DIET: A FOUR LETTER WORD

Lori Smith

[Assignment: Write a theme in which you instruct the reader how to do something or how to perform a process. Observe the following criteria: include every necessary step of the process; observe strict chronological order, explain each step clearly; define or explain any technical terms that may be unfamiliar to your audience.]

(1) Diet is a word often associated with starvation, pain, endless calorie counting, and a feeling of utter hopelessness; nonetheless, in today's fitness-crazed society, diets are as popular as The Cosby Show. Chances are all of you have vowed at one time or another to lose those excess ten pounds after eating a five-course gourmet meal. Your commitment probably only lasted, however, until supper the following day when you were offered a piece of irresistible strawberry cheesecake. If you are truly satisfied with your present physique, you are to be congratulated. Most of you, though, long to have the body of Christy Brinkley or Sylvester Stallone. You want to shed those unflattering innertubes around your waist, even if they have the charming title of "love handles." Just once you'd like to button those 501 Levis without inflicting pain. The problem surrounding the dieting dilemma, then, is not the question of should you diet, but how?

(2) The first step in initiating a successful diet is sheer willpower. If you have a motivating factor to work toward, temptation will be easier to overcome. You might reward yourself with a trip to Florida, a new dress, or even a super-sized banana split. Your chances for success will increase substantially if the reward you are working toward is a significant one. Avoid using, however, the empty New Year's Eve resolution or your diet will inevitably be extremely short-lived. This willpower is of primary importance because it not only gets you started but also must carry you through to the end. You must be able to order a salad while the rest of your dinner party is enjoying prime rib, to pass by that alluring red and white Dairy Queen billboard, and to munch on raw, tasteless celery instead of tasty Ruffles Potato chips. (Warning: temptation is everywhere!)

(3) After you have established this unwavering willpower, the next step of your diet is organization. Successful diets must be consistent and must follow a set course of action. This planning starts with the setting of goals. You should keep an exclusive dieting notebook. In this book you keep track of your exact weight, how much you eat, and how close you are to attaining your ultimate goal. (Caution: make a reasonable goal whose attainment is possible.) In order to ensure accuracy and a sense of achievement, small goals should be strived for.
weekly so the task will appear more accessible. When recording weight, make sure you weigh in at approximately the same time every day, keeping in mind that weight will fluctuate for a variety of reasons. In addition to recording weight, a daily chart should be kept on which every morsel of food and every drop of liquid consumed is recorded. When you know that every chocolate chip cookie, every hot-fudge sundae, and every slice of pepperoni pizza will be written down in black and white, you tend to think twice about going on a calorie binge.

(4) The next step is to draw up a nutritionally sound diet. If you are planning to lose a substantial amount of weight, you are strongly recommended to consult your physician. It is most important that you avoid all fad diets with miraculous claims, even though they prove to be extremely tempting at times. It is highly unlikely that by eating exclusively grapefruit and raw fish for ten days you will lose forty pounds and feel like a new person. In fact, any solution that sounds too good to be true usually is.

(5) The final step to a foolproof diet involves an exercise program of some kind. This does not mean, however, that you must run ten miles a day in a fifty-dollar sweat suit or join an exclusive fitness center in order to get in shape. Exercise could simply mean taking a brisk walk around the block, attempting to keep up with energetic Richard Simmons, or just doing a series of jumping jacks before bed. Another popular exercise alternative you may engage in is the new and exciting world of aerobics. You must remember, though, not to be discouraged when you see Jane Fonda smiling at the end of the routine when you are close to death, because one day you could be wearing that skin-tight leotard.

(6) Dieting will always be justifiably labeled as an uphill struggle. It is one battle, however, that can be won if you have a sound strategy. Such a dieting strategy consists of willpower, organization, and exercise. Although even the most successful diets will probably not transform you into Bo Derek, losing weight will boost self-esteem, liven up your love life, and allow you to painlessly wear size seven Calvin Kleins. The dieting process can be a tedious one; but losing weight is not impossible, and the end result is always worth the sacrifice and pain.