Responding to Diet Talk

It's common to see or hear messages implying that certain foods are better than others, and that eating these foods in turn makes an individual either 'good' or 'bad'. Consider the following responses when faced with responding to diet talk.

If people make comments about your body or food choices, try phrases like:
- My body and my food intake are not up for discussion.
- This isn't something I want to discuss right now.
- Those comments make me uncomfortable. Let's talk about something else.
- Remember when I told you how I'm working on listening to my body around food and feeling better in my body? Those comments make it hard for me, let's talk about something else.

When someone tries to talk with you about their diet:
- Say something like "It sounds like you've found something that works for you" and then change the subject.
- If the conversation is really triggering and bothering you, excuse yourself from the conversation and go elsewhere to give yourself a break from the diet talk.
- If you feel comfortable, you can share more about why you're no longer dieting, what you're doing instead, and how you have been feeling so far.

When you order a salad and someone says "Oh! We're being good today, aren't we?"
- You can say, "Eating a salad doesn't make me a better person – it's just what I'm in the mood for."

When you want dessert after dinner and someone says "I can't eat dessert or I'll gain X pounds if I eat that."
- You can say, "That's not how bodies work. Our bodies can use all types of foods and this is what sounds good to me right now." Or, "I used to think that too, but ever since I've been listening to my body about what it really wants and needs, I've been able to enjoy my dessert – and all foods! – so much more."

When someone asks if you want to join them in a cleanse after the weekend:
- You can say, "No thanks! Those never make me feel good – I always feel tired and irritable, and restricted. I'd rather eat foods that nourish and satisfy me. But if you want to grab lunch afterwards, I'd love that."

When an account you follow on social media posts a calorie-based meal plan, transformation photos, or a list of 'good' and 'bad' foods:
- You can unfollow them and fill your social media feed with diverse, body positive and non-diet accounts.

If someone says, "If I ate like that, I'd be X pounds more/less."
- You can say, "We all have different food preferences and needs – this is working for me today."

If someone starts talking about their new diet/weight loss plan:
- You can change the subject and say, "Speaking of new things, have you watched that new show? It's so good!"

If someone says, "I'm going to be bad and go up for more food – that dish is just so good!"
- You can say, "Don't be silly, there's nothing 'bad' about eating! If you still want more, you should have more, the food is amazing!"

If someone says, "My problem is I can never stop eating once I start."
- You can say, "I've been working on tuning into my internal cues around hunger and fullness – it's been such an eye-opening experience to really feel like I can give my body what it needs and wants, and feels more satisfying."

If someone says, "I cheated and ate ___ food today."
- You can say, "I'm working on thinking about foods as neutral and allowing myself to eat accordingly. All food can fit into a healthy diet including treats."

If a social media account or friend you follow posts about their diet:
- You can say something, or you can scroll past, mute, or unfollow. Your mental health and personal progress come first.