Leyla Weighs In: Stop punishing yourself with “all or nothing” thinking

As humans, when it comes to changing a behavior—an attempt at self-improvement, or establishing a healthy habit, we often start off all gung ho with an “all or nothing” attitude.

“This is it! I will achieve ____ (fill in goal of choice) no matter what!”

It’s terrific to have the will and intestinal fortitude to make the changes necessary to meet goals. And it’s a great mental attitude to start any self-improvement endeavor with.

But we must remember, as with any journey, there can be hiccups and detours, or downright stumbles along the way. We may fall off course for a bit before we find our compass back to “the program.” For every three steps forward, there may be one or two steps back. And although it may not feel like it when we’re taking those backward steps, it’s still progress.

We should be mindful of any self-inflicted and undue pressure to follow the straight and narrow at all times on our

respective programs. We have to discard, “do it perfectly, or don’t do it at all.”

Why? This is not a winning mindset. Indeed, it’s a recipe for resentment and subsequent failure. It feels more like punishment than a potentially exciting path to health and wellness. And I believe that kind of rigidity only increases the reward value of the food/behavior you’re missing. I’ve seen this far too many times in my practice.

In life, we don’t live in extremes—we don’t live in black or white. There’s a huge grey area in between where most of life happens. Embrace it.

We all experience ups and downs in life. Your journey to reaching your health/weight goals are no different. Persevere, don’t punish.

To your health!