

# Pumpkin Pie with a Side of Compassion Please

By Jan Henrickson, editor of [\*Eat by Choice, Not by Habit\*](#)

Chances are sugar plums and the weight gain to follow are dancing in your head this time of year. Self-deprecating body jokes are rampant. People are groaning and squeezing their bellies. Everyone's stuffed. Vowing to eat "better" while breaking that vow almost instantly.

"Compassion." says Sylvia Haskvitz, M.A., R.D., author of *Eat by Choice, Not by Habit*. "This holiday season and New Year spread some good will to yourself first. Judgment and compassion cannot co-exist. So be kind to yourself. Start by translating your judgments into underlying emotional feelings and universal needs."

It's easy and popular to yell, nag, tease, and heckle yourself about what you're eating and how you look, especially when emotions are high. You're surrounded by your favorite food cravings. Challenging family members. Childhood food traditions.

Bullying yourself acts like a boomerang. What you don't want comes back to you—quickly. The next time you find yourself about to launch into a tirade, "What a pig! Three pieces of pumpkin pie. I have no will power! I feel sick!" reframe it. "I've had more pie than I would like. When I'm conscious of what's going on for me, I can make different choices."

Allow yourself the freedom to choose. When you're starting to eat more than you would like, pause. Tune in to your feelings and needs. Are you anxious at a work party and food is filling in the social gap? Are you trying to silence your Uncle's non-stop diatribe against another family member with mashed potatoes? What are you needing? Comfort? Reassurance? Joy? What other choices can you make to meet those needs?

"When you tune into your emotional state in those moments, you are operating from a needs consciousness," says Haskvitz. "From this place of choice, compassion is alive and needs can be met."

Even food tastes better with compassion. If you've paused enough to realize pumpkin pie reminds you of home and you really want to eat one more piece, savor it. Instead of shoveling in another mouthful, let your taste buds celebrate the hot pumpkin, the cool ice cream. Chances are you'll eat less and enjoy more.

You don't have to kick off the New Year by kicking yourself. Give yourself a friend instead. You.

**Jan Henrikson** is the editor of *Eat by Choice, Not by Habit* written by Sylvia Haskvitz. Jan is a freelance writer, editor, and writing/creativity coach. Thanks to her work with Sylvia Haskvitz on *Eat by Choice, Not by Habit*, she can say no to chocolate without feeling deprived. And, on occasion, say yes with absolutely no guilt.

Explore this topic more with [\*\*\*Eat by Choice, Not by Habit\*\*\*](#) by Sylvia Haskvitz, or contact Sylvia at 520-572-9295 to learn more about one-on-one coaching to transform your relationship with your body and food.

[nonviolentcommunication.com](http://nonviolentcommunication.com)