

Learning to Live in Moderation

By Jeff Davidson

I have always loved pistachio nuts, especially those imported from Turkey. When Southern Season, the large gourmet foods retailer in Chapel Hill, was holding its annual inventory clearance sale years back, I noticed that Zenobia pistachios were on sale, only \$16.75 for a two- and a half-pound bag.

A two- and a half-pound bag! E-gads, I hardly buy more than a pound at the Whole Foods supermarket nearby, and even then it takes several days to go through them all. And those are California

pistachios, which are okay, but nothing like Turkish pistachios.

So, here I am face-to-face with a two- and a half-pound bag of the finest pistachios in the world. If I bring them home, I know I am going to eat them in a rapid manner, and they are 80 to 85 percent fat. Still, there's no resisting, so I walk to the checkout counter, buy the bag, and make my way home. Over the next three days, at the worst time of the day to be eating pistachio nuts — from about nine to 11 in the evening, I down the entire bag. My stomach shows it over the next couple of days. Now I'm thinking, 'Okay, I'm going to have to abstain; I love those nuts, but how can I bring them into my house? Once I start, there's no resisting.'

Days go by. The sale is still on. It ends on July 11. I'm in Southern Season again and walk past the Zenobia pistachio display. The two- and a half-pound bags are there staring me in the face. I buy

another one. I take it home. This time, I tell myself that there will be no eating after 9 p.m. I bag a few each morning and bring them to work and allow myself to munch on the nuts during the day at work. At home that night, zero nuts. It takes me several weeks to consume them all. I am glad I bought the bag, I am glad I ate the nuts, and I am proud of

myself for taking that long to go through it. Then, a brainstorm emerges!

The next time I'm in Southern Season, I make my way straight to the pistachio shelf. There is an abundance of those beautiful two- and a half-pound bags. I buy five of them!

I bring them home. I put four in the freezer. I open one bag, take out a small amount, and put it in a plastic bag for work the next day.

My system works. I am only eating a small bagful a day, during the day. Because I have a huge supply of pistachio nuts at home, I no longer feel as if it's some kind of rare commodity which I have to gobble down while the going is good. Like a squirrel, I know I'll have enough nuts to last me for months on end. At least in the context of eating pistachio nuts, I have learned moderation. What a triumph! Where else can I apply this lesson?

Jeff Davidson, "The Work-Life Balance Expert"® and author of "Simpler Living," "Breathing Space," and "The 60 Second Innovator," believes that career professionals have a responsibility to achieve their own sense of work-life balance. For more information, visit www.Work-LifeBalance.net

