

# 5 Tricks For Dealing With Trolls In Real Life

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Trolls are the [food police](#)

(<http://abbeypost.com/blog/surviving-food-police-july-4-bbq/>)'s cousins.

They'll comment on what you're eating, but also your body, your clothes and anything else about you they can think to criticize. And these

jerks think they're helping! Because they believe you're too lazy or too clueless to know about diet and exercise.

We know that the trolls are the clueless ones. They have no idea how rude they are (or they don't care), and they are clueless about the reality we all live with – that eating nutritiously and exercising will make you healthy, but it won't necessarily make you lose an ounce. And, of course, the reality that people's bodies are their own business and aren't a suitable topic for discussion.

But knowing how wrong they are doesn't make it any easier to deal with trolls. Encountering one is like someone walking up and slapping you. It can wreck your day.

So how can we keep trolls from bringing us down? Let me start with a story that may illustrate some opportunities...

## The Purple Jacket

A couple of years ago, my friend Elle (not her real name) ran into a co-worker in the elevator on the way in to the office. She complimented the woman's new purple jacket. Her co-worker's response? "If you lose weight, you can have it."

The nerve! But Purple Jacket Lady was so forceful that Elle couldn't help but feel stepped on. She was too stunned to say anything. And would it really have been worth it to try to educate someone on how rude they were? First thing in the morning?

So what did Elle do? First, she posted about the incident on Facebook, making sure her security settings wouldn't let her co-workers see it. Her friends' supportive comments soothed her hurt feelings.

**Trick #1: After an encounter with a troll, it's always good to seek reassurance that they're the crazy ones, not you.**

Elle had to keep working with Purple Jacket Lady. For a while she was uncomfortable eating in the office, expecting to hear more comments. But more nasty comments never came. And that's when she picked up this next awesome tip:

**Trick #2: Try not to brace yourself for more trolling that may never come. Many trolls are too self absorbed to pick on one target for too long.**

Elle was able to forgive Purple Jacket Lady because she realized that her trolling was born from sincere concern. Although Elle's health is no one's business but her own and her doctor's, both of Purple Jacket Lady's parents had lost limbs due to diabetes. Elle saw that her troll's heart was in the right place, though the way she expressed her concern was wrong.

**Trick #3: Don't take other people's social missteps to heart.**

Elle was able to get her relationship with Purple Jacket Lady back on track by bonding over shared interests – ballet and tennis. Elle hasn't dreaded seeing her in ages.

## **Trick #4: If you can't escape a troll, change the subject. And keep changing it.**

And then there are the trolls who make indirect comments. [The Curvy CEO](http://www.curvyceo.com/) (<http://www.curvyceo.com/>) says,

*I'm at an event, a woman skinnier than me says something negative about her own food and I wonder, 'is that a dig at me?'*

I once brought a box of chocolate truffles to the office, and every time one skinny co-worker walked past the box, he'd say, "Oh, if I had these at home, I'd be so fat." It ticked me off because it felt like he was complaining about my gift. But the most insulting part was that I had 3 other boxes of truffles at home that would take me a month or so to eat. It was frustrating to think that I was fat despite my self control and he was skinny despite his lack of self control.

That's the problem with trolls. They're so sure of themselves that you don't realize how wrong they are. Self discipline (or lack of it) has nothing to do with the size of our bodies.

But when someone comments on their own eating (or how fat they feel, or how much they hate their rear end), it could be coming from a place of habit and true unhappiness. In many circles, people are expected to be ashamed of their eating habits or their bodies. Negative internal conversations and beating yourself up over eating “imperfect” food is socially expected, and self-destructive. When someone put themselves down, it’s about them and no one else.

## **Trick #5: Don’t let their words make you feel self conscious – feel bad for them instead.**



## **Don’t Feed the Trolls**

Unless you have some time and energy to spare, there’s little point in trying to teach a troll that they need to mind their own business, and that their comments aren’t based in reality. You have better things to do, and you’re

not obligated to fix everyone. When you can, disengage and move on with your life. We know you're great – why waste time on people who think otherwise?



It's good advice.

## What are your tricks for dealing with trolls in real life?

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