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Three Ways to Energetically Break the Emotional Eating Cycle

During my travels, I have noticed that emotional eating has become something of an epidemic in busy societies. Many of us live our lives on the go, with a cloud of insatiable stress constantly hovering over us. The majority of people barely make the time to eat a proper meal, let alone express the anger, frustration, anxiety or sadness they have felt throughout the day. The energy of holding in unexpressed emotion further adds to the depletion that is already felt. I have noticed that when I have stored emotions, I feel heavy, tired and my eating suffers.

Instead of letting these emotions naturally flow out as they arise—and risk being labeled “weak” or “unreliable”—some look for a quick fix from unhealthy food to cram down the bubbling pot of feelings inside. I know I did several years ago—my vice was sugar! One study found that when women were feeling angry, stressed or fearful, they were significantly more likely to experience intense symptoms of

bodily hunger and overeat than if they were feeling relaxed or calm.¹ Another study discovered that when emotionally eating, participants were much more likely to eat sweet, high-energy foods like cake, ice cream and soda.²

Clearly, by not engaging in the full dance of our energetic flow, we are risking our body and our health. We are also potentially setting ourselves up for a vicious cycle of emotional eating—unhealthy foods containing saturated fat and sodium have been linked to a negative mood over the next few days.³ Eating unhealthy food can make us feel down and depressed, so we eat more unhealthy food to “cope” with our emotions . . . and repeat.

Fortunately, there are ways to break the cycle of emotional eating once and for all. I have done it myself, so I will share with you my personal process of how I found a path out of the chaos. The following tips will help you to recognize, identify and interact fully with your emotions:

Tap into your emotions: Tune into your emotions with an easy inventory exercise. At the end of every day, set aside 5-10 minutes to write down the emotions you felt during the day and what may have caused them. Be as specific as you can, and remember that even the smallest emotions are important. After a week, you should notice patterns emerging—maybe your daily commute is bringing frustration and anger into your life that you combat with a packet of chips as soon as you arrive in the office. Take note of these patterns.

The second part, once you have identified these emotions, is to do a body scan by closing your eyes and going within to see where in your body you are energetically holding on to these stuffed-down feelings. As you find blocks, which can be perceived as color or temperature shifts, you will want to breathe in to each place to let them release. You may also want to do some journaling.

Minimize exposure to things that cause negative emotions: After completing the previous step, you should have a better idea of people and activities in your life that are causing you to feel negative emotions and where they are impacting your body. While it will not be possible to remove all these negative influences from your life, take steps to reduce the negative emotion load.

If your commute is a burden, consider using public transportation, so you can read a good book on your way to work or carpool with a coworker to reduce some of the driving load. By reducing the things in your life that



cause you to feel angry, depressed, frustrated or stressed, you will be shifting your energy in a different direction, minimizing the causes of your emotional eating cravings, and likely, the cravings themselves.

Express your emotions through activities: At its root, emotional eating is just an unhealthy way of expressing our emotions. Instead of feeling our emotions in a natural, healing manner, we shove them down, only to have them rise to the surface in the form of cravings. When we give ourselves the chance to truly feel and express our emotions, we will likely find that our desire to eat emotionally is reduced. Allow your emotions to be expressed in ways that are healthy and comfortable, like through meditation, exercise, journaling and even talking with a friend.

Here is one of my favorite tips! The next time you feel a sudden craving for unhealthy food, give yourself fifteen minutes (known as the “fifteen-minute wait-out” in the world of addictions). In those fifteen minutes, let yourself engage in other activities: you may choose to journal, talk with a trusted friend or partner, or even meditate on the emotion, enabling yourself to feel it in all corners of your body. While it may be difficult to fight the feeling instilled within that showing your emotions is taboo, the result is worth it. Your cravings may subside after giving your body what it really craves—true emotional expression or, at the very least, movement and flow through activities.

While taking control of your emotional eating is not a quick or easy process, these easy steps will provide you freedom from the guilty cycle of suppressing your emotions with food. Not only will your body feel healthier and nourished, but your whole self will be relieved of the toxic burden of negative emotions and the energy they hold. ☺



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