

SIMPLE WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

SECTION 6

The Dangers of Emotional Eating



...powerful habits to transform your life!

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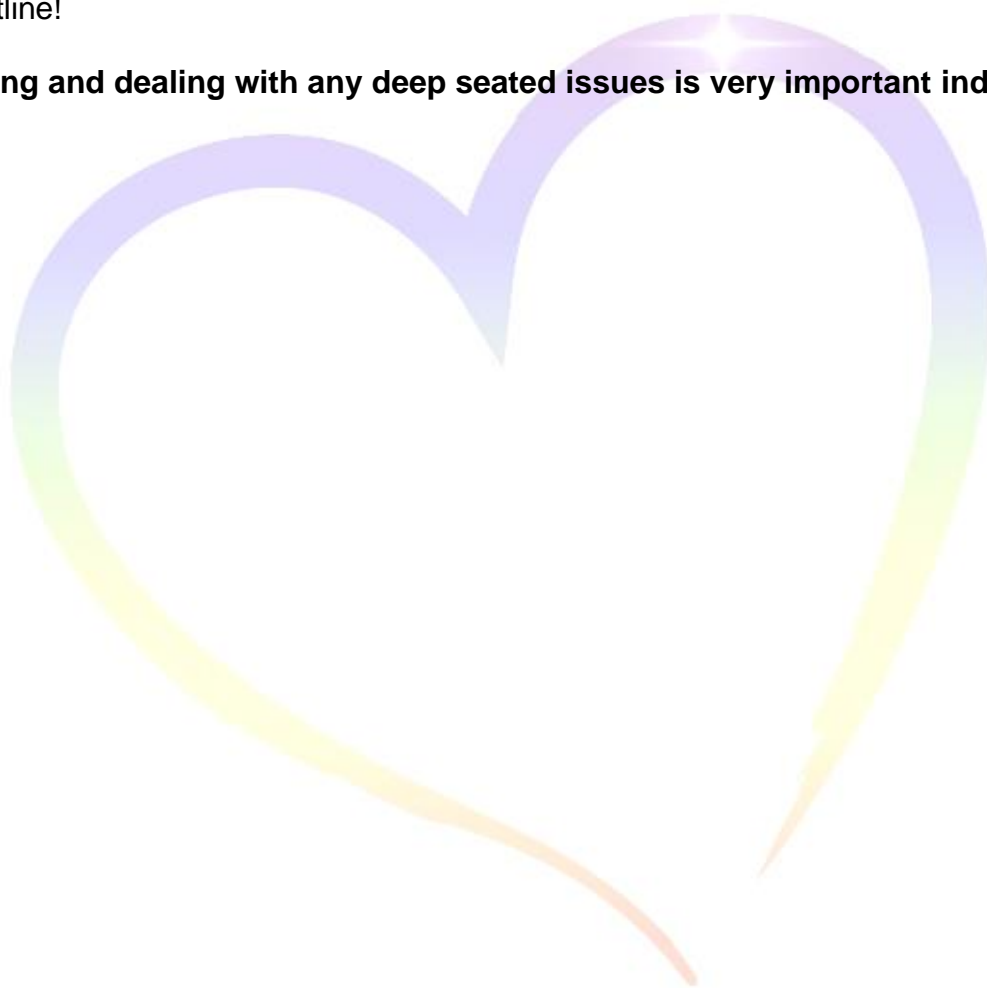
Quick Guide

Section 6 (of 12) is entitled ~ **The Dangers of Emotional Eating**

This 6th section reveals how deep seated emotional issues can affect your eating habits.

As emotional beings who generally derive a lot of pleasure from eating, there is a potential danger that we turn to food for short term relief, to mask deeper emotional issues. In these circumstances, we end up using food to self-medicate in an attempt to feel better, even though our bodies are not actually hungry. Obviously, this isn't good for the waistline!

Identifying and dealing with any deep seated issues is very important indeed!



Disclaimer

All the information and recommended action steps provided in this guide are with the sincerest intentions to genuinely help you enhance your weight management, general health, well-being and make you feel good. It is the culmination of thousands of hours of research into books, published medical studies and the study of professional expertise. Vibrant health accepts no liability for the results of any actions you take following the information contained within. We strongly advise you to do your own research prior to the taking action steps and consult a medical professional if in doubt with any aspects.

6. The Dangers of Emotional Eating

*“Studies show that people with high levels of **negative emotions (stress, anxiety, depression etc)** from underlying issues are more likely to have weight problems by using food to self-medicate...**ITS IMPORTANT YOU DEAL WITH ANY UNDERLYING ISSUES!**”*

Your Simple Weight Management educational journey so far...

- 1 – You understand there's no quick fix and long term consistency of good habits is the key.
- 2 – You're mindful of the hidden dangers in the food chain and will work around them.**
- 3 – You know working with your biochemistry is the answer and you're ditching diets forever!
- 4 – You're aware the real battle is between your brain chemicals and balancing them.**
- 5 – You fully understand how 'Bad for you' and 'Good for you' foods affect your body.

Modern reality!

Our ancestors ate to survive, we eat because... we're bored, stressed, depressed, frustrated, at the movies, watching TV, passing the fridge, the list goes on!

Eating is an emotional experience for us as we '**feel**' hungry, '**feel**' satisfied and '**feel**' full and derive a lot of pleasure as that cheesecake hits our tastebuds. All of these emotional experiences are created by the chemicals in our brains (hormones and neurotransmitters) that are triggered by the food we eat.

The emotional satisfaction can however, turn into a coping mechanism and make us crave certain foods to feel better (from the chemical high of the serotonin/dopamine release) to help mask certain underlying issues that make us feel low.

In these circumstances, it is nothing to do with hunger but using food to self-medicate to feel better. If the underlying issue isn't dealt with, this can escalate into a multitude of health related problems.

Emotional (comfort) eating

This has become a major problem over the last couple of decades as we tend to live more stressful lives. Having a lot of stress and anxiety in your life can very easily lead to eating excess food as a form of medication, known as comfort eating.

In a nutshell, we turn to food to derive some pleasure to combat the negative emotions we're trying to cope with.

If you were snacking or gorging on carrot sticks and walnuts for comfort, it wouldn't be so bad. Unfortunately, the comfort foods we generally reach for, are generally not good for the waistline 😞.

This is all do with the chemical influences in our brains created from the stress related emotions.



Soul food ~ masking the empty void

Quite a few people also experience a void in their life (usually around mid-life) and feel a deeper longing for something more meaningful and fulfilling. Although life is relatively comfortable, there's an emptiness deep in their soul, that they just can't ignore.

It's a nagging restlessness that surfaces from time to time but there's no obvious way to deal with. What many do is ignore it (hoping it solves itself) and turn to the pleasure of eating (among other distracting activities) to distract from it.

Eating temporarily eases the feeling but it's essentially 'papering over the cracks' and it will still be there, until the underlying issue (that is causing the emptiness void) is dealt with.

Advanced Habit 15 (Authenticity & Values) helps with identifying underlying voids and what's missing.

Brain chemicals influencing moods/eating

The following 5 interacting brain chemicals are the primary influencers of your emotions and affect your mood and hunger;

- **Serotonin** ~ It's the feel good chemical
- **Dopamine** ~ It's the pleasure and reward chemical
- **GABA** ~ helps you relax
- **Nitric Oxide** ~ helps to calm you
- **Norepinephrine** ~ puts you into the fight or flight mode

In simplistic terms, when these chemicals are nicely balanced (normal state) you'll feel pretty good/normal and go about your day. If there's a drop and they become unbalanced through say stress, you don't feel so good, so now you are strongly influenced (by these chemicals) to correct the balance and feel better.

And you guessed it, to get the quick fix to rebalance the chemicals and feel better, many people turn to the food cupboard in search of specific 'mood foods' that are generally not good for the waistline.

Mood foods

Studies show that certain moods have a tendency to make us reach for certain foods as follows;

- Feeling **Depressed** ~ reach for **sugary foods** (e.g., cake, chocolate)
- Feeling **Angry** ~ reach for **crunchy or tough foods** (e.g., breadsticks, meat)
- Feeling **Stressed** ~ reach for **salty foods** (e.g., crisps, crackers)
- Feeling **Anxious** ~ Reach for **soft & sweet foods** (e.g., ice cream, trifle)
- Feeling **Lonely** ~ Reach for **bulky foods** to fill you up e.g. (pasta, pizza)



Here's how the chemical process works

We'll use dopamine (gives you a nice feeling of reward from eating) as the example...

After a normal morning, let's say you're now feeling very stressed from the events of the afternoon and your levels of dopamine drop in your brain.

Your brain wants to feel better and rebalance this chemical drop. You turn to food, get a rush of dopamine and now feel better.

Although it makes you temporarily feel better, it only masks the underlying stress (if this is caused by a deeper issue) that you were feeling. Of course, this can turn into a much bigger problem over time if you continually turn to food for comfort, to deal with underlying emotional issues.

As the comfort foods we instinctively go for tend to be calorie laden, self-medicating with food can become a ticking timebomb to your long term health leading to conditions such as diabetes and heart disease (adding even more stress/anxiety/depression 😞).

High/chronic stress and the weight gain vicious cycle

You store fat in a couple of ways, as subcutaneous (under the skin) and belly fat. Belly fat is the most dangerous, the anatomical name for it is the omentum. It hangs underneath the muscles in your stomach (hence why some men's beer bellies are solid as there's a wall of muscle in front of it).

- As the omentum grows in size from a bad habits (excess consumption of 'bad for you' foods) it puts more pressure on surrounding organs which often lead to high blood pressure, high cholesterol and conditions related to heart disease.
- When you're highly or chronically stressed, your body increases its production of steroids and insulin which increase appetite.
- This often results in craving high calorie sweet and fatty foods which increases the fat deposit in the omentum, which in turn creates inflammatory chemicals in the liver.
- This then creates a resistance to insulin making the pancreas secrete more of it which makes you even hungrier.

It's a dangerous self-perpetuating cycle governed by hormones and chemicals.

Being overweight from comfort eating, whether it's dealing with chronic stress or anxiety etc, looks like (from the outside) it's caused simply by the over consumption of 'bad for you' foods.

The reality... it's actually a coping strategy (caused by your brain chemicals) to self-medicate against the underlying negative feelings (stress, anxiety, depression, emptiness etc) to feel better.



Without this knowledge, a person struggling in this way is likely to suffer from low self-esteem and blame themselves for their lack of willpower and discipline, which makes it even worse.

The remedy to comfort eating

To put it succinctly, we need to deal with the underlying negative issue to remove the influence to comfort eat.

Habits 13 & 14 (emotional freedom and release tools) from the advanced programme are specifically designed for dealing with underlying emotional issues. Doing these habits everyday will start dissolving the underlying negative energy and diminish its power.

Habits 4 (deep breathing), **6** (laughter), **9** (meditation), **11** (orgasm's), **17** (feel good now) are all designed to relax you and make you feel good and flood your system with the feel good brain chemicals 😊.

Habit 15 (authenticity & values) assists with resolving any deep emptiness/lost voids. It is designed to help you identify and align your true values (what really matters to you) with your everyday life. This is about being the authentic you and nourishing your soul by doing the things that naturally inspire and motivate you.

This is why (I know we bang on about it 😊) this programme is not sold separately and is only available in conjunction with either the essential or advanced programmes as there are so many other factors influencing your weight and eating routine. It's important that you pay attention to most/all of the habits to get the best overall results and routine for you.

Subconscious (deep seated) issues

Developing the recommended habits in the programmes can eradicate a lot of issues and significantly enhance your health, however if the problem is a deep seated issue in your subconscious, it needs a different approach.

Here's a general example of a deep seated subconscious programme that is causing someone to stay permanently overweight (without them realising) ...

A young lady aged 10 is starting to receive sexual advances from a male friend of her parents. She starts getting comments like "Aren't you a pretty little thing?" and "You'll be breaking hearts in a few years."

Not only is she getting unwanted comments, but the male friend is also touching/stroking her at every opportunity when the parents aren't in the same room.

She is completely freaked out and very unnerved by this but feels helpless as this is a very good friend of her parents. She feels if she says something it's going to cause a big row, he'll deny it and her parents are likely to think she



made it up, take his side and castigate her for making such an allegation. She doesn't know what to do and feels she just can't risk saying something.

Her subconscious minds priority (as explained in the advanced habits prologue) is her safety and protection.

To protect her, it decides if she makes herself less attractive, she won't attract the unwanted attention anymore. So, it makes her eat more to put on weight and become less attractive.

She gains weight as a 10 year old as the subconscious programme kicks in, but now spends the next 30 years battling with her weight. She doesn't overeat or eat to excess but it doesn't matter what routine or diet she tries; she just cannot shift the weight.

Here's the key ~ *that subconscious programme she developed as a 10 year old to make her larger and less attractive is still operating and causing her to carry extra weight. If that programme isn't removed, she'll always battle with weight, no matter what she does.*

Subconscious issues such as this, need to be dealt with professionally via a practitioner in the form of a psychologist, therapist, hypnotist or similar, who are suitably trained to deal with them.

If you feel you have a deep seated issue, we'd highly recommend you consider getting a professional opinion/assessment and go from there.

Beware of mindless eating

This is a major problem in the modern world!

With many families having TV's all over the household in addition to multiple devices, we've collectively developed the very bad habit of mindless eating, which is eating without paying much attention to the food, due to distractions in our environment.

When we're eating whilst focused on something else (TV, device) we don't savour the flavours in the same way and **don't notice how much we're eating**.

Popcorn Study

Researchers wanted to find out if people who typically ate movie popcorn would eat more of it regardless of the freshness.

98 volunteers were handed a box of fresh or week-old popcorn before entering a movie theatre. They found that they ate, in statistical terms, exactly the same amount regardless of whether it was fresh or stale.

Due to the influence of the environment (they were in the habit of eating popcorn whilst watching a movie) the volunteers didn't even notice the popcorn they were eating was stale due to mindless eating.



Multiple studies show that when we're distracted whilst eating, we **don't register the amount** we've eaten in the same way. This often leads to overeating as it takes around 20 minutes for our satiety hormone Leptin, to kick in. By then, it's too late, before we've realised, we've eaten far more than our body needed!

This is also linked to the lower emotions (stress, anxiety, depression) with the tendency to distract ourselves with food and entertainment at the same time.

The remedy is to get into the habit of eating without distraction (no devices) and take your time, so you consciously savour every mouthful. Its fine to eat and chat with others, just remove any external distraction whilst eating.

Studies show that your environment affects your eating, the more relaxed and distracted you are, the more you're likely to eat. To reduce this;

- ✓ Choose **conversation** over TV/music/devices (distraction makes you eat more)
- ✓ Have a **warm room** instead of cold room (cold makes you likely to eat more)
- ✓ Use **bright lights** instead of soft lights (soft lights make you likely to eat more)

Emotional eating test

You'll see we've added an emotional eating test on the action planner in section 12 (*Rebooting Your Body ~ Action Plan*). The test asks you to do a food diary for 24 hours whilst also monitoring your hunger level each time you think about wanting to eat.

You'll see we've added a 1 – 7 hunger scale in section 10 (*Your New Routine ~ 15 Core Behaviours*) to gauge your hunger level. This exercise will help you identify if you're emotional eating, just be completely honest as you do it.

If you find you are regularly using food to self-medicate to help you cope with underlying issues, it is an important step to acknowledge it. From there, you can take steps to **get the underlying issue resolved**.

Final words

Self-medicating with food is human, having a big juicy pizza followed by a big tub of ice cream is ok once in a while if you've had a 'day from hell,' as long as you go back to normal the day after.

If you discover you are emotionally eating on a regular basis, **please take action**, whether it's adopting the appropriate habits to gradually eliminate the issue or seeking professional help, it needs to be resolved.

Let's now move on to something your body will love 😊...

