

Hunger—your enemy!

“Man, I’m starving....I gotta eat something!” When you feel hungry, your brain starts to think about food; but what kind of food? An apple, banana or some carrot sticks? Or instead do you “crave” crackers, bread, cereal, cookies, bars, chips or that leftover pizza?

Someone once said, **“If I didn’t get hungry, dieting would be easy!”** Is this how you feel? Everything’s going along good and then you start to feel hungry and the urge to eat just “overtakes” you and soon you find yourself half way through a box of crackers! Hunger is the true enemy of anyone who has failed at losing weight.



What is hunger?

I like to describe hunger as the signal from your body that it has ran out of fuel and is now tapping into its fuel reserves. It’s very similar to the low fuel warning in your car. My truck makes a loud “beep” and reads “Low Fuel” to warn me to stop and get more gas soon.

If I didn’t get hungry, dieting would be easy

From a dieter’s prospective, this low fuel warning is a good thing because it tells you that your body is now tapping into body fat to fuel its energy needs. The goal would be then to create a new association that creates powerful positive feelings with this signal. One should get really excited and feel awesome when this signal goes off because it means their hard work is paying off...fat cells are dying!

Hunger is a feeling

Understanding what hunger is, is the first step to defeating it. Hunger is not a force or curse or anything else. It is simply a feeling or signal from your body. You’ve learned that your emotions come from where you focus your thoughts. If you think about something good, you’ll feel good. If you think about something bad, you’ll feel bad. To prove this to yourself, have you ever been hungry and then got an important phone call, or your kid just spilled paint on the carpet, or something occurred that monopolized your focus. You get a call that your daughter

fell at volleyball practice and the coach thinks she might have a broken wrist so you spend the next 2 hours in urgent care. Arriving home you realize you haven't eaten anything in 6 hours and you don't feel hungry! Why? Your focus was taken off the hunger signal and it went away!

Also consider how we speak to ourselves about the signal of hunger. We don't usually say "I feel hungry". We usually say "I'm hungry". There's a BIG difference. "I'm hungry" means the feeling/signal is YOU. But think about it. You are not any emotion; you are you. You are David, Jenny, Brad or Sue not angry, hungry, sad, pissed or any other feeling. You wouldn't say when meeting someone, "Hi there, I'm hungry, who are you?"

Our language reflects how we associate with things. Understanding that you are not any emotion and that you can only **feel** emotions and not **be** an emotion is an important distinction to gain control over your feelings and how they compel you.



We powerfully associate action with feelings

What do you do when you feel nervous? Some people bite their nails, some people tap on something, and some people light up a cigarette. What do you do when you feel criticized by your spouse? Most fire back their own criticism, some withdraw, some go do something like fold clothes, some leave. The point being, we all have all programmed ourselves with "what to do" when we feel a certain feeling. This programming is invisible because it just compels us. We do it for no reason or purpose. The nail biter doesn't consciously think: "*Oh, I'm feeling nervous, I should start biting my nails*", he just feels compelled to do it. Ask a person who bites their nails and most don't even know why. They think it's "just me".

"Just me" thinking kills any potential for change!

We've talked about this before, but it's worth repeating. Any behavior is not "just you". What compels you is invisible, but that doesn't mean that it's "you". You are not your behaviors. Just because you fell into becoming a nail-biter, doesn't mean that behavior is you. You learned it and then reinforced it by biting your nails when you felt nervous time after time so now it's just automatic...so automatic you find it hard to stop even when you really want to! Sound familiar?

What response to Hunger have you programmed yourself with?

How many times in the past 10 years have you felt hungry and then ate only a small healthy meal with water and no dessert, stopping BEFORE getting “full”? How many times in the past 10 years have you felt hungry and then ate a large meal with dessert or munched on a bag of chips or ate something until you were “full”?

Here’s the comparison for most people:

- Feel hungry then eat small healthy portion before getting full = 112 times
- Feel hungry then eat until full = 3,556 times!

Which behavior do you think is more deeply programmed as an automatic response to feeling hungry? The reason you feel compelled to eat too much when you feel hungry is the same reason a nail biter feels compelled to bite his nails until they bleed because he feels nervous. It’s simply a programmed effect that you can re-program if you get past the erroneous thinking that your current programming is “who you are”.

Programming a new response to the feeling of Hunger

This is where the fun begins. This is where you use your willpower; to change the programming that causes the behavior you want to change rather than the impossible task of trying to change the behavior that springs from the programming!

Any behavior is reinforced each time it brings pleasure and/or avoids pain. Any behavior fades away when it brings only pain or causes a loss of pleasure. So the goal is to bring massive pleasure to stopping eating before getting full and massive pain to being full. When it comes to eating, you are creating a thought process in your brain between the pleasure of eating until full and the pain of being overweight and missing out on the pleasures of living life in a fit and healthy body! In order to do this effectively, you need a list of all the emotional reasons being fat really sucks and all the emotional reasons being fit and healthy is something you’re unwilling to miss out on! These are the thoughts you want to “pop-up” automatically when you feel hungry and have the desire to keep eating. All thin people have these thoughts automatically pop-up that guide their response to hunger.



Here are some examples of a thin person's thoughts that automatically pop-up in response to feeling hunger:

- "I feel thin...that makes me feel powerful!"
- "Christ fasted for 40 days...I feel spiritual when I fast!"
- "I love feeling in control of my life!"
- "I hate having a full stomach; it makes me feel like a pig!"
- "I'd rather throw away food than be fat!"

Here are some examples of a heavy person's thoughts that automatically pop-up in response to hunger:

- "I'm starving, mmm chips and cheese dip sounds good!"
- "Man I had a long day, I don't feel like cooking!"
- "Wonder what's in the refrig...do we have any ice cream for dessert..the kids love ice cream...I love it when they're happy."
- "I feel like a good wife when my husband is full."
- "I'm full, but I can't let this food go to waste!"

Notice the difference in thoughts. The thin person is finding deep meaningful reasons for controlling her eating and allowing hunger. She is associating deep meaningful reasons of eating with control and allowing hunger. The heavy person however is focusing on the pleasure of food, justifying her eating, and how making her kids and husband happy with food makes her feel good.

How do you program yourself to automatically think new thoughts when you're hungry? The answer is simple; just consciously think the new thoughts until they become your new habitual thinking!

Consciously think:

- This is awesome; hunger is telling me my fat cells are dying!
- Hunger doesn't control me, I control it!
- I don't care if I still feel hungry, I'm going to go enjoy my new book...I Love reading about successful women!
- I Love feeling in control...no going back!
- I know if I wait an hour, I won't be hungry anymore.

The more time you spend REALLY thinking and making these reasons powerful to you, the more successful you'll be. This is where you use your willpower....to take the time and really put the effort into thinking deeply about this and making it real to you!

After you've really found some good stuff that will motivate you emotionally, be sure to keep these thoughts at the top of your mind for a few weeks until they become ingrained in your subconscious.

- Put the sheets in the front of your binder or in your drawer at work and look at them daily.
- Talk to yourself about the reasons as you drive to work or drive to the gym
- Talk to yourself in the kitchen when temptation is pulling on you.
- Include them in your morning out-loud prayer

Don't hold back!!! Don't be a wimp and just skim over or skip this exercise. If you use it, it WILL change your thinking. So do it, kick ass and change how you feel about feeling hunger and you'll have taken a **HUGE step forward** in your transformation to permanent weight loss!

