

Food Pleasure Addiction



We all have addictions to the pleasure of food. The association between intense feelings of pleasure and eating is likely to be very strongly programmed into your subconscious from years of eating certain foods and experiencing high levels of pleasure. This is VERY common and you likely have several strong associations of pleasure with eating certain foods in certain ways that create those experiences of high levels of pleasure. This is how ANY addiction (habit) becomes—experiencing high levels of pleasure or pain relief associated with doing something. Anything from drinking to chewing your nails becomes an addiction over time from feeling pleasure while doing that thing.

However, most people try to lose weight without understanding the power of this addiction to the pleasure of eating. No one wants to believe they are “addicted”. It feels inferior so we trick ourselves into believing we don’t have an addiction. But until YOU become aware of and then understand how to change your addiction to getting pleasure from food, you will run into this VERY common problem:

Binging and starving

Binging and starving is a very common strategy for weight loss. It develops naturally because the person never addresses their addiction to the foods that give them pleasure. Rather than learning to eat healthy and prefer healthy foods, a person just starves themselves enough to allow binges on their old eating habits. This happens because most of us falsely believe that changing one’s food preferences is impossible—especially when it comes to pleasure foods like ice cream, chips, bars, cookies, crackers, peanut butter, meat, potatoes, etc.

With this strategy a person just “endures” the week by eating in radical ways that starves their body of proper nutrition just so they can get to a point that allows them to keep eating the same foods and still lose weight. This can create major health problems seen, like hair falling out and unseen, like hormone and immune system changes.

Healthy eating is the goal!

The goal is to teach yourself to Love healthy eating. This includes some pleasure foods. A healthy diet is about 80% healthy eating and 20% pleasure eating. A healthy weight for you comes from healthy eating! However, if you have not broken your addiction to the pleasure of food, you'll find yourself starving yourself so you can enjoy your binges on pleasure foods. You'll keep moving from eating too much to eating too little—binge and starve.

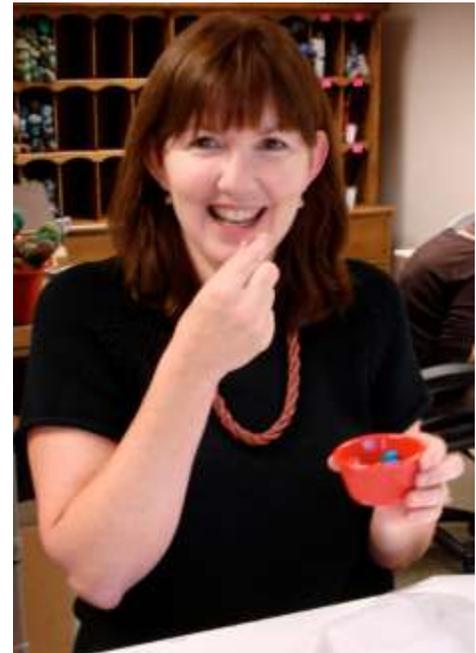
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Eventual demise

With bingeing and starving you end up losing some weight, but eventually reach a plateau. This is because your bingeing on pleasure foods begins to balance-out your starvation diet during the week. The starvation diet becomes ineffective because of the body's natural reaction to it. Starvation diets (below 1,000 calories) cause the body to shut down metabolism and try to hoard fat. After starving for a week, the body sees the binge as a perfect opportunity to store fat for the next upcoming famine period. Soon you find the scale stops moving and you begin to think, *"why should I keep enduring this crazy diet during the week when I'm not getting anything out of it?"* Soon a person will abandon the starve and binge strategy and go back to their old normal eating habits.

Why is this so common?

Very simply people don't understand how their brain works and believe that their brain's programmed preferences are their fixed "who I am" preferences. If you love potatoes and hate green beans, you think the preference is FIXED. This is an illusion that we all believe without knowledge of how our brains work. Your brain is nothing but a computer that records information and then gives it back to you to allow you to function and live. What you find pleasurable or disagreeable is only a past recording in your brain that you have continued to believe and operate by as "your" preference. This simple yet powerful understanding is what causes people to believe their food and eating preferences are fixed and unchangeable. Your brain's preferences can be reprogrammed to love healthy eating and find much less pleasure in pleasure eating—that's the goal.



Understanding how to reprogram your preferences

How your brain gets a preference is that it experienced pleasure while experiencing something. If you experience pleasure eating M&Ms, your brain will develop a preference “I like M&Ms”. If you eat a carrot after eating some M&M’s and your brain thinks “this is not as pleasurable” or “this sucks” your brain will develop a disliking for carrots compared to M&Ms. **Most of your food preferences were developed as a child as you tried foods without any care or concern for nutrition.** Kids don’t care about nutrition or calories. Now as an adult, you care about nutrition and calories, but you are still choosing to believe that YOU prefer M&Ms over carrots! The truth is you are still “seeing” the preferences your brain developed for pleasure foods when you were a kid as “your preferences” today. However, if you were to come to this planet as an adult and experience M&Ms and carrots for the very first time ever, you would consider more than only the taste of the food. You might consider the cost, calories and nutrition. You might consider “how will this food help me or hurt me?” In fact you might find chocolate detestable and carrots tasty using more than just “taste” to determine your preference.

This may be hard to believe because your brain is currently programmed with the opposite, but all your preferences are just what you have programmed into your brain.

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The goal

The goal to learn to love eating healthy rather than starving and binging is to program your brain to have less attraction to pleasure foods and more attraction to healthy foods. The first step is to go from loving M&M’s, French toast, peanut butter, pizza, chocolate chip cookies, ice cream, loaded baked potatoes, all you can eat buffets, bacon cheese burgers, cheese curds, etc. to liking them. The final step is to become neutral with them—meaning you would like any of these items, but you don’t seek them out or feel deprived without them.

Love → Like → Neutral

The goal for carrots, broccoli, green beans, hard boiled eggs, tuna, salads, cottage cheese, tomatoes, green salads



and other healthy foods is to go from DISLIKING them to LIKING them. And from liking these healthy foods and reinforcing them as you make them a common part of your routine diet, you will automatically move to LOVING and preferring them.

Dislike → Like → Love

This has happened to me with salads. I now eat a salad every day for my lunch. I have gone from disliking salads early in my life to liking to now LOVING salads—an addiction!

Realize too that you don't have to teach your brain to like every healthy food. I still dislike raw onions. 😊 But your attitude toward trying and developing your liking of healthy foods is the key.

The goal for pleasure foods:

Step #1: Go from Loving pleasure foods to Liking them

Go from "Oh my, this is SO good...I am in heaven!" to "This is good"

Step #2: Go from Liking pleasure foods to being neutral to them.

Go from "This is good" to "I could take it or leave it"

The goal for healthy foods:

Step #1: To go from disliking them to liking them.

Step #2: To go from liking them to loving them.

Open minded

We all like to believe we have an open mind. But in reality, our brains love to be closed and fixed. Change involves risk and your brain hates to lose anything. The most powerful tool you can use to reprogram your brain's preferences is YOUR OWN VOICE. Your voice is how your brain gets programmed. When I say to myself that I want to live healthy and experience many different healthy foods, over time, my brain will become programmed to do this. By saying this to myself and believing it, I now love to try new foods whereas 10 years ago I was a very picky eater. Take pride in being open minded when it comes to changing your food preferences. This will detach you from your old preferences and make you a better person both inside and out!

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Think about your past diets and how they have been the “Starve and Binge” method. Why doesn’t this method ever work in the long run?
2. Are you able to understand that your current eating and food preferences are not YOUR preferences but only your brain’s preferences from old past programming? Do you currently identify yourself with your eating preferences with words like “my creamy potatoes” or “my oatmeal cookies”?
3. Do you currently emphasize and reinforce your brain’s addiction to pleasure foods by thinking or saying out loud things like “Oh my..., this food is SO incredible!” “This is to die for!” while eating these foods? Do you talk to your friends about how much you love certain pleasure foods? Do you understand how this thinking is causing you to feel deep feelings of pleasure and thus making this food an addiction to you?
4. Make a commitment to STOP reinforcing pleasure foods with your thinking and words. Even though you may feel like saying “Oh my..., this brownie is SO delicious” say instead: “This brownie is good, but I like living healthy better!” Say it with power and conviction and your brain will start to reprogram a new preference and detach you from your addiction to pleasure foods. To break your addiction, take it to the next level with statements like:
 - “This is crap and making me feel and look like crap!”
 - “This is MAKING me fat!”
 - “This is killing me!”
 - (sarcastic tone)“Why don’t I just eat a bowl of sugar instead?”
 - “This is a FAT BOMB!”
 - “Why am I eating this crap?”
 - “This is stupid!”

Think of several more of your own:

5. START reinforcing healthy food with your thinking and words. Start doing what you were doing with pleasure foods when you ate them. When eating a healthy plain-tasting food say with conviction, "This is SO good, it's to die for...MMMM!" Here are some other ideas of what to say or think while eating healthy foods:

"This is SO much better than the high-fat crap I was eating!"

"I love the feeling eating healthy gives me!"

"This tastes SO good!"

"I feel healthier just eating this!"

"I am a SUCCESS not a failure!"

"NEVER going back to crap!"

Think of several more of your own:

