

# The Law of Reinforcement—reversed

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If you're trying to lose weight, there are certainly some things in your life that you'll need to stop or start dis-liking like:

- Regularly eating unhealthy high-calorie foods
- eating large portions
- Eating out for lunch every day
- always taking second helpings
- eating before bed
- watching TV rather than exercising

The key to stopping or limiting any behavior is to keep associating emotional pain to it until the pain outweighs the pleasure.

## How to dis-like the things you must dis-like to lose weight permanently

**Step 1: Identify the things you should dislike in order to reach your goal**

**Step 2: Consciously think about the reasons why you should dislike the thing identified. (Include emotional reasons!)**

**Step 3: Create negative feelings through self-talk and then imagine not doing what you want to dislike.**

**Step 4: Create negative feelings through self-talk and then experience not doing what you want to dislike**

**Example:**

**Step 1:** I identify that I should stop eating ice-cream at night---save for 1 time during weekend.

**Step 2:** I consciously think about what is really horrible about eating ice-cream at night (make a list and include emotional reasons)

1. Eating Ice-Cream at night gives me a double chin
2. Eating Ice-Cream makes me look bloated—fat face
3. Eating Ice-Cream at night negates all the exercise I did that day!

4. Eating Ice-Cream at night clogs my arteries
5. Eating Ice-Cream at night is expensive
6. Eating Ice-Cream at night shows my daughter a poor example
7. A weight loss coach should not be eating ice-cream at night!
8. The bowl of ice cream I was eating was 700 calories!
9. Ice Cream is a fat-bomb! [high in carbs and high in fat]

**Step 2b:** I can choose an apple instead because: (from reinforcement list)

1. Apples are super healthy “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”
2. Apples are portable and easy to take with me on the go
3. Apples are low in calories
4. Apples are water-based and full of fiber
5. Apples kill cancer
6. I want my daughter to see me choosing apples (emotional)
7. Apples will help me get the body I want (emotional)
8. I no longer have to be embarrassed to be a fitness expert who doesn’t like apples! (emotional)
9. We could go to the apple festival and enjoy it (emotional)
10. I won’t disappoint my mother-in-law when she brings apple pie any more.

*(What you are doing here is creating a HUGE push away from ice-cream and a HUGE pull toward a better alternative— an apple. When your brain feels how painful ice-cream is and how pleasurable apples are, it will overpower your current associations!)*

**Step 3:** I read my list and then imagine myself feeling like eating a bowl of ice-cream at night. I imagine the scene vividly—where I usually am sitting, the TV program, the time of night, etc. As I am imagining this, I say to myself things like:

- “Man, I can’t eat these fat-bombs at night anymore---I want a thin-looking face”
- “I want to teach my kids good eating habits”
- “I know how important going to bed hungry is; I’m not going to screw this up!”
- “I need to put an “H” on that calendar!” (I put an “H” on the calendar for going to be hungry—a mental reward for myself)



**Step 4:** When I start to experience the feelings of “wanting” or “feeling like” eating a bowl of ice-cream, I think through my list. Keep your written list near where you’ll be when the urge

strikes you or memorize it. When the time of night comes and I start to feel like a bowl of ice-cream, I will think through my list. I will visualize the outcomes I want to avoid: Seeing myself in the mirror with a fat face and double chin.

Keep in mind that your current associations with pleasurable things are very strong and you will likely fail the first few times using this strategy. Don't get mad at yourself. Remember your subconscious programming can work for you as powerfully as it does against you!



**Step 5:** If you do give in and start eating ice cream, don't think pleasure-reinforcing thoughts like: *"Oh my God, this ice-cream tastes sooooo good!"* Be sure to direct your thinking to negative thoughts from your list in step #2. It helps to say these things out loud as you are eating the ice-cream because it packs each thought with more emotion. Remember, the more emotion, the more your subconscious is imprinted. Fill your mind with negative and painful thoughts while eating the ice-cream.

**Warning**—it is very common for people to choose self-defeating painful thoughts like *"I have no willpower, I am so weak, I'm such a piece of crap, I deserve to be fat...."* These thoughts are painful yes, but they also kill your self-esteem and get you to believe that you are not worth having better. Your thoughts need to be this:

- I am an awesome, valuable, unique person who deserves to live in control of whatever I do
- Ice cream will not control me!
- Cookies will not control me!
- Hunger will not control me!
- My stomach will not control me!
- Fear will not control me!
- I will control ME and I will be a role model and blessing for others in my life!

## ASSIGNMENT

Print off the two .pdf documents. Start making a list of things you need to start dis-liking to create the new body & health you desire. Using the second document, brainstorm reasons why liking this thing (food or un-healthy habit—like always sleeping in) will destroy your life. Use these reasons to get yourself feeling pain when considering the behavior you want to change. If you do give in, be sure to fill your thinking with painful thoughts while you are giving in.

Check off each new thing you remove to your life that will help you become all you really want to be!