

The Emotional Eating Side of Your Sugar Addiction



It's easy for those who don't struggle with this every day to say things like, "why can't you just get it under control?" But if you've ever dealt with emotional and compulsive eating, you know it's much more complicated than that. We try hard to control ourselves and not overeat or not binge, but it feels like we just can't stop it from happening. It's almost as if there's an outside force that takes over our body and drives us to eat that whole tub of ice cream! Helping people deal with emotional eating is my forte, and I can honestly tell you that's there's an elegant way to work with this eating challenge and transform it.

But first, here's 3 common strategies that tend to make things worse:

1: Dieting

I like to say that for every diet, there's an equal and opposing binge that happens. The whole idea of going on a diet creates the mindset for failure because it sets up a pattern of good and bad. Things are good for a few weeks while the diet is going well, but then things go bad when the binge occurs. The cycle of good and bad, on a diet then off of a diet, is extremely stressful and promotes deeper feelings of shame and guilt around food.

2: Getting More Willpower

We only have so much willpower in a day and when people try to "get more willpower," they're setting themselves up for failure. It can work for short periods of time, but typically we'll "fall off the wagon" after a few weeks and lose the ability to resist, kick starting another cycle of emotional eating. If more willpower

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was the right strategy, it would have worked a long time ago.

3: Fighting Food (or trying to control yourself)

It's incredibly stressful on the body to try to control or suppress ourselves around food. Fighting food can actually lock us into a stress chemistry that leads to a binge. That's why those of us who try to "control ourselves" and fight food on a daily basis might do okay for a short period of time, but we'll inevitably fall into a binge and go right back to square one.

If you can relate to any of these three examples, then you know what it's like to be caught up in the cycle of emotional eating and not feel like yourself. But, with so many different ways of addressing emotional eating that don't seem to work, how do you take control of your relationship with food?

Well, instead of giving you the same advice about emotional eating that you've heard over and over, I went deeper into the science behind why we can't "get control." I want to help you understand what's going on inside your body that's causing this cycle of emotional eating to continue.

The answer, as suggested by Kathleen DesMaisons research, is that some people are born with a different biochemistry that makes them more vulnerable to the addictive properties of sugar and alcohol-she has coined a term for these people- "Sugar Sensitives". Sugar Sensitivity has 3 components:

- Volatile blood sugar
- Low levels of the brain chemical serotonin
- Low levels of the brain chemical beta-endorphin

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Here's how these components work together to make a person their own worst enemy when it comes to sugar addiction and losing weight:

Volatile Blood Sugar: The reaction of insulin to blood sugar increase upon ingestion of starches and sugars happens a lot more quickly than it should. This means that your moods are more reactionary, so you feel great when you have sugar, but get an even bigger dip in mood and energy when it falls.

Serotonin: This neurotransmitter is responsible for your mood. If you have too little serotonin you are more likely to be depressed, impulsive, obsessive and compulsive and have poor self discipline and ability to say 'no'.

Beta-Endorphin: This neurotransmitter is a painkiller. If you have low level you will have a lower pain tolerance, including both physical and emotional pain. You tend to feel more deeply and are thought of as being over sensitive- leading to feelings of isolation, inadequacy and helplessness. The lack of this chemical (and your brain's creation of excess receptors) is what causes your physiological addiction to sugar. You respond more intensely to drugs and chemicals (like sugar) that evoke beta-endorphin, because having a greater reaction means feeling more confident, soothed and able to cope. When it wears off you need more, and over time the drug-like effect diminishes, meaning you need more and more to meet your tolerance. Typical addictive behaviour.

Here are the symptoms of each. Do any particularly describe you?

Low blood sugar	Low level of serotonin	Low level of beta-endorphin
tired all the time	depressed	low pain tolerance

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Low blood sugar	Low level of serotonin	Low level of beta-endorphin
cranky/easily frustrated	impulsive	seeking crisis
restless and edgy	scattered	experiencing low self esteem
confused/forgetful	craving sweets/carbs	feeling sensitive to criticism

These biochemical conditions work together- making you crave sugar physiologically and in response to your emotional pains and stresses. By indulging in your cravings, not only do you reinforce the chemical cycle, but you perpetuate the negative feelings you have about yourself- further tearing down self esteem. It's a terrible thing.

Feeling Your Feelings

Now- of all the steps, you are probably thinking that the journalling is going to be the most difficult for you- and you're probably right- because it's all about cultivating mindfulness and awareness. It's about making some changes, but making them in a way that isn't as stressful as what you've tried in the past, because as we've already talked about, diets, willpower, and fighting with yourself just don't cut it in the long run. I'd like to explain a little more about why releasing your feelings is so important.

A sugar sensitive person's feelings are different from regular feelings. Regular feelings come up in response to outside stimuli, last a few moments, and then you're on to the next feeling. They're measured, appropriate, and usually not overly intense. Sugar feelings are anything but. Some examples are:

overwhelmed

low self esteem

taking things personally

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life is out of control	headstrong	overacting to criticism
inadequacy	all or nothing thinking	being highly impulsive

Yes, these feelings are symptomatic of a mood disorder. However, although sugar sensitivity does implicate mood dysfunction, but this biochemical dysfunction is completely treatable with food and journaling. You will be able to change old dysfunctional patterns of drama seeking behaviour and mood swings. By stabilizing blood sugar (with fiber and protein) improving serotonin levels (through proper nutrients), and seeking positive ways of receiving beta endorphins (love and exercise instead of stress and crisis) you will begin to heal from your sugar feelings and become a stronger and more confident you.

If your sugar feelings stem from old trauma, however, you may need some additional emotional and spiritual healing along the way. You may find that reclaiming your personal power and authority is too scary- that you are not ready- and that it is a very deep seated fear of change that is holding you back. Your past self sabotage may have been a manifestation of your fear of being powerful. Or a fear of being unworthy. You probably carry a number of limiting self beliefs, beliefs that are painful, that have made you turn to sugar in the first place. Again, when you have compulsive sugar pangs, find the real feeling underneath it. When you come to a feeling that flags resistance is taking place, be aware of it, and always write about it. Find your own constructive solutions. There are many meditations that can be practiced to deal with your fear and feel grateful for the body you have. I have two that are particularly helpful recorded, please ask if you would like the MP3 file. If you're having significant trouble releasing past pain and trauma on your own, energy therapies like Reiki and the Emotional Freedom Technique can be quite helpful. Conventional therapy could also be necessary, depending on your issues, but I highly recommend you try energy therapy first as it will empower you on both an emotional and spiritual level.

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However- now you are aware that it is not because you are weak. It is not because you don't try. It is because your body is trying to rebalance itself but has gone off track because it isn't receiving the nutrients it needs. What it needs is protein and complex carbohydrates- but how can it get them if all you want to eat is sugar?

You can use food and natural supplements to correct these imbalances. If you give your body the nutrients it needs it will heal its biochemistry. You must first correct the imbalances to stabilize your mood, remove impulsive behaviour, and reduce your cravings before you can attempt to kick your sugar habit for good.

Once you begin following healthier eating habits, eating specific foods, and becoming aware of your patterns and weaknesses, you will feel clear and focused, your sense of who you are will improve, you will be able to say no, you will set goals, solve problems AND you will lose weight. This is a realistic chart of what you can achieve as part of your recovery- physical, mental and spiritual vibrance:

Optimal Blood Sugar	Optimal Level of Serotonin	Optimal Level of Beta Endorphin
high energy	hopeful	tolerates pain well
appropriate fatigue	reflective	sensitive, sympathetic
relaxed	able to concentrate	high self esteem
focused	creative	compassionate
effective problem solving	engaged	hopeful, optimistic

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Optimal Blood Sugar	Optimal Level of Serotonin	Optimal Level of Beta Endorphin
even-tempered	seeking good health	taking personal responsibility

Wouldn't it be wonderful to feel this way all the time? That you are in control of your mind, mood and emotions all of the time instead of the other way around? It is entirely possible, but it takes effort- and only you can do the work.

I'd like to suggest five ingredients that I've seen make a powerful difference in any recipe for change, but especially when it comes to our food, health, body, weight, and eating concerns. I've now how easy it is to get stuck, and feel frustrated or disappointed. That's why I've got a big smile on my face as I offer up these five ingredients – and I'm happy because they work, and I think you'll agree once you give them a try.

Curiosity

When it comes to changing an unwanted food habit, many of us use the most common strategy that never seems to work in a real and lasting way – we attack our habit. With this approach, it's easy to see our unwanted emotional eating as a part of us that simply needs to be annihilated. Once this happens, our problem is happily solved right? The real problem is, creating lasting and meaningful change within oneself is seldom achieved by going down the road of self-hate. What if you got curious about your unwanted eating habit? **What if you really started asking questions?** What if you explored your challenge through new eyes, with the innocence of a child? Curiosity relaxes us. It empowers us. Curiosity actually puts us in the driver's seat and allows us to intelligently gather data that we otherwise might not have noticed had we been engaged in a brutal fight against our emotional eating. If you lean into your unwanted eating habit with an unrelenting and loving curiosity, a beautiful magic happens. Give it a try.

A Warm Heart

Oddly enough, one of the ways that humans are often taught to deal with anything or anyone that disturbs us is to close down our heart. After all, our loved ones often hurt us, friends betray us, and people we believed were trustworthy can surprise us with their selfish behavior. We do the same with self. If there's

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something I don't like about me – I don't have enough money, I'm carrying too much weight, I eat too much food - my first move is often to withdraw my love from this part of self. Of course, this seems to make sense because why should you love something that's causing so much pain? When we close down our hearts though, it's nearly impossible to shut down our heart in one domain and not have that closed heartedness spill into other places as well. You may not know this, but humans love to be loved into change. **Consider the possibility that anything you want to change in your life needs your love.** It needs your compassionate understanding. It needs your kindheartedness. An unwanted guest will leave much sooner when you give them the big hug that will help them feel complete. If your heart's been cold towards anything you wanted to change about yourself, try warming it up and see what happens.

A Sharp Sword

If you've been sitting in "un-success" when it comes to changing any unwanted habit or symptom in the body, chances are you've been trying the same unsuccessful strategies. Perhaps the most common example of this is weight loss. Even though we can't reach our goal and sustain it, it's easy to keep enacting the same approach – eat less and exercise more. Unfortunately, I've known far too many people who stay stuck in this black hole for a lifetime. **A sharp sword means a sharp mind.** Sometimes, we need to get tougher when it comes to critical thinking. We need to look in the mirror with clarity, and use our discernment to notice that some of our strategies simply don't work. A sharp sword means we're willing to see ourselves in a courageous way, and notice where life is calling for new approaches, new ideas, and a new map to give us the hope of traversing the territory of change with success. So, where do you get lazy and sloppy? Where do you stay stuck doing the same thing over and over again? Where do you need some new input and new ideas from the outside? Where do you need to cut through **stagnation**? We don't always like to see these parts of ourselves, but seeing them with a clear mind is crucial to starting real change.

See In the Dark

Have you noticed this phenomenon: oftentimes, when we go on a new diet, follow a new health strategy, or commit ourselves to some type of transformational activity to help us change – we hit a wall? Hitting the wall can feel like being stuck, but it can also feel like we're suddenly lost, confused, and

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perhaps even worse off than we started. For example, I've had many clients who, when we work on their overeating or binge eating issues, get worse. And of course, at times such as these, we abandon ship. This seems to make perfect sense, because why would we practice any strategy or see any type of coach or counselor where the net result is that we're eating more, not less? But here's the trick: things often get worse before they get better. That's just the way life works. Our unwanted habits often have us in the dark, and it's easy to be afraid of the dark and run. Learn to see in the dark. This means that we understand that "this too shall pass" and that indeed **the darkness really does precede the dawn**. Running around the darkness like a frightened child keeps us in fear and stops change. Navigating through the darkness with a sense of trust and dignity empowers change at the most core level. Remember to stay curious, and keep a warm heart for yourself.

Mentorship

The wonderful thing about changing any unwanted eating habit, or changing our body for the better, is that we feel so good when we arrive at our destination. It's easy to fall in love with ourselves when we've worked really hard and hit the bull's-eye. The challenge is, there are a lot of us looking to change – and we've been looking for too long of a time. Unfortunately, it's way too easy to get stuck in the same old strategies that produce the same old lack of results. That's where mentorship comes in. **We need other people**. No one goes through life alone. For sure, sometimes we can tough it out on our own, yet we live in a world that's magically and forever interconnected. If the wisdom of life wanted you to do everything by yourself, you would've been born on your own planet. Who are the people in life who can help guide you? Who are the ones who have courageously walked down the road that you find yourself faltering on? Who can you lean on? Who can inspire you? And who is raising their hand, and expressing their willingness to hold yours?

Honestly and openly ask yourself each of these questions, and start to approach this journey in a new way- with kindness and compassion towards yourself. You made the effort to read this document and attend the seminar. What do you need to do to go one step further and show yourself that you are worth the love and time it takes to create these changes in yourself?

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Going One Step Further

After attending this seminar and reading this booklet do you still have questions or feel you need further guidance and mentorship to achieve your goal? If so here are some options that are readily available to you:

Individual Wellness Coaching to discover the best plans and motivations to ensure you are successful in the long run:

Initial consultation (90 minutes, \$80)

Transformational package (4 sessions for \$250)

Month Long Meal Plan to Break Your Sugar Addiction

4 weeks of shopping lists, recipes, & exercises that make the process easier- PLUS the personal support of a wellness coach to help you deal with your emotions and craving psychology to enforce new habits and make what you've learned stick **\$119**

Breaking the Sugar Addiction Cookbook

Learn how to cook and bake delicious, simple whole foods recipes and have helpful inspiration for when you're feeling tempted **\$14**

3 Mistakes Emotional Eaters Make that Cause Weight Gain and Chronic Illness Over Time

New seminar coming in May **\$30**

12 Week Weight Loss Support Group

Come together weekly to discuss your health and wellness challenges that you are facing in losing weight and feel the motivational support of the group in taking on exercises and learning new skills to help you along your journey. Starting in May **\$84 registration or \$10 to join plus \$7/ week drop in fee**

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Comfort Food with a Twist

Alfredo Sauce (serves 2)

3/4 cup raw cashews/almonds (soaked covered in water for a few hours)
1 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp miso
1 clove garlic
1/4 small onion
1 tbsp cold pressed olive oil or other oil
2 tbsp nutritional yeast

Process together all ingredients in a food processor or blender until thick and creamy, about one full minute on medium or high speed. That's it! Taste and adjust the flavors to your personal liking.

Cheezy Sauce (4 servings)

2 cups cashews/almonds
3/4 cup water
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon sea salt (or slightly less)
1/3 cup nutritional yeast
Optional: 2 to 3 more tablespoons water if needed to facilitate blending

Throw all ingredients in a high-speed blender. Blend. Serve. Refrigerate leftovers. Leftover raw cheese sauce will keep for up to four days in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator.

from therawtarian.com

Sweet Butternut Squash “Fries” (Servings 2-4)

1 Organic Butternut Squash, cut into fries (can leave the skin on if organic & well washed)
1 tablespoon olive or coconut oil
A few Dashes of Cinnamon and nutmeg
Maple syrup for drizzling

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 F.

In a large bowl, toss butternut squash “fries”, oil, cinnamon and nutmeg until well coated. Cook on baking sheet for about 25-30 mins while tossing around. Cook until golden brown. For crunchier-cook for about 35-40. Drizzle with a Tbsp or two of maple syrup if desired

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adapted from monimeals.com

Strawberry Ice Cream (4-6 servings)

1 can of coconut milk (well shaken to mix cream with oil)
4-6 cups of frozen strawberries
stevia to taste (I use a concentrated form, but try 2-4 packets)
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
1/4 tsp almond extract (if desired)

Combine all ingredients in your food processor/blender and puree together till smooth. You may want to add ice cubes if the mixture is too thick. It should be a spoonable consistency. Pour mixture into a container and put in the freezer to allow it to freeze more. It can also be enjoyed right away as more of a sorbet.

Raw Carob Pudding (1-2)

1 very ripe avocado
3 dates, soaked for 1/2 hour in warm water, then drained (or use fresh Medjool dates)
1/2 cup raw carob powder

Process avocado, dates and carob in a food processor or blender until smooth and creamy. It's that simple - enjoy your raw dessert!

3 Ingredient Craving Quencher Cookies (8 or 16)

-2 medium/large ripe bananas
-1 cup uncooked quick oats
-1/4 cup of nuts, dried fruit, dark chocolate chips (or *any* other mix-in of your choice!)
Optional make even betters (1 tsp vanilla, 1/4 tsp stevia, 2 Tbsp almond hazelnut butter)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Rub a cookie sheet with coconut oil or line it with parchment paper or a slipmat. Mash the bananas well (if dry, add 2 tsp or water or so), and combine them in a medium bowl with the oats. Fold in the nuts or baking chips - or whatever mix-in you are using. Place by the tablespoonful on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 7-10 minutes, until cookies are firm and lightly browned. Remove from cookie sheet and let cool completely on cooling rack.

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