



Weight Challenges and Food Addiction

Healing Food Addiction

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Food addiction is a difficult addiction to deal with because you can't just stop eating. Discover a major underlying cause of food addiction and how to begin healing this challenging issue.

Hannah was distressed that, with all the inner work she had done on herself, she still found herself binge eating.

"There are times when I just can't stop eating. I feel awful after, but at the time I just want another cookie and another until they are all gone. Or I'll intend to take a few bites of ice cream out of the carton and find myself unable to stop until the whole carton is empty. I just don't get why I'm still doing this! And it seems worse since I married Roger, even though I really love him. I just can't figure this out!"

I asked Hannah to tune in to the addicted part of herself, and allow that part to speak about why she needs to fill up with food.

"Well, sometimes I just feel so empty and alone inside. I just can't stand it. The food makes me feel so much better. I don't feel so lonely when I'm eating and filled up. But I don't get why I feel this way. I'm not alone. I have Roger and he loves me."

"It sounds like you want to eat when you feel alone inside, when your Inner Child - which is your feeling self - feels alone and abandoned inside."

"Yes," answered Hannah. "That's exactly what I feel, but I have no idea how to fill that emptiness and aloneness without food. And why do I feel alone inside when I'm not alone outside?"

The problem is that most people think that the empty alone feeling is caused by something outside themselves - such as not having a partner, feeling rejected by someone, being unhappy at a job or not having enough money. Yet that is never what causes inner emptiness and inner aloneness. It is caused by one thing - not taking loving care of yourself, of your feelings, of the child within. And we cannot take loving care of ourselves without having a spiritual source to turn to for love, wisdom, guidance and strength.

A spiritual source can be God, a Higher Power, a guardian angel, an inner mentor or teacher, a beloved relative who has died, or your own Higher Self. We all need a source of guidance to turn to, rather than other people or our own mind. Your mind is limited to your storehouse of beliefs, many of which are false or no longer supportive of who are now are. Your mind cannot guide you in what is truly loving to yourself. It cannot advise you in what actions support your highest good. So unless you have a source of wisdom to turn to, you may not know what to do to take loving care of yourself.

You may not open to this Source until your deep desire is to take loving care of yourself. As long as you believe it is someone else's job to fill you up, or that you will get filled up from work, money, food and so on, you may not take the loving action you need to take in your own behalf to take care of your Inner Child and fill yourself with love.

The first thing I did with Hannah was to help her create, in her imagination, a spiritual source for her to turn to. When I asked her to do this, she immediately imagined her grandfather whom she had dearly loved as a child and who had died when she was five. She said she had often felt her grandfather around her, but had never thought to turn to him for help. Now, as she imagined him holding her and loving her, she began to cry with the joy of feeling his love for her.

"Hannah, while he is holding you, imagine the child part of you that wants to overeat. Imagine that you are holding her while your grandfather is holding you. Ask her how you are treating her that causes her to feel so empty and alone."

Little Hannah: "The thing you ALWAYS do that I just hate is you just go along with everything that Roger wants. What he wants and needs and feels is always more important to you than I am. You don't speak up for me. Every since we got married, it's like Roger is supposed to make me happy instead of you making me happy. I need you to make me happy by taking care of me instead of taking care of Roger so that Roger will love us. I need you to love me." (This did not come out all at once - this is a summary of what the Inner Child eventually said to adult Hannah).

Hannah devoted herself to the practice of Inner Bonding, learning to turn to her grandfather for love and guidance, and to take care of herself instead of giving herself up to Roger. Through her Inner Bonding practice, she healed her aloneness and her binge eating gradually vanished.

Self-Medicating with Food

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Do you find yourself unable to stop using food to fill your emptiness or assuage your anxiety and loneliness? Are you addicted to self-medicating with food? There is a way out of this!

What does food mean to you?

- Is it a way to nourish and support your body in excellent health?
- Is it a way to satisfy your physical hunger?
- Is it an experience that you relish and enjoy?
- Is it a way to fill your emotional emptiness, to numb out and suppress your feelings?

If you identify with the latter - if you use food to avoid responsibility for your feelings, then you are self-medicating with food. You are using food addictively - as someone else might use a drug or alcohol.

It is easy to self-medicate with food because it is so available for most people. The chances are that if you are reading this article, you have a computer and enough money to buy food. You don't need a prescription for it and it is not illegal. Therefore, it is readily available.

What is the underlying issue here? Why are you devoted to self-medicating? You are devoted to self-medicating when you are NOT devoted to taking responsibility for your feelings.

When your primary intention is to avoid responsibility for your feelings, then you will likely find numerous addictive ways of doing this - from blaming others and feeling like a victim, to numbing out with substance and process addictions. The bottom line is that until you decide that you want to take full 100% responsibility for your own feelings, you will continue to self-medicate.

What is so scary about taking responsibility for your feelings? Why will you do almost anything to avoid this responsibility, including ending up sick or obese from self-medicating with food? What do you tell yourself will happen if you take responsibility for your feelings?

© 2011 All Rights Reserved

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., Inner Bonding® Educational Technologies, Inc.

- Do you tell yourself that you can never fill yourself as much as someone or something else can and if you take responsibility for your own feelings that you will never get what you really want?
- Are you telling yourself that there is too much pain to manage - that you have to numb it out to survive?
- Are you telling yourself that you don't deserve to take responsibility for your feelings?
- Are you telling yourself that it is selfish to take care of your own feelings - that a caring person takes care of others' feelings?
- Are you telling yourself that it is too much work and you don't have the time?
- Do you tell yourself that if you open to your feelings and to taking responsibility for them, you will become too vulnerable and end up being controlled and taken advantage of by others?
- Are you telling yourself that your inner child is too needy and demanding and you can't possibly meet your needs?
- Are you telling yourself that if you take responsibility for yourself you will end up alone - that others will be upset by your self-care and leave, and you will be more unhappy than you are now?
- Do you tell yourself that if you take loving care of yourself, then you will outgrow your relationship or not want to be in this relationship?
- Do you tell yourself that you are taking care of your feelings and you don't understand why you have a food issue, or that eating the way you eat IS taking care of your feelings?

All of these things you might be telling yourself are coming from your wounded self and are lies that you tell yourself.

This is not an exhaustive list regarding what you tell yourself that causes you to fear taking responsibility for your feelings. You might want to take a moment to look inside and see what else you might be telling yourself that causes you to self-medicate rather than take responsibility for your feelings.

Taking responsibility for your feelings means that you are devoted to the practice of Inner Bonding - that instead of self-medicating you are doing Inner Bonding whenever there are distressing feelings.

You will know the joy and fulfillment of taking responsibility for your own feelings only when you do it! Start today with bringing Inner Bonding into your life throughout the day.

Food Addiction or Health: Which is More Important?

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Do you say that you want to be healthy but find yourself continuing to overeat and eat junk food? Do you believe that it is just a matter of will power? Discover how your intent determines your level of wellbeing.

As we all know, many people in our country are suffering from obesity and major health issues. It is interesting to explore this in terms of intent.

When a person eats too much or eats junk, the intent is to control. The person is using food to suppress pain - to have control over not feeling painful emotions.

While most people would say that their health is important to them, and they might even say that without their health they have nothing, often something else is even more important - having control over avoiding emotional pain.

Health problems can certainly come from a variety of causes other than substance abuse, such as heredity, extreme childhood abuse, polluted air or accidents. But the big killers - cancer, heart disease and diabetes - are often the result of the abuse of food, nicotine, drugs or alcohol.

If a person says he or she wants to be healthy, but continues to eat badly, then obviously the part of this person who is in charge of the choices is more interested in avoiding feelings than in being healthy.

Our wounded self is always more interested in avoiding pain than in loving self-care. This is who the wounded self is - the part of us that wants to have control over feeling safe from pain. One of the reasons that we have such a high rate of obesity and health problems is because, in most people, the wounded self is in charge.

I was a sickly child and I hated being sick. In my early 20s, I discovered the subject of nutrition and began to attempt to eat in a very healthy way. But because I didn't have a loving Adult in charge of my eating, eating well was a huge challenge. I would write down everything I ate in the hopes of gaining control over my sugar and carbohydrate addiction. I would go from one diet to another in the hopes of losing weight and staying thin. I went from weight doctor to weight doctor to find the magic pill that would give me control over my weight and health. I would eat well for a while, and then suddenly I would binge on sugar and junk. I just couldn't seem to find the will power to consistently eat well.

This went on for years, until Inner Bonding emerged and I began to develop my loving Adult. Now I know that a consistent and devoted practice of Inner Bonding will eventually develop enough of a loving Adult to truly care about health more than about avoiding pain. Now I know that learning how to manage and learn from painful feelings is the key to weight loss and health.

It is not about will power. The wounded self tries hard to have control by exerting will power, but always eventually fails. It IS about power - the power of your higher self that comes through when you have a deep intent to learn about what creates health and wellbeing.

Each of us needs to decide which is more important - avoiding pain through our various addictions, or striving for excellent health. When you make the deep decision that creating a healthy body for your beautiful essence to live in is vitally important to you, you will discover the power that comes from Spirit, the power that enables you to let go of substance addictions and get daily exercise.

Ask yourself now which is more important to you - avoiding pain or creating excellent health? If you find yourself continuing your food addiction, then you might want to explore why avoiding pain is more important than health and wellbeing.