

# Emotional eating...



**Deborah Marshall-Warren** invites you to consider your wardrobe and the emotions that can have been hanging there for years, and so gain access to a deeper understanding, a sense of reconciliation and a more perfect fit.

**D**o you have a sense of out-sized anger, or sadness? Do you sometimes feel an inner pain that expands in your stomach area? Do you hold within yourself a raft of unhappy memories that stop you fitting into your lovely clothes? Do you eat to be emotionally fulfilled? If so, then join the club! Get the suitcase down from on top of your wardrobe. Dust off the cobwebs. Pack your 'emotional' weight into the suitcase and blow it up! Feeling better?

In my work I am counsel to so many comments such as these...

- 'I pick constantly during the day. I would rather eat a bar of chocolate and a packet of crisps.'
- 'I cannot eat things in moderation.'
- 'For no reason, I'm just drawn to it. Picking all through the day. It can get really bad. I feel guilty after I've done it.'
- 'I have so much anger and sadness inside me. I'm sick and tired of feeling desperate. I've put on so much weight.'
- 'Food is comfort after a stressful day. I associate it with relaxation – it is something to do to help me relax. Hunger makes me feel stressed. The feeling of a full stomach is relaxing.'

The truth is that the men and women who make comments like these so often do know everything there is to know about nutrition and diet, and yet still have difficulty shifting excess weight.

When diets do not work it is often because you have been programmed to eat for another reason and it may

have nothing to do with normal eating satisfaction. Sometimes you may be carrying emotional weight that is blocking the release of the physical weight.

Romina had broken up with her boyfriend and couldn't stop eating, she said. 'It is beyond me. If I diet I am constantly thinking about food. I'm hungry for something more. It's true, I eat a big meal and still feel hungry.'

'I'm hungry for something more...', an interesting phrase wouldn't you agree? So often what we say, holds portent to a deeper level of meaning and heartfelt desire, and reveals in a heartbeat the roots of our eating.

Two emotions that love to eat are *Anger* and *Guilt*. *Guilt* can spend its day 'picking' away at you. A feeling of *Boredom* is another excessive eater. A person eating with these emotions literally 'on their mind' never feels fulfilled. They can eat to make themselves unattractive as a form of self-punishment and self-sabotage, day after day for their entire lives. We become literally our own worst enemy, rather than our own best friend.

Do you wonder why you eat so much, and like Romina, why you hunger for more?

You may not be eating the bad stuff at all. You may be eating too much of the nutritional good stuff. The problem is simply that you just cannot stop eating.



Your inner 'Critic' can engage you in dialogue at any time of day or night, making its judgments and bringing forward inner voices that express worry, fear anxiety, nervousness, or regret. Those voices can lead to insomnia, as they do not need sleep. They are players who play on your mind, and can imprison you with their chains of words – life sentences. Consider in truth how we imprison ourselves.

Nature is very simple, and very economical. A gap in your life symbolically matches an empty feeling in your stomach. Your unconscious mind latches onto an empty feeling in your stomach as the perfect metaphorical expression of the emotional emptiness and discomfort. So you stuff yourself with food to end the endless craving. But the craving does not go away because it fails to address what the feeling was really all about in the first place.

Often the root cause lies in an event that happened in the past, be it childhood or adolescence, or more recently, an event like the death of a parent or another loved one. You may have a hunch what is causing you unease, but, what you may not know about is the specific event, as you may not have thought about it consciously for years.

• **You may have overheard a respected adult comparing you with a sibling**

A parent, or other respected grown-up, may have compared you adversely to a brother or sister. "Mary isn't as pretty as Miriam." Or "Mary got the brains and Miriam certainly gained more in the looks department..." Conversations of this nature spoken in front of you – as though you were not there – potentially are absorbed by the 'sponge-like' child ... and accepted ... until such time a person chooses to find a way to overwrite the 'negative programming' embedded from the past. Words spoken – often off the cuff and thoughtlessly – go directly to the subconscious mind.

• **You may have been affected by remarks made by your father**

Your father may have made remarks about "losing some weight." Often times as a young woman you may have been a healthy size and shape – but the hurt of receiving body-criticism from such a pivotal male in your life is wounding. As a woman you may have eaten to feed the wound.

• **You may have felt the pressure of a slim Mother**

If you had a Mother who figured as a slim and elegant role model she may have wanted you, her daughter to be as 'attractively' slender as herself. Hence she may have been regularly after you to be slim. Some years ago I met a young woman whose (adoptive) mother (a Parisian) had taken her to a child psychiatrist aged twelve with regard to excessive eating. The child psychiatrist, incredibly and amazingly had said to the young girl, 'You are like a whale.' This sentence, said by an authority figure in the medical realm, had gone directly to the young and sensitive child's subconscious mind. She continued to act upon that command. As an adolescent, and as a young woman she had continued to eat more and more. She became that 'life sentence'. She became a whale. This particular client also became bulimic. In relaxation, Chantal literally and

metaphorically 'released' the whale. Chantal set the whale free and watched her swim away. This was a first giant step to freeing herself from the habit of bulimia. Much more followed. Her mother's entrenched and perfectionist views on beauty and style had affected her in many other ways.

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**R**elaxation therapy engages and supports you in gaining access to a deeper wisdom – to often immediate, effect. You are potentially offered access to a storehouse of memorabilia. With relaxation therapy you can go to the key years and discover the influencing figures and events. In relaxation you can then reconcile and heal them. Safely, and empowered, with your present, older self there, together with a helper, an assistant by your side, you can feel fully supported to speak to the Father, the Mother, the Teacher or whoever it was, and hear them speak to you. Oftentimes you will hear the people who influenced the pattern(s) in your present life apologise. They may well say that they are so sorry, not fully realising how what they said affected you so very much. They may tell you they love you exactly as you are. And so on.

Imagine this scenario embedded from the past. Marisa in deep relaxation spoke softly of her memory.

'My sister is with me, and she is giving me and my other sister biscuits. We're only allowed two biscuits and she has more. We are only supposed to have two. When I am older I am going to buy loads and loads of biscuits and no one will be able to stop me eating them.' And on reflection...' I thought she

[the sister] was being mean. When I was older I decided that I would eat anything I liked.'

You can go directly to the eleven-year-old longing for food the whole time. You can gain clarity and understanding of why, as an adult, you always go to the fridge when you come home from a stressful day at work. Joe connected in this way. He recalled that, 'My mother has a big cake tin. I always go to the cake tin when I come home from school. It is comforting to have the sweet cake in my mouth.' In his adult life, the fridge had transplanted the cake tin.

You can re-visit the associated link that food equals comfort. You can make yourself feel good and comforted in other ways.

You can go directly to your forty-fifth year when you discovered your husband was having an affair, and realise how then you made a pact to eat yourself big to punish him.

Of course you may say, on reflection, you knew about each and every one of the events you connected with. Yes, you did. What relaxation therapy can give you is a fresh insight and understanding as to what really happened. Constructively and positively you discover new perspectives, and greater truths.

'I don't really know how, or why ... but yes, I felt it straight away. I felt like I wanted to put on different clothes – more confident clothes – to show people I'm more confident. It was like – I'm fine. I don't have to hide behind excess weight.'

Are you ready to pack that suitcase with all of your emotionally dead weight and dump it for good right now? 📦

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