



PYT Weekly Training & Support

Lesson #7

An End to Emotional Eating

by Jim Katsoulis

Welcome to this week's lesson, and this may be one of the most important lessons in areas that there is when it comes to permanently changing your body. And it's mastering emotional eating.

So, before we go to the specifics of it, I want to share a term with you that I think is very, very important; and I call it "emotional malnourishment." We all know what physical malnourishment is. It's when you're not getting the nutrients that your body needs or your body becomes malnourished.

But I believe what's happened because in this day and age, we've been so conditioned to associate food with emotional gratification that we have become emotionally malnourished where we've begun to depend on food to feel excitement, to distract us from feeling lonely or bored, that we've begun to accept those levels of emotions as normal; and when in reality, we're really doing ourselves a disservice.

So, what I want to talk about today is not about stopping emotional eating. What I'm going to do is share with you a method that automatically begins to eliminate emotional eating. There's a big difference. Let's go into it a little deeper.

The first thing to understand with emotional eating is why it's happening, and a lot of people get frustrated because it doesn't make logical sense. Why would you eat when you were bored? Why would you eat when you felt lonely?

Because it takes your mind off of something, because the eating and looking forward to it creates emotions in your body.

Now, it's important to understand that the unconscious mind operates through associations, not through logic.

So, the classic example of this is the birthday cake. If you were lucky enough to grow up in a household where every year when it's your birthday, there's a party, and you got gifts, and there's a cake specifically for you, your mind starts to link up the cake with having all this fun, this companionship, being the center of attention, and all of these wonderful things.

And what ends up happening is it links it to a very unconscious level. So, you fast forward 30 years and you're alone on a Friday night, and you're looking for something to change your state, to change how you feel, and your mind says, "Oh, let's get a cake."

It didn't say, "Hey, let's go for a walk," "Let's an apple," or "Let's drink some water." It thinks about the cake because that was one time when you had an instant shift and change on how you felt.

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So, that's an example of how we link up emotions with food. And if you look at every single commercial you see, they're doing the exact same thing.

I think a classic one [inaudible] **02:36** commercials. It's not about the food as much as it is about the sense of belonging, this feeling of companionship. You walk in there and it's like you're family; and they are going after the emotions because that is how we make decisions.

Emotions are very, very quick, much quicker than logic. And this is what's deciding a lot of the behaviors that we're doing.

So, we want to learn how to influence this, how to manipulate it so that we do begin to eat when we genuinely need nourishment, when we're genuinely hungry. That's when we want to be eating.

So, to understand this, I'm going to give you a specific plan on how to analyze this and how to begin to shift it over time.

The first thing you want to do is notice the areas in your life when you are emotionally eating. So, what are the typical ones? The typical ones I see are evening ... evening becomes "I'm bored," or "I'm so tired I deserve to recharge myself by eating," or "I'm so stressed; I need to relax," and evening becomes this eating time. And it's not because someone's hungry; it's because of all these emotional reasons.

Weekends ... weekends become "I work so hard all week I deserve (so it becomes this reward thing) whatever I want." "I deserve to treat myself; I earned it."

So, these are some common ones. But you can notice in your life ... the times when you feel lonely, times when you're bored, times when you're looking to celebrate.

So, you want to begin to recognize areas in your life, and this isn't about the Christmas party or the birthday party. Those times of eating emotionally are fine, and random times of eating emotionally are fine.

What you want to notice is the habitual patterns you have, the multiple times a day, the multiple times a week, the multiple times a month when you're eating out of emotional habit.

So, identify the times. And then you ask yourself, "What emotions am I looking to feel?" or "What emotions am I looking to not feel?"

So, if it's the weekend, and it's time to party, it's time to reward yourself, and celebrate yourself, and treat yourself, then you're moving towards an emotion. You want to feel something.

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Or you might be looking to avoid something. You're stressed, you're tired, you're depressed, you're lonely; and you're looking to avoid that feeling. Then, it's the same thing. It's emotionally based.

So, what you want to do is you want to identify those times; and then, you want to identify the emotions you're either moving towards or moving away from because now, you can begin to describe the situation in a more logical fashion. That's what we're looking to do here.

So, if you are looking to treat yourself or reward yourself (if you look back at what I've said), the idea of just eating, it may be enjoyable in a short term, but very often, what happens is that it creates a lack of long-term emotion that you want.

So, if you're going out to reward yourself, and you're doing it every weekend, and that's responsible for an extra 10 or 15 pounds on your body or 20 or 30 pounds on your body, it's creating a long-term depression or frustration or anger at yourself.

So, we want to begin to recognize that and we want to begin asking the question, "What is another way that I can celebrate or I could treat myself that's in line with what I want to accomplish physically?"

Does that make sense? We want to keep the emotion but we want to get rid of the behavior. This is a big, big thing to understand because very often, what happens is people have used the eating and the food for the emotions they want to feel, and they become one and the same.

They go on a diet and they get rid of it; and what happens is they, simultaneously, get rid of the emotion. So, "I always used to treat myself on the weekend by eating this food. Now, I'm not doing that, so now I'm not treating myself. I'm just constantly working. This is no fun. I don't want to do this. It's not worth it."

So, we want to keep the fun. We want to keep treating yourself. We just want to do it in a way that is congruent with what you want to accomplish. And it's not that hard to do when you use this model, when you use this system here.

So, you identify when you're eating emotionally, you identify the emotions you're moving away or moving towards, and then you can ask yourself, "What is a better way that I could feel that emotion?"

Now, when you do this, one of the tricks you can do is to get a measurement stick; and you do that by asking yourself the question, "When have I felt that emotion genuinely in an intense way?"

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So, for example, a celebration or you're using it for entertainment; let's say, you're using it for fun; you look forward to it and it's fun to think about. I want you to think about a time in your life when you've had a real genuine level of fun, something you're having fun with that when you finish, you still felt good.

Sometimes, when you eat a big sundae or something, you finish it, and then you start going into feeling really guilty and beating yourself up about it. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about a time of fun when you did something, you look forward to it. You did it; it was enjoyable. You finished doing it and you felt good because it was good for you as well. So, I want you to think about something like that, something that was genuinely fun.

Maybe you're spending time with someone you really enjoy being with. Maybe it was reading a great book, watching a wonderful movie, or going for a walk in a beautiful place. It could be anything but you want it to be a genuine level of fun.

And as you do this, you're redefining your mind. You're sending your body and your mind new signals of what is actually fun, what is actually a reward because if you always just rely upon the food, you become emotionally malnourished. And that's the only level of fun ... you get used to that. That becomes your definition.

So, this process of, "When was a time when I felt real genuine fun in my life, what was going on, what was happening there?" It re-orient's your brain to a new level, a higher level; and this is how you become emotionally nourished again.

And so then, you begin to ask the question ... if you look at it, "I'm looking for fun. What are some other ways that I can have fun on the weekend? What are some other ways I can reward myself?"

Now, if you're moving away, you say, "Well, I eat when my bored." It becomes, "Hey, what do you want to feel when you're bored?" Some excitement, some interest, some curiosity, something to look forward to.

And then you ask the question, "How can I feel more excitement, more curiosity, more genuine interest in my life? What are some things I could do?"

You can take a class, you can study something, or you can go sign up at the gym or take a yoga class or a dance class or whatever it is. And all of a sudden, notice that quality, that level of interest, of excitement, of stimulation as opposed to the food.

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I'm not saying the food isn't enjoyable and exciting; but what you want to do is you want to increase that. You want to intentionally and regularly work on increasing that level of excitement and interest.

And as you do that and you continually do that, the emotional eating begins to fade away. And that's the point of this. It's not about "I got to stop doing that."

This is a different process, and the more you do it and the more often you do it, the better, you get at it and the more powerful it becomes.

So, play around with that and I'll talk to you all next week.

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