

Extracts from:

**WHY DO YOU OVEREAT?
WHEN ALL YOU WANT IS TO BE SLIM**

**For Diet & Health Today,
Issue 5. 11 July 2010**

www.theharcombedietclub.com

Zoë Harcombe has asserted her moral right to be identified
as the author of this work in accordance with the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any
form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or
otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

Paperback ISBN 0954489993

The advice offered in this book, although based on the author's
experience and over twenty years of research, is not intended to
be a substitute for the advice of your personal physician. Always
consult a medical practitioner before embarking on any diet.
Neither the author nor the publisher can be held responsible for
any loss or claim arising from the use or misuse of this book.

EAT TO LIVE OR LIVE TO EAT

Why do we eat and why do we overeat?

Emotional reasons for eating and overeating

Having explored the physical reasons for overeating, let us now turn to the emotional reasons. I work as a Human Resources professional and one of the best training courses I have ever attended was with the Australian founders of the Restorative Justice process. Restorative Justice is also known as 'conflict resolution conferencing' and the idea is that people in conflict are brought together to resolve their differences by talking. It works for two reasons:

- 1) The average human being would rather be in harmony with others than in conflict.
- 2) The power of the group (mob mentality) will work to help individuals in conflict tend towards harmony.

I mention this because one of the most fascinating parts of the course was about our six basic emotions. We learned on the course how to recognise these emotions, through words and body language, so that we could harness them to achieve group harmony.

We have six basic emotions that we express as human beings. The words in the English language that best describe them are:

Interest

Fear

Surprise

Distress

Anger

Enjoyment

We eat for many reasons and many of these reasons are related to our emotions. The key reason for eating should be to feed our body, to nourish it by giving it the vitamins and minerals that it needs. Our ancestors did tend to eat for this reason and for them food was about survival. They needed enough food to keep warm and to keep starvation and illness away. We seem to eat now for almost any reason other than

that we are hungry or require vitamins or minerals. We tend to eat for emotional reasons so let us look at these six basic emotions...

Interest – We do eat out of curiosity. We eat because we want to know what something tastes like. If we have eaten chocolate cake before we want to see what that particular chocolate cake tastes like. Even if we can pretty much guarantee what something will taste like, we still seem to want to eat that substance to see what it will taste like right now in this moment.

Fear – On the course, real fear was one of the most important emotions that could be observed on people's faces, as conflict resolution conferencing could be highly emotional. Human beings tend not to eat when facing genuine fear. The last thing on a hijack victim's mind is food. When experiencing a nasty road rage attack, people are not thinking about food. We do tend to eat, however, when faced with mild and perhaps inappropriate fear. Have you ever been to a supermarket the day before a public holiday? Do we stockpile or do we stockpile?! It is as if we fear running out of food. I have never known anyone die of starvation in the western world over Thanksgiving, Yom Kippur, Christmas or any other celebratory festival. Yet we shop and eat as if this is bound to happen.

This 'fear' of going without food is by no means limited to the handful of days each year that the shops are closed. We fear going without food for even a few hours. How many people eat in the airport terminal because they don't know when their next meal is due? How many people eat the aeroplane food for exactly the same reason – we don't know when we will land, when we will get to our destination, when the next meal will be. Only diabetics need food with this kind of certainly and regularity. The rest of us are eating it a) because it is there and b) because of the bizarre sense of fear of when we will next see food. (My suggestion for the not knowing when the next meal is due is to carry a whole-meal energy bar with you when travelling and then you will always know that you can stave off genuine hunger if you need to).

Surprise – In conflict conferencing, surprise is a fascinating emotion as this is how the real breakthroughs are made. When dawning realisations occur to all parties as to why other people did what they did, the most difficult relationships can turn full circle. In our generally less serious day to day world, surprise is a rare emotion. Think about the last time something really

surprised you. When did you last have that wonderful expression on your face that surprise elicits?

With eating it is almost certainly the **lack** of surprise in our daily lives that makes us eat, rather than surprise itself. Lack of surprise is of course boredom. How often do you eat because you are bored? You're in a dull meeting and the lunch sandwiches arrive and you see it as the answer to your prayers. At least now you have something fun to do. You are waiting in a queue, in traffic, to collect the children, for someone to arrive and I bet you think of food way more than even you normally would. You are bored. You are lacking surprise in your life. Take a really honest look at your life at the moment. Is it too mundane? Can you predict how the next week, fortnight, month is going to pan out? Do you have little to look forward to? Do you have nothing that will really surprise or excite you? If this is the case, you will inevitably be driven towards 'comfort eating' as your life lacks the surprise and excitement that we need as human beings and you are using food as a way to fill this void.

Distress – Now we get into a really interesting emotion when it comes to food. Extreme distress is likely to stop people eating. When people suffer bereavement, or the end of a special relationship, they suffer extreme distress and often eat considerably less than they would normally. People have been known to lose pounds after the loss of a family member or divorce. Genuine and extreme distress, like genuine and extreme fear, generally takes away our emotional need for food. Again, as with fear, it is the milder and more regular distress that we suffer day to day that drives us to eat for emotional reasons. Another word for distress is sadness. When we are generally sad, as opposed to the huge trauma of loss, we tend to eat for emotional reasons. We eat to cheer ourselves up. We didn't get the job we wanted, the person we fancy doesn't fancy us, we are feeling low because the dark nights are drawing in, we are just having one of those blue periods in life – this is when we reach for food as a comfort. We literally look to food to cheer us up. The real sadness is that it doesn't work. If food did cheer us up, the world would be a much happier place than it is now.

When we eat, we don't just deal with sadness. A lot of other emotions come into play. We feel the initial high of the food getting into our bodies (or literally the blood glucose level rising in our bodies, as we now understand) but the more we eat the guiltier we feel. The angrier we feel at ourselves, the more disappointed and so on. We feel all kinds of emotions but

we rarely feel cheered up, which was the reason for eating in the first place.

Anger – is a fascinating emotion. Entire books have been written about anger and food. There is actually a physical reason why we eat when we are angry. Anger triggers the 'fright, flight, fight' mechanism in our bodies. The anger physically causes adrenalin to be released into the blood, because the body is getting ready to deal with the crisis and to help us 'fight' or 'flight' (run away). The problem is, when we are sitting in our cars and we experience road rage (either ourselves or against us), the fright, flight, fight mechanism works beautifully, the body gets itself ready for the fight or for running away, and yet nothing happens. We rarely confront the other driver so all the adrenalin that was there ready for the battle has nowhere to go. It sits within us instead and we just have to live with the rage. Physically and emotionally we are now heading towards a huge urge to eat. Physically our blood glucose level is just about to drop because the adrenalin rushing around has not been dealt with. Emotionally we have all this rage that has not been dealt with and it turns inwards instead. We feel so angry and yet we have not had a chance to get even. We get even with a box of chocolates or a packet of biscuits instead.

Two inspirational trainers, with whom I had the great pleasure of working, gave me an insight into anger that has had a profound effect on my thinking. Kevin Downey and Brad Waldron, founders of "Oxygen Learning", told me that "*Anger is a pill that you swallow hoping to make someone else ill.*" We can lie there at three o'clock in the morning feeling rage towards another person and yet they have absolutely no idea that we are doing this. We are the ones feeling the rage, hoping that they will feel the pain. They don't, we do.

Think about all the times that you eat out of anger or frustration and start getting alert to your emotional reasons for eating. Your partner didn't do what you wanted them to do so you feel angry and turn to food. The children are driving you mad so you eat. Your boss or work colleagues are making you angry so you eat. Your family are making unreasonable demands of you and not considering your needs. Who in fact is suffering for all the anger you are feeling? Not the other people that is for sure. Don't swallow this anger pill, and all the emotional turmoil that goes with it, because it doesn't have the desired effect on the person or situation you are angry with.

Enjoyment – is the final basic emotion that we are exploring in relation to food. This has quite obvious connections with why we eat. We eat when we are sad and we eat when we are happy. Human beings don't seem to need an excuse to eat. Often when we are ecstatically happy we don't eat. When we fall in love, or when our wedding day is approaching, or when we are about to go on a trip of a lifetime, we often feel so happy that we don't eat and people can lose pounds in the early days of a new relationship. However, as we saw with fear and distress, it is only in the extreme of an emotion that we tend not to eat. When we feel moderately happy or content we can turn to food to try to give us even more enjoyment. Once the new relationship has gone past the really exciting first few days or weeks, quite often people put back on the weight that they lost and more. The happy couple have breakfast in bed together, they go out for dinner, they have picnics in the park, they 'spoil' each other with chocolates and other edible gifts and the weight soon goes back on.

We eat when we feel contentment, therefore, and we eat because we think it will give us enjoyment. We eat emotionally for the pleasure we think that food will give us. However, the enjoyment is very short lived. As the saying goes – a minute in the mouth and a lifetime on the hips. We get very brief enjoyment from eating refined carbohydrates in particular as they are so easy to swallow. Nature's own food delights, such as mangos or pineapples, take longer to eat and chew and can, therefore, be even more enjoyable.

We also eat because we think it will make enjoyable experiences even more so. We go to the cinema and we eat ice cream, M&M's and popcorn and wash it down with additive filled fizzy drinks. Does this really make the movie more enjoyable? Does it make us feel good inside? There are so many emotional reasons why we eat that are related to enjoyment. We eat because we are enjoying something or because we think it will make us enjoy that something more.

A final point to make in relation to eating for enjoyment is that, when you are addicted to a particular food, you move quickly from eating that food for enjoyment, to eating it to avoid the opposite of enjoyment, which is what happens when you don't have it. This means that you will no longer feel enjoyment when you eat a food to which you are addicted. However, you will feel bad if you don't eat it because you will have withdrawal symptoms and so you mistakenly think you will feel enjoyment if you do have it. Only when you are no longer addicted to food can you really savour tastes and

genuinely enjoy food. Until then, the food is controlling you, rather than the other way round.

We tend to eat, therefore, when we are not experiencing the real extremes of our basic emotions but when we are in that middle band of 'normal' life. However, this means that for the vast majority of our lives, during this normal range, we have emotional drivers to make us eat. We don't seem to need an excuse to eat and yet there are many – boredom, road rage, travel, public holidays and new relationships – anything and everything that happens to us in life seems to have an emotional connection to food. Why is this?

The Impact of Childhood

There is another saying that goes something like "*Show me the child of seven and I will show you the adult.*" This saying states that the child of seven has experienced the vast majority of the development in life that they will go through and, therefore, their preferences, personality traits and behaviour are all determined at this early age. Some people now suggest seven is late and that the final personality is formed in most people as early as the age of three or four. So for any of you with children over seven the argument says that your work is over – there is not much that you can do now to change how your child is going to be in later life. What a thought!

In relation to food, however, it is fascinating to note the messages that we give children and, therefore, the messages that they carry with them throughout life:

We tell them to eat everything on their plates. This means we are telling them to ignore their own hunger mechanism (which actually works pretty well in children) and to eat whatever **we** have decided to put on their plate.

We rarely ask them what they want to eat – we decide instead what **we** think they should have and then battle with them to get them to eat it.

We try to take away the real enjoyment of meal times for children and insist that they behave and don't play with food. Playing with food can be immense fun!

We tell them not to talk with their mouths full and yet they want to both talk and eat so this causes a conflict.

We set meal times to suit our busy lives rather than asking them when they are hungry and when they want to eat.

We tell them off for spilling things and yet they don't do this deliberately and they wish, as much as we do, that it hadn't happened.

We give food constantly as a reward or to cheer children up (they fall over and we give them sweets, they cry and we give them a cookie). This builds up a life-long connection between eating and feeling better.

We give children all sorts of messages about food that stay with them for life. Look at your own childhood and see how many daft messages you are hanging onto that you should now choose to get rid of as a grown-up.

My personal experience was very profound and I have had to work hard to get rid of my early conditioning. My parents were brought up in war time with food rationing and, therefore, had strong ideas about eating everything on a plate and eating whatever was put in front of you whether you liked it or not. My most vivid childhood memories are not of fun playmates or great things that I did but of constant battles with food and grown-ups. I would spend many afternoons at home in the dining room or kitchen not allowed to leave the table until I had eaten what was in front of me – hungry or not and whether I liked it or not. When I didn't eat it (when, not if) it would come out at the next meal and the next meal until it eventually went bad. I never ate anything that I didn't want to (you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink) but I certainly went through enough battles making sure that I didn't eat.

The same happened at school. I would spend many an afternoon sat in the dining hall with my uneaten food in front of me watching the clock until 3.35pm when school finished and they couldn't keep me any longer. How stupid and outrageous was that? My mother was a teacher at the same school so she would also know that I was in the dining hall and would continue to be disappointed with me. How disappointed was I with the grown-ups? I didn't know just how disappointed (or angry) I was until I first sought help for an eating disorder.

I learned all my later anorexic behaviour during this time. I learned how to push food around the plate to make it look like I had eaten more than I had. I learned how to sit next to 'Greedy Graham' at school so that I could give him the things I didn't want to eat when the teachers weren't looking (a great win-win). I even spoiled my favourite dungarees as a child by stuffing white broad beans into the pockets, when my parents weren't looking, rather than eating them. I learned how to do

other 'magic' tricks like slipping food into hankies unnoticed and all the other things that anorexics do like professionals. I learned my eating disorders as a child.

Eating disorders, as we will see in the next chapter, are about control. When I did become anorexic at sixteen, I was taking control of my life away from the control of grown-ups. One of the most fundamental choices we should have as human beings is what should go into our own bodies. As soon as I was 'allowed' to make more choices about what I wanted to eat and when I wanted to eat I took the ultimate control and hardly ate anything. Trying to control our eating is a euphemism for trying to control our lives. The more out of control we feel in our lives, the more out of control our eating gets. To understand and overcome the emotional reasons for eating we need to be well tuned in to the early messages we received, why we eat and what we really are trying to control.

For any adults reading this, who want to do the best for children, the advice I would offer is to let children do what they want as far as is possible. Clearly they need to eat breakfast by a certain time but they can choose whether to eat before or after they get dressed, for example, and they can choose what they want to eat. This doesn't mean giving them a limitless choice, as this is equally stressful for children, but it does mean giving them more than one choice (which is actually no choice). You can ask them if they want cereal, fruit, yoghurt, eggs, brown toast or a combination of any of those. Better still, from about the age of five, you can put options on the table and the children can help themselves. (The best way to get a picky eater to eat more is to put the food in the middle of the table and then they think it is scarce and they need to compete for it. They soon pile their plates up and eat quickly). When there isn't time pressure, ask them when they want to eat (children will generally tell you when they are hungry) and again give them a few options – pasta, chicken & potatoes, sandwiches – what do you fancy? Then make meal times as enjoyable as possible. Eat with them. Make it OK to spill things (they don't do it deliberately). Make it OK to talk. Make it OK to play, within reason. And, whatever else you do, never insist that they eat everything on their plate and never, ever, keep bringing it back again at the following mealtimes until they do eat it. Hopefully this is a pattern of behaviour from a past generation that parents of today are not still following.

I can hear parents now saying 'this is all very well but how do you get children to eat healthy food'? One of the best ways

is to give them only healthy food as the choice and to let them play with it. We have had deli bars at home, since the children have been aged five and seven, where we put all kinds of things on the breakfast bar and they make their own meals. They have whole-wheat bread rolls, oat biscuits, a huge variety of cheese, ham, salami, grapes, tomatoes, fruit and anything else we have in the fridge. They then make their own mustard and salami sandwiches with grapes inside, or cheese, ham and tomato falling out of the roll because there is so much filling. They have a great time and they eat a lot and they enjoy it. It also takes less time in the long run to get all the packets out of the fridge and put them on the table and to get everyone to prepare their own food than it does for you to prepare it and then try to get them to eat what you have prepared.

KEY POINTS FROM CHAPTER 21

- This book is focused on physical reasons for overeating and helping you find a way out of food addiction. However...
- We do eat for emotional reasons and there are six basic emotions which can all 'feed' our eating in a number of ways. These basic emotions are interest, fear, surprise, distress, anger and enjoyment.
- Our emotional reasons for eating and overeating are ingrained in our childhood experiences. You may need to seek help from a good friend or a trained counsellor to try to understand your own 'baggage' that you are carrying round emotionally.
- If you have children of your own, or are a child carer in any way, please do whatever you can to give them a healthy attitude towards food and don't give them some of the destructive messages that you may have been given as a child.

IT'S UP TO YOU!**The most important chapter in this book
(once you are free from addiction)**

This is the most important chapter in this book. There is only one person in the world that can make sure you control your eating and that is you. I sincerely hope that this book helps to show you how but, at the end of the day, it is up to you whether or not you choose to do anything about your eating and your weight.

Food Addiction

For as long as you are addicted to food, I firmly believe that you do not have a free choice about when and what you eat. For you to overeat, when all you want is to be slim, there must be something more powerful than your determination working against you. That powerful thing, which you have to overcome to regain your freedom to choose, is addiction. The smoker is a slave to cigarettes – they feel they have to smoke, rather than that they are choosing to smoke. The alcoholic feels powerless in the face of alcohol – they feel that they have to drink rather than that they are choosing to drink. At the moment you give into that food craving you are in the same boat. You are having to eat that particular substance rather than making a free choice. If you were making a free choice you would not eat it because you want so badly to be slim. The fact that at the particular moment that you eat the substance you do want it more than you want to be slim is a fantastic demonstration of just how powerful food addiction is.

The goal of this book is, therefore, to enable you to be free from food addiction. You now know that calorie counting will make you hungry and liable to crave anything just to get some fuel into your tank. You also know that Candida, Food Intolerance and Hypoglycaemia can all give you incredibly powerful food cravings for specific foods or groups of foods. You also know that the good news is that you can free yourself from these intense food cravings in as little as five days. If Candida is a problem for you then it can take a bit longer for food cravings to disappear but, even with Candida, cravings will subside dramatically during the 5 day kick-start eating plan.

When you follow the advice in this book, you **will** get to the point that you are not craving food in general or specific foods. You **will** be free from food addiction and the overwhelming

cravings for food that have been sabotaging your eating goals will be gone. This is when it really will be **up to you!**

At this time, when the addiction has gone, you **will** have a choice. You will not have compulsive cravings and you will be free to choose what you eat and when. At this time you need to exercise your freedom to choose on a regular basis. When you are not compulsively craving chocolate, for example, you will have an opportunity to consume chocolate (at any one of hundreds of thousands of retail outlets across the world). You will be able to make a balanced, level headed choice that you will not feel able to make right now. You will be able to weigh up how much you want the chocolate (note the word 'want' not 'need') and what it will do to you if you do have it.

It's up to you

One of the best books ever written, in my humble opinion, is the "*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*" by Dr Stephen Covey. It has sold over 10 million copies world-wide so I am probably not alone in this view. Dr Covey analysed self-help books over decades of literature for his PhD and came to the conclusion that there were seven key themes that emerged in different formats throughout all the readings. He translated these themes into seven 'habits' and proposed that people who adopted these habits would be highly effective people. (A habit is something we do without thinking. We can have good habits, like cleaning our teeth, or we can have bad habits like biting our nails – both of them we can do, without thinking, on a regular basis). The first habit in Dr Covey's work is "*Be proactive.*" This doesn't just mean the opposite of 'be reactive' – it means much more than this. It means take control of your own decisions and actions proactively so that you are always the one who decides what you do.

If you remember back in Chapter 21 we looked at our basic emotions and how we eat for emotional reasons. We talked about anger as one of the basic emotions and how often we get angry and then overeat later. The really powerful result, which comes when a person truly takes control of their actions, is that they know that they can also control their emotions to a great extent. Have you ever found yourself saying 'so and so made me angry'? The reality is that so and so did something and you **chose** to be angry as your response. Now I can hear you screaming at this book already but just stick with me for a while as the readers currently screaming at this book are those with the most to gain by mastering this concept...

The idea behind "It's up to you" is that **you cannot control what happens to you in life but you can control how you respond to it**. Viktor Frankl was a Jewish man who survived the Holocaust despite being in four Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz from 1942-1945. He suffered the most appalling conditions imaginable and yet he stayed not just sane but content and at peace with himself throughout. Whilst he realised that his captors had control of his body he refused to let them have control of his mind. He decided that his key freedom was that he could choose how he responded to what was happening around him. He could let it destroy him or he could let it make him a better person. He chose the latter. His book about this experience, "*Man's Search for Meaning*", is just one of thirty-two inspirational literary works he went on to write.

You too cannot control what happens to you in life but you can control how you respond to it. There will be times, hopefully few, when real tragedy touches your life and you will feel unimaginable despair, loss and sadness. You will be a healthier person in the long run if you give in to the natural emotions that you will feel at these dreadful times and cry, scream and do whatever you need to do to let your emotions heal you. Advising you to choose your response to situations is not about turning you into a cold and unfeeling robot. It is, however, about getting you to a level of emotional maturity where you **choose** your responses to situations the vast majority of the time. It is also about understanding the times when you will still get angry or frustrated but knowing why you feel that way and why you have made the **choice** to feel that way.

If you think about that last time when you said 'so and so made me angry' think about what they did and why you chose to be angry. Why did you take that anger pill hoping to make the other person feel ill? What did you feeling angry achieve? Getting in touch with our emotions can tell us so much about our overall well-being at any point in time.

When I see someone getting road rage, carving another car up or edging up to the car in front so that another driver can't get in, I always ask myself what stress is happening in their life, at that moment, to make them that way. Be serious, we do not get angry enough to kill another person (road rage has resulted in many deaths in the UK and US) because they overtook us or because they pulled out in front of us. We may be that angry at our partner, family members, children, boss and so on but we are not that angry at the complete stranger

whose driving has come to our attention. The other car driver **chose** to wait until the very end of the lane merging sign before pulling in front of you; you **chose** to be angry about this. That is inappropriate anger, so you need to understand what is really making you angry in your life and what you can do about it.

Understanding why you are really feeling certain things is key to conquering overeating for ever. I know now when I want chocolate because I really fancy the taste at that moment as compared to when I am using it as a comfort blanket for an emotion that I am feeling. Or, more accurately, an emotion that I am trying **not** to feel. We use food in a similar way to how alcoholics use alcohol – we use it to escape and numb the emotions that we don't want to cope with in the world. We feel lonely so we eat to cheer ourselves up. It doesn't cheer us up – it just makes us fat **and** lonely. We feel sad so we eat to cheer ourselves up – we then feel fat **and** sad. Talk to a great friend, or a qualified counsellor if need be, but get to the point where you understand why you eat for emotional reasons. This book will help you take away the physical addiction that makes you overeat but you have to work on the emotional bit too.

One of the most powerful feelings that leads people to overeat is very metaphorical. Many of my case studies have talked about a feeling of emptiness which they try to fill with food. *"I go to the fridge"* said one of them, *"I don't know what I am looking for but I still end up eating something."* You will get to the point with this eating plan where you don't need or crave that food but, if you are still feeling empty inside, you are missing something in life and you need to find out what it is, **because it is not food.**

Whose life is this?

The most seriously overweight people often look desperately for a magic wand to make them slim. They want a doctor to staple their stomach or give them liposuction or wire their jaw so that they can't eat. What they are really asking for is for someone else to take control of their eating because they can't control it themselves. How tragic is this? If you are one of those people who wants control taken away, please give some thought to the following:

What happened in your childhood with food and control to have given you the messages that you have now?

How is anyone other than you going to be able to do this for you?

Even when some people have their jaws wired, they have been known to liquidise chocolate so that they can still eat it. Who is this cheating? This is like a naughty child stealing cookies from the jar except that it is much more serious. Grown-ups doing similar things are not cheating anyone other than themselves.

The only person who is going to fix your overeating problem is you. This book will show you the physical reasons why you overeat, what is causing your food cravings and it will give you a way out of the addiction that is controlling your life. This book will help you break free from cravings but thereafter it is up to you. You have to choose to do this. You are the one who has to make the difference. You have one life – please don't waste another day of it overeating. Make today the day that you take control and decide – **it really is up to you.**

There are two more things that we are going to look at in this chapter to help you decide it's up to you. The first is something called Neuro Linguistic Programming and the second is the two voices that slimmers have in their heads – the angel telling you to stick to an eating plan and the devil telling you not to...

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP)

NLP is the study of how people think and experience the world. As human beings are so individual and subjective, the outcomes of these studies are models of how people tend to behave. From these models, practitioners of NLP can develop techniques for changing behaviour by changing thoughts and beliefs. Here is why changing thoughts and beliefs can be so key to changing behaviour...

The concept of NLP is that for everything that happens there is a belief that is in your head that determines the outcome. This is easy to remember as **A**ction, **B**elief, **C**onsequence (ABC). Here is an example – if you or I were to come second at the Wimbledon Tennis Championship we would be absolutely over the moon. If Pete Sampras were to come second he would be gutted. What is different? The Action is the same – coming second at Wimbledon – but the Consequence is very different because of the two different Beliefs which come between the Action and the Consequence. Our Belief would be that this would be our life time greatest achievement. Pete Sampras's Belief would be that he had failed to come first.

There are so many examples of where two people experience the same Action only to have a completely different Consequence because of their different Beliefs. Two people

survive the same disaster – one of them has a breakdown and the other lives the most fulfilling life possible. The first had the Belief system “*why me?, how can such a bad thing have happened to me?*” The second may think something like “*I am so lucky to be alive; I will live each day as if it were a gift.*”

This has really important applications for slimmers because it is not so much the **Action** that is ruining our diets it is our **reaction** to that **Action** – and this is determined by our thought process, our Belief in other words...

As we have explained, there are physical reasons why binges happen. Once you start eating refined carbohydrates your insulin production and blood glucose level go into a roller coaster mode and you will continue to crave refined carbohydrates, to try to elevate your blood glucose level, whenever it drops below normal. You are also feeding Candida which leads to cravings and you are getting your Food Intolerance fix so you will need more of this soon to stop the withdrawal symptoms. Hence there are strong physical reasons why you binge once you start. However, there are also psychological things going on that we need to be aware of – you need to be alert to the sabotage going on in your mind at the onset of a binge...

No one ever ruined a day’s eating with that first mouthful. It is what you do after that first mouthful that ruins the day’s eating.

- Let us imagine that you have vowed not to eat breakfast and then hunger takes over and you find yourself having a bowl of sugary cereal or,
- You vowed not to eat chocolate and you find yourself buying a confectionery bar as you get a morning newspaper or,
- You vowed to ‘be good’ all day but then you settle down to watch TV and suddenly those potato chips are calling to you from the kitchen...

Sounds familiar? So you give in to each of the events above but this doesn’t ruin the day’s eating. It is what we **believe** next that leads to a binge day. What do we say to ourselves? I’ve blown it today so I might as well eat what I want and then start afresh tomorrow. We can’t be ‘good’ today so we will be ‘bad’ today and then ‘good’ tomorrow. And can you recall the relief and excitement you feel once you have made that decision? You suddenly ‘allow’ yourself to eat whatever you want. You may even get quite excited at the thought of what you will have. I could salivate at the mere thought of

chocolate, miles away from getting my hands on it! How Pavlovian is that? (From Pavlov's dogs that were trained to salivate at the ringing of a bell after food was given every time the bell was rung).

But all of this is our mind playing games. Who decided the good vs. bad rules in the first place? You did! Who decided not to have breakfast? (crazy decision) You did! And it was you, again, who decided that the 'good' day was over. You have to be alert to the things going on in your head which are leading you to overeat. Remember – no one ever blew a diet with the first mouthful – it was what they decided to do next (yes decided) that blew it. You never blew a diet with the first mouthful – it was what **you** decided to do next that blew it!

Let's find a few ways around this thinking:

First of all you don't have 'good' days and 'bad' days any more – or rather you don't have them like you used to. A good day now is a day when you are nice to yourself and your body. A good day is when you nourish your body and feed it with vitamins and minerals and nutritious food. A bad day is when you are nasty to yourself and your body. This is any day when you binge or starve, or count calories, or try to give your body less food than it really needs.

Another idea is to introduce the concept of a weight maintenance day. In your old life you may only have had 'good' days or 'bad' days. In your old world these were days when you lost weight or days when you gained weight. Now you can have neutral days, when you neither gain nor lose weight, but you continue to nourish your body and eat mostly healthy food but you have the freedom to cheat. This is exactly what Phase 3 is about. Ideally you will only do Phase 3 when you are at your natural weight but you can have a Phase 3 day at any time.

If you do eat something you feel you 'shouldn't' have eaten, don't go back to your old style thinking and eat everything except the kitchen sink. Decide to have a Phase 3 day. You won't register lighter on the scales tomorrow but you won't have another couple of pounds to lose that you have just put on today. If you have something you feel you 'shouldn't' then start a weight maintenance/Phase 3 day – don't cheat too much and don't cheat too often. So finish your cheat and then get back on track for the rest of the day. Don't forget to manage the cravings that may come after eating refined carbohydrates and upsetting your blood glucose level. Eat

some whole foods to help regulate your blood glucose after eating refined carbohydrates.

OK, back to our ABC's. Remember it is the **Belief** that leads to the bad Consequence not the Action itself. So let us look at some examples of Beliefs that will lead to different Consequences following the same Action. Let us imagine that you have just started Phase 1 and you find yourself eating a cream cake. There are negative and positive Beliefs that can follow and these can either lead to either a negative or positive Consequence/outcome...

| NEGATIVE BELIEFS | POSITIVE BELIEFS (Imagine saying these to your best friend) |
|--|--|
| Black & white thinking – I've totally failed. I've got to have no sweet things whatsoever. | Things are never black and white – there is not perfection or failure and nothing in between. Why am I so harsh on myself? Would I treat a friend like this? |
| Mental filter – I never manage to stick to a diet, I'm useless and I'll never lose weight. | I can lose weight. Others have done it and so can I. It is up to me. There is no outside force making me break my diet. I did really well yesterday and I deserve congratulations. |
| Blowing things out of proportion – I've blown it now I may as well eat every cake in the supermarket. I'll never look nice for the wedding/party etc. | One cake doesn't mean I've failed. I've just got to get back on track and not let it lead to more than it has to. I can still look nice for the event – no one notices a couple of pounds anyway. |

The negative beliefs will lead to you eating every cream cake in the supermarket (and more).

The positive beliefs will lead to you choosing not to let one slip spoil the day and to return to sensible eating straight away.

The key message from NLP or Action/Belief/Consequence is that your Belief, your reaction to something, determines the Consequence/outcome. If you have one slip up on this eating plan just get straight back on track. Don't beat yourself up. Don't make it worse and don't do any of the following:

Don't give in to black & white thinking – *'it has to be all or nothing so I've failed.'*

Don't allow your mental filter to dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives. When you are beating yourself up you are ignoring all the positive things you have done and can do and only concentrating on the negatives. You wouldn't be so nasty to your best friend so don't do the same to yourself.

Don't blow things out of proportion – *'I've had one small slip so it is the end of the eating plan.'* This is nonsense and you know it. Don't look for excuses to give up.

The Devil & the Angel – The two voices that slimmers have in their head

You know what this bit is about – you want to eat but you want to be slim. You want that cream cake but you want to get into that outfit for the special occasion. We seem to have two voices going on in our heads all the time – the devil and the angel – and, depending on which one wins, we are 'bad' or 'good'.

This section is about how you silence the devil in your head and let the angel win through every time. When you start Phase 1 the devil is going to go wild. It is going to do whatever it can to get you to feed your food addiction. The Candida will physically be crying out to be fed, your Food Intolerance withdrawal symptoms will be begging you to eat your favourite substance and your Hypoglycaemia will be craving refined carbohydrates. As if these physical things are not bad enough, psychologically, you will be telling yourself the following:

- 1) Start tomorrow – just enjoy that pizza, chocolate, sandwich today – I can be good tomorrow.
- 2) A slice of pizza, one chocolate bar, one biscuit can't hurt.
- 3) I deserve it.
- 4) I feel fine – maybe I don't have all these Candida things after all.
- 5) Everyone else is eating chocolate, crisps, cakes around me – it's not fair that I can't so I will.
- 6) I really want that chocolate bar, muffin, tub of ice cream.
- 7) I'm going to a dinner party tonight – it would be rude not to eat whatever is put in front of me.
- 8) It shouldn't go to waste (food in the house, children's leftovers etc.).
- 9) I'm on holiday or I'm in a restaurant – I won't get the chance to eat all of this lovely stuff tomorrow.

10) Why not?!

These and more are definitely going to be in your mind when you start the eating plan so you need to be armed with strategies to overcome them. Here are some suggestions:

– *Start tomorrow – just enjoy that pizza, chocolate, sandwich today – I can be good tomorrow.*

Every diet starts tomorrow. It's a cliché that tomorrow never comes but clichés are generally true. Every time you say you will start tomorrow you are doing two things:

- You are putting off the day you take control of your eating and, therefore, your life. You are putting off living rather than existing. You are letting your addiction rule you, rather than ruling your addiction.
- More seriously you are making it even harder to take control with every day that you continue to be ruled by food. Food addiction does not reach a certain level and then plateau. It gets worse and worse the more you feed your addiction. Remember the characteristics of addiction – you need to consume more and more to have the same high and before long you need to consume more and more just to avoid the low – the highs are no longer there. With every day that you delay tackling food addiction it just gets worse. Yes you can start tomorrow – but it will be even tougher to crack tomorrow. **You have to do this sometime so do it now.**
- *A slice of pizza, one chocolate bar, one biscuit can't do any harm.*

In Phase 1, any and all of the above will do harm. They are all refined carbohydrates and they will all feed your addiction. If you give in on day one you are back to square one. If you give in on day two you have wasted nearly two days – why do it? If you give in on day three you have wasted nearly three days – that's daft. Giving in on day four or five is even worse. Don't give in to these cravings. The whole purpose of this eating plan is to stop cravings because cravings make you overeat and overeating makes you fat. If you give into the cravings you will never get in the position that they can be controlled. All it takes is five days – stick with it, one day at a time and see for yourself.

Eat more of any food that is allowed if necessary to make you so full that you can't give into the cravings. Drink a glass

of water every time you feel tempted to eat your favourite foods. **You have to do this sometime so do it now.**

3) *I deserve it.*

No matter how productive or tough a day you have had at work or at leisure you do deserve to be nice to yourself. Eating refined carbohydrates is not being nice to yourself. Giving in to yeast parasites growing inside you is not nice. Eating foods that your body cannot tolerate is not nice and throwing a brick on your pancreas/insulin mechanism is not nice. You deserve so much more than this. You deserve to live not to exist. You deserve to be free from food cravings. You deserve to be nourished and full of nutrients, not stuffed and full of empty calories. You deserve to be in control of your life not controlled by food. You deserve so many things but refined carbohydrates are at the bottom of the list.

4) *I feel fine – maybe I don't have all these Candida things after all.*

Now you are really scraping the barrel. The devil will tell you anything to try to get you to feed the Candida or to eat the foods to which you are addicted. The very fact that you want these foods so badly says that you are addicted to them. If you really can take them or leave them, then leave them.

If you are overweight, then you are overeating. If you are overeating despite desperately wanting to be slim, you are doing this because you are addicted to food. This is what cravings and food addiction are all about.

Be really honest with yourself – you are a food addict and you have to go cold turkey on your problem foods for at least five days before you can start to break free from your addiction.

5) *Everyone else is eating chocolate, crisps, cakes around me – it's not fair that I can't, so I will.*

Stop being a spoilt child. Life isn't fair – if you haven't learned that by now then you need to watch some videos on famine in Africa or war in Asia. Those people eating what you want to eat are probably food addicts too, chances are that they are overweight; chances are that they don't know why and would give anything not to be. You have the knowledge and tool kit to be slim – to free yourself from food cravings, but you literally want to have your cake and eat it. In Phase 1 and 2 you cannot have your cake and eat it. You need to stop eating cake (and other refined carbohydrates) to get your

eating back in control and to get to your natural weight. When you are there you can have the things that people around you are eating. You will be able to stay slim and cheat, not too much and not too often, provided you stay alert and in control.

Just stick with it for now, free yourself from cravings and then you may find you don't want the junk others are eating around you. You may find a fresh nut roast with a tomato coulis is just about the best tasting thing imaginable. (This is not as far fetched as it sounds – your taste buds are currently over tuned to sweets and refined carbohydrates. You cannot imagine the sweetness of butternut squash or melon until you have freed yourself from your current habits).

6) *I really want that chocolate bar, muffin, tub of ice cream.*

Of course you do. You are physically craving it. You are addicted to it so you want it as badly as a smoker wants a cigarette or an alcoholic wants a drink. You would do anything to get it, which is precisely why you must not have it. You must not give in. You need to break the addiction, otherwise you will continue to have your life ruled by food and will continue to overeat and be overweight for life. You will also continue to be dopey, bloated, exhausted and everything else that goes with food addiction. All your energy needs to be focused on not giving in to the cravings and ending the addiction.

7) *I'm going to a dinner party tonight – it would be rude not to eat whatever is put in front of me.*

If you are in Phase 1 – what are you doing going to a dinner party? You need to make these five days as easy as possible, not set yourself up to fail.

If you are in Phase 2 you should be fine going for a fat meal option. Just skip the bread and potatoes and fill up on prawn cocktail, casserole, meat, fish, vegetables and any fat/protein that is offered. Hopefully you know your hosts well enough to let them know that you are doing something positive for your weight and your health. If they are good hosts and care about you then they will be understanding and accommodating. A good host does not push dessert on someone trying to lose weight. They do everything that they can to make their guests feel comfortable and relaxed. Hosts are used to coping with vegetarians, genuine food allergies and wheat free diets. If you let your hosts know that you are there to see them, and any carbohydrate free food that they can offer will be a bonus, you will be fine.

In Phase 3 you have a choice – you can still decline the refined carbohydrates, if you choose, but you may choose to accept any whole-meal carbohydrates that are on offer. Or, you could decide to eat what you want, enjoy the freedom for the evening and then get back on track the next day. You are likely to get to a point when eating refined carbohydrates makes you feel so sluggish that you just don't want to do it anymore.

8) *It shouldn't go to waste*

If you are worried about food at home going to waste – why is stuff you might crave there? Stop buying refined carbohydrates. Get rid of all refined carbohydrates at home before you start Phase 1. Your family need to support you – they can benefit from healthier eating too. No one in your family, or any other family for that matter, needs refined carbohydrates so have the **unrefined** versions to hand instead.

If you are worried about the children's leftovers try to understand why. Does this come from your own childhood? Are you carrying a subconscious 'rule' that plates must be licked clean? Children, unlike adults, tend to have a natural appetite and they will stop eating as soon as they feel full. If you often get leftovers then reduce the portion sizes served. If it happens just with certain foods then let them decide how much they want of that food (if any). If it happens every now and again just throw the food away or save it for later if it will keep. The food was supposed to be in your child's tummy by now so why should it matter throwing it away? Don't let any daft views on waste ruin your health.

9) *I'm on holiday or I'm in a restaurant – I won't get the chance to eat all of this lovely stuff tomorrow.*

You also won't have a chance to be slim tomorrow unless you start taking control of your eating today. Also – you will actually have a chance to eat all this 'lovely stuff' again. You can come back to the restaurant, or return to the same holiday resort, in the future. Food doesn't ever go away. How often have you eaten something because it was there not because you needed or even wanted it? If there is a box of chocolates, or a celebration cake, being shared out at work don't give in. You can buy and eat an entire box of chocolates or cake on your own tomorrow if you want – I bet you won't want to once the moment has passed. Remember, in Phase 1 and 2, you are trying to get your cravings under control so that you can get back in control of your eating and reach your natural weight. You will be able to eat what you want **almost** when you want

in Phase 3. You will be able to sample new foods on holiday. You will be able to indulge in a restaurant. You will be able to have cake and chocolates for celebrations, if this is what you want to do. You will be at your natural weight, your eating will be under control and you will enjoy these indulgences so much more because you will not feel guilty or loathe yourself for having them.

10) *Why not?*

Why not indeed? This is your life. The choice is yours. So often we look for a magic wand or for someone else to make the decisions for us in life. The decision to overeat or to get your eating in control is entirely within your hands. It is up to you. If you really want that chocolate brownie more than you want to be slim then eat it. It really is up to you. However, just stop for one moment before you do eat it and ask yourself why you want it so badly. You are an addict remember. You are not just choosing that chocolate brownie, therefore, you are choosing a way of life. You are choosing to continue to be a food addict, to continue your cravings and to continue to overeat. If you really do want to get to the point where food doesn't rule your life then you have to start by saying no to it now. The longer you say yes, the longer you will be addicted and the harder this will be to overcome when you eventually do tackle it (and you will have to for the sake of your health sooner or later). Why prolong the inevitable any longer? Say no to the craving now and say yes to a craving free future.

KEY POINTS FROM CHAPTER 23

3) It's up to you!

4) No one else is going to make you stop overeating. You have to do it. This book will help you understand the physical reasons for food addiction and cravings. This section, on the psychological aspects of overeating, can help you understand your emotional reasons for eating. But, at the end of the day, you are the one who has to use all of this and make it happen.

5) You must believe that you can do this because you absolutely can.

6) Finally, you must do it now. Candida, Food Intolerance and Hypoglycaemia do not get better. They do not stay at a steady state. Unless treated they get worse. You have to deal with this some time and the longer you leave it the worse it will be, so sort it now!