

# Another Beautiful Life

## COACHING

### **Weight Loss Protocol: What is the Problem and How to solve it**

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#### NEUROBIOLOGY

Our brains are designed to be rewarded for life-preserving activities. Food provides that reward in the form of serotonin, dopamine, and/or desire. All the cues around food create neural pathways that remind us how important it is to seek it again...and again. When you concentrate and refine food, you concentrate that response in the brain.

This leads your brain to believe that concentrated foods are much more important to eat than they really are. Dopamine creates more desire for the food. As we eat it, the flood of dopamine down-regulates the receptors, perpetuating the desire.

The more you do something and the more you practice something, the stronger the corresponding neural pathways become. Eventually, we get so good at it that it becomes an unconscious habit. This is why we often feel out of control and as if we're eating against our will. (This is never true—it just feels that way sometimes!) Our brains are “plastic.” We can change these ingrained pathways by replacing them with new ones and interrupting the old ones by changing our actions and denying the unhealthy rewards.

#### HORMONES

There are three main hormones to consider when it comes to weight gain and weight loss.

The most important hormone is insulin. The obesity epidemic is caused by too much insulin in the blood. Insulin is a storage hormone, so whenever it is elevated in the blood, the body cannot use fat as fuel. Insulin, insulin resistance, and diabetes have skyrocketed with the increase in consumption of high sugar and high starch foods. Insulin also affects the presence and effectiveness of leptin and ghrelin.

Leptin is the hormone that lets us know we're full. It also lets us know it's time to move. It's blocked by an excess of insulin.

Ghrelin lets us know when we're hungry and no longer hungry. It's negatively affected by concentrated food because it doesn't recognize caloric intake.

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#### CRAVINGS VS. EMOTIONS

Physical hunger is a sensation you feel in gradual waves. Cravings are a desire for a specific food or type of food. Withdrawal is the sensation experienced mentally and physically from a lack of sugar. Emotions are vibrations caused by thoughts.

When you get hungry, it will normally come on as a wave and then retreat. If you don't eat right away, your body will access fat storage for fuel. If you have too much insulin in your blood, your body will be unable to access your fat stores, and you will get hungrier. When you have too much insulin in your blood, it blocks the leptin. Leptin is what lets your brain know you're full. It tells your brain you have plenty of fat storage and don't need to keep eating.

Ghrelin lets you know when you're hungry and when to stop being hungry. Eating a lot of refined food keeps ghrelin from working properly.

The goal is to keep your insulin as low as possible. Insulin rises every time we eat.

Insulin drops when we aren't eating. Insulin is artificially raised when we eat sugar and flour. Insulin is released in response to any large amount of glucose in the blood. Liquid sugar in soda is one of the main culprits of insulin excess. By eating little to no sugar and flour, insulin levels drop dramatically. By eating less often, we allow insulin to drop and re-sensitize, leptin to start working, and ghrelin to adjust. When our hormones rebalance, our hunger does too.

#### HUNGER AND FAT ADAPTATION

Overhunger is caused by a hormone imbalance, cravings, and withdrawal. Your body knows exactly how much food it needs. When you eat naturally occurring foods, your body knows how to process those foods and allocate them in the body. This keeps the hormones balanced and the hunger signals clear.

We have conditioned ourselves to be hungry when we aren't just by seeing foods or making associations. We put ourselves into a hungry state by eating too often and teaching our bodies to become "sugar burners" instead of fat adapted.

We have forced our bodies into a state of withdrawal and craving by eating artificially concentrated foods that we can't easily process, thereby throwing off our hormones and hunger scale.

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The goal is to reduce hunger so that you are only ever hungry for the small amount of food that your body truly needs. The goal is to allow yourself to access your fat stores when you're hungry, so your body becomes fat adapted.

Your body fat needs to be your main source of food when you are trying to lose weight. The more you can train your body to burn fat for fuel, the thinner you will be. You'll know when you're fat adapted because you'll be able to easily go twelve to sixteen hours without food. You are not fat adapted when you are eating all the time.

#### WHY LOSING WEIGHT IS SO HARD

As soon as you start restricting food, your body will go into protest mode. Your body wants to maintain homeostasis. Your brain goes into dopamine withdrawal. Your body goes into glucose withdrawal. Your body is resistant to tap into its fat stores, so it increases its demanding hunger. You will experience negative physical symptoms and emotions. When you stop buffering with food, however, everything comes to the surface. But we have to eat. (You never hear an alcoholic saying, "But we have to drink.")

#### DESIRE

It's important to understand the difference between treating the symptoms by resisting overeating and treating the cause of it, which is overdesire. Our desire for food is based on a healthy release of dopamine in the brain. Our desire comes from the subtle reward healthy food provides and the satisfaction of hunger. Our desire also comes from our cultural conditioning and beliefs around what is "normal" eating, and how much enjoyment we should get from food.

When we eat foods that unnaturally release dopamine, we get much more desire than we need to from our food. Our desire is artificially increased beyond our evolved ability to satisfy or even understand. When we cut back on food to lose weight without addressing the underlying desire, we increase our desire for food by withholding it. This is why our willpower is often so low when we embark on weight loss programs.

Often, we will feel as if we're eating against our will or that we're out of control. The truth is that false desire is making our brain run a "thought error," creating an unwarranted urgency for food. The ultimate goal is to reduce the desire for overeating. When that is gone, you will have no need for willpower or extra effort to resist overeating.

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#### DIET MENTALITY AND DEPRIVATION

Most people claim that diets don't work and that eating changes don't last because of deprivation. We seem to believe that deprivation is an involuntary feeling brought on by the lack of food. Deprivation is a feeling we create based on our desire. The more we desire something, the more we feel deprivation when we think about not having it. The diet mentality is about giving the diet the power to be the solution, but it is also the cause of failure as well as feelings of deprivation.

Desire causes deprivation. You cause your own desire. The secret to losing weight is to not overdesire food. You will know when you have managed your desire because you won't feel any sort of mental deprivation when you're eating according to a clean, fuel-based protocol.

Restriction doesn't cause bingeing on food any more than restriction of alcohol causes bingeing on alcohol. We would never tell someone who was bingeing on alcohol to drink so they wouldn't binge. Restriction reveals any underlying neural pathways, habits, or addictions that need to be extinguished.

#### EMBRACING DISCOMFORT

The opposite of overeating is misery, and that's OK. The misery we feel when we stop overeating is part of the process and the reason we're overeating in the first place. This isn't a good reason to start overeating again. This is the perfect time to learn how to feel and how to allow uncomfortable urges. You will experience three to six weeks of discomfort based on the following physical and emotional effects of a major diet change:

##### **Physical**

- **Flu-like symptoms**
- **Headaches**
- **Weakness**
- **Physical craving**
- **Urges to overeat**
- **Urges to binge**
- **Hunger**
- **Slight dizziness**

##### **Emotional**

- **Deprivation**
- **Stress**
- **Anxiety**
- **Food-focused thinking**
- **Depression**
- **Self pity.**
- **Rage**
- **Irritation**
- **Isolation**
- **Loss**
- **And more...**

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#### DECISIONS AHEAD OF TIME

We have to put the prefrontal cortex in charge and make sure we're using it thoroughly. The prefrontal cortex is what we use to think about our thinking, make decisions, and plan ahead. We want to make sure the prefrontal cortex is in charge of all eating decisions. We want to make sure primitive urges and thought errors are not driving our actions.

Plan all food the night before you need it. Based on your general protocol, what specifically will you be eating tomorrow? Decide 24 hours in advance and then follow through. This will prevent you from making decisions on the fly, which are usually driven by primitive urges that don't serve your long term desires.

Always plan any type of exception 24 hours ahead of time and be specific. Do not change it. Never make unplanned exceptions. You want to keep your prefrontal cortex in control at all times. It knows how to serve your highest human potential.

Honoring your decisions ahead of time is a great way to build your relationship and trust with yourself. You also build authority with the highest version of your capabilities. The more you plan and follow through, the stronger and healthier the thought loops you create are.

#### THINKING

The most important tool you have when it comes to changing behavior is your thinking. Your thoughts create your feelings, even those feelings you're trying to avoid. Your habitual thoughts create your urges and your overdesire. Your feelings and urges cause you to overeat. If you want to permanently change your desire to overeat, you have to become aware of what you're currently thinking and then change your thinking to thoughts that reduce desire and urges.

For example, if you think that you deserve to eat sweets once a day because eating dessert is normal, this will give you the desire to eat sweets. You might not even realize you have this thought as part of a larger mindset about normal eating. When you recognize that this thought is creating your desire to overeat, you can decide if you want to change it.

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You might change the thought to something like, “Most people think it’s normal to eat sweets all the time, but most people are overweight. I don’t want to be overweight, so I’m going to believe that my body is not designed to accommodate this much sugar. This way of eating is robbing me of the body I deserve to live in.”

Our circumstances (the facts of our lives) trigger us to have thoughts (sentences in our minds), which cause our feelings (vibrations in our bodies); feelings drive our actions (or inactions), and our actions create our results.

If you want your result to be different, you need to change your thinking. If you want your weight to be different, you need to change your thinking.