

## INNER WEIGHT CONTROL

A Blueprint for Yo-Yo Dieters

By Carolyn Blackman

Dieting and purging must stop before bingeing can be addressed. Otherwise it will always be a "back door" choice.

Commit yourself to three meals a day "no matter what". Aim for 2 fresh fruits and three vegetables a day. Avoid packaged and fast foods. Aim for more grains, fruits, vegetables, and casseroles. Cut down in animal fat and fried food. Rather than seeking out specific diet foods, educate yourself. Take responsibility. Make more conscious choices.

There are no perfect choices. There are no forbidden foods. Normal eaters binge. A life without chocolates is dreary. Depriving oneself of desires because they are "bad" only increases desirability. Conscious eating is making choices based on trade-offs. Choices should be made autonomously. Don't let someone else be your conscience.

For more nutrition information, refer to "The Schwarzbein Principle: The Truth About Losing Weight, Being Healthy, and Feeling Younger" by Diana Schwarzbein and Nancy Deville (HCI Press) or C. S. P. I. 's posters and newsletter, Nutrition Action.

Make an exercise commitment. Try a buddy system.

### Self-Parenting

The way we manage ourselves reflects in the way we were controlled in our growing up.

Most binge-eaters get angry and frustrated when they slip up, and respond by becoming increasingly overcontrolling, rigid, demanding, critical, perfectionistic and guilt -provoking. This only serves to increase the rebellious, out-of-control behavior. Thus, a cycle of distrust is perpetuated, allowing you to focus on eating behavior and avoid deeper issues in your life. This is similar to the cycle of alcoholism.

Feeling arise.  
Anxiety increases.

Diet. Self-esteem  
Increases: "I'm good."

Binge, purge. Self-esteem  
Decreases: "I'm a failure."

### Guilt

To overcome compulsive eating, it is essential that the individual seek ways to understand and acknowledge physical sensation and to stop feeling guilty about their eating behavior:

- Before eating, ask what am I feeling?
- Keep a food/feeling journal.
- Not sure if you're satisfied? Eat three more bites.

If you're wanting to eat when you're not hungry or unable to stop eating, this is compulsion. It is a cover-up for unwanted feelings. It is never healthy to indulge in compulsive behavior. Exert discipline by removing yourself from the food at once, calm yourself, and ask, "What am I feeling? What do I want? What do I need?"

When food beckons, try saying "I can have more of this tomorrow. This is good. I'll have it often, rather than forbid myself of its pleasure. "

### Affective Approaches

Feelings serve as a guide and feedback mechanism for thoughts and behaviors. We have little control over their onset. We can only learn to ride them out and not be overwhelmed by them. Feelings rise up, intensify, and diminish in a bell-shaped curve.

Attempts to block feelings or interrupt them before they diminish only increases anxiety and compulsive behavior. Attempts to transform them results in somatic problems, such as hypertension, headaches, TMJ, or Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Learn not to make them go away; don't try to make them better, discount them or tell them they should feel that way. They can't do that. Acknowledge sensations. Stay focused on them until the bell-shaped curve diminishes. This is similar to the way a good parent would listen to an upset child without judgement or criticism.

All feelings are experienced in the trunk. Sensations in the head are emotional cut-offs and focusing your attention on sensations in the head or intellectualizing will only increase discomfort and cause jaw tension. This is easily misinterpreted as a desire to have ice cream (numbing out) or something crunchy. Try describing sensations and give them a feeling label if you can:

- Anger is hard and tight. It feels hot or cold.
- Fear is a fluttery sensation.
- Sadness is heavy.
- Joy and love are warm and expansive.

### Hunger and Satisfaction

Try scoring yourself before and after eating on a scale of 1 to 10:

1	2, 3	4	5	6, 7
Fainting from hypoglycemia.	Hungry. You could eat.	Under satisfied Dieting.	Satisfied. A blood Sugar whole-body feeling. "I'm done".	Over-full. Tightness in the abdomen.
		8, 9, 10		
		Binging. Worst binging ever.		

Before eating, ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" Try keeping a food and feeling journal.

### Cognitive Approaches

When we binge, the cause is never because we are bad or failures, just as children who act out are never bad just to be bad. Something is wrong that requires a change in the way we are parenting ourselves. Resist the temptation to berate or crackdown on yourself.

Ask yourself:

Have I been neglecting my own needs and wants?

Do I need to listen more to what my body is saying?

Am I trying to talk myself into accepting something that is unacceptable?

Do I need to assert myself?

Examine your expectations. Procrastination is always a sign that you need to re-evaluate them. Take things one meal at a time. Force yourself to be satisfied when you've accomplished tasks. Be a good parent to yourself as you would to others.

It is better to stay focused on eliminating compulsive eating rather than telling yourself "I have to lose X number of pounds by X (summer, wedding, etc.). Never tell yourself what to think or feel. Rather than, "You're just eating because you're angry (bored, afraid, etc.)", try "What am I feeling?" Try to feel the feelings rather than to intellectualize. "What do I need? What do I want?" Don't isolate. Share your thoughts and feeling with friends.

Heighten your awareness of what you are saying to yourself, paying particular attention to negative, critical self-talk. Try to re-program your mental tape with positive, loving resources.

**FORGIVE YOUR MISTAKES. FOCUS ON SUCCESS.**