

Tired Of Being Controlled By Your Eating Habits?

Do you want to regain control of how you eat to lose weight and keep it off? Understand how habits are formed and how you can hack the process with a few psychological and neuroscientific tools along with biblical tenets to effect sustainable positive change.

1. ALL HABITS HAVE A TRIGGER

Something causes you to eat. It could be the time of the day, your emotional or physical state, and/or a location. Does your willpower fly out the window every time you walk by the break room? Or, are you prone to eating when you are upset? Know your cue and avoid it or confront it with your tools.

- Drink a glass of cold water slowly and/or splash cold water on your face
- Practice avoidance when at all possible (i.e. do not go into the break room)
- Do an exercise that raises your heart rate (i.e. run in place extremely fast for 20-30 secs)
- Eat only when you are physiologically hungry
- Meditate, pray, and/or practice mindfulness

2. HABITS ARE FORMED THROUGH REPETITION

When you do the **same thing repeatedly**, you send a signal to your brain and with time that behavior becomes a habit.

- Become aware of your habits (practice mindfulness)
- Take a mindful pause, breathe your way out of trouble. This gives you time and clarity, allowing you to check in to find out if this habit is serving your greater purpose.
- Change up your routine (i.e. replace the cookie with some fruit; take the stairs instead of the elevator; pray or meditate instead of watching television with a bag of chips)
- Be consistent with the healthier habits and in time they will replace the bad habits

3. ALL HABITS PRODUCE A REWARD & SERVE A PURPOSE

Habits are remembered because of the reward they produced. This **positive reinforcement** is remembered, which sets up the cycle that must be broken to achieve change. The brain especially likes the habits that generate pleasure and will even send signals to get you to perform the behavior again (i.e. cause you to crave sugar, food, etc.).

3a. Productivity habits are good for you

Brushing your teeth and combing your hair in the morning are examples of productivity habits. You do them almost instinctively without putting much thought into them. These habits free your mind up to think about other things like the meeting you have with the boss at noon. The reward from these habits is that you have increased productivity. These are considered good habits.

3b. Pleasurable habits are challenging to change

When **the reward becomes linked to the release of neurochemicals**, you may find yourself struggling to break the habit. Certain foods and activities cause the release of these chemicals into your blood. Do you often wonder why **you feel so good (emotionally and physically)** after eating that cookie?

It is not just the taste and the addictive property of added sugar. Your body releases [chemicals \(D.O.E.S\)](#) that combine to make changing pleasure-producing habits challenging. These neurochemicals are also responsible for the **craving you have for these treats**.

However, before you begin to worry, you have within you the ability to break this pathway and free yourself from the clutches of the trap created by these chemicals.

Habits satisfy a need. Figure out what that need is and fulfill that need with something besides food (something that will serve your greater good).

- Do you need to connect or feel loved? Connect with your significant other or call a friend.
- Do you need some self-love or care? Massage your arms for 10 minutes, take a warm bath or shower, read the bible, and/or pray
- Just frustrated or angry? Try saying your anchor phrase or word out loud - “love myself”, “prioritize my health”. Sit with your emotions (surf the urge, [cognitive defusion](#), or radical acceptance).
- Tired? Rest your body (make sure to get enough sleep daily), rest your mind & soul (meditate & pray daily)

D>O>E>S = Dopamine, Oxytocin, Endorphins & Serotonin