

# DAY 15

SEPARATING EMOTIONS FROM FOOD



WEEK 3

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**I want us to start off this week by confronting a major enemy in our quest for leanness:** the reason we overindulge ourselves with food. How many times have you eaten a huge dinner at a restaurant and then, the minute you got home, started looking for something to eat? Although your stomach was full, something else was missing. You weren't satisfied. And for some subconscious reason, you decided it was more food that would help you find that satisfaction.

**Studies have found that overweight people tend to overeat in response to stress.** Any negative emotion – anger, depression, loneliness, boredom or frustration – triggers a bout of overeating. Even when they are not under stress, many people with weight problems use food as a mood elevator. They get fatigued or bored, they get lonely or just mildly fidgety and they eat. Food becomes their way to get through life's ups and downs.

**I'm not a psychologist, but after years of watching people struggle to get lean, I know that until you learn to separate your emotional life from your eating life, you're not going to be very successful on any weight loss program.** If you turn to chocolate to deal with your feelings of anxiety, you're going to have a lot more difficulty following this program than someone who does not. If you're someone who can go blank while eating and let your feelings disappear underneath a mound of food, you're in a very precarious, high-risk position to get even fatter.

**To some degree, all of us have to break the practice of using food to get emotional satisfaction.** I have gone through the same struggle myself. I grew up in a family that turned to food for solace, and I know that I also have a tendency to be a compulsive overeater. One evening a few years ago, my wife shocked me when I came home and told her in a semi-arrogant tone of voice, "Honey, isn't it great that I don't take out my frustrations at the office on you or my family?"

She said, "That's right, Larry, you take out your frustrations on the refrigerator. You come home and you don't stop eating."

It took me a while, but I later realized she was right. Although I was always eating more healthful foods, I would eat anything I could get my hands on if I had a stressful day – an entire bag of air-popped popcorn followed by a bag or two of baby carrots followed by six sugar-free frozen treats all in one sitting!

## HOW TO STOP YOUR EMOTIONAL EATING

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**I am not about to mislead you into thinking that this program is going to prevent stress and tension from entering your life.** We live in the real world. As good as you might be at this program, there will be times when you'll be caught with your guard down, when stress will rear its ugly head and you'll want to eat to swallow your negative mood.

That's why you need good, solid strategies to keep your moods from determining how much you eat.

*Here are a few proven techniques:*

- 1 When you're angry or upset, go out for a 10-minute walk.** Such a move gets you away from food, and the exercise that comes from it will calm you. Did you know that when you exercise, your body releases endorphins that will combat stress? A 10-minute walk is a great answer.
- 2 When you get upset or stressed, stop and ask yourself questions.** And ask them out loud for emphasis. What has happened to upset me? How will food help me deal with this? Is it worth risking my new body in return for a few seconds of gratification through food? By taking a breather, quieting down your mind and asking some logical questions, you will start realizing the futility of using food for emotional relief. At the least, such a move will help you delay your first bite of food, and every minute you can delay yourself from eating will work to your advantage.
- 3 If you still find yourself headed toward the kitchen and you're not exactly sure why, stop dead in your tracks and ask yourself why you want something to eat at that very moment.** Often, that moment of reflection is enough to turn you back around. Seriously, as simple as it sounds, you want to keep asking yourself questions. Am I really hungry? Are these true hunger pains I'm getting? Or am I eating to fulfill some other need? You might not have answers, but by taking the time to ask the questions, you will be throwing roadblocks in front of your seemingly impulsive need to eat.

## YOUR DAY 15 EATING GUIDE

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MEAL	EATING GUIDE
BREAKFAST	Meal replacement drink.
LUNCH	Scrambled egg whites with vegetables and a diced baked potato.
SNACK	A grilled chicken breast, rice and salad.
DINNER	Try the Taco Salad dish from the Cooking Guide. Add a mashed potato and green beans.
SNACK	Fat-free cottage cheese on toast.

## YOUR DAY 15 WORKOUT

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1. Ten 60-Second Workouts. Do four upper-body workouts, four lower-body workouts and two stretches.
2. A 30 to 60 minute walk.

## EVENING PEP TALK

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**Clearly, there are ways to deal with emotional eating without spending thousands of dollars at a psychiatrist's office.** Indeed, you can work some magic in your own life simply by believing the statement "I am in control." I hate to say it, but that is about as much a magic formula as I can offer. By taking control by saying you alone and not your emotions will determine what you do, you can make your life much more special. Such control doesn't mean deprivation. It means liberation.

**When I need emotional reinforcement, I make extra affirmations about myself and the benefits of this program.** It keeps the negative voices from getting too loud inside me, and it keeps me focused on what I need to do. Here's a unique idea: record a series of your own affirmations and play them back to yourself during your daily walks or while you complete tasks around the house. You can be as creative as you want, talking at length about the joys of dropping a dress size.

**You can also read the following affirmation into your recorder:**

- I am not afraid to be slender and healthy.
- I am open to new challenges.
- I am able and willing to commit to anything that's important to me.
- I can stay committed no matter what.
- From now on, I am committed forever to my body.
- Even if I stop, I know I can start again.
- Nothing will get in my way.



## Slimdown Tip:

### *Avoiding Sugar Cravings*

**Many of you think you have such a big sweet tooth that you will still crave sugar on this program, especially at night.** How can you avoid sugar cravings? There is an easy answer: Make sure you don't miss meals, and make sure that each meal is balanced with protein and starchy carbs. When you get a sugar craving, it almost always means you are under-eating during the day, either by missing meals or having portions that are too small. If you must address the craving, look at my suggestions for fat-free or very low-calorie desserts in the Cooking Guide. These are far, far better than a sugary eating binge.