

stop overeating.

WORKBOOK



A FUTURE BY DESIGN

HEALTH & WEIGHT LOSS COACHING

Workbook Overview

I. Why It's So Hard to Control Your Diabetes and Lose Weight

1. How your body evolved to survive
2. Psychological drive to seek pleasure
3. Cultural and social programming
4. Hormones as an explanation

II. Solving Overhunger

1. Differentiating physical hunger from cravings and withdrawal
2. Fat adaptation: Body fat as a primary fuel source
3. Intermittent fasting as a tool

Workbook Overview

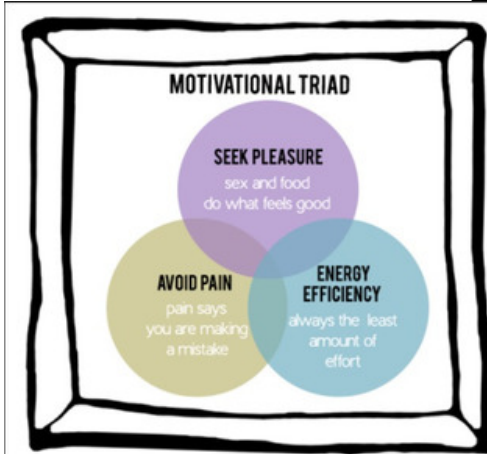
III. Solving Overdesire

1. Desire and pleasure
2. Allowing and processing urges and feelings
3. Willpower vs. Compelling reason
4. Embracing discomfort
5. Decisions ahead of time

I. Why It's So Hard to Control Your Diabetes and Lose Weight: Evolution

1. You have to overcome your EVOLUTION. It's not because something is wrong with you. Your body is the product of thousands of years of fine tuning and natural selection. It is poorly matched to our modern environment, and this is literally killing us.

We will be referring often to the motivational triad.



The lower part of your brain, or the primitive brain, is operating under these three rules because this is what has allowed us to survive. In any moment, your brain is prioritizing these rules.

Notice how these are no longer serving us as humans. In our current environment, survival is usually not our immediate threat. We need to be thinking long-term, using our human brain, or our prefrontal cortex. But many of us go around unknowingly seeking pleasure, avoiding pain, and conserving energy in the moment.

Is it so hard to understand why we are in such dire straits in our modern environment? You can rarely break a sweat, consume huge amounts of food with little effort, and experience concentrated pleasure with our concentrated foods as often as you desire.

Nothing is wrong with you: Your body is simply doing quite well exactly what it was designed to do.

2. Our food is unnaturally CONCENTRATED which create a CONCENTRATED, unnatural reward in our brains through a flood of dopamine.

Concentrated foods are mostly refined carbohydrates. Basically, this is flour and sugar. These foods do not occur naturally in our environment. We have to take the raw ingredient (wheat, sugar cane or beats), process it (grind it down), and refine and concentrate it.

When your brain experiences the intense reward from these foods, the brain learns these foods are very important for our survival and it creates a strong DESIRE for them.

When we practice the desire, response, and reward over and over, the repeated flooding of your brain with dopamine will cause a down-regulation of your dopamine receptors. This PERPETUATES the desire because you need more to get the same effect.

And now you have OVERDESIRE.

We create our own desire.

A good example of this is heroin addiction. The pleasure (dopamine flood) that comes from a heroin dose teaches the brain to prioritize this for survival.

When you respond to the desire for more by using another dose of heroin, you experience the intense reward. Now you have more desire for heroin. The more you use, the less pleasure you get from the same dose, so you have to INCREASE the dose, which in turn, drives up your desire for heroin.

Can you see how you could easily replace "heroin" with cookies?

#CONTROLMESELF



Repeating this desire, response, and reward process over and over builds strong neural pathways that make our behavior automatic, even unconscious. This is often why we feel out of control with food.

We learn our desire, but we can unlearn desire as well.

Once you can see how your body has been engineered to eat as much food as it can and store it on your body for longterm survival, you can see that it is functioning exactly how it is supposed to.

Take a moment to appreciate its masterful design.

**What foods do you think you have learned
desire for?**

**How would your life be different if you didn't
desire these foods any longer?**

When do you feel "out of control" with food?

I. Why It's So Hard to Control Your Diabetes and Lose Weight: Psychological

We were never taught to manage our emotions. We don't know how to cope with unpleasant feelings.

Many of us learn to overeat to avoid emotional pain or discomfort. We cover them up with false pleasure.

False pleasure distracts us from negative emotion, and it takes many forms besides overeating, such as overdrinking, drug use, overfacebooking, and overspending. We call this bufferring. Bufferring has a net negative effect in your life. It makes the negative emotion worse in the end because you don't deal with the negative emotion AND you have negative consequences from your coping method.

So many of us have been taught that the the goal in life is to be happy all of the time. But half of life is negative emotion. Without the sadness and disappointment, we couldn't appreciate the joy and reward.

We need to learn how to feel uncomfortable feelings without trying to cover them up with false pleasures.

I will teach you how to do this.

What are the emotions you try to avoid having on a daily basis? (e.g., anxious, lonely, bored, etc.)

When and how often do you normally experience these emotions?

How does overeating affect these emotions?

How do you feel after you have overeaten? How does it affect the emotion(s) you ate to avoid?

I. Why It's So Hard to Control Your Diabetes and Lose Weight: Cultural

How much of our eating habits are shaped by our culture and how we were raised? So much of how we think about food has been taught to us.

We have to learn to question EVERYTHING we think is normal and re-decide if it is serving us.

Let's consider what is normal:

1. "It's normal to overeat and be overweight." Here you want to ask yourself, "Do I want to be normal?"
2. Food as entertainment and a way to celebrate and show love. You may worry that someone may find it offensive that you refuse food that is offered. Do you want this to determine your success?
3. Portions of food. Social construct of "three square meals a day" plus snacks and dessert. You can re-decide if this construct moves you closer to your goals.
4. We need to eat for every occasion: Holidays, gatherings, births, deaths, PLUS a thousand other reasons. It's your first day, it's your last day, it was a hard day, it was a good day, it's Friday! It has gotten ridiculous and out of control.

What are some of your beliefs about food that are not serving you in your goal to stop overeating?

What social situations can you think of that will be challenging to not overeat?

I. Why It's So Hard to Control Your Diabetes and Lose Weight: Hormones

Insulin

Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes are hormonal diseases.

We have been taught that these are diseases caused by excess calories, but this is completely false and ignores the way our bodies are designed.

Please retire the "calories in and calories out" hypothesis. Calories are a completely useless method of understanding how our bodies store energy as fat.

Never count calories again.

They are meaningless.

The central control for whether or not your body is in fat storage mode (a fed state) OR fat burning mode (a fasted state) is INSULIN.

When insulin is released, you store fat and cannot access your fat stores for fuel. When insulin falls and stays low, you switch to fat burning state.

Understanding what causes insulin release and insulin to be elevated is CRITICAL to understanding how to lose weight. And the major influence on this "switch" is what and when you eat.

Insulin is released in response to a rise in blood sugar. Only certain foods can affect blood sugar. Mainly, it is carbohydrates. But not all carbohydrates have the same impact on blood sugar.

Concentrated, refined carbohydrates cause insulin levels to skyrocket. These include foods that contain sugar and flour.

When you eat the standard North American diet rich in highly refined carbs at 5 or 6 times of day, you are causing a frequent, pronounced release of insulin which causes you to be in a fat storage state most of the time.

When insulin is high all of the time, your body becomes RESISTANT to it. Hormones released in our body are meant to happen in pulses so we do not develop resistance. When you become resistant, you need more and more insulin to control your blood sugars, and eventually, this leads to high blood sugars and a diagnosis of Type 2 Diabetes.

The trick is to allow insulin to stay low so that you do not stimulate fat storage AND you avoid resistance to insulin.

If you find HUNGER and APPETITE are a major problem for you, it is likely because your hunger hormones are out of balance. This can happen when insulin is always elevated. You will learn how to balance your hormones with your diet to solve OVER-HUNGER in the next section.

Leptin

Leptin is a hormone that lets us know when we are full and should stop eating. It also increases energy expenditure. It is produced by fat cells in your body and is also present at high levels all of the time in obese people, who become resistant to it. When your brain doesn't receive the signal from leptin, it thinks you need to eat more and burn less energy. Excess insulin can block leptin at the brain and interfere with its signals as well.

Ghrelin

Ghrelin is produced in the stomach and lets us know when we are hungry. It responds to volume and fat content of food. Like leptin, it is also negatively affected by insulin. When concentrated foods (i.e., 300-calorie soda) are consumed, ghrelin does not recognize the caloric intake and will continue messaging the body that it is hungry.

Body Set Weight

Your brain has a body set weight--the weight it *thinks* you should be at to survive. It is tightly regulated by these hormones.

It is sort of like a thermostat. Most people develop obesity over years and decades--1 to 2 lbs a year or more.

Over time, your brain also slowly adjusts the body set weight upward, but this can also be reset by resetting these hormones. Realizing that your brain has a thermostat for setting your body weight helps explain why so many people who lose weight usually gain it back and sometimes even more.

Periods of fasting, even relatively short, can reset these hormones.



How is your current eating schedule affecting your insulin levels?

What are the reasons avoiding sugar and flour makes sense if you want to stop overeating and reverse insulin resistance?

Write down all the reasons why it might be physically hard to give up sugar and flour.

Write down all the reasons why it might be hard emotionally to give up sugar and flour.

Have you been taught or conditioned that eating sugar and flour is normal? How?

Can you find some ways that it is "abnormal" to eat sugar and flour?

How will you have to think about this differently if you want to reverse insulin resistance and lose weight?

What are habits you have and foods you currently eat that will need to change to give up sugar and flour?

Which are the easiest to give up?

Which are the hardest? Why?

II. Solving Overhunger: True physical hunger vs cravings and withdrawal

Over-hunger 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 read 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 don't have true physical hunger because of routines, seeing or smelling food, or just thinking of food. This hunger comes from our brain and travels down to our body.

We want to be able to differentiate this from true physical hunger which starts in our body and travels to our brain by really listening to the signal.

We have forced our bodies into a state of withdrawal and craving by eating artificially concentrated foods that our body can't easily read and therefore throws off our hormones and hunger scale.

As soon as you start restricting food your body will go into protest. Your body resists change.

Your brain goes into dopamine withdrawal.

Your body goes into glucose withdrawal.

Your body is unused to accessing its fat storage for fuel so it increases a demanding hunger.

You will experience very negative physical symptoms and emotions.

When you stop buffering with food, everything comes to the surface.

I will help you manage your mind and alleviate much of these symptoms with dietary strategies.

The goal is to reduce hunger so you are only ever hungry for a very small amount of food that your body needs.

II. Solving Overhunger: Fat adaptation

Fat adaptation is the process your body learns when it is relying on your fat stores for fuel. If you have been consuming refined carbs regularly, you are likely a "sugar burner."

The cellular machinery that is used to process fat into fuel (ketones) can fall into disuse if you rarely burn fat for fuel. Your body prefers to use glucose (sugar) for energy because it is much easier for your body to make available and to use.

The best analogy I have heard to explain this comes from Dr. Jason Fung. He explains that you can think of glucose (stored in the body as glycogen) as a refrigerator and your fat stores as a deep freezer in the basement. It is much more convenient when you are low on fuel to go to the fridge and get food.

Accessing fat stores is like going to the basement, finding frozen food, defrosting it, and then cooking it. This takes way more effort.



If there is not enough glucose, your body will resort to accessing fat stores, but this can take time to remember/relearn if you have rarely depended on fat stores for fuel.

This is why some people experience a period of sluggishness, sugar cravings, brain fog, and irritability. Sometimes referred to as "keto flu," how bad and how long it lasts depends on the person.

Once your body learns to use your body fat as a primary source of energy, you will be fat adapted.

The more you can train your body to burn fat for fuel, the lower your insulin levels and thinner you will be.

You will know when you are fat adapted because you will be able to go 12-16 hours easily without food.

You are not fat adapted when you are eating all the time.

II. Solving Overhunger: Intermittent Fasting as a Tool

The sensation of physical hunger when you are fat adapted comes in gradual waves. Hunger is not as insistent or urgent as when you are a sugar burner.

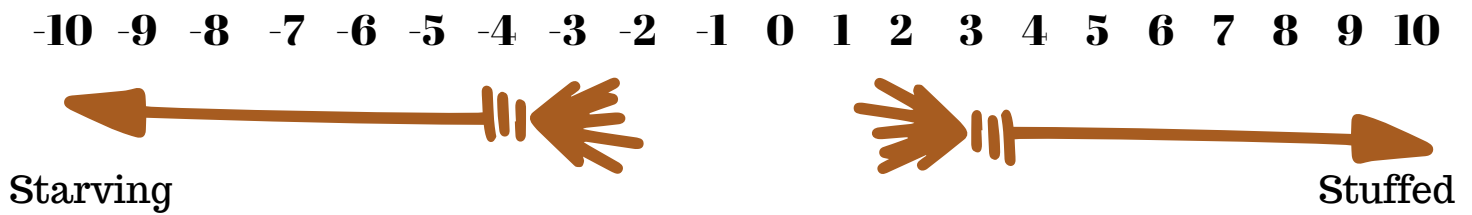
If you do not respond to hunger by eating, it usually retreats as your body accesses fat stores. I call this "dining in." This is partly why counting calories doesn't make sense because we can't count the calories from our own body fat.

Hands down, the most effective tool for reversing diabetes is fasting.

Don't freak out, it's not as scary as it might sound. There is intermittent fasting (essentially reducing the hours of the day in a fed state) and extended fasting (fasting beyond 36 hours). When beginning to fast, it is helpful to start with shorter fasts and slowly work up to longer fasts. I have lots of tips and tricks to teach you how to do this without suffering.

However, I recommend that you teach your body how to burn fat (become fat adapted) before you start fasting.

Hunger As A Tool



Where are you on the hunger scale now?

How does hunger feel to you at -4?

How does hunger feel to you at -8?

Do this exercise before and after you are fat adapted and compare the difference.

III. Solving Overdesire:

Desire and Pleasure

It is very important to understand the difference between treating the symptom by resisting overeating, and treating the cause, which is the over-desire.

Normal desire for food is important for our survival.

However, artificial and unnatural foods we consume in our current environment have created artificial and unnatural reward and pleasure beyond our evolved ability to handle.

This has created overdesire for the foods that cause the concentrated reward or pleasure. Through repetition of overdesire and reward, we have taught our brains this process to the point that it is automatic and unconscious.

When we try to cut back our food in order to lose weight or improve insulin resistance without addressing the issue of desire, we actually increase that desire for food by withholding it. This is why our willpower seems to be so weak.

Often we will feel as if we are eating against our own will or that we are out of control.

The truth is that we just don't understand that false desire is making our brain run a "thought error" creating an urgency and importance for food that is unwarranted.

I think we've all had a moment where we really thought we were going to die if we didn't eat that chocolate chip cookie.😞

The goal is to REDUCE DESIRE FOR OVEREATING. When the desire is gone you will have no need for willpower or extra effort to resist overeating.

Remember, desire is learned and can be unlearned.

A great example of this is the experiment of Pavlov's dog. This is the study that showed that dogs could learn to associate a bell with feeding and would salivate in anticipation of food when hearing the bell. He was also able to demonstrate that this response could be unlearned simply by ringing the bell and withholding the food.

We can think of it another way as conditioning and deconditioning. If we stop rewarding the desire, or urge, we can decondition our desire.

III. Solving Overdesire: Allowing and processing urges and feelings

An urge is a feeling of desire. It starts in our thoughts. Most of us have not witnessed our own thinking in action before and may never have become aware that a thought has created an urge for a certain food. Sometimes, it can happen so quickly, we can become aware only when we are in the act of rewarding an urge.

I want that.

That looks so yummy.

Those (chips/PB M&Ms/Oreos) are in that drawer.

I LOVE that flavor.

This place has the BEST creme brulee.

MMMMmmmmmm.

There are 3 things you can do with an urge:

1. Resist it.

2. Reward it.

3. Allow it.

The goal is to allow it and process it. When we reward it, we only strengthen and perpetuate the desire. When we resist it, we rely on willpower, which eventually fails us because it is exhausting.

I will teach you how to allow the urge.

When we learn to allow any urge or feeling, we stop needing to "escape" our emotions with food. We stop being afraid of our feelings and can process them all the way through.

Imagine: You are in the ocean with a beach ball. You are doing your best to climb on top of it and completely submerge it under the water. Your goal is to keep it under the water, but it keeps popping back up, jumping high into the air before you can get it back underneath. This is what it feels like to resist an urge. The urge only intensifies until it bursts through your willpower.

Imagine: You are in a bedroom with a walk-in closet. A very rude and rambunctious monster is trying to escape the closet, and you are holding the door closed with all your might. How long can you keep up the fight? Eventually, you become worn down, and the monster bursts into the room and tramples over you. This is what it feels like to resist an urge.

What we want to do is ALLOW or process the urge.

Notice the urge. Look for the thought that is creating the desire. Do not distract yourself or try to ignore it. Invite it closer and be present with the discomfort of not rewarding it.

Notice: How does it feel? Where is it in your body?
How long does it last? Describe in detail the experience of being with the urge.

It may be useful to coach yourself as you would an angry toddler in your mind. "I know that it is after dinner and that you like to enjoy a bowl of ice cream right now. But it is not in our plan to have a bowl of ice cream tonight. You can freak out, but we're sticking to our plan. Right now, "I love you" sounds like no."



All urges are caused by thoughts, but in the beginning, those thoughts will be unconscious. The best way to make them conscious is to accumulate
'ALLOWED URGES.'

I will teach you 2 methods to accumulate 'ALLOWED URGES': the 100 Allowed Urges Worksheet and the Urge Jar.

Being able to stay present with our emotions and urges takes practice. It is one of the practices that we can utilize to overcome thought errors and urges.

Rewarding an urge can sometimes be the result of a thought error. These are thoughts that create unwanted desire and unwanted actions (because remember that thoughts create feelings which drive actions).

Here are just a few examples. Write down others that you find for yourself.

All foods in moderation.

Breakfast is the most important meal.

It's not fair that I can't eat that.

I already blew it for today.

It's normal to eat when you're not hungry.

It's too hard to follow a diet.

Just one.

I'm going to miss out.

Many of these we have been taught in our culture to accept as facts, but we can DECIDE ON PURPOSE whether or not to believe them.

III. Solving Overdesire:

Willpower vs Compelling Reason

We use willpower to resist our urges. This is a limited, exhaustible resource and eventually fails us.

Your compelling reason for wanting to reverse your Type 2 Diabetes or lose weight is what will override your need to rely on willpower when you are experiencing an urge.

This reason is usually related to your longterm wellbeing. It needs to be EPIC. It needs to be so powerful that it can stand in the face of physical cravings and raw emotional desire.

Example time: What if I told you I would give you \$100,000 if you stay on your food protocol for 1 year? Would you struggle to stick to your plan?

What if I told you that if you went off of your food protocol, someone you loved would die? Would it even be an option to fail?

What I am illustrating here is the power of your compelling reason. This is the power of your brain to decide and never waver.

You must spend time exploring this for yourself because these are the thoughts that are going to make your commitment UNSHAKABLE.

III. Solving Overdesire: Embracing Discomfort

I often tell my clients that the opposite of overeating is misery and that's okay.

The misery we feel when we stop overeating is PART OF THE PROCESS and the reason we are overeating in the first place.

This is not a good reason to go back to overeating. This is the perfect time to learn how to feel and how to allow uncomfortable urges.

You will experience 3-6 weeks of major discomfort based on the following physical and emotional effects of a major diet change:

Physical

Flu-like symptoms
Headaches
Weakness
Physical cravings
Hunger

Emotional

Deprivation
Stress and anxiety
Food-focusing thinking
Depression
Loss and isolation
Self-pity
Irritability

Eventually your hormones will balance, your neurotransmitters will heal and your taste buds will re-adapt.

Once your body is fat adapted and you have learned how to confidently allow negative emotion, you will feel better than you have in your entire life.

III. Solving Overdesire: Decisions Ahead of Time

You have 2 brains:

- Your **primitive animal brain** that makes all decisions based on the motivational triad. This means your brain is concerned with the moment you are in, not the future.
- Your **prefrontal cortex is your human brain** and has the ability to weigh the pros and cons, benefits and risks, and plan for the future. It can override your primitive brain to delay immediate gratification for long-term reward.

When you plan ahead, you use your prefrontal cortex. If you rely on your primitive brain to decide what to eat at mealtime, it will be seeking pleasure and conserving energy 100% of the time. This is why we want to make decisions ahead of time and write out our protocol.

Document your protocol and commit to it for at least 2 weeks. **Stick to it NO MATTER WHAT.** Never make exceptions on the fly. You want to keep your prefrontal in control at all times. It knows how to serve your future self's best interest.

Honoring your decisions ahead of time is a great way to build your relationship and trust with yourself.

I love the thought:

"You don't really want to steal from your future self."

Urge Worksheet

We mostly respond to our desire to eat with our conditioned urges. We feel an urge, and it feels "urgent." We respond to this urge by overeating. This overeating gives us an immediate reward and relief.

1. What exactly does an urge feel like when it first appears?

2. What does it feel like when you try to resist it?

3. What does it feel like when you react and "obey" it?

**4. What does it feel like when you don't react or resist, but you ALLOW it to simply be there?
Describe in detail.**

5. If an urge is caused by a thought error, what is your most common thought error that causes overeating?

6. What would the process of allowing an urge be like for you? How would your thoughts change? How would your feeling change? How would your actions change? How would your results change?

7. What is a skill you would need to develop to feel instead of eat? Describe it.

8. How would this skill serve you in other areas of your life?

Commitment

Your commitment to reversing your Type 2 Diabetes and losing weight has to be EPIC.

1. What are all the reasons why you want to reverse your Type 2 Diabetes and lose weight?

2. Do you believe this reason is compelling enough to keep you from EVER overeating?

3. Are you willing to give up food as you know it to have freedom from being overweight and all the health problems that come with that?

4. Are you willing to live without the escape and buffering that food provides?

5. Are you willing to feel worse before you feel better?

6. Are you willing to continue even when the results are not as fast as you want?

7. Are you willing to embrace not being "normal" in order to transform? Why or why not?

8. How do you imagine you can fulfill this commitment to yourself?

Visualize Yourself At Your Goal

1. Write down exactly what your goals are for your health and weight here.

**2. Imagine yourself having achieved these goals.
How do you feel about yourself?**

3. How is your life different than it is now?

4. How do you think and feel about food?

5. What do you have to change to become this person?

6. What do you have to believe in order to be this person?