



RECOVERY FROM

BINGE EATING

GETTING
STARTED

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Hello!

How many times have you told yourself that it would just be this one last time? That you'd get the ultimate satisfaction and therefore never need to do it again? So you give yourself free reign to buy any foods you like, as much as you can get through in that day. Who cares what it all costs; financially, physically, emotionally. This is the last time you're doing it, right?

It feels good once you've made this decision and even when you start eating the food – but the excitement fades quickly and you don't feel as satisfied as you thought you would. You go to bed telling yourself that's it, in the morning you'll feel ready to start the next part of your life, binge free. For some reason you kid yourself this time will be different.

If this is something you recognise then you really aren't alone. But fear not, there is a way out of this cycle of guilt and shame, no matter how long its been going on. And I'll be there to support you every step of the way!



A little background info...

I feel it's important to give a little information about my background so you know I really do understand how binge eating affects your life.

I have memories of not liking my body from a very early age. I was conscious of looking different to my sisters and picked up the social cues early on that somehow there was something unacceptable about my very being. I became conscious of what I was eating and what others around me might think, so I started secret eating, sneaking in little bits of extra foods whenever I thought I wasn't being watched. The amount of food I ate in secret slowly grew over the years, as did my weight. At the same time I became more and more aware of the diet industry.

Naturally I started down the dieting route - you name it, I've had a crack at it! But alongside the increased dieting, I found the amount of food I ate when off the wagon was increasing too. Eventually this led to bulimia, which lasted a good 15 years before I was able to stop. Fantastic as it was to overcome such a destructive eating disorder, I still binge ate and the effects were still severe in terms of my physical, mental and emotional health.

Around this time I began studying Nutritional Therapy. All these years of obsessing meant I had a genuine interest! It totally changed my focus from calories to nutrients, and understanding what the body really needs to

keep it vital and healthy. The funny thing was, although my diet improved hugely, the bingeing persisted. It's just that now my "good" days were filled with genuinely nutritious foods, rather than awful diet foods.

I realised I had never made that internal decision to give up the bingeing. Yes, I'd had literally 1000s of new starts, but did I believe on a very deep level that I was able to stop? I don't think so - and I think this is where a lot of people kid themselves. They say they want to stop but there is a small, stubborn part that is unable to believe that they can do it.

Looking back I believe this is because I felt unable to deal with what the bingeing had been covering up: the pain of unmet needs for intimacy, recognition and acceptance, amongst others, which the food had been a substitute for. I felt too drained to deal with the uncomfortable period after taking that leap of faith and launching off the riverbank, but knowing there are some choppy waters ahead before reaching the other side.

And the one thing that I used to distract myself from feeling uncomfortable was no longer going to be an option. It felt too overwhelming, and so I would give myself one last excuse to keep going another day. This lasted for years!

A change of perspective

I finally realised after all those years that my body was calling out for real attention, it needed to be listened to. I'd been using food as a way of disassociating from my body and it had had enough. On top of the excess weight, I also had a whole range of other health issues, as my body called out in pain.

We store integrated emotions in our body - it's a myth that we can separate our emotions from our physical being. When our hearts and minds are out of alignment, our body will let us know, just as when they come into alignment, it can be felt in the body.

I realised the weight and the food were just a consequence of trying to avoid facing my emotions. And yes, when you do this long enough then the brain certainly becomes wired to take the tried and tested automatic path, no matter how destructive. But focusing on the brain alone feels like we are missing out on a chance to truly reconnect to who we are.

We all hold a divine spark within us, and as a woman, deeply unhappy with her body, I felt I was somehow not worthy of holding that divine feminine energy. Once I changed my perspective and realised it was all about going inwards, deeper into my body and my being, I found this divine feminine energy to be a powerful tool in healing my issues with food and with my body.

When you start to work from the inside out, you find yourself making decisions around food that honour your body and your health. And this might mean different things on different days! Whilst there are foods that are naturally inclined to bring health and healing (no escaping the fruit and veggies!), this does not mean that you have to eat a completely clean diet in order to bring balance back to your mind, body and spirit. The yardstick with which to measure your choices around food need only be that you are truly at peace with what you are eating.



So are you ready for a change?

The question to ask yourself is, are you ready to go into your body and start listening to its needs and allowing the emotions to arise without distracting yourself? This might hurt, it's true, but once you start realising you can allow feelings to come up without numbing them, then each subsequent time gets easier.

Binge eating recovery has many aspects to it, and for this reason I don't feel there is a magic fix. That one piece of information to change it all. I've put together what I consider to be essential pieces of information in understanding binge eating and how to stop. Because everyone's binge

eating is different, you'll find that some aspects may resonate more than others. This is totally fine, go with your instincts!

Some people find that just understanding the brain-based mechanisms is enough to get them to turn their habits around, and then once their eating stabilizes they are able to look more closely at the emotional factors. For others, it's much more important to get that initial step in of accepting who they are and accepting their body as it is, and from this place the changes to the eating patterns feel more natural. Whilst not everyone who binge eats is overweight, from my experience, most people are unhappy their body to a greater or lesser degree. So for this reason, this step is usually key.



WHAT IS Binge Eating?



Binge Eating vs Compulsive Overeating

Before we get started, a technical point to address. Whilst binge eating and compulsive overeating are technically listed as different disorders – I’m at a loss to work out what the real difference is. When you look at the definitions listed in medical forums, they both cover the following symptoms that I’ve listed below. These would be occurring on a regular, weekly basis for most people:

- Eating when not physically hungry
- Eating alone or in secret
- Feeling upset and/or guilty after overeating
- Feeling that you are abnormal
- Feeling “taken over” or “driven” when eating

For simplicity's sake, I'll refer to it as binge eating, but you might refer to it as compulsive overeating. Definitions aren't so important, it's about how the behaviour makes you feel and how much this can take over your life. It's also very much the mentality you engage in when you are eating large quantities of food.

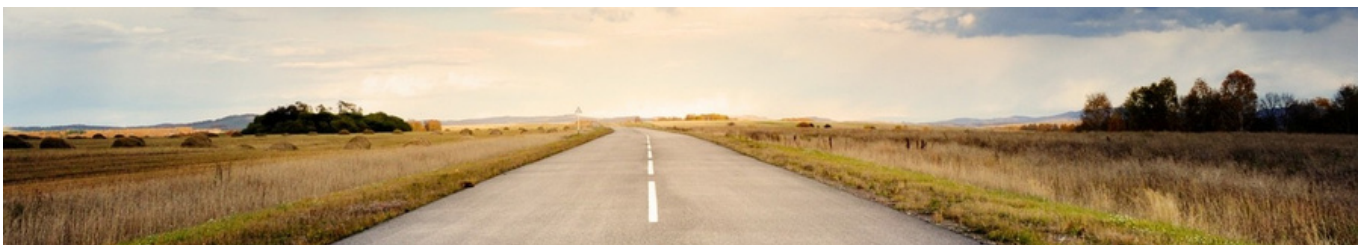
The Abstinence vs Food Freedom Approach

Most binge eating recovery programs focus on clean eating or food freedom. What I advocate is something down the middle. This might sound boring, but ultimately it's about balance.

Clean eating and abstinence involves cutting processed foods and refined sugar to support healthy blood sugars and brain chemistry as a way to control urges. As a nutritionist I understand how this has a massive effect, especially when combined with adding in particularly healing foods. Whilst this can be fantastic for dealing with some biochemical triggers, dieting actually causes other physical triggers (more on that next) as well as a whole array of emotional triggers

Food freedom, on the other hand, involves letting go of the restrictions as a way of dealing with the emotional triggers. And there is something wonderfully freeing about letting go of the diet jail mentality after years of calorie counting. But total freedom can feel very daunting for some, and also lacks an appreciation of the role that high vibrational foods play in recovery. These foods help curb cravings and urges, and perhaps more importantly, when you focus on providing your body with amazing nutrition you also fundamentally change your relationship with food and with your body.

This is why I believe that there is a balanced path to be found, a middle of the road approach which understands rigid rules and regulations are detrimental to recovery, whilst also understanding that nutrition has a key role to play. The changes you make with your diet need to come from an internal place of respect for your body and health, not self imposed rules.



WHAT DIETING DOES

To the Brain

Binge eating is complex, in the sense that there are many contributing factors, and they might not be the same for all. But it's hard to ignore the role of dieting. Of course, dieting itself is preceded by thoughts and emotions that are important to address, but in terms of why overeating might develop into full blown binges, then it's essential to understand the role that dieting and restrictive eating plays. Also, no matter how much you address emotional issues, consistently undereating makes recovery much more difficult.

Regular restriction of calories triggers our brain into survival mode (3). The brain's outer cortex is involved in high-level decision making, whilst the inner sanctums are concerned with survival. The latter is known as the primitive brain – the more simplistic, animalistic part of our brain that involves autonomic reactions and reflexes. The part that isn't going to carefully weigh up the variables! It is this part of the brain that fires up when we start restricting food, which isn't good news for making rational decisions. In fact, the only rule I have when it

comes to recovery is that it is absolutely essential to eat adequately. Because of the different priorities of the survival centres and the rational centres of the brain, we can get a sense of inner resistance and conflict. The rational part is telling you that you really shouldn't be doing this, but your primal brain only cares about survival, and it will go down tried and tested routes. So the longer you've had the problem, the more engrained those pathways are.

But why go down those pathways? Why not listen to our rational brain? Ultimately, it's because we have the physical urge to binge and the only way we feel we can rid ourselves of this urge is to engage in binge behaviour (2). The urge consists of a whole lot of thoughts, feelings, cravings and tangible physical sensations that drive us to seek out large amounts of junk foods.

Saying we binge because we get the "urge" may sound a little silly. But literally, in the moment, from a physiological point of view, this is what is happening moments before we hit the sod it button.



Dopamine and the limbic system

The limbic system sits within the primitive brain and ultimately is there for 3 reasons; survival, pleasure seeking and avoiding pain (physical and emotional). It is part of our reward system, and with binge eating it's gone awry (4). The limbic system sees dieting as a threat to survival and will seek out the most obvious solution - eating large quantities of high calorie foods. A one off binge isn't a problem but repeated binges from continuous dieting cycles, leads to the reward system reinforcing itself and the brain becomes hard-wired to go down certain pathways. Put it this way, the brain of someone who has been binge eating for a while will basically light up like a Christmas tree around junk food! (5) That's why it's so difficult to resist.

Dopamine is a key neurotransmitter that stimulates our reward system. It was previously thought that dopamine was released as a result of pleasurable experiences, but it's now realised that dopamine is what causes us to want to carry out that behaviour in the first place (6). When the brain recognises the opportunity for a reward, it releases dopamine. Most people release dopamine in anticipation of a nice meal, but a binge eater releases a flood once they've made that decision to binge. For those who have binged a long time, there will actually be an increased release of dopamine when exposed to any nice foods, even if you haven't decided to binge (7). Not because you like the food more, but because your brain is giving you a bigger signal to want the food. And the sweeter the food the more dopamine is released (8) – no wonder shopping can be such a nightmare!

Dopamine and the stress response

The urge to binge brings with it huge feelings of anxiety, that is temporarily alleviated by the release of dopamine on deciding to binge and then bingeing itself. This release of tension from the binge is only temporary though, and you then have to deal with the aftermath of feelings that follow. Unfortunately by this time the dopamine has worn off and we don't have that lovely little high that we experienced when we made the decision to binge. This is why the most satisfying part of the whole experience can be the moment you decide to cave in – you get the rush of dopamine and that's what feels so lovely. But ultimately the binge never lives up to its promise.

Dopamine Withdrawals & Delayed Gratification

One big issue that makes the cycles hard to break is that our brains are so used to getting a big dopamine hit that it becomes a struggle to go about your day to day life without it. It can feel very flat when you first stop bingeing. This can be difficult when you are trying to be more present with your body and with your food choices. It's easy to think that you somehow need something to help cheer you up!

So it's important to remember what's going on here. Your dopamine receptors have been blasted for years with ever increasing amounts of seemingly pleasurable foods, How do you go about replacing it?

Well firstly by realising that constantly flooding the brain with dopamine for instant gratification isn't healthy. So it really isn't about replacing it with something else that has the same effect (it's good to realise too that this is often the reason extreme diets feel so tempting - they can provide a dopamine rush in the early stages). There are other healthier ways to stimulate dopamine, such as being in nature, listening to music (or playing an instrument), singing, exercise, natural sunlight, being with animals and pets, meditation, even foods and a healthy gut!

Understanding delayed gratification is hugely important for any weight loss too. If you are no longer going down the extreme diet route as an alternative to bingeing, then weight loss can be slow, and it takes a lot of patience! Improvements in your health will also occur, which can be incredibly rewarding, but again, not overnight.

Instead, it's about accepting more stillness and quiet into your life. Silence and stillness are a pathway into true connection and creativity, which ultimately will be much more satisfying than a temporary hit, but it does take a willingness to delay that sense of gratification as it's unlikely to happen overnight. And furthermore, the stillness can be painful to start with, as it's in this space that the buried emotions will surface.



An internal dilemma!

Part of the problem, and why we often feel very divided, is because the rational part of our brain knows it's a really silly idea to go and eat a load of junk food, but the primitive part isn't able to rationalise. We are pulled in two directions, and the primitive urges often win (10).

Even when we know that we might be avoiding difficult and painful emotions, there is still the rational part of us that knows full well that eating to the point of feeling unwell is hardly a practical decision! We might not want to go there, in terms of facing our buried emotions, but there can still be frustration at the same time when we find ourselves going down the old paths.

It's important to understand the role that the brain and its neurotransmitters play in binge eating, and that will power alone is no match for these these powerful chemicals. This can help people feel relieved that they aren't just weak willed or inherently lazy - far from it. It's just that the brain has been set up to make it difficult for you to make those changes. But you can! I go into this in more detail in my coaching programmes, along with techniques that can be used to help the brain make these changes much more quickly and put us in a state of acceptance and peace, which is so important when overcoming any addiction.

When you use tools to prevent the urges from a physiological perspective you are then left to deal with the emotional and psychological urges.



Emotional Eating

So now you have a better understanding of why the brain pulls us into binge eating cycles on a physical level, let's spend a few minutes looking at the emotional aspects of binge eating.

Firstly it's important to state that most people, not just binge eaters, find their emotional state triggers their eating habits - be it what you eat, how much you eat, where you eat.... And that's totally fine. The issue comes when you use food as the primary way to deal with life's problems, or more accurately, as a way to avoid dealing with life.

When it comes to emotions and food, the usual pattern is for people to berate themselves if they've overeaten to cope with or avoid an emotion. Both problem and solution are seen as food-focussed. The problem isn't the food - the food is just a sticking plaster for what's going on underneath.

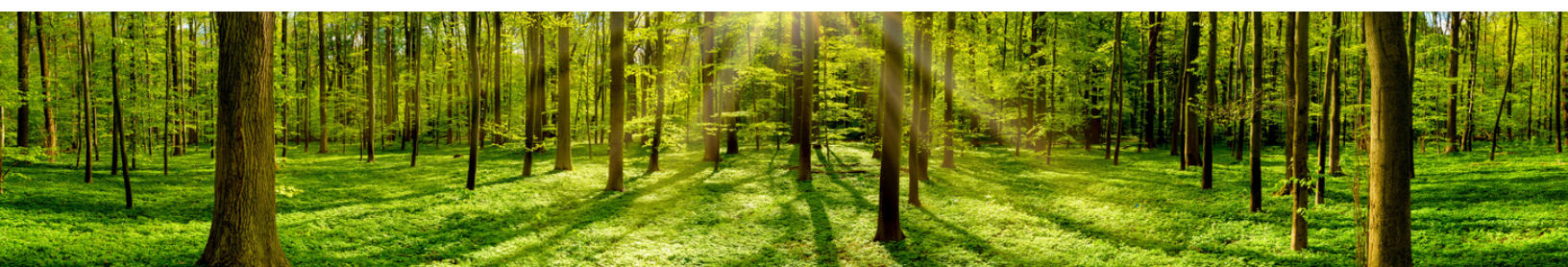
When we are confronted with difficult and painful situations, both actual and perceived, we are meant to recognise these emotions and integrate them. This might not happen overnight, especially for something traumatic. Animals often face hugely anxiety

provoking events, but are able to shake off the trauma of having been chased by a predator and quickly return to chewing the grass! We are also meant to be able to allow emotions to pass through us. But for many of us they don't, as we ignore them or distract ourselves. Maybe they are seen as too painful, or we see ourselves as unable to cope with them, either way they end up being stored in the body. This results in blocked flow of energy/qi/prana.

Over the years we can collect a lot of stuff! And subconsciously we know it's painful to look at, so we do what we can to avoid it. Food is the perfect distraction and method for avoidance.

Ultimately we have to be able to get in touch with our emotions. They are messages that we need to pay attention to, and the healthy way to deal with them is to acknowledge and even name what's coming up.

Whilst some of these emotions might be deeply traumatic, they don't have to be. Many are the every day emotions such as frustration, feeling slighted, overly stressed or disconnected. If our resilience is low, these are enough to send us over the edge.



Going Inwards

Fundamentally, even if you find it's the day to day emotions that might trigger the urge to avoid the world, there is usually a deeper underlying issue of not feeling connected.

Connected to life, to your body, to other people? Binge eating numbs you to what's going on, so it's important to start looking at what actually is going on. What unmet needs do you have that food is being used as a substitute for? Albeit a temporary substitute that leaves you feeling even more alone.

This will be different for everyone, but a common one, and certainly one that was key for me, was the feeling of not being acceptable or enough as I am. I was always comparing myself to other women, and felt like I wasn't really part of "the club. I'd fallen for all the rubbish that told me I had to look a certain way to be acceptable. And because lots of people in society fall for the same rubbish, I would often find this reflected back at me from others. All of which served to make me believe that it therefore must be true!

These beliefs about what is acceptable, who is loveable, who is worthy etc are just programmes that we have bought into. And no matter how difficult it might seem, they can be undone. It is ok to feel attractive even if you are overweight. It is ok to be loved even if you don't fit into a nice pair of jeans. These seem silly examples to some, but not to many who live out these beliefs everyday.

The answer doesn't lie in hoping others around you change, or trying to find people who won't judge you. The answer lies in changing your own mind about it, and you'll then find your experiences change as a result.

And if you have weight to lose and are panicking that I'm saying just give up on this - I'm not! But there is something deeply wounding to the body when you have told yourself you are only able to love and accept yourself, or be loved and accepted, once you've lost the weight. Is it time to try loving yourself and then allowing the weight to go as a natural consequence?



THE ROLE OF Nutritional Therapy



Using nutrition to your advantage

So we've talked about physical triggers and emotional triggers, but what about the food itself? Once I understood the necessity to eat adequately I felt some relief. I wasn't going to try and diet my way out of this anymore! It was also a relief to accept that a long list of "forbidden" foods was counterproductive for the same reasons. However, the idea of total food freedom didn't work for me either as it deprioritised the importance of amazing nutrition in supporting recovery.

Whilst it is really important to steer clear of making a forbidden foods list, there are some facts about foods that you can't ignore. Before we look at the foods that can cause problems, let's look at some basic information on what constitutes a truly healthy diet – purely from a nutrition point of view.

*To ensure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply,
live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness and maintain
an interest in life".*

WILLIAM LANDEN

Studying naturopathic nutrition led to completely transforming my views about healthy eating, particularly when it comes to weight and binge eating. The most transformational aspect was understanding the central role that fruit and vegetables play. I understood they are always part of any healthy diet, but I didn't understand enough about why they are so vital, or the quantities that make the difference between so-so health and vibrant health. Fruit also provides the body with the sugar it needs (and it does need it). When you give it a steady and healthy source of sugar, this has an incredible effect on lowering cravings for junk food. Please do not be put off by all the "fruit fear" that is out there. No one got sick off eating too many apples!

Another important shift was moving away from the idea of a super low-fat diet and seeing all fats as the same - i.e. bad. Of course, if you eat too much fat, even healthy fat, this is not good for us and is a quick way to put on weight. Although it's good to get out of the calorie counting mode, it's ok to have an overall awareness of which foods are more calorie-dense, which is why most people can only eat a little fat before feeling full. But our bodies require fats to function properly, as the membrane around each cell is made up of a fatty layer. Fats are also the basis of many of our hormones.



Nutrition in a nutshell:

- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and veg - and do not stint on the fruit!
- Have small amounts of healthy fats
- Eat adequate amounts of protein
- Don't leave too long between meals/snacks (this is important for preventing urges to binge as well as keeping blood sugar levels steady)
- Drink a whole lot of water!

The flip side is that food can also cause problems for our brain chemistry and blood sugar levels, making it harder to avoid cravings and binge urges. Certain foods are made to be addictive. Sugar is a big factor, but sugar on its own isn't appealing – no one binges on a jar of honey! Fatty foods are also a problem – but again, who binges on butter alone.

It's the combination of sugar, fat and salt that is lethal – along with all the additives. Diet foods are the worst for this and usually have all sorts of rubbish in them to replace the fat and sugar. These can send our brain chemistry all over the place. I used to have a lot of diet drinks, before finally giving them up. After going a few years without them, I tried a diet coke and it tasted grim and gave me a splitting headache!

So how do we fit this in with letting go of forbidden food lists? What finally worked for me was focusing on indulgent foods that were good quality and didn't contain too many additives. This made it easy to avoid the highly chemically-laden foods. I would go for good quality chocolate, crisps that weren't covered in brightly coloured powders and flavours, sourdough bread...

Having said all that, it's still important to remember there really are no foods off limit. If that means sometimes eating poor quality food, because not doing this will make you feel you're depriving yourself and may trigger a binge, then by all means have some. You'll soon find your taste for these foods reduces massively, especially as you increase the amount of whole foods and fruit and vegetables in your diet.



What about weight loss?

Firstly it's important to say that not all binge eaters are overweight. Around 50% of the people I work with aren't. But I'm well aware it will be important for many, as it was for me. Wanting to get to the right weight is a perfectly natural goal, but when it comes to binge eating the weight loss is a side effect of ending the binges. This can be a little hard for some people to grasp at the start, because the dieting mentality dictates that you calorie count and under eat to lose weight. But once you cut out the huge quantities of calories consumed during a binge then that will absolutely have an effect on your weight and it will return to its natural setpoint. Have patience though as this doesn't happen overnight. There are also things you can include to support the liver that will help your body become more efficient at dealing with the foods we eat.

And the dreaded scales?

Weighing yourself can be both motivating and demotivating. It depends on the context and on each individual. Sometimes it can be good to get your starting weight and really face what it is, but you have to know that you can handle this and it won't make you feel so low you then aren't in the space to make the decision to change. I actually found it helpful to have a starting point, but please listen to your intuition on this. I then decided to weigh myself once a fortnight. I'd suggest maximum once a week, but ideally every two weeks or once a month is better. And if you'd rather ignore the scales altogether then that's totally fine! We always know when we are heading in the right direction anyway, without the need for scales.

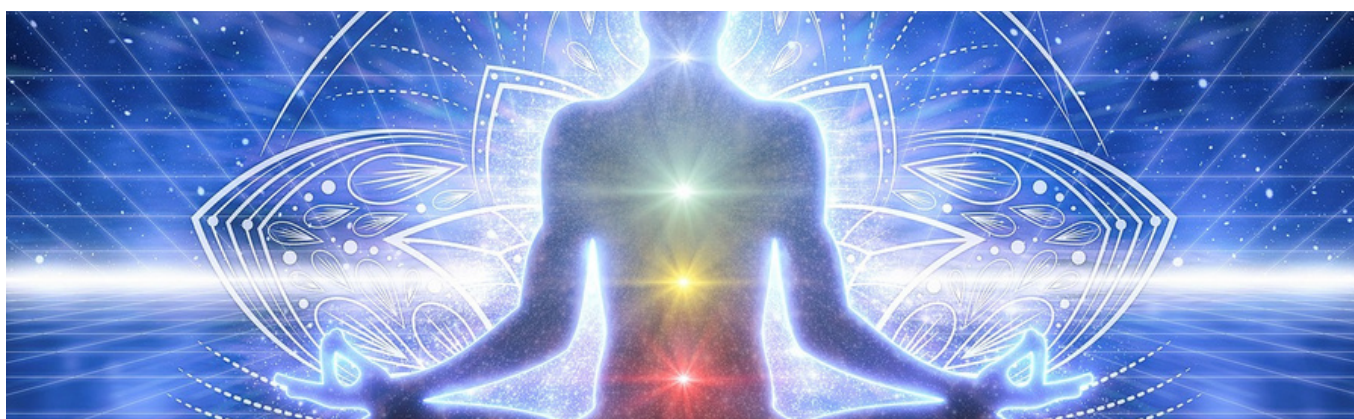


Taking nutrition to another level

This won't be for everyone, and that's fine. But I've included it for those of you that might resonate. Everything holds a frequency, both ourselves as human beings and the foods we eat. Our energy fields are intertwined with the energy fields of the foods we eat. Eating a high vibrational diet, light filled diet, has a direct impact on our emotional and mental body, as well as our physical body. These foods help create alignment within us, and are able to clear energetic blockages within the chakras, allowing them to surface in order to be fully integrated and healed.

But it's not a one way street. We also influence the foods we eat, especially those that hold a high water content - or living water as I like to call it. Dr Masaru Emoto clearly showed in his book *The Hidden Messages in Water*, just how much our emotions impact the formation of water crystals. Veda Austin takes this further through looking at the relationship we have with the consciousness of water.

What has this got to do with binge eating recovery? Well, when we see foods as living consciousness we are able to form a more reverent relationship with what we eat. At the same time if we can honour our own body, then we truly start to find peace with food. When you are at peace with what you eat, and at peace with being in your own body, then you no longer feel the need to escape through binge eating.



MASTERING Conscious Overeating

This is a really important part of long term recovery as it allows you to let go of the reins a little, or even a lot, but without giving in to a binge. Some of you might find it only happens once or twice and that's great. For others you might find this happens a lot to start with. Instead of panicking and caving in to a full scale binge realise that this was a very important learning curve and you'll find that you are then able to trust yourself to overeat without bingeing.

Let's face it, most people do overeat on occasions, its perfectly normal. There can be a fine line between overeating and bingeing, and I'm not sure I could give a technical definition of what the difference is other than you can feel it. A binge involves pressing an internal button that allows you to let go of all sense of control, because you've told yourself the restrictions will start again the next day. Whereas overeating in a conscious way still involves maintaining a certain degree of control, even though you are well aware you are eating beyond what your body needs.

As I support you through this programme it's important to let me know when this is happening, Be open about it and realise it's all part of the recovery. What you'll find is that because you know you can overeat, that it is an option, the thought of bingeing will become very unattractive. Allowing yourself to consciously overeat takes away the choice between sticking to what your body really needs from a nutritional point of view, and having a full scale binge. It feels like the middle ground, and this is exactly what is needed in that moment.



Intuition vs Planning

Allowing ourselves to be naturally drawn to the right foods in the right balance all the time doesn't suit everyone. There is no right and wrong about this, but many people find a little planning can be helpful. Mainly, because it means you aren't having to think about food all day and this is what we are trying to get away from. However, for others, the thought of writing even a rough meal plan is literally the last thing they want to do – in which case, trust your instincts and set the pen down!

I couldn't face another planning sheet, but found it useful to think ahead about the types of meals I might cook that week. This is natural after all, and makes shopping a lot easier.

It is definitely worth stocking the fridge with plenty of healthy foods that you know you can turn into meals you enjoy. Shopping daily for what you feel like is probably making things more challenging than they need be.

If you think a degree of forward planning would be helpful then do use meal planners. What I would say is don't get too far ahead of yourself. Maybe just focus on the following day, keep your plan flexible. and don't get too attached to what you have written down. Allow your intuition to make a few changes through the day if needed. For example, you might have been planning a large salad based meal for lunch but actually the weather is freezing and you feel like having something hot. Please don't stick to what you had written down just for the sake of it.



Being around trigger foods

This might come as a surprise, but from my experience, the only way for trigger foods to no longer be trigger foods is for them not to be banned from the house at all costs! An important part of my recovery was realising I could be around these foods - in fact, I needed to be around these foods and remain in control (albeit in a loose way) in order for them to lose their power over me.

So I would suggest you buy a beautiful tin and fill it with delicious treats. Go for ones that are individually wrapped, such as Ferrero Roche or Mini Green & Blacks. Have a few things in the cupboard that would usually be seen as trigger foods, such as bags of crisps and buns. Buy quality foods and avoid the chemically-laden varieties. I stocked up on multi-packs of the Eat Real crisps and wholemeal hot cross buns (which I put in the freezer so I could take one out at a time).

This may seem like asking for trouble but if these foods remain trigger foods, even if you successfully keep away from them, it will always feel like there is potential to lose control around them. To start with it may feel like this makes things a little harder, especially on days when you might have overeaten (consciously), but actually having these foods around reduces the likelihood you'll feel the need to go to the shops to buy treat foods. Avoid the supermarket when you are wanting these types of food, as old habits can die hard and it's easy to find yourself picking up whole packets of things and pretty soon the binge mentality sets in. When you have these foods in the house you don't need to go to the shops, as you know you can just dip into your tin. What you'll find is that a couple of Individually wrapped sweets and a packet of crisps or slice of toast with butter will probably be enough. You've also taken away the dilemma of feeling like you have to finish up all the so called naughty foods to give yourself a clean slate for the next day.



The only way to get over the physical and psychological pull these foods have is to be around them all the time. It took a couple of months for me, and each person will be individual, but ultimately it didn't take long to get to the point where I'd even forget they were in the cupboard. This would never have happened if I had only allowed these foods in the house on special days. Frankly, it just gives them far too much reverence and importance in your life!

I wanted to be free of feeling like any food had control over me and this meant facing my fear of having those foods around me all the time. Don't be afraid that you'll binge on these foods just because they are there - if you've made that deep internal decision to let the bingeing go, then have faith in yourself that you can stick to that decision.

“Whatever you fight you strengthen, and what you resist persists. To offer no resistance to life is to be in a state of grace, ease and lightness”

ECKHART TOLLE



TOP PRACTICAL TIPS For Success!

1. Remember the only rule - that you must eat enough food! I cannot stress this enough - it is incredibly difficult to move forward long term if you don't.
2. Pick a start day that doesn't involve too many commitments so you can put the focus squarely on you as far as possible. Put it in the calendar and remember that date!
3. Start each subsequent day with a minute or two of silence on waking, Reminding yourself of the decision you've made to leave bingeing behind. Notice any emotions that come up and allow yourself to sit with them. They are only emotions and have no power over you unless you let them.
4. Whatever you do, don't start day one with an empty fridge! Stock up on gorgeous, healthy, fresh foods – things that inspire!. Whether you are planning ahead or not, it's important to fill your fridge with a rainbow of colours. And don't stint on the exotic fruits, just remember you'll be saving yourself money when you stop bingeing. Have a container of ready chopped fruit salad in the fridge – I found this really helpful especially in the evening. Dates are a great option for a healthy sweet fix too.
5. Don't eat meals you don't like. This is a common mistake, especially when living on your own and doing batch cooking. I wasn't always the best cook and often found myself trying to work through a large batch of pretty awful soup! If you keep forcing yourself to finish your batch, in the end you can feel quite resentful about it – basically a precursor to saying “I deserve a treat”, which can often mean a binge. So please, please, please, find healthy meals you actually like!!! Binning the odd meal isn't the end of the world and is less wasteful than bingeing on a whole lot of junk food.



6. When we first start tuning in and using more intuition to guide our choices it's important to watch out for the fact that you may find your true appetite is actually not that big and you naturally feel you don't need to eat much. There is nothing wrong with this, but don't forget the most important part of this approach is to eat enough. If you find yourself thinking "oh, I'm really not so hungry so I think I'll just skip this meal" the likelihood is this will trigger the primal centres of your brain and lead to a binge later. So whilst hunger signals are vital, if you aren't getting them reliably, don't start skipping meals, at least in the first 3-4 months.

7. Differentiate between overeating and binge eating - There is often a very thin line between the two, as I've mentioned, but it bears repeating. You may very well be overeating on all the foods you used to eat during a binge. However, there is a degree of holding back, and there is no sense of starting again the next day. With overeating there is no next day, no new start. Yes, you might decide from a balanced place that you would like refrain from overeating again the next day, but this is very different to the whole "let's start again from scratch" scenario.



8. Get Support! Recovery requires daily support as it takes time and perseverance. It also works best when you can be completely open and honest about where you are at. Having someone there to support you is a form of accountability, not to that other person, rather it's about you being answerable to yourself. I know this isn't always easy to do, at least to start with, as binge eating is such a secretive thing. But I see with my clients how important it is for them to share what's really going on, and when they realise that they are the only ones judging themselves, it becomes easier and easier to be totally open. Plus, when you have support, it's a lot more enjoyable!

*"Our greatest glory is
not in never falling,
but in rising every
time we fall"*

CONFUCIUS

Booking A Free Starter Session

If you found this guide helpful and would like to take it further or find out more, then do book a free starter session using the link below:

<https://calendly.com/oliviashakespear/starter-session>

Or alternatively, find the booking links on my website:

www.lightworknutrition.co.uk



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