

Top 20 Psychological Blocks to Weight Loss

CHECKLIST



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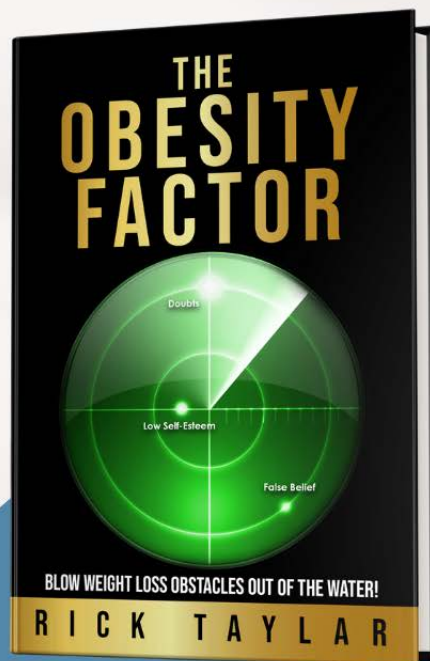
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Responses To Stress

One of the main reasons people overeat or binge on unhealthy foods is a desire to feel better, to comfort themselves. This is most often in response to stress.

- ✓ Learning to reduce stress is important, as is developing coping strategies for managing your response to stress that does not involve food.
- ✓ Tracking what you eat while also noting your emotional state is essential when trying to identify stress-related psychological blocks.
- ✓ What are the conditions that cause you to binge, reach for unhealthy choices, or to overeat? Getting a handle on this will help you avoid these in the future.

An “All-or-Nothing” Mindset

Many people have trouble changing their behaviors and relationship with food because they focus too much on absolutes. I can't start eating healthy at this meal right now because I made an unhealthy choice earlier in the day. I can't begin a new way of eating until I have completely rid my home of unhealthy foods (which I should hurry up at eat right now). Diets are often abandoned rather quickly because of one mistake or slip, rather than choosing to move forward with the same, healthy intention that began your efforts.

- ✓ **Focusing on health rather than weight is one way to avoid this type of thinking. Looking for victories and milestones that do not involve your weight can help you adopt healthier habits.**
 - Do you have more energy?
 - Are you sleeping better?
 - Do you notice you can concentrate better when you eat healthier?
 - Are you able to walk with less pain?
 - Do you see a difference in your skin or hair?
 - All of these are influenced by your diet, so you should focus on other ways that what you are eating is improving your life and health.

Allowing Mental Turmoil To Distract You

Changing your mental habits and patterns of behavior takes concentration, motivation, and dedication. When you are preoccupied with mental turmoil, you may lose focus or rationalize your unhealthy choices as something you do not “have time for” because you have not adequately dealt with these issues.

- ✓ **Whatever your emotional turmoil or distress, it is important that you deal with it in a healthy way to give you the mental and emotional capacity you need to focus on your health goals.**
 - Think carefully about the emotions you are carrying around with you that are not serving you in your life.
 - What regrets, grudges, sorrows, or issues do you find yourself thinking about? What do you worry about?
 - Getting in touch with these deeper feelings and problems is crucial to moving past them and finding happiness to allow you to become the healthy person you want to be.

Depression

There are many ways that depression can interfere with weight loss efforts. For some, depression leads to weight gain, while for others, it can prevent weight loss. If you have depression, you are more likely to have difficulty sleeping, for example, which can contribute to overeating and stress-eating. And antidepressants can often cause weight gain, as well.

- ✓ Learning to manage your depression is crucial if you want to continue on your road to better health, as mental health is just as important as your physical well-being.
- ✓ Talk with your doctor or mental health professional about your depression symptoms and treatment options.
- ✓ Do not suffer needlessly with this mental health disorder. There are even online tools and apps available today that can connect you with a therapist whenever you need.

Lack Of Knowledge Or Denial

- ✓ If you are rationalizing being overweight because you are “still healthy,” then it is time to confront your ignorance.
- ✓ Make an appointment with your doctor. Get a complete physical and have your blood tested. Talk with your doctor not only about your current health but about your risk factors for developing chronic illnesses and how your weight is affecting your life. Be honest about all your symptoms and issues.
- ✓ Armed with all this information, your doctor can explain to you how being overweight, over time, cuts your life expectancy and affects your long-term health.
- ✓ While you may not exactly be “sick” right now, you are certainly headed in that direction. Get in touch with the facts if you want to overcome this mental barrier that is keeping you overweight.

Comparing Yourself To Others

One of the reasons some people have a tough time sticking to their goals and following through on a commitment to lose weight is they focus too much on other people. They worry what other people at the gym might think of them or how other people have been successful in improving their health.

- ✓ Instead of looking around at other people, it is time to look inward at yourself. What is it that YOU want to do?
- ✓ How do YOU want to feel?
- ✓ The most important person you need to compare yourself to is YOU. Building your self-worth and worrying only about what your body needs and what makes you feel strong and healthy are crucial to making lasting changes for your way of eating.

Past Trauma

If you have experience with abuse, bullying, or trauma in your past or present, it could be interfering with your ability to lose weight. Many people who have survived abuse or trauma use eating as a protective mechanism of comfort, so trying to change your eating habits equates to changing your coping strategies for handling your pain.

Like ignoring less severe emotional turmoil, neglecting your emotions related to your past trauma will keep you on the same cycle that is preventing your healthy transformation.

- ✓ If you are the victim of abuse or trauma, it is important that you get the right professional help to allow you to process, forgive, and move forward from your psychological barrier.
- ✓ Getting the help, you need to improve your mental state and learn to deal with your past trauma is the only way you will ever enjoy happiness and health in the future.

Fear Of Achievement

Your brain may actually be resisting you in the accomplishment of your goals. There are all sorts of reasons why you may subconsciously be stopping yourself from achieving your goal, so you may need to do some digging to discover yours.

Fear is a powerful emotion. Other than necessary concerns that protect you from apparent harm, being afraid rarely leads to positive outcomes.

- ✓ So, it is essential that you acknowledge your fears and try to tap into the origin of these anxieties.
- ✓ What do you really fear? If your fears were to come true, what would happen? Most of the time, our fears are unfounded or unnecessary, but it is not until you hold them up to the light of day that you can see this for yourself.

Always Looking For More

Another reason people gain weight and fill their lives with food, drink, and other unhealthy habits is that they are trying to fill a void within themselves. If you have ever met someone who has a large appetite for life (as well as food, attention, or other vices), it is most likely that they are compensating for lack of something else.

- ✓ True happiness comes when you can attain security, peace, and love. Without these, you will feel incomplete, which can lead to behaviors that are trying to fill the hole.

If you feel like, no matter how much you eat or how much you “have” in life, you are still not fulfilled, then it is time to investigate where the void actually lays.

- Where in your life do you lack security, love, or peace?
- And what behaviors are you using to fill this gap in your life that are contributing to your weight gain?
- Being honest with yourself is the only tangible way to get in touch with this emptiness and find newer, healthier ways to fill it.

A Negative Outlook

Your brain can also hold you back with a mindset that says, no matter what, you will not be happy anyway, so why bother? This type of negative attitude saps your motivation and robs you of the self-discipline you need to make lasting changes.

- ✓ To overcome negative thinking, you must work hard to replace each negative thought with a positive one. You must consider what would happen if things DID work out, if you DID change your life, if you WERE healthier and thinner.
- ✓ You need to visualize the life you want and believe that it is possible for that to come true. Overcoming a pessimistic view of the world can be difficult, but it is possible with the right attention.

Fear Of Wasting Food

If you grew up with food security issues, if you are overly frugal, or if you have deep convictions about conservation, these mindsets could create a certain attitude about food waste that can dictate your eating habits.

- ✓ If this describes you, it is time to confront this phobia.
 - What is the worst that will happen if you throw some food away?
 - Is your small contribution to food waste really the cause of the world's problems?
 - Are there other changes you can make in your life to ease your food guilt?
 - Where does this emotion come from?
 - Getting in touch with these answers and uncovering your guilt or convictions about food and waste will be critical for surpassing this mental block.

Neglecting Your Own Self-Care

For many people, especially women, the demands of everyone else come well before your own. Work, family, friends, and partners are placed at the top of the priority list, leaving little room for your personal needs or priorities. This includes taking care of your nutrition, exercise, and mental health needs. Instead of feeling like you are in charge of everyone else, try giving responsibility to others in your life for their own needs.

- ✓ Involve your whole family in the planning and preparation of meals. Make sure you are sharing responsibilities with others, including co-workers, colleagues, and your spouse, and not taking on added duties that others can perform.
- ✓ Schedule time for yourself, including getting enough exercise and sleep, and be sure to plan meals that will help your health.
- ✓ Building time into your life to take care of yourself will show others in your life how important this is and serve as a significant role model for your children, as well.

Relying Solely On Willpower

Your willpower is a limited resource. You start the day with the highest amount you will have, and it decreases throughout the day as you encounter stress, emotions, and circumstances with which you must contend.

- ✓ Willpower is not enough to help you resist temptations and keep you on track. And simply relying on willpower will surely keep you on the weight loss roller coaster, because you will never have enough to help you win the battle in the end.
- ✓ Learn to use your willpower strategically. Once you recognize that it is in limited supply, prepare to use it when you really need it.
- ✓ If you will need the willpower to resist indulgent foods at a party later in the day, use other strategies for helping you cope with stress in the morning.
- ✓ Pick your battles when it comes to making hard choices.

Self-Criticism

You are your own worst critic, and your self-criticism could be eroding the confidence you need to succeed in your weight loss efforts. Many people find it easier to focus on the things they are doing wrong or the ways they are not perfect in their lives rather than the ways they are trying to make more positive changes in their lives.

- ✓ Instead of being critical of your efforts or choices, concentrate on the positive moves you have made to improve your health.
 - What are the unhealthy foods or habits you are avoiding?
 - What healthier alternatives have you added to your diet?
 - What are the health improvements you have noticed so far?
 - What are some of the healthier habits you are adopting into your life, and how do these make you happy?

Body Shame

Hate or loathing of your body is a major psychological block that could be controlling your ability to lose weight. Whether you feel embarrassed about your general appearance, have shame about a specific aspect of your body, or have a traumatic event in your past that has shaped your body image, recognizing your body shame is the first step in overcoming it.

- ✓ Share your body shame with someone you trust. If you want to make peace with your body and your feelings about food, you need to talk about it. If you do not want to share it with a friend or loved one, write about it in a journal or private blog.
- ✓ Share your body shame stories with a professional or join an online support community.
- ✓ Talking about your body image issues can help you learn to deal with them and take steps toward overcoming the habits that have led to this point.

Your Identity Focuses on Food

Some people have created an entire persona or life that revolves around food. You call yourself a “foodie,” you plan vacations based on cuisines, you can’t imagine a get together that does not revolve

around large meals and endless eating. Your life is based on food. It is who you are. It is what you do. So, if we take away the food, what is left, right?

- ✓ There is nothing that says being a foodie must be about unhealthy food or overindulgence. Loving food is great. It is essential to learn to love the right foods and in the right amounts. If you can't let go of this part of your identity, then it is time to shift what foods you love, so that those same foods can love you in return.

You Are Not Comfortable With Being Uncomfortable

Many of the psychological barriers we construct around weight loss have to do with not wanting to feel uncomfortable or to abandon your comfort zone. Your brain looks to return to the status quo, find that equilibrium that has been so comforting up until now.

- ✓ If you want to find peace in your life, it is crucial that you first learn to deal with discomfort.
- ✓ Creating discomfort in your life and practicing dealing with this is one way to help you overcome this mental block.
- ✓ Find ways to push your boundaries and place you outside of your comfort zone. Explore new opportunities to expand your horizons and push yourself into situations that allow you to become just a little more confident with being uncomfortable in your life.
- ✓ The more you practice this, the easier it will be to overcome this mental block when it crops up.

Failure To Prioritize Your Changes

Sometimes, we can say something is particularly important to us, yet continue to make decisions that show otherwise. If you want to make changes in your life, it is not enough to make plans. You must act. And when you tell yourself you "don't have time" for healthy choices, then you are sending a signal that your health is less important than other parts of your life.

- ✓ If you do not have time for health, then what do you have time for? If you do not take care of yourself now, when will you?

- ✓ Schedule the time
- ✓ Make time
- ✓ Get rid of other things that take time. Do something

Your Network Brings You Down

Another block that may be interfering with your ability to lose weight is the subtle and not-so-subtle messages you are receiving from your friends and support system. Your mind can have a tough time going against the grain when everyone else around you are making unhealthy choices or encouraging your unhealthy habits. It is hard to resist peer pressure sometimes, and many people will try to convince you that you do not need to lose weight simply to make themselves feel better.

- ✓ Make friends with the right people. Surround yourself with examples of how you want to be. Engage in healthy activities that connect you to healthy people.
- ✓ If your friends are always dieting but never losing, ask yourself how this is helping you. Get the right support if you want to make the right changes.

You Doubt Your Own Ability To Lose Weight

“I can’t” are probably the two most powerful words when it comes to weight loss, because the second you believe them, guess what?

You will not be successful in your weight loss efforts. Your personal belief in your ability to change your habits and find new, healthier ways to eat and act can hold you back or help you succeed. You see, we want to believe ourselves.

We trust ourselves. But the unfortunate truth is, your mind is the last person you should trust when it comes to losing weight.

- ✓ Decide right away to no longer trust your inner voice or listen to your own mind. Decide that you are going to trust instead the views of experts, doctors, and researchers, who tell you that it is possible to lose weight, you can develop healthier habits, and you are capable of making lasting change in your life.

- ✓ Ignore your own beliefs for some time, and you will start to see the differences that will prove your doubts wrong and allow you to succeed.

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