

Reasons for your Food Choices

This sheet is all about identifying the reasons you choose to eat what you eat AND systematically changing any unhealthy reasons - the habits, triggers, emotions, and other factors that can drive eating. The goal of the exercises on this sheet are to 1) identify factors that influence your food choices, 2) work through emotional triggers, 3) identify your self-talk and learn to make it positive, 4) change your view of food (learn to see it as fuel), 5) write healthy goals, and 6) finish with a health contract with yourself. Here are some excerpts (this is just a small amount of the information and exercises found in the actual 6-page handout):

From page 1:

Healthy eating is about so much more than food and weight. Many other factors come into play when you make a food choice. These factors often include emotions, perceptions, pressures, and desires. If it were only about food, everyone would be able to follow a healthy meal plan with no problem...no desire to "cheat," no bargaining, no sabotage, and no reverting to bad habits. However, we all know that these tendencies occur. This is why it is very important to get to the bottom of your food choices - to figure out what drives eating habits and to take control of your food choices!...

From page 2:

Emotional Eating

If eating and weight loss were only about food, this would be easy. You would simply get a meal plan, follow it, and lose weight. However, losing weight and eating right is about so much more than food. We've already identified some of the reasons why you might eat. They may include:

level of hunger, media influence, the influence and needs of family/friends, peer pressure, the way you ate as you grew up, religious tradition, food availability, ability to buy food, ethnicity, perceived nutritional value, social/moral concerns, habit, and emotions.

There may also be other reasons, but this is a good start. If you identified emotions as an influence on your eating habits, work through these questions and learn to eat for the right reasons!

From page 4:

Change the Way you Look at Food

For many people, food plays a much larger role than just providing nutrients for your body. After going through these questions, you may now realize that you are one of these people. However, it is not too late to change your relationship with food.

Think about putting gas in your car. Why do you do it? Do you put gas in your car because you are sad or anxious? Because you feel an overwhelming compulsion to do so? Because a TV commercial triggered you to want to? Probably not. You put gas in your car because your car needs fuel to go.

If you are ready to give this new way of thinking about food a try, work on your goals and read the contract below...

From Page 5:

Goals and Motivation Exercise

What is(are) your weight loss and health goal(s)?

When writing a goal, be specific and be measurable. Try to focus on what you can control (such as your actions) instead of what you cannot control (your weight changes). Also, give yourself a deadline...

From page 6:

Contract

It's decision time. Are you ready to commit to looking at food as fuel and to a healthy lifestyle? Are you ready to promise yourself that you will try this program for 3 months? What do you have to lose? This commitment has to be for YOU...your well-being, your health, your self-image...

"Those who think they have no time for healthy eating will sooner or later have to find time for illness." - modified from : Edward Stanley (1826-1893) from The Conduct of Life