

## Emotional Eating

Written by Valecia Weeks, CMT  
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Do you remember the song, “I get so emotional baby, every time I think of you. I get so emotional, baby, aint it shocking what ..... can do”? Now, you fill in the blank. I think I remember hearing the word “love” in that spot; but now-a-days, it would be appropriate to put the word “food” in that blank.

What is the single, most common problem that most dieters face when trying to lose weight? Will power? Nah. Temptation? Sometimes. Emotional eating? Bingo! That's why it takes so much more than good intentions and information about nutrition and exercise to be successful. The ability to manage difficult situations and feelings effectively--without turning to food and eating--is a necessary foundation of a successful weight loss plan and healthy lifestyle.

There are ways to stop emotional eating in the tracks. These steps range very widely from an emotional support group to basic relaxation techniques. Other options include:

- Keeping a food journal so that you can identify what emotions trigger emotional eating
- Cultivating mental and emotional well being through massage and/or yoga
- Learn and practice healthy ways to solve problems. It's important to practice and master problem solving techniques before you get into a crisis and make a mad dash to the pantry.

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The above 3 steps can take time. I know, sometimes - ladies - we need a “quick fix”. There are times when we need to pull something out-tha-bag in a hurry. Here is a 3-minute trick for handling stressful situations in the moment.

Minute 1: Stay Grounded. Take a few deep breaths. (You can also count to 10, if that helps.) If the stressful situation involves someone else, take a timeout and agree to continue the discussion in a few minutes. Notice the physical sensations you are experiencing. Whether it's a sinking feeling, turmoil in your stomach, tension in your hands or jaw, restricted breathing, or heat on the back of your neck, try to name the feelings that go with the sensation. Is that sinking feeling fear, or dread? Is the heat a symptom of anger?

Minute 2: Reality Check. Reading your own thoughts into someone else's words Example: Someone made a mildly critical or unsupportive remark to you, and you feel completely devastated. Reality: The more bothered you are by such remarks, the more likely it is that you are being overly critical of yourself. When you treat yourself with respect, what others say won't matter nearly so much.

Minute 3: Put Things into Perspective. Most common problems that you face in everyday life are much easier to handle when you keep them in perspective and avoid making mountains out of molehills. Ask yourself these questions: How big a deal is this, anyway? If I knew I was going to die in a week, would this be something I would want to spend this minute of my remaining time on? Will any bad things happen if I postpone thinking about this until I have more time to figure things out?

Use this approach whenever your thoughts or situations begin to feel overwhelming, and you'll quickly find that the mountains that seem impossible at first can quickly morph into what they really are—manageable hills that you DO have the ability to climb. All it takes is three little minutes of your time.