

SOOTHING & COMFORT



Your answers indicate that the primary drivers of your overeating are
Soothing & Comfort.

By identifying and understanding the central drivers of your emotional eating you can begin shifting the way you think about food, and begin feeling more empowered to take charge of your choices.

If the need for comfort is driving your overeating, it's likely that you experience one or more of the following:

- ___ Find a sense of protection or escape in food.
- ___ Eat when you feel empty emotionally.
- ___ Feel food is your friend, one that won't let you down.
- ___ Turn to food anytime you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed.
- ___ Find yourself searching for food for reasons you don't understand – you just end up in front of the fridge, or pantry.
- ___ Are more interested in the available food than the people present.
- ___ End up overeating at night when you have little stimulation.
- ___ Find that you've finished eating but don't remember doing it.
- ___ Often feel unworthy, not good enough, or not safe enough.

After reviewing the list above, take some time to think over ways that you might be using food for stress or overwhelm and jot those down as well.





Here's How Eating Helps You Comfort

[Eating for comfort is completely rational.](#) Eating may be helping you in one or more of the following ways:

- ___ As a means of nurturing yourself when you feel depleted
- ___ As a socially acceptable way to disconnect from the current situation
- ___ To prevent tears or other emotional reaction in an inappropriate setting
- ___ As a means of protection, perhaps due to abuse or traumatic experience.

It's normal to seek food for solace when you feel vulnerable or lonely. Not only is the act of eating comforting, but if you've experienced any past abuse or trauma, body fat may feel comforting by wrapping you in a protective layer.

Eating calms our nervous system, taking our body out of "fight/flight/freeze" mode and into "relax and digest" mode. In addition, eating stimulates the release of oxytocin, a hormone that helps us feel safe and connected. On a very basic human level, food is, in fact, comforting. If you often feel stressed and overwhelmed, food may seem like the easiest and quickest way to shift your mind, body and emotions into a more relaxed state. You may have simply developed a conditioned response to reach for food because it works, if only temporarily. our parasympathetic nervous system which counters the fight or flight stress response.



Here's The Downside

Eating works to ease vulnerability or loneliness only for a short while. These emotions will rapidly return and propel you to eat again. Additionally, if you aren't making careful food choices you might not be giving your body the nutrients it needs to sustain balance and energy over the long term. And while your desire for protection may be one of the drivers of your eating, it's likely that your conscious mind won't be happy with any resulting weight gain.



It's possible that you have lost touch with how to differentiate between physical emptiness and emotional emptiness such that you're confusing hunger and fullness signals. Your body may have even forgotten how to relax.

Additionally, you may believe that you should be able to do more than you're physically capable of so you push yourself and use food in an effort to relieve exhaustion.



Here's Something To Try

Practice pausing.

The next time you want to eat, pause for a few seconds. Are you truly, physically hungry? Or, is there another feeling at the forefront? Can you identify that feeling? Take a few deep breaths, and allow yourself to accept and hold the emotion, as fully as you can. Remind yourself that it is okay for you to experience this emotion.

The goal of this activity is to help you become more aware of what you're experiencing when you feel like eating. You can also practice pausing at any other time, such as before giving an answer. This is also an excellent way to avoid saying yes when you really mean no.

Be patient with yourself as you practice this. It sounds easy but it's actually a very challenging skill. If you find that you can't remember to pause, or can't delay eating long enough to identify what's going on physically and emotionally that's only a sign that you could benefit from more support.

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You Are Not Alone



Maggie was overeating and bingeing and didn't understand why. She liked healthy foods, but she found herself eating too much of them, or picking up junk food that she didn't even really care for. She said that she didn't have issues with anxiety or low self-esteem. However, as Maggie started to dive into her experience, she discovered that this wasn't true. In reality, she had a pit in her stomach all the time. She was neglecting self-care and refusing to acknowledge that she felt ashamed, damaged and inadequate.

Sometimes, after letting all of those emotions well up inside of her, she had angry outbursts, which later left her flooded with guilt. To avoid of all these complicated, painful feelings, she was numbing herself with food, which only made the feelings build up even more.

Once Maggie did the hard work of acknowledging that she did struggle with low self-esteem and anxiety, she began to practice strategies that soothed rather than numbed. She started breathing deeply to better connect with her body and understand her emotional, mental and physical needs. Over time, she developed greater self-compassion, self-acceptance and self-confidence. When, after allowing herself to feel it, she finally released the fear in her belly, she said she felt like she'd given birth. Without all that fear, there was new room for self-care. She started to make more consistent, balanced choices because she believed she truly deserved to feel healthy and calm.



Another woman, Cheryl, longed for connection and acceptance, but felt unworthy. In social situations, she often felt rejected or out of place, as though she didn't – and couldn't – belong. Whether she was filling her plate at a work party or eating ice cream at home at night, she used food to protect herself from feelings of vulnerability, emptiness and loneliness.

When Cheryl brought greater awareness to her overeating, she began to question why she felt so out of place. She discovered that others weren't really rejecting her. Instead, she had such a low sense of self-worth that she perceived rejection everywhere. As Cheryl unpacked the emotions driving her to overeat, she realized that she was stuck in a pattern of withdrawing, self-isolating and self-criticizing. She worked to change the story she was telling herself. In truth, she was worthy, and she could belong.



Many people find that emotions of stress or overwhelm are the primary driver of their unwanted overeating. However, all of us at some point experience the other drivers. For this reason, we will be sending you the other reports as well.

And to further help you understand your unwanted overeating we will also be sending you a free e-course via email. We hope that this course brings you more clarity on what is driving your eating.

