



Emotional Eating: Gaining Control Through Action

Gaining control over your emotional eating through action starts by deciding not to eat in response to a difficult emotion or situation and then by finding something else to do instead! It is helpful to have a list of instantly effective methods of control for when your emotional “hunger” hits. You can build a repertoire of “band-aid” diversions from eating and write them in a journal. For example:

- When I feel angry I will not eat. I will listen to some music.
- When I feel lonely I will not eat. I will treat myself with a candle-lit bubble bath.
- When I am worried about something, I will not eat. I will go for a walk.
- When I am disappointed about something, I won’t eat chocolate cake. I will drink a cup of my favorite tea.

Other diversions might include calling a friend, watching a movie, gardening, or relaxing in the sun.

Although it is important to control your eating, you don’t need to deprive yourself. Limit, but do not eliminate, some of the foods you crave. When you crave a piece of chocolate, first ask yourself if you really want it. If the answer is yes, then enjoy a few pieces. Eating balanced and good tasting meals with enough fat, protein and carbohydrate will also help to fill you nutritionally and physiologically, and minimize cravings.

Exercise is also an excellent way to manage emotional eating. To keep weight off and calm the emotional storms that compel you to eat, try taking a daily 30-minute walk.

Through action, reflection, and awareness you can start to take control of your emotional eating and make positive steps toward finding fulfillment in your life. It’s a challenge, but you’re worth it!