

YOUR BRAIN ON FOOD

UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

- Reptilian Brain (primitive, fight or flight, conditioning, habits, subconscious)
- Mammalian Brain (midbrain, feeling, limbic system, craving)
- Thinking Brain (reasoning, knowledge, data, facts, intention)

YOUR THINKING BRAIN AND FOOD

“I know the facts now. I learned so much at Skyterra. I am excited to eat healthy starting on Monday.”

- Scientists say 95% of who we are today are subconscious programs that you memorized. This is why change is so hard, because that 5% (who you are when you want to change a habit) is fighting against 95% of you.

YOUR EMOTIONAL BRAIN AND FOOD

“I’m having a food craving. I had a really hard day. Food gives me relief.”

- If you’re someone who is chronically vulnerable to negative emotions you will miss this food more than others because it “numbs” negative feelings. Like food is valium; it soaks up byproducts of stress, leaving you relaxed. Here’s where the emotional attachment happens.
- If you chronically lack positive emotions (Hurt, angry, anxious, lonely, tired) your body needs an intense stimuli to experience elation. The food gives you a high and you’re more vulnerable to becoming addicted to it.

YOUR REPTILIAN BRAIN AND FOOD

“This is what I do when I get home from work. I’ve been cleaning my plate since childhood...I see food I eat food”

- This brain is governed by the promise of reward. Think Pavlov’s Dog. Couch=netflix and popcorn.
- Your work is to Wake Up the Thinking Brain when it’s hijacked by the craving, the sugar, the compulsion. Become aware and conscious of what you are doing.
- Good news is your addiction, compulsion, habit, attachment to ice cream is a behavior you have learned in your life, not who you really are. It is a set of old memorized behavior that you can un-memorize.

THEORIES TO UNDERSTAND

Habituation (repeated exposure to habit weakens brain's ability to take action) and Neuroplasticity (the brain doesn't stop growing and new habits and actions begin to create neural activity--reshapes the brain).

HOW TO REWIRE THE BRAIN

**Wired by Nature, Changeable by Nurture.*

1. Prime your environment for change: Stop buying the ice cream for one week. That's your only task. No diet, no rules, just get it out of sight at home and work. One week. If others have them, they're theirs and not yours. This is not forever, but to detox the brain and body so you can begin to form a new habit.
2. Your brain lights up like a christmas tree when it sees something it wants and signals the stress response (a craving). A craving is not an emergency. It's uncomfortable and intense, but just like hunger it's not an emergency. You won't die. Your brain makes you believe you are, but remember, you won't. How can you get through these 3-15 minutes? Finding ways to comfort and soothe yourself is essential.
3. Self Compassion. Self Compassion. Self Compassion. Breathe. Feel. Honor what is happening within you. What are you needing? What is the most loving thing you can do yourself right now? If it is food you turn to, remember you're human, and you're worthy of love and forgiveness. Remember how it feels when you eat like this, and ask yourself if you want to feel this way again. Let it go and move forward. When making changes in life, relapse is part of the process. Compassion is key to keeping the momentum.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Women Food and God by Geneen Roth
- The Self Compassion Diet by Jean Fain
- The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg