

The Person I Fight With Never Fights Back

by Linda Fiverson

Feeling entrapped with thoughts that you cannot let go of is like keeping your brain in prison. Very often the food decisions we make are made after many inner conversations and discussions as to whether we should or should not have that particular food. The same conversations that we have had with ourselves over and over again....and for so long... When does it end?

Unfortunately, the food industry is dedicated to making unhealthy food appear more appetizing and addicting than ever before. They spend fortunes of money and time creating foods that have different ratios of sugar, fat and sodium to keep our senses peaked and anxious for our next "fix."

We can look at a plate of ice cream and we suddenly become fixated on wanting to have ONE TASTE and as a result we become unable to think of anything else. We can walk into a bakery and smell the sweetness of the pastries and again become possessed by the thoughts of eating cake.

What happens in the mind is the same argument we have repetitively but cannot fight back enough to win. Yes, we do have arguments in our brain, but usually we lose. It's because we love the instant gratification and the happiness we get from the junk foods. But the happiness wears off...and it happens quickly. Our bodies have been trained to crave that food to get that happy feeling again and again and again. It's amazing how fast the addiction sucks you in and doesn't let go.

While all this eating is going on, our minds are having a constant battle. I've always said, "If you don't have a good weapon, don't get into the fight." This is one fight we never win.

Being creatures of habit, very often our unhealthy overeating is the result of repetitive behaviors over a long period of time. Try to recognize the situations that cause you to overeat, where they come from, how you felt beforehand and when you started to eat. This awareness will help you begin your path to fighting back. This is the way we re-train our brains: Mindful thinking vs. mindless thinking.

If you drive home every day past your favorite fast food place, you can't help but think how much you want to stop to get that burger and fries. When you come home from work your first thought might be eating chips while watching TV. Breaking habits means breaking the old rules. Not having the chips or not driving past the fast food place is the best option but having alternative choices to snack on will make you feel like you are gaining power over this.

Fiverson's Five "R's"...

1. Recognize and accept the problem.
2. Recondition your brain to learn what the feeling of being full is like. Just because something is in front of you doesn't mean you must eat it. Many of us think we're full, but we're not satisfied. Not satisfied means we are still craving "happy" foods which are usually something sweet or salty or crunchy.

3. Rethink: We all know that eating those sweets and carbs might make us feel good for a half-hour but our fight is that deep inside it's a terrible idea. Instead of focusing on the immediate pleasure of the food, concentrate on how great and proud you will feel later on winning this round of fighting with yourself.
 - Set up new thoughts: "I don't eat French fries; not even one."
 - I don't eat candy; not even one.
 - I don't eat while driving, only sitting at the table.
 - I don't eat with my hands; except for fruit and vegetables.
4. Remove the emotional relationship you have with eating that food. Think before your head and heart are getting involved with what you eat.
5. Restructure the way you make food related "outings."
 - Make a list when you go food shopping and plan so you are prepared.
 - Fast food restaurants and vending machines make money from our impulses. Learn to pass them by without stopping or bypass them altogether.
 - Plan ahead of time what you are going to eat when you are going to a restaurant. Go online to read restaurant menus before you go out if possible.
 - Ask what's being served when invited to a party or gathering. Suggest bringing a healthy choice (enough for everyone) that others can enjoy and will keep you on track.

Choose high protein meals because studies show they are the most satiating and they keep you satisfied longer than carbohydrates and sugars do. Did you know that proteins empty out of the stomach at 4 calories per minute and simple sugar empties at 10 calories per minute?

Since these changes aren't easy, don't be disappointed or surprised when there are some fights you will have difficulty with or can't win. Don't make it worse by getting discouraged; no one cares and no one knows except you. Pick yourself up and keep going. Fight back and stay dedicated to this: your power will be recharged every successful day. Time passes quickly and before you know it, the "fighter" against you will sound like a whisperer!

Linda Fiveson is a Nutritionist in Syosset, N.Y. In addition to nutrition and weight loss counseling, she manufactures and sells her own line of foods. Fiveson's Fabulous "Fakes" have NO flour, NO sugar, NO gluten and NO refined carbohydrates. For more information call (516) 496-2300 or visit her website at www.lindafiveson.com