

CLASS



# HOW EMOTIONAL EATING BEGINS

Eating to Manage Emotions  
is Learned in Early Life



[nevereatyouremotionsagain.com](http://nevereatyouremotionsagain.com)

**MARION HOLT**

 never eat your emotions again

# HOW EMOTIONAL EATING BEGINS

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**MARION HOLT**



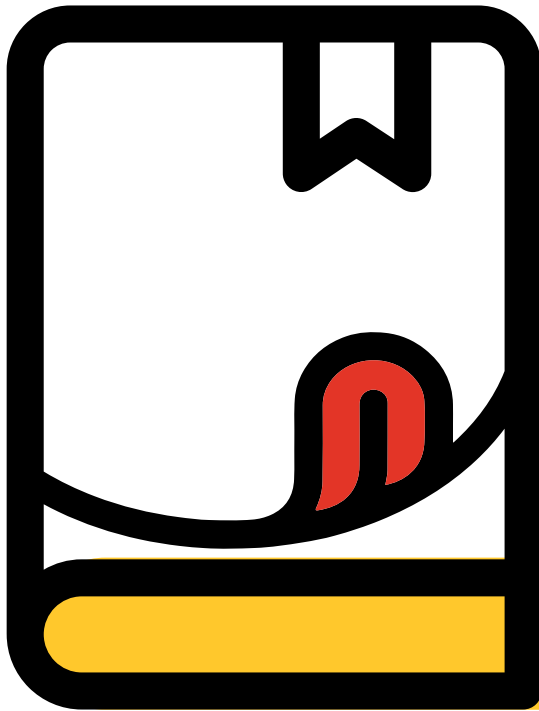
# Hey There!



## Welcome to the Never Eat Your Emotions Again<sup>®</sup> Program!

You are an Emotional Eater and your relationship with food doesn't feel good? It doesn't have to stay that way. There is not one pattern, not one feeling about food or about yourself that cannot be dispelled. Healed. Dissolved. After working with myself and many others, I witnessed astonishing breakthroughs and steady recoveries to a healthy relationship with food. You can do it too.

My name is Marion, and I am your Emotional Eating Expert. Certified professional coach, I have been an emotional eater since childhood. I was affected by severe obesity most of my adult life. No longer. In this playbook, I share my specific behavioral expertise about how emotional eating starts for most of us, and techniques for efficiently identifying the starting point for yourself.



## MISSION & VISION

I've struggled multiple times to lose weight focusing exclusively on eating habits, and exercise. I failed every attempt and ended up being affected by severe obesity. I sought professional help, unsuccessfully. For years, I believed my weight loss was a lost cause. I was able to change my relationship with food when I realized it was based on a **coping mechanism**. Using my behavioral expertise, I addressed the root causes of my way of eating, and finally lost weight.

Now I offer to others in the same situation as mine the appropriate help I sought but never found. I help my clients by **targeting the underlying reasons why they eat their emotions** and building a life where they don't need the comfort of food anymore.

Unlike other approaches, I never talk about food, eating habits, or exercise with my clients. If you struggled as I did, you already know everything there is to know about healthy lifestyles. With me, you will embark on a journey to discover who you are when you don't mute your emotions with food, and make the necessary changes to live a **fulfilled life**, where you don't need the comfort of food anymore.

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# INTRODUCTION

## THIS CLASS PURPOSES

Like me and many others, you probably have lived with emotional eating for a long time. For some of us, it has almost become a part of who we are, and we don't question why we eat without being hungry anymore. But none of us was born an emotional eater. **There is always a starting point.** Usually, it happens at a moment in our life when the circumstances do not allow us to express our emotions in an emotionally safe enough context.

In the beginning, there is a choice. Our choice. **The choice to not express what we feel.** Then we get stuck with those usually intense feelings, and we don't know what to do with them. Our inner tension increases as we lock our feelings in. They end up taking up so much of our inner space that sometimes we are barely able to make it through our daily routine. We start looking for ways to diffuse those unspoken feelings. For us, the way is food. And it works so well that we keep on using it over the years.

**Not expressing what we truly feel becomes a pattern,** and we get used to eating our stress, loneliness, and boredom away. We don't wonder why we get bored, stressed, or lonely in our daily routine. Neither do we try to bring change so we get less bored, stressed, or lonely anymore. We just eat and repeat the pattern we've been stuck into for a long time.



# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL EATING?

**Emotional eating is when people use food to deal with feelings instead of to satisfy hunger.** We've all been there, finishing a whole bag of chips out of boredom or downing cookie after cookie while cramming for a big test. But when done a lot — especially without realizing it — emotional eating can affect weight, health, and overall well-being. Not many of us make the connection between eating and our feelings. However, understanding what drives emotional eating can help you take steps to change it.

As Emotional Eaters, we often turn to food when we're stressed out, lonely, sad, anxious, or bored. Little daily stresses can cause us to seek comfort or distraction in food. But emotional eating can be linked to positive feelings too, like the romance of sharing dessert on Valentine's Day or the celebration of a holiday feast.

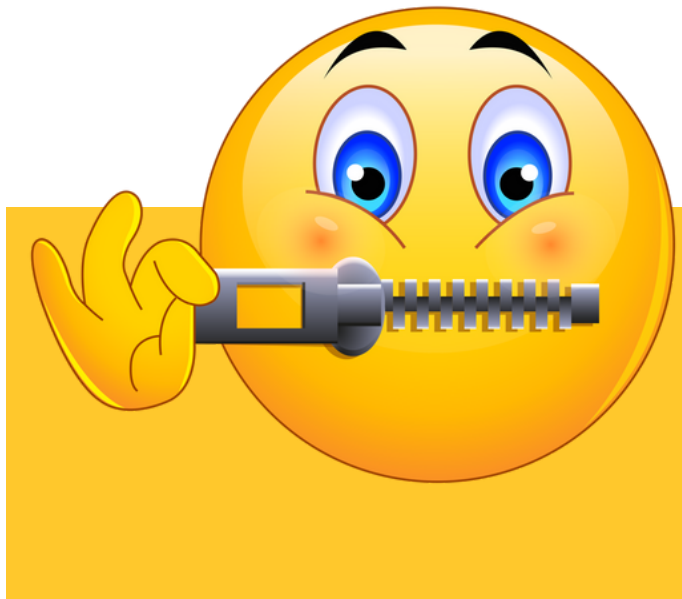
**Most of us learn emotional eating patterns as children.** For example, a child who gets candy after a big achievement may grow up using candy as a reward for a job well done. In the same way, a kid who is given cookies to stop crying may learn to link cookies with comfort.

It's not easy to "unlearn" patterns of emotional eating. But it is possible. And it starts with an awareness of what's going on. Managing emotional eating as an adult means **identifying how you have learned to use food to deal with your emotions as a child, then finding other ways to deal with the situations** and feelings that make you turn to food today.

# **E.E AS A RESULT OF A DESIRE TO SUPPRESS EMOTIONS**







Children who are exposed to stress and cope through emotional eating appear to be at greater risk for weight gain and obesity later in life.

Children with higher levels of stress also tend to eat more in the absence of hunger and emotionally overeat more.

Finally, children who emotionally eat early in life appear to have an increased risk of weight gain over time, with increased health risks.

## EATING TO SUPPRESS FEELINGS

When we have the desire to suppress our emotions using food as adults, we most likely are repeating what we've learned from our parents, or the people who raised us, about how to deal or not to deal with emotions. Sometimes, we are also repeating a form of denial of the truth and/or emotions regarding how they treated us.

When children experience a difficult situation but are not allowed to express their emotions the way they would need to, they need something to be able to cope with these emotions in another way and keep functioning. As most kids are naturally extremely resilient, they usually find something, even if it plays against them in the long run. For us, Emotional Eaters, it was food.



*When someone has an issue with emotional eating, there most likely is some unresolved difficulty in their childhood.*

# EATING TO SUPPRESS FEELINGS

Food is one of these possible supports that can help a child to endure some difficult times they have no control over. Their **decision to turn to food is almost never conscious**. They notice they feel good after a good dessert, so they start wanting more. Also, food is almost always available and accessible at home, even for kids. It is one of the rare possible ways to soothe their emotions, accessible mostly without issues and without consequences. The only escape available from the pain, that brings efficient relief.

As food helps them well, it becomes their favorite coping mechanism for everything, and it stays their main one, even as they grow into adults, and face adult issues. That's why emotional eating can suddenly appear later in life when faced with a difficult situation (death of a loved one, menopause, divorce, job loss...)

Sometimes, food works so well that it helps them not only to **soothe their difficult emotions but to avoid addressing what causes these emotions altogether**.

However, a lot of Emotional Eaters I work with feel they had a "**normal**" **childhood** - some of it was good, some of it wasn't as good, like everybody else's. Some of my clients would describe their childhood as good or even great. Years ago, I would have been one of those who told you mine was great.

But what may be considered as normal in a child's life is not necessarily loving and can negatively impact their relationship with food. Some of us can see some damaging or traumatic events in our early life, and some can't seem to remember anything that could have negatively influenced our relationship with food.



**WHAT IF YOU NEVER  
SUFFERED ANY  
TRAUMA DURING  
CHILDHOOD?**





In this section, the goal is not to incriminate your parents or the people who raised you. Most of them did their best with what they had and had a lot on their plates, too. We are not here to judge them.

## WARNING

The purpose of this section is to allow you to identify and recognize the pain you might have been in and the issues you might have faced as a child, teenager, or young adult, that might have induced the eating behavior you are trying to change today.

In this section, you might experience some emotional resistance and might feel like not finishing the course, because it might trigger some inner conflict, or tickle your sense of loyalty towards your parents or the people who raised you. That's okay. Just slow down, and become more aware of what is resisting in you and why. Then keep going when you are ready. Most importantly, **don't quit: the resistance is a definite sign that you are onto something!**



What if you do not remember going through any traumatic experience? What if you constantly feel on the edge of being rejected by those you love the most, for no apparent reason? What if you feel you could not be more “normal”, and you cannot think of anything truly hurtful happening to you?

## “I HAD A NORMAL CHILDHOOD”

Do you feel ashamed for believing you don’t have a “good reason” for your emotional eating? Well, that’s often a clue there is a “good reason”, but you just can’t see it, yet.

**Please remember:** A person displaying emotional eating always has a good reason for being there. Sometimes our “good reason” may be hidden in the shadows of our memory. Some other times going back to those memories is just too painful, and we bury them in denial. Sometimes we can also rationalize what happened to us. But **nobody eats to the point of hurting their health without a “good reason”**.



*A person displaying emotional eating **always** has a good reason for being there.*

# “I HAD A NORMAL CHILDHOOD”

Eating our emotions is a maladaptive way to cope with something. If we develop it, it means at a point in time, our life the way it was did not allow us to release our emotions, and we had to use food to suppress them. We might have focused on why the other person had no choice but to do what they did to us, and we forget how badly we got hurt, or we think it doesn't matter.

Sometimes, when one of my clients tells me: “Well, you know, I had a perfectly happy childhood and I still became an emotional eater”, I start asking a few questions. It usually takes me just a few minutes of a conversation with them to locate trauma in their history, asking basic questions like if either of their parents drank, and I hear: “Yeah, my dad was an alcoholic”. Well, guess what: one cannot have a happy childhood with a father who is an alcoholic.

But my client can't see that, because they dealt with the pain of it all by dissociating and numbing their emotions with food. They are **no longer in touch with the pain that they experienced as a child.**

Less obviously, I might ask about being bullied. And when my client says: “Yeah, I was bullied as a kid”, or just sometimes felt scared, alone, or in emotional distress as a child, I ask to whom they spoke about such feelings. The answer is almost uniformly “nobody”. And that in itself is traumatic to a sensitive child.



# “I HAD A NORMAL CHILDHOOD”

In our Western culture, we tend to value independence, financial and material success, compliance, and low emotionality. Accordingly, we foster these values early in children.

However, in doing so, we may be denying the basic characteristics inherent in children — dependence, imperfection, vulnerability, spontaneity, and inherent value. If a child is taught to ignore these parts of themselves, they may continue to get approval and love from their caregivers, but it is often accompanied by the feeling they will not be loved if they are truly themselves.

The longer this continues, the greater the belief “It is not safe to be me” and the more we may have to resort to maladaptive, self-medicating behaviors to dull the pain of rejection we may be experiencing. Rejecting ourselves becomes central to “fitting in” with others.

Most parents love their children and would not consciously withhold love to elicit certain behaviors. Parents are usually well-meaning and want the best for their children, but how “best” gets defined varies from family to family and within a greater cultural context.



# “I HAD A NORMAL CHILDHOOD”

As children, we need to feel seen, to be soothed, to feel safe, and to feel secure in our attachments to our caregivers and, in turn, secure in ourselves.

When there are deficits in one or more of these areas, we can develop a feeling that we are not safe expressing our true selves and real needs.

We learn how to be who we are expected to be to ensure the preservation of our connection with our caregivers. When a parent/guardian is demanding and expects nothing less than high achievement and perfection, or a parent/guardian is physically present but unavailable emotionally, we learn our own needs are unimportant, and we must change who we are in response to our caregiver’s needs.

**We may eat to cope with the latent fear of showing ourselves and the trauma of not allowing ourselves to be truly who we are, as we choose to feel loved over being authentic and take the risk of failing our parents’ expectations.**

These adaptative behaviors happen out of our awareness and when we think back, nothing stands out. It feels like nothing traumatic happened to us when truly, it did. Even if it is not as obvious as some other forms of difficult events, it is still very real, and enough to impact our relationship with food even years later.







## CONCLUSION

**THANK YOU!**

**You may recognize yourself in several of the above descriptions.** Please try to keep negative self-judgment at bay. **You are doing your best.** If you are here today, you have already committed yourself to a change and made the first step. The first one often is the hardest to make. You're on your way, just keep going!

Thank you for your trust throughout this lesson. I know some aspects might have felt uncomfortable. That's the thing about emotional eating: it is the emotionally most convenient choice on a short-term basis, as it allows us to numb ourselves and dissociate from any uncomfortable feeling we might feel. But we both know that in the long run, eating doesn't make us happier.

Today, you made the choice to face where you are in your relationship with food. It means you have now made the first step on your emotional eating recovery journey. The first step is always the hardest, and you've already taken it. Yes, it is already done. Already behind you. How does that feel?

**A change is possible.**  
**What is your next step going to be?**





# FEEDBACK

## DID YOU ENJOY THE LESSON?

I would love to hear your opinion about this lesson, and how to make it a more enjoyable experience. Please email me at [marion@nevereatyouremotionsagain.com](mailto:marion@nevereatyouremotionsagain.com) or directly on [my website contact page](#).

01

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 for “I did not like it at all”, and 10 for “I enjoyed it very much”, how would you rate this lesson?

02

What has this lesson brought to you? How did it help you?

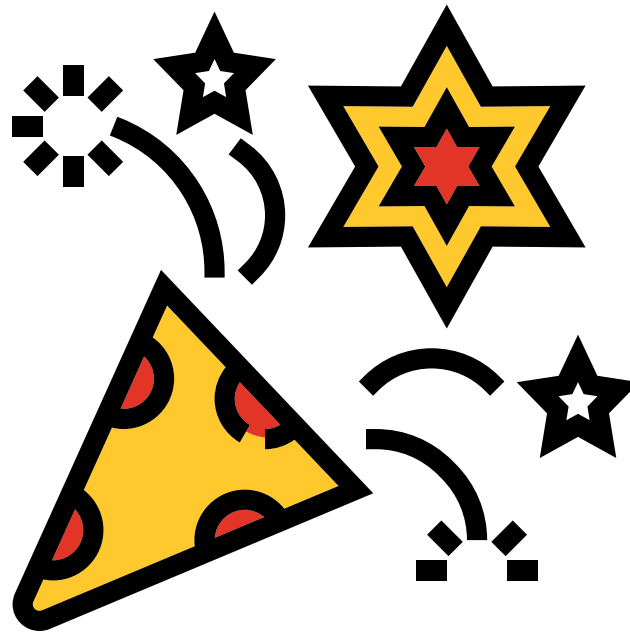
03

What have you become more aware of?

You Did It!

# THANK YOU!

This lesson was not easy to navigate and required a lot of introspection. But you have been up to the challenge. Congratulations!



## Want more information?

If you want to quickstart your emotional eating recovery journey but you don't know how or where to start, you can learn more about my approach on my website: [www.nevereatyouremotionsagain.com](http://www.nevereatyouremotionsagain.com)

Whether you want to dig further into **another lesson**, enroll in my **Signature Program**, book a **coaching session** (1st conversation is free!) or get **my books**, you will find all you need there.

[LEARN MORE](#)

let's connect



Never Eat Your Emotions Again

# HAPPY CLIENT

*The Never Eat Your Emotions Again Program has been a great way to kickstart my emotional eating recovery journey both with personal, close assistance, but also on my own terms and in my own time. I feel like I have the best of both worlds: individual, targeted help, and freedom.*

**BLAIR N.**

