

CLASS



EMOTIONAL EATING AS A COPING MECHANISM



nevereatyouremotionsagain.com

MARION HOLT

 never eat your emotions again

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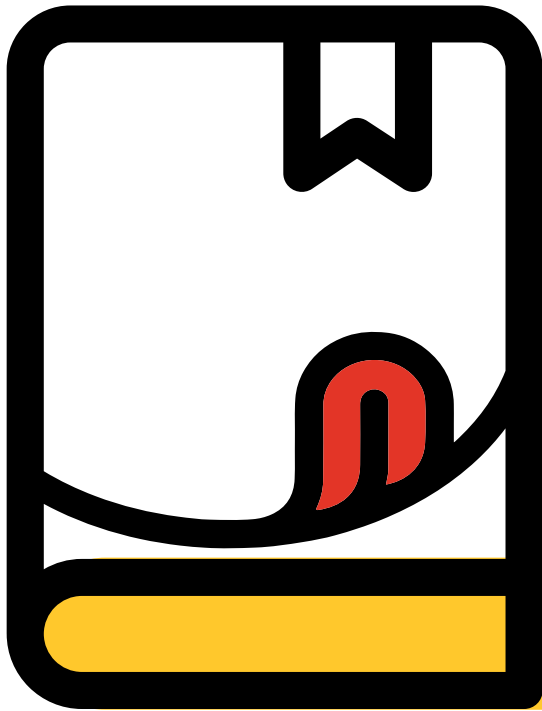
Hey There!



Welcome to the Never Eat Your Emotions Again[®] 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.

WHAT IS A COPING MECHANISM?





A coping mechanism is a **psychological strategy** a person relies on to **manage stress**. Sometimes, coping mechanisms are intentional choices, while other times a person may be unaware that they're using them.

We all use various coping mechanisms all the time without realizing it. Any activity can be used as a coping mechanism if we purposefully engage in the activity with the intention of decreasing our stress level. For example, an activity like binge-watching our favorite show can be a coping mechanism, if we turn on the TV to distract ourselves from our thoughts.

WHAT IS A COPING MECHANISM?

Sometimes coping mechanisms help us manage the emotional effects of **one-off events**, but often they are applied to **ongoing things**, such as stress at work or grief from the loss of a parent.

Coping mechanisms are also used to manage mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression.

Some coping mechanisms are **healthy**, like meditation, and some are **unhealthy**, like drinking heavily, smoking, or overeating.



Any activity can be used as a coping mechanism, if we purposefully engage in it with the intention to decrease our stress level.

STRESSORS LEADING YOU TO EAT

Food as a means to
manage internal and
external stressors.





INTERNAL STRESSORS

Internal stressors are **thoughts and emotions that come from within us** that can induce a stress response.

Some examples of internal stressors include:

- **Fears such as failure or rejection**
 - **For example:** “I will fail my job interview”
- **Insecurities**
 - **For example:** “My coworkers will make fun of me during my presentation”
- **Negative self-talk**
 - **For example:** “I’m not good enough”
- **Creating unrealistic expectations**
 - **For example:** “I need to lose 30 pounds in 3 weeks”
- **Perfectionism**
 - **For example:** “I need to have a flawless body before I wear a bikini on the beach”

**EVERY TIME SUCH THOUGHTS OR EMOTIONS
COME INTO YOUR MIND, THEY CAN TRIGGER
YOUR URGE TO EAT.**



EXTERNAL STRESSORS

External stressors provoke a stress response from **outside factors** and can sometimes include situations **we have no control over**.

Some examples of external stressors include:

- Losing a loved one
- Being laid off from your job
- An upcoming exam or presentation
- Learning you have an illness
- A car accident
-

**EVERY TIME SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES OCCUR,
THEY CAN TRIGGER YOUR URGE TO EAT.**

THE MAIN TYPES OF COPING MECHANISMS

Many of them are subtle, unconscious mental processes





TYPE 1

DEFENSE COPING MECHANISMS

Defense coping mechanisms rely on subconscious coping methods like denial: everything happens outside of our consciousness.

Defense coping mechanisms allow us to not be aware we are under stress.

For example:

“I am 100 pounds overweight, but I don't have health issues and I have a healthy relationship with food.”



I am not aware of anything. I don't lie when I say "I'm fine".



TYPE 2

ADAPTIVE COPING MECHANISMS

Adaptive Coping Mechanisms leave us aware of a problematic situation but help us tolerate the stress that comes with these situations.

Adaptive Coping Mechanisms allow us to deal with our stress in a more comfortable way.

For example:

“My extra weight makes sleeping uncomfortable, so I use a lot of pillows to support my body into a position that is more comfortable and limits my acid reflux.”



I know I have an issue but I find the most comfortable way to deal with it, rather than trying to fix it.



TYPE 3

AVOIDANCE COPING MECHANISMS

We use avoidance coping mechanisms in order to ignore the stress some situations create for us.

Avoidance Coping Mechanisms allow us to disconnect from and numb the stress we are under.

For example:

“When I eat, I forget about how bad my day was at work and I can finally relax.”



Nothing makes me feel better than a good dinner after a rough day.



TYPE 4

ATTACK COPING MECHANISMS

Attack Coping Mechanisms allow us to create a situation or a conflict that requires our focus and energy right now and takes priority over the stress factors we don't know how or don't want to deal with.

Attack coping mechanisms lead us to fight with someone rather than deal with the real problem.

For example:

“You tell me I need to lose weight, but do you realize how bad-looking and rude you are yourself? No wonder you are still single”.



While I fight someone over what was said or done, I don't have to focus on my weight issues.



TYPE 5

BEHAVIORAL COPING MECHANISMS

Behavioral Coping Mechanisms allow us to reduce our stress level by adapting to a situation/conforming to some expectations so that the pressure put on us gets less.

Behavioral coping mechanisms lead us to make changes to our behavior in order to minimize the stress we feel.

For example:

“My parents put so much pressure on me to lose weight that I now pass on having dessert when I share a meal with them, so that they don’t give me such a hard time.”



I don’t forget my needs, and I don’t betray myself. I simply compromise, to make my life easier



TYPE 6

COGNITIVE COPING MECHANISMS

Cognitive Coping Mechanisms allow us to change our perspectives or opinions about a situation so that whatever is going on doesn't bother us anymore.

Cognitive coping mechanisms help us change how we think about a situation.

For example:

My partner monitors what I eat and makes nasty comments when I indulge on some treats or comfort food. It stressed me until I changed my perspectives on the situation to see it is their way to care about me. Now I am thankful when they make comments about what I eat, because I know it is their way to help me get healthier.



They are not rude. They just want the best for me.



TYPE 7

SELF-HARM COPING MECHANISMS

Self-harm Coping Mechanisms allow us to focus on physical pain rather than our emotional pain. When we are hurting physically, that pain takes precedence in our brain and we don't feel our emotional pain anymore, as long as the physical pain keeps going.

Self-harm Coping Mechanisms involve hurting ourselves physically to stop feeling the original emotional pain.

For example:

Whenever I feel bad about myself and my extra pounds, I go for a long and very intensive workout. My muscles are usually very sore for several days afterwards and the constant physical pain helps me to defocus from my body image issues.



I am so sore I can barely move without intense muscular pain, and this is exactly how I want it.



TYPE 8

CONVERSION COPING MECHANISMS

Conversion Coping Mechanisms allow us to transform an emotion that is unacceptable or unbearable for us into another one we can deal with, less stressful.

When we use a conversion coping mechanism, we turn one emotion into another.

For example:

I don't like being angry. My father used to have anger issues when I was a child and blew up on my family for nothing. If there is one thing I know, it's that I never want to be like my father. Today, when someone comments about my weight and I feel disrespected, I don't get angry, and I don't try to stand up for myself. I get depressed instead, and I just want to disappear.



I laugh when I want to cry.



When dealing with stress, we can use several coping mechanisms simultaneously, or depending on each situation with which we are faced. But we tend to have our favorite (few) one(s), because we already used them in the past, and we know they work. I personally am a professional defense mechanism user, but I have used them all.

COPING MECHANISMS HELP US, UNTIL THEY LIMIT US.

You may recognize yourself in several situations described in the previous paragraph. Please don't be too hard on yourself. If you use coping mechanisms often, it doesn't mean you are a weak person. It simply means you are dealing with a lot of emotional pain. More pain than a human being can handle while maintaining their everyday routine normally, without breaking down.



If you use coping mechanisms, it means you are a strong person who tries to make things work, despite their pain. In my book, this is called COURAGE, not weakness.

EATING: AN AVOIDANT COPING MECHANISM





When we eat, we are attempting to make ourselves feel better by addressing or numbing the emotions the stressor provokes in us, rather than the stressor itself.

EMOTIONAL EATING IS AN EMOTION-FOCUSED AVOIDANT COPING MECHANISM

While we might feel better after eating (usually just for a short while, because we tend to quickly feel guilty for overeating or eating “bad” food), we still haven’t fixed your problem.



For example, when we get in a fight with our significant other and, instead of talking it out, we decide to comfort our hurt feelings by consuming a chocolate cake.



Emotional eating involves us avoiding a situation that is eliciting a stress response or ignoring our feelings about the stressor altogether. Eating as a coping mechanism allows us to not talk about the stressful situation, and to **distract ourselves from the stressor.**

EMOTIONAL EATING INVOLVES AVOIDING A SITUATION

I like to think of emotional eating as akin to the “laundry chair” in my bedroom. You know what I mean, right?

Somewhere in our home, we all have this chair (or couch, or treadmill, or spot on the floor, ...) that we throw random items on until we must deal with them later.



Items slowly accumulating on my laundry chair represent the way we deal with our stressors using food.

THE LAUNDRY CHAIR

For me, the laundry chair is where I put my clothes that need to be folded, clothes that are folded but not put away yet, purses that I've taken out of the closet that need to go back, and sometimes even shopping bags with the items that I haven't yet taken out of their packaging.

Sometimes my "laundry chair" is perfectly clean. But **one by one I add things to it until it becomes an overwhelming mountain of items** that may or may not lead to some tears when I finally decide to clean. The more items on my laundry chair, the more I need to eat in order to not think about all those things waiting for me to deal with them on that chair.

Items slowly accumulating on my laundry chair represent the way we deal with our stressors using food. **Emotional eating may start as harmless** (a small piece of cake here, a nice comfort food dinner there, just to help us relax a little bit after a long day...). There is nothing wrong with that, and everything stays under control **until the stressful situations keep adding on, leading to a backlog of emotions that still need to be dealt with.**

It then becomes so bad just the sight of that loaded laundry chair, aka all our backlogged emotions, makes us want to eat and just forget about our overloaded chair. We then start eating simply to not think about our loaded laundry chair.

This is how we end up overeating every day, sometimes in response to situations that could have been handled without food, if we were not already so backlogged, and sometimes in response to no specific event, other than trying to forget about our loaded laundry chair.

The good news is **it doesn't have to stay that way.** Becoming aware of the stressors in our lives and of the unconscious ways we cope with them gives us an opportunity to make new choices. Learning how to limit the situations that create a stress response will mechanically decrease our urge to eat.





CONCLUSION

THANK YOU!

You may recognize yourself in several of the above descriptions. Please try to keep negative self-judgment at bay. I have personally practiced every type of emotional eating multiple times. **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 already took it. Yes, it is already done. Already behind you. How does that feel?

A change is possible. So, what is your
next step going to be?



You've got this!



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@nevereatyoureotionsagain.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?

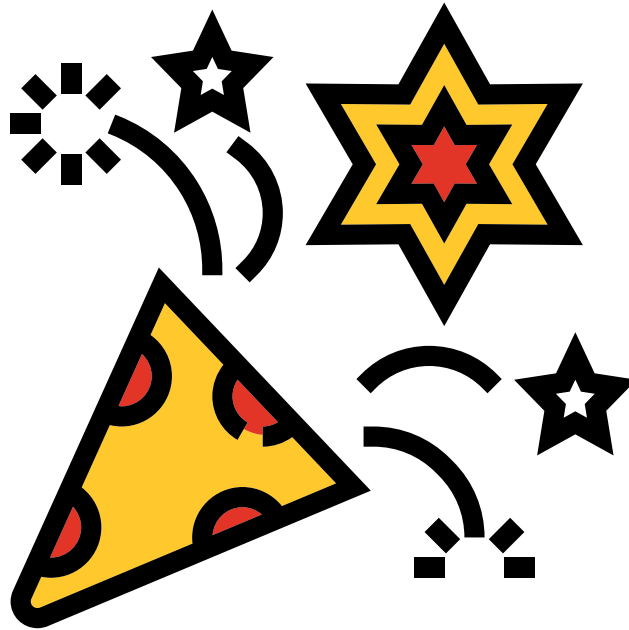
03

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

[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.

