

## FIXES FOR EMOTIONAL EATING

Do you eat when you're feeling sad, lonely or bored?

Do you celebrate or reward yourself with food?

Is there a food you crave when you're stressed or worried?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be an emotional eater. More and more people are starting to recognize that they eat in response to emotions and moods. It makes perfect sense! We are subconsciously conditioned that food makes us feel good. From the time we put our favorite foods in our mouth we get an immediate feel good endorphin release, and then to top it off we also can get a feel good serotonin surge. There is no doubt about it, food feels good. Emotional eating is the practice of consuming large quantities of food- usually "comfort" or junk foods- in response to feelings instead of hunger.

If we can be alert to why we emotionally eat, then we can be better equipped to deal with the how of fixing it. The first step is to identify your bothersome feelings. Some of the most common emotional eating cues are: anger, hopelessness, lack of control, feeling unappreciated, boredom or loneliness. If you want help in identifying your triggers, start keeping a journal of the feelings you have next time you take a trip to the fridge.

After identifying your emotional eating cues, the next step is to brainstorm and find alternatives to eating. Keep this list of ideas and post them where you will see them in a moment of need (maybe near the fridge or pantry). Some common alternative means of coping or emotional rescues are sharing problems, journaling, spending time with friends/family, listening to music, and reading, watching a movie, dancing, or engaging in your favorite hobby. Remember, undoing habits that originally developed when you were a child is a major change, and therefore will require persistence, dedication and maybe professional help.