

Conscious Eating!

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Dear Dr. Ma,
Please help me! I will eat,
but I know I'm not hungry,
yet I still crave more food.
It's become a problem. My
friends tell me I'm a food
addict. What can I do?

— Betty

Dear Betty,

You are not alone! 90% of the American public eat for every reason you can think of, but not out of actual, real hunger. We eat for an end-of-the-workday reward, social pressures, time with our friends and family, for holidays and celebrations, when it's an over-cast and depressing day, missing a loved one, childhood seasonal memories, tension and stress, anger or happiness, I'm lonely, at the movies, on a date, stuffing my emotions, or for no reason at all. You name it—we eat for it.

Is there a way off this roller coaster ride? The answer is yes! As you said, it's become a problem, more than likely affecting your health, which in turn, affects your whole life, from work to play, relationships, and most importantly, how you feel about yourself. Your friends have told you that you're a food addict. Let's look at the flip side of this coin.

Addiction to food is actually an addiction to the past and the past's emotionally-tied memories to that food. Here's an example—a true story. My mom always had gum in her purse. She was always chewing gum. She seemed to be constantly trying to lose weight. Chewing gum helped her to not eat. As kids,

we would ask for a piece. It smelled good! So, I became a gum chewer. The memory of my mom sharing her gum with me was a nice-feeling emotion. As a growing teen and young adult, I craved gum.

Being conscious of what you're eating and drinking means addressing your emotionally-connected stories (your addiction to your past) that cause the cravings. How do you change those and your attachment to the memory? You do it by reconditioning the subconscious part of your mind that associates with that memory you are holding on to through the food—in this case, with mom and gum. This is what's called "conscious eating."

So, I removed my mom from the gum-chewing picture and thought only of the gum in my mouth. It loses its taste in the first few chews, gets tough, and becomes like work to chew. You want to spit it out, but where? Everyone hates stepping on a piece of chewed gum! You get the idea. No, I don't really like the experience of chewing gum. So now, if I think of it, I just call my mom and talk to her!

The processes of conscious eating will erase your craving. What are you thinking of as you eat that food? Are you smelling it, tasting it, focusing on the texture, how it goes past your throat, the temperature of it? Then, only eat it if the food itself is enjoyable to you.

When you stop to think and focus on the food itself, you erase



Just Ask Dr. Ma

the past memories and isolate the –parts of this experience that you really enjoy in the now. That part of your subconscious mind that has craved that food becomes finally satisfied—for good—because you're paying attention to the food itself. So, send mom a card, get

past the gum, call the friends you miss, instead of stuffing yourself with the past through the food. Hunger in the way we have been taught is actually us being thrown into the past, versus being awake and aware in the present moment. As you get cleaner and cleaner of these cravings, your conscious mind won't stand for unconscious eating

any more. You will be free from cravings, and that, dear Betty, feels really good! ■

— Dr. Ma

Send your questions to Dr. Ma La Shomb, N.D., LMT, P.Tr., by text, along with your name & phone number, to (406) 224-5425. Email: jumpstartyourhealth@gmail.com. Marlenea passionately works as a health coach and writer for all who are ready to find harmony and balance in body, mind and soul through natural therapies and education.

