



THE THREE PHASES OF HEALING EMOTIONAL EATING

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"ALL HEALING COMES FROM SELF-LOVE."
~ A COURSE IN MIRACLES

Knowing Your Destination

Before we can get to a destination, it is first easier to see the roadmap for the markers that tell us we are on our way. Each year I drive back to my hometown of Durango, CO and I know when I see certain markers that I am almost there. It is the same with healing. There are milestones we hit that tell us when we are close.

Knowing these milestones in advance gives us a huge advantage. First, we know that we are on the right track, versus on our way to Vermont when we are trying to get to Colorado. Second, it helps us relax and rejoice each time we are that much closer. Without knowing the map in advance, we wouldn't have a clue how close or far we are. Not knowing can lead to feelings of insecurity, hesitancy and anxiety.

There are three phases to healing emotional eating. In this paper, we will cover each phase, plus the pre-healing and post-healing experience. These are also key indicators on your journey. Please keep in mind that these are mile-markers and not absolutes. When I visit the Grand Canyon it is a different experience than when my sister visits the Grand Canyon, yet we've both been to the Grand Canyon. Keep in mind that each component of a phase may or may not apply to you. This is meant as an overview of the most common experiences and is not an absolute.

Pre-Healing Jitters

Before we begin to heal from emotional eating, we begin noticing we are unhappy and that something feels "off". We may feel anything from a sense of panic around eating (or not eating) to a compulsion to keep eating until it is uncomfortable. When we feel out of control, we know that it is time to address emotional eating once and for all.

There are typically two categories a person can fall into before healing begins. The first is a sense of overwhelming guilt and disappointment around food; emotional eating is leaving a huge imprint on your heart. The second is a sense of hopelessness and of giving up. In the words of one woman, "I've tried every diet out there. None of them work. I give up. I just give up." This was in defense of her third piece of pie. Yet, even when we feel like we've given up, most of us still deep down really do care.

The pre-healing jitters are about:

- 🌀 Realizing help is needed.
- 🌀 Realizing you don't want a future like this.
- 🌀 Realizing you don't know if you can trust yourself to heal.

Once we realize these three things, we can take a step towards healing and steps towards creating an entirely new relationship to food.

PHASE ONE – APPREHENSION

If we take our love/hate experience with food as an indicator to get help, then we can move into the healing phases. If we recognize that we need help and do nothing, either nothing will change, or the emotional eating worsens with stress.

When we begin healing, we often start off with a bit of skepticism and resistance. This is normal. Because we have experienced feeling out of control with food, we are uncertain if we can trust ourselves to pull through the process of healing. It is ok, you can. As long as you are open and willing to go through the process, you will learn just how strong and reliable you actually are.

I also want to confirm to you that your skepticism is your helper. It will help you locate what your needs are and how to reconnect to your heart, the true source (or God-source) of inner-power.

Other experiences often present in phase one:

- 🌀 Constant thoughts about food are normal
- 🌀 Weight loss is slow during this phase, but occurs
- 🌀 There is more emphasis on eating when truly hungry
- 🌀 It may still be harder to stop when you have had enough
- 🌀 Hunger pangs may elicit some anxiety as you learn normal hunger
- 🌀 You slowly begin to release guilt and embrace the friendship of self-care
- 🌀 A budding curiosity about whether or not progress made will actually last

PHASE TWO – EYE OPENING

Phase two is often accompanied by a sense of relief. Self-trust begins to increase and the line between true hunger and emotional hunger may be crystal clear at this point, even if it isn't always followed 100%. There are still some less than ideal moments, yet these are dissipating. In this phase if you overdo it, you simply realize it is ok and you attune back to your true hunger and begin to successfully identify and deal with any emotional hunger.

At this point it is normal to be skeptical that you can still lose weight without being on any diet regimen. However, you keep following true hunger, addressing emotional hunger and the weight continues to come off. During phase two weight loss tends to speed up because true hunger is now clearer. Additionally, you begin to realize you don't like feeling stuffed and it is becoming increasingly easier to stop eating after you've had just enough to feel full, not stuffed.

There still may be some anxiety when hunger arises. This is normal. However, you now begin to look forward to true hunger with delight instead of dread.

In this phase you also begin to say no to triggers. This feels empowering and your self-trust begins to expand. I think of this as the turtle phase. You start to come out of the shell, realizing it is safe, yet sometimes duck your head back in because you aren't entirely sure yet.

Stick with it, the best is yet to come!

PHASE THREE – GRATEFUL UNFOLDING

Wow. You had no idea you could eat foods you love, lose weight and self-care all at once. The axiom, “The truth shall set you free.” begins to unfold. You sink into the idea that the progress made feels so great that you don’t ever want to go back to the discomfort. You realize this is now an option. The truth is, with all the new tools, you can choose health. This is a huge relief!

You now delight in eating. Any anxiety once experienced is rarely there now. You begin to become more aware of food choices and how the healthier foods leave you feeling amazing. You begin to love healthier foods because they offer variety, flavor and boosts of energy. The word vitality makes more sense as your energy levels rise. You may now eat a carrot or apple out of delight and desire, not because it is only 25 calories on a prescribed eating regimen.

You notice that you enjoy the balance of healthy eating, yet allow yourself to have a treat if you really want it. The main challenge present in phase three is to continue to pay attention when you eat. It is easy to be so excited about not dieting, losing weight and living life that you may tend to rush through meals or eat on the go. This is normal. This is what the Five Eating Agreements are there for, as a reminder, until they become second nature.

At this point you thoroughly enjoy stopping at your true satisfaction point.

Gratitude for the freedom, peace with food and newfound connection to your wellbeing unfolds.

The Healed Experience

Being healed means not obsessing over food. It means accidentally forgetting to eat when you get busy (something that would NEVER have happened before). It means being clear about what our heart is wanting and including self-care in all we do. It is about honoring our abilities and ourselves. It is about finding out what we are capable of in this life and going after it!

It is good to know in advance that healing from anything can leave a scar. You will always take your healing experience with you. You will always have it to look back on, hopefully not with shame, but out of joy that you found a healthier future, learned how to connect to your true needs and created a positive future for yourself as a result.

When we are healed we may still eat a little bit more when we are under stress, but never to the degree that we did when we were triggered. Furthermore, if we notice ourselves falling backwards, we have the tools to catch ourselves and stop the fall completely. Once we feel the empowerment radiating from our heart and we have the tools we need, we have made it!

- 🌀 Being in the driver's seat and the author of our own life is self-mastery.
- 🌀 Attuning our health to our heart is spiritually empowering!
- 🌀 Being healed is not about the food, it is about living a vibrant life!

Healing is within your heart's reach...

Embrace, embody and enjoy life fully!!!

Healing At-a-Glance

PHASE ONE - APPREHENSION -	PHASE TWO - EYE OPENING -	PHASE THREE - GRATEFUL UNFOLDING -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Constant thinking or obsessing about food ☞ Uncertain about capacity for self-trust ☞ Weight loss begins to occur ☞ Exploring true hunger vs. emotional hunger ☞ Emphasis is more on when to eat, and less on when to stop eating ☞ Experiencing true hunger may be accompanied by fear or anxiousness ☞ Skeptical that healing is possible or will hold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Weight loss begins to pick up (1+ pounds per week) ☞ True hunger is recognizable ☞ Emotional hungers are addressed without food ☞ You begin to say no to triggers greater ease ☞ Your self-trust begins to increase ☞ There is less anxiousness when true hunger arises ☞ You begin to find your true satisfaction point (even if you don't always follow it) ☞ You begin to realize that healing is possible and even enjoyable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ You delight in following your hunger ☞ You delight in the weight loss and finding your natural weight ☞ You may still be challenged to pay attention ☞ You delight in stopping when are perfectly satisfied, not stuffed ☞ You no longer like feeling stuffed ☞ You delight in not having to follow a diet ☞ You feel free and address yourself with compassion at every turn