

Are You Addicted to This Common Emotional Pain Killer?

Once I was driving home after a long day at a ministry leadership conference. Although I'd had a wonderful time, I was tired and wired at the same time.

Have you ever felt that way?

Suddenly, thoughts of getting a sweet muffin from our neighborhood coffee shop flashed into my mind.

I imagined using the sweet as a reward, to do something "special" for myself, and as a way to relax.

Where did this emotional connection to sweets come from?

For me, the attachment to sugar stretches back to childhood.

My mother worked a lot as a single mom. Before she would leave me with the sitter, she always gave me candy money.

I missed my mother and I was lonely. Eating the candy made me feel better.

Recently, I read about a study that demonstrated why the sugar worked.

Dr. Elliot Blass of Cornell University found that when sugar water was given to newborns, their crying time decreased from 40 percent to 3 percent.

He determined that sugar activates pain-killing receptors in our brains via the Dopamine Reward Pathway (DRP).

Drugs like cocaine and morphine use the same pathway.

So my desire to reach for sugar to make myself feel better had a biological component as well as an emotional one.

Now when I was a child, I did not know that I was medicating myself against emotional pain or discomfort.

However as an adult, I know what is going on.

I have a choice now as to what to do when uncomfortable feelings occur. I don't have to eat my feelings.

In Psalm 147:3, God's Word promises, "He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds."

When I was 240 pounds and struggling to overcome emotional eating, I had to make a choice:

I could continue to use sugar to eat my feelings—or have courage to feel them, leaning into God, and trust Him for the strength to get through.

If I made the second choice, I could come to know God's nature as my Jehovah Rapha—my Healer.

That second choice speaks to the essence of eternal life. In John 17:3, Jesus said, "This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

Now back to my drive—what choice did I make on my drive home?

I decided not to stop for the muffin. I asked God for wisdom for what to do instead.

I knew God could show me my real need.

Although the muffin would have medicated me, it wouldn't have addressed my real need, only smothered it. I didn't want sugar hijacking my brain like it once did!

My real need was to simply rest and de-stress. So I decided to go home, take off my shoes, put on some comfortable clothes and take a nap.

That's what I did! Giving myself permission not to do any work and take a nap made me feel special.

Each of us has to decide what we want our lives to be about. With God's help, I no longer eat my feelings using sugar, refined carbohydrates and junk foods.

I created the "Feel Good Meal Plan" as part of the Take Back Your Temple program because I want you to experience the same freedom.

So many of our mood swings and depression occurs because the enemy takes advantage of biochemical imbalances in our brains.

However, when we eat to maintain emotional stability, we can shut that door in the enemy's face!

That leaves us free to trust God with our emotions. In that way, we can finally start living the abundant life Jesus came to give us. {eoa}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge-eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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