

How Fresh Trust in God Moved This Woman to Break Her Addiction to Comfort Foods

Everyone loves comfort food. This time of the year, comfort foods abound when family and friends get together to celebrate the holidays. Too much comfort food, though, ends up in us being very uncomfortable because of the weight we've gained.

What Is Comfort Food?

Comfort food is defined by different people in different ways. It really depends a lot on the types of food we think of as easing our discomfort. These foods many times are connected to people we love, and the food becomes a connection to them even if they aren't around.

The food then becomes sentimental to us and evokes feelings associated with that person and how that person made us feel. In other words, the foods certain people prepared at certain times in the year seem to hold the emotions we felt when we were with those people.

That's why my great-grandmother's oatmeal cake is the epitome of comfort food to me, but so is my grandma's real country-fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy. They are all attached to women who played key roles in my life.

Feel-Good Food

It's also interesting, though, that comfort foods always seem to be high in carbohydrate content and calories. So as we eat them, we feel comfort and alleviation of any negative emotions that are plaguing us. They make us feel good.

Studies have shown that men and women eat comfort foods to alleviate different types of emotions. Men eat comfort foods

when they feel happy in order to celebrate, while many women eat them when they feel sad or depressed in order to try to feel more positive.

When we eat the comfort foods, they make us feel better for a while. Then the emotion hits us again, and we need more of them to get the same feeling. That is especially true if the food is extremely high in carbs and calories.

Weight Gain Is Inevitable

This is where the uncomfortable part comes in. We can live on comfort foods to make us feel better emotionally, but we will gain weight. Then, we get stressed about that and want to lose the weight.

So we greatly restrict our intake and stay away from comfort foods, and then we get depressed again, throw caution to the wind and start drowning ourselves in comfort again.

It is an endless cycle. I know; I've been there. I was sure there was no way out. I didn't want my emotions out of control and eating was the only way I could figure out how to keep them anywhere near under control.

Broken

When I began to understand I was a sugar and comfort-food addict, I saw why I was always stuck in the Romans 7:19 conundrum: "For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

I wanted to stop eating all things that were making me gain weight, but I didn't do it. I didn't want to gain weight, but I did it anyway.

My problem was actually threefold: I was broken emotionally, metabolically and spiritually.

Broken Metabolism

My metabolism was that of an addict. I had low beta endorphins, the feel-good hormone, and low serotonin, the hormone that says everything is right with the world. Foods with high sugar and carb content help elevate those hormones in our bodies. Problem solved, right? Wrong.

The effect of those foods on the body wears off after a while, and we need to eat more, hence the feeling that we can't stop eating the brownies or the sugar cookies. Those with broken metabolisms also have low blood sugar. When our blood sugar is low, our body asks for more sugar.

To combat that, we need to eat small amounts of protein throughout the day. That's why I always eat protein first if I'm feeling hungry. It helps me be intentional about what I'm eating, because when my blood sugar is low, my mind gets foggy, and I can't think logically.

Emotionally Broken

Being emotionally broken simply means I did not learn how to process my emotions as I was growing up. There were many reasons for this, but suffice it to say, it was just easier to ignore my emotions by eating them away than to deal with them.

I shoved them down to the cellar of my life, where I thought I'd buried them. When some situation would trigger them again, I threw comfort food at them. This double brokenness ran rampant over my life for way too many years.

Today I understand more clearly that God gave us emotions for a reason. What we eat will affect how we feel, but feeling those emotions and processing through them is the best thing we can do for ourselves and those around us.

Spiritually Broken

All along, God had been telling me to stop eating sugar and

bread and eat more meats or proteins, vegetables and fruits. This was exactly what I needed to do, but I was too spiritually broken to listen to Him.

I thought I was good spiritually, but I was rebellious and was not listening because I didn't think I could do what He wanted me to do because I was always weak around sugar. I was 100% right about that. I am weak, but I did not realize the complete ramifications of Paul's words.

"He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10, NLT).

Trust God

It took me a while to trust God and rely on His strength instead of my own weak and shaky foundation. Then I realized that the biggest issue I had was really a spiritual one. "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24-25).

I had to go through some deep inner healing to finally trust God to lead me on this journey. God is always a gentleman. He didn't rush me. He took me step by step through a process to finally surrender everything to Him. In the process, I lost over 250 pounds from my highest weight of 430 pounds, and learned to readily express my emotions in good ways and love God with every part of me. {eo}

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