

Is This the Secret Cause to Your Struggle With Weight?

When we think of emotional eating, most of us think of anxiety- or depression-induced eating. These definitely are common causes, but they are not the only emotional triggers.

Sometimes anxiety or depression is just the expressed emotion, but it's not the root. Many times, the overlooked emotion that causes us to overeat is anger.

It's kind of funny that all last week, as I was reflecting on my own emotional wellbeing. I found myself reaching into the cabinet to snack on some dates and walnuts.

But as I was rummaging through and had begun to chew on a few dates, I realized I wasn't physically hungry.

So that led me to stop for a moment and think about what was going on with me.

I had recently had a disagreement with a loved one, and I initially thought my feelings were just hurt. But as I stood there in front of the cabinet, still chewing, I realized I was actually very angry.

I closed the bag, made myself a cup of tea and took a moment to let it set in and remind myself that it was OK to be angry.

I wasn't going to resort to my immature days and be petty or attempt to make my loved ones feel bad. I just had to give my anger to God and let Him sort out the bits that I couldn't.

I thought I'd done a decent job of processing my emotions. I felt much better the next day when I ran across an article that talked about the importance of distinguishing different types of anger.

I shared this same article on my Facebook Page: "Angry?! How Naming and Understanding the Different Kinds of Anger Can Help."

I shared it because it really resonated with what I was dealing with and helped me pinpoint the type of anger I was trying to process.

As I read this article, I thought about all of the times in my life when I thought I was just sad, but really, I was angry—very angry.

It's funny because I've always considered myself to be a person who is very slow to anger because it took a lot to cause me to lash out at someone.

But as I continued to reflect, the Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance several times when I was so enraged, I felt like I could turn green and Hulk-smash a few things (and/or people!).

Those were times when I broke things and said things I wish I hadn't.

During those times, I didn't have the wisdom I learned from Ephesians 4:26-27, NLT: "Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil."

I've been making an effort to live by this principle; however, it was impossible to do this if I didn't even realize I was angry.

So, now that I've uncovered it and took some time to consider my triggers, I will be less likely to overeat as a result of hidden anger.

It's important to develop strategies that will help you avoid overeating as a result of anger and any other emotion.

I want to leave you with a few that helped me.

1. Don't keep unhealthy snacks in the house. All I had to turn to were some dried dates and walnuts, but perhaps if there was something else in the house, I might have been a bit more tempted.
2. Be conscious about your hunger level and recognize that you can still overeat a healthy snack. If you're not hungry, and you're eating to distract yourself from your thoughts, that's emotional eating.
3. Give yourself permission to feel and work through the emotion. Remind yourself that it's OK. Your feelings are valid, but they don't have to dictate what you eat and ultimately impact your health negatively.
4. The alternative can lead to numbness and cause you to feel disconnected. This can trigger additional overeating to fill the void that often results.
5. Pray and ask God to reveal the source of your feelings and give you the appropriate strategy for dealing with them. Allow Him to tell you what to do and when. He will send peace and calmness as you release it to Him. {eoa}

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