

Seven Teasers for Food-Pleasers & The Mental Tricks That the Shed Pounds

Everyday we make choices – choices about food. We decide what to say “yes” to and what to say “no” to. While we may be very health conscious, it can become a daily struggle managing self-control with food. Very commonly, we allow familiar enticing mental teasers to give us permission to overeat, when we likely don’t want the extra food anyway. We become food-pleasers by listening to these mental teasers, and in the process add unwanted calories and pounds. However, by changing the way we view these unsolicited invitations to indulge, we can regain control of what we consume and shed pounds in the process. Below are seven common teasers, and the redesigned logic and mental tricks to handle them.

IT’S FREE!

But who wants *Fat* for free? Samples here. Bite-size tasting there. “Free with purchase.” It is not hard to run across opportunities to get more food –often unwanted food- for no charge. These “free” foods are adding unwanted additional calories to our diet so they are not free after all. We pay for them by carrying around these free foods in and on our bodies.

How to handle it

When faced with a tempting handout, ask yourself, “If it weren’t free would I stop and buy it?” Anything worth your hard earned money isn’t worth the added pounds either.

BE POLITE!

You wouldn’t dare turn down your mother in laws’ homemade apple pie would you? That would not be polite. Can you say no when your boss’s child is determined to sell you 3 buckets of popcorn? We should be flattered they thought of us in sharing their sweet delights, right? How do we show appreciation for the offering and yet not fall into the trap of being polite to our own detriment? This can be tough since we often associate giving food as a loving and kind gesture, and refusing it as a sign of rudeness.

How to handle it

If you must graciously accept the extra 900-calorie piece of pie, ask for it to go and take it to work to give away or take the piece to a neighbor or friend. You can still be polite but not get pudgy in the process.

DON’T WASTE IT!

There are starving kids in Africa after all! So clean your plate or you are wasting food. These are common mental teasers that seduce us into eating more than we should. Yet the logic does not address the real hunger issue other people have. We sometimes feel we should not let a piece of food go into the trash, as this would be a waste. So we eat every last bite at the restaurant or finish off our child’s plate to not be wasteful.

How to handle it

The important mental trick to remember here is that just because you have already paid for the meal, you do not have to pay additional with the extra calories. You can choose to let the server remove the rest of that big plate of spaghetti and meatballs or you can choose to not “waste it” by seeing it sent straight to your expanding thighs.

IT'S A SPECIAL OCCASION!

Got something to celebrate? It is great to have an attitude of celebration, and finding something special about each day is a healthy approach to living. But we can't truly award ourselves by making unhealthy choices. Overindulgence in eating is one of those ways. (Shopping, drinking, gambling and other celebratory rituals can also be dangerous to our health and to our lifestyle). A special occasion can easily turn into a guilt gala if we allow this food teaser to sway our better judgment.

How to handle it

Small special occasion treats are OK, however our nutritional goals should remain the same whether we are dining in or out, or whether we are at a party or a picnic. It is never your last opportunity to have a favorite food. You will have another chance for chocolate cake. Be creative and find other non-pound adding traditions to acknowledge special occasions.

IT'S A BARGAIN!

Some call it the "Costco effect": Items you didn't especially want or need suddenly become appealing when you can get twice as much for half the price. Why is it that the "healthy" food options at fast food restaurants cost more than their full-fat counterpart meals? A "combo" meal may be a bargain by gaining the large fries, but do you want all those "extras" on your hips?

How to handle it

Go ahead and indulge if you must but choose the small burger and drink. Adopt a "pay less, weigh less" attitude when tempting to buy in bulk. Sure, it may be a better value to buy ten cookies for \$5 than it is to buy one cookie for \$2 but by choosing the smaller package, you'll actually spend less and save hundreds in calories. This concept also works at restaurants. Try ordering an appetizer or "lunch portion" of your dish even if it costs the same as the full entrée price. You're not wasting money. If you smartly choose to eat only what you really require, your meal will cost the same either way. You are simply choosing to buy fewer calories with your money

IT'S NO FUN WITHOUT FOOD!

To me, the most fun in getting together with friends is thinking about what restaurant we are going to and what food I want to eat! It seems almost strange to not have food around when people gather together. It is a bonding experience we are socialized to accept, and even thrive on. For others it may be when watching TV, or going to the movies, when the logic is that munching is just a part of it. Even boring meetings or social events seem instantly appealing when there are big bowls or platters of something around to chomp. Many times we just eat on autopilot whenever engaged in a certain activity. Where's the fun if there's no food?

How to handle it

Make the fun happen when it is not mealtime. Break your pattern of association between food and activities. Change one thing about your routine where you tend to indulge purely out of habit. Get up and change rooms, change your focus, or change the activity altogether. You can still enjoy your favorite TV show, or meeting with friends, but combine it with something new: an outdoor activity or a new hobby. What else do you enjoy that won't sabotage your waistline (and your wallet)?

I DESERVE IT!

Have you ever had “one of those days”? Everything went wrong and by golly you deserve a marvelous meal at the end of the day. You want it all: appetizer through the desert. The teaser logic is that this is one thing you do have control over and you are certainly going to utilize it! Food is easy to obtain and provides comfort for stressful times, or so it seems at the moment. Food is nurturing and it feeds our hungry heart but its pleasure is only temporary. We must deal with the emotions that come with our daily lives and the consequences of overeating.

How to handle it

Instead, think about all that you deserve that is not a detriment to your weight. What you deserve is to be healthy! You are valuable. Sometimes we need to stop, take a break, and think of all the ways we can pamper ourselves through things other than food, like relationships and self-care. Make a list of ten things that support, encourage and uplift you, yet don't compromise your weight loss goals.

Based upon “Food Logic That Makes You Fat”, Fitness Magazine, August 2006.

Take action today! Don't be tricked with these food-pleaser teasers. Practice developing new thoughts that support your total health and wellness that are also free, satisfying, and that celebrate you and your health!

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