

Are You Motivated to Stop Binge Eating?

Objective

To identify if you are motivated to change your binge eating habits.

You Should Know

To decrease and eventually eliminate binge eating, you have to really *want* to stop. Binge eating can be a very difficult habit to break.

The first step is to identify reasons why you no longer want this habit in your life.

Consider:

- Will stopping your binge eating help you be a better friend, parent, or spouse?
- If you stop binge eating, do you think you will be happier and feel healthier?
- Are you embarrassed about your binge eating? If you stop, will you feel less shame and guilt?
- If you stop bingeing, will you feel better about your appearance?

Some days you might have difficulty maintaining your motivation. What if your main motivation for recovery is to succeed in your career, but then you lose your job? What if you want to recover so that you can improve your relationship with your partner, but then the relationship ends? What if you experience physical or financial limitations? What if everything seems to be going wrong in your life? If you feel like things are falling apart in your life, will you be able to maintain your motivation? You may have the urge to binge, and you may experience thoughts such as, “Life is so hard anyway, I might as well eat until I feel better,” or, “I want to stop bingeing so that I can enjoy life, but life is really hard, so there is no reason not to binge!” What can you do if you have self-sabotaging thoughts? You can choose to pay them no attention, or you can reframe how you think about your motivation to stop bingeing.

Reframing your thoughts refers to adjusting how you think about your reasons for recovery, so that those reasons are not only about things going well in your life. It is important to be hopeful and optimistic, but if your motivation is based on things going well in your life, you might place yourself at risk for setbacks or relapse. You can pick yourself up using healthy tools – without resorting to bingeing as a way to cope.

Your motivation may come and go, and you might experience indecision and ambivalence. Understanding that your motivation may ebb and flow is important in reducing your feelings of discouragement, as well as increasing your chance for long-term success.

The first step is to determine if you are ready to begin the process of decreasing and eventually eliminating binge eating episodes. This worksheet will help you explore your motivation for change.

What to Do

Rate yourself on the following statements. Use the scale 1 = Don't agree at all to 10 = Strongly agree. Then answer the questions below.

- ___ I feel 100% motivated to eliminate binge eating as a way to cope with my feelings.
- ___ I believe that my life will improve if I learn ways of coping other than binge eating.
- ___ I understand that it is important to maintain a healthy eating plan which includes 3 standard-size meals and 1-2 snacks each day.
- ___ I am confident that I can learn alternative ways to cope with upset and stress.
- ___ I am committed to changing the way I eat.
- ___ I want to regain control of my eating.
- ___ I can find other ways to deal with my problems than by overeating.
- ___ I am willing to try various tools and techniques to eliminate binge eating from my life.
- ___ I am willing to change my routines or schedule in order to change my eating habits.
- ___ I am committed to eliminating binge eating from my life.
- ___ I am willing to change the way I think about food.

Total Score _____

If your score is lower than 50, than you might little motivation to stop binge eating. It will be difficult to change this behavior.

Reflections on This Exercise

If your motivation is low, what can you do to motivate yourself to change your eating habits?

If you decide to make changes, how confident are you that you will succeed? Explain why you feel this way.

Can you identify any barriers to making changes in your eating habits?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful to 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
