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How Far Have You Come?

Focus on the internal rewards of energy and well-being



RATING YOUR PROGRESS

In order to successfully apply the principles of HUGS™ and remain focused on this concept, you can step back to assess what life-style changes you have made. This gives you an opportunity to see where you have come from, what you have accomplished, and where you are going. It also gives you a chance to set some goals, making you aware of where you can put more time and effort towards practising certain skills.

Evaluate your success in functional terms rather than focusing on how many pounds you have lost. Has your quality of life improved? Allow yourself the time to enjoy the process of self-evaluation. An open-minded attitude towards these new skills and ideas can help make the breakthrough you need to make HUGS™ work for you.

Here is how some HUGS™ clients talk about their life-style changes.

“I am eating regularly and no longer starving and binging.”

This is an accomplishment because, as you are now aware, starving and binging can lead to lowering your metabolic rate. Each time you starve, your body compensates by storing more of those calories as fat when you finally do eat. It conserves the calories because your body is afraid that you will starve yourself again.

“I am beginning to understand when and why I’m hungry because I tune into my natural hunger signals. I know I can eat when I want to, based on my hunger.”

This process of self-discovery allows you to find out why you overate in the first place; it deals with the causes and lets you tune into why you are hungry. This process of self awareness deals with the causes of eating in a more positive manner.

“I am no longer punishing myself when I eat.” Eating food *without guilt* and the act of celebrating food can allow you to taste, savor, and enjoy your food to the fullest. It also allows you to be satisfied with less quantity because you derive not only physical benefit, but psychological satisfaction as well from the food.

"I am eating differently because I want to and it tastes good. I don't get as tired as fast. I am able to complete my housework without sitting down to rest." The gradual change in taste for lower fat types of foods and increasing activity will build up your endurance so that you feel better and can do more in less time.

"I accept myself the way I am. I like myself."

Self-acceptance allows you to believe in yourself and your ability to be able to listen to your body with regard to its food and activity needs. It channels your energy so that you can make positive life-style changes and gives you the confidence that you need. Otherwise, if you are always negative about yourself, this causes an energy drain where little to nothing is accomplished.

"I am really thinking about how different foods affect my body (metabolic rate and blood sugar). I am eating a balance of carbohydrates and proteins at meals, and feeling more satisfied." Cutting calories affects your metabolic rate, causing you to plateau after the initial weight loss. Accepting that diets don't work and that rather than cutting calories, the real answer is shifting the type of calories that you take into your body. Eating more carbohydrates gives you the energy to run your body. The balance of protein that is right for you gives you the sustaining energy, stabilizing your blood sugar. In this way, you will not have the highs and lows common to diets. This can help to stabilize your mood and general feeling of well-being.

By eating more carbohydrates, you are eating more of those calories that burn more energy in the process of their digestion and are less efficient in converting into fat. Simply by eating more carbohydrates you have automatically decreased the total fat content of your meals. By listening to your body, you are allowing your body to determine the energy level that you need on a daily basis. It will be different all the time. Some days you may need more food to make you feel satisfied, and some days you will need less. Some days you may prefer to have a dessert, and other days you will not. Listening to your body's needs and desires will allow you to get the most "punch" from your meal.

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Food choices are built on cultivated preference rather than rigid self-control.

“I’ve started to alter cooking habits to reduce fat. I am eating more fruits and vegetables, not restricting myself to the non-starchy vegetables.” As fat content of meals is gradually being decreased a taste for less fattening foods is being acquired. For example, the comment, “I now prefer french fries prepared in the oven rather than in the deep fryer,” demonstrates this point. Deanna was surprised to notice that after a number of months of gradually cutting back the fat content of her meals, she found fried chicken to be too greasy. She no longer enjoyed this meal and no longer chose to order it. Remember that food choices are built on cultivated preference rather than rigid self-control.

The gradual process of cutting back on your total fat intake in cooking, food choices, and baking is crucial in order to actually change your preference to foods that are lower in fat content.

Going straight from cheddar cheese to cottage cheese is a sudden drop in fat content. It can be a shock to your system causing you to shift back to the higher fat cheese. If you eat cottage cheese simply because it is good for you rather than because you like it, then you are in the diet mentality and your change in eating will not be permanent. In fact, if you can’t acquire a taste for the low-fat food, this can prevent you from enjoying your meal, and you may find yourself looking in the cupboards for something that you really enjoy. “Gradual” implies going from cheddar cheese to skim mozzarella cheese, possibly combining the two and eventually going down to skim mozzarella cheese. Try other low-fat cheeses such as quark, ricotta, and skyr, but make them tasty by adding canned fruit in its own juice or some jam.

“I am understanding physical hunger and eating when physically hungry.” Using food to fuel your energy needs feeds the body not the mind. Only then will your clothes begin to get looser.

“I am confronting my psychological hunger.” This is an important skill not only to deal with hunger and foods but also to help you with all aspects of life so that you can face them in a more positive way. Dealing with the causes of hunger in an assertive manner can reduce the incidence of those feelings.

YOU COUNT,
CALORIES
DON'T



"I don't like that chocolate because it is not dark and bittersweet."

"I am asking myself if I am really hungry? Do I really want the food?" This is a form of *pausing*, where you are confronting yourself to determine your real desires rather than succumbing to eating automatically simply because the food is there. Take the time to check on what you really want.

"I am trying to combat my automatic eating. I am eating the first few bites and the last few bites and leaving the ones in the middle." Becoming aware of your eating, enjoying the act of eating, and eating only what you want allows you to be selective in your eating. Using the above technique can allow you to discover the enjoyment of tasting food, noting the quantity that you need to satisfy you.

"I am more aware of when and why I am eating and I am dealing with it in a more positive fashion." Getting to know yourself and becoming more conscious of the reasons behind your compulsive eating can allow you to deal with the causes. Once the reasons are resolved, the psychological eating decreases.

"I am beginning to be more active and actually enjoy it." Fun and enjoyment are the keys to life-style change. A gradual increase in physical activity is important. Your body and mind adapts to the change. You learn to enjoy physical activity, actually missing it when you do without it. Physical activity becomes part of you and your routine. The dieter will say, "Let's go for a walk to the donut shop. We'll wear off the calories by walking so let's have the donut as our reward for doing the exercise." The nondieter will say, "Boy, I went for a walk and I feel great." The walk becomes the reward in itself. It is an intrinsic reward, coming from within. Action creates motivation. If you wait until you are motivated, action may never take place. External motivation, such as walking to the donut shop for a reward, is only temporary motivation.

"I am more in charge of food." By empowering yourself and giving yourself the tools (skills and techniques) to make the choices, you become in charge of food and your life. These skills can last a lifetime and be used in any aspect of your life.

REWARDS THAT REALLY WORK

"If you want dessert, you'd better make sure that you eat

STEPS TO CHECK IF YOU ARE INCORPORATING HUGS™
INTO YOUR LIFE-STYLE.

- Am I eating regularly and no longer starving and binging?
- Am I beginning to understand when and why I am hungry and actually starting to tune into my hunger signals?
- By gradually decreasing fat content over the past few weeks, am I beginning to acquire a taste for less fattening foods?
- Am I eating a balance of carbohydrates and proteins at meals, putting more emphasis on increasing the carbohydrate content without feeling guilty?
- Am I enjoying the full experience of eating and am I eating until I feel satisfied in order to fuel my energy needs rather than my psychological needs?
- Am I tuning into how I feel and how my body feels, no longer relying on the scales to determine how my day will go?
- Am I feeling more energetic and more content with myself?
- Am I starting to use skills to combat automatic eating and confrontation to deal with those urges that make me want to eat even though I am physically satisfied?
- Am I beginning to participate in more physical activity and actually enjoying it?
- Am I more aware of what I am eating?

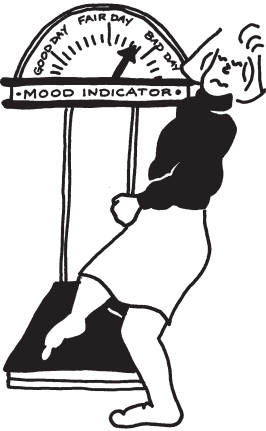


Master new ways
of thinking.

everything on your plate, Ellen." The mother who says this makes the dessert the reward for a job well done whether it was finishing your plate of food or transferring the food reward idea to other tasks such as doing your homework, etc. Why couldn't the act of eating or accomplishing something be the internal reward in itself? Why do we always feel that we need an external reward to finish the task or finalize the moment? Enjoy the meal itself and if you want dessert, have it but not because it is your reward for finishing the meal. *Revel in your accomplishments and experience the feeling of exhilaration without needing a food item to provide the finishing touch.*

Paul comes home from school and practises guitar. When he is finished, he goes to watch television as a reward. Why can't the enjoyment extracted from playing the guitar be the immediate reward? This is a healthier way of thinking that will instill positive life-

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time habits. Enjoy the new skills that you are learning; focus on the intrinsic reward of the moment.

In the past, rewards may have been essential to keep you on track with your diet. Starving yourself before you weighed in at diet class resulted in a weight loss that you rewarded by some type of food after the weigh-in. After all, you have been faithful in depriving yourself. And because you are so hungry, something high in fat such as donuts is tempting. So off to the donut shop you go.

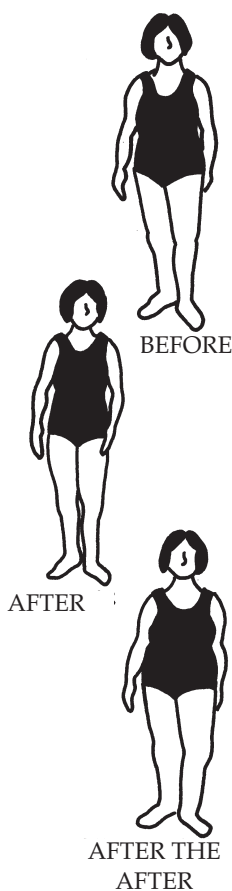
You equated the result with the weight loss and the natural reward is the thing you have been doing without—food. Are you really making a life-style change? No! What you are doing is only temporary, a means to an end. You may constantly repeat this cycle over and over again. Losing the weight, resuming old eating habits, regaining the weight, another diet. Your sense of well-being and self-esteem also goes down with the weight gain and you have a feeling of powerlessness.

Realize that *you count* by allowing the way you feel about yourself and your improved health to be your rewards. These are internal rewards and more likely to last. A positive feeling in itself allows you to keep on the road to life-style changes. Look at your accomplishments and remember that lapses from time to time are part of progress.

Unrealistic expectations can cause depression about your weight. The weight you lose cannot be the goal or the focus of your actions. Rather, improvement in health is the key to your long-term success. Applying some of the HUGS™ skills and techniques will allow you to experience mini successes and reduce the number of setbacks that occur. Focus on these gradual changes. They are progress and they can help keep your goals realistic and in focus.

Attempt to normalize your eating habits. The scale doesn't rule your life and should not be ruling how you feel each day. Take a look inside yourself for the clues. Soon the outside will begin to reflect your renewed confidence. You may be walking straighter, taller. You'll be in charge.

How Far Have You Come?



Never mind what others say and think. Jealousy because you are in charge of your food and your life may cause others to try to sabotage your best efforts. Don't be fooled into thinking that another diet will get the weight off quicker. Quick weight loss results in quick weight gain.

Start living for the present instead of always focusing on the future. Enjoy and savor the moment. *The more psychological benefit that you can extract from life, the less need for food to fill this void and the greater will be your inner rewards.* Being desperate for a weight loss prevents it from happening naturally. Focusing on life-style changes allows you to master new ways of thinking. Practice will allow you to internalize them.

As these life-style changes become second nature, you will feel more energetic and confident that you are able to steer your life onto a path of health and vigor. With time your body will adjust naturally to the weight that you were predetermined to be. Keep in mind that these outward effects will happen more quickly only in those that allow it to happen naturally. Forcing makes these changes temporary. It doesn't allow you to "feel" and "experience" them. Life-style changes require effort to become established. Practice makes them easier.

Diets are initially easy because you operate within a prescribed regimen. However, they soon become boring and monotonous. Life-style changes require a change in thinking that motivates you. If you enjoy the process and heed the lifetime skills, time will not be a factor. Stress the positive, go with the flow, allow it to happen. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Believe in yourself, and have the confidence that you can make those changes. You will be successful because you have learned from past failures and allowed yourself to grow. You will move forward.

We all operate on a conscious or unconscious reward system. The most effective rewards are the ones you reap from your own individual value system. The achievement of meeting your own standard is a euphoric experience. Your own opinion about yourself is what counts; the opinions of others are

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not as important.

If you live for others' comments and compliments, consider what happens after you have lost weight. The praise, encouragement, and compliments will stop after people have become accustomed to your new physical appearance. Will you then feel there is no more purpose in trying to keep the weight off? Or will you put the weight back on to gain attention? Or maybe you have realized that changing the outside self alone does not make you instantly happy or allow your problems to disappear. You are still the same person, the same individual. Your attitude or the way you think, feel, or act towards yourself or others has not changed. Your attitude towards food or life has not changed. It remains the same and so you will set yourself up for gaining the weight back.

Work on discovering yourself and what makes you eat. Deal with the causes and forces, and allow yourself to develop skills to improve your inner self. These can channel your energies into being the best that you can be! The inner strength that you gain will begin to reflect outwards.

KEY FOCUS POINTS TO MOVE YOU FORWARD

Use the following phrases as affirmations to be repeated frequently.

They will help you to set your mind onto a positive track.

- I like myself. I feel good about myself. I'm a worthwhile person no matter what anybody says or does. I'm going to have a great day.
- I believe in myself and have the confidence that I can listen to my body. I know what to eat and when my body is hungry. I know the level of activity that is suited to me to allow physical activity to give me energy, not exhaustion.
- When I feel like eating as a result of feelings, I will first stop, meet the situation head-on, and attempt to deal with the reason for my eating. I will work at preventing the reason from happening again. I will look at ways of dealing with these feelings in those cases where the cause cannot be prevented or eliminated.
- I realize that eating only until I am satisfied may mean leaving something on my plate. In order for me to break the automatic habit of finishing everything on my plate, I will give myself permission to eat only until I am satisfied, and not feel compelled to eat all the food on my plate, even if it means leaving something.

Use the above affirmations regularly to help move you forward on the road to healthy living.