

# **BEAT THE BELLY FAT BLUES:**

Mind-Body Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to everyone who has ever struggled with their weight and has asked the question:

“I know what I’m supposed to do so WHY can’t I do it?”

After countless heartbreaking stories of frustration, shame, guilt, and failure, I knew there had to be a better way.

My most sincere desire is that this book offers you solutions not just for weight loss, but for healing as well. When we heal the underlying issues driving our cravings and overeating, the need to tranquilize our emotions with food diminishes and we lose weight. Peace with our lives means peace with food.

**Many blessings on your new journey.**

## ***Praise***

Karen Donaldson's handy guide covers the most useful science-based recommendations for losing weight you'll find in such a compact form. Using direct, humorous, user-friendly language, she de-mystifies the way your brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine work in a self-defeating cycle of stimulus and reward. Then she identifies the missing piece in most diet plans: emotional eating. She shares heart-wrenching case histories of clients whose emotional eating was keeping them fat, and teaches you EFT tapping to heal your history of hurt feelings. Once you understand the signals of both your body and your heart, you'll be able to design a successful eating plan that is satisfying both emotionally and physically, and allows the naturally thin you to emerge. Highly recommended!

Dawson Church, PhD  
Author of EFT for Weight Loss

Some people believe that weight loss is about calories in, calories out. Karen Donaldson knows that it's more about what's eating you than what you are eating. *Belly Fat Blues: Mind-Body Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss* is a powerful how-to manual for those that have been through all the diets and exercise program without results. I wholeheartedly endorse this fabulous guide to help you change the way you feel, and look!

Alina Frank, EFT Trainer and Mentor  
Tapping Into Health, Wealth, and Freedom with Alina

Donaldson is gifted with the ability to clearly explain the complex interaction between cravings, emotional eating, and brain chemistry in a way that is easy to understand. Her intuitiveness and compassion shine through as she explains how negative beliefs and traumas stored in your mind prevent you from losing weight and keeping it off. Donaldson addresses the emotional aspect of overeating that is so often overlooked in our obesity epidemic, and offers science-based, mind-body solutions that really work.

If you've ever asked yourself the question, "I know what I'm supposed to do so why can't I do it?", you need to read this book."

Jean Bokelmann M.D.  
Endobiogenic Integrative Medical Center  
Clinical faculty, Idaho State University Family Medicine Residency Program

Karen Donaldson is a registered dietitian, personal trainer, and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) Certified Weight Loss Coach who specializes in helping people lose weight and keep it off. She is an expert at what she does. I met Karen about 10 years when I was teaching Bariatric programs. She made it very easy for my patients to understand the connection between blood sugar levels, hormones, and belly fat. If you want to lose weight and improve your health, read this book. Then share it with a friend and save a life.

Dr. Monica Ganz, Ph.D., CWLC, MS, LC

I highly recommend this book. I feel like Karen (Donaldson) somehow got into my head and figured out all the possible issues I have regarding weight, body image, self-esteem, child abuse, etc. It has been eye-opening to find out how many tragic or happy situations can trigger various issues with food. I'm just starting this journey, but I'm happy to be on it. The work we're doing is life changing.

Tami M., client

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## Introduction: True Confessions

As a registered dietitian and personal trainer, I had the education and skills to provide to my clients the best nutrition and exercise advice on the planet for weight loss. I wrote elaborate and personalized menus, helped them organize and plan their days, and even got them to exercise. But time after time I would see the same pattern emerge. These dedicated souls would be “good” for a few days, or even a few weeks, but inevitably, they would fall back into their old habits. The weight loss would stop or the weight they had lost would find its way back.

And this wasn't just happening with *my* clients. Nearly everyone I knew, no matter what program they followed or what weight loss provider they had seen, was seriously struggling with keeping the weight off. They had tried every pill, potion, and gimmick under the sun, even weight loss surgery, to no avail. It was so frustrating and it was making everyone crazy!

The truth was, they were stuck. What they were doing wasn't working for them. And it wasn't working for *me* either. Truth be told, I was struggling with my own eating and weight issues. I still remember teaching seminars on weight loss, then coming home and “unwinding” with a big bowl of buttered popcorn, followed by some chocolate. And that was *after* dinner!

***I was eating emotionally . . . just like my clients.***

As the owner of a weight loss clinic, this was not an easy thing for me to admit, even to myself. My weight was “fine” and I thought I carried it well. Sure, I could stand to lose a couple of pounds, but who couldn't?, I rationalized. And besides, popcorn is healthy because it has fiber, right? And chocolate has antioxidants, especially the dark variety. And what's a little raw cookie dough going to hurt now and again – especially if you make it with pasteurized eggs so you don't get food poisoning!

***Whenever a client would confess to me***

***“I know what I'm supposed to do so why can't I do it?”,***



### *I wanted to scream - “ME TOO!”*

Of course I preached to my clients, and myself, the standard advice - keep healthy snacks around, get rid of the junky foods, decrease your stress, call a friend, take a bath, go on a walk – but none of that seemed to help. If you’re eating for emotional reasons, it doesn’t matter how many veggies are in the fridge, the craving for the chocolates hidden in the bottom of the pantry is going to win. I needed a tool that would *really* work to help heal the issues that were causing the overeating in the first place. But what was that? . . .

### *Weight is Just the Symptom*

Clearly what we’ve been doing isn’t working. Our society is larger than ever before. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 1/3 of U.S. adults are obese. If the trend continues, that number is expected to rise to about 42% by the year 2030. Ironically, the annual revenue of the U.S. weight-loss industry is just as huge as the people it “serves”. According to a report by ABC News, the more than 100 *million* people on a diet in the U.S. generate about 20-50 *billion* dollars each year for this lucrative trade. The average cost of bariatric surgery is \$11,500 to \$26,000 and the average salaries paid to celebrity endorsers of major weight loss programs ranges from \$500,000 to \$3 million. If these programs really worked to help people lose weight *and keep the weight off*, the weight loss industry would go bankrupt. Of course we know that nutrition and exercise play a vital role in weight loss, but what I kept hearing from my clients were statements like this:

*“I know I’m an emotional eater”,*

*“I just want this war with food to be over”,*

*“The stress is killing me”,*

*“I’m good at taking care of everyone except myself”*

*“It’s a constant battle. I’m ‘good’ for a few days, and then I’m ‘bad’ again”*

*“I eat when I’m happy, sad, bored, mad, \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)”*

*“I can’t stop the cravings”,*

*“Being hungry has nothing to do with my eating”*

It was becoming evident that extra weight was showing up as a symptom of what was really going on in their lives. And no diet can fix *that*.

### *A Blessing in Disguise*

As it turns out, my struggles with weight and emotional eating turned out to be one of those infamous blessings in disguise. Of course I knew what *caused* weight gain. That’s the easy part. What I wanted was the answer to that proverbial question . . . ***“I know what I’m supposed to do so WHY can’t I do it?”***,

Fueled by the frustration, guilt, shame, and sense of failure that so many people experience on their weight loss programs, I was determined to find the answer. My journey led me down a path of remarkable discoveries which eventually led to a complete redesign of my weight loss practice.

Backed by science and supported by love, I created a truly holistic approach to permanent weight loss that focuses not on what a person is eating, but what is eating *them*. The majority of my time these days is focused on helping people understand the connection between food and their emotions, and teaching them techniques to permanently release the weight.

### *Mind-Body Weight Loss*

To lose weight, and keep it off, we simply must address - and start healing - the issues and stressors that are triggering our cravings and emotional eating in the first place. Ignoring the connection between food and our emotions will only keep us stuck in the sadly viscous cycle we’re in now.

A recent compliment from a medical doctor I work with confirmed my belief in the power of what I call *mind-body weight loss*. One of his patients was considering weight loss surgery. I told her that the doctor and I would support her no matter what her decision was, but I also encouraged her to explore the emotions underlying her overeating. The doctor made my day when he thanked me for “addressing the critical information that is so much overlooked in our obesity epidemic.”

By truly understanding the connection between food, stress, and our emotions and brain chemistry – and using the techniques and tools described in this book - I personally lost over 25 pounds. I have kept the weight off for over four years and I don't worry about it coming back. I seldom have cravings, but if I do I handle them with ease. These mind-body techniques have also helped me heal many of the issues that led to my emotional eating in the first place. As a result, I have a much more peaceful relationship with food. I'm no longer compelled to tranquilize my anxieties or stuff my emotions with carbohydrate-laden comfort foods.

As a side benefit of my healing work, my relationships are improving, my health is great, and my career is blossoming. Not every day is perfect, of course, but I'm handling life with much more ease and joy than ever before.

Now it's YOUR turn.

## - Chapter 1 -

### Carbs, Cravings, and Emotional Eating

**aka . . . Nobody Ever Said They'd Kill for a Hard-Boiled Egg!**

#### *Carbohydrates and Blood Sugars*

When it comes to weight loss – and keeping it off - *what we eat does* matter. When we consume carbohydrates – think bread, cereal, rice, pasta, cookies, crackers, cake, donuts, chips, bagels, pretzels, pancakes, waffles, soda, sports drinks, fruit juice, candy, syrup, fruit, potatoes, and more – those carbohydrates are digested into sugars and then transported to the blood where they are now called blood sugars or blood glucose. It really doesn't matter what form the food or beverage started out as, every single one of them ends up as sugars in your blood. Of course, some of these foods are more nutritious than others, but in the scientific scheme of things, the bottom line is that your blood sugars rise after eating foods or drinking beverages that contain carbohydrates.

This is not, in and of itself, a bad thing. All of the cells in our body need energy to do their jobs and they get this energy from the foods we eat. Of course, we often eat for reasons other than fueling our bodies – happy, sad, bored, mad – and we'll get to that in a moment. The more carbs we eat or drink, the higher our blood sugars levels rise. This is what gets most people into trouble when it comes to weight loss and keeping it off, especially if our carb intake is greater than our physical need.

***carbohydrates > sugars > increase blood glucose/sugar levels***

The liver and pancreas play vital roles in keeping our blood glucose levels in the correct range. The pancreas is responsible for secreting two hormones – insulin and glucagon - which work together to keep our blood sugars in the right place. We don't want them too high, but we don't want them too low either.

When blood sugar levels are high (for example after a meal or beverage containing carbohydrates) the pancreas gets a message to release some insulin into the blood. Insulin is often described as a “key” because it helps to “unlock” the door to our cells to let the sugars enter. Insulin levels fluctuate throughout the day, depending on the needs of your body. While you're sleeping, insulin levels are usually lower. Shortly after a meal, your insulin levels should rise in response to the food or drink you've consumed.

When insulin is released from the pancreas, it travels to many cells in the body, particularly the liver, muscle, and fat cells. When insulin reaches one of these cells, it “knocks on the door”, hoping that another chemical in the cell – glucose receptors – will hear the knock. The glucose receptors are supposed to help insulin open the door and let the blood sugars in. This provides the cell with energy or it can be stored for future use inside the liver or muscle cells.

***high blood sugar levels (after a meal) > pancreas releases insulin > blood glucose decreases***

## *Stress and Blood Sugars*

On the other side of this balancing act is glucagon, another hormone made by the pancreas. Glucagon serves as a messenger to the liver. The liver very kindly stores sugar for us to use when blood glucose levels get low. For example, our blood sugars levels decrease between meals, if we skip meals, and while we're sleeping at night. If they start to get too low, the liver releases some back into the blood to "save" us. Thank you Mr. Liver!

The liver also releases extra sugar into the blood during times of stress. For example, if you were out in the woods being chased by a bear, you would want your liver to release a ton of sugar to your blood so that the muscles in your legs would have the energy needed to run from the bear. This is part of the fight or flight response. It comes in handy during emergencies, but it also plays a *very* detrimental role when it comes to losing weight and keeping it off.

When you're stressed from "life" – work, family, money, health, parents, partners – or from your emotions – anxiety, fear, anger, resentment, guilt, shame, depression – or from past traumas – childhood issues (parents and families), abuse (physical, sexual, or verbal), low self-esteem, or low self-worth – your body senses danger and kicks you into the same fight or flight response as if there was a bear. The only problem is there is no bear. And, as much as you'd like to, you can't really run. But how nice would it be to tell your overbearing jerk-of-a-boss . . . "You're really stressing me out and making me angry. I deserve more respect. I'm going to take a break and go on a little jog to get rid of all the extra sugars in my blood that your attitude has caused my liver to release. I don't want these sugars to get stored as fat and if I don't release this anger I'll likely stuff it down with food, so see 'ya later." In case this conversation isn't an option for you, keep reading for some excellent tools you *can* use.

*stress > liver releases sugar > blood glucose increases*

## *Insulin Resistance, Blood Sugars, and Belly Fat*

When consume too many carbohydrates (think Thanksgiving dinner or any other carb binge), the system gets thrown out of whack. The pancreas is forced to make extra insulin to compensate for all the extra sugars in the blood. At the same time, the cells themselves (for example, the muscle cells) become *resistant* to the insulin, and even *more* insulin is needed to "knock on the door" of the cells, trying to "wake up" the glucose receivers so that the sugars can get inside where they're needed.

*higher blood sugars > extra insulin produced > resistant cells > even more insulin produced*

Having all that extra insulin and extra sugar in your blood is bad for several reasons. First of all, a high level of insulin is a risk factor for heart disease. Secondly, only so much blood glucose (sugar) can be stored in the muscle and liver cells. Your body knows that the excess sugar doesn't belong in your blood, and it wants to store it somewhere, so . . . it gets stored as FAT, right in the BELLY. Yep, it has to go somewhere and that's where it goes!

*extra sugars > extra insulin > belly fat*

What's even worse is that sometimes this process actually drops your blood sugars levels too *low*, a condition called hypoglycemia. Now you crave even *more* sugar to bring your levels back up. Of course this starts the whole cycle all over again, and you store even *more* fat.

***extra insulin > hypoglycemia > carbohydrate cravings > start the cycle all over again***

It's a recipe for disaster. Sadly, the pattern continues for many people, and after years of abuse their pancreas starts to "burn out". It simply can't keep compensating by overproducing massive amounts of insulin. As a result, blood glucose levels stay high because the sugars can't get into the cells. The result is type 2 diabetes.

[To see exactly how carbs get stored as fat in the belly, click HERE.](#)

### *Blood Sugars and Your Brain - Serotonin*

If you've ever "self-medicated" with carbohydrates, what you're about to read will resonate with you. Carbohydrates indirectly raise the serotonin levels in our brains. Serotonin is that "feel good" hormone that calms us down and helps us feel more relaxed. It helps regulate our mood, metabolism and appetite. If you've ever: soothed your anxious brain with a tub of raw cookie; crunched out your frustrations with a bag of potato chips; buried your shame with seconds or thirds at dinner; raised your spirits with a box of cereal; drowned your sorrows in a bowl of ice cream; eased your loneliness with a pan of brownies; eased your pain with a plate of pasta or found friendship with a pizza, you know what I'm talking about. IT'S NOT ABOUT THE FOOD! We just want to *feel* better.

When we consume carbohydrates, the insulin produced in response to the higher blood sugar levels allows more tryptophan, an amino acid, to enter the brain. Tryptophan is the precursor to serotonin, and, once in the brain, nearly all the tryptophan is converted into serotonin. This is evidenced by the drowsiness that can accompany a carbohydrate binge and it also helps explain why many of my clients say they would "kill for chocolate" but not for a hard-boiled egg!

***high sugars > insulin > tryptophan enters brain > serotonin produced > calm and relaxed***

The bad news is that shortly after this happens, your blood sugar levels crash, you feel tired and irritated, the carbs you consumed just got stored as belly fat, you feel like crap, and now you want MORE - as in more sugar!

***sugars crash > tired & low energy > store belly fat > feel like crap > crave more carbs***

Chances are you also feel like a failure because you blew your diet AGAIN and your brain says "Hey, I know what you can do to feel better . . . let's go find some carbs!" You try *not* to give in, but by this point in time you don't really care; your brain just wants to feel better.

As you can see, these cravings have nothing to do with true, physical hunger. Feelings of frustration, anxiety, anger, depression, loneliness, sad, or overwhelm can all trigger your brain to crave

carbohydrates - hence the term “emotional eating”. I still remember (now humorously, but not so funny back then) getting up from the dinner table, doing the dishes, and then making a huge bowl of buttered popcorn. My husband, cautiously and somewhat innocently, asked me “are you still hungry?” My response was less than cheerful (okay *fine* . . . I was bitchy) when my emotionally possessed self nearly screamed “What the hell does hunger have to do with eating?”

### *Blood Sugars and Your Brain – Dopamine*

To complicate matters further, sugar appears to have an almost drug-like effect on our brains. While still controversial, many researchers believe that sugar acts like an addictive substance, similar to alcohol, nicotine, or drugs like heroin and cocaine. Each of these substances activates the reward/pleasure center of the brain, causing the release of dopamine. Dopamine is another one of those “feel-good” brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that makes us feel “rewarded” – and we *really* like that feeling. And we want that feeling. Again. And again. And again . . .

The pathway looks something like this. Sugars activate the sweet taste receptors on our taste buds. These receptors send a signal to the brain which then activates the reward system. If you rarely eat sugar, or don’t eat too much at one time, the dopamine response rises slightly and then levels out. But if you *do* eat too much, especially on a regular basis, the dopamine response does NOT level out and eating or drinking the sugar will continue to feel rewarding. It’s *one* of the reasons we’re so “addicted” to sugary foods and why many people can’t stop at just one piece of chocolate or one cookie. Though the effect is not quite as intense as when dopamine is released in response to drugs and alcohol, too much of any “good” thing (including sugar) can send dopamine into overdrive, leading some people to constantly crave that “high”.

Factor in the emotional connection so many of us have to food and it makes losing weight hard and keeping it off even harder. For better or worse, our brains seem to remember exactly how and when we received our reward “stimulus”. For example, if mom always baked you treats for being “good” as a child, it’s likely that you’ll turn to that food to recreate that loving feeling, especially if you’re feeling unappreciated or not good enough. Or maybe you *didn’t* receive the love you needed as a child, and you found a way to nurture yourself with chocolate. The bottom line is that when we are deprived of the *feelings* we crave (love, peace, calmness, joy, validation, happiness, etc.) and we cope by eating lots of carbs and sugary treats, comfort foods take on a very literal meaning.

[To watch a video about how carb can hijack our brain chemistry, click HERE.](#)





**- Chapter 2 -**  
**“Fight-or-Flight”**  
**or**  
**“Eat-and-Store”?**

*The Stress Response*

We know that stress plays a HUGE role in our ability to lose weight and keep it off, and a basic understanding of what happens in your brain is vital to your successful weight loss. The stress response begins in a part of the brain called the amygdala. It’s a funny sounding word, but the amygdala plays a major role in processing our emotions. When it perceives danger, it sends out a warning signal to the hypothalamus, which acts like the “command center”. The hypothalamus communicates with the rest of the body through the *sympathetic* nervous system. When you’re stressed, all systems are on high alert to make sure you have enough energy and resources to prepare you for “fight-or-flight” mode.

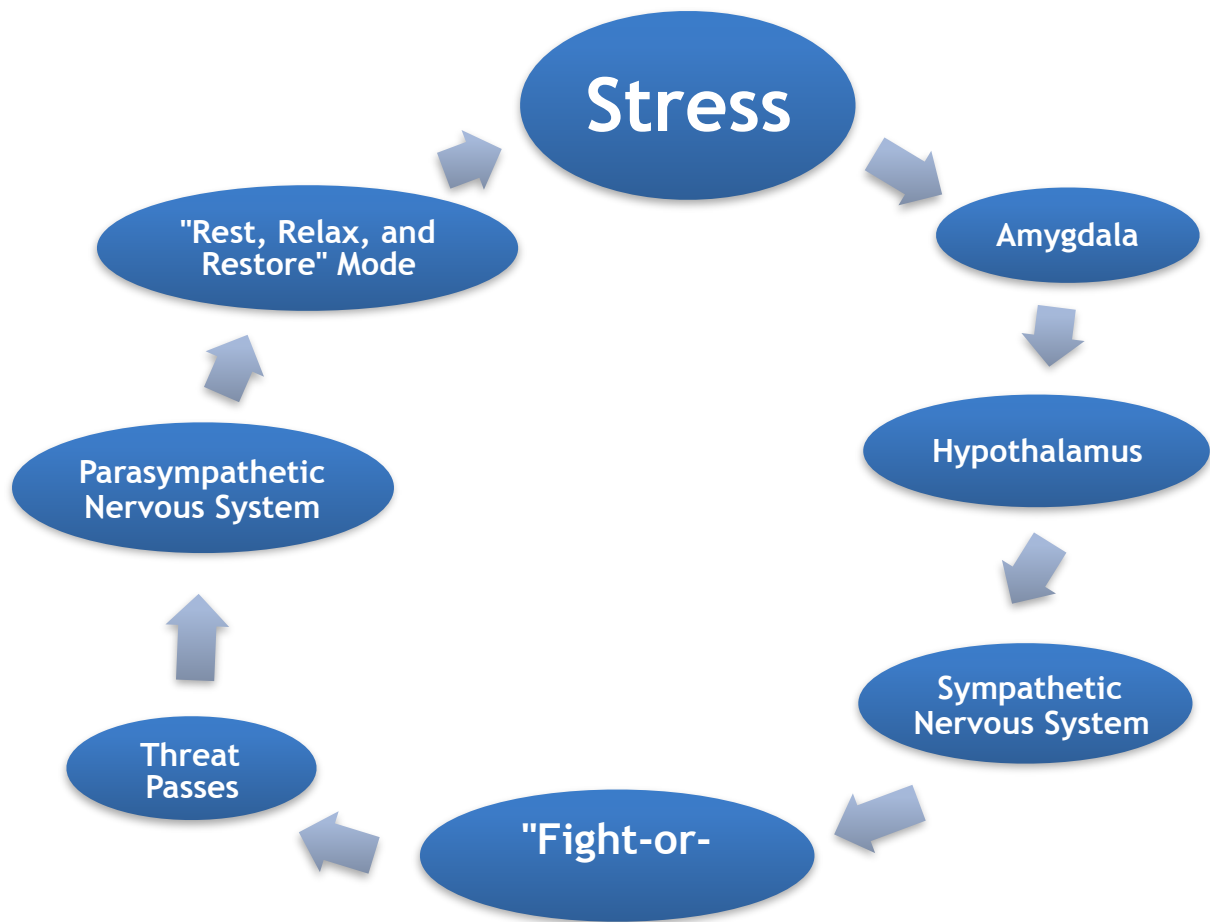
*How it SHOULD Work . . .*

When you encounter a perceived threat (for example, a bear in the woods), an “alarm” goes off in your brain. The amygdala sends out a distress signal and your adrenal glands get a message to amp up the production of cortisol and adrenaline. The increased adrenaline levels speed up your heart rate, rushing blood to your muscles and other vital organs. Your blood pressure and breathing rate also increase and extra oxygen gets sent to your brain to increase alertness. Meanwhile, the adrenaline and cortisol tell your liver and other storage sites in your body to release fats and sugars into your blood to be used as fuel to handle the “emergency”. Cortisol also shuts down any non-essential functions like digestion, reproduction, and your immune system. When you’re running from the bear, you need to be in “fight-or-flight” mode not “rest, relax, and restore” mode!

When the threat has passed, the *parasympathetic* nervous system takes over and helps return your body to “rest, relax, and restore” mode. Your stress hormones (the adrenaline and cortisol) levels should decrease, and your mind and body should recover, returning to a more calm and balanced state.

*stress > amygdala > hypothalamus > sympathetic nervous system > “fight-or-flight” mode >*  
*threat passes > parasympathetic nervous system > “rest, relax, and restore” mode*

*How It REALLY Works . . .*



For way too many people (myself included at times), modern-day stressors are CONSTANT and the body feels under attack 24/7. This keeps us in what I call chronic fight-or-flight mode. Until you find a new way of reacting to the stress, the cycle never ends.

How many times per day do you feel that anxious, revved-up feeling? The effects on our health and weight are disastrous. Constant surges of adrenaline can damage our blood vessels and arteries, which can raise blood pressure and increase our risk of heart attack or stroke. It also puts you at risk for health issues such as depression, anxiety, digestive disorders, concentration problems, memory issues, fatigue, and insomnia. Sustained high cortisol levels gradually tear down your body by destroying healthy muscle and bone, slowing down healing, and weakening your immune system. Because cortisol promotes the breakdown of fats and sugars for energy during “emergencies”, chronically high levels of this hormone indirectly contribute to the *storage* of fat tissue and weight gain. Your brain doesn’t know you’re not actually running from the bear in the woods, and your body has to do *something* with all those sugars and fats that were released into your blood. Your insulin levels also rise in response to the increases in blood sugars (chapter 1) and you’ve just set the stage to store more belly fat. Aaargh! Talk about stress!

*And so the cycle begins...  
again... and again...*



**YOUR BRAIN**  
"I need chocolate."

**SELF-MEDICATING WITH CARBS**  
"I've had a hard day and I'm really stressed. I deserve some chocolate."

**MORE BELLY FAT BLUES**  
"I can't believe I did it again. I just ate more junk and stored more fat. Will it never end? I'm so bad."

**THE SEROTONIN SURGE**  
"Ah... that's nice. I feel better now."

**CHRONIC FIGHT OR FLIGHT**  
"This stress is killing me. It's 24/7. All these emotions. I tried to calm down. Pass the freaking chocolate!"

**THE CRASH**  
"Ugh, now I'm tired and kind of irritable. Maybe I'll just have one more piece."

**CHAOS BRAIN**  
"But I don't want to be deprived. I want to be able to eat chocolate. I love food. Food has always been there for me. I'm not giving up any more in my life. I get anxiety just thinking about this!"

**THE DOPAMINE SPIKE**  
"OMG, I just ate half the bag! Why can't I stop at just one?"

**I'M SUCH AN FAILURE**  
"Aaargh! I'm an idiot. How am I ever going to lose weight if I can't control myself? What is wrong with me? Screw it! I've already blown it. I might as well finish the bag."

**BELLY FAT BLUES**  
"I knew it. My weight is up again. No matter what I do I can't lose weight. I'm just a big, fat pig. I'm starting my diet tomorrow."

To learn more about how stress contributes to belly fat, [click HERE](#).

To make matters worse, if you can't literally run from the bear (i.e. "life"), you find other ways to cope. You may want to punch your boss in the face (fight) or run away from the bills (flee), but those, sorry to say, aren't really viable options. For many folks, the easiest thing to relieve stress is to eat. Carbs. Lots of them. As you've just learned, foods and beverages high in carbohydrates can have a calming effect on the brain by raising serotonin levels. The sugars can also trigger the reward center of the brain, causing spikes in dopamine, which may induce even stronger cravings for those comfort foods. Your memories and emotions only intensify the cravings . . . "Grandma always baked me cookies when I was having a bad day and the cookies always made me feel better and besides I deserve a treat because it's been a long week. I'll just have a couple and I promise I'll be good tomorrow and . . . so on and so on." It's a vicious circle. Before you know it your fight-or-flight has become "eat-and-store".

## *Who's Running the Show?*

The nursing home called and left you a message that your mom has pneumonia. Your teenager is flunking math and is sulking in his room. You check your account balance on your phone and notice that you're in the overdraft – again. You're late for work but you really don't care because your coworker has been a pain all week. You open the mail to see that your insurance company doubled the co-pay on your cholesterol/diabetes/depression medications. The

computer beeps to let you know that an acquaintance from high school just posted her Caribbean vacation photos on Facebook . . . and the most fun you've had this year is grocery shopping

without the kids. All this before breakfast and now the coffee maker is broken. Pass the chocolate *please!*

And that's just the stress that we're conscious of. Each day our subconscious mind processes *millions* of thoughts, and it's *these* thoughts that tend to run the show. Your subconscious mind is like a huge memory bank that stores everything that happens to you and then retrieves this data upon command. For example, we learned many of our patterns and behaviors by observing and our parents, families, teachers, coaches, etc., especially during our formative years. If your role models were positive, loving, and supportive, your subconscious mind was likely programmed with healthy thoughts and belief systems, provided good, fertile soil for the seeds of success, health, prosperity, and so on. On the other hand, if negative, critical, judgmental, and abusive persons were (and still are) the major influencers in your life, your subconscious may be programmed with belief systems and patterns that are not serving you well. They are likely blocking you from success in many areas of your life, including your weight.

## *Weight Loss Stories from the Heart*

The stories below are both *heartbreaking* and *heartwarming*. They are true accounts of clients I've worked with that were tired of the same old “eat less and exercise more” message. They weren't able to lose weight and keep it off, but they didn't know why. The guilt, shame, and sense of failure they'd been feeling for years was nearly as painful as the life experiences and beliefs that contributed to the weight in the first place.

Like so many others, these clients were stuck in the cycle of playing the same negative “tapes” over and over in their heads. The results were disastrous not only for their weight but for their lives as a whole. When they finally learned how to break free of the negative energies and emotions that had been keeping them from losing weight and keeping it off, what they gained became as important as what they lost.

I am so honored to be working with these amazing people and so grateful to them for sharing their journeys with you. A few identifying details have been changed to respect their privacy, but their stories are real and their desire to bring hope to others struggling with weight, cravings, and emotional eating is inspirational.

**Tami** grew up with a single, bi-polar alcoholic mother and a mostly absent father. When he did show up he was critical and berated her about everything, including her weight. She also lived with her “mean aunt” for a few years after her mom tried to commit suicide. The verbal abuse from the aunt (“you’re so fat”) and the lack of love in her life was perhaps more devastating to her mind and body than the physical abuse she endured. In her words: “My first memories of food are of eating massive amounts of candy because it tasted good and made me feel better. Ever since I can remember I have turned to food for comfort. I’ve been overweight since I was a little girl. Food has always been a love and a pain. I loved it and hated it. Eating was always tainted with guilt and the knowledge that I would get fatter. I have struggled with weight all my life. I’ve been on EVERY diet, tried every pill, and even had liposuction. My weight issues have ruled my life. Even though I’m a very successful lawyer, I struggle with relationships. I now realize that I do whatever I have to, including pretending to be happy, so that people will like me and not leave me. I had several abortions but never had children because I didn’t want them to go through what I did. Please, please help me.”

*“I feel like Karen (Donaldson) somehow got into my head and figured out all the possible issues I have regarding weight, body image, self-esteem, child abuse, etc. It has been eye-opening to find out how many tragic or happy situations can trigger various issues with food. I’m just starting this journey, but I’m happy to be on it. During one of my sessions I was able to forgive my dad. The work we’re doing is life changing.” Tami*

Tami is learning how to recognize how the events in her life have shaped her beliefs about food and weight – and herself. She is much more mindful of *why* she eats and is no longer beating herself up for being a “failure”. During a recent session she told me that “the choppy waters and the storms are gone.”

**Mark** didn’t really understand the role that stress and emotions played in his weight, but he was intrigued. Being self-employed, he had lots of work-related stress. He claimed that his employees were incompetent - which made him angry - and he often lashed out at them. At night, he would come home and eat . . . and eat. What he *didn’t* realize was that he was *really* angry with his son, his ex-wife, and the drunk driver who killed his daughter. He was also struggling with the sadness and loneliness stemming from not having his mom around as a child and had been using food (especially chocolate) to try to mend his broken heart.

*“The real healing came when we started working on my family issues. My wife and I divorced several years ago and my family fell apart. My daughter was killed by a drunk driver and my son got into all sorts of trouble. The guilt and grief I’d been carrying around for years was killing me. I was so empty inside. During one of our sessions, I mentioned to Karen that I “loved” chocolate. It was no big deal, I said, I just really loved chocolate. But Karen knew there was more to the story. As it turns out, I was eating chocolate to fill the void I felt from not having my mom around. It’s been a hard journey at times (lots of emotions), but each time we meet I realize losing weight is NOT really about the food. Karen explained to me that the excess weight is really a symptom of the other stuff that’s going on in our lives. I’m so grateful for a more peaceful relationship with food – and life.”*

Mark lost about 25 pounds and has kept it off. He “confesses” to an occasional “emotional milkshake” but overall says he has a much more peaceful relationship with food.

**Beth** was referred to me by her doctor for diabetes and weight loss. Her blood sugars were high and her weight was over 300 pounds. After a few educational sessions on carbohydrates, proteins, healthy fats, and fiber, I cautiously brought up the subject of emotional eating. Her husband is a traditional medical provider and I was hesitant to rock the boat, but I could also feel the pain in her heart. She had spent most of her life caring for others and not really speaking HER truth. She dutifully raised her children (gaining more weight with each one), cooked the meals, kept the house, and attended to church duties. But she wasn’t truly happy. Her sisters were often mean to her, she worried constantly about her children, and her husband was always trying to “help her” lose weight. As the peacemaker in the family, she didn’t feel safe getting angry and confessed that it didn’t change things anyway, so why bother. Because she didn’t have a “real” job (a paying job outside the home), she – and her husband – both felt that his contribution to the family was more valuable, and thus his needs came first. She thought she would be able to “get more done” when the children were raised and left home, but as an empty nester she felt depressed and unmotivated and even more worthless. She believed, as do many, that if she could just lose weight, life would be better. But losing weight never fixed the *real* issues, so the pounds always came back.

Over the past six months, Beth has released over 70 pounds of fat and significantly improved her blood sugars. Perhaps most importantly Beth says:

*“I had no idea weight loss worked like this. I couldn’t figure out why I could never keep the weight off. I know now it’s because of all the ‘stuff’ in my life. When my husband recently asked me what I was doing ‘this time’ to lose the weight, I simply answered ‘I’m working on healing the hurts that have caused me to eat emotionally’. I understand that weight loss does not equal happiness. I’m learning to love and accept myself whether other people do or not.”*

**Katie** had been successful at weight loss, but she was terrified that the weight was going to back and that she would never be free from the strict, obsessive-compulsiveness she had used to shed the weight in the first place. She was a classic over-achiever, the “good” girl. She earned top grades, didn’t do drugs or alcohol, and didn’t hang out with “bad boys”. But this life of perfectionism was taking its toll. After graduating from college, she started to pack on the pounds. The pressure from her family (and then herself) to be “better”, was catching up with her and her anxiety was at an all-time high. She started using food to cope. Of course the weight she gained only fed the fire of her insecurities.

*“Two years ago I decided I wanted to lose weight. I was successful, but only because I forced myself into compliance. Any bump in the road, and my anxiety would skyrocket. I traded excessive exercise and compulsively tracking my intake for my comfort foods. I religiously regulated what I ate and how many miles I would run. The only time I felt calm was when I was recording my food intake and drinking my diet soda. When I came to see Karen I had run my body into the ground, and I was hoping for some nutritional advice to ‘get back on track.’ In reality I was looking for another set of rules to keep, because I felt if I could just do everything “right” my problems would disappear. Thankfully Karen taught me the tools I needed to stop the cycle. I’m learning to find joy and fulfillment within myself and to accept ALL of me – even my imperfections.”*

Katie lost over 100 pounds and has kept the weight off for over a year now. She is enjoying much more balance in her life.

*The REAL Reasons You Can’t Lose Weight*



It's taken awhile, but the medical world is finally starting to recognize a few of us have known for years. Our life experiences (especially from childhood) and our belief systems play a major role in our ability to lose weight and keep it off. A fascinating article by the Post Standard<sup>1</sup> discusses some startling results.

A Kaiser Permanente study that tracked more than 30,000 mostly middle-aged obese adults since 1982 showed that those who were most successful in losing weight were also most likely to later drop out of the weight-loss program and regain the weight. "We unexpectedly discovered that histories of childhood sexual abuse were common, as were histories of growing up in markedly dysfunctional households," wrote the authors. "We slowly discovered that major weight loss is often sexually or physically threatening and that obesity, whatever its health risks, is protective emotionally." Other social workers and psychologists quoted in the story went on to agree that if you grew up with trauma – emotional, sexual, verbal, or physical – you found a way to survive.

For many people, surviving means coping with food. From birth, we use food to gain nourishment but we also use it to feel warm, safe, and secure. Food also triggers the release of those major "feel-good" neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine, tranquilizing our anxieties and negative emotions. Finally, it calms the fight-or-flight response, shifting us from chaos brain to calm brain.

Thus, it's quite understandable why so many of us turn to food to soothe ourselves. It's what our minds tell us to do. It also explains why diets, weight loss surgeries, and pills and potions CAN'T work. If you take away the food, you take away the coping mechanism. Why would *anyone* want to do that? Would *you* sign up for a program that advertised the following?

### SUPER-DUPER FAST & EASY WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM

Lose 20 pounds in 20 days.

All you have to do is give up all foods that you've used over the years that: kept you safe from unwanted sexual attention; soothed your anxious brain; relieved your guilt; buried your shame; raised your spirits; eased your loneliness; entertained you when you were bored; be-friended you when you were lonely; and eased your depression when you were overwhelmed."

All this for only 6 easy payments of only \$19.99.

Plus, as a special bonus we'll make you feel like a loser when you fail and then you'll buy more stuff from us ☺

Don't wait to feel really bad about yourself . . . Call this number NOW!

*There is another way. . .*

– Chapter 3 –  
**The Missing Piece  
of the  
Weight Loss Puzzle**

*The Mind-Body Connection – The Missing Piece of the Weight Loss Puzzle*

In my quest to find answers to the question “I know what I’m supposed to do so WHY can’t I do it”, I stumbled across random articles about how our emotions affect our physical health. At first I thought it was nonsense. How could anger and critical thoughts be related to our cholesterol levels? How could irritable bowel syndrome be related to not being open about what you feel? Was there really a connection between constipation and being unwilling to release old feelings and beliefs?

The more I read, the more intrigued I became. Especially when it came to weight. In her book, *Feelings Buried Alive Never Die*, Karol K. Truman describes the emotions that show up as overweight and obesity: feelings of insecurity; feelings of self-rejection; wanting to protect the body; seeking love and fulfillment; feelings being stuffed inside; unexpressed feelings; using food as a substitute for affection; inability to admit to self or others what you really desire; and seeking love.

Wow! She really nailed it. It was then that I had the most remarkable revelation . . . weight is just the symptom of what’s *really* going on in our lives. It made perfect sense to me. Unless we deal with the *real* issues, the weight will just keep coming back.

***Weight shows up as the symptom of what’s really going on in our lives.***

In fact, this is what I tell my clients every day. It’s still a bit of a stretch for most of them to call their excess weight a “blessing”, but they’re starting to understand the correlation. In truth, if the weight *didn’t* show up, many of our deeply buried issues would never get attended to or healed so that we could move on with our lives.

*The Language of Weight*

I wasn't really sure what to do with this new-found information, but I knew it was important not only for me but for my clients. As "fate" would have it, a dear friend named Teri showed up in my life and started talking to me about my "language". Well . . . I *have* been known to use a few choice words in my less-than-finer moments and I confess to dropping the occasional "f-bomb", but that is not what she was referring to. Teri was teaching me that whatever we *think* or *say* becomes our truth. For example, if we start each day with statements like

***"I'm so fat; I'm stressed; I'm tired; I can't lose weight; My cravings are out of control;  
I can't stop this emotional eating; food is a constant battle for me"***

and so on, then that's exactly what happens. Some people call this the law of attraction, while others simply believe "what you put out there comes back to you". I immediately started to notice how automatically these words flow from the mouths of my clients and myself. Yikes. These were definitely not beliefs we wanted to be manifesting.

About this same time, I was also drawn to reading *Experience Your Good Now!: Learning to Use Affirmations* by Louise Hay. I was beginning to see a theme. "Every thought you think and every word you speak is an affirmation." Okay, that got my attention. Now I'm *really* listening . . .

The evidence kept rolling in and the powerful role of our thoughts and emotions was reinforced through the words of best-selling authors Bruce Lipton and Dawson Church. In *The Genie in Your Genes* (Church) and *The Biology of Belief* (Lipton), the authors explain how our thoughts and emotions can affect the expression of our genes (i.e.: our DNA). My first thought was "wow, that's cool". My second thought was "oh NO! I'd better be careful what I think!"

### *Core Beliefs and Negative Thought Patterns*

The more I read, the more I also began to *really* understand the influence of our belief systems on our weight loss. For example, if you grew up in an environment of shame, guilt, and betrayal (see Melinda's story, below) and you don't know what to do with all those negative energies, you're very likely to find *something* to make yourself feel better. For lots of people this "something" is food. As you've just learned, food can be *very* effective at calming our minds and making us feel good via the reward center. Or maybe you're more like Tami (previous chapter), who

was told for years by the very people who were supposed to love her unconditionally that she was fat and not good enough. If these are the thoughts that are running the show in *your* mind, just going on a diet is NOT going to help you lose weight and keep it off.

***What thoughts and beliefs are running YOUR show?***

***Real Clients and Real Weight Loss***

Armed with my new-found knowledge, and the mind-body tools I'll share in the following chapters, I started working with a few trusted clients. The results were amazing. They not only lost weight and kept it off, they transformed their lives. It is with love and gratitude for Melinda that I share her story.

**Melinda** was referred to me by her doctor for diabetes and weight. Her blood sugars and blood pressure were out of control and her weight landed her in the obese category. Our first meeting proceeded as usual. I taught her about carbohydrates, healthy fats, adequate protein, serving sizes, and exercise. She understood the concepts, but I could tell there was much more going on in her head. Towards the end of the session I asked her if I could share what I thought was *really* going on. I explained the connection between carbs and serotonin levels and how we use them to self-medicate; the effect sugar has on the pleasure center of the brain, and how addictive it is for some people; and how stressors and traumas (current and childhood) contribute to cravings and emotional eating, which explains why we “know what we’re supposed to do but can’t do it”. She cried because she was *so* relieved that someone finally understood *why* she had been unable to stop overeating, despite threats from her doctor that she was going to die! Hint – fear is NOT a motivator.

Within moments, so many of the negative energies and belief systems that Melinda had been storing came pouring out of her soul. As the tears flowed, she shared that she had been sexually abused by her father and that abuse continued for several years. Among other things, she was forced to perform oral sex on her father, which was scary but also made her feel a bit powerful (which resulted in lots of shame and guilt). She did tell her mother, but that didn’t stop mom from dropping her off at dad’s house for unsupervised visits (betrayal). The anger she felt (but stuffed) toward her mother for not keeping her safe was even stronger than the hatred she harbored against her father. As an adult she felt guilty about enjoying sex (was she “bad”?) and found it hard to be in a committed relationship (who would want her?). During subsequent vis-

its, other issues showed up such as: fear of having her curtains open (someone could be looking in); insomnia (bad things happen when you're sleeping); money problems (many people soothe themselves with food *and* shopping); job insecurities (how could she possibly deserve a great job after all the bad things she had done in her life); and relationships woes (was she really worthy of having a person truly love her when no one else had?)

For years and years she stuffed her feelings and gained more and more weight, which of course contributed to her diabetes and hypertension. As you might imagine, Melinda had tried nearly every diet out there, without success. The last thing she needed was another lecture on what-not-to-eat. The emotions from the traumas in her life were overwhelming, and she was using food to survive.

With the help of mind-body weight loss techniques (don't miss chapters 4 and 5), Melinda was able to release the pain of the traumatic memories she had been hanging onto for years and allow amazing healing to occur. As she released the negative energies, she also started releasing the weight.

*"Karen literally saved my life. I was referred to see her by my doctor because of my diabetes and my weight. She did talk to me about nutrition but then said 'Melinda, I know this might sound weird, but I think the real issues here are emotional.' I broke out in tears. She was right on. My life was a mess and instead of dealing with the real issues I buried them with food. Enter EFT (next chapter). . . I can't believe the power of our minds. In just one session, I was able to forgive my mom. In another session I worked on the guilt I was harboring for having affairs with married men (it was safer for me). I also worked on my feelings of inadequacy at my job . . . I didn't think I deserved a new office. In another, session I realized I AM worthy of a loving, committed relationship, which made the man in my life very happy. As I peeled back the layers, I was finally able to admit my rage towards my mother. In a very powerful session, I let that go too. My eating is finally under control and so are my blood sugars. I'm gradually losing fat and I feel great." Melinda*

Melinda has lost 30 pounds and kept it off. She also avoided bankruptcy by working on her belief systems about money and is now in a committed relationship with a very special man in her life.

## *Do I Really Have to Work on ME?*

After seeing the powerful effects of what I now call my “mind-body weight loss program”, I started to work on myself. I knew the time had come. As demonstrated by the heart wrenching stories you’ve just read about some of my clients, the emotional connection we have to food can be extremely powerful. It *can* be as serious as using food to cope with sexual abuse or abandonment issues, but it can also be more subtle. Perhaps you work too much and you’re feeling stressed and overwhelmed, so you eat at night to calm your anxieties and keep you going. Or maybe you’re bored and you use food as entertainment. Or maybe it’s the only way you know to connect with friends and family. You might also be using food and your weight to avoid dealing with painful issues in your life connected to your relationship with your partner, parents, or children. Whatever the reason(s), food becomes what we use to nurture ourselves.

It wasn’t as easy as I thought to work on myself or to reach out for help. I didn’t *want* to have issues. And I certainly didn’t want to deal with anything I may have buried. But everything happens for a reason – so they say! Having weight issues as the owner of a weight loss practice pretty much forced me to pay attention to *my* symptoms ☹️-

### *“Emotional Popcorn”*

When I tell people that my “problem food” is popcorn, most of them just laugh. “Popcorn’s good for you,” they say. “It has fiber”. And besides, “you’re making it on the stove with good oils so it must be heart-healthy.” As if I’ve never made these arguments to myself! The truth is that nearly *any* food can be good for you WHEN USED PROPERLY. By that I mean that popcorn *can* be a healthy snack, or even a meal, if you are truly physically hungry AND if you’re not “using” it to avoid or calm your issues. But there is a big difference between eating popcorn to fuel your body and eating what I now call “emotional popcorn”. I chuckle as I write this because I remember an amusing session with Mark a few months into his program. He sat down on the chair in my office, sighed heavily, and said “Karen, I must confess, I had an emotional milkshake this week. And some emotional French fries. And, oh yes, an emotional cheeseburger too”. I did a double take! What a breakthrough for him to recognize this. Perhaps you can relate?

### *In good times and in bad . . .*

As a child, I used to make popcorn on the stove, the old-fashioned way, for the entire family. It was amazingly delicious! I’d pop it in a special pan, dump it into a big, brown paper bag, and load it up with real melted butter and salt. My sister and I would munch away watching Friday

night television while my parents enjoyed theirs in the other room, along with some “cocktails”. It was what we did on Friday nights for *fun*. This habit continued through my teenage years, getting me through some *stressful* all-night study sessions and *comforting* me through more than a few *lonely* Friday nights in front of the television. As a poor, *stressed-out* college student, popcorn was a cheap source of calories that was very filling. For *fun*, I would get together with friends and enjoy – you guessed it – a big bowl of buttered delight. For *entertainment*, we’d pop a chick flick into the VCR (okay, that dates me!) and have girls night! Fast forward a few years to the *stressors* of married life and you’ve definitely got a recipe for *comfort food*. Add an infant to the mix and what have you got? Popcorn after a *hard day*, after a long night. Over the next several years, popcorn became my *friend*. *It was always there for me, in good times and bad*. The pounds crept on slowly. Every once in a while I’d try a “diet”, but I really didn’t like counting calories or feeling *deprived*. So I just kind of ignored the issue.

The problem intensified as the self-employed owner of a weight loss clinic. How was I supposed to help other people when I couldn’t help myself? It was *frustrating* and embarrassing. The truth was, popcorn made me feel better (where have I heard *that* before). It took away the anxiety I’d often feel from being overwhelmed and stressed. It was what I did for fun. It was how I entertained myself when I was bored. I was my own client!

*“I know what I’m supposed to do, but I just can’t do it”;*

*“I know I eat emotionally, but I don’t know how to make it stop”;*

*“I’m tired of this war with food”;*

*“No matter what I do I can’t lose weight”.*

I’m pleased to report that by making the mind-body connection and using the tools I’m about to describe, I was able to lose over 25 pounds and keep it off.

Melinda did it. I did it. The clients in the next chapter did it. And it’s YOUR turn now.

[Click here to schedule a complimentary Discovery Session with me.](#)



- Chapter 4 -

*The Real Path to Permanent Weight Loss*

As I hope you're beginning to realize, we eat for *many* reasons besides physical hunger. In order to lose weight, we must first understand *why* we overeat. We then need solutions to help us calm our cravings and *heal the hurts* that led us down the path of emotional eating in the first place and keep us stuck there. In the next chapter, I'll guide you through *all* the steps of YOUR personal path to mind-body weight loss. But first I'd like to introduce you to the technique that changed my life and is changing the lives of my clients.

*The Mind-Body Tool That Changed My Life*

Emotional Freedom Technique, simply known as EFT, is by far *the* most phenomenal tool I've found for helping people lose weight and keep it off. It has revolutionized my entire weight loss practice. Helping people curb their cravings and heal the issues that are causing their emotional eating is about 70% of what I do these days. I consult with clients privately in my office, via Skype or telephone, and through group teleclasses.

I am also the instructor and facilitator for the weight loss courses offered through Dr. Dawson Church and EFT Universe, a "job" that I am totally passionate about! As previously mentioned, Church is the award-winning author of the best-selling book, *The Genie in Your Genes*, which has been described by reviewers as a breakthrough in our understanding of the link between emotions and genetics. He founded the *National Institute for Integrative Healthcare* to study and implement promising evidence-based psychological and medical techniques. He is also the director of CEO of EFT Universe, one of the largest alternative medicine sites on the web, which hosts millions of visitors each year. Together we've created some amazing programs to help people lose weight and keep it off.

[To schedule a Complimentary Discovery Session on emotional eating, click HERE.](#)

*What is EFT?*

EFT, or "tapping", is an incredible healing tool that allows you to release the negative energies that are keeping you stuck or traumatized. You can practice it on your own or with the help of a skilled practitioner. The process may seem a little foreign at first, but the results are amazing – especially when it comes to weight loss.

EFT combines manually tapping on acupuncture points or pressure points on your body while thinking about events or beliefs that have been negative or traumatic. While tapping on these

points, you also say words of comfort and self-affirmation. The pressure points are some of the same ones used in traditional acupuncture for over five thousand years to treat physical and emotional ailments. In fact, many people call tapping “acupuncture without needles.”

According to the principles of EFT, negative emotions show up when there is a disruption to our body’s energy system. These disruptions can be triggered by things we experience in our current lives or by memories from our childhood and early life experiences - or both. For example, your spouse could make a snide comment about your weight, which, of course, is hurtful in the present moment. That rude remark also brings up traumatic memories of your mother calling you fat and putting you on a diet. Both situations caused a disruption or imbalance in your body and thus lead to negative emotions. Physical symptoms like nausea, tightness in your neck or shoulders, headache, etc., might also show up.

EFT works to restore your mind and body to a more calm and balanced state. By tapping, you decrease the emotional intensity of your traumas and negative beliefs so that they no longer affect you so adversely. EFT truly is *emotional freedom technique*.

***In more simple terms, EFT shifts you from “chaos brain” to “calm brain”***

#### *Chaos Brain and Calm Brain*

When you’re in that state of “chaos brain” (you know, when you’re driving yourself crazy inside your own mind and you’d do {or eat} just about anything to tranquilize your emotions), chances are you’re operating in fight-or-flight mode. Your amygdala has sent out the warning signal to the rest of your body. Your sympathetic nervous system is on high alert, amping up your production of adrenaline and cortisol (remember the diagram in Chapter 2). You are ready to fight or flee, but since there is no “bear” to run from (just life!), you’re on the slippery slope to “eat and store” mode. You know you shouldn’t reach for the carbs, but you just can’t help it. Your feelings of loneliness, boredom, frustration, guilt, and/or anger are overwhelming and before you know it you’ve inhaled a bag of chips or a box of cookies to stuff your feelings *away* and make you feel better. The carbs spike your serotonin and dopamine and your brain settles down for a moment, but the calmness is fleeting. As the effect of the food wears off, the anxiety returns, the emotions you tried to stuff resurface – and you’re back to chaos brain. More chocolate please!

EFT works its power by shifting you from chaos brain to calm brain. Imagine that you just had an argument with your spouse. You feel disrespected and get angry. Your mind searches its memory bank, looking for the files with the appropriate response. Because your brain perceives this as a threat, your reaction is to fight or flee. If that’s not an option, your brain says “go find some carbs”, in a sense giving you permission to eat them.

Tapping on the acupressure points interrupts this pattern by sending calming signal to the amygdala, turning *off* the fight-or-flight response. Your adrenaline and cortisol levels decrease, your serotonin levels increase, and you feel calm and balanced - all without carbs! An incredible “bonus” benefit is that EFT helps reprogram your brain so that you can learn to truly love and accept yourself.

***“Tapping is serotonin without the carbs.” Karen Donaldson***

### *Cravings*

EFT can be used for just about any “ailment”, but its effectiveness for weight loss is astounding. Cravings are a huge issue for many people and fighting them is a constant battle. Too often, the battle is lost and the extra calories are consumed. Fortunately, tapping is highly effective for curbing cravings – without the war! Within just a few minutes, EFT can stop, or at least significantly reduce, your craving to the point where you no longer feel obsessed to eat the extra calories. A study by Church and Brooks<sup>1</sup> of healthcare workers showed substantial declines in cravings - averaging 83 percent - for items like chocolate, food, alcohol, and tobacco. I’ve successfully used EFT in my own office to help clients curb their cravings for everything from chocolate to diet sodas. In fact, my closet holds the evidence of these amazing tapping sessions as many “forget” to take their (former) comfort foods with them when we’re done!

### *Anxiety and Depression*

EFT is also very well documented for its effectiveness in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. For more information please EFTUniverse.com. This is vitally important when it comes to losing weight and keeping it off. Many studies have found a link between depression and obesity. In his study published in the Journal of Health Psychology<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Bruce Blaine confirmed that depressed people, compared to non-depressed people, were at significantly higher risk for developing obesity. Dr. Blaine was quoted as saying “Depressed people are not that different physiologically from stressed people. Their sympathetic nervous system is chronically turned on, and one of the consequences of this is increased fat storage.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Emotional Eating*

One of the things that EFT does best is help people heal from what I call the more “chronic” issues behind weight. It is these traumas, events, and beliefs - and the anxieties they create – that lead us to eat emotionally. If you’ve been using food as your best friend and to tranquilize your feelings and emotions, you already know that you’re eating for reasons other than physical hunger

and nourishment. Decreasing the emotional intensity of the negative energies which are landing you in front of the television with a bag of chips or a gallon of ice cream is absolutely critical for permanent weight loss.

### *Cortisol Levels, Stress, Anxiety and Depression*

The role of EFT on reducing stress cannot be overstated. Your body is not meant to live in a chronic state of fight-or-flight. Continually elevated levels of cortisol and chronic anxiety and depression contribute to a wide range of problems, including overweight and obesity.

In a study on the effect of EFT on stress biochemistry<sup>4</sup>, Church, Yount, and Brooks showed that a single, one-hour session of EFT significantly decreased saliva cortisol levels and psychological distress symptoms. In fact, the decrease in cortisol levels was 24% in the EFT group compared to the talk therapy and no treatment groups, which both showed a decrease in cortisol of about 14%. The EFT group also showed statistically significant improvements in anxiety, depression, and the overall severity of symptoms. This should be on the front page of the New York Times!

### *EFT Basics*

The basics of EFT are amazingly simple. You identify your problem, rate the intensity, then tap through a sequence of pressure points while talking or thinking about your problem. The tapping points and the “Basic Recipe” for EFT are described on the following pages.

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### ***EFT Tapping Points***

*Top of the Head (TH)*

*Inside Eyebrow (EB)*

*Side of Eye (SE)*

*Under Eye (UE)*

*Under Nose (UN)*

*Chin (CH)*

*Collarbone (CB)*

*Under Arm (UA)*

*Side of Hand/Karate Chop  
(KT)*

*Tap firmly with the tips of your first 2 or 3 fingers. You can tap on either side of your body, using either hand. You can also switch sides and/or hands during the tapping process.*

*Tap on each point about 7-10 times. The exact number of times you tap at each point is not crucial.*

*Many people find a natural rhythm to tapping and switch to the next tapping point as they say each reminder phrase or their as they pause before speaking a new thought (see text).*

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## The “Basic Recipe”

1. Identify your problem and give it a number on the SUD scale. SUD stands for Subjective Units of Discomfort or Distress. A ranking of zero is no discomfort and a ranking of ten indicates the highest level of distress. If you were “dying” for a piece of chocolate, your SUD number would be a 10. If you’d “kill” for that chocolate, your SUD rating might be at 100!
2. Repeat a “Setup Statement” while tapping on the Karate Chop point. The Setup Statement is based on exposure therapy and cognitive therapy.

- a. The “exposure” part of the Setup Statement involves remembering the problem. Sometimes clients ask me if it’s really necessary to talk about the “bad” stuff. I gently remind them that if they don’t, it’s like pretending the pile of dog poop in the middle of the living room floor doesn’t exist. You can cover it up with a towel, but it’s still there – a big, stinky mess that is likely to cause problems in the future!
- b. The “cognitive” portion of the Setup statement allows you to accept the reality of what current “is” and to affirm that you are okay, even with all your “stuff”. A Setup Statement for a chocolate craving might sound something like this:

“Even though I *really* want some chocolate, and I feel deprived when I can’t have it, I love and accept myself anyway.”

3. Repeat a Reminder Phrase while tapping on the acupressure points.
  - a. The Reminder Phrase is a brief phrase that keeps the problem in the forefront of your mind. It works to emotionally trigger you while you’re tapping on the pressure points. A Reminder Phrase for the above situation might be:

“this feeling of deprivation” or “this intense chocolate craving”

- b. Tapping on the pressure points allows your brain to process your negative emotions in a more calm (vs. chaotic) state, decreasing their emotional intensity. Tap as directed in the side-bar shown in the tapping points picture.
4. Reassess your SUD level. If the craving or emotion is still very strong, you can repeat the steps until the intensity decreases.

If the intensity of your emotions does *not* decrease or your craving does *not* diminish, it does *not* mean your EFT session failed! Tapping very often starts to unpeel the layers, revealing some issues that are ready to be worked on. I encourage my clients to see this as a blessing and not a curse!

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### *Real People, Real Results*

With her permission, let's use Melinda's story to see how EFT works not only to help release extra pounds, but to heal other issues along the way. Melinda has a very caring spirit and hopes to inspire others and give them hope by sharing her journey.

As you may recall, Melinda was sexually abused as a child and has struggled with weight, money, relationship, and self-esteem issues for years. She obviously *knows* she shouldn't be eating tons of junky carbs because they will worsen her diabetes and obesity, but she feels powerless to stop. Instead of giving her yet another lecture on what-not-to-eat, we used EFT to tap on the events and beliefs that have contributed to her feelings of anxiety, depression, fear, shame, unworthiness, poor body image, and self-doubt. As she tapped, soothing signals were sent through her body, and the emotional charge of the traumatic events diminished. She could still recall the events, but the memories no longer evoked debilitating emotions.

We started with the sexual abuse, as this ranks high on the list of reasons for emotional eating. At first Melinda couldn't talk about it, so we just called it "The Really Bad Secret". Her SUD rating before tapping was 100 on a scale on 1-10.

***Setup Statement (repeat while tapping on the Karate Chop point):***



*Even though I have this really bad secret, and I hate myself for it, and it's hard for me to love and accept myself, I'm okay.*

*Even though I've kept this horrible secret for years, and I've stuffed my feelings about it, and I don't even want to talk about, I'm okay.*

*Even though I have all this shame and anger and guilt, and it's making me crazy, I'm okay and I might be open to learning how to love and accept myself.*

I had Melinda help me come up with the Setup Statement, and, as you can see, lots of issues or “aspects” came up for her. These “global” issues – shame, anger, guilt, hatred of self, not loving and accepting self – often show up during a tapping session and give us great insight as the *real* reasons we have cravings and eat emotionally. We started with the “secret” and then, over the next few sessions, tapped on the other areas. The tapping scripts below are a composite of different sessions and were written to give you a better understanding of how EFT works.

### ***Tapping through the points and telling the “story”.***

*Top of Head: “This horrible secret.”*

*Eye Brow: “I've never told anyone.”*

*Side of Eye: “I don't even want to talk about.”*

*Under Eye: “It's just too painful.”*

*Under Nose: “What if people find out?”*

*Chin: “I don't want anyone to know.”*

*Collar Bone: “I don't even want to know.”*

*Under the Arm: “Maybe I'll just keep burying it.”*

*Karate Chop: “It's just so awful.”*

*Top of Head: “I'm so embarrassed.”*

*Eyebrow: “This horrible secret.”*

*Side of Eye: “I've held onto it for so long.”*

*Under Eye: “This really bad thing that happened.”*

*Under Nose: “So much shame.”*

*Chin: “So Embarrassing.”*

*Collar Bone: “Makes me sick.”*

*Under Arm: “This awful secret.”*

After a few rounds of tapping, Melinda told me that her SUDS number was closer to a 10 (instead of 100!) and that she felt she could continue tapping on this “secret” because it no longer felt as scary to talk about.

***More tapping through the points (top of head, eyebrow, side of eye, under eye, under nose, chin, collarbone, underarm, karate chop), while telling the “story”.***

*“All this shame. Why didn’t I stop it? Why didn’t I tell someone? It was just too scary. And weird. I should have told someone. They wouldn’t have believed me anyway. Why would they? It was just too awful. What if I secretly wanted it? What if it was MY fault? What if I liked the attention?”*

It was during this meeting that Melinda nearly exploded with anger. I encouraged her to keep talking (nearly screaming by now) and keep tapping.

***More tapping through the points (top of head, eyebrow, side of eye, under eye, under nose, chin, collarbone, underarm, karate chop), while telling the “story”.***

*“I DID tell someone! I told my mother. I told my mom and she didn’t do anything. My dad sexually abused me and I told my mom and she didn’t do a thing! I can still recall the conversation. I was standing in the kitchen, crying, and I told my mom what my dad had done. I can’t believe she didn’t protect me. My mom didn’t protect me. Oh my God, my mom didn’t protect me.”*

Obviously this was a very emotional session for Melinda, but also very healing. She had finally been able to talk about the “secret” and the emotional intensity surrounding this dropped from 100 to about a 5. Yes, the abuse still happened (and we worked on that), but the issue of her mom not protecting her was perhaps even bigger and so were the emotions of guilt and shame she was experiencing.

***More tapping through the points (top of head, eyebrow, side of eye, under eye, under nose, chin, collarbone, underarm, karate chop), while telling the “story”.***

*“What’s the matter with me? Why didn’t she protect me? Was it my fault? Did she hate me? Why didn’t she protect me? I must have done something wrong. Did I like it? Why didn’t she protect me? There must be something wrong with me. This is all so humiliating. I don’t even know what to think. Oh my God this makes me so ANGRY. I’ve been messed up all these years. What the hell was the matter with these people?”*

As often happens with EFT, new emotions that have been previously buried show up so that they can be healed. In another session, we tapped on her anger.

***New Setup Statement (repeat while tapping on the Karate Chop point):***

***SUD scale 20/10***

*“Even though I am SO f-ing angry, and I don’t think I’ll ever let go of this feeling, I’m okay. Even though I am SO mad I could just scream, and I’d like to beat the shit out of someone, I still like myself.*

*Even though I have all this rage, and I don’t know what to do with it, and it’s SO not right what happened, I accept myself anyway.”*

***More tapping through the points (top of head, eyebrow, side of eye, under eye, under nose, chin, collarbone, underarm, karate chop), while telling the “story”.***

*“All this anger. How could they do this to me? Who does this to people? Who does this to kids? I am so angry I could scream. My life has been so screwed up. I don’t have healthy relationships, I feel insecure in my job, my self-esteem is in the toilet.”*

Melinda’s SUD number for her anger was now down to a “5”. And then . . .

***Tapping through the points (Top of Head, Eyebrow, Side of Eye, Under Eye, Under Nose, Chin, Collarbone, Underarm, Karate Chop):***

*“I eat. Oh my God, I eat. I’ve been eating for all these years to cover up this pain. I KNOW what I’m supposed to do, but I just can’t do it. I’ve been on every diet written, but they never work.”*

More breakthroughs. . .

***Tapping through the points (Top of Head, Eyebrow, Side of Eye, Under Eye, Under Nose, Chin, Collarbone, Underarm, Karate Chop):***

*“It’s not safe for me to lose weight. I just realized it’s not safe for me to lose weight. If lose weight, men will be attracted to me and it might get serious. And then I’d have to have sex with them. But I like sex. I have sex with lots of men. But they’ve always been married. It’s safer*

*that way. No strings. No wondering if they really love me. It's just sex. I like the attention and I like the way it makes me feel. Until I don't . . . I really don't like how I feel after sex and I really don't like how I feel after a binge."*

It was here that Melinda allowed herself to feel the pain that she had buried for so many years and the other emotions she had stuff with food.

***New Setup Statement (repeat while tapping on the Karate Chop point):  
SUD scale 10/10***

*"Even though I have so much pain, I accept myself anyway.  
Even though this pain is overwhelming, I'm okay.  
Even though this pain is so intense that I don't want anyone to get close to me, I love myself."*

***Tapping through the points (Top of Head, Eyebrow, Side of Eye, Under Eye, Under Nose, Chin, Collarbone, Underarm, Karate Chop):***

*"I need this pain to go away. The food is so good. It really helps. Whenever I feel this, I just eat something. And I feel better. But only for awhile. And then I gain more weight. Again. But at least it keeps me hidden. And safe. Or does it? I don't think so. I am ready to let this go. I AM ready to SAFELY let this go. It IS safe for me to let this go."*

When Melinda got to this point, I knew her mind and her body had let go of the need to be overweight to keep her safe. Her SUD number was down to a 2. She was exhausted, but stated she'd had a huge release of the pain.

*Lasting results and continued healing.*

To date, Melinda has lost 30 pounds and kept them off. The tapping described above was more general in nature, but it's *very* important to tap on specific events as well. For example, Melinda tapped in more detail on the time in the kitchen when she told her mother about the abuse, the time her mother drove her to her father's house for visitation, and the time she knew her mother was in the next room while the sexual abuse was occurring. The good news is that Melinda didn't have to tap on *every* single event that contributed to her anger towards her mother. By tapping on a few of the most disturbing events, memories that are similar in nature lose their intensity. By tapping on a few specifics, the big picture emotion (anger in this case) is effectively neutralized.

Melinda and I continue to tap on issues that come up for her, and each session strengthens her more peaceful relationship with food. We've tapped on her fear of having her curtains open at night (fear of someone looking in); spending too much money (many people soothe themselves with food *and* shopping); insomnia (bad things happen when you're sleeping); job insecurities (how could she possibly deserve a great job after all the bad things she had done in her life); relationships (was she really worthy of having a person truly love her when no one else had?); and not being able to have children (anger at her mother and her father).

Melinda recently sent me a message, thanking me for all the work we've done. She shared that has not only been able to lose weight and keep it off, she's been able to release the pain and emotional intensity of traumatic memories that literally been weighing her down for years. She starts each day with tapping and with the affirmation "Today is the day I release all that my body no longer needs." She's in bed by 10 pm and sleeping better. She didn't have to file bankruptcy. She's handling work stress like a pro. Her relationship with her significant other is joyful ☺. It brings tears to our eyes when we realize not just what she's lost, but what she's gained.

Tami, Mark, Beth, and Katie (the amazing clients I wrote about in chapter 2) have also found weight loss through EFT . . .

Tami tapped on the verbal abuse from her aunt ("you're so fat) and now the emotional "sting" of those words is gone. She tapped on the abandonment issues from not having her father around and now is grateful he left when he did because she realizes life was better with him at a distance. For years, she used candy to feel better. With tapping, she is breaking that emotional connection. For the first time in most of her life she has some peace with food.

Many of Mark's sessions were focused on tapping to release anger at his son who struggles with addiction issues, the ex-wife that left him, and the drunk driver who killed his daughter. Of course these sessions were emotional, but he no longer has to use food to tranquilize the guilt and grief he was carrying. Doug had also been using chocolate as a replacement for his mother's love and attention, and tapping helped release that powerful connection that was at the root of his cravings. He's lost 25 pounds and kept it off.

Beth and I used tapping to release the hurtful words and actions of others that had contributed to her feelings of unworthiness and not being good enough. For years she took care of everyone but herself, never speaking *her* truth. Others around her were always "helping" her lose weight, claiming that if she did so she (and they) would be happy. The pressure was too much and she ate

to calm her anxieties and insecurities. During one very beautiful tapping session, I asked her to practice speaking to her spouse about her weight loss. He had been asking her what she was doing to lose weight “this time”. Completely on her own she replied *‘I’m working on healing the hurts that have caused me to eat emotionally. I understand now that weight loss does not equal happiness. I’m learning to love and accept myself whether other people do or not.’* Beth taps for at least 10 minutes every day. She has shed over 70 pounds and releases more weight each week.

*Katie* came to me after losing over 100 pounds, but she was terrified the weight was going to come back because she didn’t think she could maintain the extreme exercise and radical dieting it took to lose it. We tapped on her need to be perfect and her insecurities. As she let these emotions go, she found the peace with food she was looking for. She has kept the weight off for over a year now. I knew *Katie* was going to be fine when she told me *“I’m learning to find joy and fulfillment within myself and to accept ALL of me – even my imperfections.”*

My filing cabinets are filled with the success stories of many more, including my own healing and weight loss of 25 pounds. Now it’s YOUR turn and I am here to help you on your way.

1. [http://www.eftuniverse.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2442](http://www.eftuniverse.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2442)

**The effect of a brief EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) self-intervention on anxiety, depression, pain and cravings in healthcare workers. Dawson Church, PhD, Foundation for Epigenetic Medicine, Santa Rosa, CA. Audrey J. Brooks, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of Arizona, Tucson. *Integrative Medicine: A Clinician's Journal*, (2010), Oct/Nov, 40-44.**

2. <http://hpq.sagepub.com/content/13/8/1190.abstract>

**J Health Psychol November 2008** vol. 13 no. 8 **1190-1197**. Does Depression Cause Obesity? A Meta-analysis of Longitudinal Studies of Depression and Weight Control. **Dr. Bruce Blaine.**

3. (<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/16/exploring-the-links-between-depression-and-weight-gain>).

Exploring the Links Between Depression and Weight Gain. *By RONI CARYN RABIN*

4. (<http://www.eftuniverse.com/research-studies/the-effect-of-emotional-freedom-techniques-eft-on-stress-biochemistry>)

**The effect of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) on stress biochemistry: A randomized controlled trial**

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- Chapter 5 -  
Love Your Body, Love Your Life

As you can see, we eat for so many reasons besides physical hunger. In order to lose weight, and keep it off permanently, we must first understand *why* we overeat. Next, we need solutions to help us calm our cravings and *heal the hurts* that led us down the path of emotional eating in the first place. Finally, we need support to help us stay the course on this amazing journey we call life!

*Step One: Make the Mind-Body Connection*

Most of my clients readily admit that they eat emotionally. However, it's not until I describe the complex interaction between comfort foods (carbs), serotonin, dopamine, stress, the fight-or-flight response – and *their* emotions - that they really start to understand *why*.

For this reason, I encourage you to study chapters one and two and take the time to reflect upon *your* eating behaviors and how they're linked to your feelings and your brain chemistry. Many weight loss programs encourage you to keep a food journal, but I also ask my clients to keep an “emotion” diary along with their food diary. Asking yourself the following questions can provide valuable insight as to why you eat – or don't eat.

*Do you eat regular meals? Why or why not? Sometimes **not** eating reveals that we don't feel worthy of taking the time to take care of ourselves.*

*What do snacks look like for you? Are you physically hungry? What are you **really** hungry for?*

*What are you doing while eating? Are you “dashboard dining” in the car, zoning out in front of the TV, or working on your computer? What are you **distracting** yourself from?*

*What times of the day/night are especially challenging? Are you “**good**” all day, and then binge after 9 pm? Do you judge your worthiness by the number on the scale?*

*How are you **feeling** right before you eat? Are you tired, bored, lonely, overwhelmed, sad, mad, happy, frustrated, etc.?*

*How do you feel right after you eat? Are you calm and happy? Do you verbally berate yourself?*

One of the best ways to become more mindful about your eating habits is to eat without distraction – no TV, computer, book, magazine, or smart phone. Try this for a few meals or snacks and



notice what emotions come up for you. In our stressed-out world, we often inhale the food or stuff it down without ever noticing the flavor, texture, color, or aroma. If the only memory you have of eating is the fast-food wrapper on the floor your car, the empty brownie pan, or the pile of candy wrappers, it's time to stop and smell the roses – literally. Pause long enough to really appreciate and have gratitude for the foods you put into your body. Notice the color, texture, and aroma. Reflect upon the nutrients that are nourishing your mind and your body.

If you're eating "real" food, this will be easy. If you're binging on "junk", ask yourself what you are *really* craving. You'll likely find some good material to tap on! And remember, the calories count whether you eat them with joy or guilt, so *mindfully enjoy* what you eat.

### *Step Two: Balance Your Mind, Body, and Spirit*

The more stressed you are, the more likely you are to use food to tranquilize your emotions. Signing up for the latest "quick-fix" starvation and deprivation program is certainly not going to heal your underlying issues and, in fact, will likely trigger them and set you up for failure. Talk about being out of balance!

There are many simple steps you can take on your path to creating a more balanced life and a more peaceful relationship with food. In addition to EFT, I use meditation, visualizations, affirmations, joyful movement, and essential oils to help myself, and my clients, shift from chaos brain to calm brain.

For example, I start my day with a few minutes of guided meditation or visualization. What I focus on is how I would like my day to transpire. Do I want to feel peaceful and accomplish my tasks with ease, or do I want to feel stressed and overwhelmed? We *do* have a choice and the choice is up to you. I might do some tapping, Tai Chi, journaling, or quiet reflective time to make this happen. I've learned that I am worth the 5-10 minutes this takes – and my day goes SO much better!

To keep cravings and emotional eating at bay, you can also tap before each of your food "encounters". Some of my clients incorporate tapping into a prayer or a gratitude statement, which is a very peaceful way to start a meal, and may reduce any negative emotions you might be feeling. For example, during the process of writing this book, I often found myself in kitchen, looking for "something". As you might guess, I was *not* physically hungry. I was however, overwhelmed, tired, anxious, insecure, frustrated, and so on. After a few not so pretty episodes of emotional eating, I committed to even *more* tapping and was able to curb the cravings. I'm quite happy to report that I did *not* gain weight while writing a book on weight loss!

I also choose my words carefully, ever mindful that each of our thoughts and words is an affirmation. For example, instead of saying to myself "I can't have *that* because I'm on a diet", I

say “Because I love and honor myself, I choose foods that nourish my body and mind for its highest and best good.” Bye-bye feelings of deprivation! It may sound goofy at first, but try it.

### *Step Three: Take the Garbage Out - and Put the Good Stuff In*

To truly nourish your mind and body for its highest and best good, you do need to put the “good stuff” in and leave the “bad stuff” out. All the tapping in the world won’t fix the problems that come with processed, refined, and artificial foods. Use EFT to help you reduce your cravings for the toxic, junky foods that got you into trouble in the first place. In time, you will start craving the “good stuff” that your body really needs to function at its best.

Fueling your body with refined, processed, and artificial foods is analogous to putting bad gasoline in your car. It *will* run, but you’ll probably have many visits to the repair shop and eventually it will die on you. The same goes for energy “boosters”. They may speed you up for a short time, but the long-term effects on your health can be disastrous. Besides, the 24/7 stress of being “on” all the time will propel you right into fight-or-flight mode, and we all know how that sabotages your weight loss efforts!

Because there are nearly as many “diets” as there are people on the planet, finding the right nutrition plan can sometimes be overwhelming. As I dietitian, my top ten *general* recommendations for weight loss and optimal health are:

- Focus on whole, unprocessed, REAL foods.
- Cut the junky carbs.
- Include healthy proteins, fats, and fiber at each meal and snack.
- Enjoy fruit in moderation.
- Eat tons of veggies.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners.
- Improve the health of your gut with probiotics

Knowing that it can sometimes be challenging to eat healthy when others in your home are resistant, I created the 14-day Family Friendly Sugar Detox. Following the recommendations described above, this program is designed to help you get off “sugar”, but it also offers easy-to-fix options for those in your family who desire a few more carbs in their lives. Daily tapping scripts and a journal are also included to help support you through the emotions that are likely to be triggered when you’re trying give up your comfort foods.

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[If you’d like to nourish your body for its highest and best good, click here](#) for more information about my *Family Friendly Sugar Detox program, and Weight Loss Meditations.*

### *Step Four: Tap, Tap, Tap. Then Tap Some More!*

My most successful client taps for ten minutes every day and also taps on her cravings. She checks in every two weeks and usually shows a weight loss of five to seven pounds. At her third visit, I rather loudly exclaimed “Beth, what the heck are you doing? You lose weight every time you come in.” Somewhat cautiously (I probably scared her!) she replied, “I’ve been tapping.” Still in awe, I asked her how often. “Well,” she replied, a little nervously, “You told me to tap for ten minutes every day and I did. Am I doing it wrong?”.

Wow, what an amazing testimony to the power of EFT! Beth is the sweet lady I spoke of in Chapter 2. If you recall, she struggled for years with not being able to speak her truth, trying to please everyone around her. She’d tried nearly every diet on the planet and always gained the weight back. In the time we’ve been working together she has released – and kept off - over 100 pounds. She is able to follow the menus I give her with ease and she rarely feels deprived. More importantly, she is curbing her cravings and healing the traumas that contributed to her weight in the first place. Her quote about how she’s doing this is worth repeating:

*“I had no idea weight loss worked like this. I couldn’t figure out why I could never keep the weight off. I know now it’s because off all the ‘stuff’ in my life. When my husband recently asked me what I was doing ‘this time’ to lose the weight, I simply answered ‘I’m working on healing the hurts that have caused me to eat emotionally’. I understand that weight loss does not equal happiness. I’m learning to love and accept myself whether other people do or not.”*

I recommend tapping several times per day. Many of my clients tap in the shower first thing in the morning or while bathing at night. Lots of my clients tap in the bathroom. It may be one of the few places you’re guaranteed privacy (unless you have toddlers). If you are properly hydrated, you’re certain to be in there several times per day!

The important thing to remember about tapping is that there really is no wrong way to do it. Don’t worry about finding the right words to say. Just start tapping. At the least, you’ll find that it has a calming and relaxing effect on your body. Once you’ve experienced how powerful EFT can be, you will want to use it to calm your cravings and heal the deeper issues behind your emotional eating.

One of my favorite scripts for helping people get started with EFT is shown below. Try it and notice how you feel after tapping for just sixty seconds.

***Setup Statement (repeat while tapping on the Karate Chop point):***

*Even though I don't know what to say, and I feel kind of dumb tapping on these points, I love and accept myself anyway.*

*Even though I have no idea what I'm doing, and I hope nobody is watching, I love and accept myself anyway.*

*Even though I feel kind of goofy, but Karen said to tap anyway, I love and accept myself.*

***Tapping through the points and tell a "story".***

*Top of Head: "This tapping thing."*

*Eye Brow: "Not sure I'm doing it right."*

*Side of Eye: "But I guess I'll try it anyway."*

*Under Eye: "I **would** like to feel more calm."*

*Under Nose: "And I certainly don't need more adrenaline and cortisol produced."*

*Chin: "I hate being anxious."*

*Collar Bone: "So I really hope this works."*

*Under the Arm: "So here I am, tapping away."*

*Karate Chop: "Hmmm, I might be feeling a bit more calm."*

*Top of Head: "Maybe there is something to this after all."*

*Eyebrow: "I wonder if I'm shifting from chaos brain to calm brain."*

*Side of Eye: "I **would** like to increase my serotonin level."*

*Under Eye: "And maybe not eat so many carbs."*

*Under Nose: "I think this is actually working."*

*Chin: "I **do** feel better."*

*Collar Bone: "A bit more calm."*

*Under Arm: "I love and accept myself."*

***Step Five: Love and Accept Yourself***

One of the biggest obstacles I see for so many of my clients is that they struggle with loving and accepting themselves. This shows up in many ways. Sometimes it's impossible for people to say the words "I love and accept myself" when we're doing the Setup Statement for EFT. Often, it becomes evident when a person realizes they are good at taking care of everyone but themselves.

Learning to really love and accept ourselves takes time, but it is time well spent. And loving and accepting yourself can really help you on your weight loss journey. If you're struggling with this I urge you to follow the wise advice of Louise Hay and practice "mirror work". At least once per day, look into your eyes (look in a mirror) and say "I love you. I really, really love you." It may be challenging at first, but it's one of the best gifts you can give yourself. If you can't quite look yourself in the eyes while saying this, start with your eyes closed and work up to having your eyes open.

I'm going to encourage you to do this even if it doesn't feel true - even if it feels like a lie! Because here's the deal. We tell ourselves all sorts of lies every single day. We say things like "I'm disgusting, I'm not good enough, I'm not worthy", etc., etc. and those words are NOT true. They may FEEL like they are true, but they are NOT. So when I ask my clients to say "I love you" and they tell me they can't lie to themselves, I remind them that they already are with their harsh words. The bottom line? TELL YOURSELF A BETTER LIE! Even if you don't believe it's true, tell yourself "I love you".

I recently had a client say to me – "Do you know how nice it feels to have someone tell you that they love you each day?" Smiling, I asked her who was telling her that. Her response? "ME!" Fabulous!



“I love you. I really, really love you.”

*Step Six: Surround Yourself with a Loving and Supportive Community*

Part of loving and accepting yourself is being able to receive love and support from others. We all need help on this journey of life, especially when it comes to weight loss. The more I work with clients who desire weight loss, the more I realize just how important it is to reach out for, and receive, love and support.

Through years of experience, I’ve found that a combination of self-care, working with someone one-on-one, and having support works best for permanent weight loss. Tap daily to keep you calm and balanced. Work with a Certified EFT Practitioner to get to the roots of your deeper issues. Take a class, get a buddy or friend, or join a support group to keep you motivated and on track. Some valuable resources are listed below.

***Private EFT Sessions***

Private sessions are a great way to get the personal attention you deserve and to really zero in on the issues that are keeping you stuck. Sessions are conducted in person or over the phone or via Skype.

[To schedule a Complimentary Phone or Skype session to talk about if working together is right for YOU, click HERE to access my online calendar.](#)

### ***Classes & Programs***

I teach a variety of courses designed to help you every step of the way. You can choose from online programs that let you proceed at your own pace, from the comfort and privacy of your home to more in-depth, comprehensive programs that include private sessions and personalized accountability. I also offer Weight Loss Meditation programs and other tools to assist you on your healing journey.

[To learn more about classes, programs, and other valuable weight loss tools click HERE.](#)

Thank you so much for taking the time to honor YOURSELF by reading this book. You ARE WORTH IT! If you have questions, please reach out. I'm here to help. Email me at [excel-weightloss@gmail.com](mailto:excel-weightloss@gmail.com) and I'll respond as quickly as I can.

Many blessing on your journey.

Love your body, love your life.

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## About the Author

Karen Donaldson is a registered dietitian and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) Certified Weight Loss Coach who specializes in helping people lose weight permanently by teaching them powerful mind-body tools that allow them to release the need to tranquilize their emotions with food and to find peace in their lives. She is the owner of EXCEL Weight Loss Solutions in Pocatello and is the co-creator, along with Dawson Church of EFT Universe, of the EFT for Weight Loss courses. Karen works with people in person, via phone or Skype and also teaches teleclasses. She has helped hundreds of people throughout the world lose weight, find peace in their lives, and keep the weight off.

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