

## - - - IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS - - -

Unmet needs are what's behind your unwanted eating. It's not about your willpower, or your food addiction, or your self-control.

**But why are your needs unmet?** For some of us, we've been taught that having needs is wrong, that to be a 'good person' we should look after others – and they will look after us and our needs. This certainly doesn't work well in reality!

For others, we've been taught to deny our needs: that having needs is 'needy' and undesirable, or even selfish. So, we attempt to turn them off and soldier on. Or maybe you know you have needs, but somewhere along the way you learned that you don't deserve to have them filled or that you'd fill them when you lost the weight... got the job... found the husband.

Or maybe you just don't know what you need. That's what we're going to work on today.

Some of the most common causes of unwanted eating are:

- Loneliness
- Anger
- Boredom
- Discomfort (physical and mental)
- Not feeling pleasure
- Sadness
- Tiredness
- Feeling judged

You might strongly identify with one (or more) of these, or you might have other reasons. What's important to know is that no matter what feelings lead to your eating, you're trying to help yourself move into a different, more desirable, emotional state.

For example, if you have a need for social connection that's not being met you will feel **lonely**. This feeling of '**lonely**' is telling you that you're missing something in life, that you have a need: **connection** with another living thing.

You try to get that feeling of connection (i.e: meet your need) by eating – which makes total sense! But, it's not actually helping you make real connections, fill your need, or meet your goals.

So, now you're going to work on identifying the needs that are causing your emotional eating.

**This is an excerpt from the '7-Day Emotional Eating Plan'. [Click to find out more.](#)**

## Identify your needs: Journal it out

These questions are designed to help you think through what needs you're filling with food. It's really helpful here (and always) to look at your emotional eating as an attempt at self-care rather than a battle or something you need to control or fix. Working with it, listening, and being gentle are far, far more productive (and pleasant!).

**When do you find yourself eating emotionally?**

**What feeling or emotions do you experience then?**

**What feelings don't you like? Are there any you're afraid of?**

**When do you feel your best?**

**What's going on then? Why does it make you feel great?**

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**What emotions do you love to feel?**

**What do you need? (brainstorm)**

**Looking at all you've written above, what needs do you believe are behind your emotional eating?**

Come back to these questions later too, as you learn more about your emotional eating. Your understanding of yourself will deepen and grow the more you pay attention.

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