

## The Psychology (Physiology?) of Cheating

I primarily practice my skills as a physique transformation specialist - having honed my skills stripping fat off clients. However, my first concern is health. I have found that fat loss is a natural result of the body adapting to a healthier environment. By gradually cleaning out the toxicity of a body, the organs begin to function better and within weeks, the body begins regenerating. Fat loss is a natural result, as well as improved complexion, better sleep, more energy, mood leveling, muscle growth, stress reduction, etc etc.

Like everyone else, I have normal desires or cravings for unhealthy foods (what I find 'unhealthy' would make most folks laugh) and feel tempted. Sometimes, for one reason or another, I decide to say, "What the hell!" and indulge.

First, it should be said that what matters most is what we do on a daily basis and not what we do rarely or occasionally. So small diet cheats once in a while are not as harmful as if they were habitual. The other side of the coin is that these small but repeated cheats can sabotage all the benefits we are expecting to have with our diet. Like fat loss. Once the body gets picky, and has dropped significant fat - small repeated cheats will have a cumulative effect that can halt the process.

When we eat a clean diet, we eventually purify our body and become ultra-sensitive to any poor food choice. The body reacts violently to any unhealthy food, much like a child does.

The worst thing is the surprise of finding out that the old foods we used to love — those that seem so innocent still — can have such a dramatic effect on us. We'd like to be able to eat them occasionally and be fine... oh, we'd like so much to be able to!

In most people's minds, a vegetarian meal is a rather healthy meal. Most folks would eat that and feel fine. That might even be the healthiest thing they ate all week! But for someone whose system has been cleansed out by a diet of vegetables, fruits and meats, things aren't the same.

If I ate such a meal, let's say, composed of minestrone soup, a vegetarian pizza and soy ice cream, it will definitely affect me in a most negative way. I might have a hard time falling asleep and my sleep could be disturbed by hot flashes and wakefulness. I'll become dehydrated from all the salt contained in those "healthy" foods. But the worst thing is that I'll have such a hard time getting back on track again. For a week I might feel kind of ill, but not really — just a sort of slight sore throat and aching in the muscles. A slight depression could even set in and I'll have the hardest time feeling like myself again. What a setback for just a little dietary indiscretion! (For a lot of folks, feeling 'off' is enough to set off more cravings - to set off a pattern of emotional eating that is difficult to break, much like an addiction.)

I know from experience what happens when I decide to eat something I normally don't, for having been there more than a few times. But I also know that this experience is common to all those who have cleaned up their diets and bodies.

The Law of Vital Adaptation will help us understand why this happens.

The law, as stated by Herbert Shelton: "The response of the vital organism to external stimuli is an instinctive one, based upon a self-preservative instinct which adapts itself to whatever influence it cannot destroy or control."

What it means is that over time, the body can become accustomed to all sorts of harmful substances. It will adapt itself to it in order to protect itself. This is done at the expense of many vital processes. Shelton again:

"There was the ancient king who, in order to protect himself against poisoning by his foes, accustomed his body to various poisons by a gradual increase in the amount taken, until, when a time finally arrived when he desired to take his own life, by poisoning, he failed in the attempt. The first effort of the living organism, in relation to adverse and inimical influences, is to overcome and destroy them. Failing in this, it attempts to accommodate itself to such conditions and influences. For what it cannot overcome, it must learn to endure or perish."

When we start a clean diet, the process described by Shelton is done in reverse. The body rejects accumulated toxins and reverts to a more pure state that has little tolerance for poisons. That is why we can react so strongly to the foods we used to eat without a second thought.

## **A Learning Process**

It's a rather interesting experience to see how bad certain foods can make you feel once you've eaten a clean diet of mostly vegetables and meats for a while. I've noticed how certain foods make you drowsy, others just stimulate you and later make you feel depressed, others make you feel irritated, and others make you feel almost drugged. And then there are stomach cramps, gas, bloating, constipation or diarrhea, headaches, sore throats, colds...a host of attractive side effects.

This backsliding is probably necessary to understand where we want to go. But what really hurts in the long terms are the small cheats that end up occurring on a rather regular basis. Let me explain. If you go out one night and have a pizza and beer after having been on a clean diet for a while, you will feel it. I guarantee that you will not feel encouraged to repeat the experience the next day. But if instead you have a muffin here and there, drink some wine once in a while, add some bottled dressing to your salads, etc., you might not feel horrible, but all of those little things begin to add up and one day

you wonder why you don't feel so good anymore, without realizing what has actually happened. And how come your weight is slowly creeping up??

When we disturb the instinct, we disturb the main natural and physiological alarm that is supposed to protect us from harmful things. Health can only be perfect when our instinct is perfect. Cheating often ends up depraving our instinct and perverting it. It's better to perfect it, so that it can protect us in life.

## Keep it Fun

Life should be fun, and eating healthily shouldn't be a big struggle. At some point, you have to accept the path that you have chosen and be happy with it. What's the point of eating healthily if you feel deprived and you're constantly going back and forth and trying to find your balance again each time?

Trying to eat clean using the force of willpower alone is meant to fail, ultimately. On one side you are trying to make yourself eat in a way that you think is good for you, but on the other side you are fighting it, because on that level you do not want to do it. This inner struggle, in spite of the greatest willpower in the world, is going to make you fail.

The key is to come to accept on a deeper level the diet choice we make, rather than understand it on a purely intellectual level. Focus on the REASONS you are making dietary changes. How about mood leveling, more energy, better sleep, fat loss, muscle gain, increased energy, giving up those anti-depressants and heart medications...

So one way to make a clean diet work, indirectly, is to focus on other areas of our lives. Instead of focusing on the diet, we can focus on becoming more active, achieving new goals in or out of the gym, or inviting new, more positive friendships. By harmonizing those areas of life, it will become easier to make the diet work, almost without any effort.

Reaching out for support from other folks on the same quest you are on is very helpful. Knowing that you are not alone and that it is normal to struggle with cravings and temptations keeps those things in perspective. Keep it fun. Enjoy the process. Play hard.

A discrepancy between what we eat and who we are in the world generates a kind of tension, which is resolved either when the diet moves back in line with the person's incarnate role, or when the person's entire life changes to come in harmony with the new diet. Force, that is, willpower, can hold diet and being apart, but not forever. The tension will build, in the form of intense cravings, aversions, and, eventually, physical illness." Charles Eisenstein, *The Yoga of Eating*

Have Fun,  
Sheri Lynn