

## TAKING A BITE OUT OF EMOTIONAL EATING!

*I don't stop eating when I'm full. The meal isn't over when I'm full.*

*It's over when I hate myself...Louis C. K.*

### WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Emotional eating is when you eat for any reasons other than hunger; a feeling triggers your eating even if you are full
- ❖ Emotional eating is a response to depression, anxiety, boredom, stress, tension, relationship problems, disappointment, anger, loneliness and other feelings
- ❖ We emotionally eat to make us feel better; it is using food to fill an emotional need
- ❖ In emotional eating, food is not viewed as fuel for the body; it is seen as comfort, stress relief, a reward, or something that just makes us feel better
- ❖ Like a drug, food that is emotionally eaten makes us feel better but afterwards makes us feel worse as the feeling is not resolved and often we feel guilty about eating
- ❖ Ironically, emotional hunger can't be resolved with food but with behavior change
- ❖ Emotional hunger occurs quickly while physical hunger occurs slowly
- ❖ Emotional hunger needs to be satisfied immediately, physical hunger does not
- ❖ Emotional hunger is often satisfied with a specific food like chocolate, physical hunger is satisfied by many foods
- ❖ Emotional hunger is not satisfied when physically full, physical hunger is
- ❖ Emotional hunger can be mindless eating, physical hunger is awareness eating
- ❖ Emotional hunger comes from a craving, physical hunger comes from your stomach
- ❖ Comfort foods are specific foods such as ice cream, chocolate, and pizza that people eat when they have both good and bad feelings
- ❖ Happy people tend to eat pizza or steak while sad people tend to eat ice cream and cookies, and bored people tend to eat potato chips
- ❖ When you emotionally eat and are not hungry, the extra calories get stored as fat leading to being overweight and obesity
- ❖ Emotional eating usually comes from:
  - ❖ Stress and the hormone Cortisol which triggers cravings for high-fat foods
  - ❖ Stuffing or repressing emotions through food which numbs the emotions
  - ❖ Boredom where food gives a person something to do
  - ❖ Feelings of emptiness and loneliness which are filled by eating
  - ❖ Early conditioning where rewards for good behaviors are given with food
  - ❖ Being around others who are eating and you are encouraged
- ❖ Emotional eaters often use the excuses of; I'll never be attractive so why try, I always fail so why try, and why give up something that makes me feel good

### WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Identify your emotional eating triggers and keep a diary of what you eat and why
- ❖ Learn relaxation exercises and other stress reduction techniques
- ❖ Exercise regularly and often; keep from being bored
- ❖ Distract yourself when you have an emotional craving for food
- ❖ Keep junk and high caloric foods out of your home
- ❖ Stay in contact with friends and develop a network of supportive people
- ❖ Deal with your emotions rather than avoid them
- ❖ Seek professional help if you are unable to get in control of your emotional eating

### WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [\*\*DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com\*\*](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

**Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates**  
**5571 N University Drive, Suite 101**  
**Coral Springs FL 33067**