

Weight Loss Coaching - Step 4

Welcome to Step 4.

Step 4 topics include:

- Why you do the things you do
- Identifying underlying issues
- Techniques to release underlying issues

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Why You Do The Things You Do

Workbook Activity

On pages 1 and 2 of your workbook there are 25 questions, and each question is followed by the words: YES, NO, I DON'T KNOW.

These questions are very personal and are intended to challenge you and they require you to be honest with yourself. And please do answer these questions honestly - do that for yourself.

After you read each question, either highlight your answer from the three choices given, or delete the two that do not apply.

After you have finished these questions you can go back over your answers and analyse them and consider what your answers mean, but for now, please don't analyse the question, just give a gut response of YES, NO, or I DON'T KNOW.

Before you begin on the questions take a couple of slow, deep, relaxing breaths. Give your mind and body permission to simply relax and be here in this moment and make a promise to yourself to be open and honest as you answer these questions.

Please answer those questions now.

The purpose for asking those questions was to help you identify any emotional and subconscious reasons for you to have developed and be holding on to your current eating behaviours.

Are you surprised by any of your answers?

Did your answers reveal something to you that you weren't consciously aware of?

Once you have finished reading these notes, you may wish to go over those questions again and consider what your answers reveal about you.

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Identifying Underlying Issues

If you answered yes to eating as a response to emotional triggers such as feeling rejected and frustrated, then you need to instigate new coping methods. What else could you do during those emotional situations, instead of reaching for food? You could go for a walk, take out your annoyance on a pillow or punching bag, call a trusted friend and unload your troubles, practice deep breathing and listen to a relaxation CD. The options are endless - the trick is to know in advance what you are going to do when that trigger situation occurs.

If food is acting as a bribe or reward, then it is time to choose a new response. Bribe or reward yourself by buying a new hand lotion, a new lipstick, a book or CD, a new tool, or giving yourself time out to enjoy a cup of tea and read a magazine, have a bubble bath, or play a round of golf. Again, the choices are endless. Pick something that is meaningful for you, but that doesn't involve food.

If you answered yes to questions 22 and 23, it sounds like your life is out of balance and it is time for you to prioritise. It is challenging to juggle work, home, kids and all other aspects of your daily life but this is something you need to do. Your health depends on it. Look at your time management and what you can do to help alleviate some of this daily craziness. Can your partner or children help out more? Is there a way to be more efficient with the time you have? Cut back on those activities that aren't important. Put aside any excuses as to why you can't change and begin to look for solutions that allow you to gain some control.

If you are using your weight to hide from other issues, to punish yourself or someone else, ask yourself questions about that. Why did I begin doing that? Why am I still doing that? What purpose does that behaviour serve for me? Is this a behaviour that I am now willing to let go? And if so, is it simply a case of demanding more of myself, of growing up and acting my age and taking responsibility for my actions and their consequences or is this something that I need professional help to work through?

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Techniques To Release Underlying Issues

On the following pages are a variety of techniques for releasing emotional issues and past hurts.

If you choose to, try one/some/all of these techniques and see if they help you.

There is a page in your workbook for each of these techniques where you can note your experience of doing this process.

Dissolving Images

(Workbook page 3)

If there are painful experiences from your past or if certain people have had a negative impact on your self-beliefs, ask yourself if you are now ready to let those things go.

Can you let those images and feelings just fade into the past?

Think about the negative experience and conjure up an image that is meaningful to you, either of the person involved, the harsh words that were said or the way you feel about yourself as a result of that experience.

Now take away the colour and sound of the image. See it in black and white, and without any sound.

Now see that image become smaller and smaller and smaller until it is the size of a postage stamp.

Now picture the person or the experience dissolving, evaporating, vanishing. And as the picture vanishes, so too do all of the feelings and self-beliefs related to that experience.

That experience is no longer part of you and no longer has any influence over your feelings or behaviour.

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Speaking Your Piece

(Workbook page 4)

Was there something you needed to say to someone but were unable to express it at the time?

Would it help to say it now? If so, do that.

You can speak to the other person/people involved and let them know what impact this situation has had on you, or if you find it difficult to talk to that person face-to-face or if they are no longer around, you can imagine them sitting in a chair opposite you while you say what you need to say.

If you find it too painful to say the words out loud, or if you find it easier to formulate your thoughts when writing rather than speaking, write the person a letter. You don't need to post the letter (although you can if you choose to) as going through the process of getting those pent up feelings out of you and written down, is usually enough to release the hold they have over you.

Going through this release process is to help you speak your piece and say what you need to, in order for you to move on. Whether or not the other person hears you doesn't matter.

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Childhood Beliefs

(Workbook page 5)

If as a child you were given the label of being a “fat kid” and that label remains as part of your identity, or if you are carrying ideas about weight that were formed in your childhood, you can now look at those old beliefs from an adult perspective and decide to change them.

As a child the conscious mind perceives things with a lack of experiences, lack of understanding and lack of knowledge. A child can be misled or misunderstand or be given incomplete information but still formulate beliefs about what he or she believed to be true. And it's those beliefs in the subconscious mind that guide our automatic behaviours, responses and actions in our day-to-day life.

There may be some beliefs formed back then, that you now can see are not true, and if this is the case, you can now change those beliefs if that is what you choose to do.

You can rearrange your feelings, your thoughts, your actions and your beliefs based on more up to date, more accurate information and make the choice to no longer acknowledge those false beliefs from the past that have been dragging you down and holding you back from achieving.

You can reframe those childhood beliefs by looking at them from a new angle and with your current, adult perspective.

Perhaps you will find that the childhood situation wasn't as you had imagined it to be. A comment made by a family member or teacher, may have been said in a moment of frustration, or meant to be a throw away line, but your vulnerable childhood mind took that comment to heart and made it a self-belief. Or a comment such as, “Everyone in our family is overweight; always have been and always will be,” may have become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What childhood beliefs are you still carrying around, that can now be reframed in a more positive light?

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Forgiveness

(Workbook page 6)

Is there someone that you need to forgive? You can forgive the person without condoning the act.

If forgiveness is too hard, can you start with acceptance?

Realise that the act of forgiveness is something you are doing for yourself, not the other person. It will change how *you* feel. It will set *you* free from continuing to carry those feelings and emotions within you.

As long as you continue to hold on to the anger and negative emotions, that situation remains tied to you and continues to influence you every single day. Forgiveness releases this bind and sets you free.

So when you are ready, give the person your forgiveness. And as you take that courageous step of forgiveness, release him or her and let the person and situation fade away.

Whether or not the other person knows that you have forgiven them doesn't matter, as you are doing this for you, not for them.

Do you need to forgive yourself for something you have or haven't done in the past? If so, give yourself permission to forgive yourself and understand you were doing the best you could at the time with the knowledge and resources that you had.

Perceive in any way you choose, that you are forgiven completely.

You can now refuse to build your life on any form of guilt or regret. It has no value to you. Understand that what you did in the past was the best you could do at the time. The very best effort you were able to make. The only reason you know better now is because you are wiser now. You are wiser now because you see yesterday through today's eyes. You have matured and grown. You now understand that there is no value in guilt as only education and experience has any value for you. Learn from the experience and then move on.

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Inner Critic

(Workbook page 7)

If you are your own worst enemy, judge yourself harshly and fail to give yourself the love and understanding that you give to others, then conjure up an image of your inner critic.

Who is that nagging voice in your head telling you that you are not good enough, that you fail at everything you do and that you don't deserve anything better?

Notice what that inner critic looks like and what they sound like. Hold that image very clearly in your mind.

Now shrink your inner critic down to the size of an ant.

Give it a high-pitched, squeaky voice.

Notice how hard it now is to take that inner critic seriously.

Any time from here on that that critical inner voice starts telling you that you are no good, or whatever other negative messages it has for you, repeat this exercise and put that inner critic back in its place.

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Cutting The Ties That Weigh You Down

(Workbook page 8)

The following visualisation exercise can help you release any negative feelings you are holding on to, in relation to your weight.

Read through the visualisation first, then if you choose to, run through each step again in your mind.

Sit or lie down comfortably, have your arms and legs relaxed and gently close your eyes.

Take a few deep, relaxing breaths, allowing your body to slow down with each breath you take. Drifting further and further down with each calming breath. And allow all sounds to fade away into the distance.

Think now about your weight and the issues associated with your weight and notice how that makes you feel.

What feelings arise for you when you think about your weight?
Where do you feel those feelings in your body?

I'd like you to imagine now that those feelings are wrapped up in a ball and are floating there in front of you. They might be 30 centimetres in front of you or 30 metres. The ball might be the size of a tennis ball or a basketball or even way bigger than that. Just form whatever image feels right for you.

All of your pain, frustration, feelings of helplessness, loss of hope etc., are all wrapped up in that ball that you now see in front of you. Notice the size of the ball. Notice how far away it is from you.

I'd like you now to imagine silver threads stretching from that ball and attaching to that part of your body that is holding those feelings. See the silver threads stretching from your body out to that ball.

How many threads can you see?

Each of those threads represents a time when you felt those unwanted feelings.

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Are you now ready to break these ties that bind you to those old feelings?

In a moment you are going to release that part of your body from being tied to these old feelings and memories. You are going to cut these ties that are holding you down.

You can cut these ties anyway you like. You may break them with your hands or cut them with scissors or use an axe if you want to. Whatever feels right for you.

And in a moment, when you break these ties, you will see the threads spring off into the distance, far, far away, taking the old memories and hurt with them. And the part of the thread that is still attached to your body will just shrivel down and drop away.

Are you ready to cut these ties once and for all? Are you ready to break those ties now? To break every single one of those threads?

If you are ready to do this, then do it now. Take your time and make sure you cut every one of those unwanted threads.

Then once that job is done, open your eyes and be back in the room, at this time, in this place.

How do you feel?

You can repeat this exercise anytime you choose to, in relation to any issue that bothers you. It is a simple technique but is very powerful.

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Facing up to the reasons behind your behaviour is not easy and admitting the truth to ourselves takes a lot of courage, but trust that going through this challenging process will be worth it.

Until you face what is really going on for you, and take steps to acknowledge and rectify those outdated patterns, you will not be able to move forward to long-term weight management.

If your emotional scars are deep and you find it difficult to work through them on your own and to let those issues go, please consider finding a counsellor or clinical hypnotherapist near you, who can help you work through and release your old hurts. You are worth it and you deserve to live out the rest of your life without being weighed down by this old baggage.

What's Next?

Coming up in Step 5 we will look at:

- Negative self-talk
- Replacing negatives with positives
- Thinking patterns, behaviours and responses

Have a wonderful week, keep working towards those goals that you set in Step 3 and focusing on your fabulous, new self-image.