

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE WEIGHT LOSS – INTUITIONS VERSUS LOGIC

“If you want to see what your thoughts were like yesterday, look at your body today. If you want to see what your body will be like tomorrow, look at your thoughts today”

Does it seem to you at times that your body has a “mind of its own”? You want it to do one thing, but as soon as your thoughts are distracted, the body does what it wants, and it is often very different from what your mind thought should be right... Do you ever feel like you are in an eternal fight with yourself? You want to stop smoking, but your body wants to have that cigarette. You want to be slim, but your body wants to have more food... You want to do the right thing, but your body wants to misbehave.

Typical weight loss scenario: The body is craving for pleasures of food. The logic calculates why we should restrict them. Willpower makes sure that the logic prevails. The harmful weight is gone.... The willpower gets tired, the emotions prevail again - we do what pleases us and we get back where we started from... or even worse.

Can we get smart and learn how to align our body’s subconscious cravings with our logically designed weight management goals?

BODY (SYSTEM 1) VERSUS MIND (SYSTEM 2) THEORY

The latest psychological studies have confirmed that we respond to the reality via two systems - fast and slow. The fast one, often called “system 1”, is an automatic system that is always “on” and always reacts to any changes in our surroundings, it responds immediately, intuitively and emotionally. The process of “thinking” by this system is hidden from our consciousness, we just aware of the final stages that come to our attention as intuitive urges/decisions/inclinations. We may also call it as our “body reaction” to the situation.

Among other things, this system controls our appetite, satiety and the resultant body mass.

This initial response often, but not always, followed by a slow, but detailed and logical evaluation of the events by an effortful “system 2”, that we usually appreciate as “thinking” or “mind”. This process is slower, conscious. It requires energy, concentration and attention. When it is “off”, as it usually happens in the 80-90% of the time, our actions are directed by the “system 1”, by our body intuitions and emotions by default. When our “system 2” is “on,” it would reassess our “bodily feelings and urges” and it would either approve them, or disapprove and correct or overpower them.

When our body strong urges are being overpowered by our conscious mind, we call it a willpower, or self-control.

DIETS

Traditionally our appetite and eating habits are mostly controlled by an automatic “system 1”. When we “go on a diet”, we wake up the “system 2” that recruits the willpower and tries to overrule and correct our “system 1” by whatever new logical information it has. It usually takes some energy to do what our Mind, or logic is considering to be right, which is often in opposition to automatic instinctive urges brought up by system 1. When our lazy and energy consuming “system 2” (or our Mind) gets tired and wants to take a rest - “system 1” (our Body) takes over by default and makes us to do what we have always been doing and what has already made us overweight.

This is one of the reasons why diets often fail. They technically speaking do not fail as such. It is our willpower and our conscious efforts to overpower the urges of our Body that eventually fails.

Do you think that successful “weight losers” are simply people who have a stronger than others willpower? I think that in many cases they are. But I think to be really successful with the weight loss and management, it would be ideal to reprogram the subconscious, automatic and effortless “system 1” (our Body). If we are successful - we would accomplish the permanent effect.

The ultimate obesity fix is when we could do what our body wants - we would eat whatever we want, as much as we want, whenever we want and get and stay with the weight that our mind wants.

I spent years of research of everything available about this topic and this book is a summary of everything I could find about our “Mind over Body” control concept. Just like a lens collecting the sunlight and concentrating them in a tiny spot to ignite the fire, I have been collecting everything I could find about mind over body control concept, with a narrow interest of the weight loss.

My ultimate goal is to learn and teach others how to use our Mind to teach our Body to react to the environment and regulate our food intake in a natural, effortless way and automatically keep our body in the ideal from the weight management prospective shape.

Is it possible? - “Whether you think you can, or whether you think you can’t, you’re right” Henry Ford

MIND

Our Conscious Mind (‘system 2’), or we’ll call it Mind for simplicity is:

- Is EFFORTFUL, it defaults status is “off” and it takes energy to get it engaged
- What we usually identify as “myself”

- It is not always involved and technically some people do not use it that often:) And, funnily enough, this joke does have a lot of truth as it is believed by many psychologists that our subconscious instincts govern most of our lives
- Conscious
- Logical
- Capable of doubt, choice
- Capable of imagination and virtual reality
- Slow, it takes time to engage and time to process the information
- LAZY. I put it in capital letters, because it is so important. It always requires an effort to engage, and, just because it is so lazy it often automatically approves whatever our Body (our system 1) brings as a suggestion for further action
- Can control some aspects of our behavior, only when we pay our attention to it, all other times our Body seems to be taking over the control of our actions
- Requires a focus of our attention
- Creates, improves, enforces or destroys our subconscious association, it can train and teach our body to meet our logically determined goals
- Our Mind in many cases is a source for our intuitions and instincts, beliefs that traditionally belong to system 1. For example, if we repeatedly do something, at the beginning it requires our attention and thinking, eventually bigger and bigger part of this process becomes automatic, subconscious and effortless - like driving a car, especially with a manual stick - the more we drive, the more it becomes automatic.

Body understandably has a physical body which includes the vegetative nervous and endocrine systems, but more importantly when we say “Body wants”, we mean our subconscious thoughts that penetrate into our consciousness only in the final stages. I think it is comprised of Intuition and Emotions. The process of subconscious thoughts is mostly hidden from our consciousness and we become aware about the whole process only in the final stages when the resultant conclusions and decisions advance into our attention.

BODY

Our Subconscious Mind (‘system 1’), or we’ll call for simplicity Body is:

- Is AUTOMATIC, it always makes decisions whether we want it or not, reactions such as random response or “no decision is a decision” are typical for system 1. It is always “on”, it always works often without our awareness. For example, we do not think about our balance or body movements as we walk, our Mind is often involved in some other activities. We can bring the process of walking under conscious attention of our Mind, but it requires an effort
- It is unstoppable regardless of our will, but can be corrected by our Mind (System 2)
- Intuitive, we are not aware of how do we get to the conclusions
- Could be illogical from the Mind’s points of view

- It usually comes to our attention as a single decision or urge, unlike the Mind that likes to bring doubts and choices
- Fast, almost immediate
- Emotionally charged
- Impulsive, impatient, not capable of delayed gratification, unless corrected by system 2
- It usually deals mostly with familiar situations, every time it faces a challenge - it wakes up our system 2, our Mind for help

System 1 decisions or urges sometimes come to the attention of our consciousness, which is technically our system 2, or our Mind. Because our Mind is energy consuming and lazy most of the time, often it just approves whatever our intuition brings to it. Most of the time our intuitive responses are correct and beneficial for us, but not always. When our Mind does get involved, it looks for alternative to intuitively brought decisions and uses logic to weigh the pros and cons. Our conscious Mind uses imagination, doubts, worries which are nonexistent in our subconscious automatic robot-like Body guided system 1 urges.

The reason we discuss the system 1 in such great details because it is the one responsible for our appetite, satiety, food selections. If we can affect this automatic subconscious process to our satisfaction we can make our weight management PLEASANT, EFFORTLESS and PERMANENT. Does it sound like a dream for you?

PUPPY ANALOGY

I often visualize our Mind-Body relationships as an owner of the puppy (The Mind) treats his little puppy (The Body). Most of the time the puppy does whatever it likes and enjoys it. Our Body, just like a puppy, can leave without our Mind. Every once in a while, the owner (The Mind) is trying to be in charge of the puppy (The Body). Sometimes it prevails, other times puppy just gets away and enjoys its freedom. The owner (The Mind) often just approves and even encourages the puppy's urges and instincts. Some of us end up having our puppy (our Body) in charge, others manage to use their brains (the Mind) to train that puppy to do what is the right thing to do.

As soon as puppy faces unfamiliar situation - it freezes and looks at the owner for help. Every time we face an unusual or challenging situation, our Mind gets involved.

The owner may control the puppy for some time, but eventually he has his own affairs to take care of and the puppy is left on its own to do what it's pleased to do.

It is possible, but not practical and very difficult to watch and control every step of the puppy all the time. One of the ways for the owner to assure that the puppy behaves well is by training it. He can also motivate the puppy to do what he wants to by bribing it with a treat. We can fool the puppy to do what we want it to do with a toy.

I propose to use our Mind to teach and train the automatic subconscious instincts of our Body.

TO SUMMARIZE:

Our Body (system 1) is automatic and effortless. It is always “on” whether we want it or not. The process of “thinking” is usually hidden from our consciousness and we may be aware at the end just with a final product of our subconscious decision-making process.

This subconscious process is mostly responsible for our appetite and food intake related activities. If we can influence and change it - we might essentially fix our overeating problem and make it effortless, enjoyable and permanent.

Our Mind (system 2) is effortful, lazy and requires motivation and willpower, it is not always involved in our interaction with the environment and often just observes the reactions of our Body and often automatically reinforces them. Use of our Mind always requires energy, that we usually prefer to preserve, and when our Mind is tired - we often may follow our usual Body guided autopilot system.

WHY ARE WE OVERWEIGHT.

My answer is simple - our Body (system 1) that is responsible to maintain our food intake is out of order. It needs to be fixed. Most of our eating habits are subconsciously controlled. If you read this book and you are overweight, then the conclusion is simple - your Subconscious Mind, your nutrition related intuitions and emotions are inefficient and out of order.

How can we fix it? We can use our Mind guided willpower for weight management purposes by:

- Directly correcting our subconscious urges by exercise of our willpower
- Indirectly by teaching our Body to develop or improve our subconscious urges and reactions and resultant appetite and satiety
- Indirectly influencing our physiology by use of the Mind over Body physiology control tricks.

COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE BETWEEN THE MIND AND THE BODY

Can you directly communicate with your body? Try to tell your body - “heart rate go up”, “metabolism speed up”, “start burning fat”. Does it listen? I thought so. Our language is a product of our Mind. Language helps us to be more efficient while processing the information about the reality, but our Body prefers imagery.

“Imagination/visualization is the language that the subconscious mind understands”.

It is a statement from one of the old hypnosis books... At first it sounds puzzling how imagination could be a language. It took me awhile to understand what was meant by that expression. I'll try to explain how I have come to an understanding of this very important concept.

We think using images and words. Some authors believe that around 75% of our thinking are words and the rest are various imagery, mostly visual but could be in other sensory modalities as well.

VISUALIZATION

Visualization may be also seen as a process of converting words to imagery. What do I mean by that? You can say to yourself a word "tiger" and try to suppress any potential images and see only a sequence of letters... Or you can say "tiger" and imagine a cartoon character that makes you smile, or, you can imagine a real tiger from a zoo... Imagery is not necessarily just visual, it may be a combination of visual with auditory, olfactory, gustatory or kinesthetic imaginations. You can imagine or recollect the memory of a tiger, the sound that he makes, you can imagine how it would feel if it touches you... The more modalities you use, the more realistic and convincing the imagery may get.... Do you notice that depending on which imagery you chose you get a different reaction from your Body...? If you are really successful imagining a real tiger interesting in eating you - your heart rate and blood pressure might go up, your body might start producing the stress hormones, your palms might get sweaty.

Let's review this sequence again:

WORD → IMAGERY → PHYSIOLOGICAL REACTION

When you tell your body "I want to be 150 pounds" without attaching any relevant imagery, you may get very limited to no reaction from your Body. Your Body understands images, sounds, tastes, smells, etc. Our bodies have very limited, if any at all, abilities to understand plain language without corresponding visualizations or imagery.

So, one of the ways our Mind can directly communicate to our Body is by use of visualizations, imagination or imagery. Our body can react to our imaginations directly - imagine a real tiger trying to eat you, and your body might start to react to it as it was real.

So, to quickly summarize - if we want to make changes in the physiology and metabolism of our bodies, we can expose our body to the visualization of the situation known to cause such changes. Or we can do it in a traditional way by making our body to face the actual situation. But even when we face an actual situation - perception is a key. You can stand in front of the wild tiger who is completely interested in eating you and be ignorant enough to think that he wants to play with you...

Another way we can use visualizations - we can create memories or associations about events which lived only in our imagination. For example:

IMAGINATION VERSUS PERCEPTION VERSUS REALITY

When I was a small boy my adorable older sister succeeded in convincing me that ice cream was “biting” and that chocolate candies were “bitter”. She gave me a bite of each of them, looked closely in my eyes and said - “see, now you believe me, don’t you?” And this conviction lasted for a good few years, leaving all of the tasty chocolate treats and ice creams automatically designated for my sister. Did you have any similar kind of experiences? Can we learn from them and use it to our advantage in the future?

If you have developed an aversion to a particular food, like ice cream, hypothetically speaking, there are at least three potential explanations or scenarios for that.

- You had a bad experience caused by ice cream (reality)
- You had some bad experiences that you attributed to ice cream (perception)
- You imagined that you had a bad experience caused by ice cream (imagination)
- You may be convinced by someone (like my sister:)) or by yourself that you might get a bad reaction from ice cream (imagination)

Most of our interactions with the outside world are affected by our perception and imagination. Perception can be seen as a filter squeezed between our sensory organs and our central processing unit.

PERCEPTION PROCESS

1. First our senses (like sensors in the car) collect information about the world around us. Just like car sensors, our senses produce stream of electrical signals. We have five SENSES - vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
2. The output signals from our sensory organs are combined and presented to our body as a situation. It is an important moment to understand, we do not judge separate electric impulses from various sensory organs. We combine them together and process them first and create a SITUATION. As we create a “situation” we pick and choose what we focus our attention on, we add different colors and flavors based on our memories, previous experiences and current mood. The situation that we have in our mind is never a 100% reality, it is rather a projection of

the reality into our internal world through the lenses formed by our knowledge, experience and multiple other variables. In other words, we always connect our sensors to our judging brain apparatus via a set of particular filters, that we constantly alter, sometimes consciously, other times subconsciously.

3. Evaluation. Our body then reacts to that situation, not to a separate signal from separate sensory organs. Every evaluation is automatically processed by our Body, our subconscious mind system, system 1 as we discussed above, and sometimes by our system 2, our Mind, our logic as well

We can alter how our body reacts to the environment by:

1. Changing the environment
2. Changing our perception, changing the meaning to us of the same environment
3. Imagining the environment.

Our visualizations can immediately change our bodies physiology, or they can influence our memories about the actual events that we have faced, or, visualizations may even create memories of the events that lived only in our imagination...

Let's summarize:

REALISTIC PERCEPTION OF THE ACTUALITY

Is when we try to reflect reality as close as possible to actuality. Is it ever possible? Can any two people perceive the events exactly the same way? I might be color blind, you might use glasses,

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Focus of attention is an important aspect of the perception. We do not have to alter the perceived, we may just notice some elements of reality and ignore the others. Remember that saying - two people are looking into a puddle, one of them is seeing stars and the other one is noticing only the mud.

We can freely change the FOCUS of our attention why evaluating any situation and get completely different unique picture at the end, with unique emotions, feelings and resultant motivations.

DISTORTED PERCEPTION OF THE ACTUALITY

is what usually happening. We always perceive reality based on our knowledge/past experiences and based on our desires and multiple other factors, including the focus of our attention, as we just discussed above. I would even say more than that - we never know what is the actual reality, we only get only approximate, distorted and adjusted representation... We always ignore some of the aspects presented by our sensors and overemphasize the others... Is there anyone capable to know the truth? Yes. It is my definition of God. Remember what the Bible says - a human will immediately die if he sees God. Distortion of reality is an essential property of the living organism.

We can consciously influence our perception by myriad of various means, starting from the changes of the focus of our attention, adding our judgments by our thinking, applying the knowledge from previous experiences and mixing it with our expectations etc.

IMAGINED REALITY

is something that actually is not happening. It is not an actuality. It is a product of our imagination via the process of VISUALIZATION. We can visualize things as just plain images, or as images with sounds, tastes, smells, temperature sensations, imagined touches etc. The more sensory modalities involved in the creation of our imagined visualizations, the more chances that we can fool our vegetative subconscious system and have it reacted to them as real.

If you think that you are not influenced by your imagination - think again. Did you like to listen to fairy tale stories when you were a child? Do you like reading books and imagine the nonexistent worlds and civilizations? Have they affected your preferences, understanding what is "right" and what is "wrong"? Aren't they being to some degree the products of your imagination guided by a storyteller, or a book, or, by your own creativity? What about history books? Before TV all of the history was a product of our own imagery guided by teachers or books.

I think it is still a huge mystery where our imagery comes from and where it disappears... It seems to be not physical. It is kind of in our head, or is it? I will leave this topic for future discussions. What important for us from a practical standpoint, is that our imagination may directly influence and change our physiology, our hormonal state, our metabolism and even expression and suppression of our genes - epigenetic. We will discuss it in more detail later.

When we imagine, we kind of fool ourselves that we experience an inexistent perception by one or few of our SENSES

Under certain conditions our body responds to the imagined situation the same way as it responds to the reality and generates the physiological changes, feelings and emotions.

What is the difference between the perception and imagination? Isn't the imagination just an extreme version of an altered perception?

I think imagination governs our interaction with the outside world and usually it happens without our consent. I want us to get smart and get in control of this process.

IMAGINATION DEMONSTRATION EXERCISE

To illustrate the process of imagination, let's Imagine an apple. First visualize how it looks - color, irregular shape, size, see some blemishes on it. Now feel the weight of this apple in your hand. Throw it up and catch it. Do you hear a sound? Squeeze it. How does it feel. Is it rubbery or soft? Does it leave a mark on the apple? Now bite it. Do you hear a sound? Did it sprinkle in your nose? Does it smell any different now? How does it taste? Is it more sour or sweet? How is the texture? Is it mushy or crispy? Do you feel it on your teeth? Does the juice drip down your fingers and leaves marks on your hands as it makes its way toward your wrists? Look at it now. Do you see a whitish-yellowish flash instead of skin? Did you bite enough to expose those tiny seeds hiding inside?... I used words to guide your IMAGINATION. Congratulations. You have completed the very first basic lesson of imagination. Not every imagination would involve every sensory modality. The more modalities we use - the more convincing imagination becomes.

ARTIFICIAL LIFE EXPERIENCE

Remember a paradox - our Body often cannot differentiate real from imagined. When you imagine future steps and play them in your mind - your Body may create memories as if you have actually have experienced such steps in real life... If you have repeated past experiences, your Body learns, and it affects your subconscious associations, thoughts and your intuitive automatic decisions.

Remember our goal - we want to learn how to use our Mind, our logic to alter, improve in the desirable directions our subconscious instinctive urges, desires and emotions...

GOAL FOR YOUR BODY

Where should we start from when we want to use our imagination for the weight management purposes? Like every other coordinated process, we should start from creating a goal.

At first sight, it appears that a weight loss goal is understandable - get slimmer. But, as we've just discussed, it turns out that our Body has difficulties understanding such terms. "Slim" is a word. Words influence our body only when they are converted into visualizations (images, sounds, smells, imagined touches etc.) Our body reacts to the environment, whether it is real or imagined.

So, to explain the Body (to your intuitive subconscious system) what we want - we need to present it an image, and preferably image that contains multisensory representation modalities, including visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and proprioceptive representations. The more modalities involved - the more convincing the communication could be.

DREAM BODY

Create a clear goal for your weight loss journey. It shouldn't be a number or a name, as we often do. "I want to be slim", or "I want to be 30 pounds lighter" are messages that our Body completely ignores, exactly like a puppy would ignore words, but put a mirror in front of a puppy, or a picture, or video - and now it reacts. Our Body is just like a puppy, it is not as sophisticated as our logical Mind. It needs the actual image, sound, taste, smell or proprioception, or even better - a combination of them, to get the actual response. It should be a clear image that your Body would appreciate with usual senses - vision, hearing, smell, taste and proprioception.

Visualize your head, forehead, cheeks, chin, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, abdomen and waist, visualize your thighs, knees and ankles just exactly the way you want to see them. Use your creativity to attach the sound, smell and taste to the body of your dreams. I usually relate them to taste and smell of my favorite chewing gum.

Now imagine yourself this very moment that you are within the body that you desire. This is your ultimate goal on the weight loss journey. Imagine how you meet your friends and family, how surprised they are. Imagine doing your usual activities, travelling to the places that you dream about, driving the car of your dreams or wearing the dresses or jeans that you love but couldn't because of the way your body is...

Setting the goal is essential. Communicating your goal to your Body, or your intuitive subconscious mind is even more important. Our Body logic understands images, smells and sounds. It has great difficulties with words, and it might be almost deaf when it comes to numbers...

MEDITATIVE STATE OF MIND

Discussions about meditations and various techniques may take another book. I'll try to explain it in a few sentences. Did you ever notice that you have a different experience when you watch a movie in a theater versus watching it at home? Or, even better, when you read a book, did you notice that you immerse yourself into imagined reality, you may transfer your thoughts into different times, dimensions, you may become a character of the story... You can easily get in and out of this state. You need to be in such state to have a good Mind-Body communication.

I usually start from "disconnecting" my Mind from my physical body, from the place around me and from the time around me... In other words - I am not in my physical present body, but I am in the Dream Body we've just discussed, in some mysterious place that exists in my memory in

some different time - it might be a place in your memories some decades ago... I usually try to immerse myself in some pleasant times and environment, like times when I was full of optimism and/or travelling to my dream destinations... It does a double service - it is not just exposing to your Goal from the weight management prospective, but also colors it with positive emotions. Dream about driving a tiny sports car while you are in your Dream Body, wear a beautiful dress that would only look on your new slim yourself. Dream about your pleasant future or imagined reality, but don't forget to include your Dream Body.

Then quickly move yourself to the present time, while you are still in your Dream Body.

Now imagine that you are a different person... You are a person who is accustomed to eat very small quantities of food you get full easily. You are addicted to healthy, weight beneficial food choices. You can easily resist temptations from junk food. You have found your new personality... We will discuss later the other beneficial imagery in the upcoming sections.

How does it feel when you imagine yourself as a new person? Can you memorize that feeling and use it? Is it a feeling of being proud of yourself, a feeling of a victor not a vic-tim?

MAKE IT IN PRESENT, NOT IN THE FUTURE

To illustrate the importance of “present” versus “future” in terms of influence of our Mind on our physical body, let's look at the example below:

I want to compare this process with a trip to a movie theater. When you think about going to the theater, first you plan it, meaning that you say to yourself I WANT to go to the theatre. It is like deciding - this is my Dream Body and this is what I want to be. Then you decide when it is a good time to go to a movie theater - it is 6.30, it is time to go. Before 6.30 nothing really happens in terms of action, it is only your plan or idea in your mind, your muscles do not move, your hair is not groomed, at 6.30 this idea, this project starts, your brain starts sending signals to your body and it coordinates different muscles to get your butt off the couch and start moving.

The same about the subconscious mind. As long as you imagine ideal yourself in the future, your body interprets that you want to be, your body thinks - it's only a plan, it is in the future. It has to be now in order to create any physical effect guided by your mind on your body.

First spend some time to create a plan, try to imagine the body you like. Then, when you are ready, imagine yourself in the ideal body that you desire like it has already happened, now this very moment and your subconscious mind will start on moving tiny levers and switches to get your ass off the couch and to start creating the body that you dream about.

Imagine your ideal body, and imagine it now. Remember the only guaranteed way to get where you want to go is to clearly tell yourself where you want to go. Then you have to decide that it is time when you actually go there now. You switch from a plan, a goal - this is my Dream Body, to

an action - "I am in my Dream Body NOW. Your spiritual mind and your physical body will inevitably create connections and interactions which will slowly transform you to what you want to be.

IDENTIFY OBSTACLES

When, where or with whom do you often make the wrong choices?

When? Is there a particular time of the day, week or year that you have a tendency to overeat, or make wrong food choices? Is it after dinner, or on the weekends, or during your vacations?

Where? Does it often happen at home or at the restaurants, or when you visit your friends, or does it happen at home? Is it in front of a TV or in the kitchen?

With whom? With your wife or kids? Or maybe you have a buddy that often prompts you to unhealthy choices.

VISUALIZE the obstacles.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS AND VISUALIZE THEM

Now, when you have found the obstacles, you need to create a plan for how you will overcome them. You need to find preferably many ways to overcome them. Visualize the situation when you are facing a challenge, now VISUALIZE how you will overcome it.

Use as many sensors as you can, When? Where? With whom? What do you see around you? What do you hear? Are there any related fragrances or smells? What do you FEEL as you face an obstacle and when you overcome them? What kind of emotions would you experience along with that?

Identify other positive things you could do - parking further away, taking the stairs, drinking water instead of sodas.

MODEL YOUR PAST SUCCESSES, GET IN A WEIGHT LOSS STATE OF MIND

If you were successful with your previous weight loss efforts, you may recollect that your body appeared to be in a special "fat burning state". You did not feel as hungry, you managed to eat significantly smaller portions without much effort. You felt like your body was finally listening to your desires and was miraculously rejuvenating itself.

Can you recollect what were your FEELINGS at that time? Can you mentally transfer yourself back into those time and reproduce the same feelings?

I think that feelings have a programming and coordinating effect on our bodies. If you are able to reproduce the feeling that you had when you were successful with steady weight loss, I think you would automatically reprogram your body into similar physiologic and metabolic state.

If you did not have any experiences with successful weight loss, did you have other situations when you were successful accomplishing your goals despite obstacles? How did it make you feel?

VISUALIZE YOUR WEIGHT LOSS PLAN FOR TODAY

VISUALIZE YOUR DAY AHEAD

Did you ever try to plan ahead of you in your mind? What I suggest is to create a visualization what activities you are planning to do during the day ahead of you in advance.

Play in your mind the steps you are going to do today toward your new body.

Visualize every single detail about doing those steps, when, where, with whom, in which environment, how long would it take, would you be alone or with friends.

Visualize the potential obstacles you might face. How would you feel when you face them? What would be the options to overcome them? Choose the best solution. Visualize how you would exercise this best option. How would it make you feel when you overcome it and do the right thing instead of “usual”? Try to imagine that situation and experience that feeling of a little but victory of your “good” over your “bad” yourself.

Then clearly visualize that even this little step or steps that you are going today is directly connected to you dream body and related feelings of pleasure. Try to visualize a time in few months after you’ve accomplished some weight loss. You are on vacation, with your friends, everyone is impressed seeing you as a new person. Clearly link performing designated steps and solutions to this new better stay on your body, but even more importantly, to your new FEELINGS. Link this pleasant sensation to overcoming the possible obstacles. Every little effort will reward you with a step closer to your dream.

Now, what would happen if you fail to get the body of your dreams? Would it affect your self-esteem? Your health? Your relationships?

Now try to bring back the memories of when you were making some successful weight loss steps, or any other goal directed accomplishments in the past. How did it feel? How good was a sensation of accomplishing a step or two toward your goal? How satisfactory and gratifying was that? Bring back those feelings of success, accomplishment and pleasure. Can you use some of your past experiences in your current efforts? How good would it feel to have such feelings again and have it daily on a consistent basis?

Put the above visualizations in a movie strip like presentation for yourself, where you are the main character. Play this movie for yourself again

Now when you've created a movie about your future body with related pleasant feelings, you've created another short movie about your today or tomorrow's activities with obstacles and ways to overcome them, with pleasant feelings of accomplishment and fulfillment, make sure that those movies have images, colors, smells, taste and touch. Make sure that these visualizations are clearly linked to desired pleasant feelings resultant from your achievement.

REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

And finally, the most important moment that many ignore. You need to create a habit by repeating these cravings for the body of your dreams and cravings for the beneficial activities on a regular basis. Repetition creates a habit.

Find a daily activity that you do every day, preferably every morning. Create a habit to go through your "dream body and activities visualization movie" with you as a main character to be played at least daily

It could be a regular activity that you do every day, like brushing your teeth, or drinking coffee, or going to work. This movie should not take you more than five minutes to play in your mind. Make it interesting. Make sure that you have a visualization of your daily activities needed for the weight management and make sure that those daily activities are clearly linked to pleasure, instant gratification, instant sense of fulfillment and accomplishment and also linked to your dream body linked to immense pleasure in the very near future. Keep fantasizing about various pleasant situations in our new body, like a birthday party, or a vacation with your surprised friends. Make yourself to crave for the new visualization created with as many sensors as you can. Do not wait for your steps to affect your weight, enjoy the steps themselves as the victory is inevitable.

People who were taught and adhered with the above routine on a daily basis, had lost on average 6.4 kg over one year, compared with 0.7 kg lost in a control group. And it was accomplished without any specific education about nutrition and exercise, it was just based on the common-sense actions beneficial for the weight loss chosen by the applicants.

TO SUMMARIZE:

1. Create a dream body
2. Learn how to immerse yourself in a Dream Body in meditative state of mind
3. Remember to produce and memorize FEELING
4. Find obstacles when, where, with whom?
5. Create ways to overcome obstacles, preferably a few different ways.

6. Visualize how you would face the obstacles and how you would overcome them.
Visualize how would you feel as you do this.
7. Bring feelings from old successful endeavors either with weight loss or in general
8. Move yourself again in the future few months from now, imagine yourself in your Dream Body. How does it feel? Use multimodal imagery. FEELING is an important moment.
Now move yourself back to the present while you are still in your Dream Body. How does it feel? Transfer yourself in a different personality. Does it feel good to be able to transform that easily?
9. Visualize how would you feel if you fail.
10. Create a “movie strip” where you are the main character.
11. Find 5-10 minutes along usual daily activity to replay the “movie strip” every day and practice all of the above steps.

REPEATEDLY

Is a key word here. Find a specific time of the day, maybe when you brush your teeth, or take a shower, or walk to a bus, ideally it should be something that you do routinely every day. Now play the above movie while doing your daily routine activity. It shouldn't take more than a few minutes. It might feel somewhat weird at the beginning, but eventually it might become your second nature.

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND HACKS

1. Never ask yourself - “How hungry am I?”
Always ask - “How full am I?”.

Make an experiment and these questions this very moment, in the same state of satiety. Do you notice any difference? Different framing of the question that logically should be the same, psychologically may be processed completely different. Your system 2, your mind is too lazy to contradict the first idea that is brought to its attention. If you ask yourself “how full?”, it automatically enforces “full” first...

If you ask yourself a question - “am I hungry?” versus “am I full?” on a scale out of 10, the logical conclusions should be - “if I am 4/10 hungry, then I am 6/10 full”. But this is not how our mind works. If you ask yourself in exactly the same state of hunger the question “am I full?” you might end up with - 6/10 full, resultant action - no need to eat. But if you ask yourself a question: “am I hungry?” - you might get 6/10 hungry - need to eat. The difference would be even more dramatic if you ask yourself - “How full am I?”, which kind of primes you that you are already full, versus - “How hungry am I?”, which suggests you that you are already hungry....

2. Never ask yourself - “how come I cannot accomplish” or “how come I cannot lose weight” But ask yourself - “what should I do to lose weight?” Or, even better - “what can I do today, and not just today, but NOW to facilitate the weight loss?”. Can I park further away? Can I do these

standing rather than sitting? Can I serve my wife/dad/friend by fetching some water or whatever from the next room?

3. We can visualize or perceive only one theme at a time... If you feel hungry because an image of food has come to your mind - try to visualize a body that you are dreaming about instead. If you cannot get away from the thoughts about a delicious taste of a particular food - imagine the taste of chewing gum, or, even better - concentrate on the immediate taste that very moment that you have in your mouth, try to describe and qualify it to yourself

4. Reward yourself mentally for each successful step... Memorize the feeling of success and victory and crave for new steps to get that feeling again. Your mental reward is more important and pleasant than the number on the bathroom scale...

5. Be creative in the use of “dog owner versus puppy” concept. Clearly visualize your “Smart Mind” versus your “Body”. Who is in charge? Can you see them like a human versus puppy? Can you train that puppy? Before you train a puppy, first you tell yourself - “I want this puppy to do such and such thing and this is my plan how I will accomplish that”. When you want your Mind to train your Body, first you create a plan - I want to make my physical body to lose some weight and I want to train my subconscious mind to have less appetite, earlier satiety, cravings for healthy foods and disgust for junk food, I want to move more etc. The more you talk to yourself about little steps toward your weight management, the more you imagine and experience them in your imagination. Attach positive feelings to these steps. Now you have another little movie in your mind. Be creative and look at your main challenges and find solutions to them. When you face a temptation - tell yourself “I really want my Body to get rid of this extra fat. I do believe that a little restrain could make me so much happier than an indulgence in this temptation”. Don’t tell your Mind “Go away, let me enjoy this”. You would be surprised that your Body will actually physically listen and respond to your Mind... Remember - talk to your children, you might not realize the results right away, but even when they rebel, they still listen and every word that you said to them counts. The same with your Body - keep talking to your Body, let your good Mind help your Body to overcome the maladaptive instincts by constant positive dialog. Learn to enjoy the little victories which will inevitably progress into the better weight scale numbers, but remember that scale moves very slowly, ideally 1-2 pounds a week, not a day.

MIND OVER PHYSIOLOGY CONTROL CONCEPT

To understand this better we should look at the basics of human physiology and the subconscious subdivision of our neurological system.

1. Vegetative nervous system is a part of the neurological system that controls the physiology, metabolism and appetite. The other name for this system is autonomous nervous system. It kind of has a “mind of its own” by being independent from our direct voluntary control. It is an older neurological system, it traces its origin all the way back to

primitive multicellular organisms, it is straightforward and primitive in its design, like a vegetable. The reactions are very simple reflexes: cause → sequence. It is not capable to think or judge. It affects our body either via direct innervation or by controlling the endocrine system.

2. Endocrine system is comprised of organs that produce hormones. Hormones are tiny chemicals that are released in the bloodstream and delivered to every single cell of our body. Hormones penetrate inside of the cells and regulate their function. They instruct the cells to store or release fat, activate or suppress the genes.
3. Genes. Every single cell of our body has the same genetic information. Only a tiny proportion of that information is actually activated in each particular cell. Depending on which genes are activated, the cell develops in one or another type of cell or performs its function in one or another way. Hormones regulate which genes are activated and how the cell will function.

Our vegetative neurological is responsible for the maintenance of the important bodily functions like our temperature, blood pressure, heart rate etc. Most of these functions, except of breathing are not under our voluntary control. Imagine for a moment what would happen if could change our temperature or blood pressure at will.

It works like a thermostat - keeps our body at predetermined levels. It is not adjustable. We cannot change our preset physiological reactions to the environment. But our physiological responses change in response to the changes in our environment... Which could be real or - PERCEIVED. Our PERCEPTION can change our PHYSIOLOGY.

Or, we can simplify it and instead of changing the environment we can just IMAGINE a new environment and convince our vegetative system that the events are real... remember what we discussed earlier - perception, meaning, conviction, belief, faith...

So, you cannot change your blood pressure at will... But - you can PERCEIVE the situation as life threatening around you, whether by altering your PERCEPTION or using your IMAGINATION, and your blood pressure may go up, as long as you've been able to convince yourself.

Practitioners of hypnosis have been using this peculiarity of the human mind for centuries. "Imagination is the language of the subconscious mind" is a message in multiple hypnosis books. Hypnosis is nothing more than a product of the imagination of the patient skillfully guided by a hypnosis practitioner. People would get real burns from the imagined cigarettes, they would behave if they were facing wild bees, or they would start acting as if they were babies...

You could say - hypnosis is so rare and it has nothing to do with me. Do you like reading books or watching movies? Why? You immerse yourself in the new imagined world, you get emotional and physiological changes in your body as a reaction to your imagination guided by the books or movies. Why do we like shopping? You see an item, like a shirt, or shoes and then you imagine a situation where you would use them, it makes you feel different, you are one step closer to your dream.

Before we go any further let's summarize what we've discussed so far about our subconscious vegetative nervous system:

- Just like emotions, it does not understand the human language, but it understands visualizations
- Our subconscious vegetative system may react to the imagined reality in the same way as if it reacts to the actuality
- To get the desirable physiological changes we may either face the actual situation known to cause such physiological changes, or, we can simply imagine such situation. Our subconscious nervous system is too primitive to make a difference between the real and imagined.
- We have a special conscious filter designed to separate the imagined from real. The hypnosis practitioners have mastered to disable this "conscious filter" and that's how they guide the imagination and the resultant actions of the hypnotized. We can disable such "judgment filters" ourselves. We can easily get immersed in books or movies, but we can get ourselves easily from the state by focusing on the reality.
- Meditative state of mind, as we discussed earlier, facilitates communication between with our imagination, while ignoring to some degree the inputs from our sensory organs

Think again about this immense discovery.

We can change our physiology, metabolism and appetite by our imagination.

Our ancestors have been using this for centuries without digging into the details about the neurological, endocrine systems and genetics. Now we know that our imagination can produce neurological reflexes which can affect our hormones, and hormones can go all the way to the genetic materials inside of our cells and can literally suppress and activate various genetic information, as a result the cell may start to burn fat, to save fat or even to convert in a different type of cell, at least theoretically.

The traditional medicine uses medications to improve the physiology. Our imagination can do similar. We knew for centuries that chemicals can do it, but only recently we have become smart enough to match the proper chemical to control the corresponding malady... We need to find the proper imaginations to get the desirable physiological changes...

"JUDGE" THEORY

There is a filter, or judge, or a jury, if you will, between the conscious and subconscious which decides which information is real or imagined. This “judge” is temporarily disabled or asleep when we are immersed in a movie or a book. When it “asleep” we live the events generated by our imagination as if they were real. Normally this “judge” can be woken up very quickly - we simply switch our attention from the screen or book to the actual reality and we are back to the real world.

The hypnosis practitioners have managed to keep this “judge” even more disconnected and suppressed, and as a result they guide the imaginations of the hypnotized people and get them to react to the imagined as if it were real even to a greater extent...

Can we do the same to ourselves? Can we guide our own imagination, put our “judge” to sleep and get the desirable physiological changes as a reaction to our imagined reality? I think we can. I think even more than that, we do it all the time without even realizing that.

SUSCEPTIBLE STATE OF MIND

There are different states of mind that make us more or less susceptible to the effects of imagination in the creation of the new subconscious associations and connections.

If we divert the attention from the imagined, we might destroy or minimize the “fooling” effect. There is not much room to the imagined when we are fully concentrated on the reality. If you want to have a full effect of the imagined on your physiology, you need to get in a state of mind when you are isolated as much as possible from the external signals. It does not mean that you will not receive them, but you might learn to ignore them at will and surrender yourself to your imagined reality.

Every session of hypnosis routinely starts with an induction stage. The hypnotizer will slowly introduce the client in the special state of mind when the client will start to live only in the imagined reality guided by the hypnotizer.

The other way to get into that special state of mind is via use of meditation.... We often get in such state by accident, or right before we fall asleep or shortly after we wake up. Did you notice that night or morning are the common times when you come up with new ideas? Those are the times when your imagination is “released” to be free from the suppressions by reality. Did you ever notice situations when you walk alone and sometime later you realize that you’ve been immersed in your own reality for some time...?

EEG Clues.

This susceptible state corresponds to a specific EEG pattern. EEG stands for Electro-Encephalo-Gram. The electrodes are placed on someone's head and record the

electrical activity of the brain. The waveform of the brain electricity is classified as Alpha, Beta, Theta and Delta waveforms. We usually function in Beta waves. When we are in a meditative susceptible state of mind, or ready to be hypnotized, the predominant waves are Alpha. Deeper state of hypnosis often correlates with prevalence of Theta waves. Delta waves are mostly prevalent during the deep sleep.

There are multiple techniques to submerge in creative Alpha state of mind. As soon as we concentrate on the real-life events or get involved in some logical tasks our brain quickly switches in the Beta prevalent state.

Alpha wave pattern is also prevalent when we are in a creative state of mind, when people write or paint, or create new music. This is the state when our body kind of ignores the external signals and immerses in its own phantasies and imaginations, when it is the most efficient and productive in creating the imaginations.

EXAMPLES OF THE IMAGINED REALITY

We have already mentioned them earlier. We love and we enjoy the fruits of our imagination, don't we? Show me a person who doesn't like movies, books, games, fairy tales, jokes. We know that the events are not real. If we do not visualize them, we do not enjoy the book or movie at all, they just become like a random collection of written letters or sounds and images in case of movies. Why do you think many of us enjoy shopping? Don't you think that we look at various objects and then enjoy our fantasies about the situation where we can find them useful? What is so attractive about travel? Does it guide your imagination into the world of unknown and mysterious? What about TV, Internet or Facebook addictions?

EXAMPLES HOW IMAGINATION CAN CONTROL THE PHYSIOLOGY

If we want to get a desired physiological response, all we need to do is to present ourselves a situation, real or imagined that is known to generate such response.

Remember the racing heart during the scary movie? Did you ever cry while reading a book? Did you ever get frightened by thoughts about something scary?

What about if you want the blood vessels in your hand to get dilated and to facilitate better blood flow?

Let's imagine your hand as being submerged into a glass bowl with warm water. Now imagine how that water touches your skin. Imagine the sound it makes as you move your fingers, imagine how it smells, may be a little touch of scent? What about imagining a burning wood underneath that bowl, you can see it, you can smell it, you can hear a cracking sound of the burning wood underneath. The more sensory modalities you use, the more chances that you can get a desirable physiological effect or feeling.

IMAGINATIONS AND SEXUALITY

I think that human sexuality is the best example of the power of our imagination over the body. Whether you are a man or a woman, you may get sexually aroused by your imagination. Men's imagination is easier to be guided by visual clues. Most women would prefer the verbal guidance. Remember the expression - men love with their eyes and women with their ears? Just a picture or a sexual word by themselves will not produce any physiological arousal changes, they should wake up some fantasies, or dreams. It always requires a visualization, a fantasy that we can sustain or destroy at will. It can be easily destroyed by a distraction. It requires a special state of mind.

Medical students look at the pictures of the genitals and read about sex physiology without any physiological sexual arousal, because these images and texts do not guide their imagination.

Doctors treat their patients, see their private parts and discuss the details about their sexual techniques without even a hint of sexual arousal. And then, some of the same doctors, likely not the best ones, but whom am I to judge, can turn around and few hours later have an affair with the very same person with all appropriate physiological responses. Why? Their "sexual imagination" is at rest when they perform their professional work.

This was the first surprising lesson that I quickly learned as a medical student. I found it was natural and effortless to be a "doctor" one moment and a "human" in the appropriate for human sexuality situations. Our imagination is an engine to our sexuality and we can turn it on and off at our will. It is natural and simple.

Let's summarize the above:

- We need to see our consciousness as a separate entity in charge of our body. We can compare it to a performer and a puppet, dog owner and a dog
- It might be helpful to see our consciousness and our body as two conflicting entities. Body wants to overeat, but consciousness is in charge. The body states "I am tired" but consciousness says "I am stronger than you".
- We can and we should train our body by our consciousness just like trains and guides his puppy. Don't let it be the other way around - puppies should not guide their owners. Just like puppies our body is given to please our mind, not the other way around
- Our bodies physiological vegetative nervous system is primitive, simple, free of judgment or ability to learn. It reacts to the imagined situations as if they were real. Our consciousness is the one to decide which situation to feed to our "guts"
- Imaginations can change or physiology and emotions. At times the physiological changes may cause the emotional changes (in fact it is one of the theories about the origins of the emotions. I personally believe that our physiology and emotions are too closely interconnected to be separated)

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF USE OF OUR IMAGINATION FOR WEIGHT LOSS APPETITE CONTROL

Let's rehearse once again the idea that our imagination and visualizations can effectively influence and change our physiology and feelings and emotions.

In order to produce the desirable physiological responses or feelings/emotions we can convince ourselves that we are facing a situation (a trigger) known to cause such responses.

The very important moment to understand is that in order to get the desirable responses, we should not imagine the responses, but we should convince our vegetative system that it faces a situation producing such response. Imagination is one of the tools to convince.

The desirable physiological effect is produced not by the power of imagination, but by a natural reaction from a convinced vegetative system.

CONVINCE YOUR APPETITE.

Rule number one is - do not convince your body in the desirable physiological response, but - convince your body that it is facing a situation that would normally result in such response.

In this particular case the desirable response is - satiety. Now you need to use your logic and find a situation that would normally result in satiety. For example, instead of convincing yourself that you are not hungry, try to convince yourself that you have already eaten:

The next time you eat, do it slowly. After the first few bites, take a deep breath, relax, try to ignore events around you just for few seconds. Make a pause. Now look at the plate that you've just started eating and try to convince yourself that this is your second "helping"... Imagine and convince yourself that you have already finished the same plate literally seconds ago, you got yourself the second "refill" and now after just a few bites you are starting to realize - "I am so full already, my stomach is distended, my mouth is already tired from chewing, this smell is not appetizing anymore, now just after few bites I realize that I shouldn't have done this, I should not have taken this second portion. I can feel the gurgling sounds my over distended stomach and overloaded guts make. I can feel how this over distended stomach presses on my diaphragm and makes my breathing difficult. I do not see the dirty empty plates on the table because someone already took them away, but I vividly remember them being here just a few seconds ago, unappetizing, dirty with some non-edible disgusting leftovers. I am so full. I am so full, that few more bites of this second "helping" and I will feel sick again from overeating as it happened before, I better enjoy the way I am right now..."

Instead of fighting and overcoming the uncomfortable hunger cramps - just use your imagination to convince yourself that you have already eaten. We will discuss other appetite suppressing

techniques in the upcoming sections. I hope that by the time you finish reading my writing, you will have sufficient knowledge and understanding to design such imaginations by yourself.

SAMPLE #1 OF APPETITE NEUTRALIZING imaginations:

1. If you are overweight or obese - you always have a huge excess of ENERGY from the melting FAT. You are ignoring this feeling, but every time you are hungry, your FAT always MELTS AWAY and releases an incredible amount of energy and SUPPRESSES YOUR APPETITE. Your body is just a battery that is ready to be discharged. Just like your car battery, your body likes to be discharged - your body LOVES the process of using your fat for extra energy and it always SUPPRESSES YOUR APPETITE. Your body LOVES when you use your melting FAT as a source of ENERGY. It is an easy and natural process. Your body has been WORKING HARD to accumulate all of this ENERGY and now your body ENJOYS this stage, it is relaxing and working easy. As long as you notice an extra FAT - you have an extra SURPLUS of ENERGY. It LOVES to use this EASY accessible, NATURAL ENERGY for its needs. This EXTRA ENERGY SUPPRESSES YOUR APPETITE.
2. Imagined a perfect body that you want. Imagine your perfect thighs, your perfect belly, your breast and shoulders, imagine your skin is tight and tightly surrounds your body without even a hint that it was bigger than just some time ago.
3. If you have an extra fat, then imagine that inside of this extra fat there is a perfect body, it is just layered with a fat that is temporarily there. It always produces Leptin that SUPPRESSES YOUR APPETITE. We just need to regain our sensitivity to that Leptin. Think about yourself just as you are a BUTTERFLY hidden inside of the temporary layers and you are right at this very moment are in the process of melting away and getting rid of that fat and relieving to everyone the perfect hidden beauty, just like a butterfly.
4. Now imagine that your fat simply melts away from the parts of the body you don't want it to be at. It simply converts in the water and carbon dioxide and you simply pee it out and releases ENERGY and SUPPRESSES YOUR APPETITE
5. The melting FAT releases a LOT OF energy. As this fat melts away, it releases an incredible amount of energy, it energizes you, it suppresses your appetite, remember Leptin hormone, it is released by a melting fat tissue, it communicates to your brain that you are not hungry, you have plenty of calories to fuel your body from the fat stores for weeks, if not for months.
6. It releases nutrients. More than that, many people do not realize, but fat is also easily converted by our body into proteins. Imagine your fat melts away, converts to energy, converts to proteins, those proteins your body uses to create the muscles you desire. Other part of fats is converted into carbohydrates, they fuel your body, fuel your brain that uses carbohydrates as a main source of energy.
7. You feel happy and energized. You feel happy, you feel satisfied, weight loss is a pleasant process for you, you never hungry and surprisingly you are not even thirsty

much. Remember - fat converts in water and carbon dioxide, it converts in proteins that build your muscles, it converts in carbohydrates that fuel your brain and body. Even if you do not eat much, you are not starving yourself, you are just mobilizing your fat. You are not in starvation mode. Your body has plenty of energy and nutrients. You feel energized, strong and healthy.

SAMPLE # 2

Imagine Saturday afternoon after long party... The table is in front of you and it is empty with some random unappetizing food leftovers... You are completely stuffed. You barely can move or breath because your stomach presses on the diaphragm and it's almost painful to breath with your stomach so you move the air in and out with your chest alone... How could I even think about food? I am so full... If I put a finger in my mouth I can reach my recent piece of steak... No appetite at all. I feel like it will take me eternity to recover back to "normal" and to regain the ability to ambulate like a human... so full...

The next time you actually physically overeat, try to memorize in your mind clearly how bad does it feel when you overeat, so you can reproduce it in your imagination...

Also, please always remember that if you face extreme food cravings, they don't last forever - 20-30 min later they will always downgrade to something not as bad.

Whatever symptoms or signs of extreme food cravings you have, try to convince that "melting fat" takes them away. The common things many would notice like are sensations "hunger stomach cramps" or "hunger throat chocks". Your melting fat easily neutralizes those unpleasant sensation, you just have to concentrate and learn how to notice and appreciate the soothing effect of the melting fat.

SAMPLE #3

My least favorite method to suppress appetite is imagining disgusting smells. It is unpleasant but effective. Our olfactory nerves responsible for delivery of the smell signals to the brain, and they are some of the shortest nerves connecting our brains to the environment.

Good smells could be some of the most powerful appetite stimulating signals that often very difficult to overcome.

The single purpose of the bad smell is to protect us from eating something dangerous to us and by... suppressing our appetite. The worst smells are always appetite suppressant and disgusting. Make your pick and imagine it, and your appetite will be gone for a while... I hope I don't have to write are examples of such, they are so abundant. Next time you are experiencing a disgusting smell - store it in your "imagination library".

THE IMAGINATION MEMORY BANK

Every time you overeat - memorize how it feels. Memorize how your body feels, how the food smells, how you cannot even look at meals anymore, feel and memorize how difficult it is to breathe with your diaphragm pushed all the way by the over distended stomach. Notice how much you hate this feeling, so you could avoid it in the future.

Next time you want to suppress your appetite - recollect this feeling all the way to the little tiny detail...

It may not work for everyone, and it may not have a full effect from the first attempt. You need to succeed with convincing yourself. The situation that you describe to yourself should be convincing enough. You need to focus your attention on the products of your imagination instead of the reality around you... Not every sentimental movie makes you cry. And if you want to get affected by the movie, you need to pay attention to the play... You are playing a theatrical act where you are the audience. The better actor you are - the more chances you can convince yourself, and you can improve this skill.

We will discuss later how to “design” the effective imaginations, poorly designed ones will not work or might produce an opposite effect. For example, any imaginations designed to suppress the appetite but containing images of food could be counterproductive.

We will also discuss later in more detail how to accomplish a susceptible state of mind.

REMEMBER: To get a desirable physiological effect we need to identify a triggering situation known to produce the desirable effect and convince ourselves that we are facing such a situation.

APPETITE CONTROL TRICKS

Before we even start talking about appetite by itself, there are two important concepts closely related to appetite that need to have discussed - FEAR and PLEASURE in relationship to our eating habits.

FEAR OF NOT EATING

We are often driven not by hunger, but by fear.

Fear is an unpleasant emotion about the possibility of something imagined that might happen in the future. In other words - fear is a product of our imagination. Think about this - fear is about something that lives only in our imagination, it hasn't happened yet, and it might, or might not happen, for the moment it lives only in our creative imagination and directly influences our lives.

Fearful emotions related to eating:

- Do you often feel that if you don't eat now, there is some unexplained, almost panicky-like harmful to your body state that you will inevitably experience? Do you ever experience like a sensation of doom, of something horrible that is about to happen because you didn't eat? It's like "or my God, it is so bad!"
- "If I don't try it now, I might never have a chance to try anything this delicious/good again, I need to get as much of this as possible"
- Do you believe that if you do not eat when you have an appetite that your body will suffer?
- Do you believe that in order for your health to be ideal you need to eat like a clock, do you feel scared and upset if you have missed, or you are about to miss a meal?
- Do you think you will certainly overeat later if you skip a meal?
- Do you believe that skipping food would make you fat?
- Do you think that the appetite will torture you forever unless you satisfy it?
- Do you eat to please your spouse/children/Mom/friends or to encourage them?
- Do you often eat because you feel like if you wouldn't eat now, you might not have an opportunity to have it later, just in case?
- Do you have a fear of starvation?

There are quite a few medical conditions when starvation is mandatory. And you know what, the patients easily accept the authoritarian guidance from a physician that "starvation is good for them". They are free from fear and panic. They would often say that skipping food even for few days was not such a big deal as long as they were convinced that it was good for them.

The dreadful "starvation mode" is a result of our fear of starvation in the first place. When you fear the starvation, the body treats your fear like if you are already starving with all corresponding energy preservation tricks (slowed down metabolism, fat preservation, increased appetite)

This fear needs to be destroyed first. How?

1. Try to use the visualization to convince yourself that you have access to unlimited quantities to your favorite food any time in any quantities secured and guaranteed for the rest of your life. Do not visualize the food items themselves, as it might be potentially counterproductive. You need to convince yourself that your food supplies are unlimited, unquestionable and always with you. The only food that you need to eat now is what your body needs for the next five minutes, not for the next 5 hours. Stop hoarding food for the foreseeable future. Accept the food as something that is always guaranteed in your mind to be available in any place, in any shape, at any time. You have to kill, destroy the fear of any potential for food deprivation at any moment in your life. You do not have to save or eat it "just in case", there is no such thing like "the next time I'll have

a chance to try it would be years from now". Kill your subconscious worry about potential food scarcity at any point in your future. Get your mind clear and eat only exactly what you need at this very moment. Focus your food needs to "this moment only". The Bible tells us not to worry about food or clothing, it teaches us to compare ourselves to free birds who always provided for by a superior power.

2. Be honest to yourself and listen to your true self. Eat when you want to, not when others want you, and not when you want to encourage, entertain or please the others.
3. Do not eat out of fear. Most religions advertise one or another form of fasting for a reason. There is nothing wrong with a food deprivation or restriction. It will not make you to overeat or injure your body unless it is more than a few days.

THE ROLE OF PLEASURE CONCEPT IN RELATIONSHIP TO APPETITE CONTROL

The human nature is such that we always look for new pleasures. As soon as we reach what we want, right away we need a new pleasure to struggle for. Buddha believed that our eternal quest for new pleasures is the cause for our suffering.

What does it have to do with food? Food is an easy pleasure to desire, to get and to repeat again. It is natural, healthy and "good for us". It is also easy to share with friends and family. We should enjoy the pleasure of eating, but if the pure purpose of eating is the pleasure alone... We might face a problem. Is it really "harmless"? You are the one to decide. Distinguishing between eating for pleasure or because we need it physiologically is not straightforward. But starting with a concept to understand it is the first step. Asking yourself questions like "am I eating because I need to or because I am looking for a pleasure", or question like "would I eat now my least favorite food?" are some of the ways to get a soberer view at the actual motives.

Now let's discuss the appetite as such.

HEDONIC VERSUS PHYSIOLOGICAL APPETITE

We are hungry physiologically when we would eat even the least desirable food. Hedonic appetite is when we eat for pleasure. One of the ways to distinguish the hedonic appetite is to ask yourself if you would eat the least favorite kind of food. It is difficult to distinguish between them, we'll be discussing the different ways we can influence our appetite.

APPETITE CONTROL OPTIONS

1. Avoid "grazing" kind of eating, or mindless eating. Just like some of the pasture animals who eat whatever they see food, we, humans, have a subconscious drive to nibble the food lying around with and actual hunger and appetite and surprisingly without any corresponding satisfaction. This kind of eating behavior usually can be easily overcome by bringing it in the focus of our attention

2. To prevent appetite - prevent any thoughts, ruminations, visualizations about food. If such have arisen - try to misplace them with different thoughts (misplacement and distraction). When you create concurrent imagery - try to use similar modality (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, kinesthetic) in the competing elaborations. Switch the focus of your attention to something different. Did you ever notice that when you are excited, you can live without food for extended periods of time? See the below Theory of Elaborated Intrusions, we can focus only on one topic at a time.
3. Never use negative imagery to influence the appetite ("I do not want to eat" will focus your attention only on the word of "eat", "I am Full" would be a better imagery to use to kill the appetite)
4. Imaginative eating of M&Ms. In general visualization of any food would usually generate more appetite with one strange exception. Volunteers who imagined that they were eating M&Ms right before they were given the actual candies, ate significantly smaller amounts of such.
5. Can you use "Disgust" emotion to destroy the appetite? Smells imagery are especially powerful.
6. Can you link "Shame" emotion to trim your food cravings?
7. Can you think about "embarrassment" as a useful emotion?
8. First and the most important is that having an appetite is not equal "I have to eat"
Most food cravings DO NOT require food and they will subside within 30 minutes or so.
 9. Can you convince yourself using imagery that you have already eaten?
10. Before you start eating ask yourself - "am I hungry or bored", "would I eat my least favorite food now?"
 11. Language choices to describe the hunger/appetite influence how hungry you actually are, use them wisely ("I can eat a whole horse" versus "I wouldn't mind to have a bite or two")
12. During the meal. Slow down and concentrated on the food only. Prevent the "mindless eating". Notice every single aspect of your meal like you are eating it for the first time in your life - shape, color, texture, smell etc. Enjoy it!!!
13. Eat slowly. At some point consciously ask yourself if you might have had enough food. Listen to your inner voice. You can always eat more later if you are still starving. Remember the 20 minutes satiety rule.
14. Eating the right food will help to keep your appetite healthy. Have you heard about the experiment with cocaine addicted mice? These rodent studies had shown that sweetness is preferred even over cocaine, and that mice can experience sugar withdrawal.
15. Know your "poison foods" that you cannot resist to stop. This is closely related to eating the right food, but some foods may completely destroy your willpower...
 16. Never eat more than a bite to please others, never say categorical "No", but rather "maybe later". "No" often will bring more persuasions.

17. Never eat out of fear when you are not hungry, unless it is a part of your plan (some people force breakfast to have most calories in the first half of the day)
18. Can you convince yourself by imagery that you have eaten twice as much as you actually have already eaten? People with impaired short-term memory always overeat because they do not remember. You can “fool” yourself that you have eaten much more than you have had.
19. Convince yourself that in the immediate future (today) you’ll have immediate access to any food you might desire, so you do not need to eat “Just in case”. It might help to have with you a piece of food (Like a small bag of nuts) to make it reality that food is always immediately available and there is no need to hoard food. Use visualization to convince yourself that the food is abundant now and in the future, there is no need to hoard any food or to preserve it for the future possible famine. Convince yourself that there is no need to store fat!
20. Reward yourself immediately if you met your goal and ate the right amount of food as you plan
21. Sacrifice theory. Look at slight undereating as a sacrifice rather than deprivation. This is your sacrifice in exchange for a better future. You are intelligent grown adult, not a child, you clearly understand the advantage of the delayed gratifications, like an investor believes in return, like you’ve always believed in education, work, insurance and retirement arrangements. Feel the pleasure of your investment, your sacrifice.
22. Learn “slightly hungry” feeling and learn to value and enjoy it. It is a key to longevity.
23. If you accidentally overeat - notice what you feel in multisensory memory. Use it for the future in your visualizations bank.
24. Create an anchor to sensation “I am full” by touching your L thumb to your L ring finger or whatever works for you. Use this anchor in the future to make yourself to feel “Full”
25. Take an advantage of “Melting Fat Imagination”

Most researchers, including the American Endocrinology Society, believe that food quality does not dramatically affect the way food is metabolized and affects our weight as long as calories in general are about the same.

At the same time many, including myself truly believe that the food quality might have profound effects on our appetite and food cravings.

THE LAW OF ATTRACTION. AVOID IMAGINATIONS WITH NEGATIVE INTENTION

The law of attraction states - we get what we focus on, regardless of whether it is desirable or not. Why? Let’s try another example:

Vividly imagine your favorite food that you want NOT to eat. For example, a steak, or whatever is your favorite “poison”. Imagine how it looks, how it smells, its texture, the sound that it makes on the grill.... And say to yourself - “I do not want it.” What is the result - you want it like crazy.

You forced your vegetative system to produce gallons of saliva and nut cracking forceful stomach cramps. You are ready to eat a cow.

Your vegetative system is primitive - it treats the positive and negative images as exactly the same. The vegetative system does not know good or bad, it doesn't understand "no". It just understands a pure image.

We need to be smart with our imaginations, so we can get the physiological effect that we want. For example, we should not imagine food or eating if we want to suppress the appetite.

HOW THE LAW OF ATTRACTION WORKS?

What do you think are your chances of seeing a Paris when you are constantly thinking how good would it be to see it?

What are the chances for you to see Paris if you have never had any desire to see it?

IMAGINED PERSONALITY

It is a somewhat complicated topic. I will try to plant some seeds of this idea in your thoughts in advance, but we will discuss it in more detail in the upcoming sections. Imagine that you are a movie star. Or, imagine that you are a big fat lazy blob too tired not just to walk, but even to talk. Now imagine that you are sexy. Now imagine that you are a really old person, slow and wise. Does it change you? Would it change your physiology for a moment, just for a short term? Do you think that all of us subconsciously have some kind of image of ourselves, whether we realize it or not? I am not telling you to become someone else. But, as a first step, just try to realize how exactly do you picture yourself for yourself.

PERCEPTION OF YOURSELF

Do you know who is real yourself? Remember what we discussed about the focus of our attention. You might focus your attention on your failures and declare yourself to yourself as a "loser", or you might ignore the losses and concentrate on victories... You might declare yourself as someone who cannot control his eating habits, because this is the only moments you are thinking about, or, you might disregard and not concentrate your attention on your missteps and repeatedly rehearse in your mind only your victories... At the end - you are what you think you are...

You can focus your attention on the fact that it is extremely difficult for you to stop eating. By the "law of attraction" you will multiply it and make it a real part of you. You can focus your attention on your weight loss "victories", no matter how few and how little they were, and start seeing yourself as a person who gets it easy and with minimal effort - and that's the kind of person you will eventually become.

What about focusing your attention on “hunger is the best sauce”. When was the last time you were shopping for the best sauce? What about this one for free?

You are in charge of your weight, feelings and eventually life if you discover and exploit the power of focus.

SUCCESS STORY

Can you tell me a story about your life and convince me that your life is a success?

Can you tell me the next day, but when you are not in a good mood, a story about the same life but this time to convince me that your life is a failure?

Do you need to tell this story to me, or to yourself? Can your imagination make the same life to be a success or a failure?

WHY MOVIE STARS ARE SLIM?

Why do you think the movie stars, or at least most of them, have an incredible seemingly effortless ability to gain and lose their weight? Do they really have an incredible willpower? I think the answer is in their profession - they live their roles. They vividly imagine being in the skin of their character this very moment. If it needs to be slim, they get slim, if it needs to be fat - they get fat. They live their roles and they take it literally. Who has better imagination than artistic people? How can they play their roles so perfectly? There is only one way - imagine that you are in the skin of your character. Become your character, and not in the future, but now, this very moment, in front of everyone you are the character.

We all choose our characters to live alike in this life. Sometimes we do it consciously, other times subconsciously. Then we use our imagination and associate ourselves with our dream, and then we become what we imagined. Unfortunately, we do it most of the time randomly, not by our will, sporadically. Wouldn't it be great to have it under our control?

IMAGINE YOURSELF AS A PERSON WITH A FAST METABOLISM

Can you convince yourself that you are someone who has difficulty gaining weight despite of eating as much as you want? Do you think you could become such a person? Do you think you could convince yourself that your taste buds are oversensitive compared to others and you suffer from early satiety problem that you have difficulties overcoming of your best efforts? Can you imagine how such a person would feel, act, how frustrated he/she could be to be facing such a challenge?

FEAR

Do you remember the law of attraction - you get what you imagined or on what you focus your attention?

I think from the weight management perspective the most counterproductive fear is a fear of being hungry. It brings a fear of starvation.

“STARVATION MODE” TRIGGER

If you have a fear of starvation - your body will do exactly what it does when it's starving - it will start to prepare you for survival by limiting the energy expenditure and by storing the energy for future as fat, just in case.

The fear of starvation will also make you hungry all the time, just to make sure that you will accumulate the maximal amount of calories because of fear for the upcoming imagined famine.

Where do you think the “starvation mode” settings are actually located? Which system in our body is responsible for this complex change of the physiological adaptations? I think it is our vegetative neurological and endocrine systems. Can we influence and correct them in the desirable direction by means other than medications or food?

If you are convinced that the food is abundant now and in the future - your body will burn energy and melt your fat. Convince yourself that the food is abundant and endless now and in the future to prevent the “starvation mode”.

Your body will do its functions differently depending on what you convince it's facing. You can convince yourself that you are fat forever. And you can convince yourself that this is a temporary transitional state on the way to real self.

EXAMPLE OF STARVATION MODE FIX IMAGINATION

EXAMPLE 4

Try to imagine that you are not on a weight loss path at all, that you are eating as usual, the food is abundant, your body is energized and healthy, it burns calories like a crazy furnace, you just need to remember to replenish it with more food. All of your muscles feel toned, energized and ready for action. They are over fueled by all of the energy release from the melting fat and now they are ready to spring in action. You feel well, young, alive, you are looking for action and an excuse to burn away all of the excess of energy you are overwhelmed with. Remember one pound of fat releases 3600 calories, it is enough for almost two days of energy needs for an average sized adult. Your fat melts away and releases tons of energy. You also have tons of Leptin in your blood giving your body messages that your battery is full and needs to be discharged. Remember the laptop battery manual? The battery needs to be periodically discharged to perform the best. Your body is like a battery overcharged with fat. You need to

discharge this excess of energy. Your fat melts away, releases energy, converts to proteins and carbs, gives your body some insane amount of energy. Your muscles regain some crazy strength from all this surplus of energy and you feel like using them for no reason - to dance, to jump, you cannot sit or stand still. You prefer to stand instead of sit and to run instead of walk. Super premium grade gasoline is released constantly from your fat reserves. It is so much better than the energy derived from food. As soon as your body is in the desirable shape, your fat will stop melting away and your appetite will resume back to usual. Remember - human body needs a certain amount of fat, especially for women, get many female hormones are activated in the fat tissues. Only excessive fat melts away, your desirable and physiologic fat is there to stay. If you are not sure which fat is which - ask the people who love you and care about you.

SPEED UP YOUR METABOLISM

Let's look at the second stage of the "Weight Management Pathway" - the Metabolism.

Vegetative system instructs our physiology and metabolism what to do with nutrients:

- Burn them as fuel and release heat and waste products
- Use them to build the muscles
- Waste them with stool
- Save them as fat for future energy needs

What influences our vegetative system to decide one way or another? I think the possible answers are:

1. Did I exercise? Did I use my muscles? Do they need more nutrients to be repaired and improved? Can you fool yourself that you have exercised when you didn't? Can you treat a tiny exercise as a huge work out?
2. Do I need an energy for the future? Am I facing a starvation? Am I afraid that I will not have food tomorrow? Can I fool my body that I have supplied it with plenty of food when I didn't to prevent the dreadful "starvation mode?"
3. What is your body image picture in your mind? How do you envision yourself? Do you see yourself as a fat and destined to be chubby or do you see yourself as a butterfly going through a temporary coconut stage and ready to be freed from protective fat and be born again?

Our vegetative system is convinced by the real-time events, or by our imagination or altered perception that it is facing one of the above. You want to imagine the scenarios which could convince your metabolism in the desirable direction.

Can you convince yourself that very this moment you feel like you have just finished a very good and energizing exercise? Can you recollect how you felt the last time right after the exercise.

Can you recreate that sense in your muscles, your breathing pattern, that pleasant and refreshing heaviness, that sensation like your blood circulates within you with a double speed?

BUILD YOUR MUSCLES

There was an experiment. Three groups of people were studied. The first group did usual activities. The second group performed some exercises. The third group imagined that they were exercising. Sometime later they measured the muscle mass. The first and second groups had predictable results. What do you think about the group number three? Why do you think I am bringing this example here? Yes, they did grow muscles. As physicians, we often see patients with damaged peripheral nerves - and muscle atrophy is always inevitable in such cases even with the best efforts to exercise and keep active the innervated area. It is not just about a blood flow. I can hypothesize that as we imagine workouts - the muscle would get more hidden neurological impulses, the blood circulation and nutrients redistribution I guess might be influenced by our “convincing power”.

The muscle growth from the imagined workouts is well documented in the medical literature.

The next time you exercise - deposit in your “memory bank” how does it feel after the exercise. Memorize how you breath, how you move, memorize the muscle sensation, the smell of your body, how your heart feels... The more details you memorize and reproduce in the future - the more chances you might be successful to convince yourself.

CRAVINGS

How do we overcome cravings for food? One of the approaches is based on the Elaboration of Intrusions Theory of desires.

To summarize this theory in a few words - multisensory elaborations/visualizations of desired food or addictive substances are the moving forces for addiction.

It starts with a random thought or few thoughts about the addictive substance or food. Then one of the intrusions is selected to progress in the stage of elaborations. Elaborations are multisensory IMAGINATIONS, or memories or fantasies or visualizations about the pleasant experience or events surrounding the pleasant experiences related to the addictive substance or food. Studies revealed that most of those elaborations are multisensory, involving most commonly visual, auditory or olfactory modalities.

Originally these elaborations are pleasant as they remain about the related pleasant feelings. But eventually they become unpleasant and force someone to crave for the substance in question.

These elaborations take place within the limited operational memory of our mind. Apparently, we usually manage to handle only one or few elaborations at a time.

How does it help us?

1. The same way as we crave for related imagery, we can crave for an elaboration/imagination about the pleasures of our dream body, or crave for the activities that we link to our dream body, or crave for the activities linked to the instant gratification of achievement toward our goal, as in the example above.
2. Undesirable cravings can be stopped at the earliest stage, when they are still on the level of intrusion that hasn't developed yet into a full elaboration. Every time we think about food we have a chance to destroy these intrusions at the beginning or to elaborate those thought to new level of desires. Did you ever find that it is so much easier to control your appetite while you are alone, without multiple ideas coming from friends and family "let's have some food"?
3. Once intrusion has progressed into the stage of elaboration, it might be overcome or minimized by either distraction, like playing games that require a lot of attention, or by
4. Introduction of a competing pleasant Imaginations. If you start to visually imagine a steak that you are craving for in your mind, bringing a competing image of the body that you are craving for. If it is smell - bring a competing smell of your ideal dream-yourself, if it is a sizzling sound that makes you crave for food - occupy your mind with a sound of your victory, your compliments, or a wind in your ears as you ride an imaginable bicycle in your new slim body.
Make sure that your competing elaboration does not have negatives. For example, if you elaborate about NOT eating food, your body will crave first food that you imagine.
5. Usually once elaboration/imagination started - it is difficult just to stop it by an effort, it appears to be easier to be overcome by another activity or imagination/elaboration.
6. The last option to deal with elaborations is to observe them from outside and try to separate them from the feelings and actions. We can learn to understand that these elaborations do not necessarily require to be acted upon. Sooner or later they will pass and leave the focus of your attention. No matter how extreme your food cravings, they will go away within some 15-20 minutes if you overcome the original urge to immediately satisfy them. They never last forever. Doing nothing is a viable option. How complicated is to tell yourself and to force yourself to "do nothing". Once you do it once or twice, you will realize that it is very simple and extremely gratifying - you get a sense of accomplishment and improved self-esteem from... doing nothing.

It might require some practice, but the results can be astonishing.

EMOTIONS

There are many opinions about what emotions are. Some people equal emotions to feelings. Other people look at emotions as subconscious motivating forces. The word of emotions derived from Greek e-motion, meaning to put something in motion.

I like the definition that emotions are our instantaneous evaluations of the environment which result in feelings and resultant motivations.

Our senses connect our Body and Mind to the environment. Such organs are - eyes, ears, smell, taste and touch generate electrical impulses which are combined together and presented as a situation.

Situation is evaluated by our Body (emotions) and our Mind (logic).

Emotional motivations are subconscious. For simplicity, when we do not use our logic, we do what is physiologically or emotionally good for us. When the focus of our conscious attention is concentrated on something different, then our actions are subconsciously motivated based on our subconscious associations. Most of our actions are subconsciously directed (or motivated). We process thousands of bits of information every second, and yet, only a tiny fraction of that information is consciously processed. As you read this, you do not pay attention to how you seat, what you hold, where you look etc. All of those tiny processes are automatic.

Body generates physiological reflexes to the presented situation and emotional evaluation, which penetrates our consciousness in the shape of feelings, that eventually add emotional flavor to our logical evaluations and to our logical motivations.

Emotional motivations are always effortless, automatic, require no energy. They are typical system 1 reactions.

Logical motivations are typical system 2 processes. They require our attention, energy, by default our mind is lazy and it would prefer to be at rest, rather than doing some “thinking and motivating work”.

In other words - we are motivated by our emotions rather than logic by default.

Emotions are our reactions to the change in the situation around us. They have three components - Evaluation, Feeling and possibly a Motivation or an “action pattern” that we learn based on our previous experiences.

The sequence of events is:

1. Evaluations of the Situation, → that generates →

2. Feelings → which penetrate our consciousness, and as a result affect our →

3. Motivation emotional part and resultant “action pattern”. Motivation part often takes place simultaneously with feelings.

Emotional associations are subconscious associations between feelings and corresponding act/object/situation. Basic feelings are divided into desirable and undesirable, pain and pleasure in relationship to the environment. We are either attracted or pushed away. We are born with some basic associations, but most of our emotional associations we develop based on our real/perceived or imagined experience. For example, what feeling do you link to the process of the weight loss - pain, suffering, restrictions? Logic tells you to do it, but emotionally you hate it. How can it work?

CHANGING EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

At first sight, it appears that emotions are automatic, spontaneous and not available for any alterations or conditioning. And indeed, I think some of the emotions are almost imprinted into our physiology and genes. For example, a fear of the unknown. Or positive emotions toward baby animals, or fear of heights. But many other emotional associations we actually form throughout the life based on our previous random experiences, or based on anchoring.

Anchoring is a process when we have a specific extreme emotional state while experiencing some other, sometimes even unrelated stimulus.

For example, someone can anchor a smell of burning wood to a forest fire, or to a romantic dinner.

Many people like to visit places where they spent their childhood, or romantic years because those places bring back the memories of pleasant feelings they once experienced there.

How can it help us with a weight loss?

Can you anchor a satiety to a specific unrelated gesture? Next time when you are full, try to do something unusual, like touching your right earlobe. Do it repeatedly while concentrating on your fullness and satiety.

At some point - touching the earlobe may actually reproduce the sensation of satiety. It may not work for everyone, but such anchors may help many to deal with unreasonable food cravings.

Or, another example. What is a common feeling associated by many with the words “weight loss”. For some people, it might be “accomplishment”, “gratification”, for others it could be associated with “pain”, “frustration”. Can we remap and link the “weight loss” to positive things like “pleasure”, “development”, “independence”.

PAVLOV'S EXPERIMENTS

Do you remember the Pavlov's experiments? Every time they were feeding a dog, the bell would ring. After certain repetitions, they would just ring the bell, and the dog would produce saliva as it was facing an actual food. We can control our physiology by habituation and producing new association in such ways.

If we can make dogs to salivate by training them to respond to the bell under certain conditions, can we create different, may be more useful for us physiological responses?

This is my story. I created a clear set of imaginations to suppress my appetite. I mastered to get them convincing and effective, and they indeed suppress my appetite. I did not use the light, but instead I used a simple expression "I am stuffed" first and then I would immerse myself in my series of imaginations and eventually suppress my appetite. One week later I noticed something strange. Just like a dog that salivates to light... As soon as I would say to myself "I am stuffed" - my appetite would be suppressed just like that, without any imagination or meditations. I have developed a new reflex, and the trigger to my reflex is - "I am stuffed" and response is that I am not hungry.... Do you think it is crazy, or it is just me...?

I believe that you can link your "physiology controlling" imagination to a specific trigger. Activating that particular trigger will produce a full physiological response that the original imagination was intended for without actually going through the whole process of visualization... Like in my example, as soon as I say to myself "I am stuffed" - my appetite is suppressed. And if it doesn't work, what do you do then? Go through the whole imagination and anchor it again to the expression "I am stuffed" till it works.

USE OF LOGIC FROM WEIGHT LOSS PERSPECTIVE

SACRIFICE

Do we enjoy making sacrifice?

Do you think that rich people are happier than poor?

How do you think rich folks became rich? Let's say - you and a smart investor each have a thousand dollars. You may go and spend them for toys, travel, food etc. And a smart investor invests them. SACRIFICE is one of the secrets for success and potentially even happiness. Delayed gratification, temporary restrictions are all the basic principles that make a difference between a successful person and a loser. What does it have to do with weight loss, you may ask?

Can you overcome the hunger and sacrifice the pleasure of food? Why? I hate being hungry. You might ask - does it worth to sacrifice? All our development depends on asking ourselves the right questions. Are there any pleasures better than food for YOU? Can you link those better pleasures with the weight loss? This is the most important question and this is the secret to the science of a logical motivation - decide what is more important and act accordingly.

For example - would you lose 10 pounds over the next month in exchange for a million dollars?

Are you sure? What happened here? The weight loss started to be associated with another extremely pleasant matter - money. Would you ENJOY losing 10 pounds in exchange for a million dollars? Would you need any special skills to keep your mouth disciplined for one month?

What about every month for the rest of your life as long as you are paid a million every month?

I would sacrifice a pleasure of food for life time travel around the world, living in five star hotels and life time meals in fancy restaurants... What is the problem? The problem is that I will not get any of these pleasures in exchange for weight loss. They are not ASSOCIATED with the weight loss.

Do they have to be associated in the real life or just in my imagination? Can I fool myself and get a real motivating force in return?

I think everyone can find multiple values that can be easily accepted as more pleasant than a pleasure of food...

Money are not usually directly associated with weight loss. But in the above theoretical bet - target weight in exchange for money - bet is a missing ASSOCIATION that can make the money to be linked with weight loss.

Can you create your own ASSOCIATIONS between the weight loss and something that you accept as an immense pleasure?

MOTIVATION LOGICAL

Motivation is technically a process of deciding what is more important to you from a logical perspective. Let's try to understand this process by splitting it in basic components.

VALUES

We all have similar desires for particular matters that we call values. Values are similar for many of us. We all want to be healthy, smart, rich, slim etc. How do we balance which value is more

important? I think by choosing and bringing to our attention REASONS why one or another value is more important than the others. Value with more reasons wins.

REASONS

When it comes to the weight loss - find the reasons why you want to lose weight. Bring them periodically into the focus of your attention. The reasons should be immediate, immense and easy to visualize to have a stronger impact on our body.

Create a list of reasons why. Find the reasons behind the reasons to support your motivation, go as deep as you want. For example: I want to lose weight so it would be easier to walk, so I could spend more time with my children, so I can be better connected with my family etc.

REASONS for the weight loss are ideally should be easy to visualize (so they can produce positive emotions and corresponding feelings), immediately beneficial, immense and preferably indefinite or recurrent.

EASY TO VISUALIZE because we want them to catch the attention of our Body. For example, fitting in a specific close, being comfortable in a specific situation, spending more time with family and friends. The very first time I successfully lost weight was facilitated by a new car that I loved, but it had the narrow-bolstered sport seats. My butt had to get smaller, much smaller to be comfortable in those seats...

IMMEDIATELY BENEFICIAL is an extremely important concept. When someone wants to lose weight because of some health benefits some years down the road - it often fails. A friend of mine had to fly overseas to get a cardiac intervention done without which he could die. His doctor made it clear - the only way he could make through such flight relatively safely with the heart he had before the intervention - was by losing at least 40 pounds... Do you think he managed to accomplish it - you bet he did!

INDEFINITE characteristic of ideal motivations is highly desirable. When my friend had his heart fixed, guess what happened with his weight...

To summarize: find as many "why's" as you can, visualize them, make them immediately beneficial, immense and indefinite and you might get motivated. Don't be afraid to be a dreamer. The more you visualize and enjoy your dreams - the more motivated you become. Your imagination is the only limit for your MOTIVATION.

This is a simple, but fundamental rule that many of us often ignore. We usually start from a weight-related reasons, but then our attention drifts away and we often tell ourselves "I want to be 180 because that is the number that I want". There is nothing wrong with the number, we just lose the actual motivation along the road....

ESSENTIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL HUMAN NEEDS

Can I help you to find the best motivating value? I may try. We are all similar and different. There are basic universal for all humans needs which are:

1. Certainty. We need to be certain that the roof will not collapse on us in this room as you are reading this, that we have some basic needs met, we are always at least subconsciously concerned about safety at this very moment or in the near future. Would a healthy weight give you a certainty that you will stay healthy, respected, loved, employed etc.?
2. Variety. I started my weight loss in the past few times because I have found it entertaining and relatively easy to accomplish gratifying and rewarding goal. At the end to lose weight all you have to do is to stop what you are already doing - stop eating. Buy new clothes. Impress your friends and family.
3. Connection and love. People will do for others than they will ever do for themselves. Would you?
4. Significance or esteem needs (for yourself and by others). Losing weight can give you an immense sensation of improved significance in the eyes of others.
5. Development or self-fulfillment, progress Would you feel that you have made a significant progress by losing weight?
6. Cognitive. Can you do that? How would it feel to get the weight you want? How others would treat you?
7. Aesthetic.
8. Contribution

All of us have biological needs. The other needs are balanced differently for different people.

I would grade my needs in the order of importance for ME as:

1. Development and progress
2. Connection and love
3. Cognitive
4. Variety
5. Certainty
6. Significance

Your order of priorities may vary, but I am sure that you could find at least a few values from above categories to motivate you. I originally started my weight loss because I was bored and I wanted to accomplish something (Variety and progress), then it was strongly supported by significance, as I started to realize how much differently friends and strangers started treating me after 70 pounds disappeared, followed by contribution, trying to understand and share what I've done with others, followed by the need for development, after I had realized that I am almost obliged as a physician to share this with my patients. And now it is about significance

again, as I am trying to accomplish something that most people fail with - easy to deliver mind over body controls system that I can teach others.

The best motivating values should be easy to visualize, attractive in the near future, immense.

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

One of the great gifts each of us possess is our incredible ability to change the focus of our attention at any moment. Just like during a regular conversation - we can freely change topics of our discussions from politics to cars, or weather, or any other matters. The same goes about our thoughts. When you communicate to yourself, you can see only immediate pleasures or you can notice the great benefits you can get in the future in exchange for little immediate sacrifices.

All you do differently is focusing your attention on different topics.

You can look at your actions as an investment in return for a bigger and more pleasant return... Or you can just notice the immediate gratification.

If you refocus your attention once - you change your motivation only for a short time as long as you keep the focus in the right direction...

TIME AND PERCEPTION

Now, there is a very important component - TIME. Time is something that can potentiate and multiply the value, or diminish and make it almost useless. Would you lose 10 pounds within a month for money, the same million dollars but guaranteed to you in 40 years? May be, maybe not. What about 10 000 dollars in 5 days in exchange for 3 pounds?

LOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS RELATIONSHIP

I think there are two main components in every motivation - logical and emotional. There are purely emotional free of logic motivations. But every logical motivation always associated with some emotional flavor. Some logical motivations may be associated with relatively neutral emotions, others might have a powerful emotional background supporting or contradicting the desired or the process that brings us what we desire.

Logical associations between the desirable values seems to be self-explanatory. Justify, rationalize, explain - are some of the common synonyms to the process of logical associations.

Emotional associations are connections that are often illogical and irrational... Every time you experience pain and pleasure your subconsciousness is looking for an explanation and creates an emotional association. Many of those associations are not directly related as a cause-sequence, like in logical associations, but rather a result of the coincidence. Someone

may have taped you on your shoulder when you were extremely sad, now every time someone does the same - you may experience the same sadness without clear realization why. It is called "Anchoring" in NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming).

To summarize - we motivated toward healthy weight not by the weight itself, but by the values we associate with the desirable weight. Remember - find reasons, associate them with the weight loss, focus your attention on those reasons.

LOGICAL MOTIVATION BY PAIN

This kind of motivation process is described by Tony Robbins as a "pressure cooker". Some problems slowly build up until the moment when the situation becomes extreme, like a pressure cooker that is about to explode. For example, weight management pertaining, when someone realizes that he cannot fit in an airplane seat. You may not need to wait till it reaches such extreme.

The first step is to get uncomfortable.

The second step is to perceive that problem as extremely uncomfortable to get a motivation leverage.

Most psychologists believe that we are motivated by pain or potential loss significantly stronger than we are motivated by pleasure or reward. The main problem with such motivations are that they are painful. We might risk to face a denial, which is a kind of unintentional neglect of the problem. This is one of the reasons why many overweight/obese people ignore and disregard their condition as a problem. The best solution to that - make this problem not just extreme, but even to be perceived as a life-threatening. We do not ignore life-threatening matters. I believe this approach is extremely effective. But, again, the problem is that not everyone consciously would be willing to put himself in pain and discomfort... I guess I would leave it as a personal choice and I would just deliver a message about the existence of this extremely powerful way to get motivated.

ADDING EMOTIONAL FLAVOR BY USE OF VISUALIZATIONS

For example. You might say to yourself "Obesity is pain", but do you really feel such way when you say so? Or you can say - I hate that I am 50 pounds overweight. But do you really feel bad when you say or think that? Now imagine extra 50 pounds that you have not like a number, but physically visualize them as a piece of luggage, exactly like the one that you have to check in at the airport. Do you see it in front of you? Now visualize like someone had strapped that luggage to your back and you have to carry it around all day long, you have to sleep with it, you have to get up from chair with it, you have to have sex with it. Does it make you feel in pain and suffering now? Denial is a kind of perception when we decide to ignore the reality to feel better. Whom do we fool other than ourselves?

When you want to get motivated to lose weight, all you need to do is to find good enough reasons to overcome the other competing values, like food or laziness... We will discuss the rules of logical motivations later.

PAIN VERSUS PLEASURE

Look at the above example more closely. There are two ways to look about carrying an extra weight. When you imagine the above example, how does it make you feel? I think it may make you feel unhappy, sad, depressed. It is a motivation by pain.

What do I think you could do instead? I think you could paraphrase the above problem in a different way - think how much BETTER you WILL feel after you lose 50 pounds, how much easier it would be for you to walk, to sleep, to have private relationships....

Practically any motivation could be rephrased either in terms of pain or pleasure.

LOGICAL SUBCONSCIOUS ASSOCIATIONS OR BELIEFS

Beliefs are the logical associations that slowly drift from our conscious into the subconscious world.

The pathway for subconscious logical associations is simple - we get a question, we think, then we come up with an answer... When we face the same question multiple times and we are keep coming up again and again with the same answer - at some point we stop thinking. We just move that question - answer structure into our subconsciousness, we do not want to spend any more brain power on it.

The other way to look at logical beliefs:

When you realize that you have difficulties losing weight, you might come up with various hypotheses. For example, you can bring the following opinions to your attention:

- I eat too much
- I have bad genes
- I exercise too much
- The food is wrong

Then you look for information to support these opinions - references.

If you repeat the same question a few times, originally you think and look for hypothesis and supporting references every time you ask yourself this question. If you keep coming up repeatedly with the same answer, eventually you just link question and answer bypassing logic.

The belief is successfully formed. You move it to the subconscious subdivision - "I cannot lose weight because I have bad genes". All of your future weight loss efforts will be based on this association.

Subconscious logical associations are beliefs. Other word for beliefs is generalizations. We generalize our opinion based on our previous experiences. When we have enough experiences with similar events with similar associations, at some point we stop using our thinking and start having automatic generalizations based on our experience. Beliefs are decided logical associations that we accept as true and we do not want to spend any more mental energy to think about them. We can bring them to our consciousness and change them. Some people believe that the Life was created by God, others by Evolution, some people believe that they were "born to be fat", most people believe that the Earth is a globe etc. "Diets always fail" (I think it's "diet operators" who actually fail), "I have fat genes" (there is some propensity to be overweight for certain people, but genetic obesity as such is extremely rare). See, we have already started the process of not just discovering, but also the process of potentially changing the generalizations, or beliefs.

Many people believe that values and beliefs are something permanent that defines them. I think that values are similar for most people, we just prioritize them differently based on our previous experiences, and as our experiences change, we change our beliefs and we do it all the time. Beliefs and generalizations are essentially our knowledge and memories, and we change them all the time as well.

The key to success is to be in charge of changing our reasons, knowledge and memories instead of them randomly changing us.

We were not born with them, we have developed them throughout our lives.

When do you think you have established your basic subconscious logical associations? Do you think they are permanent or do you see them as constantly changing? Does anyone oversee your basic logical algorithms that govern your life or have they and do they just happen randomly based on our past experiences? The same with emotions. We have created the basic generalizations and emotional associations when we were young, inexperienced and uneducated.

DISCOVERING DISEMPOWERING BELIEFS

Why I can't lose any weight? Some answers come up to your mind instantaneously without even thinking. My answer used to be simple - this is the way I am. Is it really true? Can it be debated? Can we brainstorm this question and is there any chance that we can come up with a different conclusion?

Other way to discover beliefs is to watch your language and watch for words like “always”, “never” etc. These are generalizations that you have created based on your past life. Does it always hold true?

FINDING BENEFICIAL BELIEFS

What about asking yourself a question - “what kind of belief would I need to have in order to be successful with a weight loss?” For example, you may come up with something like - “if another human could successfully accomplish it, so do I”. Now, can you find enough information to support and rationalize this statement? Rationalization is usually used when we face some wrong beliefs to reinforce and support them. But we might as well use it to our advantage to convince ourselves in beneficial for us statements.

TO SUMMARIZE

- Motivations could be emotional or logical
- Motivation for weight loss by numbers, sizes or terms without corresponding reasons is useless. Find the reasons why you want to lose weight. Visualizing reasons may help to add emotional flavor to them
- Ideal logical motivating reasons should be perceived as immense (a million dollars, not five), immediate (in a month, not in 30 years), indefinite or recurring in the future.
- Reasons which are easy to visualize have an advantage to be more influential not just on our logic, but also on our emotions.
- There are no isolated logical motivations, every logical motivation has some emotional component. Our emotions always affect our motivations, or they could be the motivations by themselves. We might ignore the neutral emotional component but it is always present and if it is contradicting our logically designed plans, then we face a conflict of logic and emotions. Emotions usually eventually win
- Every time we have a feeling - we look for and link it to the events. Very often the linked events may be completely unrelated, but merely coincidental with the linked emotion. This process is called anchoring and it is one of the ways we create emotional motivations
- Memories of feelings linked to the corresponding events are the basis to the resultant emotionally driven motivations.

OVERSIMPLIFIED LOOK AT THE ESSENTIAL BODY PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
that need to be maintained to avoid harm while losing weight.

I wrote a separate book "The Slim Nutrition" and the summary below is a short summary about the essential physiological needs from nutritional prospective.

In one sentence - if you want to lose weight you will need to create an energy deficit while maintaining the body needs for important essential nutrients that your body always needs.

Most researchers, including the American Endocrinology Society, believe that food quality does not dramatically affect the way food is metabolized and affects our weight as long as calories in general are about the same.

At the same time many, including myself truly believe that the food quality might have profound effects on our appetite and food cravings.

Our diet consists of three main macronutrients - proteins, fats and carbohydrates. If we restrict calories, the restriction should come by reducing the quantity of one or another macronutrient in our diet. Which of them we should sacrifice? I think we should start by removing bad carbohydrates first. If further restrictions are needed, I think we should look at reducing the amounts of other carbohydrates and fats. I am a big believer in the low carb diets in general. The most important macronutrients to be preserved are proteins. They are the building blocks for our body and if we have a shortage of them - the body might decide to use our own tissues, particularly muscles to compensate for the new deficit, which is not desirable. Our body also needs essential fatty acids that it cannot generate on its own. Carbohydrates seem to be the last on the list since they are used as a source of energy, rather than building blocks for our bodies. There is some controversy about carbohydrates as a main source of energy for the brain. Some scientists believe that the brain can work on ketones, which are the products of dehydration of on fatty acids as well, if not better than it works on carbohydrates. The carbohydrates can be generated within our body by the process of gluconeogenesis mostly from proteins and to some, but lesser degree from some fats.

I think that bad carbohydrates are the main cause for unreasonable excessive food cravings and should be avoided. What are the bad carbohydrates - the short answer is that they are any carbohydrates which are not normally present in nature, including, but not limited to - sugar, corn syrup, many grain products, most breadings, most juices, sauces, dips and dressings with sugars, many soft drinks and alcohol mixers.

ESSENTIAL BODY NEEDS

What does your body need?

1. Energy
2. Nutrients (building materials) - proteins, vitamins and other essential elements (essential means that our body is unable to produce them from other ingredients)
3. Physical volume (fibers and water)
4. Water. Sometime we might confuse thirst with hunger.

Ideally, we need to decrease the amount of consumed energy, while preserving and satisfying the body needs for nutrients.

Make sure you get enough vitamins, microelements and proteins and fibers. Make sure to drink water. I think we should drink water just to make sure that it is not the water we are craving for.

The energy deficit can be accomplished by decreasing the calories from carbohydrates and fats. This is a “discharge mode” for your fat battery. Keep in mind that many macronutrients are interchangeable and many short-term deficiencies are of no importance and are easily compensated by physiological reserves without any negative sequelae. But reserves, as the word implies, sooner or later need to be replenished.

In other words - eat healthy, cover your nutrients while maintaining the energy deficit and don't go crazy counting everything, the body will take care of itself.

Let's look at the scientific facts what actually are the needs for the average size human for 24 hours period:

1. Energy - 2000 calories. The fat will give us plenty of energy no need to worry. To lose weight we need to have a net negative balance of 500-1000 calories/day, which should result in 1-2 pounds/week weight loss. The numbers are an approximation for an average size adults. Energy consumption of less than 800 calories/day is considered by many as a starvation.
2. Macronutrients - proteins, fats and carbohydrates, fibers - see details below.
 - Fats are mostly source of energy, with the exception of the “essential fats” which should be treated like vitamins. Less fat in food - less energy in.
 - Carbohydrates mostly used as a source of energy and may be cross covered by the fat reserves. Fat could be converted to the carbs or use directly as fat as a source of energy. Less carbs in food - less energy. Bad carbs also stimulate insulin, appetite and a lot of other undesirable results, it's all discussed in “Slim Nutrition”.
 - Proteins. Fats will partially get converted into amino acids and cover this need, but better make sure that we have enough protein with food. I think to be on the safe side it is better to assure that we get around 1g/kg. You don't need to calculate down to a single gram, fats will provide you a good cushion
 - Fibers. We need to get around 30g/day and they need to come from food.
3. Micronutrients - Vitamins, microelements, minerals, essential fatty acids - need to come with food.

To simplify - to lose weight eat proteins, vitamins and fibers, cut down your calories mostly from carbohydrates and possibly from fats.

The above formula is oversimplification of healthy nutrition while losing weight, but it is a good start.

POISON FOODS

There are certain foods that we cannot stop eating. And I mean literally. It is different for different people. "Fast food", chocolate, candies and desserts are common offenders. One thing in common for many of these foods is that most of them are man-made, they do not grow on the trees in addictive form. They are not from the moon either. Keep saying to yourself "corn is natural". Of course, it is, it is not from aliens, that's for sure.... I'll stop it here, and if you are interested about my view on this topic, the section of the "Slim nutrition" is dedicated to the processed foods that poison our appetite.

WATCH WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Also, please be sure to remember that the effects of imagination or altered perception or imagination may be as beneficial as harmful. And we are not talking about our physiology, but about our mental health, about our lives in general. Remember the old saying - watch what you wish for. Be smart. We, physicians often see victims of anorexia nervosa which is a result of distorted body perception according to traditional medical literature.

If you are on the way to lose some weight and there are at least some people who believe that you might not need to - listen to the people who love you and who care about you and ask for a professional opinion from your physician.

CONCLUSION

Our perception and imagination shapes how outside reality is projected to our consciousness. This projection is our personal representation of the world around us, it is our life. You can change your reality at will by yourself, or you can let others do it for you.

You are what you think you are.