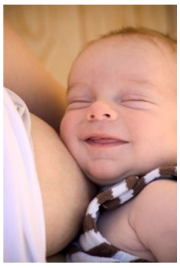
FED up with food, eating and diets?

Congratulations. You have made the first step of your last journey to a stress free relationship with food.

Food and eating are one of the core pleasures of anyone alive. And there is a good reason for it. Food is not just a necessity to survive, eating is not just a sequence of muscle-movements, there is much more to it. Food represents pleasure, safety and emotional and physical satisfaction. You only have to look at a baby to see it all presented.



Every time we take food in our mouth we replay the emotions and sensations we have experienced (or were longing for) as babies.
And if all or one of the three main representations is distorted, we develop an unhealthy and unloving relationship with food and eating.

And even if we had positive experiences as babies, events later in life can create distortions.

Pleasure – when your body responds negatively to food intake, it will take away the pleasure. This is quite clear for sufferers of conditions such as coeliac, IBS and allergies. When eating is associated with pain and discomfort, the relationship with food suffers…..

Safety – when we are looking to feel secure and safe, not vulnerable or exposed, often food is used to create the layer that helps us to hide our vulnerability. Using food to make our body the safety blanket of extra pounds, which protects and hides the real person underneath.

Another way of creating a false sense of safety by using food, is to take control of calorie intake; the sense of control creates that false sense of security and keeps the mind occupied without having to look deeper into what is going on in your life.

Satisfaction – when emotional fulfilment lacks in 'real' life, food can take its place. We create a pseudo comfort of warmth, fulfilment and overflow, by using food. We use the physical satisfaction as a replacement for emotional satisfaction. This creates again an unnatural relationship with food.

Why we develop unloving relationships with food and eating……

We can't live without it, but we would love to…. Some of us, anyway. Food causes a lot of aggravation, stress and emotional upheaval. The booming diet industry proves that we have not find a solution that makes us treat food and eating as an easy natural part of being human.

For babies feeding time is the most pleasurable: it offers the comfort and warmth of being close to a mother figure, it stimulates the senses of smell, taste and touch and it satisfies the body. What has happened to us that cause us to have lost all these wonderful and positive experiences?

The three main reasons that we don't enjoy food are:

1. **No attachments** – some people are neutral about food. They are just not interested, because they are numb to the positive effects, usually as an aftermath of childhood experiences. Food is just a necessity, but not a source of pleasure.

2. **Negative physical response** – when our body is not able to process food properly and when it makes us feel sick or unwell, such as is the case for conditions as IBS, coeliac or allergies, we see food as a thread to our well-being rather than a joy.

3. **Distorted emotional attachments** to what food represents:
   - Taking control of eating behaviour means taking control of my life
   - Eating behaviour is a way to rebel or a way to get attention
   - Food intake is compensating for emotional dissatisfaction, insecurity or lack of love
   - Mental focus on eating habits prevents from feeling deeper pain

When someone develops an unhealthy emotional attachment to food, it can easily develop into a serious eating disorder. Eating disorders are a way of compulsive behaviour that can manifest in not eating (anorexic), overeating (binging), or a bulimic disorder (overeating followed by discharging of the food by throwing up or laxatives).

Diets are one of the ways in which an eating disorder starts. The forced disconnection between body and mind creates an emotional space to develop unhealthy habits that could 'feed' an unhealthy emotional attachment.

If losing weight is on your agenda, but if your mind is making overtime thinking about food and eating; if you are on a diet and feel continuously emotionally pressurised by it; or if you beat yourself up about your eating habits, you are entering a danger zone.

The triangle that is out of balance….

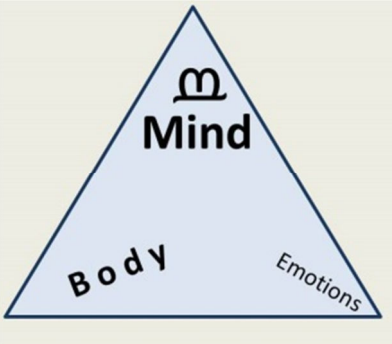
Shocking facts about diets: the average woman in the UK spends 31 years of her life on a diet. Other numbers tell us that half the female population spends half of the year counting the calories – it doesn't say what they do the other half, but I guess they are catching up with the loss, so they can start again after 6 months - and 20% is always on a diet.

Conclusion: diets don't work!

It makes sense, perfect sense.

As human beings, we are a triad of energies: body, mind, emotions. If these energies are balanced, we feel good, relaxed and happy. However, a diet creates a battleground, where our three energies don't co-operate, but are disconnected, fighting for their own space.

If you visualise them in a triangle, each energy has a place, opposite the other two, and is focussed on 'fighting' its corner.



Battle of the forces – at the start of a diet

Mind is top dog, taking up the most space, controlling, focussed

Body has a reasonable position, gets attention, positive or negative

Emotions are pushed and preferably crushed

The body has a good starting position, as diets are putting the body centrally, looking good, measuring what happens.

The mind plays a dominant role, in that it has to provide the will power and discipline: planning and counting. However, it also ignores the natural signals of the body, such as 'I am hungry' or 'I am satisfied' (long term dieters are disconnected from their body and are not aware of natural hunger or satisfaction – they eat their 'allowance' regardless).

The emotional energy is pushed into the corner, ignored and subconsciously fed with negativity, such as fear of failure, lack of nurturing, anger and frustration.

The processes in the triangle develop: the body gets tired, the mind needs to be more and more in control, to the point of obsession, to keep it all together and the crushed emotions are similar to an infection, swelling up till bursting.

Sooner or later, the triangle collapses: the emotions will erupt, the body screams for nurture and the mind tips over to the other side, giving up all control, because 'what is the point….'

THREE FED nuggets

The three tips are crucial if you want to change your unhelpful relationship to food. You need to address all three aspects, to create a balance that will support and guarantee your success!

Body: it is important to connect with your body. Your body is your carrier, without your body you would not exist, at least not in a visible manner, and you want to develop a loving relationship. To become more aware of your body get yourself into a new habit. When you eat, eat one bite at the time. Take your time, chew at least 30 x before you swallow, then drink a sip of water before you take the next bite. Eat your meal bite by bite and when you are satisfied STOP!

Mind: get a notebook and write down all negative thoughts you have around food and eating. Every time you notice a thought such as 'I can't have this', 'this is bad food', 'I hate my diet' etc, write it down. After three days, rewrite your negative thoughts into positive thoughts, such as : 'I choose not to eat this', 'I want to eat healthily', 'I make a choice for my health' and whenever a negative thought comes up, replace it with a positive phrase.

Emotions: This is very challenging, but the most powerful exercise. Sit down, close your eyes and feel. Get in touch with the emotions and feelings you have about your body, your diet, your fears, your frustration, and food. Take one emotion at the time, be brutally honest with yourself (maybe write it down) and don't judge yourself about any emotion that pops up. Honour every feeling and accept it as it is. You don't have to fight those. They are at the root of your unhappiness and by acknowledging them, you made an important step towards letting them go and create the route to success.

It might be a bit weird to do these exercises, but they tap into the areas that diets never touch. As you know, diets as such don't work, and these type of practices will invite your system to look at the process in a different manner.

I have designed a 3 months program that will help you create a stress free relationship with food. There is NO RISK involved, with the money back guarantee. You can only lose the pounds, the frustration and the obsession.

Keep going with the three exercises, and if you want more, contact me on 07967717131, mariette@stressfreecoaching.co.uk to check out how I can help you to create:

A **stress free relationship with food, eating and diets!**

Give your fat wings, and let it fly away……