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**Am I Hungry? E-Newsletter
December 2006**



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THE ABUNDANCE PARADOX

By Michelle May, M.D.

I saw another news report about how the abundance of food available in America is contributing to the obesity epidemic. They explained how we evolved over centuries to store fuel more efficiently so we could survive the lean times. Therefore we gain weight more easily when we eat too much.

All true, but they're missing a critical point.

Why do people eat too much? When food is so abundant, shouldn't it be just the opposite? The more food we have access to, the less reason there is to overeat and store up extra fuel to survive the lean times.

What these news stories often overlook is that it isn't just our *biology* that causes weight gain, it is our *psychology*. The messages we learned from parents, from advertising, and even from dieting drive us to over-consume.

The holidays are just an exaggeration of this phenomenon. Food is plentiful and many people gain weight because of the associations they've learned about eating during this time of year. We've been taught that we're supposed to gain weight then make a New Year's Resolution to lose it!

Whether you're conscious of it or not, your little voice may say things to convince you to eat more, like:

- Be a good boy and eat all your dinner.
- Don't waste food.
- Clean your plate or you don't get dessert.
- There are starving children in _____.
- I better get my share now before someone else takes the last piece.
- I deserve this.
- It's a special occasion.
- It's free.
- I paid for it.
- It's a better value.

- I won't get another chance to eat until later.
- I don't want to hurt her feelings.
- I've already blown it; I might as well finish it off.
- I'm going back on my diet tomorrow.

To illustrate the point, think about this common holiday eating tip: "Use a smaller plate when you go through a buffet." Of course this strategy works; you learned to clean your plate so the smaller it is, the less you'll eat. The problem is that you don't actually change the underlying habit so when you're served on a big plate, you'll still feel compelled to clean it!

That's the reason I want you to ask *Am I hungry?* before you eat. It allows you to create space between *wanting to eat* and *starting to eat* so you can ask yourself "why?"

In that space, think about the thoughts and feelings that drive your behaviors. Once you're aware of them, you can work on replacing them with more effective thoughts that will help you thrive in this land of abundance.

When you're tempted to eat more than you need, teach your little voice to say:

- There's plenty of food so there's no need to eat it all now.
- If I keep eating, I'll feel uncomfortable and I prefer to feel great.
- When I'm hungry again, I'll eat again.
- Food is abundant and will always be there when I need it.

I wish you an abundance of health and joy throughout this holiday season and always!

Michelle
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P.S. Unfortunately, there really are starving children in _____ (fill in the blank with any one of thousands of places in the U.S. and throughout the world).

When you eat more food than you need it doesn't help them.

However, there is a way you can help. We will donate 10% of every *Am I Hungry?* product sold in December (see ideas below) to Food for the Hungry.

Give yourself or someone you care about the gift of learning to thrive in the land of abundance and you'll help feed a few who don't have that luxury.

GREAT GIFTS FOR YOURSELF AND OTHER PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT!

(10% of all products purchased in December will be donated to Food for the Hungry).

Stop Dieting, Start Living DVD Set and Workbook

Discover freedom from dieting and overeating. Dr. May facilitates these eight live, interactive workshops with real participants. After you watch these sample clips from these DVDs you'll recognize the life-changing power of this non-diet approach: <http://www.amihungry.com/weight-loss-DVDs.shtml>

Am I Fit? Kit

Now you'll have a complete home fitness program in a bag to achieve your New Year's resolutions for improved health and vitality.

<http://amihungry.com/fit-kit.shtml>

Am I Hungry? What To Do When Diets Don't Work

Stop obsessing about food, eating and your weight and reach a healthier weight naturally. Complimentary companion Journal included to maximize your results!

<http://www.amihungry.com/am-i-hungry.shtml>

I'm NOT Hungry – What Now?

Do triggers like stress, negative thinking, challenging relationships, and body image drive your Overeating Cycle? After you read this powerful e-book you'll experience greater mastery over your weight and life.

<http://amihungry.com/Im-not-hungry.shtml>

HEALTH CARE and FITNESS PROFESSIONALS: Make a lasting impact on the lives of your patients and clients

BECOME A LICENSED AM I HUNGRY? FACILITATOR

If you're passionate about helping people make sustainable healthy lifestyle changes, join us for Am I Hungry? Facilitator Training March 29-April 1, 2007 in beautiful Phoenix, Arizona.

This amazing 3½-day workshop will teach you how to deliver Am I Hungry? Workshops in your office, community, hospital, corporation or health club. You'll be inspired by accelerated learning techniques, peer-to-peer interaction and MANY opportunities to practice what you'll teach. Continuing education credit available.

Learn more and request a free 30-minute Workshop Overview DVD and a CD of a 45 minute lecture by Michelle May, M.D. explaining this rational, innovative approach at: <http://www.amihungry.com/health-professionals.shtml>

Sign up for your complimentary subscription to this short, monthly Am I Hungry? E-newsletter and get a bonus copy of “101 Things to Do Besides Eat” to hang on your refrigerator: <http://www.amihungry.com/eneews.shtml>.

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