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**Am I Hungry? E-Newsletter
August 2005**



Go to http://www.amihungry.com/pdf/newsletter_08_05.pdf for a formatted PDF version of this newsletter.

Think About It!

This month's article, "Change Your Mind" reflects my strong belief that we have a great deal more power over our lives than most of us realize—and it starts with how we think. Many of you may have seen the somewhat strange but thought provoking movie "What the Bleep Do We Know." It makes a strong case for the power of intention. In other words, we can actually affect how things turn out simply by what we choose to think about.

The problem of course is that many people don't recognize their negative thoughts or know how to change them. Read on and you might just change your mind!

Wishing you optimal health and joy!
Michelle May, M.D.

P.S. Our next workshop in Phoenix starts next week – don't miss your chance to change your life! http://www.amihungry.com/weight_loss_programs.shtml

Change Your Mind

By Michelle May, M.D. and Lisa Galper, Psy.D.

You become what you think. If you are not getting the results you want, you probably need to change your internal conversations.

Whether you are aware of it or not, you have a mental tape running constantly that affects your moods and ultimately, your behavior. When these thoughts are negative, outdated, or confining, they will undermine the process of change—whether you are conscious of them or not. It stands to reason that without an awareness of this mental chatter, you cannot really know why you do what you do.

Your thoughts are the primary creator of your emotions, which inspire your actions, and therefore lead to your results. This "thought > feeling > action > result" cycle is a "causal loop." In other words, when you think a certain thought, it causes you to feel a certain way, which causes you to act in a certain way,

which causes certain results, which then “proves” that your original thoughts were correct.

This “thought > feeling > action > result” cycle applies to *all* of your thoughts, not just those surrounding food, eating, and weight. It applies to your thoughts about your relationships, your career, your finances, your habits, and your abilities—any area of your life that is within your sphere of influence.

These patterns of thinking become repetitive. Even when a thought pattern leads to poor results, you may stay locked in the trap because it is comfortable and familiar. Thousands of repetitions of a particular experience create auto-pilot thoughts, feelings, and actions, and therefore, predictable results.

The first step to disrupting an undesirable cycle is to start monitoring your internal conversations and become more aware of the results that it is creating. If you recognize that your self-talk is inaccurate, ineffective, or limiting, you can choose to change it in order to change your outcome. Just as the repetition of negative mantras become ingrained, the repetition of new positive mantras will result in the rewiring of your brain.

Interestingly, you don’t even have to believe what you are saying to yourself at first. There is power in simply saying it. Your mind doesn’t tolerate incongruence; if your thoughts are saying something, your brain will find a way to make it true. In other words, “fake it until you make it.” When you act “as if” it were true, it often becomes true.

There are many thought patterns or self-talk that will keep you stuck in a rut. Let’s take a look at just one type of internal conversation that is common in people who struggle with their weight, the Inner Critic.

This self-talk is harsh and hypercritical and says things like:

“You are weak-willed and you have no self-control.”

“You are too heavy to be attractive.”

“You are lazy and too undisciplined to exercise the way you should.”

Although you may think you are trying to keep yourself “in line”, remember that most people are not motivated by criticism—even when you are the one doing the criticizing. Instead, this hypercritical self-talk will cause feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness. As a result, you may not do your best or you may not even try. The results will only prove that the Inner Critic was right—and lead to more harsh criticism.

To change this pattern, begin to use an encouraging, gentle inner voice to motivate yourself toward the positive changes you want. For example:

“It is a challenge to turn down tempting food but you can always have it later when you are hungry.”

“You look really nice in this dress—especially when you smile!”

“You will feel so much better if you take even just a short, comfortable walk. Everyone has to start somewhere.”

The next time you find yourself eating in a way that feels out of control, uncomfortable, or unsatisfying, ask yourself what you were thinking before you took the first bite of food. Remember that negative self-talk can lead to uncomfortable feelings and overeating. When you practice catching these negative thoughts before they lead to negative feelings and behaviors you will learn to switch to a kinder, gentler, observing voice that will coach you toward the results you really want!

This article was a short excerpt from Teleseminar 203 – Self-Talk that Motivates which is part of our series, I’m Not Hungry – What to Do When I Want to Eat Anyway. The first 4 Teleseminars are now available as “easy-to-read over a cup of coffee” downloadable E-Books and one hour CDs. Imagine how much you could learn by listening as you drive across town! Right now, get all 4 E-Books and all 4 CDs for the price of 3

<http://www.profcs.com/app/netcart.asp?MerchantID=59012&ProductID=2459633>

Mandi from Wyoming is already signed up for the next Teleseminar series. Here is what she wrote to me about the first series I was telling you about above:

Dear Dr. May,

First I'd like to tell you how much I am enjoying your program. I have learned so much about myself and have begun to get to the bottom of my real issues instead of just "stuffing" them away with food. Honestly, it has been a little scary at times to tap into the real reasons that I eat when I'm not hungry but it has made a world of difference. Since I have started your program my life has seemed to fall together so well.

I am 28 years old and I have struggled with my weight since I was a teenager. I have tried many of the diets out there, even taking diet pills to lose weight. Sometimes they would work for a while but I always gained it back. I kept thinking that there was really something wrong with me and often felt like I was absolutely worthless because I didn't have the willpower to lose weight and keep it off. Now I am learning ways to really become aware of why I overeat and how to deal with it. I finally feel like I'm headed down the right path and it is changing my life.

The puzzle pieces are just coming together. I am losing weight, I'm setting goals- - and reaching them!!! My relationships are better and I have a positive outlook on life. I just can't tell you how thankful I am to have had the opportunity learn what you teach and I want other people to know that there is hope.

Thanks again,
Amanda (Mandi)

Thanks Mandi – you made my day!
Please join me and Dr. Lisa Galper for the next teleseminars no matter where you are! http://www.amihungry.com/weight_loss_programs.shtml :
Building a Better Body Image
Coping with Your Triggers for Over Eating
Developing Healthy Relationships While Managing Your Weight
Creating Life Balance to Achieve Optimal Health

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

If you are in the Phoenix area, join us for our eight-week Am I Hungry?™ workshop starting NEXT WEEK, Wednesday, August 17th. You can change your lifestyle—and your life by investing just two hours a week with us. http://www.amihungry.com/weight_loss_programs.shtml We have added an extra half hour but didn't raise the price so you get even more for your money AND sign up now, and you will receive a complementary 140 page workbook, available ONLY to our participants.

Sign up to receive this Am I Hungry? E-newsletter once a month or read all of the practical and content-packed back issues at <http://www.amihungry.com/enews.shtml>.

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