

PRAISE FOR DR. RHONA'S PREVIOUS BOOK,
FOOD TRIGGERS:

“Food addiction is real. It’s also discouraging, and the endless diets are exhausting and in most cases, worthless. In *Food Triggers*, Dr. Rhona shares how she won the ‘food fight’ and brings the wonderful worlds of science and faith together to chart a brilliant path to freedom and self-control. What are you waiting for?”

—DR. TIM CLINTON, President of the
American Association of Christian Counselors

“The big dilemma in conquering food addiction is that you can’t just quit using like an alcoholic or a drug addict. The need to continue to eat exposes us to many triggers that take over our appetites. Add to that the emotional and relational triggers, it is no wonder so few people keep the weight off. Dr. Epstein has the answer to this dilemma. From her own experience, research and the experience of others she provides a way to put your triggers on safety. If you struggle with weight as I have, you will find something new and very helpful in *Food Triggers*.”

—STEPHEN ARTERBURN, Author of *Every Man’s Battle*,
Founder of New Life Ministries, Women of Faith

“If you can’t put down the fork, if you never have leftovers, if you’re always hungry but never full, if your addiction to food is running your life- buy this book and let it set you free!”

—DANIEL G. AMEN, MD,
Author of *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body*

PRAISE FOR *FOOD TRIGGERS* CONTINUED:

“A masterpiece of a roadmap designed to bring love, acceptance, freedom, and, most of all, balance back into the lives of those torn up by the claws of addictions.”

—LINDSAY ROBERTS, Author, speaker, and co-host of
The Place for Miracles and host of *Make Your Day Count*

“Dr. Rhona has the unique and potent combination of her personal recovery experience as well as professional training to help those still suffering. Her book brings to life what food addiction is, the research that substantiates it, and hope for anyone still suffering. There is a way to freedom!”

—KIM DENNIS, MD, CEDS, CEO and Medical Director,
Timberline Knolls

“As someone who struggled most of my life with food, I wish I could have given this book to myself years ago!”

—MICHELLE AGUILAR, Author of *Becoming Fearless*
and Season 6 winner of *The Biggest Loser*

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A 90-DAY
SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TOWARD
Food Freedom

Dr. RHONA EPSTEIN, Psy.D

CERTIFIED ADDICTIONS COUNSELOR

 **DEXTERITY**
NASHVILLE



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For anyone who has the courage to face his or her food problem,
I dedicate this book to you.

May you find God's strength to overcome your weakness.

*For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, And the hungry soul
He has filled with what is good.*

PSALM 107:9

Table of Contents

Introduction	xiii
How To Make the Most of This Devotional.....	xvii

SECTION ONE: HELP! I'M STUCK!

Day 1: Let's Begin by Being Honest.....	2
Day 2: Yes, I Am Full of Despair.....	4
Day 3: It's Okay to Say, "I Don't Know".....	6
Day 4: Am I Addicted to Sugar?.....	8
Day 5: Make These Cravings Stop!.....	10
Day 6: Let Go of Self-Condernation.....	12
Day 7: Finding Strength in Your Weakness.....	14
Day 8: Admitting You Are Powerless.....	16
Day 9: What's Really Holding You Back?.....	18
Day 10: Are You Ready?.....	20
Day 11: You Can Talk to God As You Are, Right Where You Are.....	22
Day 12: Lord, Please Help My Unbelief.....	24
Day 13: If You Fail to Plan, Then You Plan to Fail.....	26
Day 14: You Can't Do This Alone!.....	28
Day 15: Happiness Is an Inside Job.....	30
Day 16: Focus on the Solution Rather Than the Problem.....	32
Day 17: The Power of God Is in Me.....	34
Day 18: I Can't, but He Can . . . So I'll Let Him.....	36
Day 19: All Things New.....	38
Day 20: Choose God First!.....	40
Day 21: Love the Body God Gave You.....	42
Day 22: Living Free from the Pit.....	44
Day 23: All Things Are Possible with God.....	46
Day 24: An Overflowing Hope.....	48
Day 25: Praise Him in the Battle.....	50
Day 26: Stand Firm on the Word of God.....	52
Day 27: It Is a Matter of Life and Death.....	54
Day 28: You Are Touched by His Mercy.....	56

Day 29: God's Unconditional Love.....	58
Day 30: It's Time to Let Others Help You.....	60

SECTION TWO: SOUL-HEALING

Day 31: Untangling Your Food and Feelings.....	64
Day 32: Change Yourself by Changing Your Mind.....	66
Day 33: Control What You Think.....	68
Day 34: Put Off the Old, and Welcome in the New.....	70
Day 35: Opportunities for God's Love and Growth.....	72
Day 36: Let God's Peace Be Your Sedative.....	74
Day 37: God Will Give You Rest!.....	76
Day 38: My Peace I Leave with You . . .	78
Day 39: I Trust in You, Lord.....	80
Day 40: Walking Close to the Lord.....	82
Day 41: Dealing with Anger.....	84
Day 42: Learn to Control Your Anger.....	86
Day 43: Resentment Is a Poison.....	88
Day 44: Forgiveness Is a Way of Life.....	90
Day 45: Don't Hold Grudges.....	92
Day 46: Let the Lord Be Your Comforter.....	94
Day 47: Choosing Gratitude Over Discouragement.....	96
Day 48: The Source of All Comfort.....	98
Day 49: The Lord Will Hold You Close.....	100
Day 50: Live Free from Isolation.....	102
Day 51: Leaving Busyness Behind.....	104
Day 52: You Don't Need to Be Perfect.....	106
Day 53: Don't Let Shame Hold You Back!.....	108
Day 54: Letting Go of Expectations.....	110
Day 55: Seeking the Approval of Others.....	112
Day 56: Feelings Come and Go; It's Your Actions That Matter.....	114
Day 57: Overcoming Procrastination by Asking for Help.....	116
Day 58: Always Remain Guarded Against Pride.....	118
Day 59: The Importance of Being Humble.....	120
Day 60: Live in God's Love.....	122

SECTION THREE: LIVING IN FREEDOM, ONE DAY AT A TIME

DAY 61: KEEPING YOUR "HOUSE" CLEAN.....	126
DAY 62: TURN YOUR CARES OVER TO GOD.....	128
DAY 63: LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME.....	130
DAY 64: OVERCOMING FEAR AND AVOIDANCE.....	132
DAY 65: WHEN YOU FEEL DOWN, CALL OUT TO GOD.....	134
DAY 66: FIND PEACE IN RELATIONSHIPS.....	136
DAY 67: WEEDING OUT YOUR BITTERNESS AND ANGER.....	138
DAY 68: LEARN TO CRAVE WHAT IS PURE.....	140
DAY 69: THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING CHARACTER.....	142
DAY 70: FIX YOUR MIND ON WHAT IS GOOD.....	144
DAY 71: SEEK PEACE AND HOLD ONTO IT!.....	146
DAY 72: FINDING GOD IN THE STILLNESS.....	148
DAY 73: MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD.....	150
DAY 74: GOD WILL MEET YOU RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE.....	152
DAY 75: YOU ARE WONDERFULLY MADE.....	154
DAY 76: LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART.....	156
DAY 77: EMBRACE THE FREEDOM GOD OFFERS YOU.....	158
DAY 78: A WAY OUT OF TEMPTATION.....	160
DAY 79: THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT.....	162
DAY 80: GOD IS YOUR REFUGE.....	164
DAY 81: GOD'S MERCY IS NEW EVERY DAY.....	166
DAY 82: GOD'S LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION.....	168
DAY 83: DEPENDENCE ON GOD'S POWER IS KEY TO SUCCESS.....	170
DAY 84: LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES.....	172
DAY 85: DON'T BE AFRAID WHEN YOU FALL.....	174
DAY 86: NEVER GIVE UP.....	176
DAY 87: TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE.....	178
DAY 88: SHINE A LIGHT FOR OTHERS.....	180
DAY 89: GOD HAS A GOOD PLAN FOR YOU.....	182
DAY 90: GOD IS DOING A GOOD WORK IN YOU.....	184
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	187
NOTES.....	189

INTRODUCTION



I know the deep courage it may have required to pick up this devotional. As you read these words, I want you to understand how brave you are in taking this very first step toward freedom. I haven't just studied food addiction and recovery; I have lived through it and overcome it. I know all about the struggle to put one foot in front of the other, one step at a time, toward a life of freedom. I remember the lost hope, the depressing cycle of one failed diet after another, and the inevitability of serious health problems.

I, too, was once in an oppressive, unhealthy relationship with food. Yes, I ate half-gallons of rocky road ice cream, entire boxes of Double Stuf Oreos, and jars of peanut butter while pretending to everyone (including myself) that I was on a restrictive diet. I exercised like a fanatic. I took pills to lose weight. I tried *every* gimmick on the market to control my eating, and I failed . . . over and over and over again.

I didn't understand that sugar is more addictive than cocaine.

I didn't know that the very wiring of my brain made me more vulnerable to food abuse.

I didn't realize that food calmed my nerves, much like sedatives soothing angry feelings and lifting sad ones. I didn't recognize that bingeing was my great escape from reality.

I didn't understand that my addiction was physical, emotional, and *spiritual*.

I wanted *desperately* to be healthy, but the food—the sugar—had me, and I couldn't escape its grip.

My self-esteem was destroyed. I hated myself for not being able to stay on a diet.

My relationships suffered. I slowly pulled away from people, convincing myself that my friends and family felt the same disdain for me that I felt inside. My work suffered. And yes, at my lowest point, I even began to fantasize about checking out of life.

I had lost hope that anything could change. And then the miracle happened: I found help . . . and it was NOT a diet.

The slow and steady transformation of my mind, my body, and most importantly, my soul—one small step at a time—led me into the lasting freedom promised by the only One truly able to satisfy the longings of my aching heart and soul. It was a journey that began with the knowledge, wisdom, and grace found in the pages ahead. I want to encourage you that if I can do it, you certainly can too!

Hope is found in each footstep forward . . .

I want to invite you to take your first bold steps toward freedom. I want to help transform the way you relate to food, so that it takes its proper place in your life. This struggle is equal parts physical, mental, and spiritual. I hope to equip you with

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practical and time-tested strategies and tools, as well as the spiritual direction, essential to your journey toward freedom from food abuse.

As a follower of Jesus, I believe the path toward transformation begins with your *soul*, so let's take our first steps together with a prayer:

I pray that God will empower you to find liberty from food abuse and addiction through His truth. I pray that you will no longer be held captive by obsessive thoughts about food or your unhealthy views of the body God gave you. May the Lord be your strength in your weakness. May you find yourself in a new relationship with Him in which you experience His love in a deeper way than you ever could have imagined. May you truly be filled with the Spirit and no longer held in chains. I pray that you will feel the presence of God surrounding you, encouraging you, and holding your hand in every step forward. And may God use your transformation to bring freedom into the lives of others. Amen.

In His hope,

Dr. Rhona

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS DEVOTIONAL



To change your mind, heart, and attitude, you must give your full attention to this process. Don't take this lightly. Allow yourself the gift of time and energy to care about your life and love yourself back to health.

I promise that, though it may not be easy, it will be worth it!

Give yourself ninety days to focus your attention on your recovery.

And make it the most *important* part of your day—every day.

Other Suggestions

1. Find a support group that understands overcoming overeating and food addiction.
2. Develop a healthy, satisfying food plan that eliminates all foods of abuse, including sugar and refined carbohydrates (A nutritionist would be helpful for this step).
3. Be sure your food plan is structured and clear. Don't eat outside the boundaries of what you plan unless necessary, and then ask for help with how to make needed changes. Learn to plan what you eat and eat what you plan. Practice

living with routine and structure. Doing so works better for people who have lost control.

4. Create an accountability circle of at least five people you can call on for support.
5. Don't rush through the devotional readings. Take your time and think about how each message relates to you. Write down your thoughts and reactions.
6. Every devotion ends with a "Freedom Reflection" activity. Each activity represents one step toward freedom! Complete the exercises and share them with someone you trust.
7. If you miss a day, don't worry. You can take whatever time you need. Don't give up!

This book is organized into three sections, which are influenced by the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous. Yet they are also deeply grounded in the spiritual truths of the Bible.

Section one addresses the honesty required to face your food problem. We examine the importance of admitting you need help and finding a spiritual solution.

Section two focuses more on underlying issues of food abuse—the emotional and relational triggers and the challenging character issues. Each day's devotional includes God-infused

hope and encouragement, so try not to be afraid as you dive into these days. You will be challenged, but you will also be blessed as you discover God's strength to help you through each message.

Section three covers a broader range of practical skills and ideas to help you sustain long-term change, such as: how to manage daily life challenges without food abuse; how to handle emotional triggers; how to keep close to God for the provision of spiritual sustenance (filling the void that food once filled); and how to deal with temptation and relapse.

Finally, remember to be patient with yourself! Your problem with food did not develop overnight, and the solution will take some time to work through. If you approach this process one step at a time—one day at a time—you can discover and experience lasting freedom!

** Throughout this devotional you will find terms such as: food addiction, addiction, recovery, food abuse, food addict, addict, overeating, overeater, and excessive eating. While you may not identify as a food addict, you may relate to some of the symptoms. This book is written for you if you are in a challenging relationship with food at any level—from the occasional loss of control to full-blown food addiction.*

Section One



HELP! I'M STUCK!

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

ROMANS 7:15–25 NIV

Day 1

Let's Begin by Being Honest

*I do not understand what I do.
For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*

ROMANS 7:15 NIV



Anyone who struggles with an addiction can identify with thoughts like: *What is wrong with me? I should know better! Why can't I just stop overeating?* I remember saying these words to myself each day. It is comforting to discover the same feelings in the Bible from a faithful man of God. Like us, Paul was keenly aware of his own internal battle and didn't understand why he couldn't just "do what is right" either! But in this scripture, Paul is also modeling the type of ruthless honesty that is a necessary starting point for change.

It isn't easy to come to terms with the reality that *everything* you've tried has failed, but it is the very place where God can begin working in your life. If you want to take your first step toward healing,

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you must begin with the admission that your way is simply not working. It's time to accept that you need help!



If you want to take your first step toward healing, you must begin with the admission that your way is simply not working.



Freedom Reflection

I'd like you to list all of the diets you have tried and the results of each one (Go ahead and write out the whole story—the temporary successes, the failures, all of it.). Do you wake up promising yourself today will be different, only to end up in the same mess tomorrow? Be honest. How much money do you spend on binges and fad diets? How much time and energy goes into the process of fighting your food addiction? Is it really working?

Day 2

Yes, I Am Full of Despair

I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears. My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.

PSALM 6:6–7



It is so important to begin with the admission that you are spiritually and emotionally exhausted from this battle with food abuse, but also to understand that you are physically worn out because the food itself makes you feel ill. Sugar causes you to become depressed, moody, and lethargic, and your excess weight may be affecting your quality of life!

Be honest with yourself: You know in your heart that you are out of control, and this causes you deep sorrow.

The heaviness of your addiction is always present in pain, sadness, and hopelessness. The despair of the Psalmist

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is also your despair. Yet it is in these very psalms that you can discover the power in being honest with yourself and the God who loves you.

Freedom Reflection

Write about how you *really* feel about your eating, weight, and body image. What do you think about what is happening in your life? Be thorough and honest. Before we can focus on solutions, we must face our true feelings about this problem.

Day 3

It's Okay to Say, "I Don't Know"

*Anyone who claims to know all the answers
doesn't really know very much.*

I CORINTHIANS 8:2



I understand that you may have learned how to eat better or lose weight. You might know enough to teach classes on nutrition and behavior modification. You may even have schooling on the topic like I do, but that knowledge will not solve your problem. If you are going to really change, you need to become teachable!

Today, I want you to allow yourself to simply say, "I don't know." I want you to become a student again. Learn to be curious. Be open to new ideas! Some of what you've already learned will come in handy, but don't hold on to the idea that you have all the answers. With that attitude, you might just miss the help

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If you are going to really change, you need to
become teachable!



you need! This is your time to learn and grow, and that can only
happen when you are open and humble.

Freedom Reflection

Spend some time writing about how it feels to let yourself
be teachable, especially when you already have a head full of
knowledge. In what areas do you struggle with a know-it-all
attitude? How might that hinder you from getting all you can
out of this process?

Day 4

Am I Addicted to Sugar?

For you have been called to live in freedom.

GALATIANS 5:13



Did you know that science has only recently discovered that sugar is an addictive substance? Dr. Mark Hyman, author of *Eat Fat, Get Thin*, writes, “Sugar and processed foods have been shown to be eight times more addictive than cocaine.”¹ Scientists can now actually identify the difference between people who have sugar addictions and those who don’t by simply looking at brain scans! I’m willing to bet that you had no idea when you first enjoyed a sugary treat that you were indulging in a behavior that could ruin your life. Society, family, and friends have all told you sugar was good, fun, and enjoyable; and on top of that, it is readily available *everywhere* you look. No one warned you about the possible addiction, the way they did with cigarettes, drugs,

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and alcohol. You didn't know the risk! To be fair, no one knew until recently.

You are different from other people in the way you relate to food. You understand it isn't normal to hide, sneak, and lie about what you eat. The truth is, you have a problem; it's *not* normal to think about food all day long and to make meals and snacks the focal points of your day.

Freedom Reflection

Be honest about your daily habits: Are you addicted to sugar? Do you consistently eat more than you intend? Do you ever eat until you become sick? Do you eat large quantities? Do you crave it? Do you eat for emotional reasons? What other foods may you be addicted to?

Day 5

Make These Cravings Stop!

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

MATTHEW 26:41 NIV



We have to understand *the forces* we are fighting against if we are going to make lasting progress. Science now tells us that there is a deep connection between sugar and uncontrollable cravings. In fact, sugar actually hijacks your brain and makes you addicted! Dopamine, the “feel-good” chemical in your brain, becomes overstimulated when you eat too much sugar. And when that happens, you need more and more to get—and to sustain—those good feelings. The cravings eventually become unmanageable. You see, that drive is *biological*, and until you detox your body from sugar, those sugar-induced cravings will be an obstacle for following *any* sort of healthy eating plan!²

Now that you understand you are in a battle with a *physiological* addiction, you can better equip yourself to overcome

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it (Remember that sugar is actually hidden in many of the foods we eat, and refined carbohydrates have the same effect that sugar does on the body)!

Freedom Reflection

Go through your kitchen and examine the labels on the foods you eat. What are the ingredients (Go online to find a list of all the names for sugar so you know what to look for)?

The ingredients in what you eat are always listed in order from most to least. If sugar is past the fifth ingredient on the list, the item probably doesn't contain enough sugar to "trip" the addiction wire. Make a habit of reading labels in the grocery store, too. There is power in better understanding what you are putting into your body. Most processed foods are loaded with sugar—including the ones that claim to be "health" or "diet foods." Write down what you learn from reading your labels.

Day 6

Let Go of Self-Condernation

*So now there is no condemnation
for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

ROMANS 8:1



Let's be honest. You would *never* allow someone to speak to a family member or a loved one the way you talk to yourself! If you are a parent, what would you do if you overheard someone speaking to your child with that kind of negativity? Maybe it is time to remember that you are God's child. I pray that you will hear this truth today: You've beaten yourself up long enough! All of this negative self-talk is destructive. It is time to accept some grace. You didn't know the sweets you enjoyed as a child were more addictive than cocaine! You didn't know when you turned to food for stress relief or comfort that you could become hooked. You may not have become overweight and imprisoned by addiction if you could have avoided it!

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My prayer for you is to realize that you are forgiven. God holds nothing against you: He wants you to stop beating yourself up and start trusting in His forgiveness and grace! The discouragement that follows your negative self-talk will only lead you back to needing food for relief. Instead, I want you to remember the truth: You are a child of God. You are not condemned. You are forgiven. Today, I hope you will begin to embrace that unconditional love!

Freedom Reflection

Take time to research and write a list of scriptures that affirm God's unconditional love for you, and then meditate on them today (It is even helpful to memorize a few of them and recite them whenever you begin to think badly about yourself!). Spend some time writing down what these verses mean to you, and how the truth of God's love can help you let go of negativity and food addiction.

Day 7

Finding Strength in Your Weakness

That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10



I know it is not easy to admit weakness. Some days, the simple acknowledgment that you need help can be so difficult! In our “have it all together” culture, admitting you need help can be terrifying. Maybe you feel that no one will understand your food addiction. You imagine them saying, “Just eat better and exercise. Simple, right?”

I believe it is empowering to take Paul’s approach and learn to “take pleasure” in your weakness. Admitting your own weakness opens the door for God to come into your broken places and bring strength. When you let yourself be honest and

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Admitting your own weakness opens the door
for God to come into your broken places
and bring strength.



broken before Him, you can then invite Him to help—and He is able to do far better things than you can imagine.

It may not make sense to take pleasure in your weakness. It goes against all you've ever learned about being strong and fighting the good fight, but this is the day to let Him be your strength.

Freedom Reflection

Write what the words in this verse mean to you: *For when I am weak, then I am strong.* How does this Biblical truth apply to your recovery and healing from food addiction?

Day 8

Admitting You Are Powerless

*When we were utterly helpless,
Christ came at just the right time and died for us.*

ROMANS 5:6



The first step of the Overeaters Anonymous twelve-step program is simple: “We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.”³ I understand that you have tried hard enough to fight this problem on your own, but your attempts at control have only led you into despair and discouragement. Maybe you feel as though you have hit bottom. You may even be wondering, *How much worse does it need to get before I get better?*

I know the admission of your own powerlessness before addiction can feel like defeat in the moment, but it is actually a resounding victory! Throughout the Bible, the admission of

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powerlessness by God's children is the very thing that launches Him into action. Once you are at a place of admitting you can't end this eating addiction on your own, then you are ready for His divine power to enter, transform your life, and take you to places you never could have imagined. Remember: with you alone, this fight is impossible. But with God, all things are possible!

Freedom Reflection

Spend a few moments writing about what “powerlessness” means to you. What does it feel like? What is “hitting rock bottom” like for you regarding your eating and obsession with food and weight? In what areas has your life become unmanageable?

Day 9

What's Really Holding You Back?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

HEBREWS 12:1



I know you've thought about fixing your eating problem and considered the alternatives. You may have attempted this many times before and failed. I want you to see those attempts—and those failures—as lessons. When you've been caught in addiction for so long, it takes time and effort for new behaviors and attitudes to stick.

Lasting change is a *process*. It *only* happens one day at a time, by putting one foot in front of the other. Yes, setbacks and challenges are going to come, and they will make you feel like

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quitting; but when they do, I challenge you to pick yourself up and take another step forward. Each day that you stick with your plan and use your support is one more step toward becoming the new you!

Freedom Reflection

What do you think is hindering you from sticking with healthy eating? Do you become impatient with the process and give up too easily? Do you become bored or lazy about planning and preparing? Do social pressures cause you to give up on your goals? Write a list of the hindrances to your recovery. What can you do to get past them?

Day 10

Are You Ready?

When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

JOHN 5:6



You already know you *need* to get well. You understand that you *should* be ready for all that God has for you. You are well aware that you'd be so much happier if you ate healthy food and if your body were in better condition. As Christians, we understand that healing begins with admitting our problem and calling out to God for help. Of course, it begins by saying *yes* to Jesus: *Yes! I want to get well!*

Why do you still hesitate? Because of the addiction! Even though you want to be free from the pain, the weight, and the insanity, you really don't want to live without the comfort food brings from stress and anxiety. Food gives you something, and

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though it comes with grave consequences, you like the pleasure of a good binge. The excess food is there for a reason . . .

My friend, now that you understand how Jesus has personally invited you into divine healing, you may ask: “Am I *really* ready for this?”

Freedom Reflection

Spend some time today prayerfully considering these questions: Are you ready to invite Jesus to participate in your journey from addiction to freedom? What does your food addiction give you that you cannot let go of? Why might you want to keep it around? Imagine life without your addiction, then imagine all of the obstacles in the way of that life. Spend some time in prayer over each item on that list.

Day 11

You Can Talk to God As You Are, Right Where You Are

*And I am convinced that nothing
can ever separate us from God's love.*

ROMANS 8:38



Today, I want to remind you that God is not “out there” waiting on you: He will meet you right where you are—just as you are—if you’ll just reach out for Him.

You might be feeling some hesitation about changing your eating habits and giving up your favorite foods (even if they are killing you)! Rest assured: God will show up where you are even if everything inside you is screaming, *No way! I like my sweets and my all-you-can-eat buffet meals way too much. I don't want to change!*

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You may feel completely prepared to leave addiction behind. If you are ready, make sure to talk to God about how much you need Him to help—because your way doesn't work! You may even need to ask forgiveness for forgetting about Him amid your previous attempts to fix your problem. Ask Him for the faith to depend on His strength.

No matter where your heart is along this journey, know that He will show up and enable you to do what you could not do before.



Ask Him for the faith to depend
on His strength.



Freedom Reflection

I want to challenge you to talk to God honestly about *everything* you are thinking and feeling about your struggle with food addiction. Talk to Him whether you are feeling defeated by addiction or ready and willing to change. Most importantly, open your mind and heart to listen. Remember: God loves you no matter what!

Day 12

Lord, Please Help My Unbelief

I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!

MARK 9:24



It is difficult to believe you can finally be well when you have messed up so many times. But today, I want you to be honest about whether you have truly sought God's help and strength in this battle with addiction. Have you ever invited Him to participate in this journey with you—or has this been your own fight? Your own strength fails, but God's never does.

It's a whole different story when you learn to depend on God. Do you truly believe He wants you to be free from food dependency? Do you know that He sees you in your struggles and He longs for you to walk in freedom? Jesus came to break

Satisfied

chains and set you free. He came for you. He is here for you and is ready to help.

Freedom Reflection

How do you relate to the verse above? Write about your struggle with doubt and how it hinders you from going to God with your addiction. Are you ready to ask God to help your unbelief? Don't wait any longer! Ask and He will deliver!

Day 13

If You Fail to Plan, Then You Plan to Fail

But the Holy Spirit produces . . . self-control.

GALATIANS 5:22–23



As you begin your freedom journey, one of the toughest challenges is food planning. You may resist the idea of shopping for healthier foods, of going through the trouble of preparing and packing meals, and of taking the time and care to make sure the quantities are correct. My friend, discipline is not easy!

Recovery rarely happens without planning.

It is way too easy to fall back into bad habits, like eating unhealthy meals when you have no plan in place. It's important to set aside time each week—each day—to make clear and determined plans. Knowing what foods and eating behaviors you need to avoid is just the beginning. It also helps to have accountability in the early days of change to help you get on track.

Satisfied

Freedom Reflection

Are you fighting against the idea of a food plan, or are you embracing the discipline of a clear plan for eating? Write honestly about where you are in this process. Food planning can remove confusion and bring peace to your mealtime. Are you ready to take the necessary steps to build a plan and stick to it? Why or why not?

Day 14

You Can't Do This Alone!

Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.

PROVERBS 15:22



Finding the right support is a necessary part of getting started in this process. I understand that it may be one of the things holding you back. Food is a central part of living, and as you set out toward freedom, you will quickly realize how entangled this problem is in almost every area of your day.

If you are resistant to letting people help you, it's a good time to challenge that. You see, most people don't recover alone. In fact, the Bible tells us that we weren't meant to do anything significant on our own. We really do need the help of others, especially since addiction is mainly a problem of *isolation*. Our destructive eating is often done in secret. Our shame is experienced privately.

Satisfied

True power lies in reaching out to those who have experienced the same addiction, who have walked ahead of you on the road to recovery. Leaning into a community actually helps alleviate your shame. There are so many people who have been on the same journey, and they can be a great source of strength and encouragement. They can help you when you slip up and make you feel less alone on your road to freedom!

Freedom Reflection

How do you feel about letting people help you with your eating issues? Are you willing to be real and vulnerable with others so you can receive the strength, encouragement, and spiritual guidance you need? Write down a list of groups, professionals, friends, or family whom you would trust to walk with you on your road to recovery.

Day 15

Happiness Is an Inside Job

Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16–17 NASB



Today's culture bombards you with advertisements. In almost every form of media, marketers take aim at your looks. Everything is about *appearance*: your weight, skin, makeup, or hair. Of course, there is nothing wrong with wanting to look good on the outside—as long as you truly understand the shallowness, the spiritual bankruptcy, and the fallacy of our culture's ideas about beauty and perfection. Your journey is toward a healthy body and soul! The Bible tells us that our heart is what matters most.

If your heart is right, it will make all the difference in how you feel about your life. Practice being more concerned about

Satisfied

closeness to God, hearing His voice, knowing Him, trusting Him to satisfy you, and finding His peace. Remember that lasting change in every area of your life happens when you focus on the work of the Holy Spirit within you. Make it a goal to prioritize Jesus. His Spirit will shine through better than anything you can find in the beauty aisle.

Freedom Reflection

Describe how you see people who walk closely with God. Can you see the glow and the touch of heaven on them? How does that compare to beauty products or the fake messages about youth and perfection we see in advertising?

Day 16

**Focus on the Solution
Rather Than the Problem**

*And you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.*

JOHN 8:32



It's easy to get caught up in worrying about how to get out of this addiction. You can become obsessively focused on the extra pounds, the bingeing, and the self-hatred, and doing so can make you depressed. I want to challenge you to stop focusing on the problems and to begin developing a solution-focused mindset!

I know this can feel overwhelming. Your mind will want to return, over and over again, to worry. But focus on the truth that you are a new creation. God promises that you are free and that there is always a way of escaping temptation. The

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truth *will* set you free. Be determined to practice believing. The power of God is stronger than the power of the addiction! Yes, the addiction may feel stronger than you at times, but it is no match for the Lord.



The power of God is stronger than
the power of the addiction!



Freedom Reflection

Take time to repeat the truth to yourself throughout the day: *The Lord has set me free!*

Day 17

The Power of God Is in Me

*Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.
But this happened that we might not rely on
ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.*

2 CORINTHIANS 1:9 NIV



You are here because you have been beaten down by overeating, food abuse, and weight obsession. It has taken everything from you. Addiction has stolen your hope. You have hit bottom and know the only path to real change is through spiritual transformation—a miracle—a God-given gift of freedom.

I promise you that when you come to trust the Lord with your problems, you can accomplish what was impossible in your own strength. Victory begins when you believe in the One with the power to resurrect the parts of you that died in addiction. The

Satisfied

hope for freedom is only found in the power of the omnipotent, loving God inside you—the God who satisfies your every need.

Freedom Reflection

Write about the difference between trusting yourself and depending on God. What does it mean to you to have the power of God who raises the dead inside you? Do you believe in that power? List the reasons why and remind yourself throughout the day.



Victory begins when you believe
in the One with the power to resurrect the
parts of you that died in addiction.



Day 18

I Can't, but He Can . . . So I'll Let Him

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5 NASB



In theory, it may be easy to recognize your inadequacy without God, but in day-to-day practice, it is difficult to give control to Him. If you are like me, you are often tempted to rely on your own strength, even when you know it will lead to failure and disappointment! If you feel defeated, take a moment and pay attention to the truth found in today's verse. I challenge you to learn what it really means to live it out in your daily life.

When you understand that your adequacy comes from God, you will approach challenges differently. You will hold on to God, knowing your success comes from your relationship with Him. Complete dependence on God is never easy, but it's

Satisfied

necessary. The Bible is filled with stories of people just like you and me who did great things because they learned to depend on God. Being honest about our own inadequacy and our reliance on God is truly the hope for our victory.

Freedom Reflection

Write about the strength that comes from realizing you don't have to be adequate by yourself. Explain why it's okay to be imperfect and to not have it all together. Write a prayer inviting the Lord into your inadequacies today.

Day 19

All Things New

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NASB



If you ponder this verse and believe what the scripture says, you understand that when you became a believer you actually became a new person. It can be difficult to see this truth when you cling to old, unhealthy views and behaviors. How can you feel new when you just see the same old, addicted, obsessed person?

By faith, I want to challenge you to actually take hold of this truth about renewal. Meditate on today's scripture, and know that the prison doors of your addiction have been unlocked by Jesus. You are not a prisoner anymore, you are free! You are a new creation in Christ! You now have the power of God in you

Satisfied

to rise above temptation, lies, and defeat. You have the power to live a life of victory.

Freedom Reflection

Spend some time writing about what these words mean to you today: “Old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” How does this relate to your recovery? What old things do you need to let pass away today? Describe who you are as a new creation.

Day 20

Choose God First!

Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 NIV



Purifying yourself from unhealthy eating is a necessary step in your healing journey. I know from experience that ridding your life of junk food and unhealthy dietary choices can be a challenge. There will be temptations at every turn, but let the Biblical idea of purification inspire you toward your goal. Junk and excess, in any form, can be blocks to holiness, so choose the better path and let them go!

Make the decision for holiness in all you do. Choose God! Don't fool yourself into thinking that you can have it both ways. The darkness that comes with food abuse will dull the sweetness of the life God has designed you to live. Today, focus on leaving

Satisfied



Make the decision for holiness
in all you do.



the unhealthy use of food as a means of drawing closer to God,
and watch the light of His love begin to wipe out the darkness
of addiction!

Freedom Reflection

What are you hanging onto in your eating and behavior
that is contaminating you and keeping you from experiencing all
God desires for you? Write it down and ask for help letting go of
anything impure.

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ENDNOTES



1. Mark Hyman, *Eat Fat, Get Thin: Why the Fat We Eat Is the Key to Sustained Weight Loss and Vibrant Health* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2016), 190.
2. “No one can exert cognitive inhibition, willpower, over a biochemical drive that goes on every minute, of every day, of every year.” Dr. Robert H. Lustig, pediatric endocrinologist, quoted in “How Sugar Hijacks Your Brain And Makes You Addicted,” Healthline.com, <http://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-sugar-makes-you-addicted#section1>.
3. All information regarding the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous can be found at <https://oa.org/newcomers/how-do-i-start/program-basics/twelve-steps>.
4. “Step One,” Alcoholics Anonymous, https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/en_step1.pdf.
5. “Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else.” From “The ‘Number One Offender,’” Daily Reflections, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1990, https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/daily-reflection?y=2015&m=04&d=14.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

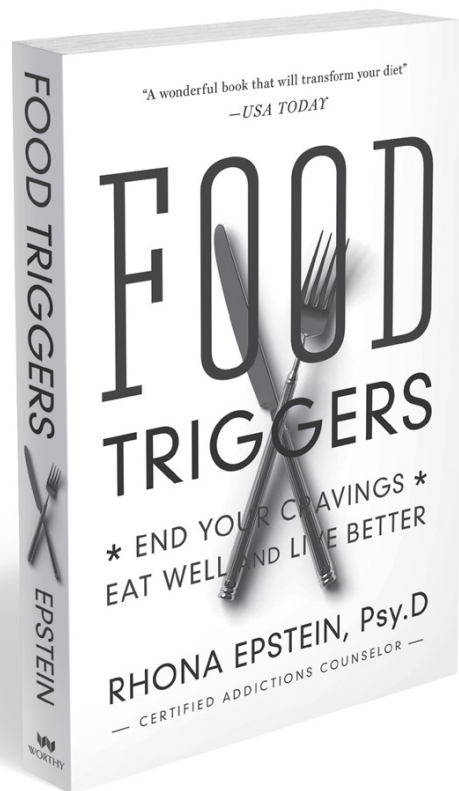


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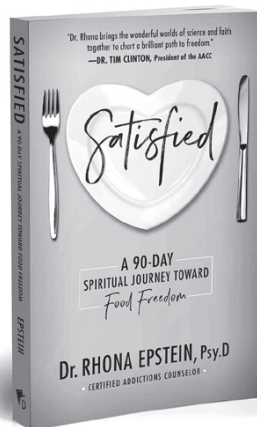


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