

Food as Fuel: Learning to Ignore Food Marketing



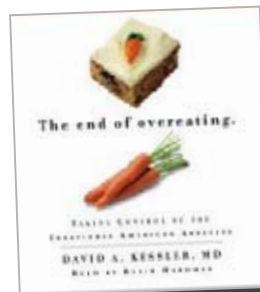
In his recent book, *The End of Overeating: Taking Control of the Insatiable American Appetite*, former

Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler set out to explore the causes and effects of binge eating on the ever expanding American Waistline.

Through his research, Kessler concludes that overeating is not caused by the usual suspects: lack of willpower or lack of motivation to eat healthy foods. Instead, he argues, overeating is the direct and desired result of a food industry that manufactures and markets items that have excessive calories and are loaded with fat, sugar and salt. These ingredients, found in popular foods such as ice cream, french fries, and chicken wings, are combined with glossy advertising campaigns to create an overload of stimulation in the human brain, thus making it impossible for most people to resist 'trigger' foods. The result is a tendency to develop addictive behavior towards food. In essence, many people abuse unhealthy foods the same way addicts abuse drugs.

The discoveries that Kessler made were in no way shocking. In fact, some of his descriptions of the manufacturing and marketing of foods seems like Nutrition 101: foods heaped with sugar, fat and salt might taste good – but they are not good

for you. What is revolutionary about his argument is that he is suggesting that the public needs to find a new way to view overeating and its impact on health. Most Americans, he argues, need a fundamental change in how we view food. We need to be aware that we are being manipulated by mass marketing and by the manufacturing of foods that create addictive responses by raising hormone levels with their infusion of sugar and fat. Instead of practicing reward-driven eating of junk foods, Kessler advises readers to choose foods for their nutritional value.



So how do we re-train our brains? One method is to apply an approach commonly used to stop another addictive yet deadly behavior: smoking.

Admitting that we are addicted to junk food is the first step. Just as cigarette smoking is deadly, junk food can kill you by causing diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and a host of other ailments associated with poor nutrition. Once you have committed to ridding your diet of junk food and overcoming the manipulation of food companies, make a list of some of the trigger foods you are addicted to, and make a conscious decision that you will quit eating them. These steps will help you follow through:

- Pick the date you will quit eating junk food and mark it on your calendar.
- Tell friends and family about your decision to quit eating junk food.

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- Get rid of all the junk food in your home, car, and place of work. Throw away any coupons to restaurants where you would be tempted to eat junk food.
- Stock up on healthy foods. First, make a list of the real foods that bring you comfort, joy and pleasure. Some examples would be berries, sweet potatoes, citrus fruits, fish, oatmeal, tomatoes, walnuts, yogurt, spinach, etc. Stock your fridge with these and begin to visualize these items instead of junk food when want to reward yourself with food. Hard day at work? A healthy plate of fish and spinach and sweet potatoes will make you feel better both emotionally and physically. Time to celebrate? Yogurt with granola and berries is the perfect healthy treat!
- Practice saying, “No thank you, I don’t eat junk food.” Develop an arsenal of replies that you can use when someone tempts you to eat foods you know are not good for you.
- Visualize foods based on their nutritional value. Close your eyes and picture a healthy meal full of nutrients. Repeat to yourself all the benefits of eating that healthy meal. Then picture a junk food meal full of fat, calories and sugar. Repeat to yourself all the negative effects those foods have on your body.
- Set up a support system. Think of the healthiest eater out of all your family and friends. Tell them that you want to make a change and ask if they are willing to mentor you.

- Think back to your past attempts to quit junk food. Try to figure out what worked and what did not work for you.
- Try a Forever Living product such as **Forever Garcinia Plus® (Item #199)**. This nutritional supplement contains a number of ingredients that may aid in weight loss when combined with moderate exercise and a sensible diet. Once you start to feel better and see success in your health, you will be less likely to lapse back into eating junk food.

Kessler argues that because of the manufacturing and marketing of foods that are cheap to make and pleasurable to eat, Americans have been stimulated to eat calories they do not need and that offer no nutritional value. He says that even people at a healthy weight have become preoccupied with maintaining that weight, and that everyone in his research reported that they had at one time felt an inability to stop eating, a lack of satiation, and an obsession with food.

Armed with the knowledge that we will all face the temptations of fat, sugar, and salt, and knowing that our bodies have become programmed to crave them, we can make the decision to take control of our eating. The best defense is to re-train our brains to crave the nutritional items that our bodies really deserve. While this training might take a while, it is certainly worth the effort!

