

# The Inner Diet

You Can't Change Your Weight Until You Change Your Mind!

Dr. John H. Sklare

## Part V: Inner Control

Welcome to Part V of my eight part series on emotional eating. I would like to begin this discussion today by addressing the fourth most common issue that leads to diet disaster and weight loss failure called **Inner Control**. My Inner Diet research shows that this issue is a serious problem for 49% of all overweight people who are trying to lose weight. Just as was true with Perfectionism, that's almost half of all overweight people which strongly suggests that, if you are overweight and dieting, there is a very good chance that this issue is causing you some trouble. So what exactly is Inner Control and how does this issue interfere with your ability to diet, lose weight and control your eating. Allow me to explain.

Inner Control is a measure of just how much authority you believe you have over your weight and what you eat. In plain English, it is a measure of the strength of your willpower and the degree of your confidence. Basically, those who struggle with this issue, express two primary negative beliefs about themselves. First, those who lack Inner Control don't believe that they **can** succeed at dieting and weight loss. And secondly deep in their hearts these people believe that, if they should lose weight, they lack the willpower and control that it takes to keep that weight off! The real danger in a belief system like this is that these beliefs alone can prevent you from ever succeeding at weight control. Lack of faith in your ability to succeed can directly cause your ultimate failure!

If I have successfully made my point, you are beginning to understand this issue much better. Wanting to control your eating while at the same time believing that you can't weakens you in a way that creates a kind of learned helplessness which leaves you feeling trapped, frustrated and hopeless. The end result is that you eventually give up or don't start at all! Negative expectations have a way of getting directly in the way of success. Replacing those negative thoughts of *inability* with positive thoughts of *capability* is what people with *Inner Control* issues must do in order to succeed. In short, it's very difficult if not impossible for you to be successful at weight control with that discouraging voice of self-doubt and inability constantly whispering negativity into your ear. Unfortunately, this is what people with Inner Control issues face every single day. So what can you do if this is an issue for you?

From a psychological perspective, there are four stages to strengthening your *Inner Control*. These four stages are: (1) **Awareness**, (2) **Acceptance**, (3) **Cognitive Restructuring** and (4) **Developing Personal Control**. Since the key to change is **awareness**, you must first become aware that this is a problem for you. As a matter of fact, I developed **The Inner Diet Questionnaire** specifically for the purpose of raising ones awareness by identifying these issues and showing how strong a role they play in the health decisions that you make. The next step demands that you own this issue and **accept** that your lack of Inner Control is interfering with your ability to diet, manage your eating and control your weight. Third, you must engage in actively challenging your self-defeating belief system by engaging in something called **Cognitive Restructuring**. Cognitive Restructuring is a cognitive therapy technique that teaches you specifically how to refute negative, defeatist oriented thinking and replace it with positive, achievement oriented thinking. The heart of this theory is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that I mentioned earlier...self-talk significantly influences performance. And fourth you

must practice this new thinking, in the real world, in order to develop more personal control over the health choices that you make each day. In learning theory, putting this new thinking to work in the real world is called *transfer*.

One simple suggestion for strengthening your Inner Control is to simply **reduce temptation**. As much as this sounds like basic common sense, most people ignore this simple step. If *Inner Control* is an issue for you, you should remove from your home all of the foods that you are trying to stay away from eating. If it isn't there, it simply can't be eaten and this is very helpful in the early stages of dieting. **Control Rewards** are another effective method of increasing Inner Control. You can simply place a checkmark on a piece of paper every time you successfully resist a strong temptation to stray from your program. When you have accumulated ten checks (or whatever number makes sense to you), give yourself a reward. The reward can be anything enticing that you consider motivational and worth the effort (a new item of clothing, an hour at the spa or a movie for example) but it cannot be food.

Lack of *Inner Control* is a serious obstacle for nearly half of all overweight people trying to diet and lose weight. Addressing this issue directly will help you become a much wiser and stronger dieter, provide you with more self-confidence and increase your overall potential for success.

This ends Part Five of my eight part series. In Part Six I will discuss fifth most common emotional eating trigger called...**Commitment Level**.

Wishing You Great Health,

Dr. John H. Sklare