

# Recovery!

“The greater part of our happiness depends upon our disposition, not our circumstances.”

Martha Washington

## Irrational Beliefs

The way we interpret our environment is the greatest predictor of how we will feel about any situation. Two people can experience the same event and have two different reactions depending upon the thoughts they have related to this event. The following are some examples of common irrational thoughts that can lead to unhappiness if they are believed.

**1) It is an absolute necessity for an adult to have love and approval from peers, family, and friends.**

Pleasing everyone is impossible, even people who like you and approve of you will be turned off by some of your behaviours and qualities. This belief is probably the greatest cause of unhappiness.

**2) You must be unfailingly competent and almost perfect in all you undertake.**

This belief results in self-blame when one inevitably fails at living up to this belief. This belief leads to lowered self-esteem and a fear of attempting anything.

**3) Certain people are evil, wicked, and villainous and should be punished.**

These people are behaving in ways that are antisocial or inappropriate and need to change their behaviour, they are not bad people.

**4) It is horrible when people and things are not the way you would like them to be.**

This attitude can also be called the “spoiled-child syndrome”. For example, a person that has a flat tire and says to himself, “Why does this happen to me? Damn, I can’t take this. It’s awful, I’ll get all filthy.” This person is using negative self-statements, which leads to unnecessary irritation and stress.

**5) External events cause most human misery - people simply react as events trigger their emotions.**

The logical extension of this belief is that you must control external events in order to create happiness or avoid sorrow. However, because we cannot control everything, this belief leads to a sense of helplessness and chronic anxiety. It is actually the self-statements interpreting the event that cause the unhappiness, not the event itself. You have only limited control over others, but you do have enormous control over your own emotions.

## Greetings!

Spring has finally sprung! After a long frigid winter on the prairies we sure are happy to feel the sun shining down on us. We hope you are enjoying the warmer weather too!

Everyone interprets their environment differently. The way you think about situations can determine how you feel. Irrational thoughts in regards to certain events can lead to unhappiness which could be avoided by replacing those beliefs with rational thoughts. In this issue we have pointed out some of the most common irrational beliefs and some pointers on how to challenge them.

Eating healthfully can be trying, especially during recovery from an eating disorder. Learning nutritional value of foods can sometimes feel as difficult as learning a new language! We've given you some guidelines as to what normal eating really is to help you get back on track to health.

International No-Diet day is approaching quickly. On Tuesday May 6th celebrate by throwing away your scale, ditching your diet, and loving your body the way it is.

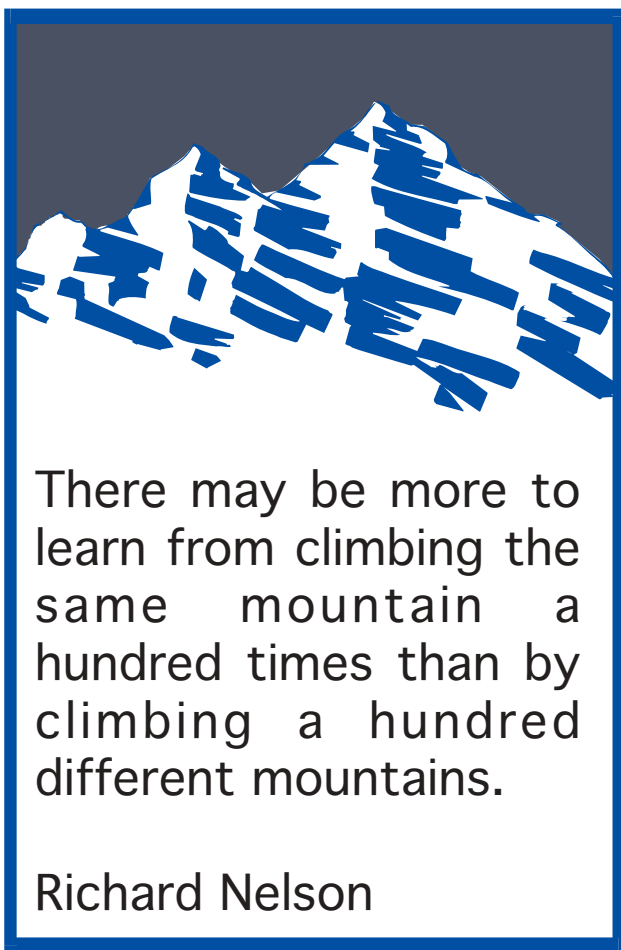
We are excited to announce that we will be offering a chapter of the Westwind eating disorder support group in Calgary in the near future. We will keep you informed of the details as they fall into place!

*Lynne Robertson*

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This newsletter is a publication of the Westwind eating disorder recovery centre, and is intended for general information only. It is not intended to provide personal medical or psychological advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

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More information about Westwind can be obtained by calling 204-728-2499, or call toll free in North America at 1-888-353-3372. Check out our web site at : [www.westwind.mb.ca](http://www.westwind.mb.ca), or e-mail us at [westwindedrc@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:westwindedrc@mb.sympatico.ca). We are located at 458-14th St, Brandon, MB, R7A 4T3, Canada.

**6) You should feel fear or anxiety about anything that is unknown, uncertain, or potentially dangerous.**

This belief can lead to unnecessary anxiety. In addition, increasing the fear or anxiety in the face of uncertainty makes coping more difficult.

**7) It is easier to avoid than to face life's difficulties and responsibilities.**

Avoiding one's responsibilities and difficult situations only creates more problems and more anxiety. Instead, examine your standard excuses to avoid responsibility and think about how you can begin to face these situations.

**8) You need something other, stronger or greater than yourself to rely on.**

This belief becomes a "psychological trap" where your independent judgment and your own awareness of your particular needs are undermined by a reliance on some higher authority.

**9) The past has a lot to do with determining the present.**

Just because you were once strongly affected by something does not mean that you must continue the habits you formed to cope with the original situation. Old patterns and ways of responding are just decisions made so frequently that they become automatic. You can identify those old decisions and start changing them right now. You can learn from past experience, but you don't have to be overly attached to the past.

**10) Happiness can be achieved by inaction, passivity, and endless leisure.**

There is more to happiness than perfect relaxation.

**11) You are helpless and have no control over what you experience or feel.**

This belief is at the heart of much depression and anxiety. We not only exercise considerable control over interpersonal situations, we also control how we interpret and emotionally respond to each life event.

**12) People are fragile and should never be hurt.**

This belief prevents us from openly communicating important feelings and leads to self-sacrifice.

**13) Good relationships are based on mutual sacrifice and a focus on giving.**

This belief rests on the assumption that it is better to give than receive. However, it is expressed in a reluctance to ask for things and the anticipation that your hidden needs will be provided for. This self-denial usually results in bitterness and withdrawal.

**14) If you don't go to great lengths to please others, they will abandon or reject you.**

This belief is a by-product of low self-esteem. You are less likely to be rejected if you offer your true unembellished self to others.

**15) When people disapprove of you, it invariably means you are wrong or bad.**

This belief leads to chronic anxiety in interpersonal situations. This belief is irrational because one specific fault is generalized to the entire self.

**16) Happiness, pleasure, and fulfillment can only occur in the presence of others, and being alone is horrible.**

Pleasure, self-worth, and fulfillment can be experienced alone as well as with others. Further, being alone is growth-producing and desirable at times.

**17) There is a perfect love, and a perfect relationship.**

This belief leads to feeling resentful of one close relationship after another, nothing is quite right because you are waiting for a perfect fit, which never comes.

**18) You shouldn't have to feel pain; you are entitled to a good life.**

It is more realistic to accept that pain is an inevitable part of human life. Life is not fair, and sometimes you will suffer no matter what you do.

**19) Your worth as a person depends on how much you achieve and produce.**

A more rational assessment of your real worth would depend on such things as your capacity to be fully alive, feeling everything it means to be human.

**20) Anger is automatically bad and destructive.**

In fact, anger is cleansing and can be an honest communication of current feelings.

**21) It is bad or wrong to be selfish.**

No one knows your needs and wants better than you and no one has a greater interest in seeing them fulfilled. Your happiness is your responsibility, being selfish means you are accepting that responsibility.

Examine these irrational beliefs and identify the ones you tend to live by and the negative effects this has on your life. Then, work on reframing these beliefs to more accurate statements. Here are some

guidelines to follow that are more accurate and will promote rational thinking.

**1) The situation doesn't do anything to me.**

The situation doesn't make me (emotion), I say things to myself that produce anxiety and fear.

**2) Everything is exactly the way it should be.**

To say that things should be other than what they are is to believe in magic. Things are the way they are because of a series of causal events.

**3) All humans are fallible creatures.**

We all need to allow ourselves to make mistakes. If you do not set reasonable quotas of failure for yourself and others you increase the prospects for disappointment and unhappiness

**4) It takes two to have a conflict.**

There is a 30% rule that states that any party in a disagreement is providing at least 30% of the fuel for the conflict.

**5) The original cause is lost in antiquity.**

Trying to discover who did what first is a waste of time. It is also a waste of time to try to find the cause of chronic painful emotions. Instead, focus on decisions to change your behaviour now.

**6) We feel the way we think.**

This belief reminds us of the fact that events do not cause emotions, our interpretations do.

Davis, M.D., Eshelman, E.R., & McKay, M. (2000). *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

## Piece of Cake

Sometimes we wonder, "What did I do to deserve this", or "Why did God have to do this to me". Here is a wonderful explanation!

A daughter is telling her Mother how everything is going wrong, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away. Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, Absolutely Mom, I love your cake."

"Here, have some cooking oil," her Mother offers.

"How about a couple raw eggs?"

"Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?"

"Mom, those are all yucky!"



To which the mother replies: "Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake! God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!".

God is crazy about you. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.

I hope your day is a "piece of cake!"

# Get Back on Track to Healthy Eating.

What is normal eating anyway? After a long time of forming abnormal eating patterns it is easy to lose sight of what it means to eat normally again. By observing the people around us, it is easy to see that normal eating can take many forms. Some people eat more or less than others or are more adventurous in their attitude to try new and different foods. However, there are some important characteristics that are inherent to normal healthy eating. In summary, normal eating is flexible, while still being consistent with a reasonable degree of routine and structure.

## What Should I Be Eating?

According to the Canada Food Guide, a healthy amount of food is 1800 - 2200 calories a day. People who are young, physically active, male or pregnant should be eating more than others. It is also important to eat a variety of foods from each food group. Canada's food guide gives an excellent summary of each food group and the recommended amount for each day. Food does not fall into categories of good or bad. It is important to eat all foods in moderation to have a healthy diet. Normal eating varies from day to day depending on appetite and the body's needs. Healthy normal eating means listening to your body's hunger



signals and feeding it what it needs. If you are recovering from an eating disorder it can be difficult to read your body's signals. Until they become regular and reliable it is important to stick with a routine of three meals a day plus snacks. Normal eating is being able to eat when hungry and continue eating until satisfied.

## The Importance of Flexibility

Normal eating includes having a balance between moderate self control and enough flexibility so as not to miss out on more pleasurable foods. Healthy, normal eating sometimes means eating more than usual at special celebrations such as birthdays and Christmas. It also means trusting your body to make up for those times by an increased or decreased appetite the next day. Normal eating may mean leaving some cookies on the plate because they will be there tomorrow, or having one or two more now because they taste so wonderful when they are fresh. Normal, healthy eating includes choosing foods for enjoyment as well as nutrition and energy. In short, flexibility gives freedom from eating exactly the same food or at exactly the same time each day.

## Food and Feelings

It is important not to use food to avoid handling emotions. However, healthy

eating means eating sometimes for pleasure without over eating. For example, maybe you are at a movie and eat some popcorn, or have an extra dessert at your best friends' birthday party. Food and feelings do not go well together when eating is used for reward or punishment rather than for nourishment. Normal eating is not related to self esteem or being a good or bad person. Normal eating takes up some time and attention but keeps its place as only one important area of life.

Healthy normal eating is eating an appropriate variety and amount of food for your sex, age and activity level. It is being flexible with what and when you eat while acting in a reasonable amount of structure. It is eating for pleasure and enjoyment while not using food to handle emotions. Healthy normal eating includes diversity and trust in the body to handle imperfections in eating.

Health and Welfare Canada (1992). *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. Ottawa; ON.

### **Support Groups**

Support groups are offered free of charge to individuals suffering from forms of disordered eating, their family members and friends, every Monday evening at Westwind at 7pm. Join our on-line support group at <http://groups.msn.com/westwindingeatingdisordersupportgroup>.

Westwind will also be offering weekly peer run support group meetings in **Calgary** in the near future. We will keep you updated on the start date, time and location. If you are interested in forming a chapter of the Westwind support group in your area please contact Westwind at 1-888-353-3372.

### **What's New at Westwind?**

#### ***It's a New Day***

Barb and Valarie will be appearing as guests on "It's a New Day" May 1st. The show is a special series entitled New Day Women in which Barb and Valarie will be speaking about the role of Christian Counselling in the treatment of eating disorders.

#### ***Maury Povich show***

Bryan, along with one of our clients, recently travelled to New York to make two appearances on the Maury Povich show. Bryan spoke briefly about the treatment program at Westwind and had the opportunity to meet Tracey Gold who has released a book on her recovery from anorexia.

#### ***No Diet Day***

Tuesday May 6th marks International No Diet Day. Trash your diet and throw away your scale! Celebrate a fearless day of no counting calories, no dieting, no exercise...just loving your body and eating what tastes good! Westwind will have an informational display at the Shoppers Mall in Brandon from 9am to 9pm on May 6th.

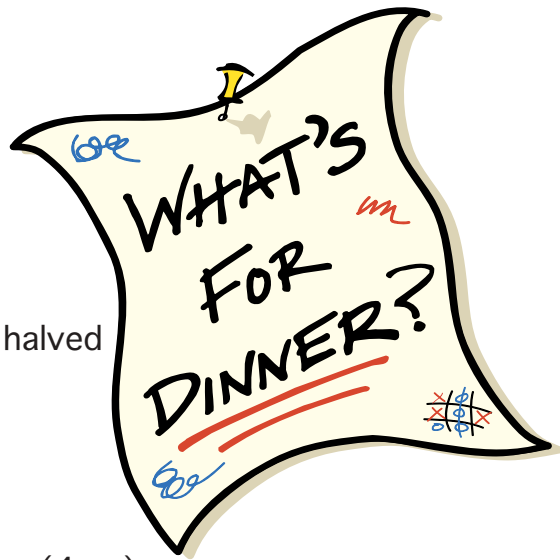
#### ***Newsletter Subscriptions***

Due to the rising costs in printing and postage, we regret that we will no longer be distributing this newsletter, Recovery!, free of charge (past clients will receive a free subscription for one year). Subscriptions are \$13/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$15/yr CAN in Canada. Other countries are \$18/yr US. The newsletter is published six times per year. Subscriptions for past clients of Westwind eating disorder recovery centre are \$8/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$10/yr CAN in Canada.

## Quiche Me, You Fool!

Crustless, roasted pepper  
and potatoe quiche.

- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and halved
- 1 large yellow or orange bell pepper, seeded and halved
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced into rings
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp chopped, fresh basil leaves
- 3 medium potatoes
- 1 cup shredded, reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese (4 oz)
- 3-4 eggs
- 1/2 cup evaporated 2% milk
- 1/2 tsp each dried thyme and salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper



- Spray 1 medium and 1 small baking pan with non-stick spray. Place peppers, cut side down, in medium pan. Combine onions, olive oil, and garlic in small pan. Place both pans under broiler. Broil onions for 5 minutes and peppers until they begin to blister and char.
- Reduce oven temperature to 375 C. Transfer onion mixture to a medium bowl and set aside. Let peppers sit until cool enough to handle. Using a paring knife, peel off and discard skins. Slice into strips. Add peppers to bowl with onions, along with basil. Mix well.
- Peel potatoes and slice into 1/4 inch thick rounds. Steam potatoes for 10 to 12 minutes, until tender.
- To assemble quiche, spray an 8-inch round quiche pan or cake pan with non-stick spray. Layer 1/2 potatoes over bottom. Top with 1/2 pepper mixture, followed by 1/2 cheese. Repeat layering.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, thyme, salt, and pepper. Pour over vegetables. Bake, uncovered, for 35 to 40 minutes, until quiche is firm to touch and cheese is golden brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing.

Makes 6 servings.

Podleski, G., Podleski, J. (1999). *Crazy Plates*. Granet Publishing Inc: Waterloo, ON.