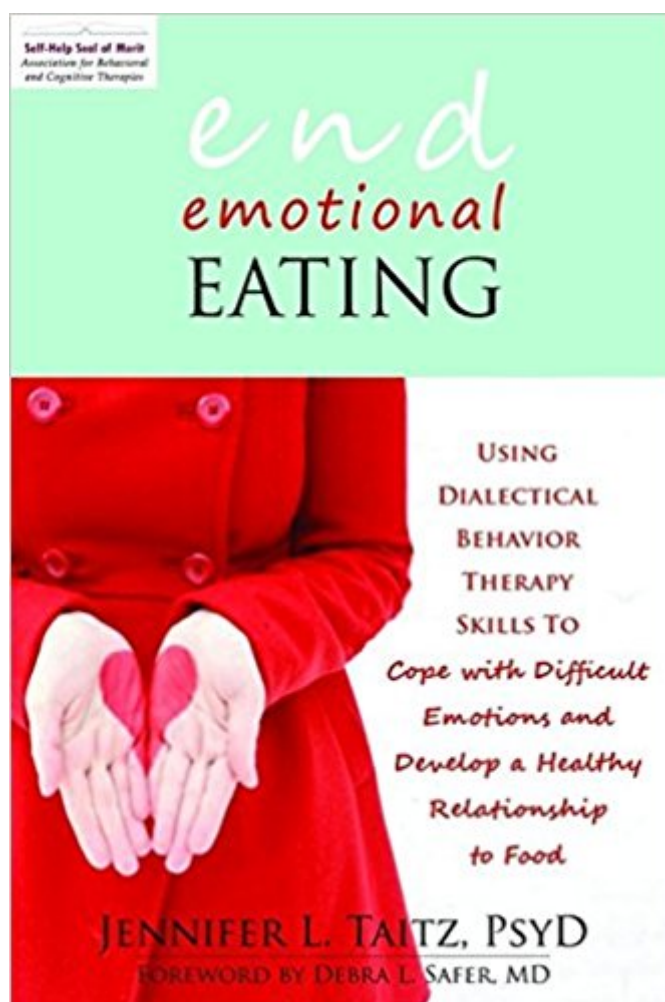


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# End Emotional Eating: Using Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills To Cope With Difficult Emotions And Develop A Healthy Relationship To Food





## Synopsis

If you eat to help manage your emotions, you may have discovered that it doesn't work. Once you're done eating, you might even feel worse. Eating can all too easily become a strategy for coping with depression, anxiety, boredom, stress, and anger, and a reliable reward when it's time to celebrate. If you are ready to experience emotions without consuming them or being consumed by them, the mindfulness, acceptance, and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) skills in End Emotional Eating can help. This book does not focus on what or how to eat—rather, these scientifically supported skills will teach you how to manage emotions and urges gracefully, live in the present moment, learn from your feelings, and cope with distress skillfully.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"End Emotional Eating may be the beginning for you in a new relationship with food and your feelings. Who hasn't had a craving for food that came from a sense of emptiness, anxiety, or anger? This book is filled with powerful metaphors, empowering messages, and mental and emotional exercises that will keep you from eating away at your feelings. Accessible, intelligent, and compassionate, this book can help you find a new way of experiencing and using emotions. You will find wisdom that you can use every day. I highly recommend this book."

—Robert L. Leahy, PhD, founder and director of the American Institute for Cognitive Therapy, professor at Weill Cornell Medical College and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, and past president

of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. “If you struggle with emotional eating and want to end the battle, this is the place to start. Based on solid scientific evidence, the author offers carefully selected, elegantly described, bite-sized techniques to release oneself from every aspect of the emotional eating cycle. The author did the work for us in this impressive, comprehensive work, and now we just need to begin. I highly recommend this book to anyone who seeks freedom from unhealthy eating habits and those who care for them.”

•Christopher Germer, PhD, author of *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion* and clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School “It’s a pleasure to see a book with a genuinely new perspective to offer the countless individuals who struggle and suffer over the simple daily act of eating. Well-grounded in scientific research, yet also written in a lively, accessible manner with moving personal stories and plenty of specific, explicit, practical advice, Jennifer L. Taitz offers plenty of new food for thought about food. This will be a helpful and valuable read for anyone who has let his or her eating be guided more by emotion than nutrition.”

•Roy F. Baumeister, PhD, author of *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength* “I have spent my entire career educating people about what to eat to maintain a healthy weight. But if there is one thing I have learned, it is that most people who struggle with their weight are not simply hungrier than their thinner peers. They eat for reasons other than hunger: sadness, loneliness, anger, and frustration. Emotional eating is often at the core of the poor choices people make when it comes to food. Jennifer L. Taitz has made a major contribution to helping those who suffer from emotional eating. She identifies the basic emotions that give rise to unhealthy eating habits and offers readers the skills and tools to end emotional eating once and for all.”

•Tanya Zuckerbrot, MS, RD, founder of F-Factor and author of *The F-Factor Diet*

“Why do we eat? Seems obvious, right? “Because we have to eat to stay alive! But many of us eat to feel better. We eat to push away feelings of anxiety, sadness, and self-loathing. Jennifer L. Taitz can help us stop. Her book, *End Emotional Eating*, helps us understand the link between emotions and eating. More importantly, it helps us break those links so that we have more healthy ways to regulate our emotions and so that our eating is not driven by our emotional state. The strategies taught in this book are innovative and powerful, and they have been shown to truly help people end emotional eating.”

•Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, PhD, professor of psychology at Yale University and author of *Women Who Think Too Much* and *Eating, Drinking, Overthinking* “Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) is an effective treatment for a variety of psychological disorders. Never before has the wisdom of DBT, as it applies to emotional eating, been so clearly articulated. Authored by a master clinician and talented writer, this book artfully

describes how to transform your relationship with food and life. I highly recommend that you read this book if you want to gain a new perspective on your emotional reactions and change the way you think about and respond to impulses to eat. This is not a diet book; it is a book that will provide nourishment for your soul and psyche. A genuine treat!

•Dennis Greenberger, PhD, director of the Anxiety and Depression Center in Newport Beach, CA, and coauthor of *Mind Over Mood*

“Jennifer L. Taitz’s insight, compassion, and far-reaching clinical experience shine from every page.”

•Sharon Salzberg, author of *Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation*

“This is not a weight loss book. It is something much, much better. If you have tried over and over to control your weight and your eating, maybe it is time to let go of that agenda. This is a book about changing your fundamental relationship with food and eating, and importantly, your relationship to yourself! Imagine that you could come into a gentler, more compassionate relationship with yourself and with eating. If you want to explore a kinder approach, this is the book for you.”

•Kelly G. Wilson, PhD, cofounder of acceptance and commitment therapy and associate professor at the University of Mississippi

“Highly recommended. *Emotional Eating* provides a sensitive and thoughtful account of how emotions and eating become entangled in a multitude of unhelpful ways, together with clear guidance for unraveling them and moving forward using a blend of ancient and modern approaches.”

•Christopher G. Fairburn, MD, professor of psychiatry at the University of Oxford and author of *Overcoming Binge Eating*

Jennifer L. Taitz, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist and director of the dialectical behavior therapy program at the American Institute for Cognitive Therapy in New York, NY. She is a certified diplomate of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy and is a founding board member of the New York City Association for Contextual Behavior Science. Her expertise lies in emphasizing simultaneous acceptance and change and providing tangible tools to help people get “unstuck” so they are better able to regulate their emotions. She has presented at conferences internationally on mindfulness and acceptance. Visit her online at [drjennytaitz.com](http://drjennytaitz.com). Foreword writer Debra L. Safer, MD, is codirector of the Stanford Adult Eating and Weight Disorders Clinic and coauthor of *Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Binge Eating and Bulimia*. Her clinical interests include working with patients who struggle with eating disorders and obesity, designing interventions for post-bariatric surgery patients, and using computer-assisted therapies to increase the dissemination of evidence-based treatments for eating disorders.

I've read a lot of books about healthy eating and mood disorder therapy, not to mention seeing professionals on the subjects, and I have to say End Emotional Eating is one of the best books I know. I find it scientific, relatable, and practical. That said, it's harder than it sounds to sit with emotions without letting it turn into feelings of deprivation. This is something I'm still practicing, so I've summarized the key points below to remind myself (and you, if you're interested) most especially in those times of weakness what I can do to truly have a positive relationship with food and why it's best for living a life I value.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is based on accepting reality because suffering comes from trying to fight pain. Radical acceptance is an active process of purposely adopting an open, nonjudgmental receptive stance while at the same time deciding whether or not to change the way you respond, often choosing to accept commitments required to take action in order to live life fully. It is illusory correlation to believe an increased urge to binge means an increased need for it. In fact, urges come and go, whereas "the more we indulge in a habit, the more habitual it becomes."

Giving into emotional eating takes away opportunities to develop other coping skills making you believe it is the only way to cope. Thinking about food may be less painful than some emotions, but emotional eaters then develop pain and suffering around food. Emotional eaters tend to be more sensitive to rewards as demonstrated in caudate nucleus response research. In fact, motivation is fleeting and unnecessary. "Action leads to action."

Recommendations

- Accept life as it is without indulging or controlling.
- Pain can be "something you experience in the service of living according to your values."
- Being mindful of this can foster self-compassion and empathy with others. Self-compassion involves kindness and warmth while maintaining realistically high standards. Focus on changing behaviour rather than trying to control feelings.
- "You don't have to feel willing to behave willingly."
- Master mental aikido by weaving and surfing, not throwing punches. Be in the present, aware of the full experience, and problem solve.
- "Look at the thoughts rather than from the thoughts."
- Strategies
- Distress tolerance refers to "both your perception of your ability to sit with physical or emotional pain and also the behaviour of tolerating difficult feelings."
- Hold stories about your abilities lightly. Avoid trying to control foods or experiences. Self-soothe mindfully without food if you need to restore your energy and mind state for problem solving. Build a reservoir of options for all your senses like a scented washcloth,

avoiding those that may exacerbate pain like sad music. Take care of yourself by holding yourself accountable, keeping soothing from becoming avoidance. Urge surfing describes a technique to observe the rise and fall of a craving | skilled surfers ride above waves and maintain balance in every circumstance | dancing on water. To surf urges: 1. Slow down your mind and body. 2. Let go. Nonjudgmentally observe the urge. Consider your senses, thoughts, and urges. 3. Refocus. Notice your surroundings, your feelings, and how consequences relate to what you really value. 4. Choose. Where is the urge now? Are you willing to watch it rise? Can you practice letting the discomfort exist for just a little while longer than you might otherwise, before you give in to it? Mastery is about purposely scheduling activities that engender a sense of confidence • improving overall belief in the process of improvement and one's abilities. Identify realistic goals and regularly challenge yourself. Focus on mastery in different areas for the sake of mastery rather than trying to control feelings. To address judgment, create two pie charts. One represents relative importance of main areas of your life most important to you now. The second represents what you would like to matter in how you aspire to live your life. Consider the following common values and really taste them: family, partner, friends, work, education, fun, spirituality, community life, physical self-care, environment, and beauty. Notice how overvaluing eating and appearance can lead to undervaluing other areas of your life and more vulnerable dependent on one area more than a variety of factors. Virtues describe a set of moral standards that can guide us in how we implement our values, giving our values-based actions detail. "When we focus on values, we let go of measurements and focus on living with virtue. • Living according to values during tough times requires devotion and skill. Practice skills in advance by imagining yourself executing the behaviour in certain situations, reflecting on thoughts and feelings. Make detailed plans. Although this summary covers all the information I deem key, there is obviously more detail on what, how, and why to end emotional eating in the book, including additional tools like accessing wise mind and acting opposite. I highly recommend this book!

I have read this book twice in the last few months. No! It will not solve your problems. Yes! This book is great. This is a great addition to anyone receiving professional help or if doing it on your own, it is a must read in your personal library of self-help books. Emotional eating broken down into layman's terms and every page is chock full of insight and knowledge.

I am actually still reading it. It almost feels like it was written for me! I have a notebook and I am doing every question/exercise. I have read several other books on emotional eating, but this one has been very helpful.

I am reading through this book slowly and engaging in many of the activities she suggests. I plan on re-reading it as soon as I finish because I really want to continue to assimilate a Mindful, Thoughtful way of being into my entire life.

The first two weeks of January around Cub Run Recenter, where I swim, are busy each year with New Year's resolutions athletes. After that, the new faces mostly disappear and the regulars return to their usual routine. Raw will-power is normally good for about two weeks. In her book, *End Emotional Eating*, Jennifer Taitz starts with a bold statement: "Willpower, as it turns out, is less about will than it is about skill. Mischel [author of a study about the marshmallow test] explains that willpower relates to the ability to strategically direct attention. For example, teaching children [age 4] to pretend the marshmallow is just a picture transforms low delayers [kids unable to delay gratification] to high delays. Obsessing and focusing on the marshmallow creates intense temptation. In this book, you will learn to sit with temptation by paying attention in a particular way; you will practice living in full contact with the present moment, learning from your feelings, coping with distress skillfully, and developing self-compassion. (1-2) A key component in her Zen-influenced approach is developing mindfulness which she defines as: "present-focused, flexible, nonjudgmental awareness. (3) Another key component is the idea of acceptance which she defines as: "a willingness to experience thoughts and feelings, even uncomfortable ones. It doesn't mean endorse things we don't want to experience or running headlong into unpleasantness. (3-4) While Taitz's approach targets patients with eating disorders, like bingeing, bulimia, and anorexia, much of the book reads equally well for people (like me) who struggle with maintaining a balanced, healthy relationship with food. Some of you may be like me and be suspicious of ideas, like mindfulness, which arise out of Eastern religions, like Zen Buddhism. It is good to be vigilant. In this context, I would make several observations. God, as creator of heaven and earth, is also the origin of all knowledge, including knowledge of ourselves. In Proverbs, for example, we read: "The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools."



(Prov 15:7 ESV) We should not fear knowledge, but instead focus on making sure it is used faithfully.

~ Mindfulness is being aware of our thoughts, emotions, and responses, which is a skill that comes also with continuous prayer and meditation.

~ Mindfulness comes close to meditation as when a Zen author might encourage meditation on physical things, like a raisin. The Christian focus in mediation is more typically on Christ (as in the Jesus prayer) or on scripture (as in Lectio Divina). Recognizing that we worship the creator, not the creation, mediation on physical things may be helpful as spiritual exercise, but would not be otherwise encouraged.

As Christians, it is our responsibility to understand the uses and abuses of any kind of knowledge, but especially knowledge in the spiritual realm. As such, Taitz's work is helpful as a tool for dealing with the special problem posed by the sin of gluttony, sometimes referred to by its Latin name, gula, which has historically been called one of the seven deadly sins.

Dr. Jennifer L. Taitz is psychologist specializing in dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) with degrees from New York University and Yeshiva University, also in New York. She writes in ten chapters, including:

1. Understanding Emotions and Eating
2. Accepting the Idea of Acceptance
3. Mindful Moments
4. Emotional Intelligence
5. Surfing Urges and Developing Realistic Confidence
6. Minding Your Mind
7. Coping with Difficult Emotions with a Second Helping
8. Cultivating Self-Compassion
9. Tasting Values
10. Ending Well and Beginning Again.

The book begins with acknowledgments, a foreword, and introduction; and ends with a list of references (iii-iv). Because Taitz offers wonderful reviews of pertinent literature embedded in her discussions, you may find the list of references especially helpful.

Jennifer L. Taitz's book, *End Emotional Eating*, is accessible and interesting to a wide lay and professional audience both because of the topic and because the approaches suggested may be helpful in copy with a range of obsessive and addictive behaviors. Sprinkled throughout the chapters are helpful exercises to promote application of the concepts being discussed. I read the book to help me succeed in ramping down my weight and ramping up my exercise routine in the New Year and was pleased with what I learned.

In part 1 of this review, I have given an overview of Taitz's work. In Part 2, I will look in more detail at some of her concepts and teaching. (T2Pneuma.net)

References

Fairlie, Henry. 2006. *The Seven Deadly Sins Today*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Kelly Koerner. 2012. *Doing Dialectical Behavior Therapy: A Practical Guide*. New York: Guilford Press. (Review: Koerner Explains DBT and Supporting Skills; <http://wp.me/p3Xeut-1uP>).

Great insight. Very helpful.

This is a great book for emotional eaters. It can help and I find each book that I read has something to offer in terms of stopping this behavior and changing one's relationship with food.

I recommend it . Very well written and includes all you need to know about eating disorder treatment. Good for patients and therapists together.

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