



## POST-OP VIDEO TWO HOMEWORK

### Dealing with Emotions

In Post-Op Video Two I talked about weight loss patients experiencing a variety of emotions following surgery.

Emotionally, there are ups and downs following weight loss surgery. For example, even though you are excited about the fact that your clothes are getting looser by the day, you may be irritable as you watch other people eat things you used to eat. You may feel ecstatic one minute because people are so complimentary about how you look but feel resentful the next because this person didn't talk to you before you had surgery. It's NORMAL to experience a wide variety of emotions as you change your eating behaviors and as your body changes. At the same time, your relationships with yourself and others change. It can be both an exhilarating and a discomfoting time. During the more challenging moments, you may be tempted to turn to food for comfort. Or, you may want to celebrate the happy times after surgery with food. Instead, try using the following list of feelings to help you learn to more accurately identify your feelings.

Remember that (nearly) everything in your life will change following WLS to some degree. Expect it. Accept it. Address it.

Your feelings will likely change (and recycle) as you go through the various stages following WLS. It is imperative that you pay attention to your feelings... they send you messages. Ignoring or not dealing directly with your feelings can lead to negative thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

### Homework:

**Once you can identify what you feel, answer the questions that follow the feelings list to help you learn to deal with your feelings in appropriate, healthy ways without involving food at all.**

#### Feeling words:

Relief	Surprised	Irritability	Surprised
Exhilarated	Joy	Depressed	Grief
Peaceful	Hope	Anxious	Doubt
Energized	Enthusiasm	Fatigued	Fear

**1. What might my (name of emotion) be trying to tell me?**

For example, Susan may realize she is being unreasonably critical toward one of her children. She takes a few minutes to consider how she is feeling, recognizing that her child hasn't done anything to warrant her negative behavior toward him. She becomes aware that she is feeling irritable and is aware she's been taking her feelings out on him.

**2. What is my (name of emotion) telling me that I need?**

For example, using the above situation, Susan asks herself what her irritability may be telling her. She realizes the irritability is saying, "Hey! I'm tired. It's been a really long day and I'm physically and emotionally tired!"

**3. What is my (name of emotion) telling me that I want?**

Again, using the above scenario, Susan asks herself what her irritability and fatigue are telling her she wants? She realized she very badly needed a nap, or at least a short, ten-minute period of quiet time by herself.

**4. What are some healthy options for getting my needs met?**

Having identified the need for a nap or quiet time, Susan said that because she didn't have time for a nap in the middle of the afternoon, she could do one of the following things to get a few moments of quiet time for herself to rejuvenate: 1) she could take a walk alone outside by herself, 2) she could lie down on the couch and practice deep breathing for ten minutes, 3) she could sit outside on her porch swing and list ten things she is grateful for, or 4) she could ignore her need for a few minutes of quiet and keep on with her day (aware that this would not help her attitude).

**5. Is there someone I need to talk with about my feelings, my needs, my wants?**

Susan decided to sit outside on her porch swing for a few minutes. During that time, she realized it would be good to vent about the many things going on in her life. She decided that later that evening she would call her best friend, Michelle, and talk through her current thoughts and feelings.

**6. Are there some boundaries I need to set in response to my feelings?**

In this case, Susan realized she had to set boundaries for herself. When she was feeling irritable, she needed to refrain from taking it out on others. She also made it a point to apologize to her son for having been critical of him. She acknowledged that she was in a bad mood and made amends to him.

**7. Do I need to balance my emotions with healthy logic? (Sometimes feelings try to drive the bus... that can be dangerous!)**

Susan knew that if she hadn't been so stressed and fatigued, she wouldn't have been verbally critical of her son. She knew her emotions had gotten the best of her. She promised herself to think about how she felt and what she needed before reacting in the future.

**8. How can I utilize the four A's – the essential aspects of dealing effectively with feelings:**

- Acknowledge
  - o This means naming the feeling.
- Accept
  - o This means to be ok with having the feeling.
- Address
  - o This means to deal with your feelings in a healthy way, rather than trying to eat them away or taking them out on someone else.
- Attach affirmative thoughts
  - o This means to give yourself credit for making healthy decisions and finding something to be positive about and grateful for in the situation.
- PLUS A BONUS: ATTEND THERAPY!
  - o This means to get help if you need to! Changing behaviors can be a very difficult thing to do by yourself.

Use these questions to help you make healthy decisions in all areas of your life. Using food to deal with feelings is a habit for a lot of people who have weight loss surgery. Make the effort to learn these healthier ways of dealing with feelings. It's worth the work! And you are worth it!

Be kind to yourself. Treat yourself as kindly as you would your best friend. This includes talking to yourself as gently as you would your best friend, even when holding yourself accountable. Be firm and fair in life – with yourself and others. A few important reminders from this video include:

- 1) Realize that you will probably experience many different emotions after the surgery and during the weeks and months following the surgery.**
- 2) Learn to identify your feelings – be able to label your feelings and know how they feel in your body. Learn to use your body's signals as a way to tell yourself you have to think about what behaviors you CHOOSE in response to how you feel.**
- 3) Be prepared for unexpected feelings to surface as you lose weight. Get help to deal with the feelings as needed.**
- 4) Change your thinking in order to positively affect your feelings and behavior.**

- 5) Realize that no one can do any of the work required during your weight loss journey for you but you can't do it alone.
- 6) Learn more about defense mechanisms and how you use them to stay away from reality in your life.
- 7) Understanding why you do something is not required to change the behavior.
- 8) Trying is not doing. Doing is what leads to long-term success.

All comments regarding MindPrep and/or the homework are appreciated.  
Please email comments to [info@mindbodyhealthservices.com](mailto:info@mindbodyhealthservices.com). Thank you.