Loving Food Loving Life:
Free Yourself from Emotional Eating and Enjoy Food Again

by Aimee Serafini
From: Aimee Serafini

To: Empowered Women Everywhere

Whether you were able to participate in the first Loving Food Loving Life summit about emotional eating in the spring or you are just hearing about it for the first time now, the wisdom shared by the experts I interviewed is still inspiring and relevant.

In this collection of short interview excerpts, each of our experts was asked the question:

**How do you think exploring emotional eating is empowering and can help us to love and accept ourselves?**

My mission with everything I do and all the resources I bring to our community is to empower women to love and accept themselves as a foundation so they can create the life that truly makes them happy.

And I thought the answers that each expert gave us were inspiring and thoughtful and right on! So I wanted to share this with you as a permanent resource in your library.

I envision this ebook as a short inspirational book you can go to whenever you need that extra encouragement or check-in when you are exploring your own emotional eating.

Please let us know if anything particularly inspired you at the blog post here:

[www.aimeeserafini.com/blog/LovingFoodLovingLifeBook](http://www.aimeeserafini.com/blog/LovingFoodLovingLifeBook)

I look forward to hearing your comments.
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I think this is a great question and I could probably go on for days with an answer, but I’ll give you a short answer. I just truly believe that the way that we eat is kind of like a reflection or a more an example of how we do life. You know, how we do food is how we do life. There are a lot of similarities and you can see a lot of the same patterns, it’s amazing how the patterns that come up in emotional eating do repeat themselves in other areas of life, without people even realizing it.

So when we explore emotional eating, one of the things I really like about it is that we have to deal with the present, where when we’re dieting or wishful thinking or planning and researching the latest and greatest diet or whatever the case might be, all these other behaviors, we’re thinking about the future and we’re just concentrating on the future where supposedly I’ll lose weight and life is going to be great. We’re constantly focusing on the future instead of the present.

When we deal with the present this really gives us the opportunity to accept ourselves right now which can be extremely scary to a lot of people but accepting yourself right now in the moment doesn’t mean that you are going to be exactly the way you are right now in six months, it just means that you accept yourself now.

This is really the first step to overcoming overeating - self-acceptance right now, right in the moment. Research even has proven this, recent research. This may sound counterintuitive but you really can’t make lasting changes in eating or weight loss or self-esteem or whatever the case may be, without self-acceptance in the moment. If you don’t accept yourself and love yourself right now, right here, right now, you cannot make choices and visions that are going to be in your best interest and really help you move forward and make lasting changes.
I think it’s so important because as emotional eaters, we kind of find ourselves caught in a place where we feel like something is wrong with us. What’s wrong with me? Why do I always go to the potato chips? Why can’t I lose these last 10 pounds or why do I run for the chocolate bar every time I’m confronted with something I don’t want to handle - and we think of ourselves as being broken. Nobody is broken here.

By sending your brain new messages that you’re not broken, that you’re capable, that you’re strong and you’re fabulous and you’re powerful and all of the process of getting to that point is going to mean falling down and getting up, and getting up and falling down.

There is a frame that we’ve been looking at that as self-sabotage, and it’s very blaming and very judgmental. But if you think about it, for any mom or anybody who has ever had a toddler, if you say to a child every single time they fall, “What’s the matter with you, are you stupid or something?” They’re not going to feel good.

And yet we do this all the time. We go after diet after diet and we have struggles and we have difficulty and we internalize the problems and the challenges that we have in being able stick to the diet as being a problem with us. That’s not the case, because the problem has never ever been the food.

The problem is that we have been so afraid of connecting with the deepest, wisest part of us that our emotions are going to connect us back to.
By using this tool and by using the tapping and listening to all of the experts in the Loving Food Loving Life event about Emotional Eating, you’re being encouraged to link back in, to reconnect with that wise part of yourself.

In the same way, you don’t wake up in the morning and think, “Wow, I wonder if I’m going to have to go to the bathroom today or how many times?” You don’t think about, you just kind of let your body go on auto pilot and you trust in the same way you don’t think, “Oh I wonder if my blood is going to pump today?” It’s exactly the same way for food.

When you take away that emotional charge of all of the shame and the guilt and the feelings of deprivation and sadness, all of this emotional load, you’re going to have a totally different relationship with food and truly you will get to the point of choosing a salad over a Snickers. But you’ve got to start by eating the foods that you never thought you could, to let your body signal to you that you truly can be trusted around food.

Because once you get to that place, you will realize that many of the things that you believed about yourself in limiting ways are not true. They are people’s opinions and that is when you start rocking forward and really stepping into your power and being the amazing woman you are.
I love that, because that is exactly true. That is core to ask, that we love and accept ourselves exactly as we are, in our perfections and imperfections.

We relate this to understanding and exploring emotional eating, really it’s about understanding our underlying needs. The underlying needs, requirements, imbalances that we may have physically, emotionally, mentally, and energetically. One of those things, when it comes to this aspect, is where are we off balance? What is our body craving? What does the food we’re craving satisfy? What need does it satisfy or what need does it suppress? To explore further, is it a habit? Is there a special memory associated with our emotional eating? Is there a physical need, is there a nutritional, a hormonal, or an endocrine imbalance that is exploring to us. So I really believe that exploring emotional eating is a key to really the lovely discovery of the depths of our weaknesses and our strengths and give us that understanding to fully love and accept ourselves, just as we are.
I have to just say, I mean, as somebody who grew up as an emotional eater and struggled with my weight and I’ve been working for 25 years now helping other women to really overcome emotional eating, I have to say that I think this is the hidden, one of the greatest hidden causes of our low self-esteem and the reasons why things just don’t go right. I have to say that people have no idea generally how much emotional eating affects our lives.

I think to some degree, everybody is an emotional eater. It’s just an easy thing to do, right?

So I feel like people, when they have weight issues, when they have food issues, everybody goes to the diet, everybody goes to the conventional means to try to lose weight. Of course, those means don’t work.

So first of all, I think that before I address that, I want to just say that when we emotionally eat, especially if it’s a chronic issue for us, I mean, I think everybody emotionally eats. I think food is lovely and wonderful and people indulge, and that’s just the way it is and it’s not necessarily a terrible thing, except when somebody does it in a chronic kind of way, like I did. In which case it becomes incredibly debilitating and there are so many things that happen when we are addicted to food, when food is our primary focus all the time, when it’s run through our mind 24/7, when we’re thinking about those ooey-gooey chewy foods that we can’t wait to eat. When we’re sitting in a meeting and want to just bust out and go binge.
It has an incredibly negative effect on our self-esteem, and think about it, we feel guilty when we overeat, we have all kinds of self-loathing and self-hating thoughts. I mean, I know after a binge, I just would berate myself and just feel terrible and that’s a great way to build self-esteem, right?

When we feel fat, we hide our bodies, we wear black, and we don’t dare wear anything else. We hide out, we avoid social situations, I mean, so many people come to us, tell us about how they avoid their reunions because they don’t want people to see how much weight they’ve gained. They avoid social situations, they don’t go out at night because they don’t want to be seen, they’d rather just sit at home and hibernate, isolate. So many different things, so many different ways it affects our self-esteem.

We don’t feel worthy of good treatment. You know, when we feel crappy about ourselves, about how we look, how we feel, what we’re doing, how out of control we are—our self-esteem plummets and when our self-esteem plummets, we don’t feel worthy of good things in our lives and we end up settling for so much less than we deserve. We don’t feel worthy of good treatment, we don’t feel worthy of good circumstances, we take jobs that aren’t right for us, or pay us much less than we deserve to be paid. There’s just a spiral effect that happens when we overeat, when it’s a problem that we’re not able to stop.

We compare ourselves to others, we’re always thinking everybody else is prettier than us. I mean, I would always be checking out other people’s bodies and think, “Wow, her ass is much smaller than mine and I really got to cover mine up,” just these crazy, self-deprecating thoughts. We don’t think people want to be with us. Our options and choices of men go down, we take what we can get, after all, who wants to be with somebody fat. I mean, it just goes on and on and people really, of course, think about these things.

These kinds of thoughts, for an emotional eater, they run in the back of our minds like a Norton anti-virus runs on our computer. It’s just there, it’s just running, it’s just a constant stream, you don’t really think about it, it’s just in the back and it’s so much a part of us that we never stop to think, my God, I would never talk to my worst enemy that way. I mean, who would say such horrible things in such an incessant way?

Then, Aimee, there’s a whole issue of trying to lose weight the conventional way and all the defeating experiences of that, trying and failing, trying and failing, thinking we’re a loser, what’s wrong with us, falling for quick-fix schemes, and we’re
vulnerable to the hype and to all these things that don’t work and we just keep doing them over and over again. You know, what’s the definition of insanity? It’s doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

This is what happens when people don’t address emotional eating, when it’s a persistent problem and we just go straight to the diets and the quick fixes and never really get underneath, we never peer under the lid and look at the fact that hey, this is an emotional eating issue and how can we address this in a constructive and responsible way so that we don’t have all this negative fall-out that’s completely affecting our self-esteem and really all of our choices in our lives.
Well, I think your question gets right to the heart of it, I think it’s a critical piece for loving and accepting ourselves.

When I talk about taking control of emotional eating, the phrase that I use and what I really work with women to do is to create peace with food. To get really peaceful with food and with eating and you talk about loving food again. That whole process of doing that and stopping and taking a look at what’s going on with us and our relationship with eating and into what we’re putting into our mouths, it’s absolutely about learning how to listen to ourselves and pay attention to ourselves with compassion.

That’s really what is at the root of all of this and then using what we hear and using what we observe and know about ourselves to start to figure out how to really feed ourselves what we’re really truly craving. By that I’m talking about feeding our spirit and feeding our soul and doing the things for ourselves that so many of us, when we get busy and overwhelmed and stressed and we’re taking care of everybody else, we end up using food to fill in those cracks and we’re really missing out.

So taking a look at this and taking this journey into your relationship with food and working to transform it, it’s all about loving yourself and making your life better, it’s really a whole life transformation process.
Forgiving Yourself and Others

By Cecily MacArthur

Well, I’m a walking example of that. I could talk a little bit about where I came from. I was a chubby child, somewhere along the line in my difficult, abusive childhood, I developed a way to suppress my emotions by stuffing it with food, and so that became a habit at a very early age and I was always chubby and was on my first diet at age 13 and had gone through life continuously going up and down and not being successful in actually maintaining an ideal weight for my body. It was a point where I really didn’t like myself at all.

I usually go on the idea of helping people to think about how much do they love themselves and also how much do they love their bodies? On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 would be completely loving yourself and honoring, particularly honoring your body and being in full peace and joy with who you are, when I actually stopped and realized there were lots of things going on in my life that I was changing, I knew I wanted to finally conquer this overweight issue and by realizing that when I asked myself how much did I love my body—and when I asked myself how much did I love myself, it was a little bit higher on the scale, I’d say about a 7. I’ve been doing a lot of spiritual work, a lot of improvement, I had changed a lot of things in my life at that point, but now I’m determined to really work the weight release and change that, and I had to be honest, I came out at a 4. I was not happy with my body. I didn’t like it, I never did. I was always shamed by it at an early age and without having that loving aspect to yourself, then when I was dieting, it just doesn’t work. You have to work the inner piece, you have to change that, I had to work my self-esteem and my love for my body to move it up the scale and then the weight started to release.

I’ve released over 100 pounds, so I’m skinny for the very first time in my life.
I’m skinner than I’ve ever been as an adult and it is, it’s just a wonderful feeling, but it became because of emotionally eating and not addressing the emotions. I was numb for most of my life, I didn’t feel feelings, I wasn’t in touch with what was going on. Once I made that decision to do that and to do that work, took about 18 months to lose that weight, to release it all. It made a huge difference, and now I can notice when I’m emotional and I’m rummaging the cabinets for something to eat, and I stop and I ask myself, “Is this an emotional response to something that I don’t want to feel or am I really hungry? Do I really want to eat at this point?”

So I have a whole different approach on how to keep the weight at this level and to live a much happier life, a more empowered life because I know that I can do this now and I can shift how I love myself. I do a lot of work around helping clients to do this for themselves, to love themselves, and particularly to love their bodies, and to change the relationship they have with food as a result.
BEING CONNECTED:
Embodiment for Conscious Oneness

by Jeneth Blackert

Well, I think I would probably start with how could it not be empowering, as we are so intertwined with food and we are so intertwined with comfort and we’re so intertwined with happiness and deservability, how could food not be an awareness or a guide for us to open the door to greater consciousness, to greater awareness and to a greater way of life through the choices that we choose.
Get Out of Your Own Way: Stopping Self-Sabotage

By Jenn Barley

You know, Aimee, that is such a great question and I did a little bit of thinking about it and basically, we know that emotional eating is avoidance of emotion. So we’re eating in order to not feel something, to distract ourselves, to avoid maybe a feeling that’s considered to be uncomfortable. So it could be frustration, it could be anger, it could be irritation, it could be sadness, it could be a myriad of different emotions.

To fully love and accept ourselves means that we have to be able to love and accept ourselves even though we’re feeling sad or even though that we’re angry, or even though that we’re irritated. So when we love and accept ourselves, we love and accept all of us, our happiness, as well as our sadness. Our connectedness, as well as our loneliness, so if we allow ourselves to be able to explore our patterns, what we’re actually avoiding, why we actually don’t trust ourselves to be able to handle what it is that we’re avoiding, that’s when true love and acceptance can really come into play, to know that sometimes it’s okay to have that wide range of emotion and to be able to experience it, so that we know how to best handle it in a non-food way.
That is such a great question, because really when we eat, we eat from an emotional place, it doesn’t serve us, right? So once we do that little splurge or however it is we’re addressing the emotional component of a need that we have, later we’re so guilty around that and we don’t feel well. Of course, our hormones have gotten completely out of whack and so if we can explore the emotional eating component and really understand where it’s coming from and what it means for each of us and how we can better serve ourselves, I mean, oh, my gosh, how empowering is that just to feel so much better, more of the time.

Really it comes down to how are you going to honor yourself and what does that look like? And that’s why really I love what you’re doing by exploring this, because just by me being on this telesummit got me thinking a lot more about it and I was thinking, “Do I eat emotionally sometimes?” Of course I do, we all do. I call it self-medication. Right? We’re all self-medicating, and so if we can really learn to become more aware of that, just an awareness alone is huge, then we’re definitely going to serve ourselves so much better and honor our temple, which is our body, and as a result, just feel so much more love and joy and happiness and of course, as women we spread that everywhere.
Well, I just feel with everything that I do with my clients, is that I’m trying to impress upon them that we deserve to feel awesome and we deserve to feel on top of the world all the time. When we’re emotional eaters, this is not often the case. So we will yo-yo between feeling miserable, needing comfort food, indulging in that comfort food, feeling good for a short time, we get that high that we get from the carbohydrates and the sugar, and then we hate ourselves.

But we need to get to the root problem, the root cause of why this is happening, and then we can stop it.

I work mostly with women; women have challenges in this area. We are caretakers; we take care of everyone else before we take care of ourselves.

We’ve got more mood disorders, for example, anxiety disorders, panic disorders, phobias; women are affected at more than twice the rate than men. We make less serotonin than men and we’ve got the hormonal impact.

But if we can address all of those things, then this issue of getting rid of the emotional eating will go away, and then we will love and accept ourselves.

It affects everyone in so many ways, but if we can get to the root cause of it, we can balance brain chemistry, address nutritional deficiencies, and then as I said, there’s no willpower required and then we don’t feel deprived.