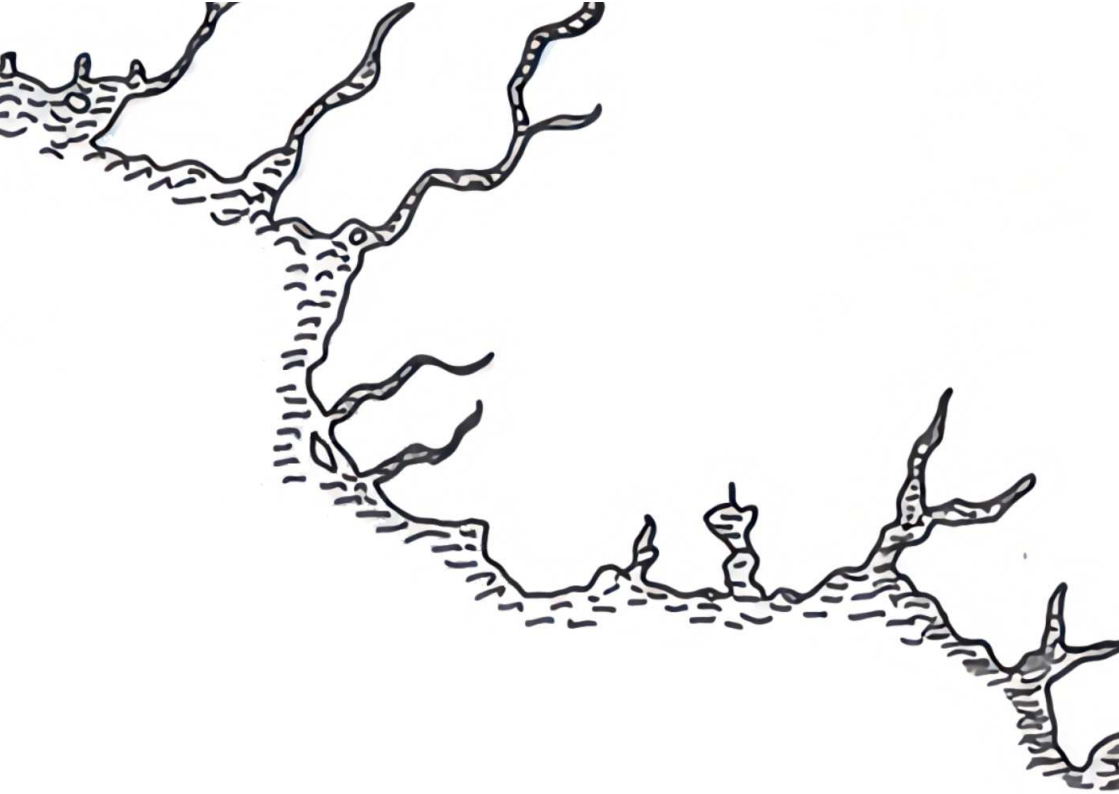

THE FEEL FREE DIET

The Rational Unconscious Diet

Cerca Trova

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CERCA TROVA

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WARNING

This book is intended to present informational content and should not replace the advice of a qualified healthcare professional.

INTRODUCTION

You probably know this statistic: 95% of all diets fail. Worse: we end up gaining back more weight than we had lost. Faced with this observation, doctors are now sounding the alarm. Many recommend we stop dieting, which some will translate as accepting ourselves "the way we are".

> The truth is that not everyone can lose weight! Or more precisely, while many can reach their dream weight at some point, few will succeed in maintaining it.[1]

Our hopes would simply not add up to reality. Our physiology would be to blame. It would doom us to fail, by not letting us be thinner, even though we wish we could. Our mistake would be to set ourselves unrealistic goals. We would like to lose weight, but of course we

1. Jean-Philippe Zermati, *Maigrir sans regrossir, est-ce possible?* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), 10. (author's translation)

would like to lose "too much" weight, without realizing that we cannot. We do not understand that our body will not allow us to look like the fantasized image we have of ourselves. Our fault would lie in our inability to admit that we do not have the means for our ambitions. We would set ourselves impossible goals, we would delude ourselves.

But this is a tough sell. First, because many people feel too fat, despite what is said about our "ideal weight":

> Nearly half of Europeans would like to be thinner. In Switzerland, among 14–17-year-olds, 62% of girls want to lose weight, and 77% think they are too big. Among adults, 35% are dissatisfied with their weight, while 60% of women and 49% of men report paying attention to their diet. In France, among women with a normal weight, 51% are on a diet, and among women who are overweight but not obese, 64% are on a diet because they feel too round.[2]

It would be convenient to believe that if many people feel too fat, it's actually just some kind of collective delusion that no one feels good about their body. We would therefore be influenced by social criteria, conveyed by irresponsible media, and collectively victims of a psychological bias against which we should all fight.

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2. Magali Volery, "Encourager l'abandon des régimes dans les programmes de lutte contre l'obésité", in *Traiter l'obésité et le surpoids* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), 304–305. (author's translation)

However, nowadays, not only do many people "feel" too big, but they actually tend to be.

> In North America [...], 20 to 30% of the population suffers from obesity. In Europe, 10 to 20% of the population is affected. [...] In Geneva, among 35–74-year old, 45% of men and 25% of women are [moderately] overweight, 15% of men and 11% of women suffer from obesity. Added together, these figures show that 60% of men and 36% of women are overweight. [...] [I]n Switzerland, 1 out of 5 children, between the ages of 6 and 12, is overweight.[3]

So that what could previously have been interpreted as a purely psychological phenomenon is now indisputably reflected in medical statistics, even if these do not correspond precisely to the intuitive perception that we may have of our body.

Despite all our desires to lose weight, it seems that we eat against all common sense. We tend to eat too much, too fat, too sweet, too salty. Many of us are overweight — or think we are — many of us want to lose weight, and are willing to make a lot of sacrifices to do so. Yet, when at last do succeed, few of us are able to keep up our new weight.

Our desires seem totally irrational, and quite simply incompatible with our needs. Fulfilling one would require denying the other. We cannot have it both ways: indulging in our cravings and be thin. Life is about making choices,

3. *Id.*

and if you prioritize your health over your appearance, then you should accept not to look like a model.

The flaw in this line of thinking is that it implicitly assumes that what governs my appetites, my unconscious, is irrational. He would make me crave for things that were impossible to achieve, induce me to pursue them, and then punish me for the efforts that he had induced. How could I trust it then? Obviously, this would be impossible. One would have to suppose that two unconscious forces are acting within me: one, totally rational, which would guarantee my survival, and the other, totally irrational, which would govern my desires.

However, all the statistics above are remarkable in that they reflect extremely common emotions. *The vast majority* of us believe we are overweight, and *a large majority* of us want to lose weight. The vast majority of us experience the same unconscious message: that we may be too fat, that we should lose weight, and that this weight loss should come through dieting.

That is to say, for our unconscious losing weight is not only desirable but also possible. And, in general, our intuition leads us to think that it goes through food. That is to say that our desire to lose weight is well founded. What seems clear, however, is that the vast majority of us don't know how to lose weight or at least stay thin. Assuming our rational unconscious, knowing how it works, is giving yourself a chance to understand what it wants, and to be able to achieve it.

THE RATIONAL UNCONSCIOUS

TO UNDERSTAND "myself" and why I act the way I do, I must consider myself to be, consciously, at least, a rational person. And indeed, I generally act according to specific objectives. I may not know everything or have access to all the information, but I usually use the best information to achieve my goals. I can therefore consider the conscious part of myself as rational. We will refer to this part of ourselves that we are conscious of, this part of us that acts "consciously", as the "conscious".

At the same time, however, I am aware that something in me works "through me" all the time. After all, I live, breathe, and perform all kinds of bodily functions without my being particularly aware of it, which keeps me alive without my having to worry about it. We will refer to this part of ourselves, which acts without our conscious awareness and provides the physiological functions necessary for our survival, as the "unconscious". It is unconscious in the broad sense: "what contributes to my survival, which I am unaware of". Nevertheless, I cannot deny it exists since I live

thanks to it. Unlike some models of the human psyche, we postulate a rational unconscious since irrationality seems incompatible with keeping us alive.

In our model, the individual, the person I am, is composed of two distinct agents, the "conscious" and the "unconscious". These two rational agents each act on their own, and their actions, combined in one, represent my own, at times irrational, behavior.

The rational agent

To think that my conscious or my unconscious are rational is to consider them as "rational agents" in the economic sense of the term. An agent, in economics, is an individual who has a goal and acts to achieve this goal. The main characteristic of this individual is more his action than his nature. Therefore, we call him an "agent", "one who acts". An agent is rational when he uses all the information related to his goal to fulfill his objective:

> I am a person lost in the desert, and I will soon die of thirst. *My goal is to drink, and I will act to fulfill that goal,* i.e.*, to drink.*

Then, suddenly, I receive information that indicates that around me lies an enormous water table right under my feet and that, by some quirk, I could reach it by digging a little.

What will I do? If I am irrational or non-rational, I will disregard this information and probably die of thirst. If, on

the contrary, I am rational, I will take this information into account. I will dig to find water and fulfill my objective, which is to drink to avoid dying of thirst.

A rational individual is, therefore, someone who uses all his information to achieve his objective. Conversely, an irrational or non-rational individual is a person who uses little or no information to reach his goals.

Information and action

Now suppose that another person is also dying of thirst on the other side of a dune. We are unaware of the other's presence and cannot see what the other is doing. What is the other person going to do who hasn't received the information I have and who can't see me digging? I don't know what he will do, but he will likely not dig. Will this individual, by not digging, behave irrationally? Of course not. He acts according to what he knows, and indeed, he does not have the information I have that there is this sheet of water under our feet. If he knew about it, he would start digging too. We would act precisely the same way if we had the same objective and information.

It is our information that determines our actions. The same information induces the same action if the objective — here, drinking — is the same. Therefore, two agents with the same information and goal will act similarly.

What would happen if this person, aware of my presence on the other side of the dune and knowing I was dying of thirst, saw me digging? Of course, he might think me

crazy. But he could also consider that, if I dig, there must be a reason. And if he tried to stop me and, with all my strength, I tried to continue digging, he may guess that, since we have the same objective, I must know something he doesn't. He may not suspect the existence of the water body. He may believe there is a bottle of water under the sand, whatever. He would suspect that I am not acting for nothing.

For this, four conditions should be met:

1. He should consider that I am not acting without an objective, and therefore not "without reason".

2. He should know that we both have the same goal.

3. He should think that I have information different from his.

4. And, finally, he should accept that my information is better than his, that I could be more or better informed than him.

These conditions are precisely those to learn something from someone.

And conversely, it is by its repetitive, recurring, predictable character that we recognize the *rationality* of action. Because information, when best used and the objective remains constant, involves only one action. In the example above, it is because my action is repetitive and predictable that my neighbor can take it as rational, even if it is incomprehensible.

If, on the contrary, my neighbor starts digging frantically, then, for no apparent reason, without any additional information, starts doing something else, then something else,

without any connection between these activities, I might rightfully think that this person has "lost his mind". I will have no reason to believe that this person obeys a precise and constant objective linked to specific information simply because his action will have changed erratically. Therefore, I will conclude that he has no particular information or does not use it best.

A repetitive or predictable action is therefore never irrational, but, on the contrary, perfectly rational. To deem a repetitive action irrational is to show that I do not understand its motivation and the very notion of action rationality.

Error and bias

An essential characteristic of a rational agent is that he is not systematically wrong. This does not mean he is never wrong: he can and will likely be. But these errors will not be systematic. Above all, they will not be systematically the same. These errors will be "noise"[4]: they will be large or small, always revolve around the central objective, but never be systematic. Why? Because if they were systematic, they could be predicted. They would provide some information that could be acted upon.

You could compare it to an archer spending his day shooting arrows at a target. His objective is to hit the center point of the target. Will he be able to hit the exact center of

4. In the sense of signal theory.

the target every time? Certainly not. He may not reach the center to the nearest millimeter. But, if nothing disturbs him, he will reach very close to the exact center of the target. Once to the right, once to the left, once above, and once below. Never exactly the center point, but never very far from it if the conditions do not change.

What would happen if the archer realized, after three shots, for instance, that his shots consistently hit the target five centimeters? He would have new information there: having made the same mistake several times, he would realize that there is a systematic element attached to his error, which he can foresee to improve. If he can see that his shot is systematically biased to the right by five centimeters, he can modify his way of shooting to correct this systematic error. This "error", insofar as it is systematic, is no longer strictly speaking an error. We must then rather speak of "bias": it is because there is a systematic bias that I can take it into account and correct it.

What will happen once the archer corrects this bias? It still won't hit the exact center of the target to the nearest millimeter, or only very occasionally. But his shot will again hit a spot very close to the center of the target, barring some unpredictable error. If an agent is rational, has an objective and uses all his information, there should be no bias in his action. The same, consistent error, the "bias", cannot result from a single rational action.

Good and better

This distinction between error and bias means that, for the rational agent, the best is never the enemy of the good: he will always try to improve on his errors. Why? Because the agent's goal is specific. Hitting the center of the target is not unexpected; it is his sole objective. All other results will not do. Therefore, he will always try to improve his score and correct any systematic error, simply because if it is systematic, it is a bias, and he can and will eliminate it. We can summarize this by saying that the rational agent always has his objective in mind and aims at its full completion.

The fact that the rational agent consistently achieves its goal comes from the way it assesses its success. Instead of aiming for a non-specific target, he aims for the center of the target. He does not seek to reach "the whole area" of the target but "its central point". This may seem trivial, but it is not because it involves an entirely different attitude.

How does he rate his success? By measuring the distance between his shot and the center of the target and comparing it to its previous results. That is why he expects to achieve his goal. Its goal is not to aim "roughly" but "closer" to the target. That is to say, the rational agent spends his time estimating orders of magnitude, and he compares them to assess the success of his action.

We could say that the rational agent will constantly evaluate the distance between his shot and the target, check his performance, and adjust his action according to this observation.

THE ANALYTICAL GRID OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

If both my conscious and my unconscious are rational, act simultaneously through my body and my actions, have the same objective, and have the same information, they should act similarly since my unconscious and my conscious act through the same body, mine. Therefore, their respective contributions should be rigorously the same and result in one identical action. Therefore, my action, the action I take, that combines the action of my conscious and the action of my unconscious, should translate the common objective of my conscious and my unconscious. And since it results from two identical rational actions, it should be perfectly rational.

However, very often, my action — as an individual — is precisely not rational. For example, when I start a diet and give in, foresee the binge and give in to it, refuse to eat when I should, give in to temptation, and regret it, my behavior is not rational. If my goal is to lose weight,

but I consistently fail to do so, I should be able to learn from my mistakes and correct them to reach my goal next time. But things never turn out that way. It would therefore be necessary to admit that my behavior is not rational.

If both my conscious and my unconscious are rational, then how is it that my action, as an individual, cannot be rational? The only logical explanation, the only thing that can vary between my conscious and my unconscious, is their respective information.

A static agent, a dynamic agent

To draw different information from the same reality, the conscious and unconscious need to have distinct analytical frameworks. How then could these two analytic frameworks differ? To enlighten us, we will again turn to economic analysis. A standard difference in economic theory, but a major one between "agents", is how they perceive time.

We will assume that our conscious is a "dynamic" agent, while our unconscious is a "static" agent. We will assume that our conscious alone perceives time. It can sense that its environment evolves and possibly act to modify it. The conscious adapts to an ever-changing reality. The unconscious does not know time. Its main activity is not to adjust to a changing environment but to control and maintain physiological balances. The organism's tendency to keep physiological constants, such as temperature, and

blood pressure, is called homeostasis.[5] From this perspective, we can consider the unconscious to be a static agent.

What the unconscious sees: linguistic units of meaning, biases

Suppose that I am sitting at my desk. In front of me is a tall building. This is what my conscious perceives. That is, my conscious knows that what I see is a large building. But my conscious can only have reached this conclusion because, beforehand, the unconscious has carried out a work of recognition. We assume that the unconscious continuously lists the properties of the environment as simple linguistic units of meaning. Instead of a building, it perceives "something" and then lists its properties: in the case of the building, it is "big", and even "bigger than me", it "is obstructing my horizon", is made of a "red material", is "rectangular", has "openings", is "static", and so on.

Another example: I am in a traffic jam, at a standstill, just behind a large truck. This is what my conscious has recognized. To come to this conclusion, my conscious has processed the information my unconscious gave him: there is "something" "in front" of me. This "thing" is "rectangular", has "wheels", "mirrors", a "metal plate" with a "number" written on it, a "metal tube" from which escapes "smoke",

5. The term *homeostasis* was first coined in English, derived from the Greek words ὅμοιος (*omoios*, "similar"), and στάσις (*stasis*, "pause, stop"), and was then translated into Latin as *homoeostasis*.

is "bigger than me", "obstructs my view", and so on. It is this list of linguistic units of meaning that my unconscious transmits to my conscious. But, for my unconscious, this list of qualifying adjectives, continuously updated, remains available to other interpretations.

Moreover, our unconscious is a rational agent that maintains equilibria and ensures homeostasis. It computes "at the margin", always seeking to hit his target, identify and removes biases in his action. We assume it aims to identify possible biases between the equilibria it must ensure and the values it observes at any time. We suppose that the unconscious informs the conscious whenever it detects a bias. Among all the information transmitted by the unconscious to the conscious, there is information indicating its own needs; it is up to the conscious to respond to them.

What the conscious sees: condensations

We assume that the conscious alone can group the list of adjectives transmitted by the unconscious into coherent sets, assign it a meaning, and synthesize this information to recognize and name specific entities.

From these lists, my conscious concludes that "a building" or "a truck" is in front of me because it has inferred that the "metal plate" associated with the number must be a "number plate", that the "metal tube" from which "smoke" escapes must be an "exhaust pipe", and that what is in front me, with its "wheels", "number plate", "exhaust

pipe" has to be a "truck". Similarly, my conscious can conclude that this "rectangular" "static" "shape" with a "roof", "bricks" and "openings" is a "building".

Conscious and unconscious have the same list of qualifying adjectives. But only my conscious can say that what I see in front of me, for example, this large rectangular mass, is a "building"; that the small openings in what is a "facade" are "windows", and that the "larger openings" are "French windows" leading to "balconies". Only my conscious could recognize a dwelling from the list of characteristics transmitted to it by the unconscious. By naming *building* or *truck* the whole list of indices that allowed him to say that this object is indeed a "building" or a "truck", he saved time by condensing these simple units of meaning under a name.

The information gap

The condensations performed by the conscious never fully match the reality perceived by the unconscious. Whereas the unconscious has complete information, our conscious merely synthesizes information and seeks to respond to it as best it can, given the reality of its environment. It is in this fundamental information gap that lies the irrationality of our behaviors and, indirectly, the origins of our emotions.

When it comes to food and weight loss, the information gap between the conscious and unconscious should be explored, if we are to understand the origins of our overweight.

From the point of view of the unconscious, we should eat when we are hungry, stop eating when we are no longer hungry, and yet stay thin, since our unconscious, which has triggered our hunger, is also supposed to maintain our weight at our equilibrium weight. Evolution and our well-being both tell us that we should eat what we want, as much as we want.

But this is not the case. While we experience hunger and cravings, following them often leads to weight gain. We end up spending our lives fighting against the desire to indulge in the foods we love.

The rational unconscious theory assumes that this irrationality around food stems from a discrepancy in information between our conscious and unconscious minds.

Cognitive dissonance and cognitive restriction

When we gain weight, the process is rarely painful. With our family, we eat "normally", that is to say, more or less,

"like everyone else". More generally, we eat because we are "hungry" and respond to that hunger. Or we eat because we have "cravings" and meet them. Or then again, we may satiate our hunger with what we crave, and finally, we do that, or so we think, probably too often. The problem is that we should have restrained ourselves. Had we been less tempted to satisfy our hunger or our cravings, or our hunger according to our cravings, we would not have gained weight. Therefore, we naturally conclude we gained weight because we have indulged ourselves, eaten to gratify our hunger and cravings, and did so more often than reasonably.

And since losing weight amounts to undoing what has been done, we are led to believe that, on the contrary, to lose weight, we must resign ourselves to doing the opposite of what led us to gain weight. That is to say, we are all intimately convinced — consciously — that, to lose weight, we should do the opposite of what we have done so far, that is enduring a period of deprivation, resisting eating when we are hungry, controlling our cravings, and reducing the frequency of our meals.

We rely on our cognitions because we all have an inherent, yet vague and diffuse sense that there must be eating habits that would enable us to be thinner or feel better — habits that would be superior to the ones we currently have. This is known as cognitive dissonance, which may lead to cognitive restriction — the conscious effort to mentally control our food intake to lose weight or avoid gaining it. Our quest for diets are motivated by these cognitive processes.

A message from the unconscious

When our distress worsens, cognitive restriction can sometimes develop into an eating disorder: hunger is replaced by a permanent and obsessive desire to eat. And since cognitive restriction can have such drastic consequences, some doctors specializing in eating disorders now recommend not denying our food cravings. Instead, they suggest accepting ourselves and respecting our natural weight as much as possible.

However, upon closer inspection, cognitive dissonance is simply the widely shared feeling that there may be a more suitable diet for us. With varying degrees of intensity, we all experience it when we think we're not eating enough fresh vegetables or dairy. We "believe" it but don't necessarily act on it.

Likewise, cognitive restriction is simply what we all do to varying degrees when we choose not to have another dish even if we are still hungry and craving it. We "restrict" ourselves because we "think" it would be too much. Therefore, we are all, to varying degrees, subject to cognitive dissonance and restriction.

Moreover, if my current food sensations make me — or would make me — periodically grow, what is this equilibrium weight that I should accept? How can I accept myself as I am if I cannot reach a balance point?

There is a clear information gap between the conscious and unconscious: we seem to misinterpret our unconscious needs. As for us, we interpret cognitive dissonance

as a signal from our unconscious trying to inform us that a "better" diet is possible. The problem is understanding the unconscious's needs by deciphering the condensations in our eating behaviors.

Information gap and condensations

You may have heard this public health message: "For your health, avoid eating foods that are too fatty, sweet, or salty." This message is an example of psychological condensing in food matters. If we all tend to eat foods that are too fatty, too sweet, or too salty, then this tendency should be seen as a normal tendency, a tendency "shared by the greatest number". And if this tendency is indeed normal, if repressing this tendency requires an effort that many give up on, we should consider this tendency to be, not a mere error, but an unconscious need. It must be that we are all driven to eating too much, too fat, too sweet, too salty. We are thus facing a statistically normal behavior, a behavior that must necessarily reflect the needs of the unconscious, only blurred by our conscious.

So how does this public health message informs us on our unconscious needs? To say that people eat "too" is a moral judgment. We are warned not to eat too much because it is accepted that eating "very" fat, sweet, and salty would push us to eat "beyond our needs" or harm our health, hence the "too". If our unconscious is rational, we can assume that it prompts us to eat until our needs are satisfied, and stops when these needs are met. Therefore, we

cannot say that our unconscious would push us to eat "too much". It is only because we tend to gain weight that we tend to believe that our eating habits are excessive. The "too much" must be understood, for the moment at least, as "very" or "much". We simply tend to eat "very" "fatty, sweet, salty", and this tendency seems to lead to overconsumption and overweight.

What this public health message reveals, it is that our unconscious eats according to four axes: "very", "fat", "sweet", and "salty".

Our unconscious needs to eat "very", that is to say that it seeks to eat "enough", or "sufficiently". In other words, it needs to reach satiety through a specific volume of food. And indeed, our shared experience informs us that when we are hungry, we would eat anything to feel full. The need to eat "very", to eat "enough" is primary. Here lies a first condensation: the quest for the "very" is the mere quest of satiety through food.

But, unless famine, or a binge eating or bulimia episode drive us to eat "anything", we all seek to reach satiety by eating "good", and even "the best possible". The primary aim of the unconscious is certainly to reach satiety, but whenever possible, he will optimize his food intake by aiming for the best, that is to say what *you*, consciously, will consider the most palatable.[6] And indeed, it is now established that foods that are high in both fat, sugar, and salt,

6. Colors, smells, and freshness contribute to this notion of pleasure.

the so-called 'multisensory' foods, stimulate the secretion of dopamine in our brains. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that influences our ability to feel positive. There lies the second condensation: our unconscious does not drive us to eat "fatty, sweet and salty".[7] It seeks palatable foods.

But the "very", which earlier represented a "volume", can also be analyzed as an "intensity". There lies a third condensation: we prefer the most palatable foods, that is to say the foods that will be the most fatty, sweet, and salty.

And this will not prevent us, in the end, from overeating. Volume and intensity are not mutually exclusive: this fourth and final condensation brings us back to the original "too".

The two axes of dieting

Despite all these condensations, our diets revolve around two axes: the feeling of being full, which is paramount when eating, and the pleasure of eating, which should be the most reliable sign of a safe food intake. Hunger and pleasure are the two axes of eating habits.

While hunger may be rational, our cravings may be influenced by various condensations of our conscious. Therefore, we should begin by analyzing the different forms that our cravings can take.

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7. In the chapter "Hunger", see "Nutritional impact of macronutrients", 42 ff.

SUPPOSE you fancy a chocolate éclair. You keep having images of chocolate éclairs popping up in your mind, you think about it over and over. This is a specific craving, which nutritionists refer to as a "specific appetite".

The craving

The origin of this thought is not conscious: you do not choose to think about chocolate éclairs. You do not choose to crave chocolate éclairs. Right now, you may feel your life would be much simpler if your tastes leaned towards the concept of salad. This is precisely the point: your unconscious is the source of your cravings and tastes, and it is crystal clear about what it wants. The unconscious has made it perfectly clear to you what would "please" it.

Let's say you're convinced that eating that éclair will cause you to gain weight. And let's also assume that you believe eating this salad is a better option for weight loss. Further suppose that you wait before eating, and when you

finally do, you opt for the salad. There you go, now you are "satisfied".

But what do you think happened? Your unconscious had set you a clear objective, and you did not listen. It wanted you to eat something specific that it deemed "good", but instead you ate something "not so good". Your unconscious will believe that it has not made itself understood. It had shown the target's center, yet you missed it. From its point of view, it failed.

By voluntarily modifying the target that your unconscious had set for you, you have only increased your sensitivity to your cravings. Your craving is a taste, it has not changed; it will come back later. But your sensitivity to your cravings has suddenly increased. And the problem is that it may well have increased permanently. By successfully resisting the craving for chocolate éclairs, you have given in to the cognitive restriction we mentioned earlier.[8]

What will your unconscious do? Next time, he'll send you a stronger signal, a stronger craving for chocolate éclairs — or anything else, for that matter. This craving will be more pressing. You won't be able to resist it so easily. Your unconscious will seek to correct the bias your conscious has created by sending stronger cravings for chocolate éclairs or any other food.

8. See Jean-Philippe Zermati, Gérard Apfeldorfer, and Bernard Waysfeld, *Traiter l'obésité et le surpoids*, *op. cit.*, 14.

Sensitivity to craving

In the food domain, emotions are cravings. Specifically, emotions can be analyzed as being composed of two distinct elements: the emotion, which arises from information transmitted to consciousness by the unconscious, and sensitivity to emotion, resulting from the strength with which our unconscious expresses that emotion.

Although distinct, these two components, emotion and sensitivity to emotion, are linked. The less we satisfy our cravings, the more our sensitivity to cravings increases. Similarly, the less you fulfill a need, the more intensely you'll feel that need, quite literally. One could say that your unconscious amplifies your sensitivity to and awareness of your cravings, in an attempt to bring attention to them and ensure that they are fulfilled. And conversely, if you consistently satisfy your cravings, your sensitivity to them may decrease. Paradoxically, the only way to reduce our sensitivity to our cravings is to consistently satisfy them precisely when they arise. This is called olfactogustatory alliesthesia. It is an autonomous, innate, and automatic physiological reflex that does not result from learning.

Research has shown that over the long term, individuals who try to mentally control their eating behavior to lose weight or prevent weight gain, even when they are not hungry, as you just did, tend to consume more and eat less healthfully than those who listen to their natural food sensations and respond accordingly. Therefore overweight

cannot result from my unconscious driving me to overeat. It can only come from the fact that I do not eat what my subconscious wants.

The guarantee of the best

There is therefore a diet that is best for you: it is the diet that your tastes and desires dictate. Changing your diet to lose weight should not involve following a better diet in the sense of "healthier" or better from the point of view of "health" if it satisfies us less than our current diet. We must eat "the best", precisely what our unconscious finds "the best".

Of course, nutritionists, doctors, the medical profession, and even your entourage could tell you the best diet for you. And you may yourself have a slight idea on the question. However, the real point is that the best food for you is the food that you — or rather, your unconscious — find the best gustatively. The best diet for your unconscious is not the diet that we, as conscious and sensible individuals, would consider the healthiest. Why? Because humanity has only ever been able to rely on its senses to survive. A better diet can only be deemed so by our unconscious if it satisfies our tastes. And consequently, a healthier diet will only be sustainable in the long term if it satisfies us gustatively.

Could there be a reason for this? It is a fact often forgotten, but certain toxic substances such as environmental pollutants can accumulate in adipose tissue. Losing

weight releases these substances into our blood and our body, including our brain.

We hypothesize that the unconscious acts in weight loss as it does in seasickness. Seasickness arises due to a dissonance between the information collected by the inner ear, the movement of the waves, and the information perceived by the eye, for which everything is stable. For the brain, this dissonance can only result from a hallucination caused by poison ingestion. It induces vomiting to rid your body of this potential neurotoxin. Even though you may consciously understand the origin of this dissonance caused by conflicting sensory information, your unconscious may still act upon it and trigger its defense mechanisms, regardless of your conscious knowledge.

We assume the process is the same in weight loss. Any change in diet, as "healthy" as it may be, which leads to weight loss is inevitably associated, in the short or medium term, with the release of toxins in your body. Your subconscious, therefore, associates your new diet with the appearance of toxins. It will conclude that you are making poor food choices and have swallowed poison. It will manipulate your hunger and cravings — the olfactory-gustatory alliesthesia mentioned above — and your morale and mood to push you back towards your previous diet.

When dieting, the only thing that can convince your subconscious that it has not ingested something toxic is that the food ingested gives it a maximum pleasure. This is why food pleasure is essential in weight loss.

Want and need

By refusing to eat the chocolate éclair, you thought you were acting rationally: you considered that eating this éclair was not the best for your health or weight. You decided the éclair was just a want, not a need.

But how do you tell the want from the need? Is there even a criterion to distinguish them? let's not beat around the bush: as far as the object of your appetite is concerned, no. Nothing allows us to say with certainty that the object of a desire does not correspond to a real need for our unconscious. The need is a piece of information transmitted by your unconscious to your conscious so that it can take it into account, just like desires. And you cannot assert that what gives you pleasure necessarily corresponds to a misguided pleasure of your unconscious. Distinguishing between a specific vital unconscious need and a desire is quite simply impossible.

However, our shared experience tells us that some desires still seem suspicious. When I finish the chocolate bar I had planned for the week in ten minutes, when I devour the family's cereal packet in an hour, or when I empty the ice cream reserve in the freezer, it's hard to think that I've unknowingly satisfied a lack spotted by my unconscious. Is there really no way to sort through all my desires?

The only way to distinguish true craving from false craving is time. Real craving is the one you can postpone. In other words, anything that corresponds to an impulse to eat something pleasurable, either out of simple desire or

under the influence of stress, sadness, or fatigue, anything that you would eat at the moment because you have the opportunity, should be considered not as a craving, but as a hunger. At the root of your impulse, there is the immediacy that reflects an unconscious signal. The unconscious is the agent that ignores time, acts in the present, and satisfies current hunger.

This signal is real hunger, and we will see how to prevent and respond to it. However, the conscious mind misguides this legitimate hunger towards the most readily available and desirable foods in your environment, which are typically high in fat, sugar, and salt.

For the moment, we will remember this: the genuine craving, the one that could correspond to an authentic need, is a craving for which you could wait, one that you could look at with serenity when it is satisfied.

THROUGH cognitive dissonance, our unconscious informs us that we can lose weight by changing our diets and eating what we crave for. But if we must satisfy our cravings, should we then give up on satisfying our hunger?

Eating

As previously mentioned, the unconscious is a rational agent, constantly there, at work within us. It cannot arbitrarily change its objectives, and always seeks to achieve them to the best of its ability. We will assume it first and foremost strives at ensuring our physical integrity. This is achieved, among other things, through feeding. Through hunger, our unconscious signals a need for food, and by satiation, that this need has been met. Hunger is sent by our unconscious to signal we need food, and satiation means this need has been fulfilled. Hunger is a positive and unilateral signal processed by the unconscious to prompt us

to respond to it. The unconscious can at times delay or suppress this hunger, and may even send a signal of disgust for food in general or a type of food in particular, in case of illness or intoxication, for example. But, when hunger pops up, it is normal we respond to it.

Our bodies can survive without eating. If you're hungry, you won't die, at least not right away: you have some leeway to get food. But the unconscious cannot intentionally choose not to feed you. So, can fasting help with weight loss? Certainly, it can. However, from the perspective of the unconscious, this is not a viable long-term solution. The unconscious's primary function is to guide us in our food choices and take advantage of all opportunities to nourish ourselves, especially in a world where food is *a priori* not readily available.

The practice of fasting is, therefore, a decision that emanates from your conscious. It may have its benefits, but it does not fit the quest for the "best" diet which is part of the cognitive dissonance mentioned earlier, since, precisely, it is not a food. You might well point out that famines have always existed, that humanity has adapted to periods of forced fasting, followed with food abundance again, and that this is probably why our body has developed this annoying ability to store fat in periods of plenty. You might then deduce we should seek to reproduce these lean times artificially through fasting.

However this ignores the static nature of the unconscious. Indeed, since the unconscious regulates weight, the unconscious should be able to maintain our weight

without relying on the chance events of deprivation, food shortages, and famines to ensure internal balance.

Satisfy hunger

Similarly, the unconscious cannot content itself with always remaining "unsatisfied". Hunger is the signal of lack, and satiation is the sign that this lack has been fulfilled. These are natural signals that have no substitute and that we cannot do without. If I remain unsatisfied, I cheat with my unconscious; I pretend it wants "too much" when it cannot because it wants "just as much as possible".

Of course, here again, our unconscious can withstand a little frustration. But, *a priori*, we should not cheat with our unconscious and instead try to satisfy its demands best. Let us not forget that the unconscious is a rational agent that does not manifest groundless desires.

And since the unconscious is a rational agent that acts constantly through us and operates on a much shorter time scale than ours, it can determine accurately whether our hunger has been satisfied or not. If I still feel hungry after a meal, it may indicate that I have not adequately satisfied my hunger. Conversely, if my hunger eventually subsides, I should acknowledge that my unconscious may be regulating the satisfaction of my needs over a longer period of time. In fact, the human body's nutritional balance is not determined by a single day, but rather over a span of several days or more.

Satisfy all hungers

There are also times when we may feel the desire or the need to overeat, to fill or satiate ourselves out of hunger, compulsion or envy, or simply because, freed from any supervision and the shameful gaze of others, we allow ourselves to eat more than reasonable. We then seize the opportunity to binge.

It is easy to decree that these are not rational behaviors; they are pathological behaviors (binge eating, bulimia, or cravings), which are not motivated by any specific nutritional need. But again, on closer inspection, this need to overeat is a perfectly normal behavior since we have all experienced it to varying degrees of intensity.

Remember that our eating behaviors are never irrational as such. Rather, they are only two rational behaviors — the unconscious and the conscious — that, combined and acted upon by the same individual, appear irrational. If the unconscious acts permanently in us and its goal is, like ours, to maintain our weight balance, it must rely on internal mechanisms of weight regulation.

We hypothesize that these compelling and recurrent urges to overeat are simply legitimate pangs of hunger expressed by the unconscious but biased and misguided by the conscious.

Therefore, the solution to the problem of overweight depends on understanding the nature of this hunger and how to best satisfy it.

Hunger and satiety

In fact, it would be wonderful if all of our appetites were as specific as your craving for chocolate éclairs earlier, for example, if they indeed were precisely what we call "specific appetites".

But let's be honest: most of the time, hunger doesn't seem to be based on a specific craving. We feel hungry, but we can't pinpoint exactly what we want to eat. Of course, an appetizing smell can stimulate our appetite. And we know that we prefer red meat over poultry, beef over veal, and rice over pasta, and that we will, therefore, choose the dish of beef with rice. So we have a good idea of our tastes, and many things can awaken our appetite. But hunger, as a specific craving, is rare because it does not concern itself with such considerations. The challenge in hunger is to eat something that pleases us, of course, but above all, to calm it down; *a priori*, therefore, no specific desire here. In other words, the specific craving would seem to be only marginal in hunger.

In the same way, satiation — the feeling of fullness after eating — is a sensation that is not perfectly defined. Quite often, we don't stop eating because we are fully satisfied, but rather because we have finished our plates, dishes, or portions of food. In the vast majority of cases, we could always have something more. Specialists call this ability to limit our food intake spontaneously a "regulated eating behavior" or "conditioned

satiation". However, this type of satiation is the result of learning.[9]

Hunger and satiation, therefore, seem to be at the heart of the problem. What exactly am I seeking when I desire satiation?

9."Conditioned satiation is based on a double unconscious learning that establishes links between, on the one hand, the sensory, olfactory and gustatory image of each food and, on the other hand, the metabolic effects that these have induced during their previous consumption." Marc Fantino, "Plaisir alimentaire et régulation énergétique", in *Traiter l'obésité et le surpoids*, *op. cit.*, 38. (author's translation)

We said that cravings are important and should be respected, and that hunger is an unambiguous one-sided signal that should not be left unfulfilled. If neither of these two signals can be questioned, perhaps we should look for the origin of our weight gain in the foods we eat and the impact they can have on our metabolism. And in fact, even if there are a thousand ways to eat, our hunger can only be truly and lastingly satisfied by three categories of macronutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids.

Nutritional impact of macronutrients

From a nutritional standpoint, proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids each have different roles. Proteins build muscles and bones, maintain organs, viscera, hormones, immune agents, enzymes, ligaments, connective tissue, cartilage, part of DNA and neurotransmitters, etc. Lipids — or fats — are an energy reserve and participate, among other

things, in cell membranes, in particular those of our nervous system and our brain, in the synthesis of certain hormones, and in the transport of fat-soluble vitamins. Carbohydrates provide energy to the body. However, none of these macronutrients are essential as "macronutrients" *per se*.

Proteins are actually assemblies of amino acids. Among all the amino acids that form these proteins, only around twenty are vital for our body, and among these twenty, nine cannot be produced by our body.[10] They are said to be "essential". Our hunger could be narrowed down to these essential amino acids since it is up to our diet to provide them, but we could find them in a relatively wide spectrum of foods.

Carbohydrates are natural organic compounds. They can be divided into two categories: simple sugars, including monosaccharides such as glucose, fructose, and galactose, and disaccharides such as sucrose, lactose, and maltose; and complex sugars, or polysaccharides, such as starch, glycogen, and cellulose. When we consume carbohydrates, our body stores the assimilated sugars as glycogen in the muscles and liver. Additionally, our body has different mechanisms for creating glycogen from proteins or lipids. However, carbohydrates are not only a source

10. Histidine, leucine, threonine, lysine, tryptophan, phenylalanine, valine, methionine, isoleucine. Moreover, arginine and glutamine are produced in insufficient quantities to meet the needs of athletes, which is why they often take them as food supplements.

of energy; they are also often associated with fibers and various micronutrients, all of which have their own nutritional value.

As for lipids, they all have more or less the same composition: they combine three fatty acids with a molecule of glycerol; it is these fatty acids that differentiate fats.

We distinguish "saturated" fats from "unsaturated fats", and in these "unsaturated fats", we distinguish "monounsaturated fats" from "polyunsaturated fats". This last group of polyunsaturated fatty acids is divided into two families: omega-3 and omega-6. Among all these lipids, only these last two fatty acids, omega-3 and -6, are said to be "essential" insofar as our body cannot synthesize them.

By their nutritional impact, therefore, neither proteins nor carbohydrates nor lipids, as "macronutrients", can be identified as essential, even if some of their components are essential for life. What about their caloric intake?

Caloric impact of macronutrients

From a caloric standpoint, proteins and carbohydrates provide 4 kcal per gram. From the sole energetic point of view, therefore, they cannot be distinguished. Lipids, on the other hand, provide 9 kcal per gram, which gives them an energy advantage.

If our unconscious only cared about calories, then it would prefer fat to protein or carbohydrates. But, precisely, our hunger is never purely a search for lipids. Nature has designed it this way: fats are not really appetizing on their

own. On the other hand, they largely contribute to the taste of the foods they make up or accompany. They influence our food intake indirectly by modifying not only the taste of what we eat but also their energy value. But they can do this just as much for protein-rich foods as for carbohydrate-rich foods.

In reality, our hunger is not solely caused by a nutritional deficiency or a caloric deficit. Rather, hunger is primarily a hormonal signal that is directly influenced by the level of glucose, also known as glycemia, in our bloodstream.

Hormonal impact of macronutrients

When our blood sugar, the level of glucose present in our blood, drops, we are hungry. This glycemia depends on our nutritional state or our physical activity, but it is also governed by the antagonistic action of two hormones: insulin and glucagon.[11]

Carbohydrates stimulate the production of insulin. Insulin is a hypoglycemic hormone: it lowers blood sugar levels. The presence of food in your digestive tract stimulates your secretion of insulin. This then promotes the assimilation by the body of the nutrients it absorbs, with the conversion of the carbohydrates present in your blood

11. Two other hormones, produced by the stomach depending on its filling rate, are also important: ghrelin, which stimulates appetite, and leptin, which produces the feeling of satiety.

into glycogen stored in the liver and the muscles, but also into fatty acids at the level of adipose tissue.

Proteins, on the other hand, act on glucagon. It is a hyperglycemic hormone that mainly allows glycogen stored in the liver to be released into the blood. Glucagon and insulin are interdependent: if the glucagon level increases, the insulin level decreases, and vice versa. Insufficient glucagon levels induce compensatory insulin secretion, which then lowers your blood sugar levels: the level of sugar in your blood drops and triggers a signal of hunger.

Proteins and carbohydrates, therefore, have antagonistic hormonal impacts on our blood sugar and our hunger. However, the excessive intake of calories in a single meal alone can stimulate insulin secretion, regardless of its source. Like proteins, lipids can indirectly increase insulin levels due to their caloric impact.

But fats also have their own hormonal impact. The lipids we absorb are used to produce "eicosanoids", specific hormones to which they confer their structural elements and properties. These eicosanoids impact all the hormonal systems of the body, our metabolism, and our food intake. However, omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids have antagonistic effects. And since they are "essential", they cannot be synthesized or substituted for each other by our body: they can only be found in food, that is in our environment, which therefore also has an impact on regulating our metabolism.

This means that if our hunger depends on a hormonal signal, this hormonal signal is itself governed by our

environment. We must therefore see what and how our environment impacts our hunger.

Hormonal impact of our environment

We have seen that omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are said to be "essential": our body does not synthesize them. They are naturally present in all plants and in animals that feed on these plants. In other words, in the state of nature, it would suffice for my unconscious to obtain both these essential fatty acids. Conversely, getting these two essential fatty acids signal to my subconscious that I am nourishing myself.

In nature, most of these fatty acids are to be found at very different times of the year: omega-3s in spring; omega-6 in autumn. They are seasonal markers that prepare our body for the change of seasons: omega-6 fatty acids promote the development of adipose tissue. Omega-3 fatty acids, on the contrary, promote satiety and slow down the mechanisms of synthesis and lipids transport. In autumn, the foods we eat are both rich in sugars and omega-6: our insulin levels and our appetite increase, and we accumulate reserves. In the spring, the reverse happens.

The alternation of seasons, its transcription in nature in terms of fatty acids, and the impact this alternation has on many living beings' metabolism, can only be understood if we factor in the need to accumulate reserves for the return of winter. For some animals, this ability to accumulate reserves is essential to survive hibernation.

In the natural state, food intake and weight gain are regulated by the alternation of seasons and their impact on our diet's omega-6/omega-3 ratio. However, this ratio has evolved over millennia.

> Paleonutritionists have reconstructed an omega-6/omega-3 ratio of 1 during the hundreds of thousands of years in which our physiology and genome were being constructed. With the advent of agriculture, this ratio slowly increased, up to a value of 5, and then rapidly surged in the last few decades to reach values between 15 and 25 in our modern diets.[12]

Our appetite and weight are therefore determined both by the seasons and our environment, or rather the artificial environment our diet makes us evolve in. In other words, we don't become overweight because we eat poorly. We eat perfectly well, in the instinctive sense of the term, when we seek out the best in our environment. Instinctively searching for the sweetest, fattest, and most mineral-rich foods, is a huge advantage in an environment where food is scarce, since these are the nutrient characteristics that best prepare us for the seasonal changes to come.

Evolution and our modern era have created a universe where our diet is no longer regulated by the succession of seasons. The search for the "perfect" food (the sweetest, the

12. Pierre Weill, "Graisse et obésité: une question de quantité ou de qualité?", in *Traiter l'obésité et le surpoids*, *op. cit.*, 61–74. (author's translation)

fattiest, and the richest in minerals) that should guide our food choices and adapt our bodies to our environment is now taking us further away from our original weight and metabolic balance. With the natural regulation of our physiology and unconscious no longer operating, it is crucial to investigate the true motivation behind our hunger.

SATIETY

IF OUR HUNGER and cravings are no longer reliable indicators to inform our food choices, we must return to what our physiology demands. If eating as we please will not do the trick, it may be that our needs are no longer adequately served. We must then seek to understand the nature of the satiation our hunger seeks to achieve.

Energy needs

"Total energy expenditure" refers to all the processes by which the body converts energy. This total energy expenditure can be divided into four main categories: resting expenditure, the energy the body uses at rest; postprandial expenditure, the energy required to digest food; expenditure from physical activity; and energy required to maintain body temperature. Thermoregulation only accounts for 2% of energy expenditure in modern societies, so we can ignore it.

How are our energy expenditures distributed? Resting expenditure makes up 60–65% of the total energy expenditure of a sedentary individual, while postprandial expenditure makes up 15%. Note that these numbers do not account for any physical activity. They merely describe your body's needs if you were to spend the day lying on the couch and eating. Eventually, if you decide to move your body and get some exercise, you will spend 15 to 20% of your energy on this.[13] So you spend about 80% of your energy maintaining a functioning body.

Nutritional needs

Still, the whole time you've been on your couch, you may have been feeling hungry. This hunger signal is caused by an imbalance between insulin and glucagon, which your unconscious detects and signals to you. But what does this signal mean?

Your body's resting energy expenditure accounts for 60–65% of your total energy expenditure, with approximately 90% of this expenditure attributed to your lean body mass, which includes your bones, muscles, organs, skin, and body fluids. Simply put, your lean body mass refers to everything in your body except for the fatty tissue your body has accumulated over time.

13. You may even reach 30%, but the proportion of your resting energy expenditure will have then slightly diminished.

Your unconscious builds, maintains, protects, and repairs your lean body mass through protein. Of the dozen kilos of protein contained in a "standard" human body, 300 grams is renewed daily.[14] This means that within six weeks, your unconscious will have renewed the same amount of protein as that contained in your whole body.

> [This synthesis] includes the production of structural proteins, which form the membrane of the cell (especially the neuron) and its internal compartments (organelles), the production of enzymatic proteins, some of which are responsible for developing neurotransmitters and receptors that receive messages and issue commands, as well as certain proteins that play a nourishing (or trophic) role. Finally, the synthesis of hormonal polypeptides (small chains of amino acids) is also involved in the mechanisms of neurosecretion. Just like in all cells, the synthesis of polypeptides or proteins in the brain is done using amino acids from the food we eat, via the bloodstream.[15]

Unfortunately, out of the three macronutrients our body relies on for fuel, only protein cannot be stored or made from anything other than protein. Tough break!

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14. Jean-Marie Bourre, *la Nouvelle Diététique du cerveau* (Paris: Odile Jacob), 129.

15. *Id.*, 127–128. (author's translation)

Actually, this is because our body is its own reserve of proteins: in the event of a deficiency, it draws on its lean mass, from the muscles and organs, to manufacture it. Note: *from the muscles and organs*. From what he wouldn't want to get rid of, in what he should never have had to get rid of. To avoid resorting to such extremes, the body strives to recycle the proteins it renews. But he must also find a certain amount of protein in his diet every day. This is neither pleasure nor energy, but minimum maintenance.

Hunger as a "specific appetite"

We have seen earlier that our desire to eat arises from hunger, the need to eat sufficiently, or "very (much)", and cravings, the desire to eat what we love: the "fatty, sweet and salty". We will now assume that hunger can, in fact, be interpreted as the specific appetite for a high-protein diet, a "maintenance diet".

In fact, our hunger can be understood as an urge our body feels to provide itself with the necessary nutrients for maintaining its integrity. This requires an optimal combination of proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids, ensuring the most efficient assimilation of the proteins you consume. In other words, everything your body needs in order to assimilate the proteins you provide through food in the most economical way possible.

To achieve this, a maintenance diet must meet three criteria: it should provide a specific minimum amount of protein per meal, while also balancing carbohydrates

and fats. Too much or too little of either would trigger hunger. This maintenance diet should also contain enough fat to make it enjoyable to eat. This hunger for some "maintenance diet" could alternately be called a "specific appetite for assimilable proteins", for a "high-protein food diet".

This appetite for a maintenance diet is driven by the need for satiation through a well-balanced combination of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. However, it leaves room for flexibility in how to reach this balance. This hunger has got to be satiated, and it is recurring. The body constantly renews its proteins and cannot store them: the need for satiation will recur regularly throughout the day.

In short, "hunger", this non-specific, indefinite craving that we feel every day and that must absolutely be met, should be analyzed as the specific craving of the unconscious for maintenance food.

"Overeating" as "specific hunger"

All non-specific pangs of hunger, including our periodic needs to overeat, can be understood as a specific craving for food that meets our body's maintenance needs, *i.e.* a specific craving for the maintenance food mentioned above. It is established that our body does not judge its food intake over a single day, but rather over a period of about a week.[16] Bulimia or hyperphagia attacks may be the unconscious response to inadequate nutritional intake from

16. *Id.*, 341.

its perspective. These episodes may reflect a "structural" hunger for an optimal protein diet rather than a hunger for carbohydrates, especially when an individual is overweight.

Why? First, because we don't really know what our protein needs might be. This is especially true as we age and our muscle mass, one of the components of lean mass, begins to decrease, regularly from the age of 20–30, then more rapidly from the age of 50–60. Beyond a certain threshold, this muscle loss can become pathological: it is called sarcopenia. Medical professionals suspect that inadequate protein intake may contribute to the development of sarcopenia.[17]

These estimates are typically based on the weight of an average adult, but it is unclear what the specific protein needs of an individual trying to lose weight might be. If our body signals a non-specific hunger with no clear craving, it seems reasonable to assume that it is seeking the maintenance diet, at least until we achieve our desired body shape.

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17. Article "Sarcopenia", website of the Bordeaux University Hospital, www.chu-bordeaux.fr/Les-services/Service-de-médecine-physique-et-de-réadaptation/PATHOLOGIES/Sarcopénie/.

THERE is, therefore, a discrepancy in information in our hunger between what our unconscious asks for and what our conscious perceives. It would seem that the conscious no longer respond adequately to the demands of our unconscious. In fact, the explanation for this phenomenon is now well known.

Paleolithic diet

We mentioned earlier[18] that the unconscious can be seen as a static agent whose role is to maintain physiological balances developed over extremely long periods. We also assumed that the unconscious operates at a much finer scale than the conscious. Actually, from a physiological standpoint, our genetic heritage is identical to that of Cro-Magnon man, who lived in the Paleolithic era, long before the appearance of agriculture. Indeed, human beings have

18. See chapter "The analytical grid of the unconscious", 18.

spent 99.9% of their history and evolution on a prehistoric diet:

> Most experts agree that man, for at least a million years, was able to subsist on a hunter-gatherer diet, consisting of 60–90% protein (game), and the rest from roots, berries, shoots, seeds, and nuts.[19]

For hundreds of thousands of years, the human diet consisted mainly of wild meat obtained through hunting, and the hunger signal itself was organized around this diet. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that when the unconscious formulates a need, it expects to receive, in the short or medium term, the same types of foods that were historically obtained through hunting, and that the human body is best equipped to assimilate due to its genetic heritage.

Neolithic diet

The Neolithic agricultural revolution brought about a significant shift in human dietary habits. Meat, which had been the primary source of food for thousands of years, was gradually replaced by agricultural products, particularly cereals.[20] Cereals belong to the category of "starches", which encompasses all foods that are sources of complex

19. *La Nouvelle Diététique du cerveau*, *op. cit.*, 42. (author's translation)

20. Wheat, rice, maize, rye, barley, oats, sorghum, millet, and products thereof.

carbohydrates. Other examples of this group include legumes[21] and tubers, such as potatoes, and their various processed forms.

And in fact, cereals and other starchy foods contain some of the amino acids that make up proteins that meat provides. However, cereals do not contain the full spectrum of amino acids that meat does.[22] To recover the full spectrum of essential amino acids that our body cannot synthesize, legumes must be added to cereals.

Numerous cultures have combined cereals and legumes spontaneously:

> All cultures, all civilizations, following a very long selection process, have ended up compensating for the deficiencies of food plants by developing which combine them by balancing their advantages, compensating for their shortcomings. It is vital to combine at least two plants.[23]

Above all, the impact of starches on our glycemic index is radically different from that of proteins or lipids. The ratio of omega-6/omega-3 fatty acids in our diet, which had

21. Family including beans, broad beans, lentils, peas, etc.

22. "If the muscles contain the majority of the body's proteins (more than two thirds), these are nevertheless present everywhere, and their functions are multiple. There are more than 12,000 different classes of them in the human body." *La Nouvelle Diététique du cerveau*, *op. cit.*, 129. (author's translation)

23. *Id.*, 136. (author's translation)

been 1 for thousands of years, was boosted to 5 by the Neolithic revolution. It has only increased since then. On the basis of this observation, some doctors today recommend returning to a diet as close as possible to the Paleolithic diet or, at the very least, adopting a low glycemic index diet.

A "better" diet

However, the consumption of starchy foods has its advantages: they potentially allow us to eat "less", or at least "less often", freeing us from our most basic subsistence needs. Additionally, by diversifying our diet, agricultural products, as well as livestock products that appeared shortly after agriculture, have considerably enriched our taste universe.

From the conscious point of view, the two objectives of a satisfying diet, satiety, and taste, are respected. With one nuance, however: with meat, satiety comes from a fair protein intake, proteins having a natural appetite suppressant effect; with cereals, even if the largest spectrum of amino acids is not guaranteed, the feeling of satiety will come, among other things, from their calorie intake and the distension of the gastric volume they cause. Thus, the Neolithic revolution brought a distinction between the satisfaction of our food cravings and the proper assimilation of proteins, allowing us to achieve satiety and pleasure while not necessarily meeting all our body's protein needs.

Return to the past?

Should we backtrack, go back to a "paleo" diet? And since the paleo diet is usually assumed to be a low glycemic index diet, should we worry about our blood sugar levels for the rest of our lives? Of course, it could be better for our health. But here it is: very often, our health does not require it. And it is worth noting that our food choices are still dictated by the same hunter-gatherer instincts that we inherited from the Paleolithic era.

Our food and taste universe is not inherently dangerous. The occasional consumption of products bought in the supermarket, regardless of their nutritional quality or caloric load, has never been known to cause death. No need then to deprive ourselves of foods that are readily available in our environment, especially if our immediate survival does not depend on it. Instead of denying our food environment, we should learn to adapt to it.

A NORMAL DIET

Now that we have clarified the questions of cravings, hunger, and overeating, we need to determine what could be a "better" diet for the unconscious. It cannot be a question of weight loss since our weight is regulated by our unconscious. We should rather assume that our unconscious seeks a more "normal" diet. But what are precisely the characteristics of a "normal" diet?

A diet that satiate

A normal diet should provide satiety. Hunger is a positive and clear signal. If my diet does not calm my hunger, my subconscious will believe it has failed to sensitize me to my needs. It will manipulate my hunger, my cravings, or both. A normal diet can only be a diet that satisfies my hunger completely.

Therefore, I should not deprive myself. My hunger should be satisfied and satiety be reached. I should not have to restrain myself voluntarily.

So what is a normal diet for the unconscious? First, it is a taste-wise normal diet. Second, it is a diet that is statistically normal.

A taste-wise normal diet

A gustatory normal diet should allow me to eat what I love, in an habitual manner. It is, therefore, necessary, for each of my food intake to be a source of pleasure. I must enjoy what I eat every day, at every meal or snack I have. I should always eat something that pleases me.

A gustatory normal diet should also satisfy my cravings. My diet should meet the specific appetites expressed by my unconscious, which must be treated as essential needs. Indeed, my survival requires that I eat a specific number of calories on a regular basis, whether on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. It is therefore quite natural for my unconscious to believe that periodically, I could eat the foods I specifically crave. Finally, a gustatory normal diet should help me to eat what is available and enjoyable in my food environment.

A statistically normal diet

A normal diet must also be statistically normal. In the natural state, a diet that provides the same amount of calories every day would be abnormal. A statistically normal diet should therefore allow for periodic overeating. My diet should be able to be irregular in terms of

calories or energy. A statistically normal diet should also allow me to eat alone and binge, if and when I feel like it, or periodically eat out of sight of the guilt-inducing gaze of the group.

The great paradox

Therein lies the great paradox of this diet: it has all the hallmarks of a perfectly normal diet, involving neither deprivation nor frustration, yet it still enables you to lose all the weight you wish.

If you allow your unconscious to have the normal food just described, if you satisfy all your body's needs, your hunger, and desires, your cravings, you will lose weight, because to your unconscious, your diet will seem perfectly normal.

As you lose more weight, it becomes increasingly important to maintain these principles. You must ensure that you are never hungry, indulge in your specific cravings, and allow yourself to snack or overeat when necessary. This is especially crucial if you have struggled with eating disorders or weight issues in the past. By following these principles, you are providing your unconscious with the reassurance that your diet is the best possible option for you.

Indirectly, this shows that maintaining our weight is not the unconscious' primary objective. Our weight is just the result of the optimization of two fundamental needs: eating "enough" and eating "good". There is no "equilibrium

weight", since this weight essentially depends on the way our body adapts to a given food environment.

You will lose weight as you gained it: you had gained weight because your unconscious required a normal diet; you will lose it because your unconscious will have obtained the normal diet it longs for. So now the question is: how do we get there?

THE RATIONAL UNCONSCIOUS DIET: THE PRINCIPLES

So, how to regain a normal diet in the sense of the unconscious, lose weight, and stay slim? You know your diet should be normal both gustatively and statistically. The key is to distinguish your hunger from your specific cravings, and fulfill both optimally.

Satisfy your hunger

The first thing to watch out for is to *always satisfy your hunger when it arises*. And the more weight you lose, the more essential this will be. But, to be completely honest, most of the time, we're *just* hungry. We want to eat, and in this state of hunger, especially if it lasts, certain foods and certain dishes end up tempting us more than others. But these are neither real desires nor specific cravings. It is optimal to satisfy this usual, daily, and non-specific hunger with a "maintenance diet", providing the right balance of proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids. Following a strict

protein diet or consuming only pure proteins is useless and counterproductive. You ought to combine your source of proteins with what will make them suitable for you and allow you to assimilate them in a way that will truly satisfy your hunger. These proteins can be animal or vegetable, provided they are of high quality and provide you with at least the nine essential amino acids our body cannot synthesize. To satisfy you, these protein sources must be good, and even the best possible, qualitatively but above all taste-wise. If you have to snack frequently to satisfy your hunger, do so with this maintenance diet.

Eventually, life can present us with unexpected challenges, such as receiving bad news, attending a stressful meeting, needing to exert more effort, or experiencing stress. The opportunities are many. Consider all these situations as disturbances in equilibrium. Your appetite is tuned for a given activity, a sure daily life. Anything that disrupts this everyday life and represents an extra effort, a crisis, generally triggers a pang of hunger. Your unconscious was tuned for a particular routine, which has suddenly been turned upside down. It will signal an additional need: you will be hungry. This hunger must be satisfied. Consider that life demands extra energy from your body that it did not expect and must satisfy. Feed it with this maintenance food, with assimilable proteins.

By satisfying occasional hunger with a maintenance diet, you won't gain weight — in fact, quite the opposite. Your body will consume what it needs and burn off any excess by increasing your physical activity. This process will teach

your unconscious that it has nothing to fear and need not accumulate, because you will provide it with what it needs when it needs it.

On the other hand, there is a moment in the day when you know that you will suffer no stress, no fatigue, no hard blow, and where you will not do much, at least consciously: it is your sleep. It would be senseless to deprive yourself during the day when something unexpected happens to you under the pretext of caloric restriction and then to overfeed your body precisely when it will need it the least. You should eat just enough in the evening, ideally a few hours before your bedtime, but not too much so that you don't go to bed hungry, which would be counterproductive. At the same time, you should eat light enough to allow your unconscious to draw on your reserves during sleep.

Satisfy your cravings

We have said that the true craving, in matters of food, is a craving for which we can wait.[24] Once your hunger has been satisfied with this maintenance diet on a regular basis, you may want to eat a certain dish. The day of the week, the season, the region, the calendar are often occasions for specific desires. In all these cases, when a specific craving arises, when you feel a certain dish would make you happy, take your time to think about what you really want, and enjoy it.

24. See above "Want and need", in the chapter "Satisfy cravings", 34.

It is even possible to approach it the other way around. Think about what you would really like to consume on a regular basis, what you would like to be able to eat once or several times a week, or month. Think about what you would like to be able to allow yourself, what would actually make you happy, what would make you feel like you are getting closer to the food of your dreams. Then start by incorporating this type of food gradually, as you lose weight.

As we have previously discussed,[25] the foods you will reintroduce are not necessarily the ones you would typically consider "healthier". Everything you modify in your diet, everything you replace, must go for the best taste. The best diet for you will be the one that respects your hunger and your cravings. Nor is it a question of choosing a specific time during the week when you can eat anything, because then you would be faced with a hunger or an urge to overeat, unconscious needs that cannot be foreseen or planned.[26]

If you have spent your life depriving yourself of certain foods, it is likely that you have specific cravings for things that were once tempting but forbidden. Think of these cravings as specific urges, and allow yourself to indulge in them. Take the time to savor the flavors and enjoy the experience. Make these occasions memorable and exceptional moments, but keep in mind that hunger and specific

25. See "The guarantee of the best" in the chapter "Satisfy cravings", 32.

26. In the chapter "Satiety", see "Hunger as a 'specific appetite'", 53, and "'Overeating' as a 'specific appetite'", 54.

cravings are not the same thing. Even after satisfying a specific craving, you may still feel hungry, which you can address with your maintenance diet. Ultimately, it's up to you to decide how to balance your desires with your weight loss goals and the situation at hand.

Satisfy your binges

If you feel like eating more than you normally would, go ahead and do it.

If you are simply feeling hungry, consider this urge to overeat as a legitimate need for maintenance food. This desire to overeat is a normal feeling that we all experience from time to time. Since it is a craving for overeating and doesn't usually come with a specific urge to eat something, it should be met with a high-protein diet in abundance.

If you feel a specific craving, and you feel like eating "a lot", keep in mind that your specific appetite and your hunger, or your urge to overeat, are not the same things, and that they can be condensed in your present craving. You have a craving that must be satisfied, but you also experience hunger, which you should satisfy with a maintenance diet. Try to satisfy both your craving and your hunger accordingly.

Here again, the point is to find the body shape that suits you while respecting your food sensations. So, do not hesitate to consume enough maintenance food to satisfy your hunger. Our body can perfectly manage this additional protein intake and may even need it from time to time.

Drink

Eating protein, losing weight, and eliminating toxins are all great reasons to stay hydrated. Liquids help to flush out toxins and eliminate waste through the kidneys. It is important to note that only 40% of the water essential to our body is provided by solid food. The remaining 60% should be obtained through the consumption of liquids, such as water, herbal tea, milk, tea, coffee, etc. Alcohol should not be included in this list since it provides 7 kcal per gram, more than proteins or carbohydrates, and should be considered as a food.

Consuming protein generally means staying well hydrated throughout the day. A total consumption of approximately 2 liters of liquid per day in small doses spread throughout the day, in the absence of any medical contraindication, is generally recommended.

But drink what? When it comes to beverages, the same principle applies as with food: they should make you feel good. If water seems too bland, there are plenty of sugar-free or sweetened drinks, without carbs to choose from.

REMARKS ON FIBERS

We have seen that assimilable carbohydrates are one of the three macronutrients that make up our diet. But there are also unassimilable, "indigestible" carbohydrates: fibers. All plant food contains fiber in various proportions.

The fibers we consume are mostly chains of polysaccharides. This is why they are classified as carbohydrates. Fibers have a power of water retention: they tend to increase the volume of our food. Additionally, some fibers are considered fermentable, meaning they can be fermented by bacteria in the large intestine to produce beneficial fatty acids that the body can use for energy.

Fiber is not technically considered a macronutrient, but it is a type of carbohydrate that provides volume to our food. Fermentable fibers induce the production and assimilation of fatty acids and, through the vegetables that contain them, provide essential minerals to our bodies.

Vegetables are an excellent source of volume and provide the flavors of "very fat, sweet, and salty" foods through fatty acids, polysaccharides, and mineral salts. However, not everyone enjoys eating vegetables alone, and even if you do, relying solely on vegetables to meet all of your nutritional needs would require consuming very large quantities, which may not be practical year-round or in all climates. While vegetables are a valuable component of a healthy diet, they may not be sufficient to fully satisfy all of our dietary requirements.

THE RATIONAL UNCONSCIOUS DIET: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

You will lose weight and gradually transition to a diet that you prefer and that suits you best. To achieve this, make sure that each of your meals is, as much as possible, a source of pleasure.

Note that we will not address your "specific cravings" here, for which you can do whatever you want, as long as you differentiate them from hunger and respond to both adequately.

Satisfy your hunger

Hunger signals an ongoing need for a maintenance diet. It may be stronger at certain times of the day, regardless of your regular meal schedule.

To fulfill these needs, *aim for light meals and small snacks throughout the day*. However, regardless of the size or composition of your meal, if hunger persists, it should be addressed with maintenance feeding.

Certainly, *you should maintain the concepts of breakfast, lunch, and dinner*, even though in the end, these three meals may not differ much from a snack. However, if hunger persists despite the size or composition of your meal, it should be addressed with maintenance feeding. In short, *you will probably never go more than 1.5 to 2.5 hours without eating, depending on the time of day.*

If you receive bad news, have to deal with an increase in stress, or experience a setback and consequently feel the need to eat, you should satisfy this sudden hunger with a maintenance snack. Your subconscious has detected a threat and requires extra strength to respond to it. Note: strength, not energy. Hence this desire to eat.

It would be completely counterproductive to deprive yourself of these snacks or energy boosts under the pretext of dieting. On the contrary, it is an additional opportunity to demonstrate to your subconscious that you have understood its request and that you are capable of responding to it appropriately.

On such occasions, you may satisfy your hunger with a "maintenance" snack. Responding to this hunger with assimilable proteins will help you feel better able to cope with the situation at hand.

Remember, there is a time of day when you generally know that you won't need to exert much effort: the few hours before going to bed.

During sleep, our bodies are in a state that's similar to hibernation in certain animals. It is an ideal time to tap into our reserves.

To optimize this process, aim for lighter meals and more protein in the evening. This will satisfy your hunger without disrupting your sleep or weight loss.

The maintenance diet

Your diet will consist of meals and snacks. How should you compose them?

How much proteins? Which ones?

The amount of protein in a single snack or meal should be approximately the same as the carbohydrates in it. Lipids, on the other hand, should be about one-third to one-half the amount of protein.

Which means that for proteins, carbs, and fats, you should aim for a ratio of 1, 1, and 1/3. This is the ratio you should look for on the nutritional information about the protein foods and products you purchase.

You should be aiming for at least 15 to 20 grams of protein per meal, and at least 10 grams per snacks, but these are only guidelines.

Anses[27] estimates that, based on current knowledge, daily intakes between 0.83 g and 2.2 g/kg of body weight, *i.e.*, 10 to 27% of energy intake, can be deemed satisfactory for an adult under the age of 60. But the real protein needs

27. Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail (French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety).

of overweight individuals seeking to lose weight are not precisely known.

If you have a strong appetite, do not hesitate to use protein substitutes. However, it is crucial to select high-quality options.

In other words, rather than buying so-called protein-rich or protein-enriched products at the supermarket, you should opt for dietary products by specialized laboratories. Among these products, you do not need to turn to protein sachets or products designed for the initial phase, which are usually too loaded in protein and do not present the right protein, carbohydrates, and lipids ratio. But if you do enjoy some of these "initial phase", high-protein products, you can use them to enhance your diet. Keep in mind that your meals and snacks should be a source of enjoyment and satisfaction, so choose foods that align with your tastes and dietary goals. Similarly, if you prefer flavored drinks to plain water, consider opting for diet sodas, tea, or coffee to best cater to your tastes.

Meal and snack composition

Build your meals around protein by selecting your preferred source, such as meat, charcuterie, fish, shellfish, or eggs. Choose a portion size that will sustain you for the next two hours; you may use fat to cook them if desired. Remember, your daily diet should be enjoyable.

Once you have chosen your protein source, select vegetables or fruits that complement them well. Prepare these vegetables in a way that you enjoy, so that eating them gives

you complete satisfaction. And here again, if that means adding some fat (such as oil, butter, cream, or cheese), or incorporating bacon, ham, or other ingredients, go for it. Cereals, starches, and carbohydrates should be mere condiments to your main dish.

For snacks, aim for smaller portions of protein, carbohydrates, and fats, and vary your sources of protein, such as charcuterie, cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese. For carbohydrates, focus on low-sugar fruits or other low-carbohydrate options. Alternatively, consider incorporating protein snacks produced by dietary laboratories.[28]

Indulge your cravings

You won't be hungry anymore. If you satiate your hunger with snacks or meals that make you happy and that match your tastes, the many cravings you may have experienced before should be bygones.

However, even in this hunger-free state, you may experience cravings. Weeks, months, and seasons offer numerous opportunities to indulge, but it's important to choose the cravings that are truly worth satisfying—the ones that you'd be willing to wait for.

The more weight you lose, the more diversity you can afford. Your unconscious is supposed to maintain your weight. When you satisfy your hunger and cravings, lose

28. See "Remarks on fibers", 71.

weight without feeling guilty, and indulge yourself, your unconscious may interpret this as a need to increase your hunger or cravings in order to slow down your weight loss.

You may experience hunger at a specific time of the day or week. Should that happen, you can satiate it with a maintenance diet. Your unconscious will adjust your food intake to your weight loss.

By satisfying your hunger whenever it arises and indulging in your cravings on a regular basis, you will feel free to explore a truly healthier and diverse diet.

Physical activity and supplements

Physical activity has little to do with weight loss.

First, because overweight people actually engage in more physical activity than others while carrying their excess weight. However, this constant physical effort never seems to result in weight loss.

Besides, physical activity can promote the burning of fat. Yet fat also acts as a storage for toxins in the body. When it is burned through exercise, those toxins are released into the bloodstream, which might induce mood swings or complicate the weight loss.

This suggests that weight loss is more dependent on diet than physical activity, and that even regular exercise may not be enough to counteract a poor diet. The problem of weight gain must therefore be resolved by reinventing a suitable diet.

Weight loss should be approached as a gradual process that requires rest, and viewed as a recovery period. You should engage in exercise only if you really feel like it, not because you believe you ought to.

On the other hand, it is important to supplement yourself. A regular diet only covers about 80% of the recommended daily intake of vitamins and minerals. It is therefore essential to complement one's diet, and all the more so when dieting.

Our body requires approximately forty essential nutrients from the food we eat in order to function properly and ensure our survival. In addition to the two omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids and the nine amino acids we have already discussed, this list also includes 13 vitamins and 15 minerals.

However, in addition to supplementation, it is important to support the body in neutralizing and eliminating toxins that may be released during weight loss.[29] As previously mentioned, fat cells can store toxins that are released into the bloodstream when fat is burned. To aid in this process, you may take activated charcoal or clay capsules to help absorb and eliminate these toxins. This is not just about digestive comfort, but about supporting the body's natural detoxification processes during weight loss.

Be very careful, however, if you are taking oral contraceptive pills or if you are undergoing certain medical

29. See "The guarantee of the best" in the chapter "Satisfy cravings", 32.

treatments: the effectiveness of your treatments could be seriously limited. You must therefore take these capsules at a safe distance from your treatments. Don't hesitate to ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Taking vegetable charcoal or green clay capsules, a multivitamin complex, omega-3 capsules, trace elements in the form of spirulina or hypertonic serum, as well as calcium, magnesium, and potassium, is crucial for the safety and effectiveness of your diet.[30] However, it is important to consult with your doctor before taking any supplements and to adjust the dosages according to your individual needs.

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30. See Daniel Arsac, Marc Gourmelon, and Cédric Paturel, *Mince... je fonds et ça dure!* (Paris: Marabout), 68–69.

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

First and foremost, it is important to avoid going for more than 2 hours without eating, on average. This may vary between 1 hour 30 and 2 hours 30, depending on your lifestyle and metabolism. Each of your meals should be intended to fuel your body for this short period of time.

You don't need to eat a lot to sustain you for the next 4 or 5 hours. Instead, your hunger signals a need for a maintenance diet that provides you with assimilable proteins,[31] which your body is unable to store. Regardless of whether you ate a large meal or a snack, you'll probably feel hungry again 2 hours later, on average.

Make sure to maintain a regular snacking schedule to teach your unconscious that you understand and respect its needs. It's important to always have enough food on hand to satisfy your hunger, and to plan and anticipate your snacks accordingly.

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31. See "The maintenance diet" in the chapter "The diet of the rational unconscious: practical implementation", 75.

Some of the food intakes that punctuate your day may be more important than others.

Eating can be a pleasure, but it is also a servitude. Start by determining your meal times for the day: what is servitude, what is pleasure, for you? It is around this distinction that you will be able to organize your daily meal plan.

Servitude

Start with servitude, and examine your day. Begin by identifying the mandatory meals and snacks. These are times when you eat out of necessity: to satiate hunger, to keep hunger at bay, or because it is simply time to eat.

It can be that breakfast, gobbled up because you avoid leaving home on an empty stomach; those meals at the canteen, where you may choose dishes you like but do not necessarily match your true desire.

In a nutshell, think of all those moments when you satisfy your hunger, but that are neither occasions for pleasure nor privileged moments.

For those times when eating is a chore, you should meet your hunger with a maintenance diet.

Your meals, snacks, and/or munchies should provide you with adequate amounts of protein, carbohydrates, and fats.[32] These can be high-protein snacks or combinations of foods with similar characteristics.

32. See "The maintenance diet" in the chapter "The diet of the rational unconscious: practical implementation", 73.

For your meals, choose low glycemic impact ingredients. Avoid starchy foods, or use them in moderation as seasoning.[33] If you eat in the company restaurant, you may have a balanced protein substitute beforehand to calm down your hunger and avoid overeating. And if you feel dissatisfied after a meal, have a small maintenance snack to tide you over.

As long as you feed your hunger with assimilable proteins, with this maintenance food your unconscious mind demands, you will not eat too much and will reduce the hungers-disguised-as-cravings you could experience.

Pleasure

In contrast, there are a few meals during the week that are real pleasure occasions. These are the few meals you would remember if you were thinking back on the past week.

It could be that lunch at the restaurant or at home, with family or friends, lunching with your parents, dinners with the family, weekend brunches. All these moments that punctuate your week, that are important to you and are real relaxation and pleasure times.

During these specific moments, if you wish to indulge a particular craving, or simply eat what you feel like having, just go for it. You have looked forward to these occasions to indulge yourself: consider them as specific appetites and satisfy them. However, if these meals are not associated with

33. See "Remarks on fibers", 71.

any specific craving, and if you can enjoy your meal while eating as little sugar and starch as possible, you can always spare your "cravings credit" for another occasion. Of course, the point is not at all to try and deceive your unconscious by always putting off a treat. It is about making the best use of the freedom you now have. Again, however, if you want to treat yourself and fully enjoy these special moments, there is no reason to deprive yourself.

Modulation over a week

If you wish to satisfy a specific craving, or after you have satisfied it, you should plan to return to your maintenance diet for one or two days to let your body return to a balance.

Resuming your maintenance diet for one or two days should be easy. You will have indulged your craving, and will know you can do it again soon, should you want to. Besides, the maintenance diet is designed to keep you feeling full, with plenty of protein, so you will not feel hungry. Moreover, the duration and frequency of switching back to your maintenance diet may vary, depending on your current weight and goals.

In fact, this maintenance diet merely offsets the impact of the meals that are truly important to you. And since you are eating enough and indulge in enjoyable meals on a regular basis, you won't feel the need to compensate for deprivation with binges, and your cravings won't be heightened by hunger.

IN CONCLUSION
A NEW APPROACH TO ENJOYING "VERY FAT, SWEET, AND SALTY" FOODS

Your unconscious can only manipulate two levers in your diet: hunger and cravings. By satisfying both systematically, and incorporating at least one real meal a day while using protein substitutes, you free yourself to adjust your diet based on your weight goals. We hope you will fully enjoy your journey!

ANNEX
FOODS WITH LOW INSULIN IMPACT

The following recommendations[34] *are valid as long as you choose quality products. Processed food should be chosen with care.*

Proteins

All butcher's meat: beef, lamb, pork, veal, game, rabbit, etc.; all poultry: chicken, duck, turkey, goose, pheasant, etc.; *all game:* wild rabbit, hare, pheasant, partridge, wild duck, roe deer, wild boar; *all offal:* heart, liver, tongue, kidneys, tripe; *all fish:* salmon, mackerel, sardines, anchovies, tuna, herring, trout, etc.; *all seafood:* oyster, mussel, crab, shrimp, lobster, langoustine; eggs in all their forms; *all cheeses:* goat, sheep, cow, whole milk, cooked, tofu...

Dairy: natural yogurts, cottage cheese, milk, fresh cream, fresh butter...

34. Didier Panizza, *Grossir, c'est surtout mal fonctionner* (Paris: Res Medica, 2008), 148–154.

Cold cuts: ham, ham, merguez, bacon, foie gras, rillettes, sausages, dry sausage, andouille sausage, sausage, duck or goose rillettes, etc.

However, not all dietary proteins have the same biological value. Their quality depends, among other things, on the proportion of total amino acids they contain. For a protein, the optimal composition is, in descending order, that of egg white, meat, and charcuterie (provided it is quality charcuterie). Cereals generally lack one or more of the nine essential amino acids and must therefore be supplemented with other vegetables.

Lipids

Lipids are found in vegetable oils but also in animal products: in meats (beef, lamb, pork, etc.), charcuterie, fish (salmon, tuna, eel, anchovies, etc.); whole or partly skimmed dairy products such as butter, cream or cheese; and in certain fruits or vegetables, such as avocado or oleaginous fruits, walnuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, almonds, cashews, peanuts, etc.

Carbohydrates

Low-sugar vegetables and raw vegetables: lettuce, beets, watercress, purslane, gherkins, dandelions, onions, endives, hearts of palm, cucumbers, pink radishes, green, yellow and red peppers, celery, celeriac, all mushrooms, shallots, raw carrots, fennel, black radish, soy, artichokes, asparagus,

sorrel, green beans, butter beans, broccoli, cauliflower, green cabbage, red cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, eggplant, zucchini, squash, turnip, olives, chard, cardoons, leeks, spinach, avocados, tomatoes, salsify, squash, pumpkin, pattypan squash, Jerusalem artichokes, bean sprouts, etc.

The least sweet fruits: strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, cherries, black currants, currants, lemons, etc.

Fruits with medium glycemic impact: watermelons, melons.

Other fruits: pears, peaches, apples, oranges, apricots, nectarines, mandarins, kiwis, papayas, fresh figs, grapefruit, plums, and finally grapes, bananas, pineapple should be consumed in moderation.

Drinks: all still or sparkling water, herbal teas, coffee or tea, sugar-free sodas, meat or vegetable broths, fish, veal or poultry stocks.

THE FEEL FREE DIET

The Rational Unconscious Diet

Despite all our desires to lose weight, it seems that we eat against all common sense. We tend to eat too much, too fat, too sweet, too salty. Many of us are overweight—or think we are—many of us want to lose weight and are willing to make a lot of sacrifices to do so. Yet, when at last do succeed, few of us are able to keep up our new weight. Our desires seem totally irrational, and quite simply incompatible with our needs.

The flaw in this line of thinking is that it implicitly assumes that what governs my appetites, my unconscious, is irrational. He would make me crave for things that were impossible to achieve, induce me to pursue them, and then punish me for the efforts that he had induced.

However, all the statistics above are remarkable in that they reflect extremely common emotions. The vast majority of us believe we are overweighed, and a large majority of us want to lose weight. The vast majority of us experience the same unconscious message: that we may be too fat, that we should lose weight, and that this weight loss should come through dieting. That is to say, for our unconscious, losing weight is not only desirable but also possible. And, in general, our intuition leads us to think that it goes through food.

Assuming the existence of our rational unconscious and understanding how it works is key to achieving our desired weight loss without hunger or frustration. It's understanding how we can lose as much weight as we want, without hunger or frustration.

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