

Well, hello there, how are you doing today? I hope that you are creating an amazing day, I was just outside with my dogs, I was watching them run around like crazy, just totally entertaining themselves, chewing flowers, picking up sticks, hopping on one another, zooming left, right all around. And I was thinking these guys just know how to entertain themselves.

Which was an awesome segue into today's topic, which is all about entertainment. And we all love to be entertained. I was entertained watching my dogs run around like crazy. And what we're going to talk about is excitement and entertainment in our lives, and how that relates to food and alcohol and all the things that we do to entertain ourselves.

And this is a really good topic as we are coming up on the holidays. Halloween is right around the corner. And then after that, you know that there's Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and Hanukkah. And what comes with all those holidays are a lot of food, a lot of entertainment, a lot of entertaining. Somebody was just telling me that they have to have the sweet potatoes with the marshmallows in it. Their grandmother made that they've always had it and they're definitely having it and going to be very entertained by it over Thanksgiving.

And there are so many traditions around Christmas and Hanukkah and the New Year and all of us have these visions of gingerbread and special recipes, and what is it going to look like, and a lot of food. And here's what I want to start off by saying is that entertainment, especially around the holidays of entertainment, in general, is normal. It's a natural form of pleasure in our lives. And it is totally normal and healthy to want entertainment. Of course. The problem comes when that entertainment leads to results that we don't want. It leads to being overweight, not being healthy, not feeling good, not performing at our best. And I think about that type of entertainment as overing as in overeating, over drinking over gambling, over connecting on social media over watching movies. All of those things in moderation are entertaining, and they're totally fine. It's when we do too much of those when we overindulge that we get results that we don't want.

And so, gambling is actually a really good example. I just had a very good friend of mine went to Vegas with her children and she was laughing, she texted me. She said, "I lost 40 bucks". So, she spent 40 bucks on entertainment. And that was totally fine. And for some people, gambling can be a serious issue. If you are playing to the point when you're spending too much money, or you're staying up really late playing online poker, then it's a problem then you're over gambling. But she was like, "yeah, it was I gambled, and it was fun, and it was entertaining. And that's that".

And with food is the same, right? If you eat for entertainment every now and again, there's nothing wrong with that and getting pleasure out of food is normal, and natural. And I will tell you that I love cupcakes. I love vanilla cupcakes with vanilla icing on them. And sometimes I just want to have a cupcake, or maybe two, or three. And I don't do that very often. It's a lot of time, sometimes I didn't I think that was a little too much.

So, if we are eating or gambling or drinking or doing anything to the point that it feels like we are interrupting our own results or having health issues or diabetes or spending too much money, or things that we are doing are impacting our relationships, then it's a problem. So gambling is not a problem. Drinking is not a problem. Eating is not a problem shopping, social media. All that is not a problem until we are overeating. So, the question is, why do we do that? Why do we keep doing things? Why do we keep overindulging when we know that it is not serving us? Well, one of the reasons is because it feels good. Right? It feels good physically, at least temporarily. And it also makes us feel better emotionally. We get a dopamine hit. It's stimulating and pleasurable. It helps us to feel comfortable and relaxed, even can help us to feel connected to other people. Right? So, there's some oxytocin in there. And so, if that is you, if you are overing in some way, know that you are not alone.

And another reason that we are overing is that we have been taught to comfort ourselves in certain ways and specifically with food and we've been taught that by well-meaning parents So if you've ever seen those videos where kids have birthday cake, maybe it's like their first birthday party for the very first time. They don't even know what frosting tastes like until their parents put it in their mouth. And they are like their faces are like what is that and then that turns into give me more, give me more of that. I want more than that we see kids begging for candy in the grocery store. And there are so many videos on YouTube about kids sneaking into the closets and sneaking candy and sneaking food and getting caught. And we do that as adults too, don't we? At least I know that I did, I would sneak in the out of my children's candy bag, I loved candy corn back then. And I would just sneak it out of their bags. And we also kind of just finished up our kids' plates. They don't finish their food, we finished that up or we have an extra drink that we know that we really shouldn't have. Or we stay on social media a little bit longer, or we stay on Netflix a little bit longer. And even though we're not necessarily sneaking, in the back of our minds, we know that we are doing something that is really not serving us, and it doesn't feel right, it feels like we're sneaking in some way.

And there's a difference between having candy and then sneaking it or having a drink and then feeling like we're sneaking it like we know the difference. And here's the thing, food and alcohol, and social media and gambling and shopping and all of these things that we can overindulge in are woven into our culture. And it's especially true with food and alcohol. We celebrate with food and alcohol, we do it daily. And we do it with weddings, and anniversaries and birthdays, and even for just making it to the end of the day. And we also gather around food and difficult times as we mourn the loss of a loved one or we comfort a friend. And also, business happens around food and alcohol. Right communication and connection. And big deals in business happen around food. We have coffee, we have drinks, we have lunch, we have breakfast meetings, we have dinner. It is such a huge part of our culture, that we barely even notice it, let alone question it.

So, it's not surprising that many of us are used to using certain things as entertainment. And it's not surprising that those things can end up becoming things that we overindulge. And it's interesting to note that our brains are literally hardwired to seek out both food and social connection for survival. And so, we have natural instincts to eat and to drink and to band together and to connect. We hunted and gathered together. And that was, and it still is, a really good thing. Except now we have almost unlimited accessibility, to food, and to alcohol, and to the internet, and to connecting and social media and all the things that are good for us, we have so much access to them that it is so easy to go into overdrive. We can order food on our phone and have it there in minutes, we can have it delivered to our door. And not just food but supersized food that tastes really, really good. And on top of all that we are inundated with images of tantalizing food and messages and ads and information about deserving a break and using food and alcohol and escape to get it.

So, the question is, how do you in the midst of all of that break this relationship to food as entertainment? To food as a way of connecting with other people? And so, the first step to ending the cycle is to just be aware of it to be aware of all of these messages and the ways that we have grown up using food and alcohol and other things as entertainment. And the way that you can become really aware of how you personally might be using it is to have a plan. To have a plan for what you will drink, for what you will eat, how much time you will spend on the internet, how much time you will spend watching TV before you start on the project, how much money you will spend gambling, you decide ahead of time. And when you do that, it becomes really obvious when you go from just doing what you had planned to overdo it. And then it becomes obvious why you're doing it. You'll notice at that moment, what the inclination is, maybe you're bored, or you're feeling stressed. Or maybe you just need some downtime.

And it has been your natural inclination to go to the internet or to turn on the TV or to have a drink or to eat something. And creating that space. And knowing why you are overindulging is really important because then you can fix it. Instead of constantly overing whatever that overing is for you. You can find your quote-unquote entertainment elsewhere.

And the really cool thing that happens when you do this when you decide not to engage in that overing habit is that you are left with space. You're left with a space that used to be filled with that overing activity. And so now you have time to actually feel and process the emotions that are going on for you have time to actually do the thing that you are procrastinating on. You have time to exercise or reconnect with a friend or to do that hobby that you have put off until someday, you have time to entertain yourself in another way, in a way that actually feels good to you while you're doing it and after you're done doing it. So, there's no regret or feeling bad about overindulging.

And it's really interesting, as we get older our responsibilities build up and we can lose sight of what it is that we actually enjoy doing; what we really like to do for entertainment. So, I'll share with you that the other day I found myself standing in front of the cupboard, I knew that I was not hungry. And I was staring at a bag of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, which I actually love. Somebody in my house here bought them as he kind of gesture. And I did not really want to be eating Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. And so, I stood there thinking, "You know what, what is what is really going on for me here?" What I decided is that I just needed a break. I had been creating a lot of things, and I just wanted to have some freedom from thinking. And so, a thought popped into my mind, an image of roller skates that a friend had given to me for my birthday. And I wouldn't have thought of those roller skates if I hadn't paused right then and thought, "Okay, what is really going on here? What am I really looking for? Instead of entertaining myself with Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. I'm going to roller skate". And you know what, that's what I did.

She bought me these really cool white roller skates, not blade skates with purple laces. And so, I went out to the garage, and I put those babies on. And as soon as I started to put them on, I got a little giddy. I was like, Oh my gosh, here I am 52 years old, and I go roller skating. And I put all the pads on which I knew I needed to do. And I just started in the driveway and my puppies were out there as being really careful not to fall over them. And as I was skating in the driveway, I really started to enjoy myself. And then I went out onto the road. And as soon as my roller skates hit the blacktop, as soon as it hit the asphalt, I had this memory of when I was younger of what it felt like inside my head to be rolling on the asphalt.

nd that brought me such joy. And I was like you know what, I'm going to roller skate in my neighborhood. And I never would have done that if I hadn't paused when I was looking in the cupboard, I knew I did not really want to be sneaking Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, I wanted something else.

So, it's really easy for all of us to focus on our obligations on our career and our parenting and being a good parent or a good child to our aging parents. And we can lose sight of what we really love to do what really brings us joy. And many of us put other people's needs ahead of ours. And we do it so often that we tell ourselves that we don't have time to take care of ourselves, we don't have time to enjoy a few minutes on roller skates. And honestly, it can become a little bit of a pity party. And so, when we stop overeating, over-drinking, over Netflix-ing, over social media-ing, over shopping, whatever our overing is, all the reasons that we are overing can come up for us. And I've heard people say that they just find themselves in a drive-up window with a doughnut in their hand before they even realize what they were doing.

So, the first piece is to recognize to know when you are overeating and to set a plan, and to become aware of what is happening in that moment. Are you following your plan? Or are you not following that plan? And then notice what's going on for you when you're eating or drinking or whatever it is, what are you thinking, what are you feeling who is with you notice if you're tired, you're bored, you're stressed, if you're in a rut, or you're angry at somebody, maybe you're even angry at yourself and to just notice. And when you do this, it gives you insight to what is really going on.

And then two, when you know what's happening, then you have the power to change it. And that's when you get to go roller skating or figure out how else you might entertain your need. Maybe you really just need a quick nap, or to call a good friend, or to take a brisk walk. Maybe that's what you're really craving. And this is not as easy as it sounds at all. Mostly because we do not want to feel what we are feeling. So, we look for an escape. We look for entertainment, that's why we are entertaining ourselves in the first place. And the great news is that when we end our affair with whatever we are overindulging with then we have this amazing opportunity to deliberately create who you want to be and what you want in your life instead of just letting it happen to you.

So, if you find yourself with time where you want some entertainment or some escape, pick what you want to do, instead of that overing. Pick something that would be a lot of fun for you. Think of how you can connect with others and really enjoy this holiday season.

And think about what entertainment would feel really good in the moment and will also create an amazing memory. So maybe it's planning long walks or buying some games that you can play or some cards or cribbage, my mother loves to play cribbage or maybe it's planning a Zoom gathering or creating new table decorations with your kids.

Or for gifts maybe it's about creating experiences that you can do together. You can have bowling coupons or plan a ski trip or dance lessons or yoga, or concerts or movies or think about some people that you have not connected with, you'd like to pick up the phone and call, write letters or write emails or send text or voice messages. And really, the sky is the limit and the holidays are a wonderful time to focus and connect, really connect with people.

And so, what you're doing is reducing the activities in life that are fleetingly entertaining, or only bringing pleasure for a few moments and then choosing entertaining activities that are going to bring you pleasure in the moment and also will bring you long term joy as you work steadily through to your results and live a truly entertaining life. Because when you are enjoying people and enjoying what you're doing and not feeling like you're sneaking, that is living a fulfilling life and that is the best entertainment that there is.

So, I would love for you to pick one old entertainment area, whether it's in food or alcohol, shopping, whatever it is, and let me know what you are going to replace it with what entertaining activity you are going to replace that old activity with. So, here's to an amazing and entertaining season ahead that you are filling it with activities that bring you joy and love and feel really good to you in the moment and beyond. As for me, I'm going to go back outside and play with my puppies, and then I think I'm going to lace up my roller skates.

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