



Junk Food

Patterns & Habits

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Understanding the default behaviors that sabotage connection

What Are Junk Food Patterns?

"Junk food" patterns and habits are the **thoughts, feelings, and behaviors** we default to when we are:

- Fatigued or overwhelmed
- On cruise control or emotionally checked out
- Feeling deprived or emotionally hungry
- Hypervigilant or anxious
- Taking shortcuts to avoid discomfort

They often show up when we lack the emotional resources to stay grounded in our **values, principles, or healthiest selves**.

Why Do We Use Them?

Because—in some way—they work.

These behaviors are often learned, reinforced over time, and used as coping strategies. Even when unhealthy, they may:

- Help us **feel in control** during conflict
- **Protect** us from emotional vulnerability
- **Get attention** when we feel unseen or unheard
- Serve as survival mechanisms from **past trauma**

Example:

After a long, draining day, we may *know* that a healthy meal would benefit us—but a quick fix like chips or fast food is easier and gives fast relief. Emotionally, we do the same: snapping, withdrawing, blaming—because it's *fast* and *familiar*, even if it's unhealthy.

How It Affects Others

For those on the **receiving end**, junk food behaviors can:

- Trigger old wounds
- Escalate conflict

- Reinforce negative relationship patterns
- Lead to emotional overload, resentment, and disconnection

Ultimately, these habits contribute to a **cycle of misunderstanding, hurt, and disconnection** in relationships.

Common Junk Food Behaviors

Below are examples of common junk food patterns that may show up:

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|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| • Criticism | • Secrets | • Frustration |
| • Contempt | • Mind reading | • Bitterness |
| • Blame | • Labeling | • Generalizing |
| • Defensiveness | • Catastrophizing | • Predictions |
| • Retaliation | • Judging | • Anger |
| • Estrangement | • Discounting | • Negativity |
| • Unforgiving behavior | • Jealousy | • Ignoring |
| • Avoidance | • Distancing | • Annoyance |
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CAUTION!!

This inventory is **not about shame or judgment**.

It's about cultivating awareness so we can:

- Understand our triggers
 - Make intentional shifts in how we show up
 - Acknowledge what's happening
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How to Begin Working with Junk Food Patterns

1. Build Awareness

Notice when junk food behavior shows up:

- What are the conditions?
- What emotions precede it?

- How does it serve you (even if unhelpfully)?

2. Translate the Pattern

Ask yourself:

- What is this behavior trying to protect or express?
- When do I notice it the most?
- How does it *help* me (in the moment)?

3. Share With Others

Once you've named your patterns, let others (e.g., partners, friends, therapists) know:

- What your triggers are
- How they can support you
- What you're working to shift

4. Practice Disruption

Commit to small, consistent efforts to **disrupt the default** and practice how you want to show up:

- Respond vs. react
- Pause before defaulting
- Use your values as your guide

Closing Thought

You are not your junk food behaviors. They are habits—often protective, often learned—and they can be unlearned.

This exercise takes time, practice, and self-compassion. The goal isn't to eliminate junk food patterns entirely, but to **dilute them** and **increase your capacity to stay present** and connected.

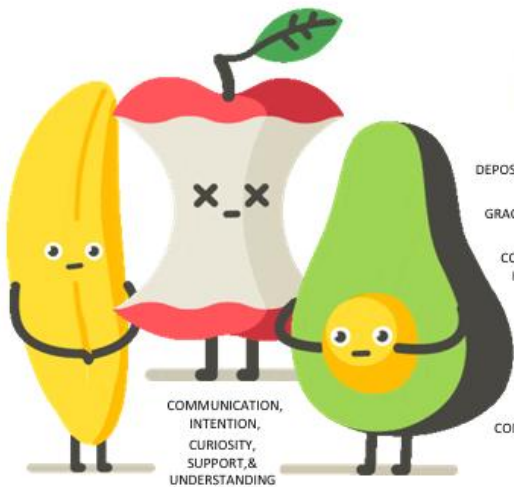
With curiosity, patience, and courage, you can build new patterns that better reflect who you truly want to be.

JUNK FOOD

WHAT THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS, OR BEHAVIOR "TEMPTATIONS" CHALLENGE ME...

To **CULTIVATE** a **HEALTHY** relationship with ones self or in a relationship there needs to be **AWARENESS** around what is being **CONSUMED & CONTRIBUTED**...

Is your contribution filling the plate with daily doses of **HEALTHY** habits, routines, and visits to the mental/emotional gym?



INGREDIENTS: CRITICISM, CONTEMPT, BLAME, DEFENSIVENESS, ESTRANGEMENT, RETALIATION, UNFORGIVING, ANGER, NEGATIVITY, LABELING, CATASTROPHISING, DISCOUNTING, GENERALIZING, MIND READING, PREDICTING, SECRETS, IGNORING, AVOIDING, FRUSTRATION, DISTANT, BITTER, JEALOUS, ANNOYED, ETC..

Is your contribution taking short cuts by contributing **JUNK FOOD** habits, routines, and comments?

