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## Craving Phenomenon

Cravings are a physiological and psychological phenomenon that often occurs after the cessation of drug and alcohol use. They are also a programmed response to environmental signals that have been connected to drug use through experience. They can occur for months or years after the addict quits using. They are extremely powerful and often lead to relapse. Cravings occur in the brain where Dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain in the reward center, is released when some drugs are ingested. Dopamine is associated with euphoria. Accustomed to functioning in the presence of drugs, the addicted brain becomes unable to function normally without drugs present. Due to this, sometimes it is difficult or nearly impossible for the addict to feel pleasure without using because the brain quits producing Dopamine on its own. Therefore the addicted person may crave the drug which, if used, would release dopamine and therefore make the craving go away and presumably lead to feelings of euphoria.

Cravings are a reality of addiction. They demand attention and either will be surrendered to or can be dealt with using some of the following techniques. There are four types of cravings: reaction to withdrawal symptoms, the escape of unpleasant feelings, a response to learned associations (people, places) and enhancing a positive mood. During physical withdrawal, the body craves the drug it was used to. Withdrawal symptoms depend on the drug that the user was taking but can include: tremors, anxiety, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and exhaustion. Boredom, depression, and anxiety often cause cravings and are feelings an addict/alcohol will seek to escape. Learned associations may include places where the addict used, people they used with and utensils associated with the use. Finally, when the addict is feeling good, happy or celebratory they may crave a mood-altering chemical to enhance their feelings.

How many of us have not been in a situation in which we crave certain foods, certain feelings, emotions, and relationships? How many of us have not developed certain addictions in order to compensate for that illusion of lack and loveliness? A Human being's body knows when it needs to rest and go to sleep, wake-up, visit the loo and when it needs to be fed or when it's full. Humans forget how amazing our body is that we neglect and fight over what it needs. A heart never misses a beat, the lungs are always breathing and each of your organs doesn't commit a mistake or give you a second of forgetting how it works. It's a machine that never fails you when it's been well taken cared of. It is only but for us who gives our body a hard time to function. Often times we mistake on the body wanting something but the truth is, it's the emotions that are giving your body the urges to have what we call - Cravings.

Cravings are there because your body needs it. Cravings aren't weaknesses unless it has been over-fed and over-looked. Sweets such as chocolates, French fries and potato chips, sundaes and macchiato, bagels and lemon squares. When these thoughts occur, when you experience craving - take a moment and deconstruct; what does my body want and why? Check-in to your thoughts and cravings then internalize your relationship with food. Cravings may just mean you're bored, emotional or just would want to succumb to pleasure but think again, do you deserve it? Do you really need it? Do you want a bite of it or the entire thing?

**Here are the primary causes of Cravings**

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## Dehydration

Dehydration occurs as mild hunger; so the first thing you do when you find a strange craving - drink up a full glass of water and gulp more of it. The body doesn't send the message that you are thirsty not until you're dehydrated. Drink 8-10 glasses every day, the more, the better.

## Being Dissatisfied

Being bored, uninspired, lazy or lacking a little life other than the routine makes a person munch of whatever there is besides, in front or what's there for them to munch on which relates to Emotional eating. Eating becomes a substitute for entertainment, or to fill the void of life fulfillment.

## Imbalance

Did you know or have you ever noticed that eating a diet too rich in sugar may cause cravings for meat? Raw foods may cause cravings for extremely cooked or dehydrated foods and vice versa? Check your food journal and review the common denominator.

## Food Memories

Food is truly delightful and an indulgence is something one can never let go of. Once you've got that craving on, you can control your craving by going for the healthier choice and go for what you're really craving for. Want a chocolate? Go for the dark ones. Want a frappuccino Go for non-fat with no whip cream. Often times it's the moment that you're wanting and looking for, not the indulgence itself.

## Seasonal

The body craves for what isn't available all the time but your body won't know that not until you're in the know. The change of weather and season may attract your cravings, too. When its cold or raining, you'd want for a hot cocoa with mallows, when its summer, you'd love to have ice cream and very cold iced tea and sodas but then again, you'd have to recall what it is that you want - you may just want a piece, not the entire thing. Have a bite that should work.

## Hormonal

When a woman's body experiences the red-letter day, pregnancy or menopause, fluctuating testosterone, and estrogen levels may cause strange cravings. The increased appetite for carbs may be caused by low serotonin levels, which signals the brain to get the body to eat more carbs. Factors as strong brain chemicals and hormone production may be powerful influences over behavior and physical cravings.

Craving is what makes cues and rewards work. The craving is what powers the habit loop.

1. Find a simple and obvious cue
2. Clearly define the rewards

Habits create neurological cravings. As we associate cues with certain rewards, a subconscious

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craving emerges in our brain that starts the habit loop spinning.

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