Hi, Lisa here.

I’m so glad you downloaded this workbook. But, here’s the thing: it only works if you work it.

So set aside some time, print it out, and go through the exercises. You’ll be so glad you did!

This free workbook is chock-full of information you can apply right now to make positive changes in your life.

There are no affiliate links, no fluff, and no sales pitches inside.

If you find this valuable, please send your friends to the Free Resources Page (Click Here) so they can benefit, too. Thanks!
My intention is to help you permanently change your relationship to sugar.

If you, like the thousands of other women, intimately know the intensity of a sugar addiction, you’ll know this intention is a tall order.

I know how strong sugar cravings are, and the relentless pull of this addiction makes us feel helpless to change it.

Sure we engage our willpower from time to time and go for short bouts of time resisting sugary foods, but this tactic fails us every time.

We end up binging and back into the throes of the stress-sugar-overweight cycle that keeps our minds, bodies and emotions weighed down and unhealthy.

Your life will turn out completely differently when you are eating well and you understand the impact food has on you.

The food you eat goes into your stomach and gets digested into the raw material that make up your blood, your cells, your tissues, your organs...even the neurochemicals that are linked to your thoughts, moods and feelings.

This workbook will help you get a handle on what you eat and drink through a deeper understanding of the connection between food and your body, mind and health. It will lead you through action worksheets to create a new plan for how you will use food in your life and how you will break free from the hold sugar has on you.

Are you ready to get started?
Every Person Is Different

Some people can have small amounts of refined sugar in their diet daily and do not experience deleterious effects. They keep it in check effortlessly and rarely experience a strong craving for sweets. Others have a serious addiction and are spending their days held hostage to a vicious cycle of binging on sugar and feeling horrible with mounting emotional, physical and mental repercussions.

Many of us fall somewhere in between. If you experience any of the following issues, you could probably benefit from taking an honest look at whether downshifting your sugar consumption would benefit you.

• You start your day with a high sugar breakfast.
• You experience an emotional high immediately after eating sugar and then emotionally crash a few hours later.
• You experience an energy surge immediately after eating sugar and then feel fatigued and exhausted a few hours.
• You have difficulty saying no to sweets.
• You have a stash of highly processed, sugary foods available in the house at all times.
• You haven’t gone without some form of sugary food for a day in a long time.
• You reach for sugar when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed.
• Once you begin eating sugary foods, you can’t stop.

Is Sugar a Problem for You?
Are all sweet things the enemy?

The company that sugar keeps determines whether it is beneficial or detrimental to our health. Refined, white sugar acts more like a drug than a food in our system...but, remember, it started as whole plant.

The sugar cane and beet plant in nature come complete with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals like any other plant. And they have carbohydrates like any other plant in the form of glucose.

When sugar is refined they strip the sugar cane plant or beet plant of all its natural components, except the glucose. Then glucose is concentrated into what we know as table sugar. **This means when we refine sugar, we take glucose out of its natural balance found in plants.**

When glucose is part of the whole food it acts like a food in your body, entering our system calmly, breaking down slowly and providing a range of nutrients in addition to energy. **When glucose is isolated, sugar acts like a drug in your body. Too much refined sugar creates a cycle of intense highs and lows, keeping our blood sugar, hormones and neurotransmitters out of balance.**

The goal is not to get all sweet things out of your diet, but to stop the addiction to refined sugar in your life.
"Do the Work": Your Sugar Footprint

As you answer the following questions, you will be collecting important information so you can begin to have a complete picture of the sources and ways in which you consume sugar.

1. What sweet foods do you enjoy the most?

2. What was your favorite sweet when you were growing up?

3. What is your favorite sweet right now?

4. What pattern does your sugar consumption take? Do you graze throughout the day, binge on large amounts all at once, always end a meal with sweets, have sweets in place of a whole meal, or snack on sweets only?

5. What times of the day are you heavy on sweets (start of the day, after lunch, before dinner, after dinner, late at night, middle of the night)?

These questions begin to help you see the ways sugar shows up in your life.
Sugar's Connection to Stress

In our brains, there are chemicals called neurotransmitters which correlate to our emotions and moods. Carbohydrate rich foods increase the concentrations of certain neurotransmitters like serotonin, endorphins and dopamine. **Refined sugar is a fast acting carbohydrate and initially increases the production of these chemicals in our brain.**

Serotonin brings on feelings of calm, happiness, well being and satisfaction. Low levels of serotonin are linked with depression and increased appetite. Endorphins are very powerful opiates that produce intense pleasurable feelings. Chocolate is a food that directly increases the level of endorphins we produce.

When you are in a stressful state or experiencing mood lows your body may have become conditioned to seek out sugar in order to bring your mood up or relieve you of stressful feelings.

**The problem is that the sugar highs that are produced rapidly are followed by sugar lows...the surge in good feeling chemicals is followed by a drop off and our moods plummet.** This keeps us dependent on sugar to keep our emotions up and in check.

Instead of having a healthy working emotional state that is resilient and stable through the day, your moods are held captive to extreme variability and dependence on sugar for the next fleeting feeling of relief.
Sugar's Connection to Weight Gain

Sugar’s connection to weight gain is much more than a calorie issue.

**Stress slows down your metabolism and prevents fat-burning.**

When you feel stressed you put yourself in a fight or flight response and your body seeks out fast energy. It has no time to relax, digest slowing and uptake nutrients. **Refined sugar breaks down fast and spikes your blood with readily available energy.** So a stressed body will crave sugar for fast energy.

Stress sets off a very specific series of hormones in your body. To burn fat you need a completely different set of hormones to be made (ones that are not made when you are experiencing stress). Stress hormones promote fat storage, not fat burning.

When you are in a stress response, your body is functioning under the assumption that you need to preserve your fat stores of energy. **Stress slows down your metabolism, prevents the important work of rebuilding and restoration of injured cells and tissues and prevents fat burning.**
The Sugar-Stress-Weight Gain Cycle

So here is the vicious cycle:

• You feel stress and reach for sugar —>
• Sugar initially produces a rush of neurotransmitters that bring temporary feelings of calm, happiness, and wellbeing —>
• But sugar is short-lived and when you enter the sugar crash, you feel depressed, stressed, and anxious again —>
• This keeps you craving more sugar —>
• When you are firmly stuck in a sugar-stress-sugar rut, your body shuts off the fat-burning mechanisms and goes into fat-storage mode —>
• Your body increasingly feels sluggish and heavy— and your moods are vacillating —>
• You feel stress —>
• You reach for more sugar —>

Sound Familiar?
The Way to Break Free

The way we work through this cycle is not about will power. **Will power engages our thoughts and says “just make up your mind to not eat sugar and stick to it.”**

But take another look at that the sugar : stress : weight-gain cycle.

**Where, in that cycle, do you engage your thoughts to consciously do something?**

You don’t consciously tell yourself to feel stress. You don’t tell your body to respond with a sugar craving. You don’t think yourself into shutting down your fat burning metabolism. Trying to break this cycle by engaging your willpower is a losing battle.

**Your cravings are a smart solution to the situation you are in.**
In terms of your body, it is intelligent to respond to stress by seeking out sugar. It is intelligent for your body, when it is under stress, to shut down fat metabolism. These are survival mechanisms.

Your body is not the enemy. Your cravings are important information. We are doing detective work to find out why they are surfacing and then we will address that core issue.

When the core issues are dealt with in a more appropriate and healthy ways, then the whole destructive sugar : stress : weight loss cycle dismantles naturally.

Let's work WITH your body and address the core issues.
3 Reasons You Crave Sugar

Let’s do a recap of the “why” behind the sugar addiction cycle and talk about one more reason you may be craving sugar. 3 reasons you crave sugar:

1. **Energy ::** Simply put, refined sugar is fast and furious energy. But it leads quickly to the spike/crash cycle. When we begin to binge on sugar, biochemically we burn all that sugar quickly and it leaves our body depleted to continue through the day. Our energy needs demand more fuel and so we reach for the next high sugar meal.

2. **Emotional Stress ::** When you experience mental stress, you want to relieve how that feels and have come to connect a high sugar meal with a surge in neurotransmitters that produce intense pleasure feelings. This leaves you in a dependency cycle on sugar for emotional relief without any real emotional health or stability.

3. **Seeking Balance ::** Refined sugar is devoid of any nutrients. Our body needs nutrients to complete the digestion process. In order for sugar to be processed it must actually grab vitamins and minerals from your body’s stores to complete its digestion.

So sugar robs us of nutrients, every time we eat it. This leaves us with an unsatisfied feeling and a need to replace the drained nutrient reserve. We become hungry and crave more food. If we get into the habit of eating overly processed sugar rich foods all throughout the day, this hunger/nutrient starved cycle continues and we **never feel satisfied**.

*Those who have studied this area of nutrition know these are just some of the reasons for craving sugar. There are more biophysical reasons we could explore, but are not necessary to do the important work of getting off the addiction roller coaster so I’ve chosen not to complicate the issue here.*
Get to the Source:
What Lies Beneath the Craving?

Now is the time to start applying this information to your own experience.

The following worksheets will have you look at each of the three reasons for sugar cravings separately. For each reason, you’ll answer some questions.

Use your answers to do a bit of introspection work to understand the role sugar is playing in your life right now.

We’ll consider whether you are using sugar as a source of energy, to fill an emotional need, in response to stress in your life, or whether you are craving more nutrient dense foods...or most likely a combination of these.

You’ll find an interpretation page following each worksheet that will give you concrete ideas of what you can bring into your life to fill those needs in a healthy way, instead of depending on sugar for that role. These ideas will be used to create a personalized plan to fill your needs in healthier more appropriate ways, so you can break free from sugar dependence smoothly.
"Do the Work": Energy Debt

This worksheet will begin to explore if you are seeking sugar as a form of energy for your day.

Answer the questions below about how and when you reach for sugar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>When do you feel a lull in energy, during the day?</td>
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<td>Do you rely on coffee throughout the day for energy reserves?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider the times when you generally indulge in sugar. Do you reach for sweets in the morning, afternoon, around 3pm, before dinner, after dinner, in the middle of the night? List them all.</td>
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<td>Describe how you typically start the day. What do you have for breakfast? How soon after waking do you eat?</td>
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Here are some ideas to provide you with healthy and true forms of energy and refreshment.

If you tend to start your day with a high sugar meal or use sugary foods when you experience lulls in your energy (typically morning and afternoon hours like 3pm) seeking energy from sugar may be the case for you.

:: **Start eating a healthy, energizing, fiber-full breakfast.** Experiment with breakfasts that having varying amounts of protein, fiber, and healthy fat to find a balance that works right for you.

:: If the energy lull hits in the afternoon, **take a look at your lunches.** Are they substantial and nourishing? Can you expect them to take you through the afternoon into dinner while sustaining your energy? If not, consider bolstering the nutrient content of your lunches.

:: Your body needs oxygen to feel energized. **Practice a few minutes of deep breathing** (in through your nose and out through your mouth) when you are feeling tired or sluggish.

:: **Take a walk outside and connect to the elements.** Breath in the fresh air.

:: **Certain essential oils like citrus or peppermint are refreshing and energizing.** Put a drop in your palms, cup your hands over your nose and take a few deep breaths.

:: **Movement and exercise actually energize and refresh us.** Get on the ground and stretch for a few minutes to start your day or to battle the mid-afternoon slump. Take a brisk walk with your kids mid-day.

:: Work on your sleep routine. **Are you getting enough hours of sleep?** Are those hours quality rest? Do you have a bedtime routine that helps you unwind and prepare for a restorative sleep?

:: **Be sure you are well hydrated.**
Sugar can become a substitute for stress relief and healthy emotional release because it temporarily gives your brain a surge of good feeling chemicals. The problem with using sugar in this way is that you mask your true need for stress management and robust emotional reserves. Consider the following questions and take some time to dig deep and explore whether your emotional cravings are keeping you hooked on sugar.

1. **What kinds of good feelings and moods do you experience when you indulge in a high-sugar food?**
   For example: happiness, calm, approval, comfort, relaxation, reward, etc. Remember, if you are addicted to sugar, you may have feelings of guilt, shame, defeat, and failure mixed in -- but for this question, try to tease out the good feelings.

2. **Try to identify what triggers you into a sugar craving.**
   What is happening when you reach for sugar?
   For example: is it right after a difficult situation with the kids (as a reward or stress relief), when you feel bored, when you need to focus, or maybe after you’ve had an argument with your spouse?
"Do the Work": Emotional Cravings Application

Once you’ve identified what your emotional triggers are, it is essential to bring in healthy ways to deal with those needs. Now is the time to build the bridge between becoming aware of an emotional health need and brainstorming practical ideas that fit in your life right now that will care for those needs.

If you know that high stress times bring on sugar cravings, your work is to create a plan for consistent and effective stress relief and management in your life. If you know you seek out sugar because you are feeling down or blue and want a mood lift, your work is to weave in strategies to help you manage your moods and lift yourself up in healthy sustainable ways.

Sometimes these revelations cause us to admit we need to seek further help...whether that is in gaining healthy living skills that we don’t have right now or seeking advice from a trusted health professional.

Begin to jot down right now what emotional cravings are surfacing in your life that need attention and care.

<table>
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<th>emotional craving</th>
<th>healthy alternatives to meet that need</th>
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"Do the Work": Nutrient-Starved

The key to breaking a sugar addiction is to fuel your body with excellent nutrition in order to feel full and satiated. To identify whether part of your sugar habit is your body's chronic search for nutrients, we are going to consider both your overall diet and your home environment.

**Overall Diet**
Think through these following types of foods. Circle those that are generally part of your weekly food intake. These foods provide empty calories which keep you overfed and undernourished.

- Fast food
- Sodas
- Candy
- High Sugar Baked Goods
- High Sugar Cereals
- Ice Cream
- Highly Processed Foods
- Foods with Artificial Chemicals, Dyes and Preservatives

**Home Environment**
The foods you keep in your home will determine the makeup of your diet. It is extremely difficult to eat fresh, healthy, whole foods when you don’t have them available throughout the day. It is also extremely difficult to avoid sugary processed snack foods when they are stocked up in your home. Setting your home up for success is essential in shifting to a diet that serves you well.

Take an honest look at your pantry, cupboards and refrigerator. List what needs to be removed and what needs to be added in order to support your goal of breaking the sugar habit.
"Do the Work": Nutrient-Starved Application

If your body is nutrient starved, start with these strategies for bolstering the nutrient density of your diet.

1. Be diligent to set your home environment up for success. Take out the foods that do not nourish you and bring in fresh, whole and healthy options to surround yourself with.

2. Here are some quick and healthy options for busy moms, to get you started:


3. Do not start the binge cycle first thing in the morning. A robust, healthy breakfast is key. If you do decide to indulge in a refined sugar food, try to pair it with other foods that are high in fiber, protein and healthy fats to keep you from entering the blood-sugar surge cycle.

4. It is a good idea to choose natural sweeteners over refined sugar, but the most important shift is in how you see the role of sweeteners in your life. Natural sugars like honey, maple syrup, and sucanat are beneficial because they retain their natural balance of vitamins and minerals, but these are still to be used as a condiment, in small amounts, not as major parts of your meals.
Work With Your Nature

The last area we are going to cover is the need for sweet in our diet.

By now you’ve collected important information about your sugar habit and concrete ideas to implement in order to remove sugar from a center stage role. Here is the final consideration before putting together your personal master plan. We all have an innate need for the taste of sweet. **Satisfy this natural need with whole foods instead of refined sugar.**

Begin to bring in some of the following foods to your diet daily:

- Fruit (especially high fiber fruit like berries), sweet potatoes, yams, carrots, winter squashes and pumpkin.
- Spices like cinnamon, clove and bay leaf as they all have blood sugar-regulating benefits.

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:** The key when adding healthy sweet flavors in is not to expect that your strong craving for a candy bar is going to immediately be satisfied with a sweet potato.

**At first, do not focus on removing high sugar foods.**

Instead, begin to weave in these natural sweet tasting fruits and veggies (as well as your other strategies) as a preemptive strike. Over a bit of time, you will be filling your natural need for sweet tastes (and taking care of the other core reasons you are craving sugar). This will slowly reduce the intense need for sugar and set you up for success when you begin to take refined sugar out of your diet.
Bring in the 4-Part Food Strategy

A very effective way to dismantle sugar cravings from the inside out.

Work to **bring in as many of these 4 types of foods into each meal and snack you eat** as you begin to restructure and calm your biochemistry to balance your blood sugar, relieve stress, shift on the calm response and eliminate sugar cravings.

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<th>Emphasize leafy, green vegetables.</th>
<th>Bring in sweet flavors through whole foods.</th>
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<td>Include some protein in your meals and snacks.</td>
<td>Focus on healthy fats, especially omega-3s.</td>
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"Do the Work": Put it All Together

Now take a moment, look through all the information you have provided in the previous worksheets and list one by one all the core issues you deal with, then healthy ways you can address these core issues instead of reaching for a sugar fix, and then name one action step for each core issue you are willing to take right now to move yourself closer to breaking the sugar habit.

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<th>core issue</th>
<th>healthy ways to address this</th>
<th>concrete action steps I'm committing to</th>
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What's Next?

Healthy living is the dance of becoming aware of your needs, recognizing when something is off and caring for your body, mind and spirit so you regain balance day in and day out. It’s a journey because you are always changing, and life is always changing, so having the tools you need to keep yourself healthy is essential for staying on track and living the best life you can.

Keep in touch!
After you’re done with the worksheets in this book and have started applying what you’ve discovered, please drop me a line and let me know the results you are seeing. I love to hear how lives are changing for the better!

Email the WellGrounded Life Team here
Find us on Facebook for daily resources and inspiration

Share the love!
If you found this valuable, please send your friends to http://www.wellgroundedlife.com/food-nourishment/ so they can benefit, too!

Thanks for taking the time to read through this. I hope you do the work and that I’ll hear about your great results soon.

And most importantly, welcome to the WellGrounded Life community! I look forward to connecting with you more and supporting you on your path to well-being and vitality!

~ Lisa Grace Byrne