

**No More Diets!**  
**Believe in a healthier,**  
**better you**

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## Foreword

I'll be straight with you. This is *not* another diet and weight loss book. Frankly, if it was simply about that, I could tackle it in one easy sentence: eat less and exercise more.

Neither is it a self-help book in the strictest sense. That's because all my professional practice as a hypnotherapist over many years tells me that we can't unlock our full potential by ourselves. If you want to achieve what I believe you are capable of achieving (and what, by the end of this book, YOU will believe you are capable of achieving), you need a real person – not a magic audio app or a DVD – to help you.

This book isn't even about your body; it's about your mind.

I know what you're thinking: "If it's not about the way I look and you're not going to give me a slimming plan, why on earth bother to read it?"

Because, like many of the clients who come to my hypnotherapy clinics, you've probably devoured more diet and weight loss books than you've had hot dinners – literally! You maybe *have* lost weight in the past – you felt great about it, but deep down you knew this was a battle with yourself that you were unlikely to win. Keeping the weight off has been a constant struggle; the daily denial and guilty lapses, the calorie counting and slavish (sometimes frankly crazy) devotion to diet advice have sapped your strength. All you've succeeded in doing is becoming *more* obsessed about food. Sound familiar?

I pioneered Virtual Gastric Band (VGB) therapy in the UK because I wanted to change the narrative about diet and weight loss. I wanted to get people thinking about outcomes rather than the diet journey itself – and, above all, I wanted them to believe it *is* possible to get to where and who they want to be, in a way that lasts and genuinely changes lives.

It's called *Virtual* Gastric Band therapy because it has the same physical impact on what you eat as bariatric surgery, but it is achieved by changing your mindset, not rearranging your digestive system.

Turn over the page and start to feel better about yourself – not because I say so, but because by picking up this book you've already shown you're ready to do just that.

Much love,

Sheila

You can find Sheila Granger-accredited VGB therapists across the world. For a list of practitioners closest to you, see my website [www.sheilagrange.com](http://www.sheilagrange.com)

## A word from David Birch

I am delighted to introduce David Birch, one of my network of highly skilled and committed practitioners worldwide, as co-author of this book.

David's experiences in delivering my Virtual Gastric Band Programme within his practice in Ireland have had a significant impact on how I have developed the therapy over the years, adding colour and depth to my understanding of people's eating disorders and weight issues from his direct interactions with clients.

All of my work is based on providing realistic solutions for real life situations, based on evidence-based therapies, as I strive to make hypnotherapy mainstream as a solution to many of the debilitating problems people face every day.

To this end, the information and examples provided by fellow hypnotherapists like David is fundamental to helping me to develop programmes which achieve the kinds of powerful outcomes that my VGB has done.

Here is what David had to say...

### Congratulations!

You've just taken the first step towards improving your life and I am delighted to have the opportunity to share that journey with you.

Sheila Granger's pioneering Virtual Gastric Band (VGB) therapy – for which I am one of a limited number of accredited practitioners worldwide – can succeed where various breeds of diet plans have failed, and led to damaging yo-yo weight loss and gain behaviour in the process.

How can I be so bold as to make a statement like this? Well, I've worked with Sheila to deliver her VGB for nine years now, observing jaw-dropping results in more than 95% of my clients.

I offer every client a free consultation to explain the process, find out more about them, and then tailor the session around them – there's no such thing as a 'one size fits all' for me.

I have experienced a lot of success with VGB and some very happy clients! I regularly receive feedback from people about their progress – one man steadily lost 2lb a week since coming to see me, and soon reached his weight loss target of 2st; a lovely lady who had been overweight all her life lost 5st; and a woman who became overweight after having a baby 12 years previously quickly lost 3st thanks to the VGB.

Feedback from my experiences with these people has helped Sheila to refine her programme over the years, and contributed to some of her insights in the ensuing pages.

I am very proud to have the opportunity to endorse the contents of this book, as one of Sheila's leading VGB practitioners.

As Sheila makes clear, there is no self-help when it comes to VGB success. This book is designed as a starting point, to give readers an improved understanding of their bad eating behaviour and why they are doing it.

I am delighted to be able to provide co-authored copies to my clients, as I then handhold them through the therapy process, and towards a more fulfilled, healthier future.

David Birch  
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### **Thanks**

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making this book a reality – from the clients who have kindly allowed us to feature their inspiring stories to the esteemed practitioners who have lent their words to endorse the power of my VGB.

Thanks also to Tracy Fletcher, Sarah Mainprize and Sue Scott for their help in bringing my words to life, and to James Mellor for his wonderful illustrations.

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# Introduction

Being overweight has nothing to do with food.

These few words sum up the message and purpose of this book.

And if they’ve made you stop and think then we’re on the right track because, in my experience, developing a better relationship with your body in general – and what you put into it – starts with breaking what I call the ‘daily trance’, which is the root cause of a number of self-destructive habits.

Try this...

Before we get into the detail of what I mean by this, here’s an exercise for you to try. In the boxes below, note down what you ate yesterday, when, and what you were doing at the time.

What...	When...	While...

Does anything stand out to you, from what you’ve written down? I’ll hazard a few guesses: first of all, you’ve really had to think hard to remember the what and the when. Secondly, I bet a good half of the instances you’ve noted involved doing something else as you ate.

Right so far?

OK, so why is this significant?

Well, the first rule when it comes to getting a handle on any habitual activity, including food and drink consumption, is identifying what the habit is and the circumstances that lead to you engaging in it. Once you’ve done that, you can become much more ‘mindful’ of your behaviour – i.e. understand what you do and the things that might be triggering you to do it.

Traditional diets – some home truths

And therein lies some of my inspiration for writing this book. Over the years, I’ve had so many clients visit me for help with all sorts of issues, and food and struggling to lose weight has been consistently top of the list. I think this is because being bigger than they should be has such a major impact on people’s lives – from their self-confidence and self-image, right through to their health and ability to enjoy the things that make life worth living.

Without exception, such problems don’t actually lie in food at all. They tend to stem from an unhelpful mindset and accompanying rituals, which lead to them eating the wrong things, or too much of the right things, or with too little exercise, and with insufficient awareness of the damage they are doing to their bodies.

I have seen literally hundreds of clients with this issue. Most have tried two or three traditional diets and seen their weight yo-yo backwards and forwards for years as a consequence, but never achieved lasting success. They have all known far more about dieting than me. In fact, they are usually experts in it.

I found myself asking ‘why are they still overweight?’. I realised that if the many fad diets out there actually worked, these people would without doubt be the shape they wanted to be. Yet most of them had repeatedly experimented with the latest craze and dropped pounds, only to put them back on again. So, what was going wrong?

There had to be a different way of looking at this problem.

### **Nature versus nurture**

When we're born, we human beings come complete with an inbuilt survival mechanism, and it's as simple as can be: our stomach sends signals to our brain that we need to eat, we cry and, once we're satisfied, we stop. We are programmed from the off to take what we need and our body knows exactly what that is.

However, as we grow, our brain gets more involved and we start to become conditioned by our environment, developing associations with food, good and bad. For example, if our parents give us sweets as a reward or to make us feel better, that creates a link in our brain between sugar and comfort.

How many of us have been told as children to clear our plates in order to be rewarded with pudding? Just one example of how natural instinct about when we've had enough and need to stop eating gets clouded by conditioning.

Similarly, being deprived as a child for whatever reason can lead to binge eating tendencies later in life, once those restrictions are taken away.

In my experience, there are several reasons why diets don't work, but the fundamental one is these kinds of connections. Because diets only address the physical results of our over-indulgence and don't change how we think, they don't address the real problem. You wouldn't put a sticking plaster over a six-inch wound and expect it to heal, and this is no different.

### **So, you think you're obsessed?**

Wonder diets, crash plans, a plethora of number crunching equations, colour combinations and health-inducing halos, protein-only, fat-for-fit, sugar free and fasting focused, most of us have tried some form of fad diet at one time or another, and ended up somewhat dissatisfied with the outcome.

In fact, most of the meal plans, regimes and lifestyle options – call them what you will – I've ever come across actually increase the dieter's obsession with food.

They introduce the notion that you are going to be deprived from the moment you embark on one, and so make you think about food even more. Some even encourage you to overeat by bingeing on certain types of food on certain days, or having carte blanche to pig out as much as you want on others. All these effectively do is encourage bad behaviour and unhelpfully label certain foods as either good or bad, rather than engendering a balanced approach. After all, there's a lot to be said for the old adage of 'everything in moderation'.

It's often possible to cheat the system, too – who hasn't avoided eating or drinking for a few hours before a weekly weigh-in just to dupe the scales, and then gone and undone all their good work just after? Go on, you can admit it, no-one's listening!

Then there's the fact that diets are so focused on weight in the first place, when it's a range of factors that are important, such as overall body shape, size and muscle tone/ratio.

### ***Food for thought***

**I worked with one lady who dropped three dress sizes in four months. One dress size usually equates to 10lbs so this would, in theory, mean she had lost 30lbs or just over 2st in weight.**

**She hadn't, she'd lost just 17lbs because she'd been exercising as well as eating sensibly and muscle weighs more, so she'd actually become a little heavier.**

**Yet she felt fabulous and therefore, from her point of view, she'd achieved her goal of transforming her life for the better.**

### **Mind over what matters**

Basically, the human brain is programmed to rebel against negative ideas like deprivation. How many times have you wanted to do something twice as much simply because someone told you that you couldn't, for example? Have you ever noticed that you are twice as likely to fall over or spill something if someone tells you not to? Why? Because concentrating on a negative outcome makes it much more likely to happen. If you're hungry because you're not eating enough, your brain is going to hark back to that original baby instinct of hankering after what it needs. All in all, your diet is doomed to failure.



All of this against a backdrop of ever-changing guidelines around what’s good for us and what’s not. Right now, sugar is the root of all evil, while protein is the best thing since sliced bread – and actually bread is also off the agenda thanks to the misguided assumption that anything wheat-based is inherently bad for us. It’s no wonder we’re all so confused!

Most of the people I see who cannot achieve their desired body shape are actually eating healthily overall. They’re not eating five burgers a day from a fast food outlet or stuffing their faces uncontrollably with endless amounts of chocolate bars. So where are they going wrong?

I think the fundamental issue is that we’ve lost sight of the basic principles on which the human species relies: eating only what we need, of all kinds of food, in moderation, and exercising more. It’s not rocket science and all comes down to establishing the right foundations and changing unhelpful routines. Which is why these are the things I focus on in my Virtual Gastric Band therapy and its associated mindfulness practice.

About the Virtual Gastric Band

I was inspired to develop my Virtual Gastric Band (VGB) therapy by my experiences with clients. It centres on increasing a person’s awareness of their food, drink and activity habits, in order to help them take control and stamp out the things that are causing their health problems.

As a clinical hypnotherapist, I am very aware of the power our minds have to influence our bodies, both positively and negatively. It’s a popular misconception that practitioners like me place people into a trance to make them do things. In fact, the exact opposite is true.

Most of us spend most of each day in a trance-like state. For example, how many times have you driven to work or walked to school to drop the kids off, and can’t remember how you got there? These are common examples of how our unconscious minds take over when it comes to daily tasks. What hypnosis and mindfulness help us do is break out of that subconscious state and take more conscious control of what our minds are making us do. This way, we can make sure they are working in our best interests, rather than against us.

The first thing I recommend, through my VGB practice, is changing the terminology we use around weight and eating. This is because our minds

are so powerful that, whatever problems we focus on in life, we will get more of. While we focus on the problem, i.e. being overweight, we will never be able to rectify it. Similarly, if we focus our energy on dieting, this is doomed not to work for us in the longer term.

Try this...

The trick is to visualise the shape you want to be and why. Concentrate on all of the positive things looking different will enable you to do, and the doors it will open, whether that is being able to walk your grandchildren to school, complete a life challenge like climbing a mountain, live long enough to fulfil your dreams or simply get to the top of the stairs without being out of breath.

You’ll be amazed how much more likely you are to succeed, if you focus on the positives of what you want to achieve rather than the demotivating facts of what you need to do to get there.

So, let’s start by getting your physical or body goals down on paper:

I want to...	Because...	By...

# **A brief introduction to my VGB**

My original inspiration for my VGB came from reading a newspaper article one Saturday morning, about some work a Spanish couple had done with their hypnotherapy patients. They'd seen a 75 per cent success rate from using mindfulness techniques to focus on weight loss.

I pooh-poohed it at first but started to explore this idea of mind over matter as an option for re-setting how people think.

Years later, in 2012, I decided to test this theory myself, and put out an appeal for volunteers to take part in a group experiment to see if I could get them to re-boot their thinking about food.

The concept of a virtual gastric band for weight loss, using hypnosis, had been around for a year or so and had generated a lot of positive press from the global media.

At the time of its first appearance, 80 per cent of my clients were coming to me for weight control. My system at the time worked fairly well, but I decided to include the VGB in my own weight control program, with a view to subjecting it to a trial.

I issued an invitation for volunteers to take part in the free trial and had little difficulty in achieving the required numbers. I took on 25 volunteers – of different shapes, sizes, ages and gender – and saw them in a group setting. Given that the treatment was not to be personalised, I had envisaged perhaps only a 40 per cent success rate, believing that group treatment might dilute its effectiveness.

I saw the group for just three one-hour sessions. I was astounded to record that they lost over 14st between them in only three weeks, and all but one reported a change in their eating habits.

Both local and national media became very interested in the trial results. I have subsequently featured in newspapers like The Sun, The Daily Express, The India Times and The Yorkshire Post. My local BBC television news programme, Look North, also took up the story, followed by local radio stations and national Radio Five Live.

Now, I would normally expect a lower success rate in a group setting, because you can't tailor treatments as much as you can on an individual, one-to-one basis. Yet the results were phenomenal. Of the 23 people taking part, 21 changed their eating behaviour in line with their self-image goals and maintained this over an extended period of time.

From this, I developed the VGB system looking at all aspects of how we can reprogramme someone to develop a new set of habits. It's not about making changes a person can't ultimately live with because they're unrealistic in the long term, it's about small, more sensible adjustments they can sustain, and giving them the confidence to believe they can turn things around.

This VGB programme has achieved phenomenal success ever since, appearing in a variety of national media titles, and is now delivered by thousands of my accredited practitioners worldwide. In all, I estimate that it will have changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people for the better.

### Case Study – Carol



### **VGB helped Carol lose 4st in three months, inspired by her daughter's dream wedding**

Not spoiling her daughter's wedding pictures was the motivation Carol Onslow needed to finally shed some serious pounds, coupled with facing the prospect of potential mid-life illnesses like diabetes and a lack of mobility to enjoy the travel and time with family and friends she loves so much.

Having tried a variety of yo-yo diets for many years, reading in a local newspaper about the work my certified practitioner Lisa Pawlowski was doing led her to consider this alternative form of treatment. Lisa is

one of a number of practitioners around the world I work with to offer my pioneering VGB.

Four months after contacting us, Carol had lost almost 4st and said the experience had changed her whole relationship with food for the better.

Carol and her husband Michael both worked in financial services, before she gave up her job to have their daughters, Lee and Samantha. But Michael's job continued to regularly take them both abroad where Carol enjoyed sampling the local cuisine. Back home, Carol's temptation for naughty nibbles had got out of hand. She said: "I would go for fuel and buy several chocolate bars at the same time and eat them on the way home. It got so bad my husband started to joke that the price of fuel was going up!

"Then I became ashamed of my habit and started hiding the chocolates I was buying.

"I'd even steal my daughter's Easter eggs and there was also the wine, chips, takeaways and puddings."

### **A dramatic change**

The special therapy had a dramatic effect on Carol from the very first session.

She said: "I remember my husband and I were going out with friends that evening and I had a starter as usual but then found that, when the main course arrived, I just couldn't eat it. My friends were absolutely amazed as that wasn't like the Carol they knew!

"I don't know exactly how it worked but it's as though I've had a real gastric band fitted and I can physically only eat a fraction of the amount I used to."

Four months later, and having shed almost 4st, the experience had changed Carol's whole relationship with food for the better and left her with a three-square-meal-a-day habit, which she is managing to stick to religiously. And it meant she could look the mum she wanted to be in Samantha's wedding photos.

### **Health benefits**

"I feel so much better," she explained.

"I've got so much energy and I've bought some new clothes that I actually feel good in. I'd started to struggle coming downstairs because my knee was playing up but now I can navigate stairs without any problem, and I can enjoy walking and other activities again without feeling abnormal.

"My blood pressure had started to go up too but now that's regulating itself.

"Something else that really made me think was the fact my mum has Type 2 diabetes. I was worried I could be heading that way too, but hopefully now I can control that."

### **Shifting her mind**

Describing the therapy session with Lisa, Carol said: "It's very difficult to describe what she did or how it happened.

"I just felt completely relaxed – not unconscious as I was still aware of my surroundings – but incredibly relaxed.

"She walked me through visualising my stomach and having a gastric band fitted and being mindful about my food, and all of those things seemed incredibly real. I can remember the consultant's face, and the conversation I had with him, vividly. As a result, this all seems to have really lodged in my subconscious mind and changed my habits around food."

As well as taking more time to eat what's in front of her, and sticking to her three square meals, Carol is making healthier choices where she can, taking her well below the thousands of calories she used to consume on a daily basis.

"The first thing I used to think when I opened my eyes in a morning was 'what can I eat?' Now, I focus on what I'm going to do with the day, and on getting the most out of life.

"Sometimes, I get so engrossed in conversations when we go out to dinner, I forget to eat, and it feels as though I'm concentrating on the things that matter now rather than just food all the time," she added.

“Even if we’re on holiday and friends are eating ice creams and other treats in front of me, it doesn’t bother me and I can take pleasure from their enjoyment.”

And she doesn’t intend to go back this time.

She said: “Everything is so much easier – even silly things like painting my toenails – and I’m realising how limiting my weight used to be. I’ve come such a long way and I’ve no intention of slipping backwards this time.

“I’m confident my new-found eating habits are here to stay.”

***Carol’s lightbulb moment***

When going out, Carol says she now ‘concentrates on what matters rather than the food’.

This is a great example of the kind of reboot that the VGB can give you.

Carol is an example of how my VGB puts you back in control so that you can start making better choices without being dictated to, in the way you are with many diets. It is designed to make you more aware of what they are doing at any given time so that you begin to listen to your body instead of mindlessly giving in to habits you have formed within your daily ‘trance’.

The first principle of the VGB is based around encouraging you to eat three times per day and be more selective about what you eat. Back to the baby who thinks ‘what do I need?’ and not ‘what kind of day have I had – shall I have this or that to numb the pain or comfort myself?’.

Our bodies are built to give us all the right signals and the VGB re-trains us to listen effectively to them once again. If we damage our foot, we heed the pain signals that tell us to avoid walking on it. The same is true with food, we need to re-learn how to realise when we’re not hungry and stop eating when we’re full.

Although the VGB isn’t just about making you think they’ve had surgery to have a real gastric band fitted. It’s about re-setting your brain and the signals it sends, and harnessing the power of your mind to make

a positive change. It’s also about helping you to realise you are at the start of a journey. We live in an age of instant gratification but long-term success starts with recognising that you can’t always have the result you want right now. However, by breaking out of that trance, sitting at a table at regular times and concentrating on the act of eating so that you give your body chance to notice when you’re full; steering away from night time snacking and eating without even realising it, you will find your way to your goal.

**What type of eater are  
you?**



When it comes to problematic relationships with food, in my experience people tend to fall into one of six broad types and understanding which one you are is the first step towards tackling your eating issues. You might find you identify with more than one type, which is fine – my Virtual Gastric Band approach to weight management is far more sensitive to individual personalities and psychological drivers than any diet could ever be.

### **Type 1: The Busy Body**

“I’m so busy, sometimes I just forget to eat.”

“Between work and kids, there’s no time to think about food.”

“I do a lot of shift work, which makes it hard to plan meals.”

“Eating less isn’t such a bad thing anyway, it will help me lose weight.”

Does this sound a bit like you? If so, you’re not alone. These are the kinds of comments I hear all the time from clients who lead genuinely busy lives. Some have full-on careers, they work overtime on a daily basis and are rarely able to switch off or down tools; some are shift workers who struggle to put a sensible eating routine in place; many are juggling bringing up children with jobs as well as a bustling social diary.

The stresses and strains of modern living are well documented, and they can have a huge impact on your eating behaviour. From not having the time to plan meals, to shop for food or prepare meals, to simply running out of time to actually eat, this is all detrimental to our health.

Some might believe that it’s perhaps not detrimental to our weight – surely if we eat less, we’ll weigh less, right? Wrong. You’re more likely to burn muscle tissue than fat, because if you trick your metabolism into thinking you’re starving, it will need stored energy and so hold onto any spare fat.

Eating on the go, grabbing sugary snacks at random times, a reliance on caffeine boosts from coffee and so-called energy drinks, skipping meals, going all day without food then binging in the evening are all signs of being a ‘busy body’.



The good news is my VGB can help you. Understanding that weight control isn’t always about overeating or oversized portions is key to this therapy. It can help you manage your relationship with food even if your conscious mind doesn’t think you have a problem with it. It will assist you with putting new routines in place which will ultimately lead to healthier habits that you’ll soon realise you *do* have time for.

### **Type 2: The Super Snacker**

Eating three square meals a day, comprising a nutritious breakfast, lunch and evening meal, is a traditional yet effective way to keep your body healthy and maintain a suitable weight. Many of my clients successfully manage to achieve this – they have no problem with food shopping or meal planning and preparation.



However, they often struggle to understand why their weight has steadily crept up despite their seemingly positive relationship with food, and are unable to identify the underlying cause of their expanding waistline.

More often than not, I find the answer usually lies in a few naughty habits that their conscious mind probably doesn’t even acknowledge – namely, snacking. So, alongside the wholesome fruit and vegetables, the essential proteins and the ‘good’ carbs, my ‘super snackers’ are consuming all manner of titbits that their body doesn’t require. A bag of crisps here, a chocolate bar there, a cupcake, a handful of biscuits, another glass of wine after dinner... Any of these things eaten on an occasional basis is unlikely to do any damage coupled with an otherwise healthy diet, but scale it up to a daily basis and we’re entering a whole world of hurt!

Most of these instances of overindulgent snacking happen in the evening, when dinner is done and dusted and it’s time to put your feet up after a hard day’s work by relaxing on the sofa in front of the TV. Now, trust me when I say the power of television is almost as strong as that of a hypnotist! Even a small amount of screen time can effectively put you in a trance, so your conscious mind doesn’t really notice or later recall how much you’re popping in your mouth.

It's not uncommon for super snackers to have almost no recall of what exactly they've consumed, or genuinely believe they haven't snacked at all. Therapists call this 'unconscious eating', and my VGB therapy can come to your rescue by helping to put your conscious mind back in control and banish these bad habits for good.

### **Type 3: The Emotional Eater**

Everyone occasionally uses food as a bit of a pick-me-up, as a reward or in celebration of something, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that – food plays a significant role in cultures across the world, it can bring enormous pleasure to individuals and can connect groups of people.

But you may find you're entering a physical and psychological danger zone when you habitually use food to make yourself feel better. It's one of the reasons so many diets fail – people eat for other reasons than just to satisfy hunger. It's often used as a stress-reliever or a way of dealing with difficult emotions, thereby satisfying an emotional need rather than a physical one.

Loneliness, sadness, anger, grief, resentment, fear and boredom, to name but a few negative emotions, can all be drivers that cause people to crave particular food in the hope it will raise their spirits, calm their nerves or simply make them feel better in some way. Many emotional eaters will eat even though they are not hungry, eat very quickly and eat more than they really want. Usually the food being craved is not exactly healthy – sweets, chocolate, ice-cream, biscuits, cake, crisps, pizza and pop – and often in very large portions, possibly involving major binges.

Unfortunately, efforts to deal with these emotions in this way usually don't succeed, because they are not a solution to the real problem. You might find yourself experiencing additional negative feelings of guilt and shame after eating, and even self-hatred. It's a self-destructive cycle of behaviour that may seem impossible to unpick.

I know how powerless clients can feel, believing they are trapped in a never-ending loop, but I can promise that with help from a trained therapist using my VGB technique, there really is a way out. Working



together, you can identify your triggers, reset your responses and put yourself back in control of what and how you eat.

### **Type 4: The Comfort Zoner**

A growing number of my VGB clients inhabit a bit of a grey area that I could have described more crudely as 'middle-aged spread' instead of 'comfort zoners', as people tend to enter this arena in mid-life. But, other than age, it's equally about an outlook and a lifestyle – falling into a comfortable routine, getting set in your ways and not challenging your habits, being settled in what feels like a perfectly pleasant bubble.



Eating will no doubt be a highly pleasurable activity, and our gregarious comfort zoners will often practise a lot of social eating – wining and dining business colleagues, attending and hosting dinner parties, eating out with family and friends. They might not be able to identify any obvious reason for their steadily increasing weight, but without realising it they are more than likely overeating large portions of rich, high-calorie foods.

The appearance of extra fat (usually around the tummy) might seem sudden, but more often than not it's actually a very slow accumulation from years of almost undiscernible weight gain. Research points to a variety of physiological, biological and neurological factors that come with age such as hormonal changes, the brain's reduction in appetite regulation, coupled with a decrease of lean muscle mass and increase in fat stores.

But don't be tricked into thinking this combination of physical causes of gradual weight gain has an inevitable outcome; sometimes comfort zoners are too ready to give in to a belief that it's simply unavoidable and there's nothing they can do about it. I can assure you that is not the case! Taking the VGB approach with the support of an accredited practitioner, you can soon shake up your malaise, re-format some of the routines you've slipped into and start shaping your body back to the size you want it to be.



### Type 5: The Supersize Me

Anyone familiar with the 2004 film *Super Size Me* will know how damaging a fast-food diet can be, especially with that particular industry's focus on 'supersized' portions. I'm not suggesting my clients are addicted to takeaways, far from it. This notion of supersizing can be applied to all types of food, including home cooking – it basically means portion control is, well, out of control!



There are a whole host of reasons behind the growth of the average adult's meal portions, but the fact is they have definitely grown. Just look at the size of crockery from yesteryear compared with what you'll find in the modern kitchen, everything from wine glasses to plates and bowls is far bigger these days than anything you'd find in an antique shop. Of course, having larger tableware doesn't mean we should go ahead and fill them right up, but that does tend to be the case.

In 2013, the British Heart Foundation published a report about the change in British portion sizes since 1993, and highlighted the trend for food manufacturers and retailers to produce and promote large portion sizes. The BHF concluded that larger portions encourage us to eat more and, coupled with a shortage of easily understandable guidance about recommended portion sizes, it's incredibly difficult to work out how much you should consume.

I would add a number of other causal factors to this tendency to pile our plates high, relating to common emotional and psychological drivers. In my experience, I've found that habits such as this usually stem from our childhood conditioning, such as being told to eat up everything on your plate because it's wrong to waste food or, conversely, a shortage of food creating a lasting fear of going hungry.

This is where my VGB technique can really get to the root of the problem, unlike your average diet – working with your hypnotherapist, you can quickly get your portion problem back under your control and start to see the weight drop off.

### Type 6: The Sedentary Scoffer

We all know that exercise is good for us, right? The physical and psychological benefits have been proven time and again in countless studies and experiments. And most people will be aware that the recommendation is to spend at least 30 minutes doing some kind of vigorous activity, five times a week. But maybe that thought alone is enough to send you into a cold sweat?



An NHS Digital 2018 study on obesity, physical activity and diet in the UK found that of adults aged over 19, 21 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women were classed as completely inactive and just 66 per cent and 58 per cent of women met the recommended guidelines for aerobic activity.

Research into obesity is all very enlightening, but we don't really need these studies to tell us there is a link between a lack of physical activity and being overweight. It couldn't be plainer – if the calories going in are greater than the calories going out, the weight will begin to pile on.

Despite understanding what, on the face of it, is a straightforward equation, this knowledge doesn't always translate into meaningful action. I've applied my VGB technique with lots of clients whose lifestyles have become so sedentary that it's ultimately harming their health, with weight gain being the most obvious indicator. Some are not really aware of how inactive they have become – without using a fitness tracking device or app, it's all too easy to think you're moving more than you actually are. Some are painfully aware but struggle to find the inner motivation to get up and do something about it. Others simply hate the physical sensations that exercise creates and avoid anything that brings on a sweat or causes a bit of huffing and puffing. Some people's levels of obesity mean that a workout could actually be quite dangerous and are unsure how to introduce safe levels of activity into their lives.

So, this supposedly simple 'eat less, move more' principle is actually much more complex when it comes to implementation than you might think, and all my VGB practitioners have every sympathy for this. Working together, we can look at how you can rekindle an enthusiasm for activity as well as identifying and tackling any underlying eating issues.

**Which type am I?**

Take this quick quiz below to find out which profile is most like you – just tick one statement in each section that you identify with more than the others.

- 1)
  - a) I want to make sure all my meals fill me up
  - b) My eating habits during the day are healthy
  - c) I often crave comfort foods
  - d) It can be hard to find the time to eat a proper meal
  - e) I don't see the point in wearing a fitness tracker
  - f) Everybody gets a little bit of middle-aged spread
- 2)
  - a) I like to see plenty of food on my plate
  - b) In the evening I enjoy winding down in front of the TV with a few snacks
  - c) I often eat when I'm not even hungry
  - d) It's much easier to just eat on the go
  - e) Exercise isn't something that interests me
  - f) I have an established repertoire of meals that I'm used to eating
- 3)
  - a) If I'm offered a second helping, I'll usually take it
  - b) I enjoy a nibble before bedtime, especially if I've had a long day
  - c) I often use food to reward myself
  - d) I don't really have time to cook
  - e) I'd rather relax on the sofa than go for a walk
  - f) Food is one of the main pleasures in life

- 4)
  - a) I don't like to see good food going to waste
  - b) After my evening meal I tend to feel tired and a sugary treat peps me up
  - c) Sometimes I feel guilty and ashamed about my eating habits
  - d) Food isn't really a priority for me
  - e) I don't have time to work out
  - f) I regularly dine out with friends and family or attend dinner parties
- 5)
  - a) I don't like to go hungry
  - b) I eat well so I don't understand why I'm putting on weight
  - c) I eat more when I feel stressed
  - d) I feel quite hungry a lot of the time
  - e) I know I should be more active but it's so hard to find the motivation
  - f) I've made it this far in life so why change now?

Mostly As	Mostly Bs	Mostly Cs	Mostly Ds	Mostly Es	Mostly Fs
Supersize me	Super Snackers	Emotional Eaters	Busy Bodies	Sedentary Scoffers	Comfort Zoners

**Summary**

So, in this chapter we've taken a look at six rudimentary types of overeater – Busy Bodies, Super Snackers, Emotional Eaters, Supersize Me, Comfort Zoners and Sedentary Scoffers. Understanding which type you most closely identify with will help you to begin tackling your eating issues, and the subconscious processes underlying them. Whichever type or types you fall into, your hypnotherapist will be able to tailor your VGB programme to ensure he or she can work with you to achieve your individual goals.

In the next chapter, we take a look at the evolution of my VGB, and the secret behind its success.

**How can my VGB help  
you?**

The Virtual Gastric Band (VGB) is a remarkable weight loss programme that I pioneered in the UK in 2012 and is now practised across the world by thousands of accredited hypnotherapists.

Thousands of people have benefited from my simple yet effective treatment to bring their weight back under control and become the size and shape they wish to be.

### **So, what is the VGB exactly?**

Many readers will be aware of a surgical treatment called a ‘gastric band’, performed under general anaesthetic, which uses an actual band to physically constrict the stomach so that the person feels full after eating less food than usual.

Rather than operate on the body, through VGB we effectively operate on the subconscious mind by creating a ‘virtual’ gastric band in your head. The good news is there’s absolutely no surgery or physical intervention involved whatsoever, and you definitely won’t need to visit a hospital or see a medic!

My VGB methods work by harnessing the power that every individual holds within them to make positive changes to their lives, using tried and tested clinical hypnotherapy techniques. It basically retrains your mind and body to be satisfied with smaller and healthier portions by changing the way you think about food, and has completely safe, predictable outcomes.

One thing it absolutely is not is a diet! Diets only work in the short term, whereas the VGB is a long-term solution that – unlike most diets – won’t leave you feeling deprived, hungry, or miserable.

### **It’s all in the mind**

I have had clients who’ve undergone gastric band surgery in the past but have still struggled with their old thoughts and feelings about food – they’ve in effect treated the body but not the mind. Clients experience their ‘virtual’ band in different ways. Some feel it physically, like a tightening around their stomach. Others form no conscious connection to it but nevertheless find they eat less.

One client, a lovely woman named Sonia, lost 10st thanks to my VGB programme. Following her treatment, she became worried about overeating at Christmas and asked me to ‘tighten her band’. We duly

did this, but as a consequence she couldn’t eat her Christmas dinner! Another client was concerned about regaining weight on a luxury cruise holiday. He did indeed gain 10lbs but as soon as he returned home, he was able to flick his mental VGB switch back on and quickly shed the extra pounds. The moral of these stories is that you’ve no idea quite how powerful your imagination can be until you set it free and believe in yourself.

A popular myth is that you must be gullible or highly suggestible for hypnotherapy to work – that’s absolutely not the case. Your VGB practitioner will explore the most suitable application of the technique for your particular needs. It’s a tool that can be applied in various ways to achieve the same long-term weight loss aim. Everyone’s perception is different, and believing you’ve had gastric surgery is not critical to the VGB’s success.

As VGB practitioners, what we are doing is helping you to update the program your mind and body is running regarding food. Your subconscious will continue operating whatever program has become embedded as the norm, until it’s instructed to do it differently. And that’s ultimately how my hypnotherapy techniques can have incredible results.

### **An individual approach**

I can’t really stress enough how important it is for your personal VGB plan to be completely tailored to your needs. The chances of weight loss success will be far higher through one-on-one treatment with an accredited practitioner compared with any online download or phone app. The latter use a one-size-fits-all approach, whereas a hypnotherapist will spend time analysing your specific situation and identify the most appropriate application of the VGB programme to ensure you achieve your goal, as well as providing on-going, direct support throughout your therapy. Unlike a download, a therapist can respond to you and your changing needs as your journey progresses.

Yes, this service will cost more than buying a phone app, but it’s considerably more effective and still a heck of a lot cheaper than paying for an actual surgical gastric band! You can find VGB therapists across the world – check out an up-to-date list of accredited practitioners on my website at [www.sheilagranger.com](http://www.sheilagranger.com)

### **The seven golden rules**

Everyone on my VGB programme follows seven rules, regardless of the underlying reasons for their weight issues or how their treatment is being tailored to suit their specific needs. These golden rules are:

#### *1. Set a goal*

Goal-setting should be SMART and progressive. So, to start with, aim for something small and achievable before setting the next goal, and then the next. It might be going down one dress size or buying a new item of clothing that you want to work towards fitting into. These kinds of aspirations are not limited to women – one male client bought a new motorbike jacket, and another purchased a wetsuit ready for his holidays. Having something visual to look at regularly can be a super incentive (this is to do with what we call ‘the law of concentrated attention’ – it means that if there is something in life you really want, then if you behave as if you already have it, you are very likely to actually get it).

Perhaps your goal will be a physical activity, such as being able to walk a certain distance, or maybe you’ll sign up for some kind of fundraising challenge. Whatever it is, your goal must be meaningful to you, and motivational. Commitment is key; ensure you are fully focused on achieving your goal and subdue any negative self-talk and doubts.

#### *2. Listen to your daily recording*

Your therapist will recommend a motivational message for you to listen to and repeat every day. It’s a constant reminder for what you’re supposed to be doing, thinking or focusing on. This is a powerful mind management technique and it’s essential to listen to it at least once a day for the first four weeks.

It might feel strange at first but there’s a good reason for using this technique. Your conscious mind will know and understand the message, but the problem is it keeps ignoring it and slipping into automatic, subconscious behaviours. The additional focus on hearing and speaking the message out loud will help instil it so that, eventually, new neural pathways are created in your brain. There’s also an element of relaxation to this practice, which can help to soothe any nerves or anxieties.

#### *3. Eat three times a day*

Forget about diets, calorie counting, points or fasting, the VGB rule is you eat three times a day – breakfast, lunch and evening meal. Eat whatever you want. Seriously, eat whatever you want! The deal is that you shouldn’t snack between these meals, so all your food consumption takes place in these three sittings.

You’ll soon find you’re not spending as much time thinking about food, and naturally end up making healthier choices about food content and portion size. We won’t go into detail about nutrition in this book but your therapist will be able to give you some basic advice and signpost you to further information should you wish.

#### *4. Eat mindfully*

Am I asking you to contradict yourself by spending less time thinking about food in general yet at meal times spend more time focusing on it? Well, it’s not really a contradiction when you look at how mindful eating works.

Many of my clients admit to eating on the go. Breakfast might be a few quick mouthfuls of something while the kids are getting ready for school, or during the commute to work. Lunch is often snatched between meetings or while still tapping away at a desk computer. Dinner might be consumed on the sofa while your attention is absorbed by a TV show. This is what I’d call ‘unconscious eating’ as, without realising it, you’re actually in a trance.

The purpose of eating mindfully is to take a step back and be more aware of what you are doing, and what you are consuming. Don’t tell yourself that you haven’t got time to sit down and eat, *make* time, especially with your evening meal. Clear the decks, resist any temptation to switch the TV on, empty your own headspace, focus on your food and your dining companions, make the meal a meaningful experience that you can enjoy. Eat slowly and chew your food thoroughly.

When you force yourself to heighten your awareness of what you are consuming, your brain and body will register it. This means you’ll be more likely to feel full and less likely to start feeling peckish again within a short amount of time, which is what leads to snacking.



*5. Recognise your ‘full’ signal*

From birth, we are hardwired to know both when we are hungry, and when we have taken in enough sustenance. A newborn baby will instinctively cry when it needs feeding and stop when it has had enough. The neurological and biological signals we are born with can unfortunately get lost in translation as we grow and develop, and for many adults this natural ability to recognise them becomes impaired.

The challenge for all VGB clients is to reconnect with these signals, and re-learn how to spot them. Some people will go by feeling – do they feel satisfied, has their hunger passed? Others will think it through logically – how big was the portion and how much still remains, is their belly starting to bloat or seem heavy? One client said he never felt hungry, so I advised him to not eat until he did. After three days without food, he sensed his hunger and began eating again. That’s maybe an extreme example, but it was his way of pressing his reset button.

A common issue many clients raise is a strong desire not to waste food or to ensure they clear their plates, which is usually a trait that can be traced back to childhood. The VGB programme comes with the permission to take a more relaxed approach – eat until you sense you’re satisfied, then stop. Any leftovers might make a tasty lunch the next day or could be popped in a tub and frozen for another meal. There’s no need to feel guilty about leaving food on your plate, in fact, why not consciously flip the experience and begin to enjoy the wonderful feeling of leaving the food you no longer need!

*6. Drink water!*

I know, I know, you don’t need me to tell you to drink more water! Our bodies need up to two litres of water a day to work properly and avoid dehydration. It cleanses the body of waste, boosts the metabolism, helps keep joints and muscles supple, but does it help you lose weight?

Well, yes it does, principally by preventing water retention and acting as an appetite suppressant. Sometimes we think our brain is telling us we are hungry when we’re actually thirsty, so as a rule of thumb, grab a glass of water when the tummy rumbles strike and see if that helps. You could also try drinking a glass of the good stuff before each meal to help you feel fuller faster.

Replace any sugary soda, so-called energy drinks, and caffeinated teas and coffees with water. If plain water is a bit boring for your palate, try jazzing it up with a slice of lemon, lime, orange or cucumber, or crush a few berry fruits into it and add a sprig of mint to create a refreshing beverage that you can guzzle with guilt-free pleasure. At work, stay away from the vending machines and instead try carrying a large reusable water bottle around with you that you can top up throughout the day.

You’ll be able to tell if you’re well hydrated each time you visit the bathroom – the darker your urine is, the more water you need; if it’s very pale you’re on the right track.

*7. Be active for 30 minutes a day*

Hands up everyone who paid a gym subscription and went just the once? Not everyone aspires to be a gym bunny and such environments certainly aren’t for all, but the good news is there are lots of other ways to keep your body fit and healthy. The last thing any VGB therapist will do is lecture you about exercise. What they will do is help you identify ways and means of introducing around 30 minutes of activity a day, at least five times a week. Don’t worry if you are currently inactive or are struggling to visualise how you can achieve this aim – together you can come up with a realistic plan to introduce gentle physical activity into your daily routine.

The possibilities of what exactly this ‘activity’ is and how you split it up are endless, and it can take place indoors or outdoors. Three 10-minute walks, following a beginner’s exercise video on YouTube from the comfort of your living room, dusting off that old exercise bike in the spare room (or maybe the actual bicycle that’s hidden by junk in your garage), a spot of gardening or even vigorous housework all count!

Perhaps you’d feel more motivated if you had mutual support at a group session rather than going it alone – there are usually lots of yoga and Pilates classes held in local village halls where you can pay-as-you-go. Maybe you’ve always fancied learning to salsa? Find out if there’s a weekly class nearby.

If you think you ‘don’t have time’ for this golden rule, then set your morning alarm 30 minutes earlier. No excuses! Our bodies are made to move and what might start out feeling like a humongous effort will

soon come naturally. Not only will it aid your weight loss, the feelgood hormones that being physically active generates will leave you buzzing.

One of my VGB clients, a lorry driver called Pete, gradually underwent a complete lifestyle change, developing an interest in nutrition and becoming hooked on cycling. You can read more about his experience in the case study below.

***Top tip***

Keep a diary and note down everything you eat and drink, recording the time of day, what it was, who you were with, and how much you ate.

It will be helpful to note any thoughts or feelings you had before, during and after eating as well, such as how full you felt or any impulses or emotions you experienced. This will help you identify and become consciously aware of exactly what emotions you are responding to when choosing food. Consider whether each instance of eating is for nourishment (N), fun (F), mindless (M), or a binge (B).

Also record all daily physical activity and exercise, even if it's something that only takes a few minutes. This could include walking, housework, gardening, yoga, dance, steps recorded on a fitness tracker or a full-on sporting activity or class.

Jot down reminders about your seven golden rules and display them everywhere you spend your time during an average day; basically note anything you think is relevant to your treatment and your personal journey.

Be honest with yourself and, even if you transgress or have a tough day, put it on the record.

Your daily diary could look like this:

*Monday*

My goal:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Food and drink:

*Breakfast –*

.....

.....

*Lunch –*

.....

.....

*Dinner –*

.....

.....

Activity:

.....

.....

.....

Thoughts and feelings:

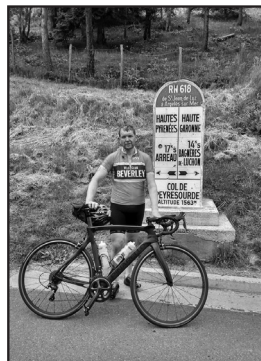
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**See Appendix 1 at the back of the book for a full week of diary pages you can photocopy and fill in**

### Case Study – Pete



#### **From fat to fitness fanatic in four weeks – how a short course of hypnotherapy changed lorry driver Pete Smith's life in 'miraculous' ways**

"One of my friends took a photo of me at a 21st birthday party. It made me realise how terrible I looked, and I knew I had to do something," said Pete.

"I was 42 and I knew that if I didn't tackle it, my weight was going to become a problem.

"I thought 'if I don't start helping myself now, why should anyone else help me?'" Pete's weight had crept up as a result of inactivity, irregular mealtimes, boredom eating and a little too much booze.

"I'd tried various diets but none of them had worked. I'd maybe lose the odd pound but wouldn't be able to stick with it for long," he said.

All of this changed when Pete got in touch after hearing a news item about me on the radio. Four weekly sessions later and the long-distance lorry driver from Driffield, East Yorkshire, in the UK, started to rapidly shed the pounds, dropping as low as 11st 3lbs within six months. He now weighs around 13st and feels comfortable maintaining at that level.

What's more amazing is the fact he's become a cycling addict who thinks nothing of notching up hundreds of miles – and whose annual highlight is a gruelling Alpine trek.

How? Pete was one of the first people to benefit from my groundbreaking VGB treatment. His therapy started with a discussion to pinpoint where things were going wrong for him because, more often than not, overeating is a symptom of another problem such as low self-esteem, depression or relationship difficulties.

"I believe you've got to want to do it in the first place, but then Sheila does the rest," said Pete. "To be honest, I still don't really know how it works, but I put my faith in Sheila and believed I could do it, and I did."

Pete had a total of four, weekly sessions in which I effectively rebooted his attitude to food and removed the triggers that caused him to reach for the wrong kinds.

All of our minds are susceptible to suggestion and this is the case with negative suggestions as well as positive ones. So, when we develop a bad habit like overeating, it is almost a state of self-hypnosis where we've convinced ourselves to do this thing that is bad for us, for some reason.

Through mindset training, including positive suggestion and visualisation, we reset Pete's thinking and switched him into more positive routines such as regular mealtimes, healthier eating choices and, importantly, no alcohol.

"I lost eight pounds in the first week," added Pete, "which was amazing.

"Then I dug out an old bike I had in the garage and, although it was difficult to exercise at first because of my size, I started doing three miles a night as well as eating more healthily, and it really progressed from there.

"I think what made a difference was the self-belief Sheila gave me. Through positive mindset she also stopped me wanting to eat so much and helped me get some discipline and routine around food.

"When I started to see it working, this gave me even more confidence to continue." In fact, Pete hasn't had to resort to drastic dieting at all.

"I haven't stopped eating anything I enjoy, and still enjoy my slice of cake at cycling cafes!" he continued. "I just try to have regular mealtimes, eat something for breakfast, dinner and tea and take time to enjoy my food rather than eating for the sake of it." And the whole process has literally changed Pete's life.



“I’m the complete opposite of what I was now, a totally different person. I have more energy and I don’t feel the need to pick at food like I used to,” he added.

He has now completed his fourth Alpine cycling tour since discovering his passion for cycling. This latest trip involved riding more than 400 miles in eight days, with several thousand feet of punishing ascents.

“It’s something I would never have believed I could do previously,” added Pete

“Losing the weight and getting into cycling as a hobby has brought me out of my shell and given me a social life. I cycle several times a week and spend weekends doing things I never would have tried before, like camping out.

“It’s really built my confidence and given me a much more positive attitude to life,” he said.

“I still enjoy watching the footy but at least now it’s offset by the biking!”

For others in the same situation, Pete had this message: “I would tell them to ask themselves ‘do they really want to do it?’. If their answer is yes, they can, with that little extra push.

“I’m a prime example – I’d more or less given up hope but look at me now. “It’s miraculous really.”

### ***Pete’s lightbulb moment***

Pete needed to tap into his inner confidence in order to tackle his issues. Not only did the VGB help him manage to achieve a new level of self-belief and deal with his eating habits, he also was able to apply this positive attitude to other areas of his life, such as physical activity and his cycling challenges – something he never previously thought possible.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, we’ve looked at the nature of the VGB and how the programme works by creating a mental gastric band to effectively help you manage your eating habits.

We’ve also gone through the seven golden rules of the VGB programme:

1. Set a goal
2. Listen to your daily recording
3. Eat three times a day
4. Eat mindfully
5. Recognise your ‘full’ signal
6. Drink water
7. Be active for 30 minutes a day

In the next chapter, we take a closer look at the practice of hypnotherapy and how this ancient method can be used to harness the power of our minds and create astounding improvements in our lives.

**Mind over matter: why  
hypnosis?**

Many of the people my practitioners and I see have been on a journey through a range of what are commonly viewed as acceptable approaches or treatments before they get to us.

Hypnotherapy can be successfully applied to all manner of issues, including addictions to substances ranging from sugar to alcohol and drugs; sexual problems; chronic pain; phobias; anxieties; self-confidence and even professional performance.

Almost without exception, the clients who approach us about such things have already visited doctors, consultants, rehabilitation centres, counsellors and diet clubs – the list goes on. And those things have not worked for them.

So, they arrive with a preconception that this is the last resort when the reality is our minds are such powerful organs, if more people truly understood their capability to impact on our lives for good or bad, they'd start not end there.

We've all used phrases like 'mind over matter'.

Yet fundamentally, we struggle to really believe that the mind can alter our physical experience. Somehow, it's easier to place our faith and trust in things we can reach out and touch, be they tablets, devices or hospitals, even if the evidence is telling us nothing is changing for the better.

Hypnotherapy is a centuries-old method for re-booting our minds and harnessing their power to positively improve aspects of our lives. In fact, I believe it is the quickest and easiest way to make someone snap out of the things that are doing them harm and start developing more beneficial habits.

And weight loss and food relationships is one of the areas where I have seen it achieve the most impressive results.

### **Lifting the hood on your mind**

The way I see it, the human mind is basically split into two parts – our conscious mind and our subconscious mind. The conscious part is the 'tip of the iceberg' which guides our daily activities, from making sure we eat to getting from A to B or fulfilling our daily work tasks. It is also the little chatterbox inside our heads, which knows very well what we

need to do to keep ourselves happy, healthy and on top of things but somehow, all too easily, keeps giving in to bad habits like overeating, and self-destructive thoughts centred on why we can't do or achieve certain things.

Then there is our subconscious, a far bigger area, which is the conflagration of everything we've ever thought, experienced or had said to us, and ultimately drives some of the things our conscious self then does. The subconscious never forgets any of these influences and will continue leading us to do certain things because we got what it saw as a positive result at some point in the past and therefore it considers repeating those behaviours to be doing us a favour. For example, comfort eating, the first time we do it, makes us feel better, at least in the short term. So, our subconscious takes note of that experience and thinks 'I know, that worked well so I'll make them do it again, and again'.

I often liken the mind to a self-learning computer, which is hardwired to run the same programs over and over again. Occasionally, it needs rebooting to ensure it's producing the outputs the user is actually looking for.

Imagine all the other suggestions that have ever been made to you during your lifetime, when it comes to food: 'eat up', 'clear your plate', 'you've got a healthy appetite'. Your subconscious interprets these as praise and so will automatically have you doing those things over and over, without even thinking about it.

There are numerous theories about human psychology and psychoanalysis, with new schools of thought developing every year, and some are now challenging the popular distinction between the conscious and the subconscious mind. However, for the purposes of this book and until this thinking is clarified, I will continue to use this traditional split as my reference point, based on what I have observed and learnt in the application of my own clinical hypnotherapy practice.

### **Common questions about hypnotherapy**

#### **Can I be hypnotised?**

This is *the* most common question I get asked. Most people's only brush with hypnosis before they visit a practitioner is watching stage hypnotists on television, making people cluck like chickens or say outrageous things. These experiences make them understandably wary of the idea

of going ‘under’ and being made to do things that are, well, downright embarrassing. Perhaps they consider themselves quite strong willed and can’t imagine ever succumbing to such ‘nonsense’.

The answer I always give is that *everyone*, without exception, can be hypnotised. The reason I say this is that, in reality, most of us are in a trance, most of the time.

Think about it. How many times a day do you do something in an automated state, where you can’t remember the process you actually went through? Maybe you drove your car and couldn’t recall how you got to your destination, or cooked dinner on ‘autopilot’ while mentally sifting through the events of your day. This is very common because, while our conscious minds are focusing on the practicalities of the things we need to get done today in the here and now, our subconscious is only too happy to oversee our habitual activities in a kind of automated state.

Therefore, it’s also not a case of being strong or not strong, literally everyone is susceptible to hypnosis in one form or another.

### **Will you put me into some kind of trance?**

The reality is the complete opposite of this and hypnosis will actually snap you out of the trance-like state you inhabit every day, in order to change the behaviours that are doing you no favours.

You could almost liken it to when you go on holiday and, as soon as you switch off and start to relax, the day-to-day clutter in your head starts to dissipate and you think afresh about all those aspects of your life you might like to change, or new activities you would like to try. Or you suddenly remember something important that has thus far been crowded out by all the other noise. Hypnosis provides a shortcut to stepping back from the world in a similar way to reassess, which we all know we need to do every now and again.

### **How does it actually work?**

Like anything in our lives, if we concentrate on one thing for long enough, we are likely to become good at it.

The fact is our brains are wired so that they just will not update their systems until they are presented with something better. The power of hypnosis is that it enables this to happen instantly, with very little conscious effort.

This is how someone can come to a practitioner like me for help with an issue such as smoking cessation and straightaway stop craving cigarettes, whereas, if they went cold turkey, stopping would be a really hard slog.

It’s not a case of one size fits all, though, and working with a practitioner is important so that they can get to know you and work out the best approach and methods to suit you as an individual.

This is why I always offer a complimentary initial consultation, enabling me to meet any potential client, understand their issue better and give them an honest opinion as to whether hypnotherapy is going to be right for them. It also means that if they do go on to have sessions, they will feel more comfortable with me and relax sufficiently to ensure the hypnotherapy is as effective as it can be.

It is virtually impossible to hypnotise yourself because you will always find yourself battling against interference from your conscious mind. Nor can you be hypnotised against your will – you always have to want to do something a hypnotherapist asks you to do, or you simply would not comply with it. Even people who are made to cluck like a chicken must want to do that on some level, otherwise they wouldn’t, it’s as simple as that. It is always important to choose a practitioner you have a strong rapport with for the therapy to be as effective as possible.

### **Will I be knocked out and unaware of what’s happening around me?**

Everyone experiences being hypnotised slightly differently. Some do fall into a very relaxed state and are less aware of what’s immediately going on around them, and more focused on their subconscious imagination around what the hypnotherapist is taking them through. Others remain alert and completely aware of their surroundings and everything going on around them. Yet in all cases, the process they experience is like stepping aside from the conscious, here and now practical element of their mind in order to concentrate on a new, positive idea or process which is going to reconfigure some aspect of their subconscious behaviour.

The way you experience being hypnotised doesn’t really matter – the goal is to distract you from your conscious thoughts for a short time in order to concentrate on adapting something your subconscious mind is doing and, so long as that needle shifts forward a little each time, it’s doing you good.

Certainly, the idea of someone taking control of your mind couldn't be further from the truth. After all, if hypnotherapists like me really could take over people's minds, we'd be running the country not offering therapy!

### Is there anyone hypnotherapy can't help?

Certain people are not suitable to undergo hypnotherapy. These include children under five, whose language isn't advanced enough to understand the necessary instructions; and those with a serious mental health problem that results in a chemical imbalance in their brain, such as schizophrenia or clinical depression. In these latter examples, this is because hypnotherapy works by heightening someone's senses, and thinking and feeling more vividly in this way can lead to them being more likely to do something that isn't good for them.

### Is there any evidence that hypnotherapy can help with weight loss?

Yes, there is! As well as the people all around the world who will testify to shedding countless pounds of weight using hypnotherapy and specifically my VGB technique, empirical studies also point to the same outcomes. Here are two such examples:

***Weight Loss: Hypnosis helped people lose weight in both the short term and in the long term. In other words, hypnosis helps people keep from regaining weight!***

Kirsch, I (1996) Hypnotic enhancement of cognitive-behavioural weight loss treatments: Another meta-reanalysis.

*Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64(3), 517-519.

### ***Hypnosis as an Adjunct Therapy in the Management of Diabetes***

Yuan Xu and Etzel Cardena

*International Journal of Clinical And Experimental Hypnosis* Vol. 56. Its 1.2007

### Inspirational quotes about the power of the mind

"The mind of man is capable of anything." Joseph Conrad

"The mind is its own place and in itself, can make a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven." John Milton

"We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves." Buddha.

"If you can change your mind, you can change your life." William James.

### Food for thought

The hypnotherapist is just the facilitator. It is you and the power of your mind, that puts you into the hypnotic state from which you start to change your behaviour. You'll be amazed by what you're capable of!

### Case Study – Sonia

#### **'I lost 7st thanks to Virtual Gastric Band'**

Chocoholic Sonia Kelly is well on the way to achieving her target weight of 13st, having started her Virtual Gastric Band programme tipping the scales at 26st.

Now 19st and down from a dress size 30/32 to a 22/24, Sonia's success story illustrates the amazing results that can be achieved through this non-surgical technique. Before she underwent the VGB hypnotherapy Sonia, from Selby in North Yorkshire, admits she was eating extreme amounts of food.

She said: "I love food, but chocolate was my big weakness. On a good day I'd eat two bars a day, but on a bad day I'd eat four or five bars. But Sheila put me off it. I don't touch it now, just the thought of it turns me.

"I used to drink two litres a day of Coke but now I can take it or leave it, whereas before I had to have it. I was always thinking at breakfast about what I'd have for dinner and I had to have continual snacks in between. Now I have three meals a day and smaller portions, and I eat more fruit and vegetables."

Sonia now enjoys shopping for clothes, something she has not been able to do for years.

“I feel more confident and positive and have a new lease of life. I’m starting to find things easier to do,” she added.

***Sonia’s lightbulb moment***

We really focused on Sonia’s thoughts and feelings about chocolate in her treatment programme. Psychologically and emotionally, she now responds very differently to it and it no longer has the power over her that it once held.

**Summary**

In this chapter, we’ve covered the way that hypnotherapy works as an incredibly effective option to help people let go of harmful habits and replace them with more beneficial ones.

We’ve looked at the two elements of the mind – the conscious and the subconscious – and how my VGB technique helps you to quieten your conscious mind and tap into your subconscious mind, allowing you to press a few reset buttons and reprogram your systems.

In the next chapter, we’ll focus on our relationships with food and some of the reasons behind the dysfunctions that commonly exist when it comes to regular overeating.

**Nature vs nurture: Our  
love/hate relationship  
with food**



So far, we've taken a look at what helps and doesn't help weight loss and a tendency to overeat. I've given you an insight into why diets are doomed to fail and how hypnosis, and specifically my pioneering Virtual Gastric Band (VGB) therapy, could provide an alternative option.

Now we'll take a closer look at our sometimes dysfunctional relationships with food, which tend to run deep. They are often rooted in childhood experience, both positive and negative, and the associations this creates. The approach our parents take to feeding us can have a huge and lasting impact, and it's usually these echoes that drive our entire thinking about what we put in our mouths and why.

I'll be exploring some of these 'food origins' in this chapter, because understanding why we do what we do is another piece in the jigsaw that is our strategy for kicking old habits and doing things differently.

### **Kick that habit!**

The biggest cause of our bad behaviour, when it comes to food and a host of other issues and dependencies, is habit.

We're all guilty of operating on autopilot in some form or another, and it's moving through each day without really stopping to think about the things we're doing and why which is the cause of what become some of our biggest issues.

For example, I had one client who took six years to contact me. When she finally approached me for therapy, she told me that all through that time she knew she should do something about her size – it was just easier to fall back into her old ways, which had become a kind of comfort blanket to her.

We are all bombarded by a range of different influences every day, from adverts to television programmes, the views of our friends, the media and social media. It's inevitable that we'll take a lot of this 'noise' onboard and it will become our reality, making it even harder to break out of our potentially counter-productive daily cycle.

Closely linked to habits are excuses. Have you ever been tempted to describe yourself as 'big-boned' or put your overeating down to a slower-than-average metabolism or stress as an avoidance tactic, instead of admitting you're fatter than you should be and need to address the real root causes? If the answer's yes, don't beat yourself up about it. You'd

be just like millions of others who've done the same. The good news is, you're reading this book, so you've made a commitment to changing your outlook.

### **Facing facts**

Actually, taking a stand and admitting there's a problem is the first, most important step towards changing the tempo and doing something about it.

The basic fact of life is that there is no change without change. You must find some motivation to achieve a different future outcome, and then alter those things along the way which are the root causes of where you are today.

You might be very comfortable with some of your favourite habits, but recognising that some of them might not be serving you as well as they perhaps did five years ago is an important first step towards adopting better ones.

So, what are the common habits I observe in people who come to me for help with weight loss? Well, inertia and lack of movement is a big one. Then, comfort eating – after all, we can all find reasons to do that, whether it be rewarding ourselves for an achievement or making ourselves feel better after a disappointment or a hard day at work.

Snacking is also very common. Just cutting out the tendency to eat between meals can make a huge difference to our body shape and health, but it's so easy to reach for a biscuit or a chocolate bar when we're feeling peckish, or just for something to do with our hands. Lack of routine also plays a part, because of all the things this leads to, like eating the wrong things through lack of planning, and chomping too late at night so that our food lays heavy and is more likely to result in weight gain.

Our social life and social influences don't always do us any favours, either. These days, we're spoilt for choice in the range of dining experiences available to us, and eating has become a central focus of a lot of our interactions. Alcohol, too, has become a popular way to tickle our increasingly discerning tastebuds, from limited edition gins to craft beers and directly-sourced fine wines. These days, everyone is a food and drink hero, inspired by the plethora of food channels and celebrity

chefs that grace our screens. Food and drink have become way more than a source of sustenance. They are a way of life and we live in a world where we can have what we want, when we want, with limits set only by our own pockets. All-in-all, there is more temptation than there has ever been, not to even get on the wagon in the first place.

Then there is the factor of routine itself. Take your post-work routine, for example. Get in from work. Pour a glass of wine. Start preparing your evening meal. Pour another glass of wine as you sit down to eat... And so it goes on. Our brains automatically want to repeat the same system again and again, night after night. However, breaking that chain reaction can be a really powerful first step towards scrambling things up and changing them for the better.

### **Case Study – Practitioner Jo-Anne Eadie**

Jo-Anne Eadie is a certified trainer of my Virtual Gastric Band programme. Based in Ontario, Canada, she has run her own hypnotherapy business, called Power of Freedom, for over two decades, and learned my VGB techniques in 2011. She is also the Director of the HypnoBiz Canada annual hypnosis conference, which takes place every October.

Since adopting my techniques, she has helped hundreds of clients to shed thousands of pounds, and my programme has become the ‘bread and butter’ of her practice.

This is what she had to say:

“I am getting an over 90 per cent success rate with my clients and they all report it is the easiest programme they have ever been on. It isn’t a diet but a lifestyle you can use for the remainder of your life.

“I lost 50lbs myself and have kept it off because this programme realises that special occasions come along and nothing is deprived.

“You will never regret taking this training. It will pay you back over and over and the good feelings you get from helping people conquer their weight problem is so gratifying. I love what I do.”

Specialising in weight loss as well as other aspects of wellness, Jo-Anne has written her own book, called *Exhale Weight* – a companion

guide to her Exhale Weight programme, a hypnosis-based approach that takes care of the emotional drivers of weight loss, using a blend of my VGB and nutritional guidance.

Her personalised approach to helping her clients involves ‘enabling them to help themselves with energy psychology techniques, hypnosis, energy work, essential oils and dowsing’.

### ***Try this...***

Take a few minutes to think about your daily routine, the things you do that are regularly linked to food, and whether they are good or bad for your constitution and overall health. Start to consider the drivers behind those behaviours. When did the habit begin, was it linked to a particular life experience, how did it make you feel, and what makes you keep repeating it now?



My habits		
Good	Bad	Why?

List looking a bit full? Don't despair, I'm not expecting to tackle all of these things, all at once! In fact, if you tried to do that you'd be doomed to failure. Once you've noted all your habits down, number them in order of the impact you feel they have on your size and weight. Then concentrate on tackling your number one.

As I explained previously, focusing on one thing consistently will give you a much better chance of success. One of the reasons so many people fail to keep their New Year's Resolutions is that they get emotional at the end of a year and decide to tackle everything that's wrong in their lives. All that happens is they get quickly overwhelmed by the tasks they've set themselves and don't do any of them. Ironically, the happy byproduct of this focus is often that making one significant change can have a positive domino effect on lots of other areas of your day-to-day life, with more far-reaching benefits.

**Food for thought**

It takes at least 28 days to form a new habit, and that's when focusing on one thing for all of that time. Hypnosis can help with this process. Over a typical four-session programme, you would begin by identifying the habit and then concentrate over the following weeks on replacing it with a new, better one, imagining how much better your life would be once you'd tackled it. This process reboots your 'core operating system' by creating new neural pathways which literally alter your thought processes and the choices you make. You know you've successfully replaced an old habit when you perform the new one repeatedly without even stopping to think about it.

**When X = Y: Associations**

From the moment we're born, we file every experience we ever have in the database that is our subconscious, labelling it according to feelings as well as senses like smell, sound, taste and touch.

I call these associations. Connections between things that happen to us now and our memories of things that have gone before, good and bad.

For example, you might have a particular penchant for the smell of apple pie because your grandma used to make a stunning one years ago, and for you that symbolises all sorts of wonderful things.

A lot of the time, we're not even conscious of the associations we make and they remain in the background, in the form of subconscious thoughts.

One client I dealt with told me she had always suffered from a sense of not being good enough. There was no logical reason for this: she was seen as a woman of achievement and a real pillar of her community, and from the outside looking in, it was very difficult to comprehend how she could possibly feel this way.

However, once we started her hypnotherapy sessions, we discovered that these feelings went back a really long way to a memory of a gym class when she was just five years old. She had been pulled out in front of the class and made to climb up a rope while blowing up a balloon and she couldn't do it. We soon realised that, as she'd grown older, she'd turned to food as a means of self-soothing and cushioning the pain and embarrassment this experience had left deep in her subconscious. She would never have made that discovery without the help of hypnosis, which gave her access to her subconscious thoughts. Over my years of practice, I've discovered that there are many people just like her, who use food as a means of 'soothing their souls'.

So, when I meet someone for the first time who is eating to excess, I always ask myself 'what is it that they are trying to fill up on?'. Are they trying to sate some void in their lives, or is food their attempt to cover up and cushion some past pain they still feel, somewhere deep inside? For example, some people who have yo-yo dieted have done so because every time they lose weight, they actually begin to feel exposed to whatever demons they have deep inside, and then begin to put the weight back on.

I've also worked with people who believe they have attracted too much sexual attention earlier in their lives and have therefore used food to almost make themselves less attractive as they get older. Then they get to 40 or 50 years old and find their weight gain has gone too far and is beginning to really affect their health, so they decide to do something about it. Whatever the catalysts, it's important to discover what they are, because until you understand that, you will never be able to create a strategy for tackling your personal issue.

Start to identify your own food patterns. Use this table to note down the foods you crave, when, and how they make you feel, over the course of a month. Once you've observed for a month, sit and review your table, look for any patterns and trends and you should start to get an inkling of what's making you do what you do, when it comes to food.



And one of the main culprits behind this feeling is that little, negative internal chatterbox. We all have one – stop and think how many times you’ve said things to yourself such as ‘I can’t do that’, ‘I don’t feel confident enough’, ‘I’m not that smart’ or ‘it’s certain to go wrong’. Or, when it comes to food and other dependencies, this self-talk can take the form of excuses. Have you ever caught yourself saying things like ‘I’ll never be like him/her because he/she is naturally thin’, ‘I’m just big boned so I can’t get slim’ or ‘I can’t eat well because of X or Y’?

In fact, 80 per cent of what we say to ourselves has negative connotations. This is all part of an inbuilt survival mechanism which makes us consider what could happen in any given scenario, in order to prepare to protect ourselves against it. The problems arise when we can no longer disregard these things and start to take notice. Thinking negative thoughts becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because of the power our minds have to influence our physical state – for good or bad.

This is also why traditional diets are doomed to fail. Every single time we deviate from the regime a little, our internal voice will tell us things like ‘you’ve blown it’ and will use this as an excuse to give up and fall back into bad eating habits again. Not only that but our pesky subconscious is constantly looking for excuses to carry on running those same old programs, just because it’s less hassle than learning a new one, even if that would be in our best interests.

This is just one example of how the language patterns you use – both outwardly and in terms of the thoughts in your head – reflect your view of the world, and physically impact it. Like the Law of Attraction, thoughts really do manifest themselves in practical outcomes. Learning how to turn negative ones into positives can dramatically change your life in all sorts of ways, of which eating behaviour is just one.

**Try this...**

Noticing our self-talk is the first step towards transforming it into a positive force in our lives. However, very often, these snippets are so fleeting we don't realise how they are taking hold of us. For a week at a time, try this simple exercise. Capture the chatter as it occurs and you'll be amazed what an insight it gives when you sit and analyse the trends. What is going through your head and when? Are there any themes emerging?

Once you have this renewed clarity, fill in the last column with the things you'd like to think instead, which will be more of a help than a hindrance in terms of where you want to be in your life. Then, out of these positive messages, choose two that mean the most to you and repeat them to yourself, over and over again, in different ways. This will help to push the negativity out of your head and replace it with positive thoughts which will turn into good actions if you focus on them consistently.

[illegible]

Hopefully, this chapter will have empowered you a little more by helping you to spot some of the ways in which your subconscious might be trying to sabotage you and arming you with some of the tools you need to stop it in its tracks.

When you start to work with a clinical hypnotherapist, they will be able to help you on this journey by talking directly to your subconscious to implant new suggestions and re-train it into a more positive way of thinking.

### **Case Study – Michelle**

#### **‘It’s not about what you weigh; it’s about what you eat’**

Michelle Cadman, from Auckland, New Zealand, was ready to try almost anything to lose weight. Tipping the scales at 90kg, she said she felt like an embarrassment to her teenage daughters.

“All of a sudden you’ve put on 20 kilos and mentally it becomes quite difficult to shed that weight,” she said. “It became a problem and no matter how hard I tried I couldn’t seem to shift it.”

In 2012, she decided to give hypnotherapy a go and hoped to lose 10kg using my VGB therapy. The effects were immediate and Michelle ended up losing 25kg.

“I wanted healthier food, I wanted smaller portions, I wanted fresh stuff,” she explained.

Today she weighs 66kg and has been able to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Numerous hypnotherapists in New Zealand have now completed my VGB training, as have thousands of other practitioners in dozens of other countries around the globe.

Michelle’s hypnotherapist, Avril Carpenter, said her typical client wants to lose 30- 40kg.

She added: “I think it’s increasing because people are so tired of diet failure. Some people have turned to the VGB as an alternative to real bariatric surgery and others have tried the programme after the failure of real weight loss surgery.

“It is very different to other weight loss programmes – I am not going to tell clients what they should weigh, it’s about what they want.”

#### ***Michelle’s lightbulb moment***

Michelle stopped focusing on what the scales were saying and turned her attention away from restrictive, unforgiving diets onto a healthier pattern of food consumption, which meant she shed the pounds naturally.

### **Summary**

In this chapter we have touched on some of the reasons behind our dysfunctional relationships with food to get a deeper understanding of why we do what we do. Subconscious associations are often at the root of this, and it’s useful to identify these.

We have acknowledged that ingrained habits are difficult, but not impossible, to shift, and it’s important that you are able to find inner motivation to make changes if you wish to achieve a different outcome.

In the next chapter, we will focus on hunger – what it really is, and the difference between imagined and genuine hunger.

**So, you think you're  
hungry?**

Do you actually know what hunger is?

I mean *really* know what hunger is?

I bet, when you stop to think about it, the honest answer is ‘no’?

If that’s the case, you’ll be at one with most of the 21st Century population, because we are surrounded by such edible riches, every day, that instant gratification has become both our norm and the root cause of many of our weight problems.

Like the client I mentioned in an earlier chapter, who approached me for help because he weighed 15st and, no matter what he did, just could not stop eating.

This had become such a compulsion that, when I tried to get him to think about establishing a more regular food routine, he admitted he literally could no longer remember what it felt like to be hungry. As a result, he didn’t trust himself to establish a new discipline around eating when he was hungry.

This man’s addiction to food was so all-encompassing, I took an approach with him that I haven’t taken with many people before or since. I instructed him to stop eating until he felt hungry again.

He went away and did exactly that, and in fact it was three days before he let food pass his lips again.

The reminder this gave him of that basic human instinct was enough to re-set his programming and snap him out of his habitual and constant eating. He managed to establish a new routine based around three square meals a day and quickly lost 2st as a result.

I won’t suggest you do the same, don’t worry – unless you want to, of course!

However, this chapter is all about helping you to recall those vital signals that have been inbuilt since you were a baby and start recognising and responding to what your body is telling you on a daily basis.

Starting tomorrow, I’m going to ask you to note down how you feel at various times of the day – what I call the ‘hunger scale’.

**Hunger vs satiety scale**

1	Starving, dizzy, irritable
2	Very hungry, unable to concentrate
3	Increased physical cues of hungry are becoming intense
4	Beginning to feel hungry
5	Content, neither full nor hungry
6	Comfortably full, you are satisfied
7	You are full, you feel as though you possibly should have eaten a little less
8	Uncomfortably full, you are stuffed
9	Very uncomfortable, you regret having eaten so much
10	Stuffed to the point of feeling sick

Have the results surprised you? No doubt. Keep hold of what you’ve rediscovered and use this fresh insight to help you listen to your body and act on what it is telling you to do, and you’ll be amazed how everything from your actual body shape – to how you see yourself – will start to change for the better.

**Real vs imaginary hunger**

We refer to the difference between head and heart in many areas of our lives, and the same is true of hunger.

One of the first steps towards controlling food rather than having it control you, is differentiating between emotional and physical hunger.



**Some facts about true hunger**

1. Although you feel it in your stomach, hunger stems from your brain, which registers that you need certain nutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, potassium and magnesium, and transmits the message to your digestive system to generate that feeling of hunger. This is designed to make you eat whatever it is your body believes you need
2. Real hunger is brought on by a true need for food and develops gradually over time.
3. With real hunger, you feel a need to eat, but not necessarily any one particular food. Any food that you like that is available will satisfy your hunger, and you won't feel guilty after you finish eating.
4. Physical hunger builds gradually and gets stronger over time, while head hunger comes on suddenly and needs immediate satisfaction.
5. Physical hunger ends when you eat but head hunger might disappear if you distract yourself.
6. Physical hunger is always in your body, not your head.
7. If you think you feel hungry below the neck, it is actually hunger knocking on your door. For clarity, if it is coming from the mouth or the head, it is a craving and not a physical hunger.
8. Physiological hunger or real hunger starts to occur about two to four hours after your last meal. Symptoms include an empty or rumbling feeling in your stomach. If you ignore this signal, your body then sends you a stronger signal in the form of a headache, dizziness or lightheadedness. This type of hunger is your body's way of telling you it is time to nourish your body.

**When the going gets tough**

Of course, overcoming the cravings typical of head hunger isn't always easy. If it was, everyone would be thin!

The nature of head hunger is that you think you need food but your body is not actually the one demanding energy. Something else is triggering you to reach for food. Maybe you're tired, or you're feeling anxious or low, and food seems like a welcome distraction – or you've

got an insatiable craving for a particular edible substance – crisps and chocolate are typical examples.

**My six suggestions for overcoming head hunger**

1. Take a sip of water.
2. Wait it out (It will typically pass in around 10 minutes).
3. Exercise – walk, stretch or even do your vacuuming – anything that takes your mind off food and moving also releases feelgood hormones that will naturally lift your mood without reaching for whatever it is you thought you needed to eat.
4. Concentrate on deep, slow breathing.
5. Use positive self-talk – keep repeating to yourself that the feeling will pass.
6. Eat a little bit of something highly nutritious and satisfying but healthy, which will help you to reduce the craving, like a banana or a handful of peanuts.

**Now what?**

What should you do with all of this new-found insight? The answer couldn't be simpler: just eat when you are hungry and not at any other time.

And it gets better. You can eat whatever you like when you are hungry, but only keep eating until you are full and then stop.

Listening and responding to your body in this way will ensure you no longer fill your face out of habit, just for something to do with your hands, because you feel happy or sad, or because you are doing something you associate with clutching a particular food or drink.

Over time, this will rule out the excess that is contributing to you developing and maintaining the wrong shape, without you feeling deprived. This is because you will be satisfying yourself when you need to, with ample food, but no more.

Focus on learning this important difference and you will be amazed at the results this simple change can help you achieve.



### **Summary**

In this chapter, we've gone through the true signs of hunger, versus the fake 'head hunger' symptoms that have become so common in our age of instant gratification.

Hopefully now you will be learning how to recognise and respond to the genuine signs your body is giving you on a daily basis to tell you when it needs nourishment.

In the next chapter, we will delve into the 'metaphoric approaches' I apply to help people lose weight, which use the power of the imagination to create internal stories that help us change our habits.

**You are the author of  
your own story**

Stories are vitally important in cultures the world over, and for good reason – they help us as human beings to form our understanding of the world.

Our imaginations are hugely powerful things and we are conditioned to use them to take ourselves into another world of consciousness, for everything from enjoyment and escapism to picturing what could happen if we do a certain thing and so protect ourselves from danger.

From listening to childhood fairytales that teach us the difference between right and wrong, to the way we recount our everyday experiences to friends and family in order to make sense of the things that happen to us – we are conditioned to use tall tales as gateways to access our imaginations.

For this reason, they can also be a powerful means of changing our own internal narrative and kicking bad behaviours into touch, and this is why I have developed what I call ‘metaphoric approaches’ to help my clients lose weight.

These are stories or ideas which mirror another pattern or situation and are inspired by an idea originally popularised by the ‘grandfather of hypnotherapy’ Milton H Erickson. He recognised that helping someone to see their situation in a new way had a profound impact on their ability to solve problems.

These creative visualisation tools work by taking you into an imaginary scenario, and allowing you to walk around and experience it, then come out of the other end with a different view of the world.

They work on two levels – firstly, you can review and analyse a particular issue you are experiencing from a ‘safe’ distance, allowing your conscious mind to relax. Like the saying ‘can’t see the wood for the trees’, sometimes we need to allow our minds some space to look afresh at a situation in order to make sense of it and so approach it in a new way.

At the same time, your pattern-perceiving subconscious minds can make the match and latch onto the new, more positive elements in the fresh stories you create, to help you make therapeutic change.

I’ve adapted some of the creative metaphors I’ve come across over the years – and tested the efficacy of them among hundreds of clients – to come up with the finished scripts outlined in this chapter.

Most of our habits surrounding food have their foundations in our childhood, in suggestions that have been made to us from a very young age such as ‘eat it all up and you’ll be a big boy’ or ‘don’t waste food, there are children dying in Africa’. Because these kinds of suggestions have been reinforced many times over, they form part of our belief system and we need to recognise, challenge and then adapt these belief systems in order to bring about lasting change.

We all have the ability to fix our own problems, and a metaphoric approach is often the best way to access our own inner resources and view any problem we are stuck on in a completely fresh light. The situations you choose to focus on should be tailored to your specific situation, in this case overeating.

To this end, this chapter includes a different metaphorical scenario for each of the overeating character types identified within this book. Whether you’re a Busy Body, a Super Snacker, an Emotional Eater, a Comfort Zoner, a Supersize Me or a Sedentary Scoffer, make yourself comfortable and then walk through the corresponding scenario below in order to start seeing food differently, and you will soon find yourself behaving accordingly.

Each time you attempt a sustained change in the way you eat in this way, you are working against the core beliefs that have been implanted and reinforced throughout your life. By becoming more aware of this core belief system, you can begin to develop new, more helpful beliefs that will lead to healthier eating habits and, subsequently, the weight loss you are seeking.

### **The Busy Body**

There are many reasons why people find themselves becoming busy bodies, what is yours? Are you a professional working long hours, dealing with stressful situations day after day? Maybe you’re a parent, used to running around looking after your family’s needs but seemingly never getting the time to stop and consider your own. Or you could have something else going on in your life that is impacting on your ‘me time’ and sense of self – from caring for an elderly relative to undertaking a major home renovation.

Whatever the reason, when your mind is on overdrive and your body is craving energy, this can result in you reaching for the wrong foods time and time again, to try to satisfy yourself. The reality is that you don't need to rely on food to fill this void.

There is another way to re-picture the scene and give yourself some escapism, instead of just reaching for something you can put into your mouth.

### ***Try this...***

Chances are that, because you are so very busy, much of your compulsive eating will be fuelled by stress – put simply, because your body is running on empty, you feel the urge to fill up with whatever is to hand in a hurry – which all too often will be sugary, fat-filled snacks.

So, I am going to suggest an imagining exercise I call the 'Remote Control Reset'. This will help you metaphorically change the picture or 'channel', and so alter the feelings you associate with your approach to food.

Sit quietly and relax somewhere comfortable. Take deep breaths. Concentrate on your breath and imagine it coming from somewhere just behind your tummy button.

Imagine you are sitting watching TV with a remote control in your hands. Have a play with that remote control and experiment with changing the picture. You can make it blurry and out-of-focus or change it from colour to black and white. You can even alter the sound, from loud to quiet.

Really concentrate on this vision and see it from all angles, to thoroughly implant it in your imagination and your mind.

This way, you will be able to recall it whenever you feel the need to step out of a busy or stressful situation, reset and change how you feel about it in the future.

Replace noise and upheaval with pleasant melodies and relaxing scenes; blur out challenging people and situations to give you some space so that you can come back and deal with them more effectively later, and escape to a scene which will give you instant comfort –

whether that be a mountain landscape or a powerful waterfall – whenever you can't literally 'take five', you can do so through your imagination instead.

All you need to do is imagine changing the channel you see on your screen in order to mentally take yourself off to a completely different situation, like going for a peaceful walk, doing some exercise or enjoying a pampering session.

Do this instead of reaching for food and it will help you overcome those urges. Alongside this, as you implement the regular mealtimes suggested elsewhere in this book, make sure you concentrate only on your food at those times, savouring what you eat, doing so slowly and re-discovering the pleasure in eating good food in the right way.

Doing both of these things together will gradually lessen your desire to use food as a stress-reliever, putting it back in its rightful place as an enjoyable form of sustenance while at the same time giving you an alternative form of relaxation.

### ***And this...***

I am also going to suggest another imagining exercise, that you can use on and off throughout each day and will help you change both the picture and the feelings you associate with food.

Just like you, your digestive system also needs some time out believe it or not, from being packed full of the food it needs to process day in, day out. This exercise is designed to complement the one above by helping you get into the right mindset to be able to give it a rest.

Once again, sit quietly and relax somewhere comfortable. Take deep breaths. Concentrate on your breath and imagine it coming from somewhere just behind your tummy button.

So, you've been using your body like some tired old worker. You know the feeling when your daily to do list is endless. It just goes on and on, but you work hard all day to try to get through everything, looking forward to that down time at the end of the day when all your work is done and you can just relax for a while. You're just about to reach

that point of switching off when someone gives you the next thing to do or wants something else from you – the next demand is placed upon you, another job to do, never getting any real time off.

Your body, your digestive system, has been just like that too, never getting any real time off before there is another job to do, another thing to process... never getting any down time.

If your digestive system had a voice of its own, I wonder what it would say about its heavy workload, of never getting any real time off?

But you can begin to enjoy a feeling of the spaces in between each meal and how wonderful it would be to have real time off, that chance to relax, unwind and really begin to enjoy the feeling of giving your digestive system a break.

Enjoy this wonderful feeling of the spaces in between each meal, explore and concentrate on it, and commit it to your memory, so that you can easily recall it whenever you need to remind yourself not to reach for food in between meals as a reflex action.

### **The Sedentary Scoffer**

As we've identified, if you're in this category your weight problems are likely to be caused by a combination of eating too much, too often, of the wrong things, and not moving around enough.

Very often, lack of activity is triggered by some other aspect of our lives. This could be lethargy, depression or a lack of motivation caused by fear of failure or worrying that we won't be able to do something that is required to change it – such as adding some type of exercise into our routine or taking up a new hobby

By reading this book so far, you've identified the root cause of your issue. The next step is to snap out of your inertia, and the 'Clean Slate' exercise below is designed to help you do that.

#### ***Try this...***

It is all about taking the time to fuel our bodies properly. We can't carry on running these busy lifestyles if we don't have the right fuel in our bodies – this is just like putting the right fuel in our cars – we wouldn't attempt to run our car on empty, would we?

So, to start to address this, take a few deep breaths. Focus on your breath and imagine each one is coming from a place just behind your belly button.

Imagine you're on holiday or a similarly happy place. Imagine you have a big whiteboard in front of you, with a selection of marker pens, paints, dusters and anything else you would possibly want to use to paint a picture with.

Reflect on your life and all the things you're really grateful for, such as the people you have in it. Then also imagine you want to paint a picture of the life you would want for the future. What would that look like and what words and phrases would you associate with it – things like 'enthusiasm', 'healthy lifestyle' or 'positive outlook'?

What things would you like to do, if you could start over again without any physical limitations? Would you like to go walking, take up a dance class or learn to play a new game? Perhaps your weight is physically preventing you from doing that at the moment, and you are addressing that starting with this book. However, for now just imagine what you would like to do, really take the time to imagine what it would feel like to do that thing, and how you would feel differently as a result of doing it.

At the same time, draw and write the negative experiences, thoughts and feelings you would like to get rid of on your white board – thoughts like 'I can't do this' or 'I'll never lose weight'.

Then, imagine erasing those from your picture and making the image of how you would like things to be the much bigger of the two.

Return to this vision and feeling every day, just for a few minutes, whenever you have the opportunity, and you will be amazed how quickly it will start to feel more manageable, more possible, until you find yourself actually doing it.

All of a sudden, that more positive picture of your life and you, as you would like them to be, will become a reality – with all the weight and general wellbeing benefits that brings.

## The Super Snacker

As we've discussed, if you're a super snacker you just won't be able to resist reaching for your favourite food, whether that be sweets, chocolate, crisps, nuts or ice cream, at all hours of the day and night – sometimes because of a sweet craving and at other times simply for something to do with your hands.

For the most part, your urge to snack will stem from the positive, uplifting feelings you get – albeit fleetingly – when you stick that chocolate bar or similar in your mouth. Your brain has become used to these hits and highs and so has hardwired them into your subconscious.

In order to overcome this, you need to retrain your brain to make different associations with these kinds of foods.

My 'Fat Bucket' exercise, below, is one tool I've developed that will help you to achieve that.

### *Try this...*

Take a few deep breaths. Focus on your breaths and imagine each one is coming from a place just behind your belly button.

As you do so, picture your favourite snacks in your mind's eye. Really paint a vivid picture of that chocolate, those crisps, those nuts, your favourite fizzy drink. Look at them from all angles and focus on the colour, the taste, the smell, the sensation as you put them in your mouth... use your imagination to make them so vivid you could almost reach out and touch them, and pop one into your mouth right now.

Then imagine filling a bucket with a big pile of your favourite snacks. Create that bucket and fill it to the brim with your chocolate, your crisps or your fizzy drinks.

Once you're confident you can really see that image and hold it in your mind, imagine a second bucket, the same colour, size and shape. But fill this one with fat. What colour is the fat? Is it yellow brown or white? Float above it in your mind's eye and really observe that glossy, oily, semi-liquid substance. Place your hands in the bucket and try to pick up some of it. How does it feel? Is it warm, cold, slimy, smooth or lumpy? How does it smell?

Once you've pictured your two buckets thoroughly, imagine yourself eating one of your favourite snacks, whichever one is your favourite. Is it delicious? Is the chocolate velvety and sweet? Does it melt on your tongue? You are so familiar with this taste and texture, and it is so comforting to you.

But we're going to start to change that. Imagine taking another mouthful, but this time you must also eat a mouthful of the fat for every one of your favourite snacks. Because this raw fat is what it is made from, when you take the other ingredients away, but this reality is hidden by the nice taste you are so used to.

How enjoyable is your snack now? Is the experience enhanced or spoilt by mixing it with the bucket of fat? Does it make you want to eat more, or less?

Really focus on the sight of the contents of both buckets, and all the sensations of eating each one. Commit to memory the feeling and taste of mixing spoonfuls of the fat with your favourite snack. Really concentrate on it and, from now on, every time you think of reaching for that chocolate, those crisps or that fizzy drink, take a second to recall what it was like mixed with the fat.

Over time, I promise you will want to eat that thing less and less.

## The Emotional Eater

We learned earlier that you reach for food of all kinds when you experience strong emotions, happy or sad. It has become your way of restoring your equilibrium.

Your brain has become used to that momentary sense of feeling better, but you know from experience that this doesn't last. Food doesn't really address the underlying cause of that emotion you're feeling, it just makes you feel more down as soon as that momentary high passes. You've also become fatter as a result, which is after all what has brought you to this book, and so it really isn't doing you any good, in any sense.

So, to stop eating for comfort, you need to really see that emotional trigger for what it is and start to seek out other ways of coping.



**Try this...**

These cravings you've been experiencing for comfort food are almost like you've been in a bad relationship, a relationship with a bully or with someone who merely poses as your friend.

Perhaps the comfort eating promised to make you feel better, rewarded you for a hard day at work or posed as your friend. But what friend would really reward you with bad health, with feeling uncomfortable in your clothes? What friend would really reward you with that?

If one of your friends or family or children were being bullied by someone, or were in a bad relationship, or had someone who you knew was just posing as their friend, I wonder what you would tell them to do?

I'm sure you'd tell them to stand up to that bully, tell that bully to 'get lost', because each and every time you stand up to that bully, the weaker their hold on you becomes.

Each and every time you stand up to bullying cravings, the weaker their hold on *you* becomes and you can become really good at standing up to those cravings, get good at enjoying the pleasure of saying 'no', feel good and relaxed about saying it.

Take a few deep breaths. Focus on your breath and imagine each one is coming from a place just behind your belly button.

Imagine that your typical comfort food is standing there in front of you. Instead of looking delicious and inviting, it looks horrible. It looks like a bully. It has a mean demeanour about it. You can see that it does not like you and is going to do you harm.

What are you going to do and say to it, to make it go away?

Imagine those things and rehearse them in your mind. Say them and do them over and over again. Start to enjoy the feeling of release and exhilaration you get from shouting down these false friends, and pushing them into submission. Really take a minute to focus on this and the feelings it gives you so that you can recall them every time, in the future, that you are tempted to reach for those things that are doing you no good at all.

You will find that before long, your subconscious will start to recognise them for the negative influences they are, and you will find it easier and easier to resist the urge to rely on those things.

**The Comfort Zoner**

You may have heard people referring to 'feeling really alive' when going through a challenging experience of some kind. This is a genuine phenomenon and happens at those points in our existence when we are forced to step out of our comfort zone and try something new. Even the most difficult of situations can, for this reason, prove to have positive emotional results and learnings.

Conversely, getting too comfortable with our existence – while we might be predominantly happy – can ultimately have a detrimental effect on our wellbeing. Because often we become so content with the status quo, our motivation subsides and we have less and less desire to challenge ourselves. After all, if we're reasonably healthy, in a comfortable and loving relationship, why would we even need to bother doing anything outside of our normal, daily routine?

If you're a Comfort Zoner, this is the main factor you will need to overcome: motivation.

As human beings, we are motivated in one of two ways – either towards pleasure or away from pain, and these are the only reasons we do anything. For example, I either drink a cup of coffee because I really love coffee, the taste and how it makes me feel, or I'm thirsty, run down and need something to keep me going. Towards pleasure or away from pain.

When looking at how we motivate ourselves to do something different, we have to accept that the motivation must come from within. Recognising what motivates you can be an important first step towards making a positive change. Try the exercise below to renew your focus in this way.

**Try this...**

Sit and write down in the two columns below, your 'towards pleasure', 'away from pain' motivators to become slimmer. Write these down in the present tense.



Perhaps in the ‘towards pleasure section’ you might want to write ‘I’m so confident’ because that’s a feeling of wellbeing that losing weight would give you. And in the ‘away from pain’ column perhaps ‘I’m playing more with my grandchildren’ because it saddens you that your weight is stopping you from fully enjoying their childhood.

Towards pleasure	Away from pain
<i>I'm so confident</i>	<i>I'm playing more with my grandchildren</i>

Doing this exercise will help you start to see what your personal motivators really are.

**Top tip**

If eating out is the thing you love but fear giving up, don’t worry, you don’t have to. What if you could still do all of that but be satisfied on smaller portions, or choose the healthier options?

In reality what we love most about going out is not the actual food, it is the experience of meeting up with friends or family, and just enjoying the time with them.

Before you go out, take a couple of minutes to sit somewhere quietly. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Next, get a sense or a feeling of being out with your friends already. Notice how you feel, what you can see and what you can hear. Then begin to mentally rehearse choosing your food for the evening, maybe making healthier options... perhaps you can mentally rehearse leaving the food on your plate.

As human beings we are really good at what we practice being. Just taking the time out to experiment with doing something different in a familiar situation can prompt a change and stop those unconscious patterns that we otherwise tend to run while we are out.

**The Supersize Me**

As we discussed earlier, many of our attitudes to food originate from childhood and the conditioning we experience from our parents and other people in our lives. One of the most common ones is being taught that it’s a bad thing not to clear our plates.

Linked to this, is the tendency among many parents to demonstrate their love through food, piling their offspring’s plates to the brim as a sign of affection. This sense of needing to supersize to achieve satisfaction is hard to break.

For this reason, learning that it’s OK – even good – to leave something on our plate at the end of a meal, and stop eating when we feel full, can be really liberating. And contrary to what we might have had engrained in us, it’s not wasteful either – sadly eating that extra potato is not going to solve all of Africa’s hunger problems, not really.

We’ve also discussed the importance of learning to listen to your body’s signals, to know when you’re full.

The exercise below will take you through a visualisation process to help you begin to see leaving something as a positive step, not a negative one. Instead of feeling deprived if you don’t ‘eat up’, this will help you to feel satisfied about leaving food and the self-discipline you have shown in doing so.

There comes a point when we are eating that our body says we’ve had enough, that we are comfortable, that we don’t need any more. You can begin to enjoy this wonderful feeling of leaving the food you no longer need, the feeling of the leave.

***Try this...***

Take a few deep breaths. Focus on your breath and imagine each one is coming from a place just behind your belly button.

When you reach that point of feeling comfortable and relaxed, imagine that you are sitting down to eat a plate of your favourite food. Imagine your plate first, then one of your favourite meals, and then place onto it, one by one, the items that make up that favourite meal.

Whatever your preference is, place the elements of that meal on your plate, one by one, until you have it all set out before you, delicious and appetising and ready to dive into.

Imagine that you are really, really hungry as you prepare to eat this meal, and fill your plate up accordingly.

Done?

Now, in your mind's eye, sit yourself down at the table in front of this lovely meal, grab your knife and fork and prepare to dig in. Your instinct might be to dive in and hurriedly pack the various items of food into your mouth but stop.

Instead of doing that, slowly and systematically select each forkful, place it mindfully in your mouth and take the time to chew and savour each morsel. Note the different nuances of the flavour as they burst in your mouth, the textures, and how together they play a part in your eating experience.

Also note how you feel after each mouthful, how the hunger pangs in your stomach reduce with every bite you take, and how you start to feel increasingly satisfied as you go on.

Really take note of that sense of satisfaction – and how calm that makes you feel.

What is left on your plate? If there are several items of food still there, ask yourself 'how do I feel?', 'do I need to eat any more?' and 'what else do I need to feel full?'.

Note those words 'what else do I *need* to feel full?'. Not 'what do I *want*?'

You will no doubt find that, doing this exercise, you are still left with items on your plate after you start to feel full.

Take a minute to mentally observe what those are and how you feel looking at them. Sense that satisfaction and peace that you have had enough. You have had all that you need.

Imagine that you are placing your knife and fork together in the middle of your plate as a sign that you have finished – a full stop at the end of your meal.

Commit this experience and the feelings and senses associated with it to your memory and you will be able to centre yourself and hark back to it in future, in real-life meal situations. You will find you no longer feel the compulsion to eat everything that is in front of you just because it is there, and instead you can shift your focus to the other things going on around you, the people you are with, the conversation, and all of the other things that make eating a nice meal such a pleasurable all-round experience.

**Case Study – Montie and Paula****Using my VGB to give Montie and Paula their lives back**

Clinical hypnotherapist Eric Webster, based in Michigan, USA, is one of the practitioners making up my worldwide network, and my VGB has formed a cornerstone of his practice, called Redefining Success, since 2013.

He has used it to help dozens of his clients shed a phenomenal amount of weight and, most importantly, achieve healthier, happier lives as a result.

Among Eric's most powerful success stories are Montie and Paula, a couple he has worked with since he first established as a hypnotherapist, with amazing outcomes.

Montie, a middle-aged businessman, had always watched what he ate and done lots of exercise to maintain his weight at a sensible level, but as he grew older he found it harder to keep the pounds off.

His biggest setback came between 2000 and 2002 when, having undergone eight bouts of surgery on his knees, his weight increased to 300lbs as a result of inactivity, remaining at between 280 and 300lbs for several years after.

Montie's wife Paula heard one of Eric's early advertisements, when he first set up his hypnotherapy practice in 2013, and recommended Montie give him a try, after trying and failing several times at traditional diets.

"When my wife Paula told me about Eric and the Virtual Gastric Band, I was curious," said Montie.

"When I found out I would be Eric's first client, I figured what the heck; I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. I knew I had reached a point where I had to do something as I was approaching 50 years of age and I want to be there in the future years for my family."

Over the course of approximately nine months, Montie lost 75lbs, and he says the experience has changed his life forever. "There were two big changes for me as I have continued my journey: my relationship with food and why I overate. My attitude to food has changed at a very fundamental level.

"I've recently experienced the most stressful few months of my professional career. The old Montie would have subsisted on chips and cheese and six packs of beer. Stress eating was very normal for me. I brought the desire to cut out beer with me into the first session and the desire and taste for beer was gone almost instantaneously. While I may still have glasses of wine every now and then, my stress eating has gone way, way down and I no longer need food to relieve it.

"In regards to why I overate, the hypnosis and sessions with Eric really allowed me to go into myself, my soul. They gave me permission to accept who I am, who I was growing up and the myriad of things that influenced my self-image and self-confidence over the years. I am now at peace with myself."

How has Montie's life changed now?

"I've hiked the Appalachian Trail, walking over 500 miles, and have been able to go places and do things I had only dreamed about," he said.

"My attitude towards life, my family and friends has improved and I can't wait to see what my life journey holds in store for me.

"I won't say that it has all been roses; some days have certainly been better and easier than others, but I know in my innermost being that I have fundamentally changed and my life will never be the same.

"I promote Eric and the VGB programme wherever and whenever I can, to encourage others to believe they can lose weight just as I have."

Of the therapy experience itself, he added: "It was enjoyable and thorough. I had never been hypnotised before but I found that Eric explained the process very well and I really enjoyed it.

"My four sessions were spread over nine weeks and I found each one had value for me, for different reasons."

### **Paula's story**

After recommending the VGB to him, and seeing the incredible life change it had brought about, Montie's wife Paula decided she wanted to share his journey.

"Not only was he losing weight but his whole attitude to food was changing, and it was so remarkable I decided I wanted to join him," she said.

"I had never been hypnotised before and didn't know what to expect at our first session, but it was the most profound sense of relaxation I had ever experienced.

“I have a history of issues with weight and food, ranging from being overweight to anorexic, to maintaining, to being overweight again.

“What I’ve learned through this experience is that I’ve let ‘head hunger’ dictate what I ate, why I ate and when I ate. Now it’s about eating when I’m hungry and stopping when I’m full.”

And the change this simple switch of focus has made to Paula?

“It has given me my life back,” she added.

“I’ve had an image of the ‘real Paula’ in my mind for years but, for whatever reason, have never got in touch with her. I’m still a work in progress but every day I’m taking steps towards becoming the strong, confident, athletic, spiritually-connected woman I want to be.

“I have never been happier and losing weight is just the icing on the cake.”

#### ***Montie and Paula’s lightbulb moment***

This couple both entered the VGB programme with open minds, and the investment of their time and efforts reaped huge dividends. Conventional diets were a waste of time for Montie and Paula – they needed to delve deep into understanding their relationship with food before they could press the reset button on their eating habits.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, we’ve gone through the ‘metaphoric approaches’ used by VGB practitioners to help you build powerful internal narratives that will enable you to establish new, positive behaviours.

We’ve then matched each of the six ‘types’ of overeater with a different metaphor for you to try.

In the next chapter, we will wrap up our whole learning process with a conclusion.

# Conclusion

This is not ‘The End’ – it’s just the beginning of ‘The New You’!

When you started this book, I told you it was just the beginning of a journey that I knew you could make.

Along the way, we have looked at why traditional diets commonly fail, and I have introduced you to the alternative approach offered by my pioneering VGB therapy programme.

We’ve identified the different types of person when it comes to being overweight, and helped you discover which one of these is most like you.

Then we explored the role of hypnosis in weight loss and demystified how it works, and why you can believe it will work for you.

The origins of bad relationships with food have also had our attention and I have shared with you a raft of tools, exercises and other insights designed to help you identify your eating behaviours, good and bad, so that you can start to change them for the better.

You have also learned to listen to your body, and even identify how hungry you really are, in order to avoid falling into the trap of mind-induced snacking and overeating wherever possible.

The case studies I’ve shared with you from clients of my VGB practitioner partners all over the world have demonstrated what can ultimately be achieved with a one-on-one hypnotherapy programme.

I hope with the insight all this has given you, you’ll be encouraged to seek out a practitioner local to you so that you can fully claim your victory over food – put it back in its rightful place and transform you into a better version of yourself with less negative impact on your health and wellbeing.

I’ll leave you with one final thought. Change doesn’t happen overnight: you can’t do everything, all at once. To really adopt a new habit, you have to focus on it and practice and repeat it until it becomes so ingrained, you don’t even have to think about it.

So, go easy on yourself. Set yourself small and realistic goals and try not to look too far into the future. It is overstretching yourself that has led to failure in the past, remember?

**Create a different reality. You *can* make the changes you want to make. You *can* be the person you want to be. You *can* live the life you want to live.**

**Believe in yourself – and it *will* happen.**

To find a VGB-accredited hypnotherapist near you, visit <https://sheilagranger.com/nearest-practitioner/>

***Try this...***

Write down three things relating to food that you are going to do differently from now on and then tackle them one at a time. Do that now and pin them up somewhere so that you can keep referring back to your goals, over and over again, every day.

***And this...***

Stand in front of a mirror – perhaps in the bathroom in the morning – look yourself in the face and repeat: “You are a person of worth and value. You are loved and capable of giving love. You can achieve whatever you want to achieve in life. You know this to be true because this person is you.”

Repeat this quote to yourself every day, to reinforce the positive belief and motivation you feel, right now, to making this change.

*And this...*

**Why not note down 10 positive things about yourself and keep them close by, to help you maintain your belief in your ability to achieve this thing you have set out to do?**

10 amazing things about me
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

**Some things to help you  
on your journey...  
Appendix 1. Your 7-day  
progress diary**



**Monday**

**My goal:**

**Food and drink:**

*Breakfast –*

*Lunch –*

*Dinner –*

**Activity:**

**Thoughts and feelings:**

**Tuesday**

**My goal:**

**Food and drink:**

*Breakfast –*

*Lunch –*

*Dinner –*

**Activity:**

**Thoughts and feelings:**

**Wednesday**

**My goal:**

**Food and drink:**

*Breakfast –*

*Lunch –*

*Dinner –*

**Activity:**

**Thoughts and feelings:**

**Thursday**

**My goal:**

**Food and drink:**

*Breakfast –*

*Lunch –*

*Dinner –*

**Activity:**

**Thoughts and feelings:**

Friday

My goal:

Food and drink:

Breakfast –

Lunch –

Dinner –

Activity:

Thoughts and feelings:

Saturday

My goal:

Food and drink:

Breakfast –

Lunch –

Dinner –

Activity:

Thoughts and feelings:

Sunday

My goal:

Food and drink:

Breakfast –

Lunch –

Dinner –

Activity:

Thoughts and feelings:

# Appendix 2. Your personal Victories Diary

Here's a template you can use to record some of your achievements in the first few weeks of your VGB programme, to remind you how far you've come!

Don't worry if the headings don't quite resonate with you – you can agree on alternatives with your therapist that are better suited to your individual programme.

## Week 1

Plans	Obstacles/ Challenges	Progress

## Week 2

Plans	Obstacles/ Challenges	Progress

Week 3

Plans	Obstacles/ Challenges	Progress

Week 4

Plans	Obstacles/ Challenges	Progress



**Appendix 3. Useful links  
at Sheila Granger's  
website  
[www.sheilagranger.com](http://www.sheilagranger.com)**

## 118 **No More Diets! Believe in a healthier, better you**

This book features a number of helpful templates and exercises for you to complete as part of your VGB journey, and these are all downloadable online so you can print out as many as you want:

<https://sheilagranger.com/templates/>

You can also download a number of free audio recordings to help you achieve your goals which reiterate some of the messages and exercises discussed throughout this book.

<https://sheilagranger.com/downloads/>

Maybe this book has inspired you to undertake a one-to-one VGB programme with an accredited practitioner? You can find a full list of them on my website, there might even be one in your town!

<https://sheilagranger.com/nearest-practitioner/>

Perhaps you are interested in training to become a hypnotherapist or you are already practising as a hypnotherapist but would like to become an accredited VGB practitioner? Take a look at my website, where you can find out more about my comprehensive hypnotherapy training programme. I offer a variety of distance-learning training packages to help you build your business, wherever you are in the world, and also operate a network of licensed trainers in a number of countries.

<https://sheilagranger.com/train-to-be-a-hypnotherapist/>

<https://sheilagranger.com/become-a-vgb-practitioner/>

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