What Do I Feel?

Whenever your emotions are making you want to eat, take a few minutes to complete this exercise before you head for the refrigerator.

In the left column, begin writing words that describe your feelings about a situation, person, or event. For each feeling word, under the heading “because,” add a reason or an explanation of why you feel this way.

Use whatever words come to mind to describe your emotions and the reasons behind the them. You can repeat words such as “angry” as often as you like, just add a different explanation each time. To help you identify exactly what you are feeling, refer to the list of emotions.

Keep your list simple, using one or two words to identify each feeling and a short phrase to describe why you feel that way. Feel free to identify just a couple of feelings or to fill an entire page with your list.

I Feel...

Because...

Once you finish, read over your list and make sure you’ve been accurate and completely addressed the situation. Then select the four most significant feelings currently affecting you, then choose the two strongest emotions from those four. Finally, pick the top one from those two.

Write it here:

This is the emotion you need address quickly in order to prevent yourself from eating to cope with your feelings. So do anything you can to find relief or an outlet for that feeling. Take a walk, listen to music, talk to someone about it, just don’t go near the refrigerator or cupboard until you have let go of that emotion.

Ways to use this exercise:

• Choose a specific event or situation such as a fight with a spouse, a bad work day, or a lonely evening.

• Consider your entire life picture and identify the major feelings affecting you at this time.

• Do the exercise with another person, then compare your statements to gain insight into your relationship struggles. This works great with kids and teenagers as well as partners or friends.