

Introduction

I am so excited to be back with this new book, a companion to my 2018 book, *Weight Loss Starts in Your Brain*. After working with this program, many of my clients and readers asked for a companion book mixing games and experiments to help readers adopt new behaviors and grow in confidence each week as the experiments become more challenging.

For example, instead of only reading the chapter “How to Deal with Emotional Eating,” now there are 12 specific “emotional eating” experiments, one per week, in this new book. Each week you will learn and experience something new and be able to move on to the next. Each week the pounds will be shed forever! That is the goal.

You can choose to follow only one of the seven transformational themes developed in my CogniDiet® Program to lose weight. This is a holistic experience merging the heart, mind, and body. Weight loss can only occur if you take care of these seven elements, which conveniently mirror the seven days of the week:



1. NUTRITION IQ AND FOOD EXPERIENCES



2. ACTIVITY LEVEL AND ENERGY



3. EMOTIONS



4. SELF-LOVE



5. MINDFULNESS AND ZEN LIFE



6. DEALING WITH STRESS



7. LIFE HACKS TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Seven Experiments per Week – Three Levels of Mastery

The book is organized in three sections representing increasing levels of mastery. Each section is four weeks long. Each week the experiments become more challenging in level of self-control and behavioral mastery. This book is designed for you to follow over 12 weeks, so enjoy the journey and take it at a slow pace.

Certain skills must be learned before you can advance to the next level. This book is not about teaching you something specific, as my first book was. Instead, it will help you “change by doing.” I highly recommend you read *Weight Loss Starts in Your Brain* prior to working with the experiments in this book in order to understand the reasoning behind the experiments, including cutting sugar, eating unsaturated fat, or tackling your emotions.

This book does not go into explaining the science behind a game and will only include a brief rationale.

The first four weeks are the Beginner Level. Do not skip this part of the journey, even if you are already familiar with The CogniDiet® techniques and principles. It is always good to go back to the basics.

When you have achieved this level at the end of the first four weeks, you move to the Advanced Level for another four weeks. After these four weeks, you will be ready to advance to the Mastery Level.

You may be slower than others at losing weight, you may be less disciplined or have a more complicated or challenging life. It is okay. Everyone should go at their own pace.

Here are a few ways to advance through the weeks:

- Follow the weeks and experiments as advised, one each day.
- Go at a slower pace and take, for instance, two or more weeks if needed, to cover all seven experiments of a specific week.
- Only follow one theme at a time and focus, for example, on just “self-love” or “mindfulness” for 12 weeks.
- Redo a week’s curriculum if you feel you did not master it.
- Return to previous weeks’ experiments to see the progress you made on past challenges.
- Repeat experiments if necessary, as many times as you want. This is very important because it may require a few times to really bear the fruits of new learning.

Here are a few things to do to be successful in this exciting endeavor:

- Create and write down your goals.
- Create your vision board and make it visible—see Chapter 1 in *Weight Loss Starts in Your Brain*.
- Measure progress and be accountable to yourself.
- Decide on a nutrition and exercise/activity plan before you start.
- Encourage friends and family to do the experiments in this book with you. Why not? You can compare results and support each other.
- Know your baseline data—more to come on this.
- Note your findings and observations in this book, or another booklet.
- Have faith in yourself.

Build Your Goals

Here are a few tips to build SMART goals:

S

is for **Specific**: Be clear on what you want to achieve from a weight, fat to muscle ratio, or even health-related issue such as lowering your blood pressure or A1C. Start by having a physical and getting baseline numbers for lipids panel, glucose, blood pressure, and liver panel. Repeat these tests at the end of the journey.

M

is for **Measurable**: Be accountable and have a defined goal for each week.

A

is for **Achievable**: Do not say you plan to lose 40 pounds in 12 weeks if you have not been able to lose 10 pounds in the last 10 years; a half to two pounds a week is a great success; sustainable weight loss must be slow. Be ambitious, but also reasonable.

R

is for **Relevant or Realistic**: Try to align your goals with your lifestyle. Do not say you want to run a marathon in a year if you know life will really get in the way of the time needed to train. Instead commit to three 10K races in a year.

T

is for **Time-Oriented**: I have noticed over the years that people are very ambitious in terms of achievements, and also impatient. Saying you want to lose 10 pounds is not enough. You have to write "I will lose 10 pounds before the end of September."



Cogni-Tips for the Road

- Try to be as organized and as committed as you can to the program. You can decide to follow it for only six weeks, but whatever you decide, do it.
- If you do it, do it well—even if you skip a week. Go back and keep at it. Sometimes you may need to repeat a week because you struggled.
- Try to schedule your training sessions and food plan in advance.
- Measure your success weekly, or even daily if that makes you feel better. Celebrate often!
- Do the experiments with a friend and encourage each other. Share your experiment results. Create a club such as the book club recommended in *Weight Loss Starts in Your Brain*.
- Write down every success or setback you achieve. Writing things down is part of the brain rewiring methodology.
- Reward yourself.

You will learn and change by doing and reflecting on each experience. You will also build up your confidence while you rewire your brain. This is a self-discovery journey.

Let's start with writing what are your goals, commitment level, and self-motivating motto for the next 12 weeks.

Write your SMART weight loss and life goals:

Write your self-motivating motto:

Create a food and drink elimination list:

Create a new healthy food discovery list:

Write the list of behaviors and other things you want to really change:

List your initial fasting glucose, hemoglobin A1C, and lipid panel (LDL, HDL, triglycerides), and liver data if available:

		INITIAL	WEEK 12
FASTING GLUCOSE			
HEMOGLOBIN A1C			
LIPID PANEL	LDL		
	HDL		
	TRIGLYCERIDES		
LIVER DATA	ALT		
	AST		

Initial Measures

	INITIAL	4 WEEKS	8 WEEKS	FINAL
WEIGHT				
BODY FAT RATIO (if you have a special scale)				
BMI (if available)				
CHEST				
RIGHT UPPER ARM				
LEFT UPPER ARM				
WAIST				
HIPS				
WAIST/HIPS RATIO				
RIGHT THIGH				
LEFT THIGH				
RIGHT CALF				
LEFT CALF				

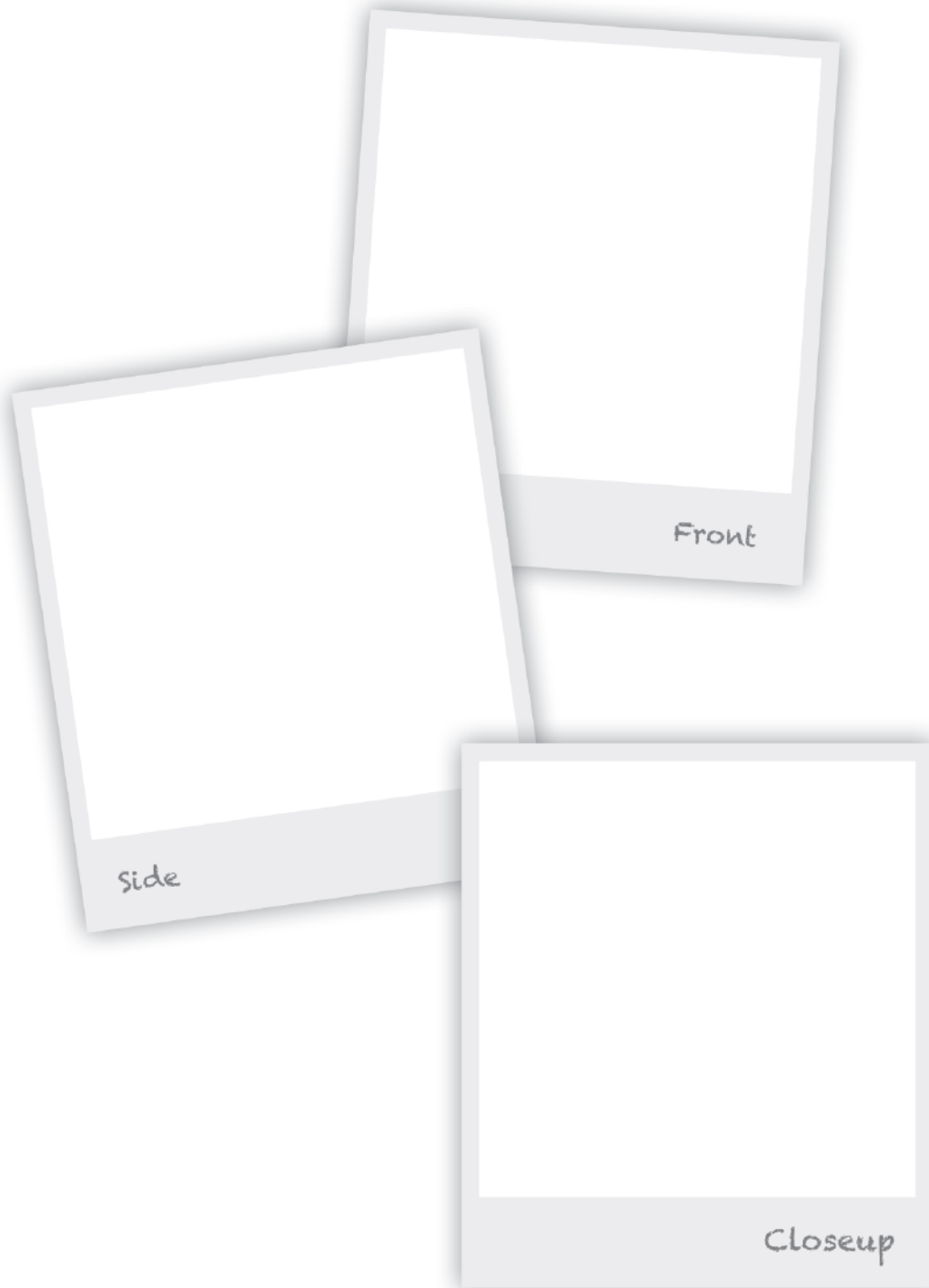
Let's Start

THE FIRST FOUR WEEKS

The Beginner Level

Week 1

Take Your Baseline Pictures!





NUTRITION IQ AND FOOD EXPERIENCES

Experiment #1 – Build Sugar Mountains

Read the label on a bag of chips, candy, cookies, or your favorite processed junk processed food. This week eliminate at least one processed snack and replace it with a healthier version or, even better, nothing.



Look at:

- The total calories in the bag (count all servings).
- The number of bites or the portion you typically eat at one sitting. Calculate how many calories this represents.
- The time it took you to eat what you wanted to eat.
- Count all the carbohydrates grams minus fiber and translate this into grams of sugar. **Count one gram of net carbohydrate as one gram of sugar.** If there are 21g of net carbohydrates in the bag, this is 21g of sugar. There are 4g of sugar in a teaspoon, translate this into how many teaspoons of sugar are in front of you. Take out a bag of sugar and put the number of teaspoons of sugar on a plate or your counter.
- Read the label for other information. Look at the list of ingredients. What kind of fat and sugar sources are there? What type of preservatives or food enhancers are listed?

Yes, carbohydrates are also flour and fruits and vegetables, but all carbohydrates, with the exception of fiber, turn into glucose in your blood.

Draw the heaps of sugar representing the net grams of carbohydrates on the bag and note how many teaspoons this represents. If you eat different snacks, continue to add heaps of sugar to the bag.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1oz (28g/about 17 chips)	
Servings Per Package 6	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 160	Calories from Fat 100
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 11g	16%
Saturated Fat 3g	14%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 10%
Calcium 0%	Iron 0%

Example

If I eat **half**
this bag of chips:
 15g of carbs $\times 3 = 45\text{g}$.
 No fiber, so that's 45g of sugar
 divided by four - that's over
 11 teaspoons of sugar!
 AND $160 \times 3 = 480$ calories!

What did you learn?



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

The goal is to make you realize how many calories, preservatives, net carbohydrates, and sugar you ingest when you eat processed snacks.



ACTIVITY LEVEL AND ENERGY

Experiment #2 – Let's Push It!

Today make one decision about your activity and exercise regimen. It is time to go to the next level. Rest assured, we will take your current fitness level into account.



Are you a beginner, intermediate, or a professional exerciser?

Beginners = Almost zero exercise.

Do at least one of these three things:

- Start walking 20 minutes a day at a brisk pace. Walk around your neighborhood every morning or evening. Find a walking buddy.
- Sign up and go to the gym at least once a week.
- Buy a pedometer to see how many steps you walk each day. If you realize you were not exceeding 2,000 to 5,000 steps a day, each week add 1,000 to 2,000 steps a day, until you regularly log in 10,000 to 12,000 steps a day. You can use an average for the week.

Intermediate = You exercise, but only once or twice a week, or you are not pushing yourself.

Do at least one of these three things:

- Add steps every day in 1,000 increments.

- Add one more day at the gym to at least twice a week or add another weekly activity to make you move and sweat.
- Try a new class if you feel bored.

Professional = You are very committed and disciplined, but you can't seem to lose the weight.

Do at least one of these three things:

- Have you fallen into a rut: same elliptical, same pace, same classes? Try something new.
- Increase intensity either in number of reps, heart rate, time, etc.
- Try a new sport or activity.
- Embark on a fitness evaluation with a professional and take stock of what needs to be improved.

Write your plan NOW and don't forget to think about all aspects of training your body:

GOALS	PAST	AS OF TODAY, AND FOR THE NEXT 12 WEEKS
CARDIO		
STRENGTH TRAINING		
FLEXIBILITY/ RELAXATION (for example, yoga)		
WALKING		



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

By boosting your current level, you may get out of a routine not allowing you to really burn calories effectively. If you are a couch potato, now is time to start moving!



EMOTIONS

Experiment #3 – I Know My Emotions

Are you emotional? When feeling an emotion, or in order not to feel it, do you turn to food? Are you dealing with anger or sadness with a cookie or ice cream?

Even happy emotions, such as joy, can trigger a craving as a kind of reward or association. Do you say to yourself, “Because I succeeded and got an A+ on this exam, I deserve a reward?”

Let’s face it. Some of us always find reasons for reward. A lot of us do not recognize the underlying emotions acting as triggers for a candy frenzy. Before embarking on dealing with emotional eating you must first have the courage to face and understand your underlying emotions.



This week is the first step. This week, if and when you feel an emotion coming, note how you feel. Write down your words to describe it in this book or in a booklet.

Do not judge yourself. Do not feel guilty. Be kind to yourself. Only note the emotion(s). Then note what happens after you ate that cookie or treat.

DAY	EMOTION(S)	HOW DO YOU FEEL AFTER YOU'VE HAD A TREAT?
DAY 1		
DAY 2		
DAY 3		
DAY 4		
DAY 5		
DAY 6		
DAY 7		



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

You will become more self-aware of your emotions and their triggers. You will begin to see patterns. You will understand what the “treat” does to you. Does it solve your underlying emotion?



SELF-LOVE

Experiment #4 – My Best Assets

Loving yourself is so crucial. If you love yourself, you become gentler with yourself, and committed to your own well-being. You do not punish yourself, you treat yourself with respect and consideration.

This week write five physical traits you love about yourself, such as your eyes, your feet, your hair, or your legs. Whatever. They are your best assets, the ones you flaunt easily because they give you confidence. Today you will be more specific about why you love them.

A few examples of what to write:

- I love my eyes because they have an amazingly clear blue color and long lashes.
- I love my skin because it is so soft, and it has a nice caramel color.
- I love my legs because they are long, well defined, and muscular.



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

Loving yourself is the first step towards feeling good. The better you feel, the easier it is to shed pounds because you will be focused on the positive rather than the negative aspects of your body.



MINDFULNESS AND ZEN LIFE

Experiment #5 – I Am Out for Lunch!

Enjoy life. Become more mindful of the moment, be in the moment, and go with the flow. Don't be on your smart phone while having lunch with your family. Don't manage your Instagram account while walking in the woods. You can post these pictures later!



Today at lunch or dinner—or choose another day this week if you are too busy professionally—plan to sit down at meal time, with no distraction and for at least 15 to 20 minutes eat on your own.

Enjoy the view, the textures, and the flavors. Think about where this food is coming from. Chew slowly and be thankful for this delicious meal. You can do this at home or in the office at your desk, but it is forbidden to work!

After the meal, write how you feel. Start with “I feel” or “I am,” etc.



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

You may notice you eat less when you eat slowly because you become satisfied quicker. You are also immersed in the action. This may lower your cravings later. It decreases your stress level because eating will have been an enjoyable moment and not something on your “To Do” list.



DEALING WITH STRESS

Experiment #6 – I Know When I'm Stressed

Do you even know how stressed you are? We multitask, and juggle commitments and we run on adrenaline all day.

The first step in starting to better manage stress is to be aware of it and notice your level. Using the *Weight Loss Starts in Your Brain* book scale:



Take the day and regularly measure the level of stress you feel. Notice the patterns, the way you feel, and the culprits. You can compare days of the week. Do this a few days this week.

DAY OF WEEK: _____

Morning: _____

Afternoon: _____

Evening: _____

Notes: _____

DAY OF WEEK: _____

Morning: _____

Afternoon: _____

Evening: _____

Notes: _____

DAY OF WEEK: _____

Morning: _____

Afternoon: _____

Evening: _____

Notes: _____

DAY OF WEEK: _____

Morning: _____

Afternoon: _____

Evening: _____

Notes: _____

What have you noticed? What are you learning about yourself?

Notice your body feelings (hands shaking, cravings, not breathing properly, lack of focus, feeling lost, etc.).



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

You become aware of how long and how seriously you have been stressed, and what the causes of your stress are. This is the first step to start dealing with it.



LIFE HACKS TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Experiment #7 – Carry Your Own Food

Simplify your life by planning. It does not take much time, and it allows for more free time and control later. One thing I noticed over the years is that people struggling with weight loss are at the mercy of events or situations. They may use this as an excuse, but if you plan your day, as much as you can, there are no excuses left.

This week, plan your meals for the next three days. I am only asking three days to start with! A few tips:

- Cook the night before and bring leftovers to work the next day.
- Cook meals that last two or three days, such as casseroles, whole chicken, etc.
- Cook batches of vegetables and soups and freeze in single serving portions.
- If you can control yourself, have healthy snacks at your disposal at the office, in your car, or bag.

A few ideas for this week:



Rationale and benefits of this experiment:

You will have more control on your environment and stop succumbing to bad cafeteria food or the snack machine.