



The  
Weight,  
Hypnotherapy  
and **YOU**

Weight Reduction Program

An NLP and Hypnotherapy  
Practitioner's Manual

Judith E. Pearson, PhD

*The Weight,  
Hypnotherapy and YOU  
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The weight reduction program described in this book does not promise successful weight reduction for every client. It is not a cure for overeating or obesity nor a replacement or substitute for proper medical care and nutritional planning. No therapeutic program works with every client, and much of the success of the program described in this book rests in the skills of the practitioner and the motivation and personality of the client.

You are encouraged to view the WHY program as a working model that you can modify and improve upon according to your clinical judgment and the needs of your clients. The WHY program is not a franchise nor a "cookbook" program, and no promises or are made or implied as to any practitioner having increased income as a result of applying the program in his or her practice.

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# *Preface*

Imagine that you could help people who are overweight or obese achieve the weight they choose. Imagine you could offer them a proven program for weight reduction, incorporating your skills in hypnotherapy and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). Imagine making a significant difference in the lives of these people who, because of their weight problems, run the risk of life-threatening diseases and grapple with self-consciousness, embarrassment, restricted movement, clumsiness, and social disapproval.

Imagine the rewarding feeling of seeing your overweight clients getting slimmer and healthier! Imagine getting referrals from satisfied clients, as well as physicians and health-care clinics, while continuing to hone your expertise as a practitioner who gets results where others have failed. Nothing can quite match the gratifying feeling of hearing a now-slender client say, "You helped me find my motivation. I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you."

This is what has happened for me since I created the Weight, Hypnotherapy and YOU (WHY) Weight Reduction Program a few years ago. Let me give you one success story as an example. One of my most gratifying experiences occurred with Ben (not his real name). Ben lumbered into my office for his first appointment weighing probably between 250 and 300 pounds. He had an amiable personality, yet was somewhat lacking in self-confidence and was not particularly well dressed or groomed. He told me he was working in an auto body shop, but his real ambition was to become an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). To qualify for the job, he would have to undergo rigorous physical and academic training in Quantico, Virginia. Ben had already met with the FBI recruiter and had passed the initial screening interview. His problem was his weight. He could not qualify unless he could reach and maintain a healthy weight.

I conducted a few NLP and hypnotherapy sessions with Ben, loosely based on some ideas I was pulling together for what would eventually become the WHY Weight Reduction Program. He began to change his eating habits and exercise more, and said he was starting to lose weight. I had audiotaped our sessions, and Ben said that listening to the tapes was really helping him change his habits. At the end of those few sessions, I said goodbye to Ben and applauded his progress. I doubted, however, that he was really FBI material.

About three years later Ben phoned and asked me if I remembered him, stating that he had come to me for weight reduction. I did remember him, but the image in my mind was of the overweight, awkward guy I had last seen. He

explained he was about to take his final exam at the FBI training academy and asked if I could work with him, using hypnotherapy, to help his concentration. I was surprised and elated to hear that Ben was indeed graduating from the FBI program. That, however, was nothing compared to my utter astonishment when he arrived two days later for his appointment. In walked a totally different man—extremely good-looking (we’re talking gorgeous here!), with the build of an athlete, brimming with confidence, well dressed, and affable. WOW! It was all I could think of to say. WOW!

When people who are overweight reach the weight they envision, it truly transforms every aspect of their lives. Watching it happen, and knowing you have had a hand in the process, is one of the most rewarding experiences you’ll ever have as a practitioner.

Perhaps you’ve felt the same way as many other practitioners who are reluctant to work with clients who have weight issues. There are valid reasons why working with this population is daunting. First, they generally have a high failure rate when it comes to weight reduction. Second, obesity is usually a chronic, life-long problem. Third, relapses are frequent because the temptation to overeat or eat the wrong kind of food is ever-present. Fourth, with obesity, people tend to feel socially inept and self-conscious. They may easily and frequently become discouraged and depressed. They are often unattractive, lonely, unhappy people. Who wouldn’t be, having to lug around an extra fifty or one hundred pounds of fat?

If you’ve ever doubted your ability to help clients with effective weight management, you are not alone. I once had the same reservations myself. Now that I have a method for working with people who are obese or overweight, I don’t feel that way anymore. The WHY program gives me quite an advantage, because it allows me to serve a wider range of clients and expand my clientele. I want you to have that advantage, too.

You have in your hands a practitioner’s manual for a structured yet flexible hypnotherapy program you can offer to your clients who are struggling with obesity and the challenges of a chronic weight problem. It is a tested program that can produce results if you follow the instructions in this manual.

Judith E. Pearson, Ph.D.  
Springfield, Virginia

*Part I*

*What You Need to Know  
before You Begin*

## *Chapter 1*

# *How the WHY Program Came into Existence*

I developed the Weight, Hypnotherapy and YOU Program for my practice; I really didn't intend to write a book about it. I just wanted a hypnotherapy program to treat obesity. Obesity continues to present a major health problem for millions. Many of those millions are turning to brief, solution-oriented therapies, such as NLP and hypnotherapy, for a solution. Some years ago, when I decided I wanted to extend my counseling services to this population, I set out to investigate how other practitioners were addressing the problem.

I searched the Internet and found several companies offering sets of hypnosis audiotapes, but little else. The colleagues I talked with seemed to use an ad hoc approach, and many seemed just as daunted as I was about working with clients with weight issues. I could not find the sort of program I was looking for, so I ended up creating my own. I read books on the subject, I looked at relevant research studies, and I asked for ideas and feedback from clients and colleagues. Through trial and error, I came up with the WHY Program.

In this chapter, I will tell you how the program, and subsequently this book, came into existence, and what you'll find in these pages. First, however, let me tell you about the extent of the obesity problem, so you'll understand more about why it is so important for practitioners to have effective skills and methods for working with people who are overweight.

### *The Extent of the Problem*

Obesity is a serious medical and social issue that affects millions of people. According to the Weight-control Information Network web site (2005), nearly two-thirds of adults in the U.S. are overweight, and 30.5 percent are obese (usually defined as forty or more pounds, or eighteen-plus kilos, over the recommended weight). The statistics are even higher for those of Hispanic or African heritage. Excess weight and obesity affect 129.6 million people in the United States alone. The prevalence of obesity more than doubled between 1960 and 2000, and has continued to increase.

The American Society of Bariatric Physicians (2005) regards obesity as a "chronic medical disease with serious health implications." The health risks

related to obesity include heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, hypertension, stroke, sleep apnea, gout, osteoarthritis, joint problems, and gall bladder disease. Even some forms of cancer are associated with excess weight. Weight problems shorten life span and reduce mobility. Moreover, an overweight population is costing their employers and the insurance industry billions of dollars in medical costs and lost productivity due to weight-related illnesses. Here are some U.S. statistics:

- The total health-care and lost productivity costs attributable to obesity amounted to \$99.2 billion in 1995. These costs encompassed hospitalization for weight-related illnesses and injuries, weight-related disability payments, and lost work days for sickness, hospitalization, doctor visits, recovery time, and disability.
- Approximately \$51.65 billion of that amount were direct medical costs.
- The health-related economic cost of obesity to U.S. businesses is substantial, representing approximately 5 percent of total medical care costs.
- Obesity-related medical conditions contribute to 300,000 deaths each year.

There is every reason to believe these costs and statistics will continue to rise along with obesity rates. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2005), obesity may soon overtake tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. People are seeking remedies for their weight problems through medical interventions, nutritional counseling, fitness programs, alternative medicines, food supplements, diets, and prescription drugs. No wonder weight reduction products and services are rapidly becoming a big business!

Moreover, it isn't always health concerns that lead people to seek help in managing their weight. We are a society obsessed with physical beauty and attractiveness. We spend billions of dollars on good looks. We buy diet books, memberships to health spas and gyms, designer clothes, cosmetics, and cosmetic surgery. People are obviously willing to spend money on products and services that will enhance their appearance.

With favorable publicity about the efficacy of brief, solution-oriented therapies and a public more willing than ever to spend money on health and beauty, many individuals are turning to hypnotherapy and NLP for help with weight control. This practitioner's manual is for medical professionals and mental-health professionals who want to address the needs of an overweight client population.

## *Chapter 11*

# *Session 6: Creating an Intelligent Relationship with Food*

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this session is to apply hypnotherapy to motivate the client to develop intelligent decision making about when to eat, how to eat, and when to stop eating. The message here is, “Tune in to your body’s messages and sensations, so that you eat only when you are hungry and stop eating when you are full, and feel satisfied and happy with yourself for doing so.”

### *Procedure*

1. Ask about the client’s weight reduction since the previous session. What factors contributed to the client’s success in reducing by at least four pounds (two kilos)? What was easy or difficult? What worked well and what didn’t work so well? Commend the client’s efforts. Give encouragement for the next four pounds (two kilos) he or she will reduce.
2. Follow up on the previous session and ask what changes the client is noticing in selecting healthful foods and beverages and avoiding or limiting fattening foods and beverages that are high in sugar, salt, fat, cholesterol, and alcohol. Inquire about the client’s problems or successes in completing the two-week food diary assignment. Answer any questions and encourage the client to articulate what he or she learned from the assignment.

Some clients will report that the assignment was a hassle or an inconvenience, which is understandable since it requires keeping track of food choices and being consciously aware of caloric intake—something people who are overweight don’t do very often. Empathize with and explore the client’s feelings about being more aware of calories and what kinds of foods he or she selects. If the client is having trouble understanding which foods are healthy and which are fattening, or has trouble counting calories, give any practical advice you can and direct the client to additional sources of information (Internet web sites, nutritional books and pamphlets, a local nutritionist, or classes on nutrition).

3. Ask your client what suggestions he or she would like to hear in today's hypnotherapy session in order to encourage an intelligent relationship with food, defined as eating when hungry and stopping eating at the point of feeling full. The underlying theme for this session is enhanced body awareness—tuning in to sensations of hunger and satiety.
4. Prepare to audio-record this session. Make sure your client is seated or reclining comfortably and is ready to listen. Record the following script, adding suggestions the client would like to hear and adapting the script to the client's needs and preferences. Remember to stress the words in italics. As you read through this script, insert deepening instructions as needed.

## *Hypnotic Script for Creating an Intelligent Relationship with Food*

### *Induction and Reassurances*

To *relax your mind and body* ... and focus your thoughts, ... close your eyes ... and consider all that you are aware of at this moment ... *the sound of my voice* ... perhaps other sounds as well, sounds in the room ... sounds outside the room ... aware of the space around you ... the surface on which ... *you are relaxing—more deeply now.* ... *Aware of your breathing—perhaps you'd like to count your breaths as I speak, until you feel so relaxed, you need not count anymore.*

Hold out your arm and imagine ... you are holding in that hand the handle of a bucket of sand ... and *feel that weight—every ounce of it—a very heavy burden ... much too heavy ... uncomfortably heavy ... weighting you down. Getting more and more annoying ... burdensome ... all that weight* ... and yet what are you weighting for? The ordeal of having supported that weight ... thinking to yourself it wasn't so bad ... trying to put up with it ... *yet, it gets more burdensome by the moment.* ... *You feel so intensely ... the desire to release it ... to lower that weight ... to be relieved of it ... and holding on to all that weight has proven more difficult and tiring.* ... *The strain, the discomfort ... as you are now finding a way to weigh the weight that you were waiting to weigh ... while you realize ... the heavy weight was just too much to tolerate ... so heavy that you could not possibly ignore it ... a discomfort ... causing you now to get a handle on things ... reaching out for the solution and holding on to it.* ... *And while you lower your appetite and raise your expectations ... you began to release that burden now and lower your hand ... lower that weight ... lower that weight, more and more. As your hand goes down, you drift more deeply into the experience ... and your subconscious mind multiplies your motivation to have the weight you choose.*<sup>8</sup>

*So you are free of that heavy weight* ... the sand in the bucket, the sand in an hourglass—time passing ... life passing by ... time doesn't wait ... *refusing to wait any longer ... to have the weight you choose ... finding the way ... the method ... the path ... the direction ... and following it with pleasure and relief ... happy to advance to a more complete hypnotic state.*

While ... *you are relaxing now*, here are some things to remember, for your comfort, safety, and satisfaction with this hypnosis experience. No matter *how deeply ... you are relaxed*, you are free to move about to become even more comfortable. You can open your eyes and end this process at any time you desire and for any reason you desire. While you are listening to this recording, should anything occur that requires your immediate attention, you will instantly return to full alertness, open your eyes, move about, and attend to the matter without delay.

## Practitioner Checklist and Notes

### Session 6: Creating an Intelligent Relationship with Food

Copy, complete, and put in the client's file.

Checklist	Notes
<p>Client's name: _____</p> <p>Date of session: _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask about the client's success in reducing four pounds (two kilos) since the previous session.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow up on any questions or concerns from the previous session.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the previous session's at-home assignment: "A Two-Week Food Diary" in the <i>Client Workbook</i>.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct and audio-record the hypnotherapy session that focuses on eating when hungry and stopping eating when full.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Give the completed recording to the client.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Give the <i>Client Workbook</i> assignment for Session 6: "The NLP Slender Eating Strategy."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Remind the client to reduce his or her weight by at least four pounds (two kilos) in order to attend the next session.</i></li></ul>	

## Chapter 16

# More NLP Patterns for Changing Compulsive Eating

*“I was doing fine until Friday night, when I went out with friends and just pigged out.”*

*“Well, last week I wanted something sweet, so I thought I would have just a little bit of ice cream. But once I got started, I couldn’t stop. I ate the whole half gallon!”*

How often have you heard something like this? People who are overweight cannot give up food entirely the way a smoker can give up cigarettes or an alcoholic, alcohol. They have to deal with food every day—it’s always there, and they can’t live without it! People who are overweight struggle with the compulsion to eat. Compulsive eating shows up in two ways: (a) overeating all types of food and eating when not hungry, or (b) binge eating a particular type of food, usually sweets or starches—which are highly processed foods. If a client returns again and again to compulsive eating, I recommend that you schedule an extra session in the program to help the client with the problem. You can use any of the NLP patterns in this chapter for that purpose.

Before addressing the problem of overeating or bingeing, understand that although compulsive eating can be a form of self-soothing, it may also be a symptom of depression, fatigue, an imbalance in blood sugars, or chemical imbalances in the brain, such as reduced serotonin. Neuropsychiatrist Daniel Amen (Amen and Routh 2004) has published several books on the interactions between brain chemistry and lifestyle. He writes that intractable depression, compulsions, and anxiety are sometimes the outward indications of brain-activity dysfunctions caused by factors such as genetics, exposure to toxic substances, adverse drug interactions, drug abuse, trauma, high fevers, head injury, or a poor diet—even though some of these risk factors may have occurred much earlier in one’s life. If you suspect your client’s compulsive eating may be associated with a brain-activity dysfunction, you may decide to recommend a complete neurological examination. You might also want to share with your client the brain-health recommendations in appendix K (also presented in a report on the *Client Workbook CD*).

To treat compulsive overeating or binge eating with any of the following NLP patterns, begin by getting the client’s congruent desire to change the behavior. In the case of overeating, the outcome will most likely be to eat less and to eat only when hungry. In the case of bingeing, the outcome will be to feel less

attracted to the problem food and to eat less of it or none at all. Below are eight NLP patterns for compulsive eating:

1. Pattern interruption
2. Anchoring a new response
3. Mapping across submodalities
4. Eye movements
5. Meta-No and Meta-Yes
7. Swish pattern
8. NLP Slender Eating Strategy.

A word of caution: When applying any of these patterns, be alert for ecological considerations and be ready to address them if they arise. If the client reports distress during any process, stop, explore the distress, and modify the pattern accordingly or choose another pattern.

## ***Pattern Interruption***

In the book *Ordeal Therapy* (1984), Jay Haley documented several cases in which Dr. Milton H. Erickson helped his patients create change by giving them strange or unusual assignments to perform outside of therapy sessions. In these assignments, clients were instructed to alter their normal patterns around their problem behaviors in such a way that they learned something new and extinguished the problem. One of Erickson's most frequent assignments, when he was living in Phoenix, Arizona, was telling a client or student to climb nearby Piestewa Peak (formerly called Squaw Peak) and return with a new perspective on the presented problem.

In writing about the basic concepts of ordeal therapy, Overdurf and Silverthorn (1995) state that the purpose of each assignment is to interrupt the client's existing pattern from a structural point of view:

The key to designing ordeals is based upon Meta-Programs, values, and strategies. The fundamental question ... is, "What have you tried to do (to solve this problem) that hasn't worked?" Exhaust all possible answers and write them down. Look at the sequence of events. What has to follow what? ... Set aside the notion of cause and effect and think instead in terms of loops. ... The result is that the point of intervention will not be directed at the source of the problem (the cause) but rather how the client attempts to solve the problem. ... The intervention itself needs to be a behavior ... that presupposes either the outcome for the therapy or some other positive result which is different from the problem. (p. 30).

*The Weight, Hypnotherapy and YOU Weight Reduction Program: An NLP and Hypnotherapy Practitioner's Manual*, gives practitioners a complete, fully-scripted, ready-to-use weight reduction program that addresses the epidemic problem of obesity in adults. This book gives step-by-step, easy-to-follow instructions for managing, conducting and marketing a unique program that can constitute a niche offering, or add a new, valuable and profitable service to an existing practice. The program is based on actual clinical experience and published research on the efficacy of hypnotherapy as a viable tool in weight management. The book includes examples of office forms and marketing materials, as well as a CD containing a Client Workbook with take-home readings and assignments. This program will help your clients stay motivated and on-track with their nutrition and exercise plans, while working at an individual pace.

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“The WHY program that Judith Pearson, PhD has created offers a comprehensive approach to using NLP, Neuro-Semantics (Meta-States), and Hypnotherapy to coach a client to succeed in losing weight and gaining fitness and health. Yet she offers more, far more. In her book, Dr. Pearson has created an exceptionally well-designed program for a coach, therapist, or practitioner to run a commercially viable business in weight reduction with these tools and models. I highly recommend this book and this program.”

L. Michael Hall, PhD, author of *Games Fit and Slim People Play* and Developer of Neuro-Semantics

“Aside from a basic grounding in hypnotherapy or NLP, this comprehensive yet accessible book contains everything you need to successfully facilitate your client's weight loss, from marketing to the easy-to-use eight part guide as to what to include in each session. The inclusion of a CD containing all the handouts you need is a masterstroke.”

Paul Jones BSc – Manchester Slimming Hypnotherapy UK

“A truly magnificent, thorough and PRACTICAL manual that all NLP and Hypnotherapy practitioners can utilise with the greatest of ease. Judith Pearson's WHY Program is really expertly designed, easy to follow and well written. She gives everything needed to help ensure successful weight reduction and management for your clients. A totally comprehensive program that I, for one, will be implementing immediately in my practice.”

Maria Clyne, Mesmerism

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Judith E. Pearson PhD is a Licensed Professional Counsellor, NLP Practitioner/Trainer and Certified Hypnotherapist in solo practice in Springfield, Virginia. She is Executive Director of the National Board of Certified Clinical Hypnotherapists and teaches at the American Hypnosis Training Academy. She holds a PhD in Counselling and has published over 100 articles on NLP, hypnotherapy, and self-help.

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