



# UnPack Your Emotional Baggage

Take Weight Loss OFF Your “TO DO” List – **FOREVER!**

## Module 1: The Art of Self Kindness

The Art of Self Kindness - First, what does that even mean? Second, what does it have to do with weight loss? Hello beauties, my name is Melinda Sohns and I am the owner of Turning Yourself Inside Out Coaching. I am passionate about permanent sustainable weight loss.

I built this business to share with you the methods I am using to release my own excess body weight. Permanent, sustainable and passionate are important to me.

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### **Permanent**

I have used several popular diet programs to lose 100+ lbs twice only to gain it all back (and then some).

### **Sustainable**

I am only willing to embrace habits, food plans, exercise plans, etc that I can sustain for the foreseeable future with no end point in mind.

### **Passionate**

I must be excited by the plan I choose to the point that I truly shift. The way I eat, move, and live becomes my new normal.

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It is impossible to hate yourself THIN. You only have to look at your own diet history to accept that as a universal truth. My invitation to you let go of any method that feels familiar. Your brain will tempt you over the weeks we spend together to just go back to restrictive dieting. Instead, I want to entice you to consider a completely different approach to closing the gap between your current weight and the natural weight your body is meant to sustain.

The GREAT news is your body is begging to let go of the weight. Your body is a mechanical neurological machine. Like any machine, it requires specialized maintenance in order to perform at optimum capacity. That's where self-kindness plays such a key role in weight loss.

You are already a kind person...to others. Kindness is a habit that you strengthen every time you practice it. A kind person is sympathetic toward others. Kindness lets you assume the most generous story about another person. Kindness encourages you to seek their best interest. A kind person will show up for others when it is inconvenient personally. Kindness is a character trait that is applauded by society and generally seen as proof that you are a “good” person.



Think about areas of your life where you are naturally kind - where it shows up automatically. Children, the elderly, animals. People you love. Your parents, your spouse, your children, grandchildren.

Why is it automatic in these cases? Your kindness is driven by the innocence of children, vulnerability of the elderly, and the unconditional love displayed by animals. Kindness to people you love is driven by connection, intimacy, self-respect and self esteem

That desire to be seen as a “good” person is a component in this dance you do with weight. That will be an ongoing theme throughout this entire program. Kindness in and of itself is useful. It is tied to other concepts such as grace and gratitude. But kindness also has a darker side.

Kindness can get us in trouble once expectations are attached. A side effect of being unwilling or unable to give to yourself is that you start over-giving to others. Your giving begins to have strings. You put expectations on the recipient, and they are not even aware. The most common expectation with this kind of kindness is to be loved more deeply.

For example, your spouse has an extremely busy schedule and you are uncomfortable asking for your needs to be met in the relationship. A healthy relationship has energy moving in both directions, you both give and receive. As an over giver, you set the relationship up as one-way giving. You never ask for anything - because he is already so busy - and you anticipate his every need before he ever speaks it.

Here is your unspoken expectation: “He will love me more because I “do” so much for him.”

Here is your reality: He pulls away from you. Instead of increasing the love he feels for you, he feels your expectation and starts to emotionally remove himself. He feels mothered rather than partnered.

I know this because I lived it for years. Most people would rather you ignored them than be kind and expect something in return. This behavior is usually just your way of being in the world. Somewhere along your history, you learned that this was the path to love.

This was one of the “storylines” (we will talk much more about that in Module 3) that put weight on my body. In response to the frustration I ate. It also manifest itself in passive aggressiveness, neediness and insecurity.

I call this victim/martyr syndrome. You are probably as offended by that label as I was the first time I heard it used in the same sentence as my name. But it was accurate.

Victim sounds like: “I do everything right and I still get screwed.”

Martyr sounds like: “I give to everyone else and no one gives to me.”

Sound familiar? I’m inviting you to just notice that about yourself, no judgment, no beating. Acknowledgement and acceptance of this automatic way of being in the world is your first step toward your body releasing all those extra pounds it does not need.



This is the first of many times during our journey together that I will remind you that the habits you currently have are not a life sentence. Awareness leads to – curiosity - leads to experimenting with other options - leads to real change - leads to weight loss.

So let's get curious. Why is it so hard to give to yourself? At the core, there is an inability to receive. You assign a higher value to giving than to receiving. Receiving is perceived as weakness. Think about the messages that have been socialized into you about people, especially women, who give to themselves? The three I hear most often are selfish, self-centered and high maintenance. Tons of judgment and character assassination implied but is it true?

Again having any of the three of those words associated with your name probably makes you want to eat. Starting to see a pattern? **NOT GIVING TO YOURSELF MAKES YOU EAT!**

Let's do a little digging. Most words in the English language have more than one meaning. Context matters. You can feel that we, both you and I, give these three words a negative meaning. Does that serve your bigger intention of closing the gap between what you weigh now and what you want to weigh?

What's the truth about selfish? The normal context is that you are stealing something away from someone else, hoarding it for yourself. The actual dictionary definition says lacking consideration for others. The result is, because you do not want to be selfish, the world gets to experience a stressed out, overtired, passively aggressive, checked out, run down version of you? Does that seem right? I invite you to consider that **NOT** taking care of yourself is selfish.

What's the truth about self-centered? The instant mental picture I get is of a woman preening in the mirror all day long. The actual dictionary definition here actually intrigues me. It means independent, self-sufficient. Consider how different your weight would be if your attention was centered on you. Would you feed yourself differently? Would you sleep more? This is a label I might willingly embrace. Lose weight by paying more positive attention to yourself instead of less. That's not something I was ever offered by the most popular diet programs.

What's the truth about high maintenance? This is the one that originally made me bristle the most? This is the girl that keeps you waiting two hours while she tries on outfit after outfit. This woman is a perfectionist, is usually very picky and requires others to satisfy her every whim. She's pretty sure she's better than you and has no regard for anyone else's time or resources. But what if high maintenance meant you had read the Owner's Manual for your body and knew exactly what it takes to keep **YOU** at the highest level of energy? What if you are a BMW and not a Hyundai? Maintenance, **HIGH** maintenance, would be appropriate.

This is your first foundational weight loss tool. Your **THOUGHTS**.

Why does your mind automatically assign a negative connotation to being called selfish, self-centered, or high maintenance? Because of the meaning you assign those words based on your personal history and societal rules. But, as we've discussed it is possible to view each of those words in a positive context. You might never be willing to call yourself selfish but if you learned the skill of receiving, your body would not need to get your attention with weight.

The reason this pre weight loss work is so exciting is it allows you to acquire and practice these foundational pieces so that you get a permanent sustainable result from your sincere efforts.



If both a positive and negative meaning are possible, why does your mind automatically choose the negative one? Notice, there is an implied invitation to judge yourself as deficient here. It's ok to simply say "No Thank You." There is actually a very loud voice that's been with you a long time that has you skewed more negative than positive. She's your inner mean girl and you probably met her somewhere around age 12.

What is the meanest thing you have ever said to yourself? That thing you've never told your best friend or your husband or your mother? Did you wince in emotional pain as the answer formed in your brain? That is the power of your inner mean girl.

Today, she has you on a short leash. She has talked crap to you for so long that just the sound of her voice reminds you, "You are not enough." Asks you, "Who do you think you are?" Tells you, "You are not worth the effort."

What messages does she send you about your weight? About your body? About the version you woke up in today? What if she is wrong? Even more intriguing, what if you could change the way she talks to you?

Remember, awareness leads to curiosity leads to experimenting with other options leads to real change leads to weight loss. If you have a mean girl, awareness has already been accomplished. Most of us have been trying to kill our mean girl for most of our adult lives but she is amazingly resilient. Like any bully, that mean girl really just craves your undivided attention.

Instead of trying to kill her, let's get curious. Why does she exist? Why is she allowed to say things to you that you would never say to another person? The simple answer is that she was born out of self-protection.

Do you remember the first time you heard her voice? She is the first person who whispered "You're fat." She's the one who shushed you when you started to offer an opinion reminding you to fit in. Don't rock the boat. Her overarching message: Never show anyone the REAL you. Nobody will like that girl.

As misguided and cruel as her attempts are, her truest goal is to protect you from pain by offering you the opportunity to pre-experience the pain. If you call yourself fat first, it will hurt less when someone else does. In the beginning, she seems to have an inner wisdom that you do not. She sets herself up as the authority. Society helps her along with air brushed magazine pictures of impossibly thin bodies. And by portraying soft spoken pliable women as somehow sexier than the ones of us that have actual opinions.

All of this is happening when your body is being flooded with adolescent hormones. Add in peer pressure and the labels our parents assign us and your inner mean girl has job security for life. Another place to focus, direct, point your curiosity. Were you the pretty girl or the smart girl? I don't know that I've met many women who thought they were both. Your mean girl used those labels to help you navigate how you "should" show up in the world. The real danger of her voice is that she talks so loudly and constantly that you cannot tune into the body intuition that came factory installed.

You might be wondering why you still believe her. After all, you're no longer a teenager. You are intelligent enough to call her bluff. The answer is practiced thought. Any thought practiced over



and over long enough becomes automated by your brain and accepted as truth. That's how brainwashing works. That's how propaganda works.

Anatomically, it's how you are hard wired. Your brain is more efficient than any computer you will ever own. Two design elements support practiced thought. First, your brain is built to identify patterns. Second, your brain is built to conserve energy. For cavemen and women, this was vital to survival. Today, not so much but it's how you are built. It came factory installed.

So your mean girl says "You're not good enough." a thousand times, the next time you don't get picked first for a team event, guess what thought appears? She says "Who do you think you are?" you shrink and swallow the shame she offers you. Practiced thought - moves at the speed of light and keeps you going in weight loss circles.

Practiced thought leads to practiced belief. However much weight you currently want to lose, remember when you only had 10 lbs to lose? Did you think you were fat? Probably so. How many times have you looked back at how thin you were and said "I'd love to have that body back." Why did you think you were fat then? Because she practiced telling you so and you gained practice believing she was right.

You've heard that idea of practiced belief before. Some teachers call it your internal thermostat or leveling or limiting beliefs. It is what you have been conditioned to think you deserve. It is a huge reason you have lost and gained the same 20 lbs over and over.

It is the core cause of self-sabotage. Lose 5 lbs, reward yourself with pizza. Gain 5 lbs, console yourself with pizza. You don't believe it can be any different. You have proof from previous dieting attempts that no matter how hard you work, no matter how long you stay focused, no matter how much you lose, you are always going to gain it back.

By the end of our Six weeks together, I want to offer you some new thoughts to consider (that) might be true. I want to be clear that I am not talking about simple thought switching or mantras or affirmations. Those tools can be useful, but I am inviting you to embrace the truth that you are, and have always been, in control of what you believe to be true.

You have a conscious choice. Real weight loss happens when your mind truly shifts one small step at a time until what you automatically believe, your new practiced thought, looks something more like this:

**You are **not** crazy, lazy or weak.**

**You are **not** a failure.**

**Your previous weight loss and regain do **not** predict your future.**

**You are NOT your weight.**

**You have NOT waited too long.**



## **Your body is NOT broken.**

This is a level of maturity that most women will never even know is possible. You are learning the skill of proactively choosing your thoughts instead of constantly reacting to what shows up.

The more skilled you get, the less work there is for your mean girl to do. You already know that killing her is not possible so what do you do with her. Coming full circle, she is your practice dummy for self-kindness.

### **Self-kindness has two stages.**

**Stage One: acknowledgment of service.** That mean girl appeared as a protection mechanism. She was not the right employee for the job but she is the one who kept showing up every day.

Shift your attention to see things from her point of view. She was never really equipped to protect you. Have you ever had a job that was way over your head? How did it feel to show up every day waiting to be discovered as a fraud? Well, for her, the only feelings she knew how to pass on to you were the ones she was feeling herself.

Wonder where your insecurity, perfectionism, approval seeking, and people pleasing started? Probably being the wrong employee for the job doing the best she knew how to do. On the other hand, she never stopped showing up. There is something to be said for that kind of loyalty.

### **You and she have been intertwined.**

She squelched your voice to keep you safe. You ate because you had no voice. She told you that you had no self-control. You went out of your way to control everything. She screamed in terror when you displayed passion. You played small to quiet her.

You gathered your courage and lost weight. She felt threatened and begged you to stop. You questioned her authority. She told you all the old stories that proved she was right. You dreamed big. She reminded you the world is an unsafe place.

Together you are a textbook example of co-dependence. The result is excess weight on your body. Your body has its own wisdom. It's voice is not loud and demanding like your mean girls'. It is subtle and soft spoken. Maybe you've never even heard it. I've had clients tell me that they don't think they have an internal guidance system. Just because you can't hear it YET, does not mean it hasn't been trying to reach you all along. If you are human and alive that voice has all your answers about how to let go of your extra weight.

In order to begin hearing that true voice, you first must provide your mean girl an acceptable exit plan. That begins with gratitude for her years of service. Gratitude for having your

back. Gratitude for being willing to let you grow and move on. Gratitude for shaping your life. Gratitude is an important part of ensuring she accepts the second stage of self-kindness.



**Stage Two: invitation to retire.** Every time she appears, you will learn the skill of inviting her to retire. “I love you for showing up to protect me but I am not fragile anymore. It is okay for you to stand down.”

You should prepare for some resistance. Suggesting retirement is going to catch her off guard. She will try to elongate her departure needing to tie up loose ends. She will want to make you list of all the things she doesn't want you to forget. She will assume she will need to train her replacement. You will be tempted to forget all about kindness. Scream at her. Abandon her. Poison her. Lock her in a soundproof room. General nastiness.

This was my experience. I sent her on her merry way. I was practicing all the tools I am offering you in this class. But I kept getting a glimpse of my mean girl in my peripheral vision. She was no longer getting a “paycheck” but she kind of shadow stalked me just in case I changed my mind and needed her. As if to say “I'm right here if you need me.”

To be honest, kindness was the only thing I hadn't tried. I didn't need her anymore. I absolutely would not rehire her but what else did she know how to do. She's worked for me all these years. Then I remembered, she lives in my brain. My brain loves patterns. My brain loves to conserve energy. She's the one who taught me practiced thought. Bingo!

I got excited about self-kindness. Like a three year old asking the same question over and over, I practiced giving the same answer every time I was aware she was present. “Honey, remember you're retired. You never have to work again. Go relax.” I haven't seen her in months. Every once in a while, she sticks her head in to check on me but as soon as we make eye contact, she heads back to her deck chair.

There is an assimilation period similar to moving out of your parents' house. Remember the first six months you lived on your own. No one to boss you around anymore. No one to set the rules. No one to raise an eyebrow and question your judgment. Separation anxiety is a normal response. It will pass and with practice you will stop listening for her opinion to override yours.

The biggest change you will notice is the absence of noise. Initially, this may cause you to overeat more. Don't panic. There is a grief component here. Even though the relationship was toxic, it was familiar and comfortable. There is no shortcut thru feelings. Here is your next opportunity to show kindness to yourself as you learn how to allow awkwardness.

Allowing awkwardness is a learned skill. You have been conditioned to either distract yourself with food, Netflix, alcohol, sex, sleep, drugs, shopping, etc to make it go away. I have a whole module on how to feel feelings so I'll leave some of that for later. In that awkwardness is where you will begin to hear your body whispering to you. Its voice can finally be heard in this new normal.

I have fallen in love with my body whispers. Some people call this a sixth sense. Some call it your conscience. Learning to trust that voice is another foundational skill that supports weight loss. Here's the thing about your mind. It lies. It bargains. It loses focus. It recognizes patterns

and repeats them whether they serve your goals or not. Your body on the other hand, always, always, always acts in your best interest.



Babies are living proof. They are completely in tune with their body. Their minds have yet to gather enough information to be useful. It is virtually impossible to ignore a baby when they are hungry. You will stop whatever you are doing and feed them. Conversely, it is virtually impossible to feed a baby who is no longer hungry. No matter how many times you offer them a bottle, they continue to reject it. Same story for sleep. A sleepy baby will fall out wherever you are often in the most uncomfortable position. A non-sleepy baby will thwart your best laid plans to lull them into dreamland.

Your body has all the information you need to reach your natural weight AND live there effortlessly. Your body has the answers to what foods to eat to lose weight, how much and what kind of exercise you need to lose weight, etc. A major advantage of assigning your body as the “last word” authority is that you can let go of old dieting habits like calorie counting, weighing and measuring your food, etc. Once you learn to interpret the information your body provides, you will recognize what hungry feels like, what full feels like, what foods your body uses for fuel and how much sleep leaves you feeling most energized.

Don't worry if this sounds like a pipe dream. If it is counter to everything you have ever been taught about losing weight. One habit at a time, you will get there and weight loss will be off your to do list forever.

As you begin to embrace self-kindness, there are six distinct habits I want to encourage you to try and hear that is the wisdom your body is offering. To clarify, your body has always been sending you this information. This is not something new. You have now just reduced all the other noise that was masking it.

Here is where you begin the habits that will lead to weight loss. These are life skills that you will practice over and over until they are the equivalent of brushing your teeth. There is no debate, you just do it. It's the maintenance required for your magnificent body to work at maximum optimal capacity.

1. Fuel Food - learn how to create a customized food plan for YOUR unique body
2. Water - how much water is enough?
3. Sleep - how many hours do I need?
4. Movement - how much and how vigorously do I need to exercise?
5. Mind management - knowing what you think and why
6. Joy - the secret sauce that is better than any food you ever overate

Get still and listen for that body whisper. Which areas does your intuition say need the most attention? Which areas do you think you have already mastered?

Now pay attention to your automatic thoughts. Are they saying “This won't work either?” “I can never make all those things happen simultaneously.” “Change is scary, I'll just do what I've always done.” The way you think, your automatic thoughts, are what you believe to be true and are the criteria you use to make decisions about everything from what to eat to where to work. What we need to do is change those automatic thoughts. If that mean girl is lurking in your peripheral vision, invite her to go back into retirement. You've got this. Let's start making a list of all the good things about you.