

# Trauma & Weight Gain & How They're Connected

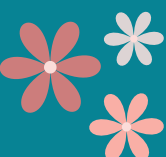
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*Andra*  
BAKER



Hello, hello, hello. How's everybody doing today? Happy Tuesday!

Today is the day that I teach a bunch of yoga, first thing in the morning, and it is also the day we go live and we do a free training here inside of our Hello Body Freedom Facebook group every single Tuesday at 4 pm. And, these are all connected to the Path to Freedom Challenge, the five day Path to Food and Body Freedom Challenge.

So, if you are in here and you are still going through the challenge or you want to go through the challenge and you haven't been through it, can you, like, raise your hand and leave a comment and go like, let me know "I need to go through that five day challenge". Say like, like "I need to go through this, like help me with the challenge." Maybe that's what you say, "help me with the challenge."

Let's do this. All right.

So, if you are new in here, my name is Audra. I help women heal the deeper reasons why they struggle with their body and struggle with food and struggle with health and weight. And, I used to own a fitness and nutrition company. I have a background in exercise physiology, kinesiology, and semantics. I'm a 500 hour train yoga teacher.

And understanding that so many of us go to personal trainers, nutritionists, because we think we're overweight or we think we need to lose weight or we think that we can't figure out this whole food thing. And, we end up in situations with well meaning people who are like, well, let me show you, if you exercise this way, you'll burn this many calories, you'll expend this many calories.

If I can get you to decrease how much you're eating, eat more fruits and vegetables, don't eat so much white food and things like that. And all of that's wonderful. And it works for some people, for a while at least. But, for most of the people who went up in my world, myself included, it didn't work.

What happened is my clients or myself would lose weight or we'd buckle down and we'd white knuckle our way through it. And we'd try to willpower and mindset our way through this stuff. And something would always trigger something in the body, something in the emotions.

And if we've learned how, if we have learned that food is the thing that we reach to, to fix how we feel, right? Food is the thing that I reach to, to cope with whatever is going on. And in those moments, just to be really clear, we're not, I'm not making those moments wrong by the way, just so we're really clear. We're not making them wrong.

But, if we have that habit, right? Most of us have learned that habit as a kid. We learned a kind of a relationship with food. Like if we were sad, maybe somebody would bake us cookies. Or, if something was going on in the house that didn't feel safe in our little small child bodies that didn't, you know, like our parents screaming or something, that didn't feel right.

Food maybe became the solace, right? Food was the thing that made us feel better. And, I know then we get into habits of sneaking food. And then, if you were raised in a house where your parents put you on like weight watchers when you were young or you started dieting when you were in junior high and oh, it's just like a cluster fuck y'all.

It's just such a hot mess because, like, going on a diet isn't the answer. What we need to do is learn how to heal the reasons why we're eating in the first place, right? And so, we learned that food fixes things. And I want to be really clear, in the moment that you're stressed or lonely or anxious or bored or whatever the thing is, right? You're generally not going for like a head of broccoli.

Not really like that kale salad is probably not going to hit the spot, right? In these moments, it is usually like high sugar, white flour, calorically dense, high fat, high salt, nutritionally void, but calorically dense types of foods, which creates this whole like metabolic thing going on in the body, which I don't mean like positive metabolic thing.

It's like a dysregulated, like, insulin going up and down, blood sugar going up and down. And quite frankly, dopamine hits all over the place that make us want more. I mean, people like, give, they give themselves a hard time and they, they, you know, get frustrated with themselves and shame themselves that they ate like three sleeves of an Oreos.

And I'm like, if you put a box of Oreos in front of me today, if after all the healing I've had, and I'm like, that sounds good, like to have one, like those things, they're chemically designed to hit dopamine. I mean, sugar in a lot of studies has been shown to be stronger and more intense in terms of the dopamine hit than I think cocaine or something.

Like it's, it's, of course, I'm going to keep eating the Oreos. It's like, like they've been made that way, right? Some food engineer engineered them to taste that way. So, that way I keep eating them. Why? Because if I keep eating them, then I will buy more of their product. They don't care about your health. They care about, whatever, it doesn't matter. It does matter. It's a total disaster.

But the point that I'm making is like, stop making yourself wrong for this, for this process, right? And, this kind of brings us into the conversation that we're having today, which is what I'm trying to do is kind of give you an example of how trauma and weight are connected, right?

So trauma is an overwhelming experience in the body, right? And, it's usually because of an outside scenario, right? COVID happened outside of our control, scary, overwhelmed. Who here remembers how scared you were in March of 2020? Or maybe, it was even February of 2020, we started hearing about this, right?

That's a big overwhelm of the nervous system, right? If your parents are screaming in the house, or you had some issues when you were a kid, that's an overwhelm of the nervous system. When I say overwhelm of the nervous system, it is a flood of emotions and feelings that are scary and intense and a lot. It's just a lot.

And so, here we are living with all of this intensity in the body, emotions that we are learning. We've learned from culture. We've learned from society. We've learned from our parents that suck it up, buttercup, it's not okay to feel these feelings, right? And we didn't really get any good coping strategies for handling the overwhelm in the body, right?

Or, like a real true trauma of PTSD going to war, boundary violation, psychological boundary violation, emotional boundary violation, physical boundary violation, right? That creates this intensity in the body. Just to really understand that intensity in the body, it is the wisdom of the body.

It's the body's emotional compass going like, oh, fight, flight, fight, flight, let's see if we can get out of here, let's see if we can get out of here. But, when the intensity gets so much, it's the fight, then the flight, and then the freeze, right? And so the words, once we get into freeze mode, whenever it's this absolute overwhelm of the nervous system, it's not, well, I can fight, I can get out of this. Watch me figure out how to get out of this. It's, I can't.

And so, the wisdom of the body separates the mind from the body, right? And separates the body from the mind so that way, it keeps the body safe from feeling and the mind safe from remembering, yeah? And it creates this dissociative quality in the body, right? And that is how trauma works. I mean, that is the actual trauma body at play.

And, it is the wisdom of the body, because its job is to keep you safe and alive, you know? And, the hard part here is that if we don't process this trauma, if we don't process the experience in our body and generally having a practitioner walk you through it, working with a therapist, working with a trauma-informed therapist, working with somebody who's somatically trained body-based to kind of walk you through because what ends up happening is you will, you know, you're going to feel some feels here, right?

But, over the course of a lifetime, if we've learned that when we feel anything big that we reach for food is the fix, right? And again, we're not reaching for kale salad or a big old head of broccoli, right? Then that can equal really struggling with our size, struggling with feeling good in our body.

And then, chronically over and over again reaching for a diet plan to fix it, reaching for the fitness plan to fix it, but really it's just, it's not the fix, right? This is a deeper nervous system healing that is needed and waiting to happen and needing to happen, for sure. So I'm going to go ahead and put this ticker right here.

So, if any of this sounds familiar to anybody, this is one of the aspects of what we do. It's definitely what makes us different than any other, you know, program I've seen out there, is we work with really working with feeling our feelings, learning what does it mean to get emotionally unconstipated, right? And, here's the funny, funny is not the right word.

Here's the thing about like trauma, unprocessed trauma, whatever you want to call it. It's that yes, there's this thing that happened in the past that was overwhelming for the nervous system. And if we don't process it, but what you need to understand is, it's not so much about the story, right? It's not that we have to go relive the past, you know, you don't have to go sit in therapy sessions and talk about trauma.

That's, so many like, high level trauma licensed therapists will flat out tell you. Just talking about experiences, bad experiences just re traumatizes you, it's not helpful, right? But, what happens is we don't ever have to go back there.

But, that's because it still lives in the body, it lives in the tissues of the body. Whatever that experience is shows up today when you wake up on the wrong side of the bed and you just are just really short fuse, if you will.

It shows up today when your kids get a little rowdy and rambunctious and then it triggers you inside of your body and you just like, you know, tell them to shut up and be quiet, right? It happens when you have a bad day at work and your boss said something to you and it felt really intense in the body. And then, you just now, here you are, you're living it out again.

And, what are you living out? Right? The actual thing that's happening is a lot of emotion and a lot of sensation in the body that we never learned how to process, we never learned how to like untangle that. But what we did learn is that food will fix it. If I will eat this food, it's going to make me feel better, right? And, so much of this is so unconscious. It is so below consciousness.

And, even if the hard part is even if you are conscious about it, that's when you're like, "well now I'm just self-sabotaging. I can see what I do and I, here I am just doing it. Now I'm self-sabotaging. There's something wrong with me." No, there's something wrong with you.

We just have a strong neuronal loop of feeling intensity, not knowing what to do with it and then using food as the fix, right? And, I want to be really clear. This is how, like, trauma and weight are connected, right? So, going on a food plan, hiring that nutritious, eating clean, whatever that next thing is you're going to try, you know, hitting the gym. "Oh, it's got to be my hormones."

Really? Or could it be because your hormones are making you feel more. And, all of these feelings are going on and you don't know what to do with them. So, of course you've learned on an entire lifetime that food fixes it. Oh, but I'm just going to go, take \$800 a month of supplements, and that's going to fix me. Is it? I don't know about that.

So, that is the connection between trauma and weight. And, the way out, should be the question at hand. And, I want to be really clear. This is also a hard talk to have because very often we'll have people come in and they'll go, "well, I don't really have any trauma." Like, "I know what trauma is. I didn't go to war. This thing didn't happen to me." Like, I have a friend.

And then, what we do is we like literally, we completely shut ourselves down from what every human experiences, which is an overwhelmed nervous system at multiple points in your life, right? At multiple points, probably a whole lot in childhood.

And, the reason why so much of it happens in childhood is because we don't have a lot of resiliency, right? So, the nervous system is set up that when the stress response happens, right? It's the fight and the flight experience of the autonomic nervous system. And, that assumes that you can fight and punch and get away, or run as fast as you can, right? But, kids don't have a lot of resiliency.

So, if you put an adult in like a cold, dark room, adult is going to be like, what? And, they're going to go feel all around. They're going to scream. They're going to kick on something. They're going to pull their iPhone out and look, you know, turn the flashlight on. What the hell is going on? They're going to try to make a call, see if they can, you know what I mean?

But, when you would let, you know, it's same example, you put like a little kid in a cold, dark room, they're just going to go, you know, it's just the resiliency isn't there, which makes the overwhelm of the nervous system so much easier, right?

And, because we live in a culture and a planet and a world and a society where we don't like, like emotional EQ, emotional intelligence, like really learning like how to feel and process what we're feeling and feel what we're feeling, the sense of emotional intelligence. It's just not so high.

We just weren't taught and our parents weren't taught and their parents weren't taught, right? Which is very like survival mechanism, like suck it up, buttercup. We got to get shit done. Let's go, no time for emotions. But, actually as humans, you can't not have emotions as a human.

Like, this is part of the human experience. It's a huge part of the human experience, right? And so, a lot of us just get really emotionally constipated. And then, we get in these situations where we wake up on the wrong side of the bed or we, you know, and then, the next thing we know, we're just lost in it on a random Tuesday.

And then, our boss says something or the coworker next to us says something. And, the next thing we know, it's happy hour, face down, and a play to nachos and a pine and a margaritas party people. Why, why is this, why didn't this work for me? Right? So, the work is to, there's, for sure, it's body based.

But, I want to be really clear, if we could just like pull out... Now you understand how it's connected, which is great. Your next very logical thing should be like, well, what do I do to, like, pull this apart? How do I work on this?

The very first piece I want to talk about is working with your thoughts. So, even though trauma lives in the body and it's body based and we have to get you going here, the very first thing we want to untangle is the way that we're talking to ourselves. What we're making things mean. And so, this is very like mindset 101.

When it comes to your behaviors and your relationship with your behaviors and your relationship with food and your relationship with your body, ultimately, we just got to be nicer to ourselves. Like, we're just like, give you that hands down.

Step one, catch yourself when you're being like shitty to yourself and like, tell yourself, like, "I wouldn't say this to like my worst enemy. Why am I saying this to myself? Would I, would I say these words to my daughter or my son? Would I say these words to my pet?" You know, and it's like, come on now. So, that's a great way to start to untangle this kind of negative self talk. It's a very important first part I would say.

The second part is a social aspect. So, getting yourself into communities of like minded people where you feel safe, like a safe community of how do I heal this and how do I work through this, right? Can I like someplace where you have a safe space to like feel your feelings, right?

So, this could be, I know in Hello Body Freedom in our clients, we have a client Facebook group, we have an entire coaching team. So, it's not just community of the people who are around me, because they might not understand what's going on. But, how do I get myself in terms of healing, having that level of holding of other humans around.

So, trauma, you know, 99 times out of 10, it's a boundary violation, right? It is a thing that somebody else did that created a trauma. You like a parent, you know, like, like, you were neglected, you didn't get the love you need, you didn't get the support you need, you didn't, somebody like literally violated your boundaries. Like it is in that it's it that's where the boundary violation and the trauma happens.

And, it's inside of safe container and safe relationships that major repair can happen. So that's the other piece of that. And then finally, and obviously, with what we do in Hello Body Freedom, it is working with the body.



So, what trauma research has shown us over and over and over again, is that talking about it, just spinning stories of the thing that went wrong, or how, you know, this thing that happened back then is just re-traumatizing is so not helpful.

But, when we can access the body, and work with the body so that we learn how to notice when we're feeling anxious, and have skill sets around feeling our feelings, and being able to gauge, like, the inner experience.

So, now, one it's about not dissociating, but it's about being safe enough to recognize what is happening at the body level, and then give ourselves what we need in that moment, based on that information.

And, that is where we start to trust ourselves more. This is where we start to build agency. You know, it's not just like, oh, well, I'm going to go for a walk, or I'm going to go dance, or I'm going to go shake, or I'm going to go do breath work I mean, all like, yes, yes, yes, yes.

But, true embodiment is, it's this inner attunement, moment by moment, of what do I need in this moment, right? And, you know, does it make sense that like right now, I'm feeling so anxious, right? And, so what we do is like, we feel this anxiety, but we make it wrong. It's like, "oh, what's wrong with me?" Like, we're just returning ourselves, like the anxiety is the problem.

But, actually, our body is legitimately feeling anxious for probably a good reason, right? And, it's probably something outside of you, that's creating the anxiety, right? And, so instead of like, like, like, putting the, you know, like, oh, it makes sense that my body would feel this way because of this outside thing, what we do is we go, what's wrong with you body, figure it out, why are you anxious, like stop it.

And, then we shove it, you know, we shove anxiety in a closet. And, then we pretend like it doesn't exist. But, that's just not how it works, my friends. So, working with the body at a body level to untangle all of this. And, those are the three ways that we do that. And, if that sounds like something that you want to do right now, we, we hello, [bodyfreedom.com/chatwithAudra](https://bodyfreedom.com/chatwithAudra).

And, we can get on the phone and we can talk about this and how it's connected to your, your health goals, your wellness goals, feeling good in your body. And, that's what I do for a living. So, and I love it. I'd love to help you with that. Reach out, [hellobodyfreedom.com/chatwithAudra](https://hellobodyfreedom.com/chatwithAudra).

And, I will see you. Also, if you have any questions, drop them in the DM. I can't wait to hear what's going on there. And, I will see you next week. Same time, same place. Thank you guys so much for coming in and have a beautiful day. And, if this is, remember, if you want to continue the conversation, you go to [hellobodyfreedom.com/chatwithAudra](https://hellobodyfreedom.com/chatwithAudra)

We can start a conversation. You also can drop me a DM if you want to drop me a DM. And let me know you, you are, have some questions or want to know a little bit more about this. And, we can definitely dive in.

All right. Have a beautiful rest of your day.

Talk next time.

Bye, everybody.