

*A Real-life Guide to Weight loss that Works with Your
Brain, not Against it*

THE
PSYCHOLOGY
Of
WEIGHT LOSS

It's Not Just a Question Of What You Eat
and Drink – But WHY

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How to Read This Book


This book isn't designed to be rushed, perfected, or followed rigidly.

You don't need to implement everything at once. Instead, read with curiosity, not judgement.

Notice which chapters feel personal. Use the tools imperfectly. And revisit sections when life gets stressful.

This is not about fixing yourself.

It's about understanding **how your brain works - especially under pressure**, and responding with better strategies.

 Progress will come from awareness first - action second.

Common Myths That Keep People Stuck

Before we go any further, it's important to clear up a few beliefs that quietly sabotage progress.

MYTH 1: "I JUST NEED MORE WILLPOWER."

If willpower were the solution, it would have worked by now. The problem is willpower is fragile under stress, fatigue, and emotional load. Which is why it lets you down when you most need it.

As you will come to understand, willpower is a tool of the Human or rational mind and something we can harness but not rely on.

MYTH 2: "I'M JUST NOT CONSISTENT."

It's not that you lack the ability to be more consistent – you're simply responding to a life that

can get messy. When you're tired, stressed, emotionally overloaded, or under pressure - your nervous system shifts into protection mode. The emotional brain becomes louder – and old patterns kick in. That's why planning feels harder. Habits feel inaccessible. Consistency feels impossible.

Inside this book, I'll show you how the brain works so that you stop fighting yourself and ease into being more consistent over a year not just 6 weeks.

MYTH 3: “I SELF-SABOTAGE ALL THE TIME.”

What looks like sabotage is often self-protection. The emotional brain seeks comfort when resources are low. When you realise it's not YOU that sabotages yourself but a more primitive part of your brain just doing its job – you'll learn to better control and sometimes just accept this rather than letting it run into next week 😊

MYTH 4: “I KNOW WHAT TO DO, SO I SHOULD BE ABLE TO JUST DO IT.”

Knowing and doing are governed by different parts of the brain. This book bridges that gap. Letting go of these myths creates space for real change. I hope you're ready – let's crack on.

Note to the Reader

If any of the following ring true for you:

“I know what to do... I just don’t do it consistently.”

“I always undo my progress when life gets stressful”

“I just don’t understand why this feels so much harder than it should”

Then this book is for you. Nothing is wrong with you. You don’t lack discipline. You’re not broken. And you’re not failing at weight loss because you don’t care enough.

You’re struggling because weight loss is not just an **exercise** and **nutrition** problem.

It’s a **psychological** one.

INTRODUCTION

Why Weight Loss Feels Harder Than It Should

If weight loss were simply about knowing what to eat and how to move, most people wouldn't still be struggling.

Information is not in short supply. Diets are everywhere. Exercise advice is endless. And yet, progress so often collapses under stress, tiredness, social events, or emotional overload.

This is where most people turn the frustration inward. They assume they must be lazy. Undisciplined. Broken in some way.

They're wrong.

This book is inspired by well-established psychological models of how the brain works - particularly the idea that we all have an emotional brain that reacts quickly and powerfully, and a rational brain that arrives later, trying to restore order.

Once you understand this dynamic, weight loss stops feeling personal.

And starts feeling manageable.

PART 1: HOW YOUR BRAIN REALLY WORKS

Chapter 1: The Human, The Chimp, And The Computer

To understand why weight loss feels so difficult, you need to understand how the brain actually works under pressure.

This model describes three interacting systems in the brain:

- **The Human** – your rational, thinking brain. Neurologically, this aligns closely with the *prefrontal cortex*. It handles logic, planning, long-term thinking, self-control, and decision-making.
- **The Chimp** – your emotional brain. This maps to the *limbic system*, including structures such as the amygdala. Its job is survival. It reacts quickly, emotionally,

and instinctively, prioritising comfort and safety over long-term goals.

- **The Computer** – your automatic brain. This reflects stored patterns across areas such as the *parietal lobes* and wider neural networks responsible for habits, beliefs, and learned behaviours.

A helpful way to picture this is like driving a car

The **Human** is the navigator in the passenger seat, calmly reading the map and planning the route.

The **Chimp** is the driver at the wheel – reacting to the road conditions, other drivers and situations that suddenly arise.

The **Computer** is the cruise control, running patterns automatically once they're set.

REACTING TO SITUATIONS

When the driver is suddenly cut up on the motorway, she reacts. The navigator doesn't get to debate it first.

Under stress, the emotional brain (your Chimp) is: -

Around **5 times faster**, and up to **5 times more powerful** than your Human brain.

By the time the passenger gets to comment, emotion has often already acted.

The game is NOT to wrestle with your Chimp. It isn't to fight with it or wish it harm. Your Chimp is just another part of you – you **MUST** learn to manage.

When you learn to better manage your Chimp, you'll prevent it hijacking your good intentions putting your Human back at the wheel.

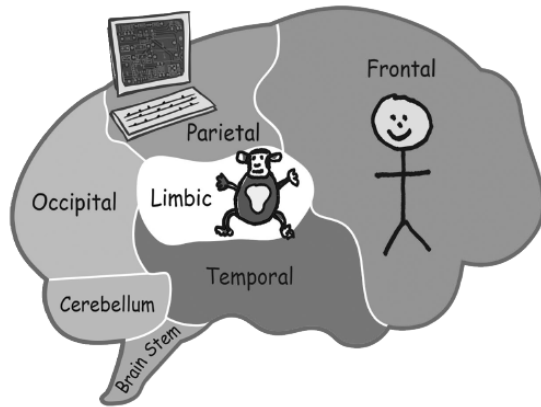
The Chimp Paradox

Professor Steve Peters, shared 'The CHIMP model' in his book, 'The Chimp Paradox'. This has become a well known and respected model to help people understand both themselves and others, and the obstacles that people face when making changes.

The **paradox** is that when you learn to better manage your Chimp, she can become your best friend helping you not just stop her self-

sabotaging nature but champion your new goals and ideals for your life.

When you take the time (and likely get the help) to also reprogram your autopilots aka your habits (computer) – losing weight and keeping it off becomes **easy and effortless**.



Source: <http://chimpmanagement.com>

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You arrive home exhausted. Before you consciously decide anything, you're already reaching for food or drink.

Chapter Tool: Brain Awareness Check-In

Instead of asking, "Why did I do that?", ask: -
What state was my emotional brain in?

Was I tired, stressed, lonely, or
overwhelmed?

Write: > "Right now, my Chimp is reacting to
_____."

Coach's Note from Darren Once people understand the power and speed difference between emotion and logic, the shame

disappears. The work becomes management, not self-criticism.

Chapter 2: Why Willpower Always Loses

Willpower is a function of the rational brain (Human). It relies heavily on the prefrontal cortex.

The problem is that this part of the brain **fatigues** quickly - especially under stress, lack of sleep, emotional load, or decision overload.

Meanwhile, the emotional brain (Chimp) doesn't tire in the same way. This creates a built-in imbalance.

When you're calm, rested, and resourced, **WILLPOWER** *appears* to work.

When life becomes demanding, the emotional brain steps in to conserve energy and seek comfort.

This is why: - Diets collapse during busy weeks. Evenings feel harder than mornings. Motivation disappears when you need it most!

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You start the day with good intentions. By evening, your mental energy is gone and poor choices feel automatic and out of control.

Chapter Tool: Willpower Reframe Script

Repeat: > “This isn’t about discipline. My brain is tired, and it’s asking for relief.”

Action: > Choose something relaxing to do, enjoy a hot drink or take a 10 minute walk. More on how to reprogram your Computer inside my Break-Through Month & Accountability Club www.dt.coach

Coach’s Note from Darren If willpower were the answer, it would have worked by now. Sustainable change comes from smarter systems, not more effort.

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING YOUR WEIGHT-LOSS CHIMP

Chapter 3: Emotional Eating

Food is one of the fastest ways to change how you feel. It works quickly, reliably, and is certainly socially acceptable.

From a brain perspective, that makes food (and drink) a powerful emotional regulator.

Your Chimp doesn't eat for calories or macros. It eats to:

Reduce stress | Create comfort | Avoid discomfort & Reward effort

👉 When life feels overwhelming, **food becomes a tool - not a weakness or character flaw.**

This is your Chimp, not you. You are responsible for your Chimp but recognise your Chimp operates differently. The trick is to manage your Chimp. Start with removing temptation from the environment. Create alternate rewards, and BIG them up. Talk to your Chimp (in your head) but don't rely on willpower.

Real-Life Chimp Moment

It's the end of the day. You finally sit down. The quiet feels loud. Snacking fills the space and softens the edge of the day.

Chapter Tool: Emotional Eating Decoder

Before eating, pause and ask: - Am I physically hungry, emotionally uncomfortable, or mentally exhausted?

What emotion is present right now?

Journal: > “If food wasn’t the answer in this moment, what might be?”

You don’t have to act on the answer - just notice it.

Coach’s Note from Darren Emotional eating isn’t something to eliminate. It’s something to understand. Once you do, it loses much of its power.

Chapter 4: The All-or-Nothing Trap

The Chimp thinks in extremes. There is very little middle ground.

This creates a dangerous pattern: -

One single off-plan choice becomes a failure. Failure triggers guilt. And guilt fuels more eating.

And Monday becomes yet another restart point.

The damage is rarely nutritional.

It's **psychological**.

The all-or-nothing trap is one of the most common and most damaging patterns in weight loss.

The emotional brain doesn't do nuance particularly well. It prefers certainty and clarity.

Things are either *good or bad, on track or off track, working or ruined*. That's why one small deviation can trigger a disproportionate response.

A missed workout becomes:

“I've lost all momentum.”

A social meal becomes:

“I've blown it.”

And once the day is labelled a failure, the Chimp takes full control.

The important thing to understand is this: **the damage rarely comes from the choice itself.**

👉 It comes from :-

<< the meaning you attach to it. >>

The Chimp is highly sensitive to emotional threat – and inherently negative. She is this way not to stop you losing weight but with the intent of keeping you safe. It's a survival mechanism to see “change” as threat.

When it senses disappointment, shame, or self-criticism, it reacts defensively.

Defence, in this context, often looks like:

- > Eating more for comfort
- > Giving up for the day or weekend
- > Delaying re-engagement until Monday

This isn't self-sabotage.

It's emotional self-preservation.

👉 From the brain's perspective, once you feel like you've failed, continuing to try feels risky. Pulling away feels safer.

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You enjoy a social meal. On the drive home, the inner dialogue turns harsh. By the next day, motivation has evaporated.

Chapter Tool: All-or-Nothing Interruption

Use this script: > “One choice does not define today. I can reset with **the very next decision.**”

Follow it with one grounding action: -

- > Drink water,
- > Eat a protein-based meal
- > Go for a short walk.

Coach's Note from Darren Progress isn't lost in the slip. It's lost in the **story** you tell yourself afterwards.

PART 3: MANAGING THE CHIMP

Chapter 5: You Can't Reason with a Chimp

One of the most common mistakes people make when trying to change their behaviour is attempting to *argue* with their emotional urges.

When a craving appears, the rational brain steps in with logic:

“I shouldn’t eat this.”

“This won’t help.”

“What’s wrong with me.”

But cravings, emotional eating, and impulsive decisions don’t come from the rational brain. They come from the emotional brain.

And the emotional brain doesn't respond to logic in the moment.

The Chimp's job is not to help you make good long-term decisions. Its job is to keep you safe and happy *right now*.

That means:

- > Reducing discomfort
- > Seeking relief
- > Avoiding emotional pain
- > Conserving energy

When you're tired, stressed, lonely, overwhelmed, or emotionally drained, **the Chimp takes over**.

At a physiological level, this is driven by stress hormones.

When stress is high, hormones such as **cortisol** increase. Cortisol's role is to

mobilise energy and help you cope with perceived threat.

One of the fastest ways the brain knows how to do that is through food - especially food that's high in sugar or that's been conditioned previously.

At the same time, activity in the **prefrontal cortex** (the thinking, planning part of the brain) is reduced.

So you end up with:

- > A louder emotional brain
- > A quieter rational brain
- > A stronger drive for immediate relief

Trying to reason with the Chimp at that point is like trying to negotiate with a smoke alarm.

 It's already gone off.

The more you argue internally, the louder the urge often becomes. This is partly because suppression increases physiological tension.

When you tell yourself “*I must not eat this*”, the brain interprets that as conflict. That conflict increases arousal in the nervous system, which can actually intensify the urge you're trying to avoid.

- > Suppression creates tension
- > Tension increases emotional urgency
- > Urgency drives behaviour

This is not a lack of self-control.

It's a predictable nervous system response under stress.

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You tell yourself you won't drink tonight. As the evening goes on, the desire gets stronger.

You notice yourself thinking about it more and more, not less.

The resistance creates focus. The focus creates tension. And the tension makes the urge feel increasingly urgent - until it feels impossible to ignore.

Chapter Tool: Chimp Management Statement

Instead of arguing with the urge, acknowledge it calmly. Use this internal script:

“I understand why you want this. You’re trying to protect me.”

This may feel counterintuitive at first.

But acknowledgement has a powerful physiological effect: **it reduces threat.**

When the emotional brain (your Chimp) feels seen rather than challenged, nervous system arousal begins to settle.

Cortisol levels start to drop. The rational brain has a chance to come back online.

This does **not** mean you automatically give in. It means you stop escalating the situation internally.

Once acknowledged, redirect gently toward a **neutral comfort option**, such as:

- > A hot drink
- > A shower or bath
- > A short walk
- > An early night
- > Changing environments

The goal is not deprivation.
The goal is *de-escalation*.

Coach's Note from Darren

Urges aren't a sign you're failing. They're a sign your nervous system is under load.

When you respond with calm understanding rather than force, you reduce the urge at its source - and better choices have room to emerge.

Chapter 6: The Pause

The pause is one of the most powerful - and most underestimated tools in behaviour change.

Between an urge and an action, there is a small window of time.

If you act immediately, behaviour is automatic. If you create a pause, choice becomes possible.

Most people don't fail because they make bad decisions. They struggle because decisions are being made **before they realise they're making them.**

Urges are not constant.

They rise, peak, and fall - much like a wave. From a physiological perspective, urges are driven by short-lived spikes in brain chemistry, particularly **dopamine**, which is involved in motivation and anticipation.

Dopamine doesn't mean pleasure.

It means *wanting*.

And wanting is uncomfortable. When dopamine rises, the body feels restless, agitated, and pulled toward action.

The brain predicts relief on the other side of the behaviour, whether that behaviour is eating, drinking, scrolling, or disengaging.

If the behaviour happens immediately, the brain learns:

“This urge requires action.”

If it doesn't, something important happens instead. **When you pause, you interrupt the automatic loop.**

Stress hormones begin to settle.

The emotional brain loses intensity.

The rational brain starts to re-engage.

Most urges peak for **60–120 seconds**.

They feel permanent in the moment, but they are biologically temporary.

This is why delaying action, even briefly - can dramatically change the outcome. The pause isn't about resisting harder.

It's about letting the urge pass *on its own*.

The 5-4-3-2-1 method can help too. Count backwards from 5. And on 1 – walk away, choose an alternative action – and act.

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You're standing in the kitchen, tired, scrolling on your phone. You're eating without really noticing. It's not hunger driving the behaviour. It's all on autopilot.

By the time you realise what you're doing, you're already halfway through.

Chapter Tool: The 90-Second Pause

When an urge appears, do the following:

1. **Stop**

Name the urge silently: “*This is an urge.*”

2. **Breathe**

Slow your breathing for 90 seconds.

Inhale through the nose, exhale slowly through the mouth.

3. **Stay**

Let the urge rise and fall without acting on it.

During this pause, remind yourself:

“I don’t need to decide anything yet.”

After 90 seconds, reassess.

The urge may still be present - but it will usually be quieter.

Why This Works

The pause works because it changes the brain's expectations. Each time you pause without acting, your Chimp learns:

“This sensation is tolerable.”

“I don't need immediate relief.”

Over time, urges become less intense and less frequent.

This is not about white-knuckling.

It's about retraining the nervous system.

Coach's Note from Darren

Most people try to control urges with rules. Rules collapse under stress. Pauses build capacity. Every time you pause, even if you later choose the behaviour, you're

strengthening your ability to respond rather than react.

That skill changes everything.

PART 4: REPROGRAMMING THE COMPUTER

Chapter 7: Habits Over Motivation

Motivation is often treated as the missing ingredient in weight loss.

If you could just feel more motivated, more driven, more inspired - everything would fall into place. But motivation is not a reliable foundation for change.

Motivation is **emotional**.
And emotions fluctuate.

They rise when life is calm or when progress is visible, and energy is high.

They fall when stress increases, sleep is poor, or decisions pile up.

Weight loss plans built on motivation tend to work **only when conditions are ideal**.

Real life is rarely ideal.

From a brain perspective, this makes perfect sense. Motivation relies heavily on the **prefrontal cortex** - the same part of the brain responsible for planning, decision-making, and self-control.

This part of the brain fatigues quickly.

Every decision you make during the day draws from the same limited mental resources:

- > What to eat
- > When to move
- > How to respond to stress
- > Whether to stay on track

As mental energy drops, the brain looks for efficiency. And that's where **habits** take over.

Habits live in what we've described as the **Computer** — the automatic part of the brain.

Once a behaviour is repeated enough times, the brain stores it so it can be run with minimal effort.

This is not laziness.

It's energy conservation.

Under stress or fatigue, the brain doesn't ask:

“What's the best choice right now?”

It asks:

What's familiar?

What's easy?

What's been done before?”

This is why old habits resurface during busy weeks - even when you know better.

Your Computer is 4x faster than your Chimp and 20x faster than your Human brain. Reprogramming your computer is essential if long-standing weight control is the goal!

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You wake up late.

The day immediately feels rushed. Instead of calmly adjusting, you default to whatever is quickest and most familiar.

By mid-morning, the sense of being “off track” has already set in. Not because you

failed - but because the day started without an anchor.

Why Habits Beat Motivation

Habits protect you when motivation disappears.

They:

- > Reduce decision-making
- > Lower emotional load
- > Create stability during stress
- > Remove the need to “feel ready”



A good habit doesn't rely on enthusiasm. It relies on repetition.

Once installed, it runs quietly in the background - even on hard days.

Chapter Tool: The Habit Simplifier

Rather than trying to do everything, choose **one non-negotiable habit** that anchors your day.

This should be:

- ✓ Simple
- ✓ Realistic
- ✓ Repeatable under stress

Examples include:

- > Eating a protein-based breakfast
- > Taking a daily walk
- > Preparing one consistent meal
- > Drinking water before wine

Write it down:

“My current non-negotiable habit is
_____.”

Then decide:

- > When it will happen
- > Where it fits naturally in your day

Everything else becomes optional.

Why This Works

When one habit is protected, the day feels safer. Safety reduces stress.

Reduced stress calms the Chimp.

A calmer Chimp makes better choices more likely. This is not about doing less forever.

It's about doing **less until consistency returns**.

Coach's Note from Darren

Most people don't need more motivation.
They need fewer decisions.

When life feels overwhelming, **simplify**.
Protect one habit, and let everything else
settle around it.

Habits reduce decision fatigue.

Chapter 8: Identity-Based Change

Most people try to change their behaviour first and hope their identity will follow.

They say things like:

“I’ll feel like a healthy person once I lose weight.”

“I’ll believe in myself when I’m consistent.”

But the brain tends to work in the opposite direction.

Behaviour follows identity.

What you repeatedly do is shaped by who you believe you are - or who you believe you are *not*.

Identity lives partly in the rational brain, but it is reinforced through emotion and repetition.

It's built from:

- > Past experiences
- > Repeated behaviours
- > Internal language
- > How you explain your actions to yourself

Over time, these elements form quiet conclusions such as:

“I’m someone who struggles with food.”

“I’m inconsistent.”

“I always fall off track.”

“I’m an all-or-nothing person.”

“I’m just not a morning person.”

Once these beliefs are in place, the brain works hard to stay consistent with them - even when they’re unhelpful.

This isn’t self-sabotage.

It’s coherence.

The brain prefers familiar identities, even uncomfortable ones, because they feel predictable and safe.

The centre inside your brain where your self-identity resides is called your Reticular Activating System or RAS for short. My job, when working with my clients, is to help them reset this over time.

Under stress, identity becomes even more influential.

When emotional load is high, the brain looks for shortcuts. One of the fastest shortcuts is:

“What does someone like me usually do in this situation?”

If your identity is tied to struggle, starting again, or giving up - the Chimp will naturally steer you in that direction - **not because it wants you to fail, but because it wants to stay aligned with what feels familiar.**

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You've had a difficult week. You notice the thought:

“This is just how I am.”

It sounds factual. Neutral. Almost comforting. But that sentence quietly limits what feels possible next.

Why Identity Change Feels Uncomfortable

When you start behaving differently, even in small ways - the brain can respond with resistance.

New behaviours create a mismatch:

“This isn’t like me.”

That mismatch can feel unsettling.

The emotional brain may react with **doubt**, discomfort, or a pull back toward old habits - not because the new behaviour is wrong, but because it’s unfamiliar.

This is often the moment people give up.

Not because the change isn't working. But because it hasn't yet been integrated into identity.

Chapter Tool: Identity Rewrite

Rather than trying to *become* a different person overnight, practise **identity nudging**.

Complete the sentence:

“I'm becoming the type of person who _____.”

Examples might include:

“...pauses before reacting.”

“...returns to basics after a hard day.”

“...looks after herself under pressure.”

This phrasing matters.

“I’m becoming” allows movement.
It allows imperfection.
It gives the brain time to adapt.

Reinforcing Identity Through Evidence.

Each time you act in alignment with this identity, even briefly - the brain records it.

Noticing these moments is crucial.

Ask yourself:

- > Where did I act like the person I’m becoming today?
- > What small choice supported this identity?

This isn't about praise or positivity.
It's about **evidence**.

Evidence is what updates identity.

Coach's Note from Darren

You don't change identity by forcing belief.
You change it by collecting **proof**.

Each small, aligned action tells your brain:

“This is who I am now.”

Over time, consistency stops feeling like
effort - and starts feeling natural.

PART 5: REAL LIFE, REAL STRESS

Chapter 9: Weight Loss in a Busy Life

Most plans fail not because they're bad - but because they assume calm, controlled days.

Real life rarely provides those conditions.

Instead, real life includes:

- > Poor sleep
- > Work pressure
- > Family demands
- > Emotional load
- > Unexpected disruptions

When life becomes busy or stressful, it's not that motivation disappears.

It's that your **nervous system shifts**.

Under pressure, the emotional brain becomes more active. And, as you now know, its job is to conserve energy and reduce discomfort.

This means:

- > Planning feels harder
- > Decision-making feels heavier
- > Old habits resurface automatically

This isn't regression.

It's efficiency.

The brain defaults to what requires the least effort when resources are low.

Expecting yourself to behave the same way during high stress as you do during calm periods is unrealistic - and unfair.

Many people respond to busy periods by tightening rules. They try to regain control by being stricter. But rigidity under stress often backfires.

When the emotional brain feels overwhelmed *and* constrained, it looks for escape.

That escape frequently shows up as:

- > Emotional eating
- > Giving up for the day
- > “Starting again” next week

The problem isn't lack of commitment. It's a mismatch between expectations and reality.

Real-Life Chimp Moment

After a few bad nights' sleep, old habits resurface automatically. It feels like starting again from scratch.

Chapter Tool: Busy-Life Contingency Plan

Instead of asking, "*How do I stay perfect?*", ask:

"What does consistency look like when life is hard?"

Complete the following:

When life is calm, I usually do:

When life is chaotic, I will still do:

This second line is crucial.

It defines your **minimum standard** - the behaviours that keep you connected to progress even during difficult weeks.

These behaviours should feel:

- Achievable
- Grounding
- Non-negotiable

They are not about progress. They are about maintenance and safety.

Why This Works

When you lower expectations strategically, stress reduces. Reduced stress calms the emotional brain.

A calmer emotional brain makes it easier to return to higher-effort behaviours once life settles.

This prevents the familiar cycle of:

Overwhelm → Collapse → Guilt → Restart

Instead, you create continuity.

Coach's Note from Darren

Consistency isn't built during perfect weeks.

👉 It's built in the messy ones.

Chapter 10: Progress Without Punishment

Guilt fuels rebellion.

Many people believe that being hard on themselves is what keeps them on track.

They assume guilt, criticism, and stricter rules will correct mistakes and prevent them from happening again.

In reality, **punishment rarely leads to consistency.**

It usually leads to rebellion.

From a physiological perspective, harsh self-talk is not neutral. When you criticise yourself, your Chimp interprets it as **threat**.

Threat activates the stress response.

Stress hormones such as **cortisol** rise, preparing the body to cope with danger - not to make thoughtful decisions.

In this state:

- > The emotional brain becomes louder
- > The rational brain becomes quieter
- > The urge for comfort increases

So the very strategy meant to “get you back on track” often increases the behaviours you’re trying to change.

This isn't because you don't care.
It's because your nervous system is
overloaded.

Punishment also creates powerful **self-talk
loops**.

A difficult day leads to critical thoughts:

“I've messed this up.”

“I should know better.”

“I need to be stricter.”

Those thoughts increase stress.

Increased stress drives emotional eating,
avoidance, or disengagement.

When those behaviours occur, the self-
criticism intensifies - and the loop tightens.

Over time, the brain begins to associate
weight loss with pressure, judgement, and
discomfort. Naturally, it resists.

This is not a discipline problem.
It's a learned stress response.

Real-Life Chimp Moment

You've had a busy, exhausting week. Sleep has been poor. Stress has been high.

Instead of adjusting expectations, you push harder. You tell yourself you need more control.

By the end of the next day, you feel tense, frustrated, and disconnected - and the urge to escape feels stronger than ever.

This isn't failure.

It's a sign that your system needs **support**, not punishment.

Chapter Tool: Compassion Reset

A compassionate reset is not about letting yourself off the hook.

It's about **lowering threat so change can continue**.

Complete the following:

“Today was hard because _____.”

“I responded like a *human* under pressure.”

“Tomorrow, I return to basics by _____.”

Notice the tone.

There is **accountability** - but no attack.

This allows stress hormones to settle and the rational brain to re-engage.

Why This Works (Especially During Busy Periods)

As you saw in Chapter 9, busy and stressful periods require **different expectations**, not stricter rules.

Compassion creates continuity.

When pressure is reduced:

- > The emotional brain calms
- > The urge for escape decreases
- > Habits become easier to return to

This is how progress survives real life.

Not through intensity — but through stability.

Coach's Note from Darren

Being kind to yourself doesn't mean you stop caring. It means you stop adding unnecessary stress to an already loaded system. **And consistency grows in environments that feel safe.**

If you want to keep going, create conditions that support you - especially when life is hard.

Conclusion: You Were Never Broken

If there's one message to take from this book, let it be this:

Nothing about your past struggles with weight was a personal failure.

You were never lazy. You were never weak. You were never lacking willpower.

You were responding exactly as a human brain responds under pressure.

👉 When stress is high, the emotional brain takes over. When rules are rigid, rebellion follows. When guilt becomes the motivator, consistency disappears.

The solution was never stricter control.
It was understanding.

Understanding how your brain works.
Understanding why habits break down.
Understanding how to respond with calm
management instead of self-criticism.

**When you stop fighting yourself
and start working with your brain,
weight loss stops being a battle.**

It becomes a by-product of living with more
awareness, compassion, and consistency.

You don't need to be perfect.
You just need to keep making **progress**.

Want some help?
See the last page of this book.

In the meantime, I've created some
worksheets for you.

WORKSHEET COMPANION

How to Use These Worksheets

This worksheet pack is designed to turn insight into action.

Reading the book helps you understand *why* change feels difficult. These worksheets help you practise *how* to respond differently in real moments.

You don't need to complete these pages in order. You don't need to fill in every line. And you don't need to get this right first time.

This is not a test.
It's a tool.

Each worksheet is designed for a specific situation:

- When emotions are high
- When motivation is low
- When habits slip under pressure
- When self-criticism takes over

Use the worksheet that fits the moment you're in.

Some days that might mean pausing before an urge. Other days it might mean resetting after a difficult evening or week.

Five minutes is enough.

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is awareness.

Awareness creates choice.

Choice creates change.

If you find yourself resisting a worksheet, that's information - not failure. Often it means your emotional brain is active and trying to protect you.

Approach these pages with curiosity rather than judgement.

Small, repeated moments of awareness are how consistency is built - not through force, guilt, or discipline, but through understanding and practice.

Awareness first. Action second. Progress follows.

WORKSHEET 1

Brain Awareness Check-In

Use this when: you feel impulsive, stuck, or self-critical.

Step 1 – What just happened?

Step 2 – What am I feeling right now?

Stress Tired Lonely Overwhelmed Bored
 Other: _____

Step 3 – Who was in charge?

Human (rational) Chimp (emotional)

Step 4 – Complete the sentence:

“My Chimp is reacting to
_____.”

WORKSHEET 2

Emotional Eating Decoder

Use this when: food is being used for comfort rather than hunger.

Physical hunger (0–10): _____

What emotion was present?

What did food provide in that moment?

Relief Comfort Distraction Reward

Other: _____

Reflection:

“If food wasn’t the answer right now, what might help?”

WORKSHEET 3

All-or-Nothing Reset

Use this after: a slip, social meal, or off-plan moment.

The story I'm telling myself:

Rewrite it more accurately:

“One choice does not define today.”

My next neutral reset action:

Water Walk Protein-based meal Rest

Other: _____

WORKSHEET 4

The 90-Second Pause

Use this when: an urge feels automatic or urgent.

What am I about to do automatically?

Pause. Breathe slowly for **90 seconds**.

After the pause, the urge feels:

Stronger The same Weaker

The calmer choice now feels like:

WORKSHEET 5

Habit Simplifier

Use this to: reduce overwhelm and decision fatigue.

My ONE current non-negotiable habit:

When I will do it:

Why this habit matters right now:

WORKSHEET 6

Identity Rewrite

Use this daily or weekly.

Complete the sentence:

“I’m becoming the type of person who
_____.”

Evidence I noticed recently:

WORKSHEET 7

Busy-Life Contingency Plan

Use this when: life feels chaotic.

When life is calm, I usually do:

When life is chaotic, I will still do:

This protects my consistency because:

WORKSHEET 8

Compassion Reset

Use this after: difficult or disappointing days.

“Today was hard because
_____.”

“I responded like a human under pressure.”

“Tomorrow, I return to basics by

_____.”

WORKSHEET 9

30-Day Chimp Management Challenge Tracker

Day: _____ **Focus:** _____

What I noticed today:

What helped:

One thing I'll carry forward:

Reminder

You don't need to complete every worksheet. Use the page that fits the moment you're in.

Your role: Become more
Aware. Be more **Accountable**.
Take more **Action**.

HOW YOU CAN WORK WITH ME

The Break-Through Month

Use my 90-minute 1-1 private consultation + one-month accountability to learn to better control your Chimp and implement my high compliance nutrition plan to jump-start a powerful result.

Join my Accountability Club

Includes my Monthly Control The Chimp Newsletter, nutrition resources, Workout Of the Week follow-along workouts, monthly 21-day challenges and more...

Go to www.dt.coach and let's get you started.