Journey Beyond Sugar
Resource Kit

Ten resources that can help you to change your relationship with sugar right now.

#1 The War of Art

This whisper thin book is the secret weapon for anyone who has something creative they want to do in the world. Or, simply (and remember simple does not mean easy) want to make a change in a positive direction.

Read it from cover to cover, or open to a random page for some help in dealing with the inevitable resistance that always shows up when you are making progress on something important.

Pick it up at your local library or better yet, buy a copy.

2 The names of sugar

There are a lot of ways to say "sugar" on packaging without saying SUGAR! Below is a list of the common aliases that sugar goes by. Do not be fooled by packaging that says sugar-free, look to see if these are found on the list of ingredients.

Agave nectar	*Demerara sugar*	*Maltodextrin*
Barbados sugar	*Dextrin*	*Maltol*
Barley malt	*Dextrose*	*Maltose*
Barley malt syrup	*Evaporated cane juice*	*Mannose*
Beet sugar	*Free-flowing brown sugars*	*Maple syrup Molasses*
Brown sugar	*Fructose*	*Muscovado*
Buttered syrup	*Fruit juice*	*Palm sugar*
Cane juice	*Fruit juice concentrate*	*Panocha*
Cane juice crystals	*Glucose*	*Powdered sugar*
Cane sugar	*Glucose solids*	*Raw sugar*
Caramel	*Golden sugar*	*Refiner's syrup*
Carob syrup	*Golden syrup*	*Rice syrup*
Castor sugar	*Grape sugar*	*Saccharose*
Coconut palm sugar	*HFCS (High-Fructose Corn Syrup)*	*Sorghum Syrup*
Coconut sugar	*Honey*	*Sucrose*
Confectioner's sugar	*Icing sugar*	*Sugar (granulated)*
Corn sweetener *Corn syrup*	*Invert sugar*	*Sweet Sorghum Syrup*
Corn syrup solids	*Malt syrup*	*Treacle*
Date sugar		*Turbinado sugar*
Dehydrated cane juice		

3 Learn the importance of Glycemic Load and Glycemic Index

Glycemic index and glycemic load are measures that help you to understand a particular food's influence on your blood sugar levels and subsequent releases of insulin into the bloodstream.

In a nutshell:

Glycemic index is a measurement of how quickly a particular food will raise the level of your blood sugar. A ribeye steak will not raise it at all, as there are no carbohydrates in it.

A bunch of leafy greens or broccoli, which are complex carbohydrates. Meaning they have a significant amount of fiber in them which slows down the release of the blood sugar raising carbohydrate, have a lower glycemic index. Because the fiber slows the digestive process, these carbs enter the blood stream more slowly. A white potato, because it is mostly starch and very little fiber, will quickly digest, convert to sugar and spike your blood sugar levels.

Glycemic load is the measure of how much carbohydrate is in a food. For example, watermelon has a high glycemic index, but because it is mostly water, it has a low glycemic load. What does this mean? It means you would need to eat a lot of watermelon to really raise your blood sugar. Same is true with carrots. They carry a high glycemic index, but a low glycemic load. So you would need to eat over a pound of them for them to spike your blood sugar.

These two numbers can help you to better understand how your metabolism will respond to a particular food.

Use this online tool for discovering a foods glycemic index.

Here is a resource for better understanding glycemic load.

#4 Fat does not make you fat, sugar does

Open your perspective and learn to understand why fat does not make you fat, sugar does.

Read *Why We Get Fat and What to do About It*, by Gary Taubes. Or if you have an eye for detail and really want to dig into the science and history of the war between fats and carbohydrates, then *Good Calories, Bad Calories* is the book for you.

The Big Fat Surprise by Nina Teicholz is also a excellent explore of the failure of nuturitial science.

The audio book version of these works is also quite good. Give it a listen, you will get a perspective on sugar that is usually not found in mainstream nutritional literature.

#5 Mindfulness

Mindfulness, while a popular practice these days with NFL football players and business executives, is an ancient practice of simply learning to pay attention to what is happening Right Now.

There is nothing magical or mystical about it. And like any skill it requires daily practice.

Mindfulness will not take away your sugar cravings, but it will reveal the underlying conversations you have with yourself that fuel your cravings, addictions, distractions and desires. Once you shine the light of recognition on those conversations with yourself, you have a different relationship with them. All kinds of change then naturally cascades out of the new conversations you begin have with yourself

- Close your eyes.
- Start counting your breath. Shoot for counting to 50 breaths. That's 5 to 7 minutes.
- Your mind is going to wander. When it does, simply make a mental note of what you caught yourself thinking about. This is important: Make that note as a complete and grammatically correct sentence that begins, "I am aware that {fill in the blank}." [E.g., "I am aware that I'm thinking about what to eat for lunch" or "I am aware that I'm angry at so and so" or "I' am aware that I'm remembering an art project I did in the second grade."]
- When you are done noting the distracting thought, return to counting your breath at the place where you left off.

It's just that simple. Breathe, catch your thoughts, note them and release, then back to breath. That's it.

Why does it work? Because when we bring awareness that which had no awareness, things gently change.

#6 Educate yourself on how grains become sugar

We don't usually think of breads, muffins, scones or bagels as sugar. After all, they are not particularly sweet. But from our metabolism's perspective it is just a few short biochemical changes to go from whole-wheat toast to insulin spiking glucose.

When grains, even whole grains are ground into a powder (flour) they are metabolized into glucose (sugar) at a much faster rate than if they are eaten in a more whole form. Once these foods hit the saliva of your mouth, they already begin to transform into glucose. And because the particle size is smaller, their chemical transformation into glucose goes faster.

This is another reason to better understand the Glycemic index, which is an indication of how a food will cause your insulin levels to rise.

We hear a lot about "healthy whole grains," and while there is some debate these days as to how healthy they are and what their place should be in our diet. (There are good arguments on both sides of this issue.) From looking at the various glycemic index tables it is clear that the more refined a grain is, the faster it convert to sugar in the digestive process.

From your metabolism's point of view, it will burn hotter and faster.

So remember that any grain you use that is in the form of a powder, while it may not taste sweet to you, it will rapidly transform into sugar in your gut.

#7 Give up the illusion of quick change

Xander Kahn in this podcast goes into the power and effectiveness of slow persistence change.

Listen in at:

http://www.everydayacupuncturepodcast.com/mindful-eating-sustained-weightloss

#8 Rewire your brain with Neuroplasticity

Your brain changes and you can help steer that process!

Our brains are constantly generating new synaptic connections as we learn new things, or strengthen habits and behaviors.

The bad news it is takes some time to create and wire together these new connections in the brain. The good news is once they are established; you can ride the autopilot of helpful habits.

Do some research on the subject, there is a lot of new brain science out there these days

You can also dig into the details with this info graphic:

https://www.diygenius.com/neuroplasticity-rewiring-your-brain-for-optimal-learning/

#9 Forget thinking of carbs as good or bad, instead cultivate an awareness of how they are fast or slow

We often hear about how some carbohydrates are "good" and others are "bad." I think it is more helpful to think of carbs as "fast" or "slow." Read on for an understanding of carbohydrates from your metabolism's point of view, and why carbs so often get a bad rap.

Our bodies turn carbohydrates into sugar, which in turn increases our blood sugar levels. When blood sugar goes up, the pancreas responds by secreting insulin. Insulin's job is to clear sugar out of the blood stream. It does this in two ways. The first is by sensitizing our cells so they more easily take up sugar from the blood, which in turn is burned as fuel. The second is by causing the liver to pull sugar from the blood and turn it into fat.

The other interesting thing about insulin is that because its job is to regulate blood sugar levels, it will prevent any fat from being burned while blood sugar levels are high. So if you eat an energy bar (most of which contain a significant amount of sugar) and then go exercise, you will not burn a molecule of fat while your blood sugar levels are above a certain point. Calories really don't count here. Fat metabolism is intimately tied to the levels of sugar and insulin in the blood stream.

“Fast” carbs, which include any grain that has been ground into flour, sugar, breads, pastries, pasta, potatoes, many fruits and especially fruit juices, will skyrocket your blood sugar levels. The “slow” carbs, which include green leafy vegetables, legumes and whole grains, also will break down into sugars, but they do so more slowly, and thus don't spike the blood sugar (and by extension) insulin levels. Plus, the fiber in the slow carbs help to support healthy gut flora by providing nourishment for the beneficial bacteria that reside in the large intestine.

It’s not about good carbs vs bad carbs. It’s about slow carbs vs fast. Again, the fast carbs spike your blood sugar while the slow carbs put less of a sugar load on your system.

If you are looking to improve your metabolism, lose weight or have sustained and reliable energy, then keeping insulin levels stable with your food choices is a good way to go.

#10 How to tell if a food is healthy

A food is probably healthy if it:

- Is green
- Does not have a nutritional label
- Is made from ingredients you have in your kitchen

Or as Michael Pollen is fond of saying, "if you great-grandmother would not recognize it as food, it's not."

Take the next step

Join us for the 45-day Journey Beyond Sugar.

This is not a boot camp, blueprint, master class or other process that involves grinding ourselves against resistance or leaning on a formula. It's more like a walkabout. The goal is of less importance than traveling through familiar territory with a different set of eyes.

We are so used to thinking of change as being a linear process. It is easy to try to fit our lives into the simple algebra of A+B=C. And yet, we all know there are no straight lines in nature. We know that a flash from the blue can instantly change our lives. And there are those moments in life where we find ourselves settling deeply and without resistance into a change we could not have previously imagined.

This process takes us along that kind of wandering path with an eye to curiosity, discovery and surprise. In the 45 days of this process we will explore our relationship with sugar by:

- Having a look at brain and metabolic science
- Engaging mindfulness practices
- Leaning on the strength of our community and family connections
- Practicing compassion
- Having fun
- Looking our demons in the eye and inviting them in for a cup of tea
- Banging up against beliefs that just might not actually hold water
- Engaging the transformative power of slow change
- Discovering resources we didn't know we had

You don't have to "effort" yourself into change. It can be an exploration that calls forth your curiosity and delight in a daily practice of discovering something new.