


Leyla Weighs In: Instant gratification and the concept of desire

Do you desire pleasure or fulfillment without delay or deferment? Maybe you operate on the *Pleasure Principle* – the force that compels us to gratify our urges, wants and needs now, rather than later because to deny them causes varying degrees of tension and anxiety.

Or maybe you believe that delayed gratification is virtuous? No doubt, most of us  have been force-fed this countless times as children. And if you're on a diet, particularly for weight loss, you likely spoon-feed yourself this belief so as not to feel deprived.

We can change our tendencies toward instant gratification if we alert ourselves to what is directly behind it:

Desire.

My inner Yogi reminds me that it is the *desire* to have or to feel anything other than what we are feeling that causes discomfort (tension, anxiety, feelings of deprivation). For example, it's the *desire* to feel less hot or cold, to be somewhere else other than where we are, that is the source of our discomfort.

So what do we do with desire? It's part of the human condition, after all.

We can be mindful of it, meditate about it; be witness to it and watch it float by (all you Yogis are nodding in agreement—I can feel it!). You can eat that ice cream, pastry or bread, or you can breathe deeply and pass it by. Deliberate presence of mind can help us in this endeavor. It's one of the many benefits of yoga and meditation: We can be present *and* we can chill out.

We can reframe or change the context of desire and point it toward a goal – a weight loss goal or health parameter goal, such as an improvement in biochemistries to reduce risk factors for the chronic disease present in our family histories. Then we can mindfully move toward those goals.

And while we won't reach those goals “instantly,” within a reasonable (read: *desirable*) timeframe, we can.

Now that can be gratifying.

Namaste!

As you may know, I've been doing a weekly “Q&A with Leyla” podcast feature with Dr. Hoffman. Now you can get my perspective and expertise every Friday on my own episode of the *Intelligent Medicine* Podcast. If you missed last week's, you can [listen here](#). To be sure you don't miss out on any of my important insights and information, **subscribe today!**

Leyla Muedin has clients all over the country via telephone consultations. No need to travel to New York City for a nutrition consult at the Hoffman Center. Should you require her services, please call our office to set up an appointment: (212) 779-1744.