

**AGENT:** Charisse Kenion  
**MISSION:** To undergo hypnosis to overcome a sugar addiction

The last time someone asked me why I ate so much sugar the answer was simple. “I like it”, was the short and sweet reply I gave to my sugar-phobic friend back home in the UK, who was often perplexed at my so-called addiction. When I was really, really bad, my binges could include four or five bars of chocolate, plus the odd cake, pastry, a sugary hot chocolate and Coke, anything that would make the average human’s teeth rot – thankfully mine are still white and filling-free. On the days when I was really going for it, my glucose sessions would end with my slipping into a self-induced sugar coma.

I couldn’t bear for anyone to see how awful my binges had become. I would remove all evidence from the scene, shoving Twix wrappers down the side of the couch and ramming Krispy Kreme boxes down our flat’s rubbish chute.

Three years on and things had changed for the better, but I still couldn’t resist the cocoa bean, so I decided to visit hypnotherapist Alla Tchemodanova.

But, unlike my friend, Alla wasn’t prepared to accept my short, snappy answer when she asked me why I loved chocolate so much. Entering her tiny office in Knowledge Village, Dubai, I had assumed our conversation was that of a journalist interviewing a hypnotherapist, before trying out a hypnosis session.

How wrong I was.

Within five minutes Alla had asked me what my relationship with my mother was like, how my parents interacted and whether I had ever been pregnant. Instantly, I began squirming in my chair. It wasn’t meant to be like this. ‘So I like chocolate, so what?’, I thought. Still, I had to be game if I was really going to give this challenge a go.

So I answered the questions and believe me, the questions above are pretty tame compared to the others that followed. At one point Alla asked, “Is there any time or person in your life that you wish you could skip over?”

“Of course not,” I retorted. I used the excuse that life is surely not meant to be full of regret, and by admitting I would like a part of my life to just disappear, I was admitting that things were wrong. Surely everything – good or bad – that happens to you, should be taken as a valuable experience?

Alla wasn’t impressed. “Do not bring the analytical mind into this, just answer the question”, she instructed.

So I did. And I answered many, many more. It felt like I was being broken down like a prisoner being prepared for some serious brainwashing. I kept telling myself, ‘It’s fine,

this is just an experiment for a story,’ but realised I had to be completely honest for that precise reason, and also, if no-one else ever found out the answers, how bad could it be?

Before starting the hypnosis part of the consultation, Alla explained how human beings are born with a preference for sweetness. What also happens is that when a baby cries, for whatever reason, a mother’s first instinct is to feed the child, even though the child may not be hungry. The baby may be fearful or anxious about something, but when its concern is greeted with more food, over time the child associates food with providing comfort. What happens as we grow older is that if we don’t get a hug or consolation when we are feeling bad, we go back to old patterns of using food. Apparently this

association can continue into our adulthood, which is, apparently, what has happened to me. After unearthing the fact that my mother had never been particularly touchy-feely with me – something that I had dealt with, rather than cried over – Alla said the reason I ate sugary treats was because I was simply looking for love. Once I accepted her theory, Alla began hypnosis, and used regression therapy, which involves taking the client back into their childhood – talk about opening a can of worms. Worse still, for some unfathomable reason, tears streamed from my eyes throughout what seemed a never ending 20 minutes.

After emerging from hypnosis tired and a little unnerved I was advised to go home and rest – advice that I happily took. Hypnosis opened my eyes to things that I had been unwilling to notice over the years – and all I wanted was to be able to say ‘no’ to chocolate. Ten days on and I still can’t look at the stuff. ●

# Constant Cravings

