

Matching Problems and Solutions

How to use this card:

*Pass this card around. Each person please state your name and read a small section of the content on **Matching Problems and Solutions**:*

Concept 20: Matching Problems and Solutions

Create personal experiments to find food and behavior solutions to health problems.

One of the greatest obstacles to change for motivated people is poor matchmaking between problems and solutions. It starts with assumptions about what's healthy. It's easy to have faulty assumptions in a culture where illness is lucrative, businesses thrive if you fail, and the cultural orientation is toward treatment not prevention. At Suppers, we are less concerned with specific diagnoses – that's up to people and their practitioners – and more concerned with the biochemical and environmental challenges that created the problem to begin with. If we understand the exposures and behaviors that caused the problem, we can make better matches between health problems and behavior solutions. Each individual will need to experiment to determine their unique nutritional requirements, and we remind people constantly at meetings to devise personal experiments to test their hunches.

Jenny's Story: Popcorn

I am used to our medical system, to getting a diagnosis and then receiving whatever prescription or procedure matches the diagnosis. I have had mostly good experiences, and my doctors and therapists would generally say that I am compliant. Well, I'm compliant until nothing works, and that is the point I reached with foot pain. *Plantar fasciitis* was the diagnosis. All I know is that I was in a lot of pain. As someone who loves to walk and to hike, I knew I had to find a solution; the pain had persisted for almost nine months. During that time, I tried exercises, orthotics and a night-time splint. I tried massage. I tried reflexology. I tried acupuncture. I bought little balls to roll around to soften and stretch the soft tissues in my feet. I bought several pairs of new shoes. I didn't want to pop pain pills; might I do more damage if I couldn't feel the pain?

One day I asked a therapeutic friend what she would do if she had received this diagnosis. She said simply: "I'd examine my diet. Pretend food is causing the inflammation in your foot, which food would you suspect?"

"Popcorn," I said, almost immediately. I recalled the meeting in which we talked about how our inflammatory foods tend to be the ones we adore. I remembered the rationale: it relates mostly to the cascade of endorphins and pleasure chemicals we experience when we eat a food stressor. But of course, it was hard to identify with the concept because, well, it's just popcorn.

At the time I ate a lot of popcorn. A LOT OF POPCORN. Popcorn had become a universal solution for me. It was an easy snack food, and I found that the crunch and the repetitive action of stuffing my face with it calmed my fear and anxiety. If I couldn't find a solution to a problem, at least I could eat popcorn. I could even convince myself that it was a healthy option as long as I didn't add much oil and salt.

Once asked the right question, however, I could not remain naïve. I had to test popcorn. To my shock, the longstanding foot pain vaporized when I stopped eating all corn products. It took just a few days for the pain to subside, and after about 10 days I was pain free. It's now nine months later and the pain has not returned.

I don't want to end this story leaving the impression that popcorn is the villain. I do want to champion experiments and especially the food elimination diets we try out at Suppers to identify the extent to which our

favorite foods drive our inflammatory processes *individually*. Since having my own compelling experience with popcorn, I have engaged in many experiments, including food elimination diets and testing new foods and assessing their potential to energize and satiate me.

I have three questions for my readers:

Do you experience pain or inflammation anywhere?

Is there any food you habitually eat that does more than satisfy normal hunger, like provide comfort, sedate you or change your mood?

Is it worth it to you to eliminate the comfort food for a few weeks to see if it's really acting more like a pain killer than a food?

Maybe my popcorn is your bell peppers, pizza or ice cream. All I know is that half a dozen interventions that worked for me for other problems couldn't touch the pain in my feet. The match between my problem and my solution was giving up popcorn.

Continue around the table by briefly sharing how you relate to the Suppers concept of Matching Problems and Solutions.

Think like Jenny. QUICK! If you had to pick one thing you suspect might be driving your pain or inflammation, what do you suspect?

Discussion Prompts (Each person select a prompt that works for you.)

- Describe how you relate to Jenny's story and the concept of matching problems with solutions.
- Sometimes we have choices about how we approach a health challenge: Meds, exercise, dietary changes, herbs, supplements, etc. Describe your personal journey with making choices based on finding your personally well-matched solutions.
- To find your best matched solution, what question might you ask yourself? What experiment might you try?

Ideas for Next Steps:

Experiments and Observations

- Make an observation about what you have tried in the past that did not result in the desired outcome.
- Make a hypothesis. To sort out your fatigue, discomfort, pain, etc. we need to understand the role of food and behavior choices. What experiment might you try to figure out what your food solution might be?

Between Meetings:

- Read how other Suppers members related to this concept.
 - For parents of children with bowel function problems, read [Diane's story](#), page 254 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* and on the Suppers website.
 - For people with headaches, read [Sonia's story](#), page 255 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* and on the Suppers website.
 - For people at risk of developing diabetes, read [Audelle's story](#), page 257 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* and on the Suppers website.