

So How Do We Actually Eat Mindfully?



By Joseph Wieliczko, Psy.D.

The practice of mindful eating is really very simple. At its core, it's about bringing awareness to our daily life. We tend to get lost in thoughts about the future, the past and various concerns and anxieties that contribute to problematic eating patterns and ways of thinking and

responding to our emotions. We cannot change our relationship to food without first having greater awareness of our thoughts, emotions and conditioned behaviors that drive the eating problems to begin with. Mindful eating is about cultivating greater awareness using a variety of simple and concrete practices.

As we start to become more aware of our eating behaviors and related thoughts, feelings and impulses, three wonderful things start to occur. One, we start to see choices we never noticed before. Two, having more choices leads to changes in behavior that do not require will power. And three, we start to feel more freedom and ease in our life. I would like to suggest just a few practices.

First, as you sit down to eat, take a few slow, deep breaths before you eat. Relax! Be aware of your breathing in your body as you ground yourself in the present moment. By taking several breaths, we create a greater sense of ease and awareness.

Second, check in with your body. Is your body hungry... not you but your body? Most people don't evaluate their degree of hunger before they eat. They tend to eat out of habit based on what the clock says or what their thoughts dictate and not so much based on the needs of the body. You may want to ask yourself, what am I hungry for? Food, companionship, stress relief, a distraction? Food is not the answer when we need companionship, emotional relief, or entertainment to cope with loneliness.

Third, ground yourself in the awareness of the food. What does the food look like? Notice the texture, the colors, the smell, etc. Now eat slowly with awareness and enjoy! As I like to say "The food is here for you, so you should be here for the food."

My program is an online 8-session group (\$30 per session, \$240 total) which meets once a week for 1 hour with a limit of 12 participants. To register and learn more about mindful eating, go to www.Mindful4life.com.

Mindful Eating & Stress Management Educational Program

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- Mindful Eating Online Training Programs
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