

## The Benefits of Mindful Eating vs. Dieting



By Joseph Wieliczko, Psy.D.

The most common benefit participants of my mindful eating program report is "I eat less food and feel more satisfied." This makes sense because being more aware as we eat is essential to feeling satisfied with what we eat. When dieting, we feel deprived as we try to eat less.

Mindful Eating is NOT a diet. It is about learning to bring greater awareness to one's thoughts, feelings and behaviors that relate to eating and how this awareness can create change without struggling, depriving or judging oneself. Dieting, on the other hand, is about restriction, deprivation, disappointment, and feeling shame.

Mindful eating is about tuning into the five senses and "listening" to what the body needs. It is about honoring the body. With dieting, we try to divorce ourselves from what our body wants. Dieters end up in a battle with themselves, trying to deny themselves for the goal of weight loss, which many times fails in the end. For example, one participant while in the program noticed that 70% of the time she ate, she was not genuinely hungry. Such an

insight, derived from observing herself (and listening to her body), created an experience-based motivation to change, which did not require deprivation, struggle or will-power. This program participant could eat less and not feel hungry. Such an insight is not associated with dieting.

With mindful eating, change does not take a long time. For instance, about 90% of participants start to notice changes in their eating habits during the 8 weeks of my program. This type of change is created by observing oneself and learning about one's unique relationship to food. Such learning creates a natural and unimpeded change in food selection, decisions about when to eat or not and what is healthy to eat, etc. With dieting, few people can say they are gaining a greater understanding of their relationship to food. Instead, eating becomes a task of measuring, calorie counting, rules, etc. Dieters tend to feel burdened by restriction, deprivation and judgments that they impose on themselves.

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

**See Event Calendar for FREE online mindful eating presentation (p.2).**

**Mindful Eating & Stress Management Educational Program**

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