

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HUNGER

March 23, 1-1:50 PM EDT

Presented by

Megrette Fletcher, M.Ed., RD, CDE
TCME co-founder, Executive director

All of your senses can trigger the experience of hunger, craving or desire.

Your senses when eating are:

- Eyes (sight of food)
- Nose (smell of food)
- Tongue (taste of food)
- Touch (mouth feel of food)
- Sound (noise of eating, noise present when eating)

All of your cognitive senses can also trigger hunger, craving or desire.

Your cognitive (coming from the brain) senses are:

- Mind (knowledge)
- Thoughts (ideas, associations, whims)
- Feelings
- Memories
- Sense of Self (how you see yourself, the world, life)

Understanding Physical Hunger

What does physical hunger feel like? Description by Michelle May, M.D., in her *Am I Hungry? Workbook* (pg. 33).

Physical Hunger

- Hunger pangs or gnawing feeling
- Emptiness
- Nausea
- Irritability
- Headache
- Low energy/Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling you must eat now

The difference between physical and emotional hunger from Brian Wansink's book *Mindless Eating* (pg. 153)

Physical Hunger	Emotional Hunger
• Builds gradually	• Develops suddenly
• Strikes below the neck	• Above the neck
• Occurs several hours after a meal	• Unrelated to time
• Goes away when full	• Persists despite fullness
• Eating leads to feeling of satisfaction	• Eating leads to guilt and shame

When food is before us, we might experience **Sensory Hunger**.

Jan Chozen Bays, M.D., has described different types of hunger in her book *Mindful Eating* (pg. 12).

Eye Hunger: This is what the eye sees – now listen to what the mind says

Nose Hunger: Smell – now listen to what the mind says

Physical Hunger	Emotional Hunger	Sensory Hunger
• Builds gradually	• Develops suddenly	• Eyes (sight of food)
• Strikes below the neck	• Above the neck	• Nose (smell of food)
• Occurs several hours after a meal	• Unrelated to time	• Tongue (taste of food)
• Goes away when full	• Persists despite fullness	• Touch (mouth feel of food)
• Eating leads to feeling of satisfaction	• Eating leads to guilt and shame	• Sound (noise of eating, noise present when eating)

Mouth Hunger: Is your mouth hungry? – now listen to what the mind says

Stomach Hunger: Notice if the stomach is full or not, satisfied or not, after you take a bite.

The following hungers are not specifically sensory.

Mind Hunger: Can you hear what your mind is saying about food? The mind talks in “should” or “should not.”

Cellular Hunger: Become aware of this food passing into the body.

Heart Hunger: Is the heart saying anything about this food? This includes any emotions and memories about food.

Sometimes we hunger for something that isn't related to food.

When this happens, it is helpful to pause and ask yourself, “What am I hungry for?” Allow yourself to think BEYOND food. When you do this, you can begin to include some other needs you hunger for. The work by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., called *NonViolent Communication*, www.cnvc.org, talks about acknowledging that every person has some basic needs. These include:

- Meaning and Purpose
- Autonomy (independence)
- Safety
- Empathy
- Sustenance (food, nourishment for body, mind and spirit)
- Creativity
- Love
- Community
- Rest/Relax/Play

The following books were used to create this teleconference:

- Jan Chozen Bays, M.D., *Mindful Eating*, Shambhala 2009
- Michelle May, M.D., *Am I Hungry? Workshop*, www.amihungry.com
- Michelle May, M.D., *Eat What You Love, Love What You Eat*, Greenleaf Book Group Press, 2009
- Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., *NonViolent Communication*, www.cnvc.org
- Brian Wansink, Ph.D., *Mindless Eating*, Bantam Books 2006

Below is a chart of common feelings that arise to help us know if a need is or is not being met. Idea: Cut out these two boxes and refer to them at your next meal or snack.

Needs Box	
Needs Not Met	Needs Met
• AFRAID	• AFFECTIONATE
• ANNOYED	• CONFIDENT
• ANGRY	• ENGAGED
• AVERSION	• INSPIRED
• CONFUSED	• EXCITED
• DISCONNECTED	• EXHILARATED
• DISQUIET	• GRATEFUL
• EMBARRASSED	• HOPEFUL
• FATIGUE	• JOYFUL
• PAIN	• PEACEFUL
• TENSE	• REFRESHED
• VULNERABLE	
• YEARNING	
•	

A 2-step approach to learn what are you really hungry for.

Step 1

Create 3 intentional pauses when eating: Before the first bite, during the meal and at the end of the meal. At each pause, see if any of the feelings in the Needs Box are present.

Cultivate the intent of learning (not judging) more about any physical, emotional, sensory hunger that is present.

Step 2

Ask yourself:

- *“What type of hunger do I have?”*

Physical, Emotional or Sensory Hunger

- *“Will eating help meet my hunger?”*

Yes, No, Not Sure

- *“What type of food would help me best meet my hunger?”*

Explore and experiment with your food selections.