

Food for Thought

What is mindful eating?

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor, and taste.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.



Free Handout for Individuals from The Center for Mindful Eating

Full Circle Awareness

Dharmacharini Amala

“Full circle” awareness means noticing the coming and going of many feelings through all phases of a meal. Our feelings about food are as varied as seasonings from around the world and as ever present as our breath. They accompany every aspect of our interaction with food and are linked to the broader field of our life experiences through associations of time and place, such as a feeling of craving that may arise with the aroma of apple pie, which we link with “home” and something “special.”

Feelings signal that it is time to eat. (I’m hungry; I’m sad; Oh, this food looks delicious...)

Feelings direct what we choose to eat. Often we select food to change or “fix” a particular feeling. (This will make me feel better; This will fill me up; This will cool me down; This will satisfy...) Feelings play into how much we eat. We may try to alleviate ongoing emotional stirrings or we

may connect “good times” with the physical sensations of fullness, so we continue eating. Feelings do not stop there. Our food contact comes full circle with impressions after we have eaten, such as enjoying lingering flavors or feeling regret from overeating.

One way to develop mindful eating is to check in at all these feeling stages:

urge to eat, choice of food, eating and the amount consumed, as well as post-meal feelings. It can be both satisfying and sometimes surprising to notice the feelings – both emotions and physical sensations – at every stage.

Sometimes our attentiveness begins to fade as the process of eating takes on a momentum of its own. Being mindful of the feelings after we have eaten can bring us back to ourselves, even if we drifted during the meal. Was the food satisfying? In what ways? Do the flavors linger in a pleasing way? Do

we feel over-full? Just right? What is our mood now? Have we become dull or “checked out”? Have we eaten in a way that leaves our body working overtime to process the results?

When we remember to notice the aftereffects of eating, we create continuity of awareness that may help us be more fully present the next time we eat. Mindful eating includes observing the feelings of one moment giving rise to the next, and one meal finishing, then soon another beginning. Full circle awareness encompasses the dynamic changes through each meal in a way that promotes acceptance and appreciation of the ever-present and continuing nature of our relationship with food.

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Internet Resources

www.tcme.org
www.mindfuleating.org
www.mindfulpractices.com
www.slowfoodusa.org
www.bodypositive.com