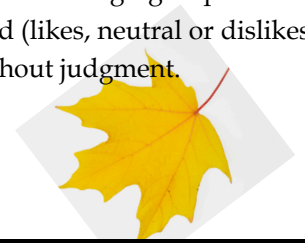


Food for Thought

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*

Being in the Moment.

By Jean Kristeller, PhD

“Be in the moment.” This is a phrase that is offered readily, sometimes superficially, sometimes as hard-won wisdom. But without some understanding of the underlying experience and meaning, it can sound like a cliché that ignores the complex hold of wishes, expectations, goals and fantasies on our usual sense of reality.

If we are not ‘in the moment’, where are we? Often, with food, the irony is that we are everywhere else. We’re thinking ABOUT the food, we’re worrying about the calories, we’re watching TV, we’re reading, we’re talking, we’re judging ourselves as we put the next bite in our mouths, and then are more aware of the guilt than of the pleasure.

Mindful eating can be done without meditation practice – but meditation practice is a powerful way of training ourselves to be ‘in the moment’. Watch, observe, bring the attention back over and over again to the moment. I use the metaphor of watching leaves floating down a stream as a way to capture the shift in our relation to the mind from usual thoughts to mindfulness. Our thoughts and experiences flow through our awareness like water flowing

along, complex, never quite the same, but still part of a whole. Our usual way of thinking is to notice a leaf, think about it, analyze it, and then associate to it – “ah, the first red leaf of the fall...is it a maple? ...where did it fall in?...I wonder when leaves in my yard will turn...oh, dear, I need to buy a new rake...”. The mind has traveled in a few moments from fully experiencing the beauty of the river – to worrying about a shopping errand.

The meditating mind learns to stop and observe the leaf...then the next one...then

a twig...and then perhaps a piece of debris...and a leaf again. Noticing but not moving off onto some other thought about it. Staying in the moment with that particular experience. When this is done with the experience of eating, the experience changes. Attention is brought to the act of eating, to the pleasure, the satisfaction, to the subtle shifts as hunger is overlaid with fullness, to the choice of one more bite – or not. As this is experienced and practiced, mindfulness can be brought more and more easily to the eating itself, in the moment. And this practice can then teach us to bring the experience of being ‘in the moment’ to other, even more complex, parts of life.



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Internet Resources

Mindful Eating

www.tcme.org

www.mindfuleating.org

www.mindfulpractices.com.

www.balancedweightmanagement.com

www.slowfoodusa.org