

Mindful Eating

Have any of you ever;

Had a meal - found yourself wondering....why did I just eat...I wasn't even hungry...I'm stuffed?

Or eaten and realized - I hadn't really even tasted or enjoyed any of that meal?

Or had a meal – enough to feed a small village - then perusing your fridge shelves looking for something – not knowing what it is you want?

It looks like it's not just me that has had these experiences with food...

If you have had any experiences like this, then you may be interested in mindful eating..... as I do - long love affair with eating food.....at times in very large quantities...

My History

So to give you a little insight in to my challenges with eating...consider 2 different nick names I had as a teen - jaws, and my brother used to call me Jethro. This is a Beverly Hill Billies reference – as Uncle Jed would say – that Jethro was the only kid born with a full set of teeth , and that he had a 6 foot stomach!

What is mindful eating?

If we look at one of my favorite definitions of mindfulness from JKZ – paying attention, moment to moment, on purpose, non-judgementally....and he often adds - as if your life depends on it...

And so just like any other aspect of our life.....There are so many different areas of experience before, during, and after eating that we can pay attention to ...moment to moment, on purpose, non-judgementally...as if our lives depended upon it....

So in looking at eating with curiosity and open hearted awareness ...we can pose these

questions:

Am I hungry?

How do I know I am hungry?

Is it through an emotion or body sensation?

Where am I feeling this?

What am I tasting right now?

So you may be thinking – how do I know I am hungry?...of course through how my stomach feels!!

But after going deeper we now know that there is much more to hunger than just an empty stomach!

Types hunger We know that hunger can be made up of - sensations, thoughts, and emotions- and if we pay attention to our experience fully in the moment we can start to cultivate a relationship with these hungers that can enrich our experience of eating in so many healthy ways.

Being aware and curious of these types of Hunger

Eyesatisfied by beauty....visually

Nosesmell gives us most of what we know as taste

Moutha desire for pleasurable sensations

Stomachwe think of pangs... but we may have also had an empty stomach and not felt hunger and in fact had a joyful feeling of lightness

Cellulardoes our body steer us toward what at a cellular level it needs to function optimally vs what we feel we want

Mind ...based upon thoughts ...influenced by the senses... aware and curious

We may think – I should eat protein, or I deserve ice cream...

Or Eggs are good – containing protein and vitamin A

VS

Eggs are bad - too much cholesterol

Heart The actual food may be less important than the mood, emotion or activity while

eating that food.... What were we fed when we were sick, what did we eat – rituals during holidays

Why The Pressing Need to Eat Mindfully?

There can be Many challenges in the way most of us live now – here is one

We are exposed to a huge amount of information daily

Two of these types of information are Data and Advertising

Data pulls at our attention and may distract us even while eating

Advertising has the message - Buy something!!!!

While the message may not be obvious, the underlying theme can be - you need this whatever it is to be whole, happy and fulfilled – reinforcing the notion that our happiness is outside of us rather than within us.

When we feel discomfort, have uncomfortable or difficult experiences or feelings – we can then feel like we need to look outside ourselves for an answer

We may then look to what is quick and gives us a fix – our smartphone, some kind of other tech, alcohol, drugs, even eating etc

All the more reason to open to the richness of our experience by paying attention to the ordinary – being mindful!

We then did a mindful eating meditation – eating a single raisin

We then did a Visualization 5 years out at end of Mindful Eating Meditation – this is a process that has been shown to help us make positive change to our habits if we wish to.

Mindful Eating Tips

Practice Mindful Meditation

Try to sit when eating...

Remembering can be the first challenge - so plan to be mindful

Put Technology away while eating

A little silence can be golden

Make it a habit!!