

The Mindful Eating Exercise

Mindful Eating is an eating tool that elevates the eating experience. Try this mindful eating exercise to get a feel for how eating mindfully can improve eating. This exercise is an extreme example of mindfulness – you do not need to be this hyper-aware when eating at all times but using this exercise a few times a week will help increase awareness.

You will need:

- 5 minutes
- A small piece of food (anything you like, something with multiple flavors and textures works best); if it's a wrapped piece of food like chocolate keep it wrapped until instructed to open it.
 - o It's best to choose a food you are familiar with you.

Instructions:

- Place the piece of food in front of you
- Explore it with your eyes, do not touch it, just look at it – notice its texture. Is it smooth or rough? Are there different colors?
 - o If it was wrapped, open it now and place it back in front of you, explore it again with your eyes
- Now close your eyes and explore the piece of food with your sense of touch. Again, just notice how it feels. Is it smooth or rough? Soft or hard? Dry or moist?
- *Notice, don't think. Just notice, be aware, observe. No thinking necessary.*
- Now incorporate your sense of smell, smell the piece of food. How does it smell?
- Take a bite of your food and don't chew it right away, let it sit in your mouth for a second and then start to chew very slowly.
- As you start to taste the piece of food also be aware of the sound eating this food is creating. Is it crunchy or are you able to just chew through it easily?
- What are you able to notice? How does the taste of the food change as it moves through your mouth? Is the flavor stronger when you first put it in your mouth or as you continue to chew it?
- Just notice second by second.
- Pay attention to the sensation of chewing and then swallowing.
- Mentally follow the bite down your throat, through your esophagus, and to your stomach.
- Take your second bite and explore it just as slowly. Use all of your senses. You may close your eyes if you wish.

After the exercise, answer the following questions:

- How was this experience different than the way you usually eat?
- Did you notice different flavors or textures to the food?
- Did you enjoy the food more or less?
 - o A lot of times we crave certain foods, not because we love them but because we *perceive* that we do. When eating mindfully you get to really identify which foods you truly love and enjoy and which you only thought you did.

If you are interested in learning more, Dua the Dietitian can guide you through the process of mindful and intuitive eating. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

