

Mindfulness – Eating.

‘Mindfulness Eating’ is a total change to how people eat in the modern world. The quick drive thru or eating on the go. Eating while working or watching TV. Mindfulness Eating is about focusing completely on the now, and on the task of enjoying every moment of eating and the feelings that it brings to you.

To start with, try it one meal at a time, breakfast, lunch or dinner. Slowly implement it into your daily life or school day. This will give you time to pause in the now. Re-focus and re-set the mind from troublesome thoughts/issues of the day or in the future.

Technique 1:

Choose a specific location to eat, such as your dining table or certain lunchroom or bench. Somewhere that is calm & not full of distractions. Sit quietly. Do not get up and do not pick up your phone etc. Place all the food you intend to eat in front of you before starting so you can fully see each item.

Technique 2:

Try to slow the whole process down when eating. Think of those food adverts where someone is completely focused eating an ice cream or chocolate bar, burger etc. lost in the moment. When you are eating, take smaller portions, eat more slowly and look at your food more closely. Observe the sensation of picking up the food and placing it in your mouth. (Like those adverts). Try chewing the food more, around 30 to 50 times per bite enjoying the full process. You can also try making the portion of food last longer with a meal taking around 20 minutes.

Technique 3:

For Raisin Meditation you give your full attention to the eating. You must focus on the process of eating and enjoying your meal, savouring the food and the senses.

1. Find a comfortable place to sit.
2. Place a raisin or other preferred food in your hand.
3. Examine the raisin closely, almost as if you had never seen one before.
4. Looking at the raisin, focus on what you see - the shape, texture, size, texture. Is it soft or hard?
5. Smell the raisin.
6. Are you anticipating eating it? Is it difficult not to just put it in your mouth?
7. How does it feel? The size of the raisin in the middle of your palm?
8. Place the raisin in your mouth. (don't bite it yet) How does your tongue react? What is it doing?
9. Lightly bite a small piece of the raisin. Feel it between your teeth, its texture.
10. Chew it three times and stop.
11. Describe the flavour of the raisin. What is the texture?
12. Take your time, chewing the rest of the raisin.
13. Swallow the raisin.
14. Sit quietly; think of the whole process, how you are breathing, the senses experienced, and how you feel now.

Mindfulness - Attention Training.

Attention Training is another strategy that helps build resilience and challenge negative thoughts. The focus of your attention will influence how you feel and behave. When you feel nervous or worried to a situation you will automatically focus upon the negative; like what could go wrong. This then increases your feelings of anxiety. You must learn to re-focus your attention and to take on a more balanced view.

A way of training your attention you will need to focus on your senses and become mindful of your environment. Really thinking about the small details of each item that involves your sight, touch and hearing.

Name three things that you can see right now:

Name three things that you can touch right now:

Name three things that you can hear right now:

The next time you have negative feelings (stress, frustration, anxiety or anger) try and think about your environment and how it impacts on your senses. An environmental focus can turn down the volume on negative feelings and helps ride the wave of emotion. Allowing you to change the negative thoughts into more positive ones.

Ride the wave of emotion.

Emotions can be viewed like waves, some will be small and weak and others may be huge, strong and powerful. Learning to ride the waves of emotion is a skill that takes practice & a lot of courage as ultimately it means sitting with an intense uncomfortable feeling until the peak has passed. This is when your coping skills come to the forefront. Breathe, focus upon the environment and remember that its passing.

EXPERIENCE YOUR EMOTION

As a **WAVE**, coming and going

Don't try to **GET RID** of emotion.
Don't **PUSH** it away.

Try not to **BLOCK** emotion.

Try not to **SUPPRESS** emotion.

Don't try to **KEEP** emotion around.
Don't **HOLD ON** to it.
Don't **AMPLIFY** it.

