

THE TASTE OF NOW

Mindful Eating for Healthy Weight Loss



Claudette Pelletier-Hannah

THE TASTE OF NOW

Practicing *The Taste of Now* concepts (Keys) will help you to understand and modify your eating behaviors, enabling you to re-establish a healthy relationship with food and a natural balance in how you eat. You deserve to derive pleasure and satisfaction from food - without struggle. It's absolutely possible.

About this workbook

The ideas within these pages make up a process that usually takes some time to master. Whether you're doing this program on your own, or you're participating in a facilitated group, know that you won't get it all at once. Success will come from repeated application of the ten keys with the corresponding *Healthy Habits* and the audio programs, together with honest reflection and journaling.

Some of the Keys might seem to contradict each other. In fact they work together quite nicely and will all make sense as you progress. Once you've been through the whole workbook and audio programs, put your energy and focus where you're ready and feel that you can be successful. Concentrate on other concepts as you progress.

Together these guidelines form a solid foundation of consciousness around food and eating that have the potential to change your health and your life.

Enjoy!

Claudette Pelletier-Hannah

Instructions

You can go through this program however you like, but the instructions below outline the recommended order.

1. Print the workbook. You will get the most from this program if you use the workbook as a journal, answering the (applicable) questions provided in writing.

2. Read through to the end of page 5.

3. Answer the questions on page 6.

3. Prepare for audio and guided eating meditation. Be seated at a table (or a desk, if required for playing audio) that is clean and free of clutter, away from distractions like TV, radio or nearby conversations. (Close your email program if you're at your desk.) Have an unpeeled orange on your favorite plate, with a lovely cloth napkin, if you have one.

4. Play Audio 1, The Orange.

If you are listening/participating with a family member, refrain from talking until after the audio.

5. Record your experience from Audio 1, in writing, on page 27 in your workbook.

6. Read and work through pages 7 - 12 to review what you have just experienced. Allow approximately 60 - 90 minutes to do Audio 1 and corresponding workbook pages.

7. Work through the remainder of your workbook (pages 13 - 26) at your own pace. It contains more important concepts that will help you be successful. Committing to the Healthy Habit Suggestions over a period of time will take your learning and experience to another level.

The intent is to first use Audio 1 (13 minutes) with an orange, and then try either one or both of the other two audio programs at a different time. Use the audio programs as often as you want, whenever you want, to reinforce the mindful eating process until it feels natural and comfortable.

Audio 2 (7 minutes) is a guided meditation to be used with a single chocolate chip.

Audio 3 (7 minutes) is a guided meditation to be used with a single potato chip.

Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths.

~Etty Hillesum

“What’s the most resilient parasite? An Idea. A single idea from the human mind can build cities. An idea can transform the world and rewrite all the rules.”

~ Leonardo DiCaprio (Cobb), Inception

An Idea

If you struggle with food and weight you might be ready to wake up to a new idea. Presented here are many ideas that provide an opportunity for you to become fully present in your eating, and in your life, because one reflects the other. Change begins with awareness of *the Now*.

An idea is simply a thought, or stems from a thought. Thoughts become beliefs. My intent is to have you become totally aware of what you currently think and believe, and where necessary, adopt new ideas, or beliefs, that are congruent with good health, ideas that are like the most resilient parasite, ideas that you just can't let go. Your mind will be changed forever. If you don't change your mind, you don't change.

I ask you to be open to changing your ideas about who you are and how you eat, what food is and what it isn't - even your idea of what tastes good and what doesn't. Just be open. You can do this. Of course it requires practice and commitment, not discipline and restriction.

The skills you will learn will be accessible to you at any time and will yield immediate rewards. Please understand that this is not another diet. It's a journey that has no end date.

This program provides a framework that will help you to eat less by becoming much more thoughtful about why, when, where, what and how you eat - without feeling guilty or deprived. Ten keys, supported by reflective questions and Healthy Habit suggestions go together to create a new eating experience, resulting in a healthier and happier mind and body.

Though you can practice one key or the other, they work best when practiced together. I suggest you start where it's easiest for you and work up to the ideas that are more challenging.

Humans are amazingly creative. I know that you can probably find loopholes regarding the guidelines you are about to read that might seem to give you permission to overeat with careless abandon. Recognize and accept this thought process and resulting behavior as resistance. Make no mistake. While experimentation is encouraged, overeating is not.

So let's begin with *The Taste*. Let's sample the keys from which this program is based.

Ten Keys

The following ten keys make up the contents of this program. Together they address the many aspects of creating consciousness around food and eating.

Numbers two, three and four address the process of eating specifically, which are the essence of mindful eating.

Read on to explore each point in more detail. Know that real change occurs when you apply these ideas to your life versus just learning them in your head.

Just imagine being free from the struggle with food and excess weight.

- 1. Tell the truth.** Do you really know when, why, what, where and how you are eating and drinking? Honest assessment leads to awareness, understanding and mindful eating.
- 2. Just eat.** When you eat do nothing else. Eat only while seated at a table and avoid eating while driving, reading, working or watching television. Be fully present when you eat.
- 3. Use your senses.** Prepare and consume food that appeals to your senses and "hear" the messages that come back to you. Let appearance, smell, taste, touch or texture, feeling full or hungry or how different foods make you feel be part of your conscious eating experience.
- 4. Take your time.** Your brain can't process your meal as fast as you can eat it. Practice slowing down, pausing and reflecting between bites. By eating slowly and mindfully you will notice the satisfied feeling in your belly before it's too late.
- 5. Eat what you want.** Don't deny yourself your favorite food. But take full responsibility for what you eat, and eat it mindfully.
- 6. Eat when you're hungry.** Avoid eating out of habit or to console, reward, protect or punish yourself or for any other emotional reasons. Comfort food can hurt you.
- 7. Get interested** in your life. Replace the urge to eat with healthy distractions, particularly those that are incompatible with eating. Get active. Develop new interests. Find a passion.
- 8. Get real.** Eat real, whole food that is fresh and needs some preparation as often as possible. Eat fast food, junk food and processed food when you must.
- 9. Manage your environment.** Set yourself up for success by limiting the temptations all around you, for example: don't buy food you will have to work hard to resist later, create distance from displays of food, stay out of the staff room, avoid the fast food traffic areas, hang out with people with healthy habits.
- 10. Know what you need.** In order to make intelligent, nutritious choices arm yourself with the knowledge of your daily food requirements and how to meet those requirements.

A Word of Warning

Some weight gain may occur as you experiment with what might be new concepts for you. If you continue to gain weight following these guidelines you're probably missing something. It's possible you're focusing on one point at the exclusion of others. Please go back to the beginning and pay attention to the whole package.

You might also consider seeking support.

1. Tell the truth.

Tell the truth. *Do you really know when, why, what, where and how you are eating and drinking? Honest assessment leads to awareness, understanding and mindful eating.*

Have you said, or thought any of these statements about something you were about to eat or drink?

"I'm a big eater."

"There's fruit on this pastry so it's not so bad. "

"One more won't hurt. "

"It's all natural. "

"I work out so I need to eat a lot more."

"No one will know."

"I deserve this."

"If I don't put it on a plate it doesn't count."

"You only live once."

"I have to eat popcorn at the movies."

What's the true story? Justifying and rationalizing are sure signs you're trying to find a reason, or excuse, to indulge. Aren't you hurting yourself?

This might sting a bit, but the truth is, if you aren't willing to tell the truth the rest of these guidelines won't matter.

Perhaps everyone around you is spinning the same yarn. You have to be really clear on what you want and is right for you because it's very easy to get derailed by the masses who will attempt to reel you in to *their* story.

Maybe there is no story - just unconscious overeating. It's better to make a poor choice consciously, than unconsciously. Just own up to it and accept the consequences, versus pretending there aren't any.

Telling the truth also means that you no longer play hide and sneak with food, if that is something that you do. When you tell the truth and own up to what you're doing and how and why you're doing it (without judgment or criticism, please) you are taking responsibility. You will be liberated.

Through your observation and awareness you will come to understand that every choice has an effect, regardless of the story or belief surrounding it. When you start listening to your body, instead of your mind and its stories, you will no longer feel the need to justify. You will eat less and be happier and healthier.

Please understand: you absolutely deserve to receive pleasure from food and eating. You can only achieve that when you tell the truth and let go of the guilt associated by the so called "bad foods." There is room for all foods in a healthy diet. We really don't want to label foods as good or bad, or try to eat perfectly all the time. From now on you get to actually enjoy what you eat, without guilt, because you're being real about it.

Instructions - Throughout the workbook, some questions will resonate for you and others will not. Be as honest as you can about what questions matter and how you answer them.

In addition to the examples given on the page opposite, what are the stories you are telling yourself about what and how you eat and drink?

What benefit/payoff do you get from the stories you tell yourself? (It's not necessarily positive.)

What story are you willing to let go? What story will you replace it with?

Do you hide and sneak food? What would be different if you always ate in view of others?

*This above all, to
thine own self be
true.*

~ William Shakespeare

Consider that when you came into the world you were totally helpless. You were incapable of any sort of accomplishment other than sucking and eliminating, yet you had worth.

- 1. New Healthy Habit Suggestion**
Accept yourself the way you are now, at any size and shape, no matter what - that means no judgment, criticism, self-loathing or punishing yourself. In doing so you will minimize negative behavior and positive change is much more likely to happen.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #1 starting _____ Signed: _____

2.

Just eat. *When you eat do nothing else. Eat only while seated at a table and avoid eating while driving, reading, working or watching television. Be fully present when you eat.*

Have you ever looked down at your food to notice you've finished eating it and you don't remember doing so? There's a good chance you probably felt ripped off and went looking for something more to eat in order to feel satisfied.

Maybe you've never considered paying attention to eating. It's just something you've got to do, or something you do while doing something else. Speed, accomplishment and efficiency rule! "Who has time to sit down and really enjoy a meal?" you ask.

Beware these words, "I'll just grab something ..." or "I'll pick something up." Invariably it means fast food, eating fast, or eating while doing something else that has to be done FAST!

Maybe it's not time or accomplishment that gets in your way. Maybe it's a desire to purposely numb out with food, to not feel your feelings, or to try to feel better. It helps for a while, doesn't it? But it's not a nice place to be. Using food to avoid the present moment doesn't do anything to solve the real problem. It might just create a bigger one, especially if the extra pounds are starting to add up.

To put it in the simplest terms, you must eat to live. What could be more important than nourishment that provides the necessary materials to your cells to support your life? Please consider giving eating some undivided attention. It's deserving.

Our North American tendency to work through lunch is an all too common example of unhealthy multi-tasking that gets in the way of mindful eating, never mind focused work.

What would happen if you brought consciousness to all the things you do? When you're driving you just drive. When you're reading, you just read. When you walk down the street, you just walk down the street. When you eat, you just eat.

Waking up

So just what does it mean to be conscious, mindful or fully present? It simply means to be fully alert. Your senses are heightened and you're open and curious to the present experience. You have complete awareness.

The present moment is the only moment you can impact. It's perfect, really. Yet so often we spend our lives either stuck in the past, which is gone, or worrying about the future, which is a mystery we can't control.

When we are not fully present to our food consumption, we tend to eat for the wrong reasons. We eat things that we think will satisfy, we eat more than we need and consequently we enjoy our food less.

Just eat.

What is most difficult about sitting at a table and being fully present when you eat?

*If you zone out when eating, what is preventing you from being fully present?
Is there something you are avoiding or that you don't want to own or face up to?*

What is the payoff, or hidden benefit, of multi-tasking?

*If you feel you don't have time to "just eat" is there something you need to let go?
What might that be?*

*I eat merely to
put food out of
my mind.
~N.F. Simpson*

2. New Healthy Habit Suggestion

Practice coming into the present moment, especially before you eat and any time you think about it. This simply means - stop what you're doing, slow down your thinking and tune in to your surroundings, your body and your mind. Become aware of how you feel inside and out. For example, are you calm, cold, stressed or shaky? How do you feel?

Breathe slowly and deeply, inhale and exhale, at least three times, bringing together body and mind. Now how do you feel?

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #2 starting _____ Signed: _____

3.

Use your senses. Prepare and consume food that appeals to your senses and "hear" the messages that come back to you. Let appearance, smell, taste, touch or texture, feeling full or hungry or how different foods make you feel, be part of your conscious eating experience.

Appreciating the food you are about to eat, before you eat it, is a step often overlooked. Yet, it could be an integral part of fully enjoying a meal.

To what extent are you calling on your senses when you sit down to eat? For many of us, it's limited to the first few bites, and even then we don't take it all in. Even sound can be part of your eating experience. And I'm not referring to the dinner conversation.

Do you like foods that crunch, like nuts or celery? Or do you prefer foods that last longer in your mouth because you have to chew - chew - chew, like meat or dried fruit? Maybe you enjoy foods that are soft and smooth - like pudding or noodles - that slurp down easy.

Are you listening?

There are many aspects to consider regarding appearance, aroma, taste, texture, and yes, sound. When you do all of that, you might determine that the food you're eating just doesn't measure up. What will you do? Will you continue to eat? Are you a member of the clean plate club? Will you use the new information as an opportunity to change course, so to speak?

Eating mindfully provides the opportunity to pause and reflect, rather than just chowing down and regretting it later. You don't have to overeat. You can stop eating at any time, not because you think you should, but because you are satisfied, or because you discover you don't like or want what you're eating. You're in charge.

When you are fully present and enjoy the sensory experience food has to offer, you will likely get a lot more satisfaction from food and you will need less to eat.

Paying attention to how foods make you feel is also about noticing when you've had enough, before it's too late. I encourage you to check in with yourself regularly. We'll talk more about that when we get to Key #6.

Habit is the 6th sense that overrules the other 5.

~Arab proverb

Use your senses.

Do you take the time to appreciate all the sensual aspects of the food you are about to eat? (taste, texture, appearance, smell, sound) What do you usually do?

My favorite foods, tastes and textures. . .

Foods I definitely don't like. . .

What food(s) does not agree with you? Do you consume it anyway?

How do you know how much to eat or when you've had enough? What do you do?

3. New Healthy Habit Suggestions

a) Take the time to make your meal not only taste good, but look good. Make it important. Use dishes you love, arrange the food with care and attention. Include a variety of colors and textures.

b) Before you take a bite, make sure you take in the aromas and appearance, like you would if you were dining in an expensive restaurant. As you eat, pay attention to aroma, taste and texture. Does the food make a sound when you bite it? Notice how what you are eating makes you feel and how it feels to eat it.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #3a starting _____ Signed: _____
I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #3b starting _____ Signed: _____

4.

Take your time. *Your brain can't process your meal as fast as you can eat it. Practice slowing down, pausing and reflecting between bites. By eating slowly and mindfully you will notice the satisfied feeling in your belly before it's too late.*

Many people who overeat eat very quickly, inhaling their food. Do you fall into this category? If you do and you shift to eating slowly, you will eat less - guaranteed. Now I know what you're thinking.

"That would take too long. Who has time to rest between bites?"

"I like my food HOT."

"How boring."

Excuses, maybe?

People always say they love eating. It's true. Who doesn't love to eat? It can be a wonderful experience. As part of every culture, food symbolizes much more than simply fuel for our bodies. It's important to also receive pleasure and satisfaction from food.

Are you "loving" food when you shovel it in and swallow without barely chewing? Consider "showing love" for food, and for yourself, by slowing everything down and savoring every bite.

Have you ever experienced the sudden, painful feeling of being uncomfortably full? There is an explanation for that. When you eat very quickly you are likely to overeat because it takes approximately 20 minutes for your brain to register the fullness in your belly. Think about the excess quantity of food you can consume in 20 minutes or more. Slowing down and being fully conscious of your eating allows better communication between mind and body.

Remember that food is the fuel that nourishes your body and keeps you alive. Consider how much of your attention nourishment deserves and how much it receives.

Most of us aren't exactly saving lives each day, yet we've got all this urgency and busyness going on. We tend to fill the time we have. If you don't have time to prepare meals, never mind actually sit down to eat them, it might be time to simplify some aspect(s) of your life. But for now, let's concentrate on eating slowly. Try taking your time to eat as soon and as often as you can - until it's automatic.

*No one can get
inner peace by
pouncing on it.*

~Harry Emerson Fosdick

Take your time.

What causes you to eat quickly, or to not pay attention to what you're eating?

What is difficult about eating slowly?

What do you get from eating quickly?

What would be different if you treated food and your body as sacred?

4. New Healthy Habit Suggestions

a) Pick a food that you like and eat it very slowly. Take small bites and chew thoroughly, more than you think is necessary. Do not put more food in your mouth until you have thoroughly chewed, experienced and swallowed the first bite. Observe what happens.

b) When you eat with your family, or with others, notice who eats slower than you. Practice trying to match his or her eating pace. This might make you uncomfortable. Stay with it as best you can.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #4a starting _____ Signed: _____
I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #4b starting _____ Signed: _____

5. Eat what you want.

Eat what you want. *Don't deny yourself your favorite food. But take full responsibility for what you eat, and eat it mindfully.*

The D in Diet stands for deprivation. You really don't have to punish yourself that way. If you don't allow yourself to have foods you enjoy you will never be free from this struggle with food. And you deserve to be free and to enjoy what you eat.

When you eat what you want you don't have to quit, fail or rebel. That would be ridiculous, wouldn't it?

Remember, there is room for all foods in a healthy diet. Now if you want to eat cake, eat cake. Read carefully. This is not permission to binge or to burn the Food Guide. Key #5 does not stand alone. Eating what you want is possible because you will do it with attention to all the keys you are learning. Telling the truth, eating slowly and mindfully, and having a sensory experience with the food will now be part of your eating experience. You will learn to enjoy chewing thoroughly, pausing between bites and staying with the food versus zoning out.

You can eat cake again if you want to, so there's no need to over-indulge. Learning to eat until you're satisfied, versus full, will help. That comes next.

A client once said, "Now that I've let go of feeling guilty about eating, I can eat one cookie instead of fifteen. When I don't feel like I'm doing something wrong I don't need to eat as much. I make better choices."

Surprisingly, there are few negative consequences of eating what you want. That's because when you eat mindfully, and eat for physical hunger (Key #6) the opportunity for overeating, weight gain, guilt and shame is pretty much a non-event. Be forgiving of yourself as you experiment with this step. It might take some time to find your balance. But you will see that eating mindfully and overeating are incompatible.

The key to healthy eating is learning how to change your state of mind. What you eat or don't eat isn't nearly as important.

~ Ronna Kabatznick

What foods have you not allowed yourself to have? Are you afraid to lose control if you have them?

What happens when you don't allow yourself to have certain foods?

Imagine that food is just food, neither naughty nor nice. How might that change things for you?

How do you think eating what you want will impact how much you eat? If you're not sure, experiment using all the keys you've learned.

5. New Healthy Habit Suggestion

If you have dieted for many years and have become very good at it, it might be difficult to listen to your body and to recognize and trust the messages like hunger and fullness. The nature of dieting is to eat what, how much and when you're told and to ignore your natural instincts.

You can learn, or re-learn, to respond to your body's signals. Practice tuning into your body to decide what you want to eat and when you are satisfied. When you were a small child you knew instinctively. It all balanced out. Listen closely and have patience.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #5 starting _____ Signed: _____

6. Eat when you're hungry.

Eat when you're hungry. *Avoid eating out of habit or to console, reward, protect or punish yourself or for any other emotional reasons. Comfort food can hurt you.*

Do you have a habit of eating just because there is food available? Perhaps you've never considered checking in with yourself to notice if you are hungry or not. If you don't know if you're hungry, how do you know when you've had enough?

Some people use work, computers, television, alcohol or drugs to shut out the world or to avoid feeling their feelings. If you're reading this, you might use food. Are you interpreting all your feelings as hunger or a need to eat? Eating might feel good for a while. But using food for reasons other than physical hunger only masks the real problem and creates other ones. This isn't usually a nice place to be. Please let go of any shame and self-loathing if this is your experience. Only self-acceptance and love will get you out of this.

If you've dieted for many years you've probably learned to ignore your body's signals, like hunger and satisfaction. Chances are you've become out of touch with your body and you might be confused about physical and emotional hunger. Your body will tell you everything you need to know when you slow down, get quiet and listen. It could take some practice.

It is very common for people to avoid or disregard their feelings or emotions. But that doesn't make the feelings go away. Even if you don't acknowledge your feelings they still impact your life at an unconscious level. Before you know it, you've developed ineffective coping strategies, like emotional eating, or health issues like high blood pressure.

Our thoughts create feelings, which determine our actions and behaviors. If you want to understand and change a behavior, examine your thinking, beliefs and stories behind the feelings.

Maybe you think you can't handle the pain of whatever is happening, or has happened, in your life. You are probably much stronger than you realize. As author Geneen Roth says, "Grief hurts, sadness hurts, but it's not the feelings that destroy us. It's what we tell ourselves about the feelings."

Emotions are part of being human. While it's important to acknowledge and feel your feelings, you don't have to get stuck in them. That can often be avoided by choosing how you think about your feelings. Repeated, negative thinking patterns are what get you in trouble. If you feel stuck in emotional pain that prevents you from coping and living happily, therapy might be required. Please do what you need to take care of yourself.

Of course emotional eating does not always lead to overeating. And we've all eaten for reasons other than physical hunger at one time or another. Parties are a good example. Food is part of every culture and that's not going to change any time soon. We need to learn to fit food into our lives, versus *rule* our lives, and be aware of the real purpose of food - fuel for our body.

The one necessary reason to eat is because you're hungry! Hunger is both good and normal. Is it possible that a lot of the food you eat is to satisfy your mind instead of your body? The only way to differentiate between true physical hunger and any other desire to eat is to heighten your awareness and get connected to your body. You will need to allow yourself to get hungry. See New Healthy Habit Suggestion 6c.

The exercises on pages 16 - 18 will help you recognize true hunger, get to the source of overeating and meet those needs appropriately. Eating mindfully will also be helpful.

What are some of the messages your body gives you, besides hunger and satiety?

Think about the last time you were really hungry, whether it was an hour or a year ago. What do you remember about that time or feeling? What does physical hunger feel like? What does emotional hunger feel like? Are you afraid to feel hunger?

As far as you can tell, what causes you to eat, other than physical hunger? List everything you can think of. Get to the source by answering questions on the following pages that will help you handle the situation in a healthier way.

Never apologize for showing feeling. When you do so you apologize for the truth.

~ Benjamin Disraeli

6. **New Healthy Habit Suggestions**

a) Start to notice what happens, that is upsetting to you in some way, and how you respond.

b) Make a list of the things you can do to soothe yourself that do not include eating, for example: walking, drawing, bathing, singing, or sawing wood . . . Now work them into your calendar on a daily basis. Ten minutes a day can make a big difference in how you feel.

c) Each time you are about to eat, check in with yourself. Am I hungry? How hungry am I? Rate your hunger/satiety on a scale of 1 to 10 before, during and after eating. A "1" means you're literally starving (not likely or advisable) and a "10" means you're ready to split you are so full (also not advisable).

Starting to eat at level 2 or 3 (before you get dangerously hungry) and stopping eating somewhere between 5 and 6 (satisfied) will make you feel a lot better and do wonders to manage your weight. It's important to allow yourself to get hungry in order to get the most from this exercise.

Remember, there is no reason to overeat because you can eat again when you are hungry. No story telling here - only absolute honesty.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #6a starting _____ Signed: _____

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #6b starting _____ Signed: _____

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #6c starting _____ Signed: _____

6. Eat when you're hungry.

Get to the Source of Overeating by answering the questions below. You're looking to find a healthier alternative to emotional eating that eliminates the problem, versus temporary solutions like substituting foods or trying harder not to eat.

Write exactly what you're thinking and feeling. Don't hold back. This process will help you define current reality and create a picture of your envisioned future. You're done when you have a commitment to at least one new action.

Name it, if you can, and describe the reason you eat unnecessarily. (one reason at a time)
Ex. Stress!! - My boss is demanding, critical. I'm always working to deadlines. I have too much work, little satisfaction. My family is completely unsympathetic and unsupportive.

How does this feel?

Ex. Overwhelming, like nothing will ever change. I'm exhausted and resentful. I just want some peaceful time to my self.

How do you respond? What do you do?

Ex. I eat. All night I'm foraging for food, trying to get some comfort. And sometimes I do. I'm grouchy and on edge.

How do you feel when you respond in that way?

Ex. Like I'm in a vicious circle. I'm frustrated, embarrassed and ashamed I'm at this place.

What actions or behaviors will allow you to be / do / have what you want? Brainstorm.

Ex. Talk to my boss, family.

I need to set some boundaries, ask for support.

Stop trying to do it all in order to keep everyone else happy.

Break it down. What small steps would move you towards your desired state?

Ex. Take a few minutes for myself every day - no matter what is going on.

Start saying what I really think and feel.

Ask for what I need.

Say no once in a while.

Identify at least one new action you will commit to practicing, starting now. Be specific. It doesn't have to be a huge goal, but you should arrive at something that meets the need of the original problem described.

Ex. I am going to exercise my right to say no.

_____ Date: _____ Signed: _____

*Diamonds are
nothing more
than chunks of
coal that stuck
to their jobs.*

~ Malcolm Forbes

Get interested.

7.

Get interested in your life. Replace the urge to eat with healthy distractions, particularly those that are incompatible with eating. Get active. Develop new interests. Find a passion.

Many people who are overweight hold it together during the workday and give it all up at night. Is it the opportunity to eat from the privacy of your home? Stress release? Boredom?

You might need to find new outlets to release your stress and allow you to relax in order to minimize the night-time damage from mindless eating. Releasing and relaxing are good things to do in any case.

Studies show that people who watch a lot of television weigh more. It's not because they're inactive. It's because they're eating while they watch television - mindlessly eating. It's an easy thing to do, what with millions of commercial breaks, advertising food, of course.

Maybe you're stuck in a rut, bored or in a funk. You may be in the habit of putting food in your mouth without even noticing you're doing it because you don't know what else to do, or you're just not doing what you know.

What are some of the things you can do instead of munching mindlessly? The answer is different for everyone. A client decided to make Christmas gifts and found she no longer had a desire to eat in the evenings. She was too busy doing something she loved.

Key #7 is about finding meaning and fulfillment in your life. It's not about filling every hour of your day. If you can discover what is important to you, you will surely find inspiration to channel your energy. There is nothing more motivating than a cause or purpose that tugs at you from the inside. When you live your values and passions you will be less likely to look to food for fulfillment, and more likely to reserve eating for physical hunger.

*If you're alive,
there's a purpose
for your life.*

~ Rick Warren

Have you lost touch with who you are and what's important to you? What's important? What are your personal core values?

Who is important to you?

What would you like to learn? What do you notice others doing that you are curious about trying?

What would relax or rejuvenate you instead of draining your energy?

Make a list. What are some simple things that bring you pleasure? They needn't be grandiose. Sometimes they are things that you used to do.

7. New Healthy Habit Suggestion

- Take some time right away to do the simple things you love to do. (See list above.) Make some long range plans for one of the bigger things you'd like to do.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #7 starting _____ Signed: _____

8.

Get real. *Eat real, whole food that is fresh and needs some preparation as often as possible. Eat fast food, junk food and processed food when you must.*

If you are someone who relies heavily on fast or processed foods, here are a few things to think about. Fast food is deliberately designed to be soft and “fast” to eat so you can consume more of it. It melts in the mouth. You've overdone the calories before you can say, “Pass the ketchup.” And it's all about profit.

For some people, the more you eat processed foods the more you want, because you develop a taste for it. There are reasons for that, and they're deliberately built in to the food.

Food manufacturers, including large chain restaurants, engineer foods to keep you coming back, with calculated layering of fat, sugar and salt. There's a reason we call them food manufacturers. (Don't assume the salad is good for you.) Chemicals mixed in labs, not kitchens, can duplicate virtually any flavor, like a grilled flavor, for example - without the grilling. (Read more in the End of Overeating, by David A. Kessler, MD) We are being manipulated by big business. Do you really want to be part of this?

Restaurants often provide gigantic servings that are the same for everyone, despite our different caloric requirements. Women and children are at a distinct disadvantage.

Eating real food can be really simple.

Preparing real, whole foods at home can save you from a lot of unnecessary ingredients and calories and help you to manage your weight. You can get used to healthy greens, simple soups and fresh fruit if you give it a try. Remember Key #3. Use your senses to guide you.

Good food does not have to be complicated or time-consuming. Scrambled eggs, anyone? Eggs are packed with nutrition and take less than five minutes to cook. What could be faster than that? And having a plan helps tremendously. One of the most common reasons for resorting to “fast” or processed food is being unprepared - no groceries or dinner ideas.

Of course there will be times that the only way you will get to eat will be via the drive-thru or slurping down TV dinners. That's life. When you learn to eat mindfully your “go to” foods often lose their appeal. Don't be surprised when you want to eat real food more often. But let's take one step at a time and do what you need to do. Accept yourself anyway.

If you already eat mostly real food, your challenge might be eating too much of it. Yes, you can have too much of a good thing. When it comes to weight gain or loss a calorie is a calorie, no matter what the source.

We are living in a world today where lemonade is made from artificial flavors and furniture polish is made from real lemons.

~Alfred E. Newman

Get real.

How do you feel about peeling an orange before you can eat it, packing a lunch or cooking a meal from scratch?

What new food or dish would you like to try?

What are your favorite ingredients for adding flavor to foods?

What commitment of time and/or energy in your life are you ready to let go of in order to make room for new priorities? Consider downsizing, delegating or dumping tasks altogether. What comes to mind?

8 New Healthy Habit Suggestions

- a) Try enjoying food preparation and let it become part of your fully conscious experience. Remember to use all of your senses.

b) Try using foods like lemons, limes, (the juice and the peel) spices, fresh herbs, onions, garlic and ginger root for flavor instead of relying too frequently on butter, salt and barbeque sauce (sugar). Of course those things taste good too. Everything in moderation.

c) Do processed foods really save you time? Think about the time it takes to heat chicken fingers in the oven. What simple foods could you put on the table within the same time frame? Research options and ideas.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #8a starting _____ Signed: _____

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #8b starting _____ Signed: _____

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #8c starting _____ Signed: _____

Manage your environment. *Set yourself up for success by limiting the temptations all around you, for example: don't buy food you will have to work hard to resist later, create distance from displays of food, stay out of the staff room, avoid the fast food traffic areas, hang out with people with healthy habits.*

When the rational, thinking brain says, "You don't need that," the rebellious emotional brain eventually wins with something like, "But I really want it." You can remove much of the struggle and make your life a whole lot easier when you manage your environment, thereby eliminating a lot of those internal debates.

When you look in your cupboards what do you see, struggle or dinner fixings? Is your staff room donut heaven? Do you really need snacks in your car?

Someone who is trying to stop drinking or smoking will initially stop hanging out where people are drinking and smoking, right? Well, you still have to eat, but you don't have to tempt yourself unnecessarily as you're learning new guidelines for eating.

Success with managing your environment will come, in part, from what you bring home from the grocery store. You will find previous Keys discussed apply here also. Start by *telling the truth* about what you're buying and why you're buying it. "These are for the kids." Really?

If you're buying *real food* you will spend less time in the centre aisles and more on the perimeter of the grocery store where whole foods are found, minimizing struggle.

Food is everywhere!

The vast majority of people in North America will not go hungry for any period of time. In our world today, food is everywhere. Sporting events, movie theatres, gas stations, corner stores, workplaces and restaurants are offering food at every turn. This means you have to be vigilant because temptations surround you. Being mindful about what, where, when and why you will eat will help you navigate temptation. Having strategies like, "Am I hungry?" (6c) will also guide you. All of this works together, remember?

When you manage your environment you will want to also pay attention to serving dishes. Apparently when we serve ourselves from larger containers we eat more. Dr. Brian Wansink* has done dozens of studies to prove it. With spaghetti, for instance, people given larger packages of pasta, sauce and ground beef prepared 23% more, around 150 calories, than those given smaller packages. And then they ate it. On average, people eat 20 - 25 percent more from larger packages or serving dishes. And it's even worse for snack foods.

Consumers beware. Dr. Wansink says that what is most surprising about all his studies and "kitchen traps" is that almost everyone thinks they're immune to them. We're not!

**Brian Wansink, Ph.D., is the John S. Dyson Professor of Consumer Behavior at Cornell University, where he is the director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab.*

Where are the trouble spots in your environment?

What can you change at home to make tempting food less convenient?

What can you do at work, perhaps for everyone's benefit, to avoid the constant parade of cakes, donuts and muffins?

Where do you need to spend less time?

*Tempt not a
desperate man.*
~ William Shakespeare

9. **New Healthy Habit Suggestions**

- a) Stop buying food, particularly what you want to eat less of, in huge quantities. If you must buy large packages, separate the food immediately into smaller packages and store them further away if they're tempting.
- b) Use smaller serving bowls and plates.
- c) Say "No thank-you" to food offered by family and friends . . . as often as you need to.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #9a starting _____ Signed: _____
I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #9b starting _____ Signed: _____
I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #9c starting _____ Signed: _____

10.

Know what you need.

Know what you need. *In order to make intelligent, nutritious choices arm yourself with the knowledge of your daily food requirements and how to meet those requirements.*

At some point, if not now, you will have nutritional questions. The truth is we can't assimilate all these guidelines at once. Though this may sound contradictory to eating what you want, (Key #5) it's not.

If you've got a lot of weight to lose, how much you eat might have a more immediate impact right now than what you eat. Nonetheless, nutrition matters and information is power. Don't hurt yourself by being uninformed. There is continuously new research, which makes it pretty much impossible to know and do absolutely everything right, so don't get too excited about all the details.

Nutritional information is everywhere, so this is not the place to provide it. Suffice it to say that eating a wide variety of foods from different food groups is key to getting the wide variety of nutrients required. But you don't need a wide variety at one meal, or even in one day. Think in terms of the week. The more variety we have at one time the more we tend to eat.

An ideal diet includes the right proportions of carbohydrates, protein and fat, with good quality carbohydrates being the largest requirement. Don't wait until dinner to eat a balanced meal. Balance that starts at breakfast (yes, it's vital to eat breakfast) will help you feel satisfied throughout the day, consequently managing your energy and your weight.

Food packages, recipes, plates and restaurant servings have all gotten bigger over the years. And so have we. Coincidence? The more you eat, the more you get used to eating. This also works in reverse. You probably don't need as much as you think you do. Find out.

Of course, eating slowly and mindfully will help you determine how much you really need to eat by listening to your body and trusting yourself to make decisions. These are important skills to learn in any case. Nutrition is science to support you.

A healthy diet can make a world of difference to how you look, feel and perform. It will also minimize your risk of developing certain diseases. If you are ready to learn about nutrition, consult a dietitian or search reputable sources on the internet or the bookstore.

In Conclusion

Please be who you are. Take what you need from this program and are ready to learn. While there is a progression of skills to learn presented here, it doesn't have to be this order. It doesn't have to be all the keys. Any one of these concepts could be pivotal for you.

Remember, this is a journey that has no end date. Don't hesitate to get the right support if you are struggling. I hope that you will make peace with food, self and life.

You can do this.

Claudette Pelletier-Hannah

What are you confused about? What nutritional questions would you most like answered? Find out now.

Describe why nutrition matters to you.

What would make it easier for you to get more vegetables and fruit into your diet throughout the day?

What do you need (i.e. systems, support, information) in order to make it easier to eat in a way that supports your health?

Food is an important part of a balanced diet.

~Fran Lebowitz

10. New Healthy Habit Suggestion

Put more emphasis on eating a healthy breakfast that includes protein. Meat, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, nuts and seeds are all good sources.

Eating early in the day stokes your metabolism so that you use calories efficiently, instead of storing them. People who eat a substantial breakfast tend to eat better throughout the day and are less likely to overeat at night.

I commit to practicing Healthy Habit #10 starting _____ Signed: _____

After the audio

Describe your mindful eating experience during the audio exercise with *an orange*.

What would happen if you always ate slowly and mindfully like this - attentive to your body, the food and your senses?

What was it like to eat *chocolate* slowly and mindfully?

What did you notice about this chocolate that you've never noticed before when eating it?

How will this experience impact how you eat chocolate, or anything else, in the future?

What was interesting, or surprising, about eating a *potato chip* slowly and mindfully?

What have you learned that you feel confident and ready to apply on a daily basis?

A series of 30 horizontal lines spanning the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing.



About the Author:

Claudette Pelletier-Hannah is a trained, professional coach who specializes in weight and wellness. Claudette's belief in human potential and her passion for health and wellness inspires her to work in this challenging field.

Through observation, research and hundreds of coaching hours and group programs, this workbook came to be.

Enjoy the journey. Be curious and playful. Now it's just food, and you're in charge.

~ Claudette Pelletier-Hannah



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