



## **PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL EATING**

### **DETERMINE IF YOUR HUNGER IS PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL**

#### **IF EMOTIONAL:**

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that you need some comfort and nurturing right now. Try to identify your present emotion. Remember, at the start of the checking-in process, it is easier to offer yourself a limited number of choices. For now use the 4 basic human emotions of mad; glad; sad and scared.

**VALIDATE:** your feelings are valid. Remind yourself of this and stay with the feeling until you determine why you are feeling that way. Ask what you would need to do in order to lessen or entirely relieve that feeling.

**DO NOT RESTRICT:** if, after you have checked in, you still wish to eat, tell yourself “you need comfort now and it is okay.” Do not restrict yourself as restriction is punishment and only creates negative feelings and a desire to binge. You will not always need food for comfort but you do now and, most importantly, you are working now to find out what you really need and how to give that to yourself.

**REMEMBER THERE ARE NO GOOD OR BAD FOODS** – everything is fine in moderation – if you catch yourself thinking of foods as legal or illegal, remind yourself that this is diet mentality and will only keep you stuck in compulsive eating.

**EAT WHAT YOU WANT** – not what you think you should have – break the mould – don’t be afraid to have pancakes for dinner if that’s what will satisfy you.



**STOP WHEN YOU FEEL PHYSICALLY SATISFIED** – try not to wait until you feel that over-stuffed feeling – check in with yourself throughout your eating experience and be honest about how full you feel. If you want to continue eating despite feelings of fullness, remind yourself that you are seeking to fill a need for comfort and review steps 2 – 4. You may need to do this a few times during some meals but it takes just a second and will relieve the guilt and anxiety.

**REMINDE YOURSELF FREQUENTLY THAT YOU CAN ALWAYS HAVE MORE LATER** – you will not restrict yourself anymore. You can relieve any fear you may have about stopping to check in if you promise that you won't restrict yourself should you identify that you need food for emotional comfort. Just acknowledge and validate that you are engaged in emotional eating and you are feeling a need for food for comfort.

**EAT AS OFTEN AS YOU FEEL THE NEED, REGARDLESS OF THE TIME** – let go of scheduled mealtime eating. If you are not hungry at dinner wait until you are hungry and have your meal then. Likewise, if you get hungry in the afternoon, don't force yourself to wait until dinnertime to respond to your body's signals.

**DO NOT FEEL GUILTY** – guilt is a throwback from the diet mentality. Whenever you catch yourself feeling guilty about what you've eaten or what you want to eat, remind yourself that to restrict yourself is punishment. The more you restrict yourself in terms of when and what you eat, the more you will reinforce the message that you are undeserving and you will continue to be plagued by bad thoughts about yourself.

THIS METHOD OF EATING NATURALLY MAY FEEL ODD TO YOU AT FIRST AND IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR IT TO TAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU TO MASTER.

THIS IS THE WAY TO PUT FOOD BACK IN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS A METHOD OF SUSTAINANCE AND NOT AS OUR SOLE METHOD OF RELEASE AND COMFORT.

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