

RESPONSIVE EATING (conscious eating)

An Internal Cue Eating Style

Definitions- The KEY to being in charge of your eating is learning to eat in response to **hunger** and **fullness**. The concepts defined below will assist you as you re-connect with this natural intuitive style of eating.

✓ **Responsive Eating:** this requires that you initiate eating within 5-10 minutes of noticing hunger. Eating as soon as you sense you are hungry works especially well at preventing overeating and keeps you from getting over hungry. Begin planning ways to be prepared to attend to hunger shortly after you notice it is present. Having a convenient and varied food supply will help, frequently carrying with you is a proactive measure. Responsive eating also includes responsive stopping that is stopping in response to fullness. All eating or not eating in connected to body sensations.

✓ **Body Hunger:** This is physiological hunger which is connected to our physiological need to refuel the body. Sometimes a sense of nausea, "growling", like a humming sensation. Uneasy sensation occasioned by a lack of food.

✓ **Mouth/Mind Hunger:** This is psychological hunger which is a separate sense of discomfort that has nothing to do with sustenance of life or refueling needs of the body. Eating "just because it's there", because you want to put something in your mouth, because it tastes/looks delicious, because it's time for breakfast/lunch/dinner. Food that "beckons" you.

✓ **Food Cravings:** An urge or impulse to eat a very specific food. These cravings can occur for several reasons, some of which are listed here:

Body Hunger Cravings

1. Frequently body cravings are signals from the body for foods containing specific nutrients that you may be needing nutritionally.

Mouth/Mind Hunger Craving

1. Forbidden foods are frequently craved (diet induced craving....a response from feeling deprived). This is usually temporary and diminishes once the foods are "allowed" or no longer forbidden.

2. Foods that represent conscious/unconscious sensations/memories of comfort ("homesick" foods). Eating exactly what your body is craving is the essence of a perfect match, and **prevents foraging**. If you don't eat exactly what you want, frequently you will eat around that food all day (eat 20 diet foods instead of 1 or 2 regular foods). Body cravings are for you to pay attention to, not to ignore or suppress.

See the **Eating Flow Chart** for a pictorial view of how this all works. Very soon you'll be re-connected to your own innate ability that regulates your eating, weight and body size.

RESPONSIVE EATING - definitions continued.....

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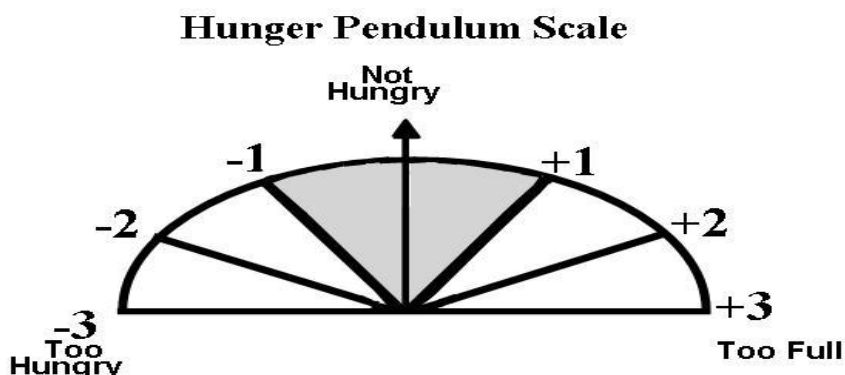
- ✓ **Conscious Eating:** this will assist you with being fully present in the eating experience, be in the moment of eating, not off somewhere else in your thinking. This makes eating more satisfying and leads to eating less. Aspects of conscious eating include the following:
 1. Minimizing eating environment distractions
 2. Focusing on enjoying the appearance and smell of the food before & while you eat it.
 3. Paying attention to the food that is in your mouth (not the next bite).
 4. Keep your thoughts on the eating process.
 5. Journalize any troubling thoughts to consider solutions later, not while you're eating.

- ✓ **Fullness:** A sense of satisfaction in terms of quantity of the food, satiety. Satiety is a physical state of being fed or gratified to, or beyond capacity. The level at which your body feels satisfied will vary from time. Follow the steps below to experiment with sensing fullness:
 1. Take a few bites of your food, then, pause eating. Ask yourself if you are still hungry?
 2. Continue the process of eating, pausing, and assessing hunger and fullness.
 3. When you decide you are no longer hungry, stop eating, save any leftovers and take them with you.

If you are full but don't want to stop: You can eat until you feel somewhat full, or until you are completely stuffed (see: **Hunger Pendulum scale**). Be aware of how both of these feel. When you know you are physically full but you don't want to stop eating is when mind hunger is active, psychological fullness is very important, remember no "yelling" at yourself. Yelling can trigger fear of deprivation, anxiety and overeating. As you continue to treat yourself in a caring, accepting way, you will gradually shift toward stopping when you are physically full.

Be aware that parting with the food can be discomforting at first, in fact it can be like a sad "good-bye". Remind yourself that you will not deprive yourself of that food when your body is hungry for it again, say "I will get to eat that 100,000 times in my life", this will call you and normalizes food.

The **Hunger Pendulum Scale** (below) is useful to visualize while determining your level of hunger. It also illustrates one of the causes of overeating, delaying responding to hunger or "over hunger". You will get better with time at understanding and respecting your body's signals and sensations.



For each -3 there is an Equal AND Opposite +3

Which means for each time you starve yourself or diet there is an equal and opposite binge or over eating episode that will follow, the body can't be tricked, it is fighting to take care of you