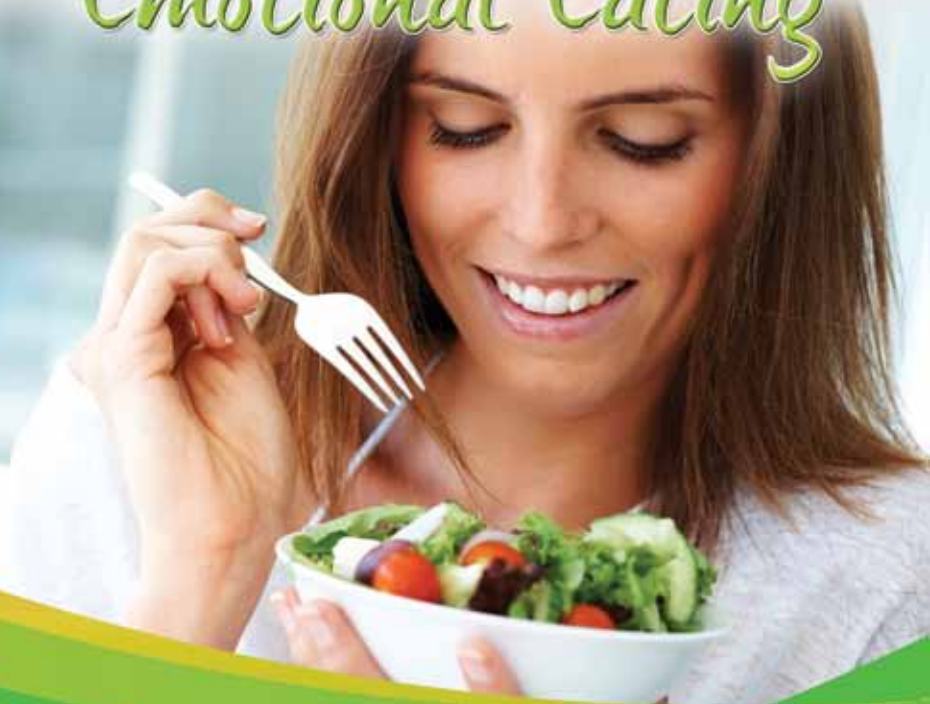




# GETTING A GRIP on *Emotional Eating*



by Katy Joy Freeman, MFT, Mindfulness Instructor

**GETTING A GRIP**

on

*Emotional  
Eating*

800.578-5939

[www.AlkalineLifestyle.com](http://www.AlkalineLifestyle.com)

Getting a Grip on Emotional Eating  
by Katy Joy Freeman, MFT, Mindfulness Instructor

Published by Alkaline People Publishing  
6352 Corte Del Abeto, Suite H  
Carlsbad, CA 92011

Lifelonizers.com / 888-688-8889

All Rights Reserved  
Copyright Alkaline People Press

Printed in the United States  
1st Printing August 2013

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the publisher.

These statements have not been evaluated by the food and drug administration. The preceding information and/or products are for educational purposes only and are not meant to diagnose, prescribe, or treat illness. Please consult your doctor before making any changes or before starting ANY exercise or nutritional supplement program or before using this information or any product during pregnancy or if you have a serious medical condition.

By reading and using the suggestions in these materials, you take sole responsibility for the outcomes. AlkalineLifestyle.com makes no claims, guarantees, or warranties regarding the use or outcomes of these suggestions. Use this information at your own risk. No materials, including this course, can substitute for the advice of your doctor who knows your personal health history. Consult your doctor if you have any questions.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part 1: Overview of Emotional Eating</b> .....	9
• Introduction to Emotional Eating.....	9
• Why Diets Don't Work.....	14
<b>Part 2: Mindfulness &amp; Reducing Emotional Eating</b> .....	21
• Mindful Eating: Creating a Balanced Relationship with Food.....	21
• How Meditation Reduces Episodes of Emotional Eating.....	25
• Easing Up on Yourself: Mindfulness of Self-Love.....	30
<b>Part 3: Tools for Change</b> .....	35
• Mindful Eating Exercises.....	35
• Observing and Describing Your Emotions.....	38
• Setting Intentions to help you Eat Less and Enjoy More.....	41
• Gain Control with Affirmations.....	43
• Reducing Emotional Eating Worksheet.....	45
• Mindfully Fit: Moment-to-Moment Workout Awareness.....	49
• Establishing and Enhancing Your Self-Care Practices.....	57
<b>Resources</b> .....	63
<b>References</b> .....	65

## Part 1: Overview of Emotional Eating



### Introduction to Emotional Eating

For the purposes of this guidebook I am defining emotional eating as the following: **Using food to self soothe or celebrate.** In other words, eating to get away from or enhance emotional states you are in.

The tricky thing with this behavior is that you may not even be aware that you are doing this. It is not to say you will never eat when upset, bored, angry, or sad, or happy. The idea here is to increase your understanding of why you eat the way you do and to assist you in developing a habit of identifying and tolerating feelings that you might not be aware of or otherwise avoid.

I want you to be successful in establishing an Alkaline Lifestyle. You can gain lots of knowledge and KNOW what to do but find yourself not DOING what you know. Why? Eating to self soothe versus out of hunger prevents us from reaching our goals to eat differently. Learning what to eat is the easy part; implementing the changes it what takes time and practice. Once you get a grip on emotional eating and establish a personal action plan to conquer it, you will find it much easier to follow the Alkaline diet.

## **Why is it helpful to understand and decrease episodes of emotional eating?**

- So you can successfully eat an Alkaline Diet
- To improve self-care
- To drop off extra weight
- So you can make better food choices
- To learn healthier ways to deal with emotions
- Most importantly, to deal with your feelings in a responsible way

Many of us are conditioned to use food as a reward or as a way to comfort ourselves. I was recently at a lab getting some blood drawn and there was a young child in front of me getting a shot. He was screaming and crying and his parents were consoling with a promise “be a good boy and you will get your ice-cream when you are done.” And how

many times have you seen a lollipop being whisked into a child’s mouth to quiet them down? I had the same conditioning. Food was offered as a bribe, reward, celebration, “treat”, or to comfort a difficult emotion. Because there are so many ways to address emotional eating, I am going to focus on the aspect I have personally and professionally seen cause the greatest



damage: Using food as a way to avoid difficult emotions. When we eat to manage emotions we tend to develop an unbalanced relationship with food. The intention of this guidebook is to help you create more awareness about when and why you eat and to establish healthy eating habits. In my opinion as psychotherapist, when you get a grip on emotional eating, you tend to feel more capable and confident and your emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual lives are improved. I know this was true for me in my own journey with food and it is what my clients report back to me as well.

### **How are you going to help me understand my emotional eating habits?**

- Introduce you to Mindful Eating
- Identify triggers your emotional eating
- Create curiosity about your thoughts and how they affect your behaviors
- Suggesting some practical ways to significantly decrease emotional eating so you have a useful action plan

### **What can I do to get away from emotional eating?**

Concrete Tools are very important after you develop a loving awareness about your emotional eating patterns. This guidebook includes simple worksheets and tools to help you overcome emotional eating. It is important to have an action plan suited for your individual preferences. Developing a well-balanced lifestyle that

includes sound nutrition, exercise, spirituality, relaxation, and regular self-care practices will significantly reduce or eliminate emotional eating. This book will offer information and ideas on how to cultivate this well-rounded life!

Many of us have learned to be very out of touch with our feelings. We have been mentored by our primary caregivers to stuff our feelings and we end up stuffing our faces instead! We think we are eating because we are hungry when, in reality, many times we are just bored, anxious, sad, angry, disappointed, or insecure to name a few. When we are not aware of how we are feeling and we are eating to avoid uncomfortable feelings, we are at risk of becoming overweight, dependent on food for self soothing, and making poor food choices causing disturbances in the way we deal with life overall. What and when we eat affects us on many levels. A huge portion of the American adult population is engaging in what has been termed "late night eating disorder." This is when most of the calories for the day are consumed after 9pm. The level of stress that has increased for individuals creates a syndrome where they get home from work, start to wind down, and then binge on food to check out and comfort themselves after a long hard day. The clients I see that eat in this way report that they feel badly about themselves as they don't sleep well and wake up very groggy and unclear. They say they feel trapped in a vicious cycle. Once they learn to directly identify and deal with the feelings from the day, they tell me they significantly decrease their late night eating and feel better overall. I am not saying that you will never eat when upset again, but my



hope is that you will make more informed choices as you get a better understanding to your current eating habits. Habits are just behaviors we have gotten used to and can be changed. If you are interested in creating better habits related to food, this is your guide!



I have made this guidebook very simple. If you want to go deeper there are many books listed at the end that can take you on that journey. This is more of a general overview to help you get a basic understanding of how to decrease episodes of emotional eating. Enjoy the discoveries and be patient with yourself as you shift out of emotional eating patterns. They can be stubborn and can really

convince you won't ever change. This is a lie and together we can get a grip! If you find that unresolved emotional issues and/or traumas from your past are blocking your success to ending emotional eating, I highly recommend you seek the support of a professional psychotherapist.

## Why Diets Don't Work

*"I've been on a diet for two weeks and all I've lost is fourteen days." – Two Ton Tony*

Many who use food for emotional reasons struggle with excess weight and then put themselves on a diet. Sound familiar? From time to time I find myself getting pulled into the "diet mentality" trap. It is easy to succumb to with all of the messages we receive "out there" to be trim and fit. This mentality usually creates added tension in my mind, body, and spirit. That is no way to alkalize the body! My hope is to help you shift into lifestyle changes versus getting caught up in instant gratification traps.

1. **"Good food, Bad food Mentality":** Food is food. It is neutral and does not have power over us unless we allow it to. On occasion we may choose to eat desserts, rich foods, or foods we would not feel good eating on a daily basis. We all do this. Thin and healthy people eat desserts and fried food on occasion and enjoy it. When we label food "good" or "bad" we potentially set ourselves up to overeat as we may say "I have already blown it, so I might as well keep going" instead of just eating less of this type of food and enjoying it more! Shift into being curious about how food makes you feel (i.e. irritated, hyper, lethargic, energized, nourished, happy, moody, sick, etc.) and learn to make food choices on how you want to feel.

- 2. Restriction:** Diets are notorious for cutting out food groups that can be very beneficial. Many are aware of the Atkins or South Beach Diets that encourage cutting the carbohydrates and increasing the protein. Being overly restrictive does not help one find peace and freedom with food. You may choose to experiment on your own with finding an eating plan that your body likes, but making strict rules about it can set you up for mental and emotional agony. This creates an inflexible mindset and rigid way of interacting with food. Stress creates acidity in the body. A relaxed stance with food promotes alkalinity.
- 3. Deprivation Mentality:** Due to placing rigid restrictions on your daily food intake, some start to feel very deprived and eventually end up overeating or develop a strained relationship with food or even worse, an eating disorder. You can end up being obsessed with food and have less mental and emotional energy for other important areas of your life.
- 4. Last Supper Syndrome:** This is a pattern of eating “one last big meal” prior to starting your “diet.” You end up treating yourself to foods you feel you “can’t” have on your new diet and over indulge. The problem is this Last Supper happens over and over again whenever you feel you have “blown it.”

5. ***Diets Don't Teach You to Eat in a Balanced and Relaxed Way:*** The diet rules and mentality can set you up to feel like a "failure" or a "cheater." I would rather you learn how to manage your thoughts and feelings about all foods presented to you and then make wise choices based on your knowledge of good nutrition and what your body needs in the moment. It can create stress and anxiety if you can't follow your "diet" plan the way it is outlined. Remember, stress is unhealthy and interferes with healthy digestion.
  
6. ***Diets Generally Can't Be Sustained:*** Rigid plans fail to teach you to be at ease with all the foods you may encounter for the rest of your life. You tend to create more anxiety around food when you diet. Serious problems with disordered eating can also develop with too much emphasis on dieting. Furthermore, due to restrictions and inflexibility, diets can't be maintained over time, nor should they be. People get confused about what to eat and not eat when on a "diet." Changing your lifestyle and developing better habits around food choices is what I recommend.
  
7. ***Quick Fix Mentality:*** Diets do not teach tolerance for the process. We have to learn to be patient. It takes time to create awareness about our food habits and get a grip on how to handle them in a way where we can make lasting changes. **Slow change over time** is what I recommend. This means we have to make some lifestyles choices that support long-term weight loss. Following the guidelines on the Alkaline Lifestyle Site

will assist you in making safe, sound, and long lasting changes in your eating and in your overall health habits.



**Why are so many of us drawn to diets even though we know at some level they do not work?**

The research is clear that dieters tend to gain all their weight back and more due to the reasons listed above. Take, for example, Kirstie Alley who has lost and gained enormous amounts of weight in the public eye on her “diets.” Sure she looks fantastic for a short time, but then all the weight and more faithfully returns. She is just one of many who continue to remain stuck in this diet mentality trap. It is extremely hard on the mind, body, and spirit to go up and down in your weight. Trust me, I know from personal experience. Fortunately I have maintained a significant weight loss for over 22 years now following the principles of the Alkaline Lifestyle.

## So what do diets provide?

In my opinion, these are the top three:

- 1. Structure:** When we are feeling out of control, the structure can be helpful and comforting. They can get us out of our everyday mindless eating and create more awareness of poor eating habits we may be engaging in.
- 2. Portion Control:** Living in the “supersize me” culture can distort our ideas about how much to eat. Diets remind us about balanced portions of food to take in.
- 3. Education about better nutritional choices:** Many diets actually offer some great education about what to avoid for optimal health such as refined sugars, white flowers, processed foods, etc.



All these are positive attributes of a “diet” but you can do those things without going on a rigid “diet.”

The Alkaline Lifestyle provides you with nutritional educational understanding on how to enjoy foods that make up a balanced diet. You eat to Alkalize and from time to time enjoy other foods that may not be recommended on the Alkaline Lifestyle food plans. As I mentioned above, that is normal and that is okay! In fact, it is healthy! The key is to eat without judging ourselves. Following a diet interferes with your ability to tune into your body and needs for each meal. Cultivating intuitive eating habits are both liberating and healing. You can make your own structure, write things down, track what you eat, have a plan, etc. but it will be your personal plan and more in tune with what you need! A lifestyle of using inner and out wisdom to make food choices is what works and it what we encourage.

Take a few minutes to think about your mentality around dieting. What thoughts can you adapt that will help you avoid the diet trap?





## Part 2: Mindfulness & Reducing Emotional Eating



### Mindful Eating: Creating a Balanced Relationship with Food

*“Mindfulness is free, We are born with it”*

- Venerabel U. Silanansa, Burmese Monk and Teacher

Mindfulness helps us pay closer attention to our habits in a non-judgmental and gentle way. Mindful eating is an effective way to observe your emotional eating patterns so you can then work on ways to change your relationship with food.

First, let me help you understand about Mindfulness practices and how they can be of benefit for you. It has been scientifically proven that Mindfulness helps people with emotional and physical disorders. Research conducted over the past twenty-five years shows mindfulness training can do all of the following:

- Decrease Depression
- Decrease Anxiety
- Help a person cope with eating disorders
- Reduce fatigue and anxiety
- Improve self-esteem
- Decrease tolerance to stress
- Decrease pain levels and the experience of pain
- Slow the heart rate and decrease blood pressure
- Strengthen the body’s immune system
- Increase the ability to relax
- Improve health

When you practice Mindfulness, you become **Aware!** You begin to slow down and listen to your body's wisdom. As this happens you will notice a desire to take better care of yourself. You will want to begin to nourish all areas of your life, including your body! When our bodies feel good, we feel good. What we eat has a profound influence on our body, mind, and overall sense of well-being. With the Practice of Mindfulness you can eat in a way that creates more happiness in your life. You can also get out of the habit of eating when stressed or emotional.

The pace of life can be mentally and physically exhausting at times. We have hopes of slowing down for a nice meal but the pressure to rush and get on to the next thing competes with this nice idea. Thus, we may find ourselves picking up fast food, eating while working, driving, or on the phone. We may feel it is too much effort to sit at a dining table to slowly enjoy a meal. Instead we may wind up mindlessly eating in front of the television, not fully chewing, or not eating at all! And if we do have a meal at the dinner table, often our minds have a hard time slowing down just because it is time to eat. All of this contributes to poor habits around eating. If you are mindlessly engaging in poor eating habits, you are most likely not giving your body the true nourishment it really needs. When you eat mindfully, you are more aware and attuned to the factors that lead you to eat even when you are full and/or deprive yourself when you are really hungry. We need to give the bodies the right fuel so we can operate at our best.

One purpose of being mindful in each moment is to develop a close and loving relationship with your mind. You begin to notice what you are feeling, thinking, and you become less reactive to the thoughts, emotions, and cravings you have. You become more aware of why you do what you do. You learn to use whatever comes up in your awareness to learn about what you truly need in any given moment.

Mindful eating is less about what you eat and more about ***the way you eat.***

Susan Albers, in her eat, drink, and be mindful workbook describes three steps to mindful eating using the mind and mouth:

- 1. Tune in to the physical characteristics of food:** Use your senses. How does the food taste? Use your tongue to feel the texture. Gauge the temperature. Notice the aroma. Ask yourself: "How does this really taste? What does it feel like in my mouth? Is this something I really want? Does it satisfy my taste buds? Is my mind truly present when I take a bite so that I experience it fully?"



- 2. Tune in to the repetitive habits and the process of eating:** Notice how you eat. Pay attention to times you are eating on autopilot. When on autopilot mode, you are more likely to eat out of habit. Ask yourself: “Is there something I do over and over again that leads to mindless eating? Do I have any ingrained habits concerning how I snack? When I begin to eat is there something that gets in the way of my feeling in control?”
  
- 3. Tune in to mindless eating triggers:** Become aware of what prompts you to start and stop eating. Is your kitchen a hot spot for snacking? Does a hard day (or other feeling, such as stress, discomfort, or boredom) lead to a overeating? Do judgmental thoughts like “I am so stupid?” trigger mindless eating? Get to know what triggers you to eat when not physically hungry. When you know your triggers, you can anticipate them and plan ahead on how to make more conscious and healthy choices. Ask yourself “What am I feeling? Am I physically or emotionally hungry? Is my environment, emotional state, or dining companion helping or hurting my efforts to eat mindfully?”

Now that you have the basic understanding of what Mindfulness is, the next section will discuss how a formal Mindfulness practice can further aid you in decreasing and/or eliminating emotional eating habits.

## How Meditation Reduces Episodes of Emotional Eating

*"True Intelligence operates silently. Stillness is where creativity and solutions to problems are found."*

-Echart Tolle, Stillness Speaks

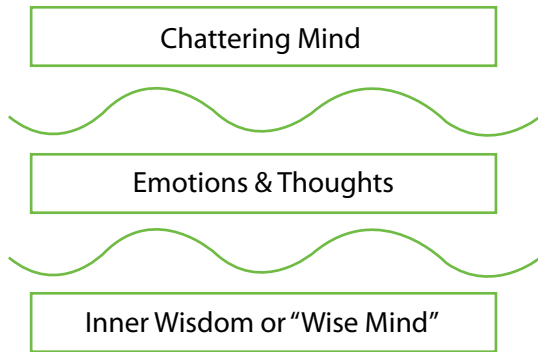
Meditation has been scientifically proven to benefit the mind and body. Some of the value is from the feelings of relaxation, but most of it comes from how meditation helps us to become more aware of patterns of thinking, reacting, in everyday situations – meditation allows a few moments to let our “inner mind or wisdom” to take control, instead of all our habitual patterns.

Mindful meditation provides the mind with a few minutes of quiet “space” that allows us to just observe what is going on in our minds rather than reacting to things as we usually do.

The goal is not about making our minds go “blank”. It is learning to be with what is happening in the moment without judgment to create more awareness of what is happening for you. It also allows us to be more aware in positive ways of experiences, such as eating favorite foods, which are better when we attend to them without worrying or being distracted.

Our minds have both the surface, habit parts – which are still important – and our deeper wiser parts that are there but are often hard to find, especially if we are feeling anxious or upset in some way.

The mind has layers with the “chattering mind” at the top, more stable patterns of emotions and thoughts below that, and “inner wisdom” below that.



The process of mindfulness meditation first allows us to be aware of the chattering mind; with practice, the chattering mind becomes somewhat more still and allows us to observe and mindfully experience thoughts and emotions more clearly. These thoughts and emotions often relate to everyday behavior and choices. As we continue to practice and learn to “be” with sometimes difficult thoughts and emotions, we pave the way to connect with the lower level – your Inner Wisdom - which everyone has. It may take some time to “get this” so please be patient with the process.

## **Basic Mindful Meditation Technique**

### **1. Get Settled**

Sit comfortably. Press the sitz bones down and lift through the crown of your head to elongate the spine. Sit upright, yet relaxed. If you are in a chair, resist the tendency to lean against the back of the chair – this can compress the abdomen and make deep breathing more difficult.

### **2. Tune into the Present Moment**

Bring yourself fully present in your body through the following five steps:

**Breathe:** Let your breath flow freely and naturally in and out.

**Relax:** Consciously soften your muscles and let go of any mental, physical, or emotional tension.

**Feel:** Open up to all of the sensations flowing through you.

**Watch:** Observe the moment closely, without grasping what is pleasant or pushing away what is painful.

**Allow:** Accept yourself and your experience exactly as it is, letting go of the need to change it in any way.

### **3. Deepen the Breath**

Place your attention on the natural flow of your breath. Gradually deepen the breath until you are taking slow even breaths, filling and emptying the lungs completely. The lower belly will rise as you breathe in and collapse as you exhale. Take ten more slow, even breaths.

#### **4. Watch the Breath (*Mindfulness Breath Meditation*)**

Let go of any effort to control the breath. Rest your attention on the natural flow of breath, watching it rebalance. At first, focus on either the movement of air in and out of the tip of the nostrils, or the rise and fall of the belly. When concentration is established, broaden the scope of your awareness to include the full spectrum of sensations, feelings and thoughts passing through you. Be intimate with the flow of your inner experience by feeling fully and observing closely. Ride the wave of sensation. Notice the shift into being an “observer.” Some call this Witness Consciousness. If you become lost in thought, just notice this, and bring your attention back to your breath. You can simply say “I am thinking.” Do not get caught up in the story line of the thoughts. It is okay to drift off. Just label it as thinking and lovingly come back to the breath. Have patience with yourself. Simply notice the distractions and return to the breath as soon as you become aware you have drifted off. There is no judgment; no right or wrong way to do this follow the breath meditation. Enjoy the time training your mind to calm down.

#### **5. Let Go of All Technique**

Once you have followed your breath for a few minutes, drop all technique. Let go of any effort to focus the mind or understand your experience. Allow who and what you naturally are to radiate out without any restrictions. Rest there until you feel finished.



It is helpful to find a quiet and peaceful place to practice your mindful meditation on a daily basis. I suggest setting aside the same time each day so it becomes a habit. Plan it out ahead of time and make it a priority. You can make this place special by lighting a candle, placing flowers or plants in this area, or some objects that have a special meaning for you. If you choose to sit outside, let the natural surroundings be your décor! Start with five minutes a day and work your way into 20 minutes each day. It takes time to settle in. Be patient with yourself. As one wise yoga teacher, Tom Kelley, once told me “Joy awaits the patient soul.” Meditation gets easier with practice and you will find you yearn for this quiet time to tune into your inner world.



## Easing Up On Yourself: Mindfulness of Self-Love

“Progress not Perfection”

-Alcoholics Anonymous Proverb

Creating healthy eating habits can be frustrating if we do not practice compassion for ourselves. It is wonderful that you are willing to evaluate your eating patterns and make positive changes to improve your health. Making the changes with a loving attitude is much more effective than beating yourself up and being too hard on yourself. This section offers some ideas on how to cultivate more self-compassion for the process of change.

We can be hard on ourselves in many ways:

- Being Self-critical
- Expecting perfection
- Taking on too much self-blame for mistakes
- Shaming ourselves - ***Shame is one of the most significant ways we participate in cruelty to ourselves.***



Merle Fossum and Marilyn, Authors of Facing Shame, define shame as: “Self looking in on itself and finding self-lacking or flawed.”

We often experience shame in public which causes us to feel vulnerable and exposed. Peers, schools, parents, authority figures, and other institutions can invoke feelings of shame. We can also bring shame on ourselves when we make statements like:

1. *“I should have...”*
2. *“Why did I....?”*
3. *“I am so stupid”*

Shame increases negative feelings, making you feel worse about yourself.

1. **Feelings of Anxiety** plus shame can result in panic attacks.
2. **Feelings of Depression** plus shame can result in deeper feelings of despair.
3. **Feelings of Anger** plus shame can result in feelings of rage.

Tara Brach, in Radical Acceptance, describes shame as the “trance of unworthiness.” She describes this trance as a toxic gas: “Feeling that something is wrong with me is the invisible and toxic gas I am always breathing.”

## **Ways to Practice Self-Compassion to Reduce Shame**

*"A man can stand a lot as long as he can stand himself."*

-Axel Munthe

- 1. Lighten Up** – Decide to stop beating yourself up and give yourself a break by lightening up and staying “in the now”; learn to laugh more and not take yourself so seriously. Practice being more playful. Smile more. Engage in fun activities.
- 2. Be Mindful of “Progress not Perfection”** – embrace, accept, and have compassion for your own imperfections. Stay in the now (living in the present and not the past and/or future) and be gentle with yourself. Remember that progress mean learning and moving forward – SELF- ACCEPTANCE is the key here!
- 3. Positive Self Talk** – focus on your uniqueness, talents, skills, qualities. Practice countering negative self- talk. For example:
  - **Negative self-thought** – *No matter what I do, it’s never going to be good enough, so why try?*
  - **Mindful Counter thought** – Stay the course. Doing is success. Stop being so hard on yourself. Do the best you can, and things will develop over time. Stay “in the now,” and let go of judging yourself.
  - **Negative self-thought** – *I am afraid to make a mistake or risk failing, because if I fail I will feel shame.*

- **Mindful Counter thought** – Mistakes are inevitable in the process of growth and learning. Learning from your mistakes leads to knowing yourself. Ignoring your mistakes leads to denial and delusion. Embrace your mistakes and understand yourself.
- **Negative self-thought** – *If only others would like me. Then I would be happy.*
- **Mindful Counter thought** – My happiness lies within me. Happiness that is externally based is short-lived. Long-term happiness is not based on things, achievements, or the validation of others.



## **Activities to Promote Self- Acceptance:**

1. Identify three talents and skills that you possess. Record them in your journal. Identify three ways you can trust and can be trusted (for example: I can be relied on; I am a good friend; I have a good heart). Record them in your journal.
2. Take a walk in nature by yourself. Notice the surroundings. Find an isolated spot. Sit and breathe. Listen and be quiet. Focus on the good things in your life, as well as your talents and skills. Have gratitude for your life. Let what comes flow and do not judge.
3. Write a compassionate letter of encouragement to yourself and send it in the mail.
4. Take a few moments now and reflect on ways you can ease up on yourself. Decide to be kind to yourself. Allow yourself to be happy and at ease.

## Part 3: Tools for Change



### Mindful Eating Exercises:

*“Did you ever stop to taste a carrot? Not just eat it, but taste it? You can’t taste the beauty and energy of the earth in a Twinkie.” - Astrid Alauda*

Use the following ideas when tempted to engage in emotional eating:

1. Pause before you decide what to eat. Tune into your level of hunger and fullness. Ask your body what the best food choice and amount would be for that snack or meal. If you are feeling reactive and upset about something use the following mindful step to do some simple reflection before you eat:

**STOP** – pause, take a time out from what is happening

**BREATHE** – relax the body and create a calming effect (decrease sympathetic responses and increase parasympathetic responses)

**REFLECT** – notice what you are feeling, what you are thinking, what is happening in your body

**CHOOSE** – with mindfulness choose a response that will benefit you

2. Urge Surfing Technique. Simply notice the urges you have to eat when not truly hungry. Label the feeling you are having. Close your eyes and see the urge to eat like a big wave. Allow it to be as big as it needs to be. You can even imagine yourself surfing on this big wave. Ride it out. The the urge will eventually crash and subside just as a wave always evens out and gently flows onto the shore. Breathe through the urges; notice them without giving into the urge to eat.
3. Simple behavior changes (ie, if sitting on the couch at night to watch TV is a trigger, stretch instead or start having an agreement you will not eat on the couch)
4. Pause half way through a meal and see if you are satisfied. Practice leaving food on your plate or wrap it up for later if you are satisfied and no longer hungry.
5. Practice gratitude before you eat.
6. Practice having one silent meal a day where you only focus on eating and savor each bite, slowly and mindfully. Notice what the experience is like for you.
7. Avoid eating when stressed. Wait until you are calm and settled inside to eat your snack or meals. Take time to journal, exercise, or talk things over with a



friend if needed to get centered and in a place of balance.

8. Use the HALT technique. You simply ask four basic questions of yourself when tempted to eat when you are not hungry.

**H** – Hungry: Am I hungry?

**A** – Am I Angry or feeling any other strong emotion?

**L** – Am I lonely? If so, what do I need to do to feel connected with myself or others?

**T** – Am I tired? If so, rest.



## Observing and Describing Your Emotions

*"Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it,"*

– Vincent Van Gogh, 1889

This exercise will help you create more awareness about what emotions you are dealing with and how to manage them in a more productive way, thus decreasing the tendency to eat to manage your emotions. **Emotional episodes have three parts to them: thoughts, physical sensations, and actions.**

Pick one strong emotion that you had today (e.g., fear, sadness, grief, joy, anger) and complete the following:

1. **Emotion** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Event** (who, what, when, where) that started the emotion. (For Example: I went for a drive with my husband yesterday was not paying attention to me when I was talking to him).

Write down the facts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are your **thoughts/assumptions** about the situation? (For example: My husband does not really love me).

---

---

---

4. What are **you sensing in your body** (body changes)? (For example: I have a knot in my stomach; My heart is pounding)

---

---

---

5. What is your **body language**? (Facial expression, gestures, posture)?

---

---

---

6. What do you **feel like doing** (desire to act)? (For example: I want to run away where no one can find me; I want to yell and scream).

---

---

7. What **did you do** (actions)? (For example: I had several cookies and a fancy coffee drink to comfort myself).

---

---

8. What consequences does the emotional experience have on you (state of mind, other emotions, behaviors, thoughts, and memories)? (For example: I stayed in a bad mood all day. Everything bothered me and I began to think about how awful my life has been and that bad things always happen to me and that I am always neglected and left out).

Use the space below to write out any insights you want to remember:

## Setting Intentions to help you Eat Less and Enjoy More

*“Intention combined with detachment leads to life-centered, present-moment awareness”* – Deepak Chopra, The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success

I have come to deeply love and appreciate the practice of setting intentions. They are a wonderful way to identify what you want to accomplish. When setting an intention you simply state what you want to focus on and trust that you will naturally gravitate toward that goal. It’s a way to become more conscious about what you are doing each moment. It’s also a way to be more successful with your long-term desire to eat an Alkaline Diet.



Your intentions can be general or specific. Some examples of daily intentions to recite are listed below:

- *I intend to eat fresh fruits and vegetables today*
- *I intend to exercise today*
- *I intend to remain relaxed and peaceful about my food choices today*
- *I intend to start my day with deep breathing and have fresh fruit for breakfast*
- *I intend to eat only when I am hungry*
- *I intend to eat one mindful meal today*
- *I intend to enjoy a green salad today*
- *I intend to take the stairs instead of elevators today*
- *I intend to drink 8 glasses of Ionized Alkaline Mineral water today*
- *I intend to have an attitude of love and acceptance towards myself and others today*
- *I intend to remain curious about my current eating and exercise patterns and find ways to improve my health habits*
- *I intend to spend 10 minutes writing in my journal about my experience with food today*

Spend a couple of minutes each day to set at least one intention for yourself. Have fun with them and allow them to bring you peace of mind and a joyful heart!

## Gain Control with Affirmations

*“All thought is creative. What have you created lately?”*

- Catherine L. Taylor, *The Power Of Affirmations - Reshaping Your Mind, Body And Destiny One Thought At A Time.*

Affirmations in go along nicely with the practice of mindfulness. Once you have begun to create more awareness about yourself, you can use affirmations to enhance the desired positive changes in your life. Affirmations are positive statements that create awareness and generate feelings of well- being. They are a tool used to move you toward the positive intentions you are aspiring to. The use of affirmations is like keeping your mind in shape. Just as one needs to exercise regularly to stay fit so it is with your thinking. Affirmations are one way of keeping your mind in tip top condition! Affirmations work best when they are practiced regularly and with an open heart. They can be used to assist you in any area of your life. They can



be done anytime, anywhere. When using affirmations it is important to be compassionate with yourself. Opposing thoughts may pop into your mind when you first begin using affirmations. That's okay; just notice the competing thoughts and then move on with your affirmations. You can use affirmations as a way to ground yourself in your mindfulness practice.

**Examples of Mindful Eating Affirmations:**

- I easily and effortlessly stay focused in the Present Moment
- I allow my body and mind to be peaceful while I enjoy my meal
- I am willing to change.
- I can do this
- I have the power to change my life.
- Yes, I can!
- My breath keeps me anchored in the Present Moment
- I give my full attention to what I am eating
- I eat in a calm and relaxed manner
- I naturally want to eat live and fresh fruits and vegetables
- I eat foods that Alkalize my body
- I am naturally drawn to fresh fruits and vegetables
- I taste my food and savor the experience of eating in a relaxed manner

Affirmations are a great tool to keep you centered, positive, and peaceful. I usually pick one or two to focus on during the day. They can be particularly helpful if you are having urges to overeat or engage in mindless eating.



## Reducing Emotional Eating Worksheet

*"You must begin to think of yourself as becoming the person you want to be."* - David Viscott, American author, speaker, trainer

Affirmation: "I will allow myself to calmly respond to all the situations presented in my day without using food"

### **Create Awareness by Getting to Know What Triggers Emotional Eating**

What are the top three situations that trigger your episodes of emotional eating? This does not have to be a binge. It simply means you are eating when not hungry due to emotional reasons (including celebrations, wanting to calm yourself, or to take your mind off something.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Have a Plan

Think ahead of time how you will handle frustrations, disappointments, surprise upsets, celebrations, and perceived setbacks.

List three things you can do to manage food when you notice the urge to engage in emotional eating:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## **Be Kind to Yourself... NO MATTER WHAT**

Commit to being compassionate with yourself in the good and challenging times. Get into the habit of being your own best friend and let go of putting yourself down and criticizing yourself when you engage in emotional eating.

List three things kind statements you can encourage yourself with when you give into the habit of emotional eating:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your self talk may need some fine tuning. Most of us are way too critical of ourselves and this creates more tension and frustration. Many judge themselves for having “negative” emotions. The truth is that all of your emotions are okay. It is how you handle them that is important. Be kind to yourself in the process of identifying and allowing all of

your emotions to be okay. Below is an example of mindful self-talk to help you accept all of your emotions and feel at ease: (fill in the last three spaces with your own words of reassurance)

1. It is okay to be upset
2. I allow myself to let go and get calm
3. I can handle what is happening without using food to calm myself
4. This frustration will pass
5. I give myself permission to get clear before I eat
6. I accept all of my emotions
7. I breath in deeply and release tension as I breath out
8. I can celebrate without using food as the reward
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

What emotions do you have a hard time allowing yourself to feel? Why? Are you willing to be at peace with all of your emotions? Use the space below to journal your responses:

## Mindfully Fit: Moment-to-Moment Workout Awareness

*"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."* - Mark Twain

Exercise is beneficial on many levels and we can use it to deal with intense emotions. Engaging in physical activity can help calm the body, soothe the mind, and assist you in solving problems. Taking a walk or exercise class are great ways to deal with built up stress from your day. If you are angry, trying a kickboxing class or challenging aerobics class will take the edge off so you can think more clearly. If you do not have access to classes, put on your favorite music and do some push-ups and sit-ups to blow off steam. Or perhaps you need some gentle stretching or yoga to soothe your soul and connect with yourself in a quieter way. Slower movement will release tension and help you move beyond the emotion and connect with your inner wisdom. I have used exercise as a positive coping skill since I was a young teenager. Besides releasing more endorphins into your system so you feel better, you are at less risk to have an emotional eating episode if you try exercise first when upset versus taking a trip to the kitchen or the nearest drive-through restaurant!

We must make time to exercise so we can release stress, promote confidence, feel physically fit, and have an overall sense of well-being about our life and the world around us. Staying fit is an important part of the Alkaline food lifestyle and it is a powerful way to take care of yourself. You can naturally reduce anxiety and depression with a

regular fitness routine. This section will help you understand the concept of mindfulness and how you can apply it to your workouts.

If you are busy and looking for creative ways to incorporate movement, deep breathing, meditation, and relaxation into your life you will find this mindful approach to fitness very helpful.

Mindfulness practices emphasizes:

- 1. Breathing:** Conscious breathing is used to bring you into the moment to calm your mind, body, and spirit. *Are you breathing deeply?*
- 2. Observing:** You learn to observe what is going on with yourself without judgment. ***Are you critical of yourself?***
- 3. Loving-Kindness:** You learn to let go of the habit of self-judgment and adopt a stance of friendliness and compassion towards yourself. ***Do you talk to yourself the way you would to your best friend?***
- 4. Letting Go:** As you notice negative thoughts that arise, you learn to quickly let go of them and replace them with friendlier thoughts. You also learn to detach yourself from people, places, and things that create unhappiness in your life. ***Are you able to release negativity in your life?***

So what does this have to do with fitness? For starters, mindfulness can be used in every area of your life. When my husband I began to practice *mindful fitness* we noticed the following:

- 1. Increased enjoyment:** We are more engaged in our activities and having fun with our time to get fit. We pay more attention to the things we really like and do those activities more often. We notice the positive changes in our body and enjoy how our fitness level improves.
- 2. Deeper Breathing:** We are more aware of our breathing habits and have engaged in breathing deeply, which had helped us relax and release stress more effectively.
- 3. Increased Self-Acceptance and Love:** We began to exercise out of love for ourselves vs. dissatisfaction. In my youth I began to exercise to lose weight and change my outer appearance. At that time I was motivated out of self-hatred. I did not like the way I looked and I wanted to change that. My husband, on the other hand, exercised to get “bigger” and did not like being so thin. He was very critical of himself and would not wear workout shorts as he did not want to expose his “skinny” legs. Using a mindful approach to fitness we offer love and kindness to ourselves and thank our bodies for being unique and for working with us to remain healthy.

4. **Increased Sense of Well-Being:** We incorporate loving intentions and affirmations into our fitness routine and feel more at peace with ourselves. After a mindful workout we notice we are more prepared to face the rest of our day or evening with more calmness of mind and clear focus.
  
5. **Decrease in physical injuries:** As we pay attention to how our bodies are feeling each day, we have learned to gear our exercise routine accordingly. For example, in the past we would have a plan of what we were going to do and whether we felt like it or not, we would do it. At times, this caused pain and injury. Now we listen to our bodies and adapt our workouts to suit the needs of our bodies in the moment. Our bodies are different every day and we have learned to honor this. We are all for a good challenge and for pushing ourselves when appropriate, but we now have a better understanding of when to do that.

You may be wondering what a *mindful workout* looks like. I have outlined a mindful workout. Feel free to add to or modify my suggestions in any way you like.





## Mindful Fitness in Motion: A 7-Step Action Plan

*"You will never find time for anything. If you want time, you must make it."* - Charles Buxton

- 1. Goals:** Set them. What do you desire from your workout? Do you want to build strength, endurance, flexibility, and confidence? You can also use your exercise routine to improve your mood, increase self-esteem and decrease anxiety.
- 2. Choose** your activity: Have fun, try new things, and vary your workouts. The body likes cross-training. To get the most out of your fitness program have several activities to choose from. The heart needs a workout so endurance activities are wonderful. Flexibility-based exercises (Yoga, tai-chi, Pilates, etc.) aid in preventing injuries as well as tone and firm the body.
- 3. Hydrate yourself:** Proper hydration sustains the body's physiological responses in all activities, but the physical and mental stresses of athletic training and competition magnify the importance of hydration. Numerous studies conducted on athletes since the 1940s have demonstrated that even **mild dehydration impairs performance**. Drink ionized, alkaline mineral water before, during and after your workout.

- 4. Pause every few** minutes and notice how you are feeling. Scan your body and consciously relax tense muscles. Notice the different sensations you are experiencing. If you are engaging in a sport or activity where it is not practical to pause every few moments (such as running, swimming, rowing, biking, etc.) then just take some time to observe your pace and check in with yourself to see how you are feeling. Decide if pushing yourself is the wise thing to do. Also ask yourself if you need to gear back and decrease your intensity. Observe your thoughts and offer yourself some encouragement. Avoid criticizing your body or performance.
- 5. Breathe** deeply: Shallow breathing causes stress and anxiety. Deepen your breath and enjoy the calming effects this has on you during your workout. Breathe into areas of tightness. Use the breath to release tension.
- 6. Visualize** stress melting away: Studies have shown that stress plays a part in creating disease in the body. "In a review of the scientific literature on the relationship between stress and disease, Carnegie Mellon University psychologist Sheldon Cohen has found that stress is a contributing factor in human disease, and in particular depression, cardiovascular disease and HIV/AIDS". As we stress out with all the demands of life, our bodies become acidic and toxic. Use your exercise time to visual perfect health and vitality. Imagine all the ways you will nourish

yourself with loving thoughts, nutrient dense foods (organic and live greens, sprouts, fruits, nuts, and seeds). Doing these things will help bring the body's pH back into an alkaline state of balance.

- 7. Stretch:** It is important to take the time to unwind, lengthen your muscles, and thank yourself for taking the time to care for your body. In our rushed world it can be tempting to skip this portion of your workout. Challenge yourself to incorporate at least 10 minutes of stretching at the end of your exercise routine. Stretching prevents injuries, detoxifies the organs, and calms the mind. It's a great time to cool down and continue to let go of stress. While you are at it, you can engage in a mini-gratitude meditation. As you are enjoying the stretching silently give thanks for 11 things in your life. Pause after each thanksgiving and appreciate all the blessings you enjoy. Smile and take your time.

Having a regular fitness routine is incredibly rewarding. The lifestyle of optimal health includes being an active person. Make the most of it and have fun! When you are relaxed and refreshed it is easier to create the wonderful life you want and deserve. It is my sincere hope that you try this *mindfully fit* approach and reap the many benefits it has to offer.

Note: These statements have not been evaluated by the food and drug administration. The preceding information and/or products are for educational purposes only and are not meant to diagnose, prescribe, or treat illness. Please consult your doctor before making any changes or before starting ANY exercise or nutritional supplement program or before using this information or any product during pregnancy or if you have a serious medical condition.

## Establishing and Enhancing Your Self-Care Practices

*“The willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own life is the source from which self-respect springs.” - Joan Didion*

Our lives can become so busy that we neglect to engage in activities that restore and rebalance out our emotions, mind, body, and spirit. If you are taking good care of yourself and taking time to nurture yourself without food, you will be less likely to use food to deal with your emotions. On the following page are some ideas on how to incorporate self-care practices into your routine. Adapt the chart in a way that works for you!



Activity	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	At Least Once this Year
<b>Physical</b>	Stretch for 5 minutes	Practice Yoga 3 times per week during lunch hour	Get a massage	Go on a nature hike	Swim in the ocean
<b>Mental</b>	Read my favorite magazine for 10 minutes	Read a good book 3 evenings after kids go to bed	Paint a picture	Go to a concert	Take a ceramics class
<b>Emotional</b>	Write in my journal	Hot bath 2 times per week	Go out to lunch with friends	Girl's/Boys night out	Go to amusement park
<b>Spiritual</b>	Read an inspirational quote	Meditate for 5 minutes 5 days per week	Take a long silent walk in nature	Give something away I no longer need	Walk a labyrinth

## **More self-nurturing ideas:**

- Listen to my favorite music
- Enjoy a long, warm bubble bath
- Go for a walk
- Share a hug with a loved one
- Relax outside
- Practice feeling contented
- Physical activity (of my choice)
- Pray
- Attend a caring support group
- Practice deep breathing
- Stretch Reflect on my positive qualities: "I am..."
- Watch the sunrise/sunset
- Laugh
- Concentrate on a relaxing scene
- Create a collage representing "the real me"
- Receive a massage
- Reflect on: "I appreciate..."
- Write my thoughts and feelings in a personal journal
- Attend a favorite athletic event
- Do something adventurous!
- Read a special book or magazine
- Sing, hum, dance or whistle a happy tune!
- Play a musical instrument
- Spiritual meditation
- Work with plants (gardening)
- Learn a new skill
- See a special play, movie or concert
- Work out with weights
- Ride a bike or motorcycle

- Make myself a nutritious meal
- Draw/paint a picture
- Swim, float, wade, relax in a pool, or on the beach
- Do aerobics/dance
- Visit a special place I enjoy
- Smile & say: "I love myself."
- Take time to smell the roses (and other flowers I enjoy!)
- Imagine myself achieving my goals and dreams
- Go horseback riding
- Reflect on "my most enjoyable memories"
- Enjoy a relaxing nap
- Visit a museum/art gallery
- Practice yoga
- Relax in a whirlpool /sauna
- Enjoy a cool, refreshing glass of water or juice
- Enjoy the beauty of nature
- Count my blessings: "I am thankful for..."
- Play as I did as a child
- Star gaze- stay up late, get up early!
- Window shop
- Daydream
- Tell myself the loving words I want to hear from others
- Attend a special workshop
- Go sailing/paddle boating
- Reward myself with a special gift I can afford
- Take myself on a vacation
- Create with clay/pottery
- Practice positive affirmations
- Pet an animal
- Watch my favorite TV show
- Reflect on my successes: "I CAN...."



- Make a bouquet of flowers
- Relax: watch the clouds
- Make myself something nice
- Visit a park/woods/forest
- Read positive, motivational literature
- Reflect on: "What I value most in life..."
- Phone a special friend
- Go on a picnic in a beautiful setting
- Enjoy a gourmet cup of herbal tea or coffee
- Participate in a favorite sport, game, and recreation
- Practice a relaxation exercise
- Practice the art of forgiveness
- Treat myself to a nutritious meal at a favorite restaurant
- Participate in a hobby
- Practice feeling awe for life
- Discover a new place
- Hug a tree!
- "Meow" with a cat; "bark" with a dog, "chirp" with a bird!
- Create my own list of self- nurturing activities

Take a few moments now to pause and choose a self-care practice you can do today! Reflect on what gets in the way of taking time for yourself. What do you need to do so you make yourself more of a priority? Use the space below to journal about your personal self-care and how you can improve it.



## Resources



- *Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food*, Jan Chozen Bays, MD
- *Art of the Inner Meal: Eating as a Spiritual Path*, Donald Altman
- *Meal by Meal: 365 Daily Meditations for Finding Balance Through Mindful Eating*, Donald Altman
- *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*, Brian Wansink, Ph.D
- *Eating The Moment*, Somov
- *Eat, Drink, and Be Mindful Workbook*, Albers
- *Eating Mindfully*, Albers
- *50 Ways to Soothe Yourself Without Food*, Albers
- *Savor, Mindful Eating, Mindful Life*, Thich Nhat Hanh
- *The Self-Compassion Diet: A Step-by-Step Program to Lose Weight With Loving-Kindness*, Jean Fain, MSW



## References



Awakening to Mindfulness: 10 Steps for Positive Change,  
Richard Fields, Ph.D.

Baer, R. A. 2003. Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 10 (2): 125-43

Brown, K.W., R.M. Ryan, and J.D. Creswell. 2007. Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry* 18 (4):211-37

Davidson, R., J.Kabat-Zinn, J.Scheumacher, M. Ronsekranz, D. Muller, S. Santorelli, F. Urbanowski, A. Harrington, K. Bonus, and J. Sheridan. 2003. Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 65:564-70

Peter Kopko, D.C., (Chief Science Advisor) - Life Ionizers  
Sports Hydration article found at, [www.lifeionizers.com](http://www.lifeionizers.com)

Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (New York, Dell Publishing, 1009), p.2.

Sheldon Cohen (Carnegie Mellon University psychologist), *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. Oct. 10, 2007

<http://www.balancedweightmanagement.com/Bob's%20Ideas%20for%20Self-Nurturing.pdf>

Lifelonizers.com  
888-688-8889





When we eat to manage emotions we tend to develop an unbalanced relationship with food. The intention of this guidebook is to help you create more awareness about when and why you eat and to establish healthy eating habits. In my opinion as psychotherapist, when you get a grip on emotional eating, you tend to feel more capable and confident and your emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual lives are improved. I know this was true for me in my own journey with food and it is what my clients report back to me as well.

This easy to read guidebook provides practical information to assist you with positive ways to take care of yourself and to establish a mindset that will help you maintain healthy lifestyle habits forever.

To your health,  
Katy Joy Freeman, MFT, Mindfulness Instructor