



Unlock the Power of Mindful Eating

Welcome to MindfulLiving™ with Shery Clein!
Today, let's explore the transformative practice of mindful eating through "Mouthfuls of Mindfulness" by Jan Chozen Bays.

Mindful eating is more than just food; it's about cultivating awareness and presence in every bite. By tuning into our internal hunger cues, we develop self-compassion and acceptance, letting go of judgment and guilt.

Through this practice, we relish every moment at the table, cherishing the food, its preparation, and the company we share. Mindful eating paves the way for heightened meal satisfaction and a healthier relationship with food.

Join me on this journey of presence and gratitude, and discover the joy of mindful living, one bite at a time.

Savour Every Bite, Nourish Your Soul



Module 1: Simple Awareness – Chapter 7

Mouthfuls of Mindfulness

by Jan Chozen Bays, Adapted by Shery Clein

Overeat, undereat, or feel conflicted about how you eat? MindfulLiving™ practice, says physician Jan Chozen Bays, can help you have a healthy and joyful relationship with food.

Charts, tables, pyramids, or scales do not direct MindfulLiving™ eating. An expert does not dictate it. It is produced by your own inner experiences, moment by moment. Your experience is unique. Therefore, you are the expert. In learning to eat mindfully, we replace self-criticism with self-nurturing, anxiety with curiosity, and shame with respect for our inner wisdom.



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Let's take a typical experience. On the way home from work, Sally, a practitioner of MindfulLiving™, finds herself ruminating about the speech she needs to prepare for a big conference. Before diving into her work, she decides to cultivate relaxation and mindfulness by watching a few minutes of TV. Seated comfortably, she reaches for a bag of chips. Initially, she nibbles slowly, but as the show captivates her attention, her eating pace quickens. When the program concludes, she looks down to find the bag emptied. In that moment, instead of criticising herself for indulging in junk food, Sally extends self-compassion and acknowledges the experience with curiosity.



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The next time this happens, Sally, practising MindfulLiving™, will approach her chip-eating differently. First, she will check in with her mind. She will notice worries about an article she promised to write and feel the pressure to start it tonight. Then, she will check in with her heart, recognising loneliness due to her husband being out of town.

Turning her attention inward, she checks in with her stomach and body, realising she's hungry and tired, craving some nurturing. Acknowledging the need for self-care, Sally embraces the opportunity to provide it herself.



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Throwing a Small Party

Sally decides to treat herself to a small chip party. (Remember, MindfulLiving™ permits us to play with our food.) She takes twenty chips from the bag and arranges them on a plate. She looks at their colour and shape. She eats one chunk, savouring its flavour. She pauses, then eats another. There is no judgment, no right or wrong. She is simply seeing the shades of tan and brown on each curved surface, tasting the tang of salt, hearing the crunch of each bite, and feeling the crisp texture melt into softness. She ponders how these chips arrived on her plate, aware of the sun, the soil, the rain, the potato farmer, the workers at the chip factory, the delivery truck driver, and the grocer who stocked the shelves and sold them to her.

Sally mindfully pauses with each chip, allowing the chip party to unfold over a serene ten minutes. As she finishes, she gently checks in with her body, listening to its signals to see if any part of it still craves more.



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She finds her mouth and cells are thirsty, so she drinks orange juice.

Her body also says it needs some protein and something green, so she makes a cheese omelette and a spinach salad. After eating, she checks in again with her mind, body, and heart. The heart and body feel nourished, but the mind is still tired. She decides to go to bed and work on the talk first thing in the morning when the mind and body are rested. Though still feeling a hint of loneliness, she is comforted by the awareness of all the beings whose life energy brought her the chips, eggs, cheese, and greens. She decides to call her husband to say good night. She goes to bed with body, mind, and heart at ease and sleeps soundly.



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MindfulLiving™ teaches us to rediscover one of the most pleasurable things we do as human beings: eating. It's not just about nourishing our bodies; it's a journey of uncovering the beauty in everyday activities and tuning into our body's innate wisdom and our heart's capacity for openness and gratitude.

We ask ourselves questions like:

Am I hungry?
Where do I feel hungry?
What part of me is hungry?
What do I crave?
What am I tasting just now?

These questions may seem simple, yet we seldom take the time to pose them. Through MindfulLiving™, we learn to embrace these inquiries as gateways to deeper self-awareness and appreciation for the present moment.



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Mindfulness Is the Best Flavouring

As I write this, I am indulging in a lemon tart gifted by a friend. After a few hours of writing, I treat myself to a slice. The first bite is exquisite—creamy, sweet-sour, and utterly delightful. However, as I delve into my thoughts for the next paragraph, the flavour diminishes with each subsequent bite. Even as I walk to sharpen a pencil, I find the lemony essence fading with each chew.

Returning to my desk, I fully immersed myself in the experience. With intentional focus, I take the fourth bite, relishing the interplay of smells, tastes, and textures in my mouth. Once again, the tartness bursts forth, reminding me of the gift my friend bestowed upon me.

At this moment, I realise (albeit slowly) that to preserve the essence of that initial bite, to honour the generosity of my friend, I must savour each morsel mindfully, with deliberate pauses between bites.



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The flavour diminishes or disappears if I do anything else while eating—talk, walk, write, or even think. Life is drained from my beautiful tart. I could be eating the cardboard box.

Here's the humorous part. I stopped tasting the lemon tart because I was thinking. About what? MindfulLiving™! Discovering that, I grin. To be a human being is both pitiful and funny.

Why can't I think, walk, and be aware of the taste of the tart simultaneously? I can't do all these simultaneously because the mind has two distinct functions: thinking and awareness. When the review is turned up, the awareness is turned down. When the thinking function is going full throttle, we can eat an entire meal, cake, an entire carton of ice cream, and not taste more than a bite. When we don't taste, we can end up stuffed to the gills but feel unsatisfied. This is because the mind and mouth weren't present and weren't tasting or enjoying as we ate. The stomach became full, but the mind and mouth were unfulfilled and continued calling for us to eat.



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We've all experienced that nagging feeling of dissatisfaction after a meal. It's like a hunger that can't be quelled by simply opening cupboards and doors in search of more food. The only proper remedy for this 'fundamental hunger' is to sit down, be fully present, and give our meal the attention it deserves, even if it's just for a few minutes.

If we eat and stay connected with our experience and the people who grew and cooked the food, served the food, and ate alongside us, we will feel most satisfied, even with a meagre meal. This is the gift of MindfulLiving™: to restore our sense of satisfaction no matter what we are or are not eating.

Jan Chozen Bays is a paediatrician, mother, wife, and long-time meditation teacher. She is the author of "Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food."



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Thank you for reading!

We hope this article provided valuable insights into Mindful Eating and health.

Mindfulness enriches every moment. As you move forward, consider integrating these concepts into your daily life.

I'm here to assist you if you encounter any discomfort or obstacles. Your well-being and progress are my priorities.

Remember to savour each moment and find joy in your practice.

For any concerns or questions, contact me via WhatsApp at +27824588151 or email at shery@sheryclein.com.

Blessings, and stay healthy and safe.

