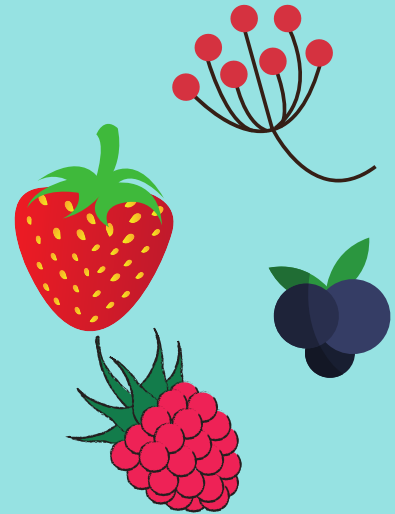


EATING WITH MINDFULNESS

The following is an exercise in eating with mindfulness. So often we rush through meals and do not consider what we are eating or how we are eating it. This has implications for our health, as well as our relationship with food. Try this exercise to pause and connect with, in this case, a nourishing sweet strawberry!



1

HOLD IT:

First, take a strawberry and hold it in the palm of your hand or between your finger and thumb. Feel its weight and explore the texture.

2

SEE IT:

Take time to really focus; gaze at the strawberry with full attention; imagine that you've never seen an object like this before in your life. Let your eyes explore every part of it.

3

CONSIDER AND REFLECT:

Think about where this strawberry came from. How did it get here? What were the natural phenomena, processes and people that made this strawberry possible?

4

SMELL IT:

Hold the strawberry beneath your nose, take in any aroma that may arise. Notice if anything interesting is happening in your mouth or stomach as well.

5

TAKE A BITE:

When you are ready, take a bite. What happens in the aftermath? Notice the taste and texture in your mouth and how these may change as you continue to chew.

6

SWALLOW AND FOLLOW:

Take note of the physical responses to swallowing. Can you feel the bite in your throat moving down to your stomach? Check in on the process and notice any emotions or thoughts that come up.

If this seems strange, time consuming, or uncomfortable at first, stick with it for a few goes and then adjust as you see fit. Maybe some mindful elements resonate with you more than others.

Cooking and Enjoying a Meal with Mindfulness



Cooking

1

HOLD/TOUCH:

Arrange all the ingredients you are going to use in front of you (space willing). Pick some ingredients up, feel the different sizes and weights of the items in front of you

2

SEE:

Gaze at the ingredients in front of you. What diverse colors and shapes do you see? What differences do you see in the fresh items vs the packed items, etc?

3

CONSIDER AND REFLECT:

Think about where these items came from. How did they get here? What were the natural phenomena, processes and people that made them possible? What did *you* have to do to bring these items home?

5

SMELL:

Do this throughout. Notice the smells that occur when fresh ingredients are prepared. Notice the smells of the heating oven or pans. How do smells change throughout the process?

6

SEE (AGAIN):

Take notes through your eyes of what happens visually as you cook. How do the ingredients change?

Eating

7

HOLD/PLATE:

Arrange your meal in a bowl or on a plate. Notice how the food rests, use some of your sight skills. Prepare a spoonful or forkful.

8

TAKE A BITE:

When you are ready, take a bite. What happens in the aftermath? Notice the taste and texture in your mouth and how these may change as you continue to chew.

9

SWALLOW AND FOLLOW:

See if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow the bite. Feel what happens physically in your body.

10

REFLECT:

Think about what you just created with your own two hands. Consider your skills and talents. Reflect on the experience and note your accomplishment. What you would keep, change, and try again in the future?