

NOURISH TO FLOURISH PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 Acknowledgments

3 How to Use This Workbook

4 **Week 1:**
Introduction to Mindful Eating

8 **Week 2:**
Physical and Emotional Eating

14 **Week 3:**
Awareness and Shared Humanity

18 **Week 4:**
Making Mindful Eating a Lifestyle

23 Resources and References

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express our heartfelt gratitude to Teresa Fung, PhD, from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, for her invaluable guidance and support in developing this program and designing the “Nourish to Flourish: Mindful Eating Workbook.” Our sincere thanks also go out to Tiffany Mitchenor, the program facilitator, and experts in the field of mindful eating for their contributions and feedback.

It is your dedication and expertise that have brought this program to life and that are helping us promote a healthier relationship with food. We extend our deepest appreciation to all program participants for their time, enthusiasm, and commitment.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey toward mindful eating and well-being.

“

When this body was just born, it was very light. As we grow, we tend to get weighed down by worries and lose our freshness and beauty. Mindful eating helps us regain this freshness, nourishing our spirits as well as our bodies. Eating with appreciation of our own bodies, we eat with more relaxation and joy.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

”

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Welcome to the Nourish to Flourish Mindful Eating Program! This guide is designed to help you cultivate a mindful approach to eating, enhancing your overall well-being.

Each week, you will participate in a session led by a trained instructor, engage in sensory activities, and reflect on your experiences. The workbook is structured to support you through:

WEEKLY SESSIONS

Each session includes an introduction, activities, and discussions to deepen your understanding of mindful eating.

MINDFUL MEDITATIONS

Sessions begin and end with a five-minute meditation to center and focus your mind.

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Hands-on activities to practice mindful eating.

TAKE-HOME ACTIVITIES

Exercises to reinforce what you've learned and integrate mindful eating into your daily life.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Brief discussions to share experiences and insights with fellow participants.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Questions to help you reflect on your experiences and deepen your understanding.



WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

“

Mindfulness is about love and loving life. When you cultivate this love, it gives you clarity and compassion for life, and your actions happen in accordance with that.

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

”

WEEK 1

MINDFUL BEGINNINGS: SETTING THE STAGE

OBJECTIVE

Understand the principles of mindful eating and set personal goals.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the practice of paying full attention to the present moment without judgment. It involves being aware of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. When we are mindful, we are fully engaged in what we are doing, whether it's eating, walking, or simply breathing.

Mindfulness has its roots in ancient Buddhist meditation practices, particularly from the Vipassana tradition, which dates back over 2,500 years. It was introduced to the Western world primarily through the work of Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, who developed the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program in the late 1970s. Kabat-Zinn's work helped bring mindfulness into mainstream medicine and psychology, demonstrating its effectiveness in reducing stress, anxiety, and chronic pain.

WHAT IS MINDFUL EATING?

Mindful eating involves paying full attention to the experience of eating and drinking, both inside and outside the body. It allows us to become aware of our physical hunger and satiety cues and to enjoy the sensory experience of food.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINDFUL EATING?

- Enhances the enjoyment of food and improves digestion
- Helps with weight management by preventing overeating
- Reduces emotional eating
- Promotes a healthier relationship with food

GOAL SETTING

Reflect on your current eating habits. Identify specific, achievable goals for practicing mindful eating. Note them in the box below.

GOAL 1: _____

GOAL 2: _____

GOAL 3: _____

TAKE-HOME EXERCISE (OPTIONAL)

Practice mindful eating with one meal or snack each day. Record your observations and feelings in your journal.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

- How did you feel during the sensory exercise?
- What differences did you notice compared to your usual eating habits?
- What challenges do you foresee in practicing mindful eating regularly?

Use the space below for your notes:

WEEK 2: PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL EATING

“

Moderation in all things, especially food, brings a healthy and long life.

- Chinese Proverb

”

WEEK 2

HUNGER WISDOM: TUNING IN TO YOUR BODY'S NATURAL CUES

OBJECTIVE

Recognize the difference between physical and emotional hunger, and learn to identify satiety cues.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HUNGER?

PHYSICAL HUNGER

- Physical hunger develops gradually.
- You may experience stomach growling, weakness, or a slight headache.
- Almost any food will satisfy physical hunger. You're more open to a variety of foods.
- Once you eat, physical hunger is satisfied, and the feeling subsides.
- Physical hunger is driven by the body's need for nutrients and energy.

EMOTIONAL HUNGER

- Emotional hunger can come on suddenly and feel urgent.
- Emotional hunger often involves cravings for specific comfort foods, like sweets or junk food.
- Even after eating, emotional hunger may not feel satisfied.
- Emotional hunger is often linked to feelings such as stress, boredom, loneliness, or sadness.
- Eating due to emotional hunger can lead to mindless eating, where you're not fully aware of how much or what you're eating.



THE HUNGER-SATIETY SCALE (UC BERKELEY)

Use this Hunger-Satiety Scale to get in touch with your hunger and satiety cues. Aim to stay within the blue zone, 4–7, as much as possible.



WHEN YOU REACH 3 OR 4

Aim to start eating when you reach a 3 or 4. By not waiting too long, it may make it easier to thoughtfully choose what you'd like to eat and eat until you are satisfied rather than overly stuffed. Keeping nutritious snacks available, especially while running errands, can help tide you over until your next meal if necessary. Some tasty snack ideas include whole fruit, nuts, hard-boiled eggs, veggies and hummus, or plain yogurt with fruit.

WHEN YOU REACH 6 OR 7

Once you reach a 6, you would be just about satisfied. Within 15 to 20 minutes, you will likely be at a 7, full but not uncomfortable. To make this a bit easier, check in with your hunger cues before and/or during meals and snacks, keep serving dishes on the counter rather than on the dinner table, and take your time while eating by engaging all of your senses.

HARA HACHI BU – EAT UNTIL YOU ARE 80% FULL

Distinguishing between physical and emotional hunger is crucial for mindful eating. *Hara Hachi Bu*, a Japanese concept, encourages eating until you are 80% full, promoting awareness of satiety cues.

RECOGNIZING SATIETY CUES USING HARA HACHI BU

- Learn to pause during meals to assess hunger and fullness.
- Practice eating slowly to recognize when you are comfortably full.
- Use a hunger scale (1–10) to evaluate your hunger before, during, and after meals.

SENSORY EXERCISE: EXPLORING HARA HACHI BU WITH MINDFUL TASTING

Choose a small snack:

- Begin by observing the snack closely. Notice the colors, textures, and shapes. Describe what you see.

- Bring the snack close to your nose and take a deep breath, noticing the aromas. Share what you smell and how it makes you feel.
- Take a small bite of the snack and chew slowly. Pay attention to the flavors, textures, and any changes in taste as you chew. Focus on the experience, and do not rush.
- After the first bite, pause and reflect on your hunger level. Use a hunger scale (1–10) to gauge how hungry or full you feel.
- Continue eating the snack slowly and mindfully, pausing periodically to reassess your hunger and fullness levels. Aim to stop at about 7 or 8 on the scale, corresponding to being 80% full.

This practice can also be done using a beverage, such as tea.



GROUP DISCUSSION

Share your experiences with the sensory exercise.

- Discuss how you differentiate between physical and emotional hunger.
- Talk about the concept of Hara Hachi Bu and how it can be applied to your eating habits.

Use the space below for your notes:

TAKE-HOME EXERCISE (OPTIONAL)

Practice Hara Hachi Bu during meals. Keep a journal of your experiences, noting when you stop eating and how you feel.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

- How do you typically distinguish between physical and emotional hunger?
- What did you notice about your satiety cues when practicing Hara Hachi Bu?
- What strategies can you use to stop eating when you're 80% full?

Use the space below for your notes:

WEEK 3: AWARENESS AND SHARED HUMANITY

“

In this food, I see clearly the presence of the entire universe supporting my existence.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

”

WEEK 3

GRATITUDE AND AWARENESS: EMBRACING THE JOURNEY OF FOOD

OBJECTIVE

Develop a sense of gratitude and awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings through mindful eating.

FIVE CONTEMPLATIONS OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

- Reflect on the effort and resources involved in bringing food to your plate.
- Acknowledge your own worthiness to receive this nourishment.
- Consider how your food choices affect the planet and other beings.
- Reflect on the quality of your thoughts and actions while eating.
- Contemplate the intention to sustain your practice of mindful eating.

INCORPORATING GRATITUDE

Practice gratitude before meals, acknowledging the food and its journey. Write a gratitude note or keep a gratitude journal related to your meals.



SENSORY EXERCISE: EATING SOMETHING PROCESSED VS. MORE NATURAL

Choose a processed food item and a natural food item.

- Observe the differences in color, texture, and aroma.
- Taste each item mindfully, noting the differences in flavor and sensation.
- Reflect on how the processing of food affects its taste and your overall eating experience.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Discuss the Five Contemplations and how they influence your view of food.
- Talk about the practice of gratitude and its impact on your eating habits.

Use the space below for your notes:

TAKE-HOME EXERCISE (OPTIONAL)

Reflect on your food choices and their impact. Write a gratitude note before each meal. Keep a journal of your reflections on the interconnectedness of food.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

- How did the Five Contemplations change your perspective on eating?
- What differences did you notice between the processed and natural food items?
- How does practicing gratitude before meals affect your eating experience?
- In what ways can you incorporate the practice of gratitude into your daily life?

Use the space below for your notes:

WEEK 4: CONCLUSION

“

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

- Lao Tzu

”

WEEK 4

EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS:

MAKING MINDFUL EATING A HABIT

OBJECTIVE

Integrate mindful eating into your daily routine, and sustain the practice.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

As we reach the final week of the Nourish to Flourish Mindful Eating Program, our focus shifts to embedding the principles of mindful eating into your daily life. Mindful eating is not just a temporary exercise but a lifelong practice that can transform your relationship with food and enhance your overall well-being.

THE JOURNEY OF MINDFUL EATING

Over the past weeks, you have learned to slow down, pay attention to your body's signals, and appreciate the sensory experiences of eating. These practices have helped you become more aware of your hunger and satiety cues, differentiate between physical and emotional hunger, and cultivate gratitude for the food you consume. Now, the next step is to maintain these habits and make them a natural part of your everyday life.

EVALUATING YOUR GOALS

REVIEW YOUR INITIAL GOALS

Take a moment to revisit the goals you set in Week 1. Reflect on your progress and any changes you have noticed in your eating habits.

ASSESS ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Identify what you have achieved and any challenges you encountered. This assessment can help you understand what strategies worked best for you.

ADJUST GOALS

Based on your experiences, adjust your goals to better fit your lifestyle. Remember, mindful eating is a personal journey, and your goals should be flexible and adaptable.

INCORPORATING MINDFUL EATING INTO DAILY LIFE

MINDFUL MEALS

Aim to eat at least one meal mindfully each day. Choose a meal when you have enough time to fully engage in the experience without rushing.

MINDFUL SNACKING

Apply the principles of mindful eating to snacks. Pay attention to what you are eating, why you are eating, and how it makes you feel.

GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Continue practicing gratitude before meals. This can be a simple moment of reflection or a more formal practice, such as keeping a gratitude journal.

MINDFUL FOOD CHOICES

Make conscious food choices that align with your values and well-being. Consider where your food comes from and how it affects your health and the environment.

SENSORY EXERCISE: MINDFULLY EATING A SNACK AS A GROUP

Choose a healthy snack.

- Sit together as a group.
- Observe the snack's appearance, texture, and smell.
- Eat slowly, discussing your experiences and sensations.
- Reflect on the shared experience and how it enhances your mindful eating habit.



GROUP DISCUSSION

- Share your experiences with the sensory exercise.
- Discuss strategies for integrating mindful eating into daily life.
- Explore the benefits and challenges of maintaining a mindful eating habit.
- Reflect on the progress made toward your goals and any adjustments needed.

Use the space below for your notes:

TAKE-HOME EXERCISE (OPTIONAL)

Create a plan to incorporate mindful eating into your daily routine. Share your plan with a friend or family member for accountability. Continue practicing mindful eating and journaling your experiences. Set new goals or adjust existing ones based on your reflections.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

- How have your eating habits changed since you began practicing mindful eating?
- What progress have you made toward your initial goals?
- What challenges have you encountered, and how did you address them?
- How can you remind yourself to eat mindfully daily?
- What new goals can you set to continue your mindful eating journey?

Use the space below for your notes:

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on completing the Nourish to Flourish Mindful Eating Workbook! Over the past four weeks, you have embarked on a journey to develop a more mindful and intentional relationship with food. This workbook has provided you with tools, activities, and reflections to help you integrate mindful eating into your daily life.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

- *Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food* by Jan Chozen Bays
- *Savor: Mindful Eating, Mindful Life* by Thich Nhat Hanh and Lilian Cheung

WEBSITES AND APPS

Mindful eating programs and resources available online:

- For meditation and mindfulness apps, check out Headspace, Calm, and Insight Timer.
- For the Hunger-Satiety Scale, visit <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/wellness-hungersatiety.pdf>.
- For the Five Contemplations, visit <https://sevengoodthings.com/five-contemplations-by-thich-nhat-hanh>.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Join mindful eating or meditation groups in your community or online to connect with others who share your interests and goals.
- Visit local farmers' markets for healthy, locally sourced produce.

THANK YOU

Thank you for participating in the **Nourish to Flourish Mindful Eating Program**. Your dedication to this journey is commendable, and we hope you continue to find joy and balance in your mindful eating practice. Remember, each mindful bite is a step toward a healthier, more fulfilling life!

REFERENCES

Fukkoshi, Y., Akamatsu, R., & Shimpo, M. (2015). The relationship of eating until 80% full with types and energy values of food consumed. *Eating Behaviors*, 17, 153–156.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2015). Mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 6(6), 1481–1483.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2001). *Mindfulness meditation for everyday life*. Piatkus.

Williams, J. M., & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). *Mindfulness: Diverse perspectives on its meaning, origins and applications*. Routledge.

Shirai, T., & Tsushita, K. (2024). Lifestyle medicine and Japan's longevity miracle. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, 15598276241234012.

Staffed by a multidisciplinary team of researchers, Mather Institute is an award-winning resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living, and successful industry innovations. The Institute conducts cutting-edge research, often in collaboration with leading universities, with the goal of informing, innovating, and inspiring. Mather Institute is part of Mather, an 80+-year-old not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating Ways to Age Well.SM

The following people contributed to the development of this Orange Paper:

Catherine O'Brien, PhD, Chief Transformation Officer and Head of Mather Institute, and Ajla Basic, PhD, PMP, Project Manager of Mather Institute

(888) 722.6468 | institute@mather.com | matherinstitute.com

