

Week 4 Challenge Work – Mindful Eating

I have a lot of tips to share with you this week, but I only ever want you to grab a couple of things that resonate with you and put them into practice. Keep it all within what is manageable you're your family or make space for it if it is important.

Mindful eating is all about tuning into your body. Our body is talking to us all the time, but often we are so busy or distracted (thanks kids) that we don't actually hear what it is saying. We do intuitively know what we should be putting into our bodies but in reality it is challenging because we get so many mixed messages from the media and guru's about all sorts of different diet or just have too much going on!

With mindful eating, no food is off limits. But has this got you unstuck before?? Yeah, me too! When you break it down, you want to eat with Intention and Attention. The intention of caring for your body so it works at its best and paying attention to the affects that food has on your body!

But how can we get this really wrong? One of the biggest traps with Mums is being distracted by children. Often to the point where we don't eat for an extended period and then we are so hungry, we understandably eat really fast. There is no time to be mindful and pay attention because your body needs fuel pronto. But when we get to this state, we are also more likely to over eat. It can take 20min for your body to realise it is full, but how many meals have you eaten in under 2min flat?! A lot right?!

Hunger fullness scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- 1 = Ravenous & Empty
- 2 = Extremely Hungry, Starving
- 3 = Fairly Hungry
- 4 = Slightly hungry
- 5 = Neutral
- 6 = Mild fullness
- 7 = Satisfied, Full
- 8 = Uncomfortably full
- 9 = Stuffed or bloated
- 10 = Painfully full, feeling sick

Ideally where we want to sit is roughly between a 3-7 on the fullness scale. Anything outside of these numbers and it is really hard for you to apply mindful eating practices.

There are a few keys that will help you:

- 1 Eat slowly – as often as you can for all meals. Slowing down your meals and eating attentively actually speeds up your metabolism!
- 2 Preparation – If you get caught out, out-in-about without food (mum lunch box) on you... you have to eat before you get into stages 1-3 and end up making a non optimal choice
- 3 Turn off distractions (I know, we can't turn off the kids). BUT avoid eating on the run, don't eat in the car or while watching TV, don't eat at the work desk
- 4 Make meal time pleasurable. Could you use your fancy glasses, should you dine outside, can you serve it on a fancy platter etc. It is not practical for every meal with young children but still doable within the week! Even just adding a piece of garnish might make you feel 'fancy' 😊

In the mindful eating world, there is a fabulous guided question to ask yourself each time you eat... "I can have it if I want it, but do I really feel like it?" Sometimes you need to ask yourself what you feel like eating! Sweet, salty, crunchy etc? The question is not 'do you deserve it' or 'have you earned it?' Do you really feel like eating peanut butter scrap crusts?? Really?

Remember calories in vs calories out is not the simple equation! Mindful eating helps you to work with your bodies hormones so you actually get better results!!

You may also find yourself over eating or eating mind-LESS-ly just because it's meal time. Just because it is 12 o'clock and its 'lunch time', doesn't mean you must eat... unless you are hungry and feel like eating. Sometime we just eat because it is 'time' to. Check back in with yourself and be flexible with your eating times.

When you eat mindfully, with intention and attention, you generally don't need as much food to feel satisfied. You can stop before you are totally stuffed. It takes a bit of practice and it does get easier, so I have a fun homework task for you this week.

This week I want you to have a meal out to put your mindful eating to the ultimate test. Now if your budget and time doesn't stretch that far... just set up a little 'home date' in your dining room or order in.

No distractions (besides kids) where possible – put the phones & tv off.

Before you eat/order. Settle into your surroundings. Notice what you see and feel. How is the restaurant set up? Did you notice all the special touches the restaurant goes to, to make you feel special? (if your at home.. did you notice the silverware used instead or smell the lovely candle). If you are dining at home... are you using the 'fancy' glasses?

As you read the menu, notice the paper they have used and font they have chosen to print. If your going for Macca's you might notice the shiny menu and marvel at the technology and how they created it.

When being served, interact with the waiter. Make eye contact and ask lots of questions... enjoy being 'served' if you are child free. Maybe this would be flirting with your spouse while you/they cook!

When your meal arrives, before you tuck in, devour it with your eyes. How does it smell. What does it look like? Or go grab some garnish from the garden.

Take your precious first bite and notice all the flavours and textures. Notice the intense pleasure of beginning your meal. Does the pleasure level decline as your meal goes on?

When you are satisfied, not fairly hungry or stuffed STOP. Put down your cutlery, drink some water and pause for a few minutes to notice how you feel. Write down how you feel! Do you feel like you could go for a walk now or do you feel like you might fall into a food coma? The goal is to stop when you feel satisfied but not overly full.

Don't panic if you overshoot the mark. Remember is all takes practice.

Let me know in the facebook group what your special meal is or where you are having a meal out this week. You could try it with something simple like just a coffee at the café, home date night, maccas in a paper bag or your actual fav restaurant. It's all doable.

Then start to apply it to every meal. Stay within 3-7 on the hunger full ness scale as much as possible and apply all our tips.

Here are some further food tips for you to consider this week. Just choose 1 or 2 that resonate with you (that perhaps you are not already doing) and implement them this week into your daily habit checker. Don't do all of them! Set yourself up for success with small manageable wins... if your excited you can add on the other ones in following weeks.

Add more!

Add more colourful fruit and vegetable to every meal. You may choose to focus on 1 particular meal that is more bland in colouring (eg maybe breakfast is just cereal and milk? – add you add some fruit... or maybe you struggle more with lunch and eat bread scraps?)

Drink 2L of water

The average adult needs approx. 2 litres of water per day to just be 'normal'. But if you are exercising, living in hot conditions, or breastfeeding (tick tick tick), all your base requirements go up! So if you are not getting at least 2L, its time to up it or potentially increase a bit more. Plus, sometimes we confuse our thirst for hunger. Try having a cup of water before you start eating.

Eat sloooooowly

Consciously make an effort to slow down meal time (as mum mode as you can). Take more time to chat at the table, talk about where your food may have come from, notice all the textures of your food.. indulge in interesting food conversation. It can take about 20mins to register you are full. If you are eating really fast (ie gobble up a meal in 2mins flat), you are prone to over and under eating because your brain and tummy haven't caught up together!

Food Prep & Batch bake

Time is of the essence so batch baking, doing double batches or cooking an extra serving at dinner time (for lunch the next day) will mean you have lots of nutrition dense options available. Pop them in the freezer so you can grab one out in the morning and its ready when you are. Perhaps you might choose one day per week that you have more time at home or less other activities on so you can focus on that for a longer period.

Pack a Mum Lunch box

We tend to make not as optimal choices when we get caught out. Sometimes we must decide between KCF & Macca's because we don't have anything else on us to eat and suddenly you get a nervous twitch because it's been hours since you ate. BUT if we always have some great choices on us, we can eat better planned/prepped for instead of opting for less awesome choices. So, when you pack snacks/bottle/lunches/babybag for you little ones, make sure you pack a lunch box for Mumma.

Accept help

Say yes to Mother in law dropping off food, go over to Grandma's house for dinner, order hello fresh to get you through a tougher period, ask a friend for help

Pre-cut veggies & fruit

You can often pre-cut 2-3 days worth of veggies and have them soaking in a small bowl of water in the fridge. So when you are feeling peckish, it is really EASY to actually grab some veggies sticks (and even dip them in hummus or other goodness)

Food Intention: Eat to be awesome.

You probably feed your baby the best possible food to help them grow and function well (to be 'awesome'), so consider CONSCIOUSLY taking this approach for yourself. Just take 10 seconds before you start eating to ask yourself if this will help your body function better

Let me know in the facebook group what your biggest challenge is, the strategies you are using to overcome these and any other food focus/intentions for the week ahead!

Here are some mindful eating mantra's and affirmations you might like to consider introducing this week. There may be one that has resonated with you or something I have already included above. Remember, we are training our brain muscle so joyful repetition is the key changing our thought patterns.

Eat, drink and be mindful

I savour my food with enthusiasm, passion, energy and joy

Eating is an opportunity to nourish my body and my soul

It is fine to eat when you are not hungry, but try to bring awareness to when you are doing it

Eat with respect for your body, your soul and the earth

What does my body truly FEEL like eating/drinking?

Pause and forgive yourself when meals don't go to plan. Mindful choices are about right now and not the past

I trust my body to do its best with this food

Do you have a meal ritual? What do you do before you eat? For some people this is saying grace. I love this because it forces us to pause and look within. When we are able to take a moment and a few deep breathes before we eat it gives us chance to connect back in with ourselves and have the opportunity to figure out what we really feel like and how hungry we might be.

Perhaps you can consider introducing a new food ritual before you eat. It can be as simple as the process you go through to set the table, having a drink of water and taking 3 deep breaths, saying grace or everyone at the table sharing something special that happened to them today. What feels right for you?

Quickly Review & do a new weeks plan for:

- Goals
- Activity/Meal Planner
- Mantras
- Habit Checker