Mindfulness 101 & Mindful Eating
Mindfulness Practice

- The purposeful attention of the mind, without judgment.

- A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.
Mindfulness Practice

- Being fully present and aware of this thing called life is *mindfulness*.
- Awareness of the people, places, and events, all is being mindful. It can be as simple as noticing the breeze that brushes your skin, the sun that beams on your skin, to the texture of the ground as you walk.
- Definitions: https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-mindfulness-definition/
Mindlessness

- Ever been on a walk or drive down the road and suddenly 15 minutes have passed, and you have no idea where you’ve been? This activity is what Dr. Ellen Langer calls mindlessness. It happens all the time, especially when we’re tired or disengaged.

- The simple solution to reducing mindlessness is to be present in our surroundings - to practice mindfulness in our daily lives. And research shows a conscious realization of our everyday actions can improve our health, reduce anxiety, manage stress, and keep us alert and present.
Meditation and Mindfulness

- Meditation is a practice where an individual trains the mind to reach a deeper concentration as a way to self-regulate thoughts and improve focus.
- Meditation takes place in different forms: prayer, silence, compassion, patience, showing love and gratitude, and being mindful.
- Mindfulness is a form of meditation. Adding an activity like driving, eating, and walking, you turn the action into a practice of meditation, e.g., mindful walk, mindful eating, yoga, singing, and chanting.
Mindful Eating

- Experience all your sensations and notice how you react to the sights, smells, and flavors of food.
- When you eat a meal, take a moment to see the textures and colors; smells and observe the food on your plate.
- Think about an apple. The characters of a green apple are very different from a red apple. One is sweet; one is sour. One is softer and the other crisper. Both trigger different sensations. Now compare those sensations to an orange or a banana. A blood orange. A plantain.
Keep it Simple

- The hardest part of mindfulness is overthinking the process. If you start worrying whether you're mindful, or your focus begins to think about the past or the future, gently guide your mind back to being present in now and experiencing the ride, the sights and the surroundings off the moment.

- The more you practice mindfulness, the easier it becomes to integrate into your daily routine.

- Mindfulness and meditation are your exercise routines for the mind.
Mindful Eating

- Listen to your body.
- Look for signs of being hungry and being full.
- Distinguish between triggers for actual hunger and non-hunger.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Eat slowly.
- Eat small portions.
- Chew thoroughly.
- Engage all your senses surrounding colors, smells, sounds, textures and tastes.
- Bring awareness around guilt and anxiety associated with food.
- Create markers around the effects of food, including feelings, sensations, and outcomes.
- Eat foods to maintain your overall health and well-being.
- Appreciate the mechanisms with food, including production, social well-being, environmental impacts, and nourishment.
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Mindful Eating Process

- Preparation
  - observations, reactions to sight, smell, color, thoughts around food, mouth reactions

- Process
  - Chewing, flavors, textures, smells, mouth reactions

- After taste
  - Mouth reactions, after flavors, memories

- Colors
  - Orange, yellow, blue, green, brown, white

- Smells
  - Fragrant, floral, earthy

- Textures
  - Crunchy, smooth, soft, chewy

- Flavors
  - Spicy, sweet, bitter, savory, salty. Sour, umami
Mindful Eating

- **Preparation**: observations, reactions to sight, smell, color, thoughts around food, mouth reactions
- **Process of eating**: Chewing, flavors, textures, smells, mouth reactions
- **After tastes**: Mouth reactions, after flavors, memories
- **Colors**: Orange, yellow, blue, green, brown, white
- **Smells**: Fragrant, floral, earthy
- **Textures**: Crunchy, smooth, soft, chewy
- **Flavors**: Spicy, sweet, bitter, savory, salty, Sour, umami

- Carrots
- Pita chip
- Hummus
- Tomatoes
- Peanut butter and pretzels
- Dried fruit
- Taffy
- Pick a potluck item
Mindful Eating

- **Step 1**
  - Describe the preparation of eating.
    - Colors, smells, associations

- **Step 2**
  - Close your eyes.
  - Take a small bite and slowly chew. Focus on the process of chewing.
  - Describe the textures.

- **Step 3**
  - Close your eyes. Take a small bite and slowly chew. Focus on the flavors.

- **Step 4**
  - Close your eyes, and take a small bite. Observe what happens during and after you swallow.

- **Preparation**
  - Observations, reactions to sight, smell, color, thoughts around food, mouth reactions

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Experts suggest starting gradually with mindful eating, eating one meal a day or week in a slower, more attentive manner. Here are some tips (and tricks) that may help you get started:

- Set your kitchen timer to 20 minutes, and take that time to eat a normal-sized meal.
- Try eating with your non-dominant hand; if you’re a righty, hold your fork in your left hand when lifting food to your mouth.
- Use chopsticks if you don’t normally use them.
- Eat silently for five minutes, thinking about what it took to produce that meal, from the sun’s rays to the farmer to the grocer to the cook.
- Take small bites and chew well.
- Before opening the fridge or cabinet, take a breath and ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?" Do something else, like reading or going on a short walk.