

HANDOUT: Mindful Eating Practices – Hunger Descriptions

Technique for Identifying Your Hunger

Journaling A **journal** is a book used to explore ideas as they take shape.

Mindful journaling is meditative writing. It is pinpointing certain emotions and why you are eating (anger, celebration, frustration, emptiness, sleepiness, loneliness, etc.) and then letting them go . . . out of your head and onto the paper. ... **Mindful journaling** is the time to confront your thoughts, explore your curiosities, and face your feelings head on. The best way to change and heal something that isn't helpful to you – is to first become aware.

Start a mindful eating journaling practice by keeping a notebook with you and periodically writing down the emotions and how you feel during about your eating practice. (Use the Mindful Journal Template accompanying this exercise.)

Below are some descriptions on hunger that may be helpful when journaling. For this exercise we will use the descriptions **from Jan Chozen Bays' book Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food.**

Bays discusses the '*Seven Types of Hunger*' as follows:

- **Eye hunger** – Increasing awareness of eye hunger, and how the appearance of food can influence our choices. Take time to really look at your food and appreciate it before taking the first mouthful.
- **Nose hunger** – Certain aromas can provoke a hunger response. Can you take the time to notice any changes in your body, heart or mind as you inhale? Lift your plate and smell your food, perhaps try to guess the ingredients that were used.
- **Mouth hunger** – If we want to be satisfied when we eat, we must be aware of what is happening in our mouth. Does our mouth want salty, sweet sour, hot, crunchy... or is it thirsty? Notice the texture and flavors of the food as you chew.
- **Stomach hunger** – Check how your stomach feels throughout the day, particularly before and after you eat. What are the signs of hunger? Is it the clock, or your stomach's sensations? Notice the difference when you eat healthy or unhealthy foods, small portions or large.
- **Cellular hunger** – Conditions such as the seasons, our age or how much physical work one does affects what your body requires. Ask it what it needs and listen for the answer. The body has wisdom. Sometimes it requires, liquids, solids, protein, fats, roots or leafy. *This also includes eating because the clock says so (it's lunch, it's dinner).*
- **Mind hunger** – What we read/hear/think about food obviously impacts our choices, especially with fad diets being so popular, and largely conflicting in their advice. We can get lost in should/should not's instead of tuning in to what makes our body feel good and operate optimally. Mind hunger is the most challenging because we have our noisy inner critic to contend with. Letting the mind quiet before making food choices can help us to discern what our body really needs. *Mind eating can also include eating because it's free or cheap or that you do not want to waste food "clean plate syndrome".*
- **Heart hunger** – Learning the skill of tuning into our emotions and associations around food is useful. Are we lonely or hungry? What memories come with certain foods? What are we hoping eating the food will make us feel? When one has heart hunger, try having a small portion of what one craves and really savor it. Intimacy is the antidote. Intimacy with ones-self. *Includes: eating to cope, boredom, in celebration or for a special occasion, when tired, or boundaries with others and food (saying no to food pushers).*

