

Food for Thought

What is mindful eating?

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor, and taste.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.



Free Handout for Individuals from The Center for Mindful Eating

Turning Your Crave into a Wave

By Ronald Theborge, PhD

We've all experienced food cravings. We've all at some point continued to eat even after we're full. Or we've felt driven to eat something even though we're not hungry. We've all craved the quick sensation of the bite, a moment of pleasure, only to realize how fleeting it all is. Delight and joy from the morsel rapidly fade, followed by guilt, anger, and often more craving. When mindfulness is applied to craving, we find that the struggle lies not in the object of desire, or even with the urge itself. Rather the struggle lies in trying to get rid of the urge to eat, cursing the fact that it just won't leave you alone. The problem is trying to make yourself *not* have what you clearly already have—a craving—and forgetting that having a feeling, thought, or physical reaction is not the same as acting it out. It is when the feeling flows into action that we feel even more



out of control, and pleasure is followed by dread.

As an antidote to struggling with craving, G. Alan Marlatt, a psychologist with many years of meditation experience, has introduced a technique called "urge surfing." Urge surfing is powerful because it does not try to control the feeling. Instead, we learn to respond to craving with nonjudgmental observation. Craving prompts curiosity rather than an immediate reaction. Left to follow its own path, craving is shown to have a beginning, a point of peak intensity, and a moment when it subsides, just like

a wave. By practicing awareness and observation, we can ride the wave with no desperate attempt to either direct it or escape it. The urge surfer learns that all cravings rise and fall without causing harm, because feeling an urge is not the same as acting on it. With practice, urges become cues for nonjudgmental, nonurgent, mindful observation. With persistence, the waves can be appreciated as part of a natural seascape rather than seen as unnatural disasters.

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Internet Resources

www.tcme.org
www.mindfuleating.org
www.mindfulpractices.com
www.slowfoodusa.org
www.mindlesseating.org