

## Eating Mindfully: A First Taste of Mindfulness

### **Seeing**

First, before putting food into your mouth, take time to really see it. Gaze at it with care and full attention.

### **Smelling**

Holding the food beneath your nose, with each inhalation drink in any smell, aroma, or fragrance that may arise, noticing as you do this anything interesting that may be happening in your mouth or stomach.

### **Placing**

Now slowly bring the food to your lips, noticing how your hand and arm know exactly how to position it. Gently place the food in your mouth, without chewing, noticing how it gets into the mouth in the first place. Spend a few moments exploring the sensations of having it in your mouth, exploring it with your tongue.

### **Tasting**

When you are ready, prepare to chew the food, noticing how and where it needs to be for chewing. Then, very consciously, take one or two bites into it and notice what happens in the aftermath, experiencing any waves of taste that emanate from it as you continue chewing. Without swallowing yet, notice the bare sensations of taste and texture in the mouth and how these may change over time, moment by moment, as well as any change in the object itself.

### **Swallowing**

When you feel ready to swallow the food, see if you can first detect the intention to swallow it as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow the food.

### **Following**

Finally, see if you can feel what is left of the food moving down into your stomach, and sense how the body as a whole is feeling after completing this exercise in mindful eating.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Williams, John Tensdale, Zindel Segal, and Jon Kabat-Zinn (2007). *The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness*. New York: Guilford Press