

The Secret Key to Weight Loss

This article is a continuation in a series of articles on mindfulness. I promise that I will deliver to you the secret to weight loss. Since weight reduction is a component to a healthy body, the subjects are congruent. To review, mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment without judgment. We observe that the only time we are able to live is right now. No other time exists.

Mindfulness reconnects us to life as it unfolds. It leads to an awareness of feeling connected to life in all of its expressions. Mindfulness reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and promotes well being. Mindfulness represents a contrast to traditional western medicine. In the traditional western model of medicine patients are passive recipients of care. In this model, patients listen to their doctor's instructions, take medications, undergo surgery and play no active role in healing. In the new model of medicine of which mindfulness is a part, the role of patients is participatory. Caregivers such as doctors, nurses, and social workers do their part, but you, the patient, must take an active role in your healing. When patients take responsibility, a shift can occur. New positive attitudes can occur that can improve your life. As a result, emotional stability can occur and influence the body to heal.

The process of mindfulness is not complex. It is not an elaborate or magical technique. What it entails is merely to hold in awareness whatever is happening in the present moment. Today I will guide you through a simple process called mindful eating. This is an excellent compliment to what we have already learned in prior weeks. What I would ask you to do is to eat a single raisin mindfully. Spend about five minutes on this exercise. Before we begin I would remind you to suspend your judgments.

Take a single raisin and begin by looking at it. Notice the color, grey tones and crevices. Take your time and focus on each element. See that at one end is a belly button where the stem attached. Now roll it around in your finger tips and feel its texture. Next bring it up to your nose and smell the aroma. Have you ever smelled raisin? Roll it around under your nose and take a deep breath. After this take the raisin and roll it around by your ear. A little known fact of a raisin is that it makes crackle noises, like Rice Krispies.

Now for the big moment: take your raisin and bring it up to your mouth. Notice that as you insert the raisin into your mouth it is received by the lips and the tongue. Let it roll in your mouth and feel the texture. Next, begin to chew your raisin. Chew slowly for at least twenty times. During your chewing, taste what raisin tastes like. After twenty chews, swallow slowly, feeling the raisin descend down your esophagus.

When I do this exercise with a group of people there is a recurring pattern. Someone will always say, "I never tasted a raisin before." Another person will say, "When I first bit into my raisin, it was an explosion of flavor." So it is interesting to examine an experience we all have had a hundred times, yet we discover that we have never been present for the experience. Wow.

The lesson in this mindfulness exercise is the experience in the actual eating of the raisin, the taste of the raisin. In turn, it is when we put the effort into being mindful that we are then able to take advantage of life's full potential. Whether you like raisins or don't like raisins is immaterial. Your experience is your individual experience; all you need to do is pay attention to it. Never mind if you think it is stupid. Try as best as you can not to judge the experience. Mindfulness teaches us to stop, if just for a second, and be with life.

I will now keep my promise to you by revealing the secret key to weight loss. What do you think would happen to your body weight if you gave this much attention to your eating? The pounds would melt off. If you eat mindfully, and chew twenty times with every bite, your brain will tell you that you are full before you over eat. This is not a joke. Instead of eating three pieces of pizza in five minutes, you mindfully eat one piece of pizza in twenty minutes.

The next time you take a plate of food, divide the portion in half and return one half back off of the plate. The half remaining on the plate is the portion you eat mindfully. You have just eliminated one half of your calories, yet you will be completely satisfied. This gives us the chance to savor food and loose weight at the same time. Weight loss and self liberation is one raisin away.

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