

# Week 3: Food Peace & Satisfaction

## Flipping the Script

*"I am being good when I eat kale and I am being bad when I eat ice cream."*

All foods are emotionally equivalent, even if they are not nutritionally equivalent.

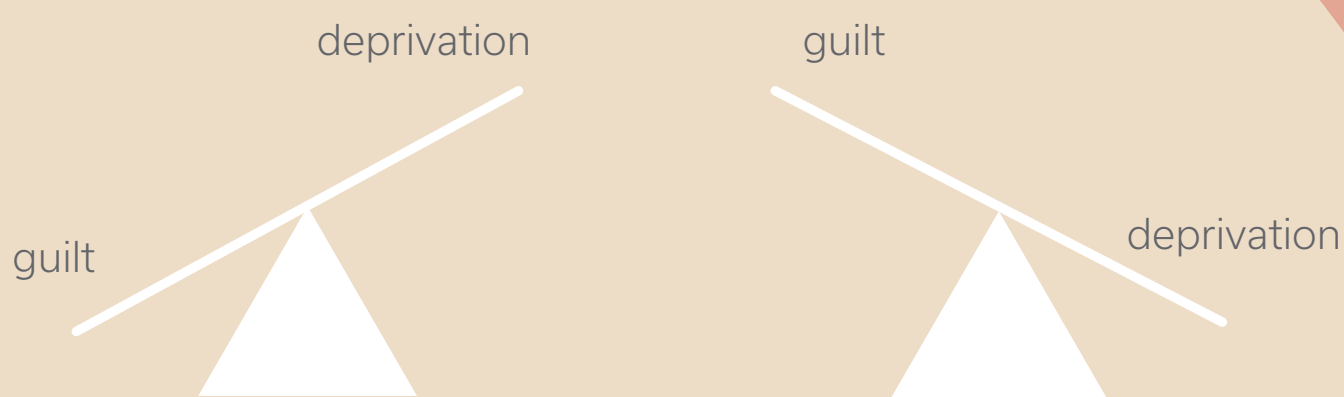
*"I should eat quinoa to be healthy, even though I don't like it."*

You have a right to enjoy your food. Lack of satisfaction fuels feelings of deprivation.

*"I better eat all of these cookies now, because I'm not sure when I'll get to have them again."*

Food peace comes when all foods are allowed and you eat in a way that honors your wants and needs.

## The Guilt-Deprivation Seesaw



Deprivation is a hallmark of diet culture. Diets dictate food rules that restrict what, when, and how much to eat.

When deprivation is high, guilt is low. When you've been following the rules you think you've been good.

Eventually, the deprivation builds and you can't follow the rules anymore. You give in, feel a loss of control, and the deprivation lowers. But the guilt increases and you think you've been bad.

At this point, the cycle repeats itself. You feel caught between periods of restriction and binges, and don't know how to stop. When you stop playing with restriction, you stop playing with guilt. That is how you make peace with food!

## The Key: Unconditional Permission to Eat

- Rejecting that there are "good" foods and "bad" foods.
- Eating what you really want. Really.
- Eating without obligatory penance.

## Common Fears

- **"I won't stop eating."** If you've never given yourself unconditional permission to eat, forbidden foods remain exciting and daunting.
- **"I've tried eating forbidden foods, and it didn't work."** Did you set conditions around eating that food? Was it truly unconditional permission?
- **"I won't eat healthfully."** When all foods are allowed, you can balance nutrition with enjoyment. Permission actually promotes self-regulating behavior.
- **"I don't trust myself around food."** You falsely believe you can't trust yourself because you have been caught in a deprivation-guilt cycle.
- **"But I want to lose weight."** You cannot find food peace while focusing on weight loss. Once you become an Intuitive Eater, you can pivot to other goals.

## How to Regain Pleasure in Eating

### Ask Yourself What You Really Want to Eat

- Diet culture disconnects you from knowing what foods you truly enjoy eating. Are you eating foods you think you should eat, or what you want to eat?

### Explore the Sensual Qualities of Food

- Notice taste, texture, aroma, appearance, and temperature. Try not to judge as you explore. Respect your individual taste buds and preferences.

### Make Eating Enjoyable

- Eat slowly and savor every bite. Eat before you get overly hungry. Eat in a pleasant environment (emotional and physical). Keep a variety of foods available.

### Don't Settle

- If you don't love it, don't eat it. If you love it, savor it. You are not obligated to eat anything.

### Check-in With Yourself

- Taste has a law of diminishing returns. As you eat a food, your desire for it decreases. We often get the most satisfaction from the first few bites!

# Planning a Satisfying Meal

In searching for meal satisfaction, think about all your senses when you're trying to decide what to eat. Your body will offer a wealth of information if you practice tuning into its sensory messages about food.

When you first start to feel hungry, ask yourself these questions:

- What taste does my tongue want to experience?
- What texture do I want to feel in my mouth?
- Which temperature would feel right?
- What aroma will be appealing to me?
- How do I want my food to look?
- How will my stomach feel after eating this meal?
- How long will my meal keep me satisfied before I get hungry again?

Shortly after you begin eating, check in to see if the food meets your expectations. Describe the sensations you're experiencing.

Halfway through your meal, check in again to see if the meal still feels satisfying to all your senses. Scientists have found that the pleasantness of the sensory aspects of food actually begins to diminish after about two minutes of eating. This is called sensory-specific satiety.

After you're finished, rate your satisfaction level on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least satisfying and 5 being the most.

Continuing practicing this and use what you learn to optimize your food satisfaction!

## Habituation Practice

Habituation means that the more we have of a food, the less exciting it becomes. If there is no forbidden food, we won't feel deprivation, or experience the intense highs and lows eating that food creates. The goal of habituation is not to burn-out on a certain food. The objective is to remove the excitement of the forbidden food.

### PREPARATION

This practice works best if you follow a systematic process using the same food, same brand, and same flavor, before moving on. For example, if you wanted to make peace with ice cream, choose one flavor, such as rocky road, rather than buying a variety of new flavors. Varying the flavor (or even the brand) extends the period of excitement—it's almost like starting anew with each flavor, even though it's the same type of food.

Choose a specific food  
(same brand and flavor).

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Decide where you will eat  
the food (home, out, etc.).

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Decide when you will eat it.

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What do you need to feel  
safe? Consider stress and self-  
care issues.

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### PRACTICE

BEFORE: Take note of how  
you are feeling. Excited?  
Worried? Curious?

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DURING: How is the taste?  
Texture? Flavor? Is this  
food meeting your  
expectations?

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AFTER: Did the experience of  
eating this food meet your  
expectations? Why or why  
not? Any surprises?

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