

*Printable worksheets for
the Eat Sanely ebook edition*

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CHAPTERS 1 and 2

WORKSHEET #1: Your Diet and Weight Inventory

This inventory is intended to help you think about your current weight—how you've reached it, how you feel about it, what you might need to change, why it's been hard to change. Your thoughts here will help you form an effective action plan and target your first steps. Fill out the form, then set it aside for a few hours or a day. See if other thoughts occur to you in thinking about how you've managed your eating and weight over the years. (See the addenda for weight charts, etc.)

Current weight _____

Ideal weight _____

Ideal weight on chart _____

If overweight, when did you first become heavy (for example, in childhood, as teenager, after pregnancy, etc.)?

How and when has your weight fluctuated over the years?

What have you tried to reduce before?

What has worked? Why?

What has not worked? Why?

Describe if there is a predictable pattern to your “getting off track” with an eating plan (for example, you blow it once, and then you’re off for good).

Do you have physical limitations (for example, a medical condition) that affect how you can manage your weight through exercise? Describe.

Do you binge eat? If so, how often? How do you think that has affected your weight?

Do you eat for emotional reasons? If you know that you do, describe what kinds of emotions lead you to overeat. Also, what has helped you, even temporarily, to not do this?

Does the “ideal weight” that you’d like to achieve match your “ideal weight” on a chart? If not, why not?

How satisfied are you now with your current weight?

What changes do *you* think you need to make to maintain a better weight?

What do you think prevents you from making these changes?

WORKSHEET #2: How Sane is Your Eating?

Sane eating involves all of the following factors. Check off those that you need to tackle, now or over the long run, to feel that you can call your eating “sane”.

| | True For Me | Need to Target |
|---|----------------|-------------------|
| I pay attention to what I eat but don't spend too much time worrying about it. | _____ | _____ |
| I am more or less satisfied with my weight. | _____ | _____ |
| Mostly I eat healthy food. | _____ | _____ |
| I don't panic if I eat something “bad”. | _____ | _____ |
| If I mess up, foodwise, I get back on track the next meal, or the next day. | _____ | _____ |
| I don't eat in secret or lie about what I eat. | _____ | _____ |
| I can usually dine out without overdoing. | _____ | _____ |
| I eat sweets and “treat foods” only in moderation | _____ | _____ |
| I don't skip meals to manage weight. | _____ | _____ |
| I know that keeping active helps my weight and my body. | _____ | _____ |
| I eat unprocessed foods most of the time. | _____ | _____ |
| I do not try to “purge” foods if I overeat. | _____ | _____ |
| I know that few people can “eat whatever they want” without concern for weight, and I make choices accordingly. | _____ | _____ |
| I often really enjoy my food. | _____ | _____ |
| I know that not every meal has to be deliciously satisfying. | _____ | _____ |
| It is OK to get hungry once in a while | _____ | _____ |
| I don't often let myself become ravenous. | _____ | _____ |

WORKSHEET #3: Identifying Obstacles

After filling our Worksheets 1 and 2, you should have some ideas about where you need to problem-solve and make changes. So now, check the areas that you think you will need to work on to reach your goal of sane eating. The upcoming chapters will address these various areas—some may need more of your attention than others.

MY EATING PLAN: to achieve a sane eating goal of “healthy enough” weight *and* peace of mind, you’ll need to know the best way for you to eat. Some guidelines hold true for everyone, while others vary from person to person, depending upon your body, preferences, and lifestyle. What kinds of foods, amounts, and schedule will be most helpful to you? How will you make room for eating out and special occasions? If you know what works best for you, and you need most help in sticking to it, then this is not a place for major work now. If you have no idea what’s best, or if have flip-flopped between diets and no-diets, making out what’s best for you is important. (Chapter 4)

My Goal: _____

PRACTICALITIES: you may know what’s best for you to be eating, but find that life seems to get in your way: shopping, planning, taking time to cook, accommodating other family members, being on the road a lot. Thinking about what works given your life, and solving problems accordingly, will help you achieve sane eating. (Chapter 5)

My Goal: _____

THOUGHTS: our thoughts often interfere with our success in changing how care for ourselves. If you often think “nothing will work for me”, “I’ve already blown it”, “I’m lazy”, etc., you could use some work here. Most people have some unhelpful thoughts in this area. (Chapter 7)

My Goal: _____

EMOTIONS: do you eat when you are stressed? Bored? Lonely? Sad? Angry? You may already know that these are problem areas for you. Or you may suspect they are. Figuring out how emotions affect your eating, and finding ways to take care of emotions differently, will change how you are with food in your life. (Chapters 6, 8, 9, 10, 11)

My Goal: _____

BINGING: a binge is an eating episode where a lot of food is eaten at one time (not on a holiday or other occasion where overeating is common). The eating feels out of control and unstoppable. The amount eaten would be judged by an outside observer to be excessive. Guilt often follows. Binging usually has to be under control (not happening on a regular basis) for weight loss to effectively occur. (Chapter 11, Special Edition 2)

My Goal: _____

FAMILY: you may be aware of issues in your family that make it hard to maintain healthier eating. For example, others will be upset if you start to lose weight or reject high-fat cooking. Or maybe you've been "the fat one" forever, and it feels strange to challenge that role. Examining these factors can help you change them. (Chapter 12)

Goal: _____

SUPER OBESITY: if you have close to 100 pounds or more to lose, your body may not respond to small efforts to change. In other words, you may need a different approach than the person who has only 30 pounds to lose and has not been overweight for long. You will need to learn what your body needs and examine the lifelong challenge of managing your weight effectively. (Chapter 4, Special Edition 1)

Goal: _____

EATING DISORDERS: if you are in recovery from anorexia or bulimia, you will need to be sure that any change efforts do not retrigger old coping patterns. (Chapters 11, 15, and Special Editions)

Goal: _____

CHAPTER 3

WORK SHEET #1: How Ready Are You to Change?

Change is a process, not a one-time event. This inventory can help you identify where you are in that process. Then you can think of how you might move yourself to the next stage of readiness. Use the following scale in your responses.

| | | | |
|--------|--|---|---|
| STAGE: | Hadn't ever thought about it, OR have thought about it but definitely am not ready to try | = | 5 |
| | Thinking about it, not sure I'm ready | = | 4 |
| | Feel I'm really ready to try (or try again) | = | 3 |
| | Have been trying, go back and forth in my commitment | = | 2 |
| | Have been trying, doing fairly well, am interested in doing all I can to be successful now | = | 1 |

Think of each of the following components of eating sanely. Write the number for the stage that corresponds most closely to where you feel you are in your readiness to incorporate that behavior or habit into your life. After you've done that, think about each statement that you marked with a number less than 1. Can you picture yourself moving to the next stage? Are you willing to try now? What might make it more likely?

- Exercising regularly _____
- Eating breakfast _____
- Eating at least 5 servings per day of fruits or vegetables _____
- Reducing portion sizes _____
- Reducing processed foods _____
- Eating less sugar _____
- Limiting treat foods Learning to "get back on track" when you mess up Learning to examine "lapses" to understand how they happen _____
- Keeping a food log Trying new coping skills Cooking more food at home Thinking ahead and planning meals and snacks _____
- Bringing lunches to work _____
- Limiting restaurant food _____
- Talking with family about healthy changes _____
- Dealing with stress differently _____

WORKSHEET #2: *Becoming More Ready*

After completing Worksheet #1, pick one or two habits you'd like to "become more ready" to incorporate. Copy this sheet and complete for each habit you'd like to consider.

Which behavior would you like to make a regular part of your life? How ready did you rate yourself to do this?

What would you need to do to move to the next stage of readiness?

Think about it more _____

Learn more or get more information _____

Practice it _____ times this week

Ask someone for help in getting you started _____

Your own ideas:

WORKSHEET #3: PROS and CONS Lists

You may not have fully considered how best to start making dietary changes. A Pros and Cons list for different aspects of starting can help you decide how you want to proceed.

Changing: small steps vs. all-at-once

On the left hand side of a sheet of paper LIST all of the PRO reasons for starting with one or two small changes per month, for example. Then list all of the CON reasons for changing your diet that way. Then make a PRO-CON chart for starting a new food plan all at once.

Examples:

Starting with small changes

PROS

I'm likely to stick with it

CONS

I'll take a very long time to reach my weight goal

Starting my new food plan all at once

PROS

I'll feel better

CONS

I might get overwhelmed

Changing: allowing for treats vs. omitting treats (potential "trigger" foods)

Example:

Learning to eat treats in moderation

PROS

I won't feel as deprived

CONS

I might overdo it.

These are brief examples. Keep adding thoughts to your columns as you consider and picture yourself trying to change. This exercise aims to help you in just that—considering and picturing. This helps you prepare. In the end it makes sense to go with what you feel most comfortable with, not necessarily with what seems most logical.

CHAPTER 4

WORKSHEET #1: Identify Your Dietary Goals

Refer to the worksheets you completed for Chapters 1 and 2—reflecting on your weight and diet history, your closeness to or distance from sane eating, and the obstacles you currently face. Think also about how ready you are to change (Chapter 3). What goals for change do you feel are reasonable for you to set right now? Think about your weight, the kinds of foods you eat, the kind of schedule you follow. Where do you want to move toward change? The following are examples of measurable, concrete behavioral goals that will bring you closer to sane eating. Write your own goals on the lines that follow. You can start with one or two or three goals, then add others after a month or two if you wish.

SAMPLE GOAL STATEMENTS:

I will eat three regular meals per day, with two small snacks between to avoid hunger.

I will take a walk five days a week.

I will learn to eat smaller portions.

I will cook at home three days a week.

I will bring my lunch to work four days a week.

I will add four servings of fruits and vegetables to my diet each day.

I will follow my meal plan and take notes about what works and doesn't work, then I will revise it next week accordingly.

MY CURRENT GOAL S TATEMENTS:

(Use additional sheets to write future goal statements)

WORKSHEET #2: My Dietary Plan

Considering all that you've read, use this page to detail your plan for eating: you may want to use a separate sheet for non-work days, if your schedule on those days differs significantly. If you've seen a nutritionist or other helper, use the plan you've devised in those consultations.

SAMPLE DIETARY PLAN:

Breakfast (include whole grains and protein)

Lunch (include whole grains, vegetables, protein and fruit-bring from home)

Afternoon snack (include protein, under 250 calories)

Dinner (make at home)

Weekends – (include an eat-out meal)

SAMPLE DIETARY PLAN:

Will follow South Beach Diet

MY DIETARY PLAN:

(Use additional sheets for notes if desired)

WORKSHEET # 3: Identifying Problems

Use the left-hand side of this sheet to list potential problems you think you may encounter in trying to change. On the right, list your ideas for dealing with those problems.

| POTENTIAL PROBLEM | STRATEGY FOR DEALING |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

After you've tried a potential problem-solving strategy, make note of how it worked. If it didn't work at all, think of a new strategy, then test that out. If a strategy works a little bit, keep trying it to see if continued use strengthens its effect. If it worked quite well, give yourself credit for that success!

CHAPTER 5

WORKSHEET #1: Improvements in Planning

Having studied Chapter 5, think about where better planning will help you succeed in your sane eating goals.

Where I need to plan better:

What I can do differently:

When can I start?

Who might help me?

What tools might I need (lists, containers, recipes, etc.)

After you've tried a new routine for two weeks, reevaluate how it's working, filling this sheet out again if necessary. Try the routine again with the added adjustments, if you've made some.

WORKSHEET #2: My Non-Routine Circumstances

Check any non-routine circumstances that you frequently face. Then write down how you can minimize poor eating or exercise habits and increase sane eating behavior in these times. In these cases, even small changes can be helpful, if that's all you can manage. Use extra sheets if you have other circumstances not listed here.

Frequent restaurant meals for work

Family holidays that include enormous meals and pressure to eat

Weeknights when the family goes in different directions without shared dinner

Frequent occasions for "potluck" meals or buffets

WORKSHEET #3: New Habits to Develop

What changes could you realistically make at each of the following mealtimes:

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snacks:

Try your new ideas, then evaluate after a week or two, make adjustments as desired.

ADDENDUM #1: THOUGHTS ON KEEPING A JOURNAL

*Your journal can be private, or you can share it with your therapist. Keep it in a safe secure place if you don't want others to read it.

*Use a small notebook if you wish to have your journal available to you at all times—say, by keeping it in your purse or tote bag.

*If you aren't concerned about size or space constraints, decorate your journal so that it pleases you. Or, buy one that's designed in a way you love.

*You can save your journal to look back on in the future, or discard pages after a time. It's the process of doing it that's most important.

*Ways to use your journal:

Free association – simply sit and write about what you're thinking, how you're feeling, ideas you've had. Don't edit or censor. Just keep going. Do this at a regular time each day. Or, do it when you're trying to “ride out an urge” to eat (or do something else you really don't want to do). Do it when you're feeling sad, angry, lonely, scared, or confused.

Sorting something out – write specifically about something that's bothering you—something you're worried about, something you feel bad about, something you don't quite understand.

Capturing an insight – write about something important that's suddenly dawned on you—a new way of understanding something, a new insight or connection.

Daily log – use your journal at the end of each day to reflect on the day's events--what went well, what did not, etc.

Place for gratitude, affirmations, wishes, dreams, goals – in addition to the other types of writing you can do in your journal, or as a separate journal, jot down things you're thankful for, things you know you do well, things you want and wish for yourself. Journals can be places to affirm and strengthen the best in ourselves. They can help move us closer to dreams and goals as well.

Venting – in life, it doesn't always make sense to complain about or yell at people directly. Finding a way to calm down is usually the best course of action. However, for those times when the feeling is terribly strong, try getting it out on paper. That can sometimes calm you down enough to be able to think through your options.

Sharing/remembering – sometimes you want to share something significant with another person, or talk something through. Maybe you want to be sure to remember how you felt about something, or just how it happened. If for some reason you can't connect with someone right then, try writing in your journal as if it were a friend. This can be a helpful measure, even if temporary.

Remember! Don't censor yourself or edit as you go along! A journal is not a school paper. And it's no place to be anyone other than yourself.

CHAPTER 7**WORKSHEET #1: Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts**

Repeated here are common unhelpful thoughts that can undo our efforts to change. Check off any that frequently interfere with your efforts. Use the blank lines at the end to write any of your own thoughts that aren't written here. If you discover more while keeping a thought journal (see below), add them.

"I just don't feel like it." _____

"I already blew it, so what's the difference?" _____

"Nobody else has to eat this boring stuff." _____

"Everyone else can eat more than I can and not get fat." _____

"I'm just too busy to exercise (or plan a meal, or make a lunch to bring)." _____

"I'm hungry, so I have to eat right now." _____

"It's not OK to be hungry." _____

"If the food is there, I'll eat it." _____

"I couldn't help it, the urge to eat was so strong." _____

"It's not fair that I gain weight so easily." _____

"I'm not losing weight anyway, so why bother trying?" _____

"I was good all week, I should have lost weight." _____

"I can't make changes now, I'm too stressed out (or depressed)." _____

"I'll do that once I'm thinner." _____

"If I start eating that, I'll never stop." _____

"No one can eat as much as I can once I get going." _____

"I just can never stick with things." _____

"It's all or nothing for me." _____

"I deserve to have that treat, it's been a tough day." _____

"I already blew it, so what's the difference?" _____

"Nobody else has to eat this boring stuff." _____

"Everyone else can eat more than I can and not get fat." _____

"I'm just too busy to exercise (or plan a meal, or make a lunch to bring)." _____

"I'm hungry, so I have to eat right now." _____

"It's not OK to be hungry." _____

"If the food is there, I'll eat it." _____

"I couldn't help it, the urge to eat was so strong." _____

"It's not fair that I gain weight so easily." _____

"I'm not losing weight anyway, so why bother trying?" _____

"I was good all week, I should have lost weight." _____

"I can't make changes now, I'm too stressed out (or depressed)." _____

"I'll do that once I'm thinner." _____

"If I start eating that, I'll never stop." _____

"No one can eat as much as I can once I get going." _____

"I just can never stick with things." _____

"It's all or nothing for me." _____

"I deserve that treat, it's been a tough day." _____

Other thoughts:

WORKSHEET #2: Counterstatements**(Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts)**

Now that you've identified your unhelpful thoughts, the next step is to return to them and write more rational, helpful thoughts beside each. (Examples follow.) In the days ahead, write down the thoughts each time they occur, then write the more helpful response beside it. If the thought occurs too often to write it each time, aim to do it several times a day. It is the repetition that starts to make a lasting difference.

Here are examples of how you might counter the sample statements used in this Chapter. Use these, or compose your own.

"I just don't feel like it."

JUST BECAUSE I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT, DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T DO IT. I DO PLENTY OF THINGS THAT I DON'T FEEL LIKE. I'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER LATER IF I JUST GO AHEAD AND DO IT. IT WON'T BE SO BAD.

"I already blew it, so what's the difference?"

IT COULD MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IF I KEEP ON EATING BADLY JUST BECAUSE I'VE GONE OFF TRACK HERE. IT'S COMPLETELY ILLOGICAL TO SAY "WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE". OF COURSE IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHETHER I GET BACK ON TRACK OR STAY OFF. I'LL FEEL BETTER IF I JUST LEARN FROM THIS AND MOVE ON, HOWEVER HARD THAT MIGHT BE.

"Nobody else has to eat this boring stuff."

JUST ABOUT EVERYONE HAS TO WATCH THEIR WEIGHT IN THIS CULTURE. EATING BORING STUFF ONCE IN A WHILE IS FINE. I CAN HAVE YUMMY FOOD AT TIMES WHEN IT MAKES SENSE TO.

"Everyone else can eat more than I can and not get fat."

PROBABLY NOT....EVERYONE HAS TO WATCH THEIR WEIGHT IN OUR WORLD. MANY THIN PEOPLE STAY THIN BECAUSE OF HOW THEY THINK AND BEHAVE, NOT BECAUSE IT'S EFFORTLESS.

"I'm just too busy to exercise (or plan a meal, or make a lunch to bring)."

THIS IS MY LIFE AND MY HEALTH. I MUST FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIT THIS INTO MY LIFE AND STICK WITH IT. THERE IS SOME WAY TO DO IT. I'LL BE HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER IF I DO. I'LL SET A BETTER EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS, TOO.

"I'm hungry, so I have to eat right now."

*IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD IF I'M HUNGRY FOR A REASONABLE STRETCH OF TIME. I'LL BE EATING LATER. I'LL TAKE A DEEP BREATH WHEN I SIT DOWN SO I DON'T WOLF MY FOOD THEN.***

"It's not OK to be hungry."

*IT'S NOT IDEAL TO BE HUNGRY, BUT ONCE IN A WHILE I CAN COPE.***

“If the food is there, I’ll eat it.”

I MAY HAVE HAD A HARD TIME NOT EATING FOOD THAT IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, BUT I’M WORKING TO LEARN NEW SKILLS AND NEW HABITS. I’LL GET BETTER AT IT.

“I couldn’t help it, the urge to eat was so strong.”

STRONG URGES ARE A PAIN, BUT I’M LEARNING TO DISTRACT MYSELF FROM THEM, TO DELAY ACTING ON THEM, AND TO GET HELP IN NOT GIVING IN.

“It’s not fair that I gain weight so easily.”

IT MAY NOT BE FAIR. BUT IF IT’S A FACT, I HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT THE BEST I CAN. WE ALL HAVE UNFAIR THINGS WE HAVE TO GRAPPLE WITH IN LIFE.

“I’m not losing weight anyway, so why bother trying?”

SOMETIMES WEIGHT DOESN’T COME OFF WHEN WE THINK IT SHOULD. WHAT’S IMPORTANT IS THAT I’M EATING HEALTHFULLY. IF MY WEIGHT CONTINUES TO STAY STUCK, I’LL CONSULT WITH SOMEONE TO SEE IF THERE’S ANYTHING MORE I CAN DO.

“I was good all week, I should have lost weight.”

ONE WEEK IS NOT A GOOD MEASURE OF WHETHER OR NOT MY EATING PATTERN IS GOING TO HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT. I’M GOING TO KEEP ON EATING WELL AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS. I CAN GET HELP IF I NEED TO.

“I can’t make changes now, I’m too stressed out (or depressed).”

BEING STRESSED OUT OR DEPRESSED DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT I CAN’T DO ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY THAN IN THE PAST. IN FACT, DOING EVEN A LITTLE SOMETHING DIFFERENTLY MIGHT HELP ME FEEL BETTER.

“I’ll do that once I’m thinner.”

I’M GOING TO LIVE MY LIFE NOW. I’M A PERSON WITH MANY QUALITIES BESIDES SIZE. I CAN CONTINUE TO WORK AT MY EATING AND WEIGHT WHILE I’M AT IT.

“If I start eating that, I’ll never stop.”

I MAY HAVE HAD TROUBLE STOPPING EATING THIS TYPE OF FOOD BEFORE, BUT THAT DOESN’T MEAN I’LL NEVER LEARN BETTER CONTROL, OR THAT I’M DOOMED IF I SLIP AND HAVE A LITTLE.

“No one can eat as much as I can once I get going.”

I DON’T LIKE FEELING LIKE A GLUTTON--BUT THE FACT IS THAT MANY PEOPLE OVEREAT IN OUR WORLD. I’VE JUST GOT TO DO WHAT I CAN TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF. THERE’S NO USE IN BEATING MYSELF UP.

“I just can never stick with things.”

I HAVE HAD TROUBLE STICKING WITH THINGS IN THE PAST. I’M TRYING TO CHANGE THAT. I KNOW I’LL FIND SOMETHING THAT HELPS.

“It’s all or nothing for me.”

I’VE BEEN A VERY BLACK-OR-WHITE THIINKER. I’M LEARNING HOW TO CHANGE THAT.

“I deserve that treat, it’s been a tough day.”

EATING SOMETHING THAT WON’T MAKE ME FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF, OR THAT CAUSES ME TO MESS UP MY GOALS, IS NOT A TREAT. I THINK I’LL LETMYSELF RENT A MOVIE INSTEAD.

***This does not apply if you have diabetes or another condition affecting blood sugar metabolism.*

PRACTICE WRITING COUNTERSTATEMENTS TO YOUR OWN FREQUENT UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS BELOW:

NOTE: You may find it helpful to keep a small notebook in your pocket or bag so that you can do the thought-countering exercise when and where needed. Your thought journal becomes a tool that helps you stay in touch with your goals all the time.

WORKSHEET #3: Affirmations

Affirmations are the positive, self-encouraging statements we all wish we said to ourselves more often, and more automatically. Writing, reading, and saying affirmations purposely to yourself helps, over the course of time, to encourage these types of thoughts to occur more naturally.

For this chapter's purposes, take one of your counterstatements. Write it in a shortened form on a few colorful cards. Put a card in your notebook, on your bathroom mirror, on your car seat—in several places where you'll see them often. Read them, aloud or to yourself, when you see them. If you find yourself not really paying attention after a few days, switch to a new affirmation. You can also try writing these statements several times a day in a notebook, for added reinforcement.

The idea is not necessarily to paste these thoughts over old ones, but to gently remind yourself of the ideas. Thinking them repetitively can help repattern your habitual thinking.

Examples:

CHANGE IS A PROCESS....I'M GETTING THERE

PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION

I'M LEARNING TO ENJOY NEW WAYS OF EATING

I CARE ABOUT MY BODY!

IF I KEEP THIS UP, I WILL HAVE NEW HABITS SOON

CHAPTER 8***WORKSHEET #1: "SITTING IT OUT"***

Do this exercise when you have the urge to eat, and you know it's not in your best interest to do so. Either you know you are not hungry, or a mealtime is approaching soon. Or, you know you're headed for "binge" or "grazing" foods that will make you feel bad about yourself.

Before getting the food, go sit somewhere, preferably somewhere comfortable. Ideally, you will keep your journal with you, though that is not essential. Take a deep breath. Sit for a minute, then another. Keep sitting, another minute, then another. What do you notice? Mentally note your thoughts. Scan your body for tensions. Note, and try to name, your emotions right in that moment. (You can write these observations down if you have your journal, or use this sheet.) Repeat the exercise when urges recur.

OBSERVATIONS

Thoughts (be specific)

Body sensations (be specific)

Name the emotion(s) you are experiencing right now

How does your urge to eat now compare with when you first sat down?

If the urge remains as strong, can you sit a bit longer? Go do something else? If not, why not?

Re-rate your hunger when you finish sitting:

Starting point (1-10) _____

After sitting (1-10) _____

WORKSHEET #2: MINI MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

Many books, courses, and CDs exist to help you develop a full meditation practice and/or to learn to become more mindful throughout your daily life. These exercises will introduce to the ideas and practice of mindfulness. More resources are listed in the Addenda.

MINDFULNESS: GETTING STARTED

Mindfulness means paying attention to the present moment, exactly as it is, with no effort to evaluate or change it. Most mindfulness practices advise focusing on the breath, as your breathing always exists in the present moment, and breath is always ready as a focal point. That's where the first exercise here will start.

Mindfulness exercises are often relaxing. Their goal, however, is not relaxation. Rather, they aim to build your ability to attend to the present, and to have better control over your attention ultimately.

Certain attitudes will help you become more and more adept. First, a *non-judgmental* attitude is key. Whatever thoughts or feelings you have, just let them be. For your purposes here, they are neither good nor bad. They just “are”. If you find yourself judging how you're doing an exercise, for example, simply notice that you judged and bring your focus back to your breath. Do this over and over again if your mind wanders, as it most likely will at first.

Next, *don't attempt to control* your thoughts or feelings. Just notice them. Don't try to stop any type of thought or sensation, just watch it, with *curiosity*, perhaps. Notice how it does or does not change as you simply observe and keep breathing.

Exercise 1: Observing Your Breath

Sit comfortably. Take a deep breath. Close your eyes or let them go fuzzy as you fix them on some neutral point around you. Bring your attention to the breath coming in and out of your nostrils. Don't try to make it faster, slower, or any different than it is. Just watch it. In, out. In, out. Your mind will probably have lots of thoughts. Just notice them, let them pass in and out as if they were clouds floating by, or maybe marchers in a parade passing through. If you find yourself forgetting to follow your breath, simply notice that you got pulled away and return to your breath. If a particular thought keeps disturbing you, say to yourself, “There's that worry thought—or that planning thought, or that critical thought—again.” And then return to your breath. Do this exercise for 2 to 45 minutes. You may want to start with 2-5 minutes and then increase to 10 or 12 after a few days. Do the exercise when you have time—perhaps before you start your day. If you think of it, do a minute here or there throughout your day.

Exercise 2: Mindful Walking

Follow the instructions above, but keep your focus instead on your feet and legs. Notice how they feel as they move along, springing you from step to step. Alternatively, focus on the sights and sounds and smells and temperature changes that come through to your senses. If your focus gets caught up in your head, simply return to your original focus and continue on.

Exercise 3: Mindful Tasks/Activities

Follow the instructions above, but use as your focus whatever task you are doing—rinsing dishes, brushing teeth, carrying bags from your car.

Exercise 4: Mindfulness as you Lay Down to Sleep

Note the instructions above. Here you will focus on the sensations you experience while settling into bed. How does the sheet feel against your skin? How soft is your pillow? How dark is it? What is the air like on your face? What sounds remain in your environment—listen. What are your thoughts doing: settling down, or racing around? Watch them. Return to a focus on your breathing after contemplating how your bed supports you, how your pillow holds your head.

Moments to Experience Mindfully

Throughout your day, take a moment to take in exactly what you are experiencing in that very moment. Notice the surface you sit on. Notice where your hands are. What are you seeing, hearing, smelling? What sensations exist in your body right now? Do this in some of these places, or anywhere else:

- in the car, just before you turn the ignition key
- in the car, just before you open the door to get out
- by the side of your child's bed, just after you've said "good night"
- as you walk down the hallway at work
- just as you enter your home after work
- as you put your hand on the telephone to answer it
- just before you go to punch in telephone numbers to make a call
- as you are chopping vegetables for dinner

Eating Mindfully

Chapter 13 will devote itself entirely to mindful eating. Just for now, though, try eating something mindfully. Take one bite, pay attention to chewing it. Notice how the texture and taste changes as the chewing progresses. Notice how it feels to swallow. Notice what your body wants to do next.

WORKSHEET #3: DELAY TACTICS

Try using delay tactics the next time you have an urge to eat and know you'll feel better if you don't. "Sitting it Out", discussed in Worksheet #1, is itself a delay tactic, in a way. Here are other ways to use a delaying strategy:

*rate your desire to eat on a scale of 1-10. Tell yourself you will have the food if you still want it in 30 minutes. Then go do something—laundry, an errand, a phone call, a walk, a floor sweeping, anything that will not make you feel worse about yourself. Then rerate your desire. If it is low, skip eating. If it is still high, delay another 30 minutes and rerate then. Keep doing this until the urge subsides. If at any time you decide to eat the food and stop the delays, you've at least changed your typical pattern. You can try again another time. Sometimes it helps to tell yourself you can have the food you're craving if you still want it tomorrow. Then rerate your desire a full day later.

Examples: Here are some real-life examples of how a delay strategy can be used—how the inner dialogue, or self-talk, might go, and what outcomes might result.

- 1.) Sheryl has just gone out with a friend, had a moderately healthy dinner and a glass of wine. She feels a very strong urge to get a certain kind of cheesecake from her grocery store bakery. She's thinking of driving there. She's trying to tell herself she'll have just one small slice, but she knows, from experience, that's extremely unlikely. She's torn. Here is what she does:
 - 6:40 p.m. – driving home. She finally decides not to stop at the store but to try delaying instead.
 - 7:00 p.m. – arrives home. Tells herself she's going to change her clothes and start doing her laundry. Once the load has started, she'll decide whether or not to go back out to the store.
 - 7:30 p.m. – Sheryl has changed her clothes, put away her work things, and started her laundry. Her desire for the cheesecake, at first a 10, is now an 8. Still pretty strong. She tells herself she'll wait until the clothes are in the dryer and then decide. In the meantime, she goes upstairs to read the newspaper.
 - 8:00 p.m. – After putting the clothes in the dryer, Sheryl rates her desire as a 6. She decides she'll rerate after folding and putting away the clean clothes. She goes upstairs and puts a DVD on.
 - 9:15 p.m. – Sheryl has dried, folded, and put away this load of clothes. Her desire has dropped to about a 2. She decides it's too late to bother going out. She'll wash up, get into bed and finish the movie she's started. The cheesecake will be there another day, she tells herself. She does not feel overfull. She feels pleased with herself.
- 2.) Deborah can't stop thinking about the leftover birthday cake from her son's party. It's in the refrigerator now. She's wanting to go get some. She'd had a slice at the party this afternoon. If she waits until tomorrow, she knows others will have eaten up more of the cake. So, it might not be there to tempt her. Or, even if some remains, there will be a much greater chance that she'll have only a small piece. She decides to go take a walk for now. When she returns, she simply no longer has the craving. She forgets about it.

The cake is gone the next day. She's happy she's learning to have just one piece of something without having to return to it and gorge on more.

3.) Mimi loves ice cream, and her freezer now contains a pint of chocolate brownie sundae *and* a pint of cookie dough—both flavors that she adores. She can easily eat a whole pint once she's started. She's begun to think that maybe she shouldn't buy these things when she shops. Maybe ice cream, for her, is better as a "go out" kind of treat. But for now.....she decides to try a delay tactic.

7:00 p.m. – Mimi is craving the ice cream. She decides to go work in her yard a bit before starting to eat. Maybe the urge will pass.

7:20 p.m. – Frustrated and bored with her task, Mimi, goes into the house, thinks longingly of those pints, decides to try something else. Her desire has gone from a 10 down only to a 9. She tries to do some tidying up in her bedroom.

7:40 p.m. – Mimi gives up and eats ¾ of a pint. She's mad at herself. However, she does remind herself that delaying, even 40 minutes has started to retrain her brain—in other words, maybe "thought of ice cream" no longer equals "eat ice cream immediately" anymore. Also, she stopped before hitting the bottom of the container. It wasn't easy, but it increased her sense of control.

Record Your Own Delay Efforts:

When you find yourself wanting to eat when you know it's best not to, try delaying, using one of the above examples as inspiration. Record what happens each time.

RATE URGE (1-10) _____

WHAT I TRIED

WHAT HAPPENED

(Remember to re-rate urge after delay intervals.)

CHAPTER 9

WORKSHEET #1: Emotional Eating Inventory

Use this sheet to take stock of your emotional overeating, and to set goals for changing any emotional overeating patterns.

IDENTIFICATION:

I Know I Overeat for Emotional Reasons – if this is you, continue. If not, see below.

Are there specific times of day when you overeat? If so, when? _____

Are there certain types of incidents that trigger your overeating? Describe them (use a second sheet if necessary). _____

Are there certain feeling states that start your overeating (for example, worry, anger, excitement)? Describe them. _____

I'm Not Sure If I Overeat for Emotional Reasons – if this describes you, refer to Chapters 6 and 8. Use the worksheets in those chapters (the following may be particularly helpful) to gain information and insight about what emotions might be accompanying your overeating. Then complete the inventory above.

Chapter 6 – Worksheet #2, Addendum #1

Chapter 8 – Worksheets #1 and 2

WORKSHEET #2: Dealing Differently

From the inventory in Worksheet #1, choose a time of day, a type of incident, or a feeling state to target. For example, you might decide to target nighttime boredom eating, or eating in response to days with an enormous workload, or eating to calm your anxiety generally. Start with this one target—you can target other situations or feelings later, whether in the very near future, or after you’ve made some progress with this first goal.

EMOTIONAL EATING TARGET _____

WHAT I CAN DO TO HANDLE THIS EMOTION OR SITUATION DIFFERENTLY (instead of eating). Note here what you’d like to try. Use Addendum #1 if you need ideas.

HOW DID IT WORK? Try your alternative activity when you’re struggling to avoid overeating. Did it help you to delay eating? Did it help you to not eat? How was it to do this instead of eating? How did you feel immediately after doing it? How did you feel an hour after doing it? Do you need to try something else next time, or would it make sense to do this again? (Use additional sheets as necessary.)

GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT FOR TRYING Write a statement acknowledging that you did something differently, even if it was just thinking about doing something new. (For example, “I DID SOMETHING DIFFERENT! THAT’S A STEP TOWARD CHANGING. I’LL TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT AGAIN NEXT TIME, TOO.”)

OTHER REWARDS Are there ways you can reward yourself for your efforts to make changes, other than with food or things that cost a lot of money? See Addendum #2 if you need ideas.

CHAPTER 10

WORKSHEET # 1: Distinguishing Hunger from Cravings

Do this exercise when you are not sure if you're craving food because of real hunger or not. It is helpful to keep a journal or notepad nearby. You can write down your responses and observations if you like.

STEP 1. Sit comfortably. Take one long slow deep breath. Focus your attention inward. (Close your eyes if this helps.)

The first question to try to answer is "How do I know I want food right now?" Here are some places to observe:

- Describe any sensations in your stomach.
- Describe any other body sensations (tightness, throbbing, etc.) Note where in your body they are occurring—head, stomach, neck, legs, shoulders, etc.
- Pay attention to your head. How does it feel? Is it achy or dizzy? Filled with anxious thoughts? Other kinds of thoughts?
- Describe your emotion state right now (happy, content, worried, angry, sad, frustrated, etc.) Imagine *not* eating. What emotion do you feel then?
- Ask yourself: Is this stomach hunger or "head" hunger? What answer immediately comes to mind?

STEP 2. If you are pretty sure now that you *are* really hungry, keep breathing. Ask yourself if you can wait until your next meal or planned snack to eat. If so, fine. Tell yourself that you'll survive, that you've headed off an eating episode that you'd feel bad about, and that you're doing well.

If your answer is "no", and you feel you really *must* eat, ask yourself what type of snack would satisfy you right now. Then picture eating it, slowly, in a modest portion. If you can't picture eating anything except foods you'll regret (large portions of sweets or junk food), try picturing different healthy possibilities. For example, picture eating some fruit, or some chicken breast, or a cheese stick, or 15 almonds. If any of the healthier things you can imagine seem to "click", even slightly, allow yourself to have that particular snack. Remember to eat and chew slowly. Then wait at least 20 minutes to assess whether or not your craving has passed.

WORKSHEET #2: Choosing Abstinence vs. Learning Moderation

If certain foods mean certain downfall for your food and diet goals, you must decide whether to:

- *cut them out completely, forever*
- *cut them out while you make some habit and routine changes, then try to reintroduce them*
- *try learning to eat them in moderation*

Here are some things to consider when choosing the option that's right for you:

Cutting Out Completely:

You will need to learn to ignore or cope with the pull of these foods *no matter what*: when they appear at social events or at work, when you're feeling down or deprived, or whenever else your resolve is poor.

You may need to learn assertiveness with people who try to give you or encourage you to eat these foods.

You may find yourself bingeing on these foods if you *do* break down and eat them, as you haven't learned to eat them in moderation.

On the plus side, you will most likely stop craving them after a stretch of time has elapsed.

Cutting Out While You Make Changes:

All of the factors that apply to "Cutting Out Completely", above, apply here, too. However, it often helps people to think of the "living without" as temporary. Without a feeling of deprivation, the likelihood of bingeing subsides.

The crucial point to remember with this option is that you'll have to undergo the (probably uncomfortable) process of "Learning to Eat in Moderation" once you feel your weight, or habits generally, has improved. Otherwise, restarting these foods will lead right back to overeating, and your whole no-win cycle starts again.

The good news here is that if you've gone a stretch of time without these foods, you may find the exercise of learning to eat in moderation easier. Easy or not, though, you must pay it attention!

Learning to Eat in Moderation

Learning to eat in moderation involves experimenting with different ways of imbibing those foods that you tend to overeat. It will most likely involve uncomfortable feelings, especially at first, as you get used to *not* going for more. In other words, while your brain is still saying "more" and your behavior is now saying "no more". That takes time. The amount of time varies from person to person. The strength of the "more" signal, and therefore the discomfort level, also varies from person to person.

The learning process will most likely involve episodes where you are not successful, or not as successful as you would like, in eating less and stopping. You will need to keep this in mind if aiming to lose weight. However, every experiment, even if not fully successful, may contribute to your ultimately making a change that lasts.

The plus side of this option is that you will be able to live without foods that are completely “off limits”. You will feel stronger as a person who can make good choices for yourself. You will not wear yourself down with discouraging self-talk about your complete lack of self-control.

Just remember: the learning process may go very well for you. If it is difficult, though, that may not be your fault. And it still may be worth the hard efforts. You will have to consider the pros and cons for the long term.

Deciding

As you read through the above points, notice what thoughts and feelings arise. Note them in your journal. One method may clearly evoke strong “yes, that’s for me” feelings. If so, then aim your efforts there. If not, make a list of Pros and Cons for each option. Picture yourself living with each possible decision. Continue to pay attention to what thoughts and feelings emerge.

WORKSHEET #3: Eating Treats in Moderation**STEP 1.**

To start eating treats, or “trigger foods”, in moderation, it helps to identify what “moderation” would mean to you. In other words, in what amount, and how often, would you eat these foods and feel okay about it? Make note of that.

If you’re not sure, moderation might mean eating the amount that wouldn’t lead to weight gain. This, of course, will differ depending upon your overall diet and your particular body. Here are some possible amount/frequency combination that you might consider:

(use portion estimator, if needed, at)

- one portion twice a week
- two portions twice a week
- one portion every other day
- two portions, just on weekends
- one portion, only out at restaurants
- one unlimited serving, once a week
- one unlimited serving, once a month
- one unlimited serving, only on holidays
- two portions, only if eating with another person

These are reasonable places to start. If you find you can’t meet your weight goals with these practice you’ve chosen, you’ll need to readjust. Most people can, as the targeted foods are typically eaten much more often, or in much greater amounts, than those suggested here. The portion estimator can give you an idea of what portion size you should aim for—in many cases, even a double on is less than what an overeater usually goes for. Just as an example, a service of ice cream equals ½ cup. A two portion serving would equal one full cup.

STEP 2.

You’ve set your goal. The time will come to try it. Learning to eat in moderation, put in the most simple terms possible, involves eating the portion in the manner you’ve decided is acceptable. You must assume that many, if not most, times, you will still want more afterward. You must then occupy yourself until the urge for more disappears. This can take a moment, or up to an hour or more. For most people, with most food, it takes something more like 20 minutes. Worksheets in previous Chapters can provide many detailed ideas for coping with this time. Here are some basics:

- make yourself a cup of herbal or regular tea, or decaf coffee, and drink it
- pour a large glass of water or seltzer and drink it
- go brush your teeth
- suck on a couple of mints
- briskly clean up the kitchen/dining area
- go for a walk or bike ride
- make a phone call
- write in your journal
- meditate

- have a supportive person in your household sit and talk with you
- sit and write a to-do list for the next day
- prepare your or your family's lunches for the next day
- put in a yoga or stretching DVD and follow it
- go read the newspaper or do a crossword puzzle

Every 10 or 15 minutes, rate your urge to eat more. Continue to keep yourself occupied until your urge is down to 2 or less on a scale of 1 to 10.

Describe the whole process in your journal.

Repeat every time you eat the food you're trying to tackle until it becomes easier to simply say, "well, that's enough 'til next time."

WORKSHEET #4: Supporting Your Abstinence

If you've decided you don't want to struggle with "learning moderation", or for any other reason you feel that stopping eating the trouble foods is best, consider the following:

What will be the hardest times to not eat the food(s) I need to avoid?:

What can I do to make these times easier (refer to the Worksheets throughout for ideas; make extra copies of those that you'll be reusing)?:

What emotional states might make me vulnerable to binging or grazing on the food(s)?:

How can I better take care of these (refer to the Worksheets throughout for ideas; make extra copies of those that you'll be reusing)?:

Who might *not* support my efforts?:

What can I say, or do, to keep to my goals when dealing with this person?:

Who is supportive of my goals?:

How can I make sure I make use of this support?:

Use the space below to think and write about how you will get yourself back on track if you slip up.

Will you have trouble getting back on track now? If so, what might help you?

How can you take care of yourself now—in other words, to avoid feeling guilty or otherwise awful? Use extra sheets if necessary. See Addendum #5 if you go blank when trying to think of how to be kind to yourself.

WORKSHEET #3: Affirmations for Stopping Binging

If you are a binger, choose an affirmation or two each week to say to yourself frequently. Write them down. Transfer them to colored cards you can carry in your bag or stick on your mirror.

I'M DOING MY BEST.

I'M LEARNING TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF WELL.

*BINGING IS EASY TO DO IN THIS CRAZY WORLD—I'M DOING MY BEST TO DETACH
FROM THIS HABIT.*

I AM ABSOLUTELY WORTH GOOD CARE—NO MATTER WHAT MY WEIGHT.

GOOD FOOD IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE—I DON'T HAVE TO EAT IT NOW.

BEING HUNGRY ISN'T THE WORST THING IN THE WORLD.

THERE IS ALWAYS ENOUGH FOR ME.

THE FOOD WILL BE THERE TOMORROW.

BINGING ISN'T REALLY WORTH IT.

I AM THANKFUL FOR ALL THAT MY BODY DOES WELL.

I WANT TO FEEL LEAN AND STRONG.

I DESERVE TO FEEL LEAN AND STRONG.

I DESERVE TO STAND TALL, NO MATTER WHAT

WORKSHEET #4: Meditation for Bingers

Chapters 8 and 13 offer instructions for sitting meditations. Read through those worksheets to orient yourself if you like. The main purpose of this exercise is to help you become more capable of “sitting with” your feelings, which is usually pretty hard for binge eaters to do. You can stop at any time if you become too anxious. Otherwise, try to stick with the exercise for at least 3-5 minutes.

To start, sit comfortably with eyes closed or focused softly on some neutral point. Scan your body for areas of obvious tension. Relax any tight places—perhaps the face, chest, shoulders, stomach. Take one or two deep breaths to loosen your body even more. Then just breathe naturally. Observe the air going in and out of your nostrils. Don’t try to stop thoughts from coming or going, just let them do whatever they happen to be doing. If you find yourself hooking into a thought, just notice that, and return to your breathing. If you find yourself thinking self-critical, worried, or other unpleasant thoughts, just note that, and bring your main focus back to your breathing.

When you feel ready, let your attention move gently from your breathing to whatever feeling is currently strongest in your body. See if you can gently observe it, without trying to change or get rid of it. Breathe in and out of it. Notice if it changes as you do this—does it become stronger, weaker, or different in any way? If so, just note that, continuing to observe and breathe. If the feeling becomes uncomfortably strong, leave that observation and return to observing your breath. If not, stay with the feeling until you are drawn to return to observing your breath, and then reopening your eyes.

Now write in your journal what you observed.

Repeat this exercise once a day if you can.

CHAPTER 12

WORKSHEET #1: Identifying Inner Obstacles to Change

If you're not sure that an inner obstacle, or resistance to change, is what blocks you, take some time to ponder the questions here. Jot your thoughts down if you like.

- *how do you feel when you picture yourself being successful? Is there any difficult emotion at all—fear, embarrassment, dread, guilt, worry?*
- *what do you imagine it would be like to not have food or weight or diet as an issue in your life—ever again? Picture how that would be, and how you would feel, especially if some of the feelings are not positive.*
- *what do you imagine it would be like to have a nice figure? What emotions do you have?*
- *how do you imagine your family (parents, siblings, spouse) or close friends would feel if you were to stop struggling with food issues for good? What can you picture? Would anyone feel hurt or angry or inadequate? How would that be for you? This is an area where people frequently feel some kind of guilt or obligation. Use your journal to explore any thoughts or feelings that arise as you picture various scenarios.*

Say the following affirmations aloud or to yourself. Note if any of them feel foreign, weird, or even impossible to say. If so, can you imagine yourself believing them? If not, why not? Note any thoughts, feelings, or images that arise in your journal.

I am a strong successful person.

I take care of myself well.

If others disapprove of me, they'll just have to adjust.

I find it easy to feed my body healthfully.

I pay attention to my body and its needs.

I have a right to be comfortable with myself.

I have a right to live my life the way I want to.

Once you've considered the above, ask yourself the following:

What unhelpful beliefs may be blocking my success in eating sanely?

Is there anyone I may be taking care of by staying *unsuccessful*?

How might my *not* changing confirm my family's beliefs or expectations of me?

How might *not* changing protect me?

What risks do I take in changing once and for all?

WORKSHEET #2: Facing Inner Obstacles to Change

Answer the following with your Worksheet #1 responses in mind.

If I act *against* an inner belief (for example, that I can't or shouldn't succeed), what do I think might happen?

What would help me cope with what might happen?

Who might I get support from?

Is there anyone I'd have to avoid, even if temporarily?

WORKSHEET #3: Visualization Exercise

Use Worksheets #1 and 2 to choose a belief or situation that you've identified as problematic to your eating goals. Sitting comfortably, with eyes gently closed, try to picture what it would be like if you did not feel as you did. For example, if feeling guilty keeps you from fully succeeding, what might it feel like to not have that guilt? What would you look like, feel like, act like? How would others respond?

Let yourself imagine these scenarios for several minutes. Then write what you noticed in your journal. In picturing this, did you discover any other "blocks"? Any other insights? If so, write about them. It might also be helpful to talk about what you've discovered with a good friend.

CHAPTER 13

WORKSHEET #1: Becoming More Mindful

Refer back to Chapter 7 (*SITTING Your Way to Sane Eating*), Worksheet #2, “Mini Mindfulness Exercises”. Our goal here, becoming more mindful, asks that you practice the basic mindfulness exercise at least five days per week, with one of the extra exercises (for example, “Mindful Walking”), done in addition at least twice a week. You’re aiming here to observe, note to yourself what you observe, non-judgmentally, without added evaluation or labels.

BASIC MINDFULNESS EXERCISE – do daily

1. Sit comfortably. Take a deep breath. Close your eyes or let them go soft as you fix them on some neutral point around you.
2. Take a slow deep breath or two. Scan your body for obvious tensions (perhaps in the neck, shoulders, chest, face) and relax these areas if possible. Now bring your attention to the breath coming in and out of your nostrils. Don’t try to make it faster, slower, or any different than it is. Just watch its natural rhythm. In, out. In, out. This is your meditation, or mindfulness, “anchor”.
3. As you sit, thoughts will still emerge, at times busily. Just notice them. Don’t try to stop or censor them. Let them pass in and out as if they were clouds floating by, or maybe marchers in a parade passing through.
4. If you find your attention has wandered or hooked onto a thought, simply notice that, and then return to your breath. In, out.
5. If a particular thought keeps disturbing you, say to yourself, “There’s a ‘worry thought’—or that ‘planning thought’, or a ‘critical thought’.” And then return to your breath.
6. If you find it easier to keep your focus on your breath this way, you can say to yourself “In, out”, or “One, two” as you breathe.
7. Do this exercise for 2 to 45 minutes. If you sit for 20 minutes or more, you’ve got what would be called a meditation practice. If you’re not sure how long to do the exercise for, start with 2-5 minutes. If you can, increase to 10 or 12 in a few days.
8. In addition to the minutes you set aside to do this each day, do a minute here or there throughout your day as you think of it.

NOTE: If you become slightly anxious while doing this exercise, just notice that, and continue. If you become very anxious or agitated, however, stop. Try attending to the sounds around you as your “anchor” rather than your breath. If this doesn’t help, you might do better with an action-oriented type of mindfulness meditation, like Tai Chi. Or, you might have anxiety that should be attended to in psychotherapy.

WORKSHEET #2: Describing Non-Judgmentally

You may find the mindfulness exercise relaxing—the stopping, the focus on the breathing in and out can do this. The “describing non-judgmentally” part of the exercise is equally important, however, and often challenging. Here are some examples of descriptions that carry judgments and evaluations and some that don’t.

JUDGMENT

I can’t stop these stupid thoughts.

There’s that awful burning feeling.

I can’t believe how bad I am at this.

When is five minutes up?

I have to stop, I’m uncomfortable.

It’s cold in here. That stinks.

I’m *starving*.

I can’t believe I want to eat *again*.

It’s so nice and cozy here.

NO JUDGMENT

I have many thoughts today.

I feel a burning sensation in my foot.

There’s a self-critical thought.

There’s an impatient thought.

I’m cramped. I notice I want to stop.

I feel cold.

I feel my stomach rumbling.

I notice I’m thinking of those rolls.

I feel warm. I feel pain-free. I feel content.

Can you see the differences? Judgments and evaluations can be negative or positive. They can be stated directly or implied. You’re learning here to note *what is*, not what gets added by thoughts and emotions.

Also remember! if you catch yourself judging:

DON’T JUDGE YOUR JUDGING!! “There’s a judging thought,” is all you need to say to yourself.

WORKSHEET #3: Mindful Eating Exercises

Previous exercises aimed to help you to become more mindful generally, so that you can better focus your attention and be less controlled by emotions and impulses. The following exercises direct mindful attention specifically to your eating. Do them more than once, on different days. (For hunger rating, use a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being “ravenous”, or use the Hunger Scale in Chapter 10.) Some of these exercises are good for doing with another person—you can compare notes on your experiences.

Mindful Eating Exercise #1.

Take a small food item—a raisin or a nut, for example. Hold it in your hand. Look it over carefully. Smell it. Place it on your tongue. Note what it tastes like before even beginning to chew. Then start chewing slowly. Keep all your attention on your chewing—notice the breakdown process, how the food first breaks into tiny parts, then becomes more liquid. Notice if the taste of the food changes as its texture changes. When the food is completely dissolved, swallow. Follow the path of the food as it travels down your esophagus into your stomach. Can you feel it reach your stomach? Does your stomach feel different now than it did a moment ago?

Mindful Eating Exercise #2.

Perform Exercise #1 again, at a different time. Instead of your raisin or nut, however, this time put a small portion of a food you usually overeat in a bowl or on a plate. Make sure there’s at least a half hour before your next regular eating time. If choosing ice cream, for example, put 2 tablespoons in a bowl. If choosing crackers, put one on a plate. For brownies, take a 1 inch square. For pizza, a 1 inch square will also do. Go through the whole exercise. Wait one half-hour before eating anything else. Did you want to eat as much as usual? How did you like this food eaten this way?

Mindful Eating Exercise #3.

Perform Exercise #2 again, at a different time. This time, the small portion of food you choose should be a non-treat food. This might be a floret of broccoli, a wedge of tomato, 2 tablespoons of brown rice, a 1 inch square of chicken. Follow the directions, and ask yourself the same questions afterward.

Mindful Eating Exercise #4.

For this exercise, choose a small meal or snack. Rate your hunger before you start. Chew each bite of food at least 30 times before taking your next bite. When you are done, rerate your hunger. Did you take longer to finish? Did you get more full than usual or not?

Mindful Eating Exercise #5.

For this exercise, choose a small meal, not the meal that is usually your largest. Rate your hunger before you start. Do nothing else besides eat once you begin—in other words, no books, no TV. Talking to another person who is eating with you is OK. Take *at least* 20 minutes to finish the food. Rerate your hunger at the end. Did you get more full than usual or not? (If you actually notice you are full before the meal is finished, you can stop.)

Mindful Eating Exercise #6.

Do this exercise with any meal. Rate your hunger before you start. Try to eat at least a little more slowly than you usually do. After five minutes, stop. Rerate your hunger. Wait a minute or two, then start again. Repeat every five minutes. If you become full at any time before you're done, you can stop.

CHAPTER 14

WORKSHEET #1: *Your Exercise Profile*

Use this sheet to set your exercise goals.

Current weekly exercise (list usual frequency of walks, gym visits, etc.):

Do you feel your current regime is good? If so, do you follow it regularly? If not, what would you ideally like to do? Write here what you would like to start doing.

What might get in the way of your doing the above?

List here any ideas for solving those problems:

What could you do this week to start making an exercise regime part of your life?

WORKSHEET #2: An Exercise Routine

Write here your exercise plan:

Weekly exercise goals:

What I will do to help myself accomplish the above:

List some non-food rewards you can give yourself for exercising: **

*make copies of this sheet and check off each time you exercise as targeted (or keep track on the Expanded Food Log, below, instead). If you find yourself not following through, revisit Worksheet #1 and start with smaller steps if necessary, or try different ways of supporting yourself and solving problems.

**see Addendum #5 for ideas if needed.

WORKSHEET #4: Charting Your Exercise Progress

Use this sheet to write down what you actually do for exercise each week. Be specific: note how many minutes you walk, how many laps you swim, etc. (If you do a weight course at a gym, such as Nautilus, ask for a chart to keep track of that.) Compare what you do to your original goals. Make adjustments as you see what works in your life. Reward yourself for progress! (Make extra sheets to keep going past Week 6.)

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

CHAPTER 15

WORKSHEET #1 Lapse Analysis and Recovery

Copy this sheet. Complete a sheet each and every time you lapse. Answer the questions as they apply to the episode you've just experienced. Use extra paper if necessary.

Describe exactly what happened (when, where, what happened, what next, etc.)

Reflecting on it now, what do you think would have helped prevent this episode?

Can you do that next time you're in a similar situation? If so, what would help you make sure?

If not, how else might you avoid a repeat of this episode?

Which chapters, worksheets, or skills from this course might be helpful to review now?

WORKSHEET #2 Relapse Analysis and Recovery

If you have relapsed and want to start anew, take some time now to reflect on your goals and how you'll reach them.

Think about which chapters and worksheets it might be helpful to review and redo. Set aside time to do this, in addition, to the exercises here.

First, think about how you got off track. What happened? Be as specific as you can.

If you're ready to start again, how will you avoid relapsing in the same manner this time?

Be specific: write down skills you might use, people who might help, etc.

WORKSHEET #3 Affirmations for Getting Back on Track

Pick one or two each week. Write them boldly on brightly colored cards. Keep them with you or put somewhere you'll see frequently. Read them over and over. Write them over and over too, for an even stronger response. Make up your own affirmations, in addition, if you like.

I learn from my mistakes.

Mistakes are part of learning.

I deserve to have this work out.

I know I can learn what I need to learn.

I can get help if I need it.

Every mistake I make teaches me for the future.

I can succeed.

My body and my mind strive toward health.

Progress, not perfection.

Human beings change in different kinds of ways.

Keeping at it is what counts.

Small changes help a lot in the long run.

CHAPTER 16

WORKSHEET #1: My Support System

Take some time now to identify what kinds of support are available to you—now and in the future.

First, list the people and activities that help you now.

What, or who, could you add to this list if you needed further help?

What routines are you developing to keep you supported over the long run?

What can you do, or who can you contact, if you start to stray off track?

WORKSHEET #2: Letting Help In

Do you find it hard to accept help? Making the kinds of changes that you're wanting for yourself may require help at times. Use this sheet to think about allowing more support into your life.

Consider the following questions and note your responses on the blanks. Use your journal or extra sheets of paper if you like.

How do you feel about letting someone help you?

Do other sometime say you're hard to help? If so, why do you think that is?

What kind of support would feel best to you? If you're not sure, try to picture in your imagination what might feel right.

If accepting help is hard, take a few moments now to picture what it is like. What do you like and not like about it?

If you thought you'd have more of what you wanted with help (for example, the healthy eating habits and body that you're aiming for), would that make it easier for you to accept? Why do you think the support of others helps so much in this area?

Is there some way now you'd be willing to try to expand your support system? How?

CHAPTER 17

WORKSHEET #1: Review of Problem-Solving Goals

You've moved through this course aiming to start and stay eating sanely. By now, you've set goals, tried strategies and skills, discovered problems that needed solving. Use this worksheet to review what you're still working on and what new skills or habits you're trying to keep up.

These are the goals I'm still working on as I try to eat sanely:

These are additional sane eating goals I'll be setting for myself over the next few months:

These are the skills, chapters, or worksheets I'll use to help myself with the above goals:

WORKSHEET #2: Goals Beyond Sane Eating

Beyond sane eating, there are other things I want to have or do or be in my life:

Here are some small steps I might take to begin toward those goals:

WORKSHEET #3: Dreams for Yourself
Journaling

In your journal, take some pages to reflect on where you might like to be in your life in one year, two years, five years, ten years. Consider all aspects of your life: family, work, relationships, fun, travel, hobbies, *and* health and self-care. The object is not to create a strict map or schedule, but to let your imagination roam and to begin to form intentions that will move you forward.