



# Love How You Look and Feel After 50

Finally Stop Food from  
Controlling Your Life

By Rosie Bank

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## Finally Stop Food from Controlling Your Life

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## Introduction: Relief... At Last!

There are many moving parts when it comes to living successfully in your body. At Health Matters Coaching, all roads lead to your enjoying more vitality, more peace and confidence living in your body, and a greater sense of being well nourished. In order to achieve your health, weight, and energy goals, using food to bathe your body's cells with good nutrition must always play a role. Similarly, learning how to discontinue any habits that put your body and your health in harm's way is essential.

No amount of exercise, injections, vitamins, surgeries, or medicine can help your body regain its optimum levels of health and vitality if you repeatedly abuse your body with food that is toxic and carcinogenic, that causes massive amounts of inflammation, that overly taxes your immune system, that clogs your digestive system, that weakens your cardiovascular system, and that promotes oxidative stress at the cellular level.

Falling in love with food that is good for you; knowing how, when, and what to eat to optimize your health; and going sane around food are nothing short of life-changing. Let me emphasize this point because it is central to your ultimate success. Making better choices comes with time and practice. It is an evolutionary process, as you will learn throughout these pages.

I know this from my own experience. It is no exaggeration when I tell you that I have more energy in my 60's than I did in my 20's and 30's. How can this be possible?

It's simple. In my late teens into my early 30's I abused my body and suffered a life-threatening eating disorder. You can [read more](#) about this devastating time in my life if you want. I did not get myself squared away overnight. It was a series of baby steps, occasional set-backs, gradual victories all of which occurred over time.

In my case “over time” meant several decades. And even to this day, having enjoyed spectacular health, peace and confidence around food, and plenty of reliable energy for over twenty years, I continue to refine my practices. Learning about food, health, and some of the distinctions I will be sharing with you is really what this is all about. Living in a state of radiant good health is work in progress. This will be in part the result of what you learn about health and nutrition, what you are ready to include into your lifestyle and food choices, what habits you are able and willing to modify, how consistently you practice, and your body healing gradually as a result of these steady improvements.



Rosie, Mark, Gus, and Dolly

This is why I am so passionate in helping people to shorten the learning curve in order to enjoy positive benefits as soon as possible. For example, something like relief from brain fog after swapping a sugary breakfast for something more wholesome is a big deal for anyone whose head feels dense and heavy a couple of hours after eating. It is precisely these small but significant victories that become the building blocks of encouragement for you to stay the course.

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Can you imagine having freedom and happiness around food, eating, and your body? If you can, and you long for that, you came to the right place.

If you are unable to envision being at peace with food and your body, you came to the right place.

Let's dive in.

With love and encouragement for you on this great journey of a lifetime,

Rosie Bank



## 1. Quit Going Crazy Around Food

*“Treat yourself as if you already are enough. Walk as if you are enough. Eat as if you are enough. See, look, listen as if you are enough. Because it's true.”*

— Geneen Roth

What messages from the media have led you to self-destructive behaviors around food? What about your life has led you to eat on the run, perhaps from a bag or box while driving your car? What propaganda have you heard about needing to have the perfect body that has caused you to trash-talk yourself, and perhaps undermine your best intentions? And finally, what about your life makes you want to use food to distract yourself from boredom,



sadness, loneliness, frustration, fear, self-doubt, and other emotions that you don't want to feel?

I want for you to know that your emotions are your friends. They guide you. They give you information and insight. They are like a compass, leading you to feel and sense your way through a variety of situations, while maintaining a connection and self-knowing with your own being. If you bury your emotions with food, then you sever an important cord between you and knowing who you are and what's important to you.

Emotions are your friends. They guide you. They give you information and insight.

If you have ever raced through a meal, barely remembering what you ate, then you know what I am describing. If you have ever eaten to feed your emotions rather than an empty stomach, then we understand each other. If you have ever snuck food from a brown bag making sure that no one saw you, then you will have done what I used to do, but do no longer.

Few of us were taught to use food respectfully, or even with a sacred attitude. One of my [clients](#) told me recently that his wife hurries his daughters through the family dinner because, according to her, they need to get to their homework quickly. She is teaching her daughters that a relaxing meal is a waste of time. All of these habits, beliefs and behaviors, can leave you feeling agitated around food, disconnected from your body, and stressed when you are eating.

You may have heard the term **mindful eating**. Mindful eating is better than some of the alternatives I just mentioned because of the value to you in sensing your body and tasting your food. Mindful eating is better than the alternative because of how you feel after a meal during which you savored every morsel, breathed,

relaxed, felt the near-fullness in your stomach, and stopped when you were comfortably satisfied.

Comparing this to feeling bloated, overly stuffed, gassy, achy, and full of remorse and regret makes mindful eating something valuable to learn. I promise to walk you through the how-to's of incorporating mindful eating into your life. I bet that you will learn to appreciate both the mere pleasure of eating this way, as well as a variety of health benefits. I will explain both to you.

My promise to you is written in the title. *Love How You Look and Feel After Fifty* means that you can be closer to the shape and size in your body that you desire as you get your life and act together around food and eating. It also means that you can enjoy some significant and positive bumps to your health as a result of consciously choosing foods that improve your mood, help reduce inflammation, and fill your belly comfortably and satisfactorily.

*Why After Fifty?* Because now that I'm in my mid-60s, I love relating to women and men who still want to feel better, be happier with and in their bodies, be more in control, and improve their health. One of my clients who is also in her mid-60s recently realized that trying to get her 20-something body back was not a reasonable request or goal. Instead of looking back, we agreed to look ahead, and find a way to allow her next healthiest version to emerge.

*How to Stop Food from Controlling Your Life* means that you can break free from the shackles of overeating, shame, blame, self-

Becoming the master of food and your body, rather than a slave to either, could be for you what this has been for me and others who have stepped on this path: namely *personally transformative.*

destruction, and exhaustion that can come from misusing food. Becoming the master of food and your body, rather than a slave to either, could be for you what this has been for me and

others who have stepped on this path: namely personally transformative. Is it a big deal to quit bingeing, snacking mindlessly, and eating to quell the flames of stress? You bet it is. Is it life-changing to learn how to nurture and nourish your body deliberately and consistently? Yes, without any doubt.

This is a journey, not a point in time. Someone once asked the Maharishi Mahesh Yoga (who brought Transcendental Meditation to the United States from India) if becoming enlightened is gradual, or is it a click. His reply, "It's a gradual click." Becoming enlightened around food, eating, and your body is also gradual click.



## 2. Your Body has a Mind of Its Own... Listen to it!

*“Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it.”*

— Eckhart Tolle

A good synonym for mindful is present. Being with what is, conscious in this moment. Non-judgmental-ness is a component of mindfulness. Mindfulness is often described as experiencing, rather than evaluating. This includes accepting, rather than rejecting an experience. Often, we get through an experience by being present with all of our senses. This is the essence of the quote above by Eckhart Tolle.

Paying attention and sensing your breath are not practices relegated to spiritual devotees in orange robes. Is the word *mindful* in your vocabulary? If it is, then you may be a bit more connected to yourself compared with others who are unfamiliar with, or who

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find it foreign to sense the subtle nuanced feedback from their bodies, breath, and minds.

If you use the word *mindful* to describe your approach to life and its myriad experiences, you may be getting a richer understanding of some otherwise ordinary occurrences. For example, being mindful – present with all of your senses – while sitting beside a turquoise lake nestled at the base of a mountain might bring with it feelings of peace, soulful nourishment, and a deep appreciation of the beauty of nature.



Rosie and Mark, Queenstown, New Zealand

The alternative might be a missed opportunity in which you use that time to go over your finances, or to rehash a squabble you had with your spouse. In the latter, you would be elsewhere in your mind and likely miss much of the splendor that the lake and mountain have to offer.

It isn't a felony, or even a misdemeanor to sit by a beautiful lake stewing over money or relationship worries. It is simply a different experience. Over time, you can increase your enjoyment by learning to:

- be with your environment in that moment
- sense your presence
- feel your emotions
- relax your body
- quiet your mind
- notice your breathing

Practicing this may become more precious to you, as it has for me. If this seems foreign to you, please don't worry. This is why we call it practice. You have as much to gain from spending more time hanging out with yourself like this as does a more experienced meditator or practitioner of mindfulness. You don't fail at mindfulness if you find your attention wandering. If this happens, when it comes to feeling disconnected from your body, you notice even that. Then you simply and gently bring yourself back to awareness in this place, in this moment.

As you cultivate a mindful presence and it becomes more part of your make-up, you will find that some otherwise

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ordinary experiences become more glistening, perhaps even magical. If you have never sat in traffic feeling the richness of your breath, the softness of your shoulders, the comfort of your buttocks and back on and against the seat, and the tiny slivers of peace and quiet between the thoughts in your mind, I recommend that you explore this.

Since you never know when some aggressive driver might decide to flip you off, it might come in handy to be centered in your body as your baseline state. Any and all relaxation techniques that you



practice support you during the day at times when you are very glad you pre-soothed yourself. Sitting in traffic is an example of this.

I am extremely fortunate to have found yoga when I was 19 years young. I have been practicing ever since then, without ever taking a break.

Mentioning yoga and stretching seems relevant to our discussion here because of how relaxing this can feel, and how much tension you can release. Although this might not be a way to lose weight in particular, how calm you might feel after taking a yoga class or even stretching your body at home can in fact be connected to your making better food choices. Anything you do to connect with your body in a wholesome way can help lead you to wanting to provide your body with on-going nourishment.

Since this discussion is about food and health, it is obvious to me that if you breathe and relax during a traffic jam, you are more likely to get home and give your spouse or your dog a hug. If you fume, tense up, and grit your teeth in slow traffic, you might be more at risk to getting to your destination and doing something less nourishing, like raiding the refrigerator, looking for something to give your brain some pleasure, relief, and reward. This is why I used the term “*pre-soothe*.”

If there is a point to mindful practices, it might be this: finding the relief, reward, and richness in the now, the beauty in this moment, sensing the breath that you are breathing in that instant.

Mindfulness and meditation are cut from the same fabric. At [www.RosieBank.com/meditation](http://www.RosieBank.com/meditation) there is a recording where I lead you through a meditation in mindfulness plus breath and body awareness.

Our bodies are designed with many self-healing mechanisms. For example, if you cannot tolerate eating dairy, your body might warn you with a rash or a case of diarrhea. Mindfulness as a practice gently directs your attention to more parts of you. In so doing, you remain present and receptive to many of our body's messages that might otherwise go unnoticed.

One of my clients had a painful awakening when she was diagnosed with diabetes. She experienced considerable grief in having ignored the warning signs from her body of impending damage. She is now listening, paying careful attention. She feels that she wants to make up for lost time. The only way she can achieve this is by being aware in each new moment that presents itself like a gift.

That is the exquisite truth about mindfulness. Although we can't go back, living more in the present moment can empower us to make life-enhancing choices from this moment and forward.

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What do you find when you sense your breathing, soften your muscles, and quiet your mind? You can visualize pouring your consciousness into your body, occupying all parts of you. This is mindfulness and paying attention in real time. I keep using this word, feeling connected.

An embodied practice affords you countless opportunities to self-heal. You learn to sense when your body needs movement and a good stretch. You can experience a craving for a veggie salad. You know when it's time to rest. You can tell when you are thirsty and



need water. You can sense the gauge in your stomach, knowing that you are near full and it's time to stop eating. You recognize the craving for human contact and touch. You are in your body. Welcome home.



### 3. Kick Stress to the Curb When You Eat

*The more you eat, the less flavor;  
the less you eat, the more flavor.*

– Chinese Proverb

Applying the practice of mindfulness and the benefits of meditation to eating is not a departure from mindfulness in general. It is an extension of it. For us practitioners who love to sense our breathing, aspire to **be with** our surroundings with a minimal of distracting mental chatter, and prefer to experience things with as little judgement as possible.

Approaching food, eating, and nutrition in this manner makes sense. By the way, that was a partial list of some of the aspects of practicing mindfulness. You will find that the more you intend these qualities, the more your practice deepens. Like with all things practiced, you will get better and your experience becomes refined. *Practice makes the master.*

Essentially, mindful eating entails being present with all of your senses. The flavors, bouquets, textures, temperatures, shapes, and

colors of your food fill your being, as the food itself fills your stomach. Eating mindfully means that you are engaged with the process by tasting every morsel, breathing between bites, filling your nostrils with the aromas, and resting your fork on your plate while food is in your mouth. Eating in this way means that you are experiencing the bite that is in your mouth now, rather than racing to get to the next bite.



Mindful eating encourages you to be calm, and supports the branch of your nervous system that enables digestion and the absorption of nutrients from your food. This is the parasympathetic branch, and it is correlated with rest, relax, and repair. And because this is the “anti-stress” branch, calming yourself while you eat can even turn down anything negative going on in your head, including everything you are saying to yourself about yourself. You can now see how pleasant a state you can be in, and what a change this can be.

On the contrary, if you eat in a stressed-out state, the other branch of your nervous system (called sympathetic) will be on alert, diverting your blood away from your centrally located digestive tract (including your stomach) and sending it to your extremities. This flight/fight/flee mechanism enables you to escape danger and keeps you hypervigilant. In this aroused state, you may have the

energy to run away, but if you put food in your stomach, it might sit there like a rock. The worst time to eat is when you are stressed.

The bridge between sensing your body's needs for nourishment and choosing to eat is recognizing that your stomach is empty, versus other stressors that may have driven you to food in hopes of extinguishing the fire of stress.

Perhaps the greatest reward of approaching food and eating in this way is your ability to know when you are experiencing true hunger. It turns out that in a mindful state, you may need to eat less volume of food, yet derive greater satisfaction and pleasure. I love how counter-intuitive this is. I will share with you more about this as we move further along in this process.

Ask anyone who inhales her food and she will swear that she loves to eat and gets enormous pleasure out of wolfing down her food. But upon closer examination, this might not appear to be true. I'll explain why with an illustration.

Last week one of my [clients](#) told me about the process of having released twenty pounds of unwanted weight over the last several months. Since she did not feel like she was dieting, I asked her what was different now compared to before she shed the weight. She said that in the past her cravings would cause her to eat anything. It really did not matter what it was. I've heard from people that even stale crackers and dried out cheese was enough to simply heap into their mouths.



When my client did not pay attention to what she ate, her standards – and her awareness – were very low. Now that she has learned to eat what she loves and enjoys most, and now that she pays attention to every bite, and now that she eats when she experiences true hunger, the desire to simply shovel food into her mouth has simply disappeared.

What this all points to is a whole different approach to taking in food. If eating is no longer about getting it in and down fast, and if it is no longer about suppressing our emotions (more about this below), then what is eating about? Let me encourage you to incorporate these concepts into your consciousness when you make your food selections.

- Nourishment of your body and soul
- Nutrition at the cellular level
- Fuel for performance
- Food to promote a good mood and well-being
- Pleasure and sensuality
- Nutrient-dense food that heals, repairs, and prevents future challenges

*Practice makes the master*

I will tell you one of the greatest ironies of my entire life. In the past, when I suffered from a life-threatening eating disorder, I was like my client. I would shovel food into my mouth faster than you can say bulimia. Since I never do this anymore, and since I approach eating more like a sacred ritual, the pleasure I get now is in stark contrast to the pain and suffering that eating food used to bring me in the past.

When I assemble a meal with whole, fresh, colorful, plant-based, seasonal, flavorful, beautiful and nourishing food, I feel connected to my spirit and in love with life. When I share food like this with family and friends, I have a sense of well-being and joy that is pervasive. It's easy for you to see, I believe, how foreign this would have been for me in the past, when I was puking my guts out after trashing my body with food that was toxic, sickeningly sweet, and literally an assault to my body. Sorry for such a dark image, but I offer this to illustrate how far all of us can come – including you – through practice, practice, practice.



#### 4. Don't Touch That Fork... Until You Answer These Three Questions

*"I am not a glutton - I am an explorer of food"*

— Erma Bombeck

The following is a set of questions you might ask yourself when you are contemplating reaching for food to eat. Doing this will guide you to be more aware of what is happening inside of you. This awareness is a primary ingredient of your mindful approach to taking in food and nourishment.

##### 1. Are you hungry?

There is a sensation when your belly is empty, which is something I encourage you to experience. This is what I mean by true hunger. I am referring to the feeling in your body when there is nothing in

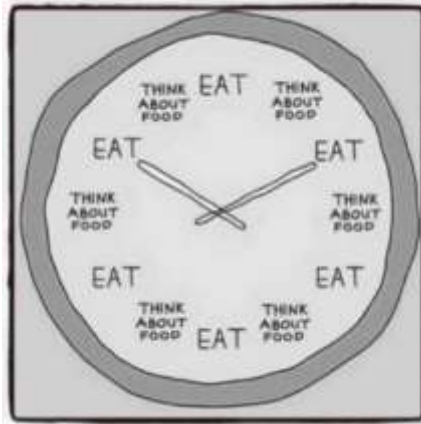
your stomach. There are many urges to eat, but we are now talking about empty belly hunger. Depending on a wide variety of factors that are beyond the scope of this document, some people get that hunger signal in as few as two hours, and some may not feel it for as many as four, five, six or more hours since the last time they ate.

For example, my husband is almost always hungry in the morning. He has not eaten in approximately twelve hours. My system is different. I usually do not experience hunger until about ninety minutes after I get up in the morning. Our metabolisms and hunger patterns vary.

The point is for you to know when your stomach is empty to inform your choice about when and what to eat. (Please note, if you suffer from erratic blood sugar challenges or if you are diabetic and are instructed to eat according to a schedule— independent of hunger cues—please consult your physician, nutritionist, [health coach](#), or medical practitioner.)

A side component of this question brings in all kinds of social implications. This could be a topic for an entire book. But put simply here, as you venture forward practicing mindful eating, please keep in mind that when others eat, it may or may not be time when your stomach is empty and when it's time for you to eat. This is a great example of how mindfulness connects you with your body, thus equipping you to make decisions that are the most wholesome for yourself.





I am staunchly not in favor of food plans that tell you that you must eat every two hours. This does not encourage you to work with your hunger. Learning to eat when you are hungry is fundamental to your knowing how and when to nourish your body. Eating according to clock time instead of sensing your body's

intelligent hunger signals moves you away from, not towards, connecting with and being aware of your body, as I keep mentioning. The image above is funny. It's also a reminder to move toward mindful eating and to become sensitive to our hunger.



## 2. Are you thirsty?

Hunger masquerades as thirst. Dehydration can do the same. Knowing that sometimes when you think you are hungry may be a signal that you are actually thirsty can be helpful to promote health and maintain your weight. It is simple. If you drink a big glass of water when you think you might be hungry, and your hunger goes

away, then you may have been thirsty. This is especially helpful if you know that you have eaten fairly recently, say two to three hours before.

Sipping water throughout the day is a great way to ensure that you stay hydrated, plus it helps to dismantle any erroneous signals about needing food. Staying hydrated helps with mental focus, hormonal balance, weight loss, elimination of toxins from your body, healthy bowels, and healthy joints. If you suffer from headaches, sore joints, constipation, body aches (especially low back pain over your kidneys), brain fog, or even migraines, make sure that you never allow yourself to become dehydrated.

### 3. What are your emotions?

You may have heard the term “emotional eating.” On the surface, this is when you use food to stuff down emotions, such as sadness, fear, frustration, disappointment, loneliness, anger, and even happiness and excitement. Gaye Hendricks, author of *The Big Leap*, speaks about emotions as something we need to be aware of in order to live our lives fully.

*Each of us has an inner thermostat setting that determines how much love, success, and creativity we allow ourselves to enjoy. When we exceed our inner thermostat setting, we will often do something to sabotage ourselves, causing us to drop back into the old, familiar zone where we feel secure.*

— Guy Hendricks, *The Big Leap*

Emotional eating also refers to using food to boost good feelings, such as calmness, and a sense of reward. Since these are two sides of the same coin, when someone downs a full pint of ice cream, she may be tamping down feeling lonely while at the same time increasing a sense of well-being.



All of these mechanisms are driven by hormones and neurotransmitters and are interwoven with our emotional state. Processed carbohydrates taken in copiously can help us feel a sense of reward, pleasure, happiness, euphoria, and relaxation. This is not a good long-term solution when you need to manage unwanted emotions, as the effect of the food wears off and often can leave you feeling even more depleted than before the food episode.

I hear from my clients all the time how incredible it is once they discover that misusing food in this way is a crummy deal, given the negative side-effects. And then, even more significantly, they are able to replace the previous habit with whole-body nourishment. Amazingly, this can help circumnavigate eating when our bodies are actually craving rest and relaxation.

The practices I have been mentioning, such as breathing and physical relaxation, can also help you achieve a feel-good state. You may try this yourself. Feed your emotions some whole-body, unhurried breaths instead of food. You may discover a whole new level of awesomeness in your life.

It's rather transformational to hear other subtle message from our bodies other than a craving to eat. This is one of the many reasons

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I am so passionate about encouraging you to work with your hunger, to recognize its clues, and to not mistake the desire to eat with some other impulse or need you may be feeling. For example, loneliness does not equate to hunger. But if it has for you in the past, you can learn to uncouple the emotion from the urge to eat food by practicing some of these whole-body techniques.

One meme that I encourage you to build into your practice is:

*“The worst time to eat is when you are stressed out. Finding other ways to experience relief and to feel soothed that do not include food will give you the nourishment your body and soul need.”*



This is why I encourage myself and all of my clients and students to have an actual list of self-caring activities. They are wholesome, do not involve food, and bring you comfort and relief when you are upset, stressed, depleted, or tired.

Here is a partial list of activities that help you feel better, more relaxed, and avoid abusing your body with food.

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Here is a second meme that is another good reminder:

*“When you are hungry, the purpose of taking in food is to experience a sense of nourishment plus a feeling of being comfortably satisfied.”*

Eating yummy food can be quite pleasurable and great fun. And for now, allow me to emphasize the benefit of providing our bodies with essential nourishment that does not necessarily come from eating. Whether it is from food or from wholesome self-care practices, this is an experience that you can create on purpose. It’s so important, I’m going to say it again. When you give your body what your body needs to be healthy and whole, the feeling of being well-nourished is real and worth every ounce of your practice.

For me, these are rules to live by. And as much as I enjoy eating delicious and nutritious food – and I do – this sensation of being well-nourished is something I have grown to appreciate just as much.



## 5. How to Know When It's Safe for You to Eat

*“Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”*

— Michael Pollan

Let's say that you are hungry. Your stomach is empty and you have learned to read the signals from your body. What now?

A beautiful way to begin a meal is with some relaxing breathing. This activates your parasympathetic nervous system, which, as described above, is the branch of your autonomic nervous system that, among other roles, promotes relaxation and supports digestion. (And to remind you, if the sympathetic nervous system is activated – the one commonly associated with the stress

response called fight, flight, or flee – digestion is compromised as the blood goes to the extremities.)

Three words to describe these breaths: *unhurried, full, and slow.*



This is one of the aspects that makes eating like this better. The difference following a meal, like I mentioned, is feeling happy and satisfied, versus remorseful, bloated and uncomfortable. Even those experiences have a variety of nuances, which you will be able to feel for yourself as you venture forward with mindful eating.

The other thing breathing does is help you take your time. This is particularly helpful if you are someone who is used to inhaling your food. More about your pace in a moment, but for now, remember that conscious breathing helps you relax, be present, and slow down (quit racing).

Each breath you breathe exists only the moment when it is being breathed. You

Gentle deep breaths, of which you are conscious, gently guide you to be present.

can't rebreathe a breath from the past, and you can't breathe for a

time other than precisely when the breath you are taking happens. You can't breathe a breath for a time in the future. This is why gentle deep breaths, of which you are conscious, gently guide you to be present.

I encourage you to fall in love with and become familiar with your breath. Each breath that you sense fully will connect you to the sensations in your mouth, thus enhancing your experience and pleasure of this bite. Breathing will not distract you from your body. It will connect you.

### ***LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR PACE.***

It is quite possible that slowing down will be somewhat transformational for you. Personally, I used to be an inhaler, wolfing down my food and reaching for seconds before I finished the bite that was in my mouth. Having practiced everything I am sharing with you here reminds me how long ago that was, and how unfamiliar it is to me now to eat like that.

This is a beautiful place to be, when you find it impossible to quickly inhale your food, barely stopping to breathe, chew, taste, and swallow. You won't want to. And you might not even be able to, like what has happened to me.

Why would and how can you develop this ability to savor your meal? By discovering that food is so much more enjoyable when you dial down your pace, you won't want to give this up. When eating becomes a sensual experience of tastes, textures, temperatures, you will find that you can eat less and enjoy it more. For you, this becomes several rungs up the mindful eating ladder. Consider yourself at this point more fully enlightened about food and your body.





Like I mentioned, the notion that you can eat less and enjoy it more is counter-intuitive, so pay careful attention on this one. When you enjoy your food more, you will need less of it. I know this sounds backwards, so I shall explain with an example. Tonight, for dinner, my husband and I ate a delicious blend of mushrooms, tofu, Brussel sprouts, and broccoli baked in a homemade kale/macadamia/vegan pesto. Alongside we had a green salad with avocado and these yummy little curried veggie balls I baked in my dehydrator.

The flavors of this meal were particularly delicate and varied. The pesto is nutty and lemony. The sprouts and broccoli were earthy and tender. The curry veggie balls were crispy, savory, and had a surprising burst of heat halfway through the bite.

This meal that I just described was way too tantalizing to wolf down. I can't imagine *rushing through* something that was so delightful. By chewing, tasting, putting down my fork, smelling the food, and breathing, I felt a familiar intoxication that comes with this intense level of eating whole, living food.

I'd like to remind you that *whole food*, that is neither refined nor processed, often contains more dense morsels, such as complete grains, nutty bits, seedy parts, and fiber. My point is that food like this deserves to be savored. Imagine chewing your food until every

chia seed has been crushed. This is that enhanced pleasure I mentioned.



The anatomy of our jaws, mouths and teeth are designed to masticate completely this plant-based food. Our digestion begins in our mouths which is a reminder to masticate thoroughly. Visualize turning an apple into apple sauce and an orange into orange juice. Doing this will intensify the experience of eating, plus give you a more whole-body sensuous feeling. In addition, it is delectably more satisfying compared to inhaling a meal and not remembering what you ate.

Through practice you can guide yourself never to want to wolf down your food again.

When you slow down, savor your food, and increase your sense of being nourished, you

will know that you have made great strides. Through practice you can guide yourself never to want to wolf down your food again.

Often my clients and students have the desire to slow down their eating. Without having a clue how to do this, they just know that they want to do something different than devouring their meals quickly. There is a hurried, stressed, and urgent feeling that comes directly from racing through eating food. Is being in a hurried, stressed, and urgent state the cause of eating super-fast? Or does eating super-fast result in your feeling this way?

I look at it as circular, rather than linear or cause and effect. And because it is a loop, merely changing the pace of eating (by breathing, putting down your fork, pausing, and savoring every morsel in your mouth) you will have a positive impact on your emotional and physical state. In particular, you can feel calmer and more relaxed. And it is from this state – calm and relaxed – that you can enjoy your next meal, when you are hungry, in a state of mindful awareness.



Living a life in which you feel connected to your body and able to nourish yourself physically and even spiritually precludes your racing through your meals. Think of something in your life that is sacred. Listening to music that moves you, playing with a new grandbaby, attending your daughter's wedding are examples that come to mind.

These extraordinary moments in our lives are meant to be cherished. Don't get me wrong... not every meal is a life-altering spiritual experience. But to treat this time when you are providing your body with nourishment as something to be fully connected with rather than hurried will give you a more satiating experience.

One last bit about your pace. You may want to read this a few times. I do not believe I am exaggerating when I explain how this one distinction could be life and health altering.

Only when you slow down and give yourself time to feel your body, are you able to sense the true fullness of your stomach. Eating too fast and too much is a sure-fire way of ruining an otherwise lovely meal. By pausing, listening, sensing, and remaining mindful, you have literally given yourself enough time to discover that you have had enough to eat.

*What difference would it make to you to experience abundance and sufficiency with food without having to eat large amounts in order to have that sensation?*

With practice, your body will lovingly and faithfully give you this signal. It's built into your hormonal system and it is quite reliable, in particular if you practice listening to this. You can override your body's exquisite feedback system by ignoring the cues and

continue to eat. But you won't do that when you embrace mindfulness and be intentional while eating.

Through practice you learn and continue to get better at stopping when you are comfortably satisfied. You leave food on your plate because you intuitively learn how much food you need in order to feel fantastic after a meal. This is independent from how much food was on your plate, perhaps not even prepared by you, but by a family member, friend, hostess or restaurant chef.

You dismantle thoughts called "fat machinery" that used to guide you to erroneously eat too much because of those kids in India, or some myth you may have bought into. And in case this isn't special enough, I have one more golden gem for you. You eat for this meal, this sitting, not for the future.



This is such a huge topic I devoted an entire chapter to this in my book, [Health Matters](#). This is, in part, why you likely have some unwanted pounds disappear. It is not because you are dieting. On the contrary, it is because you approach food and meals as a time to nourish and nurture your body and your soul. Like my client told me, *stuffing yourself simply disappears. You don't even want to do this anymore.*



## 6. Come Out of Hiding When You Eat

*“Eat with the intention of being in full view of others.”*

– Geneen Roth

In the olden days, when I practically destroyed my body as a raging bulimic, most of my food was taken in shameful hiding. For me, at that time, many years ago, eating was all tangled up with body-and-self-loathing, emotional woundedness, and confusion about how to connect with and provide nourishment for my body. If the opposite of mindful eating is a state in which we are completely disassociated from our bodies, then I can say that was me. Eating was a nightmare. I did it in private, which now sounds so tragic to me. Of course, this habit lives completely in the past, where it belongs.

Even if you are not suffering from a life-threatening eating disorder like I was, still, the realization that eating is something so normal helps dismantle the urge to hide or feel ashamed. My friend was over for lunch and I was making sandwiches for us on my husband’s

and my favorite quinoa bread, [which is available online](#). I asked her if she wanted one slice or two. She gave me a look of sheer embarrassment, then looked away, then looked down and said sheepishly, “Sorry. Two please.”

If you can relate to this segment, please allow me to guide you to higher ground. No more eating out of a brown bag. No more apologizing. Ditch the sneakiness and come out of hiding. No more lying about what you ate. This “come out of hiding” is part of Ganeen Roth’s “[Eating Guidelines](#).” She makes an excellent point when she suggests that any tendencies toward hiding or feeling ashamed about food point to our being disconnected from our souls.

Surely, truly, we deserve to be fed and we deserve to eat. Without question, we live in bodies that require optimal fuel, substance, plus micro- and macro-nutrition. Our bodies aren’t jalopies and they never belong in the neglected junk heap. Eating with an awareness of being visible means that you are more apt to see and honor your true self.

If your soul is hungry for touch, love, movement, connection, recognition, and meaning, you won’t get this from food. Becoming a practitioner of mindful eating is a vast upgrade to some of the habits I’ve described in this segment. The tag line for [Health Matters Coaching](#) is **love your body and get your body to love you back**. Now you know what this means.



## 7. Good Nutrition... Not Just for Raging Health

### Nuts

*“Food is not just calories, it is information. It talks to your DNA and tells it what to do. The most powerful tool to change your health, environment and entire world is your fork.*

— Dr. Mark Hyman

It is beyond the scope of this document to go into detail about what kinds of food you select when you are hungry. By now we know that mindful eating helps you know when to turn to other self-soothing activities – in particular not food – if you are feeling stressed, upset or somehow off kilter. This in turn can do wonders



to help you dial back tendencies toward mindless snacking, [eating your emotions](#), and misusing food in general.

With that, let's add the next layer, which is the caliber of food that you select when you are hungry and about to eat. The simplest way I can think to word this is to encourage you to pay attention to good nutrition. Without going into various dietary theories, and without asking you to become a vegan or to adhere to any other specific practice, a safe place is to ask you to dramatically reduce or eliminate eating junk food (if you do, not everybody does), which contains empty, non-nutritive calories, and to increase food that is nutrient-dense and helps your body be healthy, feel great, be energetic, and look fantastic.

You can get the benefit of good nutrition without being a raving health nut or adhering to an extreme dietary restriction or religion.



In fact, it is less important [which label you use](#) to describe your practices than it is to make wholesome pro-health choices.

As you become more relaxed in, aware of, and more connected to your own body, it is easier to sense what gives you the most nourishment. Popcorn for dinner after a difficult day at work and a long and tiring commute? Perhaps not. One of the many reasons why I practice and promote a WFPB (whole foods plant based) diet is because eating whole grains, fruits, veggies, seeds, beans, and nuts often helps you feel better in your gut, your brain, and gives you more energy. Well, it certainly does for me.

Recently I felt overwhelming frustration dealing with a computer issue. I announced to my husband that I needed to get up, take the dogs for a walk, and then come home and eat vegetables.



The point is not to knock yourself out with toxic, nutritionally insufficient, processed, bad-for-you food. If you take one thing away from this discussion, it might be this: *Growing in recognition of your body's need to be well-nourished.* Although processed “junk” food may pass your lips on occasion, let’s agree that food high in chemicals, sugar, excess salt, commercial oils, and saturated fat have no place on your plate for most of your meals and snacks. Again, whole foods that are nutrient-dense will help you feel complete, satisfied, and optimistic. Unlike junk food, fruits and veggies and other pro-health food will even help you be in a [better mood](#).



## 8. Celebrate Eating... You Deserve It!

*“Ask not what you can do for your country. Ask what’s for lunch.”*

– Orson Welles

Mindful eating may become a part of your physical, psychological, mental and even spiritual development. It will impact your health and help you maintain your ideal weight. And, just as importantly, let’s remember to have fun. Let’s make eating food a fantastic experience, one that’s incredibly enjoyable and helps us feel great about ourselves.

I remember traveling in France a number of years ago. My travel partner and I found ourselves in a restaurant that served us a terrible meal. He was quite upset and complained bitterly about a

wasted meal in France, of all places. I remember thinking at the time, “This was just another meal.”

There will always be another meal, which means there are countless opportunities for us to practice these distinctions. How marvelous to have so many good times in the arena of food, eating, and nourishing our bodies. Sometimes we do it better than other times. And yet, consistently getting better with practice is a great intention and an achievable goal.

Since it is no secret that I love focusing on good nutrition, let’s meet you where you are. I fully expect that our approaches to and habits and preferences around food are different. Your dream meal might be chicken with a barbeque glaze. And mine might be veggies, brown rice, and tofu with curry. *Vive le difference.*

I’ve mentioned in a couple of different spots that we are on different parts along our respective journeys. And since we will be feeding our bodies for a very long time to come, there will always be opportunities to become saner, calmer, more relaxed, and more confident around food.

You have a lifetime of meals ahead of you. What an adventure! Please don’t worry if you are not perfect because none of us is, and perfection is not a compassionate or reasonable goal. This is worth reminding you: improving the state of your health healthy isn’t even about being perfect. It’s about getting better.

If you remain aware more and more, you will naturally move toward this wholesome, conscious, mindful approach to food and eating. Your body will love you back with happier, healthier and more vibrant years. You will have yourself to thank.



I've saved one of my most ardent messages to you for the very end. Whether you become a vegetarian or not, follow a Mediterranean Diet, or a Paleo one... whether you have a snack before bed or have a rule to avoid any food after 7 PM... whether you start your day with lemon juice or coffee... None of these choice points is as important as whether you take good care of your body... or not.

Please learn how to stop doing things to your body that are harmful. Please stop asking your body to do outrageous and unreasonable things. I'm referring to excess, neglect, unkindness, destructive self-talk, deprivation, isolation, depletion, and the like. If you know that you are poisoning your body, use the suggestions I've shared with you here as if your life depended on it... because it does.

Learning to break free from the gravitational pull of abusing your body will always be among the most significantly transformative experiences of your life.

I'm here for you if you still have questions about what all this means, if you have concerns, and if you need help to figure all this out. I got so much help along the way... I could never have become free by myself. If I were to change one thing about my journey it isn't that I never practically destroyed my body through bulimia. I needed to go through that in order to have found this calling. What I would change is to have gotten help sooner.

I wrote this to help you. It's hard to type with all of my fingers and toes crossed. I hope that you allow a brighter future for yourself around food, your body, a loving self-nourishing relationship with yourself, and oodles of peace and harmony.

Perhaps I do not know you, but I do know that you deserve to be happy and to live joyfully in your body. The next time you do something outrageously wholesome and pro-health for yourself, feel free to let me know. I can celebrate with you and give you an 'atta boy, or an 'atta girl. You can also rejoice with your most supportive and encouraging wellness buddy.

Radiant health and vitality are cause for celebration. Cherish your body. The world is a better place when you make taking care of yourself a priority.



Rosie and her husband, Mark, kayaking at Franz Joseph glacier in New Zealand. (March 2019)

## About Rosie

Rosie Bank is Board Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach and the founder of Health Matters Coaching. She is the author of four books on health, including, [Health Matters](#). Rosie is an international speaker, blogger, and the founder of Health Matters podcast.

She is certified as a Nutrition and Wellness Consultant through the American Fitness Professional Association and as a Nutrition Advisor through Sanoviv Medical Institute. She is a graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. Rosie is the founder of the Vitality Club in Brentwood, CA. She is a graduate of the Center for Nutritional Studies at eCornell in Plant-Based Nutrition.

Rosie is a graduate of the Rolf Institute and the Iyengar Yoga Institute and practiced as an Advanced Rolfer, Rolf Movement Teacher and Iyengar Yoga Instructor for over thirty years.

## LOVE HOW YOU LOOK AND FEEL AFTER 50

Rosie has been working to help others live more successfully in their bodies since the mid-1970s. She teaches her clients and students to love themselves first. This is what makes her brand unique. She leads others to fall in love with food that is good for them and to honor their bodies through good nutrition, refreshing movement, and increasing peace and harmony in their lives.

Rosie loves to do a variety of exercises – swim, Zumba, pickleball, bike, hike, kayak, jump on her trampoline, and take long walks with her husband and their beautiful dogs, Dolly and Gus. Rosie enjoys meditation and yoga, a whole-foods plant based (vegan) lifestyle, adventure travel, and astonishingly good health and vitality.

To learn more:

[www.HealthMattersCoaching.com](http://www.HealthMattersCoaching.com)

[www.RosieBank.com/About-Rosie](http://www.RosieBank.com/About-Rosie)

[www.GetYourBodyToLoveYouBack.com](http://www.GetYourBodyToLoveYouBack.com) (Facebook)

[www.HealthMattersBook.com](http://www.HealthMattersBook.com)

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