



# Eating Psychology Coaching

## Eight Core Concepts & Tools for Success

### (1) Relaxation

#### **Exercise: Breathe While You Eat**

Breathing during meals is a great way to help you become a slow, relaxed eater. If you're eating while distracted by work tasks or involved in tense conversations, or if you're a habitually fast eater, your breathing will be more shallow. By reminding yourself to breathe more deeply during meals, you'll naturally slow down, become more present, and metabolize with greater power.

To increase your breath intake during eating, at least three times during any meal ask yourself "How is my breathing?" Then consciously deepen your breath with as little effort as possible. Focus on deep breathing to a level that's new for you yet still feels natural and comfortable.

Use gentle, fuller breathing as a natural pause during meals. Delight in oxygen as you would delight in the food itself. Deep breathe three times at each pause.

### (2) Quality

**No matter what food you eat, choose the highest quality version of that food.**

This gives you the best Las Vegas odds that the food will be healthy, whether you're eating bacon, bananas, bread, or birthday cake. Yes, quality foods are definitely more expensive. But this is the *real* health insurance. It's your life we're talking about, yours and those of the loved ones you feed.

*For a descriptive list of high-quality foods, refer to the Quality Comparison Handout.*

### (3) Awareness

#### **Exercise: Be Awake at the Plate**

This is your most fundamental exercise for the week: At each meal and every snack, choose to be present.

Notice your food. See it, touch it, and taste it with presence. Connect with it. Stay awake to your surroundings. Absorb all the nutrients of your meal—the colors and textures, the people with whom you're eating and your conversations, all the ambiance and nuances of the eating experience. If you find yourself thinking about the past or plotting your future, let it go. If you're off in some fantasy land, come back to Earth and be nice to your food. Allow yourself to be gently alert no matter what you eat, where you eat, or whom you're eating with. Notice the times when you go on automatic pilot while eating. In these moments simply remind yourself to wake up.

Even if you're eating something "forbidden" or bingeing on ice cream, your task is still to eat with awareness. That's because the more present you are at such times and the more

## (4) Rhythm

**Exercise: Eat Regularly**

Begin your week with the foundational commitment to have regular and consistent meals. Make eating a predictable part of your daily flow. This is the key to unlocking the metabolic power of rhythm. No more skipping meals and no more fuzzy boundaries around eating—"I was too busy to have lunch," "I lost track of the time," "I stop for meals when I can squeeze it in." As best as you can, each evening plan your menus and your meal times for the next day. Know that you're going to have a breakfast, a lunch, and a dinner. Choose rhythm. Make your mealtimes important. Honestly look at your schedule and see what adjustments you need to make to create time for three solid eating experiences each day. Do you need to wake up a little earlier to have a sit-down breakfast? What needs to happen at home or work so you can have a regular lunch? How can you enlist the help of those around you? If you travel or have irregular work or parenting schedules, commit to thoughtful advanced meal planning. Take food with you when necessary.

*Starting the day by eating breakfast informs your body that this is a 'feast' day and it's ok to metabolize food completely. A 'Famine' day (skipping breakfast) tells the body to ration calories and slow metabolization; to store food as body fat for later use.*

*Eating at consistent times of day helps the body relax because it knows when to expect food.*

## (5) Pleasure

**Exercise: Healthy Food Pleasure Inventory**

Your week begins with the most trustworthy pleasures—the healthy ones. In your journal, write an inventory of all the foods that you've learned (or that you firmly believe or strongly intuit) are healthy for you *and* have the added bonus of delivering to you a pleasurable experience. This list might include fruit, fish, nuts, a macrobiotic meal, a fresh juice, an omelet, a smoothie, a favorite salad, chicken soup, a bowl of oatmeal, fresh coconut, a cup of tea, a glass of wine, garlic—anything. Keep in mind that you are accessing both your acquired intellectual knowledge and your own bodily experience, so let go of trying to know with absolute universal certainty whether a food is truly healthy or not.

Your task this week is simply to include each day at least three of these foods or ingredients in your day's meals.

Eat with awareness, focusing on the pleasurable sensations on your tongue, in your belly, and wherever else pleasure registers in your body. Notice the unique ways that a healthy pleasure occurs to you. Does it leave you feeling lighter? More satisfied? Happy with yourself? Does it give you a sense of accomplishment? Can you intuit the long-term benefits it can confer on your health?

*Remember that our bodies are designed to seek out pleasure and avoid pain. Help your body relax and enter 'Rest & Digest' phase by consuming pleasurable foods. The key here is allowing yourself to enjoy eating these foods, guilt eating pleasurable food is counter-productive.*



## (6) Thoughts

**Exercise: Think Nutritionally**

With pen and paper, take an inventory of the most common thoughts you repeat to yourself about eating, nutrition, and your body. These are the one-liners that together form your relationship with food and that ultimately help or hinder metabolism. Use the following questions to help guide you in your inventory. Be specific and thorough in your answers.

What do you tell yourself when you're eating?

What do you expect food to do for you?

What nutritional rules do you feel strongly about?

Which foods are on your "good" list?

Which foods constitute your "bad" list?

What are your rules about health, weight, and longevity?

What are your fears about health, weight, and longevity?

Is food your enemy or your ally, or is it a combination of the two?

## (7) Story

**Exercise: Who's Eating?**

Here's a final and fun exercise for week 7. Whenever you sit down to meals or snacks, ask yourself "Who's eating?" Amuse yourself with the task of identifying the particular subpersonality who is currently in charge and ready to eat. Some of the common characters who show up at the table include the rebel, the little girl or boy, the victim, the judge, the wolf, the saboteur, the perfectionist, the pleasure seeker, and the teenager. There are certainly plenty more. With just a little self-honesty, you'll find it quite easy to name the inner character who is speaking the loudest and wanting satisfaction.

Once you identify a subpersonality, dialogue with it and befriend it. Ask it what it wants. Why is this character present? Have you been neglecting her? Does she have a message for you? What bargain might you strike to satisfy some of her needs, yet still take care of the most important requirements of the health and happiness of the whole crew? Do your best to kindly understand this voice, learn the lessons it teaches, and receive the gifts it can give. If you're the kind of person who feels challenged by bouts of overeating or junk-food bingeing, try this strategy: invite your inner adult to the table more consistently. Many people think they need to contact their inner child, but I've noticed that when it comes to food, the inner child receives plenty of airtime. See how your inner woman or inner man can participate in the nourishment process. Notice how this adult character can readily assist you in enlightened eating choices and is happy to help.

**Exercise: Forgiving and Healing**

Take an inventory of the people in your life whom you hold responsible for some injustice. Collect on paper all the characters you still blame, still judge, and still keep hostage in your psychic prison. Be absolutely thorough in rummaging through your past and present to locate all such criminals. Include all appropriate relatives, friends, lovers, presidents, and generalized groups of people ("men," "women," "blacks," "whites," etc.). Once your list is complete, check it over to make sure it includes the three people you likely need to forgive most—your parents and yourself.

If you haven't already figured it out, your next task is to forgive everyone. This is hard work. It takes courage, and it's the most rewarding dietary strategy you could ever imagine. That's because forgiveness is a sacred metabolic act. It releases the death grip you've placed on your own cells and ignites a meta-chemistry that opens the body so that it can receive nourishment in a whole new way. Really. There's no special secret or trick to accomplishing the heroic feat of forgiveness. You just take a deep breath and do it. Dive real deep and find the soul lesson that others were helping you learn with their wounding or betraying ways. Thank them for helping you stretch to your spiritual limits and acknowledge that you are indeed a better person and have grown from their actions.

These exercises are excerpts from *'The Slow Down Diet'* by Marc David, along with my notations. For a more thorough list of exercises, and for science-based context, I recommend that you read the book. It is also an excellent source of inspiration.

Please reach out to me if you have questions.

Blessings,  
Jared

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