

# Newsletter

September 2008

## Natural Eating

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Today I'm writing to offer you some simple tools for overcoming your stressful relationship with food and body image. The process of recovery is quite simple. There are a handful of steps that allow you to safely put one foot in front of the other and walk from the distressing diet mentality to the freedom of natural eating. Natural eating simply means eating when you're hungry and stopping when you're full.

The first step on the path to make the change from the diet mentality to natural eating is to allow yourself for one day to just stop what you're doing and ask yourself 3 or 4 times a day (especially before you eat anything): "Am I physically hungry right now?"

There are key 4 ways to answer that question.

1. No so I won't have anything.
2. Yes, but I'm not going to allow myself to have anything.
3. No, but I'm having something any way.
4. I don't know.

1. Number one takes care of itself, it's a non issue. Let's take a quick look at 2, 3 & 4.

2. If the answer is "Yes, but I'm not going to let myself eat." Stop and ask yourself why? Your body is sending you a clear signal that, regardless of when your brain things it's acceptable to be hungry, it's hungry now. Does it make any sense whatsoever to argue with your body about that? Your body is not out to get you. It is simply letting you know what it needs in order to continue to meet the demands you are setting for it.

So if you are resisting eating when your body is telling you it needs food just ask yourself what you are telling yourself will happen if you honored the natural signals of hunger from your body? Be honest with yourself and ask yourself if that story you're telling yourself is true or just what you fear might happen. There's a big big difference. (For more information on this process see my blog article on All or Nothing Thinking @ <http://www.compulsiveeating.com/blog/?p=16> ).

3. If the answer to the question "Am I physically hungry right now?" is no but you're wanting to eat anyway, you're emotionally eating and there is an underlying need for physical or emotional security that you are seeking to meet in having that particular food at that time.

4. If the answer is "I can't tell if I'm truly hungry or not." You're not.

Encourage yourself to wait until you're certain that you are physically hungry. There is no uncertainty about that. You'll feel empty physically; you'll have a growly tummy; if you've left it quite a long time before eating you'll likely also feel cranky, tired and a bit shaky - a.k.a. hypoglycemia: low blood sugar.

It is important as you begin to experiment with inviting yourself to wait to eat until you truly feel physical hunger that you have with you at all times snacks that you enjoy and that you can eat as soon as you start to feel true physical hunger.

This exercise alone will reveal to you the true extent of your disordered relationship with food. It will show you immediately how often you use food to cope; how unconscious that pattern has become; and it will even reveal to you the relationships or situations that are likely to trigger you to feel unsafe or insecure.

This is incredibly powerful information to be able to gather in just one day. It sets the stage for you to safely and forever change your use of food to cope and to begin to have a life that is truly peaceful and completely free of food and body image issues.

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