

RACHEL ANNE HOBBS R.D.

20 TIPS TO FIND FOOD FREEDOM



The Nurture
Circle

RECLAIMING YOUR WHOLE SELF

RACHEL ANNE HOBBS R.D.



A LITTLE INTRODUCTION

Hello!

Welcome to our "20 tips to find food freedom." This has been designed as a brief overview of some practical aspects that might feel safe for you to explore independently or with the support of loved ones.

It is normal for lots of different emotions to come up as we think about our beliefs around food and make changes so be gentle with yourself if anything uncomfortable does arise.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

xx

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- **Eat enough food regularly.** I know it sounds like a simple one but this is truly the most important part of finding freedom. When we are under eating our brains and bodies think there is a famine and push us into survival mode, which is why we often feel anxious, irritable and angry when we are hungry. It is natural for “enough food” to change each day depending on our activity, stress, hormones, sleep and mood so don’t feel you need to eat exactly the same each day but starting with three meals and three snacks is often a good start.
- **Think of your inner child or own children.** When we are thinking about the way we eat it can be helpful to think about our children if we have them, or our own inner child. Would we really want them to see us weighing out our food, spending hours deliberating over the menu, pulling ourselves apart in the mirror or tracking everything that passes our lips? Absolutely not! By thinking of our children or inner child we can greet these behaviors with compassion, not shame and slowly start to change them, starting with easiest - or least hard!
- **Eat your cravings and add to them.** Craving food is completely natural and normal, when we are feeling a little bit hungry we often want something high sugar which quickly picks up our blood glucose and feels energizing; however if we only have these foods at snack time our blood glucose drops again fairly quickly and we feel hungry again. So this is where we want to keep in the food we are craving and add something with more nourishment to it to make it more satisfying. For example, adding yogurt and berries to a couple of biscuits will make us feel fuller for longer.
- **Reframe the belief that food should only be for meeting physical hunger.** Food is so much more than fuel, it is connection, memories, fun, soothing and pleasure. Learning to accept that food contains more than nutrients for our bodies and souls can help ease the shame and guilt that diet culture has taught us for eating food at other times when we are not feeling hungry.
- **Don’t be afraid of bread.** There is nothing wrong with eating bread every day and more than once a day. Diet culture taught us that bread is bad so we have created a bizarre rule that we either shouldn’t have it or can only have it once a day, then we crave it, overeat it, restrict it and the cycle continues. Bread has so many benefits, it is a source of fibre which supports balance our blood sugars, it contains prebiotics for digestive health, it is a source of energy to help us live our daily lives with vitality and it is versatile and cheap.

- **Reflect on your experience of living in survival mode.** Disordered eating behaviors are a sign that we are living in survival mode, when our nervous system believes that we are in a place of threat we often continue to engage in behaviors that increase our sense of dysregulation because our rational, thinking brain is offline. Overworking, excessive caffeine use, inability to rest, excessive use of social media, compulsive exercise are just some examples of this. It often feels like we are in a “tired but wired” state and a way to explore this deeper is to take time to see how else dysregulation shows up alongside disordered eating.
- **Remind yourself that you are worthy of doing things that make you feel good.** Diet culture is part of capitalism, it feeds off people's vulnerabilities and markets and sells products which are unsustainable, lacking in evidence and keep people coming back. Therefore by reminding ourselves of an anti capitalist view this can support us take a step back. Repeat : “I deserve to spend time doing things that make me feel good.” “I am allowed to ask for help and I am worthy of receiving it.” “I feel less ambitious about my career than I used to and that's okay.” “I do not need to monetise my hobbies” “I am allowed to pace myself”.
- **Explore your bloating.** Many people think they are intolerance to a particular food so they cut it out, but actually bloating is often triggered by not eating enough food, overexercising, eating too much fibre, cutting out fat and carbohydrates, filling up on high amounts of vegetables, feeling anxious and stressed, eating in a rigid way, consuming a low variety of food or eating lots of “diet” foods containing sweeteners. Before anyone should cut out any foods, unless there is an allergy or disease, we need to address restrictive eating first.
- **Don't obsess over protein.** Protein has so many benefits and we do need to eat it regularly, however we do not need to obsess over it. It is safe and healthy to enjoy meals that are not based around protein from time to time too, especially if there is a food rule around it. Macaroni cheese, sweet potato and peanut curry and pesto aubergine pizza are some of my favorite meals which are not based around protein.
- **Acknowledge that you deserve to eat.** Nothing changes the fact that you deserve to eat, not the number on the scale, not your plans tonight, not what you ate yesterday, not how your clothes fit.

- **There are no such things as good or bad food.** Food has no morality, it contains energy, nutrients, nourishment, joy, pleasure, fuel, memories and more. There are some foods which are higher and lower in energy and some foods which are higher and lower in nutrients but we are not good or bad for choosing to eat one way or another. Our eating behaviors don't change the reality that we are inherently worthy.
- **Know the signs that you are not eating enough.** There are some signs we can look out for to help us notice that we need to eat a bit more food, these include; that you think about food a lot, you struggle to focus, you get ill or injured, you don't notice your hunger and fullness, your menstrual cycle has stopped, you struggle to sleep, you have low energy, you are not recovering from training, you feel bloated a lot of the time, you experience constipation, your body image is often poor, you like to be the last one to finish a meal, you feel low in energy or hyper most of the time.
- **Eat within an hour of waking.** A really common eating disorder behavior is trying to delay eating as long as possible, this might be to delay gratification, to avoid eating "too much" or to leave more food for the evening. This delay, especially in females can not only play havoc with reproductive health, but also increase risk of engaging in binge eating behaviours and pushes us into survival mode, increasing feelings of stress, anxiety and overwhelm.
- **Coffee is not breakfast.** Coffee is delicious and it is not breakfast, often coffee is used as a way to suppress appetite and as a "pick me up", but the reality is that it pushes our stress hormones up temporarily and gives us false energy because it does not contain any actual energy (what we measure in calories). This leads to a tired but wired feeling, so we can enjoy our coffee but make sure that we have something to eat before we have it.
- **Binge eating is not about willpower.** So many individuals believe that overeating, emotional eating or binge eating is about willpower, however it could not be further from the truth; and this belief keeps us stuck in the shame cycle and actually increases risk of further binge eating. Binge eating may be a way to self soothe, numb or temporarily forget, it may support us to escape something that feels unmanageable. It could be a way we learnt to cope with hard emotions and tough situations or a way to add a burst of joy to life avoid of joy. Binge eating is something we can recover from, however we first have to explore why binge eating happens and then build other ways to cope.

- **Eat potatoes.** The humble potato is often a fear food because diet culture and diets such as Atkins demonize them due to their carbohydrate content. Potatoes are a source of carbohydrates and that is a good thing, carbohydrates are our main fuel for living and enable us to live with vitality. Potatoes are also easy to prepare, versatile and cheap and rich in fibre, potassium and other nutrients, so there is no reason to avoid them.
- **Speak neutrally to your body.** The way we feel about our body can influence the way we eat, if we have a poor body image day we are more likely to engage in disordered eating behaviors. So on the days we feel uncomfortable it is important to speak without judgment towards our bodies. Try these - "Today I choose not to punish my body" "today I will nourish my body regularly" "today I will thank my body for allowing me to experience life" "today I choose to respect my body's need for rest."
- **Get inquisitive about your eating behaviors.** Do you really like black coffee? Or have you conditioned yourself to skip the milk to save calories? Do you really love salads and soups? Or have you conditioned yourself to avoid carbohydrates at lunchtime? Does dairy actually give you belly ache? Or have you conditioned yourself that ice cream, cheese and yoghurt are bad? There are so many ways thoughts of restriction can manipulate us, sometimes these beliefs are so ingrained that we no longer question them. If we take time to look at our eating behaviours and explore the beliefs behind them we can slowly start to let go of the ones which no longer serve us.
- **Keep all types of foods at home.** It is really common to ban certain foods from the home that may trigger an episode of overeating or binge eating; however all this does is make them seem more desirable and when there is an opportunity to eat them we overconsume them because we don't know when we will have them again. By keeping all foods at home and all foods in the daily diet this reduces morality beliefs and desire for certain foods, which means we feel safer to eat them.
- **Reach out for support if you are struggling.** If you have noticed that food or negative body image is taking over your life this may be a sign that support from your GP, a dietitian, therapist or coach could give you the safety and guidance to heal. Don't be ashamed to ask for help because we all deserve and need help at certain times in our lives, just make sure whoever you reach out to is suitably experienced and qualified.

FREEDOM FROM EMOTIONAL EATING

DONATION BASED MASTERCLASS

I HAVE DESIGNED THIS MASTERCLASS FOR THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH EMOTIONAL EATING AND FIND OTHER WAYS TO COPE DURING TIMES OF DISTRESS OR EMOTION.

THE PROBLEM IS ...

we often focus on what is happening in the mind when trying to heal, and neglect to acknowledge what is happening in the body. In this workshop we teach you how to reduce emotional eating through understanding the mind and reading the body; because the body tells us when emotional eating is going to happen.

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