



3. EATING MINDFULNESS

You can practice this exercise with one simple sultana or raisin, a piece of chocolate or a selection of fruit or biscuits on a plate. Before you choose one, come to a place of mindfulness: Sense what your body needs. Notice whether saliva production increases as you look at the platter. Take your time to choose one thing.

Focus with clear awareness on each movement and each moment of the experience as you move your arm and hand and fingers towards the object and pick it up, place it on the palm of your hand or hold it between your fingers.

Imagine you have just come to Earth and awakened to this substance you have not encountered before. Explore it with all your senses as if you have never seen it before.

Scan it; explore every part of it with your eyes as it sits on your palm or in your fingers. Turn it around.

Notice the texture, the light on it, its shape; whether it is soft, hard, coarse, smooth.

Notice any thoughts that arise (like “why am I doing this?”) and see if you can just notice the thoughts and let them be... before bringing your awareness back to the object.

Take the object beneath your nose and carefully notice the smell of it. Bring the object to one ear and squeeze it, roll it, listen for any sound coming from it.

Begin to slowly take the object in your mouth, noticing that the arm knows exactly where to go and perhaps noticing your mouth watering.

Gently place the object in your mouth, or take one bite if it is larger than one bite-size, but do not chew yet. Feel it on your tongue: its weight, temperature, size, texture. Explore the sensations of it in your mouth.

When you are ready, intentionally bite into it. Does it go automatically to one side of the mouth? Notice when the taste releases. Slowly, slowly chew, noticing the change in consistency, until you are conscious of the impulse to swallow.

Sense the food moving down to your throat and into your oesophagus on its way to your stomach. Sit with the experience, noticing any vestiges remaining in your mouth, on your tongue, any taste, feelings... satisfaction, pleasure, aversion.

Take a moment to congratulate yourself for taking the time to experience Mindful Eating.