



Repeat after me, "Ice Cream (or food of your choice) is NOT the miracle cure for (insert current life problem here)."

Come on- say it with me, "Ice cream is NOT the miracle cure for a bad day."

Okay, now let's try this one, "I do not need to eat Breakfast at 7am, lunch at noon and dinner at 6pm if I'm not hungry at those times."

And one more for good measure, "If (insert spouse/friend/etc. name here) is eating pizza, I do not need to eat pizza too."

Now, how do you feel about the things you just said?

I want you to think about everything you ate yesterday. And I mean EVERY SINGLE TIME you had something in your mouth that you chewed and/or swallowed. I'm not just talking about the food that you put on your plate but also those two bites of cookie in the break room, that mindless munching while you were making dinner, and that piece of chocolate from the candy dish - no 'convenient amnesia' here. BE HONEST!

Now, for each time that you ate something, WHY did you eat it?

Were you hungry?

Bored?

Was it a clock-based decision?

Or did you just do it because everyone else was doing it or because it was just there?

I'd be willing to bet that at least 50% of the time you ate or drank something yesterday, you weren't PHYSICALLY hungry.

I know, you're all - "Uh, yes I was hungry..." Okay, fair. I can't actually KNOW what you were feeling, BUT I'm guessing in most of the situations when you 'thought' you were hungry if your choice had been celery instead of chocolate or tofu instead of steak; that hunger would've got up and walked right on out the door.

Am I right??

Okay, so if you're not truly experiencing a physiological NEED for food, but still feel hungry - the question is -

**What kind of 'hungry' are you?**

**Yeah, mind blown, right?**

There is more than one kind of hungry  
understanding the differences between the types is kind of a big deal.

***Physical Hunger:***

This one is like Coke - "It's The Real Thing." When you're physically hungry your body truly needs food. Your stomach is growling, your blood sugar is tanking, you have a hard time concentrating and darn-it, a stalk of celery is sounding pretty tasty, I'm talking about PLAIN celery - not the one with almond butter on it. Yep, physical hunger is your body's way of telling you it needs nutrients and energy. If this is what you're feeling- EAT!!!

***Nutritional Hunger: (The "I'm hungry all the time" Hunger)***

No, this is NOT the same as physical hunger- so don't go getting the two confused. Think about the times when you eat a less than optimal diet, enter Taco Bell, Cheetos, Chips Ahoy, Fruit Loops, etcetera. You eat, feel 'full' and then like 15-60 minutes later - HOLY HUNGRY - It's the "Chinese Food Phenomenon". Sadly, a good portion of the food that we eat is far from nutrient dense, and our body NEEDS nutrients. If the foods you're eating are processed, refined, sugar and carb laden sandwiches then your body's need for real nutrition will never be satisfied. It's a vicious cycle - eat cruddy food - don't get the nutrients your body needs - don't feel satisfied - eat more cruddy food and so on... This folks is how obesity has become an epidemic.

***Hormonal Hunger: (Ladies, you know what I'm talking about...)***

Chocolate, brownies, cake, chips... You know that feeling you get after you eat a meal - the one where you think you're still a little "hungry" and you just need something sweet? Yeah, that one. I'm guessing you know it well and for some of us there may be 'times of the month' when it's a little more prevalent than we would like. It's those mid-afternoon cravings, that 'drive for dessert' - even when you know darn well you shouldn't still be hungry. These cravings are often 'fed' by caving to the sugar/carb demons - those bad boys mess with our brain chemicals and hormones. The good news is, the longer you resist the urge to cave to the cravings the fewer and farther between they'll be. Feed your body good food and your hormones will be much better behaved!

## *Emotional Hunger*

Are you sad, lonely, stressed, tired, grumpy, feeling 'empty'? Let's go back to the first line of this miniature novel; - REPEAT AFTER ME, "Ice Cream (or food of your choice) is not the miracle cure for (insert problem here)." We live in a culture that turns to food to fix EVERYTHING. Our lives revolve around eating. Food is everywhere and food is something that many of us associate with happiness and or comfort - so it totally makes sense that we eat when we're tired, bored, sad, angry, stressed, lonely... Instead of dealing with the deeper issues we run to 'instant gratification' because we want to feel better. And it works - for a VERY short time. Yeah, the ice cream tastes great- but is it actually fixing anything? How are you going to feel when it's gone? Believe it or not food will not mend a broken heart, make your sadness stop, or solve your problems. In fact, we often end up feeling even worse after we self-medicate with sugar and junk foods. Food is not a cure, it may be a Band-Aid but it's one of those really cheap ones that you have to replace every 15 minutes. If chocolate could solve the world's problems it would be a better place, but until then deal with the reasons you want to eat and life will be much sweeter.

## *Hunger By Association*

So, you're at a restaurant with a group of friends having dinner. You all had a great meal - steak, bacon-wrapped asparagus and roasted sweet potatoes. You're completely satisfied - that is until - everyone else starts ordering dessert. Suddenly, the food in your stomach miraculously rearranged itself and made room for a slice of chocolate cake. Yep, you're definitely hungry again - but only for dessert - celery need not apply... How and why does that happen? We might be completely satisfied - full, even - but when we see someone else eating something desirable we find ourselves hungry for some of the good stuff too. It's a classic case of hunger by association. We 'think' we're hungry and we justify eating something because the people that we're with are eating it. It's like peer pressure with no application of the actual 'pressure' needed.

## *Practical Hunger*

Our lives are busy! We are constantly going from one meeting, practice, or event to another and lots of times our schedule and eating just don't jive. How many times have you been in a situation like this - You get off work at 4 pm and you're headed to the gym. You're not hungry but you eat something 'just in case'. Or maybe you've got an appointment at 11:30 am and you're not sure how long it's going to take, so even though it's only 10:30 and you just ate breakfast two hours ago, you have lunch - just to cover yourself. I think it's safe to say we've all done this on several occasions. We eat when we aren't hungry to prevent ourselves from -wait for it - getting hungry! For some reason being truly, physically hungry is not something we're very comfortable with. I promise you though - you can go a lot longer without food then you think like DAYS, people and really, physical hunger is a good thing sometimes.

## *Taste Hunger*

Two words - dessert table. What kind of picture do you have in your mind right now? Is it an EPIC collection of all things chocolate, caramel, cheesecake and ice cream? Is your mouth watering just thinking about it? How many times have you been at a party, someone's home or a restaurant buffet where there are so many things that look amazingly delicious and regardless of how long it's been since you've eaten - you've definitely got some serious tasting to do. It's another situation where we eat because the food is there - not necessarily because we need or even want it. It looks good and it's staring at you, begging you to take a bite, really it's not, but you've been there - you know what I'm talking about. How can you resist?

### *Habit or Learned Hunger: (Eating by the clock)*

Breakfast at 7am, lunch at noon and dinner at 6pm - you can set your watch by it. Or maybe you're a member of the "if I don't eat every two hours my muscles are going to shrivel up and my metabolism is going to wind up in the toilet" camp. And does going to the movies or watching TV without a snack just feel wrong? Hunger and more exactly, when we should be hungry' is learned. We're conditioned from a very young age to eat at certain times. Think for a minute how babies operate. They're on their own clock - they truly do eat when they're PHYSICALLY hungry, hence the 2am feedings and they stop when they're satisfied. It's not until our parents start making us eat breakfast when we get up, lunch at noon, and dinner at six that we start becoming 'hungry' at those times. And we also start to make subconscious associations between eating and certain activities - snacks when watching TV, or mid-afternoon, pizza on Friday night, etcetera... We can train our bodies to become hungry on demand and we totally tune out our true hunger cues. It's not natural.

This week write down everything you eat yes, even those potato chip crumbs you found between the couch cushions and then determine what kind of hunger it was. Make it your goal to really tune into your natural hunger/fullness cues - listen to your body and its physical needs. If you're *physically hungry* for lunch at 10 am - EAT, don't ignore it by waiting until noon because that's lunch time. Or if you're not physically hungry for lunch at 'lunchtime' - wait and eat when you are hungry.

Your body is pretty darn smart. It knows what it needs and when it needs it. We get into trouble when we try to take control. It's time to stop playing these "Hunger Games".



**Last time we talked about types of hunger now lets look at  
How Hungry are you?**

This week we are going to focus on learning what our bodies are saying to us.

Lets use this simple scale to determine our hunger level. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6...

1 is hungry --- 2 is needing food --- 3 is full --- 4 is over full --- 5 is stuffed --- 6 is feeling ill

Do you eat when you are not hungry? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you read the signs your body puts out for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know what hunger feels like? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you remember the last time you truly felt hunger? \_\_\_\_\_

**BEFORE you eat**

Determine if you are feeling *Physical* hunger or is it another kind of hunger?

Nutritional, Hormonal, Emotional, Association, Practical, Taste or Habit?

If it is true Physical hunger eat, otherwise find something else to fill that need to eat.

It is best to have a plan, what can you do?

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**You ate...**

Now let's take a peek at how we feel after we have eaten our meal.

How do you know your full? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you comfortable, full of energy, your pants still buttoned?

Using the scale above, find the place that would best describe your physical sensation.

Are you still at one, looking for more?

Are you rolling of the table at the oh my gosh I can't believe I ate the whole thing.

What can you do to make your meal time more satisfying? When you walk away from the table you want your belly full as well as your spirit nourished.



Make meal time an event.

Serve plates from the stove. This makes it easier to measure out your correct portion.

Put the leftovers right into the fridge before you serve the meal.

This will help you avoid picking at the leftovers after the meal.

Take time to sit and eat, No TV, No Computer, No Phone calls...

You can play some soft soothing music playing (the rhythm will slow your eating rate).

Taking time to really enjoy your food, the scents, the colors, the appeal.

Chew your food slowly, savor the flavors, experience the textures.

Have a goblet of ice water by your plate, sip it throughout your meal to cleanse your palette.

Put your fork down between bites, pick it back up after you swallowed what is in your mouth.

Leave the plate on the table, don't pick it up to your mouth and scoop food off it.

It takes your brain 20 to register that you are full,

slow down give your brain a chance to catch up to your body.

One signal your body sends out at the near full mark is an involuntary sigh... watch for it.

Now sit back and enjoy the feeling in your body, doesn't that feel nice?

After you have eaten, how long before you are hungry again?

Protein foods can stay in you blood system 4 hours where a carbs are processed out in 2 hours.

Try applying the things in this lesson to your journal this week.

Before you eat think of the hunger scale,

write down the number that best describes your before meal hunger.

Then when you have finished your meal take a moment and write the number from the scale that best describes your hunger feelings.

Take a moment and listen to your body, see what it has to teach.



