Health-Full Eating & Nutrition

Fostering Positive Relationships with Food

The Positive Relationship

Having a good relationship with food means you give yourself permission to eat the foods that make you feel good – both physically and emotionally. No foods are off-limits, and you don't feel guilty eating foods that are "bad". This relationship is something you are likely going to have to work on your entire life, just as you'd work on a relationship with an important person.

Tips to Improve Your Relationship with Food

- **Eat when you're hungry.** We are all born with the ability to regulate our hunger, but as people age, they begin to lose this ability. Listening to natural hunger cues (stomach growling, low energy, problems focusing, etc.) can help regulate appetite and manage food intake.

- **Give yourself permission to eat.** Food gives your body the energy it needs to keep functioning. Creating rules around when you can or can't eat may set yourself up for hunger, fear of food, and feelings of deprivation. Instead, focus on your hunger cues and eat when your body is telling you it needs to be fueled.

- **Practice mindful eating.** Eat free of other distractions (your phone, the TV, a book, etc.) so you can take time to focus on your food. Notice the taste, texture, how full you feel, and your enjoyment of the food. Learning to slow down and savor what you're eating can help you learn which foods you enjoy and help you become more in tune with your body's hunger and fullness cues.

- **Welcome all foods in your diet.** Calling a food "bad" gives it unnecessary power. As soon as you tell yourself you can't have something, you'll end up craving it more. Allowing all foods into your diet allows you to better control your intake, since you know it's always available. When you restrict foods, you're more likely to overdo it when you do eat them.

- **Examine how you view food.** Is it your enemy? Something that makes you gain weight? When you view it as something that nourishes you, gives you the energy you need to live your life, and provides you with the nutrients you need to achieve optimal health, you are more likely to have a positive relationship with food.

References:
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