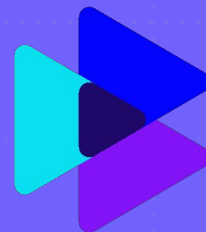


Examining Your Relationship With Food

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the Fasting Method

Why I approach this as a RELATIONSHIP ...

- Some of our survival needs are pretty basic as far as being met or not
- But food is one that we have typically developed a connection to far beyond whether we have food
- You often hear people say that the reason we eat is for sustenance, but I think that were our only use of food none of us would be part of this lesson today
- We are speaking of it as a relationship because relationships are dynamic things we form or develop, and that grow or evolve
- And if we can create relationships, we can also change them



The meaning of relationship with food...



- “The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected; or the state of being connected”
 - “or regard or behave toward each other”
- How are you and food connected?
- How do you relate to food?
 - Name any feelings you associate with eating or food
- What roles does food play for you/what do you ask from food?

The building of your relationship with food...



- Your relationship with food is not a new relationship for you
 - It began before you were making any conscious choices
 - Your very first connections with caregivers were food related
 - As you grew up, you learned patterns of how your caregivers or family related with food
- Most of us began with a healthy relationship with food
 - We had innate signaling when we had enough
 - We received signals when the body needed replenishing
- As we developed we learned ways to connect with food beyond our need for sustenance
 - We learned food could sooth us
 - We learned food could distract us
 - We learned food could help us escape
 - We learned food could serve as a currency of connection
 - We learned food could entertain us

How your relationship with food is tied to your relationship with yourself...



- If your emotional and physical needs are not met, your relationship with food will likely fill those gaps
 - The immediate gratification we can get from food, especially problematic food often becomes a way to self-soothe
 - Eating can substitute for sleep, intimacy, etc.
- If your self-esteem or sense of self-worth is shaky, your relationship with food is more likely to be unhealthy
 - You might focusing on your relationship with food and what you get from it, instead of focusing on what is problematic

Assessing if you are in a toxic relationship with food...

- Toxic relationships
 - You feel drained or negative in the relationship more than you feel supported or uplifted
 - You experience a roller coaster of extreme highs and lows
 - You find it difficult to explain your relationship to others who question your wellbeing
 - An imbalance in power; your autonomy feels usurped or disregarded
 - You hide evidence of the consequences of the relationship



Changing your relationship with food...

- Identify what role(s) you want food to play in your life
- Take it out of the roles that you need to address in other healthy ways
 - If it is your confidante, how else can you feel heard or validated?
 - If it is your only spot of joy in a day, how can you add other means of joy into your life?
 - If it is your rewarder, how can you learn to reinforce your efforts in a non-food way?
- Remember to allow food as pleasing without making it your entertainer, primary dopamine seeking strategy, etc.



Food freedom as a healthy relationship with food and yourself...



- Popularized by authors like Melissa Uban (co-creator of the Whole30)
- Diverges from diet culture and restrictive dieting
- Based on giving yourself permission to enjoy all foods in moderation, as long as your health and emotional needs do not preclude this
- Releases you from guilt or shame based on your eating behaviors and choices
- Focuses on mindful eating, not indulging urges

How to develop food freedom ...

- Identify eating behaviors and choices that are aligned with your goals and needs
- Identify your food boundaries
 - Are there foods that trigger you to feel out of control?
 - Are there eating behaviors that lead to guilt/shame?
 - Do you have any safety parameters to help you stay in a safe zone related to eating?
- Continue to accept your decisions without needing to compensate or punish yourself
- Highlight/celebrate how good you feel with actual freedom without all the backlash of unwanted consequences

