

STAGES OF MINDFUL EATING

Stage One: I Don't Think I Eat Mindlessly

- I don't think I need to change my eating, but other people (doctors, friends) tell me it would be a good idea.
- **Intervention:** Ask someone you trust to explain why they think eating healthier would be helpful. Try to be open minded. Notice whether any of their concerns ring true for you. List the pros and cons of eating more mindfully.

Stage Two: I Have an Issue, But I'm Not Quite Ready To Change

- I want to improve my eating habits. I am thinking about it, but I haven't felt ready (ex. too stressed out, didn't have the time).
- **Intervention:** Sit down with a pen and paper and make a list of the things that seem to be standing in the way. Divide the reasons into "perceived" (don't have enough time) and "concrete" obstacles (have food allergies requiring special foods).

Stage Three: I'm Getting Ready

- I'm thinking about eating more mindfully. I have taken some steps to get ready (reading a book, talking to a counselor, signing up for this marathon (this is likely you!).
- **Intervention:** Give yourself a pat on the back. Getting ready is an important step! Choose at least one small "getting ready" action step (buy containers to put fresh snacks in, look up healthy recipes online, get your tennis shoes out and put them by the front door).

Stage Four: I've Changed

- I've already started eating more mindfully. I eat mindfully most of the time. I am committed to it for the long term
- **Intervention:** If this is you, great! Keep going. Take note of what you do really well (snacking on fruit, limit junk food). When you are stressed, sticking to your strengths will help prevent you from stopping completely.

Stage Six: I've Slipped Up

- Maybe you've been a mindful eater in the past. Old habits have crept back into your life.
- **Intervention:** Commit to eating mindfully each day. Avoid black and white thinking--(I've done it perfectly or failed. Determine what factors may have triggered the slip back into old mindless eating habits.