

This is the **first step** to create a mindful practice around food.



Grace



This excerpt from my book, *Don't Eat It. DEAL With It! Your Guidebook On How To STOP Eating Your Emotions*, explains how you can immediately get started changing your relationship with food.

Please enjoy this first step that I teach my clients and Emotional Eating Freedom Masterclass participants!

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Grace

I love the word grace. Grace was on the top of my list for a girl's name. At a yoga retreat, I was crammed into a sweat lodge with other yoga ladies and we had to pick one significant word. In my delirium, I chose grace. I have been told that I handle the worst of tragedies with grace. To me, it sounds elegant but means a delicate strength.

Growing up, grace was always said before a meal at my grandparent's. My Papaw was the official grace-giver of the household. Mealtime was such a contrast to today when I think about it. We were all sitting. Dinner was on the table. We all stopped, got quiet and bowed our heads.

Silence.

He would say his prayer. Then all hell would break loose again. :)

Unfortunately, I had gotten away from this tradition as I got older. I have such fond memories of the time of peace and quiet. I have been deeply pondering the concept of grace. I have thought about it a lot as I help others modify what they are eating. I think grace is a necessity if you are trying to overcome emotional eating. Say grace before we eat, whatever we eat, however much we eat, no matter why we are eating. Stop and give thanks. Quit feeling shame as you dive headlong into your food without thinking. Stop and give thanks for what you have to eat. Stop before you leave yourself to hide in your food. Say grace. Be grateful for what is in front of you.

We all hold different religious and spiritual beliefs. I grew up going to church with a handful of formal prayers but have become more spirit-based as an adult. Those prayers still provide me great comfort. I believe there are all kinds of graces to say.

If you believe in God:

Heavenly father, thank you so much for this _____. I am blessed to have it. Let it nourish my body and give me strength. In your name, I pray. Amen.

If you don't believe in God but are spiritual:

I give gratitude to the universe for providing me with _____. I am grateful to have it. Let it nourish my body and give me strength.

If you aren't spiritual or religious:

I am thankful to myself for providing _____. I am grateful to have it. Please let it nourish my body and give me strength.

If you aren't spiritual or religious and can't say anything serious:

I am thankful to have the monies to buy _____. Please let it keep me healthy and make me strong like Popeye. Holla!

Grace provides us with two things: gratitude and presence. We join in the present moment to say thank you for what we have.

The hitch with grace is that you say it no matter what. If you sit down with an entire Entemann's coffee cake, you say grace. If you are at the ballpark with a hot dog and a giant bag of kettlecorn, you say grace. If you have nachos and your fifth beer, you say grace. Give thanks for your food nourishing your body and giving it strength. If you forget to say grace, no need to berate yourself. You can stop in the middle of your meal to say it. You can try harder to say it next time.

Grace brings us into the present moment. We choose to pause and become aware. We choose to pause and become grateful. You may return to eating your entire coffee cake, but please pause first.

The bad news: There cannot be change without awareness.

The good news: You **CAN** change **WITH** awareness.

It is easier for me to say grace for different foods. Last night, I had cornbread with jalapeños as I was trying to spice the cold out of my body. I had a honey crisp apple after dinner to soothe my scorched tongue. Whole foods, foods with purpose and foods made with love are easier to say grace for. When I ate the caramel corn with pecans that I bought on my way out of the grocery store, my grace felt awkward. “Thank you, God, for this caramel corn with pecans. I am blessed to have it. Let it nourish my body and give me strength. Amen.” I truly didn’t eat much. Bringing my awareness to the fact that I was eating caramel corn before dinner was a bit of a buzzkill. I became aware then I put the caramel corn down after a few bites. It was enough to enjoy and enough to take the edge off of my hunger.

Let’s just get started with grace.

Reflections:

1. Which grace feels more comfortable to you?
2. How might saying grace make you feel?
3. After trying it out for a few days, what do you observe about making this small change?

Creating The Habit Of Grace

Our biggest mission now is creating the habit of saying grace. We don't need to count calories, scale the food pyramid or jog in place for 30 minutes. EVERY SINGLE TIME you are going to put something into your mouth, stop and say grace. You can adjust the words that you say, but they must include the two elements of **presence** and **gratitude**. You aren't committing for the rest of your life but for at least the time you are working through this guidebook. You won't know how helpful a habit this can be without really trying it.

Reflections:

1. How does it feel in your **gut** as you commit to saying grace before every morsel of food enters your mouth?
2. Will there be others in your life that will notice this change?
3. How will you explain it and/or include them?



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