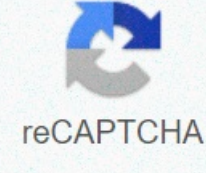




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## Susan albers mindful eating pdf

Welcome! I'm Dr. Susan Albers. I'm a psychologist at the Cleveland Clinic and the BestSelling Author of the New York Times of seven books on conscious eating. For the past fifteen years, I've found that people often know what to eat (fruits, vegetables, healthy foods) but how to choose nutritious foods and stop eating emotionally is much harder. My mission is to give you practical and easy and aware food tools, based on proven science, to help you have a peaceful and healthy relationship with food. Conscious eating can help reconnect the brain to make healthy food choices, stop eating brainless, manage/lose weight, and be happier with your body. While conscious eaters may seem demanding eaters, they are often only very picky about choices. Conscious eaters really taste food and if they don't like it, they don't eat it, just like discerning eaters. In addition, they are not afraid to adapt food to their particular taste. In restaurants, a conscious eater can ask waiters to make some changes to their order such as keeping bacon or asking for Swiss cheese rather than Cheddar. Deanna Pogorelc: Hi, thank you for joining us for this episode of The Health Essentials Podcast brought by Cleveland Clinic. I'm your guest Deanna Pogorelc, and with me today at the Cleveland Clinic's main campus is Dr. Susan Albers. Dr. Albers is a psychologist and author who has written nine books on conscious eating. And today he's here to share with us some strategies to overcome unhealthy eating habits and build a better relationship with food. Thank you so much for being here, Dr. Albers. Dr. Susan Albers: Thank you. Thank you. Deanna Pogorelc: For our listeners, remember that this is for informational purposes only and is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. Dr. Albers, I'm going to jump right away with the million-dollar question. Healthy eating seems so simple. We know what we should do, eat more vegetables, eat less sugar, everything else. Why is it so hard for so many of us? Dr. Susan Albers: We wish it was easy. Something we always do, at least three times a day. We wish it was simple but it's really complicated. I have a lot of clients coming in who are very themselves and I say don't because there are a number of different factors that are going to be cooves. And there are three in particular that make eating so challenging. Dr. Susan Albers: The first is our emotions. 75% of our eating has nothing to do with our physical hunger. We eat because we are stressed, we are bored, we are anxious, we feel overwhelmed and all these factors settle every day because we feel so much in a day. Dr. Susan Albers: The second is our environment. We live in a senseless food environment. We are surrounded by food 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it's all around us. We can't even think about food and see a commercial and all of a sudden we're craving something. Dr. Susan Albers: And the last reason is diet. There are a lot of different fashion diets that are out there in the world. And in fact, a recent survey said that over the course of our lives, we try over 162 different diets, which is a surprising number. And in that same survey, people admitted to often going to Google for their information instead of a quality resource. They also look at celebrities. And if you're confused about the information, it's hard to know what's really good quality, solid information, and many of its contrasts. So many people get very confused and overwhelmed, but it is important to eat well, very important. Deanna Pogorelc: Yes. Can you talk a little bit about what's going on? I think the psychological process of eating, feeling hungry. We have these supplements that tell us when we're hungry and when we're full, but how does it work to eat in our brains? Dr. Susan Albers: Our brain is really very important. We think eating is for our stomachs, but it actually has a lot to do with our brain, our biology and our chemistry. Our hormones are involved, our serotonin level is involved, our neurotransmitters. So there are a lot of things that are happening beneath the surface that we're not really in touch with. But one of the things that really blows me up is our mindset, how our mindset affects the way our body processes food. And that's why it's so important to have a good relationship with food. Dr. Susan Albers: For example, let's say you're a person who likes vanilla ice cream. You love him, you want him. So as soon as you start thinking about vanilla ice cream, your body triggers, you start salivating, you start to get excited, those hormones start to switch off from neurotransmitters, and your body is getting ready. And when you have that food you love, it's like dopamine is released. So it's a pleasure to hit the brain. Dr. Susan Albers: Now imagine another person who doesn't like ice cream or doesn't like vanilla ice cream, or feels a lot of shame and guilt every time they eat a food they perceive is bad or is against their diet. And suddenly their response to food, their mentality takes their body in a completely different direction. Suddenly they start thinking about ice cream and it's not dopamine that's released. It's chemical cortisol, the stress hormone, and their body starts to stretch. They don't digest it the same way. So the same food can be processed by two different people in very different ways depending on their mentality. Deanna Pogorelc: You talked about shame and guilt. This kind of almost creates a Then? Because if we eat because we're emotional and then we eat very badly and then we feel shame and... Is that how it works? Dr. Susan Albers: Shame and guilt don't us to eat well. And unfortunately, a lot of dietary language out there is based on where it shouldn't and shouldn't do and you're bad if you eat certain foods. And that's why I really love the concept of conscious eating because it turns the tongue. It's really about being more aware of your hunger, responding to it instead of reacting to the first thought I want to eat, but really responding consciously and consciously. Deanna Pogorelc: Can we talk about some of the other common or unhealthy eating habits that people have that you would recommend eating carefully for? What are some of those habits you see in your patients? Dr. Susan Albers: We have a lot of nonsensical eating habits. Some of them we don't even know about. Maybe we're sitting on the couch eating where we go at the bottom of the bowl as we watch TV and go to the bottom. Let's say, I didn't even taste it or enjoy it. We're just blowing it in the mouth senselessly. Distraction is often also a number one cause of nonsensical eating. We are sitting in front of our computers typing or our screens and eating at the same time. In fact, a recent study showed that about 20% of people admit that their screen is their only dining companion. Deanna Pogorelc: Oh, wow. Dr. Susan Albers: Who eat most of their meals in front of a screen. And our bodies just don't process food the same way when we're distracted. And we're much more or less in charge or in control of what we're eating when we're distracted. So my motto is when you eat, eat, be in the moment, focus on what you're doing. Deanna Pogorelc: Okay. Let's talk a little bit more about what conscious eating is and what some of the benefits are and I guess what it just means in general. Dr. Susan Albers: Yes. Conscious eating, it's not a diet. There are no menus or recipes. It's more about how to eat than what to eat. As a psychologist, I do not tell people not to eat certain foods such as sugar, but more about our relationship with food, our habits around food. And so if you're someone who wants to eat more carefully, there are a couple of things you can do that are very easy to start on that path. Well, they look simple, but they can be challenging. And there are about five S's of conscious eating. Dr. Susan Albers: The first is to sit down, sit while you eat. Many of us are standing in front of the fridge, collecting food directly from it, leaning against the counter, walking while eating or driving. And research indicates that if we sit at a table that helps us to be much more aware of how much we're eating, but we enjoy our food more because it's just to us and we focused on it. And so my motto is always to eat out of your feet. There was also another research study that looked at people walking against sat, and ate 5% more walked and distracted. So sitting at a table is really important. Deanna Pogorelc: Is this the first step? Dr. Susan Albers: The first step. Deanna Pogorelc: Okay. Dr. Susan Albers: The second is to chew slowly. And again, it sounds easy, but we're heavily influenced by the people around us. There was a study that looked at people eating with strangers and chewing in tandem at the same rate with the people they ate with. So, if you have a family that eats very, very quickly, chances are you'll eat quickly as well. Then sit down when you eat and set your own pace at the beginning. My motto is please don't run. Encourage yourself to chew slowly. And this can be really, as I said, very challenging to do. Deanna Pogorelc: There's like a magic number or just... Dr. Susan Albers: The research said it's 22 years old, but I say it's very intentional in slowing down when you eat. We have this hasty person syndrome where we constantly say, Hurry, let's go. With ourselves and the children constantly running through things. So, it can be a real challenge. Deanna Pogorelc: Okay. Was that the second S? Dr. Susan Albers: This is the second. Deanna Pogorelc: Okay. Dr. Susan Albers: The third S is to savor your food. Now, research indicates that the first bite is actually the tastiest because as we continue to eat, we become accustomed to the taste of food. And so the first bite is really the most important. If there's one thing you do, that first bite, you really ask yourself, Do I really like it? And we eat a lot of my mediocre foods. So if you like it, go on. In case of no, maybe it's a food to skip. And then he really likes it and savors it. Because we can eat a whole plate of food and not taste a single bite. Deanna Pogorelc: Yes. Oh, is that the third S? Dr. Susan Albers: Yes. The fourth S is to simplify your environment. Our environment can really push us towards conscious eating or mindless food that surrounds us because we will often pass in front of food and collect it senselessly. One of the things I encourage people to do is take a tour of their desk or kitchen and look around to see what food is out and available. Studies show that people who have a bowl of fruit outside and available actually weigh less, have a lower BMI than people who have soda and cereals sitting on the counter. Then take a look around and see what's available. Dr. Susan Albers: At my house, what I love to do is have a bowl right next to the door, to the exit, and it's full of healthy snacks. Things like mandarin oranges, nuts and everyone who leaves the house, stops at the bowl, picks up something, puts it in their pockets so they have it available and help them avoid stopping at fast food or going to the vending machine. If we have we have at hand, we know we should have a snack, but he just remembers to bring one with us. Deanna Pogorelc: Sure. Oh. And then the last S. Dr. Susan Albers: The last S is my favorite. It's smiling between bites. That smile, you can take a break between each bite to ask yourself, Am I really satisfied? Can I stop here? Because we often eat the whole dish before we even take a break or a breath. So smiling between bites can help you take the break, but the second advantage is that when we smile, it releases to our brain serotonin. And that helps us reduce emotional nutrition because as we smile, we feel good, and so we'll make less emotional eating overall. Deanna Pogorelc: Wow. Oh. You talked about quite a bit of research when you went through your five S's. There was a lot of research done on conscious eating. It's not just this kind of concept that's hoity-toity or isn't really supported by research. Dr. Susan Albers: Absolutely. And I think it's a myth. It's just that we think it's just a concept out there. In fact, there was a recent study that looked at over 68 different published studies to examine the overall benefit of conscious nutrition. What they found is that it is very useful to reduce binge eating. It is also useful to reduce emotional nutrition and they found a more modest success with weight loss. However, and I know that sometimes people say, Oh, no. But what I've found with my patients and also in these studies is that it's slow and consistent. So, unlike some drastic diets that will show rapid weight loss, these studies show very slow but constant over time. Dr. Susan Albers: Probably one of my favorite studies looked at people who went into their population [imperceptible 00:12:22], or people who went to restaurants on a routine basis and taught them conscious eating skills. Not what to eat, but some of these different habits around food. And they found that just by learning to interact and be more aware and aware of what they eat, they ate 300 fewer calories a day. And so they didn't change what they eat, they just changed the way they ate. Dr. Susan Albers: Research overall shows many benefits, and what I particularly love working with patients is that over the years I've seen that fashion diets are one of the biggest triggers for eating disorders and also for disordered eating. So someone can have a great relationship with food, and then they try a diet that asks them to limit a certain food, and forever after that there's this little war shot that has emotionally with a specific food, let's just say sugar for example. And so it causes a to eat disorderly. Dr. Susan Albers: And so what I love about conscious eating is that it's for everyone. Everyone can benefit from it. And whatever style of eating you have, you have, you have a specific diet that you need to follow if you are vegetarian or gluten-free, you can bring those awareness skills. And it's not triggering any kind of messy eating. This is what I love and appreciate as a psychologist working with people struggling for food. I want something they can do in the long run that doesn't create any more problems in their lives. Deanna Pogorelc: How does anyone know they're a conscious eater? I mean, how do they know they've reached that really healthy place? Dr. Susan Albers: Well, I think what I like is that I think one of the myths is that it takes a long time. That we must have a long period of time to sit and eat consciously and close our eyes, which is not the case at all. I mean, sometimes it's just a simple change of mind to be the moment you sit down and eat and be very present. So I like it's something that doesn't take much time. Dr. Susan Albers: And what I've noticed is that when people know they've become more aware eaters, they're going to catch up right now. They're going to say things while they eat. They'll say, Wait, I don't eat consciously. Or before they eat, they'll have something they love and crave and say, I'll eat this piece of chocolate in a really conscious way. And they sit down and eat it slowly and taste it. Then you know they turned this corner. At first it takes a conscious effort and practice, but once you understand, it becomes very easy and routine. Deanna Pogorelc: Does the concept of conscious eating also address one of these other factors that contribute to lifestyle to perhaps bad eating habits like stress or not getting enough sleep? Is that part of it? Dr. Susan Albers: Absolutely. When someone comes into my office, often before we even talk about food, what they eat, what they don't eat, we'll make an overall assessment of their lifestyle. And the number one thing I find is that people are often very stressed, very stressed, and that stress arises. So we don't even touch talking about their eating until we face their stress level. This is a huge factor. Because if you think about it, again, cortisol, when you feel stressed, pumps through your body. And this is really interacting with your appetite, your cravings, and so once you get that level of stress down, it makes it a lot easier. So if you're someone who's really stressed, deal with stress first. Dr. Susan Albers: Sleep is also, I'd say number two. That when you're not sleeping enough that significantly affects appetite hormones. And the research is very interesting. They have done many different studies on different hours in which they slept. There was a recent study that looked at the people who got hours of sleep versus eight, and people who slept four hours of sleep actually ate nearly 500 extra calories the next day. People report having a higher appetite and just that you know, when we're tired, we don't make big decisions about food. We're not that thoughtful about it and we just say, Oh, whatever, whatever. So sleep, I would say give priority to this too, do a lot to help you be a more conscious eater. And that doesn't even change your eating habits. It's just being more aware of when you go to bed. Deanna Pogorelc: Right. If someone is struggling with these issues, when it's the right time to ask for help and to come to a pro and say, I could really use some help with this. Dr. Susan Albers: We all eat a little emotionally and it's perfectly normal. We all do. We all have a bad day and we need some chocolate. All right. When it becomes a problem it's when it's a pattern that we see happening over and over again. Or if food is your only way to deal with it. That whenever you feel stressed or have a bad day, this is the only thing you turn to. And then the third thing is if it's affecting the way your life works in some way. So, if it is affecting your sleep, weight or health, that your eating is somehow interrupting or causing unhappiness or distress, then this is really some time to get additional help and you have tried other things. Maybe you've tried some self-help books or tried other strategies and they just don't seem to work. This when reaching a professional can be really useful. They can only help you give yourself new strategies and look at it from a different perspective. Deanna Pogorelc: Okay. Is there anything else you want to share with our listeners about conscious eating? Any more tips? Your five S's work great. Is there anything else? Dr. Susan Albers: Well, like I said, there's a lot of stuff inside. Our psychology affects how we eat in many different ways. One of my other favorite tips is to eat out of a red dish. Since red is a color that when we approach it, we automatically slow down because our minds are coded when we see the red color stop or slow down. When we see a stop signal, we automatically slow down, we don't have to think about it. So eating out of a red plate can be one of those subconscious things that help slow us down. Dr. Susan Albers: My other favorite tip is to eat with your non-dominant hand. So I'm right-handed, putting my fork in my left hand, the study showed that it can reduce the speed of what you eat by about the And you can imagine, it's weird to eat with your left hand, but it also helps you to be more aware and slow down. Also, using the fork to flip and drill instead of collecting. This is another thing that can help you slow down So conscious eating has many of these different ways of interacting with food that shake you from your daily routines because we get invitations that we're not even really aware of. And when we start looking and observing our behaviors, I think it makes a big difference. Deanna Pogorelc: What about cravings? At 3:00, I have that desire for chocolate. What can we do to overcome these? Dr. Susan Albers: Well, yes, and we all have cravings. We all have some foods we love. What I accompany people is what I call the three D's. So the first is to delay. You feel like, take a break for a moment. We often think he wants to talk late and we just make a line for that chocolate. One-moment delay. Ask yourself: Do I really want chocolate or do I feel something else? The second D is distracting. Get distracted for a while and see if this desire passes. And then the third D is to decide. If you still want that chocolate, that's fine. Get what you really want and then eat it carefully. Take that chocolate, sit down, taste it, eat it, but you could choose something else. I mean, you could say, okay, well, that's not really what's going on. I feel stressed. I feel bored. And doing something else could make that wish pass. But it's okay to give in to that desire sometimes as long as you do it consciously. Deanna Pogorelc: Conscious way. Just a piece of chocolate instead of everything. Dr. Susan Albers: Right. And you know, actually that amazes me about that, too. We think a lot of chocolate is what will make us happy. And I do a lot of workshops on conscious eating and I use chocolate, the raisins used traditionally, but I don't use them in my labs because people don't really struggle with raisins. They don't wake up in the morning and say, No raisins for me today. They say it around chocolate. Dr. Susan Albers: What we do is we eat a piece of chocolate consciously, and you'd be amazed at how often people are surprised by the experience because we often think about the next piece of chocolate before we finish what we have. The next one will make me happy. The next one will make me satisfied. And when they slow down and eat that one piece, they're often surprised at how satisfying it can be, but also tasting it. We listen and no longer taste our food. So I would encourage people to exercise chocolate, to eat that piece of chocolate consciously. Deanna Pogorelc: Okay, great. Well, that was wonderful advice. Thank you very much, Dr. Albers. If you want to make an appointment with the Cleveland Clinic's Center for Behavioral Health, visit [clevelandclinic.org](http://clevelandclinic.org) or call (216) 636-5860. And to listen to more podcasts with our Cleveland Clinic experts, visit or sign up wherever you have Podcast. For more health tips, news, and information, follow @ClevelandClinic, and that's all a word, on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Thank you. You.