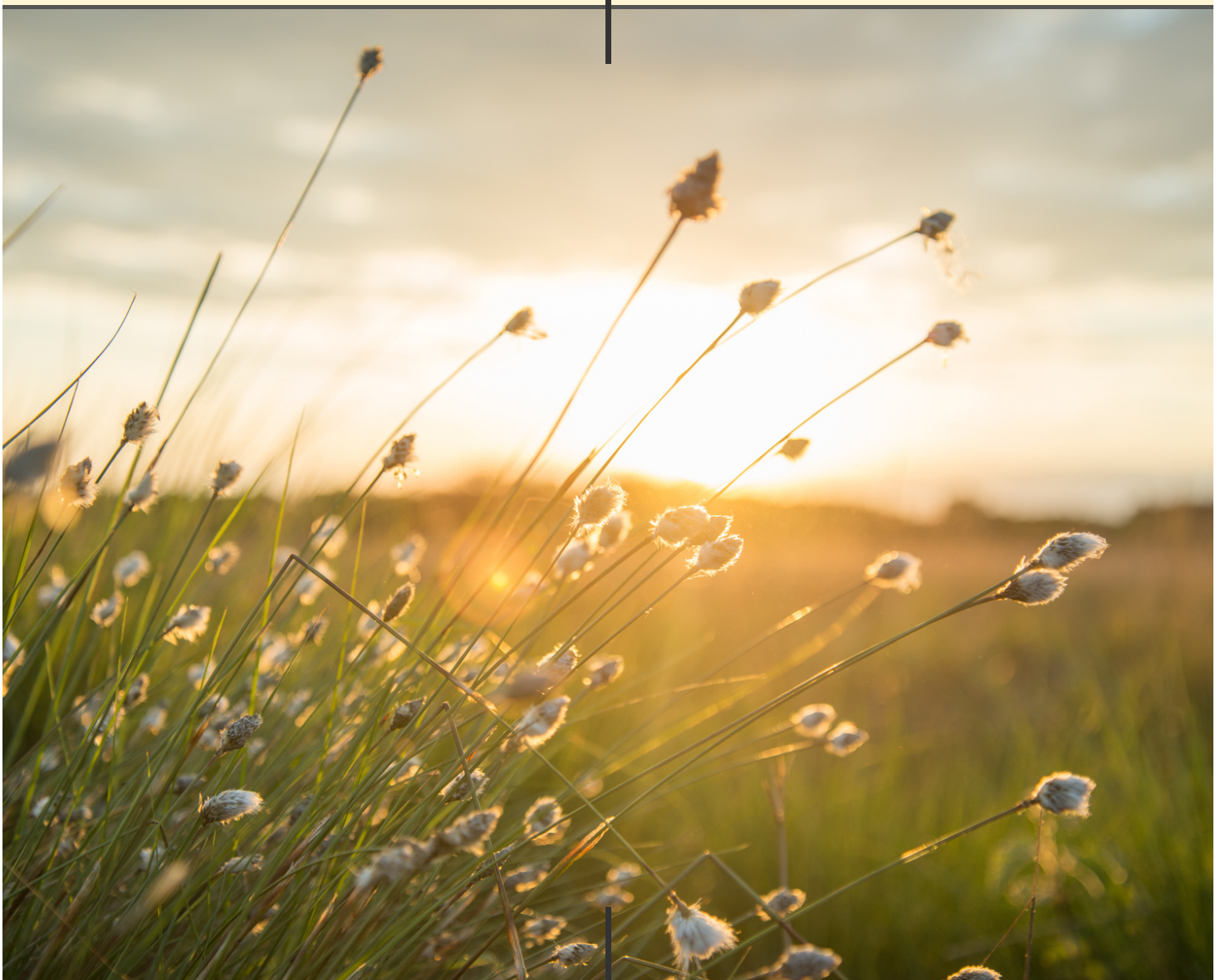


3 SELF CARE TIPS YOU DIDN'T
KNOW YOU NEEDED TO

HEAL YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

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Hi! I'm Nicolette

I'm a private health coach and mentor, yoga lover, cloud gazer, intuitive and a nonchalant foodie who loves to eat but would rather read than cook on most days. I'm happy to connect with you! I know how difficult it can be to navigate your relationship with food, struggle with diet mentality, emotional eating, negative body image and feel frustrated with unhealthy habits... I've been there. At one point I wavered in between not caring what I ate and eating anything I wanted without much discernment to obsession and scrutinizing everything I ate, restricting and over exercising. It was exhausting and I knew, deep down inside, that seeking distraction or control through food and exercise was not the answer.

Fortunately, healing can be simpler, easier and more enjoyable than you think. It's not even about the food. **Healing our relationship with food directly responds to how we show up for ourselves and the evolution of our self-care practice.** Self-care is not simply about taking baths, working out, massages or getting pedicures. Those things are great, but not transformational. Our Inner Universe can be in turmoil even when we do those things, "eat healthy" and exercise daily because diet mentality and disordered eating steals our peace if we avoid addressing it.

The transformational self care practices in this guide help us to release stuck energy and heal our relationship with ourselves. **True, impactful self-care is deeply empowering and nourishes our soul.** I have witnessed amazing transformations with my clients who learned how to really care for themselves - mind, body and soul. True self-care can unwind disempowering or unhealthy habits and heal our relationship with ourselves, which is undoubtedly, reflected in our relationship with food.

My hope is that women everywhere implement transformational self-care practices that will invoke profound healing, peace and empowerment. This guide is just the beginning! My education and training is in Psychology, Integrative Health and Healing, Mind/Body/Eating, Eating Disorder Intuitive Therapy, Plant Based Nutrition, Shamanism, trauma, neuroscience, sociology, meditation and much more. I'm always learning!

TIP #1

Create boundaries in communication.

Communication is one of the most important parts of our lives and it will profoundly influence our thoughts, emotions and overall well-being. When we have harmful conversations with others, it affects the way we think, feel and behave. For example, if someone continually uses hurtful words, name calls or speaks to us in derogatory ways, we will naturally react and experience lower-vibration emotions or feelings such as fear, sadness, anger, frustration, etc. There is nothing wrong with these emotions as they reflect an internal compass that is meant to guide us, yet they feel stressful, heavy and painful. When we continually allow mistreatment, we become physically accustomed to the chemical composition of the stress hormones. Hence, people getting “addicted” to stress and drama. Our true nature is more closely aligned with higher-vibration emotions like joy, peace and love. These states feel light, effortless and pleasurable, when sincere.

If communication with others is continually unproductive or destructive, it can be very challenging to navigate and process the compounding emotions, which leads to emotional reactivity or suppressing our feelings. Both of which will accumulate and make us feel worse over time while impacting our health in many ways. Humans are wired to seek pleasure and avoid pain, so understandably, we might try to distract ourselves or deny our discomfort and focus on food or our body in order to feel more in control.

It is important to not shy away from having difficult or uncomfortable conversations. If we continually avoid talking about topics that are important or necessary to discuss, it creates internal disconnection because we withhold honoring our truth. This pattern also creates disconnection with others because we are not showing up authentically. It's important to acknowledge our limits, take breaks if necessary, speak with kindness and respect to others while requesting the same. Consistently letting others know your boundaries by saying, "I would be happy to continue the conversation, as long as it is kind and respectful without yelling, name calling, insults, etc." or "I don't feel that this conversation is helpful right now, so I will stop, but I am open to continue at another time when we can calmly express and share our viewpoints."

Ultimately, if someone treats you poorly, it's a reflection of their inner turmoil and how they feel about themselves. It's not your job to make excuses for them. **Your job is to show up in a way that allows you to feel good about yourself while upholding your boundaries for healthier communication going forward.** The more we honor our boundaries, the less we will seek comfort from food or try to control what we eat.

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TIP #2

Shift your focus.

We can practice transformational self-care by managing our negative thoughts through redirecting our focus. Our brain naturally tends to focus on or respond to negative experiences, more so than positive ones. This is part of our human psychology and our survival instinct that keeps us safe when there are ambiguous situations. However, this tendency can also cause us to repeatedly revisit negative thoughts to our own detriment. We are continually experiencing and responding to our thoughts, whether they are negative or positive. As a result, our thoughts create emotions, which contribute to behaviors, which create experiences and the cycle continues. What we focus on will affect our lives, our relationship with ourselves, others and our relationship with food. Focusing on worries and negativity depletes our energy and lowers our vibration. We can then get accustomed to feeling low, stuck, heavy or pessimistic. Eventually, we begin to identify with these states and believe that it's 'just who we are' while simultaneously trying to escape those feelings. Our core being is heartfelt, light, expansive, peaceful and joyful, and whenever we are out of alignment with these states, we feel pain or discomfort.

We are in alignment with our hearts nature when we feel good! Fortunately, we can shift our vibration to a higher level by intentionally cultivating emotions such as gratitude, compassion, appreciation or love. (It's important to practice sincerity and not to bypass our truth. We do this by being honest and gentle with ourselves, moment by moment.) This practice will shift the energy of our body, which in turn, will influence our thoughts to become higher "vibe" and more positive, which will then influence our emotions, behaviors and life experiences. **The more we practice shifting our focus and emotions, the easier it becomes & over time will create a new default of sincere peacefulness.**

When you become aware that you are thinking negatively, that means you have become present as opposed to focusing on past or worrying about the future. First, praise yourself because presence is the only way to truly change any habit. Next, recall a favorite memory that makes you feel good. It can be from a special occasion, an experience with a loved one or a fun vacation. When you consciously use your mind and **allow your body to really feel the joy from that memory**, your body doesn't realize that it was in the past. You will give yourself the gift of feel-good hormones that also influence your thoughts. Those emotions will transform the low energy in your body and you will begin to feel better and think more positively. Now, take a few deep breaths and look for another perspective that feels better for you, even if it's a situation that is completely out of your control. Repeat as often as necessary and even designate a little box where you can add photos or items that will help you to shift your focus and energy when needed. Over time, this tip helps you to increase your energy to make necessary changes of the things in your life that do not serve you.

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TIP #3

Sit in silence.

Sitting in silence for periods of time can help us in tremendous ways. Taking breaks from screens and disconnecting from electronics in order to connect with ourselves is essential for our overall well-being and healing. Overusing technology has become normalized, however, it is a distraction from our inner world since our attention goes to the screen instead of what is happening within.

Often, we use technology and other distractions, like eating, because we don't like the way we feel in stillness, without background noise, or we don't want to "listen" to our mental chatter. **Yet, the only way to truly feel better is to allow, honor and release those feelings.** This will help us to stop numbing out the discomfort through food, television, social media, video games, apps or even addictions. The more we observe ourselves, in the present moment, the more we become conscious of our feelings, thought patterns and beliefs; and this empowers us to change. We can only heal what we can feel. Increasing self-awareness makes it easier to redirect our attention, break unhealthy habits and influence our emotions. This leads to feeling more peaceful, confident and appreciative of ourselves as we learn to witness our thoughts and release the ones that don't serve us.

All emotions are felt as body sensations and we can learn to observe them instead of automatically reacting to them. What do the sensations feel like? Where are they? Do you feel a tightness, tingling, heat, or tension in your shoulders, chest or stomach? Simply sit, notice and breathe into the sensations. Beginning with three minutes at a time, comfortably sit with your eyes closed, or a soft gaze and just be. Become a gentle observer or a nonjudgmental witness to any thoughts or feelings that arise. Bring your attention to your breath to calm the mind. If you slow down your breath, you can slow down your mind. Breathe in to a count of 3, hold for 1 & exhale for 3.

When we feel discomfort, it's often because there are old feelings and emotions that need to be acknowledged and/or released. You can do this by placing your hand on your heart, taking three deep breaths and saying "You are safe. I see you and I am here with you now." Often the discomfort will lessen within one to two minutes. Repeat as often as needed. Add a minute or two, at a time, until you can comfortably sit for 20 to 30 minutes. This is how we can increase our self-awareness while decreasing reactivity and impulsivity. Observing ourselves strengthens the mindful muscle needed to become more present, connect to our inner wisdom (intuition) and make decisions for our highest good. **Witnessing, processing and releasing emotions is essential for peace in our daily lives, and that will be reflected in our relationship with food.**

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What does presence, increasing our vibration and cultivating boundaries, have to do with our relationship with food? Everything. Our relationship with ourselves as a mind, body and soul is reflected in our relationship with food. How we relate to food is how we relate to ourselves. Notice how these tips intertwine. It's really about who we are showing up as when we sit down to eat. The more you practice true self-care, the more you are nourishing your soul. When we balance mind, body and spirit, food will take its rightful place.

I hope you found this information helpful. So often we think that there's no hope or that healing our relationship with food will be so difficult. It doesn't have to be! Begin each day with an intention to practice and increase your true self-care and you are going to notice and love the shifts!

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