

**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 mentor, yoga lover, cloud gazer, intuitive and a nonchalant foodie who loves to eat but would rather read than cook on most days. It's nice to meet 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. For many years, I wavered in between indifference and eating anything I wanted without consideration 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 corresponds with the evolution of our self-care practice.** Self-care is not just about taking baths, working out or getting pedicures. Those things are great, but they are not transformational. Diet mentality and disordered eating can steal your peace even while doing all of those things consistently.

True, impactful self-care is deeply empowering and nourishes your 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 disordered eating 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, meditation and more. I'm always learning!

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TIP #1

Create boundaries in communication.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of our lives and it will 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. Our vibration is the rate at which energy moves on a spectrum. Lower-vibration emotions feel difficult, heavy and painful, while higher-vibration emotions feel light, effortless and pleasurable.

If communication with others is continually unproductive or destructive, it can be very challenging to navigate and process the feelings and emotions, which can lead to emotional reactivity or suppressing our feelings. Both of which will accumulate and make us feel worse over time. Humans are wired to seek pleasure and avoid pain, so understandably, we might turn to food more frequently in order to feel better.

With so many polarizing and controversial topics, especially nowadays, 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 disconnection within because we are not honoring our truth and that creates disconnection with others because we are not showing up authentically. Yet, 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 would like to continue at another time when we can calmly express our viewpoints.

Ultimately, if someone treats you poorly, it's a reflection of their vibration 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.

Another powerful way to practice self-care is to manage our negative thoughts. Our brain 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. 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 the negative depletes our energy and lowers our vibration. We can get accustomed to feeling low, stuck, heavy or pessimistic. Then, 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 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 truest nature when we feel good! Fortunately, we can learn to shift our vibration to a higher level by intentionally cultivating emotions such as gratitude, wonder, appreciation or love. This practice shifts 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 and the more it benefits our mind, body and soul.**

When you become aware that you are thinking negatively, that means you have become present as opposed to focusing on past or future happenings. First, praise yourself for becoming mindful because presence is the only way to truly change any habit. Next, look for another perspective that feels better for you, especially if it's a situation that is completely out of your control. Or, recall a favorite memory that you reserve for when you want to raise your vibration. It can be from a special occasion, a memory with a loved one or a fun experience. When you consciously use your mind to recall and **encourage your body to feel the joy** in that memory, your body doesn't realize that it was in the past. Those emotions will transform the low energy in your body and you will begin to feel better and think more positively. 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.

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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 by using 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. Increased 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.

Beginning with three minutes at a time, comfortably sit with your eyes closed 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. The slower your breath, the slower your mind. 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. If it feels uncomfortable, 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 your vibration and cultivating boundaries, have to do with your relationship with food? Everything. Our relationship with ourselves as a mind, body and soul is reflected in our relationship with food. 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 hard. 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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