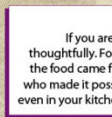


Turning Meals into Meditation

Follow this **ten-step plan** for mindful eating when you are feeling stressed about food and unable to cope with cravings.



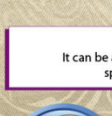
Step 1: Become aware.
Are you really hungry? What else might you be craving or facing that is making you turn to food?



Step 2: Prep with care.
If you are hungry, prepare your meal or snack thoughtfully. Focus on your many blessings—where the food came from, the plants, animals, and people who made it possible, how God is moving in your life, even in your kitchen, your office, or your grocery store.



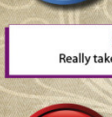
Step 3: Sit down to eat.
Never eat standing up, on the go, or at the counter. It makes you feel like the food doesn't count. Sit down at a table, preferably in an uncluttered space with a real plate and some modicum of peace; make the food center stage.



Step 4: Say a blessing.
It can be a traditional grace before meals or a spontaneous expression of gratitude.



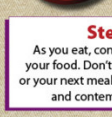
Step 5: Look at your food.
Decide whether you are okay with this food "becoming you."



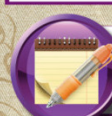
Step 6: Smell your food.
Really take in the aroma of what's before you.



Step 7: Eat slowly.
One bite at a time. Don't take the next bite until the one you have in your mouth is completely gone. Chew slowly and carefully.



Step 8: Focus on your food.
As you eat, concentrate on the taste and texture of your food. Don't let your mind skip ahead to dessert or your next meal or your latest work project. Just eat and contemplate this one action with intensity.



Step 9: Jot it down.
In your food/prayer journal, write down when and what you're eating. Note any extenuating circumstances or problems that may have prompted you to eat when you might not be hungry.



Step 10: Finish the way you started.
When you are done eating, clean up with the same care you used in preparing your meal or snack. Make it one seamless, prayerful action.

General Rule: Become a planner.
If you begin to plan out your menus, meals, snacks, and trips to the grocery store with these steps in mind, you will automatically lean toward healthier options.



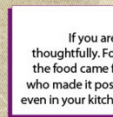
Based on *Cravings: A Catholic Wrestles with Food, Self-Image, and God* by Mary DeTurrís Poust
Find out more at www.avemariapress.com/cravings

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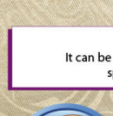
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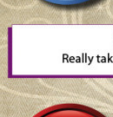
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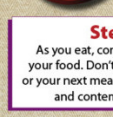
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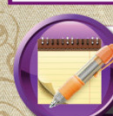
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