



# 6 STEPS TO INTUITIVE EATING

HOW I BANISHED MY BINGE EATING  
HABITS FOR GOOD

# *Dear Reader,*

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# OH, HI!

Thank you for downloading my 6-Step Guide to Becoming an Intuitive Eater! If you're reading this right now, you might be struggling with yo-yo dieting, binge eating, or an unhealthy relationship with food. Trust me, I can relate. I used to be stuck in an endless cycle of guilt and shame where food was concerned, and it wasn't until a few years ago that I finally was able to break free of my disordered eating once and for all.

In fact, I put this simple guide together based on the actual steps I took to heal my relationship with food, which is how I know that they work. It's definitely a process, however, and not necessarily an easy one. Lasting change may not happen overnight, but by implementing these six tactics, you'll slowly learn how to retrain your brain and body to eat mindfully, without restriction or fear.

No matter where you are in your health journey, be proud of yourself for committing to your health and taking this leap in the right direction. You can do this!



*"Let the beauty of  
what you love be  
what you do."*

*- Rumi*

# BEFORE WE DIVE IN...

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Please keep in mind that I am a Nutritional Therapy Consultant, not a licensed medical doctor and make no claims to the contrary. Each individual's dietary needs and restrictions are unique to the individual. You are ultimately responsible for all decisions pertaining to your health, but I am happy to guide you in how to feel your best, emotionally and physically, through nutrition and lifestyle advice.

In my 6 Steps to Intuitive Eating, you will be given the tools to:

- **Get to the root of your diet mentality and retrain your brain to disassociate certain foods with guilt or shame**
- **Mindfully incorporate all of the foods you love—yes, including dessert!—into your regular routine without feeling the urge to binge or restrict**
- **Embrace your body's natural hunger cues and signals, and begin eating according to your appetite for proper nourishment**
- **Break your fear-based obsession with food and go about your life with ease and freedom**

This guide also includes three printable sheets: 1) a simplified checklist to keep up with your progress, 2) a short questionnaire for tuning in to your emotional state whenever you feel the urge to binge, and 3) a food & mood journal for smooth transitioning.



0 1

## DITCH THE CALORIE COUNTING


I know this first step might be a challenge for some of you, because it definitely was for me; I remember just how dependent I was on my FitnessPal app to tell me exactly how many calories I had consumed for the day, and how many I needed to burn to maintain my weight. (I was even the girl who could recite the calorie count of my go-to foods by heart!) But here's the hard truth that I was eventually confronted with: calorie/macro/point counting (yes, Weight Watchers, I'm looking at you) has no place in intuitive eating—at least, not at this stage—because it only *perpetuates* the unhealthy and obsessive eating patterns that we are trying to break free of!

If you're terrified of gaining weight without your tracker, let this sink in: the quantity of calories you consume on a daily basis doesn't matter *nearly* as much as the quality of those calories. (But we'll get into that later.) For now, do your best to ditch the calorie counting and instead learn to trust your body's innate signals to tell you when to eat and how much.



## 0 1

If you've been on and off different diets for years, these hunger and fullness cues might not be so apparent right away, so you'll probably need to give your body some time—and yourself some grace—to get back into a natural rhythm. But don't worry. Soon enough, you'll settle in to your new (and less robotic) routine of eating when you're hungry and stopping when you're full, as we are meant to do.



Not ready to completely let go just yet? Feel free to keep a food journal\* for the time being, but use it for tracking foods and moods only—no numbers, please! Food journaling actually really helped me to stay sane while smoothly making the transition from calorie counter to intuitive eater, and it might help you to do the same.

\*Scroll to Page 25 for your very own printable food and mood journal!



0 2

## PLAN OUT YOUR MEALS—AND ENJOY THEM MINDFULLY

A lot of people are confused by the concept of “intuitive eating,” because they think it means simply eating whatever you want whenever you want. And to an extent, it does. *But then,* they’ll ask, *how do you keep from constantly stuffing your face with junk food?* The answer is simple: intuitive eaters eat whatever they want whenever they want, *mindfully*. Did you catch that last bit? **Mindfulness is what sets intuitive eaters apart from compulsive eaters.** But it can be an elusive concept, which is why I want to explain what “mindful eating” really looks like—or, at least, what it looks like for me.

For starters, mindful eaters tend to: 1) pay attention to the foods they eat and how those foods make them feel; 2) make mealtimes a sit-down event, rather than eating on the run; 3) eat slowly and attentively, savoring each bite before they move on to the next; 4) stop when they’ve reached satiety/satisfaction, regardless of whether there’s food still left on their plate.





## 0 2

Unfortunately, we live in a society that encourages the daily “hustle” and a go-go-go mentality, which makes it harder for most of us to justify slowing down and taking a breath. When you have a full-time job, a family to take care of, errands to run, and people to tend to, it can seem impossible to prepare and prioritize balanced meals that you can actually savor instead of scarfing down at your desk. But the best way I’ve found to begin incorporating mindfulness into my eating routine is to **plan out a week’s worth of meals and snacks before the chaos takes hold**. For me, Sunday is a great time to do this, but any day that you have a few hours to devote to meal planning and prepping will work just fine.

You might be wondering, *why is planning so crucial if I can eat whatever and whenever I want?* I wondered the same thing when I began my own intuitive eating journey, as I am not a natural-born planner, and would prefer to “wing it” instead. But as long as I failed to plan in the beginning stages, I failed to get a handle on my binge eating disorder. Now I know why: **The key to preventing overeating is to never let yourself get too hungry**, and with a fridge full of satisfying options, you won’t have to worry about losing control at any given moment.

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a bowl of coffee on a white tablecloth.

## 0 2

And *I know*, the process of picking out recipes, running to the grocery store for ingredients, and then batch chopping/preparing said ingredients all in one afternoon can be a bit daunting, especially during your precious time off—but I promise you, having yummy meals and satiating snacks at the ready during the week will make staying nourished a breeze, and mindfulness a heck of a lot easier. If you need some inspiration or ideas, check out my Pinterest page for my favorite healthy recipes, or use a trusty meal-planning app like [RealPlans.com](https://www.RealPlans.com) to make it a cinch.

Of course, life is not perfect and we're not always going to be present at every meal, eat what makes us feel the best, or stop when we're full. And that's completely okay! It's important to leave room for flexibility in every aspect of our lives, including our mealtimes—which means saying yes to your coworker when they want to take you out for lunch, or treating your significant other to a spontaneous ice cream run in the heat of summer. Life is about balance, and rigidity won't bring you any closer to your goals.



03

## CHANGE YOUR VOCABULARY AROUND FOOD

*I can't believe I ate that entire piece of chocolate cake—I'm so bad!  
These cheese fries are a heart attack waiting to happen.  
I'm going to cheat and have the brownie... I can start my diet tomorrow.  
This burger is exactly what I was craving, but working this off in the gym is going to suck.*

Sound familiar? I don't know about you, but these exact phrases (and others like them) have come out of my mouth more times than I can count in the last 5 years. Even after embracing intuitive eating and supposedly healing my relationship with food, I would still catch myself every now and again using inflammatory statements and phrases to describe my food choices. Newsflash: **If you're thinking of food in moral terms and labeling them as "good" or "bad," you're not operating from a place of freedom.** In fact, using words like "cheat," "sinful," or even "indulge," around food creates a negative connotation that automatically triggers feelings of guilt, shame, and stress—even if you say it with a smile on your face.

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a bowl of coffee on a white tablecloth.

## 03

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself, why do I give something as unremarkable as food so much weight? And since when did "breaking bread" become more burdensome than pleasurable?

It sounds like common sense, but I had to retrain my brain to accept the fact that **foods are not inherently negative or positive**. Food is just food, meant to nourish our bodies and provide energy for the activities and tasks in life that are actually worth expending energy on. Until you start speaking and thinking about food in terms of sustenance rather than calories/fat/carbs, you won't truly be able to heal from the inside out.

That said, as you learn to listen to your body and slowly start discovering how certain foods make you feel, you might decide that a certain food or group of foods just don't work for your body. (Perhaps they give you indigestion, or make you break out in acne.) This doesn't make the food bad, per se, but it may not be the best choice for you *at this time*. Based on that knowledge, you can decide for yourself if/when it's worth eating—without putting a permanent warning label on it.

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a cup of coffee on a white tablecloth.

0 4

## HONOR YOUR CRAVINGS (AND EAT THE DAMN CAKE)

Remember earlier when I said that quality of calories matters so much more to your health than quantity? I can't stress how true that statement is. Health is not defined by a simple formula of calories in-calories out, because if it was, *what you ate* wouldn't make much of a difference in your health, and calorie-restrictive diets might actually work long-term.

But most of have lived long enough to figure out that 100 calories of fruit loops does not have the same effects on our biology as 100 calories of broccoli. That's because of a little thing I like to call nutrient-density! Our bodies can utilize nutrient-dense foods for so many different processes and functions, making them a much better option for our physical health than the "empty" calories that come in highly processed food items. Take it from Aristotle, who said, "Let food be thy medicine," a sentiment that still holds true today—if you're consuming real, whole foods from nature.

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a cup of coffee on a white tablecloth.

## 0 4

Okay, I might be preaching to the choir here. I'm sure you know the difference between fruit loops and broccoli, and why broccoli is the so-called "healthier" choice. But this step is all about learning how to **put that knowledge aside for the sake of something even more important: your mental health.**

Yep, I'm sure you saw this coming from the step title—and yes, I know that for some of you, it's going to be rreeeeaaalllll tough. (It was for me!) And for others, this may be the permission you've been looking for to eat exactly what appeals to you. Either way, I'm asking you to revert back to a time before society took to demonizing certain food groups and start welcoming those food groups back into your diet again. Whatever "treats" you absolutely love but normally won't let yourself have—whether it's pastries, ice cream, bread, butter, or cheese—are perfectly fine for you to eat, starting now. This means that *nothing* is off limits\*, not even those "empty" calories.

\*Obviously, I'm not talking about food allergies or intolerances here. Please use your best judgment and stay away from the foods that make you physically ill!

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a cup of coffee on a white tablecloth.

## 0 4

You may think I'm flat-out crazy now, but let me walk you through the psychology behind this step—and why it keeps the temptation to binge eat at bay. When we tell ourselves that we can only have certain foods on special occasions, or not at all, our cravings for those foods only intensify! Even if we strengthen our willpower over time and get to a point where nothing seems to phase us, there will eventually come a day (whether because of emotions, stress, or actual starvation) when our willpower will not hold up... And that period of depriving ourselves will blow up in our faces in the form of a full-blown binge-eating episode. (Cue the self-loathing.)

This sad sequence of events has occurred in my past numerous times, and I bet you've experienced it, too. The false sense of security and even smug superiority complex we get for bypassing the dessert table at a social event or turning down pizza night with our friends fools us into thinking that we've got everything under control—until BAM, the irresistible impulse to ransack a gas station snack aisle ambushes us at 12am on a random Tuesday and leaves us wondering what the hell just happened. The struggle is real, y'all. **And it's most often a result of chronic deprivation.**

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a cup of coffee on a white tablecloth.

## 0 4

I'll let you in on the secret that weight loss companies and diet marketers don't want you to know: your battle with compulsive eating says nothing about your strength or willpower, but it says *everything* about how we're wired as humans. **And we're wired to desire what tastes good.** So much so, that if we consistently deny ourselves of deliciousness, it becomes physically impossible to not lose our cool when we finally let ourselves have it.

As a holistic nutritionist who believes in eating in accordance with our biology (think: whole, unprocessed, nutrient-dense foods), I understand how incorporating into your daily diet those "special occasion" foods you try so hard on a daily basis to avoid might go against everything you've learned about healthy eating in the past. But believe me when I say: by making them a part of your normal everyday routine, little by little, you will strip them of their hold over you, and make their presence in your life—and on your plate—*no big deal*.



A stem of baby's breath flowers with small white blossoms is positioned at the top left. Below it, a black rectangular redaction box covers part of the page. The background is a white, wrinkled tablecloth. In the bottom left corner, a white bowl with a dark rim contains a frothy, brown beverage, likely coffee. The page number '04' is centered in the upper half of the page.

## 04

Sooner than you think, the fear and stress you've mentally attached to popular comfort foods like pasta, pizza, burgers, fries, and sweets will slowly start to unravel, because you'll finally be able to honor your cravings without losing control. But like everything else, it starts with a mindset change.

A common question that comes up when I advise clients to freely consume the foods on their Off Limits List has to do with "trigger foods" and what to do about them. If someone has told you that the key to overcoming compulsive eating is to nail down your trigger foods (or those foods that typically cause you to overeat/binge) and avoid them like the plague, I'm going to rock the boat here: don't pay that advice any mind. Has it worked for you so far? It didn't work for me, and unless you're prepared to eliminate a specific type of food (or foods) from your life forever, much like dieting, it's not a long-term solution. **Trigger foods are triggers for the simple reason that we've given them that power over us—so do yourself a favor, and take it back.**

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a cup of coffee on a white tablecloth.

## 0 4

If you're on the fence about this step, or just really nervous about what will happen if you do let go of all your preconceived notions surrounding health and food, I'll say one more thing. **Health is so much more than physical.** Health is mental, emotional, and spiritual, too—and you can't reach optimal health without prioritizing all four. Which is why I choose to see my favorite foods, in all of their soothing deliciousness, as *good for the soul*, and nourishment for my emotional health. (There's seriously nothing I love more than diving into a juicy cheeseburger paired with a vanilla milkshake.)

Still not convinced? Start small by incorporating just one "special occasion" food that brings you joy into each day, whether it's a side of buttered toast with lunch or a piece of milk chocolate after dinner. Combined with the nutrient-dense meals and snacks you've prepared in Step 2, you'll be nursing *both* your physical and emotional health at the same time.

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a bowl of coffee on a white tablecloth.

0 5

## **SURROUND YOURSELF WITH INTUITIVE EATERS**

This step might seem trivial or unnecessary, but I found that it was crucial in my healing journey. Whether you realize it or not, the people you spend most of your time with will directly influence your thoughts, actions, attitude, and habits. So, if you're constantly interacting with compulsive eaters, yo-yo dieters, or body-shamers, it's going to be that much harder to change your behavior and heal your relationship with food.

Why do you think it is that women who openly complain about their bodies go on to raise daughters with the same insecurities? (I'm also guilty of this, and my husband gets on to me every time I put myself down. Thank goodness I don't have a daughter yet!) Negative self-talk is contagious, as is today's ever-present diet culture. While it might be tempting to surround yourself with people who share in similar struggles, I highly encourage you to find friends that make it easy to love yourself, your body, and your newfound food freedom. Healthy habits are contagious, too!

A stem of baby's breath flowers and a bowl of coffee on a white tablecloth.

06

## CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF EMOTIONALLY


Whew, we've finally made it to the final step! How are you feeling? Excited, overwhelmed, unsure? No worries! Healing your relationship with food is a lifelong journey that takes daily effort, but the more you work at it, the easier it gets. I no longer experience anxiety around food, but I'm still figuring out how to listen to my hunger cues and eat in a way that works for my body, because it's always changing. This is normal, and why I believe that intuitive eating is wonderful: it allows for the fluidity to suit our constantly changing bodies and lifestyles.

In the beginning stages of recovery, don't expect yourself to be perfect. (That expectation is what got you here in the first place!) The temptation to binge is most likely going to happen again at some point, and you need to have coping mechanisms at your disposal when it comes knockin' on your door. To help with this, I created a short questionnaire (scroll down to Page 24) to check in with yourself emotionally when the desire strikes.



## 06

It might not always be easy to catch, but if you feel a binge coming on, take a deep breath and wait 5 minutes before reaching for food. Just 5 minutes! Within that time, grab a pen and paper and jot down the answers to these questions. It might reveal enough information to understand what's really going on beneath the surface: you had a stressful day with the kids, you're feeling restless in your relationship, you worked through lunch and returned home starving, etc. You'll be amazed at what thoughts and feelings arise when you give yourself the opportunity to dive deep and let it out.



This is where I could tell you to distract yourself from your desire to binge by going for a walk or taking a hot bath—but those things never did it for me. So, if after 5 minutes of checking in/journaling, you're still dying to go to town on the pint of Ben & Jerry's hiding in the back of your freezer, do it. At least now, you'll be making a conscious decision to self-soothe with food, and you'll know exactly why the need arose—information that might prove valuable for preventing the next episode.

# ONE LAST THING...

Yay, girl, you made it through! I hope you were able to take away something of value from this guide. It was written from the heart, in hopes that even one woman could benefit from my personal experience and learned lessons.

Now, whether you decide to follow these six steps to a T or not, the most important thing you can do going forward is **learn to forgive yourself**. Forgive yourself for past, present, and future binges, and for every food-related struggle you've faced and are currently facing. You are certainly not alone in your struggle, and you're not any less strong or capable because of it.

Never forget that you are a **beautiful, complex creature** who has all of the tools within herself to find food freedom once and for all. All you have to do is look.

P.S. Don't forget to save and print the three documents below!

In peace, love & health,

*Emily Blasik, NTC*

# BINGE EATING RECOVERY CHECKLIST

You can use this checklist as a reminder of your progress.

Ditch the Calorie Counting

Plan Out Your Meals

Change Your Vocabulary

Honor Your Cravings

Spend Time with Intuitive Eaters

Check In With Yourself

# EMOTIONAL CHECK-IN QUESTIONNAIRE

How am I feeling at this moment? (Describe any thoughts or emotions that come to mind.)

What events (stressors, occurrences, etc.) have led me to this moment?

Am I hungry for food, or something else (love, understanding, rest, relaxation, attention)?

What would truly fulfill me right now?



# FOOD & MOOD JOURNAL

*today's date:*

*breakfast:*

*how I'm feeling:*

*lunch:*

*dinner:*

*snack(s):*

# KEEP IN TOUCH

## WEBSITE

[www.withcandorwellness.com](http://www.withcandorwellness.com)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

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