

Chapter 19

Managing Overeating with a Mind Body Speedometer

Of all the issues I hear in therapy, no issue seems to frustrate people more than being overweight. Broken hearts. They mend eventually. Death and dismemberment. A snap. But being overweight? Whew. It's the bane of banes. So now, let me ask you. Has overeating been a problem for you? Have you struggled with your weight? Have you dieted and failed or regained the weight? Is there even a way to manage overeating? These are the questions we're about to explore, in this chapter of Plain Talk about Talk Therapy.

“Fat Jokes and Thin Jokes”

As I combed the Internet for this chapter's opener, I came across this obnoxious little bit of weight directed hatred: *“When fat people pass wind, if you're caught in the updraft, you lose days off your life! It's a scientific fact!”*

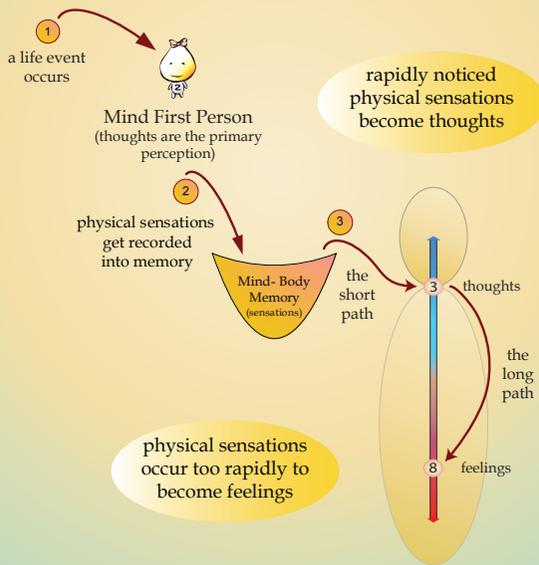
Did I just make laugh? Get you mad or insult you? Do you fear this chapter is already off track? If so, then consider this. My mother was forty eight when she died. At the time, she was 5'6” and weighed all of seventy pounds. And when I walked into the hospital ICU that day, I could barely find it in me to look at her. She was little more than a skeleton covered with skin. To say I felt afraid is an understatement. And what made it worse was how ashamed I was to show this fear. My own mother and I couldn't even look. How sad is that.

How Mind First People Can Overeat (eating is managed mentally not physically)

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What Makes Mind First People Vulnerable to Overeating?

Eating to Mind First people is an event to be managed with the mind. Thus they commonly say things like, “I ate healthy” or “I left something on my plate.” While both these things are good ideas, neither is a feeling. Thus “health” is not a feeling even if being healthy feels good. Similarly leaving food on a plate is not a feeling albeit seeing that you’ve done this can make you feel pretty good. The point is, despite the good feelings doing these things can lead to, it is the mind, not the body, that is making these assessments.



As to why Mind First People lack the physical feedback to properly manage their eating, it is simply that it takes much more time to sense the physical sensations of eating. Thus Mind First people commonly eat until they are suddenly full. As opposed to Body First people who rarely eat to fullness. What makes them know they have had enough? They eat until they have had enough taste.

What did my mother die of? She died from not being fat enough. Literally. Can you imagine that? And while most thin people will not die from being thin, if you think being overweight and hearing fat jokes is bad, you should feel what it's like to be underweight and hear skinny jokes. This one I know personally. At the point my mother's anorexia killed her, I was pretty thin myself. Frighteningly thin, in fact.

As you might imagine, I had frequently been the target of jokes during my childhood. And of course, hearing these things always hurt. Interestingly enough though, as I grew older, hearing thin jokes was not what hurt me the worst. What hurt me the worst was hearing things like, "You're so lucky. You don't know what it's like to be fat." And they were right. I didn't know. But they didn't know what it was like to be too thin either.

Fast forward to my early fifties. At this point in my life, I did know what it was like to be too fat. And had for years. Since when? Since somewhere in my mid thirties. The strange thing is, while I knew with certainty that I had gone from being underweight to overweight, I could not recall a time wherein my weight felt right. Ever. Until my mid fifties, that is, when I stepped onto a scale and in the same moment, felt afraid I'd die of obesity and afraid I'd die of anorexia. Both at the same time. And no. You're not reading this wrong. I felt too fat. And I felt too thin. Both from seeing the same number.

Sound crazy? Hard to believe? Know this then. I'm not the only person who has felt this way. In fact, many overweight people have told me they cannot recall a time when they did not feel fat. Talk about feeling confused.

In a general sense then, this is what we'll be talking about here. Being too fat. And being too thin. And what it feels like to be either or both. As well as the role overeating plays in all of this. And no, this will not be a rehash of what is known about dieting. Nor a food bashing contest either. Rather, we'll be looking at how a lack of mind body awareness, especially in the gut, is the real culprit in overeating.

What about the idea that we eat to mask our feelings? Don't we often feel painful emotions, before, during, and after overeating? The truth? Not really. In fact, seeing feelings as the cause of overeating is like seeing the sky as the cause of the horizon. The sky and horizon simply exist as two parts of the same view.

Likewise emotions and overeating. In other words, obviously painful emotions and overeating coexist. But not because one causes the other. Rather they coexist because they are two parts of the same picture. A painful picture, to be sure. However neither causes the other. They simply coexist within the same picture.

Don't experts tell us we overeat to stuff our feelings though? And doesn't this idea feel true to a lot of us?

Yes. Experts do tell us this. And it does feel true to a lot of us. Regardless of how true this may feel to us though, it cannot be the truth. Why not? *Because symptoms cannot cause injuries. They can only be the result of injuries.*

Sadly this kind of thinking; that symptoms cause injuries, is one the main errors modern therapies make. Talk and otherwise. Including therapies for everything from addictions and overeating to relationship difficulties and reality problems.

Here then is yet another common talk therapy misbelief. The idea that if we treat the symptoms, we effect a cure. Sadly, many therapies fail because they base their remedies on this misbelief. And it's not their fault either. In many cases, it's hard to tell the two things apart; the symptoms from the injury. Why? Because the nature of injury is such that it always includes a startling onset. And being startled programs our minds to go blank, rendering the cause itself invisible to us.

The thing is, no talk therapy currently teaches this idea let alone the nature of healing. Which means, if you ask your therapist if we overeat to mask our feelings or if we feel these feelings because we overeat, if she's intuitive, chances are she'll answer correctly; neither answer is true. At the same time, she'll likely have no idea why.

Does knowing why matter? Very much so. You see, if you cannot discern a symptom from a wound, how can you heal your wounds? This is why I spent so much of the early chapters of this book focused on the nature of wounds; that they are the suffering we cannot see rather than the symptoms we can see. Metaphorically and literally, they mirror the "bullet hole," not the bleeding.

With regard to overeating then, it is important to remember that while one symptom may exacerbate another, this does not make this symptom the cause. Moreover, the wounds which cause these symptoms always have one thing in common. They are some sort of an inability to notice something. Literally. A blankness which has been programmed into our minds.

What blankness causes overeating then? *Our inability to sense the gradual changes going on in our guts as we eat.* This is what we cannot see. Thus our lack of awareness that we are eating is what causes overeating. And yes. We may have wounds in and around eating as well. Most people do in fact. But healing these wounds will not stop overeating. It will only make people more aware they are overeating. And less ashamed.

So fine. Our inability to sense the gradual changes going on in our guts as we eat is the root cause of overeating. Moreover, it would make sense that because this lack of awareness is the true source of overeating, that until we focus our energies on becoming more aware of what is going on in the gut, that there can be no long term solution to our overeating. Okay. Fine. But how do we become

more aware of what is going on in our gut? Can we even learn to do this?

In a word, yes. We can learn to do this. And in my practice, I've already begun to teach people how. Moreover, before we end this chapter, I'm going to share with you what I've been teaching my clients. A way to begin this very process.

Know that what I'll show you here is but a beginning, not an end. There is much work left to be done on making this process doable. Even so, and with only a brief exposure to this work, a number of people have reported noticeable changes in their awareness. Body wise as well as mind.

Before I show you this though, I first want to elaborate on the nature of what *not* feeling what is going on in our guts is like. Beginning with what I've previously mentioned about the work of Dr. Michael Gershon. That we have two brains; a brain in the head and a brain in the gut.

Emotion and Overeating

As I've mentioned, Dr. Gershon's work clearly proves we have two physiological brains. A brain in the head and the brain in the gut. However, when asked in interviews if this means the brain in our gut thinks and feels, he says no. This despite the fact that he also says that ninety five percent of the serotonin in the body is produced and exists in the gut. And only three percent in the brain.

The obvious question to ask here is, if serotonin is the main neurotransmitter involved in moods, where is the Prozac working? Moreover, when we consider how we so often say that we eat to mask our feelings (moods), isn't it obvious the gut is the physiological mechanism by which moods and overeating coexist?

Obviously, the big question to ask here is, does what we call "emotion" come from the gut? Or is the gut merely one link in a long chain leading from the brain?

One indicator, a strong one, for that emotion arises in the gut is that if you purposely talk emphatically slow to Mind First people, you alter the balance of what they can think to what they can feel. So dramatically, in fact, that one Mind First woman whose mother had died recently told me it hurt her worse when I spoke to her this way than when she thought about her mother dying. And no, she was not emotionally detached. Quite the opposite, in fact. The slow talk merely made her more aware of what she felt about her mother dying.

The thing to note of course here is where in her body she felt this bad feeling. Where? Why in her gut and stomach, of course. Which brings us to another indicator that emotion arises from the gut. The idea that whenever we speak about having emotions, we often refer to having physical sensations somewhere in our bodies. Where? More times than not, it's within a foot wide vertical column running up the front of our bodies, roughly parallel to our spines.

Not sure what I'm referring to? Well think about it. When someone says he

was felt kicked in the gut, to where is he referring? And when someone says the bottom fell out of her stomach, to where was she referring? Or when people say they feel like a lead weight is sitting on their chests, to where are they referring? Or when someone says her heart aches, to where is she referring?

Obviously these phrases all refer to feeling emotions, and obviously they also refer to that we physiologically feel them. Where? Somewhere within this vertical column which runs up the front of our bodies.

So why does Dr. Gershon avoid what to me is an obvious conclusion; that emotion and physiology do at least coexist? To be honest, I haven't a clue. I will admit however that I think he is wise to take this position. After all, he works for Columbia University Medical Center. One of the major medical research facilities in the world. Moreover his work focuses not on psychological problems but rather on how a lack of gut awareness is the culprit in gastrointestinal problems.

To be frank then, I can understand why Dr. Gershon would so carefully limit his focus to his own specialty; neurobiology. Or more specifically, to the specialty he is now considered the father of; neuro-gastroenterology. Unfortunately, by doing this, he inadvertently cosigns the same philosophical materialism most medical folks espouse. The belief that the body gives rise to, or at least, is primary to the mind.

The thing is, this philosophy is not true. The body does not give rise to the mind. Nor is the converse true; that the mind gives rise to the body. Rather, the mind and body coexist just as Spinoza suggested; as two aspects of the same continuum. And interact with each other just as Descartes said. This means both these theoretical position parallel what I've said a moment ago; that our moods and our overeating interactively coexist, rather than that one causes the other.

How does this apply to solving our problems with overeating? Well if we add to Dr. Gershon's neurobiological discoveries my own in and around what connects our minds and bodies (our awareness of time), we now have a starting point with which to address overeating. And if you add to this that the physiological sensations which occur within this vertical column directly correlate to our sense of how fast or slow time is passing, then you have what amounts to the raw materials to construct what amounts to a Mind Body Speedometer. A way in which to physically sense the entire range of sensation needed to self regulate eating. Including what we should be sensing in our guts.

Where do we begin? We'll begin with looking at what it's like to eat and not have a sense of time. What is this like? It goes something like this.

Eating Unconsciously

What is it like to eat unconsciously?

First we do not feel hungry.

Then we realize we feel quite hungry.

Moreover, we transition from the first state to the second as if a switch has been turned on. One minute it is off. The next, it is on.

The thing to notice here is how this experience differs from what is going on physiologically. In reality then, our stomachs send regulatory signals all the time. We just never notice them.

Interestingly enough, Dr. Gershon himself mentions this lack of awareness. He says it occurs because we do not need this information. Whatever the truth here though, because we don't get this information, we go from feeling no hunger to feeling quite hungry. Ergo the urgency behind unconscious eating. As well as the reason we have so little ability to self regulate the rate at which we eat. Why? Because we simply cannot see our hunger coming on. And because we don't, we suddenly go from having no feelings of hunger to noticing we are quite hungry, all without a shred of awareness as to where and when this hunger came from.

Notice too the main missing is our awareness of time passing. We simply skip from not being hungry to being hungry with no sense of the what was going on in the time in between.

Okay. So we do not see our hunger coming. What happens next?

Next we begin to eat and a similar thing happens. We go from feeling hungry to suddenly feeling full. Or more likely, to feeling too full. All this with no awareness of where and when this began either. Which means what? Which means we miss seeing the point at which we would have felt satisfied with what we ate and so, we keep chasing this satisfaction like a horse chasing a carrot.

Do we ever reach the carrot? Like a horse, of course not. At the same time, while we never quite reach it, we also frequently overshoot the mark.

Here again, we see a missing sense of time. And the obvious question this time is, when and where did we feel full? The point at which we felt hungry and then felt this need satisfied. Where was this feeling?

Equally important, where is the moment wherein we felt satisfied with what we ate? Or for that matter, that our feelings of hunger were even decreasing? Where were these feelings?

This then is the face of what is causing our overeating. A profound absence of the sense of ongoing time while we eat. Without it, we experience eating as a two step event. One. We feel hungry. Two. We feel too full.

Why don't we see what happens in between these two transitions? The transitions from being not hungry to hungry, and from being hungry to too full? Some theorists posit that it takes roughly twenty minutes for our brains to register that we have eaten, and personally, I think they are right. However,

I also think they are right only when referring to adults. Babies do not feel this way and this, do not overeat.

As I mentioned a moment ago, Dr. Gershon, in interviews, says the higher functioning happens only in the brain in the head, and that the brain in the gut does the dirty work. Here too, I agree, albeit with one major exception. The idea that emotion consciously experienced has as much potential to influence our decisions as thought consciously experienced does.

This aside, the main point to see, of course, is that if we do not feel the process of hunger coming on, and if we do not feel the process of hunger being satisfied, then how can we know when it is time to stop eating?

The obvious answer? We can't. Unless, of course, we can alter our awareness of this process. And if we can't? Then at best, we can stop eating only when it becomes physically and or mentally obvious. In other words, when it becomes visibly uncomfortable. Either physiologically, to our guts, or psychologically, to our heads.

This is exactly what people who overeat do. They regulate their eating either with sheer mental will or with discomfort signals. To what end? To the point wherein it is inevitable they will overeat more than not.

Then there are the times wherein we feel this discomfort and still continue to eat. I, myself, have done this many times in my life. Sometimes to get more of a good taste. Sometimes to clean my plate. And sometimes so as not to insult my host or associate.

Have you ever done this? Continued to eat even after feeling full? Feels psychologically and physiologically bad, doesn't it? Almost like we are addicted to eating.

The thing is, we are not addicted to eating. Why not? Because as I said back in chapter seven, addiction is based on the high we get from purposely altering our sense of time in a rapid manner. In other words, with addition, we sense time more.

And when we overeat? Overeating is caused by the exact opposite feeling. A near total loss of awareness of our sense of time. And here is where the idea of creating a Mind Body Speedometer comes in. A way in which to notice time passing as you eat.

What Is Overeating Like?

Now let's delve into it a bit deeper into how it feels to overeat. What is overeating like?

In a way, when we overeat, we feel as if there are only two notches on the hungry - full meter. And no notches in between. Thus for those of us who overeat, eating resembles driving on the dreaded black ice of northern winters. You are

on it. Or you are off it. With nothing in between. And while you are on it, you feel afraid, because you can never know when a skid is coming. Even driving carefully is no guarantee.

Overeating feels very similar to this in that we simply never know when a skid is coming. And even when we do proceed with great care and effort, because we cannot see where we are going, eating for us is a dangerous road.

Of course, the thing many people fear here is that overeating will make them fat. And for most of us, it does. How? Well here again, we are looking at a lack of awareness regarding how time passes. Thus on average, if you eat mindlessly, then most times, you will eat quickly. And not notice. Why? Because you will respond to food as if it is either a quick fix or a blank necessity. Moreover, even if some of this blankness is due to injuries in and around food, healing these injuries will not solve the problem. Why not? Because conscious eating requires we have a mind body way to monitor our eating.

In lieu of this awareness of time passing then, we are left feeling fearful and desperate. Which leads us to consider every new fad diet the possible cure. So does any of this work? Yes. Actually, some of it does. In fact, I've found a lot of good advice in many of the latest diets. On the other hand, because none of them addresses our lack of awareness in and around time, we are left with what amounts to trying to manage diarrhea with will power. Talk about a dirty business.

Of course, the real pain here lies in how this lack of awareness leads to us getting fat. How? Simple. If you cannot self regulate your food intake, then you will tend to gain weight. Why? Because you will repeatedly miss the cues which should tell you that you are full. Or at least, the cues which would tell you, you are no longer hungry.

Which means what? Which means you will repeatedly eat past fullness. Again and again and again. And inevitably, you will gain weight.

In addition, because you will have had no sense that you were getting full, you will almost always feel unsatisfied by what you eat. Why? *Because in order to feel satisfied, you must see the process.*

This also applies to our losing weight. If you do not sense this weight coming off, then you will have no way to connect what you did with losing weight. Result? You will constantly feel afraid you will regain this weight. Not a great way to have to live. In fact, this is a terrible way to live. You're getting fitter and you feel afraid. Not the greatest way to keep yourself motivated in the long run.

What would be a great long range motivator? To be able to think and feel your way into health. Not additively, like most health professionals suggest. As in mind plus body equals connection. But naturally, by learning to listening to your body and your mind during the process.

With overeating, this means becoming aware of how eating changes your body. And your mood. Moreover if you fear this is impossible, consider this. We all once had this very awareness. As babies, we had it every day. Not sure what I'm saying? Well go observe a baby eating. What will you see?

For one thing, babies like eating. When what they eat tastes good. Which means they do not eat what does not taste good. Even if they are hungry. Imagine that?

They also only eat when they are hungry, and stop eating when they are full.

Best of all, they almost always feel satisfied with what they eat. Why? Because they feel the whole process. Mind and body wise. And to see how different this looks from how adults eat, consider this. Consider what it would look like for a one year old to binge eat. Can you imagine? And lest you see this as me being insensitive, the point is, when I tried to picture this, I had an emergence in and around this attempt. Why? Because I cannot picture this as anything other than as a scene from a comedy. In other words, it simply can no happen. Babies do not eat like this. Ever. And since we were all once babies just like this, we all have it in us to eat like this again.

Imagine that. Never eating past fullness. Never eating what tastes bad. Never eating when you are not hungry. And never binge eating again.

Learning to recognize, mind body wise, that you are in the process of eating, is the key to having all this.

In a moment, I'll share with you the basics of what I've been teaching people. Including myself. Before I do though, I need to mention briefly one more thing. An idea many people today believe; that we can overcome these problems if we learn to eat slower.

Why slower? Because one of the best indicators that you are eating unconsciously is the speed at which you eat. In other words, if you eat like you are racing to a finish line, then guaranteed, you will overeat more times than not.

So will consciously trying to eat slower lead you to overeat less? While you do it? Maybe. In fact, in November, 2004, Dr. Corby Martin of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center presented a paper at the North American Association for the Study of Obesity 2004 Annual Scientific Meeting titled, "Does Slower Eating Rate Reduce Food Intake? Results of an Empirical Test." His conclusion? Yes. It may help some folks. Oddly his work showed doing this helped men and not women.

The thing to know of course is, can this help in the long run? My answer? Not likely. Unless, of course you find a way to permanently restore your dormant sense of process.

How about as a temporary solution? Can you use your mind to control how

you treat your body; in effect, compensating for your lack of body awareness? My studies show this can have an effect. And improve your nutritional input. However, even if you manage to do this, there is still a problem. Because you have not addressed your underlying lack of eating awareness, you will constantly need to be reminding yourself to slow your eating down. Why? Because you will notice the problem *only after it becomes significant*. And before then? It will be just as bad.

And the permanent solution? There is only one permanent solution. You must, in a lasting way, learn to notice what is going on in your gut. Your physical self. As well as what you think about what is going on in your gut. Your psychological self.

How can you accomplish this? It is simpler than you might imagine. And it all starts with learning to physically feel what is going on in your body.

How about your mind though? Isn't my whole focus on a combined mind body awareness? Yes, it is. However, as it turns out, if you can notice physically what is going on in area of your body, your mind's awareness is there without effort.

Not sure what I'm getting at? Let's see.

Creating a Mind Body Speedometer

Before I describe the specifics, I need to address the key question here. How do I know we can curb our overeating by increasing our awareness of what is going on in the gut? The answer. If you directly observe Body First people; in other words, people who experience life first through their guts, you'll find, as a rule, they do not overeat. Moreover, if you do find a Body First person overeating, you will almost always find they have a Mind First counter preference when they eat.

Essentially, this preference is what renders us vulnerable to overeating. If we prefer to sense the world through our minds, we end up with a lack of physiological awareness of how eating feels. The good news is, if we address this physiological lack of awareness, we should be able to decrease our vulnerability to overeating.

Can we do this though? Actually we can and it turns out to be simpler than you might think. Although in practice it does take effort. Now let me explain.

As I've been saying for chapters now, we have two ways to sense life, one through the mind and thoughts and the other through the body and feelings. Moreover, I've defined what we feel body wise as the sum total of what we feel physically. Physical sensation itself.

The thing to note here is that I include in this sum everything from gut reactions and intuition to what we refer to as emotion itself. Thus my prior ref-

erences to that emotion arises in the gut. And my noting that painful emotions and overeating coexist as symptoms of a lack of physiological awareness.

The thing is, if you consider the larger implications of this, then you come to one rather astounding conclusion. That we can become more emotionally aware, and stop overeating, simply by becoming more physically aware of what is going on in the gut. In fact, we'll devote a whole chapter to this before we close.

For now, the things to see is how we can accomplish this change. How? By creating in ourselves what I've been calling, a Mind Body Speedometer. And if you'll now take a look at the central portion of this chapter's diagram, what you'll see is a rough approximation of this idea.

What do you see?

- Literally, you see a vertical column of body geography which roughly approximates the physiology of the spine. Only rather than being located on the back of the body, it is located on the front of the body.
- Next you'll notice that this vertical column is divided into ten body zones. From Zone One at the base of the spine. To Zone Ten at the top of the head. Know that each of these zones represents a different physical sensation. Most of which normal adults never learn to feel. At least, not by choice.
- Now please notice how this numbering goes from bottom to top. Know this choice of numbering represents more than mere logical convenience in that each of these ten zones, from the base of the spine to the top of the head, roughly equate to our varying sense of how time is passing. Slowly. Quickly. And everything in between. Thus it turns out this physiological geography is more than mere reference to height. We literally get our sense of time from where in this vertical column we currently feel physical sensation. Hence my use of the word "speedometer". More on this interesting idea in a moment.
- Four. Some will notice an obvious parallel here to a very old and honored system. The Ayurvedic System of medicine which is native to India and the surrounding countries. No coincidence, the word "Ayurveda" derives from the word *āyus*, meaning "life" or "life principle," and the word *veda*, which refers to a system of knowledge. Thus the word Ayurveda roughly translates to a "knowledge of life," wherein "life" is the combined awareness of the body, sense organs, mind and soul. Likewise the Mind Body Speedometer is a tool with which to become aware of one's life. Especially mind body wise.
- Finally, with this in mind, and at the risk of sounding new agey, the Mind Body Speedometer can be seen as a decimal version of the seven

chakras. Sans the philosophical and religious content of course.

Now let's take a closer look. What does being aware of sensation within this column do?

In a word, it makes us more aware. More aware of what? Well here is where it gets easy. You see, how we describe this awareness matters very little. In other words, you can focus on physical sensations, including the absence or presence of sensation. Or you can focus on the actual speed at which you feel these sensations happening. How fast time is passing in your diaphragm for instance (the rate of your belly breathing). Or in your eyes (the rate of your eye movements). Or in your mouth (the speed at which you are speaking). Or in your neck (the speed of your neck breathing).

Either way though, you accomplish the same thing. Your mind body awareness will increase.

Now let's begin to actually try to do this. You begin by using a finger to trace a twelve inch wide vertical column, extending from below your belt line to the top of your forehead. As you do this, try to notice what sensations it brings up.

You can also try tapping at various points on this column, comparing how the different ones feel. For instance, tap on your solar plexus and note how sensitive it is. Now tap on your upper chest and notice how this feeling compares.

To most people, tapping near their thymus feels like tapping on wood. And no, this is not due only to that the sternum is there. It's due to that we lose most of our sense of this area. No coincidence, years ago, when I was taught that the thymus was the warehouse for our immune system (it creates T Cells), I was also taught that tapping on this area stimulated our immune system.

It sounded like nonsense to me then. Today I see the truth behind it.

Okay. So you have done a rough inventory of where in this column you are sensitive and insensitive. Now you need to find where your default sensitivity lies. Where are you normally most sensitive without effort. For instance, if you swallow some water, where do you physically sense this water going? Without mentally trying.

Where ever you feel the highest sensitivity is where your current sense of time derives from. Not your overall sense of time. Rather your sense of the rate at which time is now passing.

Now use this what you felt to imagine a red speed slider control positioned at this point of highest sensitivity. Know this position indicates your overall sense of how fast you are going. Mind body wise.

Are you finding this hard to take in or believe? Don't worry. Most folks do not feel what I've just said is true. Why not? They literally cannot feel physical feedback to say it is true.

Thus when I teach this to people, at first all we do is we try to consciously note the differences in physical sensation from top to bottom.

What is normal? For Mind First people, the sensitivity is mostly mouth level. A bit above if they get excited. And for Body First people, the norm is about at the solar plexus. Or slightly below.

Significant here is that in both groups, many folks cannot sense much in between these two points. Thus at chin level, throat level, and at upper and lower chest level, most people observe a decreased sensitivity.

Now try drawing this diagram on a piece of paper. Numbers and geography is more than enough.

Now touch each part of the diagram and at the same time touch this area on your body.

Are you finding it difficult to touch all these areas without looking? Know this is entirely normal. I've seen this in some pretty conscious people in fact.

And if you can sense very little here? Again. This is good news. Why? Because you cannot heal what you cannot see. And if you can see what is causing your lack of awareness, you can with certainty heal this lack.

Integrating this Speedometer into One's Life

I need to mention something at this point. The idea that learning to create this personal speedometer may be easier for Body First people than for Mind First. Why? Instinctively Body First people will feel these sensations. And be able to begin to see how these sensations correlate to our sense of time.

Why mention this? Because Mind First people may need help from a Body First person. In fact, doing this together and comparing notes will definitely deepen your awareness significantly.

If you do this though, you'll need to keep in mind something else I've previously mentioned. The idea that Mind First folks and Body First folks learn and teach differently. Thus remember to use the Show First / Tell First Method I introduced a few chapters back, the technique I mentioned in the Hollowness in Relationships chapter.

How then can you integrate this into one's life? The best way is to share it with others. In fact, teaching what you've found to others close to you can have a profound effect on your ability to connect. And to feel close.

As for our primary focus here, how this awareness can affect your overeating, the thing to do would be to invest some serious effort in learning to sense where in your body you physically sense life. In this moment and in the next.

Here my favorite technique is the Talk Speed Technique. By this I mean, ask someone to deliberately talk slow to you and notice how this affects your ability to feel. Where in your body do you feel this slow talk? How did this slow

talk affect where you were?

Now have this person talk deliberately fast. As fast as they can without losing the ability to talk. Now sense where in your body this sensation occurs. Does it move your sense of the speed slider control up or down?

Obviously the big thing here would be to eat and notice. Again, doing this with someone while comparing notes would be best.

And when you are alone? Here again, try to notice. At least to notice what and when you do not notice.

Realize too that some of this will change based on what you were doing right before you began to eat. For instance, if you took a Yoga class not long before, your ability to sense you Mind Body Speedometer should have noticeably improved. If not, then you might want to rethink the calls you are taking and consider finding a class wherein your awareness improves. It should improve. Noticeably.

Finally, know the thing you are looking to do here is to improve your body awareness. Not necessarily in your whole body but certainly within this vertical column.

How will you know this is working? Well for one thing, you should notice more awareness of how you are eating. And for another, if you do overeat, you should have an increased sense of that this feels bad. Physically as well as psychologically.

Finally know that there should be an added side benefit. Although at first this may not feel like a benefit. What I'm referring to is, you should feel an increased sense of discomfort in your body, at least for the first month or so. Why? Because you will in all likelihood have been unaware of these physical sensations for a long time now. And because this process has a lot in common with what it's like to wake up from a long coma. Including that you'll need to learn to do everything again. Including learning to eat normally again.

This Chapter's Session Notes

Yes. I know. I've given you only starting points. And little literal sense of the exact process here.

Know I've done this on purpose. Why? Because the last thing I want to encourage is more parroting of other peoples' ideas. We have enough of this going on in the world already.

So what if you cannot find it in you to do this? Then I'd suggest you at least find someone whom you can watch doing this. You see, more times than not, people only do what feels worthwhile to them. Including that worthwhile feeling is mainly a physical feeling.

What am I saying? I'm saying that for Mind First people, if they do not feel

like what has been presented is encased in air tight logic, then most will blow it off as nothing real. And for Body First people, those for whom things must ring true in their guts, unless they feel a gut reaction when as they try to sense this speedometer, they will tend to blow these ideas off as well.

The thing is, if the problem is that we lack awareness and we try to sense this awareness before we heal, then these truth tests will all come up negative. Why? Because the very sensations used to test for truth will be a part of what has been missing.

Now consider what this means in the larger sense of life. This vertical column contains our entire ability to tell what is true. Including the value off and truth in what we sense emotionally as well as mentally.

Now consider what it is like to live life without this physical truth test. What is it like to decide the truth of something you can barely sense going on?

What's it like? It's impossible. Even for the brightest of folks. And even great willingness will not make this any better. Nor will spiritual practices.

This means, of all the things I've told you about in the book so far, this one thing is definitely the most pragmatic tool. Given of course that you are willing and able to invest the effort needed to make it a part of your every day life.

Do you have this willingness? The willingness to become aware? This is, after all, the entire point of a good talk therapy.

And if you are a therapist, let me ask you the same thing. Do you have the willingness to become this aware?

If so, then when you begin to hurt like hell from waking up these parts of your physical body, you'll see this discomfort as the process working rather than the process failing. Moreover, don't worry this discomfort will last forever either. In my case, in the first week, I felt afraid of everything and everyone. I had this much inability to grasp what feeling my diaphragm meant.

And now? My awareness continues to grow each week. And I still feel as groggy as Rip Van Winkle. Asleep for a long, long time.

The thing to keep in mind here then is, will it get better?

For me, it already has. A lot better.

Until the next chapter then.

I hope you are well,

Steven