

PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH SUSAN

Feelings and It's Connection to Food

People turn to food because something is happening. They are having a thought or experiencing a feeling. Such as anxiety, anger, frustration, boredom, loneliness, etc. Often if you ask someone what they are feeling they are not quite sure. They can not identify their feelings. I believe we are taught that negative feelings are not good. It is not nice to show anger. We should not feel them and if we do, we should swallow them. One way people “swallow” the feeling is to reach for food. This is effective for distracting the person from the initial feelings. Because we have been taught to deny feelings, we don't know what they are anymore.

How do we identify how we are feeling?? First we need to distinguish the difference between a thought and a feeling. If you can substitute the words, “I think” for “I feel “, you are describing a thought not a feeling. For example, “I feel this is not fair” This is a thought and a judgement, not a feeling. Also, if the word, “that” is in the sentence, it is not a feeling. However if you can substitute the word, “I am” for “I feel” you are describing a feeling. For example, “I am angry.” Next it is important to validate to yourself that it is OK to feel what you are feeling. This is the acknowledgement stage, it doesn't help to analyze why you are feeling the way you do. If someone stepped on your foot and it was painful, you experience pain, even if the person did it accidentally. The next step is deciding what you are going to do about how you are feeling. Since we are conditioned not to express negative feelings this is often not easy.

Susan Simon-Fleischer, M.S.W., LCSW, CSW-R, BCD offers individual sessions and support groups which focus on the principles of *Examining Your Relationships with Food*.

For more information, please contact:

Susan at (973) 535-3626 or at www.psychotherapywithsusan.com

