

**Listening To and Loving your Body through Intuitive Eating**  
**Power of Moms Radio Podcast [powerofmoms.com](http://powerofmoms.com)**

I went to counseling for eating disorder—from dramatic undereating to dramatic overeating.

My counseling was two-parts:

1) **Behavior modification strategies** (CBT)—ways to interrupt the cycle of negative thoughts in my life and reduce the stress in my life

2) **Intuitive Eating**—teaching me how to listen to and respect my body when I ate—this brought me freedom and peace around food

A year ago, April and I recorded a podcast about the first part of my counseling, and I really encourage people to listen to [that podcast](#). The single biggest thing that I learned from my counseling was to think more positively about myself—to stop the cycle of negativity and self-loathing in my life!

Today we will be discussing the second part of my counseling: Intuitive Eating.

Jonathan Bailor (author of *The Calorie Myth*) defined “eating disorder:” **an unnatural preoccupation with food**. He went on to explain that in psychology, something is considered a disorder, rather than just an inconvenience, **when it interferes with your day-to-day activities**

When defined this way, many, many women have some degree of an eating disorder

- counting calories obsessively
- choosing not to go to social gatherings because you are embarrassed by what you look like or you are afraid you will overeat
- spending the entire time you are at a social gathering worrying about what you look like and what you will eat
- feeling the guilty the moment you put a cookie into your mouth
- eating food in secret because you are ashamed
- binging on foods that you have decided are “bad” or off-limits
- feeling panicked if you miss a day of exercise

It doesn't have to be this way!

During my eating disorder years, I was stuck in a cycle of “**self-loathing**.” I was happy, in love, loved my job, great family, knew that I had talents and abilities—in some ways I was so confident and happy—but I had these demons gnawing at me from the inside, telling me I wasn't good enough—so much of my time and my thoughts were dominated by food, exercise, weight, clothes, etc.

The whole crux of intuitive eating is **learning to trust, respect, and listen to your body**, which is the opposite of self-loathing.

It's **changing your mindset from wanting to *change* or *punish* your body through extreme dieting and militant exercise to wanting to listen to and care for your body.**

It's believing that your body will tell you **what it wants to eat, when you have had enough, and how it would like to exercise.**

There are ten core principles of intuitive eating, and we will link to them. Today I just want to discuss just a few of them that were the most life-changing for me:

- 1) Make Peace with Food
- 2) Exercise and Feel the Difference

### **1) Make Peace with Food**

I had to give myself **“unconditional permission to eat.”** As long as I was thinking about my diet, as long as I was telling myself that I couldn't have something, or *tomorrow* I wouldn't be able to have something, I ate more!

**“Last Supper Eating”**—I ate food that I didn't even really want because “tomorrow this will be forbidden”

I had to decide that I would **never go on a diet again.**

I gave myself **permission to eat anything and everything.**

I decided to **stop moralizing food as “good” or “bad”** or myself as “good” or “bad” when I ate a certain way.

Some critics might be thinking, “How is that sound nutritional advice?? So you just eat cookies all day and decide to feel good about it?” It's a process. At first, yes, you might eat cookies all day, but as you listen to your body and trust your body more and more, you will start to crave nutritious foods too.

-From my counselor's book: **“When you feel good about your body and feel good in your body, you naturally take good care of your body.”**

It's an **investigative process** as you start listening to your body—you start to examine your eating habits *without judgment*.

- Am I really hungry? How did this food make me feel? Do I really like this food? Etc

From *Intuitive Eating*: **“if you don't love it, don't eat it; if you do love it, savor it.”**

### **2) Exercise and Feel the Difference**

I had to **disassociate exercise from weight loss**—it shouldn't be about that. So many women only exercise when they are dieting.

I learned to **notice how good it makes me feel—energy, sleep, strength**

-Michelle Segar (author of *No Sweat*) from Peak Performance Summit talked about consciously noticing how good you feel after you exercise, so you are more likely to do it again the next day—long-term benefits usually aren't enough to motivate you in the moment, but remembering the short-term benefits can.

I learned to **avoid the “all or nothing” mentality**

- A 20 min walk is awesome! An 8 mins ab video is great
- It doesn't need to be the “best” or “most calorie-burning” exercise to be worthwhile.
- Similar process to investigating your food choices: Ask yourself, What do I enjoy doing for exercise? How did this exercise make me feel? Do I prefer to exercise alone or with others? Etc.

As mothers, I think it's **important to model and teach both of these principles to our children!**

**Help them to recognize that their bodies “talk” to them**

- What is your tummy telling you? Have you had enough?
- You are yawning and getting a little cranky. Is your body telling you that you are tired?

**Help them to find joy in being active**—get outdoors as a family, point out how good it feels

We have only barely introduced Intuitive Eating today—there is so much more to dive in to. So if any of this resonated with you, I encourage you to search for more information:

- [\*\*\*Intuitive Eating\*\*\* by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch](#)
- [\*\*\*How Much Does Your Soul Weigh?\*\*\* by Dorie McCubbrey](#)
- [\*\*\*Health at Every Size\*\*\* by Linda Bacon](#)

If you think you could benefit from **counseling**, I highly recommend it! I've learned so much! I googled “intuitive eating counselor, Denver” to find mine.

Please remember that **learning to be an intuitive eater is a journey**. After four years of practicing it, I'm still not perfect at it, and I still overeat at times, but I am so much happier and so much more at peace with food, my body, and myself than I was five years ago. It has not been a “quick fix,” but it has been so worth it!

If you are consumed by worries about your body, your weight, what you're eating, counting calories, when you're going to fit in exercise that you don't even really like doing—if you are bogged down by feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness, please look into this philosophy of living--**there is hope!!!**