

LET NAVIGATE THE FESTIVE SEASON, NEW YEAR & BEYOND

[Whilst also supporting your
relationship with food & your body]



SOME CONTEXT FIRST...

Just because this is a joyous time of connection and celebration for many, this isn't the case for everyone, due to the associations that can arise this time of the year...



As I reflect on my own Lived Experience with an eating disorder, I vividly recall the festive season to be such a challenging time- so many social events, fear foods, diet culture and tricky comments. In my hardest moments I found it so challenging and upon reflection wish I had reached out for more support in that time.

I feel fortunate now to be in a position where I have healed my relationship with food & my body and whilst the festive time can still bring forward some challenging moments, I feel thankful to have tools to navigate these moments. So I also want to hold hope for you, for I was once in a place that I never thought I could be in.

So I have put together this guide to provide some thoughts on how we can support ourselves when tricky food or body thoughts arise. Instead of us putting blame and shame for these strong emotions, let's get curious about these feelings to better understand how we can look after ourselves.



YOUR EMOTIONS ARE VALID

[you are safe to feel any emotions or challenges that arise]

The holidays often bring forward so many highs and lows. This can include stress from different routines, Christmas shopping, pressure for the day to be “perfect”, navigating social settings & dynamics or being away from home are just some of the challenges that may arise. All in which make it understandable as to why controlling food/your body may be coping mechanisms. to handle this festive season.

We are also approaching the end of the year which comes with a lot of marketing surrounding New Year’s resolutions that can leave us questioning... “what should I do next year”, “Did I do enough”, “Shouldn’t I be better by now”, “Why am I still uncomfortable in my body or with food” etc.

With this in mind, REMEMBER it is perfectly ok for you to continue doing everything that has felt most supportive and helpful this year and carry this over to next year.

One way to reconsider your resolutions is:....

“I need to lose weight” or “I must start a diet”

REFRAME THIS TO

“Is there something I can do next year that will better support me?”

WELCOME

LETS TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT I WILL COVER

- 1. Lets stay nourished [even when it feels tough]**
- 2. Considering Nutrition by Addition**
- 3. Let's support your body image**
- 4. Responding to those unsolicited comments**
- 5. Let's navigate food guilt**
- 6. Steering away from “all or nothing”**

*This guide comes from a place of compassion and love,
but also involves some pearls of wisdom that I share
with my own clients*



1. LETS STAY NOURISHED [EVEN WHEN IT FEELS TOUGH]

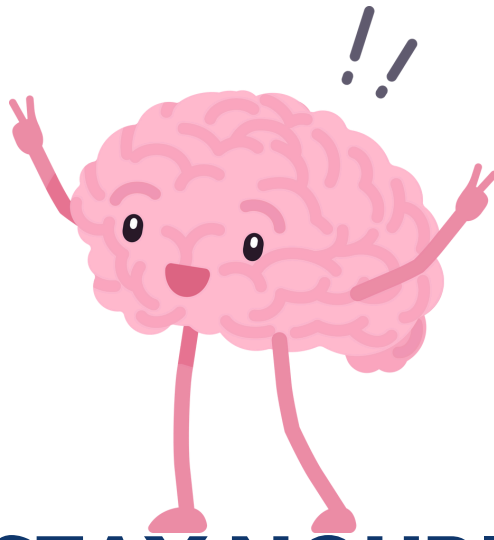
During a time we are told to “save up for meals later’ and ‘avoid certain foods’, let me remind you of how important it is to nourish your body and provide it with regular opportunities to be nourished.

I am hearing you...you have a lunch later right???? You think you shouldn't have breaky because “you don't know what will be on it”, that is a tricky place to be in.

BUT...what if you arrive to this lunch and realise you probably should have had more earlier in the day because that one lunch won't be enough to cater for all the nourishment opportunities missed earlier. You don't need to skip meals to “make up for food later”

Our bodies and brains work best when they're nourished regularly and also means we are able to provide our body with all that it needs. So before you race out to your social gathering...don't leave empty handed, grab some breaky and snacks for on the road.

For those moments it feels tough and you are conflicted with ‘what to eat’ or ‘how much’, try to make this task *as easy as possible*. Especially when facing tricky food thoughts or in recovery any eating opportunity can feel difficult. So remember whilst the festive time could provide an opportunity to challenge the eating disorder voice, not every moment needs to be a “challenge”. You can navigate towards your safe foods whilst also fuelling regularly. Consider- How can I make this as easy as possible now?



LET'S STAY NOURISHED [EVEN WHEN IT FEELS TOUGH]

Let's reframe it

"I need to skip breakfast because I am having big lunch later"

REFRAME TO: "It is still important for me to nourish my body at breakfast time to maintain my energy levels, keep me feeling satisfied and because I know food doesn't need to be "earned. I also know that if I eat now I will feel more controlled around food and likely to meet what my body needs".

"I had a "bad food" so I need to make up for that by skipping my next meal"

REFRAME TO: "There are no good or bad foods and even if I ate something different to usual, this doesn't change anything and I am glad I gave myself permission to enjoy something different. All foods can fit and continuing to nourish your body remains important.

2. CONSIDER NUTRITION BY ADDITION

The festive time we are presented with so much misinformation and so many rules about 'what to have' or 'what we need to restrict.

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO 'NUTRITION BY ADDITION'
Considering- What are you able to add to this meal or snack that could make it more nourishing or filling?

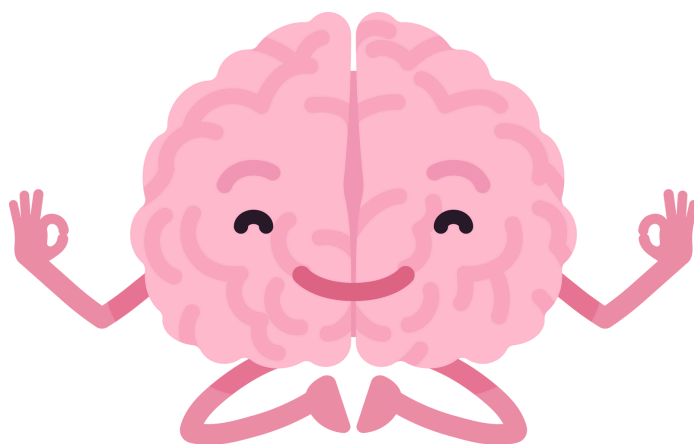
Some examples are...

I am having dessert and feel quite hungry today, I will look at adding some fruit on the side too

I am having a really yummy lunch, I am going to add salad and a bread roll on my plate because I know this can help fill me up

When practicing nutrition by addition keep in mind that 'not every meal needs to be "perfect" and balanced in order to be supportive for you. There are many other opportunities for that, however this can be a valuable mindset to adopt that focuses on addition rather than restriction.





CONSIDER NUTRITION BY ADDITION

Let's reframe it

"I really want to have that chocolate cake, but if I have just fruit that means I will be "good"

REFRAME TO: "I know that my relatives make a really yummy chocolate cake and now is an opportunity for me to have this, I can have both the fruit and chocolate cake".

"I really should have an apple as a snack, but usually I am hungry after"

REFRAME TO: "This is some interesting feedback you have noticed about yourself, try pairing the snack with something that will keep your energised and full [some examples- yogurt, muesli bar, cheese and crackers, piece of toast and spread]"



3. LET'S SUPPORT BODY IMAGE

This time of the year can bring forward a greater attention to our bodies; clothes are getting shorter, body ideals in the media become stronger and you may also be connecting with people you haven't seen for a while which can be uncomfortable.

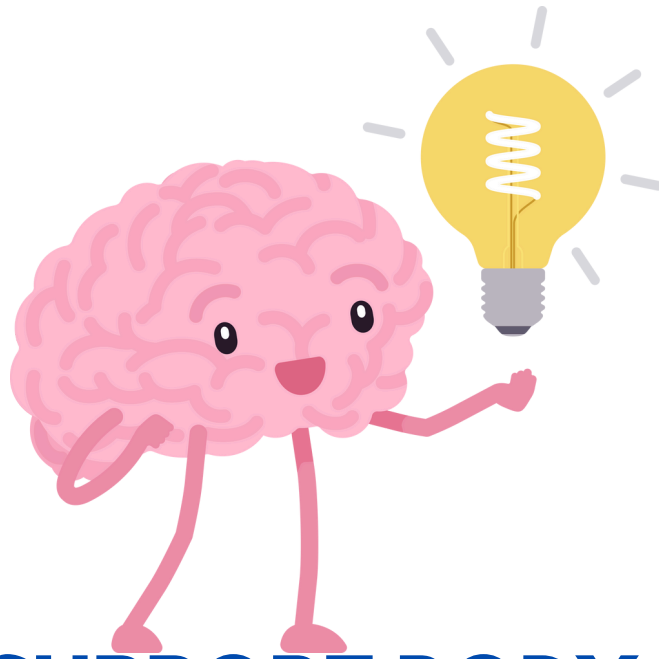
I am here to share that YOU DON'T NEED TO LOOK A CERTAIN WAY TO BE WORTHY OF FOOD- congrats your existence on this earth means you are always worthy of food.

It is helpful to remind ourselves that food is always important, even if we are experiencing a challenging day in our body. Being able to nourish ourselves on these tough days is a useful skill to build so when you next come across tricky days in your body- the option of eating won't be questioned

To support yourself on these days:

- Wear comfortable clothes (clothes are made to fit you-not the other way around)
- Remember you are more than your body, your worth is not tied to your body
- I accept my body where its at today
- I am going to acknowledge my body's hunger signals
- I see what my body allows me to do
- I respect my body today by nourishing it best

Keep in mind, you don't need to be in a place of 'body positivity',. Instead respect acceptance or neutrality can sometimes be the best we can do.



LET'S SUPPORT BODY IMAGE

Let's reframe it

"I feel uncomfortable in my body today therefore I am less worthy of nourishment"

REFRAME TO: "Food is not something we need to "earn or deserve" and regardless of how we feel in our bodies that day, nourishment is still important. Two feelings can coexist- discomfort in our bodies and respecting our body through nourishment

"In order to look like this I cannot have any "bad foods"

REFRAME TO: "If you need to cut out food groups or remove enjoyment from food in order to manipulate your body or achieve certain body "ideals, it may be time to consider the type of goals you have and whether these are actually supporting you. Is it worth being smaller to miss out on the beautiful memories life offers?"

RESPONDING TO UNSOLICITED COMMENTS ABOUT FOOD/BODY

The festive time can be an opportunity where there are gatherings that involve loved ones you may not have seen for some time. Unfortunately this can come with comments that may be about your body or foods you eat..

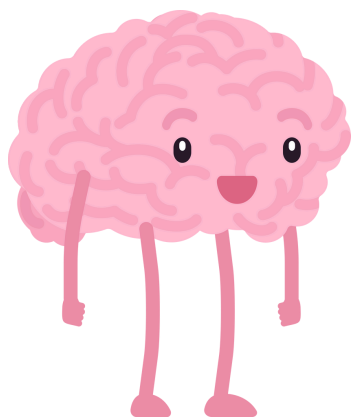
REMEMBER IT IS NEVER OK TO COMMENT ON SOMEONES BODY OR FOOD CHOICES [even if this comes with great intention, you never know their story or the way this comment is interpreted].

I have a couple of things to think about to prepare yourself...

- Ignore and move away- you don't have to respond and if you don't feel like responding you can move away or excuse yourself politely [eg. go to the bathroom or to another space]
- Provide context- If you are in a place where you feel comfortable to speak up and share your understanding, you are welcome to share this
- Change the topic- you can talk about something else that diverts the attention away from food or your body
- Set a boundary- let them know you would prefer if they didn't make comments about your body or food choice

Some examples of how to respond are next...





RESPONDING TO UNSOLICITED COMMENTS ABOUT FOOD/BODY

Some possible responses

Provide context & information: *"Your aunt comments on the food on your plate and that she has cut out carbohydrates and you shouldn't be eating them"*

Response "I am actually comfortable with the food on my plate and did you know that carbohydrates are our body and brains preferred energy source and can be a great source of fibre. I have actually found that by giving myself permission to enjoy carbohydrates has helped my relationship with food"

Change the topic: *Your friend is asking you about 'weight loss solutions' and asking for your perspective.*

Response: "Hey I was actually really interested in knowing more about your new puppy [or something that is not linked to their new weight loss solution]"

Setting a boundary: *"If a family member is talking about your body or making suggestions based on your own food choice"*

Response: "I know you mean well, but I have worked really hard on my own relationship with food and my body and comments like this are not supportive of that"



NAVIGATING FOOD GUILT

Food guilt or challenging thoughts surrounding food can be so difficult to sit with, especially during a time that may present with so many other emotions too.

Guilt shouldn't be an ingredient in any meal or snack, so here are some ways to navigate this feeling:

- Engaging in distracting activities before or after meals
- During meals, consider if having a loved one or support person beside you is helpful
- Engage in positive self-talk (eg. I am strong enough to handle this, One moment at a time, I can get through this)
- Hold onto your Why/Why is this important for you? Are you wanting to work towards feeling more comfortable in social eating occasions? Do you want to be able to travel one day and this exposure gives you the confidence to do that? Are you wanting to return to work and being able to eat these foods will get you closer to this?
- Remove the "good and bad labels"- holding onto these types of labels, rules and rigidity around foods increases the change of experiencing food guilt
- Give yourself permission to try new foods or eat beyond fullness
- These feelings will pass, how can I support myself now?



NAVIGATING FOOD GUILT

Let's reframe it

"I feel guilty for eating this "bad food", I am a bad person"

REFRAME TO: "This food has provided me with so much nourishment, it was really tasty, I enjoyed it with loved ones and I know having this meal was so important for me to do"

"I am not sure how I can get through this lunch experience"

REFRAME TO: "I know this meal is going to be challenging, and I am going to try focus on the act of eating, I have done this before, and doing this again will prove that I can do it. I will have my friend next to me if I need support."

"I can't stop thinking about the fact I am eating this food that I don't feel worthy of"

REFRAME TO: I am going to try focus my attention towards this food experience, I am with loved ones, I get to connect with people I haven't seen for a while and I know the more I expose myself to these experiences, it will get easier.

STEERING AWAY FROM “ALL OR NOTHING” MINDSET

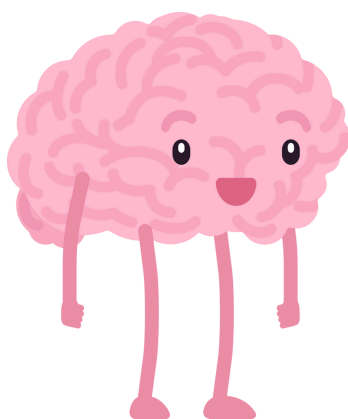
The ‘All or nothing mindset’ tends to involve a way of rigid thinking where after having a food that may be labelling as “bad” you feel the need to eat more and more because you may not get the chance to again. It may also involve following a “clean diet” all week and have something that doesn’t fit within the rigid diet and think “what’s the point”.

This mindset doesn’t take into consideration that THERE IS A PLACE FOR ALL FOODS.

Lets allow ourselves more food freedom:

- You are allowed to have these foods anytime and the more hype created around foods, the more likely we are to feel guilt and discomfort around them.
- Incorporate an abundance mindset (there are moments to have these foods again)- this can remove the negative association around them.
- Just because you may be having different foods, this is not an opportunity to cut out food groups, all food groups continue to play a really important role
- Food doesn’t hold any moral value, it has more than one purpose- serving a role in taste/connection/enjoyment





STEERING AWAY FROM “ALL OR NOTHING” MINDSET

Let's reframe it

“I didn't have a salad for lunch this week and I was so hungry when I got home and ate more than I should have, I have failed by diet”

REFRAME TO: “It makes sense why I ate more in the afternoon because I was hungry. Also, maybe a salad isn't an enjoyable or sustainable lunch option for me. There might be something else I could try next week that makes lunch more enjoyable and filling”

“I overate carbs again, I may as well give up, I need to stop eating them again”

REFRAME TO: “I notice the more I restrict or eliminate food groups, the more I feel like them. Maybe this is a sign that I should incorporate carbohydrates more regularly, because I know they provide me with energy, fibre and support my concentration”

One last reminder

As a Lived Experience and non-diet Dietitian I am more concerned about how you're feeling in your body or your relationship with food. Here are some helpful self-talk messages you might like to tell yourself...

- **I am worthy of nourishment regardless of how I feel in my body**
- **I am allowed to eat foods that are different to others (we all have different needs, taste preferences)**
- **It is ok if my body changes throughout the day. Our bodies are made to change**
- **Food is also meant for enjoyment, taste and connection. So I am allowed to have these experiences**
- **Instead of making myself feel bad for experiencing these emotions, I can think about "is there a way I can better support myself?" "Have I given myself enough time for me?"**
- **I don't need to do it alone- is there a way my loved ones or friends can support me**
- **Do I have appointments scheduled for before or after this time?**
- **How can I look after myself through self-care- some ideas may include: craft, reading a book, watching a movie, listening to music**

I hope you take care and stay safe this time of the year



Tayla ♥

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE

I put so much love and consideration into this guide and it is something I strongly resonate with and know I would have valued seeing within my own journey. Please keep in mind that this guide can also be something you explore. If you are interested in seeing more content like this, follow along at [@fuelled.with.tayla](https://www.instagram.com/fuelled.with.tayla).



Additionally if you're interested in working together to continue supporting your relationship with food & your body with a Dietitian who has Lived Experience and practices from a compassionate, collaborative and non-diet approach I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. Reach out to me at foo.dforfuel@outlook.com

You are worthy of support

here are some support chats or hotlines you may like to connect with, especially if your regular team are unable to be connected with

Direct support- *IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CONTACT 000*

Butterfly Foundation- 1800 33 4673

Lifeline- 13 1114

Suicide Call back- 1300 659 4672467

Health [Afterhours]- 13 43 25 84

Mental Health [Afterhours]- 1300 642255

Kids Helpline- 1800 55 180024/7

E-headspace- <http://www.eheadspace.org.au>

13 YARN13 92

QLife- 1800 184 527 or Webchat

Helpful resources

The Butterfly Foundation

Eating Disorders Queensland [EDQ]

Queensland Eating Disorder Service [QuEDS]

endED

National Eating Disorders Collaboration [NEDC]

InsideOut