



# Eating with Grace™

*making peace with food, weight & body image issues*

FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

## Neither indulge nor repress your feelings.

Mindfulness teaching.

### Eating with Grace WINTER/SPRING 2011 SCHEDULE

BURLINGTON BASIC  
GROUP STARTS:

**TUESDAY**  
**MARCH 8**  
**5-7 PM**

(You can get a head-start!  
Call now for a free consult!)

#### WEB-BASED SERVICES:

- consultations
- email support
- phone/Skype sessions
- coaching



and now offering  
clinical hypnotherapy  
in person and online

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Most compulsive overeaters do not like feelings. Feelings are to be avoided, tamed, controlled, stuffed. There are lots of good reasons for this: how your parents were with their own feelings, what they taught you (or didn't) about having and handling feelings, how you experienced needs and feelings with siblings, other kids, other adults. In other words, you have LEARNED to be reactive around feelings.

Most compulsive overeaters eat in reaction to feelings. Some can't even name what they are feeling; they just know something is disturbing them and believe they "can't stand it." The belief that we can't tolerate our feelings is just that, an old belief, an old familiar fear. But we can LEARN to be un-reactive to our feelings, giving us the freedom to not have to eat over them. Wow, yes, freedom!

Emotions are actually composed of bodily sensations and the thoughts or storyline that arises with the sensations. In **Eating with Grace** practice, FIRST we practice breathing and TOLERATING sensations in the body, staying aware and present to whatever is there. A feeling is just a bunch of sensations moving through: *e-motion*. We don't have to react. We don't have to EAT over it.

SECOND, we practice noticing the storyline line and "spin" the habitually negative/critical/anxious/depressed mind puts on the sensations. *If I'm sad it'll never go away. If I'm mad I'm a terrible person. If I feel anxious, it will be a disaster.* And so on. So neither indulging nor repressing feelings means allowing the sensations to move on through, and not indulging in the dramatic storyline that the sensations generate.

It can actually be *interesting* to stay present and observe all this. Especially as you learn that keeping yourself safe and grounded is the first groundrule about having feelings. If the intensity of a feeling is greater than 5 or 6 on a scale of 1-10, it's time to do something grounding or distracting, rather than stay with the feeling. And so you don't need to eat over the feelings anymore: you can be with them when tolerable, and get away from them when they are overwhelming.

Roger Gould, MD, a psychiatrist specializing in compulsive overeating (see [www.shrinkyourself.com](http://www.shrinkyourself.com)), finds that emotional eaters, as they turn to food to stuff feelings, are avoiding LEARNING whatever they need to learn to solve the problem at hand. I agree, but in **Eating with Grace** we start with acknowledging and validating the feeling, being in a loving and accepting relationship with it. This is the first thing human beings need around feelings: KINDNESS, UNDERSTANDING, COMPASSION. This involves developing an Inner Nurturer. Once a feeling is allowed, as it is, appreciating its good reasons for being there (the Nurturer's job), then we can begin to develop an Inner Coach who helps solve problems and cope when things are hard. The Inner Coach and Inner Nurturer are kind of like the classic Mom and Dad, except that each of us draws on our whole life's experience of what was helpful and what was not helpful to create these inner supports. We go way beyond our original experience with our parents, and we are free to discard any ways of nurturing and coaching our parents used that weren't helpful.

*Website of the month: [www.shrinkyourself.com](http://www.shrinkyourself.com)*

*Dr. Roger Gould's site, which offers a great free email newsletter all about emotional eating.*

*AND coming soon to [www.eatingwithgrace.com](http://www.eatingwithgrace.com):*

*guided meditations to download, and the first Eating with Grace online webinar!*

**MAY YOU BE HAPPY MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL MAY YOU HAVE SAFETY MAY YOU HAVE EASE**