

Spring 2019

Intuitive Eating Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle

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Recommended Citation

Oezer, Krista, "Intuitive Eating Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle" (2019). *Classical Conversations*. 7.
<https://firescholars.seu.edu/ccplus/7>

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April 11, 2019

English Composition II

Challenge IV Senior Thesis

Intuitive Eating Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle

“Intuitive Eating is an empowering process, which not only promotes health, but is also your gateway to freedom. When you are freed from the tyranny of food and body anxiety, you have the space and renewed energy to pursue your dreams and discover your purpose in life.” – (Tribole and Resch 298). Personally, intuitive eating has impacted my life. Not everyone knows what intuitive eating is – I did not know myself until about six months ago. Intuitive eating involves developing the right views and responses to inborn, internal hunger cues. Intuitive eating addresses the why behind eating rather than eating based on what or how much is consumed. By listening to the body’s internal cues, intuitive eaters determine when, what, and how much to eat. Through these changes, intuitive eaters develop patterns of confidence, love, and care for their bodies. I learned about intuitive eating through a blog I started. Intuitive eating captured my attention. During the time I discovered intuitive eating, I muddled through disordered eating patterns I recognized in my own life. At first, I disregarded

the message of intuitive eating. A few months later, I decided to give it a try because my body needed to heal physically and my mind needed to heal mentally. Since I began intuitive eating, I have noticed profound differences in the way I view food and healthy living.

Intuitive eating, founded by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch in 1995, emerged because of the increasing negative effects of dieting and eating behaviors. Intuitive eating started in the 1980's when the "anti-diet" movement began. (Shateri, 180). The "anti-diet" movement attempted to dismantle dieting as a whole because of negative body image and extreme yo-yo dieting. Tribole and Resch, registered dietitians and co-nutritional counselors, discovered the need for a balanced lifestyle in the lives of their clients. They discovered diets did not work. Clients experienced the need to restrict, binge, and exercise more than necessary. In addition, they questioned their body image. Tribole and Resch knew that something was not working. In their groundbreaking book, *Intuitive Eating: A Revolutionary Program that Works*, Tribole and Resch define intuitive eating as, "A dynamic process integrating attunement of the mind, body, and food." (Tribole and Resch, 204). Intuitive eating is inborn. Tribole and Resch argue that every person has the capability to live and eat intuitively. (Augustus-Horvath and Tylka 111). They further demonstrate how intuitive eating works and how it has aided clients and others in pursuit of living a healthy lifestyle. Intuitive eating promotes a healthy lifestyle.

After testing intuitive eating on their clients, Tribole and Resch observed how it positively affected their clients compared to the traditional diet approach. After much experimentation, their clients were happier, healthier, and more attuned to their bodies'

needs. Next, Tribole and Resch wrote their book on intuitive eating. Published in 1995, *Intuitive Eating* has grabbed the attention of dietitians, nutritionists, and everyday people who desire to develop a healthy lifestyle. (Tribole and Resch 281). Further research has been conducted on intuitive eating by college students, professors, and nutritionists.

Intuitive eating is more than just another option to promote health. Studies have shown the association between the mental and physical aspects of intuitive eating benefit overall health. It distinguishes between biological and emotional hunger, helping people to honor their hunger and listen to their bodies. (Shateri 180, 183). A major facet of intuitive eating includes listening to the body and responding accordingly in order to promote health. As clearly stated in a study that connected intuitive eating to positive body image in women, “Intuitive eating is trust in and connection with physiological hunger and satiety cues and eating in response to these cues.” (Augustus-Horvath and Tylka 110). Intuitive eaters become healthful eaters because they listen to their bodies’ needs. In a study conducted on intuitive eating, author Cadena-Schlam draws out four main points about intuitive eating from Tribole and Resch’s book. (Cadena-Schlam 997). *Intuitive Eating* expands on the following: First, intuitive eating encourages unconditional permission to eat whatever whenever, within reason. Second, intuitive eating focuses on eating for physical, not emotional reasons. Instead of starving oneself all day then coming home from work and binging in front of the TV, intuitive eaters consume balanced meals throughout the day so they come home from work and eat to satisfy biological hunger. Third, intuitive eating relies on listening to internal hunger and satiety cues. Grumbling stomachs and lightheadedness internally cue people to eat. In addition,

intuitive eaters enjoy food for the pleasure of eating. Lastly, intuitive eating uses nutrition to mentally connect body to food in a gentle way. The main goal of eating intuitively promotes health in all avenues of life without health becoming an obsession. Intuitive eaters engage positively around food and live without constraint or worry about what to consume next. Instead of meticulously planning out the whole day, week, or month of meals, intuitive eaters take a day-by-day approach. Listening for what foods their bodies crave throughout the day, intuitive eaters practice the art of flexibility. They willingly adapt and do not stress about eating. Intuitive eaters tend to be healthier psychologically and physically when compared to dieters pursuing a “healthy” lifestyle. (Gast, e98).

The core of *Intuitive Eating* focuses on what Tribole and Resch call, “*The Ten Principles of Intuitive Eating.*” Rejecting the diet mentality is the first intuitive eating principle. Dieting and intuitive eating are polar opposites. Second, honor hunger cues. Hunger is honored by allowing oneself to eat freely whenever biologically hungry. Third, make peace with food. Intuitive eaters make peace with food by allowing themselves to eat anything. An intuitive eater learns to honor natural cravings. Fourth, challenge the food police. No more food rules, “bad” foods, or “unhealthy” foods with intuitive eating. By allowing themselves to eat whatever they wish, intuitive eaters are actually more likely to eat healthier. Fifth, feel your fullness. Intuitive eaters listen for their body signaling to them that they are satisfied, pleased, and not overstuffed. Sixth, discover the satisfaction factor. The intuitive eaters use their senses to help them find satisfaction in their food. Seventh, cope with emotions without using food. Intuitive eaters focus on fueling their bodies when biologically hungry while paying

attention to their inner clock which tells them when they are hungry. Intuitive eaters consume food based on internal cues, not external cues. Surprisingly, emotion is an external cue, which I will explain later. Eighth, intuitive eaters respect their bodies by listening to them and responding accordingly. The ninth principle involves exercising to feel a difference. Intuitive eaters exercise to feel good, move, and gain strength. They do not exercise for the sake of attaining the perfect body or burning calories. Lastly, honor health through gentle nutrition is the tenth principle. All around, intuitive eaters practice the art of mindful living by listening to their bodies' internal cues. (Tribole and Resch 21-30). Tribole and Resch based the principles off of their research and knowledge about the human body and how it works. Tribole and Resch flesh out the purpose of the ten principles clearly in their book, "The majority of Intuitive Eating principles (1-8) deals with attunement to your inner world, which is informed by the inner workings of your mind and body. The inner world includes your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and physical sensations arising from within your body (such as hunger and satiety cues)." (Tribole and Resch 204).

Intuitive eating promotes a healthy lifestyle from a mental, physical, and spiritual viewpoint. Mentally, intuitive eating discourages restrictive eating and emotional eating, and promotes positive body image. Physically, intuitive eating fuels proper exercise, promotes honoring hunger, maintains appropriate weight, and other biological benefits. Spiritually, intuitive eating establishes a worldview of physical nourishment based in the Word of God. Lastly, I have experienced the benefits of intuitive eating in my own life.

First, intuitive eating promotes mental health and stability. Contrary to dieting, intuitive eating fosters a positive mindset towards food and life. Intuitive eating promotes mental health by discouraging wrong thinking and eating behaviors. “Intuitive eating discourages restrictive eating, emotional eating, and eating in response to external cues.” (Tribole and Resch 183). As stated previously, intuitive eating promotes the right mindset and actions toward food. Dieting fosters negative thoughts and actions in response to bodily hunger needs and cravings. In addition, dieting cons the dieter into believing they are worth more if they are prettier or more handsome. A dieter will look at themselves in the mirror and only see flaws. An intuitive eater will look at themselves in the mirror and accept their flaws. The warped mentality of the dieter will drive them to eat less and work out more. The intuitive eater, on the other hand, will balance workouts and food consumption accordingly to their internal cues. Mentally, intuitive eating discourages restrictive and emotional eating, and promotes positive body image.

Intuitive eating, unlike restriction, cultivates the right mindset towards eating. Restriction plays a massive role in the dieting industry. Dieters are conned into believing that if they eat less and workout more, they will attain that perfect body or lose the weight. In reality, restriction leads to two major consequences. (Outland 27). First, restriction will leave the dieter feeling deprived. Feelings of deprivation lead the dieter to eventually overeat. Deprivation does not foster the right mentality towards food. Intuitive eating views food as fuel; dieting views food as calories. Second, restraint cultivates negative body image and places

the dieter at higher risk for an eating disorder. (Outland 27). Restriction creates the thought process of looking in the mirror, seeing only flaws, and feeling guilty. Too many people believe they are not skinny enough, pretty enough, or good enough. Restrictive eating and dieting encourage negativity. Restrictive eating often surfaces in eating disorders like Anorexia Nervosa and Orthorexia Nervosa. Anorexia Nervosa is an eating disorder which focuses on an obsession with restricting calories and working out to lose weight. Orthorexia Nervosa is an eating disorder which obsesses over eating only clean foods. Tribole and Resch define Orthorexia as, “an unhealthy and rigid obsession to eat healthfully.” (Tribole and Resch 197). An Orthorexic will cut out certain food groups which they deem to be “unhealthy,” then force themselves to follow strict rules. Statistics show that worldwide approximately ten million girls and women and one million men will develop an eating disorder. (Tribole and Resch 251). Restriction disrupts normal internal cues and consequently disconnects people from those cues. (Cadena-Schlam 996). The dieter continues to starve themselves. In fact, studies have shown that diets focusing on restriction also promote low self-esteem, feelings of depression, and preoccupation with food, which can lead to disordered eating. (Cadena-Schlam 996). Plenty of other research shows that restrictive eating causes depression, low self-esteem, and raises eating disorder potentiality. (Gast, e91).

While dieting claims to have the answers to losing weight and living healthfully, dieting only creates more problems. It first creates the wrong mentality, then leads the dieter to take desperate measures to cover up thoughts and feelings of guilt and remorse. The majority of

people that diet want to lose weight. For example, a yo-yo dieter transitions back and forth between losing weight and gaining weight. First, they lower caloric intake and lose the weight. Highly discouraged by not eating what they want, the yo-yo dieter eventually gives up on the diet. Consequently, the yo-yo dieter gains weight back and ends up right back where they started. (Smith and Hawks 131). This kind of lifestyle decreases pleasure in life and demeans the purpose of food and exercise. Certain “good” or “bad” eating behaviors also play a large role in restricting caloric intake and clean eating. (Tribole and Resch 99).

According to Tribole and Resch’s book on intuitive eating, so-called “food rules,” also known as the Food Police, actually create a war between the body and mind. The war wages between what the body wants and what people say one “should or should not eat.” For example, a model is told she must count calories and starve herself in order to stay “fit.” The model lives life in misery and cannot enjoy foods like ice cream or peanut butter. This results in much mental damage. The dancer now has a slate engrained in her brain that says, “Thou shalt not eat ice cream.” And, “Thou shalt not eat white bread.” The model cannot listen to her body because someone else is telling her what her body wants. In reality, she lives in her body. She knows she likes ice cream and peanut butter. Her body needs it. In order to reverse this thinking, she must rely on her own body signals and say no to others telling her what she should and should not eat. In addition, Tribole and Resch point out a specific mind-body connection that when one does not eat and fuel the body correctly, it triggers eating more later and propels the body into survival mode. (Tribole and Resch 62). For example, some dieters

cut out all carbohydrates from their diets because they have been told by the dieting industry and society that carbohydrates make people fat. If a dieter who does not eat carbohydrates craves a toast with peanut butter and banana, but chooses not to eat it, they ignore what the body tells them to eat. Instead, the dieter chooses a lettuce wrap with turkey and later binges on potato chips, consuming more than needed had the person just eaten the toast. People who categorize foods into “good” and “bad” foods deceive themselves into believing they are not skinny enough to eat foods like bread or pasta. Food rules create conflict in the mind, causing dieters to be at higher risk for developing eating disorders like Anorexia or Orthorexia.

Contrary to dieters and the general public, intuitive eaters eat in response to inner signals and do not follow any “food rules.” (Tribole and Resch 83). Intuitive eating practices the art of balance, viewing all foods as equal, which dissipates feelings of guilt after eating. This decreases the eater’s urge to binge, deprive, and restrict. (Smith and Hawks 134). They allow themselves to eat unconditionally, without gluttonously gorging themselves. Some question intuitive eating because intuitive eaters allow themselves to eat whatever they want. The fact is, intuitive eaters allow themselves to eat, which eliminates the potential to binge on a certain food. For example, a girl eats plenty throughout the day with meals and snacks and at night she reaches for a bag of chips. She eats a handful, then puts the bag back because she knows the chips will be there for another night. Intuitive eaters do not eat as if they will never eat again. They honor their bodies’ fullness and happiness signals. A study on an intuitive eater’s unrestrained eating habits resulted in greater happiness for the intuitive eater. (Dockendorff

609). Overall, intuitive eaters are less preoccupied with food and dieting, and chose healthier foods. (Augustus-Horvath and Tylka 110). Intuitive eaters choose healthier foods because they understand their bodies need nourishment from real foods. Processed foods can actually increase cravings because of chemical manipulation and added sugars. Processed foods lack nutrients, so someone who indulges in processed foods may actually be less aware of the real foods their body needs. Once a person incorporates more real foods into their diet, they become more in tune to consuming whole foods that contain real nutrients. Because intuitive eaters are in tune with their body, they do not crave processed foods as much. Intuitive eaters choose healthier, whole foods over processed because they feel better. The intuitive eater will eat processed foods in the case of holidays or events or if their bodies are craving it, but in general the intuitive eater consumes real foods packed with nutrients. The goal of intuitive eating aims to help the struggling person by encouraging individuals to generate the right response to food, exercise, body image, and life. (Cadena-Schlam 996). Intuitive eating also encourages taking time to enjoy food for the experience of pleasure. (Tribole and Resch 164).

Intuitive eating helps regulate emotions. Intuitive eating focuses on listening to bodily hunger signals rather than eating based on emotions or social settings. Unlike intuitive eating, dieting triggers emotions which result in binge eating and emotional eating. (Tribole and Resch 151). Typically, feelings of boredom, anger, sadness, and tiredness cause emotional eating, which can set off a domino effect of overeating. (Tribole and Resch 151). Some drown their feelings in a pint of ice cream, others avoid boredom by eating bags of chips. Clearly, specific

emotions trigger binge eating, whether long term or short term. (Shateri 180). Long term binge eating makes a habit out of eating bags of chips in front of the television every night. Short term binge eating equates to drowning sorrows in a few dozen oreos on a rare occasion.

A few other emotional effects of dieting include more stress, a greater risk for eating disorders, more negative body image, less control, and less confidence. (Tribole and Resch 47). Worry and stress can also result in overeating. Worry and stress have been shown to have a greater impact on health than the actual food people eat. (Tribole and Resch 199). Research has shown that eating intuitively decreases eating based on emotions. Emotions are external cues to eat, whereas a stomach grumbling is an internal cue to eat. Intuitive eaters listen to their internal cues versus external cues, which promotes positive body image and lower Body Mass Index. (Gast e92). A few questions to ask oneself in order to heal from emotional eating include, "Am I biologically hungry?" "What am I feeling?" and "What do I need?" (Tribole and Resch 158-159).

Intuitive eaters challenge societal standards by refusing to base their self-worth on their body image. Studies done on intuitive eaters, compared to dieters, have shown that intuitive eaters have greater self-esteem and refuse to conform to eating disorder thought patterns. (Tylka and Wilcox 478-479). Intuitive eaters have more contentedness with their body image which lessens the pressure of society. The higher the self-esteem, the more optimistic on life. (Cadena-Schlam 998). On the contrary, many individuals who do not practice intuitive eating, especially in the early adulthood stage of life, obtain a greater negative body image. (Augustus-

Horvath and Tylka 111). Females obsess over their weight and attaining the “perfect body.” (Smith and Hawks 135). For example, a young woman will intensely exercise and restrict calories just to look like a model and look good in a bikini. As a result, she thinks less of herself. She only sees how much weight she still has to lose and how her body is not “perfect” compared to those models and peers she admires. Individuals everywhere desire to belong. Intuitive eating is vital for mental victories so that individuals can live in the freedom of loving their bodies and appreciating how God has created them. Intuitive eating aids in the journey to self-love because it is associated with the art of well-being. Well-being focuses on the overall mental and physical health of a person. (Augustus-Horvath and Tylka 111). Once a person learns to accept their body for how it works and its genetics, that person can move on to apply more intuitive eating practices to their lives. (Augustus-Horvath 110). Intuitive eaters are less likely to participate in eating disorder thought patterns and more likely to develop a pattern of self-care. (Gast, e96). Examples of self-care include, “valuing a healthy body over a thin one, body acceptance, and enjoying physical activity.” (Gast, e96). Self-care encompasses taking care of the body. Some examples of self-care include taking a bubble bath after a long day at work, going to bed early to get extra rest, and reading a book before bed. A few tips to cultivate self-care in the journey of making peace with your body include: respecting it, appreciating it, and loving it. (Tribole and Resch 169).

Intuitive eating promotes mental health and stability by fostering a positive mindset towards food and life. Mentally, intuitive eating discourages restrictive and emotional eating,

and promotes positive body image. While it is clear that intuitive eating provides mental benefits, the evidence demonstrates that many physical advantages also result.

Physically, intuitive eating lays the foundation for a nourished body. A physically nourished body better functions in balance with all the organs, cells, muscles, and joints working in harmony. A nourished body exercises and eats a healthy amount of food to fuel everyday life. Physically, intuitive eating fuels proper exercise, promotes honoring hunger, maintains appropriate weight, and offers other biological benefits.

An essential key to intuitive eating is physical activity. Intuitive eaters have been shown to develop a better relationship with physical activity versus those who utilized exercise only as a means to reaching a weight goal. (Gast, e92). Since body acceptance plays a vital role in intuitive eating, physical activity becomes an enjoyment. The intuitive eater views physical activity as a way to feel good and move, without the burden of tracking the number of calories burned and how much or less to consume throughout the day based on exercise intensity. (Gast, e92). Intuitive eating also increases motivation to actively exercise with moderation. An intuitive eater who views exercise this way will go for a run not because they have to but because they want to. (Shateri 184). Intuitive eaters take pleasure in exercise rather than pain. Exercise improves quality of life in the areas of sleep, empowerment, energy, stress, and overall a greater sense of well-being. (Tribole and Resch 186). Exercise has also been shown to decrease chronic stress. (Tribole and Resch 187). Exercise is a way to calm anxiety and feel excellent in mind and body. (Tribole and Resch 193). Running, for example, alleviates stress

from the mind and allows the body to detox. Overarchingly, intuitive eating strives to aid people in viewing exercise as an energizing and pleasant way to move the body. (Tribole and Resch 39). A person who does not have a right relationship with exercise will exercise too much or too little.

Overexercising typically results from making weight loss the goal of exercise. (Tribole and Resch 187). Research has shown that women who restricted their caloric intake were more likely to overdo exercise than those who did not restrict their caloric intake. (Gast, e97). Those women were also more likely to injure themselves exercising and were at higher risk for an eating disorder. Especially in women, overexercising can cause hormone imbalance. In order to develop a healthy relationship with exercise, one must listen to his or her body. (Tribole and Resch 195). If an individual ignores signals from the body, that person will exercise on sheer willpower, which will only last so long before injury occurs. The body knows its limits and will break down when limits have been exceeded. I can personally relate to injuries from excessively working out. I developed peroneal tendonitis in my right ankle from running. Naturally, my feet have high arches. I over pronate when I run, so the constant action of running caused inflammation in my outer tendons. The natural state of my feet combined with running too far and too long every day one summer resulted in tendonitis. I continued to increase running speed and distance even though my ankle screamed at me to stop right away. I had to take a long break from running to allow my ankle to heal. Rest is also important, because it gives muscles time to repair and build strength. Forms of exercise that are extremely

beneficial physically and mentally include strength training for muscle rebuilding and stretching for injury prevention. (Tribole and Resch 195). When utilized with caution and enjoyment, exercise moves our bodies toward a healthy lifestyle.

In addition to exercise, intuitive eating focuses on honoring hunger to determine physical satiety. Intuitive eaters learn to identify their bodily hunger signals and feed themselves nutritiously. (Smith and Hawks 134). Intuitive eaters learn to pay attention to gut reactions and gut rumbles to determine their hunger level. (Tribole and Resch 106-107). A study completed on how intuitive eating promotes a healthy weight showed that intuitive eaters were more likely to consume breakfast, which lowered fat intake and reduced snacking. (Smith and Hawks 134). The key force of intuitive eating is satisfaction. (Tribole and Resch 132). Another study has shown that individuals do not have to eat a lot to feel satisfied. (Tribole and Resch 144). A primary component of learning how to feel satisfied by food involves paying attention to likes and dislikes. Some people like soft ice cream while others like hard ice cream. According to Tribole and Resch, part of figuring out likes and dislikes includes having freedom to explore foods. "Knowing what you like to eat, and believing that you have the right to enjoy food are key factors in a lifetime of maintaining normal weight without dieting." (Tribole and Resch 145-146). Discovering the pleasure of eating helps to elevate satiety levels, resulting in less overeating and promoting overall optimal health. Instead of shoving down as much pizza as possible, try taking smaller bites and actually enjoy how it tastes. This promotes prolonged satiety. (Tribole and Resch 134).

As previously mentioned, dieting has major effects on mentality. Negative biological effects of dieting include slowed weight loss, more cravings, excess fat stored, and greater risk of heart disease and death. (Tribole and Resch 48). Overriding hunger happens when someone eats too little. If the stomach still grumbles after eating, the individual has not consumed enough. When someone eats five burgers instead of just one or two, overriding fullness occurs, alerting the person they are stuffed. (Outland 25). Overeating is a major biological effect of dieting, especially among Americans. One factor that contributes to overeating is restriction. (Tribole and Resch 40). Restriction promotes overeating because the dieter not only binges after they have restricted, but they also deafen their inner hunger signals. (Tribole and Resch 66-67). For example, a person who restricts calories and binges can never really tell if they are full and satisfied. That explains why that person keeps eating or stops after feeling the guilt of eating two bags of chips. The eating style of many Americans reveals that although Americans are more health conscious, they take less pleasure in their food compared to Europeans. (Smith and Hawks 131). Another factor, distracted eating, plays into overeating. Distracted eating occurs when someone reads a book or watches television while eating. This has been shown to increase the amount of food eaten. (Tribole and Resch 208). It is easier to mindlessly eat when one participates in a mindless activity, such as watching television. In addition, when thinness is the goal of dieting, food intake and cravings increase. For example, a girl trying to lose weight will turn down a donut offered to her by a co-worker. She craved the donut and wanted it. Instead of eating the donut, she turned it down. At the end of the day, she ate a whole bag of chips because she did not allow herself to eat earlier. By idolizing thinness, the girl ended up

eating more than if she had just eaten the donut. (Tribole and Resch 46). Consequently, restriction places the individual at a higher risk for an eating disorder. An individual plagued with an eating disorder has lost touch with his or her inner hunger signals and satiety levels. Intuitive eating aids in eating disorder recovery and seeks to restore weight and balance in life. (Tribole and Resch 252). Stress and adrenaline also cause overeating. Stress triggers blood sugar spikes and slows digestion, which plunges the body into “self-preservation mode.” (Tribole and Resch 156-157). When the body transitions into self-preservation mode, it will scarf up any food and eat even more. Eating more food now helps overcome the imprisonment of overeating. This will aid in decreased cravings and binging later. (Tribole and Resch 136).

In order to restore natural eating behaviors and balance, healing must take place. One mode of natural healing is through supplements, which take their root from plants and herbal remedies discovered by doctors and scientists centuries ago. (Boorstin 342-343). These remedies aid in balancing the imbalance in the human body. Balance in life is essential for optimal health and quality of life.

Balance not only applies to the physical body but also to food. In order to “feel your full,” as Tribole and Resch put it, individuals must learn to listen to their bodies in order to determine an imbalance in their diet or eating behaviors. To feel full, one must recognize subtle stomach fullness cues. Those cues include whether satisfaction and contentment have been obtained from eating and feeling neither hungry nor full. Feeling fullness is also highly individualistic. (Tribole and Resch 123). For example, one girl might need to eat one slice of

toast with peanut butter and banana, while another girl needs to eat two toasts with peanut butter and banana to feel full. Recognizing fullness aids in finding physical comfort and obtaining peace of mind over food. (Tribole and Resch 126). By paying attention to food consumed, one can eat intuitively. Making sure to incorporate a healthy protein, carb, and fat with every meal helps to feel fuller longer. A few other tips to feel full include eating without distraction and deciding before beginning when to stop. Pausing during the meal can help individuals check if they like what they are eating and if they feel satisfied by their food. The sensual quality of food, including taste, texture, aroma, appearance, temperature, and volume, all play a part in helping individuals feel satisfied. Take deep breaths before eating. Taking deep breaths before a meal allows the brain and body to connect and send messages during the meal. Allowing enough time to eat and eating slower allows the brain to decide to continue or stop eating. Intuitive eaters consider whether or not they are truly hungry. Is the body satisfied from the previous meal? Or is the stomach growling in anticipation of the next meal? (Tribole and Resch 124-129). It takes twenty minutes for the body to feel full, so take time to eat and enjoy food.

A major force in restriction is homeostatic compensation, which can be defined as, “A chemical force that reverses the loss of calories to the system.” In other words, homeostatic compensation reduces hunger hormones. (Outland 22). When one consumes less calories, hunger hormones, such as ghrelin, diminish. (Outland 22). This causes chaos in the body, because the body is forced into a self-preservation mode. Imagine an individual stranded in a

desert with no food, little water, and no shelter. After some time, the body will begin to shut down because the individual is not eating food and drinking water to stay hydrated. The same concept applies to living in a place surrounded by what the body needs. Calories sustain the human body and without calories, the body will shut down. In reality, cutting calories does damage to the physical body and is not a sustainable way to fuel the body. Dieting and restriction either cause extreme weight loss or weight gain. (Gast, e97). When someone gains weight, that person's ghrelin's levels climb above what they should be, which creates more fat cells. (Outland 24). Although trending, no carb or low carb diets actually harm the body. When no carbohydrates are consumed, the body pulls energy from protein in the muscles, which overall weakens the body. (Tribole and Resch 64). Another danger involves high-protein, low fat diets. Protein offers half the calories fat offers, so low fat diets pull from protein tissues. This causes unhealthy weight loss. (Tribole and Resch 65).

The American society pushes an unrealistic ideal to be thin. Unrealistic pressures to be thin deceive people into believing that there is only one ideal body type. Magazines, commercials, and ads on the internet all promote thin bodies. The ugly reality: the majority of those models, dancers, and actors are forced to starve themselves to maintain a skinny composure. Thin-sized bodies are not necessarily healthy bodies. Pressure to obtain and maintain a skinny composure even affects people with a healthy weight. (Smith and Hawks 131). Fat is viewed as the enemy and the "perfect" body idolized to a massive extent - especially among young women.

Natural, healthy weight is determined by normal intuitive eating patterns and the body's natural movement. (Tribole and Resch 178). Everybody comes in different shapes and sizes. Genetics primarily determines body shape. Some people are skinny, some people have a little extra fat. (Tribole and Resch 176-177). Despite society's scare tactics, body fat does not count for all body weight. Some body weight comes from water retention, bloat, fluid shift, and even the weather. (Tribole and Resch 55). Body Mass Index, also called BMI, is a ratio of weight to height and has been used to help people find out if they maintain a healthy weight. (Tribole and Resch 178). According to the BMI chart, a BMI of 30 or above verifies an obese condition. The obesity epidemic in America has soared to 30% of Americans. (Smith and Hawks 130). Obesity has proven to increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and chronic diseases. (Smith and Hawks 130).

How does intuitive eating biologically help someone live a healthier lifestyle? Studies completed indicate that intuitive eating lowers cortisol levels and overall inflammation in the body. (Tylka and Wilcox 475). Eating intuitively also helps to lower blood triglycerides, cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, cardiovascular risk, and Body Mass Index. Intuitive eating promotes healthy weight management. By listening to what the body communicates, intuitive eating shifts the focus of eating to satisfaction and biologically feeling well. (Smith and Hawks 130). Intuitive eating focuses on the art of well-being and portraying a balanced lifestyle. (Cadena-Schlam 1001). Intuitive eaters are 40% less likely to diet, restrict, or control their weight. (Cadena-Schlam 997). Intuitive eaters tend to incorporate more

nutritious foods and healthier eating habits into their lifestyles. (Cadena-Schlam 998).

According to Tribole and Resch, a person who respects their body respects its basic needs.

“Respecting your body means treating it with dignity and meeting it’s basic needs.” (Tribole and Resch 169).

Spiritually, intuitive eating draws a parallel between optimal health and spiritual life.

From a Biblical perspective, intuitive eating can support treating the body correctly, thinking on truth, and sharing that truth all for the glory of God. Eating intuitively reveals that the human body is complex and that the body parts work together. It points to the greatness of an intelligent Designer who created the human body to work harmoniously. Spiritually, intuitive eating establishes a worldview of physical nourishment based in the Word of God. Lastly, I have experienced the benefits of intuitive eating in my own life.

Intuitive eating encourages those with a Biblical worldview to recognize the parallel between spiritual health and physical health. For the Christian, intuitive eating can be used to take care of the physical body, God’s temple, where God resides. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (*New King James Version* 1 Cor. 6.19.20). From a Biblical perspective, the first step in eating intuitively must be spiritual health. Then, physical health will follow.

Intuitive eating addresses how to eat for optimal health. From a Biblical perspective, intuitive eating encourages the Christian to eat and live for the glory of God through a right mindset towards food. In addition, the believer's "fooditude" will change over time. In other words, improper attitudes about food change. Matthew 6:31-32 says, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matt. 6.31.32). Instead of worrying about what to eat next or wear next, this verse encourages the believer to trust in God's provision. Food comes from God and humans utilize it to nourish the body and maintain satisfaction. Intuitive eating comes alongside and re-establishes the fact that worrying about food is not necessary and can cause great psychological and physical damage. Having the proper attitude towards food produces the right mindset about food and health. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things." (Phil. 4.8). Worrying does not produce lovely, just, pure, or true thoughts. Individuals can apply principles of intuitive eating to this matter by asking oneself when hungry or tempted to worry about food, "Am I biologically hungry, or am I just (sad, mad, bored)?" "What is it I am really hungry for?" "What is the worst thing that can happen if I do not eat?" Then pray and trust God to provide for physical needs in whatever circumstance.

Clearly God wants believers to care for the health of the body, both physically and spiritually. God created humans in His image, "So God created man in His own image, in the

image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Gen. 1.27). God also created food, and He created it to nourish the human body. Genesis 1:29 explains, “And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.’” (Gen. 1.29). God created herbs and plants to fuel the human body to serve Him. In the Bible, Daniel represents someone who nourished his body in a God-glorifying way. Daniel 1:8 says, “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” (Dan. 1.8). Daniel refused to eat what the King provided and requested to eat only vegetables and drink only water. Verses 1:12-16 continue the story,

Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king’s delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants. So, he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies. Thus, the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

The whole, natural foods aided in physically looking and feeling healthier, which enabled Daniel and his friends to serve God with their whole hearts, minds, and souls. Daniel stayed in

tune with his body's nutritional needs based on his desire to obey God. He rejected the king's food in the king's palace because the Babylonians sacrificed the king's choice food to pagan gods.

Personally, intuitive eating has changed the way I view healthy living. Although I fell into the trap of restriction and disordered eating in my later high school years, intuitive eating has helped me overcome my fears. At first, it was difficult to attune myself to what my body needed versus what I perceived was a "good" or "bad" food. As I stated before, I first heard about intuitive eating through the food blog that I started the summer between my junior and senior years of high school. Other bloggers were talking about it and it piqued my interest. At that time, I lived in the midst of a disordered mental, physical, and spiritual rage that consumed nearly every part of my life, so I disregarded intuitive eating. In fall of my senior year, when I practically hit rock bottom physically, I finally realized that I needed to be mentally, physically, and spiritually well. My disordered eating habits halted me from growing in my relationship with Christ. The more time I spent working out and meticulously planning each meal to fit my calorie budget for the day, the time I spent reading God's Word decreased and I enjoyed life less. I realized following rules and diets were not the key to living a healthy lifestyle or pursuing a greater purpose in life.

God started to change the way I thought about food and exercise in 2018, which has led to a waterfall of discoveries not only about food and exercise, but also about myself and God. My body is not a calculator; fullness does not depend on my daily caloric intake. I listen to my

internal cues and act accordingly. Currently, intuitive eating aids me in living a healthy lifestyle because I can eat food and enjoy it. I no longer think about food all the time and no longer plan out exactly how many calories I am going to eat with every meal. I honor my cravings. If my body is craving chocolate after lunch, I will eat chocolate after lunch. I find the more I eat earlier in the day, the less tempted I am to snack at night. Food is fuel, and I discovered the pleasure of eating food as food.

Intuitive eating helps me to pursue both physical and spiritual strength in my life. From a physical viewpoint, I do not have to enslave myself to hours of working out every day; I just listen to what my body tells me to do. Although the basic principles of intuitive eating sound easy, I have learned to discipline myself. I have learned to eat, but not overeat and to say no to food, but not deny my cravings. Learning to love food and to love my body produced balance in my life. Balance in life is key to intuitive eating. Balance includes a little bit of everything in moderation. The journey to intuitive eating is not an easy one, but the destination is worth it. Spiritually, intuitive eating has aided me in seeing life and food as a gift from God. It has helped me to see that God created my body to be nourished physically and spiritually. The connection between intuitive eating and Biblical truths about caring for the body have supported me in repairing my negative body image. Overall, intuitive eating plays a key role in my life as I seek to live a healthy lifestyle and do so for the glory of God.

In conclusion, intuitive eating promotes a healthy lifestyle from a mental, physical, and spiritual viewpoint. "Intuitive eating is essential for the attunement of the mind, body, and

soul.” (Tribole and Resch 204). Why choose intuitive eating? Intuitive eating is a lifestyle choice, not just an alternative to dieting. Additionally, intuitive eating focuses on the quality of life and finding the pleasure of eating. Intuitive eating helps people live life in balance. At its core essence, intuitive eating promotes a healthy lifestyle through choices made based on inner signals and signs of satiety. Intuitive eating has changed thousands of lives, including mine. It has given me a passion to guide others to make proper choices for their mental, physical, and spiritual health. Intuitive eating allows people to live and eat freely, which indeed promotes a healthy and purposeful lifestyle.

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