

Mindfulness for Chocolate Lovers

A Lighthearted Way to Stress Less and Savor More Each Day

By Diane R. Gehart

Chocolate Meditation No. 2: Embracing White, Milk, and Dark

You can access the guided meditation at www.mindfulnessforchocolatelovers.com or use this meditation guide and follow along.

Materials: For this exercise, you need to have on hand three forms of chocolate, such as milk, white, and dark (or substitute three forms of any similar type of food, such as nuts, fruits, etc.). All should be unwrapped.

- One must be a form of chocolate (or other food) you feel neutral about.
- One must be a form of chocolate (or other food) you love to eat—preferably your favorite.
- One must be a form of chocolate (or other food) you dislike—yes, you read correctly—something you avoid eating at all costs.

Set-Up: Begin by placing the three objects in front of you in a row, beginning with the “neutral” object, then “most preferred,” and lastly the “least preferred.” As we move through this exercise, I want you to begin by pretending you have never experienced any of these objects. Sometimes it helps to think of yourself as an anthropologist studying a long-lost ancient site, such as a Mayan temple to the chocolate gods. Try to get your mind into an open and curious state.

Neutral Chocolate/Food: Pick up the neutral object with your non-dominant hand, and notice the following:

- *Color:* Notice the shades of color and how the light reflects off the object.

- *Shapes:* Notice the shape and any markings. If there are letters, notice the shapes of the letters and avoid thinking about the words they may form; simply notice the shapes and contours, and do your best to experience the letters without connecting them to conventional meaning.
- *Texture:* Next, notice the texture: Is it smooth, rough, hard, soft?
- *Scent:* Bring it toward your nose and observe the qualities of the scent of the object: Is it pungent, sweet, floral, spicy, fruity, strong, light?
- *Notice Your Thoughts and Feelings:* Bring the object up to your mouth as if you were going to eat it, but **do not** do so. Notice if your body reacts at all. Do you start to salivate? Notice the thoughts and feelings going through your mind: Is there a sense of anticipation or frustration? Just notice how your body and mind respond, trying not to judge what is going on as good or bad. Just curiously observe what your body is doing.
- *One Bite:* Take a bite, allowing the object to sit on your tongue rather than chewing it. Notice its texture: smooth, hard, porous, soft. Is it cold, warm, hot? Notice the taste: Is it sweet, salty, bitter, sour? Roll it around your tongue and notice if it tastes different on different parts of your tongue. *Try not to evaluate whether or not you like the taste.* Just notice how it tastes. Notice how your body may be responding: Does it begin to crave more? Does it want to stop eating? Does your breathing or heart rate change? Notice without judging or reacting. Go ahead and finish mindfully eating this object....

Preferred Chocolate/Food: Pick up the preferred chocolate with your non-dominant hand, and mindfully observe and then taste using the same steps as the first object.

Least Preferred Chocolate/Food: Finally, pick up the least preferred chocolate with your non-dominant hand, and mindfully observe and then taste using the same steps as the first object.

Questions for Reflection

- Did you notice anything you had never noticed previously about the objects?

- Even if your ranking of favorites is the same, has your view of any of them changed in any way?
- Do you have any new insight into how you form preferences, opinions, and attachments? <callout ends>

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