

# Non-hunger eating: The Eating Blueprint approach, part 5

## Friends

Do you remember The Beatles song, “With a little help from my friends?” Well today’s F is about how we can get more than just “by” with the help of our friends – we can also get bigger! Because eating together is so bonding, isn’t it? They are eating, so we do too. Shared eating experiences can be wonderful occasions and are a great way of fostering connections and communities.

But is food the only way you can bond with your friends? Sometimes, the answer is “yes!”, however, occasionally the answer might be “no,” or perhaps, “not always.” It’s simply that it’s your default when you’re with this person to go out for food, to cook for each other, to share a piece of cake with that coffee.

So today’s experiment is to simply notice and become aware. “Ah, when I’m with this friend, my default is to bond with food!” Nothing necessarily needs to change, just the recognition is a great insight; however, if you do want to try out a new way to bond, then do! And if the relationship feels different somehow without the food, then that too is an interesting outcome to notice, isn’t it?

## Foraging

Foraging is the way that we “hunt and gather” our food; in other words, how we do (or don’t do) the food shopping experience. There are lots of options available – from online shopping, going to an outdoor market, or picking up what you need at the corner shop, to browsing the supermarket aisles in the middle of the night! Do you shop alone, or with kids, a parent, partner, or friend? Perhaps someone else does it for you and the first thing you know about it are the cupboards and fridge stacked full.

Today, I invite you to think about the way that food tends to appear in your life. And more importantly, does it suit you? If you could magically have the shopping experience happen in just the right way for you, how would it look?

- Does it stress you out and you’d rather not have

anything to do with it all?

- Do you love the experience, and just wish you had more time available to make it an occasion?
  - Does the experience de-rail you – offering you 2-for-1 deals you just can’t resist, or reminding your kids of the sweets you are all trying to avoid as you pay?
- Experiment with thinking about one change you could try that would bring your ideal shopping experience a little bit closer to you.
- Maybe you can ask someone else to do it with you occasionally.
  - Try online shopping for a change.
  - Make an event of it and look for something new.
  - Experiment with having a “No BOGOFs today” rule (buy one get one free).
  - If your kids de-rail you, consider how can you translate your skills of saying “no” in a loving yet assertive way when they are physically in danger (think playing with a shiny knife that they don’t know will hurt them) to the “no” you use in the supermarket.

How does it feel? As always, if anything helps you feel better about your relationship with food, then simply do more of it.

## Fury

Fury or anger, rage, resentment, irritation, annoyance; each of these emotions, whether expressed or beneath the surface, can lead us to eat.

Anger gets a bit of a bad reputation in our modern day world, often because it can lead us to do hurtful things. But anger is a human emotion and if it’s an emotion that’s still around today, it means it has value.

Fury is a natural response to being attacked, insulted, deceived, frustrated, or hurt. In our evolutionary past, it’s likely that fury helped us to avoid certain people or keep ourselves safe. In our modern day lives, it can be a signal that a boundary has been crossed, or that something needs to change; however, if you grew up witnessing anger when it was



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## About this series

This article is the fifth piece in a six-part series that outlines a number of the psychological skills involved in the Eating Blueprint Starter Programme (Nash, 2016), designed to provide the “psychological skills” to support traditional weight management advice. It continues on from the comment from issue 5 of this journal (pages 152–3).

This article covers five further F-themed strategies. Nurses may be interested using some of these strategies in their time-limited consultations.

## About the Eating Blueprint

The Eating Blueprint is a “psychological skills” approach to weight management, equipping individuals with a simple-to-use toolkit of strategies delivered within an online/video programme.

The Eating Blueprint method was created by Dr Jen Nash, Chartered Psychologist. A recovered emotional eater herself, Jen has spent the last 10 years immersed in the heart and mind of eating behaviour, unlocking the missing link of her own food-weight journey, and she now loves nothing more than to inspire others to find theirs.

The programme is available for NHS commissioning or, alternatively, the strategies in this article are available as a book and accompanying online Starter Programme for £12. To access or for further information, please email: [hello@eatingblueprint.com](mailto:hello@eatingblueprint.com)

For a free information pack, register your name and email address at:

[www.EatingBlueprint.com](http://www.EatingBlueprint.com)



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*Journal of Diabetes Nursing*  
19: 401–7

Available at:

<https://is.gd/mindfulnessjdn>

out of control, or you were punished for expressing appropriate anger, it is natural to grow into adulthood with a tendency to suppress it.

In fact you may well be reading this saying: “Jen, I never feel angry.” If so, then see this as a clue. If you’re not aware of ever feeling angry, but you do sometimes find yourself eating in an out of control way, then I have an invitation for you. Next time you find yourself eating in this way, ask yourself a question as you eat.

- “What could I be angry at right now?” Your brain may answer, “I’m angry at myself because I can’t stop eating!”, in which case, thank your brain, and ask the question again.

- “What else could I be angry at?” Notice what thoughts, images, or memories come into your mind.

- Is it the face of your neighbour who yet again asked you to babysit her kids?

- Is it the words of your partner when they complimented your sister’s cooking efforts, but who always overlooks yours?

- Is it the phone call you had with your mum about her sickness, her loneliness, her challenges, her, her, her... with no space for you or your life?

As always, you don’t have to change anything. Sometimes food can be a helpful way to deal with fury, but the first step is to notice what’s really going on. See, that the food may simply be a smokescreen. Get curious and see what lies behind it.

## Finally

This refers to that feeling of being starving hungry, “finally” allowing yourself to eat and then going to the other extreme and devouring everything in sight.

Do you go long periods without eating as a weight loss strategy? Or are your days so busy that you don’t have time to eat? Or perhaps you sometimes forget to eat because you’ve been lost in a task or you need to meet a deadline?

If so, it’s likely that this can sometimes lead to an “oh finally!” response, where you eventually do eat and then consume everything in sight, going way beyond your feelings of being full up. Like most styles of eating, this one is a usual part of living a full life. But for some of us, this can be our default way of experiencing food; not eating all day and then eating lots in the evening, in which case, it may not be the way of eating that serves us best.

So today’s experiment is simply to consider how you could eat “frequently” instead of “finally”. You’ll know

the ideas that feel possible for you. Here are a few to get you started:

- Could you put a reminder on your phone to eat something every few hours?

- Ask your colleague who goes to the deli if you could shout them a coffee if they pick something up for you?

- Creatively break up your meals into two smaller ones rather than one big meal at once?

Simply pick one that sounds do-able and give it a go. You can always go back to your “oh finally” way of eating if that suits you better.

## Feasting

Feasting describes that “I can’t stop once I’ve started” or “I just can’t resist” experience, something that we are all familiar with.

Today I want to offer you a different way to think about this. Because if you think about it, life is full of decisions in which we choose to resist doing what we might really want to in the moment. Whether it’s:

- Not taking what we want without paying in a shop.

- Turning the alarm off and sleeping in on a work day.

- Or not acting on feelings of attraction towards someone if we’re in a committed relationship.

We have the skills to resist in other areas of our lives, so the invitation today is to consider whether it’s possible to develop this skill in the area of food too?

The key is to “commit” to the practice of saying no to more food on one occasion today; in just the same way as you have “committed” to not miss work, not be unfaithful, or not to steal! It’s funny to look at eating in the same way as these actions, isn’t it?

Make a commitment to not feasting in the same way you might commit to your partner, your work, or parenting responsibilities. See how it feels. And then “resist” or “delay” when the feasting urge strikes:

- Put down your fork, count to 3 in your head and then carry on eating.

- Say to yourself, “I can wait until it’s 1 pm to eat my lunch.”

- Or, an interesting game to play; when food “calls you”, respond in the same way you would if someone other than your partner tried to kiss you!

And know that, if it “hurts”, what you’re doing is simply exercising the muscle of tolerating delay. Just like the pain of turning off the snooze button and getting out of bed passes, the pain of saying no to food will pass with practice too. ■