



**The Inner Eater Selves:
Integrating the Parts of the Personality Involved in Eating**

Handouts

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The Inner Eater System

THE GOAL OF THE INNER EATER SYSTEM

The goal of this system is to identify, understand, separate and befriend the Inner Comfort Eater Selves (ICES) and the Nutrition In-Tune Eater Selves (NITES) and eventually integrate them into Body In-Tune Eating which recognizes and honors the natural needs of the body. The result is the development of a new psychological configuration that fosters more balanced and conscious eating patterns while still honoring these selves.

NATURAL WEIGHT

Natural weight is a state in which one feels comfortable about one's body image. One knows he or she has arrived at this state because there is no daily struggle in maintaining this weight. One reaches natural weight by reading and following the body's signals when eating. One identifies Natural Weight through a detail history of the past and present eating patterns and weight, genetics and family eating habits and beliefs.

THE INNER EATER SYSTEM

The Inner Eaters System is composed of sub-personalities or inner selves in our psyches that are involved exclusively with food and eating. One group is called The Inner Comfort Eater Selves (ICES) and the opposite of this group is called Nutrition In-Tune Eater Selves (NITES).

The Inner Comfort Eater Selves (ICES)

The Inner Comfort Eater Selves (ICES) use food as a tool for psychological comfort, protection, pleasure, or stress release instead of for its nutritional value. These inner selves misuse food by either over- or under-eating. When the ICES take over, the experience of food and eating brings pure ecstasy and/or total escape followed by severe self-criticism.

Usually people identify and name their own group of ICES. For example, an individual might have:

"The Secret Eater" I eat in secrecy whenever nobody else is around.

"The Volume Eater" I need volume because I want to take it all into her.

"Just eat, eat, eat" Stop thinking, stop feeling, just eat, eat, eat, eat.

"Sweet Eater" You had your dinner, now you need something sweet

"Non Stop Pleasure Eater" This tastes good, why stop, have some more

"The Scavenger" Clean it all up. Do not throw away any food. Finish it.

"TV Eater"

"Finish your food"

"I need something to do"

"Fuck it, eat what you want to eat."

"It is OK to eat it, you start your diet tomorrow"

"Lets take a break"

Overeating is helpful in that it:

- Is comforting
- Fills the void
- Gives one something to do
- Keeps one feeling safe
- Hides feelings, hits insecurities
- Is a guaranteed distraction
- Offers momentary pleasure
- Gives one a break, something to do to relax
- Takes care of loneliness
- Is soothing
- Helps with boredom

The main gift that the ICES bring is the protection they offer from any hurtful, overwhelming, and unpleasant emotions. They protect by blurring these emotions through eating. They act as first responders and are constantly on call. This group of inner eaters takes care of vulnerability that a person may be unwilling or unable to handle directly.

The ICES are limited by the fact that they have no connection to the body, especially to the stomach and taste buds. When the ICES are active, one eats whether or not one is hungry and continues to eat after the stomach is full. There is no tasting of the food; instead, a person will eat large quantities of food very quickly. One of the most serious limitations, is how the ICES bring on inner critical attacks. These inner critical voices enter after a meal or first thing in the morning. When one tries on clothes in department stores, steps on a scale, or looks in the mirror, he or she suffers attacks severe enough to cause depression. In an effort to deal with the depression, a person will eat more, thus creating an unending, vicious cycle.

Nutrition In-Tune Eater Selves (NITES)

Conversely, another group of selves uses food only for its nutritional value. These selves are known as the Nutrition In-Tune Eater Selves (NITES). When the NITES take control, one treats eating as a strict and serious regimen, categorizes food as either good or bad, defines right and wrong portions, and recognizes correct or incorrect food combinations at all times. For example, one might have developed "The Healthy Eater," a self who eats only what is considered healthy and rarely buys any products without reading the labels. For another individual, "The Weight Watchers Eater" might have become dominant in his or her personality. This is a self who equates food with points and who carefully counts every time he or she eats.

One of the NITES' benefits is that they place food in perspective, and their main function is to enable a person to lose weight. This is done by following external cues, usually through prescribed diet plans and programs. NITES are well educated about the nutritional aspects of food as well as different types of exercise and are extremely concerned with the individual's health. This group has strict rules, and following these rules can bring concrete results. Identifying with the NITES might very well be the only way for an individual to reach a natural weight, thus maintaining one's health and saving one's life.

One of this group's limitations is that it does not allow for any flexibility in eating. Its rules resemble army commands that sometimes exclude a person from eating entire food groups. NITES are constantly mindful of when, how much, and what one should eat as well as how frequent and intense an exercise regimen should be. They often require the person to measure food, to specify how many meals should be eaten daily, and at what times during the day one should eat them. This consumes a significant amount of energy and removes the natural joy and pleasure that eating can provide. The NITES have no connection to the body because a person is forced to follow external cues at all times, at any cost.

When the NITES take over without awareness it is easy to lose weight but impossible to maintain it off. The Diet Missionaries, part of NITES, go to work when you have a special event like, weddings, vacations, fall in love, health scare. Then you have the Greedy Dieter that always takes you below your natural weight when you go on a diet. Shortly after that you flip back to the ICES again.

BODY IN-TUNE EATING (BITE)

When one becomes available for a transformational shift, the two groups of inner eaters are integrated and the body's signals regarding eating are consistently taken into consideration. This process is called Body In-Tune Eating (BITE). One is ready for such a change when one gets tired of yo-yo dieting and becomes determined to end the struggle with eating once and for all. As one begins to use Body In-Tune Eating, one is able to enjoy and find pleasure in food, making healthy nutritional choices while staying connected with and tuning in to the body's signals. One reaches this state by learning to identify, understand, and befriend their inner eater selves.

For additional books and articles on the Theory of the Psychology of Selves and the Voice Dialogue Method you may visit the Resources page of www.koumidoucenter.com and/or the Reading Room of www.delos-inc.com

INFORMATIVE BOOKS

Koumidou-Vlesmas, Yolanda and Moritz Renate, (2019) *Responding to Loneliness and Longing*, Companion Books

Koumidou-Vlesmas, Yolanda (2015) *The Inner Eater Selves, Integrating the Parts of Personality Involved in Overeating*.

Roszak, Gomes, Kanner (1995). *Ecopsychology*, Sierra Club Books

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Stone, Hal and Sidra:

(1989). *Embracing Our Selves*, Nataraj

(1993). *Embracing Your Inner Critic*, HarperCollins

(2000). *Partnering*, New World Library

Tolle, Eckhart (1999). *The Power of Now*, New World Library

INSPIRING BOOKS

Hoff, Benjamin (1983). *The Tao of Pooh*, Penguin Books

Meher Baba:

(1967), 6th Edition. *Discourses*, Maharashtra, India, currently carried by Sheriar Books, South Carolina

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Kornfield, Jack (2000). *After the Ecstasy, The Laundry*, Bantam

Ruiz, Don Miguel (1997). *The Four Agreements*, Amber-Allen Publishing, Inc.

Watts, Alan (1957). *The Way of Zen*, Pantheon Books Inc.

Welwood, John (1990). *Journey of the Heart*, HarperCollins

VIDEOS

Videos can be accessed through:

www.koumidoucenter.com click on RESOURCES