HOW TO NOT EAT CAKE...
REALLY FAST, STANDING UP, WHEN NOBODY'S LOOKING.

BY ISABEL FOXEN DUKE
I know.

Bingeing on food secretly in the corner of the kitchen is hell, especially when you’re nervous your boyfriend/roommate/sister/mother might walk in and catch you eating your weight in Hershey’s Kisses. You may be thinking: What’s wrong with me? Will I be screwed up around food forever?! **GOD HELP ME GET A GRIP!** Or something along those lines.

I know this sentiment pretty well. And I have A LOT to say about it — way more than I can fit into this little PDF. So, I’ve designed this “how to” as a starter guide — my best quickie tips for getting your shit together when you’re in a food coma and don’t know what the hell else to do. And if you want to have a deeper conversation about how to change the way you think about food permanently, keep reading my coaching emails (which you can sign up for at isabelfoxenduke.com) and/or check out my free video training series, Stop Fighting Food, at www.stopfightingfood.com.

PS — Disclaimer: you won’t find any diet tips here. Diets generally drive women batshit crazy around food, and for that matter, drive them straight into the back of their cupboard cabinets rebelliously scrounging for nut butters. **Stop Dieting Now.** And try this instead...
LET YOURSELF EAT THE CAKE, and sit the f*** down. Enjoy, savor and for God’s sake, chew! If I were you, not only would I sit my ass in a chair but I would put that warm, chewy, chocolate cake goodness on a really attractive dish and maybe garnish it with some berries, or whipped cream like it was the QUEEN of all the cakes in the land. **Why would you waste such a treat eating so fast you barely remember it happened?** Oh right, because you’ve been trained to think you’re wrong and cake is an evil, Satan, sinner magnet. Well, guess what? Food taunts us way less when we honor it as the life-sustaining force that it is. Curling up on the kitchen floor guarding our baked goods is a reaction to two primary experiences: deprivation and shame. (Remember that, I’ll be talking about it a lot going forward...)

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2. After you’ve forgiven yourself for being a human who likes to eat cake, ask yourself why — in this particular moment — the cake is calling your name. Are you lonely and want a little companionship? Anxious? Nervous? Bored?

OR are you like a kid in a toy store who’s been told not to touch his favorite toy? (That is, do you want the cake because you want what you think you can’t have?) It’s time to get honest about what’s driving your choices with food. There is always a reason for any choice you make. You’re not a crazy, irrational, glutton who “can’t control herself.” You’re reacting to something.

3. Pay attention to your food when you’re eating, and your life when you’re living. Isn’t it funny how we obsess about food all day and night, but when we’re actually eating it we try to make the act as fleeting and unnoticeable as possible? As if eating quickly might make it “not count?” Ritualizing, honoring, and (gasp!) ENJOYING food is a natural mechanism to help us eat more “mindfully” — which is a fancy way of saying, it helps us pay attention to what our bodies really need to eat, rather than our compulsive, obsessive minds.
Similarly, when we can’t stop thinking about food outside of mealtimes (ya know, like when you’re at a cocktail party trying to enjoy the company of friends, but all you can think about is the baked brie you may or may not allow yourself to eat when the hors d’oeuvres tray comes by?) — that’s when it’s time to tune back into what’s actually happening in real life, that is, your life outside of food.

Tune back into that conversation with your girlfriend, that project you’re finishing at work, or whatever else it is that’s happening right now, in reality. **The brie has nothing to say to you.**  

4. Get dressed, even when you’re alone in your apartment (wearing really sexy loungewear that makes you feel like a B.A.M.F. counts). Remember: when we believe we look like hell, and put no effort into making ourselves feel good at our current size, we stay in and eat cake... and anything else that isn’t nailed down. There are a lot of reasons for this that I go into in my blogs and emails, but the bottom line is, it’s a lot easier to stop obsessing about food when we feel good about ourselves, and honoring our appearance **right now** is one way to do that. Do what you need to do to honor this body, the one you have today. I don’t care if you’re 300 pounds. Own it. Or at the very least, brush your teeth and paint your nails a really cool color.
5. Do something physical — or anything that reminds you that you have a body that feels things. This might include dancing in your room alone, or rubbing yourself down with really expensive lotion. Or sex of any kind... duh. This serves two primary functions: First, it reminds us to slow down and pay attention to our bodies’ needs (hunger and thirst being particularly helpful cues to notice when we first relinquish traditional diets). Second, movement reminds us that we are actual living mammals. Would you treat a child or a pet with all that starving, stuffing, and/or self-criticism you subject yourself to on a regular basis? Say NO.

6. Take your power back. That is, don’t let food (or fat) boss you around. Ever. Don’t ever decline a dinner invitation because you can’t eat what’s on the menu, and don’t let your skinny jeans tell you not to go out tonight. You’re going out tonight. And you’re getting down with your bad self. This is a really, reallyyyyy important one. Most emotional eating is done out of boredom, stress, or because we can’t stand some aspect of our lives as they currently exist. Your life can be awesome no matter what you weigh. And when you don’t know that, truly and deeply, in your core, it is very difficult for food to lose its grip.
So, chew on these for a while and see how you feel. And I know, I know... they're not the easiest things to put into practice right away. These are serious lifestyle changes — and I don’t mean the “I-don’t-eat-gluten-anymore” kind of lifestyle changes. I’m talking about mind-bending, reality-altering, thinking-pattern shifts. If you’ve been struggling with your relationship with food for God knows how long, it might be time to put some effort into a new way of being with food.

After all, how long have you been trying and failing with the “I’ll-just-cut-out-grains” mentality? A while now? I’m guessing we have some work to do...

Also, if you’re looking to do more serious work with me, check out the “Coaching” tab of www.isabelfoxenduke.com and sign up for my wait list. Once you’re signed up, I’ll be in touch when future coaching programs open up.

Love,

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