

Module 7, Lesson 2 Handout:
Food Journal Examples

We know the food journal is not only a great tool to track what a person eats, but to pinpoint the *why* behind these food choices. If you aren't already doing so, encourage clients to track their HQ with each meal and to jot down a word or two to describe how they were feeling when they chose their meal and ate that meal. This can help identify any patterns and connections between emotions and food choices. Let's dig into a few sample client food journals and discuss what the journal may be revealing about the client, and how you as the professional can help.

Client 1

Breakfast: 7 am

- *HQ 6, feeling tired*
- ½ whole wheat bagel with 2 tablespoons cream cheese
- 1 cup pineapple
- Coffee with milk

Lunch: 12 pm

- *HQ 9, feeling hungry and distracted*
- Caesar salad with chicken and parmesan cheese, no croutons
- Iced tea

Snack: 2:30 pm

- *HQ 7, feeling stressed*
- Apple with squeeze pack of Justin's peanut butter
- 1 siggi's vanilla yogurt
- Water

Dinner: 7:15 pm

- *HQ 7, feeling calm, relaxed*
- 4 ounces broiled scallops
- Small serving rice pilaf
- 1 cup roasted broccoli in olive oil

- Two slices of French bread with butter
- Two glasses of sauvignon blanc
- Water

Snack: 9:10 pm

- HQ 4, feeling sleepy
- 3 squares of Ghiradelli dark chocolate

This client could benefit from adding some additional protein into her breakfast like an egg or lox, especially since she's feeling tired, and adding in an AM snack so she doesn't feel so hungry and distracted by lunch time. Suggest a handful of nuts or a plain Greek yogurt with cinnamon. Lunch could be beefed up a bit too to prevent that afternoon crash which extends into overeating a bit at dinner. Instead of that chicken caesar salad, she could order the ancient grain bowl with chicken and roasted vegetables, which would offer more fiber, protein and nutrients. She chose nutritious options at her afternoon snack which was good but it looks like she may have been making up for not eating enough at lunch. Her dinner wasn't poor, but maybe that feeling of calm and being relaxed led her to that slice of bread and second glass of wine. Ask open ended questions about the meal here to see if she was really tuning into her true hunger or if her food choices were based more on the mindset of "It's the end of the day so I deserve to relax with bread and wine." Did she have a wrestling match in her mind about whether or not to have the bread? Or did she eat them in an empowered way. If she was "rewarding" herself but not Eating Empowered, this would be a time to discuss other ways to nurture herself. After dinner, her HQ was a 6 and she was feeling sleepy, so ask her if she really enjoyed that chocolate mindfully or just ate it out of habit.

Client 2

Breakfast: 7:30 am

- HQ 7, feeling energized post spin class
- 2 scrambled eggs
- 1 slice sprouted grain toast with 1/3 avocado
- Iced coffee with oat milk

Snack: 10:45 am

- HQ 6, feeling motivated
- KIND bar
- Water

Lunch: 1:10 pm

- HQ 7, feeling busy
- Sushi - 3 pieces eel avocado, 3 pieces spicy tuna
- Cup of miso soup
- Small seaweed salad
- Water

Snack: 4:30 pm

- HQ 6, feeling frustrated and stressed
- Small bag of popcorn, then another small bag of popcorn
- Vanilla latte

Snack: 6 pm

- HQ 5, feeling little anxious but also focused
- Handful of M&Ms

Dinner: 9 pm

- HQ 8, feeling drained
- Takeout - pad thai with tofu
- 3 veggie spring rolls
- Water

This client was off to a great start for the day. Then, the afternoon hit and it looks like there was some anxious/stress eating happening. You could ask her if something was going on at work -- maybe she had an unexpected project land on her desk that needed to be done by the end of the day. Who did she eat her sushi lunch with? A co-worker whom she had a stressful conversation with? Or, did she chat with her mother-in-law while at work and become anxious about the upcoming holidays? Her choices weren't terrible, but was she truly hungry for popcorn? Did she mindfully eat those M&Ms? She was feeling focused. What does that mean to her? Was she focused and just wanting a pick me up and those M&M's were actually eaten in an empowered conscious way? Or, was she mindlessly eating them walking past her co-workers desk? The answers to these questions are important to help devise strategies for this client. Dinner ended up being takeout at 9 pm, so ask this person if she regularly has late nights at the office and come up with a few go-to pantry meals so she doesn't need to rely on greasy takeout. Also, ask if this was a one-off bad day or if she's regularly feeling stressed at work. Ask these in an open ended way! Look for patterns in her food journal. If work stress is a big part of her life, help her with different coping strategies and ways to relax when she gets home. Maybe it's lighting a candle and doing some deep breathing before she sits down to her dinner that was premade over the weekend and ready to go in the fridge.

Client 3

Breakfast: 8 am

- *HQ 5, feeling rushed*
- Coffee with milk
- Rx bar

Snack: 10 am

- *HQ 6, feeling excited for later*
- Banana
- 6 oz plain yogurt
- ¼ cup granola
- Coffee with milk

Lunch: 1 pm

- *HQ 7, feeling over today*
- Sweetgreen Green Goddess
- (avocado, lentils, chickpeas, sweet potatoes, cabbage, beets, almonds, spinach, kale, green goddess ranch)
- Water

Dinner: 7 pm

- *HQ 8, feeling happy*
- Three glasses of rosé
- Shared appetizers - 2 stuffed mushrooms, 2 grilled shrimp
- Piece of bread with dipping oil
- Penne pasta with chicken and broccoli
- Dessert - a few bites of tiramisu
- Water

This person had a light breakfast and a larger morning snack, and that's okay. Often a mini breakfast followed by another mini breakfast/snack works perfect. This person clearly went out for dinner, so ask what the occasion was. Was it a celebration? How often does she go out? Is there always wine, appetizers and dessert? Did she "hold out" until dinner and skip an afternoon snack because she was going out? Or, does she never eat an afternoon snack? And,

if so, is she always at an 8 at dinner? Perhaps an afternoon snack is a good option. Perhaps go through menus with this client to come up with a strategy for dining out. Recommend sticking to one glass of wine and savoring an appetizer, slice of bread or dessert (not all three!). Again, this all depends on the info you receive but you need to ask the proper questions to get you that information and then go from there. Always, work with your client individually.

When your clients are really savvy at following their plans and listening to their bodies, they should know what, when and why they're eating what they're eating. Help clients tune into their feelings so they better understand the connection between their emotions and food choices. When something comes up that is unplanned, have them ask themselves "why am I eating this" without judgment. If they can answer that and decide they don't really like the reasoning, then they can interrupt themselves and take action. This is where the Triggers & Controls worksheet really comes in handy so that clients know exactly what to do when they're about to make a food choice that they know is based on emotion.