

Point32Health

**The Hunger Habit:
A Neuroscience-Based
Approach to
Healthier Eating**

**Session 3:
Surfing Your Cravings**

With
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Certified Mindfulness Instructor

Overview of All Sessions

1. Habit Loops and Curiosity
2. Is It Time to Eat? – the Hunger Test and the wisdom of our bodies
3. **Surfing Your Cravings – using the craving tool to dismantle unhelpful habits**
4. A Bigger, Better Offer – building your enchantment databank

RAIN Practice

Recognize – that a mood, feeling, or emotion is present

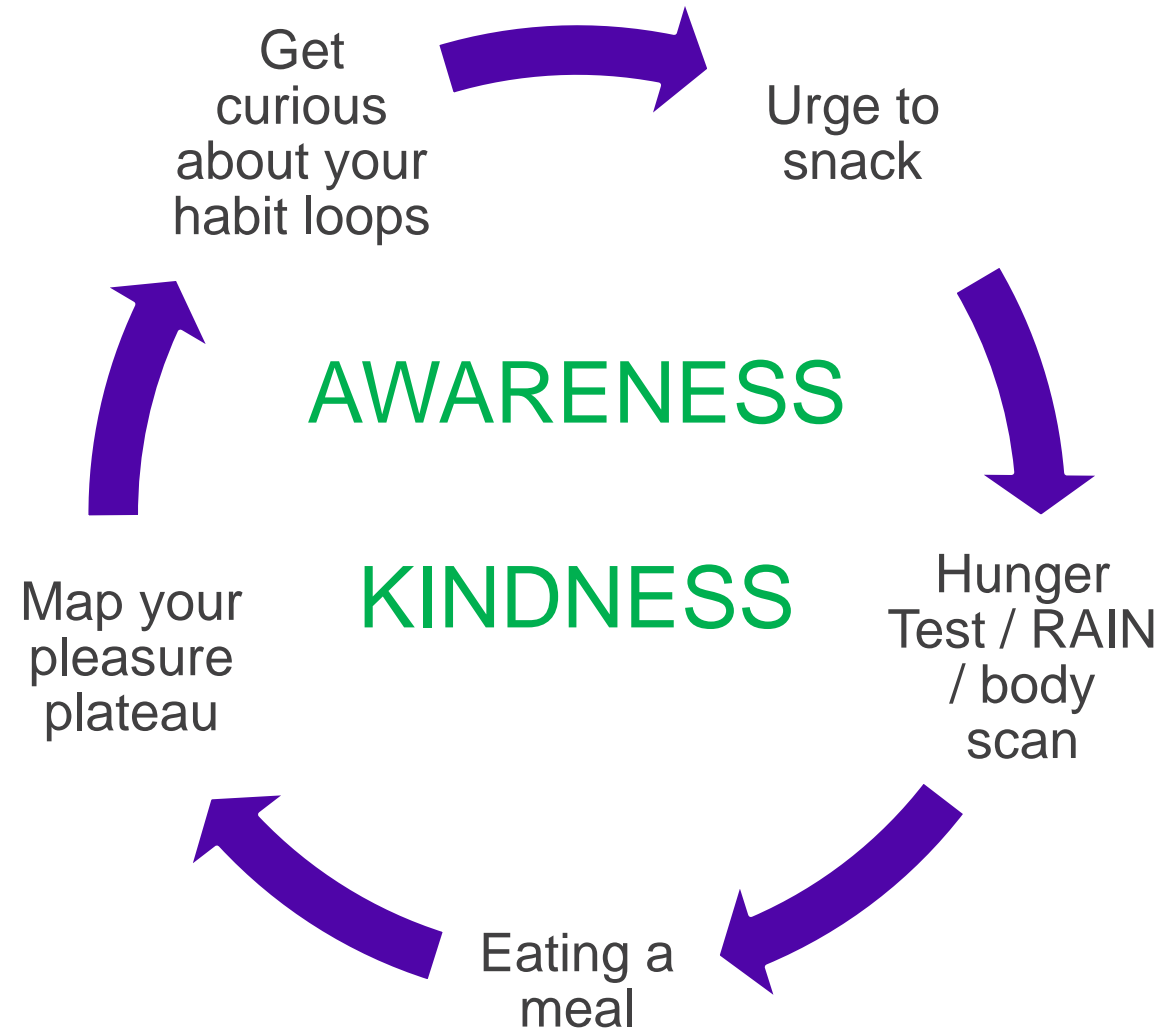
Accept – that it is there for now

Investigate – the body sensations that tell you what you are feeling

Note/Nurture/Non-identify

- Sharpen awareness of sensations
- Offer yourself kindness
- Awareness is bigger than the emotion

The Cycle of Your Day



Questions from Previous Sessions?

Overview of Session 3 – Going Deeper into Habit Loops

1. RAIN – awareness of emotions/moods
2. Befriending the body with the body scan – relearning our hunger cues
3. Changing reward values through awareness – the magic of the OFC
4. The Craving Tool
5. Action steps

The Body Scan

Body Scan

- = Bringing awareness to the body sequentially, part by part – going at the pace and level of “detail” that is right for you
- = A helpful way to start befriending the body

Benefits

- Regular body scans make the Hunger Test easier to understand and reconnect us to the actual sensations of hunger
- The body scan is good to do when in bed, to steer you away from thinking as you move into sleep



The Body Scan Practice



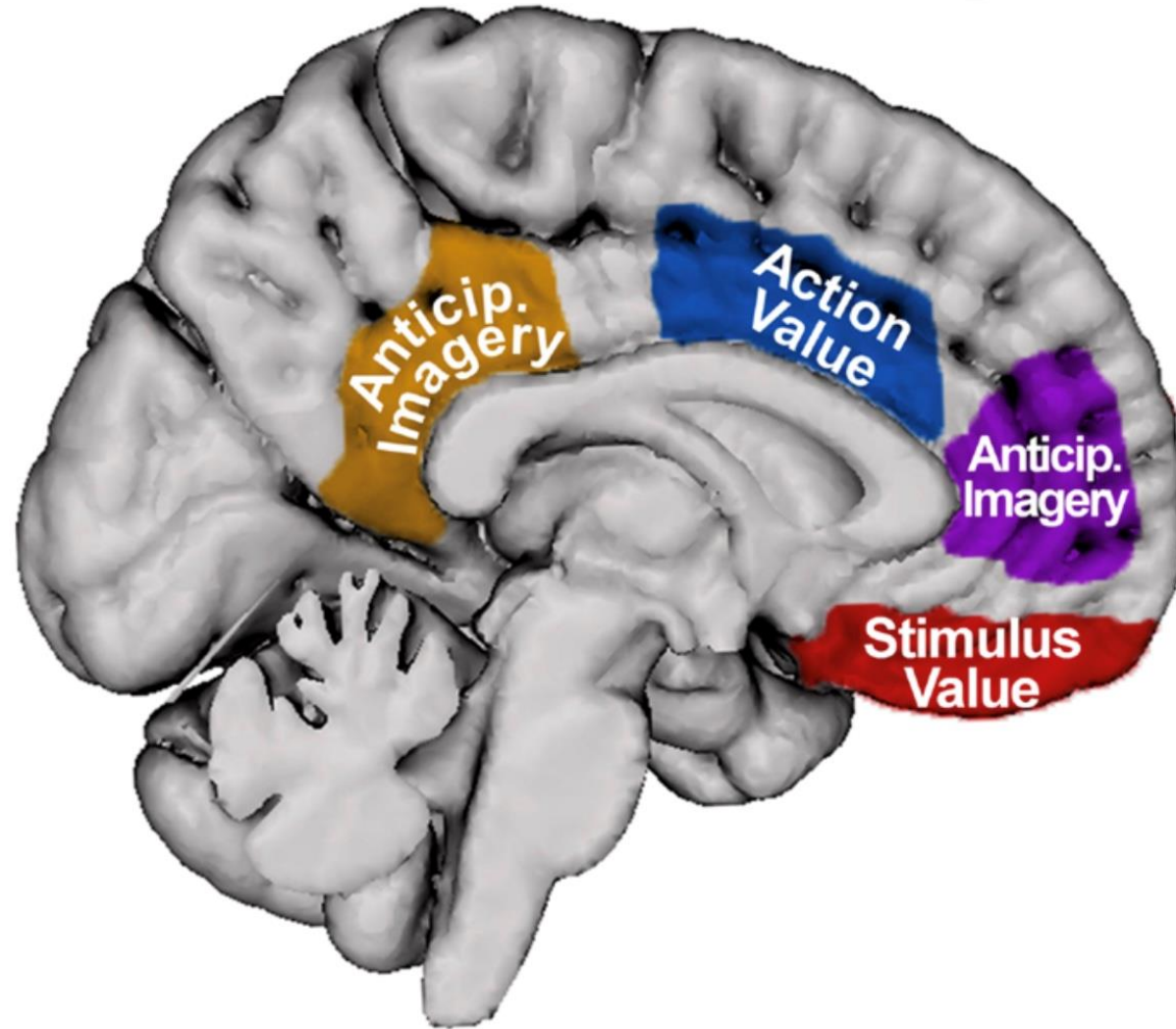
**Try the body scan and RAIN to figure out
whether you want to eat
because of stress and emotions
or
because you're hungry**

Changing Reward Values through Awareness



Reward values are the rankings we give to things we do – from very positive through neutral to very negative

Orbitofrontal Cortex – Red Area



What the OFC does

- Integrates sensory, emotional, and behavioral information
- Puts behavior, feeling, and context into chunks
- Sets up reward hierarchies
 - Makes comparisons to determine how rewarding a behavior is
 - If A is more rewarding than B, you pick A



**Rescorla-Wagner model:
The only way to change behavior is to
change where it stands in reward
hierarchy**

Rescorla-Wagner Model

- Behavior is learned through positive or negative reinforcement
- The OFC catalogues where the behavior stands in reward hierarchy
- A new input can meet, exceed, or fail to meet expectations -> dopamine spritz in reward centers
- “Should” and “understanding the habit’s history” are not part of the equation
- Something can be better or worse than expected – this can happen on purpose through awareness – and this can **MOVE** the habit up or down in the reward hierarchy

OFC

Awareness



The Craving Tool

Craving Tool Part 1 – use it before and during eating

Pay attention

- To why you want to eat – stress, emotion, hunger, convenience
 - To what you are about to eat
 - As you eat each bite, until you finish eating
- How much did you eat? (from way too much to none)
 - How do you feel
 - Physically?
 - Emotionally?
 - What type of thoughts are arising (from awful to awesome)?
 - How content do I feel? (ask this now and in 5 and 15 minutes)

Simplified: What am I getting from this experience of eating?

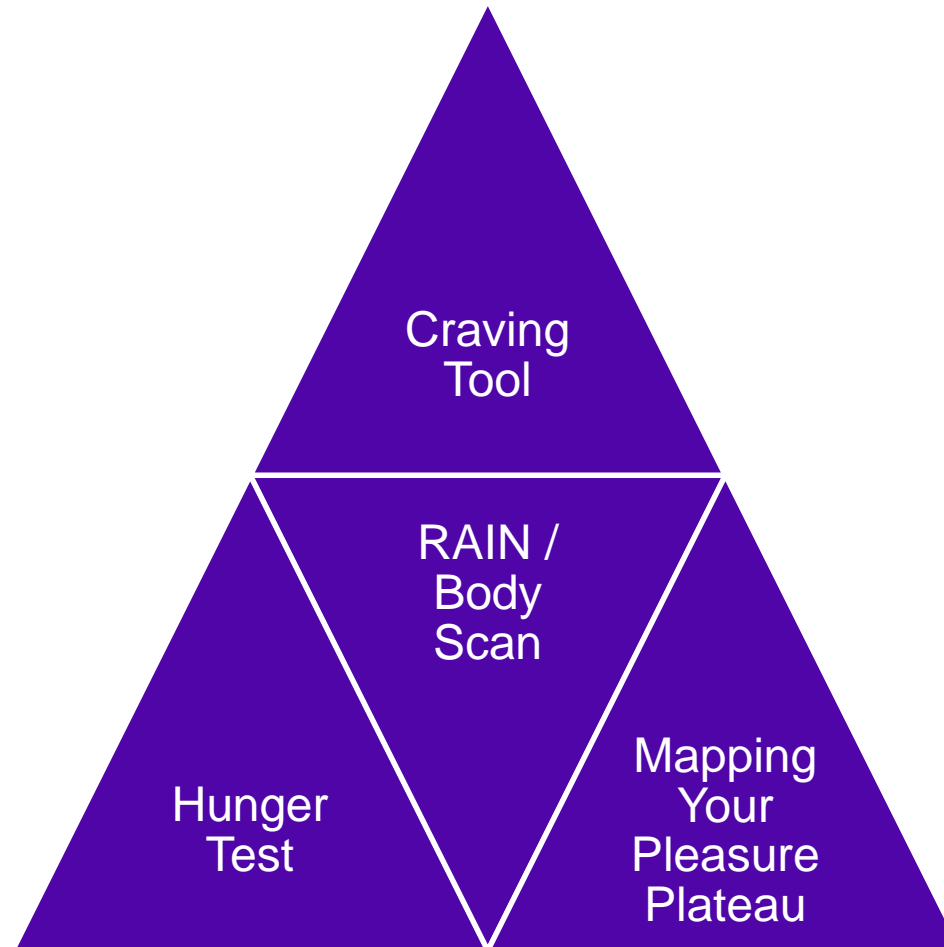
Craving Tool Part 2 – The Power of Imagination

1. Notice the craving
2. Vividly imagine eating what you're craving
3. Imagine the result
 1. The feeling in your stomach, such as, what it feels like when you eat too fast or go past full
 2. The effect of this eating on mood, energy level, emotions

How strong is urge to eat that type or amount of food now as compared to before the exercise?

If you are still craving, do the Craving Tool part 1 to gather more data. Focus on embodied experience. It's empowering not to be a slave to cravings.

The Pieces Fit Together!





**Each time you use the Craving Tool,
you help your brain determine a new
reward value – AND each time moves
you toward a tipping point
where the behavior shifts**

The reward value can change after CT 10 times!

As you experience the true reward value of the habit

- the behavior moves up or down in the reward hierarchy
- the real pleasure plateau becomes easier to find.

Nothing is more valuable in doing this than your own experience

Get curious about how long it takes for your experience to win out over your habit loop

Action Steps

Use the Craving Tool, Parts 1&2
Do RAIN and Body Scan

Extra credit:
Watch Dr. Jud's talk
Read *The Hunger Habit*



THANK YOU!

Photo Credit

OFC: Wikimedia Commons - Spielberg JM, Heller W and Miller GA - Spielberg JM, Heller W and Miller GA (2013) Hierarchical brain networks active in approach and avoidance goal pursuit. Front. Hum. Neurosci. 7:284. doi: [10.3389/fnhum.2013.00284](http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00284) <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00284/full>

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