

The Great Raisin Experience

Being mindful is about a state of being – a particular way of choosing to experience life, in the present moment - rather than letting our mind run riot over past mistakes and future worries, whilst sleep-walking through what's actually going on around us.

Experimenting with a simple raisin can help us get back into the present moment.

Most of us eat raisins by grabbing a handful, throwing them in our mouth and giving them a quick munch before swallowing.

This next raisin is going to be a quite different experience!

1. Grab a raisin – just one – or a similar dried fruit, if raisins aren't your thing.
2. Sit comfortably.
3. It's time to wrap your senses round your raisin. Look at it. Really see it. What do you notice? Can you see its texture? What about the bumps and lumps? Is it shiny?
4. Have a sniff. What does it smell like? Let your fingertips really feel the shape and texture. Allow yourself to become fully absorbed in the experience.

If your mind wanders during this experience, just allow it to be gently guided back to your raisin.

5. After a few minutes, pop the raisin in your mouth – but it's not time to chew yet! Spend a little while focussing on what it feels like in your mouth, with your tongue and your teeth.
6. Then, when you're ready, take a bite. Have a good chew. Notice the full experience of the raisin's flavour – how it builds in your mouth. How incredibly sweet it is.
7. When you have swallowed the raisin, you'll notice you can still taste it for a while.

How did this experience compare to your usual raisin-munching experience?

Chances are it was much more vivid. Did you notice things you wouldn't normally notice?

Did you enjoy it more?

What have you learned about how being mindful – aware, in the present moment – can impact your experience of eating a raisin?

How could you take these learnings and apply them elsewhere in your life?