

# TAKING STEPS TOGETHER



ON THE PATH OF FREEDOM  
FROM FOOD OBSESSION  
AND COMPULSION

PRESENTED BY  
NAOMI NYGAARD



# THAT WHICH REALLY TRANSFORMS...

Do you feel like you've tried everything to control your eating and body weight and improve your body image, and you're still not where you'd like to be?

As someone who spent over ten years with all-consuming frustration, confusion and preoccupation with food and how "fat" my body looked, I know how life-diminishing this can be. **You deserve more:** a life of freedom, bringing your unique gifts and beautiful presence to the world from your happy home in a healthy body.

My mission is to serve you in moving steadily through and beyond early stages of recovery to embrace total freedom from food and body-weight obsession and experience delight and aliveness in your own body once again ... or for the first time. I've done it, and so have countless women I've worked with over the years. If and when you are committed to your food and body freedom, then **you can too.**

As a therapist and coach, I specialise in helping people find freedom from compulsive cycles around food and body image. Based on my personal experience with my own changing body shape and rhythms of eating, and through witnessing those with whom I've worked, I've discovered, honed, and clarified **that which really transforms.**

My work in this lifetime is to share what I've discovered with whoever wants and needs this healing and transformation in their life too.

# A SIMPLE ROADMAP...

I invite you to use this guide to get a sense of where you are in your journey of freedom from food and body-image obsession ... You may notice resistance to what I suggest, or the pain of identifying with my words. If so, this is good news, and something to shine your warm light of curiosity upon.

In this guide, I will probe you to taking a loving look into your current relationship with food... allow my questions to serve as seeds sown for releasing any stuckness therein. As you read, allow your body and intuition to give you clues as to next right steps for nudging your way out of this cycle to a thriving, healthy, peaceful life.

For those ready now to invest the time and energy to reap rich rewards of flowering fullness that is a free life, read to the end of the guide. There, I offer practical actions to receive further guidance and support creating and building on your own foundation of lasting food and body freedom.



# LET'S BEGIN.

## a. The Body:

When we have been doing a behaviour for many years, there is a momentum that gathers which can be hard to halt from one day to the next. No matter how stuck we feel and how much momentum has gathered around our food habits, we can now begin creating the conditions that cultivate our freedom. We do this by bringing increasing **awareness** to the experience of compulsively eating **right when it is happening**.

These questions will support you:

**When standing at the open fridge or cupboard, eating when I hadn't planned to...**

**How does my body feel?**

**Is my heart pounding?**

**Are the muscles in my neck, jaw or belly tense?**

**How easily does my breath flow ... can it slow and become more smooth and even, if I gently try? Can I breathe this way as I eat?**

**How do I feel in my body when the part of me that causes me to eat without awareness takes me over in this way?**

# ... SLOWING THE CYCLE ...

I know that compulsive eating can sometimes feel like a runaway train, and that bringing your gentle awareness, steady breathing and curious, inquiring mind to the experience can feel like a big task at first. This is, however, the way in which we begin to bring about a slowing of the momentum that has picked up strength and speed over the years. Take your time, practice for a few moments every day, and do so with immense and generous kindness towards yourself as you begin to slow this cycle.

## How to know if you're beginning to get the hang of slowing the cycle?

If you are asking yourself the questions above while eating compulsively, or sitting quietly afterwards with a journal, reflecting on these questions with openness and curiosity, then you are firmly planted in setting the conditions for your freedom. Well done and keep going with this practice. **You are digging for gold using your own awareness.**

To make this a regular practice in your life is to witness **the magic of freedom** as it begins to unfold...

# CALMING THE CRITICAL VOICES...

## b. The Mind

When we have been practicing slowing the cycle for a while, we may notice a few things other than how our bodies feel and how our breath flows when our compulsive eating part begins to take over.

Through this awareness practice, we may also begin to notice our thoughts during or after we've eaten. I invite you to notice the quality and content of your thoughts when you are eating compulsively, or afterwards.

**These questions will help:**

**Are my thoughts loud in my head? Are they critical or shaming? Are they panicky or hopeless? What is the thinking part of me saying to me about my eating, and with what tone?**

Anxiety or fury can fuel eating compulsively. So can self-shaming. Until we know what shape we are in emotionally, we can't discover what we might be needing in that moment. It is very likely that the nourishment we truly need to receive in the moment comes from something other than excess food eaten without truly tasting, without enjoyment ....

# ...CALMING THE CRITICAL VOICES...

You may find you have emotions that feel tricky to be with and far easier to drown out of your awareness by eating. Then, when you do this, you shame yourself for the eating.

Self-critical parts of us may believe that they can force an end to our cycle of overeating through harsh, judgemental thoughts. If this was the case, we would likely have released our habit long ago.

In fact, the opposite is true: the more that critical part beats up on us, the more deeply entrenched our behaviour becomes. The criticism generates inner-shame: "You're worthless – you can't even eat sensibly!" "You're a greedy pig!" "You're a **failure** at losing weight..." "You're fat and making it worse!" "You should be doing something else right now, not eating again!!"

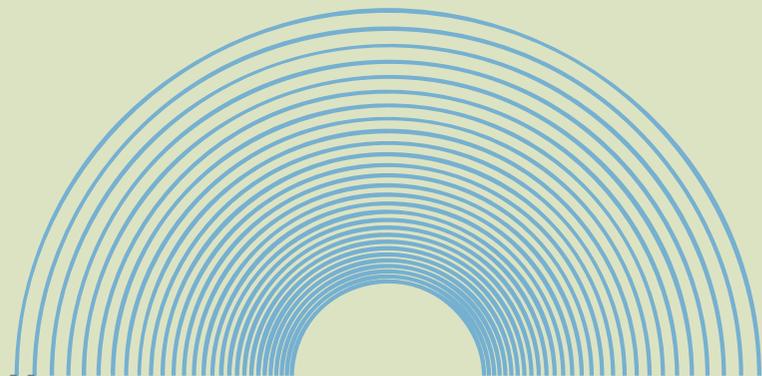
The more shamed we are, the worse we feel, and the worse we feel, the more the over-eating part of us wants us to feel better the only way it knows how: trying to soothe us and drown out the noise ("You **should!** You **shouldn't!!**") with more over eating.



# ...CALMING THE CRITICAL VOICES...

Do you find that you are beginning to bring awareness to the nature of your thinking mind and your emotional state when you are overeating? Do you find the willingness to take time after a bout of mindless eating to reflect on these things with openness and curiosity? If so, you are firmly planted in this next precious area of inquiry and freedom is beginning to unfold in you ...

See if you can allow your vision to expand to imagine what it might be like to be with your body, your emotions and the busyness of your mind in this more curious, kindly way, whether or not you are eating in that moment. Breathe steadily and calmly as you reflect on this, and notice what arises in you. Firmly but kindly ask any extreme or loud parts of yourself to calm and quieten as you read and consider this. Do you trust you can have the experience of being more than your anxious, doubtful or critical parts? Do you trust you can free up around food?



# OPEN-HEARTED SELF-ENQUIRY



Take some time to sit and quietly reflect on your experience of overeating/undereating/compulsive, unaware eating. Make this a regular practice. It can be helpful to keep a journal close by just for this purpose, adding to it each time eating has brought up criticism, generated anxiety or added to shame. Jot down a few simple words of what you notice of your body... your thoughts...

See what response you get when you ask your inner-critic to relax with the shaming, the tension, the pushing you to be different. Give it time to list any fears it may have about relaxing.

Is your food critic willing to give space for you to connect with the part of you that holds sway of your compulsive food behaviours? You will know when it has given you space, because you will notice more curiosity and open-heartedness as you get to know the compulsive part of yourself, and find out more about its role. It may help to focus on the heart to measure how open you truly feel towards the compulsive eating part of yourself.

# ...CALMING THE CRITICAL VOICES...

It can be painful to notice how harsh we are being with ourselves, or how anxious or angry we are feeling. Writing our reflections in a journal can greatly help us hold our inner-experience safely in the larger awareness that holds it all. See if you can breathe as you write. This will help you stay as present as possible in your curiosity and openness as you discover deeper layers of what is happening for you around food.

Please also [reach out to me](#) to share how you are getting on with having a go at what I've suggested; sometimes we just need to be witnessed in our experience to know that we are on our right path.



# OPEN-HEARTED SELF-ENQUIRY

You may need to go back to earlier parts of this guide if these latest suggestions prove too challenging right now. Always start with guidance in [a\) The Body](#). See this healing path as a garden and be organic about it. This isn't about 'getting ahead fast'. That doesn't work when it comes to this area of life. Going back to basics to find deeper grounding and reconnect with this moment now will pay generously when it comes to future freedom.



When you feel ready, refocus your curiosity on [b\) The Mind](#). If your inner critic is still very activated around your food behaviours, remember to give it a pen and allow it to express itself and its fears fully to you ... in my experience, being regularly heard and understood by you in how it is trying to help you prevent pain and disaster is as much as it needs in order to relax its judgements ... then you will have the space you need to breathe, grow, and heal the deeper causes of your compulsive eating.

# OPEN-HEARTED SELF-ENQUIRY

A surefire sign that the critical one has agreed to relax is that you find yourself feeling warmly open-hearted towards your compulsive eating part. From this new, curious place, inquire as to the motivation of this compulsive part of you.

The following questions will help:

**What is your role in my system?**

**Do you like your role?**

**Would you rather be doing something else for me?**

**Can you imagine relaxing your grip around my food, so that I can take the responsibility of my eating from here on?**

**What if any fears come up for you at this idea?**

See if you can discover more about this part from the perspective that it is somehow trying to help you, as I am certain it is. If it reveals answers to these questions, you may discover that it has positive intentions for you. Remember to send it appreciation whenever you feel this arising naturally towards the part. It has been working hard doing the only thing it knows how to do to try and keep you safe. Forming a relationship with this compulsive food part based on openness, curiosity and appreciation lays the foundations for enjoying a lifetime of sustainable food and body freedom.

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

We can't do this alone. For ongoing sustainable freedom from our food and body image obsession we need steady, consistent support. We need a mentor to guide us, encourage us, and steer us back to the joy and passion of this process when we slip into feeling lost or hopeless. We need the right simple and manageable processes to carry out one steady step at a time. These elements will take us beyond the maddening food and weight cycle to a new reality where we are no longer fighting ourselves or spending our valuable resources of time, energy and money getting nowhere.



"Working with Naomi has, in a very short time, shattered a life time of numbness around my food and body issues. In a few months, I have come further along than I have in a lifetime of recovery and therapy from the pain and confusion of food addiction.  
I am extremely grateful."

~ Joanne, San Francisco

# WHAT DOES THE **FOOD AND BODY FREEDOM** PROCESS ENTAIL?

I invite you to explore the links below which lay out the steps for lasting food and body freedom. See the FAB process as a garden to be tended organically, rather than a goal to be reached within a time limit. We are all different, and our growth and healing takes a different pace and course depending on who we are and where we are at.



# WORK WITH ME

Below are four options for taking the right next steps in your journey of food and body freedom. I invite you to explore the links and listen to your body and your intuition which are the best guides in helping you decide which is right for you:

**Take the  
14 Day  
FAB Freedom  
Burden-Releasing  
Bootcamp**

**HERE**



**Find Food  
and Body  
Freedom through  
the FAB Steps and  
Starpoints as a**

**Self-Study\_  
Program**



**Find Food  
and Body  
Freedom through  
working with me  
one-to-one in  
individual  
sessions.**

Interested in taking  
the FAB Steps and  
Starpoints as part of a  
live group program?  
Reach out to me  
**here** for upcoming  
dates.

Not sure of the  
best next step for  
you in **your** journey  
of healing with body  
and food? Reach out  
& connect with me

**here**



**"Prior to [taking FAB Freedom Steps], it was like I had been trying to knit a complex jumper with odd-sized needles and without a pattern to follow. This programme has been working gently in me; picking up stitches dropped long ago; undoing a purl row where it should have been plain; bringing order to the colours of the Fair Isle design.**

**All this, happening with kindness and gentleness. My jumper may be ready to wear in the Winter...or it may not! Nevertheless, the pattern is emerging, ever more beautifully, with every breath I take. Thank you, Naomi."**



**Grace Bird, Adelaide, South Australia**

"Naomi's guidance is insightful, clear and compassionate. Her energy is rich and draws us in in such a way that we are gently encouraged to look at ourselves deeply, without judgment.

I feel a newfound commitment to help the parts within me to know they are supported and do not have to do this alone.

Between group and individual sessions I was given support and offered accountability. I enjoyed setting my own eating guidelines and I am finding myself feeling better and better able to live into them.

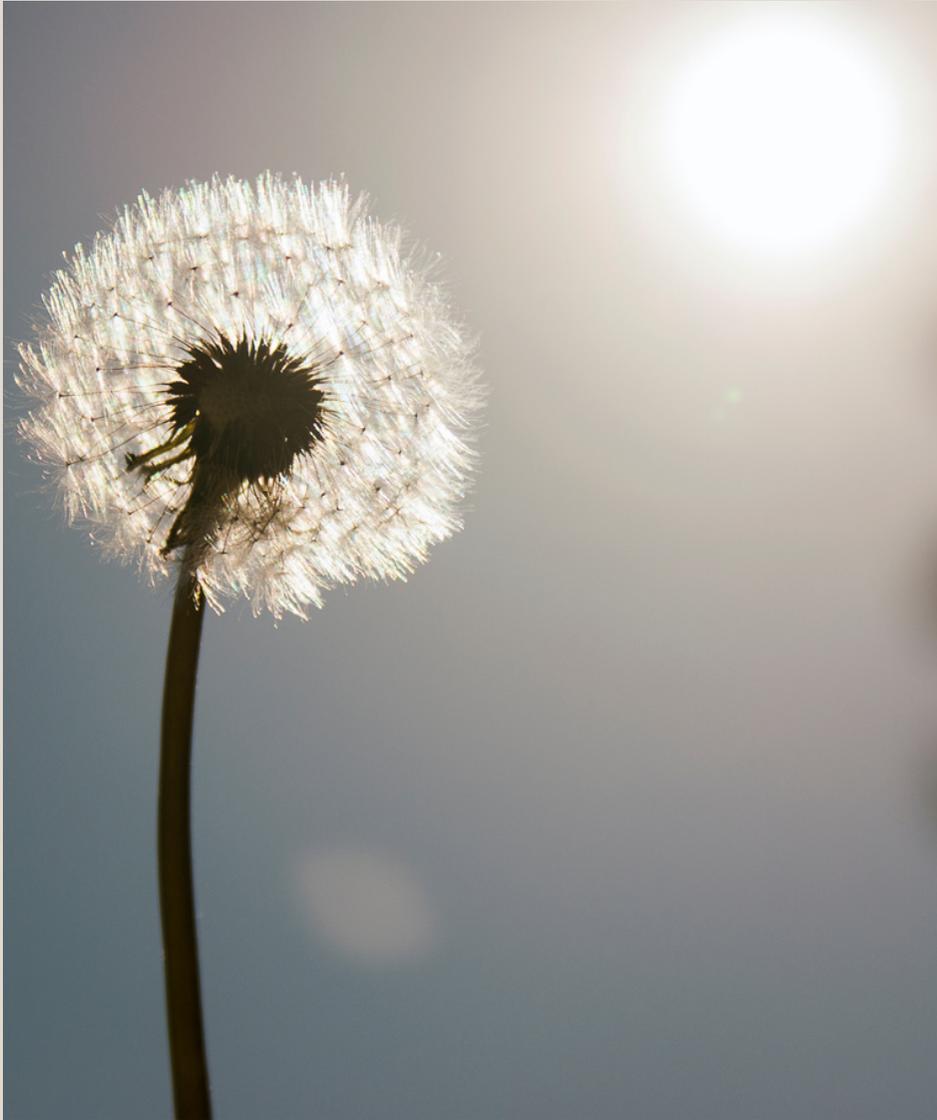
In just a few weeks, the despair around food and my body is lifting and I have hope."



Jayne, Rapid City, South Dakota



# THANK YOU



*... for sharing this path with me.  
Your commitment to walk by my  
side to lasting food and body  
freedom is a gift to me, and to the  
world.*



LOVE FROM

**NAOMI NYGAARD, M.A.**