

What to Expect ~

Well Now has four cornerstones. These are that our stories matter, curiosity, connection, and compassion. It doesn't involve rules. There's no check list. It's an approach that contains the invitation to ask yourself new questions about things you struggle with, from a curious place. In other words, from a place of respect. This can help you to an 'aha' moment or to a subtle shift that registers over time, slowly making itself felt. By making sense of things in new ways, and experiencing support, we can begin to feel differently about ourselves and our place in the world.

There's no need to work through every activity in each lesson. I mean you might, and that's fine. And you might not, and that's fine too. You will know what the right pace is for you at the moment. I recommend taking part in the zoom sessions even if you haven't done much or any of the lesson as the conversations and people's questions can still be really helpful.

You can always return to activities in future if you choose. The course content is there as a door that you open to let yourself know things. Knowing new things about eating, wellbeing, and bodies takes time. It takes letting go, and breathing in fresh things, and sitting with old things, from our fluid emotional landscape. That's how the adjustments happen, gently and gradually.

Even so, this is big. There can be a lot of shame, secrecy, confusion, and embarrassment around eating and body struggles. That's certainly where I was for long time. If you recognise this then I hope, that like me, you will experience the healing power of compassion and acceptance.

It's also big because its roots go deep. Our early experiences of feeding shape how we relate to food – and so much more. Pretty soon we get exposed to ideas that suggest there is such a thing as a good body and a bad body, and these attitudes go deep too. Everyday biases that are sizist, racist, ableist, sexist and so on get entangled in these food and body messages. We carry bias in our language too, often without realising.

Once we begin to explore our eating and make links with social factors it can feel like there's a lot wrong with the world, even more than we first thought. This might feel daunting, and at the same time it means we are now in a place to make sense of how things are connected – and that's great news! It's a little known fact, but making sense of things is key to our physical, mental and communal wellbeing.

My hope is that you will be gentle with yourself as you let new understandings trickle in. If you feel flooded I hope you can turn to someone for support as you sit with any painful emotions, realisations or memories.

There could be times when it feels like emotions belong more to the past. If so, here's a tip from my own experience. It's no good trying to move ourselves with logic when the emotions were stored in the past. Current logic won't shift past feeling. Paradoxically, the feeling shifts when we don't try and shift it. Another way of describing this is saying that the way to change an emotion is to accept it. There is something in the act of acknowledging an emotion (naming) and accepting it (not telling ourselves we are wrong to feel this way) that lets us process it.

If the emotion from the past is intense or painful we might also want another step. This might involve our grown (adult, now) self reassuring a younger (past) self that they are ok. If you feel unmoored at any time when you're going through the activities, you might like to experiment and see if any of these suggestions are useful for your adult self talking to your younger self: I'm sorry that was so tough for you. You shouldn't have had to go through that. It's ok now, you are not being judged. You don't need to change yourself at all. You are loved just as you are. You're not alone anymore. The shame was never yours. I'm the adult, I'm here for you now. It's ok to trust me. I got this.

Also, this might not be relevant to you. And guess what? Yup – that's fine too!

Let's go!