

February 2012

# next

**SALTY IDEAS  
FOR FOOD  
AND FACE**

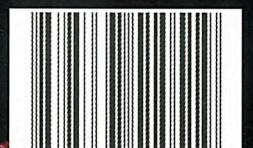
**SWEET  
THINGS ARE  
MADE OF THESE  
COUPLES SHARE  
BEST MOMENTS**

**PENANG  
RENEWED  
LIFE'S NOT JUST  
A BEACH**

**Realty check  
10 tips**

**DAVID LIM**  
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# MIND over Menu

By Marcus Wong

**Overwhelmed by work in 1997 and desperate for a break, Dr Lilian Cheung chanced upon an advertisement for a mindfulness retreat with Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh in Florida. The concept had her “hooked”. In her new book, *Savor*, Dr Cheung, connects mindful living to weight control and a healthier lifestyle.**

The multi-tasking 21st century lifestyle we have adopted has made our lives frantic and very stressful, says Dr Cheung. We buy things on impulse to make ourselves feel better, a constant salvo of television commercials tempts us to eat out more, and more often than not, we’re not even aware of what food we’re consuming or how much because we’re distracted by the television or our mobile phones.

## Live in the “here”

The concept of “mindfulness” has its origins in Buddhism, but scientists have since applied it to a whole gamut of health problems, and obtained measurable results to

prove it works. Mindfulness means to be fully immersed in the present moment – without judgement, biases or preconceived notions. In other words, *to see every moment with a beginner’s mind*. The first step, is to stop going through life on autopilot and start assuming responsibility for each and every moment of your life.

## Problem markers

Dr Cheung feels we should use our problems (she prefers “challenges”) to help us identify what is wrong. For example, weight concerns are simply reminders that we haven’t been making good decisions about what to eat and how to live. Correct these choices and the situation will naturally improve.



“To maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle, we must look carefully at the interrelationships of our body, our mind and society at large.”

Dr Lilian Cheung

### The Savor approach

The problem with most modern diets is that very often they are like a “one size fits all” prescription that don’t take into account your personal preferences and what’s accessible to you, says Dr Cheung. Because they are so difficult to sustain, people eventually give up.

With *Savor*, she brings you an extensive range of food and exercises that are good for you, so you just pick what you prefer, and expand from there, adding one new exercise or food type as you go along.

From her book:

“Try to make exercise as essential a daily routine as eating or sleeping. It may seem tough to fit in at first, but after a while the day just won’t seem complete unless you’ve had your exercise. You’ll miss the renewal and joy you get from exercising.”

### Go green

Dr Cheung recommends slowly moving to a vegetable-based diet

not only to aid in weight loss, but also as a sign of compassion, because of the consequences of eating meat.

In her book, she explains that meat production is a huge drain on the environment, and argues that the grain and resources used for raising livestock could be more directly used to feed the starving and malnourished. If we are mindful about our food, we will realise that by consuming meat all the time, we are actually depriving other humans of food; harming the planet in more ways than one.

### Last words

To truly gain benefit from mindfulness practice, Dr Cheung says you need to be immersed in the experience. Reading alone is not enough, because until you get into the company of people who practise it, you won’t truly understand it. As she says, “Nothing replaces practise because knowing is just the beginning; practise is the key! ■

National Bestselling Author of *Peace Is Every Step*  
**THICH NHAT HANH**  
AND DR. LILIAN CHEUNG

## savor

Mindful Eating, Mindful Life



Publisher: HarperOne (distributed by MPH), \$26 (paperback, w/o GST)

### Dr Cheung’s advice for people struggling to lose weight:

1. Stop what you are doing right now and **look deeply at the situation**. The most important thing to do is to ask yourself why you are gaining weight.
2. **Confront the truth**. Figure a way to get out of your situation and start doing it.
3. **Treat yourself with patience and compassion** – you have all the tools to obtain your ideal weight, just don’t give up.
4. **Regard every moment as an opportunity** to change for the better, so never let yourself feel daunted – success is within your reach!
5. **Don’t become a victim of circumstance**. Remember that there is hope always; it just depends on your mindset.
6. You don’t have to do it alone! **Find like-minded people** for support.
7. On the other hand, **recognise what is toxic** around you and avoid it.