



# nourish

A short, practical guide to finding balance using  
foods and mealtimes as a strong foundation

By Katie Sheen



# Hello and welcome

Have you ever watched a butterfly against a windowpane, getting more and more stressed as it bounces against the same piece of glass over and over? Don't you wish that it would stop for a moment, notice that the window is actually open, and then calmly walk a few steps to the edge of the window frame and fly away?

This little book is to help us stop bouncing around like that butterfly, stuck in damaging habits that we can't see clearly. When we stop for a moment and breathe, then we can reconnect with the food on our plate or in our hand. We can also calmly notice our thoughts around our eating and drinking patterns. This gives us the insight that we need in order to gently move in a different direction, and experience for ourselves that wonderful sensation of freedom.

To help you practice the ideas put forward in this book, I have designed a Mindful Eating Food Diary called 'Nourish'. This is a totally free photographic food diary that is simple to use from any device that can get online, and you can explore all that it has to offer at [www.soulnutrition.org](http://www.soulnutrition.org)

I wish you countless moments of liberation.

**Katie Sheen**

Founder of Soul Nutrition & Astro Brain Tumour Fund  
Grateful to be working in partnership with Matthew's Friends





## SHIFT

Internally,  
our body constantly  
shifts things around  
in response to the environment  
that we create,  
in order to bring  
all our body systems  
and functions  
back into balance.

If we are imbalanced internally,  
we also feel imbalanced externally;  
yet not all of us are aware of the power  
of this internal – external dialogue.

Pause a moment.

Create Space to Listen,  
to Think,  
and to  
Play around  
with the  
Balance  
of foods  
that suits you best.

You can always use mealtimes  
as creative thinking opportunities.

If you need new thoughts & insights  
to bring clarity to your life,  
how will you hear them  
if you don't create space  
in which they can be heard?





## SHIFT

Shift from  
irregular  
eating  
patterns  
to using  
relaxed mealtimes  
to balance your days.

Play around with your eating patterns and notice the effects on how you feel  
both physically & emotionally if you skip meals,  
or if you put off eating until  
your hunger is just too powerful to ignore.

How much difference does it make  
to your energy levels and mood  
if you then get ahead of your hunger the next day,  
and eat at more regular times?  
Does it affect the food choices that you make?

How long between meals seems to suit you best?  
Do you prefer 3 big meals a day, one every 5 hours?  
Or does life feel better if you eat smaller meals every 3 or 4 hours?

Do you prefer to eat a big breakfast, small lunch & a big evening meal?  
Or are you happier eating a big lunch, with breakfast & evening meals being smaller?  
Do you need some snacks to keep you going, or not?

Do you want lunch at 11am?  
Curry for breakfast?  
Porridge mid-afternoon?  
Why?  
Why not?

Where do the rules that you live by come from?  
What happens if you change them so that they suit you better?





## nourish

Before you eat, breathe.

Instead of rushing around 24/7, try breathing 4/7 before you eat:  
so breathe in for the count of 4, and out for the count of 7.

This slows down your breathing  
and in turn your whole body,  
so that you are ready to eat  
and are quiet enough  
to hear the messages  
that your body sends you  
to let you know when you are hungry  
and when you are comfortably full.

So why not sit down  
somewhere calm  
with a view,  
or even a picture  
instead of real scenery.

Treat yourself to flowers or herbs  
in a pot on the table.

Turn off the TV  
and perhaps put on  
some relaxing music  
to create an atmosphere  
that brings you happiness.

Ignore the world for a while  
and use mealtimes  
as a welcome opportunity  
to grab a few  
relaxed moments  
for you  
in your day.

Focus on the  
balance  
of  
your  
food.

See what happens to your health & happiness  
if you shift the balance of food on your plate  
so all that all major food groups  
are represented  
at every meal  
including breakfast.

Maybe use this food plate as a starting point;  
eat meals in this proportion for a couple of weeks  
and notice if it makes any difference to how you feel  
both physically and emotionally.

What thoughts come up for you?  
Don't judge them.  
Just accept them with compassion  
and wonder why those thoughts are there.  
There are usually reasons why they appear  
even if it's just to make us laugh  
once we become aware of them.

## My Food Plate

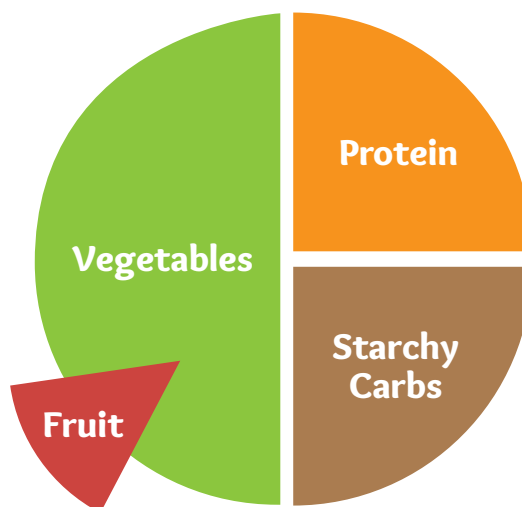
At each meal, start by serving yourself a selection of vegetables to fill half of your plate.  
Choose a protein portion approximately the same size as the palm of your hand.  
Then choose starchy carbohydrates to match the size of the protein portion.  
How does it feel to play around with these proportions? What makes you feel great?

Protein; meat or fish, poultry, eggs,  
beans, peas, pulses, lentils, nuts,  
seeds, full fat dairy products.

Starchy carbs; unrefined wholegrains  
or potatoes, alternating with  
vegetables such as celeriac,  
swede, squashes and pumpkin.

Vegetables; at least 2 or 3  
different types with each meal.

Eat a variety of fruit and enjoy the  
seasons as their availability changes  
throughout the year.



Everyone is unique, so explore the balance that works best for  
you using the online food diary 'Nourish' at [www.soulnutrition.org](http://www.soulnutrition.org)



## SHIFT

Always make Shifts one Step at a time.

Take a look at the food clouds on the following pages  
and choose one to play with first.

Grab yourself a pen or pencil  
or even a paintbrush  
and use colours  
if that makes you happy.  
Use the key on each diagram  
to indicate how you  
will shift the balance  
of your food choices.

You can number the chosen foods too if you like,  
so that you can shift how often you eat them  
in the order that you will enjoy most.  
Or just see what you can buy  
and go with the flow.

If you don't know what certain foods are or how to cook them,  
how are you going to learn more?  
Will you search the internet for easy, inspiring recipes?  
Check out videos of how to prepare them?  
Ask a friend or family member for help?  
Sign up for a cookery course?  
Ask for help on social media?  
Look through cookery books that you already have, or invest in a new one?

The foods on each cloud  
are not a complete list  
of everything edible on our planet,  
so feel free to add more  
or to shift foods from one cloud to another  
if you want to be  
very specific  
about definitions of each food group.  
Please make them your own!

You have been given a gift of every animal protein under the sun.  
Which would you use?



#### KEY



Tick, circle or put a smiley face by everything that you already eat



Put a question mark by foods that you would eat but are not sure how to prepare



Put two question marks if you are not sure what they are or where to buy them!



Cross out things that you wouldn't eat





You have been given a gift of every plant protein under the sun.  
Which would you use?

Pumpkin seeds  
 Chickpeas / Garbanzo beans  
 Chestnut  
 Butter beans / Lima beans  
 Broad beans  
*Almond*  
 Chia seeds  
 Cashew  
*Hemp seeds*  
 Poppy seeds  
 Pine nuts  
 Brazil nut  
 Hazelnuts / Filberts  
 Sprouted seeds; eg. alfalfa, red clover  
 Split peas: green, yellow  
 Edamame / Soya beans  
 Sesame seeds  
 Sunflower seeds  
 Cannellini beans  
 Fava / Broad beans  
 Pecan nuts  
 Macadamia nuts  
 Cobnut  
 Lentils: green, red, yellow, brown  
 Beech nut  
 Flaxseeds / Linseeds  
 Pistachios  
 Mung beans  
 Pinto beans  
 Black-eyed peas  
 Peanut  
 Flageolet / Haricot beans  
 Adzuki bean  
 Kidney beans  
 Walnut  
 Borlotti beans

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# PROTEIN

The name 'protein' comes from  
the Greek word 'proteios' meaning  
'of first importance'  
because without  
enough protein  
we fall apart  
both physically & emotionally.

This is because our body  
breaks apart  
the protein that we eat  
into different building blocks  
called 'amino acids'  
then it puts those building blocks  
back together  
in different shapes  
to make structures that we need.

So for example:  
protein forms the basis of  
muscles, ligaments, tendons, skin, hair and nails.  
Protein also forms the neurotransmitters  
that carry our thoughts & emotions,  
so we need to eat protein to be able  
to think straight  
and to be  
happy.

Protein is crucial  
for the production of energy  
and is also needed  
to make red & white blood cells.

It forms the basis of our genetic material.

Protein is even crucial  
for digestive enzymes  
so without it  
we can't digest  
any other foods.

In fact carriers made from proteins  
carry nutrients around our body  
so you can eat as many vitamins & minerals as you like  
but they won't get into your cells to do any good  
if you don't eat enough protein.

So there are many reasons why all foods  
that nature produces for us  
contain some protein.  
It is just the proportion of protein to carbohydrate  
that varies from one food to another.  
So, animal proteins contain more protein  
relative to carbohydrate  
than plant proteins do.  
However  
all fruits & vegetables, beans, pulses & grains  
contain some protein;  
it is just that in comparison  
it isn't as much  
so you need to eat more of them  
to get the same total amount of protein.

We are back to balance again.

Which balance of plant & animal proteins suits you best?

If you tend to cook certain dishes using just meat,  
try adding some plant proteins.  
So for example  
pad out your meaty casseroles,  
curries and pasta sauces  
with lentils or beans  
and lots of extra vegetables.  
Does it lighten your food bills  
as well as the way that you feel  
after you have eaten?

If you don't want to eat meat,  
are you eating enough plant proteins?  
Would you feel happier if you ate more?

Would you feel better  
if you ate  
a different balance  
of foods?



You have been given a gift of every vegetable under the sun.  
Which would you use?



## KEY



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# VEGETABLES

Yes,  
we know,  
vegetables contain lots of important  
vitamins & minerals  
& fibre &  
phytonutrients  
that they produce  
to help themselves survive  
and that we in turn can eat  
to help us survive.  
Thank-you.

But their name comes  
from the Latin  
“vegetale”  
meaning  
“to enliven”  
and perhaps that is the  
most important thing  
to thank them for.

Throw your own rulebook out of the window.  
Do you cook certain vegetables one certain way?  
Do you save raw vegetables only for salads?  
Why is that?  
Why not mix things up a bit?

Go wild.

Eat a combination  
of hot & cold vegetables  
at the same meal.

Eat more of what you like.  
Just increase the portion sizes  
of the vegetables you eat already  
until between them they cover  
half of your plate.

When you get bored,  
add new vegetables  
to increase the variety.

Fling fresh & frozen vegetables  
to cook in as many saucy  
dishes as you can.

Always revisit vegetables  
that you think you don't like  
and try cooking them a new way  
to change the final flavour.

Perhaps it was a ridiculous recipe  
or a boring, thoughtless cooking method  
and not the fabulous vegetable  
that made you think  
"yuck"  
instead of  
"yum".

A strange thing about vegetables  
is that slicing them into different shapes  
often makes them taste quite different.

So  
for example  
if you aren't keen on carrots sliced into circles  
try them sliced lengthways into sticks,  
cut into large chunks  
or teeny cubes,  
or grated raw.

If you still don't like a particular vegetable,  
try a different recipe  
or just  
hide it from yourself  
by chopping it  
as small  
as possible  
and mixing it into  
a strong flavoured sauce.  
It is quite surprising  
how much stuff  
you can hide  
in a pasta sauce,  
a casserole  
or a curry.





You have been given a gift of every fruit under the sun.  
Which would you use?

*Tangerine*  
Passion Fruit  
**Plum**  
*Kiwi*  
Blueberry  
Cherry  
Elderberry  
Pear  
*Prune*  
Raspberry  
Mango  
**Fig**  
Redcurrant  
Pineapple  
*Rhubarb*  
Apple  
Clementine  
Grapefruit  
Banana  
*Gooseberry*  
Papaya  
Blackcurrant  
Coconut  
Pomegranate  
Apricot  
Nectarine  
Strawberry  
Grapes: green, red  
Orange  
Satsuma  
Blackberry  
Raisins  
Currants  
*Date*  
*Sultanas*  
**Melon:** cantaloupe, galia, honeydew, watermelon

### KEY



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Cross out things that you wouldn't eat



# FRUITS

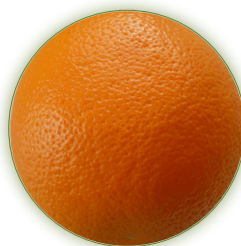
No wonder that fruit makes  
such a special treat  
or dessert.

The name comes  
from the Latin  
'fructus'  
meaning  
'enjoyment'.

Variety is key here  
as every fruit,  
like every vegetable,  
contains different nutrients depending upon  
the soil and region in which it was grown,  
the weather as it burst into life & flourished,  
the way in which the farmer treated it,  
the time when it was picked,  
the way it was transported  
and how it was stored.

For example:  
did you know that in one apple orchard  
the nutrient content of each apple depends upon  
the side of the orchard on which the apple grew,  
the side of the tree that it hung upon,  
and within that one apple  
one side will contain different nutrients  
depending upon the way in which  
the rays of the sun  
fell upon it?

So just as we are all similar  
in some ways  
and unique in others,  
so is every plant.





You have been given a gift of every grain under the sun.  
Which would you use?



#### KEY



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# GRAINS

Grains are the fruit  
of a cereal plant.

Which  
balance  
of grains  
suits you best?

As you explore this question,  
become aware  
of the grains  
hidden  
in foods  
in the form of flour.

For example  
wheat flour  
forms the basis of most  
bread, toast, muffins, crumpets,  
pancakes, waffles, cakes,  
biscuits, cereal bars,  
sandwiches,  
breakfast cereals,  
pizza and pasta.

If you eat these food products every few hours  
you are also eating wheat every few hours.  
Yet if you ate a certain vegetable  
this often you would think  
that was  
weird.

So why not view  
the wheat family  
in the same way?



Now that you have played with  
your food choices,  
which  
balance  
suits you best  
at the moment?

Remember though  
that when the  
balance  
of life changes  
we usually need  
to adjust the  
balance  
of our food choices  
to support ourselves  
in these new circumstances.

A child does not eat the same amount  
or the same balance of foods  
as a teenager,  
an active adult,  
or a sedentary elderly person.  
Are you aware of how the  
balance  
of your foods  
needs to shift over time  
to keep you feeling happy & healthy?

Make sure that you don't box yourself in with rules & regulations  
that you choose to live by at certain life stages.

Never stop  
gently playing  
with the balance  
of your food.

Small shifts  
are part of the fun  
and we are never too old  
to enjoy using stepping stones  
to get to where we want to be.





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