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I decided to take the route of mindful eating today for dinner. Before eating, my mind was on work I had needed to get done by the end of the day, requirements I need to meet to fill out a study abroad application, and my upcoming staff meeting later in the evening. I didn't feel stressed but I felt I had to constantly deal with upcoming events of the day. After the practice, I had felt a lot better about what I had to do for the rest of the day. In the past, I have taken a class where we took the time to appreciate the food we were eating called "Food For Thought" where we placed chocolates and other foods in our mouths and took time to experience our individual senses whilst having the foods in our mouths. It was an interesting experience doing this again for this challenge in the way of focusing on self-care instead of focusing on the food. I felt relieved and less nervous about my responsibilities. There was definitely a difference in my motivational levels as well. Before the practice, I was reluctant to do my work. There was a lot of very small tasks I had to do like email my advisor, charge my devices, organize a list for the clubs I head, and plan an event for the weekend. Afterwards, I felt empowered to do the things I had to accomplish and looked forward to my free time afterwards. I immediately gathered a to-do list and went through each task one by one!

Another practice I decided to do when I got back to my residence hall was the Body-Scan meditation. I had just come back from a staff meeting with my coworkers where I was given

another handful of assignments. I had practiced this meditation in my psychology class at my school in Egypt as a sophomore in high school many times. Doing it here in Vermont for the first time since then created a sort of connection between that time period and now that was very calming for me. I took more notice of my breathing pattern and where tension in my body resided which eventually left. This was also a very relaxing activity.

Overall, I would say I preferred the mindful eating activity more than the Body Scan activity. I felt that with the mindful eating, you were more in touch with your body in a physical sense rather than an emotion or psychological one. Although both activities were relaxing, the eating activity felt more fulfilling in the sense that you were able to put your focus on one sole activity rather than move from body part to body part in the scanning one.

While doing “mindfully eating” I would focus so much on the taste that I would think about the flavors in the meal and my mind would wander that direction and not focus on the speed at which I was eating. So at time, I did catch myself eating at a normal pace that I usually do but it was sort of a funny calling out of reminding myself about the activity at hand. In the future I might try to remember the point of the activity and focus on the importance of slowly eating so I can fully experience this. In terms of external barriers, I continuously saw people I knew passing by me so that would interrupt my experience but a simple wave acknowledged those people and I did not have to socialize. So in effect, I was able to accurately do my activities! In the future I might take a meal from a dining area to go so I can practice the activity in the comfort of my own room.