This is Patrice Rancour for Ohio State University’s Your Plan for Health. We are bringing you this guided imagery exercise to promote your health and wellbeing. So close your eyes and remember: all you have to do is breathe. A tasting meditation. In our preoccupation with food and speed, we often miss the food. By this I mean we often do not fully attend to the process of tasting the food we eat because we are too busy doing other things in our lives as we do so; driving, working, watching television. When this happens, we often lose touch with the real pleasure that tasting healthy food can give us and then become at risk for compensating by overeating to make up for the lack of satisfaction this kind of unawareness creates. In preparation for this exercise, have in front of you a piece of delicious, nutritious food or a drink. It could be a cup of tea, a piece of fruit, some nuts. Anything that appeals to you as something that your body knows would be good for it. Assume a comfortable position, take a nice deep breath. This is the signal breath. Signals to the body that you are moving to a special time and place set aside just for you. All subsequent breaths will be breathed normally, rhythmically, and with awareness. There will be all sorts of sounds around you. All sorts of thoughts coming and going. Whenever you feel the least bit distracted by the sounds and the thoughts, gently bring you awareness back to your breathing. Inhaling and exhaling rhythmically, consciously, and with attention. As you continue to breathe, look at the tasty morsel you have chosen. Notice its size, its shape, its color. As you pick it up in your hands, notice its texture. The way it feels against your skin, continue to breathe, allow yourself to inhale the fragrance of the food. Close your eyes if it helps to focus on this. Does the fragrance of the food evoke any memories from the past? If so, how old were you or where were you when you smelled this fragrance before? Is this a pleasant memory? If so, notice what this does to salivation starting in your mouth. Continuing to breathe, now put the morsel on your tongue, and taste it deeply without biting into it. Notice whether the food tastes sweet, salty, bitter, or sour. Feel the shape, weight, and texture of the food in your mouth. Notice the juices in your mouth beginning to flow. As you continue to breathe, allow yourself to bite into the food, noticing the rush of flavor. Don’t hurry the experience but focus on the act of chewing the food slowly and intentionally, without the need to speed through it. If you noticed yourself tending towards that, smile with awareness at the habit you have cultivated, and decide for yourself that you will slow down this process for now, for the sake of pure enjoyment. Continuing to breathe, notice the act of swallowing, the satisfaction of feeling good food slide down into the stomach. Continue to breathe, knowing that when you slow this process down, you enjoy the act of eating more, you digest your food more easily, you will tend to eat only what you need to eat, and you will choose food that your body will appreciate. Know that you can come from this place, any time you wish, that you take this power with you everywhere you go, and that all you need to do to trigger this is to remember to take that initial signal breath.