

Our Intimate Relationship with Food

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Food is living love. The kind of food we put into our bodies is a demonstration of the quality of love which we allow ourselves to ingest. Life itself is a feeding process and as Khalil Gibran says, we ourselves are the living food which is ground down and made into bread for the sacred feast for the Beloved. We all intuitively know the sacred relationship between love and eating. We say to a baby or a lover - I love you so much I could eat you up. We want that love inside us.

It is always the sense of separation from love, from life itself, which leads to imbalances in our patterns of eating and consequent sluggishness, distortion and stagnation, even severe health challenges.

The remedy is to first restore ourselves to the awareness of our non separate state, to our full participation in the life and love that we are, and with great joy contemplate the act of eating. We as living love take into our body, the physical form of our Self, living love as we eat.

Eating is an ecstatic act of loving intimacy and is a ritual of devotion to the living One.

So how do we raise this apparently mundane activity of eating to this level of awareness?

First we need to learn to listen to what our body truly requires. If you choose a method of balancing your eating - raw food, juices, macrobiotics, food combining, Ayurveda - the food that you buy should be delicious and as fresh and chemical and process free as you can find.

The food should be prepared by you or by others in a conscious loving way. In monasteries and temples only the most aware monks are chosen to prepare the food. Remember food is love. If you are upset or disturbed in any way don't buy, prepare food or eat. Tension does not make conscious choices and distorts the energy as you eat. We need to be in neutral as we eat and to give the instruction to our body that everything we eat turns to the experience of health, beauty and regeneration, and we need to do this on a regular, daily basis.

Prepare the table simply and beautifully. Take a moment to rest and relax before eating. This is especially important when you have been preparing the meal. Bring yourself completely into the magical state of the present moment. Enjoy looking at it as you sit down. Look at the colours and the arrangement. Contemplate the nature of food (love) before you eat and allow yourself to feel the flow of love between you and love that you are contemplating. Smell and taste the food with pleasure and joy.

Eat slowly, savouring each mouthful. Remember this is a ritual of love. Don't eat more than you need. If you eat slowly, attending to your body as you eat then you will know when to stop. Throw away any left over food. Your body needs fresh food for the next meal.

Following a strict unbending regime to lose weight or to clear an illness can feel very harsh and unloving at times and can lead to rebellion and feelings of deprivation. Have fresh fruit to juice and crisp satisfying vegetables to hand, and sit down to eat or drink and savour them if you take something extra between meals.

If you need to change ingrained habits and attitudes, make sure you are nurturing yourself and satisfying the bodily need for sensory satisfaction in other ways. Burn fragrant oils and incense, take nurturing, scented baths, light candles, wear delicious natural perfumes. Keep your environment clear and uncluttered, use fresh appealing bed linen, and wear fresh attractive clean clothes. Basically loving care not harsh discipline is the answer, though as with children, some boundary setting is necessary while training.

Have regular massage and bodywork. Go to bed early and have a good night's sleep. Take the time to show your body that you know what it is and that you love, honour and respect it. Learn the art of living in the present moment and so preventing stress from accumulating.

As we learn to become quiet by practising daily meditation and contemplating our joy and our willingness to allow our cells to resonate with this joy, it becomes simple and effortless to feel what our body is requiring in the moment. The food (or no food) your body asks for will always be the crystallised thought form of love which exactly complements, balances and nourishes at that moment and is most delicious, satisfying and sustaining for the whole body rather than mouth hunger which is simply an attempt to compensate for underlying feelings of incompleteness and separative tendencies.

As we become more sensitive, more aware of the bliss of our own nature (love bliss), the act of loving ingestion of food becomes a conscious participation in the surrender of life to itself in love.

Our food is to be always delicious, appropriate and satisfying and we can allow ourselves to spontaneously and individually modify any chosen programme to the requirements of the love which is our own body.

Love/ consciousness begins with the reverence with which the food is grown. If you don't grow your own food and few people can do this these days, then check where it comes from and if possible buy it from a conscious source. Find out the country or place of origin. Consciousness follows all the way through the way the food is digested and the waste eliminated. Not strategically, not inattentively but gentle, loving, peaceful, aware, seated in the witness position in the present moment in the heart.