

## Archives

### How to Eat for Body-Mind Happiness- Tips from a Life Coach



by Marget Braun

*"To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art."*

— La Rochefoucauld

Some of the best advice for healthy eating I've ever heard is: Stay out of the middle aisles of the grocery store! The idea is to shop on the perimeter, away from the packaged, man-made foods. In this crazy culture of too many food choices and not enough happy bodies, it's good advice. I've been teaching people how to eat vegetarian-based foods for years and I don't believe, repeat do not believe, everyone should be a vegetarian. People have different body types and different needs. But I do know that a recipe for body-mind happiness is 1) have a lifestyle diet, based on world traditions, and 2) eat to honor your body type, your preferences, and biochemistry. It's possible to maintain a comfortable weight, and enjoy the pleasures of food and exercise by eating a whole foods diet. Just move to the perimeter a bit, and listen up. Here are some of my best tips:

#### Have A Bigger Goal

Some clients are surprised to hear me say it, but if you want to lose weight get a bigger goal. I know there are things you would like to do more than eat perfectly. Do things that excite and inspire you and your weight will get in line.

#### Volume

A study from the University of PA reports we eat for volume. The average person will eat three lbs of food per day to feel satisfied. So, forget about eating less. Instead eat plant-based foods that fill you up not out (often called gut stuffers...). You can eat from an incredible range of delicious veggies, soups, grains, beans, olive oil, nuts, fruit, and some animal protein. It's a smart strategy to eat for volume with low-density, satisfying foods.

#### Outsmart Cravings

Put the kabosh on cravings by changing your breakfast food. The Japanese eat miso soup for breakfast. A Scandinavian breakfast may include fish. Hot bean soup with toast is heaven in cooler months. Raw nuts and fruit are delicious too. A Turkish-style breakfast of whole grain bread, feta cheese, roasted red pepper, and olive oil, is fantastic. Exercise is another way to stabilize blood sugar, and you can alkalize your blood and reduce cravings with fresh veggies, vegetable juice, miso soup, and kukicha (bancha) tea.

#### Cleanse vs Diet

There's an old saying, "A bounty can become a burden." To lighten up and get back on track, try a cleanse, instead of a diet. All traditions have a period of cleansing. It can literally bring you to your senses, renew your sense of purpose—and shed extra weight. For a simple cleanse, eliminate sugar, caffeine, or soda for three days. Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine recommend reducing an excess food by 1/4, then 1/4 again. I recommend a cleanse based on a macrobiotic diet in which you enjoy many vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein, but stay off dairy, baked goods, and processed foods. Other cleanses are raw foods, a low carb diet, or a juice fast.

#### Exercise

A client hired me to help her lose 15 lbs. Her problem was she wasn't getting to the gym. In the course of coaching we discovered what she loved to do. She adored musical theatre. She had a collection of over 200 recordings. Her favorite thing in the world was to choreograph dance sequences to show tunes. Forget the gym. She hated the gym! She loved to dance. She signed up for ballroom dancing immediately. Within a month she was having a blast making up dance sequences to show music and her new figure radiated joy. The moral: Move in the direction that lights you up!

#### Choose Whole Foods

Here's a good rule: Always buy food with the shortest paragraph and the least chemicals. Feed your self like a king or a queen by reducing your boxed foods! Organic, local food is often comparable or less costly than food shipped thousands of miles. And, it makes sense to eat in season. When you're adjusting to cool weather, sweet winter squash grown in local soil will warm you more than tropical foods.

#### Don't Beat Yourself Up

If there's one thing to give up, give up 'beating yourself up,' or 'free fall' when you slide off your goals. Instead say, "I'm learning to feed myself with love." Then choose positive action in the next moment. Choosing positive action, in each next moment, is the path of freedom.

#### Food Prep

Delicious eating requires some food prep. A lettuce spinner is the easiest way to clean and dry veggies to have on hand. Make rice or noodles ahead of time. Have beans, lean fish or poultry at the ready. Build a fantastic meal, quickly. For example: Sautee onions in olive oil, add handfuls of fresh, washed, chard. Add red beans and tomatoes. Season with balsamic vinegar and soy sauce. Serve with rice or noodles. Sprinkle with cheese.

#### Family Veggies

I've seen kids gobble up brightly-colored, cut-up veggies, who won't touch a salad at dinner. Cut veggies on the diagonal to make big, crunchy oval chips and put them in a bowl. Include carrots, celery, red cabbage, cucumber, radishes, green peppers, sprouts, and cherry tomatoes. One client packs cut-up veggies and dry roasted almonds for the after-school car pool. A friend puts out a bowl of cut-up veggies for dinner, and she no longer says, "Eat your veggies."

#### Beans

When our meat is pumped with pharmaceuticals and our fish is mercury- laden and color-enhanced, beans are the new world. Get hip to beans. They are the future. Fortunately every culture has developed sumptuous bean cooking. Beans become French pate, Indian dahl, American chili, Italian minestrone, Ethiopian lentils, Cuban black beans.

#### Stop Being Dissatisfied

Stop being dissatisfied with your body right now. Just stop it! Your body is amazing and beautiful and does miraculous things. If you can't find anything you like about your body, love your collarbone. Find something to be grateful about and appreciate it. Remember the wisdom of author Colette, "What a wonderful life I've had. I only wish I'd realized it sooner!"

#### Yummy Sensual Eating

Speaking of appreciating, what would you rather say about your life? "I thoroughly enjoyed every morsel of my brownie with reckless pleasure" or "I ate 10 brownies and barely noticed." Yummy sensual eating is the main rule in my lifestyle coaching. It's the smallest thing that will make the biggest difference. Try all-out savoring your food, with as much pleasure as you can stand. It's mindful eating, with hedonistic respect. I guarantee yummy sensual eating will change your relationship to food. Let me know what you discover!

#### Internal Sensing vs External Viewing.

Sense yourself from the inside instead of looking at yourself from the outside. Tune in to sensation, movement, taste, breath instead of outside cues. If you are visually gifted you may critique your body. Instead make art. Make beauty. Create something. I guarantee when you die no one will say, "Wow, she had a flat stomach." They will say, "What awesome gifts she had and she really put them to use."

#### Generate Energy In Other Ways

Food isn't the only way to get energy. Generate energy with yoga asanas and breathing. Go outside. Laugh with a friend. Make art. Give a massage. Play with a baby. Inhale the light on water. Forgive. Move on. Smile.

#### World Tradition Eating

Diet books are big on drama but short on satisfaction. Instead have a Lifestyle Diet based on World Tradition eating. World tradition eating includes all six tastes: Hot, sour, bitter, sweet, salty, & pungent—which give you variety and balance. You may even discover a food you can't live without. Miso soup has restored my peace of mind countless times. Knowing how to make good miso soup is high on my list of life skills.

#### Ask Your Body

Your body is a friend and it has something to say to you. It wants to tell you what it needs. When hungry, ask your body, "What do you want?" Now listen. Your body will tell you.

#### What's Your Story?

We all have a story. What's your story? Are you a person who goes to bed early because you love having time in the morning? Are you a person who loves to be fit because you love to run with your kids on the beach? If your story isn't serving you, make up a new story.

#### Mindful Consumption

This beautiful mindfulness vow, from Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, speaks to heart and mind:

*"Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society."*

— Thich Nhat Hanh, For a Future to Be Possible

#### Choose Happiness

Always choose what will bring you happiness. When we eat for bodymind happiness, we feed our self and have something to give others: Joy, confidence, compassion, and clear action. Learning to feed your self is one of the most important things you can do. Bon appetit!



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