

A Healthy You - What's Love Got To Do With It?



We all know people who are very wealthy financially but are unhappy in their lives. Many of us are also fortunate to know those who are extremely happy, but don't appear to have much money. As the saying goes, money can't buy happiness and money surely can't buy love or health. The most important love relationship we have is with ourselves. Loving ourselves is important; not only is it central to our happiness, but to those we love and care for.



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At the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, I was introduced to a concept called Primary Foods which are essential to health and happiness. Our health and happiness is not dictated only by the foods we eat. Our health and happiness relies upon a myriad of ingredients which include diet, exercise, relationships, spiritual practice, and many other factors.

Sometimes we are fed not by food but by the energy in our lives - Joshua Rosenthal

Primary Foods



Remember back to when you were a child playing, laughing, singing or running and you were suddenly interrupted because dinner was ready. Think of a time in your life when you were so busy with a project or an assignment that you forgot to eat a meal or when you were so in love that everything appeared glorious and delicious!

Now think of a time when you were troubled. Did you have trouble eating? Did you have trouble sleeping? Have you ever eaten when you felt sad or empty? Sometimes we eat due to habit, boredom or emotional lack. The good news is that by understanding and incorporating the concept of Primary Foods into our daily lives, we can increase our levels of happiness and health.

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An Integrative Approach to Health and Happiness

Yes, it is important to eat whole grains, good quality vegetables, wholesome fruits, healthy oils and heart-healthy proteins.

Yes, it's important to drink adequate amounts of pure water to keep us well hydrated every day.

Yes, it's important to understand how vitamins and medicines can have an impact on our daily lives.

However, to be truly healthy and happy, we must establish a rhythm of love in our lives by finding a balance in our relationships, career, spiritual practice and physical activity.

Relationships

There are many types of relationships. There is friendship, love, intimacy. We have friends with whom we can share the most intimate details of our lives and friends that we only see every other year. We feel joy when we receive a hug from a loved one and thrilled when we are in a loving, intimate relationship with a lover. We laugh, hug, and cuddle and with each kind touch we receive, we are filled with the love that is being shared. Human beings need love - we need to give love and receive love. However, we must be mindful that we have different personalities and personal boundaries.



For example, I love to give hugs. I love to receive hugs. However, I know many friends that do not feel comfortable with the public display of affection. It is always a matter of individual preference. What is important is how you feel about the relationships in your life. Here are some questions you might wish to ask yourself:

- Is there someone in my life that seems to always be in a crisis and drains my energy when we spend time together?
- Do I have relationships that support my needs, wants and desires?
- Is there anyone one in my life that used to fit well in the past but doesn't seem to fit any longer?

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If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you might wish to reexamine those friendships and the amount of time that you invest in them. It is much easier to increase the amount of time you spend on healthy relationships than to eliminate unhealthy relationships in one fell swoop. It might be that once you communicate your concerns, your friend might make positive changes that will allow you to build a better relationship than that which you have had in the past. Ultimately, it is up to you to surround yourself with those who support you.



Career

We spend more time with our colleagues at work than we spend with our loved ones at home. Do you love what you do? Are you happy with how you spend your time? Do you ever dread going to work in the morning? Do you have happy and satisfying relationships at work? How many hours per week do you focus on your work? Do you leave work at your office or bring it home with you?



I can speak from experience that sometimes we allow our lives to become totally out of balance because of pressures related to work. I was that type of person. My family joked that I was never really present because I was always on my “crackberry”. The stress that I experienced on a daily basis had a definite effect on my health and relationships. Once I made the decision to follow my passion and let go of the stressful job, I questioned how I had ever fit everything into my life. My answer was that I was so busy taking care of everyone else and everything on my list that I often did not take care of myself.

Find work that you love. Love what you do. This is a necessary ingredient of a satisfying career, which is essential to having a healthy, happy, balanced life.

Physical Activity

Having adequate physical activity is paramount to good health.

Although I am not an expert in exercise physiology, I know that I feel happier after a refreshing walk or a bicycle ride.

Exercise is invigorating and stimulating. Allow yourself to experience with a variety of exercise forms. You can try walking, jogging, bouncing on a trampoline, yoga, pilates, weightlifting, karate or simply turning on some music and dancing till you break a sweat. Sweating will help your body detoxify and dancing to music will invigorate your soul. Most of all, it's important to exercise regularly, at whatever level is suitable for you. Make it a habit for life.



Spiritual Activity



My teacher, Joshua Rosenthal, wrote: “Spiritual nutrition can feed us on a very deep level and dramatically diminish cravings for the superficial rewards of life.” Spiritual practice is deeply personal. Some follow traditional religious practice while others nourish their spirituality by harmonizing with nature, meditating, listening to uplifting music, or reading inspirational articles and books. Whatever the vehicle you choose to explore the inner peace within your soul, I encourage you to make it a daily practice. It will deeply enrich your life.

Checkpoint

So, how are you doing? Are you keeping track of your level of satisfaction in the areas of relationships, career, physical activity and spiritual practice? Once you have addressed those core areas, you begin to take notice of other areas that might require further attention.

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Next Steps

So now that you have addressed the core areas, you might begin by examining other areas in your life that might require some attention, such as:



- Creativity
- Social Life
- Home Environment
- Home Cooking
- Health
- Finances
- Education
- Confidence



Understanding where you have an imbalance in your primary foods will allow you to develop a clear vision of where you need to invest your time and energy to create the balance and joy you desire in your life.

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." - Albert Einstein

Gratitude is an attitude

Once you are focused on your vision, take some time to be grateful for the miracle of your life. Find ways to express your gratitude to those who have positively had an impact on you.

In an article entitled *"Positive Psychology and the Power of Psychological Nutrition"* by James O. Pawelski, Ph.D., Director of Education and Senior Scholar at the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, he offers some guidance on maintaining a positive attitude of gratitude.

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Three Blessings Exercise

For one week, every night before going to sleep, write down three good things that happened that day and why they happened. At the end of the week review your list to see if you find any patterns.

Gratitude Visit

Think of someone that has made an impact on your life or has done something wonderful for you that has had important consequences in your life. Write a letter describing exactly what they did for you and what affect it had on your life. Put creativity and effort into your letter. Make it beautiful. Then, schedule a time with them and surprise them by reading the letter to them before gifting it.

Use Your Strengths in New Ways

Identify your “Signature Strengths” and think about how you use them in your life. Think about how you might be able to use them in more ways and commit to using your strengths in new ways every day for a week.

In Conclusion

Love has everything to do with a healthy YOU! Loving yourself allows you to invest your time and energy to achieve success in every facet of your life.

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About Me

My name is Ruthie Guten, I am a graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, where I was trained in many different dietary theories, eastern & western nutrition, modern health issues, personal growth & development and health counseling. I am certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. I am also a Licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Texas with over twenty years of public sector experience in the areas of water utilities and public works. I am an advocate for Public Works & Infrastructure, Natural Resources/Environmental Protection and am devoted to Regional Sustainability Efforts. As a Health Coach, my focus is on providing support to clients in the area of energy issues, general nutrition/wellness and stress management. I am an experienced public speaker, trainer and career coach.

I appreciate all comments received and will gladly develop specific training programs, workshops, webinars and podcasts to suit your specific needs. For additional information, or to schedule a free initial consultation, please call me at 214-476-2989 or visit www.ruthieguten.com.

Blessings,

A stylized, cursive signature of the name 'Ruthie' in a purple color.

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