

## **CHEWING... A NECESSARY CONVERSATION**

In our model we focus a lot on The Story of Health. We believe that without a healthy relationship between mind, body, spirit and environment, a life of peace and contentment is denied us. We place a lot of emphasis on ensuring the individual develops all four aspects equally, because where there is a weakness in any one area there will inevitably be weakness in the whole.

Chewing is an important part of The Story of Health. Although it obviously relates to the body, in fact it has a deep, subtle connection with the other three. If the body is properly nurtured, then so is the mind. If both mind and body have their needs met, the spirit unquestionably rises.

There are many aspects to environment and arguably the one most neglected, is our inner ecosystem, our internal world. This too is better cultivated through the simple act of chewing. When we chew in the 'right' way our inner worlds are better served – everything works optimally and as a result, we are better able to meet our own needs and the needs of others.

What does it mean to chew in the right way? It of course relates to masticating the food in our mouths thoroughly because only then do we fully extract the nutrients on offer. The numerous enzymes that break down our food and ensure we imbibe the vitamins, minerals, amino acids and essential fats etc. can only do this job efficiently when we completely chew the food we imbibe. It is important to 'drink your food', in other words ensure it is a watery mixture at the time of swallowing - then optimal nutrition is guaranteed. Otherwise, it sits in the gut rotting, as the enzymes struggle to break it down because we have not completed the first task of digestion. Digestion begins in the mouth. It is in the mouth that the food is initially broken down and made ready for distribution.

This is a process that needs both our understanding and respect because the relationship between the mouth and the mind is arguably the most intimate relationship on the planet.

What we eat eventually finds its way into our bloodstream, and subsequently becomes part of the fabric of our bodies. What becomes part of the blood/body influences the brain, which in turn influences our thoughts and feelings (the mind). The mind is deeply connected to the spirit, that part of us that most defines who we are. And yet this simple equation is repeatedly overlooked, which is why so many of our attempts to generate healing fall short of what is required. We need to understand that we are made up of food, air, water and light and chewing is a central character in this drama.

So, our invitation to you is to start chewing mindfully, with awareness of this relationship between the physical and the metaphysical, because what you do with the food in your mouth is helping to shape you and your reality.

Starting from today, in fact starting with your very next meal, strike up a conversation between what you are eating and your body. Understand, everything you imbibe, that is thoroughly chewed, has the capacity to enhance the quality not just of your body but of your

mind too. Food can make you look and feel good and when you understand this, you can genuinely shape your mind and your body. Here's an example of the kind of conversation you could have....

I give thanks for what I am about to receive... with every mouthful I extract the wonderful gifts of vitamins and minerals contained within this food... this food helps to keep me alive... it enriches my cells, tissues, muscles and bones... I'm made stronger with every mouthful... I can literally feel the energy contained within the food being broken down and distributed around my body... my body is the most incredible organism... it takes what I imbibe, providing me with the best possible nutrients... and simultaneously it is extracting all the waste and toxic compounds for removal... the body is a genius, striving at all times to promote the quality of my life... all it asks of me is my co-operation... and increasingly I co-operate by making better food choices and chewing and savouring each mouthful... eating in this way is such a pleasurable experience... I find that I am able to taste and appreciate flavours I have far too often taken for granted... I can feel that every day, and in every way, I am getting stronger and stronger... the nutrients via my blood, enrich both my brain and body... as a result I can feel the mind being uplifted as it reaches for and embraces both contentment and joy... eating in this way is such a pleasurable experience... and I find that I eat only what I need... I no longer need to eat just for comfort... I eat according to need... and the pleasure that I derive from that comforts me... I find myself in a beautiful dance with consciousness... one where mouth and mind work co-operatively in the name of health... I give thanks for this awareness because it allows me to appreciate the beauty and connection between all things... I now see food as my friend, and I give thanks for the many gifts that it offers... What a beautiful feeling... I am so enjoying this food and its many magical properties... and I promise to maintain this special relationship...

The more you converse with yourself in this way, the more this conversation will enable you to derive real pleasure from your food, a pleasure that will feed the mind, body and spirit. This will automatically transform your internal environment and 'your' story of health will be well on its way to creating a foundation for you that will make all your other endeavours less challenging and automatically more enriching.

So many of the diseases in our modern world begin in the mouth and our lack of chewing contributes to this fact. It's not enough to eat the right things, it's what we absorb from what we eat that really matters and that is handicapped by eating too quickly and swallowing food in chunks, which then end up becoming toxic waste, offering us inadequate nutrition in the process. The situation is made even worse by drinking whilst eating, simply washing away the enzymes at the time they are meant to be breaking down the very foods we are consuming. If you do feel you need to drink whilst eating, then only sip those liquids rather than gulping them down.

Ideally, we are meant to 'drink our food' and 'chew our liquids', that way we assist the body in its wonderful endeavours to keep us healthy in every area of our lives. So, start practising this art of conversation today.