



I must admit that I am probably most guilty of being a ravenous nutrition information scavenger. In fact, I have been in a lifelong state of “information hunger.” After all, I spent more than half my existence being entrenched in stacks of published studies and hundreds of books on nutrition and health. I have tried virtually all diets because I thought each of them was the one for me.

However, at a certain point, I became saturated. Enough was enough. I put down the papers, books and tried to quiet the mind. I found it fascinating that the spiritual world was not about information or doing something. It was about “being”—a practice that sounds so simple, yet can take decades to master. I learned that when we are in the state of being, the body can be heard. Rather than us talking away in our head, we allow a space for the body to share its feeling, pain and knowing.

We all know of the power of the mind and its influence, but research by Dr. Amy Cuddy at Columbia University has indicated that our body poses may define our physiology (see her Ted talk at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc).

It is well known that the majority of communication—about 60% or greater—that takes place between people is through body language. Dr. Cuddy and colleagues found that changing our posture by assuming what she refers to as the “power pose”—keeping our shoulders back and our legs slightly separated with feet on the floor—for a mere two minutes can change our hormone levels. We can increase our testosterone (leading to feelings of assertiveness) and decrease our cortisol (stress hormone). Additionally, we *feel* powerful and less averse to risk.

What if...

- ... we felt more powerful about our food choices?
- ... we had confidence every time we sat down to eat?
- ... we felt less stress about our lifestyle?

Perhaps the answers to these questions are in the body itself.

You may want to reflect on what poses your body is in when you are making a food selection from a restaurant menu, standing in your kitchen with the refrigerator door open or even sitting down after a long day at the office to your evening meal. Do you cross your legs? Do you hover over your plate? There may be some real “information” coming through that we do not even realize. We could be changing our physiology through our posture, stance and connection to the earth.

Instinctual Eating: Listening to the Wisdom Within

Our bodies carry their inherent wisdom and truth at a deep, cellular level. The key is to access it, create a dialogue, and most importantly, to listen carefully.

One of the most common “maladies” I see in the nutrition field is what I refer to as “analysis paralysis.” We take in as much as we can, trying to intellectualize eating, and, ultimately, we become overwhelmed, confused and upset with figuring out what to have at our next meal. We vacillate from diet to diet, hoping that our intellect will find us the “perfect” diet. However, it can be an unending, insatiable quest.

Can one ever truly have too much information about food and eating? Of course, it is important to stay educated on topics like genetically-modified foods, organically-grown produce and label reading, but how much is too much? When does the information control us rather than us harnessing it?



Try grounding by having your feet firmly planted on the floor, dancing wildly for four minutes every day or even sitting cross-legged on a grassy patch while meditating on a body organ. When we are “in touch” with our body, we may be more apt to connect to the body’s wisdom of instinct. Instinct, or the inherent inclination of our body to act without prior experience, is how the physical body communicates to us. What if we gave our intellect a bit of a break and balanced it by linking it to our instinct? We may be more informed of better food choices for ourselves without overthinking them too much.

I believe we have to start with the body if we are going to create a loving, healing relationship with food. All of our relationships, with others, food, our lives, will be determined to some degree by how we treat ourselves. We even hear of the sacredness of the body in religious traditions (“body as temple”). It would be fulfilling to see how we can find our way back to the sacredness of the body. And, in so doing, we might find that our food choices shift, our energy might be rekindled and our passions may surface. We might even *think* better! ☺



Dr. Deanna Minich is an internationally recognized, cutting-edge wellness and lifestyle medicine expert who has mastered the art of integrating ancient healing traditions with modern science. Her unique “whole self” approach to nutrition looks at physiology, psychology, eating and living within what she calls the “7 Systems of Health.” A five-time book author and founder of Food & Spirit, she continues to do detox programs with individuals to help them achieve better health. Her new book is *Whole Detox*, published by HarperCollins in March 2016. For more information, visit www.DrDeannaMinich.com.