

## Growing Together Through Connections



### Change Your Mind

Do you value good nutrition, yet struggle to find the time to actually put it into practice? So often we like the idea of healthy eating, but grocery shopping and cooking is the last thing we want to do with our precious time. If only someone else could feed us! If only we didn't have to think about it! *Change your mind:* make it more important and more enjoyable by changing how you think about it.

What if eating, and all that goes with it, was a sacred practice? In Zen retreats we have something called work practice. During the breaks from sitting meditation we have working meditation. We are assigned tasks like chopping vegetables and cooking. We continue the practice by doing our task with full attention. Imagine how different eating would be if we approached it as a form of spiritual practice.

The foods that we eat nourish us in many ways—body, mind and soul. Our body chemistry is impacted by the food choices we make, and so is our peace of mind. When we choose the foods that best support our physical body, we experience a sense of ease and well-being. Even when we choose foods that challenge our internal systems, we can still be deeply nourished when we eat with moderation and full awareness.

Many of us have integrated our businesses with our mission and purpose; our work has deep value to us. Caring for our body is not separate from that. Instead of disconnecting or putting it last on the long list of things to do, eating and food can be a celebration. It connects us to the

earth, to our past, and to each other. It is a living art that celebrates life every day. All of the tasks involved with putting food on the table are part of this rich practice.

Grocery shopping can be more enjoyable when we think of honoring the body. Ask your body what it wants, what makes it feel good. Bring full consciousness to the experience. Shop at locations that make you feel good. Enjoy the colorful bins of produce. Try something new; let eating be an adventure.

Cooking can be more fun and fulfilling when we do it with others. Get your family involved and make it fun. Create family if you wish—invite friends over and cook together. Make it a sensual experience. Breathe in the scent of onion as you chop it, the garlic that lingers on your hands. Listen to the sizzle of vegetables sautéing. Let it all in.

Before eating, pause for a moment. Bless your food, offering thanks to all the hands and lives involved in bringing this food to your plate, food that will soon be part of you. Eat with mindfulness, allowing all of you to be filled with nourishment. Let the flavors explode on your tongue. When you nourish yourself with intention, you let more of it in.

If the tasks involved with feeding yourself have been low on your list of priorities, then it becomes a chore. Change your mind. Change how you think about it. Let the whole process of being nourished be joyful. Let it fill you and fuel your life and your work.

By Kathy Nichols,  
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*The Healthy Habits Coach: Wellness from the Inside Out*

*Kathy is a registered dietitian and certified life coach. She can help you find a way of eating that is sustainable, healthy and joyful. Visit [www.HealthyHabitsCoach.com](http://www.HealthyHabitsCoach.com) for more information and to sign up for her free newsletter, the Wellness News.*

#### RESOURCES

##### Books:

*Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*  
by Barbara Kingsolver

This is a lovely and inspiring book. She chronicles one year as her family swears off transported foods. They grow most of what they eat, and have many culinary adventures including making their own cheese. The story is warm, captivating and puts the "kitchen back at the center of family life."

*Omnivore's Dilemma*  
by Michael Pollen

He wrote this book because he began wondering where his meals actually came from. It is a dense book, but has an engaging style and is fascinating.

##### Web:

[www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com](http://www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com)  
Blog with cooking and nutrition tips.

[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)  
Website with suggestions how to get more fruits and vegetables into your diet.