

Eating Mindfully

You have a whole new appreciation for food, when you grow it from seed, harvest it, prepare it, and eat it. You can't help but think of the effort that went into it while you eat it. It is a great exercise in consciousness. It can also lend itself to thinking more about any food you eat. You start to realize how many organisms and people were involved in getting a morsel of food to your plate. This then spills over to your cloths and everything around you. You realize that you could not have done it by yourself. I tell people that if they eat meat they should go to a place that raise chickens and ask to witness, or even better, actually dress out a chicken, or a fish, or a steer. It is one thing to see it on television or to read about it, but to actually do it and then eat that which you slaughtered, will wake you up. I have slaughtered my own chickens many times. Some people are kind of shocked to hear that. I don't enjoy the experience by any means, but I have more reverence for that which I eat. I one time invited friends of mine over to show them how it is done, from catching it to freezing it. My friend Pat, said "We eat chicken all the time, but never give a thought about what is involved." He asked me if doing this was bad Karma. I said, "No, Ignorance is Karma. Eating your food, living your life, and not being aware of all that is involved in making it HAPPEN is ignorance." A man who has raised a chick to a rooster, who fed it, cared for it, gave it fresh water, cleaned up after it, composted the manure and grew vegetables from it, who slaughtered it with his own hands, plucked the feathers, removed the entrails, cooked it and ate it, is very aware of what he did and is mindful. A man who opened up a bag of lettuce and poured some dressing on it, consumed it, through the bag away, and put the dish in the sink all while watching television, was not mindful. He ignored all the people who raised that lettuce, who made the bag it came in, who trucked it in, who placed it on the shelf, who made the store that the shelf sits in. It goes on and on. Rather mind blowing I think. Of course I am not mindful to that degree all the time, because then you miss out on another special gift.... flavor. Some people eat food and don't even taste it! I can guarantee you that the man who ate his chicken, tasted the flavor, the man watching television did not.

I think that if people who eat meat had this "slaughter experience" they would still eat it, but they would not "consume" it like they do now. The reason we have factory farms is because too many people consume their food instead of mindfully eating it.

I like the organic and Raw Food movement, but I am not a 100% raw, vegetarian, or organic convert. I think that a large part of this movement is a mind shift rather than a dietary shift. People feel more connected and mindful of organic food, because they have a better understanding of where it came from, how it was raised, or prepared. But one does not need to pay for pricey food in order to be more mindful of what they eat. You can have the same mindful experience over a bag of Cheetos. However, after you think about all that went into making that bag of Cheetos, you may feel more inspired to eat healthier and fresher food. With that said I still don't let that stop me from satisfying the cravings I have every now and then.

Brian