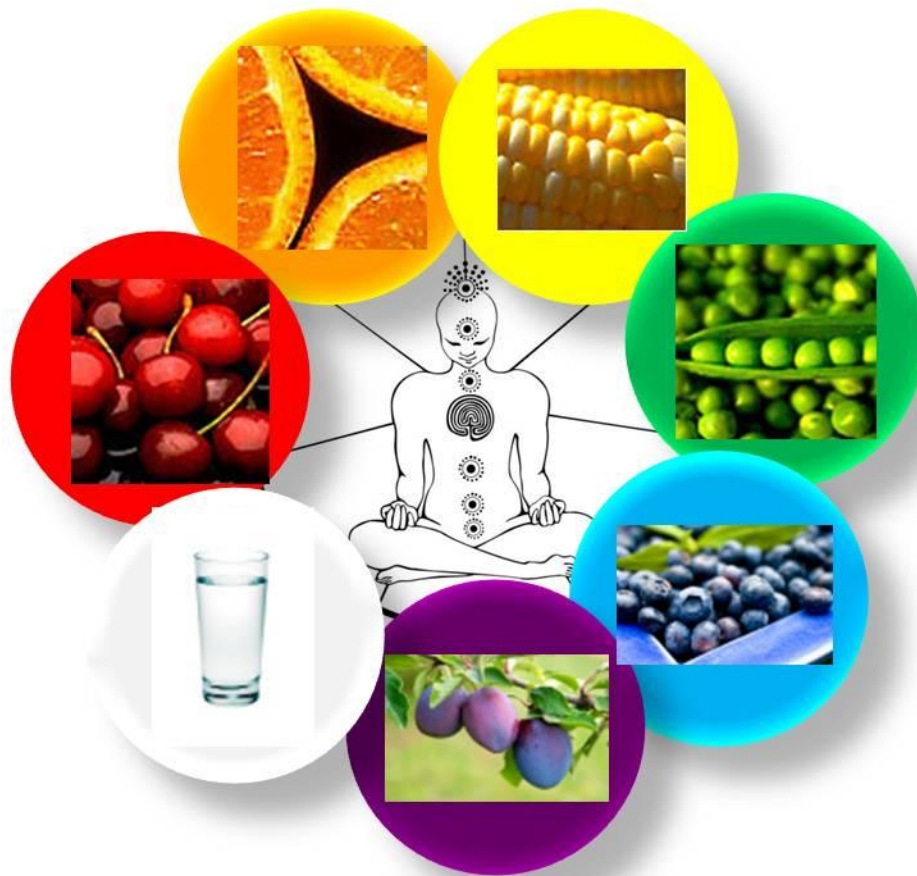


Feeding the Chakras: **7 Steps to Ultimate Fulfillment**



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CHAPTER 1

Foods for Grounding and Protection: Feeding the Root Chakra

Many food and eating issues are intertwined with our ability to feel safe, protected, able to trust, and be grounded and present. Without a strong foundation in basic principles for survival like trust, safety, and security, you might imagine that we may not trust our own bodies' instincts about eating. In fact, I have observed that most people are out of touch with their bodies. They are not in the present moment, and in order to feel grounded, some people choose to eat, sometimes to the extent that they end up with the opposite feeling that was intended – they feel detached from their bodies, or fragmented.

The part of our energy that has a deep, earthy physical resonance and is connected to these core survival and physical body issues is known as the root chakra (in Sanskrit, *muladhara*). A healthy root chakra translates into being able to survive adequately in the world without being plagued by fear around providing a living. As you can imagine, during this time of an economic downturn, fear is being conjured up all around us. Our root chakra issues come to the forefront as we start questioning our ability to provide for life's necessities, including meals.

The root chakra also represents boundaries and support in our lives. It is responsible for the energy of body systems that provide us with physical structure, allowing us to make tangible, meaningful contact with the Earth. These anatomical parts include the joints, bones, muscle, legs, and feet. The root chakra enforces boundaries in the body by keeping us in check with an internal and external defense system, including the immune system (internal "defense" strategy) and skin (external barrier between us and others). As part of the defense system, the root chakra oversees the action of the adrenal glands which allow us the momentum to "fight or flee" if we feel that we are in danger.

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Root Chakra:

- (1) **Honor Your Body's Wisdom:** Since most people are out of touch with their bodies, it may be difficult for them to know when to eat. Try to get in touch with listening to your body by observing its natural rhythm rather than your imposed rhythm. See if there are certain foods that your body instinctually needs by simply asking yourself what you need. Practice trusting the response. Note whether some foods make you feel "grounded" or "ungrounded".
- (2) **Shed Protecting Oneself with Food:** More than 60% of Americans are overweight or obese. Of course, there are many contributors to excess body weight, including lifestyle behaviors such as eating poorly and remaining sedentary. However, if we look deeper to unearth some other causes, we may find that excess weight may be connected to feeling unsafe. Instead of hiding ourselves in the shadow of too much food, we can bring out the best of us by eating according to our bodies' needs. Practice checking in with your body on food choices. What language does your body use to tell you what to eat and when?
- (3) **Engage in Healthy Social Eating:** The root chakra carries the energy of "tribe" or community – those who support you. When we do not feel safe or supported by the tribe, we may not be comfortable eating with a community or being a part of traditions created by a family. As a result,

social eating can be a stressful event, particularly family gatherings. Some strategies to overcome the fear involved may include creating your own traditions or bringing a dish to add to the mix. Give some thought to the belief patterns about foods and eating that you inherited from your family and decide whether these are still valid for you. If not, create new belief patterns and enforce them with your new way of eating. You may want to create a community of individuals with like-minded thoughts about eating to get together on a regular basis to share a meal.

Foods for Grounding and Protection:

- (1) Protein:** Protein assists us in reestablishing and strengthening our connection to the earthly vibration within us, bringing us back to our roots. It makes us feel heavy and slower moving, a welcome feeling if we are feeling fragmented or spacey. Animal proteins (e.g., dairy, egg, meat) are particularly grounding since their origin is from some of the most grounded creatures - animals who are "sure-footed" with up to four feet on the Earth and in contact with their instinctual selves. Vegetable protein (e.g., legumes) works perfectly for those who are vegetarian. Too much protein can have the reverse effect, literally creating too much rigidity, ultimately throwing off our physical structure.
- (2) Minerals:** Minerals, which are stable compounds from the Earth's crust, impart structure and stability to the body and workings of the root chakra. For example, calcium is needed for a strong skeleton. Iron is needed to ensure that the body can be properly oxygenated and able to function. Foods high in minerals such as dairy foods high in calcium would be nourishing to the root chakra.
- (3) Root vegetables:** These tenacious vegetables grow deep within the dark, quiet Earth, and embody earthy energy. Root vegetables help us to nestle into our internal, lower core and to be comfortable in its darkness. Examples include beets, parsnips, rutabaga.
- (4) Red-colored foods:** A healthy root chakra vibrates at a frequency similar to the color red. Therefore, red foods provide the vibrational rate needed to help balance the root chakra. On a nutritional level, red foods usually contain relatively high levels of vitamin C, a nutrient utilized by several body parts overseen by the root chakra such as the bone, teeth, skin, and adrenals. Examples include tomatoes, strawberries, cherries.

CHAPTER 2

Foods for Feelings and Flow: Feeding the Sacral Chakra

It has been estimated that over 75% of overeating can be attributed to emotions. When we feel out of control with our ability to process emotions, we may feel tempted to stuff them down with food. Many people I meet have experience emotional eating episodes at one time or another. Emotions (otherwise known as “energy in motion”) are intimately enmeshed with our creative spirit. If we are creative, we may have an easier time expressing emotions because we are used to the flow of energy running through us. When we lose sight of our creativity due to lack of time or stress, we indirectly effect our ability to express emotions.

The Sacral Chakra

The part of our energy that has an organic, dynamic, flowing resonance and is connected to the core issues of emotions and creativity is known as the sacral chakra (in Sanskrit, *svadisthana*). The sacral chakra, nestled in the region of the lower belly, yokes us to the water element and its eternal state of movement and changes. A healthy sacral chakra translates into being able to “go with the flow” of life and to move as our creative expression calls us, without judgment. An individual who is able to express herself and to be in tune with her emotions, creativity, senses, and dreams is someone who is in strong communication with her sacral chakra.

Since the sacral chakra is about movement from a place of centeredness, it represents flow in and the water aspects of the body. For example, the flow of materials inside and out of the cells is determined by the presence of flowing, liquid fats in the cell membrane. In addition, there is also the fluid that the cells are bathed in – referred to as the “extracellular fluid” – that is responsible for much of the transport of materials between cells. That’s why when we get a massage, we feel so much better – because we are assisting in the “flow” function of the body. It’s even more important to drink water (a key sacral chakra substance) after a massage to facilitate the removal of toxins from the body after having bodywork. The anatomical parts associated with the watery function of this chakra include the bladder, kidneys, and large intestine (colon).

The other aspect of anatomy overseen by this chakra is those organs that are about creativity, or creation. This center is particularly linked to women since it harbors the creative organs of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus. The hips and sacrum (hence, “sacral” chakra) are also part of the energy in this area of the body.

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Sacral Chakra:

- (4) **Spend time to create meals:** In our current culture, we have become dashboard diners, eating in our cars on our way to and from work, shopping, dropping the kids off, or picking them up. A fair number of us live in our cars, which I often refer to as an “island” or “bubble,” or are confined to a certain structure of life that stifles our creativity and our ease in preparing meals so that we buy processed foods for the sake of convenience. The sacral chakra gives us the gift of creating a meal –

let it flourish by hand-selecting items at the grocery store, designing a plateful of food in a colorful way, or even inventing new ways of eating through different silverware or painting your own bowl to eat from. The possibilities of creation through foods and eating are truly endless!

- (5) **Pay attention to the senses when eating:** It is common to eat without the assistance of our team of senses. Tune in to the here-and-now when you are selecting, preparing, or eating food so that you can get the most out of your eating experience. When we are aware of what we are eating and doing through our senses, we may tend to eat less because our experience of being in touch with our bodies will be much more fulfilling rather than having to stuff down some more bites of food.
- (6) **Engage in playful eating:** This part of us wants to honor the child within, which means we need to take advantage of any moment of play, pleasure, and fun. Many of us, when we were young, were told NOT to play with our foods. The sacral chakra place of us asks that we sit in the mindset of our childlike selves, and play with food in any way we'd like!

Substances for Feelings and Flow:

- (5) **Water:** There is nothing more healing than ensuring that our bodies are properly hydrated. It's one of the simplest things we can do, yet most of us overlook its importance. We are 60-80% water and the high water content is responsible for helping us to flow internally. Not only is drinking water essential, but eating foods high in water content, such as vegetables and fruits, will support the sacral chakra. Aim for at least 6-8 glasses of water per day, sipped throughout the day so that you can keep hydrated.
- (6) **Fats and Oils:** How many people do you know that are "fat-phobic" or afraid of eating fat because they think they will become fat? Unfortunately, the low-fat trend of the early 1990s has resulted in lingering false notions about the role of fat in the diet. If we are missing certain fats that our bodies cannot make (called "essential fatty acids"), then our skin becomes dry and scaly, our behavior changes to make us more irritable and depressed, and we don't learn as well. These essential fats are wiggly, flowing fats that are needed by the cell membranes for important functions. Make sure that you get enough of the pivotal omega-3 fats: flaxseed oil, salmon, leafy, green vegetables, nuts
- (7) **Fish:** Salmon is one of the most ideal foods for the sacral chakra since it is a food that embodies the water element (which rules the sacral chakra) and is made of essential, fluid fats. Additionally, its flesh is the color orange, which provides the optimal vibration for the sacral chakra.
- (8) **Orange-colored foods:** A healthy sacral chakra vibrates at a frequency similar to the color orange. Therefore, orange foods provide the vibrational rate needed to help balance this chakra. On a nutritional level, orange foods usually contain relatively high levels of carotenoids (for example, beta-carotene), a family of nutrients that can be incorporated into cell membranes for protection against free radicals. Examples include carrots, pumpkin, mandarins.

CHAPTER 3

Foods for Power and Transformation: Feeding the Solar Plexus Chakra

We live in a power-hungry, stress-filled society that is always expecting more and more of us. Our ability to maintain balance in the midst of chaos becomes increasingly difficult when demands and responsibilities begin to pile high. We try to accommodate and stay in control by saying “yes” when we really mean “no,” and after awhile, we feel burdened with life and everyday events become drudgery. Finally, we collapse in utter exhaustion. When there is an excessive amount of energy being taken in, there may be an inability to integrate this energy with the self. Often, the imbalance manifests as weight gain in the abdomen, particularly when the individual takes in energy and cannot balance the intake with the output. The nationwide obesity epidemic is due, in part, to the collective imbalance many people are experiencing. We have now arrived at eating out of our cars, eating on the run, eating foods that deplete us further only to get quick energy to prevent us from running low.

The Solar Plexus Chakra

The part of our energy that has a fiery, transformative resonance and is connected to the core issues of energy exchange is known as the solar plexus chakra (in Sanskrit, *manipura*). The solar plexus chakra, which sits in the middle of the torso, underneath the diaphragm, connects us to the fire element and its ability to catalyze energy reactions in the external world. This is the center from which we live our outward life, and according to my own research, the energy part of us that is most often imbalanced! A healthy solar plexus chakra translates into an integrated, powerful exchange of energy in and out of the physical and energy bodies in a way that generates the radiance of “presence”. I am sure we all know when someone embodies the essence of “presence” – they walk confidently into a room and light it up with the brilliance of their solar plexus.

Since the solar plexus chakra is about transformation and harnessing energy, it oversees the digestive organs – esophagus, stomach, pancreas, small intestines, liver, and gallbladder. It is the hub of our physical relationship with food and represents the exchange of information with food and our bodies’ ability to decode the information into energy – both physical and energetic. The nutrients signal a transformation throughout our body known as metabolism, the sum of buildup and breakdown reactions. On a smaller level, it encompasses the workings of the cell’s “powerhouse” – the mitochondria - which has the ability to extract ATP (or energy) from metabolic reactions.

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Solar Plexus Chakra:

- (1) **Get in touch with your hunger gauge:** Often, we lose sight of our innate sense of physical hunger and responding to our bodies’ physical cues to eat. We may forget to eat, or we may undereat or overeat without realizing it. By tapping into our internal rhythm to eat, and eating regularly, we will help ourselves to keep our internal power rather than giving it over to irregular eating times and over or under doing our eating. Rate your hunger before and after eating to tap into how well you are maintaining your fuel reserves. If you find yourself “stuffed” after a

meal, you may have inundated your solar plexus, placing an additional burden on it to process. Aim for about 80% fullness, which will enable you to take a light walk after eating.

- (2) **Know your fuel:** You may find yourself eating foods even though you know they “run you down”. For example, sugars are everywhere – in the least expected items like salad dressings, ketchups, sauces – even though they give an initial burst of energy, in the long run, they will drain you because of the constant rollercoaster of glucose (sugar) and insulin (hormone that processes glucose in your blood). Avoid artificial sweeteners as they set you up for additional cravings and metabolic imbalance. You’ll actually set yourself up for chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes if you continue to imbalance your energy by making poor food choices and not exercising.
- (3) **Schedule regular eating times:** You may want to start by first creating a regular eating schedule – eating small meals 4-6 times per day - so that you can retrain yourself to get in touch with your eating rhythm. Studies have shown that eating more frequent meals throughout the day helps us to maintain our blood sugar, and therefore, gives more energy. Feeding yourself more regularly will ensure that you have the fuel you need to keep going without succumbing to cravings or dips in energy.

Substances for Power and Transformation:

- (1) **Carbohydrates:** The three lower chakras connect to the energy of the trio of macronutrients - the root chakra anchors into protein, the sacral chakra flows with fats, and the solar plexus chakra resonates with carbohydrate. Carbohydrates vary in quantity and quality in the diet. If we eat too many carbohydrates, we tax our solar plexus. If we eat too little, we do not equip it with the energy it needs to have momentum and direction. The key is also to get the best quality of carbohydrate – from whole foods rather than from processed foods that have been stripped of essential nutrients.
- (2) **Fiber:** Fiber content of carbohydrate is a good marker of the amount of sustained energy your body will receive from the carbohydrate. If a food is high in fiber, you will receive adequate amounts of energy over time to fuel your actions. If a food is low in fiber and high in simple sugars, your energy will be erratic – initially it will be very high but then it will plummet. The goal for a healthy solar plexus chakra is to eat foods that are balanced so that you can be balanced – for example, fruits, nuts, whole grains, legumes, and vegetables.
- (3) **Yellow-colored Foods:** A healthy solar plexus chakra vibrates at a frequency similar to the color yellow. Therefore, yellow foods provide the vibrational rate needed to help balance this chakra. On a nutritional level, yellow foods usually contain relatively high levels of plant compounds antioxidants like lutein which protects cells against an attack from the effects of too much energy in the body and overactive metabolism. Examples include lemons, yellow bell pepper, fresh corn or cornmeal.

CHAPTER 4

Foods for Love and Compassion: Feeding the Heart Chakra

There is no greater food than love. Human beings thrive on it. We feed ourselves with symbols of the heart plastered on t-shirts, bumper stickers, books, and cards. Our speech is littered with the word “love” – “I loved that movie!” “I love going on vacation.” “I love you!” The meaning of the word “love” can be stretched out to a long continuum, going all the way from romantic love to platonic love to familial love. Without a doubt, the heart is front and center of our lives. In fact, in Traditional Chinese Medicine, the heart is referred to as the “sovereign,” or the ruler of the body, and is claimed to house the spirit of the person. All the emphasis that has been placed on the intellect for so many years is now proving to be misplaced, as recent research from the HeartMath Institute shows that the heart generates a more significant field than the brain.

In several cultures, food is used to show love. Think of all the boxes of chocolates exchanged for Valentine’s Day. Dating couples typically spend their time together eating a meal. Mothers bake cookies for their children. The message being delivered on many levels is that if we care about someone, we share food with them, whether preparing it for them, serving it, or even eating with them. Our love travels through the conduit of food. Also, we may overlook love for ourselves, but it is through the act of eating that we show we value and love our bodies. Religious traditions have used the phrase, “Your body is your temple.” Indeed, loving and caring for ourselves implies providing our bodies with quality nourishment.

The heart is the inner fulcrum from which our eating experience balances. Without a solid foundation of love and a free, open heart, we are unable to lovingly assimilate any quantity or quality of nutrients we ingest, no matter how pure and adequate they may be for our body. People who are preoccupied with obtaining the proper balance of calories, protein, carbohydrate, and fat are lodged within the earthy mud of the lower chakras – this is not the best and only way to approach nourishment. Remember this next time you take a bite -- love energizes every particulate we pass through our lips. If we eat with an expansive heart, we amplify the healing effects of foods compared with eating from a place of non-love. Truly, the greatest nourishment we could ever take in is that of love – if we only ate love, we might call ourselves “lovearians” or “lovivores”. The take-home message is that if we do not infuse our food with love, we starve our hearts, and ultimately, our spirit.

The Heart Chakra

The part of our subtle anatomy that connects to the heart is called the heart chakra (in Sanskrit, *anahata*). It holds not only the heart but the lungs, breasts, shoulders, armpits, arms, wrists, and hands. The arms and hands are an extension of the heart chakra, as they provide us with the ability to reach out, receive, and give. Touch is the sense associated with the heart chakra. Additionally, the blood vessel network and circulation of blood throughout the body is connected to the heart chakra.

The heart chakra is unique from the lower three chakras in that it has more of an air quality associated with it, rather than some element that is concrete and physical. Entering the heart chakra territory is like

stepping into another universe – one that is vast, cosmic, and infinite. Some traditions perceive the heart chakra as the center point where body and soul, heaven and Earth, meet. When our heart chakra beats to our optimum rhythm, it will sit comfortably and peacefully on a throne surrounded by love, feeling and discernment. Like the sacral chakra, the heart chakra works with emotions, but on a different level – it translates the raw emotions spun from the wild wheel of the sacral chakra into a tapestry of pure feeling with a basis of wisdom. It is common to think of someone with an “open heart” as being endlessly giving and self-sacrificing; however, a well-developed heart chakra implies loving discernment and detachment as the highest expression of love – this is “emotional wisdom”.

Like to the solar plexus chakra, the heart chakra can easily find itself in overdrive by giving without an equal balance of receiving – women, especially mothers and *caregivers*, are usually in this position. However, a healthy, balanced heart chakra can harmonize feelings and love for others without compromising the expression of feelings and love of self. Those who are truly tapped into their wellspring of love will let their emotions be their guiding principle for decision-making, or, in other words, they will “follow their heart.”

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Heart Chakra:

1. Growing, eating, and serving food with love and gratitude

There is a good chance that you have had a meal made with love, or had a meal carefully, lovingly created, prepared, and served to you. It is quite a treat to have nurturing baked into your nourishment, as it feeds the body along with the spirit. Without a doubt, love is the highest Earthly vibration possible. When food marinades in love, it is saturated with a high vibration, along with making it taste sweeter and more flavorful. People who buy organically grown food claim that it tastes better than conventionally-grown food when compared side by side, even when they do not know which one is which. There certainly is an element of ‘love’ that appears to go into organic gardening that you don’t find in mass, industrial farming. And when we make the selection for organic food, we are actively tapping into the energetic lineage of love that has grown into the food imparted from the sun, stars, moon, sky, farmer, harvester and grocer.

2. Sharing meals with others

Love grows when we share it. By loving others, we never become depleted of love. In fact, quite the opposite! In much the same way, sharing meals with others feeds our heart chakra. The more we share, the more nourishment that is available to all. Try inviting others over to eat and trying new recipes – this is the perfect meal for the heart chakra. Eating in a communal setting is important for us as human beings as we are interdependent on each other. Our lives at their essence are truly about giving and receiving love. When we build walls of isolation or separation around us, we close off the heart chakra. Eating with others blossoms the heart with joy, especially when the meals are prepared and eaten together.

Substances for Love and Compassion:

- (1) Vegetables:** The three lower chakras revolve around the macronutrient universe - the root chakra grounds into protein, the sacral chakra flows with fats, and the solar plexus chakra burns carbohydrate. The heart chakra doesn't feed on calories from these nutritional "big guns". Instead, it loves to take in plant foods because of their complexity. Plants are some of the most tenacious life forms on the planet – they are confined to one place and are able to survive, a very similar quality to that locked within the essence of the heart chakra ("love conquers all").
- (2) Cruciferous vegetables:** Of course, vegetables, on the whole, speak clearly to the heart chakra and provide it what it needs to be grounded and yet expansive and loving. Cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, are especially balancing for the heart chakra. The very organization of these vegetables mirrors that of the unfolding spirals of the rose-like heart chakra. These vegetables are composed of a family of several components or layers, such as broccoli which is a crowd of tiny florets, like a forest on a stick. Brussels sprouts and onions share a similar quality, but in a different way. They are multi-dimensional and are built upon many layers coming together. The cruciferous vegetables share a common stinky, sulfur smell, indicating that they are effective at guarding the body from toxins. Sulfur-containing compounds such as sulforaphanes found in broccoli act as detoxification agents in the body. They work together with the intestines and liver (overseen by the solar plexus and sacral chakras) to rid the body of contaminants.
- (3) Green-colored Foods:** A healthy heart chakra vibrates at a frequency similar to the color green. Therefore, green foods provide the vibrational rate needed to help balance this chakra. On a nutritional level, green foods usually contain relatively high levels of plant compounds antioxidants like chlorophyll which is "king" of the plant-based antioxidants. . In addition, green foods contain an essential nutrient known as folic acid. This nutrient, along with vitamin B6 and B12, is needed to lower levels of a reactive compound known as homocysteine in the blood. Studies indicate that there is a correlation between blood homocysteine levels and the incidence of heart disease. Examples include avocados, limes, lettuce, and fresh soybeans. If you want more love, eat GREEN!

CHAPTER 5

Foods for Communication and Truth: Feeding the Throat Chakra

As human beings, one of our unifying gifts is to express ourselves. We are surrounded with expression in everyday life when we talk on the phone, write an e-mail, listen to the radio, watch the television or have an in-person conversation. The vehicle of the voice is one of the most impactful means of expression we are capable of. After all, we cannot fully release the chaotic, raw thoughts and emotions that arise within us without being able to speak, write or communicate in some way. Therefore, our throat becomes a ‘birth canal’ for the passions and feelings of the heart. Our heart cannot make its feelings known without having an outlet of expression.

The thoughts we think and the words we speak are destined to ultimately become manifest. But how many people realize the power of their words? Do we speak authentically, coming from our true place within? Or do we find ourselves caught up in lies, deceit, or rumors? How do we communicate our feelings and needs about eating? Do we remain silent to issues around the food supply – such as the safety of foods, the adulteration of foods with additives, or the marketing of unhealthy foods – or do we speak out? You may have seen the recent fast food ads showing gorgeous models gorging on greasy burgers. This is clearly a disconnect, and sends a message of inauthenticity to people watching – young children and teenagers are most vulnerable to the subconscious messages these ads are promoting. Eating those fast foods laden in sugar, fat, and salt will not help someone to have a healthy, perfect body. In fact, as we know, quite the opposite.

Therefore, it is important to be true to ourselves in all aspects of our lives, even when it comes to foods and eating. If we can't say “no”, we may find ourselves in a predicament where we must eat certain foods that don't benefit our bodies, minds, or spirits. Know exactly where you stand on something like foods and eating so that when you are called into question or in a situation, you can report your truth! And then you will feel good about it – your message will be clear and consistent with **who you are**.

The Throat Chakra

The part of our subtle anatomy that connects to communication and the voice is called the throat chakra (in Sanskrit, *vishuddha*). It holds not only the throat but the ears, mouth, nose, thyroid gland, lips, and cheeks. The ability of the nose to smell, the tongue to taste, and the ears to hear are all contained within the throat chakra vicinity. Thus, the throat chakra is essential for our connection to food. It serves as the gateway for food to enter our physical body. Our intent for that food is set within the throat chakra, and the throat chakra determines and chooses foods that are needed for our highest good.

Like to the other chakras, the throat chakra can easily find itself in overdrive by talking incessantly without making sense, chewing mindlessly, or gulping food. However, a healthy, balanced throat chakra can harmonize truth and authenticity within the entire being by speaking clearly and truthfully, eating mindfully, and synchronizing all the activities that take place in this concentrated area: hearing, talking, tasting, chewing, breathing, and swallowing.

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Throat Chakra:

1. **Chew food** – In the age of fast living, we are doing everything fast, including eating. If we are eating on the run, we may tend to shortcut our eating by gulping and swallowing rather than chewing and assimilating. If we are not chewing our food thoroughly, chances are we won't be able to digest, absorb, and ultimately, assimilate it into our body. Thus, chewing serves an important function. It is also essential that we put our awareness into eating so we get the most from the experience and do not feel like overeating – chewing slowly helps us to accomplish this. Eating with consciousness keeps us in the moment and allows us to savor the flavor and joy of foods!
2. **Eat high-quality foods for your highest self** – Every day we are bombarded with food choices – how do we know what is best for us? Nutritionists seem to tell us one thing one day and another thing the next. How do we know how to choose foods? The throat chakra is about choice, decisions, and options – but not just any – the throat chakra, being a higher, resonating chakra than some of the other lower chakras, is calling us to make the best choice for ourselves and our planet. Eat foods that serve your body, mind, and spirit, and that serve the realm of nature – the animals, plants, and water. If we are eating meat from chickens kept in unhealthy, stressful conditions, we may take on the 'energy' of those chickens – frenetic, chaotic, stressful. If we are eating foods that were grown using natural elements instead of synthetic, such as organically grown foods, we are taking in healthy, higher-vibratory signals for our soul.
3. **Broaden your food horizon** – When we cave into food ruts, we let go of our ability to choose and experience. The throat chakra encourages us to be expansive like the overarching sky – to look wider and broader, to explore and discover. One of the ways we can do this is by eating ethnic foods – foods we may not normally eat, whether Thai, Indian, Middle-Eastern, European, or Ethiopian, to name a few. See what happens when you introduce some variety. It exposes you to an abundance of tradition and culture. It broadens not only your food horizon, but helps you to step out of the box of your everyday living!
4. **Spark alchemy amongst the food elements** – On a spiritual level, the throat chakra is about alchemy – transforming the messages of the heart into the language of voice, words, song, poetry. The throat chakra resonates with the alchemy of food elements – bringing together water and earth, fire and water, fire and earth. By eating foods like soups (earth-water elements fused together through fire), we encourage and honor our connection with the elemental nature of foods and our bodies.

Substances for Communication and Truth:

- (1) **Sea Plants:** Sea plants are not a common food for most Americans, but they have value for our throat chakra because they supply iodine and other minerals for our thyroid gland. When our thyroid gland is properly fueled, we can metabolize our food properly and feel in balance with our body weight. Try sprinkling dry dulse flakes on top of a salad or making a wrap out of a sheet of nori!

- (2) **Soups/sauces/juices:** These foods are moistening and lubricating for the mouth and throat. They help quench our thirst or help us to sustain our bodies with an amalgam of nutrients. Adding a little sauce (like soy sauce or a light dressing) to a vegetable can help it to better mix within our mouths so that we can digest it fully. Eating soups can open up the throat chakra area and create more ease in eating. Eating spoonfuls of soup compared to bites of food may help us to slow down and be more in the moment. And finally, juicing fruits and vegetables can extract the nutrients we need in a liquid base to nourish the body through the conduit of communication.
- (3) **Fruits:** Fruits tend to be high in water content, so they are the perfect food for the throat chakra. Some of them make us pucker, like lemons and limes, which can be good for propelling us into action to say something. Others make us expansive because of their water content and sweet taste, like melons, which can help us to be more communicative when we feel withdrawn.

CHAPTER 6

Foods for Intuition and Imagination: Feeding the Third Eye Chakra

When we think about “seeing”, we often think about our ability to see the external world. When we think of our eyes, we might refer to the two eyes on our face. However, the third eye chakra guides us into another realm of sight. It leads us to peer into our internal world – to examine who we are not just in the physical world, but also in the cosmos at large. Who are we in the grand scheme of life? How do we connect our life on Earth to all of life through the entire universe?

The third eye chakra gets us to move from the microcosm of our being to the macrocosm of All That Is. Through the vehicle of intuition, it guides us through our lives, helping us to make the choices that serve us and others best. Sometimes we hear our intuition outright and other times, we are imparted information we need to know within our dreams. If we are paying attention, we will be able to connect our small and big selves using the bridge of intuition.

When it comes to food, many of us have lost sight of our inner voice about what to eat, how to eat, and how much to eat. By reconnecting with our true inner needs, we can find our way back to our perfect bodies and minds. We can start to do this by listening. Yes, listening rather than always talking! When we are still, in a meditative mindset, we are able to hear what we need to. Practicing meditation or simply being still is a superb way to exercise your intuitive muscle!

The Third Eye Chakra

The part of our subtle anatomy that connects to intuition and imagination is called the third eye chakra (in Sanskrit, *ajna*). This part of us is unique as it opens the part of us that is responsible for vision – physical and intuitive. It oversees the truly visible aspects of our physiology like the eyes, as well as the brain, and the coordination of the incredible network of hormones through the hypothalamus, and pituitary and pineal glands. Also, it is the link to our ‘higher vision’ – that of our purpose, path, and passion, all wrapped into one. It is the seat of our intuition, or the culmination of our earthly experience combined with our senses and “gut feeling”.

Therefore, the third eye chakra is uniquely part of our connection to food. You may have heard the expression – “you eat with your eyes” – and, indeed, there is some truth to this statement as our eating process begins before we’ve even taken a bite of food. We begin the process of transformation in the body by first seeing the food – noticing its rainbow array of colors and the artistry of food arranged on the plate. This interaction feeds us – it sparks our brain to start sending signals to the rest of our physiology, primarily the gut - that we’ve got food coming.

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Third Eye Chakra:

1. **Eat intuitively** – We are all intuitive beings, but sometimes we put our intellect on overdrive when it comes to eating. By tuning into our soulful needs through the vehicle of our intuition, we will be in harmony with what both our body and soul require to resonate to their fullest. Listening to our

intuitive voice about foods and eating requires practice. You may “feel” that you need to be eating more spinach. Or you may have a “hunch” that you need to get more protein by eating black beans. Honor your intuitive signals to bring your body and soul into alignment. The more you pay attention, the more intuitive signals you’ll receive!

2. **Nourish the brain and mood** – Of course, the brain is an essential organ and we need to nourish it just like any other part of us. In fact, it has unique nutritional needs. Since about 60% of the brain is fat, we can alter the composition of the brain by feeding it good, healthy, unsaturated omega-3 fats, like those you’d get from fish, nuts, seeds, and vegetables. Feeding the body and, ultimately, the brain with healthy fats will ensure that your neurotransmitters are flowing fluidly, and keeping you in a good, positive mood. Studies have shown that people who have depression have lower amounts of omega-3 fats in their blood. Feast on fish and prevent yourself from “going nuts” by eating nuts!
3. **Eat to sleep well** – There is a “new” disorder on the market – it’s called “Nighttime Eating Syndrome”. When people have lots of extra time at night, they may settle into a routine of relaxing at home, watching television and eating snacks. These snacks may amount to a significant proportion of their daily intake – in some cases, about 15% of the total calories can be eaten at night after dinner! Eating close to bedtime may result in disruptions in sleep patterns for some people. Not eating two to three hours before bedtime works well for most. If we eat right before we go to sleep, our third eye chakra may remain too active, keeping us unsettled throughout the night. On the other hand, having a light protein snack right before bedtime may help give some individuals with a third eye imbalance a more deep, grounded quality of sleep. For restful dreams, curtail nighttime eating.

Substances for Intuition and Imagination:

- (1) **Chocolate:** Chocolate is one of the most powerful foods for the third eye chakra – its vibration replenishes and stimulates this center, and it does so in a number of ways. Dark chocolate contains caffeine which stimulates the brain and thinking, enabling us to focus on a task at hand better. It also contains antioxidants known as flavonoids which help to open up the blood vessels. We may even become more relaxed and lower our blood pressure as a result of this effect. Aside from its physiological effects, it can certainly alter our psychology – our mood, as it contains several constituents that act as stimulants or that give us the comforting “I’m in love” feeling. Try having a small square of dark chocolate in the late afternoon to help your brain to revive from thinking all day long and to help your mood sink into one of relaxation and bliss!
- (2) **Spice it up!** The theme of substances that influence the third eye chakra is that they are “intense” – just like thought and intuition can be. Spices are typically used in small amounts because of their potent effects. As a result of their pungent flavors, their effects are felt in the realm of the third eye chakra. Many spices are not only tasty, but medicinal as well, and helpful for reducing brain aging. One example is curry. Populations that eat more curry tend to have better scores on cognition tests.

Also, curcumin, from the curry spice, has been shown to be a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compound that reduces the buildup of a protein (beta-amyloid) found to be in greater concentrations in demented brains.

- (3) **Purple berries:** Berries, particularly the dark purplish kind, like blueberries, have been shown to help animals learn better. Researchers have shown that giving berries to aged animals (the equivalent of about ½ cup for humans) resulted in cognitive improvements. And if that weren't interesting enough, what we now know is that berries aren't just brain-wonder foods because they are potent antioxidants. Scientists have shown that the two berries, blueberries and strawberries, influence different types of learning and memory. They appear to be very specific both in function and where they end up in the brain. Think berries for breakfast, especially for kids, to help them learn at school. Smoothies containing a mixture of frozen berries are also a real treat as a snack.

CHAPTER 7

Foods for Interconnection and Purification: Feeding the Crown Chakra

Many of us realize that eating is a physical act – our bodies harness energy from the food in order to move around, be active, live life – but how many of us recognize the inherent spiritual aspects of eating? When I say that eating is spiritual, what I am actually saying is that it connects us to all of life. Spirituality, in my opinion, is synonymous with “interconnection”. When we share a meal with friends, family, or co-workers, we are entering into a venue of connection. We connect through conversation, eating together, laughing together, and talking.

There are actually many layers of interconnection that can occur within a meal besides relating to another human being. We would nourish not only our bodies but our souls if we were able to see the cosmos in our plate – an energetic lineage – spanning from the seed, which was planted in a field and tended to by a caring farmer and workers, bathed in sunlight and moonlight, visited by a multitude of insects, to when, eventually, the seed transformed into a vegetable picked by someone’s loving hand. The vegetable made a hearty journey to ultimately make it to the store or farmer’s market. It connected with someone enough for it to be selected and bought. A chef or cook took great skill in preparing it into a dish, and days later, it has found its way to your plate.

So when we are eating, we are not just eating a blip in time, savoring a present moment of goodness, but a whole past history of connection. We eat our connections and take in not only the physical energy of each one, but the non-physical energy as well. Therefore, it is very important to eat the energy you want to become! Organically grown food and free range animals are excellent counterparts to conventionally grown produce and caged animals, and will have a different resonance.

The Crown Chakra

The part of our subtle anatomy that connects to interconnection (spirituality) and purification is called the crown chakra (in Sanskrit, *sahasrara*). It is located at the top of the head and is said to vibrate to the colors white, lavender or gold. During meditative practices or prayer, this center is opened and serves as a conduit to the flow of universal energy and peace. The crown chakra is less about physical embodiment than the other chakras, and it vibrates at the highest rate. The root and crown chakras share similarities in that the root chakra extracts energy from the Earth for its vitalization while the crown chakra is nourished by the life force of All That Is.

Due to the fact that it is not physical in nature like the other chakras, the crown chakra is more about how we eat than it is about what we eat. It can also resonate with lack of eating (fasting) as a means to purifying and clarifying the physical body. In order to work with this chakra through food, it is best to see the act of eating as a spiritual act of interconnection. Every meal is indeed a miracle. How we approach that miracle could serve as nourishment for the body and soul, just like the food constituents themselves.

Ways to Eat to Promote a Healthy Crown Chakra:

1. **Purify the body through pure foods** – The message of the crown chakra is purification and releasing the physical body from debris so that there is a better connection between body and soul. One of the ways to purify the body is to refrain from eating foods that have been contaminated with artificial ingredients or additives, such as artificial sweeteners, dyes, preservatives, and colorings. When we load ourselves up with these synthetic ingredients, our nervous systems (as well as the rest of our bodies) become toxic. We may develop neurological symptoms like headaches, hyperactivity and inability to focus on task.
2. **Incorporate gentle detox in your everyday routine** – You may have heard the word, “detox” used to refer to cleaning the body of toxins. Many of us are bombarded by environmental stresses such as pollution, unhealthy foods, and lack of activity. By making sure to do something every day to keep you “clean”, you will keep your toxin load to a minimum, and thus, feel and function better. There are a number of things you can do to rid the body of toxins. One of the foods that is great for sweeping toxins out of the body is fiber. Eating high-fiber foods like non-starchy vegetables, berries, and legumes are excellent ways to trap toxins in the gut and carry them out.
3. **Connect with interconnection through eating** – With each meal, take a couple of moments to reflect on the complexity of connections that you are about to take in. Give thanks or say a prayer for all of nature that went into the making of the foods – whether people, animals, or plants. By doing so, you acknowledge the interconnection of all the pieces that are involved in the lineage of that food. Imparting a blessing through prayer or a spoken intention will help to connect the food to your spirit, and even alter the food compounds to make it resonate on a more positive level.

Substances for Interconnection and Purification:

- (1) **Sunlight:** The crown chakra has often been referred to as the sun, or as being gold in color. Like the individual photons vibrating within the glorious sun rays, the magnificent crown chakra resonates to the fine vibration of the source of universal light. Sunlight and crown chakra energy can permeate our physical being and spark certain cell processes. Connecting with the sun’s rays fills us with the nourishment of hope, love, and divine grace. It balances the body and the soul. Before eating, try “bathing” your food in sunlight. Allow your plateful of food to bask in the sun for a couple of minutes, allowing it to be invigorated with the high photonic energy of Divine radiance.
- (2) **Oxygen:** Oxygen, extracted from breath (referred to as “chi” or “prana”), is the subtle substance we are always sipping in to keep our cells vibrant and flowing with life. We couldn’t survive without it. Oxygen is the key component that the body uses to access the energy contained within bonds of glucose in a process called oxidative metabolism. We cannot assimilate the vibration of foods to feed our chakras unless we have the essential wiring in place to our crown chakra. With oxygen, our being stays conscious, alive, and invigorated. Deep breathing and oxygenation therapies help to

clear the crown chakra. Breathe deeply when you eat to ensure that you are harnessing all energy within the food.

- (3) **Love:** Ultimately, love alone nourishes us. It is different than food in that the more we allow it to feed us, the more it grows, enabling others to be fed. When we are ready to accept love fully and completely, without limits, we are liberated from having to ingest any food to feed our vibration. We can experience love in its many facets – love of self, of others, of nature, of planet, of God. By practicing indulging on love in all its many rainbowed forms, we open ourselves to a connection that our bodies, hearts, and spirits crave most!

About the Author



*Deanna Minich, PhD, CN, (www.foodandspirit.com) is a nutritionist who sees more to food than calories and macronutrients. She blends cutting-edge nutrition information, quantum physics, and the ancient chakra system to guide others to use foods and eating as tools for spiritual growth and nourishment for the soul. With her latest book, **Chakra Foods for Optimum Health: A Guide to the Foods that can Improve Your Energy, Inspire Creative Changes, Open Your Heart, and Heal Body, Mind, and Spirit**, she unravels your intuition, and guides you on a journey to inner and outer bliss with every bite you take! Her new book, **An A to Z Guide to Food Additives: Never Eat What You Can't Pronounce**, is a companion guide for your journey to the supermarket to help you make sense of your food!*