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## Holiday Eating - A Gift To Yourself

The holiday season is a great time to adopt new eating habits! Many of us fear gaining weight during the holiday season. Yet we neglect to set clear, measurable intentions about what we would like to have happen.

As energy practitioners, we know that intentions are critical to effecting change and creating new patterns. Dietary intentions are not about “eating more fruits and vegetables” and “eating less sugar.” They are about healing the emotional voids, which lead to emotional eating. They are about the deep emotional reasons we want to make changes. Some may say that the root of all change is to feel love and happiness.

The two best ways to **fail** making dietary changes are willpower and discipline. At best, these work temporarily. Usually what happens is that dieters follow willpower and discipline until they cannot take it anymore and then, in a fit of feeling deprived, eat the whole bag of chips or package of

cookies or container of ice cream. Another common response is for a stressful or wonderful situation to arise (both of which are abundant at the holidays) and dieters choose to have “just a little” of something they are “not supposed” to have. They usually eat more than originally intended. Then they feel guilty or shameful about it and punish themselves.

Food, like energy, is not good or bad. It has a vibration and that vibration can enhance our well-being or disturb our well being. It depends on our intention and how we use the energy.

The two best ways to succeed at making dietary changes are removing judgment and eating to fuel our bodies. These are both paradigm changes and shifts in how we think about food. For example, some people eat comfort foods when encountering stressful situations or as the weather becomes colder. Some people reward themselves with food to overcome pain and to celebrate joy. Many families hold a value that food is love. Food is -- food!

If you find yourself reaching for comfort food this holiday season, consider why you need comfort. What is the emotion of discomfort? Is it anger? Sadness? Loss of control? Which chakras or meridians are affected? How might you address this without food?

Think about the next holiday gathering you will attend. What would you like to have happen? Are you eager to connect with a specific person? Are you excited about the venue? If the event is wildly successful for you, what will have taken place?

If you are eager to connect with someone, what will you talk about? What is the intended outcome of your conversation? Do you need to prepare any information or strategy to create that outcome? How will you know if the outcome has been met? Be sure to set a qualitative or quantitative measurement for your goal.

Maybe you are excited to wear a new outfit or one you do not often have an opportunity to wear. Shifting the focus to what is really important to you will guide your actions. Take time to explore your true desires for holiday gatherings.

As you change your perspective on the role of food and begin to work through emotions instead of choosing emotional eating, your food choices will naturally change. You may find yourself no longer seeking comfort in calories. You may find that you enjoy food even more and are satisfied with just a few bites of your favorite treats.



When you make changes, your family and friends will notice. In all my years of private practice, I have yet to fully understand why others become defensive about their food choices when those around them make changes. But I can guarantee they will! Having strategies to gracefully negotiate the situation for a positive outcome is critical for success and a joyful gathering.

People may ask if you are following a diet or why you are not eating a particular dish. There are several great responses. One is to say that you are experimenting with eating differently and notice that when you focus on \_\_\_\_\_ you have more energy and sleep better. This will intrigue some people and they may ask more questions. Having stated that you are experimenting sets the stage to say “*I am not sure*” when you do not know the answer.

Another tack is to say that you are challenging yourself. Name your challenge and then ask the person if he or she can help you and describe, in detail, what kind of help you need. People LOVE to help and this is a great way to get someone to champion your change rather than challenge it. For example, let’s say you want to stop eating dairy. You might say “*I am challenging myself to go dairy-free. Can you help me figure out which foods might have dairy hidden in them? I’m not sure if there are eggs in that casserole or whether toast-spread has butter in it.*”

If someone becomes defensive and says, “*Oh, I couldn’t do that,*” the best response is simply a neutral acknowledgment of their statement. You might say “*I hear you*” or “*It is not for everyone*” and then change the subject.

This year, give yourself the gift of healthy eating FOR the holidays. Enjoy gatherings by having clear focus. Create measurable outcomes and then, treat yourself when you attain your goals! The treats are all the good feelings. Notice where in your body you experience them and then enjoy those juicy vibes! 🍋



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