

# The Doctor Weighs In

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## Getting in touch with your feelings....about raisins

by Dr. Pat Sylber

A friend put me in touch with Maureen Whitehouse, a former model and now author of a new book, *Soul-Full Eating*. Maureen sent me a copy of her book to review. It is a pretty book with a serenely beautiful cover photo, it reminds me of the décor of some of the nicer high-end spas I have frequented.

The subtitle of the book is “A (*Delicious!*) Path to Higher Conscious.” Oh, oh, I’m thinking ... this may be a little too zen for me. I practice yoga because it is a great exercise and my main stretching activity. But I have never really been the meditating sort. I avoid the silent dinners at my annual visit at Rancho La Puerta ... not being able to imagine how someone could pass up the chance to blab with the terrifically interesting people who attend that spa.

So, you can imagine my mind set when I started reading Soul-Full Eating. Each chapter starts with a quote. “*Eat with love what’s grown with love, prepared with love, and served with love*” is the basic principle of Soul-Full Eating. Hmmm.

Each chapter also has exercises to perform to help you understand the ideas presented in that chapter. The first chapter’s exercise was “*Just for one day, do only what you genuinely love to do.*” Yeah, right...but what about all of work I have to do. Who is going to write the post for The Doctor Weighs In?

Things aren’t going well for me and this book until I hit page 24. There, the author described a “mind-fullness” exercise that she uses in her *True Beauty* workshops. She describes how she walks into the workshop, and without saying a word, hands the participants three raisins.

Then she asks them to examine the “objects” as though they had never seen a raisin before. They are to experience the raisin with what Zen Buddhists call “a beginner’s mind.” She tells the readers to get three raisins and do the exercise while reading this section.

So, I go to the kitchen and open the package of raisins that has been sitting, untouched, in my cupboard for several months (no, really several years, I think). I pick out three raisins and sit to read the section.



First, she tells us, examine one of the raisins carefully. Look at it closely and roll it in the palm of your hand. Lo and behold, the raisin I have picked out is actually two raisins stuck together. Had I just popped it in my mouth, I never would have known that. Next you lick the raisin. It is softer than it felt in my hand. At last, she tells you to put it in your mouth, but not chew it or swallow it, rather let your tongue explore it. Amazing, as I explore the raisin, it starts to get soft and feels like it is plumping up. It likes being in my mouth.

Now, she tells us, to slowly chew, but still not swallow. You are to chew that little raisin until it liquefies. That takes a long time. Meanwhile, you start to really *taste* the raisin. Ordinarily, if I eat raisins, I just pop a handful of those little sugar bombs in my mouth and swallow. I am not sure I ever really thought about the taste before.

The raisin tastes pretty darn good...earthy and sweet, but not too sweet. It is nice. I swallow the juice. It took about 3 minutes from touch to swallow...considerably longer than my usual "grab and swallow" raisin eating approach.

The author instructs us to repeat this exercise two more times. Each time consciously exploring the raisin and trying to find something new about it that you didn't notice before. By the time I swallowed the third raisin, I realized how good it was to roll a raisin in your mouth with your tongue. And, how much flavor it has when allowed to slowly disintegrate and dissolve with during the long slow chewing process.

I must say, this exercise did get me in touch with my feelings about raisins in a way I have never experienced before. This, according to Maureen Whitehouse, is mind-full eating. I think I like it! **I think I like this book. I think I'll read the rest and will try to do what Maureen says -- that is to really *be there* when I eat. Soul-Full Eating... a pretty good idea.**

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