

MC: What first inspired you to write *Soul-Full Eating*?

MW: *Soul-Full Eating* actually began as a chapter in another book I am writing called *True Beauty*. When I was writing the proposal for that book I decided to submit the finished chapter on diet and nutrition. When I finished the chapter it was 100 pages, and that was just skimming the surface of what I really wanted to impart. I quickly realized that information couldn't be squeezed into a chapter. It had to be a book – which ultimately evolved into an almost 450 page comprehensive guide to everything you've ever wanted to know about nutrition and, of course, Soul.

MC: That is an interesting combination – a real co-mingling of body and Soul.

MW: Exactly! It's become almost cliché to use those two words together... but Soul-Full Eating really tangibly illustrates how this can be so – we can direct our lives and the choices we make for our bodies from a soulful perspective. Actually, it's only when we do this that we truly feel full or fulfilled. Eating is one of the most available, tangible and often the most overlooked way to experience a true body and Soul connection.

MC: Have you always been interested in nutrition?

MW: I first became interested in nutrition when I was a model and traveling around the world. It was vitally important for me to stay fit. To be marketable, I had to look wonderful for the camera. In order to do that, I chose to learn as much as I could about nutrition and diet and ways to keep myself healthy.

MC: What was it like being a model?

MW: A lot of people think modeling is a glamorous life but it's pretty much just a job. At times it is intense and demanding, not only in a physical way but also emotionally and psychologically. It is work to constantly keep yourself at the top of your game, and important to look that way as you present yourself to the entire world in commercials and in print.

Keeping a whole perspective eventually became a top priority for me. In the beginning it was quite dazzling and confusing to have such a superficial focus. But that career actually pushed me inward. I think I am very lucky in that respect. I became a deeper, more thoughtful person because the only alternative was to become very disturbed.

MC: So how did you transition from that more superficial life to where you are today?

MW: It took many years and that's actually what the book is about. I think it's important for people to understand there is an evolution from a superficial orientation to full consciousness. There aren't overnight changes or quick fixes that can make people feel completely content. It is a process of moving yourself to a place where you show up as authentically as possible to life.

MC: How can eating help make a person authentic or fully conscious?

MW: I use food as a primary example of how much joy, contentment and fulfillment there is in life that we often miss. Most people miss that awareness every single day of their lives, at every

meal, two, three or more times a day! If you sit down to eat with complete awareness, you can connect with the entire world via the food that's in front of you.

MC: Tell me more about that. How is that possible?

MW: In the book, I tell the story of a weeklong Mindfulness Retreat that I attended with Thich Nhat Hanh. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Buddhist Monk who teaches principles of Buddhism and meditation, specifically the practice of "mindfulness".

At mealtimes, a gong would sound and we were instructed to mindfully walk to the dining hall – not rushing with our appetites leading the way and our minds off somewhere else, but a slow, deliberate walk – one step at a time, focusing on exactly where we were and what we were doing – into the dining hall. The food was laid out in a buffet; a lot of it was organically grown. As we walked to the buffet and picked up a plate, one of the first things we were instructed to do was to notice our empty plate and then look at the food in front of us and realize that we would be filling our plates with all four elements of the earth: from the air, the water, the sun, and the minerals of the ground itself. We carefully chose our food based on how we were inwardly feeling, what we intuitively wanted to eat.

When finished selecting the food, we mindfully walked to a table, which sat between 12-14 people, and waited behind our chosen seat until the entire table was full. When everyone was present, we acknowledged each other by bowing respectfully, to each person at our table, realizing that we would be sharing a meal together. Then we all sat down and began to eat. Meals were eaten in total silence. It was an intense experience because it wasn't about socializing but actually about being mindful and present to our own experience.

While I ate, I noticed myself pick up the fork, noticed myself pick up the knife, noticed the taste of each bite. We were asked to chew the food very well not only to get the full burst of flavor, but also because digestion actually begins in the mouth. Just recognizing that, recognizing all the aspects of eating that I usually missed because I was in a hurry or had 10 other things on my mind, brought a deeper and infinitely more enjoyable perspective to eating.

At some point during the meal—we never knew when—one of the monks would get up and ring a gong. As soon as we heard the gong, we'd put down our forks or spoons, stop eating and notice the thoughts we were thinking. Were we present to the reality of eating our food? Was our mind 10,000 miles away? Did we taste the bite that we were currently chewing? It really let me see how little of me had been showing up to meals! And I wasn't alone. How many people eat in front of the television? Or eat while walking down the street? How many people eat talking away to everybody at the table? Socializing is an enjoyable experience, but it is a powerful experience when you eat in total silence and your focus is entirely on the food.

By the end of the week, guess what happened? Most people were putting a lot less food on their plates than when they first began. We started to feel more full eating less food, just from the experience of being mindful when eating.

MC: All over the world, people are living hectic and fast-paced lives. How do you suggest that we be as mindful, and pay as much attention to eating, as you do?

MW: First of all, I'd say, slow down. That's what everyone is *craving* to do. Not just while eating but in every aspect of their lives. It's important to notice that we're missing the rich life we all deserve to live by constantly moving on fast-forward, rather than living the moment we're in. We feel empty. So what's the point? To get ahead...to where? If we can't appreciate the moment we're in, when we get "there" we'll only realize that we're still longing for something –

something we can never quite attain. It's *key* to notice how absurd this situation is. But we must notice it in a way that is gentle, as a consciously acquired awareness.

People definitely don't need more authorities telling them what to do or how to be happy. People need to learn to trust themselves. Mindfulness is a wonderful practice because inherent in it is a quiet, calm appreciation of ourselves exactly as we are. It also allows us to see that in any moment, if we find ourselves feeling empty or unhappy, we can choose differently and orient our perspective towards the Soul of life. The point is to become aware of your life and to take responsibility for it. Not to judge yourself or beat yourself up or use it as proof that you're lacking, but to realize that you have complete power to change your own circumstances. Soul-Fullness is a gradual awakening to Self-honoring that can be easily integrated into anyone's life.

MC: The premise of your book is "eat with love, what's grown with love, prepared with love and served with love". How is that accomplished?

MW: In *Soul-Full Eating*, the first thing I discuss is being in the supermarket—wherever you happen to be shopping for food—while purposefully choosing to be mindful. In other words, being entirely present while you lovingly select only that which enhances your feeling of well-being. I illustrate how it's possible to thoroughly enjoy the shopping experience by taking the time to use all 5 of your senses. How many people really look, feel, smell, even listen to, and when appropriate, ask for a taste of the food they are considering? On the other side of the coin, consider how many people see food shopping as a boring, rote experience – an undesirable chore – because they've chosen to buy the exact same staples over and over again and never expand their culinary horizons.

I also feel it is equally important to choose food that is grown with love. In *Soul-Full Eating* I illuminate a lot of things about farming methods. Once the reader has this information they realize that some farming practices enhance life on our planet, while others deplete our natural resources. Choose wisely – where does the food come from? Is it full of preservatives, additives and flavorings? Or is it something you would actually find in the ground? If cooked or processed in any way, is it prepared naturally and with love?

I also discuss that being compassionate towards animals feels more connecting and more fulfilling. Eating what promotes healthy, sustainable living for *all* allows us to see that there are many very fulfilling ways we can connect to the entire planet, not just the plate of food in front of us, while we're eating. Each bite we take can be a source of connectivity to the entire world.

Once the food is lovingly selected, then it's important to prepare it with love. Some people are so busy with the demands in their lives that they just throw food on the table. Yet, for so many cultures going back throughout history, the preparation of food has been a sacred experience. When you are present and loving while you prepare and cook food, a powerful and fulfilling energy is added to it. And it makes the process of cooking more satisfying and fulfilling in itself.

Then, of course, when you eat the food, I again advocate mindfulness. I also advocate eating with a grateful heart. Being mindful when we eat promotes feelings of love. Giving attention and care to ourselves is extremely satisfying. Choosing to consciously and lovingly notice what you're eating while you're eating it can be euphoric. Noticing that we live in an abundant society in the United States and realizing how much variety and beauty is available to us via our diets is especially revelatory when we realize that is not the case everywhere else in the world. We are so fortunate; noticing that is key to experiencing a greater love for and within ourselves, and so I also talk about how we can connect with the rest of the planet through this process of eating.

MC: There are a lot of diets circulating, and there are a lot of health plans that are constantly coming out. In your book you discuss a lot of them. What are the diets you mention and why did you select them?

MW: The wide variety of diets I discuss are mostly ancient diets. For example, the Ayurvedic way that many people eat in India is actually an ancient spiritual science. It is the science of how to keep a healthy, well-balanced life via balanced eating. I talk about that because it can connect someone to their Soul if they practice this process with mindfulness. Another diet I write about is the macrobiotic diet, which is another ancient diet that focuses on the Yin and Yang of things. It takes into consideration how some foods are expansive in their energy and some are contractive in their energy; some foods are warming in their energy, some foods are cooling in their energy. It shows people how to keep a balance within while eating specific foods.

Another diet I discuss is the kosher diet, and in the section of *Soul-Full Eating* entitled, “The New Kosher”, I discuss a way of observing kosher that can have a wide-range healing effect on the entire planet. In the chapter about the acid/alkaline diet, how to keep an optimum internal Ph balance via diet is also discussed in depth.

I also speak a lot about the raw food diet. Right now there seems to be a “fad” happening – some famous people are eating raw foods, and there are very many good reasons behind that, including a healthier longer life. Also I speak about why eating raw is a wonderful experience for some and unsettling or impractical for others.

I speak about those diets in order to give people an abundance of well-researched information, so that they can choose for themselves which approach to eating feels most authentic, healthy, doable and let’s not forget, delicious for them. I believe that showing people all these different ways of approaching food, many of which have been around for a long time, will make it possible for people to pick and choose the one approach that they resonate with most or to feel free to combine them all.

I feel that eating well and for our own unique optimum health and well-being is almost an art, but I also believe that we are each a masterful artist. Choosing from and experimenting with all these types of diets would be like picking up a different brush to paint with each time you make a new, well-informed and conscious choice. The goal is for each individual to settle on what feels the best, the most whole and most Soul-centered for them.

MC: Is this what you mean in your book when you talk about eating what you want?

MW: Yes. I talk about eating what you want because most people actually don’t know what they want. They’re so busy living outside of their innate comfort zones and listening to shoulds and shouldn’ts, relying on other people to tell them what is right and wrong, or following fads, that they don’t take the time to connect with their Soul. They don’t know what is truly nourishing for them.

MC: Of all the diets that you write about in your book, which do you practice?

MW: I don’t like to label myself in any way, but I eat mostly raw foods. I currently live in South Florida where it’s warm and sunny. And right next door to my home is an organic market, so I shop there every week and eat that food – plain raw. But if I happen to visit family in Boston during winter I love a nice steamy bowl of lentil soup.

MC: Do you find it easy to practice what you write about in your book about eating mindfully and “Soul-Fully”?

MW: Absolutely.

MC: What do you believe is the most important point that you make in your book?

MW: I think the title says everything, *Soul-Full Eating: A Delicious Path to Higher Consciousness*. What I’m really speaking about here is getting to a place where we are fully connected with ourselves, where we aren’t looking outside of ourselves for any answers but rather we can actually feel within our own beings what is most fulfilling.

Because we have a physical orientation, we think we’re bodies. We tend to miss our Souls. We forget that we just put these bodies on, for what is a relatively brief time. In order to feel fulfilled in any way we must return our focus to the Soul, which was the whole point of coming here to begin with – to evolve to a Self-realized state. By Self-realized I mean actually living as though you’re a Soul in body: an Omnipotent Being, instead of a limited being. We all *crave* the connection that only embracing our identity as a Soul gives us. We all long for deep connectivity and to be free of superficiality. So that’s the “full” that I’m speaking of. Our Souls are always full. The Soul’s perspective is “I’m complete. I’m One with the Divine”. So I believe that the more and more we allow ourselves to connect with our Souls, the more and more satisfied we feel.

Eating with this in mind is certainly a most powerful path to higher consciousness – one that not only benefits the person who selects, prepares and eats this way, but for the entire world as, one-by-one, people adopt this Soul-Full philosophy of *eating with love, what’s grown with love, prepared with love, and served with love*.

MC: What is your favorite part of the book?

MW: My favorite part of the book is the concept of *eat with love, what’s grown with love, prepared with love and served with love*. I feel it is the most liberating concept having to do with food since the dawn of time.

MC: Why do you feel that way?

MW: From my perspective there are only two options in life. One is love and one is fear. If you’re approaching food with love, then there’s no fear around it, no diets necessary, no guilt, no pain, no overeating, over-consumption, over-indulgence, etc.

MC: In your book you discuss many different types of diets and yet, you talk about eating what you want. How do you reconcile these two concepts?

MW: I believe that the more options people have, or are aware of, the more they can look at everything and then genuinely choose their own unique approach – what works best for them. I give all of this information because I feel the more informed a person is, the more experiences a person has, the better able they will be to make the wisest choices about eating for themselves.

By Soul-Full, I mean authentic—what feels most deeply satisfying, most deeply fulfilling. Because our Soul is the deepest part of us, it’s the light that often gets hidden by a superficial perspective. This hidden approach to life is one that so many people are taking.

MC: How can focusing on one's own diet and eating Soul-fully affect the sustainability of the planet?

MW: When making truly whole choices, many people find that they resonate only with things that are whole on a larger, grander scale. For instance, when people choose organic foods, there are less pesticides leeching into ground water and affecting the environment. If you are a meat eater and if you choose to have free-range beef or free-range dairy, then not only are you being a compassionate consumer because cows were meant to eat grass and not some kind of fabricated foods, but it also preserves more green and open space on our planet. It may seem to be more convenient to cage animals, but to restrict them in factory farming methods doesn't *feel* whole or right to an aware person. It cannot be the healthiest approach for raising animals or for the planet, or for those who consume this meat with all kinds of unloving, fear-based energy involved.

MC: What are the main points you make about that in your book about sustainability?

MW: First of all, that at a Soul level we're all connected, we're all one. It may sound cliché and new-agey to talk about us all being one, but if you approach life with the respect and reverence for yourself, including the way that you eat, and eat mindfully, the natural outcome is to choose products that are more aligned with wholeness of being. Again, organic foods mean fewer pesticides. Free-range animals mean more grass and wide-open spaces. There has to be spaciousness for these animals to graze and be grown on. We can't keep slashing and burning and paving all of our land to put up parking lots and shopping centers. When a person chooses to buy the foods that a local farmer is producing, that person is actually making a statement that farmland is desired in their local community.

Those things do affect the picture of your life in a larger way when you begin to see the connection between your individual choices and your happiness: Are your choices whole? Are they Soul-based? What are the repercussions that will result from your choices?

MC: What is the impact you envision that *Soul-Full Eating* will have on the planet?

MW: I feel that we can change the world one plate of food at a time. Sometimes we feel very overwhelmed with the many huge, detrimental circumstances that appear to be looming over us all, such as global warming for instance. These are things that seem so far-reaching in scope that the vast majority of people often feel quite impotent to do anything about them on a personal level. A person eating Soul-fully will find a sense of contentment, peace and happiness that pervades their perception of the world. Why? Because, by eating Soul-Fully they can play their part in the healing of the planet via their choices. That feels very connecting and very empowering to an individual. When one person chooses to love themselves, that feeling of love, of being loved and nurtured, reverberates throughout the entire world. It starts with one individual and has a ripple effect – when a person feels supported (most especially when they feel it *from themselves*) it's easy to be supportive, kind, compassionate with others. And that feeling affects each experience one has. That is in fact very liberating. To feel this kind of connection each day—to oneself and to the entire planet in a powerful, healing way, while doing something as simple and basic as eating—that is just awesome. That is my vision for us all.