

“HeartMark” = Health

One simple gesture supports smart selections

By Chef Alan Frailich and Tali Lehavi Hamer

WE'RE ALL CONCERNED ABOUT the disturbing phenomenon of eating disorders, but such problems really begin with what nutrition consultant Tali Lehavi Hamer calls “Thinking-Eating Disorders.” After all, how we think or don’t think about food affects our choices. Therefore it is crucial to teach our kids healthy thinking habits about food—and to start teaching them when they are young.

How can you do this, though? At Young Chef’s Academy in Scottsdale, we often teach children to “HeartMark” before they eat a food. The HeartMark is a gesture for which you make a heart with your hands. It allows you to take time out to focus and think. In order to correct Thinking-Eating Disorders, teach your children to take this important moment and to follow four steps.

KNOW YOUR HUNGER

First, HeartMark with your hands, creating a peaceful heart. Take a deep breath in through your nose and let out stale air slowly through your mouth. Pay attention to your hunger. Do you feel a deep down hunger? If so, continue to step two. Do you need a quick pick-me-up? Again, continue to step two. If you ate recently but still want more, perhaps you ate the wrong food and you are experiencing a “low.” If so, try again, this time making the healthy choices described in step two. If you ate a nutritious meal recently, then you are not really hungry. This would be a great time to focus on what might satisfy you other than food.

PAINT A HEALTHY PICTURE

Step two is to envision a healthy meal or a snack high in protein, fiber, vitamin C and calcium. Think of a specific meal that will bring you pleasure. For deep-down hunger, plan a meal with lean protein, lots of vegetables and/or fruits, and a high calcium snack. You could eat rotisserie chicken with a salad and low-fat string cheese. For a lighter snack, eat the same food groups as you would for a full meal but in a smaller quantity. For example, plan on eating lean chicken nuggets, a tomato and a light cheese serving.

Step three is to choose and envision honestly the quantity that you will need to feel satisfied. Pretend that you finished. Are you satisfied? You may alter this imaginary amount until you are comfortable with it.

In step four, visualize the benefits after you will eat this meal. Connect the protein to the energy you will have. Feel clean and cancer-free from the fiber, vitamins, and minerals from the vegetables and fruits. Visualize your bones stronger from the calcium.

Now you may prepare and slowly eat a part of your meal. Stop midway through to see if you are still hungry. Take a deep breath. Notice how great you are beginning to feel. Continue to eat. If you need more, repeat step one through four until you can leave the table fully satisfied.

The HeartMark should help you take the



Tali and Alan

time to break unhealthy Thinking-Eating habits. Ask yourself: “Do I like myself? Do I deserve to eat healthy? Do I deserve to feel great? How healthy do I want to be?” Naturally, you will choose to be as healthy as you can be.

Tell yourself that “You Are Not a Garbage Can!” Junk goes into garbage cans and you never think about it after you put it there. But you do need to think about how food affects your body. The best way to break a bad food habit is to visualize the damage the food does inside your body. With a few visualizations, you can teach yourself to not like that food because you will associate it with the damage it does to you.

Thinking-Eating Disorders are a serious problem. Often, children develop incorrect thinking patterns about food because they hear faulty thinking about it from parents or media. Practice the HeartMark to associate positive attitudes toward healthy food and you will arm them with an approach that will give them healthy, and happy, eating habits for the rest of their lives. ■

Chef Alan Frailich owns a colorful award-winning cooking school for children called Young Chefs Academy of Scottsdale. Plan to let kids spend the summer at their special cooking camp, held only at the Young Chefs Academy of Scottsdale.



Tali Lehavi Hamer wants to spread the HeartMark to inspire everyone to connect through love. You can find more articles, recipes and fun creations on www.heartmarkhop.com and follow her on twitter.

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