

## **Win the run for your refrigerator; feed your love hunger**

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For the best diet, nourish your heart with love.

I'm binge shopping for groceries and cooking up a storm. My daughter is coming home for visit, so I best be true to our family motto: Food is Love. Now of course we laugh at that motto, know deep down inside it isn't true. But like many jokes, there is an element of truth. I like to think that my grandmother's and mother's recipes are fun ways of remembering their nourishment of our lives. But is it really necessary to fix the 1000-calorie caramel cinnamon rolls?

All of this is food for thought.

We're told there is an epidemic of obesity in our nation. Do we eat to nourish our hearts and souls, to nurture and comfort ourselves, to soothe away anxiety? Is this emotional eating, meant to heal our hearts, the wrong cure for the wrong organ? Our stomachs really need small amounts of food. Our hearts and souls need lot's of love.

OK. If you buy this idea, how can we feed love to our hearts? Where does nourishing love come from? How can we fill up on high-test love. What's the recipe for just the right amount? There's a lot to ponder here.

If we depend on external approval, like we get from family, friends, colleagues and bosses, we will continually be at their mercy, needy and longing for more. Yuk. We're on a merry-go-round; high when we're at the top, needy when we're at the bottom. What a crazy cycle! Makes me anxious and hungry just thinking about it!

Filling up on the internal sources of love, like affirming our basic goodness, and our spirituality--now that's where we can finally be satisfied. If we fill our glass half full ourselves, life will not feel like a chase for others' affirmation and love. And an interesting thing happens. The less needy we are, the more others sense our worthiness and give more freely. We have the power to make ourselves happy.

And, what a wonderful side effect: weight loss! Make a list of things to do that make you feel good, whole, talented and relaxed. When you run for the refrigerator, do one of these present-centered activities instead. Remember, make it easy, fun, not hard. Be present-focused, absorbed, and your hunger will disappear. Magic.

Here are a few exercises/affirmations/rituals that will increase self-love, decrease over-eating, and increase other-love.

- Develop fun hobbies: paint, read, walk, ride a bike, dance, play a musical instrument, or sing.

- Spend some daily time in silence: Meditate, pray, take a bubble bath, do yoga, relax, watch the clouds or birds, listen to the wind, quiet your mind. Even looking out your window for five minutes, just observing nature at work, can be calming.
- Read your affirmations: I am loveable, beautiful, kind \_\_\_ (fill in the traits you like about yourself.) I love you \_\_\_ (fill in your name). These positive statements should make you smile.
- Detach from the outcome of where your next bite of love will come from. You have plenty of love inside. Just enjoy people when you're with them.
- When you eat, sit down, chew each bite 32 times (as per my father), and enjoy it. Food is meant to be pleasurable, so set the table, make a balanced meal and serve small portions, even when you eat alone. When you're eating with others have fun, playful conversations. And you're finished say, "I'm full, that was tasty."

I trust you will find great ways to feed your love hunger. Me, I'm going to carry on some of the Food is Love family traditions, but I am skipping the rolls. And we will play Scrabble for dessert.