

Done with Dieting
30 Days
of
Soul-Full Eating

Maureen Whitehouse

Copyrighted Material

*All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the
belongings of my or your body or of
anyone's body, male or female.
The exquisite realization of health;
O I say these are not the parts and poems of
The body only, but of the Soul,
O I say now these are the Soul!*

~ Walt Whitman (from *The Body Electric*)

Foreword

Kate came to me exhausted. “Tired of myself,” she said, dropping into a chair and slouching into her bulky sweater as if she wanted to disappear. “I’ve been struggling with self-image for as long as I can remember, trying to lose these extra 10 to 15 pounds that I’ve been carrying around,” she pinched her waist, then threw up her hands in disgust. “I’ve tried probably 20 or 30 different diets. I’ve worked out, pumped up, fueled up and now I’m feeling entirely fed up. It feels like I’m constantly thinking about my weight. I’m sick of it. Even when I almost reach my goal of 125 pounds—say one or two pounds away—it’s not long before I’m back up to 140 again.”

“I’m done!” She said emphatically, “I not only feel fat, but sad and defeated.” Tears began to well up in her eyes. As she sat across from me, my office desk between us, I could see that she was at the end of her rope, and would probably want to hang herself with it if she’d found herself in front of one more diet guru with yet another miracle plan.

Happily, I knew I couldn’t offer her such false promises.

Instead, I handed her a box of tissues and smiled, feeling immensely grateful for the opportunity to work with someone willing to be so vulnerable and honest—knowing that when harnessed and moved in the right direction, these qualities breed tremendous strength.

“So, are you ready to begin?” I asked.

She looked at me skeptically, raising an eyebrow, “I don’t know.”

“Good!” I said, “For the next few moments, allow yourself to stay in that frame of mind—not knowing—and for once in your life, allow yourself to feel happy about it. Can you do that?”

“I don’t know,” she replied, still teary.

“Perfect!” I said, enthusiastically.

She looked confused, but as the irony of the situation dawned on her, a slight smile came to her lips and she let out a long sigh, as her mood visibly lightened.

“You’re doing it already!” I said.

“Doing what?” she asked, shaking her head as if to say, no, I don’t like this one bit. But her widening smile betrayed her.

“You’re surrendering.” I said.

“To what?” she asked.

“To the moment,” I replied. “Doesn’t it feel great?!”

“I don’t know—” she began to say, but then caught herself mid-sentence and burst out laughing.

To which I replied, “Isn’t it a relief?” And I continued, “Not knowing—if you can surrender to it—is the key to happiness.”

“Well, it’s definitely not your typical diet plan,” she laughed.

I could see that she was entirely engaged now.

“It’s clear that you’re catching on quick,” I remarked. “So I’m going to let you in on a little secret of mine—something you can always fall back on when you’re struggling or confused. I have a personal mantra that I say to myself whenever I’m about to begin a new endeavor, or find myself in the midst of transition, challenge or change. And really, if we’re fully living life and not shrinking from it, these moments of uncertainty happen to us hundreds of times each and every day. Whenever I’m in the middle of one, I say:

I don’t know what it is, but I love it!

“You see,” I went on, “It’s a happy little secret of life—the secret of not knowing. It doesn’t have to be scary not to know. It can actually be invigorating, exhilarating and thoroughly enjoyable to not understand exactly what’s going on in your life. But the trick is that you have to *love* that you don’t know what’s going on.”

Kate’s eyes were wide, as if she didn’t quite believe what she was hearing, “My whole life, I was always thought that I had to have a plan, that I needed to know where I was going.”

“Most people do,” I said, “Thanks to the ego—that’s the voice of survival, of control, of dreaded anticipation that keeps us feeling imprisoned in a hopeless endeavor, because we can’t possibly control our lives to a ‘t.’ The ego can never really make us feel safe, or secure, or happy, or comfortable, because it’s too obsessed with controlling everything. And following the ego will never make us feel loved, which is really what all of those other feelings are about.”

“So what does all of this have to do with dieting?”

“Good question,” I laughed, “I’ll cut to the chase and go right to the end of this *non*-dieting journey that you and I will be taking together these next 30 days. And I’ll let you know right now, that at the end of these 30 days I don’t want you to be anything but you. Free, happy and joyously you!

1. I don’t want you to change at all. I want you to find what’s unchangeable in you and begin to live from there.
2. I don’t want you to be in control of yourself or your life. I want you to embrace life’s unpredictability. And realize that its uncontrollability is actually a blessing.
3. I don’t want you to win any “diet battles.” I want you to surrender to the grace that’s all around you.
4. I don’t want you to achieve some dieting goal and “get there” by giving up all of your ‘bad habits.’ I want your bad habits to give up you!

Kate looked at me, completely confused, but for once, not seeming to mind that one bit. Her whole body was less tense and she began to sit up straighter as I spoke, leaning in with interest. The tears of sadness and frustration that she'd come in with had turned into tears of relief.

“Good, that’s what I want,” I said, “your eyes to see more clearly now. So keep on crying. Cry for hours and hours if you like. I’ve got plenty of time. Those tears are going to help you immensely, they mean that you’re letting go, and ultimately they’ll turn into what I call ‘golden tears – tears of joy.’”

Kate basked in this acceptance of her emotional roller coaster. For once, no one was telling her that what she was feeling was wrong or that she had to be a certain way.

When I could see that she'd had the chance to soak in what she'd heard so far, I said, “Now, it’s the beginning.”

“The beginning of what?” she asked tentatively.

“Just you wait and see. Over these next 30 days, we’re going to lift the veil between you and your life, so that you can finally see the beauty that’s all around you and realize the brilliance of who you are.”

Kate was speechless, her eyes wide, but no longer skeptical.

“Go home. Rest up. Let our conversation sink in and notice how you feel about it. I’ll see you tomorrow morning...”

Food For Thought...

Prior to beginning *Done with Dieting: 30 Days of Soul-Full Eating*, I’d like you to tangibly mark the commencement of this endeavor by setting aside some time today, approximately 15-20 minutes, when you can be quiet and introspective. Then fill out the attached questionnaire: *Are You Soul-Full?* While doing so, pay close attention to your feelings. Be honest and self-reverent, while remaining as objective as possible. You’ll be happy to have this record of your authentic feelings when you complete the program. In addition to your profound physical transformation, it will be a powerful way to realize how far you’ve come.