

The Nutritional Cleanse -Day One

A few weeks ago, while I was at the Ladies Who Launch Live event in San Francisco, I met a woman named Terese Marchese, who runs Rock Solid Fitness in San Francisco. She is a personal trainer and holistic health coach and she holds nutritional cleanse groups for one-week intervals in San Francisco. During this week, participants eat a diet of raw foods and supplements to help detox the body of all of the pesticides, chemicals and toxins that most of us consume in everyday living. Terese makes all of the meals for the week and gives participants a bag with tea that she makes, detoxifying body oils and facial oil (yes, she makes these too) as well as a dry brush to aid in lymph system drainage and a yummy herbal candle for emotional health.

I am not a particularly healthy eater. I don't eat poorly, but I do eat dairy, wheat, probably not as many veggies as I should and definitely too much sugar. I eat organic fruits and veggies when I can and am aware of the chemicals in many foods and personal products. As much as I wish I could say I don't, I still use antiperspirant. Exercise is not a huge priority for me, although I wish it was. Anyway, I decided to give this nutritional cleanse a try. So, it should be an interesting week.

A week ago, we met with Teresa over a dinner of organic green salad (wild lettuces, sprouts, avocado, pomegranate seeds, persimmons) and winter squash puree soup (winter squash with yummy bits of crispy sage that were cooked in olive oil and sea salt and very tasty) and sprouted crackers. This dinner was for all of the participants to get an overview of the cleanse and to start pre-detox. To say that I left hungry would be an understatement, but it certainly felt good knowing that what I did eat was very healthy and that I would soon begin the process to clean out the toxins!

Ready Set... Breakfast

So, I will tell you what I ate this morning, but first, let me fill you in on the fact that my stomach is barking from hunger right now! I am STRAVING! Okay, back to business... before breakfast was a fiber shake which consisted of a cup of fiber powder poured into 12 ounces of water and shaken. It tasted a bit like apples. That's it. Then, it was time for the workout.

We did the Lyon Street steps- which are very steep stairs that run up a hillside in Pacific Heights and every morning people flock to the stairs instead of hitting the gym (or maybe before hitting it). So there we were. Up and down and up and down and lift the legs straight up behind you on your way back up and sit ups, push ups, squats, and more push ups- ouch! It was pretty intense. After we stretched, I was famished. Reaching into the back of Terese's truck for my bag of food for the day, my arm literally flew up when I lifted the bag because it was so light! I had to check that there was actually anything in there! Thoughts of "Oh no, what did I get myself into?" kept racing through my head as I drove down the hill to pick up my girls for an on time school drop off.

When I returned from morning drop off, I sat down to eat breakfast with my 2 year old. I gave her a bowl of cereal and some kiwi, but she wanted some of my breakfast, of course. So, I gave her a few bites of the strawberries and kiwi garnished with spearmint and drooled over her cereal (that never smelled so good!) At 10 am, we both went down for a nap! I haven't taken a nap in forever. It felt great, but I am still tired.

Really... This is Lunch?

Lunch was a kale leaf wrapped around zucchini, sprouts, beets, jicama, hummus and garbanzo beans, with a side of sauerkraut and a few cherry tomatoes. It actually tasted better than it sounds, but nothing like a turkey and avocado on a sweet roll from Lucca Deli!

Did you know that we are supposed to chew each bite at least 20 times to help the digestion process? Well, I was so starving that I ate the whole wrap in about 2 minutes. Who knows how many times I chewed? I literally was so hungry that I was dizzy, so I quickly scarfed the wrap down. The sauerkraut was painful and very acidic, but my 2 year old loved it! Nothing went to waste.

This is all a learning process and sort of an experiment for me. Eating well is about eating what makes your body feel good and your mind function at it's best. Everyone is different, so when this diet is over, it is up to the participants to individually introduce different foods back into the diet to see if the body has a negative reaction (bloating, sluggish, redness in face, etc) to it. Many people do these detox diets to lose weight, but that is not what intrigued me as much as seeing if I could workout at 6:45am every morning, eat raw foods and still function... and maybe even function better than

ever. It is very hard to eat healthy in our society because people do not eat to fuel their bodies as much as to comfort their tastes. Junk food and sugar are everywhere.

The Enlightenment Lesson

In a binder that we received with our oils and tea for the cleanse, there was an article about "The Enlightened Diet" by Deborah Kesten, which has many interesting points about food. One of the most interesting elements to this diet is the importance of putting love into the food that you make. (I can just hear my mother and father -true Midwesterners- right now, laughing at how corny this is.) Love is an ingredient that is called for in foods from many cultures (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Japanese Tea Way, Native American foods, African American soul foods and more). There are studies that suggest that children who are raised eating foods that the cook has injected love into during the cooking process actually thrive more consistently than those who did not. There are also studies that stress the importance of children having a calm and supportive atmosphere during mealtimes, as this may "improve physical and emotional well-being". I am going to study up on this "putting love into the food" thing and will report back what I find...

So, my message in writing this is not to tell you all to go out and do a nutritional cleanse. I just want to document my experience for anyone who is considering it, but also to impress upon us all the importance of nutrition and being aware of our relationships to food and mealtimes. In our house, mealtimes can get stressful, but after reading about the "Enlightened Diet" I will think more about the importance of having a calm and supportive moment for my family to enjoy their food and each other. Many people, especially girls and women have unhealthy relationships to food, so it is very important to examine your own relationship to food and whether you are setting a good example for your kids. you can't very well eat junk food and sugar all day and tel your children to eat fruits and veggies, they want to eat what you do- so eat well! And you just might feel great because of it!

Stay tuned for Day 2!