

Coda #2

Capsule Thoughts: Eating Ideas to Swallow Like Vitamins

1. Eating should nourish both our spirits and our bodies throughout our lives.
2. The way we eat should give us both health and joy without hurting us.
3. We are equipped by nature with the tools we need to eat healthily and happily.
4. Guilt and circumspection are not supposed to be part of the eating equation.
5. For all the natural world, the first and most important principle of life is fuel to run on.
6. We can find a textbook reference to the fuel of human life in the composition of nature's first human food, breast milk.
7. Three 'macro' or large classes of nutrients nourish human life: carbohydrates, fat, and protein.
8. Breast milk is approximately 49.5% carbohydrates, 45% fat, and 5% protein.
9. The preferred fuel of human life is almost certainly some mixture of carbohydrates and fat. That is why we like them.
10. All carbohydrates are transformed by the body into simple glucose, the body's (and the brain's) primary energy source, sooner or later. Complex and simple carbohydrates are only differentiated by the speed with which this happens and the extra complement of fiber, vitamins, and nutrients enhancing complex ones. Despite the obvious advantages of these latter, they all become glucose so vilifying the ones that do it faster is a bit silly. Sugar, by any other name, is still sugar, and life at its running level is a sweet proposition.
11. Fat, the much maligned, is as essential to human health as the other macronutrients and certainly in far greater proportions than have been assumed for at least the last 25 years. In its two essential fatty acid forms, linoleic (omega-6) and alpha-linolenic (omega-3) acid, fat is like the revered essential amino acids of protein in that the body cannot make them. They must come from food.
12. Dietary fat is also the medium for transporting the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K as well as disease-fighting carotenoids to the bloodstream¹. It is the medium for storing these essential fatty acids (linoleic, alpha-linolenic),

vitamins, and carotenoids in the body. While our need for fat may decline with age from its major proportions in breast milk, we need it all our lives, probably a lot of it.

13. Protein, tool of growth and repair and lesser ingredient of the plant world as well as breast milk, has a distinctly subordinate role to play in human life except during two very specialized periods: our growth spurt into adulthood and pregnancy.

14. Plant foods tend to be concentrations of either carbohydrates or fat with protein playing a subordinate role just as it does in breast milk; hence they are as appropriate to nourishing human life as breast milk.

15. Plants contain myriad phytonutrients, most unknown even a decade ago and certainly many still unidentified, essential to human health. The vibrant colors of plants, so beautiful and attractive to us, reflect nutrient cornucopias vital to our well-being.

16. Plant foods provide naturally the fiber that keeps things moving happily and steadily through our extended guts dispensing nutrients as they go.

17. Plant foods avoid the toxic concentrations and possible genetic imbrications of animal ones. The animal has 'saturated' the plants it eats and any virulence within them by incorporating them, creating a density unsuitable to the bulk-oriented human gut.

18. Dairy foods and eggs are 'shed' animal products, less saturated by nature than any flesh and easy for us to add in very small amounts, providing enrichment, pleasure, easy protein infusions as needed, and important, hard-to-get-otherwise B vitamins, most notably B12 which comes only from animal sources. The mineral zinc also comes to us mostly from animal sources.

19. Any macronutrient eaten wrongly or disproportionately can cause degenerate disease and/or obesity.

20. A daily multivitamin is simple and inexpensive insurance in a fast paced world but beyond that food, not supplements, should be our daily bread. We are designed to eat food, not pop pills.

21. Exercise keeps us limber, makes us feel good mentally and physically, tones our muscles, bones, and brains so that they work better, and acts as a tension vent, but it is not the key to the slimness citadel. What we eat is.

22. God was not a Puritan. Moderate – between one and three daily drinks – alcohol consumption may help prevent heart disease, strokes, Alzheimer's, and similar forms of dementia². The key word is moderation. Excess drinking causes innumerable, well-documented problems. Like protein, a little goes a long way, but that little makes the long road of life more fun.

23. We have appetats perfectly capable of sorting out what we need to eat as well as when we are full if we eat from the foods designed to nourish human like. Creatures do not get fat or overeat when eating the food they are supposed to eat.
24. We should be able to live our entire lives at a normal weight without hardship, stress, huge physical effort, or extreme fasting.
25. I you don't like the way your kids eat, change what you eat yourself. Children learn by example, by example, by example.
26. Use your head to give the clout of habit to things you know are good for you like always serving some fruit with dinner.
27. Never fast; vegetarianism is already a modified fast even if it scarcely seems so. In this case, the medium is the solution and as much austerity as is needed.
28. Never count calories; let your body do the computing via your taste buds and appetatic feedback.
29. If you have a lot of weight to lose, veer very slightly in a vegan direction. Then just wait (to lose weight!).
30. Whatever food it is that you truly adore (other than flesh), eat some of it every day (Chocolate? Cookies? Nuts? Beer? Chips?) lest you magnify its importance by giving it forbidden fruit status. Sanction it with the blessing of habit.
31. Do something every day even if its only 15 minutes of walking or some simple calisthenics or light weight work. Exercise is too good for too many parts of you to completely forego.
32. Avoid pre-fab meals with indecipherable ingredients as much as possible in favor of simple, natural foods that are what they seem to be.
33. Remember the power of the work. Our work civilization comes from the Latin civis meaning city; civilization only followed the development of cities. The work 'vegetarian' also comes from Latin, its meaning deriving from vegere, "be active", through vegetus, "whole, fresh, lively", to vegetare, "animate". And animate means "give life to".

Footnotes: Coda #2: Capsule Thoughts: Eating Ideas to Swallow Like Vitamins

1. Environmental Nutrition Newsletter, December 2000, Vol. 24, No. 12, pp. 1, 6.
2. Dallas Morning News, 1/25/02, Sect. A, p. 19, as quoted from "The Lancet Medical Journal."