

Take 5: Body to Mind Practice

We all have to eat. But according to yoga science (Ayurveda), it's more important to pay attention to what you eat and how you eat it. There is a reason we are not getting thinner, despite the skinny lattes and fat free products in the grocery aisles. These items that you believed would help with weight loss might actually be promoting weight gain. Despite your best intentions, your dairy might be making you fat. The stats claim 75% of the adults worldwide are dairy intolerant and 50% who are sensitive to gluten are also dairy sensitive. That's because one of the top foods that contribute to excess inflammation is dairy. Inflammation is your body's emergency response system to an irritant. The bottom line is that dairy (along with gluten) is one of the most common food sensitivities. This sensitivity is the result of a lifelong subtle violence against your gut. So as we age our tolerance for dairy diminishes, hence the huge market for over-the-counter chewable lactase tablets. But my question here is, why are you not getting to the root of the matter and just eliminating the cause?

SLOWING DOWN

In modern day life it is easy to scarf down a meal at your desk, in the car, on the couch, or over the sink. We are so multi-task oriented that sometimes we lose the joy of the moment. We have to slow down and take hold of the act of being present.

CANDLE GAZING PRACTICE

There are many ways to slow down and be present. I particularly like this one.

1) Light a candle in a darkened room (perhaps the dining room table), have a seat, and take a couple of calming breaths.

2) Fix your eyes firmly on the image of the flame in front of you. Slowly allow the peripheral vision to fade away until you have no visual awareness of anything around you but the candle.

3) This is a profound experience. Your eyes are open but you are actually not seeing anything but the small flame in front of you. As a result, it feels as though there is no distance between you and the flame. In essence, you become one with the flame.

4) You can deepen this experience by imagining that you are breathing the light of the candle in and out of yourself with each breath.

5) At the completion of your candle meditation, close your eyes and relax until you feel your body and mind have drifted back into your space.

TROUBLESHOOTING: To achieve this requires both mental and physical stillness. As soon as you move your eye around your brain is flooded with new sensory input and you are back a square one instantly aware of the room around you. Sit closer, remain as still and focused and see nothing but the flame.

