

Eating with Soul: Seven Steps to Body, Mind, and Spirit Nourishment

by Deanna Minich, PhD, CN

The foods we choose and how we eat takes on a much larger significance than we realize; they are powerful vehicles into the deeper, underlying issues that are craving to be addressed at our innermost core. For this reason, rather than tell people what to eat, I choose to guide people through their body-soul landscape using the chakra system to help them find their way back to their instinct and intuition so they can connect with what they need on several levels.

Identifying what needs healing is the first

step. In ancient East Indian philosophy and sacred texts, the concept of chakras (Sanskrit for "wheel") is used to describe the energy centers in the body just like the traditional Chinese medicine talks about energy meridians. Even though the complex circuit of chakras is laced throughout the body, seven main clusters of energy are often discussed.

If we step back and look at the symbolic meaning of these centers, we can see they encompass key aspects of life. When we are out of alignment with these aspects, our eating can fall out of balance. We can also bring them back into harmony using foods.

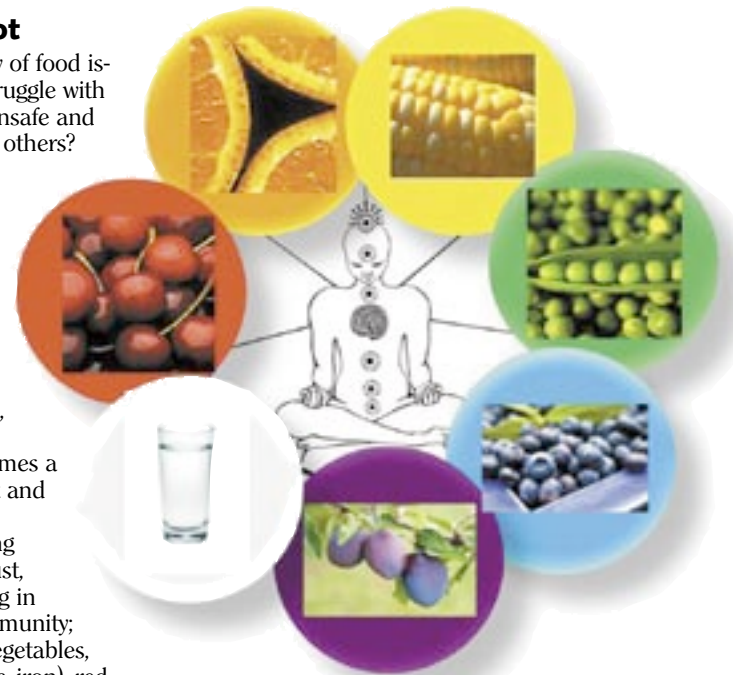
• Survival (root chakra): A majority of food issues stem from our struggle with survival. Do you feel unsafe and find it difficult to trust others? If so, there may be a connection to your ability to trust your own eating instincts. You may even eat out of a need to feel safe. When we are unable to rest in the hands of a "tribe" or others that support us, we may feel alone and scattered. Eating becomes a way to give us comfort and to ground us.

Example of an eating practice to support trust, safety, and tribe: Eating in the presence of a community; Foods: Protein, root vegetables, minerals (calcium, zinc, iron), red-colored foods.

• Emotions (sacral chakra): It has been estimated that most people overeat due to their inability to express emotions. Instead of expressing, they stuff themselves with food which "stuffs" down the hurts. Emotions are also connected to our ability to create and express our childlike self even as an adult. When our emotions are blocked, we lose touch with our nature to be creative and playful. We may not even feel like giving energy to the creation of a meal.

Example of an eating practice for expression of emotions, creativity, and play: Spend time creating a colorful meal to share with someone else; Foods: Fats and oils, tropical fruits, seeds, nuts, orange-colored foods.

• Power (solar plexus chakra): Do you lose your energy throughout the day by not eating regularly or by giving your power away by eating foods that cost you energy? When we lose touch with our body's energy



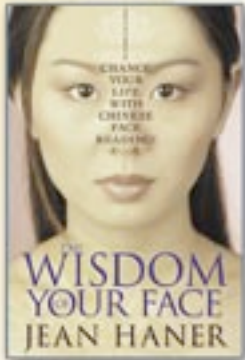
In ancient East Indian philosophy, the concept of *chakras* is used to describe the energy centers in the body. The symbolic meaning of these centers encompass key aspects of life. When we are out of alignment with these aspects, our eating can fall out of balance, but we can bring them back into harmony using foods.

rhythm, we are unable to feed it properly with foods that sustain our energy. Being out of sync with our rhythm may also lead to issues in our ability to process on many levels; as a result, we may have difficulty in transforming information coming into the body via food.

Example of an eating practice for energy, power, and transformation: Eat small meals frequently during the day; Foods: Complex carbohydrates, whole grains, legumes, yellow-colored foods.

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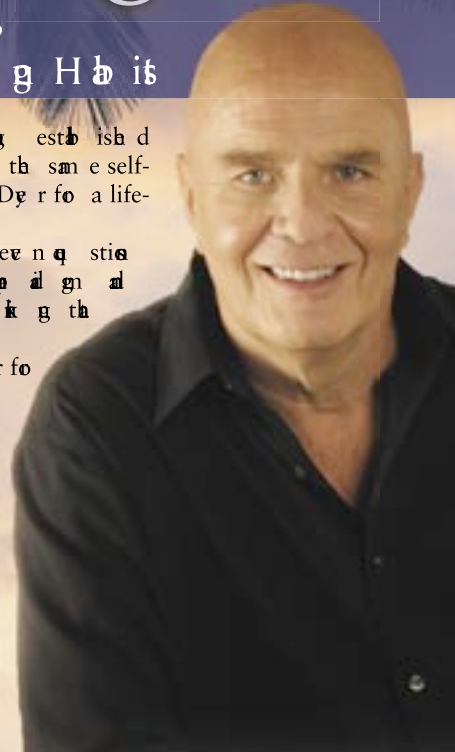
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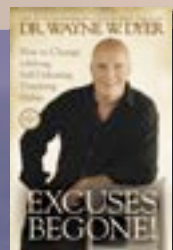
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