

It's a Sweet Life: Chocolate as a Teacher of Consciousness

By Julie Dittmar

For me, "a sweet life" definitely would include sweets. I've always said, if my body could survive it, I'd live off yam tempura, donuts, and pretty much chocolate everything else. Most of the time, though, I'm living in moderation to maintain internal balance and keep my skin and digestive system happy and humming along.

Having gone through intense food elimination diets, low glycemic diets, no sugar regimens, and anti-inflammatory adventures, I found that over time, my body and my mind redefined "sweet."

A mere week with no sugars, and suddenly, a bite of peanut butter, or a strawberry,

became almost too much.

Additionally, I found that as I gave my body a rest from sweet treats, I naturally wanted to exercise more (psychologically, it somehow makes sense to accompany all those clean proteins and veggies with getting in shape). So, I exercised. I stepped away from the computer, got out in nature more often, and breathed in some fresh air.

My mind and tastebuds were in cahoots though, working hard to catch up with this new plan, and teased me with cravings. I noticed the thoughts I had about my desires for sugary foods, felt them run through my body, thanked them for being an echo of what was once true, and reminded myself how I want to be in this moment and enjoy

something "sweet" without added calories or sugar.

I then looked around. I noticed a new mother giggling with her baby. I laughed too, and said to myself, "Awww, how sweet." I filled myself up with deep appreciation for being able to witness such a precious moment.

I usually find that I experience "a sweet life" when I express myself through the joy I feel through dance, singing, creating art, or spreading my well wishes around the globe. A peaceful prayer opens my heart and puts a smile on my face, not to mention the waves of grace that go out to uplift the planet from such an act of love and simplicity.

With gentle awareness, noticing the breezy palms, the fragrance of summer lilacs and gardenias, or bees on the clover, brings me right into the present moment where I rediscover and reaffirm the power of now. There is no longing for a past sweet moment, or for future sweet melodies, I am too busy being immersed in this one sweet, glorious

moment filled with more aliveness than I can ever imagine. It captures and holds all my attention.

When "the one" in me realizes I've been captured, I delightfully surrender even more deeply and give myself fully to the moment. I fall headlong into a vat of sweetness that may look like a child being carried over her father's shoulder and making goofy faces at me at the store. Or, it may be cleverly disguised as a late night search of the internet only to stumble upon someone's surprise kind comment about my work in their blog. Ah, that sweet connection. Or, perhaps it's a full moon night with the smell of sweet, freshly mowed grass from the neighborhood lawns.

Each moment reminds me to fully feel the awe of the mysteriousness of how life flows, and how all our puzzle pieces fit together in beautiful, divine perfection.

As I empty myself of cravings, I find there

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