

Welcoming 2016: Intentions for Your Body–Food, Movement and Sleep

*We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.*

–Aristotle

Last week I made the suggestion that in the weeks leading up to 2016 you consider some intentions for your Body, Mind and Soul that will lead to the discovery of your true self. But who is that true self? That self is who you were born to be, that self is who can put into motion all the good will you are destined to deliver. Our true self does not get stuck, tangled up in stories, make excuses, or need to rationalize. Our true self is the purest love deep within us that we were born with, but due to life experiences, we often lose the connection.

It is my belief that by tending to the needs and nurturing our body, mind and soul we will have a greater access to our true self. This happens through love. Love for yourself begets love and that is when you can achieve your destiny.

So what might an intention to tend to your body look like? That answer will be quite different for each person depending on current lifestyle but all intentions will be those that promote your health and well being. So what does a body need to thrive? A body needs food, movement, and sleep. Here are some thoughts on each of those topics:

Food



What we put in our mouths each meal, each day can be the

greatest gift you give your body. Gifting yourself with whole, fresh organic fruits and vegetables is how you can thank your body for all it gives to you throughout the day from your first breath in the morning to your last stretch before bed.

What one intention can you set in order to feed your body in such a way to promote your health and wellbeing and reach your true self? Will that intention be to omit a food that is not serving you or possibly will it be to add certain foods? Whichever you choose, set your intention in the purpose of your higher good. When you work within that framework, you can steer clear of shaming yourself and rationalizing your cravings.

So, consider and then articulate your intention regarding food for 2016 and do what you need to do now to pave the way.

Movement



Our body was actually designed to move long distances in a day. The way we live today is so very far from that that we are forced to insert “exercise” into our daily routine. Each summer when I spend the month in Germany I get a first hand glimpse of how we used to use our bodies as I watch my 80 year old mother-in-law and her peers go about their day. These 80-90 years old people each tend their own vegetable garden, watering it twice daily with a with a watering can they carry back and forth from their rain collection system, hoeing and weeding as needed, they wash their clothing in the basement and carry it upstairs out to lines that hang outdoors, they walk to the market and back as needed, and after their afternoon meal they take a walk in the nearby forest. Most can still drive but they only use their cars when they leave town, some who even do so to care for their still living parents! These folks are continually sending the message to their brain that they are active beings. Because they are!

That's not a lifestyle most of us can match, however, you can commit to specific daily movements that will stretch and build muscles, move lymphatic fluids, provide some aerobic exercise, and remind your body on a daily basis you intend to keep moving! What that movement will look like will vary greatly for each of us from gentle yoga poses, to aqua aerobics, to dance. What movement/s do you love? This is important because therein lies the difference between forcing vs. nurturing. Work out of a place of love. Choose a movement that gives you joy and then give it a place of honor in your day. I personally am a big fan of loving yourself first each morning before heading into your day.

Sleep



Nothing can make up for or replace the rejuvenation our body gains from sleep. Yet, when under pressure, it is the first thing we offer up at a time when just the opposite should be true.

When we are rested we are loving and kind, not only to others but to ourselves. We have the bandwidth to forgive and be gentle.

I believe the more sleep deprived we are, the more we begin to operate on automatic and lose any sense of being mindful and present. I spent a few years extremely sleep deprived and not only did I struggle with depression in that time period but I also have few memories. A clear indication I was not even present for my own life.

In 2016, make a full night's sleep a priority. Consider an intention that is sustainable given your responsibilities and clear the way to make it a reality.

Consider your body this upcoming week and the specific intentions you will set to honor and love yourself in 2016.

Next week I'll share a bit about your mind and the importance of taking responsibility for what you are feeding yours on a daily basis.