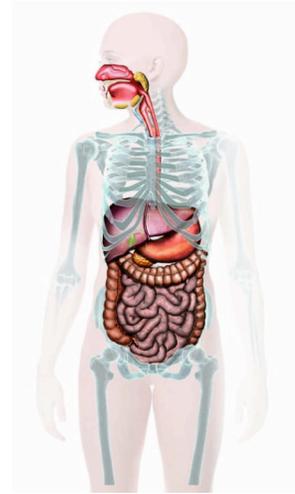


Our Nourishment System: A Somatic Meditation

Part 1, Introduction: The Digestive System and Our Attitudes About Nourishment

Ponder for a moment:

How do you know when you need to eat?
How do you decide what you want?
You locate it; what action must you take?
It's in your mouth: another decision—keep going or spit out?
Chewing, swallowing—you've taken it in.
Your various organs break it down and absorb what it has to offer ...
...until you eliminate the leftovers.



Think of a current real-life situation, choice, or relationship. Read the above again with this in mind instead of actual food.

“Hard to stomach” “bit off more than I could chew” “a lot to swallow”

We speak these phrases about situations in our lives, with good reason. Our bodies must have food to live; so must our souls have nourishment. The digestive system is a wonderful mirror for how we assimilate our lives.

Your alimentary canal, or digestive tract, is essentially an open tube through yourself from one end to the other, with the insertion of a few ‘gateway’ sphincters. Its inner surface is continuous with your skin. This truly epitomizes the relationship of our internal world with the external!

- As you read this, take a bite and swallow. Sense or imagine the journey down your esophagus. Its muscular contractions move the substance along into the stomach, left-front in the middle of your torso. Saliva and teeth already began the work of breaking down the food, but it continues here. Then, into the small intestines for assimilation; into the large intestines where, aside from some salvageable bits, the un-usable remains await elimination.

The digestive system offers wisdom about locating and receiving what we need, obtaining the nourishment it offers, and letting go of what we no longer need.

- What is nourishing to you? Food, possessions, inner peace, relationships, creative ideas, divine presence, a hug?
- Think of your attitudes toward food and consider if they relate to how you accept other types of nurturing. For instance, will you eat anything, or do you choose carefully? Do you enjoy, attack, or play with your food? Do you give food a lot or a little attention? Does this shed any light on how you relate to life?
- On a soul level, do you look for nourishment externally or receive it from within or both? How do you deal with what you have already taken in?

Explore the following meditation slowly. Name something specific that is nourishing and that you desire.

- Decide what you want, locate it, and in your imagination sense it with all relevant senses.
- Imagine taking it into yourself—“taste” it, “chew” it, and decide if you still want it.
- If so, swallow and accept it, welcome its nutrients. If not, “spit” it out.

Affirmation: I receive nourishment for body, mind, soul, and spirit from loving, appropriate, and healthy sources both within me and without.