



Choose Well-Being!


How One Simple Question Can Change Everything

Sundari Jensen

To weaken or neutralize harmful inclinations,
replace them with constructive actions.

—Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, II.33 (translation by Roy Eugene Davis)

In a teaching about the right diet for a yogi, I vividly remember my teacher, Yogacharya O'Brian, saying, "*Don't ask yourself what you want to eat. Ask yourself how you want to feel.*" This is a very basic and clear instruction. I wish I could say that I took it to heart right away, but that's not what happened. My teacher's words were always there in my awareness, but in the beginning they were overpowered by habit. When I was preparing a shopping list or reading a menu I would vaguely hear the question, "*How do you want to feel?*" echoing quietly in the background. Overcoming more than five decades of feeding desires instead of nourishing the body felt as difficult as stopping a fully-fueled steam engine by hand.



I strategized a way to turn this train around—how to replace harmful, habitual behaviors with constructive actions. I needed to stop fuelling habitual desires and instead fuel the physical body, the temple of the soul. I began by changing “*when*” I ate and started to eat at regular intervals throughout the day. This was key for me. Having a plan and a schedule for regular eating proved to be almost as important as having a regular meditation practice. Then I began to change “*what*” I ate, addressing one meal at a time. Eventually I refined “*how*” I ate—I now have meals in a relaxed, quiet environment without distractions. Eating in this way became a form of prayer and immensely improved how I felt.

On a literal level this teaching seemed to be only about food. Over time I realized the instruction was intended to be taken figuratively and applied to everything that I ingested in any way. With this realization, I began to experience significant positive changes in all areas of my life.

What we ingest contributes to well-being on all levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. When discerning about ingesting through any sense organ, I ask myself, “*How do you want to feel?*” This simple question has become foundational in discerning what I ingest in any way—food, music, movies, company, activities... and on an even more subtle level, my thoughts.

One simple practice—when embraced fully and adhered to faithfully—can unravel the ties of ego and open us to an experience of the spacious, ever-new joy of the soul, moment to moment.

Ask yourself, “*How do you want to feel?*” 🌸

Rev. Sundari Jensen serves as a Senior Kriya Teacher at the Center for Spiritual Enlightenment.