

Macrobiotics America

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Some Ideas About Macrobiotic Practice

by **David Briscoe**

Macrobiotics is far more than another way of healing through diet. There are a thousand diets and many of them have good results. The advocates of diets are often on a campaign to prove that theirs is THE diet for everyone. I am on no such campaign for macrobiotics, but I do think the macrobiotic principles applied to food, nutrition and health are really wonderful. It is the way I choose, and I have seen it be very beneficial to many people over the last 25 years. What is important is to think for yourself, to find out what it is YOU want to do. When it comes to food, there is no RIGHT way. Everyone has his or her own take on what is the right way to eat. What is important is to discover for yourself what makes sense, what makes you feel the best, and what supports your health and happiness over time. If you are ill, having personal problems or experiencing mental suffering, you must find out for yourself why you have these problems. No one else can tell you why, really. When you understand for yourself why your problems and illness have developed, you will then be able to do something to change them.

Macrobiotics offers each one of us the opportunity to find the freedom of being the artist of our own life. What does this mean? It goes beyond what we eat and drink. Macrobiotics is a fascinating way of viewing life and the world. Our education in the modern world has conditioned many of us to believe that we are victims of germs, viruses, bad genes, a polluted environment, our parents, etc. It is easy, under this kind of thinking, to view life through the muddled filter of blame. We come to blame everything and everyone for our illness and our unhappiness. The macrobiotic approach is opposite of this. In the macrobiotic outlook, one's life can be understood as being adjustable, adaptable, changing and fluid. By our own thinking and choices we can create the new life we want through facing our difficulties and challenges head on, not by running from them or blaming. In the macrobiotic spirit of community, we support each other in finding the unique life each one wants to live. We encourage each other to dream and we are especially happy when someone's dream materializes through their own action, dedication and hard work. It is natural to realize one's vision and dream through conscious application of macrobiotic principles.

Self-reflection and self-understanding are the core of macrobiotic living. How one lives in daily life is the most important thing of all. It doesn't matter how rich you are or how long you have been practicing macrobiotics. It doesn't matter how many books you have written or how well you can cut a carrot; what matters is how you live your daily life. Our relationships with others, and our honesty, integrity and solid character are just as important as physical health, maybe more so. The intention with which we live our daily life is so important. In

the macrobiotic way, we learn to understand our jealousies, egotism and arrogance without guilt, shame or self-judgement, and to view them as possibilities for growing and becoming clearer and happier people. In the macrobiotic spirit of community, we help each other get through personal suffering and we encourage true self-reflection.

The modern hurry-up attitude makes many of us view life as chaotic and completely unpredictable. When observing life through this view, we never know if an awful illness will befall us, or when the seemingly haphazard winds of fate will send us into a desperate life crisis. For many, everything appears fragmented, disconnected and inevitably impossible to comprehend. On the other hand, in the macrobiotic view, order and wholeness are the foundation of life. Through understanding and applying the macrobiotic principles of harmony and balance, we can begin to see a completely different view of life. As this happens, the mystery of life leads us more to celebration and away from confusion. There will always be mystery as we contemplate the origins of life and our place in it, but through the view of macrobiotics we can begin to feel at home and at ease in the ever-changing wonder of daily life.

Macrobiotics encourages each of us to establish healthy blood through learning how to select and prepare food that suits our personal needs and helps us be in harmony with the environment. When our blood quality is strong, our health and well being is fully supported. Without healthy blood quality, we are building our life on a shaky foundation. The goal of macrobiotics is not to be obsessed with organic food, or abhorrent of artificial food, but to understand food and put it in its right place. The goal of macrobiotics is not an obsession with physical health, but to regain and maintain one's physical health so that less and less energy and attention have to be given to illness, aches, pains, complaining, depression, blaming and unhappiness. When physical and mental health is secured, all of the energy that was tied up in one's own illness and problems can be finally freed and directed toward living the life you truly want. When our attention no longer has to be sucked away by serious physical illness and confusion, we find that there is a magnificent life to be lived. So, in this sense, macrobiotics is truly a spirited approach to life, not just another health food diet.

The best way to know if you are practicing macrobiotic correctly is if you are enjoying it. If you are not enjoying it, find out how to adjust it, as well as your understanding and attitude, so that you can enjoy your practice. If you find that you just can't be happy practicing macrobiotics, please find something that you are happy with. Life is here to be enjoyed. I wish you all the best in your adventure of living.