

Body, Mind and Heart

A publication that promotes total growth

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Curiosity: Friend or Foe?

Melinda Fry, LPC

Babies are born hard-wired with the desire for discovery. Children constantly explore their world and everything in it. A child's day is filled with questioning, wondering, searching and speculation. It is a glorious delight to be so guileless in the pursuit of understanding and knowledge.

Between 3 and 10 years old our questions often change from innocent curiosity to hesitation wrapped up in suspicion and fear. We have all heard the old adage 'curiosity killed the cat.' The saying is used when questions are unwanted or even worse it suggests that your inquisitive nature can lead you into murky or dangerous ground.

It is this belief that can scare people and keep them from questioning themselves and others when something isn't understood. Perhaps in the past your innocent questions provoked an angry response and enforced the message that it was not okay to be inquisitive. Fear and judgment may become the guiding force when choosing what is an acceptable area of inquiry, thus some subjects become too scary or even dangerous to explore. We begin to think that if we explore the murky areas or ask the hard questions we may become unglued or our relationships may disintegrate. The irony is that if you don't explore and question, the intimacy of the relationship will almost always disintegrate. This fear and lack of questioning can create distance and disconnection, both from yourself and from your loved one.

How do we get back to that place of joyous curiosity for curiosity's sake? We never really lost the ability. It takes commitment and practice to strengthen the questioning 'muscles' again. Begin with the conscious effort of softening your heart and bringing your awareness to a place of openness. Question your motives. Why are you asking the questions and what do you want? Ultimately we all have the desire to be seen, heard and understood. Living in the world with a child's curiosity can melt defensiveness, heal wounds and mend our relationships.

Upcoming Events You Don't Want to Miss

Art Workshop – Process Painting

Arnell Etherington, Ph.D. will be in St. Louis for the third year to share her gift and special blend of art therapy with us. Choose an evening session, the day session or both. It's a great way to explore your creative self and escape from the logical, left-brain world in which we live.

Dates and times:

Thursday, June 5th: 6 to 9:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50 for Thursday only

Friday, June 6th: 9:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$100 for Friday only

Cost to attend both sessions: \$130

Location: 2601 Sutton Blvd

You must register in advance by Friday, May 30. Call 314-781-9400.



Dr. Jackie's Classes:

This one-hour monthly meeting grew out of the Alkaline Way of Life© classes to support healthy eating and living. Each meeting consists of current health topics, handouts and a healthy recipe to taste test. The group meets on the first Wednesday of every month. Advanced registration is required.

Upcoming dates: June 4th, July 2nd, and August 6th. Class meets from 7-8 p.m. Cost is \$10.

Energy Medicine Study Groups

Meetings are on the second Monday of each month to explore and practice energy techniques. Upcoming classes: June 9, July 14 and August 11. The group meets from 7-9 p.m. Cost is \$15. Advanced registration is required.

Artificial Sweeteners – Just the Bad and the Ugly

Jackie Reed, MS, DC, Internal Health Specialist

Many of you know that I am not much of a shopper. I am in and out of a store in record time. I made an exception for the information I needed to write this story. I spent over an hour in my local Shop'n Save store reading labels and looking for the hidden ingredient called sucralose, better known as Splenda. Three years ago Melanie Warner explored the topic of low-sugar products and their safety in an article printed in The New York Times (May 15, 2005). Splenda (i.e. sucralose) at the time had already been introduced into over 2200 sugarless or sugar-reduced food and drink items. Now the estimate is over 4000. The artificial sweetener industry has been around for more than 40 years with Sweet'n Low (saccharin), Nutrasweet/Equal (aspartame) and now Splenda (sucralose). Dr. Susan Schiffman, Duke University School of Medicine, was quoted in the article with regards to the safety concerns she had with Splenda. The Food and Drug Administration's 1998 report revealed that it was approving the use of sucralose while admitting that it is "weakly mutagenic in a mouse lymphoma mutation assay." In lay terms, this means it is cancer-causing. Dr. Schiffman questioned the sucralose people and their response was "It's just a little bit of a mutagen."

Well, I don't know about you but I don't want to take in carcinogens if I can help it. So, armed with my notepad and glasses (I probably would have been better served with a magnifying glass) I went in search of "healthy" foods. I was glad to find that Organic brands of Wild Harvest (no low-calorie labels) did not contain any artificial sweeteners. When I looked at jams and jellies, I found clear and correct labeling. If it said sugar-free, it either had a Nutrasweet or Splenda logo visibly seen on the front. If it was Smuckers Low Sugar with a label stating no artificial sweeteners, I was relieved to not find any in the ingredient list. The most recent surprise package to contain sucralose for me has been Thomas English muffins. Whether the package said light, hearty grains, the original or even Double Fiber, all of them now contain sucralose. On some labels sucralose is defined in parentheses as a non-nutritive sweetener. Well at least they are not making health claims from the addition of the product. One patient recently mentioned that he was thrilled to find a healthy drink. He was drinking V8 Fusion Light. I told him I was certain it had sucralose. He couldn't believe it when he looked at the label closely and saw that this was indeed true. You see the American Heart Association label on the front and think you are doing yourself a favor, but it's not that simple. The same goes for Ocean Spray Diet/Light, Gatorade's new line of G2 products, SunnyD, low-sugar yogurts, Propel sports drinks, flavored waters regardless of the brand, Crystal Light, light Arizona teas or other brands. Anytime you see *light, diet, low sugar, or no sugar* on the label it probably contains aspartame or sucralose. I even found it in apple sauce and apple juice.

Just in case you don't know by listening to me preach about the dangers of artificial sweeteners, sucralose is touted as being made from sugar. Sucralose is created by heating sugar at a high enough temperature to remove three hydrogen and oxygen groups (think water as the break-down product) and replace them with three chlorine atoms. While blood sugar levels are not elevated when you consume artificial sweeteners, your blood insulin levels do rise. The food or liquid tastes sweet in your mouth so the brain sends the signal to the pancreas to release insulin. Since the blood sugar never rises, the insulin is then used to remove sugar unnecessarily from the blood and store it as fat.

My advice regarding consuming sugar-free items is DON'T. Get the real thing – eat a little less or dilute a favorite drink with water to reduce sugar consumption. Head out to your favorite farmer's market this spring and summer and taste the sweetness in locally grown produce.

**Body Mind & Heart is a joint venture of
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Margie Lewitt, BS and Jane Barry-Davis, BA.
314-781-9400**

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