

Beatrice's Story – Unwitting Self-Saboteur

The spiritual foundations of the Suppers program are of great interest to me. I have felt such a sense of loss of family traditions, so many of which were typically shared around the dinner table. So the community that grows out of Suppers' devotion to restoration of the family table nourishes my soul at the same time that it nourishes my body. For me, the value of Suppers meetings is not just the hour I spend with friends, it's carrying the experience into my life. It's the spark I get that helps me take a little extra time to prepare food and re-connect with my family on a daily basis at table. I look forward to the creative aspect of making meals with fresh foods, and I feel so satisfied when we sit down to a plate of colorful, fresh, tasty food. The beauty of it all is that there are no lines between body, mind and spirit when a meal is shared. Making healthy food choices, I'm honoring my body as the temple of my soul at the same time that I'm taking an emotional breath and re-connecting.

Feeling my connections is big for me. Every morning I wake up and say a prayer that begins with, "May I feel a bond with each person I meet..." To do this every second all day requires great presence. I find my intention to bond is regularly challenged by all of those mid-day symptoms that crop up when I've waited too long to eat. Now I am aware when my mood changes and I become impatient. It is only through the realizations of this spiritual practice that I have come to understand how these symptoms have limited my ability all along to "bond" with others. As I move through my day, I'm able to watch how my own physical status affects my personal and professional relationships and how others respond to me based on *my* moods. Others don't know what is going on with me, they just see the behavior. They aren't thinking, "Gee, Beatrice just needs to eat". They are thinking more like, "What a crab," or maybe, "She is so hard to work with." Creating community is a spiritual, social, healthful, AND professional skill that I not only need to do but really enjoy doing. It's so silly to let a missed meal or a hasty sweet snack be the thing that reduces my ability to bond.

I have been an unwitting self-saboteur. No more. Now I eat strategically: I make sure to eat a good helping of protein in the morning (lentil soup is a great example), and I pack a healthy lunch (usually using leftovers) or snacks that deliver the nourishment that I need. I always have nuts and fresh spice teas on hand. I also review my schedule to know whom I'm meeting that day, what needs to be accomplished, and how I can bring my best self forward. And I give myself permission to take a walk or close my door, if I need to.