

It's Not Just About Food

How to use this card:

Pass this card around. Each person please state your name and read a small section of the content on It's Not Just About Food.

Concept 23: It's Not Just About Food

Logical miracles happen only when enough of your needs are met.

While Suppers seeks to elevate the role of nutrition to its rightful place in the body, mind, spirit equation, we fully acknowledge that it's not just about food. Ten years into running meetings and with so much research emerging about the role of emotional needs that relate to eating, the various forms of nutrition and hunger, and the healing value of community, we are adding a chapter on the concept that being fully nourished is not just about food. With this concept we ask users of The Suppers Programs to share your thoughts and feelings about the many contributors to your sense of well-being and relationship with food by writing to us at info@TheSuppersPrograms.org.

Vera and Dor's Story: Vanity

I had to do something to soften the blow when Vera shared her brutal take on our concept "It's not just about food." I'm supposed to create a safe environment for sharing. Sometimes it's hard since I can't always support the speaker and the listeners at the same time. My best hope the day Vera spoke was damage control, wielding my magic wand like the Good Fairies – after the fact – undoing the worst of Maleficent's curse.

Vera: "I know where you're going. You're giving me the chance to share what drives my compulsive eating. Vanity. It's all about vanity for me. If it were fashionable to be fat, I'd be fat and fine with it." Maybe I should have stepped in earlier, but I couldn't predict where Vera was going, and she was finally speaking her truth. "I am vain and not expecting to change. Since I was a child, I have wanted to be the prettiest woman in the room. My father and mother used to come home from parties, Dad saying, 'Your mother was the most beautiful woman in the room,' and she believed him. No matter how much I wish my wiring were different, I have never succeeded at changing. I still want to be as beautiful as I can be, even if it reduces intimacy.

"This is my culture's standard of beauty. Even though intellectually I don't subscribe to it, all the rest of me has internalized it. I meditate daily, and I can't change how I feel."

I didn't have a magic wand, just a "talking spoon". So I asked the rest of the group to share their thoughts on what needs had to be met so they could transform their health. Hank needed professional help; he's working on mindfulness with a coach. He said if he ate according to his impulses he'd be eating all day. Penny felt like a "meditation failure;" she needed social support from people with similar health goals and not to be judged. Sharon said, "It's more important what I don't eat than what I do eat. I get so sick on fermented foods, I'll never let them pass my lips again." And a newcomer shared that she needed help finding safe people to eat and be with because she has to avoid exposure to pesticides and herbicides to support her immune system.

For me, the judgment-free environment is key. As a universal allergy reactor, I just need to be around people who don't fault me for all my experiments, flights, and food fads.

"My food choices are all about the current understanding of what keeps me thin," the talking spoon came around to Vera. "Flavor and enjoyment are way down the list of reasons to eat. There are times I would like more rapport with women, but I don't have it because being thin trumps everything. One day my father hugged me and said, 'You're too thin'. I perked up, 'Really?' Then he said, 'Well, no, but that's what women

want to hear.’ The only redeeming thing about this sick vanity is that it gives me something to bond over with other women who share emotional issues, particularly around food. I think I’m right about this.”

I hope people understand that Suppers facilitators work on meeting everyone’s needs. It’s hard to get it right. But if the Good Fairy Merryweather flew in with a magic wand, I’d probably ask to trade it in for a talking spoon.

Continue around the table by briefly sharing how you relate to the Suppers concept of It’s Not Just About Food.

What feels like nourishment besides food?

Discussion Prompts: (Each person select a prompt that works for you.)

- What do you hunger for, and has food become a substitute?
- If you are a person who feels fully nourished, help others by describing what you do to get your sense of satisfaction.

Ideas for Next Steps:

Experiments and Observations:

- Do a thought experiment: Imagine you already feel fully nourished. How is your life different from the life you are actually leading?
- Make a list of things you can do to nourish yourself, whatever that means to you.
- Do a thought experiment: Select something self-nourishing you can use for a real experiment. (Need ideas? Listen to more of your favorite music, meditate, spend time in a zoo or art museum, spend time with a child, light candles, call a friend), and imagine how you’ll feel.
- Do the experiment. Feed yourself and observe how you feel.

Between Meetings:

- Read how other Suppers members related to this concept.
 - For dealing with anger or stress, read [The Anger Eater’s story](#) on page 305 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.
 - For people who want to press “reset” on intentions to lead a healthier life, read [Nana’s story](#) on page 306 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.
 - For emotional eaters, read [Toni’s story](#) on page 307 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.
- Dedicate a special meeting to nourishment that involves no food.