

The Diagnosis May be Inconsequential

How to use this card:

*Pass this card around. Each person please state your name and read a small section of the content on *The Diagnosis May be Inconsequential*:*

Concept 7: The Diagnosis May Be Inconsequential

If eating processed foods caused your problem to begin with, the right solution—whole food—may be more important than the diagnostic labels.

Suppers welcomes people with a wide array of health and mental health challenges related to diet and lifestyle. Most of us have problems with blood sugar regulation and mood chemistry. Though nutritional requirements vary greatly from one person to the next, we all share a fundamental need for whole food. Determining which whole foods make us feel best will require doing experiments to collect the data. Suppers has nothing to do with the details of dealing with particular diagnoses; that's up to people and their practitioners. But Suppers has everything to do with providing the support people need to make health-restoring change.

Merrie's Story: Different Diagnoses

I know exactly what it takes to keep me at a weight that preserves my good opinion of myself and allows me to move through life in comfort. It only took me one bad diagnosis and a few decades of not doing what I needed to do to finally figure out that I would have to make permanent healthy changes to stay in my comfort weight zone. At our Suppers meeting we were considering how so many of us have different diagnoses, but we share a mutual need for support to sustain healthy change. I have had many diagnoses over the years, but the two that help me behave well are breast cancer and chronic anxiety. Once I had breast cancer, eating clean, fresh food became a lot easier. And, of course, the same foods that I believe help prevent a recurrence also help me stay at a good weight and reduce my anxiety. The diagnoses no longer rule my life.

I shared this at a meeting, which prompted a lot of discussion. Another member said she has lots of diagnoses too: obesity, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and bad triglycerides. She needed the same thing, a diet of whole food and a safe place to figure out which foods worked best for her. After doing our food experiments, I found I actually had a fairly high tolerance for starchy foods – I feel well and can maintain my weight as long as I don't eat too much of them. My friend found that she has very little tolerance for starches. But we both thrive on piles of fresh vegetables. We both were amazed to discover that experimenting with breakfast chili and legumes put a halt to unwanted eating as long as we ate some before we spiraled down into uncontrollable eating.

Another member of our group is a woman with type 1 diabetes; she's had it since she was an infant. Her hope in working The Suppers Programs was to reduce her units of insulin and, as much as possible, choose foods that would make her more stable. She too had similar experiences. She thrived on fresh vegetables. She began to crave – a healthy kind of craving – salads and vegetables, once they started making her feel good. She too needed to do experiments, but in addition to seeing how she felt on different foods, she also had her glucose monitor giving her feedback about which foods had the most impact on her blood sugar. The feedback was unmistakable. She started out consuming about 100 grams of carbohydrate daily and went down to 60 grams.

Her insulin intake was at 85 units per day and went down to 50 units. She added a morning dance routine to her self-care package and now enjoys being 15–20 pounds lighter than before, the weight having come off mostly around the abdomen.

None of us have the same diagnosis, but we all shared two fundamental similarities: the need to eat fresh whole food and the need for a supportive environment where we could run our own experiments. I still need my doctors, but knowing what I know now about the effects of whole food on my quality of life, my diagnoses don't overwhelm me anymore.

Continue around the table by briefly sharing how you relate to the Suppers concept of The Diagnosis May be Inconsequential.

Name some of the labels or diagnoses you or others have attached to you. Consider how your diet has contributed to them and how diet can help you lose the labels.

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

- Describe the recommendations you have been given for diet and lifestyle change.
- If you don't have an actual diagnosis, describe what lifestyle changes are indicated for whatever is your reason for attending Suppers.
- Describe the support you need to make the necessary changes.
- Note how you feel similar to someone who has a different diagnosis.

Ideas for Next Steps:

Experiments and Observations

- Do a thought experiment: Imagine you have already made the shift to eating mostly whole, healthy foods including lots of produce, describe what your lunch plate looks like.
- Do a thought experiment: If you experience fear or anxiety around your diagnosis, what would it take to help you feel more neutral?
- If you know someone whose attitude toward their labels is gentler than your attitude toward yours, engage them in a conversation about living with but not being defined by their diagnosis.
- Notice how people with diagnoses different from yours need to change their diet and lifestyle, and note any common themes.

Between Meetings:

- Read how other Suppers members related to this concept.
 - For people who feel resistant to change, read [Alley's story](#), page 130 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* and on the Suppers website.
 - For people who struggle with weight, read [Kay's story](#), page 132 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* and on the Suppers website.
- Between meetings, make conversation around the role processed food and beverages have played in scoring you your labels and diagnoses.