

MACROBIOTIC EDUCATION FROM THE HEART

MACROBIOTIC MEETING LISBON 2014



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We discussed various topics based on the theme of Macrobiotic Education From The Heart.

These are notes from the discussions.

1 The Age of Macrobiotics: Why Macrobiotic Education is more important than ever

Macrobiotics is more relevant now than ever particularly in terms of health and environment. We choose to use the word MACROBIOTICS to give ourselves a stronger identity. Macrobiotics is a lifestyle that includes food and an awareness of the environment

Science is showing that a plant base diet is essential for health and environmental wellbeing. The macrobiotic community has the skill and experience to help people cook healthy plant based food. We aim to develop a stronger ethic in terms of our relationship to the environment.

Emphasise local food and natural agriculture. Be aware whether we are importing food for general use or specifically for medicinal use.

2 Power and Purpose. Young people have to be able to spread Macrobiotics

Teaching macrobiotics from the heart includes being authentic and acting with integrity. Young people are the future, and have the enthusiasm power and ability to spread Macrobiotics.

We need to be aware of how we teach as much as the content of what we teach. We can be guided by the Macrobiotic principles of honesty, self reflection, beginner's mind, thinking for ourselves, responsibility and being humble.

Consider involving students in the discussions and if appropriate part of the teaching. People learn differently and apply a range of techniques in teaching. Young people often do not want to be told what to do, but inspired to take action in their own way.

3 What happened to Barefoot Doctors?

Macrobiotics can be shared with fun and pleasure and has to make sense. When we have a strong vision it's inspiring for young people. We only need a fairly basic education to help people be effective in society and introduce macrobiotics to their community. It's important that students feel empowered after basic courses to spread Macrobiotics. Be careful not to over complicate and overwhelm people. We only need to know a few things well the be useful and valuable to other people.

Teach to be curious of traditional ways of eating and new diets and apply our own principles of yin and yang to understand why they can be effective.

4 Teaching is taking Students from A to B

Understand where students are and where they want to go, to create a clear path from A to B, so students and teachers know what has to be achieved to complete their training.

Education is more than teaching, it is like creating a small community, from which amazing things can happen.

5 Macrobiotic Education Throughout the World

Be flexible about the foods we eat according to the climate and weather conditions. Use our principles to see how we can change our diet from summer to winter and hot countries to cold countries.

6 Relationships, Ethics and Intentions

Be mindful of our relationships with our students. Consider whether it is appropriate to deliver guidance or encourage students to think for themselves.

Write up our ethics so that students know what they can expect. For example is our teaching going to be constructive, empowering, and life affirming. Be clear of our biggest intentions when teaching. What do we want our students to take out into the world?

Facilitate a learning process where students discover for themselves, in a creative context. Try not to make students 'wrong' or disempower them with criticism.

Sometimes we restrict ourselves with unnecessarily strict dietary teaching when we can teach how to apply our principles to any natural food. Macrobiotic teaching embraces all cultures and traditional healing remedies using yin and yang principles.

7 Cooking Classes

Know your audience. Cooking comes from the heart and is an art. Offer some guidelines, but encourage students to be free to create. Let them be bold. Growing food, buying, producing, cooking with joy. Use cooking as a way to develop intuition. Be in the moment in the kitchen and after that study macrobiotic principles.

Making mistakes helps students learn and it is fine to make mistakes. Teach how to cook under any circumstances.

Keep it simple, easy to follow recipes. Remember many people do not know how to cook at all. Give confidence to people. Not too many rules. Colourful foods and engaging their senses is important. It's important to eat mindfully and ask how do I feel after this food?

Be realistic about the time people have for cooking and how they will fit it in with their lifestyle.

8 Reflections on the past and possible

We need a wider door to accept people into macrobiotics. Give preference to teaching principles rather than rules. Focus on health rather than sickness. Explore self sufficiency in terms of health and happiness. Stay humble and try not to exaggerate claims. Be careful to avoid a 'Do as I say, not as I do' approach.

We can teach more of an awareness of experiencing food as energy. We can study more of the use of herbs. Try not to be dependant on Japanese foods. Basic macrobiotic health coaching is a valuable service to others. We recognise that more exercise is a crucial part of healthy lifestyle. Be realistic about what is possible. Our advice could be as simple as initially changing 3 things, if that is what is possible.

Be peaceful with ourselves, each other, clients and students as an example of world peace.

9 Teaching From The Heart

Attract students that challenge us and think for themselves. These people are best able to spread Macrobiotics. Smart people like teachers who are honest and say when they don't know something. Have a symbiotic relationship where we support our students and they support us in terms of the centre or school.

Keep the food for generally healthy people in the centre or school. People who aren't well, may have different needs and we can recommend the appropriate person to help.

People will respect us when we teach from the heart. Being open and non-judgemental is an attractive quality that helps us attract more students.

10 Self-Education

Education originally meant to draw out from within. The student already has everything inside him or her. Self-reflection is how we grow. If we want to educate people we need to also be in the process of educating ourselves.

If we consider a process of - physical - sensorial - emotional - social - ideological - spiritual - we can say that we can only reflect on each stage when we have passed it and moved onto the next level. For example it is easier to reflect on our emotions when we are developing socially.

Be aware of the reality we create for ourselves. The things we develop become our own truth. Our truth shines through.

11 A reflection on what we can learn from the last 40 years of Macrobiotic practice

We reflected on why long time teachers died from cancer and heart disease and what we could learn and apply to our practice and teaching.

This is an issue that has come up before and we will reflect on how we could be healthier every year.

We may need to evolve and develop the Macrobiotic lifestyle itself based on our communal experiences.

We discussed having regular medical check-ups and being open to medical treatments.

To be aware of getting stuck in an unhealthy pattern and to be open to other people helping us out of these patterns.

Be mindful that eating too strict a diet may lead to deficiencies.

It is important to have balance between activity and relaxation.

It is important to develop faith, strength and creativity through exercise, being in Nature and spiritual practise as well as what we eat.

Adelbert and other teachers

We remembered Adelbert and sent wishes to his family and prayed for all people in our community that have passed before.

International Macrobiotic Website

Lourenço Simon and Francisco will be the administrators of the website for the next year.

Simon and Anna will write the About Us section.

Bill Tara will send in a glossary of macrobiotic terms.

We will accept new members from this year and last year's group at the same price of 260 Euros.

We only will accept new members in the future if they come to the International Macrobiotic Meetings.

Sandy will send a PayPal money request to those who e-mail him to say that they are interested to be a new member.

We agreed to use the upcoming money for further work on the website.

Ana will work on the site and chase up people for content.

Next Meeting

We voted to hold the next

International Macrobiotic Meeting in Zagreb, Croatia on the 13, 14 and 15 October 2015. The hosts are Zlatco and Jadranka Pejic.

The general theme will be around developing macrobiotics in terms of the environment and our communication of macrobiotics. Simon and Ana will develop this further.

Anna, Francisco and Simon will assist Zlatco and Jadranka with the organisation as needed.

Projects

EDUCATION FROM THE HEART

First we gathered ideas about what this means

Seeking a balance between feeling and thinking
Heart of things.

Teaching macrobiotics as a new way of seeing the world.

Creating a place for new friendships

Facilitation a deeper level of connection

Shifting between thinking and feeling

Helping students teach each other

Being our authentic self

Being non judgemental

Seeking unity with our students

Meditation before or during class

Giving our teaching its soul

Being flexible and open to change

Teaching with compassion

Sharing our challenges

Cultivating resonance to grow together

Self reflection

Creating a loving family

Being present

Being in our body and connecting through our senses

Sensitivity

Empathy

Simplicity

Being the bigger person

Teaching with humour

Being humble

KEY WORDS

ACCEPTANCE:

Acceptance include accepting our students as they are, their actual life situations, their different motivations for the macrobiotic studies, along with their ideas and opinions. Accepting where people are in their macrobiotic journey and being realistic in what people want to or can do.

CONNECTION

We connect to our students and clients when we find them interesting. Our connection can be encouraged by asking questions, listening and understanding. By using examples that are relevant to our student's lives we connect our teaching to each person's reality. By seeing the best in our students and interacting with a generous warm heart we reduce barriers that come from being judgemental and critical. By including students in discussions and appreciating their opinions we help a group of students connect to each other.

COMPASSION

Teaching with compassion involves the understanding of student's emotions and feelings, from the perception of our own reality, as teachers in unity, carefully and quietly, transmitting vibrations of happiness and mental clarity, infusing our achievements, sharing our merits and knowledge gained, with unconditional love. Compassion with the student, from a more earthly view, is to understand the situation in which each student is, metaphysically sharing their situation.

EDUCATION

Education means to draw out from within. It is to understand where a student is and to facilitate a discovery or learning process that supports him or her in reaching a new level of understanding macrobiotics, guiding the student from A to B. Macrobiotic education works best when it includes all our five senses. This is easiest in cooking classes. Lectures, discussion, images, story telling, activities, interaction and expression are all part of macrobiotic education and best serve the different ways people learn.

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility in our teaching includes being conscious of the changing world we live in and how we can be flexible to the changing needs of the environment and people. We can respect the different environments, climates and locations people live in, along with their various ages and lifestyles so that our teaching meets our students needs. Being flexible we adapt our principles to meet the needs of students coming from different traditions. We might use examples of our own challenges and changes to be better able to share with our students and grow together.

HEART

Teaching from the Heart includes specially the qualities of the Heart in the teaching process. It means a combination between the intellectual contents and the relational and human contents during the meeting of teachers and students.

If we think about Five Transformations, or The Chakras, or any other system that involves different energetic qualities of the human being, all the features regarding to human behaviour and inner qualities, take place on this form of teaching. It is orchestrated by the Heart.

The Consciousness that human beings, teachers and students, are involved in the learning process, breaks the boundary of a teaching purely

intellectual, without underestimate it. The Heart is the bridge between the Desires and the Reality of the classroom, balancing them.

HONESTY

We present ourselves as we really are, being the example of what we talk and becoming the change we want to see in the world. If we don't know, we say "I don't know". We commit ourselves not to take advantage of other people for our benefit. We have the courage to expose ourselves. We respect the shared values of the community we live in. In conclusion Honesty is the best policy.

INSPIRATION

Is a deep in-breath of recognition on every level; a spark, why am I here, yes I can do this and more.

INTUITION

Our intuition is an instinctive knowing of something that doesn't use or require a logical thought process. Everyone has natural intuition but it can get hidden under fears, blocks, beliefs from others or feelings about ourself. Intuition shows up as a fleeting insight and can guide us to places we never believed possible. It is an unfolding of what is going to happen in life and uses an older brain structure. Developing our inner guidance can help us make personal decisions, notice sensations, be completely present, and aware of how we are feeling. In order to develop our intuition skills, it is important to slow down, quieten our mind, listen, trust our hunches, and pay attention. The more you acknowledge your intuition, the stronger and more accurate it gets.

NON JUDGEMENTAL

Accepting people as they are, appreciating them and describing our experience of them.

SIMPLICITY

Is the art to explain something in a way that is easily understood. It is the art to bring knowledge into practice in a way that everyone can participate.

SOUL

If you teach macrobiotic way of life or counsel, then you're well versed in the information that you share. To have a greater impact on this valuable information, we as counsellors should never forget the humanistic quality of what macrobiotics is all about.

I refer to this trait as SOUL. We all have a heart and book learning knowledge. To greatly enhance the experience for the client, don't forget to include SOUL as part of your being.

SOUL is this special personality of spirit and essence that differentiates a good counsellor from one spouting forth information. It is a caring from the core, a feeling and action that is distinctly separate from the body.

SUPPORTING WORDS

CREATIVITY

Being creative is to enjoy free expression, without being restricted by fear of mistakes. It is one way we play, have fun and enjoy self development. A relaxed mind tends to be more creative. Engaging different parts of the brain helps creativity. Meditation, mindfulness and listening to our hearts can inspire creativity. Enjoying the process is more important than the results. Staying in the moment and engaging through the senses can lead to a natural creativity from the heart.

DIRECTION:

The extremely accelerated modern life style creates a tendency to get lost in the world, there are too many options and no time and not enough individual capacity to choose correctly – so we need to give our students a compass to become more structured and orientation in their lives, to guide them through all possible challenges.

EMPATHY

Empathy refers to the cognitive and emotional capacity of the individual. When we are teaching we can develop the ability to empathise putting ourselves in the situation of our students from attentive experience of their gestures, language and mood.

The greater the contact we have with our students the more empathy develops, and the better the learning. This places the group and teacher in the same direction, in the same rhythm or vibration. The empathy , further arises from understanding of the journey of another, and is a skill of listening.

ENGAGING THE SENSES

Our senses allow us to learn, protect ourselves, and perceive the world around us. We connect to all living things through our senses. We use at least one of our senses in every moment of every day. Sense-stimulating activities are an important part of learning as they expand or enrich certain nerve cells in the brain. The more we develop and attend to our senses, the greater the potential for enjoying life. We absorb energy or chi through our senses so the saying, 'we are what we eat', means we are fed by the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and sensations we experience. Some easy ways to develop our senses are spending time in nature, creative pursuits, cooking, music, being mindful, and meditation. Focusing on just one of the senses for a period of time can further help us to understand the many ways we connect

EXPERIENCE

Is the practical application of knowledge. What the mind comes to know is memorised. Experience creates craftsmanship and an understanding beyond our mind. Experience brings together our heart and hara with our mind, connecting our energetic centres.

HUMOUR

Being open, honest, authentic, humble and reflective often encourages humour. We encourage humour by helping students share their experiences and our natural struggles as humans. Our own egos, and the difficult situations our egos and attachments get us into, can often be a source of humour. It is when we have the humility to find macrobiotics humorous that we make ourselves and the subject more attractive. Humour is a way to change the mood of a class and bond with the students. Funny stories can be the most memorable part of a class.

RESONANCE

Resonance is a quality of the Heart and implies deeper levels of communications.

As a teacher, to be in Resonance with the students, means to be able to perceive the needs of every student at that moment, and appropriate ways to fulfil them.

Everything happens, here and now, and a new Shen(conscience) is born constantly and endlessly.

Resonance transcends the duality Yin and Yang, connects Hearts and Minds toward unity.

Teacher and student are changing every moment and both grow with their contact.

With our Heart, we can open a Resonance Space that includes all the students in the class. The teaching takes place beyond the level of knowledge delivery.

The Teacher does not lose his authority when Resonance allows him to be firm and sweet and the students are not challenged to defend themselves from unproductive, unnecessary and unpleasant feelings.

NATURAL WORLD

It is magnificent and we are inseparable from it, therefore we are beholden to respect and nurture it and ourselves for the future of all living things.

BEING SUPPORTIVE

Supportive is more than helping somebody to go on. Supportive means also helping another to take decisions consciously, being also careful not to influence that choice. Living macrobiotics from the heart we have endless opportunities to support and encourage people who wish to start a macrobiotic lifestyle, including our friends relatives and whoever might need help. Everybody has to confront challenges and unexpected events and we know by experience what a great relief is to be supported by another human being with compassion.

SENSITIVITY

Sensitivity is the capacity to use and place our attention in the needs of those who surround us.

POSITIVITY

Positivity is the capacity to see the best, or a great opportunity, in any kind of situation and be grateful.

MACROBIOTICS AND A HEALTHY PLANET

For over five decades the macrobiotic movement have been leaders in an ecological approach to healthy & sustainable living. By the late 1960's macrobiotic practitioners had established a network of independent shops, restaurant's, wholesale distributors and small farming enterprises to support local and regional organic agriculture. This pioneering activity also stimulated local food production such as bakeries and soy food production.

Macrobiotic educational centres in Europe and America have lead the way in teaching men and women the simple life skills of living in balance with nature and seasonal change that supports individual and social health with a focus on sustainable living with a low carbon footprint.

Our Macrobiotic principles are firmly rooted in an understanding of the profound connection between individual health, society and the environment. This includes increased awareness of the impact of our daily life style habits not only on our health but on the state of whole planet and society.

Here are some of our principles:

1. Healthy, wholesome and organic choices reflect a profound sense of gratitude toward nature for providing us with everything we need.
2. Society can only achieve its potential when people live in harmony with the planet and one of the simplest ways is to eat locally and according to the seasons.
3. A healthy individual with a healthy social life is the foundation for a sustainable environment.
4. Respect for all life is fundamental to healthy living so we are committed to careful use of resources in our daily life.
5. Macrobiotic living and education promotes conscious consumers and encourages making environmentally friendly life choices moving toward a zero waste home.

We are proud to be a part of the growing awareness of planetary dangers caused by human action and the hundreds of groups and organisations that work tirelessly toward the creation of a healthy, socially just and environmentally sustainable way of living.

MACROBIOTIC WAY OF LIFE COACH / ADVISOR AND COUNSELLOR TRAINING

The aim is to provide a simple macrobiotic training that gets students to a level where they can help other people start macrobiotics. This would be called a Macrobiotic Way of Life Coach or Advisor.

In addition we explore whether a macrobiotic counsellor is still necessary and if so what kind of training would be appropriate. This is work in progress and may include a more in depth training with greater clinical experience.

We recommend writing to all existing schools and people teaching with the aim of arranging a meeting to see if we can create a harmonised programme for Way of Life Coaches / Advisors and Counsellors.

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