

## Nourish: A Body, Mind and Spirit Approach to Healthy Living

Many of us are malnourished. Not in the physical sense when it comes to vital nutrients and such but more from not living into our full potential. We lack joy and enthusiasm. We lack stamina and vitality. We lack hope.

For most of my life, people-pleasing and perfectionism had a strong hold on me. Both still creep up often. Both left me depleted and malnourished as described above.

In 2019, a word kept stirring in my heart and I made it my “go-to” word. The word is NOURISH. I began to pause before I ate something, before I pursued a friendship or accepted an invitation and asked, “Will this nourish me?”

If the answer was no, I tried my best not to pursue it. I can't be my best self if I don't properly nourish myself. I realized that not only food but people and activities can either nourish us or deplete us. I decided that I would take a break from the things and the friends who deplete me without feeling guilty or worried about what people would say about my decision. This was a BIG step for someone who struggles with people-pleasing and perfectionism.

So, the first thing I did was take inventory of what nourishes me and what depletes me. I thought about the activities I take part in, my friendships (the healthy ones and the toxic ones) and even the foods I like. I found both lists were quite simple and insightful.

At the end of this writing, you will find a print out where you can do this inventory activity on your own. As you brainstorm, you may find some are obvious to you and some others may catch you by surprise! A few on my list caught me by surprise. Cabbage made my “nourishing” list. Yes, cabbage. Walks with a particular friend was on my “nourishing” list as well. All simple and inexpensive.

Before you take this inventory, know that you deserve restoration and rest. You deserve joy and hope. Know that you are loved and accepted as a beloved child of God. You have nothing to prove and no one to impress. You have every right to desire nourishment for your body, mind and spirit. Nourishment that will feed, sustain and maintain you in every sense.

I love the line in the song *O Holy Night* that says “when the soul felt its worth.” Despite growing up attending church regularly and hearing that God loves me, my soul finally felt its worth in December of 2018. I was on my way to teach a bible class and I was in prayer. In my prayer, I told God that I was “His humble servant.” I was corrected. He put this in my heart, “You are not my humble servant, you are my beloved child.”

I am here to tell you that you reading this now are a beloved child of God as well. God wants you to take care of yourself. In doing so, you honor Him and the life He has given you. You honor the blessings bestowed upon you. Stop striving and start living.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, help me to know my infinite worth and that I am infinitely loved by you. Not just know it on the surface but may I know it in the depths of my soul. There is nothing that I could ever do to make you love me more or less. I am already fully loved by you today and for eternity. Your love is enough. It doesn't matter who has rejected me or deemed me unworthy of being loved. All that matters is that I am worthy of your love. God, please help me to love myself, to know my worth and to seek ways that nourish me. Give me the courage to walk away from the things that deplete me. I pray this in your Holy Name, Amen.

You are ready to take inventory of what nourishes you and what depletes you. You can write on the page provided at the end of this writing. (Please print it out or feel free to make your own).

Do not overthink this. Write whatever comes to mind under the two categories. Trust that you innately know the answers. The soul knows what it needs to keep you nourished and keep you safe but we often ignore it. The most important part of this exercise is that you put the list up where you will see it often. My list is posted up in my closet. You want to keep this as a daily visual reminder. I am reminded daily of what to make time for and what to stay away from. You will have days when you may not have time to do any of the nourishing things on your list and other days when you just may have to do something on your depleting list. That's ok. The list is just a guide to help you be more mindful of honoring yourself. We all have set-backs but your list will give you a reference point to go back to that will provide insight into why you are depleted and ideas to get yourself nourished.

This simple exercise has made such a positive impact on my life, my health and my outlook. The other day as I was pushing my daughter on a swing, she looked at me and said, "Mommy, you look really happy."

I replied, "Yes, I really am."

I think what she saw in me was a mom who looked restored and rested because I chose the things and the people who nourish me. In the past, I spent too much time and energy on habits and people that left me feeling "malnourished."

Realize this isn't a one-time decision. This is a daily practice which is why I suggest you display it where you will see it often. Just like we have to make choices each day about what we eat, we too must choose what we put into our bodies when it comes to our mind and soul.

"Your diet is not only what you eat. It is what you watch, what you listen to, what you read, the people you hang out with and the things you subject your mind and soul to. Always be mindful of the things you put into your body, emotionally, spiritually and physically."

(The Minds Journal)

My hope is that once you begin to "feed" your body, mind and spirit with the things that nourish you, you will find more moments of joy, peace and contentment in your life.

# NOURISH

In these areas:

Body

Mind

Spirit

I will PAUSE before I eat, before I pursue a friendship, before I accept an invitation and ask, “Is this nourishing to me?” If it’s not, then I will not pursue it. I can’t be my best self, if I don’t properly nourish myself.

I will make the time to pursue the activities and the friendships that nourish me. I will take a break from the things that deplete me without feeling guilty or worried about what others will think of me. I am worthy of nourishment, restoration and rest.

Taking Inventory of My Habits/My Friendships:

**Nourishing:** (List anything in your life that comes to mind when you think of the word “Nourishing”)

**Depleting:** (List anything in your life that comes to mind when you think of the word “Depleting”)