

Recipe for a Booklet: How It Began

*“I am thrilled and deeply thankful to be playing
in my field of passion. I look forward to meeting
you in the field of compassion!”*

CATHY ARTUKOVICH

As a registered dietitian and trainer in Compassionate/Nonviolent Communication, I've been asked every imaginable food- and behavior-related question. Since I couldn't answer every question in one booklet, I turned to friends, neighbors, colleagues, the clerk at the grocery store, and others for what they most wanted to know about changing eating habits with compassion. What simpler way to experience this process of discovery than through a series of questions and responses—a dialogue—as Neill Gibson, a consultant for PuddleDancer Press, suggested.

Jan Henrikson, a freelance writer, editor, creativity coach, pet-sitter, and former NVC yearlong course participant, agreed to play the role of interviewer. She asked the selected questions. I answered spontaneously (for the most part). Two Basenjis and a Rhodesian ridgeback quietly cheered us on, as the interview took place at one of Jan's dog-sitting gigs. This was sheer joy to me. Had Zera, my golden retriever and constant companion of 13 years, not died recently, she would have been cheering us on, too. Maybe she sent me to these dogs instead!

EAT BY CHOICE, NOT BY HABIT

While Jan transcribed the interview, adding generous helpings of rewording and editing, I ruminated during the night to bring her additions in the morning. We took turns stirring the words until we created something we hope you'll find flavorful and nourishing.

Now it's your turn. Focus on the questions that pique your curiosity, read them in order, or let the book fall open to just the right page. The point is: This is your journey now.

Bon appétit!

Introduction

“Face your stuff or stuff your face.”

ANONYMOUS

Many of us are habitually at war with our bodies, treating them in ways we would not want to be treated or in ways we would never consider treating anyone else. We think we’re meeting our needs by either satisfying our food cravings or bullying ourselves into denying them. In a dieting frenzy, we jump off and on the latest fad diets without ever stopping to discover what our real needs are. But we can feel something is missing. Chronically dissatisfied, we turn to the latest doctor, diet guru, tennis partner, or magazine article to tell us what to do.

My intent is that this book will help you uncover the missing link in your relationship with your body and food. This is not a diet regimen or prescription for instant results. I am not proposing to be yet another outside authority. Through the questions and answers in this booklet, I want to inspire you to access your own authority, your own power, and your own food and body wisdom.

These questions and answers offer an exploration of Nonviolent Communication (or Compassionate Communication)—and how it can guide you in your journey to make peace with your body. What are your needs? What are your feelings? Where are you focusing your attention in any given

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moment? Are you eating because your body is hungry? Or do you want to meet other needs, such as health, safety, security, love, nurturance, protection, or simply relieving a sense of distraction or boredom for a few minutes? The practice of Compassionate Communication can lead you to make conscious choices based on your needs rather than on habits that may not be serving you anymore.

“In the land of wine and brie, obesity is relatively rare,” writes Mireille Guiliano in her book *French Women Don't Get Fat*. “We don't obsess about food, we're friends with it.”

This is an invitation to stop focusing on food without thinking of much else (“obsessing”) and start a new friendship. Not just for the moment, but each moment in a sustainable, even joyful way. Welcome.