

Conversations with a **Butterfly**



Five-Pointed Compass

*A nourishing philosophy that helps you
navigate a path to well-being.*

As a student of Naturopathic Nutrition, the last couple of years have been a revelation to me about how food can be our medicine. After decades of yo-yo diets, weight obsessions and, more recently health fixations, I have finally found an approach that enables me to take responsibility for my health (rather than my weight) and feed my body with the nutrition that it deserves. What's most amazing - my weight is no longer an issue as my body is now finding its optimum balance, which sure feels good. Above all, it has been a subtle message to my subconscious mind that says, "I'm worth it", so my self-esteem has had a bonus Spring Clean too.

Inspired by my nutritional studies, I have developed *The Five-Pointed Compass to Health*, which encompasses (if you pardon the pun) the basic ingredients to navigating a path to well-being. Armed with these you too can set a course for a healthier future, better nutritional choices and a boosted self-esteem to-boot. Here they come:

1. A Course for North - More Water Please

The first point to consider is our hydration - the impact this has on our mind, body and health is huge. Our bodies are around 70% water and through breathing, sweating, urinating and digesting, we use up well over a litre each day. Water has life giving properties and is a vital medium for transporting, regulating, cleansing and generally keeping our bodies in a balanced and healthy state. So, just imagine the stress we put on our bodies if we're not replacing our lost water with appropriate fluids. Increasing your water intake is essential to your trillion little cells, to every organ and the overall maintenance of your body's functions and without it you become starved of an essential ingredient that means your body gets clogged, dried up and deficient. Not a pleasant thought and one we can rectify so easily.

So review your fluids. I don't mean the teas, coffees and squashes - they don't count because they have other 'stuff' in them that the body has to process. Good old, plain water is best. Try a warm water and lemon on rising, which is a great liver tonic. Then sip water during the day and increase your intake bit by bit. Avoid drinking with a meal as this affects the digestive enzyme's productivity. Some simple tips I have adopted is to take a litre bottle with me where ever I go. I keep a jug of vitamin water in the fridge that has mint, cucumber, lemon, lime and fruits. So if plain water seems too much like hard work, make it simple and tasty. A glass of vitamin water gives you both the fluids and the nutrients from

the herbs and fruits - so you get a double whammy. The basic rule of thumb is to aim for four pints each day, although focus on increasing your intake as much as you can, when you can. This will be a great tonic for your body.

2. South if you please - A 'Better Than' Philosophy

This way of thinking was a turning point for me in the choices I made about my eating habits. With such a lot of information about what I should or shouldn't be consuming, having a mechanism for making better quality decisions, made such a lot of difference to me. Thank you for your inspiration Jamie Wray.

This second compass point is finding healthier food options that are 'Better Than' unhealthy options. So the vitamin water option I mentioned is a great example. Plain, filtered water is the best option, although if this is too hard then vitamin water is *better than* say coffee or tea. Or herbal tea is a great replacement for one of your morning coffees. A wholegrain loaf or spelt pasta is *better than* the white, nutritionally depleted version.

This phrase really empowers you to make great choices for you and your family and helps you fill your eating lifestyle with better, nutritional options rather than the 'giving up' alternative. Let's face it, when we've eaten a certain way for so long, changing habits can be a real challenge, so this phrase helps make the transition towards health, easier.

3. West is Best - pH Balance

The third compass point is learning about what food we eat is acid versus alkaline. There is a new wave of thinking around pH balance and making sure that our body isn't filled with too much acidity. Our bodies naturally work to keep the balance right, irrespective of what we eat, although if we give it too much work to do, then it's an unnecessary stress we put on ourselves that could be better invested in healing.

The more alkaline we can keep our body the better. When we eat an out-of-balance acidic diet, we risk that toxicity getting stuck in our systems and causing dis-ease. So, review your diet using the basic list below and identify where you could make small adjustments. A point worth making here is that this chart is based on food we consume and the acid load, after our body has processed it. This causes controversy, as some people talk about a food's pH rating prior to eating, although it is its pH level once the body has burnt it that is most important to us. Source www.energiseforlife.com

Acidic	Neutral	Alkaline
Processed foods	Beans	Quinoa
Red meat	Spelt/Oats/Millet	Herbs and spices
Refined & natural sugar	Brown Rice	Oils
Salt	Fresh water and wild fish	Most fruit
Tea/Coffee/Alcohol	Nuts	Vegetables
Squashes and sodas	Rice/Soy Milk	Green, leafy veg
Wheat products	Chickpeas	Tofu
Dairy produce	Cous cous	Buckwheat
Vinegar	Dates	Sea vegetables
Dried fruit	Melon	
Pasta		

Aim for an 80:20 ratio of alkaline foods versus acid. Although as you make a start with this, just work on increasing the number of neutral and alkaline foods you have in your diet and simply reduce some of your acid intake. You would be looking after your body immensely just with a few shifts.

4. East is looking good - Colour me healthy

The fourth point of my *Compass* is simply to get as much colour on your plate as you can. White food is bland by nature, both in colour and in end-product. It has been processed to within an inch of its life, is nutritionally depleted and ideally needs to be reduced. So white bread, sugar, pasta and rice need to be rethought and replaced with a rainbow of colour. Salads and stir-fries are a great way of introducing colour to your plate. Fruit salads again have an array of colours, are alkaline and just pretty darn good for you. Even brown is *better than* white, so time to brighten up your plate.

5. Fifth point of our Compass?

Ok, so I've confused you.... Of course there are only four points to a compass, so how come we've suddenly got five here? It's ok, stick with me, there's good reasoning behind it, I promise. The fifth element is actually the one right in the middle of the Compass, which when working smoothly balances us completely and brings us a huge health potential when we tap into it. This is your Inner Healer.

I think it's really important to acknowledge the role this fifth element has in our health. We can of course do a tremendous amount with our food to ensure well-being, although when we harness our internal power to heal, then boy do we have an amazing combination. As you'll know by now, I'm pretty passionate about the power of our mind and how it can help us in so many ways and our health is no different.

When we realise the power our mind and body have, we'll never look back. The science is indisputable - read Dr David Hamilton's books for some amazing insights to the mind/body connection. Our body is subtly working on keeping our physical ecosystem in balance - that's an incredible realisation isn't it? So imagine if you could boost that natural process by harnessing your mind - putting energy into empowering your internal healer through conscious and positive thinking and specific pain healing intentions just gives us a new dimension to health. I have really noticed the difference when I actively focus on thinking about my internal healing ability and am beginning to win the challenge over my health fixations. I am in control and I can change the outcome of my future through both my mind and my nutrition. Our futures really are in our own hands.

Let me leave you with this thought - by adjusting a few conscious choices that you make around your food options and igniting the power of your internal healer, you could be well on your way to navigating a path towards health and well-being. Interesting possibilities? Not just possibilities - realities. Give it shot and let me know how you go. A route-map to your health is just a decision away.

Karen



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