

Many ways to feed the mind, body and spirit

by Mark Pavilons

I try to provide ?food for thought??each week in my editorial columns.

Sometimes I even provide actual food suggestions.

As we reintegrate with our fellow humans in the coming weeks and months, we are looking for a new balance. Hopefully lessons learned over the past year will give us some renewed umph, or at least some motivation to get out, explore and become more fulfilled.

After watching the 2010 movie ?Eat Pray Love??with Julia Roberts for the fourth time, I took those three main components to heart.

Let's start with my favourite subject, eating.

TV personality Guy Fieri said eating is ?an experience,? and Irina Shayk said there's nothing better than going home to family, eating good food, and relaxing.

Here, here.

My wife and I are cooking show fans, and I love watching TV hosts travel the world, revealing beautiful, ethnic dishes. Most are simple and most contain as much TLC as they do natural ingredients.

My mom was German so there was never any shortage of good, home-cooked meals at our house. Fresh veggies from our own garden; dishes made from scratch. All filled with tradition and care.

When I had visitors, they were always offered or treated to some of my mom's home cooking. I remember a colleague asking me once if we always ate like that.

When I see chefs, cooks, and average people making pasta from scratch, or cooking with a bit of wine or beer, I grin from ear to ear. When I see the colour of home-made Italian pasta, I wonder what it is we've been eating all these years. The same holds true with farm-fresh eggs. My wife and I have been getting our eggs from a Caledon farm for more than two years now. The taste and colour are simply amazing. I would never go back to store-bought eggs again.

We are now starting to have family dinners again, and they are likely the most important gatherings of all time.

Eating and sharing food with loved ones brings a spectacular joy to life. It doesn't really matter what's on the menu, but if you come to our home for special occasions, you may find rouladen, BBQ, potato salad and even my wife's home-made cheese cake.

?Pull up a chair. Take a taste. Come join us. Life is so endlessly delicious.? - Ruth Reichl

There's a reason God gave us humans so many (upwards of 8,000) taste buds ??o enjoy the bounty we create. And most of it is so abundant on this planet of ours. Unfortunately, our taste buds wane the older we get.

How many of us associate food with our vacation experiences? Both of my hands are raised, stretching to the ceiling.

Our family's go-to summer spot was the former Delawana Inn at Honey Harbour. The meals were to die for.

My father-in-law still raves about a meal we had at Rama ? a porterhouse with all the fixings. And that was a few years ago.

There's no argument that conversation around the table is much more enjoyable when your mouth is full!

Let's not forget candy! Retro candy stores are more abundant, likely catering the Boomers and thank goodness. How many childhood memories are sparked by Pixy Stix, Blow Pops or Sweet Tarts?

I could go on and on about food. Suffice it to say that we should all explore, sample and try as many foods as possible.

With restaurants now open, there's no time to waste.

Moving on to the ?praying? aspect of life, well this comes in many forms.?We often pray right before one of those amazing family meals.

We pray to ourselves, in church, and often when all hope is lost.

Along with prayer are meditation, inner cleansing and unlocking our chakras. There are countless resources to help us do these things.

I visited a Reiki Master from King several times over the years. The sessions were relaxing and rejuvenating and I highly recommend it.

We are the masters of our own inner strength, and we alone spend time in our own heads. I believe we need to expand our spiritual horizons and explore the possibilities. I think we should reach out, connect and ponder the infinite dimensions of the universe. I don't know if doing this will reveal all the answers or the definitive meaning of life, but it's a worthwhile exercise.

Like eating, it's another aspect of humanity that's worth savouring.

If it feeds our soul, and helps us get through the day, I say go with it.

I have a small collection of ancient crosses, some dating as far back as 800?AD. Religion was an important part of life back then, and as I hold ?history??in my hand, I wonder about the former owners, and their way of life. Often, their faith was all they had.

More than 1,000 years later, we pray to the same god and when I?see early depictions of Jesus on medieval coins my heart glows.

And now, to the most important aspect ? love.

Love is still a bit of an enigma, even though it's the strongest, most talked about subject in our vocabulary. We seek it, fear it, grab it with both hands, and sometimes run away from it.

When you're married with children, love is a blanket, a warm and fuzzy thing, not unlike something grandma would knit.?It covers us all and we embrace, wrap it around us to keep us warm and safe.

Love is the anchor in our lives, the very thing that balances it all out. If we can attain the ?trifecta? - love for ourselves, love for others and love for the world, we're all set.

So, my friends, I?encourage all of you to eat, pray, love!