**CRAVINGS**

A book I read 27 years ago called, "Food and Healing" created a foundation of understanding around cravings.  I have observed elements from this book and found truth in what it said.   I have never read another book breaking down our cravings in this way.

It talked about the yin and yang qualities of foods and how fruits and vegetables are in the middle of the spectrum. Meat lies on the extreme yang side of the spectrum. When we eat it, we crave yin foods to balance it and those foods are the sweets and pastries that we eat.  Cravings signify a lack of nutrients or an imbalance of our yin/yang intake.  In the case of a nutritional deficiency, we don't crave that which we lack. Instead, we crave candy, muffins, cookies, etc.  We eat such products until we are full yet we are still not satisfied. Now that our most basic fruits and vegetables are depleted of many nutrients, eating what would be considered a “healthy” diet leaves us nutritionally depleted and thus craving more all the time.

Various patients of mine who have suffered from an eating disorder have taught me that the low fat diet promoted for health and weight loss, the diet I was forced to follow as a young girl, leaves us feeling forever unsatisfied.  It leads to overeating, the consumption of high glycemic index foods, possible diabetes and thus heart disease.  This was promoted by my doctors at the ripe young age of 6 when it was discovered that I had high cholesterol like my father who had just died of a heart attack.

Leptin is a hormone that is produced by adipose cells (fat cells).  The American diet that promotes a low fat diet depletes leptin.  Leptin decreases hunger and stimulates satiety.  Lower levels are associated with cognitive changes in anorexia, depression and alzheimers.  Sleep deprivation also is associated with lower leptin levels.

High fiber, high proteins and healthy fats stimulate leptin production. Having adipose cells on your body also helps increase leptin levels so the rage to lose fat  (and also not eat it) actually predisposes one to gain weight and possibly develop obesity.

We will continue to crave foods we do not need until we consume more nutritious foods with adequate healthy fat.   This requires revamping the farming industry to improve the quality of our soil and the treatment of animals.  Composting will add healthy nutrients back to the soil which has been thoroughly depleted through repeatedly growing the same crop on one plot of land year after year, removing the nutrients required by that one crop.  The soil becomes acidic and deemed useless.  When we rotate our crops and add necessary nutrients back to the soil via compost, the food is more nutritious and satisfying.  We will continue to crave until we get what we need from our food which requires massive changes in our agriculture.