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You are what you eat?

You've probably heard the statement "you are what you eat" countless times, mostly as an incentive for weight loss. What you might not realize is that statement is not the whole story. Here's a more complete statement:

"You are what you take in, what you do with what you take in, and what you don't let go of."

Its easy to picture this in terms of what you eat (what goes into your mouth), what you do with what you eat (digestion and absorption of nutrients), and what you don't get let go of (the difference between what went into your mouth and what goes into the toilet).

But we are not just eating machines. We are breathing, absorbing, sensing, emoting, thinking beings.

What we take in doesn't simply involve what goes into our mouth through eating and drinking. What we take in also includes the air we breath; what we absorb through our skin; what we receive through our senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch; even information we receive through intuition.

All those things, the tangible and the intangible, have to be dealt with somehow by our bodies. And so we digest, absorb, store and ponder everything that makes it into our space.

The obvious ways we 'let go' are through the kidney and bowel as well as exhaling and sweating. The less obvious ways we let go are through verbalization, body language and emotional reactions.

If I was a mathematician, I might express this concept with the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{You equal} \\ & \text{'What you take in'} \\ & \text{multiplied by} \\ & \text{'What you do with what you take in'} \\ & \text{minus} \\ & \text{'What you eliminate'} \end{aligned}$$

So there you have it, an Herbalist's version of an overused and often misunderstood statement.

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