

## LIFESTYLES WITH SYLVIA



Dear Friends,

Indulge me for a moment: when I started writing this column, I knew I would enjoy it. What I didn't know though, however much I hoped, was whether you would enjoy it, too (or even take the time to read it, for that matter).

Now, based on the feedback I've gotten so far, I'm thrilled to report that you both read and enjoy it, and I have to thank you for your many kind words and emails!

It's also been a great thrill for me to meet members of the SRC family whose paths I haven't crossed before, so please continue to introduce yourselves. I was asked whether I'm "the Sylvia who writes the lifestyle column" a good number of times last month, and I can't tell you how wonderful it has been to get to know so many new faces!

On another note, thanks to all the members who participated in our Health for Haiti raffle, as well as to all the trainers who gave so generously by donating their time and talent. An extra special thank you goes to Kim for organizing the event, too—it was a huge success, and congratulations to all the winners.

Now... time to spring ahead!

I know it can be hard to think about Spring when the snow's still falling, but believe it or not we'll be changing our clocks in only a couple of weeks, and before we know it Spring will be upon us! We're certainly getting ready here at the SRC: we've got loads of new equipment and machines upstairs (if you have any questions about how to use them, just ask!) and there are some wonderful new classes on the schedule. For example, if Latin dancing is something you've always wanted to try, come learn Salsa, Cha Cha and Samba with Nicole on Thursdays at 10:45 am... it's guaranteed to put a spring in your step and a smile on your face!

So with all of this renewal and revitalization right around the corner, we're all going to need some energy to support it, right? And of course, if you've been a loyal read of this column, you know the best energy comes from the best foods and the best eating habits. That leads me to the subject of this month's column: the immensely valuable information I found in the brief 139 pages of Michael Pollan's "Food Rules: An Eater's Manual."

I've been planning to write a book review column for a while now, and when I happened across "Food Rules" in a Barnes & Noble while visiting my father in Florida recently, I knew I had found the perfect subject. In "Food Rules," Mr. Pollan, who you may recognize as the author of two other highly-praised works on food and nutrition, "In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto" and "The Omnivore's Dilemma," has put together a sensible, intelligent and easy to follow "manual" of eating rules. I went through this little book cover to cover in under an hour, and believe me when I tell you it will do more to motivate you to make important, lasting, health-promoting and planet-saving changes in what and how you eat than any other book I have ever read!

Now, if you'll indulge me again, I'd like to share with you some of my favorite themes...

### **If It Came From A Plant, Eat It: If It Was Made In A Plant, Don't.**

In his last book, Pollan summarized his approach in just seven words: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." His new book provides the practical steps to fulfill those seven words, starting with advice to avoid "processed concoctions," no matter what the label may claim ("no trans fats," "low cholesterol," "less sugar," "reduced sodium," "high in antioxidants" and so forth).

Also be wary of foods that are advertised nationally—after all, companies that produce the most healthful foods, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains, rarely have the budget to support national advertising campaigns. Pollan also suggests buying fresh food from farmer's markets whenever possible, but if you do shop in a supermarket, he urges sticking to the periphery of the store and avoiding the center aisles, which are usually laden with processed foods.

### **Cook.**

If you're buying fresh food, inevitably you're going to find yourself in the kitchen... which, believe it or not, is a good thing! "Cooking for yourself," Pollan writes, "is the only sure way to take back control of your diet from the food scientists and food processors."

Don't think you have the time to cook? Think about it this way: you'll make up time spent at the stove with time saved not visiting doctors or shopping for new clothes to accommodate an ever-expanding waistline!

### **Never Get Your Fuel From The Same Place As Your Car.**

Cut out the chips, the soda and the candy (you know, the stuff you can grab so easily at the gas station), and remember that the most wholesome eating pattern consists of three leisurely meals a day, and preferably a light meal at night.

If you must snack, stick to fresh and dried fruits, vegetables and nuts, which are all naturally loaded with healthful nutrients.

### **Pay Attention to Your Eating.**

Pollan points out that if you're not paying attention to what you are eating, you're likely to eat more than you realize. As such, he recommends that you do all of your eating at a table, not at a desk, in front of the television or in the car.

Also, always practice portion control—using smaller plates is a great way to keep portion sizes down—and eat slowly to the point of satiation, not fullness.

### **Keep Special Occasions Just That: Special.**

“There is nothing wrong with special occasion foods, as long as every day is not a special occasion,” Pollan writes. “Special occasion foods offer some of the great pleasures of life, so we shouldn't deprive ourselves of them, but the sense of occasion needs to be restored.”

### **Remember the “S” Policy.**

When it comes to indulging in treats, Pollan has a so-called “S” policy that's too good not to share with you: “No snacks, no seconds, no sweets—except on days that begin with the letter S.”

As you can see, “Food Rules” is chock full of great information in easy-to-digest terms that can be applied to any life at any time. I highly recommend you do yourself and your family a favor by investing eleven bucks and one hour to consume (no pun intended... well, maybe *somewhat* intended) the whole thing.

If you do, be sure to let me know what you think! Feel free to email me at [Sylviae9@aol.com](mailto:Sylviae9@aol.com), and I look forward to hearing about your experiences with this nifty little book.

Until next time, happy, healthful eating,

*Sylvia*

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