

Mourning Has Broken by **Lisa Marie Lindenschmidt**

I heard somewhere that it takes 14 days to create a new habit. I think that's crap. I think it takes a lot longer than that. Not only are you having to make the new habit a reality, but you have to mourn the old habit, honour that old habit. Those lovely old habits have helped you hobble through some tough times. They're like the favourite mixing bowl that finally breaks after 20 years: you know it can be replaced, but there's still sentimentality attached to it. My new habits can sometimes take months and months to stick because I want to usher the old ones out with gratitude and with grace... no matter how odd or unhealthy that old habit may be.

I recently went on vacation to visit my husband's family. Jim's family is incredibly large (by my standards, anyway), so we ended up attending a number of holiday parties. Each party had a similar set-up: buffet-style snicky-snacks, followed by another buffet-style dinner, followed by another buffet-style dessert selection. Of course, beer, wine, and assorted other alcoholic drinks were also available throughout. The set-up was always nice, the hostesses amazingly gracious, and the company was excellent.

It's just that... I'm still in mourning. Or so I wanted to believe.

I found myself getting ready for each party and doing a quick body scan: am I hungry? Where is my head today in regards to my eating? Do I need to take any food or drink with me to make me feel more comfortable? This scan has been part of what I've been calling my Transitional Plan for almost two years now. When I first began transitioning to a much more intentional diet – one that included a higher percentage of raw foods, one that was more vegan and more local – I knew that I was the one that was going to have to provide for myself in every situation. I couldn't just assume anymore that I would be able to find something to eat or drink. But this isn't just about me being practical about my dietary needs; this is also an emotional journey. I knew that if I put myself in a social situation that the environment itself would be a trigger for me. When people are celebrating, there is an unspoken understanding that eating party-type foods is expected and encouraged. I find this ironic because we're celebrating milestones in our lives and yet we're eating and drinking things that discourage optimal health. This pattern then becomes infused in our day-to-day reality: we begin to look for reasons to celebrate, to eat these types of foods, in order to incorporate them more readily into our daily diets. So, the lowly celery stalk gets pushed to the side as an "appetizer."

So, I found myself coming home each night to enter my food into my food blog and saw that the choices I made weren't that hard after all. I didn't eat any meat, any dairy, any eggs, any refined

sugar, any wheat, drink any alcohol, and stayed almost 100% raw. I'd had a good time at the party and didn't feel emotionally drained afterwards.

But the most important realization was that all of this wasn't an effort anymore. I'd made all of these choices without angst, without feeling lack, or without feeling peer pressure. What did this mean? Had I truly crossed over into some new territory of myself?

I think – and don't quote me here – but I think... that I've created a new habit. After 2 years of working through all the emotional baggage around parties and food, I believe I may finally be out of mourning. This by no means is the end of my journey with food and emotional eating; it's just one piece. But it is cause for celebration.

Now... where's that celery stalk?

Lisa Marie Lindenschmidt is a raw foods chef and teacher and owner of Rite Food and Company (www.ritefoodandcompany.com), which offers workshops on intentional and joyful eating. Lisa Marie and her homeschooled daughter, Mo, record a weekly podcast – called Sweet Peas Podcast – chronicling their raw foods journey together.