

At Friday's Drumright Rotary Club meeting, we welcomed guest speaker, Denise Madeja, a raw foods chef and instructor from Tulsa and recent winner of the Sing for Your Supper at Chefs for the Cure, a cancer fundraiser at Cancer Treatment Center. Denise transitioned to a raw foods lifestyle almost two years ago. After struggling with health issues and being tired all the time, she knew she needed to make some changes.

Denise's first leap into raw foods was at a raw foods retreat in California for an intense 3 week detox and educational experience. She was expecting a change in her health and lifestyle so she completely cleaned out her cupboards and pantry of anything in a box or can before leaving for the retreat. However, the results, of her stay, were more than even she could have imagined.

She immediately lost excess weight and gained energy and vitality. She even learned how food is tied to our emotions and is so often used to self medicate in order to cope with life events. After the retreat, Denise says "I had more space in my head, a mental clarity that I hadn't had before".

The raw foods lifestyle is not a new fad, it has been around for many years and almost everyone incorporates raw foods into their diets daily, great examples are salads and guacamole. However, more and more people have found renewed energy and health benefits by incorporating raw foods into their daily life that the raw foods lifestyle is becoming a recognizable trend. The premise of the raw foods lifestyle is based on a vegan diet, which means absolutely no animal proteins. This diet consists solely on vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and grains and any combination thereof. The next principal of raw foods is the foods are not heated above 115 degrees. Most raw foodists keep the temperatures between 105 and 115 for optimal quality. The low temperature is necessary for the protection of the foods enzymes. Many food enzymes are destroyed at higher cooking temperatures. These enzymes help the body digest food easier and without these enzymes the body uses more energy to digest and process the food.

Some examples of raw foods include raw pasta, where instead of wheat noodles, zucchini spirals exist covered by a raw marinara sauce created in the blender from fresh and sundried tomatoes and different herbs and seasonings. Or possibly, one of the treats Denise brought to share with our club, which was a rich, decadent chocolate pudding made with avocados. Really, the possibilities are endless - which would explain why the raw food community is huge.

Denise's company is called Raw Intentions and started because she loves to make food and share it. "Before, I always felt guilty like I was poisoning people by giving them high cholesterol, fatty foods, now I love to make food for people because I know it's healthy and tastes great too", says Denise. Even though avocados and nuts have high levels of fat, it is the healthy fats that your body and brain needs to function properly. Just like everything else in life, a person could overdo those aspects of raw foods and not be healthy. It is important to incorporate a large variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds to be a healthy raw foodist. "With raw foods you are just satisfied because of the nutrients going directly where needed in your body", says Denise.

There are no diet rules, or restrictions to just incorporating more raw foods into your life. The only equipment necessary to get started is a sharp knife and cutting surface. If gourmet foods are more your style, you might enjoy the convenience of a high speed blender, food processor and/or a dehydrator.

Denise's website is www.rawintentions.com where she offers food sales, health coaching and more information on the raw foods lifestyle. Her motto sums up her outlook on food and life "It's about making a better choice today than yesterday so that tomorrow can be the best, so you can live in optimum health."

Please join us at Friday's meeting for the change of leadership ceremony. And help us welcome in our new president and leadership for Rotary year 2011 – 2012.

If you are interested in becoming involved in Drumright Rotary Club, or if your high school child(ren) would like to be involved in our Rotary Interact Club, please contact us on our FaceBook page, Drumright Rotary Club or go to our website www.wix.com/drumrightrotary/drumrightrotary.

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