

Coping with a cooked family

by Anna Marcon



Those of you new to 'RAW' may be facing a time where you are making raw food for yourself and cooked food for your family. Often when new to raw food, people begin to feel guilty about feeding themselves amazing enzyme-rich food, whilst plonking another plate of over-cooked vegetables, pizza or dhal and soggy rice in front of the kids. Well, I did anyway...

After guilt came panic. It manifested in a massive effort on my part to fulfil Philip Larkin's poetic observation, "They fuck you up, your mum and dad". Every piece of dairy, I assured them, would give them man-breasts, cancer, and then kill them (although I was doing a rather good job stressing them to death). I was also excellent at telling my husband that every veggie fry-up was taking him one step closer to the grave – *without* offering him the lovely, raw alternative of marinated dehydrator warmed mushrooms and onions, succulent, gently dried tomatoes and live corn bread.

So after trying to induce acidosis and an eating disorder with my kind words, I figured it was time to try and get some of those lovely raw enzymes into them in an acceptable way. First move was to stop panicking about vegetables; increase the amount of juices, smoothies, nut milks and raw puddings. This started to work fairly quickly and meant they were having a raw breakfast. OK, it meant I had to get up a little earlier, but I could relax because my little darlings were getting a few more enzymes! In my case I was fairly lucky because my eldest two are fruit bats at heart anyway, but my youngest, who would eat dhal and soup until it came out of his ears, would not contemplate eating any fruit other than grapes or 'easy peelers'. As for non-cooked veg, or any veg indeed (apart from the soups and those in the dhal) – forget it! So while my eldest two were taking the new additions to their diets quite well, my youngest was still forcing juice down with the aid of a straw. He still refuses smoothies but has finally succumbed to recipes including: chocolate almond milk with NO banana (or else!), brazil vanilla milk, energy balls and chocolate brownies. Not a very well balanced diet I hear you cry. But, these additions to his diet have led on to a remarkable change in his eating habits in general. He actually eats now, no longer flips at the sight of vegetables on his plate, in fact he doesn't seem to tantrum at all now (oh, the power of enzymes), plus he has started happily munching away on fruits (previously unheard of). These simple changes benefited all the children in many ways. Now if they don't want their dinner, they know they can just eat fruit instead, and will often come and ask for something 'fresh'.

As for my husband, he is often raw, usually semi-raw, but of his own volition. I no longer beat myself up for not having a 100% raw vegan family, as I know that they are moving in that direction, are educated on raw and will know it is there when they need it. Meanwhile I quietly sneak in the odd recipe, the last one, my middle son assured me, was 'not only nutritious, but delicious!' as he tucked into another helping of Alissa's Blueberry Pie. Other tricks that helped included; adding carrot juice or raw soup to cooled cooked soups, fruit sorbets, banana/coconut/berry ice creams; grating raw veg into rice or 'risotto'; using veg sticks and hummus as a starter; hiding veg in sushi and gradually increasing the amount; and, of course, getting the kids involved in making their treats and smoothies - I've seen some of the most unusual banana splits ever created!

For me the answer is not to worry about what to remove from a cooked diet, but to concentrate on introducing healthier alternatives, so they soon become the norm. Who needs cooked biscuits when you can make wholesome sprouted dehydrated cookies? I haven't yet managed to persuade my youngest that sprouted rye bagels are great (he's still convinced I'm trying to trick my students into believing they are dough nuts!), but I will persevere. Healthy eating habits and a relaxed relationship with food can be among our greatest gifts to our children.

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