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ARE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT EATING GETTING IN THE WAY OF YOUR WELL BEING? TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

Food for Thought

Some things in life are black and white: Either you got the part or you didn't. Either your competition team took first place or it didn't. Other issues are more complicated. You might have mixed feelings about a piece of choreography, or you may like petite allegro more on some

days than on others. Eating habits and attitudes about food are similar, because there is a large gray area between what is healthy and what is not. Complete the following questionnaire to learn where you fall in this range. The results may be surprising.

QUESTION	YES	NO	POINTS*
1. Can you eat when you're hungry and quit when you're satisfied?			
2. Do you stop eating because you <i>think</i> you should (as opposed to because your body is satisfied)?			

DS would like to thank the Renfrew Center Foundation for granting permission to republish and adapt the questionnaires used in this article.

MINDbody

QUESTION	YES	NO	POINTS*
3. Do you make food choices based on foods you enjoy?			
4. Do you become physically uncomfortable (weak, tired, dizzy, etc.) when you undereat or diet?			
5. Do you feel that your food selections are a combination of “healthy foods” and “pleasurable foods”?			
6. Do you <i>have</i> to eat in a certain pattern—always three meals a day or always at a certain time of the day?			
7. Do you believe that if you eat when you’re hungry and stop when you’re satisfied, you will not get fat?			
8. Do you feel guilty when you eat to the point that you’re stuffed?			
9. Can you balance the time you give to thoughts about food, weight and dieting with thoughts about other important aspects of your life, such as relationships, dance, work and self-development?			
10. Does what other people eat determine what and how much you will eat?			
11. Can you leave some cookies on the plate, because you know you can have some more tomorrow?			
12. Do you usually pick foods based on their calorie content?			
13. Are your regular eating habits unaffected by important events, such as performances or auditions?			
14. Do comments (from teachers, friends, parents) about your appearance influence how much you eat?			
15. Do you maintain your regular eating habits despite varying levels of physical activity, not aiming to eat more on days when you’re dancing a lot or less on days when you’re not?			
16. Does the way you see yourself in the mirror influence what and how much you eat?			

** This survey is designed to help you reflect on your relationship with food. “Normal” eating is flexible and varies naturally according to your emotions, daily activities, hunger and proximity to food.*

*SCORING

1. Give yourself one point for each **no** answer to an **odd-numbered question**. Write that number here: ____
2. Give yourself one point for each **yes** answer to an **even-numbered question**. Write that number here: ____
3. Add your points together to get your final score: ____

NOTE: This questionnaire can only give results based on the limited number of questions asked. It cannot account for the truthfulness of the answers, only for the self-reporting of each participant. The interpretations given are for informational and educational purposes only, and do not constitute or

substitute for any psychological and medical evaluations performed by a qualified professional, nor for any psychological or medical treatment. If psychological or medical evaluation and treatment are indicated in your score, immediately consult a qualified professional.

MINDbody

YOUR SCORE

0-4

In general, you have a healthy attitude toward food and eating.

5-11

Your self-acceptance and overall happiness may be negatively affected by cultural pressures regarding appearance and ideas about how much and which kinds of foods to eat. You may be at risk for disordered eating; exploring these issues may be helpful.

12-16

These scores suggest serious issues with food, ranging from food obsession to a full-blown eating disorder. These behaviors could be interfering with daily life and may be harming your body. Professional assistance is recommended to deal with thoughts, feelings and behaviors related to food and body image. Medical evaluation and intervention may also be needed to address health concerns.

WATCH YOUR WORDS

WHAT YOU SAY CAN HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ANOTHER'S EATING HABITS.

Without noticing or meaning to, you or your friends might be speaking or acting in ways that can contribute to another person's eating issues. Unfortunately, unintentional comments, just as much as intentional ones, can bruise gentle egos. To contribute to a healthy environment at your dance studio, watch out for the following activities (and don't be afraid to speak up if you notice someone engaging in them):

- Praising or glorifying another's appearance based on body size or attractiveness
- Complimenting someone when they lose weight or diet
- Encouraging someone to lose weight
- Talking negatively about bodies, whether yours or your team member's
- Discussing measurements, weight or clothing sizes
- Thinking of foods as "good" or "bad"
- Making fun of another person's eating habits or food choices
- Criticizing you or members of your group's eating choices
- Considering weight important
- Saying someone is "healthy" or "well" because he or she is thin
- Expecting perfection
- Encouraging more exercise than is healthy
- Assuming that a large person wants or needs to lose weight
- Allowing the media to dictate what body type is "in"

If you observe friends or teachers participating in any of the behaviors mentioned above, ask them to stop. If comments made by a teacher or a peer are making you uncomfortable, speak to a trusted adult. Often, offenders are unaware of their words' impact.

WHAT IS DISORDERED EATING?

While you've probably heard of eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating, you may not have heard of disordered eating, a related condition that represents a collection of symptoms, including restricting food intake, having negative thoughts about food and having a low self-image. Both conditions are characterized by a psychology of food obsession and unhealthy eating. The main difference is that physical effects—sudden weight loss or gain, vomiting, hair loss—accompany eating disorders.

An eating disorder presents a direct threat to your health; disordered eating, on the other hand, may not be as immediate a danger. However, disordered eaters are still at risk for developing full-blown eating disorders, and those who don't can still be affected. If you suspect that you or a friend is experiencing disordered eating or has an eating disorder, immediately speak to a trusted adult about getting help; check out the list of organizations in "Resources" above.

Resources

These organizations can provide more information about eating disorders and disordered eating, as well as offer therapeutic services.

Academy for Eating Disorders

847-498-4274
aedweb.org

American Dance Therapy Association

410-997-4040
adta.org

Eating Disorder Education Organization

780-944-2864
edeo.org

International Eating Disorder Referral Organization

858-792-7463
edreferral.com

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders

847-831-3438; anad.org

National Eating Disorders Association

800-931-2237
nationaleatingdisorders.org

Overeaters Anonymous

505-891-2664
oa.org

Remuda Ranch Programs for Eating Disorders

800-445-1900
remudaranch.com

The Renfrew Center

800-RENFREW
renfrewcenter.com