

The Members, the Body and the Owner

One fine day, it occurred to the Members of the Body that it was getting harder and harder for them to do their jobs. When the Owner started to complain about the Members not working as well as they used to, they had to figure out why. For years, each Member had been carrying out specific tasks to make the Body healthy, strong and energetic. But now they all felt weak, sluggish and ineffective.

The next day the Members called a meeting to discuss the problem. At first they couldn't figure out what was wrong. But the Mouth, who became the spokesman for the group, said, "I think I know the answer. The Owner's eating habits have changed. He's been eating a lot more 'extra' foods that are not food-group foods and don't provide all the nutrients we need. The Owner expects a good performance from each of us, but he's making our tasks impossible by frequently choosing the wrong foods."

"I think you're right," said the Muscles to the Mouth. "In fact, I'm sure of it! How can the Owner expect my teams to keep the Body moving well when food-group foods aren't eaten? We're missing the protein we need to be strong and the B-vitamins we need for energy."

The Mouth confirmed it. "Not much has been delivered from the Protein group lately, or the Grains group."

"I bet the Owner is getting peer pressure to eat more 'extra' foods," said the Brain. "It's obvious he's not thinking clearly."

"Make no bones about it. The Owner might be able to fool himself, but he can't fool us. I used to be proud about the support I gave the Body, but I can't hold up much longer," said the Skeleton. "I haven't been getting the calcium I need on a regular basis."

The Mouth confirmed it. "I can't remember the last time I took in something from the Dairy group." The Throat nodded in affirmation.

"Ah ha!" exclaimed the Teeth. "That's probably why we've been getting more cavities lately. We need calcium on a regular basis, too!"

"Now it all makes sense," said the Eyes. "We used to be known for our keen sight, but lately we've been missing little details. We haven't been getting our vitamin A."

Again, the Mouth confirmed it. "Yes, sadly there's been a big slow down on the Vegetables group intake, too."

The last Member to speak up was the largest member of all, who also considered himself to be the most important, the Skin. "I am the bodyguard," boomed the Skin. "Without my protection, you are all doomed! It is my responsibility to protect you from outside invaders, and it's impossible for me to be strong without vitamin C to make fast repairs whenever there's an injury breaking through. Without fast healing, the survival of

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the Body is at risk, which means your survival is at risk, too. The Owner must eat more from the Fruits and Vegetables groups!"

There were other Members present who had similar concerns, but they didn't speak up, they just nodded in support.

By now, everyone was scared and not exactly sure what to do about the problem. The Mouth was the first to come up with an idea. "All Members are important to the Body, and we need it to survive," said the Mouth, "but we can't succeed without the Owner's help. Somehow we must get the Owner's attention."

The Stomach had been thinking the whole time and proposed a possible course of action. The Stomach proposed that the Members go on strike to voice their concerns and make their feelings known. Being a democratic body, a vote was taken. The decision to strike was unanimous. Indeed it was a risky decision for all Members to stop work at the same time, but the long-term survival of the Body was at stake. For 2 days no work was done, but they did put up signs with mottos such as "Members for Food-Group Foods" and "'Extra' Foods Weaken the Body." When the Owner of the Body saw the signs, he realized that he was the cause of all the problems. After all, he was the one in charge of the Body.

The Owner pleaded with the Members to come back to work. "Please accept my apology," he said. "I realize that all your problems are my fault, and I promise to fix them. I want a strong, healthy Body, which means I need every Member to be in superb shape. From now on I promise to eat in a balanced way every day. This means I will eat foods from all food groups every day so all Members get the nutrients they need. Even though I'm in charge, we're all in this together. If the Members are happy and working well, then the Body will be happy and strong, and I will be a happy, healthy Owner. It's a win-win for everyone."

The Members believed the promise made by Owner, so when the Owner's eating habits changed for the better, the Members received their essential nutrients and happily went back to work.

The Body got stronger, the Members continued working well together, and the Owner enjoyed the benefits of healthy eating for as long as he lived.

The Members were glad they succeeded in getting the Owner's attention, and the Owner was glad he paid attention to the signs, for if he hadn't, the outcome would have been very different for everyone.