

1-22-10 We Don't Have to Fool Mother Nature

Some real stuff in moderation is better than a whole lot of fake. That's the conclusion I arrive at when I think of things like butter. For a long time, the fat and cholesterol issues were very confusing and most people could not be blamed for not knowing about things like hydrogenated and how bad that is for us, especially when their own doctors were recommending margarine over butter! But, eventually, the truth came out and packaging was supposed to be truthful about saturated fats. Commerce is so powerful, though, that their teams of s-o-b's (sayers of baloney), I mean communication experts, will continue to devise wording and imagery to fool many of us.

My Aunt Dorothy would have enjoyed getting upset with me over the state of our non-food dilemma. So much of what is on the shelf really is a non-food and there are more additives than ever. Dorothy was an amazing woman who used words like "research" when her children were little. One might ask what was in the dog food and she would have them read the ingredients. If they did not know what some component was, she would say, "Well, let's research that!" Of course, this was way, way before even the concept of the internet, so research meant a trip to the library and asking questions and writing letters. Dorothy was always learning.

As an adult with children of my own, I enjoyed visiting her, looking forward to the certainty of an animated discussion. One of the frequently discussed topics was why there was more cancer and heart disease. That discussion usually included pondering over the fact (or so it seemed to us) that there was less cancer and heart disease in the previous generation, even though everyone drank whole milk, and used real butter. We'd include more exercise as previously a part of everyday life as a helpful plus. We'd toss in some chemicals, including medicines, as detrimental factors. And when we had calmed down, we'd say, "Real is better than fake. It's what people ate for thousands of years. It tastes better and we don't have to worry about additives."

As much as I loved those conversations with her, I had six young children at the time, and I could not admit to her that I could not afford to buy butter. I did not want to tell her that because she would insist on buying some for us! So, I kept quiet on that topic but determined to arrive at an affordable solution. The solution arrived via my sister, Carole, a farming horse woman in Maine, who grows most of her food supply herself. This is what she suggested: Mix olive oil (or inexpensive but less tasty canola) with butter, about half and half, until completely mixed. Store this in the fridge and it stays the lovely spreadable texture of margarine without any of its dangerous chemistry in the forms of hydrogen, colors and flavoring additives, to make a non-food pass as a food.

It truly is not nice to fool Mother Nature and we don't have to. Eating natural foods in moderation, including some fats, such as butter, is a delicious way to enjoy a well-balanced diet.

Blending butter with olive oil makes it even healthier and more affordable. Pass the real butter spread, please!

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