



by Steve Charter – at www.eatmoreraw.org

How the *Holmgren Principles* of permaculture really do apply to a naturally health-creating *eat more raw* lifestyle

- 1. Observe and Interact** – “Beauty is in the mind of the beholder”
By taking the time to engage with the nature of health creation (and illness creation), both of which arise naturally from certain ecological / biological circumstances, you can design solutions that suit your particular situation. Observe your body’s reaction to different types of foods, by feeling its responses and effects in the body – don’t get stuck in your thoughts and ideas, instead get use to tuning into your body’s interactions with food, and then interact by responding to the positive effects, and cutting out or cutting down the negative effects.
- 2. Catch and Store Energy** – “Make hay while the sun shines”
By developing systems that collect resources for our body’s innate wish to create health when they are abundant, we can use them in times of need. In other words, build the body’s immunity and resilience by eating more vitamin and mineral rich health creating foods, and clean out the pollution (e.g. the remnants of processed and junk food in your body) to build up the body’s positive resources. When you have the chance, and your body has the energy and resources to do so, why not try a cleanse or an appropriate type of fast to accelerate and support your body’s ability to build and maintain health.
- 3. Obtain a yield** – “You can’t work on an empty stomach”
Ensure that you are getting truly useful health-creating rewards as part of the eating and growing you are doing. Grow the health and resilience of your bodily garden, by eating more naturally health-creating foods, as well as growing more naturally health creating foods in your actual garden. Develop and implement a *nutrition gardening* design for your plot.
- 4. Apply Self Regulation and Accept Feedback** – “The sins of the fathers are visited on the children of the seventh generation”
Work with and support the positive effects of naturally health-creating foods, attitudes and activities, and expand them in your life, and reduce or cut out the negative effects of foods, attitudes and activities that naturally create ill-health in the short, medium or long-term. Look at the typical state of health in the western world, and accept the feedback its giving you. Look at the healthiest permaculturalists and natural health practitioners, and understand how they have created and maintained good health in their life. We need to discourage inappropriate activity to ensure that systems can continue to function well and naturally create health, inside and out. Negative feedback is often slow to emerge, but if we really look we can normally see where and how it is going to arise eventually.
- 5. Use and Value Renewable Resources and Services** – “Let nature take its course”
Make the best use of nature’s abundance of health creating foods and activities, to reduce our unhealthy behaviours and dependence on non-renewable resources, and our addictions to unhealthy foods, attitudes and activities. Vitamin and mineral rich foods are renewable resources that build our health, immunity, resilience and vitality, all of which are essential supports to maximising our own positive impacts in the world.
- 6. Produce No Waste** – “Waste not, want not” or “A stitch in time saves nine”
By valuing and making use of all the resources that are available to us, nothing goes to waste. A lifestyle that

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naturally creates ill-health, sooner or later is going to create significant waste – a waste of your own vitality, creativity and positive contribution to the world, and waste of all sorts of physical and human resources if you become dependent on the ‘health system’ to manage your state of ill-health. For some this is unavoidable (e.g. for inherited conditions, or conditions that arose from when we were less aware), but for many these conditions are completely avoidable.

7. Design From Patterns to Details – “Can’t see the forest for the trees”

By stepping back, we can observe patterns in nature and society. There is a very clear pattern for what creates health in nature – see, observe and study the patterns of health creating diet, lifestyle, environment, relationships etc. These can form the backbone of our designs for healthy living, with the details filled in as we go.

8. Integrate Rather Than Segregate – “Many hands make light work”

By putting the right things in the right place, relationships develop between those things and they work together to support each other. Design your own ‘flower of health’, to make sure various elements of your health creating lifestyle support and strengthen each other, through the naturally symbiotic processes of health creation.

9. Use Small and Slow Solutions – “Slow and steady wins the race” or “The bigger they are, the harder they fall”

Small and slow lifestyle changes can be easier to maintain than big ones, making better use of available resources and producing more sustainable health-creating outcomes. Take one or two health-creating steps at a time and get them well embedded in your life, feeling and experiencing the benefits, and then move on to the next steps in health creation.

10. Use and Value Diversity – “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket”

Diversity reduces vulnerability to a variety of threats and takes advantage of the unique nature of the environment in which it resides. Ensure that you plan to put in place a number of health-creating elements in your lifestyle – don’t just think that one change is the answer to everything, although each change should be valued as an important step on the path.

11. Use Edges and Value the Marginal – “Don’t think you are on the right track just because it’s a well-beaten path”

The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place. These are often the most valuable, diverse and productive elements in the system. Explore the benefits of combinations of elements – for example, how meditation can improve your body’s awareness of health creating foods, and vice versa - or how an improved diet can improve your yoga practice or sports performance.

12. Creatively Use and Respond to Change – “Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be”

We can have a positive impact on inevitable change by carefully observing and then intervening at the right time. Be aware of the opportunities to make changes in your life that strengthen the naturally health-creating elements in your overall lifestyle – and also be aware that by making health-creating changes in your lifestyle, all sorts of other positive and creative opportunities may emerge in your work and livelihood, your living situation and in relationships and your social world.

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