

## **THE IMPLICATION OF NUTRITIONAL PSYCHOPEDAGOGY IN THE MATRIX OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT\***

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The birth of conceptual nutritional psycho-pedagogy represents the compulsory matrix for the development and maintenance of human and personal value. Thus, it must respond both from the point of view of attitude and behavior through education and from a structural point of view to the social command, enclosing the individual in a quality segment of his existence, starting from the nutritional act. Being a new and interdisciplinary domain, nutritional psycho pedagogy, determines, by the implication in the personalized act of nutrition, the acknowledgment of the fact that “eating is an art” and, at the same time, it makes responsible the ones who sustain that “they live to eat” and/or “they eat to live”. This fact cognitively implies both the acknowledgment and the application of the component elements necessary for the approach of a healthy life style which determines the improvement of the life quality, as a response of personal identity. We wonder: Is the nutritional psycho pedagogy able to answer the question “Tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are”

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### **1. Introduction**

The need to understand man’s approach to food determines the existence of a proper behaviour as well as an attitude in accordance with the ways that determine the human development and evolution, structurally speaking.

In this context, nutritional psychopedagogy is the dimension that implies the behavioural-educational act regarding the nutritional phenomenon from the perspective of human formation and development and its approach to community in the configuration of a positive attitude about the concept and importance of a healthy life style as the effect of the balance between soul and body / body and soul.

As objectives, nutritional psychopedagogy proposes:

- the maintenance of physical and psychical health
- the knowledge and application of nutritional requirements according to the peculiarities of human age
- the implication of educational elements in the nutritional act
- establishing a healthy life-style pattern and living life accordingly, gradually improving, step by step, the quality of your life through the growth of life quality
- the maintainance of an evolutive and numerical balance between body and soul, as a result of a healthy life-style
- the elimination of attitude-behavioral-educational failures regarding the nutritional act
- the elaboration of some structural concepts regarding the role of nutrition in the psychopedagogical and social assisting of SER persons (with special educational requirements)

Thus, nutritional psychopedagogy will prevent the turning off from the standards of the persons’ normal and healthy life, starting from the new-born until old age, emphasizing the necessity of some conditions that can favour the elements mentioned before in personal involvement.

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Moreover, it will teach us to have the balance between eating in order to live and living in order to eat, that can be quoted in the form “tell me what you eat, that I tell you who/what you are”. On such an identity, nutritional psychology will have as a study object the individual being involved in her/his own development as a personality, nutrition and development, gradually managing to understand and provide solution to those problematic situations in which the conceptual deviant may finally lead to disorders of human personality, but we should not forget that everything is in our power, starting from the well known and up to date Latin saying “*Men’s sana in corpore sano*” (A healthy mind in a healthy body).

All these when we start from the concept belonging to Halford (2008) that optimal nutrition represents the nutrient taking-in that:

- helps us reach mental performances and emotional balance
- helps us reach optimal psychical performances
- is associated with decreased incidence of the health-disease challenges
- is associated with a healthy life-style enhancing longevity

It is necessary to mention that, in our perception, the matrix of personal development as a concept is also based on what the same author Halford (2008), makes direct reference to personalized nutrition and by means of which we can:

- improve the sharpness of our mind, our mood and power of concentration
- increase the level of the IQ
- improve physical performances
- improve sleep quality
- improve resistance to infections
- defend ourselves in front of the disease
- cherish a longer and happier life

In this context, we get to update the triad: health – environment – nutrition (H – E – N) that at some point can control our state of identity but also of social cohabitation, thus trying to prove the interrelation of previous elements, getting to the conclusion of Alicia Hart (2006): “If you have the luck to own a bit of land, why wouldn’t you make your own vegetable garden?”

And then H – E – N starts from:

- What shall we eat? / What do we eat?
- When should we eat? / When do we eat?
- How should we eat? / How we eat?
- Where should we eat? / Where do we eat?
- How much shall we eat? / How much do we eat?
- Why should we eat? / Why do we eat?

The answers being in fact the decodings for a reasonable life in which “the physical and mental health are permanently found in a balance of evolution, value and human program.

Personality is unique and original, and we will talk about an art of nutrition, and our way to perceive and live life will be different, because we will appeal to it differently, better appreciating and using its resources.

Thus, knowledge from a certain perspective of the age peculiarities of our patients will bring us into the situation of not only understanding the nutritional act on categories, but also realizing a personalized nutritional program, according to and starting from the psychological identities linked to its development and evolution.

Our constructive approach will further regard the fact that the child may have, in the nutritional act an ally or an enemy particularly in situations in which his whole universe is messed up. Then, the act of nourishment/nutrition, the food in itself, can take the form of a:

- a) Refuge – (I binge eat because I am upset, no one loves me, I don’t care about how I look) thus the signs of a future obesity can appear
- b) Protest – (I don’t eat because my parents argue a lot, have just divorced, I want to die, I don’t care about anything), the signs of nervous anorexia are manifest.

In these situations, the nutritionist will take the nutrition act towards its personalization starting from the relation child (C) – food (F), giving up the negative attitude towards food, because the latter is neither the substitute of the family’s lack of affection, nor the refuge of causal unfulfillments.

Continuing our attitude journey at the level of adolescent (A) – food (F), most often there is a conflict based on the two attitudes (refuse and refuge), creating a problem at this age, that determines the specific attitude.

Thus, food satisfies the adolescent’s need to take action through:

- Having something to say
- Protest
- Desiring to be seen
- Desiring to be understood

Following the banner:

- “So, what if I get fat? It’s my problem!”
- “So, what if I get thin? It’s my problem!”
- “So, what if I die? It’s my problem and what is your problem?”

As compared to the two entities mentioned above, the adult is aware of the role of balance in the nutritional act, trying to overpass the infamous phase of living in order to eat. It is the moment when the adult, at this mature age (according to Iordanescu, 2006), acquires experience, culture at the nutrition level and applies his discernment in the choice of daily nourishments. Now comes the “game of nourishments”, of the scales, of “minute” slimming programs, the stress being laid on movement done “so that others see me” or as a real necessity for keeping fit.

During this period food becomes an art, and the kitchen is turned into a real sanctuary, and we should not forget of temperance and nutritional balance, sine qua non elements in this dimension of personal development.

In old age, the person eats in order to live, imposing himself a strict nutrition program of the meals from the day time and controlling the good effect of nutrition based on natural exponents. Food, in general, is scarce, and the mastication act can be prolonged, both because of dentition (lack of teeth), and of the pleasure to enjoy the respective food. The food related conflict disappears, and nutritional education arrived at this point, its proper duty performs.

It is important that from these perspectives the whole lifelong nutritional act may be personalized, determining the appearance, within the framework of personal development of new attitudes and behaviours, starting in some situations from heredity – environment – education, determining new mutations in nutritional education.

In this context, we will enumerate, with the due alternations, the strategic phenomena that negatively influence the nutritional act in itself already started since the first life years.

Thus, advertising through:

- a. Television broadcasts (education through television): advertising clips, broadcasts (diets, slimming programs, health, cooking, preparing food), news related to gastronomic events, traditions, customs
- b. Written press: specialized articles (pages dedicated to nutrition and nutrition minutes), advertising images aiming at the presentation of some food products / foods, advertising announcements.

Generally, the strategies used in the advertising industry can be characterized as being:

- Aggressive (both verbally and visually)
- Almost absurd in their incitement
- Immoral through the message they convey
- Incorrect from the point of view of a specialist
- Inappropriate as presentation and concept for the target population to whom they address
- Transmissible of subliminal messages
- Infringing to human value

- Bearers of some behavioural risk conducts that aim food generally and the nutrition act in particular

And thus, the previous enumerations have the result that in time we assist to nutritional risk conducts through the fact that:

- Serving the table is not to be the most important moment of the day and the cooking tradition of the house
- People eat packed, canned food, hot or cold, dry
- Mostly children and adolescents, but also workers give up the “school or job packages”, nutritionally well balanced in favour of money for food or food received in learning units (kindergartens, schools)
- People eat in a rush, while working on the computer
- Nutritional alternatives are to be found, but we don't know if they respond positively to every organism in particular
- People frequently meet in: cafes, bars, restaurants, fast-foods, generally eating “eccentric delicacies”
- French fries, hamburgers, mayonnaise, pizza and spicy sauces already “make the rule” being the ID cards of a generation for which the resources of the Earth matter less and less
- We turn to the fashion of fast diets and slimming programs, without a previous consultation at the nutritionist physician or the family's personal nutritionist

## 2. Conclusions

The conclusion to the aspects enumerated above is that our balanced way of living in a normal and natural environment is more and more difficult to achieve.

Our decodings so far have proved that the nutritional act discovers its value construction, making us aware of the necessity of some structural determinations, starting from attitude and getting to perspective, and we should not forget what Dunlap I. said in 2001: “The attitudes are our own creations. We are free to choose to be the victims of life conditions or humans or we can choose to watch life with an open mind and be winners. Our perspective and choice of attitude gives us the power to be our own masters. This is the energy of freedom truth.” Thus it is in our power to cognitively involve both in the concept and application of component elements necessary to the approach of a healthy life style that determines the value growth of life quality as a response to personal identity.

It shall be only then that we may truly have the certitude that to eat is an art, the nutritional psychopedagogy determining its valences, making from its interdisciplinarity a viable value dimension, expressed through the matrix of personal development.

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