



# **It's Not About the Broccoli: Three Habits to Teach Your Kids for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating**

*Dina Rose*

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## **It's Not About the Broccoli: Three Habits to Teach Your Kids for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating** Dina Rose

You already know how to give your children healthy food, but the hard part is getting them to eat it. After years of research and working with parents, Dina Rose discovered a powerful truth: when parents focus solely on nutrition, their kids - surprisingly - eat poorly. But when families shift their emphasis to behaviors - the skills and habits kids are taught - they learn to eat right.

Every child can learn to eat well, but only if you show them how to do it. Dr. Rose describes the three habits - proportion, variety, and moderation - all kids need to learn, and gives you clever, practical ways to teach these food skills.

With *It's Not About The Broccoli* you can teach your children how to eat and give them the skills they need for a lifetime of health and vitality.

## **It's Not About the Broccoli: Three Habits to Teach Your Kids for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating Details**

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## From Reader Review It's Not About the Broccoli: Three Habits to Teach Your Kids for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating for online ebook

### Monica K. Cochran says

Much of what Dina shared I knew, however what I especially liked that Dina took the long view about developing lifelong healthy eating habits instead of getting caught up in looking at nutrition over a day or fixing problems (she does have a troubleshooting guide at the end though). Lots of good suggestions; however, most helpful were creating the environment (externally and internally) to support the three habits--remembering to go slow and to keep in mind keeping ourselves (parents and caregivers) in a resourceful state ...will recommend to parents I work with!

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### Emily says

Great book for parents of toddlers/school aged kids or anyone involved in caregiving. I would definitely recommend it, even if your child is very young. Great tips for ensuring you don't raise a picky eater!

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### Danielle says

This book had good tips and suggestions, but I didn't like how it was structured. The first part was convoluted rather than clear. With that said, it feels like a moderate, long term approach and did include some good tips.

My three favorite takeaways:

1. Never serve the same food two days in a row.
  2. Serve fruits and veggies at every meal so dinner doesn't become a battlefield. Frequency is the antidote to fighting.
  3. Describe the taste of new foods to your kids so they know what to expect.
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### Louise says

2.5 Stars

Eh, maybe this will be helpful to some parents, but I didn't find it terribly helpful. Lots of anecdotes and vague references to what NOT to do, while the advice for what to actually do seems like common sense to me.

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### Ruth says

Probably like most people who pick up this book, I read it because I have a daughter and I want her to become a healthy, adventuresome eater.

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Being reasonably knowledgeable about health and nutrition, I found a lot of the book to be pretty old hat. But there were a few insights I found very helpful, and in any case, it was a pretty quick read.

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## Melissa says

I don't have any kids but I babysit for dozens of families and I care a great deal about nutrition and getting folks to eat healthier. I witness the struggle between kids and their parents over food constantly, so I decided to read this book. I've already recommended it to many of the parents whose kids I look after! I think it's a fairly excellent book with good ideas, though it perhaps foolishly trusts parents to understand what foods are healthy and what are not. There are parents out there who have been so fooled by the meat, dairy, and egg lobby's carb-phobic propaganda and its spread throughout both mainstream and social media that they don't understand that fruit, starchy veggies, and whole grains are undeniably healthy foods, the kinds you eat in higher proportion than other foods. This raises concerns for me, but I still think it is an objectively helpful book even if parents got only one thing from it, like setting food time windows so that kids don't end up snacking all their calories, something I see all the time. If it gets any parents to stop using food as rewards and to follow through on both all threats and all promises, it will have done a lot of good for families.

I just want to throw in, though, that I sat for a vegan single mom and her son from age 3 to almost 6 and that this momma, all by herself, fed her son the best food with the least fighting of any family I've seen, but they did it very differently from how this book suggests. First, he ate the same things for dinner always. He'd have a plain baked sweet potato, pinto beans, avocado, plain broccoli (if he complained about it, we'd add some soy sauce over it), plain tofu (the delicious vacuum-packed super firm kind), and either rice or whole wheat pasta. He'd eat the whole plate with minimal complaining. His mother did not have the same dinner as he did, she'd have an enormous kale salad every night for dinner. How did she manage this? One, we'd help him, putting food on forks for him, sometimes even hand feeding him because he was a very prone to distraction. Two, there weren't alternatives. This is just what he ate. Three, I'd read books to him while he ate because he was a total hellraiser but he loved books. When he wanted sweets, he'd ask for dates. If I offered him a cookie, he might accept it, but he was also likely to say "No thanks" because his tastes had never been geared toward sweets and processed foods. "Junk food" he enjoyed included seaweed snacks, his mom's homemade flax crackers, olives, and frozen peas (not heated). This was a particularly rebellious and wild kid, let me add. And yet, the eating struggle never reached any kind of serious point. So, take from that what you will. I think it really just indicates that vegans, who care a lot more about the quality and ethics of their food than most people, are more mentally able to give their children a consistently healthy diet. If eating ethically is central to your belief system, this can positively impact how your kids view eating. This is just one anecdotal story, but if the vegan children of folks online are any indication, there are a lot of happy kids out there helping their parents season roasted veggies and begging for green smoothies. So this could be an alternative to the method suggested in the book, but if that won't work for you, *It's Not About the Broccoli* is terrific and should help!

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## Little says

I've followed Rose's blog for a few years now, and I love that her message is simple and consistent. Simply stated: it matters less what your child *eats* today (or this week or this year) than what your child *learns about eating* today that will affect how he eats for the rest of his life. Rose further expands that message in to three food habits: Proportion, Moderation, and Variety. Rose contends that focusing on those good habits will lead to proper nutrition, and that focusing instead on nutrition will lead to bad habits which will ultimately undermine nutrition, too.

In this book, Rose presents both the underlying philosophy and an actionable plan for parents to teach those three good food habits. While much of the information is available scattered about on Rose's blog, the book lays the plan out in a comprehensive, step-by-step way. If you've already got food struggles with your children, you should definitely buy a copy

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### **Naoma says**

Once you read the whole book, you realize that she really promotes the Ellyn Satter method of feeding, but in the long, convoluted program described here for feeding, she confuses matters and even contradicts herself. "Do what you can to get kids to taste foods, but don't pressure them!" (I'm paraphrasing. Have you met a 3 year old that doesn't want to taste something?)

There were a few good elements, suggestions like trying to encourage your child to focus on being a food critic and describe the food they're eating - I think that could be helpful.

But really, save yourself the time and just read Satter.

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### **Shae says**

In the beginning of this book the author describes our parenting pitfalls when it comes to our children's eating habits and I was just depressed. Somehow I persevered and things got better. Dr. Rose advocates the move from a "nutritionist" state of mind (my college food science class) to a healthy habit approach. Here are the three habits:

- 1.) Teaching Proportion: We eat more growing foods (fresh and healthy -- fruits, veggies, chicken, milk, eggs) than fun foods (not junky, but not fresh and healthy -- red meat, crackers, chocolate milk) and more fun foods than treat foods (junk food.)
- 2.) Teach Variety: Teaching your kids how to taste new foods, how to have variety -- not eating the same fun or treat foods over and over.
- 3.) Teach Moderation: Teaching kids to listen to their body -- eating when you're hungry and stopping when you are full, using eating zones, managing treats and sweets.

Reading this book has given me some really practical approaches and lines to use on children of all varieties: undereaters, overeaters, brand new eaters. It's given me some direction, and some confidence, and some clarity to the eating struggles we've had the last couple years. Hurrah!

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### **Jimmy AndSarah says**

I have changed my own bad diet over the past several months with the whole30 but I tend to fall back into old habits and have to recommit myself. I really want to help my kids become healthy eaters now! The author makes sense, i learned a lot, im going to start implementing the eating zones now! One step at a time.

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## **Christina Zable says**

This is a great book about feeding children. I wish I had read it when my girls were just starting solids.

The author's position is that when we emphasize nutrition and try to control our kids' eating, we create stress and, ironically, UNhealthy eating patterns. She advocates not emphasizing nutrition but the teaching of good eating habits, specifically eating a variety of foods, eating foods in proportion to their health benefits (lots of veggies, less ice cream), and eating in moderation -- listening to our hunger, eating when hungry and stopping when not hungry. She gives multiple suggestions for methods to support learning these habits.

Her idea of what constitutes healthy food is sometimes extreme -- she wants a diet of mostly unprocessed natural foods and, while I agree that that is probably good for you, it can be tough to achieve when you're busy. She emphasize dealing with picky eaters more than dealing with overeaters, which is my situation, but she has advice for overeating as well. She places more emphasis on toddlers and preschoolers and starting right than on shaping things up when problematic patterns around food have been established -- one of the reasons I wish I had read this sooner.

If your kids are adventurous eaters and you don't have struggles around food, you probably don't need this book, but I think it's a valuable read for the vast majority of parents who do not have food and feeding going as smoothly as they would like in their households.

her blog, *It's Not About Nutrition*, is great too.

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## **Greg says**

This was an incredibly straight-forward book into how to help children develop healthy eating habits. It was a little overwhelming to consider implementing the suggestions, but unlike other parenting books these things do seem possible to try out. What stuck out most to me is that most of our eating habits have very little to do with eating! Rather knowing ourselves well enough to realize we are satisfied or full, being willing to try new things and enjoy variety, and developing self control with a long term perspective are things the world in general needs more of!

My wife and I plan to implement some of the things from this book, but it isn't going to be easy. I recommend this if you want to help your children develop long-term healthy habits around food, I think this is a must for all parents.

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## **Sera says**

What a great book. It took me many months to read it, because I wanted to implement the ideas within the book slowly over time. Too much change at once tends to freak out most people.

The book focuses on healthy habits when it comes to eating rather than healthy eating itself. The thought is that the latter will follow the former in due time. The book examines how most parents have a "nutrition mindset" (I know that I did) versus the "teaching method". The key is to have variety, proportion and self-regulation when it comes to satiety.

I started with the Eating Zones and identification of foods as Growing, Fun or Treats. Then, we implemented the Rotation Rule, which requires that no same food be eaten two days in a row. Over the course of a few months, I noticed that my daughter started to try new foods because she was constrained from repeating her favorites. I also started "Soup Sundays" where she and I picked a soup to make, shopped together for the ingredients and then made the soup on Sundays. This idea was mine but it provided me with a way in which to introduce my daughter to new flavors, and in particular, vegetables. My daughter loves spinach now as a result of Soup Sundays.

We've been working on proportion and intend to start working on what it means to feel full. My daughter, if left to her own devices, would eat 24-7. She claims that she is constantly hungry. She is not overweight at this point, but I worry about her ability to learn how to say "I'm full" in the future. The book provides a visual for parents to use so that kids can rank their hunger. They can't really understand the concept of satiety so that like everything else, it needs to be taught. We'll continue to work on this approach as well the others. Changing behavior takes a long time.

Overall, I highly recommend this book.

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### **Kimberly says**

I think this does have some good ideas. Like most parenting-related books, pick what works for you. For me, I like the idea of focusing on variety in all things. I'm someone who naturally avoids variety, but I can see the value here. I like that it points out to do variety in unhealthy and healthy foods. The idea is just to get your kids used to eating different things or even the same things in different ways. This makes trying new things fun. Also, I like the information about how to talk about having your kids taste things. Ask them to taste only the tiniest bit and have them share their opinion about the food. Make them into a food critic. I'm not currently stressing about what my kids eat. I have one (6 yrs) who is fairly balanced and very willing to try new foods. Then I have one (3 yrs) who could be labeled as picky and has zero interest in trying new things. I've never fought with my kids about food, and I don't plan to start now. But I like the idea of working these ideas into our routine and I think with time it will work itself out.

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### **Angela says**

Followers of the author's blog, *It's Not About Nutrition*, won't find a lot of unfamiliar information in the book, but it's nice to have it all in one place with questions addressed. Having struggled recently with keeping the toddler eating a variety of foods in the face of an overseas move and living out of hotels, I found it a good refresher and system for "rebooting" how we've been eating in the last few months. Also, unlike the blog, it presents Rose's advice as a comprehensive program rather than just a series on thoughts about different aspects of varying a child's diet.

As always, she's convincing and well-reasoned, and does a great job debunking the long term usefulness of, say, hiding vegetables within other foods or relying on slightly healthified junk foods. Now I just need to be consistent in implementing her advice!

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