



A Lesson on Restraint

It was Friday- the day before July 4th weekend. I've really wanted to try out this new BBQ joint that I hadn't been to before. I was craving ribs given the nostalgia surrounding the time of year. I drove down there late afternoon, pulled up to this really local-looking, hole-in-the-wall joint. I could smell the aroma of charcoal, grilled meat, and BBQ sauces even before I walked inside. There were wooden table benches inside and a small walkup counter to order. The anticipation was intense as I looked at the menu to place my order.

Now understand that my wife and I are just the two persons in our household. During the drive there, I spoke with her to have an idea of what she would like since she was still at work. She said "Now make sure you don't go nuts—you know you" My response- "Well it's a new place and I heard that it's so good. I want to try several things." Her reply- "You can always go back another time to try something else."

So here I am at the counter, the choices are endless. Beef ribs, regular pork ribs, baby back pork ribs, smoked chicken, beef brisket, pulled pork, chicken wings, spicy sausage links and endless sides. What's a man to do!!?

Sir, what are you having?

I'll have ½ rack of pork ribs, ½ rack of baby back ribs, ½ rack of beef ribs, ½ smoke chicken and ½ pound of spicy sausage links.

Anything else? No....Oh yes some uhhhh...a side of BBQ beans.

What was I thinking? My wife's going to kill me!

My order is ready and I take my two large takeout bags, and begin the drive home. The aroma in the car is unbearably delicious. The only things stopping me from digging into one of the bags to grab a rib was: 1) I was driving 2) It was in the back seat and 3) My wife always tells me to focus while I'm on the road.

I made it home safely. I went into the house and eagerly unloaded the goods onto the kitchen island counter. The spread was ridiculous. A Smörgåsbord! I took a picture and sent it to my wife. Why?



Maybe I'm trying to soften the blow for when she actually sees this feast in person. She calls me and says I'm planning to do yoga when I get home so if you're thinking of joining me, maybe you want to wait a bit. I was thinking, I'd have a little taste before she gets home. But I held off. I couldn't imagine doing a down dog just after having a rib. So my wife gets home, we do a 45-minute yoga class. The whole time I'm thinking BBQ, but I got through the vinyasas, up dogs and warrior poses. Refreshing, I must say.

After a quick shower, I got ready for dinner. By now it's been over two hours since I picked up the food. We each dished a plate. I picked one single pork rib, one single baby back rib, half of a single beef rib, and 3 slices of the spicy links with a small serving of the side of beans for starters, thinking to myself that I'll be back.

We sat at our dining table and dug in. Rather than sitting at the TV, we sit at the dining table where we can have good conversation. We took our time and really enjoyed the meal. It was amazing. After about 30-45 minutes of enjoying our meal I found that my partial beef rib was still sitting on the plate only partly eaten. I was actually full. Didn't even want to finish it because I was really and truly satisfied. And the food was fantastic too.

It was a revealing moment that taught me RESTRAINT. Well, my wife played a huge role here. Which is why I'm writing about this experience. Every day we learn. Life is a learning process. We're born, we live and we die. We have this one chance to do it right.

Hara Hachi Bu: This Japanese phrase is a Confucian teaching that teaches people when eating to "stop when you're 80% full." It's a self-imposed habit/practice in calorie restriction. This is what I tell many of my patients. I say pause, just pause for a moment! All we need is a short moment to think about what we're doing. It allows us to experience what our bodies really need. It allows us to be more in touch with mind, body and spirit.

We are all human in that we have primal urges and instincts that may push us to overdo it now and then, however we need to think about our bodies when it comes to health and wellness.

Do I want that chip? Do I need that chip? Should I eat that chip? It's amazing, the dialogue that we have in our heads when we see something that we like or want.

If you want overall health and wellness:

Just think **Hara Hachi Bu**.

Happy eating!

BH