Healthy and organic food, more than just eating!

This study¹ investigated personal experiences associated with the choice of organic food from a psychological perspective in young adults. In-depth interviews were analysed followed the descriptive phenomenological psychological method².

Introduction. The patterns of food consumption are changing among young people. It is an expression of their awareness of how food affects health in both positive and negative ways. The acts of buying, cooking and eating food are related to cultural were carried out in different values and the social and psychological life of the individual. References to identity formation and health are frequently made in consumer research. However, there are also other perspectives to consider, which have not yet been investigated.

Method. This study investigated personal experiences associated with the choice of organic food from a psychological perspective in young adults. Indepth interviews with 30 young adults favouring organic food parts of Sweden between 2011 and 2012. The interviewees were asked about their choice of healthy eating based on eating organic food. The interviews lasted 1.5-2 hours. The analysis followed the four steps of the descriptive phenomenological psychological method developed by Giorgi (2009)².

Result. Results show that young adults' experiences and explorations of organic food relate to the need to be physically healthy and to a sense of subjective well-being involving expressions of self though food. In this study, four constituents were identified:

1) The lived body as the starting point for lifestyle exploration. The participants expressed satisfaction about having a certain ability to "listen to their own body signals," indicating that their lived body was perceived as a starting point for their exploration of a healthy lifestyle. 2) A narrative self through emotional-relational food memories. The second constituent

was marked by the participants' experience of forming a narrative self through emotional-relational food memories.

3) A life strategy for well-being and vitality. The third constituent identified was characterized by the participants' experience one to aspects such as idenof a need to deliberately develop tity, values, and well-being. a strategy for a sustainable balanced life, marked by well-being and vitality.

4) A personal set of values in relation to ethical standards. The participants expressed their own values as a need to respect themselves, other people, animals, and nature.

Conclusion. For the young adult, choosing a lifestyle based upon an organic diet constitutes a return to the natural world on a philosophical level, whereas on a psychological level it connects



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¹ von Essen, E. & Englander, M. (2013) Organic Food as a Healthy Lifestyle: A Phenomenological Analysis. International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being ² Giorgi, A. (2009) The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified husserlian approach. Duquesne. University Press.