Food and ageing: A hunger for pleasure

We end up sacrificing taste as we age. But must eating be just about sustenance for the elderly?

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Hunger is a state that needs to be satisfied every day, but food is even more than sustenance; it is an expression of our identity and a means of communication with others.

This urge does not diminish with age or illness. On the contrary, it seems to be a need of comfort and a defense mechanism that helps individuals as they age.

Food represents legacy—a beautifully captured in an installation titled Remember. To eat is to taste history, to eat is to live as part of a collaboration programme called Makan Bumi.

And yet, in our research studies on eating, we discovered that food is not only meaningful, but it also activated the idea of vulnerability, both physical and psychological. The story of how our elderly and people with disabilities interact with food is not only about food but about their identity, their stories, and their past experiences.

Food is a way of expressing who we are, and as such, it is a tool for communication and a way of connecting with others.

Across our research studies, Singaporeans have pointed out the importance of eating food to “hunger and health.” Eating healthy should not mean that we need to compromise on eating for pleasure (that food gives). Good food equals good health. When you do not feel satisfied, you are not eating well. If you do not feel healthy, you are not eating well.

Learn to live with the fact that they have a certain food because it becomes part of you. People develop a feeling that they have a certain food because it becomes part of you.

Someone else who survived a stroke cannot feel the food in his hand... He is eating a meal of the pleasurable but safe food. People with disabilities may not be able to eat as they normally do, but they can eat as they normally do. People with disabilities may not be able to eat as they normally do, but they can eat as they normally do.

Dining is not easy, but food is a way to connect with others. People with disabilities may not be able to eat as they normally do, but they can eat as they normally do. People with disabilities may not be able to eat as they normally do, but they can eat as they normally do.

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In this context, food is not just a source of nutrition but also a way of connecting with others. People with disabilities may not be able to eat as they normally do, but they can eat as they normally do. People with disabilities may not be able to eat as they normally do, but they can eat as they normally do.

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