

THERE IS evidence that, as far back as 5000 BC, the Egyptians were making tooth powder of ashes of ox hooves, myrrh, burnt eggshells, and pumice. The chewing sticks of 3500 BC Babylonia could be the origin of our modern toothbrush. Toothpicks were written about in ancient Greek and Roman literature. They were used to keep the mouth clean. The toothpick progressively got larger. Records from 1600 BC show that in China one end was chewed until it became brush-like, while the other end was pointed and used as a toothpick. The twigs used for this purpose were from aromatic trees and therefore freshened the mouth, as well as cleaned it. To deal with halitosis, Egyptians made a breath mint consisting of

frankincense, myrrh, and cinnamon, boiled with honey.

In the booming era of the early 1900s, a young entrepreneur developed a minty paste that foamed in the mouth. He wanted his friend, Claude Hopkins, to advertise it to the American public. In his book, *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg tells the story of how Hopkins was in no way interested in this enterprise. Why would he want to promote a product that no one used? Only seven percent of Americans used any kind of tooth powder or toothpaste. People just didn't brush their teeth.

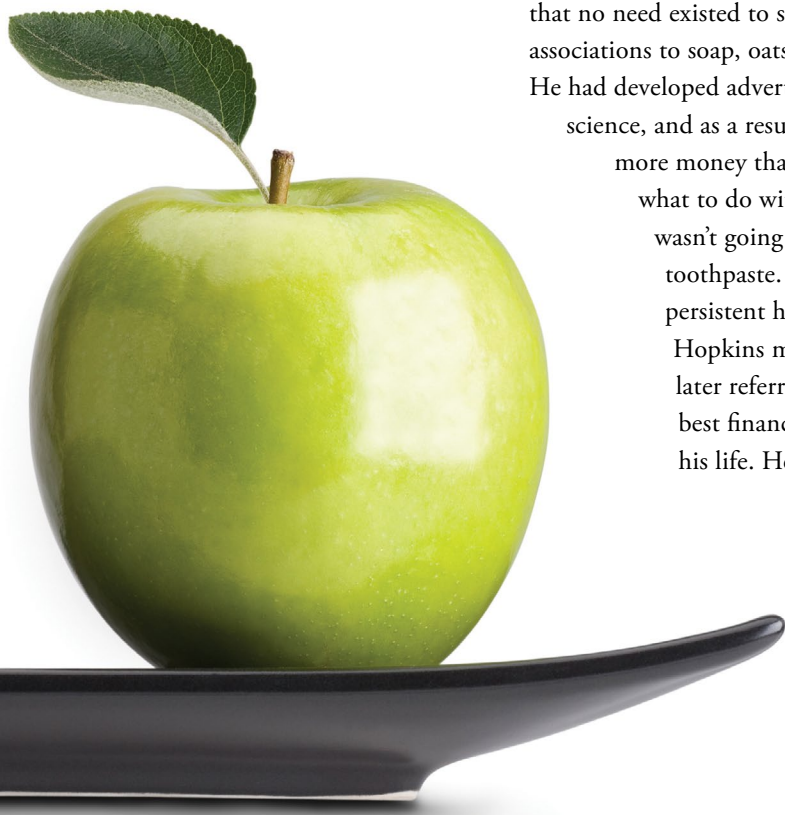
Hopkins was extremely successful at what he did—advertising. He was responsible for popularizing Palmolive, Quaker, and Schlitz to the point that no need existed to specify their associations to soap, oats, and beer. He had developed advertising into a science, and as a result already had more money than he knew what to do with. So no, he wasn't going to advertise toothpaste. His friend was persistent however and Hopkins made what he later referred to as the best financial decision of his life. He took up his

friend's concoction and made Pepsodent one of the best-known products on earth. How did he do it? He created a craving for that tingly, fresh, clean feeling and taste that was experienced after brushing with toothpaste. Sure a beautiful smile and

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better oral health were in the mix, but that sparkling, cool sensation in the mouth became an expected and desired experience. We crave it. Think about it, if toothpaste tasted bad or left our mouth feeling dull and flat, we'd probably forget to brush our teeth a whole lot more than we do. How did the craving come about? It was learned.

Researchers studied 266 individuals. Many of them had decided, almost on a whim, to start working out, which had become a three-times-a-week habit, at minimum. The researchers discovered that the reason why this large percentage of the group continued was because of a specific reward they started to crave. They had learned to crave exercise. Ninety-two percent said it made them feel good and gave them a sense of accomplishment. A stressful day or feeling down stimulated the craving of wanting to feel good again and off they would go to the gym.



You may think that everyone craves potato chips or chocolate, but that's not true. If you crave those foods it is because you learned it somewhere. Sure, they are highly stimulating and impact not only the taste buds but brain cell receptors as well, however, in the end you need to know that those cravings can be unlearned. When

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certain foods are abstained from and taste buds are given a new repertoire of flavors and textures, they can learn to love them. In other words, the taste buds can learn to love the foods they're with. Changing the foods we are accustomed to and giving our taste buds a bit of time, new foods can actually become preferred. How long is a bit of time? Some studies suggest as little as two weeks.

Angelle Batten, MEd, a Family Wellness Coach, discusses on her website how she counsels parents of picky eaters and then educates their children about adventurous eating. A pediatrician even told Angelle how one of his patients shared that they were now eating a wide variety of healthy foods because "some lady explained to them that their taste buds were trainable and asked them to take an oath to be more Adventurous Eaters."¹

We have teachable taste buds. Angelle shares, "Kids love thinking about the idea that their taste buds are in school every day just like they are. And it's true. Taste buds are trainable. It's proven. No matter how sensitive your child's taste buds are, they can

learn to be more adventurous. Explain to your child that just like every student in a class is different, everyone's taste buds are different too. And just like every student is capable of learning and growing, taste buds can learn to like new and different tastes. The good news is that your child is the teacher in this 'classroom.' How does the teacher in

this 'taste bud classroom' teach those buds to be more Adventurous? Well, 2-bites at a time. That's right. The key is to just take 2-bites of every new & REAL food every time."²

Mealtime then becomes an adventure with 2-bites making their way to the stomach. When this is done repeatedly, Angelle says 12 times, children often say, "It's not my favorite but it's okay" I normally respond with, 'Every food can't be your favorite.' Or, 'How can you make this work for you?'"³ Patience, creativity, and probably fortitude are needed, but I think this approach could work for all ages.

Just like the rest of the body, the tongue is continually regenerating new taste buds. Somewhere around 10,000 taste buds are continuously turning over. Give them a chance to explore. They might learn to accept that which they once spurned. Just 2-bites. Imagine the possibilities. You could actually start craving kale salad or quinoa!

The Bible says, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8, ESV). "How sweet are your words to my taste" (Psalm 119:103, ESV).

What begins with 2-bites grows into a delicious, satisfying feast in the word of God.

¹ Angelle Batten, MEd, "Take Those Picky Eater Taste Buds to School," 3/11/13, <http://www.angellebatten.com/take-those-picky-eater-taste-buds-to-school/>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



Risë has been writing on various health subjects for over 20 years. She has inspired many through her research and down-to-earth writing and speaking style. She believes that healthy living is intimately tied to happiness and wholeness.