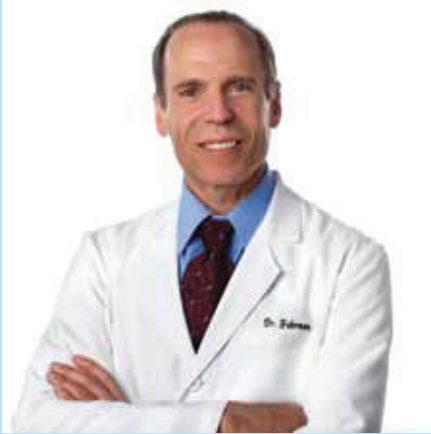


# An Interview with Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

by Mark Huberman



*Joel Fuhrman, M.D. is a family physician, New York Times best-selling author, and nutritional researcher who specializes in preventing and reversing disease through nutritional and natural methods. Dr. Fuhrman is an internationally recognized expert on nutrition and natural healing, and has appeared on hundreds of radio and television shows, including The Dr. Oz Show, The Today Show, Good Morning America, and Live with Kelly and Michael. Dr. Fuhrman's own hugely successful PBS television shows, 3 Steps to Incredible Health, Dr. Fuhrman's Immunity Solution, and his latest show, End Dieting Forever bring nutritional science to homes all across America.*

## I know that your roots in the Natural Hygiene movement began with your parents. Tell us about them.

My father was a “Sheltonian” hygienist and introduced natural hygiene to our family when I was young. My mother wasn’t as into it; however, as she got older and saw more, and as I became a physician specializing in nutrition, she eventually came around and adopted this way of living and eating. So, I would say my father was the person who supplied the most enthusiasm for excellent nutrition when I was growing up.

## Did you rebel against eating this way?

I wasn’t rebellious in that I didn’t like to eat that way, but I was a little bit rebellious over the viewpoints that my father learned from Dr. Herbert Shelton. I thought: how could this be right and the whole world be wrong? I had arguments with him about it, but as I got a little older I recognized that the world really is crazy and that people are on a race to eat themselves to death. I realized how addicting food is and how people don’t make judgments based on logic and scientific reasoning, or what’s best for their life and longevity.

## Were your parents members of the American Natural Hygiene Society?

Yes, of course. My father even invested money in “Sheltrano” a proposed large land development project in Texas for a retirement village for natural hygienists.

## Were you familiar with the writings of Dr. Shelton?

*“I’ve probably read everything Dr. Shelton ever wrote.”*

Yes. I had a collection of Dr. Shelton’s *Hygienic Reviews* dating back to the mid-1950s. I’ve probably read everything Dr. Shelton ever wrote.

## Did your father ever undertake a fast?

He fasted at Dr. Shelton’s Health School, and he even gave money to other people if they wanted to go there.

## What was your father’s line of work?

My father was the owner of 10 shoe stores in the New York metropolitan area. I worked in his stores almost every weekend. His main store was on 231<sup>st</sup> Street and Broadway in the Bronx. It was mobbed with people in those days, many waiting in line to buy Nike sneakers. I worked in the stores a lot until I got involved in my ice skating career.

## Tell me about your skating career.

It began with my sister and I taking lessons for recreation at an ice rink close to my house. When my parents would go up to the Catskill Mountains on weekends we started taking ice skating lessons. We also started performing in the ice shows there, and that gave us access to the ice rink for many, many hours a day. We started to really enjoy the ice and began to think we had potential. My parents sent us to Detroit for special coaching in pair skating. In 1971, I believe, my sister and I were second in the United States in junior pairs. In 1972, I believe we were fourth, and in 1973 we were second in the US National Champion-

ships. Usually the top three go to the Olympics, and we were very excited over our chances and so we worked really hard. Then in 1974, after the number one team ahead of us had retired, we were number one in the country. However, I then got injured and couldn't walk for over a year. I got back on the ice and competed in 1976, but I came in fourth in nationals again because I hadn't been on the ice for long enough and was not able to compete at that high level again. So, I wasn't as good as we could have been if I hadn't lost that time training. The injury derailed my opportunity in skating and made the end of my skating career stressful.

### **At some point, you actually fasted at Dr. Shelton's, right?**

Yes. I was 20 years old, and after not being able to walk for over a year, and dealing with physicians who wanted to do experimental surgery on my foot, I left Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, and said, "No, let me try to fast." I went home and I fasted 10 days but didn't see any improvement. I called Dr. Vetrano and she said to come on down for a longer fast. So I went to Texas. I fasted at Dr. Shelton's health school for 36 more days. Altogether I had fasted for 46 days, which is a lot of fasting for a person who only weighed about 145 pounds. I believe that the lengthy fasting took away my potential to compete on the world level because it took me too many years to build that muscle and stamina up again. Fasting that long set me back years as far as physical conditioning and hurt my opportunity to make the 1976 Olympic team.

### **What made you want to go to medical school?**

I had this strong interest in nutrition from my history and familiarity with Dr. Shelton's works and others in the natural hygiene movement. Since I graduated from college as an economics and business major, I had to take some science courses to consider medical school and started to do so. It was then that I met my future wife, Lisa, who was, herself, applying to medical schools. I started telling her

about my interest in nutrition and how doctors really are so confused and that the whole basis of what they do is wrong. Then she said, "If you are so passionate about this, why don't you just quit your father's shoe business and go full-time back to school and do what you really want to do?" We started dating, and Lisa really helped me consolidate my decision. I left the shoe business and started the post-graduate pre-med program at Columbia University, and then was accepted to the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

### **How did you avoid the orthodox indoctrination of medical school?**

I actually enjoyed medical school, and I found it much easier than high school and college, because I wasn't skating eight hours a day. I just had to worry about school, and I found the information, the basic sciences, to be interesting. I did not feel that the information I was being taught was contradictory and, in fact, it was supportive of my wanting to learn more about the body and how it functions. Mostly what you learn in medical school is how the body works, and I think that was very valuable. It isn't until your third or fourth year that you start to go into clinics where you actually are doing dermatology, surgery, obstetrics, and seeing hospital medicine. I had a lot of interesting conversations and was able to pursue my interests in nutrition in medical school; so it turned out to be very supportive of what I wanted to do.

### **Do you feel that your involvement in the American Natural Hygiene Society and your professional involvement with Dr. Alan Goldhamer, Dr. Alec Burton, and others kept your focus?**

I'm not sure that it kept my focus, but I think it did give me significant exposure to a lot of information and vision to what I had observed—of people getting well and staying well. By the time I was in medical school at age 29, I had already been exposed to this community since I was 10 years old.

### **Is it true that one of your fellow medical students was Dr. Mehmet Oz?**

Yes, Dr. Oz went to Penn when I did and he was actually president of the school class when I was there.

### **Was he as open-minded at the time as you were?**

Dr. Oz was always very friendly and very open-minded, as were many of my classmates. As a matter of fact, I would say most of my classmates now have either read my books or follow my nutritional guidance. You know, it's funny; when I was in medical school, I was made a chairperson of the nutritional education committee, and they put me on the school's admission committee where I



*Joel and his wife Lisa at an NHA Conference in 1982.*

helped decide which students would be accepted into the school. When I was a student, I actually talked openly about nutrition to my classmates. During my residency I received an award for having the most influence on the other residents.

### Do you ever go back to Penn and lecture?

This last year was my class' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and they invited me to be the keynote speaker at the medical school reunion. It was really rewarding because the professors remembered me. A lot of people in the class became cardiologists and other types of specialists, and many came up to me and said things like, "You know, I learned a lot from you, and you have affected my life considerably," or "I'm so grateful to your books, and your guidance helped me in my own life, in my patients' lives, and in my career." So it was really rewarding to see all of the physicians upon whom I had an influence.

### A long time ago, I recall you giving an interview on the history of Natural Hygiene and you coined a phrase that I quote often: You distinguished what you called "historical" versus "hysterical" hygiene. I want to ask you about some of those historical, maybe hysterical, concepts and get your thinking on whether they have validity today. The first one is "food combining."

First of all, I was not the person who coined those phrases. However, let me answer your question in a broad stroke, and then we can talk about some of the specifics. It seems that people in the nutritional field are often in movements that have philosophies that often develop into belief systems. When you read information that they write, it's information that they've collected toward supporting the viewpoints they want to maintain. They often don't think scientifically, and they are not looking at all the evidence in a non-biased approach. We have this going on in almost all aspects of nutrition, including the vegan community.

If you want to discuss a specific issue, we can discuss some of the concepts regarding food combining, because it is not true that the stomach becomes acidic when it's digesting a protein and alkaline when digesting starches. The stomach is always powerfully acidic. The reason that food combining seems to work is because it limits the amount of (unhealthy) food being eaten. But once you're on a diet of whole, natural foods, you're not going to improve your health any or live longer by not eating nuts with your corn or sweet potato.

### Another traditional notion is that "cooked foods are



Dr. Fuhrman is a frequent guest on the Dr. Oz Show.

### dead foods" and that "a raw food diet is pristine."

We shouldn't eat all cooked foods, and I think a lot of evidence and data strongly suggests that we get valuable anti-cancer elements from raw, green vegetables, and raw onions, garlic and berries. But the other issue is that certain cooked foods also have lifespan-enhancing affect. For example, eating beans that are cooked, especially with tomatoes and mushrooms, enhances the absorption of some of their anti-cancer ingredients that concentrate in your body and make for better functioning of your organs.

*"I'm not against people juicing or blending, but I do want to say that actually eating a salad and chewing it well is still the healthiest thing to do."*

### Let me give you another traditional notion—"that juicing and blending oxidizes and fractionates foods, making them less digestible."

It is certainly true that you get some oxidation of nutrients when you blend and juice. But it is also true that juicing and blending can provide for some increased absorption of nutrients; and I believe that the small degree of oxidization is not going to ruin the food or make it useless to us. To put this in perspective, the average American is eating less than 5% of calories from colorful vegetation and less than 1% from greens. So, when they choose to blend, they're usually dramatically enhancing the nutrient exposure in their diet. Keep in mind that the average American is currently getting 30% of their calories from animal products and 55% from processed foods, so anything we can do to get people to eat more natural vegetation will be beneficial to them. However, in a real, pure sense, it is still important to chew most of your vegetables rather than blending or juicing them, because it's not just the fiber that you lose, but it is also important to use your teeth. If you don't use your teeth they're going to atrophy and as you get older you're going to lose muscle tissue and bone mass in your jaw. Finally, there's some benefit to actually chewing vegetables

and mixing the food with the bacteria in the mouth. I'm not against people juicing or blending, but I do want to say that actually eating a salad and chewing it well is still the healthiest thing to do.

**Another notion that we hear from time to time is that we should “limit our intake of nuts, avocados, and dried fruits.” Is there a scientific basis for such concerns?**

No, there should not be a fear of nuts and avocados. I think that this is a major problem with some of today's vegan community: they think that fat is the enemy. Over 20 years ago many authors wrote that fat in animal products was bad for us. And since oil makes you fat, and oils are bad for us, it is probably fat that makes us fat. That means that avocados, nuts, and seeds were also going to be unhealthful and fattening. These leaders taught that the main benefit of the vegan diet was that it's low in fat. I think that concept had a tremendous affect to weaken the scientific basis of this movement; that we put the emphasis in the wrong place. Animal fats and processed fats have something in common because they are absorbed very rapidly in a concentrated form into the bloodstream. But when we eat fats in nuts and seeds, the fats are absorbed very slowly, like an I.V. drip going through the body over many hours; the body preferentially burns them for energy. And when we eat a diet that's lower in cooked foods and higher in roughage, we need those extra fat calories; and it actually lowers the glycemic effect of our diet, compared to eating more calories from grains or potatoes. The truth is that eating high-fat nuts and seeds with meals, especially meals that have vegetables in them, dramatically enhances the absorption of the meal's anti-cancer biochemicals. Studies show that people who eat nuts and seeds, in a dose-dependent manner, live longer, have fewer heart attacks and strokes, and are less prone to cancer. If someone without an anti-fat bias laid out the evidence of the thousands of studies on this subject, they would have to conclude that eating more nuts and seeds is better than eating less, and eating none is foolish and lifespan shortening.

**What about the claim “that all drugs are poisons, and germs and viruses do not cause disease”? That's probably as old as me; when I was growing up, that's what I remember hearing the most.**

I grew up with that concept as well, and that microbes do not cause disease simply is not true. There is so much science and data today that confirm that microorganisms, parasites, spirochetes, and viruses have an intimate and important role to play in the development of disease. But that doesn't mean that eating right isn't the most impor-

tant thing, because when we have an immune system that is functioning at a high level, we can better protect ourselves against microorganisms. However, eating healthy is not going to protect you against all types of infectious exposures, and we still have to deal with the virility of the microorganism and the powerful infectious properties when exposed to certain infectious agents, such as Lyme disease. The size of the exposure also plays a role.

**We've talked about some of the things we got wrong. Let's talk about some of the profound things the early hygienic physicians got right. I suppose you would agree that Dr. Shelton and his contemporaries were right about the superior nutrition that results from a plant-based diet?**

Well, not only do I think they were right about that, but I also think that almost the whole world of nutritional scientists have come around to recognize that fundamental truth. However, I don't use the word “plant-based” because I don't know what that means. If that means that more than 50% of your diet is derived from natural plants, that could mean Coca Cola or potato chips, since they are both mostly plant-based. The Standard American Diet is already “plant-based.” I have wanted to be more specific, and that is why I coined the word “nutritarian,” to emphasize the importance and value of consuming foods with a high level of plant-derived nutrients. A nutritarian describes a person who is consuming lots of high-nutrient plants. I think the point is that Dr. Shelton was right in advocating a varied diet of whole, natural foods of the plant kingdom and restricting animal products to very small amounts. Today, most independent nutritional scientists who are unbiased, and are not associated with commercial interests or working for major corporations, would agree that your diet should be predominantly composed of natural plant foods. Scientists agree that highly processed carbohydrates do not only cause obesity, diabetes, and heart disease but they also contribute to cancer. Eating white flour, bagels, croissants, and other commercial baked goods also leads to cancer and depression, and I think that this is well recognized in the scientific community. I also think that most nutritional scientists today recognize that the 30% of animal products that Americans currently eat is way too much, and that for better health and longevity we have to significantly reduce this amount. So, I think that these concepts advocated by the early founders of the Natural Hygiene movement hundreds of years ago were right at the time, and we are still advocating those same things today. Unfortunately, conventional society still hasn't embraced it even though the science supporting it is overwhelming.

*“A nutritarian describes a person who is consuming lots of high-nutrient plants.”*

## So Drs. Shelton, Benesh, Esser, Gross and their contemporaries were ahead of the game?

Yes, they were. It's funny because even when Nathan Pritikin and some other health advocates came on the scene in the 1950s, it was almost like they were claiming to have come up with the idea. In reality, the health advocates

of the Natural Hygiene movement had been advocating healthy eating habits as a means for transforming people's lives since the early 1900s. Or course, this is an historical movement that we're currently refining; the advancements in science are making it more powerful, predictable and consistent so that it can be better applied to patients' lives.

At the same time, one of the biggest mistakes that people, even in the hygiene movement, have made is thinking that they can have a philosophical viewpoint but not recognize that individuals may have varying needs that may not mesh with their philosophical viewpoint. In other words, people are not all identical. With modern science, including the availability of blood testing, we have a much greater ability to understand and care for patients in a way that uses the basic principles but also make modifications unique to their needs. This is done to maximize their lifespans and afford them the opportunity to live into their mid-nineties and beyond without having the chronic, degenerative medical conditions and intellectual loss that most Americans have.

## Do you think that perhaps some of the views by Shelton, Benesh, and Esser back in the fifties and sixties about food combining, juicing, and blending were simply a result of the kind of science that was available back then?

Yes, of course. They had to rely on their observations and on the science available to them. I believe that if they were living today, they would recognize and accept the concepts that science did not support. It's never been a religion to most of the leaders of the movement.

## We have talked a lot about diet, but do you also feel that one of the early wisdoms of the leaders of the Natural Hygiene movement, past and more recent present, was their recognition of the importance of other key elements of health, including fresh air, clean water, sufficient rest and exercise, and emotional control? Were they right about that as well?



Dr. Fuhrman lectures for his PBS special, "End Dieting Forever!"

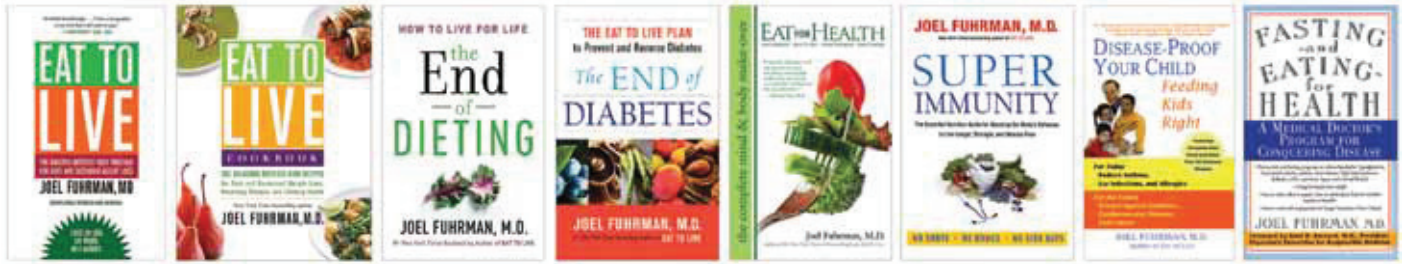
They were right, but they weren't the only people saying it. In other words, I think that those are things that everybody is now saying. You have to get the right amount of sleep. We all have different sleep needs, but obviously waking up with an alarm clock and being sleep deprived can negatively affect your health. I think these things are well accepted today. I tell people that I have four basic principles of a nutritarian diet, and I don't talk about lack of sleep, exercise, proper emotions, and fresh air because it is so obvious that these negative influences are not good for us.

The first principle I teach is nutrient density, because we want to eat a diet with a sufficient amount of nutrients from the calories we consume. We want to target those

***“Waking up with an alarm clock and being sleep deprived can negatively affect your health.”***

foods that supply us with the nutrients that humans need to thrive. The second principle is “comprehensive nutrient adequacy,” or CNA. CNA means that we should NOT just consume the foods that are highest in nutrients, like kale, strawberries, and beans. But maybe you're missing some other nutrient that you might need. In a comprehensive sense, you have

to make sure you're not missing anything that's important. For example, you may have higher needs for iodine, zinc, B12, and DHA. You might have some individual needs that require that you get more of a certain nutrient than another person would need, and that's important. The third principle is that one's diet should be hormonally favorable. We know that too much animal products can drive IGF-1 levels up to too high and too much processed or high-glycemic carbohydrates could drive up insulin too much. And, of course, we talk about sex hormones like estrogen and testosterone, and make sure that you are not driving those too high. And the fourth principle is that you should reduce exposure to toxic elements. In other words, avoid consuming things that contain infectious agents, are contaminated, or are loaded with bad bacteria or have chemicals or toxins in them. An example of that might be commercial seafood, such as salmon, where dioxin levels are



very high. So, in response to your question, I think it's generally acceptable that adjunctively, we have to get enough sleep, we have to not breathe polluted air, and we have to not over-stress our body in any way that's going to make a major negative impact on our health. And get proper exercise and activity, of course.

**When I interviewed Drs. Esselstyn and Klaper, they were of the view that proper nutrition trumps all and is the biggest determinant of good overall health. Do you subscribe to that view?**

Obviously, if you don't have the right diet you're not going to have the right emotions because your brain can't function normally. If you are not properly nourished the more agitated you are, the higher your risk of depression and loss of intellectual function. Your brain is dependent on your nutrition, and if you're not given the right start in life, you're not fit to begin with. You don't sleep right if you're not eating right. You can't exercise or feel like exercising if you're not eating right. In other words, you can tell a person to exercise, you can tell them to sleep better, to do all these things, but they can't do them if they're not healthy. So, yes, I think that proper nutrition is the foundation to health, and it leads to the ability to have a more balanced and healthful life.

**You have been a remarkably successful author. How many books have you written, and which has been the most successful?**

I think nine. *Eat to Live* has been most successful. It first came out in 2004 and was on the *New York Times* Best-seller list for a long period of time. It's hard to believe that it's been out 11 years already, and sold well over a million copies, and continues to sell really well.

**Do you think part of the magic was in the title?**

No, it was in the information. My other books have also sold really well and many have been on the *New York Times* bestsellers list, including *Super Immunity*, *The End of Diabetes*, and *The End of Dieting*.

**You said in *The End of Dieting* that diets don't work; tell**

**me why.**

As I mentioned earlier, it's okay to have a hypothesis about a diet, but it has to be tested and the data analyzed. We know that when we look at the data as people eat more animal products, not less, we see more disease. And it doesn't matter whether the animal products are raised naturally or not because when we look at people eating more wild animal products, they still get more disease; it's the same thing. We have to take people's ideas and hypotheses and really put them to the test with lots of scientific scrutiny, and when we do this we find that all these diets don't hold up.

**One of most frequent claims that you hear is that while most fats and oils are bad, there are some that are actually good for you, like olive oil. Is there anything uniquely healthful about olive oil?**

What we should be talking about is the best foods to eat to maximize our longevity, and to that we shouldn't be comparing one oil to another, but rather the whole food to its oil. In other words, we should be comparing an olive to olive oil and an avocado to avocado oil. I don't think anybody would argue that eating a whole food with its intact fiber and full symphony of nutrients is not as healthy as eating it in its processed form. And once people begin to eat a significant amount of nuts and seeds in their diet, as I recommend, then they're going to be taking in too many empty calories, with both the oil and the nuts and seeds. Nuts and seeds should be a preferred fat source, and I don't think that's hard to disagree with. If you're going to eat fat, get your fat from whole foods.

**In your many years of observing the state of American health, do you believe that there is a link between diet and lifestyle and the explosion of such conditions as attention deficit disorder, autism, and allergies?**

Of course. We're learning today that our health is not just a result of what we eat but, it's also affected by what our mother ate when she was pregnant. However, our health is not just affected by what our mother ate while she was pregnant but also before she was pregnant. Because as an egg we lived in her body, the health of the egg can be affected by the health of the mother. Our health is also

*“If you're going to eat fat, get your fat from whole foods.”*

affected by the diet of our father before he conceived with our mother. So, yes; we can't say we have all the answers, but we know that our health is affected by our environment and by our parents' environments.

**On a more observable level, do you believe that the nutritionally deficient diets that most people follow is responsible for the epidemic of obesity that we are seeing, not only in America but across the world?**

Yes. Highly palatable foods and processed foods become highly addictive. They absorb very rapidly, they interrupt signals to the brain, and they lead to detoxification hunger. When people get unrelenting drives to overeat, obesity is the result. As the quality of the food being eaten has deteriorated, we've seen obesity explode all over the world.

**But if these are such foodless foods and are responsible for this epidemic of obesity, how is it that many people who live on conventional diets become obese while others do not?**

I don't think that overall what you are saying is correct. Right now obese people represent the majority of people in America. There are more obese and overweight people than we normal weight people—probably close to 90% are overweight or obese. Now, if we look at the people that are of normal weight, the majority of those have some medical conditions that are keeping them at a normal weight. They may be alcoholics, cigarette smokers, suffer from depression, or have digestive or autoimmune disorders.

**But can't you go into any high school or college and see plenty of people eating and living on a conventional diet that are not obese. Look at athletes, dancers, cheerleaders, etc. eating all of these foodless foods; they are not obese, and they look beautiful. How do you explain that?**

It is often because they're young, highly physically active, and their body metabolism is high. You may not see their weight start to accumulate until their late twenties, and high blood pressure and other conditions until their forties or fifties. It takes years for degenerative illnesses to develop. We often don't see people become insulin resistant until after years of eating a high-glycemic diet. This pattern of eating damages the body gradually over time,



Doctor Fuhrman lecturing.

so it's harder to see the effects. You don't see young smokers with breathing problems or lung cancer, but that doesn't make it okay to do it, because those deadly diseases were caused by what they did when they were young and still felt well. And the risk is proportional to the years in which they did it. The younger in life you start doing something unhealthful, the more risky it is, and its problematic effects will manifest later in life. But the problem is that when you wait until later in life to try and do something about it—when the condition is visible—the pathology is often irreversible. Prevention is much easier when you start young. So, it's really very important to eat right when we're young, whether or not we visibly see negative effects.

**In addition to your books, many Americans have come to know you through public television. What is your relationship to public television and how did that come about?**

I'm very excited about my positive effect on millions of Americans through public television; it is just incredible. And I am very proud of the fact that I have raised nearly 30 million dollars for public broadcasting. I love public television and am a big supporter of it. I think it's really the only

place people can get information that can motivate them to change their life that is not based on commercial interests. On commercial television you can't say certain things because the sponsors, through their money, control the message. Public television has given me a great soap box to be able to influence people's lives positively and at the same time also help public television survive.

**How did your involvement come about?**

They gave a lot of doctor-authors the opportunity to audition with them and tape a 15-minute pilot. Then they tested it in various markets around the country. Out of the 12 doctors who were given that opportunity, my pilot did the best in the market testing. My first show, which was called *Three Steps to Incredible Health*, became one of the top PBS shows of all time. They invited me back for two additional shows, one called *Immunity Solution* and the other *End Dieting Forever*. I have a new book coming out in March 2016 called *The End of Heart Disease*, and I'm planning another PBS show that's going to focus on the information in that book.

*“Highly palatable foods and processed foods become highly addicting.”*



*The Fuhrman family enjoying time at the beach.*

**We've talked about your books and your appearances on public television. Tell me about your website—DrFuhrman.com. What do people get when they visit and/or subscribe?**

The website gives people supportive information and answers their questions. In other words, I

don't aspire or expect to affect the majority of the people in America, but I want people to know that if they want to get well and they want to get their health back, then I want to make it easier for them and support them in any way I can. Even when I wrote *Eat to Live* over 10 years ago, the publishers would say to me, "I want you to make certain modifications to this book to make it a bestseller," and I would say, "I don't want to make it a bestseller. I don't really care how many books it sells. I want it to offer the best information so that it will have longevity throughout the years." And that's what's happened. The books may not sell in huge quantities at any one time, but they keep selling consistently, and people keep referring them to their friends. That's why I have drfuhrman.com; it's a place where people who are interested can find the information, guidance, support, camaraderie, and products to make it easier for them to become well and be successful in achieving the results they want.

**Is the website a family affair?**

I have a lot of my family members helping me in the business. My wife, Lisa, has been a tremendous asset in running the business and allowing me to concentrate on my writings, research, and speaking engagements.

**And speaking of family, I believe your daughter, Talia, wrote a book of her own.**

Talia did have a book come out a few years ago called *Love Your Body*. It was a terrific book.

**Are there any other projects in the works?**

I just finished my new book and will shortly start working on my next PBS special. I am also busy all the time, and doing a lot of lecturing and traveling. I give seminars, immersions, and lectures, and offer healthy vacations around the country. I am also excited about the nutritional research projects we are launching through the Nutritional Research Foundation with major universities around the country.

**Where do you want to see yourself five or ten years from now?**

Working less! It is always challenging to balance work and family. I sometimes do too much work, but I'm very proud of the body of work I've put together. I think that body of work will give people tremendous opportunities to improve their health. You know, I never thought when I was going into this as a career 30 years ago that I'd have the opportunity to reach so many people in a positive way, and I get such tremendous reward and satisfaction from it.

**Are you able to lead a pretty healthful life in terms of diet, exercise, and rest?**

I maybe exercise a little too much because I love sports and exercise. I especially love playing singles tennis and mogul skiing. I like the fact that eating this way has enabled me to continue doing sports and enjoy being physically fit into my sixties, and hopefully for the rest of my life.

**And speaking of the sixties, I had the pleasure of attending your 60th birthday celebration a few years back at your home in New Jersey, and one of the things I remember is that you loved gardening and that you had just built a greenhouse. How is the greenhouse coming along?**



*Dr. Fuhrman enjoys harvesting his own fresh figs.*

The solar-powered greenhouse has been phenomenal! I can grow my own fig trees in the northeast and I now have 17 of them. I wheel them outside in the summer. The greenhouse also allows me to grow tomatoes, cucumbers, mandarin oranges, kumquats, and pomegranate plants all year around.

**Are you optimistic about the future of progressive health thinking in America?**

There's a bigger population of people that are certainly interested in healthy living. But the population is growing, and there are also a growing number of people that are eating unhealthfully, too. So, I think the percentage overall may have gone up a little bit, but I don't think there's been a massive shift in the way most Americans eat at this point. We still have a long way to go.

**Well Joel, I appreciate you taking the time to share your journey and wisdom. Your achievements have been unparalleled in our health movement, and I wish you nothing but continued success.**

Thanks Mark, I appreciate it. 