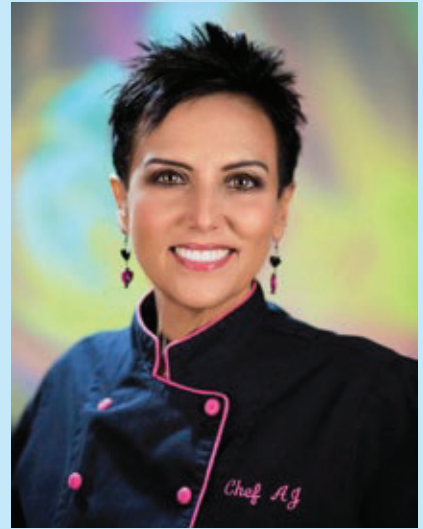


# An Interview with Chef AJ

by Mark Huberman

*Chef AJ has been devoted to a plant-exclusive diet for over 40 years. She is the host of the television series Healthy Living with CHEF AJ that airs on Foody TV and the author of the popular book Unprocessed, which chronicles her journey from an obese junk-food vegan faced with a diagnosis of pre-cancerous polyps, to learning how to create foods that nourish and heal the body. Her new book, The Secrets to Ultimate Weight Loss: A Revolutionary Approach to Conquer Cravings, Overcome Food Addiction and Lose Weight Without Going Hungry, has received glowing endorsements by many luminaries in the plant-based movement. She is also the creator of the Ultimate Weight Loss Program, helping hundreds of people achieve the health and the body that they deserve. She holds a certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from eCornell University. She is proud to say that her IQ is higher than her cholesterol. (Visit [EatUnprocessed.com](http://EatUnprocessed.com))*



**As a leading figure in the whole-food, plant-based world, you don't need a lot of introduction, but there may be a few people who have not heard of you. So, who is Chef AJ and how did you land on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson?**

I was an aspiring actress and comedian in my twenties, and my agent, Sid Levin, landed me an audition for *The Tonight Show*. I performed a novelty act where I played two flutes through my nose while standing on my head and blowing bubbles through my mouth. I developed this unique talent as a young child and had appeared on television many times in many different countries. But appearing on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson was truly a dream come true! If you want to see one of my favorite appearances, just go to my "Chef AJ" YouTube page.

**Were you a professional comedian?**

This depends on what you mean by "professional"! "Aspiring" is more like it. I did perform stand-up comedy many times at clubs. If you want to see a sample of my stand-up comedy at The Improv, just search "vegan comedian" in the YouTube search box.

**What did your parents do?**

My dad was a scrap metal broker. He had an enormous shop and he tinkered with things; there was a lot of railroad memorabilia. My mom was a homemaker for many years and then went to work as a medical bookkeeper.

**Was vegetarianism or a plant-based diet a part of your upbringing?**

No, quite the opposite! I grew up on all the traditional Jewish foods, many of which Dr. Goldhamer says begin with k: knishes, kugel and kreplach. We ate the standard American Jewish diet, which is high in fat, salt and animal products. But it was kosher! Believe it or not almost everyone in my family was a medical doctor. Good thing, because they all had heart disease from their diet.

**So, as a result, were you an overweight child?**

I certainly was! I first became fat at age five, and by age eleven, I weighed 160 pounds! That's obese when you're not yet five feet tall. But you know, most everybody around me was fat and sick, and so I just assumed this was genetic. I remember my great grandmother losing her leg to diabetes. Sadly, in my family this was considered normal.

**Did it bother you, growing up during the sixties and seventies, when TV and magazines were all pushing the "perfect figure"?**

It did, but I don't think it affected me as deeply as growing up the fat kid at a time when fewer kids were actually overweight. I think now one in every three children is overweight or obese. When I grew up there was only one fat kid in a classroom of 40 students. And that kid was me!

My father was not overweight, interestingly enough, but he was not healthy. He had his first heart attack before I was even born. So, everybody was fat, sick, or both. Even the ones who weren't overweight had heart disease or diabetes.

### What was your diet like as a child?

Let's just say that I was "cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs." While my Mom did cook healthy dinner meals from scratch, we also ate a lot of processed food and refined carbohydrates, which I simply could not resist, and I believe became addicted to at a very young age. My Mom used to make pancakes for breakfast and stir chocolate chips into the batter and serve them with margarine and maple syrup! Lunch was often a peanut butter sandwich with marshmallow fluff on white bread. When I look back now, I realize that most of my meals were actually dessert!

**One of our mutual heroes, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, often says that in terms of health, we all have a warranty period. And by that he means that most of us can get into our forties and fifties with seemingly good health, but if we haven't been taking care of ourselves, the warranty runs out and serious health problems begin to emerge. Did your warranty run out?**

It did! On January 1, 2003 I woke up bleeding, and through a sigmoidoscopy it was discovered that my colon was riddled with pre-cancerous polyps. They said if they did not remove them I would most assuredly develop colon cancer, like many of my relatives had. Because of the ill health of my colon, they were unable to remove the polyps during the routine procedure and told me I would have to come back and have surgery. Having been allergic to an anesthetic in my teens, during a routine operation, I developed a severe phobia to anesthesia and refused. That one decision changed the entire course of my life.

### What did you do?

On July 6, 2003 I checked into the Optimum Health Institute, where I learned for the first time that what we eat has a profound effect on how we look, feel, and even what diseases we develop. Even though I had been vegan for 26 years and not eaten any meat or dairy, my diet was



*Chef AJ with two UWL participants, Debra Levine (left) and Dana Ferrigno, taken during the Holistic Holiday at Sea cruise in 2015.*

made up of my own four toxic food groups: sugar, flour, oil and caffeine. For the first 43 years of my life I rarely ate any fruits or vegetables. After all, French fries and Dr. Pepper are vegan. At OHI I learned that all of the processed foods I was eating, and the caffeine I was drinking, was inflammatory, and that if I eliminated these things and adopted a health-promoting

diet, I could reverse my disease without drugs or surgery.

### How long did you stay at the Optimum Health Institute?

I spent eight days at the San Diego campus and another eight days at the Austin campus. I surely would have gone to TrueNorth Health Center instead if I had known about it.

### When and why did you become vegan?

I became vegan on September 1, 1977. I was a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania studying to become a veterinarian, and instead, became a vegetarian! The doctor who I was working for wanted me to decapitate a tank of live salamanders. I am ashamed to admit that I did do this to one of these defenseless creatures and was so repulsed that I became an instant ethical vegan.

**Drs. Lisle and Goldhamer, who co-wrote the book, *The Pleasure Trap*, talk about how many folks, like you, will have a health crisis that leads them to an epiphany to change their lifestyle and improve their health, but then slip back into old habits. Did that happen to you?**

Absolutely. I followed the OHI diet until I had a colonoscopy showing that all of my polyps had disappeared, simply by changing my diet. After I received a clean bill of health, I slipped right back into my old habits. Once I got off the caffeine from the Coke Slurpees and Dr. Pepper, I never went back to that particular addiction; but I did go back to sugar and flour for another few years. Once I met "the Hammer" (my affectionate name for TrueNorth's Dr. Alan Goldhamer) in January of 2011, I completely cleaned

*"Lunch was often a peanut butter sandwich with marshmallow fluff on white bread. When I look back now, I realize that most of my meals were actually dessert."*

up my diet to mirror the one recommended at TrueNorth and have never looked back.

### **Tell me about your professional journey to becoming "Chef AJ."**

After returning home from OHI I knew that if I was going to stay on the diet that the food would have to taste a whole lot better! So, I took a leave of absence from my job as an activity director at a retirement hotel and went to culinary school. I had no idea then that I would ever actually work as a professional chef. I was just trying to make healthy food taste as good as possible. What I learned helped me teach others how to incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables into their diets, and in ways that are easy, delicious and fun.

### **Was there one book or one lecture that was an epiphany that allowed you to begin to put it all together?**

The first time I heard Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr. speak I had what many call a "light bulb" moment. He did such a great job of explaining why oil was so deleterious to our health, especially for someone like me who was obese with a strong family history of heart disease. So, on August 1, 2008 I adopted a completely SOS-free diet.

### **Was it a live lecture?**

It was a DVD of a lecture he gave at a yearly conference in Los Angeles called "The Healthy Lifestyle Expo," which was put on by Jeff and Sabrina Nelson. For me it was really profound. It made me want to order all of the other DVDs from previous conferences and immerse myself in this knowledge.

### **Who else influenced you?**

In 2008, the same year I first encountered "Dr. Essy," I had a friend who became a patient of Dr. Joel Fuhrman's. He did not care for the food he was eating, and I told him



*Chef AJ with her husband Charles and their dog Bailey*

that I would try and come up with some recipes he would enjoy within his dietary parameters. I had not yet heard of Dr. Fuhrman so I went to his website and ordered all of the books, DVDs and CDs he offered. I created many delicious recipes for my friend that were Fuhrman-friendly. My friend absolutely loved them, and these recipes became the basis for a very successful

culinary class I have taught for over 10 years now called "Healthy Made Delicious." One of the books I got from Dr. Fuhrman's website was *The Pleasure Trap*, which was my first introduction to Dr. Doug Lisle and Dr. Alan Goldhamer; and it eventually led me to TrueNorth. And, as they say, the rest is history!

*"One of the books I got from Dr. Fuhrman's website was The Pleasure Trap, which was my first introduction to Dr. Doug Lisle and Dr. Alan Goldhamer; and it eventually led me to TrueNorth."*

### **From what I have read about you, despite the wisdom and lifestyle changes you adopted from OHI and Dr. Fuhrman's teachings, you were still not losing weight. Did that frustrate you?**

Yes, because I was truly eating an SOS-free, whole-food, plant-exclusive diet for many years, yet was still 50 pounds heavier than I am now. What I did not understand, because I hadn't yet learned it until I went to TrueNorth, was *calorie density*. Dr. John McDougall had always said "the fat you eat is the fat your wear," but I really didn't understand it until Dr. Lisle sat me down and explained it to me.

### **Did you think you would ever lose weight?**

My mother was morbidly obese and my grandmother and great grandmother were also obese and diabetic. I truly believed that 160 pounds, the weight I was at age 11, was my body's set point and that my obesity was genetic. Twice in my life I had lost weight. The first time was in my late teens, and I accomplished this by starving myself and spent many years battling anorexia. The second time I lost weight was in my thirties, and this was from taking Phen-Fen, a drug that was later revealed to be quite dangerous.



Both times the weight loss was fleeting since I didn't understand what to eat for permanent and sustainable weight loss.

**What is the "secret" that is at the core of your popular lecture, "Secrets to Ultimate Weight Loss"?**

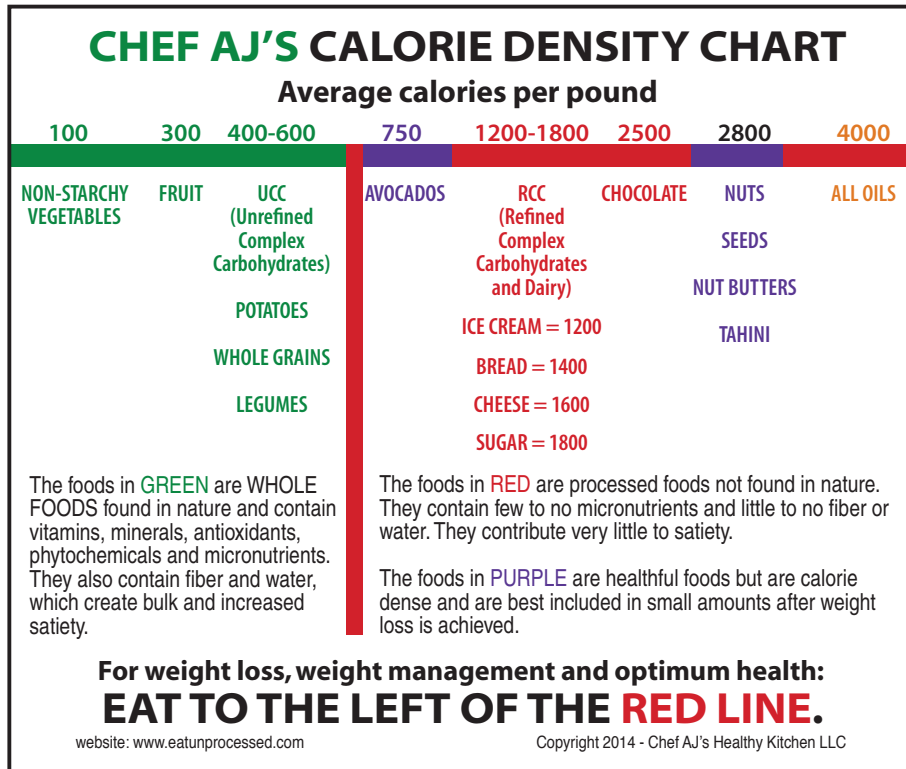
I can give you the secret to ultimate weight loss in two simple words—and they aren't "eat less" or "exercise more." And they certainly are not "gastric bypass"! The secret to ultimate weight loss is CALORIE DENSITY. By eating the foods that are lowest in calorie density (fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes) you can literally eat twice as much food yet take in half as many calories. These are all the foods that appear "to the left of the red line" on my calorie density chart. And, as luck would have it, nature provided the foods that are lowest in calorie density with the most nutrients; so not only can you get lean, but healthy too!

**What foods are "right of the red line" and should they be totally avoided?**

Americans eat 92% of their calories from animal products and processed foods, which appear to the right of the red line, and less than 10% of their calories from fruits and vegetables, which appear to the left of the red line.

The foods to the right of the red line are highly processed, like refined carbohydrates, dairy and most animal products. I believe that we should avoid all animal products and processed food, but the healthy high-fat plant foods, like nuts seeds and avocado, do not have to be avoided by everyone. However, people need to be mindful of the high-caloric-density foods they are eating if they wish to lose weight, or if these foods are personal triggers that they have trouble moderating.

**But what about those people in the world, like myself, and probably like your lean husband, Charles, who can consume all the nuts and avocados they want but who still won't**



**pile on the pounds? Where do they fit into this picture?**

Well, you guys are lucky. You can enjoy more of the healthy whole-food fats like nuts, seeds and avocado (to the right of the red-line) without the inevitable weight gain and compulsion to overeat that many food addicts experience. As Dr. Goldhamer is often fond of saying, "Women are energy-conserving, estrogen-producing, fat-storage machines," and I don't know too many of us who can eat a lot of fat, regardless of source, without eventually wearing it or craving it.

**So, eating to the left of the red line is what you recommend?**

For people who desire to lose weight or who suffer from food addictions to highly processed and refined foods, that is definitely what I recommend. Remember that all highly addictive foods (like sugar, flour and alcohol) and all of the high-fat, high-calorie foods, are to the right of the red line. Even for those who are not overweight or struggling with food addictions, it's still the healthiest way to eat because, as luck would have it, the foods that are the lowest in calorie density are also the foods highest in nutrient density. (And if you are worried about getting enough of the essential fatty acids, simply sprinkle a tablespoon of ground flaxseeds or chia seeds on your daily salad.)

**You say to limit your calorie density to "600 calories," but isn't the beauty of your program that you really don't have to measure what you consume?**

Absolutely. But just to give credit where credit is due, the dietary style I recommend in the Ultimate Weight Loss Program is the same dietary style that Dr. Goldhamer eats and recommends to all of his patients at TrueNorth Health Center. Research shows that if you keep your average calorie density to 567 calories per pound or less (this includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes; all

the foods to the left of the red line), most people can eat *ad libitum*, as much as they want, as often as they want, whenever they want until *comfortably full*. When you change WHAT you eat you don't have to worry about how much you are eating, especially if you are not adding any chemicals, like sugar, oil and salt to your food, which fool the brain's satiety mechanisms.



*Chef AJ with Shayda Soleymani (center), who shared her story in the Winter 2018 issue of Health Science, and Heather Goodwin, who lost over 300 pounds on the Ultimate Weight Loss Program.*

### Is Dr. Joel Fuhrman right on the money when he preaches, “Salad should be your main meal”?

For optimum health and weight loss, I could not agree more. I have the privilege of being a guest presenter at a wonderful spa in Mexico called Rancho La Puerta, where the nutritionist there says, “Put your dinner on your salad plate and your salad on your dinner plate.” A similar maxim I like comes from plant-based pediatrician, Dr. Jay Gordon, who tells his patients, “Every day eat a salad the size of your head!”

### What obstacles do people face when it comes to salad dressings and weight loss?

One of the biggest triumphs of marketing over science is the promotion that olive oil, or any refined oil, like coconut oil, is a “health” food. The truth is that, from a cardiovascular and obesity standpoint, it’s a “hurt” food. It is simply a ridiculous idea that this highly refined liquid that has no fiber and almost no nutrients is the cure for disease or will facilitate weight loss. At 4,000 calories per pound—40 times as calorically dense as vegetables—how could this be the answer to the obesity epidemic? If you eat a salad made of 40 calories from vegetables, then add 400 calories of oil in a salad dressing, you wind up clogging your arteries, getting fat, and often making your skin break out. Believe it or not, when people just cut out the oil, and make no other dietary changes, they always lose weight.

### Is the same true for all oils?

*“When people just cut out the oil, and make no other dietary changes, they always lose weight.”*

make you vomit! People say they like it because high-fat/high-calorie foods produce more of the pleasure chemical, dopamine, in the brain. We get more of a high from them!

We get a lot more dopamine from olive oil at 4,000 calories a pound than we do from steamed kale at 100 calories a pound.

You can easily make delicious dressings out of whole-plant-food ingredients without using sugar, oil or salt. Once you neuro-adapt to the amazing taste of whole, natural food, you may find you don't require an oily dressing or any dressing at all! This is especially true if

you put delicious ingredients in your salad, like fruit or beans. In my new book I describe what I call “the secrets to superior salad satisfaction” and give many delicious salad dressing options. For example, many people find that simply using a good quality balsamic vinegar is enough.

### Regarding balsamic vinegar, don't you have to be careful because a lot of them contain added sugar?

The brands that we use and recommend are made simply from grapes and contain no added sugar. But it's always a good idea when purchasing any processed food to check the label carefully. Dr. Esselstyn recommends that his heart patients eat steamed greens six times a day with these types of vinegars, which actually enhance the absorption of nutrients. My favorite brand is Bema & Pas, which comes in over 30 flavors. My favorite flavor is the grapefruit. And if your readers go to [BemaandPas.com](http://BemaandPas.com) and use my name, CHEFAJ (no spaces), they can get a 10% discount on their order.

Absolutely! Coconut oil is touted as being healthy yet it is over 92% saturated fat, which contains even more saturated fat than even lard! I find it frustrating that this is one of the hardest things to convince people of, especially chefs. Of course, when you think about it, it's not because oil tastes good, because if you were to drink a cup of oil it won't taste very good by itself and it will likely

### Will recipes using these vinegars be in your forthcoming book?

Yes. My new book has over 100 recipes and a few do contain vinegar as an ingredient. Using balsamic vinegar is actually a great way to roast vegetables without using oil.

### When did you start teaching the Ultimate Weight Loss Program?

In January of 2012 I started offering a live four-week program for people who lived in Los Angeles. People who lived outside of the L.A. area heard about the success the participants in L.A. were having, so in 2014 I started offering the program online so that more people could benefit from the support.

### It obviously worked for you.

Yes, it has! And it's also worked for hundreds of people in my Ultimate Weight Loss Program, like Shayda, who offered her testimonial in the Winter 2018 issue of this magazine. As a matter of fact, it has never not worked.

### When you look at yourself in the mirror today, are you smiling?

I definitely am. Having spent over 50 years in a fat body, suffering from such low self-esteem because of it, I am really proud that I have been able to maintain my "skinny bitch" status easily for over six years now. And I have Dr. McDougall, Dr. Goldhamer and Dr. Lisle to thank! And now, I actually enjoy shopping for clothes.

### To what do you attribute all the success people have had in following your program? Is it the simplicity of the program or the clear understanding of what participants are doing?

The Ultimate Weight Loss Program is the only 100% plant-exclusive program I know of that deals with both weight loss *and* recovery from food addiction. I think understanding the science of calorie density is a big part of it. If you really understand calorie density and implement it in your daily eating, it is virtually impossible to be overweight. And that means eating a lot of vegetables. One of the most profound things I ever heard Dr. Goldhamer say was, "Show me an overweight person and I will show you someone who is unwilling to eat enough raw salad and steamed vegetables." And that is one of the biggest



Chef AJ with her UWL partner John Pierre

*"I urge people to find their tribe and love them hard."*

### How do you help people navigate the pressures of family, business, and society to slip back into the pleasure trap of negative dietary practices?

I urge people to find their tribe and love them hard. Whether it's my Ultimate Weight Loss Program, one of the many plant-based groups on Facebook, or by joining Meetup.com, I think having a support system is key. I don't think most people are willing to get rid of their current peer group of friends and family, but they can create new relationships with a healthy new group of people. That's what

happens at TrueNorth every year at the Holiday Extravaganza. Support groups of like-minded people who understand what you are going through can help you see that you are not alone. The other thing is, try to lead by example rather than preaching. When you reverse your lifestyle disease and lose weight, you will be much more effective in getting them interested in making some changes in their lifestyle.

### Do you have an estimate as to how many lives you've positively influenced since you began your Ultimate Weight Loss Programs?

I'm not sure, but I think it's in the thousands. People always send me "before and after" photos of their weight-loss successes. But it's not just about weight loss. At speaking engagements, people often come up to me and say, "I've reversed stage 4 kidney disease following your advice on Weight Loss Wednesday, and I'm not even in your program." And reversing kidney disease is something we are told is impossible. The same has been true for those suffering from diabetes. Even though it is marketed as a "weight-loss" program, it's really a "health gain" program because the weight is just a symptom indicating that the body is not in balance.

secrets of ultimate weight loss: making sure that at least 50% of your plate at every meal is comprised of non-starchy vegetables (SOS-free, of course). They not only help you lose weight because of their low caloric density but have been shown to have compounds that literally turn off your hunger switch and help you fight cravings for unhealthy foods, like sugar. That's why I recommend people eat vegetables for breakfast, just like they do at TrueNorth.



### You must find this work very rewarding.

Absolutely. It brings tears to my eyes and joy to my heart. From personal experience I know how hard it is, especially as a woman in our society, to be overweight. And I know how wonderful it feels when you have both the health and the body you deserve. I believe that this is possible for everybody! But you have to get the food right.

### What personal support can Chef AJ provide to people?

When someone joins my program, I, along with my partner, John Pierre, offer them support 24 hours a day, answer all of their questions, and support them in their journey. The online program is a way to connect with other like-minded people in the group. We deliver content electronically in the form of lectures, audio and video recordings, and a recipe guide for 21 days. But the real magic happens in the private support group, where they see they are not alone. Wherever they are in their journey toward optimum health, there is somebody at that stage, somebody just beginning, and somebody that's been doing it for years. We really have created a family; and if you attend the LIVE conference you can meet many of these exceptional people.

### How do they reach you?

Currently it's through our private Ultimate Weight Loss Facebook group, but soon it will be a subscription-based forum, much like Dr. Fuhrman's. Currently the cost is a one-time fee of \$149, and that gets you all the content plus daily support.

### What is "Weight Loss Wednesday"?

That is my weekly Facebook Live show that airs at 3p.m. Pacific Time every Wednesday. Here, people can interact with me and ask questions in real time. It is completely free and viewers only need a phone or computer. Even if you are not on Facebook and cannot watch live, you can watch each epi-



Don't miss Chef AJ's February 2018 interview with NHA President Mark Huberman (visit YouTube and search "Chef AJ, Mark").

sode within 24 hours on YouTube. There are over 70 now!

### Do you have a Chef AJ channel and website?

Yes. On YouTube my channel is my name, "Chef AJ," and you will find hundreds of educational and, often, entertaining videos. Almost every week I interview interesting people, such as yourself, on my show *Healthy Living LIVE*. I

have done some fantastic interviews with Dr. Lisle, Dr. Goldhamer, and Dr. Fuhrman, which you will find there as well. My website is [EatUnprocessed.com](http://EatUnprocessed.com).

### You also host an annual conference in Las Vegas, right?

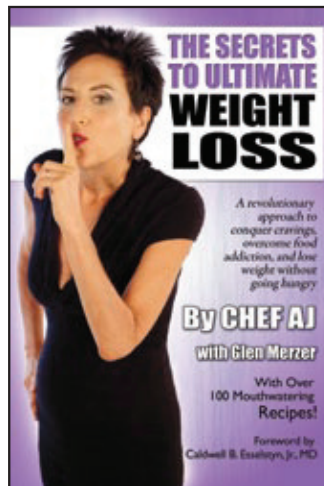
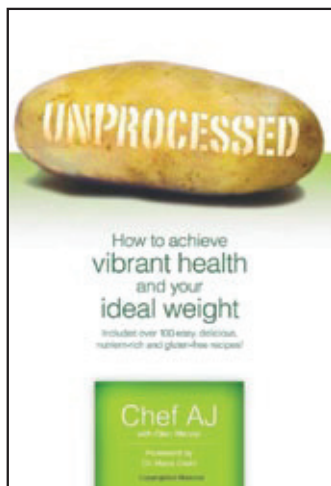
Yes, we do a phenomenal annual event called the "Ultimate Weight Loss Live" conference. Our core group of speakers are Dr. Lisle, Dr. Goldhamer, myself and John Pierre, who is my partner in The Ultimate Weight Loss Program, and who is also a celebrity fitness and nutrition expert. The event always takes place on Labor Day in Las Vegas at the Tuscany hotel, just off the strip. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Neal Barnard. And we also have Dr. Rosane Oliveira joining us. I am happy to offer your readers a \$100 discount on the conference by using the coupon code "bailey100" in the coupon code box when they register ([EatUnprocessed.com](http://EatUnprocessed.com)).



Chef AJ (front, third from right) poses with "Ultimate Weight Loss Live" participants in Las Vegas.

## Tell me about your books.

My first book, *Unprocessed*, which has over 100 SOS-free recipes, was released in 2011. My new book is called *The Secrets to Ultimate Weight Loss* (out in May 2018), and while it also has over 100 SOS-free, left-of-the-red-line recipes, it is more focused on weight loss and food addiction.



At left is Chef AJ's first book and at right is her newest book.

## Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the progress we are making in this country in terms of health awareness?

I think positive change is happening, but not as fast as I'd like. There are more and more wonderful documentaries about our health, the health of the planet, and the plight of animals being released every day. At a minimum, I believe that everyone needs to see at least these three documentaries: *Earthlings*, *Forks Over Knives*, and *Cowspiracy*.

## Tell me about your husband, Charles. Did he join you in this journey?

I got married at age 35 and Charles was not yet a vegan. If I was marrying somebody today, you bet they'd be eating like me. I wouldn't even date someone who didn't. But I was more liberal back then. When I met him I said, "Look, you know you can do what you want outside of the house, but the house is vegan, the wedding is vegan, and if there are any kids, they're going to be vegan." He became sort of an accidental vegan. He would occasionally eat animal products if we were at a restaurant, but not very often.

However, in 2001, six years after we got married, we went to the first Healthy Lifestyle Expo hosted by Jeff and Sabrina Nelson. When Charles heard Dr. John McDougall speak, he was so inspired that he became vegan at his very next meal. The same was true for my sister. So, I have to thank Dr. McDougall because he really made a big difference in the lives of the people that I love the most. Charles shares my love for animals and has come to the realization that if you follow this lifestyle, you really do become bulletproof from almost every disease that plagues Americans. Charles is also highly intelligent and conscientious, like Dr. Goldhamer, but like Dr. Lisle, he will have the

*"If everyone could just understand the concepts in the book The Pleasure Trap, in addition to calorie density, they will have all the tools they need to solve their health and weight problems, and control their health destiny."*

ing a chef, I spent most of my career working with seniors as an activity director. I was a witness to seeing people suffer tremendously and needlessly at the end of their lives simply because of their dietary folly. If they could have come to TrueNorth and learned to escape the dietary pleasure trap, they would have discovered that it's possible to age gracefully without disease and debility. Another blessing from eating this way is that, in addition to not harming yourself, you are also not contributing to animal suffering or the destruction of the planet.

**It must feel very rewarding to consider yourself a partner in the progressive health movement, with the likes of Alan Goldhamer, Joel Fuhrman, Caldwell Esselstyn, John McDougall and Neal Barnard.**

Absolutely! These luminaries are still my heroes and it is on their shoulders that I stand. The only difference now is that I often get to share the stage with them.

I've got to give an extra shout-out to Dr. McDougall because he was the first person to hire me to speak at his Celebrity Chef Weekend in 2009. I think that Dr. Lisle and Dr. Goldhamer are absolutely brilliant, and their book *The Pleasure Trap* (soon to be released as an audio book) really explains why this is so difficult for people. If everyone could just understand the concepts in their book, in addition to calorie density, they will have all the tools they need to solve their health and weight problems, and control their health destiny.

**That's a great note to end on. Thank you so much.**

Thank you! 

occasional piece of vegan carrot cake.

**Do you agree with the long-held belief of the Natural Hygiene Movement that one of the greatest blessings of this way of living is gaining control of your health destiny?**

I do. Your health is your greatest wealth. It's great to have a lot of money and it's great to have a lot of friends, but none of that matters if you're sick. As I mentioned earlier, prior to my becoming