

Why Is Finding Health So Hard?

How I discovered true health and now support others

by Dillon Holmes

I've spent my first 30 years of life searching for truth in everything, and I don't imagine my next 70 years will be any different. Breaking apart core processes and ideas that work for most people has often led me to discover that there are indeed better ways.

Our current model of health is one of the ideas I sought to break open. I have learned from personal experience that achieving health is more than a choice. It's more than fixing the food and adding some exercise, and much more than flipping a switch and leaving the "Pleasure Trap" behind.

For many of us, our goal of achieving optimal health comes only after spending most of our lives feeling totally helpless, wondering why our health is constantly deteriorating, and being unsure of who to trust for help. Doctors tell us that our deteriorating bodies are just a part of aging. Then we watch a gripping documentary or read an eye-opening book, and suddenly realize that if we make straightforward changes our whole world would be well again. Could it really be that simple?

Finding Out for Myself

I began my own search for health around 2010 as a family friend was dying of cancer; I just couldn't understand it. It was the closest I had ever been to a death that was not supposed to happen.

I started digging, and I found juicing and became obsessed with that. I felt my own health improve, so naturally I thought I'd cracked the code. But I hadn't. I read Dr. T. Colin Campbell and Dr. Thomas Campbell's book, *The China Study*, and decided to go vegan in 2013. As a vegan I felt about the same, and still had high blood pressure and cholesterol. I regularly ate vegan kettle chips, fake meats and cheeses, and other processed poisons. But I was veg-



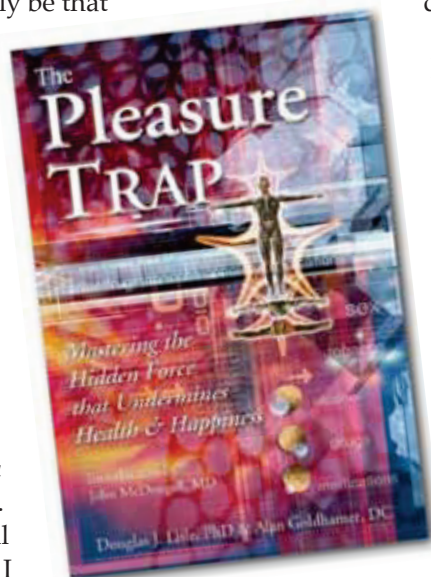
Dillon interviewing Dr. Klaper

an, so obviously I was healthy, right?

Then I read Dr. Campbell's next book (along with Dr. Howard Jacobson), *Whole*, and it still didn't quite click for me. I am a scientist and an engineer, so why was this not getting through to me, even while actively searching for the answer? I realize now it was because I was stuck in the "Pleasure Trap," which makes people all too susceptible to dietary and lifestyle excesses.

Additionally, in early 2016, my mom had been prescribed a statin to control her cholesterol, but she was determined to lower her cholesterol without the use of medication. We teamed up in search of the perfect book to set us on the right path. That book was Dr. John McDougall's *The Starch Solution*, and after reading it together, my mom and I decided to go one month with no oil and no processed junk foods. After 10 days we knew we would never go back to our old ways of eating. My total cholesterol dropped 40 points in that first month and so did my mother's. Likewise, we both dropped 15 pounds in that same month (now 25 for me and

35 for her). Weight loss was not our ultimate goal, but an appreciated side effect of living a healthy lifestyle. We had



never felt better!

But what Dr. McDougall didn't tell me was that even with some of my closest family members completely on board, my new lifestyle would occasionally leave me feeling very alone. I didn't expect that I'd have to constantly explain myself to others, or that I'd unintentionally alienate myself from family members by declining their gatherings in order to avoid being around meat and other unhealthy foods. I didn't know that my relationships would deteriorate if I wasn't careful; if I didn't go along just to get along.

It turns out that I needed ongoing support, and I discovered that many other new health seekers were also struggling with this very same challenge.

The Pleasure Trap

It was the book *The Pleasure Trap*, written by Drs. Doug Lisle and Alan Goldhamer, that helped me understand exactly why sticking with a health-promoting lifestyle was so difficult. For example, it shed light on things like why everyone pretended to care about my protein intake. (They certainly didn't appreciate my honest explanation.) And why eating this way upset almost everyone I knew. (If I proved through personal experience that I discovered the key to amazing health, wouldn't everyone in my life want to be exposed to that truth?)

It turns out that a few people in my life are genuinely interested, but most are not. And even the interested ones are usually unwilling to make changes. *The Pleasure Trap* helped me to understand that the only people ready to experience real health, through making important changes in their lifestyle habits, are those willing to admit that they have been misled (intentionally or not) their entire lives.

The core concepts expressed in *The Pleasure Trap* brought me clarity, peace, and self-confidence. While *The Starch Solution* taught me how to achieve health, *The Pleasure Trap* supported me through the transition and enabled me to maintain my newfound health.

Supporting Others

Because I want others who may be searching for truth and support to find it more quickly and easily than I did, I started a YouTube channel and a Facebook support group, both called Well Your World. Through these two platforms, I am building a community of like-minded individuals who are all faced with the same common challenges.

I make cooking videos, and along with my followers,

we share recipes, vent about our daily struggles, celebrate our daily successes, and support one another with love and respect, no matter where we are in our health journey.

The goal of Well Your World is not just to attract "committed lifers" like myself, but also the curious, the skeptical, the encouraged, the discouraged, the elated and, finally, all those struggling like I have (and still do) to get it right and keep it right for the rest of our lives. Finding and attaining true health is hard, and, therefore, support is critical. If we can bring the community together and stay together, then we can slowly affect the current system that does not have our best interest at heart.

Visiting TrueNorth

I had wanted to visit TrueNorth Health Center, in Santa Rosa, California, since learning about it in *The Pleasure Trap*. TrueNorth is staffed by many of the doctors that helped save my life. I've watched all of their videos and read their books, so it was time to say hello.

I did my first water-only fast for seven days during my two-week stay this summer. I had no specific health goals or known ailments in need of improvement; I simply wanted to experience a prolonged fast for myself. The staff, the facility, and the food were amazing.

My doctors were incredibly generous with their time, sitting down with me for interviews that I have been posting to the Well Your World YouTube channel. I talked

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Dillon showing off his well-stocked kitchen.



Dillon having a conversation with Dr. Lisle




Dr. Goldhamer enjoys a discussion with Dillon

about diet and lifestyle with Dr. Michael Klaper, the gut microbiome and women's health with Dr. Csilla Veress, fasting with Dr. Alan Goldhamer, and the psychological challenges of maintaining a healthy lifestyle with Dr. Doug Lisle.

A critical component of the TrueNorth experience is the daily circuit of lectures and cooking demos by the staff. For many patients, their stay is a first exposure to healthy living, so there is understandably a lot to learn before re-entering the real world, where they will have to work to avoid the standard American diet (SAD) and fully integrate their newfound whole-food, plant-based, SOS-free (salt, oil and sugar free) lifestyle.

Once people return home, they are faced with the greatest challenge of all: sustaining the gains they made during their re-education at TrueNorth. Home is where they need support the most. This is where they need to build community, clean out their environment, resist social pressure, and practice cooking and preparing wholesome, healthy food. Cultivating these new habits and relationships will strengthen their conviction, and suddenly they

may find themselves offering others the same critical support and reinforcement.

While at TrueNorth, I was also excited to learn about the National Health Association (NHA) and its quarterly Health Science magazine. I'd almost given up the search for a publication that focused on the same health principles I learned about at TrueNorth. While I am a brand new member of the NHA, I already can see its benefits. The magazine is a great way to feel supported and stay tuned-in to our trusted health professionals. I missed this year's NHA conference in Cleveland, Ohio, but I look forward to attending in 2018! 

Dillon Holmes is a vegan, environmentalist, urban farmer, solar installer, and community builder living in Phoenix, Arizona. You can find him in the Well Your World Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/WellYourWorld) and YouTube channel (youtube.com/c/WellYourWorld).

letters & notes

Much Appreciated Letters to the Editor

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Mark,

As usual, your Summer *Health Science* magazine was spectacular!

PATRICIA THOMPSON
MIDDLEBURY, CT

Dear Mark,

I am thankful for your steadfast dedication to the publishing of *Health Science* magazine. Your parents would be proud

of you for following in their Natural Hygiene footsteps!

MARY SHARRETT
HARRISBURG, PA

Hi Mark,

Thanks for all your efforts and hard work for a great magazine!

DIANE HATHAWAY
LOVELAND, CO

We'd love to hear from you, too!

Send your letter or email today!

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