

## Empowered by the Science Behind a Plant-Centered Lifestyle

*Discouraged by her poor health at an early age,  
she took charge and changed her health destiny.*

by Brittany Jaroudi

**B**efore my sixth-grade school year, I was already familiar with medical terms such as cancer and heart disease, since both of my parents had struggled with these illnesses. My mother had battled stage 4 breast cancer and my father had had a massive heart attack that resulted in triple-bypass surgery. I spent many nights worried about my parents' survival and turned to food as a coping mechanism. The weight started to accumulate over the years, and despite being involved with sports, I was generally known as a chubby kid.

At such a young age, I recall one doctor visit where the pediatrician flagged my cholesterol numbers as a concern to my parents. I personally had no idea what a healthy lifestyle looked like, and neither did my family. Our family dinners consisted of meat, dairy, usually only one vegetable, and processed convenience foods.

My weight would fluctuate up and down throughout my entire life. By age 25, I had reached approximately 185 pounds and had a BMI in the range that is considered morbidly obese. Additionally, I had high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and a C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) level of 16 (normal is below 3)! I knew something had to change dra-



Brittany before and after her switch to a healthy diet and lifestyle.

*“The research proved that I had influence over my health destiny and that I could naturally fight these illnesses I’d seen plague my family. Everything clicked together, and for the first time, I felt empowered over my health.”*

research and science of T. Colin Campbell, PhD, and the China Study along with the work and results Dr. Caldwell

B. Esselstyn had documented in his book, *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*. In the film, the blood test results of the director, Lee Fulkerson, showed blood pressure, cholesterol, and CRP levels similar to what I initially had before making any dietary changes. I watched him adopt a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle and improve all of his health markers, and I thought, if he can do it, then so can I.

Understanding what a healthy lifestyle looked like and the role it has in our genetic outcome was such an intriguing concept that I knew I needed to learn more

atically in my life or I was headed in the direction of heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune disease, and even possibly cancer. I had directly seen my own family members suffer with these illnesses, as well as several other members of our extended family.

While researching how to lower the inflammation in my body, I came across the benefits of eating plant-based and discovered *Forks Over Knives*. This documentary had been recommended to me since it demonstrated the benefits of eating a plant-based diet. It showed the

