

A Natural Thirst for Truth Drives Health Transformation

ONCE OVERWEIGHT, SICK, AND MISERABLE, HE RESTORED HIS VIBRANT HEALTH AND NOW HELPS OTHERS

by Anthony Vita

If you had told me 10 years ago that one day I would be sharing my plant-based transformation story in a magazine called *Health Science*, I would have checked to see if it was April Fool's Day.

You see, looking back to 2012, I never once considered the possible connection between what I was eating and how I was feeling. Everything I ate was driven purely by food cravings and whatever sounded good at the time. At my worst, I found myself eating restaurant food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with fruits and vegetables taking a noticeable back seat to fried chicken, cheeseburgers, pepperoni pizzas, deli subs, McDonald's milkshakes, Starbucks lattes, Chinese buffets, candy bars, soft drinks, and snack chips. In other words, I was deep into the "SAD," or Standard American Diet.

In retrospect, this explains why I felt so miserable most of the time. Not only did I suffer from low energy and mental fog, but year after year, I would take advantage of every allotted sick day at work to care for sore throats, upset stomachs, chest and head congestion, headaches, colds, and fevers. Because I was eating so poorly, my skin was oily with painful acne, and I had slowly become about 50 pounds overweight. As I approached 40 feeling exhausted and out of shape, I just figured this was how it felt to finally reach middle age.

Then, in late 2012, a friend I hadn't seen in years came to visit. It was good seeing him

again, especially since he had turned his health around by changing his diet. Now, I know what you're probably assuming—this is the guy who introduced me to a plant-based diet, right? Well, even though he was certainly looking and feeling much better than at our prior visit, he had adopted a more Paleo-style diet and enthusiastically urged me to do the same for my health.

To him, it was quite obvious that I had packed on some pounds, and after scrutinizing the contents of my refrigerator, he let me know quite frankly how everything I was consuming was both destroying my health and making me fat. He recommended a couple of health-related resources including the documentary *Hungry for Change*, which instantly made me recognize areas of my diet that needed improvement. Most importantly, for the very first time, I suddenly cared about what I was eating.

One of the first things I did was invest in a Nutribullet, which helped me commit to making green smoothies starting on January 1, 2013. As a result, I found myself perusing the produce section of the grocery store much like I once sifted through vinyl albums at the local record shop. For the first time in my life, I was spending time in the produce aisle buying fruits and vegetables—and actually consuming them!

Even though I'm no fan of the meat-heavy Paleo diet now, it did help me in two key areas. First, it helped me realize how eating



fast food, along with ultra-processed donuts, cookies, and pies, was highly toxic and very harmful to my heart, brain, and gut health. Second, the most important aspect of my new approach to eating was how it finally got me thinking about my food choices and helped me to make better ones. While this was not my final diet destination, it was definitely a step in the right direction. The needle had been moved, and this was tremendous progress!

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Because I am inquisitive and love asking questions, I developed a natural thirst for wanting to understand more about the associations between diet and disease and why this better way of eating was so beneficial to my health. Over the course of my research, I eventually came across the highly respected work of Dr. John McDougall, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr., Dr. Neal Barnard, and Dr. Joel Fuhrman,



just to name a few of the leaders in the whole-food, plant-based field. As I read their books, watched their presentations, and listened to their interviews, one thing in particular resonated with me.

Reading testimonial after testimonial from former patients of these doctors, I was impressed by how they actually got better. Even though these patients may have struggled with obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, autoimmune disorders, kidney failure, or cancer, they would change their diet to whole plants and eventually come off their medications, and they'd often completely reverse their health issues as if they never had them to begin with. This was a total revelation to me because, in my world, nobody ever got better. From my experience, whenever a friend or family member was given a dreaded diagnosis and prescribed medications, they lived with that disease and remained on medications for the rest of their lives.

As my understanding of the links between diet and disease deepened, it became both a blessing and a curse. On the bright side, I was learning powerful information that would help me to lose weight, regain my health, and prevent common lifestyle diseases. On the other hand, every time I looked around, I could clearly see why so many, especially loved ones, were suffering needlessly on a

lifetime of medications. Their serious health issues were not a result of their body being broken or having bad genes—it all came down to their food choices!

Because of what I had learned from online resources such as [NutritionFacts.org](https://www.nutritionfacts.org) and documentaries like *Forks Over Knives*, I no longer viewed food and disease quite the same way. By the fall of 2013, and without anyone pushing me to do so, I started eliminating meat, dairy, and eggs from my diet and began emphasizing more starches like potatoes, rice, beans, and quinoa along with fruits and vegetables in what became my full commitment to a whole-food, plant-based diet and lifestyle.

By April 2014, my steady diet of plants was paying off nicely, as I had dropped three pant sizes (from 40 to 34) and lost 50 pounds. In terms of how I was feeling, the difference was night and day. All of the nagging health concerns that I had struggled with just a year earlier were completely gone, and it wasn't just a fluke. It's now been nearly 10 years since I adopted a whole-plant diet, and I can tell you it's been that long since I've had to care for a sore throat, major headache, or even a runny nose.

My initial thought was, "I need to tell everyone about the healing power of plants!" I had always wanted to write a book but never felt inspired about anything until now. Over the course of 2014 and into 2015, I fully immersed myself in researching and writing my book, *The Vital Blend: 5 Ways to Dramatically Improve Your Health*, which was released in 2016.

I also created a Facebook page, "The Vital Blend," with the intention of building an audience with whom I could share everything I had learned and hopefully make a profound difference in their lives. Over the last few years, my page has grown to nearly 12,000 followers, and so many of them have expressed how much they truly look forward to and are inspired by the plant-based transformation stories, nutritional info, recipes, interviews, and more that I feature on a daily basis. Between my book and Facebook page, I can't tell you how amazing it feels to have people express how my work has literally changed their lives for the better!

However, my attempts to reach, educate, and improve people's lives with plants were

not over yet. In the summer of 2021, after a few years of advising people unofficially, I decided to become a Certified Holistic Nutritionist. These days, I regularly coach those who desperately need to lose weight or regain their health and show them how to follow a whole-food, plant-based diet and lifestyle to reach their goals.

So far, I've been absolutely blown away by the results my clients have been witnessing simply by staying committed to a diet of low-fat plants, just as I did. My clients have successfully reversed stage 3 kidney failure, painful arthritis, and high blood pressure/cholesterol, and they are losing weight the healthy way!

In early 2022, I interviewed NHA President Mark Huberman for my YouTube channel, and I finally got to meet him and his lovely wife, Wanda, in person this summer at my first ever NHA Conference in Ohio. The three-day gathering was highlighted by so many powerful presentations, truly inspiring testimonials, timely information, and, of course, an incredible group of like-minded individuals who truly appreciate the many rewards that come from eating whole plants.

If you had told me 10 years ago that I would eventually become a health coach who helps restore people's health by showing them how to eat more fruits and vegetables, I would have never believed you. However, there is one thing I now know for certain—when you change your food to plants, you will forever change your life. Love yourself and eat more plants! 🌱



ANTHONY AT HIS FIRST NHA CONFERENCE THIS YEAR, WITH MARK HUBERMAN