

# From Lost Hope to an Unwavering Commitment to Health

“Miracles happen with a whole-plant-food diet!”

by Kathy Taylor

Growing up in the South with my parents and five brothers, most meat was fried and vegetables were overcooked in bacon grease or butter. Fresh vegetables and fruit were uncommon. Obese since the age of six, I experimented with many, many diet programs through the years.

Over time, I ballooned to more than 400 pounds and spent a fortune on 14+ medications for diabetes, acid reflux, depression, sleep disorders, arthritis, restless leg syndrome, and more. I bristled when my GP told me I'd be on high blood pressure medicine the rest of my life! After suffering with diarrhea for nine months, I went to a gastroenterologist for multiple, invasive tests. He told me I had IBS and wrote several prescriptions, but he never asked me what I was eating.

In my professional life, my teaching career gave me countless creative opportunities to explore music, art, drama, literature, and movement in the classroom. Awards, accolades, and a master's degree proved that I could achieve success. I had even lost one hundred pounds twice but gained it back. Why was I such a complete failure at maintaining weight loss?

I finally felt so defeated that I paid \$20,000 for Lap-Band bariatric surgery. With that surgery, I initially lost 30 pounds but then gained 90 more, consuming soft, highly processed foods that slid down easily. Whole food had too much fiber and caused me to throw up for three years. The device eventually broke into pieces inside me in 2011; it cost \$100,000 to remove, nearly killed me, and caused permanent internal damage. I lost my health, my savings, my career, my ability to dream—and I simply lost hope.

A few years later, my nephew, Zach, encouraged me to watch *Forks Over Knives*. What a life-changing film! Everything I heard and saw rang true and gave me a glimmer of hope! Dr. Doug Lisle was featured in the film talking about the *Pleasure Trap*: there were physical and psychological reasons why my food addictions were trapping me in a prison of fat! Humans are hard-wired to hang

on to weight for the survival of the species. I investigated everything I could find about this new whole-food science, which led me to TrueNorth Health Center in Santa Rosa, California. My prison doors were unlocked!

In the fall of 2019, I stayed at TrueNorth for the first time to do an extended water-only fast followed by a whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) diet. While there, I attended two lectures and watched three or more health and wellness videos daily. **What a fabulous crash-course in nutrition, biochemistry, psychology, physiology, and culinary arts!** I lost 50 pounds in 49 days for a much-needed jumpstart to my new lifestyle. I counseled with their psychologist, Heidi Crockett, who encouraged me to create a support system, a “circle of strength.”

I met like-minded friends at TrueNorth and continue to meet with them regularly by phone, personal visits, and on Zoom. I returned home, read *The China Study* and joined a WFPB book club with my TrueNorth friend, Sia Hurst (6DLiving.com), where we read and discussed *The Pleasure Trap*, *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*, *How Not to Die*, *The Cheese Trap*, *Fiber Fueled*, *Whole*, *Power Foods for the Brain*, and more. I love learning and believe that knowledge is power!

Last fall I moderated two book clubs exploring *How Not to Diet* by Dr. Michael Greger. Now I am honored to moderate three new book clubs through 6DLiving.com featuring *Fiber Fueled* by Dr. Will Bulsiewicz.



Please join us! <https://www.6dliving.com/event-details/fiber-fueled-by-dr-bulsiewicz>

I taught elementary and middle school for 32 years, eating the school lunches and fast food for dinner. I never learned to cook, so I was desperate and grateful to watch hundreds of YouTube videos about WFPB cooking with Tami Kramer's *Nutmeg Notebook*, Dillon Holmes's *Well Your World*, Brittany Jaroudi's *The Jaroudi Family*, Chef Ramses Bravo, Cathy Fisher, Jill Dalton's *Whole-Food, Plant-Based Cooking Show*, *Krocks in the Kitchen*, Chef AJ, and many others.

Over the next two years I continued to drop weight for a total of over 200 pounds melted away. When I finally gave up dairy, the IBS went away and so did the chronic sinus infections I routinely got four times per year. Also eliminated were expensive prescriptions, high blood pressure, type 1 diabetes, GERD, restless leg syndrome, sleep apnea, low-back pain, skin rashes, and a wheelchair! I sobbed the first time I buckled my seatbelt on the airplane and realized I no longer needed an extender. Last May in Greece I even hiked up a very steep mountainside to the Temple at Delphi. Miracles happen with a whole-plant-food diet!

Recently, my insurance agent was astonished that I take no prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs and that I haven't needed a primary care physician except for a yearly physical, saying “You need to teach classes about this!” When I had skin reduction surgery to remove my stomach apron, the surgeon also said I needed to teach classes. “Let food be thy medicine.” I have important work to do here!

I still have a considerable amount of weight to lose, but now I truly believe that it is absolutely possible and enjoyable to eat lots of delicious, whole food and, over time, achieve a healthy weight, a lean, strong body, and an active, vibrant life!

Kathy is a proud Century Club member of the NHA. Get to know her better at [6dliving.com/post/kathytaylor](https://www.6dliving.com/post/kathytaylor)