

Healed from the Inside Out

by Jillian Kidd

I'm at once nervous and excited to share my story. I'm nervous because I have lived a very secret life for a very long time, and giving of myself in this way is nauseatingly uncomfortable. I'm excited because I have learned and benefited so much since my nutrition studies began, I want anyone now suffering to have the same opportunity. Everyone around me is ailing in some way or another, and if there's a chance one of them will experience the healing I have, it is my pleasure to endure the discomfort.

Friends and family see my weight loss and the smoothness and improved tone of my skin, and some notice I have a new sense of calm and comfort. They compliment and congratulate me. While I appreciate their surprise and praise, none of them had any idea the extent to which my body had been burdened with disease. Until I made drastic nutritional changes in the spring of 2020, not even my husband and grown children knew how unwell I was. I refused to acknowledge all the ways I knew I was sick, had long ignored and abandoned researching new symptoms that presented, and lied to everyone who would care enough to ask me specifics about my health.

Worse than managing my secret life and sicknesses was the mere idea of seeking a physician to confirm my suspicions, let alone actually allowing them to treat me according to how I understood modern medicine would do so. All I ever observed were people complaining of symptoms, setting an appointment with their doctor, leaving with one or more prescriptions, being referred to a specialist, and leaving there with another or more prescriptions. This one for that, that one for this, these to counter the side effects of those, and those to alleviate the side effects of these. Years, decades, a lifetime of financial strain with the added unpleasant and often killer side effects with no end in sight. No healing. No cure. The symptoms I experienced were the lesser of the evils, I thought.

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There had to be something I was missing or just not getting. Though at the height of my sicknesses I was fortunate to have had the flickering thought that what I ate had the greatest effects on my well-being, it would take several years to fully learn and understand the whole truth of that thought and how to practically implement it. At some point in 2015, after living more than 15 years with a growing list of health concerns, I began to feel the urgency of facing those facts despite my fear and humiliation. However, I wasn't interested in fad diets or even in losing weight as a main goal. My desire was to be healed from the inside out.

I identified the most popular mainstream approaches to nutrition. For many years, on and off, I adhered to the tenets of every one of those approaches, often with some immediate benefits. Each promised something in the way of better health, and, though they were fleeting, I reaped all of those promises to some degree. But which, if any, of those approaches offered proof of physical healing and reversal of disease? What did it matter if the numbers and biomarkers on some tests were looking better if the sicknesses were still there? Are there foods that damage the body and its



systems? What foods truly nourish and repair them? Was I even able to achieve optimal health at that point?

In 2019, when I was 42, I was set on a path that would answer all of those questions and show me exactly how to attain my deepest desires. Three beautiful words have indeed changed my life forever: whole plant foods.

In early 2020, while the mountains and forests were still copper and all life awaited the nourishment of spring, I looked at myself in the mirror and marveled that I wasn't yet dead. I was humbled, grateful, energized, and for the first time, hopeful I could be well. Once, a few years before, while sitting in the parking lot of an emergency room trying to determine whether I should go in, I prayed the issue for which I was there would resolve, making an oath to thenceforth do my part in the full remedy. The issue did resolve. I went home and waxed and waned in my loyalty to that oath over time, but now I prayed for excellent health and was determined to be a participant in the blessing I was asking for. It was time to confess and to admit to myself the ways I had contributed to my sicknesses, even unwittingly, and acknowledge the consequences. I made a list. As I finally named each of my health issues, it was as



thinking I experienced a few, but certainly that wouldn't determine I had an overactive thyroid. Instead, I found that I experienced nearly every symptom on every list produced.

The bullet points of irritable bowel syndrome offenses left me in a perpetual state of discomfort. Antacids were a food group. My menstrual cycles were their own constellation of complications. My flow was abnormally heavy by every medical standard, and my symptoms were consistent with endometriosis. I was a physical and emotional mess, out of commission for everything during that time every month.

Emotional and cognitive issues were a regular part of my daily life even outside of my menstrual cycle. I struggled with anxiety and depression, heightened and erratic emotions, constant feelings of gloom and doom and worry. I was in a habitual state of irritation. People, sounds, smells, the sun, the wind, random objects—so many things plagued me just by being. It took great effort to focus on a task or concentrate when reading or when listening if someone spoke. I was overwhelmed by simple daily decisions. Rarely did I get excited about anything. If I did, the excitement faded, and I lost interest. All I wanted to do was withdraw from everyone and everything.

if I had been indicted and was scanning my rap sheet. I had committed crimes against my body.

Just how sick was I? Consuming a diet high in animal products, fast foods, and processed foods prior to the first step on my whole plant food journey, I was morbidly obese at 5'7" and 350 pounds. I was somewhat active, generally pleasant to be around, and gave little hint or indication I suffered any infirmity associated with my weight. In reality, however, I was hypertensive (systolic numbers over 170 and diastolic over 90), had a resting pulse rate over 80, and almost always had the dreaded IHB, irregular heartbeat. My heart fluttered or thumped or seemed to skip or beat rapidly or pound against my chest. My blood glucose averaged in the mid-400s, was sometimes into the 500s, and at least once was over 600. Never did I have a fasting level below 250. I'm thankful I never suffered a diabetic-induced coma.

Hypertension. Arrhythmia. Diabetes. I was tempted to stop there. Wasn't that enough to go on anyway? But I knew it was important to deal with everything. There was no avoiding the idea that I had hyperthyroidism. When it was suggested, I searched the top symptoms

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Good sleep was a pipe dream. My whole body ached. I was so used to pain that I was ignorant of how bad it was. That is, until it was not. Here's a recap of that list I made. Morbid obesity, hypertension, arrhythmia, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, irritable bowel syndrome, endometriosis, anxiety, depression, cognitive impairment, fibromyalgia, and arthritis.

And there was more still. Data shows any one of those factors greatly increased my risks for heart disease, heart attack, stroke, cancer, liver disease, dementia, Alzheimer's, and whatever other conditions we all fear. I had revealed a confetti popper's worth of troubling



disorders likely to exponentially increase my risks for every known chronic and debilitating and dignity-stealing disease. I had sentenced myself to death row. Dead woman walking.

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Consuming an abundance and variety of only fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, often mostly raw, not only alleviated some of my symptoms within days, but within weeks many were gone, many more within months, and now, not quite four years later at age 46, I humbly report a complete and total dissolution of nearly all the symptoms and conditions on my list. Having lost 200 pounds, I am no longer obese. My blood pressure is maintained below the lauded 120/80, my blood glucose averages around 110. My heart drums gently away through the days. Long gone are all signs of hyperthyroidism, irritable bowel syndrome, endometriosis, fibromyalgia, and arthritis. And no more am I plagued with anxiety or depression or disturbing focus issues.

The National Health Association was so instrumental in my health and nutrition education, I became a lifetime member in 2022 and attended my first conference in 2023. Thanks to their mission and the abundant resources educating and promoting a diet of whole plant foods as well as other principles of natural hygiene such as sunbathing, breathwork, hydration, fresh air, exercise, and fasting, my prayer was answered. I was healed from the inside out. My prayer now is for many others to experience healing, and so I have become passionate in my endeavors to share all that I've learned and, hopefully, help make another's journey an exciting adventure.

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