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## YOUR BODY HAS ALL THE ANSWERS YOU SEEK INSIGHT INTO HOLISTIC NUTRITION

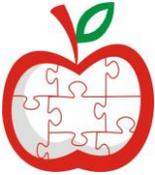
*Fear holds us back from being our best,  
but believing things that are not true is what prevents us from being  
willing to walk past our fear and do what we fear the most.*

I started off as an unhappy binge-eating couch potato with no idea why I was unhappy. When I found myself sitting beside the toilet feeling like I was going to throw up because I had eaten so much, and when a musician in a subway station told me to smile because surely whatever was troubling me wasn't that bad, I knew I needed to change, but I didn't know what to do. I had already seen a dietician, sought out an eating disorder support group, and at one point even found the courage to visit my family doctor. At the time, we had just made the decision that I would quit my downtown job and stay home to look after the kids and do in-home daycare to help make up the income we would be losing. The doctor was excited about our decision and when he expressed, at great length, how lucky I was to have the opportunity to stay home and raise my children, I didn't have the nerve to tell him I was unhappy for reasons unknown to me, and so left without saying a word.

In the meantime, Amy had a rash her doctor passed off as normal. When I noticed she had a belly on her like the Ethiopian children in the TV commercials, I knew something wasn't right. I took her to a naturopath, which was a new experience for me. I was a little apprehensive and unsure, especially when she told me she was also a vet. I didn't know how I was going to tell my husband that I had taken our two-year-old daughter to see a vet. The supplements the naturopath recommended helped, but I quickly realized if I wanted to truly help Amy, I had to learn how to feed her, which is when I decided to go back to school to study holistic nutrition.

As a family, we changed our diet, so Amy didn't feel isolated with the dietary changes. Although my goal was to help Amy, I was unintentionally helping myself. I noticed that wheat and gluten made me moody, irritable and negative, caffeine gave me migraines around my cycle and tomatoes seemed to weaken my bladder. I made a lot of dietary changes, but even though I switched white and brown sugar to cane sugar and then eventually to coconut sugar, I could not bring myself to eliminate sugar from my diet. The thought of eliminating sugar terrified me. I had realized sugar was my coping mechanism, and I didn't know how I would ever cope with stress or be able to relax if I didn't eat sugar, and yet I didn't want to eat the sugar because it made me gain weight and feel sluggish. Most of my weight gain would go straight to my belly and I had grown tired of going through the embarrassment of people asking me if I was expecting.

Then my Dad died, and I was suddenly keenly aware of how short life really is, and I seriously started to contemplate what I had done with my life, what I still wanted to accomplish, and what unfinished business I wanted to complete. It was at this time I began exploring emotional eating and started to understand the connection between my emotions and my sugar habit. As I found the courage to address old wounds and hurts from my past and chose to acknowledge and effectively process my emotions, sugar stopped controlling my life. For years I believed I had an eating disorder. Now I know that is not true. I realize my eating choices were being controlled by emotions I had pushed deep down inside, where they have an opportunity to fester and potentially cause disease, instead of facing my emotions head on, allowing myself to feel them, and then being willing to let them go.



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I have always found it difficult to articulate what it is that I have to offer my nutrition clients that is unique. A simple Google search will reveal more recipe ideas than you need. I don't do eating plans. I realized 18 years ago that people don't follow them or if they do, they don't follow them for very long. I assumed the reason was we are all individuals with different likes and dislikes; however, I have recently realized that another reason could be that as human beings we are designed to create. We are capable of creating many things, but the most important thing we create is our best life, and part of creating our best life is choosing how we fuel our body, so food choices really are a personal thing.

Then yesterday, I received this text: "I'm feeling like I'm back at square one."

And after reading it, I realized what it is I have to offer that is unique. I help people look past what they believe to be true and help them see what truly is so they can walk past their fear if they choose to.

Inflammatory foods – sugar, wheat, various corn products, red meat, food additives, etc – make us feel heavy, cause swelling, aches and pains, and make us feel irritable and sluggish. However, if we have been consistently eating well and exercising, one meal won't take us back to square one. We may feel like it has, but just because we feel a certain way does not mean it is true. If we stay the course. Remain consistent with healthy eating habits and consistent exercise during the 4 to 7 days it takes for the inflammatory foods to work their way out of our system, we will realize we haven't fallen as far as we think we have. Walking beside people as they go through the ups and downs of not only changing their eating habits, but also changing their lifestyle, is how I spend most of my time assisting my clients.

When I start working with an individual, we start by getting enough water and protein. Then we establish a healthy balance of carbohydrates and fats. From there we identify potential food sensitivities, address digestive issues, consider food quality, address nutritional deficiencies, and ensure consistent movement. And then, if applicable, we consider emotional connections to food choices. I am not a psychologist, so I do not provide advice in this area. I see my role as simply assisting individuals see the connection. Once they are aware of the connection, then they can choose to address it if they wish to. I can suggest tools that helped me, but they can choose to address it in a way that feels right for them.

I believe our body has all the answers we are looking for. Learning to listen to what our body is telling us is how we find the answers we seek, and as a holistic nutritionist, this is what I help my clients do.