

My Personal Journey

My 47 year 'young' father returned from work and entered our family kitchen; his clothing soaked with perspiration. Clutching his chest Dad stumbled into the bedroom and I heard the laundry basket and clothespins hit the wood floor as dad knocked it over while collapsing to the floor. He was gone before he hit the floor; his face strangely blue. A clot in his coronary arteries due to his Midwest meat and potato diet, working in a 1964 second hand smoke office environment, and family history ended his life. That combined with bacon and eggs, biscuits and sausage, sugary cereals, burgers, chipped beef on toast, pork tenderloin sandwiches, and fried chicken with pan gravy.

Like father like son, in '88 I acquired terminal heart disease. Two weeks later I waltzed out of ICU, the recipient of a generous miracle. "I'm only 40 and still have half my life to live? No way, pal. I like the taste of life more than dead food". Before, I also smoked and boozed heartily so my heart was a weak, unexercised glob of goo and I couldn't walk across a street without becoming winded. I never exercised it, instead, snarling and snapping, I sucked up meat and chicken gizzards like they were going out of style.

After cardiac-rehab, I joined a gym and turned my flabby, gelatinous heart into rippling, efficient muscle. If you expect your heart to support your physical, mental, and spiritual needs, it would behoove you to strengthen the pulsing orb, considering it beats a whopping 100,000 times in one day and about 35 million times in a year, totaling 2.5 billion times during an average lifetime. The second behavior change was weaning off fast food so I cut the cheese pizza. The USDA says Americans eat 30 cheesy pounds a year. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) says cheese is America's major source of naughty saturated fat, and urges us to cut back. Don't get cheesed at me, I'm just the messenger.

Heart attacks are preventable, but Hoosiers aren't scared enough. Food's a colossal risk factor for coronary artery disease; oddly, stubborn Hoosiers favor eating foods that cause plaque build-up and blockage. The vegetable-deficient Western diet of dead food, accounts for the preponderance of heart attacks. Other lifestyle choices placing people at high risk are obesity, alcohol, high blood pressure and cigarettes. Humans, alas, wait till disease happens before altering behaviors.

Visualize a whole food, plant-based diet a plumber's snake keeping arteries unclogged, reducing the risk of your heart freaking out or a clot rendering you a turnip. Forgive my yammering, but indisputable, conclusive research reports it's vital to living in the joyful fashion the loving Universe planned.

Unless you dig pickling your liver in vats-o-statins, a diet high in delicious, dead barn animals laden with chemicals, hormones, saturated fat, and sumptuous cholesterol will most certainly, increase plaque buildup. If blockage happens in an artery carrying blood to the heart muscle, a heart attack can occur. When a roadblock occurs in an artery that delivers blood to the brain, a stroke can occur. 911! Ker-Thud!

If anyone experiences chest discomfort, pain in other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, back or jaw pain, breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness, please pop an aspirin under your tongue and call 911 at once. Too often people aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before seeking help.

After conquering terminal heart disease, there's an empowering feeling that washes over your soul which human language cannot serve justice. It is what it is; a grateful heart, your second brain, owning another tantalizing chance to get it right. The highest high!

Experience a miracle with a little help from your friends; sense of humor, exercise, real food, and moments of meditative gratefulness to the Cosmos your health.

Peace, Love and Health: It's your birthright