

Lana's Story – Me Against the World

There have been times in my life when I took comfort from the thought, "It's me against the world." At least I was clear on the point. Everybody was against me, family -- everybody. I would have to speculate to tell you how much of my emotional turmoil came from poor diet, but it must have been a lot.

My health turnaround took place long before I went to my first Suppers meeting. But in this program I have learned many lessons about tolerance. It is the journey of acquiring tolerance that I want to share. One day I was looking at the community bulletin board in my bank and the invitation caught my eye: "Join us for Suppers". I had long imagined that I would find a community of women vegetarians with whom I could create a cooking club. Where I live, being a vegetarian is unusual enough. But by my family's standards I'm way out there because I'm not only vegan, I eat almost exclusively raw food.

When I called for more information about Suppers, I was disappointed to learn it wasn't vegetarian, but everything else sounded just right for me. I was assured that there would always be something for me to eat at meetings, and that I'd get a chance to teach what I know. Well, wouldn't you know, as soon as I arrived, I met another raw food vegan. The demographics were all different: age, size, shape and color. But who cared! Our bodies both spoke the same fundamental language: we healed on raw food.

Even though everyone else was feeling better on a higher protein diet than I wanted, I found people were very interested in hearing what worked for me. The program is built on honoring people's biological individuality. Here is my history. As a young woman, my downfall was sweets. I spiraled out of control every month. In many other ways, my diet was very healthful. I'd grown up in the islands and had always eaten lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Unfortunately, all that good food did NOT protect me from sugar. And after my first pregnancy, I experienced a hormonal nightmare, suicidal depression, and a fierce resurgence of periodontal disease.

At that point in my life I was still eating meat too. The doctor said my body needed it if I wanted to get pregnant again. I don't know how all these things are related, but at age 35 I started having rages. It got so bad, my husband would simply pick up our young son and remove him from the room. He must have thought I was a lunatic. I'd had bouts of heart palpitations since childhood and these would just thunder inside me. Emotionally, I was a wreck, driven partly by my biology and partly by my desire to have another child. In retrospect, I'm able to say I was focused on a child I didn't have while neglecting the one I did have.

In my search for sanity and wellness, I saw a renowned vegetarian health "guru". He put me on a vegan diet and suggested a nutrient protocol that included lots of fatty acids. The turnaround in my health was remarkable. My body calmed down. I got out of bed energized. The post partum depression just went away and I lost weight.

It was a good thing I got so much better because, as time wore on, it became clear I had a neurologically interesting child to deal with. My extremely intelligent son seemed to operate brilliantly from certain parts of his brain while other parts didn't want to function at all. He could do complicated visual and arithmetic tasks but fell apart when it came to putting his experience in writing. His teachers were tearing their hair out saying they'd never worked with a child whose brain worked like my son's. They feared he would flunk first grade! He also had Tourettes.

My husband was still giving him fast food doughnuts. At the same time, I was calculating that if he could clean up his diet, some of his bizarre problems might go away. You can

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imagine how this went over with my husband's family; they already thought I was crazy. I was highly motivated, however, because my own turnaround on a vegan diet had been so profound and because his teachers were pressing me to put him on Ritalin, which I refused to do. It has been a struggle, but there has been a big return. To make a long story short, his tics are gone and his learning issues are reduced, although in honesty we still have work to do.

I am now a Suppers facilitator. I want to help people avoid unnecessary agony for themselves and their children. Dealing with our health, mental health, and learning problems has taught me that nobody could have made me change faster than I wanted to. Or slower. When I was ready to make big changes, I did it, but not a day sooner. Since coming to Suppers I have been introduced to the idea of nutritional harm reduction, which to me means identifying the lifestyle changes I think are most doable and working on them at my own pace. I am so proud to contribute what I know about the value of raw food at meetings and know that my contributions are part of the body of information available to seekers who come to our program.