



I Lost 155 Pounds, Normalized My Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure ... and Feel Absolutely Amazing!

By Ruth Hughes
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Since I was young, I struggled with my weight. Growing up, I experienced judgments from my peers and had difficulty keeping up with healthier, fitter kids. By my late 20s I was faced with the sobering reality of ongoing health issues as a result of carrying the extra weight.

At the end of 2009, I visited a doctor after experiencing nausea, muscle aches, dizziness, and extreme exhaustion for several weeks. It had been several years since I had been in a doctor's office, or even stepped on a scale. Intense feelings of shame and remorse overcame me when the nurse weighed me in at a shocking 290 pounds! It became clear to me that the food choices I had been making for 29 years were literally shortening my life expectancy, and I knew I had to make immediate changes. With a history of high blood pressure and diabetes in my family, I wasn't surprised when the doctor told me that I had both, but I would have thought I'd have more time before succumbing to daily medications and disease management. In that moment, I found a new sense of resolve: I told the doctor that I had no desire to be dependent on medication and that I would do the work necessary to lose the weight.

I left that appointment feeling confident, for the first time in my life, that I could truly attain my weight loss goals. I immediately started researching healthy eating, weight loss programs, fitness routines, and other topics in an effort to jumpstart my transformation. I tried Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, and other diet programs, losing some weight and learning a great deal about making better food choices ... but I knew that long-term

weight loss would require a permanent lifestyle change, not just a "diet."

Then I watched *Food, Inc.* and *Forks Over Knives*, two documentaries that changed my life. By June of 2012 I took the plunge! I decided to make the switch to a whole-food, plant based diet immediately and not gradually—I went all in, from day one ... and I haven't looked back.

Within six months of starting this plant based diet, I had lost 70 more pounds and reached my goal weight, making my total weight loss 155 pounds. And I have reversed and eliminated all of my medical issues, including the type 2 diabetes, the high blood pressure, and the persistent exhaustion. In fact, I have so much energy I don't know what to do with it all. Bottom line: I feel absolutely amazing!