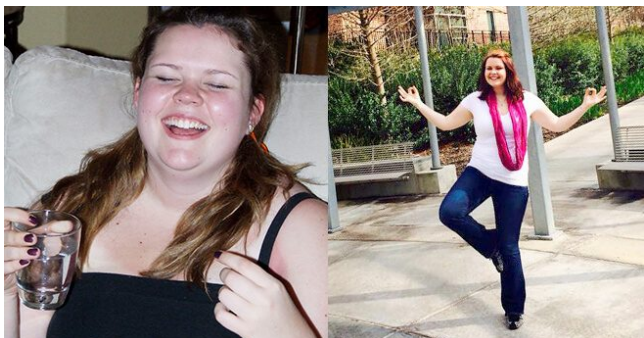




How I Lost 55 Pounds and Gained a Happy Life

By Aleksandra Strugalska
2014-08-20 05:00:52



As a Polish-American, I was raised in a culture in which meat was the staple cuisine and the plant-based lifestyle was never spoken about. By college age of 18, my unhealthy eating, countless daily cigarettes, alcohol abuse, and endless dieting (while only getting heavier) all contributed to a miserable, depressed life. By age 18, I topped the scales at 220 pounds. I had difficulty performing everyday tasks, felt out of breath while climbing stairs, and wore hoodies to hide my body. I was in an emotionally unstable, self-destructive downward spiral.

In 2011, determined to live a happy life, I began researching healthy choices that would point me in the right direction. I came across *The China Study* and was shaken. It answered most of my questions and finally made me connect the dots. Switching to a vegetarian diet was the first stepping stone in my transition. It showed me I don't need meat in order to live.

While in transition to the vegan lifestyle, I watched the *Forks Over Knives* documentary, which really hit home. It was scary to think that the patients in the film were about twice my age, yet I felt like them. I had struggled with soda addictions, animal product intake, and feeling overwhelmed by the many "proven" diets that led me only to obesity. Thankfully, the film explained all of the concepts in plain English, which empowered me to easily embrace the full transition to a plant-based diet.

To date, I have released 55 pounds. I am full of energy, a cycling addict, and I never plan out what I can or can't eat. For me, veganism is not about restrictions — it's

about abundance.

I now advocate plant-based eating both for the animals and for human health. The *Forks Over Knives* film and website, as well as the books they recommend, are my go-to resources for introducing friends to the plant-based lifestyle. Although I am a living example, I find the extensive research and case studies imperative for sharing with others.

Veganism proved I can live a healthy life that leaves my body as well as my mind happy. I wouldn't change a thing!