



A BOOK

OF LETTERS TO THE CLINICIAN

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you



Golda Meir

I felt that I was in bad place. My doctor was very concerned about my growing weight and cholesterol, even referred me to Weight Loss center. I found that it has a huge wait list, still not sure if they have anything to offer in my situation.

I tried all diets I ever heard of, bought so many books about dieting, but was slowly by surely gaining weight, nothing helped. With every diet it was always the same story— always hungry, counting dates to the end, and always gaining back weight and a little more, so my weight was growing and growing. I felt that my eating habits were out of control—I was chewing on something all day and never felt satisfied—could finish dinner and be ready to eat again. I never was really hungry but kept eating anyway. The problem for me was that I knew that I need to lose weight, but I didn't have a plan, and didn't know what to do.

And then like miracle came Humberto! And he had a plan and a roadmap and support system—all of these I really needed.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

First thing I found very helpful—use of sugar monitor. It was extremely educational to see how my body reacts to different foods. For example, I thought that I can eat berries without any limitations, so it was a shocker to see how my blood levels spikes after eating fruits, watermelon seemed worse than other fruits for me.

It was important for me that our focus was on getting healthier—reducing inflammation, clearing my head, improving eating habits, and losing weight of course.

And we didn't have buy any pills, everything is natural, food is the medicine, what can be better? In addition, I was amazed to realize that I started saving money on food. In fact, I never spent so little on food in years, at the same time my refrigerator is full of food, but it is a different food—mostly vegetables.

For the last 3 month I never felt hungry and always felt well hydrated. I loved all the smoothies, all soups, booster salad is wonderful. I enjoyed eating all of them and plan to continue for times to come. Every day I was trying to move as much as possible, doing squats every hour. Walking in the morning before work, at lunch. When weather was bad, was walking in place in my house. To be honest—only one thing didn't work for me—box breathing—I am a mouth breather, controlled breathing makes me nervous. Everything else I was doing exactly as suggested. We gradually decreased eating window, and even 6 hours eating window was not a problem for me at all. I was having hard time

keeping 8-9 window before when tried, didn't think that 6 hour eating window is even possible for me. But after a couple month of the protocol, I kept forgetting to eat; and this didn't happen to me since I was very young. It is unbelievable how much changed for me in these three months!.

I am full of energy, dropped a couple of sizes, but want to lose more so trying not to buy anything yet hoping to get into smaller sizes. Another wonderful thing is that skin doesn't sag, I was a little worried about it, but looks like we are losing weight in a healthy way and skin adjusts.

I really enjoyed having specific, easy to follow weekly plan. Also, weekly group meetings were very helpful; people asked various questions, looking from different sides, good to know that you are not alone. What's Up group is a wonderful idea too—people can exchange ideas, also ask questions.

Joan of Arc

I first need to acknowledge how difficult the past two years have been for doctors and nurses. You are my heroes. Thank you all for having the courage to show up.

Before I tell you how much Humberto has helped me, I'd like to begin by giving you information about my health issues and age so you know where I began my process.

I'm now 69 years old. When I was 19 years old, in 1971, I went camping and something bit me on my behind, leaving a big, raised, hot red mark on one cheek. Spider? Tick? I don't know. Within a few days I had a lot of pelvic pain and went to a gynecologist who said my pelvis was very inflamed. He wasn't sure why but guessed it was gonorrhea and gave me antibiotics, which did treat the pelvic pain. It's important to note that my boyfriend at the time had zero symptoms and was never treated and was fine. Again, within a few days, I became overwhelmed by fatigue and weakness and could not go to work. This fatigue lasted 9 months at the time. Of course, there were no tests or information I know of about Lyme disease or any other bug bite diseases in 1971, so I was diagnosed with depression. I have to say, before the bug bite it was one of the happiest times of my life. I was

young and in love, had many, many friends, a job I liked, weighed 125 pounds at 5' 9" and I was otherwise in good physical health. Within 9 months, all symptoms were gone, without being treated, and I thought that was that and went on with my life.

About 31 years ago, again life was good. Lots of friends, recently married to a man I'm still married to today, 36 years later, a good job I liked and had an active social life. My only problem at the time was I was over stressed and overworked. Suddenly I came down with what I thought was a bad case of the flu. I couldn't get out of bed due to weakness and fatigue. My body ached all over and I had a fever and chills. These symptoms did not get better or go away. I saw several doctors at the time and one diagnosed chronic fatigue syndrome after 6 months. At that point I became depressed since there was no cure or effective treatment and my prognosis was very vague, plus I had no life. A psychiatrist at the time said he believed my depression was the result of how I was feeling and not the cause and put me on Prozac, which did help the depression and my perception of the pain. Unfortunately, I remained in bed for the best part of the following 3 years. Both my husband & I were convinced I was dying of something that the doctors either couldn't find or wouldn't look for. The only people I saw were family members during holidays and my husband. I stopped wearing makeup, dressing up or fixing my hair special. When there was a holiday, I'd have to shower the day before, dress the day of, and my husband would drive me to the gathering. Eventually, friends stop calling. When you have a chronic, disabling disease of any kind, this is

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

what tends to happen. I understood, they were all young vibrant people who had a life to live, and it was clear it couldn't include me. Obviously, my life changed dramatically. I've seen internists, infectious disease experts, rheumatologists, and psychiatrists over the years. None have been able to help. I tell you all of this, so you understand how isolating and depressing this illness is and how hard it is on caregivers, like my husband, who had to step up and do so much for me over the years.

After the first 3 ½ years, I very slowly began to feel better, going from bedridden to housebound and eventually having the ability to get out of the house on my own from time to time for doctors' visits and social interactions. This happened very slowly over the course of 20 years.

I have a history of childhood trauma and had anxiety issues in my early twenties that I treated by self-medicating with alcohol. I've now been sober 42 years. Because of this, I've always been open to a psychiatric cause for my illness. I've seen many psychiatrists over the years and have tried many different medications, always hopeful they'd be a cure. One well-meaning psychiatrist gave me Adderall to give me energy. It worked the first day. I walked 5 ½ miles that day and felt great. The second day I could only walk 3 miles and needed to rest afterwards. The third day, I pushed myself to walk 1 mile and rest. The fourth, fifth and sixth days I couldn't get out of bed even though I had taken the Adderall as prescribed. It was clearly not a long-term solution. A message I really need doctors to hear is that a person can have mental health



issues AND have a physical disease completely independent of that diagnosis. The two are not mutually exclusive. Just because there's no medical marker for a disease does not mean it's "all in your head". If you were suddenly really sick and disabled, but looked fine, and your doctors not only had no solutions to help you or worse, didn't believe you were sick, I can promise you, even with the best of childhoods and parents, you'd be depressed. I know I look ok because I managed to get dressed and get to your office but that doesn't mean I am fine. Even if my blood work says I am. At the very least, even if you're skeptical of someone's illness, have some compassion for your patient and acknowledge they are suffering. Remember many diseases like M.S, Lyme disease were thought to "only be in someone's head" until they found a way to scientifically diagnose the illness. It's my hope that someday soon, we'll have some way to definitively diagnose ME/CFS. Especially now that Dr. Fauci has said long covid and ME/CFS symptoms are very similar.

I gained weight throughout the time I was sick and basically ate whatever was premade and easy, got food to go from a restaurant or ate dinner my husband would make. For sure I turned to food for comfort and when I was bored. This, obviously, just created more medical issues I need to deal with.

Because I have suffered from Myalgic Encephalomyelitis M.E. (AKA Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) for 31 years, I was eager to begin Humberto's protocol to see if he could help me. I've tried too many things to list here to help myself over the years and

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you



am always hopeful and looking for natural ways to help myself. As I stated, I was very hopeful and eager to begin the protocol. It didn't take very long before I realized I didn't have the energy to do the protocol as laid out. Humberto was very kind and supportive and adjusted requirements for me. At the time I'd average about 2 hours a day of active time. If I pushed myself and spent 4 hours, I'd have to rest the next day to make up for it. Of course, I also have general daily activities like personal hygiene and household cleaning, etc. to do like everyone else.

When I began the protocol, in addition to the M.E., I also had many digestive issues and pain in my right upper quadrant. I'd had chronic constipation, bloating, gurgling & gas and was only able to treat the constipation with daily MiraLAX, magnesium and Metamucil. I was told I have fatty liver disease and my cecum is in my RUQ and gallbladder sludge. I'm still not sure what was causing the pain since it could be any or all three. In May 2021 I had 5 weeks of radiation in Boston for what we believe is a benign tumor in my skull. When that was over, I was either in bed or in a chair the entire summer and most of the fall and early winter as I recovered.

When Humberto realized how little energy I have and heard my story, he concluded my mitochondria had been damaged. He told me to begin taking NADH 10 mg. and Glutathione 250 mg. to see if that would help. It took time, and it's helped tremendously. What I've been able to do continually and daily is a prescribed smoothie, 1 cup of sauerkraut & 1 cup of kimchi along with a

probiotic capsule, box breathing, dinner with two vegetables and usually fish. Humberto also suggested intermittent fasting. I keep my eating window 8 hours a day, with a few days being 8 ½ hours.

My digestive issues are gone. The RUQ pain is rare. My energy level increased dramatically. Recently I was able to walk an average of 2.5 miles daily for 8 days in a row and still do other work at home afterwards. This is unheard of for me!!! My energy level has continued to increase, and I have hope that it will continue to do so going forward. My sleep is much better. I feel calmer and happier, even during the Omicron surge. For years I've scraped my tongue when I first get up and I've always scraped quite a bit off it. Now, there's nothing to scrape. My thinking and concentration are better.

I began this journey with Humberto hoping only for better digestion and maybe a little more energy due to better diet. He has changed my life in a matter of a couple of months. There's no question about it. Even though I didn't have what it took to do the protocol as he laid it out, my life has changed dramatically for the better.

What's been important to me is Humberto is very specific with his recommendations and protocols. Everything is laid out very clearly. I can't say it's easy as I'm not a cook, but it's simple and clear. For example, he gives a recipe for a salad meant to help the microbiome in your body and explains why the body's



microbiome needs attention. We all know we must “eat right, move more”, “Lose weight”. “Eat more fruits and vegetables”. I’ve honestly tried to do this over the years but I’m not a doctor or a nutritionist. I love fruit. Bananas, pears, apples, oranges, grapes, watermelon, peaches, berries, nectarines, mangoes, papayas. I eat them all and love them. Humberto educated me as to how much sugar is in these foods and how the excess sugar converts to fat and raises blood sugar and should be eaten sparingly with more of an emphasis on berries. Telling me to eat more protein and vegetables is not as helpful as prescribing a full, very specific meal plan. Not everyone had good parents that taught them good eating habits. Or discipline habits. I believe your average person really needs more education with regards to nutrition. It should be taught in school beginning at a young age, so people understand that what they’re putting in their bodies affects their health. I believe stress reduction techniques should be taught as well. At 69 years old I can tell you that the availability of junk foods is dramatically different than when I was a child, when an obese person really stood out in a crowd.

There’s no question we need more education so people understand that what they put into their mouths will either give them health or disease. It’s really that simple. People need to know what sugar is doing to their bodies and minds. What stress is doing to their bodies and minds. HOW is exercise going to help them? I believe education is the key to motivating people to help themselves. Nutritionists cost a lot of money. Most people can’t afford to go continually. You can’t learn everything you need



to know in a few office visits. You just can't. It would be nice if insurance would cover these visits, but they don't. I would think that with obesity being the cause of so many diseases, insurance companies would save money by helping people to change their lifestyles.

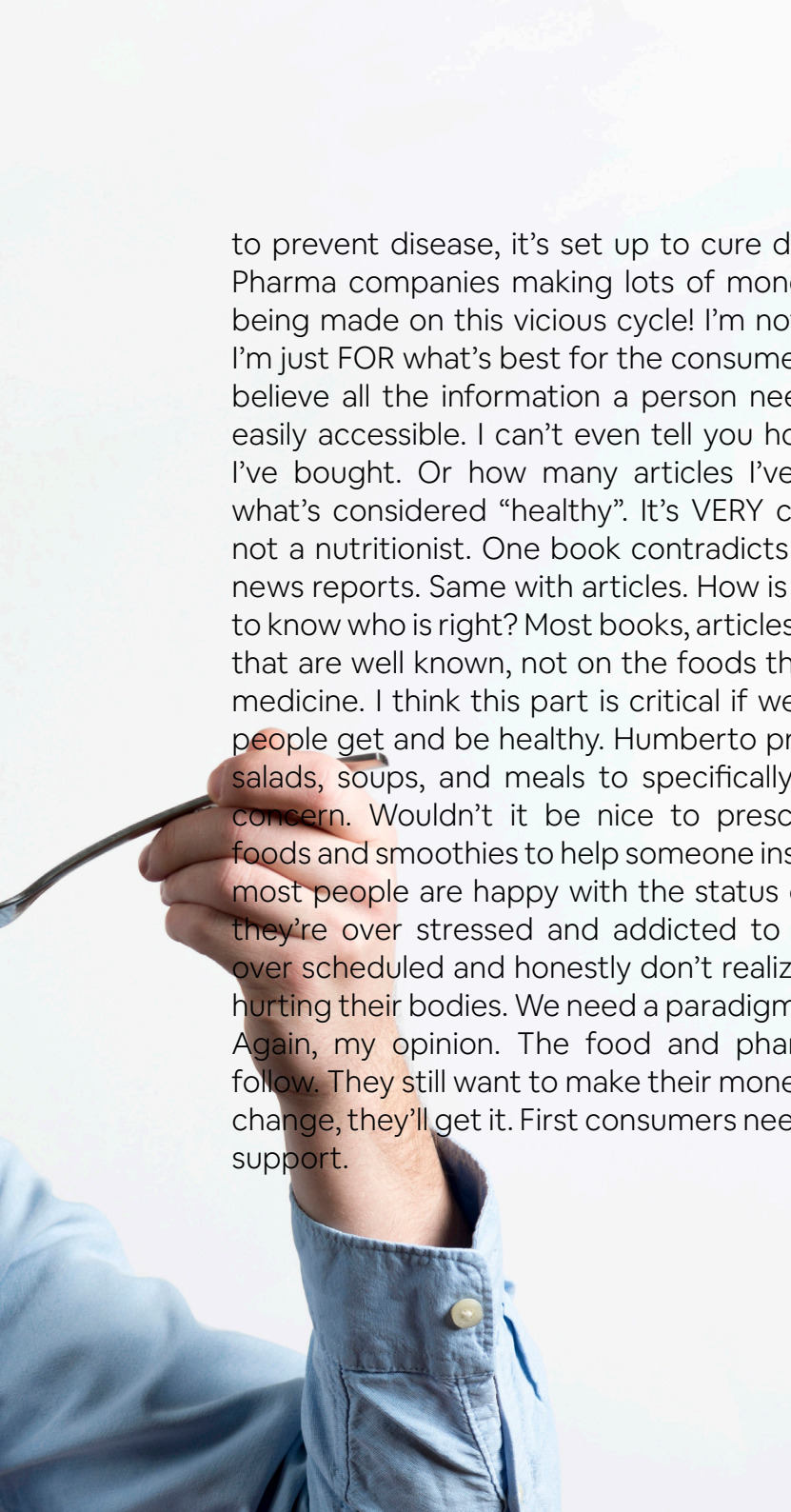
The other critical component of changing your lifestyle is support. I know MGH has nutrition classes and support groups. They're great if you live nearby and have a flexible schedule. Not so much if you don't. I really like that Humberto can do his meetings on Zoom at a time that's usually convenient for most. I do think it would be helpful if there would be a way to access a meeting after the fact in case you can't make it to that particular meeting. He educates people during the meetings and tells them how and why they need to change a particular aspect of their life. He focuses on a particular subject during the meetings, like

the microbiome, or glucose or the importance of a good night's sleep, or how to deal with stress. The support online is very helpful. We can ask questions and help each other with a myriad of things. Like finding dragon fruit in the supermarket. Where do you find it? What's it look like? Personally, I'd never even heard of dragon fruit before. The support helps to know you're not doing this alone too. It's very hard to change in a vacuum.

It's my belief that food companies only care about their bottom line and they do everything they can to make their products taste the best so they can make more money. The American lifestyle is set up for these companies to make money and serve people who need convenience. It's so easy, but not healthy, to fill up on fast food, junk food and restaurant food. The healthcare system is backwards, in my opinion. Instead of focusing time and money on making sure people have all the information they need

I began this journey with Humberto hoping only for better digestion and maybe a little more energy due to better diet. He has changed my life in a matter of a couple of months. There's no question about it. Even though I didn't have what it took to do the protocol as he laid it out, my life has changed dramatically for the better.





to prevent disease, it's set up to cure disease with pills. Big Pharma companies making lots of money. So much money being made on this vicious cycle! I'm not against capitalism, I'm just FOR what's best for the consumer. I'm aware doctors believe all the information a person needs to be healthy is easily accessible. I can't even tell you how many diet books I've bought. Or how many articles I've read online about what's considered "healthy". It's VERY confusing. Again, I'm not a nutritionist. One book contradicts another. Same with news reports. Same with articles. How is someone supposed to know who is right? Most books, articles, etc. focus on foods that are well known, not on the foods that could be used as medicine. I think this part is critical if we really want to help people get and be healthy. Humberto prescribes smoothies, salads, soups, and meals to specifically target a particular concern. Wouldn't it be nice to prescribe specific whole foods and smoothies to help someone instead of a pill? I know most people are happy with the status quo. That's because they're over stressed and addicted to the junk foods and over scheduled and honestly don't realize how much they're hurting their bodies. We need a paradigm shift in this country. Again, my opinion. The food and pharma companies will follow. They still want to make their money. If people demand change, they'll get it. First consumers need the education and support.

It's my hope that with organizations like MGH behind him, Humberto and Boston Healthiest will flourish and grow and help many more people in the future. I'd love to see insurance companies cover a series of meetings. Like \$? For 8 weekly meetings. Something like that. And \$? For 30 minutes of personal coaching from him that's focused on the individual. IF insurance companies really want to cut their costs, they need to step up and really help people to get the knowledge they need to prevent illness in the first place. Without education and support, things will remain the way they are, which is treating illness, not preventing it.

It's also my greatest hope that as I continue to work with Humberto and Boston Healthiest, now that I have more energy, I will be able to lose weight and gain muscle and even better health.

Maya Angelou

As a child, I was always perceived as a physically big person; I never felt out of place or strange or insecure about how I looked. Especially around my family, everyone was of different shapes, heights, and sizes. And culturally, since my family was from Haiti, it was okay to be heavysset because it represented wealth. But it wasn't until I left my family circle and went to school, I realized that I was different not only in my race, culture, and language but also in size. Everyone in my class was primarily thin, and I stood out like a sore thumb! I was teased and called fatso or gorilla girl!

My mother would take me to my annual pediatrician's office visit; the doctor constantly measured my wrist because he said it was substantially large. He also repeatedly scolded my mother to stop overfeeding me junk food, which wasn't true. I may have overeaten, but my mother never fed me or my siblings junk food, and she cooked healthy home-cooked ethnic Haitian food. At that point, my trauma and anxiety began with doctors. Whenever I visited my doctor, I knew it meant a lot of poking, prodding, a conversation about obesity, eating less, and exercising. I always equated my pediatrician as the dreadful news dispatcher for kids like me, who was too incapable of giving good news.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

When I became a teenager, I became very self-conscious and very aware of my presence in the world. I started reading teen magazines and hated how I looked. I constantly saw tons of ads for diet pills. At fifteen years old, I purchased my first diet pills. I did lose a lot of weight, but I still wasn't thin. My doctor didn't encourage nor discourage taking the diet pills, but instead, she showed me a chart that stated what weight I should be at my height and age. It was such a letdown when I saw how much "off the chart" I was from the recommended weight

By the time I started college, I had embarked on my journey of yo-yo dieting. I went to my annual doctor's appointment; she mentioned the same things yadda, yadda, yadda, "you're obese, you have to exercise and eat less." I then told her I was thinking of trying Slim Fast Shakes; she thought it was a great idea. I even had another doctor recommend trying the controversial and risky weight-loss drug Fen/Phen to help me lose weight. This same doctor also suggested that I see a nutritionist. I agreed, but she didn't say anything different from what I already knew; eat more vegetables, exercise, and lose weight. The nutritionist also never knew how to incorporate ethnic foods into her diet plan, which only consisted of traditional American fare.

I am married, and now I have three children. Not much had changed about my weight; I was still overweight and obese. My doctor was always on my case and said that I needed to do something about my weight or else I would develop chronic diseases. I'll be honest, growing up and feeling fat-shamed,

my doctor's weight advice often went in one ear and went out of the other. Seeing my doctor gave me so much anxiety that I would make an appointment and reschedule it when it came close to the time for the visit. One time, I made it to my doctor's office parking lot, then chickened out and called to cancel the appointment; I didn't want to be humiliated. This tension and stress of doctors happened so often that I avoided seeing my doctor or any doctor for years. Although my current doctor had nothing to do with my past experiences with doctors, I was too stressed and traumatized to keep my appointments. Despite my feelings towards doctors, I never really questioned them. I believed they were the experts on the human body; they had medical degrees and knew the best!





As I reached middle age, I began not to feel well physically. I felt like I was dragging; I assumed and blamed it on getting older. I felt tired because my children kept me super busy; I had gassy stomach pains and achy joints, and now wearing reading glasses was a homage to getting older. Even though I drastically cut back on what I ate, I noticed I gained more weight and didn't understand how and why.

I had a breaking point! My father became very ill when the COVID crisis began. I had an emotional and physical breakdown when my father became very sick. At that time, he did get better but was still fragile. My mom received an email from Boston Healthiest to join them on Zoom. My mom was so excited that she suggested that I try this program with her. Living in a multigenerational household, we all needed a "good" distraction from our constant worries and taking care of my father. I admit I was skeptical and thought it would be something like weight watchers (which I tried and failed).

My first zoom meeting with Boston Healthiest went well. I loved that it was convenient, and our group leader/coach said many things that made sense. I followed a two-week detox with the Boston Healthiest group and felt great. But sadly, my father became very sick again, but unfortunately, he didn't make it this time; he died. I was on an emotional roller coaster; I was so devastated, sad, and stressed!

My father's death made me realize that life is short; I looked at

my life and realized I wasn't happy with how I felt and how things were going. I decided to concentrate on my mental health, take care of my body, and overall self-care.

One day I received an email from my doctor's office stating that Boston Healthiest was starting a new detox session, and the slogan was something along the lines of, you do not have to take medication to be healthy. I thought maybe it was fate that I received the email. I had such a positive experience when I initially did it with my mom, so I decided to do it again, and it was great! Then Boston Healthiest soon offered a challenging and individualized new program. I was excited but had cold feet. I started to talk myself out of it and thought I was too busy with my family and job to participate; I decided to take a leap and go for it. That was the best decision I made in a VERY long time!

I first learned about the magic of Box Breathing, its benefits, and how to do it. Learning how to take a deep breath in, hold for 4 seconds, and release and hold again, I continued that rotation every day. Box Breathing has been phenomenal! It has helped me relax and not feel so stressed and uptight. This method of breathing was therapeutic. I paid more attention to what triggered my glucose level. Although I am not diabetic, through my glucose arm monitor, I learned what unhealthy sugary foods and certain fruits to stay away from.

Boston Healthiest taught me that eating poorly can do bad things to your body, like blocking the nutrients you need to



stay healthy. The importance of choosing the right foods to eat and eating lots of fish for omega3 can save you from developing life-threatening chronic diseases. Boston Healthiest also gave us terrific recipes to cook and help improve our microbiomes, cut inflammation, and improve brain and internal body health. And most importantly, the essential benefits of sleeping and resting our bodies for healing and much more. I didn't realize how much I was missing until I started to feel great physically! I never knew I was feeling bad all that time. I accepted the idea that it's okay to feel bad, but it's not! I also love that Boston Healthiest never pushed us to focus on weight loss; instead, it was focused on eating healing foods and changing our lifestyles. The leader/coach once told me that just because a person was an athlete or thin didn't mean they were healthy and that it was a myth. I decided to avoid being obsessed with the scale and constant weigh-ins (even though I did lose weight); instead, I paid more attention to how I felt and my health. I soon started to experience the changes happening with my body; my clothes felt less constricting, I went down a shoe size, my face appeared brighter, and someone told me I looked great!

will say, eating the right foods was not all I needed to feel better. I also had an amazingly patient coach with whom I had weekly one on one coaching.

And most importantly, I had a wonderfully supportive community! We had weekly meetings, and we were all a part of a chat group. We were also in the same program and often shared our triumphs and downfalls. We were there for each other when

we felt off track and lost our way. They were always there to say it's okay, cheer you on, and encourage you to get back on. It's been an incredible journey; I still have a lot more steps to go, and this time, I've been equipped with valuable tools to continue my physical and mental healing journey.

I'm excited and looking forward to continuing a better and more permanent way of eating, taking care of myself, feeling great, and being happy!



The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you



Margaret Thatcher

Before I started with Boston's Healthiest, if you were to ask me if I ate healthily, the answer would have been, "Yes, absolutely." But I have experientially learned that my understanding, assumptions, and even what the doctors at the American Diabetes Association prescribe, were out of whack for me. These past few months have taught me what I actually have to eat and the way I must live to change my microbiome by adding new habits to feel truly healthy. I now have a proven prescription for new tools to create a total change in lifestyle to achieve health and life. I have not thrown away my other prescriptions yet, but this is a game-changer for me. This is a prescriptive roadmap, and support for, an impactful lifestyle as a powerful medicine. Before Boston's Healthiest I was trying to get healthy, but really just trying to lose weight by eating more vegetables, going to my trainer three times per week, never smoking nor drinking, and taking montelukast, atorvastatin, and metformin every day. But at best I was only slowing my decline in health.

In July 2014, when my primary care physician, Dr. Gelev, told me I was pre-diabetic, I was shocked. She informed me I had probably been working on this for the past 20 years or more. So,

when I was invited to join this group, I had reservations about how effective it would be. After all, I have been carrying a large belly since I gave birth at 43. I am now 3 months shy of being 76. But I realized that my Alc was 6.3. My stomach measured 43 inches in diameter. My triglycerides sometimes rose to above 380. My weight hovered over 180 pounds. My blood pressure was around 130/80. I was a "Hot mess."

IMPACT:

Name	9/2/21	4/5/22
Triglycerides	209	60
Cholesterol	200	114
HDL Cholesterol	37	47
LDL Cholesterol	121	55
CHOL/HDL ratio	5.4	2.4
Weight (pounds)	183	160
Hgb A1c	6.3	6.0
B/P	133/87	W111/72
Stomach Circ.(inch)	43	41

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

GUIDING VERSUS PRESCRIBING LIFESTYLE

I attended two lectures given by our coach, Humberto Moncayo, which were inspiring and educational. We tried to incorporate his suggestions but following a list of “to-dos” was not as effective as this regimen. Partly because everyone’s personal filters and assumptions vary from what our coach meant. He was right, I needed the Road Map as signposts along the way plus the support. I believe everyone does. It is not intuitive given our culture. Our food culture, social habits, media, medical practices, advertising, and lifestyles do not provide the support to make the changes needed to be healthy. Also, you cannot measure what you do not measure. The common metric is a focus on weight- how many pounds I lost or gained is easy to

measure, but I learned that weight is a lagging and inaccurate indicator of true health. Weight is a sideshow to the health of my microbiome, glucose levels, and amount of sleep and exercise. The group connections were critical. Before, working alone on changing my lifestyle was not successful. I had constant questions and misunderstandings which were unresolved barriers. In this group of peers with a common goal, and with the guidance of Coach Humberto and Dr. Gelev, we were able to overcome any frustration; clarify all the cobwebs and build a cost-effective and efficient support group. It made getting better possible.



COOKING/BLENDING MENTAL RESET

I had never done smoothies. I am now learning how to shop for the ingredients that I need. The same for making bone broths. Dropping the habit of buying what is fast and tasty was a major adjustment, but one that now seems natural. Support through a coach and the group showed me a way out of the morass.

EATING WINDOW

Adhering to the adage “breakfast is the most important meal of the day,” we ate huge breakfasts. It set the tone for overeating all day long. Eating out constantly did not help. Without the coach and support group, I would never have had the confidence to limit my eating window. I now understand and I will carry a cooler to have smoothies and soups as needed on long trips.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you



INCREASED EXERCISE

Seeing my trainer 2 or 3 times a week was insufficient. Making time to do long walks is a must. I walk 10,000 to 20,000 steps a day with water aerobics 2-3 times a week and some pickleball. Squats are sporadic for me, but I will need to build them into my life. What I realize is the time I am spending exercising is improving the quality of my life. Extending my health is worthwhile and I am enjoying it.

INCREASED WATER, COLD SHOWERS, AND CHEWING

Not natural for me. I still do not drink enough water, but I have made improvements. I rarely miss the large glass of morning water with cider vinegar. Chewing slower, in general, has not yet become habitual. Though I never thought I could do this, ending my shower in a cold setting is now a habit.

COSTS

Hard to compare since excessive eating out and takeouts are so expensive, but I know I am saving money in my case

BOX BREATHING

I am not practicing this as diligently as I should but doing it about 20% of the time. I sometimes do this during my evening walk. It is difficult during the daytime walk as people always want to talk. I work on the phone and drive a lot, so I am also sitting too much. I need to work on increasing my movement during the day. Unfortunately, I have not figured out how to work box-breathing into my normal regimen.

SLEEPING

Always has been difficult for me: peeing during the night, socializing late, long commutes, long-distance calls in the evenings, too much stimulation, and stress. Unplugging the TV in the bedroom, drinking Valerian tea at bedtime, and doing more activity and exercise has helped. Also, not going to restaurants has been helpful as well.



EMOTIONAL CHANGES

I had resigned myself to being overweight with a massive belly. After all, I was 75. So, the emotional change that comes with the improvements has been huge. My new knee and losing 20 pounds make me a desired pickleball partner and a walking companion. Inclusion is a boost to my physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Looking better doesn't hurt either. Losing 20 pounds is effectively taking 60 pounds off my new knees. I am a better partner and can do more of my share of the cleaning. The house looks better. Cutting back on vitamin supplements and pills made me less disappointed when there were no visible results. I am now more hopeful that I can cut back on my medications one day.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

ATTAINABLE GOALS

I need to keep my gains permanent. I still need significantly decrease my belly fat. I measured at 43 inches but last measured at 41, I want to achieve the recommended norm. I want to incorporate all the new ingredients and foods that I have learned about and learn to love cooking in this style. Keep my friends that I love but change the way I eat with them. This one will be difficult. Find ways to exercise and work efficiently. Learn to stress less. Breathe more. Practice more gratitude. Stay in touch with the group to find connections, inspiration, and cooking ideas. Stay feeling supported, with shared hope. Be more disciplined about driving less and be more active. My results to date make me realize that these are attainable goals.

ASPECTS MOST BENEFICIAL

The road map of instructions and recipes was CRITICAL for me. The GROUP was also critical in making me feel supported and not discouraged. Coach Humberto's data-driven positive leadership with Dr. Gelev's medical wisdom allowed me to ask questions with which I would normally be reluctant to bother health professionals. More courage in a group than solo. Humans are social animals.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE CEO

Incentivize physicians to experience the very real benefits of a Boston Healthiest lifestyle. All medical doctors, PAs, nurses, and support staff should go through a trial and challenge themselves to experience their results. Then offer it to their patients as needed, making it acceptable for a hybrid of drugs, counseling, and lifestyle. The medical profession can take the lead by directly going into a positive program. Most importantly make this program an insurance-covered prescription in the arsenal of all physicians because lifestyle counseling can be systematized, it will substantially reduce MGH's operating costs and reduce the costs of medical care for patients while providing more efficacious and efficient health care. It will increase the team connection between the hospital and its patients.

I would make this program mandatory for all patients struggling with health and weight. Nothing is worse than receiving a negative diagnosis, and knowing you must fix it, but not having concrete steps to follow. Incentives in the form of financial gift cards or reduced medical fees, backed up by a support group would be great. An ROI study of Boston Healthiest patients to financially support lifestyle and diet would be useful. This could spin-off several profitable MGH programs and side businesses.

Cooperate with the appropriate organization and start a grading system of restaurants on a "Healthy" A to D scale based on healthy options offered which can be placed in their windows,

not unlike the cleanliness grades currently in force.

Be the hospital that creates and leads in offering results-driven "Road Maps" and Group Supported Programs. Regular tracking of key biometrics is important. This is a unique opportunity to improve the MGH brand and leadership by fostering great results among its' physicians, staff, administration, and patients.



The journey with Boston Healthiest started in 2018, I was experiencing severe back pain and I was bedridden for one month from Sciatica. At the age of 30, I started having serious inflammation in my feet and ankles, I was told at the time, to decrease my sodium.

The humid summer months were the worst. I'd be irritable from the water retention, wearing prescribed support stockings that were for the birds, especially in August and the constant pain was exhausting! The prescribed diuretic which I took during the summer provided minimal relief and I'd experience late-night heartburn.

During a scheduled visit with my internist, Dr. Leslie Vensel for Sciatica, she suggested I join the BH program. God's honest truth, before entering the examining room, I noticed the staff looked like they had lost a few pounds. My observation was confirmed when Dr.V. mentioned WWWshe and several staff members had attended BH with positive results, naturally, it was a key factor for my decision to venture into "intermittent fasting"! Losing the weight would definitely elevate the pain along with physical therapy and a prescription of 15mg. of Phentermine HCL one tablet daily. My eating habits were dreadful, not having much of an appetite in the mornings, I skipped breakfast altogether, drank coffee and water, hardly ate at noon unless there was a scheduled occasion at a restaurant, but I faithfully made time for tea at 3 pm along with pastries. Dinner between 7-8 pm with my family, indulging again around 10 pm or later

with coffee, tea, and yet again something sweet.

With the in-person meetings at MGH and the "BH intermittent fasting" I lost close to 30 pounds, and the back pain and heartburn were all GONE! The inflammation decreased but the ankles remained slightly swollen (I resolved myself to the inflammation). I had no need for the Phentermine and stopped it altogether, embracing BH's protocols as my "lifestyle". My hypertension is relatively normal, the only prescribed medication to date is Losartan Potassium. To say I was grateful is an understatement,

Cokie

but I was not unaware there's much more to do daily to improve and maintain one's optimal health!

The pandemic officially hits Boston in March of 2020, in September there's a similar war as we are witnessing in Ukraine today. It took place in Nagorno-Karabakh, 44 days of a senseless war, displaying thousands of refugees to the capital of Armenia. Before my retirement, I worked for public broadcasting in Boston. I, along with a team of American Armenians from the

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

media, was called to duty to bring greater awareness of the war. Writing endless press releases to national and international media outlets and letters to the US Congress for increased aid. Up at ungodly hours, sleeping no more than 4 to 6 hours a day, in a continuous state of mourning. This gut-wrenching period of my life is shared with you because of two significant protocols which I learned recently. Had I known what I know now, it would have made a huge difference in my well-being! The BH protocols obviously ceased, and the sweets increased! Within two years,

Roberts

my level of physical pain increased as well resulting in limiting my physical activity, at my wits end from sciatica which now was causing a numbing sensation in my right upper thigh when I tried to rest and/or sleep at night, the inflammation again in both feet and ankles, including my hands and fingers, bloated belly, and the darn weight gain!

Last December, it was sheer luck, Dr. V's office informed me BH was starting up again! When I initially entered this study, I said to

myself, shed the weight and everything will fall into place or so I thought! In January, I wrote in my journal, "It's not enough to lose weight, I need to be smart COVID is not going away and what's coming down the pike is a big unknown! Learn how to build a strong immune system. Make your goal "to do it" and strive to do "your best" whatever that may be, but "do it" for yourself! With the knowledge I gain, it's dully important as a mother to teach my daughter good nutrition."

In the months that followed we prepared all our meals from scratch. The ingredients and preparation of entrees brought back childhood memories, the fresh fish, veggies, herbs, and spices are a part of our cuisine. What Humberto taught us in detail is how eating the right combination of foods would benefit our wellbeing, for example, an 18-ingredient veggie soup entitled "Autumn Stew" filled with antioxidants would boost our health defenses while nurturing our microbiome, our mitochondria and giving us a perfect micronutrients balance! Not to mention it's delicious and a favorite now for my family. Had I known this two years ago, things would have been so different.

I also started questioning myself, what was my excuse, for not preparing meals, many of which I was familiar with? One word, convenience! It was easy to run out and buy Trader's brand salsa or order take-out.

Today I feel empowered with the knowledge I've gained. Scheduling prep time in the kitchen, in full control of the amount

of sodium, and an added bonus, there are no hidden sugars! Humberto recommended I use the following supplements, Krill Oil, Magnesium, Vitamin D, and Niacin. By mid-February, I noticed I was regaining my strength and a substantial decrease in inflammation, and without exaggeration... After two decades, I actually see my ankles! Pleased to say the pain levels continue to decrease, the above ailments listed are gone. I continue to lose weight and I haven't taken Motrin since December, back to doing physical activity!


Last month I discovered something new, I have a tendency of holding my breath, especially when under stress or when fully concentrating on a task. The subject matter in my press releases thank goodness is no longer war-related but deadlines remain stressful! I can only imagine how helpful it would have been if I knew how to "Box Breath".

I do it more often than the recommended five minutes 3-4X/day. When on my computer for more than 20 minutes, I now get up, stretch and then do the box breathing. It helps me to refocus and beyond a doubt lessens my stress level.

What remains an ongoing challenge is my sleep routine. Rarely do I go to bed before 11 pm or midnight. I was not aware of the "circadian rhythm", and if not addressed, it will undo and jeopardize all my efforts during the day! It's a matter of time but I'm determined to do my best to achieve it.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you





**The purpose of
this book is not to
convince you but to
show you**

Elizabeth Queen

A lot of us don't like to admit it, but food and body image are emotional and very hard things to talk about. This is especially true when you've had a bumpy journey with weight, and you are trying to make peace with food and your body. But you can't make peace until you understand food. I thought I did. I am highly educated, have traveled to 45 countries, come from an amazing family, and have access to fantastic health care. But honestly, none of that matters unless you are healthy from the inside out. What does that mean? To me, it means my insides are healthy and functioning so I can live an optimum life. What does that mean to me? Being active, feeling great daily, looking great, planning for life in my 80s and 90s. Maybe to 104. Living life to the fullest and enjoying all my hobbies. I am a 63-year-old very active female who has always tried to eat healthily and exercise. I am very active with my family, career, travel, hiking, spinning, cooking, and community. Given my busy lifestyle, I must plan. We usually travel 4 weeks out of the year and spend the weekend summers on the high seas boating near Newport, RI.

Maybe those of you reading this are still on your journey, like me. Or perhaps you haven't begun! Regardless of where you stand today, I am excited to share this story with you because it is a topic that I'm very passionate about, and one that I get questions about often. How did I change my eating habits? My food shopping habits. Why does my skin have a healthy glow? Why do I have so much energy? Well, in the fall of 2021 I had the opportunity to partner with my doctor, Dr. Christina Gelev and Humberto Moncayo, the founder of Boston Healthiest. They are

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you



so passionate about food as medicine as I am. What precipitated this was an annual physical that showed high cholesterol and sugar levels. This was in the fall of 2021. I have high numbers?! But I am careful, and I am eating healthy. How could this be?

Dr. Gelev suggested addressing these issues by working on reducing inflammation and getting educated about food. I was glad because I don't want pills. Come to find out that the fix was in the power of food. You see, we do not have to count calories, or follow a specific diet to achieve a body that is healthy and worthy of respect. You need to eat right and mostly feed your body with the most powerful foods. She reinforced that you don't have to weigh a certain amount or even look a certain way to be proud of your body. She said the words that I needed to hear! I am still hearing them. Most important is the health of the inside of your body.

The food journey and what to eat is often difficult because most of us must undo what we have learned over the years. It is often very difficult as everybody knows because life is so busy and to eat healthily you need to be very playful and regimented. For many years I thought I was doing all the right things to stay fit and healthy. With all the activities mentioned above, I would also go to the Gym religiously three to four times a week and do some weight training. I packed lunch and snacks while on the road, made sure I was drinking a lot of water with lemon or citrus, eating fruits and vegetables having lots of whole grains, lean proteins, and nourishing on what I thought was a healthy



regimen. But what was sabotaging my weight loss and health was some of the areas where I didn't understand food. I was not educated on what I was eating.

For instance, I would have cereal for breakfast, but even low sugar brands have several carbohydrates. This may have been followed by an apple or orange, even if they have high sugar. I would have a salad with lean protein and salad dressing, but they're filled with too many fats, calories, and chemicals. For a snack maybe a cheese stick and whole-grain crackers, peanut butter with celery or carrots. For dinner a protein, veggie, salad, rice, etc. You would not think those foods are so terrible but in doing the research and participating in the Alpha Boston Healthiest Group I came to find out that I could be doing so much more to ensure my body was getting the right nutrients. I was shocked that what I thought were healthy choices were being sabotaged by my lack of understanding about food.

As with most issues I am faced with, I plan of action to tackle. I attended almost every group meeting, read books, asked questions, allowed myself to admit hard truths, tried recipes, shopped differently, and cooked differently. I cut out the following just about 90%. I must be honest and say 90% because habits are hard to change. I cut out all nuts except walnuts and almonds, most cheese except the ones recommended and only have on occasion, all processed foods, cereal, crackers, high sugar fruit, sauces like BBQ, chips, most breads, on occasion Dave's bread or 100% whole grain, dairy, all salad dressings,

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you



daily dark chocolate, popcorn, pasta, all rice except brown on occasion, regular butter, only use Kelly Gold. I added fish to the regimen more, cut carbohydrates, learned to make bone broth, and have fasted for a few months from 12-18 hrs. per day. I use oil and vinegar on my salad with lemon, I drink warm water, take cooler showers, and I have incorporated many other suggestions. I feel good. But these changes must be worked on every day, and I do get off track. Especially when life gets busy and unbalanced sometimes. Elderly parents, Career, Celebrations, Life stuff.

So, here's my so here's my plan for all of you that are trying to make the change to a healthier lifestyle, like Nike says JUST DO IT! When you go to the supermarket shop the outer perimeter. Buy colorful vegetables red, yellow, and green peppers. Buy avocados and add avocados to your daily list of foods you eat. Have spinach to get iron. Buy all kinds of herbs.

Maybe even start your own herb garden. Cut the sugar, cut nuts, cut processed foods—change your habits—you will feel the difference your body will feel the difference. Also, once you get into the rhythm of fasting it really isn't that hard if you wake up and can wait till noon time to eat something and make a choice to have a healthy item at that time and then keep your eating window to 6-8 hours and then let your body rest from 8 PM until the following day at noon you are giving your cells a chance to regenerate you're giving your body a chance to rest. Autophagy! It makes such a difference if you can add to your daily exercise whether it's walking stretching, cardio, spinning, or running. If

you can hydrate consistently and can add Vitamin D and Krill, it's good for your body. Cut dairy, and sugar, leave the bread behind and use romaine lettuce or dark green lettuce to wrap delicious foods, it's going to make such a difference. If you can slow down in the supermarket and understand the different benefits of certain foods, it'll make a huge difference. It may even increase your life span.

What these past months have done is educate me about food and how to eat to be healthy, keep my body in good condition, fight off disease, and respect food as the healing entity it is. I now feel like I have found some food freedom in terms of control, meaning I know what to eat for health and I can practice intuitive eating and body kindness. Come to find out many other people were trying to improve their health, turn around a medical condition and learn.

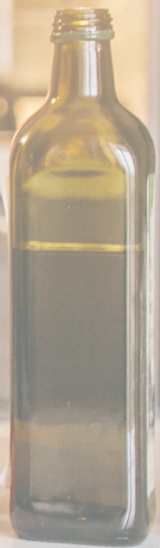
The group I participated in is and was amazing. We met every week for several months virtually, kept journals, communicated with each other constantly, shared recipes, celebrated one another's success and we have become bonded. This group of men and women who were curious to learn more about this way of thinking became a force led by Dr. Christina Gelev and Humberto Moncayo of Boston Healthiest. It was a small, intimate group, and one that I feel so grateful for. I participated a lot and asked questions. I sensed zero judgment in the meetings for we were all trying to make changes. I felt compassion and caring, and most of the people there were strangers, aside from my

dear Dr. If someone missed a meeting we shared information, documents via email, and amazing recipes too.

Before, I didn't understand food.... I would make a healthy salad but then use salad dressing. Not a good choice. I would have a snack that included all kinds of nuts. I would have chicken with barbecue sauce or some kind of topping and I would have cheese as a snack. I was eating a lot of apples and oranges which are loaded with sugar. My cholesterol was high. After the Thanksgiving holiday, my sugar was high. Dr. Gelev suggested that I work with Humberto Moncayo and Boston Healthiest and learn more about food. Well, I can tell you that this journey has been incredible not only do I feel empowered, but I can see a change in my body. I learned about the difference between

omega six and omega 3. I learned about the correct way to shop. I learned about intermittent fasting and autophagy and the benefits that come from that. I learned box breathing which is an incredible way of getting oxygen to all parts of our body that makes a big difference in how our organs function. I learned how to cook using the right seasonings, so I never ate a lot of processed foods because I was trying to be careful. But some of the foods that I thought were healthy were not as healthy as they could be. My total shopping weekly has changed 100%. I shop for lean proteins vegetables and all-natural products only. This has resulted in cooking being done very very different as well I have also discovered the benefits of bone broth and what that can do to our bodies and have tried making four different bone broths.

My goal is to continue to fast so that my body has the chance to rest and when I choose to eat food I try and make the healthiest choice possible. This is a complete change because there's healthy and then there's what's healthy and we've been made to think by the companies that produce food that there are healthy options. But some of the things that we think are healthy options are not so Dr. Gelev and Humberto have taken the time to teach. They have taken the time to listen...they have taken the time to coach and show us all the tools that we need to live our healthiest. There are so many benefits and such a feeling of empowerment of knowing the best choice for your body. There obviously are situations where you may go back to old habits but my habits at this point, I would say are healthier choices.



I enjoy myself but I enjoy myself with items that are the best choices for my body. I intend to go and have my cholesterol checked in my A1C to see if there's a difference in May. There's a lot of power in this program...I believe it's the power to choose. I was feeling optimum when on vacation in the Mountains and had completed doing a three-day bone broth and fasting challenge. I could see the difference from the inside out as there's a lot of collagen in bone broth and I could see it in my skin. I'm just going to continue to take the very best care of myself and to listen and learn as much as I can continue to do as I don't want to be on a lot of medication. I want to be hiking, traveling, and feeling great.

I feel that this journey has given me so many the tools in terms of eating out when I'm on a weekend away or with friends I try and pick the healthiest item on the menu whether that's broiled salmon broiled fish, a green salad, spinach salad, and a steamed veggie. The same thing at family parties and I

have just learned to cook so differently and using spices and different healthy olive oil's or different fresh herbs. Pick the best option. Request the best choice. This has made such a difference, so I wanted to share how incredible this has been for me and encourage people don't go for the pill to learn more about food and its benefits.

Take the journey, learn what your body likes, learn about intermittent fasting, learn about the power and benefits of

bone broth, read information about food, and stay away from processed food on all accounts.

The journey continues for me to eat the healthiest food possible every chance I get.

In closing, I want to implore the medical community no matter what focus you are in to get educated. Learn about food as medicine. Patients cannot keep relying on pills for everything and need to understand the serious consequences of not treating their bodies with care. We all know there is a percentage of people who either don't care or can't understand the situation. But, those who can, should work towards using food as medicine before taking pills and they should exercise.

There are many pieces to good health as we know...Food as medicine, sleep habits, stress reduction, balance, understanding how the body processes food, what's in food, etc. It's not that you need to become a runner for the Boston Marathon. But you need to move and feed your body with the nutrients it needs to stay well. I still have a long way to go to understand even more but I know this program has helped me so much and so many and maybe you could benefit. It may even save your life. Learn and educate no matter what your job is as a Dr, Nurse, Social Services, etc. Fight for your future.

Clark Kent

Fifteen years ago, after years of joint pain and sports injuries never quite healing fully, I was diagnosed with Psoriatic Arthritis. I grew up as an athlete and never thought much about physical health, the foods that I was eating, or what they might be doing to my body, mind and spirit. After my diagnosis, I was put on various biologics to keep both my Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis in check. Even while on these drugs, I never gave much thought to my diet or metabolism.

Three years ago, when my weight ballooned to 250 pounds, and my bloodwork was poor, I worked with my doctor and Boston Healthiest on a 30-day metabolic reset. This reset focused on withdrawing from the years of processed sugar I had fed my body and decreasing inflammation. This reset was successful in terms of weight loss (~35 pounds), feeling better and improved bloodwork, but it didn't teach me how to change my lifestyle for long term success. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit...and everything came crashing down again.

Fast forward to November 2021 and my annual physical. I wasn't in a good mental state, was in a lot of pain, and my weight had ballooned again, this time to 241 pounds. My bloodwork showed that my:

- A1C was in the low diabetic range; at that moment I was a Type II diabetic
- Vitamin D was lower than the range my doctor wanted
- Lipid profile was very unfavorable
- CRP was the highest my doctor of 30 years had ever seen for me

These results were a wake-up call. My doctor told me that Boston Healthiest was about to start a new program, and that I should reach out to Humberto and participate. The focus this time was to fix my metabolism, improve my health, and change my lifestyle....so it was more sustainable long term to how I live – wife, 2 kids, job, coaching sports, and graduate school. I would end up pairing the Boston Healthiest program with MGH's On-

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

line Behavioral Health program to improve my headspace.

While I was committed to changing my lifestyle, I wondered if I would be able to make the necessary changes for long term success. After talking with Boston Healthiest and committing to the program, I attended a virtual group meeting where I met others who would be taking this journey with me. My individual journey to better health started with monitoring my glucose prior to and during the initial cleanse. This allowed me to understand what the foods I was eating prior to starting were doing to my glucose...and thus to me, my moods and my energy level. Once I understood this, I was able to holistically understand my relationship with food and how what I was eating was affecting my body, mind, etc. I also started keeping a journal to track the days on the program, how I was feeling, and any other thoughts I was having while working on my lifestyle change.

Once committed to making the change, the program itself, the detox, and the cleanses weren't the hard part for me. Boston Healthiest set up a great support system with a WhatsApp group where the participants could text each other and Humberto for support; weekly meetings to talk about what was next, how you were feeling, any difficulties, etc.; check ins with Humberto where you could review your glucose charts, talk about foods and supplements, and more; and documentation about the various phases, recipes for what you can eat, and the bio-hacks to try – cold showers, box-breathing, walks, exercise, and more.

I ended up having difficulty in surprising places while in the program. I would remind myself that “life happens” and that “this is a MARATHON, not a sprint”. It was important to hear that others were having issues, but you were able to reset yourself and keep going...don't allow any missteps to get into your head and stop the progress you are making! The program takes work and effort. Throughout I needed to:

- Carefully plan my eating window: I ate many meals alone as the timing of my eating window didn't always line up with when my family was eating and/or their schedules.
- Purchase the food for each phase: I was ready to go to the grocery store multiple times a week in order to purchase the needed food for the program. There isn't processed or prepackaged food in this program. You need to be prepared to buy fresh produce, seafood, steak during the week. Not only would I make multiple trips to the grocery store, but my weekly food bill increased by factor of 2, which was due to the amount of fresh produce I was buying every 3-4 days.
- Pre-prepare my food for the week: I enjoyed “thinking” about what I would be eating during each phase of the program. I found making the time to cut, measure, and cook my meals allowed me to slow down. Be more present and focused on where I was going. Think about the healthy recipes
- Make time to slow down and move: I forced myself to take movement breaks. If I couldn't go for a long walk, I would walk around the house to get moving so I wasn't sitting for long periods of time

•Keep my journal and reflect: I found that writing things in my journal helped me to stay on course. While I could see the progress I was making, I could also reflect on the missteps and issues I was having. Keeping a journal not only helped with the lifestyle change, but it helped me handle the anxiety I was experiencing.

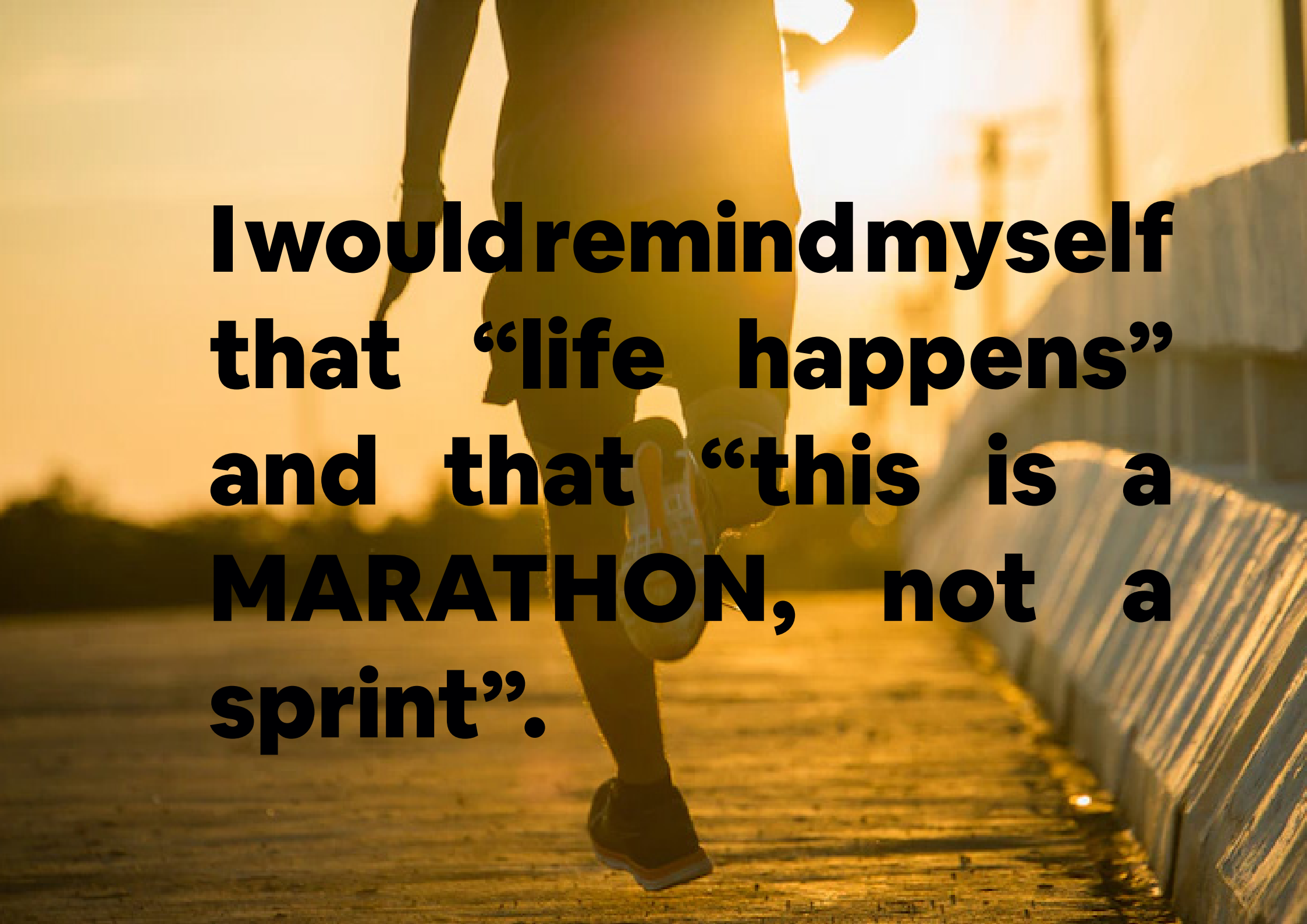
Am I a success story? I'm not sure, as it's too soon to tell if the changes are sustainable long term. I will say this though, my mentality about my metabolism, the foods I eat and life in general have definitely changed now that I have participated in the Boston Healthiest program. My post-program bloodwork shows great improvement in my A1C, my CRP has improved drastically, and my Triglyceride level is about half of what it was prior. I know I still have work to do to see additional improvements metabolically speaking, however I do see some additional everyday benefits from participating in the Boston Healthiest program over these past three months:

- Most importantly, I feel BETTER!
- My skin is clearer
- My joints don't hurt nearly as much as they had previously
- I have lost ~30 pounds since my November 2021 physical
- My clothes fit better
- I am in a better headspace than before
- I have a better understanding of food and how it affects my body and mind
- I don't crave sugar or junk food the way I had previously

- My sleep has improved
- My energy level has improved
- My moods have improved, or at least become more even
- I eat better now than I did before. I love the recipes that have been shared and look forward to continuing to eat fresh and healthy. I have been able to adapt how my family eats so we all can be healthy moving forward.

In conclusion, change is hard, life is hard. Sometimes you succeed and sometimes life happens and there are missteps. The important thing to remember is you can always reset and try again. While difficult at times, I am happy with how things have turned out and I look forward to using what I have learned over the past three months and continuing to work with Boston Healthiest and my doctor on an overall long-term healthy lifestyle! I know I am in a better place now than I was months ago because of the support I received from my family, Humberto, my doctor, and the other program participants.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

A person is running on a paved path during sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. A white fence runs along the right side of the path. The text is overlaid in the center-left of the image.

**I would remind myself
that “life happens”
and that “this is a
MARATHON, not a
sprint”.**

I have struggled with my weight and blood pressure my entire life. My mother had issues with food and blood pressure. Her obsession with diets affected me as a child and it continued throughout my life as an adult. I always felt that my health was dependent upon my weight. I never really understood that my weight is dependent upon my health. I have probably done every fad diet out there. Weight Watchers was my first. Although it did have some focus on eating healthy, there were also processed food meal choices that didn't really provide me with the true health benefits that would help my gut or teach me about the benefits of healthy food options. A problem with so many fad diets is there is very little regard for lifestyle change. When I was younger, I thought that I just need to lose the weight and that my health and weight issues will be gone.

Ella

I am 60 years old. My mother died in 2019 at 100 years old. Many of my relatives lived into their 90s. My father died the youngest at 77 years old. I would probably say that I have good genes. Although my mother encouraged me to go on diets as a child, I learned a lot about eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains that helped me to adjust to a healthier diet later in my life. Unfortunately, my mother was not the best cook. With any food program or diet, if the food doesn't taste good then no one will eat it.

I feel that sharing the background of my life with my health and food relationship is very important. It's my food and health journey and it's what brought me to the place to embark on this health and lifestyle approach through Boston's Healthiest. Had I not been through these health and food experiences, I may not have found my way to the understanding of gut and microbiome health and the protocol that is so necessary for healthy living.

I think for most of us, we have been taught that good health means being thin and that we need medicine for our health issues. We have also been taught that only 2% of people that go on diets, keep the weight off. In addition, we have been taught that it is our fault because we don't have willpower. They are not looking at the underlying reasons for these issues. For at least 50 years of my life, I have been conditioned to think the way our medical community and our society thinks, that it's my fault and not how we are taught to eat.

I started before the age of 12 doing deprivation/calorie-reducing diets. At first, I lost a lot of weight (I think about 60 lbs.). My parents rewarded me with new clothes. But very soon after, I gained the weight and more. I was often the receiver of taunting and teasing. I didn't have confidence in myself, and I had very low self-esteem. I felt that it was my fault that I was fat and the only thing I could do was lose the weight by going on diets that were challenging and with little chance that I would be able to keep the weight off. Having this burden throughout childhood,

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

can easily set anyone up for a lifetime of failure. My mother's eating and food issues only compounded the continued dieting cycle.

My mother had a thyroid "issue" or so she said. She had me tested when I was a kid for my thyroid to explain why I was fat and not losing weight. My thyroid was fine. My blood pressure was considered borderline high. I never was put on medication,

Fitzgerald

but there was always concern. Every time I went to the doctor, I would get weighed and blood pressure tested, then my mother and I would be told that I need to eat healthier and lose weight. Every time. I even went to a nutritionist. But none of that really helped at all. There was no real understanding of how our body responds to the processed foods that we continue to consume, the diet sodas, the fat free foods, the frozen and processed packaged meals that my family depended on. Fortunately, I tried to do things that the thinner, "healthier" kids could do. I was still an active kid. I loved riding my bike. I walked to and from school every day. We played back yard games like tag, volleyball, and badminton. I loved to swim, ice skate, go sledding

in the winter and just about anything that I could to play with my friends. But I think I was much luckier than a lot of kids. Many kids nowadays are glued to the computer and their cellphones and don't get to "play" outdoors with friends every day.

Through my teen years, I went back on Weight Watchers and lost 75lbs just to gain it back again, plus more. I tried the grapefruit diet and the banana diet. I even tried not eating for a week, but without the proper guidance, afterwards, I ate more than before and went right back to my previous eating.

In my early 20s, my weight went up and down. My activity level also went up and down. I had moved to the city and went to collage while working full time. There was not a lot of time for physical activity, and I was so happy to not live with my parents with them telling me what to eat, I ate whatever I wanted and it was not the best options. I went out to eat a lot. I rarely cooked for myself. I ate a lot of take-out and prepared foods.

After so many years of overeating, eating the "wrong foods" and dealing with the shame of being obese, I no longer was able to listen to my body's true needs. I didn't know when I was really thirsty until I was dehydrated. I didn't know when I had enough to eat until I was so full that I could barely move. I overrode my "shut off" ability so many times that my body stopped letting me know when to stop eating. Basically, I no longer truly ate



for stomach hunger. I ate for mind hunger. I had become an emotional eater.

My personal journey led me into mental health therapy to understand the issues that triggered me to use food as comfort. In my 30s, I began that journey with a therapist for approximately 15 years. In my early 40s, I did a bible study through my church that focused on food issues. That was probably one of the most helpful self-observation studies that I was part of. It helped me to realize that by all the choices I was making, thinking that I was helping myself by eating whatever I wanted, I was actually harming my body and creating much bigger problems for myself then and for my future. It was then that I chose to find a way to lose the weight in a way that would honor myself as opposed to doing it because I was angry at myself. It was also then that I decided that I would lose the weight in a ways that would help me to maintain the weight loss for the rest of my life. I wanted to change my view of food and my lifestyle.

That was the start of my new approach to lifestyle...

I began this program in January 2007. I weighed 260 lbs. I had knee pain. I had little to no physical activity. I was 46 years old, and I could see that my health would rapidly decline if I didn't do something about it right away. This program had doctor supervision, required bloodwork, and included lifestyle and diet education. It also included meal replacements. In 1 year, I lost 100 lbs. I had learned to incorporate physical activity into my daily life. I learned that I didn't need as much food as I had been

consuming. I learned more about fruits and vegetables, and their health benefits. I developed tools to help me navigate through our society and its contradictory messages that we need to be thin but eat delicious, unhealthy foods.

One of the strongest messages that I received during my first weight management class when I began this program was, "This is not your fault. The cards are stacked against you. Our culture makes it very hard to make healthy choices." The focus of the education was environmental control, learning how to control our environment so the choices are easy to make healthy ones. This has helped me ever since. This was the basis for the tools that I learned about making healthy choices and understanding the consequences of my choices.

I stayed with this program even after the initial weight loss in 2008. I was extremely motivated. I became a spokesperson for the program. I was also spokesperson for the American Heart Association Go Red for Women for 1 year. I started salsa dancing and became part of a thriving and active community. I learned to ski. I started doing long distance road cycling for MS and for 3 years in a row, I would cycle almost 200 miles in 2 days.

All the while these wonderful changes are occurring, I am being challenged with a new life of socializing. I went to parties. Drank a lot of alcohol. Started being more challenged with food situations. I felt like I was living my 20s, but yet I was in my

40s. It was fun, but not sustainable and I was not supporting my need for a healthy lifestyle.

Over the next 11 years or so, I stayed with the program, going up and down with my weight but keeping most of it off. I didn't want to go off completely. I was the only person from my original group still on the program and at that point, it was all I had. I didn't feel like I could keep the weight off on my own. I was still using the program meal replacements. I thought it was the only way to keep my calorie intake low while still getting the nutrition that I needed. I had gone up and down with my weight. My blood pressure and my bloodwork were still within a healthy range. But I was finding it harder and harder to lose the weight. My blood pressure began to get higher. I thought it was just the stress of my job. I thought that if I could just lose the weight, it would go back to a healthy range. For so many years, while being on the program, my blood pressure stayed in the range of 118/68. Now it was starting to be consistently higher, 138/84.

I didn't know what to do. The meal replacement, even though I grew to like them a lot, were not agreeing with my gut. I was experiencing a lot of bloating that was very uncomfortable. The entrees were not too bad, but on their own would not give me the nutritional base or hunger satisfaction that I needed.

A friend of mine, Humberto Moncaya had started a program called Boston's Healthiest. He asked me to come to a lecture that he was giving. I went and found it fascinating. I started to do my own research to get some validation for the information



The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

he shared about microbiome and gut health. It all sounded true, but would it be something that I could apply to my life. I tried a 3-week cleanse with his program. It was helpful but challenging. I felt great. I didn't have the issues with bloating, but I couldn't wait to get back to my meal replacements and my eating lifestyle because it was so challenging to do this cleans. After a short period of time, I could feel that my body went back to feeling uncomfortable and bloated.

Then the pandemic happened in 2020. Within a short period of time, I had gained 14 lbs. and now I was at the heaviest weight since I reached my "goal" weight in the program back in 2008. My lifestyle changed a lot. I was sitting more. I hardly left my house. I started to work at home and my office was in the kitchen. I started to bake a lot. For some reason, that is what everyone did. I was having zoom meetings with the program that I started in 2007. It was helping me to not continue to gain weight and to find some sort of physical activity. But I wasn't losing weight and I was struggling with food issues as well as blood pressure.

March 2021, the program that I had depended on for so many years, ended. The clinic could no longer continue because of the pandemic. At first, I was freaked out. Then I realized that this could be the opportunity that I was looking for.

By summer 2021, I contacted Humberto at Boston's Healthiest. I told him that I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to do the original protocol he designed. That it would be too challenging

for me and my lifestyle. He had a protocol that he was working on. It was an 8-day challenge. I did it. I loved it. Unfortunately, after that, I went back to my previous lifestyle and way of eating.

Within a couple of months, he shared that he was working on a bigger challenge, 42 days and we would share the resulting data. I thought that this is exactly what I need. Something that I could commit to for a certain period of time and maybe make some effective changes that will last longer than the 42 days.

I began the challenge January 9, 2022. I weighed 214 lbs. and my blood pressure averaged 144/92.

The Protocol began with weekly meetings and sharing why our bodies do what they do. Humberto, our coach gave us a plan to follow and why we need to follow this plan. This plan incorporated changes to lifestyle and eating that become the cure for anything that our bodies are going through. We learned about daily behaviors like getting up early, box breathing, keeping our bodies moving, keeping our eating windows under 7 hours, eating slowly, not eating to be full. These are just a few of the things that we learned. But overall, it's not just about what we eat, it's how we live and take care of ourselves.

We started the Protocol with a 12 Day Detox. Within a week, I had already lost 8 lbs. I was thrilled but also realized that the first week of a healthy diet change usually induces a large weight loss. The first few days, I felt good but tired. I was loving the food

even though the preparation for the soups were a lot of work since we had to make our own bone broth as a base. Humberto shared with us the importance of making it ourselves because of the healing benefits of the homemade bone broth.

In fact, some of the biggest challenges to the protocol is the amount of preparation that is needed. Since much of the foods that we needed to prepare the smoothies and the soups were not foods that I was accustomed to eating, I didn't know where to find them at first. It was important to make time for shopping and preparing the foods.

I loved eating the foods that are on the protocol. I enjoyed eating salmon, eggs, avocado, berries, all kinds of vegetables, olive oil, mushrooms. I have also learned to incorporate cilantro, parsley, and other herbs into my eating along with lemons, limes, garlic, pink salt, and fresh ground pepper. This was not deprivation for me. This was abundance of all the right things that are so delicious.

Not only did my eating change, but the time I ate changed. I had also suffered from very poor sleeping for many years...especially since I before I went through menopause. I started taking sleep aides (diphenhydramine) to fall and stay asleep. I never thought I could stop taking this drug. About 1 month into the Challenge, I stopped taking the sleep aide. I started to drink a bedtime tea with Valerian, Passionflower, Chamomile, and lemon balm. This has become my new nighttime routine and I am no longer

dependent on the sleep drug. I also started getting up early in the morning and working out before starting work. This has given me more energy during the day and the ability to wind down at night. I am working on getting more sleep at night. But the biggest change has already occurred. No more sleep drugs.

I used to have a cup of tea every morning with milk and Splenda (a lot of Splenda). Now I have a cup of black coffee. I take a packet of stevia in the morning. My artificial sweetener addiction has been cut off. That is huge for me. One of the issues with the previous program was the use of artificial sweeteners. I was getting more and more used to having very sweet foods.

There are still aspects to the Protocol that I still need to incorporate into my daily life. Having a warm glass of water first thing in the morning would be a benefit to my gut health. I am practicing box breathing only once a day and need to incorporate it more often. I love taking walks but with my current work schedule, it is a challenge. But I do manage to work out every day either in the gym or doing a walking video in front of my TV. I will continue to work on these aspects of the Protocol because I know they make a difference in my overall health.

I feel like a dodged a bullet. My story shows that each positive move towards health has kept me from being hospitalized or on permanent medication. I feel super lucky that when I started working with Boston's Healthiest, that I wasn't "sicker". But I know had I not had the opportunity to make the healthy

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

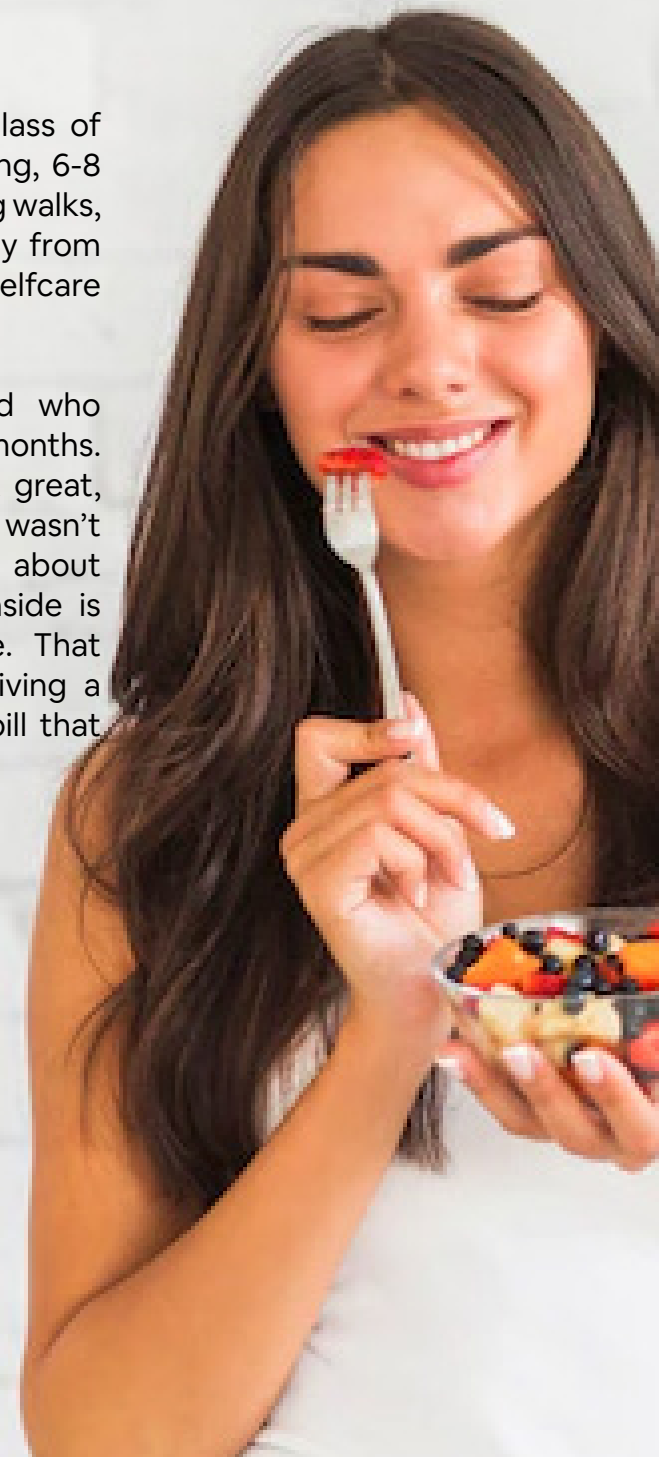
life choices with food choices and physical activity, I would be in trouble. I am lucky to have good genes. But I know that good genes are not everything. I also feel lucky, that I found an alternative to the “normal” diet mentality that is so prevalent in our society. Because we can take all the pills we want, have all the surgeries that are out there, get all the cosmetic surgery that we can afford, but our health will only continue to decline if we don’t address it honestly with the foods we eat and how we nurture our bodies and our minds.

Pills and surgery are only band aids to the problem of Obesity and Food issues. I am grateful that I didn’t have to depend too much on pills and although I had contemplated the surgery once, I never did it. I know this will need to be a lifetime commitment and the society will still be a challenge because there are big pharma out there that want to make money because of the obesity issue.

I feel so much better since I started this protocol. To this day, I have lost 20 lbs. and my last blood pressure reading was 128/86. I feel great. I have energy. I can wake up at 6 am and work out. In the past when I have lost about the same amount, I don’t remember feeling as “thin” as I am feeling. My belly is almost flat. I am still “overweight”, and I would like to continue losing weight, but if I stayed where I am now, I would be happy because I feel amazing, and my body feels great. Based on what I am learning, I just need to continue to follow the protocol and this healthy way of eating while continuing to incorporate the “bio hacks”

such as box breathing, glass of warm water in the morning, 6-8 hour eating window, taking walks, bedtime tea, getting away from the screens, and more selfcare behaviors.

Recently, I saw a friend who hasn’t seen me in several months. He said to me, “you look great, fresh and well-rested”. It wasn’t about my weight. It was about my overall person. My inside is radiating on the outside. That is truly the benefits of living a healthy life. There is no pill that can prescribe that.



Catherine the Great

I am a married, 47-year-old mother of two girls (ages 8 and 6), with a demanding career as a healthcare executive. For most of my life, I was fit and felt good about my health. During both pregnancies (at ages 39 and 40) I developed gestational diabetes and was prescribed large doses of insulin. Following both deliveries, I was able to discontinue the insulin. Raising two small children, completing a doctorate, changing jobs, and relocating cross-country to the Boston area created a lot of stress. Often happy, positive stress, but stress nonetheless! At the end of 2021, I weighed 168 pounds, the most I had ever weighed when not pregnant. Not only were my lab values trending in the wrong direction, but, year over year, my values were significantly worse. During the end of 2021, while donating plasma and platelets, I was shocked each time I would hear the intake clinician say aloud my blood pressure... 144/96 or 141/88. 'Whose blood pressure is that?', I remember asking myself? Thinking back, being completely honest with myself about it, I shouldn't have been surprised at all. Despite having a brand-new elliptical machine in my basement, I was not working out, and I was certainly not eating well. Food, which I love, became a reward for many daily activities. Difficult day at work? I'll grab some Thai takeout for dinner. A stressful week with lots of meetings? I'll grab Chinese takeout so I can save time with cooking. Surviving the stressful week, completing the big report, getting the big meeting behind me? — all great excuses for pizza, Mexican food, and baking. When I look back on it now, I was eating lunch out 5-6 days per week and dinner was takeout 4-5 days per week. It was a

routine that I just slipped into. I knew better — I'm smart, I'm in healthcare, but my new routine was comfortable and easy. When presented with the opportunity to participate in the Boston Healthiest 45-day challenge, I knew it was going to test me mentally and physically. It would be one thing to begin exercising and preparing more healthy whole foods, but it would be another to mentally change my relationship with food. On December 16, 2021, I had my labs drawn to document my baseline. On my way home, I had lunch at a Mexican restaurant. On December 17th, determined to succeed, I began the program.

As our cohort made our way through the program, each of us was asked to keep a journal of our experience. For the first time in months, I am looking back at the first few entries:

December 17th – Labs were drawn yesterday. A real eye-opener. They were a lot worse than I expected. I am using the continuous glucose monitor, and watching my readings is interesting. My baseline is a lot higher than I expected. I am disgusted with my body and don't recognize myself in pictures and full-length mirrors. I have got to change and get healthy. Optimistic this program will help.

December 18th — I was in the car today for the two-hour round trip to the office. I was so proud of myself for not going through a drive thru. I thought a lot about how being in the car used to equate going through a drive-through. I did 11 minutes on the elliptical and worked on my box breathing.

December 21st — My weight is dropping, and I was able to 15 minutes on the elliptical. Great call with Humberto this morning. He lined up my glucose graphs — it is interesting to see my baseline and then begin to see reduced fluctuations and the overall average glucose value dropping. We spoke about doing 10 squats per hour as many times as I can throughout the day. Get up from my desk and walk around. I was able to do 4 sets of 10 squats today. I now have a recipe for an egg drink and a green smoothie that I like. I find when I eat (drink) those, I am not hungry at all. I had salmon for dinner and stopped eating at 5:30 pm.

My biggest fear when I started the program was that I was going to be hungry. I experienced some hunger at the beginning of the program, but that went away quickly. I found I was very satiated with the egg drink, or scrambled eggs at lunch, and then a green smoothie around 4 PM. At dinner, the salmon filled me up — often to the point, I could not finish my fish. I actually welcomed the occasional hunger at bedtime. It reminded me that I was making good progress, and my body would be able to hopefully reach autophagy by the next morning. I was able to work through the hunger and fall asleep. I would awaken the next morning feeling great about my progress, and not hungry.

December 23rd — I am shocked that I have no cravings and I am not obsessing about what I am going to eat today. In the past, all it would take was someone saying the word “sushi” or “pizza” and I would not be able to get it out of my head until I had the sushi or pizza. Not really craving any food.

January 5, 2022 — I weigh 159 today! Almost 10 pounds. Feeling great and thrilled to see my weight drop below 160. Thinking about certain foods occasionally, but I do not want to interrupt my progress. Not really craving any sweets, and proud of my ability to stay off the Coke Zero. Had some thoughts about how I will eat once the program finishes. I am mourning the loss of some of my comfort foods. Humberto shared with me that once my metabolism is reset, I will be able to occasionally eat something unhealthy and my body will be able to handle it better. How do I eat well and still enjoy some of my favorite foods and not ruin my body again? Is this possible? Perhaps wearing the CGM will help.

The program included different foods on different weeks. We were supplied recipes that we followed for 1- and 2-week intervals. During the different phases, our cohort would have “free days” when we were able to eat whatever we wanted. But we were asked to be mindful of our choices and not go overboard. On some of those free days, I was not mindful. I realized deviating too far from the foods we were eating would result in weight gain and several days to regain my progress. Deviating from the path became if you can believe it, not worth it. On January 10th we began an intense several days of vegetable soup with a bone broth base. We were to eat as much soup as we wanted. I was not a fan of the soup but followed the program to a T.

January 10th — Had to go to the supermarket this morning to get the last supplies for the soup. The bone broth has been

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

simmering for hours. I assembled the soup and am just delaying the start. I am not a soup person. I got hungry around 1 pm and ate the soup, daikon radish, and broccoli sprouts. Throughout the day I ate three bowls of soup after putting it through the blender. I thought this would help me eat it. Bad headaches today and needed to take Advil 600mg x2. Exhausted. Laid down from 3-4 pm. Constipated, hungry, little energy. Glad to go to sleep and forget about the hunger. No energy or desire to work out. I think Humberto said to avoid the workouts during the soup-only days.

January 11th — Hungry again today. Ate two bowls of soup, radish, and sprouts. I cheated and had 5 raspberries. Cravings are bad and constipation continues. Very cold. No workout. No need for any medicine for headaches.

January 12th — I awoke this morning feeling great with no hunger! Energy is moderate, just thrilled to have the hunger go away. Lots of thoughts today about what happens after the program. Can I do this without my Humberto calls and the group calls? I am accountable to Humberto when I share my glucose data. Can I watch what I eat if I am not sending in my 24-hr glucose values to anyone? Who would know if I cheated? Me. I am thinking about how grateful I am to be part of this process. My glucose graph has been pretty flat and my average glucose for the last 24 hours is 90.

January 16th — I weigh 153 today. This marks 15 pounds lost! 30

days.

January 17th — Today marks 30 days since I started the program. No McDonald's in 30 days. No Chinese or Thai food in 30 days. Humberto said we can go back to workouts today. I did 21 minutes on the elliptical at a high intensity, and my glucose spiked to 202. Humberto said this was okay because the glucose spike was physiological and not pathological. Thought again today about how I needed the accountability and to do this with others.

January 20th – BP 108/83!! What??!! Amazing.

As Omicron raged across the country and state, my family was not spared. My youngest was first, followed by my husband, and then my oldest daughter. Despite lying in bed with two children coughing in my face, I did not get COVID. COVID was in our house for three weeks straight and I did not get it. I believe it is due to my diet and my vitamin D supplements. I am healthier and feel strong.

There were times when I cheated here and there with a Coke Zero or handful of popcorn. Staying 100 percent on the protocol was difficult while children were home ill with COVID, or in quarantine.

February 19th — 150.2!! WOW. I am working out every day again with the girls back in school. The soup started again on Wednesday. Cravings have been very minimal or absent.



My thoughts have also changed regarding maintaining these lifestyle changes that I need to adopt for the long term. Needing to keep these changes going does not depress me. I no longer mourn the loss of certain foods. They don't taste that good anymore and I do not have any cravings. I think this is because my body is getting all the nutrients it needs. I am proud of the progress I have made and I want to keep going and make even more progress.

So much has changed. The way I shop at the grocery store is completely different. I had always heard that it was best to "shop the perimeter" of the store and that is just what I do now. I purchase a lot of produce, then fish, sometimes a beef fillet, eggs, and then to the checkout. I am eating healthier, and my body is loving it. I am down 22 pounds (weight is now 146), down 2 pants sizes, and have lost 5.5 inches around my waist. I feel comfortable in my body again and that feels amazing!

By the beginning of April, I was ready to have my post-program labs drawn and I was absolutely stunned by the results. Through this program, I was able to decrease my hemoglobin A1c from 6.2 to 5.4, decrease my insulin level from 14.6 to 8.9, increase my Vitamin D from 27 to 55, and decrease my CRP-HS from 6.4 to 2.3, decrease my triglycerides from 143 to 97. Finally, as a non-consumer of alcohol, I was disappointed before the program to see one of my liver enzymes trending upwards, suggestive of fatty liver. After the program, I was able to decrease my ALT from 65 to 22 and my AST from 34 to 16.

I feel strong and have lots of energy. I am smiling a lot and I am more confident. I am proud of the progress I've made, and I am determined to continue the journey. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to participate in the 45-day challenge.



**Humberto
Moncayo**



I was born in the Chinese year of the dragon. Dragons are fierce and hard: they are the king of the Chinese Astrological signs. But you cannot be a dragon all the time. Sometimes you have to be soft and flow like fluid. To know when to be which is the key to my own personal philosophy called freestyle lifestyle.

Before, I got sick, I used the analogy that my body was a Ferrari -- fast and top of the line -- but now I have a new analogy. I'm a combination of a Ferrari and a Tesla. A Tesla is an efficient electric car that is environmentally friendly. It's quiet, but a Ferrari has strong fumes. A Ferrari though is a work of art, it's fierce and loud. I can't always be a Ferrari. I have use my energy effectively now as I recover. I never took naps before. But now I see I have to shift gears, and so I lay down to give my body rest. The speed and power of the Ferrari is not always appropriate for me at this point in time. Being calm and quiet is more sustainable, so I have changed my perspective on life from this experience. I see the value more fully in being a Tesla when necessary.

I look at this journey as blessing because I will take what I have learned here and use it every day for the rest of my life. Cancer is a gift because it has allowed me to up my game and share my story and my methods with you. I've entered this unexpectedly: I am accessing parts of myself I didn't before. I stand with joy in the face of this cancer. I hope in sharing my journey, I can help you on your.

I have worked hard in every area of my life to properly nourish

my body, mind, and spirit with food. Through my company Glam Foods (G. Lam, my initials), I worked as a food/mentor coach to empower individuals to create a healthy lifestyle performance. My motivation has changed lives by changing diets and instructing people on how to live their best lives. I've done that through freestyle cooking, a concept I created that employs skills and creativity, discipline and improvisation to fuel people and communities. It's not about talent, there are no quick-fixes in life. Freestyle mixes the discipline and structure of martial arts and religion with the creativity of music, art, and dancing.

As a warrior, you need to see your opponents' weaknesses, but my opponent is invisible. Where can I destroy cancer? I can't touch it. Everything I'm battling is invisible. I'm battling demons from within. They're coming at me also from the treatments which make my body weaker and even took away my ability to taste, and thus cook. The side effects aren't immediate, they come later. They attack when you think you're out of the woods. I want to take cancer's heart and rip it out, but I can't. I see how smart cancer is. But the treatment is also smart, even smarter. Cancer wants to crack my inner shield but I am fighting this with everything that I have.

I have nasopharyngeal cancer which is located in the area in the back of the nose. It's caused by a virus. So, no matter whether you eat right and workout your whole life or not, you can still contract it. The Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is best known for causing mononucleosis, the "kissing disease." It stays in your

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you

body, but most people don't have any symptoms past the first few weeks after infection. But in my case, it made me life-threateningly ill.

When the nurses at my treatments asked if I was suicidal, week after week, I said, "hell no." I wasn't, but I will admit that I wish someone had prepared me for what was to come. I didn't know how painful this journey would be and I want to share my story so that others are prepared. I want to create a movement of knowledge and prevention. I want to create awareness about and foster prevention for cancer caused by viruses which aren't often screened for. I want to illuminate the challenges and the holes in the system. This is only the beginning of my journey, so much of this will come later. Right here, right now, I want to tell my personal tale and share my philosophies which strengthen me and can strengthen others. My freestyle lifestyle, which helped me stay in peak condition before I got this disease, has made me strong enough to endure this battle against cancer. And anyone can use freestyle to feel their best during peaceful times in their lives -- before any major health or life challenges -- and also while they are engaged in life's battles.

When I was diagnosed, I explained my minor symptoms to Doctor Allen C. Lam at Massachusetts Eye & Ear. He looked at my ear infection and prescribed me medicine. But I felt like something was off though I didn't know what it was exactly. My ear infection had cleared up, but my nose was still completely stuffed.

"Doc, I'm not feeling it," I told him. I wasn't in pain, and my symptoms seemed innocuous, but I had this inclination that something was really wrong. He worked with me and looked further into my concerns. "There's a possibility you have nose cancer," he explained. Because I am a man of Chinese descent, I am at higher risk of developing nose cancer. "We need to do a biopsy, get some tissue out of there," he told me. And we were both right about my health.

That nurse who gave me the bad news also gave me a coin with a quote from Albert Einstein that I carry with me in my wallet: "You can live as if everything is a miracle or you can live as if nothing is a miracle."

I believe in miracles. The diagnosis opened up a new world, one in which I am set to demonstrate my full potential as a dragon. I am focused on destroying cancer through the foundation of values I built and was raised with and the freestyle lifestyle, which emphasizes both skill and creativity. Freestyle is how you can also strengthen your body, mind, and spirit, so that if you ever are in a similar position — finding that you have cancer or are facing another seemingly insurmountable challenge — you can be better than prepared to meet your enemy. I believe the core value that leads to success is eating properly and respecting the body. Just like an athlete, you need to protect your assets and the rewards will follow.

What I learned from the diagnosis process is that time is of the essence when it comes to your health, you cannot wait. The

most important part is sensing the way your body feels, to be in tip-top shape in every way — mentally, physically, and spiritually — so that you can sense shifts in your health. When you're not in tune, things happen so fast, it's oftentimes too late to treat it. Because of my sensitivity as a chef, as a religious person who appreciates art, music, dancing, sports — things that engage the body — I knew I had to trust my gut feeling and return to the doctor whose next step may have saved my life. Having that gut feeling, acknowledging it is a simple skill. Without the softness I learned from Wing Chun, I wouldn't have been so sensitive to my body's changes, and without the dragon, I wouldn't have the raw power to fight for my life. I hope my letter will inspire your approach with patients by recommending with a freestyle lifestyle and nutrition program. They need to be 99% accountable for their body, mind and spirit with food. You are the 1% to complete them!

The purpose of this book is not to convince you but to show you





A BOOK

OF LETTERS TO THE CLINICIAN

