

100 POUNDS LIGHTER, FEELING 30 YEARS YOUNGER

Cloudy Rockwell's Vegan Story

I was 80 to 100 pounds overweight for at least 30 years. Now, after losing 102 pounds in the past two years, I'm still kind of surprised when I look in the mirror. Is that really me?

My life is so different now! This new me feels like I'm thirty years younger. But let me tell you what it was like before.

I work in a building where I have to walk up a flight of stairs to my office. It became a real struggle to get up the stairs. I'd hold the banister, pull myself up, put one foot on a step, then bring the other foot up meet it. It was even a struggle to get up the single step into my own home.

One of the things I hated most was traveling on planes.

Not only were the seats too narrow and I felt like I was imposing on my seatmates, but walking down the aisle, I couldn't help brushing against people with my hips.

I had been on a zillion diets over the course of my life, and lost a few pounds and regained it over and over. For the last five years, I'd been on the South Beach Diet, eating just meat and salads. I lost 30 pounds, but that was nothing compared to the 100 pounds I needed to lose. Finally, I was ready to give up. I figured that at my age, it was so much harder to lose weight that it would be impossible. I was a fat woman; this was just how I was going to be the rest of my life, and I might as well accept it.

But then the pain started. My legs and hips started hurting all the time. They hurt standing up and hurt sitting down. They hurt lying in bed at night.

Until then I wasn't taking any medications, but I started taking lots of ibuprofen to try to get some relief from the constant pain. I knew I had to do something! I was just turning 60 and this was no way to live.

Then I ran into a friend at a Christmas party in 2009. I hadn't seen her for a year and she had lost 74 pounds! I asked her how she had done it and she told me she had attended a Food for Life Class for Cancer Prevention and Survival and was eating a vegan diet. She gave me hope that a person of my age could still have a chance

to lose a lot of weight. I didn't want to be out in public so I didn't pursue the class myself, but I searched found the PCRM website, and then Dr. John McDougall's website.

I was ready. On New Year's Day, 2010, I started the vegan diet I learned about on the McDougall website. That's when my life changed.

I'd actually tried being vegetarian a couple of times many years ago. I was into natural foods in the 70's and 80's, making my own bread and focusing on whole foods. But in those days I was still using plenty of oil and didn't lose a lot of weight.

When I understood how many calories are in oil and how those virtually empty calories were added to the top of all the foods I'd been eating, a light bulb went on in my head. It all started to make



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sense. Giving up oil was the key. And even though giving up oil was the hardest part for me, I did it, and I saw results. I lost the first 13 pounds quickly, and then just kept losing a slow and steady pound or two each week.

I was determined to learn all I needed to know about losing weight

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successfully on a vegan diet. I studied it. I read many books, such as *The China Study*, *Eat to Live*, *How to Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*, *The Pleasure Trap*, and *the Engine 2 Diet*, plus several of Dr. McDougall's books. I watched videos and read websites. I joined the forum at drmcDougall.com, where I received wonderful support. And I tried about four of Mary McDougall's online recipes each week. I learned by doing, and it worked!

I actually loved the food! It was such a relief to actually be able to eat starches again, after five years of avoiding them on the South Beach Diet. I bought a lot of condiments in the beginning, thinking I'd need them to make the "tasteless vegetables" more palatable. But to my surprise, I learned to love the taste of vegetables and rarely use any of those condiments.

Being prepared at all times was a real key to my success. Every Sunday I'd make about four new recipes and have them to eat throughout the week. I always knew what I would have to eat that day, and the next day. This kept me from worrying about food and making bad choices. If I was someplace where there wasn't anything for me to eat, I didn't worry about it because I knew I had good food waiting for me at home. When I travel on a plane, I take food with me: fruit, veggies, cooked potatoes. I do just fine!

The pain in my legs and hips got a lot better within the first month. Now, it is virtually gone. The stairs at work are easy now. I run right up the middle of them, not needing the banister at all. I can get down on the ground to play with my 18 month-old granddaughter. . . and back up again! This would have

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been impossible before. Someone would have had to lift her up to the couch so she could sit on my

lap.

Now, instead of wondering how I'm going to make it up the stairs and through another day of pain, I enjoy each day and look forward to the years ahead of me.

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