

# “I Got Hope Today”

*Anna Luby's Vegan Story*

When I graduated from college, I was a petite little thing. I only weighed 100 pounds, and I looked and felt really good! Over the years, especially after getting married in my early 40s, I began to put on a lot of weight. Every time I went to Barnes and Noble, I checked out the latest diet books. But I kept getting heavier.

Then, almost a year ago, on November 17, 2009, I was diagnosed with diabetes. My A1C wasn't terribly high, only 6.6, so my doctor agreed to let me try to bring it down by losing weight. After reading all those diet books, I figured I knew how to lose weight! But with the holidays just coming up, I actually gained 5 more pounds and reached a high of 175.

On February 11, 2010, I went to the Diabetic Center in Anchorage. They told me to limit my carb intake, but said that I had a progressive disease which would get worse and worse, and that no matter what I did, all I could hope for was to maybe slow the progression. I would eventually end up on insulin and my body would begin manifesting the horrible complications of diabetes. And I know how bad these complications can be as I work in a kidney dialysis center where so many people with diabetes end up.

Shortly after that, I picked up a flier for the

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Food for Life Classes at Providence Cancer Center. I called the instructor, Delisa, and told her I'd been diagnosed with diabetes. She told me I could reverse it if I changed my diet, but that I'd have to really do it all the way. I couldn't be on the fence. I signed up for the class immediately. Right after signing up

for the Food for Life classes, a social work colleague of mine came into my office. I told her, “I got hope today” -- a hope that has been watered and nourished by the Food for Life classes and all the good nutritional books introduced to us in the classes that continue to inspire me.

I became vegan on March 2, the day of the first Food for Life class. I had starved off 10 pounds before then, but after that, the weight really started coming off. I was able to eat plenty of delicious, high-fiber plant-based food, and incredibly, I kept losing weight without ever being hungry! At this point, I'm down to 120 pounds, a loss of 55 pounds. I'm still losing, gradually now, and my goal at this point is to get back down to 105 to 110.

What's really, really exciting is that my blood sugar level is now normal and my doctor has told me I no longer need to test myself! I'll get my A1C taken periodically (that is a test of your average blood sugar readings) just to keep my eye on it, but I feel confident. I've reversed the diabetes!

In addition, my blood pressure has dropped, my cholesterol has dropped, my triglycerides have dropped, and the pain in my knees is gone. My energy level is way up, I sleep as well as I did in my 20's again, and I can bend over and paint my toenails without having a big belly in my



way. And I don't hear my own labored breathing like I did when I was so heavy. And now, when I go into Barnes and Noble, I don't bother looking at the diet books.

As I lost weight, I had my clothes taken in several times. Finally the person making the alterations said, "I can't take these pants in anymore! The pockets in the back are already touching each other!" So I went shopping for some new clothes. Now I'm wearing a size 4 pants and my husband thinks I look great! Who would guess they could do this at age 55?

I now feel I am in partnership with my body.

I take care of it by eating the foods that are good for it, and my body takes care of me. When I eat my greens and beans, (which I love), I say to my body, "Look what I'm giving you!" My body is healing and it will find its optimal weight. It says, "Trust me!" And I do.

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This is so exciting to me! I love the food and the new relationship I have with my body. Before, I felt like I had no choice. Now, I know I have the choice and I choose health. I just wish more people were told by their doctors and dietitians how they could reverse diabetes and lose weight healthfully on a vegan diet.