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By Shannon Miller



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# Fat To Fit: Woman Goes Vegan, Loses 100 Pounds, Rids Herself Of Illnesses

THE DAILY TIMES.COM | 12/26/10



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At 49 and with deteriorating health, Janice Church knew she might not see 50.

508

She had battled ulcerative colitis for years, high cholesterol, numbness like that experienced by stroke victims and severe depression.

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She was living in Maryland at the time and finally reached out for help.

"I was near death at the age of 49," she said. "I had many serious diseases and was on strong medication. I knew I didn't have long."

That was back in 1997. Church found the help she needed at the Weimar Center of Health and Education in California. The weight loss facility taught her how to eat, what to eat and got her on an exercise regimen. She stayed at the residential program for 18 days and left knowing how to take care of herself for life.

"When I arrived there I couldn't walk a block," Church said. "When I left I was walking three miles a day. I lost 13 pounds in 18 days."

Today, Church is 62 and a resident of Louisville. She has lost more than 100 pounds since she first cried out for help. She's now taking what she learned from her stay at the California facility and sharing it with others like her who have come to the realization that they were on a crash course with disaster.

One of the first things she did was give up meat and dairy, not so easy for someone who grew up on a meat and dairy farm. But today, Church has overcome the

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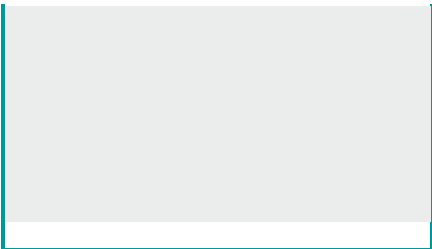
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ulcerative colitis that almost cost her life. She said the vegan diet is what healed her body and she follows it to this day.

She has been offering cooking lessons from her home for people interested in this alternative lifestyle. She is a member of some meet-up groups and provides members with the motivation they need to make a change.

Then recently Church became a bit more recognizable. She was named one of the winners in the AARP Fat to Fit Challenge, which had 18,000 online participants. This AARP member had gone to the Challenge website and offered her first-hand wisdom and encouragement to others needing a gentle push.

The site has people wanting to know how to exercise from a wheelchair or tips on how to keep motivated with no outside support, Church said. She was one who felt a responsibility to pay forward what had saved her own life.

At her heaviest, Church, who stands 5 feet and 6 inches tall, weighed 275 pounds, in April of 1997. She lost down to 150, but recent hip surgery has kept her from being as active as she wants and she now sits at 170. "And working my way back down," she said.

Her cholesterol used to be a dangerous 312. It has lowered considerably with the diet and exercise changes. "I honestly didn't think anybody could help me," Church said, remembering when she was at her worst. She had to be helped out of a chair.

The first year, Church lost 60 pounds. Then 20, 10 and 10 more over the next three years. She has managed to keep it off by hiking regularly and working out at the gym.

[Read the whole story here.](#)

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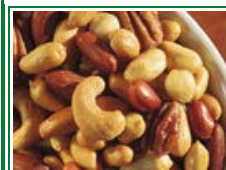
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 What a great story! I was by no means in her health situation when I went vegan close to four years ago, but have lost over 70 pounds by eliminating animal products from my diet and walking as often as possible. I'm glad that I made the changes when I did instead of letting then minor issues (like breathing problems and high triglyceride levels) turn into something more severe in the long-term.

Posted by:  [msmoon](#) | December 27, 2010 6:41 PM | [Reply](#)

Score: 6 (8 votes cast)




 Msmoon,  
Congratulations for being preemptive and making major changes before illness strikes.  
A vegan diet has helped my health recover significantly after decades of illness, food abuse and strong prescriptions. The human body tries to heal itself when we give it the right building materials.  
Janice Church

Posted by:  [HappyVegan](#) | December 29, 2010 8:21 AM | [Reply](#)

Score: 7 (7 votes cast)





 It was so great to read your story Janice, I'm so happy for you. I too suffered serious, debilitating health problems several years ago. I was diagnosed with Mastocytosis. As an RN I was devastated to find it to be a rare, incurable illness. I tried several alterantive treatments to no avail. My symptoms gradually diminished when I adapted a raw vegan diet. I've since written a book, "Transitioning to Living Cuisine" and have lots of free videos and info available at my site...rawfoodrene.com  
The recipes are quick and easy, hope you find a new one you like!

Posted by:  [Rene Oswald](#) | January 4, 2011 4:35 AM | [Reply](#)

Score: 2 (2 votes cast)




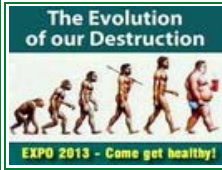
 Rene,  
As you have shown, we must be proactive to rescue our own health, or else suffer the unfortunate fate of many others who blindly follow medical advice. Thanks for sharing.  
You have a nice website. I will try the ranch dip and banana pie recipes. The pie looks simple and delicious, plus no gluten.  
Janice

Posted by:  [HappyVegan](#) replied to [comment from Rene Oswald](#) | January 4, 2011 7:00 AM | [Reply](#)

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 Dear Janice,



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**OVER 40 & OVERWEIGHT?**

SELECT YOUR GOAL:

5-25 lbs 

25-50 lbs 

50+ lbs 



Way to go girl! I lost 55 lbs. after becoming a vegan and juicing daily, along with exercise. I have stage four stomach cancer and intend to heal myself through diet and exercise. I also got off my high blood pressure medication. I refused all treatment from my oncologist and am feeling fine. He says I'm too skinny! My BMI is 22, pretty much perfect. I am writing a book about all this and when I am completely healed, intend to publish it so others can see that they do not always need chemo and radiation to get well.

Linda

Posted by:  flowergal | January 7, 2011 9:50 AM | Reply

Score: 5 (5 votes cast)



 Linda,

You are both disciplined and inspiring. I am so happy you are doing so well and certainly hope your health continues to improve.

You deserve much credit for having the courage to do things your way when I am sure there is much pressure on you to conform to standard health care.

I will be watching for your book!

Janice

Posted by:  HappyVegan | January 7, 2011 8:47 PM | Reply

Score: 0 (0 votes cast)



 Janice,

I've had a weight problem most of my life, having gained and lost. I have been trying to stick to a vegan way of life off and on for the last 4 years. When I am on the vegan plan, I feel great and the medical problems disappear. Then...I go back to the SAD (Standard American Diet). Any suggestions would be appreciated.

JR

Posted by:  JR | January 8, 2011 3:10 PM | Reply

Score: 3 (3 votes cast)



 JR

Many of us are good at beating ourselves up for what we do wrong. We often fail to appreciate or even notice our attempts at self improvement.

My suggestion is select one or two goals that you absolutely can achieve this week. If there is any question that you might not achieve them, choose easier goals.

Write down the goals and when you achieve them. If you don't achieve them, it is not you that failed. You simply were not ready for the goals you selected.

Write down a detailed plan to achieve your goals that will not fail. Initially it is good to overdo the planning to guarantee your success.

Select tiny goals that are achievable rather than major goals that reinforce failure. Personally I focus on one pound at a time and never look beyond that goal. Mt Everest is climbed taking step at a time. Staring at the mountain top does not get one to the summit.

A goal might be to cook one healthy meal this week. Or to buy only two snack foods this week. Identify and climb a small knoll before you attempt Mt. Everest.

Each week select and write down small goals that you can achieve. Writing down your achievements is critical and after a few weeks leads to a "winner" mentality than can conquer larger knolls. If you fail a goal, break up that goal into smaller segments, take smaller steps to the top.

Write down and review your achievements so you create a self image as a "winner". When you fail, it is the goal's fault, not yours. Modify the goal until it is achievable.

Every small step in the right direction gets you closer to the mountain top.

Janice



Posted by:  [HappyVegan](#) replied to [comment from JR](#) | [January 17, 2011 7:00 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Score: 1 (1 votes cast)



Excellent success story! Bravo! Thank you, Janice, for paying it forward!

Posted by:  [VeganMarr](#) | [January 14, 2011 12:53 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Score: 0 (0 votes cast)



VeganMarr,  
I am paying it forward but along the way to helping others I am also getting "dividends".

Janice

Posted by:  [HappyVegan](#) | [January 17, 2011 7:05 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Score: 0 (0 votes cast)



Dear Janice

Your advice on the small goals is just so wonderful, thanks a lot.

I'm just finding my way into (mostly raw) veganism, and I am also following small steps. Now I'm in my third week, and I already feel more energy and lost about 4 pounds.

I am 59 and my goal is to overcome a very deep exhaustion, also to loose about 30 pounds.

Now I'm confident that with your advice on breaking down goals til they fit I will make it.

Herzkraut

Posted by:  [Herzkraut](#) | [January 28, 2011 10:32 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Score: 1 (1 votes cast)



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