

Chapter Five

A Plant-Based Diet You Can Sink Your Teeth Into

I ate like a pig the other day. And for five months I haven't counted a single calorie. But the amazing thing is—I feel a lot better now than I have for the past twenty years.

When I hit forty, my friends started calling me SnackBar. I reveled in all the food groups—particularly meat, dairy, and bread—and I wore the badge of omnivore with great pride. I was a definite steak-and-potatoes man, and there'd be hell to pay if someone dared to scrimp on the butter and sour cream. Weighing in at 280 for most of my adult life wasn't a liability, it was an ACHIEVEMENT!

Sugar was also a favorite of mine like it is for so many other red-blooded Americans. I got a big jolt of it every morning with a large bowl of Frosted Mini-Wheats, and I made sure to follow that up throughout the day with various sodas, candy bars, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, handfuls of caramel corn, ice cream sundaes, Twinkies, and much more.

I had one rule when it came to food: If it tasted good, I'd eat a lot of it! Frankly, I never met a calorie I didn't like.

I never really thought much about what I was eating, or the impact it might be having on my health, until the days of my McDonald's experiment. Before then, I never monitored my food intake or cared a whit about what nutrients I was ingesting, let alone in what proportions.

All that changed for me when students in my sophomore biology class started telling me what I could eat at McDonald's each day based on an allotment of approximately two thousand calories.

When I started the McDonald's project, I began to see that the amount of food I put into my body had a dramatic impact on my physical appearance. And as my blood work came back from