

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about your journey with food and why you're here today.

Nancy: I have always been on diets. My mom put me on very restrictive diets when I was about eight and had digestive problems always, a little bit overweight and never a lot, but not terribly active as a child, more artistic, creative, but so I grew up with a pretty poor relationship to eating and food and a lot of shame and a lot of hiding of girl scout cookies and that kind of thing. Of course I had very athletic, popular brothers on either side of me. And my mom was an early thinker in diet and had us on skim milk and ice milk in the '50s which was very, very unusual. So when I discovered the health benefits of full fat dairy, it was a real leap of faith to say, "Okay no more non-fat, no more-" of course now there's fat free cream which I'm not really sure how that even exists. It does not exist in nature, let's put it that way.

I had done a gluten-free thing, I had done Atkins and rotation and intermittent fasting and always my body, my digestion was never very happy with that and plus I'd lose weight pretty well and then gain it right back, but I had heard several years before I finally got to the point where I could try the idea of not eating any kind of processed grains. And I have learned enough over time to realize that I had to wrap my brain around it before I could do it right and about the time that I was ready, the first of the year I was ready to find something. I read about this plan and it was like perfect, perfect timing and got the book, read the book, but oh my goodness, I have a million questions and so found a community of people who are also doing the same thing and it was so helpful to have a network of people that we could talk about where to even find some of these things. There's sugar in every kind of – everything in the grocery store had sugar in it and where do you find garbanzo flour and that kind of thing? So it was very helpful to find a community and then become active in that community.

I actually started doing some blogging about this new approach. It wasn't high fat, no carb. It wasn't all the other things that I have experienced and so there were some baby steps that needed to happen, but immediately within 48 hours of getting rid of the sweets and the processed foods and the processed grains, within 48 hours I was so comfortable without them. I had such a bad relationship with food over time with all of the diets and all the shames. I was the one that went to the buffet and got the dessert and then I went back and got the carbs, the processed and so on like that and then I got the dessert again. And the people who went and got the salad first I thought were trying to show off. Well, I became that person without even knowing it was possible and without really trying.

So when I first started with this, I thought, “I’ll give it a little try. I’ve tried all these diets, maybe a few weeks, maybe a few months and I heard someone say, “This is for your whole life.” Well I’d heard that before, I’d heard that in every diet so this is for your whole life, this is a lifestyle change and I said, “Okay, we’ll see.”

Eating the right foods, the right proportions of nutrients, I just felt my digestive problems for my whole life were gone and I’m talking doctors and pills and tests and all kinds of things like that. If for no other reason than having a better relationship to food which is a requirement in our life that we have been having that changed relationship with food, so that was two and a half years ago and there’ve been trips, there’s been backsliding, there’s been a huge crisis in my life and knowing that I have this new relationship with food was so powerful that I was in France yes I ate the baguette, but I came back and knew this was what I wanted, the way I wanted to be, the way I feel well.

Part of my journey was about eight months into this new way of life and I was cooking for my husband and we were both benefitting and having wonderful, wonderful meals carefully planned. My marriage ended and it was not expected. It was very much of a surprise and not at all what I wanted for myself and my future at this point in my life. And I didn’t go and drown my sorrows in doughnuts and cake and cookies. My kitchen was clean, my lifestyle was clean. I stopped doing the creative cooking that I was doing, but I still had really high quality protein and good fats and the healthy carbs to go with the fruit. I’ve never been a fruit eater. I eat fruit all the time now and I love it.

It was so important to me to have that foundation of health when everything else was falling apart and everything did, absolutely fall apart. And still even now and it’s been over a year and a half, I’m not doing the creative meals like I’d like to, but I’m being gentle. And I think that when you’ve been shamed or felt – it wasn’t necessarily someone was saying, we do it to ourselves when we feel the shame for so long, when you can then be gentle with yourself regardless of the piece of cake that maybe you have or the devastating changes in your life, so really empowering and healing sort of thing. I think it was key to my healing, just having a healthy, feeling better with myself and that whole relationship with food was a big part of that.

Interviewer: Yeah it sounds, for one [clapping] yeah absolutely. I have [inaudible 00:08:49] and you lose who you are a little bit or you can’t understand what’s good about you that is the weird thing, right?

Nancy: Absolutely.

Interviewer: And so you lose what makes you, you. And when you have some – when you know in your heart that you have a good relationship with food now and that something you can do well and it was something that was antithetical to that, then tell me how that made you feel.

Nancy: It was very empowering. It was the steady in my life that was going that, so yeah.

Interviewer: It's like food became your new rock, though?

Nancy: Well, it really did and I moved into a new place, I fixed it up exactly the way I wanted. I started having dinner parties and the dinner parties were absolutely healthy proteins, healthy fats, healthy carbs. And my friends were so impressed really that this could be a grain free meal, essentially grain free and no added sugar and always a little bit of dark chocolate at the end and so much fun to have that be a part of well - first of all, figuring out, you have to find out who you're friends are when your marriage ends. This was a lifelong marriage and so your friends are part of that couple. And they've been wonderful and being able to have them in my home and feed them beautiful, healthy food was really, really helpful. Building community has been like my job ever since that happened and food is a big part of that.

Interviewer: That's awesome. I mean if this happened 10, 15 years ago, your marriage ended and all that, you didn't have relationship with food and you didn't have that sort of thing to come back to, I mean how – that's not a pretty picture right?

Nancy: It's not a pretty picture. I'm sure I would have had a lot of Cheetos and it is still difficult. I had to stop and realize that the last time I was single, I was in college. The last time I was cooking for one, I was in college. And I lived in a room on the third floor and the kitchen was on the first floor and I made packaged macaroni and cheese and had a jug of cheap red wine on the third floor and that was – I mean I was thinking, "Why am I not doing better meals, more interesting meals for myself?" And then I realized, "Well, you're doing better than the last time you were single." It's very empowering, but having the digestive issues straightened out so completely is nothing short of a miracle really.

Interviewer: And did you just feel like you had something holding you back or there's just something wrong with you? Did you feel ostracized? Just digestive problems alone, like how does that make you approach life when you feel like your body just doesn't operate the way that everyone else's does.

Nancy: Well, I mean you get to be in your 60s, your body doesn't the way you think it should anyway so it sort of feels normal, it's like. And in fact a lot of times with digestive issues as a child, you don't realize that it's not normal. You just think it's, "I go to school every day doubled over because I had a bowl of cereal with milk and my body didn't like that." Well, I didn't know that and my mother was too busy and didn't really have the connection either.

Interviewer: Tell me about someone with good – having good intentions, but having the wrong information, because it sounds like that's what your mother had. She wanted to try and she cared about your wellbeing, she didn't have good information. Tell me a little bit about that.

Nancy: Right, well she had had digestive issues all her life and so she was always reading this and trying this. And there was a book that came in the '60s called *Calories Don't Count* which today we're interested in that, but it was not a healthy diet. They were very restricted diets. And I've lost my train of thought.

Interviewer: That's all right. What's the opposite of restriction to you? How does that feel to not feel restricted, not feel deprived?

Nancy: Oh well, the way I dealt with feeling deprived as a kid was to hide food and to get really angry at myself when I ate something I wasn't supposed to eat or ate too much, but mostly I hid food. And that is very uncomfortable for a child. I think it's really, really damaging to tell a child that they're fat and to put them on diets. I know that childhood obesity is a huge problem, but please don't tell your little kids that, "Get more active. Eat healthy. Do the right things."

But I know, you were talking about good intentions, just bad information. Oh my goodness, I just can't believe that we finally, it seems like we're finally getting to the point where this makes so much sense. It feels so balanced and so healthy and so wise, because just like my mother I've tried all the different diets, but to have that information now and to also have in addition to the research and the studies and all this body of knowledge have what I know from inside that it absolutely works for me. Someone was saying, "Well, you know everybody's body is different. Not everybody is going to be able to benefit from eating this way." You do learn how your body responds to these things within the framework of real food, not processed food. It took me six months to be able to start listening to my body after I got rid of the processed, the simple carbs. It took that long for having eaten processed food for so long under the auspices of a healthy, low-fat

diet to realize that even brown rice, my body didn't like brown rice. Brown rice is eaten successfully by millions of people, but my body doesn't like brown rice, it's okay.

Male Speaker: You have three minutes.

Interviewer: Yeah, it sounds like you got saved by science in a way, right?

Nancy: Very much so, very much so and juxtaposition of being ready for it and seeing it in the media at the same moment, it was very helpful.

Interviewer: What specific thing were you following, were you reading?

Nancy: Well this is *Always Hungry?* By David Ludwig and it came out in January of 2016. I read about it, about when it first came out and since it's had great success for many, many people and it's certainly been life changing for me and it's got amazing recipes. The thing about real food is that the tastes are so amazing. And so I was reading this book and going, "Okay I need more. I need more. I need more." Recently the cookbook has come out, *Always Delicious* and it's just – I'm so excited to have it.

Interviewer: I know about it, we might have had a hand in that.

Nancy: Yes.

Interviewer: That's beautiful. Tell me about – that's over. In my mind, because I know the science behind most things we do in life and there's definitely science behind flipping a switch, like a light switch. I've got to think that as you go through life and just things aren't working, it's like you keep flipping the switch and nothing happens and then science kicks in and the voltage actually happens and you flip a switch and you're like, "Holy shit there's life, like this works."

Nancy: Or even worse, you try things and they're harmful to you and they are discouraging and you go, "Oh well. I guess I'm just going to be fat and accept that and have these horrible digestive problems and accept it." You don't have to.

Interviewer: That's awesome.