

Christine: Christine [inaudible 00:00:01], far Northeast Wisconsin and I am 50 years old.

Interviewer: 50 even?

Christine: 50 even.

Interviewer: The big five oh.

Christine: That's right.

Interviewer: 50 and thriving.

Christine: I am.

Interviewer: Christine you have one of the most amazing stories of anyone I've ever heard in my life. Can you tell us your story in brief?

Christine: Where do you want me to begin because there's a lot of it?

Interviewer: I would say right before you got your neck broke.

Christine: Before I got my neck broke I was prepping to drive in a minor snowstorm up in Marquette Michigan, any of you Yoopers know what I mean, no big deal, to actually go get my birthday gift which was a beautiful pure white kitty with blue eyes. And unfortunately things started to get worse. A deer must have run out in front of the cars, in front of me and I was hit head-on. It was a five car collision so I ended up getting severely injured with a broken neck. I was a little overweight from stress at that point and coming from a meat and potatoes and bread culture, meat, potatoes, bread was the standard right, before anything else. So I had a lot of ignorance too in just my general eating. So it took about four months to recover from – yeah, about for months. It happened on December 4th and I was in traction right before my wedding which was June 15th. So actually it was longer than four months. Anyway, after that, a tremendous amount of weight was gained. And a lot of it was comfort food, emotional eating, stress was a lot of it. And ignorance, just eating what was expected of you.

Interviewer: Do you mind if I ask how much you weighed at your highest?

Christine: 279 pounds. Yes 279.

Interviewer: Okay. So you have a broken neck and you weigh 280 pounds.

Christine: After the broken neck the rest of the weight was gained over time.

Interviewer: Got you. How long did it take?

Christine: I'd say six to nine months. It was pretty rapid.

Interviewer: Okay.

Christine: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So you were at approximately 280 just because it's a round number. What caused you to say something has to change?

Christine: That light bulb didn't occur for many years. I was able to have my beautiful son Tyler, he's my miracle baby. And they told me I'd never have a child. God said, "I will show you." So I had my son and it was while he was a little one that I was fighting that torment inside of myself of basically anger because I was the fixer. I should be able to nurture and take care of things, I should be able to fix things and I wasn't. I couldn't figure this one out. And I needed my son to be healthy. I think I nurtured and fed him better than myself because that's very common. Parents are taking care of everyone around them more than themselves. And it was probably when he turned seven or eight years old that all of a sudden we joined martial arts. I excelled at it thankfully, and I realized there were big puzzle pieces missing. There was a particular podcast that I listened to that had a tremendous amount of information that started to put the puzzle pieces together. And that was a light bulb moment for me, when I realized I don't have to follow a 28 day diet, I don't have to do any other program, I have to create a way of eating and living that actually works for me and my body and my situation.

Interviewer: So you're creating a way of eating and living that works for your body in your situation. This decision happens. You get back in the driver's seat. Then what happened?

Christine: When I made that decision, I lost 40 pounds of fat and started to practice. And I preach practicing because that's what it is. So practicing what works for me. I have to like what I'm eating. It has to fit my lifestyle convenience needs and my body has to respond to it well. Well, I found out during those years I had polycystic ovarian syndrome and that's a metabolic disorder, you pretty much have to live like a diabetic if you don't want to become pre-diabetic. Well, I refuse to be in a prison in my head. I don't want to be tormented and I don't want to be encaged in anything. I'm not going to walk around feeling deprived and I'm not going to walk around going, "How come they can eat that and I can't?" That's a bunch of baloney. So as I was practicing I was figuring out what

are the things that I can eat that I love, that are nutrient-dense and really satisfy me so that I never have to have that issue.

Sometimes I have to bring food with me. Yes, that's true especially in the culture we're in, it's getting better. And there are a lot of places that offer some options but not nearly enough. So I have safety nets, I bring things with me and I just keep it very convenient, very easy. But I have sweets and I have crunchy, I have salty, I have savory, I have hot and spicy. I never go without because when I was living in that prison I was angry and disgusted and I loathed myself. And it wasn't because I thought I looked horrible or other people told me I was horrible but I felt broken and I felt like I was somehow wrong because I couldn't fix this. "Why can't I fix this, right?" So I don't want to live that way anymore so I make sure that I'm never in that prison. And I haven't had a day where I've been dissatisfied as long as I keep in mind I'm practicing. You're always finding new things playing with your food. I preach, "Play with your food," because then you keep a happy attitude then it works really well.

Interviewer: In retrospect, do you think you actually ever were broken?

Christine: Yes and no. I was broken in that I sincerely believed there was something wrong with me as a whole person with the fact that I couldn't figure out how to fix it soon enough. I struggled for way too many years and that's part of why I want to be talking to people especially menopause ladies. After I lost a total of 104 pounds and then I've hit menopause, I've gained a little bit of that back. Not a huge amount but a little bit. That happens but you should never beat yourself up about it. It's not that I'm not doing it right but it's – I have to customize again. I have to make a little shift in practice and I have to figure out how to do things now that I'm hitting that different stage in life. So I'm still satisfied, nutrient-dense healthy and I can be active and I guess joyful. I'm always looking for that that place of joy and that's the key for me. So that's what I'm working toward all the time and that's what I was at that point too when I started to make those changes. That was my goal. So I wasn't going to be broken emotionally anymore.

Interviewer: So this is going to sound like a kind of a weird question so stick with me. And it might come out wrong so we might have to go back and forth a little bit. There's kind of this paradox, right, of there's body image, self-love movement, extremely important, right?

Christine: Right.

Interviewer: You've got to love yourself because if you don't love yourself there's no need to – you're not worth anything so you're not worth living better. For some people, some people could interpret accepting yourself as, “So if Christine truly accepted herself, she would say 280. I accept that and I'm going to be 280.”

Christine: No, that's a lie. To me that is just a blunt lie. That's the easy way out of accepting what everyone else – accepting what the media is saying. The biggest thing I want women to understand is the media gives you this image. I'm not a fitness model but I'm healthy and I'm active. I do [inaudible 00:08:44] backpacking, I do stand-up paddle boarding. I'm a multi degree black belt martial artist. I have no problem carrying huge amounts of weight. I just spent almost 36 hours and I'm not exaggerating, carrying an average of 50 to 70 pound boxes, totes and over 100 pound furniture over and over and over again as I moved my in-laws. I can outwork a lot of people because I'm healthy, I'm strong. I'm not a fitness model, I don't care to be, I'm not a size 2. I'm more like a 14 depending on who makes the clothes, right ladies? It could be 12 to 16 depending on who makes the clothes. I don't give a darn what that number is, I don't care what the media says I should look like or how I should do it because skinny is not healthy and freedom is not the diet mindset. And that's the big key people have to get.

Interviewer: So one thing I need your help with because that's super powerful. So you embody a strong person. Strong, in like the most beautiful, positive sense of the word. Strong I mean, you're taking care of your family you're taking care of yourself, you're taking care of others, it's incredibly powerful. So that's great. One of the other strongest most successful human beings I know of or anyone knows of is a woman by the name of Oprah Winfrey...

Christine: Right.

Interviewer: Who was raped as a child in poverty and is a black woman in a time when those two things didn't work to you as advantage at all.

Christine: Yes.

Interviewer: Despite all that strength she believes that she cannot have all the experiences in her life that she could have because of her body and that's something she struggled with for 30, 40 years. I think if we can help Oprah we can help everybody. So I'm going to ask you to do me a favor, I want you to look in that camera and I want you to pretend you're looking into the eyes of Oprah Winfrey.

Christine: Okay.

Interviewer: Help Oprah overcome this and be free once and for all into that camera.

Christine: Well, Oprah I have not lived in your shoes so I will never say that what you're doing is wrong because I don't know you. I do understand my experience and the experience of other people that I deal with on a daily basis. And often when they're saying that I'm heavy and I just have to accept it and make the most of it, they're still tormented inside and in their mind and they're not happy, they're not satisfied, they're not – as immobile as they want to be and they are basically being stolen from. That being stolen from to me is just heartbreaking. And I understand what I've been hearing about the experiences that you've had to deal with, with sexual abuse and racial discrimination and you've already been stolen from enough. And there are such beautiful simple real ways, real life ways to eat nutrient-dense but in a way that you absolutely love what you eat. There are even soul food recipes and soul food items that you can even just buy convenience-wise that are fantastic nutrient-dense, low in starch and low in sugar.

There are so many options but obviously I don't know what your health is as far as you know, what has your doctor been saying, where are you at. I don't know what other things they're dealing with and you certainly don't have to tell that to everybody. But if that one simple little message of don't let yourself be stolen from in this area too can find a tender spot in your heart, just think about that. I just don't want you to be stolen from because it can be done. And it can be done with a lot of happiness and just satisfied. I don't feel deprived anymore, ever and I don't worry about what people think or say about me and I'm active. And my doctor says that I'm in a very good place. After the menopause, a little bit of weight gain. Yes, I have a little to lose again. But now instead of being tormented about it, I'm simply look at it – looking at it like that's not a big deal because I have the tools in my toolbox. I know how to work this out. I know how to practice to customize this season of my life to get where I need to be.

And so it's not 28 days to quick fix because think about it, NASA did not get to the moon in 28 days, right? Neil Armstrong very clearly said it was small steps that created the giant leap and it's the same thing with us. We practice these small steps, we get this giant leap of not just optimal health or as close to it as you can get but actual mental freedom and a happiness of every aspect of who you are. So there's not that lingering thing. That cloud back here.

Interviewer: Preach, preach, preach. So you talked about – so part of, I hope what gives Oprah and all the people in the world hope is that there is a solution, there are tools as you said. Is one of those tools that bread is only one point?

Christine: Oh, god no. No. All of that is nonsense. No food is evil. I don't call any food evil because everybody is different. There are different bodies and there are different ways bodies react to food. So I have PCOS. For me bread is a no-no because it's going to create for me a glycemic hit and my body is going to react badly to that. I also will get bloated, I'll feel tired. It's not a good, not a good product. Our wheat isn't the best in this country as it is to begin with but there are other people that can eat some wheat and they don't get the reactions that I do. They eat it in a much, they eat it in mindful amount and with protein and fiber to help make sure that your body is better able to make a bio available to itself. But I don't want to ever say any food is evil. Now if the food is made in a lab and it was going to poison and kill rats before they monkeyed with it to make it edible for humans, okay, now that I'll call evil. That doesn't make sense.

So there are foods like oils and stuff that literally you can't eat it unless they monkey with it in the lab to make it edible. And then it's not food, it's an edible. Let's say a food-like product. It's a food-like product. Well, I wasn't designed by God to eat a food-like product. I was designed to eat food. So if it's whole food eat it, if it's raw, it's awesome, right. If you can find great options to your favorite things like cauliflower rice frozen in bag, people you don't have to – you're not going to find me grating cauliflower over my counter. No way on earth. I'm going to buy the frozen bag, I'm going to put my microwave and it's done. And my husband hates cauliflower but he loves cauliflower rice and he loves cauliflower tater tots. They're awesome and they're frozen. Just cook them up good and brown and crunchy. They're fantastic. I don't want to live without pasta. I love pasta.

Well, how do I make that work for me? Well, there are veggie pastas now. They're frozen in a bag. Can you see a pattern here? It's convenience. So whatever that is, if you like to make your own – I love zucchini pasta also, spiralized zucchini. I'm a fan of it but I buy it frozen in a bag, okay, and that's just how I do it. But because for me in my life if I don't have the convenience, I will lose motivation and I'll basically say, "Forget it." And then who knows what's in front of me? So I keep safety nets surrounding me all the time. If you have vegetables, if you buy them in bulk – and I know there are people that love to buy bulk and they will clean them all and they will cut them all up and then they go ahead and use them. There are other people where that stuff is going to sit in the fridge until it

rots. They're not going to do anything with it. Give yourself permission, buy the stupid tray, peel the plastic off the sucker and go.

You put it out on the counter, everybody's going to be diving into it, it's fresh vegetables. You can buy it organic, you can get them much more inexpensive now. And a lot of variety from peppers and sugar snap peas, to the standard carrots, broccoli and cauliflower, you've got lots of options. Buy the big bag or box of lettuce there or salad mixes, complete salads. Don't make it difficult, make it convenient. Keep all that stuff at your fingertips because then there's no excuse. They're safety nets. If it's easy and in front of you, you're going to use it and everybody else, most of the time they eat it and don't even question, they don't even question.

Interviewer: So you mentioned that no foods are evil. How do you feel about when the same people who make those food-like products say, "Everything in moderation."

Christine: Who are you talking about? No, that doesn't work and it doesn't work for most people to be honest. I mean, I love bananas but with PCOS and whatnot I don't have any symptoms, I'm not on any medications at all for that. But I don't go downing bananas because it's a high starchy food for my system. It's not going to work well. Oreo is sure not going to be any better right. They're going to be a lot worse and that's just processed garbage. I'd rather make my own cookies with real whole food ingredients and they're fantastic. That whole thing with everything in moderation, well, then rat poison and moderation is okay? That doesn't make sense to me. So if rat poison is no good for you don't eat any of it, right. Cigarette smoking is really not good for you even a little bit. It's going to cause lung problems, secondhand smoke or just sucking it in. Same thing with certain foods and more so for some people than others. It depends on where they're at, what their body is doing, what are their circumstances?

Interviewer: Christine you are amazing wife, amazing daughter, amazing mother, amazing coach. In those roles you are obviously a tremendous caretaker for other people. The only person it seems like you've ever struggled to take care of is yourself.

Christine: Yeah, that's true.

Interviewer: The eating and our relationship with food, let's talk a little bit about when eating is – this is going to sound a little bit awkward. I've been intentionally phrasing it awkwardly. When you eat you are putting something inside of yourself, you are putting

something inside your child. What sort of attitude do you think we should have when we are thinking about what to put inside of our bodies and in the bodies of our loved ones?

Christine: You are what you eat, period. So, convenience matters but quality matters more. However, nowadays they are catching up; they're making sure that quality can be convenient. If I did have to pick quality or convenience, quality would win. I would then just start to play with my food to practice, 'how can I make this more convenient for myself keeping the quality that I need?' You literally are what you eat and so if you think about it, do you want to be garbage or do you want to be whole food that has a vibrance to it? And if you take foods and you put them out very often you can see you know, when they sit for time, one behaves correctly and one does not, right. I have a chiropractor that has a happy meal with the burger and fries and it's 15 years old and it hasn't changed one iota. It's kind of terrifying when you think about it. It's just terrifying. If it doesn't rot, something's wrong with it. It has to have a lifespan.

Interviewer: What helped you? So your son is seven, eight years old, your weight is around 280 pounds, you're not living the life you know you're capable of, what helped you to see that you are worth it and you are of the highest quality?

Christine: My Kido, my son. Yeah. And that's what brings tears in my eyes.

Interviewer: So it sounds like if you're not going to do this for yourself, do it for the people who depend on you. Talk to me about that.

Christine: Absolutely. Yeah. When I was pushing 40, I was still in my 30s, I pretty much was avoiding that I had a death sentence taped to my forehead. So that was huge. So my son is little and then even as he matured into middle school, why on earth would I not want to be healthy enough to give him everything that he deserved and stay there, to be a part of his life. It just doesn't make sense. That's cheating him, it's stealing from him. Why would I want to do that?

Interviewer: So often we hear parents say, "I don't have time to take care of myself."

Christine: I learned the hard way. Oh this is amazing, it really is. My own son told this to me and it blew my mind. As he got a little bit older he saw the difference in the person I was when I was not taking care of myself and then letting it trickle down to continue to take care of everyone else. I was a great president of the company. Just like I say, "It's all in your head." It's absolutely all in your head. Ladies, it's not a lie and it's not a bad thing, it is all in our heads. We need to plan and prepare first then take action to do stuff

right and your body is going to follow your head but it's the same thing with what we do with our family and our people where we were great heads of companies for everyone else around us. We make sure all those departments, if you want to think of it that way, are running well right. They're efficient, they're making profit right, they're productive, everything's good but I'm falling apart.

And then you don't realize actually that's affecting all those other departments big-time. So I made improvements and all of a sudden one day, we're chilling out and my son made the comment to me that I was just a nicer person. Wow. And I don't even know if he'll remember saying that. I don't remember – I don't know if he will remember. But I just – it impacted me so strongly, I'm a nicer person now. So because I was taking better care of myself, I was more balanced I was more satisfied. I wasn't being in that mental prison of torment anymore and it had nothing to do with, 'I don't think I look good enough.' It was the fact that I couldn't fix what I knew had to be fixed, it was so frustrating. It made me irate. And so the fact that I was able to fix it with practice showed him too, this is what you need to do.

And to this day he's living this way and his wife now. He's 26 and married. His wife is living this way. So they take time to practice. They've had the stresses. He just is going from one extraordinarily stressful job to a better job. And he's doing that partly because he said, "Even if I had safety net foods, I can't change the fact that the job is so miserable and stressful." That environment, anybody will tell you if they're working in a super stressful environment you've got to change that environment somehow whether it's within that job or you must leave it depends on what you're capable of doing, right. And so with food and as well as environment we have to do that. We have to make sure that within ourselves that it's all in our head so we've got to plan and prep and we've got to be willing to make these changes by practicing little steps, step by step consistently and we see what works and what doesn't.

I call it AIM, Assess Investigate Modify. So you're assessing what do I need? What do I want to eat? How do I make up more nutrient-dense, right? How do I make it easy or whatever it might be you're assessing. I need to lose weight, this is why. I need to be stronger, right. Then you investigate how do I do it? Well, as you're practicing that then you're making modifications, you keep what works, you throw away what doesn't work. It's real simple. It's just – we do it everywhere else in life why can't we do it here? If you think about it we're doing Assess Investigate Modify everywhere else in life but when it

comes to this one which is probably the most important, it just doesn't happen I don't know why.

Interviewer: We don't assess, we don't investigate, we don't modify, we don't do any of those three things. We just...

Christine: It's just practicing really and it's just being mindful of why, you know, it's the most pertinent precious gift we have this life. And we cannot trade this in for another car, it doesn't work that way. This is all we got; we got one shot at it. So we better make that engine keep purring like a kitten because there's no replacement for this engine, this is all we got.

Interviewer: For somebody who feels like – she says, she's watching this and she says Christine I hear you. My heart is full, my eyes are misty but Christine I have tried everything. I've tried every diet under the sun. I go to – I've tried all the classes at my gym, I've tried all the exercise gadgets, I have drawers full of diet pills.

Christine: Done it.

Interviewer: What do you, what do you say to her?

Christine: Stop doing them, they're not the answer. That's followed – remember I said skinny is not healthy and freedom is not a diet mindset. So I live in freedom, I don't follow a diet period. I never will. You couldn't pay me money to follow a diet because diets don't work. It's creating a lifestyle, creating a way of eating. And if you think about it, if you look back 20, 30, 40, 50, 100 years, nobody followed diets, they just ate. And they ate what was seasonal, they ate what was on the farm, they ate what they found, they ate a big variety. So two things were happening, they were eating a variety, they were eating whole foods, nothing processed, nothing refined and nothing that was fixed in a lab so it didn't kill you. Also they were eating a variety of bacteria biomes, right. So you had –because that's one of the biggest problems, we have too with our gut is that we don't have – that's why probiotics and all that stuff is the big thing because our diet is so limited, so narrow often that we're not getting what we need as far as the healthy bacteria in the system.

So you just need variety. You need simplicity, you just need to be willing to make those little steps, just pick a couple of things. If you need to find somebody to help you, there are resources out there. Find people to help you but just pick one or two things to practice a couple of things. And I tell people the first two things is just look at your plate

and make sure it's more vegetables and meat than anything else. Well, whatever type of meat or protein source you want, more vegetables than meat before anything else then some whole food fat. If you just use your plate just – if that's the only thing you ever think about is what is on your plate, you're good. You're going to start to see success just with that one thing.

Interviewer: That's so important. So I want to laser focus on that. Complete the following sentence for me. You look at your plate and you see?

Christine: Vegetables first.

Interviewer: Start with the whole sentence.

Christine: More vegetables than anything else then some lean protein and whole food fat, that's the priority.

Interviewer: So what does that look like for breakfast?

Christine: For breakfast, well, just recently because I had to travel. I had to go into a restaurant. That can be a big issue for a lot of people. I simply, I couldn't find anything that didn't have a ton of pancakes, hash browns and bread and I didn't want any of that. So I simply asked for a couple of eggs with some spinach. Yes, they looked at me a little funny but they were actually very sweet and they threw a bunch of spinach in with a couple of eggs. I asked for two pieces of bacon. Yes, you can eat bacon, just don't live off of it just like you can have real butter and stuff just don't live off of it. And then I had some fresh fruit and no, it was not a banana and no, it wasn't a bunch of pineapple or grapes. It was berries, it was some cantaloupe, it was some melon and that was fine. Otherwise I can – well, if I make it at home it's usually something very simple. I make egg muffins. I take a muffin tin and I pretty much make omelets. And I am from Wisconsin, people; I will eat cheese, okay.

I'm a cheese head so cheese is part of my vocab because if you don't eat it they kick you out, you know. You eat cheese or they kick you out of the state, it's done. So I'm going to eat some cheese. So I put cheese in my little egg muffin omelets and I love red pepper and orange pepper so I put that in there. A little bit of bacon because I love my bacon, I'm not going to live without that. And yes, I drink coffee and I very – and I always have spinach just because I enjoy it. I just like spinach but you can use whatever veggies you like, mushrooms, whatever trips your trigger. So I just put a lot of veggies in with something like that. Many people are big into green smoothies. Personally I don't like

them, I don't drink them. I'll drink it juicy like a liquid. So if I can make a green smoothie that's like juicy liquid, I'm great with it but I hate the texture of a smoothie. You're allowed to not like stuff and it's okay to not eat it. Find things you like and make it so that you like it, you know, change things if you have to so you like it. So I'll drink green juice that I make but...

Interviewer: So Christine we're going to move on to the rest of the day but I'm just, I'm going to channel, I'm going to channel someone who's watching this right now. She's just, "Well, that's awesome Christine. And, you know, you got a 26 year old son, cool beans, I have a four year old son, a two year old daughter and they're screaming at me. I have no time to even make breakfast let alone make three breakfasts for my kids. What do I do?"

Christine: Make it convenient one of two ways, either you do a bunch, the hubby takes the kids or mama or somebody or they're taking a nap and you just make a bunch all at once. Like with those egg muffins I told you about, I make them in a tin, I freeze them and they're ready to go. You can do things either in bulk so that way it's already prepared and ready to go or you can even put them in individual serving containers ready for you. Otherwise you look for those convenient options. If there are days that you need a convenient help, you look for the things that you could utilize that are higher quality but convenient, that you can maybe just buy frozen and heat and eat. So there are times that we can make in bulk and it's reasonable, there are other times that I understand it doesn't work. You can give yourself permission to do the best you can with where you're at and what you have and then go from there. And it starts to snowball, it will snowball and you're going to find that all of a sudden you're doing things you didn't think you could do, let alone would do and it's just working better than you ever imagined. You just have to give yourself that time to practice it and get it down.

Interviewer: Beautiful. And for what it's worth there are pre-peeled, hard-boiled eggs at Costco now.

Christine: There are, that's right. Hard-boiled. Well, yeah. But for a two-year-old wouldn't probably care for that so much, so you might have to play around with that a little bit.

Interviewer: So what about, what about lunch? Lunch rolls around. What are we doing?

Christine: Oh, that could be anything, leftovers from the night before.

Interviewer: Sandwiches?

Christine: I don't do standard sandwiches. If I absolutely have to, my father-in-law is now living with me, and if I had to do a sandwich I do flax and millet bread. So it is a grain but it's not wheat. Flax is obviously much better for you. So it's an option because he is a sweet old geezer and he's not going to change. So I do things like that. I "cheat". He says, "You will cheat and put vegetables in that." I take hamburger, grass-fed beef and I stuff it full of spinach that I've cooked. You cook it down so it wilts and then you squeeze out all the liquid and you put it in there. Well, then the old geezers getting grass-fed beef grilled hamburgers but they're full of either greens powder and or spinach. And so I do that with meat loaf, it's stuffed full of different veggies. Well, then you could have meat loaf as part of a lunch. There are flax crackers, there are nut-based crackers, there are bacon crisps, there are all kinds of things, there are – you've got options. You just have to look to find them. That's part of that planning and prepping. Take the time to plan what do I want to eat, how do I make it better? Then see what your options are and start to practice them. All of a sudden you have a staple list that you can work off of that's just automatic.

Interviewer: I think – let's talk about that a little bit because I think, I think people look at this and they see it as overwhelming. But if we take the process you've talked about, do it in various steps.

Christine: Yeah.

Interviewer: You don't need to figure this out all at once perfectly.

Christine: Nope. Absolutely, not. You just simply decide, I want more vegetables. Start there. How do you incorporate more vegetables? Just that one thing. Don't think about anything else, just incorporate more vegetables. Done. And let that be your priority and it can be a priority for quite a long time and you're going to make huge improvements just by doing that one thing. So sneaking in the spinach and the eggs or, you know, in sandwiches, greens powders, if you need greens powders. And I put it in sauces and gravies and chili and soup. It's amazing what you can do with it. So if you have a good greens powder you can put it. You can use it in recipes and put it everywhere. It might darken things a little bit but that's all it does, is darken it. It doesn't really alter the taste at all but you've added some greens and nutrition in there.

It's just a matter of looking at what do you need, what do you like to eat, see about expanding that variety. Playing with things, play with your food, be adventurous. I'm going to try jicama today or I'm going to try kale. I've never had kale, let's see what that's

like. Just don't get it when it's real bitter. Kale is awesome but it can be bitter. Look for this stuff that's not bitter and play around with your sources. You can find all kinds of fantastic things if you're just willing to play with your food and just kind of get your fingers dirty in there, right. Just figure out what you like, what you don't like and how you can use it.

Interviewer: So I get that. Am I giving up sweets? My kids can't go trick or treating?

Christine: I had a brownie before I came down here because I use black beans, you know, black beans are a protein source but they're not an optimal protein source, right. There is a little bit of starch in there but like lentils from a can not a bag. Did you know canned lentils have more protein than bag lentils? Don't ask me why but they do. So I've used those too. But you use black beans and you can make fantastic brownies otherwise you can just use some almond flour or coconut flour, use dark cocoa. So you just have cocoa powder. I use stevia or xylitol as a sweetener. However, if you have dogs watch out because xylitol is deadly to dogs just like raisins. It's not a bad food but there are certain things you don't want your dogs to have, okay. Xylitol is one of them, so just be careful with it and use it and enjoy it. So no, I have SANE cookies all the time. These chocolate chip cookies that are nutrient-dense. They have a good whole food in there and whole food fat and my mother-in-law is addicted. She makes them every two weeks and she freezes them and then uses them every day with her tea or her little cup of hot cocoa.

Interviewer: So dinner. The families getting together, it's crazy time at night. What's happening? What are we making?

Christine: Is it a horrendous day that's been super busy and painful or is it easy breezy day?

Interviewer: Let's do the horrendous day that's been super painful.

Christine: Go to the freezer department, grab two bags of frozen veggie pasta noodles, they're penne noodles. Take that and you've got two choices; you can either add a couple of cans of tuna – anybody remember tuna helper, hamburger helper, right? Okay, this is the nutrient-dense way of doing it. You take these noodles, you could either get the plain noodles and add your own sauce to it or you can get the cheddar cheese noodles. And yes, the ingredients are really good, I was very surprised myself. You simply throw them into a pan; throw in some ground meat, veggies, whatever you like and within literally 10 minutes you're eating. So you can either have a pasta type dish,

you can have a hamburger helper-ish type dish, you can have a tuna casserole type dish. These penne noodles are fantastic and they're frozen and they're veggie-based, lentil-bean and veggie-based.

Interviewer: But Christine...

Christine: So options like that are everywhere.

Interviewer: But I don't, I don't know how to cook.

Christine: How is that cooking? You're heating and eating. My husband does it. If my husband can do it, I'm sorry there is no excuse. Take a pair of scissors, cut open big, dump big in frying pan, take tuna, open can with the electric can opener, okay. Drain out the liquid, that's the hard part, okay. When you're done draining out the liquid, dump it in frying pan, stir. Okay, that's it. You're done, that's it. Now heat it and eat it that's all there's to it. And you've got tuna, you've got a – you've got a pretty optimal protein. You've got these veggie noodles so it's satisfying because you – people love that pasta, that mouth feel, right. But it's made from veggies and lentils, it's much better for you. You can throw – if you, if you really are desperate and you need extra veggies and you like things, grab a frozen bag better than a can, throw in the frozen bag of veggies and mix that in with it, okay. Now you have even more veggies in there. And that was a pair of scissors, that' cut open the bag, dump.

Interviewer: Okay Christine, so I'm vibing with you. I'm feeling momentum however, it's the holiday season. This is going to totally derail me, it's the holiday season. I'm going to gain 20 pounds.

Christine: Why? Cookies, brownies, those can be whole food and delicious. Turkey is good for you. Prime rib is good for you, traditional main dishes. If you want a little bit of real mashed potatoes on that day, I say go for it. That's fine. It's one day, one meal, one day is not going to derail you. If you don't want to do that there are even frozen cauliflower mashed potatoes with garlic, you can have cauliflower tater tops, get them good and brown they're delicious. You've got veggies, all kinds that you can add a little butter and some spice too tada, right. The green bean casserole whatever that people traditionally have that's fine. Otherwise, just have one day and be completely out of your mind for one day. It's okay to be out of your mind for one day. I'm not going to, I'm not going to say a word.

Interviewer: All right. So I feel comfortable. I feel comfortable it's, you know, we do Thanksgiving at my house so now I feel equipped, I'm ready to go. And then we're going to go to my in-laws' house the next day and that's going to be the one day I go crazy. But then there's office parties and this other party, it's like two weeks of situations that I don't control. What do I do?

Christine: Safety nets. Just keep stuff with you. Keep the brownies in your purse. Keep whatever types of bars you like or cookies or whatever. I mean, quite honestly there are – even I don't know if I can say names of things but there are like Atkins bars and stuff like this. They're not great, okay. But for an emergency safety net you can even have things of this nature. There are other companies with other bars, there are peanut butter bars, there are chocolate peanut butter cups that that are sold by all kinds of different reputable places with good quality as well as some that are so-so. But if you have safety nets either that you make yourself or you find, the whole point isn't, it's not about perfection. It's about practicing step by step and doing the best you can with what you have and where you're at. So if the best you have is pretty good, that's fantastic. Start with pretty good. Then you find oh these are good but I found these and these are easy to get, these are better, better quality, well great.

Well, as you were working on improving you were at pretty good you went from not good to pretty good now you're not better well then as you go from there you know you're starting to see other kinds of results because you're focusing on, "My plate is more vegetables and lean protein than potatoes, bread or processed junk. So I'm feeling better. Now I have a little more motivation and energy and I care about what I'm doing and I found this is better. Well, this one's even better yet and this one might take a little more effort but this one over here takes none at all." Well, see what I mean? Practicing and looking and customizing. You make it work for you.

Interviewer: Christine, I'm feeling lots of energy, I'm feeling like I can do this. I'm excited to get my family started. There's just one more thing I need your help with and that's what do I send my kids to school with for lunch?

Christine? Why would that even be a question? Why is it different from what you're eating?

Interviewer: Well, they don't have refrigerator.

Christine: That's going to depend partly on personal taste. If they like tuna, you can use canned tuna, that's not going to go bad in a couple of hours. You can give them

sandwich makings not wrapped in bread. It can be wrapped in other things whether it be romaine lettuce or something else like the flax or the millet et cetera. You have options. Truthfully it is absolutely no different than eating at home. It's really not. You can get insulated bags to go around those lunch boxes or lunch bags are insulated and you put something in there to keep it cool. You can put anything in there; it'll stay cold for those couple of hours until lunch time. There's really no reason why it has to be any – just give them leftovers from dinner. Just shove it in the bag with something to keep it cold in the insulated little cheapo lunch bag that you can get anywhere. Family Dollar, Dollar Trees carry those things and send them out the door.

You don't, you don't have to – why on earth would you want to send them with something that is bad for them, going to lower their energy levels, not make it easy for them to think and learn and process their lessons? That doesn't make sense. How they eat even at the school should have no – just because they're at school that has a bearing on what they're eating. No, they're just eating the same thing just figure out how to send it in an easy way.

Interviewer: And have you – what have you found Christine because, you know, my family – when I hear you say eat high-quality foods, what I hear is I need to shop at Whole Foods. I need to buy only wild-caught, grass-fed organic. I don't know if my family can – how can my family afford to eat high-quality?

Christine: No. Well, since you mentioned Whole Foods, that means I can mention names. All these does a great job and they're doing an even better job and you can –especially the seafood, I eat a lot of seafood. Oh my gosh, the inexpensive high-quality fantastic seafood they have, grass-fed beef, vegetarian and vegan options that are not soy, are great options. Wal-Mart is improving because they have to keep up, they want to keep the customers, right, so they're fighting. And if you look and you demand and you tell them this is what I want, believe me they'll order it for you by the case. I've done it. I need this, I want this, I need you to keep it in stock, bring it back or get it for me. Because we're the ones paying their wage, we're the ones keeping their business alive. If we're the ones making the demands they're going to provide it for us. So there are –I don't have a Costco but I hear a lot of people talking about Costco, I guess it also has a lot of discount options. There are a lot of options out there now you just have to look for them.

Interviewer: So when you say, when you say eat natural Whole Foods and high-quality foods, I was looking in my cupboard the other day and I saw my box of honey nut

cheerios says that it's made with all natural ingredients. So does that mean my honey nut cheerios are high-quality?

Christine: Well, what's the first ingredient?

Interviewer: Probably wheat or sugar.

Christine: Wheat, flour, sugar right. So that's starch. And if you look at the label itself – I have a little thing I call the label tool, and you look at the total carbohydrate fiber and protein just those three things. So the total carb is going to tell you the total amount of sugar and starch combined, it's the total carbohydrate, right. Then you've got your fiber and your protein. You want your fiber and protein to be more than that total carbohydrate, right. So if you take total carb subtract the fiber, subtract the protein, 10 and under is good, five and under is better but zero and negative numbers are better yet. So you're looking for items that are preferably wheat free, or they're starch free in that sense using better quality wheat et cetera. Now are there cereals – we can make cereals even like even granola type cereals that are actually real good food and not this processed stuff. So we have a lot of options there. We don't, we don't need that. But you have to think, you have to look, just take a glance and you don't have to, you don't have to take long to look at it either and you're going to know really quick. Now put it back, look for the next option.

Interviewer: So that, the label trick, the math is awesome. Can you – let's do that, just that one more time. So start it out, whatever your name you gave it.

Christine: I just call it my little label tool. It's just a little tool that I use. So I look at the total carbohydrate, I subtract the fiber and I subtract the protein and if you look at a nutritional label, that is the order you see it in. You see the total carbs first, you go down sugar or whatever then you're going to see fiber, go down a couple more, fat blah, blah, blah then you see protein. So total carb, fiber, protein, you simply subtract that protein and fiber from the total carbohydrate. Obviously the lower the number or a negative number is going to show you that it's going to be better quality as far as starch and sugar content then, you know, you take a look at the ingredients, you can tell. Look how they split within the first five. Are you in the running or do I put you back? So you don't – please don't waste a bunch of time reading and analyzing every single label, counting the calories. I never look at the calories. I could care less how many calories is in it. I want to know what does that label tool show me.

Is it 10 and under, preferably zero, negative numbers? Total carb, subtract fiber, subtract protein, that's it. You can do that wicked fast once you do it a couple of times. Then I want to know is it, is it good quality? Is there some good ingredients in there? And now if there's something in there toward the bottom that might not be the best optimal but it's convenient, it's better than the others and I can afford it, I'm going to go with that one because it's not about perfect. I don't need the whole food perfect. If you can't get grass-fed beef easily just get good beef. I'm not going to, you know, don't have a hissy fit about the details, right, just do the best you can with what you have and where you're at.

Interviewer: If I have to choose between buying a little bit of wild-caught Alaskan salmon or a little bit of grass-fed beef and then filling up on starch or a lot of conventional nutrient-dense proteins and a lot more conventional non starchy vegetables, what should I choose? And don't just answer my question, sort of speak my question and then give your answer.

Christine: If it's high-quality grass-fed or wild-caught salmon protein and mostly grains or some form of starch like potatoes et cetera, compared to mostly vegetables and any good conventional protein, I'm sorry but like I said you look at your plate. You want more than half – you have to be a plate full of vegetables, multicolored, non starchy vegetables, greens, purple's, reds, yellows, orange et cetera. Half of your plate, good vegetables, and then about a third of it good quality protein. So if that's the best ground beef, 80% lean that Wal-Mart has, go for it. Just have more good vegetables than anything else and if that's the only thing you change for the next eight weeks is just how do I get in more good non starchy vegetables? Make that your only change. You're going to be winning.

Interviewer: When should I eat?

Christine: When you're hungry and stop when you're satisfied, not full.

Interviewer: What's the difference between being satisfied and being full?

Christine: One hurts, one is uncomfortable, one leaves you feeling ugh. So you want to just be satisfied and you're not hungry. So often, yes, we stopped eating sooner than the portion that we're given whether it be from a restaurant or other people or ourselves. You just, you know, save it. Good, you got, you got something for later.

Interviewer: Am I allowed to eat after 6:00 p.m.?

Christine: If you're hungry why not? And also our body desires sweets, that's natural, that's biologic. Let yourself have some sweets. So if you want that good brownie or that cookie or if you want something salty, crunchy, have a little bit. And it also depends on where you're at, menopausal ladies sometimes they have a horrible time sleeping. Sleeping can be an issue. They have interrupted sleep. Sometimes that actually is a lack of starch, so that's where I said like bananas are not evil. A lady might need a little bit of banana before she goes to sleep or if she's interrupted in her sleep because she's a menopausal lady. Her sugar level has dropped, her body wakes her up, she has interrupted sleep, that's a hormonal thing. So she might need a little bit, maybe a protein bar that has a little bit of something like, you know, dried fruit or something in it, you know. It could be – there's a variety of ways to handle that.

So it depends if you're hungry or if there's something like that going on. I don't care what time of day is it, if you need to eat. I had to get up at 2 o'clock in the morning in order to come here and do all this wonderful stuff. I was hungry at very oddball times, I didn't care I just found what – the best I could find and I ate.

Interviewer: So Christine I'm convinced. I am going to – I'm a father and I'm going to – I'm committed to feeding my children a higher quality food. So instead of giving them Mountain Dew tomorrow, I'm going to give them grape juice.

Christine: You're too funny because one has sugar and one doesn't, right. No, because it's just that simple, no. Grape juice, if you look at it has nothing but shooting and you know, why don't you just inject them with sugar. It's no different.

Interviewer: But it has vitamins in it.

Christine: How is that going to help? Okay, sugar that's been injected with some vitamins. Oh yeah, that's real fun. No, you have a lot of better options, so many better options. And quite honestly if push comes to shove and you're looking at juice bottles or even some of those v8 options, they have some of the better v8 options now, look at some of those, turn it over use that label tool or look to see how much sugar is there compared to other stuff. It might not be perfect but at least it's a better option. And they have the orange and they have the grape one now and there's part of the healthy line so, it's not great but at least it's better. It's a step in the right direction and then start to go from there.

Interviewer: Christine for our, for our vegan friends out there who want to increase the quality of their vegan lifestyle, what should they be doing?

Christine: The same exact thing. It's nothing different except there are – no, vegetarian is going to be a lot – is going to be easier often than vegan but because a lot of the good whole food fats and whatnot other than like avocado, coconut, coco as animal products. So you just have to look to see, you know, what are the, what are the vegan options that you're most happy with preferably veggie-based not soy-based protein products. And you just – again you just have to practice and play with your food. Find the options. Like I said, all this has a lot of options, now many more than other places. Look for those resources and just play with your food. Make it so it fits you and you're happy with it so you get as much nutrient-dense of a variety of veggies, non starchy and protein. Find what fits you and then you're going to be happy to keep it consistent. And we just – we don't – it's like everybody thinks it has to be this big fight it's not a big fight it's really not.

Interviewer: Christine my final question for you is that, I have learned so much. This has been so extremely helpful. It's been so helpful that I'm a little overwhelmed and I don't know where to start. What do I do when I feel overwhelmed and how do I get started?

Christine: Just more vegetables than anything else. Just look at how can I eat more vegetables? Just start there. That's usually the majority of people, that's their biggest problem for a lot of different reasons. So just start with more variety of non starchy vegetables, find different ways, different resources to buy them. Find them packaged, ready to tear the lid off and just eat them so you don't have to fuss with them. Find them frozen, have them steamed, have them roasted, put them in soups. I put – like I said, I put non starchy vegetables pretty much in everything. You can do that very easily, just if that's the only thing you do, you're going to have success. You're going to be going in the right direction.

Interviewer: So Christine I'm going to have to get the last word here because for anyone who's watching this, I know you don't hear me but this has been Christine [inaudible 00:57:32]. If you have any doubts about whether or not you can do this or not, just look at what you're looking at the screen right now because Christine, this is absolutely fantastic and I really appreciate you sharing this all with us today. It's beautiful.

Christine: Just keep it simple. Thank you.