

Choices

Inspiring Stories of Healing Through
Alternative and Holistic Health Care

19 Authors Sharing Real Stories of
Hope and Healing

Cherri Gregori-Pedrioli

Choices Book Series
www.ChoicesBookSeries.com

Choices
Inspiring Stories of Healing Through Alternative and Holistic Health Care
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Dedication

I dedicate this book to two of the most amazing and important women in my life; my grandmother Minnie (Gregori) Chavez and my mother Barbara Jean (Roberts) Gregori.

I know in my heart, that had you both explored your Choices, the outcome may have been very different.

Because of the events of your life, and the journey I walked with you, I have the strength, the courage, and the knowledge to spread the word about Choices.

“In the end that was the choice you made, and it doesn't matter how hard it was to make it. It matters that you did.”

— Cassandra Clare, *City of Glass*

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Chapter 15

From Toxic to Transformed

by Addie Spahr Kim

“There are many things we can’t control in the world, but we can control what we put in and on our bodies, and the choices we make every day may impact whether we live in a state of toxicity or a state of optimal health.” - Addie Spahr Kim

I wasn’t the kind of sick that keeps you in bed and you know it will be a few days and then you will feel better. I was tired. I was struggling with depression and anxiety. My stomach would often cramp up, but I thought it was just stress. I wasn’t overweight, but I didn’t feel good in my clothes. I was starting to believe that feeling sick and tired was normal. That the haze and discomfort I was experiencing was just how I was going to always feel. But a voice inside was telling me it shouldn’t be this way.

As a child I remember getting sick a lot. All the way through college I battled allergies and asthma and seemed to get the flu, strep throat and other viruses easily throughout my childhood and early adulthood. I suffered from yeast infections, ovarian cysts as well as depression and anxiety and waves of skin breakouts. But after the stomach pain started in my mid-twenties, I knew there was something potentially serious going on, and that I couldn’t keep living like this. I went to doctors. Had blood tests, stool tests, every superficial exam without a full body invasion. The doctors could not pinpoint what was causing the problems and had no advice on how to get better.

So, I took a different path. I went the herbalists and acupuncturists and other healers. And what I discovered was that I was sick. But not from a virus, and thankfully not a disease. I was sick from years of exposure to environmental toxins. Some probably from my food, others from the water I drank or the air I breathed, possibly the asbestos floating round my high school as they removed during construction, with school still in session. I was also suffering from food sensitivities/allergies that were triggering a host of issues. Oh, and the stomach pain - was partially from a parasite that I likely picked up traveling through Europe and an excessive coffee drinking habit that was causing an acidic overload in my body.

In order to get healthy, I had to detox. I did several types of cleanses, ranging from liquid concoctions to colonics and herbal supplements. I radically overhauled my diet and stopped drinking coffee. I continued to explore a variety of wellness practices into my 30's because I knew I wanted to have children. Given my history of cysts and my age, I was worried that I wouldn't get pregnant easily. I knew that achieving optimal health was key for my future, whether being a mom was in the cards for me or not. I know that if I had not started to educate myself in those earlier years, I would have had a harder time undoing the damage to my body from years of being inflamed and undernourished. Once I changed my habits, my ailments went away, along with my anxiety and depression -- aside from the occasional mood waves that come with the female menstrual cycle, and the hardships we all face as adults. I went from toxic to transformed and was finally feeling the way I had hoped was possible.

But what shifted my long-term health the most was my belief system. I now have the belief that I have the power to not only heal my body, but to nourish and protect it. I've had to rewire my own thinking around my relationship with food and establish a solid foundation of healthy lifestyle practices beyond the kitchen. Making

these changes not only took me from a state of toxicity to one of transformed health, but they shifted the purpose of my existence, and I am now committed to helping other people have their own health transformation. After I was able to take control of my own health, I had to do another deep dive after my first son was born and struggled with his own digestion issues. It turns out that he inherited some of my food allergies and then came into the world with even more severe allergies. He spent his first couple years of life inflamed until we got to the bottom of his issues. It was during this time that I became a holistic health coach and did everything possible to heal my son, but also pledged to help others gain control of their own health.

It seems like it should be so simple to take care of ourselves and be thriving from both a physical and mental state of wellness. But for most of us, it's a real struggle. We are over-committed, stressed-out, and often struggling to find our purpose and value our existence and contributions to the world. We are lonely, even when we have a large support network. And when we don't have that, we are lost and often depressed and turn to unhealthy habits to fill voids that can only truly be filled when we arrive at a place of self-love and compassion. This is not an easy task. I get it. It's taken me years to shift my mindset, and I am still working on it all the time. But it is possible for all of us to change, and to make choices that best serve our well-being. It takes commitment and awareness and an open heart and mind.

When it comes to taking care of our bodies, I like to use the analogy that we are like high performance sports cars. We need to add premium fuel (eat mostly plants), get oil changes (do a cleanse or detox program every few months or bi-annually, or when we feel our bodies need it), and rotate the tires (find outlets for creating balance in our lives). To thrive in the world today, we all need to have a solid foundation of whole food nutrition. We need to hydrate, get adequate

sleep, find ways to relieve stress, and prioritize meaningful connections to the world around us - with both people and nature. This sounds simple, but in reality, it is harder and more complicated, but it is possible. I am living proof. Had I not been open to other choices, and explored other healing modalities, I would have a much different life than I have today. My two healthy boys may not have ever come into the world. I may not have learned the tools to support my husband and me to manage our busy entrepreneurial lives while also parenting and being a support to family and friends. And I definitely wouldn't have had the confidence to change careers centered around my soul's purpose and my joy in helping others live their best lives.

If you struggle with your health - in any form - consider looking inward and first making the mindset shift to know how powerful you are. You can't control many things in the world. But you can control what you put in your body, how you view yourself, and trust that you have the power to heal and thrive even as the world around us is still toxic and out of balance. The more we realize the toxicity - on an environmental level but also in how energy flows around us and between us - the more we can shift all of it. We can be the change. But it starts inside first. I am so grateful for the gift of empowerment over my own health, and know you have this gift too should you choose to embrace it.



Addie Spahr Kim is holistic wellness, sustainability and network marketing business coach with over 10 years of experience in the wellness and sustainable lifestyle sector. She is a franchise owner with the Juice Plus+ Company and her passion is teaching busy families how to create

a foundation of whole food-based nutrition and adopt healthy lifestyle practices that support both people and the planet.

She also coaches busy moms how to build home-based businesses that create residual income and provide the flexibility to work around their family's needs and schedules or add additional revenue streams while earning income at a full-time job. She is a mom of two boys and wife to a busy restaurant owner with businesses in Washington D.C. and San Diego County. She lives in Encinitas, CA and feels happiest by the ocean.

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