**My Story**

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A plant-based diet is a diet based on foods derived from plants, including vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes and fruits.  While I choose to be completely meat and dairy-free (vegan and plant-based), plant-based can also mean choosing to include a limited amount of animal products.  My husband and I discussed going on a plant-based diet many times before we actually did it.  Although we had already cut a majority of meat and dairy out of our diet, we thought like many others that we could never do it long term.  We were already aware that a plant-based diet was healthier and better for the environment, but it took a trip to a local animal sanctuary to make the leap to veganism. Once we decided to commit, we began many conversations to figure out the logistics of being a vegan family.  We were concerned of having little or nothing to eat at family dinners as well as awkwardness when negotiating a restaurant for dinner with friends.  How would our 10-year-old, meat-loving daughter react?

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I would love to say it was an easy transition for us, but becoming vegan definitely takes planning and thought.  I had to learn how to navigate and research living a plant-based life, while experimenting with new ingredients.  Throughout this process, I have acquired a wealth of knowledge and experience.  I have grown to crave foods like quinoa, Swiss chard, and sweet potato and have lost the taste for the processed foods I once enjoyed.  I have never been healthier.  My husband, who had been on cholesterol medication for 15 years, is no longer on those medications because of our plant-based lifestyle.  He had been told that because of his genes, he would be on medication for the rest of his life.  This simply isn’t true and the power of a whole food, plant-based diet is often underestimated.

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This is a diet, “as in the kinds of food a person eats” and should not to be mistaken with going on a diet, “as in those things most people fail at”.  The good news is that you will inevitably lose weight with a whole food diet because the food is naturally low in calories and fat but high in nutrition. This is a new way of life that will make you feel good, give you more energy, and help keep you free of chronic illnesses that make up the majority of deaths in America.

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I have fully immersed myself into the plant-based world by cooking, reading, taking classes, attending plant based events and expos, and achieving a Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate through the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies at eCornell .  I am committed to making the people around me healthier and happier.  One of my recent ventures includes making plant-based take-out dinners for the families in my community so that they can sample plant-based food and have a healthy alternative to other take-out currently offered.  Besides the tremendous positive feedback, this initiative has also provided me the opportunities to hone my chef skills and perfect a variety of plant-based meals that have been adult and kid approved!  My background prior to consulting includes 20+ years in the helping professions, including teaching.  Being a Plant-Based Consultant aligns with my professional goals and provides me with an exciting new way to help people by reaching their nutritional needs.