

MY STORY (ALLISON JURGENS)



I'm often asked, "How did you go from Corporate America Executive to a Complementary and Alternative Medicine Healer?" The answer: I witnessed my health and joy careening on a downward spiral for decades, and knew in my heart and soul there must be a better way to live.

I was 9 when I first experienced depression. 17 when I moved out. 19 when I had my first child, 23 with my second, and 36 with my third. I earned my Bachelor's degree after a decade of night classes and working full time. I derived personal value (not monetary) through work and achievement until my late 30s, and believed climbing the corporate ladder and making money were a reflection of my worth.

I battled low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and ADHD on a bumpy rollercoaster punctuated with extreme highs and lows. I had no clue (complete lack of awareness) that these patterns weren't normal - my childhood examples were just as dysfunctional. I used alcohol to 'take the edge off' after work. Then it became a regular occurrence at lunch and on weekends. It was my way of coping with everyday life which seemed perfectly normal given how prevalent alcohol consumption was around me.

By the time I was 28, my digestion and elimination (or lack thereof) dictated my life. I began experiencing abdominal discomfort, bloating, constipation, irritability, mood swings, breakouts, and acid reflux. At 30 my metabolism came to a screeching halt. I found I could eat very little and feel nauseatingly full. The discomfort was palpable - my body was in distress. At 32 I sought medical advice which led to a series of inconclusive tests and a recommendation to remove my gallbladder because "it's a little sluggish". I was also told I had the beginnings of

Barrett's Esophagus, a pre-cancer indicator, on account of the acid reflux. The doctor's solution: take Prilosec or Pepcid AC every day for the rest of your life and cut out the gallbladder.

I had the surgery, chose not to take the daily dose of OTCs and began feeling a little better, but not great. By 35 the same symptoms were once again becoming an issue. This time they decided to bring some friends - inflammation, brain fog, weight gain, fatigue and roaming body pain.

I began to think, "This must be my modus operandi (MO) or part of aging," and trudged along. As you can imagine, my sleep was riddled with interruptions (mostly my monkey mind and insecurities), my relationships were unstable, and my anxiety and depression were off the charts.

On the outside, I looked like a healthy individual. I was successful, within the optimal weight range, had a network of supportive, loving family and friends, and appeared to be happy. On the inside, I was still riding the rollercoaster of physical, mental and emotional pain and trying to clean up the wreckage in its path.

I began using natural remedies including talk therapy, vitamins and supplements, essential oils, acupuncture, massage therapy and more to help regulate my mood, curb my anxiety and manage stress. I was getting some relief in the form of ebbs and flows in inflammation, acne, and energy which was progress, all things considered.

I was 40 pounds over my normal weight range and had my 3rd miscarriage in 2018 after going through a particularly long ebb in health. In an act of desperation, I began extensive research and discovered my symptoms were similar to patients with leaky gut. I investigated a number of possible reasons and root causes based on the plethora of symptoms I was experiencing, and eventually initiated allergy testing which revealed nothing more than a few food-based intolerances. "Great," I thought, "more inconclusive tests."

During this period I saw a gastroenterologist and my family doctor - both of whom did blood panels and offered various prescriptions to manage the symptoms I was

experiencing. Lab results suggested I was the picture of health with the only marker out of the normal range being a deficiency in Vitamin D. One of them told me to take Miralax regularly to help with constipation.

Neither doctor could tell me what was causing the deterioration of my health. Not once did we discuss my diet, how I managed stress, what my job entailed, whether or not I exercised, or how these afflictions were impacting my mental health and emotions. AND we certainly never discussed traumatic life experiences.

I continued to read articles and research papers about the effects of gluten on digestion and mental clarity, and decided to experiment with a gluten- and nightshade-free diet. This was the first time in 18 years that things were finally beginning to change. I experienced a reduction in inflammation and brain fog immediately, and my acne flare ups cleared shortly thereafter. I found that my anxiety and depression also moderately subsided, and I gained more energy, balance and joy. I later removed sulfates and nitrates, common preservatives, from my diet and no longer experienced debilitating migraines.

In 2019 at the age of 43, I introduced and committed to regular yoga and meditation practices, and eventually reduced my alcohol consumption in 2020. It was also around this time that I had my first introduction to Ayurveda and decided to become a vegetarian.

By 2021, I had completely reset my metabolism and mental health. I was in control of my happiness and well-being, and was fully restored to vitality without ever using over-the-counter or prescription medications.

Throughout 2020, 2021 and part of 2022, I managed a globally distributed team leading them through the chaos of Covid downsizing, a massive business transformation project, and a merger with a Fortune 500 company. In addition, I moved my family to Colorado, watched my son graduate college and was made redundant after the merger was completed. If there was ever a time when I should have experienced elevated stress and spikes in cortisol, it would have been during these few years.

Instead, I navigated the chaos with grace and remained completely balanced throughout. I showed up everyday whole-heartedly for my family and colleagues, and implemented the appropriate boundaries to remain healthy despite the changing dynamics and uncertainty. I attribute this balanced state to an Ayurvedic diet, yoga, meditation, sound therapy and other Complementary and Alternative Medical therapies like Reiki, acupuncture and massage, that gave me the resources and space to examine my purpose and practice self-love.

My journey to health and wellness helped me discover my life's purpose. I want to help other people who have similarly experienced 'failure to thrive' restore their vitality and realize their fullest potential. It's my greatest wish that all beings connected to the earth could once again rediscover joy and express their unique gifts which begins by regaining control of their health and well-being. This is the birthplace of Ascending Spirit, LLC.