

Foods you love and will love you back!

My story

I am a very busy mother of four. Samantha is the eldest, seventeen. On her way to finishing high school and leave for college. Next in line is Faith, fourteen. Starting high school and searching for herself in a very confusing time in her life. Then is Hayleigh, four. I swear she is really about fifteen though. All the attitude that goes with it! Being in a home with, well, mostly adults type figures has made her wiser than her years. Really gives a whole new meaning to slow down and take your time growing up. Final but definitely not least is our little boy Tyler, 6 months. Yes the newest addition is finally a boy. My husband was so relieved as he really did not think that he could survive yet another girl. I believed him too!

Well that is my family, for better or worse we love 'em all. Which brings me to why I decided to start this book. Going back a few years I started to suffer physically. I had always been pretty active all my life. Anywhere from roller skating from the time I could walk to playing baseball with the boys, softball with the girls, soccer, football, water skiing to horse back riding. You get the picture. I really never sat still. Needless to say I was in pretty good shape. When I started having health problems it was a bit of a downer. I just didn't feel well. Food didn't seem to agree with me, I had aches and pains. I felt tired all the time and like I was walking around in a cloud. I had lost all motivation and who could blame me walking around feeling that way. Going to the doctors, well it didn't help. Mostly they told me that it was in my head. After running every test under the sun I guess that is all they could come up with. It really seems to be the go-to when doctors do not know what is wrong with you. It was so frustrating.

I decided to go back to school. This was after Hayleigh and before Tyler was born. I wanted to understand more about nutrition and physical activity as it related to the body. Now I am not certified and never claim to be a professional of any kind. I am simply sharing my story and things that have worked for me. I cut out gluten from my diet and started taking aerobic classes, kick boxing and walking. See these things were hard on me as well. I was told that I had fibromyalgia. Doing any kind of activity was hard. Painful really. But pushing through I started getting stronger and with cutting the gluten out I started feeling better as well. I thought hum maybe we got a winner! Then I ended up pregnant with my son. All of a sudden I felt really good. No aches or pains, could eat whatever I wanted, and good to cause before long I did! Boy was I hungry with him. Not so much the girls but Tyler was a different story.

This year in particular was a hard year. See a lot of things took place besides my son. I started out feeling really bad which ended up pushing me to find answers. While in school finding these answers I received the news that my father had cancer. Talk about stopping you in your tracks. So I buckled down even harder and was determined to get him through this. So more reading I did. Then a couple of months into the treatment my husband was sent on detail to D.C. A huge step for him as it was what he had been working for for a couple of years. It was a difficult time, yes, but what was he going to do here. I told him to go. He needed to, he couldn't pass up this opportunity. After he left I was taking my father to treatments, going to school full time and raising three kids by myself. Now I am not asking for pity here. Not by any stretch of the means. There are plenty of men and women out there who deal with these kinds of things and more, ei. our service men and women. I am laying my story out there so if you think you are out of hope, try one more thing. Never know it could help.

So here I am, keeping up pretty well I think. My dad is in good spirits for the most part, kids are happy and husband is doing what he has always wanted to do. Then that is when I find out that I am pregnant. Really? So anyone out there who suffers with fibromyalgia knows that stress, well it is kinda a trigger. My father got through his treatments and was on the road to recovery. We all moved to D.C. and was starting a new chapter. Then I was told that I had gestational diabetes. That was a trip. Try being pregnant, having cravings but can't eat any of those cravings because of your blood sugar. But I made it through. My son was born, healthy, happy and diabetes free.

After he was born and we went home with a clean bill of health I got a headache. A bad headache. It didn't let up. Everyday for about six weeks. They could not figure out what was causing it and nothing I took, prescription or over the counter worked. One night I ended up in the E.R in agony. I couldn't take it any longer. They gave me a shot for migranes, I have suffered from these before, and sent me home. I would have to say it worked. After the drugs wore off I felt better. Well so I thought. The headaches came back about three times a week. My body aches and pains came back and all the other issues I had before the pregnancy. So okay here we go, I did it once I can do it again, right? I got a gym membership and started going everyday. Not to mention I

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had about 40 lbs to loose. Yeah a little gilft from the diabeties. This was the heaviest I had ever weighed, in my life. I had always been in between a size 1 and size 5 and I was in a size, well nevermind.

So I had a plan. My gym had daycare included so there was nothing stopping me right? I know, how cool is it to have a daycare in your gym so you can work out while your kids play! So there I was, eating better again working out two hours a day five days a week. But nothing was happening. Not a pound lost, nothing, nada, zlich. I know what you are thinking, or at least the ones of you who work out. I was gaining muscle in place of fat, so of course I wasnt seeing a huge reduction in weight. Here's the thing, I know all that. I am not really a person who looks at the scale. I look how my clothes fit. When I still could not fit into anything other than my maternity clothes I knew that what the scale showed was true. Nothing was happening. I mean I felt good I had all the other effects that working out gives you. But I still weighed the same since I gave birth to my son. This seemed impossible to me. I went back to the doctors, now new doctors as I was on the east coast, to see if there was something wrong with me. After test after test there was nothing that would cause this. My thyroid was fine, my cortisol levels were fine, my blood sugars were fine, I mean anything that could prevent me from loosing weight was showing fine. Yet here I was, knowing that I was doing everything right. I mean I had been doing it for, well, my whole life. Getting into shape had never been hard for me. Something had changed and I had to find out what it was, cause one thing for sure I was not crazy and it was not in my head!

I started researching more. What was I missing and what were the doctors missing. I decided that going back to the basics is what I needed. Really it is what we all need. I mean going back to "Little House on the Prarie Days". They grew it, raised it and then ate it. You remember the days that your grandma would fill the air with good home cooking. Boy I do! I don't ever remember her grabing a box kit that all you needed to do was add chicken or hamburger. I certainly do not remember her grabbing a frozen meal to throw in the microwave! I knew that with everything I learned in school and everything I was reading was that the preseritives, artificial flavors and enhancements had to go. Face it, our bodies are not made to handle these things. They are more or less like toxins to us. It effects everyone different and on different levels. What I began to see was that the more I ate of these things and the more time went by it was effecting me more and more.

So here I am not just cutting gluten out of my diet but most everything that has all these "toxins" in them. It is hard and I knew that this was going to take time. I know that I am not a "overnight" type person. Cutting these things out would take time. Not to mention that I knew I couldnt be the only one in my house that was doing this. I dont know about most of you women out there, but my husband is a bit stubborn when it comes to food. He likes his bread and occasional pastries. My mission was to find meals that I could get him to eat. Heck get all of them to eat. I am sure like many families out there my children are all very different. This means that I need something for everyone. I knew if the diet didnt satisfy all of their cravings they would not want to be on board. Let's face it, right now I was the only one having a lot of issues but I knew that everyone needed to be on board.