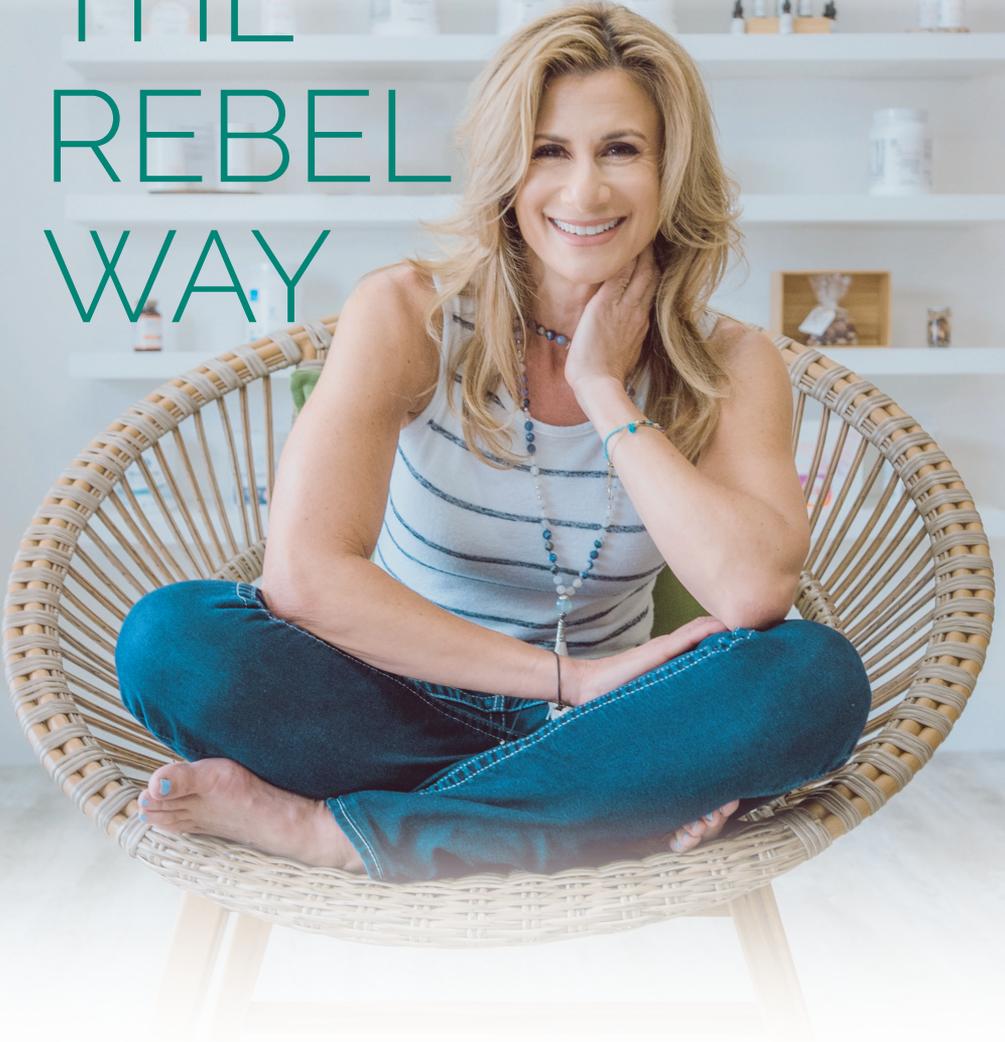


JOIN THE REBELUTION



**THE
REBEL
WAY**



How to ditch your health struggles and
fall in love with feeling your best!

BY MERYL BRANDWEIN



THE REBEL WAY

How to ditch your health struggles and fall in love with feeling your best!

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Rebel Way: How to ditch your health struggles and fall in love with feeling your best!

I'm thrilled you've downloaded my free book and can't wait to help you get started on a healthier, more exciting journey back to better health.

Let me start out by saying The Rebel Way is more than a healthy-living self help book. It's a philosophy and a way of living that will open you up to feeling your best - even if you don't remember what that feels like right now.

Every single day I see clients who struggle to feel good.

And it's not for a lack of trying.

Whether they've tried to lose weight and can't or have been yo-yo dieting and simply want something sustainable. Or they've struggled with a chronic illness that no doctor or health professional seems to understand or ease. . . it can be frustrating.

And sometimes even painful or dismissive especially when my clients are told things like . . .

"That's how it is when you get older."

"There is nothing wrong with you according to our tests."

"You'll have to be on this protocol for the rest of your life."

"Here's the number to a specialist (or therapist)."

"I'm sorry, there's nothing more you can do."

We're told to accept dysfunction in our body - even though that's not our natural state!

I wrote The Rebel Way because the truth is that our bodies have incredible powers to heal and nurture - it's just that

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most of us haven't been taught how to tap into those incredible powers.

After I was diagnosed with cancer in my 30's, I learned just how powerful our bodies really are. More importantly I learned that food is actually the medicine that unlocks our body's ability to heal itself.

The Rebel Way is ultimately about helping you take back control of your body and learning a more centered way of living with food.

This book is written for anyone who is interested in learning about the power of nutrition, emotional wellbeing and adopting a healthy lifestyle. It's for anyone who doesn't want to settle for the stuff you've been told on the Internet. It's for anyone who's tired of restriction, limitation and fads. And it's for anyone who is simply . . . a bit of the Rebel.

I'm excited to share with you some of the secrets I've learned from over 20 years of working with clients and living my best life as The Rebel Nutritionist. And I can't wait to hear what it unlocks for you.

Let's dig in.

Your Rebel Nutritionist - Meryl



CHAPTER I

How I Learned to Live The Rebel Way

Like most people who grew up during the 1970s and 80s, I wasn't raised with a lot of information about food and healthy eating. Nutrition wasn't actually something that was really talked about in my house (or my friends' houses) . . . at least not in the way that I talk about it in my own home with my kids.

Food was merely something to be eaten, enjoyed, celebrated with family and shared.

And like most kids who grew up on the typical American diet of that generation, our house was full of things like Count Chocula cereal, canned tuna, yodels cakes, ring dings (anyone remember these?), devil dogs and yankee doodle cupcakes.

My grandfather also owned a candy shop and we would often find it our personal mission to sneak Sara Lee cakes from my grandmother's freezer until she would walk in - fuming because she caught us peeling the fudge off the top of them.

So, yeah . . . my diet was full of processed food and chock full of sugar.

It's just how it was.

I don't think I really noticed anything about how we ate until I found myself heavier than the other kids in dance class around the age of 9. Every time I had to get fit for a costume, I had to go up a size - I noticed that the other girls my age were simply thinner. It was something my grandmother would emphasize by telling me that I needed to watch the ring dings.

It was in that moment that I got the message that being thin was the thing that mattered.

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Like so many young girls my age, food became my focus, but it wasn't about nutrition. Food became something you could control to impact the way you looked, not to mention your status. I got caught up in being thinner - looking at calories in and calories out - rather than seeing how food might support my body in functioning.

That message was supported by constant media focus during the 1980s of low fat foods and ultra-thin super models. I learned quickly that wacky diets and eating almost nothing could get you noticed. It was the start of an unhealthy battle with food that persisted over the next two decades. Food simply became a mechanism to control weight . . . not once considering how food could nourish my body.

And - to be honest - there was nowhere for me to access information like that back then because food science wasn't even that evolved beyond the food pyramid they provided (and still provide) in schools.

It actually wasn't until six weeks after my third child was born on November 19th, 2000 that food and the power of nutrition would truly take center stage in my life.

THE WORDS YOU NEVER WANT TO HEAR.

I'll never forget the day I found myself in my doctor's office being told that I was facing Hodgkin's Lymphoma Cancer. The diagnosis turned my world upside down because - in my circle - I was known as "the healthiest person anyone knew". And here I was being rushed to surgery to remove a tumor in my neck.

It all felt so overwhelming. I had imagined I would be enjoying time with my newborn daughter at home but here I was recovering from surgery and scheduling chemotherapy almost immediately after.

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My first day of chemo was actually a day I'll never forget. I was with my aunt and my dad, and I just remember watching the nurses hang up the bag of chemo and crying as it slowly dripped into my arm.

I wasn't emotionally prepared for any of it (especially since I had to stop nursing my infant so early) - let alone the nausea that accompanied each chemotherapy session. Like so many others who undergo cancer, just the sight of the hospital could send me into an automatic reaction - making my stomach turn and wondering if they'd be able to find my vein this time or if they'd keep poking me again and again.

Some weeks they couldn't even do chemo because my white blood cell count was so low. But I was determined - I was going to do what it took to get through chemo for my kids.

So week after week, I'd do what I needed to get better. I lost my hair. I was tired. I didn't feel well. I had chemo brain, which is a constant brain fog that you have when you're going through treatment.

I just never really knew if my feet were on the ground - at least that's how it felt.

This ensued for 12 weeks. And although 12 weeks might not sound like a lot, it certainly wears on you.

The one thing that kept me going? Lance Armstrong.

Now, I know that sounds funny, but reading his book gave me the inspiration to move. He spoke of his own cancer recovery - he said that if he could get on his bike and ride that he felt like everything was going to be ok. So, I got up and I worked out.

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Working out gave me some sense of normalcy.

And especially when I had to start radiation. It kept me going and believing in my body's ability to heal.

(By the way, radiation may not seem as though it would have been that hard, because it's not as physically invasive as chemotherapy, but mentally it takes much more stamina.)

The truth is that I needed normalcy to feel anchored because when you have cancer - or anything that impacts your overall health - you feel isolated. You feel as if no one really understands what you're feeling. They simply throw solutions at you that you hope will work!

In my case, thankfully, traditional chemotherapy did work. But after I was done with the treatment, I expected everything to just return to normal. Instead, I was constantly sick. I had no immunity after chemotherapy and radiation ravaged my body. Add to that, I was also trying to care for my three small children. I truly had nothing left.

And because doctors simply dismissed my complaints and told me it would take "time", I felt like I had nowhere to turn.

It was at that point that my mother-in-law became my saving grace. An early subscriber to alternative and integrative medicine, she urged me to visit an integrative health facility in Mexico called International Biocare.

Specializing in integrative oncology, my time in Mexico exposed me to therapies now common in the United States including hyperbaric oxygen, cupping, and acupuncture. I was put on a mostly plant-based diet and received infusions that helped my body do what it was designed to do - heal.



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I had never been exposed to any of this and was enthralled. I would follow the doctors around and ask them every single question I could think of because this felt so new - but so exciting.

They explained to me - like I often do with my clients now - that what they were doing was an integrative treatment designed to drive my immune system to heal and support itself. They even made me a vaccine of my own called an autologous dendritic cell vaccine.

That week in Mexico was the most life changing week of my life. And when I returned home, I poured myself into the research of understanding this field of medicine because at the time it was so foreign in the U.S.

I made a commitment to dedicate my life to the practice of functional medicine - where you look for the root cause of the problem instead of only trying to treat the symptoms.

I've been practicing functional nutrition for over 20 years now. It has become my life's work. I always say "If I can help one person avoid the suffering I suffered, then I've done my work!"

And although functional nutrition is now more common, the truth is that for many - this method of healing feels so uncertain and so foreign. But I promise that, like me, when you see the power of healing your body in this way, you'll become a rebel for life!



CHAPTER II

Combating a Culture of Struggle & Reaction

One of the core tenets of The Rebel Way is helping people understand how the body works, how imbalances are created and working to heal them.

I love arming clients with information so that they have a life-long toolbox that puts them in control of their health.

As I shared in the last chapter, my passion for this work was ultimately driven by my own frustrations with modern healthcare and a focus on disease management and reactivity.

This may or may not surprise you - but our modern healthcare system is designed to be reactive instead of proactive.

When we look to solve our health problems, we're often told we have to "deal with things." We are given a pill instead of a plan and we are often made to feel dis-empowered rather than empowered to take charge of our own health. Rather than treating the diagnosis like our modern system does, being proactive means understanding the underpinnings of each individual and helping people move past a culture that consistently struggles with food and waits for the health challenge rather than working to prevent it in the first place.

Historically, people were not obsessed with food because they were limited to what they could eat in their geographical area. There was nothing manufactured or processed. You ate what you farmed or what was available to gather. And we certainly didn't have the knowledge about how food nourishes the body - it was all focused on what was available.

After the industrial revolution, however, food became more accessible, but at the same time it began to be more processed. Manufacturing and the distribution of goods to get to a wider range of people shifted the process of making food into a process to make money.

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The industrial “food” revolution allowed food to become more accessible to many, but at the same time transformed our mentality of how we think about food. We entered into the beginning of the ‘fast food/get it quick’ era. What we didn't know was that this way of thinking and eating would quickly become the downfall of the home cooked meal,

And as one company did it, others soon followed. This was the backbone of how the food manufacturing, industrial food revolution began.

Acquiring food was suddenly easy and convenient, and there was no thought of what the processing actually did to the quality and nutritional value of food. It wasn't until we started seeing a rise in disease and the prevalence of disease that we had to take a look at what manufacturing was doing to our health.

Fast forward decades into the 1980's where misconstrued science took hold and the philosophy of controlling fat and weight became about controlling calories and demonized fat and labeled it as the root of all evil.

Foods that were labeled as “diet conscious” were supposed to combat fat and weight gain - they were marketed as being healthy for us. Even the American Heart Association hopped on that bandwagon so people thought they were eating healthy. But what actually happened? Heart disease, obesity and eating disorders skyrocketed - we became sicker in our quest to look thinner.

If you look at body shape and body image in the last century, what was considered natural - especially for women - completely changed. Women went from being full figured in the 1950's and early 1960's to being stick figures who caved in to a culture of fashion and thinness.

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Once upon a time people thought what I did was new age, but now people know that science supports it - the more you pay attention to being proactive and look at everything that influences your body and your life- the better you'll be able to fight off dis-ease.

Begin your rebel way by letting this all soak in and commit to living more proactively. While you can't always change the messages of mainstream culture, you can choose how you react to them.



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So this is the long-standing struggle that we've always had - not only does our medical tradition take a more reactive stance, the only proactive action we take is focused on an outward appearance of health instead of true health.

We've become so disconnected from our bodies and instead rely on a diet culture to tell us what to eat and what's in vogue, instead of listening to our bodies and understanding how our own DNA interacts with the food we eat.

We want quick, fast solutions and are disappointed when they don't work.

For the first time in decades, we're starting to wake up and see that what we've been told all this time, may not have been the best way.

The truth is that we are in the middle of a health and wellness revolution.

More and more people are starting to rebel against big government, big pharma and big industry messages around food. They are looking for answers that will help us actually live healthier lives.

It can be hard to break these habits and patterns around what you know (or have been told), while embracing a more proactive approach that includes lifestyle, emotional well-being, nutrition and knowing our own genetic makeup can improve our odds at living better, healthier and longer lives.

We have to rebel against the fast-paced world we live in. We must learn how to nourish ourselves and work with our genetics to create our own best environment. We have to monitor our sleep, focus on breathing and advocate for ourselves for the true answers we have been searching for.

CHAPTER III

Your Body's Innate Power to Heal

Now that you know why it's so important to understand and be more proactive when it comes to your health, is it possible for your body to heal itself?

Most of us have been taught that the best way to heal disease or illness is through medical intervention, but the problem with that approach is that we don't always get to the root cause of our illness. Ultimately, functional medicine and functional nutrition is about getting to the root cause - it's about looking at the signs the body gives and looking for imbalances.

For example, when you have a cold, you cough and sneeze, right? That is the body's way of expelling toxins and getting the bacteria out of your body. That's part of the process you've become accustomed to when you have a cold. And this happens for a very real reason because the body is designed to rid itself of toxins. The cough and the sneeze are the symptoms, but the root cause? The root cause is toxins or bacteria in your body.

That's just a simple example, but if we take things like cardiovascular disease, diabetes or other serious health conditions, and even immune conditions, it always starts with a root imbalance. And oftentimes because we are a reactive society and we don't truly know how to take care of ourselves and nurture and nourish our bodies in the right way, we don't pay attention to the subtle signs.

It could be an ache. It could be fatigue. It could be some kind of symptom that we tend to ignore and just brush off. But those are the first signs of the body communicating that it is out of balance. So the root cause is about peeling back these layers and understanding where and when the imbalances first started.

And oftentimes it's years and years and years before we ever notice anything.

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So if someone experiences high blood sugar or heart disease, my job is to go back to early, early stories where there might have been a gut or other imbalances (we now know that gut microbes may lead to other types of issues because the body is that interconnected) and figure out how to connect those dots..

What has happened in modern medicine is that we compartmentalize. We have a specialist for everything, yet nobody is really connecting the dots and teaching us how to look at things as a system and as a whole. Rather than looking at specific parts of the body, we have to go back to what Socrates said back in the fourth century . . . we have to treat the body as a whole and the sum of its parts not be individual parts themselves.

Looking at the root cause is the beginning of true healing.

This may be a hard concept to grasp because it's not familiar. It may not make sense that you have to take care of your gut in order to protect your brain, or that you have to manage stress to protect organs and systems from further decline - but that is how the body works.

Getting to the root cause is truly about listening to the subtle signs that your body gives you and then paying attention so you can heal. If you really want to have health, then it begins by healing from the inside out. It's not about taking a medication-only approach that suppresses symptoms because when you do that you deny your body the ability to truly heal.

Let's go back to my cold example. Most of the time you don't enjoy feeling the symptoms associated with the cold, yet not sneezing or coughing out the toxins denies our body the chance to heal even faster. Instead you're building up those toxins and by denying the natural process, becoming more susceptible to things like bronchitis or pneumonia down the road.

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You have to listen to the whispers. Because if you don't, they get louder and louder until they become roars.

The body does want to heal. Remember that.

So next time you're tempted to suppress the symptoms, what if instead you gave yourself the gift of nutrients, rest and space to recover and support your system?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we've become so disconnected from our bodies that we don't even realize how powerful we really are.

If you start to ask your body what it needs, it will respond. If you listen to what it needs, it will tell you when and how to eat. The truth is that as humans, we didn't survive by counting calories or counting carbs.

We survived by our body's innate ability to dictate what we put in our mouth. If someone was picking berries and it tasted bad, they didn't eat them because that was the body's signal that it might be poisonous. Yet we have become so far removed from listening to that.

The goal of The Rebel Way is to bring you back to you - to listen to your body's signals and to understand how to react. This is about catching the signals earlier and responding so that your body can do what it was designed to do.

Just band-aiding the symptoms is not the answer. So, as you begin to adopt The Rebel Way, I hope you'll start to make it your daily practice to listen to your body and commit to ditching the food fads, diets and restrictions you've been sold and opt for a better way.

CHAPTER IV

The Three Pillars of The Rebel Way

Now that we've talked about how your body really works, what it needs and the incredible power to heal, it's time to get to the heart of Rebel Way! There are three pillars that make up The Rebel Way: movement, nutrition (of course) and emotional wellbeing.

When you focus solely on nutrition or solely on movement and ignore the other pillars such as emotional wellbeing, you'll continuously find yourself out of balance and not operating at your best. So, in adopting The Rebel Way, you'll want to ensure that each of these three pillars is in balance and a part of your daily action plan.

The First Pillar: Movement

The truth is that consistent movement is one of the hardest things for so many of my clients to adopt. Perhaps it's because our lives have become more sedentary or perhaps it's because people think that movement - or exercise - has to be boring, difficult or embarrassing. As a result, movement is one of the hardest habits to create and stick with over time.

So, what I often recommend is that when you're beginning a new exercise regimen (or changing your current one) that you begin by making tiny, incremental changes that are realistic for YOUR life.

Creating a movement plan that lasts begins with focusing on what you like - not something that has come out of a book that you are supposed to be doing or that is completely foreign to you.

The problem with most exercise recommendations is that they don't account for the resistance you might feel if you've not exercised for years or are asked to do something that feels forced.

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For example, you might be told to try the elliptical, run, swim, spin or something else, but unless it's something you enjoy - you're not going to keep doing it. Maybe you start running and you hate it. You keep telling yourself that it's good for you, but your mind comes up with excuse after excuse - and you do nothing. You beat yourself up for not moving, but it feels impossible to get started.

But what if you gave yourself permission to do something else? Walk, dance or even try out a fun new class at your local gym. The key is to find something that is sustainable over the long haul.

In addition, there are simple things you can do to help your body move more regularly. If you're like many of my clients, you've gotten so used to being sedentary and are behind a desk all day. What if you simply set an alarm each hour to get up from your desk and walk for five minutes? Get outside or do a tour of the office - anything to help you clear your mind and get your body moving.

It will make you better. And if you can do that every day for a period of time, chances are that you'll be ready to try something new or more challenging.

I had a client who told herself that she hated running her whole life but had never even tried it. So, after walking for some time, she decided to simply run one mile. That's it. And then the next day she added another half mile. Little-by-little, she realized she loved running and the time it gave her to focus on herself. She ended up running 5 half marathons and loved how it made her feel.

When it comes to movement, I invite you to ask yourself, what do I enjoy? What am I willing to try?

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Don't go into the gym, if you hate being inside a gym, or if you're intimidated by a gym right now. Or conversely, don't work out at home alone if you enjoy being surrounded by people.

It doesn't have to be an organized or formal exercise either.

You may think you have to go to an orange theory, spin class or be committed to some kind of formal group program to get the results.

That is so far from the truth.

Decide simply what is one thing you can do right now? Something that makes sense that you enjoy. Keep it realistic. Keep it simple and keep track of how much joy it brings to you when you're doing it (and when you're done).

Maybe you start with sit-ups, maybe you start with a wall squat. There are so many things that you can do. We tend to overlook the small things and feel like we have to go right to the big things, because that's what we've been told or learned.

But, the truth is that the only change that lasts is the change that is chosen day after day!

If you can be consistent day after day with moving your body in a way that feels good to you, that is the big win here for you!

The Second Pillar: Nutrition

Just as with movement, sometimes the biggest impact with nutrition comes from the smallest changes. If you're someone who has grown up being a meat and potato eater (along with a heaping side of milkshakes, desserts and sugary

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drinks), to think that you're going to realistically eat salads and fish every day is a set up for failure.

When people first come to see me, they expect that I'm going to put them on a restrictive plan or diet. As a registered dietitian, people automatically assume that I'm all about strict changes and cardboard flavor.

But it couldn't be more opposite from the truth!

Instead, I recommend something much simpler. Try one new thing each day and work on that. Perhaps you eat a sandwich everyday for lunch, but you know that you need more fiber. What I ask you to consider is how can I get more of that fiber into my diet?

Do you swap out the bread? Do you make a salad? Or perhaps you have veggie leftovers from the night before. It's all about changing one simple thing.

And just like with movement, the food you choose has to be enjoyable. If you think you have to eat a salad in order to lose weight, it won't be satisfying. And if it's not satisfying, you won't stick with it.

Every single bite will be painful.

Earlier on, I shared with you how disconnected we are from our bodies and when it comes to nutrition. So, it's incredibly important that we reconnect and consider what our bodies really need.

Listen to how you feel before, during and after a meal and get cues from how your body feels in order to



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see what you really need to eat. Find one meal that you would like to change and go from there to begin your exploration.

Like so many of my clients, I don't always want a salad for lunch. As a matter of fact, very rarely do I have a salad for lunch. Instead I choose a smoothie or a soup - that's what resonates with me.

What is going to satisfy you? Notice I didn't say think about what you should eat or what you're supposed to eat - but what will satisfy you.

What whole foods (not processed foods) will support my goals of eating better and feeling satisfied? Every meal doesn't have to include a starch, vegetables and protein.

I don't always have protein with my meal and that's okay. I do, however, try to balance it out throughout the day. Balance doesn't have to happen with every meal, but find a way to create a balance that resonates with you. You may skip a protein, or find you like to eat more for lunch and a lighter dinner.

It's up to you.

The key is to take small, small steps so that you can choose what's best for you day after day. This is about being able to practice and experiment with changes that feel good so that healthy habits come more easily.

Once you know you'll be able to accomplish a simple goal, you'll be better to implement a more complex meal plan and truly make it your own!

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The Third Pillar: Emotional Wellbeing

The third pillar of The Rebel Way is perhaps the most ignored because in the busy lives most of us lead, we've simply become accustomed to constant stress. Stress acts like a low-volume buzz in most of our lives, but it can have a lasting impact on our health and overall being.

That is why I ask you to start first by tuning in to your overall emotional being. Take a look at how stressful your life really is?

Are you running from one thing to the next? Are you always abandoning your needs for someone else? Do you find yourself agitated and stressed out - all the time?

As we talked about in earlier chapters stress can impact your health in some really subtle ways, so finding emotional balance is key to long-lasting, Rebel Way health.

As with movement and nutrition, you don't have to tackle stress with huge solutions.

The key is finding small moments to process stress differently can make a huge difference when it comes to your overall well-being. Doing breath-work, finding a way to meditate (there isn't only one way), journaling - all have been shown to improve overall mental health and well-being.



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There are so many different options and apps available on the market now, your options are endless when it comes to finding the support to shut off your mind.

I'm a big fan of meditation - especially for those of you who say you can't meditate. It's exactly for those reasons why meditation is important. Even if that means sitting and slowing down just for a few minutes without distraction.

Meditation doesn't have to be formal and it doesn't have to be perfect.

One practice I often recommend is simply sitting down and inhaling for four counts, holding your breath for two and exhaling for four full counts. Do that for one minute or up to ten minutes and I promise that will be enough to support you in releasing some of the daily stress and finding greater balance.

If you're lucky enough to live somewhere where you can get out in nature and disconnect from technology, email and obligations, you'll likely get some powerful benefits. Getting a little Vitamin D from the sun is not only good for your body, it's good for your emotional well being.

Whenever I can get outside early in the morning, clear my mind and simply breathe - it allows me to refocus my priorities and let go of whatever isn't important. It also allows me to stay on track with what my body needs both from a physical and nutrition perspective.

Movement. Nutrition. Emotional Wellness.

These are the three pillars that set up The Rebel Way. Focusing on all three will help you prioritize health in a new way and create small (yet important) changes to move you forward toward your goals!

CHAPTER V

Adopting New Habits: The Formula For Living The Rebel Way

Now that you understand the importance of prevention, listening to your body and the Three Pillars of The Rebel Way, how do you begin to create the changes you need to reach your goals and live a healthier life.

The truth is that if you're reading this you likely want to make changes, but it can feel a bit scary. You may even feel conflicted because everything you've learned up until now about health means that you'll have to restrict or give up the things you love.

It can also feel overwhelming - especially if things like nutrition, cooking or even self care feel new to you.

But here's the thing, adopting new habits and living The Rebel Way doesn't have to be hard. It simply takes an understanding of how to change your habits step-by-step using a simple formula.

The Rebel Way Formula = Willingness + Awareness + Choice + Celebration

First, you have to be **willing** to change. If you feel as if change is being forced on you, you'll never make the changes you say you want. Your subconscious brain will limit you and hold you back - no matter how much you tell everyone else you want to change.

This means checking in with yourself and being honest. Are you ready for change? Are you ready to give up the quick-fix, fad diet, reactive approach to health that you've been taught your whole life?

It may seem obvious to say yes, but sometimes that can be hard if our friends or family members aren't really on board. We like to belong and if we're doing things differently, it can be hard to stay the course.

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Willingness is something that has to come before all else. It's the thing that gives you the motivation to structure your life in such a way that listening to your body and caring for your body become the priority over all else.

If you're struggling with willingness - I do want to say that's ok (and you're not alone). Willingness can be manufactured even if you feel some initial resistance. It begins by really getting clear on the outcome you want to achieve.

What is on the other side of your commitment to your well-being?

Are you looking to be pain free? Are you looking to be strong? What does your vision of optimal health really look like?

Understanding this will help you become more willing to give up the old habits for new ones that support your body. If you haven't really thought about what your vision of health looks like - perhaps do that right now.

Stop reading and write out what you imagine health and wellbeing to look like for you. What does your life look like if you commit to changing your habits and become more proactive about your health?

Once you can say YES!! I'm willing to change, the next step is to create greater **awareness** around your habits and patterns.

Maybe you're familiar with your own personal health habits and maybe you're not, but it's a good idea to become hyper-aware of the habits that often sabotage your success when it comes to eating better, moving your body and releasing stress.

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Keep a mindful health journal.

Every time you encounter a habit that you recognize is counterproductive to your stated health goals, write them down. Try not to judge yourself, but simply write it down. Notice too what thoughts were going through your head just prior to the action or activity. Often your self-sabotaging behaviors are preceded by an emotion or negative thought that sends you veering down the wrong path.

Your ability to become aware of your actions will help you identify places where you can easily create change and see where you may need the support of others - like a health coach. If you can't be aware of the habits and patterns, you simply can't change them. This is a critical step that you can begin today and might be easier than diving into a food journal because it will give you insights about what you eat, when you workout and what brings you stress!

Next, you'll want to make **one new choice**.

The biggest problem with creating lasting change is that you probably think that it's impossible to make all the changes you need. It can be overwhelming and scary!

So, instead of tackling everything you want to do, start small.

Pick something you know you can stick to and make one new choice. It's important that you take action on this choice too so that you can experience what it's like to do something different in your life.

In his book, *Atomic Habits*, James Clear talks about being 1% better. That's the approach you can take when it comes to creating healthy (rebel) habits. Instead of eliminating everything right away or implementing a new 7-day workout schedule - try something smaller. Try something you know

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you can stick to as we talked about in the Three Pillars.

This is about creating confidence and seeing changes one step at a time. As I talked about earlier, it can be tempting to turn to the quick fix - the thing that will help us lose weight, feel better or look good, but it doesn't usually last.

The Rebel Way is about long-term, easy-to-manage change.

It's about rebelling against the norm and finding out what your body really needs - so the choices aren't really about limiting gluten, for example, because that's what's en vogue. It's about looking at your own body and what it needs so you can create change!

And lastly, I want you to **celebrate**.

If you've traditionally celebrated by giving yourself a slice of chocolate cake or a heaping plate of french fries, I'm going to suggest you find a different way to celebrate.

Food is about nourishment, not about reward.

Recall that American culture has taught us to look at food as something we restrict or limit so we can look a certain way - so what has happened is many people think of fatty or sweet



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foods as a treat or reward for sticking to something. The Rebel Way is about moving away from that mindset.

So, as you celebrate taking the new step - not the outcome (because in the end what matters is that you took the step), find something that feels good to you and marks the change.

Take a walk outdoors. Get a massage. Splurge on something you've really wanted.

The key is to celebrate the step toward new behavior because you want to recognize it's not the outcome that matters so much, but the fact that you're making real progress.

And if this feels over the top to you (because you'll be celebrating so many exciting new steps), simply take a few minutes to pause and acknowledge the change you've made. Don't rush through it or brush over it because you want to really signal to your brain that this new way is working and bringing you the joy you've been looking for when it comes to your health.

In the next chapter, I'll share with you some initial steps you can take to become a rebel yourself and begin your journey toward your biggest goals. But for now, keep The Rebel Way formula somewhere you can see it.

Connect with the formula daily. Remember that you're using this simple formula to guide you and your actions. Repeating each one of these things - willingness, awareness, choice and celebration each and every day will help you build a strong foundation to your new healthy future!

CHAPTER VI

The Rebel Way In Action: A Plan

Hopefully by now you have a clear idea of what it really means to adopt The Rebel Way. To live a healthier life without deprivation and build greater connection with yourself and the way you want to live.

But chances are you might ask yourself . . . what do I do next?

Well, this book wouldn't be complete without an action plan. As the Rebel Nutritionist, I'm all about action and making changes that make sense for your body.

As I shared with you in Chapter Four, small changes have a big impact. You'll want to start to incorporate the Three Pillars of The Rebel Way into your life first! And then you can start to explore your options as follows.

At Brandwein Institute, we believe that no two people are alike - which is why we don't prescribe cookie cutter solutions. We help people in three distinct areas: weight loss, chronic illness and preventative health.

Depending on your unique circumstances, every Rebel Path begins with a consultation to determine what is happening for you and your body. That may include testing and a determination of what kind of support you need - from an online education plan to personalized health coaching (yep, we offer it all).

But I get it if even that feels overwhelming right now.

So here's your first option:

Testing out one of our meal plans. One of the things people always ask me is, "Meryl, what should I eat??" Our meal plans are flexible and allow you to make small changes by using the plan as a guideline. You can start to see what works for you and what doesn't. What feels painful and what feels doable.

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We offer a free 7 day trial to Living Plate. All you have to do to access your free 7 days is visit :

<https://merylbrandwein.com/meal-plans/>

Here's your second option:

We also offer a 15 minute Rebel Roadmap where we discuss what some of your personal options might be and the best way to proceed for you!

This free 15 minutes can be done with one of our members of our health team and will help you decide what kind of changes you need to make today in the three pillars. To schedule your session visit **merylbrandwein.com**

The only option I say is no longer available is doing nothing. Now that your eyes have been opened to The Rebel Way you are free to cut out fads, worry about counting calories and invite a new way of thinking. One that focuses on what your body needs and how to fuel it to produce maximum results.

I hope that you can take at least one thing from this book and begin to look at your health differently. And as always, if you want to share anything or ask a question, please reach out to me! I would love to help you get started.

In good health,

Meryl



THE REBEL WAY

How to ditch your health struggles and fall in love with feeling your best!



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