

REMOVE TOXINS • LOSE WEIGHT • HEAL YOUR BODY  
BOOST ENERGY • IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS  
INCREASE EMOTIONAL WELLNESS  
FIND PURPOSE AND PASSION



DR. DEANNA MINICH



# WHOLE DETOX



A 21-DAY PERSONALIZED PROGRAM  
TO BREAK THROUGH BARRIERS  
IN EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE

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# WHOLE

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# DETOX

A 21-DAY PERSONALIZED PROGRAM TO BREAK  
THROUGH BARRIERS IN EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE



DEANNA MINICH



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## DEDICATION

To my father, who is healing the ancestral threads, and to my niece, Eleanor, who is creating healthy patterns for the future.

To the healing of past, present, and future generations from the effects of *all* types of toxins and with hope for a planet filled with the full spectrum of health and vitality.

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## EPIGRAPH

You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop.

—RU

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## FOREWORD

I get the questions all the time from my patients: “Why detox?” “Isn’t detoxing just a fad?” Of course, “detox” is a word that means different things to different people, which is why sometimes it can cause confusion. Most people relate detox to juicing, fasting, or eating lots of cruciferous vegetables and drinking lots of lemon water. There is definitely a food component to detox. I talk extensively about how to do a detox diet right within my book *The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet*. Sure, it’s about taking out sugar, gluten, dairy, and caffeine. Equally important, it’s about including whole, colorful foods in the diet, which are chock-full of nutrients. It’s that tender balance of avoiding unhealthy foods and including nourishing foods in our everyday eating. I believe strongly in living the age-old principle of “food as medicine” and starting here first and foremost.

The other part of detox—lifestyle—gets less recognition than food, but I believe it’s very important to consider. I’m a huge believer in the power of community, in sociogenomics, and in how our social networks can add or take away from our health. We need to be looking at the root of who we are personally connected to, because as the research shows, their habits can become ours. We also need to be examining other lifestyle toxicities, like going to a toxic job every day that doesn’t nourish our soul; having toxic emotions stored within, thinking recycled toxic thoughts that limit our potential; and being exposed to environmental toxins through home, school, and work.

For detox to work and take hold, it needs to address the “whole self.” I’ve seen this time and time again in my patients. If they change their food, many times they change their lives. However, when they see detox as a temporary deprivation, only to thrust themselves back into a toxic lifestyle and do it again, then detox doesn’t have the full potential it could. I am a huge advocate of lifestyle change, and I see detox as being a short-term reset button to fuel long-term changes.

I am excited to see that my colleague and friend Dr. Deanna Minich has written *Whole Detox* for this very reason. She sees detox much like I do—that it needs to focus on the whole person, to incorporate whole foods, and look at the whole-systems approach we embrace within Functional Medicine. In fact, we know each other through our work with the Institute for Functional Medicine. In 2014, she collaborated with the Institute to launch and lead the seventy-thousand-person worldwide Detox Summit and then had thousands of people do the detox in the Detox Challenge. Similar to the results I find in my clinical practice, she found a 50 to 60 percent reduction in symptoms just within twenty-one days. Furthermore, she is also faculty for the Institute, teaching specifically the food and lifestyle aspects of detox.

Quite frankly, I think she is the perfect person to talk about detox in this new “whole” kind of way. Deanna is a scientist and clinician who is keen on looking at the psychology, eating, and living features of someone’s life. I especially enjoy the fact that she uses so much color in her teaching and draws upon her talent as a visual artist.

It’s very promising to see that we are redefining detox in the twenty-first century. The Father of Functional Medicine, Dr. Jeffrey Bland, introduced nutritional detoxification (metabol

biotransformation) in the twentieth century and brought important concepts to the foreground. Now decades later, with the emerging areas of mind-body medicine, we've come to realize that toxins cross over between the body and the mind. Physical toxins, like heavy metals, can create psychological effects, and psychological toxins, like stress, can have physical manifestations. Truly, "detox" needs to keep up with the evolving science, and I think that's what we have *Whole Detox* here to do.

Mark Hyman, M.D.  
Director of the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine



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## FOREWORD

For decades, the word “detoxification” was narrowly defined to refer to pharmacogenomics, which is the manner in which specific inherited traits influence the way that drugs are metabolized and eliminated from the body.<sup>1</sup> In 1980, as a university professor trained in nutritional biochemistry, I started to wonder if the detoxification of drugs was influenced by the food and its associated nutrients that we ate. I had the fortune of meeting Dr. William Rea, a physician in Dallas, who had specialized in understanding the relationship between chemical sensitivity and individual differences in detoxification.<sup>2</sup> I began to understand that the metabolic pathways utilized in drug detoxification could be influenced by nutrients and foods.<sup>3</sup> For example, grapefruit juice was known to change the activity of some drugs that went through a cytochrome enzyme known as CYP3A4.<sup>4</sup> There were also certain herbs, like St. John’s-wort, known to alter these hepatic enzymes and thus became contraindicated by pharmacists to patients if they were on specific drugs.<sup>5</sup>

Based on what I observed within the context of my background in nutritional biochemistry, I decided to go further down the path of examining how nutrition, especially protein and certain plant extracts, could alter metabolism and change one’s health. In 1995, I published a paper in the *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine* journal to detail some of our clinical research on the role of nutritional intervention in detoxification.<sup>6</sup> We found that patients who were chronically ill with what had been diagnosed as “chronic fatigue syndrome” and were given a medical food formulated with specific nutrients to enhance detoxification pathways in conjunction with a “clean,” low-allergen, calorie-controlled diet did significantly better and had a greater reduction of health complaints (53 percent reduction) compared with those who were administered the same diet without the addition of the medical food (22 percent reduction in symptoms). We were able to show that symptom reduction was associated with the normalization of liver enzymes involved in detoxification that might have otherwise been impaired. Additionally, we were able to statistically increase reserves of sulfur and glutathione in these patients, both of which are essential compounds for biochemical pathways in detoxification. At this time, we recognized from the research of Drs. Rosemary Waring and Glynn Steventon that the onset of Parkinson’s disease is often associated with insufficiencies in a patient’s detoxification system, particularly in glutathione metabolism.<sup>7</sup>

From this beginning I came to recognize that the metabolism or detoxification of alcohol by the liver was very dependent upon nutritional status,<sup>8</sup> as was the metabolism of common over-the-counter drugs like acetaminophen and ibuprofen.<sup>9</sup>

This study sent me further in the direction of researching detoxification from biochemical and nutritional perspectives. I continued doing research into the role that various nutrients had on the metabolic detoxification processes. My colleagues and I utilized a number of specific tests to evaluate the detoxification potential of the individual, including the caffeine and benzoate clearance tests.<sup>10</sup> In 1991 Dr. J. O. Hunter, a well-respected medical research professor at Cambridge University Hospital

authored an article that indicated that the adverse reaction some people have to specific foods may be a result of their inability to detoxify the natural substances found in the food.<sup>11</sup> All of these studies proved to us that nutritional status and specific nutrient supplementation programs could have a significant influence on detoxification of both foreign chemicals and endogenous toxins produced by normal metabolism.<sup>12</sup>

It was at this point that I was very fortunate to have Dr. Deanna Minich join our research group at MetaProteomics in Gig Harbor, Washington. From the day she joined our research team the focus on nutrition and specific nutrients took a step forward. She was a superb researcher who helped pioneer the understanding of nutrition in supporting the detoxification processes of the body. Her work on the role of the alkaline diet in detoxification was a major advance in the development of a dietary program to support improved detoxification.<sup>13</sup> The recent paper on detoxification that she and her research colleague Romilly Hodges have had published is a landmark review paper that clearly defines the role of foods and food-derived components in metabolic detoxification.<sup>14</sup>

Over the past thirty years in the field, I have come to recognize that “detoxification” is a term that means more than nutritional detoxification. The use of the word often implies something quite different from how we had used the word within my research. The term now describes the metabolism of drugs, metabolites from gut bacteria, pollutants, metabolic byproducts, and even “toxic” experiences, relationships, and thoughts. With this broad definition of detoxification, I come back to what we know of the relationship of diet and specific nutrients to support the specific inducible metabolic processes associated with detoxification. This concept of detoxification has become one of the seven core physiological processes within the functional medicine concept. There is now irrefutable evidence that toxic burden contributes to many chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes,<sup>15</sup> cardiovascular disease,<sup>16</sup> arthritis,<sup>17</sup> and neurodegeneration.<sup>18</sup>

I am so impressed with how Dr. Minich has incorporated into her book *Whole Detox* the expansive, evolving science of nutrigenomics into a sensible program for improving the body's detoxification program that the average non-scientist can successfully apply in their own lives.

For more than ten years I have observed Dr. Minich in her role as a senior leader of our research and development team, in which she provides consultation to patients in the Functional Medicine Research Center. Deanna is not only an expert in the science of nutrition as it relates to detoxification but also a holistic systems thinker who is able to understand the broader personal and lifestyle issues related to detoxification. Her knowledge about how people develop and then respond to detoxification programs is not theoretical but rather derived from years of clinical experience with hundreds of patients. In addition to her background as a functional medicine nutritionist, she has integrated elements of personalized lifestyle medicine, determining what felt right for her patients specifically and how to tailor their detoxification to their specific needs.<sup>19</sup> Deanna is able to make the sometimes technical aspects of lifestyle medicine more consumer friendly through her artistic use of images and color. She teaches with metaphor and creativity, which allows for a well-rounded approach to all she does.

Within this book *Whole Detox*, the reader will find the best of Dr. Minich and an opportunity to improve their health through the wisdom she provides from both her extensive research and her clinical applications. This is the book in which the approach to detoxification offers the whole picture in a program that is tried and proven to be successful.

Jeffrey Bland, Ph.D.



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## INTRODUCTION: WHY WHOLE DETOX?

My patient Sandy was frustrated.

“Dr. Minich,” she said, “I’m *really* hoping you can help me. I feel like I’ve tried every detox under the sun, and they all work, but only for a little while. I’ve heard that *your* detox does some really great things and that it will change my life, and I really hope that’s true. Because, honestly, I’m starting to lose hope.”

I could well understand Sandy’s frustration. Like many of my patients, she was looking for a way to lose weight, feel great, and boost her energy. She was also struggling with brain fog and some mild anxiety. Some of my other patients suffer from aching joints, sleep problems, depression, listlessness, or fatigue. For many, I’m not the first stop on the health-care trail; they’ve tried conventional medicine, a number of supposedly healthy diets, a wide range of fitness programs, and at least one or two cleanses. Many even improve—for a while. Then, like Sandy, they start to drift back to the same set of problems that sent them searching for help in the first place.

Does that sound like you? Are you also frustrated that those five or ten or twenty pounds keep coming back after you’ve worked so hard to lose them? Do you wish there was a way to regain your lost energy and sharpen up your brain? Are you struggling with sleep problems, anxiety, or depression that you’d prefer to treat naturally? Do you feel as though you keep running into the same brick wall?

If so, I hear you. I’ve spent enough of my life seeking answers for my own health problems to know just how frustrating and sometimes scary that can be. When I began as a functional medicine nutritionist, I was thrilled that I’d have the chance to translate my years of science and research into practical ways of giving people access to the vibrant health that is our birthright. At that point, I had a lot of faith in good nutrition as the royal road to health—the way to living well and feeling great.

Over the years, though, I, like Sandy, became frustrated. I began to see that for many patients, the wonderful nutritional suggestions I was making simply didn’t “take.”

Maybe they would for a while. The patients would be incredibly excited as they finished their consultation, thrilled with their jump-start to a healthy life. They had shed pounds and lost inches. Their brain fog had cleared. Their anxiety had calmed. Their depression had lifted. Detox had given them a glimpse of just how great life could be when they felt *this* good, all the time.

And then a month, two months, half a year later, many of those same patients would return discouraged, maybe even defeated. They had started to regain the weight. Their aches and pains were back. They no longer felt the energy, the hope, the vibrant health they had once enjoyed.

What had gone wrong? Why would an approach that had worked so well *stop* working?

I struggled with this problem for several years, and then finally I got it.

The reason most detoxes have so little staying power is that they treat only a part, but not the whole.

They deal with part of your body, not your whole body.

They tell you what to *take out*, but they don’t focus on what to *put in*.

They deal only with your physical body, not with your whole self.  
And as a result, they often fail.

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## WHY MOST DETOXES DON'T LAST

### **They Don't Deal with Your Whole Body**

Most detoxes pick one single part of your body—your liver, perhaps, or your gut. But very few programs look comprehensively and systematically at your whole body and make sure that your entire physical self—from your feet through your belly through your heart to your brain—has every bit of support it needs to expel *all* your toxins.

This whole-body approach is essential, especially given that the latest developments in medicine focus on the activity and interrelationships of your body's networks: not just your gut but your digestive system; not just your digestive system but the interaction between it and every other organ and system in your body. Your liver doesn't work separately from your gut; they work *together*. (The scientific terms for this type of thinking are “network medicine” and “systems biology.”)

### **They Focus on What to Take Out, Not What to Put In**

Most detoxes zero in on reactive foods, industrial chemicals, and other environmental toxins. They tell you how to protect yourself from these toxins, and maybe they even offer you a few weeks' worth of meal plans. Or they focus on a few potentially toxic foods—caffeine, sugar, and gluten, perhaps, or maybe soy, peanuts, and artificial sweeteners. Some detoxes are more restrictive, with an even longer list of things to cut out. But none of these approaches gives enough attention to your *whole* body comprehensively, systematically making sure that every one of your vital systems is getting the full spectrum of nutrients it needs.

### **They Focus on the Body, Not the Whole Self**

Most detoxes tell us how to avoid reactive foods and industrial chemicals, which is great. But do they help us shed toxic thoughts, let go of limiting beliefs, or cope with the stressful situations that frequently make us ill? Not that I've seen.

Every time you encounter an upsetting relationship, a frustrating personal situation, or a depressing day at work, your body is flooded with biochemicals that have the power to sabotage your health. I'm talking about stress hormones like cortisol, which cues your body to put on the pounds, disrupt your sleep, and drive up your blood pressure, potentially sending you down the road to obesity, diabetes, autoimmune conditions, and cancer. I'm talking about the shattering experience of heartbreaking grief, which research has shown can literally disrupt the workings of your heart. I'm talking about lives that seem plagued by loneliness and boredom, which numerous studies have shown are characterized by more chronic health problems and also end sooner than lives full of passion, meaning, and community.

We now have volumes full of research showing that stress, boredom, frustration, and heartbreak aren't simply psychological states. Rather, they are *physical* conditions that profoundly affect your health: through your hormones, your blood pressure, your neurotransmitters, and, ultimately, your entire biochemistry. A happy, relaxed person is biochemically different from an angry, sad, or fearful one. Your body affects your thoughts and feelings . . . and your thoughts and feelings affect your body. This interaction is straight out of Human Biochemistry 101. It can be a significant disrupter of your health—or a profound tool for healing.

Yet most detoxes ignore this life component and stick strictly to nutritional advice. Even when they pay lip service to “stress relief” or “taking time for yourself,” they fail to offer any concrete workable program to actually get rid of your life toxins. As a result, most detoxes are sadly incomplete, because if you don’t heal the whole person, you’ll just see the same problems coming back again and again and again.

## DETOX’S NEW FRONTIER

I didn’t want my patients to keep suffering. I didn’t want them to follow up the brilliant initial success of their detox with a disappointing fizzle a few weeks later. I didn’t want a detox that worked only briefly, randomly, or occasionally, and I didn’t want a detox that addressed the body alone.

So I began searching for a program that would allow us to remove every single toxic barrier that keeps us from total health and vital, fulfilling lives. I drew on my years doing academic and professional research into the biochemical and nutritional properties of food, and on my experience as a clinician who had worked with thousands of patients. I wanted a detox that spoke to every facet of our bodies and our lives—a clear, actionable program that even the busiest and most stressed of my patients could follow.

The culmination of this process was Whole Detox: the first comprehensive, systematic approach to breaking through *all* the toxins that hold us back. But first, I had to rethink what I meant by “toxin.”

## REDEFINING “TOXIN”

Okay, we all know that “detoxification” means, literally, to get rid of toxins. But what exactly are toxins? We’re used to speaking of them in purely physical terms. My research and my clinical practice have taught me that they are much, much more. Toxins are better understood less as poisons than as *barriers*—obstacles to the life and health we truly want.

On a physical level, this is pretty clear. If we look at the thyroid signaling system, for example—the complex network of glands and hormones that regulate thyroid function—we see that poor thyroid function makes the whole body more vulnerable to environmental toxins, interfering with our ability to detoxify. At the same time, the increasing toxic burden disrupts the thyroid signaling system, making it more difficult for different parts of the system to communicate with one another. These toxic barriers to communication further depress thyroid function, creating a vicious cycle that can sabotage our entire quality of life. Depression, weight gain, brain fog, exhaustion, memory problems, and, potentially, heart disease are only some of the chronic conditions that can result.

Yet when you remove the toxic barriers, communication resumes. Thyroid function improves, and we suddenly have a new lease on life.

Slowly I came to see that the very same principle applies to life toxins. If mental, emotional, or spiritual challenges are standing in our way, they can block our progress—and undermine our health. I began to see that when I helped my patients release their life toxins, their health improved as well.

For example, my patient Marqueta had struggled for years with a limiting belief: she felt she couldn’t be a successful, empowered woman and also retain her femininity. Marqueta’s mother had grown up in a very traditional religious household, and she had tried to instill those same values in her daughter, including the notion that women were supposed to be quiet, timid, and sexually passive.

This limiting belief was keeping Marqueta from pursuing relationships with men who really interested her. Any time she found a man she liked, she worried that she was being “too sexual” and

“too forward.” She also worried that the man would be put off by her success as the administrator of a local hospital.

When she came to me, she was suffering from crippling menstrual cramps. She also described herself as “dried up—my brain just won’t work.” Once a creative, vital person, she was clearly struggling with many toxic barriers. Her physical symptoms expressed her life issues; her life issues were shaped by her physical problems.

Enter Whole Detox. I addressed Marqueta’s hormonal issues in a variety of nutritional ways: healthy fats, better hydration, some herbal supplements. I also worked with her to identify the limiting belief that functioned as such a daunting obstacle. I encouraged her to foster her creativity, even in such little ways as how she dressed or how she decorated her office. I asked her to write in her journal about the women she admired and wanted to emulate, and to identify the qualities in herself that resembled those women. Through a wide variety of modalities—diet, supplements, lifestyle, self-exploration, journaling, and creative activities—I helped her get rid of the toxic barriers that were holding her back.

Once Marqueta understood how to identify and overcome *all* the toxins in her life—from reactive foods to limiting thoughts to frustrating relationships—she was able to reclaim her health. Because she wasn’t following an abstract system but rather identifying her own personal toxins, she was empowered far beyond what partial detoxes could achieve. Thanks to the tools she had learned through Whole Detox, she would be able to target and defeat her personal toxins for the rest of her life.

Even after a few weeks, the results were astonishing. Soon after we began working together, Marqueta transformed her wardrobe from dull grays and beiges to brilliant oranges and yellows, which suited her much better. She began to feel creative and “flowing” again, no longer “dried up” and “stuck.” She started a new relationship, slowly and tentatively, but with more passion and excitement than she had previously allowed herself. Her menstrual cramps disappeared. Her hormones were in balance. The culmination came at her last appointment, when she showed up with a haircut so dramatic and different from her previous style that I honestly almost didn’t recognize her.

This, to me, is the essence of Whole Detox. Marqueta had broken through the toxic barriers that were limiting her life so she could finally savor the full spectrum of her whole self.

## DISCOVERING WHOLE DETOX

When I developed Whole Detox, I had been working for nearly a decade as a nutritionist. I had done graduate research into the nutritional properties of the carotenoids that give foods their color, as well as into the biochemical properties of fats.

I had also explored other ancient healing arts, including Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Ayurveda, and many others. A single yoga class I took more than twenty years ago first turned on the lightbulb in my head, illuminating the many healing truths available to us, even if they are often neglected by conventional practitioners.

So in my quest for detox’s new frontier, I went back and searched my library for every discipline I had ever studied: nutrition, neuroscience, epigenetics, physiology, and psychology as well as yoga, Ayurveda, TCM, and traditional healing. Odd as it might sound, I also explored color and drew on my background in the visual arts. After all, color has long been associated with emotion and mood as well as with the phytonutrients that make fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other plant foods such a crucial part of our diet. Color plays a role in East Indian healing too.

Working with this rich array of influences, I came up with a new approach to detox. Its power was

astounding. As I introduced this approach to my patients, I saw how deeply mind, body, and emotion all affect one another. Remove a toxic food from your diet, and you might also free yourself from depression, anxiety, or helplessness. Eliminate a toxic thought, and you might also rev up your metabolism and lose some unwanted weight. Tear down the barriers to your sense of purpose and connectedness, and you might also revitalize your immune system and restore your optimism.

The opposite was also true. Hold on to a toxic belief, and the healthiest diet in the world might not free you from troublesome symptoms. Remain mired in a stressful life, and even without caffeine, sugar, and refined flour, you might still feel wired, anxious, or depressed. A raging hunger for meaning or community might keep you dissatisfied and on edge even when your body is fully nourished.

Every one of us is a complex biochemical structure in which every factor affects every other factor in an endless synergistic loop. Sometimes this synergy works against us: Negative thoughts can impact our health; poor health can breed negative thoughts. As your health gets worse, your thoughts get bleaker; as your thoughts get bleaker, you move less, crave more sugar, and send more stress hormones coursing through your veins. You feel even sicker . . . and your thoughts spiral further down into depression. Talk about a vicious cycle!

But with Whole Detox, you can transform the downward spiral of disease into an upward spiral of vibrant health. By addressing nutrition, exercise, thought patterns, and many other factors at the same time, you can break through toxic barriers and create an energized, full-spectrum life.

## WHAT WHOLE DETOX WILL DO FOR YOU

Whole Detox integrates Western science and Eastern medicine. It is a systematic way of overcoming every barrier that keeps you from health, energy, and fulfillment. So welcome to Whole Detox because it will change your life:

- You'll begin to heal the parts of your body that are struggling under their toxic burden, including your endocrine system, digestion, heart, bones, and brain.
- You'll shed pounds, boost your energy, heal your aches and pains, and recover from debilitating symptoms, feeling calmer, more vital, and more energized than you have in years.
- You'll detoxify your relationship with your community, your family, and yourself.
- You'll detox through food and also through movement, new thought patterns, and emotional expression.
- You'll break through conflicts and creative blocks, which will free you to pursue long-deferred dreams for work, love, and personal satisfaction.
- You'll feel nourished, not deprived, because sometimes the best detox is not cutting something out but rather bringing in *more* of what you need!

Most important, Whole Detox is a *personalized* approach. You'll zero in on the parts of your body—and your life—that most need cleansing, healing, and revitalization. You'll also acquire the lifelong ability to target your personal barriers by using the Whole Detox Spectrum Quiz. As a result, Whole Detox is the fastest and most effective way to become your healthiest, most energized, and most fully realized self.

## THE POWER OF WHOLE DETOX



To illustrate the power of Whole Detox, let me share with you the story of George, who came to me frustrated and helpless about six months after completing a detox with another practitioner. George's problem was that he couldn't sleep—an aching frustration that had been with him ever since his sophomore year in college.

Now in his midforties, he was paying a heavy price for his insomnia. He often found himself short-tempered with his children as well as his wife. Since his father had been a short-tempered, angry man, George hated the feeling that he was repeating his father's version of family life.

At work, too, George struggled to remain calm and centered. The owner of a small tech company, he frequently had to travel on business, working with clients in various parts of the country. He knew that a sleepless night before an important meeting could jeopardize a vital relationship, yet he hated to depend on sleep aids.

Sleep problems were ruining his life, he told me frankly the first time we met. His despair was all the greater because he had recently completed a detox that, for a few sweet months, had finally seemed to heal the problem. On that program, he cut out caffeine, sugar, white flour, and unhealthy fats. He drank water with lemon juice to flush the toxins out through his urine, and he took yarrow pills to support his liver's detox function. He got a water filter, an air purifier, and blackout curtains to keep "light pollution" out of his bedroom. Anything that could interfere with his sleep, he got rid of. And for a time it worked. George's sleep quality improved until finally, after less than two weeks, he was sleeping deeply throughout the night. For the next few months, he felt as though he had witnessed a miracle.

Then, slowly but surely, the old sleep problems began creeping back. When a loud noise in a hotel corridor woke him up one night, he tossed and turned for hours. When a difficult client meeting loomed the next day, he couldn't fall asleep till nearly five A.M. When his ten-year-old daughter came down with a high fever one night, he lay rigid beside his sleeping wife, imagining all the terrible ways her illness might play out.

"What's the problem?" George asked when he eventually came to see me. "Once I started sleeping again, why couldn't I *keep* sleeping?"

"I think three things might be going on," I suggested. "First, there may be some toxins that are personal and specific to *you*—some reactive foods or problematic chemicals that are disrupting your body. Most detoxes are cookie-cutter—one size fits all. They can be a great first step, but they don't necessarily identify the toxins that are disrupting *your* system."

George nodded, beginning to look more hopeful.

"Second, although your previous detox focused on what to cut out, you didn't really find out what to *put in*. Healthy fats are really important for sleeping. So are complex carbohydrates. There may be some other imbalances we will discover as we work through your entire body, systems in your body that are not getting all the nourishment they need."

George nodded a second time, seeming even more hopeful.

"Finally—and maybe most important—we can't just look at your body. We have to look at your whole self."

Now George was startled. "You mean there's something wrong with me, with my personality?" he asked.

"Not at all," I said quickly. "But your body and your mind aren't really separate. They're both parts of the same system. Your thoughts and feelings are biochemical events that have a profound effect on the rest of your physiology. We can work only on the body level, as your previous detox did. But that's not Whole Detox, and I think it would help you to work on the life level as well."

George and I had many long talks about what might be keeping him awake. As he thought about his bad-tempered father, he recalled many late-night arguments his parents used to have. His father had worked until midnight at the restaurant he owned, and when he came home, he expected George's mother to offer a sympathetic listening ear and a plate of hot food. George's mother, for her part, was exhausted after a long day of working at an office downtown and then making dinner for her children. George's father frequently woke her up, and the two fought, waking George. The sense that night was the time to be alert, on edge, ready to protect the people he loved yet helpless to do so, had never really left George.

He had also held on to the sense that to be a truly successful businessman, like his father, he had to stay up late, worrying about his business. Without realizing it, he had adopted that same worry, and though by falling into a deep sleep he was neglecting his business and letting down his clients. Of course, the exact opposite was true. His sleep problems were actually interfering with his ability to be a good family man and an effective businessman.

Certainly, he had found it helpful to cut out the foods and beverages that had disrupted his sleep, and he also benefited from adding in the supportive foods I suggested. But George was a whole person, and he needed a whole detox, one that included both health *and* life issues. To solve his sleep problem, he had to identify *all* the toxic barriers that kept him up at night, not just the nutritional ones.

## YOUR 21-DAY PROGRAM

The Whole Detox George embarked on with me is what you're about to begin, too.

In chapter 1, I'll give you an overview of the cornerstone of Whole Detox: the Seven Systems of Full-Spectrum Health. These are seven clusters of physical and life issues that can be supported, healed, and detoxed in similar ways.

Once you've learned about each separate system, chapter 2 will help you see how all of them work together. It's called "The Power of Synergy" because synergy—the extra benefits you get from many systems all working in harmony—is truly the force behind Whole Detox.

Then, in chapters 3 through 9, I will provide an in-depth look at every system so that by the time you begin your Whole Detox, you'll be able to see your body, your life issues, and your goals in those terms.

This approach offers you two striking advantages that make Whole Detox more effective and longer lasting than any other detox I've seen. First, these seven systems target every aspect of your body and your life: every anatomical system and also every life issue (work, love, community, spirituality, etc.). When you target each of the seven systems, you guarantee yourself a truly *whole* detox, identifying every single barrier that stands between you and optimal health, between you and a wholly inspired and fulfilling life.

Second, working with the seven systems enables you to create a truly *personal* detox—one that zeroes in on the specific barriers that are most troublesome to *you*. The Whole Detox Spectrum Quiz helps you work through every one of the seven systems, identifying each specific physical, mental, or emotional issue that stands in your way. What most people discover is that one or two systems are more out of balance than the others, while one or two other systems are areas of strength and power. When you identify your strengths and weaknesses, you can find ways to immediately support the strengths and improve the weaknesses, which will improve your physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

## THE SEVEN SYSTEMS OF FULL-SPECTRUM HEALTH

**Here are the seven systems that encompass the health of your entire being:**

**The ROOT:** adrenal glands, immune system, DNA, bones, skin, survival, community

**The FLOW:** ovaries/testes, reproduction, fertility, urinary system, colon, partnerships, creativity

**The FIRE:** digestive system, blood sugar, work–life balance, energy production

**The LOVE:** thymus, heart, blood vessels, lungs, compassion, expansiveness, service

**The TRUTH:** thyroid gland, throat, mouth, ears, nose, speaking, choice, authenticity

**The INSIGHT:** pituitary gland, brain, neurons/neurotransmitters, sleep, mood, thoughts, intuition

**The SPIRIT:** pineal gland, electromagnetic fields, circadian rhythms, connection, purpose, meaning

These seven systems might seem a bit counterintuitive at first—why should adrenals, the immune system, and community all be part of the first system while ovaries, creativity, and the colon fit together in the second? But I promise, by the time you’ve finished reading chapters 1 through 9, the seven systems are going to seem intuitive and even a little obvious. And by the time you’ve finished your twenty-one-day program, you won’t remember thinking any other way.

As a clinician, I found that these seven systems of health were my keys to the kingdom: through them, I could see that seemingly disparate issues—usually separated into nutritional, anatomical, psychological, and spiritual—did actually benefit from being treated together.

For example, the first system of health includes, among other things, immune function, bone health, identity, rootedness, and security—all the things that ground us and define us in a physical way. I could address immune function by giving my patients an immune-healthy diet, but I could also help them to create a strong sense of personal boundaries. They could enhance their bone health through supplements but also through yoga exercises that help them feel grounded. Meanwhile, a healthy immune system and strong bones could create a feeling of rootedness, safety, and security. In other words, treating one ROOT issue opens the door to a whole new world of improvement.

During your twenty-one-day program, every three days you’ll detox another system of health, starting at the ROOT and working your way up to the SPIRIT. By the end of the three weeks, you will have addressed every toxic barrier in your life.

I’ll be with you every step of the way. I’ll tell you exactly what to eat each day (the recipes are simple, colorful, and delicious!). And I’ll guide you through each day’s activities: affirmation, meditation, visualization, journaling, explorations of limiting thoughts, and recommendations for healthy movement: a whole spectrum of ways to break through your personal toxic barriers. The instructions are clear and unambiguous—all you have to do is follow directions.

I’ve provided every single thing you need to complete this program successfully, including mouth-watering recipes, most of which can be prepared in thirty minutes or less. I’ve also shared shopping lists and some suggestions for how to lay the groundwork in the week before you start.

Whole Detox may be one of the most exciting journeys you’ll ever take—and it doesn’t end after twenty-one days. I’ve also included a section on how to maintain Whole Detox for life, so you can be sure to keep removing barriers and creating fabulous results.

### DETOX FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

I’m thrilled to share Whole Detox with you, because I think it’s high time we found a new definition for “detox.” We need a detox that employs the whole spectrum of ancient and modern knowledge, and

one that treats the whole spectrum of who we are. As a functional medicine nutritionist, I believe that “food is medicine,” but I’ve also come to believe that this approach is not enough. Most people cannot heal on food alone. Yes, health requires a foundation of good eating, but good eating will not necessarily solve our emotional woes or stop our limiting beliefs and toxic self-talk.

The Seven Systems of Full-Spectrum Health have been recognized by ancient healing traditions for thousands of years. They still hold true in the present day. Our physiologies are so intricate and complex, and so are the ways each of our bodies interacts with our entire being. No two of us are alike, yet each of us contains these seven systems, this spectrum of color that helps define our bodies and our lives.

Whole Detox empowers us to remove not just physical toxins but *all* the barriers that impede our growth. Whole Detox is a twenty-one-day program, yes, but it’s also the beginning of a *whole* new way of life.

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## CHAPTER 1

# WHOLE DETOX FOR YOUR WHOLE SELF

My patient Padma was confused—and skeptical.

“I came to you for nutritional advice, and to detox,” she said with her faint flavor of an Indian accent. “But you are talking to me about all sorts of other issues besides food. I am a person of science—a sociologist—and I want to focus on science and the facts.”

I smiled. I had heard these objections before, but seldom did my skeptical patients express their opinions so bluntly, and so soon.

By being so clear, Padma allowed me to be clear in response. “I am also a person of science,” I told her. “And what I’ve learned in more than fifteen years of research and clinical work is that the most scientific approach to healing doesn’t ever focus on just one small part of the human body, but alone ignore the role of thoughts, beliefs, and emotions in our health. You get the best results by addressing the whole person. That’s what this program is all about.”

Padma still looked doubtful.

“Padma,” I went on, “you think that beliefs and emotions are separate from the physical body. But in fact, every time you have a thought or feeling, it is expressed biochemically, as a cascade of neurotransmitters, hormones, or cellular responses. Therefore, your physical condition can have an enormous impact on your mood, your ability to think clearly, and your overall outlook on life—just as your mood, thoughts, and beliefs can affect your physical condition. Mind–body medicine isn’t some mystical mumbo jumbo. It’s Human Biochemistry 101.”

Most of us are used to making distinctions between our body and our emotions. We believe that “I feel hot” or “My foot hurts” or “My doctor tells me I’m at risk for a heart attack” are fundamentally different types of statements from “I feel scared” or “My heart aches” or “If my boss keeps me late one more night this week, I’m going to go through the roof.”

Of course, in some ways, those *are* different statements. While we can’t measure the subjective experience of heat or pain, we can take our temperature with a thermometer, x-ray our foot for broken bones, and run a whole range of tests to assess our risk for a heart attack. Fear, grief, and anger are harder to measure. And even though we turn to physical metaphors to express our emotional states, we know we don’t mean them literally. Your heart doesn’t *really* ache. Your blood isn’t *literally* boiling. You aren’t *actually* about to explode.

Yet in a very real sense, the contrast between mind and body is what my old professors used to call “a distinction without a difference”—a distinction that, at the end of the day, isn’t really very useful. Because, in fact, there isn’t really any such thing as “body,” “mind,” “sensation,” “emotion”—those are just the names we’ve come up with to make sense of our experience. What we *really* have, when we look at our human lives, is biochemistry: one big interactive network of hormones, neurotransmitters, synapses, and glands whose job is to respond to the challenges and opportunities of our environment. These responses all happen through electricity and chemistry, and all of them are always *both* physical *and* emotional. That is, any thought or emotion is reflected in a biochemical

event, and any biochemical event has its mental and emotional dimensions.

If someone runs up to you with a knife, for example, you might experience the emotion known as fear. Or you might feel anger or determination or some other emotion. You are likely to think, *This doesn't look good* or *I wonder if I can run fast enough to get away*. Whatever thoughts and emotions you might have, you'll also experience an immediate, measurable physical response: the stress response. Your muscles will tense, your blood will begin to flow toward your muscles and away from your stomach, your heart will beat faster, your pupils will contract, your palms will sweat, and you'll start to breathe quickly. And behind both the mental and the physical responses is a flood of stress hormones—cortisol, dopamine, adrenaline, noradrenaline, and many others—triggered via a complicated chemical cascade initiated in your hypothalamus and passing on to your pituitary and your adrenals. Your mental, emotional, and physical experience—the thoughts, feelings, and sensations you experience—all show up in biochemical events.

And guess what? It doesn't really matter if you *actually* experience danger or if you just *think* you *might* be in danger . . . or even if you *remember* a time ten years ago when you actually were in danger. Memory, imagination, fantasy, anticipation—all of these produce the same physical response. . . . A hypnotist can convince you that you're scared and produce in you a stress response. So can a powerful speaker alerting you to a political or social threat. So can a movie, a roller coaster, or even a really scary novel. Or a dream. You might think the attacker with a knife is real and the nightmare is unreal, and of course that *is* an important distinction, but an equally important point is the fact *your body doesn't know the difference*. The biochemical responses and electrical impulses that trigger the chemical cascade are the same whether they are generated by an actual physical event or a mere thought.

Now, what does this mean for those of us who want to lead healthy, fulfilling lives? It means we need to be aware of the complex ways in which our bodies and minds interact—in which the categories we like to call “physical,” “mental,” and “emotional” are often blended and blurred. If you feel depressed and I suggest you eat more fiber, and in a few weeks you've cheered up, then your body has measurably affected your mind. If you feel stressed and you then have trouble digesting your food (because, among other things, stress lowers your stomach acid), your mind has measurably affected your body.

When I realized this truth, I understood that I needed to incorporate it into my work as a functional medicine nutritionist. I couldn't just tell my patients what to eat; I had to help them detoxify from all the factors that might be adversely affecting their health.

This insight cut two ways. Patients with seemingly intractable psychological issues—anxiety, depression, stress—frequently got spectacular results from changing their diets. At the same time, patients with seemingly incurable physical issues—joint pain, cardiovascular issues, thyroid problems, and ulcerative colitis, to name only a few—got their own spectacular benefits from letting go of some limiting beliefs, nourishing their creativity, and otherwise supporting their minds and emotions.

We tend to think of the boundary between mind and body as a kind of seawall—a rigid, firm barrier clearly marking out the difference between water and land, wet and dry. In reality, the boundary is more like a wide patch of damp sand over which the tide ebbs and flows: now water, now land, now a mixture of both—and constantly changing.

## HORMONES: WHERE MIND AND BODY BLUR

One of the quickest ways to understand the interplay between our emotions, thoughts, and physical selves is to consider our hormones.

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A hormone is a signaling molecule that helps to regulate the body's physiology and behavior. Hormones are produced by glands, which are part of our endocrine system, the system of hormones and glands that regulates immune function, stress response, fertility, digestion, circulation, metabolism, cognition, mood, the sleep-wake cycle, our circadian rhythms, and many other aspects of ourselves.

Unfortunately, hormones in popular culture have been blamed for female "craziness"—the kind of insanity that women are supposed to feel when they are PMSing, pregnant, or undergoing menopause. The fact is, we all have hormones, and every single one of us—of every age and gender—is profoundly affected by them. When our hormones are in balance, we are sexually vital, vigorous, clear-headed, calm, motivated, and energized. When our hormones are out of whack, so are we: anxious, obsessive, wired, and insomniac . . . exhausted, listless, "foggy," and depressed . . . or, for double whammy, some of both.

Please don't misunderstand me: I am not saying that our hormones rule our lives (though it can often seem that way!). I am saying that they are the middle, overlapping ground between what we usually think of as "mind" and "body." If you are terrified by thoughts of losing your job, you'll have very high levels of stress hormones. That thought—*I'll lose my job and I won't be able to support myself or my family*—is enough to measurably alter your anatomy. (Yes, there is research in which scientists measured blood levels of hormones after asking subjects to think about upsetting situations. If you listen to music, your stress hormones may decrease, and you may find yourself able to think more calmly and rationally about whether your job is really at risk or how you'll respond if you do lose it. (Yes, there is research about how music lowers your stress hormone levels.) If you drink caffeine, your cortisol levels will rise in response to the physical stimulus—and these rising hormone levels might cause you to start feeling anxious about your job again. If you meditate or just breathe deeply, you might once again lower your cortisol levels and find yourself in a calmer state. Your thoughts might reflect that calm feeling, moving from *I'll never work again* to *I'll call Judy on Monday and see if she's hiring*. This positive thought might make you feel even calmer . . . and your stress hormones will fall a little bit more.

Do you see how quickly mind and body flicker back and forth? Whether the stress hormone spike is caused by something physical (caffeine) or mental (the prospect of being fired), you experience a measurable physical response (rising hormone levels). That physical response—whatever its cause—affects your mind.

Likewise, whatever caused your stress hormones to go up (caffeine or fear), you can lower those hormones through something physical (a warm bath) or mental (meditation). And when your stress hormones have fallen—for whatever reason—you will experience different thoughts and emotions.

## CASE STUDY: STRESS HORMONES

### What Produces Stress Hormones?

**Physical:** caffeine, blood sugar spikes and crashes, hunger, environments that are too hot or too cold, physical danger (facing an attacker, skydiving, bungee jumping), physical challenges (hiking rough terrain, rowing a boat, lifting weights)

**Mental:** a tough puzzle to solve, a difficult math problem, an unfamiliar language, note-taking as a speaker talks too fast, a phone call on a bad connection where you can't quite hear the other person

*Emotional*: a troubled child, a sick parent, a challenging relationship, worries about health or finances  
anxiety about public speaking

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As you can see, the lists under each category could go on and on. What I want you to notice is how seemingly unrelated events—bungee jumping and worrying about bills; public speaking and working out at the gym; a fight with your spouse and white-water rafting—all stimulate a release of hormones.

Now, here's where it gets even more interesting. How you think affects how you feel, and consequently, how you feel affects your stress hormones. If you learn you are about to be fired, you might experience any of several different responses, for example:

- *I'll never get another job.*
- *There are plenty of jobs out there. Guess I'll polish up my résumé and start hunting.*
  
- *My family will think I'm a failure.*
- *My family will come through for me. I can't wait to see them on Sunday to tell them all about it.*
  
- *I really screwed up this time.*
- *Sometimes things just go wrong. This really isn't such a big deal.*

Can you guess which thoughts on this spectrum are more likely to raise your stress hormone level and which are more likely to lower it? This is why working with belief patterns and limiting thoughts is such a crucial part of Whole Detox.

The problem gets still more interesting—and more urgent—when I tell you all the ways that excessive stress hormones can adversely affect your body:

#### *Symptoms*

- Acne and skin problems
- Anxiety
- Brain fog
- Depression
- Imbalanced blood sugar
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased likelihood of PMS, menstrual problems, menopausal problems
- Indigestion
- Insomnia—can't fall asleep, can't stay asleep, or both
- Lowered sex drive and/or sexual function

#### *Disorders*

- Autoimmune conditions
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular conditions
- Diabetes
- Obesity

We've taken only a brief look and only at one group of hormones. Your body contains dozens of other hormonal groupings that profoundly affect you as well! Each time you examine one of the Seven



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