


FOOD: A LOVE STORY

FITNESS FLYER

By Becky Moran



I have always loved food. I love the tastes, textures, aromas and downright beauty of food. Happiness for me comes in the form of waking up to the sinfully decadent smells of bacon and cinnamon rolls wafting into my bedroom (not that this happens frequently enough – all due respect to my husband). My food love however, has often been a one-way street. Since middle school, I have experienced many stomach-related health issues. Over time, I have discovered that these issues stem from the foods I've chosen to eat. The foods I love the most – fried chicken, donuts, french fries – were literally hurting me. It was like a bad romance novel.

So the solution should be simple, right? Don't eat what makes you feel like crap. Well, life isn't always that simple. Sometimes you are so entrenched in a bad relationship that though you struggle and fight to get out, you fall back in when things get more difficult.

This probably won't come as a surprise, given the foods I've raved about, but I've also been overweight for most of my life. Like most overweight Americans, I've done my fair share of dieting only to gain back most (or at times all) of the weight because the diet became too much to maintain. My relationship with food kept getting worse instead of better! My experiences were telling me that food was evil and I was wrong to love it! After all, had food ever loved me back?

It wasn't until recently that my relationship with food started to recover. I began to realize that while food is delicious and amazing, it serves another, extremely important function. Food is fuel. Food is what makes my body work. Food is what keeps me going. Donuts are not good fuel.

Donuts are treats, best enjoyed every once in a while. Pork, chicken, beef, sweet potatoes, green beans, apples,

bananas, almonds – all of these are good sources of fuel to be eaten all the time.

Healthy foods don't even have to be boring! Learning to cook with whole-food ingredients in new and interesting ways is another trick that I've learned for saving my relationship with food. I'm spicing up my love life with food in the kitchen! The other day I made a delicious Lemon Garlic Chicken with Zucchini. It only took 45 minutes from start to finish and I felt great all night.

With my new outlook on food, I am falling in love again and this time, food is noticeably loving me back. I have less stomach problems and the energy to do more with my day because of these healthier foods. My skin is clearer and my lips aren't perpetually chapped. Even though I'm not targeting a restriction of calories I am slowly, but surely, losing weight.

Of course I still fall off the wagon sometimes. As with any love story, there is always conflict and the lovers don't always see eye to eye. In this case, the "It's not you, it's me" paradigm is true. Food is inanimate and can't physically do much, so the departures are my responsibility. But in these instances, I practice kindness with myself and take steps to get back on track.

The realization of what pulls me off track often helps keep me on track longer when I try again. Here's an example: When I don't go grocery shopping, I'm tempted to see my only option as fast food. But, there's an easy fix: Make grocery shopping a priority and have a go-to list of healthful foods to expedite my time in the store. Plus, choosing things like bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs allows for versatility and can keep the cost of a meal similar to fast food. (Here's a tip, cut out the bones and use them for a super-healthful bone broth!)

My overall takeaway is that it is possible to focus on health and still have a loving relationship with food. You just have to choose the foods that will love you back, not the ones with the leather jacket and the motorcycle that offer a moment of delicious with a wrath of consequences... I mean donuts.

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Eat Well. Live Well (and Long).

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