

## DIVORCING CELIAC DISEASE: TURNING OFF THE GENE

In 1995 I was diagnosed with celiac disease, an autoimmune, genetic condition marked by a sensitivity to gluten. Having been in year three of my business, BEANFIT Health and Fitness Services, I immediately incorporated celiac disease into my teachings. I also joined a support group, which I chaired for 8 years.

For a total of 19 years I lived and breathed celiac disease. My business was booming, my health was thriving, and my clients were prospering. During that time I traveled the globe attending celiac disease symposiums, hosted Celiac Radio and wrote “Ask Bean” Column, molded my gastroenterologist into a celiac expert, and attended patient conferences where I represented food manufacturers and lectured.

In 2014 I burned out—on all of it. I burned out on offering health and fitness services, teaching celiac disease, having celiac disease, talking/breathing/living celiac disease, and *being* “a celiac.” I was also sick of fear—of accidental gluten ingestion and co-morbidity, like non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. I shifted my business from health and fitness infused with humor, to humor infused with health and fitness. Not only did I divorce celiac disease professionally but also personally. I was tired of identifying with and *being* a disease, even though as Dr. Fasano, a prominent celiac researcher noted, by that time I didn’t have celiac disease; I had celiac condition. Dis-ease was no longer present, but could return upon re-introduction of gluten.

In 2016 I started studying spirituality and digging into how emotions affect health. The education was in part spurred by asking my doctor if I still had three conditions, including endometriosis, which had been diagnosed many years prior by other physicians. Through the years, no one had given me an update. She said no to all three. I was not only thrilled but also mad at myself for owning those three conditions longer than necessary. *That’s terrible!* My doctor’s report motivated me even more to let go of celiac disease.

In December 2016, I brainstormed conditions I currently had, for example carpal tunnel syndrome. My mouth was agape while looking at the list. How could such a healthy person have so many issues?! The table was set. I planned to eliminate the conditions—ALL OF THEM—including turning off the celiac gene\*, which I left for last (December 2020) assuming it would be the most challenging. I eliminated two or three ailments each December and then entered the new year healthier than the last.

When I was in college in the 1980s, I learned that stress was a risk factor for heart disease. That was the extent of my learning in college about how emotions affect health. In continuing my education I realized that stress was just an umbrella term for all negative emotions, which can affect any part of the body. I already knew how important it was to dump emotional baggage for sanity sake, but I acquired more reason to.

I always believed my body could heal itself, but I hadn’t always believed that most conditions could be healed. A plethora of resources guided me toward eliminating conditions and turning off the celiac gene. One is *You Can Heal Your Life* (Hay House 1984) by Louise Hay,

who I consider to be the first person in modern time to teach the public about how emotions affect health. At the end of her book there is a directory of conditions, the associated emotions, and healing affirmations. A much more detailed and expansive reference is Michael J. Lincoln's book *Messages from the Body: Their Psychological Meaning* (Talking Hearts 2019). Dr. Bradley Nelson's *The Emotion Code: How to Release Your Trapped Emotions for Abundant Health, Love, and Happiness* (St. Martin's Essentials 2019) helped me figure out what trapped emotions I had and the childhood origin.

Understanding oneself for the purpose of good physical health requires peeling away layers like an onion. I understood this concept early in my career and wrote *The Every Excuse in the Book Book: How to Benefit from Exercising by Overcoming Your Excuses* (BEANFIT Publishing 2005). Personally, I not only had the courage to peel away the layers but also to introspect to the point of excavation. Courage to understand oneself, flaws and all, are vital to healing physical and emotional wounds.

When I started learning about spirituality, I wanted to find a book that would teach me the topic in my language—scientific. And I found it!! Dr. Bruce Lipton's *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter, & Miracles* (Hay House 2008). "It shows that genes and DNA do not control our biology, that instead DNA is controlled by signals from outside the cell, including the energetic messages emanating from our thoughts." I learned further from Dr. Joe Dispenza's research and "the effects of sustained, elevated states of mind and emotions—and how self-regulation produces significant effects on heart and brain function, immune response, and overall mind-body health."

My education included a relatively new branch of genetics called epigenetics. According to Cleveland Clinic, "Epigenetics is the study of how our environment influences our genes by changing chemicals attached to them." Our environment includes our thoughts and emotions, as Dr. Lipton explains in his book. Epi- means above, the chemicals above the genes. The book *Inside the Vortex* (See the Fire Publishing Company 2016) by James Chappell references Dr. Masaru Emoto (1943-2014), who "developed what he called mind *energy* transference. He was able to scientifically prove how humans can use their words and thoughts to reconfigure vibratory chaos into vibratory harmony using water molecules. Since the body is made primarily of water, it is postulated that with intent, we can turn genetic expressions off or back to a genetic predisposition if we want. Dr. Emoto used mind *energy* or thought wave transference." That quote was the keystone of the arch. **If my mind turned on the celiac gene, then my mind could turn it off.** I was more than willing to take responsibility for my health.

One of the reasons why I left celiac disease for last was because the genetic component seemed challenging. None of the other issues I had was genetically related. Each was emotion only (e.g., endometriosis) or emotion plus physical (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome).

Specific to celiac disease, these are the steps\*\* I took toward releasing ailments:

1. Determined what emotion is associated with the small intestine (where celiac disease is focused): vulnerability.
2. Determined the cause of vulnerability. As a child I was afraid of my dad. Home was a dangerous place to be in his presence.
3. Performed a spiritual ceremony: burning sage and waving it around myself while repeating mantras such as, “I am safe and I have always been safe.” “My intestines are healthy.” “The celiac gene is turned off.”
4. Continued to believe, speak, and think that I am healthy, safe, and that the gene is off. “I *used to have* celiac disease.” “I *choose to* eat gluten free.”

Since this article serves to introduce choosing health rather than accepting disease, above is a watered-down description of what I did.

A very small percentage of genes that code for disease will be expressed no matter what. In other words, the rest require a trigger. My fear during childhood turned on the gene. Occasionally I had brutal gastrointestinal symptoms, yet I never missed a day of school. I didn’t need to, because I was perfectly healthy there. I LOVED school and I always felt safe there. In college the disease progressed to chronic anemia and a long list of other signs and symptoms. In 1993 I had infectious mononucleosis, which is what precipitated advanced disease. A year later the dying process started. I lost 10 pounds—a lot for my 115-pound frame—and diagnosis was “now or never.” Finally a physician thought to refer me to a gastroenterologist. Eight months later I was diagnosed via biopsy.

I choose to continue eating gluten free, because there are more nutritious grains like sorghum. Yet, I am no longer careful about ingestion and have no fear about short- or long-term illness from gluten exposure. I don’t take precautions at restaurants or at friends’ homes. I put gluten-free bread in a non-dedicated toaster, for example.

Although there is currently no scientific proof that I turned off the gene, I am 100% sure I did. You see, I re-wrote the script. It’s been 4 1/2 years since I turned off the celiac gene, and I continue to enter each year healthier than the last.

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\*There is more than one gene for celiac disease. Since I never had genetic testing, I don’t know which one(s) I have. I have never had antibody testing either.

\*\*Consult an open-minded physician before releasing diseases, especially if you intend to cease medication. I highly recommend hiring a practitioner of Dr. Gabor Maté’s Compassionate Inquiry program, which involves investigating a patient’s early childhood environment to determine the cause of disease.