



A Journey Not A Diet

A Journey

Not A Diet

*A Journey of Vision, Accountability,
and Getting Your Life Back*

By F. B. Gordon

“It wasn’t about the diet. It was about deciding to live.”

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A Note Before We Begin

This is not a keto recipe book. This is not a 30-day challenge guide. This is not a list of foods to eat and foods to avoid.

This is a book about what it actually takes mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually to transform your body and your life when you're in your sixties, overweight, on multiple medications, and staring down the barrel of a future you don't want.

I started this journey at 65 years old. I weighed 288 pounds. My A1C was 9.9, deep in Type 2 diabetic territory. I was on multiple prescription drugs. I was tired, inflamed, and running out of time to do the things I still wanted to do with my life. In 5 months, I have lost half of the 100 pounds I am going to lose.

By the time you finish reading this book, I hope you'll understand that the keto diet was just a tool. The real work happened in my mind, long before I ever changed what was on my plate.

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The author is not a doctor, registered dietitian, or licensed healthcare provider. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as a substitute for professional medical guidance.

Individual results will vary. The weight loss, health improvements, and outcomes described in this book reflect the author's personal journey and are not typical or guaranteed. Factors including age, current health status, medical history, consistency, and individual metabolism all influence results. No specific outcome is promised or implied.

Some individuals may lose more weight; others may lose less. Some may experience health improvements similar to those described; others may not. Your experience will be unique to you.

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Chapter One: Getting Ready to Get Ready

The Two to Three Years Nobody Talks About

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Lao Tzu

Here's something the fitness industry will never sell you: getting ready takes time.

I've done keto four times. This fourth round is different; not because the diet changed, but because I changed. And that change didn't happen overnight. It took two to three years of personal development work, reading, coaching, and honest self-reflection before I was truly ready.

Most people think failure means you didn't try hard enough. I'd argue it means you weren't ready yet and that's okay. The preparation phase is real. Honor it.

What nobody tells you is that transformation begins long before the first pound is lost. It begins in quiet moments when you start asking yourself difficult questions. Why do I eat when I'm stressed? Why do I quit when progress slows? Why do I sabotage myself right when things begin working? Those questions matter more than meal plans ever will.

For years, I treated weight loss like a temporary project. I approached it with urgency, impatience, and unrealistic expectations. I wanted fast results without fully understanding the emotional and mental habits that kept pulling me backward. Every attempt started with motivation and ended with exhaustion. I would lose weight, gain it back, and then carry the guilt of “failing” all over again.

But over time, I began to realize something important: the problem was never a lack of information. I knew what foods were healthy. I knew how calories worked. I knew exercise mattered. What I lacked was internal readiness. I had not yet built the mindset necessary to sustain change.

During those two to three years, I slowly started changing how I viewed myself. I read books about discipline, habits, emotional health, and personal growth. I listened to podcasts and watched interviews with people who had transformed their lives. I paid attention to the common thread in all lasting change: identity. Successful people didn't just change what they ate, they changed how they thought. That realization hit me hard.

You cannot hate yourself into becoming healthy. You cannot shame yourself into long-term discipline. Lasting change comes from learning to respect yourself enough to keep going even when progress feels invisible.

There were seasons where I wasn't actively dieting, but I was still growing. I was learning patience. I was learning how to sit with discomfort instead of escaping it with food. I was learning that one bad meal did not mean I had ruined everything. Those lessons may sound simple, but they were foundational.

This is the stage many people misunderstand. Society celebrates dramatic before-and-after photos, but it ignores the invisible preparation that made those transformations possible. The inner work rarely gets photographed. Nobody sees the late nights spent reflecting on unhealthy patterns. Nobody applauds the decision to stop using food as emotional relief. Nobody notices the small mental victories that happen before the physical ones. But those victories matter.

In many ways, the preparation phase is the real transformation. The weight loss is simply the visible result of deeper internal changes that have already begun.

I also learned that readiness cannot be forced. Sometimes people are not lazy; they are overwhelmed, emotionally exhausted, or mentally unprepared. That doesn't mean they are weak. It means they are human. Growth often happens in layers. Before someone can consistently change their body, they may first need to heal their mindset, rebuild self-trust, or learn healthier coping mechanisms.

Looking back, I no longer see my earlier attempts as failures. They were rehearsals. Each one taught me something about myself. Each setback exposed another area I needed to work on. Without those experiences, I would not have developed the awareness I have now.

This time feels different because I'm no longer chasing a quick fix. I'm building a lifestyle rooted in patience, honesty, and consistency. I understand now that health is not a punishment for being overweight; it is an act of self-respect.

If you are in the "getting ready to get ready" phase, don't dismiss it. Don't compare your beginning to someone else's middle. Your preparation matters more than you realize. Sometimes the most important progress is happening internally long before the scale ever reflects it.

And maybe that's the truth nobody talks about: before you can transform your body, you often have to transform your relationship with yourself first.

The Day of Disgust. Every transformation has a moment. Mine came on January 6, 2026.

I call it my "day of disgust." Not self-hatred; disgust. There's a difference. Self-hatred is paralyzing. Disgust is motivating. It's the moment you look at your life and say, enough. Not with rage, but with calm, quiet certainty.

And then I did something that doesn't come easy to a lot of men my age: I asked for help. That was the key. Not the diet. Not the gym. Asking for help. If you take nothing else from this book, take that.

For most of my life, I believed strength meant handling everything alone. Like many men, especially those over fifty, I had been conditioned to think vulnerability was weakness. You work harder. You push through pain. You keep your problems private. You figure it out yourself. That mindset may help you survive in some areas of life, but when it comes to health, isolation can quietly destroy you.

The truth is, I had spent years pretending I was fine when I wasn't. I avoided mirrors. I avoided photographs. I avoided honest conversations with myself. I kept telling myself I would "start Monday," "start next month," or "start when life settles down." But life never settles down. There is always stress. There is always another excuse waiting patiently for you to accept it.

January 6, 2026, felt different because the excuses finally sounded empty. I remember sitting there realizing how tired I was not just physically, but mentally and emotionally. Tired of starting over. Tired of making promises to myself I never kept. Tired of carrying the weight, the shame, and the disappointment. There comes a point where the discomfort of staying the same becomes greater than the fear of changing. That was my moment.

What surprised me most was how calm it felt. I decided not to tell the world on social media. Just told close friends and family that I was going to lose 100 pounds on keto. They have supported me with making sure I had appropriate food to eat when we were together.

People often imagine transformation beginning with dramatic emotion such as tears, anger, some explosive breakthrough moment. Mine wasn't like that. It was quiet. Clear. Almost peaceful. It was the acceptance that I could no longer continue living the way I had been living. No drama. No self-pity. Just truth. And truth can change everything.

The next step was the hardest one: admitting I could not do it alone. Asking for help forced me to confront my pride. Pride tells you that needing support means failure. But I've learned the opposite is true. Asking for help is one of the strongest decisions a person can make because it requires honesty. It means you stop pretending. It means you finally become willing to learn, listen, and change.

Help can come in many forms. Sometimes it's a coach, a doctor, a friend, a spouse, a support group, or even a book that makes you feel understood for the first time. The important thing is breaking the isolation. Healing rarely happens alone.

Once I reached out, something shifted inside me. I no longer felt like I was carrying the burden by myself. Accountability entered my life. Encouragement entered my life. Perspective entered my life. Most importantly, hope entered my life.

That doesn't mean everything suddenly became easy. It didn't. There were still cravings, setbacks, doubts, and difficult days. But now I had support instead of silence. And support changes the way you endure struggle.

Looking back, the "day of disgust" was not really about my weight. It was about finally becoming honest with myself. Honest about my habits. Honest about my pain. Honest about the fact that I needed help to become the person I wanted to be. That day marked the end of denial. And sometimes that is where real health begins.

If you are reading this while standing at your own breaking point, know this: you do not need to have everything figured out before you begin. You do not need perfect motivation or perfect discipline. You simply need one honest moment where you decide your life matters enough to fight for it.

Then take the next step. Reach out. Ask for help. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but it could become the single decision that changes everything.

Chapter Two: Building Your Vision

Vision Is Not a Goal

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Eleanor Roosevelt

Before I started, I read a book that changed everything: “Mach 2 with Your Hair on Fire”, by Richard Bliss Brooke: a business and personal development book. I recommend it to anyone starting this journey.

Here’s the distinction that unlocked everything for me: A goal is a destination with a date. “I want to lose 25 pounds by April 1st.” That’s a goal. A vision is a living, breathing movie of the life you’re moving toward. Goals live inside your vision. But the vision is bigger, richer, and more emotionally compelling than any single goal. I didn’t just set goals. I built a mental movie.

My Mental Movie. In my movie, I saw myself: Walking through the streets of Europe. Not shuffling. not stopping to rest just walking freely, for hours. Standing on a golf course, carrying my own bag for 18 holes. Not because I have to. Because I can. Watching my three grandchildren grow up. Being at their graduations. Their weddings. Maybe even meeting their children someday. Running a business again with the energy, clarity, and stamina it requires.

I also kept a vision book: a collection of images and words that represented that movie. I looked at it regularly to keep the feeling alive. My father is 94 years old and doing great. That means, at 66, I potentially have 28 more years ahead of me. An entire second lifetime. A whole new career. More golf. More grandkids. More everything. That’s what I was fighting for. Not a number on a scale.

Find your “why” that makes you cry. Your vision has to be emotional enough to pull you through the hard days. “I want to look better” won’t cut it. “I want to see my granddaughter walk down the aisle” might. Ask yourself: What do I want to do, see, experience, and be that I currently cannot? Build your movie around those answers.

One of the biggest mistakes people make when starting a health journey is focusing only on restriction. They think about all the things they have to give up: sugar, comfort food, late-night snacks, old habits, convenience. That mindset creates a feeling of loss, and eventually, most people rebel against loss. But vision changes the conversation entirely. Vision shifts your attention away from what you are losing and toward what you are gaining. You are not just giving up unhealthy habits. You are gaining freedom.

Freedom to travel without exhaustion. Freedom to tie your shoes without pain. Freedom to get up from the floor after playing with your grandchildren. Freedom to wake up with energy instead of dread. Freedom to believe your best years may still be ahead of you. That kind of vision creates emotional fuel.

When cravings hit or motivation disappears, goals alone often fail. Goals are logical. Vision is emotional. And human beings are emotional creatures. On difficult days, it was not the scale that kept me going. It was the image of the future I wanted. I could see it clearly enough that it began pulling me forward. That is why your mental movie matters.

You have to rehearse the future version of yourself before you fully become that person. Athletes do this all the time. They visualize the shot before they take it. Successful people mentally practice victory long

before anyone else sees the results. Health transformation works the same way. Your mind needs a destination bigger than temporary discomfort.

For me, the vision book became more than a motivational exercise. It became evidence that I was serious about creating a new chapter of life. Every image represented possibility. Every word reminded me that I was not too old, too far gone, or too late. That last part matters deeply.

Many people over fifty quietly believe their most meaningful years are behind them. They stop dreaming. They stop planning. They begin managing decline instead of building a future. I refused to accept that mindset. If my father could still be thriving at 94, then I had every reason to believe my story was far from over. Age changes certain things, but it does not eliminate purpose.

In fact, sometimes maturity gives you something younger people lack: perspective. By this stage of life, you understand how quickly time moves. You understand what truly matters. Health is no longer just about appearance. It becomes about quality of life, independence, relationships, contribution, and legacy.

That realization can become incredibly powerful. So don't build a vision around vanity alone. Build it around life itself. Picture the experiences you still want to have. Picture the people you still want to love. Picture the places you still want to go. Picture the work you still feel called to do. Then return to that movie often.

Because on the days when discipline feels weak, your vision can remind you why the fight is worth it.

Chapter Three: Assembling Your Support Team

You Cannot Do This Alone

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” African proverb

One of the biggest myths about transformation is that it’s a solo journey; a test of individual willpower. It’s not. It’s a team sport. Here’s who was on my team:

A holistic coach and friend. Someone who knew both the science and the human side of what I was going through. When I fell off track in April, it was my coach who helped me get back on schedule. That phone call may have saved months of backsliding. I cannot give her enough credit. Many of the ideas in this E-Book came from her or her recommended reading that I did.

A new integrative primary care physician. This was a deliberate choice. I didn’t want a doctor whose primary tool was a prescription pad. I wanted someone focused on underlying causes, not symptom management. Someone whose goal was to help me get off drugs, not add more.

Books that became mentors:

Mach 2 with Your Hair on Fire, Richard Bliss Brooke business and personal development

Undoctored, William Davis health and wellness book

Vitality, Nick Wilson and Leah Wilson wellness book

A video that started it all: Butter Makes Your Pants Fall Off, by Bob Briggs. Watch this first. It explains insulin resistance in plain English better than anything I’ve found.

My hiking mentor. A close friend, named Bill, who hiked the tour du Mont Blanc, helped me prepare for my Appalachian Trail adventure goals and has been a constant source of inspiration.

My daughters, who joined me at infrared sauna fitness studio, creating shared fitness time that keeps us all accountable and connected. The realization that my daughters had never seen me at my current weight hit hard. In fact, my 2 older boys may have seen me at 250lbs but I doubt they can remember it.

The Accountability Group Concept. This book is also about building something bigger: a community of people who support each other through this journey. The mental side of losing weight is the biggest hurdle, bigger than the food, bigger than the exercise.

An accountability group, people who check in, encourage, share wins, and talk honestly about failures is more powerful than any supplement or meal plan. We’re building that community. And you’re invited.

For years, I believed discipline meant doing everything independently. I thought asking for support somehow weakened the accomplishment. But experience taught me something very different: isolation is often the enemy of lasting change.

When people try to transform their health completely alone, they usually end up fighting battles in silence. Silence makes discouragement louder. Silence allows excuses to grow unchecked. Silence creates the illusion that everyone else is succeeding effortlessly while you alone are struggling.

But once you begin talking honestly with other people on the same path, something changes. You realize struggle is normal. Temptation is normal. Setbacks are normal. The difference between people who quit and people who continue often comes down to one thing: support. Support gives you perspective on the days when your emotions lie to you.

There were moments during my journey when I felt frustrated because progress seemed slow. Sometimes the scale barely moved. Sometimes I slipped back into old habits for a few days. In the past, those moments would have triggered shame and eventually surrender. But having people around me who understood the process helped interrupt that cycle.

My coach reminded me that one bad weekend does not erase months of progress. My daughters reminded me that health could actually become something enjoyable instead of punishing. My hiking mentor reminded me there were still mountains left to climb both literally and figuratively. That matters more than most people realize.

Transformation is not simply physical. It is emotional, mental, social, and even spiritual. Changing your health often means changing routines, relationships, and long-standing coping mechanisms. That kind of change can feel disorienting at times. Having the right people around you creates stability while your old identity is being replaced by a healthier one.

And let's be honest: there will be days when motivation disappears completely. That is when accountability becomes priceless.

Accountability is not about guilt or pressure. It is about connection. It is knowing someone will notice if you disappear. It is having people who celebrate your victories without jealousy and challenge your excuses without judgment. True accountability combines honesty with encouragement.

Unfortunately, many people do not have that environment in their everyday lives. Sometimes family members unintentionally sabotage progress because your changes make them uncomfortable. Sometimes friends encourage unhealthy habits because it keeps everyone in familiar territory. Growth can expose relationships that were built around shared dysfunction instead of shared health. That is why finding the right community is essential.

A strong accountability group becomes a place where people can speak openly about the mental side of transformation, the emotional eating, the fear of failure, the discouragement, the self-doubt, and the exhaustion of starting over. These conversations matter because weight loss is rarely just about food. Most of us already know what healthy eating looks like. The real challenge is learning how to manage stress, emotions, habits, and identity without returning to destructive patterns. Community helps make that possible.

One of the most powerful things you can hear during a difficult week is, "Me too. I've been there. Keep going." Those words can keep someone from quitting. That is part of the vision behind this journal and this journey. Not just individual success stories, but shared transformation. A place where people support one another honestly instead of pretending to have everything figured out. Because nobody climbs a mountain completely alone.

And the truth is, they were never meant to.

Chapter Four: Why Keto — And Why It Works for This Body

Not All Bodies Are the Same

“Know thyself.” Ancient Greek maxim

There are lots of diets that work for lots of people. Calorie restriction. Mediterranean. Atkins. Intermittent fasting. I’m not here to tell you keto is the only path. But I am here to tell you that if you carry your weight in your belly, if you’ve tried diet after diet and never gotten real traction, there’s a strong chance your body is insulin resistant, and that changes everything.

For the Insulin Resistance Problem watch “Butter Makes Your Pants Fall Off” on YouTube by Butter Bob Brigg. It will explain this better than I can. But here’s the short version:

When your body becomes insulin resistant, it loses the ability to efficiently process carbohydrates. Instead of converting them to energy, it stores them as fat. And it keeps doing it, no matter how little you eat or how hard you exercise.

This is why people with insulin resistance lose one pound after two weeks of busting their ass and quit. It’s not laziness. It’s biology. The solution isn’t to eat less fat and exercise more. That’s the old model, and for insulin-resistant people, it doesn’t work. It leads to yo-yo dieting, muscle loss, and frustration. The keto formula:

High fat ✓

Low carbohydrate ✓

Adequate protein ✓

You must eat fat to burn fat. Cut the carbs, and your body switches fuel sources from glucose to ketones, derived from fat. This is ketosis. Go low carb AND low fat? You’ll burn your muscle instead. You’ll get weak. You’ll quit.

My Numbers:

A1C at start: 9.9 (severe Type 2 diabetic range):

A1C two months in: 7.4:

A1C 5 months in 5.8 (The diabetic threshold is 6.5)

My Fasting Glucose dropped from 226 to 118 to currently 96.

The inflammation reduction alone is remarkable. Most people don’t realize how much water their inflamed body is holding. That’s why the first month numbers are so dramatic.

The Hidden Saboteur: Zero-Carb Drinks. Here’s a mistake I made that I want to save you from.

When I started keto, I wanted to make sure I stayed well hydrated which is absolutely critical on this diet. So, I started drinking a lot of zero-carb, sugar-free drinks. Those popular hydration drinks with the fake

sweeteners. They're marketed as keto-friendly. Zero carbs, zero sugar. What's the harm? The harm is what your body has to do with all those artificial chemicals.

Even though these drinks contain no sugar or carbs, your body still has to process and metabolize everything in them. All those synthetic sweeteners and chemical compounds create a burden on your system and when your body is already inflamed, that burden translates directly into water retention. You think you're doing yourself a favor. You're actually quietly working against yourself.

The lesson: pure water is KING. Hydration matters enormously on keto, but the source of that hydration matters too. Don't let a clever marketing label fool you into thinking your body can't tell the difference between real and fake.

One of the hardest parts about beginning a health journey is accepting that your body may no longer respond the way it did when you were younger. At twenty-five, you can abuse your metabolism for years and still recover quickly. At sixty-six, the margin for error gets smaller. Years of processed food, sugar spikes, chronic stress, poor sleep, medications, and inactivity eventually catch up with you.

That realization can feel discouraging at first, but it can also become empowering. Because once you understand what is actually happening inside your body, you stop blaming yourself for every failed attempt. You stop seeing yourself as weak or lazy. Instead, you begin approaching your health like a problem that can be understood and solved.

For me, learning about insulin resistance changed the entire emotional tone of the journey. Before keto, every failed diet felt personal. I thought I lacked discipline. I thought I simply needed to "try harder." But when I began understanding how insulin affects fat storage, hunger, inflammation, and energy, things finally started making sense. My body wasn't broken it was overloaded.

Insulin resistance creates a vicious cycle. The more carbohydrates and sugar you consume, the more insulin your body produces. Over time, your cells stop responding efficiently to insulin, so your body produces even more of it. High insulin levels tell the body to store fat and make it increasingly difficult to access stored fat for energy. That means you stay hungry, tired, and frustrated even while dieting.

No wonder so many people quit. They are fighting their biology without understanding it. Keto interrupted that cycle for me.

The first major change wasn't even the weight loss. It was the reduction in constant hunger. For the first time in years, I didn't feel controlled by cravings every few hours. My energy became steadier. My mind became clearer. The afternoon crashes began disappearing. Those changes gave me hope long before dramatic physical transformation showed up. And hope matters.

Because the beginning of any health journey requires patience. Your body needs time to heal. Years of inflammation and metabolic dysfunction do not disappear in two weeks. But when you begin seeing signs that your body is finally responding differently, motivation grows naturally.

That said, keto is not magic. I know people who have done intermittent fasting. Typically waiting to eat until 2-4pm and not eating after 8pm. With the theory that fasting gets rid of dead cells. Friends named Jim and Ann were eating healthy (not keto), but who were also fasting, lost 25 pounds by just walking 2X a day and playing tennis 2-3X a week. He went from almost 220 pounds to 190. So 'keto' is not the only path but is working great for me.

You still have to learn discipline. You still have to pay attention to ingredients. You still have to prepare for social situations, emotional eating triggers, and moments of temptation. But keto gave me something previous diets never did: a nutritional strategy that finally aligned with what my body actually needed. That difference changed everything.

I also learned that quality matters as much as carb counts. You cannot build long-term health entirely around processed “keto” products and artificial substitutes. Just because something is labeled keto-friendly does not automatically mean it supports healing. The closer food is to its natural state, the better your body tends to respond. Real meat. Real vegetables. Real fats. Real water. Simple often works better than complicated.

And perhaps most importantly, I stopped obsessing over perfection. There were days I got things wrong. Days I slipped. Days I retained water and felt discouraged. But instead of quitting, I kept going. That consistency — not perfection — became the real secret.

Because health is not built in a single meal or destroyed by one bad day. It is built decision by decision, week after week, as your body slowly learns to trust you again.

Chapter Five: The Journey Month by Month

The Timeline

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.” Robert Collier

January 6, 2026 — Day 1

Start weight: 288 lbs. All-time high had been 305.

Day 3

Achieved ketosis. The body had switched fuel sources.

Months 1–3

Stayed in continuous ketosis for three straight months.

Current weight: ~238 lbs.

Total lost this round: ~50 lbs.

Goal: 100 lbs. total

Why the Slowdown Is Normal and Expected.

The dramatic first-month losses are real, but they’re partly water weight. An inflamed body retains massive amounts of fluid. Keto reduces inflammation, and that water comes off fast.

As the months go on, losses slow. This is biology, not failure. Expect it. Plan for it mentally. Do not quit because the scale isn’t moving like it did in January.

The Weighing Strategy:

Always weigh first thing in the morning

Weight can fluctuate 3–4 lbs. in a single day, don’t chase daily numbers

When stuck: stop weighing for 3–4 days, focus on the diet and exercise, then check

The scale is a tool, not a judge

One of the most important lessons I learned during this journey is that progress is not linear. Some weeks everything seems to click. The scale moves, your energy improves, your clothes fit differently, and motivation feels easy. Other weeks nothing appears to happen at all. That is where the mental battle begins. The danger is not the plateau itself. The danger is the story you tell yourself during the plateau.

Most people interpret slower progress as proof that the process has stopped working. In reality, the body is constantly adjusting. Healing takes place beneath the surface long before visible results appear. Inflammation drops. Blood sugar improves. Energy stabilizes. Sleep gets better. Joints hurt less. Those victories matter just as much as pounds lost.

I also learned not to let a single weigh-in control my mood for the day. The scale reflects many things besides fat: hydration, sodium intake, inflammation, stress, poor sleep, even digestion. One bad number

does not erase good decisions. Looking at long-term trends matters far more than obsessing over daily fluctuations.

There were moments when I became discouraged because my losses slowed dramatically compared to the first month. But instead of quitting, I reminded myself of one simple truth: slower progress is still progress. Four pounds lost in a month may not sound exciting, but over a year that becomes nearly fifty pounds. Consistency compounds over time.

This journey also taught me patience in a way nothing else ever had. In the past, I wanted immediate results. If the scale didn't move quickly, I assumed something was wrong. Now I understand that sustainable health is built month by month, habit by habit, choice by choice.

The goal is no longer just rapid weight loss. The goal is becoming the kind of person who can maintain a healthier life permanently.

And that transformation cannot be rushed. Another important realization during this process was learning to separate identity from outcomes. In the past, if I had a bad week, I would immediately label myself a failure. One setback became an excuse to abandon the entire journey. Now I see things differently. A difficult week is just data. It is feedback, not a final verdict.

Sometimes progress slows because the body is healing. Sometimes stress levels rise. Sometimes sleep suffers. Sometimes life simply becomes overwhelming for a few days. None of that means the journey is over unless you decide to quit completely.

I also discovered that non-scale victories often arrive before major weight milestones. Walking became easier. My stamina improved. I could stand longer without discomfort. Mentally, I felt sharper and more optimistic. Even simple things like bending over, climbing stairs, getting out of bed began improving. Those changes reminded me that health is about far more than appearance.

One of the most powerful habits I developed was focusing on daily consistency instead of obsessing over distant results. I stopped asking, "How fast can I lose the weight?" and started asking, "What would a healthier person do today?" That small shift changed my mindset completely.

Healthy transformation is not built through perfection. It is built through repetition. Good choices repeated often enough eventually become a new lifestyle.

And perhaps that is the greatest victory of all: not simply losing weight, but slowly becoming someone who no longer lives trapped by old habits, old excuses, and old limitations.

Chapter Six: Exercise — Start Where You Are You're Already Stronger Than You Think

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” Mark Twain

Before we talk about exercise, I want to share something a trainer friend of mine told me, she's a fitness competitor, someone who knows the human body inside and out.

She said: “You're carrying around a hundred pounds. You've got lots of muscle. You just can't see it.”

Think about that. If you were at your ideal weight and someone handed you two 50-pound barbells one in each hand and told you to carry them around 24 hours a day, how fit would you have to be to do that? That's what severely overweight people do every single day without even thinking about it. The muscle is there. The strength is there. It's just hidden under the weight.

This reframe took a lot of pressure off me. I didn't need to become an athlete overnight. I was already doing the work just by getting through the day. And that's worth recognizing.

The First Three Months

At 288 pounds, high-impact exercise is a risk, not a strategy. The last thing you want when you're finally motivated is an injury that sidelines you.

My first three months were intentionally low-impact:

Stretch bands

Floor work and core exercises

Stretching

Pool workouts (the pool on the farm was invaluable: zero impact, full workout)

If you don't have pool access, consider a YMCA membership or similar just for the pool. It's worth it.

One more thing about this early phase: one of the visions I kept coming back to in my mental movie was simple but deeply personal. I saw myself not sweating profusely from the slightest movement. If you've been significantly overweight, you know exactly what I mean. Walking to the car. Climbing a flight of stairs. Breaking into a full sweat just existing.

That vision of moving through the world with ease, lightly, and comfortably without my body working overtime just to carry itself was a powerful motivator on the hard days. Don't underestimate the small visions. Sometimes they're the ones that keep you going.

After Month Three: Adding Weight Training.

As weight comes off, muscle loss becomes a concern especially on keto. The weakness is real. Weight training counteracts it, preserves muscle, and accelerates fat loss. I added weight training around month three and have built it up steadily since.

Making It Fun; The Key to Longevity.

Here's what nobody tells you: if you hate your workout, you will eventually stop doing it. The sustainability of any fitness routine depends almost entirely on whether you enjoy it.

What do I do? Pool workouts: push-ups, arm and leg work, cardio, all in the water. No sweat, no joint pain, and I live on a 12-acre farm with family pool access.

Farm golf chipping: I chip 3–4 balls back and forth across the fields. Can't hit full shots without hitting the house or the woods, but the walking, the uneven terrain, and the joy of having a club in my hand makes it not feel like exercise.

Hiking scenic trails over a monotonous treadmill does wonders for my soul.

Infrared sauna workouts low or high-intensity, (Doctors recommend 125 degrees). And I now go with my daughters, which means fitness and family time in one.

The principle: Find what you love. Build movement into it. Make it last.

One of the greatest mistakes people make at the beginning of a health journey is trying to exercise like someone who has already been fit for years. They go too hard, too fast, and too aggressively because they are fueled by emotion and urgency. For a week or two, adrenaline carries them. Then the soreness, exhaustion, discouragement, or injury arrives, and everything falls apart.

I've learned that sustainability beats intensity almost every time. The best exercise program is not the most extreme one. It's the one you can still imagine yourself doing six months from now. Consistency changes the body far more than occasional bursts of punishment. That mindset changed how I approached movement entirely.

Instead of asking, "What burns the most calories?" I started asking, "What kind of movement can become part of my life permanently?" That is a much more important question.

For me, exercise also became deeply connected to mental health. Walking outdoors, being near trees, feeling the sun, hearing birds, moving through open spaces all of that helped quiet the stress and mental noise that had contributed to unhealthy habits for years. I began realizing that movement was not just about weight loss. It was about feeling alive again.

And those feelings matter.

Chapter Seven: The Birthday Mistake A Warning

April: The Birthday Blowout

“It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.” Confucius

After three and a half months of clean eating, I decided to celebrate my 66th birthday by going completely off plan. Ice cream. Cinnamon rolls. Pop Tarts. Fast food biscuits. Chocolate. All of it.

I will not sugarcoat what happened. (No pun intended.)

Couldn't sleep

Severe acid indigestion

Blood sugar spiked

Face broke out overnight

The complexion improvement from months of keto and water intake gone in 24 hours. My body had become clean and sensitive, and I shocked it with a sugar grenade.

I called my coach. I got back on track. But it was, in my own words, a stupid, stupid move. The Lesson: Come Off Slowly.

Whether you're transitioning permanently to a different diet (like Mediterranean) or just planning a cheat day come off keto gradually. Reintroduce carbohydrates slowly. Your body has adapted. Respect that. This applies especially to the end of your journey. The exit matters as much as the entrance.

What surprised me most about that birthday weekend was not just how physically bad I felt, it was how quickly old habits and cravings tried to wake back up. After months of stable energy and reduced hunger, one binge of sugar and processed food triggered cravings almost immediately. Suddenly I wanted more. More sweets. More junk food. More comfort eating.

That experience taught me something important: unhealthy habits may go quiet, but they do not completely disappear. For many people, food is emotional as much as physical. Celebration, stress, boredom, loneliness, reward we attach food to nearly every emotional state. My birthday exposed how easy it can be to slip back into “reward mode,” where food becomes entertainment instead of nourishment. And honestly, that is dangerous thinking for someone trying to reclaim their health.

In the past, one bad weekend would have turned into a bad month. A bad month would have turned into giving up entirely. I would tell myself I had “blown it,” and then use that excuse to continue eating poorly. This time was different because I recognized the danger quickly and asked for help before the slide continued. That distinction matters.

Failure is rarely the first bad decision. Failure usually happens when one bad decision becomes permission for a hundred more. The faster you interrupt that cycle, the easier it is to recover.

I also learned that the body adapts more dramatically than most people realize. After months without heavy sugar and processed carbohydrates, my system reacted violently when I flooded it again. The inflammation returned almost instantly. My sleep quality collapsed. My stomach felt miserable. Even mentally, I felt foggier and more anxious.

Ironically, that miserable experience became reinforcing. It reminded me how much better I actually felt living differently. When you have been unhealthy for years, feeling bad becomes normal. You forget what steady energy feels like. You forget what good sleep feels like. You forget what reduced inflammation feels like. Once your health begins improving, your awareness sharpens. Your body becomes more honest with you. That honesty can become a powerful guide.

Another important lesson from this experience is that “cheat days” are often psychologically risky. For some people, moderation works fine. For others, especially those with food addiction tendencies or insulin resistance, a full cheat day can reopen cravings and patterns that took months to calm down. Only you can determine where that line exists for you. That requires honesty, not ego.

There is also a major emotional trap hidden inside milestone celebrations. We tell ourselves, “I’ve been good, so I deserve this.” But true health is not punishment and reward. It is stewardship. It is learning to care for your body consistently instead of swinging between extremes.

That doesn’t mean you can never enjoy special foods again. It means you learn intentionality. You learn awareness. You stop treating celebrations like opportunities for self-destruction.

Looking back, I do not share this story because I am ashamed of it. I share it because it was educational. Real journeys include mistakes. Real transformation includes setbacks, poor decisions, and uncomfortable lessons.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is recovery.

Can you recognize when you are drifting? Can you correct course quickly? Can you refuse to let one mistake define the entire journey?

That is where long-term success is built.

And perhaps the biggest lesson of all is this: your body is always listening to how you treat it. After months of healing, mine made it very clear what helped it thrive and what made it suffer. I needed to start paying attention

When exercise becomes punishment for being overweight, people naturally resist it. But when movement becomes a celebration of what your body can still do, something shifts emotionally. Gratitude replaces shame. Progress feels meaningful instead of miserable.

I also had to let go of comparison. At first, I would look at younger, fitter people and feel embarrassed about how limited I was. But comparison is poison during a transformation journey. Somebody else’s chapter twenty should not discourage you from beginning chapter one. Every person starts from a different place physically, mentally, and emotionally.

What matters is movement forward. There were days when my workout was modest. A short walk. Stretching. A pool session. Light weights. In the past, I might have dismissed those efforts because they

didn't seem "serious enough." Now I understand that small actions, repeated consistently, create enormous change over time.

The body responds to repetition. One walk does not transform your health. One month of walks absolutely can. Another important lesson: recovery matters more than most people realize. Sleep, hydration, stretching, and rest are not signs of weakness. They are part of the process. Especially after fifty, your body needs recovery time in order to rebuild itself. Pushing relentlessly without listening to your body often creates setbacks instead of progress.

I also discovered that confidence grows through action, not before it. Most people wait to feel motivated or confident before they begin exercising. But confidence is built by keeping promises to yourself repeatedly. Every workout completed, even imperfectly, becomes evidence that you are changing. Over time, those small wins create momentum.

Eventually, movement stopped feeling like something I "had to do." It became part of my identity. I became someone who hikes. Someone who trains. Someone who moves intentionally. Someone preparing for future adventures instead of preparing for decline. That may be the most powerful transformation of all.

Not simply becoming lighter, but becoming capable again.

Because health is not really about the scale. It is about reclaiming your ability to fully participate in your own life.

Chapter Eight: The Fitness Reward — Hot Springs and the AT

Build Rewards Into Your Vision

“Make your life a masterpiece; imagine no limitations on what you can be, have, or do.” Brian Tracy

Goals need dates. Rewards need to be attached to those goals.

Mine: a long weekend in Hot Springs, North Carolina, June 2026.

A cabin with a hot tub

A creek with a swimming hole for cold plunges

Access to the famous Hot Springs

Two hikes on the Appalachian Trail (2–3 miles each)

I’ve been training for this on the farm walking the hills, building stamina. I downloaded the mobile-app, “AllTrails”. It was highly recommended by my hiker friend Bill. It helped me plan my trip.

It’s not an epic wilderness adventure. It’s a scenic, manageable, joyful milestone that says: look how far you’ve come. That’s the point.

One of the most overlooked parts of a successful health journey is learning how to celebrate progress in ways that reinforce your new life instead of sabotaging it. In the past, my rewards were almost always food-related. Big meal. Dessert. “Cheat day.” Celebration through excess. But eventually I realized something important: rewarding yourself with the very behaviors that harmed your health creates a dangerous cycle.

I needed new rewards connected to life, movement, experience, and memory. That shift changed everything.

This trip to Hot Springs NC represents much more than a vacation. It represents capability. A few months earlier, the idea of hiking mountain trails at my size felt intimidating. I would have worried about stamina, joint pain, sweating excessively, or slowing everyone else down. Now, instead of fearing the hike, I’m preparing for it with excitement. That emotional difference matters.

Health transformation is not just about changing your body. It is about expanding your world again. It is about regaining access to experiences you slowly started avoiding because they became physically uncomfortable or emotionally discouraging.

Many overweight people quietly shrink their lives without realizing it. They avoid long walks. They avoid beaches and pools. They avoid hiking trips, amusement parks, airplane travel, photographs, and physically demanding experiences. Not because they don’t want those things, but because their body has become a barrier between themselves and life. I understand that feeling deeply.

That is why this trip feels symbolic. It is proof that the barrier is beginning to disappear.

I also think rewards work best when they align with the person you are becoming. A healthy reward should strengthen your vision, not pull you backward. Hiking the Appalachian Trail, soaking in hot springs, spending time outdoors, and building positive memories around movement all reinforce the identity I'm trying to build.

An active life.

An adventurous life.

A connected life.

And perhaps most importantly, a future-oriented life.

At sixty-six, it would be easy to settle into the mindset that life should become smaller and quieter with age. Society often sends that message indirectly. Slow down. Sit down. Accept limitations. But I've begun realizing something powerful: movement creates momentum, regardless of age.

Every hill I walk on the farm is preparing me for another hill somewhere else. Every workout is building confidence for future adventures. Every pound lost creates new possibilities.

That is why vision and rewards matter so much. They give meaning to the hard days. When motivation dips, I can picture myself standing on a trail in the North Carolina mountains, breathing deeply, moving comfortably, and realizing that my life is opening back up instead of closing down. That image pulls me forward.

And the beautiful thing is, the reward itself does not have to be extravagant. It simply has to matter to you emotionally. Maybe your reward is hiking a trail. Maybe it's dancing at a wedding without exhaustion. Maybe it's fitting comfortably into an airplane seat. Maybe it's playing with your grandchildren without needing to sit down every few minutes.

Those moments are powerful because they reconnect you to life. That is the real reward of health. Not perfection. Not six-pack abs. Not impressing strangers. But freedom.

Freedom to move, explore, participate, and fully experience the years you still have ahead of you.

Chapter Nine: The Bigger Vision — Legacy

Inspiring the Next Generation

“Your children will become what you are; so be what you want them to be.” David Bly

One of the goals I’m most excited about isn’t on a scale or a blood panel. It’s watching my children start their own health and fitness journeys not because I told them to, but because they wanted to. Show, don’t tell. Always.

That’s already happening. My daughters are at the gym with me. The ripple is moving. When I get healthy, my kids notice. When my kids get healthy, my grandkids grow up in a household that values movement, clean eating, and longevity. One decision on January 6, 2026 may change the health trajectory of an entire family for generations. For years my weight affected my relationships with my wife, friends and kids. That’s not a diet. That’s a legacy.

For years, I underestimated how much example matters inside a family. Children and grandchildren may not always listen to advice, but they always observe behavior. They notice energy levels. They notice attitudes toward food, exercise, stress, aging, and self-care. Whether we realize it or not, we are constantly teaching the next generation how to live. That realization gave my health journey a deeper meaning.

This stopped being only about me losing weight. It became about changing the atmosphere around my family. Instead of conversations centered around decline, exhaustion, and poor health, I wanted my family to see growth, movement, possibility, and discipline. I wanted them to see that reinvention is still possible after sixty. Because hopelessness can become generational too.

When families normalize unhealthy living, the cycle quietly repeats itself decade after decade. Poor eating habits become tradition. Sedentary lifestyles become routine. Chronic illness becomes “just part of getting older.” Eventually people stop believing change is even possible.

I wanted to interrupt that story. Not through lectures. Not through pressure. Through example.

There is something powerful about watching someone you love fight for their health, honestly. It creates permission for others to believe they can change too. One person’s discipline often becomes another person’s inspiration. That is already happening in my family.

The shared workouts with my daughters mean more to me than I can fully describe. Those moments are not just exercise sessions. They are connection. Encouragement. Accountability. Shared growth. They are memories being built around health instead of unhealthy habits.

And that matters because culture inside a family is built through repeated experiences.

I also think this journey changes how future generation’s view aging itself. Too many people assume getting older automatically means becoming weak, inactive, and disconnected from life. I want my children and grandchildren to see something different. I want them to see that taking care of yourself is an act of hope. That health creates freedom. That adventure does not have to stop at retirement age.

My oldest son lives in Colorado with his three kids they already practice a healthy lifestyle. Maybe one day all my grandchildren will simply grow up thinking movement is normal. Hiking is normal. Drinking water is normal. Cooking healthy food is normal. Prioritizing mental and physical health is normal. If that happens, then this journey becomes bigger than weight loss.

It becomes inheritance. Not financial inheritance but a lifestyle inheritance. And perhaps that is one of the greatest gifts a parent or grandparent can leave behind. Not just memories, but patterns worth repeating.

I also realize now that legacy is built in ordinary moments, not dramatic speeches. It is built when your family watches you keep going after setbacks. It is built when they see consistency instead of perfection. It is built when they notice that you chose growth instead of surrender. Those quiet decisions accumulate over time.

The beautiful thing about transformation is that it rarely stops with one person. Healthy choices spread outward. Energy spreads outward. Hope spreads outward. One individual deciding to change can alter the emotional and physical future of an entire family tree.

That possibility motivates me deeply. Because maybe the real victory is not simply adding years to my own life. Maybe it is helping create healthier years for the people I love long after I'm gone.

Chapter Ten: My Keto Journey: A Chapter on Real Change

Four Attempts, One Lasting Commitment

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” Commonly attributed to Aristotle

This is my fourth time following a ketogenic lifestyle.

The first three times, the results were undeniable. Each time, I lost between thirty and thirty-five pounds. Each time, I felt healthier, lighter, and more energetic. Yet each success ended the same way. I celebrated my achievement, returned to my old habits, and gradually regained every pound I had lost plus a few more.

The problem was never the diet. The problem was my mindset. I viewed keto as a temporary solution rather than a permanent lifestyle change. I treated reaching a goal weight as the finish line instead of seeing it as the beginning of a healthier life.

This time is different. This time, I made a decision that goes far beyond weight loss. I decided to stop living to eat and start eating to live. That simple shift in perspective has changed everything.

I chose keto because I know it works for my body. I also know that years of poor eating habits left me carrying excess weight and chronic inflammation. Keto provides rapid feedback, helping reduce water retention and inflammation while encouraging my body to burn stored fat for energy. My hope is that this journey will ultimately improve my metabolic health, reduce my dependence on medication, and help me build a healthier future.

Keto is not the only path to weight loss. Many people succeed with Mediterranean diets, calorie-restricted plans, low-fat approaches, or other nutritional strategies. This chapter is not an argument that keto is the only way. It is simply the path I chose.

Water: The Foundation of Success:

If there is one habit that has had an immediate impact on my health journey, it is hydration. Many people underestimate the importance of water, especially when following a ketogenic lifestyle. As carbohydrate intake decreases, the body releases stored glycogen and excess water. Without proper hydration, fatigue, headaches, and poor performance can quickly follow.

For me, drinking approximately half my body weight in ounces of water became a daily goal. That worked out to roughly 144 ounces per day.

To stay consistent, I developed a simple routine:

Drink 30 ounces immediately upon waking.

Dissolve hydrogen tablets in approximately 15 ounces of water.

Carry insulated water bottles throughout the day.

Consume the majority of my water before late afternoon.

Reduce water intake after 6:00 PM to avoid interrupted sleep.

Tracking hydration may seem tedious, but consistency matters. Every small habit contributes to long-term success. Over time, water became more than hydration—it became a daily reminder of my commitment to health.

Beyond Dieting: Building a New Identity:

One of the greatest lessons I've learned is that sustainable transformation is not created through occasional acts of discipline. It is created through identity.

Every healthy meal reinforces the identity of someone who values health. Every workout reinforces the identity of someone who prioritizes fitness. Every fasting window reinforces the identity of someone who can delay gratification in pursuit of a larger goal.

The scale is only one measurement of progress. Reduced inflammation is progress. Improved energy is progress. Better sleep is progress. Increased mobility is progress. Mental clarity is progress.

For years, I measured success solely by the number staring back at me from the bathroom scale. Today, I understand that true health encompasses far more than body weight. I am not simply trying to lose pounds. I am trying to become a healthier person.

Learning to Trust the Process:

Perhaps the most difficult lesson of all has been learning patience. Modern culture encourages instant gratification. We want immediate results from every effort. Unfortunately, lasting health does not work that way.

Real change happens quietly. It happens when you choose water instead of soda. It happens when you complete a workout despite not feeling motivated. It happens when you prepare healthy meals while others choose convenience. It happens when nobody is watching.

There have been weeks when the scale barely moved. In previous attempts, those moments would have discouraged me enough to quit. Today, I recognize that healing often occurs beneath the surface long before it becomes visible.

Years of inflammation, poor habits, and metabolic dysfunction cannot be reversed overnight. What matters is consistency. Every healthy choice is an investment in the future. Every workout is a deposit. Every fasting period is a deposit. Every gallon of water is a deposit. Individually, those deposits may seem small. Collectively, they transform lives.

For the first time, I do not feel like I am following a diet. I feel like I am building a new life. And that life is being built one decision, one meal, and one day at a time.

The Mental Shift: Eating to Live:

Ultimately, lasting success requires a fundamental shift in thinking. Food can no longer be the reward. Food can no longer be the solution to boredom, stress, frustration, or celebration. Instead, food must become fuel.

My long-term goal is not to remain in a strict ketogenic state forever. As my health improves, I may eventually transition toward a Mediterranean-style approach that includes greater flexibility. The objective is not perfection; the objective is metabolic health.

But before I can earn that flexibility, I must first build a healthier foundation. That foundation is being built today. The destination may still be ahead of me, but the journey has already begun. And it all starts with a simple decision:

What I'm Not Eating (or Drinking)

No caffeine.

No alcohol. Many people cite a glass of wine as acceptable, but alcohol is hard on your liver, and a friend of mine personally found that two glasses of wine stalled her weight loss for two to three days. I wasn't drinking much anyway, so this was easy to give up.

No white stuff: no bread, pasta, potatoes, or starch of any kind.

No soft drinks, regular or diet. Diet is just as bad as regular for what your body has to go through to process it.

No fast food. After three months on keto, you'll find it doesn't even taste the same anymore.

I'm also working on eliminating wheat. Read *Undoctored* or *Vitality* to understand why wheat may be at the root of many of our health problems.

It is important to verify you are in ketosis. I do this with a simple Ketone urine kit. Basically, I pee on a strip every 1–2 days first thing in the morning. The more purple it turns the more you are in ketosis. This will help you adjust your diet and especially your carbs. It's a simple, inexpensive method to make sure you are on track. They are available at any CVS type store and are over the counter.

My Menu:

Breakfast

Eggs any style, bacon, or sausage.

Plain Greek yogurt with cinnamon and a small number of berries. Berries are the best fruit on keto; blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries. Even cantaloupe in moderation is fine.

No bananas. They have about as much sugar as a Coke. I've had two in five months, and it wasn't easy they're my favorite food, but it's what you commit to.

Snacks

Boiled eggs, easy to carry, great protein.

Pecans and Brazil nuts are among the best. Not all nuts are keto-friendly, so look it up.

Small handfuls of approved fruit.

One plant-based protein bar I've found that works: the IQ bar.

Lunch and Dinner

Meat and veggies. All the salads you want. All the chicken, burgers (no bun), and steak you want.

Sauteed vegetables.

Be careful with salad dressings. Oil and vinegar are your best bet—learn to love it. Commercial dressings have chemicals, so if you use them, keep it light.

Fattier cuts are better: rib eye over New York strip, pork chops over chicken. Keto is high-fat, low-carb, moderate-protein. Chicken is actually the least ideal meat because it's so lean.

At the grocery store, go organic when you can. Look for food with no label, fruits and vegetables, or with fewer than ten ingredients on the label. Shop the farmer's market when possible.

Eat to live, not live to eat.

Chapter 11: The Medicines

The following chapter describes the author's personal medication history and health progress. It is shared for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Never adjust, reduce, or discontinue any prescription medication without first consulting your physician or licensed healthcare provider. Individual health situations vary, and what worked for the author may not be appropriate for you.

“Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live.” Jim Rohn

When I began this health journey in January 2026, weight loss was certainly one of my goals. However, the number on the scale was never the entire reason I started. My deeper motivation was health. I wanted to improve my quality of life, reduce inflammation, increase my energy, and hopefully decrease my dependence on prescription medications over time.

Like many Americans over the age of fifty, I found myself managing multiple health conditions simultaneously. Years of poor eating habits, excess weight, stress, and aging had taken their toll. At the beginning of my journey, my daily medication list was extensive.

Prescription Medications (January 2026)

Neuropathy

Gabapentin (reduced by 25% as of month 5)

High Blood Pressure

Enalapril Maleate

High Cholesterol

Atorvastatin (Eliminated)

Atrial Fibrillation (A-Fib)

Flecainide Acetate

Metoprolol Succinate ER

Gout

Colchicine (Eliminated)

Allopurinol (Eliminated)

Type 2 Diabetes

Metformin HCL (Eliminated in month 5)

Acid Reflux

Pantoprazole Sodium DR (Eliminated)

Heart Health

Eliquis

Hydrochlorothiazide (Reduced 50%)

Nitroglycerin (as needed)

Vertigo

Promethazine

Meclizine

Asthma

Serevent Inhaler

Over-the-Counter Supplements (Before)

Baby Aspirin

Vitamin D

Iron

Ester-C

Multivitamin

Vitamin B-12 Liquid

Current Supplement Protocol

As my health journey progressed, I worked with a qualified health professional to evaluate my supplementation strategy. Nothing was added randomly, and nothing was removed without thoughtful consideration.

My current routine includes:

Fish Oil (in place of baby aspirin)

Liquid Multivitamin

MCT Oil

Magnesium Glycinate

Magnesium L-Threonate

Liquid B-12, B-6, and B-1 Drops

Probiomed Probiotics

Vitamin D3 + K2

Glutathione Liquid Spray

Berberine

Looking at this list can feel overwhelming. There are mornings when I line everything up and think, “This is a lot.” But it also serves as a reminder of why I started this journey in the first place.

My goal has never been to simply lose weight. My goal is to become healthier. The encouraging news is that my bloodwork continues to improve. Several markers are moving in the right direction, and my healthcare providers are closely monitoring my progress. While many physicians are understandably cautious about reducing medications, improving health markers creates opportunities for meaningful conversations about what may or may not be necessary in the future.

I don't expect miracles. Years of health challenges are not reversed overnight. But every pound lost, every workout completed, every healthy meal eaten, and every positive lab result reinforces my belief that change is possible.

One of the greatest victories I can imagine is not seeing a lower number on the scale. It is opening my medicine cabinet a few years from now and seeing fewer prescription bottles than I see today. That would represent something far more important than weight loss. It would represent healing.

And that possibility is one of the strongest motivations driving me forward every single day.

Chapter 12: Body Changes: Digestive Health and the Reality of Poop

Healing takes time, and asking for help is a courageous step.” Mariska Hargitay

There are some parts of a health journey that people love to talk about like weight loss, lower blood pressure, improved blood sugar, better energy, and smaller clothing sizes.

Then there are the topics that almost nobody wants to discuss. Poop is one of them.

But if this journal is going to be honest, then I need to talk about it. Digestive health is one of the most noticeable changes that occurred during my keto journey, and it is something readers deserve to understand before they begin their own transformation.

When I drastically changed my diet, my digestive system had to change right along with it. I went from eating a diet that included more carbohydrates, processed foods, and frequent meals to a ketogenic lifestyle centered around healthy fats, protein, low-carbohydrate foods, hydration, and intermittent fasting.

My body did not adjust overnight. In fact, it took approximately three months before my bowel movements felt normal again.

During those first weeks, I experienced all kinds of changes. Sometimes I would go less frequently than before. Other times things moved faster than expected. There were changes in consistency, changes in appearance, and changes in routine. None of it was particularly comfortable, but all of it was part of my body adapting to a completely different way of eating.

At first, I wondered if something was wrong. Then I started researching digestive health and discovered something called the Bristol Stool Chart—the famous poop guide used by doctors, nurses, and gastroenterologists around the world.

The chart categorizes stool into seven different types, ranging from severe constipation to diarrhea. It sounds funny, but it is actually an extremely useful tool. Once I learned about it, I realized that what I was experiencing was often completely normal during a major dietary transition. The chart helped me understand that digestive health isn't just about how often you go to the bathroom. It is also about consistency, shape, ease of passage, hydration, and overall gut function.

What I learned is that keto changes digestion because it changes everything about how your body processes food. You're eating less sugar. You're consuming fewer processed carbohydrates. You're often eating less frequently because fasting becomes easier. Your gut bacteria are adjusting. Your water balance changes. Your electrolyte needs change.

That's a lot of change for one body to handle. Over time, however, things began to stabilize. Around the three-month mark, I noticed that my digestion had settled into a predictable rhythm. What once seemed unusual had become normal. My body had adapted to its new fuel source. One thing I wish more health books discussed is that digestive changes are not necessarily signs of failure. They are often signs of transition.

We expect our waistlines to change. We expect our energy levels to change. We should also expect our digestive systems to change. That doesn't mean you should ignore serious symptoms or avoid speaking with your healthcare provider. It simply means that temporary changes can be part of the adjustment process.

I found that staying hydrated, maintaining my electrolyte intake, eating low-carb vegetables, taking probiotics, and being patient all helped support my digestive health. Most importantly, I learned not to panic every time something seemed different.

The truth is that your poop tells a story. It provides feedback about hydration, nutrition, gut health, and how your body is responding to change. It may not be a topic people discuss at social gatherings, but it is one of the most honest indicators of what's happening inside your body.

If you're beginning a keto journey, know this: digestive changes are normal. Give your body time to adapt. Pay attention. Learn from what your body is telling you. And don't be embarrassed by the process.

Sometimes healing looks a lot less glamorous than before-and-after photos. Sometimes healing looks like finally having normal poop again after three months of teaching your body a completely new way to live.

Chapter 13: Discipline: Leads to Another

“Discipline is choosing between what you want now and what you want most.” Abraham Lincoln

There comes a moment in every successful health journey when you realize something much bigger than weight loss is taking place. At first, the goal seems simple enough. Lose some weight. Improve your bloodwork. Fit into smaller clothes. Feel better walking up a flight of stairs. Maybe reduce medications or gain a little energy. Those goals are important. They matter. But if you stay on the journey long enough, something unexpected begins to happen. You discover that you are no longer just changing your body. You are changing yourself. I didn't understand this when I started.

On January 6, 2026, I wasn't looking for a complete life transformation. I was looking for a way to regain control of my health. I was tired of carrying excess weight. I was concerned about my future. I knew I needed to make a change before the consequences became more serious. What I didn't realize was that the discipline required to lose weight would eventually spill into every other area of my life. That's the hidden gift of a health journey. The scale may be the scoreboard, but the real victory is who you become along the way.

Building Evidence: Before this journey, I had plenty of goals. I wanted to grow my business. I wanted to improve my finances. I wanted to organize parts of my life that had become cluttered. I wanted more energy and focus. I wanted to become a better version of myself. The problem wasn't that I lacked ambition. The problem wasn't that I lacked ideas. The problem was that I lacked evidence. I hadn't yet proven to myself that I could consistently do difficult things over an extended period of time.

Like many people, I had started things before. I had good intentions. I had moments of motivation. I had plans. But motivation is temporary. Plans are easy. Execution is hard. Especially when the excitement wears off. Especially when progress slows. Especially when nobody is watching. This health journey changed that. Losing more than 50 pounds while managing a chronic illness wasn't something that happened in a week or even a month. It required hundreds of decisions. Thousands, really. Every meal mattered. Every grocery trip mattered. Every workout mattered. Every choice to stay on plan mattered. The accumulation of those decisions built something incredibly valuable. Proof.

Proof that I could stay committed. Proof that I could remain disciplined. Proof that I could continue moving forward even when results slowed. Once you gain that proof, something changes inside you. You stop wondering whether you can accomplish hard things. You know you can.

Discipline Is Like a Muscle: One of the greatest lessons I've learned is that discipline behaves very much like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes. The first few weeks of my journey required tremendous effort. Everything felt difficult. Every temptation seemed larger than life. Every social gathering felt like a challenge. Every restaurant menu looked like an obstacle course. But over time, something interesting happened. The decisions became easier.

Not because the temptations disappeared. Because the discipline grew stronger. The same thing happens in the gym. The first workout feels difficult. The tenth workout feels manageable. The hundredth workout becomes part of your identity. Discipline works exactly the same way. Eventually, you stop relying on willpower and start relying on habits. You become the type of person who naturally makes healthier choices. And once that process begins, it doesn't stay confined to food and exercise. It spreads.

The Unexpected Changes: The first signs were small. I started paying more attention to my surroundings. My car stayed cleaner. My workspace became more organized. Projects that had been sitting unfinished for months suddenly began getting completed. I found myself making better use of my time. I became more intentional. More focused. More productive. At first, these changes seemed unrelated. But they weren't. The same mindset that helped me choose grilled chicken over fried chicken was helping me tackle other responsibilities. The same discipline that got me to infrared sauna workouts was helping me stay committed to business goals. The same accountability that kept me stepping on the scale each week was helping me face other challenges honestly. Order creates order. Success creates success. Discipline creates discipline. One positive habit often becomes the catalyst for many others.

The Power of Delayed Gratification: Weight loss teaches a lesson that many people never fully learn. The ability to delay gratification. Modern life encourages immediate rewards. We want results now. We want success now. We want comfort now. We want convenience now. But meaningful accomplishments rarely happen immediately. Good health takes time. Strong relationships take time. Financial success takes time. Business growth takes time. Personal development takes time

A keto lifestyle reinforced this lesson every single day. Every healthy meal represented a choice between immediate pleasure and long-term benefit. Every workout represented a choice between temporary comfort and future strength. Every pound lost represented dozens of decisions made long before the scale reflected the results. This lesson extends far beyond health. The person who learns delayed gratification in one area of life gains an advantage in every area of life. Because nearly every worthwhile achievement requires the same skill. The willingness to sacrifice today for something better tomorrow.

Rebuilding My Business: One area where this lesson became especially clear was in my business. Like many entrepreneurs, I have experienced both successes and setbacks. Building something meaningful requires persistence. It requires consistency. It requires faith that today's effort will eventually produce tomorrow's results. In many ways, business and weight loss are remarkably similar. Neither produces instant gratification. Both require daily effort. Both involve setbacks. Both require patience. Both test your commitment. Before this health journey, I wanted to rebuild and grow my business. After this health journey, I knew I could. The difference wasn't knowledge. The difference wasn't opportunity. The difference was confidence. I had developed confidence through evidence. I had demonstrated to myself that I could stay committed to a difficult goal for months at a time. That realization carried enormous power. If I could lose the weight, I could build the business. If I could stay disciplined with my health, I could stay disciplined with my work. The principles were exactly the same.

The Confidence Dividend: One of the greatest rewards of this journey has been confidence. Not arrogance. Not ego. Confidence. The confidence that comes from keeping promises to yourself. For years, I occasionally struggled with something many people understand. I would set goals. I would make commitments. I would promise myself that this time would be different. Then life would happen. Motivation would fade. Excuses would appear. Progress would stop. Every broken promise weakened my confidence. Every kept promise strengthened it.

This journey allowed me to start rebuilding that confidence one day at a time. Every healthy meal became a promise kept. Every workout became a promise kept. Every pound lost became a promise kept. Over time, those promises accumulated into trust. Today, I trust myself more than I did before. I trust my ability to follow through. I trust my ability to remain disciplined. I trust my ability to continue when things become difficult. That trust is worth more than any number on a scale.

The Ripple Effect: Perhaps the most important lesson of all is that your transformation affects other people. You may begin this journey for yourself. But it rarely ends there. Your spouse notices. Your children notice. Your friends notice. Your coworkers notice. People watch what you do far more than they listen to what you say. As I improved my health, I noticed members of my family becoming more interested in theirs. Conversations changed. Priorities changed. Possibilities changed. That's the power of example. You don't inspire people by being perfect. You inspire people by being consistent. By showing them what's possible. By demonstrating that change can happen. One person's discipline can create a ripple effect that extends through an entire family. And perhaps even future generations.

The Real Transformation: When people ask about my weight loss journey, they often focus on the pounds. How much have you lost? What are you eating? How often do you exercise? Those are reasonable questions. But they miss the bigger story. The real transformation isn't physical. The physical transformation is simply the visible evidence of an internal transformation. The real change happened in my mindset. In my habits. In my beliefs about what I'm capable of accomplishing. I started this journey hoping to lose weight. I found something much more valuable. I found proof. Proof that disciplines work. Proof that consistency matters. Proof that small daily actions can create extraordinary results. Most importantly, I found proof that I am capable of becoming the person I want to be. One decision. One workout. One meal. One day at a time. And once you discover that truth, it changes everything. Because the discipline that transforms your body can transform your business. It can transform your finances. It can transform your relationships. It can transform your future. One discipline leads to another. And eventually, it leads to a completely different life.

Chapter 14: My Perfect Day

My Perfect Day on the Keto Journey

“We first make our habits, and then our habits make us.” John Dryden

One of the biggest lessons I've learned on this health journey is that success rarely happens by accident. People often ask me what I eat, what supplements I take, or what workout program I follow.

Those things matter, but I've discovered something even more important: structure. The healthiest version of myself doesn't appear because I get motivated. He appears because I have a plan. Over time, I began creating what I call my "Perfect Day." It isn't about perfection. It's not a day where everything goes exactly right. Instead, it's a blueprint. It's the ideal day that keeps me moving toward my goals. When I follow this routine, I feel stronger, more energetic, more focused, and more in control of my health.

This is what that day looks like:

Winning the Morning;

My day begins early. Most mornings I wake up between 5:00 and 6:00 AM. I've found that the quiet hours before the rest of the world wakes up are some of the most valuable hours of the day. The first thing I do is drink approximately 30 ounces of water. After seven or eight hours without fluids, your body is dehydrated. Before coffee, before breakfast, before anything else, I rehydrate. Then becomes one of the most important rules in my entire routine:

No cell phone for the first hour. I don't check social media. I don't check email. I don't check the news. The first hour belongs to me. Instead, I focus on preparing my mind before I ask my body to perform. I begin with prayer. Next comes gratitude. I intentionally think about the blessings in my life and remind myself how fortunate I am.

After gratitude come affirmations. I remind myself who I am becoming. I review my goals. I visualize my future. I watch what I call my "mental vision movies", the pictures I've created in my mind of a healthier body, better fitness, stronger relationships, business success, and a more fulfilling future. Before the day starts pulling me in different directions, I choose my direction first.

Movement Before Momentum

After feeding my mind, I begin moving my body. Nothing extreme. The goal is simply to get blood flowing and wake up my system. Depending on the day, this may include: chair yoga, stretching, walking, light calisthenics, grounding barefoot in the grass. One of my favorite habits is stepping outside and facing the sunrise. Some call it natural red-light therapy. Whatever the science says, I know it helps me feel connected to the day and reminds me that every sunrise is another opportunity to improve my life. Three to four days each week I extend this morning routine with a dedicated one-hour workout. Those workouts may include: walking, swimming weight training or cardio exercise. The exact workout matters less than consistency. The body responds to regular effort.

Learning to Love the Cold:

Every shower ends the same way. Cold water. For thirty to sixty seconds, I turn the temperature all the way down. The first time I did this, it felt terrible. The tenth time wasn't much better. But after weeks and months, something interesting happened. I started looking forward to it. Cold exposure teaches you to become comfortable being uncomfortable. It strengthens mental toughness and leaves you feeling energized and alert. When possible, I also do cold plunges three times per week. The shock of cold water has become one of my favorite recovery tools.

Breakfast: Fueling the Machine

Around 8:00 AM I eat breakfast. Not every day. Some days I practice intermittent fasting and wait until 2:00 PM to eat. I alternate fasting days and breakfast days depending on how my body feels and what my schedule looks like. When I do eat breakfast, my favorites include: Bacon and eggs, Greek yogurt, Berries, Cinnamon, Pecans or a few dark chocolate chips I also drink a glass of hydrogen water. In addition, I take one serving of liquid MCT oil. MCT oil has become an important part of my keto lifestyle. It's pure fat and provides an easy way to ensure I'm consuming enough healthy fat to remain satisfied and maintain ketosis.

Smart Snacking At 11:00 AM

I usually have a snack. Ten minutes before eating, I drink another 20 ounces of water. In fact, I follow this same habit before every meal and snack for the rest of the day. My snack choices are simple: Berries, Boiled eggs, Pecans, Brazil nuts, Carrots or Celery Nothing fancy. One of the greatest nutrition lessons I've learned is that simple foods usually produce the best results. And if I had to choose the perfect snack? Boiled eggs win every time. Portable. Affordable. High in protein. Loaded with nutrients. And incredibly filling.

Lunch: Protein First

Lunch usually happens between 1:00 and 2:00 PM. This meal is built around protein and nutrient-dense foods. Common choices include: Large salads, Burgers without the bun, Fish tacos without the shell, Hamburger steak, Salmon or Steak. The goal is simple. Feed the body what it needs while eliminating unnecessary carbohydrates. When I began keto, I worried I would miss bread. Today, I barely think about it.

The Afternoon Reset

Around 4:00 PM I may have another snack. Again, I choose from the same healthy options. Keeping choices limited helps reduce decision fatigue. The fewer food decisions you make, the easier healthy eating becomes. At 6:00 PM I drink my final 20 ounces of water for the day. Hydration has become one of the foundations of my success. Many people think they're hungry when they're actually thirsty.

Dinner and Recovery

Dinner is served around 7:00 PM. Most evenings it looks very similar to lunch. Protein remains the star. Typical choices include: Steak, Salmon, Chicken, Pork, Lamb, Keto recipes and Sautéed vegetables. After dinner, I take a relaxed walk for ten to twenty minutes. Nothing intense. Just movement. This simple habit helps digestion, controls blood sugar, and provides a peaceful way to finish the day.

Preparing for Tomorrow

At 10:00 PM, the electronics go off. No television. No scrolling. No endless internet rabbit holes. Instead, I read a book, listen to an audiobook, or revisit my vision for the future. This quiet hour prepares my mind for sleep. By 11:00 PM, lights are out. Quality sleep is one of the most overlooked health tools available. The body repairs itself during sleep. Hormones reset. Recovery happens. Fat loss improves. Everything gets easier when sleep is prioritized.

The Little Things That Make a Big Difference Over time. I've discovered several small habits that create surprisingly large results.

Don't Drink Much During Meals; I avoid drinking large amounts of liquid while eating. My goal is to allow stomach acids to do their job efficiently without excessive dilution. Chew your food thoroughly. One of the best digestion tips I've ever learned is simple: Chew every bite approximately thirty times. Food should be almost liquid before swallowing. This improves digestion and has significantly reduced acid reflux for me.

Fat Is Your Friend: On keto, fat becomes fuel. I intentionally choose fattier cuts of meat whenever possible. Examples include: 70/30 hamburger instead of lean hamburger, Ribeye instead of filet, Salmon instead of chicken breast, Pork chops instead of ultra-lean meats And yes, I eat the fat. For years I was taught to fear fat. Today I understand that healthy fats can be one of the most satisfying and effective tools for maintaining ketosis.

Choose Simple Salad Dressings: When it comes to salads, I keep it simple. Oil and vinegar remain my preferred choice. Many store-bought dressings contain hidden sugars, seed oils, and ingredients that don't support a keto lifestyle. Always read the label.

Progress Through Consistency

Is every day perfect? Absolutely not. Life happens. Vacations happen. Birthdays happen. Unexpected events happen. But having a picture of my perfect day gives me something to return to whenever I drift off course. The goal isn't perfection. The goal is consistency. Because when enough good days are stacked together, extraordinary results become inevitable. And for me, this routine isn't just helping me lose weight. It's helping me build a healthier, stronger, more energetic life, one day at a time.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle

Chapter 15: Faith: The Resource I Almost Forgot

“Faith is Noah building the ark under blue skies”. -Unknown That quote has stayed with me throughout this entire health journey.

When I first started losing weight, everything seemed relatively straightforward. I had a plan. I knew what foods to eat. I knew how much water to drink. I knew I needed to exercise. I understood fasting. I had done keto before and knew the mechanics of how it worked.

In the beginning, the weight came off quickly. Like many people who start a new health program, I was motivated by early success. The scale moved. My clothes fit better. My energy improved. Progress seemed almost automatic.

Then reality arrived. The weight loss slowed. Some weeks were great. Other weeks were frustrating. There were plateaus. There were cravings. There were days when I didn't want to exercise. There were days when I wanted comfort food more than I wanted long-term health.

That's when I began to realize that this journey wasn't simply physical. It was spiritual. Before I go any further, I want to make something clear. I am not a pastor, theologian, or Bible scholar. In many ways, I consider myself an amateur when it comes to understanding Scripture. There are countless people who know far more about the Bible than I do. This chapter is not intended to teach theology. It is simply my personal experience.

I also recognize that not everyone reading this book shares the same beliefs. Some readers may have a deep faith. Others may identify with a different faith tradition. Some may not believe in God at all. I respect every person's right to arrive at their own conclusions.

What I can share is what helped me. I believe there is a higher power. I believe there is a God who cares about us. And as this journey became more difficult, I found myself relying on that belief more than I ever expected.

At first, my focus was entirely on practical solutions. I bought books. I listened to podcasts. I researched keto. I joined an infrared sauna studio. I tracked my water. I studied fasting. I sought advice from doctors and health professionals. All of those things helped.

In fact, I would encourage anyone trying to improve their health to take advantage of every good resource available. Read the books. Hire the coach. Join the gym. Find an accountability partner. Talk to your doctor. Learn everything you can.

But eventually I realized there was another resource available to me that I had not fully utilized. Prayer. When the cravings came, I prayed. When I wanted to skip a workout, I prayed. When the scale refused to move, I prayed. When I became frustrated with my progress, I prayed. When I worried about my future health, I prayed. These weren't elaborate prayers. Most of the time they were simple conversations.

"Help me stay on my diet today."

"Help me make good decisions."

"Help me finish this workout."

"Help me keep a positive attitude."

"Help me not quit."

Looking back, I think one of the biggest mistakes many of us make is believing we have to do everything on our own. We ask friends for help. We ask family for help. We ask doctors for help. We ask trainers for help. We ask authors, podcasters, and health experts for help. Yet sometimes we forget to ask God for help.

For me, faith became another tool in the toolbox. Not a substitute for action. Not a substitute for discipline. Not a substitute for healthy eating or exercise. But an additional source of strength when my own strength felt limited. There were many days when discipline carried me. There were other days when faith carried me. And often, the two worked together.

One of the unexpected benefits of incorporating faith into my health journey was the perspective it gave me. Instead of viewing every setback as a failure, I began viewing challenges as opportunities to grow. Instead of becoming consumed by the number on the scale, I focused on gratitude for the progress I had already made. Faith reminded me that perfection was never the goal. Progress was. I still have a long way to go. I still have days when I struggle. I still have moments of doubt, frustration, and impatience. But I no longer feel like I'm carrying the entire burden by myself.

If you're reading this and you're a person of faith, I would encourage you to bring that faith into your health journey. Ask for help. Ask for strength. Ask for wisdom.

And if you're not a person of faith, that's okay too. My hope is simply that you find sources of encouragement and support that help you become the healthiest version of yourself.

Because health journeys are hard. No one succeeds completely alone.

The lesson I learned is that while coaches, books, friends, family, doctors, and gyms are all valuable resources, we shouldn't overlook the resource that may make the biggest difference of all.

For me, that resource was faith. And it continues to walk beside me one day, one workout, and one prayer at a time.

"Don't wish it were easier. Wish you were better." Jim Rohn

I am not where I plan on ending up. But I am on my way! To show what a partial change looks like, I did take a before picture to compare with milestones along my journey.



Hopefully the next time I take a photo it will show even more progress. Remember it is not just weight loss I am seeking, but a healthy, sustainable lifestyle. And I also hope I have given you some tools to begin your journey and to make it successful.

FB Gordon