HAPPY healthy THYROID
The Essential Steps to Healing Naturally

BY ANDREA BEAMAN
HHC, AADP
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WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Finally, we have a voice in the crowd that speaks loud and clear and most importantly truthful about our health. With her matter of fact common sense, based on experience, she guides the way to better health.

I am 64 years young and was diagnosed with hypothyroidism at 18. For years I was on synthroid and at 50 I said no more. For the last decade I had been experimenting with herbs, acupuncture, diet and exercise, naturopathic systems and so forth to find the answers to feeling good and live a vibrant life.

Andrea started with one thing that struck me dumbfounded... chew your food, take time. Sounds simple enough. Wait until your practice it.
I realized I was an unconscious eater...just going through the motions and never being aware, always multitasking or being social while eating and never just being with my food. This alone was worth taking the class as it has helped this emotional eater put on the breaks and begin to eat consciously. I feel a relationship between my food and my body. This was the beginning of wellness for me.

Be prepared Andrea is going to shake up your world. So much information and wisdom, fresh new ideas, science that works, and life skills that create change. I feel better everyday due to Andrea’s teaching. A positive solution to living a life well lived. Thank you, Andrea. — Deborah Kelly

My doctor wanted to put me on medication immediately and I decided to wait and see if it could heal itself with Andrea’s recommendations and her Nourishing Thyroid program. I loved the way she helped me, the way she teaches and the recommendations she gave us really worked out for me. My last blood test was great, my TSH levels not only where normal, they were better than ever, as the number was increasing the past few years, and this time is perfect! I am so happy with the course and I will try to keep doing all the things I have learned. Within only 4 months I got my TSH levels perfect, without any medication, only following Andrea’s suggestions, increasing my resting time, meditating, having good quality foods, introducing seaweeds to my diet, and finding out my truth. I encourage anyone to do the course, it helped my health and in my case not only this, it also inspired me! Thanks Andrea. — Laura Llacuna
The content Andrea provided was very helpful. I eat most of her recipes, and keep in mind her suggestions. She has encouraged me to stay strong, not get caught up in what others say and doctors tell me. I was able to heal my thyroid without radiation or any medication. — Sharon Siodmak

Andrea’s in-depth knowledge of thyroid disease and oriental diagnosis when way beyond anything I was taught and learned prior to her class in a meaningful, natural, and sustainable way. Andrea’s knowledge has been really so helpful, and I have picked up some of the missing information pieces that I needed for my health. Andrea suggested some bone broth. Well, I did not realize how impactful that would become. A simple thing like chicken broth with chicken and veggies made me feel more balanced than ever and not crave sugar in any form. I eat chicken and veggies all the time, but the broth was the real key. Who would have thought! WOW, major, major accomplishment. I feel blessed to have found and met her. Thank you Andrea!!! You are like a rare pearl! — Joan Ungerleider

Andrea’s enthusiasm and positive attitude is very motivational. The new information I learned was valuable and Andrea’s presentations helped to clarify information I was conflicted about and reinforced my commitment to eat healthy, whole foods. One of the most helpful things I learned about was nightshade vegetables and their effect on the thyroid. — Anne Parrish

The biggest lesson I learned was you are in control if you listen to what your body is telling you. If you crave meat eat it (I was a vegetarian for a while) and if you crave vegetables eat them. You know your body better than anyone - including your doctor. I thought I was eating healthy but it turns out the foods I was eating were not good for my thyroid. I was one of those who had a green shake with fruit, raw kale, coconut water and spinach every morning and was running 2-3 miles 5-6 times a week. It turns out that is not what my body needs. I can't wait to take my learning one step further. — Cindy Sullivan
Andrea’s Nourishing Thyroid Health Class was exactly what I needed to move forward with the healing of my thyroid. She started out with the small, yet big things to be aware of everyday to make a big difference in our free radical consumption and digestion health. Who would have thought that many of us have forgotten to chew, smell, and taste our food? She teaches us to honor and create a spiritual connection with our hurried lives and promote change.

I have learned so much about my thyroid, things I wish I knew a decade ago. I am in gratitude for the recipes, action guides. Thank you for the promotion of awareness toward our big beautiful world of local plants and animals that provide us with our nutrition. I feel healthier overall, more energy, more awareness of what my body reacts to, and the ability to love myself when I need a restorative time rather than a place of action. I make time to breath deeply in this time and oxygenate my physical body and cleanse my spiritual one.

Andrea has opened my world to embrace my autoimmune disease and live a better quality of life, knowing how to feed, love and heal it. It is very refreshing to see the new content added to our tool boxes as Andrea continues her education and understanding of the world around her. She truly is the example of the ever-evolving educator combining all her knowledge to promote health to the world and herself. Just watch a video of her smiling face as it is clear she loves her life and calling, a wonderful mentor to the world of healing.

Thank you Andrea — Brenda Young
When I was diagnosed with thyroid and diabetes I researched everything and re-tooled my kitchen accordingly. But, in all of these years, I never knew the whole story on grains. I first read about proper grain preparation in Andrea’s cookbook, but then the first module expanded on that information. I also never realized the benefits of bone broth. Not only is it good for the thyroid but is also beneficial for my blood sugars as well. And I love that I no longer have waste from my poultry and meat dishes. I keep everything in plastic zip locks in the freezer so it is ready when I have time to make more. It’s so convenient to pull out a serving of broth when I’m in a hurry or just not hungry for a full meal. The bonus module with pharmacist Karyn Bender was fantastic. I’ve been taking a very low dose of Levothyroxine for 9 months and just now started to develop fatigue around mid afternoon. I thought it might be iron deficient related but not sure. I would drink some bone broth and would feel better. Then I learned that Levothyroxine can affect iron absorption even from a multi-vitamin. Since I took both the med early in the morning and the vitamin an hour later with breakfast I changed to taking the vitamin at dinner time. Mid afternoon fatigue is gone! — Tina Rengel

There is so much conflicting and confusing advice out there and Andrea simplified it and made it really easy to understand. Andrea’s personable manner really motivated me to change my diet. I added seaweed to my diet. I would have never thought to do that. – Sadiyya Patel

To hear what other folks are saying go to AndreaBeaman.com/Thyroid
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From my mother’s battle with breast cancer to my own thyroid disease, each illness that has come into my life has proved to be a blessing. These medical conditions have taught me new aspects about healing the body from an alternative point of view. Every day, I give thanks to my beautiful thyroid gland for helping me discover new and more healthful ways to exist in the world. The greatest thing I’ve discovered is that the thyroid is my emotional and spiritual connection to voicing my truth in a healthful way. This book is the expression of that voice. Thyroid disease has become my personal catalyst to discovering my life’s work: teaching and sharing knowledge, and for that I am forever grateful.

I wouldn’t be able to share knowledge in an effective way if it weren’t for the people closest to me who free up my time and energy, so I can continue creating great content to share with the world. It’s hard work running a business, and it simply cannot be done well without an exceptional team to take care of the details. Amanda Manganaro and Erica Swammy are that core team for me. Thank you ladies for all of your hard work and dedication. I appreciate your work every day—even on the days we are not working!

Writing a book is like having a baby. The idea for the book is planted in the mind, it is then nourished and developed for a period of time, and when ready, it is brought out into the world for everyone else to see. Ahhhhh yes, such a beautiful little book baby! I couldn’t have birthed this book without the support and expertise of Paula Jacobson and Sheilah Kaufman. Their tag-team editing skills kept the content flowing and growing beautifully! Thank you.

Thank you Julie Mueller, Jennifer Weitzman and your team at JamGD for another beautiful book cover and graphics. Great work!

Big thanks to Rachel Elkind for perfectly capturing my happy mug at the Union Square Farmer’s Market in New York City. It was hard work navigating through all of those healthy shoppers, but you did it. I love my headshots!

Thank you to my students and clients who have found the courage to question their medical protocols and start taking on the process of healing their thyroid conditions naturally. Every day, I am inspired and am learning new things from all of your experiences.
Thank you Valerie Feder for giving me many opportunities to share my voice with a much larger audience. And, thank you Lily Feder, just because.

And, of course, a BIG thank you to my hubby, Pablo Garcia, for allowing me to fully express myself, even if, on many occasions, you wished that I wouldn’t. Thank you for always reminding me that many of the things I say may not be accepted by mainstream society and could possibly rock some boats. Thank you for being a great support system for me as I fully express myself to the world. I love you.
INTRODUCTION

If you ask what I wanted to be when I grew up, my answer is probably one you would never expect. In my imaginary ideal life, I was a rock-and-roll disc jockey spinning the classics. I wanted to be the voice on the radio guiding you through an awesome playlist that touched you to the core and brought you some happiness.

Becoming a thyroid expert and advocate for natural healing was nowhere on my agenda. But, the Universe had other plans for me.

What started out as finding my own path to naturally healing thyroid disease turned into discovering my life’s passion: teaching others how to heal using whole foods and natural healing methods.

What I’ve learned over the past twenty years about healing the thyroid is contained within these pages, and that information is needed now more than ever. Take a look around, and you may realize that almost everyone you meet nowadays has been diagnosed with thyroid disease or they are suffering from its exhausting and often debilitating symptoms.

I was diagnosed in 1996, and at that time, I was informed by doctors that my thyroid condition was incurable. I chose not to accept their “incurable” diagnosis, and by naturally healing my thyroid using the strategies in this book, proved my doctors wrong. Their idea that a disease is incurable is what they had been taught in medical school, but it isn’t necessarily the whole truth.

Since healing my condition, I’ve gone on to share my voice and teach countless others around the world how to heal their thyroid conditions, too. I have seen the results in my own life and the results from clients and students who share their amazing stories with me.

I want you to get ready because it is possible to heal your thyroid naturally. You no longer have to suffer from debilitating symptoms:

- Weight problems
- Hair loss
- Dry skin
- Chronic fatigue
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Infertility
- Muscle and joint pain
- Goiter
- Heart palpitations
- Menstrual irregularities
- Tremors
- Sleep disturbances
Once you understand your thyroid better, you can get to the root cause of your condition, and your symptoms will begin resolving themselves. That's the beauty of natural healing.

The body you are living in is absolutely perfect! I know you may not feel as though it is, but it is.

If you are suffering from symptoms of thyroid disease, it is your body's way of speaking to you and letting you know that something is amiss and needs adjusting. Your thyroid is actually giving you warning signals. The quality of your nutrition, stress levels, immunity, circulation, emotional health, and environment are all factors that need to be assessed and addressed.

Many people begin suffering from symptoms of thyroid disease and get tested to discover that it's either too slow or too fast, or not producing enough of the hormones needed to function properly. The answer in modern medicine is to take some type of thyroid hormone to lessen the symptoms, or to have the thyroid irradiated or removed.

A dear friend had her thyroid removed a few years ago. The doctor assured her that the thyroidectomy would eliminate the symptoms she was experiencing. He was correct. Her symptoms did go away for about six months. But, they came back within one year because she never got to the root cause of the problem.

Why was her thyroid out of balance? What was it trying to tell her about her overall condition and her diet and lifestyle?

The thyroid, as you'll discover in this book, is not the root cause of the problem. Feeling out of balance is just a symptom of a deeper issue, and the thyroid is the communicator that is letting us know.

Taking thyroid hormone or destroying the thyroid is NOT the answer to healing a thyroid condition. To properly heal the thyroid, we need to get to the root cause of the symptoms. Is something not quite right with the person’s diet? Are essential nutrients missing? Is the person under some type of stress, either emotional or physical? Is the body depleted? What’s happening in the physical environment?

Stress, both physical and emotional, includes pregnancy! I know a LOT of women who get diagnosed with thyroid disease when they are pregnant or just after giving birth—there is a reason for that.
The baby takes most of the mother's nutrients to grow, so the mother is left depleted and suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome or adrenal fatigue. For those of you old enough to remember, this used to be called postpartum depression, but I guess that's passé now, and thyroid disease is the latest trend in medical diagnosis.

Other physical stressors include overworking, taking on too much, and not getting enough rest. How many of us actually get sufficient rest? We are a society that is functioning on fumes. If you are constantly on the go with very little down time, it can set the body up for thyroid disease, adrenal fatigue, and many other diseases.

If someone is suffering from an autoimmune thyroid condition like Hashimoto's or Graves', we have to look deeply into the digestive system for the clues to healing. The majority of our immune system lives inside there, and we cannot heal until we dive in and see what's going on.

There are many underlying factors in understanding and eventually healing thyroid conditions, and we'll cover them throughout the pages in this book. Western medicine focuses solely on the thyroid, or separate parts of the endocrine system, but looking at the body that way is limited in scope. It's not the whole picture.

Don't get me wrong… Western medicine has an important role in our life, but it's not in healing thyroid disease.

Throughout the years, I've met with many other people who have tried to heal their thyroids naturally by changing their diets, but they were unsuccessful. They tried gluten-free, dairy free, vegan, raw foods, paleo, supplements, herbs—you name it! And, they were still suffering from thyroid disease and didn't know why.

I even met with clients who have actually given themselves thyroid disease by taking on what they thought was a healthful diet. Unfortunately, what many people have been taught is healthful throughout the past few decades may actually be weakening and destroying the body instead.

Be patient. We'll cover all of these eye-opening topics, one chapter at a time.

Throughout this book, I advise, above all, to be patient and loving with your body as you go through the process of healing. If you
want your thyroid to be fixed by the end of the week, you are reading the wrong book.

Another reason some people do not heal their thyroid disease is because they don’t look any deeper into their condition. They stay at the surface and focus solely on the physical body. They get their blood checked, monitor their TSH, T3 and T4 levels, and chase their tails around and around and around, focusing on their hormone levels: “My T3 is low.” “My TSH is high.” “I don’t have enough T4.” As you’ll discover in this book, it’s all nonsense!

When I was going through the process of healing, my thyroid jumped from hyper to hypo to Hashimoto’s; my hormones were all over the place. If I had intervened with medication at any point during my healing process, I would have stopped my body from finding its balance.

There is so much more to healing the thyroid than just looking at blood work. Human beings are multifaceted creatures with many layers. We are more than just our skin, bones, and blood. We are physical, emotional and spiritual beings. To heal disease, we have to look deeper:

• Where did this disease come from?
• What am I supposed to learn from this condition?
• Why is this happening at this time in my life?

A wise teacher once told me, “All disease comes from spiritual sickness.” At the time, I was focused only on food and didn’t understand what the heck he was talking about! But, after working with thousands of students and clients, I know he was correct.

There may be a higher purpose for the condition you are suffering from at this time in your life. I want to encourage you to bravely go into those painful places within yourself to discover the truth about your thyroid condition.

I’ve worked with many clients to help them get beyond their symptoms, discover the root cause of their thyroid condition, and finally heal. I’ve also worked with people who do NOT heal, and I’ll share case studies as we go through this book together. You may begin to see yourself more clearly through someone else’s struggle or someone else’s success.
Healing is a process that takes time, especially when you’re dealing with the endocrine system and the emotional body. These are systems responsible for long-term changes, so again, patience is the key.

I met a woman at a conference where I was the keynote speaker. She had a very large goiter and was suffering from hypothyroidism. She told me she had been trying to naturally heal her thyroid condition for over a decade! That indicates something may not be working with her approach. Although I do emphasize patience, ten years is a long time. I’ve seen people heal their conditions in three months to three years of taking on this journey.

You, too, can heal your thyroid condition. I’ll share with you the information that can help guide you toward success. If you’re reading this book you may fall into one of these categories:

- You have been diagnosed with some type of thyroid disease
- You have all the symptoms of thyroid disease but haven’t been diagnosed yet
- You have thyroid disease and want to get off the medication
- You’re on medication and still suffering from many of the symptoms
- You were recently diagnosed and you are looking for alternative ways to heal
- You no longer have a thyroid and want to know what to do for the rest of your beautiful body
- You have taken radioactive iodine to destroy the thyroid, but you’re still not feeling well
- You are working with people with thyroid disease and want to help them to the best of your ability

If any of that rings true for you, reading this book is exactly where you want to be. The information contained herein can show you how to finally get to the root cause of your thyroid condition, reclaim your health, and start living a happier and healthier life.

One of the greatest things that you will experience from healing your thyroid is confidence in your body’s ability to do what it is designed to do. If you can heal your thyroid, you can potentially heal any condition that comes up for you in this lifetime.
My thyroid disease has been a blessing. It has taught me that the power to naturally heal a disease that is inside me is inside every human being on the planet. All it takes is a bit of unconventional courage, an open mind, and some stick-to-itiveness to reclaim your body’s innate wisdom and power.

Your thyroid disease could quite possibly be the best thing that has ever happened to you. Trust me, I know it may feel like this is the biggest pain in the neck (pun intended!), but your thyroid is going to teach you so much about yourself and your journey here on the planet.

Are you ready to heal your thyroid condition? If yes, I encourage you to keep reading!

Let me be the voice that guides you, step by step, through a playlist of natural healing methods, so you can discover what it’s like to live your life with a happy, healthy thyroid.
Prior to my diagnosis of thyroid disease, I spent twenty-eight years being mostly disconnected from my physical, emotional, and spiritual body, and not fully supporting its needs. I didn't know how to care for the flesh, blood, and bones I was living in, and I didn't know what my body needed from me on an intimate level to thrive. In turn, my body couldn’t show up for me either; it was breaking down and malfunctioning in subtle, and not so subtle, ways.

At the time of my diagnosis, I was working as an Executive Assistant at MTV networks and had been feeling run down. My two LARGE cups of coffee per day were slowly steeping their way toward three. On top of that, I consumed at least two cans of Diet-Pepsi every day.

You would think that with all that high-octane caffeine stimulating my system, I would have enough energy to make it through the average workday, but I didn’t. By one-thirty in the afternoon, my eyes grew irritated and dry, and I couldn’t keep them open.

Using a pile of unfiled paperwork as a pillow, I plopped my head down in front of my computer screen to take a fifteen-minute nap. Thankfully, my boss escaped the office every day for long leisurely lunches, so my naps went largely unnoticed.

The odd thing was, even though I was feeling physically exhausted, I had trouble sleeping at night and suffered wild bouts of insomnia. I found relief drinking shots of NyQuil, but it always left me groggy as heck the next day. I felt as though I had a horrible hangover without the benefits of a fun night out on the town with my friends.

I also experienced random moments of uncontrollable anxiety and stress. I would be sitting at my desk typing on the computer, not exerting myself strenuously in any way, and my heart would race uncontrollably. If this has never happened to you, imagine the vibration of a machine gun releasing rapid-fire rounds.

Badabadabadabadabadabadabadabadabadabadabadah!!! It was nerve-wracking and left me feeling anxious about a potential heart attack at the tender age of twenty-eight!
Chronic fatigue, insomnia, and uncomfortable heart-racing symptoms weren’t the only indicators that something was amiss. My immune system was weak, and I suffered from frequent colds and bouts of flu that lasted way too long. Once a respiratory ailment caught hold of me, the coughing and congestion lingered for weeks, and sometimes months. I became the cough-drop queen! I was always slurping on a symptom-soothing candy: cherry mint, honey lemon, original herb, and cooling menthol. They were yummy, but didn’t actually help. I constantly cleared my throat of some mysterious congestion that never seemed to fully resolve itself.

For me, the worst part of having a weakened immune system was the unsightly cold sores that made regular appearances on my lips, nose, philtrum (the area between my lips and nose), and chin. It seemed that no area around my mouth was safe from the shameful blistering and scabbing. Oh the horror! I would call out sick from work for a few days until the fiery blister subsided. But, the scab always remained for at least seven to ten days to remind me, and everyone else who glanced in my direction, that I was cursed with the dreaded herpes virus!

Another interesting symptom: I was freezing all the time. No matter what I did, I could not warm my body, especially my extremities. My hands felt like carved ice blocks. When I wasn’t typing at the computer, I would sit on my hands to warm them. I also remember bundling myself up in sweatshirt, sweat pants, and sweat socks at bedtime, but it didn’t help. The cold sensations were coming from inside, not outside, my body.

The symptoms that ultimately brought me to the doctor’s office were chronic sore throat, laryngitis, and a swollen neck. My diagnosis arrived wrapped up in a goiter-shaped gift box that said, “Congratulations, you have thyroid disease.”

The doctor informed me that my hyperthyroid condition was incurable and recommended I take radioactive iodine to destroy my thyroid and then to take Synthroid (synthetic thyroid hormone) for the rest of my life.

Radioactive iodine was not an option for me. Years earlier, I witnessed the devastating effects of radiation on my mother’s body and vowed never to put radioactive anything anywhere near me, especially

I told the doctor I wanted to improve my diet and my lifestyle instead of destroying my thyroid with radiation. She told me my diet had nothing to do with my thyroid and that my condition was “incurable.”

The doctor was correct. According to what she learned in medical school, my condition was indeed incurable. Thankfully, I didn’t go to medical school, so I had a different perspective. I was willing to give my body the ingredients it needed for a fighting chance to heal.

I left the doctor’s office with a focus on healing my body. It was time for me to step up, improve my diet and lifestyle, and learn how to properly care for myself. From the time I was in my early teens, I was obsessed with dieting and the need to be ultra thin like the models in the popular magazines. It’s funny that growing up, I was a skinny little kid. I didn’t actually start gaining weight until after I went on my first diet at fourteen years old.

For as long as I can remember, I was always on some type of diet, seeking, but never obtaining, weight loss. I was up, I was down, but rarely was I ever happy with my weight. At my plumpest, I was 149 to 153 pounds, which by no means is fat, and may not seem heavy to some folks, except that I’m 5’ 4” on a tall day. And, according to the ideal weight charts, I was in the “overweight” range.

As a teenager, I was chubsy-ubsy for sure. I wore sweat pants most of the time, because squeezing my butt into a pair of jeans was downright uncomfortable, and I refused to buy the next size bigger pants.

The weight I gained as a teenage dieter refused to leave my body no matter how often I dieted. Whatever fat I released while dieting always seemed to reattach itself to me... like a bad relationship—which it certainly was! My relationship with food was downright dysfunctional.

I had been on every diet imaginable: Slim Fast, Jenny Craig, Weight Watchers, The Cabbage Soup Diet, Fruit Only Diet, Vegetables Only Diet, Fat-Free Diet, High Carbohydrate Diet, The Grapefruit Diet, and many others. I was always depriving myself of some major food group – carbohydrates, fats, or proteins. I didn’t eat sensibly; I just followed the guidelines of the latest weight loss fad.
There were also times that I didn’t eat anything at all. I would take Dexatrim over-the-counter diet pills or weight loss pills prescribed by a doctor in Long Island.

When I took those diet pills I would eat NOTHING for days at a time. And, right before my high school prom, I didn’t eat anything for an entire week! That’s seven days with zero food. Just water and diet pills. Egads!

My crazy dieting behavior created an endless cycle of bodily stress. Plus, I had a love/hate relationship with my bathroom scale. On days that I was one or two pounds lighter, I wanted to get down on my hands and knees and kiss the little white metallic bathroom creature. Yay!

But, on the days that I was heavier or the same weight as the day before, I would start torturing myself, and my body, for failing. I was bulimic for quite a few years. I alternated between throwing up and taking daily laxatives to try to poop my weight down the scale.

The scale ruled my life. Whatever the scale said in the morning would set the mood for my day. If I didn’t like the number on the scale, I would think all day long about how “fat” I was or how much weight I needed to lose. It was a constant stressor, and I know today that stress contributes to weight gain and poor health.

On a typical dieting day, I would start with coffee, artificial sweetener, and skim milk. I drank that every morning until I discovered soymilk. I thought soymilk was a better option for me and it became my go-to, guilt-free, creamy liquid. Some days for breakfast, I would have a caffè latte and a whole wheat bagel, dry – with nothing on it but air. Bagels aren’t meant to be eaten that way, but I was afraid of cream cheese, butter, or any type of fat. Other mornings, I would scarf down instant oats with maple syrup and a splash of soymilk.

My midmorning snack was fat-free or low-fat cookies or a granola bar, or on a “good” day, an apple. For lunch, I would line up with the rest of the herd at the local salad bar trough and eat a big bowl of raw vegetables with fat-free or low-fat dressing.

Sometimes I would indulge in a slice of pizza with the greasy cheese peeled off and discarded in an orange stained napkin that sat
on the side of the table. Occasionally, I would sneak a bite of that fatty cheese, but I always felt guilty afterwards. Damn that cheese! I was convinced that brief moment of enjoyment is what kept me fat!

In the early afternoon, right before my daily nap at my desk, I would pop a handful of Skittles or plain M&M’s into my mouth because they didn’t have any fat. I would, of course, wash it down with a Diet Pepsi.

A few times per week, I took the elevator down to the frozen yogurt shop in the building to indulge in a guilt-free, nonfat or low-fat frozen yogurt with crumbled peanut butter cups sprinkled on top. Because the peanut butter cup was deconstructed the calories must have somehow escaped. Usually, I finished my day with a big sensible salad and a piece of grilled chicken or a tuna fish sandwich with low-fat mayonnaise on whole wheat bread.

At that time, I thought my typical day of eating was healthful compared to most other folks. I mean I wasn’t eating fast food like Burger King or McDonalds, and I wasn’t sitting down to a big fat T-bone steak with French fries.

I also went to the gym religiously three to four times per week and climbed the StairMaster to nowhere for at least fifty minutes, and sometimes an hour. For the life of me, I couldn’t understand why the heck I wasn’t shaking those excess pounds off my butt.

The truth is, I was living a dieting nightmare. I was eating mostly high-carbohydrate meals with low-fat foods and copious amounts of salad. Plus, I was exercising really hard even though I was physically exhausted. I know today that all of those behaviors contributed to my weight problem and to my thyroid disease.

When I finally snapped out of that dieting mentality and instead focused on healing my illness, the weight naturally dropped off within about three months. And, I have kept it off for almost two decades with absolutely no fear of it coming back. Clearly, focusing on healing my thyroid disease turned out to be the best diet ever!

It’s an amazing feeling to heal the body of an “incurable” condition. It’s empowering. It helped me build confidence in my body’s ability to do what it is naturally designed to do: function properly.
I’ve discovered that all you really have to do is give your body what it needs, and it will reach its ideal weight without much effort. By remaining focused on the goal of healing the body instead of the triviality of weight loss, I have learned amazing things about life, health, and well-being. Healing the thyroid is not solely about eating a nourishing diet. Food is only the first step in this journey. The human body needs proper physical nutrition, reduction in stress, and emotional and spiritual healing to become balanced and to properly heal.

The extreme eating and lifestyle of my past may not reflect your story, but I can guarantee you will find an abundance of useful information and clients’ stories that you can identify with in the upcoming chapters. As you read through this material, please keep in mind that healing doesn’t happen overnight. Healing takes time. I had a client from Texas who was suffering from hypothyroidism. She had a very large goiter, much bigger than mine, plus she was forty pounds overweight and was feeling terribly depressed. Her doctor told her she needed to take medication, but she didn’t want to. She said she had seen me on *Top Chef* and was intrigued when I said I healed my thyroid condition naturally. She searched for me on the web and signed up for health coaching.

The first thing we did was get her off all of the processed foods, junk foods, and diet foods she was consuming and drinking on a daily basis, and put her on a whole foods diet. Within thirty days of improving her diet, she lost twelve pounds and was feeling excellent! She was amazed at how quickly her body responded to real food. She went back to the doctor and took another blood test. Her thyroid hormone levels read completely normal. That was the quickest any of my clients had ever normalized their thyroid blood work. Healing the thyroid can take anywhere from three months to three years depending on a person’s condition.

Although her thyroid numbers were normal, the downside to this woman’s condition was that she still had a very large goiter. The doctor recommended that she take medication, as it was the only way to reduce that goiter. She questioned that because he had also told her that she needed medication to normalize her hormone levels.
I told her to be very patient. I said, “It took time for the goiter to grow and it’ll take time for that goiter to reduce. My own goiter took eighteen months to disappear!” Here is a picture of my lovely little goiter.

I had another client from upstate New York whose goiter was even bigger than the gal from Texas. It took two years, and a lot of patience, for her goiter to resolve itself. With natural healing, especially with anything that has to do with the endocrine system, patience is the key. One of my favorite quotes by Ralph Waldo Emerson is a great reminder for us:

“Adopt the pace of nature, her secret is patience.”

Remember to be patient. Your body can heal when given the right nutrition, love, and self-care. You are going to learn what you need to know to heal your condition, but you need to understand that it’s not going to happen overnight.

Many people may feel that being diagnosed with a disease is one of the worst things that could possibly happen to them. My thyroid disease taught me valuable lessons about my body and woke me up to a whole new way of eating and living. Having this disease was truly a
blessing that inevitably improved my health and my entire life as well as the health of countless clients.

The first step to healing a thyroid condition is to gain awareness of what may be happening and why. After that there are many steps to healing, and I’m going to share them with you one chapter at a time.

So, before we set the table and sit down to eat a yummy thyroid-nourishing meal, I’m going to teach you the basics about your gorgeous gland, how or why it may not be functioning properly, and what you can do about it.
CHAPTER 2
Thyroid Shmyroid – What the Heck is it Anyway?

Before we can heal the thyroid, we’ve got to get to know it on an intimate level and understand all of the amazing functions it is responsible for inside your body.

SEE HUMAN ENDOCRINE SYSTEM DIAGRAM ON PAGE 18

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located just below the center of the neck. It lives on the endocrine system with its brother and sister glands—the hypothalamus, pituitary, pineal, parathyroid, thymus, pancreas, adrenals, and gonads (ovaries and testes).

These endocrine glands secrete hormones that evoke specific responses in cells, tissues, and organs throughout the body. The endocrine system is one of our main communicators, using blood to deliver hormonal messages to the cells, making them more permeable. It’s fascinating the way the body communicates with itself without our having to do anything except simply exist in the world!

For the purpose of this book, we’re focusing mainly on the thyroid, but not solely on the thyroid as Western medicine might do. We’re not going to isolate and segregate your thyroid gland as if it is the cause of your disease, because it’s not.

Contrary to what we’ve been told by most medical professionals and mainstream society, the thyroid gland may not be responsible for the ailments and discomfort so many people are experiencing.

A malfunctioning thyroid gland is merely a symptom of an entire system that is out of balance. For that reason, this book focuses on the entire mind/body system as a whole, rather than just one little piece of it.

The thyroid is where we are starting this journey because that’s what got you here. But, the thyroid is probably not where the dysfunction originally began.
HUMAN ENDOCRINE SYSTEM
These are some of the common thyroid dysfunctions:

- Hashimoto’s thyroiditis or Autoimmune thyroiditis – an autoimmune disease causing inflammation of the thyroid gland, which manifests itself most often as hypothyroidism, but can cause hyperthyroidism as well
- Hypothyroidism – underactive thyroid not producing sufficient thyroid hormone
- Hyperthyroidism – overactive thyroid producing too much thyroid hormone
- Graves’ disease – autoimmune disease that can cause hyperthyroidism
- Goiter – enlargement of the thyroid gland that can be caused by either hypo- or hyperthyroidism, or by ingesting too little or too much iodine
- Nodules – benign (noncancerous) lumps on or around the thyroid
- Thyroid cancer – malignant lumps, nodules, cells

“The function of the thyroid gland is to take iodine, found in many foods, combine it with the amino acid tyrosine, and convert it into the thyroid hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Thyroid hormones are then released into the blood stream and transported throughout the body where they control metabolism, which is the conversion of oxygen and calories to energy. Every cell in the body depends upon thyroid hormones for regulation of its metabolism.”

The thyroid is responsible for metabolism of oxygen and glucose, and that means it’s a pretty darn important gland! But, then again, all of the glands in the human body are essential to our optimum functioning. That’s why they are there.

What amazes me about modern medical treatment and diagnosis is the focus on the thyroid gland as if it is a solo operator. Keep in mind that the thyroid does NOT work on its own. Remember, it lives on the endocrine system. That means there are many more factors at work supporting, or not supporting, the proper functioning of this gland.

For example, the pituitary and the hypothalamus (glands located in the brain) control the actions of the thyroid. If thyroid hormone levels drop, as in the case of hypothyroidism, the hypothalamus secretes

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1 http://www.endocrineweb.com/conditions/thyroid/how-your-thyroid-works
Thyroid Releasing Hormone (TRH) and alerts the pituitary gland to produce Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH).

The thyroid, if receptive, responds to the orders delivered from the brain by producing more or less hormone. If the thyroid is not responding or functioning properly, we need to look at some of the other glands in the body as well. Most certainly, we need to check in with the hypothalamus and pituitary glands because they place the orders for more or less hormone.

If the thyroid is not “receptive” to the orders coming from the brain, that’s a key issue we need to understand to help heal this disease. The behavioral problems of our glands’ failure to communicate effectively with each other will be covered in the chapters ahead.

The thyroid regulates our metabolism, which is the body’s ability to break down food and convert it into energy. Food is fuel for the body, and everyone burns it at a different rate. Some people are quick burners, and some people are slow burners.

Generally, people with hypothyroidism and Hashimoto’s are characterized as slow burners, having a tendency to gain weight and having difficulty losing it. On the other hand, people with hyperthyroidism are usually quick burners, as the name suggests (“hyper”), and can have trouble gaining weight.

Modern medicine treats the thyroid without taking the entire body and mind into consideration. Treatment for hypothyroidism can include using synthetic hormones to unnaturally speed up a sluggish thyroid. This may seem like a good idea, but can be highly detrimental and doesn’t get to the root cause, throwing the body even more off balance.

Ask some of the folks who have taken synthetic hormones for hypothyroid conditions for a few years (or just check in with yourself), and see if their symptoms are still present or have gotten worse. Initially, many folks feel better and more energized, but within a few years they often complain of feeling worse... much worse!

They begin noticing that other problems have suspiciously taken root, like adrenal fatigue (chronic exhaustion), osteoporosis, bone fractures, muscle weakness, sleeplessness, irregular heartbeat, breast or reproductive cancer, liver stress and toxicity, hair-loss, and overall poor immunity.
So many clients have complained to me about feeling worse after taking synthetic thyroid hormones that I’m surprised more doctors haven’t taken notice of this. It makes me wonder if those clients are speaking up and telling their doctors what they are telling me. Speaking up and sharing your truth, in a gracious and effective way, is part of healing the thyroid on a deeper level.

There have also been recent studies that have indicated thyroid medication can lead to early-onset dementia and Alzheimer’s, so maybe those clients are simply forgetting to tell their doctors what is going on with their health.

Almost every day, I receive emails from people worried about their TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) levels, or wondering how to improve their T3 or T4 (thyroid hormones) levels. I always encourage those folks to stop focusing on the hormone levels in the blood tests. Those tests are not accurate in the process of healing thyroid disease. It’s called “chasing the numbers,” and it doesn’t work.

When I was initially diagnosed with my condition of hyperthyroidism and goiter, I was suffering from many of the symptoms of hypothyroidism as well: weight gain, hair loss, brittle nails, dry skin, lethargy, premenstrual syndrome, and bouts of anxiety and depression.

I refused the recommended treatment for my thyroid condition (radioactive iodine and a lifetime of thyroid hormone), and instead, focused on improving my diet and lifestyle. As I altered my diet, my blood work began changing as well. Each time I went for another blood test, my thyroid had shifted into a new form of thyroid disease. First it was hyper, than it was hypo, then it was Hashimoto’s thyroiditis.

My thyroid hormone levels were all over the place!

But, my physical body was improving daily, weekly, and monthly. I disregarded the blood tests and the doctor’s fears about my condition and listened to my body instead. I’ve been through many incarnations of this disease. I’ve also witnessed many clients transform from one condition to the next as their bodies attempted to rebalance themselves. It’s truly fascinating!

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2  http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2820146/
Our food creates our blood, and that blood feeds all of our organs, systems, and glands, including the thyroid gland. It’s basic common sense that as you adjust the quality and type of food you are eating, your blood would feed your thyroid new nutrients it may have been lacking before.

If I had focused solely on my blood work, without looking at the BIG picture, and intervened with medication at any time during my healing process, I would have hindered my body’s natural healing process.

The body is a self-healing organism. It is perfectly designed, and if we give it what it needs, it can heal itself. Going for periodic blood tests is great—they can show you what may be happening inside your body at any time. Or, they could create a false sense of worry and stress if you get stuck chasing the T3, T4, and TSH numbers in the blood work.

We need to look at the body in a much bigger way. The symptoms of thyroid disease are the body’s way of telling us that something is out of balance.

If you want to heal your thyroid condition, it would be wise to focus on getting to the root cause of the disease instead of treating the symptoms and the numbers with medication. When the thyroid is not functioning properly, there may be many underlying reasons for this. You need to start asking yourself questions:

- Am I getting proper nourishment?
- Am I overworked?
- How are my stress levels?
- Am I overeating sugar, stimulants, or carbohydrates (that includes whole grains, beans, and starchy vegetables)?
- Have I neglected good quality protein and fat (vegan diet)?
- Have I neglected good quality carbohydrates (paleo diet)?
- Are my adrenals fatigued?
- Do I have mercury fillings in my teeth? Root canals?
- Am I eating too many refined foods high in iodized salt?
- Am I using chemical sweeteners?
- Do I have digestive problems?
- Am I chewing my food properly?

These are just a few of the many possibilities why the thyroid may be out of balance. NONE of these possibilities can be found on your thyroid blood test.
It’s time to focus your attention on getting to the root cause and finally healing your thyroid condition. Whether you have hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, Hashimoto’s, Graves’, nodules, goiter, hyperparathyroidism, hypoparathyroidism, or thyroid cancer, there may be an underlying reason for that condition that you and your doctor are not aware of.

If your thyroid gland is out of balance, we need to do some detective work to discover how and why it got that way in the first place. Otherwise, the underlying problems will persist and continually wreak havoc on your system.

With diet and lifestyle improvements, you can successfully restore thyroid function by treating the underlying causes of the condition. Keep in mind, there may be many contributors to thyroid disease, and we are going to cover them in this book. You are going to need to practice patience and understanding while trying to figure your condition out.

Another common treatment for a malfunctioning thyroid is to attack it as an enemy of the body. Radioactive iodine is one way to do this, especially for Graves’ disease and hyperthyroid conditions. This therapy was recommended to me when I was first diagnosed. Thankfully, I declined! But over the years, I’ve seen many clients who have taken the radioactive iodine treatment.

For those of you who do not know what this is, I’ll give a brief overview: Radioactive iodine, taken either in pill or liquid form, is absorbed by the thyroid gland. It destroys the thyroid, but supposedly does not harm other tissues in the body.

According to WebMD, “To avoid exposing other people to radioactivity, it is important to follow your doctor’s instructions carefully. He or she will instruct you on how far to stay away from people, how long you need to sleep alone, and other ways to stay safe. You will be directed to avoid close contact, kissing, sex, and sharing cups, dishes, or utensils.”
There are many other general recommendations for someone who has taken the Radioactive Iodine treatment:

- Flush the toilet twice each time you use it.
- Use separate towels, washcloths, and sheets. Wash these and your personal clothing by themselves and not with other people’s laundry.
- Use a special plastic trash bag for all your trash, such as bandages, paper or plastic dishes, menstrual pads, tissues, or paper towels. Talk to your treatment facility to see if they will handle the disposal. Or after eighty days, this bag can be thrown out with your other trash.
- Don’t cook for other people. If cooking is necessary, use plastic gloves and throw them away in the special plastic trash bag.
- Wash your dishes in a dishwasher or by hand. If you use disposable dishes, they must be thrown away in the special plastic trash bag.
- You should not breast-feed your baby after you have been treated with radioactive iodine.
- If you plan to travel on the interstate, you may set off radiation detectors. Most police and transportation workers are aware of medical radiation, but it may be a good idea to carry some paperwork from your doctor.

Many of these precautions are to insure that you do NOT expose other people to radioactivity. I’ve had clients who have taken the radioactive iodine tell me that their doctor told them not to touch another human being or pet for five full days after taking this treatment.

Here’s some wise advice: if someone, no matter what his or her credentials, ever tells you to “drink this liquid or take this pill, and then do NOT touch any other living creature for five days,” run as fast as you can in the opposite direction.

Trust me on this… think twice before you drink the Kool Aid. For those of you too young to remember this catchphrase, it refers to the mass suicide at Jonestown, Guyana, where the followers of the Reverend Jim Jones trusted him blindly. Over 900 cult members died drinking the poisoned liquid he dished out to them.
Another extremely radical thyroid treatment is thyroidectomy, the removal of the entire thyroid or pieces of it. It seems it is becoming more “normal” than ever to assault the body rather than support it.

Do you remember how popular lobotomies were in the 1940s and 1950s? Some medical professionals were performing them to help cure headaches, mental illness, and criminal behavior. We know today that treating the brain by cutting out portions of it is not a smart idea. Always question the medical authorities, especially when they want to cut out pieces of your body.

Trends happen all the time in food, fashion, media, and medicine. Thyroidectomies are the latest surgical trend presented by mainstream medicine as a solution for hyperthyroidism, goiter, and thyroid cancer. It may be an overly aggressive approach and an entirely unnecessary procedure.

When I was growing up in the 1970s, tonsillectomies were all the rage. At seven years old, I had a traumatic accident and needed eleven stitches to close a gaping wound across the bridge of my nose. After surgery, I remember sitting in the hospital bed with white gauze taped across my face, listening to the doctor advising my mom to let them remove my tonsils. He asked me to open my mouth so they could get a look inside. Then he showed her my irritated, enlarged tonsils, and handed me a mirror so I could see them too. They looked like big, red poisonous mushroom caps sprouting from the inside of my throat.

He asked if I had frequent colds and throat infections. Both my mom and I told him my throat was constantly swollen, and that I lost my voice often and was frequently sick. He suggested that, while I was in the hospital, he could quickly remove my tonsils and reassured us I wouldn’t be as sick in the future.

The doctor was condemning my tonsils for creating the many maladies I was experiencing in my young life. In truth, many of the food choices I reached out for had contributed to my poor health. At the age of seven, I was already a full-blown sugar junkie, constantly compromising my immune system with sweet, nutrient-depleting substances. Pop Tarts, Captain Crunch, and candy were my staples. My irritated tonsils were loudly advising me to “STOP!”
Thankfully, my mom declined that unnecessary tonsillectomy, and I left the hospital intact. Removing an organ, gland, or body part is a costly procedure, and it doesn’t “cure” any disease. The body part itself may not be the cause of the dysfunction. Hearts do not cause heart attacks, brains do not cause strokes, breasts do not cause cancer, tonsils do not cause tonsillitis, and thyroids do not cause thyroid disease.

Here’s a little fact that makes perfect sense. “In the United States, the number of tonsillectomies has declined significantly and progressively since the 1970s.”[^3] It was an overly aggressive procedure that didn’t cure anything. We know today that it is NOT wise to remove the tonsils because they play an integral part in immunity and stopping future infections.[^4]

In the same way, removing or destroying the thyroid will NOT cure a thyroid condition. The thyroid is not the cause of thyroid disease. Something else is going on internally that needs to be addressed before doing any sort of radical medical procedure.

According to ancient wisdom, the thyroid is our great communicator. It is warning us that we are out of balance on many levels and need to get realigned. We need to listen to what this beautiful little gland has to say, not silence her forever.

If you are being advised to have your thyroid removed, irradiated, or destroyed in some way, I would suggest you take a moment to rethink that advice. I am encouraging you NOT to fall into the trap of destroying your thyroid gland. Once the thyroid is removed or obliterated, there is no turning back.

If you are reading this book and you are missing your thyroid, or pieces of it, or have taken radioactive iodine, it’s time to be gentle and loving with yourself. It is essential that you support your adrenal glands, the rest of your endocrine system, and your body as a whole. Send your body love, and assure it that you are the caretaker and you are learning as you go. Just keep moving forward from this point on with your remaining organs, glands, and systems intact. Your body will love you for taking a stand and protecting it.

In upcoming chapters, we’ll talk about “protection” and how it relates to the thyroid. For now, let’s check out another couple of glands that have a deeper connection to thyroid disease, and most people don’t even know it.[^3]  
[^3]: [http://www.entnet.org/content/tonsillectomy-facts-us-ent-doctors](http://www.entnet.org/content/tonsillectomy-facts-us-ent-doctors)  