



# 5 Lies You've Been Told About Health and Happiness

ReclaimYourTrueEmotions.com  
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By Donna Weber, M.A.

What does it mean to be healthy and happy? Before we get started, I want to define health and happiness. I believe health is more than a lack of disease. It is a sense of wellbeing. You feel good in your body. Happiness is a sense that you are worthy, deserving, and lovable even if everything in your life is not exactly the way you want it to be. Much of our experience of health and happiness begins with our beliefs.

What you believe can make all the difference in the world. Your actions (or sometimes lack of actions) are based on your beliefs.

What if some of your beliefs about health and happiness are based on lies? Maybe you picked these up from the media or your family. Or perhaps these are lies you are telling yourself.

What if, by changing your beliefs you could improve your life? Does that sound too good to be true? Could your beliefs be holding you back from a life filled with health and happiness?

According to Vishen Lakhiani, who wrote [\*The Code of the Extraordinary Mind: Ten Unconventional Laws to Redefine Your Life & Succeed on Your Own Terms\*](#) (2016), "To an astonishing extent [our beliefs] seem to influence the reality of the world we experience every single day." He goes on to say, "Change your accepted models of reality and dramatic changes will happen in your world."

It is no wonder you are confused. There is so much information about health and happiness out there. Every expert has their own view of what it takes to be healthy and happy. Unfortunately, many of these views are in direct conflict. One expert tells you to eat a cave man diet with plenty of

animal protein, while another tells you that a plant based diet is the only way to be healthy.

What can you do? I am going to suggest that you become your own expert. I don't believe that there is a single path or recommendation that is right for every person. You need to consider your family, your current level of health, and even your finances. Another huge factor is you and what works for your body. What works for me may not be right for you. We are all unique.

If the thought of becoming your own expert strikes fear into your heart, you may have bought into one of the 5 lies you've been told about health and happiness. Finding your truth is the first step toward a better life.

I have included some case studies. These are real people. I have changed their names. You may find these people are a lot like you.

Let's look at how these lies are holding you back. Here are the 5 lies:

## Lie #1: Your doctor is your **only** source for health and wellness information.

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Before I delve into this lie, I want to make it clear that your doctor will play an important role in your health program.

Let's look at how doctors serve their patients. First of all, your doctor is crunched for time. Many doctors spend as little as 8 minutes with a patient. Not enough time to debate the merits of various diet and exercise programs or get stress management advice. If you are waiting for your doctor to ask questions about your wellness programs, you may have a long wait.

According to [USA Today](#), "Shorter [doctor] visits increase the likelihood the patient will leave with a prescription for medication, rather than for a behavioral change – like trying to lose a few pounds, or going to the gym."

Recent research tells us that [life style](#) changes can improve your health and happiness. For example, an active life style (as opposed to being a couch potato) decreases the risk of colon and breast cancer, decreases the risk of a heart attack, reduces risk for dementia, and improves your mood and sense of wellbeing. Even with all this research, doctors don't have the time to educate their patients. But you can educate yourself.

Next, most doctors were trained to be disease specialists. They learned how to diagnose and treat injury and disease. Many medical schools did not spend much time on topics such as wellness and how life style contributes to illness. Medical educators are realizing that doctors are ill prepared for the flood of patients filling their waiting rooms. Hopefully medical

**Case study:** A doctor wanted to label Leslie's young son, Todd, with a serious behavioral diagnosis and start him on medication. Leslie was concerned about medicating Todd at such a young age. She decided to find out if there were other options. She found experts and groups to help her. She discovered that there were other options. Leslie will be the first to tell you that this was not the easy path, but she believes it was the right path for Todd. He is now a happy, healthy teenager.

schools are moving to better prepare future doctors.

But what can you do in the mean time? You can become your own expert. This can involve searching the internet, reading books, and attending classes and lectures (in person and online). Once you make your own health a priority, you will discover that there is a wealth of information out there.

How does your doctor fit into all this? Keep your doctor informed. Your doctor wants to know what life style changes you are making. This may affect your treatment and other recommendations. If you are not sure if a particular wellness program is right for you, check in with your doctor before jumping in.

You know yourself best. Educate yourself. Become your own expert. Include your doctor in your wellness program. Before you see your doctor have specific questions ready to ask. Be prepared to explain what you want to do and why.

***IMMEDIATE TAKE AWAY:*** Add [\*heart intelligence\*](#) to your decision making. According to neuroscientists, your heart has its own nervous system and can be thought of as the source of emotional intelligence. You make your best decisions when your head and heart are in agreement.

*To include your heart, ask “What is my heart-felt solution?” You can also place your hand over your heart to engage your emotional intelligence. Take time to listen to what your heart has to say.*

## Lie #2: Your food doesn't affect you that much.

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We've all been told to eat better (whatever that means). You have a sneaking suspicion that you need to clean up your diet, but it can't make that much difference, can it?

According to Nora T. Gedaudas, author of [Primal Body, Primal Mind: Beyond the Paleo Diet for Total Health and Beyond](#) (2011), "... **what we eat ultimately accounts for nearly 70 percent of our health and longevity.**" I think we can add happiness to this quote. When we are living a healthy vibrant life, we have more opportunities to be happy.

Alberto Villoldo, author of [One Spirit Medicine: Ancient Ways to Ultimate Wellness](#) (2015), says "Research shows that most of the diseases of modern living begin in the gut and are related to our diet."

Much of your health is related to what you eat. Right now you are probably thinking "I don't want to spend the rest of my life eating tofu and alfalfa sprouts!" Our culture has created the idea that healthy foods taste bad and that is simply not true. By the way, you won't find any tofu or a single alfalfa sprout in my kitchen. I don't find them appetizing either.

I am going to give you three easy suggestions to improve your diet. You may have to give up a few foods, but the reward is better health, more energy, and improved mood.

***Case study:** Clara had digestive problems for years. Her problems often interfered with her ability to function in her life. Sometimes she had to go to bed and wait for her symptoms to subside. Her doctor could find nothing wrong. She was tested for a gluten allergy and the test came back negative. She was adamant that it was not her food.*

*Clara discovered some information on eating for your blood type ([Eat Right for Your Blood Type](#) by Dr. Peter J. D'Adamo). She was intrigued enough to give it a try. Very quickly she discovered that wheat/gluten and sugar were big triggers for her bouts of digestive upset. When she removed sugar and gluten she discovered that seemingly unrelated symptoms, such as fibromyalgia type pain, dramatically improved.*

*Clara struggles to remain gluten and sugar free. Her struggles remind us that our media is full of ads for high inflammation foods. Every party or event has foods that Clara needs to avoid. Even with all her struggles she now knows that much of her sense of wellbeing is under her control.*

1. Start reading labels. And I mean every single label. Every time. You can become an informed consumer and know what you are eating.

2. Cut back on all sugars. Way back. Sugar contributes to all sorts of problems in the body, such as type 2 diabetes, weight gain, and inflammation. In case you don't know, inflammation is a major factor in the epidemic of western diseases, such as heart disease, chronic pain, depression, and cancer.

Especially avoid all high fructose corn syrup and its new cousin, isolated fructose. [Dr. Mark Hyman](#) says that high fructose corn syrup can "lead to increased metabolic disturbances that drive increases in appetite, weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, dementia, and more."

Learn to enjoy natural sweets, such as apples, berries, and sweet potatoes. Try using 100% pure stevia as your sugar replacement. Less sugar is not a death sentence. Your taste buds will adapt.

3. Cut back on highly processed foods. Processed foods include sugar (yep, this one is on two lists), grains that have been processed into flour, and food additives (those things on the label you can't pronounce).

**Case study:** *Jenny has a severe and painful form of arthritis. She has a lot of stress in her life. Her family life is chaotic. She worries about her health and whether she will be able to keep working. When she feels particularly stressed out, she copes by eating sugar and processed carbs. She has tried every medication on the market, but none have worked for her. She always has too many side effects.*

*Her doctor tested her for a wheat allergy, but it came back negative. None of her doctors (and she has several) have ever recommended dietary or behavioral changes. They are all hoping that the next new medication will be the one.*

*Jenny is aware that her diet creates inflammation and she knows this could contribute to her disease. When I suggest that she try changing her diet, she always has an excuse. Her life is too stressful right now. It will be too hard to learn a new way to cook. It will be too expensive.*

*Will changing her diet affect Jenny's health? I don't know and neither does Jenny or her doctors. She has never even tried to make a change.*

For many of us, sugar and processed grains are addictive. That is why you keep eating your favorite treat until there are only crumbs left. If letting go of your favorite treat makes you nervous, you might just be addicted.

Only you can decide if changing your diet is worth it.

***IMMEDIATE TAKE AWAY:*** Start cutting back on added sugar today. List the three main sources of added sugar in your diet. Include all sugars. Pick one area and eat less sugar. Here are two ideas: drink water with lemon instead of a sugary drink or eat fruit instead of a candy bar or cookie.



### Lie #3: Childhood problems don't affect me that much and there is nothing I can do about it anyway.

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Unfortunately, the past does not stay in the past. You may be carrying emotional wounds from unresolved childhood traumas. These incidents can follow you into adulthood and prevent you from living life to the fullest.

Recent research has found that childhood issues affect us in much more serious ways. Adverse childhood experiences have been linked to numerous physical diseases and mental health disorders.

In [\*Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology and How You Can Heal\*](#) (2015), author Donna Jackson Nakazawa describes how adverse childhood experiences damage your stress response system (also known as your fight or flight system). Your stress response system becomes damaged when you are continually faced with painful events and there is no resolution. These stressful (or sometimes traumatic) experiences turn your stress response system on. Eventually, your stress response system becomes stuck in the “on” position. When this happens your body acts like it is always in danger or a crisis situation. Your body is constantly being flooded with the stress hormones adrenalin and cortisol.

These hormones create inflammation in the body, which eventually becomes chronic. Chronic inflammation is a key player in many of our most serious diseases, such as heart disease, chronic pain, depression, autoimmune disease, and cancer.

Researchers found that an astonishing 64% of us were exposed to at least one adverse childhood experience. Forty percent were exposed to two or more adverse experiences. Go to [The Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) site to see the questions used by the researchers. Are you one of the 64%?

Childhood issues can create more problems than you ever realized. Now that you know adverse childhood experiences can cause so many health issues what can you do?

I have long believed that releasing past emotional pain – whether it is from childhood or later in life - can improve your life including your health. Until recently I did not have the research to back up the results I was seeing in myself and my clients.

When I was getting my graduate degree in counseling psychology, we were taught to focus on the here-and-now. Dredging up childhood issues was discouraged. This always confused me. It seemed obvious (at least to me) that many adult problems had their roots in the past. I couldn't see how you can separate the adult from the child. I decided to keep my mouth shut and not ask too many questions. I was already out of step with my field.

Once I got my degree, I put my attention on researching safe, comfortable ways for people to release the past. I knew that simply talking about past traumas was painful and slow. My research led me to create my own process. This has become a self-help process I call the poetry of emotion process.

The poetry of emotion process is effective in repairing your damaged stress response system because it includes your body, not just your brain. You feel emotions in your body and this is where you are storing emotional wounds from childhood. A broken heart is not just a fancy description; it is the best description of how you feel in your body. When you release a wound at

***Case study:** As a young adult, I knew that there was something wrong in my life. I was not a happy person. People who know me now find this hard to believe. Instead of accepting unhappiness as my burden in life, I set out to change it. I read constantly. I tried all sorts of techniques and some of them were pretty crazy. I spent three years immersed in [Neuro Linguistic Programming](#) (NLP). This one helped a lot, but I did not get all the results I wanted. I got a master's degree in psychology. I loved graduate school, but I did not get the personal results I wanted.*

*Finally, it occurred to me that I could create my own method and I did. I began by experimenting on myself and I got amazing results. I did not know it at the time, but I healed my damaged stress response system. When I was more confident, I started using my process with clients and got great results. Eventually, I packaged my process into a self-help method, [the poetry of emotion process](#). If I can repair my damaged stress response system you can too.*

the physical level, you are getting down to the root. Once your cells release traumatic emotions they become free to experience new emotions. You can start filling your body with love, appreciation, and gratitude. These are the emotions associated with greater health and happiness.

If you are interested in learning more, read my foundation posts: [www.ReclaimYourTrueEmotions.com/new-to-the-site/](http://www.ReclaimYourTrueEmotions.com/new-to-the-site/).

I think the poetry of emotion process is an effective way to release the past without reliving painful memories. Of course, I may be prejudiced since this is the method that finally helped me (see the case study below). I want you to know that there are other methods to heal your stress response system and many of you will use more than one to get the results you want.

Some of these other methods include: journaling about your painful past, art therapy, meditation, Qigong (my favorite is [Spring Forest Qigong](#)), forgiveness, yoga, and therapy. If you decide to check out therapy (and I recommend it for serious traumas), make sure your therapist is trained in the latest trauma techniques and knows you are not looking for a quick fix, but a deep healing. Hypnotherapy is another effective method for releasing your past. You will be guided into a relaxed state where you can address the root cause of your issues even if you have buried the memory.

If you had a traumatic childhood and your stress response system is damaged, it is not permanent. You can turn off the stress hormones flooding your body. You can heal.

You may be surprised at how good you can feel.

***IMMEDIATE TAKE AWAY:*** *One way to start healing your damaged stress response system is to practice forgiveness. Forgiveness is all about releasing the hurt, anger, and fear you have been hanging on to all these years. You are not saying that it was okay for that person to hurt you.*

*Pick someone from your childhood who hurt you. Visualize them standing in front of you. Forgiveness is about you not them, so it is better to do this exercise in your imagination, rather than in person. Tell them, "You hurt me in the past. Today, I release all the painful emotions. I forgive you." Keep forgiving until you can let go of the emotional pain and your heart feels lighter.*

## Lie #4: You need an expert to tell you what to eat.

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We have already talked about how your food impacts your health. I gave you some ideas of foods to avoid or cut back to improve your health. Now you are left with a big question: “What can I eat?”

There are so many conflicting diet recommendations out there. Should you be a meat eater or a vegetarian or a vegan? Are fats okay? What about cheese? Each expert tells you they have the answer and many of these diets do not agree on the basics. With all of this conflicting information, it is no wonder that you want to throw up your hands in frustration.

Maybe you don't feel qualified to make a decision. It is too hard to sort through all this conflicting information. It is easier to let someone tell you what to do.

If you are struggling with making decisions, you may have limiting beliefs such as “I'm not good enough” or “I don't belong” or “I'm not lovable”. According to Alberto Villoldo, who wrote [\*One Spirit Medicine: Ancient Ways to Ultimate Wellness\*](#) (2015), “As long as we're caught in the grip of our limiting beliefs stored in the limbic brain, we will constantly look to others to tell us what to do – not just medical experts to determine our health care but also political commentators to tell us how to vote and the media to show us who our enemies are.”

**Case study:** Taylor knew she needed to clean up her diet. She had a very busy schedule and changing her diet was something she would get around to eventually. She got a wakeup call when her doctor diagnosed her with diabetes and prescribed medication. She immediately sought out the latest research. Based on her research, she changed her diet and made other life style changes, including making use of that gym membership. She lost weight, has more energy, and all the numbers on her medical tests are moving into the healthy range.

Now is a good time to break out of your limitations. Start by reading about different diet plans. I suggest the Mediterranean diet, the paleo diet, clean diet plans (usually vegan), and grain-free or gluten-free plans. The internet is a great resource.

Be sure to read about plans that are based on current research. Much of what we have been told about healthy eating is being discredited. In fact, many of the new experts believe that a low fat, high carb diet is a major contributor to our culture's high levels of obesity and inflammation related diseases.

Money for research into what makes a healthy diet is sadly lacking especially when compared to the money spent on testing the newest drug. According to David Ludwig ([\*Always Hungry?: Conquer Cravings, Retrain Your Fat Cells, and Lose Weight Permanently\*](#), 2016), "The science of nutrition seems to be stuck in the dark ages." He says that the models of weight loss we are using haven't been updated since the late 1800s.

As you read about these different diet plans, ask yourself if you could be happy eating these foods. Could you see yourself preparing the foods? Could you eat in restaurants? Are the ingredients available in your area? What you eat needs to be healthy as well as appetizing.

You may want to try out different plans to find out what works for you. If you want to start slow, I recommend the Mediterranean plan.

As you make changes, you may need to stretch a bit and try some new ingredients. When you let go of processed foods your taste buds will change. Instead of flavoring your food with sugar and salt, you can explore the world of spices. Remember if you expect to stick to a plan your food needs to taste good and be satisfying.

One last thought... As you move from processed foods to healthier options, your food cravings will decrease. When I gave up wheat, my food cravings disappeared - almost overnight. Without those painful cravings, you can make more conscious food choices.

***IMMEDIATE TAKE AWAY:*** Pick a day (or even one meal) and try out a new way of eating. [Good Housekeeping](#) has a number of Mediterranean menu plans and recipes. Processed grains (bread, pasta, etc.) create inflammation so keep these foods to a minimum. If

*you have an inflammation based disease, consider avoiding processed grains completely.*

*If you are a bit more adventurous, try out a paleo, grain-free, or clean diet plan.*

## Lie #5: Disease is a natural part of life and there is not much you can do about it.

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In Western culture getting old is often equated with getting sick. We just expect older folks to have at least one disease and be on medication. If you don't already have your diagnosis, you are dreading the day when your doctor tells you which disease you have.

Do you know anyone who has maintained their health and happiness into old age? What could you learn from those people?

It turns out that there are areas of the world called Blue Zones. These are places where more people live long lives and experience healthy old age. The current list of Blue Zones includes: Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica; Loma Linda, California; and the Greek island of Ikaria.

While these people live different life styles and eat different foods, there are some common factors. They typically maintain their active life style with traditional activities such as gardening or herding. These people eat traditional diets rather than high processed foods. They don't live our stressed out Western life style. They have a strong social fabric, which includes family, the greater community, rituals, and worship.

Selling all your worldly possessions and moving to one of these areas is not the answer. You can adopt the wisdom of these people and improve your life where you live now.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Start practicing some stress management techniques. The specific technique is not as important as how you approach the activity. Your stress management techniques are calming activities that feed your soul, not just another item on your already overloaded to-do list. You may want to explore mindfulness, meditation (try the [Relaxation Response](#)), yoga, guided imagery, or spending time in nature. Take time every day to take care of yourself. The rewards are high.



2. Eat a healthy diet. Fill your plate with fruits, vegetables, quality proteins, and healthy fats. Avoid processed foods like the plague.

3. Pay attention to your emotional health. Let go of the past (try [the poetry of emotion process](#)). Practice forgiveness and engage in feelings of gratitude and appreciation.

4. Get moving: stretch, walk, take an exercise class, or join a gym.

5. Engage in nurturing social activities. We are social beings and we need other people to be happy and healthy. Even if you have a ton of friends on Facebook you still need friends and family you see in person. It is hard to get a hug on Facebook.

Psychotherapist [Virginia Satir](#) said, "We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth."

*Case study: You! What can you do to improve your health and happiness?*

***IMMEDIATE TAKE AWAY:*** *Decide to make health and happiness a priority. This take away may seem like the easiest one, but in reality it is the most difficult one. If you make health and happiness a priority, you might need to make some life-style changes, such as passing up joining your friends for junk food. Or you may need to do some wellness research, instead of relying on medication alone. Or start meditating. These changes can make a big difference in your life.*

*You can improve your health and happiness. You are worth it.*

Thank you for subscribing to my newsletter. I will be sending you posts on more ways you can improve your life. Be on the lookout for new classes and new offers.

Wishing you happiness and health!

In case you want to know more about me...



I have a master's degree in counseling psychology and a bachelor of science in theoretical mathematics. I have worked as a systems analyst, a project manager, a coach, a trainer, and a licensed professional counselor. Believe it or not, there is a common theme in all of these jobs: observing patterns and finding solutions.

I have devoted my life to learning how to be happy and healthy. I have read the books, taken the classes, and even got the degree. I have personally explored numerous personal growth techniques to find out what works. Unfortunately, I couldn't find exactly what I wanted. So, I created my own method for releasing the past based on my extensive research. I call my method [the poetry of emotion process](#).

My goal is to help you discover your own path to health and happiness.