



JULIEANNA HEVER  
Plant-Based Dietitian and Author

By Chris Wark

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## **JULIEANNA HEVER INTERVIEW**

### **Plant-Based Dietitian, Author**

Hey everybody. It's Chris! Back with another interview for you today. It is Julieanna Hever, the plant-based dietitian. Many of you may know Julieanna. She has authored five books including *The Healthspan Solution* and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Plant-Based Nutrition*. If you write an *Idiot's Guide* to anything, you must know a lot about it. *The Vegiterranean Diet*, which is a wonderful combination, obviously, of two great diets. And she's also authored two peer-reviewed journal articles on plant-based nutrition for healthcare professionals. She was the host of *What Would Julieanna Do?* She's given a TEDx talk that you can find online. We'll link to it in the show notes. And she's also instructed for the e-Cornell Plant-Based Nutrition Certification Program. You can find her online at [PlantBasedDietitian.com](http://PlantBasedDietitian.com). Hi, Juliana. How are you?

Julieanna Hever: Hi Chris. I'm great, thank you. How are you doing?

Chris: Doing great. Feeling good. Excited to do this interview. I've been an admirer of you and your work. You've influenced a lot of people in the health and wellness world. And you're a fellow crusader for plant-based eating, disease prevention, and reversal. It's just great to connect.

Julieanna Hever: Thank you so much. I appreciate you saying that, and it is great to connect.

Chris: So how did you get into plant-based eating? Was there something going on in your life? Did you have health challenges? What led you down this path?

Julieanna Hever: I don't think I realized how extraordinary this would be, but I had a feeling. It started when I was a teenager. There are two different sides to this story. When I was a teenager, I stumbled upon this book called *Diet for New America*, by John Robbins. That did it for me. It was like, "Whoa." I had no idea what happens and how food ended up on my plate. And at that time, as a teenager, I didn't do much cooking. My parents had no idea what I meant by "vegetarian diet." I was just trying to exclude animal products from my plate, but that didn't mean much back then. There was no Google or something I could look up and learn about this. So I proceeded as long as I could until my parents staged an intervention.

Julieanna Hever: They were so worried about me eating my rice cakes and granola bars and not my vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, mushrooms, nuts, seeds, fruits, and spices. I didn't know about that quite yet. And so they had a friend, this nurse. They took me to a steak house and proceeded to warn me that I'm going to be deficient in B12 and iron and protein, the usual suspects. And of course, as a young girl, I was like, "Ooh. That's kind of scary." And they scared me back. So I remember that. I talked about this in *Vegiterranean Diet*. It was a teriyaki

steak, and there was a big pineapple ring on top. I remember cutting into it. Once you know, you can't unknow.

Julieanna Hever: It was a really emotional experience for me, eating that first bite. But as we all do, everything about food is habit. And so I got back into the regular standard way of eating. Still was like, "This can't be the whole story." I just knew there had to be more. And so I continued to investigate it and went to undergrad. I was doing pre-med. So I was getting a lot of medical training. I was also doing acting. I ended up going back to acting as an adult. I grew up in Los Angeles, so it's kind of common here. Doing modeling and acting, everyone's saying, "Oh, you need to lose weight. You need to for the camera." So I was always looking at diet. I was always fascinated by all of this.

Julieanna Hever: I ended up becoming a personal trainer while I was just finishing undergrad and doing my acting on the side. I loved fitness and all that. I love that world. And people were asking me, "What I'm supposed to? What should I eat? How much protein?" I'm just one of those people. I want the information. I don't want to just repeat stuff I learned in the chapter of the personal training book or the books that I've read over the years. I thought I was done with school. It was kind of painful, my undergrad experience. So I enrolled in graduate school to become a registered dietitian and got started right away. And it was the best time of my life, educationally. I was just soaking in this information and learning about biochemistry, food science, statistics, and digging into research and sports nutrition.

Julieanna Hever: I was there searching for answers. I wanted to know why and how and what. I was just very curious. First time in my life getting straight A's because I was so curious and excited. It took me 7 years because I was running my full-time, personal training business. I was going back and forth; school, work, school, work. I was hustling. And that was it. I finished grad school 7 years later. And I was like, "Oh my gosh. I'm going back to the books." And I started reading the literature. And at this time, we're starting to have more access on the internet. And so I found out, "Oh, wait a second. Not only can you get iron from plants, you can get a better source of iron, the non-heme iron. And wait a minute.

Julieanna Hever: There's plenty of protein everywhere in the plant kingdom. And I don't have to worry about that." So I started digging with this newfound experience. I'd done all my clinical rotations. I'd done a lot of actual nutrition consults, a lot of time in the hospitals. I just had so much to glean from at this point. And that was it. It was all over. I was like, "Oh my gosh, plant-based." There were no one was saying, "Only plant-based," back then. Dr. T Colin Campbell was saying it, and I connected with him. I started reading and talking. And I wanted to do a documentary. I did a documentary to talk about plant-based eating. My health completely transformed. I had no idea I had problems. But I had lifelong GI problems, lifelong acne, and lifelong sinus infections. Gone. Gone! I know those are minor things compared to what you've gone through and many people. But then I started implementing it with my clients, and there was no turning back. I

can't believe the stuff that I still continue to witness when people transfer their diets to eating more plants. And I haven't stopped talking about it ever since.

Chris: I love it so much. There's several different directions I want to go, but I'm trying to reign myself in. Can we talk about what dietitians are taught? Because there's a lot of dietitians out there. Every year, more are graduating. What they're teaching dietitians is not what you are teaching. So what's the disconnect?

Julieanna Hever: There's a major disconnect. I'm a really out there dietitian. There's vegan dietitians. I'm out there with the regular dietitians because I'm plant-based. I called myself a plant-based dietitian in 2008, whenever I just started this journey. And now there's lots of plant-based dietitians. It's kind of funny because it was this weird concept at the time. "What does it mean?" So I'm a disconnected from that. I'm also disconnected from the vegan world because I'm doing things a little differently. And I'm okay with that. Obviously, I don't mind being a little different because I've seen what I can do with diet. And I'm so grateful for my graduate school and my clinical experience because I've learned what really happens. But what I was trained and taught was management.

Julieanna Hever: So if someone comes to me with a diagnosis of cancer, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, whatever it is, hypertension, here is the diet, and you have to follow this protocol. And the goal is to not increase medication use. The goal is to keep them steady, stable, and not have the disease progress further. But what I've discovered, (not myself, but from the literature and from my experience and from other people's experience) is that we actually reverse those conditions, take away those diagnoses, and take them off medications. I always say, "Results are typical." My clients get off these medications that they thought they were going to be tied to for the rest of their lives. And it is extraordinary. And it's not unusual. It's unusual if they don't. And if they don't, it's just because they're not doing the diet exactly as we would suggest.

Julieanna Hever: So it's opposite of what I learned. I learned management. I learned empathy, how everyone's a little different, and managing labs and medications. Obviously, I don't do medications. I would manipulate the diet to meet the medication needs. Oh my gosh, diabetes and insulin. How we teach that is so wrong. It's so wrong.

Chris: Talk about it.

Julieanna Hever: Everything is so wrong with what we're supposed to do. Like carb counting. Oh, it's awful. It's awful. Someone comes in with inflammatory bowel disease, which is horrible. People are suffering with really painful symptoms, and it's just awful to watch. And we're supposed to tell them to not have fiber and stuff that's going to help heal them and revert the flare ups.

Julieanna Hever: It's completely contradictory. And yet the doctors don't know because that wasn't the tools in their armamentarium. They were taught medication. Diagnose. Prescribe. Manage symptoms. That's what they were taught. My ex-husband is a doctor, and we went through medical school together. He was in medical school. I was in nutrition school. But I sat in on the nutrition lectures, and I know exactly what doctors learn. Which is why I teach doctors now. I teach hundreds and now thousands because it's growing so much. Interest, thankfully, is growing. So I teach these healthcare professionals because I know where they started. Iodine deficiency is a goiter. Rickets is a D deficiency. That's what they're taught about nutrition. They're not taught about how we heal with diet.

Julieanna Hever: So they don't know that it's possible. In my two peer-reviewed journal articles, and one of my lectures is that doctors don't think that people will want to change. Which is true. A lot of people are like, "Just give me that pill." I get it. There's a lot of people. Fair enough. Okay. They just want that pill. They don't want to make these changes. So I evolved my thinking just for my own peace. You could lead a human to healthy, but you can't make them eat. But if you want to make these changes, be off medication, feel good, and reverse your diagnoses, I will love you all the way there. I will give you all the information, tips, and coaching, whatever it is that you need to get there. But you have to want it. That was the hardest lesson for me to learn. But it was the most powerful lesson, too.

Chris: I learned that exact same lesson. You want to help everybody. You want to evangelize. You want to convert everybody. And I say this over and over. I'm like a broken record. But sometimes the people that you want to help the most are the people that you cannot help. You just can't. They don't want to change. But at the same time, it's not an excuse for doctors. Obviously, doctors are not trained in nutrition, especially in nutrition that promotes health and healing. But this sort of attitude, "Oh, they're not going to follow my advice anyway. They're not going to quit smoking anyway. They're not going to lose weight anyway. What's the point?" And the reality is, some people won't change. But some people will, and you lose those people. There's some percentage of the population, is it 1%? Is it 10, 20? I don't know exactly. But there is some percentage of the population that actually does want to change, and they will change if they're just given some guidance.

Julieanna Hever: I agree. I agree completely. And that's what I encourage the doctors to do, is to plant a seed. Just say, "We could give you this medication, and you have to deal with these side effects. Or you can explore diet because it is so powerful." I understand the other argument for doctors is, "We don't have time with our patients. We're only given 15 minutes." And that's a problem. However, that's what I do. That's what dietitians are for. I want dietitians to know how to do this. And I want dietitians to have the opportunity to really teach people. And that's what we do. I love that I get to guide them. They have the seed. They're ready to do what... They know what's possible. Here, let me show you how to

do it and walk you through the steps. Because that's what we're taught to do, essentially.

Julieanna Hever: We're taught to do it in the wrong way. But that's the link between the doctor and the healing, is us coming in. And coaching. Every week we're meeting. Here's what I want you to eat. Here's what I want you not to eat. Here's how you implement this into your life and how to cook. The funny thing is, we're not taught anything culinarily, but everyone asks for recipes and cooking. My first book they're like, "Add 50 recipes." I had 6 weeks to write *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Plant-Based Nutrition* and 50 recipes. I was like, "Whoa, I don't know how to cook." I had to teach myself how to cook and write a book with a toddler and an infant in 6 weeks. That was insane.

Chris: I understand that. It's really crazy. I have seen the take-home information that patients are given by the cancer clinic dietitian, and they send them home with this one sheet. And it says, "Here's what to eat." Ice cream, totally fine. Milkshakes. In the cancer world, it's a little different than the diabetes world or something else. But their entire goal is to get them to eat as many calories as possible, so they don't lose weight during treatment. That is what they're instructed to tell the patients. And it's horrific.

Julieanna Hever: Chris. I'm so excited that you're saying this because I wanted to do oncology nutrition. And I was really interested in it. I spent a lot of time, and I did part of my rotations at Cedar Sinai doing cancer. And I couldn't believe the advice. Although granted, I didn't have all this plant-based experience back then, but there was a big red flag. "Oh, just eat whatever you can to prevent weight loss." And they say that to a lot of people about weight loss. And to me, it was like, "Wait a second." We're in a very vulnerable situation. It could go either way, especially for so many different types of diagnoses. Cancer is so complicated. It's so different than any other diagnosis. There's so many pathologies, prognoses, and treatments. It's an unknown. I love that you're saying that. I think it's horrific what they teach cancer patients because it's not healing. It's managing weight, which is not the issue, not the goal here.

Chris: And these are foods that fuel cancer growth, high calorie, processed foods, high sugar, lots of dairy, and of course, meat and dairy. Everything's on the table. And also, the crazy thing is, even if you don't understand anything about nutrition, two thirds of Americans are overweight. Obesity is the 2nd leading cause of cancer. So at least two thirds of cancer patients are overweight. They actually need to lose some weight, sometimes a lot of weight. And so weight loss would be a great thing for them. Why are we trying to prevent them from losing excess weight that's contributing to inflammation and immunosuppression? So yeah. I mean the whole thing makes no sense at all.

Julieanna Hever: Dairy is hormonally active, and we're trying to temper down the hormones. And it's awful. It is really awful. I agree. And sugar. Ice cream is probably the worst thing you could tell someone to eat. Part of my message has evolved lately with weight loss. I'm doing a lot of weight loss right now. That's kind of been my

focus, and I'm not ashamed to say it. Because there's a stigma. This new messaging that the dietitians are doing and people are doing. The media is perpetuating the normalization of obesity. And there's a lot of shame. People shame me for encouraging people and helping people with weight loss. Which I think is horrible. I have to do a video on this.

Julieanna Hever: I'm so sensitive from two things that happened this week about this. There is no question. You just said that excess weight promotes chronic disease. It is not healthy. It is not "health at every size." It's not true. And just because they're normalizing it... Why are we shaming people in any direction? Anyone's body is their body and not ours to decide what weight you should be. It's wrong that you want to lose, or it's wrong that you're overweight. Why doesn't everyone mind their own business about everyone else's body? It drives me crazy. If someone wants to lose weight and be healthy, good for them. And if someone is happy with their weight, good for them. I feel like there's so much stigma in the dietetics world. Now people are shaming. Dietitians are reaching out to me. "How could you talk about weight loss? How dare you bring up weight loss?" What are you talking about? What?

Chris: That's crazy. And I'm seeing it too. It's crazy the dietitians are coming after you. That really surprises me that it has now gotten this far into absurdity. I made a video about this maybe last year, a short video about fat-shaming and obesity. As a survivor and a patient advocate, my mission, my calling, is to encourage, inspire, and help educate whoever wants to listen on the best ways to prevent and heal cancer. The things that they can do to help themselves, and weight loss is at the top. It's the top of the list because obesity is the second leading cause of cancer. I'm not advocating that we be mean to someone who's overweight, that we name call them, put pictures of them on the internet, and make memes and stuff. No, that's terrible. You're a jerk if you do that. That is fat-shaming. That's not what you are about. It's not what I'm about. But talking frankly about the consequences of being overweight or obese is more important now than ever because we've got over 40% of Americans that are obese. Over 40%!

Julieanna Hever: That's almost 3 out of 4 people are walking around in an unhealthy state. It's mind-blowing. So we are normalizing it. We're encouraging it. And our society does every damn thing. Excuse my language. Everything in society is about supporting that narrative. "Oh, you're only eating that much? Oh, you're on a diet? Here eat this, or eat that." Everything is around food. It's really pathological. You have to be so determined to walk in this world, still lose weight, and make choices that will serve you. But I like to empower my clients. And I like to tell people, "You get to choose." What weight do you want to be? What size do you want to be? How do you feel in your body?

Julieanna Hever: That is your choice. And I will help you be any of those things. It's just a matter of what you want for yourself. It's a very personal thing. The most personal thing is food. That's what my TEDx talk is about. It's about how deeply personal food is. However, it's the most socially unacceptable thing to make a decision either way. Going plant-based is bizarre and crazy and extreme. Losing weight is

extreme. Gaining weight. There's so much stigma around it, and that doesn't serve the population, clearly, from what we're seeing.

Chris: It doesn't, and it's so weird for me to think about this in these terms. People who are "normal weight," normal BMI, are now in the minority. It's crazy. It's crazy that we're now in the minority. Now the majority of Americans are overweight or obese. We're a little group trying to convince the masses that this is an unhealthy road. There's suffering and disease. If you don't have it now, it's in your immediate future. It's coming if you maintain this state.

Julieanna Hever: That's exactly right. I will add to that. We are still pushing a narrative of "not enough" and avoiding deficiency. Everything in graduate school, everything in dietetics is about avoiding deficiency. "You can't lose weight? You need more protein." We're chasing protein. We're chasing vitamins. It's absurd. We are chronic over-nourished. I haven't seen deficiency barely at all, unless someone's not taking B12 on a plant-based diet. That's a big concern of mine. But yeah, it's bizarre.

Chris: D3 deficiency is actually pretty common, especially if you're overweight. And the mechanism, as far as I understand, the mechanism is actually unclear as to why people who are overweight and obese have chronically low Vitamin D3.

Julieanna Hever: I know the answer, I think. Fat gets in the way of the UVB radiation, the UVB rays that we need to be penetrating our skin. That gets converted via the liver and the kidneys into active Vitamin D (1, 25 dihydroxyvitamin D.) Just like the darker skin we have, the more sun we need. Just like the fact that we're all indoors more. And because more people are obese and overweight. So maybe that's a connection. Mechanistically, I think it's just UVB rays not being able to penetrate into our skin adequately.

Chris: Thank you. Great. I just learned something. I love it. I'm with you about everyone. This is a very routine conversation that I have. I'm asked this question all the time, as are you, "Where do you get your protein?" The protein industry, meat, and dairy industry, plus the protein supplement industry (which is multibillion-dollar industry) are all pushing protein. They're all selling protein, and it's marketing. And so they have successfully infiltrated the minds of all Americans (and many people in other countries) who have now become obsessed with protein and think they need more. I'm frequently asked by someone who is overweight. This is the typical sort of avatar of a person that's trying to get healthy, and they're overweight.

Chris: And they're like, "Well, where am I going to get my protein?" And my answer is not trying to be rude. I say, "You've had too much protein. Don't worry about the protein. You've had more protein than you need. Okay?" That shouldn't be anything you worry about. As you alluded to earlier, every plant, every fruit, vegetable, nuts, and seeds, leafy greens, they all have amino acids. Your body converts those and uses them to build protein. And if you eat 2 or 3 nice size meals a day, you'll get all the protein you need.



Julieanna Hever: You know, I literally have never seen a protein deficiency in 25 years in the health and fitness industry. That said, it would come along with someone that's malnourished for anorexia or something like that. I think if you really wanted to try to get a protein deficiency, I would suggest eating only white sugar and oil, and leave all of the whole foods away. Every plant has every amino acid in different ratios. Second of all, the literature on nutrition, interventions with nutrition, the only way that we've ever extended health span and longevity in all the organisms that have been tested (from yeast to our primate cousins) is with dietary restriction without malnutrition. And particularly, it looks like dietary restriction of essential amino acids. So think about that. Less protein extends life. And it looks like we're going to start recommending minimizing your essential amino acids, which is crazy.

Julieanna Hever: It's the opposite of what everyone's saying. All those branch chain, amino acids. All the slugging of protein everywhere. When we would go back to the world again, I was a big gym rat before all this. It's all you hear the trainers talking about. I was doing it, too. I was eating egg whites, chicken breast, and veggies. That's the trainer's diet. I was doing it, and I was sicker than ever, relatively speaking. I just felt awful. Yes, you can get plenty of protein from plants. And in fact, most of us get too much. When I'm doing weight loss with clients, and now in the support group, I'm really focusing on, "It's okay."

Julieanna Hever: You're losing weight. You need to put yourself in a deficit. I don't want people on this diet roller coaster where they're always losing weight. It's torture. Get it done. Go through a period of deficiency. Adipose tissue is by definition stored energy. We will survive on our stored energy. During times of deficit, you will be okay. In fact, you will thrive because you're plowing through body fat. So I like to decouple health and optimal nutrition with a deficit that is required for weight loss. There's no way around it. It's not fun or entertaining or exciting to go into a deficit, but it's required if you want to lose weight.

Chris: The good thing, too, is that a person who is trying to lose weight, at least in my experience, in our community, is that when a person eats a ton of whole plant foods, especially vegetables, giant salads, fresh fruit, they don't have to deprive themselves. They don't have to be hungry because whole foods have naturally lower calories than meat, dairy, and processed food. It's not this Jenny Craig approach. I just get this tiny little meal. And I just have to be hungry for the next four hours until my next tiny little meal. What I tell people is, "Look, you can stuff yourself with fruits and vegetables, and you're going to lose weight."

Julieanna Hever: Okay. Yes. I agree. Except I've seen people figure out a way to not lose weight like that. It's this idea of loving being full. "How much can I get away with?" I've seen that a lot. So I had people coming to me that are like, "I'm eating whole plant foods!" But there's always a reason people aren't losing weight.

Chris: What are the mistakes they're making?

Julieanna Hever: There's mistakes. So one would be, for the first time in all of these years, in the last 3, 4 years, I'm having vegans come to me with the same health issues as omnivores. And that was like a drop the mic. Wait. What? How is that possible? And if you look closer, it's because of this onslaught of vegan products. "Anything you could eat, I could eat vegan." So the meat, the cheeses, and ice cream, that's not health food. That's not whole food. So that's number one mistake. But that's not what you're talking about.

Chris: The processed food and fake food.

Julieanna Hever: Yeah. Processed food is processed food. And that's what I used to say. "Just eat a whole plant foods!" I couldn't lose my last 10 pounds because I was eating a lot of food. I was like, "Oh, look at how much food I could eat." And I realized that you may have to rein it in a little bit. If your question is comparing eating the Standard Western Diet, you can eat as many plants as you want. You're going to lose weight. But then there comes a time. Maybe you have a little pudge. I don't know why I'm not losing weight. And you have to rein it a little bit. The other thing you might be doing is noshing on nuts, dried fruit, and avocado.

Julieanna Hever: And there's also this concept called oxidative hierarchy. If you pair things together, you're more likely to store things as fat. So there's all these different things that come into play. So I do the fine tuning with clients. There are some little things. But generally speaking, we're talking to the 72% of Americans. What is it? 1 out of 3 people around the world? I've done a lot of work speaking around the world, and it's everywhere. Fast food and increasing rates of obesity and chronic disease. If you want to speak to that, yeah. Switch to whole plant foods, and don't even worry about how much. You're going to do so much better starting there. That's a great place to start. I don't want people to think it's limiting and restricting because it is a change. And volume wise, yeah, everyone agrees. Also half your plate should be fruits and vegetables. There's so little calorie density and so much nutrient density. That's a win, win, win for everyone. You can't go wrong with that.

Chris: That's great. Thank you. That's good clarification. And I get it. It is possible to overeat, to be an overeater. Even if you're gravitating to or eating mostly healthy foods, it is possible. "Hey, you're just eating too much food." Let's dial it down a little. So what's your opinion on the ketogenic diet?

Julieanna Hever: Oh my gosh.

Chris: Do you need to take a sip first? This might be a long diatribe?

Julieanna Hever: No, it's actually not going to be a long diatribe. Okay. So obviously, a keto diet that's meat heavy, why would you do that to yourself? You could lose weight, but you could also lose weight with things like cocaine and medications. But that's not healthy, and weight loss isn't the only goal. That's what I love about

what I teach and what you teach. You could lose weight and be healthy at the same time and have nutrient amazingness. There's such a beautiful array of what you get from plants. So if you want to do the plant-based keto, which is a little movement in that direction, I still go, "Why?" What is the reason? You can't go into ketosis, eating a plant-based diet, even a starch-based, plant-based.

Julieanna Hever: It's just is such a nonsense thing. I get so frustrated with macro confusion. This is the perfect example of macro confusion and how it could evolve and fork off into these crazy different paths that make no sense, biologically. When I say macro confusion, carbs, protein, and fat don't matter at all. They really don't matter. They're meaningless. They're biochemistry terms. We need to abandon them. The ultimate example of this was the article in 2018 in The Lancet journal that concluded that "High Carb Diets and Low Carb Diets Increased Mortality."

Chris: Right.

Julieanna Hever: What do you do with that information? So from the regular average person trying to understand nutrition, to the researcher at the top of its field, the person that is literally doing, navigating, and creating these studies, to the doctors and healthcare practitioners, let alone the media (that loves to spin things, whatever their goal is) the marketers, and the food marketers, nobody knows what to do with protein, carbs and fat. That's why we have never come to the perfect macro ratio that we need to follow for optimal health. It's nonsense. And that's why my message is begging everyone to switch away from protein, carbs, and fats. So we don't have things like keto diets. Switch it to eating that list of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, mushrooms, nuts, seeds, herbs, and spices in infinite tasty combinations. And then I use a mnemonic called the six daily threes, which helps prioritize which foods are ideal for nutrition. Oh my gosh. Until we get rid of protein, carbs, and fat as food groups, no one's going to have any sense of any of it.

Chris: That's a really important thing, too. I'm so glad we went there. I don't think about protein, carbs, and fat. I don't worry about them. I don't count them. I have in the past, out of curiosity, just to see what are my ratios. I'm just curious. The way I eat, what is it? But yeah, generally speaking, there's no point. There's no point in trying to count your carbs, your fat grams, or your protein grams. If you're eating tons of fruits and vegetables, tons of plant food, you're going to get what your body needs. You're going to get the broadest array of vitamins, minerals, enzymes, antioxidants, and all these wonderful phytochemicals in plant food that serve your body in really infinite ways. Ways that we don't even fully understand.

Chris: For the majority of the population, you will also lose weight and get much closer to a healthy BMI. Or get to a healthy BMI. That's so important. Everyone's obsessed with this low-carb, high-carb war of ideas. The keto thing, I'm asked about it all the time because the cancer world. This keto for cancer thing is the latest fad. The clean keto idea, this vegan keto, is probably the most difficult

way to eat a keto diet because it's so restrictive. What can you eat? Avocados, nuts, seeds, and coconut oil? You have to exclude so much of the plant kingdom to eat a plant-based keto diet. It makes no sense.

Julieanna Hever: There's no reason. There's absolutely no reason. It's ridiculous. Oh my gosh, coconut oil. Don't get me started on that. Why would you do that to yourself?

Chris: No, get started. I'm getting you started on it.

Julieanna Hever: Okay. It's like this miracle food that's not a miracle food at all. I mean, I love it. I put it on my hair. I put it on my skin. It's really nice. It goes on your skin really nice. It smells good. It's tropical. It is really high in saturated fat. It's medium-chain triglycerides. Finally, we got a review study two years ago. I think it was 2018, maybe 17. It's just as bad as, almost as bad as butter, we'll say. So here's the thing. The American Heart Association, not plant-based by any stretch of the imagination, they recommend on their website, boldly state, no more than 5 to 6% of total calories should come from saturated fat. Not that I'm asking anyone to calculate anything.

Julieanna Hever: I do it for fun too. I sometimes throw it in and just see what I'm eating just to know. But a vegan diet, a healthy vegan diet, a whole food, plant-based diet is about 5 to 6% total calories from saturated fat. If you had one serving of animal or animal secretions, (I'm sorry. I love that term.) or coconut oil, you are getting a boost of saturated fat. That's going to take you off that range. So you want heart disease? You want type 2 diabetes? Probably cancer? There's got to be links to saturated fat. Boom. Why? What's the mouth thing that they swished in their mouth? I forgot.

Chris: Oil pulling.

Julieanna Hever: They're oil pulling. They're putting it in there. And they're cooking with it. And they're thinking they're eating so healthy. Pitfall. Major pitfall. I don't recommend it.

Chris: I must admit. And this is not the first public admission, but I was completely convinced, a decade ago or more, maybe 15 years ago, that coconut oil was a superfood. That it was a superfood and that it was super healthy. Of course, it's from nature, and I love coconuts. They are delicious and all that. There were some internet health influencers and celebrity health influencers (I won't throw them under the bus) that were raving about coconut oil and how miraculous it was. And they influenced me. I started the Chris Beat Cancer blog in 2010. So early in those first few years, I thought coconut oil was great, and we were consuming a ton of it. I was putting a whole can of coconut milk in my smoothies. 800 calories.

Chris: An 800 calorie can of coconut. Because I'm thin, and I'm very active, for me, actually, weight loss is very easy. So I have to deliberately make sure I eat

enough each day in being active and going to the gym, doing CrossFit type stuff. I was really trying to pack on more weight, and I was adding full cans of coconut milk to my smoothies. After a couple of years of doing that, in the early days of experimentation, I became pre-diabetic. And I'm like, "What is happening?" My blood work was pre-diabetic. And I'm like, "What in the world?" I'm eating perfectly. What am I doing wrong here? I was eating plant-based, of course, tons of fruits and vegetables. And then I just stumbled across the research about saturated fat, coconut oil, and how fat contributes to diabetes. It's not the sugar, it's fat. And I was like, "Oh, well, shoot. I'm consuming a ton of fat." A lot of fat, here. And so I cut that out. In a very short time, my blood work went back to normal.

Julieanna Hever: That doesn't surprise me at all. The smoothie probably tasted delicious, but that result does not surprise me at all.

Chris: They were delicious, and they're still delicious without it. That was my big coconut oil, coconut fat wake-up call, for sure. And then I started to really look at more and more studies and pay attention. I had that cognitive dissonance thing where I didn't want to know that I was wrong. I didn't want to look at the other side. But once I did, I was like, "Okay. Alright. Yep. I'm wrong about that."

Julieanna Hever: Yeah, it's good. We always want to evolve the conversation and learn, and I always want to learn. If someone questions me on social media... I'm really active on social media. I love responding and reaching out to my audience and knowing what people need to know about because I want to help people. When someone tells me something, I say, "Oh, please send me to study." Because a lot of nonsense comes my way. Obviously, there's nonsense out there. I always want to learn and evolve the conversation. I'm always learning. It's so important. Any time we shut that down, what's the point? I know people that just say, "I'm done. I've learned it all." No, you haven't. The world is still unfolding.

Chris: It's true. I know a lot of people who stopped learning decades ago. You know what I'm saying? It's kind of funny. I was having this conversation with my daughter just the other day. She's 15. She's learning how to drive.

Julieanna Hever: So is my daughter!

Chris: She'll be 16 in January. It's right around the corner. Anyway, somehow it came up. She was kind of complaining about school because in school they force you to learn all this stuff you're not interested in. And that's hard. It's hard to have to study a bunch of stuff you don't care about. And I was trying to explain to her that you're going to keep learning your whole life. And when you get out of school, you can really focus on learning things that you like, that you care about.

Chris: And it's so much fun to learn when you're learning things you care about. Then, somehow it evolved to me saying, "Listen, you never want to stop learning. I

know people who got to a certain age, maybe it was about college age or whatever, and they just decided they knew everything. There was nothing new to learn. And those people have not progressed, and they're in their 40s. And you know, they're not doing great in life, generally speaking, because they just stopped learning." And this is bad in the scientific community, too. The nutrition, scientific, and medical community, they learn a certain amount, and they decide, "Ok, that's it." I know it all. There's nothing else for me to learn. And then, those people actually become the least scientific people in the scientific community. Because science is never settled.

Julieanna Hever: Correct. Yes. And particularly the ones that have written books and are established in the community. So people just admire no matter what they say. And they stick to their guns. I've had many, many debates and discussions with people like that or with the clients and patients of people like that. They're like, "Nope. Because "so-and-so" says "such and such." And that's how it is." I think that's dangerous and sad. I think we all need to keep learning and not shut the door on that. I think that's hugely important. Nutrition is the most evolving field of all. I mean, as far as I know, we learned so much about it. It's so complicated and yet so simple because the answer is always just eat plants. But there is a lot of complexity and nuances to the details. And I love a healthy debate. I think it's fantastic. I always learn something, and I want to learn. It's exciting.

Chris: Yeah, it is. If you've got a book called *The Paleo Whatever*, you've kind of entrenched yourself as a paleo guy. And it's going to be really hard to walk away from that once you've written a book about how great paleo is because it was the big fad 10 years ago. I get it. There's a lot of influencers that stake their claim in this thing. And now they're fighting tooth and nail to preserve their reputation and the advice that they gave. And they don't look at any new evidence. Yeah, it's tough.

Julieanna Hever: Don't you have more respect for the people that will say, "Oh, I'm going to walk away from this because I learned such and such." That's awesome. Yeah.

Chris: I know. I think we all, as humans, have to continually remind ourselves, we don't know everything. We've got to keep learning. For me, I've learned a lot, and there's a lot of things that I feel very confident about: my opinions about nutrition, for example. I'm very confident because I've spent so many years, 17 years, reading, researching, studying, and learning from survivors and from my own experience. So I have a foundation of knowledge that I feel very confident in, but at the same time, I had to keep that in check and remind myself, "You just need to stay open. Stay open to new ideas, to new information. Just stay open."

Julieanna Hever: I love it.

Chris: So what are you working on now? What's your next project?

Julieanna Hever: So many things! I'm so excited. I'm still seeing clients one-on-one. I still do individual coaching. And I've been doing a lot of weight loss because I've just become so passionate about empowering people to decide what they want and to choose themselves. I have all these tools and things that I want to help them with. It's been really exciting because the results are extraordinary, mind-blowing, and life-transforming. I've watched people transform their lives during this process where they're starting new adventures. It's been so mind-blowing and exciting for me. So I'm doing a lot of that. I want it to reach more people because I only have so many hours in the day. And so I started a weight loss support group, which is really fun because now I get to work with the group.

Julieanna Hever: It's not as one-on-one, but the accountability is happening within the group. I just launched it last week. So I'm really excited about that. And of course, this is evolving into my next book. I'm talking to my publishers right now. So that'll be the next book, which I'm really excited about and developing programs. I just want to share all this information. Like everyone gets better. Results are typical. I love seeing this every day, and I can't talk about it loudly enough. I just want everyone to eat more plants,

Chris: Eat more plants. Where can people find out about what you're doing now? At [PlantBasedDietitian.com](http://PlantBasedDietitian.com)?

Julieanna Hever: Yes, on my [PlantBasedDietitian.com](http://PlantBasedDietitian.com)., I have my services page, and that has the weight loss group at the bottom. I'm on social media regularly, very regularly. I've been doing lives. I'm doing 2 lives today. One with a chef, with Jazzy Vegetarian. And I'm doing a live with my friend, Kathy Freston, who's an amazing influencer, author, New York Times best-selling author. So I'm doing that stuff, too. A lot of online social media stuff. It's been really nice. I'm doing this thing called "What Would Julieanna Do? Q&A" based on my TV show, *What Would Julieanna Do?* I talk mostly about nutrition, cooking, diet, and weight loss, but also beauty, fashion, and stuff. In that community, that's what people are asking about. And I love to talk about all that stuff. I'm developing these connections with people and learning what they need to know about. And it's been really fun. I'm having a really good time making videos and communicating on social media, too. So I'm all out there either as Plant Based Dietitian or my name, Julieanna Hever, (which is hard to spell, so I should always stick to Plant-Based Dietitian.)

Chris: How old are your kids now?

Julieanna Hever: Well, I have a 15-year-old daughter who will be 16 in July.

Chris: Are you teaching her to drive?

Julieanna Hever: No. My ex-husband is. I'm a little nervous about it, but she's doing really well. She's cute. I've taken her a couple times, and she's really excited about it. And my son is 13. Do you have more than your daughter?

Chris: I have two daughters about same age, 15 and 12. Yeah. They're sweet. They're a little sassy right now, but they're still sweet. There's still some sweetness

Julieanna Hever: Glimpses of sweetness that will counteract all that stuff.

Chris: Yeah. The little one ...12, 6th grade is such a big transition year when they really start to go from being little. You know what I'm saying? They still feel and act like a kid, to tween and junior high, growing up and maturing more. It's hard. It's hard, as a dad, to watch my little one become a little more mature and independent. But that's life.

Julieanna Hever: Oh, I know. What's so interesting is, I have the experience of both a girl and a boy. My boy is going through that now. But it's so different, as a boy, because forget the physical stuff, it's just not as sassy, but it's a different kind of difficult. It's interesting. Kids are interesting. Oh my goodness. I wish there was a parenting manual that really worked.

Chris: So many out there. Yeah. Well, that's great. That's exciting. It's been really fun to hang out and talk to you and get to know you more. And I just love what you're doing. Please keep it up. And of course, we'll link to your social media and your website in the show notes, so people can find you and your books on Amazon. It's been really fun. I know we run in a lot of the same circles. You know, when the world opens up and gets back to normal, maybe I'll see you at a conference or an event. Have you ever spoken on the Holistic Cruise?

Julieanna Hever: Likewise to you. I love what you're doing. I'm so excited to meet you because this is amazing, what you're doing. And so I'm really happy to meet. Two years ago I finally got the invitation. I wanted to speak on that so bad and had an amazing time. And then did it again last year. And then COVID, so I was on the virtual cruise this year.

Chris: We were both on the virtual cruise this year. I was on the boat at the beginning of the year, the actual cruise in February, right before COVID. Things were happening around the world, and we were on the boat going, "I hope everything's going to be okay." It was early February, so the news stories were starting to matriculate.

Julieanna Hever: I flew home from Thailand through Hong Kong on January 20th, and there were hazmat suits when we landed in Hong Kong. And I was like, "What's going on?" We've been in Thailand for 3 weeks. "What's going on?" They weren't talking about it yet there. At least, I wasn't paying attention because I was working. I got home in the nick of time because otherwise, 3 days later, I would have been stuck out of the country.

Chris: Whoa. That's a close call. We made it home. Had a great cruise. As far as I knew, nobody on the boat got sick or anything. And it was really fine. I was supposed to come back and speak. I think they've canceled the 2021 cruise. They do want



me to come back and speak. And I'm sure they want you to come back and speak, so maybe we'll see each other on a cruise ship at some point in the future.

Julieanna Hever: I hope so. Cheers to that.

Chris: Yeah. Alright. Well, it's super fun. Thanks a lot. Julieanna Hever. You're awesome. Keep doing your great work. Thanks for watching everybody. Please share this video with people you care about. We need to spread this message. Plant-based nutrition is awesome. It can help you heal and prevent disease. Your choices matter. You don't have to be a victim of disease. You can make different choices today that'll affect your health and your future tomorrow. So why not? Alright. Thanks again.

Julieanna Hever: Thank you so much. You're amazing.

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