

## Small Steps

Sometimes it's small steps that lead to big changes.

My friend Tina has gone from hopeless to healthier in a matter of months that way.

I told you about Tina in my last column. She's the young woman whose pelvic pain from endometriosis was so severe it made labor seem like mild indigestion, but who was so addicted to her pain, drugs and drama that she couldn't take charge of her own health. Given the choice of cleaning up her act or facing a ninth surgery, she'd take the knife, thank you.

So I was surprised to see Tina at the local food co-op last week with basket full of brightly colored produce and a broad smile on her face. She looked so bright and bouncy, I almost didn't recognize her. What had happened?

Well, some things in her life had changed—and led to further changes.

First, after months of unemployment and near-despair, she had found a job as hostess in a hometown restaurant. Her previous, high-powered position in Minneapolis had entailed a sugar and caffeine-fueled, hour-long commute, followed at day's end by burgers and beer with coworkers and arriving home in time only to tuck her preschool daughter into bed. Here in our small town, she knows both her customers and coworkers, is comfortable.

But here in the hometown, she knows everybody and everybody knows her. Now comfortable in her own skin, she hurries home after work to her husband and child. No more need for happy hour, which in turn automatically cut down on her smoking and drinking. Fed by that success, she also confidently cut back on sugar and began holding herself to only one burger a week. She's feeling empowered, she says, and more energetic. More importantly, she is detoxifying her body.

These simple-but-not-easy changes are crucial to her healing. Endometriosis used to be regarded as a gynecological or a menstrual disorder. Recent research has revealed that—like 85% of diseases that drive us to doctors-- it is fed by environmental toxins that cause hormonal imbalances and neurotransmitter disruptions in the body. It is also made worse by the "Type A" personality that feeds on drama and the need to feel in control.

Many Americans are missing the connection between our state of mind, our diets and our health. Fortunately, Tina's story reminds us that taking a few small steps in the direction of greater health—and finding success--may be far more effective than planning a massive makeover and setting ourselves up for failure.