

how doreen got her glow back

Here's how one reader found her way back to health and happiness

By Kat James

After 11 years of friendship, followed by only a few months of long-awaited marriage, inspirational singer and music teacher Doreen Coleman lost her husband in a tragic car accident. “My other half, my source of comfort in this world for over a decade was gone,” says Doreen. “My heart had been torn out. I couldn’t eat, and I couldn’t sleep. I dropped to near 90 pounds.”

From Regimented to Rebel: Food and Post-traumatic Stress

Since then, many fortunate events helped Doreen get back on her feet emotionally. A new relationship led to renewed hope, and eventually to marriage. Doreen resumed her music career, and her weight rose back to 112 pounds with her returning appetite. But general anxiety since the tragedy, the stress of a new choir-directing position, and the duress of donating a kidney to her mother in 2004 led Doreen to turn to food for comfort.

“After years of regimented, careful (though misguided) eating, followed by not being able to eat at all, I guess I started to rebel against my past self-deprivation and eat like I was a kid again,” says Doreen. The pounds came on gradually at first, and then seemed to compound, interrupted by occasional losses during her many calorie- and portion-control diets. But one day in late 2007, she hit an all-time high of 175 pounds and realized that her low energy and rising weight had become a barrier to feeling good physically, and perhaps to her future success as an artist.



Photo by Alana Cundy

Doreen's top weight was 175 pounds; today, she is working toward her goal of reaching a size 6.

Beginning a Higher Quest: Biochemical Balance

Doreen decided to look beyond the diet-and-exercise paradigm and learn more about nutrition. Her search brought her to my program held in Syracuse, N.Y., in February, followed by eight weeks of group phone sessions where she learned more from guest experts, including the impact that hormonal issues, such as insulin resistance, adrenal exhaustion, and low progesterone (which saliva tests later confirmed), could have on weight, energy, and even a person’s under-eye circles. Living on adrenaline, without real nutrients, fat, or even much sleep—in addition to textbook post-traumatic stress—had completely exhausted Doreen’s adrenal glands. Her thyroid function was in question too. All of this would explain the stubborn weight that would no longer respond to calorie restriction. Doreen decided to undergo hormone testing and ultimately designed her own program based on a smorgasbord of expert opinions, strategies, and the experiences of the group.

After cutting her sugar and starch intake, and increasing healthful proteins and fat, she started taking a whole-food multivitamin, a fish oil supplement, blood sugar stabilizing nutrients (NuNaturals LevelRight), and antistress

nutrients (New Chapter Stress Advantage). Later, after her hormone tests, Doreen added raw adrenal glandular supplementation, and DHEA (the 7-Keto form). Even before hormone testing and beginning additional supplementation, Doreen noticed she was gaining a lot of energy during the day, becoming tired at night, and that her usual five or six hours of sleep had become six to eight.

“Before, I never slept well, and then was exhausted the next day,” says Doreen. “Now, I have lots of daytime energy—even in the morning.”

I had seen this phenomenon of dramatic sleep improvement in response to these changes in diet for many years on my programs, so I decided to ask metabolic health pioneer Ron Rosedale, MD, for the medical explanation.

“Sugar, and foods that raise blood sugar levels, act as ‘excitotoxins’ in the brain, preventing deep sleep,” he said. “Cutting them out will calm the brain and often dramatically improve sleep, as can increasing fat intake at the same time, which also relaxes the brain.”

Vibrant and Glowing

Changes in Doreen’s skin and moods were also noticeable after only a few days on her new program. Her skin was smoother and tighter, which is generally

the immediate effect of reduced inflammation. "My moods fluctuate far less," she says. "And I'm no longer stressed by old temptations, like the plate of mini cream puffs I encountered at a recent charity event. I'm satisfied by amazingly smaller amounts of food these days because my body knows it has been deeply nourished."

Don't "Weight," Celebrate

At first, Doreen was very focused on the scale. Anticipating this, I asked her to have her husband, Patrick, hide the scale. "Although it was scary at first, not being able to weigh myself was very freeing. Right away, I had nothing to focus on but my choices and my health. That said, my belly is disappearing, my behind is smaller, and my legs and upper arms are firmer. I feel too amazing to ever eat or live like I was living again. The best part is that Patrick—who now eats this way too—no longer falls asleep right after dinner. Life just got more interesting!"

Do You Have a Question for Kat James?



KAT JAMES IS the author of *The Truth About Beauty*, recently rereleased and completely updated. James transformed her own body and skin after a

12-year eating disorder and liver disorder nearly took her life. A powerful motivator with a passion for creative strategies that deliver tangible and sustainable results, James has been featured on the Today Show, MSNBC, PBS, and in numerous national magazines. She regularly lectures and conducts workshops on healthful lifestyles. To learn about Kat's Total Transformation program, visit informedbeauty.com.

E-mail your health, nutrition, and beauty questions to Kat at her Web site, informedbeauty.com.

Recently, I suggested to Doreen that we have some pictures taken to celebrate her progress and share her story with *Better Nutrition* readers. I took out my makeup brushes (tools of my former trade), and we played up Doreen's new glow with cosmetics from the health food store (see sidebar). From the first time I saw Doreen at my program in February to now, her face and her body have been truly revitalized. I asked if she had been sunbathing; she had not. The golden tone and glow of her skin—which she herself couldn't believe—was likely from the carotenoids (plant pigments) in all of those raw green smoothies she drinks on an almost daily basis.

When I first showed Doreen her pictures at the shoot, she welled up with tears. "I was apprehensive about having pictures taken before I reached my goal of a size 6," she says. "But when I saw them, I couldn't believe it. I saw something in my face that I had long forgotten. Something I don't even think I had at a size 6. It struck me that being healthy doesn't always mean being at your goal weight, and that being at your goal weight isn't always healthy. I will take feeling great and glowing any day!" ♦

Natural Cosmetic Glow-Getters

Foundation: Lavera Trend Sensitive Make Up Fluid Naturel; nice, sheer, and flawless.

Eye shadow: Ecco Bella in Deep Taupe, a color I use on just about everyone, even on brows.

Lips: Eco Lips EcoTints in Mocha Velvet, followed with a touch of PureGloss Lip Gloss in Melon by Jane Iredale.

Blush: Dr. Hauschka Blush in 01 Accento, a sunny, gold-peach tone.

Bronzer: Ecco Bella FlowerColor Bronzing Powder, applied with large, beveled brush just where the sun hits.

Mascara: Annemarie Börlind in Brown, top lashes only; this mascara does not clump or look fake.

CHILDREN

DON'T NEED

ORGANIC

NUTRITION.



TRUE



FALSE

SAVING