

# Congratulations to Another Star McDougaller

## Star McDougaller: Charles Alexander "Listen to your body's wake up calls"



Charles Alexander

When I was 40 years old (I am now 68) I was very surprised to discover during an annual physical that I had borderline hypertension and elevated cholesterol. At the time I felt that I was eating a good diet which provided lots of animal protein, which I assumed was necessary for my rigorous exercise program (bodybuilding and running regularly since age 16). This is the way my parents and grandparents ate, and if it was good enough for them, it must be good enough for me. I wondered, "How could I possibly have elevated cholesterol and hypertension with such a "healthy" diet and such a strenuous exercise program?"

A couple of weeks after the physical, I was invited to attend a lecture in my hometown of Honolulu, Hawaii, where a young doctor was speaking about how to be healthy through diet and moderate exercise. That doctor was John McDougall. I was struck by his discussion about the geographic distribution of many diseases throughout the world, and how the diseases of our western world were, and still are, rare in developing nations where rich, fatty foods are not readily available. I was so impressed with the research-

For breakfast I typically ate two or three scrambled eggs with a few strips of bacon, toast with butter, and a quart of whole milk. Lunch might consist of two roast beef sandwiches smothered in mayonnaise. And for dinner I'd eat chicken or beef with mashed potatoes drowned in greasy gravy—once in a while I'd add a vegetable. And of course, dinner was not complete without ice cream and cake.

I came to learn that the way my family ate was far from healthy. I grew up in a middle-class family living about 30 miles from Philadelphia. My parents smoked two to three packs of cigarettes a day and drank alcohol regularly. Dad was a meat-and-potatoes man and loved his beef cooked rare with none of the peripheral fat cut away. In addition to having a penchant for animal fat, he also loved to smother his food with salt. He had such a liking for the taste of sodium that he would put salt in his beer. It's no wonder he was plagued with hypertension most of his short adult life before dying at age 61. My grandfather on my father's side also had a problem with the hypertension and that was the cause of his demise at the age of 61. Because my mother never went to the doctor, I don't know what maladies affected her, but we suspect she had the beginnings of osteoporosis and heart disease. A massive stroke took her life at age 71.

At the time of my physical, my cholesterol was 230 mg/dL and my blood pressure was around 180/95 mmHg. My doctor seemed to be as surprised as I was and could only attribute these problems to heredity. I asked him if my diet could be affecting my blood pressure and cholesterol, but he didn't think so. He did, however, feel confident that drugs would take care of my problems. (I chose not to take the cholesterol-lowering drug, but did start the blood pressure pills.)

based information that Dr. McDougall presented that I promised myself I would attend the rest of the lectures in the series. I began to make the necessary changes in my diet and give my body every possible chance to be healthy.

Throughout the lectures I learned that there were indeed ways to treat high blood pressure and high cholesterol with a healthy diet and without drugs. I read the McDougalls' first publication; a ring-bound recipe book called *Making the Change*, and followed their advice completely. During a visit to his medical office he explained to me that if I followed his diet, I would steadily lose weight until I reached the level that was natural for my frame and body type. And that is exactly what happened. When I made the dietary changes, my 5'5" frame was carrying a pudgy 165 pounds. At the end of the first month on the diet, I had lost eight pounds and, surprisingly, never left the dining room table wanting more food. My stomach was full, my appetite was sated, and my body was becoming lean and healthy.

As for my own family, my wife was not interested in making a dietary change, nor were my two teenage children, although they were interested in the concept. Thankfully, my kids adopted much of the McDougall diet after they got married and had children of their own. Most of my meals now are centered around vegetable stews, lentil stews, brown rice, chili, potatoes, Portuguese bean soup (without meat or oil), or just a bowl of frozen vegetables with McDougall's pasta sauce. All my dishes come from the McDougall cookbooks. Making the dietary change was not difficult for me since I believed in the program from the beginning, and that it would reduce the chances of me contracting many of the health problems that afflict westerners. It took me about two months for my palate to adjust to all the natural foods. Now the only time I'm in danger of backsliding is when I'm hungry and there is no McDougall food at hand.



After losing about 20 pounds, I expressed concern to Dr. McDougall that if I continued to lose weight at this rate (while eating all I wanted), I would be nothing but skin and bones. Dr. McDougall assured me that I would continue to lose unnecessary pounds until I reached the weight that nature had intended for me. In approximately six months, when I reached 125 pounds, I stopped losing weight, even though I continued to eat until I was full at each meal. That was in 1980, and I've maintained this weight ever since while continuing to eat according to the McDougall Plan. As Dr. McDougall expected, my high blood pressure dropped to normal, as did my cholesterol, after about two to three months.

I am now 68 years old and am in excellent health. I take no drugs, vitamins, nor supplements. In addition to losing weight, and lowering my blood pressure and cholesterol, I have also gained much more energy and I am less susceptible to colds, flu, and other common maladies. I bicycle 70 miles a week, play tennis twice a week, and work out with light weights every other day.

Many of my peers who continue to eat the typical western, high-fat, low-fiber diet, and get little or no exercise, show the symptoms of an unhealthy lifestyle, such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and breast and colon cancers. They are always impressed when they see what activities I'm involved in, observe my lean and muscular body, and learn that I don't take any drugs or supplements. They begin to realize that there must be something to a healthy diet and lifestyle.

That serendipitous invitation to attend Dr. McDougall's lecture 27 years ago had a profound and positive effect on my health and wellbeing. I plan on continuing the McDougall diet so that I will

have many more years to do the things I love.

Charles Alexander  
Kailua, Hawaii

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### Dr. McDougall's Comments

The McDougall Program is for people interested in a lifetime of good health and an outstanding personal appearance, as Charles Alexander clearly demonstrates. He has never looked back, nor does anyone else who really learns and honestly embraces the Program. You will not find followers of the McDougall philosophy searching the tabloids for the next miracle weight loss diet or waiting for a pharmaceutical discovery that lets them gorge themselves while remaining trim. Why would they waste their time? They have already found the answer in a simple meal plan.

"The truth will set you free." It really will. Just as Charles was set free from a family history condemning him to an early death from hypertension and heart disease. Without any conscious thought, Charles trimmed down to a slim body weight and has maintained his muscular appearance for more than a quarter century. And without any pills his body adjusted to a healthy blood pressure and cholesterol. He is free—disease-free.

Learning the principles of the McDougall diet does not appear to most people to be as easy as counting calories or eating only low-carbohydrate foods (meat, eggs, and cheese). What they fail to consider is with our diet you don't suffer the constant pains of hunger from limiting portions and the expected sicknesses (constipation, fatigue, headaches, oily skin, bone loss, kidney stones, etc.) from inadequate carbohydrates, and way too much fat and protein. Because people following our program fill up with delicious foods and look and feel great, they remain happy for a long lifetime.

Learning valuable skills takes some effort—like learning to properly speak a foreign language, be a nurse, or fly an airplane. But the return for the student in each case is well worth all of the effort. Learning proper eating is no different—once learned, the advantages are for life. Charles has reaped the benefits every day for the past 27 years—and so have thousands of others.

I (Dr. McDougall) have known the reason most people are chronically ill and how to cure them since 1977 (for 30 years). But I still have not fully figured out how to get most people to give up their old habits and set themselves free. We (Mary and I) try new methods at every opportunity. Together, we have written books, given lectures, held seminars, and taken people to exotic destinations (like [Costa Rica](#)). The most effective tool we have found is 10 days of intensive education and medical care at [our clinic in Santa Rosa, California](#). I estimate over 90% of participants leave our clinic permanently changed—off medications, and in control of their health and personal appearance.

Tens of thousands of people who are not able to take advantage of our live-in experience have been able to change themselves by using the free information on [our web site](#). For a small investment our latest creations provide some of the most cost-effective and practical help. These two DVDs, [McDougall Made Easy](#) and [McDougall Made Irresistible](#), demonstrate more than 34 delicious and simple-to-make meals prepared by Mary in her kitchen. For everyday living, you need only one selection for breakfast and one for lunch and a couple for dinner. Find four to six recipes you like from this entertaining collection and eat them over and over again. Now how easy is that? This is unquestionably a small price to pay to have the same degree of control over your life that Charles and thousands of others have after learning the McDougall Program.