

Lauren's Kitchen: It's a Wrap!

So I am a little obsessed with the best lunch hack ever—swiss chard rolls. I am so into this that I've been keeping a steady stock of chard in my fridge—crazy right? Well crazy-good is what I have to say. Chard rolls/wraps have been around for some time on the raw scene but it wasn't until my friend and chef extraordinaire Kelly Ritter made a scrumptious batch for a recent team meeting that I got hooked. It also finally sunk in that I could totally make these on my own and with a huge variety of fillings—including leftover kale salad and avocado which, by the way, happens to be double delicious wrapped up in a chard leaf!

Because a recipe isn't really required I thought the best way to get you hooked too was to share a list of my favorite fillings, this Pinterest board I created for further inspiration, and some visual guides for turning that wild leaf into a charming finger food.

The chard leaf can be prepped a variety of ways as pictured below. My personal favorite is to split the leaf along the spine, using it later chopped in soup or salad, placing the filling along the wider bottom portion and rolling up toward the narrow tip.



With that method you will end up with smaller but more manageable rolls.



Alternatively you can use the whole leaf as shown here and slice in half once filled.



Once you choose a method that works for you, the fun can begin! I find using a spread as a base is helpful in keeping the chopped fruit and or vegetables you add in place. Here are a few of my go to combinations:

Hummus/Avocado/Red Pepper Slices

Cashew Spread/Left over Kale Salad

Mashed Avocado/Jicama Strips/Mango

Another note in closing...this is happy food, I guarantee making and eating these will make you smile!

Gemmotherapy Answers: Why Go Plant-Based?

Wouldn't you like this to be the year that you resolved your seasonal allergies? Or possibly it's that painful menses that gets in your way each month or chronic headaches? Whatever the symptom, the very reason you struggle with it is because the organs and systems designed to resolve it are not functioning at their best. This poor function directly impacts your immunity, your body's ability to distinguish self from nonself.

Throughout the early years of my trainings and clinical practice I discovered that immunity can begin to restore and symptoms can be resolved when these two steps are followed:

1. Optimize Elimination, specifically bowel and kidney function
2. Clean and Fortify Organs, engaging with the lymphatic and circulatory systems

These steps are best achieved with a plant-based diet and an individualized Gemmotherapy protocol based to support the organs that will be doing the work.

What I have discovered after the first 100 cases testing my

method was that individuals who did not make the needed shift in their daily diet, continued to deal with symptoms.

Let's look at it this way. There is not a parent I know who can't identify with the never ending chore of decluttering the house. You get things just where you want them, and then in come all those people you love, with all your heart, leaving a trail of their "stuff" right through what you tidied up. Urgh! Now you've got to start the chore of cleaning all over again!

The same is true in your body. You make all the effort to clean and support healing of your symptoms by taking Gemmotherapy and homeopathic protocols and yet on a daily basis add to the "clutter" by eating foods that cause inflammation—even in small amounts as a *treat*! Not only does this keep your body in a constant state of inflammation it is exhausting as well. Imagine what you could do with all of that extra energy!

What your body wants is a diet that **compliments and supports its natural ability to clean, eliminate and heal itself**. This is a built-in process you come into this world with—you don't even need to upgrade, you just have to take care to work with the amazing body you have.

Your body is a great communicator and those symptoms that get you down are just an example of it telling you some changes are needed. Sure, you can choose to ignore the symptoms or suppress them with medication, but the inflammation doesn't go away.

You get to choose whether you listen now and take care or wait until the inflammation becomes chronic and the effects lead to a diagnosis.



I've written many posts about the very simple symptoms that are commonly ignored or suppressed that should be alarms to you that your body is not happy with what you are feeding it. Here's one example of the symptoms often seen in children and here's another of those in adults. If you see your symptoms listed, then it **is** about what you are eating and it's time to make a change. Here's some inspiration to get you started.

Is it going to be easy? No, actually not to begin with. We live in a loud world with a lot of money spent to sell you products that are going to keep you inflamed, keep you dealing with symptoms, and keep you from living the life you were born to live.

But, you don't have to change everything at once, because it will be overwhelming. Changing the way you eat is like learning a whole new language, one word or phrase at a time until eventually you are fluent, or almost! Change your breakfast and stay with that until you can't even remember what a breakfast taco tasted like, which by the way, you can eat for lunch, or better yet, dinner—just hold the cheese.

Over the course of the next few weeks, while I revisit and update past blog posts, I'll take you through the process of making the appropriate shifts. Until then, load up on your fruit for breakfast and Increase the veggies you eat throughout the day!

Lauren's Kitchen: Watermelon Gazpacho



This may be called watermelon gazpacho but it tastes exactly like summer. Every bite is absolutely loaded to the brim with summer flavors. Spicy freshly-plucked-from-the-garden Serrano chilies, sweet juicy watermelon that cracks wide open on the first cut, dense fruity tomatoes, and just a hint of fresh mint and basil. The only part of summer missing from this recipe is a swimming pool and its probably best to hold the chlorine.

I've just made a big batch to take for an evening vegan potluck with dear friends and while the flavors meld in the fridge I can't stop dipping in for another taste. I may have eaten my share by the time dinner rolls around. It's just sooooo delicious and refreshing.

Let this recipe serve as a good base and enjoy playing with the proportions and ingredients to suit your tastes and what you have on hand.

Here's a list of the basics:

4 cups (640 g) roughly chopped seedless watermelon, plus 6 cups (960 g) diced

2 cups (300g) diced tomatoes (*I prefer Heirloom varieties*)

1 cup (145 g) peeled, seeded, and diced cucumber

1/2 cup (70g) diced red pepper

2 Tbsp (30 ml) diced red onion, plus more to taste (scallions *also work well*)

3 Tbsp (45 ml) finely chopped basil

3 Tbsp (45 ml) finely chopped mint

3 Tbsp (45 ml) freshly squeezed lime juice, plus more to taste

1 tsp (5 ml) finely grated lime zest

2 tsp (10 ml) minced ginger

1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) minced green serrano chile, plus more to taste

1/2 Tbsp (7.5 ml) natural salt, plus more to taste

Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

(*My addition: one bunch of finely chopped cilantro*)

Full directions can be found here on Ricki Heller's blog.

Gemmotherapy Answers: The Stages of Healing REDUX

Last week I explained how chronic symptoms will appear at particular stages in one's lifetime when the basic functions

of cleaning, eliminating and healing are compromised. I called on parents to be aware and responsive to very simple symptoms that appear in their baby or young child, one of those in particular is constipation. By parent's responding EARLY the healing process is EASY! Taking care of simple constipation early in life can prevent a host of chronic problems from developing. The longer the body must compensate for its inability to clean, the more serious the symptoms become over time and the longer and more complicated the healing process.

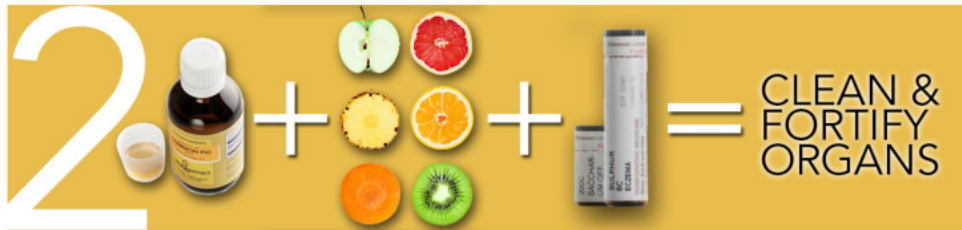
Over the years in my practice it has become very apparent that the body moves through specific stages in order to completely heal—where symptoms no longer occur and the inflammation is not just relocated. Skipping steps isn't an option if a lasting cure is desired. Last summer I began working with this idea and shared a blog post on the Stages of Healing. Since that time the process has matured and there is good news. Last year I saw that there were five stages of healing and now it seems there are only four—so there is one step less for your body!

These four stages have now become my core methodology and I am pleased to now begin sharing it with my clients and other like-minded practitioners. Just last May in Timisoara, Romania I had the honor of sharing The Living Well 4™ Methodology to two hundred physicians and pharmacists who believe in the body's self healing capabilities and are looking for a treatment path to restore it.

I am pleased to share with you the Living Well 4™ in graphic form! Below you will see each stage of cleaning and what, based on my clinical practice, works best to support each stage—A Plant-Based Diet, Gemmotherapy and Homeopathy. Your awareness and understanding of each stage should help you chart your own healing progress. Your care and attention to your protocols is what will gauge your progress.



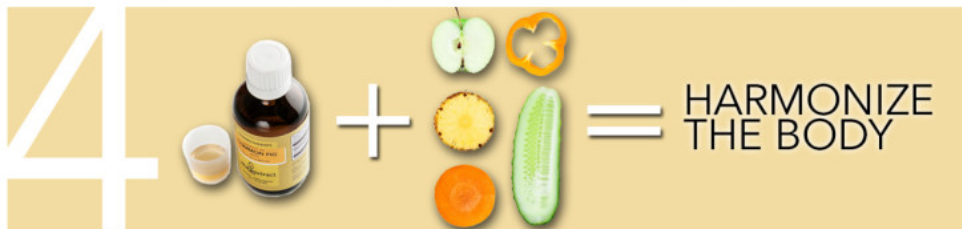
Stage One OPENS ROUTES OF ELIMINATION with specific Gemmotherapy extracts to restore optimal functionality for the bowels, kidneys, and, in women, the uterus, so that when the cleaning begins the body is prepared to handle the elimination of waste.



Stage Two CLEANS AND FORTIFIES ORGANS with the next level of Gemmotherapy extracts that target the lymphatic system encouraging drainage while still supporting the bowels and kidneys. A continued whole food, plant-based, alkalizing diet and the introduction of homeopathic remedies selected using Polarity Analysis™.



Stage Three OPTIMIZES ORGAN FUNCTION with Gemmotherapy extracts that support specific organs and organ systems that have been compromised over time. This is complimented by a continuation of a whole food, plant-based, alkalizing diet and the use of homeopathy.



Stage Four HARMONIZES THE BODY with Gemmotherapy extracts that will provide continuous gentle support to inherited organ weaknesses that may have been caused by long term use of harsh pharmaceutical medicines, surgery, or exposure to environmental toxins.

So, how do you know where you are in this process? It's all dependent on the symptoms your body is producing. Here's a simple outline to explain.

You are at **Stage One** if your elimination is not optimized, meaning you are not having two formed, easily passed bowel movements daily, and/or you are regularly waking at night to urinate.

You are at **Stage Two** if elimination has been optimized but you are having menstrual symptoms, bloating, skin conditions, headaches, painful inflammation anywhere in the body, sleep

disturbances, or anxiety.

You are at **Stage Three** if elimination has been optimized and most of your symptoms mentioned in Stage Two have healed or are greatly reduced.

You are at **Stage Four** when your elimination is optimized, symptoms are healed and you need light support to manage inherited organ weaknesses or damage done by pharmaceuticals or physical injury.

Ready to start cleaning your body so it can heal naturally? I'd love to be your guide. Check back next week and I will share the key starting point to the Living Well 4™—a plant-based diet.

Lauren's Kitchen: Cucumber Corn Salad



So my husband, Joachim, and I share the grocery shopping as well as meal prep at our house. It is a unique divide however. He manages and maintains the fruit inventory because he makes the family morning smoothies and knows what he needs. You will recognize him as the guy at HEB or Whole Foods with a grocery cart brimming with fruit. My job on the other hand is the

evening meal which consists of raw vegetable salads and a plant based main course, so you can only guess what my cart looks like. Anyway, somehow this week we were both tempted by the abundance of local organic corn (which is not a fruit by the way) and ended up with more than we wanted to eat straight off the cob. The bounty left me searching for ideas, which is how I came across this refreshing cucumber corn salad. It was so amazing that I have to go buy more corn!

The recipe calls for this simple list of ingredients:

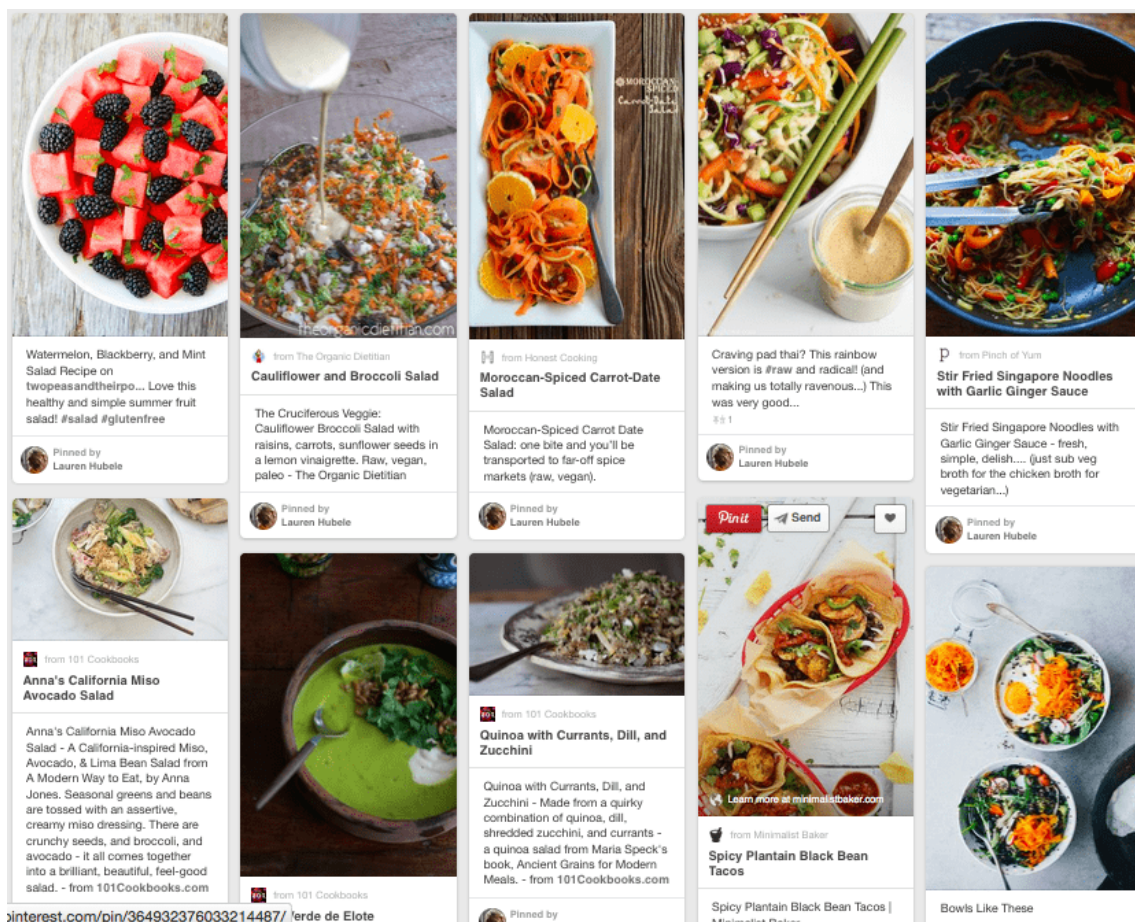
- 3 cups cooked cut corn (from about 5 medium cobs)
- 2 cups cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped (about 1 large cucumber)
- 1/2 cup basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup chives, snipped
- 2 Tablespoons light mayonnaise (I suggest this vegan mayo and a splash or two of olive oil to thin it)
- Salt & fresh ground pepper, to taste

Be sure to make a double batch as it packs up well for lunch the next day. Full directions available [here](#).

Lauren's Kitchen: How About a Summer Reset?

Yes, it is true that in my dream world all of you would be following a plant-based diet to the "T" day in and out and no one would need a reset. Then there is reality...and vacations...and family gatherings...and holiday weekends like the one we just had and suddenly you find you have strayed so far you can't even remember why you were following this plant-based idea in the first place. Sadly, that happens to be the

time when many throw in the towel and give up completely on their ability to eat whole and clean on a regular basis.



I have another idea! How about this—instead of giving up on yourself, you actually believe in your abilities to make change and love your body enough to do a 10 day reset? Will this 10 day reset detox your body from all that you have been feasting on? Honestly? Not completely, but it's a great start and most importantly will reset your cravings by reducing the acid levels and give you some structure to follow on day 11 and beyond—which is exactly what you need and why you should do it.

So who's in?

I've had a bit of fun getting this ready for you all and I hope you can let yourself have fun with this process as well. While eating clean is serious business when it comes to your long term health and wellbeing, preparing and eating your meals should be pure pleasure.

Here's the program I suggest you follow for the purpose of resetting your pH levels, improving digestion, and giving your energy levels a boost. Just know this isn't a magic detox. It's ten days of mindful eating to reset your course of food choices moving forward.

You daily meal plan should look like this:

Morning: fresh fruit, fresh squeezed juice or all fruit smoothie on an empty stomach. Please consume as much as you can.

Mid Morning: all fruit smoothie or fresh juice, OR a mixed fruit and veggie smoothie and juice, OR a bowl of cut fruit. (Again, no restrictions on the amount consumed. Have as much as you need to feel full.)

Midday: salad or leftovers from your evening meal. If that's not an option, consider a vegan soup and salad combination from a local source. (ATX readers, consider the Soup Peddler and use FAVOR to deliver it to your office!)

Late Afternoon: raw veggies and hummus, apples/carrots with almond butter, or a banana, nut butter, date & raw cacao smoothie.

Evening meal: start with a full plate of raw veggies or a raw fruit salad and a meal of your choice off my Ten Day Reset Pinterest board. You'll find a healthy selection of seasonal soups, raw and cooked salads and hot meals to meet a variety tastes.

I would love to hear your experiences and any tips you might want to share with others. Feel free to post questions or comments on my Facebook page.

Gemmotherapy Answers: Detox vs. IVF for Infertility

Last week I shared a story that depicts the classic pharmaceutical treatment spiral that is quite commonplace in women's healthcare. Since writing that I have received numerous inquiries from women who have stories that are, truthfully, heartbreaking. Following the advice of their ob/gyn physicians and believing they were helping their symptoms by taking hormonal birth control, these women are now in a state of aggravated symptoms and struggling to conceive. The message I have reiterated in each of these posts—Menstrual Symptoms What's Normal?, The Root of Infertility, Could this be your Daughter?, Painful Periods, Stop the Suppression—is that suppressing menstrual symptoms is not, and never will be, the right answer.

When explaining the crucial role menstruation plays in women's health in my office recently, I gave this example: we could not even imagine a health practice that would suppress bowel movements when they are irregular. Why then have we accepted that as a standard treatment for menstrual cycles?

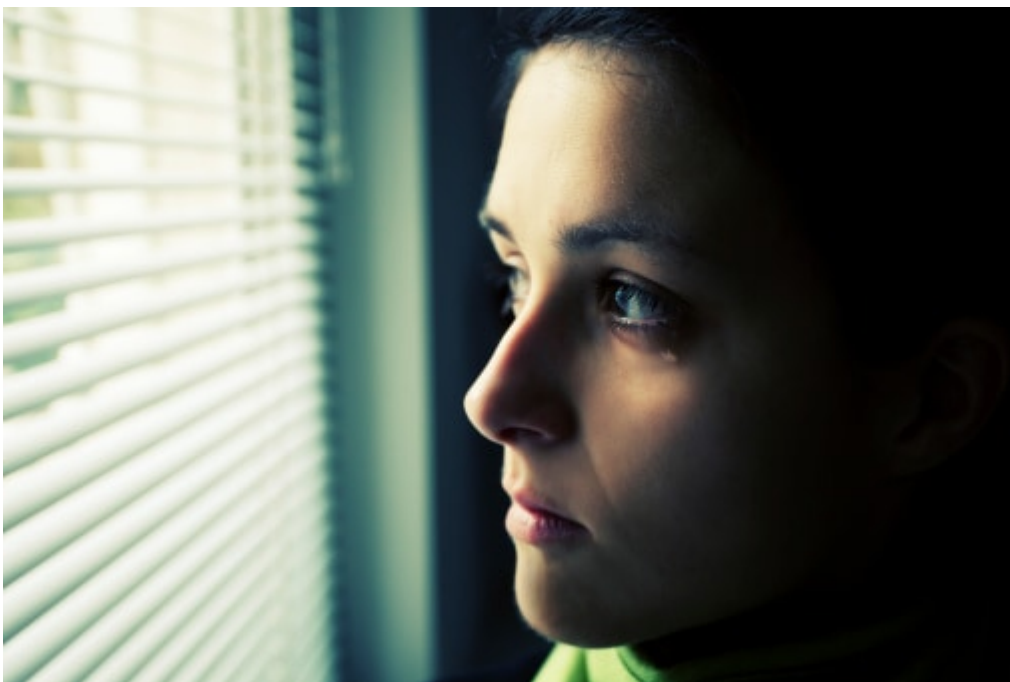
While there is much more to be said on this topic of fertility, I will be closing out this series by making a case for detoxing the body rather than following the conventional treatment for infertility.

Making a Case for Detox vs. IVF for Infertility

If you or a close friend or family member have gone through IVF you know it's a difficult, emotionally charged and expensive process. Because there are success stories, it has become the accepted "conventional" approach. What I've learned from the women who come to my office, however, is that IVF is just the last step along a long trail of pharmaceutical

treatments that started for most of the women when they took their first hormonal birth control pill or had an IUD implanted.

I believe the actual approach to fertility should be to first re-balance the body until the menses occurs every 28-30 days and with little to no discomfort. This change alone signifies a healthy body with a high fertility rate. It's important to know that fertility rates decline as the body's elimination routes are compromised and wastes build up in the system. The uterus can't serve its purpose as a womb when the body is using it to help clean accumulated wastes the bowels and kidneys did not eliminate. Adding hormonal birth control to lessen or stop monthly flow creates even more havoc.



What if you are ready for a baby but your body is not? The best thing you can do is to get your body ready by helping it to clean out the build up of wastes created by years of meds and a less than perfect diet. The state your body is in when you conceive affects not only your pregnancy but the long term health of the child you are carrying. So cleaning up the system not only impacts your health and your fertility, it has positive consequences for your children throughout their lifetime.

So now that we're talking about a much greater and longer impact than just a 9 month pregnancy, let's look at some of the details of a typical process.

Joan came into my office a few months back looking for answers to why she was struggling to get pregnant. Like many of my clients, she had followed the conventional medical treatment of hormonal birth control to suppress the pain, irregularity and additional symptoms of her menstrual cycle during her late teens and twenties. Now in her 30's and thinking about starting a family, her body isn't really up to the task. Those painful periods in her teens were the body's way of saying "Pay attention. Something is wrong here." What was wrong was inflammation caused by diet and difficulty eliminating wastes, but she was told to treat it by suppressing the pain.

The original problem was that her bowels and kidneys were not efficiently eliminating the wastes. Her uterus tried to take up the slack, but also got bogged down and inflamed, which then caused the secondary symptoms of cramping and heavy flow. This means that Joan's reproductive organs have been mired in all that build up of stagnant lymphatic fluid, which, by the way, is acid. It seems fairly clear that doesn't lead to healthy organ tissue by any means. Unhealthy organ tissue means that organs simply cannot perform their function. Think of it if like a dirty air filter in your air conditioner. Every smart AC technician will tell you a clean filter optimizes function and a dirty one makes the ac work twice as hard. To solve this problem you wouldn't boost the power of your AC you would just clean the filter, right? Same is true for your reproductive organs.

If Joan had sought conventional help to get pregnant she would have been treated with medications to stimulate the function of the organs that are tired, dirty and sluggish. If the first level of treatment is unsuccessful there are stronger medications and more refined procedures all optimized to push unhealthy organs to perform in ways they have tried to

make clear they are not up to. It's a testament to the inherent strength of our organs that the IVF approach actually yields a success rate of over 50% nationally.

Beyond my concern for mothers is an interest in a healthy fetus and child. When the pharmaceutical treatment is successful, we then have a baby developing in a less than optimal environment. Conventional medicine rarely discusses that problem. The rate of premature deliveries of IVF babies doubles that of naturally conceived babies and for some very obvious reasons. On top of that, the increased health struggles faced over the lifetime of an infant who arrives prematurely are significant. While medical science has advanced in the area of neonatal care, much of this is completely avoidable if mom is in a healthy state at the beginning of the pregnancy.

Here's what I propose:

1. Get yourself familiar with how the body cleans and heals itself.
2. Begin a clear plan supervised by your health practitioner that features a clean, plant-based diet, gemmotherapy and works on these four steps:
 - Opening your elimination organs
 - Cleaning and restore organ tissues
 - Optimizing organ function
 - Supporting your body's ability to harmonize
3. When your bowel and kidney elimination and menstrual cycle is regulated, then consider getting pregnant.

Do I guarantee success? No I don't because I do believe there is more at play in bringing forth life than just your physical state, but I do guarantee that you will have a clean, healthy, harmonized body if you see your way through the entire process. You will be in a better space to make decisions that will be wise and informed for all involved.

Please check back in next week. I will revisit and update a post from last summer that depicts what happens over the course of your life when your body does not clean and eliminate efficiently.