

From Thyroid Cancer to Vegan Mentor – An Incredible Story

(Manufactured Vegan Foods Are Not The Answer)

Linda Middlesworth has been vegan for almost 30 years, but she didn't make the switch until she was nearly 45 years old. Now an energetic, aerobic-loving vegan guru at the **thriving age** of 74, Middlesworth works to help others on their plant-based journey through her company, Vegan Mentor. Her story is unique yet entirely relatable, and she was kind enough to discuss her vegan journey, her food philosophy, and how to live a healthy, vibrant, purposeful life.

“I had no idea that calves were separated from their mothers very soon after birth, and I had no idea that dairy mama cows were only allowed to live only 4 years (out of a 24-year lifespan) and then they became hamburger meat,” she said.

Although Linda followed the whole food, plant-based McDougall diet at home, she admitted that she indulged in *“all the oils and processed foods”* when she ate out. *“I just could not lose all my heart disease or the last 20 lbs! I did not become a ‘completely healthy’ vegan until about 20 years later,”* she explained.

Eventually, she cut out all oils, processed foods, most simple sugars and salt, finally losing the last 20 pounds and a few insecurities as well. *“I was no longer a fat aerobic instructor!”* she joked.

Inspired by her own transformation, Linda educated herself so she could help others (both humans and animals). She holds several plant-based nutrition certifications and also works with the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine as a Cancer Food for Life Instructor. She also launched Vegan Mentor to work with individuals struggling with their weight and other health-related issues to teach them about whole food, plant-based eating.

Of course, Linda isn't just in it for the health benefits. She feels deeply for the animals and wants to do her part to end factory farming.

Linda commented, *“Most people, like me, go vegan with processed vegan foods. Which I do understand. I think any way people can use vegan junk food to get off the sick Standard American Diet is a good way to transition. Sometimes, I catch people early in their transition and I put them on the oil-free, unprocessed whole food plant-based diet and those people are able to reach their goals faster. But people need to do whatever it takes to be vegan so we can stop this animal holocaust.”*

When asked what her favorite foods were, she excitedly replied, *“Potatoes! In any form. I eat mostly Yukon gold or sweet potatoes and the air fryer is a wonderful way to have my healthy French fries!”* She also reserves Ice Cream and chocolate cheesecake for special occasion treats. Her diet is obviously working for her, as she was named PETA's Sexiest Vegan Over 50 in 2015.

Beyond her busy coaching and speaking schedule, Middlesworth devotes her time to animal rights causes, such as the Sacramento Animal Save and Get Healthy Event.