

THE BIG IDEAS

Challenges and Hope

We can do something!

The Engine 2 Diet

In a nutshell.

Crazy Myths

About food.

The Protein Myth

You don't need as much you think.

The Calcium Myth

Real issue is animal protein.

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Ew.

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Attitude

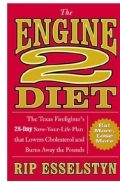
It's our most powerful tool.

Always Finish.

And remember to start! :)

"It's now 2009, and I've been a firefighter for a dozen years. I'm more in love with this job and with helping people than ever, but it's not enough. I yearn for more. I want to take saving people to the next level, and that involves helping them in a more fundamental way. In my mind, dragging you away from your disease-promoting diet to a better way of living will have just as powerful an impact as dragging you out of a raging fire."

~ Rip Esselstyn



The Engine 2 Diet

The Texas Firefighter's 28-Day Save-Your-Life Plan That Lowers Cholesterol and Burns Away the Pounds

BY RIP ESSELSTYN · GRAND CENTRAL PUBLISHING © 2009 · 288 PAGES

"The most basic, profound, and powerful way to take care of your health on a day-to-day basis is to eat a healthy, plant-based diet. This regimen is the best way to fight the dangerous fires raging inside us—fires that create all the chronic Western ailments including heart attack, stroke, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and diabetes. That's why I created the Engine 2 Diet, and why I wrote this book."

~ Rip Esselstyn from *The Engine 2 Diet*

[Rip Esselstyn](#) is an amazing guy.

He's a former All-American swimmer and professional triathlete-turned-firefighter who's super passionate about educating and motivating people "to eat a plant-strong diet so they can enhance their lives and avoid the common killer diseases."

His dad, [Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn](#), is an Olympic gold medalist and one of the world's leading medical doctors who *literally* wrote the book on preventing and reversing heart disease (see Notes on [Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease](#)). Between the two of them, they're doing some incredible work to make a profound difference in the world. In my mind, they're true heroes.

Packed with everything from the science behind the Engine 2 Diet to an effective exercise program plus over 125 (!) recipes, this book is a REALLY cool guide for a "normal" person to transition away from the foods that're killing us to create a healthy, plant-based lifestyle.

If you've been looking for a guidebook to help you make the transition to more healthy eating but have felt overwhelmed about how to do it, I think you might really love this easy-to-read, super practical book!! So, if you're feelin' it, go pick it up and get your 28-Day Engine 2 Challenge on! (And lemme know how it goes! :)

For now, let's jump in!

CHALLENGES AND HOPE

"Take a long hard look around you. Do you see what I see? Americans are downing empty calories with reckless abandon, gorging on vats of animal-based products teeming with unhealthy fat, cholesterol, and acid-producing protein; gobbling up refined and processed foods; drizzling, swathing, and dumping concentrated vegetable oils into, over, and through everything and anything without thinking twice.

We've become addicted to the taste, texture, and comfort these foods give us. But unfortunately, what they also give us is a breeding ground for the ailments and diseases that are tearing at the seams of our nation's health. High blood pressure is the norm. Constipation and irritable bowel syndrome are commonplace. Migraine headaches—and headaches in general—bring tears to our eyes. Osteoporosis is breaking us down. PMS, allergies, infections, and eczema have increased in frequency and intensity. Kidney stones and gallstones are more than a pain in the side.

All these conditions are influenced by a poor diet, and they add up to a big mess. However, the

"Americans currently consume a staggering 50 percent of their calories from refined and processed food."

~ Rip Esselstyn

crowning blow to American health is the lineup of killer diseases taking us down like rows of dominoes: heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and Alzheimer's disease.

Yet there is hope—in the form of a great deal of scientific evidence showing that a plant-based diet can prevent, and even reverse, most of these diseases."

Yikes on the challenges. And, Amen on the solution!! :)

How can we address these challenges?

One awesome way is to rock the Engine 2 Diet! Let's learn more about what it is.

THE ENGINE 2 DIET

"The Engine 2 Diet is a simple, easy-to-follow four-week program that will enable you to reach whatever goal you choose, whether it's losing weight, becoming physically fit, or reducing the precursors to disease, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, blockage of the arteries, high blood sugar, insulin resistance, or all of the above.

When you follow the Engine 2 Plan, you will:

- Lose weight
- Lose body fat
- Increase lean muscle mass
- Improve your cardiovascular health
- Free yourself from the shackles of chronic Western diseases
- Have fun learning how to make new, smart, and delicious food choices
- Improve self-esteem and confidence
- Be instilled with a sense of personal power, because you, and you alone, are in control of your health
- Absolutely love how you feel"

Sounds good to me! :)

Rip offers two different tracks: the Fire Cadet and the Firefighter. The Fire Cadet eases his or her way into the full program over the course of a few weeks whereas the Firefighter jumps all in. Ultimately they both wind up *"doing the whole shebang: no dairy, no refined foods, no meat, and no oils."*

Rip's approach is based on what we SCIENTIFICALLY know prevents and reverses disease and echoes the wisdom we cover in the Notes on [The RAVE Diet](#) which tells us:

"The word RAVE is a simple acronym used to help people remember the rules. It is based on the guidelines used by doctors to treat and reverse diseases. This is what RAVE stands for:

- No Refined foods
- No Animal foods
- No Vegetable oils
- No Exceptions (& Exercise!)"

Plus: *"Heart disease is the most documented and easily reversed disease in the books. But it's not just heart disease. Our common cancers—including breast, prostate, colon and other cancers, have not only been reversed, but can be totally prevented by following the RAVE Diet. Adult onset diabetes is a snap. One doctor gets 90 percent of his patients off insulin within a month by prescribing simple changes in diet. There are literally hundreds of other diseases, ranging from arthritis and autoimmune diseases to rheumatoid arthritis to shingles and*

"The more you substitute plant foods for animal foods the healthier you are likely to be. I now consider an all plant based diet the ideal diet for optimal health and to reduce disease risk."

~ T. Colin Campbell

varicose veins that can be arrested and reversed by following the RAVE Diet."

It's kinda weird that the thought of getting rid of refined foods and animal products is such a radical idea. But, alas there are a lot what Rip calls "crazy myths about food." Let's look at a few of them now!

CRAZY MYTHS ABOUT FOOD

"When I developed the Engine 2 Diet, my mission statement was: Educate and motivate people to eat a plant-strong diet so they can enhance their lives and avoid the common killer diseases."

~ Rip Esselstyn

"Doctors didn't think smoking was bad for our health until the 1960s; in fact, they actually endorsed it until the 1950s. And there have been times when medical professionals thought cocaine was a legitimate medicine, when drilling a hole in the skull was considered a remedy for many diseases, and when a frontal lobotomy was thought to be sound therapy.

In many ways, things haven't changed. There's still a ton of misinformation out there, and much of it concerns plant-based eating. To make matters worse, doctors are seldom schooled in nutrition, and the ones who are tend to follow the antiquated food pyramid created by lobbyists and special-interest groups that are less interested in your health than in keeping their jobs and taking your money.

I can't believe all the incredible things I hear about diet and nutrition, spoken by people who don't have a clue but talk as if they did. An all-protein diet is good for you! Carbs are terrible! God put animals on the planet for people to eat! Alcohol is a health tonic! Vegetarians are weak wusses who can't play sports!"

Crazy food myths.

Rip explores twelve of 'em in the book. Let's explore a couple!

THE PROTEIN MYTH

"Myth 1: You can't get enough protein eating a plant-based diet.

Reality: Not only will get all the protein you need, for the first time in your life, you won't suffer from an excess of it.

Ample amounts of protein are thriving in whole, natural plant-based foods. For example, spinach is 51 percent protein; mushrooms, 35 percent; beans, 26 percent; oatmeal, 16 percent; whole wheat pasta, 15 percent; corn, 12 percent; and potatoes, 11 percent.

What's more, our body needs less protein than you may think. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the average 150-pound male requires only 22.5 grams of protein daily based on a 2,000 calorie a day diet. (WHO recommends pregnant women get 6 percent of calories from protein.) Other nutritional organizations recommend as little as 2.5 percent of daily calories come from protein while the U.S. Food and Nutrition Board's recommended daily allowance is 6 percent after a built-in safety margin; most American's however, are taking in 20 percent or more.

Doctors from my father to Dean Ornish to Joel Fuhrman, author of *Eat to Live: The Revolutionary Formula for Fast and Sustained Weight Loss*, all suggest that getting an adequate amount of protein should be the least of your worries."

Protein. We don't need *that* much of it!!

Unfortunately, we've been conditioned to believe otherwise.

The meat and dairy industry has way too much influence over the USDA—the governmental entity that creates the food pyramid and tells us what we should eat—and they've done a great job of convincing us we need a lot of protein (especially animal protein!) to function. Eek.

As [Mike Anderson](#) puts it in *The RAVE Diet* (see those Notes): "*Most people think only animal*

" Calorie for calorie, the most nutrient-dense foods are plants, not animals. After all, plants are the mother source of all calories and all nutrients for all creatures, whereas animal-based foods are essentially plant foods recycled into an unhealthy package."

~ Rip Esselstyn

" According to the Framingham Study, for every three additional servings of fruits and vegetables you eat a day, the risk of stroke is reduced by 22 percent."

~ Rip Esselstyn

products have protein, but the lawn in your front yard is full of protein. You may not recognize it, but a cow would. Herbivores, such as cows, eat plants to get their protein. When carnivores eat herbivores, they are actually eating the protein that originally came from the plants eaten by herbivores. The problem with eating protein from animals is that it comes in a package of saturated fat and cholesterol, the two most deadly ingredients in the American diet.

For most Americans, getting enough protein simply means eating animal foods. You'll have doctors and dieticians flatly state that you won't get enough protein by just eating plant foods. Unfortunately, they are following the protein requirements of our government, which have been set by the meat, dairy, and egg industries through lobbying efforts—and they are not only ridiculously high, but also potentially dangerous."

THE CALCIUM MYTH

"Myth 4: You can't get enough calcium eating a plant-based diet.

Reality: A diverse, plant-based diet is one of the best available sources of calcium—and lets you avoid the deleterious effects associated with dairy products.

... One reason why Americans have such a high incidence of osteoporosis (or weakening of the bones) isn't a lack of dietary calcium, but an excess of animal protein, which leaches calcium from the bones.

In fact, did you know that the countries with the highest rate of dairy consumption, including the United States, New Zealand, Britain, and Sweden, also have the highest rates of osteoporosis? Although their citizens consume massive amounts of dietary calcium, the excessive protein in that milk, cheese, steak, fish, and eggs always trumps this important mineral, leaving them with a net deficit.

Meanwhile, people in rural China, who consume one-third the amount of dairy we do, have almost zero cases of osteoporosis. Dr. John McDougal, author of *The McDougal Program for a Healthy Heart*, has scoured the medical literature on the topic and has yet to find one case of dietary calcium deficiency in humans—so long as they consumed an adequate number of calories. So no milk mustache for you!"

Calcium.

This is another one of those things that makes you scratch your head.

If you want to avoid osteoporosis, lay off the calcium supplements and just quit eating so many animal products. :)

LIQUID MEAT

"I think of dairy products as meat, only in a liquid, cream or solid form. After all, they contain just as many concentrated, disease-promoting, and nutritionally compromised calories.

Dairy is ubiquitous in the American diet. The milk and dairy industries have done an amazing job of propagating and maintaining the myth that we need three servings of milk, cheese, and/or yogurt a day to maintain healthy bones and overall health. We don't. In fact, the opposite is true."

Milk. It does a body bad.

As Rip advises, dairy products are basically liquid meat. (Or creamy meat or solid meat depending on how you're having it, of course. :)

Not only is it just WEIRD to drink the milk of another animal, it's just not smart.

As Rip tells us: "Cow's milk is fine for a calf who wants to gain one thousand pounds in less than

a year. Whenever possible, humans should stick to breast milk until the age of two, and then make the switch to a milk substitute.”

So, unless you're a furry little newborn calf looking to put on 1,000 pounds in a year, cow's milk isn't for you!

DEALING W/ROOT CAUSES

“Bad health is like a raging fire in the body, and can be just as deadly. The best way to fireproof yourself is to eat a whole grain, plant-strong diet.”

~ Rip Esselstyn

“I hope it is now crystal clear to you how many of us are suffering from the foods at the end of our forks. It is nothing short of a travesty. Here we are, living in the great land of America in the twenty-first century, possessing the knowledge to fight off our most crippling diseases, yet we continue to consume excess amounts of toxic animal protein, fat, and cholesterol, as well as processed and refined foods.

Medical science has shown us that the American diet is unhealthy. Yet modern medicine still treats all these diseases without addressing their root cause: improper nutrition.”

Tragically, our medical professionals prefer to throw billions upon billions of dollars at treating the *symptoms* rather than going after the root cause. Gah!!

Rip's dad, [Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn](#), puts it brilliantly in his great book, [Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease](#), telling us we need to focus on prevention rather than desperate intervention.

Here's what he says: *“I still cherish the naive dream I had when I started this research. We have shown that the number one killer in Western civilization can be abolished, through consumption of a plant-based diet. But we can do much more. If the public adopted this approach to preventing disease, if, by the millions, Americans abandoned their toxic diets and learned a truly healthy approach to eating, we could largely limit all those diseases of nutritional extravagance— strokes, hypertension, obesity, osteoporosis, and adult-onset diabetes. Meanwhile, we would see a marked reduction in cancers of the breast, prostate, colon, rectum, uterus, and ovaries. Medicine could relinquish its primary focus on pills and procedures. Prevention, not desperate intervention, would become the order of the day.”*

Let's focus on prevention by dealing with the root causes of our health challenges!!!

ATTITUDE: OUR MOST POWERFUL TOOL

“I firmly believe that your attitude is the most important tool you have in life. With the right attitude, you can achieve anything—and I mean anything. So as you embark on the four-week E2 Diet, you will need to dig deep into your emotional closet, find your best attitude, and wear it for the duration of the program. Before long, you won't have to work at it. It will become a natural extension of your being.”

Attitude.

How's yours?

As you probably know by now, Attitude (or Optimism) is Principle #1 in my approach to Optimal Living. As Rip (and pretty much all the authors we profile!) tells us, it's the most important tool we have in life.

If you're attitude is a little wonky, no worries. We can train it like we train a muscle.

[Sonja Lyubomirsky](#) puts it wonderfully (see the Notes on [The How of Happiness](#)): *“Essentially, all optimism strategies involve the exercise of construing the world with a more positive and charitable perspective, and many entail considering the silver lining in the cloud, identifying the door that opens as a result of one that has closed. It takes hard work and a great deal of practice to accomplish effectively, but if you can persist at these strategies until they become habitual, the benefits could be immense. Some optimists may be born that way, but scores of*

optimists are made with practice.”

ALWAYS FINISH

“So be proactive. Eat a whole food, nutrient rich, plant-based diet. Never allow the building blocks of stroke and heart disease—artery-clogging saturated fat, dietary cholesterol, and acidic animal protein—into your body.”

~ Rip Esselstyn

“The lesson I learned: Always finish. I’ve competed in more than three hundred triathlons over the course of my career, and I’ve never failed to finish one. I remember Scott Tinley, one of the sport’s legends, saying that he never quit in the middle of a race, because then it would be that much easier to quit the next time when things weren’t going his way.

It’s the same with this diet. Try not to surrender to your bad habits and temptations. Over the four-week period, the more you remain true to these guidelines, the less likely you are to fall back into your old ways later. Besides, you will soon see dramatic benefits, lose your cravings, and set up a successful pattern for life.”

—> “Always finish.”

That’s pretty awesome.

Rip offers that wisdom in the context of telling the story about his first Hawaii Ironman Triathlon in 1994. (For those curious souls, that’s a 2.4-mile swim followed by a 112-mile bike ride followed by a 26.2-mile marathon run. Two more quick notes on that: 1) Dave Scott, the six-time Hawaii Ironman champion competed as a plant-powered vegan; and, 2) Check out the Note on [Brendan Brazier](#)’s great book *The Thrive Diet*; Brendan’s another professional Ironman who’s 100% vegan. So, don’t buy into the myth that you can’t be a world-class athlete as a vegan! :)

Back to the main point of this Big Idea: Let’s train ourselves to “Always finish” the noble projects we begin—not just with our diets but in every aspect of our lives! And, of course, here’s to STARTING this 28-Day Engine 2 Diet Challenge! :)

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

If you liked this Note,
you’ll probably like...

[Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease](#)

[The China Study](#)

[The RAVE Diet](#)

[The Thrive Diet](#)

[The How of Happiness](#)

About the Author of “The Engine 2 Diet”

RIP ESSELSTYN



Rip Esselstyn was an All-American swimmer at the University of Texas and spent ten years as a professional triathlete. He joined the Austin, Texas, fire department in 1997. Learn more about Rip & *The Engine 2 Diet* at www.theengine2diet.com.

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.