



EVEN Interview with

Ruth Heidrich, Ph.D.

Vegan Ironman Triathlete

Ruth Heidrich, Ph.D. is the winner of 1,000 trophies including 8 Gold Medals in the Senior Olympics, 67 marathons including Boston, New York & Moscow, The Great Wall of China and 3 World Fitness

Records at the famed Cooper Clinic in Dallas, TX. Dr. Ruth was named One of the Ten Fittest Women in North America and was nominated by PETA as Sexiest Vegan Alive. She is a breast cancer survivor, her story told in Forks Over Knives. Dr. Heidrich is author of A Race for Life, The CHEF Cook/Rawbook, and Senior Fitness.



EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?

Dr. Ruth: I have the diagnosis of breast cancer to thank for that! Shortly after I was given the shocking news, I happened to read about the clinical research being done by John McDougall, MD. I called him to enroll in the study. I had to agree to a low-fat vegan diet and to refuse chemo and radiation since he needed to demonstrate

that it was the vegan diet that made the difference. And it sure did work! That was 30 years ago with no recurrence of the cancer!

EVEN: Who was an influential person in your life earlier on that led you to veganism?

Dr. Ruth: As just mentioned, it was John McDougall, MD. He held the metaphorical “medical gun to my head,” although as soon as I switched (two hours in his office did the trick), I knew I should have been eating this way my whole life!

EVEN: What advice would you give to a vegan advocate wanting to become more of an activist?

Dr. Ruth: Start by educating yourself on veganism and learn the objections you’re apt to be facing and how to counter them. Then make yourself available to give talks to any audience you can get to listen. I started with service clubs, business clubs, schools, universities, churches, and medical groups. Generate publicity about your talks from local newspapers, radio, tv, and social media to get attendance up. I can’t say it’s the best advice; just the only way I know – so far.

EVEN: What do you think makes veganism hard for people?

Dr. Ruth: The challenge for so many people is making what they think will be such a “radical” change. It’s such a shock to hear the opposite of what they’ve been told their whole lives, that eating animals and their by-products is supposed to be good for you, even necessary for good health. In fact, that message is still being promulgated. Tune into most any of the popular media, and you’ll still hear this misinformation being passed on. So sad!

EVEN: What, in your opinion, is the most misunderstood idea about veganism?

Dr. Ruth: That you can't get enough protein! People need to know that they are most likely getting too much protein! I'd also like to add that there is a stereotype of vegans being skinny, pale weaklings and in order to disabuse people of that notion, I took on the Ironman Triathlon to show that you can do one of the toughest races in the world and do it well on a vegan diet.

EVEN: What one thing from your thinking in childhood do you wish you could change?

Dr. Ruth: That I could have been taught the proper foods for we humans to eat from the very beginning.

EVEN: Do you have a favorite vegan meal or food you can tell us about that really makes veganism work for you?

Dr. Ruth: My breakfast after my morning work-out. A large bowl filled with leafy greens, a banana, a mango, some fresh minced ginger, and sprinkled with lots of cinnamon.

EVEN: What one thing makes veganism worthwhile for you?

Dr. Ruth: Regaining my health, my survival, my life!

EVEN: Any opinion or insight on the future of veganism in today's world?

Dr. Ruth: I am hopeful that we are making progress, that we are creating vegans faster than they are creating non-vegans!



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