An Enlightened Approach

For entrepreneur Russell Simmons, his journey to health and wellness began with diet and lifestyle changes.

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Most experts agree that becoming healthier means changing your lifestyle. For entrepreneur Russell Simmons, the CEO of Rush Communications, becoming healthier meant going vegan and doing yoga, a spiritual and ascetic discipline that he practices “every single day,” Simmons says.

“When I went to yoga 20 years ago, there were no guys in it back then,” he says. “And then that changed.”

Simmons confesses that he became interested in yoga because that’s where the girls were. “But after the first class, I felt so good afterward I got addicted,” he says.

When Simmons discusses yoga, his love of the practice is evident. He meditates twice each day and he’s also written books about the science of sitting in stillness that he endorses as a way to find success and happiness in life. “I’ve always studied the process and I try to live the yamas (moral, ethical and societal guidelines for practicing yoga) that I do daily.”

In addition to using yoga to achieve spiritual and mental health, Simmons also supports going vegan. For him, it followed naturally from embracing yoga principles. “This is what they call enlightenment,” he says. “Dominion over the animals and concern for them is part of this practice.”

Simmons is a well-known animal rights activist who PETA named as their 2011 Person of the Year. “Being a thoughtful vegan makes our time on this Earth more peaceful and joyous, because you get to have a hand in promoting and increasing the happiness, good health and well-being of others—both animal and human—rather than being an instrument of suffering and death,” wrote Simmons in an article titled “Why I’m a Vegan.”

But Simmons also promotes his belief that going vegan can help improve our health. “Lots of people who’ve taken a vegan diet as their new choice have warded off diseases, such as diabetes, and helped to heal themselves,” he says. “The body will heal itself if you give it the right nutrients. There’s lots of research about this.”

Simmons views himself as a living testimonial to the benefits of veganism. Since going vegan, he’s lost about 18 pounds. Says the busy business magnate, “People said I looked better, and I absolutely feel

better.”

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