

Naturally, How to Look and Feel Healthy, Energetic and Radiant The Organic Way

Jo Wood

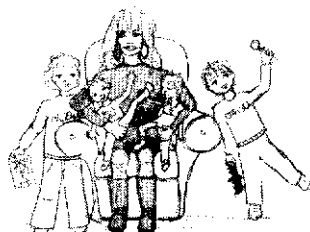
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Extract

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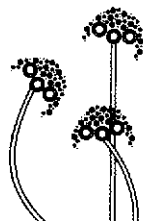
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Introduction



MY NAME IS JOSEPHINE WOOD and I am a self-confessed organic nut. I'm also wife to my famous husband, Ronnie, mother to four wonderful grown-up kids – Jamie, Jesse, Leah and Ty -- and granny to four wonderful grandchildren. I have had a great life: I have travelled the world, watched my husband play to millions, met lots of interesting people, seen wonderful places. I have been very lucky. My mother always said, 'Better to be born lucky than rich,' and she was right. Some people call me a rock chick, but I prefer the term 'chic nomad'.

Since my conversion from someone whose mantra used to be 'pass me the ciggies' to 'who wants an organic beetroot juice?',

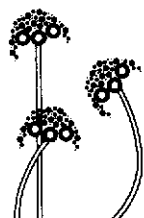


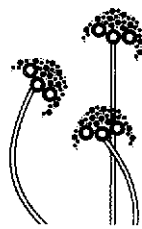
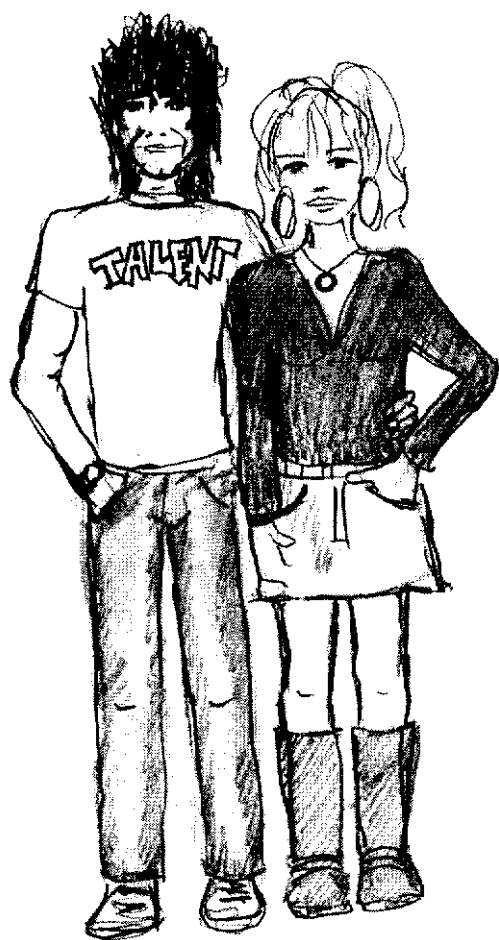
Introduction

I have delved more and more deeply into what it really means to be organic – what a healthy, natural lifestyle entails, not just in terms of shopping and gardening, but in the kinds of food you put into your body, what you surround yourself with, and how you treat your body and the world around you. I still love to party, but now I feel more grounded.

In this book I'll show you a little of what I have learnt along the way about how to live in tune with yourself and the natural environment. You'll find tips on living organically, delicious recipes, ideas for growing your own fruit and vegetables, my own beauty secrets and lots of my favourite ways to relax and feel good. Above all, it's about finding your own path in life and living as well as you can.

I hope you will feel sufficiently inspired to try some of the ideas I suggest for yourself.





‘Josephine’s preoccupation with organic food, people’s health and helping save the planet has almost reached obsession pitch.

What my wife says is well researched, full of truth and usually extremely beneficial to the body, the mind and general well-being. Read what she says with an open mind and you will find it helpful to both you and friends in need. I am very proud of her advances towards a healthier you and a safer planet.’

Ronnie Wood

Part I

Eating Organically

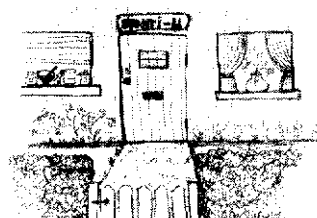


Jo's been in a bit of a panic
Her task is tough and titanic
The opposition is dark and satanic
Their methods are cruel and barbaric
So she's gone completely organic
While she's trying to rescue the planet
So go buy this book – goddamit!!

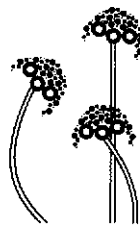
Mick Jagger

I

Finding Shangri-La



MY CONVERSION TO ORGANIC LIVING, which occurred when it was still pretty unfashionable, was sparked by a life-changing event. At the time, Ronnie and I had been together for about fourteen years, and it seemed as if my life couldn't get any better – my kids were growing up well-adjusted and loving, plus I had a husband who adored me. There were countless parties, lots of late nights and wonderful days. One night in 1989, though, just after we'd bought a fantastic Georgian house by the canal in County Kildare, Ireland, we went for dinner with friends in Dublin. During the evening, I suddenly felt ill and went outside, where I was violently sick with pains in my stomach like you wouldn't believe. Ronnie tried to help,



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but there was no denying I was really ill, so he insisted I go to the hospital to get checked out. The next day the doctors said they were not sure what it was and wanted to do more tests. By now, however, I was feeling better and, as I was very keen to go to Morocco (where the Stones were recording), off I went. I was fine on that trip, but when I got home I was sick again. This time I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease (an inflammation of the intestine) and put on two kinds of steroids – yuck. They took my spirit away. I went to see four doctors, in the hope of being told something different, but they all said the same thing: Crohn's disease.

So I began to live with it, all the time believing I would one day find a cure. I didn't know how or where I would find it, but I always had an open mind and was willing to try anything that came along.

About a year later, I got a request for an interview about my illness. I must admit the headline 'Stone's Wife has Incurable Disease' in huge letters in the tabloid press was not what I had intended. But two weeks later the office rang to say the paper had sent over a big bag full of letters for me. I read them all. One letter in particular struck me. It was from a man called Gerald Greene, a herbalist. In it he told me that if I went to see him he would be able to put my Crohn's disease into remission for life. That was what I had been waiting for! So I asked a girlfriend to come with me and



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off I went to Hastings. That was the start of my fantastic organic journey.

I wondered if I was on my way to a madman or my saviour when I arrived at a house named Shangri-La. 'Sit down, Jo,' Gerald said gently. I wasn't sure where to sit, as the tiny house was packed with books, bottles, pots and God knows what else. I found a corner of a sofa. After a few moments we were chatting like old friends, and I was giving him what were probably quite intimate details about my digestive system.

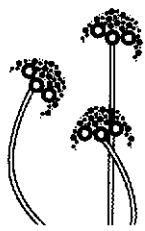
'Four doctors have told me I have Crohn's disease,' I finished, looking at him expectantly.

'Yes, my dear. Whatever your disease is, I need to know what it is that you eat.'

This was a surprise. I had never given my diet much thought. I wanted a cure, not to talk about the contents of my fridge.

'Oh, ordinary stuff. Pork chops, frozen peas. Whatever I have to hand – normal supermarket food. I cook a lot of those slimming ready meals. I mix up packet stuff. Sometimes, if I can't be bothered to cook, I eat takeaways, and I love Kentucky Fried Chicken.' He was nodding sagely.

'You've got to change your whole way of eating if you want to get well,' he said after a pause. 'You have a lot to learn.'



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‘What do you mean?’

‘All of those foods you have mentioned, you will have to stop eating them,’ he said simply.

Oh my God. ‘Why?’

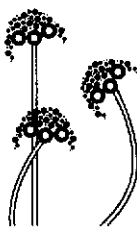
‘It’s all to do with your immune system. If you don’t look after it, you’ll be in trouble.’

I was intrigued. ‘Tell me more.’

‘Let me describe it to you the way I explain it to my patients. The immune system is like an army. There are generals, officers and private soldiers called lymphocytes. The T-cell lymphocytes are the generals, who give orders to their B-cell officers and private soldiers (called B-cell antibodies) to attack anything bad which attacks the body. Just as in an army, these “soldiers” are split into regiments, with one regiment assigned to each vital part of our bodies, so protecting us from any attacks, from any quarter, any time. Are you following me, my dear?’

‘I think so.’

‘Now, some people have fragile immune systems, and what happens when they ingest inorganic chemicals from insecticides, fungicides and herbicides in our foods is that the general-like T-cells misprogramme one of the multiple regiments protecting our vital parts, and whatever that regiment was protecting *it now attacks*. This



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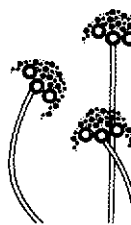
is called an autoimmune disease and includes diseases such as MS, Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, systemic lupus and so on.'

'Caused by chemicals in our diet?'

'I believe so, and I'll come on to these in a moment. But first let me tell you about candida. This is a friendly yeast everyone has (initially at least) and its purpose is to feed the beneficial gut bugs at night while we sleep so that during the day they can do their wonderful digestive work. If, however, the person has a nasty disease that is treated by antibiotics, steroids or chemotherapy, these good bugs are destroyed – so there is nothing left to eat their ever-growing food source: candida. So what happens is that candida grows out of control and turns into a very unfriendly fungus that punctures the bowel wall, sometimes causing an allergic response to foods, which in turn triggers the symptoms of the diseases I have already mentioned.'

'That sounds awful.'

'It is, but to add insult to injury, candida then gets into the bloodstream, where it ingests blood sugar and converts it to alcohol, leading to fatigue. The patient becomes a slave to alcohol: not like a normal alcoholic, but to the "fix" from sugary foods. And so it continues. I have seen patients with Crohn's disease come off sugar and shake as if they have DTs.'



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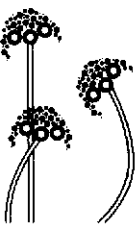
‘Oh my God, it sounds terrible. What can I do?’

‘Take it one step at a time, my dear. I specialise in treating autoimmune diseases, of which Crohn’s is just one, and I have had extraordinary success. There are three things you must do to start building up your immune system to give your body a chance of fighting back. The first is to change your diet completely, and I’ll come on to this. The second is to eat organic food, and the third is to take some of my herbal pills.’

‘I’m sorry, I don’t know what you mean by organic food.’ (This was fifteen years ago, remember.)

‘Organic food is food that is grown without the use of chemicals. Of course, all things are made up of chemical compounds, as you probably know, but I’m talking about synthetic chemicals, manmade in a laboratory. Chemicals that prevent your immune system from working properly. Many of the chemicals used on our food today are organophosphates, which started life as nerve gas in the First World War.’

Organic? I had never heard of it, or, to be more accurate, I had heard the word, but had no idea what it meant. Gerald talked for two hours about how food is produced, where it comes from and what is done to it before it gets on to our plates. He talked about things I had never given any thought to – about farming techniques,



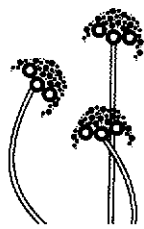
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about soil, about the conditions animals are kept in, and about hormones, pesticides, colourings and flavourings. He was opening up a new world and I was horrified yet fascinated. It all made so much sense. I understood how it was that we had come too far from the natural way of producing and eating food -- so far, in fact, that our bodies could not deal with what we were asking them to digest. Our guts had not developed the features necessary to deal with our modern diet, and our livers could not process the poisons quickly or efficiently enough. They stayed in our bodies and made us ill. In addition, certain foodstuffs clogged up the digestive system and stopped the real nutrients getting to the body. Now I understood why the steroids I had been taking had made me feel a whole lot worse.

‘Those pills you are taking will kill you before your digestive disease will,’ he concluded.

I wanted to know more. I loved what he was telling me and I wanted to get better. This had to be the answer: I was sick of doctors, sick of being ill, and I hung on his every word.

‘Yes! You’re right. The pills have made my symptoms better, but I just don’t feel like myself – and look at me, I look terrible. If I come off them, though, will my stomach pain come back? What can I do?’ I pressed him for answers.



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‘You must follow this diet,’ he said, handing me some leaflets, ‘it will ease your candida problem. And you must gradually come off the steroids. It is important to cleanse your body, and these herbal pills will help. They contain a mixture of natural healing plants: slippery elm, golden seal and liquorice. They will coat your insides so you can eat your new cleansing diet without feeling ill.’

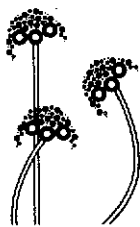
‘What is the diet?’

‘No wheat or dairy products and no red meat. No processed food. Lots of vegetables, a little fish and chicken, and make sure they are produced without added chemicals. Avoid anything that candida loves – which includes sugar, yeast and carbohydrates. And, as I have explained to you, you must get hold of food that has been produced *organically*.’

What he was suggesting sounded pretty difficult, but I was prepared to try anything. Realising I had been there for hours, I paid him for the herbs, thanked him and said goodbye.

‘Stick at it, Jo,’ he said as we left. ‘As my grandfather used to say, “Only the impossible is difficult; the rest is a piece of cake”.’

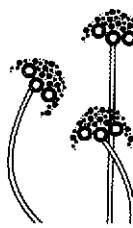
He stood on his doorstep watching us drive down the lane, an old man full of wisdom and kindness who had reached out to a complete stranger. By now I felt strongly that he wasn’t a madman, but just how much of a saviour he would turn out to be I couldn’t then have known.



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On the way home I reflected on what he had said. Why had no one ever told me this before? It was so obvious, really, if I thought about it. Our bodies simply were not adapted to the mix of foods, saturated fats, additives and chemicals we were asking them to absorb. Many hundreds of generations had passed since people had had to subsist on a diet of vegetables and nuts, and that kind of diet no longer suited our lifestyles, but now that multinational corporations with slick marketing operations had got involved in the business of mass food production, we had gradually been taken further and further away from what our bodies need. Time had moved on, but the human digestive system hadn't. In order to produce the amount of food consumers wanted crops were being sprayed with chemicals to kill fungi, insects, weeds and bacteria. How could it not be harming both us and the environment? Yet – like millions of other people – I thought it was perfectly fine to exist on a diet of meat and two veg, a bit of fruit here and there, nice puddings, takeaways when I fancied them, and lots of processed convenience foods full of sugar.

I was slowly killing myself, and – let's face it – my busy lifestyle touring the world wasn't exactly helping. I knew I was being offered a golden opportunity. I was sick and tired of feeling sick and tired: Gerald was offering me the chance to live well, and to create a healthier life for my children. I grabbed it with both hands.



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The change in my health was amazing – it was as if my soul had come back. My skin cleared, my hair shone and my eyes sparkled. I was happy and laughing again when, three months after Shangri-La, I had a setback. I was at a friend's house when suddenly I doubled up in pain. It was back – the terrible gut-wrenching agony. I was appalled, angry and shocked. How could this be happening again?

'What's going on?' asked my friend Lorraine in horror. 'I thought you were cured.'

'So did I,' I moaned.

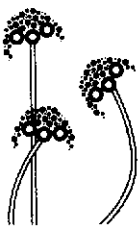
It turned out that my friend's father knew an amazing intestinal specialist called Professor Farthing. Well, I had nothing to lose, I thought, but I was miserable at the prospect of reverting to traditional doctors, and no way was I going back on steroids. I had a consultation with Professor Farthing the very next day, and straightaway he did several tests, including giving me a Barium meal.

'I don't think you've got Crohn's disease,' he said.

'Great.' This was fantastic news – but God, what could it be? Cancer? I asked him what he thought, and he hedged his bets.

'I'm not sure, we'll need to have a look inside you to find out exactly what it is.'

I was terrified. I had never had an operation, and the night before what they were calling 'exploratory surgery' I looked down at



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my smooth, flat tummy knowing that the next day it would have a big scar right down the middle.

After the operation we had our answer. I had had a perforated appendix. I must have had it all the time. Because it was infected, it had been inflaming the intestine, which explained why I had been in so much pain and why the doctors thought I had Crohn's disease. Needless to say, they removed it, plus some of my intestine. As I was recovering in the hospital bed, the surgeon came to see me.

'You have had a lucky escape. If you had stayed on the steroids you were given for Crohn's disease they would have continued to mask the symptoms and one of these days the perforated appendix would have burst. That is not something I would wish on anyone. You could have died.'

'What about my new diet?'

'I think it's doing you a great deal of good. Apart from your appendix, the rest of your gut looked pretty healthy to me.'

So I wasn't suffering from an incurable disease after all. I was relieved beyond measure at this diagnosis, but furious with those other supposedly top doctors who had told me I'd had Crohn's, especially because it had led to the terrible year on steroids. But at the same time I recognised that if it hadn't been for the chance contact with Gerald Greene my life would be very different today. He opened my eyes to a new way of living.

