

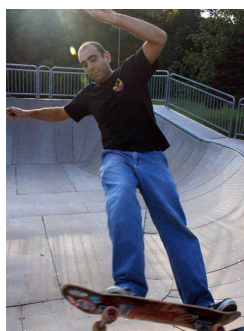
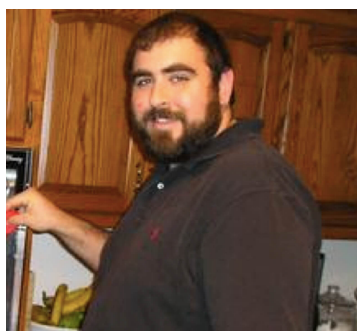


Anthony Masiello's Journey From Patient to Lifestyle Medicine Pioneer

By Courtney Davison
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If you've been a Forks Over Knives reader for some time, you may already know Anthony Masiello's [remarkable story](#). Once weighing over 360 pounds and struggling with multiple health issues, this young father of two transformed his life by adopting a whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) diet. He lost 160 pounds, reversed chronic health conditions, and gained a new lease on life, becoming an inspiring figure in the plant-based movement.



Since we first shared his story in 2017, Masiello has turned his personal transformation into a professional mission. Leaving a successful career in pharmaceuticals, he founded [Love.Life Telehealth](#), a platform connecting patients with lifestyle medicine doctors. Through this work, he's helping others achieve the same kind of life-changing results he experienced. We recently caught up with Masiello to learn more about his journey, insights, and tips for anyone looking to build a career in the plant-based space.

How did you discover whole-food, plant-based nutrition?

Anthony Masiello: The short answer is out of necessity. Back in 2005, I applied for a 20-year-term life insurance policy and was denied. I was morbidly obese, on medication for high blood pressure, had high cholesterol and sleep apnea. And I was only 33. I was going for the insurance policy because my wife was pregnant with our second son. So here I am thinking that my life is just starting, and I had this company telling me that the end was in sight, essentially.

I went to Google and typed in "vegetarian weight loss." [Although] everything that was popular at the time was high-protein, high-fat diets, that just never made sense to me. ... I found Dr. Joel Fuhrman's book *Eat to Live*, which said to eat vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, and seeds and eliminate all processed food. And that's what I did.

Was the transition difficult?

AM: Only until I started losing weight and my doctor started reducing my medication. And then it kind of became fun, because now I was like, "Holy smokes, this is working. For the first time in my life, I'm starting to feel better." Then it became easy.

What inspired you to leave pharmaceuticals and launch your telemedicine platform, Love.Life Telehealth?

AM: I loved the people I worked with ... but I kind of lost the passion for [our purpose]. I left my job at Novartis in 2018, and I didn't really have a plan. I started going to [lifestyle medicine] conferences and I noticed a pattern: A doctor would give a presentation, share some case studies, stories of people like me. And then [there would be] a Q&A. Almost every single time, someone in the audience would raise their hand and say, "Where can I find a [lifestyle medicine] doctor?" And there was never a good answer, because it depended—where do you live? Can you travel?

(continued)

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I just kept hearing that over and over. So I started researching telemedicine systems ... I knew enough on how to evaluate existing systems, and I basically just put the pieces together and figured out that we could do this.

How do you see traditional Western medicine and lifestyle medicine fitting together?

AM: They work hand in hand. I think that the shift that we need to make is to take a lifestyle-first approach, and then we can use medications and other medical procedures as a next level, when we can't achieve the desired outcomes with lifestyle changes. None of the doctors at Love.Life Telehealth are giving up their years of experience treating patients with conventional medicine. They're building on that.

What has the feedback been from patients?

AM: We hear from patients all the time who are lowering their cholesterol, getting off medications, lowering their blood pressure, and reversing [Type 2 diabetes](#). ... [Beyond those] more measurable things, we hear patients say they just feel better, they're happier to get up in the morning.

Being the Change

"Forging a career in the lifestyle medicine space has been one of the most challenging and rewarding things I've ever done," Masiello says. "Here are my tips for others looking to do the same."

Build community. "Join or start a local WFPB group on [MeetUp.com](#), so you can connect with other WFPB folks in your area for potluck lunches, weekend walks, or restaurant outings," Masiello says. "In collaborating with others who share your passion for plant-based nutrition, you're more likely to bring new ideas to fruition."



Share your experience. "Find opportunities to share your own experience with a WFPB lifestyle, whether that means speaking at local events or sharing your story online. You'll inspire others, and you'll likely end up connecting with other folks on a similar path." (Submit your success story to Forks Over Knives [here](#)!)

Never stop learning. "If you're new to the world of nutrition and medicine, consider getting your feet wet through a program such as the [eCornell Plant-Based Nutrition Certification](#)," Masiello recommends. "If you're a health care professional, take free courses through [Plantrician University](#) and seek lifestyle medicine certification from the [American College of Lifestyle Medicine](#)."

To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#). For meal-planning support, check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.