



Jennifer's Way: My Journey with Celiac Disease-- What Doctors Don't Tell You and How You Can Learn to Live Again

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The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness estimates that as many as one in 133 Americans has celiac disease. Unfortunately, 83 percent of people who have this terrible disease are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed—suffering through years of pain and misunderstanding. Award-winning actress Jennifer Esposito was one of those 83 percent, receiving an accurate diagnosis only after decades of mysterious illnesses and myriad misdiagnoses.

Now Jennifer shares her riveting personal journey—from her earliest memories of her childhood in Brooklyn to her years as a young actress, all the while suffering from unexplained, devastating ailments. Jennifer's struggle to finally receive an accurate diagnosis is one that anyone who has a chronic disease will share. But this is more than a story of suffering. It is the story of one woman's valiant journey to take charge of her health and rebuild her life.

Not only will you learn from Jennifer's personal story, the book also guides you through early diagnosis, sharing the steps that helped Jennifer heal. Plus, you'll find recipes she uses at home, along with recipes for some of the delicious treats she offers at her own gluten-free bakery, Jennifer's Way, in New York.

For anyone struggling with a chronic illness, *Jennifer's Way* is proof that you can find an answer to what is wrong with you, that you shouldn't stop until you find it, and that you can learn how to truly live again.

Jennifer's Way: My Journey with Celiac Disease--What Doctors Don't Tell You and How You Can Learn to Live Again Details

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From Reader Review Jennifer's Way: My Journey with Celiac Disease--What Doctors Don't Tell You and How You Can Learn to Live Again for online ebook

Megan says

As someone with a high intolerance to Gluten I want to say this book saved my life, which is a little dramatic.. But nonetheless. It was by happenstance that I saw this book & I actually cried when I read it, mainly because I felt lots of hope. I could identify with Jennifer in the way she described all her hospital visits, getting sick, dealing with family & doctors - nonchalantly giving you tons medicine - which never worked. I'm so grateful she told her story & started her own business ♥? even if you do not have celiac (or any disease for that matter) it's still a wonderful book!

Grace Carter says

What an amazing book. For celiacs or non-celiacs, this is a great novel to gain some understanding and perspective. This book made me cry at some points. For everyone who understands what it is like to go through this. For everyone who has been forced by their body to go through this. I learned so much about myself and I also learned what it is like to be in an outsider's shoes. This book motivated me to take my life back and accept what this disease is. I feel so understood. Jennifer Esposito has told my story, as well as many others just by telling her own. (The recipes in the back were also so helpful to me!) Jennifer offers advice- real, genuine, helpful advice, not just something you can read online or some hokum your doctor told you. She gives advice from a celiac's perspective. This may have been one of the most beneficial novels I have ever read- regardless of my health. This book could teach anyone, ill or not ill, to be more compassionate for people going through a serious health crisis (not just celiac disease, although celiac disease is the main focus of this book.) This book will teach you that gluten-free is not just a dietary preference- it is a dire necessity for celiacs and the gluten-sensitive. I feel as if every base I can cover is covered by this book, which is why anyone should read it to gain understanding, compassion, and empathy.

Bianca says

Took me forever to get into it - I have picked it up and put it down a lot over the past year since my husband and daughter were both diagnosed with Celiac. But the book got better and better as it went along, almost as if you could feel her getting stronger and more confident as her body started to heal. Heartbreaking for me to read since this is what my daughter will deal with for her entire life, but knowledge is power.

Fate's Lady says

As someone with a different and equally invisible autoimmune disease, it was all at once validating, heartening, and heartbreaking to read so intimately of a parallel struggle. Jennifer manages to keep a fabulous balance of providing enough personal information to be engaging and interesting without losing

track of the point of her narrative or of becoming self-obsessive.

The book is separated into two helpful parts, the first disclosing her personal struggle with illness, the medical institution, and societal expectations of wellness. When people get sick, society expects them to either "buck up" and get over it, or to sadly die quickly. For those of us who suffer and suffer for years on end, there is often a sense of frustration or impatience coming at us from all directions. "Yeah, yeah, you're tired. You hurt. We've heard all this. Can't you just get over it? Have you tried yoga?" I wanted to hug her. Heck, I wanted someone to hug ME. It was very well done.

The second part describes some of the day to day details for living with celiac, including how to search out mystery ingredients to avoid, and while I didn't think I would be interested in reading this part of the book, I ended up reading or at the very least skimming most of it. The information was presented in an extremely readable way, and spreading awareness always seems wise. I was able to pass this book along to a friend with celiac disease, and I would heartily recommend it to anyone. It's knowledge worth having, and it's presented in a fabulously readable format.

Brooke says

I have watched Jennifer Esposito for years on my television and always thought and still do think she is a wonderful actress. I just recently started watching Blue Bloods and was looking up cast names when I noticed that next to Jennifer's name on a website it said Celiac Disease; I clicked it and I'm so glad that I did because it led me to this book.

I am currently watching the beginning of season 3 of Blue Bloods and I'm around the part where Jennifer leaves the show due to health issues. It was interesting to see her act on Blue Bloods and then read about her explaining why she couldn't do that show anymore; had I'd not been researching the show prior I wouldn't have guessed at all that she was so ill: she's that good.

This book was so well written and the things she mentions about people especially doctors/nurses not even knowing what this disease is...well it's frightening. I can't even imagine all she has had to endure.

Her story has a beautiful "ending" with her opening her own bakery, "Jennifer's Way" and helping others like herself when she could have easily decided to remain hidden in a sense. Even though I don't have Celiac I still learned so much and this book has impacted me more than I thought it would!

Caitlin Rose says

Being just diagnosed with celiac disease I thought this book may be a good introduction to the disease. I recognize that Jennifer began by writing a blog and that's how this book reads. I didn't find it particularly interesting or fun to read. And according to this book every single ailment I've ever had could be blamed on being celiac. Accurately titled "Jennifer's way" because the book provides no sources for a lot of the information that she provides as facts.

Laurie Bok says

I didn't watch "Spin City" very much, and I only watch "Blue Bloods" when I am with my parents (but it's a wonderful show), I have never seen "Crash", but I did watch "Samantha Who?", yet Jennifer Esposito is such a strong, natural and profound presence in her acting - I remember a wonderful show she was the lead in that lasted only a season "Related" - that I immediately asked my mother when we were watching "Blue Bloods" earlier this year where was she. She said that she had some disease – maybe MS or Parkinson's. She had no idea.

So, when I had the opportunity to read and review her book for my blog, "Jennifer's Way", I jumped at the chance. Jennifer's Way is not only a book and a bakery, but a foundation for Celiac education.

I do not have Celiac disease (definition at the end). And until I read Jennifer Esposito's account of her experiences, I would never have thought twice about it unless I knew someone who had it, and I think I may know a handful of people who are "allergic to gluten and/or dairy", as well as other foods, or who have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, or have Lupus, and have a few other symptoms but may never have been thoroughly diagnosed or even misdiagnosed. I don't want to put them in a panic, but I will be encouraging them to read this book.

But, according to Jennifer, I probably wouldn't know if someone is a celiac because it's a disease that sufferers will most likely keep quiet about other than telling people they are allergic to or can't process gluten. I didn't realize everything that does or may contain gluten until I read the book (Chapter 17 is filled with a plethora of information on foods, products, and strategies to take).

I have to be honest here, for those of us who don't suffer from any food allergies (or none that I know of so far), most probably really don't know the first thing about it other than once in awhile eating or drinking something that "doesn't agree with us". It's hard for me to imagine how to test for a food allergy since in my mind it could be something else you ate earlier or a combination of food and drink. I have to admit, I'm 47 and I don't know really, how long it takes for food and drink to digest fully.

I have to applaud Jennifer Esposito for her candid, honest and openly sharing her story with this hidden disease and her perseverance to push through and rebuild her life. Since she is a public figure, it's even more brave and giving of her to open her heart, pass on her experience and share her wisdom so others who may, or may not have celiac disease can come out of the shadows and take the bull by the horns and be heard.

I admire her persistence to find out what exactly was wrong with her, and her tenacity to take charge and change doctors and practitioners who weren't working for her, and her courage to tell the world her story and to pass on vital information.

She's right. You know your body better than anyone else does. Go with what your gut, so to speak, is telling you and you can't go wrong.

I never listened to my body unless I was in pain, sick or bleeding. I'd be more aware if I woke up but still felt tired all day, was drained of energy, had a foggy head, had achy muscles, or if I was in a funk or fog that I couldn't seem to shake...for me, it's usually my over-taxed, over-thinking, over-stressing mind playing nasty tricks on me!

Over the past 15 years or so, when I started having my own tummy issues, I opened my ears and started

listening to my body and can now tell when something isn't quite right. I started focusing on what I ate, drank or if I was over-stressed – I tried to distinguish any patterns or triggers. Wednesday's were the only consistent variable for awhile - although I'm still not sure why. But to this day I still listen and learn what my body is trying to tell me.

And, you have to be tenacious and persistent with your doctors. That is one thing I am going to be next time I visit a doctor. I have a few ailments I've been bogged down with for years and have been brushed off by doctors who are too lazy, really don't care, or just don't know enough but are too proud to admit it to pass me along to someone who may be able to serve me better.

I highly recommend Jennifer's Way for anyone who is challenged with Celiac disease, knows someone who has it, as well as anyone who wants to read one woman's account of how you should be aware, engaged and open about what is going on with your body, and to be proactive in finding out what is really going on and to take action to rectify it.

The information in Chapter 17 and the Resources section are worth it – for everyone. I'm going to take this information and pay more attention to what I put into my body, as well as see if any of the vitamins, supplements or strategies work for me. I luckily don't suffer from celiac disease, but this new knowledge I now possess will be passed on to those I care about, as well as help me to be more mindful.

I think restaurant owners should also read this book and hopefully become more aware of people with food issues and understand fully about cross-contamination that could happen even when they are preparing food for folks with special diets if they even choose to serve these people, as well as food manufacturers and packagers, to understand what truly gluten-free is if they make these products and to take responsibility...not to just make money on the fad diet of the day.

Thank you to Jennifer Esposito for giving back and sharing – your journey, your bravery, your tools, your courage, your knowledge, your tenacity, your recipes, your insight, your advice, your power, and your heart. I personally wish you all the best health and happiness, and do hope that you will stay in the public eye and grace us from time to time with your rare acting gifts.

Celiac disease is an autoimmune digestive disease that damages the villi of the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. What does this mean? Essentially the body is attacking itself every time a person with celiac consumes gluten.

Disclaimer: This book was provided to reviewer from the publisher, Perseus Books Group, Da Capo Press through NetGalley for the sole purpose of reading and review.

Ngairé says

This was really interesting and quite frustrating too - mainly because it took so long for anyone to figure out what was wrong with Jennifer Esposito. She went through years of health problems so severe that, at times,

she could hardly walk, her hair was falling out, and she was having terrible panic attacks. And still, doctors misdiagnosed her and gave her medications that, at best, made no difference and often made her worse. Finally, she was told she had severe celiac disease and has been able to start recovering her health, though it seems like slow going. Jennifer has nice authorial voice and her stories are interesting to hear too.

Sandy Lowe says

Fabulous resource

well written, real and raw understanding of what a lot of people experience! thank you Jennifer for sharing. loved it!

Lois R. Gross says

Most of us know Jennifer Esposito as an actress. Her career started in her teens where, fresh off Staten Island, she landed a gig dancing on MTV with Downtown Julie Brown. She hit the bigtime with recurring roles in TV's Spin City and Blood Brothers, and movies with Spike Lee and the award winning "Crash." What we didn't know was that, the whole time we were enjoying her acting, Ms. Esposito was desperately ill and the many doctors she went to either mislabeled her disease or dismissed it as "all in her head." She was suffering from an extreme case of Celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder that causes the body to see gluten, a product found in bread, wheat, and many other products, as an invader in the body. The physiological response is for the body to treat it as an allergen, destroying the digestive system and heavily damaging the neurological system, skin, hair, and critical organs in the body.

Raised in an Italian family, Esposito loved food and food-based occasions. The cornucopia of Italian dishes - the pastas and pastries, pizzas and "Any " -- were central to Jennifer's existence. However, all of those food played a part in an increasingly "bad stomach" and debilitating panic attacks. Her family dismissed much of her illness as being like her mother (Celiac has a genetic component). However, as she became sicker and sicker in an industry where appearance and "showing up" is critical, she began to seek her own solutions only to spend decades crashing into brick walls.

Her journey is frightening and heart-breaking. Her resolve to find her own solution is inspiring and Ms. Esposito tells her story in a very human and very relatable way. Any reader who has fought their own battle with food sensitivities will easily understand the feelings of frustration and alienness that are created by a disorder like Celiac.

What Ms. Esposito emphasizes is that gluten-free is not a "diet of the week." It is a lifestyle that has to be strictly adhered to if the patient is to survive. Even policing herself carefully, the actress has had many setbacks and there seems to be no end to the limitations she places on herself. If you wonder why, after two seasons, her character disappeared from the hit series "Blood Brothers," it was in large part due to a lack of accommodation for her condition by the network and her own illness made worse by the stress of working on the hour-long episodes in the series. Although some of the conditions that result from a Celiac diagnoses are covered by work accommodation, the disease itself is not recognized.

Ms. Esposito shows remarkable restraint for not calling out people like Gwyneth Paltrow who, with no

medical reason, promote a gluten free lifestyle as a diet. Having attempted gluten free for just two weeks (thankfully, the tests came back negative), I am in awe of Ms. Esposito's ability to restrict herself and take care of her own health.

Ms. Esposito uses the book to promote her own website, answer FAQs from Celiac sufferers, and offer favorite gluten free recipes. Her happy ending is that she is now the owner/operator of a gluten free bakery in the West Village where she helps other sufferers like herself feel better about what they are eating.

Great respect, Ms. Esposito.

Lesley says

I know people who choose to eat gluten free and some that have no choice because of their celiac disease. Well now I can understand the frustration of diagnosis. she did an excellent job telling her story in an engaging way then the second part was what to do if diagnosed this, what to eat, what to throw out. I didn't realize gluten is in so many beauty products as well. Very informative!

Kayla Donnelly says

Amazing read. Celiac disease sucks... this book made me cry, laugh, and really connected me. My daughter and I suffer from celiac disease and this book was really helpful.

Lisa says

Jennifer Esposito! Thank you for sharing your story about living and struggling with Celiac Disease! I understand all too well how difficult it is to have to radically change your diet in hopes of keeping your body from turning on you, and it's always good to know I'm not alone. I completely believe all the frustrations you experienced on your journey to diagnosis and health, and anyone who may doubt it need only to watch *this* infuriating interview that Jennifer gave to Dr. Drew. If I ever happen to come across this man, I plan to fill him in on a thing or two (Really? You're a doctor and you don't know what leaky gut is??). Jennifer, I admire your restraint. You're a classy lady!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8AwI...>

Andrea says

I learned so much from this book and I have had Celiac Disease for two years. Felt a connection to the Celiac community which helps you feel not as alone :)

Georgette says

Amazing book. If you are or aren't celiac-stricken, you should read this. If you are, you will learn a ton of information. I've been for a year, and I still learned a ton more. It's a frightening look at the medical community's indifference to celiac as a disease and an autoimmune one also. Great book.
