

Spring into Change and Make it Lasting

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Mollie, Ella Rose, Claire, and Mike Lannen

In 2016, Mike and Mollie Lannen of Barre, began a journey of intentional, positive behavior changes in their diets, self-care, and home-life that would have profound and lasting effects on their happiness and relationships. Their daughter Claire was two years old at the time; she is now five, and Ella Rose, their second child, is one year old. Mike is the founder and creative director of the website design firm Eternity. Mollie is Eternity's CEO, as well as founder and president of CW Print and Design.

Mike and Mollie Lannen are those neighbors you see in passing all the time. One day you see Mike coming out of his house and you notice a change in his appearance. He looks healthier, and maybe slimmer. You say to yourself, "What's up with Mike? What's he been doing?" Another day you see Mollie and she has a noticeable glow about her. The same questions come to mind.

What you didn't see was the work it took to get there. The research, choices, the little changes here and there, the minor slip-ups, renewed commitment, the appreciable shifts in energy and satisfaction.

Mike hadn't seen a doctor in about ten years, it being too clinical and impersonal. To try something different, he contacted on a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). An ND helps to restore optimal health by supporting the person's inherent self-healing process, working to identify the underlying causes of illness, and developing a personalized treatment plan to address them.

The Deep Dive

Mike's work with his ND revealed a number of concerns, some of which suggested the possibility of underlying allergies. Allergies can cause serious, immediate reactions, as well as systemic issues that may significantly affect your overall health and wellbeing. A simple allergy test concluded that Mike was allergic to cow's milk, dairy, citrus, and chicken eggs.

To begin his quest for improved health and wellness, aside from eliminating foods he now knew he was allergic to, Mike decided to eliminate sugar for ninety days as well. "The beginning was arduous," Mike says, "I was totally self-guided. Within 30-days I was already dropping weight, sleeping better, and had much more energy."

Impressed by Mike's experience with the ND, Mollie made an appointment for herself. After trying a number of elimination diets to identify what may be triggering her frequent headaches, she requested an allergy test. The results showed an intolerance to gluten and dairy. By eliminating gluten, her headaches lessened in intensity and frequency almost immediately. She felt less bloated, and her digestive system felt considerably better. The effects were nothing short of life-changing.

Systematic Approach to Healthy Eating

Mollie joined Mike in his rigorous ninety-day quest. Mollie became the expert label reader, identifying every type of sugar imaginable in all their usual provisions. Their new grocery shopping routine took some time to adjust to; sourcing quality, sugar and gluten-free products between traditional grocery stores and local food co-ops, but they figured it out together.

"We held each other accountable to these new behaviors. Without a partner to do this with, I would have had to find a friend, group, or coach. The support and encouragement we gave each other was tremendously important."

The dramatic shift in their diet, and the education that came with it, offered Mike and Mollie a perspective they never had before. The food they choose today tends to be organic, and emphasizes vegetables, gluten-free grains, beans, and fruits, and the occasional grass-fed meat from local farms.

Self-Care Beyond Diet

Mollie's interest in taking better care of herself and her family really peaked as they celebrated a second child on the way. Being a mother and business owner presents a never-ending array of challenges.

"There needs to be harmony in my life, with our family, for our well-being and to keep stress levels low. Ultimately it allows us to be more joyful together."

With their daughter Claire growing, learning, and mimicking their every move, more and more each day, it didn't take long for Mike and Mollie to understand the degree to which their work life was overlapping with their home life; they could see it in the way Claire mimicked their busy work behaviors on the phone or laptop.

For a while both Mike and Mollie stopped bringing their laptops home at all. Phones were turned off by 9 p.m., and for two months of the year nobody turned on the television. The idea was to *normalize* instead *emphasize* certain activities, and bring balance back into their lives.

Time and energy between work and home lives are continually shifting for Mike and Mollie, but what they've learned more than anything is the value of moderation, being present, aware, and intentional. Refocusing on a few key values in their lives like balance, harmony, healthy diets, and exercise has helped guide them to make better choices in all areas of their lives.

Mike and Mollie's story is unfolding in similar ways in people's lives you see every day; some may live right next door. Their work, and their passion to make change reinforces the idea that conscious, learned behavior is a constructive force in our lives, and that we not only need the motivation and discipline to make real, lasting change, but the ability to recognize what it is that may be holding us back, keeping us from changing, and finding ways to let it go.

By Sherry Rhynard
