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McClures turn lifestyle change into healthier-living program

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Four years ago, Ed McClure, owner of **Ye Kendall Inn** in Boerne, got in his Mercedes S500 to drive to a weight loss clinic. At 500 pounds, his mode of travel was due largely to his size -- had he chose to fly he would have had to buy two airline seats and required a seat belt extension.

But on his way to the clinic in North Carolina he stopped off to visit a doctor in Florida who had been referred to him, Don Colbert. The result, for McClure, was not only an eventual loss of more than 200 pounds; It was the creation of a whole new way of eating and living.

"I was up around 500 pounds. I had high blood pressure, arrhythmia, psoriasis and a number of other problems. I can't explain why I didn't have diabetes, I had everything else. And they were all being treated independently," he recalls. "I'd go to an internist for the psoriasis, a cardiologist for the heart arrhythmia, and various other doctors for various other things. It's not that they weren't looking at other drugs I was on or other treatments I was receiving, but what happened in my case was that we were treating a bunch of symptoms."

McClure and his wife, Elisa, took what they learned from the experience and created the Zoe8 weight management program, which they contend promotes a more holistic approach to health management.

Their experiences are chronicled in a book they published with the help of writer Connie Reese entitled "Eat Your Way To A Healthy Life."

The premise of the Zoe8 program is that as complex organisms, human health issues, physical, emotional and spiritual, are all interrelated.

"I approach it from the physiological, what we feel; the emotional, what we think; and the spiritual, what we believe," Ed McClure explains. "If we take a look at ourselves as a complete being, I don't think we're designed to be sick. I think we're designed to be well. This is a phenomenal machine we occupy and it's designed to run well, just like a Ferrari is designed to run well, but if you put in the wrong kind of fuel, it's not going to run well long. I don't think we were designed to eat white, enriched, refined flour or sugar or corn in the zillion ways corn comes now."

The McClures have expanded the Zoe8 program beyond their book, offering monthly seminars at their hotel -- intended to help attendees rebalance their bodies and give them a chance to start over. The couple have also developed cookbooks, with some of the program foods featured in their restaurant.

"Why does our generation have diabetes? Why is our generation obese? Why do our kids have attention deficit disorder? I think a whole lot of it is because of what we eat," Ed McClure says.

He describes the Zoe8 program like this: "In phase one of our program we take people to the lowest level of ingestion of sugar of any form. We take people off of wheat, corn and most dairy for a three-week period. And we do that for a couple of reasons, first, it's not going to hurt anyone and secondly people tend to lose weight very rapidly. Blood sugar and cholesterol absolutely crash."

Phase two of the system slowly re-introduces a number of low-glycemic foods and phase three is a maintenance program. Ed McClure is quick to point out that diabetics who enter his program should do so under a doctor's supervision.

"I believe part of the problem is perception. Once people are told they're diabetic, they believe it. I think people are what they think, what they eat and what they say. If you believe you are a diabetic and let yourself be defined that way, then that's what you are. The perception that once a diabetic, always a diabetic, is absolutely not true."