

Self-Care the crazy sexy Way

Kris Carr's workshop at Omega NYC
teaches attendees how to feed the body,
mind and soul for ultimate wellness

By Tammy Mastroberte

We live in a fast-paced society packed with technology, to-do lists and responsibilities. We run from one obligation to the next — be it work, family or friends — and rarely slow down enough to take a breath, let alone take care of ourselves. For many of us, it's not until an illness, injury or disease hits that we begin to re-evaluate our choices in life and make changes. This is what happened to Kris Carr.

An actress and photographer living in New York, at age 30 Carr was told on Valentine's Day that she had an incurable, untreatable, but slow-moving form of cancer, with tumors on her liver and lungs. This sent her on a journey to discover the true meaning of self-care, changing her diet, lifestyle and way of thinking. Now, 10 years later, she continues to live with cancer, but is proud to report it has not progressed, and she is happier than ever before.

"I changed my life out of fear," she told the "Crazy Sexy Life: Creating a Daily Self-Care Game Plan" workshop audience at this year's Omega NYC in April. "But I realized, it's not just about what you are eating. It's about what's eating you."

Accompanying the best-selling author in teaching the workshop was Nick Ortner, creator and executive producer of the film "The Tapping Solution," who teaches EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), a process of tapping meridian points of the body, based on Chinese acupuncture. The process is done while saying certain statements aloud, and has been proven to help reduce or



eliminate physical and emotional pain, change deep-rooted beliefs and more.

"When I learned about EFT and found Nick, I went to a four-day summit on tapping," Carr explained. "What took me 40 years of therapy was shifting in a weekend."

For this weekend workshop, Carr asked attendees to become their own inner detectives, as she walked them through uncovering the obstacles



Nick Ortner, EFT teacher and creator of the film "The Tapping Solution."



Crazy means “out of the box thinking, forward thinking” and Sexy means “empowered.”

Kris Carr

in the way of their optimal health — physically, spiritually and emotionally — and offered suggestions on how to make small changes that would produce big results.

“The focus of this weekend is energy. When we were babies, we came into this planet with 100 percent of our energy. But along the way we get leaks,” she explained. “We make deposits too, with things like food, exercise and joy, but this weekend we are going to talk about the leaks.”

She shared her own leaks, and spoke about the concept of stacking — which is when these leaks start to pile up. Born to a teenage mother, who worked three jobs and put herself through college, and a father she didn’t meet until 18, Carr said she felt abandoned and as a young girl, withdrew into herself. It wasn’t until her diagnosis with cancer that she realized she had also abandoned herself.

“Now, I’m never abandoning myself, no matter what comes along,” she said, explaining she carries

a picture of herself with her from when she was 5, and looks at it as a reminder that she needs to be nurturing and loving to herself. "How would I treat this girl? How would I nurture and mother her?"

The three keys to her daily self-care plan — and what she recommends for others — is to include a spiritual practice, food practice and a practice to eliminate stress into everyday life. She also shares these practices in her *New York Times* best-selling book, "Crazy Sexy Diet: Eat Your Veggies, Ignite Your Spark and Live Like You Mean It."

"The root cause of disease is inflammation, and that comes from what we eat, drink and think," she said. "All the scripts and stories you tell yourself — it's time to burn them."

In her experience, teaching others about lifestyle practices is not just about food, and that is why it's important to deal with stress and stressful thoughts. EFT is one of the ways she believes we can make changes in this area.

"The root cause of disease is inflammation, and that comes from what we eat, drink and think."

"There was a study done recently on EFT and stress, looking at the level of cortisol in the blood," Ortner explained. There was a control group, a cognitive therapy group and an EFT group. In just one hour of practice, there were no changes in the first two groups, but EFT saw a 24 percent decrease of cortisol in the blood, a hormone released during emotional stress, he said.

When we feel we have low energy and high stress, it's time to get the detective out and uncover what is really going on, said Carr. "Are you taking time for yourself? How? What is your daily spiritual practice? What is your diet like right now?" she said, calling them inventory exercises (see sidebar on page 23). And although many people use the excuse of not having enough time, Carr said it's about making the time.

"It's not that we don't have the time. It's that we don't make time," she noted. "Don't wait for something catastrophic to happen."

CRAZY SEXY DIET PRINCIPLES

The "Crazy Sexy Diet" isn't a typical diet — it is a way to enact our inner pharmacy, using food as medicine. "Your grocery store can be your new pharmacy," she says in the book. Crazy means "out of the box thinking, forward thinking" and Sexy means "empowered."

The food plan Carr offers is a low-fat, vegetarian program that offers anti-inflammatory, detoxing and alkalizing benefits to the body, increasing energy and decreasing inflammation. And while Carr is a vegan, the diet doesn't require it.

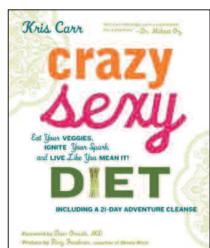
"As far as this weekend, take what makes sense to you and leave what doesn't. It's about making small steps and leaning into the changes," she said. "The Crazy Sexy Diet is an outline of a plant-based diet. I got interested in inflammation and how food affects the body, so I recommend reducing things like dairy and animal protein and eating more plant-based foods."

Simply starting with "I'm not going to eat or drink things that create heat or inflammation in the body," is an option, and choosing low glycemic sugars that "don't create huge energy spikes, which lead to crashing," she said.

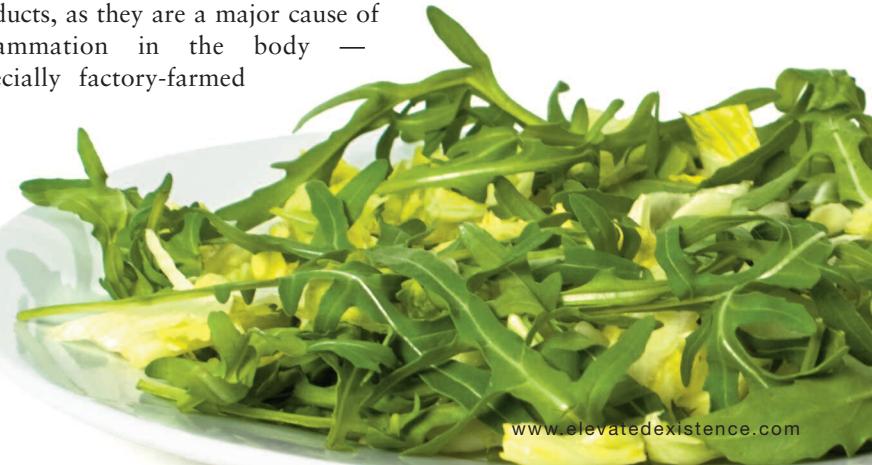
The Crazy Sexy Diet fills the body with whole foods, low glycemic fruits and raw vegetables, as well as alkalizing green drinks and smoothies. But Carr created the diet to be flexible, and even a few changes can produce results, she said.

One of the ways she recommended for people to start is the 50/50 concept. "Have 50 percent of your plate covered in vegetables, and the other 50 percent with a small amount of animal protein — although not every day — and grains," she advised. "Then move to 60/40 and 80/20. It's about reducing the foods that create fire, and pumping up the ones that create health, which are plants."

Additionally, when it comes to protein, she recommends decreasing or eliminating animal products, as they are a major cause of inflammation in the body — especially factory-farmed



"Crazy Sexy Diet: Eat Your Veggies, Ignite Your Spark and Live Like You Mean It,"
by Kris Carr



in the modern agricultural system where animals are given antibiotics, steroids and growth hormones to make them grow faster.

"The system is based on profits, not health, and these things are in the animals' tissues, which we are consuming," she said, explaining if we choose to eat meat, look for the certified humane seal and for free-range, antibiotic-free options.

However, animal products are not the biggest cause of inflammation when it comes to food — dairy products are far worse, according to Carr. "We wean all animals off milk but us," she said, explaining not only does dairy produce mucus, but many are no longer able to digest it. "If you are struggling with your weight, removing dairy from your diet is a great way to start."

In addition to animal products and dairy, Carr researched and learned a lot about sugar, particularly that it feeds cancer in the body, and is another source of inflammation. Sugar is not only addictive, but it's often hidden in foods, especially refined and processed food.

"Our digestive process takes most of the energy in our body, and it's harder to digest refined foods," she explained. "Instead of sugar for energy, take time to move the body with exercise and breath." Even if it's just dancing around the house — which she demonstrated as the music pumped through the speakers and attendees danced to songs by Prince and more. "And cut out the energy drinks. They are loaded with high-fructose corn syrup."

When it comes to fruit, stick with lower glycemic options, but when dealing with an inflammatory condition or chronic disease, stay away from fruit and other types of sugar, she said. "I was a sugar junkie. I would wake up in the middle of the night and crave it. Sugar is highly addictive. The same thing happens in the brain with sugar as with heroine addicts," she explained. "I know I can find the sweetness in my life without the sugar."

Carr also spoke about the importance of maintaining an alkaline versus acidic pH balance — as the body likes to maintain a pH of around 7.365 (anything below 7.0 is considered acidic). The Standard American Diet (SAD) is much more acidic than it is alkaline, which causes the body to mine minerals from our bones, joints, organs, tissues and teeth in order to maintain the balance. "The body tries to quell the fire of an acidic diet, and this creates inflammation," she explained.

Taking Personal Inventory

When starting a new wellness program, changing your diet or getting back on course, if beginning to feel stressed, Kris Carr, best-selling author of "Crazy Sexy Diet," recommends inventory exercises to uncover what is going on in the present moment.

During her workshop at Omega NYC, she recommended the audience keep track of their "anti-inflammatory life," including eating, drinking and thinking.

"We don't always know what we put into our body," she said. "I recommend doing a 10-day food journal to open your eyes to what is going on and what you want to focus on changing."

The following is a basic "inventory exercise" she walked the audience through to uncover possible issues:

Questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your energy level?
Consider the past month.
- What is your stress level from 1 to 10?
- What is one piece of unfinished business that has irritated or slightly inflamed you?
- How much coffee do you drink per day?
- How much soda do you drink per day?
- How much alcohol do you drink per day?
- How much water are you drinking on a regular basis?
- How much dairy do you consume?
Is it at lunch and dinner? Is it every day?
- How many animal products do you consume?
- How much sugar do you consume?
- How much wheat, breads and pasta do you eat?
- How many hours do you sleep each night?
- How much exercise do you get, or how much do you move?
- Do you have a support system? Who are they?
- How much free time do you have?
- What makes you happy?



One of the biggest changes — that can lead to the best results — is adding green juice into our daily diet. Move over energy drinks — there is a new energy booster in town! Not only can green juice and smoothies amp up our energy, but they are easier for the body to digest, and allow us to consume much more produce than we could possibly eat in one day, she explained.

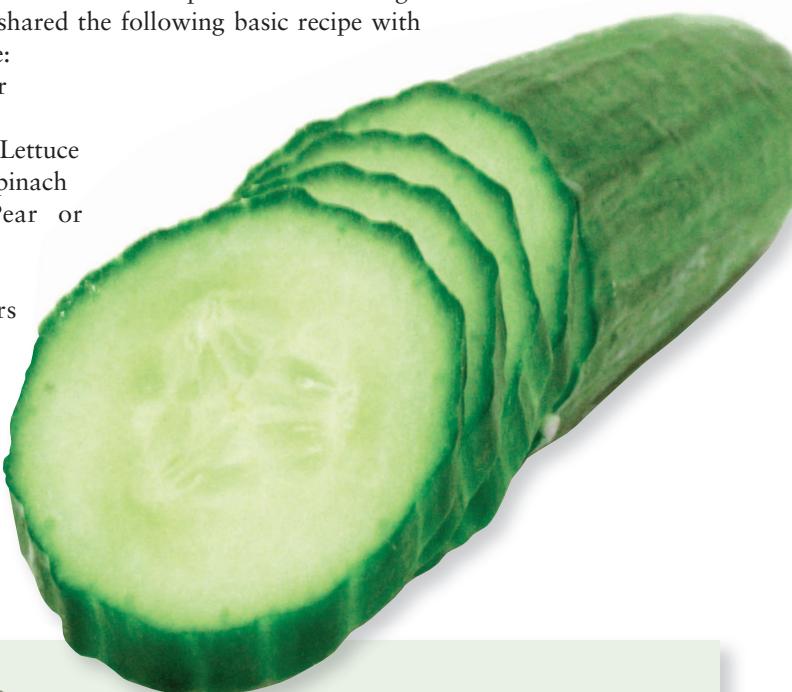


"If you take nothing else away from this weekend, the one thing to take is to start blending or juicing your vegetables," said Carr. "This bathes your body in alkalinity, and with a juicer, the fiber goes into the catch basket and you are only getting the blood of the plant. With a blender you get the fiber."

Carr uses a centrifugal juicer by Breville (in her book she recommends Breville Ikon multispeed, Breville Juice Fountain Compact and the Omega 4000), and shared the following basic recipe with the audience:

Cucumber
Celery
Romaine Lettuce
Kale or Spinach
Apple, Pear or
Pineapple
Lemon

She offers a variety of options, as well as an e-book of juice and smoothie recipes at



Pantry Tips from Kris Carr

On her Web site, www.crazysexylife.com, best-selling author Kris Carr offers advice, recipes, resources and more for those on the "Crazy Sexy" path. Making changes to our diet can be overwhelming and confusing, so here are some tips Carr offers for stocking the cupboards and refrigerator:

Extending Produce Life — Debbie Meyer green bags can help extend the life of your produce — and in turn, your wallet!

Noodles — Craving noodles, but trying to stick with gluten-free? Try Tinkyada rice pasta or Ancient Harvest quinoa pasta.

Substitutes for dairy — Rice milk, soy milk and almond milk; Daiya cheese.

Superfoods — E3 Live Blue Green Algae from Klamath Lake; Spirulina, which is high in chlorophyll and protein; and Chlorella, which helps to normalize bowel function and boost the immune system.

Beans — Chickpeas, lentils, white beans, black beans, lima and pinto are the easiest to digest, and if buying canned, she suggests Eden brand because others have preservatives.

Soups — Pacific Foods organic vegetable broth can be added to soups.

Daily Green Juice — Consume a minimum amount of 16 ounces of green juice or smoothies per day (made fresh, not store-bought), and add one to two ounces of wheatgrass per day.

Breads — Gluten-free brands she recommends include Food for Life, Mauk Farms Crusts and Love Force raw breads.

Quick Foods — Sunshine brand veggie burgers (wheat, gluten and soy free) and Amy's gluten-free organic pizza.

Snacks — San-J Crackers; Edwards & Sons crackers; Mary's Gone Crackers; Lydia's raw crackers; Just Veggies dehydrated snacks; LaraBars; Glutino brand snacks and Glaser Farms products.

“My kitchen is my pharmacy. That is where my medicine is.”

www.crazysexyjuice.com. “If you add green juice, you are getting an enormous amount of vegetables, and you have your flu shot, immunity booster, life force, health and happiness in that glass,” she said.

She also cautioned the audience to stay away from store-bought juice as they contain a lot of sugar and not the same nutrients as freshly made juice at home.

“Healthy foods are not about deprivation. It’s about loving yourself,” she said. “My kitchen is my pharmacy. That is where my medicine is.”

INCORPORATING EFT

Using the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) can change thinking patterns and limiting beliefs, and also work on emotions and physical symptoms. In his movie, “The Tapping Solution,” Ortner shows people with 30 years of chronic back pain, fibromyalgia and war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

“When we do the tapping process, and focus on the issues we want to change, the tapping sends a signal to the amygdala, or flight or fight center of the brain,” said Ortner, explaining while fight



or flight is necessary in certain situations, for many of us, this center of the brain is being activated for small things rather than big ones. “This is a problem, and in some cases, it is happening all day long. It creates tension in the body and depletes energy.”

He gave the example of “The Tapping Tree,” developed by Lindsay Kenny, and asked attendees to draw a tree with branches, leaves, a trunk and roots. The roots represent the limiting beliefs we carry, the trunk is the events or traumas in our life, the branches are the emotions, and the leaves are the symptoms or side effects, he explained.

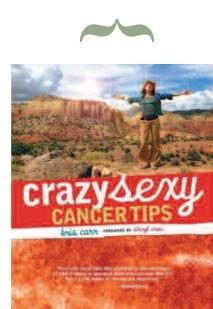
“The tree is everything that is going on with us, and can tap through each of the elements. But what is feeding everything? It’s the roots or limiting beliefs,” said Ortner. “The most efficient tapping is done on the limiting beliefs.”

Ortner recommends looking back on the events in our lives, such as traumas or relationship breakups, as well as beliefs we picked up from boyfriends/girlfriends, parents or teachers along the way, and make a list to discover the leaks in our energy. “People can often come up with a list of 50 things. Tap on one each day,” he said.

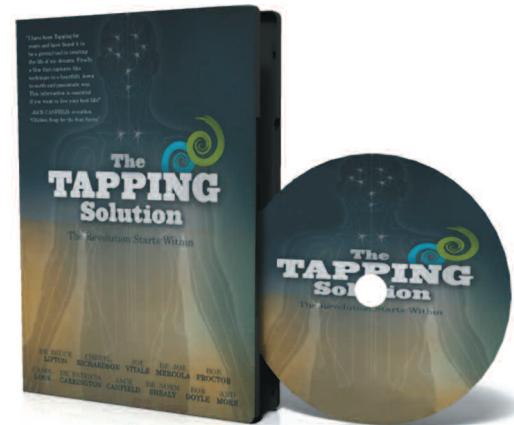
When doing the tapping process, which includes nine meridian points on the hand, face, chest and head, the first statement made is always addressing the issue. For example, for back pain, someone would say, “Even though my back hurts, I deeply and completely accept myself.” After acknowledging the pain and the symptoms — or the limiting belief — the statements move to more positive ones, such as “I choose to release it now. I’m releasing it from every cell of my body. I’m letting it go.”

“It’s about acknowledging and accepting oneself with the problems first,” said Ortner. “Then from that place, we can heal.”

EFT can also work on sugar cravings, as Ortner demonstrated by having three volunteers come onto the stage and sit with their favorite brand of chocolate candy. After walking them and the audience through the technique with certain statements, the cravings for the candy, which in some cases started as a nine out of 10, went down to zero.



“Crazy Sexy
Cancer Tips,”
by Kris Carr



OTHER SEXY SELF-CARE TIPS

In addition to what we put in our bodies, we need to watch what we put on our bodies, such as body lotions, makeup and more. As a daily detox, Carr recommends dry brushing the body to help eliminate toxins, and using coconut oil or other natural and organic body lotions.

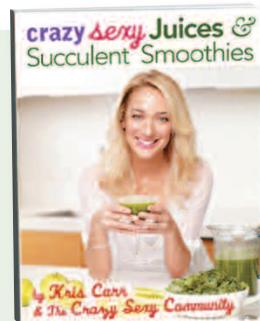
It's also important to dedicate time during the day to be with ourselves. "Spending quality time alone is one of the biggest rechargers, and then if you add nature to the equation, it doubles — especially if you do it barefoot," she said. "Sit with yourself, bring your journal, and spend time walking and noticing things around you. As you start to love and take care of yourself, the blocks holding you back release."

And one of the biggest aspects of self-care is proper sleep — 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. is ideal, Carr said, offering the following tips to ensure a good night's rest:

- Don't have a television in the bedroom.
- A dark room is important so we don't stimulate the pineal gland in the brain.
- A room that is cool is important, as heat will wake up the body.
- Do not drink any caffeine late at night.
- Don't drink wine at night — the liver starts to metabolize and it becomes sugar, and that will wake the body up.
- Lie in bed and relax. Go through the body and tell the ankles to let go, calves to let go, etc. This is the perfect time to practice affirmations.
- She uses a diffuser with lavender oil in her bedroom at night (a tip from her book).

Crazy Sexy Juices & Smoothies

Looking for more tips and great juicing recipes? Kris Carr provides this and more in her downloadable e-book "Crazy Sexy Juices & Succulent Smoothies," available for purchase at www.crazysexyjuice.com.



It offers recipes, a guide to choosing fruit, and a nutrient density guide, and also explains the differences between juicing and blending, what tools work best, and how to save both time and money in the process.

"Without proper sleep and rest, I can tell you that your dreams won't come true," she said. "Change isn't going to happen overnight — it takes time, and we need to be compassionate with ourselves," she told the audience, also explaining that studies done on Epigenetics, or what is hereditary or in our genes, show that this does not create our destiny. We hold the power in our own hands.

"You can come to this planet pre-disposed for something but you don't necessarily have to experience it," said Carr. "Your diet and lifestyle are what trigger it."

At the end of the conference, Carr left attendees with the following advice:

"Remember, you are worth it. Without you believing you are worth it, a lot of people will lose out. This planet will lose out — that is how important you are."

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"Without proper sleep and rest, I can tell you that your dreams won't come true."

