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## Interview with Bev Actis

Lurette Frost

Bev Actis

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Lurette Frost: This is tape accession number ELFS-LSF-A032101.A. This is Lurette Frost interviewing Bev Actis on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March.

Bev Actis: Well, I grew up in Illinois. And my mother was a wonderful cook, the greatest Italian cook in the world, actually. And her concern always was getting fresh food, good fresh food and serving plenty of it for her family. And so I grew up with that background, knowing that really what you are, you are what you eat. You really are. And, when I had my family, I have six children, all of them are grown. My youngest is the one who ... just received a kidney transplant. But, I guess I always emphasized, and was part of a food co-op from early on, so that I could get good sources of food for the children. So, I guess I've always been interested in nutrition. I guess I've seen in my family how that's affected their own health status. So, personally, food has always been an important part of my life. I like to eat it and I know that the results are good. I got really involved in learning about the healing properties of food when my youngest son was found to have failed kidneys. He was ill for about three weeks and I took him to the emergency room and they found that he had kidney failure. They did tests and they found that he only had one kidney and that it chronically degenerated. He had no idea, he was in excellent health for 25 years and all of a sudden he was in kidney failure. And it was such a shock to me because my family was so healthy. So, I couldn't figure out what happened. And, so, in addition, to that he was given a hepatitis vaccination and developed ??? Syndrome, which, it's a syndrome that actually attacks the nerve ??? and damages the nerves. He ended up with damaged arms and legs, couldn't walk, he was in a wheelchair. And this happened a month and a half after the kidney failure. So he was just a total... Our lives just came to a total halt. It was such a shocking thing and the biggest shock to me was how could this happen when I spent my whole life being so concerned about my family's health? And that started me on this, I don't if you would call it an adventure or an odyssey of trying to find ways to help heal, not only through good foods, but through mind/body interaction, the spiritual path. Whatever I could find that would help him heal. And a big part of it was the food. Because he was on occasional dialysis and when you're on dialysis, you really have a lot of strikes against you and you're very restricted in what you can eat. And your body becomes highly toxic because the dialysis doesn't quite get the waste products clear from your system. So, dialysis is very, it's a wonderful stop-gap measure, but it isn't a solution. You really have to struggle to keep yourself in good physical condition. So, I got to know Elaine Hartley pretty well because I started going to the health food store for a lot of the things we needed. I researched so many supplement, food supplements, herbal supplements, vitamin supplements and I think he's taking them all. Again, we just, I thought we'd eaten a pretty good diet, but we've absolutely improved our diet on all levels and went back to as many non-processed foods as

possible. Back to the basics, really. I took a look at what we took in, as far as food and water, and went to filtered water. You know, as much as I could, organically grown food, which isn't very well available around here. At least, I don't know where some of the sources are, but, to the best of my ability. Whole foods... I've got some notes down of some of the things I did. I can't tell you what books I bought, but just took a look at the amount of sugar coming into our bodies. The ratio of the alkaline to the acid producing foods, which is a really good indication of the health of your body if you take a look at that balance and see where you are.

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Made use of digestive enzymes and metabolic enzymes and fiber and took bacterial flora like the acidopholus and all the other groups. Because I really believe that many health conditions are, originate in your digestive tract and you've got to get that back in sync before you can really heal. One of the good things that we did was that we went to a holistic doctor and he started us on a lot of testing to find out where he was out of sync and his entire digestive system is disrupted. It wasn't only the kidney's that had failed, the digestive system, he had high blood pressure. He had a lot of other conditions that were secondarily related to the kidney failure.

LF: When did this start?

BA: This happened in March of '98. So, from that time on, we've totally changed our diet.

LF: What's your son's name?

BA: His name is Eric. Eric Bisenius. B-I-S-E-N-I-U-S. And at the time he was 24, actually he was 23 at the time. It's been a while. But what I found was that over a period of months, the doctors could not—all they told us they could do was put him on mydo-steroids. And they thought he would continue to have weakening of his muscles because of the nerve damage. They thought that he'd never... That solution was totally unacceptable because I knew what it would do to him, when you think about his kidney problems, it would devastate his body. So, we opted out of that option, I guess you'd say and decided to go with building up his body and using all the other resources that I had been reading about. Which is what we did. It was a nutritional therapy program that we went to. And I really believe, miraculously, he began to heal. He'd lost about 25 pounds and was just skin and bones. All of his muscles had atrophied because he couldn't move. He was very very inactive. He couldn't walk. He couldn't use his hands. All of his muscles had atrophied and slowly he started gaining weight. And between the good food and good physical therapy that he did everyday, he gained his weight back and started getting his strength back and ended up able to walk again. So, he still has work to do with his ankles and his hands. And he's had some setbacks with the drug affecting him and the surgery from the kidney transplant, but he's on his way back, I think. And, so, I really, I look at that two, three year period of his slow recovery from multiple problems and I know that the greatest part of that was what he was taking in. So, food... We grew to believe that pills are the solution to a lot of problems, a lot of health problems, but really

the most powerful drugs are the foods that you eat. And they are taken in in proportions that are, and this is really key, and something that I learned during this three year period, is that even though you might not get a big amount of, a large amount of a particular, for instance, a large amount of phosphorous or calcium, or whatever it is in the food that you're eating, but the proportion is what's important with whatever you're taking in. And that little amount can be really effective in bringing your body back into balance and I truly believe that your body knows how to heal itself—in the right environment, and with the right intake of things. The body has a... This goes into the mind/body field that I've studied a lot, and read about also. You know how to heal yourself on some level, some subconscious level it controls all of those healing processes. And it's just a matter of providing all of the ingredients to allow it to do its work. And some of those ingredients are very simply, we've been taught them since the time we were little. You've got to get out and get sunshine, you know, fresh air and sunshine. You've got to have good fresh water. Good, whole, unprocessed foods that aren't contaminated with whatever indulgences we put into them – pesticides or whatever. You need to move, your body is built to move and when you are inactive, it atrophies and all kinds of problems follow. And I saw that in my son. So, I don't know how many of these things I mentioned, there were six things. Rest. You have to get enough rest.

100

And your attitude, you have to have an attitude towards healing. You have to believe that you can heal. And that's one of the other strong things that I emphasized with my son from the very beginning. I protected him from any negative diagnoses. I did not let doctor's tell him that they didn't think he'd ever walk again, although they told me. Never did we mention that he couldn't heal, that he wouldn't be okay. He was always expecting that he was getting better and I think that is one of the key factors in the recovery that he's made so far. He still has that attitude. All that stuff he went through with the surgery, which was another whole experience.

LF: When was that?

BA: The surgery was in October and he's doing very well. Actually, he went to the National Institute of Health. He's one of seven people in the world that have gotten??? which, in time will not damage the kidney. He has the hope of keeping this kidney, which was donated by his brother, whose ??? There are side-effects, but they're much less serious than standard protocol. So, he really has an excellent prognosis. And it's just getting over stuff like ??? to get there. He's done pretty well these last six months.

LF: And do they know why he had kidney failure?

BA: They can't, they have no real cause for the kidney failure, except that it was shriveled and scarred and usually that's caused by infections, but he was never sick. So, they can't figure out what caused it. And again, it's your attitude. You may never know the cause, you just know that here we are dealing with this, what can we do to give him the best possible future. So, it's been a real. I have been, and I think he has been too, transformed by this experience. I can honestly say that I ??? Anytime you go through

crisis that happens. You get really overwhelmed and bitter or you ... I think that's taught him to be very strong and disciplined. Both of those characteristics were things that he didn't have when he started this process. So, in a lot of ways, we've had a lot of good things that have happened as well. But getting back to the food, there were certain things that I did for him besides finding supplements that might help a particular problem. One of which was giving him a whey protein supplement, which is just powered whey protein. Because he needed protein so badly and he couldn't handle, he couldn't eat a lot of milk, for instance, because of the phosphorous. He has kidney failure. So, I had to find supplements that would give him enough protein because usually you become protein deficient with dialysis. And whey protein is just a wonderful, wonderful supplement that I mixed with yogurt and fruit and flax seeds.

LF: Whey protein?

BA: Whey protein. It's milk based.

LF: I don't very much about this. The dialysis, was it connected to the kidney failure?

BA: Yes. Dialysis is a process that cleanses the body of its waste products, because the kidneys no longer function. You can do it a few different ways. You can either go a few times a week to the hospital and they run this, they plug it into your blood stream and clean your blood, which is time consuming and draining and very hard on the body. Or you can do it yourself through a little computer sized machine, called a peritoneal dialysis machine, and with that procedure you have to have a catheter installed in the abdomen and we agreed to have that done, and you connect up every night when you go to sleep. And he slept for 10 hours connected to this machine and it cleansed his body and then you carry fluid in your abdominal sac, which gets, it's very similar to a kidney's function. It's much gentler on the body. But it also has its drawbacks because it pulls a lot of extra protein out and it puts a lot of other things out of the body, which can make you become nutritionally deficient. So, you have to keep supplementing to make sure that, for instance, your electrolyte level stays balanced or whatever. So, we had to learn a lot about all these things and how they function. And, another thing that I found was so important for healing and for preventive maintenance too is, in our country, we don't get in our oils, the essential fatty acids that we should because they're so heavily processed. And, so, the fats, we have such a fear of fats. It bothers me when I go to the grocery store, "Fat Free." Well, darn it, put good fats in it and you won't have to worry about it. Fats are essential to staying thin and most people don't realize that.

160

So, that was another ingredient that I incorporated into our diet. I basically use the flax oil. You can use fish oil and you can use other things.

LF: I love flax seeds.

BA: Yep, I do too.

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