# SUCCESS STORIES



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### Live Healthy

**CONSULT** 

**Think** Yourself Well

For integrative health expert Lissa Rankin, M.D., well-being is a state of mind. by BARBARA BRODY

As an ob-gyn, Lissa Rankin thought there was only one way to be a healer: People come to you with a physical complaint and you supply them with a pill or other scientifically vetted remedy. But after 20 years in medicine, she began to question that system.

"I noticed that many patients had healthy habits but a laundry list of ailments," she recalls. "When I delved deeper, I realized most were under a lot of stress. They said things like 'I need to leave my husband' or 'I should get a different job.' Those who made life changes got better."

Rankin started researching the connection between physical well-being and other aspects of life—like spirituality, sexuality, and relationships—and became convinced that all those factors need to be in balance for the body to thrive. "Once I went searching for proof, I was amazed," she says. "There are many cases of people with 'incurable' cancer who inexplicably went into remission and others who have gone from HIV positive to negative." Why these "miracles" occur isn't always clear, but Rankin says many can be linked to a religious prac-

tice, alternative therapy, or a strong belief in the body's ability to repair itself.

Ultimately, she quit her day job to teach people how to heal themselves: her new book. Mind Over Medicine, is out this month. Rankin's philosophy hasn't led her to shun Western medicine, she says, but to look beyond the quick fix. "You need an antibiotic to treat a urinary tract infection, but if you get one often, something else may be going on. Chronic symptoms are a wake-up call."



## Rankin's Secrets to Self-Healing



#### **MEDITATE**

"I sit in front of an altar in my house for 20 minutes a day, which is very relaxing. I also live by the ocean, and I love to go hiking where the redwoods meet the water. That's a type of meditation too.



#### **GET CREATIVE**

"Everyone needs an outlet. For me, it's art, I do abstract paintings, and I've also been making plaster cast sculptures of the torsos of women who've gone through breast cancer surgery.



#### **FEED YOURSELF WELL**

"It's about balance. I follow a mostly vegan diet, but I might go out to dinner and order the duck. And sometimes I just want the cheese plate and some red wine-that's okay."