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**Sheryl Crow *Rockin' A Healthy Tune***

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**Sheryl Crow with  
Chef Chuck**

# Sheryl Crow—If It Makes Her Healthy

by Kim Henderson

It was 1993. I had just seen a John Hiatt concert at the Wiltern theatre in Los Angeles. As I exited with my friends, they were handing out promotional cassette tapes featuring new artists. I grabbed one, and the next day I slipped it into my car's cassette deck (because that's what we had in our cars back then). The upbeat, catchy tune sung by a gal with a sweet and raspy voice hooked me immediately. I loved it. There were only two songs featured—"Can't Cry Anymore" and "Leaving Las Vegas," and I played them over and over again and shared them with friends. I remember thinking, "This artist is going to be huge!"

And huge she became.

Fast forward 17 years and that artist, the lovely Sheryl Crow, has sold more than 33 million CDs worldwide and is the recipient of nine Grammy awards. She has turned out seven albums of work spanning personal, social and political themes, all the while staying on the charts. She has worked with the best of the best—Eric Clapton, The Rolling Stones, Sting, Stevie Nicks, the Dixie Chicks, Kid Rock, Don Henley and Johnny Cash, to name a few. And now, Sheryl can add author to her list of accomplishments. She, along with chef Chuck White ("Chef Chuck"), have penned a book about delicious food that supports health and tantalizes the taste buds, cleverly titled, *If It Makes You Healthy*. And that is what brings this rock star to the pages of *Healthy Living*.

Now, *If It Makes You Healthy* is not just another celebrity cookbook. Its inception can be traced back to a game-changing moment in Sheryl's life—when she received a breast cancer diagnosis early in 2006. At that sobering moment, all the money, success and fame in the world had little to offer the rock star songstress. As Sheryl explains, "When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I realized that no one could do it for me. I was the only one who could do what I needed to do to get well." She looked carefully at the part she played in getting into her health predicament. "Cancer is, of course, a physiological happening. But for me, the diagnosis went much deeper. I realized that I felt like I came last in my life. I was always trying to make everyone else around me happy. That kind of stress in the body over the years takes its toll," she explains. Sheryl made a very conscious decision to, as she says, learn to put on her "oxygen mask" first, before making herself available to others. "It's an analogy that has really worked for me," she adds. Unless she learned to put herself first, she didn't have anything to give to those around her.

What did that look like? It started with learning how to nurture her body and soul with healthful, delicious food. Previously, Sheryl had been one of those people who didn't think much about food. Always trim and athletic, weight was never an issue. Sustainability was more of an annoyance to be dealt with a few times a day. She explains, "I just grabbed whatever there was on the go—from restaurants in small towns, hotel room service or at the gig. I ate okay—but I didn't really think about taking care of my health with what I ate." Consulting nutritionist, Rachel S. Beller, MS, RD, who also contributes to the book, Sheryl committed to a sustainable nutritional action plan that includes high fiber intake, essential fatty

acids and cancer-fighting herbs, fruits and vegetables. Weeks later, happenstance brought her together with Nashville chef Chuck White. At the time, he had already begun incorporating health-supportive, nutrient-rich foods into his delicious recipes. It was a good match. Sheryl hired him and has never looked back. "Eating well became the way I could proactively participate in my treatment process, and now it's the way I live," she says.

Since then, Sheryl has become the mother of two boys—Wyatt and Levi. Her rock 'n' roll lifestyle on the road, which was never too outrageous to begin with, is now centered on health, community and sustainability. Regardless of the expense, Chef Chuck tours with her and cooks with the freshest, most natural ingredients he can find for the entire band and crew. Meal time is sacred and the entire crew eats together before a gig—usually simple, fresh fare that is not too heavy. And for her kids, she keeps things as normal as possible. "I don't want to have the kids eating at restaurants. We bring the same snacks we eat at home. Low in glutens and rich in nutrients," she says.

There are some guiding principles that inform the way Sheryl eats now. They are easy to learn and to incorporate—perfect for the busy, working mom she is.

### COLOR, COLOR AND MORE COLOR

Among many helpful, simple principles in the book, Sheryl and Chef Chuck make use of colorful vegetables. The color usually means more nutrients and antioxidants—the substances that help protect cells against the degrading effects of free radicals. "I've learned that you always choose the colorful vegetables. For example with cabbage, the purple kind is much more nutritious than the pale green. Cauliflower is the same—go for the purple, orange or yellow. A sweet potato is much better than a regular russet potato," Sheryl says. Pretty simple.

### LOCAL AND NATURAL

Another basic tenet is to always go for organic—particularly when it comes to meats, poultry, fish and dairy. "There are so many studies that have come out recently about the detrimental effects of antibiotics and hormones in our food. It's in your favor to eat organic whenever possible," Sheryl says. That means wild-caught salmon, free-range chicken, grass-fed beef, heritage pork and hormone-free, organic dairy. She and Chuck see not only the health benefit, but also the environmental benefit to choosing local and organic.

### CANCER-PREVENTATIVE FOODS AND SPICES

Fiber and omega-3s are a cornerstone of Sheryl's diet now. "Getting 35 grams of fiber a day is not easy!" she says. Rachel, her nutritionist, taught her that omega-3s have a cancer-protective effect and fiber is necessary for proper elimination. She also drinks lots and lots of water and makes full use of health-enhancing spices

such as cinnamon and curcumin. "I enjoy a high-fiber cereal with flax in the morning, topped with berries and cinnamon. I didn't know how healing spices could be, so I include them now in my meals. And flaxseed is great source of omega-3s," she says. Omega-3-rich fish is a staple food as well.

But this rocker isn't perfect. She fully embraces what she calls the "10 percent cheat zone." What's important is eating healthy food most of the time, but not all of the time. What is her favorite guilty pleasure? Salty potato chips, "And not the healthy kind!" she says. It might sound silly to hear a rock star talk about indulging in potato chips, but there's a dead seriousness about it. With two boys depending on her, health is paramount. Cancer free now for five years, you could say, and excuse the pun, this new healthy lifestyle is a change that has done her good.

### GREEN LEANINGS

Health extends beyond the personal for Sheryl. Her deep connection to nature and compassion for others make her a passionate advocate for the environment. And she walks the walk. Several years ago, she decided to move from Los Angeles to a farm just outside Nashville, Tennessee. Living close to the land, she has found it to be the perfect, low-key environment to raise her sons, not far from family. The farm is completely solar powered and boasts an organic garden. When she tours, the bus uses only bio-diesel fuel. "We fill up every day at 4 p.m.," she says. And forget plastic. Each crew and band member brings their own aluminum bottle for water. "That's one waste stream I thought we could avoid adding to," Sheryl says. In fact, the music industry's leading environmental organization, Reverb, and Tom's of Maine are working with the *100 Miles from Memphis* tour to make it more "green." Each tour stop features an Eco-

Village where concertgoers can take action and learn more about the environment, recycling bins, the use of only natural cleaning products, local and organic catering and reusable/biodegradable hospitality products, among other initiatives.



*If It Makes You Healthy* is available from Amazon.com and booksellers nationwide.



Check out Sheryl's latest work, the R&B infused *100 Miles from Memphis*.

### STAYING BALANCED

Caring for her kids during the day and playing gigs at night, Sheryl leads a pretty fast-paced life. Staying balanced is critical. She admits that it's hard for her to exercise every day now, although she tries to slip some in as often as possible—running is her favorite, but meditation has become her real sanctuary. "I meditate every day for about 20 minutes. It slows things down for me," she says. Slowing down is pretty important for most of us these days, let alone a rock-star-working mom. Quiet and reflection are the necessary ingredients for creating the kind of music that makes Sheryl Crow an enduring recording artist—and now an author. And they are both a result of healthy, balanced living, which seems to be the silver lining she found amidst the dark cloud of breast cancer.

Lucky for us.