



Meet Kris Carr  
and her fabulous, fun,  
informed life—all made  
possible by cancer.

By Elizabeth Castoria

# Crazy sexy survival

LIFE IS A TERMINAL CONDITION. MAYBE somewhere in the backs of our minds we all know that, but for Kris Carr, the option of happily ignoring her human-condition death sentence has long since been revoked. In 2003, she was diagnosed with stage IV cancer in the blood vessels that line her liver and lungs. After being told that her cancer was inoperable and incurable, Carr was sent home to wait for death. Five years later, she's not only alive, but thriving. After chronicling her cancer treatment in the award-winning documentary film *Crazy Sexy Cancer*, publishing two books, and completely overhauling her life, Carr is the ultimate, crazy-sexy survivor.

Imagine you've just learned the news that struck Carr—on Valentine's Day, no less: you have incurable cancer. What's the first thing on your new cancer-management agenda? "When I left the hospital, and there

was nothing they could do for me, my family went to Whole Foods. When somebody says, 'there's nothing you can do,' you get pretty resourceful, immediately. I left there thinking, 'that's not true.' I could control something, and in that moment, the only thing I knew I could control was what I put in my mouth," she says. The very day of her diagnosis she adopted a macrobiotic diet, and has been totally vegan for the past two years. The connection between her plate and her health was only the first of many steps Carr's taken toward healing herself, but that initial impulse to clean up her eating habits has provided a solid foundation on which she bases the rest of her management strategy. A former model and actress, Carr recalls her pre-diagnosis, "skinny-minded" diet. "A diet to me was what to eat to whittle away my figure because I was in the entertainment business. I had no idea

what an Omega-3 was. I had no idea what kale was." Instantaneously, post-diagnosis, Carr's curiosity about natural healing became insatiable. "When I did the health-educator program at the Hippocrates Health Institute, I was exposed to people like T. Colin Campbell who made their case for why animal protein actually turns cancer on, and that's the last thing I want. The more you get educated on these things, the less you can stay attached to your addictions."

These days her strategy is based around a chair, both literally and figuratively. "When I think about balancing my life, I think of a chair. So, the diet is the seat of the chair—it's the biggest thing, it's the most important thing that holds me up. [The four chair legs are] the mind, the body, the spirit, and my daily practice." Her daily practice revolves around meditation, yoga, and a fierce affinity for her juicer. If one aspect of her life gets out of balance, the chair falls over. Simple, right? Thanks to her guru—cancer—Carr makes sure that she constantly evaluates her quality of life—something, she says, that we could all do a bit more of in our hectic, multitasking schedules. "Everybody's got cancer. For some people it's tumors, for other people it's stinkin' thinkin'. For some people it's obesity or staying in a bad marriage because you're just too afraid to be alone; that's your cancer. And that's why it's always been used as a metaphor, that's why it's so spooky and stigmatized. It's ultimately the thing that people connect with death, but there are a lot of people who are living and managing cancer." Carr calls cancer patients "the lucky ones," as they have not-entirely subtle realizations that their lives are out of balance, which in turn gives them the abrupt opportunity to make the self-nurturing changes that would benefit the rest of us "healthy" people just as much. "My motto is Make Juice, Not War," says Carr with her almost omni-present giggle that underlies her conversation.

The humor, sass, and cowboy-inspired style that brand Carr's approach to cancer are reaching people, and inspiring them to make real changes. "I've got some die-hard fans out there and they've become vegan, and changed their lifestyle, and started going to therapy and yoga. We're helping to reverse diabetes, high cholesterol, clinical depression, heart disease, and cancer. We're starting to put together some crazy-sexy proof, and that is so inspiring." The testimonials Carr's received by the truckload

## CrazyCancerFacts

Carr's particular type of cancer, epithelioid hemangioendothelioma, is exceedingly rare, occurring in only .01 percent of the population with cancer. The following cancers have all been linked to animal-product consumption:

---: **Bowel:** According to a British study, eating two servings of meat per week increased the chances of bowel cancer by 35 percent.

---: **Breast:** According to the Tufts-New England Medical Center, women who consume typical American meat-heavy diets are more likely to develop breast cancer as a result of elevated levels of diet-derived estrogen.

---: **Colon:** Eating more fruit and less meat was found to make a significant difference in the incidence of colon cancer, according to a study published by the University of North Carolina.

that attest to the fact that her strategies are working for people are what keep her inspired to continue healing herself. Carr's latest achievement is a lifestyle website—[crazysexylife.com](http://crazysexylife.com)—that features regular bloggers, discussion boards, and resources for anyone dealing with cancer. What's coming next for Carr? Oh, that would be a wellness-focused television show and publishing her third book, this time one that will focus on diet and lifestyle.

While Carr's veganism is the seat of her all-important chair, she's giving just as much back to the movement as she's getting. "We gotta change the party. This movement—we need a makeover. We've got to make it sexy and hip, we've got to make it mainstream, and that's happening. You see it more and more." Her positive attitude about the inevitable mainstream spread of veganism mirrors her confidence about her own health. "I have a very rare cancer that has no cure. Do I think that I'm going to have cancer for the rest of my life like my doctors say? Absolutely not." Maybe she's crazy, maybe she's sexy, but Kris Carr is most certainly a survivor. **VN**

*VN Senior Editor Elizabeth Castoria can't wait to make a huge kale salad.*