

**Feeding the Illusion: Healing the Body, Reclaiming the Soul**

*Epigenetics, Ancestry & the American Dream*

By Autumn Marshall

Greenwood Village, CO, USA

© 2025 Autumn Marshall

Published by The Conjuring Mystic Ltd.

[www.theconjuringmystic.com](http://www.theconjuringmystic.com)

## Abstract

This essay examines how capitalism, consumerism, and generational trauma converge within the human body as a site of inscription, dependency, and resistance. Writing from the positionality of an African-American woman born in 1994, the analysis traces an interlocking cycle connecting industrial agriculture, bioengineered food, pharmaceutical dependency, healthcare reimbursement structures, debt culture, and media saturation. Drawing upon epigenetic science, political economy, cultural critique, ancestral lineage, and lived experience, the essay argues that food, debt, and entertainment function as socially sanctioned anesthetics—legalized drugs that pacify the body while numbing collective awareness.

Through ancestral remembrance and embodied praxis, the essay advances a counter-framework: health as sovereignty, healing as resistance, and the body as the first and most exploited temple. Herbal medicine, fasting, hydration, movement, sunlight, disciplined consumption, and frequency awareness are framed not as lifestyle trends but as ancestral technologies of survival. Ultimately, the essay concludes that true freedom is biological, spiritual, and economic—and that reclaiming the body is the first act of liberation in a system built on extraction.

## I. The Awakening

I am thirty-one years old, a Black woman born in 1994, carrying a bloodline annotated by strokes, diabetes, hypertension, addiction, grief, and premature death. These conditions were explained to us through a familiar medical refrain: *“It runs in your family.”* The phrase masqueraded as neutrality while functioning as quiet inevitability—destiny reduced to inheritance, survival mistaken for pathology.

For generations, illness was framed as fate rather than consequence. Yet that framing fractured when I encountered epigenetics—the science demonstrating that genes are not immutable scripts but responsive mechanisms, switched on or off by environment, stress, nutrition, and behavior. In that moment, destiny loosened its grip. What once appeared as a curse revealed itself as context.

What my grandmother ate under oppression still echoes through my cells. The foods forced upon enslaved ancestors—discarded animal parts, sugar-dense fillers, chemically altered rations—were survival technologies under captivity. Over time, survival became tradition; tradition became identity; identity became unquestioned inheritance. What we now call “soul food” is not merely cuisine—it is history preserved through appetite, trauma seasoned into comfort, sorrow disguised as celebration. The body remembers what history refuses to name.

## II. The Legal Drug Dealers

Street dealers are criminalized. Corporate dealers are celebrated. The chemistry never changed—only the marketing.

Sugar floods dopamine receptors in patterns neurologically comparable to cocaine. Processed fats and salts hijack reward pathways, demanding repetition under the illusion of choice. Caffeine masquerades as productivity while functioning as a dependency. Nicotine and alcohol—both legal, both normalized—rank among the most addictive substances known to public health science.

These substances are not sold as drugs. They are sold as nostalgia, convenience, productivity, reward, and self-care.

The grocery store has replaced the corner trap. The checkout line has become a slow-moving fix. The grocery store has replaced the corner trap. Today, over 70% of the American food supply is ultra-processed, engineered for addiction rather than nourishment—a design that mirrors drug distribution models more than food systems. Fast-food corporations cloak chemical dependency in pastoral imagery—“farm fresh,” “natural,” “wholesome”—while engineering food for maximum addiction and minimal nourishment. America does not sell sustenance. It sells neurochemical stimulation and calls it dinner. This is not incidental. It is by design.

### III. The Industrial Illness Complex

The American healthcare system is not structured around wellness. It is structured around reimbursement.

Hospitals are paid when beds are filled. Pharmaceutical companies profit when prescriptions are lifelong. Insurance companies thrive on complexity, chronicity, and recurring claims. Prevention is praised rhetorically but penalized economically.

Illness is engineered upstream and monetized downstream:

1. Industrial agriculture produces chemically altered, nutritionally depleted food.
2. Chronic illness emerges predictably from sustained exposure.
3. Pharmaceuticals manage symptoms while preserving root causes.
4. Side effects generate additional prescriptions.
5. Insurance monetizes every transaction.
6. Alcohol and tobacco soothe the despair that the cycle creates.

Television completes the ritual. Advertisements loop endlessly: burgers, antidepressants, alcohol, insurance, luxury goods—repeat. Capitalism does not require well-informed citizens; it requires compliant consumers. Sickness becomes a subscription model. Dependency becomes stability. Health becomes a threat.

This is the industrial illness complex: a system that designs imbalance, then profits from its management while withholding restoration.

#### IV. Debt as Diet: The Economy of Entrapment

The same psychology that ensnares the body ensnares the future.

Debt functions as the invisible calorie of capitalism—consumed daily, rarely metabolized. Credit is marketed as freedom. Financing is framed as access. Ownership is promised without sovereignty.

Cars are purchased at predatory interest rates. Homes are mortgaged for lifetimes. Credit cards are sold as empowerment while binding families to perpetual repayment. Worth becomes tied to acquisition, even when what is “owned” belongs to banks and algorithms.

Debt is not merely financial. It is psychological, emotional, and spiritual. It disciplines populations more efficiently than chains ever could.

Debt is the modern plantation. Credit is its cotton. The overseer no longer carries a whip—only Wi-Fi, advertising data, and predictive analytics.

## V. The Matrix of Comfort

Most people recognize that the system is broken. What sustains it is not ignorance—it is comfort.

Comfort is the most potent narcotic. It whispers, *“This is normal. Everyone lives this way.”* Convenience disguises captivity as choice. In neighborhoods shaped by scarcity, intention collapses beneath proximity. People eat what is near, not what is nourishing. Survival eclipses discernment.

Scarcity oscillates into excess. We swing between famine and feast, denial and overconsumption. Healing begins not with perfection, but with remembrance—remembering balance as a natural state rather than an aspirational fantasy.

## VI. When the Machine Becomes Both the Illness and the Cure

In recent conversations with my son—often sparked by watching educational content together—we speak openly about health, attention, and consumption. Not only what we eat, but what we absorb: images, narratives, habits, and assumptions. These moments are not casual. They are generational interventions.

I went vegetarian not as a moral performance, but as a matter of pattern recognition. The deeper I studied food systems, bioengineering, and health outcomes, the clearer it became that much of what American society relies upon for nourishment is structurally incompatible with vitality.

This is why I read every ingredient label. This is why I prioritize organic fruits and vegetables whenever possible. This is why I consciously align our household with the principles of the MIND, DASH, and Mediterranean diets—not as rigid doctrines, but as adaptive frameworks centered on longevity and balance.

As we watched footage detailing genetically modified food, chemical preservation, mass production, and food waste, it became clear that health outcomes are not determined solely by genetics. When patterns change, results change. Across populations. Across generations.

Epigenetics confirms what ancestral wisdom has long known: the body responds to instruction. Environment, repetition, and exposure matter.

Yet Americans pay for food engineered to make them sick, then pay into a healthcare system rewarded for managing that sickness. Pharmaceuticals often introduce side effects

requiring additional prescriptions. When the body finally collapses, families pay again to bury their dead.

From consumption to medication to death, every stage is monetized.

This is what happens when the machine becomes both the illness and the cure.

## VII. Reprogramming the Body

My revolution arrived quietly. I began with fruits, vegetables, hydration, fasting, movement, sunlight, and rest. I replaced convenience with intention. I replaced prescriptions with herbs, breathwork, meditation, and prayer. Depression lifted. Clarity returned. These were not trends. They were returns.

Herbal medicine, fasting, clean water, sacred smoke, and disciplined nourishment revealed themselves as ancestral technologies—methods refined long before laboratories isolated compounds and patented molecules. Healing ceased to be a theory. It became an inheritance.

## VIII. Frequency, Vibration, and the Body

The body is not merely biological. It is energetic.

What is alive carries a different frequency than what is dead. What is chemically preserved does not communicate with the body the same way living foods do. Sustained consumption of low-vibrational substances manifests as physical illness, mental fog, emotional numbness, and spiritual disconnection.



Changing one's diet is not merely nutritional—it is ideological. It disrupts narratives. It threatens industries. It exposes the illusion that health must be purchased rather than practiced.

Personal experience has shown me that when individuals take control of their bodies—scrutinizing ingredients, reducing meat, choosing live foods—ridicule often follows. People laugh. They dismiss it as extreme. In doing so, they defend the very indoctrination harming them. It is easier to mock transformation than confront participation in self-destruction.

### IX. Discernment, Not Extremism

During this awakening, I watched educators such as Dr. Bobby Price and Yah'ki Awakened—not as figures to idolize, but as catalysts for inquiry. Their work did not ask me to abandon reason. It encouraged me to reclaim it. I listened. I researched. I tested. I observed my body.

The result was not fanaticism, but improvement—clarity, regulation, agency. In a culture where prevention is framed as radical and illness as inevitable, the decision to eat better and live better is mischaracterized as extremism.

What is extreme is how deeply dysfunction has been normalized.

This was not opposition. It was alignment. Inspiration became activation. Knowledge became practice. This is not extremism. This is self-governance.

### X. Reflective Academic Epilogue: Health as Freedom

To be healthy in America is to stage a revolution. True liberation is biological, spiritual, and economic. Each clean meal, each mindful breath, each disciplined choice is an act of refusal.

Health is not a trend. It is not a luxury. It is the return of memory. When we heal ourselves, we bankrupt the machine.

### From Insight to Practice: Reclaiming the Body

Transformation does not require perfection—it requires interruption. The following practices are not ideology; they are measurable interventions that shift biological and psychological outcomes over time:

1. Ingredient Awareness

Read labels. If a product contains more than five unfamiliar ingredients, do not purchase it. This single practice reduces ultra-processed food intake without diet culture.

2. Live Food Ratio

Aim for at least half of your daily intake from whole fruits and vegetables. Research consistently shows improvements in metabolism and inflammation when live foods increase, regardless of dietary label.

3. Consumption Audits

Apply the same scrutiny to media as food. Ask: *Does this nourish, distract, or deplete me?* Awareness disrupts automatic intake.

4. Healthcare Reorientation

Track how often intervention replaces prevention. Each avoided prescription through lifestyle change is a measurable resistance to dependency.

5. Frequency Awareness

Observe—not theorize—how different foods, environments, and habits affect mood,

clarity, and energy. The body offers data when attention is sustained.

These steps do not reject medicine or modernity. They restore agency within them.

## Works Cited

Federal Reserve Bank of New York. *Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit*. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2024, [www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/hhdc.html](http://www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/hhdc.html).

Goleman, Daniel. *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence*. HarperCollins, 2013.

Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books, 2015.

Lustig, Robert H. *Metabological: The Lure and the Lies of Processed Food, Nutrition, and Modern Medicine*. Harper Wave, 2021.

Marion Nestle. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. University of California Press, 2013.

Moss, Michael. *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*. Random House, 2013.

National Institutes of Health. “Epigenetics: How Environment Shapes Our Genes.” *NIH*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2022, [www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/epigenetics-how-environment-shapes-our-genes](http://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/epigenetics-how-environment-shapes-our-genes).

Pew Research Center. “Racial Disparities in Health and Wealth in the United States.” *Pew Research Center*, 2023, [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org).

Pollan, Michael. *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto*. Penguin Press, 2008.

Price, Bobby. *Vegucation Over Medication*. Dr. Bobby Price Publishing, 2020.

Sapolsky, Robert M. *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst*. Penguin Press, 2017.

Sebi, Alfredo Darrington. "Food as Electric Medicine." Lecture, 1987.

Spurlock, Morgan, director. *Super Size Me*. Roadside Attractions, 2004.

Standing, Guy. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.

Van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Viking, 2014.

World Health Organization. *Global Report on Diabetes*. World Health Organization, 2016, [www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565257](http://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565257).

Yah'ki Awakened. *Return to Your Roots: The Science of Self-Healing*. Yah'ki Awakened Publishing, 2021.