
How the Keto Diet Reduced My Paranoid Schizophrenia Symptoms



Richard Carlson

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By Richard Carlson

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How the Keto Diet Reduced My Paranoid

Schizophrenia is a work of nonfiction; however, certain facts and other details have been changed.

IMPORTANT: Do not discontinue or decrease medications without your doctor's approval.

Chapter 1

I was extremely fortunate to have been living with my parents when I first became noticeably psychotic in early 1992. I was twenty. Had I been living on my own, my parents might never have known how ill I had become. I would have been homeless, perhaps, living day to day in a horrendous state of mind. I have my parents to thank, for being my caregivers when I was extremely ill.

Once my psychosis took hold, I believed that my father, who is a good father, had abused me as a child. I believed that I had been wanted by the Mafia, CIA, Mossad, and every other intelligence agency around the world. In fact, in my mind, there was a chance that I might be tortured for the rest of my life in prison by the Mafia.

In addition, I thought that my mind had evolved to such a degree that two bumps had grown on my head (one on each side) and were controlling the world. As a result, I was convinced that my mind was responsible for Operation Desert Storm—this was my act of revenge for the teasing I'd endured in elementary school. Because I was delusional, I thought that no one could remember me being wanted by the Mafia, etc., because now it was a dream inside my mind.

I believed that people remembered my past differently; some people remembered me one way, and other people remembered me another way because the bumps rewrote the past. For example, some people remembered me being a Mafia boss, whereas others in some way in which they wouldn't ever do harm to me. Some people remembered me dressing up like a woman and

also wearing costumes to school. Throughout my twenties and early thirties, I was delusional.

After I was hit with full-blown paranoid schizophrenia, I dropped out of college. My first psychiatrist, whom my parents brought me to after I told my father I was wanted by the Mafia, diagnosed me with paranoid schizophrenia. However, because of a neurological disorder called anosognosia, I did not believe that I had this mental illness. Even though my psychiatrist explained to me that I had paranoid schizophrenia, I thought that I was actually seeing a psychiatrist for a different reason entirely. I was under the grandiose delusion that I was supposed to see a psychiatrist and tell him all about what I was experiencing in my mind, so that he could help me contact experts who studied people whose minds had evolved. Once I accomplished

this goal, I thought I would no longer need to see a psychiatrist.

I think that my first psychiatrist knew I was suffering from anosognosia because he wrote a letter explaining my condition for me applying for government disability benefits which stated I was delusional. But later, when I saw other psychiatrists, I did not receive proper treatment, because they didn't know about everything I was experiencing in my mind. I told my psychiatrists very little about what I was experiencing; I never divulged the whole story. They would check to see if I was suffering from anosognosia by asking me why I was there. If I had replied that I didn't have paranoid schizophrenia or if I had given another reason for the visits, then they would know I had anosognosia and treat me accordingly. I always lied and said that I had paranoid schizophrenia, because that's what they expected me to say,

since that was the “diagnosis.” Ironically, I really did have paranoid schizophrenia, so I was telling the truth—but in my mind, it was all a lie. So, I would lie and state that I had paranoid schizophrenia to go along with my psychiatrists’ expectations because I knew that they wouldn’t believe in the grandiose delusion. At that point, I did not even believe that I needed to see a psychiatrist, but I did so anyway. I wasn’t going to stop because I didn’t want people to think I was not doing well with schizophrenia.

For eleven and a half years, I lied to my psychiatrists about how I was feeling. I told them that I was doing well, and so, they assumed I was telling the truth, I suppose, because they prescribed a low dose of antipsychotic medication. Sadly, they had no idea about the disoriented state of mind I was in. If my psychiatrists had figured out that I was suffering

from anosognosia, they could have worked with me, possibly increasing my meds to the point that I would have overcome my anosognosia and realized I actually did have paranoid schizophrenia—but that didn't happen.

After lying for twelve and a half years, my psychiatrist took me off the medication completely; he thought that, since I had been doing so well, based on what I'd told him, I probably did not have paranoid schizophrenia. He claimed that, if I showed no symptoms for a year, he would declare me not paranoid schizophrenic. He also suggested that a psychotic episode had caused my initial complaint, twelve years earlier, about the Mafia being after me. My father agreed with him.

But they were very wrong.

Not long after that meeting, I started hearing a voice that played with my emotions. It

commanded me to do bad things, like steal an employee work schedule from a supermarket breakroom and modify a Web site to include offensive and inappropriate content. Eventually, there was an incident with the police.

Then, the voice told me that I had paranoid schizophrenia. The voice “figured out” that I was schizophrenic. As a result, I decided to be honest. I began the recovery process and worked with a psychiatrist to find the right combination of medications and correct dosages to help. If the voice had never told me that I had paranoid schizophrenia, I might never know.

When I figured out that I really was paranoid schizophrenic, I began showing signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder. I also experienced episodes of paranoia, in which I thought people were after me, and delusions about me plagiarizing my self-published children’s books.

My paranoia and OCD took a toll on everyone. Even when the voice told me to wash my hands an excessive number of times, even when my hands were red and sore, it seemed to make sense to me. Interrupting dinner to wash my hands over and over also seemed to make sense.

The OCD symptoms gradually went away as I realized, over time, that these urges were the result of OCD. Also, my paranoia decreased to the point where I rarely experienced it and, when I did, at times I realized it was paranoia and it went away. My recovery took over ten years. The longer a person experiences psychosis (for me, it was twelve and a half years), the longer his or her recovery takes once treatment begins.

I was not 100% better. However, according to my psychiatrist, due to my meds, I was at least 70% recovered, which, he believed, was the best I could be.

When I figured out that I had paranoid schizophrenia, the first thing I realized was that people should be truthful and that I should tell the truth, especially about how I am feeling.

I am so glad that I finally told the truth. Being honest may be difficult, but in the end, it can make a tremendous difference.

Chapter 2

Years passed. I had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia almost thirty years ago. I would still experience periods of good times, when my thinking was clear, and I'd at times communicate with a voice that I could hear inside my mind. But I'd also experience low points, when I'd spend two or three weeks hounded by thoughts that interfered with my job at a supercenter and with my writing career. I accepted that, with modern medicine, this was how my life would be.

My psychiatrist mentioned another medication, one that would require blood tests every other week for a year and another blood test once a month as a potential alternative. It might improve my condition; however, I was reluctant because of the inconvenient blood tests

and high copays, which I might not be able to afford. At the end of 2019, my psychiatrist and I decided to discuss taking this medicine my next visit.

Long ago, I had joined several schizophrenia-related social media groups. One day, a member posted, asking if anyone had ever tried the ketogenic diet and had success with it. This person also posted a link to an online article on a psychology website. The article described two severely schizophrenic women who'd had remarkable success with the diet.

Either that day or very soon after, I bought a book and two magazines about keto and began reading the book a little. I planned to begin eating some of the foods that are recommended for the diet and to eventually migrate completely onto the diet. I bought unsweetened almond milk and

certain keto-friendly nuts for starters, but didn't go onto the diet full time.

Chapter 3

About a month or two later and fed up with the schizophrenic residual symptoms, thoughts about the Mafia I was now experiencing, I went on the diet religiously. I had thoughts that weren't reality and I knew they weren't based on reality, but my mind would "force" me to think about them. These thoughts would have to do with the Mafia telling me what to do and the Israeli government making me dedicate my life to poverty, for example. These thoughts greatly interfered with my life. I read the keto book I had bought and discussed the diet with my endocrinologist (I also have Grave's disease), who gave me her approval. Right after my appointment with her, on December 16, 2019, I began the diet.

On the keto diet, you eat very few carbs. Instead, you ingest high fats, which your body burns, which can also make you lose weight. In fact, the purpose of the keto diet is to have your body burn fat instead of carbohydrates; this is called ketosis. On that first day, I used a keto urine test strip, which showed a negative result for me going into ketosis. This reading was normal at this point.

By December 21, five days later, I didn't feel hungry all day, like I always had in the past; I used to eat often throughout the day when I could. The next day, I began taking a multivitamin to make certain I was getting enough vitamins and minerals. I began eating a lot of cheese and ground beef and keto-friendly salad without the dressing (which has sugar and carbohydrates). I was also eating, in moderation, keto-friendly sugar-free candy and cookies, as well as salted

seaweed, some of which I bought at the supercenter I worked at.

On Christmas, I had a mild headache for the first half of the day; I assumed I was going into ketosis, as that is one symptom, along with experiencing nausea and dizziness. I didn't use a test strip.

During this time, the only thoughts I had as a result of my paranoid schizophrenia were extremely few and minor, especially compared to the number and intensity of them before beginning the keto diet. I also still didn't feel very hungry during the day, which meant I didn't eat as much; at times, I even "forced" myself to eat the keto-friendly foods with fats like cheese to, hopefully, get enough fat for my body to burn to give me energy.

On January 5, I experienced distracting thoughts, which may have been about the Mafia

or the Israeli Mossad being after me. I knew this wasn't reality, but my mind still made me think about it. Since then, however, I have only had mostly extremely minor and non-distracting thoughts and symptoms.

On February 16, I came to a realization. Maybe my condition wouldn't improve further. I might still have the extremely rare and minor thought. I might remain barely psychosomatic and be able to communicate with a voice in my head. If that were the case, I would consider that the keto diet had reduced my paranoid schizophrenia. Even if that were the case, my condition would no longer be interfering with my life, causing me to lose precious time. Even if that were the case, I wouldn't be preoccupied with thoughts that I knew weren't reality. I wouldn't be robbed of my attention to what was going on around me. I wouldn't be incapable of doing things like writing

efficiently. I would be able to do things that normal people do.

I had determined that I would need to be in this state of mind for at least three months to prove to myself that the ketogenic diet had helped me, leading me to a 85% improvement from severe mental illness. I would still see a psychiatrist regularly and this was my goal. I still had about two months to go. Would a miracle happen? Would I gain countless hours of productive life, instead of losing time thinking about things that were complete nonsense?

Chapter 4

In early February, I saw my psychiatrist. He hadn't heard about the ketogenic diet being effective in treating paranoid schizophrenia. I told him about the article. He said it'd be worth a try.

Dr. Smith and I agreed to decrease my Risperidone by one tablet because I had been on a very high dose. In the past, when I had issues, I'd increase the dose, usually by one or two tablets, contrary to his recommendations—he'd recommend a half a tablet at a time. Please do not decrease or discontinue medications without your doctor's approval.

I really wanted to make Dr. Smith happy by eliminating my mental illness symptoms. Maybe, someday, I'd see him and have no bad news to report during each visit. That would be amazing. I had so much hope for a miracle!

Chapter 5

Between February 21 and March 6, I had thoughts that were similar to what I had experienced while suffering from anosognosia years ago, before I realized I had paranoid schizophrenia. My mind would make me think about things about the Mafia torturing me, the people in elementary school, junior high, high school, hating me, and the Israeli government killing me, which had to do with my paranoid schizophrenia. When I had these thoughts, at times I would mumble things to myself—I couldn't help it.

My parents and sister noticed these changes. I know they were concerned about me. I felt bad about it, because I knew they were worried that I might not be doing well.

At this time, however, the voice went away. I could no longer carry on silent conversations with the voice in my mind. What I was experiencing made me wonder: Was I going backwards with my condition? Would I eventually go so far back to where I wasn't mentally ill?

Chapter 6

From March 8 to March 13, I experienced thoughts again, similar to the previous ones, but I still didn't hear the voice. It had been about a week or two since the last time I ate high protein keto-friendly chocolates; I assumed and checked a reputable website to see if too much protein adversely affects being on the keto diet, and it does. It can cause a person not to go into ketosis.

In March, early in the day, the thoughts went away. Then, at about eight-thirty in the evening, all the symptoms except for me being slightly psychosomatic went away (My mind can make me feel a sensation on my wrist). Also, I hadn't experienced any paranoia since beginning the diet. It had been almost three months since I'd begun the keto diet. If I stayed this way from now on, I'd consider that the keto diet had reduced my

symptoms. Only time would tell. I'd have to be patient and hope the distracting thoughts wouldn't come back. I decided that I'd have to go for one more month with no distracting thoughts, to consider myself to have improved on the keto diet.

On April 4, the thoughts changed. I had some thoughts about the Mafia, Israeli government, etc., and then there was a break whereby my mind was clear. Then, as the days progressed, the thoughts decreased how long they were, and the time when my mind was clear increased.

On April 18, about four months after starting the Keto diet, the thoughts went away for the most part. I am now 85% treated in my opinion; before starting this diet, I had only been 70% recovered. To make sure I had improved, I waited a month, to May 18, to see if the

symptoms, the distracting thoughts, would return. Week by week, I had no—or very few—thoughts! I still have vibes telling me to type on my computer keyboard, which is communication with my mind, and I am still slightly psychosomatic. But I no longer hear a voice. The keto diet has reduced my paranoid schizophrenia. Eighty-five percent treatment is a true miracle! I've also lost a significant amount of weight since beginning the diet; and I might have lost more, if I hadn't been eating too much protein for such a long time.

By the way, I was searching on the Internet about the keto diet and schizophrenia and read about a man in England, I believe, who is presently, in his opinion ninety percent treated because of the keto diet!

Before you begin the keto diet, see your doctor first. Please don't discontinue or reduce your medication without your doctor's approval.

I am not certain, but I believe the keto diet might be hazardous for people with diabetes, which is one reason to get your doctor's approval. Also, I can't guarantee that the keto diet will help you like it helped me.

Chapter 7

Your local supermarket or supercenter very likely sells keto-friendly chocolates, plant-based cookies, flavored drinks, and the like. I find them in the pharmacy at my local supercenter, where I work, and I also find additional candies in the sugar-free section of the candy aisle. At my local supercenter, there is also a keto-friendly section of coffees and other specialties in the pharmacy. The coffee I buy tastes great, by the way.

I take a multivitamin supplement daily. I made a decision regarding which multivitamin I was going to take by visiting www.consumerlab.com, which requires a subscription to access. Consumer Lab has reviews, rankings, and price comparisons of a plethora of supplements, as well as articles about health. Consumer Lab has been useful in helping people

to choose supplements that are the best quality for the lowest prices. After investigating their website, I found my multivitamin at a local food specialty store, which carries more healthy foods in general than the local supermarket chain.

Also, on the Internet, I have discovered websites that can generate custom keto-friendly meal plans based on user-set preferences regarding the kinds of foods you want to eat and don't want to eat. But I warn you: do your research and find reputable sources for information.

Presently, I don't own a keto-friendly cookbook; I eat simple meals, like pork or turkey sausages with raw broccoli, which I am happy to eat, especially the broccoli. Some days, I drink a keto-friendly protein supplement, and some of the keto chocolates I buy are rich in protein. Unfortunately, most of these candies are very

expensive as compared to regular candies.

Admittedly, I have on occasion pigged out on keto-chocolates; I had to stop doing that, however, because of the high amount of protein in these chocolates. Too much protein can cause a person to either gain weight or not lose weight on the keto diet. **IMPORTANT: It is critical not to have too much protein on the keto diet because it can prevent you from achieving ketosis. I believe that this is what happened to me for weeks.**

Chapter 8

Presently, I only write part-time. I plan to write full-time and support myself solely with my writing, though. I wish to be on television, the radio, and other news media to promote my writing and to also promote my younger brother Kevin's and my younger sister Suzanne's illustrations for our books.

I hope that readers learn from my book. I really hope the keto diet becomes a miracle for you, too. Please, do not hesitate to write me. Best wishes, and always follow your dreams.

—Rich

Life After Going on the Ketogenic Diet

In early August 2020, I decided to increase my paroxetine, as in the past when it has been increased, I did better mentally. The previous time my paroxetine was increased, my psychiatrist was against increasing it anymore. In mid-August, I increased my paroxetine again by one tablet and noticed improvement, as I have fewer episodes of being psychosomatic and fewer foreign thoughts about the Israeli Mossad and the Mafia for example. Was me increasing the paroxetine, still within the scope of what my psychiatrist would be good with? I wondered, but I was tolerating the high dose.

In early September, I increased my paroxetine by a whole tablet and noticed having fewer episodes of being psychosomatic and still no or extremely minor and brief foreign thoughts.

Five days later on September 8, I again increased my paroxetine by another tablet to seven. I started getting up earlier in the morning which I believe is because of doing so well. Now, I had gained more productive awake time.

Then, September 17 I decided to up the risperidone by one tablet and a few days later, I increased my paroxetine by one tablet. Now, I was having some dizzy spells, which made me nervous about falling, which I didn't do.

On October 10, I increased my paroxetine by a tablet. Now, I didn't have as an intense desire to listen to music on my earbuds. Now, I liked music less, as much how I did before being diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia which I assume is how much I'd like music if I wasn't mentally ill. I also, over a week or so, quit drinking caffeinated diet soda every day. Caffeine can

negatively affect a person who has paranoid schizophrenia.

During my phone appointment with my psychiatrist, he said that there was something about me that my stomach and body can tolerate an extremely high dose of paroxetine. In his opinion, I most likely would have distressing side effects. I noticed that I didn't feel as hungry during the day which could be because of being on the keto diet or perhaps it is a side effect of the paroxetine.

After another telephone appointment with my psychiatrist, he wanted me to decrease the paroxetine from eleven to nine tablets, because of me feeling dizzy. He said, that nine is high enough.

Also, I used to have minor tardive dyskinesia (TD), where when I wasn't doing as well, I would increase my risperidone by two tablets and then after a week or so, would do

better and then have TD, and then have to decrease the risperidone from preventing the TD from being permanent. Now, on a very high dose of paroxetine, I believe possibly that the paroxetine covers up the TD I usually would have on such a high dose of risperidone, which is great news. Now, I don't have to decrease the risperidone since I am doing better!

Finally, I am 90 percent treated from my mental illnesses and no longer have as many foreign thoughts. Also, now I might be done with adjusting med doses. I am very happy with my state of mind as I no longer lose precious time thinking about nonsense. It had been about thirty years since being diagnosed with severe mental illness and now, as far as I am concerned, I am as well as I'll most likely ever will be. With the help of the ketogenic diet and more meds, particularly the paroxetine, I went from 70 to 90 percent

treated. I wish every person who has paranoid schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder did as well as me.

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About the Book:

Richard Carlson was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia when he was twenty-one years of age. His illness first manifested when he was an early adolescent. Modern psychiatry greatly failed Richard for over a decade. Then, after an incident involving the police, he truly understood that his diagnosis was real, and finally began the long process of recovery. Over sixteen years later, his life is greatly improved. In the course of his treatment, Richard also recovered from depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and lethargy.

According to Richard's psychiatrist, he would most likely only be seventy percent recovered with the medications presently available. Fortunately, Richard learned about the ketogenic diet on social media which had helped some people with severe mental illness live

without symptoms. Richard tried the keto diet, and it reduced his residual paranoid schizophrenia symptoms while he continued to adhere to his psychiatrist's medication prescriptions. For patients, family members, caregivers, students, and medical professionals who would like to learn more, visit www.schizophreniaketo.com.

About the Author:

Richard Carlson is an author of children's books and coming-of-age romances. He is a highly sensitive person, or HSP, and has paranoid schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. You can learn more about him at www.richardcarlson.com.

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