



# Kale and Coffee: A Renegade's Guide to Health, Happiness, and Longevity

*Kevin Gianni*

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*"Four years ago, when I was something of a YouTube health celebrity, I was on top of the world [and] . . . the diet pyramid. I ate the cleanest, most nutritious diet on the planet (or so I thought). A raw-food vegan diet . . . not only pure in its contents but also pure in its intention. With this type of diet, you eat straight from the earth, only as nature intended. I ate kale salad, raw nut butters, goji berries, raw chocolate, and dehydrated flax crackers. I drank green smoothies, green juice, wheatgrass, and hemp milk. I even tried a fruitarian diet . . . I thought about food from the moment I woke up until the second I fell asleep . . . I was an addict in search of the purest dope: raw, vegan, organic food . . . I was headed down a path of self-destruction. So it's not surprising that, like any hardcore addict, I eventually hit rock bottom."*

So begins the saga of health blogger Kevin Gianni and his wife, Annmarie, as they travel the world to learn as much as they can about health and nutrition. Along the way they meet unlikely people in unlikely places as Kevin seeks an answer to his burning question: What—and how much—should we eat?

Gianni's lighthearted debunking of the hype and nonsense surrounding much of the health and nutrition world today should be encouraging to anyone who's ever tried a fad diet and failed. *Kale and Coffee* is packed with research—delivered in Gianni's warm and humorous voice—but the aim throughout is to empower you to create the diet and lifestyle best suited to you alone.

*Kale and Coffee* offers practical tips for wellness, from testing your body—and pantry—for toxic metals to selecting the healthiest coffee, wines, and green drinks to consume. And don't miss the Kale and Coffee 21-Day Jumpstart to launch you on your own journey of transformation.

## **Kale and Coffee: A Renegade's Guide to Health, Happiness, and Longevity Details**

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## **From Reader Review Kale and Coffee: A Renegade's Guide to Health, Happiness, and Longevity for online ebook**

### **Patti's Book Nook says**

I quite enjoy this title. I'm working on loving kale, and already adore coffee. Continuing my health knowledge quest, this was an entertaining, anecdotal account of the author's roller coaster weight loss and gain- with the main goal to achieve a sustainably fit mind and body. A nice departure from the more clinical, research-focused books (although this does contain some research), I liked the practical applications of his tips. Gianni's style also reminded me a little of AJ Jacobs, the author of Drop Dead Healthy.

Gianni also reminded me of basic nutrition markers that I'd forgotten...such as the importance of checking your blood work periodically, paying attention to your heart rate, and being aware of whether you're using an aerobic vs. anaerobic fuel system when exercising. Also, stress sucks! There is a good discussion on our bodies response to stress and cortisol production.

A lot of health is simply paying attention to what our body is telling us, particularly how it responds to what we eat and what we do. The cultural studies into longevity were helpful, even in their varied results, because it highlighted what you shouldn't eat. "There is a long-established connection between culture, genes, and food." (pg 31). Assess, detox, think long-term. And have a good green smoothie. If you're entertained by memoirs about individual health journeys, particularly from a a YouTuber who has been on both ends of the spectrum, this book is for you.

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### **Hannah Kumlin says**

I loved this author's writing style and, as someone exploring dietary health myself, I learned a great deal about the pros and cons of certain diets. Would definitely recommend to someone looking to learn more about health - this book was fun to read and discusses health from an approachable and relatable perspective.

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### **Eileen says**

I picked this book up at the library in the "new" nonfiction section and it was a great read. The author used to be a vegan but found a much better way to approach healthy eating and wellness. (This was to be balanced and eat in moderation and even drink wine and coffee.) He chronicles some of his two and a half year journey in his RV, called "the Kale Whale." His honest, straight toward and sometimes humorous narratives include why we should or should not eat some meat, the value of exercise, why sugar is mostly bad, and even my favorite chapter called, "What an almost 90-day experiment (binge) taught me about America's most popular pick-me-up" or all about his coffee drinking! Learned a great deal about many different foods and the value of some foods to deter some health issues.

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### **Christina Torretta says**

What a delightful read! Although the author has done some things that I cannot see myself doing on a normal

basis, like going to the doctor to get blood testing done each month, he does bring eating down to earth.

He starts off and he explains that he was a vegan. He even was on a fruit diet for a time! These diets, as many others that I hear about, seem obsessive. Because they are! But the author is able to see that he is harming himself and he is able to take action. Funnily, he takes action like we all do, feet first, all in! That also is not the way to go, so he found out after he gained quite a bit of weight!

What makes this so great is that it is a personal experience. He tells his own story and even the mistakes and hiccups he has made along the way. Everyone dieting has had hiccups and it can be infuriating when people do not explain how they got to where they are.

There are a lot of interesting thoughts in this. He takes dieting as a lifestyle and is really striving to find the most ideal way of eating. But he also explains that DNA is a big mixture of dieting. Not knowing where you are coming from makes the food path in front of you very difficult. And i have seen this in my own life first hand.

My hubby and I both went on the 17 day diet. That diet has some yummy food but minus carbs. No big deal right? While my husband had a great time and lost 25 pounds, I thought I was going to die! I couldn't handle it! I had headaches every day and just wanted to stay in bed all of the time. So when Kevin Gianni is talking about DNA and how your body processes are different from another person's processes this made total sense to me!

The only downside (not for the book but for dieting) is in finding that we are all made differently that then equals that we each have to figure out what is good for us. What is good for the goose is not good for the gander! Case in point the 17 day diet with me and my hubby! Kevin stresses that it is important to know how you feel about something and pay attention to your body! He makes it sound much easier than it really is but being an advocate of paying attention to what I eat, I have to agree that it is worth the time and effort.

Overall the book has some great insights. Some information can be filed away for future use but what I absolutely put into practice on day one was learning about my DNA. I have a lot of French and I studied how they eat and funnily enough came to find that I love breads, cheeses, and fruits! I'm going to explore more and find recipes that both my husband, who is Italian, and I can eat without worry!

Recommended to everyone with a grain of salt. Take it slow, it is chock full of great information.

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### **Crystal says**

This book started out great - I really like the way he approaches life with balance. What's healthy for one person might not be for another, depending on the person's lifestyle and genes. The same with exercise. There are some good nuggets of information in it, but overall, I found it lacking substance - and many of the websites and resources included are out of date, which is odd to me since the book is only a couple of years old.

It's a good read - and I learned a bit from it - but it's not my favorite book of all time.

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### **Alex Linschoten says**

On some level, I guess this was interesting and honest enough. The author goes on a road-trip with his wife and meets a bunch of people related to his ongoing health kick. He learns lessons about a cornucopia of health and lifestyle trends along the way -- gut health, FODMAPS, sugar cleanses, coffee mould, EFT and tapping, you name it... He seems more earnest than most memoirists writing in the same field -- there's less desire to sell you something, though perhaps he just hasn't earned his stripes yet -- and I had less of the bullshit factor but nevertheless I learnt very little from reading this book, even though doing so was very quick. You can probably skip this one.

Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for making an early-release copy available to me.

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### **Zee Monodee says**

If you want a book that debunks most - if not all - of the diets/fads/'advice' out there, then read this one. The author goes into full-on research - and it is personal research, as in, he went looking for the answer himself (rather than citing such and such study or whatever). This is information a fellow human being went looking for and compiled, and it is presented in a way a fellow human being can understand without needing 2-3 Phd degrees under the belt.

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### **Online Eccentric Librarian says**

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

Kale and Coffee is a very engaging personal memoir and diet book detailing the author's journey into healthier living. From vegan diets to 7 day water fasts, climbing the Andes to discover indigenous diets to studying nearly every health/diet/fitness finding in the past 10 years, Gianni is a bulldog with a very big bone to grind. He shares his mistakes and gives thoughts/recommendations based upon his experiences.

The book breaks down as follows: the first half of the book explores the meatier topics of diets, exercise, and raw/whole foods. The second part of the book tackles smaller subjects such as alcohol, stress coffee, gluten, and positive energy/thought processes. With each chapter, he starts with a personal story and then segues into the research he's found about the topic and his conclusions.

Kale and Coffee is, at heart, a book on health. But the author's winning personality and willingness to come forward about his mistakes make for an enjoyable read. Readers may be learning about all kinds of important health/living topics during the course of the book but they won't realize it since the hard science topics are bookended by amusing bon mots. I enjoyed his exuberance - he's gone out and done the things that we probably wish we could in order to discover the truths hidden beneath the food industry/health industry/holistic industry rhetoric. There is good out there but a whole lot of bad as well.

Probably the most important message of the book is that each person is unique and so finding a one-size-fits-all diet that works for you, personally, will be a lot like pinning the tail on the donkey while blindfolded. Genetics alone will ensure that no diet other than avoiding packaged foods will be universally effective for longevity or weight loss. Certainly, the author tried many diets to see the effects on his system and some were fairly damaging (vegan, probiotic, paleo, etc.).

Where the author lost me, and why this is a 4 star book despite the brutal honesty of the writing and

engaging humor, is in the money, ironically. He is very curious and has his food tested (sent to a lab) frequently for metals/poisons, his brain scanned and then analyzed by a professional, blood work done very often, 1 week medically supervised water fasting, and more. Combined with the trips around the world to remote places and off hand comments about his personal assistants mailing things for him, and I soon recognized that this everyman really isn't one. This fitness quest was a very personal thing for him and I just can't see many people being able to afford any of those options - even blood testing to try different diets and determine how they work on a person is an expensive and daunting procedure. Celebrities have the connections and money to do those things - a 48 year old housewife with 4 kids in Muncie, Indiana, probably less so.

Admittedly, I also can't help but remember we're talking about a youngish fit male obsessed with health. Issues that face that 48 year old housewife such as emotional eating really isn't covered (other than under a blanket stress topic). As well, we don't get much in the way of more of the author's history; e.g., past drug use is mentioned briefly but never explained. I would have liked the book much better if we had more of an introduction to his personal story and why he is so obsessed with food/health.

Where Kale and Coffee really shines is that there are so few books that really break down what is wrong with American food today, why diets do and don't work, and why studies are so conflicting. To keep the book brief, Gianni smartly doesn't go into detail about things like sugar dependency (as Hymen does in his book), or detailed sugar detox plans (as JJ Virgin does in her book). But he does quote them/reference them so there are places to read more. He's really thought about the topic a lot - perhaps obsessively - and it makes for some startling conclusions when everything is put together.

At the end of the book, a simple diet plan is given for removing sugar, processed food, and feeling better. It's based on Gianni's own diet plan and what he's learned over the years in his obsessive quest for health. The plan has two options - easy and renegade. It's meant to get the bad stuff out of your system.

In all, this was an enjoyable read and although the author doesn't take risks or make a stand, he does suss out the various claims, hidden issues, and problems facing anyone wanting to be healthier and live longer in the modern age. I just wish I had his contacts for all the testing and personal medical attention. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

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### **Jenkenzz says**

not that great; nothing really that I didn't already know

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### **Janis Hill says**

I would like to thank Hay House for supplying me with an ARC of this book in exchange for an open and honest review.

This has to be one of THE BEST books I've read in a while for anyone trying to suss the whole healthy, food, life, longevity questions thrown at us by modern living.

Thoroughly enjoyable and interesting read. Yes there were some parts I didn't fully agree with, but there were parts I did fully agree with too. And one of the biggest things I took from 'Kale and Coffee' is that the reader didn't have to agree with every single thing, as long as they took something positive from the book to

use in their everyday life.

I also loved/ connected to the fact Mr Gianni was trying to emphasize there was no quick fix, one size fits all, totally guaranteed, absolute certain sure fire way for us all to live, eat and BE well. Instead he showed us various facts, theories and examples of what some people are out there are trying, and how he felt about them. The fact there is no real right or wrong answer for most things is great too. I mean, there are the obvious wrong answers like about high fat, high carb and high sugar diets being bad. Or smoking, or too much coffee for SOME people... but I hope you get what I mean?

Basically 'Kale and Coffee' is like a personal guide through Mr Gianni's life and experiences on his road to better health and better eating. And he's shared it with us, not for the reader to become a disciple and do absolutely everything he does... but to use his experience as a guide and suggestions to the reader taking their own path through the food, exercise and living maelstrom of information out there.

I did find the jumping from one time period to another a little jarring at times. But found it I read the book in small snippets, like reading a blog, it was easier to cope with. Not a book I could sit down and read all in one sitting on a slow afternoon. Something to be savoured piece by piece, every now and then.

Would I recommend this book to others? Absolutely. I feel ANYONE wanting to learn how to find their way through all the mixed information of "the best" diet, exercise, living, etc. should read this book. I don't expect them to find the end all and be all answer in this book... but I do feel they will help gain knowledge on how best to face the rest of the mass information overload out there and find out their own path in it all. There is no quick fix; no one size fits all solution to food, health and exercise. And anyone wanting to learn more about why needs to read this book.

Would I buy this book for myself? I probably would. Sadly though I might consider getting it as an eBook and I feel that sort of defeats some of the purpose. Don't get me wrong, I love eBooks as much as paper books... but there are just some books better suited to each media. This book would be better suited to be read in paper form – away from technology, wi-fi, and in a hammock on a gorgeous beach somewhere. But for me, I'd find it handier to have in electronic form to quickly use for reference every time I want to re-check something. So, yeah, kind of hypercritical of me I know.

In summary: People focussed on finding THE ANSWER when it comes to food, health, exercise, life need to read this book. It won't actually give you that answer, but it will help you be better equipped in your search for it. Especially as it should teach you there is no ONE answer, you really need to make it up as you go in a manner that suits and is good for you. Well, that's what I got out of it anyhow.

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## GONZA says

As a matter of fact, the part I liked more about this book is the beginning and the author's complying about being Vegan and feeling very bad. As I have a Master in Eating Disorders I study a lot about eating, all this vegan/fructarian stuff made me cry, because this is just a form of orthorexy, which is just another eating disorders. So I appreciate the author coming out of the closet and describing his going back to a "normal" type of eating, with alcohol, coffee and sugar, all in moderation of course.

Devo ammettere che la parte di questo manuale che mi é piaciuta di piú é quella in cui l'autore racconta come dopo anni di alimentazione vegana non si reggeva in piedi. A causa del mio master sui disturbi alimentari ho studiato parecchio l'alimentazione e le diete vegane/fruttariane mi fanno accapponare la pelle perché non

sono che una forma di ortoressia e cioè un disturbo alimentare. Quindi ho apprezzato molto il fatto che l'autore abbia avuto il coraggio di ammettere che non aveva funzionato e che era tornato ad un'alimentazione variata e normale, con tanto di alcool, caffè e zucchero, il tutto senza esagerare.

THANKS TO NETGALLEY AND HAY HOUSE FOR THE PREVIEW!

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## Leah says

Things I learned: extremes are unhealthy, no matter which end of the dietary or exercise spectrum you try. Genetics are a key factor in longevity, as is an active mind and body. Some people have far more endurance for suffering than I do. Be wary of self-proclaimed experts. The author's long suffering wife deserves her own special trophy as she appears to be married to a neurotic basket case. By the end of the book, I was glad to leave him.

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## Paula Vince says

Which diet and lifestyle will help us thrive? To me, it's like a jungle out there. There is so much conflicting information in the media. Not only are self-proclaimed experts always contradicting each other, but staple diets from the past are being given the old heave-ho. What are we supposed to do?

Kevin Gianni is a health blogger who made it his mission to ferret out the real deal on health and nutrition. His goal, as he states, was to 'find the people at the top of the misinformation chain and tie them up so they never confuse anyone again.' That made me curious enough to see how he would go. Hoping this book would clear everything up, here are some of the things I found interesting.

- 1) There is no one-fits-all human diet. We must all consider our own genetic lineage before we start messing around with other diets which suit people who have adapted to their cultures over thousands of years. Yet almost nobody alive in the western world today is a purebred human, coming from just one race. I'm a fourth or fifth generation Australian and already know I'm a mixture of Anglo Saxon, Germanic and probably others.
- 2) After just a few generations in a new place or with new habits, our genetic expression may change enough that our ideal diets needs to change too. That's the problem behind the philosophy of popular diets such as the Paleo. As we are actually worlds away from our paleolithic ancestors, it doesn't makes as much sense as it sounds to say that we should eat as they did. He visited animal breeders to help make this point, as changes can be observed over several generations of dogs or farm animals far quicker than with humans, yet the same thing happens.
- 3) Kevin Gianni tried some of the popular diets, including vegan and raw foods. Instead of filling him with energy and well-being, they mucked up his hormones and adrenal glands.
- 4) Many 21st century 'superfoods' which were unheard of a few decades ago (and we've all heard of many of them, think quinoa, chia, kale), are being pushed by those who market them, but the real indicator of health and longevity may be more about what we leave out of our diets rather than what we add in.
- 5) Many of us have been brainwashed into believing that exercise has to be hard and painful to be worthwhile. Over-training takes a serious toll on us, yet we all carry on. If our body is our planet, the way we

approach fitness is like burning our precious fossil fuels. He believes that an ideal fat burning zone should be between 105 and 134 heartbeats per minute. That information actually changed how I ride my stationery bike. Instead of going flat out and pausing in the middle for a water and breath-catching break, I now easily go for a full half hour.

6) Emotional stress may mess with our health by stewing our organs in a cortisol broth. He urges us to consider stress a bigger threat to our health than french fries and fast food.

7) Technology may be changing the chemistry of our bodies. We are frequently rewarded by a dopamine fix when we see that people have liked or shared one of our social media posts, yet these feel-good chemicals aren't meant to be turned on continually and can harm us in excess.

8) He examines a lot of other interesting information too. For example, are sugar, carbs and gluten really the 'holy trinity' of disease that it's popular to think they are? He also looks at coffee, salt, alcohol and meat consumption. We need to read this with an awareness that all the information may not apply to us, depending on where we are from. For example, the Australian beef industry differs from the horrible situation he describes in which animals are fed bad stuff in small, enclosed spaces. (He likens their diet to being forced to eat Twinkies out of your own toilet bowl. It fills me with compassion for the animals as well as convincing me of the benefits of free range produce.)

Overall, I'm not certain that Kevin Gianni's book did make things crystal clear, but it made it crystal clear why we can't expect them to. It definitely inspired me to change a few things which I had no idea were an issue. It really gives us lots of food for thought about physical food in a very entertaining way.

Thanks to Hay House and Net Galley for my review copy.

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### **Jacquelyn Core says**

Not brilliantly written but makes a lot of points we have been making for a long time.

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### **Christine Zibas says**

Author Kevin Gianni has been a YouTube sensation in the area of health, branding himself and his approach "renegade." Interestingly enough, what he was using -- and recommending to others -- was the raw food diet. In fact, this left Gianni health-deprived, as we learn at the beginning of his latest book, "Kale and Coffee."

Kudos to Gianni for admitting as much and being willing to try some alternatives, and to search out new ways of being healthier. However, and despite his honesty, it does give the reader pause to wonder just how much of his current health information is valid, given that he was previously such a dedicated raw food advocate to his own detriment. So, reader, that old phrase "buyer beware" is never more apt when it comes to health practices.

Gianni does deserve credit for searching out the science behind commonly held health ideas, and much of what he uncovers in his book is fascinating. It is also a bit disjointed, but perhaps that's really no surprise, given that he's most comfortable in short-segment video format.

His journey begins when his wife suggests that they change their lives by buying an RV and traveling around the country, and beyond to Central and South America (albeit not by RV in those cases). Along the way, he tackles topics like fasting, coffee, exercise, green tea, toxins in our food, and more. There's plenty of research to back his writing up. In fact, some may find his note section at the book's rear very helpful for exploring these topics themselves. There's also a 21-day jumpstart program that readers can follow along with.

Perhaps the biggest message from Gianni's book is that those seeking good health and longevity should not stubbornly stick to systems that don't work, and each of us must adopt the health practices that best suit our individual selves. Renegade health, it turns out, means mostly listening to the wisdom of our own bodies (for example, with food sensitivities). That may be the most powerful health tip of all.

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