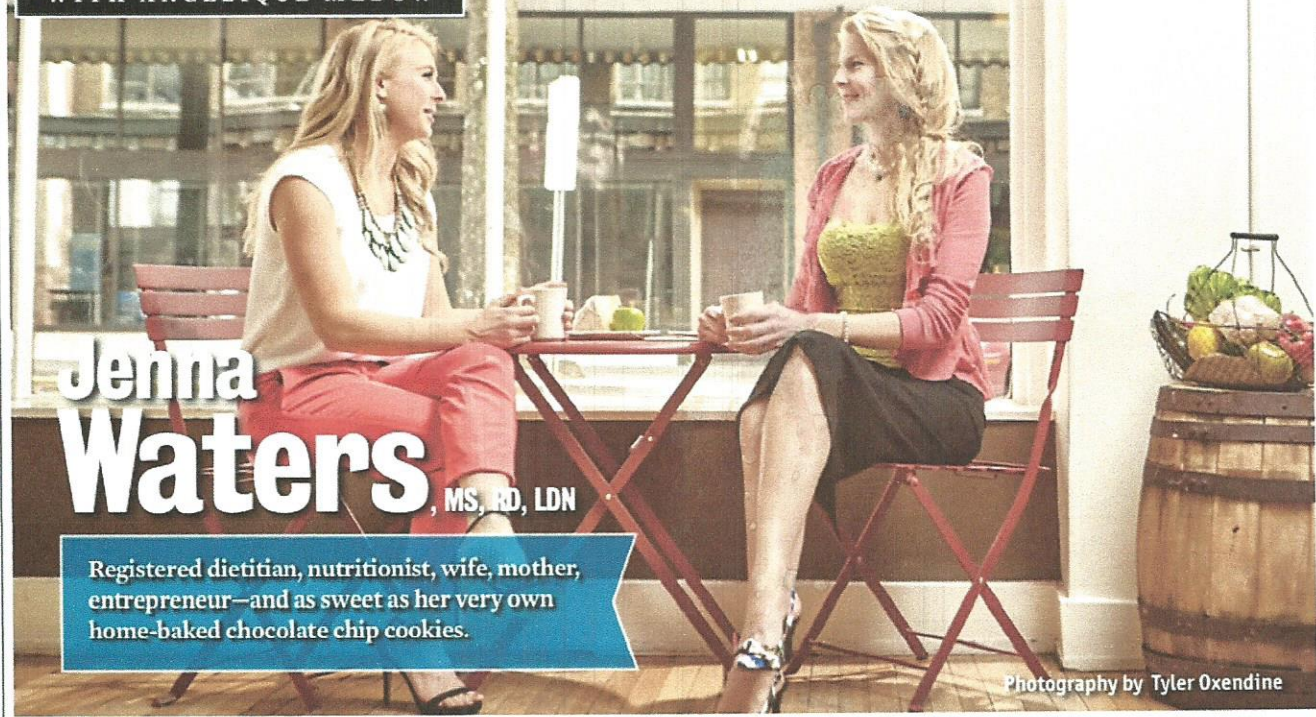


CONVERSATIONS

WITH ANGELIQUE MEDOW



Jenna Waters

MS, RD, LDN

Registered dietitian, nutritionist, wife, mother, entrepreneur—and as sweet as her very own home-baked chocolate chip cookies.

Photography by Tyler Oxendine

JENNA WATERS' appearance might suggest that her advice on nutrition and all things healthy might be only for those born with her natural good looks—but be not mistaken. This dulcet darling of a dietician can dish, dole, and dollop guidance on food choices with the best of the best.

Born and raised in upstate New York by her first-generation American family of Italian and Polish heritage, Waters' entrepreneurship was fostered in her family's business in Vestal, which sells commercial doors and hardware to contractors and architects. By the time she was 8 years old, young Jenna was stocking shelves, answering phones, filing paperwork—and preparing lunches for breaktime.

Educated at the University of Tennessee and graduating with a bachelor's degree in nutrition and a master's in nutrition and exercise science, Waters considered becoming a doctor of medicine—until she concluded that *MDS treat the results of illness rather than the cause*. Waters instantly staked her entrepreneurial claim: That *she would treat the cause of wellness*—nutrition and lifestyle.

ANGELIQUE MEDOW: How did you decide that food is the best medicine?

JENNA WATERS: When I was 5 years old, I knew I wanted to help people get well. In being honest with myself, I grew to know that wellness is generated by food and nutrition. From there, my food philosophy was born.

AM: And what is Jenna Waters' food philosophy?

JW: Food is fuel. Our bodies are machines

with heart and soul. The right food—fuel—has the powerful potential to make or break us. We are quick to acknowledge the vital importance of nutrition in the life of an athlete. It's obvious that athletic careers and livelihoods depend on a body's optimal performance. We can apply this same level of importance to our own lives—not because we are preparing for an athletic event, but because we desire to thrive. Nutrition plays a huge role in mental clarity, energy levels, mood, confidence, sex drive, physique, productivity, thoughts, and feelings. Tak-

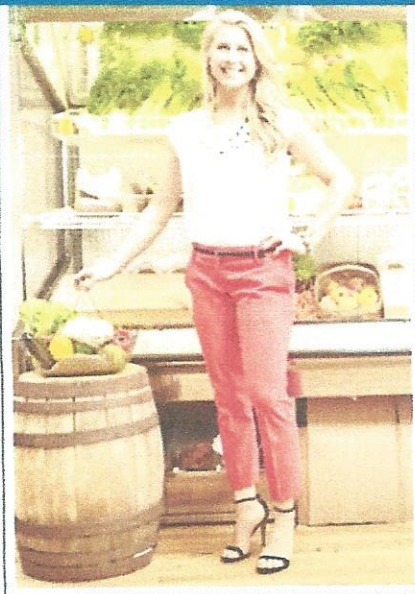
ing control of our nutrition can literally enhance our businesses, relationships, desire to serve others, and more! My philosophy is that we are not just meant to survive, we were made to *thrive*. And good nutrition is the fuel.

AM: Tell us about your customers. How do you help them thrive?

JW: I get to know them, what foods they like and don't, and why, and their goals. I help them eliminate foods that keep them from their goals and add foods that help them attain their goals. I come into their homes and meet their families and talk about family goals. I make shopping lists and help them organize foods in their kitchen and pantries to fit their nutritional needs. I also write recipes and meal plans and I am partnering with a local, sustainable farm to provide partially prepared meals.

AM: Can you give us some examples?

JW: The coach of the Nashville Predators ice hockey team wanted his players to refine and implement a nutritional program. I worked with each of the players



individually to meet their performance goals and provided an overall implementation plan for the team. With their diligence, we optimized their recovery and performance! Another example: A middle-aged woman wanted to lose weight once and for all, have more energy, and alleviate some health complications. She started a program with me, lost 12 inches in nine weeks, had more energy and mental clarity than she ever remembered, felt relief throughout her body—and had people complimenting her successes continuously. She has a completely new outlook on health. We took time to dig beneath her surface problems with food and address her underlying issues—which has been pivotal in her lasting success.

AM: So is that what it takes to be successful with a nutrition program—diligence and willingness to dig beneath the surface?

JW: Diligence always—and sometimes digging beneath the surface. Other times, people just need to be educated about healthy choices.

AM: What are the underlying food issues that keep us pinned to old habits?

JW: Fear—and fear can be worked through. The point of digging into the underlying food issues is to free us of the fear that can trap and drive us to choose foods and drinks that are unhealthy. Once that's done, we can lovingly choose foods and drinks that are healthy.

AM: When did you start implementing healthy, nutritious choices for yourself?

JW: As a sophomore in college, I started using myself as a guinea pig. It was in the quest to find what was right. There's so much information, it's hard to know what to believe. At first, my goal was to lose weight, not gain health—but that never lasted. Ultimately, the focus and goal needs to be on health, not on weight.

AM: Sounds like your version of health is very proactive. How is that implemented?

JW: Having a proactive and healthy lifestyle means prioritizing food choices, exercise, and everything that supports a healthy way of life. It means spending more money on groceries, workouts, and therapists—and less money on prescriptions and methods to manage our pain.

AM: So you're helping to change our American methodology of, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it?"

JW: Yes! After studying the human body and understanding what it needs to thrive, it is essential that we choose proactive, healthy lifestyles, and choose foods from a healthy source, just as our grandparents did. Buying locally raised, whole foods from an organic, sustainable source is the best nourishment that we can give our bodies. You might ask, "Why?" Grass-fed beef has about four times more omega-3s—which are extremely important in reducing inflammation (the cause of disease), than conventionally raised beef. Local, farm-raised products simply nourish our bodies better. The vitamins and minerals present in these foods are "through the roof" in comparison to conventionally raised products. Fruits and vegetables that ripen in the field contain more nutrients from the soil and sun than conventionally raised, which are picked green and shipped to stores. Food is—medicine—and every day we fill prescriptions for our own health. ✕

Angelique Medow was featured on the cover of Cityview's "Entrepreneurial Spirit" issue in 2012 and is a public speaker and writer on topics that support and uplift human potential and willpower.