

Debra Lynn Dadd

“The Queen of Green” - New York Times

A Toxic-Free Life



This is a **free** e-book you may share with anyone



Debra Lynn Dadd
author
consultant
speaker

I've been living without toxic chemicals in my home for more than 30 years. But my life was not always toxic-free. This is my story of how I grew up toxic and learned to live toxic-free.

Creating a home environment free from toxic chemicals changed my life:

- I recovered my health
- I save money on health care costs
- I enjoy life more because my body feels good. I can work and have fun.

Today there is much more information on how toxic chemicals cause illness in every part of our bodies than there was when I first learned that toxic chemicals were making me sick.

Toxic chemicals can cause cancer, asthma, insomnia, headaches, overweight, and even sexual dysfunction (for more on how toxic chemicals can affect your body see www.toxics-health.com). The good news is all these illnesses can be *prevented* by reducing your exposure to the toxic chemicals that cause them, and *reversed* by removing toxic chemicals you have already been exposed to that are stored in your body.

You can live toxic-free, too. Let me show you how...

My book
Toxic Free
is a quick start guide
to removing toxic
chemicals from your
home and body





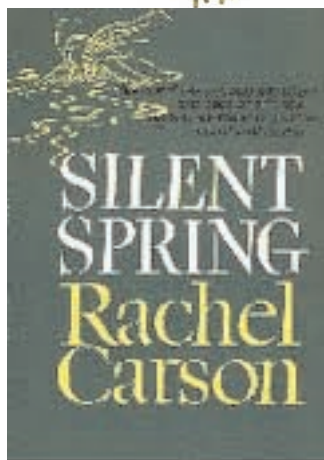
I was born on 18 June 1955, in Oakland, California.

It's really not surprising that I became a consumer advocate—my mother spent her pregnancy selling nylon stockings in her own little shop and my father was in advertising. After I was born, I spent my days with mom at The Stocking Bar, and when I could stand up on my own two feet, grandma started walking me up and down the street to visit all the stores.

It seemed like a happy time, but unbeknownst to me, my parents, and most people in the world, there were already toxic substances affecting our health.

When I was born, the government was recommending housewives spray the toxic pesticide DDT inside kitchen cabinets where it would come in contact with food, actors were smoking in the movies and on television, and DuPont was running commercials telling us how we could all have "better living through chemistry." Now we know better.





In September, 1962, when I was seven years old, a book called *Silent Spring* was published. It was the first book to outline in detail how toxic chemicals were affecting both human health and the environment. The title was a reference to the fact that so many songbirds had been killed by pesticides that springtime was no longer filled with their serenades. *Silent Spring* launched the environmental movement, but had little effect on the many toxic chemicals in consumer products, despite an entire chapter on the subject.

I didn't read *Silent Spring* until the summer of 2010, when I found that it said that DDT (which was soon to be banned because it was so toxic) had already been ubiquitous in the environment since 1944. DDT was present then in every living thing, even penguins at the North Pole, and my mother.

So my little baby body was born toxic, even in 1955.

In 1963, my family moved from Hayward, California—where we had been living in an old rental house—to Concord, California, where we moved into a brand new suburban house, with new paint and new carpets and new cabinets, and a oil refinery just over the hill.

I grew up eating at McDonald's, drinking tap water, cleaning with toxic cleaning products, spraying pesticides all over the house, wearing perfume and polyester, and sleeping on a fireproofed polyurethane foam bed with formaldehyde-laced polyester sheets.





I continued to live the typical American toxic lifestyle until I was 23. That was the year my body broke down.

I didn't know what was wrong with me. I had constant headaches and insomnia every night. I was "spacing out" and fainting in the shower. Most of the time I was depressed and had uncontrollable urges to eat sugar. These symptoms seemed unrelated to me, and not like any illness I had ever heard of.

That same year, my mother died of cancer at age 51. Many of my neighbors were dying too. Our neighborhood was designated a "cancer cluster."

It turned out that my immune system had been damaged by toxic chemicals I had been exposed to in my home, and from refinery emissions in the environment and pesticides in the old walnut orchards I played in. I was diagnosed with a condition that was at that time called "environmental illness" and is now known as "multiple chemical sensitivities."

I was offered various treatments, but what made the most sense to me was that if toxic chemicals were making my body sick, then avoiding toxic chemicals would allow my body to heal itself.

But avoiding toxic chemicals was easier said than done. Where were these toxic chemicals that were making me sick? And what could I use instead? Unfortunately for me, in 1978 there were no books or websites to tell me which products were toxic and which weren't.

I was on my own to find out.





What got me out of bed every morning at that time was my quest to find out what chemicals were making me sick, and where I could find products that did not contain them. I spent my days at poison control centers and medical libraries, trying to put the pieces together. At the same time, as I started to get well, I realized *if I had not been exposed to toxic chemicals, I would not have gotten sick in the first place*. Not only did I want to heal my own body, but I wanted to warn others of toxic dangers in consumer products so they would not get sick as I did.

Fortunately, everything started magically going right. I moved to San Francisco and got a job working for a doctor who was treating patients with environmental illness that had full-time pay and two days a week off when the office was closed, so I got paid to do this research.

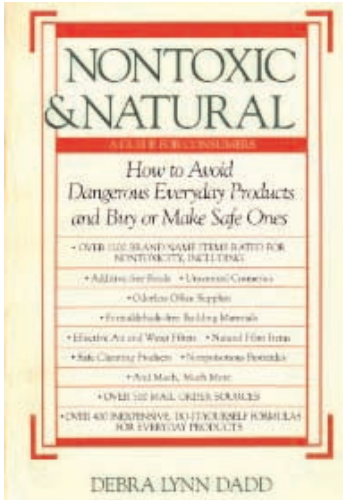
Eventually I wrote the very first directory of nontoxic products, *A Consumer Guide for the Chemically Sensitive*, which I self-published in 1982. Serendipitously, the makers of Bon Ami cleanser were at that time running a campaign asking people to write in about their experiences using Bon Ami. A friend wrote to Bon Ami, told them about my book, and they sent me on two week-long media tours, where each



**A
CONSUMER
GUIDE
FOR THE
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Debra Lynn Dadd Alan S. Levin, M.D.

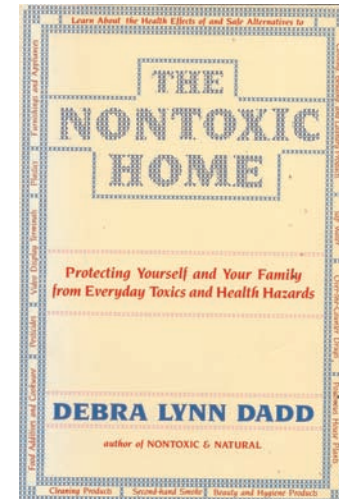
day I was on a tv show, a radio show, and had a newspaper interview. My mailman started delivering bags of mail to me with requests for ordering information and self-addressed stamped envelopes. Clearly, the general public wanted to know about toxics and how to avoid them.



My experience selling *A Consumer Guide for the Chemically Sensitive* to the general public opened another door. I was still working at the doctor's office, and one of our patients was a published author. She introduced me to her editor, who gave me a contract to write a directory of nontoxic products for the general public.

When *Nontoxic & Natural* was published in 1984, I received a lot of publicity, for this was something brand new. Nobody had ever written a book about toxic chemicals in consumer products and safe alternatives before. The bookstores didn't know which shelf to put it on.

With the success of *Nontoxic & Natural*, my publisher asked me to write a book about toxics in the home that outlined the dangers and gave safe alternatives. In 1986, *The Nontoxic Home* was published.



When I first started writing about toxics and safe alternatives, there were not many safe products to choose from. In *Nontoxic & Natural*, there were no organic foods listed—they didn't exist. The "natural" foods were 7Up and Godiva Chocolates because they didn't contain artificial colors and flavors or preservatives. Baking soda and Bon Ami were the only nontoxic cleaners. But as I continued to make the dangers more known and promote the safe products that were available, more and more nontoxic products came on the market.



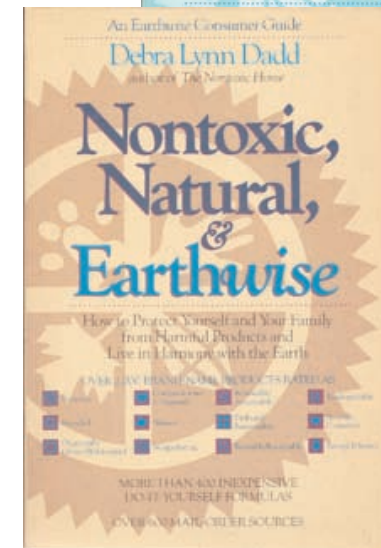
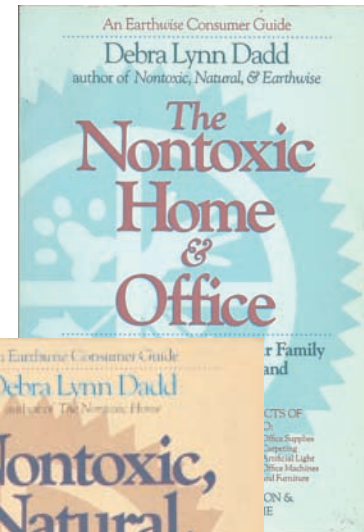


In 1985, I left the city and moved to the small village of Inverness, in the rural part of Marin county, just over the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. I wanted to live in a really clean in environment. My health had improved tremendously by eliminating toxic chemicals from my home, but I wanted to improve even more, so I moved to a place where there was clean outdoor air, too. I was just over a hill from the Pacific Ocean, in a forest, where thousands of trees were producing fresh oxygen.

While living there alone in the woods, I had a life-changing experience. I realized that I could make my home nontoxic, but what about the rest of the world? Living in nature I could see firsthand

how my life is utterly dependent on the ecosystems in which I was living. I began to research the environmental effects of consumer products in 1987, and published a small newsletter called *The Earthwise Consumer*. This was before anyone was talking about “green” products.

When Earth Day 1990 introduced green living, I was right there with my new book *Nontoxic, Natural & Earthwise*. By 1992, the field of indoor air pollution and sick building syndrome had been established, so I wrote *The Nontoxic Home & Office* as an update.





In 1990, everything changed for me. Toxics was on the back burner, and the environment was suddenly hot. I had been studying sustainability, which was very new then, and was interested in applying the principles of sustainability to consumer products.

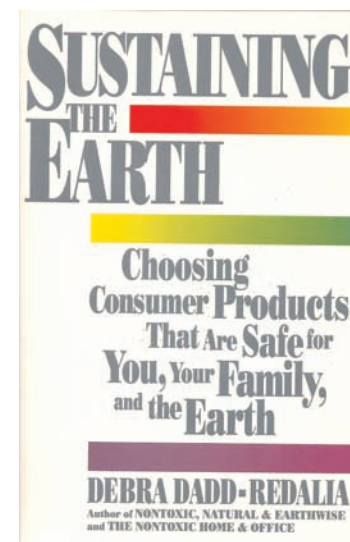
Two wonderful businessmen approached me and asked if I would bring my environmental wisdom to start a new company with them. The idea was to find or make green products and sell them through a chain of boutique stores across the country. At that time, there were a few scattered green stores that sold a few products and none were sold in mainstream stores.

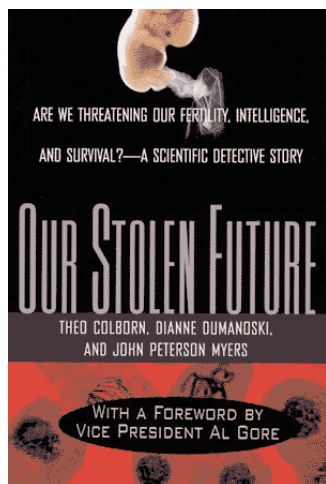
After some months of R&D, I said, "This business model is all wrong. We shouldn't be setting up green boutiques, because soon green products will be sold everywhere." And that's exactly what happened.

So Worldwise was started as a manufacturer of pet products made from recycled materials and is now a multimillion dollar company that sells to WalMart and other mass market stores. In fact, Worldwise helped get some of the first green products into WalMart.

My role turned into educating both the growing Worldwise staff and the general public about sustainability. When the Internet became available in the mid 1990's, I wrote one of the first educational websites about green products, the award-winning "Worldwise Wiseguide."

I also wrote a book about green products called *Sustaining the Earth*, and the New York Times pronounced me "The Queen of Green."





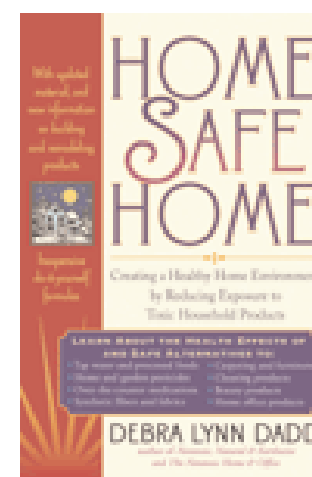
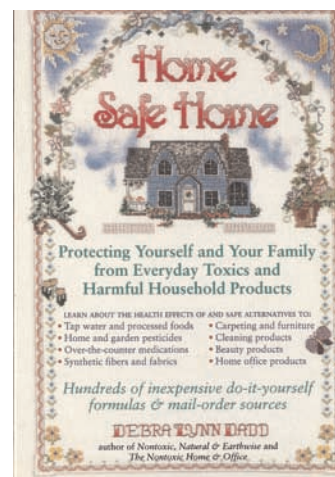
Throughout the 1990's, more and more research was being done about toxic chemicals and their health effects. The whole field of toxicology was just in its infancy when I started writing. I first wrote about toxic carpet in 1984 because I had observed for myself that I and others were being made sick by it, and then studies followed that confirmed my findings.

In 1986, another groundbreaking toxics book was published, *Our Stolen Future*. This book showed how toxic chemicals were damaging our endocrine systems. Though I had recovered from my multiple chemical sensitivities many years before, those first symptoms had been replaced with ongoing thyroid problems, fatigue, infertility and weight problems—all regulated by the endocrine system. This all made perfect sense to me.

And so it was time for a new book. *Home Safe Home* was published in 1997 and updated in 2004.

By 2004, however, there were so many non-toxic products that I couldn't list them in a directory in the back of the book. It was time for a website. I started **Debra's List** then, which has grown to be the #1 source for finding toxic-free products on the Internet.

Since then, my website has grown and grown and grown. It's the ideal medium for me as a writer because I get to say what I want and publish instantly.



For all these years, a momentum had been building about toxics. Nonprofit organizations were established to study toxics, warn the public, and offer safe alternatives. The Environmental Protection Agency put a lot of information on their website. Whereas in 1982 I was scouring libraries for data about toxics, now all anyone needs to do is type the chemical into a search engine to get a lot of data on health effects. It's technical, but there.



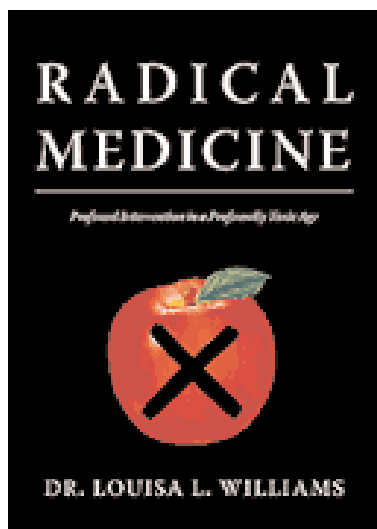
In 2010, however, there was a change. New legislation was introduced to revise and strengthen the Toxic Substances Control Act, and there was a lot of publicity around this. Though the act didn't pass, almost every day in the news there was another story about toxic chemicals in consumer products. Suddenly, I wasn't one of the few who were talking about toxics. It was news.

In my own personal life, there was also a change. My nutritionist gave me a detox product made from **activated liquid zeolite** to remove toxic substances from my body, and it was amazing. For three decades I had thought that if I just avoided toxic chemicals my body would heal itself, and that was true...to a degree. When I took these drops that immediately removed toxic substances from my blood, I felt so much better that I could see the vital necessity of helping our bodies detox.

And I began to study what our bodies do with all the chemicals we are exposed to and how the natural detox functions of our bodies have been compromised.



Just before Christmas 2010, while working on writing my new book *Toxic Free*, I read something that made me realize how urgent it is right now to address the problem of toxics in consumer products.

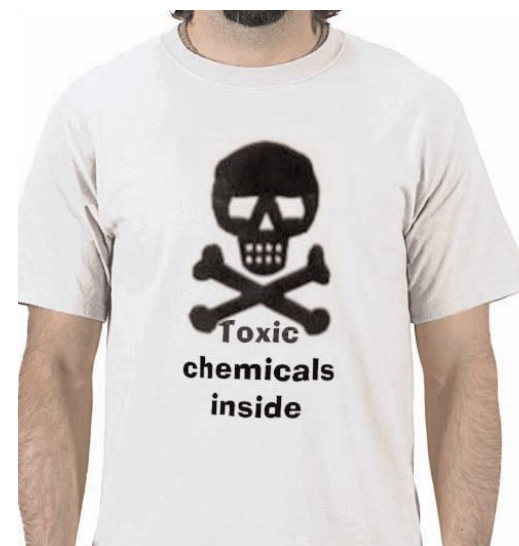


I was reading a book called *Radical Medicine* by Dr. Louisa Williams, which is a 3-inch thick book about how toxic chemicals affect your body and what can be done to remove them. She wrote

An apple a day won't keep the doctor away...nor can the most optimum diet possible, drinking pure water, exercising regularly or even diligently supplementing with mega-doses of vitamins and minerals ensure the preservation of good health for most Americans. A healthy lifestyle [is] simply no longer adequate to fend off degenerative disease and help individuals regain their birthright of optimal health...

Dr. Williams went on to say that such natural practices as chiropractic and other natural remedies are no longer as effective as they were 100 years ago, before our bodies began to be inundated with toxic chemicals.

I was stunned to read this. Since 1987, my basic truth had been if I just follow nature's ways all will be well. But now, alone, common sense health practices are not enough to handle the onslaught of toxic chemicals we are daily exposed to in our homes and the environment, or the toxic chemicals that are already stored in our bodies from past exposures.





Today, thirty years after I first started writing about toxics, I know two new things:

* studies now exist that show ***toxic chemicals contribute to every illness***

* to be healthy, we need to ***protect our bodies from toxic chemical exposure*** and ***remove the toxic chemicals from our bodies.***

If we want to have healthy bodies, if we want to have an environment to support our lives with clean air, clean water, clean food, and all the natural resources used to make everything we need to sustain our lives, ***the number one thing that needs to be done is handle the problem of toxic chemicals.***

Every day I am adding new information to my **Toxic Free Zone** website and spreading the word through social media and other channels.

Toxic-free products exist, we just need to choose them.

Methods to remove toxic chemicals from our bodies exist, we just need to use them.

I'm here to show you how.



Making Dreams Come True

There is just one more thing I want to say. I don't do this toxics work because I am against toxic chemicals. I do it because I love life.

My ideal is to live in a world where spirituality is celebrated and we live according to the laws of nature. I want to enjoy loving relationships and a creative life. In pursuing that dream I found an obstacle: toxic chemicals.

Toxic chemicals injure bodies, reduce intelligence, and dull spiritual awareness. And they destroy the ecosystems that support our lives.

Toxic chemicals interfered with my reproductive system, so I couldn't have children.

I've lived in Florida since 2002, right near the Gulf of Mexico. Though I live hundreds of miles from the site of the 2010 oil spill, I saw firsthand how our fish supply was polluted, and people got rashes from swimming in Gulf waters.

I want spiritual awareness, a sound mind, a healthy body, and flourishing ecosystems. I want everyone's dreams to come true, whatever they are.

This is why I am working to eliminate toxic chemicals.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra Lynn Dadd".



Come Visit My Website...

Debra's List has more than 1000 links to websites that sell toxic-free and products of all kinds. From air filters to water bottles, you'll find every non-toxic product you need on this easy-to-search directory.

Green Living Q&A is my popular blog where you can ask your questions about nontoxic living and get answers from me and my knowledgeable readers. More than 2000 questions and answers, and more every week.

Toxics & Health has articles on how toxic chemicals in consumer products can affect your health.

Debra's Bookstore sells recommended books on toxics and safe alternatives (which you can purchase with a click).

Debra Detox has information about how to remove toxic chemicals from your body.

Personal Consultations has information on how you can contact me directly. I am available to answer your questions regarding toxic exposures and toxic-free products by phone, or on-site at your home or workplace.

And Tell A Friend...

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Together we can create a toxic-free world