

Reclaiming Wellness: Ancient Wisdom for Your Happy, Healthy, and Beautiful Life

Jovanka Ciales

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“Wellness is something we work for and achieve with daily practices, choices, and behaviors,” Jovanka Ciales writes in *Reclaiming Wellness*, which combines dietary advice with information on traditional curative techniques to craft an accessible plan for regaining health.

The Afro-Latina founder and CEO of Solana, an herbal supplement company, Ciales grew up in Puerto Rico and learned the principles of herbalism from her grandmother. Her experience with chronic illnesses occasioned her search for a healthier lifestyle. She recommends a mostly plant-based diet as well as yoga, massage, meditation, moral support from other people, and time in nature.

The book melds the practical with the philosophical. There are mindfulness exercises at the close of many chapters, and tables that list serving suggestions for, and the benefits of, oils and herbs. But there are also passages explaining overarching concepts like *ubuntu* and *namaste*, which express the value of community and human connection.

Ciales acknowledges that changing one’s habits takes time, and sets out a schema for making gradual adjustments. “Take any changes one step at a time,” she soothes. For instance, an aim could be eating one raw ingredient per meal. Her 21-day diet plan starts with lunches that are 80% plant-based; by the end, they are 100% vegan. Sample daily menus make it easy to see how meals could be based around plants. A “reduce and replace” method is her model for introducing any new routine.

Alongside familiar elements, less expected techniques are considered, such as “sound healing,” which might involve singing bowls or rain sticks. Ciales has an inclusive vision: “wellness is for everyone,” she insists, not just a privileged minority. She makes a diversity agenda plain: this is not just a movement for “Southern California hippies.”

Reclaiming Wellness is a friendly guide to making incremental changes that will establish better physical and spiritual health.

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