

From GMO hater to biotechnology advocate: One person's Facebook journey

How could I have been so misled about so much for so many years?

I've been obsessed with good health and nutrition since I was a teenager. As a young mom, I did everything possible to ensure my kids' good health. Organic, natural foods, natural remedies, pesticides and cleansing agents — only the best. My guidebooks were the myriad of materials provided by health gurus, celebrities and yoga instructors.

Then I discovered Facebook, joined some health groups, and learned about evil corporations like Monsanto and its dangerous pesticides and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

My mission was clear: I needed to inform the world of these terrible things.

I was well into this commitment when one new member in an anti-Monsanto group suddenly chose me as his mentor, asking for all I knew.

He questioned endlessly, I answered. He questioned my answers. He forced me to search for ever more information.

[facebook 3 8 18](#) It got tiresome and I started throwing in links without even reading them. I just knew that they were good links; the headlines all matched my views. He read them all — and questioned me sentence by sentence. That meant I had to actually read everything I shared — and found to my surprise that half of the links that I had provided went against everything I believed.

I started asking a lot of questions on my favorite forums, seeking evidence for claims that, days before, I had merely ingested as facts.

I soon found out any challenge to a claim on anti-GMO sites had me being called a shill for Monsanto and permanently removed. I realized that by stifling all challenges and silencing dissent, group members forced others to fall in line, mindlessly and unquestioning. I was shocked that my months as a 'good member' meant nothing to people who now turned against me, merely for asking for evidence of their claims.

Fortunately, I found Facebook forums where I wasn't yelled at whenever I questioned someone's post on the subject of food and GMOs. I even joined sites that weren't anti-GMO, wanting to know how they could believe in this terrible unnatural technology.

I've learned to respect the views of people who are educated on subjects about which I was concerned — for example, farmers, biotechnologists and, yes, even those who work for Monsanto. I recognized that some celebrity actor knows no more about science than I do — and shouldn't have as much influence on public opinion as a university-educated professional.

I even found organic farmers who support GMOs for a sustainable future.

I have come to realize that biotechnologists and farmers are not evil, paid-off or misguided. They kiss their babies and want to make a better world like the rest of us.



I've realized the harm that comes from being uncritical. That

those who aren't speaking from a position of knowledge or education can hurt my family — by not vaccinating children, by controlling what's taught in schools and by lobbying governments into making wrong decisions.

To pay it forward, I now run several fact-based Facebook sites. I try to help others who are confused and fearful about agricultural practices, as well as other controversial topics like vaccines, pesticides, chemicals and the often-misinforming portrayal of scientific research.

I'm every bit as committed to good health as I was as a teenager and young mom, but I've learned so much about what really constitutes truth and what represents distorted propaganda for other agendas.

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