



Healthy, Vibrant, Exuberant Marilu

Marilu Henner at home
in the Hollywood Hills.

by Kim Henderson

The world first came to know her as Elaine O'Connor-Nardo, the struggling divorced mother of two on the Emmy Award-winning hit sitcom "Taxi." Today, Marilu Henner is shining brighter than ever and shows no signs of slowing down. A *New York Times* bestselling author on health eight times over, wife, and mother of two teenage sons, Marilu also teaches classes and workshops as the leader of her online health community, Marilu.com, in addition to acting in film, television, and on stage. Her boundless energy and enthusiasm is evident in all that she does. The secret to her bright energy? Her unshakable commitment to health—now her number one priority.

While not always her top priority, health became Marilu's focus when the two most important people in her life died prematurely due to the ravages of disease.

THE BEGINNING

Kind, warm and open, Marilu generously shared how she came to be the health leader she is today. She said her journey to health began with her colorful childhood in Chicago. "We had a very, very active family. We were like the Kennedys of Logan Square. My mother taught dancing in the backyard. We had 200 students between the ages of 2 and 80, including the nuns who came over for stretch classes from the Catholic church next door. And everyone had their first kiss somewhere on our property because we had teen night on Fridays. My mother also ran a beauty shop out of our kitchen where women from the neighborhood came to get their hair done. My uncle lived upstairs from us with cats, dogs,

birds, fish and his boyfriend, Charles. He taught art at the Catholic grammar school and was also the neighborhood astrologer," Marilu explained. It's no surprise she gravitated toward the exciting and creatively rich life of an actress. Then, at age 17, her father had a heart attack and died. He was just 52 years old.

The loss was devastating to both Marilu and her mother Loretta, who died nine years later at age 58, from rheumatoid arthritis. Marilu was just 26. She began her role on "Taxi" just two weeks later. Having dealt with the death of her father by eating: "I ate my feelings and ballooned up to 174 pounds, which is a lot for me—I'm 120 now," after her mother's death, she experienced a profound shift and became determined to "learn everything I could about the human body and health." Instead of eating food as she did after her father's death, she decided to eat up information. "I became an obsessed student of health. I read every single health book I could get my hands on. I went to medical libraries and read everything I could about the human body. I took a human anatomy class. I went to nutritionists and