

Self

ROBERT CRAMPTON
TAKES STOCK, A
TEENAGER'S BATTLE
WITH BREAST CANCER,
JIMMY SULLIVAN'S
FITNESS REGIME
AND **MISS ABIGAIL'S**
TIME WARP ADVICE

Robert Crampton's age of enlightenment



EVERY JOURNALIST knows that the subjects that generate the most response are dogs and religion. To those two, a third may now be added: colonic irrigation. Over the years, I've written what I thought were controversial, thought-provoking articles on all sorts of people and goings-on. I've probably averaged one reader's letter or call per piece. Two weeks ago I wrote in this column about how it feels to have a load of water pumped up your bottom for an hour. The phone hasn't stopped!

Not that there is any controversy. Callers are unanimous: they too want to be irrigated, and soon. Typical was the man whose upper-crust accent and rather constipated manner signalled, I assumed, a career in the service of Queen and country. "Robert Crampton? Colonic irrigation? Very good. Want one. Telephone number?" My answer to him and everyone else is: Sir, Madam, call Jane Haines on 020-7565 0333. She is waiting, nozzle at the ready.

Apart from "What's the phone number?" and "Did it hurt?", the other question everybody asks is: did it work? I have given the matter some thought and my answer is: do you know, I believe it did. Or at least, something is working. Six weeks into my search for self-improvement,

I feel a whole lot better. A whole lot better. I have lost half a stone, and have become reacquainted with the pleasure of 100 per cent elastic-free trousers. I have more energy, making do with seven hours a night rather than waking up furious if I've fallen below eight. The headaches are decreasing in frequency and severity – down to one Nurofen a day, sometimes none at all. My concentration has improved, too. I wrote that last sentence in one go, straight away after the one before. I've lost my temper just the three times. No, four: but the extra one came after sustained provocation at bath-time.

What I need to do now, like any serious scientist, is isolate the variables. This is difficult. In the last few weeks my world has altered radically. It is not just the colonic – although clearly that serves as the flagship. There have been a flotilla, an armada, of other changes. I have: doubled my water intake and exercise; halved coffee, alcohol and red meat; started vitamins C and B complex (for my nervous system), plus something called Hep 194 (for my liver), plus the wholly self-explanatory Gastro-Cleanse. I have also eaten vast amounts of yoghurt, brown rice, salad, raw vegetables and fruit. And four different types of seeds. That is a lot of variables.

My sense is that, as Jane herself predicted would be the case, the physical effect of the colonic is slight. However, I think the nozzle treatment has had two important catalytic effects. The first one results from the humiliation involved. Well no, not humiliation... extremism might be a better word. (Whatever the merits of a colonic, no one can deny that an hour-long enema is more heavy duty than eating apples or walking to work. Colonics are hardcore.) I say to myself: "I have survived the irrigation ordeal! After that, yoghurt and seeds are easy!" And they are.

I have become reacquainted with the pleasure of 100% elastic-free trousers

The second effect was that the colonic led directly to the food test, which I wrote about last week. Jane said there was no point clearing out your system, just to top up with more junk. That made sense. I was, and I remain, sceptical about the machine to which the lovely Amanda hooked me up. But I have followed her advice anyway, most of it, and it is now almost a fortnight since I had a sandwich, or a biscuit, or anything with any wheat in it. The same goes for all cow's milk products. This is a huge change for me, as I'm guessing it would be for most of you.

So, again I'm guessing, but I believe the biggest reason I am feeling so much better is this absence of wheat and dairy. I can scarcely believe I've written that. Believe me, I am – was – a very unfaddy eater. When people talked about special diets, I was instantly bored. I spent ten years operating on the principle that if I wanted to lose weight, I bought a less-than-350-calories sandwich from the Texaco garage. When I couldn't care less (most of those ten years), I bought the deep-filled mayonnaise. Now, I believe wheat and dairy to be the devil's work. (Though in a restaurant on Wednesday, when they brought the bread, that soft one with walnuts in it, I had a relapse, cramming in a couple of guilty wads.)

That apart, I've gone native. Didn't take long, did it? In August I'm a walking cheese and ham sandwich, £1.80, thank you very much. By October, I'm acting as though the agricultural revolution never took place, and feeling much the better for it. Let no one say I'm not open to change.

Next week, both fully to test and to celebrate the crazy new guy I have become, I am rowing out into much deeper water, right over to the wilder shores of looneydom. I am going to have a "psychic reading", on the telephone, with a man in California. This is not a joke. I want to make contact with my cat, Smoky, who sadly died four and a half years ago. I buried him in the front garden, and I'd like to know if he is OK. If I succeed in talking to a dead cat on the telephone, send for the men in white coats. ●