



PERPETUAL HEALTH 365

**A PERPETUAL TOOL FOR EVERYONE TO RAISE THE BAR,
RAISE THEIR EXPECTATIONS, AND IMPROVE THEIR LIFESTYLE
IN ALMOST EVERY WAY IMAGINABLE.**

DR. DOUGLAS N. GRAHAM

Perpetual Health 365

By Dr. Douglas Graham

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The 80/10/10 Reference Guide

Grain Damage

Nutrition and Athletic Performance

The High Energy Diet Recipe Guide

Prevention and Care of Athletic Injuries

Table of Contents

	Page
<i>Author's Note</i>	xvi
<i>Foreword</i>	xviii
JANUARY Follow through on your best intentions. Live every day as if it were the first of January.	1
January 1 Want to do a quick health evaluation? Your health is only as strong as its weakest link.	2
January 2 Adults need and deserve extra-large portions of love, support, caring, and nurturing.	3
January 3 On the boat ride of life, you are at the helm.	4
January 4 The best exercise? To be completely honest with yourself.	5
January 5 Strive to eliminate the contradictions between your beliefs and your actions.	6
January 6 To feel as young as possible, and die as old as possible, one must live as healthfully as possible.	7
January 7 When you quit taking care of your health, your health goes away.	8
January 8 If what you are doing is not working, do something else.	9
January 9 When you plant the seeds of health, you will reap the harvest of health.	10
January 10 Give praise freely, and receive it graciously.	11
January 11 Take excellent care of yourself now, and you will feel excellent from now on.	12
January 12 You have the choice every moment of every day to be either self-constructive or self-destructive.	13
January 13 Resume living with the enthusiasm and zest you had as a child.	14
January 14 Health comes for free, but it does not come for nothing; you have to earn it every day.	15
January 15 The best way to get what you want is from the people who already have it.	16
January 16 If you are a “health nut,” does that make other people “sickness nuts”?	17
January 17 You are limited not by what you can do, but by what you believe you cannot do.	18
January 18 I used to be called a “health nut.” Now I am known as a “health enthusiast, a health connoisseur, and a health expert.”	19
January 19 We are all subject to the same laws of nature, and are either accumulating health or accumulating sickness.	20
January 20 Dr. Graham’s First Rule of Holes: When you find yourself in a hole from which you wish to escape, first you must stop digging.	21
January 21 Strive to get the things you are saying to be in line with the things you are doing.	22

January 22	Dr. Graham's Second Rule of Holes: "You must climb, as you cannot dig your way out of a hole."	23
January 23	Now is the time and here is the place to live the best and the healthiest life you can.	24
January 24	"Someday Isle" is a fairy dream. Why wait to improve your health regimen?	25
January 25	When values are clear, decisions are easy.	26
January 26	Faith is built through the accumulation of knowledge. Need is built through the accumulation of Reasons Why. Faith x Need = Motivation.....	27
January 27	Goals without commitment are still only wishes.	28
January 28	To spread a believable and healthy message, you must live a healthy life.	29
January 29	Your health plan will succeed at the intersection of opportunity and preparation. You have complete control over your preparation.	30
January 30	When you stray from whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, you do so because of taste, habit, and addiction, but at the cost of nutritional value and health.	31
January 31	The time you most need to relax is when you do not have time to relax.....	32
FEBRUARY	<i>As the first hints of spring begin to show themselves, remember that every day is a new beginning.</i>	33
February 1	Is there a limit to the number of times you will renew your efforts to be healthy?	34
February 2	When you find yourself tempted to go off your regimen, ask yourself this question, "Is the value of the gain going to be worth the cost of the loss?	35
February 3	In order to be tranquil, one must eat, breathe, and live healthfully.	36
February 4	If you do what everyone else does, you will get what everyone else gets.	37
February 5	Listen to your body. Have confidence in its intelligence.	38
February 6	Are you willing to leave your self-destructive habits behind in order to have what you want in your life?	39
February 7	Love yourself with every deed, and reap the harvest of health.	40
February 8	You cannot take 100% out, unless you first put 100% in.	41
February 9	Potential minus Commitment equals Nothing.	42
February 10	Strive to improve yourself constantly.	43
February 11	The only way to coast in life is downhill.....	44
February 12	Even a dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream.....	45
February 13	Who you are today is not so important as who you are becoming.	46
February 14	We have come to accept an extremely low level of health as normal.	47
February 15	Would you like to live your life in such a way that no one ever offends you?	48
February 16	Unlike machines that wear out from use, our bodies wear out most rapidly from disuse.	49

February 17	We have no responsibility to convince people about the correctness of our way living.	50
February 18	Taking excellent care of your health is not weird; such behavior is healthy.....	51
February 19	Your differences are what make you unique and special.....	52
February 20	Health, like success, must be earned.	53
February 21	Helping others is how you can best help yourself.	55
February 22	Human beings are the only creatures that can choose how they impact the environment.	56
February 23	Life, like sports, would be pointless without immediate goals.	57
February 24	Foods with no expiration date do not grow microbes, hence will not support life of any kind.	58
February 25	People who spend too much time watching their health have no time left to enjoy their health.....	59
February 26	Your health is like a fire—it will go out if not properly tended.	60
February 27	Without stress there can be no development of strength.	61
February 28	Stress comes in two forms: distress and eustress. Distress does you harm. Eustress results in personal development.....	62
February 29	What you do once in a while accumulates far more slowly than what you do every day.	63
MARCH	<i>Begin the month with the vigor and enthusiasm of a lion.</i>	64
March 1	A person gains light, and loses none, by bringing light into another’s life.	65
March 2	The difference between work and play is attitude.....	66
March 3	As soon as you open your eyes, it is time to start making the day count.....	67
March 4	You may not be able to control the length of your life, but life’s width and depth are completely up to you.....	68
March 5	Resolve to be the very best that you can possibly be.....	69
March 6	If you wish to become healthier, associate with people healthier than yourself.	70
March 7	Though we may fail to destroy the world with our carelessness, we may succeed in making the world uninhabitable for humanity.....	71
March 8	Health is something that requires action, something that you move on daily, rather than something you contemplate.	72
March 9	If everyone you meet is your mirror, how do you think people are going to act towards you if you start belittling yourself?	73
March 10	Treat your loved ones as you would treat a baby, by nurturing them and remembering that they too are also extremely vulnerable.	74
March 11	Remember the Seven P’s of Success: Prior Proper Planning Prevents “Piss Poor” Performance.	75
March 12	If you want to do something well, you have to do it often. Make healthful living a habit.....	76

March 13	The only thing that really works is you.	77
March 14	Are you willing to ruin the environment in which your children and grandchildren will live their futures, simply for the sake of a few conveniences today?	78
March 15	How you view yourself is the most important thing.....	79
March 16	Victories come in “cans.” Defeats come in “can’ts.”	80
March 17	You may be the minority, but please do not be the silent minority.....	81
March 18	Your best teaching tools are not your words, but your actions.	82
March 19	Average is no more than the best of the worst, the worst of the best.....	83
March 20	Three R’s of Goal Setting: Make your goals Reasonable, Ratcheting, and Resettable.....	84
March 21	Believe in yourself.....	85
March 22	Act healthfully and live healthfully, for you become the person whom you pretend to be.	86
March 23	If you are not taking care of yourself, no one is going to do it for you.	87
March 24	You do not have the right to be a burden to yourself or to anyone else.	88
March 25	What you think about, comes about.....	89
March 26	Say to yourself, “My health/life/situation is my choice.”	90
March 27	If you are not planning your destination, you probably will not like where you end up.....	91
March 28	What you picture is what you get.	92
March 29	Either your habits are self-constructive or self-destructive, good for you or bad for you.	93
March 30	If a tree lives for an entire year without showing any growth, it dies.....	94
March 31	The way to make an occasion special is to be the best that you can be.....	95
APRIL	<i>Now is the time to renew your efforts and really step up your health program.</i>	96
April 1	Better to look the fool for a few moments while asking what you think is a foolish question than to be a fool forever for lack of asking questions.	97
April 2	Part of enjoying life’s journey is knowing that we never get there; we just keep going there.....	98
April 3	Plan for the future, but enjoy the present.	99
April 4	Make plans and be flexible.	100
April 5	Now is the one moment during which you have total control over your life.....	101
April 6	Set the example you would want any other leader to set.....	103
April 7	Your best friends bring out the best in you.	104
April 8	When you give, forget, and when you take, remember.....	105
April 9	Live life with one hand up and one hand down. The hand that is down may give someone else a hand up. The other hand is up to reach for assistance.....	106

April 10	Associate with bank robbers, and you will soon be driving the car. Hang out with health enthusiasts, and you too will soon become one of the healthy ones.....	107
April 11	Life works in circles: what you put in comes back around to meet you.	108
April 12	The difference between goals and wishes is that goals have a plan, a timeline, and a deadline.	109
April 13	You control your future through the constant use of self-development and self-fulfillment.....	110
April 14	Now is the time to do and be the best that you can.	111
April 15	Be proud of your differences, for they help you develop self-esteem.	112
April 16	Enjoying the work that is behind each success is at least as important as the success itself.	113
April 17	You have to do what you have to do in order to get what you want to get.....	114
April 18	Some people cram what could have been 100 years of healthy living into less than 50 years of self-abuse.....	115
April 19	Are you supplying yourself with the conditions you need in order to thrive?	116
April 20	No matter how well you nurture a tree afterward, once you strike it with an axe, the scar will remain forever.....	118
April 21	Live healthfully and experience long life as a gift, rather than a curse.	120
April 22	Being at war with your vices while maintaining peace with your neighbors is a worthwhile goal.	121
April 23	Giving up a vice forever is difficult, but choosing not to participate in that vice just for today is much easier.	122
April 24	For every person who climbs the ladder of success, there are thousands more standing around waiting for the elevator.	124
April 25	Every new idea is first subjected to rejection and ridicule.	125
April 26	All new models begin with criticism of the current model.	126
April 27	There is always a helping hand available, at the end of your own arm.	127
April 28	Each day provides as many pockets as you have ideas to put in them.	128
April 29	Being important is nowhere near as important as being healthy.	129
April 30	Become ultra-conservative regarding your health.	130
MAY	<i>Spring is in the air, and it is time to regain that spring in your step.</i>	131
May 1	The sun is getting up earlier every day. Are you?	132
May 2	Weight loss diets are for people who are thick, and tired of it.	133
May 3	The human body, if properly cared for, will last an entire lifetime.	134
May 4	Like the false sense of ability gained from any drug, the sense of energy gained from stimulant use is strictly illusory.....	136
May 5	CANI: <u>C</u>onstant <u>A</u>nd <u>N</u>ever-ending <u>I</u>mprovement	137

May 6	Just as no one ever bet enough on the winning horse, you cannot over-invest in your health.....	138
May 7	If you want your place in the sun, beware, as you may occasionally get burned.	139
May 8	When you are alone, your thoughts and actions determine who you really are becoming.	140
May 9	Health is cumulative. It is typically gained, or lost, in very small increments.	141
May 10	When I open my eyes in the morning, I already know it is going to be a very good day.....	142
May 11	We are always paying for something: either paying the price for health or paying the price for sickness.	143
May 12	When you cheat on a diet, the only one who gains weight is you.	144
May 13	The price of health is not negotiable.....	145
May 14	You cannot break the laws of nature; you can only prove them.....	147
May 15	Health is gained or lost by the conditions you choose for yourself.	148
May 16	Pain is our best warning device.	150
May 17	You still have time to benefit from learning to take better care of yourself.....	151
May 18	By extending the limits of your comfort zone, you can push yourself to grow.	152
May 19	One at a time, you can make many changes.	154
May 20	Total health requires total commitment.	155
May 21	Make a commitment to get up and continue on your path after each fall.	156
May 22	To laugh at yourself is better than having someone else laughing at you.	157
May 23	You cannot buy health assurance with health insurance.....	158
May 24	The time to be healthy is now. The place to be healthy is here. The way to be healthy is to live healthfully.	159
May 25	You will always achieve your dominant thought.	160
May 26	Our bodies should be labeled, "Shake well before using."	162
May 27	The healthful approach to life it is to stop all of health's leaks, as opposed to mopping up the spillage.	163
May 28	Those things that are healthful are good for us only in moderation, while those that are harmful are to be avoided entirely.	165
May 29	Nothing is more powerful than the mind that is already made up.	166
May 30	Once your mind is made up that you are going to accomplish something, you need to set a date, if you want to be sure that it will happen.	167
May 31	The service we render to others is the rent we pay for our time on this earth.....	169
JUNE	Take advantage of the perfect weather to perfect your physique and health.	170
June 1	A good four-letter word for dealing with every form of rejection: NEXT!	171
June 2	The healthiest diet is not radical; it is ultra-conservative.	172
June 3	Every advancement ever made was made by a nonconformist.....	173

June 4	Raw organic fruits and shoots (young tender greens) have successfully made up the majority of the human diet for millions of years.	174
June 5	Going against the grain of society is never initially viewed as a popular decision, until it becomes viewed as essential.	175
June 6	Neither science nor nutrition can demonstrate any benefit from the eating of cooked food, as long as raw options are available.	176
June 7	In nature there are no exceptions: Animals with similar anatomy and similar physiology thrive on similar foods.	178
June 8	In nature, there is no sandwich.	179
June 9	When it comes to empty calories, starches take the cake.	180
June 10	If you have to cook it in order to eat it, it is likely not people food.	181
June 11	Dr. Graham’s Baby Rule: If you would not do it or feed it to a baby because it is not nurturing, do not do it or feed it to yourself.	182
June 12	Good eating habits never result in indigestion.	183
June 13	You cannot build first-rate health from second-rate foods.	184
June 14	Virtually every aspect of fitness improves or declines in direct relationship to the quality of the diet.	185
June 15	For uncommonly excellent results, one must develop uncommonly excellent habits.	186
June 16	Let your fruit tooth be your guide to choosing healthful foods.	187
June 17	An acre of orchard will feed 100 times as many people as an acre of grazing land.	189
June 18	Cutting the forests to gain land in order to grow grain for livestock is like draining your blood to lose weight.	190
June 19	Grain’s claim to fame is its storability, a feature that all but nullifies your chances of ever purchasing a fresh grain product.	191
June 20	If you do not have an appetite for fruit or vegetables, you are not truly hungry.	192
June 21	Wheat is simply not all that it is cracked up to be.	193
June 22	There could well be more nutrients in the cardboard box than there is in the cereal.	194
June 23	Pasteurized foods are certified to not support life.	195
June 24	People who shun starches tend not to have issues with being overweight.	196
June 25	People find it easier to overeat on starches than to overeat on any other food.	197
June 26	A disproportionate number of the world’s best athletes in almost every sport invariably turn out to be vegetarians and vegans.	198
June 27	If you truly want to know if you are addicted to something, try going one full week without it.	201
June 28	Ripe fruit’s fuels are called “simple sugars.” Every cell in your body is fueled by simple sugars.	203
June 29	If your diet is not improving, the best you can be doing is coasting.	204

June 30	Going against the grains and other starchy foods just may be the healthiest food choice you ever make.....	206
JULY	<i>You know you have had your fill of sunshine for the day at the first hint that the sun's warmth just does not feel good anymore.</i>	207
July 1	Fasting is the fastest way to bring about the return of health.....	208
July 2	Fasting is the condition that develops when we are in the deepest states of rest that can possibly be achieved.	209
July 3	Every great religious leader in history fasted for clarity of mind.	210
July 4	One simply cannot be poisoned into health.....	211
July 5	The body heals itself rapidly during a fast, often recovering from a lifetime of abuse in a matter of weeks.....	212
July 6	True hunger, like thirst, is experienced in the mouth, yet this type of hunger sensation is one that few of us have or will ever experience.....	213
July 7	If you try to break Nature's laws, Nature will break you first.	214
July 8	Excessive feasting will soon lead to a need for fasting.	217
July 9	Hygiene is the science of human health, named after Hygeia, the Greek Goddess of Health.	218
July 10	Total rest includes the physical, physiological, sensory, and emotional aspects of rest.	219
July 11	<i>Physical Rest:</i> Cease all physical activity. <i>Sensory Rest:</i> Enjoy peace, quiet, comfort, and immerse in nature. <i>Physiological Rest:</i> Reduce the metabolic rate. <i>Emotional Rest:</i> Let go and be at peace.	220
July 12	Health is the natural state of all life on earth.....	221
July 13	Enjoy life's simple pleasures: clean air, sunshine, rest, sleep, fresh fruits and vegetables, human touch, companionship, emotional poise, and comfort.....	222
July 14	Improve your self-esteem by increasing your connectedness, uniqueness, power, and role models.	223
July 15	A baby does not judge itself a failure when it fails.....	225
July 16	When it comes to lifestyle, knowledge, and skills, we are all proficient at some things, less talented at other things, and almost completely ignorant about most things.	226
July 17	The more body fat you carry, the more dehydrated you become.....	227
July 18	When you eat well, thirst is a relatively uncommon experience.	228
July 19	229	
	Think health, see health, expect health, grow health, and live in health.	229
July 20	The kidneys, liver, colon, and lungs quietly do their jobs, accomplishing the ordinary tasks of elimination while barely being noticed.	230
July 21	Extra ordinary means of elimination become necessary when the ordinary modes of elimination are overloaded to the point of being insufficient to the task.....	231
July 22	In preparation for ovulation, the body must cleanse the blood.....	232

July 23	Guys have hormonal cycles and emotions, too.	233
July 24	The laws of nature do not allow for someone who is perfectly healthy today to drop dead tonight.....	234
July 25	Practice the causes of health and forego the causes of sickness.....	236
July 26	The real trick to healthful living is to develop and embrace healthy habits so powerfully that they become ingrained, at which point you can live healthfully without ever having to think about doing so.	237
July 27	The weakest areas of your health regimen determine your overall level of health.....	239
July 28	Learn to handle personal health questions with poise.	241
July 29	How do you react when asked a question about your health regimen?	242
July 30	Develop a nonthreatening personality.....	244
July 31	Raw! Raw! Raw! That's the spirit! Goooooooooooooooooooo Raw!	246
<i>AUGUST Strive to become the person that the child you were would have been proud to be.</i>		247
August 1	Play as much as you can.	248
August 2	Make resolutions every day.....	249
August 3	In the absence of health, one is not truly free.....	250
August 4	A diet of raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds provides for all of your nutrient needs.	252
August 5	A slight increase each month in the percentage of raw foods in your diet will yield big health changes over a few years.	253
August 6	Your health, like a bicycle wheel, requires many spokes, each of the same length.	254
August 7	The sun's ultraviolet rays sanitize and disinfect the skin, lymph, and blood.	255
August 8	Sunlight makes it possible to process calcium, a mineral found in every cell of the body.....	256
August 9	Healthful living has no substitute, and only healthful living results in health.	257
August 10	Are you willing to eliminate coffee, alcohol, tobacco, and other stimulants, irritants, and poisons from your life in order to free yourself from the chains of addiction and sickness?	258
August 11	Practice living healthfully, until healthful living practices become automatic.....	260
August 12	Overload the body with excess protein, fat, or carbohydrate, and the body responds acutely and dramatically with emergency measures.....	261
August 13	By living within the laws of nature, you will amass health every day.	263
August 14	Your health is absolutely your greatest wealth.	264
August 15	Those conditions required for maintaining health in a healthy person are identical to those required by a sick person who wishes to regain health.	265
August 16	The sooner the better, but hopefully before it is too late, you will have decided that it is important to accumulate health.	266
August 17	Creative individuals go out on skinny branches.....	268

August 18	Negative knowledge: Incorrect information that you believe to be correct.	269
August 19	Healthy Cholesterol Levels: Are you heart attack proof?	270
August 20	You can be fit without being healthy, but you cannot be healthy without being fit.	271
August 21	Dr. Graham’s Prime Directive of Health: Observe the Masses and Do the Opposite.	272
August 22	A reasonably good performance goal for almost any activity is to be able to do half as much or go half as fast as the (age/weight) world record.	273
August 23	Healthy people are trim, fit, flexible, happy, hydrated, well-slept, and do not suffer from indigestion.	274
August 24	Healthy, average, and normal are not equivalent terms.	275
August 25	Treat your health like you do your wealth.	276
August 26	Ignore even the smallest aspect of your fitness, and it will begin to melt away.....	277
August 27	Under conditions of high stress, body mechanics must be excellent, or something is going to give.	278
August 28	Give yourself an extra hour of sleep every night for a week, and you will be more productive during your waking hours, feel better, and even end up with more free time than usual.	279
August 29	To tan is healthy, but to burn is harmful, every time.....	280
August 30	An ideal food for human consumption is one from which you can make a complete meal.	281
August 31	A clean, healthy body, properly cared for, generates no foul odors.	282
SEPTEMBER	<i>Back to school and work means a tremendous amount of sitting. Make sure that all of your summer’s health gains are not lost this month.</i>	283
September 1	Heated fats not only cloud one’s thinking, they hasten cancer’s growth and development, foster heart disease, and generally destroy health. They are also extremely fattening.....	284
September 2	We add more fat to our starchy foods to make them palatable than we add anything else.....	285
September 3	Preparing healthful and nutritious meals is easy.	287
September 4	The damage done by our unhealthy habits cannot be undone by our healthy habits.	288
September 5	Steak and potatoes have been replaced by fruits and vegetables.	289
September 6	Salt deadens the taste buds’ abilities to sense anything other than more salt.	290
September 7	Have you ever questioned why salt is added to sports drinks?	291
September 8	Play is more fun than work, so rather than workout, go out and play.....	292
September 9	Everyone loves fruit, and fruit makes a great meal, all by itself.	293
September 10	During intense or extended exercise, if you wait to drink until you are thirsty, you are likely too late and already in trouble.....	294

September 11	Athletes have eaten fruit since the beginning of recorded history, and likely for long before then.	295
September 12	The old saying that approximately one ounce of salt is all that is required to kill a grown man is somewhat outdated.	296
September 13	For good digestion, keep meals simple. For optimum nutrition, keep meals varied throughout the year.	297
September 14	How much sleep do you really need? Enough.	298
September 15	For the best “rest of your life,” get enough rest and sleep each day.	299
September 16	Insufficient sleep has an adverse effect on virtually every bodily function.	300
September 17	Would you wake a sleeping baby with an alarm clock? Treat yourself to the same kindness.	301
September 18	You can survive for weeks, even months without food, but only for days without water.	303
September 19	If you want to get harder, you’ve got to play with intensity, and eat smarter.	305
September 20	The solution to pollution is dilution.	306
September 21	Have you ever tried eating nothing but bananas for an entire day?	307
September 22	Everyone is your master, as you are everyone’s master.	309
September 23	When you do not feel like your usual self, make the appropriate adjustments.	310
September 24	Have you had your five-mile walk today?	311
September 25	Maintaining your health is always easier than making gains in your health.	312
September 26	Continue getting your out-of-doors time throughout the winter months.	313
September 27	Thicker clothing, more layers, heavier foods, less sunshine, busier schedules, insufficient sleep, colder weather, and dry, heated air can result in a health disaster.	314
September 28	You do not fail until you place a limit upon the number of times you will attempt to succeed.	315
September 29	If you like to find out if you are actually addicted to something, give it up for a while, and see how you do.	317
September 30	If you can sleep, you need the sleep.	319
OCTOBER	<i>Eating for optimum nutrition and digestion: Whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, when hungry, until full.</i>	320
October 1	The “normal” body temperature of a healthy individual at rest is around 94°-96°F.	322
October 2	You run for your life by participating in life’s daily events.	323
October 3	This year, do a little more participating and a little less spectating.	324
October 4	Attachment to outcome is a surefire recipe for frustration and disappointment.	325
October 5	Continue learning throughout your life and you will continue growing.	327
October 6	Resolve to make healthy resolutions every day.	328

October 7	If you must eat starch (no, starch is not recommended), know that all desires to eat starch are rooted in the fact of eating an insufficient quantity of calories from fresh fruit.....	329
October 8	When your shadow is longer than your height, you face little danger of sunburn.	330
October 9	Why pay to have industrial and medical wastes “properly” disposed of when they can be sold as health enhancers?.....	331
October 10	The burden of proof should fall upon practitioners of modern medicine, with their self-proclaimed “radical” procedures, and not upon the conservative practitioners using the time-honored “nature cure.”	333
October 11	The demand for remedies results in the supply of remedies.....	335
October 12	You will experience health in direct proportion to the degree that you live healthfully.....	337
October 13	Being a raw food vegan is easy, in between meals.	339
October 14	Be willing to take actions, make mistakes, and to learn from them.....	340
October 15	We do not have enough time to make all the mistakes ourselves. Far faster and easier is to learn from other people’s mistakes.	342
October 16	The body rebuilds itself in a quality directly proportional to the quality of the building materials you supply.....	343
October 17	The secret to lifetime fitness: eat whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, sleep all you can, and train like a champion.....	344
October 18	Training for overload becomes overtraining when there is inappropriate refueling or otherwise inadequate recovery.	345
October 19	If you would rather die than change your unhealthy ways, you probably will.	346
October 20	When you take care of the quality of your foods, the quantity will control itself.....	348
October 21	Only a foolish person waits to begin taking care of his health until after he notices that his health is in serious decline.	349
October 22	In the absence of health, life itself becomes an irritating, unenjoyable experience that challenges one’s patience.....	350
October 23	Health of mind and body is an essential component of moral and social health.	351
October 24	If people are not talking about you, you are likely not doing anything worth talking about.	352
October 25	Children will rise to and often surpass the values demonstrated by their parents.....	354
October 26	There are never right and wrong decisions, but there are always consequences.	355
October 27	If you want to become sweet, happy, fit, healthy, trim, energetic, helpful and resourceful; begin practicing now.....	356
October 28	Health is the most beautiful of all possible options.	357
October 29	Fruit is perfection itself.	359
October 30	Build your self-esteem through simple daily practices such as affirmations.....	360
October 31	Q: What is your most valued possession? A: Your next breath.	362

NOVEMBER *The holidays are upon us. These final two months are the busiest time of year. Take time for your own health each day.* 363

November 1 Still (somehow) the Number One nutritional question of all time is: “Where do you get your protein?” 364

November 2 No value is gained by removing the fiber from fruits or vegetables. 365

November 3 No value can be gained by adding the fiber from grains into our foods. 367

November 4 Pasteurization allows the manufacturer to sell food as good that would otherwise have to be thrown away as having gone bad..... 368

November 5 Why is there so little health food in the health food store? 369

November 6 When you want to drink, think “water.” 370

November 7 Sleep all that you can. Your body will not allow you to oversleep..... 372

November 8 The best sleep comes on an empty stomach. 374

November 9 Act “as if,” and that is who you will become. 375

November 10 Water is best when consumed 30 minutes before a meal or else several hours after, 376

November 11 Love yourself more. 377

November 12 A profound difference exists between participation in the causes of health and the suppression of the causes of disease. 379

November 13 If not considered crazy, one must at least be considered inefficient when repeating the same performance, again and again, while expecting different results. 380

November 14 A hominid’s primary food source is typically herbivorous/frugivorous, meaning that they eat leaves and fruits for the bulk of their food. 382

November 15 When the toxemia levels surpass the toleration point, symptoms arise. 383

November 16 Complex meals digest best and most efficiently when the most water-rich foods are eaten first and the most calorie-dense foods are eaten last. 384

November 17 Digestion can use from 30 to 70 percent of our total fuel supplies. 385

November 18 Stimulants drain you by supplying a false sense of energy..... 386

November 19 The most efficiently digested meal is the mono meal, that is, where only one type of fruit is eaten at the meal. The simple pleasure of the meal, and its ease of digestion, is exactly what makes this type of meal so satisfying..... 387

November 20 True energy has only one source: sleep. 388

November 21 Rest after meals to ensure optimum digestion. 389

November 22 Despite opinions to the contrary, the most important six inches in a person’s life is between the ears. 390

November 23 Five major factors that enhance calcium absorption include: sufficient sunlight, adequate sleep, appropriate exercise, a diet predominated by fruits and vegetables that also supplies not more than single-digit quantities of proteins and fats, and avoidance of the various factors that result in calcium losses: dairy, meat, coffee, soft drinks, and a wide variety of prescription drugs. 391

November 24	Inflammation walks hand in hand with irritation.....	392
November 25	The human body is overbuilt.....	394
November 26	By walking an extra mile per day, you will use enough calories to lose ten pounds per year (all other factors remaining the same).....	395
November 27	Review and renew your health program weekly, and remember to pat yourself on the back for all the progress you actually have made.	396
November 28	Utilizing the effect of sunlight’s ultraviolet rays upon the skin, the body can produce 100% of the Vitamin D it requires.	398
November 29	Exposure to sunlight increases both male and female sex hormone production.	399
November 30	Current research indicates that a diet high in cooked fats, and not exposure to sunlight, is the probable cause of most skin cancers.....	400
DECEMBER Each year brings a new you. Use this month to gear up for your New Year’s resolutions. Write them down and begin to practice them.....		401
December 1	Stress the similarities between yourself and other people.....	402
December 2	When asked about your food preferences, the simplest and often most acceptable answer is that you eat exactly what you most enjoy, and that which works best for you.....	403
December 3	We accept without question the notion that our right to swing our arms ends long before we touch someone else’s nose.	404
December 4	Where is the sport in pitting a comfortable 200-pound man with great leverage against a two-pound fish with a painful hook in its mouth?.....	406
December 5	Get enough rest.....	407
December 6	What is the best oxymoron ever? “Humane slaughter” has got to be high on the list.....	409
December 7	In a true Age of Enlightenment, there will be no more war and no more cooking.	410
December 8	Cancer experts agree that cancer cannot be caused in healthy tissue.	411
December 9	Forty-five years after President Nixon declared war on cancer in 1971, scientists and cancer experts today say they are no closer to a cure than they were when they began.....	412
December 10	Today, cancer experts recommend a diet high in fruits and vegetables, clean air, pure water, and the avoidance of toxic habits.	414
December 11	You cannot experience sustained health to a greater degree than you practice health.	415
December 12	Imagine an airplane with no instrument panel. How would you know when something was going wrong?	416
December 13	The body’s instrument panel of symptoms must be considered a blessing, not a plague.	417
December 14	In health, all requisite substances, forces, influences, and conditions are designed to be pleasurable.....	418

December 15	Leaders must continue to grow and develop themselves, or else they will cease to be leaders.....	419
December 16	Eating fruit immediately after exercise will dramatically help muscles to recover.....	421
December 17	The times that we tend to abuse ourselves are during and shortly after those moments when we are most emotionally challenged.....	422
December 18	If time is money, health is time.....	423
December 19	When you are sick, the only thing there is time for is taking care of your health.....	424
December 20	Cooking does not come naturally to us, and is not good for us.....	425
December 21	Nature provides no model for the consumption of cooked foods.....	426
December 22	Health is the direct result of healthful living.	427
December 23	Take excellent care of yourself, just for the health of it.	428
December 24	The pursuit of fitness is a lifetime activity.....	430
December 25	Good health is the greatest of all gifts.	431
December 26	Take care of your body as if it was the only one you will ever have.	432
December 27	Training in “no man’s land” brings mediocre results, at best.....	433
December 28	The sum of the body’s anabolic and catabolic processes is known as metabolism.	435
December 29	A balance between the catabolic and anabolic processes in the body is referred to as homeostasis.	436
December 30	Your most-valued possession is your next breath.	437
December 31	Are your health habits taking you where you want to go?	438

Author's Note

“Why did you write this book,” I am often asked, “when you already wrote *The Perpetual Health Calendar* from which this book is derived?” The answer is simple. *The Perpetual Health Calendar* offers a sentence of education for each day and month of the year. For those few who get the point, each message serves as a great reminder, a bit like a compass, and helps people stay on track with their health. These people tell me that the calendar is the best product I have ever created, their absolute favorite. I share their enthusiasm and appreciate the compliments. Most people, I have found, actually do not understand the short motivational quips, educational gems, and pared-down health advice offered in the calendar, and they are disappointed that the product does not offer more depth of explanation, more clarity, and more insight. Perpetual Health is my effort at remedying this problem.

By expanding on each of the almost 400 sayings, with *Perpetual Health 365*, I am breaking new ground for the experienced health seekers, and holding the hand of those beginning their journey into healthful living. Adding depth and breadth of knowledge for those who already know and understand how to create abundant health, *Perpetual Health 365* serves as a challenge and a tool for everyone to raise the bar, raise their expectations, and improve their lifestyle in almost every way imaginable.

Perpetual Health 365 is a course in health that you can study one day/one page at a time. I have always appreciated the beauty of perpetual calendars, so why not a perpetual course? Each day's lesson explores a single health concept or factor, addresses it in depth, and then moves on. By the time you return to the lesson, a full year later, much of what you read a year ago will either seem new to you again, or be an old friend that you are happy to revisit, expanding your understanding of, and appreciation for, the depth of the message. Hopefully, *Perpetual Health 365* will remain on your desktop or living room table for years, for you and your loved ones to review repeatedly.

The quantity of new material in Perpetual Health has been a tremendous challenge for me to create. Not only did new thoughts and concepts have to be transcribed into words, they had to be congruent with all of my previous work. Very little of this book came off the top of my head. I enjoyed every bit of the research required, even when it took as long as four days to get the information necessary to write one sentence. I hope you find this book as valuable to read as I have found it to write, and that it will serve you for a lifetime in your efforts to live in perpetual health.

*This book is dedicated to my brilliant, darling daughter,
Faychesca Celeste, whom I love with all my heart.
May you live in perpetual health, Peanut.*

*Love,
Dada*

Foreword

Perpetual Health 365, by my longtime friend and health and fitness educator par excellence, is probably the most embracing and impactful health read ever. It talks to me, reinforces everything I am working on, and I am pretty sure it will do the same for you in numerous familiar, as well as many new areas along your path of self-improvement.

This is brain food—one dish for each day of the year—for whole health excellence, served with friendly, caring warmth. Each day’s lesson leaves me thinking, “Yeah, I need to keep on working on that more diligently—thank you, Dr. Doug!” After each lesson, I feel appreciation for having received the wisdom in a light and personable manner.

Dr. Doug is known worldwide for giving lectures that deliver numerous points that make at least half of the audience think, “Wow—I never looked at it that way!” On the pages of this book, you will similarly glean an abundance of new insights that bring the whole health picture into clearer focus and inspire you to take the easiest, most natural path to health, as Dr. Doug teaches at every opportunity.

Wisdom, dedication, discipline, consistency, and a never-give-up attitude are the qualities that Dr. Doug will empower you with in his book. You’ll get a year-long course in health empowerment one day at a time, one which can be repeated year after year for consistent reinforcement.

After having read hundreds of health books and gleaned deep insight from a dozen or so truly great health educators (including several thousand conversations with Dr. Doug) over the last 32 years, I can say that Dr. Doug has covered EVERY true principle of health and EVERY truly health-empowering tool in his uniquely enlightening fashion. There are rare insights and “aha!” moments on every page.

When seeking to overcome illnesses in our twenties, Dr. Doug and I both searched and found the same health teachings from the best and only accurate (and therefore most liberating) sources: the great Natural Hygiene teachers of the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Hygienic System of thought is based upon an accurate understanding of human biology and physiology and, as Dr. Doug says, the tried and true application of these health sciences in the lives of many before us, and our own lives, too. Our greatest health teachers of the past were Drs. Herbert M. Shelton and T.C. Fry. Their lessons set us on firm ground and largely shaped who we are and what we do today. Their influences shine through in *Perpetual Health 365*. However, this book is not a rehashing of old work. Dr. Doug takes us way beyond the basic lessons of Natural Hygiene and into the realm of this modern age of personal transformation via the wise use (or training) of our mind, incorporating the most effective teachings of today’s premier self-improvement teachers.

I have realized in my life that my mind is the key to where I want to go, and that Dr. Doug’s credo of “excellent health can only be achieved by consistently practicing uncommonly excellent habits” is indeed the key to health excellence and creating the life of my loftiest desire.

In the pantheon of great Natural Hygiene teachers who have led the way over the past 200 years, *Perpetual Health 365* will stand as a classic that sets Dr. Doug at a high place among the best. This book delivers the right approach for this day and age; it is the perfect health-teaching guide for our new century. I can truly say that I will be going back to it many times each year, because it gives me the lessons I want to hear and get better at every day. May you, too, be inspired to climb to a higher place in your quest to be the person you truly want to be!

David Klein, Ph.D., Naturopathic Doctor
Maui, Hawaii, USA
December 2016

JANUARY

**Follow through on your best intentions.
Live every day as if it were the first of January.**

If there was ever a day where motivation to improve oneself runs especially high, it would have to be the first of January. Of course, New Year's resolutions are traditionally made BEFORE the New Year even begins. In late December, however, these good intentions are just ideas: nothing more than wishes, pipe dreams, wild imaginings, and yet-to-be-fulfilled empty promises. But they are important—they are promises you make to yourself. Actually fulfilling your resolutions requires daily commitment, fortitude, and serious motivation to even begin the process, let alone follow through, and eventually turn them into realities. You can become as healthy as you truly wish to become. Life is as good as you are willing to allow it to be. But it requires persistence in the face of a world of distractions in order to stay focused on your goals.

Just before the New Year is chimed in, we are ripe with introspection. We remember our successes and our failures, and many of the moments that made last year special. We review the year that has just passed, and preview the year that is to come, all the while assessing and deciding which changes that we want to bring about. Resolutions are our way of bringing about change, getting our lives back on track, and living true to our deepest beliefs and desires.

Seeing people out exercising on January 1 is extremely common. More people start diets on the first than any other day of the year. The first is the ideal time to quit your bad habits, and just as much the time to initiate your new preferences. After a good night's sleep, life begins anew each and every morning. Every awakening is very much a rebirth, a new beginning, a fresh start. This new lease on life can be met with vigor, enthusiasm, joy, and boundless energy to rise to the challenges of the day. Indeed, live every day with the enthusiasm, commitment, joy, and motivation that you have on January 1st.

January 1

**Want to do a quick health evaluation?
Your health is only as strong as its weakest link.**

I am often reminded of the truth that my health is only as strong as its weakest link. I have old injuries that leave me vulnerable, some of which can inconvenience and even incapacitate me for a while. I live with them. Some have become old friends. All are respected. If I ignore caring for any one of them, they soon enough tell me about it in unforgiving and often disabling fashion. So, in my care for them, I also care for myself.

The Amazing Sandow, possibly the strongest man ever to live, died suddenly of a heart attack. Jim Fixx, a distance runner often referred to as the world's fittest man, died suddenly of a heart attack. Paul Bragg, the famous health enthusiast that invented the first health food store and promoted the physical culture movement, died nine months after drowning in a Hawaii surfing accident from which he never took the time off from his busy travel and lecture schedule in order to fully recover. Dr. Herbert Shelton, leader of the hygiene movement for decades, prolific author, and an almost unstoppable powerhouse of a man, slowly declined and died a few years after being kicked in the head by a horse.

A painful pinkie toe can be enough to keep an NFL superstar from playing, even in an important game. Evaluate your health regimen and see where it needs support. Heed the messages your head and heart give you telling you that your weak links will inevitably make themselves apparent and take their toll. Are you a positive person but not fit? Are you trim but eat poorly? Are you strong but not flexible? Do you keep your mind active but somehow short yourself on necessary sleep? Do you get as much fresh air and sunshine as you desire while you take care of all the other important parts of your life?

Like the little mouse that took the thorn out of the lion's paw, you too can help yourself improve all aspects of your life by taking care of the weak links in your health regimen. And, like the lion in that story, it is very likely that those weak links exist to be overcome, so that you may achieve many of your highest health goals. Don't wait until your weak links take you down, or even until they result in missed goals. It is January 1st, time to get started, so go with enthusiasm!

January 2

Adults need and deserve extra-large portions of love, support, caring, and nurturing.

Supersize your self-care! Every parent knows that, except for those periods when babies are sleeping, infants require almost constant attention. Children, too, prefer to be watched than ignored, as they pursue their play, imaginary games, and even the mundane exercises such as bathing and eating. When they fall, scrape a hand or leg, or bump their head, we empathize, cuddle and coddle them, give them love, and assure them that they will recover soon.

Children do not live the stress-filled lives of adults. They do not answer to the alarm clock, have to deal with bosses or deadlines, or even live up to any commitments. They do not have to put food on the table, keep the house functional, or deal with any of the timelines and stresses known primarily in the adult world.

Adults subject themselves to food, drink, drugs, a sedentary lifestyle, challenging commitments, jobs, commuting, and generally take on a wealth of self-destructive activities that are the exact opposite of what we consider as “nurturing.” It seems that adults would thrive far better in an environment filled with loving relationships, where support and caring were the rule rather than the exception, and where they could count on all with whom they interact to respond with a nurturing tone, nurturing words, and nurturing actions.

In such an environment, who knows what the world would be like? Certainly what we are doing is not working as well as it could, and there is room for improvement, locally and globally. Perhaps a world filled with love, support, caring, and nurturing would bring peace, prosperity, happiness, and acceptance for one and all. Perhaps this simple change of view is the key to Utopia.

How do we bring about such a change? We must start with ourselves. We cannot give away that which we do not possess. Take exquisite care of yourself. Treat yourself to adult-sized portions of nurturing. When times get stressful, take even better care of yourself. Soon enough, your health will improve, and you will be able to set the example for others. Health is catchy.

January 3

On the boat ride of life, you are at the helm.

Ultimately, you are in control of the directions your life takes. You choose your path, you choose your attitude about the road you follow, and you choose whether to hold “steady as she goes,” or to flit about from endeavor to endeavor in butterfly fashion. You are the captain of your ship. As you see it, it shall be, for only you have the power to “make it so.”

Response-ability and responsibility, both are yours. So often we fall into the blame game, the trap of believing that we are powerless to affect, change, and control our life. All living beings are endowed with the ability to respond to their environment. This is response-ability. Many of these responses are autonomic, meaning they happen without conscious thought or noticeable effort. We also have free will, however, and free will is accompanied by responsibility. Your body responds to a drop in air temperature in a variety of ways (response-ability), but it is your responsibility to put on another layer of clothing, move about in order to generate core heat, turn up the thermostat, or otherwise take charge of the situation in order to remain comfortable.

See your life as you want it to be, and take the appropriate steps to bring about your envisioned reality. Steer your life, and if you find yourself off course, make adjustments. Life never brings us anything that we cannot handle. Each and every one of life’s challenges can be perceived as growth opportunities, chances to develop yourself, and fortunate encounters with exactly what you need in order to mature into the person you wish to become. Look at life as if it were an engaging puzzle, one you wish to solve every day. Steer your course true, and when you find that you have strayed or wandered, simply set your sights again and resume your wonderful journey.

January 4

The best exercise? To be completely honest with yourself.

There is an old story about a Japanese businessman who wore many masks. At work, he wore a mask so that his employees would not see his true feelings. After all, life in the business world requires that many harsh decisions be made. When the workday ended, he would take off the mask and travel to a nearby drinking spot where he would meet with friends and unwind. During his travel, the other commuters saw only another mask, for he did not want to disturb them with his concerns, or be disturbed by their emotions. At the pub, he took off the mask, only to reveal yet another mask below it, for he wished to show no weakness, nor bring any of his troubles to his friends. Heading home, he took off the mask, showing his wife and children yet the next mask, the calm mask of the unperturbed family man, the loving father and husband. He had gotten used to wearing masks, to never showing anyone his true self, and to living a lie. Finally, it was time for bed. He would go to the bathroom each night and take off yet one more mask and brush his teeth. Only then would he look in the mirror. What did he see? All he could see was a man still wearing a mask, for he dared not show his true self, even to his own self.

If you are not candid, transparent, and open with yourself, you will live. But life's richness will evade you. People will not confide in you, for they can sense when you are being trustworthy, and when you are not. People can see through your masks. Great portions of life's many opportunities will steer clear of you. Are you able to look yourself in the eye?

The ability to connect with others begins with the practice of connecting with yourself.

January 5

Strive to eliminate the contradictions between your beliefs and your actions.

We all know how challenging it is to remain congruent. There are many expressions that denote our appreciation for how rare this quality truly is (hence, Diogenes of Sinope and his search for the honest man), and our delight in discovering someone who “walks his/her talk.” Taken on all at once, living in congruency can be an overwhelming task. Instead, it is something to live with, to work upon, and to build, bit by bit. Whenever and wherever incongruence is exposed in your life, make the necessary adjustments. Seek out and read, listen to, or watch the appropriate information in order for you to learn how to overcome each individual challenge to your congruence. Sure, these procedures take time. But in the process, you learn, and you grow as a person.

The contradictions you hold are the stray hairs, the misbuttoned shirt, the untied shoelace, and the unzipped fly of your behavior. People notice such things, and their confidence in you is diminished.

Do you claim to be vegan for ethical reasons, but still ignore the ethics of cooking your food? Are you kind to puppies, but harsh with your own loved ones? Are you a different person from moment to moment? Do you love watching sports, but lack the fitness to participate in active fun? Do you put your children to bed each night so that they will get their sleep, but yourself rely upon an alarm clock to wake up each morning?

Each time you find a contradiction, spend time with it, and do what it takes to transform it into congruence that becomes a personality and character strength. Life is long, and there is plenty of time to weed your inner garden. Plant seeds of congruence, and reap a harvest of health.

January 6

**To feel as young as possible, and die as old as possible,
one must live as healthfully as possible.**

Healthful living results in health. The outcome of living healthfully is predictable, as is the outcome of living unhealthfully. While we cannot prove anything based on the results achieved by an individual, we can make assumptions based on the results of large groups of individuals. For instance, vegetarians typically outlive people who follow a Standard Western Diet, by about seven years. And vegans are said to outlive vegetarians by almost another eight years. These simple lifestyle changes stack the cards in your favor.

Sure, vegans may be prone to other lifestyle habits that are also beneficial to their health, when compared with those who follow a more typical diet. Whether or not the chicken preceded the egg in this issue is impossible to tell, nor does it matter. If veganism is associated with other healthful living practices, such as not smoking, being physically fit, or staying trim, all the better. No single aspect of healthful living applied on its own is the ticket to longevity. Health comes from well-rounded, comprehensive, healthful living. Still, your overall health is not likely to be better than your weakest lifestyle link. Take responsibility for your health, live a healthy lifestyle, and reap the harvest throughout the decades.

January 7

When you quit taking care of your health, your health goes away.

Healthful living is a lifetime pursuit. The challenges involved are countless and ever changing. They must meet all your current needs, and the demands of aging. Healthful living is a seemingly endless pastime. Your health is not unlike a piece of pewter. If you do not polish it regularly, it tarnishes. So many aspects to healthcare exist, and as we grow and accumulate new facets of ourselves, we often find that there is even more to manage. Injuries, family matters, business, fitness, technology, and many other areas of life continually pose new opportunities, call for our attention, and make life ever more complex. Many people choose to coast, tiring in their battle for self-betterment. But is life really easier once you decide to let your self-care go to pot?

Once your fitness fades, the world begins to close in upon you. Simple pleasures like playing with children, hiking in the mountains, or participating in active games, such as badminton or tennis, become impossible. Walking to the stores, shopping, and many social gatherings become dreaded chores rather than delightful excursions. The overweight or otherwise infirm person cannot enjoy many of the pursuits that they used to enjoy. Opportunities to have fun, to join in, and even to socialize in public can quickly become quite limited.

Your health is your responsibility. Health does not require a huge investment in time, money, or energy. In fact, healthful living is no more demanding than any other type of living. Many people say that being healthy actually requires far less time than being ill, and certainly being healthy is far more enjoyable. Learning to live healthfully provides its own rewards. The time invested in such learning pays dividends for a lifetime. Don't let your health slip away. Develop healthy preferences and pursue them daily. Guard your health, as it surely must be one of your most prized possessions.

January 8

If what you are doing is not working, do something else.

The fact that people will make the same mistakes over and over is simply amazing. If you have what you think is a good idea and you put it into action and it fails, it is understandable that you might try again, even several more times, before moving on. How many times have you told yourself that you were not going to overeat till you hurt, and then did it again? How many speeding tickets have you gotten? How many times have you said something that upset a loved one, only to realize that you really could have been far more kind? W.C. Fields, the comedian and movie star from the early days of the silver screen, is credited for saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. There's no point in being a damn fool about it."

Often we get so attached to our own way of doing things that we become closed to the possible options. We see such behavior all the time in other people, but are challenged to spot it in ourselves. Religion and politics are prime examples of situations where people adopt a viewpoint so completely that they are simply not willing to see other possible sides to the same story. When it comes to food, we are often more closed in our view than we are even about politics and religion.

How then do we successfully modify our diet? Think of any diet change as an experiment. View the experiment as short-term, and treat all changes as if they were just temporary. Definitely make the experiment optional. Reserve judgment until the results are in. If, after a few weeks, you find you wish to extend the length of the experiment, by all means do so. We are all quite happy to accept improvements once we have experienced them fully, even improvements in diet. Know that all change takes time, and give your experiment a fair chance to succeed.

January 9

**When you plant the seeds of health,
you will reap the harvest of health.**

Can you imagine how ridiculous life would be if you planted carrot seeds and they matured into corn? The sheer unpredictability of such a world would make almost all of life impossible. A world where, when you pulled your car keys out of your pocket and dropped them, they floated away into the sky, never to be seen again. Such a world would simply not make sense. Our world is not like that. All life operates under a strict, cohesive, and predictable set of natural laws, laws that are completely integrated and in full agreement with each other.

Business, sports, and all of the trades operate under the premise that “if we do what you have done, we will get the same results that you got.” Hence, in order to be their best, sprinters train in a specific fashion, and long-distance runners train in a different, yet also specific, fashion. Future businessmen and businesswomen go to business school for training, tradespeople go to trade school, weightlifters lift weights, etc. We depend upon the predictability of the results when planning our activities and making our choices.

Health is no different in this regard. Health is not a crapshoot. Health is predictable. Health is the natural state, the default condition. The body will demonstrate health whenever the conditions, substances, forces, and influences to which we subject ourselves are conducive to the generation of health. In all other situations, the body will generate symptoms, the early warning system that let you know that something must change in your personal health care regimen.

January 10

Give praise freely, and receive it graciously.

Have you ever met the person suffering from an oversufficiency of praise? You just never know how far a kind word will go. Noticing the good in someone, and telling them about it, is often just what it takes to bring out their best.

Giving people the opportunity to feel good about themselves is one of life's most wonderful gifts. Giving someone recognition, for even a small thing, can often make their entire day, and can sometimes be a turning point in a life.

People warm up to others who are gracious to them, for responding in kind is human nature. What you give is what you get, especially in the world of human interactions.

We must let go of expectations, however, when giving praise. Give freely, for the sake of giving the gift. Give because it makes you feel good to give, rather than for the effect you hope it will have on the other person. Their feelings are up to them.

Giving is not all that is required, however, if we wish to healthfully balance the equation of giving and receiving. We must also learn to receive well, to make the person who is giving the kindness feel appreciated for his or her efforts. Often, receiving well is a more challenging social skill than is giving. You must consider the other person's feelings, as if it was you doing the giving.

Giving is the best gift you can receive, and receiving is the best gift you can give.

January 11

Take excellent care of yourself now, and you will feel excellent from now on.

Contests are a time-honored tradition. We all seek to thrive, and to demonstrate that we can provide the substances, forces, influences, and conditions that will facilitate other life forms in their quest to thrive. To show our prowess, we hold sporting events, dance contests, debates, and many other competitions. We sponsor and participate in flower contests, vegetable growing contests, dog shows, horse shows, and many other such events to prove who can raise the best hog, rabbit, or whatever. We raise pets and have gardens, and we are proud of the care we give them.

In so doing, we demonstrate our agreement with and understanding of the basic laws of life that govern and dictate the growth and development of all life forms. We show our respect for the fact that healthful living results in health, and that all else results in symptoms. We know that too much or too little, of almost everything, results in problems. We know that there is a bull's eye to every target, an "ideal range" in the middle of every continuum, and that this is especially true when it comes to growth, development, and overall health care.

With this awareness in mind, it should not be difficult to accept the fact that when we improve our self-care regimen, we invariably benefit. Feeling better is the natural outcome of living healthfully. We are so confident when raising award-winning flowers or prize-winning animals. We need to apply the same confidence about our own self-care regimen. Health is a freedom we all deserve. We must learn to live healthfully, to expect health, and to develop the skills that allow us to regain, maintain, and build our health as needed.

January 12

You have the choice every moment of every day to be either self-constructive or self-destructive.

How much do you love yourself? There is no way of measuring such a phenomenon, but it is nonetheless one that deserves a lot of attention and thought. One goal worthy of striving for is to love oneself a bit more, every day.

Doctors spend their entire day, every day, dealing with the issues and problems of those whose health has spiraled downward, often to the point of going completely out of control. The physicians must learn to protect themselves from the almost constant barrage of negativity, hopelessness, anger, and depression that assaults them. They have two options; they can put up a shield and attempt to deflect the negative input, or they can simply be a positive force beaming confidence and optimism to all they meet. Which doctor would you prefer was caring for you and your loved ones?

Building anything is engaging, and nothing is more rewarding than building your health. Growing better is always satisfying, and when we improve ourselves in any way, it is an expression of the healthiest form of growth.

Another very important aspect to today's aphorism is the issue of "choice." When we are ruled by addiction, or even by habit, we lose our freedom to choose. We become disempowered, and there is no feeling that is more depressing than to feel that you have lost even some of the power over your own life. By getting in contact with our ability to choose, and choosing to be self-constructive in every way possible, we empower ourselves.

Expressing the preference to be self-constructive is natural and normal. Hence we are no different from the trees in this regard; we are either growing or decaying.

January 13

Resume living with the enthusiasm and zest you had as a child.

Watching children play is inspirational. They are fully engaged, completely immersed, and they hold nothing back. They go all out, putting themselves completely into whatever role they are playing at the moment. If they are playing tag, it is all or none. If they are “the mommy” taking care of their dollies, they live the part. In dance class, they fully become ballerinas. Perhaps this single-mindedness, this focus, this total commitment to the moment is why they learn so rapidly, and develop so quickly.

Adults have a different perspective on time than do children. We can set our sights on long-term goals, and we better understand what is involved in making and following through on commitments. Still, we do not grasp the long-term as well as we might think. Studies have shown that people almost invariably underestimate what they can get done in one year’s time.

When we choose a daily commitment, say walking or jogging for 15 minutes daily, most people are shocked to find out how much they progress in a matter of weeks. By the time months have passed, most people are having tremendous insights about themselves and their chosen activity. All they had to do was commit, and throw themselves in. The insight, and the growth, comes naturally.

Sometimes, it seems, we forget how wonderful life is for children. When we lose touch with that wonderfulness, we suffer accordingly. Make a practice of giving thanks, of appreciating the wonders of life, and to putting yourself fully into everything you do.

The rewards will invariably be inspirational.

January 14

Health comes for free, but it does not come for nothing; you have to earn it every day.

Healthy people do what unhealthy people are just not willing to do. Healthy people pay attention to the consequences of their lifestyle choices, rather than simply focusing on short-term pleasure. Having a healthy mind, body, and spirit brings great happiness.

Health is the natural state; we are born into it, and we revert to it when we supply the necessary substances, forces, influences, and conditions. When we were babies, our parents nurtured our health, guiding and encouraging us towards living healthfully. Sunlight, fresh air, sufficient sleep, refreshing rest, positive mental attitude, and physical activities are free for the choosing. Fruit literally grows on trees. In nature, room and board is free for all animals, but they must secure it on their own accord. The outcome of healthful living is health, every time.

There are many pressures, duties, responsibilities, and distractions, however, that can be so demanding as to make it seem that there is simply no time to live healthfully. Nothing could be further from the truth, as in fact, we simply have no time or inclination to be ill. Healthful living is easy, and in many cases far less time consuming than any of the options. Healthful living is a responsibility. We owe it to ourselves, our friends and loved ones, and certainly to our immediate family to live as healthfully as possible. The premature loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult experiences of life. To watch a loved one choose self-destructive behavior over self-constructive action is almost as difficult.

Healthful living, on the other hand, is easy, and extremely pleasant. All of the “necessaries” of life are enjoyable pastimes. Participation in health-giving activities invariably leaves us feeling good about ourselves, and supports the mindset of wanting to be perpetually healthy. Make your routine a healthy one, and reap a healthy harvest, daily, for the rest of your life.

January 15

**The best way to get what you want
is from the people who already have it.**

Let's face it. We rub off on each other. If you want success, hang with successful people. Athletes have learned, all too often the hard way, that the people they choose to associate with really does matter. Negative influences can easily take them down a road to destinations they really do not wish to visit. For the best coaching, go to the best coaches. Businesspeople long ago determined that if they want great results, they must go to consultants who specialize in exactly the results the businesspeople want. Even mountain climbers use guides, people who have been there before, to get them where they want to go. As the old saying goes, "If you hang around with dogs, you will soon enough have fleas." If you wish to be successful, in any area of life, spend your time with the people who already have success in your area of interest, and watch how quickly their success rubs off on you.

Many of the world's most successful people are simply not accessible to us via live associations. They may have lived in the distant past, live in a distant land, or they may travel in different social circles than you. In those instances, we can read about them, watch video and listen to audio materials by and about them, or spend time with people who further the teaching of the person in whom you are interested. Biographies and autobiographies can prove tremendously illuminating and insightful. In as many ways as possible, you want to associate, get into the mindset, and learn to think and act like the people you hold in high regard. In this way you can use the people you look up to as role models.

You may not like everything about a specific role model. Perhaps you really appreciate one person's persistence, but not some other aspect of his/her personality. Focus on the qualities you wish to emulate, not the entire person. You can pick and choose, as needed, in order to develop the characteristics of your own personality. You can develop yourself into the person you wish to become, simply by associating with the people who are already like the person you wish to become.

January 16

If you are a “health nut,” does that make other people “sickness nuts”?

Have people ever referred to you as a “health nut”? Likely the answer is yes. Did you take it as a compliment? If so, it speaks highly of you. For there is no way that being called a “nut” of any kind can be taken as a true compliment. Being called a “nut” is just not an expression of kindness.

What is most interesting about this concept is the fact that it is human nature to respond in kind. When we are complimented, we tend to compliment in return. When someone is rude, the automatic response is to be rude in response. But we must remember who we are. We must set the example, be proactive, and shine our healthiest light. There is always time to smile, and think, before reacting to anything someone does or says. The knee-jerk response does not always represent you putting your best foot forward. Kindness can go a long way towards winning and keeping friends.

Of course, you were not always enlightened. Did the enlightened ones judge you harshly, way back when? Or did they open doors, shine lights, and generally do all they could to make their message available to you? No one wishes to be sick, and everyone is doing the best they possibly can. The onus of responsibility to raise your bar, both in terms of expectations for yourself and in terms of your actions, including how you treat and respond to others, rests entirely upon you.

January 17

You are limited not by what you can do, but by what you believe you cannot do.

“Whether you think you can, or think you cannot-you are right.” This time-honored adage is as valid today as the day it was first penned by Henry Ford. There have been countless motivational speakers throughout the years that have made their entire living by teaching, day in and day out, the implications and variations of this one powerful proverb. The power of belief is truly exceptional.

If we truly believed it was impossible, would we have ever broken the four-minute mile, put men on the moon, built even one suspension bridge, harnessed electricity, sailed around the world, flown airplanes, or made any of the millions of changes we have brought to our world? Likely the answer is a resounding “No!” If, by some happenstance, someone actually stumbled upon the secret of using a double-walled, vacuum-sealed container in order to insulate the container’s contents, s/he would have to have become a believer before actually producing such a product. The power of belief unleashes us.

Believe that something can be done, and you can likely figure out how it can be done.

Knowledge that someone else has already done this or that feat or performance greatly increases the chances of other people performing the same feat, and eventually performing even more difficult versions of that feat.

“Why even try? It’s impossible.” Such an attitude is the main cause of failed or stunted efforts. Broaden your perspectives, open your mind, and dig deep. Use your imagination, your intelligence, and your foresight. See the world as it could be, and proceed to make it so.

January 18

I used to be called a “health nut.” Now I am known as a “health enthusiast, a health connoisseur, and a health expert.”

How do you see yourself, and how do others see you? How do you wish for others to see you? Your posture, your body language, your appearance, and your actions, all carry more weight in terms of making an impression on others than do your words. Of course, what you say and how you say it also make big impressions on people. Are you consistent? Are you true to your word? Are you congruent between your words and your actions?

When people referred to me as a “nut,” even as a “health nut,” it really was not a compliment. Essentially, being called a “nut” is similar to being called a “kook.” The word implies that something is amiss. Calling someone a “nut” is akin to saying they are obsessed, and obsession can never be healthy. Hence, the “health nut” is an oxymoron. Like the “orthorexic,” who has an unhealthy obsession with eating healthfully, the “health nut” is a bit of a weirdo, and not always in a good way.

The “health nut” is vulnerable, often falling for the latest health gimmick, gadget, supplement, super food, fad diet, therapy, cleanse, flush, or treatment. His friends and family judge him on his past failures, learn to tolerate his idiosyncrasies, and come to expect future failures. The “health expert” has learned to discern the truth from the hype, and is the living example that his/her program brings the desired results.

Who are you going to develop yourself into, the expert or the nut? Learn from the example of those you wish to emulate. Cultivate yourself into the person that others respect, look up to, listen to, and learn from. Whether you choose to coach, teach, or simply live the part, the world is ready for a great many more health enthusiasts.

January 19

We are all subject to the same laws of nature, and are either accumulating health or accumulating sickness.

In the immortal words of songwriter and poet Bob Dylan, “He not busy being born, is busy dying.” All day, every day, we have the choice to build our health or to demolish it. The laws of life are always in effect: there are no time-outs, everything counts and accumulates, and even when you are alone, Mother Nature is watching, and knowing. The seeds of health are planted incrementally. Life is rich with opportunities to develop or destroy our health. Tens of thousands of times per day we are presented with choices, and we choose either the self-destructive or the self-constructive options. We can choose foods that we love, which love us back, or we can choose foods that we love that harm us in return. We can choose the stairs or the elevators, thus gaining the benefit of a bit of exercise or not. We can choose entertainment that in some way helps us develop into better people, or we can choose mindless trash, violence, and other such distractions. What goes into you affects who you become. Choose your friends, music, books, movies, television and other social exposures wisely. Think about whether you are exhibiting self-loving behavior, if you are being self-constructive, if your life choices are bringing you closer or further from your own life goals. Choose to accumulate your health, for healthful living is a lifetime pursuit.

January 20

Dr. Graham's First Rule of Holes: When you find yourself in a hole from which you wish to escape, first you must stop digging.

Many people come to me hoping to regain their health. They realize that it is likely that to do so is going to require at least some modification of their lifestyle.

I was in a small store, shopping for a pair of sweatpants. There was one other customer in the shop, and she was talking to the owner, who was at the register. The customer was telling the owner the story of how her health had declined to the point where she could not tolerate it any longer, and she had decided the solution was to quit smoking, which she had promptly done. She recounted some of the challenges she faced, and how difficult they had been to overcome, but that she had succeeded. She talked for quite some time, repeatedly mentioning that she had quit smoking. Obviously, she was quite proud of quitting smoking. She relayed how much better she felt, now that she had quit, and all the benefits she was noticing and accruing. After receiving repeated congratulations from the owner, the customer dropped the bomb, admitting that she had not actually completely quit smoking, but had only thus far managed to reduce her use from 60 cigarettes per day to a mere 20. That is a pack-a-day habit and going strong. To a nonsmoker, someone smoking a pack a day simply does not qualify as being an ex-smoker, a nonsmoker, or someone who has quit smoking. I was glad that the woman could tell that she was on the right road. Certainly, I wanted to encourage the woman to continue her efforts and to quit smoking entirely, for there was no way she could reap the benefits of quitting without actually quitting.

When driving a car at 60 miles per hour, there is no way to make a sharp turn without crashing the car. We must slow down dramatically in order to turn the corner. When we slow our speed, we notice, visually and in many other ways, various changes in the way it feels. But in order to step foot out of the car and walk away from it, we must fully stop the car. I was gladdened that the woman noticed improvements by reducing her reliance upon cigarettes. But if she wishes to become a nonsmoker, and to reap the healing benefits of not smoking, she must discontinue her smoking habits completely. The same is true for eating cooked food, or any other habit that you wish to overcome. Climb your way back to health by living healthfully.

January 21

Strive to get the things you are saying to be in line with the things you are doing.

Congruence is one of the most challenging of all personal lifestyle choices. To be fully congruent between your beliefs, words, and actions is truly a perpetual growth opportunity. Growth is what we strive for, for when we are growing, we are expressing our vitality and truly experiencing life. Can you look yourself in the mirror and truly say that you are living up to your own beliefs, expectations, and philosophies? Strive to improve yourself, at least a little each day. Ask for the input of other people, to see if they are aware of issues you have that you perhaps have not noticed. Choose an area of life, be it food, fitness, fun, social interactions, sleep, work, or any other facet of life, and intentionally put time into developing yourself in this area to be more in line with the standards you set for yourself. Bit by bit, you can develop yourself into the person you would most like to become. Be persistent, and be consistent in your efforts, and you will no doubt be amazed at how far you can develop in a relatively short time. Be alert and watch yourself. Are you being helpful, or passing work to others? Notice your words, tone, and even your body language. Is your message coming across to others in the way you really want it to? Are you living true to your own chosen goals? There are literally endless opportunities for you to better yourself in life as a person, and in every instance increasing your congruity will take you in the healthiest and most successful direction.

January 22

**Dr. Graham's Second Rule of Holes: "You must climb,
as you cannot dig your way out of a hole."**

Whether you are digging at full speed or digging yourself into a hole slowly, you will never dig yourself out of the hole you find yourself in by continuing to dig. If you want to get out of a hole, you must completely stop digging and, in fact, start climbing. Extricating yourself from a hole does not have to be painful, or even unpleasant. Every step towards a goal can be exhilarating, rewarding, and well worth the effort involved, especially if you plan to reward yourself along the way. The trick is that the rewards should not include more digging, or any backsliding. Someone with a weight loss goal, for instance, might reward him/herself every time a pound is lost, but not by pigging out on high-calorie junk foods. The rewards might be time spent reading a book, or taking a walk, or making time to talk with a friend. Maybe the reward is shopping for new clothing. The point is that if you still crave the old behavior, still think of it as a treat, then you are likely to go back to that old behavior. The solution is to focus on the new goals, the new desires, the new purpose, and head directly towards what you want. Like an addict, going back for "just a little" can open the floodgates to failure. Close the door and do not look back. Look forward, and climb out of your old addictive behavior into a world of having healthy preferences and making healthy choices.

January 23

**Now is the time and here is the place
to live the best and the healthiest life you can.**

Knowing that you have the power to control your life is priceless. The feeling of powerlessness is among the lowest of the lows that humans are capable of experiencing. You cannot affect the past; it is gone forever. You have little if any control over the future. The future is a mystery to us all. The future will unfold in its own time and reveal unforeseen secrets and wonders for us to behold. We are powerless to control the future, or even to control the outcomes of our own efforts. But we do have complete control over ourselves in the here and now, as well as full responsibility for ourselves. The feeling of being overwhelmed only hits us when we stop living in the present moment and attempt to take on multiple possible futures all at once. When we commit to doing our best here and now, the only possible outcome is a positive one. Whether you get the results you want or not is not the question, and does not really matter. The very fact that you did your best means that you were successful. It is not possible to do one's best while living a self-destructive, self-sabotaging lifestyle.

To increase your overall feeling of self-determinism, practice coming back to the present, to the task at hand, and focus on being in this very moment. Each moment is special, offers countless options and opportunities, and is not to be missed. Take exquisite care of yourself and experience the high-level health that will support you in getting the most out of each and every moment of your life.

January 24

**“Someday Isle” is a fairy dream.
Why wait to improve your health regimen?**

“Someday, I’ll start a fitness program.”

“Someday, I’ll write a book.”

“Someday, I’ll lose this weight.”

We have all heard it, and likely we are all guilty of having said such things too. The simple fact is, “someday” never comes. The time is always now, and there is no time like the present for getting things done. Accomplishments are almost never ever as difficult in the actual doing as they are in our perception of doing them. This is primarily because we perceive getting a job done in its entirety, but we actually accomplish things by doing one step at a time. For instance, writing this book seemed like a monumental undertaking to me when I began the project. But in reality, all I ever had to do was touch one key of my keyboard, then another and another. Not that big of a deal. I just had to come back to the keyboard and push keys, again and again. Like eating the proverbial elephant, projects are completed “one bite at a time,” and books are written “one byte at a time.” I was helping a friend and mentor of mine to build a large addition to his home. He was doing the work himself, at least all of it that he possibly could, with the help of various professional friends where necessary. When people would visit his house, they would invariably comment on what a huge undertaking the project was. “Board by board,” he’d say, and go back to work. The addition took almost a year to complete, but my friend nailed down a lot of new friendships while working on it, and cemented his connection with a lot of his trusted buddies. Once completed, everyone enjoyed the addition, and my mentor started his next project.

Now is the best time there will ever be to implement your improved health program. Take the first step toward getting fitter, or eating more fresh raw produce, or getting to bed earlier. You do not have to do it all today, just start. The benefits will accrue for a lifetime.

January 25

When values are clear, decisions are easy.

Indecisiveness is a condition that plagues many people. They spend hours planning, making lists, weighing the pros and cons of performing or not performing some small task. They seem to have no sense of urgency, no willingness to commit, no confidence in their ability to make decisions. Often, after hours of figuring out their options, they still choose to do nothing at all, being completely undecided as to which course of action to pursue, which is best.

Life is full of choices for us. Making a list of the activities and accomplishments that are important to you helps you clearly define where you need to be spending your time. I recommend organizing the list by the order of importance you place on each item, so that the most important one is at the top, the least important at the bottom. Once again, this makes it easier to see where you want to be investing your time. If you are putting most of your time into the item at the bottom of the list, you are essentially saying that this item is more important to you than the ones that you initially placed above it on the list. This means that it is either time to restructure your list, or redistribute where you put your time and effort.

You must decide what you want, while allowing for the fact that to a great degree, your wants are colored by your values. Let's say you place high value on looking good, health and feeling good, and being fit. You enjoy many things, including listening to and playing music, reading, and talking and eating out with friends. The conflicts are obvious, and must be resolved, or else you are being incongruous. Taking care of your appearance requires time, and so does maintaining a modicum of fitness. In order to be healthy and feeling good, one must accept certain responsibilities for self-care, such as getting enough sleep, eating a diet abundant in fruits and vegetables, and putting time and effort into fitness activities.

There are many potential solutions to the apparent conflict. You could interest your friends into doing fitness activities with you, cater your choice of reading so that you spend more time reading about fitness and your other interests, and you might even encourage your fit friends to eat healthy choices with you by inviting them to your home for some fruit after exercising. Once you know what is important to you, making the decisions to support your values becomes almost effortless.

January 26

**Faith is built through the accumulation of knowledge.
Need is built through the accumulation of Reasons Why.
Faith x Need = Motivation**

There is a lot of talk these days about willpower. Many people use the excuse that if they just had more willpower, they would be able to get more done, to become more responsible, and live better lives. But alas, they were only gifted with very weak willpower, so they are destined to fail in almost every endeavor....

The answer to getting things done lies not in willpower, but in motivation. Humans are easily distracted, and harnessing your willpower is simply not enough to see you through to the finish line with long-term and lifetime projects. But with sufficient motivation, we can all be as powerful as Archimedes, who said, "Give me a lever long enough, and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world." With sufficient motivation, all things are possible, and most things are easy. The question is therefore, "How do we develop our motivation?"

The answer is as easy as a multiplication problem. $F \times N = M$. Going to bed at night could be a very scary endeavor, if you did not have faith that the sun would be coming up the following morning. Our knowledge of astrology, physics, and other sciences gives us enough information that we can have faith that indeed the sun will come out tomorrow.

Few people would ever bother with fitness training, if they did not have faith that doing so would result in a better level of fitness and an overall improved sense of well-being. Knowledge of anatomy, biology, chemistry, physiology, and the sports sciences all yield great faith in the efficacy of the training effect, and the positive results that will be gained by fitness training. We increase our faith by improving the quantity and quality of the knowledge we acquire.

Millions of people die in hospitals for lack of the simple knowledge that a diet change could save their life. They have great need, but no knowledge. Millions of young people know full well that smoking, drinking, and doing drugs is harmful to their health, yet as young, inexperienced adults, they perceive themselves to be almost bulletproof, and express little need for conserving their health. They have lots of knowledge, but no need. Anything times zero yields zero. If you want to build your motivation to astounding levels, raise both your needs and your knowledge.

Need levels are raised simply by becoming aware of them. List your wants, needs, desires, and goals on paper. Review the list regularly, expand it as more needs come into your awareness, and create the action steps necessary to fulfilling your needs. Knowledge is gained from the people and resources that have the information and skills that you desire. Spend time with these people, through books, tapes, and live associations, and they will rub off on you. Watch your motivation soar as you increase your needs and knowledge.

January 27

Goals without commitment are still only wishes.

We may all well understand that wishes are almost goals, but that they lack deadlines and action plans. But in order for wishes to be converted to goals, they also require commitment. I remember when I was a young boy at summer camp. Once we had demonstrated that we could swim sufficiently well, we youngsters were invited to jump off of first the low board, and then the high diving board. Most of us said we would, and did. But some of the boys said they would go up the ladder and then decide. One boy in particular, a reasonably good swimmer, walked to the end of the board and looked down at the water. He stared for a terribly long time, all the while hearing the kind encouragement from the children and coaches below. But he had not committed himself to jump, and he just could not make himself do it. In the end, he came down the ladder. We all assured him he could try again some other day. He had made no commitment, to himself or to others, and at the end of the day, jumping off of that high board was still just a wish.

If the steps that make up your action plan are too large, you are less likely to carry them out successfully. Break the project into micro-steps, and you increase your chances of succeeding. Writing a book is a big commitment. Writing a chapter per month can still be a daunting task, doomed to failure. But commit to yourself to put 500 words to paper every day for a year, and you will likely have your book written. Writing for just 10 or 15 minutes per day is certainly not a big challenge.

In the end, you must commit to yourself to carry out your plan, whatever it is. But it helps to commit to others as well. For instance, you might commit to walk four miles every morning at 6:00 A.M. Some mornings, however, you just might not feel like walking, or the weather might be bad. No one is going to chide you if you roll over in bed, rather than get up and walk to start your day. But if you have three friends outside knocking on your door and waiting for you, you are much more likely to be carried along by their enthusiasm and commitment. You have committed not only to yourself, but also to your group. Using peer pressure to help you succeed in reaching your goals is a valid strategy. Most of all, you must make your commitments, and live up to them.

January 28

**To spread a believable and healthy message,
you must live a healthy life.**

People get messages in many ways, and interpret them in equally as many ways. We listen to tone of voice, inflection, volume, and pitch, and make decisions about the incoming message accordingly. We look at a person's face, posture, body language, clothing, and their physique for clues about the validity of their message. Many of the clues we get about what others tell us come in subliminally, and are interpreted subconsciously. Marketing experts know that the color, shape, and size of the packaging of a product to be sold are often more important to sales than the actual product itself. Even the choice of font used in the writing on the package conveys a message. Look at how batteries are packaged, for example, or toilet paper. Each brand attempts to convey a message with its packaging. Notice that the packaging on products geared for children, be it food, drink, or toys, is always very colorful.

If you went to the gym to hire a personal trainer, would you hire the person who looked trim, fit, and strong, or would you hire the person who appeared heavy, slow, and out of shape? Chances are, we would all hire the fittest looking instructor. If we knew that the least likely looking person was the best qualified, had the best success rate when working with people like ourselves, and had trained the most champions, we still might be swayed by the looks of the other candidates.

“The uniform makes the man,” or so the old adage goes. I believe that in most instances, this message is quite true. During college, one of my summer jobs was working as a baseball umpire. I had long hair, a beard, and rode a motorcycle. When I would arrive at the baseball field in my regular clothing, no one from either of the teams paid any attention to me, even if I had umpired many games for their team in the past. I would then go to a private place and change clothing. Immediately upon emerging in my umpire “blues,” the coaches from both teams would announce to their players, “Here’s the umpire, let’s get started.” When it comes to spreading a message about health, you simply must look the part, or at least be on the road to health. This does not mean that you must be perfect, for no one is perfect. Perhaps you have lost 100 pounds, but still have 100 to go. Your “before” pictures will tell the entire story, and give you great credibility. Personal trainers show off their physiques, doctors wear their white lab coat, and attorneys dress “professionally.” None of this technically helps them do their job, except that it does inspire confidence and credibility in the eyes of their clients, which of course helps in many ways. We are all far more likely to let a plumber or a doctor do his job if he looks the part and has all the necessary tools, than if in any way he seems unprepared.

January 29

Your health plan will succeed at the intersection of opportunity and preparation. You have complete control over your preparation.

Opportunities come to us constantly, endlessly, one right after the next, in a nearly continuous stream. We always have an opportunity for something. Capitalizing on those opportunities, however, requires preparation. We all make choices about how we wish to invest our time. Do you choose to stay fit, ready for any fitness-related opportunity that comes your way that sounds appealing to you?

When I was 30, I took up running as a hobby. At first, I only ran a few miles, a few times per week. Gradually I increased the mileage and the frequency, until I was running about five miles per day, every day, on average. I did this for a decade. During that time, while out running, many people would ask me why I was running, what I was training for. I did not have a specific event in mind, such as an upcoming competition, so I always just said, "Someday, someone might invite me to run with them, and I want to be able to say yes."

Recently, after more than a decade of preparation, I have had exactly that experience occur, and have been invited to enter into various ultra-running events with friends. In two of the cases, the friends had already entered me into the runs before inviting me to participate. Talk about an opportunity.

Being ill is never fun, even when you take the perspective that your body is simply cleaning house to your overall benefit. The symptoms, the down time, and the lost productivity combine to make illness unappealing. Are you living a lifestyle that will lead to illness: running yourself down, making too many food compromises, exercising too little, or otherwise setting the stage for an upcoming house cleaning? Can you imagine how many opportunities will be missed during your illness?

The opportunities will come. The rest is up to you. If you are prepared, you will be able to grab opportunities as they present themselves. If you are living healthfully, health will be the natural and only possible outcome. Grow towards health. Accumulate health and vitality. Let your shining health be a beacon for others to follow.

January 30

**When you stray from whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants,
you do so because of taste, habit, and addiction,
but at the cost of nutritional value and health.**

I have always been fond of equations. Something about the way they balance seems a thing of beauty to me. The concept of “cancelling each other out” is also very appealing, because it simplifies an equation down to its bare minimum, eliminating the extraneous bits and revealing the truly essential parts. Here is an equation for you that I would like you to ponder: Eating foods you love that harm you in return versus eating foods you love that love you in return. Certainly no one would argue that pizza, cheeseburger, French fries, doughnuts, fried fish, or many of the other notoriously unhealthy foods taste bad, though of course we each have our preferences. People worldwide seem to truly love the taste of such foods. But then, too, no one would argue that peaches, mangoes, watermelon, grapes, or strawberries or any of the notoriously healthy fruits and vegetables taste bad either, though again, we each have our preferences. And as expected, people worldwide seem to truly love the taste of fresh fruits, vegetables, and even nuts and seeds. Now, let’s balance out the equation.

We begin by “cancelling out” the parts on both sides of the equation that are the same. In this case, those parts were, “Eating foods you love that...in return.” We are left with: “harm you” versus “love you.” If you were going to join in a relationship with a person, would you choose someone who would harm you, or someone who would love you? How about if you were going to get a pet, would you want one that harms you, or one that loves you? Obviously, we all wish to be loved, and not harmed. Now is the time for us to examine our behavior when choosing foods, and to begin focusing on eating those foods that love us as much as we love them.

Habits develop out of mindlessness. When you pay attention to what you are doing, when you act out of choice and preference, you can easily overcome your habits. Addictions are almost as easy to overcome. Addictions are challenging when we try to replace something such as a drug, a food, or even a television show, with nothing. But if we replace an addiction with a healthy choice, the healthy choice will very quickly win out. Addictions will never die if we continue to support them, even a little. Cold turkey is proven the easiest, fastest, most effective, and most efficient way to break addictions, and has the lowest attrition rate. Gradual weaning has been shown to be the least effective way to quit an addiction, because during the weaning process, we continue to reinforce the addiction.

Is eating food that harms you really worth giving up your health for, when you could be building your health by choosing from the many delicious and nutritious healthy foods?

January 31

The time you most need to relax is when you do not have time to relax.

Sometimes, life just really gets hectic. Responsibilities loom large, the calendar is working against you, and the relentless clock just keeps on ticking. Before you know it, before you have reached many of your important monthly goals, you can easily run out of month. You might even find yourself doing more than one thing at a time now and then, a pretty good recipe for an accident and a surefire sign that you are just too busy. By the time you are feeling stressed, overloaded, scattered, too hectic, or just plain frazzled, your effectiveness and your efficiency are greatly diminished. Your health is being compromised, your ability to communicate with others in kind and clear fashion is dissipating, frustrations are mounting, and disasters, injury, and illness are looming just around the corner. Sleep, recreation, family time, and the other experiences of life that really make life worth living can get squeezed almost completely out of existence. Oddly, although you may feel that all you need is more time to get your work done, what you may actually need is less work time. Obviously something has to give.

Take a short break from your work, and when you get back to work, you will be refreshed, focused, and much more efficient. Shorten your workday, and notice how you can get just as much done in less time with less stress, if you really pay full attention to your work, as opposed to being scattered. Make sleep a priority, getting all the sleep you require, and watch as your attitude soars, your effectiveness improves, and your increased mental clarity allows you to see the solution to problems that had been incomprehensible beforehand.

If someone hands you a knotted ball of string, you cannot get all the knots out with one move. Nor can you approach the problem with speed, or you will just make matters worse. To totally remove all the knots, you must approach them one at a time, paying full attention to what you are doing. This same approach works well in all parts of our lives. Pay attention. Do one thing at a time. And when you feel that life is getting too darn busy, take a break. All the chores and responsibilities will wait, but if you put your own self-care on hold, you will pay with your health, and ultimately, with your life.

FEBRUARY

**As the first hints of spring begin to show themselves,
remember that every day is a new beginning.**

Sure, after a good night's sleep, we wake up feeling refreshed, renewed, and ready to face a new day. Solutions often come while we sleep to problems that may have seemed insurmountable at the end of the previous day. You get a fresh start to take on new hobbies, incorporate improved personality traits, become more productive, and generally to be a better person.

In reality, however, those options are always available to us. We can improve ourselves at any time. When you find yourself frustrated, irritable, feeling low, or otherwise in a funk, you do not need to wait until tomorrow to change your perspective. You can choose to return to your irrepressible self immediately. Literally every breath provides an opportunity to see things in a more positive light; hence, every time we inhale, we become inspired.

Should you receive challenging news, take a breath, and right then and there choose to rise above the challenge. You will be amazed at how well this action plan works for you. Begin anew with every breath, as if each were the springtime of your life.

February 1

Is there a limit to the number of times you will renew your efforts to be healthy?

Health is a lifetime pursuit, and setbacks along the way are inevitable, especially when we push our limits by seeking to excel. I have spoken to so many people who have said, “I tried _____ (fill in the blank with any of the following, or anything else that seems appropriate: running, strength training, being vegetarian, being vegan, going raw, 80/10/10, positive thinking, losing weight, etc.), but it didn’t work for me.” What these people could be saying is that they did not persist long enough to try an approach that was workable, one that would bring them the success they had initially hoped for. They blame the activity, or the goal, rather than taking direct personal responsibility for not having planned and allowed for the potential challenges that were certain to arise. They did not persevere, and chose quit rather than to continue steadfastly towards their goal.

Challenges are constant reminders that we are striving. When pursuing lofty goals, it is imperative that we focus on the big picture, rather than losing momentum due to the little obstacles that appear along the way. The ability to endure, to tenaciously pursue your goals, in spite of whatever comes your way, is an essential quality if you actually hope to reach your objectives. In order to reach exceptional goals, we must be insistent in our efforts, and willing to think and perform in an exceptionally grand manner.

What if you had given up learning to walk after the first time you fell down?

What if you had quit driving after the first time you had an accident?

If you place a limit on yourself, you become limited, penned in, un-free.

By placing limits on the number of times you will endeavor to reach important goals, you all but guarantee your failure.

When you are down, reach up and get up. Start again. With every experience, you learn, and success gets that much closer to your grasp. When you are up, reach for even greater heights, as Bruce Dern was coached to do in the movie, *On The Edge*. If you reach for the moon, that is as far as you will go, at best. If you reach for the stars, you might reach them, but even if you fail, you will go far past the moon. When it comes to your health goals, do as then Prime Minister of England, Winston Churchill, so rightly proclaimed when addressing the students of Harrow School, on October 29, 1941, and, “Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, give up. Never give up. Never give up. Never give up.”

February 2

When you find yourself tempted to go off your regimen, ask yourself this question, “Is the value of the gain going to be worth the cost of the loss?”

“A moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips,” or so the old saying goes. Motivated health seekers might well ask themselves before participating in self-destructive behavior, “Is what I am about to gain going to be worth the pain?” Rarely will “yes” be the answer. Asking that simple question before making exceptions to your health routine could save you from a lot of regret and suffering.

We all have, and all hear, the little voice of common sense inside of us that warns us before we do silly things, dangerous things, or put ourselves into potentially uncomfortable situations. The question is, do we listen to the voice, and heed the advice, or do we ignore it?

In many ways, this line of thought brings us back to the issue of paying attention. When we are being attentive, we do not eat foods without noticing what they are, and consciously making decisions about whether we really wish to eat those foods. Sometimes referred to as “mindfulness with food” or “conscious eating,” the basic concept is to be as aware as possible of all of the factors and influences that affect your consumption of food. Such mindfulness can only serve to heighten your enjoyment of your food, the benefit in terms of pleasure and nutrition received from the food, and your experience of health as a result of eating.

Would you stay up all night and miss much-needed sleep in order to watch regularly scheduled television programs? Hopefully, your answer would be, “No.” Too much would be lost for far too little, if any, real gain. Would you stay up all night and miss much-needed sleep in order to give your help to a loved one in need? Hopefully, your answer to this question would be an unequivocal “yes.” In this instance, though the sleep might be desired, the gains received through the giving of essential service to a loved one more than outweigh the loss of sleep. The act of giving, no matter how small or insignificant the gift may seem, can be one of the most powerful and rewarding of all human experiences. We always gain, more than we give, whenever and whatever we give.

Should you ever want to make someone’s gift more meaningful and much more powerful to them, receive it well. Receiving a gift sincerely, graciously, and enthusiastically is actually the greatest gift you could ever give. Giving up your health, momentum, continuity, weight management, or any other component of your regimen for something that results almost entirely in net losses can never be worth the effort.

February 3

In order to be tranquil, one must eat, breathe, and live healthfully.

We take more tranquilizers in the U.S. than in the rest of the world combined. Tranquility does not come from a pill. Road rage, gasoline station and tollbooth shootings, and generally rude behavior in stores, on the telephone, and even in recreational settings are becoming increasingly more common. Theories abound for the decay in respect for others that we are experiencing. Some say the loss is due to our decline of societal structure, sense of community, and shared values. Others point their finger to the influence of the internet, citing the increased sense of anonymity we experience today, and the falsely inflated sense of power that often accompanies it. One theory is that people get upset, and sometimes act out violently, when they feel their rights or privileges have been disrespected by others, as occurs when people interpret the “rules of the road,” or the “rules of social behavior” differently. Sometimes rudeness by others is intentional, but just as often, it is not meant as rudeness, and only perceived that way. Many times, such misunderstandings are simply the result of clashing cultural differences. Lateness, unrelated stresses, crowded conditions, shortages, financial and relationship influences, a general loss of civility and respect for authority, and even the media’s push to have us “looking out for number one” have all combined to promote social unrest and antisocial behavior.

The healthy approach to this challenge is to improve the way we live. By taking better care of ourselves, we dramatically reduce our level of stress. Health costs less than sickness, in a huge number of ways. When we feel good, we are generally more amiable towards others. Living with respect for ourselves results in increases in our awareness, and our respect for our fellow man. Sickness takes a huge toll on our resources, including our time, and being healthy allows us to get more done in even less time. These two factors reduce stress, especially the stress of lateness, meaning healthy people are not as prone to being in a rush, or the rudeness rushing tends to convey. There is time and inclination to take care of the amenities.

Like all animals, humans have a species-specific diet. Fruits and vegetables are best suited to our needs. When we stray from this diet, a chemical and physiological war is generated within our bodies, making it all but impossible to act peacefully. By living healthfully, taking care of our needs for fresh air, sunshine, rest, sleep, proper food, water, and all other necessary substances, forces, influences, and conditions, we generate and accumulate our health. Healthy people have far more leeway for being accepting of others, and are far less prone to antisocial behavior.

February 4

If you do what everyone else does, you will get what everyone else gets.

If you follow the road that everyone else uses in order to get to a specific destination, you will arrive at that destination, as everyone else does.

Businessmen, athletes, teachers, and students of every discipline all rely on this basic underlying principle: if you do what I do, you will get the same results. Well, that is certainly comforting information. Life would be terrible, if so unpredictable that reliable results could not be obtained at least now and then. When we follow the instructions of a recipe, we expect the results to be the same as those gained by the original chef. Should you want to get better at push-ups, doing the same drills as someone who is good at push-ups does will get you there.

I am constantly surprised when someone tells me about a friend or loved one who has come down with this or that various life-threatening condition of ill health. I am not surprised that the illness has developed; I am surprised by the fact that the person telling me the news sounds surprised. Of course, we both share the same feelings of compassion and wish the person well. But I am not surprised that they got sick. I would have been surprised had they not developed their diseased state, given their decades of relatively unhealthful living.

Doctors have told us for decades that smoking is bad for our health. If you are a smoker who eventually comes down with a lung disease, you should not really be surprised. When we see someone in their fifties, sixties, seventies, or beyond who looks superbly fit and healthy, we can be fairly certain that they have performed some sort of fitness activities for most or all of their life, and likely took good care of themselves in other ways too. Drive down a steep and curvy mountain road, and there will be many guardrails. We know that when conditions are good, and we drive at the recommended speed, the tires will hold the road, and we will navigate the trip safely. We know with equal certainty that should we attempt to get down the road with too much speed, the momentum of the car will force the tires to lose their grip, and we will either end up hitting the guard rails or worse.

The guidelines for healthful living are clearly defined. We know that if we follow those guidelines, we have the best possible chance of experiencing a healthy life. Inside of each of us is a desire to obtain something for nothing. When it comes to health, there is no “something for nothing.” Health must be earned, accumulated, and developed through a lifetime of applying healthful living practices. The only reliable road to health is through healthful living.

February 5

Listen to your body. Have confidence in its intelligence.

Your body knows what it is doing, even when you do not know what you are doing. Every human being is comprised of trillions of cells, perhaps as many as 100 trillion or more. Each of those cells operates of its own accord, performing as many as hundreds of functions at once. These cellular functions continue constantly throughout life, completely free from our guidance or control. Every function is coordinated with all the others within the cell, and is also in concert with all the functions performed by all the other cells of the body. Every cell knows what all the others are doing, and every cellular function is affected and responds to your surroundings, your actions, and even your thoughts. Just look at how someone's entire posture and attitude is affected by something as little as a pebble in his or her shoe, for example.

There is no denying the needs of the body. When you must go to the bathroom, you must go. Waiting might work for a little while, but your body will perform whatever functions it must. Sleep will overtake you, no matter how much you try to deny it. Supply healthful substances, forces, influences, and conditions to yourself, and watch how your health soars as a result.

Millions of operations must be performed to digest even one bite of food, many of which even our best scientists do not yet fully understand. Countless bacteria that live in your intestines participate in the digestive processes and help us turn food into nutrients. The functions of digestion, absorption, assimilation, and cellular elimination of the waste products of metabolism into the extra-cellular fluid all proceed without one conscious thought on our part. We perform complex physiological and anatomical processes with every muscular contraction (and even most of the muscular activity is reflexive, requiring no conscious thought), yet we never have to think at all about what is going on inside of us when we are physically active. We go to bed, exhausted from the day's efforts, and arise in the morning refreshed and enthusiastic to begin anew. Not even the experts are completely sure what actually happens when we sleep, or why we become so renewed by sleeping, yet the body knows exactly what to do.

When you feel the need to be active, do so.

When you feel the need to rest, by all means, take a rest.

Eat when hungry, and drink when thirsty.

Let your body talk to you, and take heed of what it is telling you. Your body is looking out for your best interests. Follow your body's suggestions, and health will always be the outcome.

February 6

Are you willing to leave your self-destructive habits behind in order to have what you want in your life?

Some cartoons are so appropriate, so meaningful, and just so darn funny that you cannot help but to remember them for a lifetime. I saw a cartoon years ago that made just such a lasting impression upon me. It featured a fully dressed, upside-down man, completely underwater. Based on the bubble pattern, he going down rapidly. He was clutching onto a large rock with both arms, and of course the rock was pulling him down even further. He had a wild look of wide-eyed confusion and realization about him, and the caption made it clear that he was dealing with a surprising mix of conflicting emotions. The caption read, “My rock, my rock! I just can’t LIVE without my rock!” Obviously, the guy could not live WITH his rock either, at least not for long, given his current situation. I could relate, on so many levels. Are you holding on to rocks in your life that are taking you down? Have you examined the reasons why you just cannot seem to let go of your attachments?

Are you afraid, and, if so, what are you afraid of? I’ve asked a lot of people that question. Many people say they are afraid of failing, because failure will result in some type of public ridicule. Even after telling me that they know this is not the case, and that likely there will only be congratulations, and no actual ridicule from anyone, they say that they still have the fear. Some people tell me that they are afraid to start over, or afraid to lose what they already have, as they might end up with nothing, and that this fear keeps them locked into an unacceptable situation. A rock is a rock, whether it is a job, a habit, or even a personal relationship. Most of our fears are blown up, way out of proportion to the realities of life. Our apprehension of things to come is almost always far worse than the realization of those same things. We usually find that when we face our fears that they turn out to be non-entities, mere vapors, or nothing more than paper tigers.

The beauty of leaving self-destructive habits behind is more than just the freedom of choice that you gain. You are not giving up something in order to end up with nothing. Invariably the void is filled. You have the choice to fill it with various self-constructive activities: the substances, forces, influences, and conditions of your preference. Choose to act bravely, go after your goals, and reap a healthy, productive harvest. You will likely find that your fears were unfounded. The freedom will be a breath of fresh air, warm sunshine, and relief all rolled into one pleasant package that will be your new life. Enjoy, and let the rocks fall where they may!

February 7

Love yourself with every deed, and reap the harvest of health.

Farming and gardening are wonderful activities, and teach us so many valuable lessons. We learn to respect nature and to care for the crops we have planted, which depend upon us. We learn about crop rotation, composting, sustainable agriculture, patience, and the miracle of yield. One marigold plant, properly cared for, can yield thousands of marigold seeds. Plant one fruit tree, from the seed of one fruit, and it will yield hundreds of pounds of fruit each year, often for 100 years or longer. The return on investment is astronomical, unthinkable and almost unimaginably huge. Our garden of health works in exactly the same manner as does any other garden. We do not simply reap what we sow. We reap what we sow, hundreds of times over, time and again, for an entire lifetime. Often enough, we pass our habits and behavior patterns on to the next generation, and often even the next, hence the harvest, be it profoundly healthy behavior or that which leads to chronic illness, is foisted into the future.

Before you eat your next meal, ask yourself if your behavior demonstrates profound self-love, or is the food you are about to eat going to do you harm? Are your interactions with people loving, designed to foster friendship and cooperation, or do they frustrate you and alienate others? How will your choices to be active or sedentary affect your goals regarding body composition, physique, and athletic performance? Be conscious of your actions, and allow that self-awareness to support your healthiest goals. Self-love is not greed. Self-love is leadership, kindness, and a gift to one and all. Everyone benefits when you treat yourself with loving kindness.

Many people put the focus of their attention and kindness outside of themselves. They care about worthy causes such as the animals, the environment, or children in far-off lands, often more than they care for themselves. You cannot give what you do not have, at least not in any sustainable fashion. First and foremost, you must be the model of any change you wish to see come to fruition. The good news is that everyone is watching and modeling after you, even when you are not aware of it. People notice when you are healthy, and want your health to rub off on them. Coworkers, friends, and loved ones notice when you are cheery, energetic, cooperative, and have a positive attitude. Even in the grocery store, people you do not know at all will look in your cart and be affected by your choices. Love yourself in every way you possibly can and see how you and your loved ones benefit.

February 8

You cannot take 100% out, unless you first put 100% in.

When we watch talented dancers, cheer for our favorite athletes, listen to the musicians that thrill us, look at art in a museum, view skyscrapers, bridges, or other wonders of design, and in countless ways appreciate the efforts and genius of others, we are inspired to do our best as well. Often, just watching others do something provides the motivation we require to also do that same thing, or something else we have been putting off. There is no way to complete any project, tiny or grand, without first beginning it.

There is no “something for nothing” in this world, as much as we would love to believe in such a “free lunch” fairy tale. If you want to develop your talent, you must put in the effort. If you want to reap the harvest, you must sow, and tend the garden. How long does it take to gain mastery? The answer is unique to the individual, but in generic terms, “as long as it takes.” The question remains, “Are you willing to put in the time, practice, diligence, effort, energy, focus, attention, sweat, resources, funds, and the other essentials to see your dreams come true?”

With \$5 in your pocket, and no credit of any kind, it is impossible to spend more than \$5. You have to do the work, and earn profits, before you can spend those profits. People often write to me with questions about their health. They cannot understand why they are not getting the results that they desire. Usually when they tell me about their diet, I can easily see why the desired results are not forthcoming. They are putting in 60% effort and hoping to get 100% results. This just never happens, not in real life.

Let's look at an example we can all appreciate. Imagine you were in a relationship with someone you loved dearly. You want a 100% commitment from that person. But you yourself are only willing to give a partial commitment. Perhaps you are afraid to give up your freedom, or you wish to date other people now and then, or you just do not want to take the full responsibility of a committed relationship. Seeing how this will never work is easy for most people when looking in from the outside. Health is no different. In computer lingo, the phrase GIGO means “garbage in, garbage out.” Again, health is no different. If you wish to experience the glory of vibrant health, you must be willing to live healthfully, all of the time. This does not mean that you must be perfect, or that there is not room for leeway within the acceptable limits, for there most certainly is great latitude within the boundaries of that which we consider healthful living. But blatant disrespect for the laws of nature and the laws that govern our health can only invariably lead to health decline. To get the results we all strive for, we must be willing to completely invest ourselves, and our efforts, into living healthfully.

February 9

Potential minus Commitment equals Nothing.

“If it is to be, it is up to me.” Those ten two-letter words are so clear in their message. The number of people who have told me that they were going to write a book is beyond my ability to count. Most of those people really had a great story to tell, too, or had information that would benefit everyone. All they needed to do was write it down. The books almost never materialize. The potential for greatness was there, but remained untapped, simply because the potential authors put no commitment to the project. They ended up with nothing to show for their experience, and everyone lost out as a result.

We all have potential. We all have greatness within us. Enough said about that.

Commitment is the key. With commitment, the obstacles do not matter. With commitment, setbacks are inconsequential. With commitment, nothing can hold you back. With commitment, success is the only possible outcome.

A mentor of mine, Ron Camp, spent 17 years coaching high school football in North Georgia, where they take the game very seriously indeed. He told me that during that entire 17-year span of coaching, his team had never lost, ever, not even one single game. “We did on occasion run out of time,” Ron would sheepishly admit, but then he would brighten up and add, “but we never lost.” Ron’s attitude represented some serious commitment.

Success never attacked anyone. No one just wakes up in the morning to find they have amazing talent, say, in art, music, sports, or in anything. Success to the point of mastery requires practice, dedication, repetition, and a willingness to face and overcome all obstacles, no matter what.

Commit out loud. Commit to others, and if you can, enlist the aid of others to help you reach your goals, even if it means nothing more than accompanying you while you go for your daily walk. Commit on paper, commit in public, but most important of all, you must commit to yourself. No one can put the action behind your commitments but you.

The wonderful thing about committing to any project, no matter how large or how small, is that you do not actually ever have to take on the entire project. This book was written over a period of years, one keystroke at a time. One more keystroke; that was all I ever had to commit to. Every commitment requires action on your part, but all you must do is begin, and then continue.

Day by day, you can build your momentum, grow your project, and increase your commitment. The developing project and the interest it generates in others will provide motivation to continue. All you have to do is begin, anew, every day. Commit.

February 10

Strive to improve yourself constantly.

Hold yourself to a high standard, and watch how easily you rise to it. Visualization is a major part of every realization. Sure, the actual effort may take the bulk of the time in reaching any goal, and the visualization may take only moments, but the insight has to come ahead of the reality. Your time invested in visualizing the future will prove of great value.

At the age of 58, I took up the sport of powerlifting, my first ever effort at strength training in my life. The sport is composed of three events, and in addition to your score in each event, you get a combined total score. My initial efforts totaled 200kg, and even that was only possible if I gave all I could possibly give to every lift. I had to really strive to visualize myself lifting more, but with great effort and abundant optimism, I could imagine myself perhaps someday reaching a 225 total if I really put in the effort. 225kg actually came sooner than I imagined, so I reset my goal, added a six-month time limit, and started aiming for 250kg. I made it, on time, and set the next goal, aiming for a 300 total one year later. I fell short of my goal, but I did manage to improve to a total of 275. I did not give up on the 300kg, knowing that once I had reached it, I would raise my sights again. 325, 350, and 375 have all fallen by the wayside. I am currently visualizing myself reaching a total of 400kg, and doing the training to get myself there.

People naturally strive to improve themselves, and to improve their situation. Children strive to learn to walk, talk, feed and dress themselves, and to make an endless stream of accomplishments. Though, as adults, we are able to take on grander challenges that have much longer timeframes, we still can enjoy making every little accomplishment along the way.

Life is all about growth. When we stop growing, we start dying. Personal growth is rewarding, enriching, and immensely satisfying. To do something better than you have done it in the past is always a treat.

This concept of striving to constantly improve oneself does not mean that we are destined to a life of dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. Striving means that while we acknowledge how wonderful things are in life currently, our human ingenuity always allows us to imagine how things could be, if they were changed slightly, and somehow made just a little bit better, or sometimes, a lot better.

“There, isn’t that better?” could be the trademark phrase that embodies the character and spirit of the human race.

February 11

The only way to coast in life is downhill.

Strive to better yourself. Being complacent is easy, but the road is one-way, and it is a dead end. Finding balance in life is an endless pursuit. Life is to be enjoyed, for certain. Every day poses many serious issues to be addressed, but this does not mean that we cannot have a great time all the while. Nothing makes life more rewarding than reaching a new pinnacle, no matter how small the conquest. Every step represents accomplishment, and every accomplishment gives us a good feeling.

After a big project comes to fruition, many people lose their momentum. Sometimes, their single-mindedness of purpose was so focused that after reaching the goal, they seem to have no other goals to strive for. They are lost, at least temporarily. This is one reason that I recommend that we always have a huge list of goals for which to strive.

Here are some examples of situations where people lose the plot after reaching big goals:

- ❖ After reaching a milestone on a weight loss program, it is common to reward oneself. Often enough, the reward turns into a binge, and the person gains more weight than s/he had lost, and must start all over again.
- ❖ When the sports season comes to an end, many athletes completely stop training, and become quite sedentary for a period of time. When their sport's season comes around again, they must first get into shape, a process that can take months, before they can begin training for their sport.
- ❖ Many people find that after a big mental challenge, they do not want to strive for that level of intensity again. They lose their productivity value, and often become a "has been." This is very common in the world of science, where amazing insights are often generated by young adults, yet these same people rarely continue to bring us great insights throughout the remainder of their lives, in spite of their promising potential.

Pacing yourself is essential, but coasting is dangerous. It is far easier to stay on top of your game, in any field, than it is to lose the plot and attempt to regain your prowess. Continue to set challenges for yourself, even while you are reaching the conclusion of major goals and projects. Human insight invariably gives us the vision to see what is next, a better way, a little improvement.

February 12

Even a dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream.

Have you ever watched salmon swim upstream? The experience is truly inspirational, motivating, and very educational. We are talking about some extremely powerful fish. For them, swimming upstream is usually relatively easy. But towards the end of their route, they are truly spent. They can only move upstream a little at a time, pausing for long breaks after swimming for just a few seconds. They have to pick and choose their way through the eddy currents, finding the moments and places that offer the least resistance. But upstream they swim, for that is their destiny.

Do you think the salmon belittle themselves for the meagerness of their efforts? Do any of the animals talk down to themselves, and tell themselves they are unworthy of succeeding? My guess is that animals do not engage in self-deprecation of any kind, and that when we do so, we have really lost the plot. Trash-talking to yourself, even if it is silent and just a thought in your head, will never bring you to the successes you wish for yourself. You must swim upstream, be like “the little train that could,” constantly reminding yourself, “I can, I can, I can.”

Does this mean that all of life is an uphill battle? No, life is only a battle if you choose to perceive it as such. Life can be perceived in many ways, as you prefer to see it. Uphill can be a glorious experience. Uphill can represent growth and development, learning and experiencing, fun and adventure. You are free to choose to experience life, with all its challenges and opportunities, as glorious and wonderful at all times. Life can be the precious gift, or it can be the penalty, and your attitude is the determining factor.

Heading upstream requires mental toughness, a positive attitude that constantly needs reinforcement. You must be willing to renew your efforts, to dig deep within yourself to find pools of enthusiasm, to revel in the little challenges as well as the large ones, and gleefully ride the rollercoaster of life.

No one is happy to see his or her health go downhill. No one wishes to give up any of his or her abilities. The loss of physical capabilities, loss of enthusiasm, loss of vitality, loss of mobility, and the gradual loss of our five senses combine to take much of the pleasure out of life. A far better option is to pay the price of health by living healthfully, to stay as healthy and fit as possible, physically mentally and spiritually. You never need to give up in any way and coast downhill. An even better choice is to enjoy life from start to finish, to experience more pleasure and less pain, and to strive to be your best at all times.

Are you heading upstream?

February 13

Who you are today is not so important as who you are becoming.

Growth is the one sure sign of life. Where there is life, there is hope. We constantly must show hope that we can better our health, our attitude, and our condition. We hope that we can reach our goals. We take on challenges, volunteer to help get things done, make plans for the future, and in countless other ways demonstrate our intention to continue to grow.

Young children very often model their behavior after that of other young children, sometimes to the chagrin and dismay of their parents. As children approach their teens, they begin to look more seriously to adults for role and behavior models. “When I grow up, I want to be like _____ (this person or that)” is a common expression among those that have realized that indeed they will grow up, and have yet to do so. We come into our own as teens, and often by the time we enter the job market, we erringly think that we have finished growing. We often let go of having role models, and just try to be ourselves. In fact, for as long as we are alive, the growing never ceases. We always have potential to improve, and always encounter opportunities to become a better person, to live more in alignment with our beliefs, and to bring our actions more in line with our knowledge and understanding.

Make a list of the qualities and features you would like to embrace, and those you would like to be known for. Create a plan for developing those qualities, and the action steps to put the plan into effect. Make a separate list of the qualities and features you would like to put into your past, and the plan for getting free of them. Change comes easily to those who embrace it. With a bit of focused practice, you can develop yourself into exactly the person you would most like to become. Making the commitment, having the dedication, putting the effort into action, and demonstrating persistent and consistent renewed enthusiasm for the project of personal self-betterment ranks among the highest of human personality traits. Congratulate yourself now and then for your commitment to personal growth.

Ask yourself, are you a human being, or a human becoming?

February 14

We have come to accept an extremely low level of health as normal.

Most people are sicker than we give them credit for. The average person today is fatter, less fit, sick for longer, less productive, takes more medications, and is overall less healthy than at any time ever in recorded human history. We use labor-saving devices with unprecedented frequency, and have lowered our fitness performance expectations dramatically. To give an idea of how low is our value on fitness, many schools no longer even offer physical education as part of their regular curriculum. This is in spite of the fact that we know that if we do not teach and encourage our children to be fit, their likelihood of ever being fit as an adult is nearly nil.

At the same time, as a nation, we are getting sicker and sicker, according to the various organizations that track such statistics. Year after year, we set records for having more doctor's visits, using more sick leave, taking more drugs, seeking more psychiatric care, undergoing more surgeries, and being more likely to be living with multiple chronic illnesses. The average medicine cabinet today is filled with an alarmingly huge array of over-the-counter and prescription medications. Just a century ago, the phrase "medicine cabinet" was not even in common usage, as such a piece of furniture was solely utilized by pharmacists. Back then, if you looked into someone's bathroom cabinet, you would likely find just a man's razor and brush, and perhaps a few bits of ladies' makeup and perfume.

We are the most medicated people in the world. The average American is currently taking three medications per day. One hundred years ago, the average was statistically zero, as most people prided themselves on never being sick, taking no medications, and rarely if ever seeing a doctor. Productiveness yielded bragging rights, and pay bonuses were awarded to the people who missed the least work each year, with even more recognition going to those who missed no work at all.

The scary part is that we have lowered our expectations for our health and accepted the current status quo as normal. Children are no longer expected to be fit, or even healthy. There are now children's hospitals in every big city, and even entire children's hospitals that are dedicated to one of several different diseases. The good news is that we have the ability to change all of this distressing news and give it a positive outcome. We can choose to be active, to eat fruits and vegetables, to get enough sleep, and to regain our emotional poise.

We can reclaim our health and be role models for others who are willing to take personal responsibility for their own health. Being healthy is easy, and being sick is a chore. Lead from the front and show everyone the value and benefits of being healthy. Others will follow suit, in their own good time.

February 15

Would you like to live your life in such a way that no one ever offends you?

Remember, no offense can be given unless offense is taken. Mr. Spock, on the original television series *Star Trek*, was often the focus of various verbal put-downs, slurs, and other demeaning comments. His response was to always take the higher ground. He popularized the phrase, “No offense is given when none is taken” by using it repeatedly on the series every time he was subjected to such racial abuse. Viewers of the show were being taught a valuable lesson, whether they knew it or not.

You have the option of choosing to be offended, or not, by any comment or action that you see or hear. When someone says to you, “What did you do to your hair?” you might interpret the comment to imply horror, or you can choose to hear delight. Think for a moment before answering, because your response can initiate a war, or cement a friendship. “You look like you just woke up” could start a war. “Oh, I’m really thrilled with this look, and I’m glad you are too” could generate a response that bonds you with your friend.

Are you a person who is easily offended? When you hear or read something someone has said to you, do you think to yourself, “There is no other way this can possibly be interpreted, except as an affront,” or do you take time to consider if there could be other meanings in the message? Perhaps you heard them incorrectly, or they did not really say what they meant, or through some quirk of culture, gender, geography, or social position what they said had a different meaning to them than it did to you. Do you give the person the benefit of the doubt, ask them to repeat what they said, perhaps request that they elaborate, or do you go straight for the kill, figuring that since you’ve been injured by them, you had better respond with your most cutting reply? All of these options remain open to you at all times. The loving and kind responses open doors of communication and friendship with other people. Respectful communications generate even more of the same, while allowing people the opportunity to notice likeable qualities in each other.

Rising above being easily offended requires presence of mind and fully-aware conscious effort. The “knee-jerk” response of hissing back at the other person might be easy, but it destroys relationships. Often, the apparent insult is totally unintentional, as happens when someone (who did not even see you) cuts you off in a car or even in the supermarket. Notice if you are cool and calm or rash and rude, and decide if that is who you really wish to be. Before responding, take a full breath, as there is always time for that. And, whether the person can see you or not, take the time to smile too, as your smile will be heard in your tone of voice, even if the smile cannot be seen.

How many times have you waved your hands at a flying insect, and watched that insect calmly fly away? There is a lesson to be learned from that little creature. We have all brushed a bee aside, but incredibly rarely does the bee ever choose to take offense and sting you. Be like the bee, and choose the peaceful path.

February 16

Unlike machines that wear out from use, our bodies wear out most rapidly from disuse.

“Use it or lose it,” goes the old saying, and the adage has never been more true or appropriate than in today’s world, where sedentary living is at an all-time high. We live in the age of machines; hence, we have the potential to be more productive today than ever before. But giving up our strength, or any other part of our fitness or health in exchange for increased productivity cannot be worth the cost. In Iceland, many centuries in the past, the men used a simple system in order to see who qualified for which jobs. They had four stones, each larger and heavier than the one before it. If you could lift and carry the heaviest stone a prescribed distance, you were considered “fully-strong,” and could take on any type of work, meaning you could take the highest-paying jobs. One stone down from heaviest and your job capabilities were deemed somewhat limited, as the work on the other jobs would likely be too heavy and too demanding for someone who could not lift the “fully-strong” stone. As a result, you earned less. The next stone down in weight qualified you as a “weakling,” where the work options were even further limited and even less financially rewarding. The lightest stone was referred to as the “useless” stone, and if you could not lift that, you simply could not work. One can only imagine what type of work, if any, a person with “useless” strength could obtain in a society that equated strength with functionality and usefulness.

Where we hope for health, we must provide balance. Labor-saving devices truly help us and can serve to make life easier, more enjoyable, and raise our productivity. The fact remains, however, that our bodies depend upon frequent movement in order for us to thrive. Misuse and abuse will destroy a machine as well as they destroy a body, but we are different from machines in that proper use serves us, and disuse works against us.

The movement of nutrients within the cell in order for it to reach all of the cellular organelles is enhanced when we move. The elimination of waste products via the lymphatic system is fostered by the movements we generate through own muscular contractions. The flow of lymph is especially efficient each time we change the direction of our movement. Our muscles depend upon being used in order to develop and remain functional, while our joints will lose range of motion if they are not used on a regular basis. Even our emotions and attitudes are negatively affected when we are sedentary for relatively extended periods, demonstrating our reliance upon movement for the health of our endocrine, nervous, and other systems.

Unless you want the phrase, “I used to be able to,” to creep into your vocabulary way too soon, stay active. Once your world of activity begins to close in upon you, it is difficult to re-broaden your horizons. Staying fit than is far easier than losing your fitness and then trying to regain it.

February 17

**We have no responsibility to convince people
about the correctness of our way living.**

Want to guarantee some serious frustration for yourself? Be attached to controlling the behavior of others. You have total control over your own behavior, but next to no control over the behavior of others. Yet many of us often find ourselves wanting to tell others what to do, when to do it, and even how to do whatever we wish for them to do. While we may fully believe that this controlling behavior is completely generated by our desire to do good and to benefit the other person, in reality, controlling other people is simply not our responsibility (with the exception of certain protective and professional duties).

A certain enthusiasm is generated whenever we discover something wonderful, and very often that enthusiasm includes wanting to share the discovery with others. The expression, "Come on in, the water is just fine" serves as an example of the kindness and generosity we feel for others. Often we are motivated out of altruism, wanting the best for our friends, family, and loved ones. But by forcing anything upon people, even if we truly believe it is for their own good, we generate responses featuring rejection, objection, and resistance. There is an old adage, "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." My mother altered the saying slightly, to, "You ... cannot make him think," which often is more apropos. A mentor of mine, Bill Britt, changed the saying again, to, "You ... cannot hold his head under until he gets thirsty." By being a pest, and trying to convince people that your way is the best way, not only for yourself but also for them, you may often actually succeed only in alienating your loved ones and frustrating yourself.

The best way to get your message across is to live it, to be the living example of the results you wish others to experience. Lead by your own example. It may be far easier to tell others what to do than to do so yourself, but you will be far more successful in your efforts to help others, if you begin by sowing the seeds of health that you wish others to harvest. When you are happy and healthy, others will flock to your message. Remember, health is contagious. Become as healthy as you possibly can and spread the message of health far and wide.

February 18

Taking excellent care of your health is not weird; such behavior is healthy.

Obsessing about taking good care of yourself is definitely not a healthy pursuit. But then, obsessing about anything could be considered unhealthy, and usually is considered to be unhealthy. Of course, there are those who glorify certain obsessions, claiming that the way to exceptional achievement is through the single-minded pursuit of a worthy obsession. The question remains, “Who decides if your obsession is worthy or not?”

If, among all the people you know and tend to interact with, you are the only person eating raw, are you the one with the obsession, or is it everyone else? If you are the only one maintaining your goal weight, while those around you struggle a losing battle as they gain weight annually, are you the obsessive one? You enjoy staying fit and most of the people you know prefer to be spectators. Does that mean you are mentally unbalanced? Since when does taking care of your health count as weird?

If you watch television or open a magazine, you will see countless commercials and advertisements for perfume and cologne. The men and women in those advertisements invariably look beautiful, healthy, fit, coordinated, alluring, svelte, sexy, and overall appealing. Sure, usually they are also quite young, but they did not get to keep those lovely physiques by being obsessed with eating fast food and watching television. Yet if you do what they do, knowing you will get similar results, you are considered weird.

Intentionally harming oneself is unhealthy. Self-destructive behavior, in any form, is a weirdness no parent would ever want his or her child to put themselves through.

Once, in a large and busy Kansas City hotel restaurant, I was interviewed by a newspaperman over dinner. He asked if I thought eating my salad was “radical.” I told him that eating salad was normal and healthy for humans, but that I considered the other 200 people to be radical, as almost all of them were eating dead, burnt bodies (steak).

I mentioned that not one of them even knew how long ago the animal they were consuming had died, or what it had died from. “Looking at it that way, I have to agree with you,” the reporter noted. Sometimes you just have to let people see things through your eyes.

February 19

Your differences are what make you unique and special.

Famous people, and especially entertainers of every type, invariably have unique and special qualities that make them notable. We prize them for their uniqueness, often as much or more than for their talent. If they were just like everyone else, they would not stand out, and we would likely never even notice them. Our differences make us special to others.

We also all have a need to fit in with others. Being outcast from society is a terrible punishment. Being shunned or banned is extremely challenging on one's psyche. We fit in by being like others in a group. The realistic challenge is to be uniquely yourself while being enough like others that you can fit in with your chosen groups. In fact, you can have it both ways.

By being yourself, you are being true to yourself. This is an essential for healthful living. By following the social graces, dress codes, and other behaviors of your group, you will fit in and be accepted. We are each unique to some degree, and everyone knows, understands, and accepts this.

The real value lies in developing your differences, pursuing your interests, investing your time into becoming more of the person you really want to be. Assume you know more about hippopotamuses than anyone else in the world. Don't you think that would be valuable? If you were the best at coaching basketball, or performing brain surgery, or doing rocket science, or playing violin, or telling jokes, can you see how society would value you and your accomplishments? In spite of your uniqueness, and in many ways because of it, people would welcome you into their social circles.

The more you develop the special and unique parts of who you are, the more you pursue those things that are intriguing to you, the more happiness you will get out of life. The return on investment is huge. Not only does developing your uniqueness bring you more satisfaction, it also increases your worth and value to society.

February 20

Health, like success, must be earned.

Success in developing health, as in all ventures, is the cumulative result of an ongoing process. Success must be earned with time and effort, and often enough success with a project takes more of these valuable commodities than many people are willing to invest. If you wish to succeed in seeing a project through to a successful conclusion, however, the requisite energies must be applied.

Living a lifetime in good health is no different to any other project in this regard. If health is your desired outcome, healthful living is a prerequisite. Different people may find different aspects of healthful living challenging. For instance, for some people, being vigorously active on a regular basis is easy, while others find this challenging. Some people relish their sleep while others find every reason to stay up late. I once overheard a conversation between a mentor of mine and his student:

The mentor said, “Leaders are readers. If you want to be a successful leader, you must read, at least a few pages, every day.”

“I really don’t like reading, and hardly ever read,” was the student’s reply.

“That’s OK,” said the mentor, “you don’t have to.”

“I don’t have to read?” the student asked hopefully.

“No,” was the reply, “you don’t have to like reading, but you must read.”

To be healthy, you must participate in healthy activities.

The human body is absolutely amazing, and the fact that it operates under a known and predictable cohesive set of laws is deserving of tremendous respect. One of the laws is that the human body is always seeking and generating the healthiest possible outcome, based upon the substances, forces, influences, and conditions (aka SFIC) that we subject it to. When the body generates symptoms, it is a method of garnering our attention, to let us know that the body’s needs are not being met, and that various systems of the body are being overloaded in some way. The body’s ability to maintain homeostasis, a condition whereby all bodily structures and functions remain relatively the same (within the range of normal limits) is being seriously challenged. Correct the SFIC and the body will have no further need to generate the symptoms, and will stop doing so.

Accumulating health, vitality, and a vibrant ability to capably handle the stresses of life is achieved by living within the guidelines preset by nature. Healthful living results in health, and all other options result in symptoms. Your body will tell you, with very clear messages, when you are following nature’s plan, and when you have strayed. You will know in the morning when you wake up with the energy and enthusiasm of a child. You will know at meals when

food tastes amazing. You will know each time children ask you to play with them. You will know by your attitude, your energy, your digestion, and your posture.

Your health is your own personal responsibility.

February 21

Helping others is how you can best help yourself.

People generally respond in kind, to whatever type of interactions they experience. When you smile, people will usually return the smile. When someone smiles at you, you are likely to smile back. When they cut you off or tailgate while you are driving, aggressive urges often bubble up in response. When someone does you a great service, you usually feel the desire to do something kind for him or her in return. The talented customer service representative knows this and must take action steps against being as upset in response as the customers that call or visit. I was once in a major airport lounge waiting for a plane with my five-year-old daughter in tow, and I invited her to play a game with me. We would walk through the lounge together, her looking one way and me the other, and we would smile at people and see how many we could get to smile back. Of course she won, but I did pretty well too. No one scowled at either of us.

The wonderful part of the fact that people respond in kind is that you can use this information to your own advantage. By adjusting your attitude before you interact with someone, you can create the type of response attitude that you hope they will give you by providing exactly the same to them. Even better, when they respond in kind to your pleasant and helpful approach, it invariably leaves you not only feeling good about the interaction, but also about yourself. By being helpful, not only do you have a better chance of getting what you want out of any conversation, but you also feel good. Giving something to someone in this way is actually a gift to yourself, one of the best you can ever get.

By sharing health information with others, you create the opportunity to go over materials repeatedly, until you really know your stuff. You might become aware of areas where you feel you do not know as much as you would like to. By setting yourself up as a relative expert in some health topic, you effectively paint yourself into a corner of expectation and commitment. You commit to yourself to live the part, to implement the lifestyle issues you are teaching. Meanwhile you generate expectations on the part of the people you are speaking to that you will live the life you so enthusiastically endorse. Everyone wins, and everyone benefits. There is no downside. Such a situation, with no downsides, and where everyone benefits is known as “winfinity.”

February 22

**Human beings are the only creatures that can
choose how they impact the environment.**

Many creatures are hard on their environment in one way or another. Gorillas devastate their surroundings, crushing, breaking down, and eating practically all the plant life around them, and then they move on. They travel from place to place through a large area of terrain wreaking havoc as they go, and leaving a trail of destruction behind them. The gorillas could take years before returning to a spot they have already despoiled. The areas recover in their absence, and by the time they return to a place they have visited previously, it is again ready to yield food and the shelter of privacy to the gorillas. Whales often eat all the food (krill) available to them in the northern waters they visit each year. They eat till there is practically nothing left to eat, and then they leave, often for eight to nine months. During this time, the krill upon which the whales feed have the opportunity to renew their population to the vast numbers the whales require. These processes and events are sustainable, and they repeat themselves year after year in a nearly endless cycle.

Human impact on the environment can be more severe, much longer lasting, and far less sustainable. As in the case of the carrier pigeon and the dodo, many varieties of fish, and (almost) the buffalo, we are notorious for using what seem like endless resources until they are completely exhausted. We despoil areas so completely that they literally will no longer support anything but the most rudimentary of life-forms. In some places, both on land and in the water, we have actually created “dead zones,” where there is apparently no life of any kind. Radioactive accidents, oil spills, and other major disasters have left lasting marks upon the earth. Our cities, roads, and other structures serve to remake the ecology of our world to the point of affecting weather patterns, migration routes, and even the very currents of the world’s oceans.

We have the option to tread lightly upon the earth, to plant trees rather than fell them, and to be an environmental “force for good.” By choosing to eat fruits and vegetables, we minimize the negative effects associated with food production. By not cooking, we vastly reduce our daily carbon footprint. By staying healthy, we exert a dramatic positive effect on overall human productivity. We also all but eliminate the need for what could become the wasted efforts of tens of millions of people in the medical/pharmaceutical and research/advertising industries worldwide who spend their time treating symptoms rather than removing the cause(s) of those symptoms. Will you leave this earth in better shape than you found it?

February 23

Life, like sports, would be pointless without immediate goals.

Can you just imagine two teams of five men, running up and down a basketball court, dribbling and passing the ball, but without any hoops to shoot at? What a boring game of basketball that would be.

Goals give purpose and meaning to our activities. Goals supply us with reasons, a sense of urgency, and when reached, a feeling of accomplishment. Without purpose, why even bother to do anything? A sense of purpose gives a boost to motivation. Whether it is cleaning the kitchen floor, taking out the garbage, or fitness training, there has to be a purpose, or we simply would have insufficient drive to begin, follow through, and finish almost any activity or task. Knowing how much you enjoy a clean kitchen floor, and knowing that cleaning the floor is what brings it to the state that you most appreciate, gives sufficient purpose to the task. The fact that you and your family make a can full of garbage every week, coupled with the information that the garbage is only collected once per week and only one can is collected, supplies plenty of purpose, and the task is done regularly and in a timely manner so as not to miss the pick-up time. If you hope to run a marathon in nine months, your fitness training is given a purpose. Running with a purpose in mind makes the training all the more enjoyable, useful, and likely to get done on schedule.

The purpose is to reach the goal. The meaning is the reason why you have created the goal. Having meaning is critical to the pursuit of any goal. When you do not know why you are asked to perform a certain job or task, for example, even at work, you will often find yourself questioning the value of the effort. When you have a strong “why,” you will find yourself highly moved to do whatever it takes to pursue the goal and complete the task, to do your best. Perhaps you have set a goal to run a marathon. Why have you set such a goal? It could be to lose weight, to gain a specific type of fitness, or perhaps just to keep up with your running friends. The meaning is personal, your private “why.” Meaningless activities would not hold or even attract anyone’s interest. Without meaning, you would likely never put in the effort required to get good enough at running to run a marathon. When you have a good enough reason, anything is possible.

Set your goals high, and you might still reach them. If you fall somewhat short of a high goal, you will still have likely accomplished much. If you set your goals low to begin with, you are not likely to exceed them or reach much higher than necessary.

February 24

Foods with no expiration date do not grow microbes, hence will not support life of any kind.

The expiration date on a food represents the time at which it is unlikely that the food will remain “good.” “Good” in this case means the nutrient value is still intact, and the flavor remains palatable. A valid expiration date assures you that the consistency of the product has not been compromised, and the inevitable effect of oxidation and microbial degradation has not proceeded to the point of making the food unsafe for human consumption. What does it mean if a food does not have an expiration date? It means that the food cannot go bad, because microbes will not consume the product.

There are only three possibilities to explain why a food cannot go bad. Either it has already gone bad, meaning it was never good in the first place, or it simply is not food, or both. What does “going bad” actually refer to? Food “goes bad” when microbial life takes over and consumes the nutrients within the food. Put simply, the food has been overrun by microbes and likely gone moldy. Food that has already gone bad includes items such as cheese, yogurt, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, soy sauces, and all fermented foods.

Foods that do not go bad will not even support microbes, because there is no “food value” in those foods. We typically rely upon microbes in our gut to perform a large part of our total digestive processes, else we cannot access and absorb the nutrients within the food. Can you imagine a substance that cannot be broken down by microbes still being referred to as a food? That seems a rather broad and loose use of the word, does it not? Consider the following dictionary definition of the word, food: “Any nourishing substance that is eaten, drunk, or otherwise taken into the body to sustain life, provide energy, promote growth, etc.” Can something that has already gone bad, or is so devoid of nourishing substances that it will not even support microbial life still be considered “food?” Perhaps there should be some other word.

When you read the label on a food product, be sure to notice if it includes the phrase “inert ingredients.” Inert means, “having no ability to react, no pharmacological action.” Inert ingredients are not food. Many of today’s most popular junk foods are rich with inert ingredients, extending their shelf life beyond all healthy limits. Remember this before you next consume a food with a long shelf life: “The longer the shelf life, the shorter the health life.”

February 25

**People who spend too much time watching their health
have no time left to enjoy their health.**

Healthful living is not a burden. Being healthy is a freedom, one that provides endless time and opportunity to pursue all of that which is of interest in life. Caring for our sicknesses, and the prevention of sickness, is massively time consuming. We spend countless hours waiting in doctor's offices, and lose days of productivity to hospital visits. The time spent reading about this, that, and the other new supplements, superfoods, and nutritional miracles accumulates quickly, and typically provides no benefit. We waste ridiculous amounts of time reading the labels on items that we should never be consuming in the first place. When we are sick but "functional," our focus is being continually distracted from the task at hand by sneezes, coughs, and the other generic interruptions of illness that reduce our ability to get fun and other important things done. The daily time spent taking or applying medications adds up to a substantial chunk of life. Weight loss programs, fitness programs, psychological counseling, beauty treatments, elective cosmetic surgeries, and a wide variety of other activities all combine to usurp the time we would normally and healthfully designate to social, recreational, and functional pastimes.

Is reading the label on five different bottles of tomato sauce to try to determine which has the least amount of salt per serving really good use of your time? Time is, after all, a limited resource in life. Wouldn't you and your family benefit far more if you simply made the tomato sauce yourself, from fresh ingredients? You need not even cook them. Simply combine and blend. Any excess liquid can be drained, and served as a delicious beverage.

Consider the life of someone whose kidneys have failed. They spend two days out of every six or seven in the hospital, feeling terrible, hooked up to a dialysis machine. They spend two days per week feeling reasonably good, on the day after each visit. By the second day after each visit to dialysis, with the blood becoming increasingly polluted with metabolic wastes, to say one feels OK would be a vivid stretch of the imagination. Poorly would be a much more accurate description of their condition. By the third day, they feel absolutely terrible, and the only option is to go back to the hospital, for another day of dialysis. Spending this much time watching one's health leaves very little time, and very little health, to enjoy life's pleasures.

How are you spending your time?

February 26

Your health is like a fire—it will go out if not properly tended.

“Ignore your health and it will go away.” Who could argue? But we must do more than notice our health; we are responsible to take care of it, to nurture and bolster it, to accumulate it, and to wisely invest in it.

Every once in a while, we hit our toleration limit of symptoms and suffering, and become extremely ambitious, very motivated in our desire to generate high-level health. We realize that we desire a sudden burst of health. Most people have heard the story of the impatient person who goes to church in order to pray for patience. Down on knees, hands clasped, the prayer goes, “God, please grant me patience. NOW.”

Big logs burn, but if you drop a huge log on a small fire, you simply put the fire out, rather than igniting the log. We should applaud every effort to improve ourselves, for certain. But we also need to recognize that health is built in increments, in small regular doses, not all at once or in the infrequent bursts common to the weekend warrior, who usually only ends up hurting himself in his efforts. To be healthy for a lifetime requires patience. The quick fix almost never works, and usually it creates far more problems than it solves. “Lose weight NOW,” “get fit NOW,” “live forever NOW,” and other such vacant claims are simply marketing tools, not realistic promises. They foster the creation of lifestyle imbalances, false hopes, and shattered dreams. They take advantage of needy people who deserve a helping hand, and they do so when those people are at their most vulnerable moments. A persistent and consistent program that utilizes repeatedly renewed goals and perpetually newfound enthusiasm is a far more effective method for realizing success in all projects.

An efficient fire is built in stages, from tinder to kindling to sticks to branches and eventually to logs. By focusing your efforts in small but often repeated increments you will experience far more efficient progress towards reaching your long-range goals, such as lifetime health and fitness, sustained weight loss, etc., while also reducing the challenge of such efforts into realistic, bite-size units.

February 27

Without stress there can be no development of strength.

Stress is not the bad guy it is often portrayed as. Stress, when accompanied by sufficient and appropriate recovery, invariably sets off a chain reaction of responses that make it easier for the human body to react to a similar stress should it ever be experienced again in the future.

Athletes stress their limits of performance in order to generate the “training effect” that allows them to improve and perform at ever-better levels. Musicians push themselves to perform to the best of their abilities, and practice relentlessly, knowing that what used to be stressful and difficult will get easier and easier with proper perfect practice. Through experience and practice with the challenges of raising children, parents learn to cope with what other adults would consider the nearly unbearable stress of being responsible for children on a 24/7 basis.

Hothouse plants look beautiful, but they have been grown without the benefit of stress—no temperature changes, no wind, consistent unchanging humidity, never dried out, etc. We know we must be very gradual when we transition an indoor plant to outdoors, else the conditions will be too harsh, and the plant will suffer or even die. Every spring, millions of gardeners worldwide lose billions of plants to the cold, wet, or windy weather in their eagerness to get their greenhouse plants shifted to their gardens as early as possible.

We are capable of handling great stresses, and have witnessed many people coming out of stressful situations better for the experience. When we rise to meet the challenges presented to us by various stressors, we develop ourselves personally. We grow stronger, wiser, and more capable of meeting and succeeding with the subsequent stresses we are sure to encounter. We watch this exact scenario of people developing capabilities every day, in every field of endeavor. By practicing against the best pitchers, the best hitters in baseball eventually succeed against those pitchers, where others fail. By developing specific skills, top businesspeople succeed, no matter how challenging the situation may appear. Plain and seemingly regular people rise up to survive against amazing odds during a wide variety of disasters. We all have the potential to develop ourselves. Use stress wisely, recover fully, and watch your own personal strengths improve as a result.

February 28

Stress comes in two forms: distress and eustress.

Distress does you harm. Eustress results in personal development.

Many people think that stress reduction is an important key factor in living a healthy life. Nothing could be further from the truth! Stress is an essential factor in the development of all types of physical, mental, and emotional strength. Learning to respond to stress in a healthy and productive fashion is the important key. Also important is to recognize that there are two basic types of stress: distress and eustress. Distress implies a stress that is in some way bad, painful, or harmful. Eustress is good stress, productive stress, and can even be perceived as pleasant stress.

You may already see that what is eustress for one person may well be distress for another person. Running for hours on end could be heaven for one person, yet hell for another. The same can be said for watching a movie, eating specific foods, or almost anything. Deciding what is distress and what is eustress is often just that and no more, a decision. Bodybuilders gain size by lifting heavy weights, an activity that many people would find very stressful indeed, and something to be avoided. Still, stress is absolutely necessary to personal development on all levels.

We may not think of children's play as stressful, because they are totally enjoying themselves. That is because the stresses they are experiencing in their activities are eustress, not distress. They are having fun, but they are also pushing their limits, and developing their abilities as a result. All learning incorporates some degree of stress. Your attitude to the experience largely determines whether you are gaining from the eustress or suffering with the distress of the experience.

Even staying in bed for days on end brings challenges, and can be distressful. Many people find it difficult to get comfortable when in bed for day after day. There is a loss of personal power, and the sense that life is passing you by. There is virtually no way of avoiding stress. Learning to cope with stress in healthy ways is the best option.

February 29

What you do once in a while accumulates far more slowly than what you do every day.

We all understand that life unfolds before us as an endless series of moments. We know that we get better at exactly that which we practice and repeat. If, for example, you wanted to learn a certain challenging piece of music on the piano, you might practice it repeatedly, day after day. You would likely notice that you were getting better at playing the piece if you evaluated your progress on a weekly basis. After a month, you might be able to play the entire piece flawlessly, and after two months, to play it from memory. If at that point you missed one day of playing, you could likely still go back to playing the piece from memory the following day. If you played the piece daily every day for a year, with the exception of every Monday, you would still continue to make progress and improve. But if you ONLY played every Monday, or if you only played one Monday per year, your memory and playing skills would devolve, and eventually you would barely be able to play the piano at all, let alone remember or play a complex and difficult piece of music.

Vocabulary, physical skills, in fact your very health is either accumulating or dissipating in this exact fashion. Bit by bit, you can build your health through healthful practices, or you can lose your health by letting it slide. This does not mean that there is no room for exception, for, as in the piano example, there plainly is plenty of leeway to allow for the occasional exploration of the side trails life offers. By organizing your goals so that you know which are most important to you and which are of lesser importance, you will clearly be able to discern if indeed you are on track toward pursuing whatever is the most meaningful to you.

Seeing the big picture is critical to good decision-making. For instance, you might have a desire to build your health and another desire to stay close with your family. Air travel is somewhat stressful, and not considered to be constructive to good health. Yet air travel may be necessary in order for you to be with your family several times per year. Room exists in life to experience occasional health distress (and, in fact, even the opportunities to convert your distress to eustress), as long as the exceptions do not become daily occurrences.

MARCH

Begin the month with the vigor and enthusiasm of a lion.

Hopefully, you begin every day with vigor and enthusiasm. If you do not wake up enthused to face the day, energetic to take on all the awaiting tasks, and excited just to be alive, then by all means it is time to modify something in your lifestyle. Likely all that is required is that you allow yourself more sleep, an easy task that simply requires that you get into bed earlier, sometimes much earlier. Catching up on sleep can totally change your perspective and provide newfound energy that may have felt long gone. Perhaps eating your dinner meal a bit earlier is all you need in order to sleep better and awaken refreshed. Or maybe reducing the fat in your diet represents the single biggest and best modification that you can enact. Whatever may be the cause of your malaise, ignoring it is not the solution.

At the beginning of every month, a wise approach is to create a plan for what you hope to accomplish before the next month begins. Aim high and plan big. Aim for greatness, and even if you fall a bit short, it is better than to sell yourself short by expressing low expectations. Start each month as if it were January 1st, with enthusiasm, and wanting this month to be the best, the most rewarding, and the most productive you have ever experienced. Throw yourself into your projects and give your best. Treat others the way you wish to be treated, and know that amazing things can be accomplished when you create a strong team.

Lions take full responsibility for being lions. They know that they have a role to fill, king of the jungle, and they rise to the challenge. We all have roles to fill, many of them self-chosen, and have the ability to rise to the challenges those roles bring us. Put as much into every month as you possibly can, and know that you will get even more out, with interest. Completely commit to giving your best, and know that all the right things will happen all month long.

March 1

A person gains light, and loses none, by bringing light into another's life.

I was taking a long walk down the streets of Manhattan one day after a heavy snow. The sidewalks had mostly been cleared, as had the streets, but the gutters and curbsides were filled with deep slush, mush, and dirty cold water made even worse by the oils, excrement, and accumulated garbage of the city. I spotted a blind woman walking in front of me, using a long white stick to feel her way forward. While standing at the edge of the curb waiting for the streetlight to change, she had touched the clear part of the street with end of the stick, not realizing that in the gutter, between her feet and the street, was a deep, cold, wet pile of slush. I caught up to her just as the light changed (and the accompanying sound gave her the appropriate cue to walk), and as the blind woman was about to step forward into the slush, I grabbed her by the arm gently and said, "Let me guide you around the snow that you didn't notice." She accepted my help, and I walked and talked with her for several more blocks, each time helping her to cross the street so as not to walk into the deep puddles and mounds of slush. She walked with great confidence. I asked her where she was going. "To the bank." I asked her how she knew if she got the correct change. "Sometimes you must trust people." Finally she said she was at her bank, and we parted company.

I felt fantastic for having helped her, it was truly an amazing feeling. For more than 20 years, I have remembered that incident, and every time I remember it, I get a wonderful, warm feeling in my chest. This woman allowed me to help her, yet it helped me much more than it did her, I am certain. In fact, I seriously doubt that the woman could possibly still recall that incident at all, as it was not a big deal to her. I brought a little bit of light to her, but she brought a lot of light to me in return.

We all have opportunities to help others, every day. By so doing, we actually help ourselves as well. If you wish to feel really good, help someone in need. Set a fine example. Live life as you would have others live theirs. Shed the bright light that allows others to see the truth—healthful living results in health.

March 2

The difference between work and play is attitude.

What a world we live in! We have everything at our fingertips. We can communicate in real time with people who live on the opposite side of the world. We can purchase almost anything, and have it delivered to our doorstep, with no more effort than just pushing a few keystrokes. Enough self-help books exist to fill a library. MP3 players, smartphones, and cameras have become so common that we have found ways to entertain ourselves while performing almost every daily activity. We have the option to enjoy every moment of every day.

What is it that makes us desire so much entertainment? Perhaps it is our need for play. Humans require regular doses of play in order to stay healthy. While we attempt to avoid interruptions from play, we will create interruptions from work if none occur naturally. The beauty and the challenge of this requirement is that what one person perceives as play, another may perceive as work. The reverse is equally true, meaning that the option to play is always available to us, by choice.

Essentially, perception boils down to attitude. You have the choice to work at making dinner, or play at making dinner. Either way, dinner gets made, but if you play at it, you are likely to enjoy the activity far more, and very likely to do a better job in the process. Most people find that they are willing to put more effort and enthusiasm into their play than they will when working. When you do your daily fitness activities, you can approach your training in workmanlike fashion, as if it were a job, or you can perceive of your exercise as if it were a game. We quickly lose enthusiasm for work, whereas enthusiasm rises while playing a game, and continues to rise the more we play, waiting for the mystery to unfold and allow us to see the outcome. We strive to finish working simply so that we can move on to some other activity, hopefully one that will be more enjoyable, such as play. You will find that you will have more fun, get more done, in less time, and with better results, if you play your way through your day as opposed to working your way through the day. A day of endless play is a thing of beauty, indeed.

March 3

As soon as you open your eyes, it is time to start making the day count.

Every moment in life counts, and you haven't got a moment to lose. A certain degree of urgency is required to get us started, and to keep us highly productive throughout our days. This does not mean we must be frantic or frenetic, or, like the rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*, there is no reason to feel we are in a hopeless situation. What a worthy goal: to be calm while productive, relaxed yet focused, filled with initiative and also able to lend a hand, or ear, whenever others need your help. Every day offers an endless stream of opportunities, choices, and potentially rewarding options.

Finding balance in all of life's pursuits is imperative for health and happiness. Some people are happiest to start their day by gradually warming up to the tasks that must be faced. Some people prefer to get their work done as early as possible. Some face the most difficult tasks first, while others choose to begin with entertainment, saving the more challenging efforts for later in the day. When all is said and done, only you can determine how to best structure your day.

Still, if you wish to be productive, a good policy is to not put off till later that which can be accomplished now. Often enough, we find that the apprehension we create before taking on any task, effort, or project is grossly exaggerated compared to the realization we experience when actually performing the task. Mountains turn into mere molehills when we simply focus our attention and put our efforts solely onto our goals.

There comes a point in every day when it is time to stop, relax, rest, recreate, and eventually go to sleep. When you reach the point of diminishing returns, where your efforts are not realizing sufficient results, when distraction becomes the rule rather than the exception, and staying focused on the task at hand becomes extremely difficult, the wise person will stop for the day. Tomorrow is another day, and you can begin anew, refreshed, and filled with enthusiasm and energy to face whatever tasks the day brings. The most productive people capitalize on their morning time, when tasks can be accomplished most rapidly. Begin your day with zest. Accomplish enough to make yourself proud of what you have done. Fill each day with worthwhile efforts. At the end of every day, we all want to be able to look back and say, "It was a good day. I did my best." For doing your best is really what matters in life.

March 4

You may not be able to control the length of your life, but life's width and depth are completely up to you.

Do you take the time to notice and appreciate the little things in life? Do you allow your thinking to be sidetracked now and then, in order to pursue the interesting branches of thought that often come to you? Do you find yourself thinking and doing things that are interesting, in general, even when you find yourself in the company of people with interests completely different from your own? Are you ever bored? You just never know when something that may appear to be a completely useless and boring conversation might turn out to be a lifesaver.

A friend of mine named Jim was once telling me a story about the time he went with his wife to visit some of her friends. As it turned out, the man of the house made musical instruments, and his specialty was making clavichords. Most people do not even know what a clavichord is, let alone are they aware of all the intricacies of how one is made. Jim started taking the tour of the clavichord factory and realized he was bored out of his mind, and just made peace with that. Then he noticed how intensely fascinated the man giving the tour was, and how he threw his heart into the process of making clavichords. He gave his all, even when just explaining about clavichords. Jim decided that if this man was so interested, there must be something about this entire experience for him to be interested in too. He started asking questions, got involved in the conversation, and by the time he was done, he had a newfound interest in the instruments, and was really excited about playing and making clavichords too.

When he told me the story of his experience, he had two different stories to tell. The first was about how deciding to be interested in something he did not think he was interested in really changed his entire experience for the better. He realized that his interest, or his lack thereof, really could be a conscious decision for him, and that once he decided he was interested, his entire experience of life changed. The second story was about making clavichords, and the various processes, tools, and challenges related to such construction. By the time Jim was finished, he had fully transmitted his interest to me, and to this day, I still find the making of musical instruments to be a fascinating endeavor. You just never know when someone or something is going to expose you to something that will result in a change in the entire direction of your life. Be open to life's possibilities. Throw yourself in and enjoy the many directions and experiences toward which you are directed.

March 5

Resolve to be the very best that you can possibly be.

Knowing what is important to you is a very valuable insight. Or, perhaps more to the point, being able to list that which is important to you, according to degree, helps you to stay focused. To be your best, you must first decide whom it is you wish to be, and then live the part. Are you focused on your work, your family, your health, or your hobbies to the degree that the other areas of your life suffer? If you had to choose, “Good family man” or “Got his work done” as your epitaph, which would you prefer?

How do you wish to be remembered? No one is perfect all the time, but striving to be your best at all times is a very worthy goal.

Winning everything every time is simply not possible. We cannot be the best at everything, everywhere, every way, always. We can, however, strive to be our very best at all times. To give your all is an exceptionally rewarding and exhilarating feeling. The experience of going “all out” leaves us with a desire to do so again. Relentlessly pursuing excellence is a choice, and it is one that is very worthwhile, as it invariably leaves us feeling good about ourselves.

We often accomplish much more than expected when striving to be our best. Many world record performances, outstanding inventions, astonishing art, and brilliant insights have come about unexpectedly, once the commitment to be one’s best was made. Athletes shooting to be their best, hoping to conceivably set a world record by the slimmest possible margin, have been known to smash the record, often by literally inconceivable degrees, once they committed to give their all. We are simply not aware of how much we are actually capable of, where our limits end, how far and wide is our reach, or to what degree our capacity extends in any field of endeavor.

Being your best does not always lead to success, but it often leads to performances that exceed all expectations. Commit to live to the highest principles, and you will never be disappointed in yourself. When you shoot for the stars, even if you miss, you’ll still likely end up with some stardust, at the minimum.

March 6

If you wish to become healthier, associate with people healthier than yourself.

A bumper sticker read, "If you wish to appear trim, healthy, fit, and intelligent, hang around with a bunch of fat, sick, out of shape, stupid people." Well, that's one way to look good, but you would look even better by associating with the people who have what you want. Several wealthy people were asked, "If you lost all your money and wanted to make more, what would you do." They all said basically the same thing, indicating that they would get a job someplace where wealthy people go, such as at a posh restaurant, golf course, or spa. The thought expressed was that if they were associating with wealthy people, even if it was only as a busboy or caddie, that opportunities to make money would eventually come their way.

When it comes to gleaning health, the answer is even easier than getting a job. By associating with healthy people, people with healthy habits, people dedicated to self-improvement and personal growth, people who are committed to eating raw fruits and vegetables, staying fit, getting sufficient sleep, and incorporating balanced amounts of the other tenets and necessities of healthful living, you greatly increase your opportunities and chances for improving the quality of your lifestyle.

When it comes to living healthfully, we must consider all aspects of health with the understanding that those aspects that are the weakest links tend to control the altitude to which your entire health can rise. When you associate with people healthier than yourself, you will quickly become motivated to strive to have what they have, to be able to do what they do, and to learn from their examples in every conceivable way. Every improvement in lifestyle will result in improvements in health. Soon, you will be recognized as one of the healthy ones, and you will have others flocking to associate with you.

March 7

Though we may fail to destroy the world with our carelessness, we may succeed in making the world uninhabitable for humanity.

A mere 400 years ago, a squirrel could probably travel from Maine to Texas without once having to come down out of the trees. Today, a squirrel could not get out of Maine without climbing to the ground many times. We have successfully deforested huge portions of our continent, and fostered global climate change in the process. Many of the tectonic plates upon which our continents sit, are supported by, and virtually float upon massive seas of oil. We are draining that oil to use it for fuel. No one really knows what will happen when the plates are no longer supported as they were, but most of the predictions are not good. From nuclear testing to nuclear power plant disasters, GMO foods to fast foods to junk foods, and chemtrails to strip mines and fracking, we are making a mess out of what was once a paradise. Nuclear winter threatens us, global disasters are becoming ever more common, and the scale of the mess we are making of this planet is multiplying rapidly.

Yet the balance of nature prevails, and reestablishes itself wherever and whenever mankind attempts to override it. We may succeed in making our planet unlivable for ourselves, but there are a wide variety of life forms that will survive, from microbes to earwigs to roaches and weeds of all sorts. Even the scorched ground invariably grows green again.

Will you become part of the problem, or are you part of the solution? Are you involved in reforestation, or helping to preserve the earth in any of the countless ways available to you? Are you being responsible in your use of natural resources by eating a low-fat raw vegan diet? The low-fat raw vegan diet, commonly referred to as "*The 80/10/10 Diet*," is the kindest on our environment, while fostering the growth and development of fruit trees, sustainable organic agriculture, and an overall active lifestyle. Are you actively doing what you can each day to make the world a better place? Do you consider yourself a "force for good," and if so, how?

Let us do all we can to make the planet better for those who are inevitably going to inherit it from us.

March 8

Health is something that requires action, something that you move on daily, rather than something you contemplate.

Some items, such as deciding what to do on an upcoming vacation, or the pursuit of various philosophical conjectures, make for excellent thought experiments. In your own mind, you can examine the pros and cons of your potential choices. Commonly, you can relate to potential outcomes, have a framework of reference, or perhaps even previous personal experience that help guide your decision-making. The accumulation of health is not such an item. Great health cannot be imagined by someone who has never experienced this superlative state. We can imagine what we think great health would be like, but in reality, superb health is much better than anything we can imagine.

Health requires constant and appropriate action; even when the action is sleeping, resting, or relaxing. Health is built through the continuous application of, and participation in, healthy substances, forces, influences, and conditions. Health is the natural outcome of healthful living. Healthful living is an active process, not a passive one. You cannot simply watch life go by and expect to be healthy—you must participate. Health never just dropped down out of the sky and attacked anyone. Enthusiasm may indeed be catchy, but health must be earned. Plenty of room exists for us to be spectators, as well as participants, in games, watching children play, etc., but superior health is earned through activity.

Health is the birthright of every being. The potential to build health exists in all of us. We build our health in countless, tiny increments. In our impatience, we may often hope to build health in grand chunks, or in enthusiastic bursts, but the reality that we either build or destroy our health consistently and persistently remains.

When you are not building your health through the regular activities of your life, your health is likely dissipating and decaying. Earn your health with action. You will be glad you did.

March 9

If everyone you meet is your mirror, how do you think people are going to act towards you if you start belittling yourself?

Berating yourself is never a constructive pastime. Belittling oneself for any reason never brings about the desired results. In the world of sport, it is common to see athletes make mistakes, some small and some grand, but it is exceptionally uncommon to see them openly beat themselves up about the mistake. A receiver may drop a passed football, and often the audience shows more emotion than the player. The spectators do not understand why the receiver does not show how much he cares. The player must remain in the moment, intent upon the current play and not the past one, focused on catching the next pass that comes his way. Studies on players of various sports, including golf, tennis, gymnastics, diving and basketball, have repeatedly shown that when players start talking negatively towards themselves, derisively telling themselves that they should not play so badly, they invariably begin to play even worse. When they speak kindly, use encouragement, and talk positively about their future play, they have the best chance at performing at their peak. In other words, it is a rare person indeed who could perform the trick of pulling himself up by talking himself down.

When we smile at people, we increase the likelihood that they will smile back at us. Do someone a favor, or pay them a compliment, and likely you will receive the same in return. That is the way people are; they tend to respond in kind to whatever emotions and experiences those around them are transmitting. If you belittle yourself in front of others, you would be wise to anticipate that others will join in, for there are few who can resist the temptation.

The way others act towards you is extremely telling about the way you act towards others. Indeed, everyone that you meet truly does function as a mirror that tells you how they perceive you. Are people openly friendly and cooperative towards you? Do you tend to talk to helpful people who smile when they converse with you? Do people align themselves with you, sometimes even going out of their way to make your life better? What do you think you will have to change about yourself in order to facilitate those types of responses from others? Remember that in order to harvest, first you must sow, and then you must tend the crops you have sown. This is as true with interpersonal relationships as it is with any crop. You must become the person who gives to others, who thinks highly of others. When you are the person who speaks lovingly and kindly to yourself and to others, you will receive the same from others, multiplied and magnified.

March 10

Treat your loved ones as you would treat a baby, by nurturing them and remembering that they too are also extremely vulnerable.

If you wish to have the best experiences with your family and friends, you must treat them as if you cherish them. Make it unmistakably clear that you think highly of them, in your every action, word, and even your body language. Often enough, when times are challenging or stressful, it is not just you feeling the challenge and responding to the stress, but those around you as well. Adding insult to injury is totally counterproductive, and will only add to everyone's frustration, including your own. What started out as a challenging situation can quickly escalate into a nightmare of guilt, blame, and harsh words that would have been far better not spoken. The secret to having calm and loving interactions with others lies in maintaining your perspective, keeping track of what is really most important to you, and by acting in accordance with your priorities.

Maintain your perspective when speaking with others. What are you hoping will be the outcome of your interaction? How important is it, for you that the other person acts in a friendly and helpful fashion? How do you wish to be perceived and remembered? Remember that you never get a second chance to make a first impression, and that every encounter makes an impression of some sort.

What is really most important to you? More often than not, being kind is better than being correct. Do you wish to bring out the best in others, and have them bring out the best in you? Do you care only about your own agenda, or do you believe that the needs of others are as important, and sometimes conceivably even more important, than your own? The old saying, "When Momma ain't happy, nobody's happy" is based on more than just a shred of truth. It is indeed extremely unlikely that any member of the household can be happy when another member is unhappy. Helping the one will invariably help everyone.

Act in accordance with your priorities. During every encounter, we must remember our purpose, the reason for the encounter. What is it that you hope to achieve? How do you want the other person to feel as a result of having interacted with you? What standards do you set for yourself? Keep in mind that at any given time, the persons you are dealing with might be wearing their "thin skin," might be at a low emotional ebb, or might be experiencing challenges of their own.

Pose as the person you wish to be perceived as, and become that person whenever and wherever possible.

March 11

**Remember the Seven P's of Success:
Prior Proper Planning Prevents "Piss Poor" Performance.**

The age-old adage "practice makes perfect" has most likely led to more failures than all other performance strategies combined. Practice definitely does not make for perfection, practice simply makes you better at whatever you are practicing. If you repeatedly practice a skill, but do so with a built-in technical error, you will get very good at performing the skill, and the error. Equally as misleading is the concept of planning ahead. Planning ahead is of little value, if you have not planned properly. Planning properly not only requires planning for success, your Plan A, it also includes developing strategies to meet and overcome the wide variety of obstacles and challenges you might meet along the way. These are your Plans B, C, and even your Plan D. When it comes to success, proper planning is almost everything. Abraham Lincoln once said, "If you have eight hours to chop down a tree, spend the first seven hours sharpening your axe." The value of proper planning simply cannot be over-emphasized.

We all wish to progress, and we all want that progress to happen faster. Usually we want the progress to occur even faster than it actually or realistically can. We want the finished product without having to put in the endless hours of preparation, without the failures, and definitely without the frustration. Thomas Edison is said to have tried more than 10,000 different filament materials when developing the lightbulb. At one point, when it was suggested to him that he should quit, for he had not learned anything, he is said to have retorted, "Of course I've learned. I've learned 7,500 things that won't work." Such is the type of planning required, if you hope to develop success on a grand scale.

Success simply does not happen overnight. Malcolm Gladwell, in his book about various successful people, "Outliers," discusses the idea that almost all great successes are preceded by at least 10,000 hours of preparation. Practice, planning, preparation, and lots of perspiration do not guarantee success, but they are the key ingredients required, if you are even hoping for a successful outcome to any endeavor.

March 12

If you want to do something well, you have to do it often. Make healthful living a habit.

Awareness is the first step toward making lifestyle changes. Heightening your awareness of an issue will make it much easier for you to put attention on the matter. Acute awareness is all but impossible to ignore. The following is a simple and painless drill that will aid in heightening your awareness of your personal health habits. Putting your habits under the bright light of scrutiny will motivate you to make the lifestyle modifications you desire. Likely, you know what you need to be doing in order to improve your health. In case you are not certain, however, make a list with three columns. In the first column, the “always” column, list all the health-building and health-destroying practices that you find yourself performing on a daily basis. In the middle column, the “sometimes” column, list all those that you participate in occasionally (“occasionally” could be defined as anything ranging from less than daily to only a few times per decade). I suggest making the middle column by far the widest of the three, so as to accommodate and demonstrate the broad spectrum between “always” and “never.” In the third column, the “never” column, list all the health-builders and health-destroyers in which you never take part.

Now the fun begins.

Stage One: Choose two or three items from each list that you would very much like to see moved to another column. Draw an arrow from the item to the point on the chart that you would like to see the item moved to. That’s all you really have to do. The action of noticing the problem and choosing a better solution is often enough to motivate you to begin the process of change.

Stage Two: Should you not find yourself getting along the path you wish to go down, or you are not getting there rapidly enough, put a date on the pointy end of the arrow to indicate when you would like to reach your target goal. You can also put dates along the shaft of the arrow to indicate how much progress you would like to make by a certain date.

Stage Three: Write a list of all the action steps that you need to perform in order to help you successfully reach your goals by the dates indicated in your timeline.

Stage Four: Write a list of at least two obstacles that might arise that could derail your efforts at performing the necessary action steps for reaching your goals. Then write down the solutions to overcoming these obstacles.

At regular intervals, weekly or monthly, review your chart, make any necessary updates, and see how you have progressed. You are now on the road to superior health, for you have made healthful living a chosen daily preference.

March 13

The only thing that really works is you.

The number of people who say to me, “Give me one year, and I’ll be fitter than you” never ceases to amaze and amuse me. I am not, I do not believe, a super-fit guy. I train with all the intensity I care to muster, but I do not train all that hard, all that long, or all that often. I sit at a computer for my work, play a bit of guitar, experiment in the kitchen for fun every day, and putter around the garden for a hobby. I get out regularly for a dose of physical activity, do not get me wrong. But I am a doctor, a writer, and a teacher, and I do not make my living through my fitness. Still, I have done my groundwork in order to develop a base of fitness, and I know that an unfit person will have to progress a long way before leaving me in the dust. Fitness never attacked anyone. No unfit person ever woke up one morning having gotten fit overnight. Fitness does not come by miracle, not even by surprise. Fitness is built, and accumulated, as a result of putting in the necessary effort. Most unfit people have no idea just how much effort is involved.

Whether we are speaking of physical fitness, fiscal fitness, emotional poise, social maturity, scholastic achievement, mental, moral, or any other type of development, the effort must go in before the results can be harvested. When you are building a house, shortcuts invariably mean compromises in quality. The same can be said for building your fitness, building your food habits, or any aspect of your personal development. Put in the effort, and the results are predictable.

The need for groundwork in lifestyle management is endless. If you are willing to put in the work, you can expect to enjoy a lifetime of health.

March 14

**Are you willing to ruin the environment in which
your children and grandchildren will live their futures,
simply for the sake of a few conveniences today?**

The old saying, “If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem” applies more to our awareness of world environmental issues than it ever has in the past. Not that long ago, in fact, until plastics were introduced to society, everything a human being could touch or build was biodegradable. Admittedly, bricks, steel, and rubber take longer to return to their original form than do leaves, pelts, and sticks, but they do break down. Plastic is here for the long haul. There is an island of waste plastic garbage floating in the Pacific Ocean that is said to be larger than Rhode Island, and unlike that smallest of states, the plastic island is growing on a daily basis. Are you contributing to its size, or helping to shrink it?

We know that our use of petrochemicals is damaging our world in many ways. We destroy pristine environments searching for our precious oil and then finish the job by downing great forests and creating dead zones in the seas while procuring the crude. Oil spills ruin reefs, kill countless numbers of wildlife, and destroy our coastlines. When we burn the fuel, we corrupt the very air we must breathe. The materials comprising our beautiful vehicles bely ugly scars on the landscape in the form of strip mines for procuring metals, environmentally unfriendly high-tech manufacturing plants, plastics factories, smokestacks galore, and even the ultimate house of horrors: factory farms.

Is every mile you fly and drive absolutely necessary? Are you reducing your carbon footprint, or is it still growing?

Veganism, animal rights awareness, and the application of kindness in all aspects of our behavior are on the rise. Are you leading from the front in this regard, or are you resisting the powerful forces that are fostering these inevitable changes in our society? Is your home environmentally friendly, or are your bathroom and kitchen cupboards filled with toxic chemical cleansers and detergents?

What are you doing to make the world a better place? How are you helping to heal the damage we have done to our planet? Cooking food actually is one of the biggest contributors to environmental problems that we know of. Not only are trees felled, greenhouse gasses produced, and precious fuels taken from the earth in order to cook food for 7 billion people three times per day, but that very cooked food contributes to human malnutrition, illness, and lost productivity. Free yourself from the shackles of cooked foods, and you do your grandchildren a big favor.

March 15

How you view yourself is the most important thing.

Are you actively involved in building your self-esteem, self-image, self-love, and self-confidence? Do you believe you are on a healthy and productive path, one that will eventually get you to where you wish to go in life? Are you sure of yourself? When someone says to you, “What did you do to your hair?” do you perceive it as a compliment or a criticism? Do you accept compliments well, and also accept criticism well?

Many people are more concerned about what others think of them than they are about what they think of themselves. As it turns out, we truly have no control over what others think about us. Our best efforts to satisfy and please someone could easily backfire in our faces, often due to no fault of our own. Despite what anyone says to you about what they are thinking, you really have no idea what they are actually thinking. They may be telling you the absolute truth, or what they are saying could be complete fiction. Is what others say and think about you really that important?

What really is important is how you talk to yourself when you are alone, as well as when you are with others. How easily you lose your cool, how quick you are to become overtly upset, and how long it takes you to regain your equilibrium are all very telling factors that readily demonstrate what you think of yourself. Do you resort to cutting sarcasm? When speaking to yourself, do you talk yourself up, or do you speak harshly about yourself? If other people were to say the things you say about yourself, would you feel you had been complimented, or unduly criticized?

How you view yourself comes across to others in thousands of tiny ways, many of which are subliminal. People just get a feeling about you, and then they respond, positively or negatively, often based more upon those feelings than upon anything else.

At the end of the day, how you feel about yourself is going to determine if you enjoyed your life or if you simply suffered through it. Being kind to yourself, being supportive, constructive, and building yourself ever upwards are essentials to living a happy and healthy life. Practice viewing yourself as being the person you most want to be, and become that person. Practice being kind to yourself, until kind behavior becomes authentic and automatic, and reap the harvest of health that comes your way.

March 16

Victories come in “cans.” Defeats come in “can’ts.”

Have you heard the expression, “skiing the trees” when referring to going off the trails and skiing through the woods? What a misleading expression that is. No one actually skies the trees—they ski the spaces between the trees. If you allow your visual focus to be distracted from the spaces and instead focus on the trees, you will likely find that you ski directly into the tree, no matter how hard you try not to do so. This phenomenon, known as “object fixation,” applies to a great many activities. Have you ever ridden your bicycle in between two upright posts? Even though there may be room for the handlebars to fit between the uprights, if you find yourself focusing on one of the obstacles, rather than the empty space in the middle, your chance of fitting between them decreases, and your chance of hitting a post increases substantially. How many times have you told yourself that you could not do something, and then proved that you were correct by your failure? Your thoughts lead the way to your success, or failure, more times than you care to know about.

You create your reality with your thoughts. This is the power of visualization. See yourself succeeding, and likely you will succeed. When fear takes over and you visualize yourself failing in some way or another, you are in fact very likely going to cause that failure, no matter what.

How many times after thinking you couldn’t do something were you surprised to find out after trying a bit more that, in fact, you could do exactly what you thought you couldn’t? Most people have similar experiences many times every year. When you think “I can’t,” you are more than likely going to be correct, and have only a small chance of succeeding. Equally, when you think, “I can,” you dramatically increase your chances of being correct. An “I can’t” belief system leads to a “why bother” attitude.

The real secret to success lies in breaking your tasks and projects into small bits that are so easy that you simply cannot fail. By stringing the successes together, one after the next, you can eventually accomplish a big project. Like eating the proverbial elephant, one bite at a time, you can be victorious at anything, as long as you take on tasks with an “I can” attitude, and break the task into smaller action modules of which you are confident that you will not fail.

March 17

You may be the minority, but please do not be the silent minority.

Health is beautiful, fitness is eye-catching, and success inevitably breeds more success. If you've got it, flaunt it. Two T-shirts come to mind. The first is a picture of a lovely cow, in a beautiful green field, with a lake and mountains in the background. The picture is truly beautiful, the scene tranquil. The image definitely catches your attention, as does the caption, "This cow was mutilated and suffered terribly while being slaughtered so that you could get fat and sick eating her flesh."

What a turn off. But the message is difficult to argue with. You may be able to catch more flies with honey than with vinegar, but this T-shirt really packs a wallop. The second T-shirt shows a cartoon drawing of a carrot-person dressed in running clothes. The caption on the front, "No meat athlete," definitely gets you thinking, without any element of offensiveness. The back of the shirt shows the same carrot, but this time the caption reads, "Runs on plants." Again, the message is clear, slightly humorous, and not at all offensive. Which approach do you think will influence the most people towards a healthier vegan lifestyle?

Whether you choose the honey or the vinegar as your own method of spreading the news, the one technique that is guaranteed not to work is dead silence. Keeping your approach to eating, exercising, or mental clarity a secret will not help others become aware.

Be verbal, and be seen. Write letters to the editor expressing your views, wear clothing that sports your message, and be the living example of that which you espouse. Use bumper stickers to get the word out, and participate on social media sites. Let people know what you believe. People today are fatter, sicker, and more eager to learn how to overcome their issues than ever before in history. Your bumper sticker may be all it takes to get someone on the road to 80/10/10, and you might never even know about it. Your example at a family gathering or holiday event might be the trigger that catapults someone into exploring veganism. Your letter to the editor or on a social site might stimulate an avalanche of people to go raw. We cannot know the future, or exactly who will be next to catch on to *The 80/10/10 Diet*. Lead from the front, and be sure to shout and cheer encouragement for those who may potentially be following you.

March 18

Your best teaching tools are not your words, but your actions.

We all know the expression, “Actions speak louder than words,” but it is easy to lose sight of the truth of this fact. Telling someone what to do might be the easy way for you to get your point across, but most people learn primarily by seeing, and not by hearing. When you set the example that you want others to follow, you can be sure that others will indeed follow you.

Many people come to me with frustrations that their family members or other loved ones just will not adopt the 80/10/10 raw vegan lifestyle. Usually, upon deeper prying, I find out that the person wanting to do the influencing is not actually following the lifestyle him/herself, but wants others to go first. “If my family did the program with me, that would be so much easier for me,” is a common lament. I encourage these people to take personal responsibility, to be a leader, and to lead with patience, compassion, and loving kindness.

“Why can’t they see that 80/10/10 is best for them?” I am asked repeatedly.

“The light goes on for each of us when the time is right,” I reply. “Someone has to show us the way.”

In sport, many of the “impossible” records were broken repeatedly once the first person broke the record. Ethiopia’s Haile Gebrselassie smashed a marathon record that had existed for four years, dropping the mark by more than 30 seconds. One year later, in September 2008, he dropped another 26 seconds off the record, thus becoming the first man in history to go under 2:04, long thought to be an impossible barrier. It did not take Patrick Makau of Kenya long to better Gebrselassie’s mark by another 21 seconds, and to also run an unofficial 2:03:02 in the Boston Marathon. When Dennis Kimetto of Kenya ran 2:02:57, he became the first man to run a sub-2:03 marathon. The record is expected to continue to drop. Someone just had to show that it can be done.

The four-minute mile is the classic “impossible” story. Physiologists said four minutes was not just dangerous, but that it was physiologically impossible. People talked about trying to reach the mark for the better part of a century, but always failed. Eventually the record plummeted to 4:01.4, and stayed there for almost a decade. There were rumors of several people unofficially going sub-four minutes before Roger Bannister finally did the deed in 1954. Since that time, more than one thousand men have run under the four-minute mark, with the current best being 3:43.13.

Whether it is putting a man on the moon, some great athletic achievement, or wireless internet, there is always someone who will tell you that your desired accomplishments are “impossible.” Do not believe them. Show them your success, and know that others will follow in your footsteps.

March 19

Average is no more than the best of the worst, the worst of the best.

The average American makes resolutions that last just four-and-one-half days. Becoming armed with information about people in general is a great way to help you in forming your own specific behavior patterns, and in making your own decisions about many different things. The Bell Curve, also known as the Normal Curve or Gaussian distribution, makes it possible to estimate the probability of occurrence of any value of a normally distributed variable. For instance, let's say you evaluated the driving skills of 10,000 different people. The result would be a Bell Curve, with about 34 percent of the people falling within but below one standard deviation from the average, and another 34 percent of the people falling within but above one standard deviation from the average. Between one and two standard deviations, above and below the average, would be another 27 percent of the people.

Within three standard deviations from average, you would find more than 99 percent of all drivers. Yet if you were to ask 10,000 people to rate their own driving skills, more than 90 percent of them would rate their skills as "above average." Laws of statistics and probability say that about 70 to 80 percent of all drivers must qualify as having average driving skills. At the very most, not more than about 20 percent of all drivers can actually have the necessary driving skills for them to qualify as "above average." Yet more than 90 percent of all drivers consider themselves to be endowed with skills that are indeed above average. How does that information affect your estimation of your own driving skills?

What is your honest assessment of your resolution-keeping abilities? If you fall anywhere near the average of four to five days, wouldn't making New Week's resolutions make a lot more sense than New Year's resolutions? Perhaps your abilities do not quite measure up to "average." In this case, perhaps making New Day's resolutions would be the more logical and likely to succeed approach. If you were to make a New Day's resolution every morning upon arising, you would get really good at making resolutions, and likely just as good at keeping them. Here's to your success!

March 20

**Three R's of Goal Setting:
Make your goals Reasonable, Ratcheting, and Resettable.**

Goals are simply wishes with deadlines. Setting goals is a relatively easy process, as long as you follow the three R's.

Make your goals reasonable. You must believe that your goals are realistic. No one else must believe, but you must. You must know in your heart of hearts that you can truly reach your goals, if you put in the appropriate effort. If you know, for instance, that bodybuilders typically work hard all year to gain 12 pounds of muscle, it would not be reasonable for you to believe that you could gain 12 pounds of muscle in a matter of two or three months. While it is fine to have grand visions, organize your goals into action steps that are small enough so that each step seems reasonable to you.

What are ratcheting goals? These are a series of smaller goals that build, one upon another, until the larger goal is accomplished. Ratcheting goals are like walking up a flight of stairs, one at a time. Most flights of stairs have 14 steps, but you cannot take the last step until you have taken the ones that precede it. You might have a goal to be able to perform 25 pushups in a row, but currently you are only able to do three. You might build your goals in steps, ratcheting forward, building on each success to bring about another success. Your first goal might be to make five pushups, and once that is accomplished to perform 10 in a row. Ratcheting allows you to make endless progress with whatever goals you have set that lend themselves to this method.

You just will not make every goal that you set within the timeline that you have set for yourself. There could be any number of reasons for not reaching your goal: it may have been unrealistic, even though you tried really hard; there may have been distractions or other priorities that took precedence over your time and energy; or perhaps you just did not realize how tough a specific goal was, and how long it really would take to accomplish. No worries, you can always reset your goals. Maybe you had a goal you wished to achieve in a month, to finish on April 20. When April 20 comes and you have not reached your goal, you can evaluate the situation, and reset the goal, for perhaps 10, 20, or even 30 more days, if necessary. Resettable goals mean you never fail, but that sometimes you do run out of time. And when you do, you just reset the goal for a future date, and you are back on the track to success again.

March 21

Believe in yourself.

If Edison had believed the naysayers who said, “You can’t do that,” we would all be watching television in the dark. OK, it was a joke, an admittedly small one at that. But it makes a point. There will always be naysayers, disbelievers, and people who feel threatened when you behave differently from the way they behave. We see this truth demonstrated in the trends and fashions that come with each new generation of young people. The older generations invariably balk and reject the new styles, new music, new dances, and even though it clearly could make their lives better, they tend to resist accepting new technology.

Often enough, people behave in a fashion that is like crabs in a pot of hot water, although admittedly for different reasons. All the crabs want to get out of the pot, and likely they could all do so, each in their turn, if they would just proceed in an orderly manner. But as soon as one crab grabs the edge of the pot and starts to climb out to freedom, the other crabs grab at him in their effort to climb out. Most of the time, the crabs pull so hard in their frantic attempts to escape that they cause the crab to lose its grasp on the pot and all of them fall back into the water. People are usually happy enough to see others succeed, but what we do not like is to look badly ourselves. For instance, if you follow a special diet, say a raw vegan diet, and you are thriving on that diet, it can make those who eat meats and fast foods question the validity of their dietary choices. Rather than openly admit that they may have made some poor decisions in this regard, they are more likely to either defend their decisions or attack your position. Be forewarned that your very existence can be perceived as a threat.

While we all share many things in common, we each have a unique calling, an inner voice that is strictly our own. Follow that voice with confidence. Pursue your interests wholeheartedly. Let your passion be your guiding star and know that, by following your heart’s desire, you will always be heading in the right direction. You can become immune to the negative influences of other people by focusing all your attention and effort on that which seems most important to you.

March 22

Act healthfully and live healthfully, for you become the person whom you pretend to be.

There are several New Age adages about developing into the person you wish to become:

“Fake it till you make it,” is one that many people find upsetting, but that is because they do not really understand the saying’s meaning and purpose. The saying is not about pretending to be someone whom you are not, nor is it about fooling people, but rather it suggests that you must act like the person you wish to become. Once you realize how to act, and you begin acting that way, you are two steps closer to actually becoming that person. Mental and physical changes can take a bit of time, and one way to bring them into reality is to begin behaving like the person who already has the characteristics you desire.

“Act as if,” is another expression that underscores the importance of behavioral change leading the way to other types of change. The motto of the State of Missouri is “The Show Me State.” Some people say this means that people from Missouri are not so gullible as to simply believe anything they are told, that they have to see it before they will believe it. “Act as if” is really the reverse of the Show Me model, as it suggests that you must believe something before you will see it come to reality.

“Thoughts become things” is yet another phrase that embraces the idea that you can play a role in creating the realities you wish to experience, simply by thinking about them. The power of visualization is a tried and proven method for bringing the results you desire into your life. Coupled with the phrase, “What you think about, comes about,” the power of the mind to effect change becomes apparent. Perhaps the comic book mascot from *Mad* magazine, Alfred E. Neuman, was more correct than he was given credit for when he repeated his favorite phrase, “What, me worry?” Worrying (focusing your thoughts on potentially negative events or outcomes) about things that are not likely to happen may actually increase their potential for occurring. Best to focus your mental powers on that which you really desire, and leave all negative thoughts behind you. Perhaps Peter McWilliams was even more correct than many people realized when he asserted in his book of the same name, “You can’t afford the luxury of a negative thought.”

March 23

If you are not taking care of yourself, no one is going to do it for you.

People love to join in, almost no matter what the activity. We are very much “monkey see, monkey do” in this regard. When we see people eating, we want to eat too. (Hence, “I’ll have what he’s having.”) When we see people playing tennis, we want to join in, and the players want you to join them. (“Care to play some Canadian doubles?”) When we hear an interesting conversation going on, we want to put in our own two cents. (“That’s not the best way to get there,” or, “The best way to get there is....”) We are easily lured into participating in practically anything, as long as it does not conflict with our moral, ethical, or personal beliefs. So, a great way to find the motivation to take better care of yourself is to simply hang around with people who enjoy taking self-care to a high level. Associate with people who have already developed the lifestyle habits that you strive to achieve. Their choices will soon enough rub off onto you.

When you do actually put in the time and effort required to take great care of yourself, you will likely find the experience so rewarding that you would not want someone to do it for you anyway. Enjoying things vicariously is all well and good, but not as much fun as being in the mix, actually doing and experiencing the activity. We each have our own personal responsibility to manage and cultivate our health. No one can exercise for you, think for you, eat for you, or sleep for you. Only you can manage and maintain your health, and you must, therefore, be responsible for the state of your health. This is a level of accountability that only a very small percentage of people are willing to accept.

In a hospital or other type of care center, people provide assistance to others. Such service is typically very temporary, and has the end goal of helping people get well enough so that they can once again resume personal responsibility and accept the duties and joys of independent living. Begin again to live as healthfully as you can. Set the example for all to see, and provide the incentive needed by others for them to enjoy exuberant health for a lifetime.

March 24

**You do not have the right to be a burden
to yourself or to anyone else.**

Do you find yourself dragging through your days? Are you simply marking time, waiting for the end to come? Is life really too much effort, even for the exertions required to have fun? Hopefully, you answered none of the preceding questions in the affirmative, but even if you responded with a “yes,” there remains one fly in the mixture: being a burden is a lopsided situation. All unbalanced equations eventually result in tension. People have an inborn desire to be useful, hence the receivers of charity, while they may at first be grateful for the help, eventually come to resent their donors. Whereas we all enjoy giving, no one enjoys giving to someone who is unappreciative, let alone resentful.

The solution is to accept full responsibility for our situation in life. Our health, fitness, wealth, social standing, relationships, and all other aspects of life are completely up to us. The first step towards becoming more energetic, productive, and self-reliant is to get sufficient sleep. Anything less than “enough” qualifies as “not enough.” Sleep deprivation takes a severe toll on our enthusiasm, moods, and overall health. Tiredness is said to play a role in more than half of all automobile accidents. Changing one’s diet requires a bit of motivation, and can be challenging for a variety of emotional, social, intellectual, religious, and other reasons. But getting enough sleep is relatively simple. For most people, getting more sleep simply means turning off the television a bit sooner in the evening and going to bed.

Over the years, many clients and patients have told me point blank that they are getting all the sleep they need, even when I express to them that I believe they need at least 20 hours more per week than they are getting. People become used to living on less sleep than they need, and even start to think that the symptoms of chronic sleep deprivation are normal: tiredness, irritability, nagging neurological issues, demotivation, a sedentary lifestyle, reduced awareness of sleep deprivation, and overall declining health. Only when they actually do the experiment and see how they just suck up the extra sleep like a dry sponge soaks up water do they realize how deeply sleep deprived they really were. Only when they start feeling significantly better do they realize what an important role getting enough sleep really plays in overall health.

If you would rather be a caregiver than a care-getter, start out by getting enough sleep. Add in regular fitness activities and a low-fat raw vegan diet, and you will be well on your way towards a lifetime filled with happiness and health.

March 25

What you think about, comes about.

The above phrase represents much more than simply the power of positive thinking. Indeed, putting your mental powers to work, visualizing end results and the pathways that will get you there, is easily as important a part of any project as is the actual physical work itself. We are not talking about some Walter Mitty-esque dreamland, where life is lived solely in the imagination. Rather, we are suggesting that thinking is the first and foremost avenue towards the successful conclusion of every endeavor.

How many times have you thought or talked about someone, only to get a phone call, email, or other contact from him or her, surprisingly soon thereafter? How many times have you tackled what seemed like insurmountable tasks, only to find after thinking it through that indeed the task was not going to be as tough as it at first seemed? How many times has your thought process guided the outcome of events? We have all seen and experienced the power of the mind. Learning to focus your thoughts on successful outcomes, to literally see into the future, is often all that is required in order for you to forge reality from vision. “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing” is a well-known quotation that is popularly used in sports. Some say the quotation embodies all that is excellent in sport, while others suggest it encapsulates all that is wrong with competitive sports. Either way, the power of thought is distilled to its essence in this epic phrase. Attributed to UCLA Bruins football coach Henry Russell “Red” Sanders, who first spoke the profound words in 1950, the phrase was popularized by football icon Vince Lombardi when he used the words to motivate the members of his amazingly successful Green Bay Packers all through the 1960’s. Lombardi is also quoted as saying, “Winning isn’t everything. The will to win is the only thing.” This modification even further supports the importance of the concept that what you think about, comes about.

Many top athletes have told me that winning is not what they focus upon, but rather they put their total attention on giving their all, competing at their best, and preparing for success. Grantland Rice, the well-known sports journalist, is credited with, “It’s not that you won or lost, but how you played the game.” Dr. Terry Orlick, author, sports psychologist, and champion athlete, freely gives his views on the importance and power of thought in many of his books’ titles, including *In Pursuit of Excellence*, *Embracing Your Potential*, *Psyching for Sport: Mental Training for Athletes*, and *Winning Through Cooperation*. If you wish to see your dreams come to fruition, you must spend sufficient time in dreamland to bring your dreams into crystal clear focus. When you can see the details on the details, when you can envision every obstacle and how to overcome it, when you can clearly see yourself navigating from the beginning to the end of your project, nothing can stop you.

March 26

Say to yourself, “My health/life/situation is my choice.”

Life offers us nothing, if not an endless string of choices. Every moment of every day, choices come to us. From the simple to the sublime, from the straightforward to the subtle, what we really do is make one choice after the next. You set your priorities each day, and go about fulfilling them in the fashion that seems most appropriate. You choose whether to be thrilled or disappointed each moment of the day. You choose to earn your health, or you choose to contribute to your demise, with every action, decision, or lack thereof.

Many factors in life are totally beyond our control. Try as we might, we cannot control the behavior of others. Much as we may wish it, we cannot control the outcome of events, whatever they are. What we can control is ourselves. People have often said to me, “Why bother taking care of yourself when you might get hit by a bus tomorrow and die?” I cannot control the bus, or the driver, it is true, but I can control my own driving. I believe that my odds of not having a crash improve as my health, awareness, reflexes, and fitness improve. I hope, too, that my chances of surviving a crash improve in direct relation to my overall health.

The odds of getting hit by a bus are about the same as getting hit by lightning. Sure, it would be terrible should it happen, but there are much more likely things to concern myself with, things over which I do have control.

Many doctors estimate that more than 95 percent of all Americans suffer from some degree of heart disease, but that “only” 66 percent die from heart disease, because cancer takes them first. Similarly, it is estimated that more than 95 percent have or will have cancer, but that only 33 percent will die from cancer, because heart disease will kill them first. Lifestyle management such as a low-fat raw vegan diet, regular exercise, sufficient sleep, fresh air and sunshine, have all been shown to play a role in reducing the likelihood of ever suffering from, or even developing, heart disease or cancer. Before worrying about being hit by the proverbial bus, I believe my energies are better invested in living as healthfully as I possibly can. My health is my personal responsibility, and no one else can carry that responsibility for me. My lifestyle choices, actions, and attitudes demonstrate whether I wish to travel the road that allows me to accumulate and conserve my health, or to blithely lose my health incrementally through self-destructive actions.

March 27

**If you are not planning your destination,
you probably will not like where you end up.**

When I was a boy, we had a family boat on which we took trips every summer. It was not a large boat, but was sufficient to sleep the four of us in a forward cabin that provided protection from inclement weather. My dad would spend hours poring over the nautical charts, planning every detail of the trip. Often, we would travel on bodies of water large enough we could not see land, or in weather foggy enough we could barely see the water. Calculating for speed and direction, wind and current, Dad plotted a course so that I could steer by compass and clock. He told me approximately how much time should pass before I should expect to see the next buoy or landmark, or in inclement weather, hear the next bell buoy. I took my shifts at the helm very seriously, and proudly directed our craft from buoy to buoy. Sometimes these markers were an hour apart or more, and should you get lost in the fog on open water, you really were lost. I learned to pay attention to the compass, and to do the requisite math so that I could figure out exactly when to expect to sight a buoy or other landmark. Sometimes we would travel from coastal New Jersey to the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, a trip of more than 250 miles over open water. Getting lost in the Atlantic was simply not an option. We had to know where we wanted to go, and we had to do what it took to get there. Valuable life lessons came to me on these boating holidays, in addition to the great memories and stories.

Should you follow the path that most people take, you are likely to end up where most people end up. Eat excessively fatty, toxic, chemicalized, and refined foods and suffer the consequences of serious digestive disorders, heart disease, cancer, and a variety of other ailments. Live a sedentary life and you will look like the couch potato you have become. The majority of people suffer many ailments in their later years, often living for 30 years or longer while accumulating one chronic, degenerative condition after the next, until finally they can no longer tolerate their illness.

For more than 150 years people have been proclaiming the value of healthful living, using essentially the same principles the entire time. First, there were doctors and others in the health field stating that whole foods were better than the refined foods that had recently come into vogue. They said that plants made our best food, and heavily promoted the consumption of fruits and vegetables. We still recognize the names of many of these health pioneers, though they lived 100 to 150 years ago and longer. Dr. John Tilden, Harvey Kellogg, Horace Fletcher, and Ellen White are just a few of these forward-thinking leaders. Next came several lines of thought known as the Water Cure, the Nature Cure, and the Physical Culture movement. Bernarr McFadden, Paul Bragg, Gypsy Boots, and Jack LaLanne were notable leaders in physical culture. The introduction of health food stores, the first fitness centers, and the use of nutritional supplements all came out of the physical culture movement. By taking the best from these movements and eliminating that which seemed useless, unsound, or counterproductive, Dr. Herbert Shelton accumulated and explained the principles known today as Natural Hygiene. The 80/10/10 lifestyle is based upon natural hygiene principles, while taking the food and nutritional concepts several steps further towards the ideal.

March 28

What you picture is what you get.

Have you ever watched a cat as it walks, jumps, and wends its way through a house? Have you ever wondered what the cat actually sees, as compared to what you see? When humans look at an object, our vision is affected by a tremendous number of factors such as color, function, beauty, manufacturer, utility, etc. Where one person might see a big white box, another sees a refrigerator, and another sees the fridge's effect on the electric bill. A building inspector looks at a house and notes sites of previous or potential damage, such as seepage, flooding, subsidence, or other signs of disrepair or poor construction. An interior decorator looks at the same house and interprets the potential it has, and how it could look and function better with changes in color, carpet, curtains, façade materials, and even the possible moving of walls, doors, and windows. A landscape artist looks at a house and sees something entirely different from anyone else, perceiving the house and grounds from his/her own professional viewpoint, as does the electrician, the plumber, and each of the various tradespeople. The homeowner sees the house in yet a different light. Ask an artist to draw or paint the house, and you will get yet another perspective of how the house appears, and how it could be.

“Draw what you see,” is a common expression used by art teachers. Learning to draw what you actually see, however, is a talent that few people hone and polish. If you were to take the time to do 20 or 30 drawings in one day, each of the same thing (a house, for example), you would likely find that each drawing improved over the last. Each would be somewhat more realistic, or incorporate better use of perspective, or show scale more accurately, or in some way be better. The same can be said for the way you create your reality, your day-to-day life, and your interactions with others. If your day does not go quite the way you pictured that it would, perhaps you did not picture it quite accurately, or in sufficient detail, or with the clarity necessary to bring you closer to your desired outcome. Taking the time to plan your day, to make it happen rather than just allowing it to happen, can be a huge asset, if that is what you desire.

Can you see yourself reaching your goals? Have you clearly outlined them, put deadlines on the various steps along the way to reaching each goal? Do you have a plan for what you will do if you do not reach your goal on time? What if you reach it early? Have you visualized your strategies for overcoming the various obstacles that you could imagine might interfere with you reaching your goal? When you set out to make a meal, do you see the end product in your mind's eye? Do you see yourself enjoying your fitness training, setting personal best performances, getting great sleep, and waking up refreshed? If you cannot see these things in your mind's eye, they are far less likely to occur than if you visualize them in detail.

March 29

**Either your habits are self-constructive or self-destructive,
good for you or bad for you.**

When it comes to health care, middle ground does not exist. I am often asked by people who have temporarily “fallen off the wagon” of taking great care of themselves if I think they have undone all the benefits that they had generated for themselves. My answer is that health is built, or lost, in trillions of tiny increments, moment by moment, all day every day. The body constantly creates the best health that it possibly can, based upon the substances, forces, influences, and conditions to which you are exposed and those that you supply. We can tell if a man used to be a bodybuilder, for example, because even if weightlifting is decades in his past, he will still carry the hypertrophied musculature associated with this pastime. Ice hockey players walk with a recognizably lumbering side-to-side sway, ballerinas move with unmatched grace, and bodybuilders carry themselves in a uniquely distinctive, “restricted” fashion. Tennis players tend to have one overly developed forearm, gymnasts who specialize on the rings tend to have massive upper bodies but underdeveloped legs, basketball players are notorious for their deltoid development. Cigarette smokers are known for their persistent cough, diabetics urinate three to four times as frequently as non-diabetics, asthmatics have their trademark wheeze, and chronic coffee drinkers reek of their distinctive odor. You truly are either building your health or tearing it apart.

We all understand that some things are worse for us than others, but even something that is mildly harmful is still harmful, and simply cannot be considered as neutral or beneficial. There may be times when you must choose between two beneficial options, and perhaps you may not truly know which of the two is the most valuable, but you are certain that neither is harmful. Middle ground proves extremely elusive, if it exists at all. The idea of “moderation in all things” is purely wishful thinking that just does not hold water. How could moderate or even minute quantities of abuse hold value? Abuse is abuse, and whether it is child abuse, spouse abuse, self-abuse, animal abuse, or abuse of the environment, abuse is harmful and destructive. Every moment of every day you are either adding to your health account or you are withdrawing from it.

March 30

If a tree lives for an entire year without showing any growth, it dies.

When we look at the growth rings of a tree in order to assess its age, we notice that some of the rings are wide and some are quite narrow. The width of the ring tells us if the tree grew well that year, or if it struggled to grow at all. The size of the ring is a good indication of the conditions the tree encountered that year. If conditions were favorable, the tree likely grew extremely well, and will have a wide band for a growth ring. If the weather, soil, environment, water, or other influence was less than or more than what is considered favorable, the tree's growth will have been hampered, and this compromise will be apparent in the diminished band width of the growth ring. Fires, floods, droughts, extreme temperatures, and many other weather factors over the past few centuries can be read in the tree's rings. If the tree's roots hit harsh soil, if there is an attack by insects, and even fluctuations in the amount of sunlight affect the tree's growth. During the course of every year, however, the tree must grow at least to some limited degree.

A tree's rings are markers of growth that are much easier to visualize than the growth indices of complex animals such as human beings. Still, understanding that the models demonstrated in nature often apply across the board to all life forms is a basic concept, and easy to understand. In fact, many of our life sciences depend upon this regularity in nature in order to state the laws that govern life. Anatomy, biology, organic chemistry, and physiology all depend upon there being predictable and immutable actions and reactions that are essential to all things alive.

We have no reason to think that humans exist or operate outside of these laws, or the models set by nature. We use the same terminology to describe the aging process in humans that we use for other living things: the spring in the step of the youthful, the autumn of life, etc. We note reductions in productivity, withering of capabilities, and the general decline in functionality and associate these with the aging processes. Our physical growth, with the notable exceptions of healing and repair, ends somewhere in our late teens or early twenties. Mental, emotional, and spiritual growth has unending potential. The importance of challenging oneself cannot be over-stressed, for growth is essentially demonstrated when we rise to meet a challenge. Give yourself growth opportunities, and enjoy how it keeps you young and growing, for we too are either growing or dying.

March 31

The way to make an occasion special is to be the best that you can be.

When people tell stories, it is rare indeed that they say, “Well, we just had one boring day after the next, until first thing you knew, we’d nearly concluded a boring life marked by nothing of note, nothing to remember, and nothing much worth telling about.” In fact, just the opposite is true: life is packed, and people talk about the notable things that happened. If you wish to make an occasion really special, tell a story that people will remember. A good story, whether it is a comedy, tragedy, thriller, mystery, romance, or contains any other aspect of human interest, must be engaging, as it is this feature that makes the story special. Learn to be a good storyteller, and you can contribute your skills in making every occasion a special one. As demonstrated by the amazingly high incomes garnered by today’s actors and athletes, people will pay a huge sum for great entertainment, because such entertainment leaves people feeling good.

The one key ingredient guaranteed to make any occasion a special one is the ability to make the other attendees of the event feel important to you. Make someone feel appreciated, feel important, feel loved, feel approval, or feel accepted and you will have massaged a key nerve that is hardwired deep in their inner psyche. In addition, there is no better feeling than making someone else feel good. Thanksgiving is not only about the meal, Christmas is not just about the presents, Easter is not solely about the fancy clothing, and the Fourth of July is not just about the fireworks. When friends and family get together, it is exceptionally important that we tell each person how much we appreciate them, how much we have been looking forward to spending time in their company. When you rise to the social challenge of being the best that you can be with other people, you also bring out the best in them. In every way imaginable, such appreciation makes your occasion as special and memorable as it can possibly get. Working towards mastering the art of treating everyone you meet with the respect, appreciation, and approval that you yourself would like to receive is a lifetime pursuit. Rise to the challenge, and make every moment a special moment.

APRIL

Now is the time to renew your efforts and really step up your health program.

The year is one quarter done. Summer is right around the corner. Can you take on an obligation to improve yourself, starting now? Are you willing to set the bar that represents your own personal performance just a little bit higher than it currently sits? In 90 days or less, it is going to be full-on summer. You will be wearing short sleeves, and maybe even short pants. You probably will be seen in your new bathing suit. Are you going to be proudly sporting your new muscles, the ones you have packed on during these last 13 weeks? Are you going to be proudly exhibiting your trim, ripped self (during the next three months, you could easily enough drop a pound a week if you really wanted to), or will you be hiding behind loose-fitting wraps and beach towels? Will you be sporting a tan body, earned through lots of outdoor, springtime activities, or will people need sunglasses to view your oh-so-white skin come summer? When it comes to your goals, do you feel as though you are ahead of schedule for the year, or have you already fallen hopelessly behind? The time to start anew is right now.

Spring is rife with promises, bursting with potential. Everyone can feel it. Daffodils are blooming, and tulips are lining up right behind them. Trees are beginning to show their blossoms. The sun is rising higher each day, bringing warmer weather both day and night.

Birds are on the move, mammals small and large are being born, and the last vestiges of winter are quickly fading into nothing more than memories. We can see and feel the renewal of life being played out on all fronts. April is the perfect time for spring cleaning, within and without.

If you can see where you need improvement, commit to making those improvements. If you are not certain, ask a trusted friend or loved one for guidance as to which part(s) of your personality and physique need to be addressed. Your best intentions may just come to fruition, but only if you begin now to put in the effort to improve yourself. By putting in daily effort, you can make huge progress in relatively short periods of time. Spring into action, and expect to grow into exactly the person you hope most to become.

April 1

**Better to look the fool for a few moments
while asking what you think is a foolish question
than to be a fool forever for lack of asking questions.**

Life is full of potentially uncomfortable situations, but we find that when we face them, most prove to be nowhere near as bad as we had imagined they might be. Perhaps facing such situations on a daily basis would help us all get better, braver, and more willing to face the many challenges that come to us. Do you do all you can to avoid challenging situations, or do you welcome them, thinking of them as growth opportunities, rather than terrible and frightening experiences?

Most of the questions people ask, which they think are going to sound foolish, really are not silly at all. Usually, people put time into thinking about the potentially foolish question before they actually muster the courage to ask away. By prefacing a query with, "I think this might be a really foolish question," the responder is made aware of the questioner's insecurities, and will almost always do all s/he can to respond sensitively and put the questioner at ease.

Develop your ability to ask questions, and learn all you can about as many things as you can. You will likely be amazed at how many people welcome the opportunity to answer questions, for most folks rarely are put into situations where they are considered the teacher, the leader, or the one with the most knowledge. People appreciate being listened to. Ask away, and soon enough, people will be asking the same questions of you that you were asking of others. You will have the chance to develop your skills of putting others at ease, by becoming comfortable with phrases such as, "That's a very good question," and, "I used to think the same thing, but let me tell you what I found out," and even the old standby, "The only dumb questions are the ones you don't ask." There are no dumb questions....

April 2

Part of enjoying life's journey is knowing that we never get there; we just keep going there.

What a fascinating challenge to be here, now, always in the moment, focusing full awareness on the present, while what you are doing at the moment could well be an act of preparation for the future, or telling a story of something that happened in the past. How can I be in the present, you may ask yourself, while visualizing and planning for something that might happen months or even years from now? Aren't the two thought processes mutually exclusive? How can I be here now, and there then, at the same time? The challenge is nowhere near as difficult as it may seem, easier even than child's play. Countless species of creatures around the world perform exactly this task, many times over, every day. Birds make nests in preparation for eggs that are yet to be laid. Many animals migrate annually, often crossing huge bodies of water, hoping that the conditions they require will be at their destination when they get there. Dogs lay comfortably looking out the front window of their homes, patiently awaiting the timely arrival of their masters. To be fully focused on the present activity, even when that activity is an act of preparation, is indeed quite possible.

Ashleigh Brilliant, the well-known cartoonist and author, is credited with having said, "I try to take it one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once." When you are focusing on the present, when you are in the moment, the future cannot attack you. You can have total and complete power over your behavior and thoughts when you are in the present moment. Should you ever feel overwhelmed, it is invariably at a time when you have lost your grip on the present and have allowed yourself to be looking so much at various future possibilities that the present is not even part of your consciousness. To regain control, come back to the present.

Sometimes we just take ourselves far too seriously. Life is a gift, and meant to be a pleasure. Even when we are struggling to learn something, to master a skill, or to complete a project on time, remember to maintain perspective. What really is the most important thing for you? Is getting your work done more important than your health, your family, or even your personal fitness? Is there really no possible way to enjoy yourself while you do your job? If you had to write your own eulogy, would you rather it said, "S/he got her/his work done," or would you prefer, "Cherished family member and inspirational leader"?

April 3

Plan for the future, but enjoy the present.

Every moment of every day we make choices. No matter what we are doing, we have the option to be happy or sad, intrigued or bored, engrossed and focused by present circumstances or off daydreaming in Neverland, in the moment or lost in memories or visions of potential futures. Planning ahead in order to be prepared for whatever might happen is time well spent. Worrying about potential future events is completely a waste of time. In fact, worrying is a wasted effort regardless of the potential problems you foresee. If you have a concern, address it. If you envision potential problems arriving, make plans to overcome them.

Worry is an emotion that effectively paralyzes you. More often than not, worry leads only to more worry, greater worries, and even more paralysis. Rather than worry about possible futures that will likely never come to pass, take action on current events, put your present affairs in order, and give your full attention to the people whom you are currently with. Often enough, the issues about which you find yourself worrying are concerns that you simply do not have enough information on to make an informed decision. The smartest course of action may well be to simply wait; to reserve judgment until more facts present themselves, and to hold off on any actions until they are needed. You will find that most of the time, things sort themselves out, and you may never need to address or do anything about those very issues that had caused you needless worry.

Some people go about their day, performing their chores, work, and interactions in unhappy fashion, wishing to be someone or somewhere else, doing something, anything, other than what they are currently doing. Others do exactly the same things but with a different mindset—they are happy in all that they do. The nature of the work does not appear to matter. There are happy lawyers and unhappy ones. There are happy janitors and unhappy ones. There are happy and sad people in every profession, in every endeavor. The happiness or sadness seems to be a matter of choice, of focus, a classic “glass half empty or glass half full” situation.

How many times during the course of your day do you have to remind yourself of all there is to be happy about? How close to home does true tragedy have to strike before you realize that you are indeed living a charmed life? Do you count your blessings or curse every little thing that isn't to your liking? When all you have is lemons, do you make a sour face, or do you smile and make lemonade?

April 4

Make plans and be flexible.

One of the people that shared a lot of her wisdom with me was a woman named Barbara “Babs” Camp. Babs was a patient of mine, but also served as an up-line teacher and mentor in an MLM that I joined while still in school. “Make plans and be flexible” was one of the many key phrases she taught me to appreciate. The two concepts seem diametrically opposed, until you understand and appreciate them in greater depth. Making plans means much more than just deciding what you want, and what you are going to do to get it. Making plans is an in-depth process that could include creating your Plan B, your Plan C, and if you are really serious, even your Plan D. You must plan for every possible contingency, knowing full well, according to one of the unwritten laws of inanimate objects, “If it can go wrong, it will go wrong.” For each plan, you must visualize as many of the various steps that will be required as you possibly can imagine. You must “flesh out” each of the actions required to properly cover those steps, including making lists of what must be done, who you will need to do it, and a timeline by which you expect each step to be completed. Projects that get the attention they deserve, up front, often go so smoothly as to appear effortless. That is because the work went in where it was supposed to, in the planning stages, which meant that execution was a simple matter of following the plans, as easy as putting a flat-pack project together.

The demonstration of flexibility requires great skill, mastery of the subject matter, and a fluent understanding of the nuances and possibilities inherent in any project. Anyone given the proper tools and necessary ingredients can follow a recipe and make a pie. But someone with all the requisite talent, skill, and knowledge will find themselves hard pressed to come up with the menu that you desire when not given the proper tools or the expected ingredients, unless they have developed their gift of flexibility.

Once, on a trip to the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica, I had the profound pleasure of seeing a troupe of squirrel monkeys cascading through the rainforest. The squirrel monkey is one of the world’s most acrobatic creatures, and this troupe, although acting as if I was not there, was living up to its reputation, demonstrating long sequences of beautifully linked, profoundly advanced gymnastic skills. A few times, I thought I saw a monkey make a judgment error, missing a branch and fall tumbling through the air, but each time the monkey would recover, grasp a new branch, and continue on his merry way as if nothing unplanned had happened at all. Indeed, I was not actually certain whether the freefall had been planned or was a life-threatening accident. I could not tell if the fall was part of the act, or if the fast-thinking monkey had simply switched to his Plan B. Hopefully you can go through your day as smoothly and effortlessly as a squirrel monkey, and be equally as comfortable with your Plan A as you are with your Plans B and C, so that you can switch and segue from one to the other seamlessly, with ease.

April 5

**Now is the one moment during which
you have total control over your life.**

On their debut album, The Incredible String Band wrote and performed a song entitled, “This Moment.” The lyrics are as follows:

This moment is different from any before it.
And this moment is different. It’s now.
And if I don’t kiss you, that kiss is untasted. I’ll never, no never, get it back.
But why should I want to. I’ll be in the next moment.

Sweet moment. Sweet lover. Sweet now.
The walls of this room are different from any before them.
They are now. They are now.

The air that you breathe is different from any before it.
It is now. It is now.
You may think that life is repeating.
Repeating. Repeating. Repeating. Repeating.
You may think that life is repeating.
Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no!
Each moment, is different, from any before it.
Each moment, is different. It’s now.

I find this song profound. The reality is that we truly can live in the moment, in the present, enjoying and appreciating everything that is now. That which has passed, we can put into the past. We can anticipate things that we hope will come in the future, but in reality, the future is totally unknown to us. All we have is now. Now is all there is.

The beauty of this reality is that you have complete control over your own thoughts and actions right now. You have the power to make your own decisions, to choose your own perspective, and to think say and do as you wish. Of course, there will always be consequences, and your ability to accurately foresee those consequences determines, to a large degree, which thoughts, words, and deeds you will choose.

Practice living in the now. You may be surprised at how difficult staying present actually is. Can you stay in the moment for more than a few seconds? Are you amazed at just how short your attention span and focus really is? Most people want “now” to last, but by its very nature, now is transient. They get the feeling that they are in the moment, but usually within a second or two, they are distracted and off thinking about the future or the past. The fleeting nature of now is a huge part of its allure. We cannot capture and contain the present, for it is unstable. Yet we continue to try. We clear our mind and live in the moment, now and again, while meditating. To be in the moment while interacting with others is a completely separate challenge, another order

of magnitude more difficult than sitting silently and contemplating the now. We grasp the moment and occasionally can connect one now moment to the next. We can choose our perspective and see now the way we wish. Staying present is a lifetime activity.

Spend as much time as possible in the now moment, and feel the power you gain over your own life.

April 6

Set the example you would want any other leader to set.

We all know that doctors do not have to be healthy in order to give you worthwhile health advice, but it sure helps their credibility. For unknown reasons, when a doctor looks the part, he gains credibility, and his advice becomes more believable. This same philosophy is exemplified in hundreds of professions; wherein former sports stars eventually become the coaches, great soldiers become the highest-ranking military officers, and as described so well in the book, *The Peter Principle*, successful businessmen and businesswomen move up the ranks into upper-level management. After all, would you take advice on how to prevent hair loss from a bald man, or buy weight loss pills from a fat person? Have you noticed that practically every personal trainer in every gym looks the part?

We are all in leadership positions to some degree or another. We are all role models for others, whether we like it or not, whether we wish to be or not, and even whether we know it or not. I have been stopped countless times in grocery stores by people asking me questions about the quality of this or that variety of produce, simply because my grocery cart is filled with fruit and veg, so people assume I must know something. Many people see my cart full of fruits and vegetables and assume I work for the store, perhaps doing quality control, as they are unable to even imagine that anyone could possibly be purchasing all that produce for personal use. Every aspect of your personal appearance sends messages to other people about who you are, from your shoes and your clothing to your posture, your diction, and the way you wear your hair. Sherlock Holmes may have been the only one able to interpret all these clues, right down to the length and cleanliness of your fingernails, and even to put them into words, but all of us receive the impressions. We say, “something about that person,” or, “s/he gave off a vibe,” or we trust or distrust, often simply based on the impression the person gives us, rather than what s/he said or did.

You are leading all the time, even when you are alone. And people are watching us all the time, even when we are not aware of their scrutiny. Lead from the front, for that is where the best leaders lead from, and it is where followers expect to find their leaders. Do your best to maintain the attitude you would hope to find in any other leader, especially when you are with your friends, family, and loved ones. Practice kindness, for usually it is more important to be kind than it is to be correct. Remember that people are impressionable, and that you may be making a longer-lasting impression on someone than you would like. Raise your personal standards yet another notch, and set the example you would want set for you.

April 7

Your best friends bring out the best in you.

Discerning who your true friends are, among your many acquaintances, is not really that complicated. Your true friends will offer you support, regardless of your chosen course of action (unless, of course, you are about to break the law or do serious harm to yourself). Your friends may not choose to go along with you on every venture you take, but they will wish you well, encourage you, even while they are also explaining that your latest idea is not for them.

Most of the people we call friends are folks we have met while doing something we enjoy or believe in, such as a club, activity, or class. They share common interests with us, at least to some degree. We base our friendship around those interests, and we expand from there. By participating with us, our friends express inherent support of who we are and what we do.

Not all of our friends fall into the above category of shared interests. Some of our friends share almost nothing in common with us, yet we still manage to enjoy each other's company. They realize that we are all growing and changing, and that our interests and beliefs are likely to change too, so why base a friendship solely upon the fact that we like, think, or do the same things as someone else? If you change schools, careers, hobbies, or dietary preferences, you do not need to lose all your old friends and start seeking new ones. Friendships are great when they are new, but they are the best when they last, when they stand the test of time. Having friends you know you can count on is a true blessing.

Friends offer encouragement, no matter how hare-brained they may think your latest scheme may be. They will tactfully bolster you, while saying something like, "I don't think this one's for me, but I really hope it turns out even better than you are hoping it will." Good friends listen while you think out loud, and when you ask them to serve as a sounding board, they tell you the truth. Friends cheer for you, even if they are unsure that you can succeed. Most important, your friends do not judge you based upon their knowledge of your prior failures, but instead they do all they can to help you succeed with every endeavor.

In order to really benefit from having best friends, you first must be a best friend for someone else. Giving your friendship to others is like planting seeds in a garden—what you give is what you get, multiplied time and again. Bring out the best in your friends, and they will bring out the best in you. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, "Our chief want in life is somebody who will make us do what we can."

April 8

When you give, forget, and when you take, remember.

The expression “bury the hatchet” means more than most people understand. The simple act of burying the proverbial hatchet is not sufficiently effective, if you do not also put the issue to rest. No one enjoys being reminded again and again of the wrongs they have committed. Often I hear people say, “I bury the hatchet easily, but I have a very hard time forgetting where I buried it, and all too often, I dig it back up.” If you wish to truly bury the hatchet about someone or something, you must be willing to let the issue go, to put it into the past, and be willing to completely forget the hurt you experienced. Remembering why you had a hatchet to bury and remembering where you buried it means that you are not truly willing to forgive and forget, and that you are hanging on to your old issues and hurts. You are living in the past, and that negates your ability to fully experience living in the present. Effectively, you want to remember your past, so as to hopefully not repeat any errors you had made, but you want to let your old emotions go, so that you can experience your present emotions fully and completely.

Giving is not an act for gaining leverage. Give because you want to, because you are so moved. Giving is its own reward, as giving provides a sense of feeling good that few other acts can supply. Some people say that giving leaves the giver with such a good feeling that the giver may actually get more from giving than does the receiver. In this sense, giving is actually a gift to the giver. When a gift is well received, the pleasure derived by the giver is intensified immensely. Gifts are to be given with no expectations, however. Gifts are given out of generosity, not expectation of reciprocity. Giving a gift with the hope of calling in the favor at some later date defeats the purpose of giving. Gifts are not business transactions. Gifts are given with no strings attached.

When someone helps you, however, even if the help is small, remembering that person and the act of assistance is indeed important. Think of all the award ceremonies you have ever seen, and the long lists of gratitude expressed. Authors invariably thank many people for helping them to be able to write their books. At the end of every movie runs an extensive list of credits. None of us can function alone, and we all know that truth. We depend upon a great many people to get through our day. Giving credit where credit is due is an honorable act, a gift that completes the circle of giving and leaves everyone involved with the motivation to begin anew.

April 9

**Live life with one hand up and one hand down.
The hand that is down may give someone else a hand up.
The other hand is up to reach for assistance.**

Picture yourself helping someone to climb out of a hole. Bend over and reach down with both hands, and the person is very likely going to pull you down into the hole. Reach down with one hand while using the other to hold something so as to brace yourself, and you will be able to help the person out of the hole without falling in yourself.

There is a big difference between a hand up and a hand out. Helping someone get back on his/her feet in a time of need is a hand up. The person can then function independently, without any further help, and can even likely begin to give help to someone else. A hand out does not really help, except in the shortest possible view of the situation. A hand out simply leads to dependence. To want to feel and believe that we are independent, capable of taking care of ourselves, and if possible, even to be able to assist and take care of others, is human nature. Reliance upon handouts is demeaning, and fosters the worst possible developments in terms of self-esteem and self-image.

Being able to ask for help when it is needed is as much a sign of mature personal development as is being able to offer help. You demonstrate strength, confidence, and trust in others when you ask for help. Yet many people perceive of asking for help as a sign of weakness. They would rather work themselves into illness than ask for help, or risk failure rather than succeeding with the help of others. Knowing when to ask for help is a valuable skill. Knowing how to ask for help is a trait worthy of developing. People are often honored to give their assistance when they are asked properly, and will often offer help even when not asked, if they perceive that their help will really be of value to you. When you open a door for someone, whether figuratively or literally, you are offering help. Sure, we all want to be able to do things on our own, but with good teamwork much more can be accomplished than can be done individually.

April 10

Associate with bank robbers, and you will soon be driving the car. Hang out with health enthusiasts, and you too will soon become one of the healthy ones.

People rub off and affect each other in a huge number of ways. We pick up accents, body language, phrases and expressions, and a wide variety of preferences from the people around us. We easily develop the habits demonstrated by others, large ones and small ones, from facial and other gestures to social interactions to societal norms, values, and mores.

If you think of yourself as a freak, a weirdo, or an outright nutter, you may find it very difficult indeed to be “the only one,” no matter what the activity, philosophy, or difference there is between you and the rest of your group. You may be intimidated, may feel yourself challenged at every turn, and might even actually cave to the perceived pressure you feel from the rest of your peers, whether it is actually there or not.

Of course, if you thought of yourself as a star, a hero, a special personality, or some other member of the elite, you could imagine how your group would look up to you, want to spend time with you, and even emulate you. You would be the trendsetter; the forward-thinking, individualistic role model.

When it comes to matters of health, there are many ways to associate with those who already have what you wish to gain from them. Books, audio, video, and live associations, including festivals, seminars, and private consultations all offer the opportunity to get into the mind of the leaders in the health field from whom you desire to learn. In the same way that you pick up the accents of those around you, when you spend time with healthy folks you almost cannot help yourself from picking up their healthy preferences. At first, their actions may seem a bit unusual for you, simply because certain exercises, foods or preparation procedures are new or unknown. If you are willing to try them, and the results are worthwhile, you will likely persist, gaining healthy results all the while. The next thing you know, once you have gained a bit of experience, you will be the one leading the way, with others gathering around you, hoping to pick up bits of wisdom from you.

April 11

**Life works in circles: what you put in
comes back around to meet you.**

Whether you wish to embrace the Eastern concept of karma or the Western expression, “What goes around comes around,” the basic truth “What you give is what you get” remains the same no matter how it is expressed.

“As ye sow, so shall ye reap.”

“If you wish to make a friend, first you must be a friend.”

Hence the humor of the child’s joke about the man who went to the doctor and said, “Doctor, I have a serious problem with my ears.”

The doctor examined the man’s ears and proclaimed, “I see what’s the matter. You have carrots growing out of your ears.”

“Exactly,” said the man, “but I planted potatoes.”

We can never be certain when one of life’s circles is about to reach completion. Nor can we tell where in the cycle we are at any given time. We can be certain that an almost endless number of doors of opportunity constantly and continually open and close, as do doors of perception. We are destined to parade through life much like Johnny Appleseed, doing our best as we go along, planting seeds every step of the way and never even looking back to see which bore fruit and which did not. The ripples that result from your actions may come back to you just moments later, or they may take a few generations to fully take effect. Imagine that what you are planting will come back to you multiplied 10 times as powerful as what you sent out. Are you going to sow goodness or greed, love or hatred, help or hindrance?

Philosophers and social scientists have long debated if indeed goodness is inherent in humans. Are we kind to others solely because we want them to be kind to us, or are we kind because being so somehow makes us feel better about ourselves? If either of those options are correct, are they so because, in the first instance, we are greedy, and in the second, because deep down we really only care about ourselves? At the end of the day, the answer does not really matter. What matters is how you view yourself, and how you treat others. The Golden Rule, to treat others as you would like to be treated, sums up all our guidelines for action in this life. Altruism may or may not truly be part of our nature, and the argument about it will likely continue forever. Either way, acts of kindness will come back to you if you send them out. Be the person you would enjoy encountering. Set the example you would like others to follow.

April 12

The difference between goals and wishes is that goals have a plan, a timeline, and a deadline.

“If wishes were horses, beggars would ride,” or at least so goes the old saying. We all have wishes, and that’s perfectly fine, for many of our most grand achievements began as wishes, and every once in a while, by mere chance, those wishes come to fruition. Wishes are airy-fairy, wishy-washy ideas with little to no substance, and no plan or procedures. Poor women wish to be rich, but haven’t a clue how to become rich, and most would not be willing to do the work required to achieve that end. Many people wish for a high-paying job, but they are not willing to get the training or put in the hours. Some people wish to be famous, but they haven’t the persistence to develop their talent. The numbers of people who say, “I’m going to write a book” outnumber the actual authors by more than 100 to one. To wish is easy, almost effortless. Wishes are nebulous whereas goals are concrete. Goals require effort.

If you really want your wishes to reliably be transformed into realities, on schedule, you must convert them into goals. The conversion process is easy and simple enough, though of course there may well be considerable work in making your goals come true. Putting a deadline on your wish is the first step towards realizing your dream. Once you have a deadline, you can make a plan with as many steps as you require, putting dates on each step along the way so as to reach your deadline on time. You would be wise to develop a Plan B for each step along the way, to allow for possible obstacles, delays, or the other potential intrusions that may impose on your initial plan. You might consider what you will do if you find yourself running behind (or even ahead) of your planned schedule. Will you give yourself more time, and if so, how much more? Wishes are asking for something for nothing. Goals are commitments to doing the necessary work in order to make wishes come true, exactly when and how you want them to.

Should you give up if you don’t reach a goal on time? The answer can only be, “Absolutely not.” All that is required is a shift in your timeline, a reset of your goal and deadline, and a new plan for reaching your goal. With any luck at all, you will have learned from your past failure and be able to make a new plan for reaching your goal without repeating the same mistake(s) again. You are not guaranteed a success your second time around, for there may be many other mistakes to be made along the way, but hopefully you will learn as you go. The learning process improves your odds of success. Persist and you may reach your goal. Quit and you definitely will not reach your goal.

April 13

**You control your future through the constant use
of self-development and self-fulfillment.**

One year, at a convention that I had attended annually for two decades, one of the organizers explained why she so often received the comment from attendees, “This year is the best ever.” She said she was convinced that without any doubt, the reason the event was the best ever was because the attendees had developed themselves to become the best to ever attend the event. Our appreciation of all things increases with our knowledge of those things. Our appreciation of quality deepens the more we understand what was involved in creating that quality.

Human growth and development progresses rapidly on all fronts during the first two decades of life, but by the time we reach our twenties, most of our physical development has reached near to its pinnacle. From this point onward in our development, as we continue to gain experience and awareness, we can focus more on our emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and other aspects of our mental growth. Along with self-development comes a heightened ability to observe, reflect, and appreciate the intricacies of all that goes on around us.

If you were to list 10 of your personality traits and show the list to 10 friends, asking each of them to rate you on each trait (anonymously, if they are concerned about that), you would likely find that your friends often know you even better than you know yourself. Put another way, your friends experience you socially, looking in from the outside, while you can only experience yourself emotionally and intellectually from the inside. Their perspective of who you are can often be far more telling than your assessment of yourself. Should quite a few of your friends tell you that you have an area or two on your list that is weak or “needs improvement,” you would be well-advised to begin putting effort into such development immediately. In fact, this exercise, or one much like it, is well worth repeating annually, at least until you can score high marks from friends on at least the top 50 or more personality traits that are important to you. In this way, you become a work in progress, better every year, and increasingly able to enjoy and appreciate not only all that comes to you, but who you are developing into, as well.

In our endless quest to maintain control over our own destinies, we must attempt to always keep sight of the fact that we are able to choose our own perspective on issues, to decide if we wish to enjoy the current situation, and that by developing ourselves we are most likely to encounter exactly the conditions that we most hope for.

April 14

Now is the time to do and be the best that you can.

We have all had the experience of asking or hiring someone to do something for us, something we thought might take an hour, for instance, only to find out that the person required three or four hours or longer to do the job. Initially you may have been quite upset, perhaps thinking that the person was not as capable as you had thought, or that your good will had been taken advantage of. Upon further inspection of the work done, however, you sheepishly discovered that the job had been done exceptionally well, and in all likelihood far better than you would have done it yourself. You may have further discovered that many extra details were covered, things that you would not have done, making the job far more comprehensive and thorough than you had initially perceived it to be. The time required was actually quite reasonable, you realize as you reassess, given the quality and quantity of the work performed. The commitment to excellence is always impressive, and rarely goes without notice. With any luck, after seeing how well your job could be done by someone else, you raised your standards and committed to always doing things to the best of your ability.

For decades, the Cadillac car was viewed as the best, for that was how Cadillac marketed itself. Certainly many cars are far more expensive than a Cadillac, and likely many make claims to be “better,” but Cadillac held the position of “best” for so long that eventually the word “Cadillac” became associated with meaning “the best.” This concept is demonstrated in phrases such as “They are the Cadillac of blue jeans,” or “the Cadillac of popcorn.” Even though people knew that they could do better financially than drive a Cadillac, the company thrived. During the first 10 years of the 21st Century, Apple computers established themselves so strongly as “the Cadillac of computers” that today people now use the name “Apple” in the way that they used to use the word “Cadillac.” You could now say that Apple is the new Cadillac. People recognized the quality built into Apple computers, and the company has become one of the biggest financial successes of our time. You cannot fake quality, but if you really are the best, people will more than happily pay for the quality you provide.

Coasting is easy, but you just do not make much progress in life when coasting. Assess your efforts regularly to see if you are truly giving your best, raising your standards, and aspiring to do even better. Research and real-life situations have shown us time and again that if we are forced to perform at a high standard, we rise to it. Quality in almost all fields of endeavor rises endlessly. There is no better time than the present to raise your personal standards of performance to new highs.

April 15

**Be proud of your differences,
for they help you develop self-esteem.**

Make a list of 10 famous people, all from different walks of life, and they will have one thing in common: because of something special about them, they are different from other people. The difference might be their wit, their physical prowess, their acting ability, or their intellect. The difference might be their style, singing voice, creativity, or their humor. There is always something unique about every famous person, something that makes them stand out from everyone else.

Children often pick on other children for such differences. Boys pick on girls, athletes pick on those not as athletically gifted, the smart pick on the dumb, etc. Children pick on others whose hair color is different from the norm, those with unusual facial or physical features, those with funny names, and for every other reason that they can think of. This ridicule is counterbalanced by the fact that children also have a strong need for acceptance, and to be part of a group. In the same way that baby birds do not wish to be kicked out of their nest, children need to know that their parents accept them, and that their friends accept them too. Joining together in a group that ridicules others gives those doing the ridiculing a sense of belonging to a group of people who have similar beliefs.

Maturing into adulthood, we gain self-confidence and an appreciation for the contributions of others. We come to realize that it is the uniqueness of each individual that makes them interesting, entertaining, and special. None of the famous people on our list would be famous at all if they were “just like us.” As adults, we come to terms with the apparent dichotomy inherent in the acceptance of others, recognizing that it is the differences between one person and another, as much as the similarities, that are important to us.

Whereas, as children, we strive to hide our differences in order to gain acceptance, as adults we are free to strive to develop our differences in order to increase our value to society. The more valuable we are to society, typically, the greater our acceptance, and the more rewarding it is for all involved.

While there are several millions of differences from one individual to the next, there are quadrillions of similarities, meaning the similarities outweigh the differences by billions to one. If your goal is to make someone feel comfortable around you, it is easy to emphasize the similarities between you. If you want people to recognize you for your fullest value, make them aware of your differences, your special talents, and your uniqueness.

April 16

**Enjoying the work that is behind each success is
at least as important as the success itself.**

An ages-old adage of unknown origin, “Take time to smell the roses” can be interpreted to mean that there are many wonderful experiences to be enjoyed, even when performing a relatively unenjoyable task. The words encourage us to do more than simply complete our day’s work, but rather that we appreciate all the “little things” that are often ignored when we focus solely on our work, or when we just pay attention to reaching the current finish line. Children are excellent living examples of this adage, for they are easily distracted by the littlest things, and often find joy in objects and experiences that adults may not even notice, perhaps because their senses are so acute compared to that of an adult. A common leaf, pebble, insect, or twig can seem special to a child and bring the child great joy. We adults are often so wrapped up in our work that we do not even notice when nature hits us on the head with the big things, such as the smell of fresh rain, the sound of spring birdsong, the feel of warm sand or fine grass under our feet, or even the occasional rainbow. Are we really here solely to toil, or can a balance be struck between productivity and pleasure?

Once again, we see that attitude is often the most important aspect to our life experience. Are you too hurried, too pressed for time to be able to pause and enjoy a moment with a loved one? Do you give people the impression you are going through life like Alice’s proverbial White Rabbit, who exclaimed, “I’m late, I’m late, for a very important date. No time to say ‘Hello Goodbye,’ I’m late, I’m late, I’m late.” Is that what you want? Are you living the life you wish to live, the way you wish to live it? Every now and then we must remind ourselves that we have choice, and that we are doing whatever we are doing at the moment because it is our choice to do so. Even if you are pressed for time, it takes no more time to smile than it does to frown. No matter how important or stressful your work may be, there is no reason for you not to be able to enjoy it. In fact, many people believe that the more stressful your work, the more you must make efforts to be light of heart, for yourself and for your clients. Patch Adams was one of the first doctors to bring merriment to the practice of medicine and then to a hospital setting. His approach was ridiculed at first, but today “doctors of delight” attend to patients (especially children), family, and staff in many hospitals around the nation. The concept that laughter makes the best medicine is not a new one, and the healing power brought out by humor has been shown to be highly effective. People can enjoy every part of every day, and benefit from doing so, and the work they do will benefit as well. As the old saying goes, “When you smile, the whole world smiles with you.”

April 17

**You have to do what you have to do
in order to get what you want to get.**

All too often I hear people complaining about “having” to do this or that task (apparently they perceive it as distasteful), when I know that what they really want are the results of having successfully completed the task. Is the glass half full or half empty? The decision is yours to make, again and again, all day, every day. If you are not willing to do what you have to do in order to get what you want to get, no problem, but you will get something else, something other than what you want to get. The big decision then is whether you are going to choose an attitude of enjoying every part of every day, or whether you are going to perceive the day’s activities as a penalty. As the old saying goes, “If you wish to play, you will have to pay.”

If you want big muscles, you have got to do the appropriate bodybuilding training.

If you want to be flexible, you must stretch.

If you want to be really talented on a musical instrument, you must play that instrument regularly.

If you want to feel well-rested every day, you have got to get to bed early enough to get a good night’s sleep.

If you want to speak a foreign language, you have got to put in the practice time.

If you want a suntan, you have to spend some time in the sun.

If you want the experience of abundant health, you have got to live the healthy lifestyle.

There is just no substitute for putting in time, regardless of the goal.

Now that we have established that you just have to do what you have to do, the big question is how much of the time you can remember to be thrilled just to be alive, happy to be able to put in the effort required to get the results you are hoping for? Maintain the perspective that everything that comes to you in life is a blessing, and just watch how blessed your life becomes. Every cell of your body is eavesdropping on your thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and perspectives, and responding accordingly. When you are cranky, you have more accidents than when you are happy. What you give, you get. If you really want to see things going your way, put on a smile, and watch as people go out of their way to help you get what you want.

April 18

Some people cram what could have been 100 years of healthy living into less than 50 years of self-abuse.

No one knows how long s/he is going to live. In fact, no one knows if the lifestyle they pursue is ever going to catch up with them. We know that some people seemingly “get away” with terribly unhealthy lifestyle habits and live in reasonably good health unto ripe old ages. But do they really get away without suffering the ill effects of their lifestyle? Most likely, the answer is “absolutely not, no way.”

Let’s look at an example of a professional athlete. Obviously, to make it as a pro, you have to have tremendous talent. But drug use is rampant in professional sports, and drug use is damaging to the liver. Being very physically active, the professional athlete typically eats double to triple what the average person eats. If the foods chosen are of high quality, this speaks extremely well for the athlete. If the foods chosen are filled with pesticides, carcinogens, excitotoxins, preservatives, and other health-destroying substances, then the athlete’s liver is forced to deal with a considerably greater load of these toxins than is the average person. The average professional athlete has a career that lasts less than 10 years, and he dies an average of 10 years younger than most other people. The guy may be talented, but is he talented because of his lifestyle, or in spite of it? The sheer fact of inborn talent is not due to lifestyle, no. Would he have been an even better athlete, perhaps had a much longer career, or lived far longer, if healthful living had been part of his regimen? The answer can only be “yes,” because all of science and logic points us to that conclusion.

We also know that most people suffer the ill effects of their lifestyle, often for the last 30-40 years of life, and sometimes even longer. We see the effects of overeating, the sedentary life, alcoholism, tobacco use, poor diet, and drug abuse take their toll on health, quality of life, and eventually on longevity. Acute conditions that are directly attributable to self-destructive lifestyle choices become chronic, and if the habits continue, the conditions worsen to become degenerative, and eventually pathogenic, meaning that they are the genesis of the person’s death. We watch as people who take excellent care of themselves age gracefully decade after decade, often retaining their youthful appearance far beyond what we consider “normal.” We see the ravaging effects of lifestyle on the drug addicts, alcoholics, and chronic chain smokers, and watch as they grow old in appearance long before they grow old chronologically. You will only grow old before you time if you stop investing in healthful habits and pursue the health-destroying ones.

April 19

Are you supplying yourself with the conditions you need in order to thrive?

Rate yourself on a scale of zero to three on each of the following parameters. Simply by adding the total you can see what level of health to expect, overall. In much the same way that an insurance actuarial table would give you a “life expectancy,” the results of this quick questionnaire give you a fairly accurate “health expectancy.” You do not have to be perfect in order to score a three, you just have to consider yourself to be at least “very good” in that area.

1. Clean, fresh air
2. Pure water
3. Whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables
4. Sufficient sleep
5. Adequate rest and relaxation
6. Vigorous physical activity
7. Emotional poise and stability
8. Sunshine and natural light
9. Comfortable temperature and climate
10. Peace, harmony, serenity, and tranquility
11. Human touch
12. Thought, cogitation, and meditation
13. Friendship and companionship
14. Gregarious social relationships and sense of community
15. Love and appreciation
16. Play and recreation
17. Pleasant environment
18. Amusement and entertainment

19. Sense of humor, mirth, and merriment
20. Security of life and its means
21. Inspiration, motivation, purpose, and commitment
22. Creative useful work and hobbies
23. Self-control and self-mastery
24. Individual sovereignty
25. Expression of reproductive instincts
26. Satisfaction of the aesthetic senses
27. Self-confidence and self-esteem
28. Positive self-image and sense of self-worth
29. Internal and external cleanliness
30. Smiles, laughter, and happiness
31. Music and all other arts
32. Biophilia (love and appreciation of all life forms)

If you score a zero or a one in any of these areas, know that by making improvements in your weak areas you will experience the biggest effect towards improving your health and longevity, for it is always your weakest links that will hold you back. One of the rewarding features of putting attention onto your weakest links is that you will make the most progress in the least amount of time, with the least amount of effort, by working on them.

Total scores above 87 are excellent, above 78 are good, above 69, fair.

If you have any doubt about the accuracy of your own evaluation, you might also ask a friend or two to evaluate you, while you offer to reciprocate by evaluating them. The results always promise to be insightful, and to provide much fodder for conversation, whether your friend's assessment agrees with your own or not.

April 20

**No matter how well you nurture a tree afterward,
once you strike it with an axe, the scar will remain forever.**

Over the decades, I have heard so many sentences that began with a phrase similar to one of the following:

“I was a smoker for 15 years.”

“I drank heavily for 20 years.”

“I was a hippie in the 70’s. You know what that means.”

“I used to weigh over 300 pounds.”

“I used to eat butter ... straight up, the whole stick.”

“Through most of my teen years, I was anorexic and bulimic.”

“I took prescription steroidal drugs to control my acne for ages.”

“I was on birth control pills for a decade.”

“I was in a bad accident and suffered disfiguring injuries.”

“My father abused me badly when I was a child.”

“I’ve been sedentary my entire life.”

“I am a Type 1 Diabetic.”

“I tore my ACL in both knees.”

And each of those phrases ended with, “Can my body completely repair itself on 80/10/10?”

The human body has an amazing capacity to heal and recover from the damage and abuse to which it is subjected. This does not mean that we are supposed to damage and abuse our body, far from it. But accidents do happen, as all too often we misjudge our own capabilities. From the simple biting of our cheek while eating to the severe compound injuries most usually associated with automobile wrecks, extreme sports, and military experience, the body choreographs all possible reparations in the speediest and most efficient fashion.

Repair is a subset of growth, and as such, repair takes its toll on human resources. The need for sleep increases when repairs are needed, as is the need for a variety of nutrients associated with helping us cope with stress, such as B Vitamins, and the proteins required for the body to

manufacture various hormones. The human body thrives on nurturing, and grows according to the challenges and recovery conditions that we supply. The body will heal itself, to the degree it can, based upon the substances, forces, influences, and conditions that you provide, within the limitations of matter. But the body eventually loses the ability to repair itself perfectly, to replace damaged cells with perfect new ones. This production of less-than-perfect cells as replacements of better ones is an integral part of the aging process, and is not something we wish to rush. Cut your finger, it heals, hopefully as good as new. Cut off your arm, however, and you will have exceeded the limitation of matter. The stump may heal, but you are not likely going to grow a new arm, even if you fully adopt the 80/10/10 lifestyle.

Some of the damage we do to ourselves may indeed be irreparable. Surfers call injuries to their delicate fiberglass boards “dings.” Perhaps we should rightfully refer to our cuts, bruises, and other damage as “history.” We cannot undo our history, but hopefully, we can learn from it.

April 21

**Live healthfully and experience long life as a gift,
rather than a curse.**

Most people suffer with health problems the last 20 or 30 years of their life. George Bernard Shaw's famous quote, "Youth is wasted on the young" is perhaps most meaningful because of its profound characterization of the typical human condition. What a wonderful experience life could be if we could combine the vitality of youth with the wisdom that can only come with the maturity of age. For most people, having vitality and wisdom is akin to having your cake and eating it too, simply an impossible combination. Are we really designed to have either vibrant energy or sophisticated discrimination, but never both?

If we look at a herd of horses, it is relatively difficult to tell the difference between the horses that are five, 15, and 25 years of age. When we watch a flock of birds flying in formation, there is no way to tell the young from the old. In fact, with most animals, it is nearly impossible to be able to discern young adults from any other age of adult, with the possible exception of those in advanced old age. Nature has made this arrangement for a variety of reasons, most of which have to do purely with survival. Nature's plan works for us in many other ways as well. Life is better in every way, and far more pleasurable for us when we feel great and have no physical restrictions or infirmities. This is "the charmed life" that Victoria Moran writes about, "the good life" made famous by Helen and Scott Nearing.

Health care is one of the biggest industries in the world, and it seems that the more we spend on medical care, the sicker we get. Or perhaps what is really happening is that as we get sicker, the cost of medical care rises accordingly. Medical intervention masks the symptoms of poor health, but does not in any way eliminate the cause(s) of those symptoms. In most cases, the causes are known, and quite predictable.

Heart Disease: The consumption of animals and animal products is known to foster the development of heart disease. Heart disease is almost completely unknown in vegans.

Cancer: The majority of the life-threatening metastatic cancers are common in meat and dairy eaters and quite rare among vegans.

Diabetes: Type II diabetes incidence is dramatically on the rise in people eating 30 to 50 percent or more of their daily calories from fat. Diabetes is successfully reversed when people choose to eat less than 10 percent of their total calorie intake from fat.

The majority of all digestive disorders are completely eliminated when we follow a low-fat, raw vegan diet, such as taught in *The 80/10/10 Diet*.

April 22

**Being at war with your vices while maintaining peace
with your neighbors is a worthwhile goal.**

To challenge oneself to become a better person calls for a lifetime of commitment to this laudable goal. Improving your personality and social skills is a challenge that never goes away, never lets up, and always reminds you to strive to be your best. Just when you think you are at the top of your game, you realize that there is always room for improvement. While it is relatively easy to have peaceful relations with your friends, relatives, and neighbors when they are in good spirits, can you provide the impetus to lift them to new heights when they are feeling down, or do you somehow manage to unwittingly set them off?

We all have vices, and we are all aware of them. Just in case you aren't aware of ANY of your own vices, ask a few of your friends to help you make a list. But be ready for them to seriously give you the worst. Honestly, I would recommend that you start by making your own list. Let us assume that you can come up with 12 vices, some glaring, some minute. Pick one and write down your strategy for overcoming this vice. You can likely think of at least four or five action steps that you could take to eliminate this vice from your personality. Commit to implementing the action steps, as needed, every day for an entire month. Most likely, long before the month is out, you will see that incidents of the undesirable trait will have all but vanished, while your action steps for dealing with such behavior, when appropriate stimulus appears, will be well on their way to becoming habitual. With the onset of a new month, choose another behavior trait you wish to modify, make a new list of action steps for overcoming the behavior, and start anew. You will be amazed at how easy this approach to behavior modification is, especially when compared to the impossibly overwhelming task of redesigning all of your personality in one go.

A Florida politician I was visiting once said to me that he had gotten into local politics in order to help bring his sleepy, little hometown back to being the friendly and safe place that it had been when he was a child. He blamed the town's current social unrest problems on the unchecked population growth that had come to his quiet coastal area. "Back when there were only three people in all of Florida, you could pretty much do whatever you wanted. You could ride a bulldozer for 100 miles through the Everglades and no one would be upset in the slightest. Now, with a population in excess of 20 million, it is difficult to swing your arms without hitting someone else, impossible to fertilize your lawn without 50 or more neighbors being offended by the aroma. We need to establish rules of behavior and acceptance that are in line with our current cramped quarters." If being neighborly with your neighbors requires that you raise your level of respect and understanding of their needs, so be it. Rise to the occasion, and count not rising as a vice that needs adding to your list and addressing.

April 23

Giving up a vice forever is difficult, but choosing not to participate in that vice just for today is much easier.

“Just for today.” Many a prayer has been formed around these three hope-filled words. Countless people have committed, just for today, to be or do something, better than they have in the past. Some have succeeded, but many have failed, basically because an entire day is too much for them to take on all at once. Rising to the occasion, being as good as you can possibly imagine, at anything, is a lot like holding your breath. You can hold your breath for a few seconds, maybe even an entire minute, but not for a whole day. In reality, when we say “just for today,” the help we are really hoping for, or accepting (depending upon your interpretation of the concept of prayer) needs to be continuous, moment by moment, and always in effect, lest we suffer a lapse in behavior. For most of us, instead of praying “just for today,” a better approach might well be a mantra, which we could repeat again and again, as needed, such as “Just for this moment, and the next.”

“For how long are you going to eat your raw food diet?” I am often asked.

“I haven’t really thought much past my next meal,” is my usual response.

“Do you exercise every day?”

“I did today, but can’t make any guarantees about tomorrow. I remain hopeful.”

“Come eat with us. A little won’t kill you, will it?”

“How about if I just sit with you. If I don’t eat, it won’t kill your enthusiasm, will it?”

“Everything is good for you in moderation, right?”

“Poison gas? Infanticide? Spousal abuse? Mutilation? Please respect my choice to just say no, thank you.”

“The animals are here for us to eat them.”

“The animals are here for us to appreciate, and care for them.”

“Do you ever cheat?”

“I have no desire to cheat myself of the health that I most desire.”

“You mean you can’t eat meat again, ever?”

“Sure, I can eat whatever I desire, but my current diet is going so well that I really don’t want to eat meat.”

“Do you do something to make yourself a better person every day?”

“No, just today.”

The very concept of forever can be intimidating, especially if you are considering “giving something up.” Perhaps a better approach might be to focus on what you are heading towards, what you are gaining, and why you wish to move away from using a specific substance or behavior. Many people find that the concept of a “short-term experiment in dietary modification” is fascinating, alluring, quite acceptable and not at all intimidating, especially when compared to the phrase, “permanently give up all your favorite foods.” Express your goals in ways that you find work best for you.

April 24

For every person who climbs the ladder of success, there are thousands more standing around waiting for the elevator.

A saying I used to hear a lot was, “I’m waiting for my ship to come in.” In today’s world, the updated version would be something such as: “I see no reason to work in order to be successful. Instead I’m just going to buy lottery tickets and hope that I get lucky.” Can you imagine someone living somewhere in the middle of the United States, waiting for his lucky ship to appear on the horizon? After leaving the Atlantic Ocean, the ship would have to make its way into Saint Lawrence Bay and down the Saint Lawrence Seaway. Near Montreal, the ship would then meander through the St. John River to Lake Champlain and then down the Erie Barge Canal to Lake Erie, Lake Huron, and eventually to Lake Michigan, where, after going through a series of locks, it could theoretically end up in the Mississippi River. One thousand miles later, the ship could turn eastward to navigate a small tributary of the Mississippi, then attempt a smaller contributing stream, and eventually turn up the little trickling creek that runs through the back yard of our lucky man, who would be lying in his hammock and waiting for luck to attack him. Do you honestly think such a scenario could ever happen? We might as well buy lottery tickets, or better still, just give our money away.

Who enjoys waiting for an elevator in a crowd so large that you know you are going to be lucky if you make the third or fourth group to squeeze in? Heck, who enjoys riding in an elevator that is so packed full of people that no one has near enough personal space anyway? At least on the ladder, or the stairs, you have plenty of space, plenty of fresh air, and a great view! Choosing to actually do the work necessary to reach your goals is not an airy-fairy dream. Your success will be as real as the work you do to gain that success. If you fail to reach a goal, you can always start again. As the old saying goes, “Failure is temporary. Quitting is permanent.” Keep your eyes on your goals, and keep climbing the ladder of success. That ladder is the most direct course toward reaching your desired destination.

April 25

Every new idea is first subjected to rejection and ridicule.

More people have listened to music by The Beatles than perhaps any other musicians in history. Yet when they first hit the scene, many established music critics criticized them harshly, and most of the rest made fun of them. For their forward-thinking ideas, Newton was ostracized, Galileo was jailed for describing what he saw through his telescope (none of his fellow scientists would even look through the telescope), Tesla was considered a dreamer, and Goddard was ridiculed for his suggestion that we could send a rocket to the moon. The work of Gregor Mendel, the father of genetics, was totally ignored until decades after his death. Ignaz Semmelweis, the first to promote the concept that doctors should wash their hands after each patient, was locked up in an insane asylum for his idea. The Wright Brothers were endlessly made fun of for their passion about their flying machines. William Harvey's discovery of blood circulation resulted in his being ostracized from the scientific community. Josiah C. Nott suggested that mosquitoes could be transmitting malaria and yellow fever. His idea was completely ignored for more than 50 years, during which time toxic gas from swamps was blamed instead.

Automobiles, originally known as horseless carriages, were considered a nuisance that would never catch on. Thomas Edison was mocked for his efforts at creating the electric lightbulb, and Alexander Graham Bell was not only the laughing stock of society for his telephone, he was the butt of many jokes, since no one could see the use of his "darned contraption." From adhesive bandages to Ziploc™ bags, people really have a difficult time seeing what the visionaries see. Rather than embracing new ideas, people are very prone to saying "no" as their first response, long before they capitulate and finally say "yes." Knowing this fact might actually affect how quick you are to say "no," or it might reduce your reluctance to say "yes" to new ideas.

Some people say that one way to tell if you are on the right track with an invention or idea is if practically everyone else tells you that it will not work or will not sell. One Western Union official famously said the telephone was not practical and they "had no use for it."

The mind likes a strange idea as little as the body likes a strange protein and resists it with similar energy. It would not perhaps be too fanciful to say that a new idea is the most quickly acting antigen known to science. If we watch ourselves honestly, we shall often find that we have begun to argue against a new idea even before it has been completely stated.

-Wilfred Trotter, 1941

The study of history is a powerful antidote to contemporary arrogance. It is humbling to discover how many of our glib assumptions, which seem to us novel and plausible, have been tested before, not once but many times and in innumerable guises, and discovered to be, at great human cost, wholly false.

-Paul Johnson

April 26

All new models begin with criticism of the current model.

People sometimes say not to criticize, for they think that criticism is a bad thing. I believe that in order to criticize, you must be visionary, able to see the need for improvement in something. In order to give constructive criticism, you not only must perceive a problem, you must be able to verbalize or otherwise construct at least vague ideas about how to make an improvement on the problem, and be able to communicate or demonstrate your perception. The old adage, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” may well be true for things that are working perfectly well, but equally true is the fact that we all appreciate improvements, in every form.

People balked about so many improvements, but then embraced them wholeheartedly. From airplanes to electric xylophones, push-button phones to cell phones, pop-tops to laptops to solar panels on rooftops, reel-to-reel to eight-track to cassette to CD to MP3, we have accepted and appreciated them all. Some of these improvements came to the inventor in a dream, but most came as the result of a common problem. The problem is a simple one: all too often, designers are so far separated from users that there is almost no connection between the two. How many models walk down the catwalk wearing designer clothing that has never been seen before, only to find that the clothing falls off the shoulder, or they trip over the hem, or that inappropriate coverage is a problem? How many people complain that the starter key is in an inconvenient spot on their car, or the door handles are difficult to access, or the seatbelt rides too high on their neck, or any of dozens of other user flaws that the designers just did not see? The phrase “user-friendly” has come into vogue as a result of exactly these types of problems with computers, televisions, and other high-tech equipment.

Airplane seats have for so long been notorious for being uncomfortable that they have become the butt of many harsh jokes. No one wants to sit in an uncomfortable chair for two to 10 hours. Before the concept of user-friendly came into vogue, the phrase “ergonomic” was popularized. Ergonomic means “designed to minimize physical effort and discomfort, and hence maximize efficiency.” Over the decades, we have seen our use of many tools, from shovels to vegetable peelers, benefit from the application of ergonomic design. Do we ever stop to wonder why the item was not designed for maximum efficiency in the first place? The answer is relatively simple: we do not really know how well something is going to work until we have tried it. Hindsight can almost always improve upon foresight.

April 27

**There is always a helping hand available,
at the end of your own arm.**

Charlie “Tremendous” Jones is truly a giant of a man, as he stands head and shoulders above most people in a crowd. The author of *Life Is Tremendous*, an extremely popular motivational book, Charlie has been extremely successful in the business world and equally so on the public speaking tour. He was wonderfully gracious when I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking to him after a presentation he gave for the National Speakers Association. Part of that conversation is printed here:

DG: Charlie, you have been ultra-successful in your life. To what do you attribute the secret of your success?

CJ: Good judgment.

DG: Charlie, how did you attain such good judgment?

CJ: Experience.

DG: And Charlie, how in the world did you get all the necessary experience?

CJ: Poor judgment.

Most of the tasks that seem so large as to be daunting when they loom in front of us are really not so bad once we have dug in, done the work, and put the task behind us. What many of us lack is not the energy to get a job done, but the enthusiasm, and this is totally understandable, if you focus on the job itself. If, instead, we focus on how good it will feel to have the job finished, or on the fun we can have as a result of having done the necessary work, or even how much other people will appreciate us for having taken care of the task at hand, we will discover abundant newfound enthusiasm.

Everyone wants something for nothing—found money, winning lottery tickets, riches made at gambling casinos—but life rarely works that way. Life seems to bring the best rewards to those who put in the most effort. Samuel Goldwyn, the famous movie producer, is credited with ensuring that his own future would be rosy by adapting Coleman Cox’s adage, “I’m a great believer in luck. The harder I work, the more luck I have” to “The harder I work, the luckier I get.” We are always pleasantly surprised when someone else does a job better than we would do it ourselves. The adage, “If you want something done well, do it yourself” is based on sound experience. Sometimes, however, you might feel you are just too busy to do it all. Lucille Ball, one of the busiest and most active women to ever grace the planet put her finger directly on the pulse of this issue when she said, “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it.” The more things you do, the more you can do. Dig in and get started. You will likely find that you can get more done than you thought you could.

April 28

**Each day provides as many pockets
as you have ideas to put in them.**

“When one has much to put in them, a day has a thousand pockets.” —Friedrich Nietzsche

Today’s saying is obviously based on Nietzsche’s brilliant and optimistic insight that an endless stream of opportunities comes our way every day. Nietzsche was obviously a “glass half-full” kind of guy, a character trait well worth developing. Optimism goes back a long way, as Buddha is given credit for saying, “Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional.” Apparently we have choice as to when, where, how, and even whether we choose to experience misery, if at all.

My daughter has loved dogs (and all other animals, to be fair) for her entire life. When she first learned to walk, we would take her to a local park where she would pet every dog whose owner said it was OK. She would pet the dog forever, if given the option. Eventually, even the most kind-hearted of dog owners would make it clear that they had to continue with the walk. My daughter would cry her eyes out over the loss of the dog, asking me repeatedly why the dog and owner had to go. I told her we would see another dog soon, which we invariably did. The crying would stop and the smiles came out again. “There is always another doggie just around the corner” became a phrase of optimistic thought that we have used in our family from those days till the present in order to remind ourselves that no matter how bleak things seem, good news is certain to be coming soon.

Recognizing opportunities, discovering hidden gems, seeing the best of all possible meanings in the words and deeds of others, this is truly an important part of the art of healthful living. Eric Idle’s 1979 song, “Always Look on the Bright Side of Life” was originally written in earnest, though Monty Python made the song famous by singing it as a parody at the close of their film, *The Life of Brian*.

When you have ideas, collect them. Make little notes, reminders you can keep in a booklet and go back to now and then. You might be way ahead of your time. You never really know which of your ideas are going to turn out to be winners. Treat them all as gems.

April 29

Being important is nowhere near as important as being healthy.

We all enjoy the feeling of being needed, and we greatly appreciate being helpful and useful to those we care about. Without health, however, everything else pales in comparison. When your health is at a low ebb, regaining your health becomes the most important thing. The same cannot be said for feeling helpful. We all want to be accepted by others, but when your health is down, all you can think about is getting better, and it is extremely difficult to think about the needs of others. Commonly, people in the hospital are given gifts, cards, flowers, and other encouraging items, but are not known for giving such niceties to others.

When a head of state falls ill, getting him or her healthy becomes the primary concern for all involved. Forgotten are the pressing international matters. In many countries, keeping the heads of state healthy has become big business, and efforts are taken to raise the leader's level of health and prevent them from ever actually becoming ill. The leadership of businesses large and small have realized that the best way to increase production while lowering the costs of "health care" (which truly should be known as "sickness care") is to provide fitness, nutrition, and other services to their employees. Reductions in sick leave and use of health care services results in lowered costs and rises in worker productivity. The small investment in workers' health proves to result in large dividends for owners and stockholders.

Many athletes choose short-term fame over long-term health when they make the decision to use PEDs (performance enhancing drugs) in order to boost their athletic careers. Are these motivated young athletes told that there is a very good chance that taking such drugs will shorten their lives, put them at risk of becoming social pariahs, and will possibly even shorten their careers? The average NFL player dies in his 50's, fully 15 years younger than the average NFL fan. One can only wonder if the decision to take the PEDs was left up to the athlete's parents, wife, or children, if they would have chosen fame and fortune over health and longevity. Which will you choose?

April 30

Become ultra-conservative regarding your health.

A dictionary synonym for “radical” is “extreme.” Often, extremism is considered a negative quality (that was *extremely* discourteous, going to political *extremes*, carried her weight loss to an unhealthy *extreme*), though sometimes extremism is associated with positive features (you are *extremely* kind, *extremely* good-spirited, beautiful to the *extreme*). Radical behavior is not inherently or automatically bad or good, but is nevertheless typically associated with the negative.

Conservative behavior is generally considered prudent, careful, and well thought-out, though, once again, it does not have to automatically be associated with positive actions. The dictionary defines conservative as follows:

Conservative:

1. disposed to preserve existing conditions, institutions, etc., or to restore traditional ones, and to limit change.
2. cautiously moderate or purposefully low: a conservative estimate.
3. traditional in style or manner; avoiding novelty or showiness: conservative suit.

Most people live in a dream world, wasting their health left, right, and center on a daily basis, thinking that the doctors are going to be able to perform a miracle, like they might see on a futuristic sci-fi movie, or on an evangelical television show. (Please remember that television is indeed just a show, and is referred to as “regular programming.”) People act surprised when they are told that they simply cannot be helped, will have to live with infirmity, or that their condition is going to continue to decline.

We laugh about being workaholic and chocaholic, addicted to coffee, or unable to live without meat, yet we make fun of those who take great care of themselves, referring to them in a demeaning way as being somewhat crazy, and calling them “health nuts.”

You cannot buy health. Conserve what you have, to the best of your ability, for, as the old saying goes, “When your health is gone, where are you going to live?” The ultra-conservative health enthusiast should be thought of as the ultimate connoisseur of health, rather than a nut. Healthy individuals are becoming a rarity, and should be prized rather than chided.

MAY

Spring is in the air, and it is time to regain that spring in your step.

The surefire method to improve the way you feel is to improve the way you take care of yourself. Every improvement will yield results that will lead to motivation to make even more improvements. There are many aspects to every health care program, and spring is the time to make upgrades in all of them. The warming sun, longer days, and the promise of the coming summer with its visions of vacations, bathing suits, and sweet fruits combine to provide great incentive for making lifestyle improvements.

Getting sufficient sleep goes a long way towards improving the way we feel. Developing the habit of getting to bed early and sleeping until you awaken naturally can give you that extra energy you desire, and put a bit more spring into your step.

Many people think “spring clean” when they think at all of spring. Spring is a great time to simplify your diet for a period of time, to get rid of all the unnecessary items in your fridge and pantry, and start anew your love affair with fresh produce. Perhaps even take a week to follow an ultra-simple dietary plan, to heighten the sensitivity of your taste buds and to give your digestive tract a chance to renew itself. You will feel better for having done so.

Is it time to drop a few pounds, before the minimal clothing of summer makes your excess girth apparent to all? You have several months to make the improvements in your appearance that you know you want to make. All you have to do is begin. Do a little more exercise, eat a few more vegetables so as to reduce your total calorie intake, and get enough sleep whenever possible. You can be certain that all the right things will happen.

Sometimes we have to push ourselves just a bit harder than we may wish to in order to bring about the gains in fitness, health, and vitality that we want to achieve. Hopefully, winter has been a time filled with family, fun, rest, and regrouping for the coming year. Spring comes in like a lion, or so the saying goes. This spring, how about if you roar around a bit too, and give your all to your health program. You will see rapid results, and put that spring back into your step, not only from your newfound fitness, but also from the sheer pride of having taken the responsibility to reclaim your health.

May 1

**The sun is getting up earlier every day.
Are you?**

To be well-rested enough to get up early and enjoy the morning, you will soon have to go to bed while it is still light outside. The best time of day for accomplishing challenging tasks is the first thing in the morning. Before other people start asking things of you, get done what you need to get done. Before the telephone starts ringing, before the mail arrives, before the day's email starts pouring in, get done those things that are important to you. Face some of the most difficult tasks, even if only for a few minutes each day. Put off the day's daunting efforts until later, and you will all too often find that other duties, responsibilities, commitments, and unforeseen delays throw your schedule out of whack and, lo and behold, the challenging task will have to be put off for another day. Easily enough, the task gets put off again and again, and is eventually forgotten. Jack LaLanne, renowned fitness expert and holder of several world records for fitness stunts, hosted an exercise program on television for 34 years. He said that every morning, he always did the most difficult things first. He is credited with saying, "Getting out of a warm bed at 4 A.M. while lying next to a soft woman in order to go to a cold gym to lift hard steel for two hours, that's the most difficult thing I am likely ever going to face. After that, I know I can do anything, whatever is asked of me, for the rest of the day."

If you wish to see yourself making the kind of progress that you know you are capable of making, do it first, whatever "it" is. Get the hard stuff done, and you can sail through the rest of your day on a pleasant breeze.

All too often, when discussing the above approach to making grand accomplishments, people say, "But there just isn't time in the morning, I have so much to do then," or, "I've got to go to work in the morning," or give some other excuse for not spending a bit of time exercising, or writing, or doing whatever is really important to them. The answer is simple: GET TO BED. If you stay up late, there is no way to get up early, at least not on a consistent basis. Getting to bed early, at least relatively early, is a habit well worth developing. The best way to learn to get to bed is to get to bed. Once in a while, go to bed much earlier than usual, two, three, even four hours earlier than usual. You will likely find that time in bed beats time in front of the television, hands down. Getting to sleep early (and sleeping as much as you wish) is one of life's greatest pleasures. Of course, it is equally as rewarding to wake up refreshed in the morning, energetic and enthusiastic about facing the duties of the day.

May 2

**Weight loss diets are for people who are thick,
and tired of it.**

Every day, an increasing number of people are looking for easy ways to lose weight. They try every gimmick in the book, and many that are not yet even in the book. They are hoping for miracles, demanding miracles, and there seems to be no end of “reputable” people selling miracle products that are guaranteed to yield miraculous results. Sorry folks, but when it comes to weight loss, the hard truth is that there are no miracles.

The guideline for weight loss is simple; if you wish to lose weight, you must use more calories than you consume. This leaves you with three basic options: (1) increase calories used in physical activity, (2) decrease calories consumed as food, or (3) both. Weight loss calculations are exceptionally easy to figure. If you under-eat by roughly 100 calories per day, you will lose about one pound of fat per month.

Jeff Novick, former director of nutrition of the Pritikin Longevity Centers and now nutritionist for the McDougall Centers, said, “Of all the weight loss programs known, only the LCD (low-caloric density) approach has been shown to give reliable and lasting results.” Whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables provide the lowest calories per bite, hence the lowest caloric density of all foods. The vegetables typically consumed in fresh salads are so low in calories per bite, in fact, that it would be next to impossible to eat salads as a sole source of calories, even if you were an inactive person. The volume of food required would be immense. An athletic man requiring 4000 calories per day would need to eat roughly 80 heads of lettuce per day, for example, to garner the necessary calories. Even a sedentary woman would need 30 to 40 heads of lettuce to eat sufficiently. Obviously, such consumption could never happen.

Fruits provide greater caloric density than vegetables, ranging from roughly double the calories per bite to 20 times the calories per bite and more, depending upon the sweetness and fat content of the specific fruit. Fruits provide the ideal source for the majority of calories for humans, and when complemented with vegetables, are sufficient to cover all of our nutritional needs.

May 3

**The human body, if properly cared for,
will last an entire lifetime.**

Maybe it seems obvious that the human body will last a lifetime, but there is a big difference between living healthfully all the way to the end of your life, all functions and faculties working perfectly, and surviving in poor, failing, and ever-worsening health for several decades until you finally expire, with many of your functions, faculties, and capacities diminished or having left you completely, years or even decades in the past. Maybe the health “fanatics,” the ones who took great care of themselves for 50, 60, 70 years and longer, the ones who seemed to never have a sick day, always be in great spirits, who continued to be useful to humankind into and beyond their 90’s, maybe they were just lucky. We do not prove a point by mentioning the life of one individual. In 1971, I read an article in my local paper about a 114-year-old North Carolina man who had been smoking cigarettes daily for 102 years. Was his longevity due to the fact that he had been smoking all those years? Or was he just fortunate that emphysema, lung cancer, or any of the other ailments associated with long-term smoking had not taken his life?

When we observe the statistics derived from large numbers of people, we see trends that simply cannot be denied. Smoking greatly increases your chances of dying of lung cancer. High-fat diets often lead to Type 2 diabetes. Drinking and driving are all too often a deadly combination. Vegans live longer than those following a standard Western diet.

- ◆ T.C. Fry died at 70 years old, 25 years after changing his diet as a result of the doctors informing him he did not have long to live.
- ◆ After changing her diet, Hannah Allen lived to around 90, some 50 years longer than her doctors said she would.
- ◆ Dr. Herbert Shelton died at 90 after being kicked in the head by a horse.
- ◆ Jack LaLanne exercised daily until the day he died, at 96.
- ◆ Paul Bragg, promoter of health foods and exercise, died at 90 as the result of a surfing accident.
- ◆ Dr. William Esser, noted promoter of natural hygiene, was still playing tennis at 90. He died at 92.
- ◆ Dr. V.V. Vetrano, another noted promoter of natural hygiene, was still going strong at 90, while this book was being published, as was her good friend, Dr. Keki Sidhwa, who was so ill at age 14 that he was pronounced dead. He then changed his lifestyle and adopted healthful living principles.

Many other hygienic practitioners lived long (into their 90's), productive, and healthy lives, including Dr. Gerald Benesh, Dr. John Brosious, and Dr. D.J. Scott, to name just a few.

Stack as many lifestyle cards in your favor as you possibly can. Live long and be healthy.

May 4

**Like the false sense of ability gained from any drug,
the sense of energy gained from stimulant use
is strictly illusory.**

True energy comes from within, produced by every cell 24 hours per day. Energy accumulates during sleep, and dissipates during our waking hours. The use of stimulants to gain a sense or feeling of energy is not truly a representation of energy having been supplied. Rather, stimulant use drains the body of its vital reserves of energy. Thus, although the users of crystal methamphetamine certainly become extremely active with its use, while they feel unlimited and boundless energy, when the body has sufficiently thrown off the drug and the effects wear off, the user is left more tired than before the drug was taken. The primary effect may indeed have been stimulation, but not the supplying of energy, for after the primary effect wears off, the secondary effect takes hold, and the user usually falls into a deep sleep that may last two, three, or even four days or longer. Had the drug truly supplied energy, the person would still have plenty of his/her own energy left after the drug effects were over. In fact, if drugs could truly be used to supply energy, people could stay awake for an unlimited period of time by using drugs. But even with generous use of drugs, people can rarely stay awake for more than a week or so. The fact that stimulants drain energy is again demonstrated by the fact that the people who have set the absolute records in staying awake have done so without the use of stimulating drugs. Drug use makes for inefficient physiology, extraneous cellular functions, and puts extra stress on kidney and liver function, all of which leaves the user tired. If you want more energy, get enough sleep, while gradually training the body's ability to output through repeated practice at the exertions you wish to improve upon.

May 5

CANI: Constant And Never-ending Improvement

Some ideas just seem so obvious, once they have been shown to you. The concept of Constant And Never-ending Improvement (CANI) is certainly one of those ideas. In a classic example of not being able to see the forest for the trees, many people fall into the trap of thinking that by age 18 or 21, they have become “all grown up” and now just need to live their lives. Nature provides a completely different model for us. Trees, for example, just keep on growing, as do many types of animals. We have the potential to keep learning, to continually refine and improve our skills, and to endlessly develop our social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual faculties.

When faced with challenging situations, many people experience frustration, while others sense an opportunity to develop new abilities. Our growth potential is endless, if we are willing to grow. We enjoy the learning process so much that we constantly challenge ourselves to do more, and better. We raise the bar of our personal expectations, figuratively and literally, as part of our unique human nature. When we find design flaws, we make improvements. We streamline designs, processes, and production methods so as to make them more efficient and more effective.

Children constantly show us their ideas, experimenting and endlessly coming up with new ways to do things. Making improvements is innate, built into our innermost “hard-wiring.” We are utilitarian by design. For example, consider the way we walk from one place to another. If you wish to get from A to B, you will likely take the shortest route, even if the pavement design suggests a longer route. We see the wear patterns in the grass to let us know that others went the same way. The evolution of products, from baseball gloves to cell phones, televisions to bicycles, bears witness to the human drive for Constant And Never-ending Improvement.

The trick is to apply this drive to your own personality and skill sets....

May 6

**Just as no one ever bet enough on the winning horse,
you cannot over-invest in your health.**

Obsessing about your health is not healthy. Obsessing about the quality of your food is not healthy. Obsessing about your physique is not healthy. Obsessing about your weight is not healthy. What is unhealthy about each of these things? The obsessing is unhealthy, not the fact that you care about your health, your food, your physique, or your weight. Obsessing about anything is just not healthy.

Not caring about health issues is also unhealthy. We rarely hear anyone who is willing to speak out about our obesity problem, our fitness failure, and the problems of living on fatty fried foods, etc. Did movies, such as *Supersize Me*, or documentaries, such as *Forks Over Knives*, cause people to stop eating at fast food restaurants? Did headlines confirming, “Carcinogens Found in Starchy Food” result in people shunning starches and turning to fruit for their carbohydrates? Even though cigarette boxes are printed with blatant warnings such as “Smoking Kills,” people continue to buy cigarettes in record numbers.

Pristine health is your birthright to cherish, nurture, protect, and develop. Whether you choose to do so is totally your decision. Building your health is a lifetime pursuit requiring daily investments in thought, effort, time, and energy. Healthy choices are not always the most convenient ones. You must decide what you really want, what direction you want to head, and where you really want to end up. Your lifestyle choices will make the difference as to whether you spend your life feeling healthy with a vibrant body, a clear mind, and an indomitable spirit, or whether you will destroy your body, mind, and spirit, allowing them to deteriorate and decay, until you find yourself encased in a body that is experiencing living hell.

People may make fun of you for being meticulous in your health care habits, but they will not get the benefit of your lifestyle choices any more than you will have to suffer through theirs.

May 7

If you want your place in the sun, beware, as you may occasionally get burned.

You are out earning your health, pedaling your bicycle in a steady cadence, enjoying the warm sun and fresh air as the miles just slip away, when suddenly a truck passes you just a little too close, and you lose control of your bike. After the setting of one broken bone, cleaning and stitching of your two serious cuts, and putting dressing on the several fairly impressive bits of road rash, you are on your way home from the hospital. Three weeks will be required before you can resume training.

On an early evening training run, you push the limits of distance only to get caught in the dark, two miles from home. No worries, you know the way through the woods by heart. You did not know a rabbit had dug a small hole near the edge of the trail. You will be off that sprained ankle for a week, and it will be three weeks before you are running at full speed again.

Summer has finally come, and the sun is strong. That night, after a full day on the beach with your family, you realize you took a bit too much sun. Tanning is good, but burning is always bad. That peeling nose is not going to look so good in tomorrow's photo shoot

You are so happy about losing weight and gaining fitness on *The 80/10/10 Diet* that you make a series of YouTube videos. You are quite disappointed when you see that along with all the keen responses, one person has posted several rude and unfounded comments.

You have been greatly enjoying all the tropical fruits while on vacation in Hawaii. The food has truly been outstanding. On your last day, you stop at a local farmer's market and binge on jaboticaba, a purple grape-like fruit with superb flavor. This is the first time you have ever tried them, and you just cannot seem to get enough. That night, on the plane, you suffer the consequences of a comprehensive Vitamin C Overdose in a big way. The cramps and subsequent diarrhea are truly epic, lasting almost 24 hours, and will not be forgotten for a long time.

If people aren't talking about you, you likely aren't doing anything well enough to be worth talking about. By pushing your own limits, you develop yourself to the maximum. Sometimes, you will misjudge your own capabilities. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Health is well worth the price. Still, injuries are your worst setbacks, so be sensible, even when pushing your limits.

May 8

When you are alone, your thoughts and actions determine who you really are becoming.

Do you struggle with reaching your lifestyle management goals? Does it seem that you are always trying, but never actually accomplishing much? Do you make vacant statements about what you are going to do, but you fail to back them up? Do you dream of losing weight, gaining muscle, writing a book, or reaching some fitness performance goal, but none of this ever comes to pass?

When no one is watching, do you stick to your commitments? When fitness training on your own, do you step up the training, or do you ease off? Do you ever say to yourself, when realizing that you are about to compromise your own commitments to yourself, “Well, just this once,” or “No one will know,” or “It isn’t really going to matter,” or anything of that sort?

Are you congruent in the expectations that you place on others and those that you place on yourself? Do you hold yourself to the same standards as you would hold anyone else? Do you tell people the truth about yourself, or do you pad the truth some, and tell them the stories that you wish were the truth?

Living truthfully is relatively easy when you think you are under an observing eye, and even easier when you know people are watching. When no one is watching, however, when there is no one to hold you accountable, do you lower your standards? Is your life an open book, or do you keep secrets from the world? Do you keep secrets from yourself?

Self-development takes very little willpower, but demands a clear understanding of your goals. Not only must you have distinct goals in order to be consistent and persistent with your personal development, you must also have good knowledge of how and why you want to reach those goals, including what will happen if you do not persist in reaching them. For some people, positive reinforcement, such as incremental rewards, provides the best support as a motivational tool. For some people, negative reinforcement, such as threat of punishment or revoking of rewards, works far better. Knowing which method of reinforcement works best for you, even if it is a combination of the two, will allow you to use the approach that is most likely going to result in your success.

If you are making progress towards your goals, congratulations are in order. If you are sabotaging yourself, taking steps that bring you further from reaching your goals, you must be willing to look at the reasons for this behavior. In essence, if you are cheating yourself on your own goals, you are really stating that it is time you reassessed your goals, and perhaps even changed them so that they were in line with your actions.

May 9

**Health is cumulative. It is typically gained,
or lost, in very small increments.**

The numbers relating to physiological factors affecting our health are absolutely too staggeringly large to be able to truly comprehend what they imply. Little things can add up to make huge differences over time.

At 60 beats per minute, the average person's heart will beat more than two billion, five hundred million times over the course of a lifetime. A fitter person whose heart beats only 50 times per minute, will save approximately five hundred million beats over the same period of time. A highly fit individual's heart will beat fewer than half the number of times per day as the heart of an extremely sedentary person.

At approximately 30,000 breaths per day, we breathe more than 14,000 liters of air daily. If air were water, that would mean we breathe enough water for a person to fill two Olympic-sized swimming pools every year. There is particulate matter in air that is not technically part of the air itself. These particles include (but are not limited to) pollens, spores, organic matter of animal and vegetable origin, dust, smoke, construction debris, and various pollutants. One author wrote that the average breath of clean rural air contains approximately 10,000 particles, and that city air can hold 10 times that number, and even more. Many of the particles that we breathe go into our lungs and never come out. Depending upon the type of particle, the weather, and the person's general health, somewhere between 10 to 50 percent of the inhaled particles stay in us.

One hundred trillion cells, each performing roughly 1,000 different functions ranging from the uptake of nutrients, processing the nutrients, eliminating the waste products of metabolism, and performing their specific functional roles within the tissue, organ, and system of which they are a part.

Twenty push-ups done once a decade will not result in great arms or a chiseled chest. But done daily, the results add up predictably. Over the course of a lifetime, we are looking at about half a million pushups and quite a physique to go along with it.

Build your health all day long in as many increments as you can imagine. Reduce exposure to negative influences, also in as many ways as possible.

The effects will be cumulative, and after a few years, whether self-constructive or self-destructive, they will show on you.

May 10

**When I open my eyes in the morning,
I already know it is going to be a very good day.**

My dad always used to say that when he got up in the morning, if he saw that he was on top of the grass rather than under it, he knew that the day had gotten off to a great start. What a gift, to open one's eyes and be given a day!

Dad would also say that when he woke in the morning, the first thing he would do would be to read the obituaries in the morning paper. If he was not in there, he knew it was going to be a good day. Every day can be a good day, if you choose to let it be.

The classic question, "Is the glass half full or is it half empty?" serves as a reminder that we have choice when it comes to viewing situations. We can be optimistic or pessimistic. There are other ways to view the human condition. Plainly, the glass is half full of liquid, and half full of air, so, technically, the glass is completely filled. Every moment of every day can be viewed as completely full, if you so choose.

Are you thankful for all the goodness that comes your way, or do you just take the good for granted, almost without even noticing it? How often do you give thanks? There are traditional times for expressing your gratitude, such as upon arising, at the start of meals, and upon going to bed. But you can give thanks at other times during the day as well, and you only stand to benefit if you do so.

"If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't, you are right." This Henry Ford quote is so important that I am including it for a second time. Being grateful for things that you believe are about to happen is part of the self-fulfilling-prophecy effect that converts ideas into realities. We give thanks for the existence and safety of our loved ones. We extend our gratitude to include our physical abilities, our mindset, and our social experiences. If possession is 90 percent of the law, and if seeing truly is believing, then knowing that something is possible brings you 90 percent of the way towards getting it done. By the time you can see it in your mind's eye, you almost own it, whatever "it" is. The expectation of a very good day goes a long way towards guaranteeing that you will indeed experience a very good day.

May 11

We are always paying for something: either paying the price for health or paying the price for sickness.

Would you prefer to think of your current behavior as “investing” in your future health? That is fine too. Either way, the point is that you are either building your health or you are losing it. People so want the idea of moderation to apply to all things, including their health, but it just isn't so. Moderate amounts of cheating on your mate, moderate amounts of stealing from your employer, moderate use of performance-enhancing drugs for sport—no one tolerates such moderation. If other people will not tolerate being cheated on, and you will not tolerate when others cheat on you, why should you tolerate when you cheat yourself of your own health potential? Obviously, there is no defensible rationale for such behavior. Whose judgment of your behavior could possibly mean more to you than your own?

Yet, still we find amusement in attempting to lure others into behavior that would otherwise be unacceptable to them with sayings such as, “A little won't hurt you,” “Come on, just this once,” “You don't want to be the odd man out, do you?” and, “Everything is good for you in moderation.” If we can convince someone to eat, drink, smoke, or do something that they would for health reasons typically otherwise refrain from, does this mean that said behavior is now OK for those doing the convincing?

Consider the following scenario: You have been eating 80/10/10, raw vegan, for eight months. You are definitely getting the hang of the program, and relishing the benefits you have noticed. You have taken the program beyond diet by quitting smoking, no longer drinking alcohol, incorporating exercise, getting more sleep, and even taking time each day for some personal development drills. You have always been known as the most health-conscious person in your family, but you are ready to show them your latest upgrades. At a family gathering during the winter holidays at your sister's house, you realize that you did not plan as well as you might have, and there are no ripe bananas or other sweet fruits. Being winter, the available fruit is not sweet at all, nor very appealing. You quickly start getting very hungry, and you have always loved your sister's cooking. She makes low-fat cooked vegan dishes, which the rest of the family considers to be “health food.” For lack of any other acceptable calorie source, you eat them.

Does the family think badly of you? Likely not. Do they take your raw veganism seriously? Likely not. Do they figure that since you are the healthy one in the family and you ate your sister's cooked foods, that “similar” foods (of course, their versions likely will not be salt-free, or even vegan) are healthy for them to eat? Probably. Did you make converts? Probably not. Did you do the best you could at the time? Assuredly, but hopefully you learned a thing or two, and with better planning will do even better at capitalizing on opportunities to be a role model for your loved ones at future family gatherings.

May 12

**When you cheat on a diet,
the only one who gains weight is you.**

You have decided to change the way you eat, to finally embrace fruits and vegetables wholeheartedly. You start eating fruits, vegetables, and even a bit of nuts and seeds. Upon initiating the program, you instantly feel better, begin to lose a bit of weight, and notice that you have more energy than you have had in a long time. All in all, the change seems very rewarding. You start congratulating yourself on a job well done. Then the cravings begin.

There are four major cravings that can occur if you do not eat enough fruit, or if the fruit you eat is not sweet enough to meet your needs for sugar. These are:

1. Craving for sweets at the end of a meal. Who isn't looking for a sweet dessert after a savory dinner?
2. Craving for refined sugars, such as candy, alcohol, chocolate, or dried fruit in between meals.
3. Craving for heavy foods (nuts, seeds, avocado, or other equally rich fare) at the end of a meal.
4. Craving for starchy foods (bread, rice, pasta, corn, potatoes, etc.) at any time of day.

There is one other craving that some people experience, which is the craving for salty foods. If you do not eat a sufficient quantity of vegetables, you may find yourself craving salty food.

Truly, to succeed on *The 80/10/10 Diet*, you must eat enough fruits and vegetables so as not to experience any of the above-mentioned cravings.

Knowing why you cheat on a diet can be more important than the fact that you cheated, since knowing why may well be sufficient to prevent you making the same mistake in the future.

Are there potential social situations and emotional issues that could predispose you to cheat on your chosen diet? Certainly there are. Being on a diet is much like being in an exclusive relationship. In the same way that you must occasionally review your reasons for being in that relationship, especially when temptation walks by, you must know your reasons for eating the way you do, or you will certainly be tempted now and then to broaden the scope of your program, even to the point of including known health destroyers. People can rationalize anything, so it is important to relate your diet to your goals, and to keep your goals where you can review them regularly.

After all, you don't really want to cheat yourself, do you?

May 13

The price of health is not negotiable.

- “This watch usually sells \$499, but I can let you have it today for \$399.”
- “Can I get a better price on these bananas if I buy an entire case?”
- “I respect your asking price for your house, but I am wondering if you are open to taking a somewhat lower offer?”
- Sign in car window: “Original owner, 89,000 miles, runs great, excellent condition. \$1999 OBO.”

Practically everything is negotiable these days. But if you want to experience a lifetime of uncompromised, high-level health, you must pay the full price. Health cannot be attained at a discount. If you compromise your regimen, you compromise your health. There are no exceptions, no time-outs, nothing that you can get away with. Health must be earned again and again, bit by bit, bite by bite, through all of your choices and decisions, every single day. Health care is something like hair care: you can comb and brush your hair till it is perfect, but then a few hours later, you have to do it again. You cannot comb your hair continuously for an hour in the hope of not having to do it again for the next several days. We all love the idea of getting something for nothing, but the reality is that health requires commitment. There are consequences for everything we do. People all want the results, in different ways, but can find living healthfully challenging:

- “I want to be really fit, but I don’t want to train.”
- “You mean, in order to get big muscles like a bodybuilder, I’d have to work out like a bodybuilder does?”
- “I want to learn to speak foreign languages well, but I don’t want to study.”
- “How can I learn how to food combine? Is learning proper food combining really like learning a foreign language?”
- “I want a slim, well-muscled body, but I want to eat whatever I want, whenever I want, and as much as I want.”
- “I also want to experience the benefits of a committed relationship while I get to sleep with everyone that seems alluring to me.”
- “I want to look and feel well rested, but most nights I want to stay up late to watch movies.”

- “Isn’t there some product I could buy that would give me more energy and make my skin look great?”

Maybe the fairies will wash and put away your dishes, clean your house, brush your teeth, and throw fairy dust on you so that you look and feel great. But maybe not. Which do you want to bet on?

May 14

**You cannot break the laws of nature;
you can only prove them.**

The passing of the seasons, the variations in the weather, the ripening of fruit, the changing tides; this is the natural order of things. We may not fully understand the sciences governing the laws of nature, and in many cases do not even appreciate which laws are governing the behavior and actions we observe, but there is no denying that such laws exist. The pull of gravity is ever-present—nothing is exempt from its effect. Without sufficient oxygen in the air, we will suffocate, and too much oxygen irritates our delicate mucus membranes upon exposure. All our biological urges from appetite to zest for life impose themselves upon us, if we do not provide for them. There is no getting away from nature's laws—we cannot even bend them a little. Every attempted infraction will result in failure or, put more accurately, the immediate demonstration of any and all necessarily involved natural laws. In the immortal words of The Borg from the television series *Star Trek, The Next Generation*, “resistance is futile.” We may as well accept natural law, for there is simply nothing that can be done about it. Perhaps acceptance is not the optimal attitude and joy would be a better representative emotion. Could you imagine living in a world where nature's laws were not in effect, where random behavior and unpredictable results were rampant? Such a world would not work, not even for a moment. Total chaos would take over, as pigs took to the sky, seemingly strong buildings collapsed, plumbing and all machinery ceased to function, and even the basic biology governing life devolved into unpredictable and frustrating madness.

When you lose your grip on something and it falls to the floor, you are proving natural law. If you do not get enough sleep and find yourself yawning all morning long, you are proving natural law. Consistently overeat and gain weight—natural law. Reduce your calorie intake and watch the weight melt away—natural law.

We may be like fish in a barrel, but it is our barrel, and nature's laws provide the structure and predictability that allows us to function, build, and grow. Nature's laws enable us to benefit by getting results similar to others, if we are willing to do what they do, and if we avoid falling into traps and hazards others experience by not duplicating their actions.

May 15

**Health is gained or lost by the conditions
you choose for yourself.**

“I don’t care if my lettuce has DDT on it, as long as it’s crisp.” ~ Grace Slick

“It is better to look good than to feel good.” ~ Billy Crystal/Fernando Lamas

“I’m so tired, I haven’t slept a wink. I’m so tired, my mind is on the blink.” ~ The Beatles

“If you know you are going to hurt yourself with your next meal, take _____ (name of antacid brand withheld) before you eat.” ~Television commercial

Heard and overheard, spoken by those who wish to pretend that they have no personal responsibility for the state of their own health:

- What’s the point of taking good care of myself, when I could be enjoying life instead?
- Eating health food won’t guarantee that I’ll never get sick, will it?
- If I switch to your diet, will my _____ (name almost any disease) finally go away?
- Health is genetic, so we might as well live it up.
- I don’t think I’m going to live that long anyway, so now’s the time to party.
- Heck, I might get hit by a bus tomorrow.
- I never exercise. I prefer to watch others play sports.
- What do you mean I’m not in shape? Spherical is a shape.
- I have no energy until I drink a cup of coffee.
- I smoke because I like to smoke.
- I only smoke a pack a day.
- Smoking calms me.
- I only smoke medical marijuana.
- As long as I remember to take my medications, all is well.

- Other than for my _____ (choose any one or even two of the following: diabetes, Crohn's, gout, obesity, angina, asthma, arthritis, candida, cancer, colitis, heart disease, diverticulitis, stroke, depression, eczema, myofascitis, pleurisy, dialysis, high blood pressure, prostate, AIDS, IBS, PCOS, GERD, PTSD, CFS), I am perfectly healthy.
- Mmmmmm, chocolate.

You get to choose whether you make self-constructive lifestyle choices or self-destructive ones.

May 16

Pain is our best warning device.

If we could not experience pain, we would likely open ourselves up and accidentally kill ourselves before our fourth birthday simply from curiosity to see what is inside. Built deep into the matrix of our neural hardwiring is a profound respect for getting hurt. After all, get hurt badly enough and you may die. This awareness is what keeps us from jumping down from heights from which we would definitely get hurt. The self-preservation instinct is in us from before birth, but it really kicks in as we approach puberty, at which point the taking of unnecessary physical risks tends to diminish dramatically. Balancing the inborn wisdom to play it safe is a profound enjoyment and satisfaction in taking risks. We gradually learn to build upon the safe yet satisfying middle ground.

We get burned, and learn to respect fire. Broken glass earns our respect after a few judgment errors, as do knives, power tools, blisters, flights of stairs, paper cuts, hot water, and eventually, seatbelts, helmets, and other forms of prophylaxis.

Few children would survive to adulthood, despite their parent's best efforts to protect them, were it not for their ability to experience pain. Pain is not something to be feared, but rather is input from our body letting us know that we are doing something potentially harmful. In a manner similar to the way the lights on the instrument panel relay to the driver that there is a problem somewhere in the car, yet the lights on the panel are not the actual problem, pain is usually an indicator that something is wrong, but the pain itself is not commonly the actual problem. For instance, you are walking along and notice a pain in your foot. You stop walking, take off the shoe, and get the pebble out of the shoe. The pebble was the problem, not the foot, or the pain. You love your new outfit, except for the fact that it gives you a pain in the back of your neck. Then you notice that you had not fully removed the plastic tag that held the label in place. You remove the tag, and the pain is gone. Tennis elbow is invariably the result of poor mechanics, and not the tennis itself, nor the elbow. Listen to your pain, and be thankful for it. Remove the cause of the problem, and your body will not have to demonstrate symptoms, which are designed specifically to catch your attention.

May 17

**You still have time to benefit from learning
to take better care of yourself.**

OK, today's comment is a bit of an exaggeration. Here are four real life examples of when it is likely too late for lifestyle changes to be of much value:

1. A potential client called me on the telephone: "I'm interested in making dietary changes that can help my liver. I have liver cancer and the doctors have said I only have a few more days to live."
2. "I'm really psyched about going 80/10/10. I'm a Nike-sponsored athlete and will be running a marathon in two days. What can I eat or drink to boost my performance?"
3. "As an amateur bodybuilder, I understand the importance of great nutrition. My next competition is just four days away, and I'd like to drop my final 18 pounds before stepping onto the stage. What do you recommend I eat in order to lose the weight quickly without sacrificing my strength or muscle tone?"
4. "The emphysema has gotten so bad that I cannot leave my house. I'm on oxygen 24/7, and even with that, I can only speak a few words at a time because I get so out of breath. I no longer smoke, having quit last year when the doctors diagnosed me, but I guess 53 years of heavy smoking took its toll. My doctor is talking about lung transplants. I have reservations, because the survival rate from lung transplant surgery is very low. I'd have to be on serious anti-rejection drugs that lower immune function for the rest of my life, and not eat fruits or vegetables afterwards either, since they counteract the efficacy of the drugs. They say without the surgery, I probably won't survive more than a few more weeks. What can you do for me, doctor?"

In general, it really never is too late to begin taking better care of yourself. The benefits begin to accrue immediately. For your sake, as well as that of all your loved ones, start improving your health regimen today. You have nothing to lose except some excess weight, and everything to gain.

May 18

**By extending the limits of your comfort zone,
you can push yourself to grow.**

Two restaurants stood side to side, owned by a pair of brothers who were “known” to be at war with each other. One restaurant proudly challenged its patrons by displaying a sign that read, “All you can eat.” The restaurant next door catered to a slightly “better” class of patrons by sporting a sign reading, “All you care to eat.” The truth turned out that the brothers were very close, and that they each shared ownership of both restaurants, and served almost identical foods on their buffets, at identical prices. Both restaurants made money, but the profits from the “all you care for” restaurant were more than double those from the “all you can eat” establishment, simply because of the difference in volume of food consumed, and wasted, at each restaurant. “*All you care for*” does not imply the same challenge to eat as much as possible as does “*all you can*.” That little distinction made a huge difference to the eating habits of the restaurants’ clientele.

In work, play, food, fitness training, and all other areas of endeavor, there is a profound distinction between doing *all you care for* and doing *all you can*. Of course, doing all you can do might not always be the best option, as there are times when moderation makes the most sense. But pushing your limits has been proven to be of great value in the development of every skill.

In sports, pushing the limits is known as “overload,” as opposed to overwork (an unreasonable challenge that typically results in injury), or over-training (training beyond one’s ability to recover, leading to a propensity for injury, soreness that delays future training, and even mental dread of future training). “Overload” should be interpreted to mean “a reasonable challenge.” By rising to meet a reasonable challenge, practicing at that level, and providing the factors necessary for sufficient recovery, you gradually become adapted to this level of performance. Your skill level rises as a result of the training effect. Soon enough, you will find yourself able to raise the level of overload challenge yet again, abilities improving in rewarding and endless increments.

There are many ways to push the limits of your comfort zone, but the primary ones are to increase some combination of the frequency, intensity, or the actual time put into a specific effort.

Frequency: Many tennis players, for example, find that by playing once per week, they are constantly frustrated because they never seem to improve, and, in fact, seem to gradually be losing their skills. When playing twice per week, they can very satisfactorily maintain their abilities and sometimes even make a bit of improvement. Only when they start playing more than twice per week does the improvement become profound.

Intensity: Jimmy Connors was ranked in the Top 10 in men’s tennis for 16 years, and for more than five of those years, he was ranked Number One. Many critics say he was the greatest tennis

player of all time. Jimmy was notorious for his short training sessions. When asked how he managed to stay Number One while training less than any of his competition, his coaches always said, “Jimmy doesn’t train for long, but his training is more intense than what anyone else can even imagine.”

Duration: Play tennis for 20 minutes, and you will barely have time to warm up. Play for an hour, and your mindset changes and you notice that you are beginning to think “like a tennis player.” When playing four hours at a time seems normal, you are a tennis player. Tennis not only is what you do, it is who you are. Your physique begins to adapt to playing tennis, as does your mindset. You will find yourself playing at a level you previously thought impossible.

May 19

One at a time, you can make many changes.

Have you ever watched a bird of prey as it zeroes in on its next meal? The focus it demonstrates is amazing. The animal applies a single-mindedness of purpose that cannot be improved upon, as it blocks out all extraneous input and pays attention solely to its prey. Heavyweight fighters go into the ring knowing that even the shortest lapse of attention could result in their being knocked out of the fight by an exceptionally heavy blow. As they begin the fight, they posture and pose, fake and jive, checking to see how the opponent reacts to their moves, and becoming familiar with the moves and reactions of the opponent. The eye contact is so intense, you can feel the tension it creates. Boxers say that once the fight starts, they are so focused that they no longer hear the cheering of the crowd, no longer see outside of the ring, and even lose awareness of the referee. They put all their attention on their opponent.

Think about what you have to do during the course of the next 90 days, and you will likely experience debilitating overload, very likely to the point of complete paralysis. Put your attention on what you must do next, and it is a relatively easy task to focus on the one job, or piece of the job, until it is completely done.

Make a list of all the ways you believe you can improve yourself. These may be broken down into various categories such as physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, fiscal, relationships, etc. If you were to try to take on all the changes on your list at once, you would likely fail at each and every one of them. But if you focus on one change, and really pay attention to that change until you have begun to get the results you are hoping for, you can then begin the next, and the next, in turn. As overwhelming as the entire list might have seemed when taken as a whole, one at a time, each project can be relatively easy. Three sayings have already been coined that represent the concept of taking things one at a time:

Inch by inch, anything is a cinch.

Q: How do you eat an elephant?

A: One bite at a time.

Q: How do you write a computer program?

A: One byte at a time.

May 20

Total health requires total commitment.

“I do.”

Now that you have made your vow, given your word, will you keep your promise? When things are going well, when the living is easy, commitments are no problem to keep. Wedding vows are a total commitment, made with the intention to last through the thick, as well as through the thin. A lot of pressure exists when you give your word to someone else. In the case of marriage, there is also great motivation to make the contract succeed, from both parties. Society helps reinforce the commitment, as do religious, moral, ethical, financial, and many other influences. With all this help, one would think that a successful marriage should be a cinch, almost automatic, a given. Yet the overwhelming majority of all marriages fail, at least in the Western world. One can only wonder how much commitment must be required in order for a person to keep a promise made in private, solely to him/herself. Is it any wonder that most New Year's resolutions are kept for less than a week, with the average resolution being kept for only four days? It comes as no surprise to learn that most dieters fail, that most people never get “back into shape” despite their best intentions, that the books never get written (“I'm going to write a book” is something almost everyone says at one time or another), and that an extremely low percentage of people succeed at quitting smoking, drinking or using recreational drugs.

The Sistine Chapel, Mt. Rushmore, and similar grand accomplishments are the product of total commitment. Such artistic endeavors require persistence, great effort, and the development of natural talent. Health comes naturally, automatically, as long as nothing is done to compromise it. Still, to live a life of vibrant health requires persistence, effort, intelligent decision-making, and a consistent string of self-constructive behaviors. Health is our birthright and, as such, is the natural outcome of healthful living.

May 21

**Make a commitment to get up and
continue on your path after each fall.**

Do not judge yourself by how many times you fall down. When it comes to reaching goals, we all fall short of perfection many times per day. Usually we take such shortcomings in stride, or we do not even notice them. A misspoken or forgotten word, shoelaces becoming untied, a drop of spilt food, a nick or cut, dialing a wrong number on the telephone, or other minor mishaps do not generate huge reactions. We class such failures as insignificant, or we do not even register or pay any attention to them at all. They do not typically cause us to lose our stride, go into a tailspin, fly off the handle, blame others, hide in a corner, or spiral into the depths of depression. Instead, we move on, clean up, and get on with our day.

Attachment to outcome is a surefire method for experiencing frustration, disappointment, and outright failure. Things just do not always go exactly as you would like them to go, as quickly as you would like, or as economically as you intend. Keep your eye on your goal, for sure, but know that you may have to resort to using your Plan B, Plan C, or even your Plan D in order to reach that goal. You may have to reset your sights or push back the target date for achieving the goal. You might have to hire a new person, or even a new team, before you are able to complete your plans. What is, is. If the outcome you seek is not coming to fruition, figure out a new way to make it happen, or consider if perhaps you need to seek a different outcome. “Make plans, and be flexible.” Frustration is not productive. The old saying, “Don’t go away angry, just go away” can be put to good use here, rather than interpreting it in the negative way in which it is usually proffered. We can change the saying to, “Don’t be frustrated, just change your plan.” There are countless ways to reach almost any goal, and if your current plan is not getting you where you wish to go, choose another route.

Success never attacked anyone. You absolutely, positively will not reach your goals, if you quit working towards them. So, instead, find a way of heading towards your goals that you can live with. Failure is an integral part of success. Each failure brings you that much closer to the success you seek.

May 22

**To laugh at yourself is better than
having someone else laughing at you.**

When people are laughing at you, laugh with them. Join in the fun. Be willing to laugh. Not one single solitary shred of scientific evidence exists to even suggest that life is to be taken seriously. Laugh along with others, especially when the joke is on you. You demonstrate your self-confidence by being able to laugh. You highlight your self-respect by rising above the pettiness of showing anger or being upset by a mere joke or lighthearted comment. You can completely refresh the atmosphere and diffuse any intentional or even unintentional harshness by being quick to laugh at humor that is focused on you.

Developing and maintaining the emotional maturity to think before responding requires (and deserves) daily effort. Pretend for a moment that your brain was the engine of a car, and your mouth was the gearbox. The best plan for driving a car is to turn on the engine before putting the car in gear. Let your brain do a bit of work before you put your mouth into action. You can still be spontaneous, quick, and witty, but let your brain do some work for you before you speak. Take a moment to consider the possible consequences of your words, tone, and body language.

Lighthearted is better than heavy-hearted in almost all but the most solemn of occasions. Being able to see the humor in every situation is a gift, a talent that others will appreciate. Why not laugh at your efforts? You stand to lose nothing, and to potentially gain much. Laughing at yourself does not mean you are belittling your efforts. Laughter shows that you have gained a sense of perspective, an overview of your own situation, and realized that *it just isn't that serious after all*. Have more fun, every day, by choosing to rise above the hurtful barbs and zingers sent your way. Return goodwill, humor, smiles, and laughter, and enjoy how quickly others embrace your point of view.

May 23

You cannot buy health assurance with health insurance.

Fitness centers sell memberships to far more people than could ever use the center comfortably, if everyone were to actually use their memberships. The centers rely upon the fact that most of the people who purchase memberships will never actually come to train, or if they do, they will not come consistently, or even very often. The centers constantly push to sell memberships, because so many members quit that there is a continual need for new members.

Thousands of people have told me, one time or another, that they are going to write a book. Few have followed through on their own words, proving to me that their word of commitment meant little, even to them. I am surprised again and again by the number of people who, with newfound enthusiasm for a sport, so completely disregard the time and effort necessary to become truly great at something that they tell me, "I'm going to become a champion in _____"(insert the sport of your choice).

The old saying, "You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear" has never been truer than when it comes to nutrition. Repeatedly, I have watched people bless with "white light energy" absolute junk food, candy, and other sheer crap, and then eat it, full of false confidence that the low nutrient value of the food has magically been transformed into that of health food. Words just do not transform junk food into health food.

I have purchased several books on tying knots, but without putting in the necessary practice, knot-tying remains an unknown art to me. Obviously, knot tying just isn't as important to me as I sometimes think it could be. I would like to learn about the constellations as well, as I very much enjoy looking up into the nighttime skies, but I have just never put in the requisite time and energy, so my knowledge of the constellations remains rather limited. How many books have you bought that you haven't read? Until you read the book, owning it does you no benefit.

The purchase of health insurance might give you some sense of calm security, but it will not make you healthier. Health assurance comes as a result of the consistent and persistent application of the guidelines of healthful living. Health must be earned, each and every day, all day long. Fortunately, living healthfully is not a great effort, and being healthy is the easiest way to live. All the lifestyle requirements for healthful living are pleasant experiences. Bring more pleasure, more happiness, and more ease into your life by following the tenets of healthful living, and accumulate all the health assurance that you possibly can.

May 24

**The time to be healthy is now. The place to be healthy is here.
The way to be healthy is to live healthfully.**

One of my favorite bits of kit is the “excuse towel.” Golfers carry this small towel, with a wide variety of excuses printed on it, to explain why their shots go awry or their scores are above their expected norm. “The green was wet,” “Mud on my wedge,” “A bird got in the way,” and “Someone screamed just as I swung” are favorite golf excuses. The excuse towel is popular with bowlers, too. “Smoke got in my eye,” “The lane was too oily,” “The pins weren’t placed correctly,” and “My thumb got stuck,” are just a few of the many excuses on the bowler’s towel.

Gymnastics, tennis, swimming, and likely almost every sport has excuse towels and even excuse T-shirts. If an athlete screws up, it is apparently never his/her fault.

The mindset of the healthy person is unique. The healthy person expects health, anticipates health, breathes health, and lives healthfully. The healthy person rises to the challenge of converting every potentially health-destroying situation into a health-building experience. The healthy person knows that every cell of the human body is designed to thrive—to seek optimum conditions, substances, forces, and influences at all times. The healthy person experiences the full range of all possible emotions, and is present with those emotions, but also allows them to pass, so as to be able to be present with the next experience, and the next emotion, as quickly as it comes. We want to experience, and remember.

We want to keep all our memories so that we can learn from them, but we must stay current with our emotions, or we get “stuck.” While memories are permanent, emotions are fleeting. When we experience painful emotions from past experiences, generated either from new experiences or even from old memories, it blocks our ability to experience the emotions of the present. An emotional overreaction is often indicative of having stored emotions that have been linked to memories. If someone can “push your buttons,” or if a subject of conversation seems “charged with emotion” for you, it is likely that you have held onto and locked away old emotions. Let them go. Come back to living in the here and now. Here and now is where the healthy life is lived.

Life is to be lived, and only when healthy can you live life to the fullest. Life happens in the present, and health can only fully develop when you live in the present moment. To live a healthy life, live it in the now. Don’t worry; be healthy!

May 25

You will always achieve your dominant thought.

What you think about will come about. Your thoughts do indeed become things. If you can see it in your mind's eye, you can make it become reality. Hence the old saying, "When I see it, I'll believe it." What your mind can conceive and believe, you can achieve!

Who are you? How many times have you been like Chicken Little? Do you see the world as it is, and continue to reinforce that reality, or do you see the world as it could be, and then work to make your dreams come true?

How much responsibility do you take for the way things are in your world? Do you even take responsibility for your own words and actions?

- ◆ You blame the weather, "I always get hungry when it rains."
- ◆ You blame others, "I had to eat something; I was sitting with a group."
- ◆ You blame your equipment, "The bat was giving me a blister."
- ◆ Big Pharma is making us all fat.
- ◆ Fast food is making us all fat.
- ◆ The vaccines are making us all fat.
- ◆ Television is making us all fat.
- ◆ Milk, sugar, choose your poison, is making us all fat.

Guess what, we are not ALL fat, folks. Some of us are trim.

Do you think like The Little Train That Could, "I think I can, I think I can"? Or are you like Chicken Little, who thought the sky was falling?

- ◆ '50's: Did you own a fallout shelter?
- ◆ '60's: Did you think everyone was going to die of cancer?
- ◆ '69: Country Joe and the Fish: "Ain't no time to wonder why, whoopee we're all gonna die." Was Vietnam a war that was never going to end?
- ◆ '70's: Did you think Skylab was going to fall disastrously from the sky?
- ◆ '80's: Were you preparing for everyone to die of AIDS?

- ◆ '90's: Did you think Y2K would bring banks to their knees?
- ◆ 2000's: Which war would we lose first, the War on Obesity, the War on Cancer, or the War on Drugs?
- ◆ 2010's: Expecting us to be pounded back to the Stone Ages with Peak Oil?
- ◆ 2011: Were you caught waiting for the world to end in 2012?
- ◆ 2020's: Is Global Warming going to leave us all high and dry?
- ◆ 2030's: CDC predicts all Americans will have diabetic tendencies by 2025. Will we watch it happen?
- ◆ 2040's: Will this be the decade when sports records stop being broken?

May 26

**Our bodies should be labeled,
“Shake well before using.”**

We are designed to move. In fact, if we do not move, we soon die. According to Dr. Guyton, author of the famous medical text often simply referred to as “Guyton’s Physiology,” if the lymphatic system were to be stagnant to the point of nonfunctional for 24 hours, a person would die. The lymphatic system has no pump, per se, as only the circulatory has a heart. The lymphatic system relies upon changes in pressure, created by physical movement, in order for the lymph fluid to move through the lymph vessels towards its ultimate goal, the bloodstream. Some of these changes in pressure are achieved through the simple acts of breathing and digestion, but most are brought about by the muscular contractions involved in movement.

Even the circulatory system, with its powerful and tireless heart, relies upon changes in pressure to bring blood from the capillaries back to the heart. In the capillaries, blood pressure approaches zero, and as blood flows from those tiny vessels into the veins, which are slightly larger, pressure goes down even further. The heart only pumps blood away from itself, towards the extremities. Once again, it is the changes in pressure created by the muscles and movement that allow venous blood to make the return trip to the heart.

When we are active, the mixing and mingling of nutrients within the intracellular fluid of your individual cells is optimized. Oxygen transfer, nutrient transfer, and the removal of waste products from cellular metabolism all reach peak performance status when we are moving. Joints are lubricated, reducing stiffness and swelling. Any accumulations of fluid, such as occur in the lungs and legs when we are immobile, are dispersed as soon as we start moving. Shaken out of the reverie of being stationary, movement results in a heightening of mental and physical awareness. Even digestion is enhanced by the action of rhythmic movements, such as walking.

Neurologic development such as balance, coordination, agility, proprioception, and the kinesthetic senses are also developed through movement. Indeed, “Shake well before using” should be a rule, rather than just a suggestion.

Get out and move. Movement is a wonderful start to every day.

May 27

The healthful approach to life it is to stop all of health's leaks, as opposed to mopping up the spillage.

If your bucket has a hole in the bottom, no matter how much water you add, the bucket is going to run dry, and the water will end up on the floor. What would be the point of hiring a man to ceaselessly walk behind you mopping the floor? If your faucet was leaking and flooding your house, would you mop all day, or just fix the leaky faucet?

One misguided approach to nutrition is “more is better.” Unfortunately, the “more is better” approach to nutrition does not make sense, and, in fact, it often leads to major nutrition and health problems. In almost all bloodwork, we are not looking for extreme high or low values as healthiest, but instead we are looking to fall into the midrange. When checking vital signs, we do not want highs or lows. We consider the middle of the range to be indicators of highest levels of health. So why do we opt for “more is better” when it comes to nutrition, when we know intellectually and experientially that this approach does not make sense?

For instance, calcium consumption has been touted as one of the key factors in preventing osteoporosis (a condition in which the bones lose strength and eventually crumble), and getting sufficient calcium is known to be important to overall health. We are told to consume greater quantities of calcium in order to specifically avoid the likelihood of experiencing the ravaging effects of osteoporosis. We are encouraged to modify our food choices accordingly, with dairy being touted as one of the food groups that is highest in calcium. Yet around the world, in all of the locations that are notably highest in dairy consumption per capita, we also find the highest instances of osteoporosis.

More does not equate with better. Isolated nutrients provide the highest source of any given nutrient, and we know for fact that whole foods provide better nutrition than the empty calories we find in refined sugars, refined starches, refined fats and oils, or refined isolated proteins. Why do we then fall for the fallacy that the “empty nutrients” found in isolated supplements could possibly be more nutritious than eating the whole foods from which the supplements were refined?

Is it that deep down inside, we want to believe in magic, or is it that we simply do not wish to be held accountable and responsible for our own food choices?

The problem with mopping up our lifestyle shortcomings is that we suffer the consequences of them in terms of reduced quality and quantity of life. In addition, mopping usually means that the leaks have not been repaired, but the individual experiences a false sense of security about the problem.

Leak: Insufficient exercise to develop the shoulder muscles.

Mop: Wear shoulder pads in your clothing.

Leak: Overeat and become obese, or at least not as trim as you would prefer.
Mop: Liposuction.

Leak: Minimal consumption of whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plant foods.
Mop: Supplements, drugs, and surgery.

May 28

Those things that are healthful are good for us only in moderation, while those that are harmful are to be avoided entirely.

Harmful substances are always harmful. The degree to which harmful substances do us harm is solely dependent upon the dose. People are very easily confused, especially when the topic of conversation is something about which we know very little, understand next to nothing, or when it involves processes or structures that we cannot even picture or imagine. So, for instance, when we hear that salt is good for us, that we will actually die without sufficient salt, it is easy to see how we are misled into thinking the salesman who concludes his presentation by explaining that he is selling you the “really good” salt actually has an important product for us. After all, you have been using salt all your life, right? And, you rather like the taste of salt. Does it ever seem to you that some foods just do not have much flavor if you do not add salt? So what could possibly be wrong with adding a little salt to your food?

In fact, we do need the primary minerals that make up salt, known as sodium and chloride. We get both of these minerals from the fruits and vegetables that we eat in satisfactory quantities for health, and in appropriate proportions to the other nutrients we consume.

What else is in the “really good salt” that could possibly drive people to sell it to us for its supposed health-supporting qualities? We are told that these “ancient sea salts” are rich in “all the minerals known to be essential to life.” We are not told that the quantities are so minute as to be, arguably, of insignificant benefit. The average person eats a mere 10 to 15 grams of salt per day (less than half of one ounce), and 97 percent of sea salt is pure sodium chloride. All of the additional minerals mentioned (and some 80 or more are often listed) are found in the other 3 percent of the sea salt. That means that in approximately three tenths of one gram of salt we are supposed to be able to obtain nutritional value from more than 80 different minerals. We are not told that all of the toxic minerals, heavy metals, and a wide variety of whatever harmful substances were in the seawater are also in the salt.

We are not told that adding salt to our food results in a hormonal imbalance that causes the body to become worse at holding onto sufficient extra-cellular sodium, while also becoming worse at eliminating excess intracellular potassium as compared to when we are in a healthy state.

May 29

**Nothing is more powerful than
the mind that is already made up.**

One of the primary techniques used by all types of salesmen is to initiate the conversation with comments, statements, or questions that are almost certain to be answered in the affirmative. Once a person starts responding with “yes” answers, it becomes easier and easier to get subsequent “yes” answers. After emitting a sufficiently long string of yesses, most people actually feel responsible to continue responding positively. A relationship develops between the two people, closeness, a sense of trust that makes it easier and easier for the salesman to do his job, and makes it increasingly difficult for the potential customer to say “no.”

When we were children, my sister kept one button pinned to the outside of her bedroom door. It read, “Before you ask, the answer is no.” The sheer intimidation factor that button created was enough to repeatedly convince me not to bother my sister with issues, unless I really needed to do so. Even then, when asking for help, a favor, or even an opinion, the hope of being successful was always tainted by the possibility of failure. If my sister did actually choose to help, and the power of “the button” meant that it was totally her decision whether she helped or not, the gratitude I expressed was always huge. The mindset and opinion expressed by that one little button totally shifted the balance of power to my sister’s advantage, a fact that she was always aware of. That message imposed itself upon me. Essentially, it was my task to get her to change her mind from a no to a yes, rather than us starting from equal ground or even from a position of assuming that getting sis to comply with my whims would be as easy as if it were automatic.

Have you decided in advance that you cannot succeed in reaching a goal, and now need only to prove the accuracy of your vision? I have seen many people say that they couldn’t do this or that athletic feat (things I felt confident they could do), then try timidly, almost intending to fail, as if by failing, they meant to prove that they were right.

Do you believe that what you can conceive and believe, you fully have to the ability to achieve? If quitting is not an option, then failure is nothing more than a temporary setback. In fact, you may even choose to view each failure as simply an experience that brings you one step closer to success, every “no” as part of the experience that brings you one step closer to the “yes” you are expecting.

May 30

Once your mind is made up that you are going to accomplish something, you need to set a date, if you want to be sure that it will happen.

“If wishes were horses, beggars would ride,” at least so goes the old saying. But wishes aren’t horses, and beggars rarely, if ever, ride. Something for nothing is just a dream. What is the difference between wishing something to come true, and actually converting your dreams into reality? Four things are required in order to make the conversion from wish to accomplished fact.

1. Make up your mind what it is, exactly, that you wish to accomplish.

The more exactly you can define your desires, the better your likelihood of achieving them. Be as clear as you possibly can be, and as you develop greater clarity, become ever more clear. Focus your attention on what you actually do want, as opposed to what you do not want.

Consider going to a restaurant for dinner. The waiter asks you what you want. Telling the waiter what you do not want does not really help him bring you what you do want. Through practice, you can develop the ability to express your desires exactly as you wish to achieve them.

2. Put a deadline on the finish date.

Without a deadline, most projects would never get completed. Many projects would never even get started if it was not for the motivation provided by the looming deadline. Without a deadline, it is extremely difficult to gauge progress, and just as difficult to tell how much effort should be exerted on any given day. The deadline therefore serves a variety of functions, and is a necessary part of every successful endeavor.

3. Develop a step-by-step plan, complete with options for overcoming setbacks, encountering obstacles, delays, unexpected challenges, diversions, and possible and even impossible complications.

Your plan can be broken down into many small steps, each with its own deadline, so as to be able to tell if you are on track towards reaching your goal in the allotted time. If you think it may be necessary, build in extra time for reaching your goals, to allow for delays. And if further adjustments need to be made to the schedule, such as resetting a completion date, do so early enough so that you are never late reaching a stage of your goals, or the finale.

4. Work your plan.

No alternative exists for getting the work done, other than simply buckling down and doing what must be done. You have the option of choosing your attitude towards your work. You can enjoy every minute of it, or you can grumble your way through your days. Of course, grumbling never really was all that much fun, so if you want to totally enjoy yourself, choose the highest ground and get the best view of your situation. If you want to reach your goals, effort must be put in, and there is every reason for you to enjoy that experience.

May 31

**The service we render to others is the rent
we pay for our time on this earth.**

There are few sensations in the world that humans enjoy more the feeling they get when giving to others. As soon as children are able, they begin sharing their treats with their loved ones. They share their food, give away their toys, are quick to give kisses and hugs to those that are kind to them, and sometimes even to people they do not know at all. The pleasure derived from giving has been the source of much psychological and philosophical discussion. Some people say we give because we enjoy doing so. Others say we only give because on some deep level, we know that giving paves the road to receiving. Whether giving is a greedy move or a generous one does not really matter. What matters is that everyone involved in the giving process benefits from the exchange. Those receiving the gift feel appreciated. Those giving the gift feel good simply for doing so.

All creatures earn their keep on Earth by being part of the complex tapestry of life, by being themselves. All lifeforms fill a specific biologic niche, and each and every living creature plays a symbiotic role. E.O. Wilson, in his landmark works on biophilia (*Biophilia*, and *The Biophilia Hypothesis*), beautifully describes the brilliant and comprehensive nature of life on Earth. The innovative and ever philosophical musician Donovan, in his epic song, "Happiness Runs," expresses the interwoven interconnectedness of all things with the simple lines, "Everybody is a part of everything anyway. You can have everything if you let yourself be." With such a perspective, giving becomes synonymous with receiving. Receiving well becomes an art form in and of itself, to the point where receiving can be considered to be as much "giving of a gift" as was the actual giving.

- ❖ Will the world be a better place for you having been here?
- ❖ How will the next generation benefit from the gifts you have given them?
- ❖ Who have you influenced for the better?
- ❖ Has your kindness, generosity, and example inspired others?
- ❖ Do you give unto others in the fashion that you would like to be treated?
- ❖ Are you dedicated to being a force for good?
- ❖ Do you earn your keep every day?

JUNE

Take advantage of the perfect weather to perfect your physique and health.

“The sun is out. The sky is blue. It’s beautiful, and so are you.” ~ The Beatles

If there was ever a time to get in shape and bring your health to its annual peak, June is the time. The weather tends to be cooperatively warm and dry, with long days that seem to encourage everyone to get outside and be active. We shed the extra layers of clothing, expose our bare skin, even don our bathing suits, and head for the great outdoors. We see people riding long-unused bicycles, playing tennis, hiking, flying kites, playing ball, and having picnics. Runners, walkers, and skateboarders abound, motivated to lose excess weight and gain newfound fitness and skills. Playgrounds fill with exuberant children who seem to know how to have a great time without any need for lessons, adult guidance, or even having to think about it.

Now is the time to take off your clothes and look in the mirror. Give yourself a full body assessment. Where do you wish to see more of yourself? Where do you wish to see less of yourself? What areas need toning? How is your posture? Are you smiling? Are you happy? Sometimes, all it takes to make your “too big” areas smaller is to ever so slightly modify your diet or add a bit to your fitness program. Sometimes, all it takes is to de-emphasize the big bits is to perform the appropriate exercises that will make some of the smaller bits grow. For instance, increasing the size of the *latissimus dorsi* muscles will make the waistline appear smaller.

How do we develop the physique of our dreams? First, we must understand the basics of diet and fitness training. To lose excess fat, we must reduce calorie intake relative to calorie output. In other words, we must either do more activity, or eat fewer overall calories. Consuming roughly 100 excess calories per day results in a pound of fat gain per month. To lose a pound of fat in a month’s time, cut calories or increase physical activities by an average of 100 calories daily. Do both, and you will drop roughly two pounds of fat per month.

If you wish to gain muscle size, do what the bodybuilders do, or at least a miniature version of their regimen. To gain size, you will want to exercise a specific muscle group through 15-25 repetitions, by which point you should be pretty well spent. If the weight is so heavy that you cannot make even 10 repetitions, it is too heavy. If after 25 repetitions you are still going strong, the weight is too light. Adjust accordingly, and be willing to perform two or even three sets at your chosen weight.

Enjoy earning your physique, and then enjoy putting it on show.

June 1

**A good four-letter word for dealing
with every form of rejection: NEXT!**

You've gotta say it like you mean it, "NEXT!"

You must request it as though you truly desire it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta call for it like you want it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta ask for it like you have to have it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta shout it like you believe it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta scream it till you accept it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta boom it till it comes to you, "NEXT!"

You've gotta claim it till it's reality, "NEXT!"

You, you, and only you can make it happen, "NEXT!"

You've gotta demand it like you need it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta crave it as though you cannot live without it, "NEXT!"

You've gotta focus on what you really wish for, to bring it into reality, "NEXT!"

You've gotta make your wishes come true by calling, "NEXT!"

You've gotta let go of your attachment to the old by exclaiming, "NEXT!"

You've gotta sometimes struggle for what is going to be "NEXT!"

You've gotta be willing to stand up for what you hope will be "NEXT!"

Are you willing to fight for what you trust must be "NEXT!"

Do you KNOW that you can create what comes "NEXT!" into your life?

Are you living in the past, frustrated because you are fighting a losing battle to hold on to what was, the way it used to be, or how you imagined it should have been, or even could have been?

I have one word for you—shout out, "NEXT!" and step bravely into your future.

"NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!" "NEXT!"

June 2

**The healthiest diet is not radical;
it is ultra-conservative.**

Departing from the mainstream path may sometimes be considered radical, but what if the mainstream path is already a radical one? Humans living in society today are less healthy than we have ever been. We are living shorter lives, are more decrepit, suffer more illnesses, are fatter, and generally becoming less productive, less able to think clearly, and becoming ever more dependent upon the help of other people, prescription medications, technology, and machinery in order to be able to get through our day, let alone be a functional and contributing member of society.

Eating a healthy diet is considered one of the essential pillars of raising a horse, dog, fish, bird, snake, or any other pet. We even take care to feed our plants properly. Why should healthy diet be considered an odd or radical behavior for people who simply wish to experience health in their own personal lives? In fact, perhaps we should start taking a look at the people who intentionally do not eat healthfully, and begin questioning them about their intentions. Do they intend to be contributing members of society throughout their entire lives? Are they planning to live free and unencumbered lives, not fall into debt due to impossible-to-manage medical costs, and stay physically and mentally competent throughout life? Is the model they set through drinking alcohol, taking recreational drugs, eating animals and animal by-products, smoking tobacco, eating greasy and salt-laden fast food, becoming sedentary, overweight, and reliant upon prescription drugs and medical care, really the model that they wish their friends, family, employees, loved ones, and children to follow?

When did taking full responsibility for one's health become a radical act? Arlo Guthrie, in his epic masterpiece "Alice's Restaurant," made his point about radical behavior quite clear when he gave his description of eating meat (and his position on the Vietnam war), "I want to kill. I mean, I wanna, I wanna kill. Kill. I wanna, I wanna see, I wanna see blood and gore and guts and veins in my teeth. Eat dead burnt bodies. I mean kill, kill, KILL, KILL." We are not natural born killers. We are born with innately compassionate tendencies. Eat with compassion and you need never kill another being. Compassion begins at home, with yourself, and with the food you choose to put on your plate. Conserve your health.

June 3

**Every advancement ever made was
made by a nonconformist.**

How often have you found yourself driving a route that you commonly drive, then suddenly snapped out of your reverie when you realized that you were about to miss your turn, or that you had already missed your turn, because today you were going someplace other than “the usual place”? We so effortlessly slip into the patterns of doing what we always do that when struck with a new idea, a new route, or a new choice of almost any type we almost automatically say “no” before we even consciously think if “no” is really the best answer. Apparently, human beings can be extremely resistant to change, and very much against change. Practically everyone complains about the weather, but somehow we have unilaterally agreed that we are all against climate change. So many people long for “the good old days” and tell us how things used to be better. We even want our food to be “like mom made.” We hold on to old habits, old clothing, old technology, old relationships, old food preferences, and our old way of doing things, even when it really no longer serves us to do so.

In the practice of medicine, “standard of practice” is an imperative. Doctors literally do not have choice as to how they perform a great many of the services they offer. Should a doctor believe s/he has a better way to do something, and then does so, that doctor will be accused of malpractice, and subsequently be forced to suffer through a period of probation, or even have his/her license suspended or revoked. Often enough, those same revolutionary procedures that resulted in suspension become the standard protocol for the next generation of doctors.

People ridicule new ideas, showing their lack of foresight and creativity. In the 1940’s, people competed in the high jump using a technique known as “scissoring.” When the diving roll over the bar was introduced, it was heavily ridiculed, and there was talk of making the technique illegal, but too many people started using the dive, and winning with it, even breaking records. In 1965, Dick Fosbury introduced the “Fosbury Flop,” and it garnered more ridicule than any former technique, until he started winning with his new style of high jumping. Today, the Flop is the only technique in use by world-class high jumpers.

People eating 80/10/10, a low-fat raw vegan approach, get plenty of grief for their non-conforming ways, even though eating raw food is not even remotely a new idea. Be proud of your raw food diet, lead from the front, and demonstrate to the world that your approach to diet and lifestyle is working for you.

June 4

**Raw organic fruits and shoots (young tender greens)
have successfully made up the majority of
the human diet for millions of years.**

There is much discussion these days about how long humans have been walking the earth, and even about which of our possible ancestors were indeed human and which did not qualify to be classed as human. There is much discussion about how old the Earth is, for how long it has supported life, how that life got started, how long we have been putting our food into the fire, and a variety of related questions and topics. I certainly do not claim to have the answers to any of these questions.

What is clear, however, is that all life on Earth has been eating a 100 percent raw food diet, and eating strictly foods appropriate for their particular species, for as long as there has been life on Earth. Lions ate antelope, cows ate grass, pelicans ate fish, spiders ate flies, whales ate seals, and the anthropoid primates (the “monkeys without tails”) ate fruits and tender greens. Only man has tried the cooked food experiment, on himself and on some of his domesticated animals. Estimates vary both higher and lower, but many professionals estimate that humans have been cooking their food for only approximately 0.001 percent of their total time on Earth, a very small percentage indeed. If we extend that relationship to a typical person’s meals, eating roughly 1000 meals per year, it would mean eating 999 totally raw meals, and one cooked meal, out of the roughly 1000 meals the average person eats in a year. One cooked meal per year! Yet the average person rarely eats even one raw meal per year.

Of late, the idea that man became human because he started eating cooked food has been getting a lot of press, as if eating cooked food could somehow make you smarter. If indeed eating cooked food made us smarter, then people today would be really smart, since we cook almost everything we eat. If indeed cooking made us smarter, how the heck did we get smart enough to start cooking our food? Consider that the smartest group of people ever known lived almost 2500 years ago, in the Golden Age of Man, in Greece. These famous mathematicians, philosophers, leaders, historians, scientists, teachers, poets, and playwrights lived primarily on whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables. They discussed the pros and cons of living as vegetarians, and all chose to live as vegetarians, eschewing meats completely. There were no fast foods, no packaged foods, no preserved foods, no junk foods, and no food additives.

There were some really smart people living in ancient Greece, smart enough so that we still know the names and accomplishments of more than 1000 of them to this day. Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Aesop, Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Sappho, Herodotus, Archimedes, Euclid, Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Alexander the Great, Demosthenes, Draco, Pericles, and many others made their lasting mark on the world. Could it have been all the grapes, figs, melons, and dates that they were eating that made them so smart?

June 5

Going against the grain of society is never initially viewed as a popular decision, until it becomes viewed as essential.

During the first decade of the 21st Century, dozens of books were published emphasizing the health hazards and countless negative social and environmental features of growing and eating grains. At the same time that *Wheat Belly*, *Grain Damage*, *The No-Grain Diet*, *The Grain Manifesto*, *Grain Brain*, *Going Against the Grain*, *Dangerous Grains*, and many other books and dietary programs were coming out with strong stances against the use of grains, there were also people rallying to save the status quo, standing strong in their position of support for the grain-based diet.

The polarity was predictable. Arthur Schopenhauer, the 19th Century German author and philosopher, is best known for his view that we are driven by a dissatisfied will that is continually seeking satisfaction. He is famous for his statement, “All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.” A century after this insightful comment was made, we now also know that many of the same people who ridicule and oppose profound truths, later become their strongest champions, once they have figured out how to take credit for establishing said truths and profiting from them.

Cooking has become so common that many people simply cannot imagine life without heating their food. Miniature stoves, fuel packs, and cooking paraphernalia are commonly sold for use by hikers, backpackers, mountaineers, and other people who spend time in the great outdoors. Many people do not even realize that products such as canned foods, breads, cereals, pasteurized foods, chocolates, condiments, and most other prepackaged foods have all been cooked. In many countries, building codes distinguish between a taxable dwelling and a tax-free structure by the presence or absence of a stove. Eating sans heating is almost unthinkable for many people, to the point where several societies are known to have been ruined simply because the people cut all available trees for miles and miles for firewood for cooking. The resultant environmental changes, habitat changes, and weather pattern changes made living in those areas next to impossible, and the civilization collapsed.

Raw food is gaining in popularity. Raw broccoli is delicious. Raw almonds are very tasty. Fresh fruit is still the best of all foods, and salads made exclusively from raw vegetables are growing in popularity. Many fast food restaurants have begun serving fruit salads, prepacked vegetable salads, and even offering “all you can eat” salad bars, a telling sign of the times indeed. Fruits and vegetables are available in most airports and train stations. Raw food restaurants continue to open in city after city, while many vegan restaurants are now offering an increasing number of raw food options. Even grocery stores now offer a huge variety of prepackaged raw snacks, bars, and treats, in addition to the produce department we have come to depend upon..

June 6

**Neither science nor nutrition can demonstrate
any benefit from the eating of cooked food,
as long as raw options are available.**

Granted, if you were starving to death, you would likely eat almost anything, including eating a dead person. Some people might even kill another person in order to eat. Become hungry or thirsty enough and you will promise almost anything. “Water, water, my kingdom for a drink of water.” Humans have a very strong will to live.

A low-fat raw vegan diet supplies all the nutrients that humans are known to need in order to healthfully thrive. As far as we can tell, a low-fat raw vegan diet also supplies all the unknown nutrients that humans need in order to thrive. In other words, a low-fat raw vegan diet is nutritionally complete in every way. The same CANNOT be said for cooked foods, and cannot be said for animal foods. A diet of all cooked foods can be shown to be significantly lacking in a variety of heat sensitive nutrients. A diet of all animal foods is severely lacking in many vital nutrients. Vitamin C and fiber are completely absent from animal fare. Neither animal foods nor cooked foods of any kind provide any essential nutrient that cannot be obtained from raw plant foods. Millions of scientific studies consuming billions of hours and trillions of dollars have been wasted trying to prove that there is essential nutritional benefit to be gleaned by eating meats, dairy, or cooked foods, all to no avail.

To be fair, all of the money spent on nutritional research regarding cooked foods has not been completely wasted. What has come to light is the significant fact that food degrades rapidly under the influence of heat. The very factor that makes the nutrients inside the cells of the food more available as a result of cooking, the rupture of the food’s cell membrane or cell wall, also results in the excessively rapid loss of the individual nutrient’s value. We see this phenomenon clearly demonstrated when we cut an apple. When the cell walls are cut, ruptured by the action of the knife, the nutrients are exposed to the air, and begin to oxidize, losing value. Instinctively we know that we do not want to eat an apple whose interior has gone brown.

Heat also exerts direct chemical changes to the nutrients in our foods. Proteins denature quickly when heated to cooking temperatures, losing much of their value, while also forming anti-nutrients, mutagens, and carcinogens. The proteins that are structurally integrated into the food’s enzymes also denature, and the enzymes are inactivated. Fats degrade when heated also, losing much of their valuable antioxidant qualities. The aromatic oils that give fruits their distinctive smells boil off, explaining why heat-treated mangoes have no smell. When fatty foods are heated at searing temperatures such as on a hot grill or skillet, or subjected to super-heating of broiling, roasting, or deep-frying, carcinogens form almost immediately. Heating carbohydrates results in just as many problems as when cooking fats or proteins. Acrylamide, a powerful carcinogen, is formed when many starches are heated. The starches in foods are caramelized when heated, forming a sweet and very sticky goo, much like molasses. This goo is so sticky that it is used industrially in the adhesives utilized in the manufacture of

corrugated cardboard and hanging wallpaper. The consumption of caramelized sugars results in an unusually rapid sugar uptake known as “spiking,” whereby blood sugar surges to dangerously high levels. In addition, blackened carbohydrates are known cancer-causing agents. Foods such as toast, the hardened crusts on pies breads and potatoes, and even the over-cooked rice at the bottom of a pot are all known carcinogenic health destroyers.

June 7

**In nature there are no exceptions:
Animals with similar anatomy and
similar physiology thrive on similar foods.**

Cows, zebras, deer, antelopes, moose, springbok, buffalo, caribou, and elk are similar in their anatomy and in their physiology. They all graze on grass. Cows eat grass. Horses eat grass. Zebras eat grass. Deer eat grass. Antelope eat grass. Moose eat grass. Springbok eat grass. Buffalo eat grass. Caribou eat grass. Elk eat grass. Granted, each species of grazing animal may choose and prefer different types of grass, but each eats, essentially, grass.

Lions, leopards, tigers, cheetahs, pumas, cougars, ocelots, tigrillos, lynx, jaguars, and jaguarundi are similar to each other as far as their anatomy and physiology are concerned. They all hunt, kill, and eat their prey. Lions eat the animals they catch and kill. Leopards eat the animals they catch and kill. Tigers eat the animals they catch and kill. Cheetahs eat the animals they catch and kill. Puma eat the animals they catch and kill. Cougars eat the animals they catch and kill. Ocelots eat the animals they catch and kill. Tigrillos eat the animals they catch and kill. Bobcats eat the animals they catch and kill. Lynx eat the animals they catch and kill. Jaguars eat the animals they catch and kill. Jaguarundis eat the animals they catch and kill. Granted, each species of predatory cat may choose and prefer different types of prey, but each eats the prey they catch and kill.

Lowland gorillas, mountain gorillas, orangutans, bonobos, chimpanzees, mandrills, spider monkeys, capuchin monkeys, howler monkeys, baboons, macaques, gibbons, and squirrel monkeys are similar to each other in their anatomy and their physiology, though some have tails. All these primates eat primarily fruits and vegetables. Lowland gorillas eat fruits and vegetables. Mountain gorillas eat fruits and vegetables. Orangutans eat fruits and vegetables. Bonobos eat fruits and vegetables. Chimpanzees eat fruits and vegetables. Mandrills eat fruits and vegetables. Spider monkeys eat fruits and vegetables. Capuchin monkeys eat fruits and vegetables. Howler monkeys eat fruits and vegetables. Baboons eat fruits and vegetables. Macaques eat fruits and vegetables. Gibbons eat fruits and vegetables. Squirrel monkeys eat fruits and vegetables. Granted, each species of primate may choose and prefer different types of fruits and vegetables, or different percentages of fruit as compared to vegetables, but the unanimous first choice of primates is to eat fruits and vegetables.

Man is classed as a primate. Human anatomy is more similar to the anatomy of all the other anthropoid primates than it is to the anatomy of any other creature. Human physiology is more similar to the physiology of all the other anthropoid primates than it is to the physiology of any other creature. No valid argument exists to challenge the conclusion that the species-specific diet for humankind is one of whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables.

June 8

In nature, there is no sandwich.

Bears eat a wide variety of foods. They eat berries, honey, fish, and much more. Can you just imagine a bear collecting berries, stacking them onto a few of the fish they'd caught, pouring honey over the lot, putting two fish together with the berries and honey in the middle, and eating it all as a sandwich? Nature never created a sandwich tree, a sandwich bush, or a sandwich vine. Sandwiches just do not occur in nature. In nature, creatures eat one food at a time, when hungry, until they are either full or until the food runs out. A sandwich is a form of entertainment, a flight of fancy, a concoction.

Personally, I enjoy eating sandwiches of many types, and always have. Sandwiches are fun to eat, and there is no rule that food shouldn't be fun to eat. Sandwiches are usually fairly clean to eat too, a quality definitely in their favor. Sandwiches provide for texture and flavor combinations that are often extremely pleasing to the palate, ones that are not available when eating mono meals, and by all means, food should be pleasing to the palate. Still, there is no denying that nature never made a sandwich.

The problem with many sandwiches is that they provide a medium by which the consumer can eat a combination of substances that actually do not digest well when combined. Sandwiches encased in bread are even more prone to this problem, as not only is the bread itself a nutritional nightmare, but the starches in bread combine poorly with many other foods that could potentially find their way onto the sandwich.

Is there a healthy sandwich in your future? There certainly could be. Lettuce does not always have to be on the inside of a sandwich. Cut a head of iceberg in half, or romaine lettuce, down the length. Pull out the middle leaves and fill with your favorite vegetables. A divine sandwich, for sure. Cut the "cheeks" off of a mango and peel the skin. Fill with a slice of beefsteak tomato and a slice or two of cucumber. You will soon find yourself eating a sandwich that is tough to improve upon.

Be creative. Enjoy playing with your food.

June 9

When it comes to empty calories, starches take the cake.

Cotton candy, rock candy, hard candy, candy cigarettes, candy corn, candy buttons, candy canes, stick candy, and a thousand other types of candy do not even try to pretend to be good for your health. These simple carbohydrates are promoted solely for the pleasure they bring. But the complex carbohydrates, the starches ranging from amaranth to yams (zucchini is not starchy), have a strong constituency supporting their claim that starch is “health food.” Since writing *Grain Damage* in the ‘90’s, my views on grains as food have only gone downhill. Since writing *Grain Damage*, dozens of other anti-grain books and many starch-free diets have come to the market. Could it be that the promoters of starchy foods simply do not wish to give up eating their own starches?

A simple definition of “empty calories foods” is “substances that have maintained their caloric value while being chemically, mechanically, or thermally stripped of some or all of their nutritive value, or have been subjected to the addition of such calorie sources.” All starchy foods fit this definition of empty calories, as starches must be heated (thus destroying a wide variety of heat-sensitive nutrients) in order to become digestible. You would never associate starches with empty calories based upon the way they are marketed, however.

Starches are never compared nutritionally against fresh fruits or vegetables, for they would pale. Instead, they are shown with fresh fruits and vegetables, and then we are told that they make, “a nutritious part of this healthy breakfast,” or some such promotional verbiage. Fruits and vegetables are marketed for their overall health value, but starches cannot be marketed in this way, so they are marketed based upon specific nutrients found within. Oats, for instance, are touted for their cholesterol-lowering properties. Of course your cholesterol goes down if you choose oats instead of bacon for breakfast, since there is next to zero cholesterol in oats. Watermelon for breakfast would also result in lower cholesterol when compared to bacon for breakfast, but watermelon would also shine, nutritionally, when compared to oats. In fact, any fruit looks great, nutritionally, when compared to any starchy food. And that is before we factor in for the negatives derived from cooking starchy foods. There is the fuel used for heating, the strip mines for metals for making pots, pans, stoves, and trucks to move it all, the carcinogens formed in the cooking process, the anti-nutrients, etc. Starches simply cannot compete with fruit.

June 10

**If you have to cook it in order to eat it,
it is likely not people food.**

The number one reason stated on the web for cooking food is that there may be bacterial contamination that is destroyed in the cooking process. Reading on, we find that fresh fruits and vegetables are exempt from such concerns (with the possible exception of unhygienic handling, but that is true for any foods) and are best when eaten raw. No one seems concerned about the positive or “good” bacteria that are on food, and whether or not these also get destroyed in the cooking process. Why would only the bad bacteria be destroyed?

The next reason for cooking is because more nutrients become available through the cooking process than are available in the raw food. This reason would be plausible, except for a few major flaws. First, while it is true that if you swallow a small grape without the benefit of chewing it, the grape will pass through your entire digestive system untouched by your digestive enzymes, and will emerge whole and unscathed. You will receive essentially zero nutritive benefit. But if the same grape were cooked first, the heating process would cause the liquid inside each cell of the grape to expand and burst the cell wall, making the nutrients in the grape accessible to the consumer. Of course, the same things would happen if you were to chew the grape, a natural and normal process that comes highly recommended when eating any type of food. This is why blending and even juicing is sometimes touted, because the plant’s cell wall is broken. Cooking is not required, as chewing will more than do the job. Once again, however, I am concerned that proponents of cooking seem quite happy to ignore the known and proven nutritional negatives associated with heating foods. They seem completely content to act oblivious to the damage done to heat-sensitive vitamins, to minimize the destruction of antioxidants associated with cooking, to pretend that anti-nutrients, carcinogens, and mutagens are not formed when foods are cooked, and to blithely continue to eat cooked foods in spite of the various laws in effect making heating carbohydrates illegal, unless appropriate signage is displayed, and making cooking with trans fats outright illegal. More anti-cooking laws are under consideration, of course, and will inevitably soon come into being.

You have the right to swing your arms, but do not have the right to hit me. You have the right to build your home or business, and to plant plants, but not if it blocks a previously safeguarded view. You have the right to make noise, but not at times when it disturbs my peace. You can take off your clothes and parade around your house completely naked, but not in public. You can design your house and grow your garden as you wish, as long as it isn’t considered a public eyesore. We clearly understand the concepts of noise pollution and light pollution. To a lesser degree, we appreciate the idea of odor pollution. Can it really be that long before you will be required to control the odors and smoke emanating from your barbeque?

June 11

**Dr. Graham's Baby Rule: If you would not do it
or feed it to a baby because it is not nurturing,
do not do it or feed it to yourself.**

When does the shift occur from the mindset of doing all you can to nurture and support your baby to really having to restrain yourself from doing harm to your teenager? Little ones never intentionally harm themselves, yet teenagers and youngsters in their twenties consistently experiment with discovering the limits of how much abuse they can withstand and still be functional the following day. Children do all they can to heighten and hone their awareness, while many teens and an alarming number of adults seem quite intent upon dumbing down their awareness as much as possible. From whom should we be taking our cue, and what lesson can we learn? Do we deserve adult-sized portions of nurturing, or do we need less and less as we mature?

Food plays a reasonably large role in almost everyone's daily life. Food isn't the most important thing in life, but it definitely is quite important. Do you want to develop improved health, at least partially as a result of your improved food choices, or do you want your poor food choices to be a contributing factor in rushing the onset of your overall health decline? The Baby Rule is simple to understand because we spend so much time nurturing so many things other than our own health. We nurture our plants, our pets, our children, and our relationships. We nurture and nourish everything that we want to thrive and grow, even our businesses. Many people care for their cars with more loving attention than they give to themselves, or their food. They will spend ten minutes considering which oil to put in the car, often choosing the most expensive brands (just to be safe), but rush through the grocery store, stopping here and there only long enough to determine which is the cheapest option on the shelf. Can we give our children that which we do not even give to ourselves? Do we truly wish to set the living model to our children that once they grow up, they will likely not bother with self-nurturing?

Would you wake a sleeping baby, just because it was a certain time of day? Hopefully not, as most adults would let a sleeping baby continue to sleep. Would you feed a baby hot peppers, or vinegar, or a teaspoon full of salt? Again, hopefully not, as these are not nurturing influences. Would you do anything to your baby that you did not consider nurturing? One more time, hopefully not. Give yourself the adult-sized portions of nurturing that you deserve, and watch how you develop, thrive, and grow as a result.

June 12

Good eating habits never result in indigestion.

“It must have been something I ate,” is one of the most common expressions used to explain an upset digestive system. In some ways, it makes sense, of course, but from at least one perspective, “it must have been something I ate” seems almost irrational. Consider using a parallel response for any other ache or pain in the body. For instance, imagine you are putting a new roof onto your house, nailing shingles all day. One time, you accidentally hit your thumb with the hammer (okay, admittedly, it actually happened several times during the course of the day), and that night, your thumb hurts. You wouldn’t say, “it must have been something I did lately.” You would know for certain that your thumb hurts because you hit it with a hammer, probably several times. There is no reason to have to guess what upset your stomach, as your stomach need never be upset. By learning the simple guidelines of food combining, and consistently following the protocols for healthful eating, you should always be able to enjoy the gustatory pleasures and delights associated with eating a healthy meal to satiation.

1. Sweet fruits do not combine well with highly acidic fruits.
2. Sweet fruits do not combine well with fatty foods, such as nuts, seeds, olives, and avocado.
3. Water is best consumed before a meal, as opposed to during or immediately after the meal.
4. The most water-rich portions of the meal are best eaten first, the least water rich last or towards the end.
5. Fights, arguments, and other upsets will spoil digestion.
6. Create an ambiance of peace, beauty, tranquility, and calm in the dining area in order to support optimum digestion and maximum nutrition, and full enjoyment of the eating experience.
7. Take time to taste, chew, and enjoy your food. Do not rush.

One of the big problems with eating cooked and heavily spiced foods is that you cannot always tell if the food, or something in it, has gone bad. This leaves the consumer susceptible to experiencing any number of ailments from foodborne contamination. Granted, some foods, such as aged meats, cheese, and all fermented foods have already gone bad, by definition, before they are “ready” to be consumed. One of the major advantages of eating whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic foods is that your senses of sight, smell, and taste will tell you if some of the food you are about to swallow is in a state that it is likely going to make you sick.

June 13

You cannot build first-rate health from second-rate foods.

The Law of Implementation, one of the 36 laws of life under which our bodies operate, essentially states that the quality of our growth, development, and overall health is determined, at least in part, by the quality and quantity of the foods we eat and the other nutritive factors to which we are exposed. Amazingly, we know, understand, and fully appreciate this fact when it comes to feeding and raising our pets; hence, we take the best possible care of them. We purchase puppy chow for our pups, and specially-designed foods for our animals as they go through each phase of life. Walk into a pet store these days and it feels as though you have walked into a health food store, complete with vitamins, minerals, and supplements designed to help our pets overcome every type of ailment, from digestive issues, to bad breath, to intelligence, agility, hyperactivity, and most of the rest of the string of ailments that also, not surprisingly, inflict themselves upon modern day humans.

Somehow we seem to be in complete denial of the relationship between food and our health when it comes to our own food choices. We blithely and gaily eat junk foods, fast foods, foods laden with empty calories, heavily salted or heavily sugared foods, deep-fried foods, foods steeped in unfamiliar chemicals whose function we do not understand and whose names we cannot even pronounce, and comfort foods rich in chemicals that numb our ability to feel or even think. We somehow manage to forget the six words so important in judging the quality of our foods: **whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic, plants**, and succumb to the lure of bottled, boxed, bagged, canned, and otherwise preserved junk. All of this is so far, so good. If people wish to abuse themselves, or in any number of ways not partake of the necessities of health care, so be it. The shock comes when we express surprise that so-and-so's health has failed—that they had a heart attack, developed diabetes, or are hosting malignant cancerous tumors—as if we thought there could be any other possible outcome.

Given some Styrofoam, balsawood, string, white school paste, and clear plastic wrap, it would be impossible to build a high-rise building that would hold together, stand up to the ravages of the weather, or even support its own weight. Fruits and vegetables are health foods, and they supply the highest quality nutriment from which the body can build the best possible health.

June 14

**Virtually every aspect of fitness improves or declines
in direct relationship to the quality of the diet.**

There are five major categories of fitness performance: (1) muscular strength, (2) muscular endurance, (3) flexibility, (4) cardio, and (5) neurological. Most coaches and many athletes live in complete denial (or ignorance) of the profound effects that diet has upon performance. At best, they watch their weight and make sure to eat enough “protein.” Some follow misguided advice and believe that they can train their bodies to become “fat burning machines.” This is about as likely as a person growing gills because they swim every day. Your anatomy and physiology do have the ability to adapt, a bit, within strict limitations. You can live while ignoring your body’s requirements, but there is always a price to pay, and you pay it with your health, and the length of your life.

Muscular strength comes as a result of challenging the muscles to perform acts of strength. Strength is demonstrated through action of the super-fast twitch muscle fibers, fibers that use glucose as their primary fuel. If insufficient glucose is available to these fibers, muscular strength is compromised. Fruit supplies the best sources of the glucose necessary for strong muscular contractions.

Cardio performances are primarily about oxygen exchange. Two fit individuals, both equally trained, will perform differently if oxygen exchange is unequal, with the better-oxygenated athlete outperforming the other. The ability to uptake, transport, and deliver oxygen from the lungs to the bloodstream, through the bloodstream, and from the blood to the muscles is enhanced when quantities of fat in the blood are relatively low, such as when dietary fat intake is in the single-digit range. A diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in fat is ideal to support cardio performance.

Muscular endurance requires a strong and steady supply of fuel to the muscles. Uptake, transport, and delivery of fuel, in the form of glucose, become better and better as dietary fat levels decline, when compared to overall calorie intake.

Brain and nerve function, the rudiments of neurological fitness, rely upon excellent oxygen delivery to those structures. Brain function is impaired under conditions where oxygen levels in the room are low, and where the blood’s ability to uptake, transport, and deliver oxygen is compromised. Decision-making, reflexes, balance, alertness, and all other nerve functions are compromised when blood-oxygen is low. Eating a low-fat diet optimizes neurological functioning.

Joint suppleness is also negatively affected by dietary choices. Cooked foods, animal foods, and the starchy foods containing gluten are associated with arthritic reactions in the body. Flexibility is threatened when we are dehydrated, and stretching tissues that are not well-nourished puts them at increased risk of tears and injuries. A raw diet of fruits and vegetables, foods high in water content, best supports all aspects of flexibility.

June 15

**For uncommonly excellent results,
one must develop uncommonly excellent habits.**

People invariably find it easiest to pursue their goals when the situation for doing so is supportive. When the conditions become challenging however, when we are faced with the choice of whether to make exceptions or to develop “uncommonly excellent” habits, this is when we find out who we really are and what we are really made of. The choice to pursue your dreams and goals, no matter what, is always open to you. Do you use challenging times as an excuse to forget about your goals for the moment? Do you find that exceptions creep in with increasing frequency, until the exceptions actually become the rule? Do you back down, give in, get distracted, pay attention to the obstacles in your way, and give up, or do you stay focused on your goal(s) no matter what? You do not have to be an exceptional person in order to develop excellent habits—you just have to really want to reach your goals. Pursuing goals to completion can become habit forming, almost automatic, until you finally come to expect that you will reach your goals, rather than being surprised should you reach them, or give up before you reach them.

Learning to be productive, to make great use of your time, takes practice. A person only gets so much time to live life, and then it is over. How do you waste your time? When you stand in line, do you just “space out” and think of nothing, or do you read a book, make lists, or somehow make use of the time? How many times have you seen people at work, but doing nothing? I see it all the time. Construction workers are notorious for getting very little done in the course of a day, or for amassing a crew of eight men so that one of them can dig a hole while the others watch. At the grocery and many other stores, cashiers sit idly at their registers, blankly doing nothing, while they wait for the next customer to arrive. Flight attendants spend many hours in near stasis, especially on longer flights, in between the times when they must be available to serve the passengers and perform other vital functions. The down time is not the problem. The way it is utilized is the problem.

This is not to say that entertainment is automatically a waste of time. Sometimes you may need a mental or physical break, and a bit of waiting around is welcomed. Many types of entertainment can also serve other purposes, such as learning new information or developing or refining skills.

At the end of the day, only you can decide if you put as much into your day as you had hoped to get out of it. Make good use of your time, focus on reaching your goals, and watch as you, too, reap exceptional results.

June 16

Let your fruit tooth be your guide to choosing healthful foods.

A child's first teeth are referred to as "milk" teeth. Some people conjecture that the age at which children mature to the degree that they lose the ability to produce lactase for digesting the milk sugars in their mother's milk parallels the age at which they lose their milk teeth. Once the milk teeth are gone, they are replaced by a secondary set of teeth, which are euphemistically referred to as "sweet" teeth. The truth is that we are sweet seekers from birth. Mother's milk is richly sweet. All children enjoy the taste of fruit, and of course almost all children's snacks are incredibly sweet, and sold in packaging that usually mimics the bright colors of fruit.

Why is it that at some point we begin to think that following our natural inclination to eat sweets should be overcome, denied, or ignored, as if it was a bad habit? We do not ignore our urge to sleep, to drink water when thirsty, or to eat when hungry. We do not ignore our bodily input when it tells us that it is time to go to the bathroom, or even to yawn.

When my daughter was little, I remember the first time that I gave her a grape. She had been watching me eat grapes, and made it clear that she wanted to try one. She was old enough to know to chew, and not to choke on the grape. I gave her one, and she popped it into her mouth, swirled it around for a while, then she pushed it back out of her mouth. I then realized that until you break the skin of a grape, there is no taste of the sweetness within, not even a hint, nothing to inspire you to chew the grape. So I peeled the grape and gave it back to her. She tried it a second time, tasted the sweetness and began chewing. She greatly enjoyed the experience, and of course asked for another and another, peeled, of course. I have been peeling grapes for her ever since, figuratively if not literally.

Follow your sweet tooth, a natural indicator that lets you know if what you are putting into your mouth is really food or not.

Does your mouth water:

- ◆ when you see a herd of cows, casually grazing in a pasture?
- ◆ when you see a flock of geese, majestically flying in V formation?
- ◆ when you see a field of wheat, waving in the wind?
- ◆ when you see a school of fish, communicating with unfathomable coordination?
- ◆ when you see a clutch of eggs in a nest?
- ◆ when you see a brood of chickens, clucking in the grass?
- ◆ when you see a passel of pigs, wallowing in the mud?

◆ when you go to a baseball game, and see the most beautiful grass in the world?

Does your mouth water when you see ripe cherries hanging from a tree?

Trust your sweet tooth, and build your health through eating fruit.

June 17

**An acre of orchard will feed 100 times
as many people as an acre of grazing land.**

Vegetables crops can yield a lot of produce from a fairly small space, but what is really great about them is that they can usually yield two crops, and if managed correctly, even three crops per year can often be harvested from the same patch of ground. Fruit trees offer stunning quantities of food annually, often averaging more than 10,000 pounds of fruit per acre. At 250 calories per pound of apples and more than 1,200 calories per pound of dates, an average fruit orchard can offer from 2.5 million to as many as 12 million calories per acre per year. Current estimates suggest that we can produce up to 40 times as much food from vegetable plants on the same amount of land as we can from raising animals on that land. The yield from fruit trees is at least 2.5 times the yield from vegetables, meaning that on a raw vegan diet we can raise more than 100 times as much food from fruit trees as we can from livestock, using the same quantity of land for each. Of course, the benefits of raising fruit do not stop with just feeding more people from less ground.

A few of the other benefits to expect when fruit replaces meat include:

- ❖ Freeing up more space for recreation and other human use.
- ❖ Massive quantities of fuel conserved, no longer needed for cooking.
- ❖ Strip mines for metals for cookware, stoves, barbeques, and microwaves become redundant, as does the mining machinery and the fuel to run it.
- ❖ Wildlife supported by orchard encourages comebacks for many species.
- ❖ Sickness vastly reduced as a result of improved nutrition cuts medical costs and yields increases in productivity.
- ❖ Cost of food goes down, since fruit culture is more efficient than meat culture.
- ❖ The quality of the fruit we all eat would be vastly improved, since demand always yields supply.
- ❖ Sports become more fun to watch as healthier athletes play at higher levels.
- ❖ Reverence for life rises, human awareness and respect for all rises, while crime plummets.
- ❖ Billions more trees result in great environmental improvements and stabilized weather conditions.

June 18

Cutting the forests to gain land in order to grow grain for livestock is like draining your blood to lose weight.

“The operation was a success, but the patient died.” Excuse me for not understanding, but how exactly was the operation a success, and for whom? Certainly not for the patient, or anyone who cared about the patient’s health. Billions of acres of forested land have been cleared, specifically to increase the acreage available for grazing livestock. Sure, you lose a little weight when you lose blood (about a pound per pint, to be exact), but blood is, well, blood, and in limited supply. The expression “lose your life’s blood” means that you lose something that is so important to you that it makes life barely worth living, if in fact not worth living at all. You cannot give up your blood without also giving up your life. Every drop of blood is important to your health; every corpuscle serves a purpose.

In the forest, every tree matters. Trees provide safe havens for countless multitudes of creatures. Trees bring rain, build and hold the soil, and bring nutrients to the surface from deep in the ground. Every part of a tree becomes food for one organism or another. Forests may contain billions of trees, and it might seem as though one tree here or there couldn’t matter, but it does, especially to the creatures that live in, eat from, sleep on, hide within, or otherwise utilize that specific tree. Is there any logic that serves to make the last tree in what was once a forest any more important than the first tree that was cut from that forest?

Eating meat is a losing proposition from start to finish. Certainly from the animals' point of view, humans eating meat is an unspeakable atrocity. The consumption of meat and dairy is linked with dozens of major illnesses, most notably heart disease and cancer. Animal abuse is known to run rampant in all phases of the animal industry. Humane slaughter is a myth. Slaughterhouse workers are notorious for their high turnover rate, high accident rate, and high depression rate, not surprising when you spend your days killing for a living. Their drug and alcohol abuse is second only to that found in the medical profession.

Cutting forests for grazing is an unsustainable approach to an altogether unthinkable process. Every tree cut represents the death of an important part of the forest. Replacing a perfectly balanced environment with an unsustainable one makes absolutely no sense.

June 19

**Grain's claim to fame is its storability,
a feature that all but nullifies your chances
of ever purchasing a fresh grain product.**

Wheat is notoriously the “best storing” of all grains, and can be used decades after it has been harvested. Purchasing fresh bread is essentially not even possible, for no one harvests wheat and uses it immediately in bread making.

Freshly harvested wheat is dried and stored in silos, or a similar storage facility. Grain products, such as cakes, cookies, breads, etc. come with “sell by” dates, by which point they are considered “old,” but no information is supplied to tell you during which year the wheat used in making the food was harvested, likely for good reason. No one wants you to know! Do you ever wonder when the grain was grown that was used in making this morning's “fresh muffins,” or for how many years has the flour been sitting on a shelf?

After harvest, grain is stored until at some point, possibly years later, it eventually goes to a mill to be ground. After grinding, flour is bagged and sold to major distributors, who store it until they can sell it to wholesalers. The wholesalers store the product once more, until they can sell it to retailers who once again put it on their shelves where it sits until it is purchased. Once the bag of flour is purchased, who knows how long it will sit in your home before it is used for making “fresh cookies” or “fresh bread”? Calling a product “fresh” does not make it so, any more than calling a product “whole” means that it really is. By the time the water and antioxidants have been cooked out of the grains, it is quite a stretch to still refer to the end product as “whole” or “fresh.”

Let's throw the facts out the window and pretend that the wheat in fresh bread really is fresh, even though we know it is not. A minimum of at least three other ingredients are used in bread making—sugar, salt, and baking powder—none of which even claim to be fresh. This is before the stabilizers, preservatives, coloring agents, and other “secret” ingredients are added to the bread. Once we have added such ingredients into our fresh bread, no one should still rightfully be allowed to call it “fresh.” “Fresh bread” is a hoax.

June 20

**If you do not have an appetite for fruit or vegetables,
you are not truly hungry.**

A friend drops by your house just as you are preparing to go grocery shopping. You have almost no food in your house. You are very close with your friend, who casually says to you, “I’m really hungry. Do you have anything to eat?” Your house is so low on supplies that all you can offer is some garden-grown organic lettuce that you really enjoy. “I’m not hungry for lettuce,” says your friend. “What I really want is some chocolate, but I’d settle for pizza.”

A profound difference exists between hunger and appetite. Hunger is non-specific. Hunger is not a call for a specific food item; it is simply a call for food. When you are truly hungry, you will eat practically anything, and be quite glad of it. Contrast hunger with appetite, which is exceptionally specific. A heroin addict specifically seeks heroin when s/he feels ready for the next fix. A coffee addict just isn’t happy until s/he gets that cup of coffee, and nothing else will do. We have all seen someone who “just has to have” a cigarette. Have you ever seen someone who just has to have some lettuce, or has to have a banana and nothing else will do? Appetite is the nice word, the socially acceptable word for craving, which is the nice word for “addicted to.” After all, we usually think of the addict as being a person who needs help, someone who has lost control of his/her life and whose decisions are being driven by the intense desire for a specific substance or experience. Addicts are other people, not us, though of late it has become somewhat chic to associate yourself as an addict, at least on your T-shirt. Coffee addicts, chocoholics, and even some workaholic traits are today being glorified and even being presented as desirable traits. Many people use the word “hunger” when they mean appetite, you may have noticed. “Hunger” is the “nice” word for appetite.

We have all witnessed the following scenario: a group of people is sitting around the table at a celebration meal. Many of them have eaten as much as they possibly could. One young man pushes his chair back from the table and proudly announces, “I couldn’t possibly eat even one more bite,” just as the desserts are brought to the table. “One more bite of dinner,” he says, and finishes his sentence by saying, “but I have plenty of room for dessert.” Would you say that he was functioning out of hunger or out of appetite?

If you are not sure if you are bored, tired, thirsty, hungry, or something else, ask yourself whether you would like to eat some lettuce, and you will likely gain the clarity you sought.

June 21

Wheat is simply not all that it is cracked up to be.

Crack a joke, crack your knuckles, crack a pot, but stay away from the wheat. There is so much wrong with eating wheat that there is just no way that eating wheat can be right. How did anyone ever put wheat into the “healthy foods” category?

Nutrition today is taught in a backward manner. In today’s version of nutrition, foods are marketed by telling us about the specific individual nutrients in them that are good for us, and no mention is made of what is in the food that is not good for us. Hence, we will see junk food products made of refined white flour and sugar that are being promoted because they have, “extra added calcium,” or are “enriched,” because some of the B vitamins removed in the refining process have been added back in. We are truly witnessing a case of the tail wagging the dog. Nutrition by the nutrient, rather than by the food, is completely backwards.

When the science of nutrition was in its infancy, the German scientists of the day were given the task of setting nutritional standards. They needed to determine the recommended minimum and maximum intake for the nutrients of which they were aware at the time. Various methods for doing so were discussed, and eventually the smartest protocol was elected. The scientists realized that all they had to do was analyze the nutrient content of the typical daily diet of a group of relatively healthy people, and their job would be complete. Based on those findings, they could then recommend nutritional intakes. The original recommended daily allowance (RDA) of a wide variety of nutrients was determined in exactly this way. Granted, the diet used for generating the standards was the average German diet, which at the time was exceptionally heavy in meat, animal products, and starchy foods, and relatively low in fresh fruits and vegetables. Even though the diet may not have been the optimal one, the protocol for determining RDA makes sense, even to this day.

Wheat is high in gluten, the sticky substance used in making paste. Humans do not handle gluten well, and some people are so highly sensitive to gluten that they must shun it entirely, or risk becoming deathly ill. Other than sprouting them, wheat and all the other starchy grains must be cooked in order to be consumed, which seriously undermines their potential as natural foods for humans. The cooking process destroys many of the nutrients in the wheat, while also resulting in the production of various mutagens, carcinogens, and anti-nutrients. Of course, wheat does contain some valuable nutrients, but this is not how the value of a food is determined. Poison ivy is a dark green leafy vegetable that contains valuable nutrients, but we do not tout it as food. Optimal food choices for humans are the nutritious and delicious organic plants edible in their whole, fresh, ripe, and raw state that contain the absolute minimum of health-destroying substances.

June 22

**There could well be more nutrients in
the cardboard box than there is in the cereal.**

OK, OK, the above comment really is just a saying, and perhaps a bit of an exaggeration at that. But then, consider the following, written by S.T. Otradovskiy, taken from Yahoo! Voices:

A rat experiment conducted in 1942, but locked away in a company's file cabinet, revealed how grains affected their health. Rats that received a whole grain diet lived for over a year; those that received vitamins and water lasted two months, rats that received water and sugar lasted one month and the rats that were given water, vitamins and all the puffed wheat they wanted, died in two weeks ... even before the rats that received no food at all!

Another unpublished study conducted in 1960 by researchers at the University of Michigan had a similar result. The rats that ate rat chow and water were in good health, rats that ate the cardboard box and water became lethargic and eventually died of malnutrition. But the rats that ate cereal died sooner than the rats that ate the box! There was more nourishment in the box the cereal came in compared to the cereal itself!

I am NOT a fan of animal studies when it comes to drawing conclusions regarding human health and nutrition, but in this case, I am willing to make an exception, if for no other reason than the experiments were done 60-70 years ago. Certainly I vote for not repeating the experiment.

Perhaps of more concern is what happened to the rats that actually had access to unlimited quantities of the same sugared cereal we daily give to our children. Again, quoting Ms. Otradovskiy, "About the cereal-eating rats, they developed erratic behavior, threw fits, bit each other and then went into convulsions. Autopsy revealed dysfunction of the pancreas, liver, kidneys and degeneration of the nerves of the spine, all signs of insulin shock." If that does not discourage you from eating cereal grains, I do not know what will.

One of my nutrition professors while I was going through my training in chiropractic medicine used to repeatedly emphasize the negative effects of cereal grains. He was convinced that although the cardboard box the cereal came in was not particularly good for you, it was not particularly bad for you either. With full knowledge of the many negative effects of grains on our health, he frequently proclaimed that the box contained more nutrients than the cereal. Certainly the cereal manufacturers are aware of the nutritional weaknesses of their product, which is likely why they spend so much money putting nutrients back into their cereals, and spend oodles more money making sure they tell you just how nutritious their breakfast cereals really are. They show you orange juice, eggs, milk, and cereal, and claim that the cereal is "part of this nutritious breakfast." They just do not bother telling you that the cereal is likely the least nutritious part.

June 23

Pasteurized foods are certified to not support life.

Pasteurization is a process of heating food, usually a liquid, to a specific temperature for a predefined length of time and then immediately cooling it. The purpose of the process is to “slow” the spoilage of food caused by microbial growth.

What is the big deal about pasteurization (in regards to food), other than the fact that this process of cooking food “just a little” is named after the 19th Century scientist? Yes, sterilization of surgical instruments, one of Pasteur’s ideas, has made a huge difference to the effectiveness and survival rate of surgical procedures. Does cooking really make our food safer to consume? No doubt exists that cooking food destroys at least some of the harmful bacteria that might be in or on the food, and in addition does the same to the beneficial bacteria. But heat does not discriminate and only destroy the detrimental microbes by denaturing their proteins. The proteins within the food itself are also damaged, as chemical bonds within them come apart, only to reconnect in a “cross-linked” fashion, forming enzyme-resistant bonds. Human digestive enzymes cannot break apart chemical bonds deemed “enzyme resistant.” The affected proteins are not simply rendered unavailable and unusable, but are also recognized by the body as foreign invaders, to be attacked and eliminated. Exaggerated allergic responses, auto-immune conditions (such as lupus, Type 1 diabetes, various types of arthritis, Crohn’s disease, and multiple sclerosis), leaky gut syndrome, GERD, and even chronic fatigue have been linked to the ingestion of the cross-linked proteins that form when food is heated.

Why then do we pasteurize? The following diseases can be transferred through unpasteurized milk, and also from milk that has been stored improperly: tuberculosis, brucellosis, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and Q-fever. Pasteurization also greatly reduces the number of the following harmful bacteria in milk, reducing them to a “seed” or spore form that will once again bloom when the milk is warmed to room temperature: salmonella, listeria, yersinia, campylobacter, staphylococcus aureus, and Escherichia coli. Pasteurized milk is safer to drink than raw milk, granted, but the entire point is that only babies are designed for drinking milk, and they are only designed to drink their mother’s milk, not the milk from other species. We do not need to make milk safer to drink or make cheese safer to eat—we need to educate people to the point that they no longer choose to consume dairy products of any kind. Most adult humans lack the digestive enzymes to properly digest dairy, and many suffer from debilitating symptoms for doing so.

Essentially, pasteurization is a process of killing the microbes in food, while adversely affecting the nutrients in the food, thus making it less likely to support life of any kind, big or small.

June 24

People who shun starches tend not to have issues with being overweight.

For a person eating a typical Western diet, starches make up at least 40 to 50 percent of the total calories each day, and sometimes more. Cutting out starch means that the person is cutting almost half of his or her total calorie intake for the day. Those calories must be replaced, or else the person will suffer dramatic weight loss and severe cravings.

Basically, two main strategies for avoiding starches are in use. One way is to replace the calories from starch by eating loads of fatty foods. With single-digit fat intake being recognized as the healthiest ideal, eating half or more of your calories from fat is not a healthy route to pursue. A diet high in fat leads to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney problems, and liver disease, to name just a few. Some of the other conditions associated with eating a diet that is high in fat include candida, chronic fatigue, mental fog, different types of digestive disorders including diverticulitis, Crohn's, colitis, and GERD, eczema, pimples, and obesity. Even when making up for the lack of calories from carbohydrates by consuming great masses of fatty foods, humans will still be prone to craving and bingeing on starchy or sweet foods, since we are designed and built to thrive on a diet predominated by carbohydrates.

The second method of shunning starchy, complex carbohydrate foods is to eat a diet predominated by fruit, nature's rich and healthy source of simple carbohydrates. All carbohydrates are reduced to simple carbohydrates during the digestion process, so consuming fruit proves to be the most efficient and effective method for meeting our carbohydrate needs. Eat sufficient quantities of fruit at every meal to reach complete satiation, and you will never experience cravings, such as the desire for sweets at the end of a meal, the desire for heavy or rich foods at the end of a meal, craving for refined sweets in between meals, or the desire for any type of starchy foods. Eating a healthy quantity of vegetables will stave off all desires for salty foods, as the minerals in vegetables more than meet that requirement.

Fruits and vegetables contain plenty of water and fiber, so eating these foods also keeps you hydrated and fulfills your desire for eating a sufficient quantity of foods. Being relatively low in calories per bite and also high in nutrients per bite when compared to other foods, fruits and vegetables offer the ultimate solution to healthy weight management. If you wish to gain weight, simply eat more food, putting emphasis on fruit. If you wish to lose weight, eat a bit less fruit and a bit more vegetable, thus effectively cutting total calorie intake while actually raising total food volume. The classic "health nut," or health enthusiast (depending upon whether you wish to denigrate or laud), eats a diet heavily predominated by whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables, and is known for his/her sleek physique.

June 25

**People find it easier to overeat on starches
than to overeat on any other food.**

Vegetables are filling due to their high water and high fiber content. They offer very few calories in return for the volume consumed, making vegetables perhaps the most difficult of all foods upon which to overeat. Vegetables offer a nutritional package unparalleled by any other food group, and are an especially good source of minerals. Fruits offer up their abundant and sweet simple sugars in delicious, easy-to-eat packages that digest very quickly. As much as we are all drawn to consume sweets (driven by our sweet tooth), we are equally all contented and satisfied by them. Fruits are satiating, not only because of the sugar, but also because they are rich in water and fibers, while remaining a good source of minerals and most other nutrients. The satiating quality of fruit is exactly what also makes it so difficult to overeat this treat from nature.

By weight, fats contain more than double the calories of proteins or carbohydrates. Seemingly easy to overeat, in reality fats often kill one's appetite before massive quantities can be consumed. Fats are difficult to digest, and sit in the stomach for considerably longer than fruits or vegetables, resulting in a sense of fullness much sooner than when eating foods that move through the digestive system quickly. Many people find fatty foods, especially greasy foods, "gross," "unappealing," and even "sickening," a feature that again makes it relatively difficult to overeat on fats. A variety of high-fat fad diets include "all the fat you can eat," but allow no starches, nothing to spread the fat onto, as if the people who might try such a diet were not already eating all the fat they cared for before starting the diet. But who wants butter if there is no bread to spread it on, fatty dips with no chips, nothing starchy to hold the mayo? No one eats a sub sandwich without the roll.

Starchy foods do not yield up their sugars rapidly. Hence, eating starches (such as bread, rice, pasta, corn, or potatoes), does not result in a quick sense of satiation, making it easy to just keep eating them to and beyond the point of overeating. Starchy foods typically are worse than bland; they actually have no taste of their own. Dictionary definitions of "starch" invariably include the word "tasteless," or "flavorless." In order to make starchy foods more appealing to the mass market, and thus increase sales of their product, large quantities of salt, fat, sugar, or other condiments are commonly added to starchy foods. Many of these condiments are toxic stimulants known as excitotoxins, which actually cause permanent damage to brain function. Their stimulating qualities make them enticing to humans, as we are really fond of (and become easily addicted to) almost every sort of stimulation. One television advertisement for chips essentially admitted the addictive quality of their additives by stating, "Bet you can't eat just one." The fact that starchy foods are commonly laced with addictive excitotoxins is yet another feature that makes it extremely easy to overeat on starchy foods.

June 26

A disproportionate number of the world's best athletes in almost every sport invariably turn out to be vegetarians and vegans.

With only a tiny percentage of the world's population being vegan, we would not expect to see large numbers of vegan athletes at the top of their fields. The odds are more than 99 to one against them, yet vegan athletes are at the top of practically every sport. For every vegan athlete at the top of his/her sport, there are at least five more vegetarian athletes vying for the top spots. Who looks into such things? Hardly anyone. Rarely do we hear about what an athlete really eats, and often what we hear is not comprehensive or necessarily true. With coaches, trainers, doctors, physios, and most athletes promoting the consumption of meat, it really would be amazing for any athlete to go vegan, other than for the fact that vegan athletes so dramatically outperform their non-vegan counterparts. The following is a short list of world famous vegan athletes that have set high standards in their sport(s).

Noteworthy Vegan Athletes, a partial list:

- Alexander Dargatz: 2005 world champion bodybuilder
- Amanda Riester: 4-time Golden Gloves champion
- Andreas Hanni: Swiss professional ice hockey
- Andy Lally: Highly awarded Grand Am driver
- Austin Aries: World champion wrestler
- Bill McCarthy: International power lifter
- Billy Simmonds: 2009 winner of Mr. Natural Universe
- Brendan Brazier: Triathlete winner, 50K winner
- Cam Awesome: 11-time US champion amateur boxer
- Carl Lewis: 9 Olympic Gold medals in track and field
- Catherine Johnson: Winner of the 2005 Boulder Cyclocross Series
- Catra Corbett: Ultra runner with multiple course records
- Christine Varderos: US cyclocross team member
- Craig Heath: National champion figure skater and ice dancer

- Dusan Dudas: Winner of several national bodybuilding competitions
- Ed Templeton: Winner of the skateboarding World Cup
- Emily Jans: National champion boxer
- Esther Hahn: Professional surfer with 4 international titles
- Fiona Oakes: Elite marathon runner
- Georges Laraque: Professional hockey player
- Greg Chappell: Australian cricket captain
- Harri Nieminem: 1997 World Title in Thai boxing
- Helen Fines: British Fell running team
- Jack Lindquist: 9 major cycling race victories
- James Southwood: Multiple British champion, world bronze medal in French martial art
- Jason Sager: 60+ cycling victories
- Jim Morris: Lifetime bodybuilder into his 70's
- Joel Kirkilis: National level bodybuilder
- John Salley: NBA champion basketball player
- Joni Purmonen: Strongman competing at international level
- Kara Lang: Canadian footballer, youngest international appearance
- Keith Holmes: 2-time World Middleweight boxing champion
- Kenneth G Williams: Winner, World Natural Bodybuilding Championships
- Kevin Selker: Track cyclist with US titles
- Laura Kline: World age group champion in duathlon
- Leilani Munter: Record holding NASCAR driver
- Mac Danzig: MMA King of the Cage, 2005-2007
- Madi Serpico: Canadian national level tri-athlete
- Meagan Duhamel: World bronze medalist in pairs skating

- Michael Zigomanis: Longtime professional ice hockey player
- Mirko Buchwald: British karate champion, US team captain
- Molly Cameron: 2-time Oregon state cycling champion
- Neil Robinson: Professional soccer player
- Pat Neshek: MLB pitcher for the Twins
- Pat Reeves: National powerlifting champion, masters division
- Patrik Baboumian: Multiple strongman world record holder
- Peter Ebdon: Snooker champion
- Rob Bigwood: International champion arm wrestler
- Robert Lichtenwalner: National cycling champion
- Ruth Heidrich: Age group Ironman triathlon winner
- Salim Stoudamire: NBA basketball for the Hawks
- Sarah Stewart: Australian wheelchair basketball, 3 Paralympic medals
- Scott Jurek: Ultramarathon great with 24 victories, 10 course records
- Seba Johnson: Olympian, slalom skier
- Steph Davis: Noted climber with many firsts
- Tony Fiametta: NFL fullback for Cowboys
- Weia Reinboud: Set 9 age-group world records in field events
- Willie Austin: 1990 World Drug Free Powerlifting Champion

June 27

**If you truly want to know if you are addicted
to something, try going one full week without it.**

We all hear it, again and again, “I don’t drink much coffee, just a cup or two in the morning.”

To someone who does not drink coffee, 500 cups a year sounds like a whole lot indeed. “Do you ever miss a morning, and just not drink the stuff?” you might ask.

“Absolutely not. I wouldn’t be able to go to the bathroom in the morning if I didn’t have my cup of coffee.”

In a mere few sentences we’ve gone from barely admitting use of coffee to confirming full dependence upon the bitter drink. That wasn’t so bad, was it? Let’s ask a few more questions.

“Starchy foods, you ask? I hardly ever eat them.”

“What do you usually have for breakfast then?”

“Cereal and milk, with some fruit.”

“And for your 10 o’clock snack?”

“Usually a bit of cake, and some coffee, or if not cake, then some chips.”

“What’s your normal lunch, then?”

“Oh, soup and sandwich, or a salad sandwich, and an apple.”

“Do you take an afternoon tea?”

“Sure, usually a biscuit, a cookie or two, and a hot chocolate.”

“Would you describe a typical dinner, please?”

“I’m a vegan, for health reasons. I always have a salad at dinner, a couple of vegetables, and some potatoes, corn, or rice. Sometimes I have pasta, with loads of vegetables, but I almost never have bread at dinner.”

“Do you realize that you’ve just explained to me that you eat starchy foods every time you eat? Would you be willing to go a week without eating any starchy foods at all?”

“Oh no, I couldn’t do that. I’d be hungry all the time.”

Once again, we have progressed from complete denial to junkie status in a matter of moments. Do you think the conversation would go any differently if the question was about fat

consumption, junk food, or even dairy consumption? People just tend to be magnificently unaware of what they actually eat, often to the point of not consciously noticing what or when they eat. In one nutritional study designed to track the total calorie intake of various Olympic athletes, the conclusion was that athletes invariably lose track of what they eat, that they do not actually notice and write down everything they eat in a day, even when they try very hard to do so. Eating 80/10/10, one food at a time, when you are hungry, until you are full, greatly enhances and supports conscious awareness and appreciation for the foods you are eating.

June 28

**Ripe fruit's fuels are called "simple sugars."
Every cell in your body is fueled by simple sugars.**

Simple sugars are the preferred fuel of every cell of the body. From the smallest cell in the body, the human sperm, to the largest cell, the human egg, every cell uses the simple sugars fructose and glucose, naturally found in fruit, in order to carry out its functions. The simplest and most direct method of supplying that fuel is to consume a combination of fructose and glucose directly from the foods we eat. Eating fructose and glucose in fruit is the most effective and the most efficient manner of insuring that every cell gets all the sugar it needs for fuel.

Efficient means that you accomplish what you are attempting with minimal extraneous effort. Your body has the option of taking on fuel in exactly the form that it is going to be used, as fructose and glucose, or else it will rely upon doing the chemical work of converting other sugars or complex starches into the fructose and glucose it requires. If sufficient sugars or starches are not supplied, then the body will utilize the less efficient method of converting fats to sugars. Sugar is required to efficiently convert fat to sugar, and if sufficient sugar is not available for this task, the body will still make the conversion using the even less efficient method known as "gluconeogenesis," which means "the creation of new sugar." Gluconeogenesis is a "dirty" conversion, however, as it also generates the production of ketones. When blood ketone levels rise, brain function is compromised in a manner quite similar to when blood alcohol levels rise. High levels of ketones can result in keto-acidosis, a condition that can be deadly, and is especially common in diabetics.

"Effective" means using your effort to get done exactly what you are hoping to get done with minimal wasted or extraneous effort. You are ineffective when you kick a football in a field goal attempt, but you miss getting the ball through the uprights. Roll a bowling ball down the lanes, hoping for a strike, but losing the ball into the lane's channel is ineffective. In baseball, the "swing and miss" is ineffective for the batter, but extremely effective on the pitcher's part.

Eating fruit is the most efficient and the most effective method of delivering fructose and glucose to the human bloodstream. This is why we invariably see fruit served at the finish line of almost every running race, and even along the way on longer races. The runner's muscles need sugar for fuel, and fruit is the best way to supply the required sugars. After 10 years of study on professional cyclists, researchers recently concluded that during the midst of a race, the cyclist could take on almost 50 percent more fuel by eating fruit than by any other food delivery system, including the goos, gels, and gimmicks with which many top athletes are tempted to experiment. Now is the time to put your faith in nature by nurturing yourself with fruit.

June 29

**If your diet is not improving,
the best you can be doing is coasting.**

The only way to coast is downhill. Admittedly, with sufficient momentum, you can actually coast uphill for a short while, but you will be losing precious momentum the entire time. The balance between the positive and negative substances, forces, influences, and conditions in life is in a constant state of flux. Every moment counts, as you accumulate health and as you allow it to dissipate. Exceptions may seem to exert only a tiny effect, but those effects add up. Soon enough, you will find yourself slipping down the perilous slope towards ill health, and you will not always be able to identify the relationship between cause and effect. The more you build your vitality, your “health momentum,” the better you can withstand the shocks, assaults, accidents, exposures, challenges, obstacles, and exceptions that seem to be an endless part of life.

Lots of people think that they can maintain their health with little or no effort, but this is simply not the case. With every decade, the challenges of staying fit and healthy must be met, or the downhill slide prevails. Losing ground is effortless. Gaining ground requires effort. All of life’s imperatives are pleasant experiences. Sleep, activity, personal growth, fresh air, and more, we enjoy the results of all of life’s necessities. So, while effort must be exerted, there is no reason for the pursuit of health to be an unpleasant experience. In fact, every reason exists for the pursuits that result in health to be far more pleasant than the pursuits that result in ill health. In addition, and perhaps as extra motivation, excellent health is far more pleasant to experience than ill health.

What can you do to improve your diet?

Eat whole foods. Fractured, fragmented, refined, distilled, or otherwise isolated foods simply never can be as nutritious as whole foods. Supplements are less nutritious than the whole foods from which they are derived.

Eat fresh foods. Bottled, boxed, bagged, canned, or otherwise preserved foods can never match the nutritional clout of fresh foods. The freshest foods are those you grow yourself, or those purchased directly from the grower.

Eat ripe foods. Unripe foods are not yet ready to release their nutritional goodness, are often difficult to digest, and cannot match the flavor of their fully ripe counterparts. Learn about your food, and be patient when waiting for items to ripen.

Eat raw foods. Cooking destroys nutrients while creating anti-nutrients, carcinogens, teratogens, tumorogens, tremorogens, and mutagens. Cooking results in massive destruction of the earth’s resources and habitats. Every free creature eats raw food.

Eat organic foods. The use of toxic chemicals can only have negative effects on human health, many of which are not only cumulative, but are passed through to future generations. Those

substances passed on to our offspring that have negative health implications for them or their offspring are known as “teratogens.” Organic is best for the planet, the creatures, and for us.

Eat fruits and vegetables. A diet predominated by fruits and vegetables offers the best of everything: health, weight control, fuel, attitude, and spirit. Every creature has a diet that is unique to its species. For humans, fruits and vegetables are the foods for which we are designed.

June 30

**Going against the grains and other starchy foods
just may be the healthiest food choice you ever make.**

More than 75 percent of all disordered eating problems, binges, and food addictions revolve around the consumption of complex carbohydrate foods and their derivatives, such as alcohol. For most people, once starchy foods get a grip on them (usually this happens very early in life), it is a grasp from which they simply cannot, and often enough do not wish to, break free. Since the advent of the internal combustion engine, and the almost unlimited grain production that it enabled, we have transitioned from being a nation that relied primarily upon fresh produce and game for our food to a nation of starch eaters. Most people eat starchy foods three, four, and even five or more times per day. From breakfast cereal, toast, doughnuts and Danish, to sandwich bread, rice, pasta, corn, and potatoes, to cakes, brownies, and other floury desserts, starch has done more than taken hold, it has taken over. Ask 100 people at random if they have ever gone a week without eating starch, and you are unlikely to find even one person who has done so. Most will eat starch every day, at every meal. Starch literally has a death grip on the nation. Perhaps this is why, when all else fails and people are driven to desperation, they will finally consider one of the various starch-free dietary approaches in their efforts to lose weight. *The 80/10/10 Diet* not only offers a starch-free approach to eating, but it can rightfully claim to be the healthiest and most nutritious of all dietary approaches.

Grains lack many essential nutrients, most notably Vitamin C, a nutrient we would consume in great quantities when we were eating fruit as our main carbohydrate source, which we are designed to do. Grains are rarely eaten raw, though it is possible to sprout them, and by cooking them, we damage, derange, and outright destroy many of the nutrients that are in grains. Orchards are better for the economy, ecology, and the environment than fields of grains. Fruit orchards promote the development of stable weather patterns and regular rains, build the quality and quantity of the soil, and out-produce grains by more than 100 percent.

Fruits taste great on their own, whereas grains invariably require condiments, many of which are considerably worse for our health than the grains themselves.

Instead of “pass the bread,” next time, why not completely pass on the bread and have all the fruit you want. Day in and day out, fruit is your healthiest carbohydrate food.

JULY

**You know you have had your fill of sunshine
for the day at the first hint that the sun's warmth
just does not feel good anymore.**

We all know that the sun's rays feel good, and that they are indeed good for us, when not overdone. The sun brightens our day and helps us stay awake. Sun makes the grass go green, helps fruit to ripen, and tans our skin. The ultraviolet we get from the sun also cleans and disinfects our skin, our blood, and our lymph. Through a complex series of chemical reactions, we use the sun's rays to create Vitamin D, a fat-soluble vitamin that is critical to many aspects of overall health. Without sufficient sunshine, we cannot properly hold calcium in our bones. Sure the sun's warmth feels good, especially when you have not been out in the sun for quite a while. No matter how tan you are, or how pale, getting more sun than your skin is prepared to handle will always result in more harm than good.

Save some of your sun exposure for tomorrow. Too much of a good thing is, well, too much. The sun actually exposes you to radiation, including X-rays. Excess solar radiation results in damage due to its cumulative nature. A full 90 percent of skin aging is attributed to sun exposure, according to at least some sources. You may think that all is well, and that the amount of sun you are getting is not excessive, but if you are pushing your skin to its limits time and again, there is good chance that the damage will appear later in life. "Cumulative" means that the radiation you got as a child will be with you throughout your entire life, and will add on endlessly to all the solar and other radiation you ever receive.

While tanning beds may leave you with the glow of a tan even in mid-winter, overuse of tanning beds is associated with the recent massive rise in the number of skin cancer cases seen in the US and Western Europe. This is clearly a case of too much of a good thing. Tanning is good, burning is bad, and pushing the limits of your skin's ability to handle sun to near the point of burning is definitely going too far. Fearing the sun makes no sense at all, as the sun is indeed your friend. We must also respect the sun, and its immense power, even from 93 million miles away. Taken to excess, sun exposure is like getting too close to a fire. A fire may warm you from a distance, but jumping in the fire makes no sense at all, and you will get burned. Enjoy a bit of sun, but use hats, clothing, shade, and if you must, use natural sun block in order to prevent yourself from getting more sun than you can handle.

July 1

**Fasting is the fastest way to bring
about the return of health.**

Most people understand that when they get tired, all they need to do is take some rest and they will feel better. Resting is how the body frees up energy from other processes and functions in order to redirect that energy into its own healing powers. A limited amount of energy is always going into the processes of healing, repair, and renewal. When we rest, we allow the body to make maximal use of its innate healing powers. Perhaps the fact that this reality is so obvious is what makes such a simple truth so difficult for many to see in the conscious parts of their brains. Fasting is resting taken to a high art form, so it follows logically that during and immediately following a fast is the time when the body will be most able to regenerate and renew itself, mustering its healing forces to its utmost. Some scientists have studied lizards and other animals capable of growing new tails and other parts, and theorized that for humans too, amazing healing is also conceivably possible. They have suggested that things such as regeneration of limbs or regrowth of various organs could be within our capability, if only the body could access sufficient healing energy. When we fast, we make more healing energy available to the body than at any other time.

We are automatically directed to rest whenever we do not feel well, though we do not always heed our body's guidance. Loss of energy, diminution of appetite, a desire to just go to bed and be left alone, lack of motivation, and dulling of enthusiasm are all clues that we need more rest. By fasting, we fully participate in all four of the types of rest available to us.

Physical rest: Physical rest is relative, as walking is restful when compared to running, and sitting is a rest as compared to walking. But the ultimate in physical rest is available when we simply lie in bed and do nothing, or as close to nothing as we can figure out.

Emotional rest: Freedom from worries, cares, concerns, fears, doubts, and upsets is of huge value and benefit to the body. The old saying that "Every cell of the body eavesdrops upon your thoughts" is highly significant when it comes to healing. Good caregivers and an equally good attitude can make a world of difference to the success of every fast.

Sensorial rest: We take in a world of input through our special senses, though most of it comes in visually, especially during a fast. Being in "natural" surroundings makes a huge difference for fasters. Green fields, open vistas, blue skies, pleasant smells, and a comfortable bed are major rest factors. "Comfort" is the key word when it comes to sensory rest. Comfortable climate, temperature, and surroundings all contribute to our sensory rest.

Physiological rest: The heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, and all other vital organs and glands must continue to function at all times. But the digestive system can be put to rest, simply through the stoppage of eating. Digestion can utilize more than half the body's available energy at certain times of day. The digestive system can completely go on holiday when we fast, making more energy available for healing.

July 2

**Fasting is the condition that develops
when we are in the deepest states of rest
that can possibly be achieved.**

We fast, but only in an introductory and limited degree, every night. Each morning we awaken to notice the brilliant results of our night's sleep, and then terminate the fast with either physical activity or our first meal. With breakfast, we put our digestive energies back to work. Some of us break out of the deep resting state long before we eat, with cardio, strength, or some other form of vigorous physical activity, thus putting an end to the nightly fast. We got to sleep fully confident and knowing that even while totally unconscious, our body will continue to maintain all the functions necessary for life, and that in fact we will actually benefit from resting. Fasting should be perceived as no different, or perhaps as much better than a mere night's sleep, as it really is no more than a super-sized and extended resting period. Other than for a few specific contraindications, we have no good reasons to fear the fasting state.

Fasting is perfectly natural, especially for mammals, although many birds, reptiles, amphibians, and probably some fish fast, as well. Sometimes these creatures fast for health reasons, such as to recover following injury, but most of the time, they fast as part of their normal annual cycle. Bears hibernate, elephant seals will fast for up to six months each year, and some whales fast for eight to nine months annually. Living in nature, humans would naturally experience times where they could access little or no food, when the best option was to simply rest and wait. Science has demonstrated that such lean times, and other tolerable periods without food, are actually beneficial for us, rather than detrimental, as was thought in the past.

During the first day or two of a fast, fuel for the cells is readily available from the digestive tract, from the bloodstream, and especially from the muscles. Once all of the food from the intestines has been digested, and some of the muscle's glycogen has been used, the body will begin dipping into blood sugar for fuel, but only ever so slightly. The resultant drop in blood sugar triggers the body to begin making sugar from stored body fat, a process known as gluconeogenesis. Fat will be used at a rate of approximately one kilogram per week, or roughly 1000 calories per day, which will be demonstrated by an equivalent weight loss. Any excess weight loss beyond one kilogram per week is a representation of water weight being lost.

Losing fat takes time, but losing or gaining water can be a relatively rapid process, meaning that all rapid weight changes are a matter of losses or gains of water. An interesting note is that the glycogen in your muscles is diluted by almost eight pounds of water. When muscle glycogen is used, as it is during the initial week or so of a fast, there will be an accompanying loss of water from the muscles. This water is the weight that is lost through the various "quick weight loss" programs that are always being touted. Unfortunately, for those who wish to lose fat, such programs typically only result in losses of water weight, and do not result in appreciable fat losses.

July 3

**Every great religious leader in history
fasted for clarity of mind.**

Taoism, Sikhism, Judaism, Jainism, Islam, Vaishnavism, Hinduism, Mormonism, Pentecostalism, Lutheranism, Church of the East, Oriental Orthodoxy, Methodism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Bahá'í Faith all have a history of supporting and utilizing fasting.

Many reasons are given in support of fasting. During a fast, many people pay more attention to the spiritual sides of life than they are able to during their more hectic, work-filled, eating days. People see a bigger picture, gain confidence in the higher intelligence that runs the body, and often experience an enhanced connection with all things, great and small, when fasting.

Fasting initiates a great shift in the gears of life. We slow down to our slowest conscious speeds when fasting. Life goes on all around us, yet we physically relax our control, allowing the power that made the body to be the power that heals the body. The faster you go through life, the less peripheral vision you have. Slowing down allows us to see much more of what is going on all around us, and gives us time to reflect upon those things, and upon life itself. Fasters often mention that fasting is one of the most intimate of all life's experiences.

There is time during a fast to consider what we really wish to do in life, what we want to get out of life, what we hope to accomplish, what we live for. When fasting, we have time in an almost endless quantity, and a chance to follow our own private stream of consciousness, uninterrupted, in ways we never get to do in day-to-day life. We can make and consider lists, plans, outlines, and goals, and go through them till we are truly pleased with our efforts.

Fasting brings us in touch with the fact that we are not solely physical beings, but also spiritual, and vice versa. Fasting lets us see sides of ourselves that we sometimes otherwise hide behind the masks of working, eating, and dealing with others. Fasting lets us see who we really are, and gives us the time to decide who we wish to become.

Fasting is the great equalizer, as it brings everyone to the reality that we are not totally in control, as we sometimes like to think we are. No person is so strong as not to be weakened by fasting. Fasters are often moved to tears when they experience their first bites of food. Emotions gush forth. We realize that compared to the power of nature, we are insignificant. Yet each of us matters, and how we conduct ourselves matters.

Fasting brings clarity of mind that is rarely ever otherwise experienced. Religious leaders fast in the hopes of experiencing all of the above-mentioned benefits, and the followers of most religions are also encouraged to occasionally fast, for these same reasons.

July 4

One simply cannot be poisoned into health.

All poisons are poisonous, regardless of dose. To a toxicologist, the previous statement is false. To a toxicologist, anything can be toxic poison, if the dose is right. More than one toxicologist has come up to me after a lecture to tell me so, and to let me know that I would have been considered incorrect were I addressing a group of toxicologists. They each conceded that taken in context, my assertion was completely accurate. “Even water can be toxic, when consumed in a large enough dose,” they would inevitably assure me. Fair enough, but that is not what I am talking about. I am referring to substances that result in predetermined physiologic responses, such as the increase in pulse, respiration, blood pressure, and body temperature that accompanies the use of a stimulant such as amphetamine, or the reverse of those responses that accompanies the use of a sedative such as barbiturate. The larger the dose, the more pronounced the response, until a physical limit is reached and death results. But amphetamine use always results in a rise in vital signs, as barbiturate use always results in a drop in those signs. Toxins are always toxic to us, regardless of dose. Individuals can build a bit of a tolerance to specific substances through use, essentially by lowering their own vitality, but the toxic substance remains toxic to us all.

On three occasions, over the course of the almost 20 years I spent in private practice as a chiropractor, I had the good fortune of having a pharmacist as a patient. When a chiropractic patient is on his or her back, neck twisted precariously in the hands of the doctor, the chiropractor is in a very good position to ask questions and expect honest answers, as the patient inevitably has a moment of experiencing extreme vulnerability. I asked each of my pharmacist patients the same question, and got the same response each time. “Are any of the drugs in the entire pharmacopeia not toxic, or are they all poisons,” I asked. “Every drug is poisonous,” was the consensus response, “that is why they are all treated as controlled substances, and kept under lock and key.”

The human body cannot learn to accept and respond to toxic poison as if it were health food. Vitality can be lowered, however, to the degree that the body will not demonstrate the violent reactions associated with acute poisoning. As vitality diminishes, so too does the degree of the response to toxic matter. A young smoker inhales on his first cigarette and coughs vigorously. His ears may ring, he may become nauseous, he might even experience visual disturbances and other symptoms. When sufficiently devitalized through years of smoking, the experienced smoker will inhale on the cigarette even more deeply than the initiate, yet will demonstrate almost no negative reaction whatsoever. The responses at this point are more sinister, chronic, debilitating, and eventually pathogenic. The smoker’s reduced vitality and inability to respond to the smoke becomes the smoker’s demise.

July 5

**The body heals itself rapidly during a fast,
often recovering from a lifetime of abuse
in a matter of weeks.**

Fasting frees up bandwidth, energy, for the body to utilize in its self-healing efforts. Some researchers have speculated that the body could heal itself from virtually all types and degrees of damage, if it was given sufficient energy. Tim Allen made the phrase, “more power” famous. Before Tim Allen, Montgomery Christopher Jorgensen “Scotty” Scott, chief engineer of the Starship Enterprise from the original *Star Trek* television series, made famous the phrase, “She hasn’t got the power, Captain,” when referring to his beloved ship at times that Captain Kirk had asked him to do the impossible. The idea of diverting energy from one function to another more important one is not new. This concept, sometimes referred to as “Robbing Peter in order to pay Paul,” is often utilized by the body when dealing with differing types of emergencies. During a fast, the body gains access to massive quantities of extra energy, which it can divert from digestive and muscular functions and apply to its own healing efforts. Still, the energy available to the body during a fast is limited. When we refer to “the limitation of matter,” that degree of bodily damage beyond which the body cannot heal itself, we are actually paying homage to the limited supply of healing energy available to the body.

The healing that occurs during a fast is directed in an orderly fashion by the body, from most recent to most ancient. Longstanding issues such as chronic conditions or old injuries will not be the first to be addressed, and often require longer fasts in order to be overcome. At the same time, the body also follows a directive that instructs the body to heal itself in a fashion that requires the least effort by the body, while simultaneously incurring the least possible damage upon itself. This triage is going on continuously, allowing the body to run all bodily processes while also healing itself in the most efficient and effective of all possible fashions. To the degree that the body possibly can heal itself, it is during a fast that the body is most likely to recover from all that ails it.

July 6

**True hunger, like thirst, is experienced in the mouth,
yet this type of hunger sensation is one
that few of us have or will ever experience.**

Somehow, and it seems we almost never show the curiosity or get down to the business of questioning how, practically everyone knows when they want something to eat. We just know. The hunger messages that first come to us are exceptionally subtle, yet like a mother attuned to the cries of her own infant, we quickly sense the message and respond to it promptly. Only in rare and extreme cases do we ever wait to eat until the issue becomes critical. In similar fashion, we know early on when we want something to drink, without getting to the point of having extreme symptoms of thirst. We pay attention to the earliest input from the body telling us when we have to go to the bathroom, rarely getting caught in emergency situations. You might ignore a sign or two that you need to get some sleep, but the best approach is to heed the earliest signals. Feeling a bit of a chill? Put on the extra layer of clothing. When we participate in fitness training or are physically active in other ways, we can usually tell when enough is enough, and we stop to rest, long before we have done too much or incurred injury. Minute and somewhat mysterious changes occur within us to which we are innately attuned, and we have learned how and when to respond to these changes. Rarely do we have to get hit on the head with the hammer of intense symptoms before we respond to what our bodies are telling us.

I have never read or even heard of anyone discussing the distinction between the strong sensation in the bottom of the throat that we refer to as “true hunger,” and the ever-so-faint awareness of the beginning pangs of hunger. The difference between these two is profound, for they represent the two ends of the hunger continuum. You become aware of hunger through a variety of clues. The passage of time, the smell or sight of food, changes in brightness of sunlight, physical sensations, such as the stomach emptying or a feeling of profound emptiness, a drop in blood sugar—any and all of these can be the instigators, gentle reminders, that get you to start thinking about eating, wondering if you are hungry enough to eat, or in some other way bring an awareness of food to mind. Heed the messages your body brings to you, and do not worry if you never experience the strong throat sensation known as “true hunger.”

July 7

**If you try to break Nature's laws,
Nature will break you first.**

To date, there are 36 written laws of nature that govern and control the development, sustained degree of health, and the eventual decline of all human beings. Unlike theories or hypotheses, which can, upon sufficient examination, prove to be true or prove to be complete folly, nature's laws have withstood the test of time. Many people have contributed a law or laws to the list during the course of the past 150 years. The laws themselves have been in existence since the beginning of time, but have only recently been transcribed into written word. The laws are organized into two main groups known as Fundamental Principles and Secondary Principles. They are listed as follows:

Fundamental Principles

- I. The Law of Universality
- II. The Law of Phenomena
- III. The Law of Uniformity
- IV. The Law of Tendency
- V. The Law of Symbiosis
- VI. The Law of Identity
- VII. The Law of Homeostasis

Secondary Principles

- A. The Law of Order
- B. The Law of Activity
- C. The Law of Vitality
- D. The Law of Response
- E. The Law of Balance
- F. The Law of Reaction
- G. The Law of Stimulation

- H. The Law of Nutrition
- I. The Law of Utilization
- J. The Law of Continuity
- K. The Law of Regulation
- L. The Law of Development
- M. The Law of Implementation
- N. The Law of Economy
- O. The Law of Selectivity
- P. The Law of Distribution
- Q. The Law of Peristalsis
- R. The Law of Autolysis
- S. The Law of Elimination
- T. The Law of Compensation
- U. The Law of Excitation
- V. The Law of Affinity
- W. The Law of Superiority
- X. The Law of Enervation
- Y. The Law of Expenditure
- Z. The Law of Limitation
- AA. The Law of Defense
- BB. The Law of Capability
- CC. The Law of Potential

The following is the first law, known as “The Law of Universality.”

The Law of Universality: All laws of vital relation are universal:

They are fixed, or constant, immutable and inviolable, the same in all places and at all times under all conditions of life; they are in harmony with the natural order of the universe and with all natural phenomena or laws of life; they are inherent in the nature of life as integral factors, necessary to the completion of the sequence of all natural process, i.e., they are essential to the existence and continuance of life; they are all-encompassing, excluding nothing, and are involved in all aspects of life; and they describe accurately, briefly, and completely the normal sequence of natural developments and explain consistent fundamental relationships of life. These criteria are universally applied to include all uniformities and regularities of nature and are in agreement with all true natural science.

Each and every one of the laws of life adds critical understanding to the way that our bodies function. Complete descriptions, synopses, explanations, real life examples, applications, and utilizations of each of these laws can be found in my soon-to-be-released book, *The Laws of Life*.

July 8

Excessive feasting will soon lead to a need for fasting.

Fasting is not the most fun experience you could ever get yourself into. While resting and a good night's sleep are indeed welcomed treats, and many people initially welcome a break from the hustle bustle of modern life as they begin a fast, fasting soon enough becomes tedious. Not long after initiating a fast, fasters invariably begin counting the days till the end of their fast, clearly indicating the intensity of their desire for it to be over.

Imagine you have company coming to your house from overseas for a couple of weeks. What's the chance that you would just invite everyone to fast for the entire visit? We all know the answer to that question is, "Zero." We invite our company to overdo, to indulge, and have a vacation from which they will need considerable time in order to recover. All too often, we eat till we hurt. We eat beyond our digestive capabilities. We eat in a fashion that results in the steady gain of unwanted excess fat. We eat as though we embraced the Old Testament Isaiah (slightly misquoted) quote, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." We will suffer the consequences of our poor eating choices for the remainder of the day, and those consequences will carry through to tomorrow and for the rest of our lives. Fortunately, there is a way to eat, drink, and be merry without suffering terrible health-destroying consequences, simply by following the basic tenets outlined in *The 80/10/10 Diet*.

"How often should one fast" is a question I commonly hear. I am not a big fan of fasting on a regular basis; neither weekly, monthly, quarterly, nor annually. Instead, I recommend living as though you never intend to need to fast, ever again. Take such fantastic care of yourself that you feel fine without needing to fast. Recover from today tonight, rather than accumulating a growing health deficit for which there will be a major price to pay. Going into arrears with your health, and paying for it with reduced functionality, is simply a price not worth paying. Relying upon yet another fast to undo the damage incurred since your last fast is not good planning.

The next time you are tempted to bend the rules of your own health regimen simply to eat foods that are not typically on your "acceptable" list, repeat to yourself the following quote: "**Nothing tastes as good as feeling good feels.**" Food can be a real treat, but food that destroys your health is only a treat for a moment, and forever after that it is a punishment.

July 9

**Hygiene is the science of human health,
named after Hygeia, the Greek Goddess of Health.**

The idea that health care is all about treating sickness and disease (monitoring, managing, medicating, maintaining, suppressing symptoms, and eventually removing the “offending” parts) is among the most misguided concepts in our modern world. Doctors would have no work at all in a world where everyone was healthy, meaning they have zero motivation for you to be healthy. For hundreds of years in China, or so the story goes, doctors were kept on a retainer, and paid every week, for as long as the patient remained well. Should the patient ever experience sickness, payment to the doctor was withheld until the patient regained his or her health. With the exception of those who manufactured medications, it was to everyone’s advantage for the patient to remain well at all times.

In its roots, the hygienic approach was simple: live healthfully and avoid the doctor. In the late 1800’s and well into the 1900’s, a trip to the doctor could be fatal, hence the modern-day fear of visiting the doctor. A trip to the hospital was very likely going to be fatal, which explains why so many people today fear going to hospitals. Anyone could call himself a doctor, and use whatever methods he chose to treat the patient. Drugs were completely uncontrolled, as was their production. Until the 20th Century, doctors had no efficient methods for controlling bleeding, pain, or infection, so surgeries were quite often deadly.

Modern hygiene calls for the making of intelligent decisions, which at times may well include a trip to the doctor. Time and again, medicine has taken the hygienic route, choosing healthful approaches rather than sticking with dangerous methods. In cases of severe physical trauma, life and death situations, accidents, emergencies, and in many situations where you do not know what else to do or where other help is simply unavailable, a trip to the doctor can be the most expedient and intelligent choice one could make. A good idea is to learn about such options in advance, even to role play them, and to learn enough about your own health so that you have a better idea of when visiting the doctor is the smartest decision, and when choosing to stay home is your best option. Some of those decisions are easy to make. The littlest of injuries, you can care for yourself. The biggest ones require assistance. The ones in the middle are the tricky ones, and they are the ones worth considering in advance. Prepare yourself for accidents and emergencies, and you will be better able to handle them when they arise. That’s good hygiene.

July 10

Total rest includes the physical, physiological, sensory, and emotional aspects of rest.

The pace of modern life just seems to keep speeding up. People sleep fewer hours than 50 years ago, are available (via various electronic devices) to their work responsibilities more of the time and sometimes 24/7, feel greater financial pressures than ever, and generally have less leisure time than at any time in many generations. For many people, rest has become an unknown commodity. When given the opportunity to rest, people often clearly demonstrate a lack of knowledge of how to go about performing this alien activity. Patients have come to me at times and actually stated that they do not know how to rest. Many people have asked questions demonstrating their lack of understanding of what constitutes true rest, such as, “Does (this or that activity, such as walking, computer work, yoga, etc.) count as rest?” Truly none of those activities count as rest, though they may be considered “relatively restful” when compared to more vigorous or more strenuous activities.

Fasting calls for the deepest forms of comprehensive rest possible, yet many times I have been told by fasters that they went for a long hike, or a run, hoping to help speed the elimination of toxins from their body. “It didn’t seem like that much exertion,” is the rationale. The muscles used when walking and running generate their own metabolic wastes, adding to the body’s already loaded detox efforts. Would you get up in the middle of the night in order to go for a run, hoping that running would prove restful? Sometimes I scratch my head wondering what fasters are thinking.

On my way to the beach one day, I saw a man who was sitting in the shade, on a large rock, near a calm pool of water. We exchanged glances as I jogged by, but that was all. I figured he was waiting to meet a friend, or something like that. On my way back from the beach, perhaps three hours later, I saw the same man sitting in the same place. I stopped to exchange pleasantries with him, and eventually inquired what he was doing there. “Just sitting and resting,” he said. “This place is very calming.” I had to agree, and made a mental note of recognition that few people think resting is time well spent, fewer still ever consider sitting as an activity, and even fewer think of resting as an active pastime.

When we are sitting around, we think of ourselves as doing nothing, with the possible exception that we are wasting time. Resting is almost considered abhorrent, something one should never get “caught” doing. If the person on the other end of a phone line wakes you at a time you do not think you should be found asleep, even when apologetically asked if you were sleeping, you will likely deny the fact. We act as if resting and sleeping are illicit activities to be avoided at all costs, rather than being the restorative and health-building activities that they are. Be proud of getting enough rest and sleep.

July 11

Physical Rest: Cease all physical activity.

Sensory Rest: Enjoy peace, quiet, comfort, and immerse in nature.

Physiological Rest: Reduce the metabolic rate.

Emotional Rest: Let go and be at peace.

At the end of a full day, one of nature's best treats is a great night's sleep. Yet all too many times we experience restless sleep. Perhaps we toss and turn, unable to find a comfortable position. Perhaps we suffer from indigestion, or we ate so late that the body is far too busy digesting our food for us to be able to get into any type of deep rest. Maybe there is just so much going on in life, or there is emotional turmoil, or you are deeply worried about something or someone. Such turbulence can negatively affect the quality of your sleep, and can even make sleep next to impossible. Perhaps you are cold, or it is too noisy for your liking, or there are disruptions nearby, or the lights are too bright, or you fear the local insects are going to bother you in the night. Getting into a deep state of relaxed sleep relies upon a tremendous number of factors.

Learning to rest truly effectively is an art, as well as a science. If you wish to garner the most benefit from your rest, you will want to get as deeply into the resting state as you possibly can. The following tips will make your resting and your sleeping more effective and more efficient.

1. *Prepare for rest and sleep.* You likely almost always do certain things before you sleep, so as to fall asleep quickly and easily. Develop a checklist of these actions, and make sure to cover all of them before you attempt to sleep. Your list might include such items as locking the doors, turning off the lights, changing clothing, bathing and other bathroom ablutions, reading, speaking softly, opening a window, or any number of other preparations.
2. *Set an alarm, if you have to arise by a specific time.* Many people find they simply cannot allow themselves to fall into a deep sleep, or they awaken many times, if they know they must wake up by a certain time, but they have not set an alarm.
3. *Turn off phones or other possible interrupting devices.* Whatever it is, it will wait. Usually, the interruption turns out to be a wrong number, or a sales call.
4. *Give yourself permission to get the most rest, or sleep, in the time you have allotted.* Affirm to yourself that everything can wait until after you sleep, and that you do not have to think about anything until later.
5. *Develop a ritual for falling asleep by noting what you usually do, and doing those things in an intentional order.* From brushing your teeth to the things you say to yourself, once you have a pattern for sleeping, the entire process becomes effortless and automatic.

Make rest and sleep a joyful part of your day, every day. Get deep into these activities, for the more you put into them, the more you will get out of everything else you do.

July 12

Health is the natural state of all life on earth.

How quickly we forget the obvious. We just stop noticing. We take for granted that our bodies will work perfectly all of the time, until we somehow lose track of this knowledge. When we experience symptoms—illness, infirmity, or other signs of what we often refer to as sickness—it is not, as commonly assumed, an indicator of the body working incorrectly. Illness is not an indicator of a bodily malfunction. Rather, illness is a message from the body drawing our attention to the fact that something about the Substances, Forces, Influences, or Conditions (SFIC) we are providing to ourselves is less than ideal. Symptoms are the body's equivalent of warning lights, flashing occasionally to let us know that we have taken a wrong turn, that something is inappropriate about the SFIC we are living with.

Farmers raising crops and livestock, gardeners growing flowers and vegetables, parents bringing up their children, zookeepers caring for thousands of different species of animals, and anyone with pets relies upon the fact that health is the natural state. They know that in order to bring about the best possible outcome in terms of growth and development, the ideal substances, forces, influences, and conditions must be provided at all times. Contests to see who can grow the best plant, flower, or animal are actually just tests of who can consistently provide the best SFIC.

Mothers of newborns are particularly motivated to be protective of their infants, and to provide their little ones with the best possible care. We provide for and protect our children, and expect them to be healthy as a result. Not everyone fully understands just exactly which SFIC are ideal, nor does everyone agree on how to provide the best SFIC for our children and ourselves, but we all know that when we take poor care of ourselves, we develop symptoms. We understand intuitively that in order to return to the state of pristine health that we all desire, we must change something, and that something is invariably to do with the SFIC.

Health is the default condition, the state that the body continually attempts to achieve. Health is the body's "go to" guy. The body is constantly seeking to maintain its own health, a condition known as homeostasis, in order to demonstrate the highest degree of health possible, given the SFIC provided. When health is compromised, if the SFIC do not improve, then the body will institute health at a somewhat lower level, a reduced state of vitality. Through seemingly endless phases, health is lost or gained incrementally. Improve the SFIC, and to the degree that you have done so, all structures and functions in the body will vector towards health proportionally.

July 13

Enjoy life's simple pleasures: clean air, sunshine, rest, sleep, fresh fruits and vegetables, human touch, companionship, emotional poise, and comfort.

The human body does all it can to get us to live healthfully, even playing mad chemist and using a widespread arsenal of powerful substances to entice us to follow nature's plan.

Life's simple pleasures are life's greatest treasures. How easily we overlook the common daily experiences of life. We diminish their value, take them for granted, and falsely assume we will always have them at our fingertips. Our children grow up all too quickly, and we regret having not spent more time with them. Adequate time for rest and sleep gets usurped by sleep lost to work responsibilities and financial concerns, and then is gone forever. The fitness of youth is eradicated by an all too sedentary adult life. Family and friends move away, while the internet, illness, and the deaths of loved ones isolate us from ourselves and from others. The city grows up around us, polluting our lungs and dulling our minds to the allure of all things natural. Fearmongers convince us to shed the glow of the healthy tan and to replace it with a pasty pallor. Positive and independent children, convinced that they can do anything, grow into insecure adults who cannot live without their therapists. What are we missing?

When you think back on the best times you can remember from your life, not only will they be pleasant experiences in some way, but they will also almost always involve a lot of comfort. Enjoying a summer's picnic in the park. Waking up from a great night's sleep. Time spent lounging with a loved one. Family meals. Active fun playing with friends. Not all of life's pleasures are healthy experiences, but all of the requirements for healthful living are indeed pleasant to experience. Can you imagine what kind of world we would live in if sex was not pleasant? There would be no humans. During sex, we actually produce hormones that support us feeling good. Mother's milk contains slightly addictive, morphine-like substances known as casomorphins that supports the infant's desires to breastfeed. In a world where physical activity was unpleasant, we would become so unfit as to once again become extinct. We produce our very own "feel good" hormones when we exercise, morphine-like again, but self-produced, known as endorphins. Eating, sleeping, giving, and receiving human touch, in fact, all of the requirements for healthful living are pleasant experiences, or else we simply would not do them. We get feedback from our body, in the form of hormones, to reinforce our repetition of each of these required, healthy activities.

July 14

Improve your self-esteem by increasing your connectedness, uniqueness, power, and role models.

These four areas of life are critical to the natural development of self-esteem: connectedness, uniqueness, power, and role models. Self-esteem, defined as “a realistic respect for or favorable impression of oneself; self-respect,” is an essential character trait for continued personal development. By putting even a little bit of attention on each of these four areas, you put yourself on the right path for the positive emotional growth that is critical to supporting all other healthy progress.

What connections have you developed, and are you willing to seek out new connections? A child comes into the world alone, and quickly develops connections with its family. Soon, friendships arise. We connect via school, religion, sports, hobbies, interests, and in many other ways. Making the effort to connect with others is a worthwhile venture. The isolated or disconnected person, alone in the world, feels lost, unloved, and unaccepted.

Each of us is unique, at least a little bit, but sometimes, in our efforts to fit in and be accepted by others, we forget to develop our uniqueness. Children often tease other children because of their differences (red hair, unusual religion, fatness, skinniness, funny name, intelligence, etc.), but it is this very quality that we look for in our heroes. The fact that someone can sing, act on stage, play a musical instrument, communicate, wear clothing, speak, tell jokes, or do something else completely differently from the way most people do that thing is a criteria for fame. Every famous person is famous, at least in part, because they have developed their uniqueness to such a high degree that their unique qualities stand out.

We are all born with an innate desire to have power over our own lives. The feeling of powerlessness is linked with feelings of hopelessness, despair, and depression. Most of the power we can exert goes unnoticed and is taken for granted. You choose when and how to breathe, what clothing to wear, when and what to eat, how to exercise, and make countless other decisions and actions during the course of each day that clearly demonstrate your wielding of power. Power over yourself, the power to control your thoughts and actions, is the greatest and most valuable power you can hope to develop.

Who do you look up to? Likely there are many people in your life who have qualities that you desire to develop. By utilizing role models to show you how high you can hope to set your standards, you can strive towards your highest ideals. Most people might think that something is impossible (such as running a four-minute mile, air travel, or videophone), but once one person performs that impossible thing, then countless others follow. Associate with your role models in every way that you can, via books, audio, video, and live associations, and they will rub off on you.

Your self-esteem will grow automatically as you learn to be a bit more like the people you look up to, develop your uniqueness, wield your power, and continue to strengthen your connections with others.

July 15

A baby does not judge itself a failure when it fails.

The baby simply tries again, or calmly moves on to the next thing. If any adults happen to be watching, they praise the baby profusely for trying, and encourage the child to try again. Even though they witnessed a failed attempt, the adults teach the baby to speak lovingly to itself.

Failure is not a permanent condition. Although it may not seem so to you at the time, failure is only temporary. Failure provides the stepping stones, the building blocks, and the learning experiences necessary to get that much closer to your eventual success. Like the fighter who gets up off of the canvas in order to continue the fight, or the rider who gets back on his or her mount, the only way to turn failure into a permanent condition is to quit. Failure is temporary. Quitting is permanent, but that is another story entirely.

Imagine an infant, on its back in a cradle, reaching for a bauble that is dangling overhead. The baby misses completely on the first reach. Its eyesight has not yet fully matured, and it has trouble judging distances. Like a dog that chases its own tail thinking it is a foreign object, the baby is not yet fully aware of the functions or range of its own arms and legs. The stereoscopic vision that we as adults take for granted in order to judge depth of field, in fact, even the very concept of judging distance, has yet to develop in the infant. The infant reaches, misses, and then has a thought. Do you think the thought is, “Stupid me, why did I ever even bother trying to reach that hanging thing? In fact, why did I even bother being born?” Does the baby berate itself, get upset, talk negatively to itself, or lose even one moment’s sleep over the missed reach? Of course it does not. If it did, that baby would never learn to crawl, walk, chew, talk, read and write, let alone send a rocket ship to the moon.

Many people are their own worst enemies. When we judge ourselves harshly in our thoughts, even for a moment, EVERY CELL of the body listens in, and reacts. Scientists such as Bruce Lipton have clearly demonstrated that the genetic encoding of every cell is malleable, and that it adapts to our thought processes, as well as to every experience. If you want ideal growth, you must supply ideal SFIC. Negative self-talk does not count as ideal SFIC. You must believe in yourself, even when things seem to be turning for the worst. You are either building your health or destroying it with every thought.

July 16

**When it comes to lifestyle, knowledge, and skills,
we are all proficient at some things, less talented at other things,
and almost completely ignorant about most things.**

What opportunities life brings us! We find activities that we enjoy, practice them, and get better at them. As we improve at specific things, gaining insights and awareness of the finer points and nuances involved, we often find that we enjoy these activities even more. The increased enjoyment fosters dedication and greater time commitments to our preferred activities, resulting in even further improvements. The cycle tends to continually spiral upwards, with participation, enjoyment, skill, and talent all increasing and supporting each of the others. For the people who are masters at a skill, even the smallest improvement is difficult to achieve, and often requires massive amounts of time and energy.

The vast majority of things we know very little about, or perhaps we have at best a passing knowledge. When asked about these activities, we respond that we are not very good at them, or we don't very much enjoy them. The downward spiral effect takes hold from there. We perform said activities infrequently, managing them with even less talent and skill than in the past, and thus enjoy them less than we used to. Less enjoyment leads to still diminished participation and even further loss of ability. Soon, we avoid the activity entirely, stating either that we are simply not very good at it, or we really do not enjoy it. The potential to do better is vast, and with a relatively small investment of time and focus, huge improvements can be noted.

Yet, it is in those areas that we know nothing at all about that we stand to make the most progress, in the shortest amount of time, and with the absolute least effort. Think how much you can learn about a subject you know nothing about, and how quickly you can be exposed to such knowledge and develop basic skills. Often enough, we discover newfound "favorite" activities into which we can invest our energies, converting areas of minimal proficiency into areas we consider strengths and favorites.

Learning is such a joy, and for adults, learning is one of the few areas of growth left wide open, making learning one of the most beneficial and rewarding of all activities. Many people think that improving their strengths will benefit them the most, but developing the weak areas of lifestyle, knowledge, and skill will invariably yield the most benefit for the least effort.

July 17

The more body fat you carry, the more dehydrated you become.

We see a lot of hype about staying hydrated these days. The current generic recommendation for men to drink at least 12 glasses and for women to drink at least eight glasses of water daily is essentially an open admission from the medical establishment that the Standard American Diet (SAD) is at least that much deficient in this vital nutrient. Yet this recommendation is a clear case of treating the symptoms without ever actually correcting the problem. Hygienic philosophy dictates that we are always better to correct the problem rather than simply treating the symptoms.

An average adult is typically about 60 percent water by weight, but athletes or people with larger than average muscles can be up to 70 percent water. Our water balance is quite finely tuned. We tend not to experience the conscious sensation of thirst until we approach a 3 percent loss in body water, but mental and physical performance is compromised by the time we have lost even 1 percent of our water weight.

One of the main symptoms of dehydration is tiredness, often crippling tiredness. Such tiredness makes it much less likely that a dehydrated person is going to be physically active, especially when compared to a well-hydrated person. Chronic dehydration is often listed as one of the major causes of chronic fatigue, and is also associated with a wide range of other degenerative conditions.

Muscles carry almost 75 percent water by weight, whereas fat is usually only 5 percent water by weight. This huge discrepancy makes for some interesting numbers that can seriously affect our health when we consider the relationship of body fat to body water. Essentially, for every 10 percent increase in body fat, there is an accompanying 7 percent decrease in “percent body water.” Women typically carry at least 10 percent more body fat than men, and have about 7 percent lower percent body water as a result.

Increases in body fat make physical exertions more challenging. While we rarely see obese people out exercising, and might attribute that fact to the possibility that they would feel self-conscious, the reality is that when you carry around a few hundred extra pounds, you simply do not have the energy to exercise. Extremely heavy people barely have the energy to walk to the car, let alone go out to exercise. One client told me that when she was at her heaviest, she tended to sit all day long. She said that she considered getting out of a chair and walking across the room to another chair as her “exercise” for the day.

By the time we combine the sheer muscular effort caused by obesity with the resulting dehydration lethargy, it should become easy to see that carrying excess body fat is to be avoided. The solution: *The 80/10/10 Diet*. The low caloric density of fruits and vegetables combined with their generous water and nutrient content provides everything we need from our food in order to manage weight, hydration, and all other aspects of general health having to do with our food.

July 18

When you eat well, thirst is a relatively uncommon experience.

First, admittedly, there are a huge number of possible extenuating circumstances that negate today's thought, or at least that qualify as exceptions. Altitude, extreme heat, endurance, or high-intensity training, high humidity, and many other possible scenarios exist that can quickly drive us to extreme thirst. Even so, such living situations are not the norm, and can easily be compensated for by drinking sufficient quantities of water to replace whatever water is lost.

Fruits and vegetables are the two food groups from which juice is commonly extracted, specifically because of their high water concentration. When we eat fruits and vegetables in sufficient quantities to meet our calorie needs, we generally also meet most, if not all, of our water needs. How cool is that?! Nature provided us with the ability to drink water, but did not make this faculty one for which we are well-suited, leaving us to speculate on whether drinking water is a natural process for humans.

Many types of animals are much better suited to drinking water than we are. For instance, horses and similar animals have long snouts, and can suck water in large quantities. Dogs and cats have tongues designed to easily lap up all the water they need. In both examples, the creatures mentioned do not have to put their faces into the water, and while drinking, their eyes are far enough from the water's surface that they can easily see about them in order to look out for predators or other potential dangers. For humans to drink from a pond or other natural water source, we have to put our faces almost completely into the water, blinding ourselves and putting our posteriors into a very vulnerable position. Yes, we could learn some other method for drinking, such as forming a cup with our hands or a leaf, sponging water and then sucking it off of the sponge, or finding some other way of obtaining our water, but all of these options represent rather advanced intellect.

The creatures built very much like us, the anthropoid apes, including the gorillas, gibbons, chimpanzees, bonobos, and the orangutans are not notoriously known to be consumers of large quantities of water. This comes as no surprise, as these creatures thrive on a diet made up primarily of fruits and vegetables, and, like us, they do not have the facial structure that makes it easy or safe to drink from the water's edge. Our physiology supports our anatomy in not being huge water drinkers. While physical and mental performances are adversely affected when we lose water equal to even one percent of our body weight, we do not tend to experience thirst until we lose about 3 percent of our body weight in water. This apparent discrepancy clearly demonstrates that our need for water is not designed to be as acute as our need for food. Stated another way, we are designed to obtain most of our water from our food.

July 19

**Think health, see health, expect health,
grow health, and live in health.**

In order to harvest and accumulate health, we must be willing to plant the seeds of health. We must nurture the seeds, providing them with all of the support they require in order to germinate, grow, thrive, and produce a crop. Simply pulling weeds and spraying herbicide will not result in a crop of vegetables. The vegetables must be planted, nurtured, nourished, protected, and provided for. We do not cause health by fighting disease. Declaring war on cancer and obesity has not resulted in improved health for anyone. Health is not caused by preventing illness and injury, two practices that have gained great public support. Health is the natural outcome of healthful living, and the persistent following of healthful living practices.

Think Health: Wherever you are and whatever you are doing, ask yourself if there is a healthier way. A practice as simple as opening a window and getting some fresh air can make a huge difference to your overall health. Giving yourself the gift of getting to sleep 30 minutes earlier than usual could leave you feeling like a new person.

See Health: Notice the way people do what they do, and ask yourself if you want to follow in their footsteps, or if there might be a healthier way. When it comes to sports, more people spectate than participate, but the participants are the healthier ones. Is it a healthy practice to wait in your car for three minutes in order to get the parking spot nearest your destination, or would you be better to park two minutes from the building and walk to and from your goal?

Expect Health: Every cell of your body is listening and responding to every thought you have. You are either building health or destroying health every moment with every thought and every action. You are creating your reality, inventing the future, pre-incarnating yourself. Your thoughts affect your posture, your dreams, the way people interact with you, and even how you will interact with yourself in the future.

Grow Health: If you wish to harvest carrots, you must first plant carrots. If you hope to have a healthy life, to experience the wonderful outcome of health accumulation, you must plant the seeds of health in every thought, action, and deed. Healthful living is not some repugnant penalty that must be paid in order to have any hope of improving some far-off future part of your life. Healthful living practices are pleasant and rewarding—they provide instant, as well as long-term, gratification.

Live in Health: We live in a world filled with endless choices, and equally as many factors that are completely beyond our control. You cannot choose your heredity, or erase anything you have done in the past, but you have full control over your present lifestyle choices. Tens of thousands of studies have proven irrefutably that lifestyle, specifically diet and exercise, can add life to your years and as many as 20 or more healthy years to your life.

July 20

**The kidneys, liver, colon, and lungs quietly do their jobs,
accomplishing the ordinary tasks of elimination
while barely being noticed.**

When the body is functioning within normal limits, we have very few ways of perceiving or recognizing that anything is happening in our insides at all. For example, unless something goes very wrong, you cannot tell that your pancreas is doing whatever it is that a pancreas does. Unless your nose hurts, itches, a bug lands on it, or something of that sort, you simply cannot tell you even have a nose. Even though, of course, your sense of smell is functioning, you sense smell in your brain, not in your nose. Most of the time, we do not feel our bones, our cartilage, or most of the remainder of the body at all. You can contract your various muscles, but you do not really feel them inside your body, unless they hurt or ache in some way.

Until only a few hundred years ago, most humans had almost no idea at all what was inside their bodies. Even as late as 1980, medical doctors still taught that there were organs of the body that had no direct nerve communication with the brain, an error that has been since corrected.

Most people go through their entire lives without ever noticing their kidneys or their liver. When we are eating correctly, we never notice our colon either. As long as we stay healthy, our lungs work so perfectly that we actually have no way to tell that they exist at all. What an amazing system!

If these ordinary organs of detoxification become overloaded, however, symptoms crop up. Foul breath, skin eruptions, abnormalities in the urine, and any number of possible inconveniences with fecal elimination are usually among the first telltale signs that at least one of the major eliminative organs is being overloaded. When all is going according to plan, the body has the chance to fully recover each night from all of the substances, forces, influences, and conditions experienced the previous day. But when we do not fully recover, a backlog begins to accrue. Vital reserves are utilized, resulting in reduced overall vitality. Function is then invariably compromised in some way or another.

July 21

**Extra ordinary means of elimination become necessary
when the ordinary modes of elimination are overloaded
to the point of being insufficient to the task.**

The processes of elimination of waste and toxic matter from the body are greatly misunderstood. For most people, when we talk about detoxification, no clear images or processes come to mind, and only grey clouds appear. Perhaps it is this very lack of clarity that leaves so many people vulnerable to the endless hucksterism that revolves around the selling of detox products, programs, and retreats. The body constantly and continuously generates metabolic wastes, which are the byproducts of its own cellular function. These waste materials are eliminated from the cells into the extra-cellular fluids, where they are picked up by the lymphatic system for delivery to the bloodstream. Once in the blood, they pass through the liver and kidneys. Most of the solid and some of the chemical waste is filtered via the kidneys, and is eliminated through the urine. Excess amounts of nutrients, such as Vitamin C and potassium, are eliminated by the kidneys. The remainder of the waste is chemically transformed and neutralized by the liver, unless these two organs are overloaded beyond their ability to keep up with what is being asked of them.

When we eat our food, not everything in the food can be utilized for nourishment. Some parts of the food will not be digested, and will not be absorbed for utilization. This waste must be eliminated, as feces. Particulate matter in the air enters the lungs with every breath, is trapped in mucus and eliminated, either by coughing and spitting or by swallowing. Gaseous waste is also eliminated with every exhalation.

Each of these processes represents the completely normal and ordinary methods of elimination utilized by the body. Overload the ordinary eliminative channels, and the body will turn to auxiliary methods for elimination of waste, such as the congestion of mucus membranes, hemorrhage of blood, skin eruptions, boils, alterations of blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and temperature, and any of countless other means. While the sufferer of extraordinary eliminative processes may be of the opinion that the symptoms are truly extraordinary, in reality the body is simply calling upon normal and natural built-in backup functions that let us know that the capacities of our ordinary modes of elimination have been exceeded.

July 22

**In preparation for ovulation,
the body must cleanse the blood.**

Menstruation results in the creation of vast numbers of healthy new blood cells. OK, OK, we are admittedly talking about a cycle, and cycles do not have clearly delineated beginnings and endings. Fine. But in order to define the entire cycle, we must start somewhere, and then follow the processes until we get back to our starting point, which we arbitrarily define as the “beginning” of the cycle. Most people focus on the fact that large quantities of blood are lost during the menstrual cycle as a result of the egg not being fertilized. They reason that unused tissue is sloughed off, and along with it comes menstrual bleeding. Thus, they refer to the menses, the periodic flow of blood and mucosal tissue from the uterus, as the beginning of the menstrual cycle, and for diagnostic purposes (as well as to prevent unnecessary risk from X-ray or other radiation), doctors often mark time from the date of a woman’s last period.

From a hygienic perspective, and from a classic anatomical view, unnecessary and uncontrollable bleeding is not a healthy sign. Far better is the idea that the body monitors and gauges the quality and cleanliness of the blood, and takes whatever steps are necessary in order to provide the most pristine environment for what could possibly be a newly fertilized egg, even to the point of generating hemorrhagic blood loss as a form of detoxification. Not only will blood-borne toxins be removed from the body via menstrual bleeding, resulting in vastly cleaner blood, but the new red blood cells that develop to replace the lost old ones will have a far better oxygen-carrying capacity, making them much more functional. Cleaner blood coupled with high-vitality red blood cells makes for a much better environment for a fertilized egg, and greatly enhances the fetus’s chances for survival.

According to the esteemed anatomist Dr. Virginia Mayo, creator of many of the questions used by the National Medical Board for their anatomy examination of prospective doctors, a healthy woman’s menses should be comprised of no blood, “or perhaps one drop,” and made up of an insignificant quantity of mucus, “perhaps a thimbleful or two.” “The woman should essentially not be able to tell that she is having her menses.” There is no true anatomical reason why blood should be lost when the mucosal membrane is sloughed from the uterine wall, as the blood could just as easily be resorbed before the excess tissues are discarded.

Whereas, traditionally, most people think of a woman ovulating and then menstruating if the egg is not fertilized, anatomists often think of menstruation preceding ovulation, as a method of preparing and readying the body for the possibility of pregnancy.

Either way, the cycle is a cycle, with no beginning and no ending. Hopefully if you think about the menstrual cycle now, it makes more sense to think of bleeding as a detoxification, a readying process, rather than one of senseless and uncontrollable hemorrhaging.

July 23

Guys have hormonal cycles and emotions, too.

Though they are not typically in touch with them in almost any way, men are affected by their hormones, and do actually go through several different hormonal cycles. The male cycles are quite different from the female hormonal cycle. Men experience several different cycles, each of which is primarily related to the production of testosterone. Testosterone production typically rises and falls at least several times during each hour of the day, and a guy's moods can be affected as a result. Throughout the course of the day, testosterone production tends to ebb and flow as well, being highest early in the morning and lowest towards the end of the evening. The male monthly cycle is difficult to track, and tends to be unique for each individual. The best one can do in the hope of being aware of the monthly cyclic trends is to keep track of emotions and moods. Men even experience seasonal lows and highs, with testosterone production typically peaking in November, and being lowest in April. The male equivalent of menopause is known as "Andropause," and typically affects men between the ages of 40-55. Noted psychotherapist and author Jed Diamond brings to light yet another male cycle as he discusses the "Irritable Male Syndrome" in his book by the same name.

Gabrielle Lichterman, founder of "Hormonology," goes into some depth when discussing the typical male's experience and reactions to his daily hormonal cycle in her online "Hormone Horoscope." She suggests that testosterone levels affect practically all aspects of how a man feels throughout the day. For example, in the morning, when a man's testosterone level is highest, is also when a man will feel most focused, energetic, and confident, as well as most aware of his desire for sex, yet is also the time of day when he is most likely to respond to requests with a "no" response. Lichterman says you are more likely to get a "yes" from a man late in the day, or into the evening, when testosterone levels are lowest.

While hormone production affects mood and behavior, the natural daily testosterone cycle is affected by a man's activities, and even by his thoughts. Competition of almost any kind, action movies, and sports will all result in a rise in testosterone levels. Win a game and testosterone skyrockets and with it mental outlook. A loss will result in an immediate drop in testosterone level, and an accompanying depression and lethargy will generally follow.

Men are not at all aware of their hormonal cycles (generally), nor do they tend to ever keep track of their emotions, behavior, or mood swings. They also do not ever credit their hormones for affecting their feelings, being essentially oblivious to this entire aspect of life and its relationship to how they feel. Men are out of touch with hormonal cycles, making it easier to understand why guys tend to have a rather blunted awareness of their feelings and emotions. So ladies, go easy on your man, as he does not really know what is happening inside of him.

July 24

The laws of nature do not allow for someone who is perfectly healthy today to drop dead tonight.

Throughout the centuries, primarily due to a lack of sufficient knowledge that resulted in an inability to understand the actual science behind various phenomena, humans have clung to some bizarre and sometimes downright crazy ideas. We are almost all aware of a few of these ideas, such as the misnomer of a flat earth, an earth with edges from which one could sail or fall off, and the geocentric idea that the earth is the center of the universe, but there are countless others:

- Spontaneous generation
- Heroin sold as a cough suppressant
- Drapetomania (a theoretical mental illness that caused slaves to flee captivity)
- Divine rights
- Dysaesthesia aethiopica (an alleged mental illness that caused laziness among slaves)
- Lobotomy (to cure depression)
- Bloodletting
- Phlogiston (the combustible portion of every combustible item)
- Mercury used as a cure-all
- The four humours
- Electroshock “therapy”
- Urine therapy (including urine enema)
- Tobacco smoke enema
- Tapeworm egg tablets and amphetamines sold for weight loss
- The Island of California
- Trepanation (a hole bored into the skull to let out evil spirits)
- Alchemy
- The world ice theory

- The concept that the plow brings the rain

These were just a few of the one-time dearly held beliefs and practices that have been disproven. Check the internet for hundreds of examples, lists, and explanations.

Even today, many people still cling to outdated and unfounded beliefs. A saying heard all too often, upon hearing of the “untimely” death of a friend or loved one is, “Gosh, I just saw him/her a few days ago, and s/he seemed to be in perfect health.” People in perfect health simply do not suddenly drop dead. Imagine a lovely field, filled with grasses, trees, and a wide variety of plants and animals. Imagine that these plants and animals are all thriving, all “perfectly healthy.” And then imagine how many laws of nature would have to be broken in order for everything in that field to simply drop dead, without having been exposed to even a single moribund cause. Such a thing simply would not, and simply could not, happen.

Hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, osteoporosis, obstructive sleep apnea, heart disease, breast cancer, lung cancer, mesothelioma, colon cancer, rectal cancer, aneurysm, arrhythmias, carbon monoxide poisoning, and even Alzheimer’s are among the many conditions that make the list known as the “silent killers.” Silent killers are deadly conditions that seemingly sneak up on us without giving us the myriad warning symptoms we have come to associate with our understanding that “something is wrong.” By not providing copious clues, these lethal ailments oftentimes progress beyond the point of no return before they are addressed at all. In some cases, the patient eventually discovers his ailment, and lives with the reality for a relatively short time. In many instances, however, death is sudden, and the person dies at the first clue that something is amiss.

Only in dreamland can we expect health to be the outcome of a life filled with unhealthy habits. According to Dr. Greg Fitzgerald, “There has only been one diet EVER which has been shown to scientifically halt and reverse coronary plaque in arteries of people suffering severe heart disease (atherosclerosis), and that is the vegan diet (no animals whatsoever).” Stack the lifestyle cards in your favor for protection against all the silent killers by following the tenets of *The 80/10/10 Diet*.

July 25

**Practice the causes of health
and forego the causes of sickness.**

Sick people usually get well, without even trying, without any conscious awareness or effort to do so. Getting well is what we do, and we are in the process of doing so all the time. From a moment in time more than 11 months before birth, your mother's egg, the one that eventually grew and developed into you, has been responding to the SFIC to which it was subjected, constantly gaining or losing health and vitality as a result. When you were little, every bump, bruise, scratch, and cut healed itself. You recovered from every cold, cough, infection, illness, allergic response, insect bite, and plant or chemical irritation. When you ate too much or ate the wrong foods, when you drank alcohol, smoked cigarettes, took recreational or prescription drugs, over-trained, or under slept, you recovered and got well. Every aspect of our bodily functions is geared towards instituting the highest level of health possible. Getting well is automatic for us, the default status.

People get well in spite of themselves. People who smoke tobacco hourly and drink alcohol daily get well, although perhaps not as quickly as health enthusiasts do so. People on the worst diets, the most unhealthy diets, get well and function just fine, though admittedly they live lives that are on average 10-20 percent shorter than vegetarians and vegans, respectively. Absolutely sedentary couch potatoes get well, but fit folks admittedly tend to have considerably more energy. The body's sole purpose seems to be so single-mindedly focused on optimal functionality that even the slightest improvements in the SFIC results in improved health. In fact, we do not even have to institute better health care practices or procedures—nor do we have to make changes in our lifestyle, such as taking up jogging or developing new favorite foods—in order to see our health improve. All we really need to do is reduce the amount of negative and health-destroying SFIC to which we subject ourselves. Most people notice huge improvements in health if they cut the number of cigarettes they smoke in half, or if they reduce their consumption of pizza, coffee, doughnuts, fries, and other junk food calories by even 25 percent. Often, we give credit for improved health to the food, exercise, meditation, or some other SFIC we have recently adopted into our lifestyle, when really what allowed the body to successfully demonstrate its ability to get well was the simple elimination of harmful SFIC.

The simplest way of demonstrating the power of the body to get well is by the mere fact that as bad as we may feel by the end of a day, after a night of sleep we awaken and feel much better. When a person fasts, perhaps taking just a few days of complete rest, stopping all food intake, and drinking solely water, the rise in level of health experienced is usually magnificent. Some people might credit the fast for the improvement in health. Others might credit the cessation of the health-destroying SFIC. Either way, we can clearly show that it is not the positive lifestyle SFIC that gets us well, but that it is the body that generates its own improved health, every time.

July 26

The real trick to healthful living is to develop and embrace healthy habits so powerfully that they become ingrained, at which point you can live healthfully without ever having to think about doing so.

Developing healthy habits takes very little time. In fact, developing healthy habits takes exactly no more time than developing unhealthy habits. Time is not the issue. The issue is deciding what you really want out of your life, because you will ALWAYS go after that which you want most. A client came to me once for guidance on how to lose weight. She agreed to all of my suggestions and said she would follow them for a week and then return. When she came back, she said, "I tried to follow your suggestions, but while I was driving my car, someone grabbed the wheel from me, steered the car into a fast food place, and ordered a big bucket of fried chicken and all the fixings." She later confirmed that she was alone in the car! Look to your actions if you want to know what you really want, for only your actions will take you where you most want to go. People are very good at saying one thing and doing another. How many times have you heard people say, "I'm going to write a book"? Those books do not get written. Talk is cheap.

According to the experts, habit development is easy, and takes very little time. If you want to develop healthy habits, start living healthfully. After a very short time, healthful living becomes automatic, second nature. You will not have to think about living healthfully at all.

Or, you could just make excuses:

"Being healthy is just too much work."

"Making my own food from scratch takes too much time."

"I don't like to exercise, it just seems like work."

"I could never exercise like you do."

"I could never eat like you do."

"I could never give up eating meat."

"You must spend all day exercising."

"You must spend all day in the kitchen."

"You must spend all day on the toilet."

"You must spend all day reading."

“You must spend all day working on your health.”

Making excuses seems like work to me. I would rather spend my time getting things done.

Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933), the 13th President of the United States, is credited for saying:

Nothing in the world can take the place of Persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and Determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan, “Press On,” has solved and will always solve the problems of the human race.

July 27

**The weakest areas of your health regimen
determine your overall level of health.**

Twenty people decide to set the world record for running one mile while holding hands. Running as a group, committed to functioning together with each other, they simply cannot run faster than the slowest person. If the fastest person in the group develops the ability to run even faster, it does not help the group run faster by even one second. In order to get the entire group running faster, we need to improve the speed of the slowest member of the group.

An entire space shuttle goes down in flames, at the cost of millions of dollars and claiming many lives, all because of a faulty “O” ring. Many buildings have fallen, countless bridges have failed, endless accidents occur, and billions of products are recalled simply due to one weak link. An injury to a toe can easily stop a grown man from participating in professional sports.

Many people enjoy becoming really good at one sport, but while they do so, they often become far worse at activities requiring other aspects of fitness. Flexible people practice and emphasize their flexibility, while not putting much attention on building muscular strength. Sprinters can be astonishingly fleet of foot, but are notorious for being poor regarding their flexibility. Bodybuilders and weightlifters are big and strong, but typically have poor cardio, and generally they do not swim well either. Each physique type comes with specific advantages and disadvantages, in terms of performance. The question of whether you try to become well rounded in your abilities or whether you highlight the attributes of your physique remains your choice.

- “Other than his heart, he was perfectly healthy.”
- “If it hadn’t been for the diabetes, she could have lived a long life.”
- “He was a great athlete, with tremendous talent. Too bad about the drug problem.”
- “She could have gone far in this business. She was one of the best, had a great head for figures, but her lack of social grace was her downfall.”
- “He had a brilliant mind, but he ruined it with alcohol.”
- “He was the best athlete this school ever had, AND he was class president, with a perfect 4.0 average. Now he’s obese, has heart disease and diabetes, and is losing his life to prostate cancer.”
- “Until she became crippled by osteoporosis, she was totally on top of her game.”
- “If he’d been wearing safety goggles, that accident would never have blinded him.”

- “He was doing really well in the race, leading through most of it and looking like he was going to win the gold, until he dropped from dehydration.”

Keep developing your weak areas, rather than ignoring them and they will get stronger, rather than continually becoming weaker. The neatest part of working on your weaknesses is that they develop and show progress more rapidly and in many ways more rewardingly than working on strengths can ever be. By developing your weakest areas, your overall health and performance will improve dramatically, making your efforts seem all the more worthwhile.

July 28

Learn to handle personal health questions with poise.

Not surprisingly, this double-edged sword can be rather challenging to handle. Looking out for the feelings of others while making sure that your own needs are met can be complicated. You do not want to be brutal, mean, or unfriendly, yet when your cousin's husband, the nutritionist, starts asking you why you eat the way you do, what do you say? He considers himself to be an expert, after all, and he is family, trying to be helpful, when he starts telling you what you should do. Whether you choose to simply be a good listener, or to use tact, diversion, humor, or your need for privacy to deflect the situation in a direction you are comfortable with, you must be willing to take personal responsibility for how the conversation flows, and the direction it goes. Are the feelings of others more important to you than your own feelings? Are you the host at this gathering, or a guest? Who else is listening in, and who is watching you? You can choose from any of countless strategies to diffuse what could otherwise turn into a very passionate and all-too-heated conversation. Remember, however, that you are under no obligation to answer your friend's queries at all, unless you want to. You could just change the subject. Or you might respond with a question of your own. You do not have to refute what the other person says, you could just listen and nod, and say something such as, "Thanks for your thoughts, that's really helpful," when they are done. You do not have to make a commitment to action. You could say something funny, or you could agree to work on the issues pointed out to you, and you could query as to whether the other person is willing to work on the issues you point out to him/her. Remember to enjoy yourself.

Being a force for good in the lives of others takes many forms. You could just quietly set a good example, not engage anyone, and let your actions speak louder than your words. After all, you have assumed the role of the health enthusiast, and are probably the leader in that field among your entire social group. You know people are watching you, even when you are not aware of them watching. Some people watch you in order to learn, some watch to disprove you in order to justify their own beliefs and actions, and some watch solely for the childish "fun" of trying to discredit you, usually as a means of gaining attention. Let your success be your lesson, and let your health be your last word.

No matter how you choose to handle each situation, remember to do so in a way that builds relationships, rather than harming them. The old adage that you catch more flies with honey than vinegar has never been truer than when applied to a conversation about food. People are attached to the way they eat, and people always prefer to be right. No one likes to be made fun of, or to feel unintelligent. However you handle the conversation, think how you would like to be treated, and see if you can convey your message without making the other person feel blatantly wrong or stupid. "I know how you feel, and I used to think the exact same thing, but let me tell you what I found out," opens a lot more doors than, "You are wrong, and you are stupid for thinking what you do" ever could.

July 29

How do you react when asked a question about your health regimen?

Oh, the possibilities are endless. According to noted author Malcolm Gladwell, in his bestselling book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, the first few seconds during and immediately after a question is asked, and in most instances, the first few nanoseconds, supply sufficient information in order for the questioner to determine, at least in his/her own mind, the true nature and intent of your response. When decisions are made in fractions of a second, they are on a subliminal level, but the awareness is there, nonetheless. What messages do you convey to your questioner?

- ❖ Do you get defensive? A defensive tone and posture is a clear message of weakness, and could launch a full-on attack from someone that had been asking a purely innocent question out of naïve curiosity.
- ❖ Do you preempt a possible attack by making an attack of your own? An attack will shut down any possibility of having a friendly conversation about a subject that is obviously dear to your heart, and could even damage all future communications and interactions.
- ❖ Do you respond calmly, just answering the question, and hoping for (no) more? People are perceptive. Using a friendly tone and demeanor could serve to open the door to further questions, whereas a neutral tone could be sufficient to close that same door.
- ❖ Do you treat the questioner respectfully? Your words are only a very small part of your total response.
- ❖ Do you pause to gather your thoughts before responding? A pause before responding could be interpreted in different ways, depending upon the situation and the rest of your body language, but a short pause usually is interpreted to mean that you are thinking, and taking the query seriously.
- ❖ Do you smile first, and talk second? Conveying friendliness is important, if you want the conversation to continue. If you want the line of questioning to end, or you would prefer that the questioner just go away, your facial expression can be enough to get your message across.
- ❖ Do you stop to consider, to really think about where the other person is coming from? If the person is someone you know, someone you care about, you probably have some insight into the purpose behind the question. Your response needs to demonstrate that awareness. If you have never met the person before, use all the clues you can find to help you understand the intention behind the question. If you have to ask questions before answering, you are free to do so.

- ❖ Do you try to control your body language? Body language, scientifically known as “kinesics,” is used by everyone, to some degree. We both give and receive body language messages. Some body language is automatic, but some can be learned and controlled, in order to convey specific messages to the receiver. Learning about how facial expression, body postures, gestures, handshakes, and other physical movements convey messages is a valuable pursuit.
- ❖ Do you utilize a pleasant tone in your voice, or is your response sharp? Your tone can be a more powerful conveyer of your message than your actual words.
- ❖ Do you use humor and lightheartedness to soften the message implied in your response? There are times when humor is inappropriate, and times when humor is the perfect icebreaker. Choose to use your humor wisely.
- ❖ Do you ask further questions, in order to better understand the nature and purpose of the question? Oftentimes, asking clarifying questions can be the perfect sign of respect. Most people are extremely sincere with the questions they ask.
- ❖ Do you make assumptions? Acting like a know-it-all, or assuming you know more than the person asking you questions, is almost always a surefire plan for failure.
- ❖ Do you take affront to the question, or feel as if your privacy has been invaded? You can learn a lot about yourself from the questions asked of you, and a lot more from the way you answer them. Sometimes, questions are just what you need to stimulate further self-improvement activities.
- ❖ Do you get to the root of the question? Responding is easy, but actually responding to the intent of the questions with meaningful content is an art form.
- ❖ Do you want time to consider your response? You could respond with any of the following:
 - “I’d like to think about your question. Can I get back to you later with a reply?”
 - “That’s a good question, I’m really glad you asked it. Now isn’t the right time to talk about this.”
 - “I’d really enjoy getting together with you another time to specifically discuss this issue in depth, if you are interested.”
- ❖ Do you want to know if the questioner is a possible business lead? “I consult professionally on topics such as this. Would you like to schedule a consult at my office, during business hours?”

July 30

Develop a nonthreatening personality.

Friends do not threaten or feel threatened by each other. Friends talk openly, and are willing to listen in depth. Your friend might not be ready to try whatever you try, and might even think it foolish or dangerous, but a friend will support you and your efforts. Even while expressing concerns, a friend will help you in your efforts to succeed. Friendships cease being friendships when threats are introduced.

For people who do not know you well enough to call you a friend, such as an acquaintance, someone with whom you have a business or social relationship, or someone who has only just recently met you, the fact that you are different can be threatening in itself, because awareness of the differences makes people question their own choices. Such questioning can make many people feel uncomfortable, or even make them feel judged. Some people have thinner skin than others, and we all feel vulnerable some of the time.

No one enjoys being judged harshly. Imagine being asked, “What did you do to your hair?” If a friend asks this question, you might hear a compliment and reply, “Oh, I just had it done. I’m so glad you like it.” An acquaintance asks, and you might hear a relatively neutral question, and ask in return, “Thanks for noticing, do you like it?” If someone who thinks s/he is in a position to look down upon you asks the same question, you might hear it as an insult or a criticism and respond harshly, perhaps even saying something that you might regret later. No one likes to be accused unjustly, and being so accused can bring out the worst in a person.

I care about people, and I care how they treat themselves and others, but I do not judge them, and certainly do not rate (or berate) them based upon the standards I set for myself. Once, when walking up a long driveway to attend an outdoor, covered-dish garden party, a friend of mine, who was also a patient, was walking down the drive from the party to her car, carrying a paper plate filled with food. When she recognized me, her face lit up. Then she remembered the food, and held it behind her back as if to hide it, before walking up to me to chat. I could tell how strongly this woman did not want me to judge her harshly for her food choices. I will forever remember this occurrence, because it really drove home how much I needed to develop my nonthreatening side. The thing was, I did not care what food she ate, but she thought I did, and that mattered the most.

If you wish to raise people’s awareness of lifestyle and health matters, set the example you would want someone to set for you. Show them your success in the way you comport yourself. Make people wonder what that special secret you know is that makes you glow, and be so vibrant. Many people say they could not eat the 80/10/10, low-fat, raw vegan way. Befriend them, and show them that 80/10/10 is quite possible and well worth the effort. For many decades, the four-minute mile was considered impossible, until Roger Bannister ran a 3:59.4 in 1954. Two months later, Roger ran a sub-four minute mile again, this time alongside John Landy, who also finished in sub-four. A decade later, Jim Ryun ran his first sub-four minute mile as a high school junior! Currently, more than 1000 different men have run a sub-four

minute mile, some of them having done so on more than 100 separate occasions. In 1999, Hicham El Guerrouj of Morocco ran the current world record of 3:43:13, and it too is considered breakable today. Once people know something can be done, they also strive to do it, but better.

July 31

**Raw! Raw! Raw! That's the spirit!
Gooooooooooooooooooooo Raw!**

Three cheers for the winners! For all of time, every lifeform on Earth has consumed a 100 percent raw diet, until, that is, man experimented with cooked food and intervened in the natural diet of humankind and those animals (and plants and microbes) willing to accept cooked food from us. When life began here, an estimated 3.6 billion years ago, and since animals first appeared, roughly 600 million years ago, every lifeform has consumed and thrived on a raw food diet. Primates have been on Earth for 60 million years, great apes (the family Hominidae) for 20 million years, and humans (the genus Homo) have been around for almost 3 million years. Anatomically modern humans have existed for the last 200,000 years or more. The theory that cooking resulted in the massive anatomical shifts resulting in the doubling of the human brain is difficult to prove, as the earliest records of man using fire, for any purpose at all, go back only about one million years. We can find records of man from three million years ago, but no records of his use of fire. For how many millennia would people have had to cook their food before such activity sparked a genetic change? Most paleontologists say such evolutionary changes could take one million years, give or take half a million, depending upon a huge number of factors (known as pressures). While humans can adapt in some ways to the pressures of cooked foods, we can only adapt down (devolve) to the pressures, such as nutrient derangement, mutagen and carcinogen production, and anti-nutrient generation produced by cooking food. To date, there is no evidence that eating cooked food makes us better or smarter in any way.

Fruits and vegetables have always been recognized as the natural foods of man, and the healthiest choices when it comes to food. Archeological dental evidence clearly demonstrates that early man was predominantly a fruit and leaf eater, if not totally so. Even today, in a time when eating cooked food has become practically normal for most people, raw fruits and vegetables are still recognized as the best sources of the nutrients we need in order to be healthy. There are almost no credible health or nutrition authorities that do not recognize the fact that raw fruits and vegetables are essential keys to a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Cheer for fruit, hurrah for veggies! These noble foods are the mainstay of every healthy diet.

AUGUST

Strive to become the person that the child you were would have been proud to be.

Do you remember looking up to people you wanted to grow up to be like, when you were a child? Did you have idols, heroes, role models, and people you wanted to emulate? Such modeling and mimicking is very important for our development, and is a practice worth continuing into adulthood.

Perhaps the person you admired was only a year or two older than you, or maybe a full decade. Maybe s/he had some aspect of physical development you desired, such as broad shoulders, good posture, straight hair, or clear skin. Perhaps the person demonstrated the leadership capabilities, or the quick wit, or the talent in sports that you wished you had. For some reason, you knew you wanted what they had. Something about the person really was attractive to you. Some feature was alluring. You decided to do whatever it took to develop that trait.

Two routes exist to grow into the person you wish to become. One way is to associate with the people who have what you want. Read their books, listen to their audio and video programs, and attend their seminars and retreats in order to soak up as much as possible. Essentially, just spend time with them and they will rub off on you. You will pick up tidbits of knowledge, learn tricks of the trade, gain skills, and get into the mindset of the person you wish to learn from. You will even benefit by spending time with the other people who also wish to learn from your mentor, especially those who have already spent time learning from him/her, who have essentially become disciples.

The second way to become more like the people you look up to, to gain the skills that they have mastered, is to do what they do. The old maxim, "If I do what you do, I'll get what you get," is still very true today. If a basketball player or a pianist does specific drills in order to develop specific skills, you will develop those same skills by doing those same drills. People who have become masters at almost anything have done so by putting in the necessary practice, the necessary hours, and the necessary focus. "You must do what you have to do, in order to get what you want to get."

Hold yourself to the very highest standards possible so that you can maintain and develop your self-image. Hold onto your childhood dreams of becoming really good at whatever you do, and throw yourself into your efforts with enthusiasm. Become the person that others can look up to, so that they can hope to someday be like you.

August 1

Play as much as you can.

Alan W. Watts, British philosopher and the man primarily responsible for introducing Eastern philosophy to Western culture, said, “This is the real secret of life—to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play.” Perspective, at least in this case, is everything. If you were real about it, however, would you mind working a whole lot less, if you thought of it as play?

In an odd but somewhat predictable twist, Maria Montessori, one of the world’s all-time foremost authorities on educating children said, “Play is the work of the child.” Children throw themselves wholeheartedly into their play, to the point of being unwilling to tolerate interruptions. Adults cannot seem to focus on their work anywhere near as well as children focus on play. Adults look for interruptions from work. They beg for interruptions. If no interruptions occur naturally, adults will create their own interruptions.

Albert Einstein, one of the most brilliant men to ever walk the earth, was also known for his whimsical nature. Yet it seems he was being completely serious when he said, “Play is the highest form of research.”

Many of the best ideas ever thought of came to their originators during periods of play, and other breaks from work. Mr. Rogers, noted child educator and entertainer, commented, “Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.” Children at play will voluntarily repeat an exercise hundreds of times, but turn that practice into “homework,” and they will do all they can to get free of it.

Finally, Ralph Waldo Emerson gave us, “It is a happy talent to know how to play.” Emerson’s quote may be the most insightful of the lot, for in many ways, the person who has forgotten how to play has indeed forgotten, at least in some ways, how to be happy. After all, happiness is one of the most important of all life’s goals. Beyond the mundane activities of securing the means of life, more people spend more time, and more money, pursuing happiness, than any other goal, and quite understandably. A world without play would be a sad place indeed.

What is most interesting is that we often can accomplish more during play than we can when at work. Seemingly, we throw ourselves into our play more robustly than we apply ourselves to our work. Nowhere is this truth better exemplified than in a gym. Ten guys will happily play basketball all afternoon. Ask those same guys to work at practicing basketball drills, drills that will make them better players, and they will very soon balk. Look at the guys sitting in the gym, methodically working out. They sit distractedly for five minutes, lift for 30 seconds, and again sit. The last place they want to be, it seems, is working out. Take the work out of workout, and put the play back into everything you do in life.

August 2

Make resolutions every day.

Studies have shown that human beings are remarkably poor at being able to judge how much they can accomplish in a given time period, especially if the time period is very short or very long. We tend to dramatically overestimate how much we can do in an hour, and even more profoundly underestimate what we can accomplish in a year. Knowing these facts will hopefully help you when making subsequent estimates of what you can get done.

Estimates on human attention span also vary widely, ranging from a few seconds to a few hours, but the majority of professionals agree that few people can focus deeply on any given task for a full hour without being distracted anywhere from several to several hundred times. During the course of writing this sentence, for instance, I was admittedly distracted at least five or six times, maybe more.

Usually, the idea behind a New Year's resolution is to start something and to continue with it throughout the year, or at least until that particular project is completed. In reality, however, many people's New Year's resolutions never get beyond the planning stages; that is, they are never implemented at all, not even one time. The grand majority of resolutions are only followed for a few days, at which point they find their way to the "back burner." After a few more days or weeks, these resolutions are long forgotten.

The trick to accomplishments, therefore, seems to be to start anew daily. Making "New Day" resolutions is not a sign of what a failure you are, it is a step towards success, a demonstration of your understanding of your own human nature. By starting again, over and over as necessary, you are cementing your commitment and developing a habit that will eventually become automatic. The people who "always take a walk first thing in the morning," "always have fruit for breakfast," "always get to bed by nine o'clock," or "always read something inspirational at lunch time," didn't "always" do those things. They had to decide to do them, and then start doing them, and most likely, start doing them again and again and again until doing so finally became a preference and eventually a predictable action that others can count on.

Keep making New Day's resolutions. They will serve you well. New Day's resolutions will help you become the person you wish to become, and make it possible to reach the goals that are most important to you.

August 3

In the absence of health, one is not truly free.

“The only man who is really free is the one who can turn down an invitation to dinner without giving an excuse.” ~ Jules Renard

“I’ve shackled myself with the prison bars of ill health.”
~ Terri Guillemets

When you are not able to run and play without a care in the world, you are not free.

If you cannot lift, or bend, or squat, or get up, or reach, or move without first considering whether the pain or discomfort is going to be worth the effort, you are not free.

When you must submit to becoming always a spectator and nevermore a participant, you are not free.

When you find yourself saying, “I used to be able to,” and no longer hear yourself calling, “Hey, watch me,” you are not free.

How many of the following comments, each of which blatantly accepts the fact that when we lose our health, we become prisoners to our illness, have you heard?

- “If I ever get out of this wheelchair, I’ll show you how to play that game.”
- “When his illness keeps him in bed for days on end, he sulks like a caged animal.”
- “It’s time to take your medicine.”
- “Don’t forget to bring along your meds.”
- “Just take these drugs three times a day, and you can continue to lead a normal life.”
- “Of course, we’ll have to monitor you regularly.”
- “A case like yours can be managed quite satisfactorily.”
- “Fortunately, nowadays we have medicine for your condition.”
- “With a bit of luck, the right medications, and help from our staff, you may be able to maintain your disease without it getting any worse.”

Every once in a while, “Lost Cat” or “Lost Dog” signs appear in the neighborhood, often offering a large reward for information leading to the return of the animal in question. “Lost Health” notices never get posted. When being faced with a jail term that will only end in death, how surprising is it that people are not more desperate to find and reclaim their health?

“Seek freedom and become captive of your desires. Seek discipline and find your liberty.” ~Frank Herbert

“So many people spend their health gaining wealth, and then have to spend their wealth to regain their health.” ~ A.J. Reb Materi

August 4

A diet of raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds provides for all of your nutrient needs.

I get letters. This one, or variations of it, is extremely common. “Dear Dr. Graham: I switched to *The 80/10/10 Diet* one week ago and I’m getting _____ (you name the symptom). Do you think I could be deficient in something?”

Of course, I DO NOT send the following reply: “OK, you’ve just switched from whatever you were eating to the most nutritious of all dietary programs. Somehow I just do not think that could lead to an immediate deficiency, other than for whatever addictive substances you may have given up.” Instead, I send something kind, congratulatory, and ask a few more questions that may help me see why the person is struggling.

In the world of nutritional science, we know of several hundred thousand nutrients. Some of these nutrients, such as carnitine, we manufacture ourselves, within our own bodies. Some come from outside sources, and not at all from our food, such as in the case of Vitamin D from the sun, or the extrinsic factor portion of vitamin B-12, which comes from microbes. We know of at least 200,000 nutrients that are only found in plants, and can only be obtained from plants. Other than the nutrients we manufacture ourselves, and the ones that come from outside sources and not our food in the first place, there are no nutrients that are essential for human health that can be obtained from animals but not from plants. None. Plants truly supply us with everything we need in order to be well-nourished. Period. End of story. Plants do the entire job. No ifs, ands, or buts required.

Cooking our plants does indeed make some of the nutrients in the plants more accessible, but primarily because we do not tend to chew our foods as well as we should. In exchange, however, cooking also damages, deranges, and destroys the value in hundreds of thousands of nutrients. In addition, cooking results in the formation of substances known as anti-nutrients. These substances increase the need for a specific nutrient or nutrients. Cooking also results in the formation of carcinogens, substances known to cause cancer. In addition, when we subject our food to the high temperatures of cooking, mutagens are formed. Mutagens interfere with a cell’s ability to reproduce exact replicas of itself, thus accelerating the onset of decrepitude and the aging process.

Is it any wonder that study after study shows that the more raw plants you eat, the longer and healthier life you can expect to lead? Whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants are the mainstay of every healthy diet. Would you consider eating solely raw plants, to the exclusion of all other foods, even as an experiment? Not only will your diet be filled with nutritious and delicious foods, you will be thrilled with the healthy results.

August 5

**A slight increase each month in the percentage
of raw foods in your diet will yield
big health changes over a few years.**

“The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don’t want,
drink what you don’t like, and do what you’d rather not.”

~ Mark Twain

Fortunately for us, Mr. Twain was only jesting. In fact, we all want our health. The question is not really about our actions at all, but about our desires, for we invariably end up acting out upon our desires. We are intelligent enough to know that everything we do results in consequences. We get to choose which consequences we most desire. Therefore, the question is whether we most desire to eat, drink, and do the things that result in health, or if we would prefer to eat, drink, and do the things that bring ill health. How much do you really want your health?

Twenty-five hundred years ago, the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu coined the wise saying, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” According to translators, the exact phrasing was closer to, “The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one’s feet,” which more accurately reflects Lao-tzu’s insightful position that action arises naturally from stillness. Putting a modern spin on the concept, we would end up with something such as, “Even the longest journey must begin from where you stand.” This latest incarnation of the saying supports the idea that wherever you are now, you must take some action if you wish to progress, for even the shortest journey must begin from where you stand. Richard Alpert wrote his 1971 seminal book, *Be Here Now*, under his adopted name, Ram Dass, and made the clear point that wherever you are now is where the remainder of your journey must begin.

Some people choose to overhaul their diet overnight, while others choose a slow but steady route. The overnight group generally tends to be more successful, and have a lower attrition rate, but gradual changes also have a lot going for them. In the case of changing the diet from cooked to raw, the goal is finite, and making gradual changes in the right direction will inevitably bring you closer and closer to your destination. Most people on a traditional Western diet eat about 100 bites of food per day. If you only increased the percentage of raw food in the diet by a few bites, and once a month increase again, seven years later you would be eating entirely raw. Most likely, there would be times when you would make even faster progress, reducing the total time required by months or even years. The point being that eating 100 percent raw may seem impossible to you now, but your goal is simply to eat a few more bites of raw food each day. That is quite achievable, and before you know it, you are eating a raw diet. Three years from now, you will be eating something, and the choice of what you eat then is going to be determined by what you eat today. Start from where you are, and begin taking steps (bites) in the direction you wish to travel.

August 6

**Your health, like a bicycle wheel,
requires many spokes,
each of the same length.**

If we imagined building a wheel using only eight spokes, with health being at the hub of the wheel, the spokes we might choose could include items such as food, air, water, rest, sleep, sunshine, emotional poise, and physical activity. Some people put tremendous focus on fitness, thinking it to be the most important of all factors in developing health. Other people put their focus on food, thinking this factor is the most important of all influences when it comes to developing health. Books have been written on water, suggesting that hydration is the most important of all factors in creating health. At the height of the popularity of transcendental meditation, the leaders of that pursuit often stated that meditation was the most important of all factors in developing health. Zane R. Kime wrote a book published in 1980 entitled *Sunlight*, in which he suggests that sun exposure may be the most important of all factors in developing health. Hundreds of books on the importance of sleep are available on the market, many of which make the claim that sleep is the key factor in developing health. Equally as many books on air make similar assertions. We know that these opposing views cannot possibly all be correct, and in fact we know that none of them can be correct, for it is not possible to build a wheel out of one spoke, no matter how long the spoke might be.

When we review the results of blood tests, we hope our numbers will fall into the ideal range, not too high and not too low. When we check our pulse, respiration, blood pressure, temperature, or even our weight, we once again want the numbers to reflect the ideal range, and be neither high nor low. When it comes to nutrition, we understand the concept that midrange is best, yet we seem to suffer a lapse in awareness and choose the “higher is better, highest is best” approach. For some unknown reason (could it be due to the imagery of problems brought to our awareness by supplement salesmen?), we fear deficiency more than we fear excess, even though we know that excess can be just as damaging as deficiency.

At any rate, as much as we fear the short spoke on the wheel, we seem equally prone to creating excessively long spokes. These long spokes also put our wheel of health out of balance. Stories abound of people ruining their health through compulsive exercise, excessive sun exposure, orthorexia, and taking other aspects of health to extremes to which they are no longer health-promoting. Seek balance of all things beneficial in your health regimen. Eliminate the health destroyers completely.

August 7

**The sun's ultraviolet rays sanitize
and disinfect the skin, lymph, and blood.**

The strongest ultraviolet rays to reach the Earth from the sun are classed as UV-A and UV-B. All of the ultraviolet rays disinfect, with UV-C being the most powerful disinfectant, and it works on our skin and everything else that it comes in contact with. Very little UV-C generally reaches the Earth's surface, but fortunately very little UV-C exposure is required in order for it to exert its disinfecting influence. A great number of microbes are inactivated by UV-C exposure, including but not limited to cryptosporidium, giardia, various germs, fungi, molds, and other pathogens and viruses.

We have all noticed that the parts of our bodies not typically exposed to the sun, those parts that are traditionally covered and even encased in clothing, are the very parts that tend to emanate the most unsavory aromas. Yet those aromas completely disappear when we go to the beach, and expose the affected parts to sunlight. (Yes, UV radiation penetrates most bathing suits. In fact UV radiation penetrates the skin to a depth of almost one half of one inch.) The UV exposure is the reason the odors disappear. Part of nature's plan for us is to garner doses of direct sunlight on our skin, on a nearly daily basis. The UV not only cleans our skin, lymph, and blood, but it is essential for the creation of Vitamin D, the integration of calcium into our bones, and even affects our hormones in a positive way.

By penetrating the skin to a depth of deeper than a centimeter, the UV cleans all the blood and lymph that is near the skin. When the first dialysis machines were made, they did not work as well as the doctors and patients had hoped. Dialysis looked to be a failed experiment. As a rule, people on dialysis do not feel up to going outside very often, hence they tend to get extremely limited UV exposure. When UV was added to the dialysis machines, the results were much better, and dialysis became a huge success.

We all feel clean after bathing, and certainly washing ourselves, even just with water, does remove much of the excess oils and other debris that builds up on the skin. But to thoroughly clean the skin, direct sunlight is required. Though we cover wounds with bandages in order to keep them clean, exposure to sunlight kills unwanted microbes, and greatly reduces the chance of a wound becoming infected, making occasional exposure of most wounds to sunlight a smart choice.

August 8

Sunlight makes it possible to process calcium, a mineral found in every cell of the body.

Ninety-nine percent of the one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of calcium in the body is found in the bones and teeth. For those of you not fluent in the metric system, this leaves roughly one-third of one ounce (10g) of calcium to be distributed between all of the other 100 trillion cells and fluids of the body. Doing the math, this means that outside of the bones and teeth, there is roughly 0.0000000000001 grams of calcium available to each cell of the body. Even in such insanely minute quantities, calcium is essential to the proper functioning of many enzymes, plays a critical role in muscle contractions, helps regulate the release of various neurotransmitters, is key in controlling heartbeat, and is a constituent responsible for clotting of the blood. Calcium deficiencies can result in bone deformities, growth retardation, osteomalacia (softening of bones) and is one of the main factors involved in osteoporosis. Indications that calcium may play a positive role in cancer prevention, especially prostate, breast, cervical, and digestive system cancers get stronger with each passing year. Apparently, a little calcium goes a long way.

Even though we really do not need to take in very much calcium on a daily basis, and in spite of the fact that plenty of calcium is available on *The 80/10/10 Diet*, there are still three major factors worthy of consideration when it comes to securing a healthy calcium metabolism.

1. The substances that put a major drain on calcium reserves must be eliminated. Refined sugar, salt, soft drinks, coffee, tea, alcohol, meat, and dairy are the major culprits that must be bound by calcium in order for their acids to be neutralized, resulting in a leaching effect on the body's calcium reserves.
2. Exercise is critical to bone strength and cell membrane integrity, especially activities that involve frequent changes in direction (such as tennis), sports that include a great deal of jarring, shaking, or concussive force (such as jump rope or off-road bicycling), or those that demand great muscular strength (such as powerlifting and Olympic weightlifting).
3. All of these efforts will remain totally ineffective, however, unless you also get at least 15 or so minutes of sun exposure at a time of day when your shadow is shorter or at least not much longer than your own height, on an average of several times per week. Typically, this means getting some sun exposure between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. We simply cannot incorporate calcium into our bones or cells without sufficient Vitamin D, and we are designed to obtain at least 95% of our Vitamin D as a result of exposure to the sun. Often dubbed "the happy vitamin," Vitamin D and sun exposure is recognized to play a role in reversing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and other forms of depression. Even if you take massive doses of calcium supplements, without sufficient sunlight you simply cannot utilize that calcium, and your body will show a steady negative calcium balance.

August 9

**Healthful living has no substitute,
and only healthful living results in health.**

Riding my bicycle through my small hometown, a man who was driving his car made a turn without signaling or indicating in any way. I swerved to avoid getting crushed, and out of the corner of my eye, I saw him wave a hand at me in apparent frustration. I was almost to my destination, and early, so I went back to see what the guy wanted. He started yelling at me. I mentioned that he was supposed to signal before he turned. He said, "I've lived here for 20 years, and always turn here. I don't need to signal." Honest.

While the basic concept expressed in today's thought seems fairly cut and dried, I would be willing to bet money that everyone is guilty of ignoring this truth every now and then. People seem to enjoy skirting around the edges of rules, trying to "get away with" as much as possible. Often, we become so used to taking advantage of this or that opening that when the door closes, and we are forced to live by the rules, we feel as if something that was ours was taken away from us when it was never ours in the first place. We come to expect the freebie, or the deal, and treat it as if we deserved it.

No one can guarantee you a life of health. Nor can anyone guarantee that you will get emphysema if you smoke, or cirrhosis if you drink. Life is a gamble, and you must play. You get to choose whether you stack the odds in your favor, or if you wish to play Russian Roulette with your health. Healthful living practices give you the best chance of living a long and healthy life. On average, vegetarians live longer than non-vegetarians by almost a decade. Vegans outlive vegetarians by almost another decade. How long will you live? No one can say, but if you wish to play the odds and live a long life, being vegan is the best bet, for certain.

Are you hoping to be fit in your later years? Fitness never attacked anyone, or came on overnight. Fitness must be earned, and developed, and honed, and maintained. If you wish to be fit during your latter decades, start earning your fitness today.

Is it possible to have high-level health while ignoring all of the lifestyle factors known to support health? Sure, such a result is possible, but not probable. Could you be the one in a million who beats all the odds? Sure, you might be the lucky one, but we all seem to think health decay will not happen to us, until it does. We know that buying a lottery ticket with a one-in-a-million chance of winning is basically just throwing away our money, but you can always buy another lottery ticket. You only get to live your life once. Do not throw away your health on a mirage. Reap the harvest of health by sowing the seeds of health,

August 10

Are you willing to eliminate coffee, alcohol, tobacco, and other stimulants, irritants, and poisons from your life in order to free yourself from the chains of addiction and sickness?

How many people have to say, “Been there, done that, and it didn’t work for me either,” before we get the message? Sure, we all like to think, “It won’t happen to me,” but aren’t we smart enough to know that it will? Moms resort to saying, “If your friends all jumped off of a cliff and died, would you try it, just to see if maybe you could get away with it?” Yet their imploring falls on deaf ears. As children, we seek information in order to increase our awareness and understanding of the outside world. As teens and young adults, we do all we can to dull our awareness, only to find our desire for enlightenment rekindled, once we have all but doused the fire.

- “Feed your head.” ~ Grace Slick
- “I gotta have a cigarette.”
- “I need a drink.”
- “Name your poison.”
- “Everybody must get stoned.” ~ Bob Dylan
- “I just can’t get started until I have at least one cup of coffee.”
- “This food has no flavor without salt.”
- “I don’t enjoy chili, unless it is intensely hot.”
- “That’s one speecy spicy meatball.”
- “He’s a chain-smoker.”
- “I can’t function without marijuana.”
- “I’m concerned. Drugs are ruining his life.”
- “Look at you, you’ve become an alcoholic.”
- “I need a fix ‘cause I’m going down.” ~ Beatles
- “You are drinking rotgut.”
- “Feeling like a dead duck, spitting out pieces of his broken luck.” ~ Jethro Tull

- “I just need a little something to get me going.”
- “She goes running for the shelter of a Mother’s Little Helper, and it helps her on her way, gets her through her busy day.” ~ Rolling Stones
- “I want it. I want it. I want it. I want it.” ~ The Who
- “If the river was made of whiskey, and I was a duck, I’d swim to the bottom, and never come up.” ~ Traditional
- “I’ve seen the needle and the damage done.” ~ Neil Young
- “Heroin be the death of me.” ~ Velvet Underground
- “One pill makes you larger, and one pill makes you small.” ~ Jefferson Airplane
- “Rock on, gold dust woman, take your silver spoon, dig your grave.” ~ Stevie Nicks
- “Cold turkey, has got me, on the run.” ~ John Lennon
- “I used to do a little, but a little wouldn’t do.” ~ Guns ‘N Roses
- “Driving that train, high on cocaine.” ~ Grateful Dead
- “Purple haze, all around, don’t know if I’m coming up or down.” ~ Jimi Hendrix
- “Taste me you will see more is all you need, you’re dedicated to how I’m killing you. Come crawling faster, obey your master, your life burns faster, obey your master.”
~ Metallica
- “Come on, you gotta listen unto me. Lay off that whiskey and let that cocaine be.”
~ Johnny Cash
- “Every junkie’s like a setting sun.” ~ Neil Young

So, who is in charge, the drugs or you?

So, who’s running the show, the food or you?

Are you the jailor, or the inmate?

Are you running free, or is that not yet to be?

August 11

Practice living healthfully, until healthful living practices become automatic.

Is living the 80/10/10 lifestyle really more difficult than any other way of living your life? Many people say 80/10/10 just takes too much effort, but those who follow the lifestyle have a different opinion. Living your life according to the principles of 80/10/10 is no more difficult than any other way of doing things, but 80/10/10 yields rewards that are not to be found elsewhere. Admittedly, 80/10/10 requires learning, and oftentimes people equate the quantity that one must learn with the difficulty of the learning process. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, learning to live the 80/10/10 lifestyle is child's play. Children often easily learn and espouse a vegan ethic by the time they are three or four years of age, and can give a convincing rationale for being vegan. They can learn the names of hundreds of fruits before reaching their first decade, and often know as many or more varietal types than most adults.

Certainly, there is a lot to learn when adopting 80/10/10, but doing so is not difficult. Many people say that 80/10/10 is mostly just common sense. The mechanics of picking produce, storing it, and creating delicious meals can be challenging, but anyone can learn to do so. Food combining is the easiest "language" or code of them all. Being active by going out and playing is built in to our genetic code. Children typically get over their disappointments in seconds, a lost talent we adults need to strive to regain. Seeking sufficient fresh air, sunshine, sleep, and the other mechanics of healthful living are essentially automatic functions for us.

We have to live in some fashion. We can choose to practice the art of proper food combining until we master it, or not. Once we master food combining, then using proper combining becomes effortless, automatic, and much like speaking in our native tongue. We can choose the option to develop and reinforce the preference of being active on a daily basis, until it becomes a healthy habit you would not want to miss out on.

If you focus on the results you wish to achieve, going through the motions of living healthfully will automatically become your default programming, it being the logical and perhaps only way of reaching your goals. When you are striving to reach a goal, focus fully upon it, as obstacles are mere distractions, and not worthy of your attention. If you think of each day as just another day of practice, your healthful living efforts will become ever more ingrained until they require no conscious thought, at which point making unhealthy choices becomes the more difficult of the two options. And always, being healthy is far easier on you than being sick.

August 12

**Overload the body with excess protein, fat,
or carbohydrate, and the body responds acutely
and dramatically with emergency measures.**

The concepts of STP (standard temperature and pressure) and SATP (standard ambient temperature and pressure) are used within the scientific community in order to enhance communications and make it possible for scientists to reproduce each other's results. In the body, the organic equivalent of STP is known as homeostasis, a condition maintained by the body wherein all structures and functions remain within a set of parameters sufficiently unchanging as to be considered a steady state. The body constantly monitors itself and adjusts its own anatomy and physiology in an attempt to maintain homeostasis while adapting to the SFIC to which it is subjected. Even during phases of growth and advancing decrepitude, the body attempts to maintain homeostasis. Nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than when checking vital signs and in the results of blood and lab values, where we expect to see results within specific, predetermined parameters, knowing that when the numbers are outside of the normal ranges, something is amiss.

When we see children at a birthday party running wild and acting completely out of control, we know to chalk up the behavior to the overconsumption of refined sugars. As long as the environment is safe for them, we are happy to let them burn off the excess sugar through physical activity. The interesting thing is that the children do not choose to begin intense physical activity; their body seemingly makes them do it. We have come to accept the fact that the human body knows what to do when sugar gets into the bloodstream, and that the body will take all the appropriate measures in order to bring blood sugar levels back to within normal parameters. What we perhaps do not realize is that the body takes this action swiftly, because they are emergency measures, responding as it were to the warnings of the Class M-3 Model B9, General Utility Non-Theorizing Environmental Control Robot, better known simply as "Robot," from the 1960's television series, *Lost In Space*. Robot was seen to gesticulate wildly and called out the now famous phrase, "Danger, Will Robinson," only once during the entire series, in Episode 11 of Season 3, "The Deadliest of the Species," but that one time was sufficient to burn its way into our collective psyches. To this day, the phrase, "Danger, Will Robinson" is understood to mean that serious danger is nearby.

Of even greater surprise to most people is the idea that the body reacts with similar speed to the emergencies we create when we consume sufficient protein or fat to elevate those blood levels beyond the normal acceptable range. The body takes whatever measures are necessary in order to reestablish homeostasis as rapidly as possible. Such measures include but are not limited to making adjustments in all vital signs (temperature, respiration, blood pressure, and pulse), using hormones to modify our physiology, utilizing various autonomic responses within the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems in order to bring about the best (most stable) possible outcome, and even controlling reflex reactions such as sneezing, coughing, vomiting, and swallowing. When protein powder is consumed, or when protein consumption from food is

inordinately high and blood protein levels rise beyond the acceptable norm, the body responds promptly by executing a variety of modifiers designed to bring protein levels down to acceptable levels. Excess fat in the blood results in compromised delivery of oxygen and glucose to the cells. When excess fat is consumed, the body responds by utilizing a wide range of emergency strategies in order to bring blood fat levels back to normal.

August 13

**By living within the laws of nature,
you will amass health every day.**

Health and vitality accumulate in minute increments, every day, as a result of the supportive SFIC to which we subject ourselves. In the same way, health and vitality are lost a bit each day, should our choices of SFIC be those that are detrimental to health. Health builds in two ways; through participation in supportive SFIC as well as through the overload and recovery of subjecting ourselves to challenging (growth) situations and providing adequate recovery. These two strategies may seem contradictory in some ways, and clarification is appropriate.

The hothouse plant is a notoriously weak plant. The same plant in the wild is invariably much stronger. The hothouse plant has a better chance of looking perfect, for the wild plant will likely suffer damage from wind and other factors. For all its beauty, the hothouse plant's physical weakness could also be considered an imperfection.

When the conditions are right, a stalactite just grows and grows, but ever so slowly, often taking one to two hundred years to grow a single inch. We accumulate our health bit by bit as well, with every decision, every positive throw of the SFIC dice. When watching an icicle melt, one drop at a time, it is all but impossible to see that the icicle is diminishing in size, even though we know that it must be. Health can be lost in exactly the same way, little by little, by making small but imprudent decisions, and taking actions that are counterproductive to health development.

Consider the option of breathing clean fresh air versus the choice of breathing foul, polluted air that is riddled with toxin fumes. In this instance, health is best supported when we breathe the clean air. Breathing foul air may sometimes be necessary for life, but it also takes its toll on our health. Challenging or stressing the respiratory system with toxic or caustic exposure will always promote decay within the system. In the domain of physical fitness, strength is the natural outcome of exposure to stress, as long as sufficient recovery is provided. Mental strength develops from a combination of sufficient reinforcing support coupled with appropriate challenge.

Comfortable surroundings are easy on us, and provide good conditions for recovery. As adults, if we wish to grow in some way, we have to push towards the limits of our abilities, the limits of that which we can successfully and safely tolerate. Alternating between training and recovering sets the stage for constant and never-ending improvement.

August 14

Your health is absolutely your greatest wealth.

You may have riches beyond compare, endless supplies of funds so great that you could never possibly spend it all. The money may give you a great sense of security, the means to pursue many ideas and projects that would otherwise be impossible, and allow you to purchase the best that money can buy, but as the Beatles sang, “Money can’t buy me love.” As it turns out, money can’t buy your health, either.

No matter what it is that you enjoy doing, what you do for a living, what your hobbies are, or how you wish to spend your time, you can do it better, and enjoy it more, when you are healthy. At your healthiest, you experience fewer sick days, an improved focus and concentration, better emotional poise, maximal athletic performance, optimum efficiency and effectiveness, and an increased sense of enjoyment of whatever you find yourself doing.

When you are ill, taking care of yourself in order to get over your symptoms becomes your primary occupation. Coughing, sneezing, aches and pains, and any other symptoms are distractions that reduce your pleasure while compromising the level at which you function.

Perhaps one of these “bumper sticker” phrases is meaningful for you:

- Things don’t click, when you’re feeling sick.
- You can’t ring the till, when you’re home being ill.
- You won’t play like you should, when you don’t feel that good.
- You’ll be less composed when feeling indisposed.
- If you want health long-term, don’t waste time being infirm.
- You are never at ease when suffering disease.
- You’ll not act like a saint when you have a health complaint.
- Live healthfully to forbid those feelings quite morbid.
- When your symptoms make you tearful, you are anything but cheerful.
- To stop nearly fainting, your health you must cease tainting.
- To no longer feel so vitiated, healthful living habits must be initiated.

Treat your health as you would treat any other treasure. Add to it, increase it, build it, support it, and protect it. No one can bestow health upon you—you must earn it daily.

August 15

Those conditions required for maintaining health in a healthy person are identical to those required by a sick person who wishes to regain health.

When a family member falls ill, or when you yourself fall ill, there is a strong temptation to “do something.” To some degree, it becomes obvious that what you have been doing has not been working; therefore, logic prevails that it must be time to do something else. Far too many people who do not understand this basic principle take the proverbial jump from the frying pan (of symptoms, illness, and degeneration) into the fire (of radical medical treatments and the associated pharmacological nightmare). The healthy choice would be to simply modify the SFIC to meet the current needs and capacities of the individual.

For the moment, let’s imagine that we were raising a houseplant. In order for the plant to thrive optimally, we would have to give the plant ideal SFIC. If the plant were to develop symptoms, we would know that something about the SFIC was incorrect, and we would modify accordingly. We would not assume that because the plant was showing symptoms that it needed drugs, surgery, chemotherapy, or any other such interventionary measures. The plant would not need to be shocked; in fact, we would want to avoid shock. We would not attempt to force nutrition through exposure to superfoods or barometric “therapy.” We would know that either something we provided was too much, too little, completely lacking, or that the plant was getting something harmful. Based upon the symptoms, and maybe also the plant’s past history and our experience, we would know to change something about the substances, forces, influences, or conditions to which the plant was being exposed. We can so easily see these truths when caring for a plant, but seem to completely lose sight of them when caring for ourselves.

Of course, the SFIC we choose need to be constantly modified to best suit our individual needs and preferences. The fresh air, sunshine, rest, sleep, food, physical and mental training we take must be adjusted to match our requirements and capabilities. Even our capacity for healthfully and gracefully handling social and emotional exposures has periods of waxing and waning. Whether you wish to regain your health, maintain what you’ve got, or continue to improve your abilities, providing the optimal SFIC is essential.

August 16

The sooner the better, but hopefully before it is too late, you will have decided that it is important to accumulate health.

Below is a list of comments we've all heard, along with countless other similar ones. The optimist might view them as the beginning of an awakening, a sign that change is soon to come. The pessimist thinks that it is already too late, and that the irreversible damage is already done. The realist sees the reality; it is what it is.

- “Someday I’ll give up smoking.”
- “One of these days, I’m going to get really fit.”
- “Next month, I’m going on a diet.”
- “I really need to get healthier.”
- “Why bother trying to lose weight? I just look at food and I gain weight.”
- “I need to work on my self-esteem.”
- “My self-image is so poor, I don’t know how to make it better.”
- “I never eat any vegetables, ever.”
- “I need a drink. Make mine a double.”
- “If I could only get my blood sugar under control.”
- “I’m sure the doctors will just give me a new lung/heart/liver/knee/hip/small intestine/pancreas/cornea when I need it.”
- “I thought I’d get in shape. Then I thought, ‘Heck, spherical is a shape.’”
- “These cigarettes are killing me. I really should quit.”
- “There is no life without coffee.”
- “My wife said I had to choose: either her or the recreational drugs. I’m going to miss that woman.”
- “I don’t know what happened. First thing I knew, I was 200 pounds overweight, and my eating was totally out of control.”
- “I know I really should take better care of myself.”

- “I’ll stop smoking...tomorrow.”
- “I’ll stop drinking...tomorrow.”
- “I’ll start exercising...tomorrow.”

Now is the time to take responsibility for your health, before you start hearing comments like these:

- “It was a case of too little, too late.”
- “The operation was a success, but the patient died.”
- “There is just nothing we can do for you.”
- “Your _____ (fill in any condition you like) has gotten completely out of control.”
- “I’m here to inform you that your team of doctors is not optimistic that you can recover, so we recommend that you get your papers in order and prepare for the worst.”

August 17

Creative individuals go out on skinny branches.

The brilliant and insightful hygienist T.C. Fry once explained to me that if I wanted to know if someone's pet theory made sense, I should follow their line of thought through, in every possible direction, all the way to its logical conclusions. For example, let's look at the commonly accepted assertion, "People who eat less, live longer." If you eat even less, will you live even longer? If you eat nothing at all, will you therefore live forever? By following the line of thought through to a conclusion, we can see that the original statement was false and needs modification. If the statement was, "Compared to overeating, which invariably shortens life expectancy, eating the correct number of calories for your frame will result in optimal life expectancy," the ring of truth would sound out loud and clear.

How about the idea that people should not go raw because when it gets cold in winter, people must eat hot food? That logic does not seem to deter people from drinking ice cold beer all winter long, nor does it seem to slow their habit of eating ice cream on a year-round basis. Have you noticed that these same people eat food hot off the grill during barbeque season, during the hottest months of summer, in blatant defiance of their own logic?

How about this one: "Eating cooked food is what made us human, cooked food is what made our brains grow." For some reason (yet to be determined), about two million years ago, human beings experienced major brain growth. Was that when we learned to eat cooked food? Was eating cooked food both the cause and the effect of brain growth? Our domestic animals eat cooked foods, yet they are not showing any brain development. If we weren't so smart, with our little brains, how did we get "smart" enough to start eating cooked foods? Most evolutionary changes take hundreds of thousands of years or longer. If eating cooked was going to result in brain growth, in all likelihood, it would not yet have happened. Does it follow that the more cooked food you eat the smarter you get? In that case, the morbidly obese people would be the smartest on Earth.

Going out on skinny branches means that you are willing to lead, to boldly go where no one has gone before. The promise of the best fruit is out on the skinny branches, but there is potential danger there as well. Every leader has to face danger in some way or another. In every family, someone must lead the way towards healthful living. Are you willing to be the leader in your family?

August 18

**Negative knowledge: Incorrect information
that you believe to be correct.**

Every once in a while, we find out that we were completely wrong about something. Sometimes, the realization comes as a shock, and often enough, denial is the reaction of choice. For example, on several occasions while the Wright Brothers were flying overhead in their earliest airplanes, farmers seeing them from down below would look up and insist that men cannot fly.

We have all learned much in the fields of nutrition and health, but how much of that information is dangerously incorrect? And when you are exposed to accurate information, how insistent will you be in sticking to your old ways?

Do you go across town to visit your friends every time you want to ask them a question, or do you use your telephone? Do you still think of fish, or even worse, fish oil, as health food, or have you embraced the low-fat vegan ethic? Do you consume grains and other starchy foods for complex carbohydrates, in the mistaken belief that they are better for you than the simple carbohydrates found in fruits? Have you ever heard someone say, “I’ve got to have meat, there is just no way I could survive as a vegan”? How many times has the little voice in your head told you that you could not possibly do this, that, or the other thing, only for you to find out that you could indeed do the move in question, you just needed a little support in getting started?

My seventh-grade science teacher told the class that fat people were the healthiest because they had the most reserves (yes, Mrs. Lawrence was extremely fat, at least by 1960’s standards). The sad thing was that many of the students believed her. After more than a decade of playing guitar, I gave it up completely on the day that my neuroanatomy teacher, Dr. Kirk (no, no relation to Captain Kirk), informed us (incorrectly) that playing guitar would work against us as chiropractic students because it would ruin the sensitivity in our fingers. I held that false belief for almost 20 years.

“Cooked food is better for you than raw food, because there are nutrients in raw food that are better accessed when the food is cooked.” While there are some elements of truth in this statement, as approximately 0.1 percent of all known nutrients become more accessible as a result of cooking, what is left unsaid is far more important. The fact that 99.9 percent of all of the nutrients in food are damaged, deranged, or destroyed in the cooking process, hence becoming less accessible to the body—is not mentioned. The fact that most of the 0.1 percent also becomes more accessible through blending of food is also not mentioned. The fact that a wide variety of harmful anti-nutrients, mutagens that speed the aging process, and deadly carcinogens are formed in the cooking process is also conveniently overlooked when cooked food is recommended for nutritional reasons.

Are you still hooked to your negative knowledge, or are you willing to throw out your mental garbage?

August 19

**Healthy Cholesterol Levels:
Are you heart attack proof?**

Almost everyone gets bloodwork done these days, and most people are concerned when their lab values fall outside of the recommended ranges, either low or high. Many people even get concerned if their values fall towards the fringes of what is considered “normal.” Few people stop to consider whether “normal” equates with “healthy.” Often, it does, but sometimes it definitely does not.

Rarely are we concerned with cholesterol levels that are too low, so let’s put our attention on concerns about elevated cholesterol levels. Recommended ideal ranges have varied over the years, but there has been a steady downward trend. Some people might argue that this trend is a sign of increased awareness on the part of the medical establishment that lower levels are healthier levels. Others might say that the new values simply represent an imperative to put more people on cholesterol-lowering drugs, one initiated perhaps by Big Pharma. That discussion remains open to conjecture and further consideration, but the net result is a growing awareness that the old recommended levels were too high to be considered healthy. The current recommended “good” range is several steps in the right direction, but does it yet represent healthy values? Until recently, cholesterol values as high as 240-280 might not even draw a raised eyebrow from your friendly family physician. In the mid-1990’s, our own doctor said nothing about my mother’s annual cholesterol values until it was measured at 287, at which point he only said to her, “See if you can do something about your cholesterol, or else we’ll have to consider giving you medications.” When the recommended levels were lowered, 200-240 became the new norm. The recommendations were lowered again, this time with 160-200 as the preferred range. This all seems perfectly healthy, until we stop to realize that fully 35 percent of all the people who suffer heart attacks have cholesterol values ranging between 150 and 200. By comparison, only 10 percent of all people struck by lightning die!

Could you imagine driving along in your car and having it overheat until the engine seizes, while the temperature gauge continued to read in the normal range? Or could you imagine the airlines having to explain an airplane engine failing while the gauges told the pilots everything was normal? To date, no one with a total cholesterol level below 150 has ever suffered a heart attack. Diet, and specifically the consumption of fruits and vegetables, is recognized as the best tool for lowering cholesterol values.

August 20

**You can be fit without being healthy,
but you cannot be healthy without being fit.**

When in the grocery store, my cart overflowing with fruits and vegetables, people often comment, “Wow, you must be really healthy.” While I enjoy the recognition, and accept the compliment with gratitude, I am tempted to point out that there is so much more to health than food. Nutrition and food are admittedly closely related, but even so, there is much more to nutrition than food. Maintaining a lifetime of high-level fitness requires excellent nutrition, but no one would ever suggest that food is the sole determining factor in fitness. Food even plays a role in the depth, quality, and total need for sleep, but we recognize that many other factors also affect sleep. Our expression and experience of health is a composite of all of these factors and many others as well, plus genetics and past history. No way should we fall into the trap of thinking that just because our larders are filled with fruits and vegetables that we are automatically healthy.

Those who favor running are often guilty of stating that running is all you need for fitness. Yogis often suggest that doing yoga is all one needs for fitness. Weightlifters say that running is a waste of time, and strength training is the only fitness worth worrying about. Proponents of transcendental meditation have put forth the proposition that a successful meditation practice can make the need for fitness training redundant. Each facet of fitness training deserves attention, or it will go away. There is no magic when it comes to fitness—you either train, or your fitness goes away.

People in the grocery store do not know me. I could have a cart full of produce because my doctor said that due to some horrible illness, I had little chance to live unless I changed my diet. The cart could be a dying man’s last-ditch effort, and not a clue as to his current health status.

Health is much more than just the sum of its parts, and fitness is just one part of overall health. Add to that the fact that most sports demand that athletes focus just on specific aspects of fitness, often to the point of ignoring others, and it becomes easy to see that fitness does not equate with health. Many of today’s fittest and best athletes are unhealthy. Ryan Shay died at age 28, while competing in the marathon at the US Olympic Trials. Hank Gathers, a college basketball superstar, died during a game, at age 23. Death during triathlon competitions has become predictable, at one per 75,000 competitors, and relatively common, especially when compared to the one death in 300,000 expected at half marathons. More than 4,000 athletes die annually in the U.S. of sports-related sudden cardiac arrest, a heart trauma that almost never happens to healthy people.

Do not be fooled into thinking that just because a person is fit that s/he is also automatically healthy. Take care of your health, and your fitness, because if you do not, they will go away.

August 21

**Dr. Graham's Prime Directive of Health:
Observe the Masses and Do the Opposite.**

Have you ever noticed that when driving down the highway, even when there is hardly any traffic at all, drivers will tend to cluster their cars into a group? Are you happier driving in a group of cars, or do you prefer to have open highway all around you? When you get ready to park in a lot, do you look for that one closest parking spot, even though the area is very crowded, or do you park away from all the other cars, even though you will have to walk a bit further? In a restaurant, are you more of the "I'll have what they're having" type of person, or do you tend to be the only one who orders a particular dish? Do you watch all the blockbuster movies, or are you more familiar with the lesser-known classics? Would you class yourself as a trend follower, or a trendsetter? Are you most happy in the middle of the pack, or do you continually find yourself in leadership positions? If you chose the latter option in each of the examples above, you are a splendid candidate for applying the Prime Directive of Health into your everyday life.

The challenging part of using the Directive is that you must think, weigh the options, and make qualitative decisions each time before applying it. The Directive does not imply that you should attempt to be different simply for the sake of being different, which would be easy, but rather, it is an encouragement to think for yourself, and make your decision to be unique, when it is appropriate to do so. That is the clincher, really, because you will have to decide for yourself, in each moment, if you should be following generic guidelines, or if you would be wiser to think for yourself. Just because "everyone" is getting a flu vaccine, do you think you should get one too? At three in the morning, on a deserted road, after sitting at a red light for four minutes, do you continue to wait, or do you carefully drive through the light? Do you make advance plans to eat "special" meals at weddings, conventions, parties, and the like, or do you make exceptions, and bend your eating plan, thinking perhaps that it will be easier all around to just go with the flow?

The masses fall for the supplement of the month, the superfood of the year. They buy into each and every gimmick, gadget, diet, and training program that comes along, usually getting excited about it, claiming it to be the greatest, and encouraging others to do the same. Just as quickly, they become disenchanted, and move on to the next thing, seemingly repeating the process endlessly. Doing the opposite in this case means plugging along in workmanlike fashion, consistently and persistently following your health regimen to a "T," doing all the commonplace things, such as fitness training, eating fruits and vegetables, and getting sufficient sleep, all the while knowing that being healthy is the most exciting thing in the world, exactly because it is the least commonplace.

August 22

A reasonably good performance goal for almost any activity is to be able to do half as much or go half as fast as the (age/weight) world record.

Most of us are not professional athletes, and while we may appreciate their talents, often it is difficult to understand exactly how well these guys and gals actually perform. Of course, many of the feats performed by athletes require so much ability that you cannot perform them at all, at least not without some specific training. For instance, you may never have learned how to pole vault, hence you will not be able to compare your talents to those of a pole-vaulter. But each of us can compare our performances to those of people who perform similar activities to ourselves, simply by matching our best against their best.

Not all sports are the same in this regard, but many activities lend themselves to this relatively simple assessment tool. If you look up the world record in a given sport and compare your current best performance to the record, you will very quickly be able to see how you rank. If you can do better than half the record (or double the record if the unit makes that comparison more appropriate), you can rest assured that you are doing quite well.

The world record for running a mile is currently 3:43.13 for men, and 4:12.56 for women, both records set in the late '90's, by Hicham El Guerrouj and Svetlana Masterkova, respectively. A non-runner would have an almost impossible time trying to run a mile, let alone in double the world-record time. But for a recreational runner, double the world record is a realistic goal. Bowl a perfect game and you receive a score of 300. Someone who bowls for the first time is unlikely to bowl 150, but someone who practices regularly can likely exceed that score by a bit. If you can deadlift half of the world record for someone in your age/weight/gender group, you are doing well. You have got to be serious about your running to complete a marathon in less than four hours, almost double the world record of 2:02.57.

If your fitness allows you to reach this standard in many disciplines, you can be very proud indeed. The reality is that most of us know how fit we are without having to test ourselves, but it is rewarding to know that the pros are only “this far” ahead of you. Their performances can serve to provide you with the motivation and inspiration you need to keep pushing yourself towards ever improving your own fitness.

Certainly you may encounter times when the most useful of all comparisons is to compare your present-day performances to those of your past, to see if you are improving, holding your own, or losing ground. The beauty of age groups, weight groups, and grouping by gender is that it allows people of all ages, physiques, and both genders to compete against a relatively homogeneous group of people. The world record was recently broken for running 200 meters at over 95 years of age, with a time of 55.48. When you are 95+, will you still be able run that distance in double the record time?

August 23

Healthy people are trim, fit, flexible, happy, hydrated, well-slept, and do not suffer from indigestion.

If we could imagine that health is the natural state, the default condition for all life on Earth, we would immediately raise our expectations for what a healthy human being would look like, act like, and feel like. Humans come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but within those parameters, we still must have some method for determining overall health status. Too many people die of heart attacks, or are diagnosed with morbid conditions such as cancer, shortly after being pronounced “perfectly healthy” by their medical doctors, for us to use lab work and bloodwork as our sole determining factors in assessing health. Professional athletes, typically very fit young men in their twenties, undergo exhaustingly thorough and frequent medical examinations, and are declared perfectly healthy, yet hundreds of pros from a wide variety of sports have died on the playing field. Traditional medical examinations are obviously not sufficient indicators of health.

Equally insufficient however are the arbitrary parameters such as height-to-weight ratio, fitness, hydration levels, rested-ness, or happiness. While each of these measures an important aspect of health, by themselves they do not impart or guarantee health. Many apparently healthy people have all of these things, but still die of heart attacks, strokes, or cancer.

Lack of symptoms is not by itself an indicator of health. Some people feel great because the health problems they are developing do not tend to develop any early warning symptoms. Some people think they have no symptoms because they simply do not notice them, or do not know what to look for. Some people do not have symptoms because the health problems that they are developing have just not yet had sufficient time to grow into noticeable issues.

Health is the logical, automatic, and natural outcome of a lifetime accumulation of healthful living practices. Healthy people participate in ALL of the health-building practices while doing their very best to shun ALL of the health destroyers. Health is bestowed upon us as newborns, but we must continue to earn our health as adults.

August 24

Healthy, average, and normal are not equivalent terms.

In a fashion similar to scoring an ice skater's performance, where we throw away the high and low scores and average the middle scores, "healthy" lab values are determined by determining the average from thousands of blood tests, creating an acceptable "plus or minus" range (usually, but not always, the range within which people typically do not suffer from the related excess and deficiency symptoms for the specific tested factor), and calling the results "normal." The general misconception for the majority of people is that the words "healthy" and "normal" are synonymous. While this is sometimes true (a fact that serves to further cloud the issue and confuse most people), in many instances nothing could be further from the truth, and finding out that your results are average can often enough mean anything but that they indicate health. For instance, the average 40-year-old male is overweight, physically unfit, and shows many indicators of advanced heart disease. None of this is healthy or normal. According to most medical doctors, the average 50-year-old male suffers from sufficient prostate enlargement to warrant treatment. Certainly an enlarged prostate cannot be considered normal at any age, and is in no way healthy. More than half of all 60-year-old men suffer some degree of sexual dysfunction, making such dysfunction average, but not normal or healthy. While I enjoy fitting in with the crowd easily as much as the next guy, I KNOW I do not want to experience the same level of health as the average person experiences.

We have come to accept overweight and obesity as normal, most likely because we see so much of it around us all day long. Using exceptionally generous guidelines (for example, recommendations for a "healthy weight" for a 5'9" male ranges from 125-168 pounds), and excluding highly muscular athletes who need to utilize a separate set of guidelines, "overweight" includes people up to 202 pounds (20 percent above the "healthy" recommended limit), and "obesity" is anything from 203 pounds upwards. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 69 percent of adults age 20 and over were overweight in 2012, including those who were obese, and "more than one-third of all U.S. adults are obese." The numbers are considerably higher when we consider solely the 40-60 year olds. The percent of overweight adults is on the rise.

The average person is overweight, and it has become normal to see overweight people out and about. Our perception of what is normal alters according to what we see on a regular basis. For example, a thin person has never suggested to me that I am too fat, but countless fat people have told me that I am too thin. At 5'9" tall and 150 pounds, my weight falls almost exactly in the middle of the recommended range, yet one obese man commented to his wife (a patient of mine), upon seeing me one day when I was running, that I looked "emaciated."

When it comes to health, "normal" implies healthy, but the words "common," "standard," and "average" do not.

August 25

Treat your health like you do your wealth.

Is your health your most valued commodity? Do you waste it here and there, letting it dribble out of your control like trying to hold on to a handful of quicksilver? Are you conservative with your health, or do you treat it as if it were available in unlimited supply? Is your basic approach to health accumulation one of “making more” or “spending less,” or perhaps some combination of the two? Do you figure that if you waste your health, you can always just get more, whenever you want it?

An amazing number of gadgets and technologies exist today that were inconceivable but good ideas when they were first introduced to us on the *Star Trek* television show in 1966. We have come to accept so many of these items into our normal everyday life that it seems we have also accepted a few that will likely never come to pass. “Beam me aboard,” has become part of the vernacular, even though converting organized matter into focused energy, and then converting it back into organized matter is a dream that is likely never going to become a reality. DeForest Kelley played Dr. Leonard H. “Bones” McCoy throughout the *Star Trek* series, and he used his trusted “medical tricorder” with amazing efficiency both in diagnosing and in treating his patients. Today, such tricorders actually exist, at least for use in some diagnostic purposes. But the days of doctors waving their instruments over seriously ill and injured patients, recanting the stock, “You’re all better now,” and handing out total immediate cures are as far from reality today as they were in 1966.

In 1971, then-President Richard M. Nixon officially declared the “War on Cancer.” Doctors and researchers promised that the cure was “just around the corner.” Thirty years later, researchers indicated their opinions that we were no closer to a cure than we were when the “war” began. Today, we have yet to turn that corner, other than to have shown, as we knew all along, that lifestyle, and not medicine, holds the true key to cancer prevention. The same can be safely said about heart disease, diabetes, and many of today’s other top killers. In fact, of the 10 leading causes of death in the U.S., only the tenth, suicide, would not be dramatically reduced if people would only live healthier lives. And there is much evidence to show that even many of the suicides were drug-induced, and would never have come to pass had those people been living more healthfully in the first place.

Conserve your health. Accumulate as much health as you can. Even when life intervenes and you are pushed to your limits, keep your health in mind. People have many times acquired millions after losing all their wealth, but no one comes back to life once all traces of health are snuffed.

August 26

**Ignore even the smallest aspect of your fitness,
and it will begin to melt away.**

Many people hope to successfully apply the old adage, “it’s like riding a bicycle,” to their fitness, thinking they can pull out stellar performances after putting in little to no training, usually with less than successful results. We somehow think that because we have done something in the past, we can just go out and do it again, with the same level of expertise, even after an inordinately long layoff. The first time you ride your bicycle after several seasons of having not done so, you may remember how to ride, but your fine control just isn’t there, and neither is your specific muscular endurance. Take two months off from the gym, and your strength will be down by 20 percent or more. Cardio, flexibility, neuro—it all goes, and quickly.

We see people re-injure themselves, time and again, vainly trying to recover from injury by getting back into exercising at the same intensity level at which they had been performing before the injury. If only they would be gentle with themselves, and more gradual in their approach, they would make far better progress without any of the setbacks. The classic “weekend warrior” (a sedentary person who typically only tests his/her physical prowess a few dozen times per year, at most) is so injury prone as to have had a syndrome named after this disastrous style of training. We humans are very good at doing what we are used to doing, but we require a bit of time when changing from one thing to the next. Our profound need for time in order to focus solely on what we are doing, and our predilection for giving ourselves insufficient time, is one of the primary reasons that the majority of all sports injuries occur during the first few minutes of any activity.

We must know ourselves, and have realistic assessments of our abilities, if we hope to pursue activities at the greatest level of enjoyment. Do too little, and we are left feeling unfulfilled. Attempt too much, and experience the injury and setbacks that are sure to come. Treading the fine line between doing too much and attempting too little comes with practice. Randy Pausch, professor of computer science and famous for his book, *The Last Lecture*, was once quoted as saying, “Experience is what you get when you didn’t get what you wanted.”

We tend to enjoy the things we are good at, practice, and get better at them, while we often do not enjoy doing those things we find more challenging, ignore them, and thus get worse. In his book, *Last Chance To See*, Douglas Adams wrote, “Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so.” If you know that you have been ignoring aspects of your fitness regimen, be it balance, agility, coordination, or anything else, now is the time to begin regaining what you have lost. Waiting till later is only going to make the process that much more difficult and less likely to happen.

August 27

Under conditions of high stress, body mechanics must be excellent, or something is going to give.

A well-tuned Formula 1 racecar could likely drive at 60 miles an hour for tens of thousands of miles, stopping only now and then for fuel and for the drivers to relieve themselves, without ever experiencing mechanical failure of any kind. But put that same car through the rigors of a race day, alternating between slamming on the brakes and pounding the accelerator, thousands of high-speed gear shifts, endless high G-force turns, and running at top speed for extended periods of time, and only a few cars out of every dozen will complete a three-hour race without experiencing technical difficulties, or worse, complete mechanical breakdown. Every part of the machine must run perfectly, or under conditions of high mechanical stress, it will fail.

The human body is no different in this regard. If we move well, utilize excellent body mechanics, implement leverage effectively, and are efficient with our use of energy, we can perform amazing feats with minimal risk of injury. But when our mechanics are poor, the likelihood of injury skyrockets. From the low impact, repetitive use injuries that occur from poor posture to the joint and connective tissue blowouts associated with high-end performance, the breakdown in function is almost always due to poor utilization of biomechanics.

The opposite is also true. Not only does the chance of injury drop dramatically when we use great biomechanics, our ability to perform improves too. Lift properly, and you can lift much more with less effort and less chance of injury. Athletes who perform their sports correctly with minimal wasted effort and all the effort focused on the movement they are effecting are said to make their performance look effortless. The ability to perform effortlessly is partly a matter of innate ability, but usually is the result of countless hours of coaching and analysis, tremendous attention to detail, and practice, practice, and more practice. To perform well, one must be willing to work at it.

Often, without the benefit of analysis, we cannot tell whether we are doing something well, or not. Someone might think they are pounding the heck out of a tennis serve, but when clocked, find that the serve is only 60 miles per hour. A weightlifter might think s/he knows what s/he is doing, as everything seems easy enough, but when the weights get really heavy s/he first realizes how many little details there are, and how much each of those details matters, or the lift fails.

One of the main comments I hear from people who have switched from traditional shock-absorbing running shoes to the “barefoot” style of shoe is, “No more sprained ankles.” I find this comment very telling indeed. Take advantage of having a coach observe your form, watch video of yourself when you perform, and use the objective analysis tools that can clock your performance. You will benefit from such analysis, perform better, get hurt less, and likely experience a lot more joy in the process.

August 28

Give yourself an extra hour of sleep every night for a week, and you will be more productive during your waking hours, feel better, and even end up with more free time than usual.

How often do you find yourself walking around in a fog, not knowing what, exactly, you are supposed to be doing next? How much of your time do you spend daydreaming, wasting time, or needing to distract yourself from the work at hand? How often do you put off doing the big (important) jobs because they require just too much energy to really focus in on? Do you get much done in the hour after lunch, or does your effectiveness seem to dissipate at that time? Do you rise in the morning ready to jump out of bed, or would you rather roll over and get an extra hour or two of sleep? Where has your motivation gone, your joie de vivre, your enthusiasm, and your willingness to do a little extra? Do you have the energy to train with your mates after work? Do you look forward to the next time your children ask you to play with them, or do you dread it? When talking with friends or telling a story, do you forget what you were talking about, or lose your train of thought? Do you find yourself yawning more, volunteering less, and basically feeling tired all the time? Do you zip around your house getting things done, or do you look at what needs doing and figure it will all wait for tomorrow? Do coffee, chocolate, and other stimulants seem more appealing than they used to? Do you need an alarm clock in order to be sure you get up on time? Have you just plain gotten used to being tired all the time? If you are like most people, and could answer yes to almost all of the above questions, you are sleep-deprived.

The need for sleep, and the functional compromises sleep deprivation generates, is difficult to spot, primarily because you are too tired to notice. Often, tiredness is insidious, meaning it operates and proceeds in an inconspicuous or seemingly harmless way but actually exerts a profound and grave effect. Every cell of every tissue, every organ, and every function is adversely affected by sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation is a surefire method for accelerating the aging process.

People are generally deeply surprised at how much more sleep their body will accept when they perform the sleep experiment of getting to bed intentionally early, and giving themselves all the sleep they desire. I have seen people who were used to getting 36 hours of sleep per week soak up 77 hours for weeks on end when given the chance. I have known people to sleep for 36 hours nonstop. One client slept for 72 hours, only waking to occasionally have a sip of water or to relieve himself. One client slept 20 hours per day for 30 days in a row before finally saying that she felt fully refreshed.

Give yourself the gift of getting all the sleep your body desires. You will never sleep too much; your body is incapable of that. Your health depends upon many factors, and getting enough sleep affects them all.

August 29

To tan is healthy, but to burn is harmful, every time.

We only need relatively brief, regular exposure to the sun's rays in order to get the full nutritional benefits, but there are other health benefits to being out in the sun that are rarely discussed when the topic of "to tan or not to tan" is on the table. Sun exposure lifts our mood. Sunlight affects our chemistry so as to make us more awake in the day by decreasing melatonin production, which fosters increased melatonin production later in the day, making us better able to experience good quality sleep at night. The sun's ultraviolet rays are essential for disinfecting the skin, the lymph, and the blood, to the point that without sufficient sunlight, kidney function is compromised. The sun provides warmth that we can all appreciate. Without exposure to the sun's rays, we cannot achieve proper bone growth or fully contract our muscles. Sunlight actually fosters the body's creation of many anti-cancer factors and immune responses. People with asthma do better when they get more sunlight. Sunlight has even been shown valuable to help prevent dementia and other forms of brain aging. Cholesterol levels go down with sun exposure, as cholesterol is converted to steroid hormones and sex hormones as a result of being in the sun. A wide array of skin disorders benefit from sun exposure, including but not limited to psoriasis, acne, eczema, and various fungal infections. Blood pressure drops when relaxing in the sun, and hardening of the arteries can actually reverse as a result of sunbathing. Lack of sun exposure is known to stunt the growth of children. Even the uptake and delivery of oxygen through the bloodstream improves when we go out in the sun.

Just as you would never want to be burned by a fire or any hot substance, being burned by the sun does cause damage, and that damage is often cumulative. While mild sun exposure aids skin health, burning results in premature aging of the skin. In fact, many of the conditions that are known to benefit from sunlight show the opposite response to overexposure and sunburn. To be perfectly clear, sunburn is a form of radiation burn, and the symptoms of severe sunburn are strikingly similar to those of radiation poisoning associated with exposure to high levels of radioactivity.

A diet rich in raw fruits and vegetables does seem to impart some degree of protection against sunburn, but the wise person will use appropriate clothing and be propitious about sun exposure in order to prevent incurring harm from the sun's rays.

August 30

**An ideal food for human consumption is
one from which you can make a complete meal.**

If you were wandering through some natural setting, whether in jungle, savanna, or any other habitat, one of your main considerations would be your ability to obtain food. For this conversation, let's say you found a banana plant with ripe bananas. Would your first order of business be to start looking for something to eat along with the bananas, such as dates, or perhaps a head of romaine, or would you just eat the bananas, and after resting for a while, casually move on? In fact, in nature, every animal eats one food at a time until full, or until the food runs out. No animal ever bothers creating a complex salad, slaw, sandwich, soup, or any other type of combination, let alone eating a meal with multiple courses, each a complex dish in its own right.

The world of food is not as black and white as some people would have it, however, resulting in many misconceptions and misinterpretations that often lead to less than satisfactory results. The concept of an "ideal food" opens the door to the thought that foods that aren't "ideal" are "less than ideal," meaning suboptimal, and are therefore to be shunned. To fully understand our food needs, we must realize that food serves many functions, and gleaning sufficient carbohydrates is just one of them. For this purpose, fruit is the ideal food. Carbohydrates must be diluted before they can be utilized. The sugar in fruit is so concentrated that in many cases the water in the fruit is insufficient to keep us properly hydrated. For hydration purposes, salad vegetables supply a very high water-to-carbohydrate ratio, making them an excellent food for hydration purposes, and a great balance to fruit. Of course, water is the ideal food for hydration, but it contains no carbohydrates, and few if any available minerals. Fruit supplies all the minerals we need, but the ratio of sodium to potassium is skewed to immensely favor potassium. For a higher ratio of sodium, we must turn back to salad vegetables.

A diet of vegetables might be adequate nutritionally, except for the fact that you could not possibly obtain sufficient calories to meet your needs by eating nothing but whole vegetables. An active man would have to eat roughly 75 heads of lettuce per day, or more, to meet his calorie needs, and not even Cool Hand Luke could eat that much lettuce. But even if he did manage the amazing feat once, he likely would not want to see another head of lettuce again for a very long time. For sheer calories, nuts and seeds just can't be beaten, but the calories are typically 70-80 percent from fat, hence they do not meet our basic drive for a diet that is high in simple sugars. The distinctive flavors of herbs add an element of pleasure to eating that few if any other foods can match.

Telling someone you really like their outfit should not be misconstrued to mean that you did not like their clothing on other days. Recognizing that food from which you can make an entirely satisfying meal is an ideal food does not make other foods automatically suboptimal.

August 31

A clean, healthy body, properly cared for, generates no foul odors.

One of the least enjoyable aspects of leaving home is going into a public restroom. Sad but true, some public bathrooms are even worse than expected, and though perhaps an equal number are somewhat better than expected, even if the place is clean and bright, the olfactory experience is almost always nasty. Why? The smell of rotting flesh and souring starch is so profound ... and to the human nose seems ... wrong.

Newcomers to 80/10/10 (811) invariably comment on the fact that their body, and the waste it produces, no longer smells foul. "I had mangoes for dinner last night, and today my poop smelled like mango, or maybe like mango perfume," they often say. The reason they even bother to mention this exotic fact is exactly because the change is so noticeable, so extreme, and so unexpected as to be noteworthy. Bathroom business is usually a private matter, but that too is precisely because the usual results are so unspeakably horrific. Clean, easy, odorless, effortless, quick, efficient, satisfying, and complete bowel movements are practically unheard of, essentially unknown, except on *The 80/10/10 Diet*. Try convincing your friends that yours don't stink.

But wait, there's more. On 811, bad breath becomes a thing of the past. Of course, you must still take care of your teeth and gums, performing oral hygiene practices such as regular brushing, but once you stop eating meat and dairy, the decay in your digestive tract no longer emerges with every exhale. And body odor changes too, for the better. Ever notice how sweet a baby smells? On a standard Western diet, the liver and kidneys simply cannot keep pace, cannot eliminate the toxic debris as quickly as it is being consumed. Some of the excess waste comes out of our pores, and you can smell it. No wonder the Japanese referred to the Americans as "the butter people." To them, Americans actually smelled like rancid butter!

Just say no to the foul eructations! Sour stomach be gone! Objectionable foot odor, underarm odor, foul gas, and other areas and fluids known for their objectionable aroma become things of the past on 811, as we stop playing host to the microbes that had to deal with the overload of toxic matter our bodies had commonly been exposed to. Have you ever been told to go take a shower, that you and your clothing stink after a vigorous workout? With *The 80/10/10 Diet*, you will put such issues into your past. Sweat with confidence. Heck, on *The 80/10/10 Diet*, you can sweat with pride.

SEPTEMBER

Back to school and work means a tremendous amount of sitting. Make sure that all of your summer's health gains are not lost this month.

From a health perspective, the long cold winter need not start any sooner than necessary. With its short and cold days, limited exposure to sunlight, and way too many sedentary indoor options, the winter can be a potential health disaster. The solution is to draw the summer out, making the wondrous season and all its benefits last as long as possible. While it might be tempting to hit the books hard, or go back to work after the summer holidays and get as much done as possible during the 90 days before “the lost month” is upon us, do not give up your hard-earned fitness and those healthy adaptations to the outdoor life too easily. Take advantage of the long, sunny autumn afternoons by being productive in the great outdoors. The garden needs putting to bed, the leaves need raking, and when it's warm enough, there is plenty of recreating yet to be had this year.

Fortunately, the food is great all year round, and the choices keep changing with the seasons. September brings some of the best grapes of the year, the sweetest melons, and all the best of the stone fruit season. Look for plenty of bargains, as September is the height of harvest time.

Hold on to summer, allowing it dovetail into autumn seamlessly. Relish in a bit of September sun, and remember to take time for recreation. Winter will be upon you soon enough, so be sure to get in all the “summer” you can. September is a great time for hiking, cycling, cross country running, and many of the activities for which summer was just too hot. Using your legs for such activities offers great relief and balances the tedious hours of sitting in school or at work. As the year begins to draw to a close, the pace of life often becomes progressively more rushed. Make sure you get your sleep in September, so that you are as ready as you can be for the hectic pace of autumn.

September 1

**Heated fats not only cloud one's thinking,
they hasten cancer's growth and development,
foster heart disease, and generally destroy health.
They are also extremely fattening.**

Cooked fats are sticky, as if you did not already know. Tell me you have never had to scrape baked cheese off of a dish. Not surprisingly, this sticky quality works inside our arteries just as effectively as it does on pots and pans, but with disastrous results. Normally, the interior wall of the arteries is slick, allowing nothing to adhere, thus keeping the arteries open and fully functional by maximizing blood flow. But heated fats can stick to the artery wall and accumulate, effectively narrowing and eventually blocking the arteries. When arteries such as those to the heart or the brain become totally clogged, we are obviously in very serious trouble indeed.

Sports scientists and medical researchers have each clearly demonstrated the compromised ability to uptake, transport, and deliver oxygen into, through, and from the blood vessels and to the cells as the fat levels in the blood rise. Such compromise results in various functional losses, depending upon the locations affected. Reduce the oxygen levels reaching the brain, and our ability to concentrate is negatively affected. We feel groggy, sleepy, lose focus, and, if alert enough, realize we are in need of fresh air. If not, we nod off....

Every cell of the body requires oxygen, but at oxygen levels where most cells thrive, cancer cells are none too happy. Cancer cells prefer low oxygen environments, such as those created when we consume large quantities of fatty foods. Hyperbaric chambers, booths that “force” higher than normal levels of oxygen into our system, are currently used as a treatment for cancer. This is a classic case of treating the symptoms while ignoring the cause. The solution lies in reducing overall fat consumption to less than 10 percent of total calories consumed.

Fat can build up on the inside of the arteries, reducing the effectiveness of the heart's ability to output and circulate blood. Arteries bring blood to the chambers of the heart, and also feed blood to the cells of the heart. When either of these sets of arteries is compromised, heart disease results. Another form of heart disease occurs when fat deposits accumulate on the valves of the heart, effectively preventing the valves from opening fully or closing completely.

Unless we consume a sufficient volume of food to feel full, we will not feel satisfied, and will be driven to eat more food. Fatty foods pack more than double the calories per bite than carbohydrate-rich foods, making it far easier to overeat, in terms of calories, on fatty foods than it is on foods whose primary calorie source is carbohydrates. Couple this with the fact that sugars “spoil” your appetite, whereas fats do not, and it is easy to see how the high-fat experiment of the past hundred years has led to our current obesity epidemic.

September 2

We add more fat to our starchy foods to make them palatable than we add anything else.

Perfect sense dictates that we designate a food to the group from which its primary calorie source derives. Hence, we refer to bananas as a carbohydrate food, because most of the banana's calories are carbohydrates. Yet we refer to meats, dairy, and eggs as protein foods, even though the calories in most animal-based foods are primarily fat. Starches are a type of complex carbohydrate, and we refer to most starchy foods as starches or carbohydrates.

- A potato is a starchy tuber that tends to contain about 1 percent of its calories as fat, and 7 percent as protein. Calling a potato a carbohydrate is logical.
- Potato chips, on average, are about two-thirds fat, by calorie, yet we still call potato chips carbohydrates.
- Corn carries about 10 percent of its calories from fat and another 10 percent from protein, and properly deserves to be called a carbohydrate food.
- Eat a piece of cornbread with a little butter (no one eats cornbread without butter or some other fat source), and the fat content surges to roughly 50 percent of the total, actually more fat than carbohydrate.
- Basic pasta comes in at under 5 percent calories from fat and close to 15 percent from protein. Certainly this is a carbohydrate food.
- Look up the nutritional information for most of the traditional pasta and olive oil recipes and around 50 percent of the calories are from fat, more fat than carbohydrate, again.
- Whereas pizza crust has only 4 percent of its calories as fat, and perhaps 15 percent protein, the finished pizza contains from about one-third to one-half of its calories as fat, depending upon the type of pizza you create. Even then, only about 18 percent of the pizza's calories are from protein. Once again, we have a food that really should be thought of as a fat, and referred to as such.

While most grains have less than a 10 percent fat content, almost half the calories in most doughnuts come from fat. Apparently, we just do not really enjoy eating our starches, unless we drown them in fat, and turn them into foods that, at least by calorie, are primarily and predominantly fat. Apparently we just feel better about ourselves when we convince ourselves that what we are eating is mostly carbohydrate, rather than fat. That way, when we are told to cut our carbohydrates in order to lose weight, we can blame the starches, in spite of the fact that none of the native people who live on a primarily starch-based diets tend to have any issues with overweight.

Sure, we add sugar to our pastries, breakfast cereals, breads, cakes, and other confections, but for the most part, what we add is fat. Starch, by definition, is flavorless. With the addition of fat, sugar, salt, and some spices, a good chef can even make cardboard (usually considered an inedible starchy carbohydrate source) into a delicacy. Hopefully, you would never eat those environmentally safe packing peanuts, even though they are made from starch. Though they are not generally considered “food,” I hear they taste quite delicious when fried with onions and swimming in olive oil. I could not find the caloronutrient ratio for this dish, but I am confident that the calories from fat far outweigh those from carbohydrate, proving once again that if you add sufficient fat, you can make even the most tasteless food palatable.

September 3

Preparing healthful and nutritious meals is easy.

Making healthy meals that are also nutritious has never been easier, because year-round access to Nature's amazing array of delectable fruits and vegetables has never been better. Many fruits and vegetables are now intentionally grown in four or five choice locations around the world so as to be able to provide year-round uninterrupted access to freshly harvested produce.

Production in one location begins as a former location peters out. A wide variety of crops also lend themselves to growing under glass, a production method that is rapidly gaining popularity. Glasshouse growers can provide high-quality produce for nine to twelve months per year (depending upon whether they utilize supplemental lighting), while requiring little or no insecticides and gaining a huge production advantage by not losing crops to cold, wind, hail, or the other ravages of nature.

An ever-increasing number of raw recipe guides are on the market, making it possible for even total beginners to make practically any raw dish with the flair and artistry of a professional, although admittedly perhaps not as quickly. Many of the more discerning books use only 100 percent raw ingredients, and a few, such as *The NEW High Energy Recipe Guide* and the entire *80/10/10 Simply Delicious Recipes* series, even make the point of using proper food combining throughout. For those so inclined, there are chef training retreats geared specifically to the raw chef, and the 811 Culinary Skills Week trains 811rv chef hopefuls.

However, the real key to making nutritious food lies in its edibility. Whereas the simple sugars in fruits are extremely appealing to humans, plain starchy foods are tasteless and unappealing. Dr. John McDougall, after years of recommending that we shun salt entirely, changed his mind, reversed his position, and began adding salt to his tasteless, starch-based dishes. His thought was, he said, "What's the point of offering healthy foods, if no one will eat them?" Hopefully, every chef cares whether the food tastes good. With fruits and vegetables, you have an unfair advantage over the people who attempt to make cooked food taste good, because raw fruits and vegetables are naturally appealing to us. They offer colors, textures, aromas, and flavors that automatically attract our attention, and that we inherently seek. Fruits and vegetables come in sizes and shapes that are ergonomically correct for us to handle and consume.

After serving a meal, other than inquiring whether we enjoyed the food, the host really only has one other question, which is, "Did you get enough?" Once again, fruits and vegetables have the almost unfair advantage of being relatively high in water and in fiber, making meals of such fare far more voluminous than any refined foods could ever be. When you start with world-class ingredients like fruits and vegetables, it is hard to go wrong when it comes to serving delicious and nutritious dishes.

September 4

The damage done by our unhealthy habits cannot be undone by our healthy habits.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if life were like a chalkboard? You could fill it up with all sorts of stuff: study, party, late nights, junk food, work, sports injuries, alcohol, sickness, STDs, car accidents, overtraining, overeating, harsh words, etc., and then erase it all with a good night's sleep, like wiping a slate clean with a wet cloth. Well, life isn't like a chalkboard. Life is more like a piece of early American furniture, where every ding and damage is cumulative, and has a story behind it. You have history. On the furniture, you can see every nick, cut, bump, bruise, blemish, and break. We heal, and though some of the healing leaves scars, healing takes energy from your vital reserves, and wears you down. Had it not been used for healing, you would have been able to put that energy to a purpose that was more in line with you reaching your goals.

Smoking and running are two very contradictory pastimes. While running tends to improve one's breathing abilities, smoking impairs them. Running will not make up for, obviate, undo, or otherwise erase the detrimental effects of smoking. Imagine growing a crop of tomatoes in pots, in a greenhouse. If you nurture your tomato plants every day of the season, but on the one hot day that they need water the most, you forget to water them, you could lose your entire crop. If you say 100 kind, supportive, and constructive things to a person, and then say something horribly mean, the words are said, and the damage is done. You cannot take them back, and no amount of further kind gestures can undo those harsh words, or their lasting effect.

In the same way, you do not undo the benefit of taking great care of yourself by doing some harm to yourself. I am often asked if one can negate the benefits of a fast, or some healing regimen, or an extended period of healthy eating, by falling off the wagon in some way or another. The good you do yourself is cumulative, as is the harm.

Of course, your body adapts, heals, and recovers, which is the entire point of fitness training, and the rationale for healthful living. Based upon the quality of the SFIC to which you expose yourself will be the quality of the health your body can build for you.

September 5

Steak and potatoes have been replaced by fruits and vegetables.

For decades, meat and potatoes were recognized as the food of choice for athletes from all walks of sport. With the advent of the false concept known as “carb loading,” athletes began paying more attention to the carbohydrates in their diet. Many athletes made a profound switch in their foods of preference, no longer choosing steak and potatoes, but preferring instead potatoes and steak. To the reader, this may seem like no big deal, but trust me, this shift was huge, as it opened the door for veganism to enter the world of sport, which it did in a big way.

So successful have vegan athletes been in every field of sport that a few brave and forward-thinking athletes began to wonder what would happen if they totally tweaked their diets and embraced a raw food approach. Thus began the world of the 80/10/10 athlete, an arena that has been growing in leaps and bounds. At first, it was just the endurance athletes who clambered on board, but due to their outstanding successes, the strength athletes followed very closely behind them. The acrobats, dancers, bodybuilders, and extreme sport athletes quickly joined in too.

Today, endurance sports are dominated by raw vegan athletes. 811 raw vegan athletes are winning events of all types. 811 powerlifters are pulling triple their weight deadlifts. An 811 athlete recently won the UK Ninja, a challenging sporting event open to all comers. The world’s fastest men, professional tennis’s most dominant women, Olympic septathletes, and athletes from all sports are choosing 811. The days of steak and potatoes are over, and the days of potatoes and steak are numbered. “Fruits and vegetables” is quickly becoming the winner’s catchphrase, the trade secret of the committed athlete.

Those participants in the middle of the pack look to the winners, and seeing them eating fruits and vegetables, they too are doing more of the same. The team tables in many sports are already dominated by a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables. The change is coming quickly. Will you be a leader, or a follower, in the switch to the 80/10/10 lifestyle?

September 6

Salt deadens the taste buds' abilities to sense anything other than more salt.

“It has no taste without salt.” That’s not saying much for the chef, eh? In fact, what is really being said is, “I can no longer taste any flavor other but salt.” How sad is that?

When I watch people salt their food before even tasting it, I feel a rush of emotions. I am saddened, outraged, fascinated, and amazed at how brave these people must be. I am saddened that people still fall for the myth that they need to add salt to their food. I am outraged that in a day and age with so much information available, people are still adding salt to their food, in spite of knowing many of the serious health hazards and implications of doing so. I am fascinated about what type of lives these people live, what they do, and what they eat that leads them to use salt at all, let alone add extra salt before tasting the food. I wonder how many times they tasted their food and realized it needed salt, and then added it, before they had progressed to the realization that even if they added salt before tasting the food, they would not be disappointed or feel they had overdone it. How many more times did that have to happen before they had finally just started adding salt to food as soon as it was served? I am amazed that anyone could be so brave as to use salt to change the flavor of the food they were served, as if it were a form of Russian Roulette.

Whereas when exposed to salt, the taste buds essentially go at least partially numb to all flavors other than salt for a period of a few hours, production of the hormone aldosterone can be impaired for up to two months and longer. Aldosterone plays a role in sodium regulation in order to help keep blood pressure normal. As salt consumption goes up, aldosterone production goes down. ANH, atrial natriuretic hormone, is produced by tissue in the heart. ANH also plays a role in regulating blood pressure, but functions in exactly the opposite way of aldosterone, with production of ANH rising as sodium levels rise. In fact, increases in ANH stimulate the adrenals to reduce production of aldosterone. Increased ANH levels affects function of the kidneys, adrenals, blood vessels, and the heart muscle, and results in increased levels of fatty acids in the bloodstream, almost never considered a healthy result.

A world with only one flavor would be as drab as a world with only one color, or one sound, or one smell. I feel so sorry for the people whose food has no flavor without the addition of salt. Although these people say that it is the food that has no taste, obviously it is the people who have lost their sense of taste, and with each dose of added salt, their health progressively dissipates.

September 7

Have you ever questioned why salt is added to sports drinks?

Water is the ultimate thirst quencher. Salt is the ultimate thirst creator. Dehydration is the ultimate performance destroyer. Some people argue that water is technically not a nutrient, but only a “dilutant,” or a carrier for nutrients. Virtually all the nutrition books disagree, saying that water most definitely is a nutrient. Helen Guthrie, in her classic college-level book, *Introductory Nutrition*, declares that water is the most important of all nutrients. Either way, water remains the ideal thirst quencher.

While sugar also makes us thirsty, salt is the ultimate thirst creator. Eat a pound of sugar and you may become a bit dehydrated, and possibly even become tired as a result, though more than likely you will grow weary of eating sugar before finishing the experiment. Eat an eighth of a pound of salt (two ounces), and you will die of dehydration, and there would be very little if anything that anyone could do about it.

Dehydration exerts profound effects upon every cell, tissue, and organ of the body, and all of them are negative. The brain monitors hydration in the blood, and also receives messages from the cells of the body pertaining to their hydration levels, and makes the appropriate adaptations. Anti-diuretic hormone, often referred to as ADH, is produced by the pituitary when given notice to do so by the hypothalamus, which constantly monitors water concentration in the blood. Perhaps this is too much background information, so let us mention briefly some of the symptoms you might expect as dehydration sets in: thirst, dark-colored urine, dizziness, headache, tiredness, weakness, and reduced urine frequency. Chronic dehydration threatens proper kidney function and leads to increased risk of kidney stones.

If the purpose of a sports drink is rehydration, and the result of consuming salt is dehydration, why add salt to a sports drink? Research scientists “discovered” that since sweet drinks tend to kill the appetite, just adding sugar to the sports drinks, even though that was all that was needed, would not do the job because athletes just wouldn’t drink enough of the stuff. By adding salt, not only was the strong sugary taste somewhat counterbalanced, but the drink itself actually made you thirsty, causing you to consume even more of the stuff. Thus the names “sports drink” and “electrolyte replacement fluid” were used, rather than simply calling the drink a “rehydration fluid,” because, technically, the drink can actually dehydrate you, and leave you more thirsty than before you drank it. This approach works out well for the sellers, and the strong marketing force seems to satisfy all but the most discerning athletes. No one bothers to mention that for most athletes in most situations, a simple glass of water would have been far more effective.

September 8

Play is more fun than work, so rather than workout, go out and play.

Children have no inherent sense of work ethic, but they have a built-in sense telling them to play. Given the chance, kids will play all day long. Adults welcome every interruption from work, even going to the extreme of creating their own interruptions. Adults know that any distraction from work is valid, good, and worth taking, but play is the best distraction of all, every time. There is nothing like a quick game of desktop football with a coworker to break up a monotonous task. Nothing gets the blood moving like a bit of hacky sack around the water cooler, using a bunched-up sheet of paper for the pelota. Children play for fun, and become incredibly fit as a result. Adults who play tennis or soccer are notoriously fit. We sure do not get fit from sitting at a desk all day. Why would anyone ever introduce the concept of work into an arena dominated by play? There is no work in a workout, nor should there be, because if there were, you would be looking for an interruption from it, rather than using your play time as an interruption from work.

When you were little, none of your friends came to your house to find out if you could work. They came to see if you were available to play. Apparently, in the same way that we adults never want to get caught sleeping (we will vigorously deny having been asleep when we answer the telephone, or the doorbell, even when our sleepiness is quite obvious to the other person), we also never want to be found to have been playing. We play golf and tennis quite proudly, but when we go to the gym, it is to perform a workout. Adding an element of work to your play is counterproductive.

The very concept of doing a workout brings to mind thoughts of a penalty rather than those of a reward. Work is something you have to do, not something you would choose to do. We dread Mondays, and the workweek that comes with it, while we anxiously await Friday afternoons, excitedly anticipating the weekend and the free playtime that it brings. Find ways to bring an element of play into your fitness training. Change your mindset, and change your vocabulary, to better reflect the fact that you want to train, you enjoy your training, and that training is fun. Play at it, rather than work at it. Throw yourself into your fitness play, rather than methodically going through a workout, and see for yourself that you not only enjoy it more, but you get more from it as well. Go out and play, and have a good time. I would write more on this topic, but I have to get out and play.

September 9

Everyone loves fruit, and fruit makes a great meal, all by itself.

I was skiing with four friends at Lake Tahoe, Nevada, on the California border. When lunchtime came, we decided to eat at an outdoor barbeque and picnic area at the top of the mountain. I had brought my own lunch, a bag of dates that I had kept from freezing by putting them in my inner coat pocket, along with a couple of apples and some celery sticks to end the meal. The guys went to the grill and each came back with a burger on a tray. Without saying a word, I watched, flabbergasted, as each of them opened their little burger, added ketchup, removed the single leaf of lettuce, then closed and ate the burger....

Everyone loves fruit.

Some people do not like broccoli. Some people do not like tomatoes. Some people do not like cheese, or meat, or eggs, or fish, or chicken, or lettuce. Some people will not eat salads. Some people do not like salt. Some people do not like onions. Some people do not like beer, or wine, or tobacco, or recreational drugs.

Everyone loves fruit.

Fruit is the only food you can make a meal of and get all the nutrients you came to the table for. Water, calories, nutrients, fiber, and all the other things you need, you can easily obtain from a meal of fruit. Various foods are favored in different parts of the world, but fruit is held in high esteem by everyone.

Everyone loves fruit.

Many people say that they have a difficult time keeping enough fruit in the house for themselves because everyone else in the family eats it. If you invite people to a meal and put fruit on the table along with everything else, you can count on everyone having at least some fruit.

Everyone loves fruit.

Some people might think it odd that others do not eat meat. Some people might think it peculiar that others abstain from starches. Some people might find it unusual if someone does not eat cheese or dairy. Some people are intrigued if someone else does not drink alcohol. No one thinks it strange if you eat a piece of fruit, because everyone loves fruit.

People eat fruit before meals, during meals, after meals, and even in-between meals. With *The 80/10/10 Diet*, we introduce the concept that fruit is complete in and of itself, and that a meal of fruit is a fine meal indeed.

Everyone loves fruit.

September 10

During intense or extended exercise, if you wait to drink until you are thirsty, you are likely too late and already in trouble.

According to sports science, measurable decline in performance is noted when hydration levels drop by as little as one percent of total body weight. Strength, endurance, speed, and other significant factors are affected adversely. During heavy exercise, especially in hot weather, a grown man could sweat off one percent of his weight in a matter of 15 minutes! No wonder we see marathon runners, triathletes, and Tour de France riders drinking water every few minutes.

When exercising heavily, especially when there is a strong cardio component to the exertions, much of our digestive functioning is depressed. Digestion and absorption are effectively put on hold so that the body's physiology can best support the exercise being undertaken. When at rest, a person might drink two or three glasses of water, one right after the next, with no problem. Many people can easily drink a quart of water, and some people two quarts, with no repercussions, requiring but a few minutes to absorb the lot. But when performing intense cardio exercise, more than just a few sips of water will likely result in great discomfort, as the water will simply sit in the stomach and slosh around, and will not be absorbed. Small quantities of water consumed often will work far better than waiting until you are a quart or two behind in your water needs. You will be more comfortable, and will perform better, if you drink small quantities with frequency.

Hence we have a clear case of intellect over instinct. Performance will be hindered before you even sense that you are thirsty. If you know you are going to be intensely active for an extended time, or in extremely hot conditions, or both, drinking sufficient water is a must—before during and after you exercise. The risk of heat exhaustion is real.

While it is true that those of us following the principles of *The 80/10/10 Diet* tend to have more physiological leeway than others when it comes to hydration, because we tend to stay better hydrated, we still are affected adversely when our water levels go low. You must do more than simply obey your thirst. You must pay attention to the other dehydration signals your body gives, plan ahead for extended exertions, and respect the weather conditions. Do not wait until thirst threatens to bring your play to a halt. Drink as you go, and stay hydrated. When dehydration hits, it isn't pretty, and your ability to stay active will grind to a halt, possibly for many days.

September 11

Athletes have eaten fruit since the beginning of recorded history, and likely for long before then.

Every time anthropologists study the teeth of early man, they invariably discover, and proclaim as if to their surprise, that we were primarily eaters of fruits and shoots (tender greens). Somehow, the myth of early man surviving by hunting and eating wild animals persists, in spite of evidence to the contrary. Anyone who has ever walked in nature knows that fruit, with its bright, tantalizing colors, is simple to spot. Berries are especially alluring, easy to pick (watch out for the thorns, and the snakes), and in fact are quite difficult to resist. Squirrels and other animals, small or large, are almost impossible to approach. Can you really imagine a man armed with a stick or a stone (heaven forbid him engaging in a “fair fight” by using his bare hands) getting close enough to a bear or a wild pig to do it mortal harm?

When we see fruit hanging from a tree, we see food. Hopefully, this is a sight we see every day. On the special occasions that we see ducks flying in formation, deer grazing, or other such displays of Nature’s grandeur, we are awestruck. The animals inspire us. Is it any wonder that early man immortalized the wild animals on his cave walls?

Every hunting animal does all it can to minimize the risk of being injured when pursuing prey. Wolves prefer to hunt mice and other rodents, in order to reduce the risk of being bitten, gored, kicked, or infected by the strike of a large animal. Lions and hyenas hunt in packs. Taking down an animal large enough to feed a group incurs great risk.

Man hunts for “sport” more than he hunts for food, but only when the man has an unfair advantage. Wrestlers compete by weight class, as even a difference of a few pounds poses an unfair differential. Where is the sport in a 200-pound man pulling a two-pound fish out of the water? One has a comfortable rod in his hands, and the other has a painful hook through its cheek. A deer is simply no match for a man with a gun. That’s not sport, that’s murder.

The origin of the modern Olympics has its roots in ancient Greece. Figs, grapes, pomegranates, cactus fruit, and other fresh fruit featured heavily in the diet of the day. When the season did not provide for fresh fruit, dried figs and raisins were abundant.

Sergio Oliva, known as “The Myth” for his epic, almost unbelievable proportions, is the only man to ever beat Arnold Schwarzenegger in a Mr. Olympia competition. When discussing his diet, Sergio often mentioned the large quantities of fresh fruits that he consumed, giving special mention to pineapple.

September 12

The old saying that approximately one ounce of salt is all that is required to kill a grown man is somewhat outdated.

Obviously, this is not an experiment we are going to try, and please, do not try this one at home, either. Truth be told, it is difficult to consume a sufficient quantity of salt to kill yourself on the spot, as large quantities of salt consumption will make you vomit. Excessive salt consumption has been linked to at least 10 percent of all heart disease deaths. Today, average salt consumption is more than double what is recommended by health professionals, and roughly quadruple or more of what it was a few centuries ago. To the degree that we can become accustomed to consuming salt, we have done so. When we consume no added salt in our diet at all, a variety of hormones in the body work in concert to help us hold on to our sodium, a function known as “sparing.” When we add salt to our food, bodily production of these hormones is altered so as to aid the body in eliminating excess sodium. This adjustment in bodily physiology is sufficient to require more than double the salt it would take to kill a non-user of salt than it would take to kill a habitual user. At the same time, the size and weight of the average person has increased dramatically over the past few centuries. For instance, when looking at ancient Mayan ruins, one immediately notes that the size of doorways and steps is much less than those in use today, two clear hints that the people were smaller. Historians estimate that the average Mayan man likely weighed no more than 100 pounds! The ceiling height in many of the oldest British houses still in use is often no more than six feet, another indication that the inhabitants used to be considerably shorter. Of greater importance, the average man today weighs in excess of 40 pounds more than was average for a man a mere 100 years ago.

Current assumptions are that to kill a person requires consumption of roughly one gram of salt for every kilogram of body weight. For a modern man, who weighs roughly 85 kilograms, this means that three ounces of salt would be required, as there are roughly 28.35 grams per ounce. A few centuries ago, however, when the average man weighed about 125 pounds, two ounces of salt were more than sufficient for the job. When coupled with the fact that people in the past had less access to salt and were thus far more susceptible to its influence, gives credence to the adage that one ounce of salt was sufficient to kill a man.

September 13

For good digestion, keep meals simple.

For optimum nutrition, keep meals varied throughout the year.

Many myths about nutrition are incredibly persistent, even after they have been disproven time and again. Fruit has no protein, only meat offers complete protein, cooked food is better than raw, B12 comes from eating meat, the right diet will cure everything, humans are natural starch eaters, eating fat makes you skinny, to name just a few. One of the biggest myths is the idea that you need to eat a bit of everything, every day, in order to be well-nourished. We all know this is not true, because practically every adult has been sick enough at one time or another to have gone a day or two without eating anything at all, and gotten well in spite of not eating. Certainly if your nutritional health required you to eat all your nutrients every day, no one would get healthier by skipping a few meals, yet we see exactly that happen, time and again.

In nature, animals tend to eat one food at a time. They will eat that same food until they are full, or until they run out of food. They may also stop eating when, on rare occasions, the process of obtaining the food becomes too cumbersome, or when some other animal chases them off their food. There is no salad tree in nature, and no fruit cocktail bush. If you find yourself under an apricot tree, you make a meal of apricots.

Our digestive system works best when we follow the basic guidelines provided by nature. By reducing the number of ingredients in a dish, and minimizing the number of courses in a meal, we set the stage for optimum digestion. When you digest your food better, you absorb nutrients from the food better, and experience overall better nutrition and consequently, better health. Food combining for improved digestion has helped countless millions of people to bring an end to their digestive discomfort and distress.

Variety is more than the spice of life. Nature supplies an unending yearly cycle of variety when it comes to fruits and vegetables. Long before you have a chance to grow tired of strawberries, they go out of season, only to be replaced by raspberries, then gooseberries, then blueberries, then blackberries, and finally cranberries, with many other berries tucked into the cycle as well. In the same way, cherries are followed by apricots, which are followed by nectarines, then peaches, and finally by plums. We look forward to each fruit in its turn, anxiously awaiting its arrival, and even while we are still enjoying one delicious fruit, the next one arrives, tempting us with its bright color and sweet aroma, luring us with its luscious texture and sweet flavor. While practically all fruits and vegetables contain almost all of the nutrients, the concentrations of each varies in every food, making some foods a better source of specific nutrients and some other food a better source of other nutrients. When eating a diet that is tempered by variety throughout the year, we neither miss out on specific nutrients, nor do we over-consume any specific nutrient, thus reducing the likelihood of experiencing either of the two common types of malnutrition, that of deficiency or that of excess.

September 14

How much sleep do you really need? Enough.

Anything less than enough sleep qualifies as “not enough.” Did you sleep enough last night? Can you remember the last time you slept enough? Do you bounce out of bed with the excitement and enthusiasm of a five-year-old, or do you drag yourself out of bed solely because there are things you simply “have to” do. Are you bright and cheery when you wake up, or are you Mr. or Ms. Grumpy? When you rise, do you shine? Are you ready to take on the world, or is your ‘get up and go’ still asleep? Do you yawn your way through your day, or are you energetic and raring to go? How would you like it if you sat at the table but you did not get to eat as much as you wanted, and knew you never would? How about if a fire alarm or some other absolute emergency interrupted you in mid-flow while urinating, every time? If you did not get to finish a project, or finish exercising, or finish practically anything, you would not be happy about it. Do you ever even wonder why we are so casual and accepting of the fact that we rarely get to sleep as much as we would prefer?

Insufficient sleep can result in a variety of symptoms, including but not limited to: loss of libido, increased risk of accidents, headache, yawning, memory loss, depression, increased risk of illness, increased perception of pain, loss of motor control (clumsiness), hyper-sensitivity to emotions, increased appetite, delayed reaction time, reduced attention span, and many more. Three of the world’s biggest “accidents” were at least partially caused by lack of sleep: Three Mile Island, Exxon Valdez, and Chernobyl. As if that weren’t enough, when sleep deprivation becomes a chronic issue, it can lead to such serious conditions as increased risk of heart disease, heart attack, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, and even cancer. But if you really want to be motivated to get enough sleep, consider the fact that insufficient sleep is known to be one of the major factors in aging, especially in aging of the skin.

Some people worry that they will sleep too much, saying that too much sleep makes them tired. They cite the fact that when they do allow themselves an extra hour or two of sleep, they find that they are even more tired than usual. Sleeping does not make you tired; not sleeping is what makes you tired. On those rare occasions when you get some extra sleep, you begin to get in touch with how much more sleep you really need. If you are shorting yourself of just 10 minutes of sleep each night, it adds up to an hour per week, or more than two entire days’ worth of sleep each year. Short yourself an hour each night, and the deprivation is enormous. Most people actually suffer from sleep deprivation that is even greater than one hour per day. Is it any wonder that more than 50 percent of American adults drink coffee on a daily basis, and almost 85 percent drink coffee on a regular basis? When you get enough sleep, the use of stimulating beverages becomes unnecessary and even seems ludicrous. When you do not get enough sleep, judgment is impaired, and practically anything that serves as a temporary “pick me up” can become very tempting indeed. One of the most peculiar impairments that occur as a result of sleep deprivation is that your ability to accurately assess your need for sleep is often the first thing to go.

September 15

**For the best “rest of your life,”
get enough rest and sleep each day.**

Every day matters. “The rest of your life” might seem like forever when you are a child, but as an adult, that phrase takes on ever-greater and significantly clearer meaning. People find that they must either improve their lifestyle every decade, taking increasingly better care of themselves, or pay the price with pain, suffering, and a foreshortened life.

Mattresses and lounge chairs have been marketed with the double entendre catchphrase, “For the rest of your life,” but rest actually comes in many forms. We need emotional rest, sensory rest, physical rest, and even some occasional physiological rest, as is described in the July 1 entry of this book. In his book, *The Power Of Rest: Why Sleep Alone Is Not Enough*, Dr. Matthew Edlund even mentions mental rest, spiritual rest, and social rest, which some may argue are subsets of those already mentioned. To get the most out of your rest, you must prepare for it. Rest, when heaped on top of more rest, which followed even more rest, can be difficult to accept and will likely not seem restful at all. Rest is best accepted when it follows periods of challenge. Physical rest is easy when it follows intense physical activity. Watching movies one after the next, all day long, would be extremely challenging, but watching a movie after a few hours of physical activity is a welcome relief.

Another method of preparing for rest, in order to receive the most benefit, is to create routines and rituals that get you in the mood for the coming rest, thus readying the mind and body for what is to come. We perform various warmups before engaging in physical activity. Before sitting down to watch a television show, we might want to take off our shoes or change clothing, adjust the lighting or the curtains for optimal viewing, perhaps grab a drink or a snack, maybe pull on a blanket, and sit or snuggle “just so” in order to be comfortable and get the most out of the experience. We have before-dinner routines, before-bedtime routines, and many others. You will benefit by developing routines that will allow you to easily slip into rest and sleep. Many people have overcome insomnia simply by creating a routine to follow that allows them to fall asleep.

Make room for sufficient rest and sleep in your day. You will become healthier, happier, and more productive, and as a result, you will enjoy life more than you possibly could when you were constantly harried, tired, and sleepy.

September 16

**Insufficient sleep has an adverse effect
on virtually every bodily function.**

Endurance athletes have long known that by checking their pulse first thing in the morning, they can assess fairly accurately the degree to which their body has recovered from the exertions of yesterday. Medical doctors utilize the same sign, known as pulse rate, in coordination with many other indicators in order to determine and monitor the health status of their patients. One of the primary reasons that patients in hospitals are forced to take bedrest nearly 24/7 is because we recover more rapidly when at rest, and especially when asleep, than we do at any other time. So what is this “recovery” of which we speak so casually?

Every cell of the body creates metabolic waste as the byproduct of its own catabolic and anabolic processes. (The body has no “metabolism” of its own. Rather, metabolism is the sum of all anabolic and catabolic processes.) If this waste accumulates in the cells, it impairs cellular function. The waste is shipped out of the cell by a process known as excretion. Should intracellular waste accumulate, due to insufficient excretion, cell function will cease, which will result in the death of the cell. Normally, cellular waste exits the cell and enters the extracellular fluid, from which it is picked up and carried by the lymphatic system, past the lymph nodes and on to the bloodstream. The liver then neutralizes the toxins in the blood, and the kidneys remove everything from the blood that the body cannot utilize. This is one part of recovery.

Another part of recovery is the refueling of muscle cells. Glycogen (a complex, storage form of sugar) is used during all physical activity, and the muscles must be refueled in order for them to function properly in future. Refueling is a slow process that can take many hours, and while we are sleeping, it is the perfect time for the body to trickle sugar into the muscles until they are fully reloaded.

Yet another aspect of recovery includes the almost limitless array of physical, physiological, and neurological adaptations that go into creating what is referred to as “the training effect.” The type of activity will determine the nature and degree of adaptation required, as whenever possible, the body will give you (develop) whatever you ask of it. From muscular hypertrophy to improved balance and coordination, increased VO₂max to callous formation, strength development to faster reflexes, all of these and countless other accommodations are part of the growth and development we see when sufficient recovery follows overload. Other than eating and drinking, the body carries out all of the recovery processes at optimal pace during rest and sleep.

Whether recovering from the basics of day-to-day life or the rigors of arduous training, sleep is essential. Without sufficient sleep, fitness and health are compromised, as is the function of every cell in the body.

September 17

**Would you wake a sleeping baby with an alarm clock?
Treat yourself to the same kindness.**

The success of a child's growth and development depends to a high degree upon the SFIC to which it is subjected.

Would you give a child food that was spiked with hot peppers? Of course you wouldn't, for to do so would be cruel. Hot peppers may have many valuable nutrients, but they also contain high quantities of irritants. Health is not brought about through irritation.

Would you give a child alcoholic beverages? A child's liver is undeveloped compared to that of an adult, and is extremely vulnerable to damage from alcohol. We tell children they cannot have alcohol because it is bad for their health, but we know that pure alcohol kills all living cells with which it comes into contact, hence its use as a disinfectant. The toast, "Here goes another thousand brain cells" is not based in truth, as brain cells do not die when exposed to the relatively low concentrations of alcohol that reach it, but brain function is definitely compromised, and neural dendrites in the brain are damaged when we drink alcohol. When we toast to people's health with alcoholic beverages, is that not the height of irony?

Would you give a child cigarettes or a cigar? Could we actually partake in a more disturbing habit than intentionally inhaling the fumes of burning weeds, or is smoking still at the very top of that list? The list of serious illnesses associated with smoking is exceptionally long, but a few of the highlights include COPD (including emphysema and chronic bronchitis), lung cancer and about a dozen other cancers, heart disease, kidney disease, and an overall curtailing of lifespan by 10-20 years. While smokers may indeed be "a dying breed," we teach the next generation to smoke through our own example, when we partake of this noxious habit. Set a healthy example, be a good role model, and the next generation will emulate our good habits and take them to an even higher level.

Would you give a child methamphetamine, cocaine, or LSD? Practically every recreational drug-use story seems to have an unhappy ending. As adults, we spend our money and countless hours seeking emotional poise, inner peace, and enlightenment. As young adults we spend our money and time on recreational drugs to intentionally limit our emotional poise, inner peace, and enlightenment. Perhaps if reality were more pleasant, our young people would not seek such escape.

Would you force children to work 40, 50, or 60 hours or more every week, doing something that they do not enjoy? We all need to earn a living, but why not do so by pursuing something that is meaningful and enjoyable to you?

Would you make a child do fitness training till s/he was sore? Do you ever wonder why you go in fits and starts with your own fitness training? Do you over-train, strain, and then pay the price?

Would you give junk food to an infant? The very phrase “junk food” makes me think of the “junk” that junkies inject. We want the very best for our children. We must learn to want the best for ourselves as well. Do not ingest junk food.

Why not give yourself an adult-sized portion of self-constructive behavior today?

September 18

You can survive for weeks, even months without food, but only for days without water.

Irreparable damage can be done when we push to the limits of surviving dehydration. Why push such limits? One of the most common-themed questions I am asked is, “How long can I go?” My response is always, “Until what?” My specialty area in medicine is hygiene, the science of human health. I spend no time exploring the limits of what we can get away with before falling over the abyss into dismal health failure, but instead focus on how to create optimal health. Still, many variations on the question pop up regularly.

Q: How long can I go on just bananas?

A: I’ve heard of people living a very long time on just bananas with no ill effects (more than a year), but I have no first-hand evidence. I do not know if these people were physically active, or anything else about their health. I don’t even know if they really lived solely on bananas. Many times, such stories prove to be exaggerations, or are filled with (hopefully inadvertent) omissions. I recommend a diet of fruits and shoots (young tender greens) and not a purely fruitarian approach.

Q: How long can I go without drinking water?

A: Known instances exist of adults living for a week without water, and infants making nine or 10 days (for example, when removing survivors who were encased in the rubble of earthquake damage). There are stories of people surviving 13 days and then dying. We know that health is impaired from the very beginning stages of dehydration, therefore I recommend that we always pay attention to our hydration and not allow ourselves to become dehydrated, as there are no known health benefits from such hardship.

Q: How long can I go without exercising?

A: Why would you want to miss out on physical activity? Being fit offers so many opportunities, and opens so many doors. Physical activity is pure fun. Muscles, bones and related tissues begin losing valuable components following less than 48 hours of inactivity. Each day you have two options; get fitter or become less fit.

Q: How long can I go without eating greens?

A: When I was relatively new to eating fruit for sustenance, I sometimes so enjoyed the luscious sweetness that I did not make room for eating salads, getting completely caught up in the wonder of fruit. Like anything that has been missing from your health regimen, once I started eating fruit, I just couldn’t seem to get enough. After a few days, I almost completely forgot about eating greens. I remember once (Santa Barbara, CA, 1985) looking at lettuce and thinking, “I’m not going to like this, it’s going to be bitter.” But

I took a bite, and to my surprise, not only did the romaine taste great, it felt great, and I couldn't stop eating it. Vegetables became the "missing link" that fruit had previously been. While skipping vegetables for a few days or even a few weeks will likely result in no obvious negative consequences, I do not recommend avoiding vegetables entirely.

Q: How long can I go in between dental visits?

A: If you ignore your teeth, they will go away. Dentists are still not sure why some people who never care for their teeth have excellent dental health, and why some people who take excellent care still have terrible oral health problems. But these people are the exceptions, not the rule. The odds are in your favor that when you take great care of your health, and your teeth, including regular trips to the dentist, you will get the best results.

Q: How long can I go without food?

A: Why anyone would want to set that record is beyond me. While fasting for health is a valuable and sometimes essential tool, eating is one of life's great pleasures. I do not recommend fasting for more than a few days without getting the help of an experienced professional supervisor. Is it dangerous to skip a meal, or even a few meals? In most instances no, but there are situations where skipping meals could be hazardous to your health. Usually you would know if you were in such a situation, but it is always better to be safe than sorry.

September 19

If you want to get harder, you've got to play with intensity, and eat smarter.

We have options in life. One choice we must make is whether to become firm, or infirm. We get to choose, and our actions will be clear demonstrations of what we really want most. You get better at whatever you practice, whether you want to or not. If your energy is flagging, your eyes are bagging, your get up and go is lagging, and your body is sagging, it is time to make some changes. Take a tip from the example set by children.

Infants are the least fit of all humans, yet in ten years' time, from the ages of two to twelve, and simply through the wonder of play, they develop amazing skills and nearly world-class fitness. In the wild, predators chase their prey in an all-out dash of life and death. Children most clearly simulate the "catch a meal or be a meal" struggle in the simple game known as "tag." Many other children's games are played with the same intensity. Tug of war, tetherball, jump rope, kick the can, hide and seek, duck duck goose, Smaug's jewels, and countless other seemingly innocent games are accurate representations of aspects of life in the jungle. The child's game known as freeze tag perfectly exemplifies the concept of survival of the fittest, as do many other "last man standing" type games. Play pushes you to your limits and makes you strive for maximal efforts, bringing more out of you than you will give in a workout, even for adults who are methodical and dedicated in their fitness training. Play is the ultimate bodybuilder.

Food provides the necessary fuel, nutrients, and other raw materials required to support our growth and development. Choosing healthy options can be challenging, especially with so many differing opinions available. The basics do not change, however. Fruits and vegetables are good for us. They are the ultimate health foods, and therefore must be the mainstay of any healthy diet. We maintain relatively large stores of fat in the body but have only limited supplies of carbohydrates available. The carbohydrates must be supplied on a daily basis, usually at least several times per day. Fruits are our best carbohydrate source. When we eat more calories than we require, we store the excess as body fat. To achieve the "hard" or "chiseled" look that many people aspire to possess, excess body fat must be dropped. Slow steady loss of body fat is the best and most sustainable approach. One simple plan to support such loss is to begin each meal with raw vegetables such as lettuce, celery, or cucumbers before moving on to the fruit portion of the meal. Such an approach allows us to consume the volume of food we most desire while reducing overall calorie intake. Putting even slightly more emphasis on vegetable consumption works as an excellent method of calorie control. Another option for fat loss is to shift away from the consumption of concentrated sweet fruits such as bananas and dates, while increasing the consumption of juicy fruits such as melons, citrus, berries and the like.

Combine intense play with judicious dietary management and realize the hard-body of your dreams.

September 20

The solution to pollution is dilution.

The body dilutes toxins with water, in order to keep them from becoming so concentrated that they do us serious harm or cause irreparable damage. The body also dilutes nutrients with water, in order to keep them at the concentration level that is best for the body's physiology. Blood is monitored in the brain for a wide variety of factors. Blood must be kept diluted properly so as to optimize flow, and to keep all blood factors at ideal concentration levels. The same can be said for the lymph, all other bodily fluids, including the extracellular fluids, and intracellular fluids as well. Water is used in every bodily function. We throw off water in our urine, sweat, tears, and with every exhalation. Even the feces are about 75 percent water or more, by weight. On average, we lose about 5-8 pints of water each day, not accounting for the water lost as sweat during heavy exertions, which can result in double, triple, and even greater losses. Each pint of water weighs ever so slightly more than one pound.

The common misconception about water is generally stated as follows: "Drink lots of water to rid your body of toxins." The act of drinking water does nothing to remove toxins from the body. If you had some toxic matter in a beaker and you added water, would the quantity of toxins be any less as a result of adding water? No, but the toxins would become diluted with the water, less concentrated, hence less strong. Imagine the classic example of a man crawling through the desert on his hands and knees, begging for water. The man is dying, but not because the quantity of toxins in his body is killing him. He is dying because those toxins are not diluted sufficiently; hence, they are poisoning him. A simple drink of water will serve to dilute the toxins, and the man will feel fine, and he will still have exactly the same quantity of toxins within him that he had before drinking the water.

* * *

Businessman #1, overlooking a seemingly endless mountain range of toxic industrial waste: "How are we going to get rid of this stuff? The disposal fees will cost us a fortune."

Businessman #2, seeing the possibilities: "We'll sell it as food. Better yet, let's triple the cost and sell it as health food. We have 7 billion biological disposal units who will pay us handsomely to eat our garbage."

Businessman #1: "Brilliant. Spread over that many people, no one will notice the ill effects."

Businessman #2: "Yes, and if while we are at it, we can convince them that skimmed milk, lecithin, whey, fluoride, protein powder, yeast, and all this other crap is really health food, they won't ever even suspect a thing. They may even consume more of our garbage, thinking it is helping them."

September 21

Have you ever tried eating nothing but bananas for an entire day?

Choosing to have a day of mono eating can be an extremely valuable experience, and will help in a number of ways towards the development of superior health.

But why bananas?

1. Bananas are universally available all year round.
2. Everyone is familiar with bananas and knows what to expect when eating a banana. We all know that green bananas are not ripe, and we know how ripe we prefer our bananas to be when we eat them.
3. Bananas offer a relatively predictable carbohydrate “hit.” When you eat a banana, you can fairly accurately estimate the number of calories you have consumed. The calorie content of many fruits varies widely depending upon the season, the variety, and other factors, but bananas are quite reliable.
4. Bananas are relatively uniform in size, so when you compare your banana intake from day to day, you can just count them, rather than having to weigh them.
5. Bananas are among the more filling and satisfying of fruits. You can eat a meal of bananas and be satiated for many hours. Some fruits are high in water but low in calories, meaning you would be hungry shortly after eating a meal.
6. Bananas are easy to ripen, and their ripeness is relatively easy to discern.
7. Bananas have a fairly long “window.” Once ripe enough to eat, they remain edible for several days or more.
8. Few people are allergic to bananas, and fewer do not like them.
9. There are countless ways to prepare and serve bananas.
10. Bananas are clean, quick, and easy to eat, travel well, and tend to be inexpensive.

The mono day serves many functions:

- ❖ Gives a baseline by eliminating variables.

- ❖ Gets you in touch with true hunger.
- ❖ Lets your taste bud's sensitivity heighten.
- ❖ Takes you off of stimulants and other foods that can affect your emotions.
- ❖ Changes your relationship with food, and with yourself.
- ❖ Makes eating raw food simple, and easy.
- ❖ Gives your digestive system a bit of rest.
- ❖ Helps you determine how motivated you are, and how much self-control you really have.
- ❖ Gives you more time in your day.

September 22

**Everyone is your master,
as you are everyone's master.**

Every person is your better at something; hence, you can learn something from every single person. Knowing that each person can best us at something makes life tremendously interesting and potentially very rewarding. If someone can do something better than you can do it, they have shown you that better is possible, and you have that much more reason to strive. Having an attitude that you are better than everyone else separates you from them, isolates you, and creates an “us and them” mindset. Shared abilities helps bring people together, and can serve as the “something in common” that reinforces your sense of connection with others. Alone and isolated, your self-esteem dissipates. Connecting to a group of like-minded individuals serves to support and build self-esteem.

None of us knows it all, and learning is still one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences life offers us, even though at times learning can be very stressful, at least until the breakthrough of understanding is achieved. We tend to enjoy participating in the things we are excellent at doing, for a variety of reasons, most obviously because we prefer the feeling of succeeding to the feeling we get when we fail. Most of us also inherently enjoy teaching others, as this is a trait we see in almost all children. Perhaps this is because it is easier to watch others strive than it is for us to do so ourselves. Or perhaps it is because we do not wish to be in the position where failure is possible. But maybe we enjoy teaching simply because we enjoy being around the growth, success, and enjoyment others experience when they are learning.

Whatever the rationale, we find ourselves continually fluctuating between being in the position of teacher AND student, learning and teaching, failing and succeeding, enjoying and struggling to enjoy. Finding the grace to do your best while accepting that others will be better than you is one of life's biggest challenges. There is more joy to be found in the striving than in the succeeding. Many world-class athletes have stated that they would rather be pushed to their limits (playing their very best and losing) than win in a game poorly played or against competition that truly wasn't challenging. Dave Draper, Mr. America in 1965, Mr. Universe in 1966, and Mr. World in 1970, retired from competition while at the height of his career. He said in an interview that he loved lifting and training, and that the competitions and the prep for the competitions were a part of his professional career that took him away from what he loved most, which was the actual training itself. Forty-five years later, if you want to find Dave Draper, your best chance to catch up with him is still in the gym, where he continues to train rigorously on a regular basis.

September 23

When you do not feel like your usual self, make the appropriate adjustments.

Ever have one of those days? We all have. You wake up in the morning and your hair hurts, and you know that something is not right. Your face looks puffy in the mirror, and your bowels just are not right. You snap at your family or your coworkers, and even though you apologize, you realize you are not behaving normally. You cannot stop yawning, you do not feel like doing your usual fitness routine, you are unusually clumsy, you are distracted while driving and nearly have an accident, and generally you feel the whole world is against you. Having even one of those symptoms should be message enough to tell you that something needs to change. Most likely, you need a rest.

What do you need to do to make yourself better?

One of the first places to look is to check your sleep. Sleep deficiency affects many parts of your awareness, among other things, and one of the most common things affected is your awareness of your need for sleep. One client, an athlete who was having health problems, insisted that she did not need more than the 35 hours of sleep per week that she was giving herself. To humor me, she agreed to add an hour of sleep per night, per week, but assured me that she would begin waking up before her usual time. She made it clear that she was doing this for me, because she was confident she did not need more sleep. The first week passed (42 hours sleep), and she was amazed that she slept well and did not wake up exceptionally early. The second week (49 hours sleep), third week (56 hours sleep), and the fourth week (63 hours sleep), she continued to sleep through the night till morning. At the end of the fifth week (10 hours per night, 70 hours sleep, in total), she asked if it was possible that she needed even more sleep. “You have been so sleep deprived, you are only just becoming aware of it, and have such a huge backlog of sleep deficit that it could take you a few months or more to catch up,” I replied. On Week 6, getting 11 hours of sleep per night, she found her groove, and finally began waking up a few minutes earlier than usual, and fully refreshed. Her health issues dissolved. Gradually her need for sleep reduced, and she finally found stable ground while sleeping 9-10 hours per night.

Perhaps the quality of the food you are eating has slipped too many notches. Do you still eat whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants? Have you introduced too many exceptions? Are you keeping your meals relatively simple? Would you benefit from skipping a meal or two, or perhaps just having a day or two of mono eating?

When you do not feel like yourself, when you are not completely on top of your game, you are vulnerable to illness, injury, and social misconduct, and you need to take immediate action. Whether you need more recreation, more sleep, simpler or less food, or something else entirely, make sure your needs are met. No one else can do that for you, but when you are not yourself, no one, including you, likes who you have become.

September 24

Have you had your five-mile walk today?

I just got in from my daily midday walk with the dog. She takes me out at least twice a day, sometimes more. Gets me my miles, and usually, depending upon her antics, at least a fair number of smiles. So much happens during the course of a walk. All the little things, that taken one at a time do not really account for much, but cumulatively they amount to the very stuff from which health is formed. Here are just a few of the things that often happen to me on a walk:

I step outside and am hit by amazingly fresh air, which instantly lifts my spirits. Living near the top of a hill, the view across The Brooks, a large wetlands and wildlife sanctuary, is inspirational, and different every day. During the first few minutes of the walk, I can feel my muscles warming, and my joints loosening. I see a few other people walking dogs, and have a bit of social interaction. Out on The Brooks, nature is bursting, no matter the season. Currently, the grasses are two feet tall, and their heads are making amazing patterns as they shift in the wind, seemingly changing color and clearly demonstrating the true origins of “the wave.” A few butterflies flit and flash, busy with their business. They are so delicate, yet so determined. I determine to be at least as persistent in reaching my own goals. I am walking along the River Arun, and several white swans are lounging in the water. I count my blessings that I get to see swans on a regular basis, for they are truly magnificent creatures. The patterns in the clouds, the warmth of the sunlight, the smell of the wind coming off the sea 10 miles distant, the feel of the earth under my feet and the grasses against my legs; the sensory input is almost a constant overload. Passing the RSPB sanctuary (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) where more than 100 species of birds visit on their migrations, I am reminded of the interconnectedness of all things.

Walking past the old stone church, built almost 1000 years ago and still functioning, I “get” the sense of history, of how much has happened right here, of all the people who have used this land over the past 10 centuries, and how many more will do so in the future. How many thousands of people have walked on the same path that I am now treading?

On the return, walking through our village, enjoying all the flowers, smelling the meals being prepared, and seeing the various signs of upkeep on houses and gardens, I gain motivation for my own efforts. Moving easily now, a quick jog through the park, and maybe a detour on the footpath that takes us through the huge commercial nursery to the north. The nursery is so organized, with dozens of poly-tunnels filled with tens of thousands of potted plants, and outdoors, row after endless row of potted trees. Through the little woods and on to the other side where there is a magnificent field of wildflowers, which is absolute eye-candy. Then comes a mile of sheep. How the lambs have matured since spring. A mile through the local vineyard, stopping occasionally to read the names of the grape varieties, and I am almost home.

I may have gone out as a wreck, really needing my walk, but my recreation was a wellspring of re-creation, and I am renewed, refreshed, and ready to take on the world.

September 25

**Maintaining your health is always easier
than making gains in your health.**

Maintenance is always easier than training for gains. Training for gains is like building something from nothing, and serious effort is involved. Maintenance simply requires a bit of use, a bit of polish, a bit of refreshing, a bit of practice. Think of all the work that goes into building a road, for example, as compared to the extremely limited amount of effort required to maintain that road.

Maintaining your fitness is always easier than making gains in your fitness. The ability to run an eight-minute mile might take some training, but once you've got it, not a lot of effort is needed to keep it. You can likely just go out once in a while and make sure that you can still run that eight-minute mile, and as long as you get in a few miles every week, you will probably be able to hang on to that achievement for quite some time. Bringing your mile time down to six minutes is another matter entirely. You will have to do some serious work to bring up your speed. Speed drills, strength training, plenty of overload, and lots of running are necessary to bring times down. Sure, you will make progress, but you will know that you are working at it.

Maintaining your weight is always easier than losing your excess weight. Most of us find that once we get a certain number of pounds over our goal, holding our weight does not take a lot of effort. We just eat what we want and we hold steady, but not at the weight we want to be. When you finally decide that you want the weight to drop, however, out comes the fitness clothing, in comes the vegetables, and there goes the treats. Losing weight takes time and effort, and never happens as easily or as rapidly as you would like it to.

Maintaining your weight is always easier than gaining muscle weight. Weight can be gained as water, fat, or muscle, and it is always muscle that we hope to gain. No food in the world can cause you to gain muscle. If you want to increase the size of your muscles, you have to push and pull the heavy weights, and spend time under the load. Muscle gains take time, too, so not only do you have to be consistent and persistent, you have to be patient as well. Progressive strength training performed at the 15- to 25-rep range is ideal for stimulating muscle growth.

Maintaining your current personality is always easier than achieving personal growth. Personal development is one of the few ways for an adult to grow, yet many of us fear the process, the effort, and even the possible results so much that we are unwilling to put in the effort. How many times have you met someone you had not seen in 10, 20, or even 30 years, only to be disappointed to find that they had not grown, as a person, in all that time?

Do the legwork of health maintenance every day, and save yourself a lot of effort trying to regain your lost health.

September 26

Continue getting your out-of-doors time throughout the winter months.

As the days become cooler and shorter, and the weather becomes nastier, we spend much more of our time indoors, and so very little of it outdoors, even though we know that being outdoors is healthier for us. The following solutions are just some of the possibilities that you might be able to put to work for you.

1. *Eat lunch outdoors.* Eating outdoors might take a bit of getting used to, but the payoff is more than worth the effort. If the weather is too cold, well, it's too cold, but most of the U.S. is often warm enough at midday, especially on the south face of a building, to be able to sit comfortably and enjoy your meal.
2. *Sleep with a bedroom window open sufficiently to allow for air exchange between indoors and out.* Some fresh air is better than none, and if it's coming in all night long, it may well be better than being outdoors for only a few minutes during the entire day.
3. *Make a commitment to take a walk or jog, no matter what the weather.* What better way to start your day than to go outside and just get it done?
4. *Take up a form of outdoor recreation.* Downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, ice skating are all fun, but so are making snow sculptures, winter hiking, chopping wood, and doing as much gardening as possible.
5. *Purchase some really effective cold weather gear, so that you can go outside and just not be bothered at all.* Dress in layers, so that when you get too warm you can modify your clothing so as not to become too warm.
6. *Make excuses to dawdle outdoors.* Park as far as possible from your destination. Sit on a bench and people watch or play chess in the park. Do your warmup outdoors, even if you are doing an indoors workout, and afterwards go outside and take an extended cool down period.
7. *Get outside at night to check out the winter sky, and do some stargazing.*
8. *Shovel your own snow, instead of having someone else do it for you.*
9. *Build a sunning area for winter use.* The sun will heat a small room or a big box nicely, even in winter, especially if it has an open south face, and the inside walls are painted white or lined with aluminum foil.
10. *Invite friends to your house for an outdoor party.* Remind everyone to bring redundant quantities of warm clothing, and promise that the party will end indoors.

September 27

**Thicker clothing, more layers, heavier foods,
less sunshine, busier schedules, insufficient sleep, colder weather,
and dry, heated air can result in a health disaster.**

Is it any wonder that people experience the symptoms of extraordinary elimination from now until spring? Elimination is one of the basic processes for all living things. Normally, our cells continuously eliminate everything they can that is deemed excess, metabolic waste, or toxic. Via the lymphatic system, these materials are brought to the blood. The liver and/or the kidneys then deal with this waste, efficiently and effectively, without us ever being aware of the fact than anything is happening at all. With similar ease, again without notice, we eliminate excess carbon dioxide as part of every exhalation. Our mucus membranes produce sufficient mucus to trap and transport various unwanted substances, including but not limited to airborne particles, pollen, dirt, dust, mold and other spores, construction debris, irritants, and other foreign matter. Usually, the elimination of mucus also occurs with little or no notice on our part. Essentially, such elimination can be considered as part of how the body maintains itself, an integral and necessary part of getting and staying well.

In order to experience a greater degree of health, many people attempt various program said to increase the rate of elimination. We interpret such programs intuitively as a good thing, for when we are eliminating more than we usually do, we are getting rid of unwanted waste. One simple example is the use of lemon water, a potion people will drink the first thing in the morning, thinking of it as a detox. They claim the lemon juice helps eliminate toxins from the body, and use as their justification the increased mucus production they can see and feel in their mouths. But the body is producing mucus as a response to the lemon, to protect the body from the lemon, and is not eliminating toxins (other than the lemon) in that mucus. If you get sand in your eye, or lemon juice, your body will produce mucus, but this is not generating detox from within. You cannot irritate your body into health. Such irritation only results in a drain upon our vital reserves.

When you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, you also experience heightened mucus production, exactly what you were hoping for when doing a detox program or drinking lemon water. This time, the mucus is indeed being utilized as a means of mobilizing toxic and waste matter so that it can be eliminated from the body. The body is working perfectly. Yet we refer to this experience as “being sick,” and take it to mean that something is wrong with the way our body is functioning. If regular elimination of mucus is a way for the body to get well, why do we not view “being sick” as “accelerated detox,” as the body getting well even faster than usual, and congratulate sick people for having the vitality to perform such necessary extraordinary detoxification processes?

September 28

**You do not fail until you place a limit
upon the number of times you will attempt to succeed.**

Lance Armstrong, despite all the controversy that surrounds him, set an amazing standard at the Tour de France. He is credited with saying, "Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever." Everyone fails now and then. Failure is an integral part of succeeding. If you never fail, then likely you are not attempting things that are challenging enough to be worthwhile. Most of the failures in life are so insignificant that we really do not register them, or if we do, we do not give them any importance. You are slicing a tomato and want each slice to be the same thickness. Unless you are the chef of a fancy restaurant, it just does not matter if your slices are all a bit different. You might notice that the slices are different, and you might even hope to do better next time, but you decide that it really is not an important issue, and you move on. Maybe you had to try twice to tie your shoes exactly the way you wanted them this morning. That just was not a big enough failure for you to dwell upon, or to bring on the negative self-talk.

Which bears the question, "How big of a failure does it take to bring on the negative self-talk?" The most successful people in life, it turns out, are often the ones who have had the biggest failures as well. We often hear the story of Thomas Edison, whose friends urged him to quit in his efforts at creating a functional light bulb, after countless failures. Edison is credited with saying something to the effect of, "So far, I haven't failed. I've succeed at demonstrating 7,500 materials that will not work for my desired purpose." If Edison had become depressed and given up, we would all have to watch television in the dark.

If 7,500 failures were not enough to get Edison to quit, is there not some way to use his experience to keep yourself motivated when striving for a goal?

Winston Churchill was estranged from his political party over ideological disagreements during "The Wilderness Years" of 1929 to 1939. In 1939, he was appointed to the Admiralty, and the following year, he was elected prime minister.

Thomas Edison's teachers told him he was "too stupid to learn anything." He went on to hold more than 1,000 patents.

Oprah Winfrey was fired from her first television job. Today her net worth is almost \$3 billion.

Walt Disney was fired by his newspaper editor because he "lacked imagination and had no good ideas." He failed in business several more times before releasing the movie *Snow White*.

Three-time Academy Award winner Steven Spielberg was rejected multiple times in his efforts to attend the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts.

Now with more than 18,000 franchise locations, Colonel Harland David Sanders was fired from dozens of jobs before founding a successful restaurant.

One movie executive assessed Fred Astaire's talents as, "Can't sing. Can't act. Slightly balding. Can dance a little."

Vincent Van Gogh sold only one painting in his entire life, and that sale was just months before his death.

Selling more than 600 million books, Theodor Seuss Geisel, known as Dr. Seuss, had his first book rejected by 27 different publishers.

Henry Ford ruined his reputation by failing twice in the automobile business before starting the Ford Motor Company.

Sir James Dyson tried 5,126 failed prototypes and almost went broke before succeeding in creating the bestselling bagless vacuum brand in history.

An early draft of what was to become Stephen King's first published novel, *Carrie*, was retrieved from the trash by his wife after he had become so frustrated attempting to write it that he gave up. With current book sales in excess of 350 million and still gaining popularity, Stephen King continues writing....

Be willing to fail, and fail repeatedly if necessary, until you finally succeed.

September 29

If you like to find out if you are actually addicted to something, give it up for a while, and see how you do.

“Anything you can do, I can do better. I can do anything better than you.” So go the lyrics to Irving Berlin’s 1946 song “Anything You Can Do,” from the 1946 musical *Annie Get Your Gun*. Peter Tosh expresses the same sentiments on his 1978 “Bush Doctor” album, in his song, “I’m The Toughest,” with his lyrics, “Anything you can do, I can do it better. I’m the toughest.” Ask children if they can play piano, surf, build a house, or practically anything, and they almost always reply in the affirmative, with confidence.

When faced with a clear understanding of the nature of my diet, many people respond, “I could NEVER do that.” Some say, “I couldn’t live without meat.” Others say, “I will always eat bread.” At least a few respond, “I’m addicted to meat,” while the majority let the concept of 811rv sink in and then ask, “You mean you NEVER eat bread, or rice, or pasta?” “What about potatoes?”

Why is it that in some areas of life we think we can do anything, yet in other areas of life we feel we are facing an impossible task?

When it comes to the lure of food, we are well and truly hooked. People swear by their diet, love their diet, and stay true to their food patterns. We do not think of ourselves as being addicted to our foods, even when faced with endless slogans glorifying our addictions on T-shirts, bumper stickers, mugs, carry bags, and baseball caps:

- Life begins after coffee.
- Life is hard, chocolate helps.
- I’m having an out-of-coffee experience.
- I no function beer well without.
- Instant human, just add coffee.
- I’m the designated drunk.
- The monkey is off my back, but the circus is still in town.
- I don’t have a drinking problem. I drink. I fall down. No problem.
- I can give up anything. Last year alone I gave up drinking 365 times.
- Pizza makes me well-rounded.

- Cows and pigs are lovely animals, so I eat meat instead.

Replacing addictions with preferences, healthy choices, and smart options is neither easy nor difficult, but a matter of focusing on what you really want most. Addictions bring about known and predictable consequences. If you want those outcomes, remain addicted. If you want to experience the joy of life that accompanies freedom from addiction, and the mystery of not knowing what is coming next, move away from your addiction and towards the things you want more of in life. The beautiful thing about food addictions is that, unlike most addictions, you do not have to give up food at all—you simply replace one food with another. Try *The 80/10/10 Diet*. I am confident you will like the food, and that you will love the results.

September 30

If you can sleep, you need the sleep.

In some military circles, sleep can at times become a very rare and precious commodity. These men have been taught to sleep every chance they get, even if it is the middle of the day, on a bouncing truck with many other men around, because there might not be another chance to sleep again for who knows how long. Some of them have gotten very good at the art of falling asleep quickly, in any position, under any circumstances, at any time of day. Sleep is not something that can be stored up for future use, like the contingency funds that can be put aside for when times are tough, the classic “rainy day.” Under normal circumstances, the sleep you got last night is about enough to last you through today, and maybe a bit longer, if push comes to shove. Anyone who has stayed awake for 36 hours or longer knows the feeling of tiredness that is so powerful that you can literally fall asleep on your feet.

But you are not a camel, when it comes to sleep. You cannot just sleep for 80 hours instead of your usual 8 and expect that you would then be “good to go” for the next 10 days. Your body will not allow for such storage.

On the flip side, your body simply will not allow you to sleep too much. While it is possible to exercise too much—to the point of doing yourself harm, and to eat too much—at least until you hurt, and certainly it is possible to drink too much, breathe too much, and do too much of quite a few other things involving basic bodily functions, it is just not possible to sleep too much. If you need the sleep, and are able to fall asleep, your body will let you sleep. But if you do not need the sleep, no matter how conducive the circumstances are for falling asleep, your body will simply not allow you to fall into a luxurious slumber.

How do you know when you have gotten enough sleep? When you wake up feeling totally ready to go, rested and recovered from the activities of the day before, excited to face the challenges of the day, you know got enough sleep. If you feel drowsy, tired, amotivated, achy, ill, foul-tempered, or just in the mood to roll over rather than roll out, you likely did not take all the sleep you require, and you would benefit from getting more. Sometimes, you will have the luxury of rolling over and staying in bed later, but sometimes you just have to get up and start your day, and all you can do is note the situation and make every effort to get to sleep earlier the coming evening. Give yourself all the sleep you require, and make your life even that much sweeter.

OCTOBER

Eating for optimum nutrition and digestion: Whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, when hungry, until full.

Much has been written and even more has been said about nutrition, with most of that being contradictory to what someone else has said. The essence of those messages, the areas where we can find the most agreement, can be focused into just a few key words, as written above.

Whole foods utilize the goodness provided by nature. By recognizing that the plan offered us by nature is already perfect and cannot be improved upon, we allow ourselves to rise to the highest potential offered us: whole foods. The nutrients are intact, and in the proper proportion to each other in whole foods. Do not be swayed by the “more is better” school of nutrition that teaches that refined supplements or refined and concentrated food products are better than whole food.

Even though we know that “fresh is best,” we fall for the marketing ploys of bottled, boxed, bagged, or canned foods, foods that have been “fresh frozen,” and others that have been dehydrated or cooked “fresh from the farm.” Fresh means fresh, and no amount of convoluted verbiage can disguise processed foods to make them as good and wholesome as their fresh counterparts.

Ripe foods are at their peak of flavor, texture, and nutritional value. Anything less is simply not as satisfying. Rush a piece of fruit, or an ear of corn, and the sweetness just is not there, and the flavor is disappointing at best. Foods that are overripe are going bad. They are distasteful, and becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible to eat.

Raw foods offer us more goodness than cooked foods of any kind can possibly give. Nature set the model for raw foods, and we either follow it or suffer the consequences of loss of health and vitality. Those foods that cannot be enjoyed raw are most likely not fit foods for humans. Nutritionally, cooking food only results in nutrient compromises best described as damage, derangement, or complete destruction.

Can you imagine intentionally adding herbicide, pesticide, fungicide, mildecide, insecticide, rodenticide, or any other agent of death to your food? Of course not, for such action would surely be suicide. Yet I am constantly asked to prove that organic produce is better than conventional produce. Children are far more susceptible to the effects of such poisons than are adults, as a child’s liver is relatively undeveloped, even when allowing for the difference in size between a child and an adult. Poisons such as the various “cides” can have an effect that is eight to ten times more powerful when consumed by children than when consumed by an adult. There is no better word for feeding poisoned food to a child than “infanticide.”

Humans are plant-eaters by nature. Our anatomy, physiology, and even our psychology do best when we eat plants. Fruits are colorful, flavorful, and easy to obtain. Vegetation is abundant, poses no danger when being harvested, and provides a wide array of textures and flavors. All

other creatures with designs closely similar to ours eat plants for 99-100 percent of their calorie intake. The medical sciences have endorsed plant-eating for optimal health.

Eat when you are hungry and food tastes great. Eating can be one of life's great pleasures. In order to consume sufficient volume at a meal so as to satisfy hunger until the next meal without consuming so many calories that weight management becomes an issue, our diet must be predominated by whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, as these typically contain the lowest number of calories per bite while offering the ideal ratio of nutrients per calorie.

October 1

The “normal” body temperature of a healthy individual at rest is around 94°-96°F.

98.6°F, often referred to as “normal” or “normothermia,” is considered a good temperature, hence its other name, “euthermia,” but in reality, 98.6°F is not “normal,” but simply reflects the average temperature for someone eating the standard Western diet. Average, being the best of the worst and the worst of the best, but it is not a goal to strive for if health is your focus. Body temperature is one of the prime indicators of how much work your body is or has recently been performing. Standard Western fare is not only more difficult to digest than raw fruits and vegetables, it also takes considerably longer to digest. Both of these factors require the body to do more work in the digestion of the standard Western diet than in the digestion of whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables—on average, at least double the work.

Body temperature can vary quite a bit based upon where the temperature is taken (oral, tympanic, anal, vaginal, sub-axillary, etc.), the time of day, activity levels, emotions, and various other factors. 98.6°F actually indicates that the body is running hot, and is in a pre-fever state. By the time oral temperature reaches 99°F, medical personnel are trained to consider the patient as having a slight fever, sometimes known as a low-grade fever.

Why should we care if our temperature is 95.6°F or 98.6°F? The first reason is because all bodily functions are adversely affected when temperature rises near and into the range known as fever. Thought processes are compromised, as is decision making. The second reason is that high body temperature compromises physical performance, which rises with the duration and intensity of the exertions being performed. Coordination, strength, endurance and other features of fitness lose their edge with rising body temperatures. We know, for instance, that long-distance runners prefer that the temperature is close to 50°F when they run, to allow for good cooling without it being so cold as to freeze the extremities. Some sports scientists have said that cooling the body is the number one limiting factor when it comes to running a world-record marathon.

A warmup before strenuous exercise is recommended for all activities because of the positive effect on the muscles, joints, connective tissues, and the involved neurology. But warming up results in a raise in body temperature, often by considerably more than the mere one degree necessary for the participant to be judged to have a fever that can adversely affect decision making and increase the risk of injury. The solution is to reduce what we consider normal body temperature to levels that allow us to experience the benefits of a warmup, and the raising of temperature that accompanies physical performance, without going into the fever zone. A person with a temperature is 95°F can raise body temperature to 98°F or more during activity without experiencing any of the loss of mental or physical function that his/her competitors on standard fare will experience.

October 2

You run for your life by participating in life's daily events.

Dogs frequently chase rabbits, but very rarely catch them. There is a very good reason for this. The dogs are usually running for the fun of it or, far more infrequently, actually running for their dinner. But to the rabbit, the exercise is far more serious, for the rabbit is running for its life. The rabbit must commit everything it has got to this one effort of escaping the dog's teeth. Such rabbits are seriously motivated, and most of the time they get away, and live to run another day. Lions chase their prey, and for them the hunt is more meaningful, for they truly must catch their dinner or go without. Even so, the lion's success rate is only about one out of twelve attempts. Each failed attempt brings the lion one step closer to a success. Cheetahs carry very little reserves on their lithe bodies. They must succeed in their attempts to catch dinner, for if they go without food for more than 48 hours, they likely will not have enough energy to ever catch prey again. For the cheetah, the hunt truly is life or death, and this urgency is reflected in their success rate.

Without question, we must also run for our life every single day, and must do so with powerful motivation. We must be as motivated as the rabbit and the cheetah, not just playful like the dog, though certainly there is time and place for playful enthusiasm as well. If we do not push, at least a bit in one way or another, we likely just are not going to be making the type of progress that we most hope for. We can be calm, patient, and resourceful, like the lion, but we must also be willing to put in the time, effort, and sometimes even to take risks similar to those that the cheetah must take. Productivity and usefulness are integral to our health.

Long before they are actually capable of helping their parents, children express their desire to be helpful. They want to be involved in whatever activities their parents are doing. Children also receive great pleasure when making things, and are quick to express their pride with the finished products. These qualities and features remain intact in us throughout our lives. A major lament of many senior citizens is that they feel useless. They want to be productive and desire their efforts to be appreciated. Their wish to give far exceeds their wish to receive. Like little children, they want to be able to take care of themselves.

Between childhood and old age we experience many decades of grace during which we have the opportunity to live life as we choose. Earn your keep daily, and then some, by being a productive, happy, and healthy person. Live life to the fullest, and give all your attention to the present moment.

October 3

**This year, do a little more participating
and a little less spectating.**

A commitment to health is a commitment to never-ending efforts at self-improvement. Being a spectator in life just is not as much fun as being a participant. Spectating can be time well spent, to be certain. Life is rich with opportunities to sit and watch while others compete, put on a show, or offer other forms of entertainment.

Many people are tempted to rest on their laurels, to bask in the accomplishments of days gone by, rather than being as productive today as possible. Thus was created the saying, “Yes, but what have you done lately?”

Being productive does not necessarily mean being busy, distracted, hurried, or even that you are working. Taking a nap can be productive, learning a new poem to recite or a song on guitar can be productive, and even putting in the garden can be considered productive. If what you are doing is getting you closer towards reaching any of your life’s goals, you are being productive. Think of a good night’s sleep as time well spent towards reaching your goals of staying healthy, recovering from fitness activities, and helping you maintain emotional poise when you are awake, and you can see that sleeping is productive time indeed.

The sedentary life, spent on the couch in front of the television, watching but not participating, eating with limited awareness, isolating yourself from the rest of the world, is not a productive use of time. With few exceptions, watching television does not contribute to the betterment of mankind, or even to your own betterment. You can quickly become a needy dependent, instead of an independent provider. The world can quickly close in on you. Too many people have gone from being able to go anywhere and do anything, only to have restrictions placed upon them due to deteriorating health. All too soon they find that they cannot fly in an airplane, cannot work, cannot run, cannot play, cannot leave the house, cannot leave their room, their chair, or their bed. When life closes in upon you, life becomes a lot less fun.

Would you rather be one of the players or one of the fans?

Hint: the players have a lot more fun, and get a lot more perks.

October 4

Attachment to outcome is a surefire recipe for frustration and disappointment.

Many thought processes lead to frustration and disappointment, but if you want the all-time winner, the ultimate time-tested and proven champion, be attached to your version of how the future will unfold, and how events will play out. Enjoy these examples of errant views of the future:

- “There is not the slightest indication that nuclear energy will ever be obtainable. It would mean that the atom would have to be shattered at will.” ~ Albert Einstein, 1932
- “We don’t like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.”
~ Decca Recording Company on declining to sign the Beatles, 1962
- “This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.” ~ Western Union memo, 1876
- “Reagan doesn’t have that presidential look.”
~ United Artists executive after rejecting Reagan as lead in 1964 film *The Best Man*
- “Rail travel at high speed is not possible because passengers, unable to breathe, would die of asphyxia.” ~ Dr. Dionysius Lardner, 1830
- “I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”
~ Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943
- “X-rays will prove to be a hoax.” ~ Lord Kelvin, president of the Royal Society, 1883
- “Everyone acquainted with the subject will recognize it as a conspicuous failure.” ~ Henry Morton, president of the Stevens Institute of Technology, on Edison’s lightbulb, 1880
- “The horse is here to stay, but the automobile is only a novelty—a fad.”
~ The president of the Michigan Savings Bank advising Henry Ford’s lawyer not to invest in the Ford Motor Co., 1903
- “Television won’t last because people will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night.” ~ Darryl Zanuck, movie producer, 20th Century Fox, 1946
- “No one will pay good money to get from Berlin to Potsdam in one hour when he can ride his horse there in one day for free.” ~ King William I of Prussia, on trains, 1864
- “There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in his home.”
~ Ken Olson, president, chairman, and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), in a talk given to a 1977 World Future Society meeting in Boston

- “If excessive smoking actually plays a role in the production of lung cancer, it seems to be a minor one.” ~ W.C. Heuper, National Cancer Institute, 1954
- “No, it will make war impossible.” ~ Hiram Maxim, inventor of the machine gun, in response to the question, “Will this gun not make war more terrible?” from Havelock Ellis, an English scientist, 1893
- “The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value. Who would pay for a message sent to no one in particular?” ~ Associates of David Sarnoff responding to the latter’s call for investment in the radio in 1921
- “There will never be a bigger plane built.” ~ A Boeing engineer, after the first flight of the 247, a twin-engine plane that holds 10 people
- “How, sir, would you make a ship sail against the wind and currents by lighting a bonfire under her deck? I pray you, excuse me, I have not the time to listen to such nonsense.” ~ Napoleon Bonaparte, when told of Robert Fulton’s steamboat, 1800’s
- “The idea that cavalry will be replaced by these iron coaches is absurd. It is little short of treasonous.” ~ Aide-de-camp to Field Marshal Haig, at tank demonstration, 1916
- “I must confess that my imagination refuses to see any sort of submarine doing anything but suffocating its crew and floundering at sea.” ~ HG Wells, British novelist, in 1901
- “The world potential market for copying machines is 5000 at most.” ~ IBM, to the eventual founders of Xerox, saying the photocopier had no market large enough to justify production, 1959
- “The Americans have need of the telephone, but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys.” ~ Sir William Preece, chief engineer, British Post Office, 1878
- “It’ll be gone by June.” ~ *Variety* magazine on Rock n’ Roll, 1955
- “And for the tourist who really wants to get away from it all, safaris in Vietnam.” ~ *Newsweek*, predicting popular holidays for the late-1960’s
- “When the Paris Exhibition [of 1878] closes, electric light will close with it and no more will be heard of it.” ~ Oxford Professor Erasmus Wilson
- “A rocket will never be able to leave the Earth’s atmosphere.” ~ *New York Times*, 1936
- “There is no danger that Titanic will sink. The boat is unsinkable.” ~ Philip Franklin, vice president of the White Star Line, before it sailed
- “Whatever happens, the U.S. Navy is not going to be caught napping.” ~ Frank Knox, on December 4, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor occurred three days later.

October 5

**Continue learning throughout your life
and you will continue growing.**

Two types of processes occur continually in our bodies, catabolic and anabolic. The catabolic processes are those that break complex structures into simpler, less complex ones. For instance, digestion is primarily a catabolic process, whereby we take complex structures known as food and break them down into their component parts. Catabolic activities occur to the body as well. The bones of our body are continually being torn apart and absorbed by cells known as osteoclasts. Osteoclasts are critical to the maintenance, repair, and remodeling of our bones.

Anabolic processes also happen continually within the body. Osteoblasts build bone, to balance the action of osteoclasts, while accommodating to the current SFIC influencing such development. Physical growth is an anabolic process, whereas decay is a demonstration of catabolism.

Throughout most of life, the anabolic and catabolic activities of the body are in balance. An oversimplification of the relationship of anabolic and catabolic activities is to consider that in children, anabolic activities prevail, whereas at the end stages of life, catabolic activities predominate.

The term “new growth” is essentially redundant, as by its very nature all growth is new. Similarly, use of the phrase “learning something new” implies the same redundancy, since anything learned is inherently new. As adults, we are not likely to be growing in physical stature, at least not very much. But we can continue to learn, and to gain new abilities, by putting ourselves into situations that foster such development. Whether the learning is physical or intellectual, anabolic processes are involved. One of the keys to remaining youthful, even well into your senior years, is to strive for anabolism. Put yourself in positions that require you to grow in order to succeed. Rising to the challenges you put before yourself is how you foster your growth.

October 6

Resolve to make healthy resolutions every day.

You became aware of a desire for change, and you took the time to examine what was possible. You set the goals. You created the plan and the timeline to reach your goals. Now the work begins, the effort starts, and you are taking your first steps in a new direction. Today is the only day you have.

We all figured out, when children, that when you wake up tomorrow, it will be today. Again. Today is the day to make resolutions, and to do what you must in order to convert them into reality. Today you can make a difference. Today you can progress towards your goals, or shrink away from them. Today is all you have.

In order to develop and keep your momentum when paddling upstream, you must keep paddling. When you wish to become someone better than your current self, you must overcome the existing inertia by putting in at least a bit of effort. As a result of your work, your course will change. But what if we very quickly tire in our efforts, especially when they are not validated by immediate and gratifying results? In such a situation, the only successful option is to focus on the results you hope to gain. If you truly want results, you must do the requisite work. You want the secret, the shortest possible shortcut? Practice every day and you will improve. That is the shortcut. Immersion brings the best results. Be willing to start anew, day after day, and you will be amazed at the progress you will make.

We all have room for improvement, in so many ways, at so many things. Making such improvement does not require massive efforts, but it does require consistent effort. You can be like the snail crawling up the wall, making two inches of progress every day and sliding backwards one inch every night. Eventually, you will get to the top, even if you are moving at what seems a snail's pace.

Of course, you have options. You could choose not to make healthy resolutions on daily basis. And like the snail that only goes up the wall now and then, you could progress two inches, slide back one, and another one, and even another one, till you hit rock bottom. Such an approach could hardly be considered the success track.

The beautiful thing about making daily health resolutions is that all the pressure comes off you to create massive change, to make huge decisions, and to completely reverse your course. Instead, all you need to do is make little decisions and take small actions, knowing that day by day your efforts will accumulate. Once in a while, when you look back on your path, you will be able to see that you have indeed come far.

October 7

**If you must eat starch (no, starch is not recommended),
know that all desires to eat starch are rooted in the fact of eating
an insufficient quantity of calories from fresh fruit.**

Carbohydrates are essential to life. Even if you never eat a single carbohydrate, your body will convert at least some of the protein and fat you eat, manufacture it into the carbohydrate called “glucose,” and supply those carbohydrates to all the cells of your body as “blood sugar.” The cells of your brain rely specifically upon this blood glucose to fuel themselves. Your muscles (and your liver) convert glucose into glycogen, a complex form of carbohydrate that is the animal-equivalent of what is known as starch, a form of carbohydrate found only in plants. One granule of glycogen contains around 30,000 glucose units. The glycogen is then available to the muscles for use as fuel. But whereas we carry an essentially inexhaustible quantity of fat for fuel (one pound of fat supplies sufficient fuel for the average man to walk approximately 70 miles, and most people carry 5-20 pounds of excess fat), we only carry sufficient glycogen for the same man to walk 40 miles before running out of fuel.

Not only do we have an inborn drive to consume simple carbohydrates, known as our “sweet tooth,” carbohydrates are essential to the efficient breakdown of fat for fuel. In order to utilize fats “cleanly,” we must have carbohydrates available. In order to keep our blood sugar levels optimized, we must add sugar, at least once or twice per day.

We do not have the digestive enzymes to digest most starches in their raw form. The body can convert sufficiently cooked starched into simple sugar, but that is obviously the inefficient and circuitous route. Along the way, cooking starches also exerts a steady stream of environmental damage, nutritional losses, and health hazards. The plain fact is that if you do not eat enough fresh fruit, you will be biologically driven to eat starch. Paste is paste, no matter what you call it. Whether you think of starch and water as mere wallpaper paste, schoolroom paste, simple pasta, or the basic ingredients for making pastry, it is still paste, and none of those words seem to even make an effort at hiding the fact.

If you ever find yourself looking at or even thinking about eating starchy food, a thought should trigger telling you that you have not been eating a sufficient quantity of carbohydrates from fresh fruit to meet your needs. Take appropriate action by eating all the fruit you care for. You will be surprised how much better you feel.

October 8

When your shadow is longer than your height, you face little danger of sunburn.

If you are beyond age four, and likely most of the people reading this book are over that tender young age, you have probably experienced sunburn a few times in your life. A pretty good chance exists that at least one or two of those burns were “memorable,” severe enough to have taught you a lesson about respecting the extreme power of the sun’s rays. Hopefully, you can remember the last time you were burned by the sun, and are now a bit less cavalier and a bit more cautious regarding sun exposure. Getting sunlight is a requirement for health, but too much of this good thing can be harmful. To tan is divine, but to burn is to err.

Many factors affect the relative power of the sun’s rays. One of the most critical factors is your own skin. Typically, the darker the skin, the less prone to sunburn it is. If you have very fair skin or skin that is extremely susceptible to the sun’s rays, you must take appropriate precautionary measures so as not to burn. Judicious use of hats, umbrellas, and protective clothing means different things for different people. A day at the beach is the ultimate gift for some people, but for those who cannot tolerate the sun, an hour on the beach can be torture. The sand reflects the sun’s rays, multiplying them and sending them caroming even into the most shady retreat spots. Due to this, people have been sunburned on the beach even while being careful to spend the entire time in the shade. White and light-colored surfaces also reflect and multiply the power of the sun. On a sailboat, for instance, with sails, decks, sea foam, and waves all reflecting sunlight, the combined solar power can be as much as 100 times stronger than sunlight on its own.

As the days shorten and the sun’s highest reach becomes progressively lower in the sky, the power of the sun’s rays diminishes. Generally, we do not expect anyone to be able to get a tan in winter. But the greater the altitude, the thinner the air, and the less particulate matter it contains, the more powerful are the sun’s rays. Couple that factor with reflection off of the snow, and it is easy to understand why goggle-wearing snow skiers and snowboarders end up with the traditional “raccoon eyes” or “snow glow” facial tan associated with their sport.

Allow for all factors when considering the safety of your next foray into the sun. Remember that time is a factor, so if you are going to be out all day, you might want to bring along some protection. Balance the temptation of wanting to get all the sun you possibly can against the fact that sun exposure is a form of radiation, along with the fact that the negative effects of sun damage are cumulative, and you will likely come to the conclusion that when it comes to how much sun to take, moderation is the answer.

October 9

**Why pay to have industrial and medical wastes “properly”
disposed of when they can be sold as health enhancers?**

Drugs, whey, skimmed milk, fluoride, bran, chlorine, nitrates, radioactive waste, molasses, yeast, gelatin, bone meal, sea salt, fish oil, juices, various vitamins, minerals, and other “supplements,” and many other waste products are sold in health food stores.

When pregnant mares urinate, their urine is rich with hormones. The urine is collected and the hormones are isolated and concentrated for use in a drug known as Premarin. The drug is used for a variety of purposes, most notably as a treatment for hot flashes and vaginal burning and dryness. The drug is also used to treat osteoporosis, metastatic breast cancer, and prostate cancer.

Whey protein is perhaps the most widely-used protein supplement in the world. Whey is a waste material, a leftover from the cheese-making industry. Toxic to the soil and our waterways, disposal of whey tends to be an expensive process. Roughly 4,000 liters (weighing close to 4000kg) of whey are produced from each metric ton of cheese manufactured. Currently more than 20 million metric tons of cheese is produced annually worldwide, with about one-third of that coming from the United States, resulting in a total of 80 billion kilograms of whey (that is 176 billion pounds, folks). Does it come as any surprise to learn that enterprising cheese manufacturers decided to sell the whey as food, rather than paying enormous fees to have it hauled away?

We have known for quite some time how to separate the cream from the milk by simply skimming it off the top. But it is only recently that people finally agreed to drink skimmed milk. Basically, by skimming the milk, we have created an abundance of cream, butter, and related products, allowing for the manufacture of a world of fatty foods. Eating these fatty foods has been one of the triggers that led to our current epidemic of obesity, and the eventual demand for low-fat foods. Skimmed milk to the rescue....

Initially, bran was included in breads, cereals, rice, and other grain products, as there was no viable way to separate the bran from the rest of the grain. Once we figured out how to remove the bran, and could make white flour, we began producing a host of refined flour products, which were much more expensive than their whole flour counterparts. These quickly became so popular that the problem for manufacturers was what to do with all the bran. Of course, people were now suffering from health problems related to having too little fiber in their diets, so selling the bran as if it were health food became the obvious solution.

Molasses is the leftover sludge at the bottom of the barrel when refining cane sugar.

Do you even want to think about where fish oil comes from?

Fluoride, the unwanted leftover in the refining of aluminum, was initially only used for rat poison.

What to do with radioactive waste, a material that we know causes cancer? Why, use it in cancer therapy, of course, and to irradiate our food supply.

Commercially, salt sells for a penny or two per pound when purchased in bulk. When mining for valuable minerals in salt lakes, salt flats, etc., salt is the leftover product. In health food stores, salt can cost \$5, \$10, and even \$20 per pound! Such a huge markup is more than drug dealers use.

If you find yourself stuck with an excess of industrial waste, sell it as health food, and you will be sure to make a tidy profit.

October 10

The burden of proof should fall upon practitioners of modern medicine, with their self-proclaimed “radical” procedures, and not upon the conservative practitioners using the time-honored “nature cure.”

Every once in a while, people say to me, “Show me the society that lives on a low-fat raw vegan diet. Otherwise, there is no validity to *The 80/10/10 Diet*.” Why should one thing have anything to do with the other? If there were already societies living in a style that matched the tenets outlined in *The 80/10/10 Diet*, the book would not be recognized as the groundbreaker that it is.

This is, perhaps, the first time in recorded history that we have the technology to make the low-fat, raw vegan diet a viable option for the world’s population. Improvements in roadways, shipping, and storage combine to make year-round fruit access easy today.

Until the 20th Century, mango (and dozens of other fruit and vegetable varieties) was essentially unknown outside the areas of the world where it was grown. Within those areas, the fruit was only available for the two months or so per year that it was in season. Today, in many parts of the world, mango is available year round. Produce picked yesterday, from anywhere in the world, can often be found in your local grocery store today.

How can the recommendation to consume more fruits and vegetables be considered as “too radical” in light of the following? AZT, a failed cancer treatment drug that was pulled from the market because it actually caused cancer, was re-released as an anti-AIDS drug. How is it better if AIDS sufferers die of cancer instead of AIDS?

Thalidomide was used to treat nausea during pregnancy. Babies were born armless and legless, proving Thalidomide to be a powerful teratogen. A movement is currently underway to re-release the drug, this time to treat leprosy and specific types of blood cancer. As a race, we seem resistant to learning, destined to repeat mistakes again and again.

“We learn from history that we do not learn from history.” ~ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Has your son or daughter become “difficult” to manage? Perhaps a lobotomy will help? Too radical, you say? How about electroshock “therapy”? Is this still too extreme an approach? Why not try dosing schizophrenic patients who seem likely to recover anyway with repeated bouts of sufficient insulin to put them in a coma? Call it “insulin shock therapy,” since anything with “therapy” in the name will be accepted. Insulin shock therapy went out of vogue and was replaced by coma therapy induced by the use of barbiturates. Today we have SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors) to handle behavior issues. No one seems concerned by the almost 5,000 documented instances of violent behavior associated with these drugs, or the nearly 50 (and counting) cases of mass murders perpetrated by people on SSRIs, people with no prior history of violence.

Before fast food, before cooking, before tools, and before history, man was eating a diet predominated by fruits and vegetables, because that was all he could safely catch. Nature's model cannot be improved upon.

October 11

**The demand for remedies
results in the supply of remedies.**

All too often we fall into the trap of blaming, and in this case the trap of blaming the manufacturers of items that blatantly destroy our health. Why do they even make junk food, fast food, deep-fried food, sugary food loaded with empty calories, food made almost entirely from synthetic items, food oozing artificial colors and artificial flavors, and food so loaded with chemicals that we would probably be smart to wear a hazmat suit when we go near it? The answer is easy: demand creates supply.

Roger Waters, in his song “It’s A Miracle,” from the “Amused To Death” album, released in 1992, included the following phrase:

We’ve got warehouses of butter.
We’ve got oceans of wine.
We’ve got famine when we need it.
We’ve got designer crime.

He makes it quite clear that we’ve responded with overkill to demands, by producing more supply than we could ever need.

We’re eating more than double the maximum recommended intake of refined sugar, and already carry almost 50 percent more body fat than even the most generous recommended levels allow for. We’re walking half as far daily as is recommended, and sitting more than triple the recommended number of hours. The average person is eating almost 700 calories per day in excess of his/her requirements, enough to gain a pound of weight every week. Is it any surprise we are searching for miracles?

No need to allow for the fact that you have been sedentary for the past 10 years. You want to get in shape immediately, and are willing to take drugs to reach your goals. Someone will sell you exactly what you need.

Have you been steadily gaining weight for the past 15 years, but you want to lose the weight in no time flat? Someone is more than willing to sell you a miracle cure.

Everyone from the medical mainstream to the marketing manipulators jumped at the opportunity to cash in by supplying “cures” for cancer, while no one seems interested in removing the causes.

We forget that fruit is Nature’s instantaneous food, and instead we wait in line to purchase fast food. We forego the perfect fuel supplied by fruit and opt for junk food. We walk past the tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, and celery, perfectly edible on their own “as is” and rich in electrolytes, proteins, and healthy carbohydrates, yet super low in calories, in order to buy chips

and dips, rank with rancid oils and rife with refined sugars, salts, excitotoxins, preservatives, stabilizers, and of course, excess calories.

Sure, everyone wants something for nothing, and yes, everyone wants a miracle. But how about simply earning your health while waiting for the miracle to come?

October 12

**You will experience health in direct proportion
to the degree that you live healthfully.**

We all understand and agree that things happen over which we have absolutely no control, as expressed so eloquently by Forest Gump in the movie of the same name, when he uttered those two famous words, “It happens.” You cannot choose your parents, so you have no control over the genetics you were born into. (Yes, even your genetic potential is somewhat malleable, but that can only change so much, based upon what you inherited.) You cannot undo your past, and must simply accept the fact that you have to live with your history, the good, the bad, and the ugly. What is left? You can affect your current lifestyle, choosing either to take personal responsibility for stacking your lifestyle “cards” in your favor and hoping for the best possible outcome, or not doing so, letting the chips fall where they may, and accepting the consequences.

Developing the talent of planning for long-term outcome will always work to your benefit. For instance, over the coming decade, you are either going to get stronger or weaker, more flexible or less so, see your coordination improve or watch it deteriorate, gain or lose endurance. The results will be completely up to you, based upon your activity choices. Will you allow your fitness to dissipate, or will you develop it to its highest level? Do you see that similar questions exist for every aspect of lifestyle?

Things get really interesting when we stop to consider the interrelationships of one lifestyle facet with the next and the profound effects exerted upon your health. For instance, much has been written upon the relationship of nutrition and sports performance, nutrition and behavior, nutrition and mood, and of course, nutrition (not calories) and weight management. When we improve our diet, we feel more energetic. When we are more energetic, we move more and do better in sports. As a result of increases in the quantity and intensity of our fitness activities, we lose excess body fat. Feeling energized, doing more sport, and losing weight each contribute to putting us in a better mood, which leads to improved behavior. Such interconnectedness exists in all aspects of our overall health and lifestyle regimen. Feeling better leads to being more active and more productive, which results in more outdoors time in the fresh air and sunshine, which supports clear-mindedness and goal setting, bringing us positive outlook, better mood, and self-constructive behavior; all of which leads to improved health.

Consider this old proverb, with the kingdom being your health:

For Want of a Nail

For want of a nail the shoe was lost.
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.
For want of a horse the rider was lost.
For want of a rider the message was lost.
For want of a message the battle was lost.
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

In chaos theory (a field of study in mathematics), the butterfly effect refers to the sensitive dependence on initial conditions in which a small change in one state of a deterministic (not random), nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state. The metaphorical example of a butterfly flapping its wings affecting the outcome (formation and path) of a hurricane weeks later gave the effect its name. Even those of us not familiar with chaos theory have likely heard the expression, “When a butterfly sneezes in Thailand” in reference to small things affecting other much larger things. Every factor is an influence in your health.

October 13

Being a raw food vegan is easy, in between meals.

How many times have you said to yourself, “Never again”?

Once again drawing on lyrics from Roger Waters, the song “Four Minutes,” from his “Radio KAOS” album, released in 1987:

After a near miss on the plane,
You swear you’ll never fly again.
After the first kiss when you make up,
You swear you’ll never break up again.
And when you’ve just run a red light,
Sit shaking under the street light,
You swear to yourself you’ll never drink and drive again....

After a binge, swearing off bingeing is easy. After a smoke, swearing off smoking is easy.

How many times, in how many situations, must you say to yourself, “Never again” before you are really going to mean it? If life were infinite, you would have all the time in the world to become the person you truly wish to be, to live the life you would most like to live. Life is quite finite, and the only time we are assured of having is right now.

Planning and commitment are required in order to succeed at being a raw food vegan at mealtime, especially when you are hungry. For the hungrier you are, the less discriminating, and the less patient you become.

You have got to plan ahead if you want to have a ready supply of ripe fruit in your house. So many times people have said to me, “My kids ate all my fruit, so I had to go off of *The 80/10/10 Diet.*” Really? You know that bananas take time to ripen, for example, and you know from experience approximately how long they take to ripen. If you hope to always have a ready supply of ripe bananas at home, waiting to look for more until you completely run out of bananas is likely not your best plan.

A commitment to succeed implies consideration of the various potential hindrances to that success, and a series of strategies to overcome each hindrance. While it is impossible to plan for every possible contingency, it is easy to see at least a few of the obstacles that might come your way, and to create several solutions to each problem. For instance, if you wish to always have bananas for breakfast, you might keep a reserve supply of frozen bananas in the freezer, just in case you run out of fresh ones. Or you might keep a stash of dried bananas in your closet, for emergencies. The idea is that if you just do not want to be caught short, you make allowances. You want being a raw vegan to be as easy at mealtime as it is in between meals.

October 14

**Be willing to take actions, make mistakes,
and to learn from them.**

Learning what does not work is an integral stage on the road to learning and refining what actually does work, and what will work best. Mired in the indecision of analysis paralysis, or steeped deep in the inertia of inactivity, your biggest mistake stands to be the failure to make an attempt. From this, we learn firsthand the meaning of the time-honored phrase, “Failure to try guarantees failure to succeed.”

Austrian-born Peter Drucker (1909-2005) is known as the founder of modern management. His books on business management and corporate development predicted many of the changes we saw in the latter half of the 20th Century, including privatization, decentralization, the importance of marketing, and the necessity of lifelong learning. Drucker said, “The better a man is, the more mistakes he will make, for the more new things he will try. I would never promote to a top-level job a man who was not making mistakes ... otherwise he is sure to be mediocre.” How often do you think more of yourself for making mistakes, and how often do you think less of yourself? Certainly Drucker gives us permission, yea he encourages us, to think better of ourselves for our errors.

British politician David Lloyd George (1863-1945) is often thought to have had a greater impact upon British public life than any other 20th Century leader. He said, “Don’t be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated. You can’t cross a chasm in two small jumps.” How profound this comment really is. The worst that can happen if you go for it and fail is that you err, in which case you rely on Drucker’s advice and think better of yourself for having done so.

The world-renowned televangelist and best-selling author Robert Schuller, wrote, “Failure doesn’t mean you are a failure ... it just means you haven’t succeeded yet.” Failure is just a step on the way to success. Failure is no different than each step along a 1000-mile journey; it is just another step on the journey.

Think of all the stories you would not be able to tell, if you did not fail now and then, and then thank American author and playwright Truman Capote (1924-1984) for this insight, “Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavor.”

From the man who wrote some of the 20th Century’s most meaningful music, Johnny Cash (1932-2003) is considered one of the century’s most influential musicians. He provides this powerful insight on failure: “You build on failure. You use it as a stepping stone. Close the door on the past. You don’t try to forget the mistakes, but you don’t dwell on it. You don’t let it have any of your energy, or any of your time, or any of your space.”

As Mark Victor Hansen, coauthor of the famous *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series says, we have to be willing to shout “Next,” as though we really believe it, whenever we face adversity, rejection, and anything else that could be viewed as failure.

Denis Waitley, author of 16 books, has a long history as a motivational speaker. His work in the field of success psychology, especially in working with athletes and people in high-stress positions, such as astronauts, is legendary. Waitley says, “Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end. Failure is something we can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.”

Let’s build on our successes and learn from our failures.

October 15

**We do not have enough time to make all the mistakes ourselves.
Far faster and easier is to learn from other people's mistakes.**

“Only a fool learns from his own mistakes. The wise man learns from the mistakes of others.” Otto von Bismarck, known as the Iron Chancellor, served as minister president of Prussia for almost 30 years, from 1862-1890. He is credited by historians for keeping the peace in Europe and bringing about the unification of Germany. Apparently, he took his own advice to heart.

Talking about learning from mistakes, Rick Warren, senior pastor of the eighth largest church in the United States and author of many Christian books, takes the concept to a new level when he says, “We are products of our past, but we don't have to be prisoners of it.” He suggests that we not only learn from our own mistakes, but that we learn from the mistakes made by others throughout history. His book, *The Purpose Driven Life* has sold more than 30 million copies.

So many views on failure exist. So many successful people give their opinion on the importance of failure. Somehow, the topic seems too important to ignore all the advice. John Dewey (1859-1952) American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer said, “Failure is instructive. The person who really thinks learns quite as much from his failures as from his successes.” We face opportunities to learn virtually everywhere we turn.

Author Dayna Lovely is known for her inspirational thoughts. “Even in the midst of the storm the sun is still shining.” Are you able to hold the thought that even in the middle of your worst failures, you are also taking a shortcut to a huge success?

Even when learning something that is brand new to us, we sometimes become frustrated with ourselves, and our inability to master skills more rapidly. The inspirational author known as Jerhia offers the following insight: “If you fail, never give up, because F.A.I.L. means First Attempt In Learning.”

Ghanaian author Lailah Gifty Akita, founder of the Smart Youth Volunteers Foundation gives her acronym for failure in her book, *Pearls of Wisdom*:

F – Fall
A – Arise
I - Intuitive thinking
L - Learning process
U - Undeterred soul
R - Renew thoughts
E - Experiments in new thinking

Thus expressed, even those of us who have learned from our failures are almost certain to fail in the future, if only to continue the learning process throughout life.

October 16

The body rebuilds itself in a quality directly proportional to the quality of the building materials you supply.

Given the job of building a house from scratch, and given the advantage of having a full-time knowledgeable guide to assist you at all times, and given the luxury of using the finest building materials, you could build a house that would last and last, and would stand up to practically anything Mother Nature could throw at it. But if instead of wooden beams you had to use Styrofoam, and instead of proper roofing tiles you had to use letter-sized single ply sheets of paper, with ice cubes instead of bricks for walls, and white bread for floors and ceilings, your house would likely not stand up to the gentlest drizzle or the first wisp of wind. Your body is truly the house in which you live, and the 100 trillion cells of which it is made are continually being repaired, rebuilt, and replaced. Your body will always choose the highest quality materials available for the work, but if high-quality material is not available, the construction will go on anyway, with low-quality materials.

What are low-quality materials? For starters, cooked food provides very low quality. Every whole food, whether fruit or vegetable, is comprised of at least a few percent protein. When protein is heated, carcinogens are formed, resulting in abnormally rapid cell proliferation. Also, mutagens are formed, resulting in mutant cells, meaning the cell reproduced is not true to the original. Anti-nutrients are formed, substances that, instead of nourishing the body and contributing to its nutritional stores, actually work against our nutrients, draining the body's reserves of various nutrients.

In addition, proteinaceous food quality is compromised due to the specific effect on the molecular bonds within the protein itself. When subjected to heat as low as 130°F, proteins begin to denature, meaning they come apart; hence, bonds are broken. Such heat is sufficient to kill many of the tiny pests that live in and on various fruits by denaturing their protein, which is why fruits such as mangoes are often dipped in 130°F water for 30 minutes before being shipped to certain countries. Further bonds are destroyed at temperatures above 161°F, which explains how and why pasteurization works to preserve food by killing, or at least temporarily stunning, specific microbes in the food. But the real damage to food quality occurs within the proteins when the food cools, because as the broken bonds reform, they do not link with the same members as they had done originally. Instead, they “cross-link.” Cross-linked proteins form enzyme-resistant bonds, meaning that we can no longer utilize our enzymes to help digest them. Proteins that cannot be broken down fully are recognized as foreign invaders by the body, to be attacked and eliminated. We generate a white blood cell surge to eliminate the indigestible protein, and a series of immune responses as well, some of which lead to a host of auto-immune conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, and even, potentially, AIDS. (Hence, the book on AIDS, *Animals In Digestive Systems*, was written.) The partially-digested proteins themselves can also lead to leaky gut syndrome.

In order to build and sustain a high-quality body, one must eat the high-quality foods we simply call fruits and vegetables.

October 17

The secret to lifetime fitness: eat whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, sleep all you can, and train like a champion.

When it comes to getting fit, no substitute exists for serious training. Good nutrition and sufficient recovery also play key roles. Yet plenty of topnotch athletes who eat extremely poorly are still mind-bogglingly fit. The same incredible fitness can be seen in many of the world-class athletes who burn the candle at both ends. You do not have to eat well or be well-rested in order to achieve a high level of fitness for a relatively short period of time. Only if you wish to maintain your health and fitness, to have a long and fruitful career, is it imperative that you take excellent care of yourself. Pro careers in most sports are short, over in about a decade, and leaving longer careers only to the stars. Even the superstars rarely have careers that last longer than 20 years or so. On *The 80/10/10 Diet*, however, we are seeing athletes at all ability levels extend their time at peak of performance by five, ten, and even fifteen years. Pam Boteler, for example, was still competing and winning in her sport of sprint canoe, even when the next nearest competitor was only half her age, fully 20-plus years younger. No, you do not need to eat properly and sleep sufficiently just because you wish to be an athlete. You only need to do these things if you wish for your fitness to last, or if you wish to remain fit for a lifetime.

With every advancing decade of life, we either take better care of our health, or we pay a greater price. The price can be severe, debilitating, and even crippling. The price can be the premature end to a promising career, the onset of degenerative disease, or a life-ending condition, such as cancer of the liver or kidneys.

Athletes are not immune to suffering with the same health problems as everyone else, but because they tend to eat double and even triple the food most people eat, they are also subject to concerns that develop when the toxins in conventional food accumulate in their body. Athletic endeavors of all types result in dramatic increases in cellular activity with the result of massive increases in the production of cellular metabolic waste. In addition, the use of PEDs (performance-enhancing drugs) and their toxic side effects is becoming increasingly common among athletes. The party life that includes alcohol, recreational drugs, and late nights is one that is uniquely available to athletes. Sufficient sleep helps the body do its work of eliminating toxins, as does eating whole, raw, organic plants.

October 18

**Training for overload becomes overtraining
when there is inappropriate refueling
or otherwise inadequate recovery.**

Fitness training places huge demands upon the entire body, often pushing various structures and functions to (and sometimes beyond) the limit of their ability to handle the stress. In order to support the desired adaptations that naturally result from training so that they progress at maximum efficiency and optimum effectiveness, a specific combination of fuel and nutrients must be provided, as well as enough calories. In addition, sufficient sleep and adequate time for rest must be supplied, or else only a partial recovery is possible. When we fall behind in recovery, we do not see the progress we would normally expect to result from training. In fact, when we fall sufficiently far behind in recovery, performance actually begins to regress rather than progress. Ignore the symptoms of overtraining and not only do we come to expect performance declines, but also the risk of injury rises dramatically. On top of that, because the over-trained athlete is struggling to be able to perform at what was previously the expected normal level, the fun and enjoyment of training decreases dramatically. Over-trained athletes can even come to dread their workouts, a really strange phenomenon, considering they are performing in the sport of their choice, the one that they found to be so pleasurable that they wanted to do it all the time.

Many people read these words and immediately say, “But wait a minute, many other factors should be considered. What about if people simply train so aggressively that it is beyond their ability to recover in the allotted time, or if they train with such intensity or for so long a duration that they lose the ability to perform safely? What if through such factors they actually hurt themselves? Wouldn’t that qualify as overtraining?” Going beyond those boundaries is known as overwork, is different from overtraining, and is definitely on the other side of what we refer to as the overload associated with fitness training.

During physical exertions, and especially during intense exercise, the primary fuel utilized is the simple sugar known as glucose. The primary calorie source that needs to be supplied for recovery, therefore, is also glucose. Glucose is found in the optimal quantities and packaged with the optimal mix of associated nutrients in fruit, making fruit the ideal post-workout food. Eating fruit immediately after fitness training is the perfect way to rehydrate, refuel, and take care of all of your nutritionally related recovery needs. Remember that training results in growth, and whenever you are growing, your need for sleep increases from normal. Give yourself all the sleep you desire, and watch as your fitness levels rise through the roof.

October 19

If you would rather die than change your unhealthy ways, you probably will.

I liked her as soon as I met her. Her daughter had been a patient for some years, and several family members, including her college-aged granddaughter, had seen me for various health problems on occasion. She was in a lot of pain, and I wanted to do all I could to help. But chiropractic care, although helpful, seemed palliative at best. Overall, she was in reasonable health, but the real problem was in her lungs. Having studied the normal and abnormal sounds of breathing while in school, I had not had much practical experience in listening for them. But as far as I could tell, she brought me the entire spectrum of abnormal sounds, including: wheezes, ronchi, rales, rubs, rasps, stridor, stertor, and at least a few other crackles for which I had no training, and I was not sure even had names. Yes, she had been a smoker for more than half a century. After a few weeks, when most of the musculoskeletal aches and pains had been cleared away and we'd had the time to make friends, I finally mustered the courage to ask her "the question."

Near the end of one of her office visits, as she was readying herself to leave, in as gentle and offhand a manner as I could affect, I asked her, "So, when do you think you will quit smoking?" She turned sharply to face me, and stood tall. I could see from the severe look on her face that I had touched a nerve, but the intensity, volume, and harshness of her reply took me completely by surprise. She almost shouted, and venomously spat out the words, "When I die." I never brought up the subject again, though I saw her many more times. Seven months later, and smoking until the last, she was gone.

- Are you reliant upon the alarm clock, coffee, and other stimulants to get through your day? Don't be surprised when adrenal fatigue takes you down.
- Not quite ready to give up your daily drinking? No worries, liver failure is just around the corner.
- Is the athlete in you just not quite ready to give up "the juice"? When your kidneys quit, that is the end of the road.
- Does there need to be meat at every meal, else you just aren't satisfied? When heart disease comes knocking on your door, you'll have to answer the call.
- Have you gained weight to the point of embarrassment? Obesity will hold you down, literally.
- Are you on the road to diabetes, eating a diet that has equal quantities of fat and carbohydrate calories? Have no worries, for that road is a short one.

- Have you still not decided to quit smoking? Lung cancer is not fun, and neither is emphysema. Lip or throat cancer is nothing to write home about either.
- Putting off starting that fitness program you keep talking about? No worries, we'll keep a wheelchair on reserve for you.

October 20

**When you take care of the quality of your foods,
the quantity will control itself.**

“How many times have I had to tell you not to eat sweets before your meal? Eating sweets spoils your appetite.” Every mom has uttered these words, and every child has heard them. Why is it that not even one teenager has replied:

Mom, you say I’m eating you out of house and home. You always ask at the end of the meal if I’ve had enough. By this, you taught me that the reason we eat is to satiate ourselves, to literally spoil our appetites. My body is telling me that it wants sweets, that that is what I am most hungry for right now. If eating sweets before the meal will spoil my appetite, doing so seems like the perfect solution for all of us. I’ll get the sweets I want, you won’t have to make so much food, and we will both be satisfied.

Of course, your mom meant that by eating non-nutritious, refined sweets, with their empty calories and artificial ingredients, you would spoil your appetite for the nutritious food that she had lovingly put time and effort into preparing for dinner. If only we had seen that fruit provided the ideal food for the start of every meal (and often enough, for the entire meal). Fruit provides the sweet taste we are looking for, while also providing the nutrients we all know we need.

Meanwhile, people around the world are losing the battle of the bulge in increasing numbers, and at an alarmingly accelerating pace. Finding a solution to the weight management puzzle is becoming an ever more urgent challenge. By choosing whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants, the six key indicators of food quality and the matrix for *The 80/10/10 Diet*, you are guaranteed to be eating nutritious foods that are high in water content and also high in fiber. Each of these two factors results in a dramatic decrease in the calorie-per-bite (c/b) ratio when compared to the standard Western diet, which typically provides between 10 to 20 times the c/b ratio. The fact is, humans have a built in drive to consume an appropriate volume of food, based upon us eating foods that are appropriate for our species, as do all animals. What this means is that even if you could get all your nutrients from a small tablet, you would not be satisfied, because you have an innate desire to consume a satisfactory volume of food. This is where the c/b ratio becomes important. Refined foods usually have an increased caloric density, mean that in order to consume a satisfactory volume of food, you must overeat in terms of calories. Truly, by eating the highest quality foods you also ensure that you will eat a satisfying volume of food, without over-consuming on calories.

October 21

Only a foolish person waits to begin taking care of his health until after he notices that his health is in serious decline.

Mark Twain is credited with saying, hopefully in jest, “Never put off till tomorrow what may be done day after tomorrow just as well.” Too many people take his advice seriously, or they leave off the part about being able to do it “just as well.” Pablo Picasso was a bit more serious when he quipped, “Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone,” but when it comes to caring for our health, putting off important health practices can indeed hasten death’s arrival. The science fiction and fantasy author Alan Dean Foster, with more than 20 novels to his credit, put his finger directly on the pulse when he said, “The thing all writers do best is find ways to avoid writing.” We could substitute almost any career into that quote, and the pursuit of that career, and the quote would still be equally as true.

We all put things off once in a while, but roughly one in five people procrastinate so regularly as to deem it a character trait. These people run the risk of putting off caring for critical health issues until they have passed the point of no return.

Procrastination may be a way of delaying worry and work, but it also creates its own stresses. The boss will eventually find out you did not get your work done and give you a good telling off. Or, by not doing your part, you could let down your entire team. If you are not taking care of health issues, especially those that are not going away on their own, you will not only worry that they are getting worse, they probably will be. Oftentimes, medical research has confirmed, worry can be as health-destroying as any other health condition, and can lead to the development of further health issues. Ohio cartoonist Bill Watterson, best known for his ten-year run with the strip, “Calvin and Hobbes,” said, “You can’t just turn on creativity like a faucet. You have to be in the right mood. What mood is that? Last-minute panic.”

Still, the stress of a last-minute panic can be extremely hard on your health.

While we do not know that Confucius actually said all of the things for which he is credited, he was apparently a very wise man. The following is his view on planning versus procrastinating:

The superior man, when resting in safety, does not forget that danger may come. When in a state of security he does not forget the possibility of ruin. When all is orderly, he does not forget that disorder may come. Thus his person is not endangered, and his States and all their clans are preserved.

Take care of your health before it goes away.

October 22

In the absence of health, life itself becomes an irritating, unenjoyable experience that challenges one's patience.

The sign under the classroom clock declared: "Fail now! Why wait for the June rush?" Just a bit of school humor, or is there also a shred of wisdom to be gleaned? Certainly, if what you are doing now is not working, perhaps a change is in order. Robert Crumb, the underground cartoonist and philosopher who brought his art to the world stage with characters such as Mr. Natural and Fritz the Cat, and slogans such as "Keep On Truckin'", memorialized the same theme on the back cover of an issue of his *Zap Comix*, first published in 1968. His version was, "Help solve the overpopulation problem. This year, why not commit suicide!?" Hopefully, no one took him seriously. The idea is not a new one, thus the old adage, "A stitch in time saves nine," which, by the way, is an anagram of the phrase, "This is meant as incentive." Clearly, each phrase serves as a call to action. The English astronomer Francis Baily wrote in his 1797 *Journal*, "After a little while we acquired a method of keeping her [a boat] in the middle of the stream, by watching the moment she began to vary, and thereby verifying the vulgar proverb, 'A stitch in time saves nine.'" Whether fine tuning the steering of your ship or redefining the parameters of your health regimen, the importance of staying on top of the matter is obvious.

Confucius was a Chinese teacher, editor, politician, and philosopher who lived from 551-479 BC. His philosophy embraced personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice and sincerity. He introduced the concept, "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself," an early version of what we know today as the Golden Rule. Confucius said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." Twenty-five hundred years later, this aphorism is still true, but today you can easily transfer the thought to speak about your health, and your life.

Have you ever found yourself kicking the dog, even proverbially (by being harsh to someone or something that did not deserve your wrath), just because you were having a hard day or a challenging moment? Have you noticed the relationship between such behavior and your current state of health? When you are tired, irritated, in pain, or otherwise not yourself, you can easily lose your grasp on the Golden Rule, and allow rash behavior to overtake you. Many young people look at older people with health issues and say, "If I ever get like that, just shoot me." They believe that when encumbered by ill health, life will no longer be worth living. Sure, their views on how much they are willing to tolerate may change, but the idea does not change at all. Once you have lost your health, remaining positive becomes considerably more challenging.

October 23

Health of mind and body is an essential component of moral and social health.

Granted, no egg ever laid a chicken, but “which came first” is not really the question, for equally unanswerable is the question of how the chicken got here in the first place. Perhaps the answer is not really the important thing anyway, for what we want to know most is what to do with the information, and how to use the knowledge to affect future outcomes. In the case of a desire for improved overall health, every SFIC affects the outcome, so it does not really matter whether we focus our efforts upon mind, body, morals, or social health, for each will affect the others.

The Spartans of ancient Greece may nowadays be best remembered for their terse, witty, “laconic” speech (Sparta being the administrative capital of Laconia in the Peloponnese peninsula of Greece). Or perhaps the Spartans are best known for their sparse style of living, or their aggressive, winning methods in battle. The Spartans took great pride in doing things well. To this end, they placed great emphasis upon education and nutrition, the result being that Spartan women, and the men who lived through their time of soldiering, typically lived ten or more years longer than Greeks from other parts of the country. We may not agree with their societal values, but they had a system that really worked for them, and they stuck to it wholeheartedly.

When you are not able to take care of yourself, you often find yourself caring far less about others. Who cares if society is going down the tubes when you cannot even get out of bed? When you improve your physical health to the point that you are able to take care of others and no longer need others to take care of you, your mental outlook also improves, and it becomes possible for you to see moral and social issues in a new light. Change is inevitable in all human societies, and today this is truer than ever. From women’s rights, to equal rights, to human rights, to animal rights, to environmental rights, societal and cultural awareness is growing at incredible speed. The concept of political correctness reflected the tidal wave of societal changes that flooded our consciousness, as phrases and jokes that were once acceptable have become passé. People started expecting more of each other, treating each other better, and demonstrating the fact that at least some individuals in our society are experiencing personal growth, and affecting others. The number of vegans in our society is on the rise, and dramatically so. Reports say that the number of vegans in the USA more than doubled during the early 2000’s. Soon, if it has not already done so while you are reading this book, veganism will become the norm, and eating animals will pass out of vogue, becoming as unpopular as smoking cigarettes has recently become.

October 24

If people are not talking about you, you are likely not doing anything worth talking about.

When people comment to you about anything, out of the blue, you know you must have done something that really made them notice. I recently traveled overseas. Usually, when I travel, I tend to sink into the crowd, fit in, and just be another traveler, like most people do. While we are quite willing to speak to strangers when traveling, people also like their anonymity, and tend to stay in their shell. Few people will even make eye contact with you, let alone return a smile. I was wearing an old, tie-dyed Grateful Dead T-shirt from the '80's with a series of their trademark bears arranged in two concentric spirals. For sure, the shirt just beams happiness. But I was surprised when, on three separate occasions, people came up to me to comment on the shirt, telling me how much they liked it. I am not sure any of them even knew it was a Grateful Dead shirt.

Something about the dynamics of the grocery store makes our experiences there much like the airport. People want to be left alone, to just go about their business, yet they are willing to interact, and be quite friendly, with complete strangers. When the food in your cart looks the same as everyone else's, you draw no comments. But when your cart is totally loaded with fresh fruits and vegetables, people are drawn to speak to you, and you become a comment magnet. I knew my shopping cart was noteworthy when I repeatedly got comments such as:

- “Do you run a restaurant?”
- “You must be very healthy.”
- “Are you going to make banana bread?”
- “Do you run an animal shelter?”
- “I wish I could get my family to eat fruits and vegetables.”
- “What are you going to do with all that produce?”
- “No wonder you are so slim.”
- “How do you keep from getting fruit flies?”
- “Are you making wine?”
- “You must be having a huge party.”

Takanoyama Shuntarō, born in 1983 as Pavel Bojar, is a former sumo wrestler from the Czech Republic. He reached the highest ranks in professional Japanese sumo, despite the fact that he weighed less than 200 pounds, about half the weight of many of his competitors. Spectators

never knew if Takanoyama would win or lose his matches, as his career record was 325-318, but the tiny foreigner was always a crowd favorite. They loved to watch him, and they loved to talk about him. He even developed a cult following. Fighting against men who were sometimes almost triple his weight, he was doing something both noble and notable.

Are people talking about your posture? Do they mention to you how good it is? Do people comment on your physique, your fitness, your positive outlook, or your health? Cultivate any aspect of who you are to a high-enough level, and you will stand out, draw supportive comments, and maybe even become the talk of the town.

October 25

**Children will rise to and often surpass
the values demonstrated by their parents.**

We learn as we go, and what we learn, we attempt to pass on to our children. At least to some degree, the children have the advantage of starting out at a point that took their parents 20 years, 30 years, or even longer to attain. What the parents had to struggle to reach is the starting point for the child. The realizations and insights that required tremendous personal growth on the part of the parents is the given, the standard, the norm for the offspring.

By age three, children have mastered the speech patterns and accents that enable them to sound like their parents. By age six, they have taken on the physical postures and gestures of their adult role models. Not many years later, they will have adopted many of mom and dad's social, economic, and political views.

For the children who grew up where slavery was normal, attaining the insight that human slavery was an abomination required tremendous personal growth. Yet once slavery was abolished, the very idea of slavery became abhorrent to future generations, something never to be repeated or tolerated. Some people are old enough to remember women getting to vote. This change did not come easily. But to the children of the next generation, having the vote seems as normal and natural as could be. For a woman not to be able to vote would be a tough concept to explain. Vegetarianism, veganism, and raw foodism each in turn required a generation or longer to take root. Parents had to raise raw food children before the idea could finally be seen as normal. To children raised as raw-food vegans, the millions of factory farm animals are nothing more than slaves, an idea that is inherently intolerable to them.

As a child watching television, I was always amazed at how boring the music was during the commercials. But a full generation later, when the ones in charge of the stations, and the advertisements, were people from my generation, the images and the music had changed. Now, commercials use music from my generation! To the next generation, adverts and indeed television shows in general may be completely behind the times. In a decade or two, things will change. They always do.

The idea of national parks and preservation is a relatively new one, and for the most part an idea that was not introduced into the public mindset until the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Many parts of the world are still designating new areas for preservation as national parks. The idea of not littering only gained popularity after the Korean War. Species preservation, environmental awareness, and the idea of not using our oceans, outer space, and even the moon as huge garbage dumps is relatively new. Such insight will be automatic for youngsters born in the 21st Century.

Each generation functions as a springboard for the next, giving it a running start, an alley-oop of sorts, so that the newcomers can overtake and exceed the actions thus taken. What lessons are you teaching the next generation through your actions and thoughts?

October 26

**There are never right and wrong decisions,
but there are always consequences.**

We make thousands of decisions every hour of the day. Every one of them comes with consequences.

You are driving down the street, heading to someplace you have never been before. At the point that you realize you are lost, you approach an intersection where you have the option of going left, straight, or right. Unbeknownst to you, whether you choose left or straight, you will end up in the same place, and drive practically the same distance to get there. You also do not know that if you go right, the road dead ends in less than half a mile. You have to make a choice, so you go right, and quickly discover that although the road is scenic, and ends at a parking lot with a view of a large canyon, it does not get you to your desired destination. You go back, choose one of the other routes, and to your delight, it takes you to where you are going in no time flat.

Your partner gives you an ultimatum: make a total commitment or end the relationship. You get to choose. What factors do you consider before you make your decision?

You go to a restaurant with several potential business contacts. You do not know their food preferences, and do not know if your choice of foods will affect their view of you. Besides, would you eat something that was not in line with your beliefs just to close a business deal?

With the certainty of a child, you must trust in the absolute correctness of every decision you make, as well as trusting in your choice to put off making a decision. You must know, in your heart of hearts, that you are making the correct decision based upon the information you currently have at hand. If the decision is to ask others for their input before deciding, so be it. In light of new information, whether that info comes immediately or 20 years later, you can always change your mind and make a new correct decision. Doubt in yourself, second-guessing your own thought process, or living in fear of making incorrect decisions is a road to failure. Too many times we fall into the trap of thinking that whatever choice we make, it will be the wrong one, as if we were stuck in a world of perpetual dilemma, a situation where every option is undesirable. Instead, we need to imagine how we would proceed, and what our confidence level would be, if we knew for fact that we simply could not make errors.

Decisions can be made in an instant. Decisions are especially easy when you have sufficient information. Instead of squandering your time being slow at making decisions, wavering and waffling and faffing about, use the time to gather information, and to consider the consequences of the various options open to you. The more you practice making decisions with confidence, the easier such decision-making becomes. A good trial lawyer never asks a question to which he does not already know the answer. Take the time to follow the consequences of your decision, and the correct choice will become obvious to you.

October 27

**If you want to become sweet, happy, fit,
healthy, trim, energetic, helpful and resourceful;
begin practicing now.**

The potential for human growth is endless. In spite of the fact that the laws of physics say that there must be limits in sports, we pursue and continue to break the records in determined fashion. We get better and better at performing our chosen activities.

American novelist Eleanor Porter (1868-1920) created the unreasonably and illogically optimistic heroine known as Pollyanna, for her 1913 book of the same name. In the 1915 sequel, *Pollyanna Grows Up*, Pollyanna retained her optimistic outlook into adulthood.

The math, the science, the practice, and study after study clearly demonstrates that if you wish to be as trim as a trim person, all you need to do is eat and live like trim people do. If you wish to be as fit as an athlete, all you need to do is train in a fashion similar to your chosen athlete.

The traits and characteristics that you practice repeatedly today are exactly the ones that will define you in the future. American author Kurt Vonnegut (1923-2007), in his 1961 novel *Mother Night*, wrote in the foreword of the book, “We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be.” His story is about a fictitious US spy, Howard W. Campbell, who during WWII works writing propaganda for the Germans. Within each propaganda piece, he encodes messages to US Intelligence. In order to make the propaganda worthless to the Germans, he promotes outrageous ideas, things no sensible people would ever accept. But this is war, and in times of war people do funny things, and Campbell’s insane ideas are accepted one after the other as strokes of brilliance. The Americans, not knowing he is a spy sending encoded messages while attempting to be useless to the Germans, perceive Campbell as the worst of the German war criminals. After the war, the US spy agency refuses to clear his name, and Campbell becomes a prisoner who eventually commits suicide, all because he pretended to be someone he was not.

The biographic film *Catch Me If You Can* is about the life of Frank Abagnale, who while still a teenager had left home and successfully pretended to be a Pan American World Airways pilot, a Georgia doctor, and even a Louisiana parish prosecutor. He even pretended to work as a Secret Service agent, though his primary crime was check fraud. He performed cons worth millions of dollars before he was caught, and eventually hired, by the FBI to help catch other criminals. He created the first checks that could not be forged, for which he legally earned millions of dollars.

Who do you wish to become? Which character attributes do you want to develop?

October 28

Health is the most beautiful of all possible options.

The ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Aztecs, Chinese, Persians, Indians, and countless other cultures all used sculpture as an art form. Artists from each of these civilizations created an abundance of sculptures that epitomized their idea of perfection, whether to demonstrate power and strength, sheer beauty, or simply to show respect for intelligence, motherhood, or other highly-held ideals. But the overwhelming majority of sculptures focused on beauty, through the creation of what were considered perfect, ideal men and women. Sculptural examples of unhealthy people, either lame, injured, disfigured, sick, suffering, or in some other way less than perfect, are next to impossible to find.

We can use our imagination to picture various beautiful scenes:

- ❖ A seemingly endless field of tulips in full bloom in Holland
- ❖ A pristine mountain lake in the high desert of Utah
- ❖ A fjord in Norway, with whales, icebergs, and waterfalls
- ❖ A huge orchard, trees dripping with delicious peaches, mangoes, figs, or other fruit
- ❖ A tropical beach, extremely wide with white sand stretching for miles, with perfect waves of clear blue water.
- ❖ The 360-degree view from the top of a mountain, with woodlands stretching in all directions as far as the eye can see

Each of these scenes depicts Nature at her finest, with or without man's touch, creating images that are beautiful because they are healthy.

The following unhealthy scenes are not pleasant to picture:

- ❖ A brown, clogged river, barely flowing with its load of sludge and sewage
- ❖ A shoreline completely covered in plastic bottles, bags, and other floating debris
- ❖ A third-world encampment of sick and injured people, dying of starvation and wasting diseases
- ❖ An abandoned strip mine, devoid of life, littered with construction debris
- ❖ Millions of barrels of industrial waste, stacked in the desert, slowly decaying and spilling their content onto the earth

Like the cables holding a huge marquee, or the pillars supporting a grand building, the various facets of health are each important, profound, and immeasurably beautiful. Health is the culmination of all of these beautiful factors, and, being much more than just the sum of its parts, is even more beautiful.

October 29

Fruit is perfection itself.

Fruit looks good, smells good, feels good, and tastes good. Fruit digests exceptionally easily and quickly. Fruit is rich in vitamins, especially the water-soluble vitamins, which we must replenish regularly. Fruit contains a wealth of minerals, with emphasis on potassium, which we must consume in large quantities, as we lose potassium with normal kidney function. Fruit contains essentially no cholesterol, a major contributor to heart disease. Fruit is notoriously high in simple sugars, the very sugars that are the preferred fuel of every cell of the body. Balancing the sugars in fruit are high quantities of water and soluble fiber.

Tour cycling has long been recognized as being among the most grueling and demanding of all sports activities. In a study that lasted over ten years, conducted by a group of sports scientists in order to produce the ideal sports food for Tour-level cyclists, the scientists came up with a product that was essentially nothing more than a mixture primarily of dehydrated fruit and a small quantity of dehydrated vegetables with most of the fiber removed. Straight fruit and vegetable juice would have done the job, without creating the dehydration and digestion problems that always follow eating dried foods in quantity, and could have saved the scientists ten years of work.

We can make an excellent case for fruit being the ideal food for man. Of the more than 200 species of mammals that can be found in Costa Rica, only two have not been seen eating fruit, the jaguar and the river otter, and scientists are not certain that these two do not also eat the occasional fruit. We are genetically programmed to consume specific volumes of food. Too much and we hurt, too little and we remain hungry, regardless of calories consumed. In terms of calorie density, fruit provides the perfect range to allow us to consume enough food so as to be satiated, and to hold our weight. Foods that are exceptionally low in calorie density cannot be eaten as a calorie mainstay because we would have to eat an impossible volume to get enough, whereas when we rely upon foods that are too high in calorie density as our mainstay, in order to eat till satisfied in terms of volume we will invariably over-consume on calories. In addition to obesity, many diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes have been associated with eating too many calories.

Fruits come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes, most of which easily fit into our hands. Our color vision makes ripe fruit stand out on the tree and draws our attention as well as any street sign or warning light. Fruit satisfies our sweet tooth; hence it is appealing to everyone. The aroma of ripe fruit is so strong as to be easily noticed by humans, and so inherently pleasant to us that we use the smell of fruit in deodorant, lip gloss, perfume, and to make our homes smell appealing. Fruit is indeed the perfect food for man.

October 30

**Build your self-esteem
through simple daily practices
such as affirmations.**

When I first took up running as a sport, I could not seem to keep myself going. I just wanted to stop and walk, and if not that, then to at least slow down. I did not know if it was my head or my body telling me to stop (or if indeed the two could be separate entities), but I had to do something to get myself to keep running. So, I tried affirmations. I had first learned about the influence of affirmations while in school, and decided to see if I could put these powerful, little strings of words to use. I failed miserably.

In a cadence that matched my running, I would repeat to myself, “I feel good, I feel great, I feel terrific.” As with all self-talk, there is an immediate auto-response. To my chagrin, what I got in auto-response was an endless string of negativity, each negative phrase following a positive phrase, in an alternating singsong, something like:

I feel good.	No you don't.
I feel great.	No you don't.
I feel terrific.	No way.
I feel good.	Who do you think you're kidding?
I feel great.	You feel like crap.
I feel terrific.	This won't work.
I feel good.	You can't fool me.”

I could go for miles like this, making seemingly no progress in terms of positive outlook, but behold, it did keep me running all those miles. Meanwhile, I am sure I am not the only one who noticed that not only was I of two minds, one of them was NOT me, but rather, was responding to “me.” Here I was, trying to use my “me” to convince my “not me” to keep running.

I tried a different affirmation. “I am peaceful. I am powerful. I am positive.” The end result came out about the same.

I learned that I had to persevere. I learned that I had to focus on my desired outcome. I learned that I had to listen to the voice that was telling me what I needed to hear in order to bring about the consequences I most desired. After about six weeks of daily practice, the positive “me” voice almost completely drowned out the negative “not me” voice. I felt like John Nash, Nobel Laureate in Economics, whose struggle with paranoid schizophrenia almost completely destroyed him. His story is portrayed in the book and movie *A Beautiful Mind*. Years after his recovery, when asked if he still saw imaginary people and heard their voices as if they were real, he said, “Yes, but I've learned not to talk to them.” I had to learn to stop listening to, nay, stop communicating with, the negative voices inside my own head, even though they are still there. The less power I give them, the less power over me they have.

Eventually, my running affirmation changed. I began singing my own lyrics, to the tune of “When the Saints Come Marching In.” My refrain was, “I can always run one more mile,” and I believed it. Another mile? No problem. No matter how many miles I would run, another mile was just no problem.

Put affirmations to work for you. Claim your destiny, and claim your prize. The results will not become instantaneously apparent, but like building fitness or building a house, every repeat of your affirmation will be another step in the right direction.

October 31

Q: What is your most valued possession?

A: Your next breath.

We hold so much of value in life, from friendships and family, to memories and plans, to things, ideals, and, of course, our own bodies. We have attics, basements, and garages filled with items that we likely would not miss at all were we never to see them again. When we lose a loved one, we are often filled with remorse that we did not make enough time for them, and that we did not tell them often enough how much we loved them. We value our once-a-year vacation time, and often overlook the importance of that which is all around us. Somehow, even though we spend the most time with our own body, this is the one possession that we most seem to take for granted. We consume junk food that we know full well will do us grievous bodily harm. We participate in activities such as motorcycle riding without wearing appropriate protective gear. We take unnecessary risks, just for the thrill, often without ever considering the consequences. We inhale the smoke of burning leaves, drink distilled spirits, and take recreational drugs as if we were impervious to their ill effects. We stay in the sun until we burn, explore in the cold until we lose fingers and toes, swim underwater and push the limits of flight to unconsciousness, and generally act as if we truly did have the cat's proverbial nine lives. I am reminded of the billboard I once saw in Miami. The scene was classically western: cowboys, corrals, and a scrub desert near sunset, and it brought to mind every Marlborough cigarette advert that I had ever seen. The caption, however, was from one cowboy to the other. "Gosh, I miss my lung," it read. Anti-smoking advertisements, paid for by the tobacco industry as a government-enforced fine no less, were relatively new on the scene back then.

Over the past 50 years, tens of thousands of television shows have depicted intelligent and caring doctors repeatedly saving the day, snatching patients from the jaws of certain death and bringing them back to health, usually due to their incredible knowledge and the aid of "miraculous" pharmaceutical drugs. In spite of personal experience to the contrary, most people have come to inherently believe in the miracles they hope to receive from their doctors. In a society predominated by instant and disposable items, the idea that our knees, shoulders, hips, kidneys, heart, and other parts can be abused and then easily replaced has taken firm hold.

We must learn to live as though we cherish our health. We must use our bodies wisely, and not subject ourselves to abuse, disuse, or misuse. We must safeguard our health, conserving it and accumulating more. We must treat every aspect and facet of our health as if it were our last. To learn how much you really appreciate your next breath, try holding your breath for as long as you can, and then for just a little bit longer. To thrive to your fullest, you must develop the same sense of urgency about health that you have for your next breath. You have got to know that you really want it.

NOVEMBER

**The holidays are upon us.
These final two months are the busiest time of year.
Take time for your own health each day.**

How easy it is to put things off. Work deadlines start weighing heavily as the end of the year approaches. December is practically a lost month in terms of productivity, and so the pressure to get things done really hits us right now. The weather is cooling and is foul more than fair, the days are getting noticeably shorter, and you are wearing way more clothing. Outdoor activity options are diminishing quickly. The fruit is not so sweet and abundant, like it was during the summer, forcing us to look for sugars wherever we can find them, and sometimes, if you have not planned sufficiently well, cooked foods can begin to seem like an acceptable option. Do you stick to your whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic 80/10/10 vegan diet, or have you already started making exceptions?

Holiday meals are closely spaced for the next eight weeks, and already your weight is creeping up. Everyone seems to be calling your name, urging you to give up “just a little bit of your time” for them. You simply do not have enough time to do everything, and so you have to decide what is most important to you. Fitness takes time. How important is it to you that you finish the year on a high note in terms of fitness training? Letting your commitment to fitness slide a bit is understandable, or is it?

Daylight is important to your physical, mental, and emotional health. Now that it is November, you are waking up in the dark, and getting home from work in the dark. If you do not get out and do some exercise at midday, or at least take a walk, when are you going to see the light of day?

With all that there is to do, getting enough sleep is becoming increasingly difficult. The alarm clock has gone from being your best and most reliable friend to becoming your worst enemy, rattling you awake in irritating fashion and preventing you from getting much-needed sleep. Can you afford to cut into your sleep time? If you do, how long will it be before you find yourself sick, home in bed, and totally non-productive? Will you compromise your health in the hopes of higher productivity? Sticking to your health plan really is the only way to guarantee the highest level of productivity possible.

November 1

**Still (somehow) the Number One nutritional question
of all time is: “Where do you get your protein?”**

In school, when studying basic biology, we learned that life is made up of cells. We learned that at the heart of every cell (with very few exceptions, such as red blood cells), there is a nucleus, inside of which is the “brain” of the cell, the genetic material, which at least to some degree calls the shots and dictates the behavior of that cell. The chromosomes containing the genetic material (DNA) split in half, rearranging into two identical pairs so that the cell can duplicate itself and become two cells. This process, known as mitosis, is the basis for growth, repair, and replacement of practically all the cells in the human body. We learned about Crick and Watson, the Nobel prize-winning scientists credited with putting the finishing touches on our understanding of DNA design, referring to it as the “double helix,” a shape similar to a twisted ladder. Their discovery was announced in 1953, almost a full century after the Swiss chemist Friedrich Miesher first identified what he called “nuclein” inside the nuclei of human white blood cells. Nuclein is today known as DNA. DNA is held together by protein, forming huge strands twisted into the double helix shape that made their existence possible and their recognition unmistakable. Every cell of everything alive has protein in its core design.

People act shocked when told that there is sufficient protein in watermelon, bananas, and lettuce for humans to thrive. How could that be, they think, when fruits and vegetables are mostly just sugar and water? People act as though they have never stopped to consider where the cow, horse, wildebeest, antelope and other grazing animals get their protein, and their bulging muscles. They forget that all life has protein in every cell. They minimize the importance of the fact that more than 80 percent of the calories humans consume, on average, come from the world’s more than 50,000 edible plants. They ignore the fact that of all the sicknesses and diseases they have ever heard of, protein deficiency is essentially unknown. And despite an endless string of repeated messages, from “Humpty Dumpty,” “This is your brain,” the successes of pasteurization, our knowledge of anti-nutrients, carcinogens, teratogens, and mutagens, and even their own experiences with accidentally burned hair, they discredit their clear understanding that once heated, proteins irreversibly change in ways that make them non-viable, indigestible, and even harmful for human consumption.

We might as well ask a moose where it gets its protein. *Argentinasaurus*, a dinosaur that weighed in at over 200,000 pounds, was the world’s largest known vegetarian animal. Today’s African bush elephant is our largest vegan, weighing in at around 12,000 pounds. The largest African male elephant in history weighed approximately 20,000 pounds. Next time you are in Africa, be sure to ask an elephant where it gets its protein.

November 2

No value is gained by removing the fiber from fruits or vegetables.

We fall for the same tricks, over and over again. Like the person that cannot figure out the sleight of hand performed by a talented magician, and so loses his quarter countless times, we buy in to nutritional gimmicks every time we see them. We know that whole foods are more nutritionally sound, and more beneficial to our health than their refined counterparts. We know that removing the fiber from whole grains is how we turn them into worthless (nay, harmful), white flour products, filled with empty calories for the production of junk foods that stimulate our taste buds while depleting our nutrient reserves. We know that if we remove the water and the fiber from the grass known as cane, we can refine it to white cane sugar, and we know all the problems that eating cane sugar can cause. We know if we remove the fiber, water, and sugar from fruits and vegetables, the remaining gums are used to make supplements, and still, with all we know about refined foods, somehow we convince ourselves that these refined products are nutritionally superior to the whole foods from which they came. Following this line of thought through to its logical conclusion and we can determine that by removing everything from a food we can produce something of unlimited value, which is obviously a fallacy. Where did our thinking go wrong?

Fractions of foods are not better for us than their whole food sources. The motivation to refine foods into component fractions is financial, not nutritional. Only the marketing presents the results as if there were health benefits to refined foods, in stark contrast with the known fact that whole foods are nutritionally superior.

1. Juices are touted by various health enthusiasts as being “better than whole foods,” because, “juices are easier to digest than whole foods.”
2. Juice promoters also insist that because the fiber is removed, the remaining nutrients are concentrated, meaning we can get more nutrition from juices than from whole foods.

Let’s examine each of these statements.

The nutrients in juice require the same digestion as the nutrients in whole foods, and possibly more. The water, sugar, vitamins, and minerals require no digestion, as they are readily absorbed in their natural state. The protein, fat, and other nutrients must be digested whether they come from whole food or from juice. We do not digest fiber, hence, by removing the fiber, we do not reduce the digestive effort. With fiber removed, we can admittedly drink more carrot juice than we can eat carrots. By increasing the total calorie intake through juicing, including the fat and protein, we actually increase the digestive effort at that meal.

Would higher cholesterol levels be considered better, just because you have more cholesterol? In our calorie-conscious world, how could increasing the overall calorie intake through juicing be considered a step forward? “More” does not equate with “better.” And, finally, since all

nutrition books list fiber as an important nutrient, how could the removal of this valuable nutrient result in your getting “more” nutrients from juice? If you had a pocket filled with pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters, and I said that by removing the quarters you would end up having “more money” than you started with, you would know immediately that I was incorrect.

We recognize whole foods as best, and know that nothing can be better.

November 3

No value can be gained by adding the fiber from grains into our foods.

Nutritional trends are like fashion; they never stop changing but go around in circles, only to start all over again. For example, the high-protein diet has come into vogue on five separate occasions over the past century. Butter was best, then margarine was thought to be better than butter, and now butter is again recognized to be the better of these two disappointing options. One hundred years ago, a low-fat diet was the norm. Then came the high-fat diet, only to be replaced by low fat, then high fat, and now low fat is in style yet again. Grains were not such a popular food item, and did not play as large a role in diet as they do today, until we learned how to refine them, and grind them into white flour. As refined grain products gained popularity, the amount of fiber in our diet went down, and the frequency of bowel disease went up alarmingly. Doctors recognized that humans require fiber in our diet, and that we were eating less fiber than ever before in history. Meat, fish, eggs, fowl, and dairy are all fiber-free foods. By refining the fiber from our grains, we were reducing fiber intake to dangerously low levels. Meanwhile, the food industry giants were struggling with the problem of what to do with all that excess bran. They were paying to have it hauled off and dumped as garbage. They could not even give the stuff away.

Someone came up with the brilliant idea of putting fiber back into the very products from which it had been removed. Now we pay to have the fiber removed from our grains, and then we pay again to have it added back in.

Bran, the main fiber in grains, is removed from grain products because the bran functions as an irritant. Essentially, bran, which is a non-soluble fiber, functions like ground glass as it wends its way through the digestive tract, irritating the mucus membrane sufficiently to speed the elimination from the tract of the bran, and everything traveling with it. By doing so, adding bran to a low-fiber diet, or a fiber-free diet, helps with problems such as constipation, fecal fermentation and putrefaction, and many other bowel problems. But this is a classic case of treating the symptoms instead of eliminating the cause of the problem. Nutritionally, there are many other problems associated with low- and no-fiber foods, and adding fiber will not eradicate those problems.

A diet of fruits and vegetables is naturally nutritious, and high in fiber, especially the soft, soluble fiber that holds water and keep the feces soft and bowel functions operating at peak efficiency. Adding fiber to such a diet would be redundant, unnecessary, and even counterproductive. Whole food fruits and vegetables need no extra “help” in order to be nutritious and supportive of optimum health.

November 4

Pasteurization allows the manufacturer to sell food as good that would otherwise have to be thrown away as having gone bad.

How brave are you? Bacteria come in three basic shapes: coccus (spherical), bacillus (rod-shaped), and spiral (twisted). The rod-shaped bacteria known as listeria are responsible for a condition known as listeriosis, which is fatal in approximately 20 percent of all cases. In many of the other instances, the sufferers feel so sick that they just wish they would die. In the United States, we see close to 2,000 cases of listeriosis per year. Worldwide, more than 5,000 people die annually from this preventable condition.

Bacilli form spores (the Greek word for “seed”) when subjected to heat. The listeria spores in milk or juice survive pasteurization, and as soon as the liquid cools, the seed blooms, returning to its original rod shape. In the case of repeated pasteurizations, three of which are commonly performed on milk before it gets to your supermarket, the rod repeats the cycle of forming a spore and blooming. Listeria multiplies rapidly, even when under refrigeration, so that as time passes the likelihood of illness from contaminated foods increases. The longer it has been since the food was pasteurized, the greater the risk.

Salmonella, the bacillus primarily responsible for food poisoning, does not form spores, and is inactivated when sufficiently heated. Many of the foods pasteurized today are insufficiently heated, however, as there is currently a trend towards using as cool a temperature as possible to get the job done, saving time and cost, and gaining public favor (the process known as “cold pasteurization,” which uses pressure rather than heat, has very much come into vogue). These practices greatly increase the risk of salmonella poisoning. More than 40,000 people suffer with salmonella poisoning each year in the US, and there are thought to be in excess of 100 million cases worldwide annually.

Many people have reasoned that after a course of antibiotics, there may be benefit to taking “probiotics.” When we pasteurize a liquid, not only are the harmful bacteria controlled, the probiotic microbes are also eliminated. The microbes are actually a big part of what makes food good for us, and by eliminating the probiotic microbes, pasteurization neutralizes much of food’s benefits and opens the door for health problems to arise. Pasteurization destroys beneficial enzymes, diminishes vitamins A, C, B6, and B12, and damages various fragile proteins within the food itself, converting them into potentially carcinogenic anti-nutrients.

Integrations are mobile DNA elements that can capture and carry genes. Their existence to date has been primarily of interest in terms of cross-species development of antibiotic resistance, potentially extremely serious business indeed. However, bacteria predating antibiotics have also been found to use the same structures, known in this case as cassettes, to carry their genetic material, explaining their potential for cross-species transference. Integrations may well become recognized as among the most important structures mentioned in this book.

November 5

Why is there so little health food in the health food store?

Whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic produce is the true health food. You will not find these items in most health food stores, because the shelf life of produce is extremely short. Running a produce section within a store, or running a store that sells only produce, is a full-time job. Health food stores sell supplements, superfoods, condiments, irritants, stimulants, and vegetarian and vegan alternatives to traditional packaged foods, books, and “healthier” environmentally-friendly varieties of common household items, such as laundry detergent, cosmetics, clothing, skin care, kitchen utensils and other non-perishable items with unlimited shelf life. Only the largest of the chain-store variety health food stores, the ones that truly look like traditional supermarkets, tend to offer a section selling perishable produce.

Health food stores are often run by enthusiastic health seekers, people extremely knowledgeable in a wide range of topics relevant to the alternative health field. Food is such a small segment of what is typically sold in health food stores that food per se may not be an area of interest for the shop owner, whose specialty area may be supplements, or non-toxic cleaners, or any of the other possibilities mentioned above. The owners themselves may actually eat very little whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic produce. In fact, the store’s customers may also eat very little in terms of fresh produce, though they may eat more fruit and vegetables than the average person.

Selling produce may simply not be profitable at all, let alone being profitable enough to warrant shelf space in the store. In today’s markets, every inch of shelf space is considered valuable, and must pay for itself through product sales. Profitable products that sell quickly garner more shelf space, thus generating more income for the seller. Items that do not sell quickly enough, or that simply do not generate enough profit, are taken off the shelves and quickly replaced by items that will hopefully sell better. Retail sales is a cut-throat business, and even if the health food store owner is a nice person, the bottom line must dictate business decisions. Many health food stores used to actually sell fruit and vegetables, but between the fruit flies, unstable supply lines, and the limited income such product generates, produce got pushed right off the shelves and completely out of the stores.

We have to also consider the mindset of the consumer, too, as it is always demand that determines supply, and not the other way around. With the overall health of our population in tumultuous decline, people are clamoring for help. All too often, the traditional medical system simply cannot offer to more than monitor and maintain health problems. People want cures, and they want to get well. They walk into the health food stores looking for miracles, and are happy to buy the supposed miracles that shop owners provide. They have been trained by their doctors to be more willing to believe in the healing power of a pill than in the healing power of the human body when it is provided with the fruits and vegetables that it needs. Hopefully, in the future, health food stores will once again begin selling whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables.

November 6

When you want to drink, think “water.”

Our experience of thirst is often not the one to which we are the most attuned, or even to which we bother paying attention. Especially when we are engaged in other interesting activities, and most significantly when they are physical activities, the sensation of thirst can and often does take a back seat, or worse, is left completely unheeded, to lose ground and essentially “run behind the bus” without being recognized and accommodated at all. Yet without sufficient water, all other abilities and functions are compromised and will eventually grind to a halt. During sport, staying hydrated is essential. Losing a liter without replacing it will have an adverse effect on performance, though the athlete may not yet be aware of it. Fall two liters into arrears, and the effect will become more profound, with tiredness, weakness, and amotivation exerting themselves upon the athlete in noteworthy fashion. By the time someone is three liters low on water, s/he will either be down for the count, or very close to quitting, literally unable to continue to function.

The arm of the prepared foods manufacturing industry that serves the sports community responded to this information with a wealth of products, first with the generic “sports drink,” and eventually with specialized variations designed to target specific needs, such as energy drinks, electrolyte replacement fluids, and rehydration fluids. (The gels, bars, goo, and the other products commonly seen today at sports competitions came later.) The temptation to congratulate these seemingly well-meaning capitalists is strong, until one actually examines the nature of their products. Few are little more than tap water with sugar, salt, and artificial colors and flavors, and often enough, a strong dose of caffeine or other stimulants. “What makes them sports drinks,” you might ask? “Fancy descriptions of the ingredients, and great marketing,” is the honest reply.

The fact that salt makes you thirsty is a fact known by everyone. In fact, the salt in seawater is so powerful as to result in death from dehydration to sailors who run out of fresh water and succumb to drinking from the sea. All modern sports drinks have salt added, as studies have shown an athlete will drink more when salt is added, because the salt makes you thirsty while cutting the satiating sugary taste. But the salt negates the hydrating benefits of the drink, and the more you drink the more dehydrated you become.

The health conscious community drinks fruit and vegetable juice when they are thirsty, which certainly is a step in the right direction. But when the concept trickles down for mainstream use, manufacturers produce nothing more than sugary, salty drinks “with real fruit” (no telling how much or what percentage), or even worse, they use just the imitation flavors and artificial colors of what once was the real thing. Fruit and vegetable juices are full of the electrolytes and carbohydrate fuel that athletes need, but with their fiber removed, lead to problems such as sugar spikes, constipation, and nutritional imbalances.

An even better option is to eat juicy food when thirsty, with its balance of natural high water content, fiber, sugar, and salty electrolytes. When it comes to hydration, however, even juicy fruit is no match for water. When you are thirsty, water is the most quenching drink of them all.

November 7

**Sleep all that you can.
Your body will not allow you to oversleep.**

The mere concepts of “too much” and “too little” clearly indicate a degree of dissatisfaction with whatever product or service is being evaluated. Whether we are communicating that there is too much light on a subject to be properly photographed, or too little hot water in the tub to enjoy the bath, each phrase indicates our need for a modification, and an obvious desire for the situation to be remedied.

In addition to cellular and tissue functions being completely controlled by the body, basic bodily functions are also, for the most part, coordinated and directed by the body. The brain, heart, liver, intestines and other organs do their job with no conscious thought on our part. We rather automatically relieve ourselves till our bladder and bowel are completely emptied, never worrying that we might urinate or defecate “too much.” We have some control over our breathing, but should we attempt to breathe “too little,” the body sends powerful messages imploring us to breathe immediately. Breathe too much and once again the body intervenes, sending messages that simply cannot be ignored, at least not for very long, imploring and eventually forcing us to breathe less.

Men eat nearly one million calories per year, and women about two-thirds as much, without ever counting even a single calorie. We usually eat within 0.3 percent of exactly what we need, or else we would see a one-pound change in weight during the course of an entire year. We eat appropriate quantities of food sufficient to ensure that we do not run out of glycogen, the complex sugar that fuels our muscles when it is broken down to glucose. Running out of glycogen is like running out of gas; sports performance becomes simply impossible. We drink sufficient water to meet our needs for hydration, again not having too little or too much. With insufficient water, cellular function shuts down. With too much water, the same things happen, but in somewhat different ways.

With all of these and countless other bodily functions proceeding perfectly, on their own, why would we even think that the door could be open for us to completely screw up by sleeping too much? If you sleep too little, your body starts demanding sleep, and will eventually put you to sleep in spite of your desires to stay awake. When you have had enough sleep, you will find it impossible to sleep more, at least until some hours have passed, and you have earned another sleep period.

The idea of sleeping too much comes from the fact that most of us are perpetually under-slept, and dearly in need of more sleep. Most people are walking around with a sleep deficit that is thousands of hours in arrears. When we allow ourselves, say, 11 hours instead of our usual 6 hours, we may wake up feeling really groggy. We justify the grogginess by saying we have slept too much, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, what has happened is that for the first time in some while you have allowed yourself to get into a really deep state of rest, one from which your body really was not ready to emerge. Hence, you felt groggy, and still sleepy

upon awakening, as you are getting in touch with how under-slept you truly are. In reality, you needed the sleep, and likely needed even more sleep. Your body will not allow you to oversleep. That only happens in the fairy tales.

November 8

The best sleep comes on an empty stomach.

A night of restless sleep is no fun, whereas deep sleep is a thing of joy and beauty. Waking up after a long night of profound, deep sleep is one of the best feelings in the world. Very few experiences are less enjoyable than tossing and turning in discomfort and finally waking up in the middle of the night in order to vomit food that simply could not be digested. Some foods require very little digestive effort, yielding their nutrients in minutes and passing through the entire digestive system in a mere half day. Some foods require intense digestive effort, and can take two or three days to pass through your system, or even longer. The foods that “stick to your ribs” are generally the ones that require the most digestive effort, and very often they are also the ones that persistently stick to your hips, too.

Many factors affect the quality of your sleep, and food is high on the list. A churning stomach can prevent you from ever getting comfortable in bed, and ending any possibility of achieving a state of deep relaxation. Heavy foods such as nuts, cheese, and rich desserts eaten just before bedtime may make you sleepy as a result of the combination of extreme tiredness and digestive effort, but such fare is primarily recognized as one of the major precursors to nightmares.

As is often the case with human physiology, eating too much food can yield symptoms very similar to eating too little. Where eating a huge meal before bedtime might keep you uncomfortably awake for much of the night (if it does not overload you into a state of comatose unconsciousness), eating too little food can also make sleep a difficult state to achieve. Reducing the digestive load minimizes the need for sleep. Sleep less and the day gets longer, you do more, and subsequently increase your need for sleep. When you dramatically cut food intake, you stay awake even longer. (Some people might say this is because you are driven to seek food. We are not talking about starvation, but merely reducing calorie intake, by say 50 percent, for a week or so.) The reduced food intake, coupled with the longer days and increased activities, results in compromised ability to recover, impaired physical and mental performance, and thus once again drives an increased need for sleep.

We are brought to accept Goldilocks’ concept of health and nutrition: too much of anything does not work well for us. Yet, neither does too little. In order to achieve the best quality sleep and accrue the most benefits from that sleep, you want to have eaten sufficiently for the day, while eating your last meal early enough so that your digestive system is not hard at work all night long.

November 9

Act “as if,” and that is who you will become.

“You try, you fail, you get frustrated, you quit.” Does that sound like a success story in the making to you? If not, think about what the successful person would do, how their scenario would read. “You try, you fail, you learn, you try again. You repeat as necessary until you succeed. You begin working on making improvements to your successful model. You fail, learn, and try again. Repeat as necessary.” We have all heard the, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try, and try again” model for success, and we know it has merit. We have heard countless stories of people who were outrageously successful, only after what seemed like endless and certain total failure. But have you ever stopped to consider that there may be more to achieving success than simply failing repeatedly until you finally succeed?

“Fake it till you make it” is another model often taught as the surefire road to success. But faking it can be viewed as a form of lying, at worst, and could certainly be seen as deceptive, at best. A non-swimmer certainly would not want to jump from a boat into the middle of the ocean and then fake it that s/he could swim.

Acting “as if” has a different connotation. In order to act “as if,” we have to be able to imagine someone who already is the thing we imagine. “Act as if you were a tennis teacher,” someone might say to us. Would we just toss some tennis balls onto the court, and then disinterestedly go to our office and read the newspaper, or would we perhaps talk to the potential client, show interest in the desires expressed, affirm our ability to help, and offer to give a sample lesson? Acting “as if” requires imagination, as we must put ourselves into the shoes of someone else. I know nothing about cutting gems, but if someone asked me to act as if I were a jeweler who was given a diamond to cut, I have some ideas about what I would do. I would look at photos of cut diamonds. I would ask a jeweler or two for suggestions. Since the actual cutting of a diamond does not take much time, I would follow Abraham Lincoln’s advice to take most of the time I have allotted to the job and put it towards preparation. Knowing that the cut had to be done correctly on the first try, I would be very serious indeed.

Children love to pretend. They act as if they are shop owners, teachers, doctors, mothers, and play countless other roles. Such practice is good for them, as they learn what it feels like to be those people, and how to handle the situations they face in those roles.

Acting “as if” truly means playing the part, and playing it well. Play the part long enough and you can stop pretending, as you will grow into the part and truly become the person you were pretending to be. Act as if you care about what you eat. Act as if you care about your fitness. Act as if how you present yourself in public matters to you. Act as if you are truly concerned about conserving your health. You will learn more about each of these things, and gain insights as to why they are important to some people. Soon enough, people will accept you as being that person, and you will become the person you have been acting like.

November 10

**Water is best when consumed 30 minutes
before a meal or else several hours after,**

So many accepted health guidelines are truths twisted to meet the needs of people who are not willing to live healthfully. We know that smoking cigarettes, for example, is extremely hazardous to one's health, and we know that smoking results in many different types of harm. One of the issues with smoking is that it depletes our Vitamin C, and so smokers are advised to take extra Vitamin C. Why don't we just tell them to stop smoking?

We worry about nutritional deficiencies, but rather than improve our diet, we reach for nutritional supplements. Mankind has relied upon getting sufficient sunlight to take care of a variety of essential health concerns, most notably Vitamin D. After telling patients for decades to avoid the sun, doctors are now diagnosing Vitamin D deficiency at an alarming rate. But sufficient Vitamin D is also essential for proper calcium metabolism. Could the massive increase in osteoporosis cases have been even partly caused by sun avoidance? Either way, taking supplemental calcium and supplemental Vitamin D will not supply the ultraviolet light we get only from the sun, which we need in order to properly cleanse our skin, lymph, and blood.

We are told to drink 12 glasses of water per day, or more, in order to dilute the excessive quantities of salt we eat, and to make up for the fact that most of the water is refined out and further cooked out of the bulk of our food. Consider that most people eat at least three or four times per day. If we do not drink during the combined six or eight hours after our three or four meals, and the accrued two hours before the meal, we are left with the challenge of drinking 12 glasses of water during the remaining six hours that we are awake. Certainly this task is possible, but obviously daunting, especially when you consider that if you do anything physical, such as gardening or fitness activities, your need for water could easily double or triple. Perhaps instead of treating the symptoms, we could stop causing the problem by eating whole, fresh, ripe, raw, juicy, organic fruits and vegetables?

People want guidelines for eating, and that is perfectly understandable. If you do not have the specific education regarding anatomy, physiology, nutrition, and health, you are smart to want someone else to explain it to you.

When you eat properly on *The 80/10/10 Diet*, you will find your need for water is dramatically reduced. Many people find that they can stay fully hydrated without drinking any water at all for most of the six to eight cooler months of the year. When we eat fruit and vegetables, drinking some water before the meal is completely acceptable, and if you need a bit of water after a meal, drinking is again perfectly fine. Sure, you will likely do best when you drink midway between meals, and preferably not during meals, but if you are thirsty before or after, by all means enjoy your water. And if you must drink during a meal, it is not the end of the world.

November 11

Love yourself more.

Sometimes, loving yourself is easy, and sometimes, being kind to yourself can be quite challenging. The negative influences of others can affect you, and bring you down, if you let them. Learning and developing strategies for picking yourself back up, drawing on your inner strength, and focusing on the bright side are essential skills for leading a happy and healthy life. Letting go of the past and truly living in the present is equally essential. Just because you felt something an hour ago does not mean that you need to feel that emotion for the rest of your life. Live in the now, and do what it takes to be supportive to yourself. If you are not willing to take good care of yourself, why in the world would you think others should be so willing?

How much should you love yourself? More.

Should you give yourself unconditional love? The answer is, of course, a profound “Yes.”

Sometimes self-indulgence can become confused with self-love. You must ask yourself if your indulgence is a self-constructive or self-destructive behavior. Is there anything that you should not be willing to do to accommodate your love for yourself? The Golden Rule, when it comes to health care, is, “Thou shalt not harm thyself.”

Self-love does not always mean saying yes, or, said in another way, self-love always means saying yes to the best option. Ah, and therein lies the rub, for “best” is a qualitative term requiring judgment. Which decision, which choice is best? The best decision is the one that most brings you towards your highest goals, while bringing you away from taking action that you will regret.

That pizza, fried chicken, or box of doughnuts may bring you short-term pleasure and immediate gratification, but it will take you directly away from your goals of losing weight, eating healthfully, and building your vitality. Understanding the distinction between pleasure and happiness can often be your most valuable tool in decision-making. Dictionaries define pleasure, when used as a noun, with extremely short-term references:

1. the state or feeling of being pleased.
2. enjoyment or satisfaction derived from what is to one’s liking; gratification; delight.
3. worldly or frivolous enjoyment: the pursuit of pleasure.
4. recreation or amusement; diversion; enjoyment:
5. sensual gratification.
6. a cause or source of enjoyment or delight.

Happiness, on the other hand, is defined as a state of contentment or joy. Happiness will almost always be a pleasure, but pleasing one's self will not always result in happiness. Happiness, and its pursuit, is a more lofty goal than pleasure-seeking, and tends to require more time in its pursuit, but is also more long-lasting and, overall, more satisfying and more meaningful than mere pleasure. Love yourself more.

November 12

**A profound difference exists
between participation in the causes of health
and the suppression of the causes of disease.**

The idea that drugs will make you sick when you are well, but will make you well when you are sick is a difficult one for this author to accept. And therein lies the main difference between treating disease and creating health.

In addition to the relatively common treatments used for disease, most of the modern and forward-thinking health care specialists of the world also offer “preventive” medicine. Effectively, preventive medicine is a method for garnering patients even sooner than they would normally go to the doctor, a way of treating the patient before s/he becomes ill. Thus, preventive medicine is an elective version of extraneous medical care. Often, it is coupled with “alternative” medicine, which is yet another option for receiving additional, and often unneeded care. If the preventive medicine does not work, the patient can always opt for alternative treatments. If they do not work, traditional medical care is still available. In the end, we get to pay for triple the care, and none of it designed to help the patient stay healthy. The pharmaceutical industry is not in business to create cures. The pharmaceutical industry exists to create customers, especially customers who develop continuous need for the products Big Pharma supplies.

Consider, instead, the option of lifestyle modification designed to improve the quality and appropriateness of the SFIC to which we subject ourselves. We reduce and eliminate the negative, health-destroying influences in our lives, while increasing those that are supportive of health creation. In the same way that we rely upon growing prize plants or raising healthy animals by giving them everything they need in the quality and quantities needed (no more, no less, and nothing else), the trick to creating great health is providing optimal conditions for ourselves. Health is the default, the natural state, and as such is the automatic outcome of healthful living.

The main difference between these two approaches is that in the preventive and alternative health model, the patient is essentially the one person not responsible for his or her health creation. In the health model, the individual is the only person held accountable for his or her health. No one can exchange his/her parents for a new pair. We cannot deny our genetic predispositions. Your childhood and all life until right now is set in stone, and cannot be revisited or changed. Your current state of health and vitality is what it is. The substances, forces, influences, and conditions in your lifestyle that you can control, and can take responsibility for, are your duty, from today onwards.

The world of traditional, alternative, and preventive medical options remains available to you, should straightforward healthful living not bring the desired results. In all cases, however, healthful living remains the obvious first and best choice when it comes to health creation.

November 13

If not considered crazy, one must at least be considered inefficient when repeating the same performance, again and again, while expecting different results.

After four failed attempts at swimming across the Florida Straits (without a shark cage) from Havana, Cuba, to Key West, Florida, a straight-line distance of some 110 miles, Diana Nyad became the first person to ever succeed in this endeavor, and she did so at 64 years of age. Nyad is a champion swimmer, former Olympic hopeful, and the holder of many swimming records. Her first attempt at the Cuba to Florida crossing was in 1978, at 28 years of age. Although garnering many records during the subsequent interim before the next attempt, Nyad did not attempt the Florida Straits swim again until 33 years later, in 2011.

Strong currents, tropical storms, huge waves, powerful and potentially paralyzing jellyfish, and of course, the ever-present sharks, were just some of the obstacles she faced, and each of those factors, with the exception of the sharks, caused her to prematurely end at least one of each of the next three attempts, always during her second day of continuous swimming. Sheer exposure was another big factor, as the general consensus among scientists is that most people will not survive more than 48 hours of immersion in the extremely salty water of the Florida Straits.

Exhaustion was the next big concern, as delirium often sets in with extended ocean exposure. Nyad openly admits to having vivid hallucinations on many of her ultra-swims, and quips that they are often about “following the yellow brick road” from *The Wizard of Oz*. On August 31, 2013, Diana Nyad made her fifth and final attempt to swim from Cuba to Florida, and after 53 hours in the water and just enough help from the ocean currents, she walked onto dry land at Key West, Florida. Not everyone succeeds with such valor when pursuing their glorious obsessions, although many of the success stories are indeed equally amazing.

What about the people who try to quit a habit, such as smoking or drinking, by ever so slowly reducing their use of the substance in question? More often than not, the effort proves to be a waste of time, yet people will try that same approach again and again before admitting failure. Consider the people with 150 pounds to shed, who drop 75 and then lose the plot and gain back 100. They might repeat that cycle several times or more, each time gaining more than they lost, before they finally just give up. How many times have you started a fitness program after deciding you needed to get in shape? If your old program was working, or even if you were still working your old program, you would not need to start a new one.

When something is not working, it is time to try something different, possibly even a completely different approach. The reason people turn to raw foods after eating a lifetime of cooked foods is not only because raw foods make more sense, or because raw foods are more nutritious, but because cooked foods simply are not taking them where they want to go. If cooked foods gave me the health and performance ability I desired, and generated no negative consequences, I would eat cooked too. But cooked foods come with a broad array of inherent problems, so we look to eat raw. The raw fooder is not crazy, and is not inefficient for reaching out towards

health goals. Eating cooked food again and again, in light of the fact that cooked leads to a host of health problems, is the height of inefficiency indeed.

November 14

A hominid's primary food source is typically herbivorous/frugivorous, meaning that they eat leaves and fruits for the bulk of their food.

Humans are classed anatomically in the family known as Hominidae, which includes other primates such as the Eastern and Western gorillas, Bornean and Sumatran orangutans, common chimpanzees, and the pygmy chimpanzees, also known as bonobos. Humans are anatomically and physiologically similar to all of these animals, sharing as much as 99.6 percent (some scientists say we share a greater percentage) of the same genetic material. The species-specific diet of humans is therefore also herbivorous/frugivorous, as in nature all animals that are anatomically and physiologically similar thrive on similar foods.

All animals have a species-specific diet. Human beings are indeed animals, at least when we make distinctions and group us as either “animal, vegetable, or mineral.” We may be at the top of the animal heap (though this concept is hotly debated in some circles), and we may be quite different from all other animals in some regards (though many other animals also have distinctive qualities that make them unique in many ways), but humans are a species unto themselves. We are classed as *Homo sapiens* (knowing man), and as such, must have our own species-specific diet. Being anatomically and physiologically similar to the other hominids leaves us unable to conclude anything but that our species-specific diet must be extremely similar to that of the gorilla, the orangutan, the chimpanzee, and the bonobo.

We can arrange these five animals in order of intelligence: gorilla, orangutan, chimpanzee, bonobo, and at the top, humans. We can arrange these five animals in order of the quantity of genetic material they share with humans: gorilla, orangutan, chimpanzee, and bonobo, noting that the order remains the same. We can arrange them again based upon the caloric percentage of fruit in their diet, as compared to the percentage of vegetable matter, and will once again see the same order appear: gorilla, orangutan, chimpanzee, and bonobo, each eating a greater percentage of their total calories from fruit. The only logical conclusion is that the human species-specific diet is one of fruits and vegetables, and that it must be predominated calorically by a quantity of fruit exceeding that eaten by bonobos, our closest genetic cousins, who eat approximately 60 percent of their calories from fruit.

Fruits and vegetables are noted as human “health food.” Thousands of studies have clearly demonstrated that the more fruit and vegetables you eat, the better your health, the more likely you are to control your weight, the longer you are likely to live, etc. We no longer need to prove the efficacy of eating fruits and vegetables. Now we simply have to become better at incorporating such healthful practices as eating whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables into our daily routines.

November 15

When the toxemia levels surpass the toleration point, symptoms arise.

The human body is one of the most tolerant of all the lifeforms when it comes to handling substances, forces, influences, and conditions that are less than ideal. Few, if any, other creatures can handle such a broad array of hardships as well as humans can. Many creatures are so sensitive that we can use them as indicators to tell us that something is wrong, before we ourselves are even aware that a problem exists. Thus we have the classic scenario of the canary in the coalmine, whereby the canary serves as a sentinel alerting the miners to the fact that dangerous fumes are present in potentially deadly concentrations.

In no way does our high tolerance to adverse conditions imply that we are made for abuse, or that we are at our best when subjected to harshness. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Like all living things, we do our best when the substances, forces, influences, and conditions to which we are subjected are ideal. We develop and grow into healthy specimens only to the degree that the substances, forces, influences, and conditions are conducive to our health. Unlike machines, which wear out from repeated use, humans thrive on use, whereas we deteriorate and decay from misuse, disuse, and abuse.

Symptoms are the messages sent to us from our body to make us aware of the fact that something is not the way it should be, and that a change is in order. Symptoms serve each person as a custom set of canaries in his or her own personal coal mine. Symptoms are the alert, the sentinel, the early warning system. The body's ability to discern ideal from less than optimal is exceedingly sensitive, and symptoms are one of the ways the body heightens our awareness of potential problems. The body eliminates toxins in the way that requires the least effort on its part, while at the same time doing minimal harm to itself. A rash, a pimple, a fever, or any other symptom invariably has a cause.

While able to tolerate and make the appropriate adaptive responses to tremendous hardship, the body does so at the expense of its own vitality. Consider the thickening of the mucus membranes that occurs in the throat and lungs of someone who habitually smokes tobacco. The membranes thicken in order to protect the sensitive tissues involved in respiration, but the price in terms of compromised oxygen exchange is severe. The best way to reduce symptoms is to lower the toxemia level via clean living. With every improvement in lifestyle comes a reduction in symptom generation by the body. Reduce toxemia levels to below the toleration point and the body has no cause to generate symptoms at all.

November 16

**Complex meals digest best and most efficiently
when the most water-rich foods are eaten first
and the most calorie-dense foods are eaten last.**

Under normal circumstances, once we swallow our food we remain completely unaware of any of the thousands of complex digestive functions that follow. Mechanical churning of the food via choreographed combinations of random and rhythmic muscular contractions in order to mix it with our digestive juices and keep the food moving through the digestive tract, intricate and wildly creative chemical processes methodically reduce the food into simpler structures, and bacteria by the billions perform the final vital digestive functions without which we could not survive. In this regard, ignorance is truly bliss, for very few bodily functions can be more distracting than the experience of digestive distress. Most of us have no idea how the body processes the food we eat, and have even less awareness about how to enhance those processes. Proper food combining is very often the most useful solution to a variety of digestive ailments.

Food combining can be an extremely complicated subject, or it can be explained in exceedingly simplistic terms. Initially introduced as a weight management practice (instead of eating starch and protein at every meal, proponents of food combining suggested eating one or the other at a meal, along with vegetables, thus reducing the total number of calories consumed), the profound digestive benefits of food combining quickly became apparent. The elimination of abdominal distress during and after meals, the cessation of the production of foul wind, and improved regularity were just a few of the accompaniments to the easier, cleaner, and far more satisfying bowel movements that resulted from utilizing food-combining guidelines.

Understanding and appreciating that better digestion leads to better nutrition did not require the services of a rocket scientist. Better digestion yields improved nutrition, and improved nutrition results in better health. Health and happiness are directly linked after all.

Original food-combining guidelines called for eating melons on their own, but today we know that the highly acidic juicy fruits combine well with melons. The guidelines called for separation of non-acidic fruits, also known as sweet fruits, from most other fruits with the exception of the slightly acid fruits, a guideline we still follow. But there is a simpler way to express this issue as follows: fruits of similar water content tend to combine well together.

On *The 80/10/10 Diet*, we no longer consume starchy foods or foods of animal origin at all, thus eliminating the need for food-combining guidelines regarding those substances. We have also created the hitherto unknown category known as neutral foods, which for most people serve as universal combiners. Hence mango goes with almost any other single food item, as do the lettuces, celery, and cucumbers.

Our basic guideline for creating a meal that will digest well, once food-combining considerations are integrated, is to proceed in order of water content. Drinks and other juicy foods are typically served first. Salads, slaws, and other fresh foods are next. If dense foods such as nuts or seeds are served, they are best when they are served with or as the final dish.

November 17

**Digestion can use from 30 to 70 percent
of our total fuel supplies.**

People often confuse the terms “energy” and “fuel,” or use them as if they were one and the same. In physics, they would be correct, because fuel and energy mean the same thing to a physicist. But in the kitchen, and in a world that understands hygiene and *The 80/10/10 Diet*, we speak of fuel and energy as two completely different items. Fuel, in the form of calories, comes from your food, along with most of your nutrients. Every cell is fueled by glucose in much the same way that your car is fueled by gasoline. Muscles hold functional levels of glucose, stored in a complex form known as glycogen, for use in fueling muscular activity. Energy is formed as a result of cellular metabolism, and is transmitted throughout the body via electrical currents within the nerves. During sleep, we generate more energy than we use. Therefore, it is normal to run out of energy and go to sleep, yet to awaken in the morning with a newfound supply of abundant energy. In much the same way that your car will not run without a battery or without gasoline, your body will not run without energy or glucose.

Fuel and energy are obviously not the same thing to us. Eat a heavy meal, rich in fuel, and the more you eat, the less energy you will have. Use fuel to run your body all night and though you will awaken with less fuel than you had the night before, you will have more energy than you had the previous night. You could have lots of energy to run a long race, but you will need to eat, to fuel up, in order to complete the run.

Energy is directed to the brain, the organs, the digestive processes, and to the muscles, and carried to its destinations through the blood. Roughly 10 percent of your total energy use goes to the brain, and almost 20 percent to the organs not involved in digestion. On a mainstream diet, some 30 percent or more of the total energy consumed goes to the organs of digestion during the course of a complete day. Whatever is left is available for us to apply to physical activity. We cannot affect the fuel or energy requirements of the brain or other organs, glands, and tissues, but we can affect the quantity of fuel and energy used by the digestive system. When we eat a diet that requires less fuel to process our food, more fuel, and more energy, becomes available for use for in physical activity. Some meals are considerably more difficult to digest than others. At specific times after a meal, it is possible for the digestive demands to become so great, requiring upwards of 50 percent of our total energy supplies, that staying awake becomes difficult. We have all seen relatives fall comatose after a big holiday meal, indicating that their digestion is taking the bulk of their available energy.

To increase the percentage of energy that is available to go to the muscles, make digestion more efficient. A diet of fruits and vegetables demands the lowest digestive effort of all foods. Eat fruits and vegetables, and you will feel the difference, for you will feel the sense of unbridled energy you have not felt since you were a child.

November 18

Stimulants drain you by supplying a false sense of energy.

Many people do not seem able to start their day without at least one cup of coffee, claiming that the coffee gives them energy. Energy does not come from coffee, and cannot possibly come from coffee. The “energy” value of a food is measured in terms of the calories it provides, and there are zero calories in coffee. After all, coffee is no more than the sludge from water passed through the ashes of charred ground coffee beans. Yet even as we accept the fact that there is no energy in coffee, we are faced with the enigma of knowing that people definitely experience a profound sense of increased energy after drinking a cup of coffee. Where does this energy come from?

The energy resulting from consuming stimulants is your own reserve energy, released from bodily stores. Stimulants create a bodily emergency when they are consumed or experienced. The body responds in a variety of ways, including an increase in all the so-called “vital signs” of blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and temperature. Hormones are released, specific blood vessels constrict while others dilate, digestive functions are halted while the desire for food is suppressed, and along with altered brain function, even our five senses are affected. The net result is the sensation of increased energy. Certainly, in the short run, the ability to get things done can increase with the use of stimulants, accompanied by an increased sense of euphoria. An athlete may run faster, a student might study longer, and a man might stay on the job for longer when relying on stimulants than he could without them.

Yet the price for using stimulants is severe, and the price must be paid with every use. Consider the example of the person who uses methamphetamine for recreational purposes. Such a person is referred to as a “speed freak.” S/he will often stay “up,” awake for many successive days, often barely eating or drinking. When s/he crashes, s/he will sleep for several days as well, often repeating the cycle again and again. Severe weight loss, depression, hallucinations, liver damage, and a long list of adverse symptoms rapidly accrue in people who use methamphetamines on a regular basis. The road is steeply downhill, and a healthy person can become life-threateningly ill in a matter of just a few months while on methamphetamines. What most people do not recognize is that the use of lower doses of stimulants still results in much the same symptoms, just to considerably lesser degrees.

Using stimulants to attain a sense of energy is like the proverbial robbing of Peter in order to pay Paul. Stimulants allow you to access energy that is usually kept in reserve for emergencies and other times of great need. Stimulants do not supply energy; therefore the energy that is demonstrated comes from your personal reserves. The use of stimulants to get yourself going invariably leaves you more drained than when you began, and threatens to bankrupt your reserves.

When you are sufficiently well-rested and have slept sufficiently, the use of stimulants is unnecessary and seems superfluous at best. When you are so tired that stimulant use seems appealing, take it as a sure sign that you need considerably more rest and sleep.

November 19

The most efficiently digested meal is the mono meal, that is, where only one type of fruit is eaten at the meal. The simple pleasure of the meal, and its ease of digestion, is exactly what makes this type of meal so satisfying.

Most Americans, and in fact most Europeans, have likely never intentionally eaten a mono meal. Yes, it is possible that they ate a bit of watermelon on its own, or an apple or a banana, and decided they'd had enough to nibble on for the moment, but at best this was a snack, and not a main meal. For our purposes, let's consider a meal to be breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and a satisfactory meal as enough food to satiate you all the way until the next meal. Most people eat fruit before a meal, with a meal, after a meal, or in between meals, but few make a meal of fruit, let alone one type of fruit. Yet in nature, the mono meal is the rule, rather than the exception. Animals, especially mammals, and even more especially the mammals that we most resemble, invariably eat one food at a time, when hungry, until full. The only exceptions to this rule are if the food supply runs out, or another animal chases them off, in which case they will look for other food elsewhere. The grazers are happy to eat grass at every meal, for their entire lives, and the carnivores are equally happy to eat meat at every meal.

Most people barely notice or even care about what they eat for breakfast, making breakfast the obvious choice for introducing and practicing with the mono meal. If you can learn to eat enough of one type of fruit at breakfast to hold you until lunch, you are well on your way to becoming hooked on the mono meal concept. Lunch is almost as easy as breakfast when it comes to eating the mono meal, and bananas lead the way as the prime candidates for filling the job. Only when we think about dinner do our thoughts wander towards a multi-course meal comprised of many complex dishes designed to titillate our taste buds and stimulate us with a multitude of textures, shapes, colors, aromas, flavors, food combinations, and digestive challenges. After a hard day, we want to be entertained, and if food will do the job, so be it. Are we eating for the entertainment value of the food, or for the nutrition and health value the food offers? Certainly a mono meal is still entertaining, albeit in a somewhat different manner. If only your breakfast and lunch are mono meals, you are still eating more than half your meals as mono, and should feel tremendously good about that. Mono meals teach us how to eat well.

Some confusion exists about the neutral vegetables celery, lettuce, and cucumber. Are you still eating a mono meal if you have a few lettuce leaves with your bananas? Do you still get the mono meal gold star when you eat celery with your apples? While technically the meal that includes the neutral vegetables is no longer mono, these veggies supply almost no calories, and are to be considered health builders. If you prefer to eat greens with your mono fruit meals, enjoy them in good health, and do not worry about the definitions. If you have never experimented with the mono meal, please do so at your earliest convenience. Mono meals are incredibly satiating, and eating them is always equally satisfying, like the proverbial breath of fresh air. Try a few mono meals, but be forewarned: they can become habit-forming.

November 20

True energy has only one source: sleep.

Part of the magic of life is how we get our energy. Biochemists, physiologists, and many other members of the scientific community have been studying this question for decades. Bit by bit, pieces of the puzzle have come to light, and today we have a much better understanding of how the human body works than we ever did in the past. For the most part, we understand how the food we eat is converted into the fuel we use. To a much lesser degree, we have hints about how the body generates its energy.

Part of the challenge making it difficult to understand the mechanics of this process is that we appear to be wrestling with a series of conundrums, that is, puzzles to which the solution creates confusion in our minds. For instance, everyone knows that perpetual motion and perpetual motion machines simply cannot exist. Yet it appears that the energy that runs the body is created by the actual functioning of the body. The body creates its own energy! How could this be? Apparently, energy is created when nutrients cross the cell membrane in order to enter the cell, from the extracellular fluid into the intracellular fluid. Energy is again created when the waste products of cellular metabolism cross the cell membrane in order to exit the cell. So much energy is produced in this fashion that when we are asleep, we actually produce more energy than we require, so we arise each morning with a newfound sense of energy, no matter how tired we were when we went to sleep the night before.

Additionally, contrary to popular opinion, the body is running itself, to its own best advantage, and has been at least since the egg and sperm that united to become you first encountered each other. For a few days after fertilization of the egg, the growing mass that was to become you was no more than a gooey blob of undifferentiated cells. Then, suddenly, and apparently out of nowhere, a dark streak, known as the “primitive streak,” appeared within the gooey blob. That primitive streak became your brain and spinal cord, and eventually branched out still further to become your entire nervous system. Most scientists agree that the brain runs the body, and tells the rest of the body’s systems, organs, tissues, and cells what to do, and when to do it. But the gooey blob had no brain to tell it what to do. Even more intriguing, the gooey blob developed a brain of its own. If the brain runs the body, how did a brainless gooey blob develop a brain of its own?

The more we learn, the more we realize how little we know. We know for certain that we wake up from sufficient sleep feeling refreshed and energized. The biochemical mechanics of how this actually happens are being studied, and will hopefully be fully understood someday. For now, we know that we generate energy 24/7, but that when we are awake, we seem to utilize this energy at a pace that exceeds its generation, so we eventually run out of energy and feel rundown. When we are asleep, we accumulate energy by producing enough to exceed our needs.

November 21

Rest after meals to ensure optimum digestion.

Do you have enough energy to digest your meals while at the same time being physically active? Most likely, the answer is “Yes.”

Do you have enough fuel to digest your meals while at the same time being physically active? Most likely, the answer is “Yes.”

Do you have enough blood supply to digest your meals while at the same time being physically active? Most likely, the answer is “No.”

Blood supply serves as the bottleneck, the limiting factor that determines which and how many things we can do simultaneously. The blood carries our fuel, in the form of glucose, but the blood also carries the oxygen that must be delivered to every cell of the body, and our ability to uptake oxygen into the blood is very limited. Indeed, all we have to do is start running up a gentle hill and notice how quickly we get out of breath in order to experience how difficult it is to supply sufficient oxygen to the parts of the body that need them, even for merely a single function. The organs of digestion all require oxygen in order to function, and muscular portions of the digestive tract require oxygen in the same fashion as our skeletal muscles. Attempting to supply sufficient oxygen to the skeletal muscles and the digestive organs at the same time can be a challenge greater than our limited respiratory system can handle.

One of three possibilities can occur when we attempt to be vigorously active on a full stomach:

1. The skeletal muscles get the oxygen they require, but the digestive processes are compromised. In such a situation, you could get a stomach cramp, or your digestive functions could be brought to a standstill. The food in the digestive tract will begin to ferment or rot in the dark, warm, wetness of the digestive system. Such bacterial breakdown of our food can be uncomfortable, will likely result in the production of foul gas, and will definitely cause nutritional compromises.
2. The digestive organs get all the oxygen they need, but the skeletal muscles do not. Lackadaisical performance might be the outcome, but more than likely a muscle cramp will result. Such a cramp may be only an inconvenience if the person is on dry land, but if s/he happens to be in water over his/her head at the time, well, that would be very deep water indeed, and the situation could become deadly.
3. Neither the muscles nor the digestive organs get all the oxygen they need. You feel crummy, and your physical performance is at a low ebb, as the functioning of both systems is somewhat compromised.

For the body to function at its peak, we are best off doing one thing at a time.

November 22

**Despite opinions to the contrary,
the most important six inches in a person's life
is between the ears.**

Sex sells, and everyone knows it. Advertisers promote their products by using sex in every way they can, with messages ranging from subliminal to blatant. They associate their products with sex, apply innuendoes suggesting that the use of their products will help you get sex, suggest that you and their products will make a sexy combination, imply that purchasing their products will make you more sexy, and anything else they can think of. By the time the newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet, movies, store fronts, clothiers, mannequin makers, billboards, advertisements of all sorts, salesmen, and other mediums have had their way, sex and sex appeal can seem like the only game in town. Is it any wonder that people are preoccupied with sex?

Do not get me wrong—I think sex is wonderful, but being obsessed with sex is just not healthy. When sex starts overriding your intellectual processes, and controlling your decision-making, you definitely have a problem. Dr. Nejla Burton, the Australian natural hygienist, once gave a presentation on the physiology of menopause. While mentioning the many hormonal changes that occur to women around the time of menopause, she at one point dropped this bombshell, “Come on women, at least once menopause hits, we can begin thinking with our brains.” Men have long been accused of not being so capable in this regard.

Yet, it is with the brain that we are capable of going anywhere, doing anything, and having every experience. We can travel into space instantly in our minds, and just as instantly be at the bottom of the ocean. We can feel pain, pleasure, and every other experience in our imaginations. The brain runs the show for the entire body, choreographing the functioning of almost every cell of the body. The genitalia is good, but nowhere near as good as the brain. Besides, if you lost your genitalia, you would likely still be able to lead a productive life. This simply cannot be said about losing your brain. If you had to choose between your real brain and your so-called “second brain,” the second brain would lose out, every time.

November 23

Five major factors that enhance calcium absorption include: sufficient sunlight, adequate sleep, appropriate exercise, a diet predominated by fruits and vegetables that also supplies not more than single-digit quantities of proteins and fats, and avoidance of the various factors that result in calcium losses: dairy, meat, coffee, soft drinks, and a wide variety of prescription drugs.

Calcium absorption is directly affected by sunlight exposure via the connection with Vitamin D. Through a relatively complicated series of chemical reactions, we produce storable, fat-soluble Vitamin D as a result of direct exposure to sunlight. Vitamin D plays a critical role in our ability to store and utilize calcium. Calcium is needed for the proper functioning of every cell of the body. During the summer months, most people can obtain all the sunshine they require for healthy calcium metabolism in less than 15 minutes of daily exposure to the sun. The lower the sun is in the sky, the less Vitamin D we produce as a response to sunlight, meaning that during the winter months, unless you live with 2000 or so miles from the equator, you will likely not be able to manufacture sufficient Vitamin D, and will have to pull from your stores. Typically three to four months of Vitamin D can be stored.

Without obtaining sufficient sleep, recovery of every type is compromised. Calcium is pulled from the bones, where 99 percent of all our calcium is found, in order to neutralize the excess acidity that remains when recovery is incomplete. Sleeping until satisfied is essential for proper recovery, and to ensure healthy calcium metabolism.

Exercise, and especially exercises that result in muscular strength gains, results in increased calcium absorption, as the bones gain strength, and calcium, parallel to the muscles gaining strength. In order for bones to become stronger, calcium must be deposited into the bones. Physical activities of all types are essential to optimum calcium metabolism and insuring that bones remain strong.

A diet predominated by raw fruits and vegetables, in the single-digit range regarding fat and protein consumption, will match sufficient calcium intake with the lowest calcium losses. The loss of calcium is actually a more important consideration than the consumption of great quantities of this mineral, as high losses can easily drain the body of more calcium than is consumed. The resulting osteoporosis can be crippling and eventually become a cause of death.

Calcium is used by the body to neutralize acidic influences that would otherwise result in harmful changes to blood pH. Some of the acids come from foods containing high levels of the acid-forming amino acids, cysteine and methionine, such as meat, dairy, fish, fowl, and eggs. The phosphoric acid used in most soft drinks is also a strong acid influence, as are coffee, tea, many prescription drugs, and even over-the-counter drugs, such as aspirin. Acid is also produced as a natural waste product of cellular metabolism, but the body has the capacity to fully deal with that acidity by using calcium as a buffer.

November 24

Inflammation walks hand in hand with irritation.

Endless famous couples have graced our consciousness: Bonnie and Clyde, peanut butter and jelly, Antony and Cleopatra, ham and cheese, Smith and Wesson, coffee and cake, Jekyll and Hyde, cookies and milk, Romeo and Juliet, bread and butter, Samson and Delilah, bacon and eggs, Barnes and Noble, meat and potatoes, Lennon and McCartney, fish and chips, and even Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, to name just a few. Even before the days of Adam and Eve, inflammation and irritation worked together as a couple, as you just cannot have one without the other. Trauma—whether physical, chemical, or emotional—will invariably lead to irritation, which will always result in inflammation. You can almost picture irritation and inflammation walking hand in hand, into the sunset, eternally paired.

Why is inflammation so interminably linked with irritation? Inflammation serves many functions, depending upon the source of the irritation. If, for example, you sprained your ankle, the entire area around the ankle would swell with leaked blood and lymph, showing the classic bulge we refer to as inflammation. The sprained ankle resulted in damage to ligaments, blood vessels, and lymphatic vessels, and possibly other structures. The stretched ligaments had provided the ankle with stability, but once damaged, they could not do their job, so the joint becomes unstable and hypermobile. The swelling serves to immobilize the joint, effectively “casting” it from the inside out, preventing unnecessary or unintended movement, and thus fostering speedier recovery than if the joint had remained hypermobile.

Imagine instead that you received a bee sting, a mosquito bite, or a bite from a spider or other creature. The resulting inflammation serves two functions. The first is to bring loads of fluid to the area, to effectively dilute the irritants that were received from the bite or sting. In addition, a variety of immune responses are set into effect by the body as a response to the bite or sting. The body sends the necessary immuno-chemicals and immuno-structures to the affected site via the lymph, blood, and extracellular fluids, each of which make up some of the materials that account for the swelling.

Caustic smoke, such as you would inhale from a cigarette, or when a house catches fire, or perhaps even from the smokestack of certain factories, can irritate and burn the delicate tissues of your respiratory tract. The throat and related areas become inflamed, as part of your body’s method of blocking further irritation. Substances to which you are allergic can irritate the fragile membranes of your eyes nose and throat, provoking allergic responses that include such extreme inflammation that your nose can become completely blocked. You can lose the ability to smell anything, experience difficulty keeping your eyes open as they water and puff up, and as your trachea becomes inflamed, you may have difficulty breathing. All of these inflammatory responses are part of the body’s defenses for creating a boundary between you and the irritant.

Swollen glands, swollen joints, puffy face, and even water retention are all part of the body’s inflammation responses for dealing with irritants. Instead of trying to remove the swelling, or

treating the swelling, remove the irritant, the cause of the swelling, and the swelling will go down of its own accord.

Next time, stop the cause of the irritation, rather than treating the inflammation.

November 25

The human body is overbuilt.

If only tanks were as tough as humans. They say that some people are built like a tank, but humans can handle the wrong food far better than a tank can handle the wrong fuel. Sure, poor food choices will eventually wear us down, but put sugar water into a tank instead of the fuel it is designed to run on, and that tank motor will completely stop, and probably also be completely ruined. If only watches really could actually take a licking and keep on ticking as well as we do. In fact, smack a person against a wall and most of the time, all that results are bruises. More often than not, when a watch hits a brick wall, that is the end of the watch. If luggage were as tough as people, even the luggage monkeys would not be able to break it. Think about it. How long does the average piece of luggage last? If you get a decade out of a suitcase, you have done well. Twenty years is remarkable, especially if you are a frequent flyer. People last easily five times as long as luggage, and luggage rarely gets used as often as once a month.

Let's face it, the body is packed with redundancies. Do we really need two kidneys? That's overkill for sure. Lots of people have lost a kidney for one reason or another, and do just fine with only one. Some people even voluntarily give up a kidney, usually for a transplant, and both people live long healthy lives with one kidney each. Binocular vision is definitely an asset, but not a necessity. Depth perception is greatly enhanced when you use two eyes, but in reality we do not NEED fantastic depth perception all that often, other than perhaps when we play sports. Two eyes are one more than we need, as are two ears, two nostrils, two lungs, and practically everything else we have two of. (Two legs are nice, but not essential, and the same could be said of arms, though I fully support the idea of two arms and two legs.) Whoever decided we needed ten fingers and ten toes? All those extra digits are just a luxury. Six of each would have been plenty. And what about the blood supply to our various organs. Most of the time, we do not even have a clue that something is wrong until the blood supply is diminished by at least 75 percent, and in many instances, 90 percent blockage is found after the first trip to the doctor for a suspected problem. Apparently, we supply way more blood to our organs than they really need. Why do we need ears that can handle swimming to depths we will likely never go, skin that can handle more sunshine than most people are comfortable getting, biochemistry that includes backup systems for the backup systems and buffer systems for the buffer systems, and a sense of humor that finds slapstick funny? We can handle fast food, junk food, comfort food, fried food, blackened food, hot and spicy food, refined food, and even the purely empty calories found in refined sugar, oils, and protein powder. We survive salt, pepper, vinegar, garlic, and countless harsh spices. Tobacco, alcohol, recreational drugs, and prescription drugs are not enough to stop us cold. When the doctors bring out the big guns, we even survive radiation and chemotherapy, at least for a while.

All of this redundancy does not mean, however, that we should abuse ourselves every chance we get, or until we reach the brink of disaster, but rather it ensures that we thrive when we conserve our health, enabling us to enjoy optimal functioning throughout life.

November 26

By walking an extra mile per day, you will use enough calories to lose ten pounds per year (all other factors remaining the same).

Human beings are really funny when it comes to our weight. We might take five, ten, or even twenty years, gradually gaining body fat until we reach a point where our weight becomes intolerable, but we want (and even expect) to lose the weight as close to instantly (and effortlessly) as possible. Taking full responsibility for the condition is not something many people even bother to consider. Exercise until the weight gives way and releases the fit trim person held captive inside? No way. We would rather take a pill, or buy into some magical program, or use a miraculous machine that will melt the pounds away simply by shaking us a bit. We give up carbs because we would rather believe that eating carbs will make us fat by supplying us with 4 calories per gram (that is 1,816 calories per pound), but that eating fat will not make us fat, even though at 9 calories per gram fat yields more than 4,000 calories per pound. We point a fat finger at everyone and everything and every food, never stopping to notice that every time we point a finger at anything, three more fingers are pointing back at ourselves. (Try it and see. Point your finger anywhere and notice that the other three fingers on the same hand are indeed pointing right back at you.)

At the end of the year, you've either walked those miles or you haven't. If you have weight to lose, start walking. Every step counts towards your total. You do not even have to stop to count your steps, but instead, like Ambrose from the Linda Laurie 1958 hit song, "Ambrose (Part 5)," all you have to do is "just keep walking." By the way, Ms. Laurie, a high school student at the time the song was recorded, never released a Part 1, 2, 3, or 4 to the Ambrose (Part 5) track.

Get into the habit of walking an extra mile per day, every day, and in short order you will likely find yourself walking even further, or faster, or you may even find yourself running the mile instead. When you increase the distance you cover, or the speed at which you travel, you will use even more calories, and lose even more weight. But many other benefits accrue once you start an exercise routine. Overall fitness improves, and as it does, your perspective on exertion shifts. What used to seem like a big exertion will now be seen as far less challenging. Gains in fitness lead to improvements in self-esteem that tend to foster gains in other areas of life. Getting outdoors for exercise not only gets you more fresh air and sunshine, it provides greater opportunities for connecting with nature. The renowned biologist, E.O. Wilson, made abundantly clear in his landmark work on biophilia that humans have a huge and impelling need to connect with nature, and that whenever we are separated from that connection, major portions of ourselves are lost.

Walking will not only help you lose excess pounds, it will help you gain parts of yourself you may not have even known you had lost.

November 27

**Review and renew your health program weekly,
and remember to pat yourself on the back
for all the progress you actually have made.**

Setting goals is just a part of what we do every day. All too often, however, the goals we set are not really goals, because they are just wishes, hopes, or desires. Unless you put a deadline on your goal, make a plan, and actually work towards your goal, it really is no more than a wish. Goals, even when subjective, can be stated in concrete terms. If your goal is not clear, you may have no way of knowing if you are actually on the path towards attaining your goal, and may not even have a way of telling when you have reached your goal, or if you are on track to do so. Goals are well worth the time it takes to think them out clearly, and more than worth the effort involved in planning how to reach them.

Planning is a huge part of reaching any goal, and the bigger and tougher the goal the more planning is usually required. The first step in planning any goal is to set a deadline. Once a deadline is established, a timeline can be generated. Then the series of steps required to reach the goal can be delineated, with each step fitting on the timeline, and generating its own deadlines.

When you are working towards more than one goal at a time, you must decide how much time you are willing to put into each goal, and which is most important to you. Arranging the goals according to the quantity of time you plan to put into each, or by the importance of each, is known as “vertical alignment.” Relax, because once your goals are vertically aligned, you are allowed to change your mind. If you fail to reach one of your goals, or fail to reach any of the steps along the way to reaching your goals, simply reset the goal, or reset the timeline, or change the deadline, so that you can continue to work towards your goal in a timely fashion.

You may encounter obstacles along the way to reaching your goal. Your best bet is to foresee as many such obstacles as you possibly can, and create the potential solutions for overcoming those obstacles before you ever encounter them. Once again, good planning will take you far towards reaching your goal. Should something come up that really stumps you on your way towards reaching an important goal, you may want to switch to Plan B, or even Plan C. These plans should also be created in the planning phase, well in advance of beginning the actual work of reaching your goal. How much time are you going to allow for planning, and how much time should you allow for reaching your goal? A useful bit of information is that we humans are not adept at determining how much we can accomplish in a given period of time. We tend to overestimate how much we can do in an hour (and especially tend to overestimate how much someone else can do in an hour), while we underestimate how much we, or other people, can accomplish in a year.

Other worthy considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Which are the first steps you are going to take towards reaching your goal?

- What happens after you reach your goal?
- Will reaching your goal be the end of this project, or will it simply be the first in a series of goals that spin off as a result of reaching the initial goal?
- What will you do after you reach your goal, especially if the goal does not generate subsequent projects?
- Do you have a series of goals to work on, so that when one project ends, the next can begin?
- Which do you enjoy more, the planning, the working, or the actual reaching of the goal?

November 28

**Utilizing the effect of sunlight's ultraviolet rays upon the skin,
the body can produce 100% of the Vitamin D it requires.**

Most experts agree that with “average” sun strength, 30 minutes of direct exposure to the sun each week is sufficient for the body to manufacture all of the Vitamin D it needs. Please understand that these doctors are talking about a mere four to six minutes per day of sun exposure. Certainly, the power and intensity of the sun can vary tremendously with time of year, time of day, environmental pollution, and weather patterns such as clouds and altitude, thus, the use of the word “average.” The quantity of Vitamin D we produce is affected by the strength of the sun, which determines the power of the ultraviolet light to which we are exposed. Within the ideal range, more ultraviolet exposure typically converts into more Vitamin D production. As with Vitamins A, E, and K, Vitamin D is fat soluble, making it quite possible to get too much. Too much Vitamin D can easily result in symptoms as severe as too little of this precious nutrient.

Vegans living in nature would rely exclusively upon sun exposure for their Vitamin D, as they would never see, let alone eat, the fatty fish and other such foods notorious for containing high quantities of Vitamin D. Without the use of heating, warm bedding, and insulated clothing, we would never explore further than about 1500 miles north or south of the equator. San Diego, California, would be about the northern limits of our explorations, as any further north and the nights would become intolerably cold. The animals primarily known for their high levels of Vitamin D tend to live in climates at least double to triple that distance from the equator.

People have been aware of the relationship between food and health for hundreds, if not thousands of years. In 1747, a Scottish surgeon named James Lind discovered that citrus fruit helped prevent scurvy. Not until the early 1900's, however, were individual vitamins discovered. Supplementation with Vitamin D first became available during the mid-1900's, which helped solve the problem of rickets. Rickets had become a problem after a major shift in the population, when people had moved from the country to the city, and before the advent of child labor laws, even children had exchanged farm work for factory work. Being indoors all day every day was killing people, and the first to suffer were the children. Supplementation with Vitamin D treated the symptoms of rickets, though this was definitely a case of treating the symptoms and not eliminating the cause of the problem. Though rickets is now relatively unknown in the US, the current trend towards reducing sun exposure in an attempt to minimize skin cancer has generated a new interest in Vitamin D supplementation. Once again, we are treating symptoms while ignoring the cause of the problem. When will we learn?

November 29

**Exposure to sunlight increases both male
and female sex hormone production.**

We all know it, because we have all felt it. Lounging in the sun, whether at the beach, poolside, or just in your own backyard, is a downright luxurious and sexy feeling. You do not need scientific jargon to understand and appreciate how good the sunlight's warmth feels upon your exposed skin....

Low Vitamin D levels are a known causative agent in low estrogen in women and low testosterone in men. Not only is total testosterone affected by low Vitamin D levels, the actual integrity of the sperm's nucleus is compromised, making the remaining sperm less effective. To top things off, Vitamin D receptors in the sperm have been shown to influence the health of the sperm, such that insufficient Vitamin D leads to reduced levels of sperm motility. In rats (and no, we do not support any form of animal testing), insufficient Vitamin D has been shown to result in compromises to the quality of offspring produced. Affecting more than just sex drive, Vitamin D deficiency also affects your mood, which often has more to do with how "sexy" you feel than even your hormones. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and other forms of depression, including suicidal tendencies, have been linked with deficiencies in exposure to sunlight. The desire to exercise and the body's ability to handle and recover from said exercise is reduced parallel to reductions in sunlight.

We all want to look good for our mates, and for the opposite sex in general, and sunlight supports that intention. Low estrogen is associated with low bone density and the onset of osteoporosis, a problem that is only compounded with reduced exercise frequency and reduced exertion intensity.

Sunlight has been shown to boost fertility in both women and men. Estrogen and progesterone production rises with increased Vitamin D levels, helping with the regulation of the menstrual cycle, making periods of peak fertility more predictable. According to research findings published in the *European Journal of Endocrinology*, the mere lack of sunlight in winter months may be at least partly responsible for the decline in conception rates that occur at that time of year, and the rise in rates associated with summertime sun. The next time you want to give your reproductive hormones a bit of support, spend some time relaxing in the sunshine.

November 30

Current research indicates that a diet high in cooked fats, and not exposure to sunlight, is the probable cause of most skin cancers.

Headline news in the October 26, 2015, issue of the *National Post* read: “Processed meats, including bacon (sorry!), are cancer hazards, WHO says—and red meat probably is too.” Likely, you do not need to read the rest of that story in order to get the gist of it, or to intuit most of the details, as the headline is pretty self-explanatory. The WHO took no prisoners in this press release. Scientists are repeatedly proving what we have known for decades: eating meat is killing us, yet we still do not seem willing to stop. Sports scientists, cancer experts, heart disease specialists, and doctors who specialize in diabetes are aware that consuming an excessive quantity of fat is harmful to overall health, and that this is especially true of eating cooked animal fats. Nitrates are only part of the problem, though admittedly a big part. Nitrates occur in plants, as well as in animals, but in plants they are accompanied by large quantities of antioxidants that counteract and nullify all potentially negative effects. Arachidonic acid, an Omega-6 fatty acid found primarily in fatty meats, is known to enhance the growth of cancers while inhibiting the immune functions that protect against skin cancer. Fatty foods also encourage excess production of bile, which converts in the large intestine to the proven carcinogen known as apocholic acid. Vitamin C is in rich supply in fruits and vegetables, and not present in animal fare. Vitamin C has been demonstrated as a major preventative in skin cancer.

An article by Ariana Eunjung Cha in the *Washington Post* commented on the WHO report. Cha interviewed several people, including Jennifer Burton. According to registered dietician Burton, who works out of OhioHealth, “People with diets higher in saturated fats like those from cheese, milk, cream and steak have a higher incidence of cancer recurrence.” The International Association for Research on Cancer comments in *The Lancet Oncology* on the known cancer-causing chemicals, such as N-nitroso-compounds and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons found in processed meats, and the heterocyclic aromatic amines formed when meats are cooked: “High-temperature cooking by pan-frying, grilling or barbecuing generally produces the highest amounts of these chemicals.”

Sunlight exposure generates production of Vitamin D, which is considered exceptionally good for health of the skin, and is recognized as a factor in preventing skin cancer.

DECEMBER

**Each year brings a new you.
Use this month to gear up for your New Year's resolutions.
Write them down and begin to practice them.**

One of the most popular competitions at the Olympics is the 4x100-meter relay. In this event, one team member starts from a standstill (with the aid of starting blocks) and runs 100 meters while carrying a baton, at which point s/he passes the baton to the next runner. The process is repeated two more times (though not from a standstill). The fourth runner completes the 400-meter lap. With well-executed baton passes, the total elapsed time can be mind-bogglingly quick. What really makes the total time short, however, is the use of the “flying start” that occurs in each “transition zone,” the area within which the baton must be passed. The first runner passes the baton as he catches up to the second runner, who has already begun running. A good baton pass can save the team several seconds off of their total time, and a bad pass can easily cost as many seconds.

December can be used as the transition zone that brings you from one year into the next. Of course, you will want to get a flying start towards reaching all of your New Year's goals, in order to increase your chances of success in reaching them. Very likely, by this point in the year, you already know what your New Year's resolutions are going to be, so now is the time to begin writing them down, and creating your success plans. Use the month to state your goals clearly and succinctly, to add deadlines, and create checkpoints along the way to make sure that you are on track. Foresee the potential obstacles that may occur, and develop your plans for overcoming them. You can even take a few tentative “practice swings” at doing the work that will bring you to your goal, in order to get the feel of what it is like, and help you see if you will be truly heading in the direction you wish to go. Make whatever refinements are necessary, so that when the New Year finally arrives, you have already started heading straight towards your goals at full speed.

December 1

Stress the similarities between yourself and other people.

Sometimes, in our efforts to demonstrate to others something that is new or profound to us, we make a big deal and talk about it endlessly. We “wear it on our sleeve,” as the saying goes. We go overboard, talking about the new information, often even when our companions show no interest at all. We become the proverbial ‘pain in the butt,’ the one people dread spending time with. We feel a great urgency to get our important information through to our loved ones, but the more we persist, the less likely we become of ever succeeding. Rather than convince others of the importance of our message, we alienate them, and instead of garnering their support, we succeed only in drawing the exact opposite response than that which we were hoping for. The very people we most hope to enlist as our firmest supporters seem instead to rebel, fight us at every turn, and often enough, to run in the opposite direction from the one toward which we were guiding them. People prefer to initiate their own changes, to think for themselves, and to be the ones guiding their own destiny. More often than not, they will fight back when they feel forced, or even pressured, to make changes that were not of their own design. How can we best bridge this gap?

If you wish for people to listen to you with an open mind, you must be willing to listen to them, and listen well. Then, and only then, you can begin to reinforce the connections that exist between you. Defining the common bond puts everyone at ease. Such connections always exist, even between two people that do not know each other, and it is the responsibility of the message bearer to find and highlight this common ground. An important first step is to emphasize the similarities between yourself and those you wish to influence. Noting similarities helps make you part of the group, and gains you acceptance. The similarities could be as simple as everyone being at the meeting for the same reason, or your common struggles with the current weather, or the fact that even you used to think your idea was nutty, just like they probably do, but now you wish to tell them what you have discovered that made you see things differently.

With a bit of tongue in cheek, Dr. Alec Burton drives the point home about connecting with the people you are talking to by emphasizing your similarities. He tells the story of his internship while finishing his medical training. He was working in an asylum for the mentally deranged. When it came time for him to leave, the inmates threw the young Dr. Burton a party. They told him how sorry they were to see him leave. “We like you more than the other interns,” they said. “You are more like us.”

December 2

**When asked about your food preferences,
the simplest and often most acceptable answer
is that you eat exactly what you most enjoy,
and that which works best for you.**

When you go out to dinner with a group of people, everyone orders exactly what they want, prepared the way that they want it. Some of them may even include special instructions, such as being sure to include or exclude a certain ingredient, or a request for more or less of a particular item. Each person gets his or her own special meal, and no one makes a big deal about what anyone else eats, except perhaps for the occasional compliment or mention of how enticing this or that particular dish looks. No one bothers anyone else about their food, or gives anyone a hard time, of course, but somehow they seem to all single you out as the exception to this common courtesy. For some unknown reason, after you order your meal and give your special instructions, a flurry of questions are aimed directly at you, as if you were a target. If you are in good spirits and feeling supremely confident at the time, you may casually respond to the queries, deflecting them with humor and grace. If you are not feeling totally on top of your game, you might hear disapproval or threat in the questions, and your replies might be somewhat barbed. What began as light dinner conversation could quickly degrade into an argument, with each side digging in and defending his or her own position. Of course, tension at the dinner table is never welcomed, and hopefully the flare-up can be controlled and extinguished, with Round 2 put aside for a later date. Still, no one can successfully pretend that the argument did not happen, and the dining experience cannot be the same as if tempers had not flared.

In a professional setting, at a job interview, or perhaps even while having a conversation among friends, you might be expected to be able to explain your position regarding food and nutrition. At the dinner table, however, you are often best off to deflect, defer, and demur queries about your food choices.

“I’m really not a nutritionist, so I just eat what I like,” might become your favorite reply. Or, “I’ve tried a lot of different diets, and this one seems to suit me best,” could work better for you. “My doctor and my nutritionist agree that this approach is sound,” often confounds the questioner, and “perhaps you’d care to ask one of them about the details,” is often enough to put an end to the entire line of questions. “I just do what my doctor says,” is often acceptable food for thought, though occasionally your doctor might become the subject of the next attack. An open and honest, “I’m really not comfortable talking about my diet at mealtimes,” is usually sufficient to bring compassion from those at your table, while, “could we talk about this another time,” demonstrates your confidence and acknowledges that the topic is important. You could just change the subject and hope they get the hint, or you could respond with questions of your own about their diet, nutrition, fitness, general health, etc. No matter how you reply, remember that you want to have a peaceful meal, and that you are among friends. Think, breathe, and smile before you reply, and see if indeed you can steer the conversation in the direction you would most like it to go.

December 3

**We accept without question the notion
that our right to swing our arms ends
long before we touch someone else's nose.**

When we go out in public, we do not expect to get hit. In fact, we expect to not get hit, jolted, or even touched by anyone, at least not without our specific consent. We implicitly understand this basic concept of the privacy of our body, and we apply it in almost all situations. Does it not seem equally obvious that the polluter's rights should end when they affect our eyes, ears, nose, lungs, or overall health?

Noise pollution has been recognized as a real and serious issue for thousands of years. In ancient Rome, chariots were banned from city streets at night because the wheels made too much noise when clattering on the cobblestones. In Medieval Europe, horse-drawn carriages were banned from city streets at night, or straw was placed in the streets each night, simply to reduce the noise and allow residents to sleep. Currently, in our technological world, we make more noise than ever, and the results show in our declining health.

The WHO outlined seven major areas of adverse health effects regarding noise pollution:

1. Hearing Impairment
2. Interference with Spoken Communication
3. Sleep Disturbances
4. Cardiovascular Disturbances
5. Disturbances in Mental Health
6. Impaired Task Performance
7. Negative Social Behavior and Annoyance Reactions

In addition, almost every form of wildlife is adversely affected by noise pollution. Birdsong, mating rituals, habitat, navigation, and countless other facets of animal behavior are compromised by our noise.

In the same way that we rate movies according to their age-appropriateness, perhaps we should conduct the other aspects of public life with similar awareness and considerations? The case could easily be made to support the negative effects of smoke from a barbeque grill on children's health.

What about the pollutants you breathe? In 1610, what was possibly the first of thousands of environmental laws was passed, when a British court ruled in favor of William Aldred, and

against his neighbor, Thomas Benton, a pig farmer. The judgment stated that a man has, “no right to maintain a structure upon his own land, which, by reason of disgusting smells, loud or unusual noises, thick smoke, noxious vapors, the jarring of machinery, or the unwarrantable collection of flies, renders the occupancy of adjoining property dangerous, intolerable, or even uncomfortable to its tenants....”

We know that cooking produces many carcinogens. How long will it be before one neighbor successfully sues another for damages generated by smoke from his barbeque, or the use of other airborne environmental chemicals? Neighbors have already successfully sued neighbors due to the deleterious effects of their cigarette smoke, so doing so overcooking smoke cannot be far behind.

December 4

**Where is the sport in pitting a comfortable
200-pound man with great leverage against
a two-pound fish with a painful hook in its mouth?**

Sport is considered by some to be the ultimate challenge. People will push themselves more to train for a competition than for almost any other goal. Some will dedicate huge portions of their lives to their fitness activities. Many people spend their entire lives immersed in the world of sport, even when the sport is just a hobby, or they are just spectators. Winning can become so important to some competitors that they give in to the temptation to cheat in order to win. Sportsmanship is often thrown out the window, hence referees, umpires, and even electronic eyes are employed to enforce the rules and make accurate decisions when the athletes can no longer be trusted. Millions of people watch athletes compete every weekend of the year. Trillions of dollars are spent annually on the sports industry.

Sport, by its very nature, is supposed to be a fair form of competition. In sports where gender matters, men and women compete separately. When age is a factor, we compete in age groups. If weight factors in, we use weight classes to even the odds and make the competition as fair as possible. When experience is a key factor, novices compete only against other novices. Not knowing the outcome is part of what makes sports so compelling. We love the tension. We may prefer that one competitor wins over another, but we want a fair fight.

Talent alone is not enough to ensure a win. Team sports are notorious for proving that it takes more than talent to be successful. Team play is essential, or else all you will see is a bunch of talented players competing in a losing effort. Individual sports also rely on more than pure talent for the athletes to win. Physical training, mental preparation, nutritional support, sufficient recovery, psychological rehearsals, and many other aspects go into the generation of a winning performance. Even then, the saying, "On any given day," gives recognition to the fact that a tremendous number of factors must come together for one athlete or team to overcome another.

There is no sport in hunting deer when the men use camouflage gear and guns, bows, or traps. There might be sport in pitting a 200-pound man against a 200-pound fish if the man was standing on the beach with a hook through his cheek just like the fish, and the contest was to see who was going to pull whom into their home environment. My money would be on the fish.

December 5

Get enough rest.

How many times in your life have you forced yourself out of bed, when what you really wanted was to roll over and go back to sleep? How many times have you relied upon your alarm clock, just to get up at your “usual” time? Did you ever sleep right through your alarm? How many times have you found yourself chain yawning, unable to concentrate, standing around in a daze, or making silly mistakes because you were just too tired to be functional? Do you miss major portions of your weekend, catching up on missed sleep? When you are tired, do you go to bed, or do you watch television, have something to eat, or rely on stimulants to stay awake? Does your athleticism suffer due to lack of sleep? Would you say you average closer to 200 hours of sleep per month, or nearer to 300 hours per month? Are you in tune with your need for rest and sleep, or are you in complete denial about this critical health factor?

Benjamin Franklin was quoted as saying, “There will be sleeping enough in the grave.” The “I’ll sleep when I’m dead” approach so popular today is simply not supportive of overall health. Nature provides a clear model regarding rest and sleep, which is especially borne out amongst the mammals. When not performing biologically essential tasks, all creatures spend the remainder of their day at rest, or sleeping. Although the need for sleep varies from species to species, all animals make room for sleep in their daily patterns. Giraffes rest the most of almost all animals, but sleep the least (sleeping only about two hours per day), while koalas rest the least but sleep the most (close to 22 hours per day, on average). Even plants take their version of rest every day, and seasonally as well, either greatly reducing their activities or going completely dormant for a period of time. The model is there, but like so many of the models provided by nature, we completely ignore it, and more often than not, we actually attempt to countermand it. We take pride in the fact that we work so hard that we do not have time to stay fit, to pursue hobbies, or even enjoy time with our family. We use our busyness as an excuse to eat poorly, to be in bad humor, to be ill, and to be overly tired. We deny ourselves our basic human rights.

Turn off the television and get yourself to bed. Take a nap, even a short one, and you will feel better for so doing. Many famous men credited their naps for their success. Winston Churchill took a nap every day, as a routine part of his daily schedule. Presidents Reagan, Kennedy, and Johnson were all known for their daily naps as well. General Stonewall Jackson and Napoleon Bonaparte were notorious for napping, even while battles were raging around them. Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, and Salvador Dali were all known to nap when they could. Dali, famous for his surrealistic paintings and outrageous personality, once credited naps as the secret to his prolific productivity. He said he would nap in his favorite armchair, holding a key between his thumb and forefinger. He would place a plate on the floor, directly under the key. When he would fall asleep, the key would drop, hit the plate, and awaken him, only one or two seconds into his slumbers. Today, scientists call such naps “hypnagogic.” Apparently, in the state between Stage 1 and Stage 2 sleep, on the boundary between wakefulness and sleep, the mind is in a state that supports free-flowing creative thoughts. Famous poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (author of *Kubla Khan*), composer Ludwig von Beethoven, inventor Thomas Edison, composer Richard Wagner, philosopher John Dewey, Aristotle, and Einstein are also said to have utilized

the hypnagogic approach to napping. Apparently, by cutting the nap short, these men acquired many of the benefits of napping without having to recover from the grogginess of waking from deep sleep, referred to as “sleep inertia.” To reach a state of deep sleep typically requires at least twenty minutes of sleeping. In order not to experience such grogginess, a full sleep cycle would have to be reached. Each sleep cycle lasts approximately 75-90 minutes.

December 6

What is the best oxymoron ever? “Humane slaughter” has got to be high on the list.

From “awfully good” to “zero deficit,” oxymora, a term comprised of the two Greek words meaning “sharp” and “dull,” are two words that may seem perfectly normal when first encountered, yet do not really work when used together, but only if you stop to think about them. Oxymora are very common, perhaps exactly because they exhibit both wit and whimsy at the same time, or perhaps because such contrast is often representative of the nature of life itself.

We often accept the oxymoron at face value, rather than pausing to consider the actual meaning of the words. From civil war to crash landing, freezer burn to jumbo shrimp, the larger half, old news, and pretty ugly, the oxymoron is recognized by some and completely missed by others. Consider the following sentence, which is composed primarily of oxymora. When choosing air travel for a working vacation, we are encouraged to act naturally, eat the airline food, listen to soft rock that was recorded live, reminded that bags often look almost exactly alike, and hope that our luggage is not found missing.

Do you believe the hype that California is home to happy cows? Have you ever driven past the feedlots on the I-5 between San Francisco and Los Angeles? You will see thousands of cows (and smell the toxic stench of their slurry ponds), but none of those animals will look or act particularly happy. If you had to live near that stench, you would not be happy either. Men working near the slurry ponds are required to wear hazmat suits, as the concentrated fumes are deadly.

If you actually had to hunt, kill, skin, gut, debone, butcher and then clean the meat from the animal’s carcass, do you think you would ever eat meat again? Countless people tell stories of how their childhood experiences growing up on a farm influenced them to become vegetarians. How many children are horrified when they come to the realization that the wonderful animals they thought of as friends must now be thought of as dinner? Such trauma is enough to influence a child for life.

Temple Grandin is credited with creating the world’s first “humane slaughter house,” where the cows waiting to be slaughtered are not able to watch the slaughter of the animals who go before them. Such a design is most certainly an improvement. But the creatures lining up for slaughter can still hear the other cow’s screams, smell their fear, and taste the acrid bitterness of blood and death in the air. Can any type of slaughter be humane? Can the very process of raising animals for slaughter be humane?

December 7

**In a true Age of Enlightenment,
there will be no more war and no more cooking.**

The original *Star Trek* science fiction television series was based on the premise that rather than destroying himself through nuclear warfare in the late 20th Century, man instead made a quantum leap in understanding and declared world peace. This decision led to unparalleled advances in every field of endeavor, and most notably, in space travel. Although war was an ongoing theme throughout all of the *Star Trek* television series and movies, it was never about war on Earth. The supposed abolition of war was credited with much of man's social evolution. The rationale for such bold predictions about our possible future was based upon actual events in human history. From the late 1300's to the late 1800's, China enjoyed an unprecedented 500 years of nearly total, uninterrupted peace. The result of such lasting peace was profound. Not only did the people flourish financially, they developed their culture and their arts to a very high degree. In addition, the overall population grew rapidly, leading to a burgeoning need for geographic expansion. Peace cannot come through war, and enlightenment comes during times of peace.

Denaturing food, destroying the nutritive elements in food, and actually cooking in anti-nutrients is counterproductive to everything that is healthy in our world. No loving parent would intentionally harm their child, yet cooked food is given to children of all ages, from baby food onward. The Broadway play *Hair*, which opened in 1968 and ran for 1,750 performances until it closed in 1972, popularized the concept of the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, an astrological event that occurs once every 26,000 years and lasts for roughly 2,160 years. No one knows exactly when the next Age of Aquarius will begin, or if indeed it has already begun. The song, "Age of Aquarius," by the group The 5th Dimension, includes the following lyrics, and waxes poetic of the grand wonderfulness that will accompany the dawning of the new Age:

Harmony and understanding
Sympathy and trust abounding
No more falsehoods or derisions
Golden living dreams of visions
Mystic crystal revelation
And the mind's true liberation
Aquarius, Aquarius
When the moon is in the seventh house
And Jupiter aligns with Mars
Then peace will guide the planets
And love will steer the stars

Yet how can any of the beautiful qualities expressed in this song come to fruition while we are still torturing, cooking, and eating millions of animals every day? The astrological Age of Aquarius may be dawning, but the enlightenment of which it speaks will not be ours until we stop cooking and go back to eating the whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables growing in our own Garden of Eden.

December 8

Cancer experts agree that cancer cannot be caused in healthy tissue.

Many profound differences exist between healthy cells and cancer cells. The DNA of healthy cells functions normally, while cancer cells develop aberrant DNA that functions in abnormal and unexpected fashion. Healthy cells have normal chromosomes found in predictable numbers, whereas cancer cells often acquire an abnormal number of chromosomes. Normal cells rely upon the Krebs cycle, sometimes referred to as the “citric acid cycle” or the “tricarboxylic acid (TCA) cycle,” for most of their energy, and glycolysis (the catabolism of carbohydrate) for only 20 percent of their energy, but cancer cells rely upon the Krebs cycle barely at all, while depending heavily upon glycolysis. Many people are aware that cancer cells thrive in conditions that are relatively low in oxygen compared to normal cells, which thrive in conditions rich in oxygen. The built in blood vessel system that supplies normal, healthy cells does not exist to supply our cancer cells. Due to their rapid and unchecked level of reproduction, cancer cells need more protein, more nutrients, and more fuel than healthy cells. Thus the metabolic rate of cancer cells is considerably higher than that of healthy cells. Compared to normal cells, the enzyme and hormone levels of cancer cells are usually either abnormally high or very low. Healthy cells reproduce, but they are immobile, as compared to cancer cells that can split off from the main mass and reproduce themselves in other parts of the body.

Cooking our food, and eating a diet that is relatively high in fat, are the two key factors that set the stage for cancer. Cooking foods generates the production of carcinogens, mutagens, anti-nutrients, and teratogens in the food, each of which predisposes us to cancer. A diet that is high in fat reduces oxygen delivery to the cells, yet another factor in cancer’s favor.

Healthy cells do not instantly or even suddenly convert into cancerous cells. They must go through a series of mutational processes in order to become cancer cells. Typically, such mutations result from exposure or participation in substance, forces, influences, or conditions not conducive to optimal health, such as the mutagens generated when food is cooked. Healthy cells reproduce themselves identically, or nearly identically, for as long as the cell remains alive. Each time a healthy cell divides, the ends of its chromosomes become a bit shorter until wearing down to the point that the cell dies and is replaced by a new healthy cell. Cancer cells “cheat” this process by adding bits of chromosomes with each cellular division. In this fashion, the cancer cell can effectively live forever. Cancer cells taken from an American woman named Henrietta Lacks in 1951 are still growing today, and are in use in cancer research laboratories all around the world.

Today we experience greater amounts of exposure to more types of carcinogens than ever before in history. The need to switch to a low-fat diet of whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic plants has never been more critical than it is right now.

December 9

Forty-five years after President Nixon declared war on cancer in 1971, scientists and cancer experts today say they are no closer to a cure than they were when they began.

Sure, we know more about cancer than ever before. Sure, we have more ways of treating cancer than ever before. Sure, treatments for a few types of cancer have proven successful, and the death rate for those cancers has declined. But overall, cancer is on the rise, and the rise is steep. And even worse, many of the most commonly used cancer therapies are actually themselves carcinogenic, meaning that even if those treatments were successful in treating one type of cancer, they would likely cause another. That is without mentioning the unwanted effects that invariably accompany radical cancer treatments such as chemo, radiation, AZT, etc.

Perhaps because the standard medical approaches to cancer have proven so dismally ineffective, the world of alternative treatments for cancer has mushroomed. Understandably, people are willing to try practically anything in order to overcome cancer, as this is still the one diagnosis that (appropriately) strikes fear in the heart of most patients. Being told you have cancer is essentially like being given a death sentence. So, no matter how apparently wacky or unfounded the approach, people are willing to shell out their hard-earned cash in order to (hopefully) overcome their dreaded condition. All too often, the therapy is ineffective, but this apparently deters no one.

What we know today about cancer can easily be applied, and if the following suggestions were followed, most people would never have to receive that most unwanted of all diagnoses.

1. Get fresh air on a daily basis.
2. Engage in daily rhythmic endurance activity.
3. Eat a raw, vegan diet and keep fat consumption in the single digits.
4. Get enough rest and sleep.
5. Develop and utilize a system for building emotional poise.
6. Stay sufficiently hydrated.
7. Avoid all known carcinogens, such as cooked foods, insecticides, cigarette smoke, and other toxic fumes.

Such basic advice might seem automatic or even intuitive to some people, but to those of you who are not following those simple guidelines, consider yourself forewarned. Cancer is not something to toy with. Unlike the boy whose mother warned him he would go blind from masturbating, who said to his mom, “But can’t I just do it till I need glasses?” a diagnosis of

cancer has no immediate or guaranteed remedy. To be perfectly clear, please understand that every chemotherapy drug is a type of poison. The goal of chemotherapy is to poison the cancer to death before poisoning the person to death. Even if such an approach was to work, and all too often it does not work, the resultant health decline is devastating. Poisons take a big toll on health, but in order for the poison to “work” on the cancer, the dose must be high, often so high that overall health is compromised irretrievably. Secondary drugs are often used to minimize the damage, but these drugs also come with side effects. To make chemotherapy more effective, combinations of drugs are utilized. Chemotherapy today is composed of a cocktail of at least four to six different drugs, with that many more again required to counteract the adverse reactions. Radiation is no better as an option. Exposure to radiation is known to cause cancer, which is why radiologists hide behind a lead-lined wall or screen when taking X-rays, and shield the patient as much as possible with a leaden gown.

If you have to choose between having cancer now or having it later, having it later is the better option. By engaging in healthy practices you can have your health now, and enjoy your health later as well.

December 10

Today, cancer experts recommend a diet high in fruits and vegetables, clean air, pure water, and the avoidance of toxic habits.

Cigarette smoking is on the decline in the US, as it is in much of the rest of the world. From 42.4% of adult Americans in 1965 to 17.8% in 2013, the number of smokers is predicted to go down to close to 10% by 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control. We are already seeing that only 7.9% of college graduates smoke, and only 5.4% of those with a post-graduate degree use tobacco. For the first time in history, worldwide cigarette consumption declined in 2014, though the drop was admittedly relatively small, from 5,884 billion cigarettes five years prior to 5,800 billion in 2014. Every indication is that we will see further declines in tobacco use over the coming years. Smoking is the leading cause of cancer, and accounts for more than 28% of all cancer deaths in the UK. Almost 160,000 people died from lung cancer in the US in 2014. Smoking increases the risks for getting at least 14 different kinds of cancer. Scientists have discovered more than 5,300 different chemicals in tobacco smoke, most of them quite toxic, and at least 70 of them are known carcinogens. Some of the conditions associated with smoking, in addition to almost every type of cancer, include: COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, the third leading cause of death in the US, caused almost entirely from smoking tobacco), heart disease, stroke, asthma, reduced fertility, ectopic pregnancy, premature births and low birth weight, miscarriage, stillbirth, Type 2 diabetes, blindness, cataracts, macular degeneration, bronchitis, emphysema, pneumonia, peripheral vascular disease, and many more. On average, smokers die 11 to 12 years younger than nonsmokers.

Many different occupations are associated with specific kinds of cancer. People who work in the rubber industry, with dyestuffs, and the manufacture of electric cable are prone to higher-than-average rates of bladder cancer. Uranium mining is second on the list, behind smoking cigarettes, when it comes to lung cancer rates. Ionizing radiation, such as that used in X-ray laboratories, is known to result in increased rates of leukemia. Asbestos workers and miners show elevated rates of lung cancer, while people who work within the huge industry of vinyl chloride production have higher than normal rates of liver cancer. Many of the “cide” chemicals used in conventional farming (herbicide, pesticide, fungicide, mildecide, insecticide, and rodenticide, to name a few) are known carcinogens, as are many of the chemical additives used in the production of the packaged foods so common in today’s grocery stores. Today, even many medical drugs and procedures are known to cause cancer, both in the patient and in their offspring, including, ironically, many of the chemotherapy drugs used to treat cancer and the ionizing radiation procedures utilized when testing for cancer.

Cancer is far more common in people who drink alcohol than in those who do not. At least seven different types of cancer are associated with regular alcohol consumption, including cancer of the liver, bowel, breast, mouth, pharynx, esophagus, and larynx.

Now is the time to clean up your act, while you still have time. Many studies show that if you steer clear of tobacco and alcohol for ten years or longer, you can dramatically reduce your risk of developing the cancers associated with those two noxious habits.

December 11

**You cannot experience sustained health
to a greater degree than you practice health.**

I love the cartoon that shows a scientist working on an immensely complex problem at a huge blackboard. The cartoon is entitled, “Lose 68 Pounds in a Weekend,” or some other equally unlikely situation. The board is completely filled with formulae, equations, mathematical symbols of all types, numbers in every form and relationship, a seemingly endless string of chemical nomenclature, higher math, and other such markings that are gibberish to the layperson, but could be real science to someone with enough education. In the bottom right-hand corner of the board, after following the thread of the writing through many rows of equations, appear the words, “And here, a miracle happens,” and then a few more numbers. Some things just are not going to happen, and counting on them is going to result in a serious letdown.

If you have been training for a marathon, running the appropriate mileage, and otherwise properly preparing, but all your training has been at a 9-minute-mile pace, you would be way out of line to think that on the day of the race, you are going to run at a 6-minute-mile pace. You will likely run at about the same speed as you practiced, or perhaps a few seconds faster per mile.

Had you been preparing for a weightlifting competition, and got to the point where you knew yourself and your limitations very well, you should expect to be able to lift about the same, or marginally better in competition than you did in training. If your maximum training lift was 100, you would be silly to think that you were going to lift 200 on competition day.

In a 1975 NFL playoff game between the Dallas Cowboys and the Minnesota Vikings, Cowboys’ quarterback Roger Staubach threw a long pass at the very end of the game to receiver Drew Pearson. The pass was thrown in desperation, but the reception proved to be the game winner. After the game, when commenting on the pass, Staubach said, “I closed my eyes and said a Hail Mary.” Such a pass has been known as a “Hail Mary” ever since, though there are a dozen examples of such plays having occurred both before and after the 1975 classic. In every case, the odds of success were exceptionally low, and the hope of a happy ending usually included some degree of divine intervention.

But even a Hail Mary is not going to bring your health at a level much higher than that which you have been practicing for the past decade(s). A magician might occasionally pull a rabbit out of his hat, and a less talented athlete might upset a more talented athlete now and then, but health, like fitness, never attacked anyone. Decades of smoking take their toll, as do decades of drinking, drug use, sedentary living, poor eating habits, insufficient sleep, etc. Rather than blowing your health away and then hoping for a miracle, why not simply improve your lifestyle, right now? Likely, you know exactly what you need to do.

December 12

Imagine an airplane with no instrument panel. How would you know when something was going wrong?

The cockpit of a large, modern jetliner is amazing in its complexity. Hundreds of gauges, dials, meters, and alarms bejewel the instrument panel, which literally wraps around, over, under, and between the pilot and copilot. They are constantly being bombarded by thousands of bits of information, most of which would be absolutely meaningless to anyone other than a fellow pilot. Yet that information is essential, and monitoring it properly is critical to the safety of the passengers, the crew, and of course, the plane itself. If you were to walk into a large, modern aircraft and see that it had two seats, a joystick for each pilot, front windows, and no instrument panel at all, would you proceed calmly to your seat, or would you immediately exit the plane? Flying without an instrument panel, radio, and other accessory aids, a phenomenon known as “flying by the seat of your pants,” has come to mean using one’s own judgment, to improvise without the benefit of a predetermined plan. Such action was not considered the most intelligent of choices, but in the early days of aviation, pilots sometimes had to rely upon their own senses, especially when the weather was foul or instrument failure left them with no other choice. On July 17, 1938, Douglas “Wrong Way” Corrigan left Floyd Bennett Field in New York on a flight supposedly heading for California, but once airborne, he apparently made a U-turn. Corrigan was already somewhat famous, as he had been a mechanic for Charles Lindbergh, and had helped ready the Spirit of St. Louis in which Lindbergh flew his historic first-ever nonstop trans-Atlantic flight eleven years earlier. He had applied for permission to fly a trans-Atlantic flight himself but had been denied, as the aviation board considered his plane unsafe for the flight. Twenty-eight hours after takeoff, Corrigan landed in Dublin, claiming instrument failure as his excuse for flying east instead of west.

The human brain takes in millions of bits of information every second, dwarfing the input from the instrument panel of a jet plane into insignificance. The brain monitors the entire body, directs all anatomical and physiological processes, initiates all corrections as necessary, and does so while requiring little or no conscious awareness. The brain allows you to become and remain aware of all input that requires action on your part. The brain tells you if you are cold or hot, thirsty or hungry, tired or energetic, and of course, your brain tells you about pain and pleasure. For us, the brain is the greatest instrument panel there will ever be.

The philosophic question remains as to whether we can ever build a machine that is more capable than our own brain, though we have already shown that we can build computers that are capable of storing more information than humans, and doing so faster than the human brain can. Effectively, these computers are smarter than humans, at least in some areas of pursuit.

December 13

The body's instrument panel of symptoms must be considered a blessing, not a plague.

“I was throwing up for a good part of last night.”

“The vacation was great but I think I got too much sun.”

“I have a terrible hangover, my head is just banging.”

“Hiking is as much fun as ever, but man, I'm so sore from all those hills.”

“I'm so tired I can barely stay awake, and everyone is asking me why I'm so grouchy.”

“Been blowing my nose all weekend, now the congestion has settled into my chest.”

“I've never felt this achy, and I'm alternating between feeling too hot and terribly cold.”

Such comments are common, and express a rather typical approach when seeking sympathy. As a doctor, I certainly wish to express my sympathy to anyone who is suffering. I also wish to provide education, to perhaps allow the sufferer to gain a new insight into the how the body functions, and to grasp a new understanding of the nature and purpose of symptoms. So, in addition to commiserating, I might also make a comment such as, “Congratulations on having a body with enough vitality to be able to generate and express such acute symptoms.” Then, as a bit of encouragement, I would add, “You're actually quite healthy. If you were really in a bad way, your body would not be able to respond with symptoms that were nearly half as intense as those you are showing.”

Symptoms are the only way your body can let you know that you are doing something harmful to yourself. Pain and suffering serve as some of the body's best motivational tools, as humans will do practically anything to avoid pain and suffering. We learn by accidentally cutting ourselves to respect how sharp a knife, broken glass, or even the edge of a sheet of paper, really can be. We learn by burning ourselves on hot soup or a hot drink, just how hot a liquid can actually be, and how much damage it can do. We disrespect the laws of physics a few times and learn how much injury we can sustain in even a minor car accident. We learn that poor eating can result in distress that is simply not worth having, no matter how alluring the food might be. We learn through our own mistakes that some suffering can be optional.

A dashboard light is simply a warning. A symptom is also a warning, and one well worth heeding. By choosing healthful substances, forces, influences, and conditions, you can be healthy beyond your wildest dreams, and suffer a minimum of symptoms for your entire lifetime.

December 14

**In health, all requisite substances, forces, influences,
and conditions are designed to be pleasurable.**

Many things make life interesting. We pursue hobbies, are driven by our personal missions in life, dedicate ourselves to this or that cause. We focus on our work, our family, our health, our personal growth, our entertainment, and our fitness. The arts, high society, politics, gardening, and many other activities engage us, in addition to the mere business of making a living. Who is to say which of these things is the most important, and which are mere distractions?

In biology, success is measured by only one criterion, survival. When a species dies out, it has failed, and it is gone forever. For a species to survive, its members must reproduce. All of life's drives, it could be argued, exist solely to support our urge to reproduce. In nature, there truly is only one game in town. Nature's purpose for us is to reproduce, and to raise our young so that they may reproduce. When we reach the point in life where we are no longer serving this primary function, we become redundant. Apparently, Nature does not care if you are rich or poor, famous or unknown. Nature does not pay any attention to human social structures, strictures, or confines. Nature does not give a whit whether you are big and strong, beautiful beyond belief, soft and cuddly, or how well you wield your power. Can you reproduce, that is the overriding question.

The biological urge to reproduce is powerful, and at times practically overwhelming, but with so many other distracting influences in life, Nature pulls the occasional trump card from her sleeve. We are programmed to seek and enjoy the substances, forces, influences, and conditions of life that best support your likelihood to reproduce, as they are pleasant experiences. We eat for sustenance, but the experience of eating is enjoyable. We require fresh air for life, and we use the expression, "Like a breath of fresh air" in reference to any pleasant change from the usual. We generate endorphins, our very own morphine-like hormones, when we participate in physical activities, as being fit is a necessary component to being healthy. Without sufficient sleep, all bodily functions are compromised. In *Henry IV, Part 2*, William Shakespeare refers to sleep as "nature's soft nurse." We speak tactfully of having to "relieve" ourselves, while with a touch of lightheartedness, some restaurants refer to restrooms with signs that say only, "Relief." In health, all bodily functions necessary for health are pleasurable. Indeed, if watching television, taking drugs, or any other pursuit was more enjoyable than lovemaking, the human race would be on its way to dying out.

December 15

Leaders must continue to grow and develop themselves, or else they will cease to be leaders.

Leaders must lead from the front, for that is the very nature of leading. People are smart, and when being led, they get in step, they learn, catch on, catch up, and quickly enough are ready to pass the leader and become leaders themselves. If the leader is stationary, s/he will be surpassed, left in the dust, and quickly forgotten. In order to continue leading, leaders must stay out in front of the people they are leading. To do this, the leader must continually improve, and make him/herself better.

I was listening to a conversation between a mentor and his college-aged mentee:

“So, you want to be a leader?” said the mentor.

“Yes sir, I do,” the student responded.

“Leaders are readers,” the mentor quipped, and continued, “Leaders read every day.”

“I’m not really much of a reader. In fact, I don’t like reading, and hardly ever read,” mumbled the pupil.

“Oh, that’s OK, you don’t have to,” the mentor said, seemingly dismissing the subject in a supportive voice and a wave of his hand.

“Phew, that’s good,” the pupil was obviously relieved.

The mentor looked down at his student and said, “You don’t have to like reading. But if you want to be a leader, you going to have to read.”

Generals from the past, and even kings from previous centuries were famous for leading their troops into battle. Military strategies have changed, and today we recognize that losing important people from top positions poses too great a threat to continuity, and is not necessarily the best approach. Today, our generals often stay home, directing their battles remotely.

The musician Roger Waters, creator of much of the music performed by Pink Floyd, including the classic albums, *Dark Side of the Moon*, and *The Wall*, considers his 1992 solo album, *Amused To Death*, as the third album of that trilogy. The fifth track on the album, “The Bravery of Being Out of Range,” includes the following commentary on the military leaders of today.

Hey bartender over here
Two more shots
And two more beers
Sir, turn up the TV sound
The war has started on the ground

Just love those laser-guided bombs
They're really great
For righting wrongs
|You hit the target
And win the game
From bars 3,000 miles away
3,000 miles away
We play the game
With the bravery of being out of range
We zap and maim
With the bravery of being out of range
We strafe the train
With the bravery of being out of range
We gained terrain
With the bravery of being out of range
With the bravery of being out of range
We play the game
With the bravery of being out of range

Whether you choose to lead remotely, or directly from the front line, the rules of leadership still demand that leaders lead, or become relegated to mere blips on the screen of history. Leadership status may initially be granted, but in order to retain leadership status, the leader must continually move forward.

December 16

Eating fruit immediately after exercise will dramatically help muscles to recover.

The primary fuel used by the muscles during physical activity is glucose. The muscles “warehouse” very little glucose in a form known as glycogen, as they rely upon the frequent refueling from the blood that comes as a result of eating our food. Even starting with a warehouse that is completely full, glycogen supplies in the muscles can be completely drained by world-class athletes in less than two hours of all-out exertion. At a three-quarter pace, the glycogen lasts about four to five hours, and can last a maximum of only double to triple that time as the activity levels decline. Even at complete rest, however, most of the available glycogen in the muscles is used within 18-36 hours.

During exercise, a combination of hormones and enzymes are produced that enhance the body’s ability to uptake blood glucose into the muscles and convert it to glycogen, more than doubling the usual rate at which this process normally proceeds. For a brief period of time after exercise, the factors that enhance glucose conversion are still at high levels in the blood. Within approximately two hours, the hormones and the conversion rate are back to normal. Eating during exercise is the obvious solution for optimum enhancement of recovery, but eating and exercising tend to oppose each other, especially if the exercise has much of a cardio component, or requires intense muscular endurance. Therefore, the best option for optimum recovery of muscle glycogen is to eat fruit immediately after you complete your exercise session.

The proliferation of the conditions known as Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, and the surge in research that has followed, has taught us much about sugar metabolism. After eating a starchy meal, a diabetic will usually require a dose of insulin, in order to properly process the sugars into which the starch will be broken down, and allowing those sugars to enter the muscle cells. By monitoring the blood sugar, we can determine how long it takes for starches to be digested into their component sugars and how long it takes those sugars to reach the bloodstream. When eating fruit, however, diabetics are encouraged to measure their insulin before they eat their meal, and to also take their insulin before the meal, if insulin is necessary, precisely because the sugar from fruit enters the bloodstream almost immediately. For the diabetic, this is a good thing, in that the rise in blood sugar following the meal is short in duration, and only has one peak. (After eating a starchy meal, the diabetic may experience multiple peaks, depending upon what was in the meal. For instance, if the starches also included sugar, as in a cake, cereal, or bread, there would be one quick rise that would eventually be followed by a second, slower rise.) The rise in blood sugar following the consumption of fruit also works well for the diabetic because the amount of sugar consumed is so easy to measure. Once you learn that the average banana contains roughly 92 calories of sugar (23 grams of carbohydrate), the numbers for all fruits become quite predictable. For athletes, the information gleaned from diabetes research has proven exceptionally valuable. We now know that to maximize recovery after exercise we need a food that supplies sugar, and that the food of choice is fruit, because the sugars from fruit get into the bloodstream more rapidly than from any other food source.

December 17

The times that we tend to abuse ourselves are during and shortly after those moments when we are most emotionally challenged.

You know what I am talking about, right? You get upset, maybe have an argument with someone dear to you, or about something that matters deeply to you, and the next thing you know, you are eating indiscriminately, and as though there was no tomorrow. Somehow, you are hoping that the food is going to comfort your hurt feelings, but invariably you just eat until you are stuffed, in pain, feel numb, or fall asleep. The problem, whatever it was, still hangs over you, but you just do not have the energy to deal with it. Have you noticed that we never reach for health food when we are looking to comfort ourselves? Whole fresh ripe raw organic plants simply will not numb you.

You can develop new, self-constructive behavior patterns while breaking your established self-destructive habits. Of course, you must have a willingness to do so, and you must be self-aware at the most challenging of times. The trick is to act differently, just one time. Just once, take a walk instead of hurting yourself with food. If you like the results, walking can become your new behavior when you are upset, rather than eating. Or you could reach for a good book, or give yourself the gift of getting to bed extra early. Perhaps you will appreciate your new behavior even more when you wake up feeling refreshed and energetic, as opposed to when you wake up knowing that you will be paying the price for your poor choices for the next few days. Whatever self-constructive behavior you choose, it will be better than bingeing. Choose the same behavior a few more times and it will become normal, just another part of who you really are. Yes, we are talking about developing character, moral fiber, and true grit. Just like your fitness, if you are not developing these areas of personality to a higher level, they are gradually getting worse.

What is perhaps most interesting and useful of all is to recognize that the moments when you tend to take the worst care of yourself are the very times when you could benefit the most by taking great care of yourself. Converting your personality weaknesses into strengths will work wonders for your personal development, your self-esteem, and your self-confidence. A little effort will not show much when working on your strengths, but the same amount of effort when developing a weakness can result in leaps and bounds of progress. Maximal progress for minimal effort is always rewarding. Utilize those times when you are most challenged, the times when you are most drawn to lower your standards, to develop yourself into the person you most would like to become. Raise your standards regularly, grow, and help others by setting the example you would want them to set for you.

December 18

If time is money, health is time.

Health is the new black. Black is the absence of color, and health is the absence of sickness. But in many ways, health is so much more than just the absence of sickness. In a manner similar to the way a car is more than the sum of its parts, health is like a symphony, 100 trillion musicians strong. When the players tune up, all we hear is a cacophony of sound that is neither coordinated nor choreographed. But when the musicians begin in earnest, the music transforms, and the sound they produce can be miraculously moving, truly a deeply spiritual experience. Health is the be-all, the end-all, the trump card, the winning horse, the golden ring, the ultimate prize. In 1949, the UCLA Bruins head football coach Henry Russell “Red” Sanders is credited with saying, “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.” Sanders went on to say, before the highly-contested football game between UCLA and their arch rivals, USC, “Beating ‘SC is not a matter of life and death, it’s more important than that.” This single-mindedness of purpose, this focus on winning, is highly commendable in sport, as it often brings out the best in the athlete. Some people will say, however, that to make winning so important, even if it means cheating, demonstrates a lack of moral fiber, and shows that the athlete lost sight of what was truly important about participation in sport, which was the striving to be one’s best. Sports journalist Grantland Rice provided counterpoint when he wrote, “It’s not that you won or lost, but how you played the game.” Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, is credited with creating the Olympic creed, “The most important thing ... is not winning but taking part.”

We can replace the concept of winning with the concept of health, and draw many of the same conclusions. Without health, we are distracted from the pursuit of life’s interests and drawn into an ongoing struggle to regain the level of well-being to which we have become accustomed. Our time is stolen away from us, first in little increments and eventually in massive segments, until eventually all efforts are focused on regaining health rather than on enjoying life. The old sports adage, “Winners never cheat and cheaters never win” can also be applied to our pursuit of ongoing health. When we live by nature’s rules, health is the automatic outcome. But when we cheat, getting too little sleep, being sedentary, eating the wrong foods, etc., we cheat only ourselves. Our cheating always catches up with us, and we are invariably caught out.

How well will you play the game of health?

December 19

When you are sick, the only thing there is time for is taking care of your health.

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones hit the nail on the head when they wrote, “Mother’s Little Helper,” the opening song on their 1966 *Aftermath* album. The lyrics tell the story of how easy it is to get addicted to prescription drugs, in this case the mild tranquilizer Diazepam, affectionately referred to as “mother’s little helper,” and how doctors make access to such medications all too easy. The song also conveys the fact that life quickly goes downhill when drug addiction enters the scene. The opening line, “What a drag it is getting old,” speaks of the transition from the freedom of childhood to the responsibilities of adulthood, while also equating aging with illness. Just as powerfully, the lyrics make clear that the unhealthy life really is quite unfulfilling. The mother in the song started as the classic supermom, doing it all, but by the end of the song, her only concern was getting her next dose. The song ends with a sobering line, referring to the eventual and all too common overdoses so prevalent amongst drug users, “They just helped you on your way, through your busy dying day.” Indeed, sickness is a drag. The well-worn question, “Are you sick and tired of being sick and tired?” neatly sums up the experience of being sick. When you are sick, your productivity goes down, your enthusiasm is reduced, your ability to care for others is minimized, and your general joy of life approaches the zero mark. When you are sick, there is little to be happy about, and indeed, it is all you can do to simply get well. If health is a bright warm sunny day, sickness is a cold, wet, and windy winter night.

Caring for your health actually takes no time at all. All of the requirements for healthful living are pleasurable experiences. By participating in healthy pleasures, you can focus on the experience, rather than the desired health benefits. I was asked recently if I strength train because I enjoy the activity, or because of the health benefits that accrue. While I appreciate the health benefits of becoming stronger, my response was 100 percent certain that I train because I enjoy the training. Snow skiing is a wholesome activity, and many health benefits are gained from a day on the slopes, but people are out there to have fun, certainly not just to get healthy. Hopefully the same can be said for participants in all fitness activities. I sleep, wash, eat, train, study, and do almost everything for the enjoyment it brings, not because I have to in order to stay healthy. When you are healthy, there is time to do all of the things in life that are interesting, while maintaining your health in the process. Which would you rather do: maintain a high level of health, or spend time trying to regain your lost health?

December 20

Cooking does not come naturally to us, and is not good for us.

In nature, animals do not cook. In fact, no animal cooks its food with the exception of man. But humans are not the exception to the “no cooking” rule, and the price we pay for cooking our food is high. Dr. Herbert Shelton popularized the phrase, “You cannot break the laws of nature. Nature will break you, first.” Humans have considerably more history of not cooking than we do of cooking. And even while we cook much of our food today, nutritionists continue to stress the importance of eating whole, fresh, ripe, RAW, organic plants. Let’s take a quick review of some of the issues involved in cooking.

1. *House fires.* More than 40 percent of all home fires begin in the kitchen, as a result of cooking mishaps, making cooking the number one leading cause of home fires. Fifteen percent of all home fire deaths result from cooking accidents. In the US, this means that in 2013, more than 150,000 home fires started as a result of cooking accidents, which resulted in about 400 deaths and over 2,000 injuries.
2. *Nutrition.* Cooking damages certain nutrients, deranges others, and downright destroys still more. Damaged means that some nutrients are partially lost in the cooking process. Increases in heat or duration of cooking time typically results in increased losses of nutrients. Deranged means that some nutrients are changed into substances that are either no longer beneficial or are actually harmful due to the influence of cooking. Substances such as anti-nutrients, carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens, tumorigens, and tremorogens are formed when nutrients are deranged. Anti-nutrients increase the need for specific nutrients. Carcinogens are known cancer-causing agents. Mutagens nullify the cell’s ability to reproduce itself identically, resulting in mutations and premature onset of aging. Teratogens are substances that result in birth defects. Tumorigens foster the development of tumors, while tremorogens encourage the onset of tremors. “Destroyed” means completely lost. Gone. Many of the nutrients in raw food are completely lost to the cooking process.

Nature’s plan is to provide according to our needs, and there is no indication in medicine or nutrition that more equates with better when it comes to specific nutrients. Is it worth mentioning that a few nutrients actually become more available as a result of cooking? Perhaps. Approximately 0.01% of all known nutrients do become slightly more bio-available as a result of minimal exposure to heat, while the remaining 99.99 of all nutrients are compromised. With high heat or extended cooking times, many of those nutrients in the 0.01% category are also lost.

3. *Eating inappropriate foods.* Humans thrive on a diet of raw fruits and vegetables, and fail to thrive on a diet composed solely of cooked starch and cooked meats. The argument that cooking makes foods available to us that we would otherwise not be able to eat makes no sense (other than perhaps in starvation situations), as these foods offer suboptimal nutrition at best, and are downright harmful, at worst. Fruits and vegetables, the foods that are best for us, are delectable in their whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic state.

December 21

Nature provides no model for the consumption of cooked foods.

Thousands of television nature shows have educated millions of people about the natural foods eaten by every type of animal. We have watched the zebras graze, the lions and other big cats taking down their prey, the pandas munching on bamboo, bats snatching insects in mid-flight, and chimps contentedly eating fruit. Clearly, we are not designed to graze on grass. Without fangs, claws, or great speed, we do not possess the anatomy or the physiology to hunt down and kill other animals at close range. Our sense of compassion almost always overrules any killer instinct that may be in us.

Zoos in all major cities hire trained and highly educated zoologists to feed and care for each of the animals. The animals are given the species-specific diet that is best for that animal. Specific foods are designated for each species. In the wild, every animal eats its natural food, as long as such food is available, in preference to all other foods. In nature, no animal naturally eats cooked food. For as long as there has been life on Earth, that life has been feeding itself on raw food.

Some people suggest that cooking our food is the very thing that made us human, and remains the one practice that keeps us human. While paleontologists know that humans have been cooking much of their food for 10,000 years, and some cooking may have been practiced as much as 125,000 years ago, they know humans and their ancestors have been wandering the Earth for 4 or 5 million years and possibly longer, meaning that along with all other creatures, we have been eating an all-raw diet for at least 95 percent of our time on Earth, and possibly a much greater percentage than that. Even if we have been cooking for one million years, as some scientists suggest, and were not fully human until 2.5 million years ago (again, as some people will suggest), we have only been cooking for the most recent 40 percent of our time on Earth. No matter how you interpret the information, we became human millions of years before we learned to control fire. Clearly, control of fire is not what made us human.

Perhaps it is our enhanced ability to choose, our ability to wonder, “What if?” that makes us different from the other animals. We seem to have more freewill than the other animals. No matter what it is that separates us from the other creatures, the fact remains that nutritionally, we get the absolute best when we consume a diet of whole, fresh, ripe, raw, organic fruits and vegetables. Nature simply provides no model suggesting that we benefit by cooking our food, and scientists have shown us the carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens, tumorigens, tremorogens, anti-nutrients, and nutrient losses that accompany the use of cooked foods.

December 22

Health is the direct result of healthful living.

Some things in life we have simply no control over at all. You can no more affect your past than you can affect what time the sun will rise tomorrow. Some things we simply must learn to accept and live with. My physique and stature is much like my father's was, for instance, and the core of that is something I cannot change. I can control how much muscle I carry, how much fat I carry, and my overall level of fitness, but the basic frame that I inherited is the one I must carry and work with throughout my life.

Kevin Cosmo, a vegan activist, tried the experiment of asking parents of young children three questions while they were inside a fast food establishment. When asked if they wanted their children to grow up to be healthy, parents invariably replied, "Yes." When asked if they considered burgers, fries, and a shake from a fast food joint to be health food, those same parents invariably replied "No." When asked, "Why do you give your children such food, if you wish them to grow up to be healthy," parents invariably were lost for words. When faced with an obvious contradiction between what we know and the way we live, being dumbstruck, at least momentarily, is a common response. Eventually, we are faced with several options:

1. We can ignore the new information, and the insight that it brings.
2. We can change our behavior to fit our newfound truths.
3. We can keep doing what we were doing, but feel terrible about it.

You cannot change your lineage, or the genetics you inherited. In fact, very little, if anything, about your past can be changed. Your current level of vitality and health is what it is. Making lifestyle changes in order to become healthier is one of the few things over which you can exhibit complete control.

Given the assignment to grow the best possible indoor cucumber, you would provide the best substances, forces, influences, and conditions, and expect the best outcome. Certainly the same must be true for growing the best possible humans.

Given the assignment to raise the best hog, you would do the same for the hog that you did for the cucumber, and provide the substances, forces, influences, and conditions that were ideal for a growing hog.

Each of us is given the option to become as healthy, productive, useful, aware, and happy as possible. When will you decide to participate in the substances, forces, influences, and conditions that will result in your best possible outcome?

December 23

Take excellent care of yourself, just for the health of it.

I am often asked, “How long can I go without eating greens?” and I am left wondering, “Until what?” Do we really want to push our self-destructive habits to the limit, to the brink of no return, just to find out how far we can go and still “get away with it”? You know what they say about people who play with fire, right? The only way to know for certain how close you are to the point of no return is to go completely over that edge.

When it comes to lifestyle, the same question gets asked in hundreds of different ways:

- “How much running is too much?”
- “What happens if I never strength train at all?”
- “How long can I live on just fruit?”
- “For how long is it safe to eat only watermelon?”
- “How little sleep can I get away with?”
- “If I never stretch, what will happen?”
- “I don’t like fruit or veg, is that OK?”
- “How heavy/thin can I get?”
- “I wonder how little/much water I can drink?”

We seem to have an innate urge to push limits, to find out what we can, and even what we cannot, get away with.

- “I wonder how fast I can drive on this road.”
- “I’m not too drunk to drive.”
- “I only smoke a pack a day.”
- “I don’t get drunk every night.”
- “I consider chocolate to be health food.”

YouTube is filled with “fail” videos of people who have attempted to perform bicycle, trampoline, skateboard, slack line, water ski, gymnastics, or other stunts for which they had little to no training, with disastrous results.

Thousands, if not tens of thousands of studies have shown that diet, exercise, and lifestyle make substantial differences in overall health. Are you willing to bet your life that all of that research is wrong? What benefit could possibly be gained through indulgence in self-destructive activities? The future is coming. Hall of Famer Mickey “The Mick” Mantle is still remembered as one of the all-time greatest hitters in baseball history. He set many batting records that still stand today. His career was injury plagued. He suffered a major injury almost every year of his career, and had almost as many surgeries, and many people speculate how great he could have been if he had been healthy. Off the field, The Mick was known to be a notoriously heavy drinker. His father and grandfather were miners, and both died quite young. In his early 60’s, dying of cirrhosis and liver cancer, Mantle quipped, “If I’d known I was going to live this long, I’d have taken much better care of myself.” The quote was apropos, though not original, as Mantle had heard it from his friend and NFL quarterback, Bobby Layne. The quote is often credited to the long-lived composer James Hubert “Eubie” Blake, who lived until age 96, though apparently the phrase appeared in print at least 13 years earlier than Blake spoke it on his 92nd birthday in 1979, hence, its origin is to an anonymous 90-year-old caddie said to have spoken the words in 1966. Five, ten, and twenty years from now, will you be looking back wishing that you had taken better care of yourself?

December 24

The pursuit of fitness is a lifetime activity.

The book *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* was released in 1975. In the book, written by Andy Warhol, the immensely prolific and profitable iconic pop artist, Warhol expresses his views on a wide variety of topics. At one point, he mentions something to the effect of, “Things are worth doing just once, or worth doing every day.” Staying fit is one of the latter.

Fitness is built in tiny increments. During recovery, your body adapts to the stresses of overload by developing the abilities you ask of it, through a series of processes known as the training effect. Without overload, there can be no training effect, though it is possible to maintain your current level of fitness by applying a load to which you are already accustomed. Without load, fitness declines, and is gradually lost. Essentially, our labor-saving devices, the computer age, and sedentary living are taking a severe toll on our fitness, a toll we cannot afford to pay, unless we are willing to also earn some fitness credits.

While going through my undergraduate training in physical education, special attention was paid to the activities known as “lifetime” sports. Bowling, badminton, golf, tennis, hiking, swimming, cycling, running and many other activities are not just for kids, but can be pursued throughout life. Fauja Singh completed a marathon at 101 years of age. Don Pellman broke five world records at the Senior Olympics in 2015, at 100 years of age. His secret? “Keep active, that’s the main thing.”

Staying fit is much easier than becoming fit, or regaining your lost fitness. And with each passing decade, regaining your lost performance abilities is an increasingly difficult pursuit. Mohammed Ali won the world heavyweight boxing title three times. Comebacks are never easy. Ali once commented on training and aging, saying something to the effect of, “I’m still training, but with each passing decade, the style and emphasis of my training has had to change.”

Warming up and getting loose might take longer as we age, but the benefits of training remain well worth the effort. Studies have shown that people who begin strength training programs in their 80’s and even in their 90’s will still make substantial progress. Being fit makes all other physical pursuits easier, reduces the likelihood of injury, and gives an overall sense of increased energy. All bodily systems benefit from fitness training, and you experience bonus benefits such as improved mental acuity, better quality sleep, and easier weight management.

Go out, be active, and have some fun on a regular basis. The fitness you gain will do you a world of good.

December 25

Good health is the greatest of all gifts.

News Flash: Santa Claus will NOT be visiting your home this year in order to bestow the gift of health upon you.

If you could give the gift of health, you would become the most sought after person on the planet. People will do anything in pursuit of health, and have tried practically everything to get healthy, including treatments that would be laughable if they weren't so sad, and true. People have tried rubbing the dung of snakes, alligators, birds, and other animals on themselves in the hope of obtaining healthier skin. In the early 1900's, people intentionally drank radioactive water and consumed other known radioactive substances, thinking that doing so would result in improved health. The idea was eventually dismissed as not only being ineffective, but counterproductive. This 1932 headline in *The Wall Street Journal* summed up the inefficacy of radioactivity as a healthy influence, when noting the death of industrialist Eben Byers, who was said to drink three bottles per day, "The Radium Water Worked Fine Until His Jaw Came Off." Apparently we have more to learn regarding this issue, as now, a century later, doctors are once again "treating" people with radioactivity in an attempt to eradicate cancer. This time around, the treatment is so strong that dosed individuals must spend at least several weeks in isolation, as the radioactivity is known to be so dangerous that other humans are not allowed to come within a few meters of the radioactive person.

Heroin was used as a cough suppressant, and people used to ingest mercury in a vain attempt to overcome syphilis. Tobacco has been used as a cure-all for dozens of conditions (most of which actually come about as a result of smoking this prolific weed), including but not limited to: yellowing of the teeth, headache, warding off colds, fatigue, as a disinfectant, an enema, and as a general panacea. The good old lobotomy as a treatment for mental disorder was popular enough in the early 1900's that more than 40,000 people received this treatment in the United States alone. Tapeworms to help with weight management were popular until quite recently. Today, vitamin water is sold as a weight management/health food, even though this drink has approximately the same amount of refined sugar as Coca-Cola™! Speaking of coke, no list of this sort would be complete without mentioning the fact that cocaine was sold as a cure-all for practically every ill, but was especially promoted for people who were feeling a bit tired.

If only you could impart health upon the masses ... but in reality, it is only your own health for which you are responsible. You can choose to grant yourself the gift of health this year, or you can choose sickness as your preferred modus operandi. Are you ready to be your own Santa Claus?

December 26

Take care of your body as if it was the only one you will ever have.

I was in the grocery store recently, and as I walked past the automotive aisle, I saw a man looking at motor oil. Several minutes later, I walked down the automotive aisle myself, and the same man was still there, still checking out his motor oil options and trying to decide which the best choice for his car was. I did not think much of the experience at the time, and then as I was at the checkout counter, it hit me. The guy did not look particularly fit, as he had at least 50 pounds to lose. He was not well-muscled, in fact, quite the opposite. His shoulders were quite rounded, his back was swayed, and overall his posture was not good. His grocery cart was filled with junk food, fast food, and prepackaged food. I realized that here was a classic example of a man who was willing to put great amounts of thought and discernment into choosing which motor oil to put into his car, but was willing to exert practically no energy into choosing how to best fuel himself. A great percentage of the population is the same, I am almost ashamed to admit.

Ruin the fuel pump or the oil pump in your car and replacing it with another is a simple matter. You can have practically any part on your car repaired or replaced without too much trouble. Ruin your gall bladder or your appendix, and you will have to live without it. Heart, liver, and kidney transplants are possible, if you are lucky, but recovery takes months, if you recover at all, and you will experience a lifetime of repercussions.

Coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, hyperkalemia, cardiac disease, stroke, heart attack, blood clot, hardening of the arteries, and many other conditions have one thing in common; sudden death is all too often the very first symptom. Each of these conditions has been shown to be preventable through lifestyle modification, and especially by making appropriate changes in food choices. *The 80/10/10 Diet*, the low-fat, raw, vegan approach to eating, reduces the likelihood of suffering from any of the above-mentioned conditions to nearly zero.

If you were a parachute jumper, would you take excellent care of your gear?

If you had only one pair of shoes and they had to last your entire life, would you abuse them, or would you care for them exquisitely well?

You only have one body. How are you choosing to take care of it?

December 27

Training in “no man’s land” brings mediocre results, at best.

The repetition range for different physical activities can vary from a low of one, to as many as one million, and theoretically even more. Along with the change in the number of repetitions comes an inherent change in the “percentage of maximum effort” that can be exerted per repetition. By changing the percentage of maximum effort, and therefore the total number of repetitions we are capable of performing per set, we determine whether we are training to develop strength (1-5 reps), muscular size (15-35 reps), muscular endurance (100-500 reps), cardio (1000-20,000 reps), or pure endurance (50,000-500,000 reps, and beyond).*

As the repetition range increases, the percentage of maximum effort per repetition must decrease. In terms of fitness performance, the body develops that which you ask of it. In other words, you get better at whatever you practice, a phenomenon known as the “training effect.” To become stronger, one must challenge strength. The ultimate strength challenge is the “one rep maximum” lift. In other words, no matter what the lift—biceps curl or triceps extension, squat, bench or deadlift, Olympic lifts or whatever—the idea is to discover how much you can lift for just one repetition. If truly at or very near your maximum, you will not be able to perform a second repetition in the same set, thus the expression, “one-rep max.”

Training at one-rep max has various pros and cons, and to enhance their results, people training for pure strength tend to stay within the one to five repetitions range, per set. The resulting myofibrillar hypertrophy will demonstrate primarily as strength gains, and minimally as an increase in size. For optimum muscular hypertrophy, as desired by bodybuilders, top athletes typically train in the 15- to 30-repetitions range. They know that if they can perform more than 30 repetitions, the weight is too light to bring the desired results, but if they cannot perform at least 15 repetitions, the weight is too heavy to bring on the outcome they want. Bodybuilders do not lift weights that are as heavy as those who train for strength, but they do many more repetitions. The “time underload” required in performing those repetitions results in the desired sarcoplasmic hypertrophy of their muscles, which will be visible as substantial size increases but will not bring huge strength gains. Thus the strength athletes get stronger, without getting much bigger, and the bodybuilders get bigger, without getting much stronger.

The typical guy or gal that goes to the gym, however, is taught to lift in the “no man’s land” of eight to twelve repetitions per set. They will get a bit stronger and a bit bigger as a result, thus perpetuating the myth that bigger equates with stronger. If they were hoping to develop size, the relatively low repetition range would be inefficient, and the results would be unsatisfactory. If they were hoping to develop strength, the relatively high repetition range would also be inefficient, and relatively ineffective, and the results would once again be considered unsatisfactory. Hence the 8-12-repetitions range is considered “no man’s land,” not because it is

* The rep ranges cited are only rough estimates, based upon typical performances. The actual numbers may vary from person to person.

wrong or inherently bad, but because in a world of specialized training, 8-12 repetitions with weights can only bring generalized results.

Train like the pros, and you will get the results the pros get. Train in the “no man’s land,” inefficiently and ineffectively, and you will be relegated to perpetual mediocrity in terms of performance results.

That said, if you wish to get a little bigger and a little stronger, training in no man’s land might be the perfect thing for you.

December 28

The sum of the body's anabolic and catabolic processes is known as metabolism.

Catabolism is the breaking down or destruction of complex structures into simpler ones. Usually, energy is released as a result of this process. Catabolism occurs in many different ways, at different levels of scale throughout the body. In our digestive tract, catabolism is how we convert large molecules, such as polysaccharides, lipids, nucleic acids, and proteins, into smaller structures such as monosaccharides, fatty acids, nucleotides (the building blocks of DNA and RNA), and amino acids. Most of the catabolic processes that occur within the body are influenced by signals known as catabolic hormones. Discovered in the early 20th Century, the classic catabolic hormones include: cortisol, glucagon, and adrenaline (and other catecholamines).

Cortisol is the principal steroid hormone produced by the adrenal cortex. Cortisol plays a big role in regulating carbohydrate metabolism and immune responses, and also helps maintain blood pressure. When natural or synthetic cortisol is used as a pharmaceutical, it is known as hydrocortisone.

Glucagon is a hormone secreted by the pancreas that helps regulate blood glucose levels by working in opposition to insulin, raising blood glucose levels by stimulating the breakdown of glycogen into glucose by the liver.

Adrenaline, also known as epinephrine because it is manufactured near the kidney's nephrons (the proper chemical name is: aminohydroxyphenylpropionic acid), is produced in the medulla of the adrenal glands. Adrenaline is involved in the "flight or fight" response, and helps the liver release glucose into the bloodstream from the breakdown of glycogen, the fuel made available through catabolism of glycogen used by the cells to drive the body's anabolic processes.

Anabolism, sometimes referred to as "constructive metabolism," is the synthesis in living organisms of complex structures from simpler ones, often resulting in the storage of fuel and/or energy. Anabolism is, essentially, a growth process, resulting in cell differentiation, increases in size, or an increase in cellular concentration (such as an increase in mineral matter within a bone). All growth and repair processes are anabolic in nature.

Anabolism and catabolism are the yin and yang of metabolism, the components that comprise metabolism. They are opposites, yet each sets the stage for the other. While metabolic rate can be measured, and is defined as fuel use per unit of time, the body has no metabolism of its own, per se. Basal metabolic rate can also be measured, and is defined as the minimal fuel use per unit of time, when at rest. In hygiene, we recognize that even deeper states of rest can be achieved than those typically seen when we are eating and digesting our daily meals, hence we also recognize the existence of a fasting basal metabolic rate, which typically runs 10 to 15 percent lower than one's basal metabolic rate.

December 29

A balance between the catabolic and anabolic processes in the body is referred to as homeostasis.

From the enamel on your teeth to the depths of your bones, your body is constantly rebuilding itself. Special cells known as osteoclasts secrete enzymes and acids that break down old or nonfunctional bone matter, while other cells known as osteoblasts build new bone material. Skin, hair, nails, and even the lining of your entire digestive tract wear away constantly, and are continually being replaced. Cuts, bruises, scrapes, breaks, and other injuries heal miraculously, while we barely take notice of these ongoing miracles. Food that is of no use to the body in its present form, is eaten and digested, broken down into components that the body can incorporate. Whatever the body cannot use is eliminated.

Homeostasis is a condition of dynamic equilibrium in the body, wherein things remain relatively the same, within acceptable limits. The word originates from the Greek words “homoio,” meaning “similar,” and stasis, which means, “standing still.” The body uses a wide variety of methods in order to maintain the status quo, so as to promote its own optimal functioning. Complex systems keep internal conditions as stable as possible. Equally complex methods exist for monitoring, regulating, and correcting any and all imbalances. When you are active, you generate heat, and often you generate more heat than your body can use. Overheating the body could quickly result in brain damage, so the body initiates a series of responses to the rise in temperature that results from physical exertion. Surface capillary beds are opened to allow heat to escape. Sweat is produced, further cooling the body. Excess heat is even lost through breathing. At the other end of the spectrum, various bodily functions ensure that body temperature does not drop below the healthy normal limits. Shivering is one method the body uses to generate heat and stay warm. Blood flow is directed away from the extremities, and away from the body’s surface areas to the body’s core, in order to minimize heat loss. Metabolic processes to generate heat can also be initiated if core temperature drops below normal limits.

Chemical buffer systems within the body help keep the pH of various bodily fluids within tightly controlled parameters. Outside the acceptable range of pH, proteins are denatured and digested, enzymes lose their ability to function, and death may occur. Arterial blood is typically kept within an extremely tight range, for example, with pH values normally varying no more than from 7.38 to 7.42.

Periods of growth can be expressed as times when the body’s anabolic processes outpace the catabolic. Aging, loss of abilities and functions, and general decrepitude are associated with catabolic processes outpacing the anabolic.

December 30

Your most-valued possession is your next breath.

When you breathe in, you inspire. When you cease to breathe, you expire.

Even knowing how important that next breath is, most of us take our next breath for granted. You may have already taken that breath while reading the last two sentences. Only when we are hindered or prevented from taking the next breath, for any reason, do we even begin to realize how important it really is to us. When we swim underwater, or even just submerge our head in the tub, we are forced to hold our breath. After a very short time, the urge to emerge and breathe becomes strong, and after a few more seconds, it becomes an overpowering force. You break the surface and gasp, thrilled with the rush of air going into your lungs. Yet we live and act as if there will always be a next breath, and another after that, even when we know full well that this cannot possibly be the case. Life is finite, your last breath is coming, and for this reason, among many others, health should be considered as our most precious gift. After all, no one is in a rush to take their very last breath, or even the next to last. We go through life acting as if air is an unlimited asset, and rarely noticing our own breath.

One definition of inspire is simply, “to inhale.” Yet perhaps far more meaningful is the use of the word to mean, “to fill with purpose and motivation to take on a task, challenge, or a meaningful and worthy endeavor.” The words “spire, spirit, and inspire” are closely related. When you inspire, you gain the necessary spirit to rise to the very peak, the spire of your current abilities. The fact that motivation is associated with inspiration gives us great insight into motivation’s source. In order to be filled with the purpose necessary to take on a worthy endeavor, you must be inspired.

The next time you are faced with a challenging situation, stop long enough to take a deep breath, or even two. You will likely find that after a few breaths you will be quite inspired, and ready to face even the toughest of challenges.

Take care of your health as if your life’s breath depends upon it, for truly it does.

December 31

Are your health habits taking you where you want to go?

You are driving in your car, on the way to someplace you have never been before. You are not exactly sure which way to go, or how to get where you want to go, so you just follow the signs. Occasionally, you see the name of the place you are looking for, so you know you are on the right track. You notice you haven't seen any of those signs for a while, and that all the signs are now indicating that you are heading towards a place you know for certain is nowhere near where you wish to go. What do you do? You change direction, of course.

Have you ever tried your best to explain something to someone, only to realize by the look on his/her face, or the questions you are being asked, that you are failing miserably in your attempt? You come to the conclusion that your explanation is not going to bring about the desired results or insights. What do you do? You change tact, take a new approach, and try to explain things in a different way.

Very likely, you can remember a time in your life when you felt fantastic, and certainly much better than you feel currently. Do you simply ignore your accruing symptoms, your loss of fitness, your declining health, and just keep doing what you have been doing all along? Or are you going to change something? If so, what are you going to change?

Most people choose to suppress their symptoms rather than eliminate the cause of their symptoms. They use drugs (over-the-counter, prescription, and recreational) to serve this purpose. They try various treatments (traditional and alternative), get therapy of all sorts, body work, psychological counseling, aromatherapy, acupuncture, etc., and are willing to do most anything, as long as they do not have to give up the habits and practices that are making them ill. If they were driving a car, the windows would be blacked out, with only a small portal directly in front of them so they could see whether the path was clear to continue moving forward.

If you are not experiencing the health you desire and deserve, change something. If you are causing your own demise, do a U-turn, and start down a healthy path. You are the captain of your health, and you are the navigator. No one but you is responsible for your health, and no one but you can be responsible for your health. Take regular assessments of your health, read the signs, and if you are not heading down a path that you wish to travel, choose a different path.

Go to Health!

About the author:

Dr. Douglas Graham, a lifetime athlete and raw fooder since 1978, is an advisor to world-class athletes and trainers from around the globe. He has worked professionally with top performers from almost every sport and every field of entertainment, including such notables as tennis legend Martina Navratilova, NBA pro basketball player Ronnie Grandison, track Olympic sprinter Doug Dickinson, pro women’s soccer player Callie Withers, championship bodybuilder Kenneth G. Williams, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* coauthor Mark Victor Hansen, and actress Demi Moore.

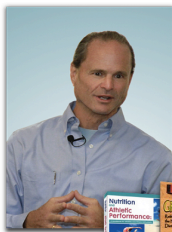
As owner of a fasting retreat in the Florida Keys for ten years, Dr. Graham personally supervised thousands of fasts. He was in private practice as a chiropractor for twenty years, before retiring to focus on his writing and speaking.

Dr. Graham is the author of many books on health and raw food including *The 80/10/10 Diet*, *The High Energy Diet Recipe Guide*, *Nutrition and Athletic Performance*, *Grain Damage*, and *Prevention and Care of Athletic Injuries*. He has shared his strategies for success with audiences at more than 4,000 presentations worldwide. Recognized as one of the fathers of the modern raw movement, Dr. Graham is the only lecturer to have attended and given keynote presentations at all of the major raw events in the world for each of the last eight years.

Dr. Graham has served on the Board of Governors of the International Association of Professional Natural Hygienists and the Board of Directors of the American Natural Hygiene Society. He is on the Board of Advisors of Voice for a Viable Future, Living Light Films, Vegetarian Union of North America, and EarthSave International and serves as nutrition advisor for the magazine *Exercise, For Men Only*. Dr. Graham is the raw foods and fitness advisor for The801010Forum.com. He taught the Health Educator program at Hippocrates Institute, served as the “source authority” for Harmonious Living, and authors a column for the magazines *Get Fresh!* and *Vibrance* (previously known as *Living Nutrition*).

Dr. Graham is the creator of “Simply Delicious” cuisine and director of Health and Fitness Week, which provides Olympic-class training and nutrition for people of all fitness levels in beautiful settings around the world. He will inspire, motivate, educate, and entertain you like no one else in the health movement can.

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