

Ken Holloway

BOOK
ONE

LIVING

On Purpose

Living on Purpose

The art and science of living well begins with your good health—mental, physical and spiritual. Say goodbye to all the crap in your life that is robbing you of your health, vitality and happiness. Say hello to a total transformation that will empower you to create and enjoy the life of your dreams and the happiness you so richly deserve.

Ken Holloway

Copyright © 2012 by Ken Holloway. All rights reserved. The purchaser of this electronic publication may print a hard copy, but please limit printed copies to one per household.

Copyright © 2012 Shutterstock Images, LLC. Images used by permission.

This publication is for private use only and is limited in scope to the man or woman who bought it and his or her immediate family (household). It is not otherwise intended to be shared, copied, distributed, transmitted, reproduced, altered, stored and retrieved, or printed by any means.

For permissions or other inquiries, please contact Ken Holloway, through the website www.kenholloway.us

The inspiration for the title of the Acting BIG Book Series comes from the relationship I had with my recently departed best friend, Ken Del Rio; and so the title is in his honor. Wherever Ken is at, I hope he is acting BIG and smiling down on me for getting these books written and published.

Disclaimer

Warning: Use this information at your own risk!

For matters pertaining to diet, nutrition, exercise and general health, please feel free to consult licensed, competent health care practitioners. The material and ideas presented in this book are not meant to take the place of medical advice, medical care or a medical opinion. If you have questions or concerns regarding your health, such as beginning a new fitness plan or changing your diet, please talk to your doctor.

Please be aware that this book contains explicit language. This book also contains material of a sexual nature and is intended for mature readers.

The information presented in this publication is for educational and entertainment purposes only. It is not meant to take the place of professional or legal advice/services. The author, Ken Holloway, does not hold any professional licenses, nor claim to be an expert at anything. He is not qualified to give legal advice, tax-planning advice, tax-return preparation advice, financial-planning advice, investment advice, medical advice, or any other licensed professional type of opinion or service.

This material is provided merely as a basis for further study. The reader is uniquely responsible for his or her own decisions and actions as well as the consequences thereof. Accordingly, it is highly recommended that people verify the information for themselves before making any important decisions, taking any actions, or causing any harm.

The author and publisher, Ken Holloway, shall in no way be liable or responsible for damages, losses, injuries, etc., alleged or otherwise, which may result from the actions of other people.

Table of Contents

Introduction		v
Chapter One	Your Good Mental Health	1
Chapter Two	Let's Get Physical	25
Chapter Three	The Right Stuff	47
Chapter Four	Dieting Traps and Tricks	85
Chapter Five	Getting Along Great with You Know Who	119
A Final Word		146

Introduction

This is the first book in the series about taking charge and living the life of your dreams. It all begins with you, and you deserve to get the most life has to offer. In order to maximize your efforts and rewards, it's in your best interest to enjoy good health.

Let's face it, it's hard enough to deal with all the other things in this world that are outside of your control. Why make it harder on yourself by being sick, or not having enough energy? You don't want life passing you by because you're stuck in bed. As fleeting as life can be, I wouldn't want to miss a single day.

On a scale of one to ten (ten being the best) how would you rate your health? Are you happy with your physique? Do you have the energy you need to do the things you want to do? Do you have a hard time getting up in the morning? Do you lose time away from doing the things you want to do because you're too tired, sick or depressed? Is it easy for you to get focused on the task at hand, or does your mind wander around, thinking about all the other things in life that stress you out? Do you feel relaxed most of the time, or full of tension?

These are a few of the many questions that you can ask yourself about your health. You want to be honest with your answers. Whether you rate your health as a six or a two, there is room for improvement. The goal is to rate your health as a ten, and never settle for less. You owe it to yourself to make good health a top priority, and a permanent part of your lifestyle.

Your body, mind, heart and spirit are your assets. They exist for your benefit. You should think of good health just the same as you would think of financial wealth. It's not something you want to waste. Once you've got it, and get used to enjoying it, you wouldn't want to go back to being poor.

It probably goes without saying that we'd all like to be in good health. But there are many other priorities and issues in our lives that compete for our time and attention. Ultimately, you have to be the one to balance your priorities, and bring them into harmony. Maybe you've allowed your health to suffer because there were other more important things to take

care of. Between working and raising a family, life sure has a way of demanding our time and attention. If your current health is less than stellar, don't feel bad. It's never too late to get started. Today is a great day to start getting the very best life has to offer.

Good health doesn't have to be difficult or time consuming; and it certainly doesn't have to be a battle of will power or a never-ending exercise in self-deprivation. Quite the contrary. I've read a ton of books on health foods, diet and exercise. If I've learned one thing it's this: Life is too short to eat bad food. The last thing in the world you should do is feel bad for enjoying a good meal. We are made to enjoy eating our food. We like to look at our food, and smelling the aroma of food cooking makes us hungry and want to eat it. We like to sit down when we eat, and stop everything else we're doing while we eat. We like to savor the tastes, flavors and textures of our food while we are eating it. We like the sensation of filling our bellies and getting full. Clearly, we are not made to subsist on a diet of seaweed and sawdust. Please, enjoy your food.

Good health may take a little more time than you're used to, but it's worth it. Consider the alternative. It takes time to go see a doctor and wait to have a prescription filled (as well as the time it takes to earn the money to pay for it). Going back to the financial wealth analogy, investing the time and effort into your good health will pay off huge dividends. You'll have a higher quality of life, and most likely a bonus of more years added to your life. That may not seem important now, but it will in time.

I think the biggest hurdle to good health is knowledge. I don't pretend to know everything or have all the answers, but I've satisfied my curiosity about the pursuit and practice of good health. It's that ton of books, along with years of trial and error experience and observation. I am motivated to write this book because I want to share what I have learned. I want to help people enjoy the best health possible and get more fun out of life.

As we go through the book, we'll take a look at what it means to have good health. We'll take a look at how to do it. What you need to know. Along the way, we'll shatter some myths. We'll take a look at how each aspect of your health affects the other areas of your life. I want you to have all the information you need, and we'll have fun along the way.

I encourage you to jump right into this book. Maybe you've been holding yourself back, or going down the wrong track. I believe that you can be an instant success at living a life of good health starting today. Once you get the information in this book, I bet you will agree with me. Being successful is something you do one day at a time. Become a success today, then do it again tomorrow.



My personal philosophy is that we (as human beings) must strike a balance between the three differing realms of our existence and daily experience. Those realms are of the mind, body and spirit. They are all related of course, but we will take a look at each of them as they affect your health. Whatever the right balance is, is as unique for every person as there are people. I probably favor the mental realm, but

I put a lot of stock in the physical too. The spiritual realm means a lot to me, but I don't spend a lot of time with it. I feel I am on the path that is right for me. How about you?

The first four chapters focus on you and your individual health, while Chapter Five introduces many factors related to the relationships with other people in your life; including family members, friends, co-workers and lovers. Please be advised that beginning on page 123, there is a frank discussion about sex and sexual compatibility/fulfillment. Although this chapter is not a sex manual per se; it does contain explicit material, describing sexual situations, and is intended for mature readers only. I feel the material is relevant, beneficial and presented in good taste (with some humor thrown in to keep it light-hearted—towel optional). If you'd rather not read about sex, please skip ahead to page 153. This material is presented with the goal for each of us to understand ourselves and our partners better, so we can spend our days (and nights) in bliss.

I think you will find this book very informative, useful and inspirational. Living on Purpose will challenge what you think you know, and help

empower you to take charge. We will journey together to discover your true essence. We will take your strongest desires and turn them into powerful, motivational forces. We'll bid farewell to all the negative, counterproductive and non-life-affirming influences in your life and cut them away. I believe that you deserve to be spectacularly happy and fulfilled every day. Like *winning the lottery* happy. That's my goal. I want you to get what you need, whether it's knowledge, wisdom, insight, inspiration, a little push, a good laugh or a hug.

The rest of your life begins right now, and I want you to be the best you can be. To your good health...

Chapter One
Your Good Mental Health

The unexamined life is not worth living.
~Socrates

We should begin our discussion with an overall objective in mind. Our goal is to be happy, and lead a life that is fulfilling, rewarding and meaningful. That means a lot of different things to different people. However, most of us are guilty of thwarting our own best efforts and good intentions. We hold ourselves back, get side-tracked, get too busy or too caught up in the day-to-day aspects of life. We devolve to a point where life is living us, instead of us living our life. If you want to change your life for the better, then you need to know *how* to do it, and you need to believe that you *can* do it. That is what this book is all about.

We Create Our Own Reality

Believe it or not, we do create our own reality. What happens to most of us is that we learn to impose limiting beliefs on ourselves. Fill in the blanks: I'm not the kind of person who could ever _____. I don't have the time to _____, because _____. I could never learn how to _____, because _____. Whenever you limit yourself, and believe it, you create that reality.

In our society, we are conditioned to develop these limiting beliefs. Maybe it was our parents or teachers who started us off, but then we learned to do it to ourselves. The funny thing is we rarely create positive and empowering beliefs about who we are and what we're about. Our beliefs almost always tend to be negative and limiting.

If you create your own reality, wouldn't you like to create one where you can be the hero of your own story? Wouldn't you like to have your picture in the dictionary when people look up the word "happy"? Can you remember the last time you were blissfully happy? Wouldn't you like to be

that happy every day? Is there any reason why you couldn't be? If there is a reason, can you do something about it?

I'm not suggesting that everyone should reach for the stars, or be completely unrealistic about their talents and abilities. Odds are, I'll never win the U.S. Open, or even qualify to be in the tournament. But I haven't imposed the belief on myself that I can't do it. On the contrary, I believe that if I could devote a year or two to full-time golf practice and instruction, maybe I could play in the U.S. Open. That's the attraction of golf. Every golfer probably believes the same thing. I believe I could do it if I wanted it bad enough. But, I have other things in my life that are more important to me than golf. As long as I'm at it, I don't plan to win any Oscars, Grammys, Pulitzers, Nobel prizes or James Beard awards. It's always nice to be recognized for your good work, and to earn the respect and esteem of your peers; but we can't all work in fields that give out such prestigious awards. The trick is simply to do what makes you happy.

I encourage you to reflect on how you have created your own reality. Be objective. I always find it useful to question and challenge any limiting beliefs. Without the benefit of objectivity, it's difficult to even recognize them. At

this point in your life, maybe you're not getting the results you want. Maybe you're not getting enough love, esteem, joy or satisfaction. Instead of using your power to create a reality where you're not as happy as you'd like to be, harness that same power and use it to your advantage. Create a new reality for yourself. Discover what it feels like to be the architect of your life.



Begin with you. Love yourself. Hold yourself in the highest esteem. Give yourself a metaphorical hug and a pat on the back. No one ever complained that they had too much love and positive energy in their lives.

Focus On The Positives

It's always easy to criticize and see the negatives in life. It seems like for some people, that's all they do. Negative, negative, negative. Always complaining. It's one thing to have an opinion (I like to go on a rant myself once in awhile). The question though is what is motivating the opinion. Is it thoughtful and constructive, or negative and hurtful? What I've come to learn about people who are overly negative is that their opinions aren't constructive. Maybe they just like to hear themselves talk, or they think everyone loves to listen to them complain. You probably know some people like that.

I've learned from experience that if an opinion/criticism isn't offered for the purpose of being constructive, then I'm not interested in listening to it. Even more important, I've learned that I don't want to *be* that person who mindlessly complains and criticizes. Some people just reek of negative energy, and I do my best to avoid them. When you're faced with a negative experience, it is an opportunity to seek out the positive aspects and turn it into a learning experience.

When I was a young lad, my Dad used to say, "There are three kinds of people: Those who learn from their own mistakes, those who learn from other people's mistakes, and those who never learn." Most of us know what it's like to learn something the hard way. Sometimes painfully so. We all make mistakes and suffer negative experiences. The important thing is to learn from the negative experiences, so you can avoid them in the future. That's one way to turn a negative into a positive.

It's a good idea to cultivate the habit of looking for positive energy (constructive) and avoiding negative energy (destructive). When you think about the things in your life that are important to you, do you focus on what you're looking for and moving towards, or do you focus on what

you're avoiding and moving away from? Suppose you wanted to have a real estate agent find you a house. When she asks what you're looking for, suppose you said, "Well, we don't want an ugly house, or one that's too small to fit our needs, or located in a crappy neighborhood." It's a good thing that you know what you don't want, but that information isn't going to be of much use to the agent. If you want your agent to find you a suitable house, you need to give all the positive information that you can. "We want a one-story house with great curb appeal, located in a good neighborhood; with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large kitchen, a two-car garage and a big yard." Now your agent has useful information and can begin the search.

This example illustrates the idea that if you want to get the right answers, you have to ask the right questions. Too often times people focus their attention on the negative aspects of their lives and don't get the results that would make them more happy. The good news is it's a real simple change to make. It doesn't cost money or take will power. You just make the effort to start doing it and it will soon become a habit. Let's take our cue from nature. Our eyes are in the front of our head so we can see where we want to go. It applies to any and all of our goals and objectives. Let's consider a few more examples to show how easy it is:

Negative

I'm tired of struggling financially.

I should cut back on the junk food.

I never have enough time to do the things I want to do.

My job really sucks.

I should quit smoking.

Positive

I'd like to earn more money.

I'd like to eat more nutritious foods.

What can I do to create more time for myself?

What can I do to get a better job?

I want to live smoke-free and breath clean air.

I should lose weight.

I'd like to get into better shape.

I hate getting stressed out all the time. I'd like to be more calm and better able to handle stress.

I never go anywhere.

I'd like to travel.

As it turns out, the mind is very powerful and we usually end up getting the answers to the questions that we pose. Therefore, it's vitally important that you ask the right questions, and make it a habit from now on. We don't always get the answers right away or as fast as we'd like, but they usually come eventually. By focusing on the positive, you turn the negative aspects of your life into solvable problems—problems with specific answers and solutions. If there are aspects of your life that you're not happy about and would like to change, I encourage you to sit down and write them out, in both the negative and the positive. We'll come back to it later.

What Do You Think?

Under the realm of mental health we will include both thinking and feeling (emoting). We do some of both every day. Some more than others. You've heard of the cold fish type, all head and no heart (Mr. Spock, Gordon Gekko, the Grinch). At the other end of the continuum we have the opposite, all emotions and no thinking. Most of us are closer to the middle and have a healthy balance of each. What we think affects our emotions and how we feel. Meanwhile, our emotions affect what we think. For example: If I think I am unattractive and undesirable, then I might feel depressed. If I feel depressed, I might think it would make me feel better to eat a bag of cookies.

Given that your thinking and feeling are so closely related, your thinking is always suspect, depending on your emotional state. The more emotional you are, the more suspect decision making abilities become. It is a very wise adage to always sleep on it before making any important

decisions. Just about everything will look different in the morning. Trust your instincts and gut feelings too; they can serve you well. Some people love to ride the emotional roller coaster and make emotional decisions all the time. I wouldn't knock it, but getting the results you want in life usually involves reflection and deliberate well-thought out decisions.



Most likely then, the people who make the best decisions and enjoy the most fulfilling lives are the people who excel at thinking. They're smart. They ask the right questions. When they are faced with problems, they come up with solutions. If they're really smart, they avoid the problems in the first place. Just about everything in this world boils down to what we want

and what we don't want. How do we get what we want, and how do we avoid or get rid of that which we don't want? It all boils down to problem solving. Most of us spend a lot of our time and energy dealing with problems and coming up with solutions. Some people are better at it than others, and some people seem to have an abundance of problems (while others seem to rarely have any).

Some people, perhaps all of us at times, don't know what they want. Don't let life pass you by. If all else fails... want what you have.

My working definition of intelligence has always been how well a person functions in his or her environment. How successful are they? If you know what you want, know how to get what you want, and actually get what you want, then you are a very intelligent person indeed. Intelligence relies heavily on thinking and knowledge. You have to know what you want, and you have to think clearly enough to develop a plan to get what you want—based on your store of knowledge; considering all the variables, choosing some while rejecting others. You also have to have the ability to put your plan into action. I have a motto I rely on: Plan your work and work your plan.

Just about any good plan is going to require an investment in time, money, education, equipment, and so on. Most plans never get implemented for a lack of these things. If your plan requires something that you don't have, then you need to figure out a way to get what you need. Again, the knowledge and the thinking is key.

I've read several popular books on Selling. It has been suggested that every situation in life is a selling situation; which is an interesting way of looking at things. In overcoming resistance to the buying decision, a salesman wants to get the prospective buyer to give specific objections. Objections are something that can be dealt with. A different color, more power, less expensive, whatever. These are problems with solutions. If and when the prospective buyer runs out of objections, then he or she is free to make the buying decision and the sale can be made.

This example shows the problem solving process at work. Whether you need ten dollars or a million dollars to implement your plan, it is only a matter of degree. The concept is always the same. You can get what you want if you find a way to put any impediments/barriers/shortcomings into solvable problem formats. The more knowledge you have the better, and the better able you are to think clearly, then the greater your chance for success.

Ultimately, if your thinking is affected by your emotions, bad mood, poor attitude and limiting beliefs, then you are lowering your odds for success dramatically. You want to isolate and eliminate all those barriers to your clear thinking and ultimate success.

Mind Over Matter

I have long been fascinated with the human potential. What are we capable of? What are the limits of human possibility? It is this fascination that has spurred my study of psychology, hypnosis, metaphysics, religion, philosophy, physical fitness, and so on. What makes us tick? How are we different from each other? How are we similar? Why are we here?

It's comforting to believe that we have learned a lot through science, and we have. But when it comes to human potential, we haven't yet scratched the surface. We've all heard of feats of human strength, endurance, creativity, memory, survival, and more that defy belief. They seem like miracles. Some people can do amazing things, and if some people can, then why not all of us? We don't know. I certainly don't know. I've got one thing going in my favor though—I like to keep an open mind.

The truth is we don't know much about the mind. What is it capable of? How powerful is it? What controls it? What does it control? In what ways is it connected to our bodies, and how does it affect our health and potential? I find this area of study endlessly fascinating. If we can't answer these questions, then how can we know what *is* possible (and what isn't)? I don't think we can at this point. Until something can be proven to be impossible, it remains in the realm of the possible. Since it is beyond our ability to limit or constrain the power of the mind, then it is effectively limitless (infinite).

For purposes of our discussion, we're going to relate the mind primarily to thinking. Let's just say what we think affects our mind, and our mind affects what we think. The two are effectively the same thing. As we've already covered though, what we think affects how we feel, so our emotions are also somehow related to our mind. Our emotions also affect our physical state/health, so there is a connection there as well.

It does seem to be the case that there is not only a mind/body connection, but that it is an extremely powerful connection. Ultimately, the three (mind, body & spirit) are so inextricably entwined and connected, it's hard to say where one ends and the other begins. To affect one area is to affect all three (and that's a good thing).

Use It Or Lose It

This simple phrase speaks volumes. If you don't exercise and stay physically fit, you will get weak and feeble bodied. The same goes for your mind. If you don't engage your brain, it will atrophy. So when it comes to

our bodies, we want to stay healthy and physically fit. When it comes to our spirit, we want to be spiritually aware, happy and in harmony with our spiritual world/energy. When it comes to our minds, we want to be sharp as a tack, all pistons firing. We want to be problem-solving marvels.

We want our brains working for us even when we're not thinking about it. How many times, for example, have you tried to remember a name and couldn't recall it, but then a few minutes later it just pops into your head?

Your brain is extremely powerful, but it won't direct itself. That's where you come in. You can engage your brain power, or just let it sit idle and unused. Some of us love to have our minds stimulated and others not so much. I like to watch *Jeopardy* for its quiz value. They cover a wide range of topics and you have to be fast. Even if you don't come up with the right response, you're still using your brain. Brainy types like to play games that require strategy—chess, backgammon, cards. They also like to work on puzzles. I like crosswords, Sudoku and other brain teasers.

Puzzles and games may not be all that constructive, but they help us stay in the habit of applying our brains and staying mentally sharp—always ready for the more constructive problems and solutions.

We have all this massive brain power to harness, but it does need our direction. It won't compute without an objective in mind. If you don't give your brain something to work on, it's like you're hanging out a sign, "Closed, check back tomorrow." Everything you need to be happy is out there for you. If you haven't got it, you just haven't figured out a way yet. You can and will figure out a way to get what you want, just as soon as you stop holding yourself back and get in the habit of proactively coming up with the solutions to the problems in your life. Ask the right questions, and you will get the right answers. You can count on it.

Question Authority

Get in the habit of questioning authority—even your own. Anytime someone tells you something that is negative and limiting, question

whether it is true or not. Most people have become conditioned to be negative (sad but true) and if you ask them their opinions, you would be well served to be skeptical.

When we were children, we developed the habit of asking our parents all of life's burning questions. We had a full and implicit trust that they were looking out for our best interests. We expanded that practice to include our teachers, our closest friends, and perhaps siblings. We got in the habit of trusting those who are closest to us, and carried the habit into adulthood. Unfortunately, even if those who are closest to us have the best of intentions, they can be dead wrong on just about anything.

I remember when I was 14 and told my dad that I wanted to be a rock star and play drums. It was 1975 and *Kiss Alive!* was a major influence. I thought Peter Criss had the coolest job in the world. My dad said that the odds of becoming a rock star were quite slim and that I would probably be happier to go into something where I would have better odds of being successful. What he said was well-meaning advice. I never pursued drumming as a vocation, but have always played as a hobby. Once I got into show business, I became aware that there are thousands of drummers out there working regularly and earning a decent living. They may not be rock stars, and they may not be rich; but they're doing what they love. I don't recall my dad telling me about all of those guys. I feel like I could have pursued drumming after all, and wonder how my life would be different if I had. I don't spend a lot of time looking back or playing "coulda woulda shoulda." But, it's a lesson and a learning experience.

I did play a lot of drums in high school, and we did some rock songs in stage band. We put on a concert and rocked the house. My dad got to see me play drums and shortly afterwards he was unexpectedly killed (plane crash). Although bittersweet, it is one of my most cherished memories. I was on top of the world. Maybe my dad just didn't realize how much I love to play drums. I never outgrew it.

The point I want to emphasize is that if you share your ideas for growth and positive change, it's likely that the people you confide in will tell you that you can't do it, or shouldn't do it. They're not necessarily wrong, but

ultimately it has to be your decision. You'll be the one who has to live with your decisions and actions.

Possibility Versus Necessity

Most people live their lives in the realm of necessity. I'm not saying that is a bad thing necessarily, but it's something you want to be aware of. The realm of necessity dictates that you give up your hopes and dreams because you've got bills to pay and other responsibilities which require you to keep your nose to the grindstone. There is a corollary here—misery loves company. Even you're closest friends will rain on your parade. The logic goes, "If I have to be miserable, I want you to be miserable too." They are usually quick to point out that you can't start over in a new career, start your own business, be your own boss, or make lots of money.

In the realm of necessity, you concern yourself with earning enough money to pay your bills and taxes, keep adequate insurance, save a little if your lucky, and most important of all—clinging to the security of earning that steady paycheck. Even if you hate your work, you rationalize that you are being responsible and that you can pursue your own interests on your days off, or after you retire, or some other timeframe in the future.



Although I encourage everyone to be responsible and pay their bills, the problem here in America is that people overextend themselves financially and take on more obligations than they can comfortably afford. They have too many bills and obligations, to the point where they absolutely cannot afford to miss a single paycheck, much less change careers. The

practice of living paycheck to paycheck is now considered to be normal and quaint. In the realm of necessity you may have a lot of creature comforts, but the trade-off is that you are now forced to pay all those

monthly bills. It's kind of like an economic prison that you put yourself into. You get used to it, and before long you quit thinking about ever getting out. If you want to live your life in the realm of the possible, you have to unshackle yourself and bust out. In the realm of the possible, we don't concern ourselves with paying monthly bills. What's that? Crazy you say?

If you're familiar with the expression "can't see the forest for the trees," in the realm of the possible we want to see the forest. It's imperative. We have to do a lot of thinking and use our imagination. How would your life be different if you could create the life of your dreams? Where would you live? What would your house look like? Would you be married? Would you have children? What would you do for a living? How would you spend your time? Describe your ideal vacation. Describe your ideal day.

Creating the life of your dreams is beyond the scope of this book. But, you *can* cross over into the realm of the possible and I would encourage you to not waste a single day. This is precisely the area I specialize in and I published my findings in my book, *Millionaire Wealth*. It's a "How To" book with step-by-step instructions. That book relies heavily on the information in this book as a foundation.

For now, we simply want to observe that there are different ways to look at your world and the life you lead. It's been my experience and observation that when most people contemplate the realm of the possible, they almost always want to be doing something different for a living and they want to enjoy greater financial wealth. I'm sure the overwhelming majority of Americans would say they'd be a lot happier if they had more money and more job satisfaction.

Not only do those who are closest to us tell us that we can't live in the realm of the possible, we tell ourselves the same thing. So maybe what you think you know isn't true after all. I've had many occasions when I thought I knew something and then found out I was wrong. It can be maddening at times or even embarrassing. It can be a humbling experience too. When you are faced with the harsh reality that you were dead wrong about something, it can make you wonder if you're wrong

about everything else; as if you can't trust your own mind.

So, it's an important part of the thinking process to question what you think you know, question your presumptions and assumptions, question authority, and don't be afraid to think outside the box. You create the box. If you want to take on the world, give yourself every advantage and maximize all of your strengths and abilities.

Wanted: Pleasure Seekers

As human beings we have a tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain. It seems to be genetic, supported by science, and frequently observable. Seeking pleasure means different things to different people; but most of us like to enjoy good food and drink, good entertainment and camaraderie, as well as other pleasurable activities such as love making.

Ideally, we'd like to spend as much time as possible enjoying all the things that we find pleasurable. As long as our fun doesn't interfere with our responsibilities, the more fun we have the better as far as I'm concerned. There's quantity and then there's quality. Listening to a record of your favorite band is fun. Seeing your favorite band live in concert is better. Contemplating a recipe is fun (if you're a foodie like me). Actually making a recipe and eating the results is even better. Watching a show or film that features attractive people making love can be fun (if you're into that kind of thing). Actually making love, well, you get the picture.

Is it possible to overdo it and have too much fun? Yes and no. It depends. You'll have to let your conscience be your guide. It's possible to spend too much time having fun and seeking pleasure, if it keeps you from the time and energy you need to meet your responsibilities. It's possible to have too much of a good time if the results are potentially dangerous, harmful or cost prohibitive (such as addictions to drugs, drinking or gambling). If you have a little voice telling you that what you are doing is wrong, then you should listen to it. That little voice is usually right.

On the flip side, most of us will do whatever it takes to avoid pain—in all its forms. There's physical pain, emotional pain, financial pain, anything punitive, suffering a loss. There are also the everyday types of pains like going to work at a job you don't like, getting stuck in traffic, cleaning the house, mowing the lawn, paying bills. It's no wonder most of us tend to procrastinate. How many papers in college were written the night before they were due? When we're faced with something unpleasant, we'll put it off for as long as we reasonably can. That's our basic human nature.

Our tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain is the fundamental precept that underlies our motivation to act (or not act). If we could, many of us would be hedonists. Doing nothing but having a good time and satisfying all our lusts and appetites. No one would argue that it feels good. Our tendency is to try this out in our late teens and early twenties. Party all night, drink copious amounts of alcohol, eat whatever you want, experiment with drugs, smoke cigarettes, sleep around. I'm not knocking it. I had my fair share of fun during that time in my life.

The reason why most of us grow out of the hedonistic lifestyle is because we find that it is not meaningful. We want to be a part of something bigger than just ourselves and more important than just having a good time. Usually this comes in the form of starting a career, starting a family, building a home, or some other higher calling. It's as if we sense that we have some particular purpose for being here and we want to discover what that is.

The Force Behind The Act—Motivation

It's easy to observe behavior, but it's not so easy is to understand why people do the things they do. It's helpful to keep in mind that people do what they are motivated to do. If you want to understand why someone did a certain thing, you question their motivation. Why did the toddler push a chair up against the counter and get into the cookie jar? If you understand what motivates a person, then you can make predictions about his or her behavior. Of course, you can apply this to yourself as well.

It may seem like all of this is merely stating the obvious. But, it's not that simple. Our behavior follows from motivation, and our motivation follows from our nature to seek pleasure and avoid pain. We have to recognize a distinction between motivation and desire. Our behavior follows from motivation, not desire. We may desire a particular outcome (make a million dollars, marry a movie star, get ripped); but if we're not motivated, then we're not going to do anything about it. So, the trick is to bring our motivations and desires in line with each other. Until we do, we're not going to be happy campers. In academia, we call this *cognitive dissonance*.

I could never say this too emphatically—the heart wants what it wants. If we don't get our heart's desire, then we're going to feel bad. We make ourselves feel bad, and until we bring our desires into harmony with our motivation, we're going to suffer the dissonance. Upon closer examination, sometimes we find that we don't want our heart's desire as badly as we thought. At other times, we find that when we desire something badly enough, we will motivate ourselves to do whatever it takes to get it. If, for example, you want to experience the thrill of skydiving, then you have to hurl yourself out of an airplane.

For most of us then, life is a balancing act. We have our hearts, minds, bodies and spirit, all with wants, desires and shifting priorities—many conflicting with each other. The heart says double cheeseburger and the mind says grilled chicken breast. The mind says to get up and go and the body says sleep in. The heart says six-pack abs and the body says six-pack of beer. We want to bring as much of this conflict into harmony as we can. As tough as it can be in this world, we don't want to be our own worst enemy (which is often the case). We want to get everything aligned and working harmoniously. If you had to drive somewhere, you wouldn't want to do it with only half the cylinders firing, or try to drive with your feet on the gas and the brakes at the same time. You wouldn't want to drive around in circles either. You'd want to know your destination and how to get there.

How Do You Feel?

As powerful as thinking is, our feelings/emotions are even stronger. This is an important point to keep track of because some of us let our emotions run away with us. As we covered earlier, getting emotional affects our ability to think and make good decisions. In turn, our decisions affect our actions and those have consequences. We all know what it's like to run off at the mouth and say something without thinking about it first. It's like getting caught up in the heat of the moment and abandoning all reason. Ideally, we want to always keep our wits about us, cool under pressure. It doesn't always work out that way, but it's a good habit to cultivate.

Thinking helps us *get* through life, but the feelings and emotions are rather the point of living life. Joy, love, happiness, sorrow, anger, pride, jealousy, etc... Some people like to refer to emotions as the spice of life. I enjoy being in an emotional state, especially the good emotions. Sometimes a song will bring me to tears because it is so beautiful or so sad. Most of us have a similar experience to a good movie or book. For some, it's difficult to let go of the rational/thinking state and cross over into the emotional state. For others, they spend almost all their time in emotional states.

We would be well-served to keep in mind that our emotions can run away with us. They can get the better of us. If we don't control our emotions, they will control us. I suspect we all like to get wrapped up in our emotions, but sometimes that can lead to results that are negative and destructive. Not good. One prime example is depression. If you allow it to set in and take hold of you, it can become all-consuming. I personally suffered a bout of depression once and the experience was so awful, I vowed that I would never allow it to happen again. I guess sometimes you have to "hit bottom." It was shortly thereafter when I decided to return to school and finish college with my degree in psychology. I wanted to learn how to be a therapist so I could help people from having to go through such a terrible experience.

Often times, people allow themselves to get so wrapped up in their negative emotions, negative self-talk, and limiting beliefs they come to

believe that they don't deserve to be happy or even want to be happy. That is the reality they create for themselves, and they resign themselves to their fate. To such people, being unhappy is just the way life is supposed to be and they don't see any point in trying to improve anything. They would not be motivated to make positive changes or consider getting outside help. Other people, realizing that they don't seem to be as happy as they could be, might begin to wonder if it's possible to make positive changes as well as how to go about doing it. It boils down to what you believe, how objective you are about the quality of your life and how happy you want to be.



I think this world would be a great place if everyone reached for the stars and lived their lives blissfully happy. Some people are already doing that. Some people don't want to do that. Others would like to reach for the stars, get more out of life and be happier—but don't know how to make it

happen. It's for those people that I am motivated to write these books.

The Grand Unification Theory — Thinking, Feeling and Doing

We create our own reality. We decide what we believe is possible and impossible. We decide what we believe we deserve, good or bad. We create our heart's desire and our own discontentment over not getting it. Our ability to think is critical to getting what we want out of life, but many of us fail to harness the power of the mind. When we allow ourselves to get too wrapped up in emotions, we impair our ability to think clearly. The goal of our lives should be to spend as much time as possible being happy and joyous—living a life that is abundantly rewarding and deeply fulfilling. We have to figure out the right combination and balance of thinking, feeling and doing that is uniquely right for us.

It's difficult to be objective, if not impossible. If we're not getting what we want out of life, we may not be able to see where the problems are. How are we holding ourselves back? Ultimately, everything we've covered so far is interrelated. When we make a change in one area, such as getting rid of a limiting belief, we effect a change in all the other areas. Sometimes, we just don't know what to do or where to search for the answers. That's when it's time to do some soul-searching.

Soul-Searching — A Time For Honest Reflection

Every once in awhile, most of us stop and think back over the course of our lives; primarily dwelling on the events that brought us the most pleasure or caused the most pain. Often times people will do this mindlessly, just allowing their thoughts to bounce around randomly wherever they seem to want to go. Other times, people reflect on purpose. As they contemplate the way their life is today and the direction they want to take it in the future, sometimes they have to look inward and backward to get the answers they're looking for.

Whatever we may think of what the soul is, it transcends most of human experience and explanation. In many ways, I feel that the soul is infinite; which is also beyond human experience. We can't really define the soul, rather we can describe it and attribute experiences to it. We often refer to the soul as a noun (a thing), but it doesn't seem to have a physical counterpart. We can't see it or measure it. Most of us would like to believe that when our physical bodies die, our souls will live on forever.

Ultimately, it's our soul that defines who we are as a person. It is the culmination of our life's experiences and a record of our journey through life. It encompasses all of our thoughts, actions, feelings, emotions, imagination, memories, beliefs (and much more). It exists for our benefit to help us determine the course of our life. As far as we know, having a soul is what makes us uniquely human.

I use the words soul and spirit interchangeably, and I'd like to mention here that this is not a book about religious beliefs. I would like to believe

that all people in the world should be free to practice their own religions and worship as they see best (provided they don't harm anyone). I do have particular viewpoints, and they are unique to me. I would not presume to tell other people that they are wrong simply because they are different from me. It's certainly not my place to knock organized religion, or any other long-standing traditions. Being that I am about looking for the positive side of things, I try to focus on what's good about organized religions. Most religions follow the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Most religions believe in the sanctity of life, and preach love, fidelity, generosity, community, family and many other great qualities. I'm in favor of that.

I prefer to talk about transcendent experiences as being spiritual. As the saying goes, the moments that take our breath away. When we have the experience, for example, that something is so beautiful that we can't believe it and it stops us in our tracks. Life is potentially full of moments like those and the more of them you have the better. I use the word transcendent because it is more than just thinking, feeling or doing. The experience is so intense that you can almost feel your body vibrating with the energy. You might get goose bumps. Sometimes people feel numb or disassociated from their bodies. Some people have "out of body" experiences.

At the risk of stating the obvious, we should consider how much time we spend being spiritual (as distinct from mortal). At one extreme we find people who have no spiritual lives whatsoever. They live entirely of this earth, and spend most of their time thinking and doing. Maybe they've never had a spiritual experience and don't know what they're missing. At the other extreme we find people who want to transcend mortal experience altogether and live spiritually. I think of monks, who have no earthly possessions, take vows of silence, live on the barest of subsistence, and sequester themselves away from society. They spend most of their time in prayer and meditation.

Personally, I don't find either extreme all that appealing. I think it's a gift to have mortal experiences (wine, women and song for instance). Some of that experience can be mundane and monotonous (e.g., shaving,

bathing, commuting, washing dishes) but most of our experience should be fun, rewarding and pleasant. As pleasant as it is to savor a fine meal, make love, enjoy a song, have an adventure, (insert your favorite activities here)... life wouldn't be complete without a spiritual awareness.

When we get in touch with our spirituality, we ask questions about our life's experiences. What motivates us? Where do our desires come from? How do we know if we're happy? What's it all about? And so many more. This is the soul searching. When you ask these questions, whom do you think you are asking? Your spirit exists both to enhance the quality of your life, and help you direct the course of your life. It can help push you forward and at the same time be there for you when you need to look backward.

We don't necessarily want to lose ourselves in spirituality, but we certainly want to stay in touch with it. That's one of the reasons, for example, why people go to church every week. They want to transcend the mundane and connect with their spirituality. Everyone has problems of one sort or the other, but sometimes we have to let them lay and forget about them for awhile. Maybe you'll come back to your problems with a fresh perspective or a renewed energy and vigor. Just a reminder, one of the main motivations for this series of books is to help people avoid having the problems in the first place.

That Little Voice Inside Your Head

Another strong component of our spirituality is our morality. The difference between right and wrong. We are moral beings as well as social beings. Generally speaking, we know it is wrong to steal, cheat, lie, kill, bear false witness, commit adultery, and so on. How do we know? It's because of that little voice inside our head that tells us these things are wrong. This isn't a sermon, but merely stating that which seems to be. We don't have to be taught that it's wrong to steal, or read it in the Bible. When you steal something, you can feel that it's wrong. We learn that from experience and then it becomes something we just know. It's like a self-evident truth. If it doesn't belong to you, keep your hands off.

It seems to be the case that some people don't have that little voice. There's no way we can know that because it doesn't seem possible for us to get inside someone else's head. What is more likely the case is that the little voice is ignored or overridden. We can rationalize anything. I'm very good at rationalizing things, so I usually give myself the third-degree before I make any important decisions. Is it okay to steal if it's for a worthy cause? Is it okay to cheat on your taxes? Is it okay to lie to spare someone's feelings? It seems there are always exceptions, and I like to tread lightly when it comes to absolutes. As my dearly departed best friend, Ken Del Rio, used to say, "Matters of principle are set in stone." On the rare occasions that I have to make a judgment call on a moral question, I always try to keep that idea in the foremost of my mind.

There was a funny scene in the movie *Animal House*, where a young man was faced with a decision to make and he had the little angel and devil pop up on his shoulders, each with their own opinion on what he should do. (Sure, it was over the top, but I was in high school at the time and not too critical of teenage sex romps.) I use that imagery on occasion and ask what would the angel and devil say in the situation at hand.

Far be it from me to give anyone a lecture on morality. I bring it up because I want to suggest that our moral compass is what it is and we would be well-served to align ourselves with it. If we don't, we are going to experience discord and grief as well as a whole host of other bad things like stress, insomnia, ulcers, etc... If I could borrow a line from the Bard, "To thine own self be true." If you know it's wrong to steal and it makes you feel bad when you do it, then don't do it. If that sounds too simple, it's because it *is* that simple. You can apply it across the board.

There are people who act as if they don't have the slightest bit of morality or conscience, and I suppose it's possible that there are people who actually don't (although I highly doubt it). For more on the topic of lawyers, politicians, con artists and other white-collar crooks, please see my book, *Freedom or Forfeit: The Fate of America*.

As you come into contact with other people whom you might want to do business with or have contractual relations with or in any way have to trust

them, it will be in your best interest to find people who are honest and have integrity. People who tell the truth and do what they say they are going to do. It's never easy to tell up front who is honest and who isn't, so you have to be wary. Sometimes the biggest crooks talk the best game and put on the best front; so when in doubt—pass. There is one piece of wisdom I found just a little too late and now I would never judge a person's character without it. Don't judge people by what they say, judge them by what they do (their acts and deeds).

Your Spiritual Journey

Although it is somewhat metaphysical, I believe that there is a spiritual life and that it's possible to have spiritual awareness. I'm not saying that we can experience the spiritual world with our physical bodies, but we do have physical reactions/experiences that defy explanation. I've already mentioned the goose bumps phenomenon. How about the feeling that sweeps through your body when you hear of someone's untimely death? We kind of go into a miniature state of shock and paralysis.

I get the sense that the spiritual world has a lot to do with energy and harmony. Positive energy flowing in the right direction (perhaps with a particular aim in mind) pulsating in harmony with all other energies. Time and space don't seem to be important. Granted, that's not much of a definition, but it lends itself to a working theory and my personal philosophy.

I see myself as being on a spiritual journey which will continue in the event of a physical death. I see the objective of the spiritual journey to be about love, growth and positive energy. I become aware of that and use it as a model for my physical life. I've learned that it's a good idea to avoid negative energy as much as possible. I prefer to be in favor of things as opposed to being against things. That's not about semantics, it's about aligning your energy. As I mentioned earlier, I'm about positive constructive energy as opposed to negative destructive energy. I strive to be in harmony with myself (congruent). I strive to live and exhibit the kinds of qualities that I like to see in others, and lead by example.

Ultimately, I see a parallel between my spiritual journey and my mortal journey; and I can't help but wonder if that potentially applies to all people.

Although everyone will have their own unique life experience and spiritual awareness, it can be very rewarding to see how they enhance and complement each other. Maybe you will discover some things about yourself that you never knew.



Chapter Two

Let's Get Physical

The best way to predict your future is to create it.
~Peter Drucker

The human body is the most amazing and marvelous creation in the world. If you're reading this book, then you have one. Congratulations. Our bodies enable us to interact with the physical world, work, play, eat, procreate, as well as play an integral role in thinking and feeling. Indeed, just about every single aspect of our human experience is affected and influenced by our bodies.

In a manner of speaking, we're going to take a good look at our bodies in the pages ahead. We'll look at some of the important roles the body plays in our lives, and the relationships we have with our bodies. We'll take a look at how the body works, and what we need to do to take care of it. In covering these topics and information our objective will be to fully know and appreciate all the wonderful things our bodies can do for us. In the process, it is my intention that you will be motivated to get the most out of your body and maximize the quality of your experience.



It's going to be a fun road, and I can tell you up front that you will be able to apply this information and benefit from it no matter what your current health status is. We can look to the past for useful positive information, but we live our lives in the present on a day-by-day basis and so the past does not have to dictate our future prospects. Living a really healthful lifestyle is something which can only be done on a daily basis. Each day that you live that way, you are a smashing success. In the end, we find that it's not about quantity—it's about quality.

A Growing Boy

The way I prefer to look at physical health is that we are either growing or dying. It's certainly true that we do most of our growing before we are twenty. And it certainly seems to be the case that everyone dies. What about the interim years, say between 25 and 75? That's fifty years, and for most people the majority of their time on this earth. Is it possible to coast... to live in a suspended state where you are neither growing or dying? I don't think so. It's easy enough to ignore and not think about it, but it's a fair question. Ask yourself right now. Are you growing or dying?

No doubt we've all seen movies or read books where the protagonist is told he or she is terminally ill and only has a year (or so) to live. That strikes us as very immediate. "Oh, I'm dying. I better live as much as I can before I go." Under such circumstances, we would all agree, "Yeah, you go out there and live it up. Live as much as you can and make every moment count." Meanwhile, the reality is none of knows if we have a year to live. The implication here is that we should all live like every moment counts, like every day is special (which it is).



I think what happens to most people is that they go on automatic pilot during the period between say, 40 to 60. They stop being active, get weak, put on a lot of weight, and start a succession of various health problems (many of which they take prescription drugs for). If they make it to their 70's, they continue to deteriorate and spend even more time at the doctor's office, or the hospital, and take even more drugs. I'm sure this all sounds very normal and typical. During this phase in a person's life, he or she is repeatedly told by their doctors, family and friends they are just getting older. They will point out

that as people age, their metabolism slows down, their bones get weaker, and their eyesight and hearing start to diminish, and so on.

What they're really saying is that you are in the process of dying. You will continue to get weaker and your systems will continue to deteriorate until you ultimately die, which is what usually happens when people die of old age. I can only speak for myself, but I do not choose to be in the process of dying. How about you? Ask me again when I'm 100 and we'll see how the next 20 years are looking.

The only way I can ensure that I don't allow myself to fall into the process of dying is to make sure that I stay in the process of growing. That's my own personal philosophy but you are welcome to use it. Even though the body goes through changes as we age, we are always regenerating new tissues, so it *is* growing (figuratively and literally).

I also consider it growing when I improve my physical health and physical abilities. I'm always working to be a better athlete, golfer, marksman, musician, cook, lover, or whatever else strikes my fancy. Sometimes it's about power. Sometimes it's about speed. It's always about balance. And, what I find as I get more experience is that it's about finesse and subtle nuance... a delicate touch. It's that quality that the masters use to make their craft look easy and effortless.

Technically, I realize that I am no longer a boy and that I am aging, but thinking of myself as being in the process of growing dovetails with my spiritual desire to stay young at heart. I think it's a good quality to retain the exuberance of a boy. I still climb trees. I still like to go on adventures. I still play basketball, volleyball, Frisbee and whatever else happens to come along. Playing was fun when I was a boy and it still is. I find it sad when I see people who give up that part of their life. They give up their youthful exuberance and enthusiasm for playing and having fun (or perhaps they never had it to begin with).

As we will cover shortly, many adults are too sedentary. They don't get enough activity. Given that we seek to avoid pain, most of us don't like to exercise. I don't either. I do like to play however, and so the more time I get to play, the more "exercise" I get. I can go to the gym and workout; and I always feel good afterwards. But I can't say that I enjoy it. Anyone who says it's fun to lift weights is, to put it in clinical terms, nuts.

Ultimately, if you don't like to exercise, you're not going to stick with it. So, if you want to be more active, you need to spend more time playing and recreating. Find something you enjoy doing and do it. A lot.

The Big Three

There are three main components to our good physical health. They are all absolutely critical and to fall short in any one affects the other two. They are exercise, sleep, and diet. We will take a good look at each component separately as well as how they work together (or don't work as the case may be). When I hear of someone with a health problem, the first thing I want to know is his or her appetite. A lack of appetite is a strong indication that something serious is going on. The second thing I want to know is if he or she is getting a good night's sleep. There are many other factors of course, such as body temperature, nausea, dehydration, trauma, stress, pneumonia, etc., but it's not possible to be in good health without adequate exercise, food and sleep.

Our Bodies Are Made For Motion

I can't stress this importantly enough. Our bodies are built for working and playing. They are not built to sit around all day and half the night. As I mentioned earlier... use it or lose it. If you insist on being healthy and won't settle for second best, it is absolutely imperative that you get **daily** exercise/activity. It could be as little as a 20 minute walk, or a couple of 10 minute walks. Personally, I like to go for a walk before breakfast. During this time, the body is low on glucose and therefore the energy comes from metabolizing stored body fat (in theory). I usually walk 30 to 40 minutes. I also like to take other strolls when I can. I don't walk religiously, but I do strive to get in some walking every day.

As it turns out, walking is one of the best exercises/activities there is. It works all of our muscles and systems. It is low impact and non-injurious. (Get good shoes) It elevates your heart rate to the optimum level for burning stored body fat and staying lean. You want to establish a full

stride at a commanding pace. Just a little bit less than a brisk pace, but purposeful enough to where it looks like your going somewhere important. Get outside. Breathe some fresh air. Take in the sights. Bond with nature. Unplug. Have some alone time if you need it.

Disclaimer: I don't really consider walking to be an "exercise regimen," but if you have any doubts or concerns about your ability to take walks, and want to get an opinion from your doctor, by all means do that. I don't claim to be a doctor or a health care professional. The same applies to the sections on diet. All the information in my books is the result of my experience—that which I learned from direct experience or from other sources such as books, teachers and professionals. The information is given in my humble opinion and offered for your own further study.

You'll have to find the level of activity that is right for you. In this area we are all unique. Some people are very physical, and they like to spend almost all their time playing sports, training, working out, and taking care of their bodies. Nothing wrong with that. At the other end of the spectrum there are people who aren't the least bit physical. They don't have any desire to be active or physically fit. They don't care about their bodies unless they have a health issue. Maybe they're one of those monks I mentioned earlier, or maybe they're wrapped up in their work.



As is usually the case, the number of people at the far extremes is rare. Most of us are somewhere in the middle, and we are generally already at the level of activity that we are comfortable with.

I will stand behind my earlier comment that it's about quality and not quantity. But it might be helpful to quantify your activity level. If we deduct eight hours out of the day for sleeping, we are left with 16 waking hours in a day. If you are highly active at work for eight hours (on your feet and using your body) then you would be active at least 50% of the time

(plus whatever time you are active outside of work). You might want to consider what you think sounds like a good level and then look at the following table where 16 hours represents total waking time:

100%	16 hours	10%	96 minutes
50%	8 hours	5%	48 minutes
25%	4 hours	2.5%	24 minutes

Active time includes whatever time you spend on your feet and moving around, such as getting ready for work, cooking, cleaning the house, and so on. Active time doesn't include any time you spend sitting down (unless you're playing the drums). Use the table to take stock and quantify your current level of activity. Be honest. Use your best guess for a full seven day week and then divide by seven to get your daily average.

Write it down. Compare it to the figure that you think is the correct amount. Write that figure down too, and then compute the difference. Stop and do this now before moving on.

What kind of figures do you come up with? Do you have a big deficit? Do you feel like you need to be more active? Whatever figures you come up with here are probably just right for you. There are no right or wrong answers. As a general guideline, more is better. For me personally, I find 75% to be a worthy goal, which leaves a solid four hours of the day resting (usually when it's dark outside). On days when I'm sitting and writing, I don't even make 50%. Many of us work sitting in front of a computer monitor and it just can't be helped. I actually enjoy writing so I don't think of it as work, but the tradeoff is that I have to plop my butt down in a chair for hours on end and it affects my health. I take breaks and go for walks.

It's good that we are able to sit down and relax, but we weren't built to sit all day long. When you spend a disproportionate time off your feet, your legs will get weak. You will likely gain weight from being less active, which compounds the bad situation. As you get heavier and your legs get weaker, you will want to spend even more time off your feet. It can become a vicious downward spiral and self-fulfilling prophecy. I don't like to sound like an alarmist, but this is likely to happen if you don't guard

against it. If you don't make staying active an important and permanent part of your daily lifestyle, then you will have to suffer the consequences (weight gain, weak legs, slower metabolism, lower back pain, poor posture, spending too much time indoors, and worse).

It's easy to see what happens when we stop being active, which is obvious proof for the claim that our bodies are made for motion. It's a self-evident truth. Use it or lose it. I know there's a lot of people in this world who aren't of a whole body. Maybe they're missing an arm. Maybe they're paralyzed and can't walk. Maybe they're blind. The list goes on. I feel deeply sorry for those who are less fortunate than I am, and I think it is a tragic waste to have a fully functioning body and not take advantage of it. That's just my own personal opinion and I'm not trying to lay a guilt trip on anyone. I simply can't ignore the reality that it's a waste to have our assets and not use them—to have our gifts and not enjoy them. I want to get the most out of what this life has to offer. I don't want to go out with regrets that I could have spent more time enjoying the mortal experience. I want to enjoy all the experiences that I can and savor the memories of them for as long as possible.



I don't like to go on about myself, but I should warn you that I like to live fully. In that sense I am admittedly biased. I believe in working hard, and when it's time to play I like to play hard. When it's time to sleep, I go to sleep quickly and deeply. In other words, I don't like to waste time or live half-way. I like to go for the gusto and live boldly. I believe in the philosophy of sink or swim. If you're going to go for it, then fully commit yourself and go for it all the way.

I love the scene in the movie *Tin Cup* where Kevin Costner's character explains why he hit a particularly difficult golf shot. He called it a "defining moment" and when on to say that "when a defining moment comes along... you define the moment or the moment defines you." I adopted that as my personal philosophy. Defining moments don't come along all that often, but I encourage people to live proactively and not wait around for life to happen to them.

What Do You Expect?

One of the most important things I learned in school is that what is expected tends to be realized. It dovetails with creating our own reality. Most of the time, what we expect is going to happen *does* happen. If you expect you're going to get sick, for example, then you will likely end up getting sick. The same principle applies from the smallest inconsequential details to grand life-altering events. If you expect that you are supposed to get weak and feeble as you get older, then you most likely will. What if in the alternative you expect to stay lean, strong and active for the rest of your life? I can only speak for myself, but that is exactly what I expect.

I bring this point up because if you'd like to stay active, strong and healthy in your golden years, then you should already be doing that now. The point isn't whether you live to be 75 or 95, but rather that you get the most out of life every day. Although that may be unique for each person, it usually involves being healthy and active. Life isn't a dress rehearsal. Think about the way your life is now and what you really expect for the future. If you're happy with your expectations, great. If you're not, then the time to do something about it is right now (not mouse now... rat now).

Sometimes whether you live to be 75 or 95 *is* exactly the point. I know which number I would choose. I don't claim to be an expert or back up my observations with hard science, but we are all capable of asking what is likely. What is the most probable outcome? The truth is that we ask these types of questions even if we're not aware of it, and that is how we determine what our expectations are. The fastest runner may not win the race, but it is the smart bet.



could be wrong, but so what?

My theory goes that if you stay active, healthy and strong (thus avoiding or minimizing injuries, sickness and disease); live a life that is meaningful and full of positive energy which you share with others, then you are much more likely to live a significantly longer life. I

There are exceptions. There are people who are the picture of health, live a life full of love and positive energy and seem to have bright futures who unexpectedly and tragically die in their forties, or even younger. Meanwhile, there are people who are in the sorriest state of health imaginable and who are curmudgeonly, miserly, selfish and hateful who live well into their nineties or more. But, exceptions don't necessarily disprove a good theory.

I think that we are each born with a potential. Our genetics account for a lot of our traits that are expressed (gender, hair color, body type, etc.). In theory, other traits are expressed as a *range* of potential (personality type, intelligence, athletic ability, artistic ability, and so on). One of those traits seems to be our longevity. As some people like to point out, we are already genetically programmed to die even before we are born. In theory, we each have a programmed range of longevity. Some of us realize the short end of that range while others may be fortunate enough to realize the farthest long end of that range or even exceed it.

Barring the obvious exceptions, my theory holds that the people who get it—who live the best lives and set the best example for others—are likely to be rewarded with the longest lives. Again, even if my theory is wrong, so what? It's still the smart bet. If my expectations are going to be realized, I expect to live a long, happy and rewarding life.

I mentioned my departed best friend, Ken Del Rio. We were friends for nearly 20 years. He had some health issues and suffered a fatal heart attack when he was only 44. It was a devastating loss and he is sorely

missed. He really loved his country, as well as his family and friends. He was the most generous man I have ever known, and the most loyal friend a person could ever have. I always knew he had my back. Ken liked to buy only the best. The best food, the best tools, the best clothes, and so forth. He lived a very modest lifestyle and worked hard for a living. He was far from perfect, but he set a shining example of what it means to have a big heart, and I am fortunate to have spent time with him and call him friend.

My father died at an even younger age. He was only 36 when he flew into some unexpected bad weather at night and for reasons unknown couldn't fly out of it. My dad was a very accomplished man and no doubt had a very promising future. It's been over 30 years ago, and I probably miss him now more than ever. I wasn't particularly thrilled to be on the receiving end of his lessons, and I didn't really care at the time that he and I were going round and round. But he raised me to be tough and self-reliant, for which I am grateful. And even more important, I finally learned that it's important to have integrity. Dad wasn't perfect and I'm not either, but it makes all the difference in the world when people know they can rely on you to keep your word, to do what you say you are going to do, to be honest and tell the truth.

I mention my dad and my friend to illustrate that there are exceptions, and that I have direct personal experience with good people dying young. It really is tragic and it drives the point home that none of us can know when it's going to be our time to pass on. The corollary is to live life to the fullest and get the most out of each new day that we reasonably can.

Ode to Leanness

No discussion about staying strong and healthy and living a long life would be complete without a consideration of leanness and its opposite, fatness. We will cover the topic of excess body fat in the section on weight loss. This is about lifestyle, and the evidence seems to suggest that people who are active and lean tend to have fewer health problems and live longer. Makes sense to me, all other things being equal. I'd like to have no health problems at all and live as long as possible.

We all carry a certain amount of body fat, which is perfectly healthy. Some of us carry more than others, which is fine. We just don't want to get in the habit of carrying around too much body fat. Some people are genetically predisposed to be thin. Other people are predisposed for being large and heavy, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Most of us have to work at staying lean, which seems to get harder as we get older.

When I refer to being lean, I'm referring to your waist line. You want to be smaller through the waist than your chest and hips, and have a flat stomach. That doesn't mean you have to have six-pack abs, it just means flat (not hanging out over your belt).

I bring this up here because it's difficult to get lean and stay lean if you're not active. Unless you want to spend the rest of your life in a constant struggle between gaining weight and losing weight, you should look at body weight/composition as a permanent lifestyle practiced on a daily basis and not something you work on every few years (or every January). All other things being equal, the more active you are on a consistent daily basis, the easier it should be for you to stay lean and trim.



When you spend a good portion of your time being active, it sends a signal to your body's control center (Command Central). Your body says, "I'm highly active and don't need to haul around any extra weight. As long as I have plenty of nutritious food coming in, there is no need to store away any extra energy (fat stores)." That stops the weight gain. In order to lose weight, you'll have to metabolize those fat stores. In a sense, you are conditioning your body to get lean and stay lean by reinforcing that same message day after day. As long as you stay active and eat right, you shouldn't have any trouble maintaining your lean physique.



Another reason to stay lean is that putting on extra fat adds a significantly greater load and demand on the heart and will likely raise your blood pressure. Staying lean reduces the load/strain on your lower back thus eliminating back pain and injuries associated with poor posture and the inability to support the new weight. Staying lean is better on your joints, better on your wardrobe, better on your pocketbook, better on your self-esteem, and the list goes on. It's like another one of those self-evident truths: All things being equal, leaner is better. And the more active you are, the easier it is to get lean and stay lean. This is how we know the body is made for motion. I'm sure it was understood even before we had universities or written language. Of course, back before the agrarian revolution (planting grain crops) there probably wasn't too much obesity.

Finding Your Fitness Level

We've already considered activity levels in terms of quantity. Now let's take a look at it in terms of fitness levels. I have divided them into five distinct levels:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 1. | <u>Top Fitness</u> | Ripped, muscular, strong, world class athlete. |
| 2. | <u>Above Average</u> | Lean, good physique, very athletic. |
| 3. | <u>Average</u> | Good shape, good fitness, enjoys sports, active. |
| 4. | <u>Below Average</u> | Out of shape, weak, minimally active. |
| 5. | <u>No Fitness</u> | Total couch potato, needs help to function. |

It should be easy to determine where you fall in this rating system, but please keep in mind that it is not there to make anyone feel bad. It is simply there for the purpose of illustration and discussion. The terms apply to fitness levels and not the general population. In the United States today, most older adults are "below average" in fitness (which therefore would be considered "normal").

If you were highly motivated, you could move up. But, consider where you're at now and if you're comfortable at that level. As we have already covered, enjoying a good level of physical fitness isn't important to everyone. Only you can decide the level you are most comfortable with. Given that it's our nature to seek pleasure and avoid pain, we often let our physical fitness slip away as a low priority. That's just the way it is and there's no point feeling bad about it. If in the process of reading this book you are motivated to improve your fitness level and be more active, I think that's great. If you're happy at the level you're at, that's great too. You can certainly be more active without moving up a whole level. Some people arrive at a point in their life where they vow to be more active and have more fun. Once they get into it, they never go back.



As a fellow baby-boomer, it's a safe bet to say that most of us would like to be in great health, totally active, and looking fabulous. We want to exude a radiance of youthful vitality and attractiveness. Nothing wrong with that. Tastes and fashions come and go but one thing that never goes out of style is good health. Our outward appearance is usually a good indicator of our inner health. So, my conclusion is that if you want to look your best, then you need to be your best.

Your Set Of Filters

In keeping with our objective to enjoy good health for as long as possible, we want to stay away from danger and harmful substances (poisons, toxins, carcinogens, etc.) and other nasties like germs and bacteria. Try as we might, we come into contact with these things every day and our bodies do their best to filter them out before they cause permanent damage.

Our main filters are the skin, lungs, liver and kidneys. They do an amazing job at filtering out pollutants and other harmful stuff. The problem is they do not have an infinite capacity. Over the course of a lifetime, they can get full and quit working. It seems that just like radioactivity, we can take a certain amount and then no more. We don't know when that amount is going to be reached, and so it is best to avoid all the bad stuff as much as possible. You want to leave yourself some capacity in case you ever get in a dire situation.

Thanks to OSHA and all the other alphabet soup agencies, it's very easy to get a list of just about every harmful substance known to man. That would include just about anything you don't want to come across accidentally, like poison.

I am compelled to mention the things we come across intentionally; like cigarettes, alcohol, recreational drugs, prescription drugs, food additives, artificial sweeteners, genetically modified organisms, and whatever else that should be listed but isn't. I absolutely would not presume to tell anyone not to use these things. Everyone is free to live the way they want to. I'm not any better than anyone else or holier than thou. I just want to suggest that if you're going to take any of these types of potentially harmful substances that you do it with an informed and educated opinion.

Obviously, if something is harmful and detrimental to your health then you should avoid it. That being said, I usually enjoy some wine just about every day. It's delicious and works as a great mood enhancer. I'm pretty tightly wound, and I find that a little wine helps me loosen up. Granted, it would probably be better for my health if I didn't drink any alcohol, but there's a quality of life factor too.

I used to smoke cigarettes. Both of my parents smoked and I started sneaking their Winstons when I was about 11 years old. I was instantly hooked and smoked as much as I could get away with. My dad quit smoking when I was 15. He absolutely did not want me to smoke and he may have quit in part to lead by example. He quit just about immediately after the first time he caught me smoking. So maybe the "do as I say, not as I do" speech didn't sit very well with him and his integrity. Since he was

killed anyway, I spent most of my 20s pissed-off that he quit to live longer and it didn't work out for him. At 21, I switched to non-filters (Camel studs) because I am a full-flavor, full-intensity kind of guy. I didn't quit smoking until I was 46, but as a tribute to my dad, I quit on his birthday. Although I enjoyed my smoking habit, I couldn't justify a quality of life argument. As a matter of fact, I was worried about *losing* a quality of life. There was just too much evidence against cigarettes. It was nothing more than a personal decision, but my desire to live a long healthy life won out in the end. I may not get the long healthy life, but it is the smart bet.

Pay Me Now Or Pay Me Later

The decision to quit smoking was not an easy one. I knew it was just a habit. But I enjoyed the habit and found it comforting. I was pretty cavalier in my twenties, and it seemed like just about everyone I knew smoked. By the time I hit my mid 40s, my outlook changed. By then I was making friends with people in their 60s and 70s. The quality of life took on a whole new dimension. I started to contemplate the possibility of being a non-smoker; but being a full-intensity, sink or swim kind of guy, I didn't want any part of quitting then starting back then quitting again and starting back again. That just wouldn't do. I was faced with a dilemma. Do I go through the short-term pain of quitting my smoking habit? Or do I continue to enjoy my smoking habit and go through the long-term pain that I could have a stroke or die of lung cancer (or whatever else)?

During the phase that I was contemplating the lesser and greater of the two evils, an old friend's words kept going through my mind. He would go through a story and always seem to arrive at the point where he'd say, "pay me now or pay me later." He always seemed to find it terribly amusing. Although it seemed to be apt, the truth is that no one likes to pay, including yours truly. I didn't like being in the position where I was going to have to pay one way or the other, but at the same time I accepted my responsibility for choosing to smoke cigarettes.

The choice was a burden I brought on myself. I didn't mind the idea of going through the short-term pain. Hell, I could quit just for meanness.

The problem I had was I didn't know how short the short-term was going to be. I don't like the idea of braving the unknown or setting myself up for failure. I was thinking a few weeks to a few months, which was doable (but there was no way I could know in advance). I had a date picked out on the calendar, which was fast approaching. I thought about putting the decision off indefinitely, but I felt like if I didn't quit smoking at that time, then I never would. So, I smoked my last cigarette and haven't touched them since. I still have that last half pack of Camels. They serve as a reminder that if I can stop smoking, then I can do just about anything.

With the benefit of hindsight, the whole thing was surreal. When I smoked, I thought of myself as a smoker. When I smoked my last cigarette and put it out, I didn't think, *Okay, that's it. I'm a non-smoker now. I'll never smoke again.* I simply thought, *I'm not going to smoke tomorrow and we'll see how it goes from there.* I live my life one day at a time.

Quitting took a little time getting used to, but it was nothing even remotely close to how hard I was afraid it was going to be. I was aware of the times I'd reach for my cigarettes, and I would crave a smoke on rare occasions; but I bought nicotine gum and chewed that whenever I wanted a shot of nicotine. I missed the habit of using my hands and having the oral stimulation, but I didn't miss the actual smoke.

Now that the years have gone by, I still don't think of myself as a non-smoker; but oddly enough, it's hard to believe that I used to smoke. That's the crazy part. Now when I hear people say that they'd like to quit smoking but don't know how, I think to myself, *Well, you just stop lighting the damned cigarettes. There's no magic cure.*

I brought up my smoking story to illustrate the concept of short-term pain and pleasure versus long-term pain and pleasure. I didn't want to give up my short-term pleasure or suffer the short-term pain (who would?), but the prospect of the long-term pain was the greatest motivator of all. Now I get to enjoy the pleasure of knowing that I made an important decision which I feel is in my long-term best interest. As we all go through life, we are constantly having to make decisions where our short-term best interests are in conflict with our long-term best interests.

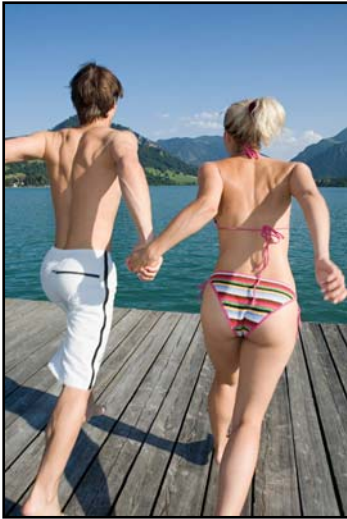
I hope you will be persuaded that when it comes to your health and long-term best interests (which are never in conflict with each other), you will always choose your good health over any short-term pleasure.

A Goopy Mass of Protoplasm in a Glass Ball

As we close out the section on good physical health and activity, I want to leave you with an image which will drive my point of view home. I apologize up front that it comes from some bad science fiction from an old show or movie. It might have been *Star Trek*. As I remember it, there is a glass ball containing a mass that resembles a human brain, but just different enough to look alien. It glowed as though it generated its own light, and it seemed to be in motion as if it were alive. Although it didn't have a body, it had a voice and could talk.

To make a long story short, this alien being was aware of the fact that it no longer had a mortal body. It couldn't feel blood coursing through its veins, feel sunlight on its face, gaze upon an object of beauty, enjoy a fine meal, make love, and so on. But it used to have a mortal body and it could still remember what those experiences were like. Over the millennia the distant memories were fading. Knowing that the experiences could never be enjoyed again without a body, the memories were bittersweet. It's the mortal experience that gives life meaning. It's not enough to just exist as though in a vacuum. To take it a step further, the alien could come to the conclusion that there was no point in existing without a body; yet without a body it didn't have any way to cease its existence. It was trapped.

I would never suggest that our afterlife will be anything like science fiction. But, it's certainly easy to imagine the idea of being alive spiritually after we are done with our earthly bodies. We will necessarily take our memories with us, because they make up who we are. This brings us to the point: How good will your memories be? Will they be vibrant and full of energy; bursting with colors and sounds; rich with flavors and textures; a veritable delight to the senses? Will you remember how you achieved all of your goals? Will you remember the joy of attaining your heart's desire? Will you remember what it's like to run as fast as you can, or swing off a



rope into a river? Will you remember the magic of kissing? Will you remember the comfort of your parent's arms? Will you remember all the times you were so thrilled you could hardly breathe?

Having the memories of such great and wonderful experiences and being able to recall them and savor them is really a bonus. The point isn't to gain the memories but to have the experiences. They are good for their own sake, and don't need an ulterior motive. It's our body that makes the experiences possible and for that reason we should really cherish it. We should appreciate it fully and give it the respect and attention it deserves. You don't buy a sports car to park it in the garage, you buy it to take it out on the road and experience the thrill of neck-snapping power, speed and road-hugging traction. Take your body out for a test drive. Fall in love with your body all over again. Look for some new magic. Sample new foods and new sensations. Savor your experiences.

To have a body is an amazing gift, and I encourage you to enjoy it as much as you can. Keep it active and healthy, and stay in it for as long as possible. Maybe as science and technology evolves, living to be a hundred or more will be common. While that's all well and good to look forward to, I wouldn't be interested in quantity without the quality. I don't want to spend my days sitting around in a chair (because I'm too weak and feeble to get up and walk around and don't have any place to go) watching television (because I don't have a life of my own) and eating oatmeal (because I'm no longer able to eat steak).



In the abstract, dying is part of living. As people advance into old age, they are able to prepare themselves for passing on. They can sense that it is their time. They are able to be at peace and pass on without being afraid. When it is their time, ideally they just drift off to sleep and don't wake up. If we have to die, that's probably as good as it gets.

Personally, I'm too young to make any plans on dying. I know it strikes some people as irresponsible and out of touch with reality... but I don't care. As long as I'm alive, I plan on living indefinitely (which may just as well be forever). If it's going to be my time, then so be it. There's nothing I can do about that. My friend Ken Del Rio made peace and wasn't afraid to die. He and I talked about that specifically. I had to agree with him that although I don't want to die, I'm not afraid to die. I'm afraid of not living. I've lost some fine family members over the course of my life, but Ken's passing was the first time I've had to deal with losing a close friend. It's been over three years now and I'm still dealing with it.

When you get to the point in your life when you move out of the realm of necessity and into the realm of possibility, you start looking down the road at all the wonderful experiences you can have in your life. When the enormity of it sinks in, you just don't want it to end. Especially so if you are fortunate enough to have children and grandchildren.

The Death Bed

This is a little acid test I use in life. Whenever I have to contemplate the course of my life, I imagine that I am laying on my death bed and I start the sentence with, "Gee... I sure wish I would have spent more time _____." Then I simply insert the target item. (Yes, I use the word *gee*.) I'll share a few of the target items that didn't pass the test. Gee... I sure wish I would have spent more time:

Waiting in lines.

Getting pissed off in traffic.

Bitching about government.

Worrying about not having enough money.

Coveting other people's stuff.
Eating bad food.
Feeling sorry for myself.
Fighting.
Working at a job I didn't like.

These are all negative and counterproductive, which is exactly the point. I don't want to waste my precious time on these things. When I find myself doing any of them, I check myself because they didn't pass the test. I've gotten so good at it, I rarely do any of these things anymore. Obviously, the death bed is figurative. I came across the idea somewhere long ago. I didn't invent it myself, but it sure is handy.

A Good Night's Sleep

Not that it has anything to do with death beds, but getting a good night's sleep is vital to your good health. Chances are, the more active you are, the better you're going to sleep. The better the sleep you get, the better you are likely to feel and perform the following day.

We all know what it's like to try to wake up and function with little sleep. We're groggy, irritable, bloodshot, bleary-eyed, and can't function worth a hill of beans. That's your body's way of telling you that you need to get more sleep. If you don't listen to your body, things will get worse, and if you still don't listen you will become ill. How much sleep do you need? That depends. Everyone is different, and we don't need the same amount from one day to the next.

For me, I often get by on six to seven hours which is great because that gives me more waking time. Once in a great while I'll actually get a full eight hours, but that is rare and I never use an alarm clock. I used to sleep whenever I could get it. I'd stay up into the wee hours, or all night long and crash the next day. I used to stay up two days at a time. Now I like to sleep during the same time every night. I'll usually go to bed around 10:00 and wake up anywhere between 4:30 and 5:00. We all have late nights once in awhile, but it's ideal if you can sleep on a regular schedule at about

the same time every night. Your body depends on that regularity to do what it needs to do.

It's beyond the scope of this book to go into everything that happens while you are sleeping. The most important part is that your body gets a chance to relax, recharge, and repair itself. According to sleep deprivation studies, if you go long enough without adequate sleep, you can go stark raving mad. I well remember all the times I went without sleep until I would start hallucinating. It can get scary. I once drove cross country from southern Florida to southern California 2,750 miles stopping only for gas. It took about 42 hours and by the time I pulled in, I hardly knew which way was up. It wasn't the smartest thing I ever did, but I like to push myself sometimes and find out what my limits are. I can still drive 1,000 miles a day no problem (but it's not as much fun as it used to be).

If you've ever had the experience where you're having a difficult time getting to sleep or waking up; or getting a full night's sleep yet not feeling rested and refreshed; you may have a problem with your bedroom. There is an optimum environment for sleeping:

1. Get the best quality bed/mattress you can afford.
2. Make sure your room is as dark as possible (pitch black is best).
3. Your room should be cool. Your body cools while you are sleeping.
4. Your room should be quiet as a tomb.
5. Your room should be free of clutter and papers.
6. Your room should be free of electronics, TVs, and computers.
7. Your room should be free of anything work related (or stressful).
8. You might enjoy a fan with a little background white noise.

If that strikes you as way over the top, I'm not surprised. Most people watch TV in bed, use their cell phones, eat, work, whatever. I'm not trying to bust your chops, but those are all things you should be doing while you are awake. When it's time to go to sleep, you should think of your room as a sleeping chamber. It takes some time to make the transition between waking and sleeping. Having the electronic stimulus prolongs that transitional phase. I like to read in bed. If I'm wound up, I might read for hours. Some nights I don't even read a whole page. The point is, when I

get in bed and start reading, it's sending a message to my control center that I am ready to go to sleep. Sure, there's always that other activity...

Try those recommendations for starters and see if you notice a difference. If you like it, there are even more exotic recommendations like magnetic fields, electromagnetic chaos eliminators, aroma therapies, and the list goes on. I've not tried any of the exotic stuff, but I wouldn't knock it either. Something else that may help is to move out to the country. It's quiet and peaceful and the stars are spectacular and dazzling. When we travel and spend the night in cities, we hear traffic, sirens, trains, helicopters and airplanes. We can still function okay, but I know that we're not getting optimal sleep. I encourage you to make a commitment to getting optimal sleep for the next 30 days and see if you don't notice a major difference in your energy levels.

Chapter Three

The Right Stuff

A gourmet who thinks of calories is like a tart who looks at her watch.
~James Beard

Now that we're on a roll, we'll get into the last of the big three—food. We know that it's important to be as active as possible every day and get an adequate amount of quality sleep every night. The body is working 24 hours a day and it takes lots of energy to make everything work. That energy comes from fuel, which comes from the foods we eat. For optimum performance, the body needs an abundant and steady supply of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, amino acids, fatty acids, minerals, vitamins, salts, metals, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon, etc... Almost all of these come directly from the ground in the form of plants (dirt, sunshine and water). We either eat the plants directly, or we eat the animals that eat the plants.

You Are What You Eat

For most of us, our associations with food are long established before it ever occurs to us to think about it. In one manner or the other, you sat down somewhere in the vicinity of the kitchen and you were served food. Hopefully, all your memories are happy ones. Mine were pretty good. I was always a big eater with a hearty appetite. I was happy with most of the food I got, and there were only a few things I didn't care for: Brussels sprouts, sauerkraut, hominy, liver, and some fish. I always had to finish my plate, but I was usually happy to do it. Being highly active, I was one of those people who could eat as much as they want and never put on an ounce. My dad told me that would come to a screeching halt when I hit about 19 (and he was right).



It's probably safe to say that most of us don't give much consideration to the types of food we eat until we are in our 20s. By then, you're likes and dislikes, habits and associations with food are largely established. If you want a cheeseburger and somebody says, "No, have this salad instead." you're not going to want to hear that. Good news—I'm not going to tell you what to eat either. Have the cheeseburger. About the only thing better than a cheeseburger is a double cheeseburger. I'm in the process of elevating the double cheeseburger to a work of art. I digress.

Unless you're taking nutritional supplements, your body has to get everything it needs from the foods you eat (barring a few exceptions). If your body needs something and you're not providing it, where is it going to come from? If your body has to do without, then your health is going to suffer for it. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't have the slightest idea if I was deficient in choline, manganese or chromium. Quite frankly, I don't even want to think about it.

It would be nice if there were some way to get an instant reading on all of our nutritional needs (there isn't), and if there were a consensus in the health industry as to what constitutes correct and optimum nutritional levels (there isn't); but since that day isn't likely to come in time to do us any good, we have to guess. Sad but true. The problem is further compounded by big business which is more concerned with profits than our good health. More on that shortly.

Since the best we can do to meet our nutritional needs is guess, we'll have to play detective to come up with a plan of attack. We know that we can take supplements to make up for a deficiency, but we don't want to waste our money on supplements if we don't need them. I remember when I was a boy. My parents fed me well, but they still made me take Flintstones vitamins. They were hedging.

Proteins, Carbohydrates and Fats, Oh My

Just to facilitate discussion, the nutritional field classifies most foods as being either proteins, carbohydrates or fats. The optimum ratio of these

macronutrients is hotly debated. I've searched far and wide to find the optimum ratio for myself, and I still have not come up with a solid answer. I think it's probably different for each person, and even the time of day. In the end, I would just like to enjoy eating and having a nice meal. I don't want to do math and science. I sure as hell don't want to count calories or weigh portions. I don't want to try to compare a serving of roast beef to a deck of cards, a light bulb, a tube of lipstick, or a computer mouse. I just want to enjoy the roast beef (with roasted vegetables and a pan sauce reduction). I don't want to look at an empty plate and think about $1/3$, $2/5$, $3/5$, or $5/8$. I *could* do it, but I just don't want to.

Let's take a brief look at the macros:

Protein



Proteins, literally means the most important (*protos* - prime, first, chief). Proteins are the building blocks of life and they come from meats, chicken and other birds, fish, eggs, dairy, cheese, nuts and seeds. Proteins can also come from plants, such as soy beans, but they are not

complete proteins that the body can use (which is a prime concern for vegetarians and vegans). Next to water, protein is the most abundant substance in the human body. It is critical to all the tissues in our bodies, including the muscles, brain, heart, and blood. It is also critical for forming hormones which serve to regulate all of our bodily functions and growth. It is absolutely imperative that you get enough dietary protein to provide your body with the protein it needs to grow, regulate your systems and keep you healthy. No two ways about it.

The experts disagree about optimum levels of protein. As near as I can tell, the range for protein is anywhere between one-half of a gram to one

gram per pound of lean body mass depending on your level of activity and health. A man who has a lean body mass of 160 pounds would need anywhere between 80 to 160 grams of protein a day. If the man is vigorously healthy and active, I would say go for the full 160 grams. A woman with a lean body mass of 100 pounds would need anywhere between 50 to 100 grams per day. If she is not vigorously healthy, she may want to split difference and call it 75 grams per day. (Obviously, I am precluded from making specific recommendations to anyone in particular. I am merely giving examples of how to figure your protein needs.)

It is generally agreed that one gram of protein is equal to 4 calories (which is the same as carbohydrates). So, if you want say, 100 grams of protein, you will need to eat 400 calories worth of protein. That would be the rough equivalent of two large skinless chicken breasts, two large Ribeye steaks, two 7 ounce cans of solid white Albacore tuna, or about 17 large chicken eggs (Yo, Rocky). In any event, we're talking two or three meals. Or one huge meal followed by a long nap (which is how Sumo wrestlers put on their enormous weight).

There are a few more interesting points to be made about protein. It is generally agreed that (unlike carbs) you can't really overeat protein. It will make you sick, or what is more likely is the thought of eating another bite is just not appealing. The other point I want to make is that proteins which are not used directly may be converted through the liver and stored as body fat (ostensibly to be used later).

Carbohydrates

While proteins are the building blocks of life, carbohydrates are a significant source of energy for our bodily functions. Carbs also help regulate the metabolism of proteins and fats. Carbs are divided into three groups: sugars, starches and cellulose. The cellulose does not convert into energy, but it does aid in digestion.

Carbs can be said to be simple or complex, but they are all converted into glucose (blood sugar). Simple carbs are converted more readily than

complex carbs (starches) which take a little more effort to convert. Once converted, the blood sugar is available for energy right now. The glucose that is not used right away can be converted to glycogen and stored in the liver and muscles for readily available energy. According to my research, the body stores approximately one day's worth of energy in the form of glycogen. Any excess is converted to fat and stored away (just like excess protein). When stored body fat is reconverted back into glucose and burned, we get weight loss.

You may have heard that carbs are bad for you. They're not. You may have heard that you need to watch your carbs (yes and no). You may have heard that there is a glycemic index and that you shouldn't have high glycemic index foods such as corn flakes, corn chips, mashed potatoes, cookies, bread, tortillas, crackers and pastry (more on that later). In terms of what percentage of carbs should make up your daily total of food, I've read compelling arguments for as low as 5% all the way up to as high as 60%. Who's right and who's wrong? I think the optimum percentage is about 20% to 30% and changes throughout the day. The raging debate over carbs is nothing new. It goes back well over a 100 years.

One of the most useful things to know about carbs is that there is a significant difference between fruits, vegetables and grains. Within the bounds of reason and good taste, you can safely eat just about all the fruits and vegetables you want. Go easy on the potatoes and other starchy foods. Grains on the other hand require the application of some basic knowledge and eternal vigilance (of your waist line).

Grains include wheat, corn, barley, oats and rice among others. These are the carbs you have to watch out for. In the modern American diet we tend to eat an abundance of wheat, corn and rice. They're cheap and they taste great. What's not to love? The problem is that most of the time they have been stripped down and highly processed. They are stripped of most of their beneficial nutrients and converted into things like flour and high fructose corn syrup. Here's the kicker—because these processed foods have been stripped down, they are effectively predigested. It's like Frankenfood. Your body doesn't know what to do with it. By comparison, whole grains take more time and energy to breakdown and digest. Instead

of empty calories, you get beneficial nutrients like proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and fiber (among others). The nutrients are released into your system at a slower pace so where your body can take the time it needs to figure out where to send them and have the time to send them there.

Fast carbs, such as the three that make up the dreaded “White Death” (white sugar, white flour and white rice) hit your blood stream so fast that it causes a spike in your blood sugar. It’s dangerous and potentially toxic to have our blood sugar jacked up, so the body releases a hormone called *insulin* to reduce the blood sugar to a safe level. The insulin opens up receptors that help shuttle the sugar out of the blood. It solves one problem but creates another—there is too much insulin in the blood. The effect of too much insulin opens up a whole host of issues leading to poor health; including low blood-sugar swings (which the brain won’t tolerate), nutrients being stored as fat instead of burned for energy (weight gain), and potentially a resistance to insulin over time.

The lesson here is to avoid the fast carbs in the first place. I still indulge in my favorites once in awhile, but I am in the process of weaning myself off of them. The point isn’t to go without, the point is to find healthy alternatives.

Fats

Last but not least we have fats, which are absolutely essential to our good health. Because people have a tendency to equate dietary fat with stored body fat (and because it gets a lot of bad press), people tend to avoid fat like it’s radioactive. That’s really a shame because fat is delicious and nutritious. True, we don’t want to overdo it, but to the extent that it occurs naturally in whole foods, help yourself.

One of the most critical distinctions between fats and other foods is that they are very calorie dense. Unlike proteins and carbs (each with 4 calories per gram), fats and oils come in at a whopping 9 calories per gram (more than double). If you eat too much high fat food, your calories can go soaring. A medium avocado, for example, is an excellent source of dietary

fat and very nutritious, but it has nearly 300 calories. A juicy Ribeye steak comes in over 1,000 calories. If you pair up a big fat steak with creamed spinach, a baked potato buried under gobs of butter and sour cream, a generous hunk of garlic bread, a few glasses of wine, a salad with blue cheese dressing, and a big hunk of cheesecake what do you get? You get about two or three days worth of calories in one sitting. It would be delicious and fun to eat, but it's not something you'd want to do every day. Even if you could have it every day, you'd get tired of it real quick.

There are other variables relating to dietary fat such as the different types of saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. I find the topic a bit tedious and don't find it necessary in the scheme of things. Everyone seems to agree that it's important to get a high ratio of omega-3 fatty acids over omega-6 fatty acids. I agree and take a fish oil supplement. Older generations used to take cod liver oil every day, now we can just pop a gel cap. Experts say the high omega-3 fats are heart smart and help prevent inflammation and atherosclerosis (build-up of plaque and clogging of the arteries).

One other thing that everyone seems to agree on is to avoid hydrogenated oils and trans fats like the plague. More voodoo Frankenfood. You'll find them in margarine, shortening, and many processed foods, if not most. These are absolutely terrible for your health and exist for no other reason than for big companies to make more profits.

Soylent Green Is People

If I could tell you only one thing in this whole book relating to food it would be to eat natural whole foods. It makes all the difference in the world. How do you know the difference between natural whole foods and everything else? Good question. Natural is distinct from artificial. Natural means it was grown or raised on a farm or ranch. Artificial means it was created in a laboratory by scientists in lab coats. Whole means that it hasn't been processed or precooked. It means it is just how you would find it in nature (or at the butcher shop, cheese shop, etc.).

Most processed foods just need to be warmed up. Heat and eat. Most of the companies that sell processed foods are purporting to offer convenience and value, and great taste (doubtful); but they fall woefully short in the nutrition department. Many, if not most processed foods are pumped full of salt, sugar and/or fat to give them flavor. It won't be a high quality fat either, but whatever is the cheapest thing they can get away with. From a nutritional standpoint, it's not just an absence of good nutrition, but the inclusion of substances and ingredients that are harmful to our health. In other words, you'd be better off to go hungry.



Generally speaking, natural whole foods don't come in a can, a box or a bag. They generally don't have labels or ingredients lists. They tend to spoil promptly if you don't eat them or freeze them within a few days to a week or so. They're not chock full of preservatives,

"natural" flavors, artificial flavors and other enhancers such as monosodium glutamate. They contain real food, as distinct from genetically modified, chemically enhanced substances like hydrolyzed corn gluten, disodium guanylate, textured vegetable protein, soy lecithin and propylene glycol (yum).

I don't see how any reasonable person could dispute that it's best to eat natural whole foods, but there is one catch... they have to be cooked/prepared from scratch. There's the rub. You either have to cook the food yourself, or pay someone else to do it. I love to cook, so it's not a problem for me. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who either don't know how to cook, don't have the time to cook, or just plain don't like to cook. Learning how to cook is beyond the scope of this book, but I will provide some useful information as we continue on. As far as dining out goes, the quality of ingredients and the way they are handled/prepared makes all the difference in the world; just the same as if you were cooking them yourself. It's not uncommon for some restaurants to use things like

margarine, pre-made spice mixes, MSG, high-sodium canned soups, gravy and chili, or just about anything frozen. That's a very short list, so be on your guard.

Ultimately, we are all responsible for the food we eat, and there is no substitute for good quality. We should trust that our food is safe and coming from a reliable source that does care about quality nutrition. Some people actually grow their own food, raise their own livestock, gather their own eggs and milk their own cows. That's not the lifestyle for me, but I see the merit in it. Small local growers are usually your best source for quality food, and you can network with them at your local farmer's market. There is an excellent documentary called *Food, Inc.* and I highly recommend it.

While we are on the topic of finding sources for high quality foods, you can be sure that the higher quality is going to cost more money (as it should). As for me personally, I am a very frugal shopper. I am always looking for discounts, sales, coupons, buying in bulk, or whatever I can to stretch a buck. As some people like to call it—I'm tight. Ken Del Rio used to accuse me of squeaking when I walk. I shopped with him a few times at his local independent grocer. He didn't care what anything cost. He simply pushed his cart through the store and selected whatever he wanted. I'd follow him around with my jaw hanging open, shaking my head at the high prices. I saw it as wasting money. He saw it as supporting his local community. Like I said, he was very generous.

As tight as I am, I'm all about the value. I scrutinize everything so that I can make an informed and educated decision on getting the most value for my money. Just because someone has the lowest price doesn't mean it's the best value. Read the fine print. I follow the old saw, "The large print giveth and the small print taketh away." You want to make sure that you're comparing apples with apples, so to speak. I'm not going to compare hamburger at \$2.99/lb. with steak at \$12.99/lb. If I were on a tight budget, I might buy something less expensive than steak, but I would not compromise on quality.

As much as I like to stretch a food dollar, once I made the commitment to never compromise on quality, I had to make peace in my heart with

paying higher prices. It's like the shampoo commercial, "It costs more... but I'm worth it." Even if your food costs go up 50% (say from \$400/month up to \$600/month) it's a good investment. For details on how to save money on food, read my book *Millionaire Wealth*.

Counting Calories

If you're an adult living in America, then you've no doubt heard all about calories. It seems this country is obsessed with gaining and losing weight—instead of eating right in the first place. I guess there's not enough profit in that. It's good for business when you go to a major supermarket and buy all the processed Frankenfood. Your health suffers so that is more visits to the doctor and more drugs being sold. Your weight goes up so that is more business for the weight loss people (most of whom care more about parting you with your money than your unwanted pounds). Then there's all the lawyers.

As I alluded to earlier, I don't advocate counting calories. We will certainly consider calories so as to have a common language and get in the ball park. But, as a general rule, I encourage people to eat healthy nutritious food and not be obsessed with gaining or losing weight. It's much more important that you're eating nutritious whole foods than how many calories you're getting. When you get in the habit of eating the right kinds of foods in the right kinds of combinations, the calorie counts will take care of themselves. You won't have to think about it.

Even though I don't encourage calorie counting, I don't mean to give the impression that I'm not into science and math. I am. I've read a ton of books on optimum nutrition and I've quantified thousands of calorie counts, macronutrient ratios, BMRs, BMIs, glycemic index tables, body fat percentages, and on and on. I'm curious about how things work. I aspire to excellence and when the experts disagree, then my curiosity gets the better of me and I want to get to the truth. In the end, it turns out that eating well is very simple—although the science behind it can get endlessly complicated. The good news is that you don't have to know the science anymore than you have to know how the engine in your car works. In

other words, you can get through life just fine without ever counting a calorie or contemplating how many of your calories should come from a protein, carbs or fats.

The amount of calories a person needs varies widely and fluctuates on a daily basis. Estimates for myself range anywhere between 1,800 and 2,800 calories per day, depending on who you ask. I probably burn more than 1,800 calories per day just being alive (keeping warm, digesting food, breathing, pumping blood, etc.) which is referred to as *Basal Metabolic Rate* (BMR). In addition to BMR, people can burn about 100 to 300 additional calories per hour getting exercise depending on how active they are. There are lots of days when I burn well over 3,000 calories from being active most of the day.

We use calories as a measure of energy, both in terms of how much energy we expend and how much we consume. In theory, if your input and output balanced each other out, then your weight should remain about the same. There are other factors such as hydration levels and body composition changes over time. As most people get older they tend to increase body fat and lose lean body mass. (bummer) As the theory goes, if you want to reduce your stored body fat then your input needs to be less than your output. I agree with that (in theory).

Let's suppose I have a very active week and burn 3,000 calories per day for seven days. Let's further suppose that I eat 2,000 calories per day. That would create a caloric deficit of 1,000 calories per day and a total of 7,000 calories for the week. It is agreed that a pound of body fat is equivalent to 3,500 calories. In theory then, my massive deficit for the week should result in a body fat loss of two full pounds. The best evidence suggests that it's not healthy to lose more than two pounds a week. It took a long time to put the weight on, and the slower it comes off, the more likely you are to keep it off. Losing just one pound a week consistently over time would be a major accomplishment (52 pounds in a year).

I mentioned earlier that you will have to play detective. If you want to count calories, you'll need to guesstimate your input and output. There are lots of free resources to help you figure it all out depending on your

gender, age, weight, body composition, diet, activity levels, and so on. When you count your food, don't forget beverages.

It's not easy to create a daily caloric deficit of 500 to 1,000 calories, much less to do it consistently over time. If it were easy, most people would be lean instead of round. You have the choice of being more active, consuming less calories, or both. As for myself, I would rather be more active than eat less. But, most people aren't going to increase their activity level 500 to 1,000 calories a day and stick with it. It's a recipe for failure. When you go back to your comfortable level of activity, you'll most likely gain the weight back anyway.

You'll have a much better go of it to reduce your calorie consumption (in addition to increasing your activity level). You may not have to eat less, just better (and smarter). It's smart to have the majority of your carbs early in the day so they will be available for your energy needs. It's smart to have the majority of your protein later in the day when your body is getting ready to do its repair and rebuilding work. It's smart to align yourself with nature and gain every advantage that you can.

If you want to take advantage of the science and dial in your nutritional requirements for optimum performance, there are many good sources available on the Internet and you should be able to find links to them from my website. There are many good books as well. Some are better than others, and there is one that stands out as the very best. It is called *The Primal Blueprint* (2009) and the author's name is Mark Sisson. If I were going to write a book, it would be very much like his. His book covers everything that I think is important and it is very well written. It is both enlightening and entertaining (and gets my highest recommendation).

Empty Calories

If you take a good long look in the mirror and decide that you don't want to spend the rest of your life battling your weight; that you'd like to get back into shape and stay in shape; that you'd like to be more attractive, healthy and live as long as possible; then you may want to consider

making a commitment to eliminating junk food, harmful food (White Death), artificial processed food, and other empty calories from your diet. It's called eating clean. It's not an easy commitment to make. I've been working on it in stages over the years, and it's still a work in progress.

Let's not pull any punches. I've already introduced the idea of fresh natural whole foods. The list of stuff you should avoid is just about everything else. Most of your processed foods and anything baked or fried with white flour and/or white sugar which covers most cakes, cookies, doughnuts, pastries, pastas and most breads. The list will include anything with added sugar, which is going to cover all candy, sodas, fruit juices and soft drinks, as well as most boxed cereal, breakfast bars, and sadly, ice cream. The list will also include most crackers and chips (my weakness). The list will include any foods made with or cooked in hydrogenated oils and/or trans fats. Processed foods containing anything artificial should be eliminated. Read the ingredient list. If it sounds like food, eat it. If it sounds like a tongue-twisting science experiment, pass. I would also pass on homogenized milk.

That's not an all inclusive list, but it is sufficient enough to get the idea across. If this list covers some of your favorite stuff, don't panic. You don't have to give it all up at once. Wean yourself off. Some of my favorite foods are on the list and I'm still weaning myself off. A good example is pizza. I love pizza and I could probably eat it every week. I've cut back to maybe three or four times a year and I make it myself at home from scratch. I do want to be healthy and live a long life, but I'm not ready to give up my favorite foods entirely. What's the point of living if you can't have ice cream, pizza or a cheeseburger once in awhile? When I have my favorite foods less frequently, I find that I appreciate them even more (I get to savor the food *and* the anticipation of eating the food).

When you consider all the amazing foods that *are* on the approved list, it's not too much of a sacrifice. If I'm sitting down to a bowl of chili or beef stew, Ribeye steak, Italian sausage and peppers, pork chops, teriyaki chicken, meatballs, pot roast, stroganoff, smoked ribs, brisket or links, braised short ribs or roasted chicken I don't feel like I'm missing out. That's the short list by the way. If you want to consider the alternative,

let's look at some ingredient lists. I took the liberty of going through the grocery store and logging 15 of our favorite national brand products. See if you can guess what the mystery products are by their ingredients.

(Disclaimer: I'm not going to give the brands, but they are generally the most popular. You can take my list and go see the products for yourself. You might already have some right in your kitchen.)

Water, mushrooms, vegetable oil (corn, cottonseed, canola, and/or soybean), modified food starch, wheat flour, contains less than 2% of: salt, cream (milk), dehydrated whey, monosodium glutamate, soy protein concentrate, yeast extract, flavoring, dehydrated garlic.

(Answer: Cream of Mushroom Soup, a main ingredient in many dishes/casseroles. Apparently, it has less than 2% cream, but that must be enough to put "Cream" on the front of the can. Why use perishable real cream when there's modified food starch?)

Dehydrated onions, salt, cornstarch, onion powder, sugar, autolyzed yeast extract (barley), caramel color, partially hydrogenated soybean oil, monosodium glutamate, dehydrated corn syrup, disodium inosinate, disodium guanylate, sulfur dioxide.

(Answer: Dried Onion Soup Mix, also used as a recipe ingredient.)

Unbleached enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate {vitamin B1}, riboflavin {vitamin B2}, folic acid), semisweet chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate, cocoa butter, dextrose, soy lecithin), sugar, soybean oil and/or partially hydrogenated cottonseed oil, high fructose corn syrup, leavening (baking soda and/or ammonium phosphate), salt, whey (from milk), natural and artificial flavor, caramel color.

(Answer: Chocolate Chip Cookies in a bag. I never cared for them myself,

but they are probably the most popular national brand. Maybe they used to be more wholesome.)

Corn syrup solids, vegetable oil (partially hydrogenated coconut or palm kernel, hydrogenated soybean), sodium caseinate (a milk derivative although not a source of lactose), and less than 2% of dipotassium phosphate (moderates coffee acidity), mono- and diglycerides (prevents oil separation), sodium aluminosilicate, artificial flavor, annatto color.

(Answer: A powdered coffee “creamers.”)

Rice, wheat flour, durum wheat semolina, salt, sugar, dried autolyzed yeast extract, hydrolyzed soy protein, dried onions, monosodium glutamate, natural flavor, dried parsley, dried garlic, dried chicken broth, chicken fat, turmeric spice which imparts color, hydrolyzed corn gluten, dried niacin, disodium guanylate, disodium inosinate, ferric orthophosphate, ferrous sulfate, thiamin mononitrate, turmeric extract, folic acid, riboflavin.

(Answer: Chicken flavored rice and pasta mix in a box. I used to stock up on these.)

Roasted peanuts and sugar, contains 2% or less of: molasses, fully hydrogenated vegetable oils (rapeseed and soybean), mono- and diglycerides, salt.

(Answer: Creamy Peanut Butter)

High fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, water, salt, cellulose gum, molasses, natural and artificial flavor (lactic acid) sodium hexametaphosphate, preservatives (potassium sorbate, sodium benzoate), caramel color, citric acid.

(Answer: I'd like to say this is Maple Syrup, but let's just say that it's

something people use in place of maple syrup. No maple, no butter. The front just says “Syrup” and the word “Corn” is intentionally omitted, so people can assume it’s maple syrup.)

Enriched flour bleached, (wheat flour, niacin, iron, thiamin, mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), sugar, corn syrup, partially hydrogenated soybean and/or cottonseed oil, leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate), corn starch, contains 1% or less of: salt, nonfat milk, dextrose, modified corn starch, propylene glycol, mono and diesters of fatty acids, distilled monoglycerides, dicalcium phosphate, sodium stearoyl lactylate, soy lecithin, xanthan gum, cellulose gum, natural and artificial flavor.

(Answer: You might think it is something for your car, but the flour gives it away. It’s obviously a super-moist White Cake Mix.)

Milled corn, sugar, malt flavoring, high fructose corn syrup, salt, sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid (vitamin C), niacinamide, iron, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), riboflavin (vitamin B2), thiamin hydrochloride (vitamin B1), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, BHT (preservative), vitamin B12 and vitamin D.

(Answer: Let’s just say sweetened corn flakes... that are great.)

Enriched wheat flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), water, shredded low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese (part-skim milk, cheese culture, salt, enzymes), cooked seasoned pizza topping (pork, water, mechanically separated chicken, textured vegetable protein [soy protein concentrate, caramel color], spices, salt, sugar, sodium phosphate, paprika, pork flavor [modified corn starch, pork fat, natural flavors, pork stock, gelatin autolyzed yeast extract, sodium phosphate, thiamine hydrochloride, sunflower oil propyl gallate], caramel color, spice extractives, BHA, BHT, citric acid. Cooked in pork fat or beef fat or vegetable oil), tomato paste, pepperoni made with pork, chicken and beef (pork, mechanically

separated chicken, beef, salt, contains 2% or less of pork stock, spices, dextrose, lactic acid starter culture, paprika, natural smoke flavor, oleoresin paprika, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, flavoring, BHA, BHT, citric acid), green bell peppers, red bell peppers, sugar, contains less than 2% of wheat gluten, onions, black olives, vegetable oil (soybean oil and/or corn oil), white corn meal, salt, yellow corn meal, baking powder (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate), yeast, sodium stearoyl lactylate, datem, flavor, spice, dried garlic, ascorbic acid. (emphasis added on bold parentheses)

(Answer: Deluxe Frozen Pizza. Mmmmm I had been typing for so long when I got to the right parenthesis in front of tomato paste, I thought it was a mistake. I kept reading back to see if there was an opening parenthesis and when I found it, I realized the whole thing was the ingredient list for “cooked seasoned pizza topping.” I wish I could say I found it amusing, but I found it offensive. I do find it amusing for these companies to suggest that their frozen pizzas are so good they are on a par with something that is fresh cooked and home delivered.

Enriched bleached wheat flour [flour, reduced iron, “B” vitamins (niacin, thiamine, mononitrate (B1), riboflavin (B2), folic acid)], sugar, water, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated vegetable and/or animal shortening (soybean, cottonseed and/or canola oil, beef fat), whole eggs, dextrose. Contains 2% or less of modified corn starch, glucose, leavenings (sodium acid pyrophosphate, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate), sweet dairy whey, soy protein isolate, calcium and sodium casein ate, soy flour, salt, mono and diglycerides, polysorbate 60, soy lecithin, cornstarch, cellulose gum, sodium stearoyl lactylate, natural and artificial flavors, sorbic acid (to retain freshness), yellow 5, red 40.

(Answer: Little yellow cakes filled with something resembling a cream.)

Enriched bleached flour [wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid], water, high fructose corn syrup, yeast. Contains 2% or less of each of the

following: vegetable oil (soybean and/or cottonseed oils), wheat gluten, salt, calcium sulfate, dough conditioners (may contain one or more of the following: mono- and diglycerides, ethoxylated mono- and diglycerides, sodium stearoyl lactylate, calcium peroxide, datem, calcium iodate, ascorbic acid, azodicarbonamide, enzymes), calcium propionate (preservative), yeast nutrients (monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate and/or calcium carbonate), corn starch, distilled vinegar, soy lecithin, milk, soy flour.

(Answer: Plain White Bread, although it's not that plain, is it?)

Soybean oil, water, egg yolk, sugar, salt, cultured nonfat buttermilk, natural flavors (soy), spices, less than 1% of: dried garlic, dried onion, vinegar, phosphoric acid, xanthan gum, modified food starch, monosodium glutamate, artificial flavors, disodium phosphate, sorbic acid and calcium disodium EDTA as preservatives, disodium inosinate and disodium guanylate.

(Answer: Ranch Dressing. I'm not a chemist, but I know the difference between these ingredients and the nutritious vegetables and salads that they want you to associate with their product. I make buttermilk dressing at home and I'm sure it wouldn't keep very long if I left it out at room temperature. My thanks to whomever invented buttermilk dressing. I love the flavor profile.

Pork, water, contains 2% or less of: corn syrup, salt, spices, sugar, monosodium glutamate.

(Answer: Breakfast Sausage. It tastes good. Too bad about the corn syrup and MSG.)

And finally we arrive at number 15...

Whole corn, vegetable oil (contains one or more of the following: corn, soybean, and/or sunflower oil), salt, cheddar cheese (milk, cheese cultures, salt, enzymes), maltodextrin, wheat flour, whey, monosodium glutamate,

buttermilk solids, romano cheese from cow's milk (part-skim cow's milk, cheese cultures, salt, enzymes, whey protein concentrate, onion powder, partially hydrogenated soybean and cottonseed oil, corn flour, disodium phosphate, lactose, natural and artificial flavor, dextrose, tomato powder, spices, lactic acid, artificial color (including yellow 6, yellow 5, red 40), citric acid, sugar, garlic powder, red and green bell pepper powder, sodium caseinate, disodium inosinate, disodium guanylate, nonfat milk solids, whey protein isolate and corn syrup solids.

(Answer: Cheese flavored tortilla chips.) Even under ideal circumstances, tortilla chips are not all that healthy. These were my number one favorite chips in the whole world. I've been eating them as long as I can remember. I'm sorry to see them go, but I have too much respect for my body to pump it full of Frankenfood. The weaning process took some time. I used to long for them, and buy them once in awhile anyway. Now I rarely buy them or miss having them. If the mood strikes me, I can make a plate of real nachos (or a platter).

Unless you're a chemist (or a lawyer), if this is the first time you've ever read ingredient lists, you're probably shell-shocked right now... eyes glazed, head spinning, nauseous.

It's been awhile since I've looked at ingredient lists, but I see the usual suspects coming up over and over: hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup, monosodium glutamate, lots of sodium, artificial flavors and colors. We also see curious things such as modified food starch and textured vegetable protein. Almost every item had soy products of one form or the other, and it's a safe bet that they are all from genetically modified soybean crops. It's all Frankenfood, and ruinous to your good health.

These manufacturers must be counting on two things: either people don't bother to read the ingredients or they read them and don't care. I'm guilty myself. I never used to read ingredient lists. I used to buy these products, and I just assumed they were nutritious. I used to enjoy eating them. I was raised that a nutritious breakfast consisted of a bowl of corn flakes (either frosted or with table sugar) with homogenized milk, a glass of milk on the side and two pieces of toast slathered with margarine.

I had an incident with my mom a few years back. She always made fudge for the holidays, which I was always happy to indulge in. Rather than ever bothering to learn how to make it myself, I just let it remain as a holiday tradition. About four years ago, I went to visit at her place during the holidays. We decided to make fudge together and after 40 years, she was finally going to show me how she makes it. So there we were, right in the middle of making fudge when mom opens the fridge and out comes the margarine! I asked her if we could use butter instead because I quit using margarine. She said that she always made it with margarine, and I never complained about it before (which I couldn't argue with). We proceeded to make the fudge and I felt like Dr. Frankenstein, stirring the sickening concoction. For reasons unknown, the batch didn't turn out and I didn't have to eat any. I haven't had fudge since and I don't miss it.

On a recent road trip, Anna and I traveled to the Mall of America. For nostalgia's sake (and since it was going to be my last) I decided to have a cinnamon roll at a place that's pretty famous for them. We shared one. As usual, it was scrumptious and I savored every bite. Afterward, we watched a batch getting made (because we make our own at home and wanted to see their technique). Much to my horror, the dough was rolled out and promptly slathered in margarine. It was going to be my last anyway, but that clinched it. I'm not saying their margarine is made with hydrogenated fats necessarily, but I don't knowingly eat margarine products anymore.

I know I can only speak for myself, but once I made the association with the ingredients and the tastes of the foods, I got to a point where I no longer found them appealing. I don't mean to come across as a food snob, but the processed food industry relies on heavy-handed doses of salt, sugar and fat to make their "foods" palatable. They clobber your taste buds over the head with them. The seasoning and spices are supposed to *enhance* the flavor of good food, not cover up the bad flavor of crappy food.

When I first started watching the Food Network (around 2003) I came across an episode of *Good Eats* featuring the hamburger. If you would have asked me at the time, I would have said that a hamburger is good; but if you doctor up the meat with onions, garlic salt, onion powder, chili powder, cumin, etc., it would be even better. The host, Alton Brown, said

to buy good quality meat and season it with nothing more than a little salt (in other words not to make a hamburger patty into a meatloaf). I was skeptical, and didn't get it at first. But I trusted Alton Brown and kept at it. I started buying better meat, and I started grinding it myself at home. Now, I'm happy to say, I'm making some of the best cheeseburgers I've ever had; and, I don't use anything besides salt to season the meat.

The Free Day

The real trick to a healthy and nutritious diet is to enjoy eating the foods that *are* good for you. As I introduced in the first chapter, focus on the positives. Place your focus on all the nutritious and delicious foods that you get to have, instead of the other stuff (that you don't think you should be having). It's not always easy to sit down to a healthy nutritious meal, but it *is* always worth it.



It's not my place to tell anyone what to do, or what they can and cannot eat. However, I can make suggestions and offer guidelines. If you're already eating a lot of empty calories and Frankenfood, and you switch to the good stuff, you will experience a dramatic and amazing transformation. Your health will improve, you will have more energy, and your body will love you for it. It will probably elevate your mood, your focus, and your self-esteem.

There are bound to be times when you will crave something not so good for you. For that reason, give yourself a free day once a week (or once every two weeks). Eat whatever you want. Eat as much as you want. Make a pig out of yourself if you want to. The best day of the week for a free day is usually Saturday. Enjoy your free day and do your best to eat clean during the rest of the week. If you need to start out with two free days per week, that's fine too. The important point

here is to set up a structure that is easy for you to follow. Foolproof. Set yourself up to ensure your success. In time, you will cut back on your free days because you'll enjoy the clean diet better than the unhealthy stuff.

There is a rationale behind the free day concept. A lot of people try to put themselves on strict diets. When they inevitably bust their diet, they beat themselves up about it (which serves no good purpose). They ruminate about how they failed and that they are failures. I live and preach the concept of living one day at a time (with the operant word being *living*). Every day that you eat clean is a smashing success. I always feel good about it when I do it myself. For a variety of reasons, there are going to be days when you don't eat clean. Since that's the way it is, I say go ahead and plan on it.

Adopt a mindset to think of your diet a week at a time. It should be quite comforting to know that if you're craving a brownie and hot-fudge ice cream sundae with whipped cream, or some other devilishly decadent comfort food, then you can have it on Saturday (your free day). If you wanted to, you could even think of it as a reward for eating clean the other six days of the week. Eating clean six days out of seven produces a success rate of nearly 86% for the week; a rate which most of us would consider a tremendous success. Five days out of seven produces a success rate of about 71%. That may not be as good but it is respectable. If you eat fresh wholesome nutritious food at least five days a week, it will be enough to turn the tide in favor of your good health and get you in the practice of making it a daily habit.

I suggest that you mull those figures around and come up with a solid plan that you know you can succeed at. Don't think about anything too radical. You either won't stick to it, or you will stress out and likely burn out. You really want to shoot for one free day per week (keeping it on the same day each week), working your way to one free day every other week. If you feel that one day only is too ambitious for you at this point, then give yourself two free days and re-evaluate after the first few weeks or month. This is the process of weaning yourself off.

It's A Lifestyle, Not A Diet

Notice that I haven't said anything about counting calories. I use the word "diet" to refer to eating, but not in the sense of eating less or doing without. I don't mean it in the sense of something you do temporarily. Eating nutritious whole food is essential to your good health, and your good health is something you want to make a permanent part of your lifestyle.

Not only will you look and feel better, you will enjoy better health. Your body will have all the nutrients it needs to keep you in tip-top shape, regulate your hormones, fight disease, boost your immunity, as well as strengthen your muscles and bones. By cutting back and/or eliminating the fast carbs, empty calories, Frankenfood, and other bad stuff, you will significantly reduce your risk for a whole slew of medical and health problems, including: Metabolic Syndrome, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, stroke, heart attack, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, and more. You can spend more of your time living your life and enjoying your good health instead of spending it at the doctor's office, the hospital and the pharmacy. As if all that were not enough, you'll be a happy camper. You'll feel great about yourself, and you'll have a lot less stress to deal with.

It's a lifestyle, and it can be yours if you choose it. It's the smart bet.

The Canned Vegetable Blues

I don't know what your experience with vegetables is, but I want to share mine with you. I love vegetables. I find it beneficial to load up my plate with huge servings of vegetables. It's more food to eat, it takes up more space on the plate, and it can make the difference between having seconds or not. All good things. I have to confess though, I wasn't always such a big fan.

I love the comedic wisdom of Earl Pitts, "If God wanted us to eat vegetables, He would have made them taste like Fried Chicken."

If you're not a big fan of vegetables, it's most likely because you're not used to having them cooked well. I grew up on canned vegetables. My mom would simply open the can de jour, dump it into a pan and heat it up on the stove. I didn't know that grocery stores even sold frozen vegetables. The only things I ever remember her buying in the produce aisle were salad ingredients. I'm sure there must have been exceptions, and my dad used to bring home produce from roadside farm stands. By and large though, it was canned heat and eat. I wasn't complaining, and I usually cleaned my plate, but they sure weren't anything to look forward to.

In my mom's defense, she usually worked full-time; and she always got dinner put on the table. I've just recently come to discover that mom isn't into cooking or learning new techniques/recipes. I guess most children grow up assuming that their mom is the best cook in the world. To my mom's credit she does have a few great dishes, including enchiladas, tacos, pot roast, and the Norman Rockwell big turkey dinner with all the trimmings. I had it good (except for those insipid canned vegetables).

During my 20s and 30s I would occasionally go nuts in the produce aisle and buy all the fresh produce my refrigerator would hold. I'd proudly bring it in from the car just knowing that I was going to be the healthiest guy in town (look out Jack La Lanne). I'd do my best to cook on it for a day or two, lose heart, give up, and the rest would sit there and rot till I threw it out.

I always had vegetables with home cooked meals, but I usually just opened up a can and made the best of it. I'm sure my favorite canned vegetable was corn (which figures since it's a grain). If you put enough butter, salt and pepper on it, it's going to taste good enough (same with canned peas). I had the same problem my mom had... I didn't know how to cook fresh vegetables. I only knew how to heat them up. I didn't know what I was missing. All that changed when I started watching the Food Network. It opened up a whole new world to me on how to cook fresh vegetables, which is a total game-changer.

With all the different vegetables and cooking methods, the possibilities are endless. There are salads, tossed or composed, which are limited only

to your imagination. I frequently sauté vegetables, which are always scrumptious. Don't be afraid to jazz up vegetables with bacon, nuts, cheese or eggs. You can cream vegetables, prepare them *au gratin*, add them to meatloaf, casseroles, stews and soups. You can make cream soups. I'll never forget the first time I made a Cream of Mushroom soup. I don't mean to brag, but I couldn't believe how good it was. You can do vegetable mashes in addition to white potatoes (sweet potatoes, parsnips, celery root and more). Many sauces start with finely chopped aromatic vegetables like onions, carrots, celery, bell peppers and garlic. You can take most vegetables and toss them in a bowl with a little olive oil, salt and pepper and grill them or roast them. If you've never tried roasted tomatoes, the flavor will blow you away. Of course, many vegetables are good deep fried; either plain, breaded or battered (tempura). You can grind vegetables just like meat and cook them up like hamburgers, or work them into a sausage. Some vegetables (like asparagus or broccoli) are great just steamed and perhaps topped with a Hollandaise sauce or some other satisfying sauce or dressing. You can process vegetables into purees like bean dip or hummus. (Somebody stop me.)



That's not an exhaustive list, but it's off the top of my head and should make the point that there are tons of great recipes for vegetables. I still like browsing through the meat case, but I really get my kicks in the produce aisle. You can handle the produce. I rarely ever buy canned vegetables (free at last), and my produce gets eaten before it has a chance to spoil. The point I want to emphasize is that vegetables aren't just good for you, but they can be made to taste good too. (Almost as good as fried chicken.)

The best place to get vegetables is at your local farmer's market. The people there will give you lots of great ideas for what to do with your produce. Next would be your local health food store, followed by your local supermarket. It's not a bad idea to keep some frozen vegetables handy, and in distant last

place would be canned. Of course, you can always grow your own vegetables; which are likely to be the best you've ever tasted.

Macronutrient Proportions

So far we've talked about calculating your protein needs based on your lean body mass and your average activity level. For purposes of illustration, we will suppose a 2,000 calorie per day diet and 100 grams of protein (which is quite a bit). We've also talked about eliminating most grains and limiting our carbohydrates to fruits and vegetables. Let's consider that we allot ourselves 100 grams of carbohydrates, which by the sheer bulk is a lot of healthy fruits and vegetables. At four calories per gram, our running total is 400 calories protein + 400 calories carbohydrates = 800 calories total. This working model leaves us 1,200 calories short of our 2,000 calorie target. Those 1,200 calories will have to come from sources of fat, many of which dovetail nicely with the sources of protein. Our model produces the following macronutrient profile:

20% Protein
20% Carbohydrates
60% Fat

Let's consider how that much fat could play out in a sample day. Most foods which are high in protein are also significant sources of fat. (All numbers are approximate.)

Eggs (2)	9 grams
Butter (3 tsp.)	11 grams
Roasted Cashews (1 oz.)	13 grams
Grilled Chicken Breast	3 grams
Cheddar Cheese (1 oz.)	9 grams
Salad Dressing (2 Tbs.)	16 grams
<u>Ribeye Steak (12 oz.)</u>	<u>72 grams</u>
Total	133 grams (1,200 calories)

I think this model reads pretty straightforward. A couple of eggs for breakfast. A very modest amount of butter for cooking, topping vegetables or bread. A small serving of nuts for a mid-morning snack. A grilled chicken breast for lunch. A small serving of cheddar cheese to have either as an afternoon snack or to go on a dinner salad. The dinner salad with dressing will enhance the enjoyment of a succulent Ribeye steak for dinner. Rich foods yes, but nothing over the top.

Popular wisdom would reverse the profile and make carbohydrates 60% with lots of grains (bread, pasta, rice). It would be virtually impossible to eat 1,200 calories worth of fruits and vegetables every day. Let's consider a few examples of our carbohydrate models:

Large Tossed Salad	20 grams	Large Tossed Salad	20 grams
Asparagus (20 spears)	12 grams	Broccoli (2 cups)	12 grams
Zucchini (2 cups)	14 grams	Spinach (2 cups)	15 grams
Carrots (1 cup)	11 grams	Cauliflower (1 cup)	3 grams
Apple	30 grams	Banana	27 grams
<u>Strawberries (1 cup)</u>	<u>13 grams</u>	<u>Blueberries (1 cup)</u>	<u>23 grams</u>
Total	100 grams	Total	100 grams

In both cases we have a very large tossed salad, two servings of fruit, and about 5 cups worth of delicious vegetables. Now, imagine eating all that in one day, and then try to imagine eating that three times over. I think you will agree that it is just way too much food. The people who would have you believe that you need 1,200 calories worth of carbs are implying that you need to get them primarily from grains. Let's take a quick look at a sugar/grains model to see what 1,200 calories looks like:

Bagel	56 grams
Corn Flakes (1 bowl)	36 grams
White Sugar (2 Tbs.)	24 grams
Glazed Doughnut	26 grams
White Rice (1 cup)	42 grams
Bread (2 slices)	30 grams
<u>Spaghetti (2 cups)</u>	<u>86 grams</u>
Total	300 grams (1,200 calories)

Granted, that's a lot of carbs, but it's not all that hard to do (which is what makes them dangerous). For breakfast you have a bagel with cream cheese and a modest bowl of cereal with sugar. Maybe some sugar in your morning brew. Mid-morning you treat yourself to a simple doughnut. Lunch finds you enjoying a big plate of your favorite oriental food with rice and noodles (add for the noodles), or perhaps a big burrito filled with meat, rice and beans (add for the tortilla and beans). For dinner you have a couple pieces of bread to go along with a salad and a plate of spaghetti.

Let's consider one more fruit and vegetable model:

Tossed Salad	10 grams
Zucchini (1 cup)	7 grams
Spinach (1 cup)	7 grams
Cauliflower (1 cup)	3 grams
Green Beans (1 cup)	8 grams
Banana	27 grams
<u>Strawberries (1 cup)</u>	<u>13 grams</u>
Total	75 grams (300 calories)

That is a lot of food and a lot of variety. It also just happens to be about the perfect amount for promoting weight loss. By comparison, 100 grams is likely to be too much food, and 50 grams might be too little. I would say go with 100 grams on days that you plan to be very active, and scale it down closer to 50 grams on days when you won't be that active. (What? You not being active?)

Now we have some good working sets of numbers and working samples of the amounts of foods they represent. Let's try them out in different combinations and see what we come up with. Again, all number are approximate, and all sample days will be based on 2,000 calories (which is easy enough to scale up or down as you think is right for you). I'm using 2,000 calories to keep the math easy. We can play around with fats and carbs, but our minimum protein requirements must be met.

In Plan A, let's consider that we will meet our protein needs with the eggs for breakfast, chicken breast for lunch and steak for dinner. Let's say

that works out to exactly 100 grams of protein and 400 calories. Let's further suppose that we get the fat calories in the example above, which is 133 grams of fat working out to 1,200 calories. That brings us up to 1,600 calories with 400 remaining.

Let's add to that one of our two fruit and vegetable examples at 100 grams and 400 calories. I'll pick the second version. That will bring us up to our full daily allotment and could look something like this:

Breakfast:	Two Eggs Roasted Cauliflower Banana
Snack:	Cashews
Lunch:	Grilled Chicken Breast Broccoli
Snack:	Cheddar Cheese
Dinner:	Large Tossed Salad with Dressing Ribeye Steak Spinach
Dessert:	Blueberries

In theory, this plan should meet all of our dietary requirements for a 2,000 calorie day, and it is based on 20% protein, 20% carbs and 60% fats. We get tons of variety, three meals, two snacks and dessert. We get to eat six times. There's just one problem... there's no bread, pasta, rice or potatoes. Who wouldn't enjoy some toast or an English Muffin with their morning eggs? Some rice would go really well with chicken and broccoli for lunch. Dinner could hardly be improved upon, but a nice potato (baked, mashed or fried) would really do the trick; and so would a couple glasses of wine. And, come to think of it, those blueberries would be even better on a shortcake and topped with sweetened whipped cream.

If we add any of those things, then we're going to go over our budget of 2,000 calories. We can't reduce our protein. In theory, we could reduce the fats, but who wants to have a salad without dressing? Who wants to cook/eat vegetables without butter? It's true that the cashews and cheese total about 200 calories, which could be eliminated and traded for carbs, but then you're going to be left without snacks, and you will be changing the macronutrient profile. 200 calories probably wouldn't even cover the wine, much less the food. Of course, that is to say nothing of sodas and soft drinks, or any of the typical junk food like candy and cookies.

You can take a few moments now and reflect on your usual diet. Go ahead... I'll wait. Do you routinely eat bread, potatoes, pasta and/or rice? How about candy and sweets? How about chips and crackers? How about sodas and soft drinks? How about alcohol? If you regularly consume these foods and drinks, then odds are that you are either exceeding your optimal daily caloric intake, or that you are falling short in proteins and/or fats. Even worse would be a combination such as too many bad carbs, not enough good carbs, not enough protein, too much fat **and** exceeding your daily allowance of calories.

If you're not sure what your daily allowance of calories ought to be, there is a rule of thumb that may get you close. Take what you believe is your ideal target weight and add a zero. If you think your weight should be 180 pounds, then add a zero to come up with 1,800 calories per day. If your target weight is 130 pounds, then you get 1300 calories per day. It's not an exact science, and you can always dial it in later; but that should get you in the ball park.

Remember, nothing too drastic. It's okay and actually preferred that you make changes gradually (except for the Frankenfood and other poisonous stuff which you should quit immediately). Don't feel bad about any poor choices you've made up till now. Accept it and move on. Look at the positive and use it as a learning experience. Make each and every new day count. You can only be successful one day at a time. You don't want to think in terms of doing without; you want to think in terms of finding healthy alternatives. Remember, it's a lifestyle, not a diet.

The Goddess Diana

When we contemplate calorie allotments and macronutrient proportions we find that the protein aspect is narrowly defined and determined. Without dialing it in, we can figure it at .75 gram times your lean body mass in pounds. If you don't know what your lean body mass is, you will need to calculate your body fat percentage. There are many free resources for this on the Internet. To get in the ballpark, refer back to the fitness levels we covered earlier. All things being equal women tend to have slightly higher body fat than men (not that there's anything wrong with that). These are rough guidelines just to get you in the ballpark until you can get more accurate information.

1.	Top Fitness	Less than 10% body fat
2.	Above Average	10% to 15% body fat
3.	Average	15% to 20% body fat
4.	Below Average	20% to 30% body fat
5.	No Fitness	Greater than 30% body fat

Let's make up a hypothetical female. Let's say she is fairly active and considers herself to be of average fitness on this scale. She is 5'6" and weighs about 140 pounds. She figures her body fat is about 20%, and her ideal target weight is 125 pounds. Let's say her name is Diana and she is highly motivated to get back in shape and put herself back on the market.

Following the guidelines mentioned here, her target daily caloric total should be about 1,250 calories. Sparse. Probably too low. To figure her body fat percentage, she multiplies $140 \times .20$ and comes up with 28 pounds body fat. Deducting the approximate body fat, she comes up with a lean body mass of 112 pounds ($140 - 28 = 112$). Her target weight is 125 pounds and so she figures to add one pound of lean muscle mass and loose about 14 pounds of body fat which is exactly half. Very ambitious. At 125 pounds with 14 pounds body fat, her body fat percentage would be about 11% which will have the men dropping like flies... especially with her makeover and new wardrobe.

Her goal is to lose about a pound a week, and so she rounds down to 12

weeks. Now she has something she can calculate. 14 pounds of fat at 3,500 calories per pound totals 49,000 calories, which divided by 12 weeks equals 4,084 calories per week or 584 calories per day. These deficit calories will come from metabolizing and burning stored body fat. She rounds that up to 600 calories per day, which represents her daily caloric deficit that she will need to generate, on average, to achieve her weight loss objective (as well as her other objectives). Very ambitious.

Diana looks up her Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) and finds her daily calorie needs to average about 1,400 calories per day. She figures to be fairly active and estimates that she will burn about 800 calories per day in daily activity, extra walks and work-outs at the gym three days a week. Her daily total calorie needs will average about 2,200 calories per day ($1,400 + 800 = 2,200$). Once Diana deducts her deficit calories, she determines that she should get about 1,600 calories per day from her diet. ($2,200 - 600 = 1,600$)

Diana multiplies her lean body mass (112 pounds) times .75 to determine her optimum protein level, which is 84 grams (336 calories). If she is to maintain her protein level to represent 20% (one fifth) of her daily calories, she calculates her total calories as ($336 \times 5 = 1,680$) calories. Now we have two figures (1,600 and 1,680) that are very close to each other. It's all about best guess, best estimates, and averages. As close as those two figures are, I would go with 1,600 and round the protein down to 320 calories ($1,600 \times .20 = 320$) which is 80 grams. We already know that the optimum amount of carbs is 75 grams but for roundness sake, let's round up to 80 grams which is also 320 calories. That just leaves the fat to calculate. Proteins (320 calories) plus Carbohydrates (320 calories) total 640 calories. 1,600 calories minus 640 leaves 960 calories from fat which is about 107 grams. ($960 / 9 = 106.6$). All told then, we have:

20%	Protein	320 calories	80 grams
20%	Carbs	320 calories	80 grams
60%	Fat	960 calories	107 grams
100%		1,600 calories	

Diana can follow this model and give herself feedback to get it dialed in to fit her individual tastes and preferences. If she does not get the results she wants, she can modify it. While it's true that most of us can improve our health by losing weight, the more important point is that we are feeding ourselves nutritious food. Don't get on the scale every day. Our bodies are over 50% water, and our weight fluctuates routinely. As I suggested earlier, let your clothes be your feedback barometer. When you have to take your belt in a notch, then you know you're losing weight.

Unless you're under a doctor's orders to have regular weigh-ins, I would recommend once a month at the most, or once every two weeks tops. If you have to weigh yourself at all, probably once a quarter would be plenty. You can use the changing of the seasons, first day of spring, summer, fall and winter. During the winter, the days are shorter and we tend to be less active. Unless we dial back our diet, we are likely to put on a few pounds during the winter, and then burn them off during the summer. Spring and fall are the two best times of the year to reflect, evaluate and prepare ourselves to make the transitions between winter and summer.

We all seem to be preoccupied with losing weight, but we hardly ever think about weight management (keeping the weight off after we've lost it). First you want to get to your ideal body composition. This is a point where you have maximum lean body mass and minimal body fat. At this theoretical point, you're dialed in. You don't want to gain more muscle, or lose more fat. You don't want to eat more food, or less food. You're fit and trim, brimming with vitality and energy, feeling great, the picture of good health. At this point you want to weigh yourself very methodically. Use an accurate scale and take three to four measurements a day over the course of a week. Average them out and you will have your ideal weight. Measure your body fat too which will likely be in the ten to fifteen percent range. Once you have established your ideal weight and determined your ideal proportion of lean mass to body fat, then write those figures down and keep them recorded someplace safe. In order to avoid the diet yo-yo, you want to make sure that you never exceed your ideal weight by more than five percent. Whenever your clothes start to feel snug, hop on the scale and see if you need to tone up a little. By monitoring this way, you never have to lose more than about five or ten pounds.

Fat Is Where It's At

Although I don't have direct knowledge of the whole history of humans on this planet, there is compelling evidence that we thrived long, long before the Agrarian Revolution. As far as we know, our ancient ancestors were hunter-gatherers and they did not plant crops. The winters were long and food was often scarce. Our bodies are programmed to store fat, which can be used for energy in the event that food is not available. This is to ensure our survival as a species. Our bodies are programmed to run just perfectly on the energy provided by burning fat (as distinct from carbs).

We need carbs too, but it is a fallacy that carbs should be our primary source of energy. The fallacy is born of bad science and perpetuated by those who have a financial stake in people continuing to buy their grains and grain products. Those people have such a powerful lobby, they effectively control the markets, the media, the schools, and much of that which we call government. Part of their agenda is to make sure that anyone who comes out against grains as the "Staff of Life" is labeled as a kook. It is just the same as how mainstream medical labels hypnotherapists, practitioners of alternative therapies and holistic treatments as quacks and charlatans, and how big pharma labels nutritional supplements as being a complete waste of time and money (or even dangerous). I see the same theme over and over again. See my book on the Fate of America.

As I've said, I don't know everything and I don't have all the answers. I do like to keep an open mind and think for myself. One thing I haven't said is that we pick our battles in this life. I'm not going to battle the food industry, but I feel like I owe it to myself to look at the evidence, question the science, question my assumptions, question authority and question the conventional wisdom in my search for the truth. I don't have an agenda to tell anyone what to do or think, but I do have an agenda to share what I have learned in the hope that people can benefit from the information. It seems to me that people are being lied to and misled by the very people whom they trust (i.e., parents, teachers, politicians, doctors, etc.). The problem is that they don't know the truth either, or they're in on it (profiting by it). I wouldn't call it a crusade, but I would call it a worthy

cause. Search out the truth for yourself. If I'm wrong, I'll be happy to admit it.

It's not just enough to argue that our bodies are quite efficient at burning fat for energy, but it is actually harmful to our health to try to fuel our bodies with grains. Remember, this is not a wholesale indictment of carbohydrates (lest I be painted as a mindless carbo-phobe). Fruits and vegetables are excluded from any derogatory comments, while processed grains and sugars are not. They're tantamount to poison.

The proof is in the pudding. Most sources of protein contain within them a significant amount of dietary fat. That's the way nature made them. We know that we need protein and we can't get whole proteins without fat. We have to eat fat. Fat is necessary for the metabolism of fat soluble vitamins such as A, D, E and K. Fat is necessary to make calcium available to the body, especially the bones and teeth. Fat deposits protect our bodies and organs and help us regulate our temperature. Fat prolongs the digestion of food, which doles out the energy we need more evenly over time and helps us feel full longer. The list goes on and on.

I find it tragic that there are millions of people all over the country with refrigerators full of skim milk, low-fat this, non-fat that and fat-free whatever. Ironically, those products are more expensive than full-fat versions, and people are happy to pay the higher prices because they've been sold a bill of goods that dietary fat causes heart disease. Meanwhile, they are told by their government and other organizations that they should be eating at least six servings of grains every day. If our hospitals are full of senior citizens who are significantly overweight and sick, it's because they fattened up on too many grains and sugars. I don't mean that as a put down to anyone who is overweight. I mention it to point out that it is all the result of bad science; but they keep going along with it—despite the evidence right in front of their eyes.

It is true that some people overeat fats. People who overeat fats may grow obese and are at risk to suffer whatever ills that are associated with obesity. We have a responsibility to consume a reasonable and nutritious amount of fats; of which the same can be said for any particular foods.

The Insulin Response

Going by what we have covered so far, we know or suspect that we absolutely must get about 15% to 25% of our daily nutrients in the form of useable proteins. All the rest of our daily nutrients are going to come from carbs or fats; both of which have the ability to be used by the body to provide the energy we need to function and live. We need both and our bodies are programmed and trained to use both. The question is what if we get too much of one or the other? If we have to err on the side of getting too many carbs or too many fats, which is the best way to go?

As it turns out, our brains are big energy hogs. It makes sense. It is a very large organ and it takes a huge amount of blood to give it all the oxygen and sugar (fuel) it needs to function. You can sit around and not use your legs, but you can't ever go without using your brain. It's Command Central. It's always working. Given that our brains are dependent on our blood supply for its energy, it is at our mercy in terms of what happens if there is too much sugar, or not enough sugar in the blood at any given time. Neither condition is good. If there is too much sugar in the blood it can become toxic. If there is not enough sugar in the blood, the brain can essentially shut down and put us into a coma. Luckily for us, we have some built-in protective countermeasures.

If our blood sugar gets too high, the pancreas secretes a hormone called insulin into the bloodstream. The primary role of insulin is to shuttle the sugar out of our blood and into the cells where it can either be used as energy right now, converted to glycogen to be used later, or converted to body fat for indefinite storage. People who follow a low-fat diet tend to eat more carbohydrates to make up the difference. They usually can't go for more than an hour or two before they have to have more carbs. As a result of the steady supply of carbs, the glycogen stores are always topped-off and full. The result is that excess sugar which can't be used promptly is always ferried off to the fat storage areas. As carbs go, the faster they are in terms of sugar hitting your bloodstream, the more insulin is going to be released to deal with it. Blood sugar spikes are bad, and so are the resulting insulin spikes. We'd like to keep everything balanced and even.

If your blood sugar gets too low, the pancreas secretes a hormone called glucagon, which directs the liver to release sugar (from our glycogen stores) and make more sugar available in the blood to feed our brains and bodies. In addition to increasing sugar in the blood, glucagon helps release fats and proteins from our cells which can be used for energy and building.

For purposes of our discussion, the energy from food can either be used promptly or stored as fat. Insulin is the hormone that is responsible for directing the liver to convert excess carbs to fat storage. Because fast carbs can be absorbed into the bloodstream so fast, they will always trigger an insulin spike (to protect the brain); and the result is more of the food going to fat storage than if your insulin level was moderate or low. We've already talked about creating a caloric deficit to shed unwanted pounds of body fat. If you're wanting to lose weight, the last thing you want to do is add on more pounds.

If you want to eliminate the insulin spikes and surges, you must eliminate the fast carbs. There just isn't any getting around it. To understand weight gain is to understand the role of insulin. It is the primary regulator of fat storage. I encourage you to learn more about this most important topic. I highly recommend a book by Eric Berg entitled *The 7 Principles of Fat Burning*. Another book I have found to be extremely helpful is *The Schwarzbein Principle* (1999) by Diana Schwarzbein, M.D. and Nancy Deville.

The best way to meet the remainder of our dietary needs is fat. Fat is converted to energy without creating an insulin spike or surge. Fat does not trigger insulin and neither do most proteins. The conventional wisdom and most mainstream sources insist that we must have grains to meet our blood sugar demands. That is just not true. The body is more than happy and able to burn fat as a source of fuel. Additionally, dietary fat slows down the digestive process which produces a longer lasting and more even dose of nutrients into the body. As a result, the cravings, mood swings, blood sugar spikes and crashes all go away. You feel calm and at peace.

I mentioned earlier that people tend to bust their diets because they give in to the irresistible carb cravings. Speaking for myself and all that I have learned, I have found that a diet of steady meals consisting of quality proteins, healthy fats and nutritious carbs completely takes away the carb cravings. The meals are satisfying and the fats keep you full longer. Once you experience this kind of peaceful calm and sense of being in control, then you may discover that the old carb cravings are just a bad habit, not unlike cigarettes. Bottom line—our bodies were made to run on fats as our primary fuel source. Now we must recondition our bodies to return to burning fat as their preferred fuel. We can only do this through proper diet and nutrition—and that can only be done one day at a time.

Every meal counts.

We may have tried to slap Mother Nature in the face and run our bodies on grains and other fast carbs as the primary source of fuel; but in the process it seems we have become the fattest (and most smug) bunch of people on the planet, with epidemic obesity, diabetes and other nutritional/dietary deficiencies and disorders. Did I mention all the pills people are popping as a result of their poor diets? As a nation, we're wasting billions upon billions of dollars every year which could have otherwise been spent to improve everyone's standard of living.

When we see the connection between food and drugs, it begins to make sense why we have a Food *and* Drug Administration (and not in a good way). Some people refer to it as the Federal Death Administration and we'd be better off without it. It exists for the benefit of the multi-national food and drug companies, and it is chock full of politicians and lawyers who have nothing better to do than sit around all day and figure out how they can legally mislead us and lie to us—all in the name of profits. If you follow their advice, you do so at your peril.

Chapter Four

Dieting Traps and Tricks

When I buy cookies I eat just four and throw the rest away. But first I spray them with Raid so I won't dig them out of the garbage later. Be careful, though, because that Raid really doesn't taste that bad.

~Janette Barber

In the last chapter, we focused on food and the science behind it. This chapter will focus more on the practical aspects of dieting, shopping, and managing food. We will also cover some guidelines, tips and tricks that will help you achieve your goals. If you jumped to this chapter first, I advise you to read chapter three first because we will be drawing from that information and using it here as well.

Let's revisit our hypothetical woman, Diana. She has some weight loss goals and has started a diet of 1,600 calories per day, based on (20% protein, 20% carbs & 60% fat). If we refer back to our samples, we could come up with a sample day like:

Breakfast:	Two Poached Eggs over Spinach and Cauliflower topped with Hollandaise Sauce
Snack:	Apple
Lunch:	Tossed Salad with Mesquite Grilled Chicken and Chipotle Mayo Dressing
Snack:	Roasted Almonds
Dinner:	Pan Seared Steak with pan sauce Sauteed Zucchini, Green Beans and Tomatoes
Dessert:	Strawberries and Cream

I don't know about you, but the last thing in the world I would call that is a diet. That looks like pretty good eats to me. It even strikes *me* as too much food and I wrote it. I had to triple check the math. I think this sample pretty well illustrates the point that eating nutritious whole food is its own reward. Just like enjoying good health is its own reward. Whether you want to lose weight or just maintain your weight, the types and quality of your food should remain a constant. The question is only how many calories to consume if you're wanting to create a caloric deficit.

So, any discussion about dieting will start with the premise that we are only going to eat nutritious whole foods. We're going to eat clean. It's going to be our new daily habit. If we want to reduce our body weight/girth, we will need to reduce our calorie consumption and increase our activity level. If we do those three things, we are guaranteed to lose weight/girth and enjoy better health in the process. No doubt about it.

When I say increasing our activity level, I'm not talking about grueling hours in the gym on the treadmill or stationary bike. I'm talking about pleasant daily walks, and getting out to play. The activity needs to be something that you enjoy, or you will not stick with it. Getting out walking and having fun is rather the point of wanting to get in better shape. How about the simple joy of chasing your children around the yard? How about remembering how much fun it was to run and jump off a pier into a lake, or learning how to ride a wheelie on your bike. Of course children are more active than adults, but the spirit of playing and having fun doesn't have to die just because we grow up.



Some people will say (you might be thinking this right now), "Sure, I'd like to get out, go play and have fun, but I don't have the time." I say make the time. Make it a priority. If you insist on being one of those people who doesn't have the time to eat right and get regular physical activity, then just know that your health is going to suffer for it.

We've all had things come up in life that make diet and exercise pale in comparison. Life happens. But, we're really asking for trouble if we routinely ignore our diet and exercise. Once we start to make it a habit, then we get used to it and it becomes normal and comfortable.

I would encourage you to stop and reflect on your daily habits. Which habits are the most important to you? How many habits would you say are beneficial to your good health? How many aren't? Which habits would you be willing to change?

Anna and I were talking yesterday about drinking plain water with our meals. That's a habit. We used to drink soft drinks with dinner every night; a habit we were very comfortable with. The idea of drinking plain water sounded terribly boring and austere. For a while we were drinking diet sodas and thought we were being exceptionally clever for saving the calories. All that came to a screeching halt when we were introduced to the idea that artificial sweeteners are poisonous excitotoxins. We promptly quit those, and we could tell if someone served us a diet soda by mistake. They have a certain "whang" as we like to call it (although that may not be a real word). We went back to real sugar (although high fructose corn syrup is more likely). Then, wouldn't you know it, we got introduced to the idea that sugar is poisonous too. Ouch. We didn't want to hear that. We promptly weaned ourselves off sodas.

We've been drinking water for about six years now, and we don't miss the sodas at all. The syrupy sweet drinks don't compete for the flavor of our food, it spares us the empty calories, it spares us the insulin spike, it saves a lot of money, and it's better for our health. Believe me, we're not running for sainthood or anything; I'm just giving an example of changing a daily habit. Between the two of us, at one can a day each, over six years... that's 4,380 cans of soda. At 160 calories each, that's 700,800 calories, or the rough equivalent of 200 pounds of body fat (100 pounds for each of us). One can is 12 ounces. Many people who drink soda every day, have three or four times that amount (or more).

This example illustrates another important point, every little bit matters. It all adds up. Every time you walk extra steps, pass on a

doughnut or cookie, push your plate back with food on it, wash your car by hand, and so forth, it adds up. Imagine if you laid out a couple of bucks on a table or dresser every day. Two bucks some days, 5 bucks on others. It wouldn't be long before you had a big pile of cash. You'd begin to wonder how much is there. You'd begin to worry that someone might steal it. You'd start to wonder what you will do with it. Invest it? Blow it? Buy something with it? Donate it to charity? Before long, it would turn into a significant amount of cash, although it was nothing more than a paltry few bucks a day over time. It starts as something you would barely miss, and grows into something quite valuable.

You could be saying the same thing a year from now about a significant weight loss. Twenty calories here, thirty calories there, and it adds up. A deficit of a mere 300 calories a day adds up to more than 30 pounds of body fat loss in a year. 500 calories per day equals exactly one pound per week (or a whopping 52 pounds in a year).

Slow And Steady Wins The Race

The funning thing about kicking off a new diet is that we want to get spectacular results, and we want it right now. We are always very excited to get started, and we want to get great results before we lose our motivation. It's not the least bit uncommon to lose eight to ten pounds in the first few weeks. That's exciting. There's nothing wrong with jump starting a diet, as long as it is not too extreme. You can skip a meal here and there, put in some extra sessions at the gym, whatever. You can make sure that every bite of food that passes your lips is super nutritious, and create a massive daily caloric deficit. When we're that excited and motivated, our thinking goes that if losing two pounds a week is good, then wouldn't five pounds a week be even better?

I say no, it's not better. You can find people who will disagree with me, and I highly recommend that you check out the facts for yourself. But, it's just not healthy to lose more than about two pounds per week. It puts too much stress on the body. I know that it's hard to get excited about losing weight s-l-o-w-l-y. But the more important point is that you are losing the

weight and improving your health, not how fast you're doing it. That may not sound exciting, but it should sound reassuring.

If you eat right, get lots of activity and lose more than two pounds per week, I'm not going to complain. Everyone's metabolism and body compositions are different. Some weeks you might lose five pounds and then other weeks not lose any. Two pounds per week is an average. Your water weight will fluctuate and you might add on some lean muscle mass while you're at it. Don't ever get discouraged. If you know it's the right thing to do to eat only nutritious foods, then be content that you are doing what is best for your good health. Keep at it and don't ever stop. Your body will whip itself into whatever shape is appropriate for your activity level. That's the natural way and there's not much point in trying to fight it. A world-class athlete can kick back on a couch, have a few beers and chill out in front of the tube with a pizza, but a couch potato can't expect to have the body of a top athlete. If you can imagine the body you want, and can see it clearly in your mind's eye, then I believe you *can* achieve it. I don't like to speak in metaphysical terms, but the better idea you have of your ideal fitness and shape, the more likely you are to manifest it.



It's also important that you keep the weight off. You don't want to be one of those people who loses a lot of weight and then puts it all back on. As you can imagine, that's not healthy either. If you happen to be one of those people who has already lost a lot of weight and put it back on, then take heart because this time is going to be different. What's different this time is that you're not going to lose the war on fighting back your irresistible cravings for carbohydrates.

I can tell you from personal experience that a high-fat diet keeps your hunger pangs level and even. You feel calm and in control. Your blood sugar level stays more even and so you don't experience the highs and lows of carb

spiking and crashing.

I have a friend who I suspect is riding the carb spiking/crashing roller coaster. Let's say her name is Beatrice. She is a petite woman in her early 60s who loves the outdoors and is very active. She walks her dog every day, hikes frequently, enjoys fishing and camping, and does grueling boot camp style workouts almost every morning. Hearing all that, you'd think she would have a fabulous body. You'd be wrong. Beatrice is overweight and has a big belly. Being petite, she has had to battle her weight all her life. Right after we met her, she invited us to dinner for Chili Verde. We brought salsa and corn chips. She said, "I wish you wouldn't have brought those. If I have them in the house, I'll sit and eat the whole bag."

We also learned right away that Beatrice constantly weighs herself; and if she puts on a pound or two, she really beats herself up about it. I told her to get rid of the scale but she would have no part of it. I think her workouts are penal; as though she feels like she needs to punish herself for putting on weight.

Being as active as she is, the only reasonable explanation for her body composition is her high-carb low-fat diet. She is one of those people who thinks dietary fat is bad and should be avoided as much as humanly possible. Everything in her fridge is either fat free, low-fat, skim, diet, etc... All crap as far as I'm concerned. She will get her protein, but whatever calories she lacks from fat sources can only be made up by carbs. Carbs and grains which, conveniently, she is not averse to. Even though she is fastidious about her weight, she doesn't think twice to have breakfast cereal, English Muffins, bread, tortillas, rice and beans, and so on. I really hate to say anything bad about my friends, but she is the textbook case of a carb-junkie. If it comes time for her next dose of carbs, she better get them or else.

Right after we met her, she was driving us around one day showing us around the area. It rolled around lunch time and she wanted to stop for lunch. We didn't. She got downright cranky and insisted that we stop. We stopped. I don't mean to put her down, but we learned quick that if Beatrice determines that it's time to eat, then she's going to eat. We've

known other people like that. If I have to put off a meal a few hours or skip it entirely, it doesn't bother me. I don't need to panic or get cranky and throw a fit. When I see people doing that, I get put off. I'm all in favor of eating, and it's perfectly natural to want to eat when you're hungry. But, if you can't put off eating for an hour or so without throwing a temper tantrum, then you might have a carb addiction.

The thing about fast carbs that most people don't want to acknowledge is that they are essentially sugar. Refined grains, flours, sugars and so forth hit your bloodstream so fast that you get a rush. It raises your serotonin and boosts your mood. It makes you feel good. It gives you a high. When you're craving that high, and you don't get it... look out. It makes no difference if the sugar is in the form of a doughnut, a candy bar, a bowl of cereal, a bagel, or a syrupy coffee drink. It's all sugar and if you're addicted to it, then this would be a good time to be honest about it and decide if being addicted to carbs for the rest of your life is worth it. I like those foods too, but I know that if I make a habit of eating them every day, then my health will suffer for it. I still have them once in awhile, so don't feel like you have to give them up forever.

Getting back to our friend Beatrice. She gives herself her carb fixes, because she has been forced to rationalize that carbs/grains must be healthy (since fat is bad). What she tries to do is go without fats. The longer she can go without enjoying some fat, the better she feels about herself. But, then she will overcompensate and binge eat, like the big bag of corn chips, or a jar of peanut butter. Then she feels terrible about it and hence the grueling workouts and constant weight monitoring. And, as if she didn't have enough difficulty trying to manage her mood swings, blood sugar levels, body weight, body composition, and her hormonal imbalances, she makes it all even more difficult by drinking hard liquor. I'm not saying she's an alcoholic or anything, but on occasion, if she feels like she's blown her diet anyway, she might turn to the bottle for some comfort. Knowing—and not caring—that in the morning she's going to feel bad about it and do her butt-kicking workout (as a punishment).

She is living proof that you can't make up for a bad diet with exercise. She is in pretty good shape, but, sadly, it's her big belly that tells the tale.

That's where our bodies like to store extra fat and shuttle toxins away from the internal organs. There's a corollary; toxins and other pollutants are stored in fat. So keep that in mind when you're eating fat. Most people like to recommend grass-fed, free-range, organic and natural meats. It's not healthy to eat the fat from meat and dairy that's been all pumped up full of chemicals, hormones and whatever else those big corporations think will improve their bottom line. I can't stress this strongly enough: know where your food is coming from.

We've tried to talk to Beatrice and reason with her, but she already has all the answers. She's tried low-carb before and the vegetables gave her gas. If you ask her, she's not stubborn or close-minded. She claims to follow some weight management system that's based on assigning point values to different foods. She's got it all memorized, and she just knows when she's staying within the guidelines of the system. Isn't that convenient? She knows that dietary fat is bad and grains are healthy, so there's no point in discussing it. We gave up. She's still a very good friend, and we always enjoy spending time with her.

It's because we care for her so much that we hate to see her have such a rough go of it all the time. Instead of just eating a nutritious diet and otherwise not giving it any thought, she seems to have created a life for herself that is obsessed with monitoring her weight, deprivation, binging, and punishing; and when all that gets to be too much to deal with, finding some relief in the bottle. We've been friends for over six years now, and it's obvious that her condition isn't going to improve without changing her diet. Her behavior has been so consistent over the years, I am forced to conclude that she must like things the way they are (punitive or not).

Reprogramming Your Metabolism

As I suggested in the last chapter, I don't recommend that you concern yourself with counting calories, weighing your portions, or calculating macronutrient proportions. These are tools you can use to get you going in the right direction, but it's really best to rely on your body for feedback. The real key to the whole thing is to avoid the insulin spikes. We're going

to do that by training our bodies to run on fat, which is what they were designed to do in the first place.

You want to anchor your meals with a high quality protein. You can have a different protein three times a day every day for a year and not repeat; so there is lots of variety. The more common sources are beef, chicken, pork, fish, eggs and cheese. Other sources include turkey, lamb, goat, bison, elk, deer, pheasant, duck, quail and other wild game. As far as portion sizes go, let your appetite be your guide. At the small end we have three to four ounces. My large eggs weigh about two ounces each. I usually have two or three eggs every morning. At the large end we have a pound (16 ounces). What most people consider a large steak is 12 ounces. So the average size of a portion will usually land between six to eight ounces, which is about the size of a boneless skinless chicken breast. I buy those in bulk at Costco, which are individually wrapped and quick frozen. They are brined so they stay juicy. They're delicious and super convenient on days that I don't feel like cooking anything more elaborate. Another super convenient food is canned tuna. Open a can, whip up a little tuna salad with mayonnaise and your favorite veggies (onions, celery, pickles), and make it into lettuce wraps. They're like little tacos. Serve them with some sliced cucumbers for crunch.

It is absolutely imperative that you have a quality protein at every meal.

You will want to accompany your protein with a generous serving of vegetables, which will make up the bulk of your meals. That bulk will take the place of potatoes, rice, pasta, noodles or bread. As a rule, meats and vegetables go down better with fats. Some meats have the fat built right in. Vegetables can either be cooked in fats, mixed with fats, or topped with fats (butter, oils, sauces, etc).

We're going to rely on fruits and vegetables to round out our nutritional needs such as minerals and vitamins as well as blood glucose for the brain, proteins to meet our building block needs, and fats to meet our energy needs. This type of a well-balanced meal is necessary to keep our insulin and glucagon levels balanced.

If you are in weight loss mode, you absolutely should not have any grains or refined carbs, including sugar (or alcohol). You might consider agave nectar or stevia (which is an herbal supplement). Anna has been using stevia for years and it is now gaining in popularity.

During the transitional phase where you are coaching your body to burn fat instead of carbs, you may experience some withdrawal and/or moodiness. This could be due to low serotonin levels. You may want to consider taking a serotonin enhancement supplement such as L-Tryptophan or 5-HTP. Talk to your health care professional.

Generally speaking, the body does not like sudden changes. If it's used to getting a steady stream of grains and fast carbs (insulin spike city), and all of the sudden you stop, it could take your body some time to figure out what's going on. It won't take long and you will get through it. Go back a few pages and look at Diana's sample day. I don't think that's too terrible to have to go through.

Don't forget that you have your free day, which you can use to get all your cravings satisfied. All your itches scratched. A free day with lots of insulin spiking is counterproductive to losing weight; but it's better to plan on satisfying your lingering carb cravings without busting your diet, than it is to be faced with the prospect of never having your favorite foods again. Don't be surprised if you find yourself passing on some of your free days.

If you intend to have a lot of carbs and spike your insulin, it's best to have your carbs with protein and keep your fats as low as possible. High insulin means high fat production, which applies to carbs and fats. The most popular way to have spaghetti, for example, is with a tomato sauce (which is low fat) and meat balls (protein) on the side. Probably one of the fattest dishes ever created is Fettuccini Alfredo; but it is so delicious, that the thought of never having it again is just unbearable. I would only have it at home and get the best ingredients to make the fettuccini from scratch. It goes in the "once a year" category for me (like Pecan Pie).

Here's a little tip: Make every calorie count. If you're going to indulge in something that isn't good for you, make it the finest of its kind. Be it

donuts, nachos, pizza, chips, burgers, garlic bread, cinnamon rolls, pasta, cookies, cake, ice cream, french fries, potato salad, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, etc... I haven't given up any of those foods; but on the rare occasions that I do have them, I make sure that I only have the best. Don't settle for less.

For the misguided people who are on a low-fat high-carb diet, the eating plan suggested here is going to be quite different from what you're used to. It won't be less, it will just be different. A lot of people, however, are on a high-fat high-carb diet. To someone who is already eating a lot of fats, this eating plan is also going to be different, although it may seem like less. Most people who eat high-fat high-carb, don't eat many fruits and vegetables, and they may be coming up short in the protein department too. They will have to learn to substitute vegetables for grains, get high quality protein, and most likely, have to transition from processed foods, trans fats, and hydrogenated oils to healthy fats and oils (like nuts, extra-virgin olive oil, avocados, and coconut oil).

Some people may not like anything unless it is fried and covered in salt or sugar. We can work with that too. You may have to take baby steps, but the important thing is to get going in the right direction.

One of the best (and most delicious) tools to help people make the switch is the humble tossed salad. I say make it spectacular. Make it an event. It can be it's own meal. Toss lots of greens, tomatoes, green onions, cucumbers, radishes, peppers, whatever trips your trigger. Enhance with meats, cheeses, eggs, olives, nuts, seeds, artichoke hearts, or whatever else strikes your fancy. Toss the whole thing with a delicious dressing. Make a creamy blue cheese, buttermilk ranch, thousand island, or a zesty vinaigrette. That's something you can look forward to any day.

Get inspired on the prospect of cooking and eating vegetables. Go to a bookstore or library and flip through the recipes. Watch the Food Network. Go to a good restaurant and have the chef whip you up some high quality vegetable dishes. As I said earlier, life is too short to eat bad food. Don't just open up a can of green beans, if you don't really like them. You won't stick with it. We can't get around our nature to seek pleasure

and avoid pain. It's foolish to try and a guaranteed formula for failure. Make it a priority right now to come up with at least a dozen good vegetable recipes that you like and look forward to eating. I'll throw out a dozen suggestions:

1. Steamed broccoli or asparagus topped with Hollandaise sauce.
2. Cream of mushroom soup (or cauliflower, broccoli, etc.).
3. Creamed spinach.
4. Cole slaw.
5. Caesar salad.
6. Green beans sauteed in bacon fat with crumpled bacon on top.
7. Stuffed mushrooms, tomatoes, or bell peppers.
8. Stuffed zucchini (like twice baked potatoes).
9. Pea salad.
10. Split pea soup.
11. Cauliflower Au Gratin.
12. Ratatouille.

You can find recipes like these in a good cookbook, such as the Better Homes and Gardens Cook Book. I'm sure they're all over the Internet, and you can check my website for links. If you don't know how to cook, get in the kitchen with somebody who does and have him or her help you learn. It could be a relative, friend, a friends' spouse, or even a friend of a friend. Sign up for cooking classes if they are available. If all else fails, offer to pay a professional chef to teach you (and perhaps a few of your friends). Do whatever it takes. The trick is to bring out the flavor of the vegetables, which is usually done by bringing out their sugars (as in sautéing) or roasting them as in a hot oven (dry heat). About the worst thing you can do to cook vegetables is boil them in water. Water is a solvent and it will leach out the flavor and many of the nutrients.

I'll never forget one particular occasion when I attempted to make a big pot of chicken noodle soup. I thought the secret to a good pot was a long all-day cook. So, I filled up a big pot with water and added the ingredients: diced carrots, celery, onions, and a couple of diced boneless-skinless chicken breasts. I probably added some garlic salt and whatever spices or

herbs I thought would be good. I cooked it for hours on end and thought it was going to be the best soup I ever tasted. I served up a big bowl and proceeded to wrap my soup-suckers around that first glorious spoonful.

It had no flavor whatsoever! I couldn't believe it. I knew all the right stuff was in the pot. How could it not taste great? The broth didn't have any flavor, and neither did any of the ingredients. It was a complete disaster. Now that I know how to cook, I have to look back and laugh.



I once dated a girl who made a pot of chicken noodle soup from scratch and it was the best I ever had. It was over 25 years ago and I think it's *still* the best I ever had. I was so impressed, I asked her to make it again and let me watch (kinky, no?). She put some water in a stock pot and put in a whole chicken! I was shocked. I had never even heard of chicken stock, much less how to make it. It was an all-day event and she (Brenda) did everything right, even making the noodles from scratch. I don't remember why we stopped seeing each other, but I'll never forget how much I enjoyed eating that chicken noodle soup.

Eliminating Temptation

The best way to successfully resist temptation is to avoid it in the first place. If there is a particular food that I know I would be tempted to eat if it were in the house, then I don't buy it at the store. I figure why take the risk? That's one more good reason to quit buying anything that's heat & eat. At least if you have to make something from scratch it will slow you down. "Do I really want this pizza? Yes, yes I do." I give my pizza dough an overnight rise and I have to make a special trip out of town just to buy the pepperoni. So, it takes a few days worth of effort for me to get pizza.

Another good example is bread. If I have bread in the house, I'm going to eat it. I can't stand the thought of food going to waste. So I've kind of made a rule with myself that I can only have bread if I make it myself. That would slow anyone down. The flip side of that coin is that I could make bread every day if I wanted to, but I don't. I know I don't want to be eating bread every day, so I don't make it that often. Maybe once a month, or less. When I do make bread, I try to incorporate whole grains, seeds and nuts. (Although whole grains raise insulin levels too.) Other things to avoid are candy and junk food.

It's real simple. When you get to the grocery store... just don't buy them. Keep your money and your good health. If you want ice cream, make your own. If you want oatmeal cookies, make your own. If you want a peanut butter cup, make your own.

I love the old bit by comedian Louis Anderson, "I don't know why they call them 'Almost Home' cookies, they should call them 'Almost Out of the Store' cookies." If you can't make it out of the store without a bag of your favorite cookies, then here's what you can do. Put them in an ice chest on a high shelf out in the garage that you need to set up a ladder to reach. That will slow you down a minute or two. Or, take them out of the bag and wrap them individually and freeze them. If you have a craving for something sweet, have some fruit (try apples and peanut butter).

When you get to your grocery store, you're pretty much going to want to stay around the perimeter of the store. The perimeter usually holds the meat case, dairy case, eggs, service deli/bakery, and produce. In the middle of the store is where you tend to find canned foods, boxed foods, frozen foods, mixes, chips, soda, cereal, cookies and so on. Don't go down the aisle with the sugar and cake mixes... there be dragons!

Never ever go to the grocery store when you're hungry. You've probably heard that before and it's true. Once you get in the habit of only buying nutritious whole foods it won't matter anymore. Until then, give yourself every possible advantage and stack the odds for success in your favor. Shop alone. Don't take your children with you.

It's best to shop from a list. You can make a note to stock up on good sale items, make sure you don't forget something important (limes, garlic, chiles) and line out your shopping for maximum time-saving efficiency. I'm into walking and getting exercise, but walking back and forth across a crowded supermarket is not my idea of a good time. I usually carry a basket (rather than push a cart) and check out through the express lane.

Menu planning won't happen by accident. When you come across a recipe you want to try, you need to make sure you have all the ingredients. You probably won't be able to remember everything while you are in the store, and it's terribly inefficient to make a special trip back to the store because you forgot one critical item (cream cheese). So I like to consider menu planning at least two or three days ahead (a week is ideal). I can sit in the comfort of my home and decide what I want to make. Then I go through the ingredient lists to see what I need to buy. I write it down and off I go.



I consider it a moral victory to get in and get out of the grocery store quickly and with only what I went for. The supermarket is designed intentionally to get us walking back and forth through the store; because the more time we spend in the store, walking past end-caps and stuff piled up in the middle of the floor, the more stuff we are likely to buy. On occasion you might happen across a great deal on something you can use, but for the most part the stuff they want you to notice is the stuff that makes them the most money. They want you to impulse buy, which is why they always have candy bars and magazines at the check-out lane. Even electronics and hardware stores have candy and sodas at the check-out lanes. It works for their business model (as long as you're in the store

anyway) if they can clip you on your way out of the store for an extra 89 cents or 1.59 on something that you didn't have any intention of buying. They especially love it if you associate going back and shopping at their store with getting your favorite candy bar fix. (I'm not jaded, honest.)

I had a particularly entertaining morning at a gas station a few years back. I went there about 7:00 a.m. to get my car smog-checked. It took nearly an hour and since it was cold out, I waited inside the little convenience store. I got to witness an endless parade of people coming in to pay for their gas and buy their morning junk food (all carbs). One person would buy soda and candy and the next would buy doughnuts and iced tea. It got to be quite amusing because there was candy right there at the register too. They'd wait in line with their chocolate milk and cupcakes, and then buy licorice and gum.

Tipping The Scales In Your Favor

It's probably a good idea to eat smaller meals more frequently than one or two large meals per day. In theory, it would be best to give your body the nutrients it needs right before it needs them. It's not unlike a race car on a long race. It doesn't start with all the fuel it's going to need for the whole race. The excess weight would slow the car down considerably. The car needs to make pit stops to get more fuel and so it is with our bodies.

If your body was a car, what kind of car would it be? Would it have head-turning good looks and neck-snapping power? I think the ideal car is a work of art. It's sleek, curvy, sexy, bold and intimidating; yet refined and elegant. It looks fast sitting still. It can purr like a kitten and roar like a lion. It has unbridled power which it can unleash in a heartbeat, yet it is nimble and responsive. It's lightning fast and hugs the road like a dream. It's impeccably appointed inside, tastefully luxurious, and a total delight to the senses. It's comfortable and fun to drive. You just want to put your hands on it, lose yourself in it and become one with the experience. (Yes, I'm still talking about cars.)

As with most everything else relating to optimum nutrition, there is no

consensus about how often and when you should eat. If you knew nothing else, just do what comes natural. Most experts agree that breakfast is a very important meal and should not be skipped. I agree. I usually like to get in some activity on an empty stomach before breakfast. It's a good calorie burn, gets the body going, and helps work up an appetite.

Most experts also agree that it's a good idea not to eat within three hours or so of going to bed for the night. I agree, although I don't always make it.

Otherwise, some people say it's best to eat five or six times a day, or every two to three hours. That's not a lifestyle that works for me, but I wouldn't knock it. Going with the pit stop analogy, it makes sense to get your fuel just as you need it. By contrast, I don't think it would be healthy to get all your calories and nutrients for an entire week just in one afternoon, for example. The more food you eat at one sitting, the more you increase your odds of eating too much and the excess getting converted to body fat (or worse).

The experts all agree that it is best to eat slowly. I agree. Chew thoroughly, savor the experience, enjoy the tastes and textures of the bite that is in your mouth. Most of us tend to eat too fast, and I'm guilty of that myself too much of the time. Put your fork down between bites. Eat with chopsticks. Carry on a conversation. Drink lots of water. The slower you can eat your food, the better you can become at stopping when you are full. Most of us who overeat have a tendency to eat so much food so fast that by the time we recognize we are full, we've already eaten too much. That's when you feel stuffed. Some call it gorging, and I've done it myself many times. I've always had a hearty appetite and I enjoy eating till I'm satisfied. The problem is, I don't like the feeling of being stuffed and I don't think it's healthy to eat so much at a time. Eating slower is a very good habit to develop.

The Sweet Burn

Eat lots of spicy foods. The kind that make you break out in a sweat.

Peppers, chiles and salsas can bring a lot of spice to the party. The spicy foods cause an effect known as thermogenesis, which creates heat in the body, helps burn calories and speeds up metabolism. I keep an ample stock of dried chiles, fresh chiles, and bottled chile sauces (El Yucateco) like habanero and chipotle. For cayenne pepper sauce I prefer Frank's Red Hot. I really love the Sriracha Chili Sauce. It's the sauce with the funky green lid and a rooster on the label. I've been using it for two years now and it's addicting. I put it on my eggs almost every morning. I haven't used it as a recipe ingredient yet, but it is becoming very popular. I do make a Sriracha mayonnaise which is great for dipping. I also keep canned chipotle chiles in Adobo sauce. They'll really add the heat to a bowl of Texas Red Chili (or whatever else you put them in).

It's also a great idea to learn how to enhance the flavor of your foods with spices and herbs (as opposed to just salt and pepper). Develop your palate. Have a tasting party. Take turns wearing a blindfold and identify spices, herbs, ingredients and flavor profiles. See if you can identify different wines, cheeses, meats and other foods. It's sensuous good clean fun (shades of *9½ Weeks*).

A Word About Discipline

Given that we can't transcend our basic genetic code to seek pleasure and avoid pain, we are each left in this world to figure out what is uniquely right for us. Being unique, some of us are more disciplined than others. Sometimes we refer to it as will power. I have a very good friend who is a recovering alcoholic. He has been sober for 20 odd years or so. We were talking about his life and he said it's all about the discipline. He had two daughters to raise, and it was more important to him to be the kind of man that his daughters deserved to have as a father, than to lose himself to his drinking. He motivated himself to choose to live a disciplined life.

That made quite an impression on me, and the concept of having discipline resonated with me as I was contemplating to stop smoking. It was easy to continue to smoke while I mulled everything over. I could light up a cigarette and wonder if I would be sufficiently motivated to quit

for my long term health. Once I came to terms with the overwhelming evidence against smoking, I couldn't continue to smoke without hearing my friend's words, "It's all about the discipline." I didn't like the idea of thinking of myself as a person who doesn't have any discipline. That just did not sit well with me. I created a cognitive dissonance and the only way I could resolve it was to stop smoking. It was my time.

There was no way I could see into the future however. I couldn't know if I was going to be climbing the walls in a week or miserable in a month. So, I resolved to do it one day at a time. "I'm going to have discipline today." Every day that I don't smoke, I am a success.

That's exactly how it goes with following a healthy nutritious eating plan. It's something you can only do one day at a time. Every day that you eat clean, you are a success. The question is whether or not you are sufficiently motivated. That is a question only you can answer. It can be hard to go through a period of change (just as it was to stop smoking), but if you are sufficiently motivated to make a better life for yourself, then you will have plenty of discipline and will power to draw from.

I Double Dog Dare Ya

Give yourself a five-day challenge. Vow that you will only eat fresh nutritious whole foods for five days. No sodas, junk food, fast food, fast carbs or Frankenfood. It doesn't have to be the next five days, but sometime soon. Do some menu planning, and whatever else you have to plan to do to ensure your success. (See sample suggestions at the end of the book.) Go into it with the confidence that you know you *will* succeed. Go through the five days and then see how you feel afterward. Once you have a five-day success under your belt, go for a ten-day challenge. If you think five days is too ambitious, then start with a three-day challenge.

If you think it will help and make it more fun, get a buddy. Do it together. Get in some good quality walking, preferably with every meal. Get in as much physical activity as you can, which will also help you get a good night's sleep. If you're right smack in the middle of raising children,

the best thing you can do for them is lead by example. I'm not suggesting that you put your children on a diet, but I am suggesting that you feed them only nutritious fresh whole foods. Teach them good habits that will last them a lifetime and that they will pass down. Start a legacy of vigorous good health.

Go through your kitchen/pantry/fridge/freezer and get rid of all the crap. All the man-made scientific creations, all the artificial sweeteners, anything with high fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, trans fats, margarine and all other Frankenfoods. You can't even have those on your free days. Get rid of any homogenized milk, skim milk, and just about any packaged foods which say they are fat-free, low-fat or diet.

A quick word about milk. If you must have moo juice, whole raw milk is best. You might be able to find it at your local health food store or farmers market. Find your nearest dairy and go check it out. Pasteurization isn't the end of the world, but most mass-marketed milks are heated to such a high temperature that they effectively kill the milk, destroying most of its beneficial nutrients (if not all). Whole raw milk has enough fat in it to moderate the milk sugars (lactose) from causing too large of an insulin spike. If you remove the fat, then you may as well be eating sugar. I wouldn't have any part of homogenization either. I don't think it's worth the potential health risks. By the way, I love milk. I wish I could drink it every day. Unfortunately, it's just too high in carbs for me. Now I just have it on special occasions (like with donuts or pancakes).

The Scientific Method

Odds are you've never heard of health risks associated with homogenized milk, fluoride, caffeine, monosodium glutamate, sodium laurel sulfate, aspartame, parabens, high fructose corn syrup, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, growth hormones, or hundreds of other potentially harmful substances created in our nation's laboratories.

When questions about our health and nutrition come to the forefront of public inquiry, most people rely on the positions and recommendations

from our biggest institutions, such as: The American Cancer Society, The American Medical Association, AARP, the American Heart Association, the Surgeon General and Congress. I wouldn't dismiss their findings entirely, but I would be highly skeptical about their published findings. Almost all of their published work is the result of lobbying, which usually boils down to who has the most money to throw at an issue (which is always the giant corporations).

The corporations rely on the institutions to come out with statements assuring the public that their products are not harmful.

For example, I've noticed a recent campaign of television commercials saying something to the effect that high fructose corn syrup is natural because it's made from corn and it is "nutritionally the same as sugar." The commercials implied that it was silly for people to have any concerns that high fructose corn syrup might not be good for them or their children. That's fine, however, they aren't saying anything about the nutritional value of sugar. I think refined sugar is tantamount to poison, and therefore so is high fructose corn syrup. Most people though, don't have a problem with sugar. I didn't either until about six years ago.

There's a big difference between saying something has not been proven to be harmful and saying or implying that something is good for you.

The American Cancer Society, for example, can come out with a statement that Substance X has not been proven to cause cancer. The corporations will turn that around and imply that Substance X is good for you because it has not been proven to be harmful. There's a big difference between being harmful and causing cancer. Just because something hasn't been proven to cause cancer doesn't mean it isn't harmful. But that's exactly what the corporations are trying to get over on an unsuspecting public. And, sadly, it works most of the time.

There is an inherent problem in trying to prove that something is bad for your health. Who are you going to test it on? In order to test the effects of Substance X, you would have to come up with an hypothesis—Substance X causes cancer. Then you have to have at least two groups of

people (subjects). One group gets Substance X (the test group), and the other group doesn't (the control group). Ideally the subjects would be randomly assigned to whichever group they end up in. The problem is, if you suspect that Substance X causes cancer, then it wouldn't be ethical to ask people to volunteer to be in the experiment. "You have to take a pill once a day for five years, and depending on which group you end up in, the pill might cause you to get cancer." The experiment can't be run, and the hypothesis that Substance X causes cancer, is not proven. It would be accurate to say that Substance X hasn't been proven to cause cancer, but it would be unconscionably misleading and deceptive.

What if there were already a lot of people taking Substance X? We could compare them with a group of other people who aren't taking it. Let's say we get a hundred people in each group and monitor them closely till they either die or reach 80 years old. Suppose five people in the Substance X group got cancer and died from it. Meanwhile four people in the other group got cancer and died from it. You could conclude that the incidence of cancer in the Substance X group was not statistically higher than the control group, which doesn't prove anything. Again, the hypothesis is not proved; but that doesn't mean Substance X isn't harmful. That's to say nothing of the time lines involved, or the ability to isolate variables. Maybe the people who were already taking Substance X at the beginning of the experiment were significantly different on other variables that weren't isolated (which is endless).

Ultimately, it's very difficult to isolate variables and prove that any particular thing is either beneficial, harmful or fatal to humans over the course of a lifetime. The scientific method is wrought with limitations when it comes to testing on humans. Unfortunately, there are way too many unscrupulous people in this country who will intentionally use those limitations to misrepresent the truth and lead people to infer the wrong conclusions. They're not above outright lying either.

We have to apply our own common sense and rely on our own authority. When in doubt, err on the side of caution. Not all food companies are bad, but you must remain vigilant and read food packaging with a critical eye. Don't be afraid to be skeptical. If a package contains

something sweet and it says, “Zero Calories” or “Sugar Free”, then that should alert you that there is some voodoo going on. Or how about “Reduced Fat” Macaroni and Cheese, or “Lite” Potato Chips. All things being equal, always go for natural as opposed to artificial, refined, processed, enriched, enhanced or manipulated.

I believe natural is always best, and if I’ve learned anything from watching the Food Network, I think most chefs would agree. Chefs may be noted for coming up with fancy presentations. But every good chef knows that the key to any successful dish is to start with the best ingredients and highlight their natural flavors. I once heard Bobby Flay say that when he’s considering to hire a chef, he may have the prospective chef cook something simple like scrambled eggs or an omelet. Anyone can learn how to make something fancy, but the real test is how well a chef can cook something simple. How well can you roast a chicken? How well can you dress a salad? How well can you grill a steak?

I’ve not been to culinary school, but if you go into a good chef’s kitchen, I doubt you’re going to find margarine, aspartame, propylene glycol, modified vegetable protein, partially hydrogenated soybean oil, high fructose corn syrup, polysorbate 60, yellow 5, or sodium aluminosilicate. By the way, I would love to go to culinary school someday.

Getting Buff

In addition to walking every day, I’d also like to recommend some weight training. You can go to a gym and use weights, or you can use your own bodyweight (or both). I’m not necessarily suggesting bodybuilding; just an improvement in your strength, power and stamina. The best weight training is short but intense. The potential health benefits are staggering. You can add lean muscle mass which will help you burn more calories 24/7. You can feel stronger and look better. It will improve your muscle tone and your posture. It helps you burn calories. Stronger muscles alleviate strain on the joints, and help to prevent injury. Being strong and vigorously healthy helps keep up your appetite, and will most likely result in better sleep (which is when your body does most of its recuperating, repairing and fat burning).

There's no physiological reason not to stay strong and active for the rest of our lives. It's not written down anywhere that just because we're getting older we have to allow ourselves to become weak and feeble. As always, use it or lose it.



Speaking for myself, I like to go to the gym three days a week and give myself some variety. Some weeks I will do general conditioning and whole body workouts. At other times I will do splits which divides the body up into sections for more intensity.

Day 1 could be upper body pushing muscles such as chest and triceps. Day 2 could be pulling muscles such as back and shoulders and biceps. Day 3 could be legs and lower body. Somewhere in the mix I add in abs and core.

The most important thing about weight training is to avoid injury. Don't overdo it. Use good form. Do warm-up sets. Rome wasn't built in a day, so don't try to force gains. Work up a sweat, but don't blow a gasket. Concentrate on balance, full range of motion, perfect form, deep breathing and maximum pump/burn. There's no reason for a good workout to run more than 20 - 30 minutes, 40 tops. Get in, get out.

If you're new to the idea of working out in a gym, you may want to start with a personal trainer. You can usually count on the staff to be friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. They will be happy to show you how the equipment works. A personal trainer can help you define your goals, assess your current health and abilities, and outline a workout program tailor-made to your objectives and time constraints. A personal trainer can also train and coach you through your whole workout.

If you're already an experienced gym rat, then get your lazy butt back in the gym. You know it's good for you.

You'll notice at the gym there are rows and rows of cardio equipment. If you're going to use them, tread lightly. In your quest to lose unwanted body fat, you certainly don't want to lose lean body mass along with it. At the end of your weight lifting workout, your glycogen stores will be depleted. If you hop on a cardio machine and get your heart rate up to where you can still carry on a conversation but starting to get a little huffy, that is about the optimum heart rate for burning stored body fat. If you go for 30 minutes or more, you will be burning tons of those stubborn old fat stores. Sometimes I'll be enjoying an MP3 rock concert and go for an hour or more.

My last gym trainer said, "If you ain't sweatin', you're wasting your time." As long as I'm on a treadmill and sufficiently warmed up, I like to alternate my steady walking pace (3.6 to 4 mph) with some runs and sprints. Other times I'll keep the pace steady but raise the incline all the way up. Quite frankly, I'm not a big fan of treadmills. I'd much rather be hiking a scenic trail or barefoot on the beach. But the darned things are handy when they're right there at the gym and I want to work out.



When you go above that optimum fat furnace rate, and get into full aerobic mode, then know that you are working out your cardiovascular fitness, which is a different objective from burning fat. When you exert yourself to the point where you can't convert your body fat fast enough to burn it for fuel, then your body will be forced to rob it from your protein (your muscles). That is a catabolic state where your body feeds on itself. As you can imagine, that is not good and is about the last thing in the world you want to do.

So, here's the rule of thumb. If you just want to burn stored body fat, there is nothing better than walking, and occasional high intensity workouts. Walk to your heart's content. If you want to ramp it up a little and get in some cardio work, then you need to make sure you have ready carbs (or glycogen). The evidence suggests that long sessions of cardio really aren't all that beneficial and may even be detrimental to your good health. Not to mention that it can be terribly boring and time-consuming.

Another benefit from a good workout at the gym is that it will raise your metabolism, and it will stay elevated even after you're finished (which is a swell bonus). Working out gives you a natural high and you always feel good afterward. Remember though, more is not necessarily better (you don't want to burn out). Focus on quality over quantity.

Going Buff

Okay, I just wanted to see if you were actually reading the sub headings. You don't have to take your clothes off on my account. Most of us see ourselves undressed often enough to know what we look like nude. Most of us don't look like the people in the beer commercials, or the cover of magazines. We tend to be our own worst critics and we know every imperfection and trouble spot. We hardly have the benefit of objectivity. What we see in the media (magazines, movies, television) is not normal, and in many cases not even real. In real life, our bodies come in all different shapes and sizes.

No matter what your shape and size is, you should love the body you have. It's your instrument to enjoy this physical world. There's nothing wrong with being a work in progress and having a little room for improvement, but please be happy in your own skin. Maybe you've been taking your body for granted lately, but it's never too late to make a change. Your body is a unique, one-of-a-kind living masterpiece and if you nurture it, it will grow. Just like plants and trees—we need sunlight, water and nutrients. One of the most beneficial ingredients for nurturing and growth is love. If you don't already, please fall in love with your body. Have a love affair. Get in harmony with it. Give it an opportunity to show

you what it can do. Be good to your body and it will be good to you.

As for going in the buff... it's an experience. It's natural. I'm sure many people would be uncomfortable with the idea, but that may be because they haven't tried it. When most of us think about nudity, we immediately think of sex and pornography. We don't think about just being natural and enjoying nature. Being in a nudist environment can be



profoundly liberating because people tend to hide behind their clothes (literally and metaphorically). We use our clothes as a symbol of status and class; they give us a sense of security and make us feel safe and secure.

No doubt we've all had the dream where we've somehow ended up standing naked in front of the whole class at school, and we were deeply embarrassed. In a nudist setting, you're naked in front of the whole class (so to speak) and everyone is happy to accept you the way you are. There is no ridicule or criticism, and nothing to be embarrassed about or ashamed of. That's the liberating part.

Now, I'm not suggesting that you have to go nude in public to appreciate your body. I'm not even suggesting that you would enjoy it. There's no way I could know that. I just brought it up for you to have something to think about. In terms of how much you love your body, the thought of being nude in public raises the stakes considerably from being alone in your bathroom. I certainly would never begrudge anyone their modesty or suggest that they do against their morality. Perish the thought.

Wearing clothes has been around for a long time and it is one of the things that differentiates us from lower-order animals. I'm not knocking it. I've got a whole closet full and I'm happy to wear them (especially in the winter).

Getting The Kinks Out

If you can, pick out a time slot in your day for about ten minutes or so to just relax and get in tune with your body. Stretching is good and highly recommended. So is deep breathing. Yoga is excellent and so is meditation. Give yourself a comfortable spot, pull up some floor, stretch out a little and then close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Sit up straight, cross legged, arms comfortably in your lap and pull your belly button in as though you are trying to get it to touch your spine. Let your mind go blank and get in touch with your body. Feel your energy. Feel your heart beating and slow it down. Feel any tension drifting away with every breath you take. Continue to focus on your breathing until you feel all the tension and stress drift away.



When you get into this relaxed state, you're wanting to send a message to your control center that you are receptive to whatever your body wants to tell you. This is your opportunity to get feedback from your body. This is not metaphorical but real. There *is* a mind/body connection and it's a two-way street. We can harness the amazing power of our mind to direct our body to become lighter, thinner, stronger, more athletic, more youthful, or whatever else we want bad enough. But we have to get in harmony with our body. We have to get the mind and the body on the same page and going in the same

direction. It will go so much better if we make it a habit to tune in and get whatever useful feedback we can. Try it. You might amaze yourself.

Tuning In

When you think about it, our bodies are always giving us feedback. They let us know when we need to eat, drink water, go to the bathroom and go to sleep (and more importantly when to wake up). Our bodies tell us other

less obvious things like when to stop eating because we are full, when to rest, when to get up and move around, when to get out of the sun, or when to be on alert for potential danger lurking about.

Our bodies tend to expand their awareness to their environment and immediate surroundings and they give us feedback for that as well. Maybe you notice the smell of gas, or smoke. Maybe you notice your children are being uncharacteristically quiet. How is it, for example, that we get the feeling someone is watching us, or how women can usually seem to sense when someone is checking them out?

Some people are highly tuned in to their bodily signals and others are practically oblivious. Some of us are better at it than others and I suspect that is in part due to innate ability. But I also think we can improve our bodily signal reception just by giving it a higher priority and making it a daily habit. I think the more attuned we are to our bodies and our environs, the better it's going to go for us in terms of having fun, being healthy, avoiding danger and staying safe.

The reason I'm bringing all this up is because many of us are guilty of ignoring some of our most important feedback. It's called getting sick (aka illness and disease). We look at getting sick as something that just happens to us, instead of looking at it as our body's way of telling us that something is wrong. If we don't consider that we make ourselves sick, then we relieve ourselves of the responsibility for the choices we make. Isn't that convenient?

The consequences of some actions are more immediate and easy to observe. "I don't really know why I passed out. I was just hanging out with some friends and we were having a whiskey chugging contest." or "I don't know how I got pregnant." When the cause and affect occur slowly over time, it's much more difficult to make the connection. The majority of illnesses are due to nutritional deficiencies. There is some chronic shortage of a vitamin, mineral, enzyme, acid, or other nutrient over time. Maybe you feel weak. Maybe you feel anxious or depressed. Maybe you're having a hard time sleeping. Maybe you're cranky and irritable. If we even happen to notice these things, we tend to ignore them, accept them as

normal or go see a doctor for a prescription.

What we don't tend to do is look inward at the cause. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the case of stress. It's good to be able to handle stress, but it's not good to subject ourselves to chronic stress, anxiety and worry. If you have trouble sleeping, for example, it's most likely your body telling you that something is wrong and needs to be fixed. It's your body giving you feedback (which isn't always pleasant).

What we find today to be the most prevalent cause of sickness is a combination of nutritional deficiencies, too much stress, and poor eating habits which result in insulin spiking, weight gain, hypertension, and so on. These insidious types of maladies occur slowly (but steadily) over time. By the time we notice that it is starting to affect our health, we get concerned about it and go see a doctor.

You tell the doctor your symptoms. "Well, I'm having trouble getting to sleep at night. My blood pressure is going up, and I'm having a hard time controlling my anger. I think I just feel too tense and wound up." The doctor, just doing his or her job, may prescribe you the appropriate pharmaceuticals to deal with your symptoms, and off you go. You've got one pill to help you get to sleep. One pill to help you relax, and another pill or two to lower your blood pressure.

The doctor has helped you deal with your symptoms, but what about the cause? Wouldn't it be better to eliminate the symptoms by addressing and alleviating the cause? I believe it would. Rather than treating a sickness, isn't it better to not get sick in the first place? If we want to avoid sickness, we have to practice wellness and prevention. We want to stay out of harm's way and avoid dangerous substances, alleviate stressors, eat right, stay active, get a good night's sleep, and tune in to our bodies when they are giving us feedback. That's the recipe for health and well being.

The Straight Dope

A major component of wellness and prevention is avoiding dangerous

substances and activities. I love thrill-seeking adventures more than most, but it's not likely you'll ever find me running with the bulls or swimming with the sharks. You don't necessarily have to defy death to feel alive. You don't have to walk up to it and poke it with a stick or slap it in the face. I've done it a few times and I'm going to quit while I'm ahead.

If you are smart enough and fortunate enough to avoid an untimely death, then you may live long enough to have to deal with all the harmful substances that you've exposed yourself to over the course of your life. Smoke, alcohol, drugs, toxic fumes, sulfates, petroleum products, make-up, soaps, cleaning products, pollution, smog, lye, chlorine, bleach, mold, etc... Some things are so harmful that most everyone agrees they should be avoided, while others are more open for debate (e.g., microwave ovens, caffeine, fluoride).

One of the most critical aspects of exposure to harmful substances is what you put into your mouth. We've already covered at length much of the bad stuff that goes into processed Frankenfoods. But what about pills and medicine? Have you ever stopped to think they could be harmful?

I've been fortunate in my life that I've never needed much in the way of prescription medication. Up until six years ago, however, I didn't hesitate to take analgesics for headaches (acetaminophen or aspirin), or that night time stuffy head fever so you can get to sleep medicine. I just assumed they were safe because you could buy them everywhere. Once I started looking at the evidence that these substances may be harmful, especially over time, I decided to stop taking them. That's been over six years now and I don't miss them. I'm more into natural cures and remedies, but my primary emphasis is on staying well and not getting sick. I'm very much into prevention. It's the same rationale behind flossing and brushing our teeth; we don't want to get cavities or gum disease.

The funny thing about taking prescription and over the counter drugs and medicines is that most people cavalierly ignore all the warnings. They tell you up front that their products are harmful, and people take them anyway. They inform you that the effects of the medicine could include: rash, headaches, nausea, diarrhea, upset stomach, dizziness, fainting,

inability to focus, confusion, loss of appetite, vomiting, loss of sexual desire, anxiety, insomnia, hair loss, mood swings, depression, suicidal thoughts or actions, and death. Hey, I'd like to get a big jar of that.

People don't seem to care about any of those things because they are euphemistically labeled as "side effects." If I were to take a pill, let's say for lowering my blood pressure, and I find that the pill causes me to get nauseous, wouldn't that be a direct effect of taking the pill? I call the doctor and report that I am nauseous and feeling miserable. The doctor says, "Oh, that's just a side effect." Is that supposed to make me feel better? Is that going to make my nausea go away? I suppose if you allow yourself to be under the care of a doctor and the doctor says you need to take those pills, then you'll just have to deal with the nausea and other side effects. There are several things people can do to lower their blood pressure naturally, but you're not likely to hear about them from a medical doctor (who is in the business of pushing drugs).

I don't mean to imply that I have a low opinion of doctors, but ultimately we are responsible for our own health, including whatever we put into our mouth. Thousands upon thousands of people die every year from taking prescription and over the counter drugs. If a doctor prescribed a drug for me, I would research it carefully before I took it (which is something the doctor should have already done). It's probably a fair guess that most doctors don't have the time to do all that research. It's like suggesting that legislators actually have the time to read all the bills that they vote on. What is more likely is that the doctor is relying on abstracts and/or other information provided by the sales rep of the pharmaceutical company. I'm not putting that down; I'm just recommending that when you have to make important decisions, you make them with the benefit of all the relevant and pertinent information. Don't do something just because a doctor tells you to do it. Even the best doctor in the world is capable of making dumb mistakes or being misinformed. Speaking for myself, I don't want to play Russian Roulette.

Even if you're fortunate enough to dodge all the near-term side effects, you would be wise to consider the long-term effects. Some medicines are prescribed for years or even indefinitely. What is the effect on the body of

taking drugs over such long spans of time? The truth is, we don't know. Technically, we can't know. Once we start taking the drugs, then we no longer have a control (something to compare against). You can't take the drugs and not take the drugs at the same time. If we're going to follow our rule to err on the side of caution, it would be best if we can avoid long-term ill health effects.

Let's stick with our high blood pressure example. I go to the doctor. The doctor prescribes some medicine. Option A: I take the drugs and hope for the best. Option B: I skip the drugs, find out what causes high blood pressure and how to lower it. I stop smoking, eat right, get regular exercise, lose weight and de-stress. Within a short period of time, my blood pressure goes down to the normal range. The doctor will probably be aware that those actions would lower my blood pressure, but he or she will have to assume that I'm not going to do those things (usually an accurate assumption). Most people continue to do what they are comfortable with. Even if they tell the doctor that they will do all those things (and spare the prescription), they might only keep up with it for a week or two, and then go back to their unhealthy ways. The doctor is virtually bound and obligated to make the prescription. He or she can't be expected to be your life coach. But, you should be expected to be your own life coach. Motivate your self to do what's right and healthy.

Many people joke that they would feel gypped if they went to the trouble to go see a doctor and didn't end up getting a prescription for something. Taking a pill is relatively easy compared to making significant lifestyle changes. The doctor says, "Your problem is such and such, and here's your prescription for it." You don't have to suffer the slings and arrows of owning up to whatever caused the problem.

People believe that only doctors are sufficiently schooled and qualified to understand good health. Not so. They are qualified to give a medical opinion. I'm not. I haven't been to medical school. If I can keep myself in good health, I'll never be in the position where I need a medical opinion. That's my objective.

Most people agree that it's a good idea to have regular check-ups and

physicals. Many lives have been saved by screening and early detection of cancers and so forth. I'm not going to knock it. Doctors and surgeons save lives every day. I am greatly pleased at the continuing advancements in science and technology. I can't wait to see what comes in the next 50 years, or even the next 25. So please don't get the impression that I am against the medical establishment or any particular doctors.

In one of my dumbest moments, I ended up at the emergency room several years back after I nearly cut off my left thumb. It took a steady hand and a lot of stitches, and the doctor did a fabulous job sewing me back up. My thumb is 100% operational, I have full feeling. There is virtually no scarring, and I didn't get an infection. So believe me when I tell you, I like doctors (and nurses, and technicians, and EMTs, etc.). That wasn't the first time I've needed stitches either, although I hope it will be the last time.

There are many doctors who also believe in practicing wellness and prevention. They tend to be a little stingy with their prescription pads. They want their patients to understand how they contribute to their illnesses and what they can do to improve their health. They want to help you be the most healthy that you reasonably can be, and they want you to take responsibility for your lifestyle choices. That is the best kind of doctor, and I hope you are fortunate enough to find a doctor like that. It's the best of both worlds. Go easy on the drugs, and only then as a carefully considered best alternative.

Put the good stuff in, leave the bad stuff out. Stay active. Walk every day. Enjoy nature. Eat clean. Sleep deeply. Live fully. Laugh often. Love much. Hug a tree. Kiss a squirrel. (Just wanted to see if you were paying attention.) Each new day is a gift and an opportunity to give and receive all of life's greatest pleasures and treasures.

Chapter Five

Getting Along Great With You Know Who

I didn't say it was your fault, I said I am blaming you.

~Unknown

Although this is a broad topic which could easily fill a book, I want to include a chapter length guide that will help most people in most situations regarding relationships. It's been my experience that most problems can be traced back to the breaking of a few basic guidelines and principles. Once you master them, you can apply them in every relationship and most situations that you find yourself in. You should be able to make the best of any bad situation, or better yet avoid them in the first place. Let's quickly introduce these ideas and then we will see how they apply in various circumstances.

Integrity

The idea of being a person of integrity covers a lot of bases; the foremost of which is honesty—being honest with others and being honest with yourself. It's difficult to have great relationships with other people if you're not honest with yourself about who you are, what you're about, what you want, and what you expect. Being honest with others includes living up to your word, telling the truth, doing what you say you are going to do and paying your debts. It's nearly impossible to have a lasting and meaningful relationship with a man or woman who has no integrity.

Trust

It's a wonderful thing to have mutual trust with those who are close to us. As long as we don't have any reason not to, we like to trust people with our feelings, our property, our fidelity, our very lives, and more. Once a person has broken or violated that trust, it's nearly impossible to regain.

People can (and do) maintain relationships afterwards, but they will no longer trust someone who has given them good reason not to. There are few things in this world worse than being betrayed by someone you trusted. Sadly, I am speaking from experience.

Loyalty

On a closely related note, it's very difficult to maintain a good relationship with someone when you feel they are being disloyal. As circumstances change in life, sometimes we are put in awkward positions where we have to make a stand with regard to our loyalty being questioned or tested. It's not always an easy thing to do either, which is why the relationships that we have with the people who are the most loyal to us mean the most to us.

Respect

Truer words were never spoken than the fact that respect has to be earned and commanded. There are people whom I respect, and then there are people whom I don't. Off the top of my head, I can tell you that I don't have much respect for people who are dishonest (for example) or people who don't have respect for themselves. I think a person has to have some self-respect before he or she can earn it and command it from others.

Reliability

It's a great comfort to know that there are some people in this world whom we can rely on no matter what. Maybe it's our mom or dad, or our spouse. We all know what it's like when we rely on someone to do something, and then he or she drops the ball. It's very upsetting. We quickly learn not to rely on *that* person. Sometimes it seems like we can only rely on ourselves for sure, but it is nice to have family and friends we can rely on. The stakes are high when it comes to raising a family. We rely on our partners to stay in the relationship and provide whatever it is that has come to be expected. It's great when that works out, and it can be quite devastating when it

doesn't. Sadly, I've learned that from personal experience too.

Understanding

Relationships are better when we treat each other with understanding, empathy, sympathy, compassion and patience. It's not always easy to do, especially if we are wrapped up in our own thoughts and feelings; but we certainly appreciate it when people are understanding with us.

Courtesy

The *Golden Rule* holds that we should treat others the way we'd like others to treat us. I think most of us would agree that it's a good policy, but we don't always live up to it. In the abstract, we're usually in a relationship or situation because we want something out of it. It's in our best interest therefore, to be friendly, courteous, polite or whatever the circumstances warrant. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we have to suffer a pompous ass, a bore, or what have you. Do your best to be kind and courteous, and then do your best to avoid them in the future.

Good Manners

Some of us were raised to have impeccable manners and others of us were raised by wolves, in a barn. Good manners covers a wide array, beginning with such things as saying *please* and *thank you*. Collectively, we could refer to it as being polite. Being polite is contagious, and always in style.

It's also good manners to be punctual. It's rude to keep people waiting, and on a related note, no one likes to hear excuses about why you were late. No matter how you slice it, it's always going to come across as if showing that person the courtesy and respect to be on time just wasn't important enough to you to do it. That's the bottom line. By the way, that's a figurative *you*, not *you* the reader.

It's a show of good manners and respect to wear appropriate clothes, and be clean and well groomed (which is also a good indication of self-respect). If I could borrow a line from *Bridget Jones's Diary*, you don't want to look like you've just wandered out of Auschwitz. You don't want to wear clothes that look like the dog slept on them. I could go on and on here, but the point is made. We may not all be fashion plates or have model good looks, but we all can look our best.

Respecting Other People's Property

This is one of the leading causes of problems in relationships. There is one simple rule that applies universally: If something doesn't belong to you, keep your hands off. It's that simple. It applies to just about everything including your roommate's beer or your neighbor's wife. We know we don't like it when other people steal, borrow without asking, or otherwise sully our things; and we should be just as considerate.

I remember waking up from a nap one day to discover that my Porsche was gone (along with my keys). It turns out that a "friend" of mine "borrowed" it without asking, and then promptly wrapped it around a telephone pole. He said he was sorry and that he would cover the loss, but he never did.

I've done my share of laying my hands on things that didn't belong to me, but I've also grown to see the error of my ways. I keep my hands to myself, which is good advice for anyone and everyone.

It was about 20 years ago when I gave up coveting and envying other people their stuff; and that was a turning point in my life. I realized that if I felt bad and resentful because other people seemed to have nicer things than me, it was because that was the reality that I created for myself. I caused myself to feel bad and resentful, and once I became aware of that simple fact, it was an easy fix. I've learned to be happy with what I have, (which is a lot—especially including the intangibles). It's not that I wouldn't like to have more stuff, but not unless I work for it and earn it honestly in value for value exchanges.

Being Caring and Considerate

Whole volumes could be written on this topic. People who are considerate do things like put the toilet seat down, remember birthdays, help clean up, remember your favorite foods, and other things that may be special and important to the people who are close to them. Other people are so inconsiderate that it's a wonder anyone can stand to be around them. They can be obnoxious, rude, and completely devoid of awareness and sensitivity to those around them.

We can think of a one to ten scale for being considerate with one being a complete self-absorbed ass, and ten being people who are so considerate of others that they lose their own identity and autonomy. With this scale fixed in your mind, ask yourself where do you rank? Put a number on it.

Those of us who *are* considerate of others have a difficult time dealing with people on the other end of the spectrum. Sometimes we get mad, and other times we get our feelings hurt. You might find yourself wondering how someone could be so thoughtless and uncaring. Meanwhile, those at the low end of the scale don't see what all the fuss is about. Maybe they *were* raised by wolves, or monkeys, or pigs.

The trick here is to hook up with people who complement us and match us in terms of caring and consideration. Such people won't agree on everything, but at least they have similar expectations about what is acceptable behavior.

Romantic Relationships

I'm going to go out on a limb here and make the bold claim that for most of us, the most difficult (and yet the most rewarding) relationship is that between a man and a woman who are lovers. It's mind boggling to consider how two creatures could be so much alike and yet be so worlds apart different. Maybe you've gone through the range of emotions with your lover where one minute you love him or her so much you can't stand it, and then the next you are so upset you just want to scream?

Note: I don't mean to slight anyone, but I am going to limit my thoughts and comments to relationships between a man and a woman who are in a monogamous relationship. That's the experience that I have to share, and what I am most qualified to have opinions about (if I dare say knowledge).

What Women Need To Know About Men

Women are lucky because men are super-duper easy to figure out. We're easy to please too. A sharp woman can read any man like a book, and play him like a fiddle. Many women do.

As some women point out, there are three main inroads to a man's happiness: his heart, his stomach, and his privates. If you keep those three covered, you're going to have one happy man. True, some of us men are a little more sophisticated and complex, but don't let that throw you off. We may like to pursue intellectual things such as making money, but our head is not the way to our heart. The basic three always apply, universally, and at all times. Seen on a tee-shirt: *Three ways to impress a man. 1. Show up naked. 2. Bring food. 3. Don't block the TV.*

The heart wants what it wants. It's different for every man, but it's a safe bet that men want to find their women attractive and fetching. Men love good food and drink. And of course men love sex, especially when it's spontaneous and easy.

Ego

Besides integrity, loyalty and the other traits mentioned above, the main thing anyone needs to know about a man is his ego. It might be fair to say that most men have the right amount of ego for their situation and circumstances (some tempered, others wild). Still, some men have way too much ego, while others are sorely lacking any ego at all. Some men have big egos, but they can back it up. In other words, it's rightly deserved. By comparison, a lot of men have big egos for no apparent

reason. They might think they are God's gift to women, or the best fill-in-the-blank to ever come along (even if they are delusional). I don't know why some men have bigger egos than others, deserved or not, but I do know that some of us have learned to be humble.

Male egos have a tendency to be fragile, especially if they are not well founded to begin with. A lot of men overcompensate for feelings of inadequacy or inferiority by coming across with a giant ego. It's a front. Mature women can see right through it, but any guy who puts on a big enough show might impress less experienced women. Again, I'm not here to judge, I'm just calling it as I see it.

If there is a word that sums it all up, we might call it being *authentic*. Is the man in question happy with who he is as a person? Is his level of ego appropriate and well founded? I don't want to get too esoteric here, but the men who make the best mates are the men who have themselves figured out first. They know what they're about, what they want and what they expect—from themselves and others. They may not have all the answers, but they are happy with their plans and living without regrets. They take life seriously, but they're not afraid to have fun.

As the plot thickens, we start with the man in the abstract, then we gauge his character, his personality, his looks, his wealth, his strength, his knowledge and education, his social skills, and so on... Is he a hard worker or lazy? Does he want to raise a family? The traits and lifestyle choices that women find attractive in prospective mates are as varied as the women themselves. It's virtually infinite. However, if a man isn't authentic to begin with, then you run the risk that he may completely change as he lives and learns more about what he likes and doesn't like.

What Men Need To Know About Women

Good luck. To the extent that men are easy to understand, most women are nearly impossible to understand. It's just not meant to be that men can understand women. Women bring amazing and wonderful qualities to a relationship, but it comes at the price of being perpetually in awe and

wonder about what makes them tick. It's a delightful mystery to be sure, but a mystery nonetheless. I've been fascinated with women my whole life.

One of the first things men need to know about woman is that there is nothing more important than trust. Compared with men, most women are more vulnerable emotionally, physically and sexually. Women are not free to fully express themselves in a romantic relationship unless they trust the man in their life. Of course, if a woman is not free to express herself fully, what's the point? Life's too short to be inhibited or repressed.

Ultimately, it's best for a woman if she is able to trust that her man will not hurt her in any way; including leaving, cheating, ridiculing her, making fun of her, or any type of violence or abuse. It's not until after a woman has spent enough time with the man in question that she is able to develop a trust and be comfortable in the relationship. This process could take anywhere between a few days to a few years or more. Once a man has fully earned a woman's trust, he is gold. Trust is key. Learn it. Live it.

Ultimately, a woman wants to be in a relationship with a man she knows she can trust; who will stand by her, cherish her, protect her, provide for her, and make her toes tingle in the bedroom. Without having established this much of a foundation in a relationship, the rest is relatively unimportant. Call me old-fashioned, but it's my opinion that women like their men manly, strong, confident, able, accomplished, talented, intelligent, smart, educated, worldly, wise, sensitive, clean, well-groomed, well-dressed, well-mannered and great looking. It helps if the man in question has money, a good sense of humor, loves the same things she loves, and is a consummate lover.

Does that describe *your* Mr. Right?

The Perfect Complement

Although men and women are very much alike in terms of anatomy, physiology, biology and so on, it's the differences that make life exciting and fun. Especially so in the realm of sexual relations. There was never a

more perfect fit than the sexual union of a man and a woman. We could cover a whole book on it. Suffice it to say that it works and we can all be happy and thankful to enjoy this natural delight.

The reason why I call this the perfect complement is because making love is the ultimate expression of pleasing our lover while we are pleasing ourselves at the same time. Kissing comes readily to mind for example. To take it a step further, we are built and programmed to please our partners in ways that can only come from love making.

In my humble opinion, it's the man's role to make his lover feel like a woman, and vice versa. If I'm going to make love to a woman, you can be sure that when it's over, she's going to appreciate that she was adored and ravished like a woman (and not just any woman, but the special woman that she alone is). Tying this in with the rest of the book, it's called living in the moment (on purpose). It's fun to please ourselves, but it is so much the better when, in the process, we please our lovers too.

Obviously I can't speak for women, but I have learned one thing from experience... you've got to take your time. This is the part that men tend to rush through (which is a shame). Sometimes, a man and a woman come together in a frenzy and they are both already ready. It's hot when it happens that way, but it's fleeting and rare. Under normal circumstances, it takes a bit of time before the woman is ready for intercourse. I've heard it said that it takes some men a bit of time as well, but I wouldn't know anything about that. From what I hear, most men are always ready, right now (hence the impatience).

In the abstract, I like to think of a woman's amour as building a fire. It starts with some kindling and a spark. Blow on it a little until you produce a flame and then gently tend to it as the flames get bigger and hotter. Pretty soon you've got a rip-roaring fire on your hands. If you keep fanning the flames it will get hotter still. With just the right amount of attention, you can get it nuclear hot in the core and it will positively glow.

Every woman is different, just as every bout of lovemaking is different. Sometimes a woman gets as hot as she is going to get in five minutes,

maybe other times five hours. Follow her lead.

I can think back to being a teenager and making out with girls, usually in cars. We'd spend hours kissing and groping, exploring, probing. Being a guy, I was more goal-oriented, and doing everything within my power to get to the next base. I was incorrigible and if you gave me an inch I'd try to take a mile. Whatever I may have lacked in experience or technique, I certainly made up for it in enthusiasm and tenacity. Actually I was fortunate enough to start kissing girls at a very young age. I always loved it and never outgrew it. Now as a full fledged adult, I'd be happy to kiss and make out for hours on end, for its own pleasure. Making out can be its own goal.

The point I want to make here is that a woman can't be rushed. Men make the convenient yet untimely mistake of assuming that the woman is just as ready for sex as he is. Sometimes she might be, but most of the time probably not. When a woman senses that the man is in too big of a hurry and gets in a rush, she may decide to let him get off quickly and be done with it (rather than start to get worked up and then be left wanting, unsatisfied and disappointed).

As we all know, there's few things on earth worse than being sexually frustrated and unsatisfied.

A Bag Of Chips

So listen up guys, this is what a woman brings to the party. First is to look at her. Eye candy. There's hardly anything on earth more beautiful to look at than a woman, especially if you're in love. I love to look at women, and when I can't look at women, I'll settle for looking at pictures of women. I don't care if their painted, drawn, photographed, younger or older, dressed or undressed, it matters little. Women are beautiful and fun to look at. It's timeless. Women have curves, hips, breasts, and so on; they have their hair done, wear skirts and dresses, tight jeans, bathing suits, lingerie or nothing at all. These are all things that turn men on, and drive us nuts.

Next, when a woman draws near, you notice how good she smells. It could be a perfume, a body spray, a scented lotion or soap, a shampoo or conditioner in her hair, or perhaps just her natural scent or musk. It's heady and intoxicating.

There can be no doubt, between the way a woman looks, how she moves, what she smells like, what she sounds like, the expressions on her face and the look in her eyes... women are positively alluring, enchanting and captivating.

That is to say nothing of how good they feel when you touch them. They're both soft and yet firm in all the right places. Certain parts of their bodies just seem to be made for filling up a man's hands perfectly. Every part of a woman's body is a living work of art. Although women tend to be sensitive in certain areas, a woman's whole body is an erogenous zone, and begs to be touched. Women are the ultimate sensual creatures. Touch one and see how she responds. You don't even have to use your hands. You can use your lips or whatever your imagination might come up with.

It's been said that every part of a woman's body leads inevitably to her sex, and I'm not going to argue. Indeed, I'd say that's what makes the world go round. It's the ultimate in intimacy, and a precious gift when it is shared with a man.

As good as all that is, it's not even the best part.



The best part is that women are autonomous volitional beings. Unlike say, a sex doll, women can love you back. They can act and move in ways that drive men out of their minds. They can flirt, tease, please, dance, play or whatever mood strikes them. That's one of the best parts... you never know what you're going to get. Playful, passionate, slow and languid, fast

and furious, anything and everything.

Everything I've mentioned so far is the frosting on the cake. As good as all that is, the most meaningful and rewarding thing a woman brings to a relationship is her love, support and devotion. It's so special, that it makes men want to be a better man (which usually comes to pass). If they say behind every great man there is a great woman, they will get no argument from me.

Women contribute a woman's touch to the home. We men may not always appreciate curtains, decorative pillows, tablecloths, matching towels, or scented candles; but a woman's touch can make the difference between an inviting home or a tasteless, boring crash pad.

Women also contribute their intuition, which is invaluable and beyond the reach of men. Men can make judgments about people, and they are likely to get better at it with age and experience. But women can sense things about people that men just don't pick up on. That's not to say that a woman is always right, although it's always a good idea to hear a woman out when she's acting on her intuition (especially on matters of trust).

So there's the cake and the frosting, and here's the bag of chips... Women are able to get pregnant and bear children. Not only are they built for it, but they are also programmed to have maternal instincts; including nursing, feeding, care giving, protecting, teaching, and rearing. It's a total package. Not every woman is able to get pregnant, or necessarily wants to have children, but it is a miracle when a baby comes along.

The Woman's Guide To Pleasing A Man

If you're a woman, I'm happy to tell you that there is only one thing you need to know about pleasing your man. Before I share it with you, let me tell you about my Uncle Joe.

Uncle Joe lived in a distant town and we'd go to visit him and his family once or twice a year. Whenever we'd arrive at his house, Uncle Joe would

gush about how much bigger I was getting, how my muscles were getting bigger and how I was getting taller and better looking. He might slip in a comment or two about me having girlfriends. Here's the thing—I *always* believed that he was being sincere. Even at his 80th birthday party a few years ago, he came up behind me, put his hands on my shoulders, and said, "Gosh Kenny, are you *still* lifting weights?" It should come as no surprise that he was always my favorite uncle, or that everyone who knew him thought he was just about the greatest guy they ever met.

The corollary here is the enthusiasm (even if you're not feeling it in the moment) and the simple fact that every man wants to be a stud; especially when he is having sex with a woman. Of course not every man *is* a stud in the bedroom, but any woman should be able to *act* like he is the biggest stud who ever took a woman to bed. Not unlike the famous scene in the film *When Harry Met Sally* where Meg Ryan's character fakes an orgasm. I'd say it was *her* faking an orgasm, but I'll grant that she was acting.

That kind of acting also reminds me of the Oscar-winning role portrayed by Marisa Tomei in *My Cousin Vinny*. This isn't in the script, but I could just imagine her gushing, "Oh my god, you're such a **stud**—you're so muscular and powerful. Oooh, you're driving me wild. You're so **big and hard**, and you really know how to give it to me good. (Gasp) You're the best lover I've ever had and I never knew sex could be this good until you took me and had your way with me. (Pant) You really make me feel like a woman and I come so hard with you that I'm afraid I'll never catch my breath. Oh my god, f--k me! Yes! **Yes!**"

I know that sounds a bit over the top, but believe me when I tell you, it encapsulates the exact and precise feelings that a man supposes he has about himself when he is trying to please a woman. Every man, every time. I conjured it up, so I can tell you that it applies to me too.

If you haven't seen the movie, order it today. Once you see the character, put together with this sample script, you will find it terribly amusing. It would mean a lot coming from Marisa's character, because she is a total hottie in the movie, wearing skin-tight outfits, and the picture of a woman in her sexual prime.

So, if you want to inspire your man to be a better lover, all you have to do is give him the encouragement by showing him your enthusiasm. That's the trick. Try it out for yourself and you be the judge. Whether you mean it or not is a different story. I can tell you that while you're in the act of making love, he's not going to care. Also, consider the alternative to being enthusiastic. What should we call that? It reminds me of a moldy old joke: A man is telling his wife the next morning, "I was afraid I woke you up during sex last night because at one point I thought I felt you move."

There's all kinds of cues and things you can say. Whenever your man does something that you like, point it out to him. "Ooh, I *love* it when you touch me like that. It drives me wild." If he's going too fast, say, "Let's slow down. It feels soooo good I want to make it last."

Don't be afraid to be authentic and tell your man what you're really thinking or feeling. If you want a playful swat on the rear (for example) tell him. Most men want to please their women, but women don't come with instructions. Give your man encouragement and feedback: harder, softer, faster, slower, there, not there, do it like that, and so on. All things being equal, the more into it you are the more into it he's going to be. That's the difference between great sex and ho-hum sex.

I remember one of the first women I had sex with. I was 18 and she was in her late twenties. It was a one night affair, and to make a long story short, she shredded my back with her nails. It was quite painful while it was happening, but I wasn't about to let on or complain. It took a while for the wounds to heal up, but I wore them like a trophy for showing that woman such a good time (which was mutual). You can be sure that she made me feel like a stud. To this day, whenever I look at a woman as a prospective lover, I always look at her nails (and shoes). To be honest, I look at everything else too. But, it's particularly fascinating to watch a woman draw attention to herself with her nails.

Okay, since I brought it up. Here's the theory. There's dog people and there's cat people. I'm not into pets myself, but my taste in lovers runs toward feline type girly-girl females. They have claws and cat-like moves

(like arching their backs). They like to wear tight outfits and leather shoes with pointed toes and heels (and they may even purr). I hope that doesn't sound too objectified. It's just a theory. Of course, every woman is unique and special. Some women pick out their shoes first, when dressing.

In bed, men will do pretty much whatever you tell them to do. Men only need to know two things: that they're going to get off, and that you are having a good time too. As long as you are enthusiastic and seem to be enjoying yourself, then all is well in the world.

The Big O

From the man's perspective, the act of sex falls into one of two categories: either it's going to be a quickie where the woman may not orgasm, or, the man is going to bring his woman to a climax before he gets off himself. Of course it's great to come at the same time, but that's a different chapter. Sometimes we want the release that can only come through intercourse, but we may not want to go to a lot of time and effort.

The woman is responsible for her orgasms/climax, and she has to make a judgment call about whether she's going to go for it, and if so, how much she is going to rely on her lover to help her get there and stay there for her. When it comes to the Big O, all is fair. A woman can, and should, do everything in her power to have the most fun in bed possible, including masturbating. Men love it when a woman is proactive, especially with her hands. Don't be afraid to fine tune the situation and help out in the friction department. All men that I know of love to watch women pleasure themselves during sex, including the use of toys/vibrators.

Here's the way I look at. It's my own personal approach, but it works for me and it may work for you. Whenever I'm going to have sex with a woman and she is going to help me get mine, then I want to make sure that I'm going to help her get hers too. That's how I roll. It only seems fair. It's a labor of love anyway. For me, it boils down to one of two options: either she will climax during intercourse, or if not, then I will help her to orgasm before intercourse (or both). Either way, I'm all-in for the

oral stimulation. In the first option, it might come in the way of lots of kissing and foreplay, and in the second option... well let's call it the same thing, just a little farther south.

As an aside here, there's absolutely nothing wrong with both partners getting a preliminary nut, to knock the edge off, before a much longer and more passionate bout of lovemaking. That's an event. Other times people may just want a prelude or an interlude (not the full symphony).

So, there's at least two very important factors that couples need to consider for their compatibility during the courtship phase. Is the woman able to climax during intercourse, and how do both partners feel about cunnilingus. Some people aren't into that. If the woman loves her man to go down on her and he's not into it, she's not going to be a happy camper.

I remember fondly the little neighborhood girl who initiated an *I'll show you mine if you show me yours* exchange (which I found thrilling on both counts). I wasn't just mildly curious, I was fascinated with girls. We were both about six or seven, still innocent. We locked ourselves in a bathroom, and when it was her turn to show me hers, I asked her to stand on the toilet so I could get a good view. She climbed up on the toilet and I was bristling with the anticipation of the discovery I was about to make, and the fun I was having. The whole thing was surreal. It was thrilling enough just to see her in her panties—and then she pulled her panties down.

I can't say that I remember what I was expecting, or if I had any particular thoughts running through my mind. What I can tell you for sure is that I remember I liked it—a lot. It was the first time I got to see a girl naked. I took a good look at her, and then I followed my natural instinct which was to lean in to start kissing and licking her (which she was happy to receive). I wanted to taste her. We were both too young to know anything about intercourse, but for the next few days or so, we were eager, budding young lovers (until we got caught).

I think it was the better part of ten years or so before I would get my next opportunity to get inside a pair of girl's panties (which was not for a lack of trying). Those were the longest ten years of my life, especially when

the hormones started kicking in. I had several girl friends, many of which we would sit and kiss for hours on end. But, they didn't know what they were missing (and I did). I was precocious about girls from my earliest memories of being able to walk and talk. With so many girls around, I never had the time or interest to get into pets.

I share this little slice of personal history to illustrate an important point. We should follow our instincts, which is the same as saying that we shouldn't fight our nature. It dovetails with my earlier comment about being authentic. I couldn't be happy in a relationship with a woman who didn't enjoy kissing and making out (and other oral activities). Similarly, I couldn't be happy in a relationship with a woman who is not able to orgasm/climax during intercourse. Maybe it's the fragile male ego thing, but I want to act and feel like a stud in bed, which follows from thoroughly pleasing a woman and leaving her in a heap... blissfully sated and spent.

I've heard women claim that they can enjoy intercourse without getting off (which I won't argue with) but it's obviously so much better when a woman *does* get off. That's undeniable. Assuming that a woman is able to climax during intercourse, if I don't help her get there, then I would feel like I didn't keep up my end of the bargain. It's the mutual quest for her elusive orgasm/climax that motivates and inspires me to be the best lover I can be. Without it, I would just be lost. Sex would seem like little more than charity, or pity.

A significant number of woman (30% to 60%) routinely report that they are not able to climax during intercourse. The reasons could be biological, anatomical, physiological, neurological, or whatever else. I'm open to all theories. But given that it is such a large percentage of women, I am inclined to attribute a psychosomatic basis (psychic/mental/emotional) to this disorder. It's just too big of a population of women to be put together wrong. Given a lifetime of observation and study, and more than 30 years of hands-on experience, I'd say the problem is more likely to be mental or emotional than physical. Some people like to refer to it as the problem is all in one's head; which although grossly oversimplified, is not without merit. I happen to think that many of the physical disorders that people suffer are psychosomatic, which is why I studied psychology in college.

By all means, any woman who is having difficulty in this area may want to get a medical opinion, and have a thorough examination by a well qualified and highly competent medical doctor. Good luck with that.

Is this particular disorder more likely to be a cause or an effect? Would we say, “I don’t get off during sex, and therefore the sex isn’t as good as it could be.” Or might we say, “Sex isn’t as good as it could be, and therefore I don’t get off.” Once we are clear about identifying the specific problems, it’s much easier to figure out specific solutions.

Is it its own problem, or is it a symptom of a deeper problem? Let’s consider a failing restaurant as an analogy. If you ask what the problem is, one might say, “We’re not getting enough customers, and therefore we don’t have enough revenue coming in to cover our overhead.” That could be 100% accurate, but it doesn’t get to the cause. Maybe the reasons why they aren’t getting enough customers is because their food sucks, the service is bad, the prices are too high, and the place isn’t inviting.

In order to arrive at a solution and fix the main problem (not enough customers), we have to consider all the possible reasons why they’re not getting enough customers to stay afloat. Makes sense when we look at it that way, right? Someone like me would go in and start troubleshooting, identify the problems, come up with solutions and put the restaurant back on track for being successful and profitable.

Let’s apply the same rational to a different problem. If you are a healthy woman, who is able to orgasm by other means but not intercourse, then there might be other underlying reasons that you haven’t thought about. Maybe, as we’ve already established, you have trust issues with your lover. Maybe you’re with the wrong guy. Maybe you’re inhibited, or afraid to let go and be yourself. Maybe you’re not comfortable being naked and/or vulnerable. Maybe you’re worried about being too sexual or overbearing (or liking it too much). Maybe you’re too self-conscious about how you look, sound, smell, taste, feel (or whatever else). Making love is not necessarily supposed to be a quiet, reserved, measured, polite event. Maybe for some women having an orgasm is just too intimate to be shared. A lot of women don’t enjoy intercourse at all. It doesn’t give them any

thrill, satisfaction or stimulation (in which case the point is moot).

Unfortunately a lot of women have issues from their past. Many have been abused, and worse, some have been physically raped. A lot of women have hang-ups that they learned from their parents, and many woman have latent issues about going through puberty/development.

Another related theory could be that the woman does not hold the man in a high enough regard/esteem to allow him the satisfaction of helping to bring her to orgasm/climax. This could be true even if she loves him. Some of us are very highly tuned in terms of primacy and power.

The potential psychosomatic reasons are numerous to say the least. I can't dwell on each point in this general book, but I would encourage all women to explore this area of their lives to see if there is room for insight, healing and growth. Please check my website for further resources, including private individual counseling and therapy. Send me an email.

In addition to all the possibilities that we've covered, I have another theory which may prove helpful. Speaking of theories and research, I found that experimenting and testing at the graduate school level was too politically correct, too regimented/limiting, and too bureaucratic for my taste which is why I went into directed self-study/education rather than go for a Ph.D. I put my emphasis more on getting results than having an abundance of credentials. I've studied a significant amount of science to better understand women sexually, but I believe that every woman is unique and can only be helped on an individual case by case method. It's very important and rewarding work for me when I get the opportunity to help women enjoy more fulfilling lives, but I wouldn't want to limit myself to specializing just in this one area (although it's a really great area).

The last theory I want to cover basically revolves around disassociating our sexual organs from the rest of our bodies. This applies equally to men, but I'm going to limit my comments to women.

To get this discussion started, let's say that a woman has a vagina, clitoris, and all the surrounding tissues and everything works. Some

women are very highly sexual while others may not be sexually inclined at all. Some women have a body with a vagina attached, while others have a vagina with a body attached. (As I said, it applies equally to men.)

It's been my experience and observation that women who are very highly sexual keep their whole body in condition for mind-blowing sex. They see their whole body as an instrument which is designed for pleasure. They have spectacular control over their vagina, hips, abs, legs, core, and so on. They know how to grind, and they know how to milk it. They tend to keep their figures, stay strong and healthy, and can make love for hours on end.

Their sex is the center of their bodies and universe, and they're going to be the most happy with a man who appreciates her strong sexuality.

Compared to that, we can only wonder what happens when women aren't quite as sexually inclined. Maybe they were never that much into it in the first place and don't see the big deal about it. Maybe they're too busy having/raising children. Maybe they've put on weight, got relatively weak, or both. Maybe they don't feel as attractive as they used to. Maybe when it comes time for sex the woman says to the man, "Hey, it's down there somewhere. You have fun with it if you want to, I'm too tired."

The point I'm wanting to make here is that you're going to get out of sex what you put into it. If you see your body as a highly tuned sexual instrument and you hook up with the right guy, then you should have all the orgasms you want. If you let your sexual muscles get out of shape and weak, whether you hook up with the right guy or not, the sex just isn't going to be as good as it could be (or as it used to be).

Lackluster sex becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, which will never get better by itself if no effort is made. The sexual coming together of a man and a woman necessarily dictates that they feed off each other's passion and enthusiasm. If that enthusiasm and passion isn't there, then the whole thing turns into a dud (if left unchecked it will turn into a rut).

It takes a fair amount of strength as well as a lot of energy and effort to

have great sex, which is why men and women usually take turns alternating between leading and being passive, as well as alternating positions. The better you keep up your sexual muscles, the better lover you're going to be. You will enjoy sex better, and your lover will pick up on that enthusiasm. Ultimately, great sex also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It's beyond the scope of this book to get into specifics about how to have great sex. Sex is not static, but rather is dynamic, and just doesn't lend itself well to books. A video production would be more beneficial; both in terms of getting more out of it in a shorter amount of time, and enjoying the learning in the process. There are some available, but I haven't as yet reviewed any. If there is enough interest, I would consider putting a video project together. (It would be a great production, but not something I would do on speculation.)

Most of what we learn how to do in bed is either innate or learned by trial and error through experience. There is no right and wrong. If it feels good, do it. You don't have to be real good at sex to enjoy it.

From an innate perspective, some people are just better at it than others. They are more talented because it means more to them to be good at it and get the most out of it. They're driven sexually. I suspect women who are into sex the most are also the women who have mastered the art of flirtation and seduction. They highlight all their womanly features: hair, make-up, nails, clothes, perfume, curves and the way they move. They are consummate flirts, and they enjoy getting and holding the attention of men (driving them to distraction). They liked to be looked at and be the center of attention.

Whenever I had the opportunity, I was not afraid to ask women about sex (especially if we were lovers). I'd ask what they liked personally and what they thought other women liked. I wanted to unravel the mysteries and learn the secrets. Get the inside scoop.

Here's what I've learned... every woman is different, just as every sexual situation is unique. Men are expected to lead and initiate activities, but

they look for cues from the woman first and act accordingly. The cues could be verbal or non-verbal. Let me give an example. Let's suppose you are making out with a woman and you place your hand on her thigh, just above the knee. It should be obvious to the woman what your intentions are with that hand, and she will respond accordingly. If she keeps her knees together and you feel a little tension as though she is pulling away from your touch, that means it is not welcome. Desist. She is not comfortable with the idea of you moving your hand up her thigh. If she is comfortable with that idea and wants you to move your hand like that, she will most likely spread her legs, even if just a little bit, and you will feel her thigh move into your hand as though inviting you to feel more. If the woman is already worked up and eager for you to touch her between her legs, she might put her hand on yours and move it up herself. Ooh-la-la.

These examples seem pretty basic and obvious. But the idea of picking up on cues and acting on them permeates the whole sexual encounter. The better you are at reading your lover, the better the sex is going to be. Very often times, a woman likes to be *taken* by her man and swept up in whatever waves of passion happen to come her way, but not until she is comfortable with the prospect and gives him the cues to go for it.

One of the problems many women have is that they are just not comfortable explaining to their lovers what they want exactly. Maybe they're not sure themselves until the heat of the moment and then they are too reluctant to say anything. I encourage all women to say whatever they want in bed. Be real. Another problem women have is that their lovers don't have any imagination or repertoire of skills/techniques. In that case, I would say just tell him the way it is. You'll be doing him (and yourself) a big favor. I've tried lots of things, and boy was I wrong once or twice.

One of the biggest problems women have is simply that their man always wants to rush through sex. Some women can have satisfying and climactic sex quickly, which is great. But more often than not, the woman is going to want to take about five to ten times as long as the man wants to. The best advice here is to hold back on the sex and focus more on quality than quantity. Before you can effect any significant change, you first have to get his attention. Explain to him that you want him to be more

responsive to your wants and needs. Tell him that you'll be happy to be there for him, and that you need him to be there for you. In other words, you want him to enjoy the ride instead of just arriving at the destination.

The truth is that men love the ride, and enjoy everything about women sexually. They just get self-centered, too excited, and sadly, tend to take their lovers for granted. Men enjoy long bouts of mind-blowing sex just as much as women do, but for a guy it just doesn't have to be that way every time. Guys love sex, but they don't like to make a production out of, or a big deal.

Men love to see their women whipped up into a passionate frenzy, all hot and excited, spurring him on to ever greater heights and depths. If you're having a hard time getting there, you may have to delay intercourse. You may have to fake it a little. You may try to focus more on the other parts of sex besides pumping (such as kissing, stroking backs and legs, fondling, rolling around, and even just looking at each other).

You may want to give him a preliminary nut. The usual risk is that after he has gotten his, then he won't be in the mood for sex anymore (but you've got a trick). You'll have something planned, such as sexual play, fantasy, bathing together, watching suggestive videos together, giving him a lap dance, doing a strip tease, or something that will raise him back up to his full attention (at which time you will be surreptitiously hot and ready). Let the good times roll. Also, if you can get yourself in the mood, go for some early morning wake-up sex. If you can get your lover going, before he's had a chance to get out of bed and go to the bathroom, you're both likely to have a great time.

Again, these are general guidelines and not meant to apply to everyone. Sexual compatibility and happiness is an important part of any relationship. Do what you need to do to be happy and get the most out of it; even if that means getting outside help.

I will share a few tips for men. Take your time. Enjoy the bounty. Enjoy all the sensations of whole-body contact. Listen. Start off gently. Women are very sensitive to touch and pressure. Whether you're using

your hands, mouth, tongue, or whatever else, always start gently and slowly, then follow the woman's cues to go harder, faster, deeper, or whatever the case may be. Pretend that every time is like the first time and you don't know what you're going to get; try something that you've never tried before to see how your lover responds. Experiment with different positions. Make a contest with yourself to see how wild you can drive your lover, and how well/long you can make love. Stay fit and trim and strong. If you want your woman to treat you like Studly Do-Right, then you have to act that way. Always keep your fingernails clean, trimmed short, and smooth/buffed (and use an all-natural hand lotion). Hold her. Shower her with compliments. Tell her how beautiful she is.

If you're with a new woman and going for that first kiss... be a man. If you want to kiss her, then kiss her. Don't ask her if she wants you to kiss her, or if it's okay for you to kiss her, just go for it. If she doesn't want you to kiss her, she'll let you know. While it's true that women appreciate men being polite and considerate, it's equally true that women prefer their men to be manly and act boldly.

If you're a woman trying to give a man clues that you're ready for him to kiss you and he's not picking up on them, you'll have to be more obvious about it. As all women know, men can be a little dense at times (or blind, preoccupied, distracted, etc.).

I've heard it said that women love to see men in tight blue jeans. That's *tight* blue jeans, not comfort fit. If you're not filling out those jeans as good as you used to, maybe it's time to whip that butt into shape. This applies equally well to women. Flat stomachs and tight butts drive everyone nuts. Draw her out and ask for feedback. Listen.

Compatibility Issues

Most of the compatibility issues are addressed during the dating and courtship phase of the relationship. Yet, people often end up in relationships where they don't feel like they are compatible with their mate. There are a few good reasons.

Relationships are a lot easier to get into than to get out of.

People may be blinded by visions of flawless perfection and grandeur in their mind's eye; lacking any kind of objectivity or rationality. This will usually include strong physical attraction, lust, admiration and infatuation. This is compounded by the fact that we try to be on our best behavior, make the best impression possible, and come across as charming and wonderful (i.e., a great catch).

Alas, familiarity breeds contempt, and as people get more used to being together, they begin to express themselves more authentically. You start letting your partner know what you *really* think about such and such. It could be anything from the grand to the petty. Your partner will be all too happy to return the consideration and give you what for. "You're too clingy, I need some space." "Oh yeah, well *you* are a slob and you leave your crap all over the place. You should pick up after yourself—I'm not your maid." Once the so-called honeymoon phase is over, then it's time to decide if you want to stay committed to the relationship that you're in. It's a simple cost/benefit analysis. Are you getting enough out of the relationship relative to what you have to put into it? Yes or no? Phrased differently, is it worth the trouble? Can you do better?

Once you've got those answers firmly planted in mind, you have to ask yourself if you and your mate are compatible. Let's use sex as an example since it's fresh in our minds. If one person wants to have sex once a week and the other wants to have sex twice a day, there's going to be some disappointment and sore feelings. If one person wants to sleep around and the other wants monogamy, that's going to be a problem. If one person wants to raise a family and the other doesn't, well, you get the idea.

There can be no getting around the issue of compatibility. Usually, these are the kind of issues that are discovered and settled during the dating and courtship phase. Invariably however, people get into full-fledged relationships (perhaps under false pretenses) and then are faced with significant compatibility issues, and perhaps a long list of other peccadilloes, annoyances, irritations and complaints. They are vested in the relationship and have to wonder if it's worth it to work things out.

On the basis of compatibility, there is no working things out. There is only compromise or capitulation. On the basis of a cost/benefit analysis, it's a total judgment call which only you can answer. When it comes to breaking someone's heart, hurting someone's feelings, or dealing a blow to someone's ego/self-esteem, there are no easy answers. Life is hard sometimes, and the easiest choice is not always the best choice.

I have a rule of thumb that I follow when I have an important decision to make. I do my best to live my life without regrets. So, I imagine myself in the distant future looking back to this point in time and wonder if I will regret making this important decision. It often boils down to the lesser of two evils. Give important decisions the consideration and reflection they deserve, then make them without regret and move on with your life.

Change happens in an instant. It might take a long time to get ready to make a change, but when the change occurs, it's instantaneous. Please don't do anything rash or go off half-cocked. Only you can decide what is right and wrong for you in your life, and you have to live with the consequences for the decisions you make and the actions you take. Don't settle for mediocrity and unhappiness. It's your life, your happiness and your well-being that are at stake.

A lot of people stay in less than ideal relationships, and as long as that is the decision they are making, they will figure out a rationalization for it. It will usually have something to do with money, timeliness, children, projects, friends, and so on. People also stay in unhappy marriages because of their wedding vows (which I'm not discounting the importance and significance of).

Married or not, what usually happens is that one person is very worked up and emotionally upset about the quality of the relationship, and the other person isn't. This is often because the partner is taking you and your relationship for granted. He or she may have a false sense of security, and may not appreciate the gravity of the situation until after you've already left. In situations like these, I cannot stress enough the importance of effective communication.

Before you end a relationship, you owe it to yourself and your partner to make every reasonable effort on your part to work out your problems and differences. You need to make a serious commitment in this regard, and if you decide to end the relationship, then you will know that you made your best effort to work things out. You can look back without regrets.

Sometimes people come together for the wrong reasons. Other times, one person will outgrow the other. No matter how much you care for someone else's happiness and well-being, there just isn't any getting around the issue of compatibility.

A relationship coming to an end is sad, but it's also an opportunity for healing and growth. It's sad when we lose someone we love, but we have to move on with our lives and make the best of it.

Again, this book is not meant to take the place of counseling or therapy. Just don't forget that the point of being in a relationship is to be happy and enjoy your partner's company as well as the other benefits your partner brings to the party.

I have offered this chapter as a neutral base for any couple in conflict to consider and spark constructive and positive discussion. It's enough to get the ball rolling and gauge your partner's attitude and sincerity towards improving your relationship. Other than that, shoot me an email and I will help if I can.

A Final Word

I hope you enjoyed the read and the time we have spent together. I've put a lot of emphasis on living life one day at a time, but I don't mean that to sound like a bad thing. Live in the moment. Live on purpose. I hope you are now looking forward to getting more out of life and that you are excited at the prospects for new plans and growth... new horizons and newfound joy and happiness. Each new day offers the promise of a thrilling adventure and fabulous rewards.

If you enjoyed this book, I encourage you to get the other books in the series and recommend them to your family and friends who could benefit from them.

Book One focuses on you and being your best. Millionaire Wealth focuses on your lifestyle and what you are going to do with your productive time. You could very easily become wealthy (if you're not already). Freedom or Forfeit, focuses on living in a free country and having the freedom to create the life that makes you the most happy.

Please share your experiences and success stories with me and the other people who might find this book informative and inspirational. I look forward to hearing from you and wish you health, wealth, happiness and the freedom to enjoy it.

Bonus

We recently found a sign that no one wanted in the back of a clearance store. I liked it so much, I hung it on the wall leading into my office. It's not copyrighted, so help yourself to it. Customize it and make it into your own art and hang it on your wall. It reads,

This is your life.
Find a passion and pursue it.
Fall in love. Dream big.
Drink wine, eat great food and spend quality time with good friends.
Laugh every day.
Believe in magic. Tell Stories
Reminisce about the good old days but look with optimism to the future.
Travel often.
Learn more. Be creative.
Spend time with people you admire.
Seize opportunities when they reveal themselves.
Love with all your heart.
Never give up.
Do what you love.
Be true to who you are.
Make time to enjoy the simple things in life.
Spend time with family.
Forgive even when it's hard.
Smile Often. Be grateful.
Be the change you wish to see in the world.
Follow your dreams.
Try new things.
Work hard.
Don't count the minutes, count the laughs.
Embrace change.
Trust in yourself.
Be thankful.
Be nice to everyone.
Be happy.
Live for today.
And above all... make every moment count.

Five Day Challenge Sample Menu
(Mix & Match)

Breakfast

Mushroom and Swiss Cheese Omelet
Asparagus Spears with Hollandaise
Side meat optional

Bacon & Eggs cooked to order
Twice-baked Stuffed Zucchini

Garden Vegetable Sauté (Squash, onions, mushrooms, peppers, sausage, sautéed in olive oil & butter with a splash of balsamic vinegar).
Top with fried egg(s)

Chef's Choice Frittata (meat, vegetables, cheese)
Spinach with Hollandaise

Country Sausage Patties with fried peppers and onions, topped with poached eggs.

Mid-Morning or Afternoon Snacks

Fresh Fruit, Nuts, Apples & Peanut Butter (or other nut butter), Yogurt,
Fresh Cheese, Protein Shake, Jerky, Hard Boiled Egg, Seeds

Desserts

Go with creams, custards, fruits, chocolate, nuts, applesauce

Lunches

Chef Salad with choice of dressing.

Marinated Grilled Shrimp & Vegetable Ka-Bobs

Taco Salad

Grilled Lamb Chops
Side Chopped Salad

Lettuce Wraps with choice of Tuna, Chicken, Egg (or other protein) Salad

Dinners

Grilled Fish with Pea Salad

Tender Pot Roast with Roasted Vegetables

Apple & Sage stuffed Pork Chops with Braised Cabbage & Leeks

Mesquite Grilled Chicken with Cole Slaw and Southern Style Green Beans

Steak au Poivre with Creamed Spinach and Root Vegetable Mash