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Greetings and Welcome to these pages,

The following treatise was initially written for clients as a take home reminder of topics discussed during a consultation, however it has expanded and evolved into a document that may serve as an introduction to the concepts underlying so called Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practice.

Health is far more than waiting until you get a disease, then choosing a drug to suppress it, or surgery, radiation or 'wait and see' (however appropriate these measures may be in the circumstances).

As a practitioner of Holistic Medicine, I offer a healing system that focuses on the cause of disease, not merely the suppression of symptoms. My goal is to discover the individuality of your health problem, treat its cause and stimulate your body to heal itself as soon as possible - Working with you (your doctor and specialist if appropriate) to provide better health outcomes than can be achieved through orthodox medical therapy alone.

Six Principles of Naturopathic Care:

1. First do no harm: use non-invasive treatments that minimize harmful side affects.
2. Find the cause: find the underlining cause for the illness from lifestyle, environment and/or foods.
3. Healing power of nature: Use methods, remedies and techniques that will promote the body's innate processes of healing.
4. Treat the whole person: Holistic medicine seeks to remove the causes of disease, raise the vitality of a person and thus restore the body to health. Encompassing the person's interaction of physical, emotional, mental, social, dietary, genetic, environmental, life style and any other factors that could affect the individual.
5. Education: Inform people and provide inspiration.
6. Prevention: Teach the principles of healthy and responsible living.

Excellent results provide the best advocacy for seeing a Naturopath.

May I state from the outset that while some of the following information may be interpreted as an attack on orthodox medicine, that is definitely not the intention. Rather, the information is put forward to give an educative &\or balancing perspective. The philosophies of both the orthodox physician and the naturopath are right and true, each form their own view point. The validity of each system can only be judged or compared to the outcome or goal that the individual has in mind when seeking a consultation. The health care system of the future I believe will incorporate the best on the old with the best of the new. Why hop on one leg when you can walk on two!

Advice given and medicines prescribed in my clinic are in accord with best practice and are evidence based i.e. they have stood the test of time and the tests of the modern scientific method.

Perception is an interesting 'thing'. This document reflects a certain perspective [mine] and thus is coloured and flavoured by concepts and experiences that I as an individual have been exposed to; I lay no claim to having all the answers only a perspective...

May you shine as the sun shines,

Darren Sassall

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Naturopath, Medical Herbalist, Homoeopath, Nutritionist, Remedial Massage Therapist, Sport Scientist.

“Since before the days of revelation...the same four corrupting errors have been made over and over again: submission to faulty and unworthy authority; submission to what it was customary to believe; submission to the prejudices of the mob; and worst of all, concealment of ignorance by a false show of un-held knowledge, for no better reason than pride.” Francis Bacon.

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## A Naturopathic Perspective of Health

"...The cosmos, life, preceded the tool of the whim of men, called the scientific method..." D Burisch.

Traditional systems of healing are undergoing a timely revival in popularity and are now being integrated into health care systems worldwide. These systems bring to modern healthcare principles of healing that have remained unchanged since their inception – some of which date back thousands of years.

Unlike modern allopathic medicine, where theories about the cause of a disease change based on new insights garnered from the science of the day, traditional systems provide a constant, unchanging understanding of the human species and its relation to nature. We are part of nature and the laws that govern nature also govern us. Analogies have been drawn between the practice of Modern Medicine and a newborn infant – the infant sparkles, has lots of energy and is very clever, but lacks the wisdom that time and experience brings.

“Daring as it is to investigate the unknown, even more so is it to question the known.” Kespan

Herbal medicine (or Phytomedicine) is a system of medicine that exclusively uses plants. It is the oldest form of medicine on our planet, and is still the primary form of medicine utilized by over 75% of the world's population. In fact Herbal medicine is the traditional medicine of all cultures, and is based on observation and experience passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years.

Today pharmacologists still seek out and examine the use of traditional medicines in the hope of finding the active chemical in the plant. They then make a drug by isolating the active principle. For example, aspirin came from salicylates found in Willow bark; heart drugs are still extracted from Foxglove; the Madagascar periwinkle provides drugs for leukaemia sufferers; and taxol from the Pacific Yew is utilized in chemotherapy for cancer. Herbalists acknowledge the existence of this active principle, but insist that the other less active components of the plant are essential in presenting the medicine in a form that is easily absorbed, utilized and excreted by the human body.

The World Health Organization encourages the use of Herbal medicine because it is cheap and effective and safe!

It is interesting to note the different labels placed on the use of Herbal Medicine as the years have gone by. Up to the 1940's, GPs prescribed and Pharmacists dispensed herbal medicines as the treatment of choice (with the discovery of Penicillin, War and a number of other factors, the drug industry hit its stride). By the '70's Herbalism was branded as hocus-pocus witchcraft; in the '80's it was placebo' and in the '90's herbs were toxic substances and to be avoided. What shall it be in the new decade I wonder? The indicators are that the cycle may be turning full circle. These labels are of course ridiculous when you consider that the herbs dispensed have not changed over the millennia and that herbs are still utilized by two thirds of the world's population as their primary source of medicine.

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## With Your Health in Mind...

“The amazing successes of medical science, the technology of today’s medicine, is based in the science of physics - that is obvious. However physics has already moved to a holistic view of the universe, leaving medicine like a bride at the altar without support.” Chris Magarrey (Professor of Surgery Sydney University 1981)

The health of our bodies is but one small part of the functioning of our entire organic system. To take the immune system for example in isolation is akin to disturbing a bee in its nest – it makes quite a stir but ultimately does not lead to anything constructive. We need to perceive the human in its social context, psychological context and its environmental context in order to fully appreciate and contend with any disturbance that may arise from poor habits of living. It is these poor habits of living that make an individual more susceptible to disharmony in his or her organic system and thus more susceptible to disease of one form or another.

“The assumptions that underlie "biomedical" medicine are that it is accurate, scientific and proven. It is a medicine based on the biological understanding of the organism. Given the tremendous advances in our understanding of the physical universe, i.e. quantum physics, it is clear that the biology of living organisms is not as simple as the textbooks would suggest. In fact, the evidence that the mind and body are one and that the human body is more than a structural and biochemical entity is overwhelming.” (Understanding the Differences Between Conventional, Alternative, Complementary, Integrative and Natural Medicine. By Anna MacIntosh, PhD, ND. Dean of Research, National College of Naturopathic Medicine, Portland, Oregon USA; from Townsend Letter, July 1999)

The practice of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) picks up where orthodox medicine leaves off. The blocking of a painful sensation or in some other way interfering with the bodies best attempts at self repair (however necessary that may be in the short term) does not serve to lift a person out of the situation that led to the manifestation of disease in the first instance. This is where a system of care whose aim is one of nurturing rather than suppressing will lead to a prevention of recurrence and thriving rather than just surviving.

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## Illness – Your New Best Friend...

Illness is always a biologically meaningful process, the purpose of which is to eliminate toxins and to repair, reduce, or contain the damage they cause. The type and degree of damage caused depends on: the body’s immune status (its ability to deal with the problem), the type of toxin and the duration and strength of its effect.

Taking medication as a Band-Aid measure is OK in the short term but this is no cure! The pharmaceutical will take the pain away and mask the symptoms but does nothing to address the cause of your pain or condition. These symptoms are your bodies' way of telling you that all is not well in its world! Something is missing, being overloaded, or over looked - its needs are not being met at some level. Ignoring a problem at work does not make it go away. So to, the body will continue to try to let you know of its problem in ever increasingly more obvious ways until you finally take notice.

Note: symptoms of illness are indicative of the body's best efforts at eliminating the problem, they are not the problem itself.

When a toxin disturbs the body it will first attempt to excrete it through phenomena such as diarrhoea, vomiting, a runny nose or sweating. If this is not successful, the body will then employ deeper defences, most resulting in inflammation. Most of the '-itises' in medicine will be here, like cellulitis, acute sinusitis, rhinitis, gastroenteritis etc. This inflammation is a very important healing tool for the body and should not be just suppressed. (Suppressing this defence mechanism with anti-inflammatory drugs might take the symptoms away - swelling, redness, and pain; but will not treat the cause i.e. the foreign substance or the damaged tissue). The direct effect of suppressive therapy is toxicity, greater rates of recurrence, and other immeasurable long-term consequences. Suppressing the inflammatory process also means slowing down or inhibiting the natural healing process. Is this what medicine is supposed to do? Time poor 'baby boomers' have a lot to answer for in the acceptance of and mainstreaming of this method of care - soldier on at any cost (until you fall over)!

If this initial effort fails, whether because of suppression, the structure of the toxin, the scope of its impact, the body's reduced reactivity (which may be due to Iatrogenic causes - side effects of medication) or for any other reason; the body attempts to reduce the impact of the toxin by depositing and storing it in specific tissues. Examples of this phase of disease would be fatty infiltration of the liver, lipomas, fibroids in the uterus etc.

If the cause of the imbalance is not rectified and the deposited toxins are not eliminated, cellular communication is disturbed and cell structures are damaged. At this stage of disease it is still possible to reverse the process but aggressive therapy is required. Examples here would be asthma, late onset type 2 diabetes and Syndrome X, osteoarthritis, cardiomyopathy, ulceration etc.

If the organism is not supported here or cannot overcome the toxin by itself, the breakdown is so severe that structural changes in the tissues and organs takes place (this is definitely bad!) leading to degeneration and disintegration of tissues leading to cancer and possible death of the organism

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Ignorance is Bliss but...

"If Qantas had the safety record of the health system there would be a 747 crash every second day"  
(Illawarra Mercury Tuesday May 13, 2003)

Why, dear readers, was this article on page 12 and not front-page news I ask you? It is a little perplexing considering the coverage the media has given to the Pan issue of late.

"...At least 80,000 hospitalisations related to medications occur in Australia each year. Between 32% and 69% of these are considered to be avoidable." (Malpass et al. An analysis of Australian adverse drug events. J Qual Clin Prac 1999; 19: 27-30)

The widely reported perspective on this issue seems to automatically assume medicine and science to be always above reproach; always correct; always fully vindicated by truly scientific research that is always ethically done, with no politically or financially driven agendas and thus being on all levels the golden standard against which everything else is tested or vindicated.

The problem however is that these assumptions - as the above examples and the ones that follow point out! - Are not automatically correct and show quite a different story about the skeletons within medicine's own closet that need to be brought to light and expunge. The Pan recall was caused by quality defects in badly manufactured Travacalm. This involved serious side effects for the people affected, but this is not a natural health product. Travacalm is a drug - an over-the-counter pharmacy-only medicine that was poorly manufactured and quite rightly recalled.

The fact is there seems to be no reports of adverse effects of any vitamin or herbal products on the Pan list, however the Travacalm reports are being touted as evidence of how dangerous herbs and other 'unproven' medicines are. The issue is one of the code of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) being breached by a pharmaceutical company/laboratory that also manufactures complementary medicine products. The recent medicine recall has flushed out the detractors of natural medicine who have hijacked the situation to criticise the efficacy of complementary medicine. Consumers take natural health products for one simple reason: because they work.

There is a wealth of scientific evidence to support the use of natural health products, including:

The mineral selenium: a randomised, controlled trial of this supplement had to be stopped because of "the apparent reductions in total cancer mortality and total cancer incidence" in the experimental group. The researchers could no longer ethically justify not giving this substance to the placebo group (Journal of the American Medical Association, 1996).

Lactobacillus bacteria: if pregnant women take Lactobacillus bacteria every day, the risk of their newborn babies having atopic eczema halves (The Lancet, 2001).

The vitamins folic acid and B12: if everyone diagnosed with heart disease took these vitamins, 310,000 lives over five years would be saved in the US alone (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2001).

St John's wort: this herb is commonly used for mild and moderate depression; a meta-analysis of trials in 1996, published in the British Medical Journal, showed that it was as effective as standard antidepressants, but with fewer side effects.

These are but a few examples.

"...The exact contrary of what is generally believed is often the truth..." Jean de la Breyere

Then of course there was the 'granddaddy' of them all in the medico's recent reversal towards the use of HRT. It is a major example of how medicine has more than once foisted a totally unproven treatment onto huge numbers of people. Yet natural

therapists have long been suggesting that the use of such hormone therapy may have serious consequences, the medicos inevitably responded with arrogance and anger, declaring their treatment "obviously safe!" And if we wanted to use Black cohosh or other herbs as alternatives, these were declared "unsafe" or forms of quackery for which there was no scientific basis!! But who are the quacks now?? This is not actually meant as a vindictive statement. Rather it is a deeply valid response that deserves a clear, concise and honest answer from medicine.

At least confronting them with such soul-searching questions should also awaken them to the reality that what is perceived as "quackery," is a very relative situation and depends very much on which side of the fence one is throwing one's stones from!

What about the historical realities of the use of DDT? Children and entire populations were routinely sprayed with this deadly carcinogenic substance, promoted by the scientific and medical "experts" of the day, as being "totally safe."

What about the use of asbestos? Again declared by the "experts" as being completely benign. What about DES? Thalidomide?

What about the use of lead in petrol? What about the discrediting of breast-feeding in favour of using bottle-feed, which was such a rage for a long time, but for which a lot of people today have to live out the consequences of this advice e.g. diabetes, etc?

What about cigarette smoking? Vaccination?

The reality is that we still have such issues as the continued use of Tamoxifen, despite a lot of evidence that it creates more harm than good. What about the use of amalgams...actually they are getting close to admitting their huge mistake in this case! What about the use of fluoride in water?

All these are still being heavily defended and promoted as "perfectly safe," but for which holistic therapists can already see much evidence to the contrary. (Thankyou to Peter DeRuyter, an esteemed colleague, whose correspondence the above few paragraphs was based on). Shall I go on...yes?

"...A good scientist doesn't care what the result is..." Carl Sagan

A recent report by the Australia Institute into academic freedom and commercialisation of Australian universities stated that nearly one fifth of Australian academics reported being prevented from publishing contentious results from their research. It also showed that over 40% of academics had experienced discomfort in publishing contentious research results and almost half had experienced a reluctance to criticise institutions that provide large research grants. The Australia Institute report was gleaned from 1,000 social scientists from 13 universities across four university types. (Source: Wollongong Advertiser Newspaper Feb 2001)

This aspect of human nature could be justified in some minds as few seek to bite the hand that feeds them, however as an indicator perhaps of a wider trend in scientific research (where much research - approximately 70% - is for industry, sponsored by industry) it is a worry! Particularly with statistics like the following being published:

? A recent investigation found that if a drug study is funded by the pharmaceutical industry, it will be found ineffective 5% of the time, whereas, if the study is independently funded, it will be found ineffective 45% of the time. (Friedberg M et al. Evaluation of conflict of interest in economic analyses of new drugs used in oncology. JAMA 1999; 282 (15): 1453-7)

A common criticism of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is that therapy is unproven and anecdotal, but interestingly...

? "...only 15% of medical interventions are supported by solid scientific evidence...(and)...only 1% of the articles in medical journals are scientifically sound...many treatments have never been assessed at all..." (Smith R. Where is the wisdom...? The poverty of medical evidence. Editorial. British Medical J 1991;303(Oct 5):798-799 )

It would seem that medicine might have as much work to do as any other profession in justifying its existence as this suggests that 99% of published trials, or at least the reporting of them - cannot be relied on.

? "...only 5% of published papers reach minimum standards of scientific soundness and clinical relevance..." and that "...in most (medical) journals the figure is less than 1%". (O'Donnell M. Evidenced-based illiteracy: Time to rescue "The Literature". The Lancet 2000;335:489-491).

? "...Only 6% of drug advertising material is supported by evidence..." (British Medical Journal, February 28, 2004, p. 485 P

Rome)

? Patients suffering adverse reactions to their prescribed medications, with around 20,000 deaths per year, take up one third of hospital beds in Australia.

? Healthcare costs in Australia currently run at approximately AUS \$50 Billion/year (CHC Summit 2001), with the cost of the pharmaceutical benefits scheme last year of \$3.5 billion subsidised by the taxpayer.

? “Randomised controlled trials do not necessarily reflect real-world practice or experience...Meta-analyses are often unreliable...There is bias in the hypotheses tested in clinical trials...The evidence is not transmitted to practitioners in a timely or uniformly reliable manner...There are many conditions for which no ‘high-level’ evidence exists.”

“For all these reasons, the ‘evidence available’ may often be flawed. We all practise ‘evidence-based medicine’, but the evidence comes from many sources: our own experience; our clinical judgement about a particular patient, and (to a lesser extent); the published literature of which we are aware.” (Celermajor DS. Evidenced-based medicine: how good is the evidence? Med J Aust 2001;174(6):293-295).

In an extraordinary admission, a senior executive with UK drug giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) has 'confessed' that the vast majority of prescription drugs don't work. Dr Allen Roses, worldwide vice-president of genetics at GSK, has told a conference that over 90 per cent of all drugs work for only between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of patients. At the very bottom of the efficacy table are the cancer drugs, which work on only 25 per cent of patients. These are closely followed by Alzheimer's drugs that work on just 30 per cent of people. Drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, migraine, incontinence, hepatitis C, and diabetes work on only half the patients, at best. The most effective drugs are the analgesics, which work for to 80 per cent of those who take them. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3299945.stm>)

It is probably not surprising then to find that according to the Journal of the American Medical Association in July 2000, that ADR's (adverse drug reactions) too correctly prescribed medications, are now the number three cause of death in American hospitals behind heart disease and cancer - accounting for approximately 225,000 deaths a year with many hundreds of thousands more maimed and permanently injured. These statistics exceed the number of deaths from all illegal drugs combined, at an annual cost to the public of more than US\$136 Billion (JAMA. 227; 301-6. 1997) More recently: A definitive review of medical peer-review journals, and government health statistics shows that...the number of people having in-hospital, adverse drug reactions (ADR) to prescribed medicine is 2.2 million. The number of unnecessary antibiotics prescribed annually for viral infections was 20 million. The number of unnecessary medical and surgical procedures performed annually is 7.5 million. The number of people exposed to unnecessary hospitalization annually is 8.9 million. The total number of iatrogenic deaths is 783,936. It is evident that the American medical system is the leading cause of death and injury in the United States. (Death by Medicine By Gary Null PhD, Carolyn Dean MD ND, Martin Feldman MD, Debora Rasio MD, Dorothy Smith PhD)

By way of comparison, the Australian Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee reported the number of adverse reactions from complementary medicines as averaging only 23 per year compared with 400,000 in 1999-2000 for prescribed drugs. “...The passing of a belief is never a happy event for those that hold it, live by it, trust it, behave according to it's tenets, and make their livings be following it's ramifications, even if it proves to have been an obstacle in the way of something that later seems to be more like the truth...” Unknown

Websites of interest: [www.credence.org](http://www.credence.org) , [www.medicaltruth.com](http://www.medicaltruth.com) ,[www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com) and [www.healthanswers.com](http://www.healthanswers.com) a drug information database to find out all about any medication you may be taking.

th their GP and then seeking combined treatment with a Naturopath. The best of both worlds so to speak!

There is no doubt that advances in acute care are truly amazing. Diagnostic skills and surgical procedures in particular stand out. It is the emphasis on disease rather than health that is the essential difference between allopathic and natural medicine.

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## Building Bridges...

“...New thoughts and new truths go through three stages. First they are ridiculed. Next they are violently opposed. Then, finally they are accepted as being self evident...” Arthur Schopenhauer

The past federal president of the Australian Medical Association Dr Kerryn Phelps extended her Association’s support for the use of natural and complementary medicines – with an emphasis on an evidence base.

She told delegates at the inaugural Complementary Healthcare Council Summit in Canberra (2001): “there is nothing to be achieved through continuing the past adversarial approach between the orthodox and the complementary advocates...It is a time to build bridges – and all bridges much be built on trust and understanding. A good starting point is being clear about what we have in common – best practice, health outcomes and patient welfare.”

Dr Phelps said orthodox medical practitioners need to stop stereotyping complementary medical practitioners as ‘quacks’ and ‘leaf eaters’, similarly, complementary therapists need stop stereotyping orthodox medicine as simply disease-based, non-holistic ‘flat Earthers’ and dependent on technology. “Orthodox medicine has moved on”, she said.

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## A Philosophy of Care...

" Health is freedom from pain in the physical body, having attained a state of well-being; freedom from passion on the emotional level, having as a result a dynamic state of serenity and calm; and freedom from selfishness in the mental sphere, having as a result total unification with truth." George Vitoulkas

What the current status quo would have you believe is only the half of it. Life is no more nor less than the sum total of the mind of its creator and to truly get an understanding of life will require the getting to knowing of its creator; a topic however a little broad for this treatise.

To a Natural Therapist it is unhealthy cells that lead to disease - disease does not cause unhealthy cells. This is an important distinction. You contract a disease because you are sick. Not, you are sick because you have a disease. If the soil is poor, you can only expect to reap a poor crop. Even the 'father of the germ theory', Louis Pasteur admitted on his deathbed that he'd been wrong about germs, saying, "Bernard was right...the germ is nothing, the soil (internal environment of the body) is everything".

{Claude Bernard was working in the same fields as Pasteur but came to different conclusions -

the medical establishment chose to follow and still follows Pasteur’s discarded theory

to base its philosophy of care upon}.

Life is chemically complex and to the Naturopath or Herbalist it seems more than logical that, just as our foods are chemically complex, so should our medicines be. A phytotherapist (a modern day herbalist) prefers to prescribe chemically complex remedies, often in complex formulas; where as a conventional physician would rather prescribe a single agent.

One of the serious drawbacks of the science inspired by Galileo and Newton is that it was never designed to understand wholes. Its strength is in reduction of complexities to their parts; it is not interested in understanding or predicting the behaviour of systems such as the human body and nature itself. This is difficult to put right. Scientists within the western world regularly dismiss traditional medicine as anecdotal, and as such relatively useless. They forget that the basis of all scientific endeavours rests on systematic observation and that traditional medicine is one of the few disciplines that have a consistent record of systematic observation that dates back to antiquity.

The body has its own innate sense of order and movement towards health: do you need to direct the body to heal if you cut yourself or break a bone? – No. What about digesting your food, cutting a tooth, or growing a limb? – No.

No one doubts that self-repair is a vital phenomenon. However, modern medicine has moved away from the classic principle that all healing is self-healing. No drug or surgery actually heals; its value is in reducing pain and distress, returning an acceptable function and at best enabling spontaneous repair to occur when it had previously been prevented. The healing power of life is the only healer and the physician should do no more than help it on its way. Natural therapists have no problem with the modern strategy; in many circumstances, it is certain that it can save lives and protect health in ways inconceivable to pre-scientific

medicine. However, 'first do no harm'.

Naturopathic practice has as its primary goal that of supporting self-repair. This approach is arguably the most appropriate in facing the challenge of chronic disease, the broad range of syndromes and the many minor self limiting symptoms of today's maladies. First take care of the basics, if this does not lead to cure outright, it tends to highlight the problem and allow for specific targeting of the imbalance that underlies the condition.

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Treating the cause...

Of course, both orthodox and traditional therapists aim to treat the cause of disease. Where they often differ is in their different perception of the cause. As perception and understanding of a patients problem improve, the closer we come to the 'real' cause. Often there is a chain of causal events and the traditional approach is to treat as many of the links in the chain as possible. Perception of the cause should ideally be linked to a correct medical diagnosis. Take the following example of treating the links in a causal chain of events:

Stress insomnia lowered vitality weakened immunity viral infection catarrhal state of mucosal membranes cough.

Now which 'cause' of the cough do you want to treat? The practice of herbal medicine is unique in that by choosing herbs that cover several of the perceived causes; it may be possible to treat many or most links in one prescription. For example: St. John's Wort is antiviral and nerve tonic; Echinacea is an immune stimulant and lymph tonic; Marshmallow as a soothing demulcent for the mucous membranes and to relax bronchial tension; Siberian ginseng as an adaptogen (non-specifically aids the body in its ability to deal with stress).

Herbal medicine can successfully treat many common health problems and give support to individual organs and systems. However, it is particularly suited to the treatment of chronic disorders such as arthritis, asthma, skin disorders, chronic fatigue, depression and digestive problems. It is also highly effective for the treatment of female menstrual problems such as period pain, excessive or disordered menstruation, PMS and menopause; as well as pre-conception and pregnancy care.

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How Long Is This Going To Take?

Treatment of chronic problems is sometimes slow, taking months, but a permanent change and relative freedom from side effects are more than adequate compensation. Generally some improvement will be noted within a few weeks, although this varies and depends to a great extent on how much effort the patient is prepared to make on his or her own behalf. As a general rule, treatment duration is around 1-3 months for each year the problem has persisted.

An unhealthy cell cannot produce a healthy cell. Different tissues and organs reproduce or 'turn over' at different rates - some quicker (10 -14 days) some slower (up to 7 years). Which organ or system is afflicted and how long it takes to replace itself, will determine to a large extent how long is required for cure. It is imperative that a cell be supported through its entire life cycle having all it requires so that it reproduces healthy cells and therefore the organs which they make up. As an illustration: say a puzzle has 50 pieces but you only have 49 of them! You cannot complete the puzzle. So to, if a biochemical reaction requires 50 components and you only have 49, the process cannot take place. Or say you only have 50% of the last required component, the whole process will be limited to the amount of the last component - 50% of it potential.

For more acute problems such as colds and flu, response to treatment can be very quick taking a day or so.

Avoid over the counter self-prescribing - the main herbal medicine manufacturer of practitioner medicines in Australia rejects (after stringent testing) 30% of the herbal samples it receives as being of poor quality; these herbs end up somewhere? See your friendly practitioner for personalized advice and to ensure the herbs you are purchasing are of good quality, potency and identity.

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## A House Built on Faulty Foundations...

“...We must not constrict the universe in order to adapt it to the limitation of our capacity of understanding it, such as man has been accustomed to doing. Rather we must extend our knowledge so that it is capable of grasping the picture of the universe...” (Albert Einstein)

Look at the state the world is in! Clearly, we have missed something, have we not? There is something fundamental that we don't understand, or are not willing to understand! When what a true scientist does is not working, she sets aside all assumptions and starts over. Seeking to search for answers with a 'beginners mind' as Einstein once put it. All great discoveries have been made from a willingness to not be right. You can't know something new until you admit that you might be wrong about something. Nothing new is ever found in a textbook! 'Right' is a term we use to designate something with which we agree. What we've missed or don't agree with, therefore, appears at first to be 'wrong'...interesting! Similarly, you can't know good without knowing what bad is; joy without despair; happiness without depression; feeling high without low; you can't know health and wellness without the experience of illness and disease.

Scientific methodologies reflect a misunderstanding of our universal nature:

“...Rational empirical scientism is banal in its attempts at utter concreteness. Its methods of investigating and structuring reality make little use of metaphor or symbol, of analogy or simile; it compartmentalizes, isolates, and fragments reality. Despite the advances in relativity and quantum theory, scientists still expect to view a world in which things are exactly as they appear to be, discrete and unperturbed by the subjective depths of the mind from which our very perceptions and rational intellect emerge...”  
Robert Lawlor

The philosophies of both the orthodox physician and the naturopath are right and true, each from their own view point. The validity of each system can only be judged or compared to the outcome or goal that the individual has in mind when seeking a consultation. A doctor will look to influence disease via drug therapy by altering a biochemical pathway or by manipulating a receptor site, or in some other way impose his will on the body. While a naturopath will look to influence health by supporting the body's own innate ability to heal itself. One is not inherently better than the other, it depends on what you may be hoping to achieve or gain by the experience i.e. you see a chef for a meal; an accountant for your tax; a massage therapist for your aching muscles; a surgeon for the knife; a doctor for a 'magic bullet' to take away the pain; a naturopath to aid in restoring your health once you have made a conscious decision to take care of yourself.

So why do we get sick? Simply because we love it! We love our diseases; they greatly help us to feel sorry for ourselves and to get attention from others; and there are few things more motivating to initiate change in our lives than pain. We usually don't consciously recognize we are making ourselves sick, so when we do 'catch' something it feels far more like something impacting us from outside ourselves rather than from within. Our physical being for whatever reason has moved away from that which it innately strives to move towards – harmony.

We smoke and wonder why we get cancer. We eat modified fat and wonder over blocked arteries. We stay angry for 30 years and drop dead from heart attack. We compete mercilessly and stroke with the stress. We quite literally worry ourselves to death. We take rotten care of our bodies, paying little attention at all to them until something starts to go off the rails. We take much better care of the car than our bodies and that's not saying a great deal. And what is particularly interesting from my perspective is when we do go to see someone about our health; we don't take their advice or the medications they prescribe!

Imagine a continuum with death at one end and vibrant health at the other with symptom free halfway - where do you sit on this scale? Where would you like to sit? What are you doing about it? If you suffer recurrent conditions such as sinus, allergy, headache, insomnia, fatigue, muscular or joint pain, digestive disturbances, anxiety or mood swings etc., you are not on the more desirable side of this scale, would you agree? Yet, conditions like these are endured and thought of as commonplace, a hazard of our lifestyle and ignored where possible.

It is a mathematical certainty that if you do not, have not or will not spend time looking after yourself, that this time will be more than compensated for when illness of a more debilitating nature strikes.

Still not convinced? Well...

The quality of sunlight has changed have you noticed. Our air is polluted, as is our water (ever seen the inside of a water pipe?).

Our foods are sown with GM (genetically modified) seed; grown in soils devoid of nutrients (as irrigation systems prevent yearly flooding and soil nutrient replenishment); treated with various chemical cocktails; then picked green and gas ripened (nutrients are transferred to the fruit or vegetable as it ripens on the vine), transported, irradiated and processed, packaged, refrigerated/frozen, cooked/micro waved - denatured! And those of us that are getting enough exercise may not be getting enough relaxation. Sunlight, Air, Water, Food, Exercise – these are the foundations of our bodies health. A house built on faulty foundations some time sooner or later is going to fall down. Our health falls over just as quickly if we are not careful builders and choose our foundations wisely.

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The Way Forward...

"Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so." Douglas Adams

Choices can be made that have a major impact on our health long before any treatment becomes necessary for disease. The US National Cancer Institute recommends that we eat 5-9 varied servings of fruits & vegetables every day; including: cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale and turnip), citrus fruit, dark green leafy vegetables and yellow/orange/red vegetables with three different colours per day. However, the vast majority of us in the West will not follow this advice - less than 10% of the population in fact. We Humans have evolved as hunter gatherers consuming small amounts of a wide variety of foods; over 100 in most localities, including: roots, beans, nuts, tubers, fruits, edible flowers and gums; with the occasional game when available. (Eaton SB, Konner MJ. Palaeolithic nutrition revisited: a twelve-year retrospective on its nature and implications. Eur J Clin Nutr 1997;51:207-216) We have evolved to be at our best, our healthiest & our most able to prevent and fight disease on such a diet. The typical Western diet is made up of approximately 15 foods – this is a recipe for poor health (excuse the pun!).

Diet and lifestyle have been reported to be the cause of up to 30% of cardiovascular deaths, 60% of fatal cancers and 80% of diabetes mellitus cases, including 30% of diabetes deaths. In addition, it is estimated that 35% of all cancer deaths are attributable to diet. (McGinnis JM, Foege WH. Actual causes of death in the US. JAMA 1993; 270:2207-2212)

Our genetic constitution has remained relatively unchanged over the last 40,000 years. However the way we eat, the amount we eat, the nutritional content of the foods we choose and the exceedingly high levels of toxins in our environment could not be more different. Evolution is a slow process and our bodies have not yet evolved to utilize toxins as fuel! If we will not eat the ideal diet for any reason then we must be prepared for the consequences.

However eating well is not the end of it. Today it is not so much a case of 'you are what you eat', but rather 'you are what you can absorb!' Stress is a significantly under rated cause of imbalance and disease to our system. Whether the stress is on a physical, mental or emotional level, it directly impacts on our ability to digest food (among other effects) and can set up a nasty down-would spiral effect. If you are unable to absorb nutrients from your food to meet your body's requirements, it is then less able to deal with its workload or stress. This further impacts on digestion and further reduces nutrient uptake and your ability to cope with its effects multiplying down the line. Further, stress triggers hormones that can imbalance an array of body systems leading to pituitary, thyroid, immune and reproductive imbalances to name a few.

Herbal medicines work wonders in this situation to break the cycle, calm the nerves and initiate healing.

It is my belief that the body can deal with just about anything you might want to put it through as long as it gets what it requires to deal with the workload. Today's society demands more of the mind, emotions and body than ever before, and with its foundations undermined and crumbling, the body is suffering. To the extent that I believe it is no longer possible (for most of us) to get from our diet alone (even if we wanted to) the nutrients required to meet these demands and combat the toxic load it is confronted with. Sadly, some form of supplementation - preferably from a whole-food source - is a must. This position is also supported by the orthodox medical perspective:

"...Most people do not consume an optimal amount of all vitamins by diet alone. Pending strong evidence of effectiveness from randomised trials, it appears prudent for all adults to take vitamin supplements..."

(Fletcher RH, Fairfield KM. Vitamins for chronic disease prevention in adults: clinical applications. JAMA 2002 Jun 19;287 (23):3127-9)

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## General Dietary & Lifestyle Guidelines

“It is a wise man’s part, rather to avoid sickness, than to wishe for medicines.” Sir Thomas Moore 14thCent.

There is an old and famous saying - ‘you are what you eat.’ Quite simply eating denatured and poisoned food leads to denatured and poisoned humans! Is this overstating things? I think not. When was the last time you felt really well?

Hippocrates wrote - ‘Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food.’ The state of your body - how it looks and feels as well as how it functions, depends to an enormous extent on how well it is nourished.

The most common and significant diseases in all parts of the world are the health problems associated with an inadequate diet. There are different problems with different diets eg. The 3rd world diseases are associated with too little protein and too little food, and the Western society degenerative diseases are associated with too many calories and too few nutrients i.e. over-eating and under-nutrition. The body requires 90 nutrients daily from our diet. Sixty of these come from plants in the form of minerals via the soil they are grown in. However, modern farming practice replaces only three! The question is then, how do we get these nutrients if the food we eat doesn’t contain them? Answer: we don’t! And suffer in degrees accordingly.

We need to rebalance the body with the basic necessities of life – sunlight, fresh air, pure water, good nutrition, adequate exercise & relaxation, good sleep & a balanced state of mind.

Remember - if your desire is physical health, you need do what physically healthy people do, and these guidelines are it! However, try not to let this list overwhelm you. When looking to implement changes in routine it is best to ‘make haste slowly’.

### FOR THE BEST HEALTH:

Eat a wide variety of foods - the greater variety of foods you eat, the more likely you are to get the full range of nutrients required by the body; and the greater the dilution factor if there is any toxic or harmful, factor in the food, eg. Pesticides, chemicals, hormones, antibiotics etc.

Increase consumption of whole grains (choose a variety such as millet, buckwheat, quinoa, rice, barley etc.) fresh fruit and vegetables. Have a large proportion of your diet as fresh fruit and vegetables, while ensuring adequate protein intake. Try to have a big salad every day as well as a couple of pieces of fruit. Note however that different people do well on different diets – some do better with a little red meat in the diet, some do better on a solely vegetarian diet. Take time to take notice of what your body tells you it needs.

There are varying ideas on amounts of raw foods to be eaten. The hygienists suggest eating about 60-70% raw foods; macrobiotic diets suggest all cooked foods. This reflects individuality; no single dietary regime works for the entire population. Again, choose what works best for you. This may also vary depending on the season eg. Winter - warming foods such as homemade soups are nourishing, summer - salads are often preferred. (For debate on the pros, cons and myths of vegetarianism see article posted at [www.powerhealth.net](http://www.powerhealth.net) see under articles section)

Remember - the closer to the natural farm product, the greater the nutrients. Ground to mouth is best. Choose organically grown foods or grow your own without chemicals (see [www.nutri-tech.com.au](http://www.nutri-tech.com.au))

Avoid saturated animal fats and trans-fatty acids as found in margarine and heated vegetable oils, but make sure you are getting enough of the essential fatty acids. Avoid fried foods. The anti-inflammatory essential fatty acids come from flaxseed oil, fish oils and evening primrose oil mainly plus nuts and seeds. Cold pressed virgin olive oil is the best choice for cooking as it has a relatively higher tolerance to heat – the darker in colour the better. Be aware that when choosing ‘low fat’ or ‘diet’ products you are depriving yourself of fat-soluble vitamins (A,D,E & K), as they are lost when processing to reduce fat content. (see [www.ravnskov.nu/cholesterol.html](http://www.ravnskov.nu/cholesterol.html) re cholesterol myths).

Decrease the consumption of sugars, including hidden sugars and refined (white) flours. These substances have been processed to the point where they no longer contain anything of nutritional value. They are negative foods requiring the body to utilise stored nutrients in order to digest them. They are in effect poisons to our system. Wholemeal flour should always be used instead. Sweeteners in moderation – uncooked honey, real maple syrup, sucanat (dried sugarcane juice) or the herbal sweetener Stevia.

Avoid artificial sweeteners like the plague. (See [www.dorway.com](http://www.dorway.com) or [www.holisticmed.com](http://www.holisticmed.com) for further information).

Eliminate processed and junk foods and those foods high in sugar and salt.

Encourage pure water intake (8-10 glasses per day). Spring water is the best choice or at the very least purchase a water filter. Be aware that distilling water removes everything from water including minerals. Tap water is not designed to be drunk!

Salt food to taste, but use North Atlantic grey sea salt or Celtic Sea salt. This is available from health shops and it is a salt with a broad range of minerals in it.

Protein. Lamb is a good choice of land creatures. While oily fish and small, deep-sea fish are the best choice for sea creatures. Include salmon, sardines, herrings, and deep-sea mullet. Chicken and eggs are good sources of protein if you can buy free-range products (otherwise they have too many chemicals).

Vegetarian sources of protein are legumes (beans, soy, tofu, lentils), nuts (avoid peanuts as they are high in aflatoxins – liver toxin) and seeds. People on vegetarian diets have far less degenerative disease, but the protein needs to be well organised. An example of a good vegetarian protein meal is beans/lentils and rice.

Black tea, coffee and chocolate should be minimised. Try herbal teas and dandelion coffee instead. Green tea is an excellent option. Ginger tea is very good for digestion. Avoid de-caff products – the residues from the extraction process are worse for you than the caffeine.

Check if you have any allergies or intolerance to any foods and eliminate these from your diet as much as possible. Avoid dental amalgam, chlorine, fluoride, aluminium, microwaves, radiation, pesticides, chemical out-gassing from paints, furniture, bench tops etc. (See [www.nexusmagazine.com](http://www.nexusmagazine.com) for selected articles, [www.bcd.com.au](http://www.bcd.com.au) for everything you did not want to know about the toxicity of amalgam fillings and what can be done if you have them, as well as [www.fluoridation.com](http://www.fluoridation.com) and a must for parents of 'sensitive' children [www.ritalinfreekids.com](http://www.ritalinfreekids.com) ).

Take time when eating to enjoy your food, preferably in a quiet and relaxed setting without undue distraction. Don't take your worries and stresses with you to meals. Leave them at the door on the way in or out and then if you must, pick them up again later. Avoid eating on the 'run', eating irregularly, skipping meals, eating a heavy meal at night, overeating – eat to live not live to eat. Chewing food thoroughly aids in its breakdown and digestion. Do not consume carbohydrates after 6pm if trying to loose weight. Buddhist wisdom tells us to 'drink your food and chew your soup'.

Limit the use of household chemicals so as to help reduce the total chemical load on the body (your liver will love you). Natural substitutes abound, for example, bicarb of soda, vinegar, tea tree, and eucalyptus based products. Why would you not choose body and environment friendly products? Why would you not for example choose recycled, unbleached toilet tissue etc.?

Keep yourself informed and educated (no one else will!); there is a direct correlation to education levels and levels of health in the community. Consider joining the email lists of the following organisations/groups: What Doctors Don't Tell You ([www.wddty.co.uk/e-news.asp](http://www.wddty.co.uk/e-news.asp)); Dr. Mercola's health newsletter ([www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com)); Keep informed of events behind the news ([www.campaignfortruth.com/Eclub](http://www.campaignfortruth.com/Eclub)).

## EAT RIGHT FOR YOUR BLOOD TYPE?

The following points are excerpts from the work of James and Peter D'Adamo - [www.dadamo.com](http://www.dadamo.com)

Our hunter-gatherer ancestors were Type O. As populations grew and migrated, and major technological or cultural events such as the agricultural revolution took place, other blood types developed. Archaeological examinations at gravesites suggest that when the type O's started consuming more grains, as populations gravitated to city centres, their physical stature diminished and they showed other signs of malnutrition. They had not biochemically adapted.

Type A which appeared 10,000 to 20,000 years ago seems to be an adaptation that allowed better grain tolerance.

Worse by: high protein diet from meat source; harsh physical activity; betacarotene supplements.

Better by: vegetable sourced protein eg soy; light exercise; Vit's B12, C, E, Calcium, Iron, Zinc, digestive enzymes, probiotics

Common Health Problems: Gastritis (low stomach acid); Stomach cancer; Pernicious anaemia

Type B which first developed about 13,000 years ago was seen in groups that depended primarily on herded domesticated animals for their diet. Meat and cultured dairy products were their staple diet. Do well with Magnesium and Lecithin supplementation as it improves carbohydrate metabolism.

Type O hunter gatherers, original blood type

Worse by: high grain diet

Better by: high protein diet from meat source; hard physical activity; B complex vitamin; Calcium, Iodine, Manganese

Common Health Problems: Duodenal and gastric ulcers (high stomach acid)

Type AB had mixed ancestry, therefore you should eat a combination of Types A and B. DETOXIFY OR DIE!

OK, maybe that heading is a little over the top - how about, 'detoxify or die...slowly!'

Now more than at any other time in human evolution, we are exposed to the greatest amount and widest variety of toxins. These toxins include pesticides, heavy metals, medications, microbes, industrial pollutants, viruses, food preservatives and colours; we also need contend with the effects of allergens, substance abuse, metabolic by products and unbalanced diets etc.

Couple this toxic load with the decline in the quality of the food we consume and add the stresses of a modern lifestyle and this represents a serious health challenge for us all.

When the body's eliminative organs cannot fully cope with toxins there is a cascade of events that are said to take place. The body's first tendency is to excrete by any means possible. If this fails to bring about resolution the following happens:

1. The toxins must be neutralised and stored to limit further harm - Yes, the aforementioned list of toxins cause harm, acknowledged or not!
2. There may be an accumulation of these toxins in certain tissue areas. This may lead to ongoing symptoms of disease eg. Rhinitis, sinusitis, digestive upset, poor immune function, foggy head, lethargy, headache, insomnia etc and the various disease names associated with these types of symptoms.
3. If there is significant accumulation, the toxins will start to effect cellular health - this is definitely bad! - disturbing cellular function or even causing cell death.

Our bodies use a very sophisticated system for removing toxins. This system involves five major organs:

- The liver helps to break down and remove toxins - when you drink a cup of coffee, for example, the liver must change the chemistry of caffeine into a less harmful substance. The body then eliminates these by-products through the kidneys as urine.
- The bowel carries toxins from the liver and removes waste material from digested food.
- The kidneys help to filter harmful chemicals from the blood, removing them through the urinary system.
- The lungs and skin also work as detoxification organs when the body is overloaded with toxins, and serve as other outlets for elimination.
- The blood circulation system is involved in all areas of detoxification. For detoxification to work well, the blood circulation system needs to be working at its peak.

Detoxification requires all organs of elimination to be functioning adequately. A detoxification treatment should contain tonifying medicines for all the target organs. Stimulating only the liver, for example, may result in the common side effects of nausea, poor appetite, headaches, constipation, etc. Opening all avenues of elimination ensures one organ does not become congested. Five organs working efficiently are better than one! Homeopathic detoxification is the treatment of choice here.

It is well established that toxins are linked to numerous disease conditions and the removal of said toxins improves the clinical wellness of sufferers. Detoxification improves immune function, reduces free radical production, improves brain function, improves digestion, increases wellness and vitality and helps in fat loss. **LIFESTYLE FACTORS ARE ALSO CRUCIAL FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH:**

Prevent and control obesity. Look at the amounts of food you are eating and when you are eating it, i.e. it is better to have a larger meal for lunch and a smaller one at night (no carbohydrates – especially bread and pasta and other grain products - after 6pm [or at all] if you are looking to lose weight). Overweight is largely due to excess calories consumed versus energy expended. Ensure adequate protein, EFA's and nutrient intake while avoiding excessive carbohydrates.

The popularity of high refined-carbohydrate, low-fat diets over the last 20 years has led to the emergence of an epidemic of obesity, type II diabetes and Syndrome X. Excessive dietary starches and sugars which have a high glycaemic response cause

surges in blood insulin and cells start to lose their sensitivity to insulin. This in turn leads to an even greater output of insulin and an increase in fat storage.

Characteristics of 'Thin' People:

Picky eaters

Have no food issues

Seldom if ever weigh themselves

Don't eat diet foods

Refuse food easily

Can wait for meals

Can throw food away

Can buy investment clothes Don't sneak food

Can watch others eat and not eat themselves

Their clothes fit

Eat when hungry

Are not afraid of food or eating

Are not afraid of gaining weight

Separate stress from eating

It is well established that low calorie diets can actually kick-start the fat storage mechanisms and contribute to rebound weight gain and future resistance to weight loss. Other factors to note are stress and allergy (both of which are contributing factors to weight gain) and exercise...

LACK OF EXERCISE is one of the greatest scourges of our time. It predisposes to obesity, increases the tendency to diabetes, favours the development of coronary heart disease and contributes to shortness of breath on exertion. It causes muscles to waste, joints to stiffen and backache. It fosters the occurrence of muscle tension syndromes, increases the tendency to vascular thrombosis and reduces mental efficiency. It is aesthetically undesirable, psychologically unsound and sexually unfavourable. Nationally its consequences rank with the motorcar as major causes of morbidity and loss of productivity. Medically it fills our waiting rooms, increases our affluence, reduces our efficiency and shortens our lives! (K.Fitch)

Invest a minimum of 30 minutes, 3 times per week in your favourite exercise eg. Swimming, dancing, brisk walking, riding etc. for optimal health. And don't be so quick to pick up your remote control as 'incidental' daily activities play a major role in fat burning.

A regular supplement program of a Vitamin B complex and Vitamin C plus bioflavonoids (2-4g/d) is advisable if under stress and living in the city - and mandatory if you are a smoker and/or on the contraceptive pill. Be aware that you get what you pay for when buying supplements.

Encourage breast-feeding babies for as long as possible (at least till six months of age). Avoid vaccination of all kinds. Standard vaccine active ingredients include: thimerosal (a mercury derivative), ethylene glycol (antifreeze), phenol (a disinfectant or dye), benzethonium chloride (a disinfectant), formaldehyde (a preservative and disinfectant), and aluminium. It cannot be overstated - Investigate before you vaccinate!!! Question me at length about this and/or see [www.avn.org.au](http://www.avn.org.au), [www.vaccination.inoz.com](http://www.vaccination.inoz.com), [www.visainfo.org.au](http://www.visainfo.org.au), [www.jabs.org.uk](http://www.jabs.org.uk), [www.909shot.com](http://www.909shot.com), [www.thinktwice.com](http://www.thinktwice.com)

Nutritional needs vary according to genetic makeup, level of activity, general state of health or disease, environment, drug consumption (whether prescribed or recreational) and consumption of alcohol, tea and coffee. The needs of each individual vary with changing circumstances and our diets and lifestyle should cope with this. (See [www.naturalhealth.org](http://www.naturalhealth.org) the Natural Health Society's website, and [www.naturalhealthline.com](http://www.naturalhealthline.com) a great information resource).

**SUPER FOODS:** These may be added to your diet to provide extra nutrients, they are foods with exceptionally high nutrient content which are readily absorbed and utilised by the body.

Vegetable juices - carrot (70%), celery (15%) and beetroot or apple (15%); green vegetable juices with mint added for flavour.

Spirulina, Chlorella, Green magma, Wheat Grass juice.

Foods from the hive - bee pollen, royal jelly

Designer food products - 'Missing Link for Humans', Beyond Greens, LSA mix.

**SPECIAL FOODS:** These should be added regularly (if not daily) to your diet.

Garlic, onion and ginger

Sea vegetables - Tasmanian wakame, kelp, nori, kombu

Brewed apple cider vinegar for balancing digestive function (1 tablespoon in hot water first thing in the morning on rising; honey may be added to taste).

shitake mushrooms

miso (unpasteurised)

Spices and herbs - chilli, turmeric, coriander, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, cardamom, cinnamon, fresh basil, mustard seeds, asafoetida, liquorice etc.

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## WHO IS THE CAPTAIN HERE ANYWAY...

The sages of India say that the intellect is the assassin of the reality. Implying that you cannot know reality if you rely on the intellect alone. We may be able to ascertain a great many surface details using the intellect but not the inner substance, the full truth. It is said that only the heart (soul) has the ability to penetrate to the center of reality.

The inner and the outer, the objective and the subjective worlds: these two aspects of reality exist, and it is the intellect/mind that explores the objective world, while the heart (is meant to) explore the subjective world. To illustrate, two people observe a sphere, one from the inside and the other from the outside. One will report that it is concave while the other will report that it is convex, both are 50% right. The intellectuals amongst us who look at things from the outside are right in what they observe, but only insofar as the outside is concerned. The mystics amongst us who see things from the inside, through sensation and feeling, are also right. The intellectuals use the left half of the brain, the mystics use the right - only half a brain each! It is a sad fact but it would appear that most of us are merely half-wits moving in and observing this world utilising only part of our full potential! (I use the term 'half wit' empathetically here) The whole truth it appears can only be found by using both the intellect and the heart at the same time and this union is found in the intuition, a topic for another day and another observer.

Why meditate? There is generally a reason that people do the things they do! A commentator on the ancient Indian Vedic healing tradition Dr. Sharma (Geneva) put forward the following metaphor: "Imagine a glass of water in which floats a lump of ice. The ice is solid like our bodies, but it is completely dependent on the state of the water around it. Add anything to the water and the ice will eventually be altered by it." Our mind (water) & body (ice) are not separate. Anything impacting on the mind will affect the body and anything that impacts on the body will affect the mind. In meditation we are able to utilise the mind via the brain to influence the body and facilitate change on the three levels of our being - body, mind and emotions.

An analogy for you: take the relationship between the captain of a ship and his first mate. The captain if he allows the first mate (the mind) to take charge of his ship has to be prepared for any untoward consequences as a result of allowing his authority to be usurped by a subordinate. Put your captain's hat firmly back in place and discipline that wayward first mate. The first mate should be taking directions from the captain not the other way around.

Changing habits of old can be a difficult and painfully slow process that requires strenuous effort coupled with gentle resolve – however a most noble past time if ever there was one. The creating of a habit (whether in mind or body) would seem to be a three-part process of thought, word and action. Firstly, there is thought and the initial concept. This then turns into words and then occasionally words are put into action and we get a result - a physical manifestation of a thought. Amazing! You may have heard the axiom 'you live tomorrow your thoughts of today'. Well, this is how it works. Thought – word – action. Whether these thoughts are beneficial to you and your world is a matter of choice and free will.

And so, the quickest way to change an old thought pattern is to reverse the order. Action – word – thought. Do the deed that you want to have the thought about! If you want to experience vibrant health, do in deed what is required to live a healthy vibrant life! If you want to be physically healthy, simply do what physically healthy people do! However, do not allow these kinds of beneficial practices to become another stress in your life. To make room for something new, you start by letting go of something old.

Daily meditation has three key components for success:

1. Intention – i.e. 'I intend to meditate', then do it!
2. Relaxation - deeply relax by focusing on your breathing. Take ten slow deep breaths and allow your body to relax and settle into a comfortable position with a straight spine. Then 'step back' and get some perspective. Observe the mind and its ramblings and allow any thoughts it throws up to be acknowledged but not added to or expanded upon, just observe. Eventually after much practice the racing of the mind will settle and become still.

### 3. Focus – i.e. on chosen issue of the day

Meditation involves achieving a state of ‘thoughtless awareness’ in which the excessive stress producing activity of the mind is neutralized without reducing alertness and effectiveness. Authentic meditation enables one to focus on the present moment rather than dwell on the unchangeable past or undetermined future.

Meditation may take many forms and does not necessarily entail sitting cross-legged focusing on a candle flame. For example, substituting fishing the intention may be to catch dinner; then relax, and focus on feeling for nibbles on the end of the line. Other substitutes might include knitting, ironing, washing up, life itself. (For further insight see [www.au.dhamma.org](http://www.au.dhamma.org) , [www.suryoma.com](http://www.suryoma.com) , [www.yogananda-srf.org](http://www.yogananda-srf.org) )

“...Once upon a time in India, seers predicted that in seven days there would be heavy rain and that whoever drank the rainwater would become insane. When the rain came, the King had saved plenty of pure water for himself, so he avoided becoming insane. But the people soon ran out of pure water and all went mad. Soon they started accusing the king of being insane. Therefore, in order to understand his people and to feel the same way they did, the king drank the rainwater and became insane like his subjects...” Tulku Thondup

Our challenge is to remain sane in the face of the current world madness and resist the pressures placed on us to conform to current modes of thinking and living.

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