

Without health nothing else matters

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Thanks

This is a book that's long overdue. To everyone who helped me by sharing their time and expertise so freely, thank you. Most of you won't know how much you've changed my life.

Aogan, when I think of you, one thing comes to mind – goals, goals, goals! Jeremy, you've added new meaning to the words Smash It. Shaun, your professionalism is inspirational. Mark, thanks for still making me believe in *Living The Dream*. Keven, inspiration sometimes comes in a weird but wonderful way (say hi to Froggie). Peter, the seeds you've planted are still growing. Darryl, you've given me the opportunity to see the world and grow as a person. That was life changing! Frans and Pottie, your friendship are more valuable than my first Comrades marathon medal. Uncle Gerrie, your unexpected death was a shock to many people. Your humble way of doing things, your dedication and commitment to your goals changed many people's lives. Thank you to every person that I had the privilege of working with. I've learnt from every encounter. What I cherish most is learning how much cultures differ, yet how similar we all are.

To all my friends, family and loved ones who had to put up with me carrying on about health, you must be very relieved. Finally, my thoughts are on paper, so now you can read instead of listen!

To my godparents, your support, love, understanding and great example will always be treasured.

I want to say thank you to my mother, father and sister. Your unconditional love, trust, friendship and support still means the world to me. You were always there for me. I love you!

Thank you to every person taking the time to read this book. I hope it will change your life in a positive way for many years to come.

Finally, and most importantly, to our Heavenly Father. Thank you for Your wisdom, guidance, love and all our wonderful blessings here on earth – most of which we usually take for granted.

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Introduction

When I set out to write this book, it was never my intention to produce a serious medical or health journal. My goal was simply to share my understanding of the human body, how to stay healthy and how to prevent disease.

Working in the health industry, both here and abroad, for the past 19 years has given me practical knowledge and insights I find invaluable in my profession as a personal trainer. I am results-driven and, for me, the most important objective when it comes to health, is preventing disease.

Getting sick occasionally is inevitable. Living a healthy lifestyle is no guarantee that one will not become ill. But when disease strikes, a healthy person will overcome a health setback more easily than an overweight, unhealthy person. There are doctors who prefer to focus only on treating patients' symptoms. As the cause of the problem is often overlooked, such an approach is not effective. Fortunately, doctors

worldwide are increasingly opting to follow a more holistic approach when treating disease.

I could not possibly ask you to automatically believe everything I say. But please bear with me and, once you've read this book, decide for yourself whether I make any sense.

Many years of preparation, research, meetings with doctors, nurses and politicians (believe it or not) as well as exposure to different cultures have gone into the writing of this book. Whenever a book such as this is written, there will always be those who challenge the information and the statistics provided. As mentioned, my knowledge is practical and was gained over two decades of assisting ordinary people to improve their health. I have learned much along the way, and that's what I want to share with you.

The pharmaceutical business is a massive industry with the same objective as any other industry, profit. So let's start considering how we could spend less time and money treating the symptoms of the challenges we face. By doing this, we will be taking a huge step in the right direction.

Nothing worth living for comes easily. The greatest things are achieved through hard work and dedication. Remember, without health, nothing else matters.

You can't enjoy life the way you ought to, unless you first take care of your most valuable possession, your health. In this book, I frequently use the analogy of a car when describing the human body. Funny how much time, money and effort we put into something like a car. Yet, when it comes to our health, a little effort seems to be too much.

Stick to the basics outlined in this book and your health will change for the better. You will reach your personal goals more easily and the results will be lasting. Make positive changes in your life and you will reap the benefits of your efforts! The goal should not be to live longer, but rather to live healthier for longer.

Finally, look at your body as your business. Without health, you cannot be much use to your loved ones, your friends, your boss or your clients.

If your body was your business, how would it be doing? Happy reading.

Shaping Your Life

"To give anything less than your best is a sacrifice of a gift" – Steve Prefontaine

Before we carry on, you need to ask yourself a question "do I value my health"? If the answer "yes", continue reading this book. If the answer is "no", what follows is likely to be of little value to you, as I am not sure that reading it will change your answer. You either do or you don't.

Most people would agree exercise and nutrition play a major role in a healthy body. When it comes to something like weight loss, many people will get results, but then plateau before reaching their goal. Or they may reach their ideal weight, but then gain it all over again. There are numerous things that might cause this.

Exercise, nutrition, detoxification, supplementation and motivation all play an equally important role when it comes to getting and maintaining results. Changing your thoughts on many of these issues will help you to shape your life and live a more balanced lifestyle.

A big challenge of modern society is that we have become 'instant'. Our lives are ruled by gadgets that are supposed to make things better and faster. Youngsters will laugh if instructed to go to the post office to send a telegram to someone in a different town. They'll probably not even have heard of such a thing.

When was the last time you wrote a letter – no, not an e-mail, an actual letter? It's become so easy to send a text message or a BBM (Blackberry Messenger). Mobile devices are just one modern- day culprit. Think about your TV remote control. Channel surfing has never been easier. Need to open the garage door? No problem. Just press the remote.

I have nothing against any of these wonderful make-your-life-easier devices. In fact, love my Blackberry. I use a TV remote control (if I can find it!) and I wouldn't swap the remote control to open the garage door for anything. Not only is it much safer, but it's also more convenient, especially in a downpour!

While all of these gadgets are handy, they do have a downside. The biggest being that we have become sedentary. Most things these days happen at the press of a button. It was completely different not so many years ago. To switch a TV channel, we had to get up and actually walk to the TV (or at least order the kids to do it). Yes, we had to move the entire body. Hundreds of muscles work together to make getting up possible. We may not use many calories doing it, but add things up for the entire day – getting up to switch TV channels, opening garage doors, taking lifts instead of stairs... We blame many things for our health-related problems, but hardly ever look at the underlying causes. We are our own worst enemies.

To be truly happy, one needs to make health the foundation of one's life. I am not going to discuss religion in this book, but I am a Christian and I truly believe that without religion, I am nothing. I also believe that one should treat one's body as a temple. Good health is the foundation for elevating one's life to a higher level.

Think about the last time you felt sick. The last thing you probably wanted to do was to help others. When we are sick, most of us focus on ourselves. For us to be truly

happy, the focus should not be on ourselves, but on those around us. We simply cannot do that unless we're healthy. The human brain prefers happy faces. If one wants to influence other people in a positive way, step one will be to smile. Next time you are not feeling well, try to smile... Not so easy when you are sick!

Many people do not realize that disease doesn't develop overnight. In most cases, the body breaks down over a long period – mainly due to what we do (or don't do) and what we feed our bodies.

I am not claiming you'll never get sick. I am healthy, but I could die of a heart attack today. Anything is possible. But if you take good care of your body, you will decrease your chances of getting a heart attack and, if you do, your chances of surviving and getting better will be better than those of an overweight, unfit person.

Health refers not just to the physical, but also to the mental and emotional. It's not easy to maintain good health. We need to make sure that we do everything in our power to improve the things we can control. You probably cannot control your selfish boss, but you can make sure you go to gym after work to lower your stress levels. Life is all about choice.

Living a healthier life means you might have to make a few drastic changes. We resist change. It takes courage. The biggest part of progress is the courage to do it. Don't let your dreams turn into doubts.

Children grow up thinking they can do anything. Yet, as we grow older, we start questioning ourselves. Much of that discouragement comes from comments made by family members, teachers or loved ones. Don't allow fear of change to prevent you from becoming the person you could be! We need to reinvent ourselves.

Are you tired of doing the same thing with the same result? Maybe it's time to change – and it all starts with good health.

Determination plays a major role in living a healthier lifestyle. It takes courage and willpower to do it. Life is not easy, nor should it be.

Change your attitude towards health, combine that with a few courageous choices and put in some effort. Easier said than done, but life is all about choice – and attitude! Read the following word out loud. Don't think about what you read. Just say it as you see it:

Opportunityisnowhere

Did you read 'opportunity is nowhere' or did you read 'opportunity is now here'? Opportunity is now here!

Life is not what happens to you, but what you make of what happens to you. You have a choice today. You can change your attitude (if need be) towards your health today! Your attitude is your future. You either control your attitude, or your attitude controls you.

Adopting a healthier lifestyle doesn't mean one cannot enjoy life anymore. It simply means making better, healthier choices more often – and living a healthy life for longer.

I live in Kleinmond, a small town in the Western Cape. A lot of elderly people live in this town and I'm saddened to see how many of them are unable to enjoy their retirement. I'm not talking about those who struggle financially. Many people struggling with their health has all the money in the world. It's not much use when one

is bound to a wheelchair or an oxygen mask. When I spend time with them, almost all of them agree that they could've lived a healthier life. Diabetes, cholesterol, high blood pressure, back related problems, obesity and many other diseases can almost always be tied back to an unhealthy or unbalanced lifestyle over a long period of time. I recall one gentleman telling me with tears in his eyes "if only I'd listened and never started smoking". He died a slow, terrible death a few weeks later.

When one spends a lot of time with elderly people, one soon realizes most of them don't regret things they've done. What they do regret, is the things they did not do – not looking after their health being one of them.

Make a choice and develop a good attitude towards your health. Invest time in your body and your investment will flourish.

Energy is a powerful weapon, both good and bad. To do the things you've always wanted to do, one needs to find the energy to enjoy life, to make the most of it.

The only way to do this, is to service the body – often. Make sure the engine runs smoothly. If you don't service your car regularly, it might just let you down at an unexpected time.

We often make time for less important things. Yet, when it comes to the things that really matter, we frequently say we don't have time.

Before I started writing this book, a friend of mine e-mailed me. She had been involved in a terrible accident many years ago and had made a remarkable recovery. Over time, she had gained a lot of weight and realized she needed to do something about it. She told me she was desperate and would do anything to lose weight. I gave her a few basic guidelines and suggestions.

She replied "thank you for your suggestions. I've just bought a house and there isn't time or money to follow the guidelines at the moment. Maybe at a later stage when I have more time".

I felt ill after reading her mail. Not because she did not follow my advice, but because I honestly thought that someone who had survived a terrible accident and had been given a second chance in life, would cherish health above all things. She is still not ready to make the change.

She missed out on a chance to improve her most valuable possession, her temple. She is still blessed with a perfectly healthy mind but chooses not to make positive changes towards a healthier lifestyle. I pray that she will realize that there is no quick fix.

Life doesn't give many second chances. Time is valuable and we all need to do something now. Make the choice today!

A Quick Fix

The main reason for failure and unhappiness is that we trade what we want most, for what we want now.

We all want to look good, feel good and live a pain-free life 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The truth is, we want maximum results with minimum effort. Open the Sunday newspaper and you will find numerous advertisements for a quick way to lose weight. A magic machine that will shape your body or a tablet to swallow that will melt the fat away. Fact is, there is no such thing as a quick fix. If there were, nobody would be overweight.

We have time for parties, movies, shopping, Facebook, Twitter, reading the papers, watching sport or our favorite soaps on TV. Yet, we can't find time for our most valuable possession – our health.

You don't get what you wish for. You get what you work for. Good health comes through hard work and dedication.

One of the best days of my life was when I decided

to make things simpler. I used to do so many things that I could hardly find the time to eat. Everything was about being successful, making money, getting a promotion, satisfying my boss, a client, my family...

Some years ago, I attended a seminar where a presenter spoke passionately about making time for oneself. He explained the concept of a 'wheel of life' and gave each of us a piece of paper with a big circle on it. The circle was divided into 24 equal segments, the same as a clock. We were asked to fill in our 'wheel of life' and use it to determine how many hours per day we spent doing various things.

At first, we all joked about the way we spend our time. My group included a few young testosterone- laden fitness professionals, so you can imagine where the conversation went. But when I went to my hotel room that evening, I realized that my 'wheel of life' was a disgrace. One of my biggest problems, was that I gave so much of my time to others, that I had hardly any for myself.

The greatest happiness in life comes from simplicity. More than 90% of people feel that they suffer from time poverty. Only after adopting a simpler approach to life, did I learn the true value of investing time in more important things. In order to help others, I first had to help myself.

As a personal trainer, it is easy for me to help ten to twelve clients a day. Then, suddenly, one realizes that there is no time left to go for a run or even to eat a proper meal. This is true for most professions.

It's easy to get carried away with one's work. Help one more client, do one more sale, type one more memo. We so easily focus on the things that are less important in life. You will never see a removals van behind a hearse. Our cherished earthly possessions cannot follow us. Yet so many of us argue that we need to work very hard because we need more money. Or our boss or client expects us to go for a drink after work. Yes, we all need money and we all need to work. It's also human to want to be successful. The key, however, is balance. Ask yourself, do you really need so

much? What is more important to you – your work, your family, time for yourself? For most people this is a difficult question to answer but, fact remains, without health nothing else matters. Ask yourself, do you really need all the things you work so hard for, or are you perhaps trying to impress someone else?

Is it worth having that 5-bedroom house that you can hardly afford, when it means spending less time with your kids? Can you afford not to exercise often and not to eat healthier food?

Here is a tough question. What will fit your schedule better – exercising for 30 minutes per day a couple of days per week, or feeling dead twenty-four hours a day?

We must make time for ourselves. By saying that, I include our loved ones. Many people forget one crucial thing when it comes to general health – emotion plays a major role. If you are not happy as a person, you will develop a health-related problem. And, more often than not, it will be something like depression, anxiety, stress or sleeplessness.

I am not suggesting for a second that one's emotions are the only contributing factor when it comes to diseases like depression, anxiety and stress. I do however believe that making certain lifestyle changes will help you to be a healthier, happier individual. Address the cause of a problem and the symptom disappears.

An easy way of getting more time to relax, is to watch less TV. Most people, especially children, think that spending time on the couch watching a movie equals relaxation. Truth is, your brain cannot relax in front of the TV. I have family members who

think that it's OK to go to bed and leave the radio on all night long. Your brain needs time to shut down, relax and reload. According to a study done in America by medical doctor, Brandon S. Centerwall, the murder rate in the world doubled within 15 years of the introduction of television. It makes one think. Have the guts to turn off your television and make time for yourself.

It is very important to commune with nature! When was the last time you walked barefoot on grass or took a hike in the mountains? With so many of us living in cities, it may be a challenge to get close to nature. Yet, people who make time for a Sunday picnic in the park or working in the garden will tell you that they feel great after spending time outdoors.

My wife (back then my girlfriend) and I worked on luxury cruise liners for many years. When working on a cruise ship doing six to nine month contracts, there is obviously not much time for animals or nature. Once, during a stopover in Barcelona, we took the chance to explore their street markets. Now for those of you who haven't been to Barcelona's markets yet, you can buy almost anything there. Without planning to do so, we found ourselves pausing automatically every time we saw birds, puppies or any other animal. Humans need nature on a continuous basis to keep their sanity. Growth is very important for any living creature.

If something isn't growing anymore, nature considers it to be dead. Similarly, with humans. Without any growth, we set ourselves up for failure and frustration. It's important to constantly improve our personal skills. Challenge yourself by constantly learning something new. Think of mastering a new language, learning how to use social media like Facebook and Twitter, taking up public speaking or playing brainteaser games like chess. Try things that involve using the right brain more often and get those creative juices flowing.

I've learnt to radically restructure my own finances. Destroy your debt, or it will destroy

you. Financial problems will most definitely lead to higher stress levels. Stress will have a major negative influence on your health and your personal life. Stress, especially financial stress, is a destroyer. Develop a game plan for overcoming your current situation.

Habits are formed when we do things over and over again. If asked to fold your arms, you will always have the same arm on top. Now try folding your arms, but this time have the other arm on top... Not so easy, is it? We must stop and think about what needs to be done. But when we repeat it often enough, it becomes a habit. This can obviously be good or bad. When we continuously waste money, spending more than we earn, that habit will lead to financial ruin.

Now start thinking about your body as your business. If we continuously expect more from our bodies than we put in, our bodies will become 'insolvent'. We cannot expect to stay healthy if we never deposit anything into our personal health account.

Most people will agree that exercise is not the most pleasant of things when one is unfit. Become fit however and, over time, a habit will form. You will begin to like it. And yes, you can get addicted to exercise – not a bad thing by the way. The same is true when following a healthy eating plan. Learn the basics, apply them often and over time you will start feeling better and maintain results. Continuous body cleansing (detoxification) is very important.

I do believe in taking quality health supplements every day. It should become a habit. The only way for it to be effective, is to take it consistently.

Try not to resist change. Embrace it and develop a strategy for changing your bad habits. Stop trying to find an excuse not to do things. Rather find ways to change your life to be able to do more.

The best teachers help students to understand why certain things need to be done and give them time to come to grips with the things they've learned. Good teachers also place more emphasis on showing rather than telling. There is so much truth in the phrase "show me and I will remember, tell me and I will forget".

It would be such a shame to finally understand what health is all about, only to find out that you don't have the time to actually enjoy it. There is no quick fix!

The only way to become healthier, to lose weight and to get results, is to stop telling your body what to do and to start showing it.

We become what we repeatedly do and show our bodies.



Exercise

The only bad workout is the one that didn't happen.

I had just returned from a run on a footpath along the beautiful Kleinmond coast when I started working on this chapter. It had been a short run,

only about 25 minutes, but once again I had enjoyed the stunning scenery – an amazing sunset over the Kogelberg mountains, a few dassies (rock rabbits), whales frolicking in the waves, a variety of bird life. I said to myself "life doesn't get any better". I'd run all the way to the harbor and hadn't seen anybody on my way there, but on my way back I passed quite a few people.

Some walking their dogs, a few speed walking, others merely enjoying the view over the ocean.

It was then that I was greeted by a husband and wife sitting on a bench, each holding a cigarette. If you are a smoker, do not get upset (yet). Luckily God made each of us unique, but we all have one thing in common, we have the ability to choose! One can lose everything in life – car, job, a loved one. It's choosing how we deal with it that's important.

Similarly, we can choose to exercise and live a healthy lifestyle, or not. I choose not to smoke. I understand how smoking will not only negatively affect my health, but also the health of those around me. More often than not, it's those closest to one – wife or husband, children or work colleagues.

I'm often amazed when I see how many people in the service industry who work closely with clients do not understand that they might actually lose customers based on their smoking habits.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, I do believe in a balanced lifestyle. I am decidedly not one of those people who spends the entire day exercising and eating only salads. I love good food, wine, chocolate and the odd beer.

It is all about balance. I decided to go for a run based on what I'd consumed for the day.

I'd had a few good meals, a chocolate and had enjoyed a glass of wine. I also had lots on my mind. I needed some 'me' time. It is very simple, if I had not gone for a run, the number of calories consumed for the day would've been more than the amount used. This is not rocket science. Repeat this bad routine (not going for my run after a day like this) a couple of times over a couple of weeks and one will gain weight. Easy as pie.

I've been told that my metabolism will slow down as I get older. I've refused to believe it, and perhaps you should treat such a claim with skepticism as well. Consider your current lifestyle and ask yourself whether a lack of activity is likely to lead to a slowdown of your metabolism and consequent weight gain.

I was skinny as a child. I was very active and loved keeping myself busy. I also loved food. At the age of fifteen, my family told me that I shouldn't enjoy my fast metabolism too much as it would start slowing down soon. By 18, still very active and still loving food, I noticed no discernible change in my metabolism. Once again, I was told a

slower metabolism was around the corner. Then came age 25. My parents were probably very happy that I'd moved out as I consumed more food in one day than most people would probably eat in a week – but I was still very active. Getting closer to my thirties, many of my older friends laughed at me, telling me to enjoy the last year or two of a fast metabolism and all the benefits going with it. At 35, my metabolism was still as fast as ever. I am heading for forty now yet, if anything, my metabolism is faster than 10 years ago. There will of course be those who argue that I should wait another ten years, but I am convinced there will be no slowdown.

I will share my secrets for maintaining and increasing the body's metabolism in coming chapters. However, there is no quick fix for a slow metabolism. It takes commitment and constant hard work. Your body works as a complete unit. Every system in your body needs to work in the most effective way to maintain a very fast metabolism.

You must be familiar with the phrase "use it or you will lose it". That goes for many things in life. More so when it comes to your muscles. View your muscles as your body's engine. The bigger the car's engine, the more fuel it will use.

If you drive a vehicle with a big engine, you will probably get under 10 kilometers per liter of fuel. Compare that with a smaller vehicle where you can get up to 22 kilometers per liter of petrol. The smaller the engine, the less fuel it will use.

The human body works on the very same principle. People with a higher basal metabolic rate have more developed muscles. (Basal metabolic rate is the amount of calories your body will burn at rest.) On average, men have more lean muscle weight than women. Therefore, on average, men burn more calories than women. That's why men need more food than women. It's really rather simple, people with more muscles will burn more energy.

The only way to increase (and maintain) your lean body weight, is to continuously stimulate your muscles with resistance exercises. If you don't, you will eventually lose some of your muscle weight.

This becomes more pronounced with age, but is not a straightforward, inevitable result of aging. Rather, it's due to a lack of resistance training and muscle stimulation. There are of course many other factors that play a role, such as disease, family history, the environment and hormones.

It's undeniable that age plays a role in the breakdown of the body. It cannot be prevented. My concern is those who notice change in their bodies and look for an excuse. Blaming age is convenient and prevents us from having to admit that we are also to blame.

By not stimulating your muscles with resistance exercises, you are personally responsible for breaking down your body and slowing down your own metabolism. It cannot be blamed on age alone.

Women are often scared of doing resistance exercises. Until very recently, it was widely believed that resistance exercises make one bulky. Rest easy. Women do not have sufficient amounts of testosterone in their bodies to gain loads of muscle. Granted, there are female athletes who are very muscular. That is mainly due to their sport-specific diet, supplementation and a very specific exercise routine with the sole purpose of gaining muscle weight.

When people think of resistance exercises, they almost always think of weightlifting. Yes, lifting weights is one way of doing it, but there are other more effective ways for the average person to achieve the required results. I almost never do any form of

weight training in a gym. I do, however, do resistance exercises every day of my life and I prefer using my own body weight for the exercises.

It is fun, easy to do and more effective than doing any other form of resistance training. You can also do these exercises in the comfort of your own home.

The key is to ask yourself what your specific goals are. If you are training for the Olympics, your personal fitness needs will obviously be completely different to those of the average person exercising just to maintain good health. There is, however, one principle that is important for everyone. It's the biggest, most important and also most neglected area of training for people worldwide – core stability.

(This relates to the bodily region bounded by the abdominal wall, the pelvis, the lower back and the diaphragm.)

On average, most people's lifestyles become sedentary. Furniture is designed to support the back in such a way that the back and stomach muscles hardly do any work.

The focus is on comfort and, more often than not, a good, healthy posture is compromised. People move around less. Children don't play outside anymore. Remember, the body will adapt to whatever it gets used to. This will ultimately become the habit.

For most people, the habit will become sitting in a very comfortable chair or couch with no focus on core muscles or core stability. My goal is to adapt my exercise routine in such a way that the majority of my exercises focus on core strength.

I want to make this very clear; I have nothing against exercising in a gymnasium. In fact, I worked for one of the major fitness club groups in the country for many years. I gained invaluable experience and made very good friends during my time there.

There is, however, a big difference between doing exercises that utilize your own body weight and lifting weights. Always keep in mind that my goal is to maintain good health and not to exercise for the next body building competition or Olympics.

I prefer to use those big inflatable exercise balls for training. They have different names all over the world. The most common name is the Swiss ball. Just sitting on a Swiss ball will be a challenge at first. The core muscles are activated just by sitting on it. Every person should have one in their house or office. It is cheap and easy to use. When using the Swiss ball for exercises, many different muscles are working together. The key is to balance on the ball.

Falling is one of the biggest fears for elderly people. With age, balance becomes more challenging. Certain things, like getting in and out of a bath and

using a flight of stairs, are a real concern for many. If you do not stimulate specific muscles in the body, these muscles will become weak. Many elderly people do not feel confident to walk around without a walking stick. The body will adapt to what becomes

the habit.

If we do not continue with exercises to stimulate the smaller muscles in the body, balance will become more challenging with age. This is not only due to age, but also to a lack of muscle stimulation.

One of the deepest core muscles is the transverse abdominal muscle (TA). This muscle is extremely important in core strength and stability. The TA muscle is also very important in overall body balance. Every exercise done on the Swiss ball will stimulate this specific muscle.

I often ask my clients to sit on a Swiss ball during a consultation and make a point of mentioning posture. Within less than a minute, their postures change for the better, but most can't maintain a good posture while sitting on a Swiss ball.

Now imagine them doing exercises on heavy gym equipment if they can't even do something basic like sitting on a ball. I always say, go back to the basics. If your car's wheel alignment is out, will it make sense to change the tyres without first fixing the car's wheel alignment? Absolutely not.

The same goes for worn-out shock absorbers. In order for the car to perform at its best and to get the maximum number of kilometers from the new set of tyres, we must make sure the wheel alignment is 100% and the shock absorbers are in good condition. Tyre pressure is important and we need to drive responsibly. More often than not, by doing all of the above, the tyres should last a very long time. As in life, some 'roads' are unfortunately heavier on tyres than others.

Most people start their exercise routine by simply 'putting new tyres on their car'. They start doing

exercises without taking into account that there may be an imbalance in the body. Certain muscles may be stronger in relation to others. There may be weaknesses to take note of.

Without identifying those weaknesses and imbalances, you will have to change your body's 'tyres' more frequently. The 'tyres' may be a hip replacement or even back surgery...

I believe not identifying underlying weakness is the main reason people who start an exercise program suffer an early injury. The majority of my personal training clients suffer from previous sport injuries or injuries sustained in an accident. I refuse to help them unless we first take care of the basics. We start with their core strength and balance.

Focus on that and the rest will fall into place. It is amazing to see how quickly people get results from doing basic exercises.

The quickest improvement is usually seen in the elderly. Their balance improves drastically. With that, their confidence improves. They start believing that they can once again do certain things and train even harder. The key is consistency!

A client once admitted during our first consultation that she used to love taking a bath. It made her sad that she couldn't do so any longer as she could not get in and out of a bath on her own anymore. Her body was too weak.

I told her with hard work and dedication it would be possible again. She was very skeptical. She did however agree on the program I recommended and booked a few sessions with me. Within 6 weeks I had a call from her. It sounded like she had won the lotto.

There was so much joy in her voice when she told me that she had just managed to get out of the bath unassisted. A huge achievement for someone in her seventies who thought she would never be able to take a bath on her own again. All this with a few basic core stability and balance exercises. It was music to my ears! Through my work, I've learnt to appreciate the small things in life.

Another thing to consider when starting an exercise routine, is your heart rate. Basically, your maximum heart rate is 220 minus your age.

To improve cardiovascular fitness, the goal should be to train at a rate between 80 to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate. Cardiovascular exercise should be done at a

higher intensity. For weight loss, training for a longer period at a lower intensity is recommended, so train at a rate of about 60 to 65% of your maximum heart rate.

There are many inexpensive heart rate monitors available. Most modern cardiovascular gym equipment includes a built-in heart rate monitor to keep track of your heart rate during exercise. It is very important to understand that the heart is a muscle and needs to be exercised often to stay healthy. If not exercised, the heart, as any other muscle in the body, will become weaker and weaker, putting the rest of the body under enormous stress. If you don't use it, you lose it!

I believe in a combination of high and low intensity workouts, along with resistance, stretching and balance exercises. The most effective way of improving fitness and losing weight, is through maximum interval training.

Maximum interval training is training for a certain amount of time at a very high intensity, followed by a recovery period.

This sequence is repeated for 20 – 40 minutes. I do not recommend this for beginners or for elderly people.

It is very important to seek professional help when planning your fitness program. Good personal trainers don't only provide very good exercise programs but are results driven and inspire their clients.

After all, you will not take your expensive car to just any service station – you want the best possible

service. Do the same when deciding on your personal trainer.

Any exercise you do is better than not doing anything at all. The longer you sit around doing nothing, the weaker your body will become. If you value your health, you will start doing something now!

Change the way you think about exercise.

Change your lifestyle to become more active.

Next time you go to the shopping mall, use the stairs instead of the elevator.

Instead of taking your car to the car wash, rather wash it yourself.

Instead of sitting in your comfortable chair watching TV in the evening, sit on a Swiss ball.

Those small changes in your routine will ultimately have an enormous influence on your health and your body.

Many people are shocked when I first instruct them not to exercise like an old person. Older people usually reply, "but I am old". Many elderly people, especially women, have been very upset by this statement. Once they understand what I mean by it, they agree that I do have a valid point. Let me explain. Your body will adapt to what becomes the habit. If you keep on doing slow, easy exercises, the body will become slow. We need to challenge the body. You need to continuously take your body out of its comfort zone and do exercises that will challenge your body and mind. Doing the same routine day in and day out will not only become very boring, but there will be no challenge anymore.

Many people go for a walk every day, thinking that it gives them enough exercise. Don't misunderstand me, taking a walk is great. And yes, you will benefit from doing some exercise. The problem is that many people take their 30-minute walk without getting the heart rate up at all. The key is to challenge the body with every exercise session. A quality fitness program will have recovery days as well.

I believe that there is no such thing as the perfect exercise program. What is good for

one person might not work for somebody else.

Every good exercise routine should however include resistance exercise, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility exercises, a good core stability workout and a few balance exercises. Always remember: If you don't use it, you lose it.

Most of us are blessed with a perfectly good body. Two arms, two legs – no excuse not to exercise. The problem is that many people don't value their health enough to do something about it – until they develop a problem.

Do not blame your inactive lifestyle on anything or anybody. We all have the ability to choose. Make the right choice today.

Start your quality fitness program now and invest in your own personal health account!

Your Body MOURESS BUSINESS

Without health nothing else matters

Chapter Four

Nutrition

You are what you eat...

Hippocrates said, "let food be your medicine and your medicine be your food".

There are many contradictory views when

it comes to nutrition. What was bad for you a few years ago, is now suddenly really important. One day chocolates are good, the next they're bad. With so many food items available, no wonder we get confused.

When I think of food, I think of fuel. Food is fuel for the body. The quality of the fuel you put in your car will have a significant effect on the performance of your car.

Will you put low-quality petrol in your car? Will you pour sand in the petrol tank? Of course not! You want to fill up with the best petrol or diesel available. After all, you've paid a lot of money for the car.

Isn't it amazing how much we care about our belongings, but how little we care about our most valuable possession, our health?

Without health nothing else matters. If we do not feed our bodies with the best available foods, they'll break down eventually. The sad truth is that most people who have a bad quality of life almost always followed a poor nutritional plan over a number of years. It amazes me when people who develop a life-threatening disease convert to a healthy lifestyle overnight. Better late than never, but why not start before disease strikes?

When a sick person adopts a healthy lifestyle, they often expect a sudden change in their health. When they don't get better quickly, they get upset and disheartened.

Let me make one thing clear – even people who have a healthy lifestyle can get sick!

A healthy lifestyle is not a guarantee for a disease-free life.

The human body generally does not break down overnight. Every person is unique and certain things may happen without any logical reason. It is possible that your body may suddenly let you down even though your lifestyle is beyond reproach. But in most cases, the body breaks down over a long period. This usually happens because of specific, bad lifestyle choices. People mostly make nutrition and food choices very complicated. For me, success lies in sticking to the basics. The way the human body functions do not and will not change.

What we do to our bodies is however not the same as 50 years ago! Environmental factors play a huge role. So does stress. Stress is a silent killer.

Medication is also a major factor when it comes to the way the body functions. It's intended to treat the symptoms of disease. The downside is a long list of side effects. The general public is usually not aware of nor informed about possible side effects. I do believe that medication is prescribed too easily and that there should be stricter guidelines for prescription and over-the-counter drugs. More focus should be on treating the cause of the illness. This starts with a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Ask the average person for their thoughts on good nutrition and most people will agree that we need a good combination of protein, carbohydrates and good fat.

I want to share my personal thoughts on nutrition with you. As with everything else in this book, please consider what I say here – and then decide for yourself whether it

makes any sense. I've tried to keep things very simple. Most people, myself included, are confused by all the big words and medical terminology. We lose interest when things get too complicated.

For me, the most important thing when it comes to nutrition, is not so much what we eat, but rather when and how often we eat.

Can you start your vehicle without petrol? Definitely not. Yet so many of us want to start our engines (our bodies) without fuel (food) when we start the day.

Not having a good, healthy breakfast every morning will definitely have a negative effect on your health in the long run. The word breakfast, when broken down, literally means 'breaking the fast'. We need food in the system in the morning to get our energy levels up and our metabolism going.

I discussed my thoughts on metabolism and exercise in the previous chapter. Now, in addition to that, think about a slow metabolism when it comes to food. If your body gets used to NOT getting energy early in the morning over an extended period, it will adapt by slowing down its metabolism.

Your brain will literally tell your body to hold on to energy instead of burning it as it starts believing that it will not get energy soon. Remember, the body is designed to protect and heal itself. In this case, the body will slow down the metabolism to protect it from depleting its energy.

If you do eat a good breakfast, there would not be any reason for the body to adapt and to slow down the metabolism. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day! For a faster metabolism, eat breakfast every day of your life.

Another major reason to eat breakfast early in the morning, is your blood sugar level. It's very important to maintain a good blood sugar level throughout the day.

Our blood sugar levels will fluctuate from time to time, but you should do everything in your power to keep your blood sugar level constant. When you wake up in the morning, your blood sugar level is low. When you eat something, your blood sugar level increases. When your blood sugar level increases, your body produces insulin. It does this to keep the blood sugar level regulated.

Now let's imagine you skip breakfast. Your blood sugar level will stay low. You will feel tired and drained. You will not have the energy to do what you need to do. One day without breakfast will not be the end of the world. If this however becomes your lifestyle, you will develop problems. Your blood sugar level will stay low for way too long. On a day that you skip breakfast, you will probably have a cup of coffee to keep you going. At lunchtime, you will probably be very hungry.

You pop in at the local shop to get something to eat. By this time, your blood sugar level is even lower. You eat your meal, causing a rise in your blood sugar level. Because of your very low blood sugar level for the entire morning, your blood sugar level rises dramatically – which means the body must produce more insulin than usual to regulate the blood sugar level. At least your hunger is now sated, and your day continues.

Your next meal is a huge dinner, late in the evening, after a long day at work. By this time your blood sugar level is once again very low. The same insulin cycle repeats itself. You go to sleep soon after you've finished your biggest meal of the day – a time when your body needs the minimum amount of energy and needs to relax. But we make our bodies work extremely hard during this time to digest our big dinner.

Tomorrow, the same routine will repeat itself...

If this sounds familiar, you should be very concerned. If you keep going without food for extended periods, your blood sugar level will fluctuate more than what is considered normal.

If this routine repeats itself over and over again,

you will eventually develop Type-2 diabetes. The reason is simple. Your body cannot cope with the large amounts of insulin that need to be produced at irregular times. Eventually, the body shuts down its insulin production.

If things get out of hand, you will end up taking medication and eventually need to inject yourself with insulin on a daily basis. This will obviously drastically change your health and life.

I believe that this could be prevented or controlled with good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. Diabetes is one of the world's major killers. It causes so many health problems. You should prevent it at all costs. This example only refers to the time of day that you have your meals.

Now think of what you eat. If, on top of the time between meals, you make bad choices when it comes to food, things will become even worse.

There are loads of different diets out there, many of them very good. As with everything else in life, I like sticking to the basics. You need a good combination of all the different food groups with your meals. The high carbohydrate diet versus high protein/ fat diet has been a hot topic of discussion recently, triggered by the dietary about-turn of a very well-known South African sports doctor. What he wrote years ago regarding a high carbohydrate diet, is suddenly no longer appropriate! After various studies, he now believes the complete opposite of what he previously advocated.

One could claim that I do not have the necessary knowledge and experience to talk about nutrition. However, my opinion in this regard will never change. I believe one needs a good balance of all the different food groups. If one's body does not get enough of a specific group, it will break down something else (muscle, bone, tissue) in order to get sufficient amounts of nutrients to function at its best.

If your body still doesn't get enough of what is needed through nutrition, supplementation and by breaking down something else in the body to make up for the deficit, your body will start to shut down.

My advice is to look at the quality of food first. Organic food is best, but not always available. When it is available, it is often very expensive. Spend time trying to find the best suppliers in your area. Do your own research. Find out who collects their fruit and vegetables fresh from the farm and who doesn't keep their 'fresh' veggies in the fridge for days. The fresher, the better. Be careful of companies that use techniques to keep food fresher for longer.

By using certain chemicals in the production process, food can stay fresh for longer. While this is a good way of getting the profit margins up, fact is the chemicals will end up in your system. The local guy on the corner who buys straight from the farmer will always be a better option.

Everything you eat and drink will have a positive

or negative effect on your system. When I make food choices, I always try to look at the PH level of the food. The perfect PH level for a healthy body is 7.36 (just on the alkaline side). I try to get more alkaline food into my system. Again, this is not rocket science. If you only eat acidic food, your body will become more acidic faster. Chances of developing disease will be much higher. Remember, disease can only

survive in an acidic environment.

A typical meal for most people (more so for men) will be rice, meat, potatoes and gravy. All of this is very acidic.

The body must work much harder to keep a healthy PH balance. We can reduce stress on the body by eating more alkaline foods. We've always been told to eat our fruit and vegetables. The reason is simple – most of these foods are high in alkaline. A major question is always "how much should I eat"?

I believe this is different for each person. Your basal metabolic rate (how much energy your body needs at rest for a day) will determine how many calories your body needs. An active person needs more energy to maintain a constant body weight. If your goal is to lose weight, common sense tells you that you should consume fewer calories than you burn over an extended period.

My advice has always been the same. Make sure you get a good balance of all the different food groups. Eat a healthy breakfast and eat throughout the day. I eat every 3 to 4 hours.

If you are currently overweight, start an exercise program to burn more calories and make sure you eat less than before.

Eat much less bread and stay away from sweet things. Most of all, do not reward yourself with food!

BUSINESS

Without health nothing else matters

Detoxification & Supplementation

There are many different forms of detoxification (detox in short) available today. I believe that most people go overboard and for many companies this has turned into yet another money-making opportunity. It is not my intention to promote any specific product or program in this book, but simply to give basic guidelines and advice. I do however believe in a good detox fairly regularly.

It is important to understand where toxins come from. The world is not the same as it was 50 years ago. The way the human body functions are still exactly the same, but what we feed the body is different. Farmers use pesticides, herbicides, hormones and various chemicals to produce food quicker, in bigger volumes, and more cost effectively.

The consumer digests all of this. But the human body was not designed to deal with it.

In addition, we find things like pollution, chemicals that we use on the skin, deodorants and medications with bad side-effects. None of these will have any immediate effect on the body, but they will certainly make a huge difference in the long run. This is, in my opinion, the reason why more and more people than ever before suffer from diseases like cancer, skin disorders, irritability, tiredness, insomnia, depression, high blood pressure and diabetes. This is also very evident in countries all over the world that adopt a Western lifestyle.

Detoxification involves removing toxins from the body with herbal supplements or other forms of detoxification treatment. Many different types of treatment are available to 'cleanse' the body.

One way to help eliminating toxins through the skin is by doing dry skin brushing. Do this by using a firm, natural brush over the entire body. Avoid the face, neck, sensitive areas and broken skin. Brush over an area a couple of times – always in one direction, towards the heart. By doing this, you will get rid of unwanted dead skin cells and increase circulation in the targeted area. This will also help to prevent the appearance of cellulite. You will see magnificent results very quickly.

You also need to consider the amount of water you drink daily. One glass is simply not enough. Many people will argue that they consume plenty of fluid throughout the day. It needs to be pure water. You simply cannot fill your swimming pool with coffee and expect the water to be clean... Your body needs enough water to flush out the system. It will vary slightly from person to person, but a good guideline is about 1.5 liters of water daily.

Many different forms of alkaline algae and grass are available commercially. Most of them have a very high alkaline content and will help to eliminate toxins. Some of them even target specific organs. The skin, colon, liver and kidneys are the most important organs to consider when it comes to detoxification. Make sure you get good advice from your physician or healthcare adviser before you start on a detox program.

The liver is responsible for converting fat to energy. Without going into too much detail, common sense tells us that if the liver is overloaded with toxins, it will not be able to assist in this process and will make weight loss (or maintenance) so much more

difficult.

Another function of the liver is to clean and purify the blood. So much more reason to have a clean, healthy liver. Now start thinking of the damage we do to our livers when we have one drink too many (not to mention binge drinking)! According to Dr Bernard Jensen (DC, ND, Ph.D.), author of the book Natural Healing Power, over 90% of disease in America can be traced to unhealthy conditions in the bowel. The first thing to consider is bowel movements. How often do you think you should have one? You may be surprised to learn that you should have a bowel movement after every decent meal. If not, you may already be suffering from severe constipation.

The worst thing you could do, is use laxatives to turn waste in the colon into liquid. A proper detoxification program will help clear the bowels and when it comes to a detoxification program, slower is definitely better.

I do not believe in shock treatment for the body. Rather take it slowly and enjoy lasting results.

If done correctly, a proper detox program should stimulate and clean the colon, liver, kidneys, lungs and lymphatic system as well as purify your blood. Most good programs available today will do this over a 90-day period.

If you use a quality daily multivitamin, the supplement should contain certain ingredients that will assist in the daily detoxification of the body. Remember, the body is designed to heal itself. Our goal should be to provide the body with the best possible sources (food and water) for it to do this. One cannot expect one's body to perform at its best unless one supports it. This is why I firmly believe detoxification should be done on a daily basis, with a specific program every couple of years to assist in this process.

When it comes to supplementation, it is important

to do your research. Although it's not always true, the more expensive supplements are usually better.

I am still amazed that people would easily buy a can of Coke but are unwilling to spend the same amount of money daily on quality supplements. By investing money in your health, you ultimately save money and improve your quality of living. Life is all about choice.

Detoxification is more often than not the missing link and the reason why most people simply do not get satisfactory results from weight loss programs. Dieters do see results, but invariably their weight seems to plateau, and they become disheartened. For lasting results and a healthier body, follow a proper detoxification program.

A toxin overload within the body is one of the biggest reasons why people get sick or find it difficult to overcome disease.

There are some food additives that one should try to avoid at all costs. I acknowledge that this is difficult, as they are found in most of the foods we buy – but make an effort to avoid the following:

Aspartame (or Acesulfame Potassium) is an artificial sweetener found in thousands of foods, drinks, candy, gum, vitamins and even some health supplements. It contains approximately 50% phenylalanine, 40% aspartic acid and 10% methanol. All three these ingredients can have side effects that could lead to potentially dangerous health conditions. Symptoms documented as associated with these ingredients include dizziness, headaches, behavioral changes, depression, nausea, numbness, muscle spasms, weight gain, rashes, fatigue, irritability, insomnia, vision problems, hearing

loss, heart palpitations, breathing difficulties, slurred speech, loss of taste, memory loss, joint pain and much more...

Funnily enough, Aspartame is found in just about all diet sodas and food. It is very acidic, causing the body to create more fat cells to deal with and store the excess acid.

It comes as no surprise that many people who regularly consume foods containing significant quantities of Aspartame just get fatter and fatter

Aspartame is also believed to make Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) worse. I've worked with

many parents and always recommend they remove Aspartame from their children's diets. Those who have done so, have all reported seeing significant behavioral improvements. Aspartame is not the only culprit when it comes to ADD, but it's something to consider.

Another commonly used product is MSG, or Monosodium Glutamate. This is a flavor enhancer that activates the taste buds by making them more receptive to flavor. But at the same time, it stimulates the appetite! This is the reason it seems impossible to eat only one potato chip. It is also very addictive with a long list of side effects, very similar to those of Aspartame.

The best way to avoid MSG, is to avoid eating food at fast food restaurants and packaged, processed foods.

The sad truth is that so many parents do not know this or choose to ignore it. Visit any school and have a look at what kids have in their lunch boxes, or what they buy at the tuck shop during breaks. I've been in trouble on more than one occasion for saying all that a naughty child needs is good food and/or a good spanking!

Ask any experienced teacher about the difficulty to control children after first and second break. There is a direct link between their food intake and their behavior. You are what you eat.

On a recent business trip, flying from Cape Town to Johannesburg, I watched a group of schoolboys who were on the same flight. They were on their way to a tennis tournament in Johannesburg.

I was amazed to see how their behavior changed minutes after the stewardess served them – the majority ordered Coke, crisps and chocolates. The few that ordered a healthier option were relaxed, quiet and well behaved.

There is a definite link between food and your child's behavior. Think about it.

Try to avoid Aspartame and MSG at all costs and there will be a positive change in your health over time.

Most importantly, a combination of exercise, good nutrition and detoxification will give you the jump start you need to start living a better, healthier life.

Chapter Six

Skincare

The skin is the largest organ in the human body.

Some might find it strange that I would mention skincare and skin protection as part of a healthy body. For many, skincare is just about looking

good and getting a massage is just about relaxation. Just like getting a proper massage will have many health advantages, so does looking after your skin.

The skin plays a very important role in controlling body temperature. It assists in the elimination of waste elements and also offers protection to the body and other organs. It keeps water and other precious molecules in the body, but also keeps unwanted elements out.

The skin is composed of two kinds of tissue – the outer epidermis and the underlying dermis. They are firmly connected. However, a burn or friction caused by something like a poorly fitting shoe may cause them to separate, which may result in a blister.

The skin is also the place where the body will first show signs that something is wrong. When the skin rebels, it is quite a visible revolution. A loss of homeostasis (optimum state where the body functions at its best) within the body can easily reveal itself on the skin - the reaction is sometimes unbelievable. The skin can develop more than 1000 different ailments ranging from allergies, to bacterial, viral, or fungal infections. Then there are more damaging conditions like burns and skin cancers.

I love sport and the outdoors. Unfortunately, my love for the outdoors also holds a challenge – the sun. I wish I knew 20 years ago, what I know now. If I did, I probably would've taken much better care of my skin.

Not once during all my years in school did any teacher advise me about using sunscreen or looking after my skin. As with most men, I believed that it's something that only women should do. How wrong I was. A good skincare routine is much more than just sunscreen.

My passion for health and fitness didn't include a good skincare routine. Then I met my wife. As a qualified skincare therapist, she introduced me to ways of looking healthier and younger. Though I must admit, the only reason why I listened to her when I went for treatments, was to spend more time with her!

After a few basic changes and good advice, I was on my way to a healthier skin. Good results followed and I was amazed by the improvement I saw. I looked younger and, because of it, I felt better and had much more confidence. I've followed a skincare routine ever since. It takes me less than a minute twice a day.

Your body works as a complete unit. By looking after your skin, the rest of your body will benefit as well. By this I refer to your face and body. Do not forget to care for your feet. There are over 2000 sweat glands under your feet. You need to get rid of dead skin cells. This will make it easier for your body to get rid of unwanted waste through these sweat glands. It will also improve circulation – something that is critical for anyone with diabetes! Getting a proper pedicure is one of the most relaxing treatments and it has so many health benefits. I recommend getting this done at least once a month.

Don't forget dry body brushing (as explained as part of a detoxification routine). It will

also stimulate the skin and produce new skin cells. It takes about 28 days for a woman in her early 20's to produce new skin cells from the bottom to the top layer of the epidermis. As we get older, this process slows down.

A good skincare routine will speed up this process, making you look younger and feel more energized.

Use a quality face wash with the correct PH value, especially for your face. The PH value for your skin is 5.5, so it requires a wash with the same PH value. This will get rid of impurities on the skin and open up the sweat glands. The use of a toner after cleansing is very important. This will balance the PH level of the skin and also prepare the skin for better penetration of the day/night cream that should follow. Use an eye cream/gel on the sensitive areas around the eyes. You will see a big difference quite quickly.

Always put on a quality sunscreen in the morning. Find one with added antioxidants that will not only protect, but also nourish your skin. Remember, the higher the SPF value, the more chemicals will be in the product – something we should try to eliminate. A very high SPF value might also cause skin irritation. Rather apply a lower-SPF sunscreen a couple of times per day instead of a very high SPF only once a day. Do not go to bed at night without first washing your face followed by your basic skincare routine. Prevention is always the key. The sooner you start doing this, the better your skin will look when you are older.

Always apply sunscreen to all unprotected areas of the body when spending time in the sun. Do not forget your ears and lips – two areas very often neglected.

Protective clothing has come a long way in recent years and is now made from fabric with built-in ultraviolet protection. There are many different brands, so visit a sport shop or outdoor shop that specializes in clothing.

Remember, you will pay the price for spending too much time in the sun without proper protection. Not only does your skin age much quicker, but you also increase your chances of developing skin disorders and diseases like cancer. Sun damage is permanent and can never be reversed. Parents should be extra cautious when taking babies into the sun as their skins are even more sensitive to direct sunlight.

Young children are not knowledgeable when it comes to skincare. Be responsible and guide them. Educate them on the specific dangers associated with sunburn. Fact is that the sun is much more damaging than twenty years ago because of environmental changes. Even with so many products available, the best protection is still to avoid spending too much time in the sun.

Always make sure you have your sunscreen on hand and do not forget to apply sunscreen on your

hands and arms when driving long distances.

Of course, sun exposure is not all bad. We do get valuable vitamin D from it. The recommended 10 to 20 minutes of sunlight per day is still a very good guideline, just make sure you don't do it during the warmest part of the day. And if you should see any sudden changes in your skin, always consult your skin specialist.



The Truly Happy

The goal should not be to live longer, but to live happily and healthily for longer.

We don't play much of a role in our entrance into this world and we have minimal say about how and when we will depart. What is important though, is how we spend our time between our birth and death.

Every day is a learning experience. A new opportunity to discover, to live, to appreciate and to perfect. Great men and women aren't born, only babies are. What you do with your time will determine your success and happiness. Let's refer to the period between the day you were born and the day you will die as your Dash (-)

Your actions and behavior influence your Dash!

Your body works as a complete unit. This includes your thoughts, your emotional and your physical state. If you want to be truly happy, you should give

attention to each aspect of your life. Spending too much time and effort on one specific area will have a negative effect on other aspects of your life.

Remember, life is all about balance.

Below are steps that will, if applied, help you to shape your life and master your Dash.

Don't let possessions possess you

Remember, the best things in life aren't always "things". We live in a time where people keep wanting more and more. So much focus is on unimportant material things. Fancy cars, bigger houses, fashionable clothing and much more.

The biggest cause of this is advertising. We are made to believe that we cannot do without certain things. That they are a guarantee for a better life. Ads create desire. Children are brought up with the same mindset. Many parents are caught in this trap – giving their children everything they want instead of the things they actually need. Stop chasing the shadow of possession and power. Before you buy something, ask yourself "do I actually need this"? Take time and go through all the 'things' in your house. Get rid of what you don't need. Not being attached to the material brings a sense of joy and relief. Even wealthy people don't ask for their possessions on their death beds. They focus on family, friends and faith.

To speed up, slow down

Insomnia is common and is often viewed as a disease. I will agree that in some cases this may be true. However, many people are simply incapable of shutting down the nervous system and brain.

We expect our brains to shut down the moment our heads hit the pillow. One cannot stop a big speeding truck in a couple of meters. Yet we expect our brains to do exactly that after a long, hectic day at work. We eat fast, drink fast, drive fast, answer e-mails fast. Everything is done at great speed. Speed has invaded our personal lives. Learn to slow down. Learn to unwind. Learn to relax. Do not underestimate the power of a

relaxing evening, weekend or holiday. If you do not slow down, your body will eventually do it for you.

Learn to be grateful

Get used to the fact that there will be challenges in your life. One sometimes has a day where just about everything was perfect except for one small little incident. It's so tempting to devote a lot of energy and attention to a negative incident and to forget to be thankful for the 99% that was perfect. We want more, even though we give less.

It's also easy for parents, teachers and managers to

forget to focus on all the good things that were done by children, students or workers. We are quick to criticize and point out the things that are wrong and fail to acknowledge the time and effort put into that which was done correctly. Instead of having a negative attitude, learn to appreciate all the good things in life. See the things that did not go according to your plan as an opportunity. With each opportunity comes a learning experience. Learn to be grateful!

Your ego – a ticking time bomb

Self-congratulatory athletes never cease to amaze me, especially those involved in team sports. They forget to acknowledge the effort of their teammates. Life becomes about 'me' instead of 'us'. Think of the managers or principals you've encountered who've referred to "my company" or "my school". It's an attitude that breeds disrespect and self-indulgence. The moment one starts focusing on 'us' instead of 'me', one starts earning the respect of others.

If we're self-centered and egotistical, our lives will eventually start heading in the wrong direction. Something is bound to go wrong. To become a master of your Dash, learn to be humble.

You become who you associate with

If you surround yourself with lazy, unfit, negative people, you will eventually become like them. It becomes acceptable to behave in a certain way. We adopt the values of those we associate with. It takes a very strong character not to be influenced by others. We might tell ourselves that we are strong but think about how easily we use bad language in a group where that is the norm. This is just one example. Being overweight has become socially acceptable because so many people are overweight. Children often get angry when parents question who they hang out with. You have every right, because association is one of the most powerful influencers when it comes to the direction your child's life will take.

Make sure you are happy with the groups or people you and your kids associate with. Set yourself high standards and goals in life. Be with people who share your values. If, for some reason, you don't have a choice when it comes to who you associate with, be strong enough to know the challenges and always be the good example.

Confidence is contagious

Make sure you know where you are and where you are going with your life. Ambition, experience, working

towards a dream, dedication and hard work always lead to confidence. If you lack confidence, you will lack self-esteem. Confidence is something that you constantly

have to work on. Parents need to ensure they spend enough time with their children to equip them with the correct tools to become confident. Adults need to ensure they work hard towards their goals in order to be successful. Hard work leads to confidence.

Confidence gives you courage and the strength to do things you never thought you had the guts to do. Confidence leads to success. The key is to be humble. Remember, you are not superior to anybody else, but just as good as anybody else. There is nothing more inspirational than a confident, yet humble person!

Don't look over your shoulder

You cannot walk in a straight line if you keep on looking over your shoulder. You cannot change the past, but you can most definitely learn from it and change the future. Hold onto the good memories, treasure all those special moments – but don't hold onto negative things from the past and allow them to influence your present. This especially applies to relationships. We often blame things from a previous relationship for our behavior in a current relationship. Children blame parents. Students blame teachers...

It's all water under the bridge. You cannot change your past, but you can definitely influence your future. Life is not what happens to you, but rather what you make of what happens to you.

Life is not fair

Life is not fair, and never will be. Things happen for a reason. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need, even though we may not think so at the time. One may view a difficult childhood as unfair. True, but in the long run it may be a blessing in disguise. It teaches us to work for what we want. Adversity helps us to appreciate success. The same goes for athletes. Talented sportsmen and women often take their talent for granted and do not work as hard as they could. An average athlete needs to work much harder to achieve the same success – often with better results. Accept the fact that life will throw you a curve ball every now and then. Learn to adapt.

Arthur Ashe said "winning is great, but I prefer the process".

Learn from every experience. Appreciate the challenges and be thankful for what you have. There are always people with bigger problems, whether it be financial, health-related or personal.

Make health the foundation of your life

Without health, nothing else matters. You can be of little use to your loved ones, your clients or yourself, if you do not first take care of yourself. Make time to relax. Follow a good exercise routine. Remember, if you don't use it, you lose it. It is much easier to maintain than to start from scratch. Prevention is better than cure. Every single action in your life will have an effect on your health, be it physical or emotional. Remember, emotional health is an integral part of your well-being. Do not neglect it. There are many people who will give anything to have a healthy body. Never take it for granted! The foundation of success and happiness is good health.

Never forget to say thank you.

In our rushed lives, so many of us forget to say, "thank you". We take things for granted. We pay for our groceries at the store and walk away without uttering a word of thanks. It is, after all, the cashier's job to serve us, not so? What happened to "thank you"? Good manners seem to be a relic of the past for many. It's extraordinary how pleased people are when complimented or thanked for having done something, whether it be their job or a personal favor. It has almost become the norm to do things for others only to get something in return. I prefer siding with Nelson Henderson who said, "the true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit".

We have so much to be thankful for. Most people have a perfectly good body and mind. Yet, we find time to criticize and complain.

Wake up, smell the roses. Be thankful for what you have and stop focusing on what you don't have.

People who spend more time on their knees, and who are truly thankful for everything in their life, understand what it means to master their Dash.

BUSINESS

Without health nothing else matters

Conclusion

Doing good things consistently will eventually lead to something great...

Over the years many people have asked me for advice on nutrition, exercise and injuries. My response has always been the same – there is no right or wrong, no straightforward answer. What is good for one person, is not always good for someone else. There is one thing however that will never change – the way the human body functions.

I hope reading this book has, in some small way, helped you to understand how easy it is to live a healthier life. Living healthily simply means making better choices, more often. The only way to become great at what you do, is to consistently make good choices for your body and mind.

You have an opportunity today to start afresh. Doing the right thing is not difficult. It takes commitment, guts and common sense. Change can happen in a second – the process of change takes a bit longer. You owe it to yourself, your family, loved ones, friends and your career. Without health nothing else matters.

The human body will adapt to what becomes the habit. If you keep on making bad choices, you WILL eventually pay the price. The goal should never be to live longer, but to live healthier for longer. Remember, life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage. Have the courage today to make a fresh start!

There is no age limit on being successful. Elderly people tend to get better results when they change to a healthier lifestyle. This might be because they realize their time on earth is limited. They start to value their health much more. It is never too late to change.

The past is for reference, not residence. Stop looking for excuses. Take control of your life – take action.

Negative thoughts are very powerful. Stay focused on your goal. Remind yourself every single day of all the good things in life. Set yourself specific goals and keep your eyes on the target. You have so many things to be thankful for. You've received the gift of life. Never take it for granted. If you are not happy with your situation, change it.

You can lose everything in life. Your money, your loved ones, your house, car and even your health. One thing nobody can take away from you, is your ability to choose. Be brave! Make the correct choice today!

If you value your health, you will do your absolute best to maintain what you have and improve where you can.

Do business with integrity, be humble, become your own manager, leader, coach and mentor. Educate your heart, learn to forget and cherish the good. I am going to leave you with one question.

If your body was your business, how would it be performing?

Your Body MONTESS BUSINESS

Without health nothing else matters

For more information on health and fitness and other services offered, please visit the MBIHealth website. MBIHealth will help you to maximize your potential and reach your goals.

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