

INTRODUCTION

For much of my adult life I had been prone to episodes of pain in my back, hips, and neck that occasionally left me bedridden for a few days at a time, although they never really required me to compromise my lifestyle to any extent. However, as the years went by these episodes became more frequent and painful, so that by the time I was 55 (which was 10 years ago), I truly started to think and feel that I was getting old. This physical decline of my body finally prompted me to discontinue activities such as basketball, softball, and long-distance running (which I truly loved to do), and I figured things were only going to get worse for my body from then on. That was especially depressing because I thought I had been doing all the right things to take care of my health, such as watching my weight, avoiding junk foods and caffeinated beverages, exercising, and stretching regularly. At that time I believed:

- I would have to live with chronic musculoskeletal problems for the rest of my life, these problems would only worsen over time, and there was nothing I could do about it.
- As one ages, it is only natural for one's health to decline: this cannot be avoided or prevented.
- As long as I didn't need to go to a doctor, I was healthy.

The experiences to come would teach me that I was wrong on all three counts, but at the time, with these beliefs, I felt only anxiety over what the future would hold for me physically.

One of the biggest things that changed was my understanding of what true health really means. Despite a lifetime immersion in the medical field (my father was a family doctor, my mother was a dietician, and I have been a podiatrist for nearly four decades), it turned out that I was quite ignorant about the real definitions of health and wellness. I did not realize just how much power and control each of us has over our physical health—both our current and future health. I thought that good health is something people are blessed with or not. I did not realize that for the majority of us, good health is a choice. I did not realize that being healthy and well has nothing

to do with (for the most part) doctors, pills, lotions, potions, or surgery. It has to do with how each of us chooses to live.

HEALTH IS NORMAL

The *really* good news is that it is normal for the human body to be healthy!

The human body, if left to its own devices and treated properly, would almost never become sick, though it would at some point wear out. If we:

- Breathed only fresh, non-polluted air.
- Ate balanced meals derived from natural meats, vegetables, and fruits free of pesticides and other chemicals that are rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.
- Drank sufficient quantities of healthy water.
- Got eight hours of quality sleep a night for adults (more for infants, toddlers, adolescents, and teenagers).
- Exercised for a minimum of thirty minutes at least five, if not seven, days a week.
- Encountered little or no chronic stress
- Did not abuse alcohol, smoke, or use illegal drugs.
- Practiced proper personal hygiene.
- Spent fifteen to twenty minutes a day in moderate sunshine (ideally every day but at least a minimum of three days a week).
- Were consistently exposed to adequate amounts of magnetic and far-infrared energies.
- Stayed socially involved and mentally active

How sick do you think we would ever be?

It is the things that we do or do not do to our bodies that make us unhealthy. No matter what illness you are suffering from, no matter what discomfort you feel, and no matter what is wrong with your body, you should ask yourself this one, simple

question: What am I not giving the cells of my body that they need? After that, you might want to consider asking yourself: What am I giving the cells of my body that they do not need? Apart from things specifically recommended by my physician for me to avoid and/or do, what can I drink, eat, or do to give my cells exactly what they need? Making the necessary lifestyle changes based on your answers should improve your ability to overcome whatever health challenges you may have and prevent others in the future. *Giving the cells of the body all the nutrients they need and creating a healthy living environment should enable them to produce enough energy for the body to do everything it was designed to do, be as vital as it can be, and be able to take care of itself as it was meant to do. How successful we are at this depends on what lifestyle choices we make related to the **Six Habits of Health**.* Part Two shows you this simple yet powerful path to health.

It is important to note that though it is always advisable to give the cells in the body all they need to function as optimally as they can, there are those whose bodies have so deteriorated that making some or any of these lifestyle changes may not be feasible or possible. In addition, even if they did make the changes, though there may be some positive impact on the quality of their life to some extent, it may very well be too late to dramatically change their health or fate.

THE GOOD NEWS

Solving the healthcare crisis seems hopeless when you focus on the dismal statistics of its decline and believe that any new approach will require agreement by all the parties involved: government, insurance companies, medical schools, hospitals, healthcare practitioners, pharmaceutical corporations, food companies, and the dining industry. How to get all of these diverse and differently motivated groups to come together to solve a multi-trillion-dollar crisis is hard to imagine.

However, despite this seemingly hopeless problem there is some good news. The good news is that the common denominator in all of these groups holds the key to the solution of this problem: the individual person. The truth is that we possess the keys to our personal health, the health of our loved ones, and the health of the nation. Just as we are the primary cause of the problems, we do not have to depend on the

federal government, corporate America, or any part of the medical-industrial complex for the solution. We have the power and the ability to control our own health, and improve it ourselves, which is what this book is about.

You have the power to turn off the TV and get on the elliptical trainer. You can stop playing video games and start playing tennis (the outside kind with rackets). You have the power to eat a salad instead of a grease and salt-laden coronary on a bun. You can find the right questions to ask your doctor and you can find a new doctor if he or she does not answer your questions (but do not necessarily dump your doctor because you do not like the answers you get). Do not accept as fact the idea that the only solution to finding a better night's sleep, relieving chronic back pain, overcoming your allergies, or lowering your blood pressure is inside a pill or on an operating table. Just because an insurance company does not cover a treatment does not mean it is not good for you or can't help you.

Excerpted from *To Be Or Not To Be Healthy: For most of us this is a choice*, by Myles J. Schneider, DPM