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MEDIA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

To Be Or Not To Be Healthy: For most of us, this is a choice

By Myles J. Schneider, DPM

Why did you write the book?

Ten years ago, I felt like a 55-years-OLD man. I suffered from a variety of musculoskeletal aches and pains (the worst were in my back and neck) which interfered with my ability to sleep. I assumed that these were related to, or caused by, a head-on car accident I had years ago, when I was 21, as well as to several other injuries over the years. I also took it for granted that this was, in a sense, normal; that as one ages, aches and pains are to be expected...that you should expect to feel old.

I had been to several different types of doctors over the years for the severe episodes, and they would help me to get through them. But there were always recurrences, and as the years went by, they seemed to be more frequent and more painful. Then I was introduced to some complementary products that had a remarkably positive effect on my body. Ultimately, this changed the entire way I looked at what good health really means, and it opened up my mind to other products and wellness concepts.

Now, ten years later, I describe myself as a 65-years-YOUNG man! I know there are millions of people out there who suffer with similar health problems, as well as even more serious ones, and are just not aware that there are a lot of things (most really simple and safe) that they can do about them.

What is the most important point you want to make through this book?

Though the workings of the body are complex, its requirements to have one feel as good, and be as healthy, as possible are actually simple...and, for the most part, have nothing to do with doctors, lotions, potions, medications, risky tests and surgical procedures. Actually, the body's basic needs are generally related to simple lifestyle choices. Furthermore, you have no idea how good you can feel, how much more energy you can have, or how many diseases you may never get, until you follow the recommendations in this book.

Why should someone buy this book?

I believe your body is the most important possession you have, and you cannot be the best you can be, or enjoy your life to the fullest, without being as healthy as possible. If you really know how to take care of your body and follow through on what you need to do for it, it will function optimally. Furthermore, you will have more energy, feel better in general, and be better able defend yourself against disease and illness. And if you should unfortunately succumb to disease or become injured, your ability to heal most likely will be expedited.

The fact that more and more people are getting sicker and sicker at younger and younger ages, often with chronic illnesses, tells me that people either do not know what their body needs or are not taking the necessary steps to take care of it. The bottom line is that the majority of people are doing a poor job of taking care of themselves.

Why do you think more and more people are getting sicker and sicker at younger and younger ages?

There are several reasons, with perhaps the most important being that most people think that inasmuch as the workings of the body are very complex, it requires some highly intelligent people, with years of training (like our healthcare professionals), to take care of it. Therefore, they relinquish the primary responsibility for their health to the healthcare professionals and the healthcare system. While we certainly need doctors when we are sick, in reality the needs of the body to be truly healthy and well have nothing to do with doctors, lotions, potions, medications, risky tests and invasive surgical procedures. Actually, it's largely a matter of simple, risk free, healthy lifestyle choices. I believe that many think that it does not matter how much we abuse our bodies; that the doctor will always have some pill or surgical procedure to take cure it. Others simply do not know how relatively easy it is to be as healthy as we can be and also how important it is that we be the ones responsible for our own health. Then, too, many young people, especially, feel invulnerable and do not fully understand that how they treat their bodies now (both the good and the bad) will have an effect on them later in life.

What is the cause of the healthcare crisis?

There are four main groups that I feel are primarily seen as the causes of the healthcare crisis. They are, in no order of importance, the health insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies, the healthcare professionals (healthcare system), and the food industry. There are those who would include the legal profession, as it relates to malpractice lawsuits, in this list, but I do not believe this is so. However, I do believe

that each and every one of us is the cause of the problem. I think that the real danger is that more and more of us are getting sicker and sicker at increasingly younger ages, often with the chronic diseases that ultimately have led to the healthcare crisis.

What is the solution?

Studies have shown that over seventy percent of all diseases and deaths are avoidable and are related to lifestyle choices. If the majority of us started taking care of our bodies the way we should and started making healthier lifestyle choices, then the number of people getting sick would decrease considerably, thus ending the healthcare crisis. More specifically, I believe two main things need to be done: First, the federal government and the health insurance industry need to offer significant financial incentives to influence people to make these healthier lifestyle choices. Second, the healthcare professionals' philosophy of taking a "reactive" approach to disease needs to be changed to a "proactive" one.

How would you fund your solution?

The cost of healthcare in the U.S. is projected to be more than $\$2\frac{1}{2}$ trillion this year (2009), so if, as I maintain, *seventy percent* of that amount can be avoided by wellness programs reducing illness and disease, then we've just saved over $\$1\frac{3}{4}$ trillion. That's more than enough to fully fund healthcare for all those currently without benefits. Obviously, this is a best-case scenario, but it's evident that *any shift at all* to a proactive, wellness-based system would dramatically reduce costs. And as an example of this, assume that if merely ten-percent of the currently insured population—an almost absurdly low number of participants—decide to become healthier citizens, that alone represents a staggering savings of $\$250$ billion! Moreover, that's without factoring in the unknown—but easily computable—*additional* billions in savings inuring from less absenteeism and increased productivity. My proposal for changing healthcare not only *wouldn't* increase costs, it would *lower* them...*and cover everyone!*

What is your definition of health?

My definition of health is unique to each one of us as individuals, but essentially it is giving your body all the things it needs to function as well as it can. This means you should have more energy, feel as good as you can feel, and avoid diseases and/or symptoms of diseases that you will never know about. Furthermore, no matter how good you feel or how healthy you think you are, if you have not paid attention to the principles that I discuss in this book that foster true health, then you will never know how truly good you can feel. If you do become sick or injured, you want to minimize the need for medications and other medical interventions.

What are the body's basic needs that you write about?

The primary basic needs are good nutrition, healthy water, quality sleep, regular exercise, stress management and clean air. These are what I call the Six Habits of Health.

What is the Wellness Continuum you talk about?

The Wellness Continuum is a simple, self-manageable, measurable process of improving and monitoring your individual wellness. Its function is to help you move your state of wellness in the real world (today) toward your goal of ideal wellness. It is simple, so that you can implement it. There are several questionnaires you are asked to fill out that will give you an idea of how healthy you are—or are not—at the present time. Then there is a step-by-step guide on how to take you from where you are, health-wise, to where you want to be.

What do you mean by “living in a health-enhancing environment,” and what is its importance?

I am speaking about where you live. Within your own home, you have the ability to control what you eat, the water you drink, the air you breathe, the quality and quantity of sleep you get, and the amount of regular exercise you get. For most people, your home could, or should be, a sanctuary, where you can get away from the stressors of daily life. All of these work together synergistically to enhance your body's ability to function as efficiently as it can, which is what this book is all about.

What is the one thing that could be done to help us all move toward ending the healthcare crisis?

Quite simply, to have everyone implement the majority of suggestions I give in this book pertaining to the Six Habits of Health.

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