A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and white shorts, is sitting in a lotus position on a large, dark, mossy rock. Her hands are pressed together in a prayer position (Anjali Mudra) above her head. She is looking upwards with a serene expression. To her left, a waterfall cascades down several tiers of rocks, creating a soft, blurred effect. The background is filled with lush green foliage, including large-leafed plants and ferns. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

# the guide to being well

a blueprint for exploring the mind, body & spirit

scott hinds lambeth

# **The Guide to Being Well**

A Blueprint for Exploring the Mind, Body & Spirit

© 2012 by Scott Hinds Lambeth

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by All Good Thingz, LLC, Gainesville, Florida.

Printed in the United States of America.  
Cover and interior design: Chermont Design.

ISBN-13:978-1477613658  
ISBN-10:147761365X

First Edition

# **The Guide to Being Well**

A Blueprint for Exploring the  
Mind, Body & Spirit

Scott Hinds Lambeth

*[www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)*

# Foreword

*The Guide to Being Well* includes the story of my personal struggle with depression. Becoming familiar with my story will help you understand how my philosophy on managing depression was formulated. Although my philosophy on managing depression is based on personal experience, I have learned to manage depression effectively.

The assistance that mental health practitioners can provide to those struggling with depression is vitally important. *The Guide to Being Well* is not a substitute for traditional mental health treatment. However, the techniques for managing depression that *T.G.T.B.W.* provides can supplement traditional mental health treatment.

Sharing the story of my struggle with depression is an important step in my ongoing effort to be

## Forward

mentally, physically and spiritually well. I hope that my story will inspire you to take a closer look at your mind, body and spirit. It is also my hope that the enclosed techniques for managing depression will help you move out of the darkness of despair and into the light of wellness... the choice to be well is yours to make.

# Introduction

**F**irst, I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not a guru, sage, saint or perfect person. Like you, I am a work in progress. Furthermore, I cannot help you solve all of your problems. Truthfully, I cannot solve all of my own problems.

If you are looking for advice that will solve all of your problems, this is the wrong book. My only advice is as follows: remember that your life is only so long. Over a lifetime, your heart will only beat so many times.

Your choices ultimately determine the rate of your heart beat. Hearts can beat at a moderate rate, result-

ing in a long fruitful life. You can also expend your heartbeats prematurely by making choices that create stress. Do not waste your life mired in stress. Stress is a killer!

This is not a dress rehearsal of your life, it is the final curtain. With that in mind, you should do all that you can to live in full. There are no do-overs at the end of life if you are haunted by what could have been. To enjoy life while you can is the best advice that anyone can give!

This book will not solve all of your problems – no book can. The solutions to your problems are locked inside you. You must unlock the secrets to creating a life of happiness and well-being for yourself. Nothing outside of you is responsible for how you live; that is entirely up to you.

*The Guide to Being Well* is a tool to help you explore how you live. I hope that it pushes you toward self-awareness. Self-awareness is the key to overcoming the challenges in your life that seemingly have no solution. Often, the solutions to our problems are so close that we cannot see them.

Because many of the solutions to your problems are within you, self-awareness is vital to solving them. Although difficult to achieve, self-awareness will help you solve your problems for yourself. Nothing is as powerful in life as understanding who you are. I hope that you will become an expert in yourself. May this document of my journey of self-exploration help guide you to self-discovery.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Step 1 – Wellness of the Mind**

Chapter 1 – My Journey Begins .....	3
Chapter 2 – Healing Psychological Injury (Your Journey Begins) .....	25

## **Step 2 – Wellness of the Body**

Chapter 3 – Exercise .....	43
Chapter 4 – Nutrition .....	69

## **Step 3 – Wellness of the Spirit**

Chapter 5 – Building a Spiritual Foundation .....	93
Chapter 6 – Living for Something Other Than Yourself .....	109
Chapter 7 – Moving Beyond Me (Life with Marguerite) .....	115
Chapter 8 – Rising & Setting with the Sun .....	121
Chapter 9 – Things to Consider .....	127
Epilogue .....	149
My Gift to You .....	153

**STEP**

 **1** 

**Wellness of the Mind**

# Chapter

# 1

## My Journey Begins

I think of the brain as the human hard-drive and our thoughts as Random Access Memory (RAM). I began thinking this way several years ago after changing careers and falling on subsequent hard times. My broadcasting career ended because I was determined to make my mark in the fashion industry. With a great concept, sufficient capital and fierce determination, I was going to make my dream come true.

Unfortunately, or so it seemed, the stars did not align for my overly-ambitious dream to come true. In fact, soon after leaving the radio business to make a name in fashion, I was out of money, determination, and losing my mind. At the time, it seemed like things

could not be worse. I felt like everything was falling apart.

Although the economy declined immediately following my career change, failing as an entrepreneur was my fault. No matter how desperately I wanted to believe otherwise, I was not prepared for the challenge. The major obstacle in my plan had nothing to do with the economy; I know now that I was in over my head from day one.

I thought that my success in one field would easily translate to another. Discovering that I was wrong jarred my ego. It was a rude awakening to realize that my concept of self-employment was completely unrealistic. The experience taught me a valuable lesson about overconfidence. Arrogance prevented me from seeing that I was unprepared for what I was attempting. As a result, I was destined to fail.

## **To Hell in a Hand-basket**

After floundering as a business owner, I did not know what to do. Without the regimented structure of employment, I was lost. During my 27 years in broadcasting, I always knew what was expected of me. When left to my own devices, I felt unsure. Being self-

employed was not the dream scenario I envisioned. In fact, self-employment was a nightmare for me.

Eventually, I was overcome by the sense of doom that follows the realization of failure. With no money or hope of success in my new endeavor, despair became my constant companion and led me down a path of self-destruction. This was not my finest hour.

I was severely depressed after failing as an entrepreneur. Until then, I was enjoying a long period of success in my life. By the time my entrepreneurial dream imploded, failure was unfamiliar. This new brush with failure was a big surprise to me.

In my mind, everything that I did was automatically supposed to work. Failure was unthinkable to me, so when it happened, I was unprepared. Foolishly, I let overconfidence prevent me from considering the need for a backup plan; I was over-confident and foolish in a big way.

My response to failing as an entrepreneur is difficult for me to admit; it reminds me of times when I was weak and fearful in my life. After being self-assured for so long, feeling doubtful was practically new to me. I had forgotten what it was like to doubt myself. However, my old feelings of self-doubt came back with a vengeance when it became clear that my

entrepreneurial endeavor was a bust. Unfortunately, I responded to the failure by being weak and fearful.

## **The Comeback (Ode to Misti)**

Bouncing back from the most disappointing experience of my professional life was difficult. My failed business venture resonated at the core of my being. The self-doubt that I felt as a result of failing at self-employment was all-encompassing. Failing as an entrepreneur left my self-confidence in shambles.

Here I was, approaching 40 years old with no home of my own. In dire straits financially, I was forced to move in with my mother and stepfather. Soon after, I spiraled into a full-fledged self-hate/self-destruct mode. The situation could not have been further from my expectations.

Following my failure as an entrepreneur, I attempted several other far less ambitious employment prospects to no avail. Then, while walking home from work one day, I thought about a conversation that I had years earlier with my friend and former Personal Trainer. Misti said something during one of conversations that suddenly occurred to me. It was odd that I recalled what Misti said because it seemed meaningless at the time.

Out of the blue one day, Misti told me that I would make an excellent Personal Trainer due to my strong

communication skills. It seemed like an arbitrary thing for her to say because I had never expressed interest in becoming a Personal Trainer. After offering the obligatory “thank you” in response to her comment, I went on living. I never imagined that her comment would help change my life one day.

In hindsight, I understand that Misti’s comment was anything but arbitrary. Her seemingly meaningless remark planted a seed in my mind that would bear the fruit of revelation. Even now, I do not know why I recalled our conversation while walking home that day. Becoming a Personal Trainer still had not occurred to me at that point. Thinking of the conversation seemed just as random as her comment did. I had no idea how meaningful her comment was until long after she made it.

Things began to look brighter when I recalled what Misti said to me about Personal Training. The next morning, I awoke from a dream about being Personal Trainer. I felt upbeat that day for the first time in many weeks. The dream was positive, which I interpreted as a good omen. Since childhood, many of my steps in life have been ordered by dreams. My dream about personal training left me with a good feeling!

I lost contact with Misti for several years after we stopped training. Nevertheless, I wanted to talk to her

about what seemed like a career choice worth consideration. I wondered if she remembered telling me that I would be a great Personal Trainer. Armed with recognition of how remarkable it was that I recalled a seemingly random conversation from years past, I called Misti.

After speaking to Misti, I was convinced that personal training was a career that I should pursue. When I told her what I was thinking, she mentioned the conversation we had years earlier. That was the only confirmation I needed to begin pursuing a career in personal training.

After being utterly lost – wounded self-confidence in tow – the new course of my life became clear. Instead of the other way around, destiny discovered me when I recalled Misti's random comment about Personal Training. From my first session, I knew that Personal Training was for me. Additionally, becoming a trainer helped me discover that I have a gift for motivating others.

Remembering Misti's comment from years past taught me that people often see things in us that we cannot. Misti was right; communication is my greatest asset as a trainer. Her insight about my potential as a trainer helped lead me to my life's purpose, motivating others to seek wellness of the mind, body and spirit.

Misti saw something in me that I could not. For this, I owe her a debt of gratitude that I can never repay.

## The Making of a Philosophy

Digressing for a moment, let us revisit my opening statement: “I think of the brain as the human hard-drive and our thoughts as RAM”. I believe that just as a computer hard-drive must be defragmented, the human mind needs to be also.

Until becoming a self-taught student of human behavior, I did not understand my mind’s defragmentation process; it is a process that has been occurring for my entire life. Unbeknownst to me until recently, I defragment my hard-drive (mind) all the time. I had no idea that something I do routinely is extremely important to my mental, physical and spiritual well-being.

Something that I once regarded as meaningless is actually one of my most important practices. I spend countless hours daydreaming while walking and talking to myself. I know that walking around daydreaming sounds like a waste of time. Truthfully, I have always thought I was crazy for doing so. However, the thought of being crazy never stopped me from engaging in this seemingly useless practice.

What I am actually doing during my meditative walks is defragmenting my hard drive. For most of my

life, I was unaware of how critically important this process is. The time I spend defragmenting is when many of my thoughts, inspirations, ideas and insights are uncovered.

Case in point: I became a Personal Trainer, leading me to discover my gift for motivating others. Consequently, I wrote this book, and who knows what will happen as a result of it. However, this all happened because I was walking home from work one day while daydreaming and talking to myself. My affinity for walking and daydreaming is anything but mindless... it is my saving grace.

The thoughts on my hard drive are being organized when I daydream. Walking and daydreaming is how I make sense of things in my life. Furthermore, talking to myself is how I process the information on my hard-drive. Walking is how I engage my defragmentation mode. Being the genius that I am, it only took 38 years for me to figure out how my defragmentation process works. Better late than never!

## **What is Defragmentation?**

Defragmentation is essentially a form of meditation. Since beginning to understand how the process applies to me, I have discussed the concept of defragmentation with other people. Everyone that I have talked to about it has a defrag-process of their

own, often without realizing it. Like me, some people find that walking stimulates contemplative thought (defragmentation). Others become introspective while running, cooking, driving or bike riding. Reaching a meditative state is what matters, not how you do it.

Meditation is an important tenet of many cultures, philosophies and doctrines. However, for many, the word “meditation” conjures images of monks and monasteries. Meditation does not require the burning of frankincense and myrrh or the incessant chanting of monks; it does not have to be rooted in a particular doctrine or philosophy.

Meditation is the process of entering a state of mental calm. People often reflect on their thoughts, feelings, insights, ideas or desires when meditating. Until I understood my defrag-process, I did not realize that it is a form of meditation. People have engaged in practices similar to my defrag-process for ages. Ironically, I once thought of my meditative process as mindless.

I understand now that meditation allows me to hear my conscience and intuition. Through meditation, I discovered solutions to problems by listening to my inner-voice and allowing it to guide my actions and decisions. The process of walking and daydreaming is how I discovered my inner-voice. In addition, listening to my inner-voice helped me develop self-awareness.

## Exploring Conscience, Intuition & Ego Through Meditation

I consider conscience and intuition to be two parts of the human inner-voice. In my opinion, conscience and intuition are more vital to human experience than is generally recognized. Because most people have them, it makes sense that conscience and intuition are essential to human-experience. I believe the inner-voice is an important survival mechanism.

Environmental and psychological factors conditioned me to discount the importance of my inner-voice. At times, I have willingly ignored the part of my inner-voice that I identify as conscience. Nevertheless, conscience is firmly rooted in my psychology at all times; its influence on me is powerful. However, intuition is more abstraction than conscience, and therefore easier to misidentify and discount.

I was a stranger to myself until I began listening to my inner-voice (conscience and intuition). Listening to my conscience and intuition helped me understand myself. In addition, understanding myself helped me trust my inner-voice. Consequently, I began allowing my conscience and intuition to guide my actions and decisions. Although I have not always realized it, my inner-voice is always there to show me the right path.

Conscience and intuition do not cause us to do things that are wrong. However, there is a third component of the inner-voice that can be terribly destructive. Ego is easy to identify because it is not abstract or subtle. The human ego is amazingly powerful. The power of a single ego can drive entire civilizations to madness.

Conscience and intuition are often in the background of our consciousness, while ego is in the foreground. During meditation (defragmentation), ego is displaced by conscience and intuition in our consciousness. Meditation helps us move beyond ego to a higher level of self-understanding and self-control.

## The Sweet Taste of Optimism

*“Optimism is the cornerstone of progress.  
Progress is the cornerstone of success.  
It behooves me to be optimistic”.*

I have often felt pessimistic about life. As a teenager, I was diagnosed with clinical depression. Depression made it extremely difficult for me to approach life optimistically. After a brief period on antidepressants, I stopped taking them because they made me feel lifeless.

Without antidepressants, I was often severely depressed. Depression made it difficult for me to be

productive at times. Some days, getting out of bed in the morning was difficult. Although being depressed was like living in psychological hell, I preferred it to being medicated. When depressed, at least I felt *something*.

I was unwise to stop taking antidepressants without consulting my doctor. Consulting the doctor about the side-effects of antidepressants would have allowed her to adjust my treatment. A different medication or dosage might have worked better for me. Continuing treatment could have saved me from many years of psychological distress. Unfortunately, nothing could save me from myself.

To escape the constant psychological pressure of depression, I learned to self-medicate. I spent most of my late teens and twenties in a haze of alcohol, pot, coke and various prescription medications. My life during that period is mostly a blur. However, the overwhelming sense of gloom that accompanied my every move back then is clear to me.

As a young adult, I lacked optimism. Now, I realize how important optimism is to psychological health. Optimism drives us toward our highest aspirations; it is the fuel that propels us toward our greatest desires. Without optimism, we cannot rise to higher causes and accomplishments.

Humans have an inherent need for accomplishment. Optimism is difficult to achieve without accomplishment. Understanding the relevance of optimism and accomplishment is important in developing psychological well-being.

Experience taught me that optimism does not occur by accident; being optimistic is a matter of choice. Choosing to gravitate toward optimism changed my life. As I discovered, the key to being optimistic is setting goals and striving to accomplish them. Optimism and accomplishment are two sides of the same coin. We must create opportunities to be optimistic.

## The Bitter Taste of Apathy

*“Apathy is a corrosive force that erodes to the core that which it inhabits, rendering it devoid of light and essence.”*

On the opposite side of the coin from optimism is apathy. Apathy is something that I am intimately familiar with. Anyone suffering from depression knows apathy well. For a long time, apathy was something that I was an expert in.

Like optimism, apathy is self-imposed. We must choose to be apathetic. Difficulty is something we all face. However, our responses to adversity are a matter of choice. We can rise above challenges or allow them to defeat us by choosing to. No matter how great the challenge, encountering difficulty does not excuse apathy.

## **Dancing with Apathy**

As a young adult, I spent more than a decade being defeated by circumstances in my life. Often, I chose to be weak, allowing apathy to defeat me. Although each difficult circumstance that I have faced eventually passed, I prolonged them by choosing to be weak. The choice to be apathetic or optimistic was mine to make in every circumstance. Unwittingly or not, I chose to be apathetic and weak!

Apathy is an excuse for avoiding challenges. Often, we choose apathy believing inaction to be easier than confronting adversity. The difficulty of adverse circumstances is prolonged and compounded by giving into apathy. Confronting difficulty is the key to moving beyond apathy and toward optimism. Confronting challenges increases our ability to overcome them and eventually, confrontation becomes a habit.

The years that I spent overcome by apathy and depression were difficult times. Although living through tough times made me strong, I prolonged my suffering by refusing to get help. Choosing to suffer in silence was unwise and had long-term negative effects on me.

## The Breakdown

At 23, I suffered a nervous breakdown. After many years of self-destructive behavior, my life spiraled out of control. The day that my feelings erupted, I was literally unable to get out of bed. The moment that my eyes opened that morning, I began sobbing uncontrollably; it was as if a floodgate of sorrowful emotions suddenly broke free in me. For the next two days, I was psychologically paralyzed. This was my darkest hour.

After three days of utter misery, I decided that it was time to either end it all or get help. For several hours that day, I contemplated if life was worth living. I also thought about different ways to end my life. After thinking about my grandfather that day, I knew that ending my life was not the answer.

My grandfather (Pop) was a remarkable man. Disappointing him was always one of my greatest fears. Pop would have been profoundly disappointed

in me for considering suicide. He would never have done to our family what I was considering doing, no matter how dire the circumstance he faced.

At 70 years old, Pop was lost in the Gulf of Mexico for 22 hours during a storm. While recovering from his experience in the Gulf, I asked Pop how he survived such a difficult ordeal. His response to my question is unforgettable. He said that “thinking of the devastation that his death would cause our family kept him holding on”. He held on for dear life because “the thought of leaving us under those circumstances was unbearable”.

Throughout the ordeal in shark infested waters, Pop kept saying “Lord help me make it through the night”. His simple plea to the Lord is the mantra that helped bring him through the storm. Although my grandfather was deceased, he saved me on the day that I was considering suicide. He helped bring me through the storm of my despair.

When I awoke on day four of my breakdown, I called my mother. Not surprisingly, she immediately came to comfort me. Gathering up the emotional wreckage that I had become, my mother took me home. Forsaking everything, she spent the next two days comforting me.

My mother’s empathy for the emotional turmoil that I was experiencing was limitless. After two days

of witnessing my misery, she convinced me to get the help I desperately needed. I could not have made it through those dark days without the help of my loving family, especially my mother. I am alive to tell the story because of the love and support of my mother and family.

## **Here Comes the Sun**

After completing a 60-day treatment program, my mind was clear for the first time in months. I could see the fine lines and sharp edges of the world again. It was the first time that I had a clear head since long before the breakdown.

Prior to treatment, my mind was extremely cluttered; I did not realize that things had become featureless and tasteless to me. After treatment, I began rediscovering the subtle details in life that give it a sense of beauty. Suddenly, the sky seemed bluer... and the grass looked greener. Even the taste of food was more pleasing to me once my head was clear. My senses were reborn after I underwent treatment.

Fearing the loss of my new mental awareness, I decided against taking antidepressants after completing the treatment program. Despite the doctor disagreeing with my decision, I was back on solid ground by my 24th birthday. The love and support

of my family was vital to my post treatment success; in fact, their support was more helpful to me than antidepressants.

I was a professional radio announcer for 10 years by the time I was 24. While on air each day, I was not the insecure, morose person that I often was outside of work. On air and in public, I was confident and strong, the toast of the town. The people I worked with were unaware of how insecure and depressed I was at times.

Work helped me mask my true feelings. Moreover, work related activities kept me in perpetual party mode. Partying all of the time allowed me to avoid dealing with my problems. With popularity came a cast of hangers-on that prevented me from escaping the emotional vortex I was in. I took every opportunity to keep myself preoccupied with people and partying to avoid the emotional darkness that awaited me when things were still.

In treatment, I learned the importance of developing new social outlets at home. Avoiding people that I partied with before being hospitalized was integral to my recovery. Truthfully, avoiding my party friends when I returned home was easy; it was easy because they did not want me around if the party was over.

When the party was not on my dime, my so-called “friends” had better things to do than hang with me. They did not want to hear me talk about being clean, sober and healthy. Hearing about the positive changes in my life reminded them of all that was wrong in their lives.

Ironically, the friends that stood by me were those I left behind during my “party-like-a-rock-star” days. The experience taught me that a few true friends are all that you need to have. True friends are always there if you need them. My true friends were there for me, despite my shortcomings. I no longer take friendship for granted.

## **Running to Revelation**

Besides the support of friends and family, something else prevented me from lapsing into self-destructive behavior. Exercise helped prevent me from reverting back to old habits. However, I learned the importance of exercise in managing depression by accident.

Before my breakdown, I was drinking heavily and eating poorly. An unhealthy lifestyle made me overweight and out of shape. One day, I looked in the mirror and was mortified by what I saw... it was like looking at a stranger in the mirror.

Looking in the mirror made the physical effects of my lifestyle clear to me. The athletic young man from a few years earlier was gone. Realizing how bad I looked inspired me to start exercising. It was a decision that changed my life.

Mental well-being is one of many positive changes that exercise spawned in my life. I began exercising by running. Eventually, I was running 4 to 6 miles daily. At the onset of stress or depression, I would literally run out of the darkness in my psyche. I rarely felt depressed when I ran because it gave me a mental high. Running made me feel good mentally and physically, so I ran as often as possible.

After running for several months, I was in great shape mentally and physically. My performance at work was better than ever, and I was finding my way socially as well. The antidepressant effects of exercise prevented me from falling back into bad habits. Furthermore, the hormonal release from exercise is better than any drug.

My journey from apathy to optimism began with a run. Long periods free of depression motivated me to set and accomplish new goals. Optimism is one of the great benefits of exercise. Exercise made me optimistic which changed my life in positive ways. Most importantly, exercise helped me discover the

symbiotic relationship of the mind, body and spirit.

The effect of physical fitness on my mental state is undeniably positive. There is no doubt that physical fitness makes me mentally strong. Now, instead of shrinking in the face of adversity, I confront challenges head-on. I wholeheartedly believe that strength of body equals strength of mind.

Discovering the relationship between physical fitness and mental well-being inspired me to help others. Today, I am far removed from the days when depression and apathy ruled my life. For more than 20 years, I have managed depression by exercising, eating well and living purposefully.

At this point in my life, I am stronger than ever. I am in excellent condition mentally and physically and looking at the future optimistically. Recognizing the link between physical fitness and mental wellbeing changed my purpose in life. Now, I am dedicated to helping others become mentally, physically and spiritually strong.

# Chapter

# 2

## Healing Psychological Injury/ Your Journey Begins

The personal details in *Chapter 1* were difficult for me to admit and accept. However, confronting the truth about my life and character made me self-aware. Psychological well-being is impossible to achieve without self-awareness.

Accurate self-analysis is difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, your quest to wellness must begin by uncovering the truth about your life and character. Self-analysis is the key to developing self-awareness. Self-awareness is also important to personal growth; many psychological barriers are difficult to overcome without self-awareness.

Uncovering the psychological effects of unresolved trauma is another step in becoming self-aware. Unresolved psychological trauma can have negative effects on your character, self-perception and responses to adversity. The process of self-discovery must include identifying the effects unresolved trauma. The effects of unresolved trauma can include depression, anxiety and other forms of psychological distress.

## **The Seeds of Psychological Distress**

The effects of unresolved trauma are often difficult to identify. Psychological distress can have behavioral influences that are imperceptible. Uncovering the behavioral effects of unresolved trauma is critical in creating psychological wellbeing.

Identifying the psychological effect of unresolved trauma improved my mental health. My journey of self-discovery required confronting past trauma and revisiting the psychological distress of each experience. Self-analysis made it possible for me to overcome psychological injury.

The effects of psychological trauma that occurs during childhood can influence our behav-

ior as adults. Childhood trauma can have especially harmful psychological effects. The following story illustrates the long-term psychological effect of a childhood experience.

## Ugly Me

Looking back, I am struck by something that happened when I was in third grade. The experience troubled me well into adulthood. While running on the playground at school one morning, I tripped and fell near two girls.

The “Mighty Mouths” (as I now call them) were in the fifth grade with my sister, Renee. My sister was every elementary schoolboy’s fantasy girl. She was a beautiful girl with doe eyes and flowing black hair. On the other hand, I was frail and at an awkward age physically. In fact, my nicknames were Tankhead and Grover; I absolutely hated being called both names.

Why Tankhead and Grover you ask? Tankhead meant that my head was the size of an army tank. Grover is the character from Sesame Street whose head is too big for his body. So, there I was (Tankhead/Grover) running along when suddenly, I tripped over my feet and went sailing face first into the dirt. Great!

As fate would have it, my embarrassing moment took place in front of the girls with the biggest mouths in school. While in mid-flight, I saw the Mighty Mouths watching my ill-fated descent to the Earth. At that moment, I knew my life was going to be a living hell that day. Unfortunately, my concern about the day was warranted.

Before I could retreat from the playground, the Mighty Mouths began chiming in a chorus of shrill laughter. I knew the sound of their laughter could be heard for miles. Within seconds of hearing the hyena like laughter, a crowd of exuberant onlookers gathered around me. The crowd was like a pack of hungry wolves feasting on a kill.

After realizing that my nightmare was real, I focused my energy on the single task of not crying. I knew that crying in front of the shrieking hoard would make the situation even worse. No matter what, I would not cry. Like almost every boy my age, I was well informed that only sissies cry.

## **Self-Acceptance**

My experience on the playground seemed like the worst thing that could happen at the time. The experience haunted me for many years afterwards.

When it happened, the world seemed to be moving in slow motion. It was difficult to hear the insulting comments that onlookers to event were hurling at me. The deafening roar of laughter, pointing fingers and staring eyes consumed my attention.

Processing anything specific during my humiliating encounter on the playground was nearly impossible. However, a particular comment shot through to my consciousness like a bolt of lightning across the sky. One of the Mighty Mouths said, “Renee’s little brother is so ugly with his big ole head”. Following her comment, I leaped to my feet and ran as far from the embarrassing scene as possible.

My impressionable age when the experience happened caused the hurtful comment to become part of my consciousness. The feelings that the insult caused stayed with me for many years; they were present in my consciousness until I released them. I eventually discovered that refusing to acknowledge hurtful feelings can be psychologically destructive.

A silly childhood insult had a destructive affect on my self-confidence because I repressed my feelings about it. Moreover, the low self-confidence that I developed during childhood affected my adult relationships, especially with women. Fear of rejection often

caused me to feel inadequate in romantic relationships. In addition, my lack of confidence caused most of my romantic relationships to fail.

For years, my irrational fear of rejection was not evident to me. Fear of rejection had a dramatic effect on my behavior toward others. Feeling unworthy of acceptance made me believe that others viewed me that way. Just as my schoolmate said on the playground, I felt ugly. Because I behaved like someone unworthy of acceptance, people often rejected me. Now, I understand that accepting yourself is the first step in being accepted by others.

## **Moving Beyond Unresolved Trauma**

An elementary school experience damaged my self-image. Harboring negative feelings from the experience resulted in years of psychological distress. Additionally, accepting a falsehood as the truth about myself inhibited my personal growth. The self-truth that I created during childhood affected me as an adult.

My third grade experience demonstrates how unresolved trauma can inhibit personal growth. I was socially and emotionally stunted by the unhealthy self-image that I developed as a child. Until confronting it,

unresolved trauma adversely affected my experiences and behavior. Choosing to face unresolved trauma improved my life.

The psychological effect of unresolved trauma can be difficult to recognize. However, identifying the trauma of past experiences helped improve my self-image and behavior. Moreover, changing my self-image and behavior helped me overcome unresolved trauma.

Confronting unresolved trauma revealed that I was driving people away by behaving self-consciously. Being rejected by people because of my appearance was a figment of my imagination. People were not attracted to me because my self-consciousness was unappealing to them. As I discovered, it is virtually impossible to attract others without self-confidence.

## **Finding Me**

Self-doubt and fear of rejection once permeated every facet of my life. My self-doubt was so great that it influenced how I thought others perceived me. Believing that I was unattractive caused my behavior to be unappealing to others. Furthermore, self-conscious behavior facilitated people's rejection of me and reinforced my unhealthy self-image.

Facing unresolved trauma is vital to overcoming psychological barriers. Acknowledging the self-doubt that past experiences caused me improved my psychological health. Overcoming unresolved trauma allowed me to grow socially and emotionally.

A failed romantic relationship caused me to examine my behavior. The disappointment of the failed relationship compelled me to change. Sick of being insecure and needy, I decided to take control of my life. The failed relationship made it apparent that I had to change. The burden of my insecurity was too great for anyone to bear, including me.

My approach to life was flawed for many years. I liken my existence during those years to sleepwalking. Life was unfolding before me beyond my control. Because I was living without purpose, my life was like a random occurrence of magnificent proportion.

## **A Psychological Breakthrough**

While rebounding from a failed relationship, I began to question why I was so insecure and unhappy. Questioning my life and character increased my self-awareness. Self-awareness created positive changes in my psychological health.

Talking about my unfortunate experience in the third grade was a turning point in my psychological wellbeing. Until the first time I talked about it, I never spoke of the incident. In fact, I avoided talking about the experience at great personal cost. Now, I understand that not talking about the experience had an adverse psychological affect on me.

It was liberating to discuss how insecure I was about my appearance. Acknowledging the mental distress that my insecurity caused helped free me from it. Admitting how I felt about myself was an emotional experience for me. My usual guarded persona dissolved as I talked about the hurtful comment that was made about me on the school playground; the experience was emotionally cleansing.

Insecurity about my appearance had such a hold on me that it resonated within my soul. The torrent of emotion that expressing my feelings caused was healing to my soul; it changed my belief that showing emotion is sign of weakness. Ironically, a moment of vulnerability helped me find true strength.

Talking about my self-doubt was revealing. By expressing my feelings to someone else, I learned about myself. Being open showed me that I was facilitating my unhappiness. Failing to stand up to

adversity diminished my self-image, which made me unhappy. Because I had no self-respect, I was unhappy about myself. I was the primary source of my unhappiness all along.

For many years, my responses to adversity were passive. I relied on time passing to ease my sorrows. My passive way of dealing with problems often resulted in negative psychological side-effects. I gained control of my life by learning to express my feelings, which changed my responses to adversity. Instead of giving up in difficult circumstances, I began confronting challenges directly.

Passively allowing time to ease my sorrows prevented me from overcoming them. Passive behavior trapped me in a cycle of discontent. In fact, I chose discontent over happiness by being passive. The first major step that I took in pursuing happiness was learning to express my feelings.

Dealing with my feelings by talking about them was a psychological breakthrough for me. I overcame the unresolved trauma that crippled me by venting my feelings about it. Revealing the long guarded secrets that damaged my self-image was life changing. I moved from discontent to happiness by confessing my sorrows, which released them from my spirit.

Managing my feelings by expressing them improved my life. Gaining control of my feelings made

me optimistic about life and built my self-confidence. Venting my feelings of insecurity allowed me to focus on pursuing happiness. Realizing that happiness is a pursuit was a life changing breakthrough.

## Choosing Happiness over Discontent

*"Optimism is the cornerstone of progress.  
Progress is the cornerstone of success.  
It behooves me to be optimistic."*

I recite this mantra every morning to remind myself of how important optimism is in life. A powerful mantra can literally save a man from drowning. It was a simple mantra that helped deliver my 70 year old grandfather from a life threatening storm in the Gulf of Mexico.

In difficult times, I quietly recite encouraging mantras throughout the day. Whispering to myself for reasons apparent only to me is no doubt strange to some. However, reciting mantras brings the encouraging words to life in my spirit. When thrown overboard by life's troubled waters, encouraging mantras have prevented me from drowning in despair.

An optimistic attitude is an important part of creating a healthy lifestyle. Pessimism prevented me

from developing a healthy lifestyle. Actively pursuing happiness changed my outlook on life by making me optimistic. Approaching life optimistically resulted in many positive changes in me. Now, I know that optimism is the key to living a rewarding life.

Experience taught me that optimism is a matter of choice. Our choices help determine whether or not we are optimistic. Obviously, the things that make us unhappy are often beyond our control. Nevertheless, how we respond to difficulty is still our choice. We can choose to face adversity optimistically. Regardless of the difficulty confronting us, we can choose happiness over discontent.

## **How Dreams Come True**

Happiness is difficult to find if we do not pursue our dreams. My journey of self-discovery taught me that dreams do not come true by accident. You cannot realize your dreams by relying on fate to make them come true. Setting goals and formulating plans to accomplish your dreams is the key to achieving them.

We are responsible for making our dreams come true, not fate. No matter how improbable it seems, we can accomplish our dreams by pursuing them. For instance, planning a dream vacation before being able to afford it is a step toward making it happen.

Great accomplishments often take many years to achieve. No matter how long it takes to reach a goal, each step you take is how dreams become reality. The first step in accomplishing your dreams is choosing to pursue them. Pursuing your dreams must begin with creating a plan to accomplish them. If left to fate or chance, it is unlikely that your dreams will come true.

Pursuing my dreams makes me happy and productive. The emptiness that I once felt is gone because I have chosen to pursue things that fulfill me. Moreover, I am no longer filled with discontent because I have accepted responsibility for my happiness. One of the most important things that I have learned is that happiness comes from within. Ultimately, I am the only person that can make me happy.

It can be difficult to choose optimism over discontent. However, finding cause for optimism is the key to overcoming discontent. An optimistic outlook is an important part of creating the life you dream of living; it is up to you to make your life fulfilling. The following section can help you start the process of moving from discontent to happiness.

## **Defragging Your Hard Drive**

There are some tools that can help you succeed at finding happiness. First, you will need a defrag-process of your own. As stated in *Chapter 1*, “I think of

the brain as the human hard-drive and our thoughts as (RAM)". Just as a computer hard-drive needs defragmenting, so too does the human brain.

Defragmentation (meditation) stimulates personal growth by allowing your inner-voice to speak clearly. Self-exploration requires the mental stillness that defragmentation can provide. You can gain valuable insight into all aspects of your life by listening to your inner-voice.

Your inner-voice is an important survival mechanism. Guiding decisions that have life affecting consequences is the primary function of your inner-voice. Familiarity with your inner-voice is the key to developing trust in its ability to guide you. Defragmentation provides the proper mental environment for becoming familiar with your inner-voice.

## **Documenting Personal Growth**

The second step in your defrag-process is creating a personal-growth journal. The format and style of your journal is up to you. Your journal is a transcription of your internal-monologue; it imprints your personal psychology in written form. The most important thing about your journal is that it makes sense to you.

Your journal should document your goals, dreams, aspirations, plans and personal growth. It is

for your benefit alone and should reflect your personal style and organizational skills. Learning to organize and maintain your journal will help you organize and manage your life.

Insights and ideas uncovered during your defrag-process can easily be forgotten. Documenting your insights and ideas is important in achieving psychological wellbeing. Additionally, your journal will help you become purposeful about living and being well. Living purposefully is the difference between accepting discontent and choosing happiness.

## Some Help Getting Started

Begin your journal with a list of several immediate goals. The following example can help you get started.

<b>Goal 1</b> (physical):	Lose 10 pounds
<b>Goal 2</b> (professional):	Explore professional training opportunities to increase income
<b>Goal 3</b> (social):	Join a book club
<b>Goal 4</b> (personal):	Read 2 books in 30 days

After you determine your goals, the next step is to formulate plans to achieve them. Obviously, the more ambitious your goals are, the longer it will take to accomplish them. Early on, set short-term goals that can be accomplished with relative ease. As your goals are reached, your confidence and ambition will naturally grow.

Living purposefully is an irrevocable part of being well. A personal-growth journal is an ongoing record of your commitment to live purposefully. Your journal represents your personal commitment to living a fulfilling life by assuming responsibility for your happiness. Creating a journal is a source of great pride and an invaluable tool for self-exploration.

Your path to psychological wellbeing is unique to your circumstances and experiences. However, documenting goals, ideas, insights, plans and accomplishments can benefit anyone seeking self-awareness. Creating a record of your life is one step on your quest for psychological wellbeing. You will uncover many steps of your own during your journey of self-discovery.

**STEP**

**2**

**Wellness of the Body**

# Chapter

## 3

### Exercise

**O**vercoming psychological injury is one step on the journey to wellness of mind, body and spirit. Physical fitness is an equally important aspect of total wellness. Physical fitness expedites the processes of becoming mentally and spiritually well. In this chapter, you will learn how exercise can jump-start your journey to wellness.

The mind, body and spirit operate symbiotically. Of the three, the body is readily accessible. Purposeful manipulation of the body to achieve physical fitness can be accomplished in a relatively short time-frame. Unlike the mind and spirit, the body is not abstract and is therefore easier to make fit.

Long-term self-analysis helped me discover the correlation between physical health and that of the

mind and spirit. When my physical condition is poor, my mind and spirit are unhealthy. Conversely, if my body is strong, my mind and spirit are stronger too.

Physical fitness is a significant aspect of achieving overall wellness. Exercise improves brain function and is beneficial to the electrical, hormonal and chemical processes of the human body. Moreover, the hormonal release from exercise relieves lethargy; consequently, regular exercise is an effective tool for managing depression.

## **The Body Machine**

The human body is a magnificent example of Nature's engineering. It is an array of complex systems that form a precisely operating organic-machine. Like a finely tuned sports car, the human body is engineered for high-performance.

The performance of a perfectly-tuned sports-car engine will diminish over time if not run. Without sufficient use, precision machinery eventually fails in operation. The physical functions of the human body also diminish over time if not used.

Throughout most of human history, the daily rigors of life kept us physically fit. Unlike modern humans, our ancestors were far from sedentary. Their days were filled with hard, physical labor. From traveling vast territories on foot in pursuit of food to making

tools, building shelters, farming, hunting and eluding predators, humans worked hard to survive. For most of man's history, survival was the only fitness plan.

Modern technology has made life easier for humans. In the past, feeding even small populations of people was difficult. However, modern humans are capable of feeding millions of people throughout the world. The many conveniences of modern-life have caused the decline of human-physicality. Consequently, a high percentage of modern humans are obese, out of shape and suffering from nutrition-related illnesses.

Evolution under difficult physical conditions caused the human body to require regular exertion to function properly. Since humans no longer expend great physical energy to survive, we must exert ourselves by choice. The purposeful stress of exercise fulfills our need for physical exertion to maintain good health.

The human body is meant to be a finely-tuned organic machine. Like the mechanical function of a precisely tuned sports car, human physical function diminishes if used infrequently. The phrase "use it or lose it" says it best; the only way to maintain precision tuning of the human body is to use it. Physical exertion through exercise is a key component of being healthy in mind, body and spirit!

## It Can Happen For You Too!

Physical fitness helped me develop a new outlook on life. My active participation in creating the life I desire began when I started to exercise regularly. Physical fitness increased my thoughtfulness about life. It is a major part of how I became purposeful in my effort to live and be well.

Improving physically was a major step in reshaping my self-image and developing optimism. Physical fitness compelled me to make a greater effort to be happy. As a result, I discovered that the pursuit of happiness is an active process.

The mental energy that exercise provides caused me to question why discontent had such a hold on me. My soul-searching process coincided with the period when I was rebounding from a failed relationship. The process began one day when I was severely depressed. Unable to ease my distress, I put sneakers on and took off running. It was the beginning of a period of profound self-revelation.

Shortly after my inexplicable run, I discovered that pushing myself physically caused me to challenge myself in other ways. Physical fitness gave me the mental resolve to confront my personal demons, and helped me discover the symbiotic nature of the mind, body and spirit. I discovered that physical health is directly related to mental well-being. The pos-

itive effects of physical fitness on my mental health are undeniable; physical fitness helped me find joy, self-confidence and peace of mind. The benefits of physical fitness improved my life, and it can happen for you too!

## The Nature of Transformation

As a personal trainer and fitness instructor, I teach people that exercise is a process of physical stress. Physical activity lacking stress is best defined as recreation. Recreation has both physical and psychological benefits. However, exercise is meant to be transformational, recreation is not. Exercise must be stressful to be transformational. Stress is inherent in most transformational processes.

To understand why exercise requires stress to be transformational, we must increase your understanding of the nature of transformation. For instance, it is widely believed that the Universe began as a single particle of mass that erupted in an unfathomable violent (stressful) explosion. Millions of years later, that single particle of mass is the vast universe that we inhabit today. The origin of the universe is the greatest example of transformation through stress.

Birth is another example of transformation through stress. Imagine a fetus in its mother's womb. Safe and warm in amniotic fluid, the fetus is a picture

of tranquility. Save to kick occasionally and await its big transformational moment, the fetus does not have a care in the world.

For 9 months, the fetus enjoys the good life (Ahh, yeah). However, after 9 months with no big surprises taking place, the fetus is in for a major shock! The transformation from fetus to newborn is extremely stressful. In fact, if it did not take place at the beginning of life, it might be impossible to live through. The birthing process is transformation through stress for both mother and child.

## **Getting Real Before Getting Started**

Your transformation from unhealthy to physically fit will be a process of ongoing stress. Now that we have looked at the nature of transformation, it is time to look at a sensible way to begin your transformation.

The mistake that most people make when choosing an exercise program is setting unrealistic goals, which often causes them to not reach their goals and to eventually abandon them all together. And voila – you have all the makings of a mighty fine vicious cycle.

Begin your journey to physical fitness slowly, consistently and realistically. Being inactive for a long time means that you cannot expect to become an exercise machine overnight. It is also unwise to think

that joining a gym right now is a reasonable way for you to get in shape.

Joining a gym is not a miraculous cure to your fitness shortcomings. If left to your own devices in a gym, how realistic is it to think that you would stick to an exercise regime? Not likely! Start by setting a goal that you can accomplish with relative ease and without wasting money. First, prove that you can accomplish a simple goal before spending hard earned money on a gym membership.

Walking is nature's perfect exercise for humans and a smart way to become active; it provides the benefits of aerobic exercise with minimal impact on joints, bones and muscles. Walking does not cost money or require fancy equipment. However, you can literally walk into becoming happier and healthier!

## **To Thy Self Be True**

If you are out of shape, you must accept that your choices caused the health and fitness dilemma that you are facing. You did not just wake up one morning out of shape. Expending time and effort combined with poor habits caused your present physical condition.

You made poor lifestyle choices to get out of shape, and you will have to make good lifestyle choices to get in shape. There is no quick fix, magic pill, miracle diet or easy way out. Changing your lifestyle

to accommodate physical fitness is accomplished through hard work.

If getting in shape is important to you, do more than talk about it! Talking about exercise will not make the planets magically align to remove the impediments that stand between you and your goals. Without action, talking about exercise is worthless.

If you believe there will be a moment of absolute clarity that will reveal the perfect time for you to begin exercising, stop dreaming! The perfect time is right now. Your first step toward physical fitness can begin with a simple walk. It could be one of the most important walks you will ever take, if you choose. Walk yourself into a better quality of life and a richer life experience.

## Getting Started

It is time to begin your journey to physical well-being by setting your first fitness goal. Find a location close to home or work that is conducive to walking. Schedule 3 (30 minute) walks per week for 4 weeks, at exact times. It is important to be punctual for each appointment! You will need at least 24 hours rest between each walk. Creating an exercise schedule is a necessary step in making it part of your lifestyle.

Walking is the first step on the journey to improving your overall being. Becoming physically fit is one of the most important things you can do for yourself,

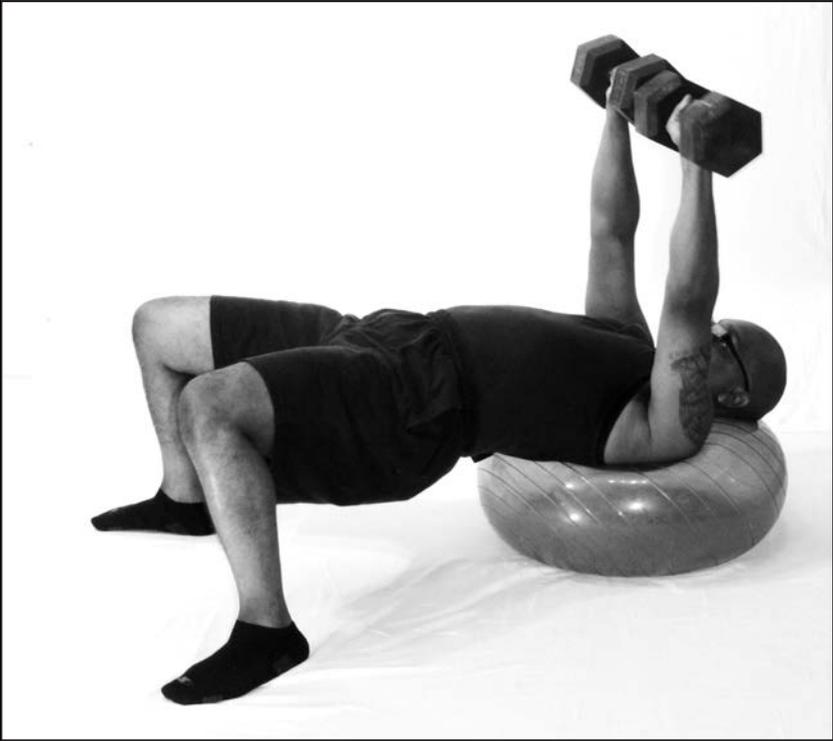
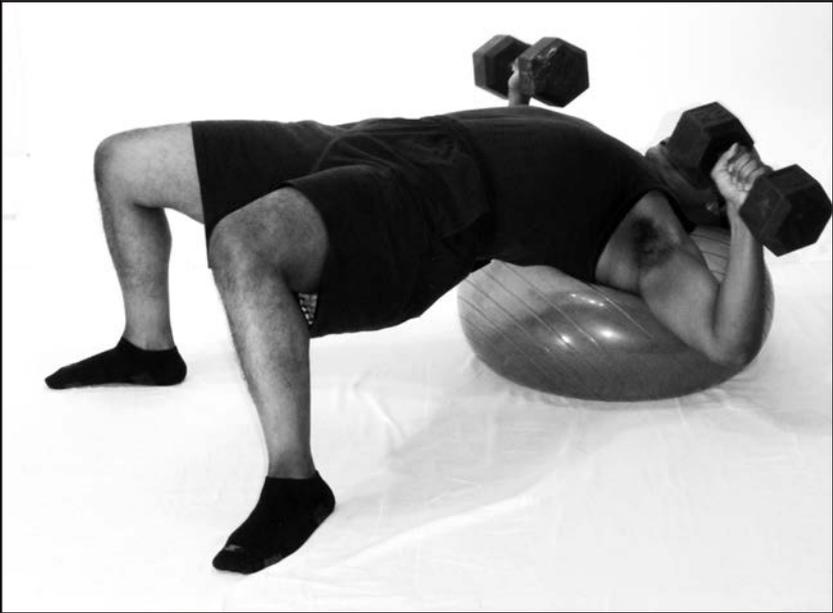
so take it seriously. Your exercise schedule is as important as your work and social schedules. Schedule walking appointments immediately and take the first step on your journey to becoming a stronger and better you.

You will need certain things before beginning an exercise program. To ensure proper foot support, you need athletic shoes that are in good condition. Athletic apparel that allows movement in all ranges of motion including walking, running, jumping, squatting and bending is also important. A water bottle is another good item to have because proper hydration is a must. When you have completed 4 weeks of walking, it will be time to take the next step in the process: preparing for the gym.

## **Weight Training For Beginners**

The following section will help you get started with basic weight training. Weight training is excellent for increasing your metabolism, developing and toning muscle, reducing body fat and increasing your overall strength. The featured exercises in this section include workouts for strengthening and conditioning your body from head to toe.

**NOTE:** It is important to warm up properly before exercising by stretching and moving for at least 15 minutes. Warm up motion can include walking, light jogging or dynamic arm and leg swings.

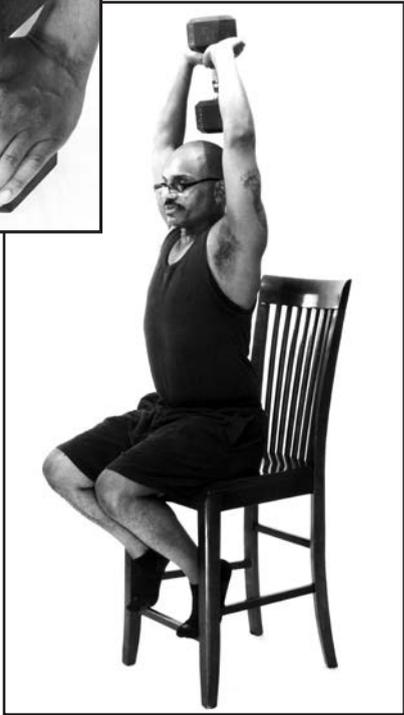


 CHEST & TRICEPS WORKOUT **Ball Press**

1. Place your head, neck, shoulders and upper back on the stability ball.
2. With a dumbbell in each hand, lower your elbows toward the floor while keeping your hands outside the width of your chest. If possible, lower your elbows until the dumbbells in each hand are positioned approximately 2 inches higher than your chest. Align your elbows directly beneath the hand bars of each dumbbell to ensure proper chest expansion during the exercise.
3. With your knees bent, position your feet with your heels as far back toward your buttocks as possible. Do not go beyond the point of comfort when positioning your heels relative to the position of your buttock. However, moving your heels toward your buttocks activates your lower body and abdominal muscles during the exercise, optimizing its effectiveness. To further activate your buttocks push it up toward the ceiling, engaging each side as much as you can comfortably. Suck your bellybutton in toward the floor to ensure maximum abdominal engagement during the exercise.
4. While maintaining the instructed body position, press each dumbbell upward toward the ceiling in an explosive motion. Exhale while pressing the dumbbells upward. Bring the dumbbells together at the top of your range of motion while fully extending your arms without locking your elbow joints.
5. Return the dumbbells to the starting position while guiding them downward in a slow purposeful motion. Keep your elbows aligned beneath the dumbbell hand bars to ensure proper activation of your chest during each repetition. Inhale during the downward motion.
6. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging, then increase the amount of weight used to perform the exercise accordingly.
7. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and  
locate the Ball Press instructional video.



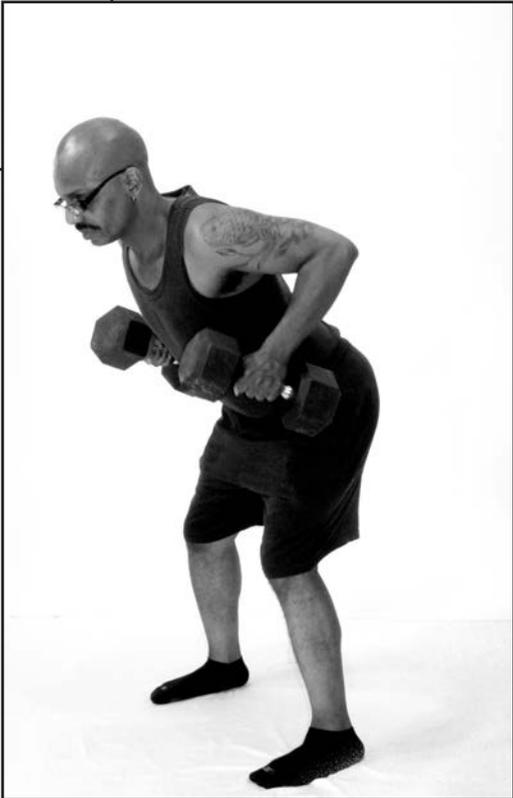
 CHEST & TRICEPS WORKOUT 

### **Triceps Extension**

- 1.** Overlap your hands in the shape of a triangle with your palms facing away from your body. While supporting the inside part of one bell of a dumbbell with the palms of your overlapped hands, lift the dumbbell above your head and carefully position it behind your head. Your wrists should be in the down position so that your palms are directed toward the ceiling.
- 2.** From the starting position, lift the dumbbell toward the ceiling while keeping your wrists in the down position. The full range of motion requires lifting the dumbbell above your head and extending your arms fully without locking your elbow joints. Exhale while lifting the dumbbell toward the ceiling.
- 3.** From the top of the range of motion return the dumbbell to the starting position while inhaling. Be purposeful about guiding the dumbbell downward to the starting position. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging, then increase the amount of weight used to perform the exercise accordingly.
- 4.** Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Triceps Extension instructional video.



 **BACK & BICEPS WORKOUT** **Bent-Over Row**

1. With a dumbbell in each hand, stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent. Bend your waist while keeping your lower back slightly arched so that your back is flat during the exercise. Do not perform this exercise with a rounded back. Bend your waist until the angle of your torso relative to the floor is at approximately 45 degrees. With your palms facing your body, let your arms hang naturally.
2. From the starting position, pull the dumbbells upward toward your body. Rotate the position of your arms during the upward motion so that your palms are facing your body at the top of the range of motion. The upward motion should be performed explosively while exhaling. The full range of motion requires bringing your hands up to the sides of your chest to allow for proper compression of your shoulder blades and upper back. Your upper back and shoulder blades should feel tight at the top of the range of motion but not uncomfortably so.
3. From the top of the range of motion return to the starting position. Rotate your arms so that your palms are back in the original position at the bottom of the range of motion. Inhale while performing the downward motion. Be purposeful about guiding the dumbbells downward to the starting position.
4. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging, increase the amount of weight used to perform the exercise accordingly.
5. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit **[www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)**  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Bent-Over Row instructional video.



 **BACK & BICEPS WORKOUT** **Bent-Over Fly**

1. The stance for the Bent-over Fly is the same as the Bent Over Row.
2. With a dumbbell in each hand let your arms hang naturally. Your palms should be turned inward so that they are facing each other. Bring your hands and the dumbbells together at the starting position of the exercise.
3. While keeping your arms extended raise the dumbbells as high as possible in an explosive swinging motion. The full range of motion requires raising your hands above your back to allow for proper compression of your shoulder blades and upper back. Your upper back and shoulder blades should feel tight at the top of the range of motion but not uncomfortably so. Exhale while performing the upward motion.
4. From the top of the range of motion return to the starting position. Be purposeful about guiding the dumbbells downward to the starting position. Inhale during the downward motion.
5. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging than increase the amount of weight used to perform the exercise accordingly.
6. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Bent-Over Fly instructional video.



 **BACK & BICEPS WORKOUT** **Suspended Curl**

1. The stance for the Suspended Curl is the same as the Bent-Over Fly.
2. With a dumbbell in each hand turn your palms away from your body and bend your waist slightly. Fully extend your arms without locking your elbow joints and position your elbow in front of your body approximately 6 inches. Your knuckles should be facing the floor.
3. While keeping your elbows in front of your body, create a tight seal under your arms to ensure proper activation of your chest during the exercise.
4. Move your hands upward toward your shoulders by bending your elbow joints. Keep your elbows in front of your body and your underarms tightly sealed during the upward motion of the exercise. The full range of motion requires fully compressing your biceps by bringing your hands up to your shoulders. Exhale during the upward motion.
5. From the top of the range of motion return to the starting position. Be purposeful about guiding the dumbbells downward to the starting position. Inhale during the downward motion.
6. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging, then increase the amount of weight used to perform the exercise accordingly.
7. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Suspended Curl instructional video.



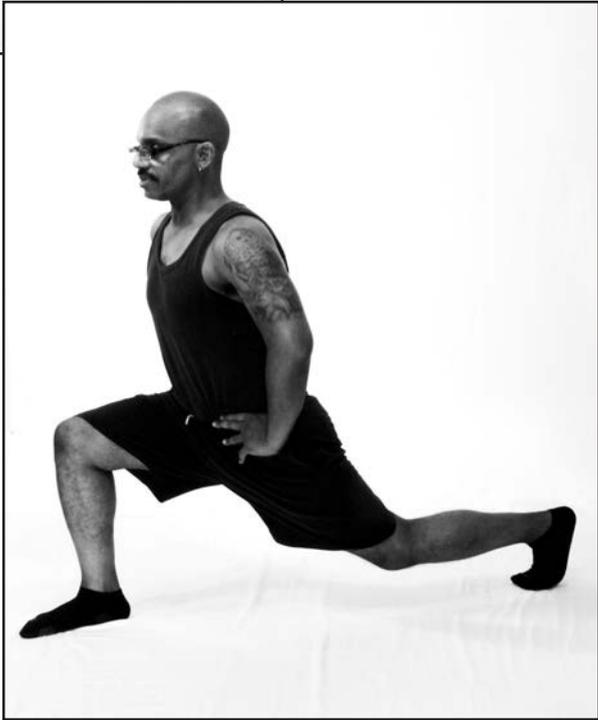
 LEGS WORKOUT 

## **Deep Squat**

1. Stand with your feet slightly beyond the width of your shoulders and your knees slightly bent. Shift your body weight backwards to your heels while shifting your buttocks into a sitting position.
2. As if attempting to sit, bend your knees while dropping your buttocks toward the floor. Perform the downward motion of this exercise in a slow, purposeful manner. The full range of motion requires squatting downward until your thighs are parallel with the ground. Inhale before beginning the squatting motion. **Caution: Serious injury can occur when squatting beyond the point of comfort. Be patient and improve your range of motion over time by performing the exercise regularly.**
3. From the squatted position, push your buttocks away from the floor by standing up. Perform the upward motion explosively with your weight concentrated on your heels and the sides of your feet. **Caution: To prevent injury perform the upward motion of this exercise in a controlled manner without jerking at the beginning of the motion.** Return to the fully upright position without locking your knees. Exhale during the upward motion.
4. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging, then increase the amount of weight used to perform the exercise accordingly.
5. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Deep Squat instructional video.



 LEGS WORKOUT 

### **Stationary Lunge**

1. With your hands on your hips, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart from left to right. Stand with one foot forward. From front foot to rear foot, step out far enough so that you are up on the toes of your rear foot. Your front foot should be flat. Keep your hands on your hips during the entire exercise. **Caution: Serious injury can occur when stepping beyond the point of comfort from front to rear foot. Be patient and improve your range of motion over time by performing the exercise regularly.**
2. From the top of the range of motion, lunge by dropping the knee of your rear leg toward the floor. Stop your downward motion when your rear knee as close to the floor as possible without making contact. The downward lunge should be a slow, purposeful motion. Lunging properly requires keeping your torso aligned properly during the downward motion so that your front knee does not cross the threshold of your toes. Inhale before beginning the downward motion. **Caution: To prevent injury do not lunge downward beyond the point of comfort. Be patient and improve your range of motion over time by performing the exercise regularly.**
3. From the bottom of the range of motion, move your rear knee away from the floor by pushing your body weight upward on your front leg. Move upward as far as possible without locking your front knee. Exhale during the upward motion.
4. Repeat the exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. When beginning to do lunges it is wise to limit the number of sets and repetitions performed to prevent extreme soreness. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 15 repetitions is not challenging, then increase the number of sets performed accordingly. Perform an equal number of repetitions and sets with each leg in the forward position. Alternate your forward leg after each set.
5. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Stationary Lunge instructional video.



 LEGS WORKOUT **Ball Transfer**

1. It is best to perform Ball Transfers on a yoga mat or other padded surface. Lay flat with your arms extended above your head and your legs straight.
2. Place the stability ball between your feet and ankles.
3. With that ball in place simultaneously raise your legs and arms off of the floor, bringing the ball above your torso and then transferring it to your hands. While transferring the ball from your feet to your hands raise your neck and shoulders off of the floor to ensure proper compression of your abdominal muscles during the exercise. Exhale during the upward motion of the exercise. ***Caution: To prevent serious injury do not go beyond the point of comfort when raising your neck and shoulders off of the floor. Be patient and improve your range of motion over time by performing the exercise regularly.***
4. After transferring the ball to your hands, return your arms and legs to the starting position. Perform the downward motion of the exercise in a slow, purposeful manner. Upon returning to the starting position repeat the exercise. Inhale before beginning the upward motion of the exercise. Count one repetition each time you transfer the ball from your feet to your hands and back to your feet. Eventually, you want to perform the exercise without allowing your hands and feet to touch the floor.
5. Repeat the exercise for 4 to 12 repetitions and 3 to 5 sets. Work to a reasonable exertion level during each set. If 12 is not challenging, then increase the number of repetitions performed accordingly.
6. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.

Visit [www.theguidetobeingwell.com](http://www.theguidetobeingwell.com)  
for a video demonstration of this exercise.

Select the *T.G.T.B.W.* exercise link and locate the  
Ball Transfer instructional video.

Perform the workouts in this section on successive days in addition to walking for 45 minutes to an hour at least 3 times weekly. When you have completed all 3 workouts, rest for approximately 48 hours before repeating them. The order in which you perform the workouts is up to you, provided that you allow for proper rest (48 hours) upon completing them.

# Chapter

## 4

# Nutrition

**E**xercise is a very important part of becoming physically fit. However, physical fitness also requires proper nutrition. In fact, eating properly is the key to optimizing the results of exercise. Without a plan for sound nutrition, physical fitness is exponentially more difficult to achieve.

The following chapter highlights two common misconceptions about nutrition. It also includes a brief review of the history of nutrition and a section highlighting the operation and development of the metabolic system. When you complete the chapter, it will be time for you to create a nutrition plan.

## Giving Credit When it's Due

I want to credit Dr. David L. Katz and Maura Harrigan Gonzalez for changing how I eat. Their book (*The Way to Eat*) changed how I view food. It is one of the most important books that I have ever read. I strongly suggest reading it yourself. Much of the information in this section was influenced by *The Way to Eat*. Thank you Dr. Katz and Ms. Gonzalez for writing such a wonderful book!

There are many resources available to help you explore nutrition. I suggest completing this chapter and then searching for other resources on nutrition. The more you learn about how different foods affect your body, the better equipped you will be to choose good food over bad.

## The Body Furnace

An efficient metabolism is the key to maintaining a healthy body weight. Eating frequently is an important component of achieving metabolic efficiency. Furthermore, food provides energy for everything from walking, running, breathing and thinking.

Think of the human body as a furnace. A furnace fire requires a continuous fuel source to burn efficiently. The human body's fire is the metabolism. Like a furnace, your metabolism requires fuel to burn efficiently. Metabolic efficiency is the key to weight control.

An efficient metabolism converts food to energy, preventing it from becoming fat. Food is human fuel. Eating frequently provides your metabolism with the necessary fuel to burn fat efficiently, stimulating body-fat reduction and weight loss.

## The Fallacy of Dieting

A common misconception about nutrition is that dieting is an effective means of weight loss. In truth, diets do not work because they are not designed to. A diet is a temporary change in eating patterns. Obviously, the primary objective of most diets is to stimulate weight loss.

Most diets require the participant to make abrupt and often extreme changes to their eating patterns. Other requirements such as measuring portions and limiting or eliminating certain food groups are typically included in diet plans. Such requirements can lead to nutritional deprivation and negative health effects.

Considering that nutrition is a lifelong process, your nutrition plan should be designed to support a lifetime of healthy eating. With that in mind, you must design a plan that is sensible from the day that you implement it until long into the future. Your plan must be based on realistic eating patterns that can be maintained for life.

Many diets emphasize limiting daily caloric intake. However, a healthy nutrition plan must emphasize the importance of limited fat and sugar consumption. An active person does not need to count calories with a diet consisting of whole foods as its primary emphasis. It is also important to regulate consumption of carbohydrates when devising a nutrition plan.

Whole foods are natural and unprocessed. They grow on trees and vines, become rooted in soil, live in water and soar among the clouds. A diet consisting of whole foods makes limiting fat and sugar consumption easier. The fat content of acceptable foods is 30% or less of their total calories. Acceptable foods must also have minimal sugar content. Limiting sugar consumption requires avoiding sweets and processed beverages.

Limiting fat intake to 30% or less of your daily calories requires ensuring that the foods you consume regularly are within the acceptable range. Most food packages contain nutrition labels listing the product's total calories and fat content. By dividing the total calories of a food by its fat content, you can determine if it is within an acceptable range. By doing this simple math, you will ensure that your daily fat intake supports sound nutrition and good health.

Most whole foods are within in the acceptable fat range and can be consumed without limitation. Exceptions to this rule are nuts, seeds, dairy products and

meats, which are high in fat. Eat whole foods in abundance, exercise regularly, and you will be on the road to a lifetime of weight control and good health.

## **Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner Can Make You Fat**

Now that you understand why diets do not work, there is another misconception about nutrition that needs to be addressed. This one may surprise you! Many of us do not eat often enough. The traditional 3 square meals a day are not the keys to a lifetime of sound nutrition; to the contrary, they are key components of weight retention and weight gain.

The 3 square meals a day rule has helped spawn an epidemic of obesity. To a great extent, infrequent eating is responsible for the multitude of robust waistlines on display throughout the world. Eating only 3 times per day is for many a nutritional nightmare. Limiting daily food consumption to 3 meals can prevent weight loss.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner devotees are often nutritionally deprived. This is true even when caloric intake is relatively high. The number of calories being consumed by people in their 3 daily meals is not the only problem regarding weight loss. Furthermore, the type foods being consumed by those dealing with weight control issues are not the only problem either.

Obviously, there are many bad foods that should be avoided to prevent excessive weight gain. However, it is possible to prevent weight loss while eating the right foods. The amount of time between meals is the problem that breakfast, lunch and dinner devotees are overlooking.

An efficient metabolism is the key to weight control. Infrequent eating causes metabolic inefficiency. The fundamentals of developing metabolic efficiency are pretty simple: eat healthy foods (including fruits, vegetables, grains and meats), eat during regular intervals of the day (5 to 6 times daily) and exercise regularly (3 to 6 hours weekly). Long periods between meals can cause extreme hunger which leads to over eating. The benefits of eating frequent, small meals cannot be overstated. Eating 3 large meals daily or six small meals is the difference between triggering the body's defense against hunger or not.

The body's hunger defense is to store food as fat instead of using it for energy production, leading to weight gain. Eating frequently is the key to relaxing the body's hunger defense. By preventing hunger and overeating, eating frequently supports weight control.

Waiting for the onset of hunger to eat is a common mistake. Hunger pangs are indicative of nutritional deprivation. When deprived of nourishment, the body is more likely to store fat than burn it. Preventing

hunger by eating frequently supports weight control. Eating often enough to prevent hunger will improve your health.

## **Making a Plan for Healthy Eating**

Now that we have identified two major nutritional pitfalls, it is time to learn some basics about sound nutrition. This chapter will help you sort through the basics of healthy eating. Proper nutrition is about eating the right foods, at the right times. Specific foods support different bodily functions including everything from energy production to bowel regulation.

Creating a nutrition plan will give you the best chance of developing healthy habits. Without a nutrition plan, you are likely to fail at eating healthy. With that in mind, the time for you to create a nutrition plan is near.

Maintaining good nutrition habits is a challenging part of your quest to become healthy and fit. Developing good habits takes time; eating healthy requires making daily sacrifices that are difficult for many people. Changing bad eating habits is more than a matter of self-discipline or willpower. Many of the factors that lead to poor eating habits are beyond the reach of human-will. We will examine some of these factors in this chapter.

## Looking at the Big Picture

Changing your eating habits to support good health requires understanding the factors that influence your food choices. Many important factors in your eating habits were set in motion before you were even born. Most people believe being out of shape is indicative of inadequate willpower. Obviously, making poor choices caused you to be out of shape. However, the story does not end there.

Before deciding that you lack the will to change your eating habits, it is important to consider some facts about human history. Understanding the motivators that are influencing you can help making good choices easier. The next section will explore the history of human nutrition and how it affects our eating habits.

## Here's Where It All Started

Widespread obesity is a modern phenomenon that was set in motion by a number of factors. While factors like over-eating and poor nutrition habits are within our control, others are not. We cannot control how or what our prehistoric relatives ate. Nevertheless, our ancestors eating habits influence how we eat; the eating tendencies of prehistoric humans shaped our metabolism.

Modern humans (like us) belong to a species called *Homo sapiens* that have existed for about

200,000 years. *Homo sapiens* more closely related to us have existed for approximately 50,000 years. Like all animal species, humans have developed evolutionary traits. Evolutionary traits influence everything about us including our mating habits, genetic makeup, dietary tendencies, etc.

## The Evolution of Eating

Let us look at our drive to eat from an evolutionary standpoint. For most of the approximately 200,000-year history of our species, we have hunted for food. Consequently, for most of human history meat has been scarce. In prehistoric times, the drive to survive caused Man to eat whatever was available.

For most of human history, meat was in short supply because gaining access to it required hunting successfully; this meant our ancestors ate what Mother Earth provided. Prehistoric humans ate a high-fiber diet consisting of plants, grains, fruits, nuts, seeds and vegetables.

Fat-rich meat was an occasional indulgence when hunting was good. However, even under the best of circumstances, hunting successfully was difficult. Limited exposure to fat-rich meat meant our ancestor's diet was also low in fat.

After eating the same way for thousands of years, humans developed a metabolic system that operates most efficiently when fueled by a low-fat/high-

fiber diet. The metabolic structure of ancient humans is part of the physical legacy that we inherited from them.

## Metabolism is The Fire Inside You

***Metabolism:** The series of processes by which food is converted into the energy and products needed to sustain life.*

Note that metabolism is defined as a series of life-sustaining processes. The way our metabolism operates was developed over thousands of years. Because our prehistoric relatives did not consume fatty foods at the levels of modern humans, the onset of nutrition related illnesses was less prevalent among them. Nutrition related illnesses include diabetes, metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance and obesity.

## How Does Metabolism Work?

The metabolic process starts with food being broken down into carbohydrates during digestion. The carbohydrates are then converted to glucose which is the body's main source of energy. Glucose (blood-sugar) is absorbed into the bloodstream from the intestine, causing an increase in blood-sugar. When

blood-sugar levels are elevated, insulin is secreted from the pancreas.

The body's cells are equipped with insulin receptors. Insulin binds to the cell-receptors after transporting glucose from the bloodstream. The respective cells then absorb the glucose that insulin transports to each cell-receptor. Glucose is then used by muscle cells as fuel for energy production or stored as fat reserves.

Without insulin, the body cannot process glucose. Insulin is the transportation system that carries glucose from the bloodstream to muscle cells. This process provides the body with energy to run, walk, breath, digest, think, etc. Digestion, glucose, insulin, and blood flow are all components of the metabolic system.

## **Metabolism's Affect on Body Weight**

Eating triggers the release of insulin by causing an increase in blood sugar. Consuming reasonably apportioned meals, at frequent intervals, creates a healthy balance of glucose to insulin during digestion. In addition to eating frequently, it is important to eat high-fiber, low-fat foods that support metabolic efficiency. Metabolic efficiency is a key component of successful weight control.

Metabolic inefficiency can cause the over production of insulin during digestion, leading to body fat

retention. Insulin overproduction causes glucose to be stored as fat, resulting in weight gain. Prolonged inactivity combined with infrequent eating can cause excessive weight gain and the onset of nutrition related illnesses.

Eating three daily meals is not the key to sound nutrition like many of us have been taught. Infrequent eating is one of the problems many people face in regulating their metabolism. An inefficient metabolism makes regulating body weight impossible.

## **Metabolic/Psychological Programming**

The metabolic system responds to physical and psychological cues. These cues were programmed in the human psyche dating back to prehistoric times in response to a number of human lifestyle, environmental and physical markers.

Like our ancestors, modern human's drive to eat is influenced by an inherent fear of hunger and starvation. This is true regardless of how unlikely the possibility of starvation is. Our fear of starvation was cultivated over thousands of years. Consequently, anxiety caused by fear of hunger is ingrained in the human-psyche and is an inescapable part of our drive to eat.

To a great extent, we no longer experience the ongoing anxiety related to hunger that prehistoric

humans did. However, our modern-day responses to hunger are in many ways the same as prehistoric humans. Our responses to hunger are driven by an innate sense of self-preservation.

When deprived of food, the body triggers an all-encompassing discomfort that emanates from the stomach and eventually resonates throughout the body. The discomfort brought on by hunger is often referred to as hunger pangs. If deprived of food for extended periods, the body is programmed to consume its muscle tissue to prevent starvation. The body's defense to hunger is an evolutionary survival mechanism that is a part of the life sustaining process of metabolism.

## **Your Mind Is Playing Tricks on You**

It is possible to be concerned about hunger without feeling hungry. Long before feeling its effects, hunger can have a subconscious affect on you. We are at times preoccupied with preventing the unpleasant effects of hunger.

Soon after finishing a meal, people often contemplate what to eat next. Our preoccupation with food shapes our responses to it. Although most of us do not face the difficulty feeding ourselves that our ancestors did, we are still preoccupied with hunger and starvation. This preoccupation often causes us to act impulsively regarding our food choices.

Our innate fear of hunger and starvation wields considerable control of our behavior and tendencies regarding nutrition. This is true if food is plentiful or in short supply. When identifying the factors driving our behavior relative to nutrition, our instinctive fear of hunger and starvation should be considered.

Some factors that cause overeating are beyond the control of willpower. We are driven to eat for our individual survival and for that of our species. Survival is an important component of human psychology that should be considered when devising a plan to control the habits and tendencies that lead to overeating.

## **The Psychology of Overeating**

Our modern responses to food are affected by the lifestyles of ancient humans. Ancient humans lived in constant fear of starvation. Because it was often scarce, ancient-humans ate voraciously when food was abundant.

Variables beyond ancient human's control determined if food supplies were sufficient for their survival. These variables include climatic conditions, animal migration patterns and animal population. The many environmental factors that ancient humans could not control gave them little certainty of having sufficient food for survival.

Because ancient humans often had little to eat, they likely over-ate whenever possible. The tendency to overeat was inherited by modern humans. Although most people in industrialized nations are not under constant threat of starvation, the tendency to overeat still exists.

## **How Do I Stop Overeating?**

Fear of starvation ingrained the tendency to overeat in our species. We are unwittingly responding to thousands of years of psychological programming when overeating. Even if the possibility of starvation is unrealistic, your responses to food are affected by an instinctive fear of starvation.

Recognizing the affects of instinct on your responses to food can help prevent overeating. The instinct to overeat can be controlled by remembering that you are not starving. Controlling your responses to food allows good habits and willpower to dictate your behavior.

## **Creating Good Eating Habits**

Like all humans, you are a creature of habit. Understanding your psychological responses to food can help create good eating habits. The things that you are familiar with formulate your habits. Changing bad habits to good requires familiarity with eating properly.

Part of formulating good eating habits is limiting your exposure to unhealthy foods. If healthy foods are readily accessible, you will eat them. Conversely, you cannot eat unhealthy foods if they are not accessible. Over time, you are less likely to eat poorly by becoming familiar with proper nutrition habits.

Limited consumption of processed foods is also important to sound nutrition. Processed foods contain additives and preservatives that can cause nutrition related illnesses. Furthermore, processed foods often contain high levels of sugar, sodium and fat. Such foods include white rice, white pasta and white bread, to name a few.

Formulating good nutrition habits requires doing the math on the foods that you eat regularly. Foods that are within an acceptable range of fat and sugar are essential to a healthy nutrition plan. Items with 30% fat or more should be limited in consumption. Sweets, sugar enriched foods and processed beverages should be consumed in moderation to limit sugar consumption.

Be realistic when attempting to turn bad eating habits into good ones. Do not expect to stop bad eat-

ing habits instantly. Going cold turkey is an unrealistic approach to sustaining positive changes. Gradually decreasing consumption of unhealthy foods is a more effective way to formulate and sustain good eating habits.

## Creating a Plan for Nutrition

Creating a nutrition plan is not complicated. Remember, you are creating a plan for a lifetime of sound nutrition, not a diet. Your plan is a blueprint for successful eating. Creating a plan can help you achieve your health and fitness goals.

Eating 5 to 6 small meals daily is essential to healthy nutrition. Fortunately, it is not necessary to sit through 5 or 6 full meals each day. Eating 3 meals and 2-3 snacks daily is required. Snacks can include fruit, protein shakes, protein bars, granola, etc. There are many other grab-and-go foods that can serve as snacks too.

Think of your body as a coal-burning furnace. Your metabolism is the furnace fire and food is like coal. The furnace needs a continuous fuel source to burn efficiently. Frequent eating helps stimulate weight loss by providing your metabolism with fuel to burn fat.

## The Foods You Should Eat

Complex-carbohydrates are an important source of food energy. They digest slowly and provide lasting metabolic fuel. Consuming complex carbohydrates is like fueling a fire with a log instead of a sheet of paper. Although paper burns, fire consumes it rapidly.

There are many complex carbohydrates including grain-based foods like whole-wheat bread, oatmeal and whole-grain cereals. There are also starch-based complex carbohydrates including brown rice, sweet potatoes and legumes. The third group of complex carbohydrates consists of vegetables, including broccoli and cauliflower.

Protein is another important source of food energy. There are many protein-rich foods including red meat, eggs, chicken, fish, milk, beans, potatoes, nuts and seeds. Some high-protein foods are high in fat, so do the necessary math.

The third source of food energy is simple carbohydrates. Consuming simple carbohydrates is like fueling a fire with paper. Simple carbohydrates provide short-term energy that is expended rapidly. However, many simple carbohydrates are high in vitamins, antioxidants and other nutrients.

## Taking the First Step

This section is dedicated to helping you become healthy and fit; it does not require training or eating like a world-class athlete. What IS required is moderate consumption of foods that do not support good health. However, it is unnecessary to deprive yourself of everything that you enjoy. It is okay to have the cheesecake sometimes, just not every day.

When managing junk food cravings, it is unwise to resist for prolonged periods. Satisfying cravings at their onset is an effective way of managing them. Eating a reasonable portion of the desired food allows the craving to be satisfied and overcome. Scheduling a regular “cheat day” is another good way to satisfy junk food cravings.

Attempting to resist junk food cravings with willpower often leads to eventual overconsumption of the desired food. It is better to satisfy the craving and get over it! You are not training for the Olympics, so be reasonable.

This brings us to step one of creating your nutrition plan. Beginning at your daily wake up time, you must schedule 5 to 6 meals. What you eat during each meal is as important as when you eat it. The following sample nutrition plan can help you get started.

## Sample Nutrition Plan

### Meal 1

---

A good example of a first daily meal is 1 slice of whole-wheat toast (complex carbohydrate) with a teaspoon of peanut butter (protein/**high fat content**), 1 to 2 eggs, (protein) and a half or whole piece of fruit (simple carbohydrate). A serving of oatmeal or whole grain cereal is also a good choice for this first meal.

***Have meal 1 within 30 minutes of waking up. It is important to begin fueling your metabolism as early in the day as possible. This allows your metabolism to begin burning fat at the start of the day, optimizing the time spent doing so.***

### Snack 1

---

Your first snack should be consumed within 3 hours of Meal 1. This light snack will provide your metabolism with fuel to continue burning fat. With this in mind, Snack 1 should be eaten whether or not you are hungry. Something as simple as a handful of almonds (Protein/**high fat content**) will suffice for this snack.

***Because nuts are high in fat, do not eat more than you can fit in the palm of your hand when snacking.***

### Meal 2

---

Meal 2 should take place within 3 hours of Snack 1. This meal should consist of a food item high in protein such as a can of chicken or tuna that can be served with lettuce or other vegetables as a salad.

***Due to high fat content, avoid using dressings such as ranch, blue cheese or creamy Italian.***

### Snack 2

---

Snack 2 is optional on non-workout days or if your workout takes place less than 2 hours after meal 2. This snack will provide you with fuel for exercise. It should be consumed no less than 1 hour prior to exercising (**1 to**

**1 & 1/2 hours is preferable**). This snack should consist of a complex carb to provide you with a highly efficient source of food energy. Good examples of a second snack are whole grain cereal, oatmeal, granola or sweet potatoes. A protein bar or protein shake can also satisfy this snack requirement.

### **Snack 3**

---

Snack 3 is also optional during non-workout days and should be consumed immediately after exercise. This snack is also optional if meal 3 is scheduled within 2 hours of working out. Snack 3 should consist of a protein bar or shake. Protein is the building block of muscularity and is necessary for muscles to rebuild and restore after exercise.

***This after workout snack is highly recommended to help achieve maximum results. Complex carbs are also important after working out, and they should be consumed with protein within 2 hours of exercising.***

### **Meal 3**

---

Your third and final meal is a post workout meal if consumed within 2 hours of exercising. The 2 most important food items after working out are protein and complex-carbs. Protein is necessary to rebuild and restore muscle after working out. If consumed without complex-carbohydrates, protein is used for energy production, not to rebuild muscle. Complex-carbs serve to protect protein for its proper use.

This meal should be the final point of the day when high protein and complex-carbs are consumed.

***High-protein and complex carbohydrate foods are slow digesting and are likely to be stored as fat if consumed late in the day. You do not need high food energy to rest or sleep.***

This final meal should consist of a high protein food (**boneless chicken breast**), a complex carbohydrate (**brown rice**) and a vegetable (**broccoli**).

***It is important to consume this meal within two hours of working out to achieve maximum results.***

## Snack 4

---

Your final snack of the day should be consumed no less than 2 hours prior to bedtime. This snack is optional if your dinner/post workout meal is consumed within 3 hours of bedtime. It should only consist of foods that are low in fat, sugar, carbs and protein. Good examples of food choices for this snack are cottage cheese or plain yogurt with a small amount of fruit added for taste.

***Yogurt prepackaged with fruit is high in sugar and should be avoided.***

*Note: Complex carbohydrates and other heavy carbohydrates are slow digesting and should be consumed during hours of peak activity. Slow digesting foods are best if consumed at the beginning of the day as well as before and after exercising. If consumed during hours of low activity, slow digesting foods are likely to be converted to fat. These foods include potatoes, whole grain foods, etc.*

*Simple carbohydrates including white flour based and corn based foods like bread, pasta, cereal and snacks are a leading cause of obesity and should only be consumed in moderation. Consumption of cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and kale help reduce body fat and are best if eaten lightly steamed or raw. Moreover, fruits and raw vegetables are vitamin and nutrient rich and should be consumed regularly.*

**STEP**

 **3** 

**Wellness of the Spirit**

# Chapter

## 5

### Building a Spiritual Foundation

**E**xercise and sound nutrition are fundamental components of good health. However, achieving spiritual wellbeing requires more than exercising and eating properly. This chapter provides principles that helped me build a strong foundation for spiritual wellness.

#### Standing Up

My journey to wellness began without me realizing it. Due to a painful childhood experience, I took an unintentional step toward wellness many years ago. Although it was life changing, I did not recognize the importance of the experience until long after it happened. My experience was not unlike that which many of us face during childhood. However, how the experience changed me was profound.

From my early childhood, I recall the all encompassing sense of self-doubt that was my faithful companion. As a child, adults called me bashful, quiet, introverted, sensitive and thoughtful. The self-doubt that colored my childhood was constant, regardless of the many convenient labels others branded me.

For most of my life, I have felt imprisoned by my own thoughts. At times, I could not escape my introspective nature, which made it difficult for me to connect with others. Feelings of self-doubt were the primary focus of my thoughts and behavior. How I felt about myself caused me to project that onto how I believed others perceived me.

Feeling powerless to define myself beyond an unhealthy self-image was a major personal impediment. Now, it amazes me to think that I was imprisoned by my own thoughts by choice. It was my choice to spend countless hours meditating on and discovering ways to doubt myself. Eventually, I realized what I was doing and how it was affecting me.

Being filled with self-doubt gave me a convenient excuse for not attempting things that were difficult. Unconsciously, I was convinced that failure was inevitable in anything I tried. I mistakenly believed that never attempting things prevented me from suffering the disappointment of failure.

I was missing the fact that the disappointment of failure was the most prominent aspect of my life. Allowing self-doubt to cripple me was a monumental failing on my part. It prevented me from living a rewarding life. Recognizing how much time I wasted dwelling on self-doubt made me mad enough to change.

Realizing that my struggle with self-doubt was mostly self-imposed was vital in building my self-confidence. There was no brilliant plan to increase my self-esteem; it happened by accident. Recognizing that I my thoughts were steeped in self-doubt led me in the right direction.

## How It All Began

Defeating self-doubt is an ongoing process for me. However, I took a major step toward developing self-confidence when I was 12 years old. The importance of the moment leading to my improved self-image was evident to me many years after it occurred. The moment will live in my thoughts for the rest of my life. In addition, it demonstrates how childhood experiences can have lasting effects.

The paradigm began shifting for me when I was in 7th grade. From 5 years old until the moment in question, my closest friend doubled as my personal tormentor. He took great pleasure in bullying me, often

mercilessly. His bullying also encouraged others to do the same to me.

My breakthrough moment occurred when I was shooting hoops after school. After nailing a perfect jump-shot, suddenly my body was robbed of breath. My reward for nailing a beautiful shoot was the direct blast of a basketball to the gut. My friend/tormentor struck again.

Being pummeled with a basketball came as no surprise to me. I was accustomed to being the victim of attacks by my (so-called) friend. However, my response to his attack brought the entire gym to a screeching halt. Unbeknownst to my sadistic peer, I spent the week leading up to that day utterly frustrated with feeling insecure. I was sick of being afraid of my own shadow and having no confidence.

My tormentor's delight at the embarrassment his prank caused me made my blood boil. Without thinking, I grabbed a basketball, pursued my longtime bully and struck him in the face with the ball. Acting purely on instinct, I wrestled my eventual former friend to the floor and delivered several blows to his face. Subsequently, while the scuffle was being broken up, I told my bully to be ready to fight anytime he messed with me.

After the incident, the gym manager took me to his office. I thought I was in big trouble, but I did not

care. I was glad to finally stand up for myself. To my surprise, instead of being upset, the gym manager congratulated me. He then offered a congratulatory handshake for in his words, “finally standing up to that son of a bitch”.

Before leaving his office, the manager suspended my gym privileges for 2 weeks. He commented that if it were up to him, there would be no suspension for me. He also assured me that my days of being picked on were over. He was correct. My personal tormentor and other school bullies never harassed me again.

My experience ended that day with the manager escorting me back to the gym before taking me home. I reentered the gym to the enthusiastic greeting of kids that witnessed the years of torment bullies put me through. I was shocked to be so well-received by kids that often treated me with contempt.

Refusing to be victimized helped me formulate the basis of several principles that I live by. It was also instrumental in improving my self-image. When I began protecting and defending myself, my self-concept improved.

Because I was not willing to be, people stopped mistreating me. I developed self-respect by not allowing myself to be disrespected. Soon after my eventful day in the gym, I went from being a pushover to being a leader.

## Teaching Others How to Treat Me

Defending myself taught me that I am responsible for teaching others how to treat me. Moreover, I learned that by accepting mistreatment, I was conditioning people to treat me poorly. Conversely, if I deserved and expected respect, I would be treated accordingly.

Another important thing I learned is that developing mutual respect in relationships is impossible without defining personal boundaries. We are responsible for establishing expectations for how others treat us by defining clear personal boundaries. Establishing boundaries and defining expectations of expectable behavior in relationships are extremely important principles.

Accepting responsibility for my treatment by others is a vital principle in all of my personal relationships. Until I understood that people's mistreatment of me was rooted in my acceptance of it, I believed being mistreated was what I deserved. I became so accustomed to it; I accepted mistreatment from anyone. Foolishly, I accepted mistreatment even from people to whom I did no harm.

All I did to deserve mistreatment was continue to accept it. There were two choices I could make each time I felt mistreated, and I kept making the

wrong one. I chose to accept mistreatment from others instead of accepting responsibility for allowing it. Whether I deserved to be mistreated or not is irrelevant because I allowed it to continue.

A great danger of accepting long-term mistreatment is the possibility of responding to it harmfully. I was mad enough when I stood up to my bully to become violent. The anger that I felt toward him blinded me. If we had not been separated after I attacked him, he could have been critically injured. There is also the possibility that like many other victims of bullying, I might have harmed myself eventually.

Fortunately, I learned not to repeat the mistakes that lead to the most damaging peer relationship of my childhood. The experience taught me the importance of setting clear personal boundaries of expectable behavior in my relationships; which has become a primary principle of my life.

I have learned that setting behavioral boundaries significantly influences the nature of relationships. Unwittingly or not, we begin establishing boundaries in personal relationships from the start of each one. Personal relationships are more likely to succeed when anchored by well-defined boundaries.

Failing to define clear boundaries of acceptable behavior early in relationships is often detrimental. For

instance, my childhood bully began mistreating me soon after we met. I did not set boundaries in the beginning of the relationship, which resulted in our roles as bully and victim being defined early on. My failure to set boundaries helped establish the nature of our unhealthy relationship.

## Ceasing Incessant Introspection

My introspective nature was always apparent. Even as a child it was a major part of what defined me. Upon reflection, I realize that most of the time I spent reflecting on life was wasted. I have spent too much time reflecting on life instead of living it.

Thankfully, I now understand that my incessant introspection was not productive because it was not motivated by the desire for self-awareness. For me, introspection is like a syringe full of heroin to an addict. My fix was spending introspective time immersed in self-doubt, my drug of choice.

Self-doubt was like a narcotic flowing from the tip of a needle into my spirit. My past behavior was so often influenced by feelings of self-doubt; it was like a bad high at times. Nevertheless, like any addict, I kept getting high.

Too often, I sat in silent reflection stoned on the intoxicating effects of self-doubt. And, like I said, self-

doubt gave me the perfect excuse for not facing challenges. Introspection facilitated my indulgence in self-doubt, and as a result, I spent a chunk of life not living.

These days, I am wise about being introspective. Instead of dwelling on thoughts that injure my spirit, I spend quiet, meditative time beginning and ending each day. Planning reflective time satisfies my need for introspection and lets me control the process. It helps prevent me from obsessing on negative thoughts and experiencing the resulting harmful effects to my spirit.

My introspective time made me more self-aware after I started controlling how I spend it. However, even now, there are times when self-doubt affects me. Being unsure is a part of life at times. In fact, I believe a certain degree of self-doubt is necessary; a healthy dose keeps us grounded and striving to be our best. However, when self-doubt is a focal point of one's self-perception, it becomes destructive.

Self-doubt destroyed my confidence and prevented me from facing challenges. I did not understand that there is no advantage to avoiding challenges. If never failing is the upside of doing so, never succeeding is the downside. Moreover, self-confidence is impossible to develop without the building blocks of success and failure.

## Confronting Depression

I believe that the pursuit of wellness is an ongoing effort to create the life you desire. For much of my life, I was not purposeful about living a fulfilling life. The pessimism that comes with depression ruled my existence. That was the case until I made the choice to pursue happiness. Making a concerted effort to be fulfilled changed my outlook from pessimistic to optimistic.

Being aware that I could be happy or unhappy by choice gave me greater control of my life. Instead of allowing depression to overcome me, I became a warrior for optimism and against depression. Eventually, I began confronting depression instead of accepting it.

In the past, I dealt with depression by being reclusive. Changing habits at the onset of depression helped me overcome it. By doing even simple things, I avoided giving into my usual response to depression's onset. As I discovered, my early response to the onset of depression factors into how deep the depressive incident is.

My reclusive behavior during the early stages of depression often triggered its full onset. Shutting down and then accepting depression were always the first steps in letting it defeat me. Accepting whatever the

winds of depression blew my way was how I dealt with it. I mistakenly believed that giving up to depression was easier than standing up to it.

Giving up in the face of difficult challenges alleviates the possibility of overcoming them. There are many examples of people overcoming difficulties that seemed impossible. My grandfather overcame seemingly impossible odds while lost at sea. The story of his miraculous survival exemplifies the strength of human will. If he had given up, my grandfather would not have survived.

Reoccurring interruptions of my life by dramatic low points is the result of giving into depression. However, once I began standing up to depression, I stopped wallowing in despair. Before long, I discovered that being productive, even in small ways, is key in overcoming depression.

## Simple Things

Many times, the first step I take toward overcoming a period of depression is sitting in the sunlight. Obviously, lounging in the sun is a simple thing to do. Nevertheless, absorbing the sun's energy is always a productive first step toward moving beyond depression for me. The importance of it is that it differs from my usual first response to depression.

In the past, I dealt with depression by shutting out the world. My method of dealing with depression consisted of closing the blinds, turning out the lights and burying my head under the covers. I dealt with depression by not dealing with it. Prolonged misery was the result of my repeated acquiescence to depression.

Battling depression helped me develop skills for overcoming life challenges. Because living with depression is difficult, learning to manage it is an accomplishment that I am proud of. It enhanced my life unlike anything else I have achieved. My attitude toward life has changed from hopeless to hopeful.

## **The Inspiration of Hopelessness**

The hopelessness of depression is intimately familiar to me. The sense of hopelessness brought on by depression is the inspiration for this book. Sharing my story has been cathartic, but more importantly, it turned my hopelessness into inspiration. Of all the things in this book, learning to turn hopelessness into inspiration is of utmost importance.

I lost many things to depression: love, joy, pride, optimism and much more. However, the fear depression left behind was more damaging to my spirit than anything I lost to it. Fear had such influence on me

that it crippled me psychologically and prevented me from living a rewarding life.

Not understanding how fear influenced me caused failure to become my self-fulfilling prophecy. Turning the hopelessness of depression into inspiration encouraged me to achieve things that fear prevented me from attempting in the past. Now, the fear once pervading every facet of my life is an occasional passing thought, at best.

## **My Story = Your Story**

My journey to wellness is in many ways unique to my experiences. However, the experiences of those who suffer from depression are in many ways the same. I believe the principles and techniques that have been helpful on my journey to wellness can help others in their search for wellbeing.

Admittedly, I do not know how to make anyone else happy. Fulfilling myself is challenging enough at times. The most anyone can do is contribute to another person's happiness. Creating a rewarding life is a matter of personal responsibility. Relying on others to make you happy leads to certain disappointment.

In my experience, happiness does not often come without effort; and I don't believe it is meant to. The pursuit of happiness is an active process.

Fortunately, I have discovered how to pursue happiness even when facing despair. The choice to be miserable or to strive for fulfillment is mine to make, in good times or bad.

Obviously, happiness can be difficult to find and sustain. However, the alternative to pursuing happiness is conceding the possibility of finding it. Each time I give into depression or discontent, I am choosing to be unhappy. The responsibility for being unhappy is mine to bear regardless of my circumstance.

Accepting adversity as a reality of life is a necessary part of overcoming hardship. We are not confronted with challenges because life is inherently unfair, as many believe. To the contrary, happiness is difficult for everyone to find because life is fair. Believing life is unfair because bad things happen is to conflate fairness with happiness. The expectation that happiness should be automatic is not just foolish; it is potentially dangerous as well.

Although our struggles differ, the outcome of our responses to them is a matter of personal responsibility. Blaming some mythical inherent unfairness in life for our problems is a cop out. It is an excuse for not accepting responsibility for our choices and how they

affect us. Happiness is completely beyond our control without accepting responsibility for pursuing it and without acceptance of the fact that life is difficult at times.

## Chapter

## 6

# Living For Something Other than Yourself

**T**his section begins with the story of an extremely influential person in my life. Although our acquaintance lasted for only a brief period during childhood, my friend bears a significant impact on me today. The lesson about the superficiality of material possessions that my final visit with him taught me changed my life.

### **A Gift More Precious than Gold**

I used to be unhappy because my attention was concentrated on things I did not have. Focusing my attention on the wrong things caused me to lose sight of blessings that I already had. My state of want

was perpetual. Often, things I desired failed to meet my expectations which fed my overwhelming sense of want. Hustling and bustling, I foolishly believed that my station in life was advanced by the acquisition of material things. Sadly, my self-worth was based on the quality and quantity of material possessions, not the depth of my character.

One day, while waiting at a traffic light in my fancy, new esteem-machine (car), I noticed a man crossing the intersection. His face, although somewhat featureless, was vaguely familiar to me. After making it to the sidewalk, he turned and pointed at me. Suddenly, the origins of his familiarity became clear.

The look on my face was one of surprise when I realized who he was. Despite his disheveled appearance, it was clear that the man was an old friend. Any doubt about his identity was laid to rest when he shouted “what’s up lil’ man” across the busy intersection. It was the first time in years anyone called to me that nickname. After gesturing for him to wait, I turned around to pick him up.

The last time I saw my old friend, I could barely grow facial hair, let alone drive. My old friend entered the car accompanied by the distinct odor of someone who had not bathed for quite some time. I am sure that my desperate attempt to seem oblivious to his offensive smell was transparent.

The funny thing is, upon noticing my reaction to his smell, my friend tried putting me at ease by remarking “you ain’t lookin’ too bad yourself, lil’ man”. His comment prompted window fogging laughter, and soon we found ourselves transported to days gone by.

As we reminisced about old times, without my noticing, the malodorous beginning of the day’s encounter became imperceptible to me. My friend’s disordered appearance vanished from my eyes. What remained visible to me was a dear friend for whom things had somehow gone wrong.

The playful spirit of the boy that I remembered from childhood was alive in the man with whom I spent that remarkable day. However, my heart was heavy sensing the burden that life had apparently become for him. Everything in me longed to know his story of struggle and how I might serve to improve my lost friend’s lot in life.

As if reading my mind, my friend began talking about the night that his life changed irreparably. Hearing of the incident reminded me of the many times that I saw him protect other kids from schoolyard bullies. Ten years in state prison for brutally assaulting a man who repeatedly abused his sister was the eventual cost of his steadfast protection of the underdog.

Before the day ended, I asked my old friend if he needed help. I offered money, and he refused. He

told me there was no need for money where he was going. He then commented that I needed the money much more than he. At the time, I had no idea what he was talking about. I then asked if he needed a place to clean up and crash for the night. Again, he refused my offer saying that “prison purged him of the need for walls to confine”.

Before parting ways, I asked him to reconsider my offer for a place to crash. He responded with “thank you, but I prefer sleeping under the stars”. At his request, I dropped him off at the corner where we met, and I never saw him again.

A few days after the unexpected encounter, I ran into a classmate who informed me of my friend’s passing. I later found out, what my friend did not talk about during our fateful day together was a sexual assault that he suffered while in prison. The assault was a violation that ultimately ended his life. The incident resulted in his untimely death from AIDS. I was bereaved to discover that in his time of need, no one was there to stand up for the brave soul who often protected others.

Many years later, I realized what my friend meant when he said that I needed money more than he did. In the end, freedom was more important to him than money, clothes or cars. All the things I invested

precious time and energy acquiring meant nothing to him. Other than life itself, the star filled sky was most precious to him in the end.

The things that gave my friend's life meaning were far more valuable than anything I could ever own. I knew that he was sent to change my life by teaching me that lesson. He also taught me that spiritual fulfillment cannot be attained with trinkets of gold or silver. The lessons that the encounter with my friend taught me are more valuable than all the riches in the world.

My fearless friend helped me understand that I could have everything my heart desired and still have nothing. Despite his filthy clothes and empty pockets, he had everything that mattered to him in the end. Even now, many years since our encounter, I am humbled by my friend's dignity and reverence for life. I am embarrassed by my arrogance, thinking that a little money and some clean clothes would have made a meaningful difference in his life.

In all the years since the (not so) chance encounter with my friend, the unrefined eloquence of his words remains in my consciousness. Although the physical-man has passed, his spirit is alive in each person to whom I impart the lessons that he taught me.

Often, when standing beneath the night sky, my thoughts are of him. The man and his lessons will live in my memory until I cease to be. Because of him, I understand that when my final rest is near, my thoughts will not be of cars, homes or money. All that will matter in my final moments of life are the people that I love and those who love me in return. In fact, love is really all that matters, period. I hope not to be remembered for accumulating great wealth. If I am remembered for giving and receiving love, my life will have been meaningful.

If only for a day, it was a privilege to encounter my childhood friend. In a single prophetic moment, my life changed thanks to an unlikely teacher. I honor my friend's memory by being thankful for life and teaching others the importance of doing so. I am grateful to have inherited from him the thoughtfulness with which he lived. His gifts of compassion, empathy and humility will remain with me until we meet again. His ever-guiding presence in my life is a gift more precious than gold. I pray that his spirit is at peace.

# Chapter

# 7

## Moving Beyond Me (Life with Marguerite)

I used to believe that being an island unto myself was a good thing to be. Living free of responsibility to anyone seemed like an ideal way to live. At the time, I did not understand that freedom from responsibility to others requires being spiritually and emotionally disconnected.

I built a wall of spiritual and emotional discontent with the bricks and mortar of personal freedom. This section tells the story of how moving beyond my needs to help someone else is the greatest thing that I have ever done for myself spiritually.

My grandmother (Marguerite Lambeth) is one of the most important and influential people in my life.

She raised me until my mother assumed the role of full-time parent when I was 12. She has always been there to care for and support me. I owe her much more for all that she has done for me than I can repay.

Several years ago, my grandmother fell at work and fractured her hip. Despite recovering from the accident, she was forced to retire. Soon after retiring, my grandmother developed health problems. Unfortunately, her life of good health came to an abrupt end after she retired. She no longer enjoys the good health that allowed her to work until she was 80 years old.

In 2008, my grandmother was stricken with Pulmonary Arterial Disease, resulting in the partial amputation of her right leg. However, despite the loss of her limb, my grandmother is still amazingly optimistic and resilient. In fact, she often talks about celebrating her 100th birthday in 2023.

After moving out of my grandparent's house at 18, I never imagine being an adult living with and caring for my grandmother. My grandmother's fierce independence made the possibility of her ever needing care seem impossible. Until it happened, I never considered the possibility of ever being responsible for my grandmother's care.

In my youth, I never expected to look back in amazement at how fast time moves. Now that our roles are reversed, it astounds me to think that my grand-

mother was my age when I was born. Living with my grandmother reminds me that her life today is my life tomorrow.

I was happily responsible to myself only until my grandmother became ill. To me, having no restrictions on my personal freedom was a blessing. As an adult, I have come and gone as I please without answering to anyone, which was inconceivable to me just 3 years ago. Nevertheless, I am grateful to assist my grandmother however necessary.

Since becoming my grandmother's caretaker, I have learned the importance of living for something other than my own self-interests. When deciding with my family where and with whom my grandmother would live after leaving the hospital, I began thinking about the many sacrifices in personal freedom that she made for me. Many times in my life, she has gone without so that I would not have to. With that in mind, deciding to assume the responsibility of caring for her was an easy decision to make.

Several days before my grandmother was released from the hospital, I discussed becoming her caretaker with my family. I am not sure who was more surprised by what I was proposing, me or them. I considered becoming my grandmother's caretaker for weeks. However, until discussing the idea with my family, I did not realize how committed I was to the

idea. Once the discussion with my family was over, my life suddenly had new purpose and meaning.

The sense of purpose that I get from caring for my grandmother is more meaningful than living free of responsibility ever was. The hole in my spirit that I tried to fill with drugs, alcohol and ill-advised relationships is at last full. Considering my grandmother's needs before my own gives me the fulfillment that once eluded me.

The many years that I spent cherishing my personal freedom above all else were times when I felt emotionally disconnected from almost everyone in my life. Caring for my grandmother taught me the importance of serving others. It also strengthened the bonds between me and my loved ones. Now, I realize that my fear of being tied down actually prevented me from being emotionally whole. Moving beyond my wants and needs to help satisfy those of my grandmother has been an important step on my journey to spiritual wellness.

Assuming responsibility for my grandmother's care helped me understand that my emotional needs are best served by serving others. Sacrificing to help others fulfills the greatest need that all people share: connecting with those we care for. Connecting with others is why people marry, raise children, build families, form friendships and create communities. Most

people are unfulfilled absent important social and emotional connections.

Things have changed dramatically for my grandmother since her amputation. Adjusting to life as an amputee is difficult, but my grandmother handles it with amazing optimism. The strength that she displays, despite the mental and physical difficulty facing her each day, is truly heroic. Her ability to remain positive despite the challenges she faces reinforces my belief that optimism is a matter of personal choice.

Although I am responsible for her care, my grandmother is actually taking care of me; she does it by confronting the indignities resulting from her loss of independence optimistically. My grandmother's positive attitude makes assisting her a joy instead of a burden. Her enduring optimism is the most selfless act that I have ever seen. The example of caring for others demonstrated by her optimism is inspiring.

Caring for my grandmother taught me that being responsible for someone does not have to be burdensome. Additionally, I discovered that the responsibility of caring for a loved one is profoundly gratifying. Helping my grandmother live with dignity and security is the most important experience of my life. Being committed to her care is more beneficial to my spiritual

well-being than desperately clinging to personal freedom ever was.

Being beholden to my grandmother has been more important to my spiritual development than I could have imagined. It is ironic that my spiritual good-fortune resulted from her physical decline. However, just as my grandmother often reminds me, caring for me as a child was as much of a gift to her as it was to me. Now that I am responsible for her care, I understand what she means.

Living up to the responsibility of being my grandmother's caretaker is my greatest accomplishment. Assisting her gives me the sense of spiritual fulfillment that I have spent my life searching for. Honoring the sacrifices that she made for me by assisting her has been more spiritually uplifting than any other experience of my life.

Obviously, I wish my grandmother had not become ill. However, I cherish the opportunity to assist her. Caring for her showed me the importance of moving beyond my needs for someone else. This I believe is mankind's most significant purpose.

# Chapter

# 8

## Rising and Setting with the Sun

**T**he previous sections identify two important revelations that I have experienced. Recognizing the limited value of material possessions and the vital importance of serving others helped me find spiritual fulfillment.

Being materialistic and self-absorbed was damaging to my spirit. I hope to help people understand the importance of service to others and being thankful for life's simple blessings. This chapter is dedicated to the physical and spiritual benefits of sleep and sunlight, two of life's simplest blessings.

Like flowers, humans need the sun. In addition to providing us with energy, the sun is an important source of vitamin B. Vitamin B is essential in bone

development and strength, helping the body absorb calcium, assisting the immune system in fighting bacteria and protecting bones from osteoporosis.

While providing the necessary environmental conditions to support life on our planet, the sun's gravity tethers Earth to its life sustaining position in the Milky Way Galaxy. Human existence is inextricably linked to the sun's fate, both past and present. The sun shines magnificently as a glaring reminder of the far reaches in space and time from whence we, and all things, come.

The sun embodies the most primitive and the most complex processes in the universe. Lighting our way through the day, the sun links human creation to the primordial past and the singular moment when the universe is thought to have come into existence. For some 4.5 billion years, the tumultuous sphere of hydrogen, oxygen and helium that we call our sun, has been burning bright.

The sun's gravity literally molded Earth to form from dust and holds the existence of our planet and man's fate in its grasp. Life as we know it would cease without the sun's frenetic energy to provide our planet with heat. All life on Earth needs the sun to survive, including humans.

Not only do humans have a powerful physical connection to the sun, man's spiritual link to it spans

our entire history. Human devotees to the religions of antiquity to those of the 21st century have worshiped the sun with God-like reverence. The sun reigns supreme from the caves of the prehistoric world, to the temples of ancient Egypt, and places of worship in the modern era.

The sun's illumination of the Earth has long been a source of inspiration for mankind in art, music and literature. Personally, I have neither worshiped the sun as a god nor have I been inspired to render its likeness on canvass. However, I do understand Man's spiritual connection to the sun in a very personal way.

I was once an avowed night owl. My preference was to live under the cloak of the night's darkness. The mysteries of the night were far too alluring for me to waste time sleeping beyond the sun's setting. Opposite to most people, my time awake was spent between sunset and sunrise.

For a long time, I had a great time living like a vampire. As a popular radio personality, many of my nighttime activities were work related. My career prolonged the period that I spent living nocturnally.

I remember very well when the need to change my sleep schedule became clear to me. One Monday morning, while reviewing my weekly schedule, a deep sense of dread washed over me. After realizing that the week in question was littered with nightly events,

all I could think of was how much I wanted to sleep more than anything else. The mental and physical effects of toiling long into the night were becoming clear to me.

After reviewing my schedule that day, my inner-voice began speaking to me about the need to change my nocturnal ways. Fortunately, by that point in my life, I understood the important role of my inner-voice regarding my survival. I knew well the danger of ignoring what my intuition was saying. That day, I took heed to what my inner-voice was telling me.

An increase in my overall energy was immediately evident when I began sleeping at night. Rising and setting with the sun helped me improve mentally and physically. Its positive benefits made awaking to the sunrise one of my favorite things to do. Sunrise is a time of day that is visibly stunning and spiritually uplifting. Having witnessed sunrise many times, I understand why the sun holds godlike status with so many people.

The sun's rising and setting are two of the most miraculous events in nature. However, few people truly appreciate the power of witnessing the sunrise. The sunrise is a breath taking spectacle that connects mankind to eons past and future.

My life as vampire was filled with sunrises because they often marked the end of the day for me.

Witnessing the sunrise by awaking to it is entirely different to me than going to sleep after it. Being up until sunrise was often accompanied by nights spent indulging in self-destructive behavior. However, seeing the sunrise as it births a new day awakens in my spirit something that cannot be described in words. In the earliest light of day, I experience the majesty of the cosmos.

Changing sleep habits is as healthy a lifestyle choice for me as becoming physically fit was. Awaking with the sunrise is a simple blessing that enriches my life. Sleeping with the setting sun is an equally wonderful gift. In addition to supporting productivity during the day, night-sleep allows for daytime exposure to sunlight and its health benefits. Changing sleep habits is how I came to understand that like flowers, humans need the sun.

After experiencing the benefits of adjusting my sleep schedule, I began to wonder about the causal effects of darkness on sleep. After only a few minutes of research, I discovered that the body's master clock controls the production of melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone that causes drowsiness and ultimately leads to sleep.

The body's master clock is located just above the optic nerves. The optic nerves relay information from the eyes to the brain and transmit information about

incoming light to the master clock. When the master clock receives information regarding decreased light, the brain responds by increasing its production of melatonin. After learning about how the body's master clock functions, I understand why rising and setting with the sun is natural and productive for humans.

# Chapter

## 9

### Things to Consider

**T**his section of *The Guide to Being Well* highlights some things about religion, romance and love that I believe are worth consideration. It also examines some things that men and women need to know to help make relating to the opposite sex easier.

I am not an expert on any of the aforementioned topics. However, experience has given me insight into religion, romance and relationships that may be useful to others. I have included this chapter because I believe that religion and relationships are integral to spiritual well-being.

## Religion

The principles of goodwill that govern most religions are valuable to the world. In many ways, religion helps some people be their best. It is beneficial to all when religion influences people to do good works. By imparting lessons about charity and righteousness, religion can be influential as an overwhelming force for good.

Unfortunately, some people of faith display a sense of superiority at times. Some have contempt for people that do not share their beliefs. The tendency to feel superior to others is difficult for some religious people to recognize and overcome. Many religious observers believe their humanity is superior to people of other faiths and the non-religious.

Personally, I am skeptical of religious doctrines with contempt for the beliefs of others. In my opinion, religions that promote contempt for other's beliefs belie the concept of God's benevolence. If all people are "His" children, contempt seeming only serves man... not God.

The way that some religions are practiced often causes unrest between people with different beliefs. Many religious observers are more passionate about their individual beliefs than what their faith stands for. One of religion's main purposes is lost when compassion gives way to passion.

Religious observers should be charitable to those they disagree with. The Crucifixion Story is perhaps the greatest expression of charity in the face of opposition. While hanging from the cross, Jesus beseeched God to forgive his persecutors. Near death, Jesus showed unwavering compassion for those who least deserved it. Religious observers of all Faiths would be wise to follow Jesus' example of unconditional LOVE.

## **The Peacock Theory**

It is possible to discover the type of person someone is by listening to what they claim not to be. Conversely, discovering the type of person someone is not is revealed by what they claim to be. People tend to present themselves as what they want to be, not what they are. Humans are not intentionally dishonest; presentation is important to all animal species.

In many ways, people are like peacocks. The male peacock presents itself as the best potential mate to females by displaying its tail feathers. Honestly, Mr. Peacock is probably average among males of his species. However, to become the prize pick of prospective mates, Mr. Peacock needs to put on an impressive show for the ladies. Like the peacock, humans perform for potential mates as well.

Instinct drives us to promote ourselves in flattering terms to attract the opposite sex. Presenting ourselves glowingly is driven by the same impulse driving the peacock's tail feather display. How people describe themselves is influenced by things they aspire to; it is the human equivalent of Mr. Peacock's attempt to top the mating chart. Developing healthy relationships requires recognizing instinct's influence on how we present ourselves to others.

## **Male & Female People**

Men and women need to know a few basic facts about behavior between the sexes. First, a little goes a long way relative to understanding how the opposite sex is wired. Second, like most things, keeping it simple is wise when trying to understand the opposite sex. And third, relating to the opposite sex is less complicated than it seems.

Some things are the same for both genders. For instance, in relationships, both men and women waste time feeling uncertain about things that can be resolved in short order. Rather than asking simple questions, we eat our hearts out with wonder instead. Often, by the time the right question is asked, opportunity has passed.

Many times, we avoid asking the right questions for fear of getting the wrong answers. Understandably, we dislike rejection. However, agonizing over an attraction, never to know what might have been, is worse than rejection. Worst still is waiting a long time to express an attraction that is not mutual. Considering the options, knowing where you stand sooner rather than later is best.

## The Simpler Sex

Both genders have distinct behaviors regarding attraction. Compared to women, men's behavior relative to attraction is simple. Women need to know one important thing about male attractions. If a guy is pursuing your friendship, he is probably attracted to you. Sexually functional, straight men typically "pursue" friendships with women they find attractive.

"Pursue" being the operative word in the previous statement: men are capable of befriending women absent an attraction. However, ladies, there is no contest to be the guy with the most female friends. Guys do not sit around drinking beer discussing how great their female friends are. Men are not being disrespectful by pursuing acquaintances with women we find attractive, we are simply wired that way. Men are

programmed to seek the most desirable females to mate with. Male responses to physical attraction are driven by the instinct to mate with genetically superior females.

Even simple male behavior can be attributed to instinct. For instance, when men refer to attractive women as “hot”, they are being influenced by instinct. By calling a woman “hot”, a man is instinctively acknowledging her desirability as a mate. Obviously, men should be mindful of some women taking offense to being objectified.

Seemingly simple behavior between the sexes can have underlying meanings. How men and women relate is influenced by instinctive impulses. Although we tend to forget, humans are animals. Like animals, instinct drives human behavior; this is also true of our responses to physical attraction.

Some men respond to physical attraction inappropriately. Fortunately, most men can evolve beyond base instincts. Considering instinct’s influence on humans can help women understand men’s behavior better. Notwithstanding its influence on us, instinct does not excuse men for behaving inappropriately.

## **What Not To Do**

Gentlemen, you can do many things to appeal to the opposite sex. However, not doing certain things is

a better way of attracting women. An excellent start to list of things not do is cat-calling. This senseless male response to attraction is like a farmer calling pigs by shouting “Sue Wee.” Cat-calling is pointless and rarely well-received. Furthermore, demeaning gestures are a lousy way to go about appealing to anyone.

Despite its ineffectiveness, some men cat-call anyway; they see an attractive woman, instinct takes over, and then out it comes. In this case, instinct is an impediment to success. Expecting a favorable response to an offense gesture is unreasonable. Cat-calling is perhaps the worst method of attracting female attention!

## **The Need to Control**

Controlling behavior is another thing guys should avoid. For instance, if a woman wears sexy clothes before you begin dating, expecting her to stop is unreasonable. People do not often change things about themselves because someone else expects it. We tend to resist change that is demanded of us. Demanding someone to change is a sure way of driving them away.

Of course, dating someone that gives you genuine cause for distrust is a mistake. However, personal preferences like clothing choice do not determine trustworthiness. You are being controlling of your mate

if personal preferences like how she dresses become unacceptable when you begin dating. In this instance, insecurity and the need to control are being mischaracterized as distrust.

It is unreasonable to expect to control other's behavior. Unrealistic expectations cause relationships to fail. Expecting others to change to assuage your insecurities is as unrealistic as expectations can be. This type of insecure, controlling behavior makes people resentful. Unfortunately, men often do not identify their behavior as controlling until it is too late.

## Good Time Girls

Now... let us look at some things the fairer sex should know about men. It is important for women to understand that men tend to see things as black or white. Men generally put women in either one of two categories. The first category of women consists of Good Time Girls; these are the women we call when it is time to blow off some steam.

Almost every man appreciates a Good Time Girl. A G.T.G. can party like one of the guys while offering benefits that male friends do not. A guy that considers you to be a G.T.G. is probably attracted to you and enjoys your company. There is not much to dislike about enjoying the company of an attractive woman without having the responsibility of a girlfriend.

If a guy thinks of you as a G.T.G., he probably always will. This is true, although guys do not always realize it, causing some to make poor relationship choices. Developing feelings for someone who thinks of you as a G.T.G. is usually a mistake.

The difficulty for the G.T.G. is that guys tend to see things as black or white. According to how most guys think, a woman is either girlfriend material or not. As much as guys like G.T.G.s, we rarely succeed at dating them.

## Keepers

“Keeper” is the second category that men put women in. A Keeper is a woman that men identify as “girlfriend material”. Guys are usually fast about distinguishing between women suitable for dating and those more suited for casual relationships.

For guys, assessing which category that a woman fits in is heavily influenced by what we see. Women are wise to remember that point about male behavior. In a man’s black or white way of thinking, a woman either looks like girlfriend material or not.

Appearance is a major factor in a woman being categorized as a G.T.G. or a Keeper. Once a man’s ideas regarding the characteristics of a suitable mate are formulated, they rarely change. Often, when guys

date G.T.Gs, they attempt to turn them into their idea of a Keeper.

In some cases, men unwittingly ignore their beliefs about acceptable characteristics in mates. Digressing for a moment, consider the earlier example of male controlling behavior. Some men date women that wear revealing clothes.

Women that dress provocatively are thought of as Good Time Girls by most men. However, at times, physical attraction is over-powering. The strength of physical attraction causes some men to disregard their apprehension about a woman's provocative style of dress.

Men with mates that wear revealing clothes often want them to change how they dress. Although it is unrealistic to expect others to change to placate our insecurities, people often do. Instead of expecting their mates to change, guys should avoid dating women that dress revealingly if it makes them uncomfortable.

Discussing our expectations with prospective mates helps build healthy relationships. Whether it is about clothing or more important issues, honest dialogue between mates is important. Women that dress revealingly should ask potential mates if they are uncomfortable with them doing so. When mates fail

to acknowledge areas of discomfort between them, problems may arise. However, women should understand that only extremely secure men succeed at dating Good Time Girls.

## The Caged Tiger Theory

Here is an analogy for women that dress provocatively to consider. A tiger is a truly extraordinary creature. Even seeing a caged tiger is an exhilarating experience. Being close to a creature with such power and grace is awe inspiring. Every move the tiger makes is captivating. Long after encountering the magnificent beast, the tiger's beauty remains etched in our memories.

When women dress provocatively, the impression they make on men is much the same as encountering a caged tiger. Men are naturally drawn to women's bodies. In fact, the more we see of a woman's body, the more we want to see. Much like watching the tiger in motion, every move a scantily clad woman makes is captivating to men.

Dressing provocatively is how many women attract the opposite sex. However, most men are not comfortable with their mates exposing themselves. Fair or not, women that dress revealingly are thought of as loose. Generally, men do not pursue committed

relationships with women they perceive as disreputable.

Many women are unjustly judged by how they dress. Unfortunately, judgmental people are a reality of life. We are judged based on appearances and our lives are affected accordingly. Many men are apprehensive about dating women that dress provocatively because of how they are judged by others. Women that dress provocatively are like the caged tiger; although the tiger is phenomenally beautiful, few men would take it home to live with them.

## **He's Not a Lump of Clay**

Like men, women are also guilty of attempting to change their mates. In fact, women often want to change more than just a man's style of dress. Without considering that men tend to mature slowly, some women choose immature mates and attempt to change them.

A woman of 25 dating a man close in age will probably be frustrated with him frequently. Women tend to become fully formulated adults sooner than men. Maturity levels between men and women begin evening out by mid to late 30's. Unfortunately for many women, they remain in relationships with immature men at substantial cost to themselves.

Instead of recognizing that it is difficult for people to change, some women mistakenly attempt to mold men like clay. How people are when you meet them is how they will likely be long afterwards. If a man's behavior is intolerable when you meet him, expect it to stay that way. Believing that you can teach, train or change a person is foolish.

## **You Cannot Make Him Be a Man**

Another mistake that women frequently make is dating men that lack ambition. Women that have live-in boyfriends with sporadic work histories are taking a big chance. A man that is not ambitious enough to earn a living is weak; if he is too lazy to support himself, he is not worth having. Moreover, most women enable deadbeat boyfriends to be bums by having low expectations of them.

Generally, men are instinctively motivated to be providers. Obviously, women are capable of providing for themselves. However, a man lacking the natural instinct to be a provider is pitiful. Only a weak man sits at home all day playing video games while his woman works. Many woman in a relationship with a man too lazy to work will ultimately be unhappy.

An able bodied man who is comfortable mooching off of women is probably unreliable. If he cannot

support himself, how can he be counted on for anything? Anyone woman that puts herself in the position of depending on a lazy man will be disappointed more often than not. Such a man is incapable of putting anyone's needs before his own. Try as you may, you cannot change him. You cannot make him be a man!

## Bores

A bore is one of the least endearing things a person can be. Bores take everything too seriously, which makes them tiresome to be around. Lacking the ability to appreciate the humor in things is characteristic of being a bore. Lightheartedness is to a bore is what gracefulness is to a bull in a china shop.

The least attractive thing about bores is that they always seem unhappy. A smile on the face of a bore is as rare as sighting a shooting star. Stone faces are people repellent. Also, wearing an uninviting face is a sure way to turn people away. Bores need to know that chronically unhappy people suck the joy out of everyone around them.

Social awkwardness is another aspect of being a bore. People that take life too seriously are unappealing to others. One of the most attractive things anyone can do to appeal to people is make them laugh. Lacking the ability to laugh at life makes bores social and romantic kryptonite.

Bores would be wise to quietly exit social situations they feel awkward in. It is pointless to participate in social settings without being sociable. People that are bores make social events less fun for others. By mysteriously vanishing from uncomfortable situations, bores do not become party poopers to others. It is better to be mysterious than to be a socially awkward bore.

## **Neediness**

Neediness is one of only two turnoffs bigger than being a bore. Needy people try to fill emotional voids by draining others emotionally. The biggest problem with needy people is that they are never satisfied. No matter how much you give to someone that is needy, you cannot meet their needs. Unfortunately, needy people do not realize that what they are searching for can only be found within.

There are many of reasons why people become needy. People with issues of abandonment, loneliness, heartbreak and possessiveness are often the neediest of all. Regardless of the reasons why they are needy, people with an insatiable need for attentiveness from others are a major turnoff.

The best thing that can happen to someone who is needy is to be told the truth. Of course, no one

wants to hurt another person's feelings. However, it is possible to be truthful and diplomatic simultaneously. It is important to choose an appropriate time and to be as dispassionate as possible when having the discussion. If needy people are not told the truth about how their actions affect others, they do not change.

## Jealousy

The biggest turnoff of all is jealousy. The ranks of jealous people consist of bores, the needy and a multitude of other personality types. Jealousy is typically triggered by the need to control, especially in romantic relationships.

People in romantic relationships normally get jealous because they are unable to control their mate's actions. Like bores and the needy, jealous people come in all sizes, colors, genders and ages. One of the craziest things about jealousy is that it is often completely irrational. Some people get jealous about little things like their mate speaking to someone of the opposite sex. Some people even get jealous about things that only exist in their thoughts.

Both men and women need to realize the importance of finding out if a prospective mate is the jealous type. Dating someone prone to jealousy is dangerous and the biggest relationship mistake of all.

With jealous people, almost anything can set them off. Jealousy causes people to behave irrationally.

Determining if someone you are interested in is the jealous type is extremely worthwhile; it can save you from being in hell on Earth. A good way to determine if a potential mate is jealous is to test them. Game-playing in relationships is bad unless you are doing so to protect yourself. Playing a little game is acceptable in the case of finding out if a love-interest is prone to jealousy.

To find out if a prospective mate is unreasonably jealous, plan a date with them. Call your new love-interest on the day of the date and inform them that an “ex” is in town for one night and wants to have dinner with you. Explain to your friend that you have not seen your “ex” for a while, and you would like to. Then tell your “prospective” that since the “ex” is only around for one night, you need a rain check for your date with them.

The night of your fake date, do not answer if your “prospective” calls. If he or she does not call, it is possible that they are comfortable giving you space. If your new love-interest does call, the number of times is revealing. 1 call is acceptable... 2 calls are questionable... 3 calls or more is a sign of bad things to come.

If your potential mate calls more than 3 times during your fake date night, you should probably cut your losses. Barring some emergency, calling an excessive number of times means that your “new friend” has difficulty recognizing acceptable boundaries. Anyone that does not understand that it is inappropriate to intrude on someone by calling excessively is probably the jealous type.

The most telling part of the jealousy test takes place during the next visit with your “prospective” after the cancelled date. During your next visit, if you sense awkwardness, distance, distraction or displeasure, you may be dealing with a jealous person. Dating someone that shows signs of being jealous soon after you meet them is risky.

Avoid the risks of jealousy by remembering that relationships are like driving down the highway. Along the way there are signs to help lead us to our destinations. However, the signs can only help if we are paying attention them. In relationships, we often miss the signs directing us to the right off-ramp. It is easy to go in the wrong direction on the highway of love by ignoring the signs.

There are always signs when someone has a jealousy problem. People get caught up in the excitement of new attractions and forget to read the

signs. Often, by the time people recognize that they are involved with a jealous person, it is too late. Many lives that could be saved are lost to jealous rage.

When getting to know a new love-interest, it is important to be sensible. Do not be so distracted by hormones and attraction that you make poor choices. Protect yourself by listening to and trusting your intuition. Your inner voice is there to guide you by revealing the signs along the highway of life. Be wise and pay attention to your inner-voice.

## **The Pressure of Forever**

People tend to put the pressure of forever on relationships. When you love someone, it is natural to want to believe that it will last forever. Often times, people say, “I will love you forever”.

We put unbearable pressure on relationships by thinking of them as never-ending. Promising to love someone for all time can distract you from loving them today. It is as if we unconsciously believe that romantic relationships are only worth having if they last eternally. Unfortunately, most relationships fall far short of lasting forever.

More important than promising to love forever is being committed to loving one day at a time, as if each day is forever. People that live with significant

others are fortunate to have them be the last person they see each night and the first person they see each day. Being thankful for great blessing like these is far more important than concern for if love will be everlasting.

We squander love here and now by locking it in the test of time. Our focus should be on each moment that love is alive; remembering that without each moment there is no forever. As the days turn one by one, the resolve to love should be reborn in our hearts and actions each day. Then... if love lasts forever, so be it.

## **What Is Love, Not**

I once believed that love is purely a feeling. Often, I mistook the euphoria of mutual attraction for love. Because I thought of it in lofty, romantic terms, it was easier for me to love someone than to like them. In the past, I professed to love people without really knowing them. With my head clouded by infatuation and raging hormones, “I love you” often crossed my lips too easily. I did not understand that love is more than a feeling expressed in word.

Professing love during the infatuation stage of a relationship is foolish. When raging hormones sub-

side, things often look different. Until infatuation calms, it is hard to determine the type of person a new love-interest is. People often dislike the person they professed to love when infatuation wanes.

Declaring love is easy when viewing it through the prism of hormonal impulse. However, after the initial emotional bliss, love is more difficult to define and declare. Only when the clouds of unbridled physical attraction subside can a true profession of love be made. Love and lust are easily confused when the influence of physical attraction is at work.

“True love” is more a responsibility than a feeling; the bounds of love go beyond the utterance of words. In fact, the truest expressions of love are exemplified in what we do... not what we say. Whereas words can mislead, actions are determinative. Actions reveal far more about our true feelings than words.

Love feels good if those we love say and do the right things. However, true love remains when times are good or bad. Maintaining love through hardship is the most profound expression of it. To truly love is to do so despite our loved ones inability to always say and do what is right. The greatest challenge of loving others is doing so in spite of, not because of.

I do not profess to know what love is. The difference between most people and me is that I am not trying to figure love out. I decided long ago not to waste time figuring out what love is. Ultimately, I discovered that succeeding in love does not require knowing what it is.

Love is not mean, hurtful, jealous, unfaithful, angry, offensive, hateful, untrue, intrusive, competitive, ungrateful, discouraging, overbearing, deceitful, forceful, scornful, obsessive or always easy. Love is indescribable because to succeed at loving and being loved, it is less important to know what love is than to understand what love is not.

## 👁 Epilogue 👁

**T**hank you for reading *The Guide to Being Well*. If you are under the care of a mental health professional, review this book with your doctor or counselor before employing its techniques. Although my expertise is based on personal experience, I believe my principles and techniques for managing depression are an effective supplement to professional mental health treatment.

If your depression is untreated, seek the assistance of a mental health professional. Being open about your feelings is one of the most important things you can do to overcome depression. Mental health professionals can give you the tools to effectively manage depression.

Although overcoming it is difficult, giving up to depression makes life harder than standing up to it. Accepting responsibility for your life by pursuing happiness is paramount to stepping away from depression and moving toward wellness. This is one of the most important things my experience with depression has taught me.

I hope that sharing my struggle with depression and how I am overcoming it will help others do the same. If you believe there is no way out of despair, I pray the pages of this book give you hope; all is truly lost without it. No matter who you are, it is impossible to overcome difficulty without hope.

In the book's forward, I called myself an average working-class person, which is true. If I can overcome depression anyone can. I am not a guru, sage or perfect person. Like most people, I have frailties and shortcomings. The only thing that I am an expert in is me.

We should all strive to become experts in ourselves, which requires confronting things that are unpleasant to face. Although it is difficult, understanding ourselves is one of the most meaningful things that we can do. It is the key to living a fulfilling life.

Self-exploration is fraught with challenges but it is a necessary step on the way to well-being. Sufferers of depression must not fear the pursuit of self-understanding. Well-being of the mind, body and spirit is impossible to achieve for those who are not self-aware.

The choice to fight for mental, physical and spiritual wellness is yours to make. Your life will be good or bad depending on what you choose. I hope you choose wisely. Be well!



## My Gift to You this Day



*My gift to you this day is the wish that you will take time to witness the rising and setting of the sun while the opportunity avails itself upon you, and that you are made humble with reverence in recognition of the fact that the Sun's rising and setting bear silent witness to every moment of existence from dawn 'til dusk of your very life.*

*My gift to you this day is the prayer that the experience of your life will be richly rewarding to you, and that you should find yourself blessed beyond that which you have the ability to conceive.*

*My gift to you this day is the timeless lyric of a beautiful song which doth protest that all you need is love and the fervent hope of a coming day when this and all other such higher human aspiration rings true in every heart of all humanity.*

*My gift to you this day is encouragement to attempt making right any such wrong on your behalf that prevents you from sleeping with the peace of a clear conscience and further encouragement to forgive yourself the transgression once your attempt at contrition is made in earnest.*

*My gift to you this day is the sacred belief that we are all created equal and all somehow linked and interconnected as kin by the singular moment when all of creation came to be.*

*My gift to you this day is a plea ascending to the heavens that the greatest measure of days in your life will be filled with dreams imagined & realized and love given & received.*

– Scott Hinds Lambeth

Life is a process of exploration and discovery. One of the most compelling aspects of human intelligence is the ability to understand the world through exploration. Although humans comprehend even complex processes, understanding ourselves is perhaps the toughest challenge facing all of us.

Despite our great intelligence, few people use their intellect to explore and discover themselves. Even the brightest of us are virtual strangers to ourselves, for most our lives. Just as exploration helps unlock the world's mysteries, self-exploration is the key to discovering fulfillment in life.

The **Guide to Being Well** documents my 25 year journey of self-discovery. It demonstrates how through self-exploration, I have become mentally, physically, and spiritually strong. My insight into the relationship between the mind, body and spirit can serve as a roadmap for others on the path of self-exploration and self-discovery.



**SCOTT HINDS LAMBETH** was born in 1966 in Queens, New York. Raised by his grandparents and mother, Scott's family moved to Gainesville, Florida in the early 70's. Scotti (as he is commonly known) left Atlanta, Georgia and returned to Gainesville in 1999 to open a recording studio. He still lives in Gainesville currently.

Subsequent to returning to Gainesville, Scotti became the Program Director of a prominent North Central Florida radio station; a position which he held for 6 years. Subsequent to ending his career in broadcasting in 2006, Scotti became a Personal Trainer and Fitness Instructor.

Shortly after beginning his career in Fitness, Scotti discovered that he had a gift for motivating others. During his tenure as a Personal Trainer, Scotti has logged over 1000 training sessions with an extensive list of clients. Working as a Personal Trainer lead Scotti to his life's work, helping others become mentally, physically and spiritually strong; that is how **The Guide to Being Well** came to be.

ISBN 978-1477613658,-8



Cover and Book Design:  
Chermont Design  
Printed in the U.S.A.

**ISBN-13: 978-1477613658**  
**ISBN-10: 147761365X**