



YOUR LIFE, YOUR PURPOSE, YOUR FUTURE

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Ageless IDEAS Publications

Butler, Pennsylvania



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Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

(Matthew 7:24-25)

SECTION I—Laying the Foundation for Health

What determines your overall health and longevity?

Is it predetermined?^{*} Is it in your genes?

What is the power of your day-to-day choices?

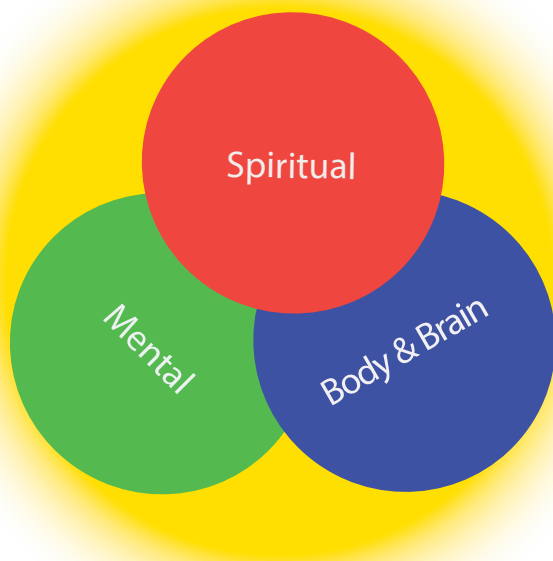
***YOUR LIFE, YOUR PURPOSE, YOUR FUTURE* is about comprehensive health. It attempts to answer critical questions and provide a reliable guide faithful to the Scriptures while drawing from contemporary science.**



^{*} ***Predetermined—defined as either fate or divine will***

Chapter 1—HEALTH: SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

What is health?



Your health is not just the absence of disease in your body and brain. It is also the presence of something very positive—the totality of how God has created you to be—spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Health is not just about the genes you inherited from your parents. It also concerns epigenetics—how your healthy behaviors (lifestyle) and environment can suppress your bad genes and express the good ones. For example, suppose you inherited a predisposition for heart disease, cancer, or type 2 diabetes. Regular exercise, good nutrition, sufficient sleep, and effective stress management are some of the factors that could prevent these conditions from ever developing. Your unique genetic and epigenetic makeup, grounded in your essential nature, shapes who you are, what you become, and your overall health.

Your essential nature—body, soul, flesh, and spirit—includes consciousness, self-consciousness,

moral character, and will. It encompasses your aspirations for a meaningful life, personal dignity, and immortality.

God created you with “spaces” in your being that only He can fulfill and another—a “people space”—that only people can fill. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 1:18). Other dimensions of how God made you include your sexuality and your passions and talents expressed in a life of work and service, balanced with timely rest and recreation.

Living healthy is a choice—more accurately, health is a function of the tens of thousands of choices you make throughout your life. Your beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and actions tremendously impact your health.

Basic physical health (Body/Brain)

- All bodily organs and bodily systems are structurally sound and working optimally in harmony with one another as God designed them.

Expressive physical health (Body/Brain)

- Above and beyond basic health—you are equipped with the strength, power, endurance, mobility, coordination, and balance to effectively and safely engage in all you need, called, and love to do.

Mental health

- You have full capacity to exercise personal freedom in all areas of life, consistently choosing to behave in a manner that promotes your well-being and the good of others.
- You have an accurate perception of yourself, your life, and your world.

Spiritual health

- You have a relationship with God, evidenced by a sense of gratitude and a growing awareness and appreciation of the presence, activity, power, beauty, and magnificence of God.

Health: Why does it matter?

Taking care of my body equips me to serve God more effectively

1

Taking care of my body puts me in a better place to be fully expressive and serve God. It gives me the energy and clarity of mind to fulfill His calling across the entire spectrum of life areas—spiritual, vocational, relational, and recreational.

We are to live biblically informed lives in all areas and, with God's help, to be about healing the brokenness in our lives.

We live in a fallen world. In God's way and timing, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we are to be fully involved in restoring it.

2

Taking care of my body promotes better health and fitness, enabling me to apply financial resources for building up the family, the church, and the community rather than treating and managing preventable, lifestyle-related diseases and injuries.

Consider the cost of diabetes, for example.

Type 2 diabetes is largely preventable and can often be reversed through major changes in eating and exercise habits!

- Three out of five people with type 2 diabetes have at least one other serious health problem related to their disease. Common complications of type 2 diabetes include heart disease, stroke, eye damage which can lead to blindness, kidney disease, and vascular (blood vessel) problems that can lead to foot amputation.

- U.S. care for a person with diabetes now costs an average of \$16,752 per year (2017).

3

We honor God when we are good managers of all that He has placed in our care, including our bodies. We are *"fearfully and wonderfully made."* We cannot justify systematically destroying our bodies with an unhealthy lifestyle of abuse and neglect.

The plot thickens—your choices and God's sovereignty

The Bible, with clarity, presents parallel truths throughout: First, God is sovereign, and in control. Second, we make authentic choices that shape our lives and impact the lives of others. As to how God can be in control and, at the same time, the choices we make are real creates a mystery for which Scripture does not offer the solution. As the theologian Francis Schaeffer stated, *"The Bible states both and walks away."*

What is the condition of your “house”? (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised.”



“But presently, He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”



Ordinary People Doing the Extraordinary

Eula Weaver, at seventy-seven years old, was frail and suffering from severe medical conditions. She was on more than a dozen medications. When she walked only a short distance, she experienced excruciating pains from claudication (cramping pain during movement or exercise due to limited blood flow from narrowed, obstructed arteries). To add to her pain and woes, Eula suffered a heart attack while undergoing a checkup at her doctor's office.

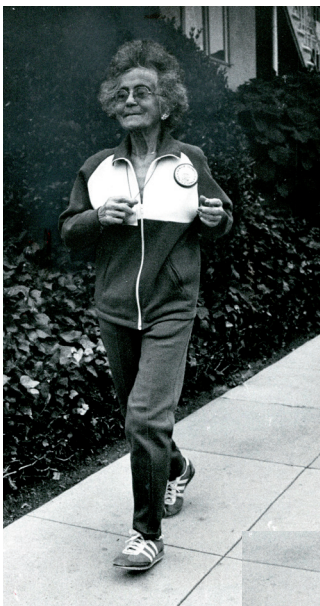
Johnny Rouse is a Hall of Fame college wrestling coach with two national team championships. Unfortunately, his type 2 diabetes destroyed his vision and required trans metatarsal amputations on both feet. At his peak weight, he was 340 pounds. At the time of his early retirement from the public school system in 2001, Johnny selected a guaranteed ten-year income program "because I knew I wasn't going to live that long."

Barbara Arrowsmith-Young, entering the world with a most severe learning disability, could not understand logic or cause and effect. She could not tell time on a standard clock. She felt the pain if she placed her hand on a hot surface but had no idea of its source. She was disconnected from her body's left side and had a poor sense of the space and objects surrounding her, often bumping into things. She could not find her way around, even in places often visited, such as her best friend's home. She said language was highly challenging and made no more sense to her than Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky poem:

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble to the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Dr. George Knox was 55 when he had a heart attack. All of the male relatives on his side of the family were dying of heart disease in their 50s or 60s. It seemed this would be George's outcome as well. He overheard a physician speaking to someone just outside his hospital room, speculating, "I do not think George will not be around to celebrate his 60th birthday."

What kind of future would you predict for Eula? Johnny? Barbara? George? What follows is "the rest of the story." (We have borrowed a famous phrase from Paul Harvey Aurandt, an American radio commentator for ABC news. He was best known for his inspiring, surprising segments—always ending with the words, "Now you know the rest of the story.")

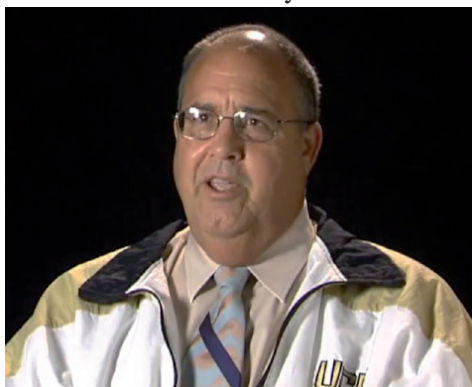


Eula: As she was about to be released from the hospital from her heart attack, her physician challenged her: "Eula, you have a choice. You can go home, go to bed, and have someone feed you with a spoon, or you can start moving." Of course, Eula told her doctor that no one was going to feed her with a spoon! It was, however, much more difficult than she anticipated. She started a walking program but still had excruciating cramping in her legs after a few steps. She was ready to give up when her son set up a meeting with a nutritionist, Nathan Pritikin. He advised her to keep walking despite the pain and radically change her poor eating habits.

Eula took his advice, moved to a healthy nutritional path, and continued walking daily. It took eighteen months before she could jog a single lap, about 400 meters, around the local high school track. But her perseverance paid off. She entered the Senior Olympics at eighty-five, earning gold medals in the 800 and 1,500-meter runs. Five years later, a San Diego newspaper article heading read, "**Eula Weaver Hangs Up Competitive Racing Shoes at 90.**"

Johnny: After months on a whole-foods, plant-based diet and regular exercise, Johnny reported, “They said my vision would not improve, but I can see better. I can see a lot better!” In addition, he brought his average blood sugar to a non-diabetic level. As to his guaranteed 10-year retirement program, he said, “It’s been seven years, and I’m feeling pretty good. So I think I chose the wrong program!”

It has been over 22 years since Johnny was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes! He has maintained a significantly lower body weight since then, and his blood sugar continues to be well below what it was during those years of poor diabetes control.



Barbara was determined to challenge her disabilities head-on. She succeeded on all fronts by creating novel ways of overcoming these barriers. She can now think logically, comprehend and remember what reads, has become in touch with the left side of her body, can tell time a standard clock, and enjoys getting around with the use of maps and sense of direction rather than relying on a GPS. Barbara completed a master’s degree and opened a successful school in Canada for children with learning disabilities. Her ideas have been implemented in schools across Canada and the United States. She is the author of an inspiring book, *The Woman Who Changed Her Brain*.

<https://barbaraarrowsmithyoung.com/>



George decided he would not sit around waiting to die. Here are George’s words when he was in his 80’s:

I began to get these notions about thirty years ago when doctors gave me an estimated five more years to live after my first and only heart attack. I had been making all kinds of errors. I overate, exercised too little, smoked a pipe, had too many negative thoughts, etc. All my male relatives had died of heart attacks in their ’50s and ’60s. Was it bad genes, or was it a lifestyle? I couldn’t change my genes, but I could change how I lived. So after studying what was available on longevity and anti-aging, I began a triple approach toward living beyond those five years. So far, it has worked for thirty years!

He had begun a walking program that eventually included jogging. Jogging led to running in races—not your usual 10Ks (6.2 miles) or marathons (26.2 miles). He became a long-distance runner, competing in 60-mile races!

At age 85, was George’s life coming to a close? The first words of his obituary give us the answer:

KNOX George W. Knox, Ph.D., age 99, passed away on October 2, 2010 . . . He was a founding member of the Columbus Roadrunner Club. He was a long time participant in the Cystic Fibrosis stair climb and many events for the Heart Association. Some of his favorite awards were a silver bowl from Sports Illustrated Magazine and a bronze running shoe presented by former Governor Jim Rhoads.

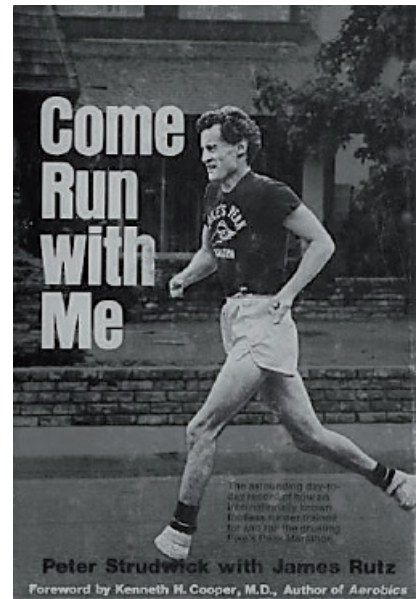
We are encouraged if not inspired by “ordinary people doing extraordinary things,” but aren’t these folks outliers (one who is set apart from others), having little to say to you or the general population? Science-based discussion in the last chapter of this book, plus your own successes and determination might help answer this question.

What if I face physical, cognitive, or mental challenges?

Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to firm resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind. (Leonardo DaVinci)

There are two paths to consider when faced with apparent body and brain limitations. One, you can avoid taking on your areas of limitation and go with your strengths. Or, you can take on the challenge of an area of weakness head-on to overcome it. Both strategies have merit.

Peter Strudwick (1930-2014)—author, speaker, and filmmaker— at age 39, began running. By age 55, he had competed in about two-hundred-fifty 10K runs and more than fifty marathons, including the Pikes Peak. That is unusual enough, but Peter virtually had no hands or feet. Instead, he ran on the stubs of his legs. His disability resulted from his mother contracting rubella during her pregnancy. They fled Germany, crossed into France, and eventually traveled to America.



David Hartman lost his sight due to glaucoma at the age of 6, and detached retinas at age 8. On May 27, 1976, he graduated from medical school in the upper fifth of his class. Temple University Medical School admitted him as the 181st member of a class that was to have just 180 students. They were impressed with his strength of character and determination but thought it was improbable that he could complete the four years and graduate. In 2019, continuing his many years as a board-certified psychiatrist, he received the NCAD (National Conference on Addiction Disorders) Champion Award.



Aimee Mullins is an athlete, actor, model, and nationally-recognized motivational speaker. She was born without shin bones and, at the age of one, had both legs amputated at the knee. Aimee co-founded HOPE (Hoping Other People Excel), a not-for-profit organization that helps athletes with physical challenges train and compete. She attended Georgetown University on a scholarship awarded by the U.S. Intelligence Agency. As an athlete, she competed in the sprint and the long jump in collegiate and paralympic competitions.

How do you see yourself—your health and your future?

There are many factors involved in how we see ourselves. One source is the “mirrors” we encounter in our experience with other people—that is, the feedback about ourselves we receive from them.

Eight-year-old Stephanie came home from gymnastics practice saying, *“I don’t want to go there anymore!”* She said that her coach gave a speech to the team about good nutrition, concluding with, *“Now some of you are fat!”* The coach then proceeded to name Stephanie and three other young gymnasts.

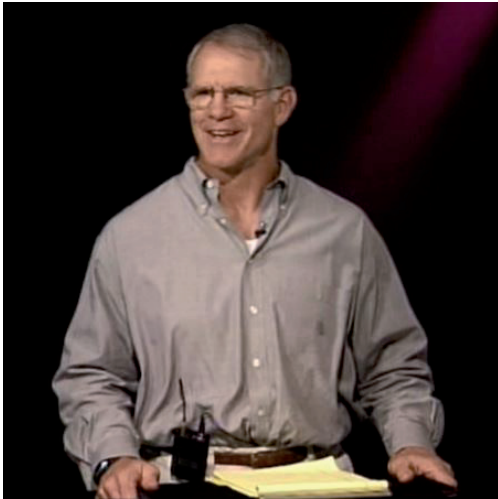
Stephanie’s Dad described how people are like mirrors: some are perfect mirrors—plate glass backed with silver—and reflect an accurate image of us; other mirrors are like the ones at the amusement park that significantly distort our look. She understood—recalling the mirrors she had stood before at Kennywood Park. Next, she and her Dad discussed how we need to determine what kind of a mirror a person is when they say things about us or act toward us in a certain way.

Stephanie concluded that her well-meaning gymnastics coach, in this instance, was an amusement park mirror. Despite this, she decided to continue training with her. Who are your “mirrors,” what have their responses said about you, and how accurate are their perceptions?



Chapter 2—ANSWERING THE “WHY”

Is your sense of purpose sufficient to motivate you for success?



Jon Kolb is an exercise physiologist who has worked wonders—young and old, athletes on all achievement levels, and clients facing physical and emotional challenges. The name of his organization—*Adventures in Training for a Purpose*—conveys a vital message. Jon says training will be short-lived without a higher sense of purpose—without placing purpose over goals—and you will fall short of your plan. If, for example, you make a New Year’s resolution to begin an exercise program merely to fit into a smaller clothing size, you are likely to fail. The statistics bear him out. According to a University of Scranton research New Year’s resolution study, only 77% of those who resolved made it through the first week, and only 19% kept their pledge for two years. Over the long term, the success

number continued to shrink.

Jon’s life reflects what he teaches. In ninth grade, Jon aspired to make the school’s football team, but at 120 pounds, the coach would not issue him a uniform. In an interview, Jon once said jokingly: *“In Oklahoma, if you do not become a football player by ninth grade, your parents will put you up for adoption and find a kid who can play.”* Later, Jon became a stand-out football player in high school, was an All-American at Oklahoma State and earned four Super Bowl rings in his 13 years with the Pittsburgh Steelers. With a passion for helping others, Jon’s contribution to the community has even exceeded his greatness as an athlete.

What is meant by purpose?

The words “purpose” and “meaning” are sometimes used interchangeably. A sense of life purpose gives life meaning; a meaningful life is one with a sense of purpose. Maybe a better way of comparing the two words is to think of purpose as doing and meaning as a state of being.

What does it take to find purpose and meaning? Must you *“be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound; be stronger than a locomotive; be faster than a speeding bullet?”* Be a Superman or Superwoman? No, but part of the answer is in discovering yourself.

Meet Paul Haefner: Paul was discouraged when he first moved into a nursing home in the Pittsburgh area. He was in his mid-seventies and had a progressive condition that paralyzed him from the neck down. He could no longer bathe, shave, dress, or feed himself. As to movement, he could only turn his head and move his left hand and wrist.

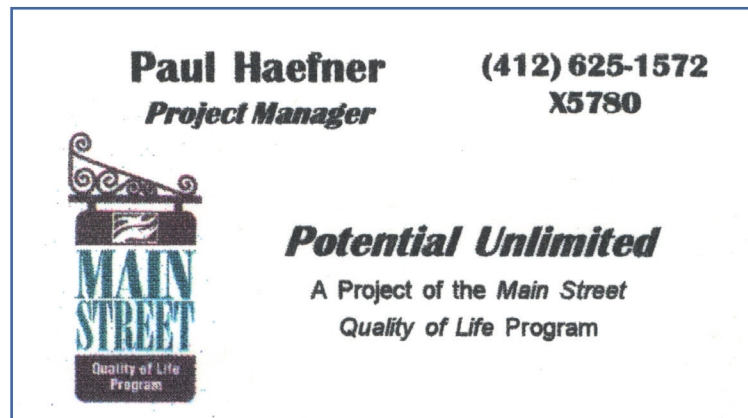
Paul was a loyal fan who closely followed every Pittsburgh professional sports team, displayed a compassionate heart for others, and had a sharp mind. His memory of facts, figures, and names was incredible. His dedication extended beyond the Steelers, Pirates, and Penguins to helping others. He said, *“I cannot move, so I have to have*



people care for me. Yet I see others around me who can move, but they don't. They lay in bed or sit in a chair or wheelchair all day."

Paul decided to make a difference. He discovered a tool for helping people identify their abilities and interests. He set out to administer the survey to residents and then interpret the result with each one he recruited to take the survey. Through their ability/interest profile and strong words of encouragement, Paul was able to stir them to action—to connect with activities, to serve, and to draw from available services.

Until then, Paul had been wholly dependent on staff and volunteers to move about the building in his wheelchair. Because of his new official volunteer role, his insurance carrier provided a motorized wheelchair. That left hand, still capable of movement, allowed him to operate the tennis ball-toggle switch on the chair and independently scoot about the building to visit his friends and meet his newly adopted clients. Paul aptly named his program "*Potential Unlimited*" and had business cards printed and distributed throughout the building.



Paul became the chairperson for the Resident Committee and was the number one go-to person when the state annually sent their inspectors. He actively participated in the many activities he had promoted to others—programs, games, having a character part in musicals and plays, participating in small groups, going on field trips, and, on rare occasions, attending a Pirates baseball game.

Paul continuously stretched the boundaries of his life. He had a strong faith and a sense of purpose. He knew he had an important place in his world.

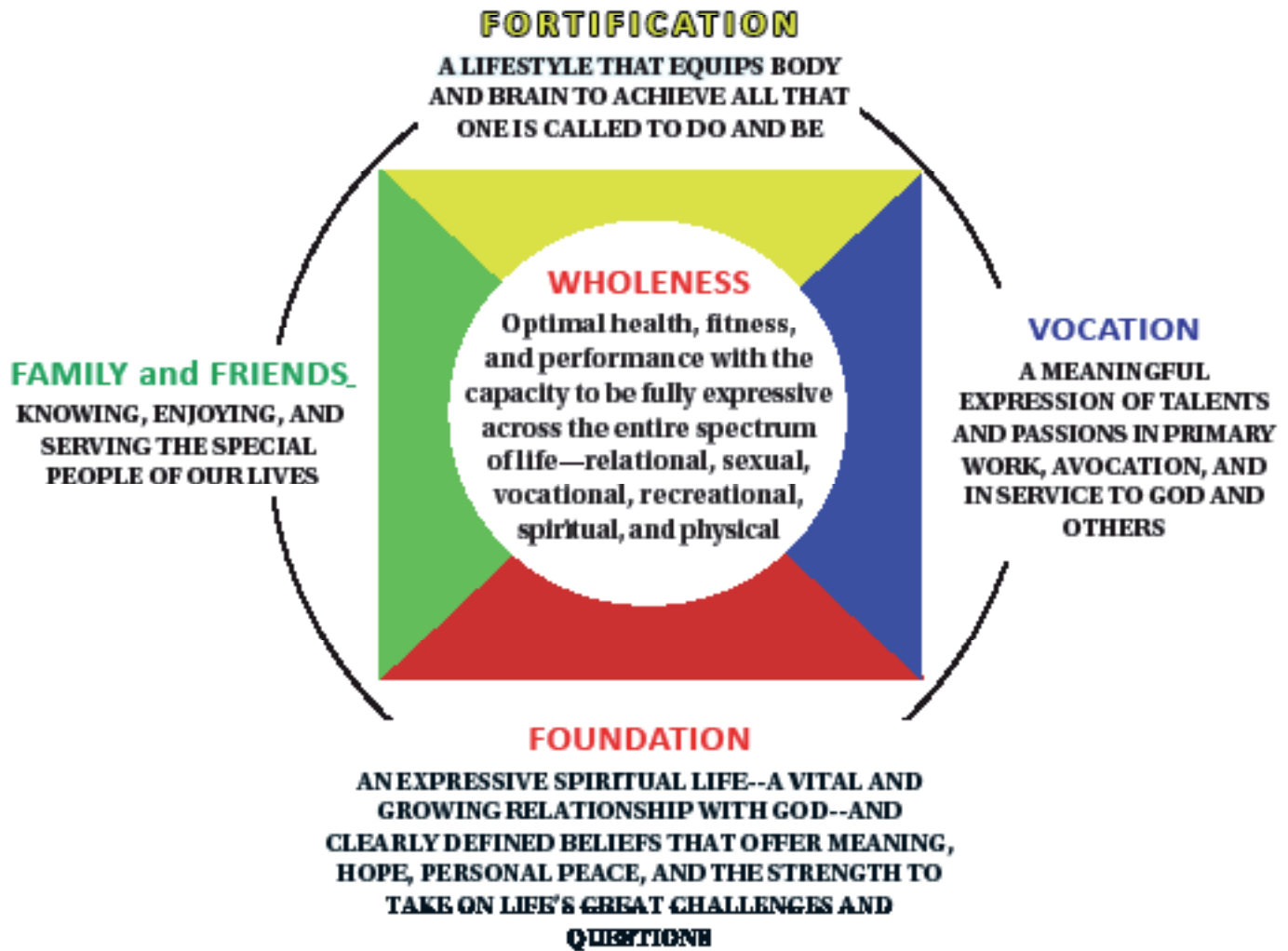
Life purpose, meaning, and health—what are the ingredients?

The view of life's meaning ranges from philosophers such as Camus and Sartre, who asserted life is meaningless, to the belief that each of us creates his meaning, to the conviction of an ultimate meaning rooted in the spiritual dimension of life. Mental health professionals such as Abraham Maslow, Victor Frankl, and Carl Jung introduce life meaning and health as inseparable partners. Victor Frankl claims that meaning and happiness elude us when they are sought directly—as an end in themselves. Instead, they are the product of the pursuit of "*a cause greater than oneself*." (*Man's Search for Meaning* by Frankl)

In our view, three major life themes are bound together in the pursuit of meaning and purpose. The three—relationships, vocation, and spirituality will be discussed in later chapters. Relationships take on meaning as we are about knowing, enjoying, and serving those in our inner circle and when we reach out to serve the needs of those in the extended community. We find meaning in expressing our abilities and passions through our work. Finally, an active spiritual life focused on knowing, enjoying, and serving God is the foundation for meaning and purpose.

LIFE PURPOSE AND HEALTH

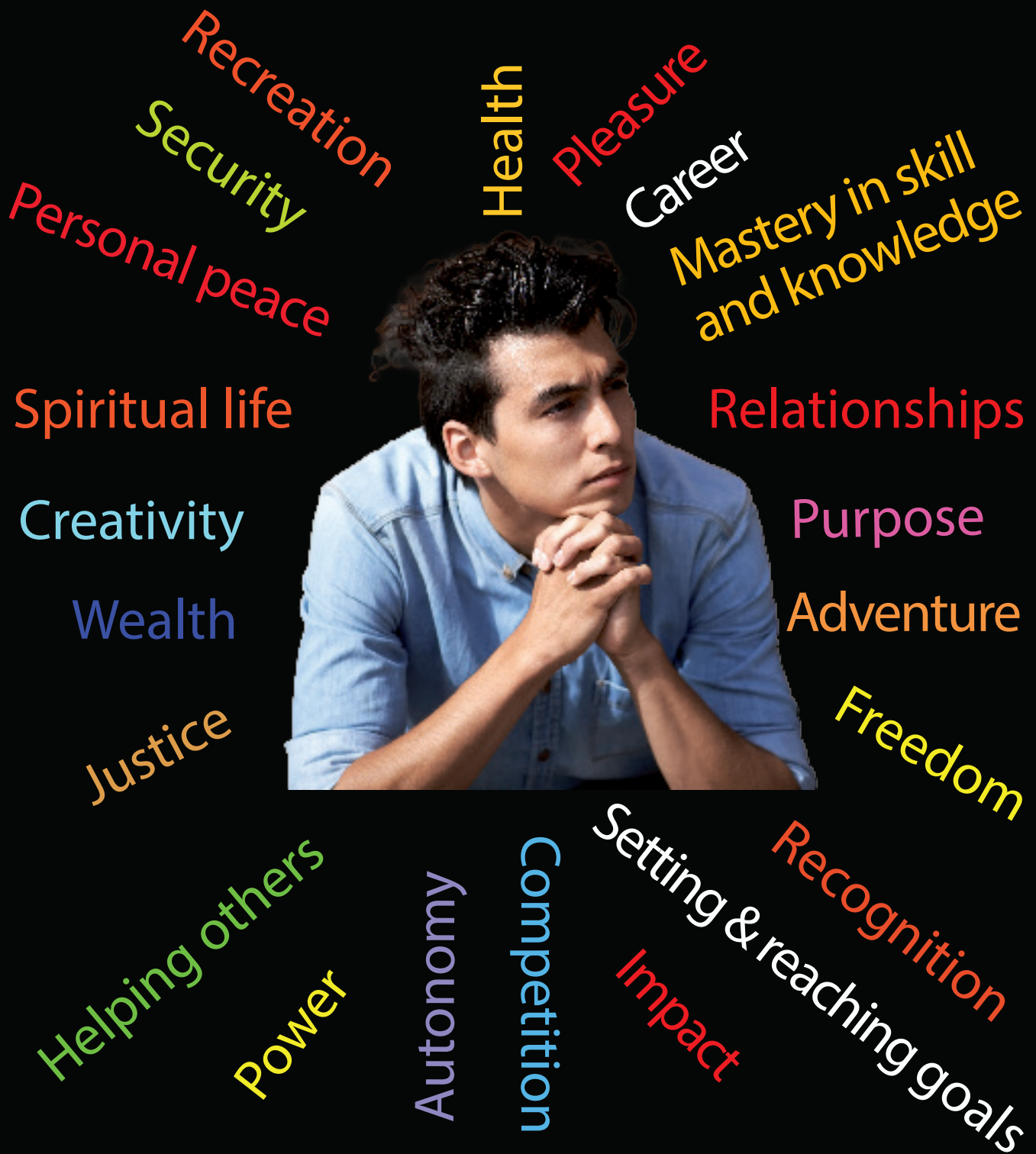
Below is an illustration bringing together relationships, vocation, spirituality, and a healthy lifestyle with life purpose and meaning.



About “training for life”

There is one other significant contributor to the pursuit of a full life. It is a healthy lifestyle directed by wisdom. Nutrition, exercise, and adequate sleep and rest strengthen us to do well in everything we love and are called to do. Choices that address the health of the body and mind involve life training—enabling one to reach optimal potential. As an athlete trains for their sport, you and I do well to train to be at our best—for our relationships, vocation and service, and spiritual life.

SECTION II—What Matters Most In (Your) Life?



Chapter 3—SPIRITUAL LIFE

Who is God? Which God are we talking about?

Many people today say all religions are fundamentally the same, only different superficially. We agree with those who have asserted the opposite as accurate: “They are fundamentally different and only superficially the same.” Consider the differences among them (The following descriptions, in large part, are taken from *Christianity, Cults and Religions*, by Rose Publishing, 2004)

Mormonism: God was once a man who progressed to become God and has a physical body. There is no Trinity; God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate gods. Jesus’ body was from the sexual union of Mary and Elohim. Salvation is by works and by being faithful to the leadership.



Jehovah’s Witnesses: There is one God, no Trinity. Jesus was the archangel, Michael, before he came to earth. Jesus is not God. Eternal life in heaven is by being baptized as a Jehovah’s Witness and carrying out their door-to-door efforts in service of their faith.

Islam: God is one: There is no Trinity. Jesus, highly regarded, is among one of 124,000 prophets sent by Allah. Jesus is not God. He was not crucified. Your good deeds, instead of evil deeds, determine whether you go to heaven or hell. Paradise includes maidens to provide sexual pleasure to righteous men.

Orthodox Judaism: God is a spirit, personal, eternal, loving, and omnipotent. Jesus is not God. The Messiah eventually will

restore the Jewish Kingdom and be the supreme ruler on earth. After a physical resurrection, the obedient will go to heaven; the disobedient will suffer punishment.

New Age: God is not a person; all is god, god is everyone and everything. Jesus drew from the divine power that we all are capable of. He was not the one true God. He did not physically rise from the dead. There is no resurrection of persons; one must overcome bad karma with good karma. Reincarnations continue until you achieve oneness with the god who is everything and everyone.

Classical Christianity: There is one God, holy, unchangeable in nature, existing eternally in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—each fully and equally possessing all the attributes of God. There is no God before him, or after or beside him. God is a spiritual being without a physical body. Jesus Christ, while retaining the fullness of His nature as God, took on a physical body, being miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. Living a sinless life, He died on the cross to make full payment for our sins, accomplishing salvation once and for all who trust in him alone. He was bodily resurrected; He ascended into heaven. His Deity and perfect humanity are united in one person, forever. He intercedes for us and will return to earth in power and glory.

Humankind was created in the image of God, but because of sin, was alienated from God. That alienation can be removed only through accepting God’s gift of salvation through faith alone which was made possible by Christ’s atoning death and resurrection. While works do not save us, our works are evidence of a new life in Christ.

Who is Jesus?

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

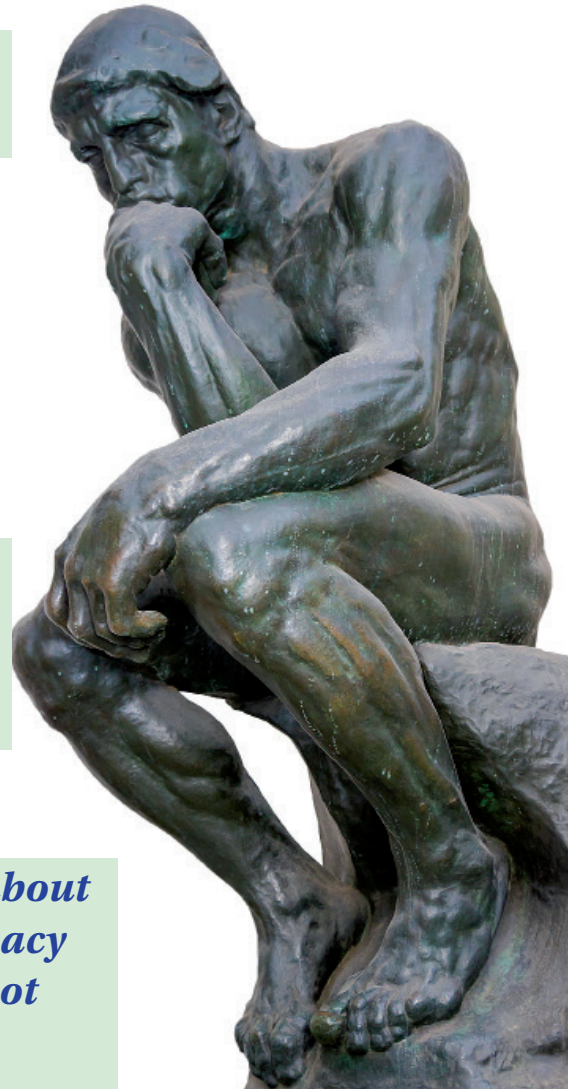
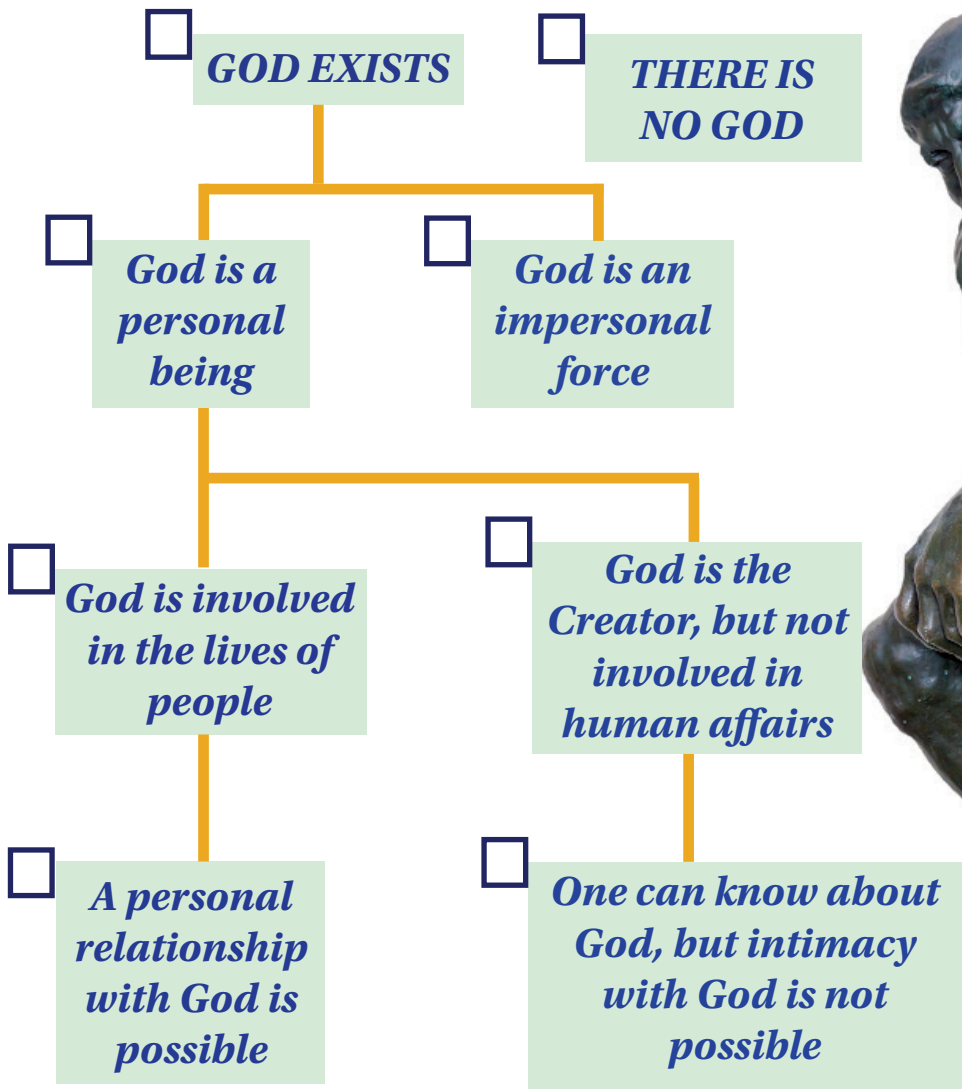
"I and the Father are One." (John 10:31)

"And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." (John 17:5)

He is the image of the invisible God, . . . For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (Colossians 1:15-16)



What is your view of God?



Only God can fill the space

We have a “*God-sized vacuum*” inside us. A paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 3:11 in the Amplified Bible says, “*There is a sense of eternity in Man’s heart which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy.*”

But there is a serious problem here—even if we seek out God on our initiative, there is a great barrier between God and us.

We are sinful creatures; the Creator God is holy and cannot simply overlook sin. The great question of human history is, “How can a sinful man or woman, guilty before a holy God, become not guilty?” How can I cross what, humanly speaking, is an unbridgeable chasm between myself and God?

The answer: God has provided the means—amazingly and unexpectedly that no human being could have ever anticipated it. Scripture speaks of the plan of salvation as a mystery revealed to us in God’s timing.

Foundational life questions that count most

Truth and Morality

Contrasting Systems of Belief

Today's Norm—21st Century Humanism

Either society or the individual determines what is right, but there are no absolute standards for truth or morality.

Biblical Christianity

The word “truth” appears 167 times in the Bible. God is truth; Jesus is truth. Jesus said, “*I and the Father are one*,” meaning He is as fully God as the Father and the Holy Spirit. Ethical standards are rooted in the very nature of God, and His laws correspond to us being created in the image of God. There are absolutes when it comes to morality.

Discerning what to do in life's complex circumstances is sometimes very difficult. Theologian, John Murray, recognizes just how challenging it might be to determine what is right in some circumstances. In his book, *Principles of Conduct*, Murray says,

The Biblical ethic is built upon fine distinctions. At the point of divergence, the difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, is not a chasm but a razor's edge. And if we do not appreciate this fact, then certainly we are not sensitive to the Biblical ethic.

The Biblical ethic allows no room for legalism or taking a passage of Scripture out of context—proof-texting. Instead, Scripture interprets Scripture—apply the whole Bible to life.

Udo Middelman, adjunct professor at Pepperdine University and former Member of Francis Schaeffer's L'Abri in Switzerland, says that we Christians have a propensity for adding to the law of God and then binding one another's consciences with what we believe to be true. As a result, we have to distinguish between what Scripture says, applying sound principles of interpretation, and what well-meaning believers sometimes claim to be the teaching of Scripture.



Destiny

Today's Norm—21st Century Humanism

You die and return to dust. There is no afterlife.

Biblical Christianity

Death is not the end. God has a grand and wonderful plan beyond this life for those who receive his gift of salvation. That gift becomes a reality when trusting and believing in Jesus and following Him as Lord.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Challenging beliefs

What we believe shapes our emotions and behavior; our behavior sets us on a course of health or ill health. Consider a famous skit by actor/comedian/clown Karl Valentin of Munich. The curtain on the stage lifts, and we see Karl anxiously searching within the circle of light from a lamp post. The rest of the stage is dark. A policeman walking by inquires, *“What are you looking for?”* Karl says: *“I lost the key to my house.”* The policeman joins Karl in the search but finally, in frustration, asks, *“Are you sure you lost it here?”* Karl points to a dark corner of the stage and says, *“No, I lost it over there.”* The policeman, exasperated, exclaims, *“Then why are you looking here!”* Karl: *“Because that is where the light is.”*

Karl searched for his key in the circle of light around the lamppost. Your circle of light is your life experience over the years. The darkness represents areas of life you have not yet searched. This Guide aims to shine scientific and Biblical light on regions of life you may not have explored—to challenge any currently-held counterproductive beliefs and contemplate and test new ones.



Putting beliefs to the test

We invite you to bring core beliefs into the light of the available evidence—as they apply to all of life. Will your beliefs, when put into practice, promote your well-being? Here are a few questions for putting personal views to the test:

1) Will my beliefs stand the test of the available evidence?

While there are areas of mystery in natural science, religion, and all other bodies of knowledge, our beliefs should stand the test of close scrutiny.

2) Will I thrive? As I live out my beliefs, will they further my overall well-being?

It is primarily my choices that shape my life for good or ill. For example, will a sedentary life and the Western diet sabotage the good genes I inherited from my parents? Conversely, will a healthy lifestyle suppress inherited bad genes and facilitate the expression of good genes?

Will my spiritual or religious beliefs bring out the best in me and promote the well-being of those around me?

3) Does my body of beliefs answer the great questions?

ORIGINS: Where did it all come from—the material universe of space, time, energy, matter, and all living things?

MORALITY: Concerning right from wrong, good and evil: Is there an ultimate standard?

DESTINY: What happens to us after death?

REVELATION: Is there a reliable written source of absolute truth—not only containing the truth but is Truth? Archaeologist Sir William Ramsey on the New Testament book of Acts: *“It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth.”* (You will read a little more of Ramsey’s work and his conclusions on page 23.)

4) Does my body of beliefs provide a basis for fulfilling my core aspirations?

We universally share *core aspirations* for meaning, dignity and immortality—a drive for a meaningful life, a sense of personal worth based on who we are (not based on our performance or market value), and a means of ultimately circumventing death.

MEANING: The importance of a sense of life meaning for all was addressed by Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Gustav Jung:

About a third of my cases are suffering from no clinically definable neurosis, but from the senselessness and emptiness of their lives. This can be defined as the general neurosis of our times.

Psychiatrist, Victor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor, said, “Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear almost any ‘how.’” No one is exempt when it comes to aspiring to a meaningful life:

Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated; thus, everyone’s task is unique as his specific opportunity to implement it.

To have meaning is to have a highly valued sense of purpose in life. It is not just a string of meaningful experiences, but a belief that one’s life has meaning. Again, from Frankl:

A psychiatrist today is confronted more and more with a new type of patient, a new class of neurosis, a new sort of suffering, the most remarkable characteristic of which is the fact that it does not represent a disease in the proper sense of the term . . . I have called this phenomenon, which the psychiatrist has to deal with so frequently, “the existential vacuum.” What I mean thereby is the experience of a total lack, or loss, of an ultimate meaning to one’s existence that would make life worthwhile.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow joined with Frankl and Jung when he described so many people being in a situation characterized by meaninglessness, existential boredom, and spiritual starvation.

DIGNITY: Your dignity is your worth, and all of us want to be treated by others in accord with our inherent value. We praise people of accomplishment—in art, academics, sports, and a host of other notable expressions, but dignity reaches far beyond what one achieves. We want others to recognize us for who we are, not merely what we do. To be human is to have dignity, and no matter how low or high is our station in life, we want others to treat us accordingly. This principle extends to every child, every adult—young and old, of every level of talent, intelligence, and education, rich and poor, healthy and infirm, and including the hardest of incarcerated criminals and persons of the noblest of character.

IMMORTALITY: Death, no matter how it is couched in poetic writing and art, is abnormal and stands against our deeply held aspiration to immortality. Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, author of the *Five Stages of Grief*, said death has always been distasteful to humankind: “Man does not die, he is killed.”

Sigmund Freud said that religious beliefs are “born of the need to make tolerable the helplessness of man . . . defending himself against the supremacy of nature—earthquake, flood, disease and above all the painful and insoluble of death.” He also wrote that belief in an afterlife is “the oldest, strongest, and most insistent wish of mankind.”

A few more thoughts about death and immortality:

Nikolai Berdyaev—*“I am not prone to the fear of death, as for instance Tolstoy was, but I have felt intense pain at the thought of death, and a burning desire to restore life to all those who died.”*

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *“The highest that has to be transcended is death.”*

Johann Gottlieb Fichte: *“Should this life not prove entirely vain and ineffectual, it must at least have relation to a future life, as means to an end.”*

The Abkhazians of south central Russia are known for their longevity—often living beyond 100 years. But they do not accept death as inevitable. Anthropologist Sula Benet states that *“death in their view is not the logical end of life but something irrational.”*

We have addressed four ways of subjecting our beliefs to a “truth” test—Are they supported by the evidence? Will they enable me to thrive? Do my beliefs provide adequate answers to life’s big questions? And, do my beliefs address the universal core aspirations to meaning, dignity, and mortality? The fifth and final question follows.

5) Do I have a healthy belief system for taking on the issues that create pools of negative emotion—fear, hurt, disillusionment, anger, grief, guilt, and shame? Negative unresolved past experiences will continue to impact our lives in the present. This burden, a lack of closure, is often best addressed in dialogue with a professional or pastoral counselor. The goal is to bring closure to unresolved issues past to “travel light.” A Biblical framework for achieving closure is presented in chapter 9.

Medical science, spirituality, religion, and health

In this brief segment, we will dip our big toe into the waters of scientific research, investigating the impact of spirituality, religious expression, and belief on mental and physical health. It is estimated that about 80% of the scientific research and literature on religion and spirituality is devoted to mental health; only 20% is focused on physical health.

An extensive presentation would have us digging into many scientific peer-reviewed studies and many other well-designed research projects, something we will not do. So instead, you are invited to consider the merit of the limited information presented here, followed by your investigation. For example, typing in a search on the internet for “spirituality, religion, and health” will connect with 252 million results. A few reputable sources represent this formidable number. Here are a few examples to begin an investigation:

- **Mayo Clinic:** *“Most studies have shown that religious involvement and spirituality are associated with better health outcomes, including greater longevity, coping skills, and health-related quality of life (even during terminal illness) and less anxiety. Several studies have shown that addressing the spiritual needs of the patient may enhance recovery from illness.”*
- An article in **Forbes** offers an overview of research studies, drawing from 55 sources with documentation: *“Science Says: Religion Is Good for Your Health,”* by Dr. Nicole Roberts (doctorate in public health, University of North Carolina; Masters in public policy, University of Chicago). She reports a range of results from various bodies of research. Here are a few she addressed:

An increase in religious practice was associated with having greater hope and a greater sense of purpose in life.

According to the Pew Research Center, highly religious Americans are more likely to be *“very happy with the way things are going in life.”*

A review of 100 studies said that people frequently involved in religious activities and highly valued their religious faith were at reduced risk of depression. According to Tyler J. VanderWeele and associates at Harvard University, women ages 30 to 55 who attended religious services at least weekly had a five-fold lower rate of suicide than those who never attended.

Studies found that adolescents who frequently attended religious services and had a high level of spiritual support from others in their community had the lowest levels of depression.

Men and women who attended church weekly had the lowest mortality rates. Religious practice reduces death rates, especially among African-Americans.

A review of 250 epidemiological health research studies found a reduced risk of colitis, different types of cancer, and untimely death among people with higher levels of religious commitment.

Youth who attended religious services weekly and rated religion as important in their lives were more likely to eat healthfully, sleep sufficiently, and exercise regularly.

- **Meditation** is a relaxed state of focused attention that may or may not be related to religion or spirituality. In some practices, one tries to clear the mind and focus, for example, on breathing or visualizing a beautiful and quiet scene. Different religions promoting meditation—Buddhist, Hindu, Christian—differ in their meditation practices. For some, the purpose of meditation is to reduce stress and promote brain health. On the other hand, Christian meditation is more a matter of substance—focusing on the nature and works of God as revealed in creation and the Old and New Testaments, and the expression of worship, confession, gratitude, and petition in prayer.
- **Prayer** common to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, according to a large population research study led by Harvard Professor Tyler VanderWeele: *“Young adults who prayed daily tended to have fewer depressive symptoms and higher levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and positive affect, in comparison to those who never prayed.”* (Quoted in *Psychology Today* magazine)

Religious beliefs and expressions are associated with a range of health benefits: the relationships developed within a group, the emotional support they provide, and the encouragement to adopt a healthy lifestyle that leads to good emotional and physical health.

About engaging your brain while crossing the threshold of Faith

The Christian Faith engages both the heart and the brain. The brain is engaged by the evidence when crossing the threshold of the door of Faith. That is why the Apostle Peter spoke of the Christian *“always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”* (1 Peter 3:15)



The Apostle Paul

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

“And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.” (Acts 17:2-4)

He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. (Acts 18:19)

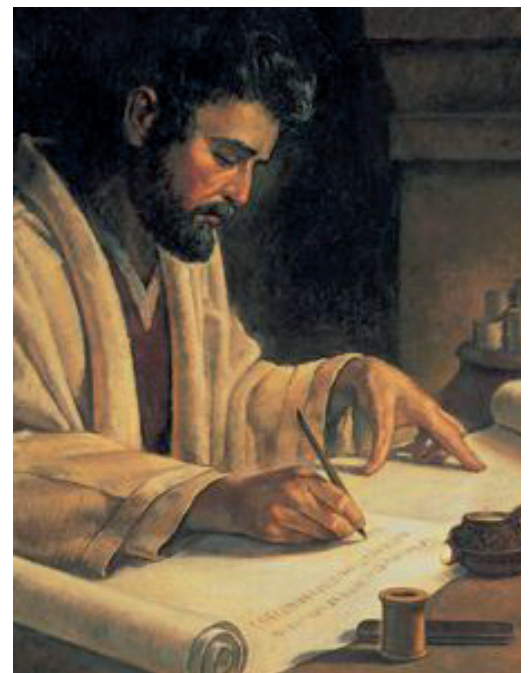
And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 19:8-10)

The Physician Luke

Luke wanted his reader to be reassured as to the accuracy of his historical account:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

Archaeologist, Sir William Ramsey, set out to prove the inaccuracy of the history recorded in the New Testament books of Acts and Luke. This was his conclusion: *“I take the view that Luke’s history is unsurpassed in its trustworthiness. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian, and they will stand the keenest scrutiny and the harshest treatment.”*



Reasons to believe

The Christian Faith has been attacked vigorously over the centuries: the accuracy of Biblical historical narratives; the miracles; Jesus' virgin birth, death, and resurrection; his claims about Himself, and what Scripture claims who he is—the prophesied Messiah, the Son of God and that He is God and the only way to salvation. In our times, there has been a renewed, energetic effort to discredit even the very existence of God. Why such a fuss? Why is God such a threat? The answer is that there are far-reaching, eternal implications if one takes the Bible's messages seriously.

Nietzsche captures a motive of the atheist in his statement: *"Man killed God because he couldn't stand to have God looking on his ugliest side. Man must cease to feel guilty."* If God exists, there is the problem of sin. Today, that 3-letter word is carefully avoided, even in the pulpit. Psychiatrist Karl Menninger mocks this trend among today's preachers in his book, *Whatever Became of Sin?*

If God exists, it is not true *"I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul."* I must bow and answer to God; I have freedom, but my freedom does not go to being autonomous. Writer William Braden, regarding many of the atheists of our day: Why are they such a jolly and optimistic and happy lot? *"All this happy talk stems directly from the fact that God is no longer around to spoil the fun, so to speak."*

What is God?

J.I. Packer, in *Knowing God*, quotes the fourth question of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, "What is God?" Answer: *"God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."* Here is a brief summary of how God is presented in the Bible:

GOD'S NATURE IS DISTINGUISHED FROM CREATION: Self-existent, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable

THE POWERS OF GOD: Almighty, (omnipotent), omniscient, omnipresent.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD: Holiness, love, mercy, truthfulness, faithfulness, goodness, patience, justice

We don't have the original Bible manuscripts. Do we know what it said?

The science of textual criticism (lower criticism, the science of studying ancient manuscripts to determine the authentic text) virtually takes us back to the original writings. About one thousand Hebrew manuscripts, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, and 5,800 manuscripts and manuscript fragments of the Greek New Testament have been available. *"The science of textual criticism has given us 100% certainty that what we have in our Bibles today is the original meaning and over 98% for the Old Testament and 99.5% for the New Testament in words."* (Quoted from the website, <https://truthfaithandreason.com/>).

The persuasive power of Biblical prophecies

More than 300 Old Testament prophecies about Jesus were fulfilled—including being born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), and the circumstances of His death (Isaiah 53). Other remarkable prophecies include the destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 26) and the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia—100 years before he was even born—to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

"Cyrus is my shepherd and will fulfill all my purpose." (Isaiah 44:28) In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (Ezra 1:1-2)

Contemporary Science and God

Many people today continue to believe the origin of the universe—all matter, energy, space, and time—and all living organisms can be accounted for within an evolutionary framework. In general, discussion of intelligent design in the classrooms of public schools and universities across the nation is considered unscientific and is not to be discussed as a viable option.

An increasing number of reputable scientists, however, have acknowledged that no adequate evolutionary construct exists to explain 1) the origin and fine-tuning of the universe, 2) the origin of the first living organism, and 3) the sudden appearance and incredible complexity of numerous highly-developed living creatures in the fossil record.

Theoretical physicist, Werner Heisenberg, said, *“The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass, God is waiting for you.”*

Astrophysicist Sir Fred Hoyle in 1981: *“A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as the chemistry and biology, the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put the conclusion almost beyond question.”*

What follows is not a complete picture, but it intended to provide a basis for further thought and discussion.

THE FINE TUNING OF THE UNIVERSE

Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking (hardly a theist) makes an interesting comment on the fine-tuning of the universe: *“The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.”*

Physicist John Polkinghorne stated that although he did not think that the fine-tuning of evidence proved the existence of God, he did think that a theistic designer provided a much better explanation of fine-tuning than any materialistic hypothesis. *“I don’t say that the atheist is stupid. I just say that theism provides a more satisfying explanation.”*

British physicist Paul Davies states, *“The really amazing thing is not that life on earth is balanced on a knife edge but that the entire universe is balanced on a knife edge, and would be total chaos if any of the natural ‘constants’ were off even slightly.”*

A quote from an article in *Scientific American*, September 1971, pp. 51-59, raises speaks of a finely-tuned universe that allows for life. *“As we look out into the universe and identify the many accidents of physics and astronomy that have worked together to our benefit, it almost seems as if the universe must in some sense have known that we were coming.”*

Scientist Stephen Meyer, in his book *Return of the God Hypothesis*: *“We apparently live in a Goldilocks universe. The fundamental forces of physics have just the right characteristics, the properties of the universe just the right characteristics, and the distribution of matter and energy in just the right configuration to make life possible.”*



THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

Consider a comment from UK science writer Michael Marshall: *“In a few scrawled notes to a friend, biologist Charles Darwin theorized how life began. Not only was it probably correct, but his theory was also a century ahead of its time.”* In his article, Marshall referred to one of Darwin’s many letters to botanist Joseph Hooker:

My dear Hooker,

It is often said that all the conditions for the first production of a living organism are now present, which could ever have been present.

But if (and oh what a big if) we could conceive in some warm little pond with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts-- light, heat, electricity &c. present, that a protein compound was chemically formed, ready to undergo still more complex changes, at the present day such matter (would) be instantly devoured, or absorbed, which would not have been the case before living creatures were formed.

Microbiologist Dean Kenyon, for many years, was one of the leading scientists offering chemical evolution as the explanation for the first living organism. In 1969 he co-authored a book, *Biological Predestination*, on the origin of life. “My co-author and I were convinced we had *THE* scientific explanation for origins.” By the end of the 1970s, through the continuing research by many scientists, Kenyon knew his theory had failed. He said,

We have not the slightest chance of a chemical explanation of the origin of the simplest of cells. So the concept of intelligent design of life is immensely attractive to me and made a great deal of sense as it very closely matched the multiple discoveries of molecular biology.

Concerning what is being built and operating on a micro-level:

This is mind-boggling to perceive at this scale of size such a finely-tuned apparatus that bares the detail of intelligent design and manufacture. And we have the details of an immensely complex molecular realm of genetic information processing. And its exactly this new realm of molecular genetics of compelling evidence of design on the earth.

WHERE IS IT ALL GOING?

Do you remember watching a western with two characters facing off in a duel?



It is not just in the movies. Recently two business partners engaged in a conflict that made the news: “*Florida business partners die after shooting each other in dispute at work, police say.*” I think there is a parallel here. Many evolutionary scientists are “killing off” one another’s dueling theories. In a room full of such theorists, not many will be left standing at the end of the day.

More than merely recognizing that God is—Enjoy a relationship with the One who knows you and delights in your knowing Him

Matthew, then age 4, and I got into the car to drive to a restaurant. I looked over at him, and as he pulled the door shut with both hands, he turned toward me with a big grin and said, *“Dad, I really like it when just you and me go someplace.”*

Matthew’s response was a reminder—the best gift I have to give my children is myself. Amazingly, this parallels what God wants most from me—me. God, who lacks for nothing; God, who is perfect, complete, and fulfilled within Himself, delights in our fellowship with Him.

Where are you on your spiritual journey? Are you just beginning to realize that God is interested in you? Are you wrestling with some challenging issues or questions? Have you wandered away from a prior commitment to God? Possibly you are already in a place of strength in your relationship with Him.



Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Do I believe?

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD: "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)

Our personal sin is the barrier between us and God

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

The great question: How do the guilty become "not guilty"?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:16-18)

The key to removing the barrier between me and God is belief in Jesus

Before God, knowing my sin I enter the plea, "guilty."

I can do nothing to earn my way to God: I am absolutely helpless to remove my own guilt.

I acknowledge that Jesus Christ, who is without sin, took the punishment for my sin upon Himself when he died upon the cross.

I accept the free gift of what he did as payment in full for my sin and that His righteousness was "credited to my account."

I commit on a heart level to follow Jesus, who was raised to life as my Savior and the Lord of my life.



Building a vital and growing relationship with God

One-on-one with God

Like our human-to-human relationships, our relationship with God has to be nurtured through spending unhurried time with him on a regular basis via reading what he has to say in His Word, and through talking with Him— i.e., prayer.

Prayer's common ingredients include praise of God, confession of specific sins, expression of gratitude, and requests on behalf of ourselves and others. Without this one-on-one fellowship with God, in spite of how many "spiritual" things we participate in, we become a mere religious shell.

J. I. Packer in his book, *Knowing God*: *"If I were playing the role of the devil's advocate, I would do everything in my power to prevent people from spending regular, intimate time with God each day."*

Martin Luther said that he spent an hour at the beginning of each day with the Lord—except, that is, on really busy days when he spent two hours!

Inspiration from Auca

Many years ago I met Auca, a missionary woman in her 70s, at a leadership training retreat. I walked into the main lodge early one morning and saw her off in a corner of the lodge, reading and praying.

I approached her when she was finished and asked how long she had been meeting with the Lord in the morning. She said that she had made a commitment at a Christian camp as a teenager to spend the first part of each day with Him.

I asked how she had done over those years, She said, *"I've never missed a day."*

About community—the role of the cast of thousands in our lives

We need to worship and fellowship with other believers. Participation in the life of the church is critical for having a vital and growing relationship with God. Sometimes a person is hurt by someone in the church and withdraws from participation saying, "I don't need to go to church to worship God." It is true that we can worship alone, in a modest building, a magnificent cathedral, or a home church. We will be spiritually undernourished, however, if we withdraw from fellowship and worship with other believers.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching) and fellowship, in the breaking of bread (taking communion) and in prayers.

(Acts 2:42)

Study, study, study!

Study is also critical for spiritual growth. We are to know what we believe and why we believe. Christian books can be helpful, especially those authored by respected authors, but they should not take the place of a diligent study of the Scriptures.

The Psalmist says that “his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.”

Peter in the New Testament says, *“Be prepared to give a defense when anyone asks you for a reason for the hope that is within you.”* (1 Peter 3:15)



Your word I have hidden
in my heart, That I might
not sin against You.
(Psalms 119:11)

Turn knowledge into action

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)



Chapter 4—RELATIONSHIPS

We were made for community

Relationships are critical to living a long, healthy life—especially our relationships with family and friends. Malcolm Gladwell writes about the town called Roseto in his book entitled, *The Tipping Point*. He addresses the community's unusual characteristics and the reason behind its uniqueness. A brief recap: In 1882, ten men and one boy left Italy and set sail for New York. They eventually found their way to a slate quarry in Bangor, Pennsylvania.

Others followed, and they built homes and a church and named their town Roseto. In 1896 a dynamic priest took over the church and set up spiritual societies and festivals. He encouraged the townsfolk to plant gardens and gave them seeds and bulbs. The town came to life and prospered. Schools, parks, shops, restaurants, and factories sprang up, making blouses for the garment trade.

Jump to the 1950s. Dr. Stewart Wolf from Oklahoma spent summers on a farm near Roseto. On one such visit, he spoke at a medical society and met with a physician afterward. The doctor said, "I've been practicing for seventeen years. I get patients from all over, and I rarely find anyone from Roseto under sixty-five with heart disease." That was well before the advent of cholesterol-lowering drugs and aggressive measures to stop heart disease. Heart attacks were an epidemic in the US and were the leading cause of death in men under sixty-five.

Dr. Wolf decided to investigate and enlisted the support of his colleagues and students from Oklahoma. First, they analyzed medical records, took medical histories, and constructed family genealogies. Then, they invited the entire town for testing at the local school over the summer.

The results were astonishing to Dr. Wolf. No one under fifty-five had died of a heart attack or showed heart disease. For men over sixty-five, the death rate from heart disease was half that of the US. The death rate from all causes in Roseto was 30-35% lower than expected. There was no suicide, no alcoholism, drug addiction, little crime, and no stomach ulcers. People were mostly dying of old age. What was the reason for that phenomenon?

Did their dietary practices from the Old World make them healthier than Americans? For example, they cooked with lard, ate pizza loaded with bad stuff, and ate sweets year-round. Yet, 41% of their calories came from fat. In addition, they smoked and struggled with obesity.

Could the solution be found in their genes? Perhaps they were from a particularly hardy stock that protected them from significant diseases. But Rosetans living in other parts of the US did not have the same good health as their cousins in Pennsylvania.

Was it explained by the region in which they lived? Perhaps the beautiful foothills of eastern Pennsylvania are good for one's health. But, on the other hand, the towns closest to Roseto, similar in size, of European ancestry, with hardworking folks, had death rates from heart disease three times that of Roseto.

The Answer: It had to do with relationships!

- People visited one another, chatting in the street, cooking for one another in their backyards, and sitting on their porches talking.
- The families were multi-generational, mostly living under one roof, with greatly respected grandparents.
- The church also had a unifying and calming effect.
- There were twenty-two civic organizations in a town of under two thousand people.
- The wealthy were discouraged from flaunting their success and helped the less successful.
- They had created a robust, protective social structure capable of insulating them from the pressures of the modern world. They were healthy because of their solid and enduring relationships.



When the team presented their results to the medical community, they were met with skepticism. No one was used to thinking about health in terms of community. The team had to get them to realize that culture, friends, and family profoundly affect who we are.

One research study concluded a lack of intimacy and not getting emotional support can increase the risk of coronary events. “There is a growing body of literature that shows that being exposed to negative relationships can, over time, produce emotional effects that may trigger biological changes in the body.” People who experienced negative close relationships had a 34% higher risk of coronary events. (Dr. Roberto De Vogli of the University College, London, UK, and colleagues reported their findings in the October 8, 2007 issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine.)

More evidence



- Infants who are insulated from regular human contact fail to thrive and soon die.
- Infants born prematurely in intensive care, when stroked and touched for significant periods each day, are less prone to infection and fare better developmentally.

Twin sisters Brielle and Kyrie Jackson (their 20th birthdays celebrated in 2020), were born 12 weeks premature. Brielle, struggling to breathe, was beginning to turn blue. Contrary to hospital regulations in the U.S., nurse Gayle Kasparian, with the parents' permission, placed Kyrie in her sister's incubator. “Brielle snuggled closer to her sister, and a miracle took place. Almost instantly, Brielle's heart rate slowed to normal and she began to stabilize. Her oxygen levels, which had been dangerously low, leveled out and she began to breathe more easily.” Photographer Chris Christo of the Worcester Telegram & Gazette happened to be at the hospital to take the photo known as the “lifesaving hug.”



- Children with inadequate human interaction and contact are more prone to illness and fall behind developmentally.
- Adolescents—even if surrounded by people—are more at risk for depression and suicidal thoughts and acts if they feel there is no one they can openly talk with when the need arises.
- Adults who are isolated from others have a significantly higher all-cause death rate than those who are not isolated from others.



"A child arrived just the other day; he came to the world in the usual way. But there were planes to catch and bills to pay. He learned to walk while I was away. And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it..."

*– from Harry Chapin's
Cat's in the Cradle*



Toward nurturing your special relationships:

- *Spend time one-on-one, in addition to group and family time.*
- *Enjoy activities together in a variety of settings and circumstances.*
- *Tear down any barriers between you.*

Building strong relationships—Intimacy



There was Adam, lacking nothing in himself, placed in the perfect setting of the Garden. He had fellowship with God unhindered by sin. In Genesis, chapter two says, “*And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’*”

People were made for people—to know, enjoy, and serve one another. When God presented Adam to his newly created partner, Eve, Adam exclaimed, “At last, this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” This strong response reflects a need filled by an equal—a person in the image of God.



We are incomplete apart from community—apart from vital, growing, intimate relationships with other people. The Scriptures and current scientific research affirm that God created us to know, enjoy, and serve one another.

One of the most powerful passages in the Scriptures describing the communion of intimacy between two people is in the Book of Samuel. The text defines the deep, interwoven bond between Jonathan and David.

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. . . . Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. (1 Samuel 18:1-4)

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
(Proverbs 27:17)

Your special relationships

Name those with whom you have the deepest or strongest relationship. What sets these relationships apart from every other relationship, and how do you contribute to one another’s well-being?

Chapter 5—VOCATION AND RECREATION

God created us for meaningful work. The model presented in Scripture is that our vocation or calling is to fit how God has made us—our labor is to be a self-consistent expression of our talents, aptitudes, gifts, and passions. For example, whom did God call to be the 70 elders to work alongside Moses? It was “men of reputation” who demonstrated maturity and judgment.

What are your strongest abilities or potential abilities (aptitudes)?

“I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.” Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.” (Numbers 11:14-17)

Whom did God call to accomplish the task of building the temple? First, there were laborers with strong backs: “Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry stone in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.” So also were chosen gifted artists and artisans, and timber cutters from Lebanon recruited to work on the temple because there were no skilled timber cutters in Judah or Jerusalem.

“So now send me a man skilled to work in gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and in purple, crimson, and blue fabrics, trained also in engraving, to be with the skilled workers who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. Send me also cedar, cypress, and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber in Lebanon. And my servants will be with your servants, to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the house I am to build will be great and wonderful.” (2 Chronicles 2:7-9)

Your work and your health

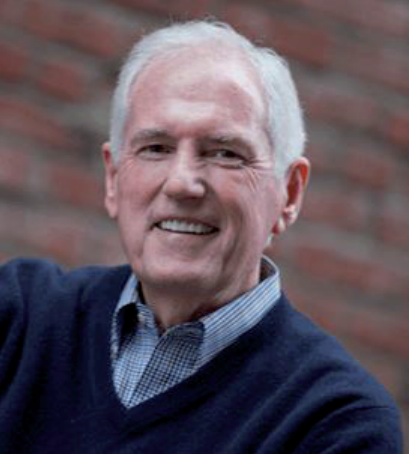
Our work is a natural expression of who we are. Chancellor, Otto von Bismark of Germany, set the retirement age of 65 when he introduced a social security system in 1889. There is a direct relationship between retirement and longevity. People who retire before age 65 have a higher death rate than those who retire at 65. Those who retire at age 55 are more likely to die in the decade after retirement than those who retire at 65. (Reported from Web MD)

Work has its hazards to health and longevity. A hated job negatively influences physical and mental health, leading to anger, depression, anxiety, and disrupted sleep. Through destructive behavior patterns, fellow employees, managers, and executives create a toxic work environment that impacts mental health. An example is a boss who believes he can only maintain a high-level production by always conveying, "You are falling short of the mark." In contrast—author, consultant, speaker, and executive mentor Bobb Biehl says, "a Christian organization views its employees as persons to be developed, not merely tools to be used." Bobb has developed many resources, logged thousands of hours as a consultant to 500+ clients across the country, and mentored more than 5,000 executives. He has also developed a wealth of printed and video resources. Bobb's web address:

<https://www.bobbbiehl.com>

Men and women working the night shift (not the evening shift) have an increased risk for heart attack and stroke. It appears that we are not able to adapt to that schedule completely. Working too many hours creates a life imbalance that pushes relationships, exercise, and sleep to the side.

Harry Chapin's song, "Cat's in the Cradle," carries an important message for times when we are too busy to spend adequate time with one another:



A child arrived just the other day; he came to the world
in the usual way. But there were planes to catch and
bills to pay. He learned to walk while I was away. And
he was talkin' 'fore I knew it.

A much later exchange between father and son:

I've long since retired, my son's moved away
I called him up just the other day
I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind"
He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I could find the time"
"You see, my new job's a hassle and the kid's got the flu"
"But it's sure nice talkin' to you, Dad"
It's been sure nice talkin' to you"

And as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me
He'd grown up just like me
My boy was just like me

I once introduced a lecture by playing Harry Chapin's song. In the audience was a couple—busy professionals—who had brought their 13-year old son. As the last note of the music sounded, the son jumped to his feet and shouted, "*That's my parents!!!*" The parents were red-faced, and the rest of the audience fidgeted uncomfortably. These were loving devoted parents over-committed in their work in the community. So busy addressing the world's needs, they were neglecting their children and one another.

Vocation – occupation and job

Let's distinguish between vocation, occupation, and job.

Vocation or **calling** is *you*, who you are—your talents, gifts, passions, interests, and personality characteristics expressed in your work. Your vocation is always intact.

Occupation is the particular line of work you engage in for your vocation. It has a label— homemaker, artist, musician, craftsman, tradesman, laborer, educator, politician, physician, psychologist, scholar, writer, theologian, pastor, etc. Your occupation is your title or “handle.”

Your **job** is a particular focus and setting for your work. You can lose your job, yet your occupation and vocation still be intact. For a season, you may have to commit to a job that is not your preference. Your job is defined by what you do—not always by who you are.

Ideally, vocation, occupation, and job are a match. However, family and peer pressures, insecurity, the need for status and recognition, and the pursuit of wealth can throw us off track.



Choosing a vocational expression

Do you want to know God's will for your life in the area of work? Then, know yourself—your aptitudes, talents, personality, passions, and enduring interests. All types of work have their toilsome dimensions. The greatest joy and satisfaction arise in work that is a good fit. Do all of your work in a love for God, in His service, and with a spirit of gratitude.

It is important to note that every legitimate vocation or work is to be valued. In Scripture, is there a distinction between secular and sacred in the area of work?

Those with specific responsibilities and roles are judged by a higher standard (e.g., the teacher—James 3:1), but the homemaker, laborer, artist, physician, custodian, etc., can all work proudly to the glory of God.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

(Colossians 3:23-24)

Any doubts? Aspirations not yet expressed? Questions?

Do you think you've missed your calling? Maybe not. Some questions to ask: "Am I continually dissatisfied?" "Do I possess the aptitude for this work?" "Does this work fit my passions and interests?" If your work does not line up with your talents, passions, and interests, it may be you are to change direction so that you are more in line with the way God has made you.

Pray fervently, dream boldly, and seek feedback from those whom you trust and know you well. Examine yourself through the window of things you have done well and enjoyed in the past, and survey what is out there in the world of work—until God gives you a new way to go.

Continue what you do with energy and integrity "*as unto the Lord*," for this is pleasing to Him.



Imagine!

Suppose in a single wish, you have the aptitude for absolutely any type of work in the world. Assume you have all the necessary skills, knowledge, degrees, certifications, and licenses required. What would you choose to do? Why? Your wish is a window into your interests and passions. Is there a way to apply your choice to your life choices in the near or distant future?

What matters most? (Revisit page 14, introducing Section II)

Listed below are five major areas of life, followed by a series of motivational themes. For each one indicate its level of value or importance to you by entering the appropriate number in the corresponding space to the left.

0 = Zero importance

1 = Matters a little bit

2 = Matters somewhat

3 = This is important to me

4 = This is a major, non-negotiable priority for me

___ Relationships

- Belonging—Being accepted, with an unshakable and special place with others
- Fellowship—Interacting with and enjoying the special people in my life
- Intimacy—Having an in depth relationship in which we really know and enjoy one another

___ Spiritual fulfillment—Experiencing life as having meaning and purpose; having a sense of personal worth or dignity; having a deep and pervasive sense of contentment with life and self; experiencing a deep and lasting sense of inner peace, or joy

___ Vocation and career—Meaningful work that is consistent with my talents, passions, and interests

___ Recreation—Having sufficient periods of enjoyable activity that restore my energy and renew my spirit

___ Health and fitness—My life not hindered by injury or disease or unresolved emotional conflict; having optimal levels of stamina, energy, strength, flexibility, and agility through proper nutrition, adequate sleep and sufficient exercise

___ Financial prosperity—Having an income to meet needs and more; not being burdened by debt

___ Advancement in skills and knowledge; mastery—Increasing expertise to the highest level

___ Career advancement—To move upward in authority, responsibility, or position

___ Achieving goals—Continually setting new goals and reaching them

___ Personal peace—Feeling safe; having deep inner peace

___ Recognition for personal achievements—Being praised or recognized for work well done

___ Humanitarian expression—Making a positive contribution to the lives of others

___ Competitive challenge—Bettering my best performance; winning; beating the competition

___ People impact—Being influential with people (e.g., by writing, speaking, counseling, teaching, acting, etc.)

___ Creative expression—Making something new or unique; adding my personal touch to things

___ Task enjoyment—The sheer pleasure of performing a task or job or participating in an activity

___ Adventure—Experiencing the unknown, the unexplored, the risky; things new and exciting

___ Independence/autonomy—Having the personal freedom to direct my own life, set my own agenda

Exploring my interests

For each activity, enter the number from the scale to the right to identify your level of interest. DON'T BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES—ONLY YOUR INTERESTS.

0 = no interest at all
1 = some interest
2 = moderate interest
3 = strong interest
4 = passionate interest

Musical

- ___ Composing
- ___ Writing music
- ___ Singing
- ___ Playing an instrument
- ___ Conducting an orchestra
- ___ Leading a band or a chorus

Artistic

- ___ Sculpting, ceramics, wood carving
- ___ Painting or drawing
- ___ Woodworking; cabinet making
- ___ Crafts—sewing, macrame, etc.
- ___ Interior design and decorating
- ___ Landscaping
- ___ Architecture
- ___ Flower arranging
- ___ Jewelry making
- ___ Precision skill with the hands (such as dentist, surgeon, precision machinist)
- ___ Calligraphy
- ___ Photography
- ___ Meal creation (e.g., as a chef)

Academic

- ___ Math
- ___ Science - physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, anthropology
- ___ Philosophy
- ___ Theology
- ___ Psychology
- ___ Logic; debating
- ___ Formal academic studies

Linguistic

- ___ Writing - book, letters, articles, poetry, or a script for a play
- ___ Speaking
- ___ Learning a language
- ___ Teaching

Physical activity

- ___ Heavy or challenging physical work
- ___ Athletic activity
- ___ Recreational activity such as hiking, swimming, physical games
- ___ Work tasks, including fixing things, yard work, gardening
- ___ Trades - electrical, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, metalwork
- ___ House remodeling (the hands-on work)
- ___ Exercise - individual and/or group

Interpersonal, relational

- ___ Helping, counseling, supporting people in need
- ___ Mediating a conflict
- ___ Mentoring someone
- ___ Conversing
- ___ Leading a group or team
- ___ Managing others
- ___ Selling, persuading
- ___ Directing a play, production, or program
- ___ Greeting
- ___ Hosting

General creative

- ___ Inventing
- ___ Designing
- ___ Performing - dancing, acting, reading poetry
- ___ Improvisation
- ___ Developing a new theory
- ___ Participating in challenging brain games and puzzles

Exploring my abilities and aptitudes

Instructions: On this and the next page is a range of skills. Consider the evidence provided by your own experience and from the feedback you have received from others. Mark each item in the way it best describes your ability. It is quite possible—in fact, likely—that you have hidden talents. Many people take longer to develop skills but get to a higher level of achievement if they stick with it. *For example:* For one of his young team members who was slow in perfecting particular moves, a wrestling coach gently knocked on his forehead saying, “*Matthew, are you in there?*” That young wrestler became a team captain and two-time All-American at Penn State, went on to win the Gold Medal in the Pan American Championship, and finished 10th in the World Championships.

0 = This skill/quality is not evident in my life

1 = I have very limited skill in this area

2 = I have moderate skill or strength in this skill/quality

3 = I am strong in this skill/quality

4 = I excel in this skill/quality

☐ Physical Abilities (Bodily-Kinesthetic)

_____ I typically have a high level of endurance.

_____ I have good balance, coordination, and agility—for example, is evident in a particular activity I have participated in: tennis, golf, martial arts, fencing, basketball, baseball, dancing, gymnastics, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, or water skiing.

_____ I am physically strong.

_____ I can learn and perform precision tasks with my hands (e.g., as a chef, surgeon or machinist)

_____ I can run fast.

☐ Language Abilities (Linguistic)

_____ I can learn a foreign language.

_____ I am a good public speaker or presenter.

_____ I can write well with one or more of the following: articles, letters, poetry, books.

_____ I have an extensive vocabulary and good memory for words; I know a lot of words and their correct meaning and how to use them.

_____ I have good reading comprehension; I understand and remember what I read.

☐ Relational Abilities (Interpersonal)

_____ I can lead—engage the talents and cooperation of others in achieving an objective or completing a task.

_____ I can cooperatively work with one or more other persons; I can be a valuable group or team member.

_____ I can accurately “read” (understand) what another is saying, not just through words, but through tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc.

_____ I can establish and maintain empathy—recognize and remain connected with another’s feelings, in a conversation, or by observing another.

_____ I am a good conversationalist.

☐ **Logical, Reasoning, or Academic Abilities (Logical-Mathematical)**

_____ I can reason well—construct an argument to persuade others; or see any flaws in another’s argument.

_____ I can organize things into useful systems.

_____ I am good at learning and remembering information, theories, or facts.

_____ I can learn and remember mental procedures involving many steps

_____ I can invent things, or create better ways to do or learn something.

☐ **Artistic Abilities (Artistic-Spatial)**

_____ I can coordinate designs or objects to blend well, and I can see which colors blend (go well together) and which ones don’t.

_____ I can clearly imagine how a room, structure, setting, painting, photographed scene, or piece of sculpture will appear when I am finished.

_____ I have a good sense of direction; I seem to be able to find my way around without getting lost, and I can follow a good map without getting confused.

_____ I can accurately do one of the following: draw, paint, sculpt, build, or craft what I see or imagine.

_____ In my mind I can clearly visualize faces, scenes or designs I’ve just seen, or ones I create in my mind; the mental images are as clear and bright as they are when I see them with my eyes.

☐ **Musical Abilities**

_____ I have a quality singing voice.

_____ I can play a musical instrument.

_____ I can compose original tunes, in my imagination playing the tunes I create.

_____ I can lead a choir, or band, or orchestra.

Notes

Connect your vocation (yourself) with a well-fitted job and service

Line up your paths of work and service with your capabilities. Know yourself well, and then choose a vocational or avocational way that lines up with your abilities, interests, and what you value most. It is surprising how many people overlook this basic principle. Most jobs, when considered individually, are somewhat limited in scope. They do not allow for fully expressing all our abilities and interests.

Balance your work or service with other essential areas of life. Working within the context of a balanced life means having time for all the important things outside of work, including intimacy with the special people of your life, recreation, sleep, exercise, spiritual life, and applying your talents in the home and community.

Be discerning as you consider how you can best serve your community. The saying, “the squeaky wheel gets the grease,” tends to be true regarding people’s needs. Sometimes we are wise to gently push our way past the squeaky wheels of the world, the people who yell loudest, to reach out to those quiet persons whose cries for help can barely be heard. (A study of adolescent girls who had attempted suicide revealed that everyone felt a strong need to go to others for help in times of emotional stress, but only 4% were willing to go to others and ask for help.)

Respect every type of work and service. It is easy in our culture to place one person or job above another. There are jobs with greater responsibility, visibility, and financial reward but no inferior jobs. Each has an important place in our world. However, on what basis can we say one position is superior? Power and prestige don’t necessarily result in satisfaction. In one research project, people were asked about the level of job satisfaction they experienced based on their work and the tasks they performed. It was not the lawyers, doctors, and corporate executives who reported the highest levels of job satisfaction, but rather the artisans: people who could see the fruit of their labors said they were happiest with their work.

Maybe you have some hidden talent

Harry Lieberman

Harry Lieberman attributed his longevity (he lived to 106 years of age) to finding a sense of purpose in painting at seventy-nine. At seventy-four, he was retired and bored. At the Great Neck Golden Age Club, a staff member pressed him to try painting in the art room, though he had never even held a brush. That began a 26-year art career that led to national recognition and a renewed sense of meaning and purpose.



Harry Lieberman - 103rd birthday

Photo by permission, from Allie Light of Light-Saraf Films

Rashad Jennings

Doctors said Rashad Jennings’ asthma would prevent him from participating in sports. At a weight of 270 pounds, coaches said he was too fat and slow. His grade point average of 0.6 negated the possibility of college. No matter, he dreamed of becoming a running back and went out for the football team. As the fifth-string running back, he didn’t expect much action, so he sat on the bench chomping M & M’s and drinking Sprite during games. However, as providence would have it, the four guys in his position ahead of him suffered injuries in the last game of the season, and Rashad was sent into the

game. No one predicted what was about to happen next. He was handed the ball and ran thirty yards for a touchdown. In the fourteen plays he was in the game, he scored four touchdowns—two on offense and two on defense.

The next fall, Rashad attended a private school, repeating his junior year and then completing his senior year. His brothers made it possible because they agreed to coach without receiving a salary. Their offer meant Rashad could attend tuition-free. Rashad's academic success, plus 56 touchdowns and 3,287 yards rushing, earned him a football scholarship and a starting position as a freshman at the University of Pittsburgh.

But Pitt was not to be in his future. A severe family medical concern led him to return home near Lynchburg, Virginia. He eventually enrolled in Liberty University and continued in football, scoring forty-two touchdowns. In his professional career, he played for the Jacksonville Jaguars, Oakland Raiders and the New York Giants. In 2014 he signed a fourteen-million-dollar contract with the Giants.

Repeating the quote from Leonardo DaVinci on page 9:

Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to firm resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind.

Leonardo Da Vinci

About you

Any chance you are underestimating yourself? You are probably willing to persevere even if it's hard work. Perhaps your learning curve for mastering a skill is long and slow. By being tenacious, you may rise to the top of your game. An accomplished Broadway star, who also teaches voice lessons, said she would take the student with the drive and discipline over the naturally gifted student who lacked the discipline any day.

Maybe you are settled and satisfied in your work role. You may have discovered talents that could be applied to an avocation, a hobby, or a volunteer role. There are a great number of people out there who could benefit from your talent and compassion.

Aspire, test, but be balanced—be realistic

Often, we hear an enthusiastic, well-meaning, very successful person such as Oprah, or a well-known sports figure, a teacher, or a parent say, "If you give your very best, you can be anything you want to be; you can accomplish all that you aspire to." Sorry, that's not true!

- The best swimmers in the world, such as Michael Phelps who has earned 28 Olympic medals, have long torsos and short legs.
- The best distance runners have long, thin legs.
- Many top major league baseball players have 20/12 visual acuity, unusually quick reflexes, a superior ability to track moving objects, and exceptional *dynamic* visual acuity—the ability to discriminate the fine details of a moving object. They say that Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox could count the stitches on a fastball. He was also the last player to hit over .400 for an entire season. He batted 406 in 1941.
- David Epstein was a senior editor at Sports Illustrated and author of *The Sports Gene*. He points out there are seventeen American men in history who have run under two hours and ten minutes in the marathon, and there were thirty-two Kalenjin men with long, thin legs who did it in a single year in October of 2011. The Kalenjin are a tribe in Kenya consisting of a population of less than the city of Atlanta.

Recreative expression—*one day in seven*

Rest is associated with the Sabbath—God created the heavens, the earth, and all living things, and then He rested. The Sabbath is rooted in creation and upheld in the 4th commandment (note Exodus 20:11 refers back to creation). In the early church, one day in seven was set aside as a special day of worship to celebrate Jesus' resurrection and rest.

Unsurprisingly, the quality of our worship, celebration, and rest on that special day is strongly influenced by the quality of our lives and fellowship with God during the preceding six days.

Note the Scripture reference to the right. Not only did God make provision for rest for man and beast—one day in seven, but also rest for the land—one year in seven.

“For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard. Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.”

(Exodus 23:10-12)



Take time to rest

God is not arbitrary. His laws are a self-consistent expression of His perfect nature and beautifully correspond to how He formed us.

His teaching is a yoke that fits. God commands that we rest—it is more than friendly advice. If we go against God's instruction, we not only violate Him, but we break ourselves.

While we have a built-in need for periods of rest from our labors, the application of the concept goes beyond one day in seven. Shared experience and current research confirm that we do well to rest daily amid our work and at the end of each workday.

Many of us run on a daily high dose of adrenaline, which, over time, will cause damage to our bodies.

An old saying is, *"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."* It is also true that all play and no work will eventually leave one with a sense of emptiness—the 25-cent word for it is ennui (pronounced än-'wE), meaning a feeling of weariness, dissatisfaction, or boredom. Work and recreation must be balanced to fulfill God's calling and equip ourselves to serve effectively.

When it comes to rest, it can be active rest. We can select from a wide range of things we love to do that restore our energies and are edifying.

Studies have shown that even a 20-minute, restful break during the workday will disrupt the cycle of adrenaline and cortisol buildup and help us to avoid consequent injury to our bodily organs.

Extended recreative rest



And then there are vacations—ideally, those regular extended rest times that we are supposed to find restorative. It doesn't make sense that a vacation should be a stressful, whirlwind experience that takes several days (or longer) from which to recover. Careful, thoughtful planning is in order when scheduling a vacation.

Extended leave: Some employers have a policy of allowing their staff to take an extended period—six months to a year—for a sabbatical. Some school districts, for example, allow a staff member to take six months to a year off, at half salary, after six years of service. Many churches offer the same for their pastors. A person taking advantage of the policy may have much more to give when they return home and to the formal workplace.

About saying no

Some things in your life seem compelling, but they are not necessary or timely.

Dr. Francis Schaeffer recalls from Scripture that King David wanted to build the temple. However, God said he was not to build the temple; his son, Solomon, was to build it. He was only to begin gathering materials for it. To build the temple was a good thing; however, *“For David to build the temple would have been a well-intentioned act of disobedience.”*

How many “good” things are we invested in for which God has not called us? Maybe God would have us jettison some good things to accomplish His things.

Are we taking the time we need for recreation—daily, weekly, and yearly?



***“Most of the time I don’t have much fun;
the rest of the time I don’t have any fun at all.”***

Woody Allen



Does Woody’s quote hit home?

Chapter 6—NUTRITION

Some foods protect and nourish the body . . .



A mostly clean
aorta—a main
artery in the body



Some foods attack the body . . .

Eating the wrong foods is like releasing a team of workers with pick-axes into your blood vessels. The linings of the vessels are damaged, and fatty plaques form at the damaged sites.



What does Scripture say about nutrition?

While there is no “Biblical diet,” Scripture provides insights and guidelines for healthy nutrition and prescribes boundaries for the freedoms we enjoy. For example, the overconsumption of food and alcohol typical today runs counter to the teaching of Proverbs.

The current drift of science is toward advocating a diet that consists primarily of whole, nutrient-dense, plant-based foods—especially significant for those with known cardiovascular disease, pre-diabetes, type 2 diabetes, or a history of stroke. Has history come full circle? Consider the following quote from Genesis 1:29: “Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.’”

Add the 6th century B.C. Old Testament narrative in Daniel, chapter one: Daniel, on behalf of himself and his friends, successfully petitioned the king’s steward to put aside the king’s delicacies and instead consume vegetables and water. “At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king’s food.” (Daniel 1:15)

Just because God permits something does not mean it is wise to exercise the full limits of that freedom. In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul puts things in perspective: You say, “I have the right to do anything.” Paul responds: “But not everything is beneficial.” You say, “I have the right to do anything.” Paul says, “But not everything is constructive.”

He says we can enjoy a vast range of foods without incurring guilt. The question is not whether a particular food is permitted, but whether it is wise to consume it—at least with the frequency and in the large portions common today.

Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.’ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.

(I Corinthians 10:23-27)



Catalogue of foods

Below is a range of common foods, recorded by category. Scan the list and get a sense of where your eating habits fall. Many of the foods on the right side of the chart are less healthy, especially if consumed often or in large amounts.

GREENS

Artichokes
Arugula
Asparagus
Avocados
Broccoli
Brussel sprouts
Celery
Chayote squash
Chinese cabbage,
Cucumbers, Endive
Green apples
Green beans
Green cabbage
Green grapes
Green onion
Green pears
Green peppers
Honeydew
Kiwi fruit
Leafy greens
Leeks, Lettuce
Limes, Okra, Peas
Snow Peas
Spinach
Sugar snap peas
Watercress
Zucchini

BLUES & PURPLES

Black currants
Black salsify
Blackberries
Blueberries
Dried plums
Eggplant
Elderberries
Grapes
Plums
Pomegranates
Prunes
Purple Belgian endive
Purple potatoes
Purple asparagus
Purple cabbage
Purple carrots
Purple figs
Purple grapes
Purple peppers
Raisins

WHITES

Bananas
Brown pears
Cauliflower
Dates
Garlic, Ginger
Jerusalem artichoke
Jicama

Kohlrabi
Mushrooms
Onions
Parsnips
Potatoes
Shallots
Turnips
White corn
White peaches

REDS

Raspberries
Red bell peppers
Rhubarb
Radish
Red onion
Beets
Radicchio
Red potatoes
Red chillies
Red cabbage
Red chard
Red chili peppers
Red carrots
Red corn
Red leaf lettuce
Red grapefruit
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Watermelon

ORANGES & YELLOWS

Apricots
Butternut squash
Cantaloupe
Cape Gooseberries
Carrots
Golden kiwi fruit
Grapefruit
Lemon
Mangoes
Nectarines
Oranges
Papayas
Peaches
Persimmons
Pineapples
Pumpkin
Rutabagas
Sweet potatoes
Tangerines
Sweet corn
Yellow apples
Yellow beets
Yellow figs
Yellow pears
Yellow peppers
Yellow squash
Yellow tomatoes

BEANS & LEGUMES

Alfalfa
Carob
Clover beans
Kidney beans
Black beans
Lentils
Lupins
Mesquite
Peas
Peanuts
Soybeans
Tamarind

NUTS & SEEDS

Almonds
Brazil nuts
Cashews
Macadamia
Pecans
Pistachios
Walnuts
Pumpkin seeds
Sunflower seeds
Chia seeds
Flax seeds
Pomegranate seeds
Grape seed
Sesame

100% WHOLE GRAINS

Brown/wild rice
Bread, pasta, pancakes
Cereal (e.g., oatmeal)

FATTY FISH

Omega 3
Mackerel
Salmon
Sardines
Trout
Tuna

WATER

Several 8 oz glasses/day

HEALTHY DRINKS

Unsweet black and green teas
100% Fruit/vegetable juice
(in limited amounts)
Almond/cashew/silk drinks

EGGS

DAIRY

Yogurt 6 g sugar or more)
Low fat milk
Cheese
Whole milk
Butter
Cream
Ice cream
Coffee creamer
Milk shakes

OTHER DRINKS

Sweet tea
Coffee (It has positive benefits as well as negative effects)
Energy drinks (sugar)

FAST FOODS, FRIED, SWEETS, TREATS

Artificial sweeteners
Candy
Cereals with a lot of sugar
Chips
Coffee + sugar, cream
Fries
Hamburgers
Honey
Less than 100% juices
Pastries
Pretzels
White sugar
Soft drinks
Syrup
Sweet tea

WHITE FOODS

Bread
Pasta
Rolls, Buns
Pancakes
Waffles
White rice
Sugar

ALCOHOL

Wine
Beer
Spirits

OILS

Animal fats
Trans fats
Avocado
Olive
Peanut
Sesame
Safflower
Sunflower
Animal fats
Margarine
Corn
Soy oil (very common)
Cottonseed
Coconut
Gravies
Interesterified oils
Palm
Salad dressings with oils
Sauces

MEAT

Bacon
Hot dogs
Deli meats
Red meat, white meat
Sausage
Poultry

OTHER SEAFOOD

Clams
Oysters
Lobster
Crabs
Shrimp
Large fish such as shark, swordfish, grouper, etc.
Other non-fatty fish

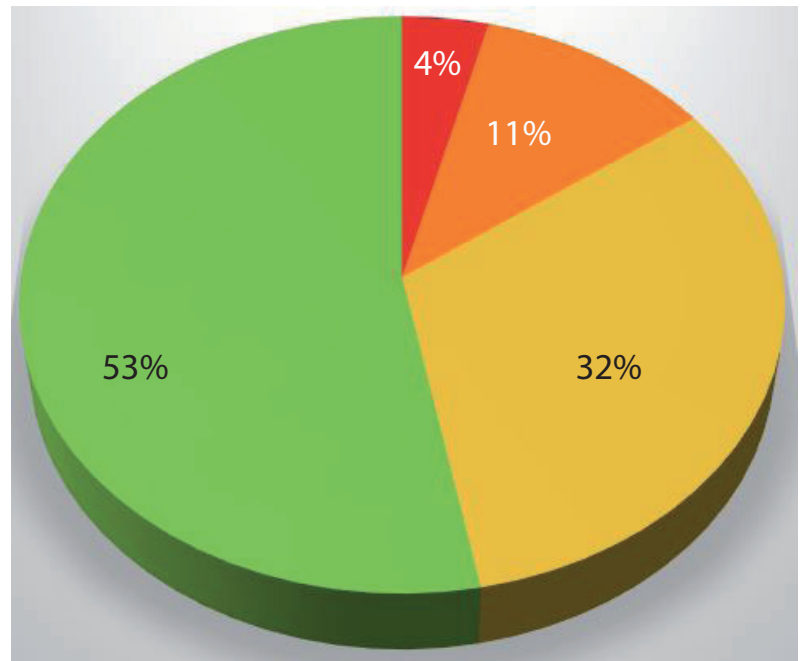
Nutritional paths: Which is closest to your eating habits



1) The Standard American Diet (SAD)

- Whole grains
- Vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans and legumes (including French fries and ketchup!)
- Animal products (meat, chicken, pork, fish)
- Processed foods (white bread, cereals, rice)

85% of the Standard American Diet is comprised of processed + animal foods. More than 90% of the SAD is unhealthy.



2) USDA ChooseMyPlate

You will find the USDA recommendations, excellent tools, and resources for designing an individualized nutritional path located on the website: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy>. It is far superior to the SAD diet, but scientists for the Harvard School of Public Health say it does not go far enough. They claim the food industries continue to influence the USDA recommendations.

For each of the five groups, the amount of food you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. In general, if you do 30 minutes or less of activity per day:

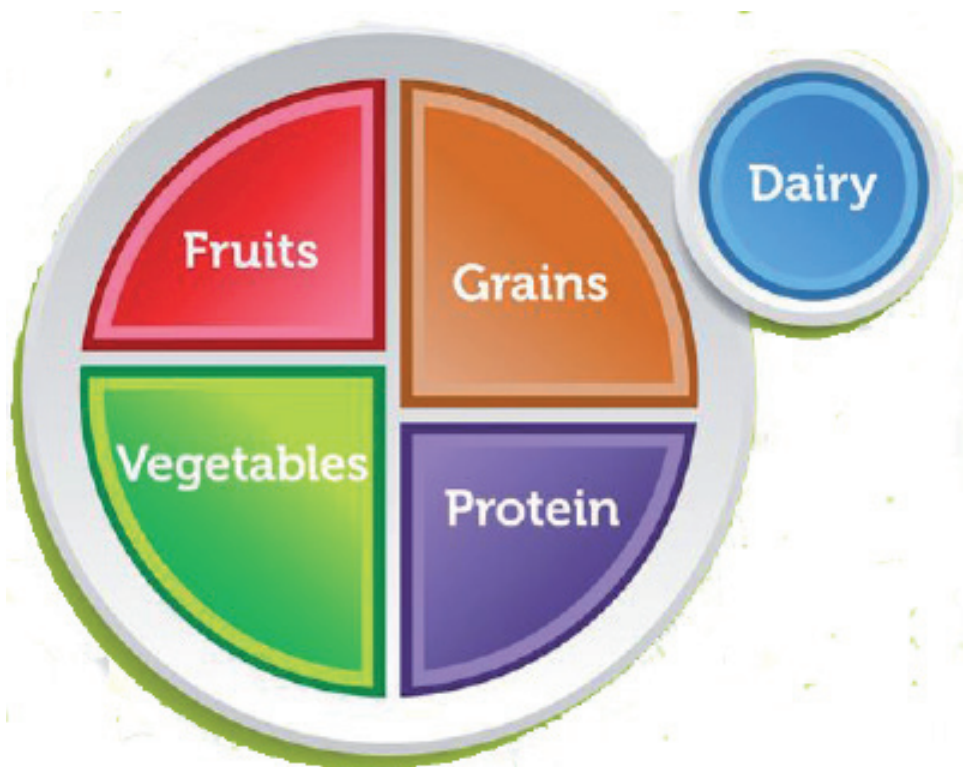
Fruits—1 to 2 cups each day

Vegetables—2 to 3 cups each day

Grains— between 3 and 8 ounce-equivalents each day; 50% from whole grains

Protein—meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds; between 2 and 6½ ounce-equivalents each day

Dairy— between 2 and 3 cups each day. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are *not* part of the Dairy Group.



(3) The Mind Diet

Three similar diets appear to be among those reducing the risk for major disease such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers—¹Mediterranean, ²DASH (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension), and ³MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay). The MIND diet, drawing from the Mediterranean and DASH, is designed to prevent or slow the development of various dementias, including Alzheimer's.

Foods to include

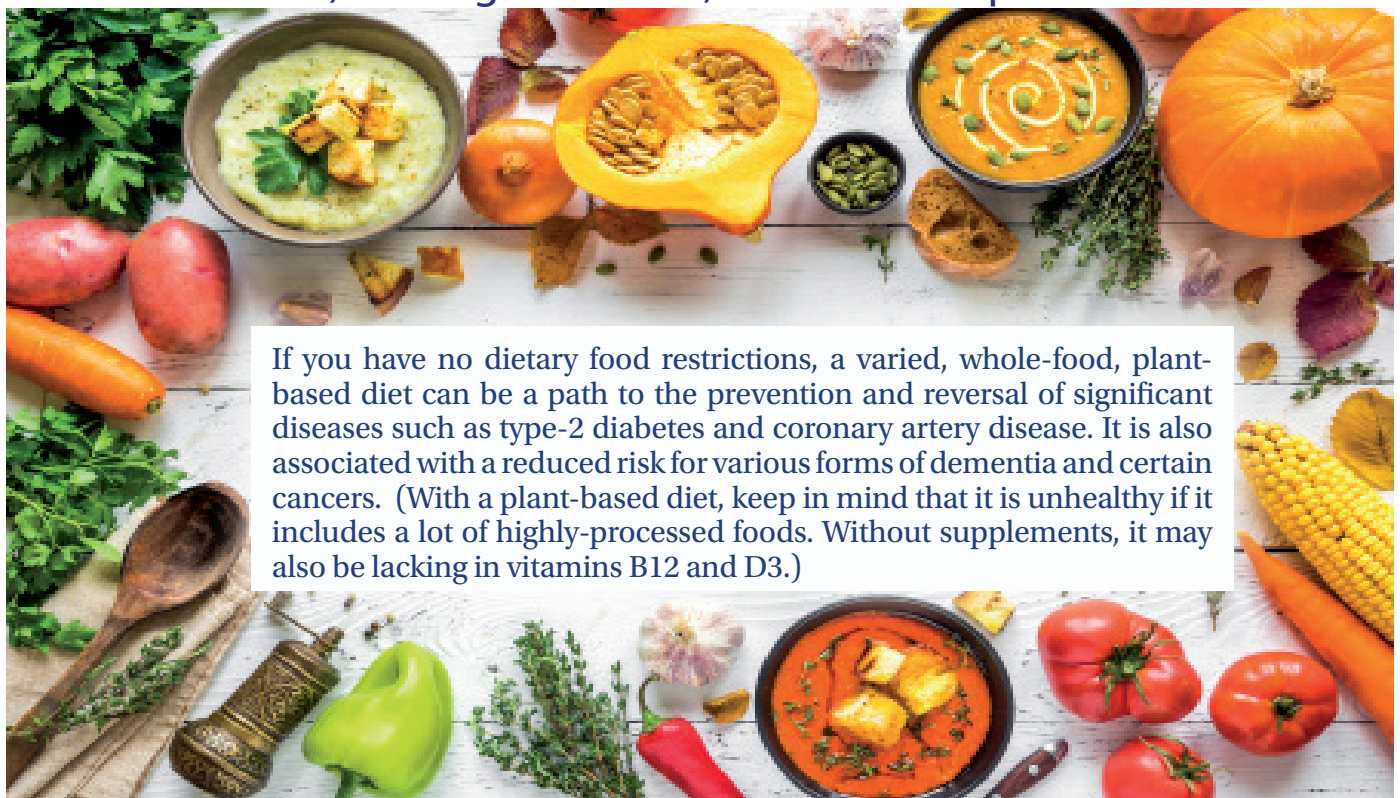
- A variety of vegetables—green, leafy and those of the colors of the rainbow
- Berries (more than fruit)
- A variety of nuts
- Whole grains
- Olive oil
- Poultry (not fried)
- Beans and legumes
- Fish
- Wine (one glass daily)



Foods to limit or avoid


- Butter and stick margarine
- Fried foods—especially fast foods
- Cheese
- Pastries
- Sweets
- Red meat
- Processed foods
- Foods with trans fats

4) The high-nutrient, whole food option



If you have no dietary food restrictions, a varied, whole-food, plant-based diet can be a path to the prevention and reversal of significant diseases such as type-2 diabetes and coronary artery disease. It is also associated with a reduced risk for various forms of dementia and certain cancers. (With a plant-based diet, keep in mind that it is unhealthy if it includes a lot of highly-processed foods. Without supplements, it may also be lacking in vitamins B12 and D3.)

Comparison for Eight Paths of Nutrition

SAD (Standard American Diet)	MyPlate.gov	Harvard Healthy Eating Plate	Mediterranean Diet
<p>No limits</p>  <p>Typical of the SAD:</p> <p>4% whole grains</p> <p>11% vegetables, fruits, nuts and legumes (including French fries and ketchup)</p> <p>32% animal foods</p> <p>53% processed foods</p>	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables
	Fruits/Berries	Fruits/Berries	Fruits/Berries
	Make at least half of your grains full grains	Whole grains	Whole grains
	Nuts and seeds	Nuts and seeds	Nuts and seeds
	Beans and legumes	Beans and legumes	Beans and legumes
	Fat free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese	Fatty fish, poultry	Olive oil as main source of fat
	Variety of meats, poultry, and seafood		Wine in low to moderate amounts-- with meals
	Limited	Limited	Limited
	Choose a variety of foods. Eat less, avoid large portions.	Milk/dairy (1-2 servings/day), cheese, and butter	Cheese and yogurt daily in low to moderate amounts
	Added sugar, saturated fats, and sodium. You do well to eliminate them.	Red meat	Fish and poultry in low to moderate amounts--a few times per week
		Sugar	Red meat--consume infrequently and in small amounts
		Refined grain such as white rice and white bread	Sweets with added sugars or honey only a few times per week
	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
	Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)	Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)	Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)
	Alcohol	Sugary drinks	Processed foods
		French fries	Refined grains
		Cold cuts and other processed meats	Alcohol (other than red wine)

NOTES

DASH Diet	MIND Diet	Nutritarian Diet (Fuhrman)	Ornish Diet
Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables
Fruits/Berries	Fruits/Berries	Fruits/Berries	Fruits/Berries
Whole grains (cereals)	Whole grains	Whole grains	Whole grains
Nuts and seeds	Nuts and seeds	Nuts and seeds	Nuts and seeds
Beans and legumes	Beans and legumes	Beans and legumes	Beans and legumes
Meat, fish, chicken	Fish and poultry		
Low-fat milk	5 ounces of wine each day or purple grape juice		
Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Sodium	Dairy, eggs	Dairy, eggs	Non-fat dairy or calcium supplements--1-2 servings/day
Red meat	Tablespoon/day of butter, margarine (Choose olive oil instead)	Sugar	Lean poultry--0-1 servings/day
Sugary foods and drinks	Cheese, fried food, fast food no more than once a week	Wild or naturally-raised animal products	Egg whites and fish--0-2 servings/day
	Pastries and sweets less than five times/week	Fatty fish	Sugar, refined carbs, alcohol (occasionally)
Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid
Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)	Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)	Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)	Trans fats (hydrogenated fats)
Saturated fat	Fried food	Alcohol	Red meat
Cheese	Red meat	Processed foods	Butter
Fatty meat and poultry with skin	Butter and stick margarine	Commercially-raised meats	
Lard, cream, butter, whole milk	Cheese	Cheese	

NOTES

Chapter 7—EXERCISE

Our bodies are made for movement

There is strong case for investing time each day for physical activity to promote body and brain health.

The Cooper Institute, based upon 50-plus years of research, has found that people could extend their life expectancy by six to nine years by engaging in regular exercise.

Studies have suggested that regular, moderate exercise can reduce the risk of stroke by 20 percent, breast cancer by 25 percent; diabetes by 30 percent; dementia by 30 percent; colon cancer by 35 percent; and fractures from falls by 40 percent.

The American College of Sports Medicine and American Heart Association exercise guidelines call for a minimum of 30 minutes, five days per week of moderate aerobic exercise, 20 minutes of strength training twice weekly, and regular stretching. Skilled movement—balance, coordination, and agility activities are also a must!

Time spent on exercise is a valuable investment. The return is restful sleep, better digestion, higher mental function, reduced risk for disease, illness, and injury, more excellent work productivity, and more energy to do all the things we love.

Aim a few notches above the cultural norm for exercise. Reap maximum benefits through a comprehensive approach, including aerobic activity, strength training, skilled movement, and stretching in your weekly routine.



Major types of exercise

Below are five of the major areas of exercise for an ideal health, fitness, and body/brain performance program. They will be covered in detail in the following pages.

(1) Aerobic

Continuous exercise that raises breathing and heart rate. Regular exercise over a period of months improves endurance by increasing the body's ability to utilize oxygen and fuel efficiently and effectively.



(2) Skilled Movement

- ☐ Balance
- ☐ Coordination
- ☐ Agility
- ☐ Quickness
- ☐ Speed

BALANCE—The ability to sustain or return the body's center over its base of support.

COORDINATION—All parts of the body moving smoothly, in concert.

AGILITY—On cue, the ability to accelerate, decelerate, stabilize, change direction quickly while maintaining balance.

QUICKNESS—Speed of response and body reaction to a signal.



(3) Mobility

- ☐ Range of motion
- ☐ Elasticity

RANGE OF MOTION—Full range of movement of all major joints, in all planes of movement.

ELASTICITY—Elastic properties of all tissue, including skin, muscle, fascia, lung tissue, etc.



(4) Strength and power

- ☐ Stabilization
- ☐ Endurance
- ☐ Hypertrophy
- ☐ Maximum strength
- ☐ Power

STABILIZATION—Resistance training to increase joint stabilization and improved posture during activity.

ENDURANCE—Muscle force over a prolonged period, or with many repetitions.

HYPERTROPHY—Training designed to increase muscle size.

MAXIMUM—Training to increase the greatest amount of force.



(5) Brain

- ☐ Learning—diversified complex, novel, and challenging
- ☐ Memory recall
- ☐ Performance or expression of a skill

Learning activity that includes recall, reasoning, or problem-solving and/or the expression of one, or a combination of multiple intelligences: 1) musical, 2) spatial, (artistic or navigational), 3) linguistic, 4) bodily-kinesthetic, 5) logical-mathematical, 6) interpersonal, 7) *intrapersonal*, 8) chronemic (timing).

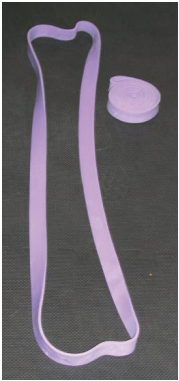


Basic home equipment for an exercise program

Special equipment has value, but you can engage in an effective exercise program with no equipment at all.

- An aerobic routine begins with walking.
- Skilled exercise requires only a small space—indoor or outdoor.
- Stretching your muscles and moving your body/arms/legs/head through a full range of motion can be done anywhere.
- Strength and power exercises can be done with just your body weight and gravity.
- Many types of brain exercise can be conducted just within your head.

If you want sophisticated exercise machines, consider joining a quality gym. For inexpensive home exercise equipment consider the ones shown below. They are available in most sports equipment stores, and the web—companies such as www.performbetter.com & www.theoriginaljumpstretch.com



Jump Stretch
(whole body)



Door-Anchored Bands
(whole body)



Mini-Bands



Figure 8 Bands
(shoulder and upper back)



Exercise/yoga mat



Exercise ball



Dumbbells and ankle weights



Trekking poles for walking & hiking
(We prefer the **telescoping**, to the folding_type.)

Aerobic exercise

Aerobic activities improve your stamina and help you manage your weight. A minimum recommendation for aerobic exercise is 30 minutes per day, five days per week. **You will notice that a number follows each aerobic activity listed below. That number refers to the energy demands (oxygen utilized and the fuel burned) for an activity.** Below-right is a chart that describes the four phases of aerobic exercise. You can gauge your level of exercise intensity based on breathing rate.

Include a warm-up and cool-down for each workout. Are you just starting? Just do Phase 1. As your conditioning improves, you move alternately between Phase 1 and Phase 2 in the same session. With further improvement, you include the intense Phase 3, alternating between all three Phases. Phase 3 has excellent brain benefits, increasing the production of new brain cells.

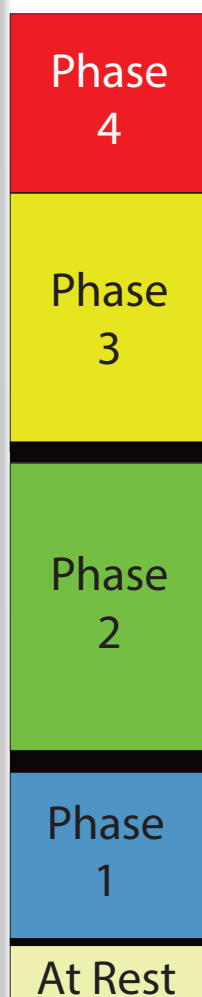
AEROBIC EXERCISE	If I don't ...	If I do ...
Recommended exercise: Walking, jogging, hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, swimming, stair climbing.	Loss of 10% of aerobic capacity for each decade after age 30; loss of stamina; greater risk for dementia, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.	Through a vigorously active life-style, loss of only 2 1/2% of aerobic capacity per decade. Reduced risk for disease.

Levels of exercise intensity based on oxygen consumption are listed below. On the right is a chart of aerobic phases from American Council on Exercise.

○ Aerobics class	5	Low impact
○ Bicycling	4	Leisure; < 10 mph
○ Bicycling	10	Mountain; BMX
○ Canoe, kayak	7	Moderate
○ Dancing	5.5	Folk, square
○ Golf	4.5	No cart
○ Jog/run	8	12 minute mile
○ Martial arts	6-10	
○ Racquetball	7	Casual
○ Rope jumping	8	Slow
○ Soccer	7-10	Casual
○ Stair climbing	8-10	
○ Strength training	8	Circuit
○ Swimming	8	Slow crawl
○ Swimming	10	Fast
○ Tennis	6	Doubles
○ Volleyball	4	Recreational
○ Walking	3.5	20 min. mile
○ Walking	4	15 min. mile
○ Walking, power	8	13 minute mile

Your breathing level tells the story

From American Council on Exercise, *Personal Training Manual*, 4th Edition



Phase 4—Exhaustion.

You are no longer able to continue to exercise.

Phase 3—Your breathing rate suddenly increases to a level where you are not able to carry on a normal conversation. This is the beginning of **Ventilatory Threshold 2 (VT 2)**

Ventilatory Threshold 2

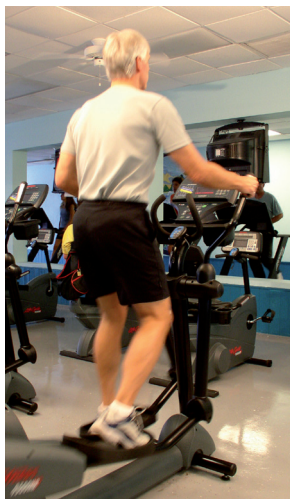
Phase 2—There is a noticeable rise in your breathing rate. Conversation or reciting the alphabet is accompanied by brief pauses between some words or letters, but you are able to continue exercising at your current pace. This is the beginning of **Ventilatory Threshold 1 (VT 1)**

Ventilatory Threshold 1

Phase 1—You experience a gradual increase in breathing rate, but you can comfortably carry on a conversation or recite the alphabet without pausing between words or letters.

Warm-up—Low intensity for 3 to 10 minutes. A few minutes of cool-down after your primary routine.

Types of aerobic exercise



Elliptical



Treadmill



Bicycle



Recumbent



Stair Climbing



**Hiking, Walking with
Trekking Poles**



Jogging, Running, Sprinting



**Tennis, Pickleball, Handball,
Racquetball**



**Swimming, AquaJogging
(illustrated above)
Water Aerobics**



**Martial Arts, Dance, Jazzercise,
Group Aerobics**

The intensity of your exercise (Intense exercise = increased production of new brain cells.)

Higher numbers mean you are burning more fuel, using more oxygen, and therefore burning more calories.

Exercises Listed Alphabetically

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Intensity</i>	<i>Pace</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Intensity</i>	<i>Pace</i>
Aerobics class	5	Low impact	Martial arts	4	Tai Chi
Aerobics class	7	High impact	Martial arts	10	tae kwon do, karate, judo
Aerobics class, step	8.5	6-8" step	Pilates	6	
Aerobics class, step	10	10-12" step	Ping pong	4	
Aerobics - Tae Bo	10	Vigorous	Racquetball	7	Casual
Badminton	4.5	Social	Racquetball	10	Competitive, skilled
Badminton	7	Competitive, skilled	Rock climbing	11	
Baseball, softball	5		Rollerblading	10	Vigorous
Basketball	4.5	Shooting baskets	Rope jumping	8	Slow
Basketball	8	Game	Rope jumping	10	Moderate
Basketball	6.5	Wheelchair	Rope jumping	12	Fast
Bicycling	10	Mountain biking; BMX	Rowing machine	3.5	Light
Bicycling	4	Leisure; < 10 mph	Rowing machine	7	Moderate
Bicycling	6	Light; 10-11.9 mph	Rowing machine	8.5	Vigorous
Bicycling	8	Moderate; 12-13.9 mph	Rowing machine	12	Very vigorous
Bicycling	10	Fast; 14-15.9 mph	SCUBA diving	7	General
Bicycling	12	16-19 mph	SCUBA diving	16	Against the current
Bicycling	16	> 20 mph	Skateboarding	5	
Bowling	2		Skating, ice/roller	7	General
Calisthenics	3.5	Light	Skating, ice/roller	9	Fast
Calisthenics	8	Pushups, pullups, etc	Skiing, X-country	8	Moderate
Canoeing, kayaking	7	Moderate effort	Skiing, X-country	9	Vigorous
Canoeing, kayaking	12	Vigorous effort	Skiing, downhill	6	Moderate
Dancing	3	Slow, ballroom	Skiing, downhill	8	Vigorous
Dancing	5.5	Disco, folk, square	Skin diving	7	General
Dancing	8	Very fast	Skin diving	12.5	Moderate
Dancing	9	Swing dancing	Soccer	7	Casual
Dancing	9	Zumba	Soccer	10	Competitive, skilled
Football	8	Touch, flag	Strength training	6	Machines, free weights
Golf	3.5	General, with cart	Strength training	8	Intensive
Golf	4.5	General, no cart	Strength training	8	Circuit (continuous)
Handball	12		Stretch for flexibility	3	
Hunting	5	On foot; not sitting	Surf, bodyboard	3	
Jog/run	8	12 minute mile	Swimming	4	Water aerobics
Jog/run	10	10 minute mile	Swimming	6	Leisurely
Jog/run	12.5	8 minute mile	Swimming	8	Slow crawl; sidestroke
Jog/run	14	7 minute mile	Swimming	10	Fast; vigorous
Jog/run	20	5 minute mile	Tennis	6	Doubles
Jog/run upstairs	15		Tennis	8	Singles
Jog/run in place	8		Trampoline	3.5	
Jog/run -- Sprinting	22	Full speed			

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Intensity</i>	<i>Pace</i>
Volleyball	8	Competitive, skilled
" beach	8	
Walking	2.5	30 minute mile
Walking	3	25 minute mile
Walking	3.5	20 minute mile
Walking	3.75	17.5 minute mile
Walking	4	15 minute mile
Walking	8	(Power walk) 13 minute mile
Walking	8	Upstairs
Walking	8	Upstairs with 25 lb bag
Walking	10	Upstairs with 50 lb. bag
Walking	9	Stair machine
Yoga	3	

Everyday Activities Listed by Intensity

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Intensity</i>
Standing in line at the movies	1.2
Reading while sitting	1.3
Playing cards, board games	1.5
Sewing, knitting, macrame	1.5
Talking while sitting	1.5
Taking a class; studying	1.8
Talking while standing	1.8
Writing a novel, poetry, letter	1.8
Attending synagogue, church, mosque	2
Driving a car	2
Playing the flute	2
Washing dishes	2.3
Billiards, pool, or croquet	2.5
Carpet sweeping	2.5
Change light bulb, pump gas	2.5
Cooking; prepare or serve food	2.5
Dressing, undressing	2.5
Fishing from a boat	2.5
Light cleaning	2.5
Mowing the lawn on a riding mower	2.5
Paint - acrylics, oils, water colors	2.5
Playing the violin, piano, trumpet	2.5
Play wall or lawn darts	2.5
Stand and play with children	2.8
Sailing, leisurely	3

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Intensity</i>
Sight-seeing	3
Fish from a river bank, standing	3.5
Playing the trombone	3.5
Teaching a class, lecturing	3.5
Woodworking, carpentry, sculpting	3.5
Gardening, general	4
Horseback riding, general	4
Paddleboat	4
Pottery making, potter's wheel	4
Showering	4
Take children for day at theme park	4
Raking lawn	4.3
Home repair-painting, etc.	4.5
Mowing the lawn - power mower	4.5
Painting, papering, plastering	4.5
Plant shrubs, seedlings, trees	4.5
Wash car, clean windows, mop	4.5
Weeding, cultivating garden	4.5
Cleaning gutters	5
Digging, spading, composting	5
Hanging storm windows	5
Chopping wood	6
Moving furniture	6
Carrying 25 lb load upstairs	8
Carrying 50 lb. load upstairs	10

Increased mobility through foam rolling and stretching

Foam rolling has been around for about 100 years. It is a technique for slowly rolling an object over a muscle, or slowly rolling the muscle over a device. The device can be in the form of various shapes, including a ball, a cylinder, etc. The object can have a soft surface or hard surface, or in-between. Pressure applied displaces fluid in the tissue, allowing fresh fluid to flow back into it. Foam rolling contributes to muscle flexibility and to resolving adhesions in the tissue.

Pressure can be applied over most of the muscles of the body, but it is not recommended for the back of the knees, high groin area, the lower back, or the neck.



Stretching and range of motion exercises increase your flexibility and range of motion. Musculoskeletal alignment exercises help to prevent injury and improve function. Flexibility exercises reduce stiffness, allow you to engage in a wider range of activities safely, and help you avoid injuries in cases where you need to quickly regain your balance—such as when you lose your footing on a slippery surface. Note: The focus for the lower back is more about stability than flexibility. For back stability, engage in strength exercises such as the lat pull-down, the pull-back with bands, or the bird dog.

- ☐ **Static stretches**—hold a low force stretch position for a designated number of seconds (typically 20 to 30)
- ☐ **Active stretches**—move a joint repeatedly through a range of motion (hold is brief)
- ☐ **Dynamic stretches**—uses force and momentum to move the joint through the full available range of motion (e.g., execute a side lunge to stretch the muscles on the inside of the thigh)
- ☐ **Pilates**
- ☐ **PNF stretches** (an *assisted* muscle stretch, followed immediately by working the stretched muscle against resistance)
- ☐ **Stretches for musculoskeletal alignment and pain reduction** (E.g., an effective exercise program designed by Pete Egoscue, author of *Pain Free*. He has several U. S. clinics, and some of his video instruction is on YouTube.)

Some stretches *not* recommended: straight-leg toe touch (especially for older folks); inverted hurdler's stretch; the plow; arching quadriceps

Strength exercise

Exercise to build or strengthen your muscles involves either working out with weights, bands or working your body against gravity. Doing push-ups, in which you are lifting your body weight off the floor, is an example of using your body weight. So is vigorous walking, especially walking on uneven surfaces or stair-climbing (up and down). Strength training makes it easier to do everyday chores, such as carrying laundry or groceries.

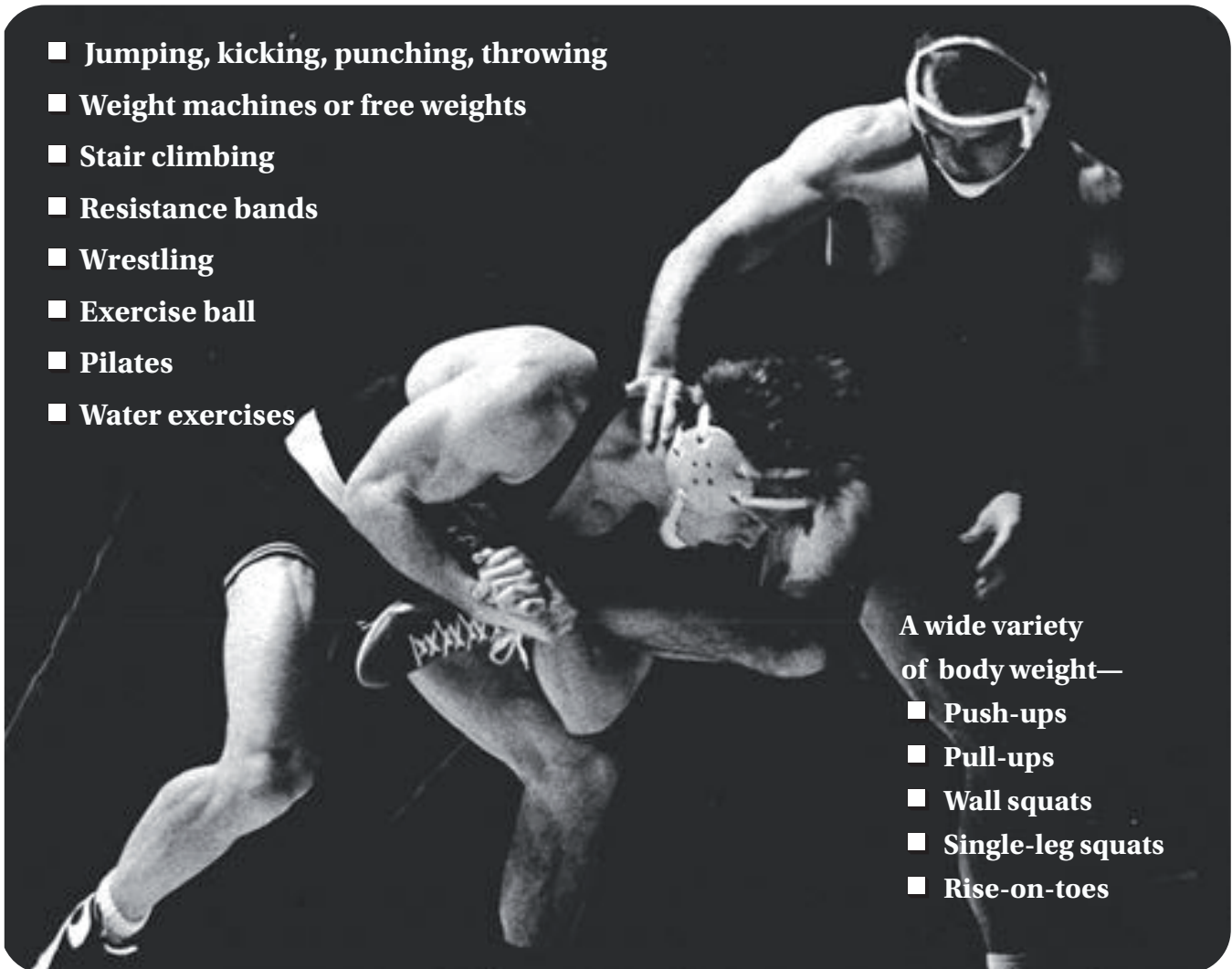
Additionally, as you build muscle, you will burn more calories. The exercise that strengthens your muscles also strengthens your bones.

Resistance exercise should begin with an adaptation phase to prevent injury and facilitate progress. It should be progressive, allowing you to increase strength until you reach your maximum potential or goal strength.

STRENGTH EXERCISE	If I don't ...	If I do ...
At least two total body strength training sessions each week - bands, cables, weights, specified machines (some machines are not safe; do your research).	Loss of muscle mass and strength (25% loss by age 65), loss of bone mass (increased fracture risk); slower metabolism with weight gain.	Maintain or even increase muscle mass, with improved strength; improved insulin sensitivity; reduced fracture risk; slowed aging.

Do you see some strength activities you would like to add to your routine?

- Jumping, kicking, punching, throwing
- Weight machines or free weights
- Stair climbing
- Resistance bands
- Wrestling
- Exercise ball
- Pilates
- Water exercises



A wide variety
of body weight—

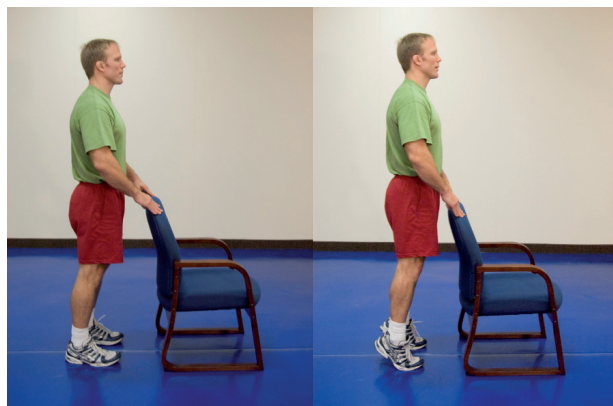
- Push-ups
- Pull-ups
- Wall squats
- Single-leg squats
- Rise-on-toes

A beginning strength routine (2 - 3x/week; 1 set of each exercise; 12 - 20 repetitions)

The photos below are intended to provide a general view of a typical strength routine.



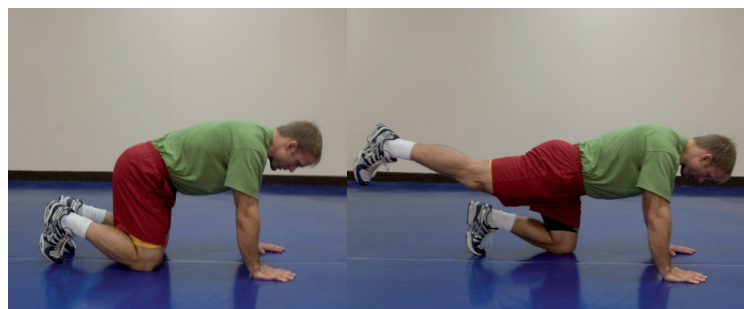
Ball Wall Squat



Heel Raise



Modified Crunch (do not change angle at hips)



Single-Leg Extension Hold (The Bird Dog when opposite arm is extended as leg is extended)



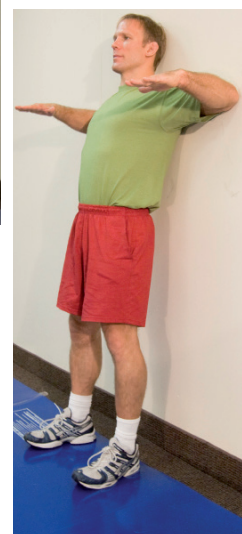
Chest Press with Bands*



Pullback with Bands*



Single Leg Squat (can put back leg on step)
For those with healthy knees and good form!



Isometric
Upper Back Press
(3 second holds)

****A caution: Worn or poorly anchored exercise bands have been known to cause eye and other types of injury. Be sure the anchor point for the bands is foolproof, and the bands themselves are not worn or frayed.***

Skilled exercise

Skilled movement exercises improve your kinesthetic sense —the awareness of the position and movement of the parts of your body during motion. Kinesthetic sense is required for every movement we make, from doing cartwheels to walking on uneven surfaces. Skilled movement activity, because it improves balance, coordination and agility, will help you to maintain a high functional capacity throughout your life.

A note of caution: There is a risk of injury if you do not warm-up before a skilled activity. It is also important to engage in some weeks of sport-specific *preparation* before engaging in skilled movement—training for range of motion, elasticity, strength, power, coordination, and balance. For example, a report in the *Journal of Emergency Medicine* estimates there are about 19,000 pickleball injuries per year with 90% of them affecting people 50 and older.

SKILLED MOVEMENT	If I don't . . .	If I do . . .
Recommended exercise: Any activity that requires balance, coordination or agility	Reduced capacity to participate in a wide range of activities across the lifespan; increased fall risk in the later decades of life	Enjoyment of a higher functional and performance capacity across the lifespan; greater brain potential



- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Racket sports
- ☐ Martial arts
- ☐ Balance training
- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Agility drills
- ☐ Team sports—basketball, lacrosse, baseball, etc.
- ☐ Skiing, snowboarding
- ☐ Other: _____

Dynamic, advanced routine to improve balance, coordination, and mobility



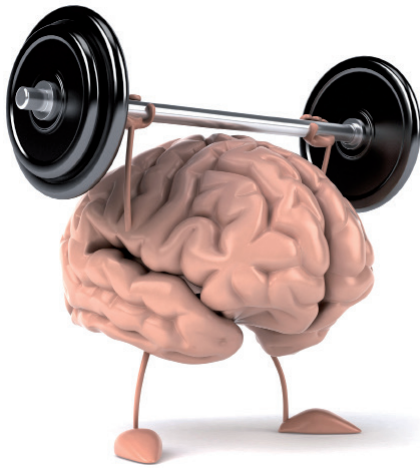
Brain exercise

Not long ago, it was believed, “You are born with only so many brain cells, and from birth on, you begin to lose them. The brain is not capable of generating new cells. That’s OK, though, because you have plenty of brain cells.”

Current research now shows this to be entirely wrong. Clinical neuropsychologist Dr. Paul David Nussbaum and other brain health experts attest that the brain has the ability to produce new brain cells. You are capable of positively impacting your brain health and performance over your entire life—regardless of your age.

According to Dr. Nussbaum, primary contributors to brain health include ¹socialization, ²healthy spiritual life, ³good nutrition, ⁴regular exercise, and ⁵stimulating mental activity. Areas of brain function include language, visual/spatial, concentration, memory, and executive function. Viewed from a slightly different angle, you can enrich some of the types of intelligence: musical, artistic-spatial, linguistic (reading, writing, speaking), interpersonal, logical-mathematical, and bodily-kinesthetic (skilled movement).

BRAIN EXERCISE	If I don’t . . .	If I do . . .
Recommended exercise: Novel and challenging learning plus exercise—especially intense aerobic and skilled exercise	Reduced cognitive function and greater risk for dementia, including Alzheimer’s	Maintain high cognitive function across the entire lifespan; reduced risk for dementia or later stage and slower onset of dementia



More evidence of the benefits of exercising your brain

Studies have been quite encouraging. For example, the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine studied the lives of 38 Catholic nuns who had pledged to donate their brains to science. At autopsy, some showed clear pathological signs of Alzheimer’s in the brain, yet they had been high functioning in the latter years of their lives with no clinical signs of dementia.

Since the original study, scientists have gathered data on 678 Catholic nuns born before 1917. They collected essays written by the nuns when they were in their late teens and early 20s. Those whose writings revealed more advanced language skills showed fewer signs of dementia in the later decades of life. Neuropathologist Diego Iacono states, “By studying the nuns’ autobiographical writings from their early lives, the scientists found that regardless of evidence of Alzheimer’s in the brain, sisters who had better language abilities early in life were less likely to exhibit symptoms.”

It appears that you can reduce, or at least postpone, the development of dementia, including Alzheimer’s, by making healthy lifestyle choices.

In the later stages of Alzheimer’s, a pattern of behavior called “sundowning” occurs, often expressed in difficulty sleeping with an increase in behavioral problems toward the end of the day. The person with Alzheimer’s may act aggressively, becoming very active, anxious, confused, and agitated. Leading the person through physical exercise sessions and other activities during the day tends to diminish acting-out behaviors and improve sleep.

Activities that positively impact the brain:

- ☐ Games that challenge the mind: Sudoku, Bridge, chess, etc. ☐ Puzzles
- ☐ Problem-solving challenges ☐ Academic studies; new language ☐ Skilled body movement
- ☐ Artistic expression - sculpting, painting . . . ☐ Web-based brain exercises - E.g., Sponsored on-line games
- ☐ New and challenging combined areas of intelligence ☐ Other: _____

Don't forget about your spine . . . Take good care of it!



The spine is an incredible creation—and following some health guidelines will serve you well throughout your life. Because of the connecting structures of the muscles, which function like **guy wires***, the spinal column maintains its structural integrity when subjected to strong compressive forces. In his book entitled *Low Back Disorders* (pp. 113-114), renowned back expert Dr. Stuart McGill, Professor of Spine Biomechanics at the University of Waterloo, presents an interesting illustration:

Suppose a fishing rod is placed upright and vertical with the butt on the ground. If the rod were to have a small load placed in its tip, perhaps a pound or two, it would soon bend and buckle. Now suppose that the same rod has **guy wires*** attached at different levels along its length and that those wires are also connected to the ground in a circular pattern. Each wire is pulled to the same tension (this is critical). Now, if the rod's tip is loaded as before, the rod can sustain the compressive forces successfully. However, if you reduce the tension of just one of the wires, the rod will buckle.

***Guy wires are the cables that surround TV and radio towers for stability.**

The spine is like the fishing rod in the illustration (or like a radio or TV tower). Dr. McGill reports scientists have tested the load-bearing capability of the human spine of cadavers. Testing the spine with the muscles removed (no guy wires), it can withstand a load of only twenty pounds. A properly supported spine of a young, healthy male; that is, with healthy bones and discs, muscles, tendons, and ligaments the spinal column can withstand a downward force of greater than two-thousand pounds without crushing or buckling!



How to be nice to your spine

1) **Maintain a healthy weight.** For each pound you gain you *multiply* the stress on the spine during walking and other activities. It is even greater in running. The strike force on the heel of a runner who weighs 150 pounds is 450 to 600 pounds. Add extra weight and you get an idea of the force that travels from foot, up the leg to the spine. Also, extra fat weight increases

the level of inflammation throughout the body, bringing destruction to the cartilage in the knees and hips and to the discs in the spine.

2) **Eat healthy.** Following the Standard American Diet (see Chapter 6) will guarantee the build-up of fatty plaques in your arteries, compromising circulation throughout your body, including the spine.

3) **Exercise regularly and sensibly**—including safe exercises for your core and spine. Some 140 interconnected muscles stabilize and/or move the spine. Consider the exercise routine on page 64.

4) **Achieve and maintain good posture**—especially when you are sitting. Don't sit for long periods without standing and moving about often. Dr. McGill suggests sitting no longer than 45 to 50 minutes at a time.



What a week's exercise schedule could look like

Aerobic (30 minutes, 5x per week) ►



Copyright : maridav/123rf

► ***Stretching, range of motion***
(5x per week)



Strength (Whole body workouts,
2 or 3x per week, with at least 48 to
72 hours between sessions) ►



► ***Skilled*** (2x per
week in activities that
require balance and
coordination)

Brain (Various types of new and
complex mental activities: Remember
that skilled physical activity is also
brain exercise—establishing new
connections, and intense aerobic
activity increases the production of
new hippocampus brain cells) ►



Invest your time wisely—you will only be able to do what you practice

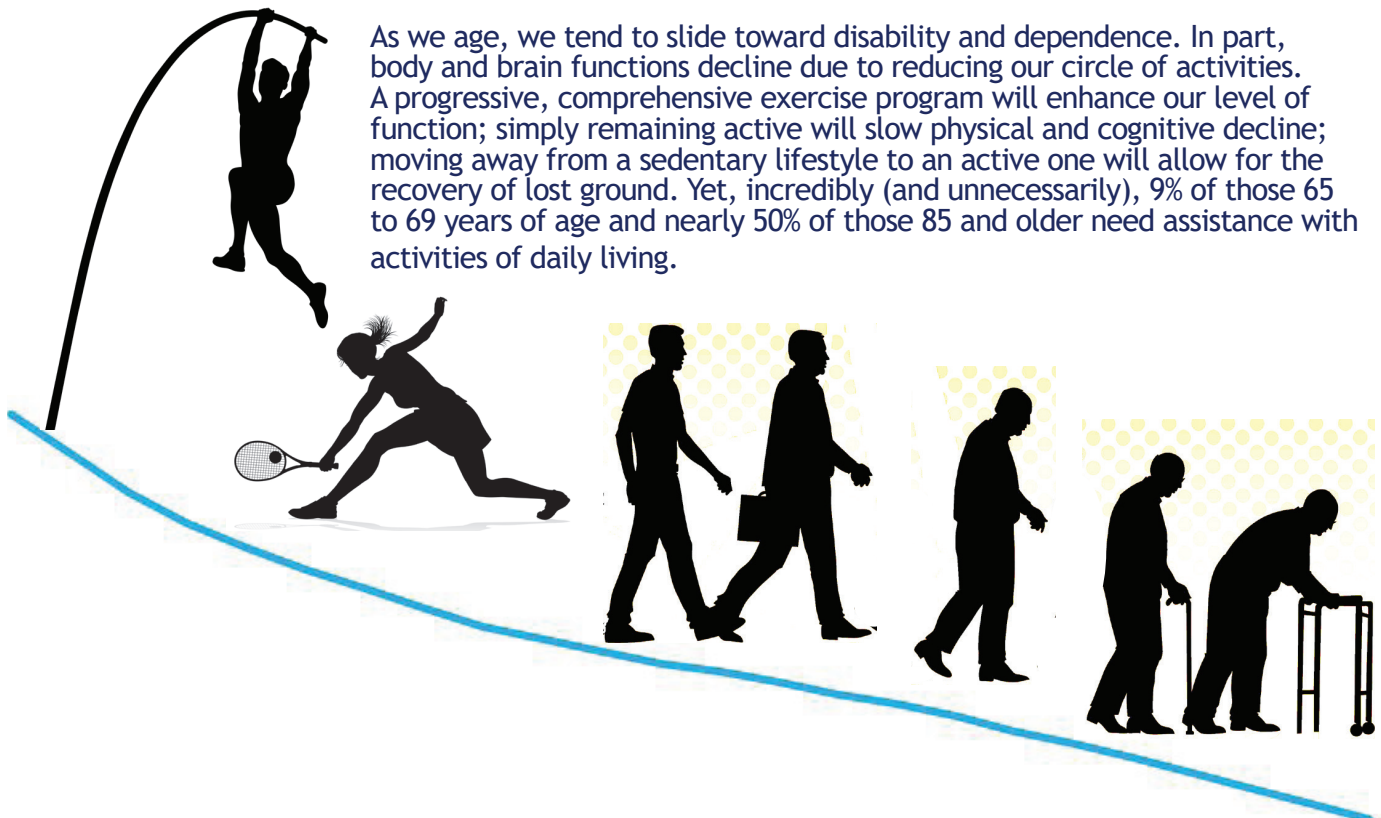
Dr. Kenneth Cooper, the father of the aerobics movement and the founder of the Cooper Aerobics Center, Clinic, and Institute in Dallas, was asked, “Dr. Cooper, what is the best form of exercise?” His answer: “The kind you are willing to do.”

Of course, engaging in activities you enjoy makes you more likely to stay with your exercise program. In addition, scheduling various activities on different days throughout the week can keep you motivated, work all your muscle groups, and diversify your skills.

Do you have a young athlete in your family? Research, combined with the success of athletes in our nation and those in other countries, suggests that the earlier years of training should be comprised of experience in a wide range of diverse activities, gradually working toward more specialized training as they mature. This approach, called translateral training, leads to a lower burnout rate, fewer injuries, more years of rewarding competition, and a later peak in performance.

To ensure your success, set specific times for exercise, and consider an interval approach. With interval training, you can vary the intensity of your workout during a session. For example, you vary the pace in walking, swimming, biking, or jogging. Short on time? You can achieve greater efficiency—better results with less time spent weekly—if you engage in activities that span two or more of the categories of exercise.

Your future—to a great extent—is a matter of your day-to-day choices



As we age, we tend to slide toward disability and dependence. In part, body and brain functions decline due to reducing our circle of activities. A progressive, comprehensive exercise program will enhance our level of function; simply remaining active will slow physical and cognitive decline; moving away from a sedentary lifestyle to an active one will allow for the recovery of lost ground. Yet, incredibly (and unnecessarily), 9% of those 65 to 69 years of age and nearly 50% of those 85 and older need assistance with activities of daily living.

DECLINING FUNCTION IN THE EXTREME IS NOT A PART OF NORMAL AGING: Short of physical dependence, worsening function refers to a vulnerability to muscle and joint injury and pain, increased risk for falling, a loss of physical strength and endurance, and a shrinking circle of physical and cognitive activity.

In the extreme, a physical and cognitive decline leads to others having to do what you cannot do for yourself. The decrease could include any basic activities of daily living—toileting, dressing, bathing, eating—and instrumental activities such as food preparation, shopping, driving around town, housekeeping, handling finances, telephone use, and managing medications.

Chapter 8—SLEEP

Good sleep leads to good health

A person getting regular, sufficient, restful sleep will generally awaken refreshed and rested each morning after passing through the normal cycles of sleep during the night.

Most adults require at least eight hours of sleep each night; some require a little more, and some a little less. However, more than nine hours of sleep is associated with poorer health.

The notorious alarm clock awakens most of us before getting the needed sleep. As a result, most people stay up too late, missing those hours before midnight, which has the most therapeutic potential.

People who sleep less than six hours or more than nine hours a night have a higher incidence of type 2 diabetes.



While you sleep . . .

- ◆ Injured tissue heals more rapidly.
- ◆ Muscle tissue “injured” during strength training is repaired and muscle size increases.
- ◆ Cell division is faster while we sleep—the cells of the skin, intestinal lining and blood are constantly being replaced. Erythrocytes are the red blood cells, and we have about 25 trillion of them. Red blood cells have a lifespan of only three to four months, so they are replaced at a rate of three million every second!
- ◆ Liver processes speed up.
- ◆ Your brain is at work transferring short-term memory to long-term memory.
- ◆ Your central nervous system is rejuvenated.
- ◆ Output of growth hormone is increased.
- ◆ Toxins accumulated during the day are flushed out of the brain.

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone,
O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

(Psalms 4:8)

Sleep cycles



Stage 1 (Drowsiness)

When you first fall asleep, you are in Stage 1 sleep (Drowsiness). Stage 1 lasts just five or 10 minutes. Eyes move slowly under the eyelids and muscle activity slows down. You are easily awakened during Stage 1 sleep.

The sleep cycle is repeated four to five times throughout the night.

REM (rapid eye movement) Sleep

At about 70 to 90 minutes into your sleep cycle, you enter REM Sleep. You usually have three to five REM episodes per night. Your eyes jerk rapidly in various directions under your eyelids, thus the name REM Sleep. First sleep cycles each night consist of relatively short REM periods plus long periods of Deep Sleep. Through the night, REM Sleep periods increase in length; Deep Sleep decreases. Toward morning, nearly all sleep time is in stages 1, 2 and REM.

Stage 3, then stage 2 repeats, prior to the REM stage.

Stage 2 (Light Sleep)

Next, you go into Stage 2 sleep (Light Sleep). In Stage 2, eye movements stop, heart rate slows and body temperature decreases.

Stages 3 & 4 (Deep Sleep)

Then you enter Stages 3 and 4 (Deep Sleep). During Stages 3 and 4, you are difficult to awaken. People who are awakened during Deep Sleep do not adjust immediately and often feel groggy and disoriented for several minutes after they wake up. Children may experience bed-wetting, night terrors or sleepwalking during Deep Sleep.

Sleep like a baby



- ☐ Do engage in daily exercise, but not within two hours before bedtime
- ☐ Regular aerobic exercise during the day can help you to sleep more restfully
- ☐ Don't eat close to bedtime; avoid alcohol and caffeine
- ☐ Keep the room dark; avoid the blue light of computer, cell, and TV
- ☐ Go to bed and get up at the same time, including weekends
- ☐ Avoid late night TV, especially emotionally-charged programs
- ☐ Keep the bedroom for sleep and intimacy, not for work or study (or settling disputes)
- ☐ Identify specific worries and determine the next day's plan for resolving them
- ☐ Resolve personal issues— "A clear conscience is a soft pillow."
- ☐ Get a comfortable bed and sheets
- ☐ In general, avoid over-the-counter sleep aids, but a *synthetic* melatonin for a few weeks might help. Check with your physician. (Note: *natural* melatonin may contain toxins or viruses.)

Sleep: How are you doing?

Chapter 9—CLOSURE

About “traveling light”

Unresolved issues from the past—accompanied by hurt, anger, shame, guilt, fear, or grief—siphon off our energy and impact our attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors in the present.

It is no secret that a lack of closure also negatively affects our health.

What’s in the bag?

Picture Santa Claus with a large bag on his back.

Now picture yourself in his shoes. What’s in the bag, and how great is the load you are carrying? We can become burdened with many things in life.

The worries of tomorrow, and the the lack of closure for our past issues can weigh us down. Scripture addresses both.



Healing emotional wounds

There is an old saying, “Time heals all wounds.” But time by itself usually will not heal a deep emotional wound. Even with the body’s exceptional built-in capabilities for promoting physical healing, it sometimes takes modern medicine or God’s supernatural intervention for the body to recover from injury, disease, or inactivity. Deep emotional wounds—for which no automatic, built-in mechanisms for true healing—deserve thoughtful and prayerful attention.

As a medical professional can intervene to facilitate physical healing, sometimes a pastor, counselor, or psychiatrist can be an invaluable resource in helping one to find God’s way for emotional healing. Unattended emotional wounds poison one’s life and relationships and wreak havoc on the body.

Achieving closure by taking steps to address past challenges can be a complicated matter. While God provides a way for what Dr. Francis Schaeffer referred to as “substantial healing in the life of the Christian,” it is a process that may require a significant investment of time and often the help of a competent counselor. We intend to draw attention to our need for closure and present a frame of reference for beginning the process of identifying and resolving past issues. Our discussion here will be limited to three major themes—guilt, anger, and fear.

How God makes the guilty, not guilty

Jesus says that there is no condemnation for those who are in Him. His work on the cross, resurrection, and righteousness imputed to us mean we are free.

Nothing remains to be paid off; God's forgiveness is complete, and there is nothing we could add to what Christ has done.

If you have asked for forgiveness, He has forgiven you, and you need not continue carrying the weight of your guilt. Forgive yourself. It is another step toward comprehensive health.

"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)

God forgets your sin

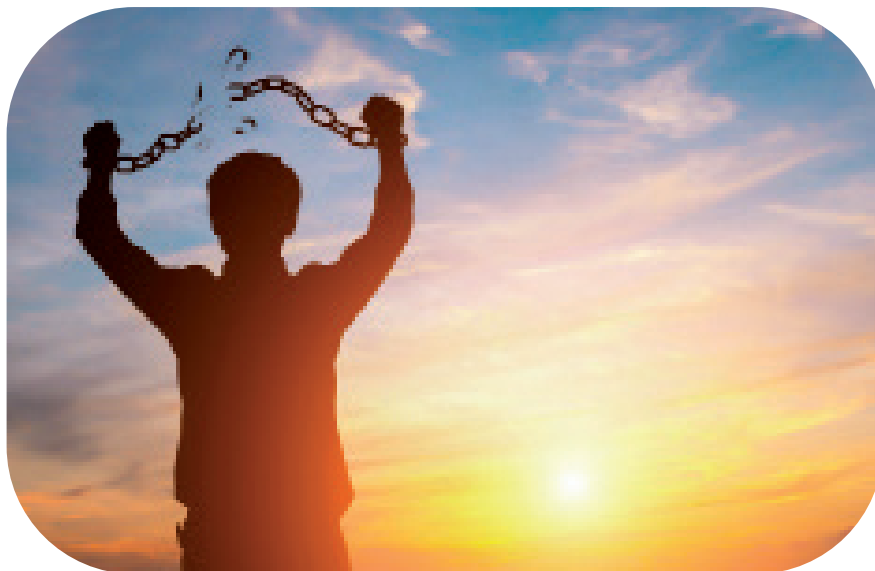
God forgives our sins and forgets our sins—He no longer charges our sins to our account. He has wiped the slate clean. God sees us as clean because Christ's perfect righteousness is credited to our account when we trust Him.

God's forgiving ways may be difficult for us to grasp, not only because of the magnitude of sin when measured against the Holiness of God, but because forgiveness is so foreign to what we may experience in day-to-day relationships.

So typical is the attitude, "I can forgive, but I can't forget." In the 15th Psalm, the mature man "does not take up a reproach against a friend." That is, he does not remind him of past sins repented. Yet, we can remind others of past failures with a look or word. We are not to accuse those whom God has forgiven, and we are not to accuse ourselves when Christ has forgiven us.

Our sin has negative consequences, but sometimes God is pleased to remove those consequences. If they remain, God can work them to our benefit and His honor. Avoid destructive self-fulfilling prophecy by thinking that one or another area of your life is beyond redemption or recovery.

"... For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)



Taking on the challenge of fear

The phrase “fear not” is one of the most often stated commands in the Bible. Fear is a common experience for all of us and is a theme addressed from Genesis to Revelation. Fear is often the response to real danger. But it can also be a product of our imagination, a product of dire predictions of outcomes that may never happen.

To experience fear in the face of a threat is understandable, awakening us to danger. The key is to manage fear wisely, drawing from God’s strength. Fear is a tap on the shoulder to get our attention, but the experience of fear itself should not direct our steps. Fear is not to be the final arbiter of our decisions.

What gets us into trouble is anxiety or fear controlling a portion of our lives, limiting us from embracing what God has for us and pursuing what He has called us to do. The goal is to respond appropriately—to do the right thing—rather than yield to fear and anxiety.

God is compassionate and understands our fear. Yet, he is also a God of promise and encouragement, as reflected in His words to Joshua as he steps into the leadership role held by Moses:

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. (Joshua 1:5-7)



Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Resolving Anger

BE ANGRY AND
DO NOT SIN; do not
let the sun go down on
your anger, and give no
opportunity to the devil.

(Ephesians 4:26-27)

God is just The One who rules the universe has also promised to work justice. Even when things are not made right, I can count on God to take care of business in His time.

In some cases, we may not see justice done in our lifetime. Having used up every God-appointed means for dealing with injustice and still not being satisfied, we give the matter to God, who judges with complete fairness. God promises to bring justice.

God is merciful and gracious The One who has promised to work justice has satisfied the demands of justice on your behalf. Consider what Christ has done for you. When you placed your trust in Him, through God's grace, you received mercy—rather than what you deserved.

Are you grateful for what Christ has done on your behalf? So it was “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Surely this should temper how you respond to those who have hurt you.

Beloved, never avenge
yourselves, but leave it to
the wrath of God, for it
is written, “Vengeance is
mine, I WILL REPAY,
says the Lord.”

(Romans 12:19)



Chapter 10—WHAT WOULD KING DAVID SAY TODAY?

Encouraging news from current science

The title of a book written by Dr. Walter M. Bortz, M.D., says it well: *We Live Too Short and Die Too Long*. A long, healthy, disability-free life is more an outcome of our lifestyle choices than our genes, gender, or age. Our bodies are made to live well beyond our current life expectancies. The often physical and cognitive disabilities encountered in the latter decades of life are not a necessary part of aging.

THE OKINAWA STUDY

The twenty-five-year Okinawa Study provides an explanation for the unusual number of Okinawans living past one-hundred years of age while continuing to be physically active and productive. Contributing to their vibrant longevity is their healthy eating, being physically active, maintaining strong relationship ties, and having a solid spiritual foundation. The study concluded that if Americans followed the healthy lifestyle of the Okinawans we would have to close eighty percent of our coronary care units, one-third of our cancer wards, and a lot of our nursing homes.

THE ADVENTIST STUDY

A forty-year study of California Seventh-Day Adventists revealed a lifespan greater than that of non-Adventists, and a lower risk of major diseases, including coronary heart disease and certain cancers. Their health and longevity were attributed to their lifestyle, with a strong emphasis on their eating habits. Their diet was plant-based and included consuming nuts several times per week.

THE PIMA INDIAN STUDY

Compare two cultures of the Pima Indians—one residing in a remote area of Mexico, and another in the Gila River Area, south of Phoenix, Arizona. While they share similar genetic profiles, there are marked health differences between the two cultures as shown in the chart below.

	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Arizona</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Arizona</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Men</i>
<i>Type 2 diabetes</i>	10.5%	37%	6.3%	54%
<i>Body Mass Index (BMI)</i>	25.1	35.5	24.8	30.8
<i>Normal weight if BMI is 18.5 to <25</i>				
<i>Overweight if BMI is 25 to 29.9</i>				
<i>Obese if BMI is 30 or higher</i>				
<i>Morbidly obese if BMI is 40, or 35 with a medical condition or disease</i>				

If you consider the Arizona Pimas over age 35, today more than 50% percent have type 2 diabetes! Of the four thousand Pimas living in Arizona in 1902, only one person had diabetes; in 1940, there were only twenty-four Arizona Pimas with diabetes.

What has changed, and what are the differences between the Mexico Pimas and the Arizona Pimas? As it turns out, the Arizona Pima diet has changed over the years, with a higher percentage of animal products, processed foods, simple sugar, and fat. The Mexican Pima diet consists primarily of beans, corn, and rice, plus servings of chicken and meat once or twice a month. Besides, they are much more physically active than their counterparts in Arizona.

The studies of these two cultures suggest a genetic predisposition to type 2 diabetes in both groups, but far and away, the primary factor is lifestyle. As has been said, “*genetics loads the gun, but lifestyle pulls the trigger.*”

OTHER SUPPORTIVE RESEARCH STUDIES

Major diseases such as coronary artery disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke are largely preventable. A cancer research study in 2008 conveys the same message as current research. Much of cancer is preventable:

Only 5–10% of all cancer cases can be attributed to genetic defects, whereas the remaining 90–95% have their roots in the environment and lifestyle. The lifestyle factors include cigarette smoking, diet (fried foods, red meat), alcohol, sun exposure, environmental pollutants, infections, stress, obesity, and physical inactivity. (*Pharmaceutical Research*, 2008 Sept; 25(9): 2097–2116)

The Mayo Clinic, American Cancer Society, Cancer Prevention Research Center, MD Anderson Cancer Center, American Association for Cancer Research, and NIH National Cancer Institute are among the many health agencies across the United States. They claim we can dramatically reduce the occurrence of cancers in our nation. Not only can we prevent major diseases, but with positive lifestyle changes, we can often reverse the damage we have done to our bodies through poor lifestyle choices.

An increasing number of scientists/medical professionals have shifted their emphasis from disease management to disease prevention and reversal. Names that have become more visible over the last decades through their programs, research, written, and video resources include Dean Ornish, M.D., Joel Fuhrman, M.D., and Paul Nussbaum, Ph.D., a brain health expert. Another name that surfaces is Jon Kolb, MS, an exercise physiologist who has worked wonders in enabling people to recover from a lost physical performance. His organization's website: <https://www.adventurestraining.org>

ON THE ROAD TO OPTIMAL HEALTH

Our definition of health, and the path to health, we hope became apparent in the preceding pages. In this chapter we will follow the path from the body's major organs and systems to the tiniest cells, considering how you can positively impact your health. From the fantastic super-tiny, microscopic parts of the human body to its large, complex organs, systems, and processes—lifestyle choices shape their destiny. Living healthy is a choice—more accurately, health is a function of the tens of thousands of choices you make throughout your life.

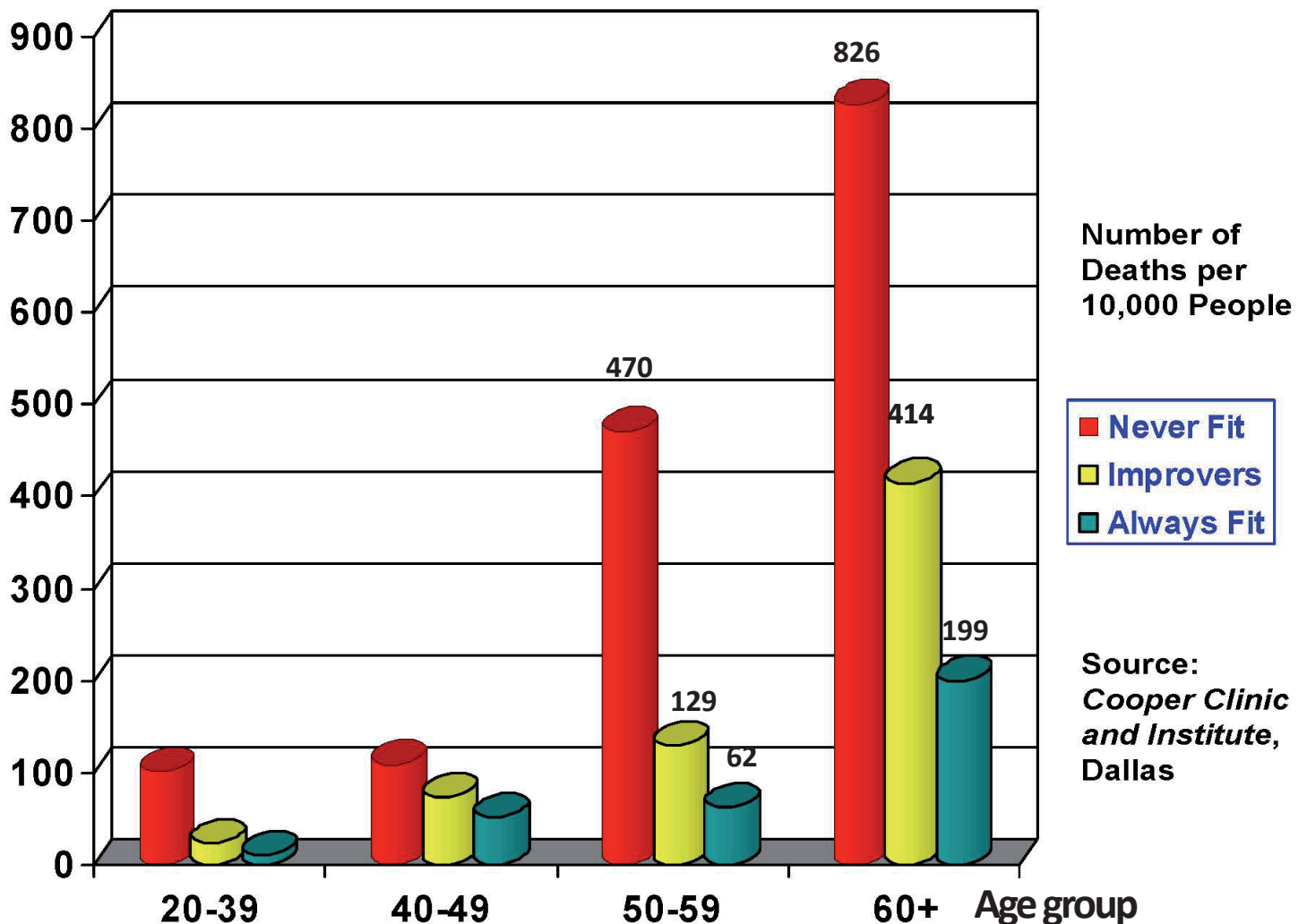


GOOD NEWS

A healthy lifestyle is critical to preventing heart issues, wielding greater preventive power than your family health history or genetic profile. A heart-healthy lifestyle includes nutrition, regular physical activity, stress management, and weight control. Of course, toxic habits such as tobacco use and heavy use of alcohol play a part.

Nutrition is the focus for Caldwell Esselstyn in his heart disease reversal initiative. He encourages exercise, but it is not required in his program. His concern is that if a health initiative requires too much from participants, *"the wheels will fall off the wagon"* (many people will drop out). Dean Ornish includes regular exercise in his approach to reversing coronary artery disease.

The research by the Cooper Institute in Dallas has shown a lower death rate for sedentary persons who got off the couch and started exercising regularly. The "never fit" had four times the death rate than the always fit; in the 50s group, almost eight times the deaths. (The graph below summarizes some of the results of the Cooper research.)



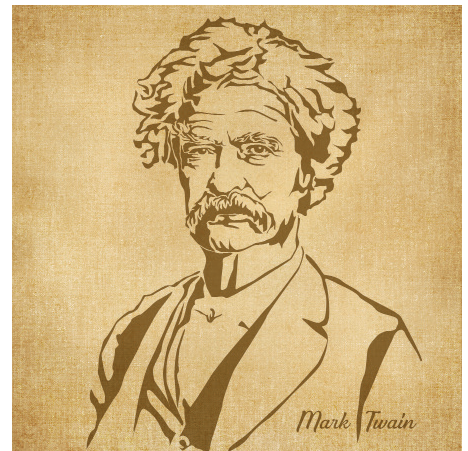
Lifestyle and health—foundational principles in review

- Health is much more a function of our day-to-day choices than our genes, gender, or age.
- Most individuals live far below their health, fitness, performance, quality of life, and longevity potential.
- God has built a tremendous recovery potential into our physical body—a capacity to reverse many of the effects of disease, injury, and disuse.
- As we age, we will only be able to do that for which we continue to practice and train.
- We can extend our life expectancy and live more years disability-free than is currently common in Western society.
- Scripture is the inerrant final authority for life and salvation, providing foundational principles and often considerable detail for addressing every central area of life.
- Christianity is unique among all religions in its understanding of God, the path to salvation, and engaging the brain while capturing the “heart” as one crosses the threshold of faith.
- Fields such as natural science (physics, chemistry, biology, geology, astronomy), medical science, psychology, archaeology, and anthropology are valuable and necessary sources of knowledge to be considered and applied in the light of the teaching of Scripture.

For additional thought and discussion

MARK TWAIN: Comment on each quote. Are they consistent or in conflict with your thinking and/or the wisdom teachings of the book of Proverbs in the Bible?

- “The two most important days in your life—the day you were born, and the day you find out WHY.”
- “If you want to change the future you must change what you’re doing in the present.”
- “The secret of making progress is to get started.”
- “You can’t break a bad habit by throwing it out the window. Instead, you got to walk it slowly down the stairs.”
- “Most men died at 27; we just bury them at 72.”



And related to Mark Twain’s statement about most men dying at age 27, we quote aspiring author **BETTY FORTSON** of Atlanta, reaching age 97 in June of 2025.

“It is sad when your body dies before you do.”

Life's Bigger Picture

Earlier (page 13), a diagram highlighted three critical life areas: Spiritual life, people relationships, and vocation. The bigger picture has been presented in Section II, with a more comprehensive recognition of life areas. These are represented in the seven pieces of the integrated puzzle below. Have you achieved a balance of expression in key life areas? Are there barriers preventing you from fulfilling all that God has called you to?



A look at self

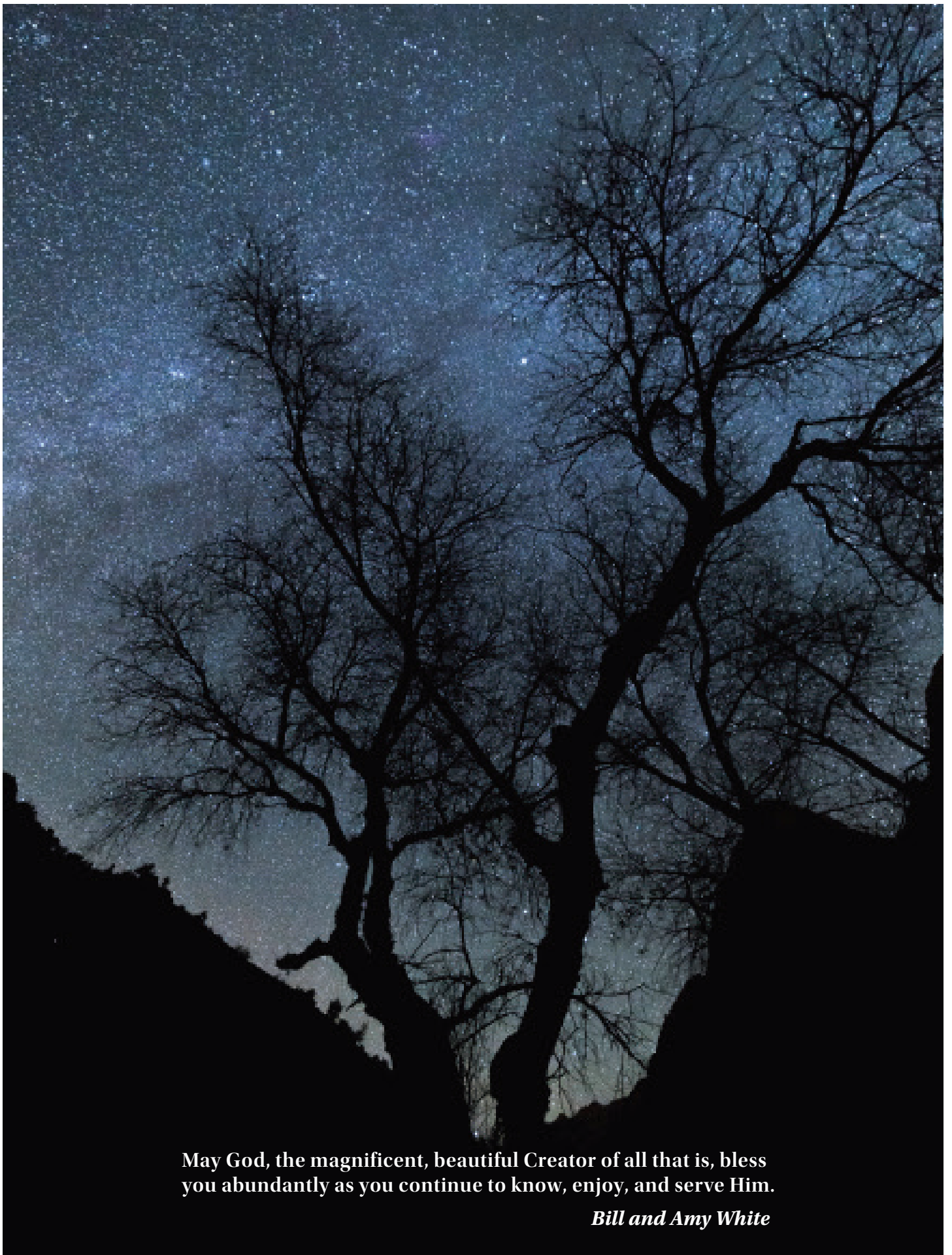
All things considered, how are you doing? Give some thought to each life area as you read through the survey items below. Consider each item

- 1) within the framework of your personal vision for your life in an area,
- 2) in accord with your action plan for achieving your best, and
- 3) the action steps you plan take to move forward.

It is not assumed you are having difficulty, but we also know that no one can say, “I have arrived.” There is always another positive step to take. For each item, identify where you are on a scale of **1** to **10**

10 indicates *you are doing exceptionally well*; a score of **1** says *nothing is happening*.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I engage in regular activities related to my faith, such as study, prayer, worship, fellowship with others
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I know what I believe and why
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I have a vital and growing relationship with God
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I have a close, trusted friend I see regularly, enjoy, and with whom I can be open and honest
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I get enough time and quality time with the special people in my life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 • I am wise in choosing relationships.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ My work is a good fit—satisfying, meaningful, and consistent with my interests and abilities
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I apply my talents to the voluntary service of others
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ One area of my life consumes too much of my time.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I take regular time for enjoyable, restorative recreation
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ Overall, I am doing well, and my life is right where I would like it to be
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I have a sense of purpose or calling in my life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I get 7-9 hours of sleep per night and awaken rested.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I get enough exercise—at least 180 minutes per week across several areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Aerobic</u>—Swim, jog, cycle, walk fast, steps: all that reaches and sustains a higher exercise heart-rate ○ <u>Stretching</u>—Self-myofascial release, stretching, and mobility/range of motion exercise ○ <u>Strength</u>—Body weight, free weights, machines, rubber bands resistance exercise ○ <u>Skilled Movement</u>—Activity that requires agility, balance, coordination - e.g., dance, tennis, martial arts ○ <u>Brain</u>—Novel and challenging brain activity 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ▪ I have healthy eating habits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meals primarily consist of lots of fresh fruit and vegetables; beans and legumes; whole grains; healthy oils; nuts and seeds ○ My snacks typically consist of healthy foods ○ I go very light on fast foods, processed foods, red meat and processed meat, sweets, and fast foods 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 • My level of motivation for living a healthy lifestyle
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 • I have closure: there are no experiences past that strongly negatively impact my life in the present.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 • I have identified at least one area of my life where I will develop an action plan with specific steps and a timetable to move forward.
No Yes |
|---|---|



May God, the magnificent, beautiful Creator of all that is, bless
you abundantly as you continue to know, enjoy, and serve Him.

Bill and Amy White

A resource for creating a personal vision and action plan for each central area of life

Your Life, Your Purpose, Your Future is for individuals and groups—as a stand-alone or to accompany the book ***REIMAGINE Your Life, Your Purpose, Your Future***. It is a tool for an individual working independently and a resource and curriculum guide for professional counselors, pastors, teachers, Bible study leaders, and church home group coordinators. It is solidly based on Scripture and draws from relevant science interpreted in the light of the Bible. Like *REIMAGINE*, it addresses significant areas of life—spiritual, relational, vocational, recreational, physical, and emotional.

William White, Ph.D.

Bill's studies include education, exercise science, counseling, and theology. He is the Ageless IDEAS founder. He has taught in public school, seminary, and university settings and held various leadership roles for not-for-profit organizations. He is a public speaker, educator, trainer, life coach, and program design specialist. He has extensive experience developing health-related educational initiatives, including programs for corporations, churches, hospitals, and retirement communities.

Bill is an ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist, ACE Medical Exercise Specialist, and NASM Certified Personal Trainer. Encouraging his clients to stay active and reach for higher health and body/brain performance goals, he is engaged in the martial arts—4th Degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do.

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She has been strategically involved in human resource/people management; facilities and operational roles; staff and leadership development; conflict management and resolution; community/partner building; and strategic planning. She has presented at universities, organizations, churches, women's groups, and national conference workshops.

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