



The Twelve Pillars of Health - September 2006

Introduction

From my observation over many years, I have become convinced of three important things. That (i) physical dis-ease often comes from emotional imbalances (ii) there are different ways of staying healthy or recovering from illness (iii) taking our own responsibility for our health enhances our capacity to stay well and get well. So I have tried to identify what the combination of different routes to health might be.

In the ideas outlined below, I am hoping to offer some perspective across the wide range of therapies and treatments available these days, from pharmaceutical drugs to good nutrition to homeopathy to flower essences, and to show where each of them might fit in to the whole picture.

I believe that we are healthy when, in our body, our relationships, and our lifestyle, we feel: freedom, balance, adaptability, flow, joy, and love. And it seems to me that, to help us reach this state, there are 12 pillars of health. Six of them refer to what we can 'do' and 'have', and six of them refer to how we can 'be' and 'become':

What we can do and have:

sleep, water, nutrition and environment, exercise and meditation, homeopathics and essences and talk-therapy, pharmaceuticals and herbs and body-work

How we can be and become:

resolving our stuff, stillness and inspiration, having unconditional affection, impact on our world, inherited wellness, belonging.

The Twelve Pillars

What we can do and have

Sleep : good sleep restores the body, mind, emotions, and spirit; everything looks better when we're not tired; some think that both concentration and memory are affected if we under-sleep; everyone has their own optimum sleep-time, approximately ranging from 6 hours to 8 hours; a post-lunch nap is thought to have huge health value.

Water: sipping water constantly enhances all body processes; it is good for: concentration, digestion, optimum organ functioning, and flushing; sipping, rather than gulping, stops the water from going straight through; and remember that, even though they are drinks, we can get dehydrated by alcohol, tea, coffee, fruit juice, and carbonated drinks, so we need to supplement these by drinking water too.

Nutrition and environment: working towards a long-term maintenance diet can lead to the best nutrition, and living in a clean environment can lead to the best lifestyle. For good nutrition, in simple terms, cutting-edge thinking suggests this means: (i) organic where possible (ii) low amounts of starchy carbohydrate foods, especially wheat, *no* processed ones, and *no sugar!* (iii) no transfats (i.e. processed fats), as processing damages polyunsaturated fats in cooking oils and margarines and biscuits and cakes (iv) increased good fats (especially essential fats via fish and olive oil and nuts and avocado, and *including* saturated fats in some meat and coconut oil and butter (v) a lot of fibre (green veg, nuts, beans, peas, fruit, brown rice, ryebread, oats) (vi) a lot of protein (fish, meat, eggs, nuts, quinoa, chickpeas, beans) (vii) above all, large quantities of green non-starchy carbs (green vegetables) (viii) all this plus 4000mg of Vit C a day, and other supplements as appropriate. The aim is to get into good habits and still eat satisfyingly, and so, for healthy weight loss and healthy cholesterol, we should expect results in about three months. For a clean environment, it is clear that unpolluted air, clean water, minimum-pesticide food, and

clean surroundings, are essential. We also need to be careful with all drugs, whether pharmaceutical (e.g. medicine) or recreational (e.g. alcohol/tobacco/cannabis), because these are chemicals, and can have long-term side effects. We should avoid anti-nutrients, which drain or block the body's natural processes. [For a more detailed outline, see my Basic Nutrition Sheet, available from me]

Exercise and meditation: the best exercise is full-body but not too strenuous, e.g. 'power' walking or swimming; exercise is absolutely crucial to reduce cortisol, the most destructive of the stress hormones; but we have to be careful that exercise is not over-exertive, as this can lead to acidosis and more illness; meditation is not difficult and so we have to find a technique that suits us and go with it; meditation can be short (e.g. calm breathing while standing on the train), or long and involved (e.g. tai chi or pilates or yoga or TM); meditation also helps many people to connect with Source.

Homeopathics, essences, ayurveda, acupuncture, and talk therapy: these approaches depend on the view of the body as a subtle-energy body as well as a physical body; with European homeopathy, about 4000 remedies in many potencies, plus the ranges of flower/gem/animal essences, can bear on physical issues, psychological issues, and people's whole way of seeing the world; with Indian ayurveda, the combination of diet and herbs and yoga meditation are said to rebalance the body's subtle-energy fields; with Chinese acupuncture, part of traditional Chinese medicine, the use of needles is based on a similar energy-model of the body; and talk therapy such as psychotherapy and cognitive behavioural therapy can enhance mental and emotional change.

Pharmaceutical medicine, herbal medicine, and body-work: these approaches, also along with surgery, mostly depend on the view of the body as a physical machine; thus, with the first two approaches, a molecular model of applying chemicals to affect the physical processes of disease is implied; pharmaceutical

medicine and surgery are particularly effective in extreme and emergency conditions, but many people feel are less so in some cases, such as administering multiple vaccinations to very young children, sometimes causing immunological hypersensitivity (i.e. easy allergies) to follow for life; herbal medicine is more holistic because it does not separate 'active ingredients' from each other, so that all ingredients work synergistically; body-work (e.g. physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic) may be necessary for muscle, joint, and spine treatment, though cranial osteopathy and Bowen technique and reiki also treat emotional states.

How we can be and become

Resolving our stuff: we are each on this earth to sort ourselves out, and the key to this is awareness; we need: to find out and accept who we are; to let go of self-limiting beliefs (e.g. resentment, envy, feeling victim, feeling lost, guilt, anger, blame, fear, confusion, anxiety, denial, self-delusion); to count our blessings; to take responsibility for everything that happens to us so that we do not feel victims; to change the way we see the world (what we resist, persists; what we allow, dissolves). When we resolve our stuff, and when we follow our instincts and common sense about what is healthy, the more we clear things away, the more unconditional love we feel for others, and the more confident we become to deal with everything and everyone.

Stillness and inspiration: feeling at-one, feeling comfortable in our skin, not attaching ourselves to outcomes, being OK with what happens, allowing rebalancing, being in the now, trusting our intuition; finding stillness through meditation, getting away, nature, music, rhythm, dancing, or creating; doing things and being with people that energise and inspire us, that we love; and avoiding things or people that drain us; connecting with Source.

Having unconditional affection: everybody needs to feel that one good person in

the world is their ally, unconditionally and reliably, and if appropriate, toughly; this creates the foundation for true confidence, and for love of others; having social support structures is important for minimising stress.

Impact on our world: we each need to feel that we have some influence on people or events, some power to make things happen; when this impact is easy for us to come by, it gives confidence and helps us to have pride in what we do; when it is difficult to find, we often look for it in unhealthy ways; when control is exerted over us, or when we lose control over our own lives and impact on the world, or when we are treated without dignity or respect, we can feel the worst kind of stress.

Inherited wellness: whether marked in our genes, modelled in our childhoods, or passed on via our subtle-energy- bodies, our ancestral imprint is a major component of our health picture

Belonging: whether to a healthy family, or a toxic gang, or a nation, or a local community, or a racial group, or a political movement, or a golf club, or a religion . . . the need to belong, the need to have clear identity, is a core human drive; for health, we need to seek healthy belonging.

A word on integrative healing

A recent theory of integrative healing has been developed by the renowned healer, Paul Francis, in which all of the above approaches are integrated into one overarching model of health.

A word on detoxification

'Detox' is a buzz-word. A lot of the treatments offered in the commercial world are satisfying but superficial. For deeper detoxification, a good practitioner will be able to

advise on a holistic approach, which will normally involve a longer-term commitment, and a combination of: talk-therapy, lifestyle review, nutrition advice, flushing, exercise, homeopathy, and essences.



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