

True Health Freedom

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When it comes to health care – getting healthy and staying healthy - this world is filled, way past the breaking point, with facts, data, theories, information, recommendations and advice. People are saturated with “what I am supposed to do” to be healthy, wealthy, good-looking, popular, successful, powerful and lovable. And if you are not these things yet, well then you should try harder! And every new guru-of-the-week has got the answer you are looking for...

Why do we want these things? Essentially, we want to feel good, so that we need not worry about our health. When we have abiding good health, we have more freedom and options in our lives.

Freedom.

Freedom, liberty, self-determination. Nice-sounding words, inspiring words. But if we are observant and honest with ourselves, really honest, we can say that we are not very free at all inside. Our inner world is full of fears, doubts and anxieties. To deal with this, we attempt to define ourselves by our accomplishments, in order to provide temporary solace. We constantly look for answers from external sources – what I should do, how I should look, how I should think, how I should speak.

But the authoritarian external sources are no better; they have their own fears, doubts and anxieties. Those authoritarians who are the most insecure within themselves will demand rigidity, compliance, surveillance, submission and punishment of others. And consequently the artificial world we've created around ourselves is less and less free every day.

It is all unnecessary, self-destructive and very sad.

Where to start?

With you. Within you.

If our mind and body are not healthy, there is *absolutely no way* to experience lasting joy and contentment in our lives. If there is malfunction, pain, violence and war happening inside our body and mind, we will automatically project pain, violence and war into our world, in our relationships to each other, and in our relationship to nature.

How to stop this war once and for all time?

First we get essential wisdom – basic principles, solid understanding about *how to live well* and *how to stay well*. Really simple stuff that most of us never learned as children because our parents and their parents did not know these basics, either. They did the best they could, but now it is time to break free of those limitations and that ignorance. It is time to move into full human adulthood.

Let us look at one fundamental dilemma of all human beings – sickness.

Humans have experimented with countless techniques, therapies and remedies; potions, pills and miracle drugs, in order to alleviate their pains and afflictions... for thousands of years...and still we keep looking. We have an astonishing array of medicines to cure us - from ancient herbal concoctions to modern genetically-manufactured drugs – all available in bewildering variety. Advice comes in every form imaginable - thousands of varieties of doctors, healers, therapists, shamans, gurus, facilitators, coaches, and advice-givers. With all this brainpower and wonderful heartfelt intention at work, surely the answers to our problems are just around the corner, right? Just a little more research... Just a little more therapy... Just a little more money... Just, just, just....

Are we closing in on the answers? Have we missed something? Do we really require just a little more science, more knowledge, more data, more research?

Or have we merely forgotten something very, very simple?

You know how it is when you are hiking in dense, unfamiliar terrain, and you somehow get off the trail... now you are lost. You try to retrace your steps, but it seems that you have made a mistake retracing, because now you are more lost than before. You try and try again to find the clear path, but no luck. Your frustration with your desperate search gets magnified when you see the same tree again and again, as you realize you have been going in circles.

How to find your way back? Let us probe deeply and discover marvelous treasures....

Dr. Herbert Shelton (1895-1985) was an iconoclast and rebel health pioneer. Standing on the shoulders of prior progressive and independent thinkers, Shelton relentlessly taught and promoted a practical, sensible and extremely effective system of achieving overall human health and happiness - Natural Hygiene.

The name comes from two words: Natural - in harmony with Nature, and Hygiene - the science of good health. Many of the principles of this natural science of excellent human health can be traced far back into history; indeed Natural Hygiene is basic common sense. However, common sense is not very common!

Shelton was by far the most prolific thinker and writer on the subject, and he was relentless in promoting self-reliance. For him, freedom, independence and autonomy is what human life is all about. He understood that this is what we grow up to become - totally autonomous, self-determining, self-balancing, self-healing, self-regulating, self-correcting and self-loving creatures. By becoming so, we each could truly love and care for each other, uninhibited.

Examining a few philosophical tidbits from his article "Principles of Natural Hygiene"⁽¹⁾ allows us to cut right to the chase:

"Natural Hygiene is that branch of biology which investigates and applies the conditions upon which life and health depend, and the means by which all health is sustained in all its virtue and purity, and restored when it has been lost.....Natural Hygiene is an understanding of nature and is not a system of therapeutics. It professes to build health in all forms of diseased states by the employment of hygienic agents alone, and without the employment of poisons, or resort to enervating palliatives or therapies of any nature. In the class of hygienic agencies can be included only the actual necessities of life - food, air, water, sunlight, rest, sleep, relaxation, exercise, play, warmth, cleanliness, hope, faith, courage - and the means of securing these. Constructive surgery forms the only non-hygienic measure endorsed by the Natural Hygienist.

"The truth should be self-evident that any method or system of health care or disease treatment that destroys the independence and autonomy of the individual and makes one forever dependent upon another person or class of people is not natural. Any system that of itself creates a privileged class who can, by law or otherwise, lord it over their fellow people destroys true freedom and personal autonomy. Any system that teaches the sick that they can get well only through the exercise of the skill of someone else, or through the operation of something else, and that they remain alive only through the tender mercies of the privileged class, has no place in Nature's scheme of things, and the sooner it is abolished, the better will humankind be. It was no more a part of the original scheme of things that people should be a supplicate at the feet of the healers than that lions or cod-fish should be. It matters not whether a person is dependent on the physician, the osteopath, the chiropractor or the psychoanalyst, that person is a slave to that class upon which one depends. Thera-

peutics makes slaves of men and women. This is an evil and cannot endure. Natural Hygiene uses no treatments.....none. A hygienist is a guide, a teacher. I'm not a treatment peddler. I do not treat symptoms. We always first look for the cause. The hygienist does not use the word cure.

"The healing principle is always in the living system itself. All living organisms are self-constructing, self-defending and self-repairing. Teach men and women to prevent disease by avoiding its causes rather than attempt to cure it by administering the causes of other diseases [drugs] - then health and happiness will abound everywhere. We are convinced that mankind can be educated in correct principles and trained in right practices so that sickness will cease to trouble us. It is our business to teach people how to naturally prevent disease and not merely how to take care of themselves when ill. I am well aware of the revolutionary character of the principles I have presented.....but I am convinced that the physical salvation of the human race depends upon their acceptance."

These statements by the late Dr. Shelton reflect his search for truth and his understanding that humanity is born to be free and autonomous; that the power and intelligence that created a fully mature human from a microscopic fertilized ovum is the same power that will maintain us in excellent health and well-being. All it takes is some basic education in the natural laws that govern us, the Earth, the Universe.

More recently, Dr. Thomas Hanna (1928-1990), a philosopher, writer and researcher, spent much of his time studying and teaching in the area of somatic education. He, like Shelton, stood on the shoulders of great visionaries that came before him: F. Matthias Alexander, Moshe Feldenkrais and others. Likewise, he synthesized and improved upon the works of these predecessors. Combining insights gathered from neurology, physiology and sensory education, Hanna created a body awareness and movement improvement technique he called "Somatics." In an interview entitled *Mind Over Movement*⁽²⁾, Hanna put it like this:

"My own interest, first of all, for myself, and second of all for any person I deal with, is to do anything I can to inculcate freedom. Freedom, independence and autonomy is what human life is all about. This is what we grow up to become - totally autonomous, self-determining, self-balancing, self-healing, self-regulating, self-correcting. We're magnificent creatures for becoming just that. Usually we don't come off being so. In various ways - emotionally, psychologically, physically - we get enslaved. And we don't have either the confidence or the ability to choose and truly conduct our own affairs and take care of ourselves. The truly burning and major issue of the 20th century - how can we become more autonomous human beings - rather than depending on authoritarian experts who give advice on everything.

"The whole thing is to let people get a taste of freedom; for self-reliance. You've got to be competent and confident enough to be independent and autonomous because freedom means that you're capable of being self-responsible. The human life has no other aim, as far as I can see than for human beings to become self-regulating and self-directing. Human freedom is at the heart of all issues. It's the only issue there is of human and moral philosophy: how can you help people become more free?

"What I do is education.....not therapy. My main concern is in knowledge that frees. We do things in one or two sessions and the

problem is gone. And they (the clients) are utterly in command and aware of what went on. Thoughtful medical people know the limitations of medicine. Arrogant ones are dangerous.....the excruciating unhappiness is to know what I know and realize it's going to take years to get these ideas across to the establishment of traditional thinking that has a hard time absorbing them. The impatience that I feel is with physicians who damage and hurt people and are arrogant about it. Underneath I have enormous anger because I see so many people abused.....I've got certain talents, certain understandings; it's in some sense my personal obligation to myself and other human beings to help them in any way I can. It has nothing to do with power. It has to do with loving people; being concerned about the human condition."

Hanna's love of freedom permeated all his work; he understood that much of the misery of humanity stemmed from a lack of self response-ability which was mostly due to a lack of education. To chip away at this wall of ignorance was his primary mission.

The goal of this article is to reintroduce into the realm of true health care some age old wisdom, seen through contemporary eyes. That wisdom is simply this: Daily practice of the precepts of Natural Hygiene, periodic practice of basic Somatics movements, and full attention to only doing what you know you are designed to do will enable you to live a full, joyous and healthy life for all of your years. Embracing the philosophy and science will fortify your mind with the knowledge necessary to carry on through good times and bad. Acting on these simple, essential and correct practices will keep you fit and flexible to adapt whenever and however necessary.

NATURAL HYGIENE

The science of Natural Hygiene is about enhancing physical, emotional and mental well-being through education. It provides us with a simple, straightforward system for regaining and maintaining superb human health and beauty. Hygiene is personally empowering and liberating. It teaches independence and rational action. It banishes fear and ignorance regarding human health and how to keep it. Ultimately it is about liberation and freedom.

The principles of Natural Hygiene, to be universally true, must reflect and harmonize with Natural Law. Just what is natural law? Natural law is,

"Law which so necessarily agrees with the nature and state of man, that without observing its maxims, the peace and happiness of a society can never be created or preserved. Knowledge of natural law may be attained merely by the light of reason; from the facts, and of their essential agreeableness with the constitution of human nature."⁽³⁾

These are profound words. Everyone wants peace and happiness in our society. And we each want to experience it in our lifetime. To create this reality, as an individual and as a society, we need to learn about natural law and how to observe its maxims. We need to personally experience how to apply it to our lives.

NATURAL HYGIENE PHILOSOPHY

The timeless philosophy and platform of Natural Hygiene is rock-steady; it does not rest on shifting sands; it does not change directions like the wind. As we progress in our understanding of the wonderful and intricate workings of Nature and as we slowly come full circle toward embracing and protecting this Earth which makes our lives possible, we will come to cherish these eternal truths. Shelton and Fry assembled these planks of the Hygienic platform:

- Natural Hygiene holds that life should be meaningful and filled with beauty, goodness and happiness.
- Natural Hygiene holds that humans are inherently good, righteous and virtuous, and that their exalted character will be realized under ideal life conditions.
- Natural Hygiene holds that superlative well-being is normal to human existence and necessary to the realization of the highest human ideals.
- Natural Hygiene holds that supreme human excellence can best be realized in those who embrace those precepts and practices which are productive of well-being.
- Natural Hygiene, which encompasses all that bears upon human well-being, constitutes the best way to realize the highest possible order of human existence.
- Natural Hygiene is in harmony with nature, in accordance with the principles of vital existence, correct in science, sound in philosophy and ethics, in agreement with common sense, successful in practice and a blessing to mankind.
- Natural Hygiene recognizes that the human body is fully self-constructing, self-preserving and self-healing, and that it is capable of maintaining itself in superb functioning order, completely free of disease, if its needs are met.
- Natural Hygiene recognizes that human anatomy and physiology dictate specific needs and conditions to function at peak genetic capability. Supplied with these needs and conditions, in a proper balance, humankind will realize abounding health and joyous well-being.
- Natural Hygiene recognizes that diseases are caused by improper life practices, especially dietary indiscretions. Illness proceeds from reduced nerve energy and consequent toxicosis (general systemic poisoning). Insufficient nerve energy arises from stressful dissipation, overindulgence or deficiency of the normal essentials of life, or pollution of the body with substances not normal to it. Accordingly, recovery from sickness can be achieved only by discontinuing its causes and supplying conditions favorable to healing.
- Natural Hygiene recognizes that a thorough-going rest, which includes fasting, is the most favorable condition under which an ailing body can purify and repair itself.
- Natural Hygiene, which teaches that exalted well-being can be attained and maintained only through biologically correct living practices, is not in any sense a healing art or curing cult. It regards as mistaken and productive of much grief the idea that diseases can be prevented or overcome by agencies abnormal to our natural being. Consequently,
- Natural Hygiene emphatically rejects (except in life or death emergencies and other extraordinary situations which will be touched upon later) all drugs, medications, vaccinations, treatments and therapies because they undermine health by interfering with or destroying vital body processes, cells and tissues. Therefore,
- Natural Hygiene regards the body and mind as the inviolable sanctuary of an individual's being.
- Natural Hygiene holds that everyone has an inalienable right to have a pure and uncontaminated body, a pure and uncontaminated environment in which to live, to be free of abnormal compulsions and restraints, and to be free to meet his/her needs as a responsible member of society.

BASICS

The study and practice of natural hygiene manifests its wonderful results most obviously in our physical health. Its benefits are not as tangible, but just as profound, to our mental, emotional and spiritual health. This is clearly true when viewed through somatic eyes since there is no real internally-experienced distinction between mind/body/spirit.

Natural Hygiene concerns itself with the question: What are the ideal conditions upon which human life depends? It seeks to understand the relationship between action/non-action that is harmonious with natural law and the positive results therefrom. On the flip side, the consequences that result from rejecting natural law are studied and explained. The result is what might be called a "Master List of To-Do's" that need be practiced to realize ideal health. The funny thing is that living in this manner is, by and large, much easier than straining to live the many pathological practices promoted by approved higher authority - coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco, thousands of medicines (poisons), etc.

T.C. Fry, in putting together his pamphlet entitled *The Health Formula*⁽⁴⁾, has succinctly detailed the basic premises of a healthy life. An abbreviated version follows.

Above all, thou shalt not poison thyself! The fundamental principles that beget and maintain superlative health include:

- Pure Air.
- Pure Water - not mineralized/carbonated.
- Comfortable temperature. Ideally a climate that allows many hours out-of-doors year-long
- Cleanliness of body, both inside and out. Don't pollute it internally by taking in anything other than pure air, pure water, sunshine and foods of our biological adaptation. We can also strive to keep ourselves externally clean without continually stripping away our natural body oils.
- Adequate sleep. Nerve energy, which we use while awake, is generated while asleep.
- Fresh, sun-ripened, uncooked foods (preferably organically grown and non-irradiated) of our biological adaptation. By this I mean foods that are most effectively and efficiently processed by our digestive systems. As humans are naturally frugivores, fruits should make up a major part of our diet. Vegetables, nuts and seeds that are palatable should complement it. Cooked foods should be considered of secondary and relatively inferior quality to uncooked foods; any food obtained from animals should be considered tertiary and of even more inferior quality.
- Vigorous activity. Optimum health demands exercise and activity. Start out slowly and build to an energetic workout that revitalizes all your body's systems.
- Sunshine and natural light. Artificial light robs our bodies of much of the visible and non-visible spectrum that is crucial to high level functioning of our eyes and endocrine system.
- Rest and relaxation. The siesta is a good example of allowing ourselves time to rejuvenate during the day.
- Play and recreation. This should be both physical and mental in nature.
- Emotional poise. Our feelings are born of the conditions of our lives. If we make our conditions right and maintain a positive attitude, our feelings will be euphoric and outgoing.
- Security of life and its means. Insecurity leads to emotional stresses that rob us of well-being.
- Pleasant environment. This applies to all our surroundings, including the people and animals that comprise them. Create and care for a garden. Invite birds and

other wildlife into your surroundings. Beautify your home. Include a special place for meditation, music, etc.

- Creative, useful work. Humans feel right only when they can fend for themselves and supply their needs by their own efforts. We should strive to make a living at those endeavors which come naturally to us; that we do well and with ease; that give us a sense of pride and self-esteem.
- Self-mastery. When we know what makes us and the world tick, this knowledge will liberate our minds. The truth will set us free.
- Belonging to a group or social circle. As gregarious creatures, humans thrive within a context of peers on some level, and friends. We need to interact with others about feelings, matters of intellectual moment, and life's affairs and problems.
- Inspiration, motivation, purpose and commitment.
- Love, appreciation and esteem.
- Personal growth in spiritual realms. Striving to know, understand and fulfill one's purpose in life begets joy, wisdom and serenity.
- Expression of sexual desires.
- Satisfaction of the aesthetic senses. We must have harmony, beauty and goodness in our lives.
- A sense of self-reliance and self-worth. Trusting our own inherent powers and our ability to do things is essential to well-being.

This is by no means a complete listing of all of life's needs, but it covers the most basic ones. By reflecting on this list of life's essentials, we can take the necessary steps to improve our lives.

NUTRITION IN A NUTSHELL

Nutrition is the process of ingesting substances that build and maintain tissues. Nutritive substances include air, water, sunshine and food. Each of these is essential for superior health in human beings. Sunshine, in proper amounts, is required for proper eye, pituitary and pineal gland functioning. There are probably countless other benefits from natural light; we just don't know about them yet. The importance of pure water and pure air is obvious. Food, however, is the big question mark. For every nutritionist and dietitian out there, we will likely get exactly that many different opinions about our ideal food requirements.

I will break it down and make it simple.

All living things, from amoebas to humans, have genetically-determined foods of their biological adaptation - foods which look good, smell good, and taste good in their raw state as nature delivers them to us - foods that are easily and efficiently digested, assimilated, utilized and the waste products quickly eliminated by our bodies. These are called foods of dietetic character. For example, the *primary* dietetic characters of several species:

- Cows & Horses = Herbivores = Vegetation
- Frogs & Lizards = Insectivores = Insects
- Squirrels = Graminivores = Seeds/Nuts
- Dogs & Cats = Carnivores = Animal Flesh
- Pigs = Omnivores = Nearly Anything
- Humans & Primates = Frugivores / Herbivores = Fruits & Vegetables

Note that the above are *primary* dietetic characters. In severe circumstances where survival concerns are dominant, living things will consume whatever they can find in order to survive. But, eating of foods outside of the primary dietetic character are not digested well, create many toxic byproducts which cause many secondary problems, soon leading to diseases of their own. Primary dietetic character is always best.

As one studies human anatomy and physiology, he/she arrives at the inescapable conclusion that we are constituted to be primarily vegetarians. The perfect foods for humans are fruits, complemented by various palatable vegetables, nuts and seeds (There is inconclusive evidence for the addition of a very small amount of animal products into our diet - maybe 1-5%). These plant foods are the foods of our biological adaptation. They give us the most complete nourishment with the least amount of toxic by-products. The more we eat relatively harmful foods (grains < dairy products < dead animals, etc.), especially if cooked, the tougher it is for our bodies to physiologically handle them and the more we poison ourselves.

Raw is how nature provides food. Every living thing on this planet, since the beginning of time, has eaten everything it has ever eaten – raw. So shall it be for Homo Sapiens, if he/she desires high-level health and abiding well-being.

ELIMINATION

The process of self-poisoning is also crucial to understand. Just as the process of nutrition is vitally important, the process of elimination is just as important. Billions of our cells die and are replaced daily. The non-recyclable parts of these spent cells, along with any toxins in the air we breathe and the water we drink must be eliminated. The non-digestible fiber and non-usable parts of food we eat must also be eliminated. If we eat biologically correct foods, and if the stress levels in our lives is manageable, our eliminative faculties (liver, kidneys, lungs, skin, colon, etc.) are usually up to the task of maintaining an acceptably clean internal soma. But if stress is high, and/or we consume foods that are not suited to our digestive capabilities, the internal waste products can quickly and dangerously pile up past the toleration point.

The integrity of the whole organism is now threatened and the wisdom of the body begins a stepped-up process of elimination. It uses any and all outlets to rid itself of excess toxic materials. The channel it chooses is an individual matter - your body picks what is most appropriate for the toxin to be eliminated and your particular genetic make-up. From the outside, we call these elimination processes colds, pneumonia, diarrhea, vomiting, appendicitis, herpes, acne, sinusitis, allergies, asthma, etc., etc. The name doesn't much matter, all are active elimination processes.

When we contemplate what is happening, we realize that these things we call diseases are really not diseases at all. They are really **the cure** for a condition of the body called toxicosis (general bodily saturation with toxic waste products). As such, these eliminative processes should be cooperated with as much as possible. Instead, in our ignorance, we are unaware of what is going on and we then take even more poisons into our bodies in the form of drugs and medicines, in order to try to stop the painful elimination process.

The body basically treats all incoming substances as nutritive or toxic. Nutritive substances provide the body with materials to build and maintain cells. Everything else is by definition toxic; i.e. something that is not inherently useful and therefore must be eliminated. All medicines, drugs, potions, etc. are toxins, poisons. *The chemicals they contain are not usable in building or maintaining normal healthy cells and tissues. They are foreign, injurious substances.* Therefore, the body must expend energy, vitamins, minerals and other important substances to eliminate them.

Think about it. How can a drug, which makes a healthy person sick (note the many side effects inherent in any drug), magically turn around and make a sick person well? This is childish fantasy, yet nearly everyone believes it.

What about holistic therapies and treatments? First we should establish a good working definition of the word therapy.

"Therapy - The treatment of disease by the application of some kind of force (whether mechanical, chemical, thermal, electrical or other) to the body to alter its structure or function. The key word in the definition of therapy is force. Therapy forces change upon the body. The force applied may be harsh or gentle; it may be pleasant or painful; it may be applied internally or externally; but without force there is no therapy. With therapy, there is always the possibility of producing adverse effects, and sometimes this is a certainty. This is because the essence of therapy is often not merely force, but outright violence against the body's structure or function."⁽⁵⁾

I believe that the best way to illustrate the proper place for these treatments and therapies is to ask a few basic questions. Let us say that we are experiencing a pounding headache. Is it due to an aspirin deficiency? Is it caused by a lack of neck vertebral manipulations? Is it due to the absence of needles at certain acupuncture points? Are we missing specific herbal remedies, homeopathic tinctures or crystal stones? None of these therapies or substances provide anything that is usable by the body to build or maintain its cells and tissues. Most serve to further weaken our bodies by forcing them to waste energy on eliminating and countering the effects of these toxic materials and violent therapies.

It is paramount that we understand the basic law of cause and effect. The aforementioned headache is an effect, and it has a definite cause (usually multiple). The cause is not a lack of therapies, drugs, manipulations, etc. If this were the case, we would need daily, constant intravenous drips into our arms full of aspirin, drugs, herbal potions, and homeopathic preparations in order to prevent the headaches. At the same time, we would need to be careful not to dislodge the multitude of acupuncture needles strategically placed in our ears, head, hands, neck and other body parts, especially while the chiropractor is contorting our body in order to deliver his adjustments.

It is clear that all these approaches are palliative (to alleviate pain without removing the cause) and temporary, as long as natural laws continue to be violated. Pain is our warning alarm. Pain is a potent motivator. It is there to teach us that something is definitely wrong and that changes must be made. Otherwise, disease and pain will intensify. Sometimes it is better to relieve pain by whatever means available, especially when the suffering is causing unacceptable emotional turmoil. However, compassion in the form of tough love has a powerful role to play as well.

Anyone familiar with the pain of addiction knows that the turning point back toward health and sanity comes when 'the bottom' is reached. And each of us must experience our own bottom. This understanding also highlights the insidious nature of pain-killing therapies. They allow us to postpone true corrective action while we rely on false cures.

"Medicine *can* help relieve some of the physical effects of the addictive process, and therefore I strongly question the role of medicine in *enabling* the addictive process. For example, medicine often heroically rushes in to try to save people from the consequences of their indulging in their addiction (smoking, drinking, overworking or overeating) while steadfastly refusing to confront the addictive process as the root cause of the disease..... Yet, one way of looking at much of medicine (as it is now

practiced) is as the systematic enabling of addictions; as what allows and supports addicts to continue to use until their deterioration is so far progressed that there is no hope of physical recovery.....they have taken the edge off just enough so that the society can indulge in and play with its addictive process. The field of psychotherapy has been especially guilty in this respect."⁽⁶⁾

If we do use a pain reliever of some sort, I believe the responsible and honest thing to do is to let the sufferer know that the treatment and/or therapy employed is in fact only palliative, and that the true cause has not been addressed. As such, the same or worse symptoms will reappear later.

"So what price this remedy mentality? Patients undergoing treatments and therapies are at a great disadvantage. The patient blindly assumes that the therapy he is receiving will 'cure' him and hence makes no effort to self-recovering from his disability.

"This sort of remedy mentality perpetuates from one generation to another the wrong idea that disease is due to chance and that the only recourse is how to drastically reduce the signs and symptoms (warning alarms) of diseases as soon as possible. Such a mentality is a breeding ground for physical, intellectual, moral, emotional and spiritual decadence.

"Instead of being made aware of his own immediate responsibilities, he is lulled into a comforting assumption of childlike innocence and ineffectuality. He is lulled into a false sense of security. He is not in any way to blame for the unwholesome state he finds himself; he cannot be expected to face the tasks of self-repair and readjustment. These burdens he hands over to the remedy.

"With them go at least part of his most valuable assets - self-respect and self-reliance. Man cannot live imprudently with impunity."⁽⁷⁾

Nature is extremely fair in that she metes out disease and suffering in direct proportion to the degree that her laws are violated. Some call it karma, others realize that we are reaping what we have sown. Better that we grow in the understanding and practice of Natural Hygiene so that we may eliminate the causes of our diseases.

This, in a nutshell, is what goes on with most sickness and disease. The more we intuitively understand these simple processes of nutrition and elimination, the quicker we can rid ourselves of nearly all common diseases, permanently.

With this understanding, we see that many mysterious and incurable conditions, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, arthritis, asthma, ulcers and many others are likely just more exotic manifestations of a condition of toxicosis. The most natural, quick and efficient way to deal with this intolerable internal state is to employ a pure water fast.

FASTING

An integral part of Hygienic care is the use of fasting for the recovery of health. Fasting is an instinctive action instituted by our living body when internal toxin levels reach a threshold that threatens the survival of our body. During any acute illness, the appetite naturally diminishes, usually to the point of fasting. Our body intelligently focuses its energy stores to the task of eliminating the offensive toxins. It diverts energy from the muscles and gastrointestinal tract; this is why we feel like lying down and only drinking fluids. Our body is most effectively and efficiently 'curing' the underlying problem -

toxin build-up. Forcing food and excess physical activity upon the ailing organism slows down or even aborts this natural cleansing process. Just the same, taking any medicine (drug, poison) short-circuits this body-instituted process of healing. Drugs simply make the problem worse, though it may appear, on the surface, that you feel better. Adding more virulent poisons and toxins (drugs, medicines) to a body that is already trying to rid itself of toxic material is damaging, injurious and unnecessary. The body is already "curing" the problem. 'Cures' do not come from outside the body.

Some basic facts concerning fasting are that:

- Fasting is a highly regulated bodily process that occurs during the complete abstention from all food, supplements, protein/electrolyte drinks, etc. Only pure water is taken as desired.
- Fasting begins when carbohydrate stores (mostly glycogen) are depleted. This happens within 12-24 hours. Fasting can continue as long as fat stores remain to be metabolized for fuel (ketosis). This is usually 5-6 weeks for the average person. Longer for the obese, shorter for the emaciated.
- When fat stores have been metabolized past certain minimum levels, rapid autolysis of protein structures occurs. This is starvation.
- Various hormones come into play during an extended fast. Significant ones include sustained increases of plasma growth hormone and adrenocorticotropic levels. These have important effects on ketosis and cellular protein conservation. Also, pancreatic release of insulin is diminished considerably.
- As the body continues fasting, it scavenges any and all superfluous fat stores, abnormal tissues, adhesions, fibrous growths, etc. for autolysis and subsequent gluconeogenesis. All important organs and structures are preserved during fasting.
- Growth and healing continue during the fast, but these processes slow during extended fasts.
- Various 'healing crises' may occur during the fast, which reflect the intelligent innate control of tissue repair and optimal healing. Our body is working at the degree and speed that it knows can best restore health.
- Clear and prominent signs are given by our body before it moves into critical protein breakdown called starvation.
- Fasts longer than 4 or 5 days require supervision by someone experienced with monitoring the progression and proper conclusion of extended fasts. In this way, maximum benefit can be obtained and preserved.⁽⁸⁾

Fasting can provide the ideal context for tremendous healing to take place in our body. However, fasting is not a cure. Fasting doesn't do anything. In fact, fasting is the best way to do nothing.

The most difficult thing for health care practitioners is to do nothing but simply set the stage (context) for our body's own magnificent healing powers to take over. Yet in the vast majority of cases, intelligently doing nothing (not neglecting) is exactly the best thing to do.⁽⁹⁾ Fasting simply provides the most favorable internal environment for the most rapid and effective healing to occur.

For those in the health professions, it is tempting to jump right in and assist the healing process with manipulation, bodywork, electrical modalities, colonics, supplements, etc. Yet the clinical experience gained from collectively supervising hundreds of thousands of fasts demonstrate that many of the barriers to healing are effectively autolyzed (eliminated) - cysts, calcium deposits, mucosal and fecal deposits, tumors, adhesions, pannus formations, and other similar scar-type tissues. The practitioner must use his or her judgment carefully in such cases. Mild intervention may be of help, but it could just

as easily hinder the healing process, forcing our body to divert precious resources prematurely to the newly-injured areas and generally squander vital energies. It is most often better to allow our body to achieve what it can during the fast and to then apply gentle supportive techniques later where warranted.

APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION

Dr. Ronald Cridland, in an article in Health Science⁽¹⁰⁾ magazine, points out where appropriate medical intervention makes good sense, hygienically speaking:

"A primary principle of Natural Hygiene is the understanding that only our body [including our mind-Ed.] can heal. Whether we have an illness or a wound, it is our body that will heal it. Even when some form of medical or surgical treatment is appropriately and successfully employed, that procedure is not going to make the cells knit together or make the function return. Only our body (vital force) is capable of doing that."

We want to avoid medical and surgical treatment and hospitalization because it has serious risks. There are situations, however, when medical or surgical intervention can be of great, sometimes life saving benefit. Generally speaking, these are times when the intervention, by removing as much as possible any interfering factors, helps provide the optimum healing environment, thus allowing our body to achieve its maximum healing potential.

When is medical and surgical care necessary?

- Splinting/casting of severe bone fractures.
- Cardio-pulmonary emergencies.
- Organ failure emergencies; liver, kidney, etc.
- Severe shock; hypovolemic, anaphylactic, etc.
- Extended anoxia due to severe acute asthma, grand mal seizure, pneumothorax, etc.
- Severe dehydration due to vomiting, diarrhea, etc.
- Reconstructive surgery - cleft palate, defects or patent ductus arteriosus of the heart, other congenital defects, injuries, etc.
- Elective surgery - cataracts, unstable chronic hernias, late stage prostatic hypertrophy, unresolved abscesses.
- Obstetrics - life or death emergencies
- Traumas/ bites/ wounds causing life or death emergencies.

A healthy hygienic lifestyle, including fasting when appropriate, will prevent or resolve nearly all acute and chronic illness. But occasionally, medical or surgical intervention will maximize healing potential. The medical or surgical forte is in areas of trauma or life or limb threatening emergencies where high-tech care improves the outcome, and this is where surgical or other intervention makes sense.

LIVING WISDOM

During these extended fasting periods, our body receives a well deserved period of physical, mental and emotional rest. During fasting, we can take time to get back in touch with the inner healing power that sustains us. It can be a very powerful experience. We have the internal somatic feeling of health returning. There is the empowering intuitive knowledge that comes with knowing that we ourselves are achieving this return to health, not some doctor, drug, therapy, expert, etc.

Self-empowerment is strengthened. Self-respect increases. Self-responsibility is cultivated and expanded. Greater freedom is realized. Many of the preceding concepts on nutrition, elimination, fasting, basic needs of life, etc. seem obvious and of simple common sense. And that is the beauty of it. Spiritual Masters throughout the ages agree that greatly simplifying our life is a first and major step toward achieving health, wisdom, peace and serenity.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Though we may not be able to live perfectly each and every day, we do now have a reliable method with which to measure our progress – the principles of Natural Hygiene. No longer must we jerk ourselves from one "expert" opinion to another, or concern ourselves with the latest health fad, looking for the magic silver bullet to health. We now have a gauge with which to accurately measure our health and lifestyles.

Likewise, we can easily gauge how well all other health-care systems and ideas measure up to the simple standards that nature decrees. Logically it can be seen that all other approaches to health improvement and maintenance will be successful to the degree that they employ Natural Hygiene (natural law), knowingly or not. Every one of us practices Natural Hygiene every day to varying degrees. Every one of us breathes, drinks, eats, moves, sleeps, etc every day. We can do these things more intelligently, and we are healthy to precisely that degree. Natural Hygiene is the optimal health system that harmonizes with Natural Law in all respects. Man did not create the principles of Natural Hygiene - Nature did. Hygienists, through observation, trial and error and the process of elimination simply wrote down and then put into practice what nature decrees. These harmonious laws of nature work as well today as they have for millions of years. Therapies come and therapies go. Therapies are not the answer. Nature's ways of health are *always* there waiting for us to accept them.

The word 'doctor' originally comes from the Latin word meaning teacher. The Hygienic professional truly carries out their mandate - that of a teacher. Through their example, instruction, guidance, direction and support, we are continually invested with knowledge that will thereafter free us of the need for physicians, healers, analysts, experts and other authoritarians for the rest of our healthy lives. Enlightened and empowered with this knowledge, we are encouraged to share experiences and teach everyone about this health-promoting and freedom-giving information.

Natural Hygiene teaches us knowledge and skills that we can use to maintain wonderful health of mind/ body/ spirit for the rest of our lives. There is no desire or incentive in placing us on endless treadmills of therapies, drugs, medications, supplements or rituals. This being so, there are no tremendous profits to be made by selling therapies, drugs, etc. We just have information to provide to each other. Our emphasis is on turning helpless, frightened patients into responsible, vigorous, knowledgeable and happy non-patients - permanently. The ultimate goal of the doctors, teachers and practitioners of Natural Hygiene is that nobody needs our services any longer.

This, I believe, is what constitutes the measure of truth in the field of human health: Does the approach under consideration foster self-respect, self-reliance, independence and autonomy? Or does it promote, directly or indirectly, co-dependence, addiction, deference to higher authority and ultimate slavery to pill, potion, procedure or person?

This characteristic of increasing freedom is what separates Natural Hygiene from all the rest. "Let us have truth though the heavens fall."⁽¹⁾

Though a Natural Hygiene understanding is simple, very inexpensive and in agreement with common sense, it will take a tremendous amount of patience, tolerance and

loving kindness to instill these effective practices into our culture. Yet, humankind and the Earth itself will continue to take a terrible beating if we wait.

As in matters of Spirit, this information can only be learned and embodied individually - one person at a time. The challenge is for each of us to study and embrace these simple truths; to apply them to our own lives and evaluate the results. Rational action demands that we test these revolutionary concepts out personally and judge the results for ourselves. Nature will reward us tenfold for our efforts. We will not only know about it; we will *live* it. Then, and only then, may we offer ourselves as teachers for the students who are ready.

One after another, we can build a groundswell of people that have reclaimed superb health, embraced self-responsibility, savored the experience of freedom and stand always ready to work toward ever greater human mental, physical and spiritual evolution.

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- (3) Gifis, Steven H., Dictionary of Legal Terms, Barron's 1983.
- (4) Shelton, Herbert M., compiled from various sources and edited by Fry, T.C.
- (5) Cinque, Ralph C., "Hygiene vs. Therapy"; Health Science, March/April 1993, p. 10-12.
- (6) Schaef, Anne Wilson, Beyond Therapy, Beyond Science; Harper Collins, 1992, p. 128-129.
- (7) Sidhwa, Keki, "Don't Hand Out Remedies"; Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, June 1993.
- (8) Contact the International Association of Hygienic Physicians (<http://iahp.net/>) for a complete list of professionally supervised fasting establishments around the world.
- (9) By "doing nothing", I specifically mean that the supervisor of the fast should not apply any sort of direct force to the body of the faster, whether physical, chemical, electrical, etc. Rather, provide surroundings (context) that are most conducive to regaining health - Quiet, peaceful, clean, preferably within a natural setting, and away from family, relatives, friends who are not sympathetic. Try to provide a complete physical, mental and emotional rest for the ill person.
- (10) Cridland, Ronald G., "When Do Medical and Surgical Care Make Sense?"; Health Science, March/April 1992 p. 8-12
- (11) This was the subtitle to Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review magazine.