

Part 3, Chapter 31: Life Simplification and Nerve Force

A subject not explicitly covered elsewhere is the connection between the mind and the body. To be sure, the mind, ethereal in its workings though it may be, is very much connected to the brain which is part of the body. What goes into the body clearly effects the brain which clearly effects the mind. Ask anyone who's been seriously intoxicated how much the mind is at the mercy of the body. In the days when I used to drink a lot, depression was a constant companion. The toxic effects of the Keystone Light, and other bad habits, had a marked effect on my mental state. The mind cannot function at its peak if the body is overwhelmed with toxicity. The catch-22 is that in order for the body to be truly healed, which means to remove existing toxins while avoiding adding more, the mind has to be sufficiently in charge to make wise and disciplined choices. The body and brain can be so damaged that the mind can no longer maintain control. This is what happens in an Alzheimer's disease patient—and what happened to my mother. Dr. Bragg makes the following observation:

These two states—the physical and mental—are so closely interrelated that it is impossible to separate them. Physical health affects mental alertness and mental control imposes the necessary discipline to maintain physical health. For perfect health—including powerful nerve force—we must have a strong mind in a strong body.^{1}

It is the health and vitality of the millions of nerve cells that make up your vast nervous system. You need a powerful nerve force—stored in the numerous and varied nerve cells composing the nervous system—to attain and maintain the ideal balance for perfect super health. The nervous system consists of two sections controlled by a centralized command center—the brain: The external communications nervous system, the internal autonomic nervous system and the brain the central control system.^{2}

Flesh is dumb! [Dr. Bragg says this a lot.] Flesh does not operate through intelligence and reasoning, but through the five senses. Your body's first reaction in response to stimuli is to gratify the senses, such as satisfying hunger: For example, eating something that is pleasing to the taste, regardless of negative health benefits [or consequences]. A vicious circle can evolve into an unhealthy body and mind. The devitalized popular foods in our [Standard] American Diet fail to supply the proper nourishment! Flesh becomes weary, and nerve force becomes depleted on "foodless" fast junk foods.^{3}

It's a vicious cycle. This is very much the scenario that the people portrayed on "My 600 Pound Life", chapter 19: A mind so out of control and so ignorant that the body ends up totally taking control, even if that control is destructive to the individual.

In my own case a loss of control starts with one Keystone Light, one frozen pizza, one bowl of ice cream, one slice of cheese, one dose of caffeine ... One leads to more and

before I know it I've done a fair share of damage for the day. The quintessential response to the Lay's claim of "Bet you can't eat just one" is to not eat that first chip which means don't buy the bag of chips in the first place.

Many problems can be alleviated by what you DON'T buy. As I mentioned in the "A Survey of Healthy Buying at your Local Grocery Store", chapter 20, many issues can be solved by avoiding the isles in the grocery store that are **not** included in that discussion.

To be sure, you have the right to choose to eat any food a grocery store sells but you can't choose, or ignore, the consequences of that choice. A case in point, I can choose to have pizza for dinner, but I can't ignore my sinus issues and runny nose that are triggered the next morning. Mother Nature demands the piper ALWAYS be paid for the dance, even it takes two or three decades for the bill to come due.

One of the dominant themes of ... [Dr. Bragg's book on nerve health] is a gradual return to a more natural way of living. In your thinking, eating and all of your daily habits, you must strive for simplicity of life. Try to reach a nearness to Mother Nature and make yourself at home with her. When you feel that the same pure forces which express themselves in a beautiful pine tree are manifesting themselves in you, then you have made a big stride toward the ideal life.^{4}

This is a tall order and a difficult task, which is why this discussion is at the end of part 3 of this book and not at the beginning. Mastering the details of life is true mastery and mastering your own mind is true achievement. There's nothing easy about either process. All the protocols in the book, while oriented toward the health of the body, actually help the mind to achieve mastery, too. Still, the process starts with your own commitment to making good, as opposed to bad, and healthy, as opposed to impulsive, dietary choices. One of the reasons I'm so much into juicing is because juicing helps bridge the gap—in a big way—between a Standard American Diet and the ideal of a 90%-95% vegan diet.

Arriving at a state of optimum health, of being on the bountiful side of the health continuum, which is covered in part 6 of this book, is a daily process. When we make poor choices we get dragged to the negative side of this continuum. At the same time, good choices move us in a positive direction. How far we can go in a positive direction is a question of how much of a master we are of our own life. Making good food choices, avoiding the fake foods of the Standard American Diet, fasting, juicing, exercising, getting proper rest, drinking pure water, engaging in lots of outdoor activities such as gardening—these are all important for moving to the positive side of the health continuum and for keeping us from developing disease.

Clearly, too, your own mental state about life has much to do with your state of health. It's impossible to be optimistic when you're depressed, and it's impossible to be depressed when you follow all the principles discussed in this book. The determining factor is your mind and the extent that your mind controls the choices that you make. Your body would probably be thrilled to live on pizza, beer, bread, meat, dairy, cheese, sweets—all the stuff on the Standard American Diet. Still, as Dr. Bragg says so often, flesh is dumb. Letting your body rule your mind is short term thinking for long term pain. Of course it doesn't look like that at the time. In the moment chugging down the 2 4-packs of Keystone Light with the pizza followed by a double sized portion of devil's food cake with French vanilla ice cream seems like instant joy—until the consequences strike in the morning.

And strike they do. It's the classic, "Ow, it's hurts when I do that" syndrome. Mastery begins when you wake up feeling like death warmed over and can truly say: "I know. I have no one to blame but myself!" And then something amazing begins to happen (after you've crashed and burned enough times) ... The song from the movie "Swing Time" (1936) says it well:

Radiant Health and a Kinder, Gentler World



{5} Nothing's impossible I have found,
For when my chin is on the ground,
I pick myself up,
Dust myself off,
Start All over again. {6}

Except you're not really starting all over. You're realizing that you're simplifying your life. Seemingly limited vegan food choices make for a much healthier body and a much calmer mind. Engaging in a fast, drinking only distilled water, is the ultimate in simplifying your diet—and one of the best things you can be doing for yourself.

It may seem a strange way to approach life—especially given the stress that is a part of so many people's lives—but often times letting go of old habits is the quickest way to recover from the mental anxiety so many of us seem to suffer from. The prognosis for mental health on a Standard American Diet is not good:

In this age of strenuous living, the nerves are taxed so greatly that nearly everyone is a victim of some nerve exhaustion to a degree. The higher the state of mental faculties, the greater danger of nerve depletion. That is the reason why there are over 300,000 people committed to mental hospitals yearly in the U.S. There are also increasing numbers of uncontrollable and mentally challenged children who present grave problems to their parents and the educators of our country. {7}

I find it more than a little disturbing how many children are put on ADHD drugs when, in fact, children are simply being children. Yes, there can be behavior issues but drugs that interfere with metabolic processes are not the answer. Nutrition and following the protocols in the book is the answer. Whether it's a physical or so-called mental problem, a 90%-95% vegan diet, staying off of fake foods, fasting and exercise is always the better approach than shoveling drugs down someone's throat:

Although over 8 million school children are taking Ritalin, ADHD is still the fastest growing childhood disorder in [the] U.S.! Drugs might mask some symptoms of nerve depletion, but [it] do[es] not replenish nerve force. Not surprisingly, more studies are finding that drugs are a dead-end in the treatment of ADHD! Instead, they are finding that people are renewed to health only when they follow a healthy lifestyle that replenishes their reserves of nerve force. ADHD sufferers need to build up their nerve force. This is accomplished not through drugs, but through the kinds of changes in diet and lifestyle that we outline in this book [Build Powerful Nerve Force]. Australian researchers found ADHD children began replenishing their nerve force after they were put on a natural diet free of coloring, preservatives, sugars, etc. A similar study by the Cornell Medical Center recorded a 73% improvement with ADHD patients.

Unnatural and altered foods tax the nervous system, as do highly sweetened and processed foods! Children are at a greater risk of harm from this kind of diet! As our foods become more processed and refined, our children become inattentive, unfocused, unhealthy and unhappy! {8}

I think Dr. Bragg's and others evaluation of ADHD is quite correct and that following his health principles are the only real solution to this staggering epidemic.

I find that one of the best approaches to dealing with stress, besides nutritional care of course, is to write in a journal. Mine is digital these days and takes up thousands of pages. Writing in a journal is an excellent way to resolve stress. It's all part of the oriental concept of letting go.

If I had to summarize what I've learned from Taoist and Buddhist philosophy it's

been a deeper understanding of how to let go and connect with life. It's a kind of yin and yang approach to everything. In the Tao te Ching the advice is to yield with difficulties, reduce clutter, create space, let go. So over the years I've tried to apply this to my thoughts, emotions, goals, expectations and opinions, especially when these are creating anxiety or unhappiness for me. I think this approach has helped me to let go of stress, flow with problems, accept situations that were difficult, and to find deeper peace. On the flip side the great masters of the East offer wonderful advice on how to connect more closely with the world around us, with nature, with creative activities and people, with the great flow of all existence. They emphasize how we are a part of Nature, a part of this Universe, and as we let go of our limited human thoughts and obsessions, we fall back gracefully into the source of all things, connecting directly with the Universal field of energy and spirit that has brought us into being. This is who we are, really, they tell us. We are this great dance of life, awareness and creative activity.^{9}

I've never heard it put better. To reach a state of optimal health, which means following all the protocols in this book, is the ultimate in simplicity.