

Healing & Disease Reversal

The Series

by Albert Cilia-Vincenti

This series explores Dean Ornish's 30-year research experience into healing & disease reversal by dietary and lifestyle changes. He is a California University Professor of Medicine in San Francisco. This instalment continues to explain his claims why his programme works, whilst others prove unsustainable.



Joy of living is a much better motivator than fear of dying. Trying to scare people into changing doesn't work very well. Efforts to motivate people to change based on fear of getting sick or dying prematurely are generally unsuccessful. Similarly, talking about "prevention" or "risk factor reduction" is boring to most people. Who wants to live longer if they're not enjoying life? People may say, "I don't care if I die early – I want to enjoy life". Whether good or fun is a false choice – why not both? It's both good and fun to look good, feel good, have more energy, think more clearly and perform better.

Behaviours that many people think are fun and sexy (like smoking, overeating, abusing alcohol, being super-busy and stressed out) are the ones that leave them lethargic and depressed – how fun is that? Recent studies show how much more dynamic our bodies are than previously believed. What you eat and what you do can increase blood flow in different body parts very quickly with powerful effects – for better or worse. A meal high in fat, sugar and calories, coffee, chronic stress, nicotine, cocaine, amphetamines and a lack of exercise constrict your arteries, reducing blood flow. How do you feel after a big meal? Sleepy? Why? Because your brain is receiving less blood flow and oxygen.

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*The Natural Way to Beat Depression, 2004, by Professor Besser K Fort, Hordler & Shughran

*Chronic Fatigue Syndrome – a natural way to beat ME, 2005, by Professor Besser K Fort, Hammersmith Press Ltd.

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When you eat healthier, quit smoking, and exercise, your brain receives more blood and oxygen, so you think clearer, have more energy and need less sleep. Your face gets increased blood flow, so your skin glows more and wrinkles less. Your heart also gets more blood flow, so you have more stamina and can even begin to reverse heart disease. For many people, these are choices worth making – not just to live longer, but to live better.

Life comes round only once and is to be fully enjoyed. One of the most effective anti-smoking campaigns, conducted in California, dressed up an actor like the Marlboro Man in full cowboy regalia, and put his photograph on billboards and magazines with a limp cigarette hanging out of his mouth. The large headline was IMPOTENCE, not a warning about lung cancer, heart disease or emphysema. Studies show that half of men who smoke are impotent – how sexy is that? This approach was brilliant because it went to the heart of how smoking is marketed – smoking is sexy.

The deeper issues that underlie our behaviours need to be addressed. Information is important but not usually sufficient to motivate lasting dietary and lifestyle changes – if it were, nobody would smoke. We need to work at a deeper level. Loneliness, anxiety and depression are epidemic. If these deeper issues are addressed, it becomes easier for people to make lasting behavioural changes.

Change isn't easy, but if you're in enough pain, the idea of changing habits may start to seem more attractive. Awareness is the first step in healing. Part of the benefit of pain is to get our attention, to help us make the connection between when we suffer, and why, so we can make choices that are a lot more fun and healthy. Emotional pain and unhappiness are powerful catalysts for transforming not only behaviour (e.g., diet and exercise), but also for dealing with deeper motivating issues. We are most successful when we address the emotional and spiritual dimensions that most influence our choices. It's hard to motivate depressed, lonely or fearful people to make even simple behavioural changes in diet and exercise. It's only when deeper issues of pain, self-esteem, apathy and purposelessness are addressed that people become willing to make lifestyle choices that are life-enhancing rather than self-destructive ones.

Bibliography

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