



Living the Phoenix Way

A Guide to Holistic Natural Health

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For health coaching or counseling support, please visit my website:



<http://www.phoenixway.net>

Preface: Origins of the PhoenixWay

This ebook attempts to outline the path of the PhoenixWay to Holistic Natural Health in layman's terms. This is not just a path I have researched but one I have discovered and realized in my personal experience. This has been a very real journey for me, one I started over 35 years ago when I first began to run for exercise and do sit-ups in my bedroom along with the sports I participated in via school and the community. In my teens and early adult years, I studied and practiced many types of Asian martial arts; in college, I became a vegetarian and began to study Taoist philosophy and tai chi, which ultimately led me—after suffering through a painful divorce—to Buddhism, meditation, and yoga. When I had a young family, their medical needs prompted me to study traditional naturopathy, to help discover cures and remedies that were gentle and effective with no side effects. My love for them helped me move away from harsh drugs and procedures and more towards what my heart and body were telling me healing was about.

I've always been a nature lover, having spent countless days as a youth in scouting and with my family, hiking and camping in the woods and mountains across our great country. This love of and affinity for nature has helped guide me as well during these years towards healing methods that reflect what is going on outside of the human world, in the woods, fields, mountains and bodies of water which make up the rest of our world. In college, for example, I studied primate (ape) behavior and that enlightened me about what is natural for primates to eat, how they socialize and manage relationships, rest and exercise, etc. My passion for the outdoors has guided me to choose methods of eating, recycling, gardening, composting, and purchasing products that are sustainable and have a smaller footprint. My love of fresh fruits and vegetables came from growing up in a farming community in New England, where blackberries grew wild behind my home, my mother had a large garden and canned/jarred extensively, and we had large farm stands, apple orchards, cider mills, and strawberry patches in our town. I've never forgotten the taste of real produce, and the sad excuse for imitation that appears in most supermarkets today simply doesn't measure up. And traveling abroad has helped me understand that doing things as we do in America is only ONE way of doing something that can be done in many different and wonderful ways by many different cultures...and all of them are valid and perfect for them.

I also have to share that I believe life is a learning experience; as such, I've continually kept myself involved with formal, structured learning experiences, as well as my own adventures. These experiences keep me on my toes mentally and physically, being challenged by teachers who love what they're doing and know how to do it...and ask me to do the same. I am in debt to them. As I have aged and experienced my own health changes and limitations, my interest in holistic natural healing continues to grow and deepen. These changes have included weight gain with the same diet, decreases in energy and stamina, gray hairs and wrinkles, a severe bout of kidney stones, weakening vision, short-term forgetfulness, and some immune system weaknesses that have left me prey to various viral infections. The knowledge and wisdom I've gained from my studies and experiments have been priceless to help me slow and reverse many of these symptoms and simply to age more gracefully. As I learn more, I continue to grow, gradually applying more changes to my life, testing them out, and then integrating them into everything else going on for me. You can do the same...be your own experiment!

This ebook reflects my experience formulating the PhoenixWay to Holistic Natural Health, exploring the age old wisdom of traditional naturopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), macrobiotics, yoga, various forms of meditation, modern dietary theories emphasizing plant based nutrition, the amazing health and longevity success of several traditional cultures still alive today in remote areas of the world, the eating behaviors of animals and especially primates/apes, and some current research on health and longevity issues. We will explore here several essential areas of holistic and natural health, including:

- optimal diet and nutrition to reach your ideal weight, have more energy, and reverse disease,
- balancing exercise, rest and relaxation to optimize your metabolism and slow your aging,
- managing mental and spiritual health to reduce stress and feel more happiness,
- improving relationships to gain more satisfaction and connection in your life, as well as
- exploring natural therapies to help restore health and retain balance.

The goal of this ebook is to help you understand the factors that determine the length and quality your life and how you can manipulate these factors to extend

your life to the longest possible span while living as healthy as it is possible to live during this span.

Ideally, readers of this ebook will “remember” the simple yet profound principles of health and longevity that are already encoded in our DNA, which have been programmed into our organisms by millions of years of evolution. Though these natural, encoded memories have been encrusted with years of distraction, manipulation, and misinformation...my sincere belief is that once we begin to spend a little time and effort paying attention to our bodies and what they are telling us they truly need, remarkably positive things will begin to happen as we guide ourselves back to health. The concept of the Phoenix is a sacred being in many cultures which lived for up to 500 years and then immolated (burned) itself up and rose again from its own ashes to start life again. I believe—and have verified in my own experience—that this rebirth and starting over is possible at ANY time during our lives, that it’s never too late, and that wisdom, happiness, and peace is always available for us whenever we are ready to receive it.

And yet, though we may believe we are ready for this wisdom, happiness, and peace, it appears many times that we receive only suffering...or at least a lot of it. Some may feel that they are being “given” this suffering due to something they or their ancestors have done in the past. More enlightened folks may tune in to the reality that they are somehow inviting or causing everything that is happening to them. When that realization hits, it becomes time for change. Yet, change is not always easy; in fact, it is often downright hard. If change feels too difficult, my experience is that reaching out for support is the answer. This support can come from friends and loved ones, but often the help of a professional is needed, someone who is trained to deal with the way we humans block and stunt our own growth, punish ourselves, and prevent ourselves from reaching our goals. As someone who is professionally trained as a counselor, coach and educator, as well as a holistic wellness practitioner, I invite you to contact me to explore how I can help you. Please visit my website at <http://www.phoenixway.net>, where you can also find links to my PhoenixWay page on Facebook as well as my LinkedIn page to learn more about my education and experience. You can contact me there for a free health consultation, and we can explore what services I can provide that would be of interest and benefit to you. Best of luck on your journey and I truly hope we meet each other on the road!

Table of Contents

Preface: Origins of the PhoenixWay

Introduction: Why is Holistic Natural Health Important?

Chapter 1: Diet & Nutrition

The SAD Diet

Alkaline v. Acid Food

Qualities of Healthy Food

Benefits of a Plant Based Diet

Protein Consumption

Raw v. Cooked Food

Health Inhibitors & Dietary Disease

GMOs: Possibly the World's Greatest Food Toxins & Health

Inhibitors

Balance Between Expansive & Contractive Foods

Dietary Supplements

Food Combining

Drinking

Food Variety

Behaviors While Eating

Fasting & Cleansing

Chapter 1 Summary: Action Steps for Diet & Nutrition

Chapter 2: Exercise & Rest

Exercise

Exercise in the TCM Tradition

Dao In & Hatha Yoga

Fitness Through Lifestyle

Rest, Relaxation & Sleep

Chapter 2 Summary: Action Steps for Exercise & Rest

Chapter 3: Mental & Spiritual Health

The Mind and Body Work Together as One

The Mind's Power to Heal...Or Not

Taoism, Buddhism, and Mind-Body-Spirit Integration

Taoist Meditation

Buddhist Meditation

Christian Meditation

Mental Health and Healing in Traditional Cultures

Chapter 3 Summary: Action Steps for Mental & Spiritual Health

Chapter 4: Interbeing and Relationships

Chapter 4 Summary: Action Steps for Relationships

Chapter 5: Auxiliary Healing Methods for Illness

Principles of Traditional Naturopathy

Bodywork

Benefits of Massage

Acupressure and Reflexology

Shiatsu and Thai Yoga Massage

Reiki Energy Therapy

Yoga & Yoga Therapy

Herbology & Homeopathy

Chapter 5 Summary: Action Steps for Auxiliary Healing Methods

Conclusions: What Now?

References

Introduction: Why is Holistic Natural Health Important?

A research on the bone health of one of the oldest persons in the world, who recently died at the age of 114, reveals that there were no genetic modifications which could have contributed to this longevity. The research team, directed by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona professor Adolfo Díez Pérez, pointed out a healthy lifestyle, a Mediterranean diet, a temperate climate and regular physical activity as the reasons for his excellent health. (Coronado, 2008)

The term “human longevity” has often been used interchangeably with the term “human life expectancy,” though this use is inaccurate, since the former term refers to the potential for human lifespan while the latter refers to a prediction for the lifespan of an “average human” born at a particular time. Predictions for life expectancy of the average American born at this time are approximately 78 years, which ranks America 49th on the world list, while the highest life expectancy worldwide is 84.36 years in Macau (CIA, 2009). On the other hand, the oldest woman in history whose age has been verified by modern documentation lived to be 122.45 years, was French, and died in 1997 (Robbins, 2006; Whitney, 1997); the oldest man so far whose age is not in dispute was Danish and lived to be 115.69 years, dying in 1998 (Wilmoth, 1998). Thus, the difference between life expectancy and longevity is about 40 years for most people. What that translates to is that most of us could potentially live a 50% longer life, if we only knew how! Another issue to consider is the concept of “health expectancy,” which means the prediction of how long the average person will live without major health problems. According to Robbins (2006), Americans a century ago spent only 1% on average of their lives sick; that figure has risen to 10%. That means that the typical American is only healthy until about 70 and then spends the last 8 years in chronic, debilitating illness before death. Now, we are talking about a 50 year difference between health expectancy and human lifespan, which means the average American is living only about 58% of the potential for human lifespan in good health! How is it possible that the world’s richest country is 49th on the world life expectancy list, with only 58% on average of the human potential life span lived in good health? It seems that Americans are clearly missing something very important about life and about health.

Modern American doctors and medical researchers would like to find a panacea, a magic pill or “Fountain of Youth” that would allow Americans to live longer without having to radically transform their lifestyles. Though there has been much research recently on using technology to artificially manipulate lifespan, such as modifying genes and injecting growth and other hormones, and other research exploring the impact that genetics has on aging and longevity, the bulk of the research seems to support the power and impact of the simple and practical guidelines for healthy living passed down from natural healers for thousands of years, such as the piece that opened this ebook. From the ancient systems of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) from China and Ayurveda and yoga medicine from India, to the more modern manifestations of naturopathy, homeopathy, macrobiotics, and orthomolecular nutrition, all of these systems indicate that good health and longevity are maximized by practicing a holistic, balanced regimen which includes: a healthy diet, herbal and nutritional supplementation, ingesting clean water and air, minimizing exposure to toxins, practicing mild exercise regularly, getting adequate rest and sleep, spending time outdoors especially in natural areas, having a network of meaningful and supportive relationships, finding ways to minimize and manage stress, and having a positive mental outlook and a meaningful spirituality. Further research on cultures which produce the greatest amount of centenarians indicates in addition that a certain passion for life and resilience to change, stress, and adversity must also be present to live a long life. This may be related to the state of one’s optimism, since research shows a direct relationship between one’s positive mental outlook at any given time and the state of one’s immune system (Robbins, 2006).

Yet this simple and sensible knowledge is not accessible or accessed by the vast majority of people in developed nations like America. In fact, it is very difficult to create a healthy lifestyle in this country today, because of the influence of big business, the banks, the military, the entertainment industries, and the media, run by a government that is largely serving lobbyist interests. People in America have forgotten how to live truly healthy lives. And not only have they forgotten, but if they could remember or be taught, most of them do not have time! As the richest nation on earth, we are also one of the most overworked. But, wait. Is it fair or even reasonable that we are only enjoying 58% of our potential lives? What has gone wrong? How can this be? Perhaps we do not have to be rich, famous, or powerful, but can we just get a little more out of life? How is it that 48

other countries that have less wealth than we do are living longer? And how is it that traditional peoples, who are sheltered from modern society, are living *much* longer lives with much greater health expectancies? How can someone living in a village in the mountains of Ecuador or Pakistan live so much longer and healthier than we Americans, who have so many modern advances and technology?

These are the questions that will be explored in this ebook, which will explore the age old wisdom of naturopathic medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), macrobiotics, yoga, the amazing health and longevity success of several traditional cultures still alive today in remote areas of the world, and some current research on health and longevity issues. The goal of the ebook is to understand the factors that determine the length of a human life and how these factors can be manipulated to extend life to the longest possible span while living as healthy as is possible for humans to live during this span. Ideally, readers of this ebook will “remember” the simply yet profound principles of health and longevity that are already encoded in our DNA, programmed into our bodies by millions of years of evolution. All we have to do is spend a little time and effort to pay attention to our bodies and what they are telling us they need, and remarkably positive things will begin to happen!