

SUSTAINABLE HEALTH

Introduction

As the western world is approaching a pandemic in obesity and stress related illnesses, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer and diabetes, good health is something we take for granted. Most of us focus on our health, when we are ill or have had a major catastrophe in our lives, when it simply might be too late.

- Our society has conditioned us to constantly focus on our material wealth; at all costs however having good health is something money simply can't buy.

What is Sustainable Health?

Sustainable health is a personal commitment to maintaining and taking responsibility for your own health, through preventative (proactive) means.

- This means not only having regular exercise, and taking care of what we eat, but also maintaining a healthy and balanced state of mind.

For 4,500 years, Indian Aryurvedic medicine has taught us that illnesses are caused through an unhealthy or unbalanced mind. Although modern science has disproved this, there is still some truth in the Aryurvedic approach. However, science just does not have all the answers and doesn't work for everyone.

Health is a three way balance of genetics, environment and state of mind. Most often genetics and environment are out of our control.

- Ultimately the only thing we can control is our state of mind and the toxins we put into it, through what we eat.

If you take responsibility for your own health through preventative means, then ultimately you don't place a burden on the people you love such as your family, relatives and society in general. Taking care is the rule here.

Sustainable Health is:

- A preventative approach
- A balance of mind, body and spirit
- Taking care of what we put into our bodies
- Taking natural medicines to maintaining your health and hopefully preventing illnesses before they take shape.
- Leading and maintaining a balanced life, by taking a "middle road" approach. Not too little, not too much is the key.

What are its aims?

- Taking responsible for one's own health, through a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach.

Current Approach

Most doctors fail to realize this because they and the industry work on reactive approach, and they are trained to think in a reactive approach. In western

civilization this is how doctors make a living and pharmaceutical companies thrive.

- In ancient China, the opposite was true. If a patient was sick, then the doctor was fined for failing his or her duty.
- Today we are ruled by pharmaceutical companies and health insurance companies, using a fear approach.
- Nearly all reactive medicines have side effects, just ask any G.P. Some have even been well documented by researchers and doctors.

Point in example is the arthritis pill **Vioxx** tm, which has reportedly killed over 100,000 people in the U.S since its introduction, and over 300 people in Australia. Vioxx tm relieves pain of arthritis but triggers heart attacks and strokes.

- How many other medicines are there like that?

Sustainable Health Principles

- Your health is fundamentally directly related to your mental condition and toxins we put into our bodies, through what we eat, drink and breathe.
- Chronic and terminal illnesses doesn't just happen. They happen for a reason. A sure sign that you and your body may be out of balance or "sync" with your environment.

The 10 principles of Sustainable Health:

1. Maintain a balanced life, (middle road approach)
 2. Have a healthy diet
 3. Exercise regularly
 4. Sleep well
 5. Maintain a regular rhythm in life.
 6. Take preventative natural medicines to maintain health
 7. Engage in spiritual practices manifested through meditation, mind training and raising personal consciousness
 8. Learn to live and laugh more
 9. Building discipline in our selves through mind training and raising awareness
 10. Take a simpler approach to life
- The result of this will reduce your stress level and the impact of stress upon your health and body.

Balanced life

What is a balanced life? A balanced life means being in control of all aspects of our life, such as:

1. Physical
2. Mental
3. Spiritual
4. Family
5. Financial
6. Work and Career
7. Social

It also means not to live to excesses, because we become attached to them. When we become attached to them, we lose empowerment and they take over and control us. Point in example is TV, drugs and gambling.

Preventative Medicines

- Tribal societies have long known about preventative, which we are only starting to realise now.
- Daily doses of preventative medicine may help you and boost your immune system.

What are natural preventive medicines? Things like herbs, tonics, foods and drinks. Things like fresh fruit or plants like St.Johns Wort, Aloe Vera or Mangosteen, just to name a few.

Spiritual Practices

Why do we need to maintain a spiritual approach? What if I am an atheist or don't believe in God?

- Being spiritual doesn't necessary mean believing in God. Believing in oneself is far more important. In essence you have God within, but most people fail to realize and acknowledge it.

Sleep

What is the importance of sleep? Why is it so beneficial?

Hazrat Khan a famous Sufi teacher, lecturer, writer, and musician from India has described sleep as "food for the soul". Rumi another famous Sufi poet says in one of his poems, "O sleep, every night thou freest the prisoner from his bonds."

"The prisoner when he is asleep does not know that he is in prison; he is free. The wretched is not wretched; he is contended. The suffering have no more pain and misery." ¹

- Sleep frees and rests our mind, and ultimately our soul.

Being happy

Studies have shown that happy people are also healthier people. Happiness is simply a state of mind. **Being happy truly comes when we are in control of our own thoughts and actions.**

- How can one be happy in the modern world with all the tragedies, violence and terrorism?

One must remember that it's not what happens to us that counts (because most often it is out of our control), but how we deal with it. We can control how we react to it. We have a choice. The choice is to react to it in a negative way or positive way.

If we have a defeatist, negative attitude then we lose our empowerment. If we take a positive, courageous attitude, then we can be empowered.

- How is it that after the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004, children can still laugh and play and carry on with their day to day activities?

The universe tells us that nature of life is to go on and the carrier of life is hope.

- Perhaps we can take a lesson from these unfortunate people, to free our minds up, because we often find that we are prisoners of our own devices attached to comforts and material possessions we don't really need driven by our insecurities and status anxiety. These insecurities are manifested through modern day media which is driven by society's capitalistic ideals.

¹ Khan, Hazrat Inayat (1926) *The Sufi Message Vol. VIII- Sufi Teachings*, p193, Motilal Barnarsidass Publishers, 2nd reprint (1994).

Regular rhythm

What is so important about a regular rhythm? Life and nature works in natural cycles and natural rhythms. Our world tries to take that away from us, by distancing us from the natural cycles and creating artificial cycles, like for example night shift.

- If we were meant to live and work at night wouldn't we have larger eyes or special night vision like cats? Doesn't that make sense?

Simpler approach to life

A simpler approach to life doesn't mean, we all throw away everything and live like hermits in the bush or jungle. This is simply not a practical approach. What it does mean is removing our selves from attachments and clutter.

- Why would we want to remove ourselves from attachments? Don't attachments define who we are?

The more attachments we have the more stress we induce upon ourselves, because having more attachments require more care and headaches. More headaches ultimately means more stress. More importantly the more attachments we have means the less we are empowered, which means we can feel helpless and be manipulated or controlled by larger external forces far more easily Forces and entities like the media or government and authorities. We ultimately become **"prisoners of our own devices and remove ourselves from the true nature of being, distracted from the universe by things that matter very little in the grand scheme of things."**

- It has been estimated that Australians buy **\$10 billion** per annum of goods, services and food that we simply don't need or don't use. [Source: ABC news]. What about all the precious resources that are used to make these goods, services and foods?

State of our current health in Australia

The state of our health care says a lot. Take for example the Medicare Safety net It has cost twice as much as planned. There will be a \$1 billion rise in health care cost over next three years.

The Medicare Safety Net which was announced in the May 2004 budget will cost an extra \$107 million per annum. The government's annual target was reached by August 2004, only three months into the program!

It was supposed to have affected 450,000 people, now believed to effect one million people per annum.

- Doesn't this say something about the state of our health?

[Source ABC News 11/4/05]

Effects of Smoking

What about the effects of smoking?

- One in four people in NSW smoke. Over the coming years, half will die directly.

For every person that dies in a road accident in NSW, ten will die from smoking related illness.

[Source ABC News 11/4/05]

Summary

In summary we need to rethink the way we handle own health, as the current approach is failing us. The current way is expensive, ineffective and most often only benefit health insurers, pharmaceutical companies and their shareholders.

- We must take a balanced approach towards maintaining our own health and understand that ultimately we are responsible for our own health, and not blame "the system", society or even our own family.

By taking a proactive approach, to maintaining our wellness, we are acting in a responsible manner.

Whilst we are doing this we challenge the boundaries of our lives, through better knowledge and an improved approach towards living and maintaining our wellbeing, not only for ourselves but for our family, friends and all our loved ones.