



It's Your Life, You Can Make it Better

“Appreciation is a wonderful thing:

It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.”

Voltaire

Mark Kaplan

Dedicated to Alex and Katherine and all my good friends.

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It's Your Life and You Can Make it Better

- Healthy Eating
- Fitness
- Inspiration
- Happiness

Chapter 1 Where Are We Now?

This is a crazy world we live in right now. Most of my friends who are in the retirement age are facing a world that has disrupted their excellent planning. My college and post college daughters are facing a world in recovery, high unemployment, and concern for the future.

People in between those ages are facing the pressure of job security, fewer job opportunities, paying for expensive education for their children and a need to adjust plans for the future.

And yet have there not been issues of survival since man first left the Garden of Eden? Man has experienced easy times and tough times. The one thing that is common to every epoch over the last 500-1,000 generations is that each person only has so much time on earth.

In spite of what is on our minds and on our plates, how we spend our time is up to us. What we think about, enjoy, and appreciate is exercising our free will.

It would be ideal if we could be very:

- Healthy
- Fit
- Lean
- Energetic
- Inspired
- Happy

We can be.

It is not impossible to have them all at virtually no expense.

I am not going to sell the solutions here, I am giving them away.

This is the high quality of life to which we are entitled and is readily available.

There are many paths to get there, but I have found one path that works. You just have to stay on the path and decide you want to be happier than you are, win a few mental battles and put a plan into action for yourself.

The great thing is there is no program to buy, there is no time limit to achieve these ends, and there are not limits to what you can achieve.

It's 100% up to you. I have been through the process so I am not talking about anything that isn't available in real life.

Just so you are not waiting for a shoe to drop, I make money as an affiliate from some of the experts in the components I suggest, but there is nothing here you cannot do yourself.

Different experts have specialized in some of these goals and their knowledge is helpful. Some people, like me, like to do things on their own and some people like guidance. It's up to you.

My two favorite axioms about anything are:

“As long as you don't quit, you can't fail.”

“I could cut any size boulder in half with a hammer and chisel if I have enough time.”

The path has no end and no ceiling. We have unlimited capacity to be happy and fulfilled. We have unlimited capacity to be healthy, lean and fit. The path leads to inspiration and happiness.

It doesn't have to happen tomorrow, but it can start today.

Let's begin.

Chapter 2 Putting Each Step into Play

Part 1 Eating for Health

There are only a few things in our worlds we can control.

There are a few things we can control that could revolutionize our lives.

What we eat is one of them. Just think, we can control what we put in our mouths. What a concept.

The objectives I have when I eat are several:

- Satisfy hunger
- Provide nutrition
- Enhance Physical Performance
- Enhance Mental Performance
- Get Leaner
- Feel Better
- Direct the Mind
- And I will throw in sustain the planet since it's a free bonus

My daughter Alex has tasted things I make and after giving me a grimacing face she asks “Are you eating this because you think it tastes good or because it is good for you?” I can only laugh. It is a profound question for modern man.



And that is a line we have to cross. Now most of the things I make taste good, but if you are used to fast food and eating what ever your mind thinks will make you happy, you might think some of my meals were bland or had strange tasting ingredients.

Most of our lives we eat for pleasure. If we are enlightened we can eat and enjoy things that are good for us. Pretty soon we get pleasure out of the things that are good for us and willingly drop the things that are not.

Why do we eat the bad stuff?

The right hemisphere of our neo cortex brain is our stimulus receptor and is balanced with proper amounts of acetylcholine

The acetylcholine chemical balances the alpha waves that power the right side or creative center of the brain.

“One reason we crave foods with fat is because they deliver a choline boost to our brains.” Patt Lind-Kyle “Heal Your Mind Rewire Your Brain”. Fat is also very soothing to the emotional Limbic brain. These are often called comfort foods.

We like to reward our brain for achievement or perhaps placate it when we have faced too much stress. And let's face it, most every day has too much stress.

So you can see how we can get into the habit of eating foods to placate our mind that hurt our body. Comfort food which is often fast out food, delivery, or take out, is sometimes inexpensive, it's quick, convenient, and it satisfies our brain.

Then there is the whole area of Desserts. They make our minds so happy.

Then there is the nervous eating and quick fixes where chips and cookies and candy bars come into to placate our nervous system by soothing our limbic brain or satisfying our appetite.

In the morning, we could eat something healthy or we could eat a pastry, a Mc Muffin or a sugar loaded breakfast cereal that fills us up and makes us happy.

We have developed a sense of what tastes great to us and therefore what makes us happy, but these are tastes that keep the pharmaceutical firms thriving and medical costs growing as part of our family budgets.

Notice as a nation how we are polarized by the costs of medical care.

Most of the world does not have medical coverage and therefore they are healthier than us because they know they cannot get hospital coverage. The poorest countries by our standards often have the highest quality health.

I have not always eaten perfect but I have not been to a doctor for sickness, eye problems, or dental problems for over ten years. I haven't been sick or had a cold for over five years. I am not bragging, I am just saying that health and sickness are choices.

These taste great foods make us happy, but often lower our immune system in the short term and make us vulnerable to heart disease and cancer in the long term.

Years of convenient happy eating eventually kill Americans at a higher rate than in most cultures. In other cultures people may die

of malnutrition, but we are dying of the same disease. By giving our bodies nutrients that are harmful, we are creating death by malnutrition.

Strangely, once we start eating the food with the nutrients that the brain and body really need, they become happier. Comfort foods don't make us as happy long term as we think.

Part 2 Eating for Lean

With ingestion of the right nutrients, the body responds by letting go of the fat it uses to insulate the body against the harmful non-nutrients. The body needs to have an alkaline balance for health, to protect the immune system and fight disease.

The typical American diet creates an acidic balance that if acidic



enough kills us. In reality, it does at some point because the body loses the fight.

Any processed foods whose ingredients the body does not recognize get encapsulated in fat to protect the organs. What we eat becomes part of our cells and the body fights foreign foods created by processing and cooking like it would fight cancer.

The body recognizes fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, healthy oils, and organic protein from meats. The nutrients from these foods are put to work and fat is not needed to encapsulate them.

They have an alkaline base and build immunity and help the body fight cancer and heart disease. If we eat these foods, the body will release the fat. We get lean.

Can it get any simpler than that?

The other advantage is that these healthier foods delight the brain. In a subtler way. The brain responds by operating more clearly and finding it easier to focus and stay very alert.

The body responds by shedding pounds and developing more stamina. It has been shown that a vegetarian and raw diet actually produces all the necessary protein necessary to create longer term endurance than people who live on meat.

You probably don't think the elephant, gorilla, and rhino lack power. They eat only what grows from the ground.

Part 3 Developing a Taste for the Healthy Foods

The essential first part is eliminating the foods that do not help your body. There are plenty of healthy substitutes for sugar, flour, fried food, bad fats like mayonnaise, and any processed foods.

The adventure into healthy eating, vegetarian, and raw will expose hundreds of foods. Everything on earth that has not been processed in a factory is eligible. I will soon give you a link to Organic Facts which has lists of these foods.

The problem begins when you let your mind convince you it would be happier with a Snicker's than a strawberry.

Developing a taste for healthier foods first requires a commitment that you want your body to have healthier foods. Without this commitment you will let your mind win the Snicker's versus strawberry contest every time.

You will let your mind choose French fries over a salad. You will let your mind choose soda over water. You will let your mind choose refined sugar over fruit.

Without this commitment, you will go for the foods that right now taste better as opposed to the foods that are really good for you.

But that is not an argument we will settle right now.

The important part of my stressing healthy eating and fitness and the secondary purpose of this book, are the battles you have to win against the mind that will lead to control of a healthier destiny and open the doors to inspiration and happiness.

Part 4 The Battle with the Mind for Happy Foods

Psychiatrists and neurologists tell us that our personalities are half formed by genetics and half by our early environment.

We have inherited our genes from the previous 500 or so generations. Your blood type would tell whether you have descended from 500 or closer to 1,000 generations and therefore your true place of origin.

We emulate the behavior and habits of the people surrounding us for our first few years. Even if we are not engaged in conversation, we are listening, watching, and sensing.

By the time we are 14 years old, we have formed a world view and express it in what is psychologically called our personality. One of its many attributes is to interpret incoming stimulus and react or store the information.

The mind/brain creates and sustains this personality by filtering and judging this information according to our world view. There are approximately nine personality types and each has different characteristics and each perceives and reacts to outside stimulus differently.

I highly recommend “Heal Your Mind Rewire Your Brain” by Pat Lind-Kyle for further discussion and assistance in classifying your own personality.

There is a good site that gives a very good free analysis of your personality called [PersonalDNA](#).

The brain records and stores everything that happens to us. When it perceives a new stimulus it might discuss the information with the mind. They may decide this information needs a reaction or that it can just be stored in a previously established category.

When the mind/brain filters are too strong we are no longer excited by the here and now because the mind/brain keeps categorizing and then storing or rejecting new information. Boredom can be the direct result.

As we move forward, I will discuss how our seventh sense observes what the mind is discussing and how we can make decisions ignoring or following its advice.

One of the areas in which the mind likes to direct our choices is with our food selection. As I mentioned, the limbic brain is often calmed and soothed by foods; often fatty or sugary foods.

The mind likes to take care of the limbic brain and if we continue to seek food to soothe our troubles, we can become obese. Some minds don't have a problem with obesity. I always had an alarm button that said when my pants were too tight, I was eating too much.

But bad choices over a period of years even with an active exercise program found me buying larger pants.

Once we make a commitment to eat right and learn how to fight the mind we can start creating healthier choices. The battle begins with a commitment and then it has to be put into action.

Like any battle plan, it requires strategies and tactics. The first strategy is to eliminate the harmful processed foods. The second strategy is adding nutrient rich foods.

The tactic in eliminating foods to which we are addicted or have allergies is to find substitutes. If I love ice cream and want it every night, I might first move to candy bars as a substitute. Then I might move to a granola bars. By then the mind forgets the ice cream.

If I want to move to healthier consumption, my tactic is to select some foods to put in my refrigerator. I might select apples, bananas, raw cashews, kale, avocados, and cabbage to start. I start getting my mind used to foods that might seem bland but are healthy.

The mind is a worthy opponent for anyone.

Even though the untrained mind will often go for the harmful foods, once trained, the mind and the limbic brain are perfectly happy with the most nutritious foods. They will even become the enemy of harmful foods once they have seen and felt the benefits of healthy eating.

After five years of seriously healthy eating I am getting closer to a path that will really propel me into the stratosphere. At the beginning, I had no idea I would wind up at my current level of healthy consumption. I have surprised myself. It just started becoming more obvious and desirable.

Because I have advanced gradually in eating healthier and created my loss of almost 40 pounds, I have never starved as part of the process. I repeat, I have never starved myself in the process. I am not one who enjoys deprivation.

My extensive exercising never reduced my weight. When I ran 60 miles a week, I dropped weight directly as a result of the exercise, but neither do I want to do that again nor can most people exercise at that level.

When I was mountain biking I spent an hour to three hours 4 times a week riding through the hills. It made me very fit and helped maintain my weight but did not blow off the pounds.



When I was a gym rat, I visited the gym at least four or five times a week. I was in a boxing class three times a week and rode the stair climber at least twice and used weights every other day. I still weighed my

top weight of 220 pounds

It wasn't until someone doing the same exercise routine as me in the gym dropped her weight by 25% through nutrition that I realized my diet had to change.

Today, my mind no longer protests my diet.

In fact at each stage after the beginning period, my mind has been very encouraging. Dropping cooked meat was one of the biggest steps and it happened only recently.

It happened quickly when I just decided I did not want cooked meat any longer.

Fighting my sweet tooth has also been tough. When my mind has fastened on a comfort food, I break the addiction by just selecting

something else again and then again. After a while my mind doesn't remember what it craved originally.

But finding healthy comfort foods is not a dive into pain. There are magnificent foods in nuts and combinations of dried fruit, seeds, and cacao. One of my favorite high energy snacks are small squares made of dates, seeds, goji berries, and cacao. It is very rich and very satisfying in just small bites.

If you think there is a shortage of healthy foods you could eat, look at the hundreds of foods available at the Organic Facts site <http://bit.ly/bg3Owb>

If you go to [Raw Power.com](http://RawPower.com) and look at their selection of raw and organic snacks, you will have no shortage of happiness. In his book, [Eating for Energy](#), Yuri Elkaim has a list of great desserts that can be made. [NutsOnLine.com](http://NutsOnline.com) has an endless assortment of delicious healthy snack foods.

Yuri Elkaim is not a 100% raw foodie, but his book and practice is about raw foods. He claims he is about 85% raw foodie. As a professional soccer player, trainer, and nutritionist he understands food, energy, and fitness.

Isabel de los Rios is neither a raw foodie nor a vegetarian. She is as healthy as you can get considering you want to eat everything. Her protein does often consist of lean meat.

She does insist on eating organic. She has recipes for great desserts and snacks. Her guide [Diet Solution](#) has meals everyone would love and there would be no suffering with her recipes.

The significance of her title Diet Solution is that she also doesn't believe in quick solution starvation diets or pills to get lean.

If you don't want to convert to raw but want super foods to supplement your diet as you convert, I highly recommend a live food energy powder that is good for smoothies, salads, cookies or anything else you might eat. You can see the ingredients of their energy powder on their site EnerHealth

If you want to try regular super foods you can buy in the store, [Web Md](#) has a great article that explains their reason for selecting a number of them.

And as long as I am on a roll here, one of my favorite books that got me started adding foods is Jonny Bowden P.H.D's book "[150 Healthiest Foods on Earth](#)". I got started when I selected 8 of his 150 and added them to my diet.

When you pick foods, you start taking others out. It started me on my love for kale which is at the top of Jonny's list. Dandelion and parsley are right up there. He has a page on each to explain why he picked them.

When you start eating for leanness, the meals don't have a lot of calories. Even though you feel great when you are finished, the mind will want more. What you feed it has a lot to do with the success of your program.

Both Yuri and Isabel supply hundreds of recipes on how to mix all the right foods in the right combinations and when to eat them. If you can't do it on your own, it is worth the investment to get guidance from experts.

Most people would not follow my diet, so that is why I don't even suggest it. It is too lean and narrow for most people that have not started the adventure. The experts have a much wider variety of menus.

For those who want to eat healthy food and lose weight but don't want to do the shopping or cooking, I recommend [Diet to Go](#).

They will send 21 meal packages depending on whether you want everything or vegetarian. They will give you a questionnaire that asks for your current status and weight loss goals. They will design your menu appropriately and deliver it or ship them for a week at a time.

It fights the argument that people are too busy to eat healthy. If you have the commitment and think you don't have the time, let someone else prepare the proper meals.

Concluding Part 4

I am a vegetarian but not in a fanatical sense. I will eat meat on occasion and I eat tuna daily and a little cheese. But because I don't cook anything but quinoa and beans and raw products that need to be softened, I would call myself a Raw Foodie. Vegetarians cook a lot of foods even though meat is not one of them.

There is a great deal of satisfaction that can be created on this food trip as you start to get leaner and feel better. You are no longer held prisoner by your cravings and your allergies. People telling you how much leaner you look is just one of the bonuses. You will fit in the clothes you abandoned and/or you will get to buy smaller sizes.

You will have more energy and more stamina. You will be less sleepy in the afternoons. You will sleep better at night. You will stop feeling stuffed after meals. Your brain will not be fighting your digestive system for oxygen. You will rarely get sick and disease will not like your body.



After a short time, your mind starts encouraging you to eat healthier. Isn't that a switch?

Part 5 Exercise

The importance of exercise in my program is tantamount to the nutrition in my program.

I don't exercise with a sole goal of using it to burn off the pounds. You can hardly lose a large amount of weight with exercise alone unless you are involved in extreme amounts.

Exercise has other more important functions.

What I want from my exercise program:

- Support metabolism burn
- Support Beta and Alpha Brain waves
- Connect me to outdoors
- Develop strength
- Develop stamina
- Stay flexible
- Maintain muscle
- Play sports
- Challenge my kids to keep up with me
- Look better than my peers
- Control my mind

Once again most of the items are rather obvious. A few are egotistical but no one's perfect.

I like to goad my girls into fitness or face the embarrassment of losing to their old pappy. They have been life long exercise enthusiasts but they fall into the "too busy" syndrome.

My younger daughter frequently runs five miles and I am teaching her to surf when she visits from her out of state college. She has always been active in sports and exercise for her is more on the side of knowing it is important than really loving it.

I have always taken exercise as a given. I just do it. At various times I have gone to the extreme and I am prone to over training. The more convenient my exercise, the easier it is for me to stick to a program.

When I lived downtown Los Angeles while working on a high rise condo project, I was stuck in an urban neighborhood. I put the urban environment to use.

I walked an hour in the morning and an hour at night. There was a gym across the street from my office and I could go before or after work for weights and aerobics.

I have enjoyed exercising the most when I have lived in an area that gave me access to nice grass paths for running or near the hills for hiking and mountain biking. Now I live at the beach so the possibilities are endless.

Because I appreciate the value of regular exercise to support my metabolism, brain waves, flexibility, general feeling of well being, and self esteem, I get the bonus by using it to control or challenge my mind.

When I started running for recreational purposes I was in high school. I played football and swam but I was a recreational runner. When I was in my twenties I was running five miles each week day after work.

My course was a grass median with Australian fig trees on San Vicente Boulevard in Santa Monica. I went down and back at a seven minute mile pace. Coming back I might be tired

This is where my battles began. I would never let myself stop because I knew I could run five miles. I would start with mental contests about running against a big competitor and imagined there was a crowd at the finish line to cheer on the winner.

I am not above engaging my mind in manipulative games to make it continue when it is urging me to stop. I have always known that if I let myself stop once or twice, I would always let myself stop.

Another example of my contest with my mind is that sometimes my mind will say that it doesn't feel my body is up to the routine we scheduled for the day.

The seventh sense we have is one in which we observe conversations with our mind. That is, we listen to it talk as though we were a third party.

One day recently after my mind's announcement that my body was not up for a lot of exercise, I thought about the fact that I had just given my body a day off and it should be plenty rested.

When I know that my mind does not have a good argument, I might decide to show my mind it has no idea what it is talking about.

On this particular day, as I have mentioned in other writings, so I'll keep it short, I was going to run my 40 stairs from the beach up to the street twenty times. When my mind made its announcement pleading tiredness, I started running the stairs to see how I felt.

After 20 times I decided to do 40 and after 40 times I decided to do 60. I wanted to see if I would really have to quit, what it would feel like and what my mind would do at the end. After 60 times which was my previous record I kept running until I hit 80 times.

By then my mind didn't have to convince me my body was tired. My lesson proved to me again that my mind is a limiter and cannot always be relied on to give me the truth about my body.

My will is stronger than my mind. I have proven it many times. I want my will to win out. I want to prove to my mind that anytime my body is healthy, my spirit will take control and we will set out to do what we must.

Now this applies in any of life's adventures. If given the latitude, the mind will limit our activities if it is worried. We can, however,

continue to condition and train it to accommodate greater adventure.



Compare a rookie in army boot camp with a Navy Seal or Ranger or James Bond. After a while, the experienced mind learns that the body/mind/brain can handle certain tiring or risky situations because it has experienced them in the past and triumphed.

In the Super Bowl, it is felt that the quarter back that has been there before is less likely to freeze than the first timer.

So a veteran that has survived scary circumstances in the past is capable of being fully committed compared to a rookie that has not yet had successful experiences.

Part 6 Courage, Discipline, and Risk

As we have ventured through Parts 1 through 5, we have talked about healthy eating and exercise. My particular point of emphasis has been we improve our eating and fitness, but learn to control our mind.

Yes it's our mind when faced with exertion or challenge that often wants to be safe and comfortable at home on the couch eating potato chips.

I exaggerate again, but we have all run up against the mind's courage barrier.

The brain records everything that happens to us from the time we are born. It starts keeping track of how we fared and whether they were good experiences or bad. As you know when we have bad experiences like falling in the water and almost drowning, we might have a fear of the water.

My older daughter Katherine fell in a resort pool when she was a toddler and would have drowned if I had not been there because I was the only other person at the pool.

Even though she forgot about the event, she was afraid of deep water for years.

Her brain and mind remembered the last time she saw water and that she could have died. The brain warns us when the stimulus it receives from the eyes gets processed and sees danger learned from past experiences.

On the other hand, if we were a good swimmer and we had to jump out of a helicopter into a wild ocean as part of our Navy Seal training and we were successful, the mind brain would record this as a non scary event in the future.

People that have hurtful emotional experiences are afraid to be vulnerable. The mind is in the background issuing strong warnings.

Therefore as you can imagine, we want to push the mind brain as far as we can at all times so that we will have the courage to achieve what we desire. If the mind says don't go, we might get paralyzed and refuse to move.

I have experienced the feeling of paralysis trying to take over my body many times skiing and my mind had reason to worry; injury was a possibility.

After a while I could anticipate that in certain situations my mind would revolt and that I would have to deal with it. Every skier or mountain climber knows this experience.

Once at Squaw Valley, my life long ski buddy and I were climbing to the highest peak called the Palisades and we were going to jump off the edge onto a 45 degree slope that was a free fall for a quarter mile down.

Ahead of us were five other young skiers. When we got to the top we all looked over the edge at the eight foot drop that led to the free fall. The first guy in their group immediately strapped on his skis and jumped. He did not spend one second thinking about it.

As we progressed, each person got slower before they jumped. I was the last one and it wasn't pretty, I had too much time watching everyone else hesitate. I jumped but each one of us remarked how smart the first guy was.

Understanding our limitations, as Clint Eastwood says, is important, but being able to direct the mind when something is important to us is also crucial.

In physical exercise, I like to push my limits. I don't try to kill myself, I just go beyond what my mind would have guessed I could do. I think you are seeing the rationale for this. And we can do this safely without having to jump off a cliff.

Recently, I had started running barefooted on the beach in the soft sand instead of on the hard sand near the water in my tennis shoes. The soft sand was more difficult and you know from having done it, the mind thinks it's more difficult

I actually enjoyed it and felt stimulated by the sensual feeling of bare feet on sand. I also felt like I was accomplishing more. In the hard sand I usually ran one trip down the beach of three quarters of a mile in my tennis shoes.

A few days ago after a day's rest I started to run barefooted in the sand and as I neared the end, I wondered if I could double my distance.

I knew that if I turned around I would not let myself quit, so it was an important decision. In my seventh sense, I noticed my mind

being rather quiet. It was probably thinking here we go again. I might be better off to just shut up.

I did make the turn and several times on the way back I thought about quitting but I didn't. At the end I was fine and pretty proud of myself. I started thinking about running it three times in the future. My mind was silent.

I can now say, since I have been writing this for awhile that now I have run the beach three times and today afterwards, I surfed for an hour; Push, Push, Push.

As we start using discipline to do the activities we intended, especially with exercise, and keep pushing our limits, the mind becomes a willing companion or maybe a silent one. Either one is good.



So when we come up against something else we want to do in life, we start knowing the process of how we are going to have to deal with our minds. We know we will be in our seventh sense listening to what our mind has to say.

The more used to playing this game we become, the more easily we can make progress into areas that are desirable but challenging.

Chapter 3 Healthy Eating and Exercise Together

So are we having fun yet?

We have talked about pushing our limits in both healthy eating and exercise. You haven't decided how far you want to go in the realm of healthy eating and you don't know how far you can go with exercise.

When you advance your eating program, you will want to go further. When you reach your limit in one physical exercise activity, there is always another one to try.

One difference with healthy eating and exercise is we are not just playing games. This is our life. Any gains we make may have profound positive contributions. Most of us have a lot of room for improvement.

If you are already a 100% raw foodie and run marathons every weekend, you are pretty advanced. Please write me and tell me what you are doing next. You may be the next Bear Grylls. He did climb Mt. Everest at 23 and was the youngest ever until a 13 year old just did it.

At a certain point depending where you start and how you progress, you can become pretty impressed with what you have accomplished and how far you have come as a human being.

Know it or not you are closer to connecting with universal energies and higher spirit.

The gradual growth has included a lot of thinking about the decisions you are making and why you are making them. You have seen the slow progress to better foods and the elimination of unhealthy ones.

You have noticed that you have effortlessly dropped pounds and inches as a by product of eating healthier while never starving. You have noticed that in combination with a good exercise routine you are feeling better, looking better, and functioning better.

You may start contemplating just what kind of potential you could realize if this never stopped.

How much leaner would you become? How far could you run or whatever you are doing? How much more alert and energized would you become? How much better would your brain function as you gave it better food support, exercise support, and of course the equilibrium that both create.

As you start seeing your personal unlimited potential you start realizing the unlimited potential of humans. You start seeing your connection to Mother Nature as you get closer to truly being one of her creatures.

You are impressed that a human could feel so good and achieve so much.

This appreciation of your self and human potential inspires you to keep going. It might inspire you to express your self in other ways. You might see that you could probably do a lot of things if you put your will to it

At the same time you would be appreciating yourself and your future opportunities and wondering why more people were not doing this.

You have learned discipline, courage, and how to control your mind. What else would you need to add to the formula to accomplish what ever you wanted?

You would need special knowledge, but if you have the will, commitment and discipline, you have achieved the most difficult ingredients for most people. For special knowledge you can study or train.

If we marshal our personal resources, we can accomplish anything.

Chapter 4 Inspiration

Is it a giant leap to assume that as you move along the path and get to understand just how amazing you are that you might feel some inspiration?

I found a transitional point where in a sense I was becoming self absorbed, but I was also creating great self improvement. It didn't make me egotistical and maybe not more egocentric; it made me more appreciative of my surroundings and other people.

As I started to feel better, it was almost natural that I would be in a better mood, more optimistic, more generous, have more energy, and therefore feel happier. You almost can't help it. How could you go through all these improvements and then be sour?

The big change that happened was when I started seeing a difference between who I was and all the stuff that was going on around me. I could be improving greatly while the world was falling apart. And during this process the world was falling apart and maybe still is.

As time progressed, I realized that I wanted to become more connected to nature and revel in the feeling as I did when in the mountains in my youth. Being connected is like being in the womb.

The earth has been here a few billion years, so what do I have to worry about if I am part of this solidarity? And besides if I am in this womb, no one messes with Mother Nature.

I realized that without a work place to which I had to report, I could live most anywhere. That opened the opportunity to move to the beach.

At the beach, I was able to have my constant connection like an umbilical cord, continue my diet, incorporate my exercise routine and really settle into expressing myself through my writing.

Now I don't know if you can apply any of this to your own circumstances. I traveled the road of self improvement and



developed the discipline, courage, risk tolerance, and inspiration to express who I am and what I feel.

One's inspiration could be art, literature, music, sports, construction, law, business, parent hood or anything else that grabs you and doesn't want to let go.

I think that the road to finding yourself in diet and exercise also takes you to a place where you want to do more things that are important to you.

Seth Godin says it is important to do important work. I think it is important to do work that is important to you.

Carlos Burle who is on the landing page of my Inspiration Is Freedom site wanted to surf. He did everything he could to survive and pay for entering surfing contests and search the world for big waves.

He eventually became a founder of the World Big Wave Surfing Tournament which gives points and prizes for riding the biggest waves. His inspiration to be a surfer over came all obstacles.

You are blessed if you can find something that inspires you to passion. Not everyone has it. Passion is an emotion. Most people spend a lot of time intellectualizing about their lives.

This is one of the reasons I like to move people into something very personal like their weight. Then move them into something that is very personal like their fitness. Success in these two endeavors creates a new self awareness at an emotional level.

At our emotional level, we can connect to ourselves and then to a universal energy that powers our spirit. Once we make this connection, the evolution of a spirit to express ourselves can take flight on its own.

Let's Get Scientific

Science verifies that one of the smallest components of life on earth is the cell. Beyond the cell we have energy. Every living thing has an electro magnetic charge.

We are all connected by our creator or evolution by an electrical energy. The universe is full of this energy. We are connected to the universe by this energy. This energy runs through all living things making us one at this level.

Ok, Back Again

Now it is one thing to point it out scientifically, but another to grasp and feel it emotionally. Not everyone feels connected to mother earth and nature.

Grasping this connection for me is a revelation that says we have a right to be here and an entitlement to be happy. It helps us grasp that like every tree, plant, fish, and animal, we were meant to be just like we are; perfect in nature. An A or B on a math test doesn't change who we are at our cellular level; neither does a job.

If we feel we are here to do our job, so be it. If we can see a bigger picture and decide to take advantage of the few years we are here to experience more, then let the adventure begin.

Chapter 5 Raw Food, Vegetarian, Healthy Eating

I think the ultimate challenge is to be a raw foodie. I look at the raw food diets people live on and I think I am far away, but I am closing fast. My exercise shows the diet is not hurting my stamina. I am gaining endurance.

Raw foods deliver all the nutrients a food has to offer. Raw foodies not only eat food without cooking, which obviously includes meat, they select the foods, nuts, and seeds that deliver the highest quality nutrients.

Maximizing the nutritional value means finding the highest octane and highest quality foods to create the biggest impact. At the first level, being a raw foodie is an easy standard with which to comply.

At the highest level, it is knowing the best super foods and combining them properly and eating them at the right times.

Being a vegetarian also has several levels of compliance or purity. In general, a vegetarian is not eating meat, but may choose to eat fish, eggs, and dairy. Once again, it is a matter of degree.

Vegetarians, of course, often choose to cook their food. They have many food combinations that create the protein needed and have many dishes that may look like meat or simulate meat dishes for those who need it.

Eating healthy can be a combination of hundreds of foods. They can be added to your diet slowly or at what ever pace you need to move.

The most important aspect of the first phase of healthy eating is what we eliminate. What we eat that is unhealthy takes our bodies far away from achieving our optimum energy and fitness levels.

Eliminating the bad foods probably begins with eliminating most of the foods you are now eating if you have a typical American diet.

Healthy food can still contain lean protein such as chicken, pork, turkey, fish, and organic or grass fed meats such as bison, venison, lamb, chicken, and goat.

If you like meat in your fist stage of eating healthy, just add as many products that grow in the ground as you can.

Five years ago I ate everything. I gradually progressed into mostly vegetarian food but I still had chicken or fish with most meals. I cooked but I started migrating to soups, salads, and vegetable and chicken stir fries.

It was only recently that I first eliminated meats. I had a regression into cooking hamburger stir fries and then all of a sudden I couldn't eat the meat. After I gave up cooking chicken and hamburger, it was pretty easy to move into meals without cooking.

My last vestige of resistance may have been my tuna melts for lunch. But when I considered the advantage of a tuna sandwich instead and adding avocado, lettuce, and tomato, it was an easy switch.

When I recently visited friends for five days they cooked chicken or beef every night and I ate it and loved it. I just have not cooked dinners for myself for months.

It is fun if you look at it like an adventure into yourself. There is no rush but the rewards are tremendous. I can't imagine anyone embarking on this trip and not becoming happier.

Chapter 6 Meditation

It can be very simple.

Getting a few moments peace a few times a day can have a big affect on refreshing your mind's energy.

People are afraid of meditation because it sounds so out there. There is nothing to be afraid of.

Try meditating the first few times after exercise. This is a good starter because your mind has already eliminated some of the excess adrenaline and monkey chatter. We tend to be more mellow after some aerobics.

In meditating, we're not trying to stop our thinking. We want to manipulate it. Start by closing your eyes and feeling your environment. If you are outside, be aware of the warmth, the breezes, and any sounds. Do a quick inventory of your body to see if everything is relaxed.

Because our brains are so busy, I like to complicate the meditation a little bit to occupy that monkey chatter energy until I can slow it down and focus it.

The point of meditation is to create a synchronicity of the mind brain function so all cylinders are working together. It's a tune up.

The tune up starts working when all our energy is focusing on one idea. It's sort of like when the eye doctor waves a finger across your vision to see if your eyes can follow.

Meditation is floating a simple idea across your brain to see if the mind can lock on. Sometimes these are called mantras.

You start by getting your mind to focus on something simple. The natural tendency of the mind/brain is to look at the word you are suggesting and then wander off to thoughts with which it is preoccupied. We can say the mind has a mind of its own.



Observing this mind having conversations is the seventh sense.

If you are supposed to be doing something else or be someplace, the mind will want to go to that duty. It's alright to go with those thoughts, but then to show our mastery, we bring the mind back to our first simple mantra or idea.

It would be like letting a horse run around a ring, but we always have a rope on it to keep it close to us. The process of focusing and wandering and coming back is meditating.

You can really create your own meditations, but here is what I do.

I start by giving my mind a lot to do. I love to get in a comfortable and preferably in an outdoors peaceful area. I am fortunate to live at the beach so I can sit in front of the tide in the sun and feel a cool breeze brush my skin as I listen to the ocean and feel the sun's warmth.

I then say a word or two and focus on my breathing. I might say "new you" as I breathe in and out and time each word to an intake

an exhale. Sometimes I use goofy words like “cantaloupe” or “watermelon”. We can make it fun.

As I breathe in and out and say my words I try to reflect on the feeling of the sun and the breeze and the sound of the ocean. After my thoughts have wandered a few times and I have brought them back, I might be able to simply my focus by just saying the words in time with my breathing.

If you are good at this, I imagine that the first few times you may doze off.

After a while you will learn to focus and stay awake as you drop into a very deep zone where you can hear everything that is going on, but it doesn't disturb you.

Sometimes I am in this zone and I don't want to come out.

Give it a try.

Chapter 7 Mind/Brain and Who Is in Control

I wander into this area giving the qualification that I am not a doctor, psychiatrist, or specialist. I have always been fascinated by the brain because other than the heart which we cannot control, what has more influence on our lives.

And yet most people never study the functioning of the mind/ brain and its control of our lives.

The mind and brain work together to give us our thoughts and control our behavior. Wouldn't you think it would be worth one eighth grade class in school to explain the functioning in layman terms?

I have read a great book written in laymen's terms that I mentioned earlier called [“Heal Your Mind Rewire Your Brain”](#) by Patt Lind-Kyle. If you plan to spend another year on this planet, you would be happy you read this book. You can buy a used one on Amazon for about \$11. This book is my bible.

She starts with describing the brains we have and how they evolved. She gets into brain waves and how we can control our

peace, speed up our thinking, and balance out the brain with support of right foods, supplements, and meditation.

She also describes how we get personality. Many neurologists agree there are 9 different personality types formed by our genetic code and early years of emulating our parent's behavior.

As I mentioned earlier, by 14 we start filtering everything we hear and categorizing it to reinforce our world view. You can see that if you are into growth, this could be a real limiting factor. Understanding how your particular type analyzes stimulus can be a real eye opener.

Just by knowing the characteristics of your personality type, you can start recognizing thoughts and behavior and open up your alternatives,

Meditation takes you deeper than your personality's influence and connects you with universal energies that can completely change your world view. Inspiration and spiritual growth can develop from having connections to your deeper subconscious and universal energies.



In reality, we are dropping into our Theta and Delta brain waves. Delta is the wave of sleeping and Theta is where we can connect easiest to our subconscious.

Opening your personality to analyze all stimuli brings you into the here and now. Living in the here and now is usually the best anecdote to boredom. We get bored often because everything that comes in gets classified as "seen that", "done that", "don't need to consider that."

Pretty soon your mind has nothing interesting to think about.

Stimulus would be anything your senses perceive. They might get handled by the Reptilian brain which could give out the order "run". Or they could be handled by the limbic brain which is your emotional center so you would start crying at a movie.

Or in a class room your math teacher has stimulated your neo cortex brain and you are busy analyzing.

If your brains are all working together harmoniously they can handle crisis more calmly, plan better, be more creative, and evaluate new situations better. In a sense, a better synchronized brain might give you more tools and then courage to take on risk.

If your alpha waves are too active, you are anxious and you can't focus or stay on schedule. Extreme cases are ADD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

If your beta waves are too active you may feel you need alcohol to slow down the side affect of dopamine which is adrenaline and stress.

The brain does what the mind tells it to do. So the brains can read the stimulus and discuss with the mind its findings and together they can create a course of action.

Wouldn't you feel more in control if you knew more about this? Do you want other people making important decisions for you? What about the decisions you make yourself that you don't now control?

We often get into habitual behaviors. Some people just react to everything in an angry manner. Some people might break down and laugh at inappropriate times. These people are being controlled by personalities that are acting out their world view.

Sometimes the mind goes to these behaviors because that's where they feel comfort; even if it is destructive behavior. Some people may say they always get the same result in certain situations. That is because they are locked into habitual behaviors and can't make their lives better by defeating these behaviors or knowing how to open up alternatives. .

But it's not all bad. Understanding how to support your brain support your mind can give you a brighter, happier future. Understanding how they work together can give you more control over your performance and destiny. Let's go for that.

Chapter 8 Happiness

Someone would have the right to say I am pretty presumptuous to pretend I am an authority on happiness. I would say the same thing. But as a blogger, I often start off with bold subjects and ask a question and then write as though I have the answer.

In my business and health and fitness blogs a lot of people accept I have pretty good insights. But you can make your own decisions. In the end I will only be effective if you decide to do things differently.

Now that I have qualified it, I can continue. I do have a strong opinion about happiness. I grew up like a lot of people thinking that buying or achieving things delivered happiness. I was searching and I found a lot of false prophets.

As a child I loved to play. Nothing made me happier than to go out



and play with my friends. We might play sports or cowboys or throw rocks or anything.

As I look back we were expressing our free will. Our time was our own. When we weren't under the roofs occupied by our parents, our world was ours.

I think I would have liked doing that all my life. I didn't feel a natural need to go to school, go to college, or get a job.

I don't want to imply that I was irresponsible or immature. I did everything I was supposed to do. I am not sure they were all natural compunctions. We row down the river because it seems right to go with the flow.

Until I was fully inculcated into the system it didn't seem like I had ambition. Does that mean that I was lazy and not ambitious? Not in the least. I was never lazy and I was very ambitious. I was a good societal player.

But if I could have designed my life to my own liking, would it have been different? Yes. I may not have wanted to go to school or get a job; they were not instinctual, they were obligatory.

I hope you're with me a little bit here. So what may I presume were my natural instincts? I wanted to live on an island perhaps like in the movie Blue Lagoon. A few friends would have been good and having a love interest as I hit my teenage years would have been good.

But I lived my life differently. I am not complaining. I live the way I want to live now. I write in the mornings, then I break for exercise plus maybe some surfing. I write some more and then frequently venture to the beach in the afternoons for sun, swimming, and reading.

In the evenings I relax with more writing or reading. I can break anytime I want and walk into town or visit with the people in the neighborhood. I have an ex-wife but I keep up regularly with my two daughters and close friends.

So you probably noticed, I don't have a real job. That happens to be the privilege I am now entitled to but I am living the way I always wanted to live.

Am I happy because I am not reporting to an office? I lived as an independent contractor for most of my career. And I am thrilled I am not reporting to an office.

Am I happy because I am at the beach? I am ecstatic.

Am I happy that I can exercise everyday to my hearts content?
Yes.

Am I happy I can surf anytime I want when there are waves? Yes.

Am I happy that I can have the diet I like and that it makes me feel great? Yes.

Do I feel inspired? Yes. Does it make me happy? Yes.

So in my present state of emotions I feel like I am expressing who I am in my entire life style. I, in a sense, have rediscovered my child. I feel others are entitled to the same feelings. I feel we are on a great planet that has lots of things to enjoy.

Do I feel I am fulfilling my destiny? Yes.

This is who I was meant to be. Now other people could be judgmental and say that I should care about this or that or should be doing this or that. I can't help what other people think. It is out of my control.

I can only control a few things. Those few things make me happy.

We all have a road to travel. Hopefully you have found what makes you happy. I have found that a simple life has made me happier than the times when I had high income and lots of toys. People and family still matter.

Can you find yourself in and amongst all the duties, obligations, and expectations that surround you? Are you doing things that make you happy or buying things you think make you happy? Have you found your pursuits for happiness work?

I hope you are happy. My answer is not right for everyone. That is why I would not be so presumptuous to tell you what you should do about a matter that is as personal as this. I can only give you what I found that didn't work and what I found that did.

Conclusion

The end game of this book has been to give you better control of your future and create some conditions where it could be a happier, inspired and productive future.

We started with developing healthy eating habits and getting fit. Both these disciplines make you a stronger performer and a person that feels better. They inadvertently give you more control over your behaviors by knowing how to have conversations with your mind.

We ventured into how feeling better and controlling your mind could give you more power to control your future and express yourself by doing work that is important to you.

The more you control your own body, mind, and spirit the more inspired you will be to do something that has significant personal meaning. All this leads to happiness because you are truly fulfilling your destiny on earth.

Understanding your mind/brain working process is another tool in helping your forge your future to your liking.

I hope this has been helpful to you. If you feel it would be helpful to someone you know, feel free to forward it with my best wishes.

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If you want to keep up with my daily posts on these topics tune into:

<http://MarksHealthyEatingandFitness.com>

<http://NaturalFoodWebsiteseo.com>

<http://InspirationisFreedom.com>

On my [Face Book](#) page, I post daily information and links to healthy eating, fitness videos, and inspiration

Thank You for Listening

Mark Kaplan