

The

MAN

W & Woman

BOOK



A PATH TO
BETTER LOOKS,
BETTER HEALTH,
AND A MORE
SKILLFUL LOVER

FINLEY PARKER

The Man & Woman Book

A Path to Better Looks, Better Health, and a More Skillful Lover

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ISBN: 978-1-63110-226-4

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Printed in the United States of America by
Mira Digital Publishing
Chesterfield, Missouri 63005

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Chapter 1: Health

I was talking to my friend, Tom, who is a personal trainer. I asked him about personal training, exercise, and health in general. Here's what he said, "Ben, I make a good living teaching people how to take care of themselves and get the most out of life. Here it goes:

1. Your body is the most valuable, and the only, thing you own. Take care of it.
2. Walk 15-30 minutes a day. Make sure you own good shoes. Walk five days out of seven. Even if there is bad weather, you can go to an indoor mall, or buy a treadmill or stationary bike—good used ones are available.
3. Breathe deeply for one minute, at least 3 times a day. This will help strengthen your lungs. One minute can be on your walk.
4. Cut down or eliminate the excess salt you put on your food. Salt can raise your blood pressure.
5. Cut down or eliminate the excess sugar you put on your food. Learn to like the taste of food, not the salt and sugar.
6. Do not smoke. Sixty percent of cancer and heart disease are related to smoking.
7. Get a good night's sleep. You can train yourself how to do that. You can go online and learn. Unlock the tongue from the roof of your mouth to relax.
8. Be optimistic. That can relieve stress. Besides, optimists are right more often.
9. Want a friend? Be a friend. Smile, say hello, and be a good listener."
10. Tom continued, "These things aren't exercise, but they will help your outlook and general health." Now here are some more tips:
11. Get regular exercise. Walk, run, lift weights, and breathe deeply.
12. Take responsibility for yourself. You are smarter and better than you realize. Like yourself. Be someone others like to be around. You will have created a happier life for yourself and those you love.

All of us would like to look better. All of us can, with a little intelligent effort. I have a friend, Dan, whom I have known since we were kids. I talk to him often, asking questions and sharing stories. Recently, in our talks, he said this, "Ben, in my experience, I run into many people who complain about their looks, their weight, their job, and everything else. First off, we can all look better with a smile on our face. Be clean. Be neat. Be pleasant. Listen to people. A good listener is always welcome. Be that person." Dan continued, "I can give you several tips on losing weight. It only takes determination. Eat slower. Eat off smaller plates. Eat only one helping. Eat healthy snacks. Substitute carrots and celery for candy, chips, ice cream, and soda. One day a week, eat whatever you want, but the other six days, do the above. If you are 50 lbs. overweight, you will probably lose those 50 lbs. in a year. Exercise, particularly walking will do everything running does, except it will take longer. Get in the habit of lifting free weights while you watch television. Start with 5-lb. weights and work up to at least 15 lbs. in six months. The weights will strengthen

your arm and shoulder muscles. Men and women will find that the upper arm flab will tighten nicely with a little time. Lift weights every other day. Stretch, hold on to a chair and squat, keeping your heels on the floor and your knees above your feet. Lie down and pull your knees up as far as you can, holding for five seconds and repeating 10 times. Your body is the only thing you own. Don't abuse it. Limit or cut alcohol and don't smoke. Six out of 10 heart and cancer related deaths are caused by smoking. Don't use hard drugs. They will destroy your life. Don't be curious about them. They will hook you; don't kid yourself. The 'I can quit anytime' is a myth. Be curious about life, not drugs. They will take your looks, your health, your job, and destroy your family. They will kill you. Life is a wonderful gift, for most of us, so take care of your gift." Dan continued, "My father and grandfather both died of smoking-related illnesses. I've learned their lesson. Be optimistic. Optimists are right more often and have more fun. Get a good night's sleep. If you get up at night to go to the bathroom, DO NOT look at the clock, it will start your brain and make it harder to go back to sleep."

Have or make plans. Where do you want to be next year?

Five years from now? How are you going to get there? What do you need to get there?

Dan continued, "Ben, my father told me at 14 years old, you can kid me, you can kid your mother, and you can kid your teachers and friends. Don't kid yourself, or you will lose touch with reality. Try to learn something new every day. When you're talking, you are teaching. When you listen, you are learning. This is why we have one mouth and two ears. Try listening twice as much as you talk. Ask questions. If you are smart, you can learn from almost anyone, even if it's what not to do."

I was talking to Dan the other day, and we were discussing mental health. Dan said, "You know Ben, many people don't understand that the mind and body are tightly connected. The old saying, 'As a man thinks, so is he,' is true. Our personalities develop over the years. It can be difficult to change a pessimist into an optimist, but not impossible. In my experience, I see many people who have become their own worst enemies. That doesn't have to be so. Sometimes just stopping for a moment to be grateful for what you have can change your frame of mind. Most of us are healthy, have great friends and family. Sometimes saying thanks to them can bring you up." He looked at me and continued, "I don't want to sound like a Pollyanna, but a lot of the things people worry about don't happen. Most of us are tougher and more resilient than we realize. Count on your inner strength when times are tough. There are solutions to almost all problems. We may not always like them, but build on what happens. Insanity has been called doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. Above all, a good education and an open mind will carry you through." Dan grinned at me, "Boy, I sound like a preacher today, but if many people I know would only think things thru before they act."

Did you know that the reasoning part of the brain is not fully developed until age 26? That explains why the young do such jaw-dropping dumb things. I think we've all done some dumb things. Most of us survived, fortunately. That's why parents need to teach their children to think things thru before they act. Teach them to work out scenarios in their mind. Learn to plan for anything, and eventually they won't be caught off guard. Teach them to think quickly, and "on their feet." You can't protect your children from everything, but you can teach them how to handle almost everything.

Learn to like what is good for you.

This is not difficult, but it does take effort.

Get a good night's sleep. Most of us need 7-8 hours a night.

Your body needs time to renew itself.

Learn how to put yourself to sleep. Unlock your tongue from the roof of your mouth.

If you've reached adulthood, you should know how to relax, turn off your brain, and sleep.

Don't look at the clock after you go to bed. It will start you thinking.

You can plan and worry about tomorrow in the morning.

Sleep now.

If all else fails, tell yourself that you will get 90% of the value of sleep by calmly lying in bed, think pleasant thoughts, and relax your body. Start with your scalp and mentally relax each muscle until you reach your feet.

Do not eat after 8 pm. Drink water and not much else after 8 if you are a day worker.

Become a creature of habit. If you do some things at the same time every day, your body will develop a rhythm that will be good for you.

Eat at about the same time every day.

If you eat the same or similar things at the same time every day, it will be good for you. Not exciting, but good for you.

Eat food off smaller plates; it will help you eat less. We have talked about this before, but it is important.

Overweight? Diets don't work. Change your habits, eat slower, and drink a glass of water before your meal; it will help fill you up and aid in digestion. Eating less will help reduce the size of your stomach.

Watch snacks.

I like soda, potato chips, and ice cream. I don't keep them in the house because it is too much temptation.

It isn't how long you live, as much as how long you live well.

Your health is everything; do the things you need to do to keep your body healthy.

I know a man that doesn't take any medications. He only takes vitamins and a product to help joints.

He walks daily and lifts free weights. He keeps them by the TV. Muscle tone and condition are important at any age; he's in his 80s.

If you have acid reflux, consider putting 2x4 wood blocks under the head of the bed. It may help your condition.

It is said that many of us eat half our body weight in sugar every year.

If you cut down on your sugar consumption, you will find many health benefits over the

years.

The same is true of salt. It raises your blood pressure and puts added stress on the walls of your arteries.

All these choices are up to you. You are in charge of and responsible for your health.

In 1955, a McDonald's hamburger weighed 1.6 ounces, but today it weighs 4 ounces—2 and a half times larger.

Today, we have so many diversions and demands on our time; it is hard to spend time on ourselves.

If you want to remain healthy, spend 30 minutes a day on your own health. We all have the same 1,440 minutes in a day.

Walk, swim, lift weights, do sit-ups, pushups, jumping jacks, whatever you like. Ride a bike or a stationary bike, whatever; just remember your most valuable possession is you and your good health.

Don't eat so much, exercise more, have a positive attitude, be grateful for what you have, not envious of what you don't have. Remember, large numbers of people in the world would like to trade places with you.

You teach people how to treat you. Don't be a bully, but don't let others walk on you. Don't be afraid to say "I don't like that," or "Please don't do (or say) that again." Don't be afraid to embarrass bores and bullies.

However, empathy and sincere listening can go a long way towards making you a pleasant person to be around.

While we are all different, there are more similarities among us than differences.

Be sure you have a good, comfortable mattress. Make adjustments to fit your needs.

Don't sit on your wallet. Put it in a front pocket. Sitting on it will throw your spine out of alignment.

Eat less. Have at least one meatless meal a day, sometimes two.

Don't put salt or sugar on anything. Try it and see if it works for you.

Don't eat after 8 PM if you're a day worker.

Think positive thoughts; most things we worry about don't happen.

Remember, mind and body are one. That's why placebos work.

Most westerners believe in God, Jehovah, Allah, or a higher power. If you do, give thanks for what you have.

An optimistic attitude will work in your favor.

Believe in yourself. You are unique. You got this far, didn't you?

Some people that may have been smarter didn't last this long.

Use common sense, even though it sometimes seems rare.

Take care of your body; it's the only one you get.

Give yourself 20-30 minutes a day for you.

Walk, lift weights, swim, and try new things.

Ideas are among the most valuable things out there.

The new smartphones are great toys. For most of us, 90% are used for amusement. Don't let them take the place of thinking. For some reason, most humans hate to think.

Be grateful for what you have; don't worry about what you don't have.

Few humans have everything. That's why we work and strive and think—to better ourselves.

Try to see the good in people, but use care and common sense.

Get rid of habits that will harm you. If you think that smoking and drinking won't adversely affect you, I've got a bridge to sell you.

No matter how much you are loved, no one but you can control your health.

Be proactive.

It's never too late to adopt new, good habits.

If you quit smoking, five years later your lungs will be in better condition.

A World War I English soldier was gassed. His prognosis was that he would die within 5 years. He began deep breathing exercises every day, many times a day. 18 years later, he was alive, healthy, working, and enjoying life.

You can change if you want to and work at it steadily.

TINSTAFL is an acronym for "There is no such thing as a free lunch."

If losing weight and quitting smoking were easy, everyone would do it.

You can change your habits, if you want to and work at it.

If you have dry skin, consider rubbing a small amount of baby oil or olive oil on your face and body after a shower.

Very small amounts and try to let the oil soak in before you put clothes on.

Quitting smoking is not easy, but it can be done.

Look at the rewards: a better looking, better smelling you.

Wouldn't you like that? Everyone would benefit, too.

Smoking will increase facial wrinkles later in life, as well as damage vocal chords. Learn to eat your food more slowly and without salt and sugar.

If you think adding salt gives food flavor, no it doesn't really, you are just getting the taste of salt.

The same is true of sugar.

You simply like sweet. We all do, but you will be better off with just the taste of food. This

has been written over and over because it is important.

Remember, if it is to be, it is up to me—the 10 two letter words that can control your life.

Do not blame others for your problems. If you do, you have given them your power and control. You don't look small saying, "I was wrong; I will correct it."

It takes a big person to admit a mistake. Small, weak people can't do it. They blame others.

Be decent to people who work for you. You'll get more done.

Listen to new ideas; you don't walk on water. Besides, you might learn something valuable.

Be kind and pleasant to others. People will be glad to be around you.

These are habits and characteristics that are attractive to most women.

They certainly attract the kind of women you want in your life.

"A happy wife, a happy life," it is not difficult. Be the kind of person you like.

We humans are sexual creatures. It is written that Julius Caesar slept his way to the top, bedding everyone from the King of Turkey to Cassius's mother, a big mistake that killed him.

Drinking: Be moderate; alcohol can be a poison.

Smoking: The first death from tobacco was recorded in the 17th century.

Eating: Be moderate; try to eat less, and eat healthier; don't diet but change your habits.

Exercise: We all have the same 1,440 minutes a day. Don't you have 20-30 minutes for the most valuable, and only, thing you truly own? It is your body.

Sleep: Most of us will function best with seven to eight hours a night. Yeah, when we're young we're afraid we'll miss something. You will pay for lack of sleep. It will shorten your life, cause some diseases, and probably cause you a lot of pain.

Well, let's recap: You'd like to do better, live longer, and improve your skills. Be a better man, husband, father, and lover. Good. What are you going to do to meet these goals? You will get out of life what you put in. There are no miracles here, just intelligent effort. Let's start with health, yours. We all have the same 1,440 minutes in a day. Will you spend 20 to 30 of the minutes on yourself? Good. Here's a pathway for you. Seven ways you can help yourself.

1. Cut down or cut out the sugar you put on food.
2. Cut down or cut out the salt you put on food.
3. Cut down or cut out smoking. It will help your lungs and heart.
4. Cut down or cut out alcohol. It will help your liver, among other things. Some fat men have a greatly enlarged liver. It looks like the stomach, but it's the liver.
5. Get a good night's sleep. At least seven hours. You will function better, and probably be more pleasant to be around.

6. Regular exercise. Buy some 5 and 10 pound weights. Put them beside your chair at the TV.
7. Breathe deeply for 1 minute several times a day.

While I said father, husband, and lover, this applies equally to the stronger, smarter sex—women. Get used to it guys. Large numbers of women are smarter than men.

1. Eat to live, not live to eat.
2. Eat more slowly.
3. Drink a glass of water before you sit down for a meal.
4. Eat off smaller plates.
5. Eat one helping only. The goal is to make your stomach smaller.
6. Yes it is hard, and that's why most people fail. You are strong, and you can succeed.
7. Exercise. Walk, lift weights, suck in your stomach and hold it for 30 seconds at a time, 5-6 times a day for a start. Do not obsess about losing weight. If you do the things listed above, you may lose 2 to 3 lbs. a month. Be proud of who you are and what you are. If you are in good shape and overweight, the good shape wins out.
8. Work towards a BMI, body mass index, of less than 25 if you can.
9. Cut down on salt and sugar. If you can, don't put salt or sugar on any food you eat. No, you haven't killed the flavor. You will taste the food, not the salt or sugar.
10. For snacks, try carrot and celery sticks and grapes. If you have a weakness for junk food, do not keep them in your home. These are difficult things to do. You don't have to do them all at once; just try to eliminate two things a month. This is your body, your life. You are in charge; let your brain be in control. It isn't just the length of life; it is the quality, too. I know a man in his 80s whose father died at 61, a two pack a day smoker. Heart disease got him. His grandfather died at 53, a cigar smoker for many years. Cancer got him. You have free will; do what is good for you.

You might consider a stationary bike and ride it for 10 to 15 minutes every other day if walking outside is not convenient or when the weather is bad.

You can also draw in your stomach muscles as far as you can and hold it for 30 seconds, while continuing to breathe. Do this 5 times a day and work up to 10 times.

These exercises are just a few of the many possibilities. Tape a file folder to the back of the bathroom or closet door, check off each exercise you do and when you do it. You could also enter these exercises into a tablet or phone, but a visible chart may be more effective.

Whatever you decide to do take care of your body, you will not get another one. Remember, quality of life may be more important than length of life. Cut out tobacco, limit alcohol, cut down or eliminate salt and sugar, get a good night sleep, and have a good attitude. Do as many of these things as you can, and you will find that life is pretty good.

Today, many people complain that they cannot sleep. There are many ways you can help

yourself get a good night's sleep. Learning how to turn off your brain is subject number one. If your job is sedentary, exercise will help your body to become tired. A regular routine can be an important part of getting sleep. As the evening wears on, don't tell yourself that you won't get to sleep. Rather, tell yourself, in detail, how much you look forward to a good night's sleep. Be sure you have a comfortable place to sleep. If you can't replace a sagging mattress right now, you can put throw rugs, newspapers, or other material between your mattress and box springs. Let the torso area, between your neck and legs, be slightly higher. When you lie down, it will flatten out.

Sit upright. If you need to, have your back against the chair. Lift your arms high over your head slowly, 10 times each arm. Work your way up to 25 repetitions. Curl each arm. Work your way to 25 reps. Hold each arm at a 90-degree angle. Slowly twist as far as you can go in each direction. Breathe deeply for two minutes. Walk 10 to 20 minutes a day. These things will most likely improve your strength, endurance, and feeling of wellness.

Attitude: Be grateful for what you have. Look around you. Many people have much worse problems than you. If you are religious, pray. Giving thanks is good for your mental health.

Health/Children

You can think of other things that are good for you. Do them. Thank your wife for all she does for you and your family. Thank your children for doing a good job. Be involved in their lives. Go to their athletic events. Know who their friends are. Welcome them to your home. All children aren't athletic. Encourage them to participate in clubs or other school or social events.

A physical education teacher once asked me, "What is the most valuable thing you own?" I thought it over and gave my answer. He smiled, shook his head and said, "Ben, it's your own body. It's the only thing you truly own." That's why I teach physical education. I try to get my students to realize that the care of their bodies is a lifelong effort and goal and will pay off with a lifetime of good health. Be grateful for what you have; don't pay too much attention to what you haven't. Have goals, when you reach your goals, set new ones. Your mind processes this information and acts on it.

You can also build up to a regular push up by bending your knees, keeping a straight line from your knees to your shoulders instead of your feet to your shoulders.

While lying on your back, lift both legs 12 to 18 inches off the floor and hold for 10 seconds, if you can. Repeat five to ten times. This will strengthen your stomach muscles, or your core. If it seems to put too much strain on your stomach, try locking your fingers together over the middle of your stomach for support. If you have any doubt, talk to your doctor before trying these exercises. Do 10 toe touches. Try to keep your knees from bending, but do them anyway.

Note! Music, the kind you like, can be a great source of pleasure. Most of us like the music we grew up with. Find the music you like and play it often.

With your set of five-pound weights do bicep curls 10 times, working your way up to 20 repetitions. Do this every other day, once it gets relatively easy, increase the amount of weight. You should be able to use 15-pound weights after some time.

With arm bent at the elbows, holding the 5-lb. weights in both hands, twist your forearm as close to 180 degrees as you can 10 times.

With a weight in one hand, lower it even with your waist, and then back over your shoulder. Do it slowly. This will strengthen the muscle under your biceps and tighten loose skin. Perform this exercise 10 times per arm and do this every other day.

You don't need a lot of equipment. You need determination to take care of your most valuable asset—you.

Hold on to a chair, squat, and keep your heels on the floor. Hold this position for five seconds and repeat. Work up to 10 reps. Make sure to keep your stomach tight and your knees above your ankles and behind your toes.

Tom, my friend the trainer, continued, "Let's talk about hard drugs and their effect on the human body and central nervous system. Heroin will addict you with the first use. It is not about strength of character or will power. It is a powerful drug that will take over and destroy your life and the lives of those you love. Besides, if you use drugs, you are supporting the drug cartel and their murderous ways."

Do pushups. If you cannot push off the floor, lean on a counter, wall or chair and push up. You will develop your upper body strength. You will need strength all your life.

From a standing position, spread your legs wider than shoulder width. Raise your arms over your head and touch your left foot with your right hand, then your right foot with your left hand. Repeat this 10 times on each side. If you will do an exercise for 21 days, the habit is formed, and you own it.

Tom continued, "Remember, one body to a customer, take care of the one you have. Life is a gift, value yourself."

You take care of your home and car, but these things are nothing without you. Do not abuse the most valuable thing you will ever have—a sound mind in a sound body. Be grateful for these gifts. You have the ability to make them last. Do not smoke, limit or eliminate alcohol intake, think positive and be optimistic. Get a good night's sleep. Think. You can teach yourself to enjoy the thought process. Try to make the world a better place. In some parts of the world, survival is the only thing that the inhabitants can think of.

While still in bed, in the morning, pull your knees up and hold them tightly for 30 seconds. While on your back, bring both legs up to a 45-degree angle. While watching TV, suck in your stomach and hold for 10 seconds for 10 reps and repeat several times a day.

Try eating healthy snacks. Celery or carrot sticks instead of junk food. Don't beat yourself up if you backslide. Try again tomorrow.

On your back, do bicycling exercises with your legs. Do 20.

On your back, draw your legs up to 45 degrees. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 20 times, or work up to 20 times.

This may be hard:

On your stomach, rise up on your elbows, which should be under and even with your shoulders.

Now, lift your legs off the floor and have your legs and back parallel. Work up to 20 repetitions.

There are many other exercises you can do to strengthen your core. Do the ones you can, add those you think you'd like to do.

Keys to good mental and physical health:

- Get a good night's sleep.
- Don't kid yourself, you will function better, work smarter, and live longer with good sleep habits.
- Attitude: a positive, "can do" attitude will go a long way to making a happy life.
- Honesty: you get what you give. Try not to kid yourself. We all do it, but hold it to a minimum. Also, if you don't lie, you can repeat the truth without fear that the story isn't the same as what you said last time.
- Reliability: Be someone others can trust and count on.

There are many other attributes to humans. These are simply some of the basics.

These attributes will keep you out of jail, the hospital, and a lot of trouble. They have been repeated because they are important for you. Remember, if it is to be, it is up to me. Take control of your life. You know what you need to do. Do it. You will be a lot happier, more successful, and fulfilled. Be a problem solver, not the cause of problems. You will have friends and success, and your body will respond with better health. Do these things work? Well, my father, at 84, takes no medications, and he has had several successful cancer operations. He hasn't put sugar or salt on food for years. He doesn't smoke, doesn't care for alcohol, and gets a good night's sleep. He has certainly made his share of mistakes, but not caring for his health isn't one of them. Again, it is up to you. What is important to you? This book is a path for you to consider. Life throws you plenty of curves. Do the best you can, as you see it. Learn to read and hear facts and opinions objectively. Has the writer or speaker an axe to grind? Does it seem plausible? Other people are just as entitled to their opinions as you are to yours. This doesn't mean one is wrong, and the other is right. Learn to determine fact and fiction. We have two ears and one mouth. Listen twice as much as you talk. Ask questions. With your mouth closed, you are learning. With your mouth open, you are teaching. Don't you want to gain knowledge? The more you know, the better the decisions you are likely to make. Always have goals or a bucket list. My teacher grinned at me, "That's enough preaching for one day," he said. I like what he said, appreciated the time he took to talk to me, and resolved to adopt his ideas.

When talking to my friend Dan, he recently told me, "Ben, in my experience, I see it over and over. It seems many men who can talk at great length, are really not very good communicators when it comes to their wives and children. You know, listening is a communication skill, too. Talk with your wife. Know who she is and what she wants. Know her likes and dislikes. What her favorite color is, favorite food. What she really likes on a vacation. Tell her of your likes, too. Men who do these things will not have surprises like unfaithfulness, divorce, and moodiness. As a man, you should be a haven, supporter, and lover for her. Sound like a lot? Well, the more you put into life, marriage, and raising children, the more you will get out of it. TINSTAFL; there is no such thing as

a free lunch. If you want love, give love. Ben, I can't stress too strongly that communicators are rarely troublemakers, the curse of society. You've heard it over and over, 'he was so quiet. I never expected that out of him.' Men who learn how to deal with problems, frustration, and failures are the real strong men. In my view, the quiet ones are not strong. A difficult situation will cause them to explode, lash out, with drastic consequences. Learn to communicate well; it could save your life and the lives of those around you," he said. Boy, Dan gave me a lot to think about. I resolved to take his advice and do a better job in my own life.

Another problem: how to complain effectively. Recently a problem cropped up. Don't just fly off the handle and yell. If you do that, know that it will make some people resolve to not help you.

1. State the problem, why are you displeased.
2. Tell the person involved what you want.
3. Ask them to help you solve the problem.
4. Thank them for their time and effort.

Taking Care of Yourself

Talking to my friend Dan the other day, I said, "You know, I know men in their early 50s who have had major surgery. What gives? My great grandfather died at 53, my grandfather at 61, both of heart disease. Yet, my father is in his mid-80s and takes no medicine. Is it diet? Is it attitude? Is it Activity? I'm hoping for a long, healthy life. What gives?"

Dan smiled, "Listen, all of those factors play a role. Diet, attitude, and activity levels all are factors. Control what you can. You can't control what you inherited, but you can control the rest. Cut way down on sugar and salt on your foods. I know you don't smoke. Be moderate in your alcohol intake. Get a good night's sleep. Most of us need seven to eight hours. Those people that brag that they only get four to five hours will find it will catch up with them. You see, living long is a goal, but living long without pills and pain is a gift you give yourself. If you watch your food intake, less red meat, more vegetables, you will give your body a better chance to take you much farther along life's path. Do you have to do these things? Of course not; it's up to you. You have a great deal of control over how long and how healthy you live."

You Can't Get There From Here

My friend Dan says, "It's remarkable that most people don't make plans. I guess that they just wing it thru life. No wonder they don't get anywhere. You should plan today, this week, next week, next month, the year, and 5 years. Sure, things will come up to interrupt your plans, but with a plan, you can get back on track." What should a plan do? It can guide you to reach goals. A job, an education, meeting a special someone, buying a house, where you want to live, you name it. With a plan, you can take steps to get where you want to be in a time frame you decide on. A plan can relieve anxiety, provide a foundation for you. Plans can be changed. They're not inflexible, but they should help you reach the goals you set for yourself. A plan can instill self-confidence, a very attractive trait to the opposite sex and a potential employer. You do not have loose ends; you know where you are trying to go. What you want to do is to enrich your life and the lives of the people you

love and care for. Stop, sit down. Take a pen and piece of paper and write out the things you want to accomplish. How are you going to do it? What do you need to do, need to know, to get to that goal? How much time are you going to allot to reach the goal? If not reached, is it still worthwhile? Need more time? What are you going to do differently to reach that goal?

Take a deep breath and rather than doing or saying something you will regret, walk away. In addition to ruining relationships, getting angry is bad for your heart. If you have a hair trigger temper, talk to yourself and be honest. Is it frustration that causes you to be angry? Why are you frustrated? Can you control the situation? If you can, see what will change the dynamics so you can relax. If you cannot change the situation, you will have to learn to live with it without allowing yourself to be upset. These are not easy things to do. It can take time and practice. You will not always succeed. Try to improve a little bit each time the problem or situation rises. Work at becoming the master of your emotions, rather than a slave to them. Prisons are full of people who made bad choices, whose lack of self-control, or let others dictate their actions. Do not do that. Few of us have the power to control everything, but all of us can learn to control ourselves. We will be much more pleasant, more fun to be around, and better friends, parents, spouses, co-workers, and family members.

This should be number one; be honest with yourself. We all say and do things that don't level out. Don't look at the clock if you get up during the night to use the bathroom. It will turn on your brain. When you lie down and get comfortable, there are numerous ways you can put yourself to sleep. Among them is consciously breathing in and out as you say to yourself, breathe in, breathe out. Do not think of anything else. Let breathe in, breathe out be your mantra. It will have the effect of dulling and lulling you to sleep.

It takes practice. If you faithfully practice a method you like, you will learn how to put yourself to sleep. Do not go over the day. Do not go over tomorrow. The bed is not the time or place. At 8 am tomorrow, you will do those things.

Pills are a last resort. Do not use them continuously. It will be bad for your health. As a last resort, you can seek professional help. By the time you become an adult, you should know exactly how much sleep you need. I need seven hours and 20 minutes. When I get that, I function well. Know your body. It is the only thing you actually own. Treat it well. Do not abuse it. Those who abuse their bodies don't realize that shortening your life usually involves pain. Sometimes, very much pain and expense. It can cause you to curtail activities that you enjoy. Only you can properly care for your body. It is not difficult to do.

Practice and think pleasant thoughts. That is not Pollyanna; it works. Try it.

Health/Dieting: Dan's Observations on Some of His Friends

Diets do not work. Changing your habits will work. If losing weight were easy, everyone would do it.

Let's look at health first. Most of us do not have a small or slender frame. Let's take care of what we have.

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