

My Story

Before I begin, let me answer the question that you would surely ask 'why am I telling my story?'

Answer: Simply because if I can do what I have done to reverse my health condition at the age of 63, any one can do it. It is meant to be an inspirational account of my 20 year's journey to Living Health. It is meant to instill faith in yourself and encourage you to create an inspirational story of your own.

It was not until I was 43 years old that my passion for health had any signs of manifestation. Until this age I had been like any other person enjoying the so called 'cool things of life'. I thought it was cool to smoke 45 cigarettes a day and eat all kinds of foods, be they fried or prepared in junk food fashion.

I relished all kinds of meats and consumed alcohol like a fish.

My life style could not be termed any thing but sedentary. Bed to couch and home to office by car and no physical activities what so ever! Being excessively focused on my business, there was no dearth of stress.

Does not, what I have described above, sound like a perfect recipe for disaster? Yes but how many of us, the so-called educated people, know about our bodies and its needs? And how many of us know what is wrong with the foods that we consume?

Has any one taught us any thing about a balanced diet? We vaguely know that all the things that I have mentioned in the paragraph above are bad for health. How bad? We have no idea!

We do know that these things can cause cancer, heart problems, diabetes, arthritis, etc. etc. But we lack the knowledge and hence the will to make changes in our lifestyles. We do not ever feel the need to stop for a moment and reflect over this amazing gift - our body! It is this vehicle in which we live and we experience this wonderful world and the wondrous emotions of love, pride, joy, exhilaration, sense of achievement and what not!

I was acutely aware of the potential risks that I was nurturing and that if I did not do something about my life-style, I was for sure heading for a painful old age and a disastrous end, to say the least.

One fine morning I said to myself 'enough is enough' and I decided to change my life style. I quit smoking and drinking. I also quit eating all meats except seafoods. This was, without a doubt, a major break through in the saga of my life. I can even call it a miracle! But it was far from being enough. Sure the process of damage had been drastically cut down. But the question was, had the process of repairing the damage, already done, begun? No, not at all! The problem was that I knew so little of what had to be done in terms of diet and life style.

My Turning Point

A magical coincidence took place at this point in my life.

Inspired by some of my American buddies I decided to get into health business. What a paradox – I am in health business! In the year 1987, the same year in which 'miracles' were taking place in my life, I started a company in California to manufacture and distribute a line of food supplements. A very dear friend of mine by the name of Charles Bywaters took upon himself the challenge of launching a new line of unique supplements.

We embarked on the brand name VITAL IMPACT and launched a great line of supplements under this brand name in the year 1989. Charlie did a marvelous job of leading a team of professionals. He launched nine wonderful formulations. They were unique because they were formulated from whole food ingredients and we had incorporated a great ingredient called Mucopolysaccharide (Glycosaminoglycan) in most of our supplements.

I, as the founder of this health business, felt very embarrassed that I knew so little about human body and its nutritional needs.

By a little research I discovered, to my relief, that I was not one of the few who were so ignominiously ignorant. I was one of many millions who were living in blissful ignorance.

I am an educated guy with a university degree in mechanical engineering. I come from a family of educationists. And yet so ignorant about the fundamentals of body and health!

I decided to get educated in the science of health. I enrolled for a bachelor degree in Nutrition in Clayton School of Natural Health, Alabama. Later I went on to do my Masters and Ph. D. in Nutrition. I also completed a course to become a Doctor of Naturopathy (ND).

I was extremely amazed at what I had learned and discovered during my course study. It changed the entire course of my life.

The process of learning revealed the extent of ignorance in which I had spent my life. In good old days the wisdom of living used to be handed down by the elders. But after the advent of 1960s the new generation began to reject the wisdom of the elderly merely because they did not substantiate it with scientific facts.

Junk foods and industrially produced foods, laced with toxic flavor enhancers, colors, and preservatives, became fashionable. Home cooked meals were becoming rarities.

Meat and dairy industry started using dangerous chemicals, of course within prescribed limits. Poisoning of the food begins right from the growing of foods with the extensive usage of deadly fertilizers and pesticides! In order to extend the shelf life the agriculture produces are subjected to refining, which process takes away the micro-nutrients.

So what does our food consist of? Empty calories! Examples are the trio of deadly Whites! - White flour; White Rice; White Sugar! Meats and vegetables laced with toxins! Saturated and Trans fat abound in our diet. No wonder one in every two deaths is because of heart disease and

one in three is because of cancer! Diabetes is growing into an epidemic. The only cause of this is ignorance!

Add to the miserable diets our 'glorious' life styles! No physical activities and plenty of stress! Poor breathing habit and breathing highly polluted air. How can this poor body tolerate this gross abuse?

With the knowledge that I had gained, I decided to make some serious shifts in my life. This was in the year 1987. And believe you me I have been constantly making adjustments ever since. It is not easy to change your life that has learnt to do things so wrongly right from your childhood. Your parents, friends, and every one around you lives in such ignorance that you begin to wonder if you are doing the right thing when you indeed are!

After a long struggle, with the constant adjustment of my eating habits, I have now brought some sanity to my lifestyle including my eating habits.

I specially mention 'eating habits', because that is the most difficult part. Most of us pretend that there is nothing wrong with our diets because we are eating like millions of other people.

We are not prepared to sacrifice the tastes that we have become addicted to. It requires tremendous courage and ruthless honesty.

And one more thing! If you are sincere about making your diet healthy you have to be prepared to enter your kitchen and indulge in cooking or at least in supervision of it. That is the only way to ensure that all the good ingredients are going into your diet.

Simple mistakes in cooking can cause serious health hazards. For example heating the cooking oil too much produces trans fatty acids leading to clogged arteries.

Also the amount of fats that you consume daily should not exceed the amount that gives 20% of your calorific needs. If you are on a 2000-calorie diet, the total amount of fat you need is about 45 grams of fat. Since you also get fat from other sources such as milk, yogurt, eggs, meats etc., the maximum that you should consume in cooking your meals is 40 grams or about 4 teaspoons full. If there are, say, 4 members in your family, the total amount of cooking oil you should use per day is 16 teaspoons full or 3 tablespoons full.

Allow me to share with you the changes I have brought about in my life style. This is the result of my 20 years' hard work and discipline.

My Healthy Tips

My Diet

- Immediately upon waking I drink two glasses of water (earlier my day used to start with a cup of tea)
- After two hours of Yoga, I take a cup of light Darjeeling tea with one Biscuit containing 0.3 grams of fat.
- For my breakfast I take a large bowl of fruits, a large bowl of salads, egg white omelet prepared with traces of olive oil and brown bread. (Earlier there were no fruits or salads.

The egg used to be whole prepared in a lot of oil. Also I used to eat Paratha – an Indian stuffed bread cooked in oil at least three time a week). I also take two slices of Salmon on the days when I do not take eggs.

- For Lunch I take brown rice with Indian lentils and vegetables coked in little olive oil.
- During the entire day I drink at least 1.5 liters of water. (Earlier I did not drink even half a liter of water daily, which had led to some kidney problems)
- Sometimes before dinner I take 40 ml of red wine.
- For dinner I eat Chinese stir fried greens with brown rice. I also eat fruits. (Earlier I used to eat a heavy meal cooked in an unhealthy style – it could be spicy and oily chicken, or other meat dishes)
- After dinner my desert consists of Oatabix (made from oat fiber) with a glass of skimmed milk

Question: Is my diet always so simple and so correct?

Answer: Frankly, I do deviate once in a while when I go out dinning with my wife. I have learnt to live with such deviations because I do not want my routine to become boring. But here is the catch. In earlier days I used to deviate more than follow the discipline. This is what happens most of the time with most of the people. It has taken persistent correction and after many years I dare say that I am more or less on the right course!

My Food Supplements

<u>Product</u>	<u>Dosage</u>
Complete (Whole Food vitamins and minerals from VITAL IMPACT)	1 tablet twice daily
Vital Tone (GAGs + Omega 3 + Kelp, Whole Food nutrients from VITAL IMPACT)	2 capsules twice daily
GTF Chromium (Food form, from VITAL IMPACT)	2 caps twice daily
Prostate Tone Gold (Saw Palmetto with A blend of herbal extract, from VITAL IMPACT)	2 caps twice daily
Vital Bone (Complete Calcium supplement, from VITAL IMPACT)	1 tablet twice daily
Flax seed oil (1000mg, Organic, from Canada)	1 soft gel capsule twice daily

The biggest change that I have made is in the manner of cooking. I do not use much oil. I try to ensure that no saturated fats and trans- fats are present in my diet.

My cook does not heat the oil too much. He does not fry the spices. He only does the seasoning with a little Olive oil. I am making sure that overall intake of calories is cut down drastically. Low calorie diet is a must if you want to live healthy and long.

It has taken me nearly 20 years to come to this level of discipline in eating. If there is one thing that is the hardest to change, it is one's eating habits. We keep justifying and fooling ourselves.

The fact is that we genuinely do not believe that 'normal' eating can pose serious challenges to our health. But the hard truth is that it is eating and eating alone that either destroys or makes our health. Remember what the father of medicine Socrates said, "Let Food Be Your Medicine"!

All of us keep parroting that white rice is bad for health and yet most of us eat white rice.

Our minds silently whisper to us 'hey buddy! Do not be alarmed by white rice; after all every one eats it and they appear to be OK!' Little do they know that by consuming foods that are high on glycemic index you are risking your health in many ways? They can cause diabetes, obesity, cholesterol, Syndrome X, etc?

My Exercise

I decided to learn Yoga at the age of 43. At the age of 56 I learnt Indian ancient science of breathing called Pranayama. I regularly do 90 minutes of Yoga and the breathing exercises (Pranayam). I do the treadmill for 25 minutes. Ideally I should be doing it for 60 minutes.

Stress and Relaxation

- I meditate for 90 minutes in the morning and for 30 minutes in the evening.
- I make it a point to spend quality time with my wife. I watch fun movies and TV shows with her.
- On weekends I go out window- shopping with my wife.
- We go out to enjoy Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese cuisine.
- We take short vacations every now and then.

My State of Health at 63

I feel like I am 35. I am very energetic. I am a very happy and fun loving person.

I have corrected my chronic digestive problems. I have also overcome my liver problem, which I had since my childhood.

I am in an optimum state of health. I sleep very soundly for six hours. I wake up fresh. I go to office every day and contribute to work as much as all my young colleagues.

I walk very briskly. People half my age find it difficult to keep pace with me. No one offers me seat in the local trains because I look strong and agile. They must be thinking that I have grayed prematurely.

I am living a lifestyle that will take me past 100 years of age (my stated Goal for longevity!) and that too in great shape. . I do not plan to retire until the last day of my wonderful life. I have a great passion for Living Health. I enjoy promoting basic tenets of health. I shall continue to share my knowledge and my experience with one and all.

My Definition of “Living Health”

Living Health simply means enjoying Vitality and Wellness every single day of your life.

It is possible only if you live each day in the consciousness of improving and maintaining your health.

Adopting the ‘Living Health’ philosophy is possible only if you develop passion for the wellness of your body and mind. Living Health is possible by doing Four things right. They are:

1. Balanced Diet - low calorie, cooked in unsaturated fat, rich in fiber, 3- 4 servings of fruits, lentils, fish, skimmed milk. Ensuring that every morsel of food is whole and nourishing. It should not be an anti-nutrient and burdensome to your body.
2. Plenty of Physical Exercises (cardio, weights, and Breathing) – Invest at least two hours daily for this activity.
3. Regular leisure activities to relieve Stress (vacation, picnics, and meditation). Be conscious of the need to practice relaxation.
4. Keep up to date on the knowledge of your body and the means to keep it in optimum condition.

AVOID

1. Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption
2. Eating fried foods
3. Eating junk foods
4. Consuming Sodas
5. Eating too much sugar (maximum intake of sugar per day 6 tea spoons)
6. Consuming refined foods

Moral of The Story

- You have to develop a burning passion for Living Health.
- Out of this passion will come the determination to make the necessary changes in your life-style.
- Make a constant effort to learn about healthy and unhealthy foods. Consume only healthy foods.
- Be determined to be different from the rest of the pack. You will find yourself lonely when you start making radical changes in your diet and life style.
- Do not be discouraged if you often fail in your determination. Living Health is a continuous process of erring and correcting.