

4. Take Control of Your Life by Tim Reynolds.

To Be Healthy, Take Control of Your Life

By Dr. Tim Reynolds

I took care of a man in my clinic the other day who had retired a few months before. He had worked hard all his life; he was honest, hardworking and raised children that were fairly successful. He was in my clinic because he was depressed. He was depressed because he felt like he no longer had a reason to get up in the morning.

He didn't want to go back to work but he also didn't know what to do with himself. He felt he was no longer contributing to society. In addition, he was broke. He wasn't in poverty; he just didn't have any money. He and his wife live on a fixed income and it doesn't allow them to do many things. His 401k has taken a hit and his retirement plan doesn't look like what he was told it would.

Even his marriage is on the rocks. He and his wife are "at each other" all the time because they are always home together without a break.

I wish this story were unique. I wish I hadn't heard it before, but unfortunately I hear something similar daily. People find themselves at the end of a road they didn't even know they were traveling down. They get to the latter part of life and wonder what they did that got them there. Most of them are broke, embarrassed, and depressed.

They didn't plan for where they were going. They just got on the ship of life and let it drift to its own destination without wondering if it was where they really wanted to go in the first place. If we have no plan, then we do not get excited about life and where we are going. We cannot possibly know if we are getting closer to our destination if we don't know what our destination is.

Many of us fear the future. We fear what may be coming because we are allowing others to plan our future for us. We sometimes become so paralyzed with the fear that we will make the wrong decision, that we make no decision at all. That is the greatest tragedy.

We must plan what we want our future to look like and then take massive action to make it happen.

Read Michael Masterson's book, Ready, Fire, Aim. He offers some great advice on how to overcome your fear of decision-making. His philosophy will help you start planning to get what you want out of life and then take the steps to make it happen. Don't worry if you make a mistake or change your course. You can correct as you go.

I have a personal rule to not worry about things I cannot control. That means I stopped worrying about the economy or Wall Street. I no longer concern myself with what the President is trying to get through Congress. I don't care what the weather will be like next week. I don't want to know

if my negative brother-in-law is any more or less negative than last week. You see, these are things over which I have no control.

Interestingly, most people spend a large amount of their time explaining, discussing, worrying about, or whining about things they have absolutely no control over. There is probably a good reason for this. It helps them avoid working on the one thing they can control - themselves!

When we spend less time worrying about the President's economic stimulus package and spend that same time planning our own stimulus package, it is so much more productive.

Imagine spending your time creating your own dream life instead of watching reality TV shows. Take just a fraction of the time you spend worrying about things you truly have no control over, and spend the time instead on something you can control - your own life and future.

Here is a challenge for you.

Shut off the news for two weeks. Don't watch anything negative at all. Even though you may think you have to keep up on depressing world events, just try it for two weeks and see if you really miss anything at all. You may be surprised to learn that you don't.

Spend that time instead reading a positive motivating book. Challenge yourself to read ten pages a day of something that will help you live the life you want to live. Ten pages doesn't seem like much, but trust me, the new habit will change your life. I can tell you that it's worked for me in my life, and I know it will work for you.

You won't end up retired, broke and depressed when you stop worrying about the things you can't control and start taking control of your life and actions. Just get busy.

[Ed. Note: Tim Reynolds, M.D., is a board-certified Emergency Medicine Physician. He is a Managing Partner of Healthcare Express and the Chief Medical Officer of Urgent Care America. Dr. Reynolds is also a health and lifestyle expert and sought-after speaker.]