

Health
by
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This article is the culmination of more than thirty years of lay research and practice. It does not promise or offer 'cures' (or does it?).

My study and practice into health is driven by three things 1) a desire to perfect this experience, 2) related to number one, a desire to function at a high level for as long as possible and 3) information I acquired on the benefits of cooking at low temperature and low water (preserving nutrients).

I. Definition - Twa

II. Aspects

- A. Thought - positive, healing, guiding...
- B. Environment - air (including aromas), color, dwelling (*beauty, cleaning*), work
- C. Exercise – strength, tone, and maintenance (all)
- D. Diet - nutrition including building blocks, maintenance, healing, utensils, *taste and controlling diet* (*taste must be appeased with small 'doses' but notice when appeasing it is rarely all you cracked it up to be*)
- E. Rest - patterns
- F. Vitamins, Herbs, and Health Treatments (massage, etc.)
- G. *Relationships (Afro-Centric...)*

III. Conclusion

I. Definition - the best definition of health is by the example (as in the rest of this discussion) of the Twa People (BaMbiti, so-called Pygmies). Their lifestyle is the best example of health in every sense of the word, for it is one of many that created a community without violence, war, or crime; signs that the body is treated so well that

none of the physical or spiritual diseases affect behavior negatively. Had they suffered the multitude of diseases of the body or soul that we do they would not have been able to produce such a perfect society.

Health means that the body operates at its fullest capability to regenerate, maintain, and heal itself in most cases, and to respond to appropriate herbs and treatments in crises (accidents, etc.). It also is a necessary state to perform those tasks that are alluded to by the ancients and some traditional societies (remote viewing/travel, creation through speech, etc.)

Dis-ease (ill health) is obvious by its symptoms that provide information on the diseases probable cause(s) and cure(s).

"Pain is knowledge at the door," Dr. Richard King says.

That is, pain is trying to tell us what is wrong. A common error in dealing with disease is to respond to the pains symptom without using it to find the true cause of the pain.

A headache, for instance, is frequently caused by eating something that doesn't agree with our nature (meat, cheese, etc.). We respond to the symptom by taking something for it (the headache). We don't find out the real purpose of the warning (headache) and also suffer the side effects of the treatment we usually take for the symptom (aspirin can cause ulcers, etc.). We are left with the untreated cause of the headache, and a new disease caused by the medicine we took for it. There are many other healthy treatments for the symptom (acupressure, for headaches for instance), but we must make sure we deal with the real cause as we treat the symptom (warning).

Another example is indigestion. We run for the pink stuff or the tablet (after eating the wrong foods) and look for relief rather than the cure. A sicker example is the digestive aid (lactaid) that is advertised so that we can take the 'cure' before we ingest what the body is allergic to (dairy, etc.).

II. Aspects of Health

A. Thought - Correct thought is fundamental to health. Without it we are led to improper care of the body (diet, exercise, rest, environment, etc.) and to improper thoughts that create disease of the spirit (soul) and body. Correct thought relies on some belief system that interprets life satisfactorily (makes sense, not full of contradictions) and provides guidance for keeping thought positive. It also leads us to the continuous study of the health of mind and body. This is rooted in the fundamental rule of *Kmtc* (Kametic, referring to the ancient people of what is now called Egypt) life: *Know Thyself*.

A beginning of knowing yourself would have you study your habits (discipline and disciplining yourself) and what works best for you in all things (the best time to think, study, work, rest, eat, etc.). In its initial stages, it requires learning to meditate/breath and eating only one food at a time to see how your body reacts to it. In this way we can discover which foods give us energy (we are all a little different in some ways, reacting differently to different foods, times, etc.), which relax us, which help us feel better, etc.

An excellent text to help with this process is *An Afrocentric Guide to a Spiritual Union* (overview) or *Metu Neter Volume II* both by Ra Un Nefer Amen.¹

The role of laughter in maintaining health and healing has been clearly documented. While I have a great dislike for much of the silliness that passes for comedy, the role of laughter cannot be overstated.

The Afrikan tradition and most non-European cultures of a great family tradition rooted in ancestor veneration that resolves the issues of alienation and loneliness of the dominant culture.

Finally, much research has been done on the role of pets (especially cats and dogs) that relieve loneliness and the attendant unhappiness.

B. Environment - The need for fresh air, good water, a pleasing and colorful (health maintaining) environment is frequently

underestimated in most health regimens.

Reflecting on the environment of the Twa, we have the first hint of how far our current lifestyle is from the correct one. If we are tropical people that lived primarily in the open air of a lush green environment, etc., we can look around and see what we have to deal with that meets/falls short of those requirements.

Our first task is to try to make up for the shortcomings in our environment as much as possible. Providing a home and work environment that gets us as much fresh air as possible, lots of natural light, etc., as well as care to clothe our bodies as little as possible and in natural fibers whenever possible are other pointers to the good life.

One of the great teachers of health (and a good book to read) is Dr. George Oshawa of macrobiotic diet fame. His diet was extremely simple, and was designed to transition folks to a more perfect diet. The diet consists of salad, brown rice, beans, a vegetable of choice, and yams. After three to six months of this diet, one could rely of the essential healthy condition of the body, and as a result of study, venture into other food combinations confident that as a result of the study, the body was still getting all of the essential nutrients. Part of the higher teaching of the macrobiotic diet is that all foods should be locally grown, that the local environment provides those things most suitable to the body.

Finally, I saw Dan Buettner, author of the *Blue Zones*, and Blue Zones Project on a talk show. His book originally appeared about 6 years ago, discussing 5 or so spots where folks seemed to live to ripe old young ages (100+). I leave it to you to watch the video and pursue an environment and lifestyle described therein. I wrote a piece several years ago about a similar topic “The Future in the Past”, essentially looking at the lifestyles of our hunter/gatherer (mostly gatherers) ancestors (The Twa probably the best example) as the direction we should be going rather than The Jetsons ☺.

C. Exercise - Again this is an area that is best

exemplified through the natural nomadic lifestyle of the Twa. Moving amongst the highs and lows of the rain forest to collect food, visit friends, and move to new settlements, coupled with the communal/ceremonial song, dance and other physical activity is the definition of good exercise.

Pops says the first workout should be part of cleanliness—that is, the priority of keeping you environment clean (all aspects) is the first workout (along with spending quality time playing with children and others). If that doesn't do it, then you can pursue other activities.

While walking (here again, it is amazing that people that know they need to work out will spend time looking for a parking place to avoid walking) and some weight training (which can be practiced throughout life) provide a good substitute for this lifestyle, the best organized regimen of exercise I have seen that can be practiced throughout life is Tai Chi Chuan. This slow moving "dance with the clouds" tones the entire body, provides the stimulation (cardiovascular) and relaxation (Tai Chi is also a form of meditation) that is needed for optimum health. Anyone that has seen folks in the park practicing this ancient exercise knows it is not strenuous. Most are fooled until they engage the practice by its apparent ease (it is a great workout).

Dr. Richard King, a psychiatrist and expert on melanin (*Melanin: The Key to Life*) advises that we need to make sure we get a dose of sunshine everyday, especially to assist in the production of Options for folks transitioning from obesity problems (have great difficulty moving at all) include water aerobics coupled with prolonged fasts to quickly reduce the weight before engaging in exercise that requires more mobility.

The highest teachings (see *Metu Neter*) suggest the optimum time for cardiovascular exercise is between 9:30 am and noon, nutrition between noon and 6 pm, with meditation and other relaxing forms at about 10:30 pm and rest at midnight.

Research suggests that many of the activities we engage in (deep thought, worry, electronic games, etc.) late make it difficult to fall asleep. That sort of stimulation is not much different than chemical stimulation (coffee, etc.).

D. Diet - Diet not only means a temporary change in eating habits to add or lose weight, but should come to mean those habits of eating that you accept and agree to maintain for lifelong health. There are many schools of thought each with strong arguments for the best diet. I continue to lean towards a diet that is the outgrowth of our natural environment (that is, tropical), so lots of fresh fruit, then vegetables (all raw) followed by whole cooked grains, beans and other non-meat/dairy food sources. Our task is to work towards this diet gradually.

George Oshawa described the diet I used to make this transition in *The Macrobiotic Diet*.

One component of the ideal diet that is frequently overlooked is the necessity to consume foods that are not hybrids (specially bred for size, sweetness, etc.), that is, that are pretty much in their natural state, have not been grown using chemicals and artificial conditions (organic) and are not artificially ripened, etc.

Another component that is usually overlooked is the time and frequency of eating on a daily basis. Most of our eating habits (habit meaning the same as an addictive substance, extremely difficult to break if not recognized and treated as a habit) are built around conditions of oppression, that is, a boss tells us when we can eat breakfast, lunch, and go home to eat dinner. "Breakfast" (breaking the night's fast) should not happen until noon or slightly thereafter. Avoid juices as it is more than you would consume if you ate the fruit and preservatives and other added chemicals. There shouldn't be more than one major meal per day followed by a couple of snacks (vegetables, etc. early afternoon, fruit evening).

Cooking (especially overcooking) and freezing does destroy or reduce the potency of some nutrients in foods. Another area of concern is the temperature of foods (either hot or cold). Ideally

all food should be eaten at room temperature. Aluminum is toxic. All aluminum and coated cookware (non-stick, etc.) puts toxins in the food or give off toxic gases, etc., and should be avoided. Stainless still is probably the best bet. All non-glass drinking utensils carry bacteria (remember boiling baby bottles?) and should be avoided (including that water bottle).

The final major component to meals is the size of the meal. If you look at your body, and a diagram of your anatomy, you get the feeling that your stomach is not much bigger than your foot (filled out). Given the amount of digestive juices that must be added, we all eat too much at each meal. If we slow down, and realize when we feel "okay", that's when we should stop. Seasoning (sugar² is especially addictive, making us eat more than we should, salt has a similar effect adding the necessity of drinking to the meal which should never be done dilutes the digestive juices) creates an artificial taste and desire to consume more than we need. If we begin thinking (knowledge of self) that we are "superior" life forms, then we should be in control of our desires not controlled by them (see *Metu Neter*).

One side effect of the transition to a correct diet is ill-health (referred to as crisis). The body stores toxins in fat, as well as it being throughout the system because of an unhealthy diet, air, smoking, etc. Once you start to cleanse and eat correctly these toxins are released into the body and try to get out. The skin, respiratory system, and cleansing/eliminating system must be optimal to facilitate this elimination. Even at its best the body will suffer the effects of these toxins in the form of head, stomach and other pains that usually panic us into backsliding into our old diets (see an herbalist for herbs that will moderate/eliminate these symptoms). A variety of herbal treatments, massage (including acupressure), and exercise (sweat) can help in speeding up this process and the elimination of toxins.

Emergency kits (water cleansing tools, sprouts, seeds, vegetable seeds, etc.)

E. Rest Patterns - This is the easiest part of the regimen, though others in our environment (children, etc.) may complicate matters, especially if they are out of control also. Assuming the other factors are in pretty good order, the need for sleep for adults should be between seven (extreme) and four (common) hours per night. The consumption of seeded grapes (avoid the seedless again, as they are hybrids) at about a half hour before sleep (11:30 - 12:00 midnight) helps with sleep (melatonin). Sleep, though greatly misunderstood in the West, is crucial for the regenerative processes of the body and the spirit. One productive study from the West suggested that cycles of 90 minutes (1½, 3, 4½, 6, 7½ hours) are most in harmony with the body's cycles and needs. *check amount of sleep needed and for different age groups.*

F. Vitamins, Herbs, and Health Treatments (massage, etc.) - Many folks think that a correct diet will eliminate the need for vitamins and disease (the body will be strong enough to fight off without herbs/there will be sufficient quantities in the diet). There are two problems: first, we can't come close to the diet we would eat if we were at "home" (in the tropics) and second, even if we were there, we would still ingest so many hybrids (lacking the original quality of the food, fruits, rice, etc.) that our bodies would still not be able to repair, maintain, and protect itself from its natural and unnatural enemies. That's why we have to take a variety of supplements to maintain and repair our bodies.

A good multiple vitamin is a start. Read Dr. Jewel Pookrum's *Vitamins and Minerals from A to Z* for a good background on what and why your body needs it. Her study is especially interesting because it is one of the first I read that addressed the issue that Afrikan and European bodies are not the same and, therefore, need different quantities and even some different supplements. She also pays attention to the need for sunlight for Vitamin D production and the exposure of the eyes to sunlight (avoid the use of sunglasses) for hormonal balance and muscle tone.

One of my favorite works on herbs is the classic by Jethro Kloss, *Back to Eden*. It includes a summary of the different herbs and some things they are used for, then a summary of various diseases and what herbs to use for them. For serious problems I would suggest one of the nationally known herb doctors, Dr. Paul Goss of Compton, California, Dr. Saby, of New York, Dr. Jewel Pookrum (see above), or any local herb doctor that has a good reputation in the community.

Fasting is something we should all get used to and practice regularly, both to rest the digestive tract, clean it out, and heal the body. You will notice as your diet and exercise improve a higher energy level and that there is less need for sleep. This is a crucial advantage in times of crisis (you have to stay awake for whatever reason: study, care for others, security, etc.). Limit the food intake to fruit and water and keep the fruit down as much as possible (fast).

For fasting to be successful it has to become part of your way of life, that is, it has to happen rather frequently. As with other 'difficult' lessons (math has a similar bad rep) it might help to do it in small bites first, four hours, six hours, ten and so on until it is at least twenty-four hours.

Gradually ease in and out of the fast (nothing heavy the day before or the day after fruit, salads, etc.). Stay busy to keep your mind off eating. Do whatever will maximize burning energy. Drink lemon, real maple syrup (grade B) and cayenne pepper in warm water about an hour before usual meal times, then more water at the meal time or whenever you feel hunger coming on. Herbal teas and light juices are relatively okay.

After the first day it's pretty easy to slide into three days. The best time to do it is when it feels easy.

It's not a bad idea to do a one to three day fruit (fresh only) fast at least once a month.

III. Conclusion

These suggestions/guides are just that. As in all things, we are responsible for our own condition.

We should not rely on anyone to make decisions about anything in our life without doing detailed study. This applies to our spirit, mind and body as well as our management of our physical world. Study and make it a life long love to guide yourself to self-knowledge and perfection.

¹I found the books at the following website (along with many others that are hard to find):
<http://www.7mac.com/Nubian/non-fict1.htm>

²*The Sugar Blues*, by Howard Duffy is a powerful book on the effects of sugar. Its connection with maintaining the profitability of slavery is reason enough for Afrikans born in Amerika to leave it alone.

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