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Ideas For Success | *September*

Several months ago during a trip to my hometown, I went to lunch with my older brother and his lifelong friend at the legendary barbeque restaurant we frequented often in our youth. I rarely eat red meat; however, the chopped beef sandwich at this Fort Worth establishment is so melt-in-your-mouth delicious that I always make an exception.

My nephew – a former college football player who now participates in CrossFit competitions – was with us. Afterward, I mentioned he hadn't joined in the conversation while we were eating. Thinking Matthew was silent because he didn't have any connections to, or memories of, the people we were discussing, his reply caught me by surprise.

"Uncle Dave, I listened to everyone talking for over an hour," he said. "The three of you said a lot of names I didn't know, which was fine... but the entire conversation was about either when they died or how sick they are. That's why I don't like to go to these types of reunions. I'd rather talk about sports, or the stock market, or about healthy people."

'Out of the mouth of babes'... even 25-year-old ones. Since Matthew opened my eyes, I'm conscious of not replying to someone's 'How are you today?' with: "Everything's terrific. You know, my back hurts some mornings. It's fall, so allergies are acting up. Still swimming... although I deal with pain in my right shoulder. Hey, did you hear Mr. Smith died last week? Remember when we were in eighth grade and he..."

I Did Not Know That – During a visit this month to the chiropractor for my back pain – at my age it's just darn hard to avoid the topic, Matthew! – the doctor said I need to drink more water: "By touching your back muscles, I can tell you aren't hydrating enough." When she told me how much H2O to start taking in daily, I said, "Now, I'll be getting up three times a night."

Discovery: September – *The mother of one of my closest friends (a woman going strong at 83, who when I saw her two weeks ago never spoke of ailments) forwarded an email to me about the proper amount of water intake. That's where I found the inspiration to write about health this issue. However, in my research beforehand, I discovered it's a made-up recommendation that the alleged source refuted in 2010: 'Neither Dr. Somers nor Mayo Clinic contributed to this email, which contains some information that is inaccurate and potentially harmful. We recommend that you speak with your physician if you have specific questions.' So if a message arrives in your In Box that says 'Heart Attack and Water' – attributed to Dr. Viren Somers and a report in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology – treat it as myth.*

My doctor's recommendation is to drink one-half your body weight – in

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Weighty Change

On New Year's Day, I stepped on the bathroom scale and the LED flashed '184' – an all-time high. At first I justified the gain: 'Hey, that's only 12 lbs. in five years... no big deal.' Then I segued to: 'Wait, at this pace, in five more years, I'll be pushing 200.'

So I committed to change and named a target weight of 170 by the end of 2015. Having never needed to diet, I decided the best tactic for me would be to focus on smaller portions of what I typically eat and cut down on sweets.

That approach might not work for everyone; however, stating a specific goal and setting your mind to achieve it, more often than not, seems to motivate people to achieve better results. Two days ago, I again hopped on the scale and smiled when the light read '168'. Might be time to head back to Fort Worth to enjoy another delectable chopped beef.

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ounces – of water each and every day. So for two weeks, I've been downing 85 oz before 8 p.m. She told me I'd feel better... and she's right. I'm sleeping longer at night, too... surprisingly.

Loving Care

My wife Kathy has had a difficult couple of years during her monthly cycle. So much so that she became anemic. Thus, a week ago, she had surgery. As her gynecologist said: "Whenever a woman is having ongoing issues, she should weigh the options – and hysterectomy is a viable alternative to remaining miserable."

The experience at the hospital was amazing. From pre-op, to meeting with the anesthesiologist, through surgery, to recovery, and the attention she received while staying overnight, everyone was polite, empathic and attentive. Doctors, nurses, the cafeteria cashier – the entire staff – lived up to their credo to create an environment focused on care.

This hospital is less than five miles from the one where I had surgery on my ear in 2012. While most folks there were kind and considerate, the anesthesiologist had a less than patient-facing approach when I questioned why she ordered blood work that included a cholesterol test. As I wrote in that year's May issue of *Fast:Forward*: "The look I received from her was sharp as a scalpel, as were her few words: 'I make the smartest decisions for my patients everyday regardless of insurance. How they pay is not my concern.'"

When the surgeon met with me right after Kathy's operation, she said, "Everything went beautifully." The next day when she arrived to check on Kathy just prior to releasing her, I pointed to my wife and said: "She always tells me how much she likes you, and now I understand why. You have a wonderful bedside manner and truly seem to love your patients." This brilliant, talented woman responded: "I'm here to help women. It's why I became a doctor. It's why I show up everyday with a smile. If that attitude ever changes, I'll know it's time to quit."

Those were comforting words to hear from a physician who had operated on my wife. Substitute 'clients' for 'women,' replace 'doctor' with your profession, and there's your prescription for success. Who knew you could learn so much waiting in a hospital room?

Until next time, continued success in all things.

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