

The Philosophical Physician Maintaining the Balance

Dr. Stephen Stokes, DC
Crazy Fish Publishing
2021

The Philosophical Physician Maintaining the Balance
Copyright © 2021 Dr. Stephen Stokes, DC

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review or scholarly journal.

First Printing: 2021
978-1-387-38404-4
Crazy Fish Publishing
4713 SW 25th Place
Cape Coral, Florida 33914
www.drstephenstokes.com

The views expressed in this work are solely those of the author. The information contained herein is not intended to treat or diagnose any condition and is offered for educational purposes only. Always consult with a trained physician before undertaking any sort of self treatment.

For Ordering Information Contact:
Crazy Fish Publishing Tel: (239) 645-2405



Everything is for Katherine

“Come behind the scenes of your life and discover the truth about reality, yoga, wormholes and meat substitutes. In this first person account, Dr. Stokes takes his readers on a wild ride across the cosmos, occasionally stopping for a double cheeseburger. Part autobiographical, part Alice in wonderland it is hard to know where Dr. Stokes is serious and where he is testing us. If you have ever wondered what is on the other side here is your chance, but you better pack a toothbrush, it may be a long journey.”

-Dr. Will Zhuria, DC
Acupuncture Practice Management - Renegade
Acupuncturist Seminars

“A beautiful mess. A one way ticket down the rabbit hole.”

-Dr. Michael McDowell, DO
Osteopathic Physician

“What was that all about? I didn’t understand any of it...”

-Rosiland Stokes
The author's mother

PREFACE	1
TO MY MOTHER	3
MORNING ROUTINE	7
GOING TO WORK	14
LUNCH WITH CHEF BROOKE	27
THE KIWI	31
THE BUSINESS OF MEDICINE	35
WESTERN VS EASTERN MEDICINE	38
LAST DANCE WITH THE SUN	40
CLASH OF CLANS	46
SWEETSWEAT	51
NIGHT TIME SECRETS	55
THE EARLY YEARS	63
CHIROPRACTIC SCHOOL	79
MOVING AROUND	91
THE GREAT LESSON	109
ACUPUNCTURE	113
CIRCUS TRAINING	124
DR. ROBERT WOOTTON	133
OPENING THE CLINIC	149
THE GERMAN: DR. HANSJURGENS	154
RUSSIAN LASERS	158
THE OSTEOPATH DR. FULFORD	162
BRAIN SURGEON SABOTEUR	169
THE RED CARDINAL	171

THE SEARCH FOR PANOS PAPPAS	172
THE HEART OF IT.....	183
THE PERSIAN ANGEL.....	188
FASTTRACK.....	193
MAKING DMT	195
REBIRTH	200
THE REALTOR DOCTOR	203
DIRT MEDICINE	204
FINAL WORDS.....	211

The frog in the well knows not of the great ocean...

PREFACE

My first book, **Heal Yourself: The 7 Steps To Innate Healing** is focused on diet, whole foods supplements, herbs and advanced therapies. It provides an excellent “bang for your buck,” because following these recommendations can heal most illnesses. It is my most popular book and mandatory reading for all my clients. I have sold as many copies to patients as I have to other doctors, since western physicians have very little training in alternative medicine. Also, because I recommend Standard Process and Medi-Herb products, **Heal Yourself: The 7 Steps To Innate Healing** has become a reference text used by many sales representatives of those companies. I don't mind that the book has become commercialized, I wrote it with that goal in mind. It was the book everybody bought and the one the local TV stations interviewed me about. Even Barnes and Nobel, which is right across the street from my clinic, carried a few copies on their shelves. I am very proud of this book, but it is about what I do and not who I am. I always imagined that one day I would write another book, I guess something more selfish, more like grimoire.

I have been treating sick people since 2001 without using medications, or surgical procedures. My patients are mostly medical failures. Let's be honest, only a desperate person is going to go to a Chiropractor instead of their medical doctor. And still I see them, hundreds every year, paying out of pocket for a different approach and perhaps some hope. This is far from an easy way to make a living.

Treating people is my therapy, and I depend upon the work in order to maintain my own health. Every case I resolve teaches and bends me, sometimes it hurts but more often it strengthens and carries me closer to the source. The clinic, the “Dr.” title in front of my name, and even the money I make, are all just a front. It’s not representative of what is really going on, but we need illusions so people can make sense of things. What I’m going to do, is to gently peel back this covering, and for a few hundred pages unpack something you may have never knew existed. I am not asking for your belief. In fact, I still don’t believe the experiences I have. To believe something you must also understand it, and well honestly I understand very little of what happens to me. One rule I try to live by is, tell the truth, or at least don’t lie. Nothing in this book is made up, in fact I had to eliminate many stories because I was told they were just to fantastical. After reading the initial draft of this book a friend told me, “Your life is like a make believe movie”. It’s true, it’s all Dungeons and Dragons, everyday I feel like I am playing a game and making up the rules as I go along. I really like a quote by Lon Milo DuQuette, a fellow 32nd degree Mason and esoteric student “It’s all in your head, you just don’t realize how big your head is”. Not everyone will be ready to hear what I have to say, and this book is not for them, at least not for them at this time. For everyone else, welcome.

TO MY MOTHER

We are created by our mothers and grow inside them for many months, sharing blood, nutrition and emotions. This relationship does not end upon birth, but continues throughout our lives. I think the most damaging thing we can do is suppress this reliance in favor of independence. It is only an illusion to think we can separate ourselves from our mothers. Our mothers are Godlike and historically we see that representation in all religions. My mother can provide an energy that is unavailable through meditation, yoga or prayer. A 5 minute chat with her on the phone can produce a lasting change in my emotional state, so dramatic that it is almost like she is reprogramming my brain. She is a source of divinity that I had not considered until recently. If you are currently feeling disconnect to your life, I suggest spending time with your mother. If she has passed, you can still communicate with her in other realities. Her energy is still available even if she is physically not.

I think this love we experience with our mothers serves as the standard for all love we encounter. For years I rejected the importance of my mother in my life. The results were disastrous. I was anxious, aggressive and unstable. Relationships were difficult for me and consequently I hurt many people, good people that were sent to help me. This is not to say I was a failure, in fact I had achieved a lot of materialistic success but in truth I was unhappy and unsatisfied.

Slowly I started to reconnect with my mom, allowing her to take the proper role in my life. I gave her the recognition she deserves as my creator and my nurturer. I want to say, I love you mom, thank you so much for giving me this life, thank you for all the beautiful memories, kind words and quiet hugs when I needed them. Thank you for this wonderful gift, your grace has opened my heart and given me peace

CHAPTER ONE

MORNING ROUTINE

Today is Friday, it's early and everything is still asleep. I am above, looking down as I focus my intent. "Come here my friend," I repeat in my mind, as I once again I can sense the cold sheets against my skin. I slide out of bed, and my brain starts booting up. It's dark as I walk into the kitchen, my eyes are closed, but I know the way. I flip on the coffee maker, and its blue light illuminates the night manifesting a familiar reality. I see a bag of Organic Sumatra coffee and measure out one tablespoon to produce a single shot of espresso. It foams into a small white cup resting on its saucer. Next a little cream and a drop of wildflower honey. The smell is strong, and my eyes gloss over. Okay, I am waking up. It's still dark, but my eyes have dilated, and I can see everything now. The energies all around me, the vibrations of the objects, the anger and aggression as everything is fighting to survive. "I am no different from them," I think to myself as I take that first, sip of coffee. There is an old, tattered Moleskin on the chair, lying next to a Waterman fountain pen. The paint has worn off the barrel and it is over 30 years old. I open the notebook and start writing, "I am thankful for..." I always write as if the things have already happened, so for example I may write that I am thankful for getting some good news, or perhaps I am thankful for my the wonderful lunch I am yet to have. Each request is expressed with sincere gratitude and emotion. It is the emotion that creates the manifestation. I used to write about things that had already happened but I found

myself living in the past, only when I wrote about what was yet to occur did I really feel like I was creating my life.

Next, I move outside onto the pool deck, and mount my Jumpsport Fitness Trampoline. I am still half asleep, as I begin bobbing up and down at approximately two jumps per second. I am holding the rails; staring at the horizon, steady now, focusing on my breathing. The sun has not come up yet. I continue bouncing as my heart rate increases. My Apple watch is keeping score, heart rate increasing 60, 70, 90, 100 beats per minute, blood oxygen saturation levels are increasing from 96% to 99% and finally 100%. My heart is coming to life, pumping blood throughout my body and charging my channels. I feel my hands and feet starting to tingle. My face starts to flush; sweat is forming on my forehead. How long have I been here? 5 minutes. No, it must be longer. I am guessing I have been jumping at least 15 minutes. Wait. Am I still sleeping? Is this real or another lucid dream? It has happened before, I was jumping and then floated into the starless sky above my house only to wake up late for work. I jump a little higher but come right down. Nope, not this time; I am not dreaming.

By now my body is alert, the lymphatics are flushing waste and detoxifying my system, and I am in sync with the movement. I look around the neighborhood and feel victorious. No one else is up yet, not even God I chuckle to myself. Then, suddenly from behind a line of palm trees,

across the canal He screams, “I am that I am”¹ and blinds me with 400 trillion watts of sunlight. This is the same energy as a trillion, one megaton bombs; He has arrived. I squint and stop jumping on the trampoline. This incredible experience could be the first day of creation or the end of times, but not today, today is Friday, and like every other day this week God has finally arrived, and he is ready to party.

I slowly wobble over to the hot tub that has been working hard to maintain it’s 98-degree temperature since I woke up a half an hour ago. I am slightly dizzy from the jumping, and my legs are sore. I slide into the hot water, as the Sun starts lighting everything up. I feel His presence now, burning my face. The lawn sprinkler system has begun watering the grass, forming rainbows of refraction all around me as I soak. “We are the same,” I hear someone whisper into my ear, but I am alone.

Exiting the hot tub, I make my way into the swimming pool, where the cold water startles my nervous system. I begin to swim laps. Back and forth, slow at first with deep breaths, then faster breathing less and staying underwater for more extended periods of time. I am pulling hard with my lats, slicing the water with each power stroke, swimming for my life with 280 million other swimmers. The competition is overwhelming. There can only be one.

¹ The Hebrew words in Exodus 3:14 for “I AM THAT I AM” are ehyeh asher ehyeh which should more accurately be translated “I will be what I will be” or as Rotherham translates it, “I will become whatsoever I may become.”

Lap after lap I give everything, re-living my conception. The frantic swim up the fallopian tube towards the prized egg. I win, but just barely. Crawling out of the pool I lay on the pavers, exhausted. This shits getting harder, I think to myself.

My skin is wet and cold, but there is no time to dry off, I am already running late for Salutations, up down, up down, up down. I chant out loud, “Om Namah Shivaya” (pronounced: OHM NAH-mah SHEE-vah-YAH), which translates from Sanskrit, "O salutations to the auspicious one!", or “adoration to Lord Shiva”, or "universal consciousness is one”. My spine is now starting to catch fire, and the chakras are activating one by one. I feel the energy moving, like a vibrating snake starting at the base of my spine, then drawing energy from my testicles as it shoots around my navel, passing the solar plexus. I begin to feel the 12 petal lotus shocking my heart. I have heard there is a hidden charka located just below the heart called the Hrit charka. Tradition states once found it will fulfill any wish, but today I am far too busy to search for it. The sensation blasts pass the heart and burns into my throat. No matter how many times I do this, and I have done it thousands of times, in thousands of lives, I am always surprised by the intensity of the snake’s bite as he enters my head. The pressure builds like an orgasm, and every cell in my body wants to scream, but to open the door requires the opposite response. Instead of aggression, as I feel the rush inside my brain, I surrender, completely. It is this letting go that opens the pathway. Such a horrible

trick for those who don't know. The harder you try, the less your chances. I give in to the force and Sahasrara opens to reveal it's thousand multi-colored petals. What a rush, "Aham Brahmasmi" (AH-HAM BRAH-MAHS-mee), "I am the absolute," I scream out as I drop to my knees covered in sweat.

These are the same seven chakras Jesus told John about in Revelation 1:20. The very same Jesus learned about while studying Hinduism in India. The chakras are spinning wheels of energy that are loosely related to primary nerve centers of our bodies. Using exercises that are thousands of years old, religious scripture states the charkas can be manipulated to produce supernatural-like powers and bring us closer to God. The truth is they are wormholes to other dimensions, spinning galaxies inside your body fueled by the atomic force of your soul. The Chakras can be opened with sound, you don't need to be a yogi or speak Sanskrit, you don't even need to believe any of this to see the results. The secret sounds are as follows:

LAM, VAM, RAM, YAM, HAM, OM

As you chant each sound visualize the energy centers turning on like light bulbs that are connected to a wire running up your spine². You can also add to the experience by seeing each Chakra in your mind represented in it's true vibration. The energy centers are located at the bottom of the spine, under the naval , naval

² This technique was taught to me by Sri Madhukarnath. Anyone interested should read his book, **Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography**

middle of chest, throat, center of forehead above your eyebrows and top of your head. Picture a small flower (lotus or rose or whatever you like) at each location with a small light bulb inside the flower. Then fix your attention to the flowers one at a time and say the sound as each bulb turns on. The sound is the switch. Until all the lights are on. Stay with the lights on for some time and then touch the top of your head and say OM PHAT and all the lights will turn off. Now go on with your day.

If you are wanting to take things a step further you can also visualize the color of each energy center, these are often misrepresented in modern yoga books. The true colors as I have seen them are:

LAM: GOLDEN

YELLOW VAM: SILVER

RAM: FIRE RED

YAM: SKY BLUE

HAM: PURPLE

OM (3RD EYE): PURE WHITE

OM (TOP OF HEAD): LIKE XMAS, ALL COLORS

You may find that you tend to spend more time in certain centers. Research and define your practice accordingly. There is a lifetime of exploration here. Keep your back straight and enjoy the ride.

So I am still laying on the pool deck and from the periphery of my vision, I notice the clock on the kitchen stove. I am running late, and now my wife is up and measuring her coffee with drug dealer precision. “Everything ok Stephen,” she says without looking up. I

don't answer, and she doesn't repeat the question. This is a familiar scene we have re-enacted together over many lifetimes.

It takes 15 minutes for me to shower, shave and get dressed. As I stare in the mirror, brushing my teeth I imagine the sun outside, still climbing in the sky, shining on the world, no longer interested in me. "You're going to be late!", I hear Katherine say from the kitchen. She's right, it's time to go. I mix two scoops of SP Balance Detox³ with 1/4 cup of wild blueberries and some organic soy milk into my Ninja blender. Yes I drink organic soy milk and you should as well, but more on this later. I am trying to drink my breakfast while opening the door to my RAM

³ **SP Detox Balance:** Each Serving Size 2 scoops (37 g) contains: Calories 160, Total Fat 5 g, Saturated Fat 0.5 g, Total Carbohydrate 11 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Total Sugars 1 g, Protein 17 g, Vitamin K1 4 mcg, Choline 100 mg, Calcium 70 mg, Iron 4 mg, Magnesium 70 mg, Sodium 150 mg, Potassium 230 mg, Arginine 1,300 mg, Glycine 600 mg, L-isoleucine 850 mg, L-leucine 1,600 mg, DL-methioine 300 mg, L-valine 900 mg, Creatine 600 mg. Proprietary Blend 34.4 g: Organic pea protein, flax meal, oat flour, organic pumpkin seed protein, organic buckwheat flour, organic beet (leaf) juice powder, organic buckwheat (aerial parts), apple pectin, juniper (berry) powder, organic spanish black radish (root), burdock (root) powder, organic beet (root), calcium citrate, organic barley (grass), dandelion (leaf), broccoli (aerial parts), inositol, organic alfalfa (aerial parts) juice powder, oregon grape (root) powder, globe artichoke (leaf), sunflower lecithin powder, milk thistle extract (80% silymarins), organic cordyceps mushroom powder, organic carrot, organic sweet potato, and red wine extract. Other Ingredients: Creatine, L-leucine, xanthan gum, L-isoleucine, L-valine, DL-methionine, monk fruit extract, and choline bitartate.

truck when I realize I forgot my 38. I quickly go back to the house and grab my revolver, a Ruger LCR with a laser sight, it's lying right next to my Rudraksha Hindu prayer beads, I grab both items and head out the door. This is Southwest Florida, it's the fucking wild west man and I love it.

GOING TO WORK

When I get to the clinic there are already a few patients in the lobby. I am not late, but they have come early to enjoy a complimentary cup of coffee before getting started. It's just after 7 am and the hours of operation on my front door read 8 am to 5 pm. My staff has already opened, and some have done treatments on themselves, getting ready for the day. The bird feeders outside the treatment room windows have all been filled, and the entire office has been cleaned. The lobby TV is playing Fox news with the closed captions turned on. As I walk through the lobby, I read the inscription above the reception desk, **Inveniet Viam Aut Faciet**, which means find a way or make one. I remember painting that on the wall years ago after reading how Hannibal told this to his generals when they said it was impossible to cross the Alps by elephant. I glance over at the few waiting patients, "Inveniet Viam, Aut Faciet" I chant to myself, you guys don't stand a chance.

I go to the back of the clinic, and I sit quietly in my office with the door closed. The staff understands they are never to open the door to my office when I first arrive.

Before I review the schedule, before I take my messages and before I treat patients, first it is time for Pratyahara or detachment. I place my thumbs on my ears closing them off from all sound, I close my eyes holding them still with my index fingers, each middle finger rests on the nasal passages, the ring fingers are set on the upper lip, and the little fingers are on the lower. I take a deep breath and press all fingers to turn off the senses. Turning inward, I focus on my 3rd chakra located at the solar plexus. In Sanskrit, it is called Manipura. It is red, not yellow like everyone else says and it is a magnet attracting energy from the universe into my body. I am charging up for the day.

I hold my breath for as long as possible. Time slows down, and although only several minutes go by, it feels like years have passed. The future stops running just long enough for me to catch a glimpse and I take what I need. Then suddenly, I am forced to breathe and shoot back to present time. Once again I feel the hard chair against my back. I release the finger locks and return my senses to the matrix where my physical body resides.

My energy is now peaking, saturating my body, and it makes me dizzy and slightly nauseous. Can this be good for me? I doubt it. Regardless of how much work I put into rewiring my nervous system, I don't think I will ever be able to handle this amount of energy. I am sure eventually all my circuits will burn out. Damn snake! I know I should stop this nonsense, I am not even sure if any of it is real, but I can't stop, and day after day the addiction always wins.

I walk out to the front office and choose a piece of sugarless gum selected from the assortment my staff has accumulated and placed out of sight behind the counter on a little shelf by the fax machine. There are seven different flavors, Peppermint, Arctic Grape, Strawberry Smoothie, Tropical Freeze, Cool Orange, Cool Lemon and one called Ice. I always choose Ice and have never tried the others. I wonder if my staff realizes how these 7 flavors represent the 7 planets or the 7 spinning energy centers inside our bodies... I am guessing not. Likely just what was on sale. I notice a significant amount of paperwork jammed into my inbox, but I pass over all of it and instead pick up my appointment schedule. I glance down the list. Another busy day, many hungry Vampires to see, I will need to focus, everyone is counting on me, looking for a miracle but instead of pressure, I only feel the excitement. There's a secret here that no one knows, one that has cost me everything to learn. Years of esoteric work in the Blue Lodge, repeated life failures and heartbreaking relationships that have deconstructed me to sand. It is this same unbearable pain that eventually crafted my constitution into this representation of tempered steel. And the secret is, E*****M4. Can you figure out this single word?

“We are ready Dr. Stokes”, I hear the familiar voice of my receptionist Caroline, who repeats the same statement

⁴ The secret word also known as the royal secret of the 32nd degree Scottish Rite Freemason. Bestowed upon me 2017 Valley of Fort Myers Orient Florida

every morning at precisely 7:30 am. The patients have now moved into the treatment rooms, and it's time to go to work. I hear music playing through the clinic speakers. It is supposed to be soft jazz elevator music but somehow it's the Allman Brothers singing, Midnight Rider. The song was primarily written by vocalist Gregg Allman , who first began composing it at a rented cabin outside Macon, Georgia. I sing along as I open the door to the first treatment room, "I've got to run to keep from hiding and I'm bound to keep on riding..."

"Good morning Mary, I am Dr. Stephen Stokes, let's see how I can help you today." Mary is slightly overweight, middle-aged, and cautiously rubbing her right hip. There is cat hair on her sweater. She begins telling me her history. As she speaks, I look deeper to find what she is trying to say. It is hard because Mary is talking in code, subconsciously hiding from me the very information I need to help her. I record her words, and she continues with the story. She goes on longer than needed, but I let her get everything off her chest. Mary tells me about her grandchildren, her cat and how she is an excellent cook. She mentions that she is in "perfect health," despite having marked off every ailment on my history intake form. I break into the conversation, "Ok, Mary I need to check a few things can you sit here on the exam table for me?". Mary slowly transitions, I watch how she moves. She leans to one side as she gets up from the chair, her left knee twists inward, she drops her right shoulder, and her head rotates in the opposite direction.

Unknown to Mary my evaluation is almost complete. We run through the standard medical assessment tests, blood pressure, pulse rate, height to weight ratio, oxygen saturation level, and respiration. I listen with my stethoscope, and I can tell she is nervous but the results are fairly normal. Next, I perform some orthopedic testing, these have complicated names, but they are designed to see what movements cause the patient to experience their symptoms. For Mary, it's extending her legs while seated, bending to the right, coughing or sneezing. She also hurts when pressure is applied to the lower back and right buttock. By standard medical diagnosis, she has a spinal disc injury compressing the lumbar nerves that run into her leg, the most common being the Sciatic nerve. I take an x-ray of the area which confirms my suspicion, severely degenerated discs between L3/4, L4/5, and L5/S1.

Mary has spinal stenosis, and this is what I tell her. "Spinal stenosis is an abnormal narrowing of the spinal canal or neural foramen that results in pressure on the spinal cord or nerve roots. Symptoms may include pain, numbness or weakness in the arms or legs. Symptoms are typically gradual in onset and improve with bending forwards. Severe symptoms may include loss of bladder control, loss of bowel control or sexual dysfunction."

Mary is happy. She states that she has never been to a doctor as good as me before and no one has ever taken so much time to explain to her the real cause of her problem. She knows I am the one that will be able to help her and she has total faith in whatever my recommendations are. I

acknowledge Mary's compliment with a sincere smile, but of course, the diagnosis I have given is a lie. Mary's real problem is beyond her comprehension. She has trouble with two of the lowest chakras, the Muladhara and the Svadhisthana. The Muladhara is known as the Root chakra and is located at the bottom of the spine. In western medical terms, it is the coccygeal plexus of nerves. From here the three main energy channels Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna start. The Kundalini (that damn snake) sleeps here until it is awakened. Problems associated with grounding and survival originate here, things like money and food issues. So part of Mary's treatment will involve spinning this chakra and stimulating the associated nerves. But there is also a problem with the Svadhisthana or the Sacral chakra which is associated with sexuality, pleasure, and well-being. This chakra's energy helps form what western medicine calls the Sciatic nerve. You think I am going to tell Mary she needs to spin her charkas, especially just after she said I am the best doctor ever? No, Mary and I won't be going down the rabbit hole, at least not today.

I review the treatment plan, "Mary I am going to decompress the spinal nerves in your lower back with traction therapy, use a class 4 laser to stimulate tissue regeneration in the injured spinal discs and perform some deep tissue massage to help the Psoas muscles regain their proper lengths." Yes, I think that sounds much better than balancing energy centers, and Mary agrees to start a course of daily treatment. She will be completely free of

symptoms and back to golf in less than 30 days. As she improves I will give exercises that she believes are for strengthening her back and abdomen, but again that's not the truth. The movements I instruct her to do twice per day are not exercises; they are yoga poses, disguised as physical therapy. Similar actions have been used by ancient yogis to increase energy and heal the body since the beginning of time. If only Mary knew, what would she say about doing sex yoga to spin her lower chakras? The snake takes no prisoners, and she is in for a wild ride.

I have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the most advanced treatments available to help heal the body. One device called PEMF (pulsed electromagnetic field therapy) costs \$40,000.00, and I have two of those by the way but even with all this technology I include hands-on manual therapy in every treatment plan recommend. There is something to be said for the value of human touch, especially in a world that is quickly becoming overrun with artificial intelligence. Manual therapy is not Magicks^s, and I don't want to over inflate its usefulness but honestly, it's pretty good. Regardless of what is wrong with my patients, I will usually start treatment by focusing on the diaphragm muscle. Think about this, respiration is a critical part of life, and it drives many of the physiological mechanisms in the human body, specifically

^s Magick spelled in this way differentiates itself from traditional magic such as card tricks. Magick is the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will." Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (New York: Castle Books, 1992), xii.

the lymphatics. Medicine rarely pays attention to the lymphatic system, and few physicians examine the lymphatics except when someone reports that the glands in their neck are swollen. But the lymphatics are one of the most critical systems that are involved in pain and inflammation. They are the primary transportation network for the white blood cells (macrophages) once they gobble up the cellular debris and invading pathogens. If the lymphatics are not healthy, you cannot heal. Unlike the circulatory system, there is no lymphatic heart pushing the operation. Instead, breathing is the driving force, and the primary muscle of respiration is the diaphragm.

The diaphragm represents an upside-down umbrella that is positioned under the ribcage. It puts in a lot of work firing some 12-16 times per minute as you breathe. For most of the time it is an unconscious effort but sometimes when we are excited or frightened the diaphragm can spasm and shorten reducing the ability to take in deep breathes which diminishes inflammation via the lymphatics. The diaphragm relates to the solar plexus of nerves or the Manipura chakra. This is the 3rd chakra up from the bottom for those taking notes. It directly relates to self-esteem and confidence. It is positioned around the naval and includes the lumbar plexus of nerves, so it can also produce pain in the low back and upper thigh. Nothing gets this chakra spinning like deep breathing and a diaphragmatic release.

Sandy works at the local bank (mine actually), and she spends all day on a computer slouched, with her neck

hunched over the keyboard. “Sandy, what seems to be the main problem?” I asked, already knowing from my observations the Manipura chakra was going to be involved. “I have tightness in my chest and pain in my mid back; it hurts when I breathe, and I just feel anxious, especially when I am around a group of people. I have never been like this before.” She is upset and there is desperation in her voice. No, Sandy is not dying, but the quality of her life has changed and she is afraid. Like all my patients Sandy is looking for answers that so far she has not been able to get from her medical doctor.

Her case is not unusual, the poor posture of desk work has irritated the nerves in her solar plexus and tightened her diaphragm muscle. The chakra was no longer spinning, and she is feeling insecure. I asked her to lie down on my treatment table, face up. I gently placed my hands on each side of her ribcage. I sense she is afraid I am going to hurt her and I reassure her it will be ok. “Just take a few deep breaths,” I ask, as I feel the restrictions. Each time she breathes out I followed the ribs through the expiration, then as she inhales I maintain my tension. “Again, breath deeply, that’s it nice and deep,” I maintained the tension. “One more time, very deep now,” suddenly without warning I lifted my hands off her ribs and the tension releases. Sandy gasped loudly as the created vacuum draws in a large amount of air increasing her capacity beyond anything she has ever experienced. Sandy looked up with tears in her eyes. “What was that?” she asked. “What just happened?”. As I move over to my

office desk to record some notes I whisper under my breath, “You just got your confidence back,”. I glance over at her and she is smiling ear to ear, “Ok now stand up and face forward. Move your shoulders back and down. Stand tall and squeeze your buttocks together. That’s it, good. Now rapid breaths, in and out, in and out”. I placed a percussion instrument⁶ on Sandy’s spine in the general area of the Manipura chakra. “Keep it going, rapid breaths like a piston.” The percussor begins adjusting the vertebra, moving them back and forth, gently without any popping. It sounds like a machine gun, but Sandy says it feels good. She thinks I am adjusting her back, but together we are spinning the chakra. I see them in every patient, swirling wheels of energy, colors and frequencies that demand my attention. I also sense the organs, not as autonomic mindless tissues but living entities. Each represented by different frequency, the heart and small intestine is red, Stomach and Spleen is yellow, Lungs and Large Intestine is white, the Kidneys and Bladder are Blue and the Liver and Gallbladder are green. I learn these patterns in Mantak Chia’s Taoistic meditations and with practice I have found them to be true or perhaps I have made them true, who knows? Each organ represents emotions, so a diseased Gallbladder presents as anger, Lungs, depression and a hurt Kidney will usually express as fear. The body is communicating, all we need is to listen. With correct

⁶I use the Vibracussor and Arthrostim manufactured by Impac Inc.

treatment you can release these emotions and strengthen your organs.

Heart/ Sm. Intestine: Red: Hatred/ Love
Stomach/ Pancreas: Yellow: Anxiety/ Trust
Lungs/ Lg. Intestine: White: Sadness/ Courage
Kidneys/ Bladder: Blue: Fear/ Calmness
Liver/ Gallbladder: Green: Anger/ Generosity

Perhaps the most powerful technique a person can learn to improve their health is something known as the Inner Smile. I would advise any reader who really wants to master this meditation to study the works of Mantak Chia however here is the condensed version. First get into a comfortable position and start to relax your body. Most people find focusing on the breathing to be the fastest way to do this, 8 seconds to inhale, hold for 8 seconds and then exhale for 8 seconds. Something like that, just do what feels good to you and make sure you are breathing through the nose. Now once you are in a relaxed state imagine a time when you felt incredible. For most people focusing on a sexual experience works good however it can also be something like imagining your children playing or even a pet that you love very much. Just pick something attached to a very strong emotion of unconditional love and happiness. Now while basking in that feeling start to focus all that emotion into your heart. Imagine the heart soaking up that positive emotion. Let it stay there for a few breaths. Make sure you are physically

smiling as you do this. Next, move that emotion into your lungs, then your liver, stomach, spleen, intestines, colon and bladder. Finally, focus that intense positive emotion into your genitals. After a few breaths bring the feeling up to your abdomen to the level of your belly button and just let it dissolve there. You will need to research where these organs are so you can imagine them realistically. The more vivid your imagination the better your results. Later I will share with you how I use the inner smile as part of my evening routine. But I think that's enough for now.

In the course of an 8 hour day I will do a handful of consultations with new patients, and maybe 70% will qualify to start care. I don't take every case, only the people I know I can help. For me patient compliance has nothing to do with it. Some of my best results were with people who did not want to start treating with me or people who thought I was a quack. That stuff doesn't matter to me. I know any hostility or negativity towards me is just a reflection of the patients past experiences. I see every case as an opportunity to change someones life. It's simple stuff, and not ego driven. My purpose must always be more than the self.

I have an assistant, but regardless of how busy the clinic gets I will always see every patient before they leave. For me, personal interaction is the reason I go to work, and it is one way I keep my own charkas spinning. On the days I don't work in the clinic I seek out energy exchanges in my community by connecting with the cashier at the grocery store or the waiter who brings me lunch.

Sometimes I will go to the beach and recharge by walking barefoot on the sands or a casual walk in the park stopping every once and awhile to touch some of the trees or smell some of the local flowers (yes, I literally stop and smell the flowers). Exchanging energy feeds the snake, who is always hungry and creates the power to perform Magick every day.

The morning goes smoothly as I begin to synchronize with the Universe. Soon it is high twelve and my staff signals time for a break. As the last patient leaves the music gets turned up slightly, and everyone starts playing new roles. My therapist Adriana goes out the side door and refills the four bird feeders that are visited by hundreds of birds daily. While she is scooping the seeds out of the large orange Home Depot bucket, a group of squirrels watches patiently from a nearby Cypress. She scatters some lettuce by the tree line for the brown rabbits and even tosses a cup of feed onto the ground for the field mice. It's like a scene from the fairytale Snow White. I pause to watch her and the animals dance. Hard to believe how disconnected most people have become from nature when a simple bird feeder can serve as an excellent catalyst for transformation. Occasionally the staff will post wildlife pictures from the clinic on social media; these always get more views than my health talks. I cannot complete with God, despite constantly trying to win, my role is to lose.

LUNCH WITH CHEF BROOKE

The staff are preparing their meals now and will have a full 2-hour break for lunch. It is essential that we all recharge and I encourage them to relax, laugh and even take a walk or hike. Sometimes they come back to work with grass in their hair or wearing different clothes. I ask no questions, I am only wanting them to bring happiness back with them. I have had the same staff forever, 2 women, Caroline and Adriana. They are both stronger than me and much more powerful healers... someday they will figure it out and I won't be needed anymore.

I gather my things and head out the door. Deciding what to eat is not as essential for me as where, because I eat the same foods every day. I need a loving, regenerative environment so I can recharge my energy and so off I go to visit Chef Brooke's Natural Cafe on Boy Scout Blvd. It's about a 15-minute drive from the clinic but without a GPS or trail guide, you will never find Chef Brooke. The eatery is carefully hidden within an old single-story strip mall that is located on a busy six-lane highway. It's a building you would drive by every day and never stop at or notice. There's a golf grip fitter there, a hair salon, maybe an insurance company, honestly I don't know. The front entrance to Chef Brooke's is indicated with a simple sign that reads, Natural Cafe. Opening the door to Chef Brooke's is like the scene from *The Wizard of Oz*, when Dorothy wakes up in Oz and everything switches from black and white to color. Immediately you are intoxicated by the smell of chocolate, lavender and fresh tempeh firing

your limbic system. Your energy wheels start spinning, and you feel like you've just had your first kiss. This is the place you have seen in your meditations.

Make no mistake the Natural Cafe is merely the physical manifestation of guru Brooke Wagenheim. She keeps me healthy and is my friend. "Hello Brooke, what's happening?" Brooke smiles from across the counter, "Stephen how are you?" There is no further verbal exchange, but telepathically she continues the dialogue, "I have some wonderful mung bean soup today, and I just made a fresh tray of fairy cakes." There is so much on the menu at Chef Brooke's that newcomers are often overwhelmed by the choices, Brooke is quick to make recommendations based on her intuition of the customer's energy. "That sounds perfect Brooke", I respond, and before I can get out another word, she is pouring me an organic black tea, which could have just as quickly been a strong coffee or chai. Brooke knows and always gets it right.

I take a seat at the corner table, surrounded by local wall art. A small Buddha statue stares past me toward the front door. The tablecloth is an exotic pattern that immediately makes me happy. As a sip, my tea, waiting for the soup I notice the diversity of the community. A group of women doing a post-yoga coffee chat around the big table. There are a few guys in suits discussing sales, likely from the nearby auto dealership; they are eating some of Brooke's meat-based dishes and drinking grape-flavored kombucha. I notice a pack Marlboros in one of

the salesman's front shirt pockets, and I can sense he is embarrassed by my discovery. I don't look away but instead, offer a friendly nod which relieves the tension. There is no judgment here; it is a community forged on healthy foods and optimism, all are welcome. By the front door, several people are standing, reading newspapers or checking messages on their phones while waiting for take out orders. Scattered around the restaurant are several bearded hipsters, drinking coffee, eating tempeh house platters and worshipping their Mac computers.

Suddenly I notice a man sitting up at the main counter. This is not a regular place people sit to eat. There are only 2 or 3 high top chairs placed there, and usually, there is a bunch of cooking tools laid out where a person would eat, strategically blocking entry. Sitting here would put you in direct contact with Chef Brooke, as you would be sitting in her kitchen. It is a seasoned move that would only be attempted by a close friend or personal invitation. After years of patronage, even I, have yet to be called to the counter. Today's special guest looks familiar, but I am having trouble placing him. I know I have seen him before and then I remember, it's the local Fox News TV anchor. I never recognized Patrick Nolan without his expensive suit and tie. Today he is sporting jeans and a T-Shirt. I hear him chatting with Brooke about an upcoming yoga retreat to Italy; he orders the famous Godzilla raw burrito. This is an advanced dish and not for amateurs. I catch my reflection in the wall mirror and notice the logo on my scrub top; it reads, "Advanced Pain Solutions, Dr. Stephen Stokes." I

have a little epiphany and realize the logo represents what I do, but not who I am. Slowly I remove the scrub top and toss it on the empty chair beside me. All my senses immediately intensify, and I start eating my fairy cake. On Fridays, I usually order a sweetie and I always eat it before my main meal. This Kata reminds me not to save the beautiful things for later in case later never comes. Soon the mung bean soup arrives, and it is delicious. As I slurp down the last few spoonfuls I can hear music playing in the background; it's Starman by David Bowie, "There's a Starman waiting in the sky he'd like to come and meet us but he thinks he'd blow our minds."

Chef Brooke is a music fan, and you will notice she has old billboard posters throughout the cafe. Bowie is one of her favorites, but I happen to know she also likes Rush. Sometimes, but rarely, Chef Brooke will engage a customer as she passes them. Today she asks me, "Who is your favorite Elvis?. I am slightly panicking to give the right answer, not wanting to disappoint our culinary leader. "I like older, fat Elvis," I reply, feeling that was the correct answer or at least an honest one. "Costello," Chef Brooke disappointedly responds as she continues to the kitchen. I hear a few customers laugh. "That was a sneaky question," I suggest, but there is no further exchange today. All the sand has just about fallen, and it is time to head back to work. I open the door from the cafe, and I am instantly sobered by the hot Florida air. I am no longer in Oz, but I will be back tomorrow visiting the other side and filling my stomach with faerie cakes.

THE KIWI

When I get back to the clinic, a man is waiting in the lobby, dressed in Khaki long shorts, safari brim hat and long-sleeved Columbia fishing shirt with suspenders. He also is wearing big brown hiking boots. “Hello,” I say in passing as I head to my back office. “*Gay Mate!*”, He blasts out staring at me through his super thick bottle lens glasses. The strange accent I am thinking should be an interesting afternoon. Back in my office, a nice cup of organic twig tea also called Kukicha, is waiting for me. I enjoy many different hot liquids but twig tea is my favorite. Low in caffeine and high in antioxidants, twig tea or peasant tea is made from the stems and twigs that are left over once the leaves are separated for sale. I buy my tea from a certified Demeter Biodynamic farm in Traverse City, Michigan called Light of Day Organics⁷. The farm is owned by Angela Macke, who also happens to be a nurse. Her teas are beautifully healing and tasty. My favorites are the Golden Tip, Chamomile, Simply Sencha and Twig Tea.

I review the schedule and take my messages. As I am making some notes, I can hear the conversation at the front desk. “Oh yea, staying up the road at the squatter, I’ll be *her* for *bout* two weeks, right through July 4th. Gonna *git me* feet fixed. I am Kiwi.” Well, that’s a first for me, I have seen people from all over the world but never from New Zealand. Years ago when I played rugby, we all feared the New Zealand national team, called the All

⁷ www.lightofdayorganics.com 3502 E. Traverse Hwy Traverse City, MI 49684 (231) 228-7234

Blacks. These guys were and still are some of the toughest, smartest rugby players in the world, so despite this guys appearance, I think I will tread a bit lightly on this one.

I walk out to the front lobby and introduce myself, “I am Dr. Stokes come on back and let me see how I can help you today.” This is my standard greeting. “*Ya* looks better on the You Tube,” he says with a snicker, “*Yanger*, I thinks.” We both laugh and shake hands; he slaps me on the back with his free hand as I wrestle out of his grip. I can feel his energy burning into my skin. It feels like when you stand close to the fireplace, and everything starts to tingle. It’s a pleasant sensation, but you know that just a few inches closer and your eyebrows are going to ignite. Who the hell is this guy? I look out the window and see the Sun is at about at 2 o’clock, starting its descent to the west. The Universe has a twisted sense of humor.

It just turns out this kiwi guy is a healer himself, a master in fact, of Bowen Therapy. Created by an Australian, the late Tom Bowen (1916-1982). Bowen was a very intuitive, gifted and self- taught healer, who devoted a lifetime to develop his original technique independently from any medical or bodywork background. He ran a bustling clinic seeing 13,000 patients a year. Tom Bowen allowed only a few therapists to learn from him and this guy sitting on my exam table was one of them. Unfortunately, like Tom Bowen, my prospect patient also was diabetic and slowly losing the sensation in his legs, a common condition called neuropathy. The mechanism of neuropathy is one of ischemia, where the nerves do not

get enough blood (nutrition, oxygen, etc...) and eventually degenerate and die. Symptoms include numbness and tingling in the toes, pain, burning sensations, night cramps, balance problems, and depression.

My kiwi was in bad shape, and he knew it. "Wish I had taken better care of me self when I was *yonger*, but no one told me how to eat proper," he told me with a deep sense of regret. "*Ya* thinks *ya* can help mate?". I never answered him out loud but in my heart I sensed I could. He looked up at me smiling and said, "Let's get *her* goin then." We started with two treatments per day, each lasting about an hour. The goal was to stimulate the blood vessels that surrounded the damaged peripheral nerves and cause what is called angiogenesis or blood vessel growth. Neuropathy is mostly caused by ischemia, or lack of blood to the nerves and surrounding tissues, this was our goal.

The most potent treatment modality for neuropathy is a form of electrical therapy invented by a German scientist, Dr. Achim Hansjürgens, called Hako-Med. The machine stands about 3 feet tall and looks like a robotic octopus. It can produce various frequencies of electricity in order force the nervous system to do stuff. As an example, the sympathetic nervous system communicates a signal to the blood vessels to constrict at about 10 Hz. If I put this frequency into a person's hand, it will start to get cold, due to vasoconstriction (lack of blood flow). If I increase the frequency to 10x that amount or 100 Hz, I will overload the nervous system, and within a short period, I

will fatigue the ability to constrict the blood vessels and instead we will get massive vasodilation. This is very useful in cases of neuropathy. So the Hako-Med machine can produce physiological miracles in the hands of a trained technician. Another very cool use for the Hako-Med is stopping the pain, specifically by working on a chemical produced in the human body known as Cyclic Adenosine Monophosphate (cAMP). This chemical is responsible for the transmission of pain signals. Research has demonstrated that intracellular cAMP is depleted after being subjected to 4,000 Hz of electrical energy at sufficient voltage. Electrical treatment at 1 volt and a frequency of 4,000 Hz over a period of 3 minutes showed a 28 percent depletion of the available cyclic AMP. This effectively will block 28% of the pain in just 3 minutes with a complete nerve pain block happening in 8-12 minutes. Hako-Med Therapy provides all the benefits of traditional pain injection therapy without the risks. Hako-Med was used in a significant study involving 287 patients with severe neuropathy, and 88% had a total remission within four weeks. I don't know of any research that showed such a positive response to treating neuropathy, and there is no good explanation why it is not used as a mainstream treatment for the disease. It may have to do with the fact there are no drugs involved and therefore no significant profits.

Early on during the first few hours of treatment, the Kiwi showed a positive response to Hako-Med therapy. "Ya think this will fix me feet?", he asked. "Maybe, but it

will take a year to restore those damaged nerves fully.”, I suggested. “Got till next Friday,” he smirked.

THE BUSINESS OF MEDICINE

And the day rolls on like this with interesting people coming into the clinic, some are funny and pleasant but most are pissed off and skeptical. No one comes to me because they think I am a great doctor, they have already seen their great doctors, but they never got better. I hear it over and over again, “Oh yes, Dr. Smith is a great doctor, he is the best.” Just once I want to shout out, “If he’s so great then why the fuck are you sitting in my office?”. Of course, I can’t say that, and I would be lying if I never admitted that I enjoy being the last man in on these tough cases. The other docs have done the heavy lifting and I usually just need to put the pieces together.

“Oh thank you so much, Dr. Smith, I don’t know how I can thank you enough... and by the way, will you be coming to Mary’s funeral on Saturday?”. Mary spent the last six months of her life dying slowly and painfully from treatment that only made her suffer more. It’s sad. I am not suggesting anything else. I certainly don’t think the doctor killed Mary; I am only saying he failed, the hospital failed, the medicine failed, and I suppose God (ya you up there, are you paying attention?) failed... so let’s just come out once and say it. We don’t have to scream it or hurt anybody but let’s at least acknowledge it softly and respectfully so that maybe we can find a better way.

So yea, no one comes to me because they think I am great, they come from desperation. They come to prove to themselves I am a quack and that all this alternative medicine stuff is total bullshit. But that's not what usually happens, and very quickly they find themselves somewhere else, and in a different headspace. The most common thing a patient will say to me is, "Ya know when I first came here I really didn't believe in you". They say this as if they are getting ready to grant me this big approval, like I finally have earned something that they have been keeping from me. I always respond by saying to them , "It's ok, I believed in you and that's what made the difference." Oh ya, I love saying that to them. Bam! That really just defuses the whole thing and breaks the tension.

I run things a bit differently. First I don't take medical insurance. What? That's right. Every patient I see has to pay me out of their pocket for the services I perform. The cost varies. I mean what's it worth to stop the pain or better yet what's it worth to avoid surgery? So a typical back surgery costs, say 50K and has a 40% chance of success within five years. That means most people who have back surgery are either worse or just as bad five years after the operation. That's not such a good track record. If I can do better, and not just a little better but much, much better, don't I deserve at least the same amount of compensation? Well, how about this, how about I get 1/10 that fee, would that be reasonable? Most people don't think so, and therefore not everyone is a good candidate for my clinic. Let's say you don't have the money, but I

have decided we are a good match, then what? We can exchange services. I once ate at a local restaurant for a year and I have a beautiful art hanging in my home, there are no obstacles we cannot overcome if the chemistry is right.

It is incredible how people have a considerable problem associating money with medicine. There is just something innately disgusting about making money off other peoples pain and illness. I agree, but you know someone has to pay, let's just make it a big medical insurance company. Some nameless corporation that automatically sends the bills to pay for all the shit that didn't work. We can remove individual accountability, and then you can still tell your doctor he is the "greatest." It's a real mind trap, because the doctor makes lots of money despite not performing. Anytime the doctor even considers that maybe he is not doing his job, he quickly blames other people, usually the patients. After all if he was inadequate why doe she live in such a big house and drive such an expensive car. It's a broken system and I despise all of it. The overinflated price of essential medicine like antibiotics, the marked-up MRI's and the under the table kickbacks to promote dangerous new drugs. But most of all I hate the cold and inhumane way medicine is conducted.

The western system is flawed, but hopefully, things will change. Already we see signs of progress with the legalization of marijuana. Did you know that before the Harrison Narcotic Act of 1913 all drugs in America were legal? There was not even an age limit. Heroin, morphine,

opium, cocaine, amphetamine, hashish and marijuana were all inexpensive over the counter drugs. Only 3% of the population had a dependency problem at that time. There was no reason to pass that act. All drugs should be legal for adults, without exceptions. I say if someone commits a crime while under the influence of any drug and that includes alcohol just double the penalties. This would end all the drug gangs, most organized crime and empty the prisons overnight. You are being lied to my friends and your “great doctor” is in on it.

WESTERN VS EASTERN MEDICINE

Western medicine isn't even that old, it started in the 1200's and is based on the Greek system of healing. It is designed to save lives, but not promote health. It focuses on removing symptoms with little regard for long-term effects. Medications, injections, and surgery are the main tools of the trade. Today, more than ever western medicine is endorsed and supported by the billion dollars pharmaceutical industry. Still, despite so much promotion, it has a poor record of success in treating chronic, degenerative problems such as arthritis, spinal disc injuries and fibromyalgia. Like cutting weed but leaving the root, western medicine rarely eliminates the cause of the problem and symptoms usually return. When a western physician states you have a chronic problem what they are really saying is that they can't fix it. Remember the FDA will approve a drug with only a 30% success rate, which means it can fail 70% of the time and still be

approved for medical prescription. Consider that placebo can account for 10% or more positive outcome and you can assume that many of the prescription drugs you are counting on do nothing, and we are not even discussing the side effects.

In contrast, traditional Chinese medicine also known as the Emperor's medicine, is based on a very different system. In ancient times the Chinese physician's main job was to keep the Emperor alive. The doctor got paid as long as the Emperor was healthy, but when he was ill, the doctor never got paid. Impressive system, wouldn't you agree? What if you reimbursed your doctor for keeping you well? What if all of western medicine was focused on wellness instead of disease and what if your doctor was directly accountable for your health? Well, that's how I work the medicine and run my clinic.⁸ Oh and just one more thing, once I agree to accept a patient for the care, I tell them if they are unhappy with my efforts, results, staff... the smell of my breath, anything... they can just mention it at the front desk, and I will refund all their money. How many people do you know that stand behind their business like that, and how many are doctors? I do this because I never want to be labeled a hypocrite and yes some people take advantage of my kindness but surprisingly less than you would think. I may give back the money once or twice a year, that's all. Keep in mind I don't automatically accept everyone for care. I get to

⁸I am trained in traditional Chinese medicine and a certified fellow of the International academy of medical acupuncture (FIAMA).

decide who I treat, and I am a good judge of those cases and people that I can help. This policy helps me sleep at night, and despite my accountant's criticisms, I am always able to keep the doors open and have enough money left over for bird seed.

I will say one thing more concerning this easy-going attitude towards collections, don't misinterpret my kindness for weakness. I hold people accountable for their improvement. If you don't follow my rules or take things seriously, you are out. I have to see that you care more about your health than I do. Ungrateful Vampires get the stake.

LAST DANCE WITH THE SUN

I stop working between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon. I always make sure I leave before I feel like I have to go, if that makes sense? I can't give away all my energy; I need some for those I love and for myself. I exit the clinic quickly like I am running away from a fire. I usually forget things on my way out, but the key for me is not to stay and linger. If I do, I will never leave. Once I am in my car, it's over. I mean it is over, man. I take off my scrub top and drink down a bottle of spring water. The radio goes on, and it's John Mayer, "Love on the weekend" banging on the speakers. Or maybe a little Zeppelin, either way, I am in motion.

Now, where are you? Ah there you are, close to the horizon, now I see. You are almost finished and I have survived all your tricks, I am still here. I drive up to Lakes

Park, which is just around the corner from my clinic. I throw on a baseball cap and finish my water. “Hang on, hang on, I’m coming,” I say out loud and a Spanish lady with two small children stops to see who I am talking with. I smile and make like I am talking on my cell phone, which is turned off. The sun shines softly and quickly warms up my face. It’s not the same sun that would have burned me blood red earlier, no there is a sort of truce in its radiation now. We have both made it, two warriors and although we will start the entire dance again tomorrow, for now, we are like brothers. I stroll through the park, like someone taking their last walk before they die. I take note of every detail. I am unaware of the matrix, and I could care less about what time it is or how much traffic is building on the Cape Coral Parkway bridge. I can sense life all around me, the energy spinning and moving through me, communicating. A fish jumps and startles a Great Blue Heron. He looks up and notices me but does not fly away. We have met before. The sun backlights his beautiful plumage as one last display of power before it drops behind the tree line. The magic is fading now, and for the first time since I arrived at the park, I feel lonely. It’s time to go.

Driving home I am a million miles away from an office that no longer exists. I am not a doctor anymore and my focus shifts to other roles. I am a husband, a son, and a best friend. I am a step father mentoring a young man through medical school and I am also an estranged, biological father to two children from a failed first

marriage. An occultist, a yogi, a fisherman, and a lawn maintenance worker, these are just a few of my roles. All these archetypes demand my time and energy, but unfortunately, right now I have been drained.

In 15 minutes I arrive home and head straight to the backyard. I live on a canal, which is strange. I have only ever seen this sort of set up in pictures of Venice. I have a waterway that runs a few feet from my house. I can walk out of my kitchen and into a boat that I can drive out to the Gulf of Mexico in 30 minutes. All day long you can sit on my back lanai and watch mullet jump in the canal. There is nothing I can write that will describe the beauty, drop by some time and see it for yourself but don't come unannounced or you will be destroyed by the Goetic Deamon that is sworn to protect my life. He is a real and dangerous manifestation from the Lesser Keys of Solomon ⁹, and is hard to control under the best circumstances. You have been warned, this is not dramatic metaphor.

But today I am not interested in watching the fish. I need an energy boost before I take on my other assignments. I unwind the purple yoga strap that is binding my green colored Gaiam yoga matt and assume Vajrasana, the thunderbolt pose. I relax my entire body and begin fire breathing by rapidly contracting my diaphragm in a piston rhythm. I focus on an active

⁹ The Lesser Key of Solomon, also known as *Clavicula Salomonis Regis* or *Lemegeton*, is an anonymous grimoire on demonology.

exhalation and the vacuum created sucks the air back into my lungs. “Whoosh, whoosh,” the sound echoes throughout my body. Ten, thirty, fifty breaths and I begin to break a sweat. Sixty, seventy and finally one hundred breaths. I am hyperventilating as my brain gets saturated with oxygen enriched blood. My vision blurs, and I feel sweat forming on my chest. I take a prolonged, slow inhalation of fifteen seconds. I hold this breath as if it was the last one I will ever take, then slowly, taking at least twice as much time, I release it. The snake is waking up. Then again, another hundred fire breaths, and again and again. Before I am finished, I will complete several hundred of these specialized breaths that were created thousands of years ago to stimulate the Kundalini energy located in our pelvis to rise to the head. As it moves through my body, climbing up my spine, every cell comes to life. The Chakras are spinning again, and I feel nauseous. Enough. I roll into Gomukhasansa or Cow Face Pose; this is one of my favorites because it stretches my rotator cuff muscles which are a constant source of irritation for me. I hold each arm for a minute or so and then reward myself with a quick dip into the pool.

I notice some neighbors across the canal have been watching the entire performance. Many of the homes in my neighborhood are vacation rental properties. People come and go, most are Europeans, and this environment provides a constant supply of interesting people to meet. I wave to my audience, and they smile while one of the group claps. “If you liked that, you need to catch the

morning show,” I say under my breath. “I am here all week.” I float on my back staring up at the sunless sky. He’s gone now, my nemesis, he doesn’t even know how much work I have to do to just keep up with him. I know I can’t beat him no matter how hard I try, in the end, he’s going to win, but I am not going to make it easy for him. I chant under my breath, my favorite mantra, Om Name Shivaya.

I usually eat just one main meal a day. Usually, lunch and I have it prepared by a local Chef Brooke Wagenheim. I will still eat at other times, but it won’t be a prepared meal. I may have a bowl of oatmeal or an apple sometime before bed or some buckwheat bread and almond butter depending on my mood. The key is I don’t prepare anything or plan my life around the traditional dinner time meal. You will be amazed at how freeing it is when you break out of that three meals a day format. Now before I get into talking about food I want to preface it by saying if I get a Friday night dinner invitation from friends, I am going. It does not matter if it’s to the Outback Steakhouse or the Cheesecake factory, I will be there. Also, I will eat what everyone else is eating, good or bad. I will never, ever talk about my diet in public to my friends. The key is not what I do on a Friday night but what I do the other six days of the week and I believe that.

Personally, I enjoy a basic macrobiotic lifestyle that I have modified to be more American friendly. It goes against just about all the current health food trends but remember folks you have been lied to about everything.

You have heard low carb; high protein is the best way to eat. That wheat is the worst thing you can consume, and gluten causes hundreds of diseases, but that's not my experience. Innately you know that double bacon cheeseburger is going to kill you, just like it killed Dr. Atkins. A few months ago, my granddaughter, Alana complained to her primary doctor that she was having trouble with constipation. This MD briefly reviewed her diet, which by the way includes soda with just about every meal, lots of chicken fingers and packaged processed foods with almost zero vegetables and fruits. However, among the list of crap foods, Alana mentions that she likes bananas and so the MD proclaims, "Oh Alana you can't eat bananas because they cause constipation." So the guy's solution is a prescription for laxatives and removes bananas from the child's diet. Fortunately for Alana, her dad is a medical student at AT Still University and is studying to be an Osteopathic physician. Once she cleaned up the processed foods and added more fruit (including bananas!), her digestive troubles went away for good.

Like I mentioned I enjoy a macrobiotic lifestyle, but I am not defined by it. I will cycle my diet throughout the year depending on how I feel or what I want to create in my life. If I am developing my warrior energy I will eat lots of animal protein, 1-1.5 grams per pound of body weight and about 70 grams of fat per day. This will quickly add muscle to my body and increase my testosterone production. You maybe thinking wow, if that's possible why not just eat like this all the time? Well

you can but the problem is you will eventually unbalance. Like the saying goes, “The bright flame burns twice as fast.” So it is all about what you are wanting to achieve.

Foods can invoke change and should be used as medicine. I can determine which foods are useful for patients (and friends) based on when and where they were born. This is Taoist astrology and it is a wild ride that I will not take you on right now, but I will just say it gives better results than any blood testing or metabolic profiling I do in my clinic. Something no one talks about is the energies that foods have. Again this is another big topic that I can speak on later but let me say this, if you eat meat that has been slaughtered in a factory it will destroy your health. Likewise if you eat wild salmon or wild elk you will become aggressive and determined, just like these animals. If you are eating food prepared by negative, sickly people you will likewise absorb this energy. Everything counts in large amounts, just like Depeche Mode says.

CLASH OF CLANS

So I get home from work and do my yoga meditation, grab a swim and then it’s time for my other life. Yes, I have several lives that run independently from each other. After work, until about 9 o’clock I am first and foremost a best friend to my wife, Katherine. From the first time, we met it has been this way. Instantly I knew she was my mate. In my entire life, no one else has given me so much joy. She is vital to my existence like the air I breathe. Katherine is

100% Yin energy, as I am 100% Yang¹⁰. Together we balance the flow. Regardless if Katherine goes to work with me, which she does a few times a week, I always make sure to give us time between 6 and 9 each evening. We will take a light walk around the neighborhood, get a hot tub or maybe take a swim. Some evenings we will watch a movie or just go straight to bed¹¹. The idea is to remind each other that we matter more than each of us separately. It is more about the blend than the independent admiration, the worship of the Tao. Years before I met Katherine I followed Alister Crowley¹² and he taught me a lot about my limits, or I guess my ability to go way beyond what I thought were my limits. I spend these early years attending University in Ottawa and like Crowley was destructive and unbalanced. During that

¹⁰ Yin and yang is a concept of dualism, describing how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. In Chinese cosmology, the universe creates itself out of a primary chaos of material energy, organized into the cycles of Yin and Yang and formed into objects and lives. Yin is the receptive and Yang the active principle, seen in all forms of change.

¹¹ Our bed is only for sex or sleeping, we have a rule that there is no reading and no conversation in bed. For us the bedroom is sacred space.

¹² Alister Crowley was an English occultist, ceremonial magician, poet, painter, novelist, and mountaineer. He founded the religion of Thelema, identifying himself as the prophet entrusted with guiding humanity into the Æon of Horus in the early 20th century. A prolific writer, he published widely over the course of his life.

time I lived the way I thought a God would live but ultimately, like my mentor I discovered we were both wrong. You cannot survive on just Yang energy; there must be a balance. God is balanced; nature is balanced the universe is balanced. I never found that until I met Katherine. Through her, I can maintain the balance.

So on this particular evening, we decide on taking a walk around the neighborhood. As we make the corner a white pick up truck speeds past me almost colliding. I am startled because this is a quiet street and watch the truck wiz down the road. Suddenly it stops in the middle of the road and begins to back up. It travels about 200 yards before lining up straight across from my wife and I. The window of the truck lowers, and a red- faced white, haired man in his late 60's early 70's shouts out to me in a profoundly New Jersey accent (no offense to New Jersey, I love Bon Jovi), "You got a fuckin problem", he snarls at me. I am calm and do not feel threatened in any way after all this is my street, and I have done nothing wrong unless walking around the neighborhood dressed in Lululemon yoga pants while carrying a man purse is illegal. "Why don't you slow down? There are kids playing on this street?", I stated rather unattached. "Why don't you mind your own fuckin business?" he replied, and I can't say I was surprised by that response, but I had a good feeling at this point where this was going. I took out my iPhone and took a picture of the back of his truck's license plate. Although I was looking down and focused on my photography, I could hear the thud of his truck door

slamming. “You want to take a picture; you want to take a picture. We can settle this right now.”, He screamed in my face and with that puffed up his chest two to three times, it’s original size. He looked like one of those ugly birds that ruffle up his feathers to appear larger to its enemy to intimidate. I remember thinking that this guy had excellent chest expansion for an old guy and must have a strong diaphragm. But then, without warning, he bumped me. Yes, he struck me, quite hard with his inflated chest. I fell back a few inches but was still holding steady. We were only a few inches from each other. “Hey man, you can’t touch me like that, it’s assault. Do you want to get charged with assault?”. The angry bird responds, “I don’t give a fuck, you do what you want to do.” There is sweat beading on his brow, and I can sense his fists starting to clench. I am a few seconds away from getting a smack in my chops when I calmly stare into his eyes and perform the Jedi mind trick. “You go home now,” I instructed. “You don’t want any part of this.” And just like magic, he turns around and gets back into his truck and drives away. I say drives away but what I mean to say is he drives four houses down the street from my house where he lives. Yuck. What a way to ruin my sexy time with Katherine.

So we canned the walk and just go back home. Immediately we start evaluating what just happened, and I am looking at my camera footage. “Damn, that’s a disabled veteran’s license plate on that truck.” This guy a war hero. I decide to eat crow and let the whole thing slide. But then we hear some noise outside our front door. I look

out, and there's my war hero with 3 or 4 other people walking by my home pointing at my front door. Ya, this is going to stop right now. I call the police.

Within thirty minutes of the entire episode, a police officer is sitting in my living room and I am filling out the paperwork on an assault and battery charge. The officer reviews everything and agrees a crime was committed. I tell him that I do not want to press charges, but he needs to see this guy. My war hero needs to chill out. The officer agrees. Later I get a text message from officer Bianco saying everything is ok and that my veteran will not be a problem anymore. I like to think I saved this guy from doing something stupid later on. I respect the universe, and I help maintain the balance that does not mean I love everyone blindly or turn the other cheek. It's about balance, Yin, and Yang but sometime you just can't let people fuck with you and your family.

This is America, it's the greatest country in the world, we are free and proud, but the paradox is that freedom is for everyone. I understand that some people think it's only about their freedom but it does not work that way. If you want freedom, then it's for all of us, the blacks, the homosexuals, the Muslims and even the Canadian immigrants like myself. We all get the freedom as long as we agree to follow the set rules. That's the rub. It does not work any other way. It's all or nothing, but that also means that everyone has to respect each other. I have no problem with other people living and loving anyway they choose as long as they respect all Americans. I appreciate my

angry veteran for the service he gave my country, but that does not give him the right to disrespect me or someone that may not agree with his personal views, whether political or religious. See that's what real freedom is about, so hopefully, now he knows that as well. So many people have no understanding about why they feel the way they do about their lives. For most they have been told what to think and what to say. I find the common underlying emotion is not wisdom but fear for most people.

Pretty dramatic evening for Katherine and myself, so we decide to have a glass of Malbec and sit out back by the fire pit. A few other neighbors have the same idea, and you can see fire pits lit up and down both sides of the canal. I see it's a full moon tonight and so suddenly everything starts to make sense to me. The moon controls the Yin energy, and the sun controls the Yang, tonight everyone is soaking up the moon's glow and chilling out. By 9:30 I am getting ready for the final meditation of the day. Tonight I decide on flooding my body with some terpenes¹³ to assist with the upcoming journey.

SWEET SWEAT

The final stop on my daily routine is a sauna followed with evening meditation. I take a 20 minute infrared sauna

¹³ **Terpenes** are aromatic compounds found in many plants, though many people commonly associate them with cannabis because cannabis plants contain high concentrations of them. These aromatic compounds create the characteristic scent of many plants, such as cannabis, pine, and lavender, as well as fresh orange peel.

every night before bed. Most saunas are toxic and made in China with pressboard and glue, when heated they release poisons that can make you very sick. After lots of research I bought a sauna from Sauna Ray, a Canadian company that uses solid wood boards and special ceramic heaters. I do 130 degrees Fahrenheit and constantly wipe the sweat off my body using clean white hand towels so that I do not reabsorb the toxins after I sweat it out. The sauna detoxes and prepares my body for sleep. There are many studies that suggest regular sauna use increases your chances of dying from pathological illness. A combination of shock proteins and immune response activates many different reactions that seem to prolong life. If you are interested in the “science” check out researcher Rhonda Patrick and her website www.foundmyfitness.com, she has all the answers.

It is important to remember that if you are very toxic all that bad stuff gets released into your blood stream and it is beneficial to take a binder before you sauna. Binders prevent the redistribution of poisons so you can eliminate them naturally. Activated charcoal is a good binder, and I cover this extensively in my book, **Heal Yourself: The 7 Steps To Innate Healing**. The sauna fires off my parasympathetic nervous system and burns 300 calories while I toast up. Usually I listen to music and stretch out. The sauna is on a timer in case I fall to sleep or pass out, which has happened. After the sauna I take a quick jump in my pool to rinse off, 5-10 minutes, drink some water and then get ready for the evening meditation session.

Night is different from day and likewise I have very different goals for my body. While daytime is all about activation, the evening is about powering down. It is an ideal time to focus healing and repair. All the lights in my bedroom have red LED bulbs so that after dark there is no blue light contamination. This helps with the natural release of melatonin, a hormone that helps the body sleep and heal.

Now I do the inner smile meditation I mentioned earlier. I assume a relaxed seated position on my yoga mat that is located next to my bed and in front of a full length mirror. As I slow down my breath I stare into the mirror at my image. The red lights help keep my pupils dilated and within a few minutes I can see a glowing aura around my body. Anyone can see this, the native American Indians called it soft eyes. You just relax your gaze and allow the eyes to shift slightly out of focus. Now I am ready for the inner smile meditation. I see myself smiling and happy in the mirror and I gently close my eyes and bring that feeling of happiness down into my body into my heart. I visualize my heart, red and strong pumping blood throughout my body. I fill it with love and joy breathing out hatred, and impatience. The heart is represented by the elemental energy of fire. The small intestines are also connected to this energy and I will frequently feed them both as I meditate. Next, I move my awareness to the stomach and spleen. These are represented with a yellow, earth energy.

I breath in trust and fairness as I exhale out anxiety. Within several breaths I can feel my emotions improve. As I breath I move to the lungs which are also connected to the large intestines, white energy, traditionally representing metal in 5 element medicine. The lungs take in courage and release sadness. Kidneys and bladder are next, they are a blue, water energy that accepts calmness and releases fear. Based on my taoist chart, I am very weak in kidney energy and as a result I lack calmness and gentleness. Most of my actions are therefore dominated by fear. I spend a longer than normal time here, building the kidneys gentle blue energy and exhaling all my fears. Finally, the green wood elemental energy is addressed as I focus my imagination on my gallbladder and liver. I breath in kindness and generosity and release anger. Now I relax deeper and allow my entire body to vibrate with total ecstasy. It is important to really feel these emotions. I settle all my attention to my belly button, a place known as the Dan Tien. This is known as the Alchemical Cauldron and it is where all the body's energy is stored. I focus a few more breaths into the Dan Tien and slowly open my eyes.

This entire meditation requires a strong imagination and knowledge of where the various organs are located but if done consistently it produces complete control over your emotions. The Taoists believe that all our emotions are created in our organs and must be balanced for a healthy life. I get up off the yoga mat and go to the bathroom, where I brush my teeth and then head for bed.

NIGHT TIME SECRETS

Now let me ask you an important question, when you go to sleep and you have a dream, who is it that is watching the dream? All this time you have forgotten who you really are. You came here by choice and became this body to experience life but you fell in love with this reality so much you forgot what you were. It's not your fault because the physical world is very intoxicating (even for a God), love, hate, joy, sexuality, these are all powerful experiences and strong anchors, but alas this is not you. You are not the person you see in the mirror and you are not the voice inside your head, that is just a false identity that your body has created so you can make sense of your surroundings. This is the most important step in becoming elevated, recognize you are not the voice in your head, but the one who is hearing it. It's true that all these years you have been stuck inside this body (trapped?) with an unreasonable, emotional, maniac and all this time you thought it was you. This voice makes you feel that you are in control of the world and constantly recreates the outside world inside yourself because reality is too much to handle. Which is no problem except it's not true. The voice bends and twists reality based on previous experiences and it decides on interpretations many of which are not correct. You cannot trust the voice in your head, you need to live with it but remember you are not it. This is the greatest, scared truth you will ever learn. You are not the voice.

These are not easy concepts to accept, but once you understand that you are the witness it will open doors to enlightenment. The easiest way to start learning who you really are is through dream work. When we sleep our physical bodies power down and we recharge, you lose connection to your body but yet you do not lose connection with your consciousness. For most people they report dreams are like watching a movie, and this is a great introduction to the witness ideology. Paying attention to your dreams and eventually exploring lucid dreaming (the ability to become conscious of the dream state during sleep) can be of great benefit to understanding the nature of your true self.

Stephen LeBarge is an American psychologist specializing in the study of lucid dreaming. His book, **Exploring The World Of Lucid Dreaming**, has become the standard for this type of psychological work and I recommend it highly. Stephen gives various techniques that are effective in achieving a conscious awareness during the dream state that allows the subject the ability to then maintain lucid consciousness while manipulating the dreamscape. So for example, during a dream you realize that you are in a dream (become lucid) and then decide to grow wings and fly to the North Pole to visit Santa Claus. Instead of waking up you proceed to have this dream and experience all the wonderful feelings of flying high above the ground and the childlike excitement of meeting Santa Claus at the North Pole. This ability opens up many doors for exploration of consciousness and just plain fun!

We must remember that the body does not know the difference between what is real and what is fantasy. Emotions felt are registered as real. This has big implications and suggests that we should really be careful about what we watch on TV or our inability of letting go of past traumas. Constantly exposing ourselves to scary movies may not be good for our long term mental health, but likewise if we can create a positive feeling, even one that is false, like having just won the lotto, research suggests that our body will accept that as a real event and begin to work subconsciously towards fulfilling that experience. Dr. Joe Dispenza goes into depth about this process in his book, **Becoming Supernatural**. He suggests that it is possible to completely transform your reality (heal severe illness, end poverty...) by rehearsing the positive emotions that the completion of the event would create, before they have happened. Positive thinking is not enough, it is the emotion that is the secret sauce to manifesting.

So I am lying in my bed, on my back which is the very best way to sleep and I start to power down my body. I begin by focusing on my feet, imagining a warm shadow moving up my legs. As the shadow passes over my body, the area relaxes and disassociates. I focus on my breathing, long steady inhalations with extended pauses and then exhalations that are at least twice as long. Everything starts to slow down; everything begins to die. I picture a scene, the wind is softly blowing on my face. I concentrate on the smell of the grass and the feel of the cold soil against my bare feet. I can hear birds singing and

as I look down at my hands I see that I am wearing leather gloves. I look up and I am in a large field, I am dreaming, and I am entirely conscious.

As I stare into the sky, I begin to levitate, but I am not able to control my ascent, so I decide to grow wings out of my back. Big white feathered wings like you would see on an angel. That's better; now I am flapping high above the trees, soaring like a proud eagle. I can feel the sensations of flight just like when you are on a roller coaster. I know it's a dream but it does not matter, the feelings are the same. I know exactly what it is like to fly because I have experienced it. Everything is hyper-real, all my senses are firing, and I am overcome with pure joy. I start to overthink the scene and I begin to lose my awareness, using one of LeBarge's techniques I quickly regain control of the dream state. I decide to fly as high as I can, up into the clouds, out of the atmosphere, into the solar system beyond the galaxy, beyond all galaxies. Suddenly, I am in a bright white place, and I am not alone. Someone, or something is with me but there is no fear only love. I see an infinite amount of small bright lights in a sea of indigo. Some lights are rising upwards and getting brighter while some are sinking downwards and becoming dimmer. Brightness from above is descending to the rising lights and tethering them, pulling them up. Darkness is ascending from below and likewise is anchoring the dimming lights and moving them down. A voice comes from the presence, "These are Souls, each determining it's fate".

Although it was never vocalized I was given the follow explanation. *As we focus on light we become more light and ascend. When we get to a certain place higher energies take notice and they connect with us to guide us higher. If we focus on darker energies we descend, and likewise darker forces connect to assist us in our descent. But the key is that light and dark are not good and evil, they are just energies and both are useful. The balancing of these forces, the achievement of Equilibrium is the ultimate secret of the Universe.*

I turn around to see my companion, expecting to behold an Angel (or Demon) but instead I find myself lying in my bed. I grab my iphone and record the dream into my dream diary because I know I will remember nothing in the morning. What does it mean? Maybe nothing, maybe everything, I don't know but it sure makes sleep time a lot more exciting. I step outside unto my lanai and recline on one of the loungers. The night is quiet and still. The moon is waiting for me, shining its Yin energy. I look across the water facing east and a fish jumps. For some reason I am thinking about Moses and his encounter at the burning bush. Moses asks God who he is and he responds, *eh eh user eh eh*, which translates, "I will become what I choose to become." It seems so obvious to me, am I the only one who sees it? Use dream work to unlock many answers about who you really are, in time you will start to remember and then things will get very interesting. Don't be afraid, and remember it's all in your head

When you go to sleep at night who is it that dreams? You are not the objects you look at, instead, it is you who is looking. Consciousness is the highest word you will ever utter, there is nothing deeper than consciousness. Consciousness is pure awareness. Consciousness is who is Observing. You are not human, just watching one, don't ever forget this essential truth. Deep within us there is a connection to the divine and you can consciously decide to connect with that instead of with the body. This begins the natural transformation to the spiritual. You can know the nature of God by looking into the transformed self. This is a direct experience. The lower vibrations will remain but you will no longer identify with them. As you let go you will drift upward. You do this not by reaching for spirit but by letting go of the rest. You don't claim to understand what is happening, you just know that as you go further and further it is more beautiful. You need actual experience to know God, there is no other way.

I realize these are heavy concepts and I would like to redirect you towards the teachings of my mentor Michael Singer. His teacher was Paramahansa Yogananda, but Michael does a much better job of distilling Yogananda's teachings into usable pieces. Read **Untethered Soul** and **Living Untethered**, these books will change your life and everyone who comes into contact with you. For those who demand references, do the corresponding course available at the **Self Realization Fellowship**. You will receive a course module every 2 weeks, for 18 weeks for a nominal fee.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EARLY YEARS

I was born in the city of St. John's on the island of Newfoundland, Canada. A place known affectionately as "The Rock." St. John's is the oldest city in North America¹⁴. The island of Newfoundland has more history than the entire United States. At Jelly Fish Cove (L'Anse aux Meadows) you can still see the mounds built by Viking sailors over a thousand years ago. The Rock is an



exceptional place from which extraordinary people are crafted. I am no exception, although there are many like me. European blood runs thick with Newfoundlanders, pale skin, blue eyes and reddish hair abound. Most natives can trace themselves beyond Ireland and England to ancient Nordic origins. These are Philosopher

Friedrich Nietzsche's, "Blond Beasts". I am not from Africa, nor are my Ayran ancestors. I don't share their bloodline or their Gods and I never have.

Newfoundland only joined Canada in 1949, and most islanders feel disconnected from the mainland. Many "Newfies" still promote the "Republic of Newfoundland" and reject the Canadian union. I was always a

¹⁴ Its name has been attributed to the Nativity of John the Baptist, when John Cabot was believed to have sailed into the harbor in 1497 and to a Basque fishing town with the same name.

Newfoundlander, who lived in Canada and not the other way around.

As a child I was healthy and never sick, my constitution forged by the Rocks harsh weather and unforgiving environment. Everyday rain, drizzle, and fog was the forecast regardless of the season. Being the most easterly point in North America, St. John's is constantly abused as the cold Labrador Current crashes into the Gulf Stream. The results of this meteorological combat is horrible weather. In St. John's the summers are measured in weeks, not months. I grew up in this unforgiving climate playing rugby against sailors, scuba diving with humpback whales and jigging codfish in Conception Bay.

Not much grows in Newfoundland except a few hardy vegetables. The soil is rich enough, but there's no sunlight, and consequently, most of the population suffer from Vitamin D deficiency. Most food items are imported, and fresh fruit is a luxury. Still, in spite of these challenges, I flourished doing good in school, excelled in sports and succeeding at everything blown my way. My family operated a large building supply company and several other associated businesses. I grew up wealthy, privileged and enjoyed a comfortable childhood surrounded by sharp objects.

It was always assumed I would take over the family business but instead, being young and rebellious I had other ideas. I dabbled as a photographer taking correspondence classes with the New York Institute of Photography. I grew my hair long got an earring and

moved into my apartment when I was 18. Fun times. Over the next few years, I screwed around, eventually following a girlfriend (Julia) up to Ottawa. She worked as a beer sales representative for Labatts, I was unemployed but certain I would become a famous photographer. Within three months of moving, everything had changed. I found myself alone, broke and far away from family and friends. My father gave me an ultimatum; he would only help me out if I went to school. Out of desperation, I started attending Carleton University. I had no idea what I was doing in school, but at least my rent was being paid.

While at Carleton I eventually settled on studying literature and philosophy. It was in one of those classes I met an attractive girl who seemed quite taken with the fact that I was from Newfoundland. When I asked her to join me for coffee, she declined, “That’s my boyfriend over there waiting for me.”, She said. I decided to turn the whole, awkward situation, into a positive one by inviting both her and the boyfriend for coffee. Over the next year, we all became very close, and I would say at one point we were all best friends. Unfortunately, my interest in the attractive girl from English class never diminished and eventually everyone had to choose sides. She went with me and Christian lost his girlfriend. It was a difficult and confusing time for everyone because we really did all like each other. But I was in love with Danielle and that was the end of my friendship with Christian. But don’t feel too bad for Christian, he made out ok and eventually became a very famous Canadian author (Cube People).

So after a lengthy and uncomfortable courtship, composed of innuendos, deceit and some destruction of physical objects, she left her boyfriend and moved in with me. We celebrated the commitment with matching angel tattoos, one her back (Gabriel) and one my right shoulder (Michael).

There were no classes over the summer months, and we decided to visit my family in St. John's. I found a cheap apartment above Fred's Record Store on Duckworth Street and Danielle built her nest. These were exciting times fueled with passion and the carefree island lifestyle. About 30 days into this adventure Danielle was pregnant, and things changed dramatically. Of course there was stress but we both were happy and in love. There was no question in our minds that we would marry and together, raise our child on the Rock. University would have to wait, we had a new life to create.

This was a magical time for me; I remember spending many afternoons walking along the stone beaches of Middle Cove. These were lazy days dreaming of becoming a father and growing old with my new bride. One day while relaxing and daydreaming on the beach I felt a presence with me. It was a young energy and distinctively male. I looked at my wife and I knew we were having a son.

We decided to call our son Pilate, from a character we both admired in Mikhail Bulgakov's, *The Master and Margarita*, the very book I was reading when I met my son's mother in Russian literature class. I picked up a

smooth beach stone and christen it, "You're Pilate," I said. My wife and I kept that little rock on our fireplace mantle until my son was born nine months later. Pilate kept his name for precisely three days before we caved into pressures from both sides of our families and changing his name to Michael, but of course he was always Michael.

My son was beautiful and healthy but I was a 23-year old father with no way to support my family. My Dad sensed that I needed help and offered me a job running one his shopping centers on the mainland. Without much hesitation, I packed up my new family and set out for Amherst, Nova Scotia. I was excited to be starting over in a new place, full of energy, and I was highly motivated to prove myself to the world. The only problem was that I knew absolutely nothing, about absolutely everything.

As the new mall manager, I gain immediate respect (although not earned) because of my father's reputation. The local community reached out a helping hand and made us all feel welcomed. The owner of the Chinese food restaurant in town was also the real estate guru, and he offered to rent me one of his homes until I found something more permanent. I quickly became part of every community group and gained many friends including the new bank manager. One day over coffee he approached me concerning getting a loan. "Why you renting from that Chinaman?" he demanded, "I'll give you a home loan, and you can get a decent place to raise your family." I remember thinking it was weird that he said, "Chinaman" but it still sounded good to me. My banker

friend was new and wanting to build up his loan portfolio; I was in the right place at the right time. Later I found out he had been involved in a bad business deal with my Chinese landlord, thus the gross racism. Anyways, I found a beautiful farmhouse in Sackville, New Brunswick, a small university town 20 minutes from the shopping mall. It was a fixer-upper, but the big farmhouse provided a great environment to raise a family, and it was right on the campus of Mount Allison University. What a dream come true, we grew our vegetables and made friends with our eccentric university professor neighbors. I drove to work in the morning while my young wife explored the town and its secrets. There was a guy who looked like Jesus that delivered handmade bread every Wednesday. Instead of grocery stores, we had a farmers market. I chopped and stored wood in the cellar for the winter, and Michael grew, safely and happily playing with butterflies in his backyard garden.

On afternoon I was playing outside with my son in our back yard and suddenly I felt a presence. It was a strange feeling like I was being judged. I could sense it was another young soul, but this time it was very different from Michael, this was a strong female energy of pure Yin. It was watching me, analyzing and judging me. Suddenly it was gone. That night I asked my wife to take a home pregnancy test, and no surprise we were having another child. Of course I had already met her on the porch earlier that day.

Born at the Sackville hospital early in the afternoon I first saw her little head from behind, covered in snow white hair, then quickly she turned, and I saw her big blue eyes staring at me, unafraid and demanding. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of this angelic creature, and yet I felt fear. This was not Michael; this was Gabriel, the messenger. Just as Gabriel delivered the message of Christ's birth, this small creature that I held with one hand had, would in fact have a message for me, but it would take many years in the future for it to be revealed.

I gently cut the umbilical cord and released her into my wife's arms. The prophecy was completed. It is interesting to note the tattoo on my wife's back, done many years before we had our first child, was that of the Archangel Gabriel (Gabrielle) and on my right arm I had a tattoo of the Archangel Michael done at the same time. I sort of felt like we had pre ordered these two children, at least that's how I like to think of it. I remember leaving the hospital, unsure of everything. In retrospect I was afraid and unprepared. I went home without my wife and sat outside with my son Michael. He played in his garden while I sat in the sun and rested. Life was now complete, the mall management job allowed a lot of extra time, and I started developing hobbies, one was martial arts. I began training in my backyard, and before long I attracted a group of university students that would come over on weekends workout. I had practiced traditional forms of martial arts in the past, but they all seemed to be lacking continuity. Judo, for example, was great for fighting on the

ground, boxing had powerful punches, Muay Thai was all kicks and elbows. Each system had strengths but when taken out of its environment was exposed to weaknesses. I became bored with the traditional martial art systems and started to combined techniques. This was more than 20 years ago, before the current trend of mixed martial arts (MMA) and ultimate fighting events (UFC). By taking a bit of boxing and blending it with kicking and wrestling, I created an effective system of self-defense that was more useful than each technique when used on its own. A style that was not bound by any one system but instead dependent entirely on flowing with the opponent. I named it Budoshin Jitsu, which translates as the way of the warrior. I didn't know it at the time, but it was this out of the box thinking that would eventually allow me to create a more effective system of medicine to heal my patients. Using the best techniques from many different approaches to form an entirely new and more effective strategy was first made famous by martial art legend Bruce Lee. Although I no longer practice martial arts, Bruce Lee's philosophy has made a serious impact the way I operate today, "Absorb what is useful," Bruce would say.

Before long I had quite a following of students, and we moved from my garage to the local YMCA. Budoshin Jitsu became quite an attraction even getting a few articles in the local newspaper. At its peak, Budoshin Jitsu had about 30 students and trained three times a week. I developed everything from the ground up, organizing a complete system of colored belt ranks and certification with the help

of my good friend Craig Sooley, an engineer by trade. We had university students, lawyers, correctional officers (and likely some criminals), all training side by side. We played old school rock music during workouts, and someday we had lunch on the picnic tables outside the YMCA after class. I remember seeing guys with zero ability turn into athletic, decent fighters in a few short weeks. There are many stories from these classes and I learned as much from my students as they did from me. Matt was a former kick boxer who constantly challenged my skills, and on occasion knocked me down. Woody was a good looking blond haired surfer dude with a glass nose (it would usually bust open and bleed before the end of each class), Aaron and his brother were electricians who became excellent grapplers. But there was a guy who stuck out among the university students, his name was Derek Bishop. Derek had a hard core appearance, shaved head, goatee and motorcycle jacket but in truth he was a very nice guy albeit not very coordinated. By the end of the training Derek had become a pretty decent fighter, and also a good friend. We had many talks and good times. I often think about Derek and the rest of the crew and I hope they are all doing well.

My journey into martial arts only lasted five years, but it sparked an interest in me to learn human anatomy. As I struggled to understand the biomechanics of joint locks, knockout strikes, and nerve pressure points, I fell in love with human anatomy. Since I lived across the street from the local university, I had access to a huge amount of

reference material. Soon, I was spending more time studying medical textbooks, less time teaching martial arts and no time managing the shopping mall. Then the bottom fell out of my perfect world. While I was living the perfect life in Sackville things back in St. John's were taking a very different turn. The family business that was started by my great, great grandfather Bela was failing. A combination of mismanagement, or perhaps a new goods and services tax (GST) provided the lethal combination. Although the prognosis was terminal my Dad never gave up, not initially. He restructured the entire operation and continued the business long enough to make sure many of his creditors got paid, something that most people in his position would not have done. In the end, it would be a personal bankruptcy for my dad of 35 million. My father considered this a good time to retire, he moved off the island to Halifax, Nova Scotia and began pursuing his lifelong dream of being a professional stock car driver. Quickly all the companies were dismantled, and I was out of a job. I got a call from a bank saying they now owned the mall and I was let go.

The stakes were high for me at this time in my life considering I had a family to support, I couldn't be out of work long and I had no real savings. I used an old contact from my father and hit them up for a job. It was a drywall company in Moncton, New Brunswick. This was the opposite of the mall manager position. These were long hours with a highly competitive 100% commission based salary. It was kill or be killed every day. I remember

when I complained about not having any leads my boss threw a phone book at me and said go to work. Slowly I pulled my head above the waterline by selling to some of my dad's old contacts, but most people hung up on me, and those that became clients demanded most of my commission because of my family's history. I can tell you at this point I was in a hard place and getting desperate.

I remember every day driving through the university campus on my way to work thinking, "Those lucky kids, walking around drinking coffee and not having to go to work, what a great life. That should be me". Then one day on my way to sell drywall (fucking drywall), I turned off the highway and into the university admissions parking lot. I was wearing a cheap grey suit and carrying a burgundy colored briefcase I found in a thrift shop. "I want to go to school," I begged the receptionist. "Why?" She asked me. "I need a better job," I replied without hesitation. "That's a good answer," she smiled at me and walked me over to an academic counselor. I spent about 4 hours in admissions that morning filling out paperwork and drinking coffee. Everyone was drinking coffee in admissions, cup after cup, I was so high I forgot about time.

My work had called my wife wondering if I was sick because I had never been late. No one knew where I was and the assumption was that I had been in an accident because it was the middle of winter and the roads were nasty. I guess I had the whole town looking for me because when I pulled into my driveway around noon, there was a

police car parked in my spot. My wife was standing out in the snow looking very upset and pointing at me as I got out of my car. I recognized the cop, "Hi, Charlie!" I said to the officer, who lived a few doors down from us. "Where you been Steve?", Charlie said. "I am going to school man!", I broadcasted with a big grin and a thumbs up hand gesture. "I am going to school!". My happiness was intensified with a near toxic level of caffeine I had ingested at the school's admissions office. I was so happy and so high, but soon it would become apparent not everyone was so thrilled. Among the many things not worked out was how I was going to pay for all this. I had a mortgage on the farmhouse, two children being raised by a stay at home wife and no savings. Things were going to get very interesting and twisted very soon.

So I am now a full-time student at Mount Allison University, "Mount A" majoring in biology. And I am drinking coffee all the time, and I am super hyper and high all the time, and I am walking to class every day, just like the kids I used to see on my way to work each day. I have a backpack, not a briefcase and I am wearing jeans, jeans man and I have not shaven in maybe two days, and no one cares, and I am convinced I have died and gone to heaven. But there is one little problem; there is no way I can afford to do this, and even to be able to buy groceries for my family, since no one in my family now is working I stopped paying the bank three months ago. If you are ever in a similar situation I would like to advise you not to end

paying your mortgage; banks get very pissed off when you stop paying them, as does the electrical company.

I get a call from my banker friend in Amherst, “Steve what’s going on? Your behind on the mortgage payment.” I respond immediately, “Oh yes I know, I went back to school, and I don’t have any money.” “Steve if you don’t pay we will take your house,” the banker threatens. “Ok,” I respond, “I understand, how much time do I have?”. “Maybe a few months at most,” the banker sadly replied. And that was it, the end of everything I was calling my life. Within a few days, my wife convinced her mother to buy a one-way plane ticket for her and our two children. They were flying back to Ontario to stay with her mother. There was no mistake here, my wife was leaving me and she was taking the kids with her. She had enough of everything, the late nights out drinking beer with students half my age, the lack of responsibility to pay our mortgage and the lack of attention to her and the children. There were no excuses for my failures, I never even tried to save my marriage, I just let it go.

Now I was living alone in a large empty home with no heat trying to finish the final few weeks of my school term. How was I going to last three more years and then, what would I do with a damn biology degree anyway? I was consumed with guilt and seriously considered quitting school. Everyone told me to get my drywall sales job back except for my father. Dad knew I was interested in biology and anatomy and thought maybe I could do something in the medical field. You see he recently injured his back and

had a good experience with a local Chiropractor. “You ever hear of Chiropractic?”, dad asked me. “They are doctors who used their hands to fix people instead of drugs, and I think they make good money.” I started looking into chiropractic, and the more I learned, the more interested I became. Chiropractic seemed like the ultimate healing profession, sort of like the Budoshin Jitsu of medicine. This was the connection for me.

Things started to clear up a bit, and I thought maybe I could get out of this mess after all. People talk about the Holy Spirit or divine intervention, that’s fine, I respect that, but that was not my experience. I had been turned on, just like a power switch. I saw my entire future and how everything up to this moment was leading me to this place. The best Chiropractic school in North America was located just outside of St. Louis, Missouri. I applied and was accepted to Logan College of Chiropractic. I sold my car to raise enough money for the move and as I drove the rental van through Ontario making my way to St. Louis I stopped by to see my wife and children, we were still married, but I figured the relationship was over. Just thought I would see them one more time before going to America. It turned out that we all missed each other more than expected and without making any promises it was suggested that perhaps they would join me in St. Louis once I got everything established. I was hopeful for that second chance.

I drove the bridge across the Mississippi River as the sun was settling on the St. Louis arch. Never in my life

had I seen such a massive city. I was overwhelmed and brought to tears. I couldn't believe I was here, 2700 miles from the Rock. I drove through the city to a small suburb called Town and Country, that's where I had arranged to rent an apartment close to the Chiropractic college. When I arrived at the apartment complex it was after 11 pm, and everything was closed, so I slept in the moving van outside the administration office. Early the next morning I was waiting when the rental staff arrived. Immediately there were some problems. I needed a significant amount of money to pay the deposit, first and last month rent and a bunch of other fees I never considered. My student loan money was not due to arrive for a few more weeks, and I had about five hundred dollars left in my bank account. Also, to make things even worse my student visa was still in transit, and I had not established any local bank account or anything else you would need to rent an apartment. There was no way they would rent to me. The moving van, loaded with a farmhouse of furniture was due back tomorrow morning. I walked back to the truck, devastated and then I heard a voice, "Hey Steve, your Canadian right?", a spunky little girl was running out of the administrative office towards me. "Yes, from Newfoundland," I mumbled. "My fiancé is Canadian, and he is graduating from Logan Chiropractic College next month, we are moving to Canada, come back inside I have a great idea for you.", She waved her hand and pointed towards the office. Hope is a powerful thing; it's all you need to get through any crisis. I was thinking, man if you

let me back inside that building I will have to find me a place to live because I am not leaving.

It was a simple idea to help everyone involved. There was an apartment being renovated that would not be ready for about a month. It was being painted, new carpet laid, that sort of thing. I could stay there in exchange for helping with the renovation, and when my loan money showed up, I could move into my original apartment. Not sure that was legal, but I moved my stuff in. I walked to Walmart, where I bought some groceries and got a bicycle for under one hundred dollars. The bike had one of

those cheap wicker baskets and a light that connected to my front tire; it was a kids bike. Now had a place to sleep and transportation, things were looking up.

Before I could get accepted to Logan Chiropractic school I had to first do four months of pre med course work at Meramec community college. No big deal except that the school was 10 miles from my apartment and it started at 8 am. I would be biking 20 miles a day spending a couple of hours on the road. I did this for one week and then on Friday I pushed my bike into organic chemistry class and said, "I need a ride to class, I live in Town and Country, that's 10 miles from here. I am biking every day. It's impossible. If anyone drives me, I will pay for gas, and you can have this bike." This long-haired guy from Wisconsin stands up and says, "Hey man my names Michael Gillespie; you got a deal." It was such a good day for me and the beginning of a wonderful friendship between Mike and myself. He wrote the forward in my

first book *Heal Yourself*, and seriously Mike saved my life that day, without his help I would have quit before even making it to Chiropractic school.

Within a few weeks of settling in my mother in law drove the family down to what they assumed was perfect living conditions. To her disapproval, I was still in the unfinished apartment, with no carpet and I had no transportation, except Mike Gillespie. They were not impressed. There was a lot discussion about them going back to Canada, but in the end, my wife and kids stayed. The very next day my loan money arrived, and the first thing I did after paying the apartment complex was bought a Little Tikes wagon to move the kids and groceries from the store to the apartment. Although it was only a few blocks away, people would pull over to the side of the road and ask if they could give us a ride when they saw the wagon full of groceries and a kid or two sitting on top. Somehow we got through it, and my wife's parents leased us a small car which helped out dramatically. We moved into the new apartment, and I got ready to start Chiropractic school.

CHIROPRACTIC SCHOOL

Logan College was intense because instead of a regular university program where you are tested once or twice a semester, Logan checked students every week. Many of these exams were oral, and they were conducted without notice in front of the entire class. Professor Ellis would ask, “Mr. Stokes could you please retrace the biological

pathway a red blood cell takes as it leaves and then returns to the heart... Mr. Stokes? Please sir, could you stand up and address the class?" Insane stress. There was nowhere to hide, and if you didn't know your stuff, you would get called out. Frequently students would break down in class and have panic attacks. Looking back it was complete madness, and I have no idea how I got through it.

I attended school from 9 am to 4 pm and then studied from 7 pm until midnight. Try to balance this with any family life, and end so did my marriage. Later I learned this sort of collateral damage was common. More than 30% of my married classmates had a divorce while at Logan College. No one should have to choose between career and family. As it turned out I never had to because my wife decided for me. I remember that night; she was going to the student clinic to get her adjustment from a senior student. At the time I never noticed that she was so dressed up. The appointment was at 6 pm, and I got the kids dinner while she was gone. After a few hours I noticed she had not come home, soon it was almost midnight when she walked in the door. I started ranting and jumping around, "Where were you!" I screamed. "I went for coffee with Ryan after the treatment. Wait a minute, what? Was she with Ryan, is that what I am hearing? At this point I had her backed up against the wall, then calmly, coldly, almost whispering she said: "I am leaving you." I remember the very next thing that happened and I will for the rest of my life, I said: "You

can't leave me, you love me?". She looked me right in the eyes, fearlessly her square jaw locked, this was the last time I would ever be so close to her, I remember the smell of her perfume, Escada. She was never more beautiful than at that exact moment, pressed up against the wall defiant and unafraid of me, confident in her next move. She opened her mouth, the same one I had kissed thousands of times and said, "I have not loved you for two years." And just like that, it was over. I collapsed, speechless and defeated. There is no coming back from that, no way to salvage anything, just the undeniable feeling of emptiness and failure. I lost everything; I lost them, and I lost myself.

I spent the night at my friend's house; I would drop back to the apartment tomorrow to take the kids to the zoo. It was agreed upon. The next morning I got up early, had breakfast and made my mind up I would see the kids and sort things out with my wife. As I approached our apartment, I noticed the front door was open and inside everything is gone. They were long gone, at least halfway back to Canada. I looked around in the silence, no more kids, no more wife... what the hell am I going to do now? I remember that Lou Reed song, Pale Blue Eyes, "Sometimes I feel so happy, sometimes I feel so sad, sometimes I feels happy, but mostly you just make me mad."

God can destroy us in two ways, He kills; or He simply refrains from giving us life. My life was taken, and burned in the fires of my ego, Gevurah ¹⁵(geb-boo-rah).

Ah shit! What a mess I had on my hands. To say it was a hard time for me would be a gross understatement. All this happened the week before final exams and I knew if I never got myself together I would fail out of school. I stayed with friends and as the saying goes, “I did what I had to do” in order to pass my exams. A dangerous combination of stimulants and unethical behavior pulled me through, but barely. I would really need to get myself together if I was going to make this work. The pain and self doubt was unbearable but in retrospect it was necessary. I had been an asshole most of my life, allowing my ego to dominant my actions and regrettably hurting many people. Karma is brutal. Fucking Gevurah, I understand, but now it’s way to late.

I have always lived by the saying, “When you burn the boat you quickly learn to live on the island.”, Now I could focus without distraction on finishing what I started. You can’t make someone love you. It’s ok, I am so thankful for the memories of the farmhouse, playing with my daughter in the garden and chopping wood with my son on a Sunday afternoon. These memories are not destroyed by time, if anything they become even more precious. The

¹⁵ Gevurah is understood as God's mode of punishing the wicked and judging humanity in general. It is the foundation of stringency, absolute adherence to the letter of the law, and strict meting out of justice.

day they left was the last time I would once again be with my son. In the next life, I will do this differently, as I have changed it up countless other times. So that's enough of this for now, besides there is a lot more to talk about.

I have to admit this was not the best time for me but luckily I had a few good friends like fellow Chiropractic student Alex Ginzberg. Alex is Russian with many connections in the "community" so he was able to get me a job at Zhivago's, a 5- star restaurant catering to the St. Louis elite. I worked in the kitchen as a dishwasher. The work was hard, but they paid well and always treated me with respect. I worked there after classes till about 2 am. Every night once the restaurant closed all the staff went downstairs to the basement disco and partied till dawn. Beautiful Russian models, guys in thousand dollar suits covered with tattoos, Vodka and so much more. I was only a dishwasher but still I had a lot of fun. Thank you, Alex, I am forever in your debt my friend, and I will always remember those incredible nights, " БОЛ Ъ ШО Е СПАСИБО"¹⁶.

Over time, I managed to save a few hundred dollars from the restaurant job, and I bought a used Geo tracker from an auction. It had been in an accident where the owner, a young girl, lost her life when the brakes failed. The tracker went off the road and into a drainage pond where she drowned, still seat belted to the front seat. The car was repaired, but no one wanted it. I bought it for a

¹⁶ Russian translation, "Thank you very much"

thousand dollars and was the only bidder. Although completely rebuilt, the brakes always remained soft and touchy. I kept that green colored tracker for many years, and she was always there, speaking to me late at night on long drives, reminding me how important life is and how quickly it can be taken away.

There are a few unique things about Chiropractic training that is different from medicine. One of the most valuable skills called is palpation or sensitive touch. Although there are many methods of acquiring palpation, it will usually just come about from touching a lot of people. There are stories about how early Chiropractors would place a human hair in a phone book and see who was sensitive enough to locate it on the most pages. Palpation is the difference between a good and a great Chiropractor. At its mastery you can tell exactly what is wrong with a patient by simply touching them, communicating with the innate. Even today, many years later, I can easily feel small temperature differences as I pass my hand over a diseased liver or herniated spinal disc. People think it's magic, but anyone can learn these skills. The world authority is Jean-Pierre Barral, a French Osteopathy who I was first introduced to through his book, **Manual Thermal Evaluation**.

In the early stages, you develop palpation by dissecting the human body. At my school it was one body for every six students. The first time I carefully removed the top of my cadaver's skull and placed my hands on the brain was surprisingly not gross or weird but strangely

familiar. I had many moments in the dissection lab where I felt a strong connection with my cadaver. As I removed the heart, for example, it was easy to imagine it pumping life into the person. After several months of this intimate contact, the tissues began telling their stories. The human body is a complete Universe on to its own with each cell is working in perfect sequence towards a common goal. Unimaginable complexities that are not random. It was there in the Logan College anatomy lab, working late at night listening to Mozart's Requiem Mass in D Minor, that I found reliable faith, without Jesus, confession or forgiveness. It was there in my hands, the truth.

My love of anatomy did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Logan's chief instructor at the time was Dr. Paul Ellis. He was a very eccentric man but brilliant in human dissection. We soon became friends and would work together late in the lab occasionally sharing a few beers after class. Paul taught me the complexities of human structure but most importantly that we are not just a piece of meat or elaborate architecture. The human body is to be respected and honored as a manifestation of God, as above so below, thank you, Paul.

As my time at Logan went on, I began touching real people, first other students and eventually the patients that visited our free community clinics. I could locate organs, spinal misalignments, torn ligaments and even sense the difference in temperature over one area of skin, usually indicating some pathology in the hidden tissues below. Of course, chiropractors are universally recognized

for their ability to detect and correct spinal misalignment, known as subluxations. When spinal joints get injured, they can move slightly out of alignment and stop functioning correctly. The correct term for this is a spinal subluxation, but the medical community calls it by names like spondylolisthesis, facet syndrome, lumbago, sprains, and strains. This condition can pinch or irritate surrounding nerves. A subluxation can stress a spinal disc causing it to herniate and produce dreaded sciatica.

I had seen the benefits of correcting subluxations while working in the student clinic. People would crawl in and leave standing up straight without pain. A chiropractor is the only physician, by law, that is trained to diagnose and correct a spinal subluxation. Your spine should be checked regularly for subluxations just like you would go to a dentist to keep your teeth healthy. Chiropractic is an essential part of keeping your body healthy before you get sick and that is why it is so unique and needed in today's profit-driven medical system. This best approach to health is not a better drug but instead not getting sick in the first place. I also like to kid around with closed minded doctors who tell their patient's chiropractic adjustments are dangerous. I would agree with them and say, "Chiropractic is very dangerous, if done by untrained medical doctors."

It was around this time, perhaps halfway through my schooling, that a classmate, Joe Rogers, invited me to have dinner with his girlfriend's family. Her dad was Dr. Mike Fiscella, a local chiropractor with a completely different

way of correcting subluxations. He didn't use the traditional bone adjusting protocols I was learning in school. Joe told me, Dr. Fiscella, rarely even touched the vertebra to correct spinal alignment. I was skeptical, but like all students, I couldn't afford to turn down the free dinner.

What I experienced that evening was something that would forever change the way I viewed chiropractic. After some tremendous Italian cooking, we all went down to the basement where Dr. Fiscella had a makeshift clinic. This was his Sanctum Sanctorum. There's a neighbor sitting on a treatment table with his shirt off. Getting interesting I have to admit. So Dr. Fiscella turns to me, puts his hand on my shoulder and in his Mid Western, Italian drawl he says, "Muscles move bones, bones don't move muscles. Unless you balance the muscles, you will never completely cure the problem." From the corner of my eye, I see the neighbor nodding in agreement as he starts lying down. Muscles? What? Remember I had spent several years being taught traditional chiropractic methodology, that bones are everything and that the bones move the muscles. As a chiropractor, I had developed a love affair with moving bones. This muscle talk was straight out blasphemy! I snarled in protest but unmoved by my rudeness, Dr. Fiscella just smiled and proceeded to treat the neighbor. He pulled his arm forward while sliding his fingers under the anterior side of his shoulder blade. Later I would learn this was the famous subscapularis move. Next, the patient moved face down, and Dr. Fiscella used

his thumbs to lift the Trapezius muscles up out of the way as he then pushed straight posterior. The neighbor grunted in pain. “How’s that?”, Dr. Fiscella’s asked. “Ya, ya Mike you got it! That’s the spot; it shoots right into my shoulder, that’s the thing causing my pain.”, The supraspinatus move. The neighbor was no longer grunting but smiling from ear to ear; he looked euphoric. I continued to watch in disbelief as Dr. Fiscella’s eliminated all the man’s pain in less than 10 minutes without a single pop or crack. There was no chiropractic adjustment performed but still when Dr. Fiscella was finished the patient reported complete relief and amazingly all spinal subluxations were gone. I was speechless, well not completely, I ask Dr. Fiscella how I could learn this, and he replied, “Stevie you gotta come to the clinic, you gotta do the work.”

I started training with Dr. Fiscella and began making regular visits to his office, the Wilmington Clinic, located in downtown St. Louis, where I observed the master at work. This was hard for me because I already had a full 8-10 hours of school each day. Dr. Fiscella started seeing patients at 6:30 am and many times I would miss classes to be at his clinic. There was a few of us, all dedicated students that showed up to observe the master, just hoping for a few clinical pearls and maybe even an occasional “hands-on” lesson. Fiscella demanded commitment and respect from his students. We would end up cleaning his office or painting the ceiling just to make sure he knew how much we appreciated him. Once and

awhile but not often the good doctor would pause in the middle of treating a patient and ask one of us a question, “What do you think Stevie? Is it the subscapularis or supraspinatus causing this shoulder problem.” A correct answer and Dr. Fiscella would allow you to assist in the treatment, wrong answer and he would say something in Italian, never giving up the solution.

At the Wilmington Clinic, protocols were individualized to patient needs. People would show up in pain, and Dr. Fiscella would work on them until they were fixed. Sometimes it took 10 minutes, sometimes an hour. In school, I was being taught to see patients on a treatment program consisting of several times a week for 3-4 weeks and then reevaluate for a benefit. With Dr. Fiscella there was no set plan, you asked the patient how they felt after each treatment and then decided if they needed to be seen again. There were about six treatment rooms with sliding doors between them. All patients wore a gown over their undergarments and would wait in one of the treatment rooms until the door slid open and the show started. The doctor would move from room to room all day long. He ate lunch and dinner right in one of the treatment rooms between patient visits. This whole process infatuated me. It was so honest and pure. A significant departure from mainstream medicine where patients are treated according to their insurance coverage or ability to pay. Dr. Fiscella’s patients loved the treatments, it felt good, and there were very few conditions that never responded within a few sessions. I would hear patients talking in the lobby giving

testimonials, laughing, sharing stories about how Dr. Fiscella ended their pain when no other doctor could.

As I started becoming proficient in this treatment style, I learned it was initially developed by a brilliant man, Dr. Raymond Nimmo. I also learned that Nimmo's work was the basis of Dr. Janet Travell's secret therapy she used to help President John F Kennedy with his chronic back problem. The only treatment, I might emphasize that helped the former President despite his access to the country's best doctors. This was powerful stuff, and now it was also in my toolbox.

Dr. Nimmo's died in 1986, but his work is still instructed today by dedicated instructors like, Dr. Michael Fiscella. This work is the basis of most trigger point therapy practiced today. Dr. Fiscella is a true master, and I would encourage everyone to seek out his care when in the St. Louis area. Dr. Fiscella remains a strong influence on how I treat patients. Many times when faced with a complicated case I ask myself, what would Dr. Fiscella do. I have never met a more sincere, dedicated physician and I owe him my career.

Dr. Fiscella also helped me after my wife left with some great advice. I was lonely and depressed, so Dr. Fiscella hired me to do odd jobs around his clinic. I was doing some painting, cleaning and stuff like that. I don't think he needed me there, but now I believe he was trying to help me out. So anyway, one day he hands me two movie tickets. You see Dr. Fiscella would send patients free movie tickets on their birthdays, so he always had some

on hand. He gives me the tickets and says, “Stevie, the girls, the girls, they love the movies,” and just like that I was back in the dating scene. In fact, it was after this little exchange that I would meet my future wife, Katherine Park and you know what, Katherine loves movies. Thanks, Mike.

MOVING AROUND

All through Chiropractic school, I was super confident in my abilities because I worked twice as hard as everyone else, no distractions. I studied obsessively during the week, every waking moment and then on the weekends I never opened a book, those three days were my escape, a fantasy life I created with a few close friends. The routine was well rehearsed and started on Friday afternoons with a trip to Harrah’s casino, at Riverport. In two hours I would make five hundred dollars playing the roulette wheel. The technique was one hundred dollar bets on black and double down on every spin win or lose. This method of gambling works good, but you need to be able to carry the losses until you hit the streak. Of course, we were all broke students, so where did we get the insurance money to move the wheel? We did high-interest short-term loans for ten thousand dollars using the entire years worth of our student loan money as collateral. Yes, I did that. In fact, there was several of us that did that, week after week for the last six months of school and we lived like rock stars every Friday afternoon until all the money was gone Sunday morning. This secret life allowed me to

meet interesting people and date some beautiful women who were entirely out of my league. These new friends had no idea who I was, and many times I also forgot that I was a poor Chiropractic student who had to be in class Monday morning. Sometimes I would spend the weekend in other states, once I flew to Chicago and back in one day just to eat pizza.

Towards the end of the school year information about my other life started leaking out to my teachers and I got a lot of discrimination from the faculty, who felt this behavior did not represent the school professionally. I never broke any laws, and my grade point was always average or better, so I ignored their harassments. My supervisor in student clinic was so jealous of my exotic adventures he dedicated himself to getting me suspended. Eventually, he got me on a technicality, I filled in for a fellow student who needed a day off without first clearing the switch, and I was given a months suspension. When I returned, I had to see twice as many patients to make up my graduation numbers because of missed time. I finished all my requirements three days before graduation. In retrospect, I should have handled the entire situation much better.

It was during one of those great weekends that I first met Katherine. My first impression was that she was extraordinary. I never once thought she would have anything to do with me, she was a Ferrari, and we were skateboards. Between three of us (Greg Komeshak, James Briggs and myself) it was decided that James had the most

potential to ask Katherine out. James was good looking, a bodybuilder and super nice guy. But Katherine had other plans, and for whatever reason, God only knows, she and I got along. This was a very, very slow process. Weeks of talking, meeting for coffee and doing things like going to the Forest Park Zoo or rollerblading in Creve Coeur. A very healthy and very nice relationship that was far away from the crazy rock star life I had been enjoying. Katherine was a numbers girl; she worked for one of the top fashion houses in St. Louis where she maintained their books. One day I visited her at work and was told I could have a shirt at cost if I would like, but the price was \$400. Real rock stars like rapper Nelly¹⁷ got their clothes here; this place was not for me, I was only a weekend warrior.

So Katherine and I had something that turned into a lot more. I met her only a few months before graduation, enough time to fall in love but not recognize it. By the time I graduated from Logan I was no longer going to the casino and Katherine, and I were living together. Unfortunately, I was preparing to leave St. Louis for my internship. I had accepted a job in Holland, Michigan with Dr. Barry McAlpine long before I met Katherine. She was very successful in her job, and I don't know how or why but we just said goodbye and wished each other the best. The Holland clinic was called Primary Health, and it was

¹⁷ Nelly, whose real name is Cornell Irail Haynes, Jr., has won three Grammy Awards and nine Billboard Music Awards. He's best known for hits like "Hot in Herre," "Ride Wit Me" and "Just a Dream," released in the first decade of the 2000s.

an integrated setup, meaning that there were medical doctors, chiropractors, and physical therapists all under one roof. My job was to run the physical therapy section. My salary was \$500 a week, but it was assumed that with bonuses I would be making around 8K a month. I remember driving the green tracker from St. Louis to Holland, and in the back seat, I had a Siamese fighting fish in half a glass of water. Katherine had given it to me as a gift and named him Max. Not only did this fish survive the trip but he lived five years.

Dr. Barry McAlpine is a Vietnam veteran, actually a war hero decorated with 2 silver stars and one bronze. No purple heart here, Barry was untouchable. As a helicopter pilot he voluntarily completed several tours of duty. Remember this was at a time when people were being drafted but Barry went willingly. Dr. McAlpine liked to start early, and he instructed me to open the office at 7 am, but I don't ever remember him not getting there before me. We would stand in the lobby and drink coffee until the rest of the staff arrived, and he would tell me stories about his tours in Vietnam. Horrible stories, crazy out of your mind stuff that I will leave to your nightmares. He was a wild card, very impulsive and aggressive. Not a big man, McAlpine made up for his short stature with 100% balls. He told me once that he was never scared in Vietnam, except once, "We were out at night in formation walking through tall grass when I heard something. I turned around expecting to see the enemy and instead was face to face with a large tiger. I froze and could not move

my gun; I just stood there as the tiger casually walked by and brushed my leg, like a big house cat. That was the scariest I ever was in Vietnam.” Remember McAlpine was decorated with several stars for heroism. He never had a problem with the enemy, but it was the tiger that got him. Wild stuff, right?

The problem with Dr. McAlpine was that he always spoke poorly to me about everyone else who worked for him. It never took long to figure out I was likely not the exception. While at Primary Health I made friends with the medical doctor. He specialized in travel medicine. We had long lunches together, and he would help me with some of my tough cases. He had great stories about far-off lands where he did missionary work, places like Africa, India, and Tibet.

So I worked six days a week for that \$500 and never saw any bonus money. One day I found out that my assistant was making more than me. I was miserably overworked and lonely but through it all, I had remained friends with Katherine. We talked on the phone almost every day and never lost our connection despite being so far away. Although it sounds cheesy the time away from each other only reinforced how much we shouldn't be apart. I begged Katherine to drive up to Holland and visit me, which she agreed to. The day before Halloween she arrived in her red Camaro, and the guy working at the local gas station told her she would need sandbags in the back of her sports car by the weekend because the first snow storm of the year was coming. It never took long for

Katherine assess my situation. She was not impressed and thought I could do better. The job situation was a mess, and I needed to leave, but Katherine gave me the support to make a move. She was going to drive down to Florida and see her parents, and I asked if I could go along. “Steve, I am going down to Florida to see my parents, this place is not working for you and Florida has no snow!” I remember it was so simple, just like that, and I said, “Katherine I missed you so much, and I love you, I don’t want us to leave each other again,” and she said “Let’s go!” and that was it. I quit my job, packed up and headed to sunny Florida with my best friend. I mailed McAlpine the keys and never even collected my last paycheck. By the way, Barry, if you ever read this, I wish you well, I learned a lot from you.

Enter Cape Coral, Florida to the story. The weather was significantly better than Holland, Michigan that was for sure, and I started thinking maybe it was the right move. I had to apply for a Florida chiropractic license, which also required a state exam and that would take about six months to get, so until then I decided to look for a job. One day I was walking around the Edison Mall, and I saw a large kiosk with a big sign that said Chiropractic Spinal Exams. Interesting. I approached the display, and a guy in khaki shorts and a rugby shirt walked up to me and asked if I had ever been in an auto accident. He introduced himself, Dr. Marshall Webb. Within 5 minutes he showed me the keys to his new Porsche, explained how you can make millions of dollars treating car accident

victims and mentioned that he was so busy he could use help attending the kiosk while he saw patients in the clinic, which by the way was also in the Edison Mall by the front entrance. The whole thing seemed more like a carnival show than a clinic, but still, there was something that drew me to Dr. Webb. I started working for him in the mall kiosk. I would speak with people and screen them for back problems. Those who were interested would book appointments, and I got paid a commission based on how many people signed up. I know it sounds cheesy but I needed the money, and I never had a license, so it worked for me. I built his practice to an impressive level tripling his patient flow in about two months. The hours sucked, 9 am - 10 pm, seven days a week but I was a bit desperate, so I stayed (too long). I was burning out, and feeling more like a car salesman than a doctor. One morning I was reading some job postings while having my coffee and I don't know why but I was attracted to one ad, in particular, it read, hard working chiropractor needed for high volume clinic in Battle Creek, exceptional salary for the right doctor. Michigan. Jesus, I thought, Kathy's not going to move back there but honestly, I needed to make some money, I was living with Kathy's parents and broke. I called the office. "Hello, I am calling about the job? Yes. Can I set up an interview? Ok, sure can you come in this afternoon? Well, can we make it tomorrow, I have to drive up from Florida..." Silence on the phone. "What did you say? Florida? Ya, I can be there tomorrow if I leave right now. It's a bit of a drive I think." More silence. Just a

minute, please wait a minute. I waited on the phone, must have been for 5 minutes, long distance from Cape Coral to Battle Creek, then... “This is Dr. Prebish speaking; so are you saying that you are going to drive up here for an interview, is that correct? From Florida is that correct? Yes, sir, I need a job, a real job. Ok, son, I will see you tomorrow.”

I left everything, got in my Geo Tracker and started off to Battle Creek by myself, with two hundred dollars, a shirt and tie hanging in the back of the jeep. I never told Kathy, I never said goodbye I just left. I drove a straight 24 hours and arrived in Battle Creek during a snowstorm. I never had windows in the back of my jeep, so it was all open. I was freezing and exhausted. I checked into a motel on the edge of town and gave the front desk an imprint of my credit card. The card had about a \$500 limit. I would not be able to last more than a few nights here, and I never had the money to get back to Florida. The next morning I drove down to interview with Dr. Prebish. On the way, I stopped at a dry cleaner and asked if they could thaw out and press my shirt and pants for the interview. “Where are you interviewing?” The owner asked me, “Oh Dr. Prebish on Capital Ave,” I said. It turns out that this guy who owns the dry cleaners is friends with Dr. Prebish and they both go to the same Catholic church and country club together. The owner presses my shirt and pants for free and gives me a tie. “Good luck, he says, This is a great place to live.” So I spend the morning with Dr. Prebish and watch him working in the clinic. He sees about a hundred

people a day. He wears a white coat, shirt, and tie and is the best chiropractic adjuster I have ever seen. At one point I am in the treatment room with him, and I am so tired that I put my foot up on the chair to stabilize myself from falling over. Dr. Prebish sees this and says, "Would you take your foot off my chair please?" I assume I have blown the entire interview. I finish up at the clinic and am told they will let me know in a few days. I head back to my motel. On the way, I make a call to another office in Flint, just outside of Detroit and set up another interview for tomorrow. I cannot go back to Florida. I have nowhere to go, and I am almost completely broke. I call Dr. Prebish and talk to his receptionist, "Please thank Dr. Prebish for the opportunity, but I am heading out of town this afternoon for another interview in Flint. "Where are you staying tonight," she asks me. I tell her the motel and that I cannot afford to stay in town any longer. Goodbye Battle Creek. I get back to the motel, and there is a message waiting for me on my room phone, "Dr. Stokes please stay in Battle Creek for the next few days and come back to the office Monday morning. I would like to offer you the job, and I have Bonnie drop off an advance to your motel this afternoon to help you out." Ok, this will be my new home.

I joined the prestigious practice of Dr. Richard Prebish. Katherine moved up from Florida and got a great job with Employment Group. Together we made it great. At the clinic, I would work six days a week seeing over one hundred patients a day. Treating that amount of people was hard work and required spending all day bent over a

chiropractic adjusting table. We usually split the patient load between us, but when Dr. Prebish took his family on vacation to Ireland, I was the only doctor. One hundred visits in a single day were extreme chiropractic, but somehow I got through it. During this time I started noticing a small tingle in my lower back. Not much of a problem just a strange sensation that something was different or “out of whack” in that area. I never paid any attention to it and just kept on working. At the time I was making good money and running on adrenalin. Over the years this tingle in my back would return, sometimes after a heavy workout, a tough day at the office or strangely enough when I was under stress. The last part was unacceptable to me because despite my extensive training in the physiology of stress I refused to believe I could ever be affected. Stress disorders were for the weak, the sick or at the very least, it was for a patient. I am a doctor after all. So I kept pushing myself, and I mean struggling hard. I stayed with Dr. Prebish for precisely one year. It was a great time in my life with many fond memories. If ever in Battle Creek, make sure you get adjusted by Dr. Prebish, he is a real master of what he does and a man of the highest integrity.

While in Battle Creek I married Katherine at Greencrest Manor. What a beautiful place, much thanks to the owners Tom and Kathy VanDaff. Battle Creek was a great experience for me, but Katherine missed her parents, and I knew I had unfinished business in Florida, I needed to take that state exam and prove to myself I had what it

takes to make it on my own. We left the cold weather in Battle Creek and headed back south for Cape Coral, Florida.

After passing the Florida State chiropractic exam, I started looking for a place to open my first clinic. I had a big problem because I was broke, but there was a unique government loan program to help start-up small businesses in the area, and I decided to apply. I put on a shirt and tie and went to the North Fort Myers office. I had a business plan written up, and I only wanted ten thousand dollars. “Not a problem Doc, let’s do the loan for thirty thousand,” this short, Jersey speaking extra from the Sopranos said to me. “I don’t see problems here, give us a few weeks and ... We’ll call you doc”, he confidently said as he was shaking my hand off my arm. I was happy walking out of the loan coordinators office, and I could not wait to call Katherine and tell her the good news, then I realized he never even took my business plan. This guy never called me back in 8 weeks and finally when I got a hold of him all he told me was, “We’re taking a pass on the queer-o-practics.” I was upset, but I can’t say it was unexpected. Desperate I went to my father for a bailout, but this time the answer was no. Well, not really no, more like ask your grandfather. My grandfather, Frank Stokes was the family patriarch. He was the foundation upon which the entire family was built, and he was also worth around 8 million dollars. At the time my grandfather was vacationing in St. Petersburg, something he did every year.

I headed up to St. Pete's from Cape Coral, about a 2 hour drive confident that Gramps would help me out.

Up to this point I never thought much about money. I was always of the mindset that money doesn't make you happy, but I was about to receive a lesson from my grandfather. I drove up from Cape Coral to see him and we met at an IHOP for breakfast. After a detailed discussion about my business plan Gramps agreed to loan me the money to start my new practice. As the breakfast winded down Gramps took out his wallet and laid 5 one hundred dollar bills on the table and said "Stephen I think you are doing a great job and I know you have no money right now but I believe in you." As he nudged the stack of bills towards me I responded, without even looking down at the offering, "Thanks Gramps, I appreciate that but we all know that money isn't everything". Suddenly he stopped pushing the bills towards me and a frown painted across his face. Slowly he pulled back the money and quickly grasped it in his hand. "Stephen, what you said really worries me." He held up the five hundred dollars at eye even so it was placed between us. "This is the most important thing..." he stated, waiting for my response. I was embarrassed and worried since I really needed that money. I tried to back peddle, trying to justify my statement, "Well I mean it's important, everyone knows that but it's not everything, I mean it doesn't make you happy, right?". I was only digging myself deeper into his trap. "I am sorry my son, you know I care about you and I think you have a lot of potential but I am worried about

you, and so I will give you the most important lesson here today”. Grandfather put the five hundred dollars back into the inside pocket on his suit jacket. At first I thought it was a joke, so I just kept talking, trying to justify my case against money being able to buy happiness. But I never made the point and he never took the bills back out of his pocket. We continued with small talk and pancakes. One thing about breakfast with my grandfather was we both liked to eat. As was our tradition we ordered about everything on the menu and drank 2 pots of coffee. It was a game we played when we went out to eat, seeing who could eat more. I usually won but my grandfather really enjoyed feeding me, the starving college grandson. When the waitress came with the bill my grandfather looked over at me, “How about some of those sandwiches to go Stephen? You can eat them later while you are studying?”. Yes that was a great idea, I always ordered food to go when I went out with Gramps. The waitress returned a few minutes later with several styrofoam containers containing club sandwiches and a side order of potato salad. What a great breakfast, I was stuffed and it was so nice to see my grandfather again, long gone was the tension surrounding the five hundred dollars and then the bill came. It sat in the center of the table, folded half way to conceal it’s number beneath the smiley face and written words, thank you. I glanced over at grandfather, but he was not smiling. He stared at me like someone ready to go into battle. No longer was Grandfather the cotton haired, blue eyed man I had grown up with spending time

fishing and making Spam sandwiches with. No, this was not that man. Before me was a red haired twenty four year old soldier from World War 2, a fighter pilot on his way across the Atlantic Ocean to join forces against Hitler. The same young man who would spend the entire boat ride in the brig because he refused to salute an officer who he felt was being unjust to a fellow soldier. This was the man I now saw before me as he pushed his index finger down on the bill. Without evening turning it over he stared into my eyes and said, "Can you pay this?". I couldn't, I was broke I even had to borrow the gas money to make the trip. "Gramps, I am sorry, I don't have any money..." He grabbed the bill and stood up. We walked over to the cashier in silence. I could tell he was very disappointed in me and I felt like a real punk. As my eighty something grandfather counter out the payment for our breakfast from his stack of hundred dollar bills.

We went outside and sat on the bench across from the IHOP at the mini golf park. Gramps stared into the distance and then suddenly he put his arm around me. "How do you feel Stephen?", he asked as he pulled me closer. "I feel horrible Gramps, I never meant to upset you." I said. I had taken everything for granted, because grandfather usually gave me money when I saw him, but now I was leaving with nothing and I would not even be able to pay back the gas money I borrowed to make the trip from Cape Coral. My grandfather then reached into his pocket and pulled out the remaining bills, and then he dug into his other pocket and added to stack restoring it

back to exactly five hundred dollars. Then he slowly handed the money over to me, but this time I followed his hand and reached out to accept the gift. I held it in my hands and looked at the crisp one hundred dollar bills. I saw gas money, groceries, new school books and maybe even an opportunity to take out my wife to that Mexican restaurant she liked so much. I saw my life improve and I understand the lesson that had been given to me. Staring into my grandfathers eyes he was once again the old grey haired man I have come to love, “Thank you Gramps, I appreciate you giving me this money, it will make my life a lot easier.” “You are welcome my son, you are so welcome”. He kissed me on the top of my head. “Go do great things”, he said and that was the last time I saw him before he passed away a year later.

Money is the standard by which everything is achievable and judged. There is absolutely nothing that money cannot buy for you. There are no exceptions to this. Money does in fact solve all problems and creates opportunities that could otherwise never exist. Does money buy happiness? Yes. Can it buy health? Yes. But can money buy your salvation? Most certainly, yes it can. With unlimited wealth you can purchase the very best medical car, the newest drugs and procedures and if something is not available, then with unlimited money you can hire the smartest people in the world who, if given enough time will create solutions to all your problems. Money buys friends, and even though at first they will not be sincere eventually they will not only genuinely start to care about

you but eventually they will love you. There are countless examples of this, love like all emotions are a learned response. Some people say that money is the root of all evil, but this is incorrect. I often challenge people who speak out against materialism and suggest that they should try and make as much money as possible and then simply donate the money to charity. Why not make millions and then give it all away to help promote whatever cause you feel is deserving? You can help the homeless, change the laws or build a new church. All of these can be easily achieved with money and nothing will ever change without it. Some will argue that survival is really the purpose of life and of course this is true in every sense of the statement but in the modern world there is no better tool to ensure survival than money. It is hard to buy groceries without money, today everything has price but regardless of what is being asked there is nothing that cannot be substituted with money. Because I respect money does that make me a sell out? I guess it depends on your perspective. In the physical world money is God and in the inner world we are God. I choose to live in both worlds, to each his own path.

Back to the story, I found a 550 square foot rental unit built onto a gas station on San Carlos Blvd in Fort Myers. External air conditioning unit attached to the back of the rental and no bathroom except the public washroom that was for the gas station. Whenever a patient needed to use the bathroom I had to give them a key that was attached to a big piece of wood that had the gas station logo on it. I

hung a sign above the door that read, Chiropractor, in bright red letters and I advertised on the gas pumps. The first week opened I saw 44 office visits and made my entire months overhead. You see I was in the middle of three large mobile home parks filled with seniors and bad backs. The clinic was so small and odd that other chiropractors frequently stopped by to see if I was real. I had people run in and get an adjustment while they were filling up with gas. I learned how to be very fast and efficient without sacrificing quality, and I started helping people. I was learning the medicine from the absolute bottom up. The clinic had only three areas; there was a lobby and two treatment rooms. I bought an old McManis Osteopathic flexion traction table that had an old-fashioned pneumatic foot pump allowing it to be raised up and down. This was my main adjusting table I bought it online for \$500, and it cost me \$300 to ship it to Florida from Illinois. In the other room, I had a small roller table that massaged on a timer. I could use it to park patients waiting for an adjustment or as a second treatment room. That was it, other than my hands and elbows. I used every trick Dr. Fiscella taught me and produced results on the first visit no matter how long I needed. Some patients were in and out in ten minutes others spent an hour with me, while those in the lobby waited and complained or walked out. The work was exhausting, and all I was getting was the Medicare reimbursement for chiropractic that was between \$30-\$50 a visit. Katherine ran the office, and I treated the patients, it was an unbeatable team, and

despite our small size, we made an impact on the community.

The owner of the gas station allowed me to advertise on his pumps and we would get people all day long walking in for spinal treatments. Sometimes we put coupons on the pumps other times free Biofreeze pain cream samples, it was marketing ground zero, but it worked. There were several mobile home parks next to the gas station and within a few weeks I was treating just about everyone in those parks. They all had golf carts and you would see all the carts lined up out from of my clinic on any given day. We were a real novelty in the community and people enjoyed stopping by and getting an adjustment. I think as long as people don't think you are making any money they like you. Everyone likes an underdog and we even had other chiropractors stopping by to see the little clinic in the gas station.

As I grew, I gained confidence and attracted more difficult cases. The Universe works that way. When you master one thing, it starts sending you other opportunities. I would say at this point I had mastered the art of chiropractic and had reached my maximum ability to help people with that modality. The strange thing about being a master, it is not what people think. I never did fantastic things in treating patients, I merely did common things very well, and that is what makes the difference. But I had a problem; I was getting a little bored. I saw the same people every day, non-complicated low back and or neck pain and occasionally I would get a headache or a

tennis elbow. Most people would get a couple of treatments, and the pain went away. Sometimes I would see them in a few months if it came back. Yes, it usually came back, but it was not chiropractic's fault. I remember what Dr. Prebish told me; "Patients are always in a hurry to get back to the things that got them sick in the first place."

So after five years of chiropractic school, multiple state and national examinations and a few shots at associate doctoring, I was mostly settling in. Everything seemed to be in place. However, I still was lacking the one crucial quality that all healers require, a personal experience. Regardless of how successful I became there would remain a disconnect between the patient and myself, after all, I had never really been sick and I certainly never had any significant problems with my back. Although unfair, I always considered my patients to be weak. Patients needed to take better care of themselves, exercise more, lose weight and stop feeling sorry for themselves. I know this sounds horrible, but at the time it was how I felt. Of course, the Universe was listening and saw an opportunity to teach me a lesson that would ultimately make me a better doctor.

THE GREAT LESSON

Another beautiful day in paradise, Katherine and I went to the local high school to run track. We did this a lot and enjoyed the opportunity to exercise together in the Florida sunshine and be around younger people. The

energy was clean and motivating, a mix of school kids, soccer moms, and ex-athletes. We were finishing up our usual jog when I decided to run the stairs. I guess in retrospect I must have thought I was back in the old glory days playing for the Swillers rugby club in Newfoundland but whatever I was thinking on that day my body had a different agenda. I ran up and down the bleacher stairs for 30 minutes, twisting, jumping and torquing my spine. This intense exercise felt so good that I decided to go home and lift weights for about another hour. The principal training I did was the deadlift. In this movement, you grab a 7-foot steel bar with 315 pounds balanced on its ends and slowly pull it off the floor to waist height. One swift expression of perfect human biomechanics. I remember feeling very superhero-ish, but this would be the very last time in my life I would experience that feeling of invincibility.

The tingle in my back remained quiet for the remainder of the day. The next morning I opened my eyes at 6:00 am, and I could not get out of my bed to go to the bathroom. The anticipated tingle had not shown itself, but in its place was a severe, tearing sensation that ran across my back and down into my buttocks. It felt like I had broken my spine and I mean this in the most literal sense. Even the slightest movement caused a jolt of electricity to shoot into my right leg. I slid slowly off the bed and onto the floor. I began to crawl, on hands and knees to the bathroom; every motion met with an uncontrollable twitching of my lumbar and pelvic muscles. When I got to the toilet, I grabbed the bowl and then the wall. Slowly I

crept up, inch by inch, until I got on the toilet seat. Oh my God what have I done? My wife called out, “Honey, you okay?”, “No, got a problem” I whimpered out. She had never seen me in this much pain, and I was shocked. At the time I was angry but not afraid. The fear would come later when I learned what I had done to myself.

Somehow I managed to take a hot shower, and with Katherine’s help I got dressed and drove to the clinic. I started seeing patients and survived the morning, but the pain was getting worse. I thought all I needed was to stretch out a little and loosen up. I even considered maybe going back to the track and doing a short jog. This shows how out of touch I was with what was going on in my body. I decided to strap myself to the McMannis traction table and crank it open. This equipment, in case you are not familiar with it, and of course how would you be? The table looks like a medieval torture rack. You lie on your stomach, secure the ankles down with leather straps and slowly split the table in half. It opens up, while you are holding onto a metal bar, and the spinal vertebra is forced apart, as the muscles and organs are stretched beyond standard capacity. The theory is to restore vertebral alignment by forcing the spinal bones and discs into position. I did this for 20 minutes, and when I was finished, I could not get off the table. I was in extreme pain, twice as much as before, and I had tears in my eyes. My wife called some people from the gas station to come over and help get me into the car. They carried me because my legs were numb and the muscles were not working. I

laid down in the back seat of the vehicle and Katherine drove us home. I remained in bed for several days, unable to work, feed, bathe or look after myself. This feeling, I thought, is what it is like to be paralyzed. The days became weeks, and to my surprise, the pain did not go away. Weeks became months and slowly, little by little, God granted me some relief. He knew I was approaching my limit.

The pain became tolerable, but it never went away. Whenever I tried to regain a little bit of my lost life, exercising, dancing or fishing, making love to my wife, the injury would teach me a lesson about who was in charge. Months turned into years, and finally, I understood what had happened to my spine, and yes, now, I was afraid. The diagnosis was a torn L5/S1 lumbar spinal disc that had set off a series of neurological events in my brain leading to chronic pain. You can call this fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome or reflex sympathetic dystrophy it does not matter what you name it, the prognosis is poor and any sort of recovery is unlikely. For me, this was simply unbelievable, and most importantly it was unacceptable. I did what most people do in my situation, I started feeling sorry for myself and slipped into a depression fueled by angry outbreaks and self-medication. But you know what? After a few weeks, I decided I wouldn't give up. Furthermore, I was not going to drag Katherine through all this; she deserved better. So I made this promise to myself, that I would learn how pain worked and that I would conquer it. Up to this point, everything I had

studied in school was not working for my condition, but I was just getting started. Finally, I had been given the precious gift, the one missing element that is essential to becoming a great healer, empathy. It was time for me to see the patient's journey through my own eyes.

I started looking for answers in places I never paid any attention to in the past. The process reminded me of searching for crabs on the stone beaches of Middle Cove, Newfoundland. If you have a big area to cover, even turning over stones that do not conceal crabs is considered progress because it shrinks the size of the beach. So I was about to turn over a lot of stones and not find many crabs, remember this story in your search, so you don't give up too soon.

ACUPUNCTURE

I decided to start at the beginning, as far away from western medicine as I could go, acupuncture. I would spend two years studying and eventually pass my board exam to become a fellow of the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture (FIAMA) under Dr. John Amaro. He was the first person to teach me a doctor needs to treat the patient and not the disease. During my training whenever I questioned Dr. Amaro, he would say, "The frog in the well knows not of the great ocean." This has been one of the best pieces of advice I have ever received. Today in my study I have a picture of a frog looking up at the sky from the bottom of a well to remind me I need to see the big picture in life.

Most people do not know that acupuncture has been around for thousands of years and was first created by the Egyptians. That's right, not the Chinese. I studied acupuncture under its traditional Asian name, Jing Luo Mai and it exposed me to a hidden world I never knew existed. Acupuncture really should be considered a treatment principle and not merely a technique. My teacher showed me all the things I never knew that I never knew. Read that again, and it will make more sense. With Dr. Amaro, there were no rules he frequently would say things like, "Stare at a black dot on the wall until you go inside, then turn around and experience your true reality." I raised my hand, "What is that suppose to mean?", I sarcastically growled from the back of the classroom. Dr. Amaro was not rattled by me in the slightest, "Once you have tried it, only then can you speak about it." One day while lecturing he casually said that the musical note of C represents the healing sound of the Universe. Again, I was yelling from the back row, "What? Hold on What did you say?" Dr. Amaro smiled and asked for a volunteer. "What's wrong with you," he asked. "Oh I get headaches," the young student replied. Dr. Amaro reached into his pants pocket and magically produced a tuning fork in the note of C. He stared into the girl's eyes for about 10 seconds and then proclaimed, "The skull bones are not moving correctly, the cranial rhythm is off. I will unlock the entire skull by just treating the sphenoid." And with that, he tapped the tuning fork and placed it on the side of her right temple. "Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeen," the

sound of a perfect C note filled the room. “How do you feel?” Dr. Amaro asked. “Oh I still have a headache,” was the uncomfortable response. I kept thinking that this was such bullshit and I should be somewhere else, anywhere else but here. But Dr. Amaro was not worried, he reached up with his other hand and flicked the left temple with his finger, which made a loud thud sound. The girl's eyes widened and her mouth opened as if to say something but nothing came out. “Your a C-flat” he stated as his eyes moved to the back of the room where they landed on me. Then a slight smile, as he continued with the lecture.

One day, noticing that I was having trouble with the material Dr. Amaro sat me down during a break, “Stokes buy a native American Indian Love Flute, play it every day for a week.” I told Dr. Amaro I didn’t play the flute and I don’t have time to learn. His reply, “Just blow into it and don’t worry, the flute will teach you.” So I blindly purchased the native American Indian Love Flute from a Floridian craftsman, Erik The Flute Maker¹⁸. I mean it’s a real piece of art, made from local bamboo and it arrives with no instructions or anything, and I blow into it, and the most beautiful sound comes out. I keep blowing, and it keeps singing to me, and within a week I am playing all sorts of compositions with this flute. My blood pressure is down, and I am feeling so relaxed and happy that people start asking me what’s going on. If you listen to one piece of advice from me, please buy one of these instruments.

¹⁸ www.eriktheflutemaker.com (954) 424-6502, 14701 SW 18 Court Davie, FL. 33325 email: info@eriktheflutemaker.com

Wait and see what happens, like magic, the flute will teach you how to play and how to heal.

I cannot explain, you need to experience this for yourself. For me, it was nothing short of transcendental. I know how that sounds, but still, there you have it. Today I frequently will play the love flute for guests who come over for dinner, and just to be clear, I never learned music, and I cannot read a note, I just picked up the flute and immediately I began making music as if

I had played my entire life. Don't believe me? Buy this exact flute and test what I am saying, lots of people have done this and sent me their testimonials.

Dr. Amaro taught a complete course on all aspects of Acupuncture, but he believed the most powerful treatment locations were called Tsing Points or Jing-Well Points. Here the energy moved close to the surface of the body and was, therefore, easier to manipulate. These are tiny areas located on your fingers and toes. Dr. Amaro would frequently comment on these powerful points, "If what you are doing is not working or you never knew what to do in the first place treat the Tsing Points. One of my students was faced with a desperate situation where her son was in a coma in the hospital. She never knew what to do, she was at the end of her rope, and there was nothing anyone could do. She sat at her son's feet and started to massage the Tsing Points, including a special point known as K1 which is located on the bottom of the foot. She did this for hours, and her son woke up and can out of the coma." These sort of stories were widespread

and hard to believe unless you knew the high level of integrity Dr. Amaro holds. Once I spoke with him that I was having trouble believing that the whole Chi energy system existed, he looked at me and said, “What’s so hard to accept? Look at an ultrasound machine; it works by hitting a quartz crystal with energy that sends a message out into the 5th dimension seeking healing from a higher source. Everyone accepts ultrasound. Acupuncture? Acupuncture is easy to understand.”

These sort of philosophical explanations went on all day long; I have an entire Moleskin dedicated to his brilliant ramblings. Many of his teachings rewired my brain and opened doorways into other worlds that should not exist. Many times it seemed that Dr. Amaro was playing with me, testing to see how strong my faith was. At times I felt like the young student in the movie *The Karate Kid*, and Dr. Amaro was Mr. Miyagi. If you can take his course do it, you will learn a lot about being a healer, and as a side bonus, he will also teach you acupuncture. Dr. Amaro would tell me a story, for example of how he treated a baby white tiger in China using acupuncture. I would roll my eyes, and he would quietly fumble through his briefcase and quietly produce a newspaper article with a photograph of him treating a baby white tiger. Damn, this guy was telling me the truth. So I started paying attention. He taught me about the human energy field. How when we are born the energy runs a certain way, up the Conception Vessel but when we die the energy reverses and flows the opposite way. He

told me it is a waste of time to fear death because we have already done it. Amaro said, “Don’t worry when you die your energy will remember what your ego has forgotten.” Again, I always thought this was cool stuff even if it was a little beyond my comfort zone. I think that was his idea always feeding me only what I could handle and when I was ready.

One day Dr. Amaro walked into the classroom and started showing slides of artist Alex Grey’s work. These are large colorful pictures of naked people with massive amounts of swirling energy fields dancing around them. Although some of it may be a little uncomfortable for most people I believe it is the best material representation of what energy medicine is all about. A great place to start understanding this other world is to buy Alex Grey’s mind-blowing book, Sacred Mirrors The Visionary Art Of Alex Grey. There is nothing I can say here to match the experience of these images; they will alter your reality. I was so moved by Grey’s work that I went to New York to visit him at one of his showings, my friend from school Dr. Michael Gillispie lives in Manhattan so I turned the whole thing into a vacation for Kathy and myself.

Walking into Grey's studio gallery, I found myself drawn to a large painting called, **Theologue: The Union of Human and Divine Consciousness Weaving the Fabric of Space and Time In Which the Self and It’s Surroundings Are Embedded.** Yes, that is the title. Suddenly I got dizzy and sick to my stomach. I sat down on the floor and prepared myself to vomit. At first, I

assumed it was from the bottle of Tyku Junmai Ginjo Sake I drank the night before in China town. Nope, that wasn't it I was having a seizure. Michael grabbed my shoulder, "Steve what's going on? You ok, Kathy, Kathy come here there is something wrong with Steve!" My eyes filled up with tears and the light refracted into full spectrum. Everything was glowing, alive, speaking to me. I was convinced I was dying and as Katherine ran into the room, I looked up at her, and she transformed into a ball of bright swirling energy, hundreds of spiral galaxies composed of infinitely tiny dots of light all vibrating, spinning and communicating to me. I could not believe what I saw, "God damn it, why are you doing this to me?", I thought. Whatever was happened to me, whether real or a hallucination, I assure you, I did experience it, but then it got crazier as I heard a voice say, "Let go". It was not a typical strong God-like voice (Morgan Freeman), it was soft, quiet and female. That's all I heard, but then I was filled with deep sadness, the sort of feeling a child would have when he disappoints his mother. So I let go and started to feel like I was falling or sinking down into the ground. I felt heavy and unable to move. Then everything started to vibrate and blur around me and I felt like something was getting ready to happen. I felt like my body was starting to dematerialize, like I was getting ready to be beamed up to the enterprise or maybe simply destroyed. I don't now. It is hard to describe the experience. "This is what it must feel like to die", I thought to myself and then I got scared, "Fuck it man, maybe I am

dying!” I blink and find myself back in the studio looking up at Katherine and Michael, and they are smiling and don’t seem worried, in fact Katherine is talking to someone by the window. “You ok buddy?” Michael asks. “I think this New York humidity is getting the best of you,” he suggests. I felt like I was out for an hour but it was only a few seconds, “Mike, did you drop acid in my coffee?” I asked, hoping to finally understand what was going on. “Are you nuts Steve? No, of course not, your dehydrated, relax there’s an Italian restaurant around the corner and let’s get some pasta and cappuccino.” I think for a moment about everything that just happened, “Sounds good,” I reply, as I give Katherine a kiss on the cheek, and now I find myself inside that, “black dot” Dr. Amaro spoke about, and I am looking out at where I have been, and everything has changed. The experience has left me with many questions and the beginning of an ongoing anxiety disorder that is frequented with panic attacks and disassociation.

Ok. Still with me? So back to acupuncture. After years of study and certification, you may want to ask me, “How does Acupuncture work?” Well, I have two explanations. First, a little-known fact about an acupuncture needle is that it creates an electrical charge when pushed into the human body. The needles are stainless steel with the handle made out of a second, different metal. In the presence of an electrolyte solution, (human tissue) the two metals generate a charge. Research has shown that even very small charges can increase the production of

endorphins in the human brain. These chemicals relieve pain and as I mentioned earlier are more powerful than morphine. There are hundreds of medical studies that prove acupuncture works for many different types of pain and they use this explanation. Of course, it is completely incorrect. This reminds me of the title of Bob Frissell's great title, "Nothing In This Book Is True, But It Is Exactly The Way Things Are." So in that same spirit I offer is a second explanation that is exactly how acupuncture works. When we place needles into the body these thin wires act as small antennae designed to attract the power of the universe into areas of the body that require attention. Sometimes energy is drained off and sometimes it is added in. The Universe decides. I always like to think of acupuncture-like making a phone call (long distance) back home to have a good talk with the family that I have not spoken with for a long time. Of course, this is how acupuncture works.

As a result of my acupuncture training, I went deeper into the esoteric going back over 3000 years to Ayurvedic medicine. There I learned my foundation, the chakra energy systems, the importance of diet and the use of the pulse for diagnosis. From my experience, patients who received acupuncture got better faster. I began experimenting with different ways to stimulate the energy and found I could get as good results without using needles. The energy responds to many forms of stimulation, even gentle massage. Once you get in touch

with the patient, you can learn to spin their chakras without even touching them.

I guess Dr. Amaro would be happy because I finally have developed faith, the thing he said all great healers needed, "Without faith, we are only technicians," Dr. Amaro said. Realizing that we cannot know everything is part of the human experience. According to science, bees should not be able to fly because a bee must move its wings roughly 200 beats per second, which is 10 or 20 times the firing rate of its nervous system. I guess no one ever told a bee about science. I always think about those early scientists insisting that the world was flat or more recently the statement that it was impossible for a human to run a 4-minute mile. Then in 1954, Roger Bannister ran the mile in 3:59.4 minutes and suddenly months afterward several people did it. We must be careful not to dismiss useful gifts like acupuncture simply because we have not yet developed the technology to objectify the data. Don't undervalue things you cannot see just because you are not elevated enough to understand them. A bee can fly, and acupuncture works. Remember, "The frog in the well knows not of the great ocean." So I continued my journey out of the well. I helped hundreds of patients with acupuncture and produced what many called miracles. I started daily acupuncture on myself, mainly Tsing points and my pain lessen but only slightly. Not receiving the same healing I was able to offer so many people jaded me, and I was angry at the Universe. "Why are you screwing with me. Why?" I decided I would never practice

acupuncture again and I threw away all my books, all my needles, and I dropped my degree in the Goodwill drop box at 4716 Chiquita Blvd South.

Of course, acupuncture had not failed. It works, just like it has worked for thousands of years, but I was not ready. Fortunately, in hard times, my wife Katherine is always there to encourage me to keep searching and not forget about the frog in the well. She went down to the Goodwill and retrieved my degree. That same degree, framed in Chinese red silk sits on the wall of my consultation room as a reminder to never give up on patients like my wife Katherine has never given up on me.

I picked myself up, and I started an intense, obsessive schedule of research. I thought I would work an 8 hour day and study 3 hours every night. Nope, that was impossible and only lasted about two weeks. I never saw Kathy, and I stopped doing all my regular chores around the house, so that was not going to work. I needed to find more time in my day. Time management is what I needed, and I found it around 5 am. Yes, that's early, and so we're clear it is not easy to get up at that time regardless of when you go to bed. But it is a great way to find the time. No one is awake at 5 am. It takes me 15 minutes to make a cup of coffee and get in the zone and then the juices are flowing, and I am working on my research. I studied from 5 o'clock - 6:30 am every morning including weekends. That was only 1.5 hours a day, but it turns into over 40 hours a month. That's like working an extra week every

month doing whatever I want without missing a beat. Now I just needed to get to work.

CIRCUS TRAINING

In my quest to get better I saw a lot of specialists. Now in case you are wondering, a specialist is a doctor who knows a whole lot about a tiny, specific problem. Specialists continue learning more and more about less and less until eventually they knowing everything about nothing. After a few thousand dollars I realized they didn't have a clue about how to fix my back pain. They were only interested in doing tests and studies. We did many MRI's, x-rays, exams, nerve tests, blood work and on and on for like a year this continued. But here is the deal after all this expensive testing I would ask, "Ok so what are we going to do?" They never had a solution. They were so proud of all the testing they forgot that I was trying to find a solution. These guys were disconnected to the point of medical malpractice. I got more relief from a five dollar bottle of Advil than I did from the ten thousand dollars spent on specialists. Go to hell you guys; you know who you are.

When Sidney Crosby, captain of the Pittsburgh Penguins hockey team, was sidelined by a concussion he received treatment from a little known chiropractor, Dr. Ted Carrick. I had heard about this doctor in the past but just assumed it was sensationalism. I read a few papers by Carrick and found it hard to believe he could reverse stroke damage and repair the brain using simple exercises

like following a light with your eyes. A friend of mine, who was training under Carrick told me there was a seminar happening in Florida and that I may consider going with him to check it out. I had nothing to lose at this point so was agreed. Dr. Carrick is the creator of what is now called functional neurology, also known as brain-based therapy. Dr. Carrick's treatments can activate specific areas of the brain that are responsible for healing. In preparing for the seminar, my friend gave me a video of a PBS documentary of Dr. Carrick treating a Parkinson patient with a hand tremor. After about 2 minutes of therapy, the patient's tremor stopped. He never once touched the patient's hand. What was going on here? I had to understand the mechanism; it seemed like a magic trick. It turns out I would spend many years studying with the Carrick Institute, attending weekend seminars, learning how the brain worked and realized the importance of something called the central mechanism. This is a very extensive and complicated topic that can take a lifetime of study to fully appreciate but let me give you a novice summation. Everything in the body is controlled by the brain and spinal cord. This is known as the central nervous system (CNS). It is impossible to successfully treat any chronic condition without directly altering the CNS. Let me give you an example.

A patient complains of writers cramp. This means whenever they try to write the fingers curled up and cramp. Typically, therapy would be focused on treating the hand including the surrounding muscles, joints, and

nerves. A traditional treatment approach would be therapy directed at stretching the hand, home exercises and maybe some ultrasound over the sore hand muscles. In contrast, a physician who practices functional neurology would first test the patient to see if the CNS was malfunctioning. In other words, is the problem in hand or is the problem in the part of the brain that controls the hand? Through a series of tests, it is possible to pinpoint not only the existence of a central problem but also the exact location in the brain where the lesion exists. The clinician then formulates a treatment plan to correct the brain imbalance which stabilizes the CNS. Of course, not everybody with writer's cramps has a brain-based dysfunction, most cases are merely some form of overuse syndrome, but for those patients who do not respond, functional neurology provides a permanent correction. Research shows that in the majority of chronic conditions there is usually at least one brain lesion present.

Here is a simple test that checks for one of these problems. Sit in a chair and extend both your hands out in front of you. Now close your eyes and slowly try to touch the tip of your nose, one hand at a time. If you have trouble finding your nose or you miss your nose, then you may have a brain-based condition, specifically a cerebellum lesion on the same side that you missed your nose. It is essential to resolve this dysfunction in addition to treating any symptoms you may be experiencing. Otherwise, the problem may keep coming back. Because the eyes are controlled by nerves that relate to that same

area of the brain, in this case, the cerebellum, you can strengthen and help reverse this dysfunction by moving the eyes in certain directions. For a right cerebellum lesion, you look up to the right and down to the left on a vertical plane, for the left cerebellum you look up to the left and down to the right.

Studying with Dr. Ted Carrick was like trying to understand Einstein's theory of relativity, everyone knows it's $E=Mc^2$, but few people can tell you the science behind it. Never again would I examine a patient the same. I was starting to realize the complexities of treating chronic pain, and that there was no pure, one size fits all solution. For me, it was sort of like finding out there was no Santa Clause, but at least I knew I was on the right path. I continued studying the brain and functional neurology. Soon I was helping more and more patients who had been told there was nothing that could be done for them. The clinic started becoming a place of hope. People were getting excited. I often heard patients talking in the waiting room, "I can move my foot after five years" or "I was unable to smell, but this morning for the first time since I can remember, I could smell my wife making coffee." This was powerful stuff. I gained a reputation among other physicians for helping people with idiopathic conditions. Idiopathic is traditional doctor talk for; we have no clue what is going on.

With functional neurology my patient cases were unique and the days never dull. For the first time in my career, I was getting referrals from local medical doctors.

Of course, it was not because they had so much faith in my methods, but instead, they just had no idea what else to do for these patients. I think they got tired of not being able to help these patients and just wanted them out of their clinics. It is the craziest thing, but once I started helping these tough cases, the medical community stopped referring them to me. It was too much for their egos. Hard to believe but very true, I am sorry to say. Of course, at the time I was not completely honest myself. Little did anyone know at that time I was hiding a big secret, that I was personally suffering from chronic pain. I have a good sense of humor, like all Newfoundlanders and so I did appreciate the irony but truthfully the pain was so devastating I was starting to question if I wanted to keep living.

Many times while out for a quiet walk at Lakes Park I wondered how much more I could take. Here I was, helping so many people but still unable to fix myself. I started praying several times a day asking the universe “why me?” I became paranoid and started to think I was being punished for something I had done in a past life or maybe this life. I had no idea what was going on, but it seemed to be a callous joke. Luckily my faith pulled me through those hard times. I would say to anyone who feels they are in a hopeless situation, hang on, God will never give you more than you can endure. Pray, meditate, chant, do whatever you must but hang on and if you feel yourself losing grip ask for help. There is no shame in needing help; we are all one being and what happens to

one of us affects all of us. If you are at the end right now and are ready to end your life, wait one more day and contact me, just pick up the phone and give me a call. No matter the time let's talk, I do understand, and we can talk about it. I promise you respect and unconditional support. Let's talk; I promise I will ease your pain. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For Thou art with me."¹⁹

So I held on, and when I was at my lowest, suddenly the Universe responded. At the time I was studying vertigo with the Carrick Institute, and we were using balance boards to develop the cerebellum and improve a patient's ability to walk after a stroke. While looking online to buy some of these boards for my clinic, I came across the Belgau Balance Platform (search Balametrics). The ad stated the device was for improving memory and learning disorders but never said anything about balance. What? This guy was using functional neurology and not even aware of it. Here is a brief background.

In the early 1960's, Frank Belgau, working in the classroom with children with reading problems, began carefully experimenting to see if he could find activities that made an immediate observable improvement in the children's reading and academic performance. The procedure was simple and straightforward — the children read a passage orally, they did ten to fifteen minutes of motor skill sensory integration activity and then read a

¹⁹ Psalms 23:4

different passage from the same story. He listened to and compared the two reading samples. He also asked the students to report any differences they observed themselves. He found activities that made a difference in reading and vision.

He moved to the University of Houston where he directed the Perceptual Motor and Visual Perception Laboratory. Here he continued and refined his observations. At the University he led a parent training program in which parents and children spent 1 1/2 hours twice a week for a month working to overcome their reading and learning difficulties. Many of the parents in those programs were scientists associated with the NASA space program. Their insights helped to direct his attention to the effect of balance and the vestibular system on learning processes and, to the development of the Belgau Balance Board. Since then he has observed the effect of activities done on the Belgau Balance Board with his children and with children in many school programs in this country and Japan. The results have been astounding! Because most learning disabilities are caused by sensory integration disorders, Dr. Belgau developed The Learning Breakthrough Program. The Learning Breakthrough Program is the result of the observations and interactions over many years. The foundation is the Belgau Balance Board, and it includes those materials and activities that he has found to be the most effective and most potent in showing consistent improvement in reading, academic achievement and in developing intelligence.

Here is the mechanism. The part of the brain that controls balance is called the cerebellum. In addition to balance, the cerebellum also regulates nerve signals coming from the spinal muscles into the brain's pain centers. In fact, it turns out the cerebellum helps to regulate about every nerve signal coming into the brain. It acts as a neurological amplifier and can increase or decrease signals thereby assigning priority. So a neat way to think about it is that once the signal comes up the spine from anywhere in the body, it passes through the cerebellum where it gets tagged as fundamentally positive or negative (pain or pleasure). Imagine a sticky note getting attached to a package explaining what's in the box. Then the information passes to the front of the brain where we live (consciousness), and the sticky note is read, and we decide how to react. So if the cerebellum is not interpreting the signals correctly, it can falsely label information passing to the front of the brain, and we could think that normal sensations are harmful, thus causing us pain. A healthy cerebellum will directly lower pain.

If the cerebellum could be accessed that easily maybe balance training could help me with my back pain? I bought several Belgau Platforms and started working on my balance. I also bought several pieces of 2x4 lumber from Lowe's Building Supplies and created balance beams in my backyard. I added hand movements, like juggling and touching my nose while I am balancing, to further stimulate the cerebellum. I tried to balance with one eye closed, in bare feet and eventually by walking backward.

Anything I could think of to increase the intensity. My neighbors thought I was training for the circus and in truth, I would fantasize that I was. Many days when I got home from work, I found the local kids in my backyard messing around with my equipment. Other adults in the community were laughing behind my back, “There goes that crazy, quack chiropractor again.” My wife remained supportive. She didn’t care what people thought because for the first time in years she saw improvement in my condition. Through the process, I did learn to juggle, and I taught all my friends. If you want to know how to juggle ask me, I have a secret method where anyone will be able to juggle, three balls in less than 2 minutes that I learned from Dr. Frank Belgau. To this day I display my original Belgau Balance Platform in my office alongside my degrees as a reminder to think outside the box.

After three weeks of this specialized rehabilitation, my pain dramatically reduced and I was starting to get back most of my lost function. I was excited and decided to have another MRI scan of my back. It showed no change in the protruding spinal disc between L5 and the sacrum. I was upset with these results, but mostly, I was confused. The back was still injured, yet I was feeling better and not just a little bit better at least 60% better. Later I realize that MRI’s are only part of the whole picture, but in the meantime, I knew if I wanted a full recovery I would need to get that disc off my spinal nerve. I needed a structural correction. As I said, I was definitely in less pain, but I knew the longer that nerve was compressed by the disc,

the greater my chances of permanent damage. At this point, I had two choices available, spinal surgery or wait until the protrusion degenerated naturally and hoped it did not kill the nerve in the process. Neither sounded very promising and since I was starting to feel better, I canceled the surgery. I told myself six months and if nothing changes I go under the knife. My countdown had started.

DR. ROBERT WOOTTON

Every time I ask a question to the Universe, one way or another I receive an answer. I pray for the problem and ask for help. This is the most important part; you must acknowledge you need help. You must surrender your ego. Prayer is not tricky; it works while you are very relaxed. First I ask, how would I solve this problem if I had unlimited resources? And then I ask, How would this look if it were easy? Next, I relax, breath deeply and clear my mind. Who am I asking? It depends on my mood; it may be Jesus, Allah, Buddha, or Satan, the point is these are all manifestations of the same source that spoke to me in the gallery. That source is God, of which I am a branch or as I was told an appendage.

I talk about God and the Universe a lot in this book. I quote the bible and other spiritual texts. I am toying with the reader, trying to lay common ground hoping to lower defenses enough so that they will listen to what I have to say. I respect everyone's journey, and maybe Christ has sat on your bed in the middle of the night and talked with you. I will not debate that, in fact, I believe that happens.

Consider some wisdom from the great book, How to Know God by Patanjali, “The man who thinks that he is receiving response to his prayers does not know that the fulfillment comes from his nature, that he has succeeded by the mental attitude of prayer in waking up a bit of this infinite power that is coiled up inside of himself”.

Prayer works, but if the religious connotations of that word are uncomfortable for you then just call it meditation, they are the same thing. If you ask with sincerity and focused intent, you will always get a response. Again the surrender is essential. You will not be able to hear a response if you do not think you need help. Trust me; I learned this lesson the hard way. So scream out to God, and get its attention. Sometimes you need to do crazy stuff like crash your new sports car, quit your job or go through a divorce, other times it may just be staring at a piece of art in a New York gallery. Either way, once you create the ripple, sit in silence and wait for the answer. This is the basis of Chaos Magick, another topic for another time.

This has been a reoccurring truth in my life. Anyone who claims to be a healer and does not submit to a higher power is a mechanic. The more you learn about science, the further away from spirituality you will be pulled, but ultimately you will find yourself sitting on God’s knee. There comes the point where all the data and research will point to the same place, regardless if you are a person of science or spirituality. In the end, we are all students of faith. There is a compelling little book, The Law of Success

by Paramahansa Yogananda. This book is only 34 pages long, but it teaches you communion with the Universe. Buy it now and begin the conversation that is so long overdue.

Here is a story that illustrates my point about listening to what God is trying to tell you. A fellow was stuck on his rooftop during a flood. He was praying to God for help. Soon a man in a rowboat came by, and the fellow shouted to the man on the roof, "Jump in, I can save you." The stranded fellow shouted back, "No, it's ok, I'm praying to God, and he is going to save me." So the rowboat went on. Then a motorboat came by. The fellow in the motorboat shouted, "Jump in, I can save you." To this, the stranded man said, "No thanks, I'm praying to God, and he is going to save me. I have faith". So the motorboat went on. Then a helicopter came by, and the pilot shouted down, "Grab this rope, and I will lift you to safety." To this, the stranded man again replied, "No thanks, I'm praying to God, and he is going to save me. I have faith". So the helicopter reluctantly flew away. Soon the water rose above the rooftop, and the man drowned. He went to Heaven, and when he finally got his chance to discuss this whole situation with God, he exclaimed, "I had faith in you, but you didn't save me, you let me drown. I don't understand why". To this God replied, "I sent you a rowboat, a motorboat, and a helicopter, what more did you expect?"

So I am wondering about this lousy disc in my back, and I seriously think it looks like surgery, but I have given myself six months to figure it out. I have to get the

pressure off the nerve, and it looks like there is just no way to do that except go in and operate. I am barely able to work at my clinic, and I am praying, but it seems like I am getting nowhere. Suddenly the phone rings, and there is a lady on the line who says, "Hello Dr. Stokes I have found a great opportunity for you, sorry it took us so long to get back with you, but I believe this job is exactly what you have been looking for." Apparently, I had signed up with an employment agency when I first got my Florida license. The agent continues, "It is a very special situation, the doctor is retiring and selling the practice to a New York businessman, and he needs a doctor to take over the clinic so the deal will go through." The salary offered to me was more money than I have ever made in my life. Double what I was making in my little San Carlos Blvd, gas station clinic. Even though I already had my practice, I knew at this time in my life I was the guy on the roof, so I said yes. I figured this would make enough noise to get God's attention because I needed his help.

I approached the clinic for my interview and noticed a plain white sign outside the entrance that read, The Back Pain Institute Dr. Robert Wootton, DC VAX-D Disc Therapy. The lobby inside was full, with maybe 15 or 20 people waiting there. An elderly lady approached me, "Dr. Stokes, nice to meet you I am Barbara Wootton, the doctor will be interviewing you in between seeing patients, please follow me to his office." I followed along and noticed the sound of multiple bells dinging, air compressors kicking on and off and distinct release of air

pressure from pistons, beep, beep, beep, waaaa, click, shhhh. It sounded like an auto mechanic shop that was changing tires. I could not see into the other rooms, but there were people in there getting some therapy. I entered the main office and was greeted by a doctor is in his 70's wearing a blue physician jacket, which I thought was weird because doctors wear a white jacket, not blue. He looks me right in the eyes and shakes my hand. He's talking slowly in a southern accent that I can't place. He tells me this entire practice is focused on repairing damaged spinal discs without any drugs or surgery. At this point, the doctor has no idea that I have a damaged disc and it is the first time we have ever met. Here is what he says to me, I remembered it like it happened yesterday.

“You see here Dr. Stokes, well It's all about VAX-D.” As he spoke, he stares right through me and fixes his gaze upon an MRI hanging behind me on the view box. “Now this films showed a lumbar spinal disc that has healed, completely without surgery in 4 weeks”. The doctor continued. “This treatment is vertebral axial decompression, VAX-D for short. Dr. Stokes, it is more than twice as successful as back surgery with zero side effects”. He grabs an old bone model of the lumbar spine and palms it between his two hands. “This is a model of two vertebrae in the low back. These are the bumps you feel down your back called spinous processes. The spinal canal is where the spinal cord goes down through the spine like a telephone cable from the brain and the nerves branch off between the vertebrae. The disc is a pad

between the vertebrae that hold the vertebrae together and acts as a shock absorber. It consists of a ring of cartilage that contains the nucleus, which is a spongy cushion that bears your weight. If this cartilage ring stretches out or breaks down, it can bulge or herniate into the spinal canal and press against the spinal cord nerves causing stenosis of the spinal canal. The VAX-D treatment creates a powerful vacuum in the disc that draws in bulges and herniations and stimulates repair cells to heal the disc. It also draws fluid into the disc to re-hydrate the disc and supply nutrition to the disc. It works like traction, but it is different. Traction does not help the disc because when traction pulls on the spine, the muscles feel the pull and resist it, so it is always pulling against muscle guarding”. Right, I thought to myself, I learned that the hard way, I almost killed myself on a traction table trying to force my muscles to relax. That was something I wanted no part of. The doctor continued. “Now Dr. Allan Dyer is a well-known medical doctor. He was the Minister of health for Ontario, Canada and he also did research that helped invent the heart defibrillator – those paddles that start the heart. He had research that showed if the pull is increased on a logarithmic curve – that’s a mathematical formula – the pull is so gradual that the muscles are not aware of the pull, so they stay relaxed. That allows it to pull directly on the disc. If you stretch the disc itself, it is like pulling on the plunger of a hypodermic needle – it creates a powerful vacuum inside the disc. The pressure inside the resting disc is 75 mm Hg. No traction can lower the pressure to 35

mm Hg. With VAX-D I can routinely lower the pressure to 100 mm Hg below 0. That's a powerful vacuum that draws in bulges and herniations and stimulates repair cells that heal the disc. Come with me and let me show you what we are talking about".

We walked into a small room filled with two oversized metal consoles complete with pressure dials, buttons and graph paper print out. Each unit was attached, by what looked like an umbilical cord, to a futuristic looking exam table that was split in the middle. The whole scene was like something you would find in a NASA research department. I remember thinking, there is absolutely no way I am ever getting on that equipment.

"You lie face down on the table, and this harness goes around your waist and attaches to this post at the foot of the table. There are handles to hold on to, or we can use a strap to hold you in place. It pulls for one a minute, releases for thirty seconds and then rests for another thirty seconds. This repeats fifteen times. So, you are on the table for thirty minutes. We start with twenty visits done daily. It is computer operated, and it records the pounds of the pull of each cycle. It works by air pressure, so it has very smooth action. This is the control knob that sets the pounds of pull, but, no matter how many pounds we set it at, the computer keeps it exactly on the logarithmic curve, and that's what makes it work. It's a very high-tech treating table that gets great results in disc problems of the lower back".

He turns a large dial and pushes a yellow button. I hear an air compressor turn on followed by the sound of a piston firing. An alarm bell sounds, Beep, beep, beep and the table begins to separate. “See how slowly it moves? It goes slower and slower as it pulls harder and harder. That’s the logarithmic increase, and the muscles aren’t aware of the pull, so it is pulling directly on the disc and creating a powerful vacuum that draws in herniations and bulges. Let’s go back to my office and have a seat. Now when you first start the treatment, your disc is all stretched out. On each pull, the disc is drawn in, but in the beginning, it goes back out. As you continue the treatments, the disc begins to heal, and by the time you’ve had twelve to fifteen treatments, the disc begins to hold. Some people feel better in a few treatments when things begin to loosen up, but the average person may not feel any relief at all until they have had about twelve treatments. Then the disc begins to hold, and pressure comes off the nerves, and they begin to feel better. By the time they have their basic twenty visits they have a fairly strong disc. If you get five or six treatments and stop, you’ll lose it all. It’s like if you have a cast on a fractured arm and take it off in two weeks, it might be strong for a day or two but it will probably break down. If you leave it on for the six to eight weeks that it takes to heal a bone, you’ll have a bone that is stronger than the original because the repair cells are the strongest tissue in your body. The same with a disc, once it is healed, it is stronger than the original. By the time they have their basic twenty

visits 35% of the people are pain-free, 45% of the people have great improvement and 15% of the patients don't respond very well. If they don't respond at all, we don't go any further. If they go on to thirty visits, they have a stronger disc, and 70% of the people are pain-free. If they go on to forty visits, 80% of the people are pain-free. If they go beyond 40, we can help about 5 or 6% more. So the VAX-D gives a very high potential for improvement for disc conditions of the low back. By comparison, surgery, not that I recommend surgery, surgery helps one out of three cases, and one out of three is worse, and one out of three are no better. VAX-D helps eight out of ten. So VAX-D is more than twice as effective as surgery. With surgery, you have a list of risk factors like scar tissue buildup, infection, nerve damage, paralysis, and even the anesthesia is a high-risk factor. VAX-D is noninvasive, so it has none of those risk factors making it far safer than surgery”.

He paused, expressionless, gasping for some additional air, waiting for me to say something. I was searching for something smart to say, but inside, I was shaken up. What the hell was all this about and how did I end up here? I never met this guy before, and yet he had the exact treatment I have been searching years to find. Nothing is spoken for at least 10 seconds. That's a very long time. It is awkward. “Sounds good,” I say. Dr. Wootton makes a slight smile and puts his right hand on my left shoulder, as a father would do with his son, “Dr. Stokes” he says ever so gently, “Would you sit down here

in my chair and write me a few pages of why you want to work here for me, that would be ‘good’”, he laughed a little after emphasizing the word good but not to mock me, no this was different, he was teaching me. Next, the old doctor walked out of the room and closed the door. There were a notepad and pen on the desk. “Seriously?”, I asked the Universe. I took a deep breath and sat down, and for about 5 minutes I just sat there, and no one came back in. Soon it had been 20 minutes, and still, no one came in to check on me. Then something strange happened, I started writing. I wrote about my life, my trials, my successes and my back pain. I wrote about many things that had nothing to do with the job, but most importantly I told Dr. Wootton why I believed I was his solution.

Weeks passed, and I never heard anything from The Back Pain Institute or Dr. Wootton. I resumed my normal routines and just forgot about the whole interview, assuming he was “taking a pass” on me as well. The San Carlos clinic was not doing very well; I was getting depressed because my back pain was not improving and thinking about giving up and changing careers. Almost at the end of my rope I walked out to the small waiting room of my office and sitting in the lobby was Dr. Wootton. He just smiled at me and asked, “Are you ready?”, I immediately replied, “Yes.” Then he said, “Do you believe in God, Dr. Stokes?”. “Believe in him? I’ve spoken with him.”, I stated without blinking an eyelash. “Ok, see you Monday morning at eight o’clock,” the doctor instructed.

Now it was obvious I owned the clinic he was sitting in and that I was working there, but these complications did not interest Dr. Wootton, he never even mentioned it to me. Those details never mattered, the Universe finally had responded to my prayers.

I would transfer my current patients to the new office and close Primary Care Chiropractic. I didn't care about going to work for someone else I had found my Guru. Once you get a glimpse of the truth, you have to follow it because everything else is just a lie and no matter how attractive or easy that path maybe it is still a lie. In *The Book of Secrets* by Osho, he explains how we must follow the truth despite potential hardships. No matter how easy, the false path appears it will not lead to enlightenment. He tells the following story of a man looking for his keys to illustrate his point.

Late one evening, a man who was walking his dog comes upon another man who is searching the ground under a street light. The passerby asks what he is doing. "I'm looking for my lost keys," says the man searching the ground. "I dropped them on my way home," he says. The passerby offers to help search for the keys, but after several minutes of searching under the street light, they have no luck. "Are you sure you dropped them here?" asks the passerby. "Oh, I have no idea if I dropped them here," says the man. "Then why are you only looking under this street light? Well..." replies the man, "Because this is where I can see the best." I have many great memories from the time I spent working under Dr.

Wootton. I owe him so much, and I am sad to say we lost him a few years ago. I remember one day, after trying everything, I went to my Dr. Wootton and pleaded for some help. The doctor went into the examination room and palpated the patient, “We are going to have to use some advanced treatment on this patient Dr. Stokes, 21st-century medicine”, he smirked. The Doctor reached into his bag and took out two rectangular objects, approximately 8” x 3” and about half an inch thick. I had no idea what was about to happen. He paused for a moment studying the markings on these two objects, then finally announced, “The patient is suffering from inflammation because his energy field is out of sync, today we will use the North pole.” He placed the two objects, north side down, against the patient’s lower back and that was it. What? Come on I thought; you have to be kidding? Energy fields, magnets, this was too much. I started rehearsing how I was going to apologize to my patients for this display of nonsense. The old doctor continued, “Today we will only do 10 minutes, once he starts feeling better we must switch the magnets to the South pole to stimulate tissue growth. The North pole is for inflammation Dr. Stokes or to slow down energy production; the South pole is for growth or to speed up the energy”.

What could I do? I was the young associate; he was the experienced physician. This was all coming from the same doctor that, just a few days prior, I had seen diagnose Chondromyxoid Fibroma on a 25 years old patients tibia

(a very rare bone tumor that represents less than 1% of all bone neoplasms). So I nodded my head and agreed, north pole, south pole, Santa Claus, Easter bunny... I got it. The next day my patient reported a 50% improvement and instead of apologizing for the magnet treatment I was scrambling to repeated it.

With experience, I discovered a considerable amount of evidence proving how magnetic fields directly influence cellular healing and our state of health. The famous scientist, Dr. Robert O. Becker, MD stated it best, “I want the general public to know that science isn’t run the way they read about it in the newspapers and magazines. I want lay people to understand that they cannot automatically accept scientists’ pronouncements at face value, for too often they’re self-serving and misleading. I want our citizens, nonscientists as well as investigators to work to change the way research is administered. The way it's currently funded and evaluated, we're learning more and more about less and less, and science is becoming our enemy instead of our friend.”

Dr. Becker wrote two famous books about magnetic fields and the implications for healing and damaging the human body, *The Body Electric: Electromagnetism The Foundation of Life* and *Cross Currents: The Perils of Electropollution, The Promise of Electromedicine*. I do not understand how these cannot be an essential part of any medical curriculum. They should be part of your health collection. Trust me when I say that you will never look at your cell phone or electric razor the same again. The Earth

is a giant magnet with a North and the South Pole. A few hundred years ago the magnetic field of the earth registered in the strength of 4 gauss. Today it is about 1/2 a gauss. A human being produces a magnetic field of only one gauss, which means that as we live and walk around, we are being drained. There is now a tremendous amount of evidence proving electromagnetic fields are making us sick. Power lines, cell phones, wireless internet, radio, and microwaves all cause cancer. This is fact, and we all know this is true even if we never like to talk about it. My cell phone gets hot when I have it up to my head for more than 5 minutes. I strongly suspect that I am cooking my brain.

When used correctly, magnetic fields can help the body. Correct use can even protect your body against harmful radiation. One inexpensive and available way to do this is with a bar magnet. These have two distinct poles, a north pole and south pole. You cannot use a unipolar magnet. The North pole will produce a magnetic field that has an anti-inflammation effect on the cells of the body. This is good to reduce pain and in the early stages of injury recovery. The South pole will produce a magnetic field to excite or stimulate human cellular tissue. This is better used once the initial healing has started. Because speeds up the cellular division you would never want to use a south pole field on a pre-cancerous cell because it may trigger the cancer cells to spread.

Magnetism is measured in gauss named after German mathematician and physicist Carl Friedrich Gauss. A

typical refrigerator magnet is about 10-50 gauss. That is too weak to penetrate the skin and unlikely to be helpful for anything more than a minor bruise. Medical magnets range in strength from 450 gauss to 10,000 gauss. The higher the gauss, the better the pain relief. Clinically I like the 2" x 4" bar magnet that provides 3900 gauss each; then I will double them up (stack two magnets together) for a very strong healing effect. In some cases, I will stack as many as four magnets together getting very deep penetration. I always enjoy hearing about how my use of magnets is quackery. Usually, I get this criticism from the medical community, the same physicians who regularly recommend MRI scans to their patients for detection of disease. Somehow they have decided the science only belongs to them. An MRI scanner is a device in which the patient lies in a large, powerful magnet and the field is so strong it aligns the atoms of the human body all in one direction for a brief moment. This causes the nuclei to produce a rotating magnetic field that is detectable by the scanner which uses this information to construct an image. MRI's prove that magnetic fields do affect the atomic composition of the human body. To suggest magnetic therapy as nonsense is unscientific.

Therapeutic use of magnets for healing is contraindicated if you have a pacemaker or any other electrical device implanted in your body. To make magnets work, you will need medical strength magnets. These are available from specialty suppliers and generally, run a few hundred dollars each. You should consider the use of

magnets experimental because we still don't know enough about them but I have seen positive a results treating patients and family for the last ten years with no ill effects.

Recently a family member with knee pain called me. I have hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in the most advanced medical equipment available and what do you think they asked me for? They wanted a set of magnets! So I mailed them a set and guess what? I never got them back. Every few months a will get a call from someone who has watched one of my YouTube Videos about magnets, and they don't want to talk to me, you know what they want? A set of magnets! Oh well, at least they are taking some responsibility for their health.

Under Dr. Wootton, I became a master of Vax-D therapy and helped thousands of people avoid back surgery. I also learned about magnets which laid the foundation for my future involvement with Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy. Everything the wise doctor taught turned out to be true and his approach produced miracles. I cannot tell you exactly how many lives I changed but I still occasionally meet someone at the grocery store or at the beach who knows someone that I helped. As for my back pain, Vax-D did the job and removed the pressure on my spinal nerve. That's right, no more nerve compression. Yes, the disc protrusion was corrected with Vax-D, but I did not completely recover from my injury. It turns out that when the body is hurting for a long time, it changes. It learns to compensate, and essentially it rewires. Your pain threshold alters and over

time the way your brain runs things is never the same. I have learned from personal experience that the body does not completely repair. Instead, it heals, and there is a big difference. Damaged tissue will never be the same as healthy tissue just like a scar is less mobile. This is not the end of hope for all you pain sufferers, listen to me; I am no longer living a life ruled by pain. Today I am essentially healthy, but that little tingle in my back has left its mark. It changed who I am. If you are suffering from chronic pain, your journey will change you as well. No one gets to stay the same.

Dr. Wootton was my mentor for many years, even after he retired. Under his guidance, I continued to work as the Medical Director for the Back Pain Institute of Southwest Florida and later Naples and West Palm Beach. In total, under my direction, the business expanded into a multimillion dollar corporation. This was an exclusive cash practice that survived because people were willing to pay for the results we could produce. I miss you dearly Robert, Godspeed on your travels across the heavens my friend and congratulations on your return to the source.

OPENING THE CLINIC

Eventually, Dr. Wootton retired, but I continued working as the medical director for a few more years under a business owner from New York. We were busy, and I was getting referrals from local medical doctors, massage therapists, physical therapists and even acupuncturists. We became a dumping ground for

hopeless cases other practitioners wanted to get out of their offices. I remember one example, the referral was a patient with Lupus. This is a severe autoimmune disease for which there is no cure. When I called the doctor and told him I was a back pain doctor, his response was, “Well, look Doc, she has heard about you from her friends and is convinced you can help besides she is having back pain, so why don’t you give her a crack.” Crack, by the way, is a slang word used by uneducated people to describe the chiropractic adjustment but personally, I think crack would be a more appropriate term for pain medicine.

I started working on the referred patient’s back and every visit she asked me if I could suggest anything to help with the Lupus. She heard people in the lobby reporting improvement with all sorts of conditions and figured out that I may have some answers. This was my big chance. I remember what I did for this patient; I mentioned she might want to try Echinacea, precisely a combination of *E. Angustifolia* and *E. Purpurea* root. This herbal product does not stimulate the immune system but balances it. Since Lupus is an autoimmune disorder, I figured it would be an excellent place to start. That was all I did, nothing else. Her back pain went away in a few treatments, and I lost contact with her. I bumped into her at the Publix grocery store six months later. She told me her Lupus was under control, and she was no longer taking steroids, only Echinacea. She was part of a Lupus support group, and they have 10 or so people now all taking Echinacea with excellent results. Well, I’ll be

damned! I had forgotten about the whole thing I never even remembered her name. I wondered how many more patients I could help if I started to focus on the biochemical aspects of their diseases instead of just thinking about the structural problem.

I dug out my biochemistry textbooks and started to obsessively study metabolic pathways. I contacted one of the top pharmaceutical companies, Roche and they sent me a huge wall chart that showed every chemical reaction produced in the body. This would serve as my initial roadmap. I studied the mechanisms of disease and pain and how the drugs altered those reactions. I realized quickly that there were many opportunities to influence those reactions using herbs and natural materials. This was exciting and felt like another secret door had opened in my professional life. At first, I thought I was alone in my research, but I soon found an emerging branch of healthcare called, Functional Medicine that was publishing studies in this area. It was at this time I discovered Jeffery S Bland, Ph.D., FACN, CNS.

He was the chief science officer for Metagenics. Dr. Bland was publishing research that showed you could make objective changes on many diseases through proper nutritional supplementation. He used the term “Nutraceuticals” to distinguish the products he was formulating from the unregulated, untested vitamin market. High blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, all improved with Dr. Bland’s protocols. As I included functional medicine into my treatment plans patients

experienced dramatic changes. I became thirsty for more. No longer was I content to see back pain patients, I wanted to help as many people as possible.

I resigned my position as Medical Director for the Back Pain Institute and left the company. One of my associate doctors, Gary Goerg, shared my vision, and together we set out to create a clinic that would treat the entire person without drugs or surgery. I wanted better results than the medical community was getting, and I wanted the ability to help anyone that walked in the door. It would not matter if you had a sprained ankle or pancreatic cancer, I want to provide support and hope, based on sound science. Dr. Goerg owned a phase contrast microscope and was an expert in the nutritional analysis using saliva, urine, and blood. We could test our patients initially and then retest at frequent intervals to validate the effectiveness of the treatments. We began to acquire data, and our protocols became more effective at helping patients. The new clinic would be called, Advanced Pain Solutions (APS). To reflect our new direction I adopted the Japanese Kamikaze red sun as the primary logo for the clinic.

This would represent our unsurpassed loyalty and commitment to our patients. Few people know the true meaning of our logo, and I have never told anyone until now. I mean no disrespect to those who fought in World War 2. I am not honoring the Japanese; I am merely pledging to be as committed to doing good for my patients.



The new business had a simple objective; all treatments would help the body in dealing with whatever disease it was experiencing. The names, labels or diagnosis did not matter. I was interested in treating the person who had an illness and not an illness that had the person. This is a simple idea that has been lost in medicine today. To do this and be successful, I had to look beyond the disease and the labeled diagnosis. I needed to understand how the body worked and then apply a treatment that would help the body heal itself. You see the body does a good job at taking care of itself without any intervention from the outside, but if something goes wrong, it may then need a little help. I found the best way to do this was with a systemic approach. So I did what I always did, I asked the Universe for a solution. This time I was the answer. By retracing my steps, I could formulate a set of useful procedures. The “big idea” was that there are common

elements like inflammation, pain and immune response to all chronic diseases and correcting these problems would help the body heal any condition regardless of the diagnosis.

In retrospect, I was a bit in over my head, but at the time I never knew the difference because this was new territory for everyone. Many local physicians consider my model backward thinking and openly criticized me. Patient's were told not to go and see me or that I was running some scam. When I got a patient's blood pressure down without drugs, the primary doctor said it was a placebo. Of course, he was right. The whole idea was to get the body to heal itself, in a sense the placebo is the most powerful treatment. At the time all this negative feedback hurt my feelings but eventually I stopped trying to win recognition from the medical community.

THE GERMAN: DR. HANSJURGENS

As the business grew so did our challenges. Many patients we saw presented with severe neurological problems where their nerves were degenerating. We could get them out of pain, but it was difficult to restore neurological function. For example, I could get rid of a patients Sciatica (leg pain) but not the weakness that made walking difficult. Then by chance, I was looking through craigslist trying to buy some used Vax-D tables when I found Dr. Don Bailey, MD from Savannah, Georgia. Dr. Bailey was retiring from his pain management practice, and it seemed like a good excuse to take my wife to

Savannah for a holiday. I arranged to pick the equipment up and rented a moving van. This guy was a bit different, and the entire time I was loading the tables, he was talking about his anxiety and how traditional practicing medicine, with all the stress, had made him sick. He talked about how drugs were poisoning people including himself and that he was done with that form of medicine. Dr. Bailey also stated the Vax-D treatments cured his herniated discs and prevented him from having surgery.

As I finished packing up, I noticed a bunch of funny looking machines stacked in the storage garage. “What’s that?”, I asked him. “Hako-Med, the most advanced electrotherapy available. It comes from Europe”, he said. Right whatever, I wanted no part of that nonsense. “I’ll take a pass,” I stated. Dr. Bailey, sensing my disgust walked over and pulled one of the Hako-Med machines out from the line. “This is not a TENS, these machines can produce a complete nerve block in 20 minutes, the same as an injection but using physics instead of chemistry. In Europe Hako-Med is a primary treatment for neurological degeneration”. Did he say neurological degeneration, unbelievable? I looked over at my wife, who knew all too well about my frustration to find a modality I could use on my patient's nerves. Katherine looked directly into my eyes, “Neurological frickin degeneration”, she said smiling. “How much?” I asked Dr. Bailey. “Twenty-five thousand dollars each,” he replied. I had just handed him a check for 40K for 2 Vax-D tables; there was no way I could come up with another 25K. “Taking a pass,” I

repeated and jumped into my truck. Dr. Bailey never cracked a smile, he walked over to my window and wrote down a phone number on the back of his Dunkin Donuts coffee cup. “Steve promise me you’ll call these guys, this machine is the closest thing to a miracle you will ever see.” He handed me the coffee cup. The number was an 808 area code. “Where the hell is that?, I asked. “Honolulu,” he proudly declared, “If they don’t answer keep calling, they surf all day and work between waves.” “What are they beach bums?” I asked. “No, they are scientists, Germans! Ask for Dr. Achim Hansjürgens”. It took about a month for me to complete my investigation on Hako- Med and Dr. Hansjürgens. I studied all his research papers and sat through one of his presentations. It turns out he was brilliant, a modern Edison, and he discovered a completely different type of electrical therapy that he coined Hako-Med. Let me explain.

Most electrical therapy works by creating a counter-stimulation. Like when you bump your elbow or the funny bone, and then you rub it quickly, the pain is not as severe. Electrical therapy works the same way; it exchanges one sensation, the pain for another, the vibration from the electricity. This is usually produced by a frequency around 100 Hertz. The only problem with this approach is that the results are temporary and the treatment does not address the cause of the problem; it is a band-aid only.

The Hako-Med treatment works differently because of it's patented electrical frequencies that are between 4000 to

20,000 Hertz. These frequencies deplete a chemical known as Cyclic Adenosine Monophosphate (cAMP). This is responsible for the transmission of pain signals. Research has demonstrated that intracellular cAMP is depleted after being subjected to 4,000 Hz of electrical energy at adequate voltage. Electrical treatment at 1 volt and a frequency of 4,000 Hz over a period of 3 minutes showed a 28 percent depletion of the available cyclic AMP. This effectively will block 28% of the pain in just 3 minutes with a complete nerve pain block happening in 8-12 minutes. Hako- Med Therapy provides all the benefits of traditional pain injection therapy without the risks. The only contraindication is patient's with electrical implanted devices may not qualify. However, we have tested patients with pacemakers and found no conflict with frequencies over 4,000 Hz. Long-term studies showed this therapy made long-term changes in the way the nervous system worked by not only eliminating pain but also trained the body to heal the problem.

I bought three machines and started experimenting with severe cases that no one else wanted. I challenged the local medical community to send me their worst cases. I would treat them for free as part of a clinical trial, ten visits every day Monday to Friday, for two weeks. The results were unbelievable. A 30-minute Hako-Med session reduced pain for 90% of all patients in the first visit and by the end of the ten treatment trial, these patients between 30-60% fully restored. Remember these were the worst cases, many of these patients had been suffering for years

and tried everything. Hako-Med continues to be my go to therapy for pain, I would not practice without it, but the manufacturers are still impossible to get on the phone and I suspect they care more about surf than science.

RUSSIAN LASERS

I have always been a science fiction fan. Star Wars, Star Trek, Space 1999, Battle Star Galactica, I could go on, I loved them all, and the single most fascinating common element for me was the laser. Man, I wanted a laser when I was eight years old. Turns out 40 years later I would be using lasers to heal my patients. Anyone interested in learning about lasers will end up where I did, studying laser science in partnership with the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. There you will learn how Anatoly Shekhter has used high powered lasers to regenerate damaged tissue. Lasers are the next level of healing.

Despite understanding the science behind how lasers work, I have always had a hard time explaining the mechanism to patients. Then one day my stepson Michael McDowell was helping me in the clinic, and he noticed I was struggling with a patient that did not understand my scientific explanation. Michael turns to me and says, “Laser radiation is a hard concept for many people to understand but when you consider that light from the sun causes chemical reactions in the body to produce Vitamin D, it is easy to understand how laser, which is just a different form of light has had a profound effect on regeneration and chemical modulation in the human

system.” Michael is a graduate-level biologist from St. Louis University who after working as a research scientist for two years decided to go to medical school, where he currently resides. That’s a great way to think about how focused light can create biochemical changes, and I still use it today.

Lasers work extremely fast. They stimulate the cellular mitochondria to produce Adenosine-triphosphate (ATP). More ATP means more energy and more energy means more resources available for healing. In 1967 a few years after the first working laser was invented, Endre Mester in Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary experimented with the effects of lasers on skin cancer. While applying lasers to the backs of shaven mice, he noticed that the shaved hair grew back more quickly on the treated group than the untreated group. There are hundreds of studies available that show how remarkable lasers are in treating injury at a cellular level.

Of course, there are many lasers on the market, and they all produce light so what the difference is? In my opinion, it is all about strength. While all lasers will produce light energy, most are not powerful enough to penetrate deeply into the body structures that need to be treated. A 30 Watt class 4 laser will get several inches deep, which means I can access tissues like the spinal discs. 99% of lasers on the market will not get energy past the surface layer of skin. Also, 30 watt means it produces 30 joules of energy per second of use. Since you need 20,000-30,000 joules (laser energy) to make a change in damaged tissues,

I can treat a patient in about 15 minutes. Other, less powerful lasers (most are under 10 watts) would require up to an hour to produce the same results. I guarantee you that no doctor is going to spend an hour treating you with a laser, so the patient will never get enough joules to make a lasting change in their condition. Educate yourself on these concepts if considering laser therapy.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of how capable a laser can be for healing comes from personal experience. In my profession, I am talking all the time. Usually, during a single week, I may give 15-20 hour long consultations. One day after a busy week I noticed my voice seemed squeaky. In the days that followed it started getting worse. Months later, it had not gone away, and I would lose my voice after speaking for only 5 minutes. I saw an ENT specialist, and he looked at my throat by putting a camera up my nose and dropping it down. An interesting experience. He said I had vocal cord nodules. These are like callouses on your voice box that form when the sides of your throat keep slamming together. In the own specialist words, “They are painful, they bleed, and they won’t ever heal as long as you keep talking.” His solution was to remove them with surgery. As an ironic twist, they use a “thermal” laser to burn off the nodules.

I was not very excited about throat surgery, but I had read about how nodules can turn cancerous and was worried. This is an excellent example of practicing what you preach. I told the specialist I would try to heal the nodules naturally and avoid the surgery. He smiled and

said sure, whatever. I know he didn't believe me. I could tell he thought I was a jerk because I was rejecting his expertise and challenging his prognosis. I shouldn't have done this, but sometimes the ego wins over logic.

So I decided to take some of my own medicine, and the big gun for this job was going to be my class 4, 30-watt laser. The vocal nodules entirely healed in 4 weeks. I am not joking when I say that I could have a successful clinic doing nothing but treating vocal cord nodules. I do not know of any better way that is so noninvasive. If you are a professional singer seek out class 4 laser therapy and save your career. Now, sometimes when I talk too much, and I feel my throat getting sore I will administer a good 10-minute session of the laser, and it prevents any problems with my throat. This is an excellent example of using laser technology in different ways.

One day a patient asked me if I could help him with him with his shingle pain. Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a viral disease characterized by a painful skin rash with blisters in a localized area. The rash usually heals within two to four weeks; however, some people develop ongoing nerve pain which can last for months or years, a condition called post hepatic neuralgia. Knowing so much about how a laser can heal injury I decided to try laser. The problem was that high powered laser (30 Watt) does get a little hot on the skin, now usually the patient's like the way heat feels but in postherpetic neuralgia even a slight increase of temperature causes severe pain. So I turned the power down to just 2 watts and pulsed it on

and off at 10Hz (10 times per second). The patient reported, “I don’t feel anything, how’s this going to work?”. I treated him for 30 minutes, eventually working the power up to 5 watts. It only took six treatments to eliminate the sensitivity and pain. He had been suffering from this problem for almost two years after the initial shingles attack. I documented the treatment with pictures and a signed testimonial but the medical profession rejected the clinical trial, they don’t care, if there is no drug used they are not interested. Since then I have had success treating many chronic conditions including several more cases of post herpetic neuralgia. The laser is here to stay, now if I could get my flying car, everything would be perfect.

THE OSTEOPATH DR. FULFORD

Walking around a small used bookstore in St. Petersburg, Florida I happened to noticed a little book by the famous alternative doctor Andrew Weil called, “Spontaneous Healing.” As I thumbed through the book, I read about Dr. Robert Fulford who was treating children with inner ear infections using some touch therapy. I searched the bookstore a little more and found, “Dr. Fulford's Touch of Life: The Healing Power of the Natural Life Force” I read the back cover, “A ninety-one-year-old doctor who has successfully treated patients failed by conventional medicine delineates the healing principles of osteopathy, shares case histories, and offers advice on integrating natural and modern health methods.”

Sounded interesting, wait this guy is 91 years old and still treating? I bought the book. It would be the beginning of admiration for a man I would never meet.

Let me summarize Dr. Fulford's underlying philosophy. One cycle of digestion of food takes typically 24 hours. One cycle of respiration takes 3 seconds. During one day, we breathe about 28,000 times. Fulford believed the most vital function of our bodies is the function of breathing. We can live without food for weeks; without water for a few days; but, without air, only a few minutes. We can relinquish consciousness as in a deep sleep or under anesthesia or states of catalepsy, but we cannot abandon breathing as long as we are alive. Breathing is the most subtle function of our organism, a function that can be both conscious and unconscious. This is in contrast to most of our other features such as our heartbeat; our blood circulation; our currents of nerve energy; the functions of digestion, assimilation, and secretion, etc. Breathing is the only vital function which is easily accessible to the mind. Due to this double nature, breathing can be made the mediator between body and mind. Breathing enlivens and vitalizes the physical body with life energy, and also balances the flow of life energies within the body. The primary conductor of the life energy in our body is the cerebrospinal fluid. The cerebrospinal fluid is ionized by breathing exercises. It is believed to be produced by the Choroid Plexuses, located in the ventricles of the brain. The cerebrospinal fluid circulates the brain, within the spinal cord, and within its nerve fibers. The pumping

action, which circulates the cerebrospinal fluid, is created by the cranial bones in the skull, in conjunction with our breathing. So, breathing, both conscious and unconscious, become a vital factor in the flow of cerebrospinal fluid that carries life energy.

Thus balanced breathing is a must for a long, healthy, youthful life. Unbalanced breathing disturbs the sleep pattern. Unequal length of breathing cycles has a very adverse effect on the mind, brain, nerves, and body. The unequal length of the cycle causes the unfortunate victim to seek various ways of quieting his screaming nerves, of overcoming his excessive irritability or eliminating his anxieties.

When life energy is jammed, the breath cannot flow through the body. Fulford suggested many problems of the human body can be traced back to birth. A traumatic birth, e.g., breech birth, Caesarean section, use of forceps, difficult labor, etc. can cause cranial and vertebral misalignments in an infant. Read the book, "The Baby's Cry," by Truby, published in 1978. Truby got his Ph.D. research work on the baby's cry in Stockholm, Sweden. He did a study of 15,000 sound and spectrographic analyses. He recorded the moment of the baby's first cry and followed up with studies through the first seven years of development. He got a pattern of the growth and development of the personality of the child. From the first breath or baby's cry, he could determine the personality of the child, its weakness and the degree of health and well being.

Fulford had studied under William Sutherland, DO and learned his system of manipulating the bones of the skull. Cranial misalignments can occur anytime when there is a blow to the head. This blow doesn't necessarily have to result in a knot or bruise on the head. We all knock heads with each other, with cabinets, with car doors, with falls, etc. Cranial misalignments can interfere with the flow of cerebrospinal fluid thus causing interferences within the nervous system. It was through studying the ideas of Dr. Fulford that I learned how to feel the rhythmic pulsations of the brain and adjust the membranes of the skull to restore health.

The skull is anchored to the brain through a complex network of membranes, and it is by the manipulation of these membranes that we can access the brain for treatment. Inside the skull, the brain is surrounded by cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) where it expands and contracts to produce a strong amplitude of between 6-14 pulses per minute. In unhealthy individuals, this rhythm is diminished. Until recently science rejected this concept of cranial rhythm and skull movement however recent studies have confirmed that it is a reality. Also we now also understand that the brain can heal and regenerate, once believed to be false. Perhaps the most significant concern for brain health is stagnation of cellular waste that can build up and promote degeneration. This occurs when the vessels of the brain become twisted; injured membranes blocked preventing blood and CSF to drain correctly.

The brain has two fluid systems that must be healthy to prevent disease. Arteries and veins make up the first system. These tiny arterial vessels bring oxygen and glucose to the brain, and small veins call away some of the wastes. This is a slow and steady system that can be found throughout the body. The second system is a powerful, fast mechanism involving the cerebral spinal fluid. The membranes of the skull create channels allowing CSF it to reach even the smallest corners of the brain. Special cells called astrocytes wrap around arteries to create a network of pipes creating channels that follow the same pathways as the blood vessels. This CSF is not something we hear a lot about; in fact, most doctors disregard it's importance however it is a life-sustaining fluid that brings nutrients to the brain as it helps clean away debris and toxins. If this waste is allowed to build up in the brain, it will create inflammation that can spin out of control. All the current research suggests that this increase in brain inflammation is the basis of most neurodegenerative diseases of aging like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) and multiple sclerosis.

Cranial work is a massive undertaking for any physician to learn, and in truth mastering, it requires a lifetime commitment. I am lucky to have a stepson, Michael McDowell who is currently attending medical school in Kirksville, where Dr. Sutherland's therapy is still

being taught. The CV-4 decompression technique²⁰ alone can resolve many long-standing problems.

As I advanced in my practice I discovered that it is this cranial sacral mechanism that literally moves the energy through the body, fuels the chakras and produces the life giving electromagnetic field of the body. This is a massive topic but for now I wanted to provide some background.

I don't treat children (under 18 years old) because of a long list of reasons, but mostly because they usually don't need my help. A child's energy is so powerful they will usually heal in time regardless of the problem. In truth, whenever I have treated a child I find I am the one who benefits from the encounter as my system feeds on all that power. So it's weird for me and I feel like a Vampire and therefore I just don't see kids much. Today was a bit different through and a long time patient of mine asked if I could help his daughter. "She has these headaches, and she's dizzy, sometimes so badly she gets stomach sick. Would you mind having a look? I sure would appreciate it Doc, you have done so much to help my back I just think you can help her. All she wants to do is put her on meds and birth control pills." Ah damn, what can I say?

²⁰ The CV-4 technique is done with the patient lying supine with the physician's thenar eminences cradling the occiput with the fingers left free. The physician encourages extension (towards the physician) while discouraging flexion. These movements are continued until a "still point" is reached, where softening and warmth of the surrounding occur. Foundations for Osteopathic Medicine by American Osteopathic Association, Robert C. Ward DO FAAO, Raymond J. Hruby and John A. Jerome (Oct 7, 2002) pg. 999

“No problem Terry, bring her in tomorrow and I will see what I can do.”

The next day Terry’s daughter, Megan shows up with her mother. Turns out Megan was stepping off a curb to cross the street when a speeding car recklessly forced her to jump back. Megan tripped and fell landing on her butt. She was ok, not a big deal I was reassured. “Did you hit your head?”, I asked. “Oh well just a small bump on the back of my head”, she stated casually. What would follow was years of headaches, hearing problems and digestive issues.

I proceeded to examine Megans skull and found she had injured the occiput and shift the first bone in her neck, called the Atlas. This is an area rich in nerves and blood vessels. I held the back of Megan’s head and gently began to align her skull. Immediately her breathing slowed and I could sense the cranial wave come back to it’s correct frequency. Next I palpated the Atlas, and sure enough it was shifted laterally to the right. Carefully I set the bone into correct position and as it moved into place the entire neck relaxed. “What did you just do?”, Megan asked. “I felt my whole skull move.” I got her to sit up from the treatment table, “You’re ok Megan, I just put things back in place.” The entire treatment took less than 5 minutes and Megan has never had a headache since. This was years ago. A doctor could build an entire practice on just this one simple technique, but no one will listen to me because they are so busy calling me a quack to actually learn the procedure. So sad, but the work continues and

some get it and out do not. Cranial therapy is real and life changing, I encourage everyone to try it and if you are ever in my area drop by for an adjustment.

BRAIN SURGEON SABOTEUR

Advanced Pain Solutions, has now been up and running for a few years and doing well, Dr. Goerg was still working with me, and together we were making all sorts of progress, but I still could not get the respect I craved from my peers. The chiropractors viewed me as a sellout and to the medical community labeled me a witch doctor. Then one day I had a bad idea that would almost become a career-ending mistake, I decided to hire a medical doctor. I hoped it would accomplish two goals, first add credibility to my clinic, since now I had a “real doctor” on staff, and secondly, we could expand treatment protocols and our offered services. With a medical doctor, we could prescribe drugs, do injections and yes bill insurance for everything, thus making millions of dollars. Did you catch that last point? I am embarrassed to admit it, but I said that in a meeting. You see up to this point my clinic was a cash-based practice, no insurance coverage. Patients had to pay me out of their pocket for everything we did. Why was I not taking insurance you may wonder? If you take insurance, then you must follow their guidelines and compromise on quality. So we hired Dr. Chris Pham, a Stanford University Neurosurgeon to lead us to the promised land.

Dr. Pham was essentially a brain surgeon; I could not have asked for a more brilliant doctor to team up with. Shortly after joining my team, Dr. Pham noticed how we were getting all these amazing results; and he was taken back by this. It opened his mind to a world he never knew existed, and he was excited. Dr. Pham started reviewing all my treatment protocols and suggesting improvements, “We should be doing spinal injections for our back pain patients” and “All chronic pain patients should be on several medications.” Within a few weeks, we were handing out B-12 injections like candy and billing everything to the insurance companies, or so I thought. Slowly the clinic changed. There were two distinct groups that formed, those who only wanted the drugs and those who only wanted therapy. Team drugs vs. team therapy, seriously it was very distinct. Something I need to mention is that when we added the drugs to our therapy protocols, the results did not improve. In fact, patients would say to our therapists, “I am ok with the laser, but I don’t want those injections today.” They innately knew what was helping them. At this time Dr. Pham was handling all the insurance billing which unknown to me he never had done before. You see Dr. Pham had worked his whole life in a hospital environment where billing was handled by the administration. He thought how hard it could be right? Well turns out it's very hard actually and so the nightmare began. So we never got paid for anything Dr. Pham did, zero. The only income keeping the clinic alive was what the therapy was generating despite all the

additional overhead. Within a few months, we were 40K in debt, and I was forced to restructure. I let everyone go, including the famous Dr. Pham and moved Advanced Pain Solutions to a smaller location, 1/3 the size of the original office. I lost many things because of this mistake including my relationship with my best friend, Gary Goerg. These things bring out the worst in all of us. As we panic and “survival mode” attributes surface, it becomes a case of you or them, and unfortunately, there are always casualties. I regret many things I was forced to do during that time, now I see things could have been done differently, but at the time I did the best I could. I laid off many people and caused a lot of pain. I went back to basics and slowly paid back all my debt. “If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength”²¹.

THE RED CARDINAL

I get many different types of people in the clinic, from all walks of life but one of the more interesting patients I treated was a Catholic Cardinal. During the month or so he received care at my office we had many conversations about religion. I must say that for a Catholic Cardinal he was very open-minded. I enjoyed my time with the Cardinal and our discussions about energy, faith, and God. I found him to be a very cool guy, much in touch with the times. We spoke about homosexuality, abortion, sex and even racial division. He understood politics and power, he

²¹ Provrbs 24:10

liked cheap coffee and Luciano Pavarotti. He made good arguments and earned my respect, although we did not agree on several issues.

One day while he was making a cup of coffee he overheard a conversation I was having about chakras and how they are mentioned in the bible. “Human life is electromagnetic in nature,” he remarks. “Magnetism is the glue God uses to hold everything together.” I immediately stopped what I was doing and turned towards the Cardinal. “That’s what I believe, but how can we tap into that?”, I asked. The Cardinal looked up from his coffee and says to me, “One of the most powerful spells in the bible is Matthew 7:7-8, Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.” And yes he actually said the word spell, as in magick.

He took a sip of coffee and then he continued, “When I was in Rome I also heard about a Greek scientist who developed a machine that could alter the magnetic fields for healing.” “What was his name?”, I anxiously asked. “Panos Pappas, he’s your man!”, and with that, the Cardinal disappeared into a treatment room with Adriana to get his Vax-D treatment for his low back pain.

THE SEARCH FOR PANOS PAPPAS

I did what all great researchers do when they need to find out something, I hit the internet. I found out Panos Pappas was a Greek physicist and mathematician, who

took an interest in electromagnetic fields after witnessing a recovery from chronic disease after being struck by lightning. Tough way to make a discovery, am I right? This eventually led Pappas to the development of the Papimi therapy machine. The device used electromagnetic radiation to promote tissue regeneration. Let me explain how this works.

Look at your arm, it is composed of stretched skin that is concealing the muscles, nerves, fat, and bone beneath. As we magnify and search deeper there is more; now we are introduced to smaller structures called cells. But these cells are merely a doorway revealing progressively smaller structures? I remember the first time I looked at a human cell under an electron microscope and witnessed an entire Universe. The cell is incredible but not the end of our journey. Moving closer, we encounter molecules, which are composed of atoms, but what is an atom? Well, it's the smallest unit of matter measuring about a ten-billionth of a meter. An atom has a central part called a nucleus which is positively charged and bound to each nucleus there are electrons, which are negatively charged. So the charges of an atom balance out and determine the overall charge of the cell. The atom is an electromagnetic structure, a charge. Despite our visible appearance of solid matter, on the most refined level, we are in fact not solid matter but rather only electromagnetic energy. The same energy that regulates the entire Universe and is God's soul.

Our bodies are always making new cells and replacing those that are worn out or diseased. In order for these new cells to work properly they need 5 things,

1. **Glucose:** The healthy range is between 80-110 mg/dl. Too much and you will have diabetes to little and you will become hypoglycemic. Both are a problem, everything must be balanced.

2. **Temperature:** 98.6-100°F is the key, if you go higher a fever will result and lower produces hypothyroidism.

3. **Blood Pressure:** 120-140/80-90, high blood pressure causes hypertension but low blood pressure causes dizziness and many health problems as well.

4. **Oxygen:** You need a saturation level above 95% to be healthy. Many people have lower levels and are unable to heal because of this.

5. **pH: 7.35-7.45:** is the key pH of the human body. If you go higher you will have throbbing pain and lower you will have chronic pain.

I want to focus on the importance of pH. Most people don't really know much about pH which stands for, potential hydrogen. We can measure the pH of a solution and convert that to a charge. For example, pH 7.35 is the same as -20 mV (millivolts) and pH 7.45 is the same as -25 mV and so on. The cells in the body are designed to run at -20 to -25 millivolts. When you drop into a more acidic pH or lower voltage your body will have a harder time healing and you may get sick, likewise when we increase your pH or voltage your body can heal easier. To produce new cells the body needs a voltage of -50 mV or a pH of

7.88. This is all very scientific and you do not need to get weighed down in the numbers, just realize that the voltage of the cells is the key to healing.

To heal by making new cells, we need amino acids to build the inside of the cell, vitamins, and minerals to activate the metabolic processes, fats to build cellular walls, a fuel source that is usually oxygen and glucose, an immune system to protect and a sewage system to remove waste. But the entire process of building a new cell does not occur without an initial electromagnetic charge of -50 mV.

When voltage drops below -20 mV, we get chronic pain and illness. Oxygen levels also drop since they are controlled by the voltage level, and we only get two molecules of ATP instead of thirty-eight molecules per unit of fat processed. Cells struggle to function and the trillion or so “bugs” that are always in our bodies wake up and begin to “have lunch” by putting out enzymes that dissolve our cells. These enzymes enter our blood and damage cells throughout the body causing widespread damage.

In it's most elementary state, all healing is electromagnetic. Most of my life I have been misleading to believe that the body is controlled by chemistry, when in fact it is controlled by electronics (physics). By manipulating the electromagnetic fields of the atoms, it is possible to regenerate damaged limbs, kill dangerous viruses and enhance or function to superhuman levels. The idea that health can come from outside the body is

ridiculous that a pill manufactured in a lab with materials that are foreign us can help us. The Universe is a closed system, and humans represent that same system, as we are reminded in the Emerald Tablets, “As above so below.” Electromagnetic energy not only represents the solution to healing the soul, but it is also the soul. The same energy that created the first cell that would divide to become the trillions of cells you are today will one day return to the Source and be recycled a million times more to create and destroy as is the cycle of the Universe. I remember those visions I had at Alex Grey’s Studio in New York, and now I understand it was electromagnetic energy I experienced.

Many times in my daily meditations I have wondered how I could charge the body, and always I was offered the answer, breath. Perhaps the most crucial bodily function is breathing. Through various forms of breath yoga, it is possible to control the breath and temporarily influence the body’s nervous system, for example, if you hold your breath your heart rate will lower. Although I have used breath control in my daily practices, I still wondered if there was a better way to charge the body. The solution was the Papimi therapy machine, also known as Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy or PEMF for short.

PEMF takes alternating current (AC) and transforms it into direct current (DC), producing controllable intensity variations ranging from low to high. As the voltage passes through a coil embedded in the body applicator, it emits a pulsed magnetic field. With each pulse, electrons inside the body are stimulated while the electrically charged cell

membrane of each is gently pulled. In between pulses, cells relax. Mostly, the cells are exercising, like a person doing jumping jacks. This accommodates the intake of oxygen and nutrients while dispelling toxins. PEMF therapy charges the cell thereby influencing regeneration and long-term health. On the national website www.pubmed.gov there are well over 500 research articles that demonstrate the effectiveness of PEMF therapy in treating everything from aches and pains to severe neurological disorders like Parkinson's disease. The data is entirely overwhelming, and the FDA has approved its use for bone regeneration with several other applications pending.

My skepticism increased, if this was so good why isn't everyone using it? Then slowly I began to realize many clinics are using PEMF therapy. Quietly, under the radar, I read studies from places like UCLA, who had helped treat patients with depression and soldiers with PTSD. I had to know if PEMF was the real thing, so after much searching I found a clinic in Florida that advertised the therapy and I made an appointment. What followed was a big disappointment. It turned out the machine was not Panos Pappas device, the Papimi, but instead a small suitcase looking machine that resembled a radio. The treatment was uncomfortable and made me sore afterward. Disillusioned I went back to study the Papimi and learn precisely what made it work, what I found was a massive amount of unregulated devices on the market, all promising the benefits of PEMF but falling short of

delivering the same technology as Pappas and his machine the, Papimi. It all seemed hopeless; I could not purchase a Papimi in the United States and the price tag of almost a hundred thousand dollars. Then completely by accident, I discovered American entrepreneur Paul Webb.

As a result of several accidents during his 20s, Paul suffered from constant pain and stiffness due to the build-up of scar tissue. Trying every modality recommended by national experts, all efforts failed to improve Paul's quality of life, so he knew he had to start looking in a different direction. Paul's research leads him to PEMF. He purchased a personal high-intensity PEMF machine, and after just one day of use, he experienced a drastic improvement. After six weeks of PEMF exercise, Paul was functioning normally. Sadly, Paul's machine proved unreliable over time, requiring frequent repair and maintenance. Convinced there had to be a better way to help people like himself, Paul made it his mission to develop the most advanced PEMF system on the market and Pulse Centers PEMF Equipment was born.

I got in touch with Paul and was instructed to attend a demonstration of his PEMF machine, the Pulse XL Pro. The very first time I used the machine I knew 100%, it was going to change my professional life. For me, the treatment was pleasant as I felt the electromagnetic field charging my cells and spinning my Chakras. I decided to give the device a strict trial, thirty days of my most difficult patients and if at least 50 % reported improvement, I would buy the XL Pro, which, by the way,

cost more than my Ram Truck. I made a deal with Pulse Centers and started running the trial. I expected complete failure, these patients were mostly hopeless cases, chronic end-stage degenerative conditions like severe arthritis, stroke, dementia, failed surgeries and multiple sclerosis. I treated them all five days a week for four weeks at no charge in exchange for daily reports on how they were doing and weekly physical examinations by myself. In total there were about 10 participants. At the end of the first week more than half of the patients reported improvement, and by the 4th week I had a 100% success rate, not a single patient failed to improve. I keep the original notes from this study in my office desk and read them whenever I feel overwhelmed or unhappy with a patients progress; it reminds me there is no such thing as false hope. Through some sort of divine intervention, I had discovered the future of medicine.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HEART OF IT

Years went by and I helped thousands of people. Everything grew, my practice, my pocketbook and my ego. Slowly, it changed like an inconspicuous skin spot into a cancer. Things started developing into more complex designs. What was once simple was now difficult and I felt my own body rewiring along with the new program, become layered and hard to manage.

“Another day in the books”, I thought to myself as I pulled out of the clinics parking lot. It was past 6 o’clock, I was the last person to leave and I was exhausted. Driving home I kept the radio off, silence was my only desire. All day I had listened to people complaining and my ears were still ringing. Those unappreciative demons, feeding on my good nature and draining me, destroying my life. I could hear them throughout the day, arguing at the front desk about their bill, saying things like, ‘Why doesn’t my insurance cover this?’, or “I can get something similar on Amazon for half the price.” These were the same people, that crawled into my clinic less than a month ago and begged me to help them. “Doctor, I have been everywhere else and no one does anything for me, they all just want to give me drugs. I need to get better, you are my last hope, please Doctor, please help me! I will do anything.” How could I say no, I rarely ever did. And now those same people are pain free, and once again they are playing golf, dancing, walking on the beach... having sex. But how easily they forget. In psychology this is known as the “call girl syndrome”, it is what happens when people fail to see

the value in something once they have already experienced the benefits. Witnessing this response with my patients was devastating, making me sad, insecure and broken.

Heading over the Cape Coral Parkway bridge I never noticed the sailboats cruising underneath my car or the beautiful sunset reflecting off the warm Gulf waters. I was staring at the car in front of me timing my speed so I would not leave any space between us. I was in a hurry to get home so I could hide. I wanted to be anywhere or anything else, other than this. Then slowly I felt a tightness, starting in my chest. At first just a pressure but then quickly a sharp sting that escalated into an overpowering pain that made it hard to take a full breath. Something bad was happening. I called my wife on the cell phone, “Kathy, I am having severe chest pains and I am going to go to the urgent care center”. She agreed to meet me there. As I approached the check in desk the nurse got up from her chair, “Are you ok?”, she asked with a concerned look on her face. “No, I have this pain”, I said, holding my left hand against my chest. Apparently that is all you need to do in order to bypass the line at the urgent care center and I was taken back to an exam room.

Next thing there are 4 or 5 people removing my clothes, which I thought was a bit weird and taking my vitals. Next rapid fire medical history, and questions about my family. I am thinking, it will be ok most people survive their first heart attack and I started making little deals with God, I’ll be nicer, volunteer more, adopt a rescue dog,

the sort of thing. Then in walks the actual doctor and he comes up to me and says, “Hello Dr. Stokes, do you have any past history of anxiety?” I looked up at him and said, “Are you fucking serious?”

They ran several tests including an EKG and in the end I was given a nice little pamphlet on reducing stress and a bill for \$480. Thank you very much and please come back when you have something really wrong, was the attitude. Kathy was waiting in the lobby for me and she was obviously relieved with the diagnosis , but for me it was more devastating than my fantasy heart attack. Anxiety? Fucking anxiety? No fucking way!

The next morning I went to see my personal doctor and good friend, Dr. Alan Tannenbaum, MD an Internal Medicine Specialist with over 30 years of experience in the medical field. Alan and I have a good relationship. Over the years we have co treated many patients and together saved several lives finding occult cancers on x-rays and stopping deadly infections. We refer to each other and eventually I decided he was the one doctor I could trust with my own health. Dr. Tannenbaum even wrote my step son a referral letter that was primarily responsible for him getting an interview to medical school.

Alan looks over my test results and without even looking up says, determinedly, “Steve, you have gastritis and anxiety, the urgent care center was right. Your hearts

fine, take some Omeprazole²² here is a prescription.” I put the script into my pocket and walked out to my car, feeling defeated. I couldn’t believe I had anxiety, I don’t feel stressed and besides I am strong, a real tough guy... ah fuck sakes.

Over the next few weeks I took the medicine for my stomach and absolutely nothing changed except I felt even sicker. The Omeprazole turned off my stomach’s ability to produce acid which in turn make it difficult for me to digest protein, which led to more stomach problems that created more anxiety. Here I was the guru of natural medicine taking prescription drugs, breaking all the advice I give my patients and just as predicted was getting worse.

I decided to stop the Omeprazole and focus on the stress. By this time I was getting several full blown panic attacks a week where I would experience trouble breathing, also known as air hunger, and feel like I was having a heart attack. I started really thinking outside the box for solutions and decided to try medical marijuana. The doctor I saw told me to take the CBD/THC 1:1 ratio “medicine” 3-4 times a day. “Am I going to be able to work while doing this?” I asked. “Ya no problem Steve”, the hippy surfer-like doctor said, “You are just like me, we are the same, both of us are stressed out doctors. This

²² Omeprazole is a proton pump inhibitor that decreases the amount of acid produced in the stomach. Omeprazole is used to treat symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and other conditions caused by excess stomach acid.

medicine is the answer, it's going to help you feel normal again. Look, I have been taking it for a few years now and honestly I wouldn't live without it." I was concerned and very uneasy with the whole process. I wasn't very comfortable and innately I knew this was not the answer for me, but I was desperate. In retrospective everyone in the clinic, both patients and medical staff were totally stoned.

After a few days I was issued my medical marijuana card and then it was off to the dispensary. When I arrived I showed my card and asked what can I buy? The young girl behind the counter smiled and said anything you want. I literally bought one of everything they sold. The next week was very interesting. I started vaping medical grade marijuana 3-4 times a day and not surprising, I had no anxiety. At the start of the 4th week while driving home I pulled off the road and told my wife to drive. I felt blasted. I never had any anxiety, but I also had no other feelings. I had lost any sense of emotion, and I just never cared about anything. That night while sitting in my hot tub watching the palm trees blowing in the breeze I had a strange feeling of disconnection. I literally started to feel as though it never matter if I lived or died. Luckily I recognized this as a sign of depression and it scared me enough to end my medical marijuana experiment. I stopped that night and sent my state issued medical marijuana card back to the government. I was glad to be done with that, but to my surprise even that short 4 weeks of use caused pretty severe withdrawal side effects for me.

So now I was not only back to having panic attacks and anxiety everyday but I was also going through drug withdrawal. A lot of people say marijuana does not cause dependency but I disagree. Let me explain what withdrawal feels like in someone who has a history of anxiety. “ I am walking through Publix grocery store at about 7 o’clock at night buying some things from a list my wife gave me. Everything is cool and I am totally relaxed. I look up at the over head lights and when I look back down I feel my legs get very heavy. I feel my body start to sink into the floor like I am in quicksand (not that I have ever been in quick sand, but I have seen movies). I cannot move my legs and I start to panic. I grab ahold of the shopping cart tightly and feel my heart rate climbing. Next I start to feel myself getting dizzy. The panic turns into pure fear. I am convinced I am going to die. I am struggling not to lie down on the floor. I manage to navigate myself out of the store leaving all my groceries in the cart. I finally get back to my truck and I crawl inside. Sitting down I grab the steering wheel, holding on for dear life. Everything is spinning and I feel like I am falling off a high building. Then for no reason start crying. Fuck, fuck, fuck man... ah fuck me.”

THE PERSIAN ANGEL

These were the worst days of my life. Many of my routine practices like yoga, which had served me so well in my past were added to my list of fails. Nothing seemed to help. I was lost and forced to created a new plan, sell

my equipment and close the clinic. To say I was destroyed would be an understatement, and yet, for my patients and staff it seemed like business as usual. I kept my commitment to them until the every end. I held that responsibility it the highest regard.

One day I get a phone call from a doctor wanting to buy some of the equipment I had advertised. "Ok, just stop by anytime and I will show you the stuff", I said. "You mean you are still using it?", the doctor replied. "Ya, we're super busy and booked out till the end of the year." I reported, and this was only mid October. "Ok, I will drop by in the morning, by the way I read your book and I thought it was excellent." he said with sincerity.

As scheduled the next morning at around 9 am a middle eastern looking guy showed up in my lobby, "Dr. Ali here for an appointment with Dr. Stokes." he reported in at the front desk. That 30 minute meeting with Ali turned into all day. The doctor was interested in everything I was doing at the clinic and showed me the deepest respect. "Dr. Stokes, why sell me the equipment? This is place is super busy and everybody loves you. Look, I would like to learn all this stuff, honestly this clinic is my dream. How about I work here for you?" I answered immediately, "No, absolutely no way, I am out. I'll tell you what. I will sell you everything, the equipment and the building, all yours. What do you say?" Ali, nodded, "Ok, great let's do it!" We had not even discussed a price, and neuter of us cared because we were both going to get exactly what we needed.

Over the next 30 days we transitioned the entire clinic to Dr. Ali. I received a fair compensation for the practice and the building. Everyone was happy and suddenly I was no longer in practice. People in the community were shocked with the new turn of events and even started saying things like I was dying or that I was getting a divorce. The truth was more unbelievable, I had lost myself and it was over for me. I had nothing left to give. Advanced Pain Solutions was now history and even though the clinic remained, with the same staff and equipment, it was a different place and now had a new name. Erased were the memories of who I was and what I created. Such a strange experience. I went back and visited a few times but it was over. New patients, new treatment protocols and less memories lingering. It was a new place and I no longer belonged there.

At first I enjoyed all my free time. I would take long morning walks, go to the beach all day or set up at Starbucks for hours, at a time just drinking coffee and searching the internet. I assumed my anxiety would dissolve along with my clinic, but it never happened. The anxiety never went away and if anything, the extra time on my hands proved to make things worse.

It was during one of these lost days that I stumbled on a You Tube video from Tony Robinson. Tony and his wife were interviewing Michael A Singer, a software programmer who went through a similar journey as I was currently going through. Michael was now running a meditation retreat and had just written a book called, **The**

Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself . Tony and his wife were saying that Michael's book changed their lives so much that they give copies of his book to everyone they care about. The more I watched the interview the more I could relate to what was being said. I turned off my computer and immediately went to Barnes and Nobel to buy the book. It was already 7 or 8 o'clock at night when I got back home and started reading. Like a fanatic I labored through the night and when the sun came up in the morning I read the last page, which said, "Your relationship with God is the same as your relationship with the sun. If you hide from the sun for years and then chose to come out of your darkness, the sun would still be shining as if you had never left". This is not the most inspiration quote in the book, but as I read this line I noticed the morning sun just starting to rise and for the first time in a long while I felt loved and safe.

Singer writes, "True freedom is very close; it's just on the other side of your walls... Imagine your house of thoughts standing in the middle of an ocean of light from a trillion stars. Imagine your awareness trapped inside the darkness of that house, struggling daily to live off the artificial light of your limited experiences. Now imagine the walls crumbling down, and the effortless release of consciousness expanding into the brilliance of what is and always was. Now give that experience a name-enlightenment."

I needed to get my shit together, while I still had a chance to save myself. I had lost my connection. I sat there

staring at the morning sun, feeling it's heat against my face. I had been up all night reading and I was exhausted. I took a deep breath and just relaxed into the moment. The beautiful sunlight radiated through my body and into my heart. For the first time in my life I was experiencing the Grace²³ of God. The feeling was overwhelming and unique, something I had never felt before in my life.

Imagine yourself as a radio, receiving thousands of signals but none are available without knowing the correct frequency (the radio stations address). Information is being transmitted, but all you are getting is static. Then suddenly, maybe even by accident you stumble across the correct address and then as if by magic, everything is perfectly clear. This was my experience and now, if you will excuse the cliché, the music was flowing.

The message was uncomplicated, but equally unbelievable. I was communicating with myself, and looking into a mirror, like a character in a video game seeing through the screen looking into the eyes of the player. I was somewhere else, controlling the game, maybe even playing a game. I knew in that moment this physical life was not real and that I existed before and will exist after this life is over. Although it was only a glimpse of the truth I knew it was certain and I wanted more. Besides I

²³ In Western Christian theology, **grace** is "the love and mercy given to us by God because God desires us to have it, not necessarily because of anything we have done to earn it". It is not a created substance of any kind. ... It is an attribute of God that is most manifest in the salvation of sinners.

had lots of free time on my hands since I sold my clinic and was unemployed.

FAST TRACK

There are many different ways to connect with God. Most organized religions offer systems where you can advance, in what amounts to a sort of holy 12 step program. These work, but they take a long time, however there is a fast track method available, for those who are brave or perhaps desperate. There is a secret door that exists inside our mind, really it's a wormhole, that opens the path directly to God. Knowledge about finding and opening this door can be found in the religious traditions of all cultures. These techniques have been safely used for thousands of years to establish the connection and I was about to engage in the process myself.

Unlike what is commonly preached we don't start our adventure in a church or holy place, but instead it begins inside the brain, where there is a small group of cells that make up the pineal gland. The pineal gland that is a pine cone shaped structure synthesizes and secretes melatonin, a structurally simple hormone that communicates information about environmental lighting to various parts of the body. Ultimately, melatonin has the ability to entrain biological rhythms and has important effects on reproductive function of many animals. The light-transducing ability of the pineal gland has led some to call the pineal the "third eye".

Scientists recently have discovered that the pineal gland is capable of producing of a powerfully psychoactive chemical called DMT (Dimethyltryptamine). DMT appears to be responsible for many of the visions and hallucinogenic images that occur in near-death experiences and is made naturally by our own bodies. I would suggest that any serious about exploring DMT read Rick Strassman's book, **DMT: The Spirit Molecule** and then proceed to research on the internet. Rick did experiments with DMT and recorded that different people in the same study reported having the same hallucinations. For example, they were visited by a similar entity and shown similar visions. This is not the case with other psychoactive drugs like LSD. Something different is happening with DMT and remember it is made naturally in our own bodies, and also found in many plants.

There are many theories about DMT, but most are purposed by people who have never experienced it. I believe DMT opens a portal to another dimension and is the doorway our soul passes through when we die. DMT is the Key to unlocking all the knowledge of the Universe, it is the voice of God. Unfortunately, many people will only experience the release of DMT when they die, and that's a big price to pay to validate a theory, but there are two other ways to increase DMT production while we are alive. DMT can be triggered in our bodies through exposing our bodies to extended periods of darkness or we can take externally. Remember that many plants and animals have DMT so we can extract DMT from these

plants and then consume it. It is through DMT that you can fast track enlightenment without paying your dues in a Yoga studio. I am convinced that what happened to me at Alex Grey's studio was a result of a small DMT release and not a spiked sake' drink. I researched all I could about DMT and preparing for my journey.

MAKING DMT

It turns out that you can extract illegal DMT from a legal plant source, Mimosa Hostilis Bark. The process is simple and can be performed in your kitchen. All you need to do is buy the Mimosa or similar plant, such as Phalaris Grass and do a primary extraction using NaOH (Lye). DMT extraction is illegal and I was advised not to include the instructions here. It is strange that a product found naturally inside my brain has been made illegal by the government. I know many reading this book will discount what I have just written, but seriously think about this... I ask you, does that make sense? DMT is produced by your own brain and yet you will go to jail if you extract it from a plant, which by itself is a perfectly legal plant. Anyways, just do a google search on DMT extraction and there are plenty of videos and free resources on the internet. In summary, if you want to consume ayahuasca legally, attend a ceremony conducted by a legally recognized ayahuasca church. There are several right here in Florida and they are protected by the religious freedom act. I personally endorse, Soul Quest

Ayahuasca Church of Mother Earth²⁴. Just some advice, if you decide on this path be prepared to make a considerable donation to the church and expect to be very sick during the process. It is not easy, and you better be prepared, so do your homework, this is not a spa treatment or weekend at the Ritz Carlton.

Now there is another way, a legal and less complicated method to increasing DMT production in your brain that I learned from Taoist Master Mantak Chai called Darkness Technology. By exposing your brain to darkness for 12 days you can cause DMT production. Here is my personal experience as recorded in my diary.

One Week Prior: Started taking 500 mg Tryptophan a day. This is a precursor to Melatonin and we will need large amounts of Melatonin to synthesize the DMT. Also I bought a blindfold from Manta Sleep. This allows me to keep my eyes open and still have no light enter my brain even in the middle of the day in a bright light room. I stocked my home with food that I could easily prepare and set up a network of string throughout my home going to different places I may need to visit. I had paths to the bathroom, kitchen, treadmill in the garage, outside on my back porch, basically these were roads I could travel without seeing. Next I closed off as many rooms to light as I could and made sure there were no lights left on. I told my family and friends I would be out of the loop for 12 days and only to contact me if there was an emergency.

²⁴ 1371 Hancock Lone Palm Road, Orlando FL 32828, 407-360-6297, info@ayahuascachurches.org

My wife went on a vacation to see her son and I was all alone.

Day 1-3: Easy first few days, very boring but a bit fun banging around. I spend a lot of time lying down and trying to guess what time it was. During this time my pineal gland was making between 2.5-5mg of Melatonin a day and I started feeling more relaxed and as I mentioned a greater need to sleep. I stopped thinking about schedules and agendas and found myself letting go of a lot of my anxieties.

Day 4-6: This was the hardest time for me. I lost track of time and could not tell if it was day or night. I started getting anxious about how much food I was eating and if I was getting enough water. I was losing track of time, I thought maybe I had been in darkness for almost two weeks when it had only been one. I was super bored and trying to break up my waking hours in a routine of meditation and exercise but I kept getting confused. My dreams were very intense and I started having daydreams when I was not even asleep or at least I could not tell if I had slept or not. Between days 4-6 the Melatonin level in the brain increases to between 15-20 mg and the body starts producing Proline. This affects the neurotransmitters of the brain and permits visions and dream like states. Usually this is only activated in the womb or during lucid dreams, but now after a week of darkness I was making it.

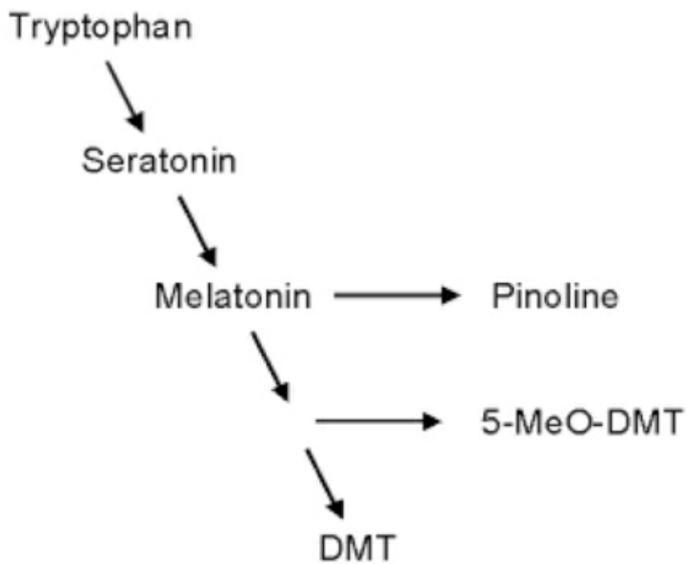
Day 7-9: As the length of time in darkness increased so did my Melatonin production. Sometime between days 7-11 it is estimated that the Melatonin levels in the brain

increase to over 25 mg and the pineal gland starts to synthesize 5-methoxy-dimethyl-tryptamine (5-MeO-DMT) and dimethyltryptamine (DMT). This psychoactive switches on 40% more of the cerebral cortex and wakes up the nervous system. At this stage I felt like I had been in darkness for more than a month. I was only sleeping about 3 hours every 24 hours but I was not tired. I would frequently have full dreams or visions, while I was fully awake. As an example, I would be eating my breakfast and experience a full dream where someone would start asking me questions. I started to hallucinate frequently and was able to lie down and go directly into a lucid dream at will. My hands and feet seemed to become very sensitive and I could feel my skin and how it held space in the room. I could hear all sorts of weird things including the sound of no sound, which I know sounds weird, but there is a buzzing like sound that fills space that I could hear. It was never quiet. Sometimes the sound of nothing got so loud I could not sleep. One day I heard it raining outside and I crawled out to my backyard to lie in the lawn chair. I think it was likely in the middle of the night because of the quietness and the smell, I fell to sleep and when I woke up I knew it was morning because I felt the sun's warmth on my face. That reset my clock a bit but by noon that day I had again lost touch with what time it was.

Day 11-12: The last two days are the hardest to describe. At this point my brain was synthesizing DMT and I started to see through the blindfold. I could walk out

to the kitchen without the string path to guide me. My vision seemed to function in the infrared and ultraviolet spectrum. I don't think I slept in the last two days and I was constantly dreaming or hallucinating, I couldn't tell the difference. If I thought about anything it immediately manifested. For example I thought about my grandfather Joe and next thing he was sitting in the room talking to me. Or I would think about some crazy xmas dinner I had 10 years ago and I could smell and taste the turkey and gravy. At first this was very stressful and it caused me a lot of fear, but I just told myself I was dreaming and went with it. I spend all day in meditation just following any images or visions that came into my mind.

Here is the biochemical pathway to synthesize DMT from Melatonin,



I can tell you that nothing was as beautiful as seeing the sun again after 12 days of darkness. Now I would take a few days and read the diary I had kept throughout the experiment. Unfortunately most was gibberish. It appeared most of the times I thought I was recording information I was not conscious. For 12 days, I had only about 6 entries so it seems that most of the time was spent sleeping and dreaming.

REBIRTH

So what did I get from all this alchemy? Well simply stated I reconnected. I was sick and for me the darkness was my medicine. People always ask me to describe my experience with DMT. It's difficult, I don't know how to explain what I saw. There are just no words to describe the emotions. How can I explain a shape that has never existed, the sound of a color or how it feels to be born? You get the idea. But let me give you some generalizations that I was able to take from the experience, and maybe you can meditate on these points and see where it brings you.

I am not the voice inside my head. When I was sitting in darkness I very quickly started to hear chatter and I realized that if I was observing all this chatter then I was not the one doing it. It became very obvious I was the observer. This was my first lesson, that the causes of all my problems in the past has been because I was listening to this "trouble maker". I was identifying with the voice, what the Taoists call the "monkey mind" and assuming we were the same. Once I stopped identifying with this

voice I was free. The problems in life are not the life itself, but all the troubles the voice inside your head creates. I realized I was inside my head somewhere in the back, observing all this drama and because I was separate from it I could choose not to be apart of it.

Next, stop fighting with life. Everyday your 5 senses will deliver information to your brain that your voice will start to analyze and make drama out of. Immediately when you feel this happening, release it. Your voice is always trying to make everything ok and make sense of everything that is going on. This is the wrong approach, instead just observe what is happening and allow it to pass through you. Do not get involved in your minds own drama.

Quickly, during my darkness retreat it became obvious to me that I was not who I thought I was. First I had this other person inside my head, the voice (monkey mind) and secondly because of this I realized I as not even human, just something else watching one. This was a real eye opener for me and over and over in my meditations I tried to push back to see who and where I was. I never got the answer, but I did feel that I was remotely located and projecting my consciousness from that point into this human form. A form that I was sharing with another entity of consciousness, that damn voice.

Many times throughout the darkness experiment I would focus on something and it immediately manifested into my reality. For example, I thought about my grandfather who had been dead for 30 years and suddenly

he was sitting with me in the room. I assumed I was dreaming or hallucinating but as time went on I could not tell the difference. Reality blended and my thoughts or more specifically my emotions instantly created my reality. This was so profound for me that I no longer question the ability to manifest things into the physical world through my emotions. I have started incorporating emotional energies into my daily visualizations and have successfully created many things out of thought alone. There is nothing more powerful and dangerous than what we think with e-motion. The format is simple,

1. Ask for what you want without delay.
2. Believe it has already happened. Don't doubt.
3. Intensify the feelings and emotions that accompany you getting what you asked for.

The final point I want to offer is concerning death. I think most of us fear death, I know I did. We are worried about the unknown and of course afraid that there will be pain and trauma associated with it. But we all know death is coming and cannot be avoided. During my 12 days of darkness I made peace with death, meaning I accepted it. I know that the body will die and so will the voice that is Stephen Stokes. This life is limited and that is why it is so precious. Once I accepted the reality of death, I committed to living with more awareness during the time I have left. I made peace with the voice and let it have its say in everything but I don't follow most of its advice. I always remember I am the observer and I will be still conscious long after Stephen Stokes has passed away.

And so I worked harder, with more awareness to my life and the world in which I live. I saw everything as part of me without separation. I resumed my meditation and yoga practices. I began to regularly ingest Valerian Root, Kava Kava, Willow Bark and Boswellia plant medicines to help my body heal. I added CBD oil, without any THC and found it also helped a lot. Finally, with all this effort I was able to get a grip on my anxiety or as I like to say, “I learned to work with the condition and stopped fighting it.” I did a stool test, from a company called Biome and it showed that I had almost no beneficial bacteria in my colon. I learned that these bacteria produce many hormones including neurotransmitters like serotonin. Unbalanced colon flora is one of the chief causes of disease including mental illness. Slowly I began a protocol of killing the bad bugs in my colon and feeding the good ones. Affectionately known as "weed and feed", I started seeing good improvement in my mood and anxiety. My theory is that years and years of stress had simply destroyed my healthy bacteria and allowed the bad guys to move in. It is difficult to restore balance to the flora, I have outlined the protocol in my book *Heal Yourself* for anyone who would like more information. I used a combination of herbs, and sauna treatments to detox my body and finally resolve my problems.

THE REALTOR DOCTOR

I was feeling better and wanting to be more productive. I had many debates about what to do next and

I felt like the world was mine, but I also did not want to jump right back into the exact environment that made me so sick. I decided to study real estate, (like everyone else here in Southwest Florida) and after passing the examination, I got my state license. It took me a few months to really get my feet wet in real estate but then things started working for me. I sold a few homes and was given a few awards from my broker including, Rising Star. Suddenly, I was no longer Dr. Stokes, but Steve the Realtor, www.meetingsteve.com for those interested. What a change of pace and what incredible times we live in where there is an opportunity to change careers and basically do whatever we want. I was a new person, with a new career. My clients have no idea about my past. I feel like I am in a witness protection program, but I am gracious. If you are looking for real estate in Southwest Florida, Cape Coral, Fort Myers area, give me a call.

DIRT MEDICINE

Is that the end of my story? Well not really. You see occasionally I would still get phone calls from old patients looking for advice. I tell them I am a Realtor now but to be polite I usually give them some recommendations. Just some herbs and exercises nothing very complicated, but to my surprise, most reported back to me how much better they were doing. Next thing I knew, I was getting more and more people calling me for advice. It started becoming a thing and taking up a lot of my time. A friend suggested I allocate a specific time to do nothing but online

consultations and set up a sort of virtual clinic. I made a simple websites and next thing I knew I was doing 8 or 10 of these consults a week. People would call in on their computers and after a 20 minute chat and review of their medical history I would recommend some herbs and specific therapies that may help. I charged a nominal fee and before long I was booked out 2 weeks at time. My wife, the accountant, started seeing this additional income and ask me what I was doing. She couldn't believe I had my foot back into medicine after all the problems she believed it caused in my life.

I though about that. Was she right? What was I doing crawling back in this saddle after the last ride almost destroyed me? But maybe this was a different horse, so to speak. I had no overhead, no staff to pay and everything was being done online. Plus I seemed to enjoyed it, so far I wasn't stressed and I even felt like it was fun. Helping sick people is very satisfying, there is nothing that compares. It was interesting that I could get very good results through only using nutritional recommendations (diet and herbs) and home care instructions (things the patient could do on their own). I started to wonder why I had used all those expensive machines... but I just could not go there. I realized it was not being a doctor that I hated, but it was the politics of medicine. Once I removed all the red tape, I could unpack all the things I loved. I know it sounds pretentious, but if I just do things my way then I have no problems. It's all about avoiding those Vampires. One day while having lunch with a few old friends I was telling

them about my new, completely stripped down, virtual clinic. “What are you running, a porno channel?”, Ali joked. “No, I just listen to them tell me about their problems and then I recommend food and plants... maybe a few exercises.” I responded. “Wow that’s really ground level stuff.” Ali said. Then my friend Will looked up from his taco and said, “It’s dirt medicine.” I thought about this and Will was right, it was really dirt medicine, because it was so basic but also because I recommended food and herbs that all come from the ground.

Eventually, I rented a small office, located in a very unimpressive building. The only clue is my name on the door that reads,

Stephen Stokes, DC
Dirt Medicine
(by appointment only)

Inside there is nothing fancy, a single treatment room that houses a solitary exam table. I see the patients I choose and not the other way around. I use herbs, lifestyle advice, acupuncture and a small amount of manual medicine, using my hands to free tension in the patients body and unlock the innate healing potential that exists in all of us. There are no treatment plans, no expensive fees. People come because they see benefit. Everything is scheduled online and I have no staff. I work a few days a week, some weeks more, some weeks less. I still maintain my other interests including my real estate practice. I am happy, less stressed and financially stable with lots of extra

time to enjoy the life I have been given. Sometimes my step son Michael visits and together we work on patients. Michael is a Osteopathic Physician (D.O), board certified in Family Medicine. A incredible healer in his own right and a very skilled doctor. Unlike myself, Michael combines standard medical tools such as drugs and surgery with alternative methods, I believe he represents the best of both worlds and I am very proud of what I have seen him achieve. Michel actually graduated while I was writing this book.

This was a very different practice compared to only a year ago. There is no coffee in the lobby, no TV playing Fox News and no staff running around feeding birds. Just my iPhone, playing a Spotify jazz station. The sound is barely noticeable. The walls have no paintings and are painted industrial eggshell white. There is nothing to focus your attention on except me, siting on a stool next to a small desk typing on my laptop.

“Hello Tom, let’s take a look”. I gently grasp Tom’s right wrist and feel his radial pulse, the heart rate variability is off, the pulse rate is too consistent. I look into his eyes, ears, and mouth. I analyze his tongue and nails. I notice the smell of his breath and the slight perspiration on his forehead. Not good, his system is stressed, sympathetics are over active.

Next I place my hands on his chest, “Take a deep breath Tom”. He struggles to expand the chest even an inch. I listen with my stethoscope, to his heart, his lungs and his stomach. He reports he is constipated and not

sleeping much at night. I palpate his spine from top to bottom and note several areas of immobility, in particular his sacrum and his occiput are locked. The diaphragm is tight on the right because the Gallbladder is inflamed and his left knee is twisted. I work on him for about 15 minutes, using my hands and a small vibrator device to free up the fascia and pull the stomach down from the esophagus. There is a brass bowl next to the treatment table, filled with clean water. I use this to maintain moisture on the patients skin as I pull and release the tissues. Many therapists use oils and creams, but these are dead elements, and water is alive. Water has been proven to hold and transmit memory²⁵ and I use it as a conduit to move some of my energy into the sick persons body. Sometimes I drop some Frankincense into the water, but mainly it is just fresh, pure H₂O. Regardless, the water acts as the perfect lubricant allowing enough friction to soften the tension without damaging the patients skin.

When I am done, Tom reports an 80% reduction in his pain and he asks me where's the bathroom, it seems his bowels have loosened up. "Nice work Doc", he announces. "I don't know how you do it, but man I feel a lot better. That's gotta be Holy Water you use, right?" Tom

²⁵ Masaru Emoto was a Japanese scientist, he studied the molecular structure of water. He wanted to know that does human thoughts and emotions have any impact on water? When water was exposed to different emotions the molecular structure of water changed. With this research, he discovered that the water we drink and use has Memory.

is more correct than he will ever understand and as he gets off my treatment table I pass him a hand written note that reads,

1. Saligesic (white willow bark) 1 pill 3x a day
2. Boswellia Complex 2 pills 3 times a day
3. Valerian Root Complex 2 before bed

I tell Tom to eat 180 grams of protein a day and no coffee after twelve o'clock, for the next 2 weeks. If at that time he is still hurting, he is to get back in and see me for another round. Less than 30% of people I treat need to come back for a second session. The herbs are from Standard Process and must be bought online using a patient direct account. I sell nothing in the office except my services. I see 8 patients this morning, a half an hour apart and then I take the afternoon off to show houses to my real estate clients. I ride my bicycle home from the clinic, which is only a mile from my home. I get a shower and change into dress pants and a sports coat, then I take my Jaguar XJ Sport to meet my real estate clients. Both worlds remain separate and never clash, maintaining the Tao in perfect balance. On my wrist is a Rolex but also a bracelet of copper, invoking the planetary energy of Venus, again it's about balance.

FINAL WORDS

I don't believe doctors live very long, or at least not the good ones. In this line of work we are always transmitting the patient's energy through our own circuits. I have even experienced a patient's condition on more than one occasion after helping them heal from it. What sort of sick joke is that? I have learned the hard way to be careful and always release the energy after the patient leaves. Something as simple as washing my hands can do the trick but it's still hard not to wear yourself out. If I miss yoga, if I don't eat right or skip my meditation (or is it medication), I get sick. I am like a sponge used to clean up other people's ailments. This is the real, unglamorous life of a healer but once you are wired this way it is impossible to do anything else. People often remark that I am fragile, but they don't know my history. I have certainly burned the flame bright in my past and now having just past 50 years alive I am more interested in maintaining the light a bit longer, albeit not as bright.

My genetics favors longevity, my grandmother lived into her mid 90's, but I am not so certain about my future. I always hear people complaining that time is running out, but that's not true. It is not time that is running out, but our lives. Time will remain long after we are gone. Life is so short and precious that we must make every second count and we must be selfish in how we spend this irreplaceable gift. Don't let other people determine how you will live but most importantly be sure to enjoy your life, every second. So in closing I invite you to join me in

taking a deep breath... in through the nose and now hold it a few seconds, then release it softly through the mouth empty the lungs. Now look around your environment, and ask yourself, “What are the possibilities of this moment?”



Author, Dr. Stephen Stokes hanging out at Brooke's Natural Food Restaurant with Fox News anchor Patrick Nolan.

