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Chapter 5: Living a Healthy Life

What is a healthy life?

A healthy life is not only about fitness, it is about each of you taking responsibility to the optimum operation of your respective bodies. Especially in our current times, the responsibility of caring for the optimum function of your body must be a joint experience. Just the economic results of one person within a couple getting sick could be catastrophic! So the responsibility of health is for both members of this coupling.

A healthy life doesn't necessarily mean about fitness, meaning performance of a sport or sports, the perfect looking body or the ability to climb El Capitan. A healthy life means that you are doing all that you can do to optimize your basic genetic makeup to physically function normally and to avoid self-inflicting diseases. Most diseases can be avoided or at least minimized through lifestyle choices, diet and exercise. All things related to cohabitation. So by looking at health from a couples perspective, your choices of what you eat, do or not do and environment that you choose to live in, is a couple's decision.

Why is it important to share a healthy life?

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, a sick partner can be devastating to a couple financially and emotionally. A study done by the Milken Institute shows that chronic disease costs the U.S. economy more than \$1 trillion annually and could balloon to over \$6 trillion by the middle of the century. The good news, according to this study is that these numbers are totally reversible realizing that these chronic illnesses are preventable by changing our lifestyle which include diet and exercise.

Things happen in life that have no control over, they are called accidents. Being a part of an automobile accident, or slipping and falling on an icy sidewalk or eating a strange food that you didn't know that you are severely allergic. They will impact a couple as much or more than disease but the difference is that an accident is an accident while diet and lifestyle choices can prevent many degenerative diseases and conditions. So out of the respect to each other, health must be a strong consideration and focus for every loving couple.

Good friends of ours can tell you how health has impacted their lives. They are a lovely couple who have spent 50 plus years together and for the most part, they aged well together. They did what most couples of that age do, they went to the doctors

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for occasional check-ups but health itself was not a focus. They ate what they wanted, kept active but not to the point that it positively impacted their health. When he was diagnosed with stage four liver cancer, he went very quickly. Leaving her without a plan, no financial support and alone. If they had taken more responsibility for their respective health, diet and lifestyle and less on fancy vacations and how they appeared to others, maybe they could have had a different outcome? I know that she would have wanted a different outcome.

Other reasons why caring for each other's health is important is it's fun! When you're able to physically function better, you can do more things together. I'm not just talking about doing extreme sports together, I'm talking about being able to do basic things like taking a nature hike at a local park to enjoy the great outdoors. Or if you're not a nature couple, be able to enjoy a shopping spree without feeling overexerted. You are given one body to care for during your lifetime and with a little bit of consistent care, it continues to operate well enough to fully enjoy your life together. Of course the best reason you can convince your significant other to give their health more focus is that sex is much more enjoyable when your body is at peak operations!

What are your couples health goals?

Now don't be scared. I'm not talking about a major overhaul (unless you need to!) I'm talking about making gradual shifts in your daily behavior that benefits a healthy life. One goal is to plan more meals at home using only locally grown (within 100 mile radius) and reducing the amount of over refined starches in your diet. Or setting a goal of taking a daily walk together after dinner instead of plopping on the sofa catching up on the latest episode of Game of Thrones or Stranger Things!

By adding small shifts toward your own optimum health as a couple, you get to support each other in the best of ways. Even if I don't need to lose more weight, maybe my sweetheart needs to release a few extra pounds off those love handles, lower their cholesterol or blood sugar. I would want to share their health journey to show my best support to them. Recently my best friend Deb reported back to me that their doctor suggested that her husband abstain from red meat starting immediately. Not an easy task given that he's been a big steak and potatoes eater most of his life. She didn't have to abstain from eating red meat as he has to, but she'll do so because it's her way of supporting him in his quest to keep his health a priority within their relationship.

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Why is it important to share your health goals?

Remember it's not your health goals but our health goals. I'm aware that some people are very private with the details of their health such as how much they weigh, the girth of their stomachs or cholesterol score from their last check-up. If you're shy about sharing some of those facts, you're not playing full out in your relationship. In the past, I always would cajole my husband to step on scale to get a baseline where we are in real time. He used to avoid the scale like the plague! Eventually I convinced him that the scale was not his enemy, it was just a tool for us to use as we deemed fit. I continued to tell him that if standing on the scale would expose to me that he was a bit over his ideal weight, well guess what, I saw you every day in the buff and there are no surprises to me if you needed to lose a jiggly bit or two!

You know your partner. You know their weak spots and tender areas. Treat them as you'd like to be treated. By encouraging and loving your spouse how they are at any stage of their health is the best and only way to be. If you truly love yourself, you'll honor your partner's body as you do your own. From that perspective, now you can choose where you'd like to go for your health goals.

Give yourself the gift of learning what true health is and how to continually achieve it. I'm not advocating any particular way of viewing health for you. But do the research for yourself. Read books on the subject of health. Listen to podcasts from authorities in the field of optimum health. My husband and I have always been big water drinkers. Yes we love our wine with dinner and the occasional Martini when we go out, but water is huge in our life. So we invested in a Kangen water ionizing machine. We discussed it. We even got samples of the water to experience it ourselves. It was one of the biggest positive impacts on our health that we could have done as a couple. But we made it as a joint decision towards our continued journey to optimum health. Just to reiterate, I am not advocating that you purchase the same Kangen water ionizing machine as we did. We are suggesting that you do your own research and determine what is best for you and your significant other. Read books on the subject like *The Rejuvenation Enzyme* by Hiromi Shinya, MD and *Reverse Aging* by Sang Whang. But make these decision as a couple, not individually. NOTE: If you do go the route of purchasing a water ionizer for yourself, be aware that there are a lot of imitations out of the market that don't come even close to the quality of the Kangen water. Just look at the ads online that say, "As good as a Kangen machine but half the price!" Don't believe it. Do your due diligence and reading before investing in your health.

So choose what you and your partner need to focus on for your health and make a simple plan and put it into action.

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How can you make health a center point of your relationship?

As the popular shoe company says, “Just do it!” Choose to make health central in your relationship, period! And not to sound like a broken record, but remember, health, not fitness should be your goal as a couple. If activities like running, skiing, hiking and other highly physical activities are paramount to you as a couple, that’s great. But that is not health. You want to be together for a long time to share a vibrant life together. You want that life to be free or as free as possible from degenerative disease that impacts your quality of life.

Now you may have come into your relationship with issues already. Many of my clients married for a second or third time. Yes, repeating the same mistakes. But through my process, finally found the man or woman of their dreams. But because it’s later in their lives, one or both of them may have some current health challenges. Well obviously we need to be realistic with what we have in front of us and not go into “would’a, should’a, could’a” mode. If your new life partner is diabetic or pre-diabetic, than learn everything you can do to support that person with this health challenge. Many borderline, adult onset diabetics can sometimes revert back to being a non-diabetic through a better diet and exercise regimen. Make health a center point in your relationship so the quality of this new relationship grows and has longevity.

A good friend of mine and my husband’s found his perfect mate and they are totally happy together. They came into their relationship with him having some hefty health challenges that they didn’t let that impact their lives anymore than they have to. His health challenges was part of the package of who he is. It does not define him but it is part of what he has to deal with on a daily basis. So what do they do as a couple? They do just what every couple should do. They decided to put a focus on what they have control on like what they eat, the quality of activity they do and the quality of information and thought that goes through them on a daily basis. They made health a center point of their relationship because they found each other later in life and want to spend as much time together as possible as a loving, caring couple. They don’t take their longevity and health for granted so they embrace each other’s health as a priority.

Health Homework:

1. Do a health assessment for each other and make a plan in keeping each other in optimum health.

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2. Make one actionable change toward a healthy lifestyle like cooking fresh product together or going for a walk together and just do it!
3. Reevaluate your covered health care with a trusted insurance professional every year to keep your coverage up to date to your needs. Even though you best health insurance is eating right, exercise and a positive mental outlook, accidents can devastate your life in an instant.