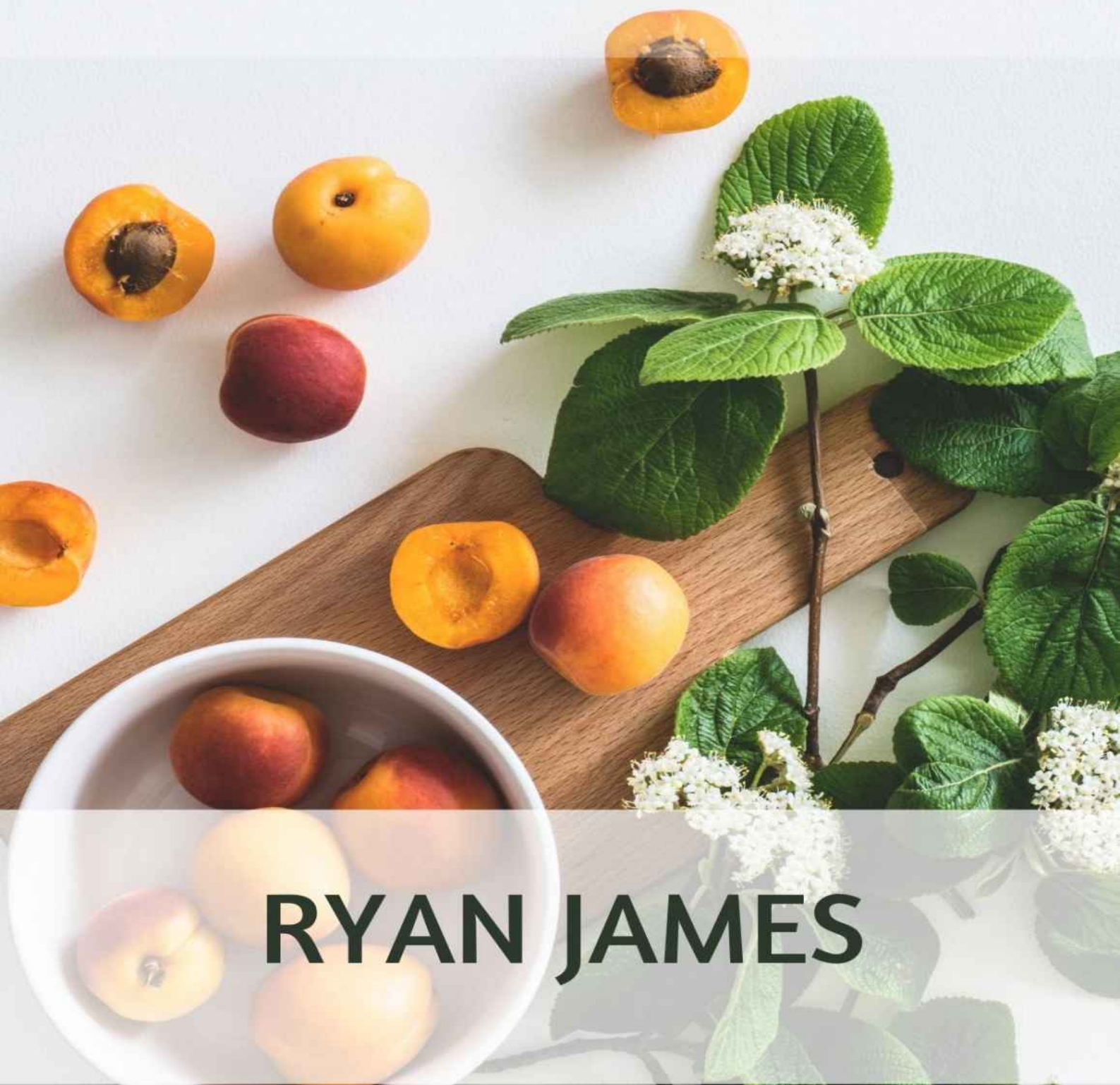


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# A Life in Balance

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**RYAN JAMES**

# **A Life in Balance**

**The Book of Health and Soul**

*Ryan James*

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# 1

## **Health – pipe dream or feasible?**

In 1986, the member states of the WHO agreed on comprehensive guidelines for global health policy. The underlying concept of health, which is still valid today, is:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Is that an unrealistic ideal, or does it really exist that you can “completely” comfortable? Be that as it may, this definition met with general agreement.

Health is not just the opposite of illness. Health has now become an industry and plays an important role not only in medicine, but also in politics and environmental protection, psychology and relationship issues, industry and consumer protection - and ultimately our health is also closely related to the lifestyle that each one of us chose on his own responsibility.

Each of the areas mentioned has a major impact on our health; but making changes to the lifestyle we choose is arguably the most effective change we can make. Therefore, the topics of exercise, nutrition and relationships should be highlighted here; own experiences and insights from work and everyday life also flow into this.

### ***In the whole world***

You don't get health in trade, but through lifestyle!

If you don't do something for your health every day, you will have to sacrifice a lot of time for the disease one day!  
Sebastian Knipp

Many people sacrifice their health to make a lot of money.  
Later they sacrifice their money  
to get healthy again.

Diseases do not come to us out of the blue,  
but develop out of daily sins against nature. When these have accumulated  
suddenly break out. Hippocrates

A happy heart brings good recovery,  
but a depressed spirit withers the bones. Solomon, Proverbs  
17, 22

The easiest way to lose health is to drink to it!

All of this wisdom suggests that there must be a connection between body, soul, spirit and lifestyle. In fact, studies show that up to 80% of physical and emotional illnesses are directly related to how we think and behave (Leaf 2013).

### ***Personal Experience***

Even as a young person I was fascinated by the human body. Through my studies I got more insight into this marvel of creation, got to know it better. Over the years, this has resulted

in a sense of responsibility towards my body. I learned to train my body and keep it fit through physical exercise.

However, I soon realized that various components had to work together in order to stay healthy: Without a balanced, sensible diet, I can't stay fit during training in the long run. My mental state (mood) also has a major influence on my well-being. I can be totally fit physically, but what use is all physical fitness if my soul is bad? And yet: Very often in

## **Freedom wants to be learned**

Throughout my life I realized that I was mentally more resilient, could endure more and also recover from physical ailments faster than my fellow human beings.

There is a connection, an interplay between body, soul and spirit. And we can play along, influence the game!

Health is a precious commodity, everyone wants it. It sounds provocative, even nonsensical, but: The biggest obstacle to gaining and maintaining health is often ourselves - each one of us. It can also be blamed on the "inner weaker self". (Does it even exist? Maybe it's just a combination of wrong priorities, being overwhelmed and exhausted, indifference and resignation? Maybe.) But that doesn't change the fact that we often stand in our own way. Then:

Each of us can decide, for something, against something. We have free will. This is a glorious gift from God. But freedom needs to be learned, because freedom has consequences.

Because we want to be healthy, we pay attention to our body, perceive its signals and want to know as much as possible about its functions - how they work, what's going on in our body. If parts of our body no longer function smoothly, they cannot simply be replaced. Today's medicine works enormous miracles, but it cannot replace every part; In addition, our body is not a car – it must be actively prevented throughout



life from rejecting transplanted organs. So we prefer to keep it in the composition it naturally has!

Since the aging process can start as early as the age of 23, we should learn early on to treat ourselves and our bodies responsibly. Here parents play an important role, their behavior often shapes more than their words:

I can raise my children how I want  
they copy everything I do.

But friends, teachers and the media also influence and shape the attitudes of young people and thus their lifestyle as adults - not only in dealing with their bodies, but of course in all areas of life. Because a life in balance nurtures body and soul and pleases both – with exercise, nutrition and rest.

Our hectic times don't make it easy for us to find the necessary rest. We are often put under pressure from the most varied sides and levels. It is not always easy to pull the brakes here, to differentiate oneself, and it has to be learned.

Try a day a week, or at least half a day, that you take away from commitments, when you don't have to do anything, when you can live as you please.

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# **Ourbody**

Man is a wonderful, unimaginably complicated being. His data, very soberly: A factory controlled centrally by the brain, electrical works, air conditioning and sewage treatment plant, thinking computer with the luxury equipment “love and hate”. A being whose organism keeps itself alive for decades and, through constant self-checks, ensures that it functions - almost - smoothly.

Composition: 100 trillion microscopically small individual parts, fantastically coordinated and coordinated. In a healthy state, they can constantly renew and even repair themselves. This marvel is kept going by a fist-sized pump, the heart, which beats 100,000 times a day and sends the nutrients through the body in five liters of blood. The lungs get the oxygen they need from the 20,000 liters of air they breathe every day. Exhaust gases are exhaled. Normal operating temperature: 37 °C.

But unfortunately: prone to wear and tear. Electron microscopes can now investigate the miracle of man with a magnification of 200,000x almost down to the last corner.

Werner Gitt (2003)

Our body is truly a marvel that should fascinate anyone who studies it. Throughout human history there have been very different approaches to the human body; in our culture he was mostly seen very isolated.

## **Body and Soul in theconventional medicine**

The findings of conventional medicine and the good medical care in our country are valuable achievements; but the human

body is still not fully understood. Our highly engineered science brings new, sometimes sensational insights. The latest devices in brain research and quantum physics are discovering amazing things.

Unfortunately, conventional medicine has neatly separated body and soul for centuries – the human being was no longer viewed and treated as a whole; only his body was considered, but his soul was largely ignored.

In return, alternative healing methods emerged. Alternative medicine took up the cause of “holism” in the treatment of the patient. It is understandable that people are increasingly looking for help there.

Can she keep what she promises? Or are there “undesirable side effects” here as well, perhaps in the mental sphere?

## **Body and Soul in the Religions**

In some religions the body is not given the attention it deserves. An example is the traditional Christian faith, the religion of the “Christian Occident”, which is accused of “enmity towards the body”. Not wrongly; this is due in large part to the Greek influences to which early Christianity was exposed – on the one hand the overemphasis on the body, on the other hand the masochistic tendencies of the Stoics and the Platonic and Gnostic concepts of reality.

These influences managed to blur the Bible’s understanding of the body for many centuries; the triad of body, soul and spirit became a sharp tripartite division, in which the spirit was given by far the greatest value. The result was neglect of the body, which is not what the Bible teaches.

I experienced the influence of the Greek body cult very intensively during my sports studies. I recognized very early on how valuable my body is and I did everything I could to train it optimally, down to the last muscle. I emulated the Greek model of the shapely Adonis body.

## **Body and Soul- both is important**

*Take care of your body*

*as if you would live forever, and take care of your soul,*

*like you have to die tomorrow!*

## **Body awareness – the art of living in my body**

Every human being has a body feeling since childhood. With our senses we perceive our surroundings and ourselves. We are in relationship to nature, to other people and to ourselves. We are made for relationship, we feel, we feel.

Anyone who feels comfortable in their body and has accepted it has a completely different charisma, a different demeanor. Self-esteem and behavior change positively. However, how we treat ourselves also has an effect on our fellow human beings and our environment - a pleasant side effect if you feel comfortable in your own skin.

Having a healthy relationship with our body is an art of living. There is an art to feeling at home in your body; it consists in not simply using it, but in inhabiting it. You have to discover it, perceive it, pay attention to it, become familiar with it.

For this it is very helpful to deal with the anatomy and physiology of the body. Unfortunately, we often only become aware of our body when pain or illness occurs. But if we know our body's needs and how it works, we can prevent and reduce pain, injuries and diseases. Anyone who has learned to listen

to their body's signals and understand its messages will find it easier to treat their body with care and respect.

Our heart provides a small insight into the fantastic structure of the body:

The heart - more than a pump with a technical twist

Did you know that the human heart beats 100,000 times in a day, which is 2.5 billion times in 70 years? It could have filled a skyscraper with blood malisic. Blood flows in a densely branched network of 2,500 km of arteries, veins and capillaries – that is, after all, the distance from Paris to Moscow through our body...

<sup>3</sup>Werner Gitt (2003, p. 49)

## **Between body hostility and narcissism**

There are many different reasons why we exercise and play sports. You can exercise too little and you can overdo it. As is so often the case, the right balance is also important here.

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## **The one Extreme:body hostility**

Some people absolutely refuse to do anything for their body, for fitness, for looking good, for a better well-being. The first thing to do here is to take off these “glasses” and find out where this thinking comes from. Were there any negative key experiences? Maybe in physical education? Through sexual abuse in childhood? Sleep deprivation? Family patterns of overexploitation of the body through extreme work, overeating, substance-related addictions? Or are there still effects of the ideological influence in the first half of the last century that our parents and grandparents experienced (by no means all against their will)?

Or is it mental commitments that led to hostility to the body? “I’m a clumsy!” - “I have two left hands!” - “Sport is murder!” - “It doesn’t depend on me.” - “I can’t do it anyway.”

*The other extreme: preoccupation with the own body, narcissistic physical culture*

With this extreme behavior, the body becomes an idol, and in this case, too, the motivation should be examined carefully: Why do I go to the gym? Why do I spend so much time in the beauty center? Why am I doing this particular sport? What do I want to achieve with it? And what’s in it for me then?

When I was in my mid-twenties, I often had two motivations for my sporting activities. On the one hand, I strived for the Greek ideal of the body. At the same time, I went through some difficult crises, and the daily training was an outlet for me to process all the frustration, to vent. I often didn’t realize that I was asking too much of my body, and that wasn’t good for my body’s health. You could say I was abusing my body back then.

## **limits and limitations of body to get to know**

Life does not consist exclusively of complete harmony, absolute health and uninterrupted well-being. We should say goodbye to this illusion.

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The other Extreme: excessive occupation<sup>9</sup>To endure and resolve conflict, restore health, and regain well-being, we must find and remain centered. This process of finding is individual for everyone. Finding new access to your own body is a risk, it means trying out and exploring. There is a lot to discover along this path; we get to know ourselves better in different areas and on several levels. Physical limitations and handicaps naturally pose a particular challenge in this process.

In my many years of professional activity, I often had to give lessons, even if I didn't feel well. I often had physical pain due to injury or illness. Sometimes it was also "mental pain", which is why I would have preferred to lie down on the couch or go straight to bed. But when you're self-employed, that's often not possible. There you have to

"standing on the mat" - as a sports and gymnastics teacher in the truest sense

of the word.

I learned a lot in the process. The movement was good for my psyche, so I usually felt better afterwards. Even with physical ailments, I usually feel relief after the lesson - but only if I do not (as so often in the past) go beyond the tolerable level of pain.

Over the years I have learned to understand my body's signals better and better. I have become more sensitive, both in dealing with my body and on an emotional level - and, no wonder, also for the needs and hardships of my fellow human beings. I am becoming more and more aware of the enormous impact my thinking and my emotional life have on my body and thus on my health.

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# Move

to hunt wrestle run to swim shoot throw to fly leap drive ... and then they don't know what to do there! Willy Meurer, born 1934

## **Sports power healthy! or early invalid?**

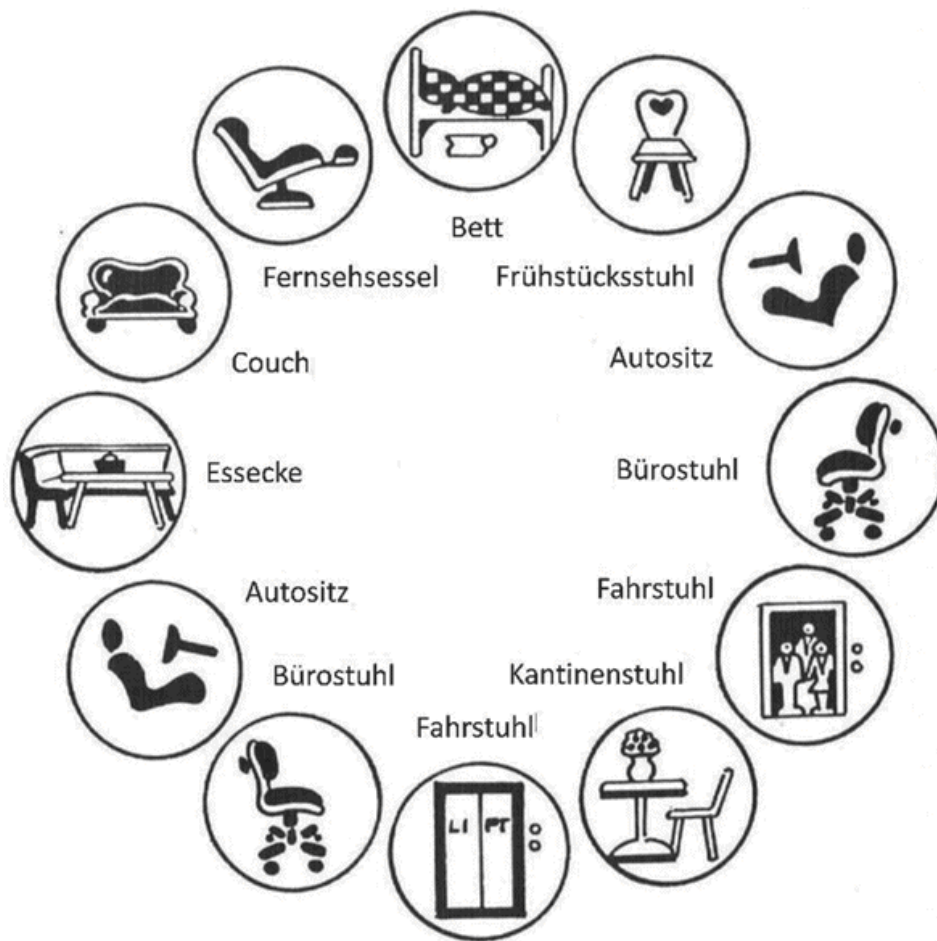
*Opinions differ on the subject of sport.*

- For the sociologist it is “the most beautiful minor matter in the world”.
- Sport used to be defined as “purposeless, pleasurable activity”.
- Sport should increase the ability to defend yourself or steer the desire for war in a more peaceful direction.
- The biologist says it is “a necessity for the human organism”.
- For some, sport acts like a drug and is therefore used in a very targeted manner.
- Others find it hard work, a waste of energy and time or even as a merciless elimination of the weaker.
- For some of our contemporaries, putting your feet up in front of the television or throwing coins into the cigarette machine is movement!

*The doctors agree:*

- Lack of exercise is the greatest risk factor for coronary heart disease (with the final destination being a heart attack). Nicotine does not have such an effect on our cardiovascular system. Gert von Kunhardt summed it up quite drastically: “Smoking is healthier than not moving.”
- Lack of exercise is often responsible for high blood pressure.
- IncreasedCholesterol levels can be caused by a lack of exercise.
- A sedentary lifestyle is responsible for a third of all deaths from heart disease, colon cancer or diabetes.

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Sieht so Ihr Tagesablauf aus?

If you also only stand in the elevator (an interesting combination of words, isn't it?) and otherwise only use your feet to get from one seat to the next as quickly as possible, then you should really make a change. In moderation, please – sport cannot give your life any meaning, but absolute abstinence does not make sense either. Don't make a religious war out of it. But people need exercise, and exercise is fun as long as it doesn't get out of hand.

Even small children show us that we could actually learn from them: Babies kick, children walk and hop, climb and run. Man is made to move. But unfortunately, as the saying goes: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Can one say lazy?

Unfortunately, our “inner bastard” is usually very quick to “heel” in these matters. But you can put him in his place or get him moving:

- Become aware and experience how good it is for you to move. Think about how exercise can benefit you.
- Link your activities with multiple benefits or pleasant side effects - some conversations are even easier to have on a walk than on the sofa. Enjoy the fresh wind, the view of nature, the trees, clouds, birds and flowers. Or the children playing in the park.
- In a sports or gymnastics group you can get to know new people in an informal and non-binding way. Even if you’ve lived in the village for decades, someone keeps moving here.
- For anyone who hates wasting time of any kind at heart, it’s easier to go it alone if you’re listening to something interesting (or important). No problem thanks to modern technology.
- How could you move around in your apartment, on the balcony, watching TV, ironing, even when it’s raining and dark? (Yes, there are treadmills that take up less space than an armchair.)
- Do you have a favorite CD that could “get you moving”? Or try dressing to the beat of the radio music.
- Or would it help you mentally if your exercise bike could charge a battery? If you’re tech-savvy, almost everyone has solar panels on their roof these days; why not produce “renewable energies” with your own body, so to speak?
- Try this, try that, until you find something you enjoy so much you don’t want to be without it.

Who rests, rusts. Physical activity is necessary into old age and feasible if our health allows it.

As already mentioned, our aging process begins at the age of 23. In old age, muscle breakdown accelerates and metabolic

processes become slower. Movement can effectively counteract both developments.

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Swinging: Johanna Quaas turns on her favorite device, the parallel bars.<sup>1</sup>

The 87-year-old cannot imagine life without sport.

## **What can Sports, What bring she?**

Sport or exercise can reduce the risk of developing the following diseases

fall ill:

- Heart attack
- diabetes
- colon cancer
- osteoporosis

- overweight (obesity)
- banal infections
- postural defects
- Back problems
- depressive moods

Sport can have a preventive effect and can be used for:

- ADHD
- violence prevention
- injuries
- after operations
- joint problems
- muscle weakness

Let's summarize:

- Sport or exercise helps to reduce stress.
- A well-trained person is more resilient on all levels, he can relax better and regenerate faster.
- Choosing the right type of exercise depends on age, but above all on personal preferences.
- Choose a sport that trains strength and endurance as well as mobility and coordination. (Functional full-body gymnastics is particularly recommended here.)
- Basically, a little is better than nothing. Just 30 minutes of activity a day is good for the heart; at the beginning they can be divided into three times ten minutes.

professor dr medical Uwe Tegtbur, Director of the Institute for Sports Medicine at the Hannover Medical School, reported in an interview with Jörg Blume in autumn 2013:

- Recently, it has been increasingly recognized that sport is also helpful for the treatment of illnesses; new mechanisms of action are constantly being discovered.
- Moderate endurance training increases the availability of free tryptophan in the treatment of depression.
- Training-related increase in heart volume improves endothelial function and cell aging can be delayed.
- Endurance training reduces oxidative stress and significantly lowers oxidized LDL cholesterol.
- Exercise lowers blood sugar, insulin or blood pressure.

The focus of the Institute for Sports Medicine at the Hannover Medical School is currently 1) outpatient sports programs for patients with chronic.

## **Sports as drug**

ische diseases of cancer, heart, lungs, musculoskeletal system, after transplantation, with an artificial heart, 2) offers to improve employee health and increase their ability to work and 3) top-class sports support.

***Overall it could be said: Physically active people live longer. This applies to both people with health-oriented fitness training as well as for high-performance athletes (Tegtbur 2014).***



## **Motionless childhood**

In children, physical inactivity has dramatic consequences:

- The muscles and organ systems often lack the regular stimuli required for normal development.
- Bone density, muscle strength and endurance, coordination and performance of many organs or the metabolism are not sufficiently developed.
- Aging starts earlier.

A lack of exercise among children and young people is not only due to the frequently mentioned computer games. Increasingly longer school days often no longer allow sport in a club. For this reason, higher priority should be given to physical education in schools; School and health policy should formulate common goals here.

As with everything in life, there are extremes in sports. Some people overly focus on the spiritual while neglecting their bodies. Others are so concerned with the shape and formation of their bodies that they neglect spiritual growth and maturation. Neither one nor the other testifies to a life in balance.

As already mentioned in advance and based on personal experience, sport can become a drug. Each person must find out for himself what suits him is good and where his personal limits are. A patient after heart surgery, for example, needs endurance training under professional supervision. The recreational athlete needs to review how often they should train to maintain their health; the top athlete, on the other

hand, has to ask himself how often and how intensively he can train without endangering his health.

We exercise to improve our physical health and to gain more physical energy, which we can then devote to spiritual goals and issues. Did you feel like it? Here are a few simple ones

## **Tips for beginners**

- Careful training
- First increase the duration, then increase the intensity
- Good equipment
- Correct technique, depending on the sport (guided by an experienced trainer to avoid injuries and joint damage)
- variety
- After training: stretching, massage, sauna
- Eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of water (and drink the right amount).

## **The minimal movement for in between: Something to Smile**

Water polo is a tough sport, especially for non-swimmers!

And then there was the optimistic athlete. He wanted a break from God!

There were times in my life when sport was far more to me than just physical training. Exercising was an outlet for me to deal with stress and problems during the worst of my life crises. After a while I needed the daily extreme training

whether I was in a crisis or not. Sport had become a drug for me.

Drug addicts completely lose sight of the health of their bodies. And the soul suffers too. A destructive process is going on, far from balance, from inner peace, contentment and equilibrium.

The minimal movement for in between: Something to smile about<sup>19</sup>

Many sports injuries and wear and tear in joints are the result of my sports addiction; I am still suffering from the consequences of this unhealthy time.

And yet: quitting is not the solution, I have realized that over the years. With all the ailments I still have, exercise is good medicine. I would like to pass this knowledge on to everyone who suffers from similar problems: Targeted, adapted training is the right recipe. Sports medicine is increasingly confirming this.

But I also learned a few things from this “overly busy” time that can be helpful for everyone to cope with everyday life.

That’s how I learned not to lose sight of the goal and to persevere. The last few meters before the finish line are often the hardest. I learned to stick with it and not look at the circumstances. I will no longer be dissuaded by critical comments, negative statements and inappropriate advice.

Achieving a difficult goal gives a real sense of exhilaration and renewed vigor. I’ve learned to trust myself and to push seemingly insurmountable boundaries. Even with physical complaints, I usually feel relief after the lesson - but only if I don’t go beyond the pain threshold (as I so often did in the past) but feel the pain is “still bearable”.

I can heartily recommend it: move, even if it hurts. If I rest, I rust, goes an old saying. Don’t let your complaints hold you back. Nevertheless, treat yourself to a nice walk with friends, encounters in the gymnastics group, cleaning your apartment, a little dance with your partner. Find out for yourself what is

good for you - your body and your soul. And on your weekly rest day, you can enjoy your couch if that means relaxation for you.

*Physical training can be a real help in life.*

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# Nutrition, physically and mentally

You are what you eat.

**meal she himself healthy?!**

Under this heading, Michael Weiß gives a very good overview of the topic of healthy nutrition; I found the article in the “Umdenk Impuls Zukunfts Gestaltungs Magazin” Z for future May-June 2014 and reproduce it verbatim with kind permission.

“Filmmaker Morgan Spurlock recounts a self-experiment in the film ‘Super Size Me.’ He only ate meals from a well-known fast-food chain – three meals a day for a month: hamburgers, french fries, salad, shakes and soft drinks. The result: headaches and stomach aches, depression, high cholesterol and liver levels, and eleven kilos overweight. A real fattening cure!

So we can eat ourselves sick. Unfortunately, many people do this every day:

- liters of sugary drinks,
- ham, bacon and sausages,
- greasy dishes,
- candies, ice cream and chocolate.

The portions are getting bigger and we are getting fatter, tired, listless and sicker.

No commercial break on TV without the temptation to eat [of] substances that our bodies don't need and that only make us

sick and tired. [...] The confectionery industry is very inventive. Every German eats 18-20 kg of sweets a year – statistically speaking, of course.

**sugar**in excess promotes diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. It messes up the hormone system and makes you fat. We have him to thank for our clothing size XXL and adult-onset diabetes, even in children. do we really want that?

Eating healthy is not that difficult. All we have to do is eat real ‘food’ foods, foods that still contain life - ie nutrients that we need to not only feel good physically.

## **carbohydrates**

Humans need carbohydrates, but not those found in candy and white toast. These refined, ‘simple’ carbs get insulin pumping into the blood. The consequences: cravings and even more fat on the hips.

‘Simple’ carbohydrates also promote diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. They make us sick and listless.

Carbohydrates from whole grain bread, apples, broccoli or oatmeal, on the other hand, do not cause insulin levels to shoot up. [...] A muesli made from oatmeal and fruit that you have prepared yourself will keep you full and fit longer than a stack of toasts with jam.

But that’s not all. Foods with complex carbohydrates also contain plenty of vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, trace elements, protein, good fat and fiber.

Biscuits and chocolate, on the other hand, consist almost entirely of calories and fat that makes you fat.

## **Protein - protein**

Protein is the most important building block in our body. When we eat protein, cells are repaired and new ones are formed. Bones, muscles and hair grow, enzymes, hormones and antibodies develop, skin, nails and connective tissue are renewed.

Nothing works in our body without protein. That's why we have to do it daily

take us

We find 23 of the protein building blocks in our food, but we only need to consume enough of eight of them every day. [...] Anyone who eats varied and wholesome food has an adequate supply of protein. [...]

If we eat too little protein, we grow old and wrinkled prematurely. Our

The immune system weakens and our muscles are broken down. [...]

## **Fat**

Many nutritionists say that fat makes you fat. [...] They are right as long as bacon, cheap margarine, refined oils or frying fat are involved. [...]

Fat makes you fit, say nutritionists. By that they mean cold-pressed vegetable oils [...], made from nuts and grain germs. Unsaturated fatty acids (olive oil) or omega-3 fatty acids (rapeseed and walnut oil) lower bad LDL cholesterol, protect the heart and prevent cancer. And they keep the cell membrane elastic, functional and young.

Without fat, we cannot utilize fat-soluble vitamins, such as vitamins A and E. [...] However, our body only needs about 6-10 g of the essential (vital) fatty acids per day.

## **Vitamins**

In order to stay healthy and vital, we also need vitamins, minerals, trace elements and secondary plant substances. A varied, wholesome diet usually contains all of them. But we eat too many white flour products that contain hardly any vital substances. For some, salad and vegetables are just decorations on the plate. Pudding, chocolate cream and ice cream have replaced fruit as dessert. [...]

So eat five servings of fruit, salad and vegetables a day. [...] You will soon feel the difference because you have more energy.

## **Water**

[...] Our body needs water. It consists of 60 [to 75] % of it, our brain as much as 84 %.

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Every body cell contains water. If we don't drink enough water, we become dehydrated. After all, we lose a lot of water through excretion, sweating and breathing.”

Even mild dehydration can slow metabolism by 3% and cause short-term memory failure. Drinking, on the other hand, strengthens the ability to concentrate and memory.

Sufficient drinking improves digestion, promotes metabolic functions and supports detoxification.

## **Drink - but right**

Carbonated water promotes acidification in the body. Sweets, coffee and meat already acidify the body anyway. Carbonic acid is therefore superfluous. Michael Weiß advises further:

“But leave the soft drinks containing sugar and caffeine at the beverage dealer. Not only do you save a lot of money, you also save yourself diabetes and overweight, tiredness and a lack of momentum.

## **Fiber**

Those who eat high-fiber foods are less likely to suffer from heart disease and gastrointestinal disorders. Just ten grams more dietary fiber from vegetables, nuts, fruit and whole grain products reduce the risk of a heart attack by 19%. [...] Fiber reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes and helps lower cholesterol levels. Food passes through the digestive tract much faster, stools are softer and bulkier, and the risk of colon cancer,

“colitis, haemorrhoids and intestinal inflammation decreases” (Weiss 2014).

This is just a short list of the extensive topic of nutrition. There are a wide variety of findings and opinions on this; I only want to pass this list on as food for thought and do not claim to have found the absolute truth.

Basically the question is:

*Do I eat to live or do I live to eat?*

*And by which I feed my Soul?*

## **Oldwisdom**

Sometimes, even in our highly civilized world, old wisdom still applies. the vernacular says:

Eat

A rich breakfast gives the body a good basis to cope with the stresses of the day. In order to replenish the reserves used up, a balanced and substantial meal is recommended at lunchtime. You could satisfy the small hunger in the afternoon with fruit, for example. In order not to put too much strain on the body during the night, it is advisable to have a small snack in the evening, because some metabolic processes and, above all, digestive activity are greatly reduced during sleep.

Also in the book of books, the Bible, one can find numerous instructions for a healthy lifestyle. This includes hygiene regulations, behavior in the event of illness and instructions on how to handle alcohol. These “ancient” principles are confirmed by the latest medical knowledge.

Even as a child I had an aversion to pork, which I couldn't explain for a long time. I now know that pork is unhealthy. Recent medical research and discoveries have shown this clearly, and the Bible also confirms this.

**And what do I feed my soul with?**

“Did you know [...] that every tenth diagnosis (9.9%) relates to a mental illness or a behavioral disorder?”<sup>1</sup>

If what I eat is so important for my physical health, can I also give my soul the wrong, unhealthy “nutrition”? And vice versa, do something good for her with the right input?

1

“The fact that heart and soul form a unit is part of general knowledge. How strongly they actually interact - that feelings can trigger physical pain and even heart attack symptoms - is known only to a few.

Even medical professionals considered this impossible for a long time. Since René Descartes in

Postulated the separation of body and mind in the 17th century, physicians and scientists have long considered - and treated - two separate spheres. But in recent years, studies have shown more and more clearly how closely the body and psyche are connected” (Hauschild and Wüstenhagen 2013).

There is probably an increasing number of new discoveries in this area because newly developed measuring devices enable new investigations and studies.

So it certainly makes sense to think about what we “feed” our soul with: do we spend our evenings in front of the television and watch horror films? (Then we shouldn’t be surprised if we have nightmares.) What’s in our bookcase?

As a teenager, I often watched horror films. When I then went into the bedroom, I often found myself looking behind the door or under the bed. I had a hard time falling asleep and had crazy dreams.

In the next chapter I would like to take a closer look at the interaction between body and soul.

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# Our Soul

Do your body good so that your soul wants to live in it! Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

1

When asked “What is the soul?” the search engine offers the following definition:



The soul gives man his personality. In the person, soul and body are one. The soul needs the body to become conscious, to be noticed and to communicate. To do this, she uses the language that is unique to humans as the only living being. Despite many prerequisites (e.g. anatomy of the larynx), it is not possible for any animal to speak in the human sense, i.e. to communicate experiences, to argue and much more. Human language requires not only physiological and anatomical prerequisites, but also psychological ones. But what are these faculties that give people their personality and enable their language? (Herrmann 2014).

Man consists of soul and body, often the term “spirit” is added. Soul and spirit are opposed to the body; they represent the non-material part of a human being. The term “soul” is also used to designate the moral and immortal part of human beings. “Soul” refers to the person as such. The soul is the seat of desires and desires, feelings and thoughts.

The “spirit” differs from the soul in that it is more like the “higher” part of the human being.

According to quantum physics, the soul also exists after death further:

People who have had near-death experiences tell of mysterious phenomena - often of a tunnel with light shining at the end. Even reputable researchers claim: The soul is real, and the immortal consciousness is just as much a basic element of the world as space, time and energy. [...]

One of the most renowned quantum physicists of our time, Professor Hans-Peter Dürr, former head of the Max Planck Institute for Physics in Munich, is of the opinion that the dualism of the smallest particles is not limited to the subatomic world, but rather is omnipresent. [...]

Pioneer Dürr recently received support from Heidelberg physicist Professor Markolf H. Niemz. He believes that after a person dies, the soul departs at the speed of light. Niemz teaches medical technology at the University of Heidelberg. In addition, he is intensively involved in near-death research. The latter provided the decisive impetus for his thesis. (Frobose 2008)

The Bulgarian professor Dr. Detschko Svilenov has written a recommendable book on this subject: *Life After Death – What Do Science, Religions and the Bible Say?* (Detschko 2012)

## **Body and Soul – only strong together**

Based on the WHO definition of “health”, the following clearly applies: You are only really healthy if you are physically, mentally and spiritually well. I would like to go into this complex interplay in more detail; Of course, that too is only patchwork, I’m not a scientist or a doctor. However, it matches my own experience.

The quotes up to the end of this chapter are from an article by Jana Hauschild and Claudia Wüstenhagen; I’ve added them here and there.

“New studies reveal intriguing connections between body and mind. Not only can mental suffering damage our health, the body also controls our feelings. [...]

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The psyche has an immense influence on the risk of illness and the course of healing.” – Doctors are paying more and more attention to these connections and also treat their patients from this point of view; for many experts, however, it comes as a surprise what an amazing power the human body has over the psyche. A simple example: if you’re feeling uncomfortable, plant both feet firmly on the floor, pull your shoulders back, and suck in your stomach. What does that do to you? Or: In the case of the famous November depression, it can be worth treating yourself to twenty minutes of sunlight a day or, alternatively, five minutes of solarium a week. (Ridiculously little, you think? Five minutes of solarium can keep winter fatigue at bay for two weeks without stressing the skin.)

“Researchers are just beginning to grasp the full extent. Biochemical processes in the organs can throw people so emotionally out of balance that they become mentally ill. Some mental illnesses may even arise in the depths of the gut, assume representatives of a new research direction, neurogastroenterology.” Unfortunately, this also turns into a shoe the other way around.

“Experimental psychology has also discovered the body and shows with amazing studies how even unconscious movements control our feelings and thoughts. [...]

Even in the womb, the psychological well-being of the pregnant woman forms the immune system of her child. If she goes through a separation or other stressful situation, the body releases cortisol, which also reaches the fetus’ body via the placenta and changes the immune system there. The affected children are more likely to suffer from allergies or asthma as adults.” – Perhaps it wasn’t just old wives’ tales that kept pregnant women from fires and similar catastrophes as much as possible?

“Sometimes the effect of the psyche can even be observed directly, for example on wounds: In stressful times, they heal more slowly. If the scab disappears after a week, it takes



almost three days longer under exam stress. If your spouse is constantly fighting, you add about four days.”

***psychotherapy for back pain patients?***

For every third back pain patient, the head is the reason why short-term complaints turn into years of suffering. After all, back pain becomes a problem when you overestimate it, consult a doctor every time you feel a pinch, or even stay in bed. Anyone who, fearing pain, withdraws from their usual everyday activities at the first prick and takes it easy, does not achieve any relief, but the opposite: the back muscles atrophy and ultimately hurt even more when moving. A

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vicious circle sets in. Sometimes patients wander for decades from family doctor to orthopedist to surgeon to physiotherapy to osteopathy - without success. According to a report by the health insurance company DAK, this costs the healthcare system €25 billion every year. A quarter of this could be saved if doctors would increasingly use modern therapy methods such as psychological training.

I can only underline these statements based on my professional experience. In addition, there is clearly the patient's own responsibility. You can't expect the doctor to fix it. I can substantiate this claim from my professional experience.

For many years I offered back training courses, the course fees were covered by the health insurance companies. Almost all participants already suffered from back problems. It was the absolute exception when there was one participant who was not in pain. These courses should serve as prevention!

It happened that participants felt relief, but after half a year they were back at the next course. When I asked why they were taking part again, the answer came: "Yes, the pain has increased again." When I asked whether the recommended exercises and behavioral training had been used in everyday life, I got a "No". The attitude that everyone else - the state, the health system, doctors, therapists and so on - has to take care of our health is still too much in people's heads.

In my lessons, I try to make the participants aware that every person bears a great deal of personal responsibility for their body and their health.

I want to give the participants a set of exercises and behaviors that will make them independent of therapists, doctors and maybe even medication.

I would like to challenge and encourage everyone to overcome their "inner bastard", ie unhelpful priorities and inertia as well as frustration and resignation. This is easier if you deal with your own body, explore it and get to know it - and treat it with care.

## **To the Example: diabetes and depressions**

We all “benefit from the fact that body and soul grow together in research and practice. Here only the influence of the psyche would have to be considered as therefore too short-sighted. Because, conversely, the body also has power. Physical illnesses can in turn lead to mental illnesses. [...]

In diabetes, researchers are on the trail of such connections. Diabetes is not only a possible consequence of depression, it also doubles the risk of becoming depressed. Researchers suspect that diabetics not only suffer from the burden of the disease, but that processes are also taking place in their bodies that make them more susceptible to depression. On the one hand, diabetics often feel exhausted when their blood sugar levels are poor, and are unfocused and listless. ‘That can affect mood and promote depressive symptoms,’ says psychology professor Frank Petrak from the LWL University Hospital in Bochum, who has been studying the psyche of diabetics for years. On the other hand, the disease may also lead to changes in the brain.

[...] Imaging studies in humans indicate that some diabetics have reduced brain volume in certain areas such as the amygdala and hippocampus. Although these are only isolated findings so far, they do suggest one thing: ‘Assuming that the nerve growth in the hippocampus is disturbed in some diabetics, then this may impede their ability to learn,’ says Petrak. ‘Perhaps then they are less able to learn how to cope with difficult situations.’ This could lead to depression. So far this is speculation. But it is undisputed that physical processes can produce mental symptoms. In some cases, the latter even point to a physical problem.”

## **Physical causes of mental disorders**

Erich Kasten is a psychologist and professor at the University of Göttingen.

The psychologist has often seen that mental disorders can also have physical causes. He describes how people often come to him “in whom he cannot identify any mental disorders. ‘They had a happy childhood, have an intact marriage, have healthy children and a great job, but they can’t bring themselves to do anything anymore,’ says Kasten. He sends her back to the family doctor for a blood test – who often finds something.

Even an underactive thyroid can trigger symptoms similar to those of depression. Hyperfunction, on the other hand, sometimes causes mood swings that really mess up the lives of those affected. Even a tooth root infection can lead to psychological symptoms, says Kasten. If inflammation goes undetected or persists for a long time, people can be so emotionally unbalanced that doctors can label them as mentally ill

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classify. Messenger substances of the immune system trigger the typical feeling of illness in the brain, which pushes those infected to withdraw from society, making them more introverted and listless. Actually, that makes sense, after all, sick people belong in bed. But in the long run it can endanger the mental balance.

There are numerous such physical causes of mental disorders, including vitamin deficiency or oversupply. 'Ultimately, all mental processes have a physical basis. So it's not surprising that many organic disorders also make themselves felt mentally,' says Kasten. But not everyone knows that.

Just as doctors often fail to consider psychological causes for physical problems, psychotherapists often fail to assume that physical causes could be behind mental symptoms, says Kasten. [...]

The cause of a mental disorder may sometimes lie in a region of the body where hardly anyone would suspect it: in the intestines. 'For a long time it was only assumed that psychosomatic disorders could lead to gastrointestinal diseases. But for several years there have been increasing indications that it could also be the other way around,' says Peter Holzer, Professor of Experimental Neurogastroenterology at the Medical University of Graz.

The representatives of the still young discipline of neurogastroenterology regard the intestine as a kind of second brain because of its millions of nerve cells. It not only receives signals from the first brain, but conversely sends information to it. In addition to the nerve cells, immune messengers, intestinal hormones and bacteria also influence the brain – and possibly control emotions.”

Is there more to the well-known statement “gut feeling”?

““Even more astonishing are the findings on the intestinal flora. It is now assumed that intestinal bacteria form substances that reach the brain via the blood and can change emotional processes there,’ says Holzer. When scientists from

Canada paralyzed the intestinal flora of mice with antibiotics, the animals were much more willing to explore than before - an indication of reduced anxiety. Holzer's team came to similar results, but they also observed that the mice also developed memory problems.

A study from Ireland, in which researchers treated mice with a probiotic, caused a stir. They reported that after four weeks on the lactobacillus diet [lactic acid bacteria], the mice were less anxious and depressed and could also cope better with stress. Corresponding changes in the brain could even be detected.

Of course, such experiments suggest that you can specifically influence your mood through your diet. 'At least we know that the quality of nutrition has a major impact on the composition of the intestinal flora,' says neurogastroenterologist Holzer. [...]

[Because of this] scientists are convinced that a healthy diet promotes mental health. [...]

So your own body is definitely a key to mental happiness. Even his movements contribute to it. It has long been known that physical exercise is good for the psyche. It is not without reason that people who are depressed are advised to exercise as much as possible. Sport increases the release of endorphins.”

Of course, one cannot draw one-to-one conclusions about humans from animal experiments; animal experiments are also not unobjectionable from an ethical point of view. But these examples show that we still have a long way to go when researching the structure of the human being. Who knows what new discoveries technological advances will make accessible to us. Stay curious to discover and perceive the marvel of your body even more - maybe like never before.

Science and medicine increasingly see people as complex beings with body, soul and spirit. This wholeness in which man was created is being rediscovered and researched.

Let's be excited!

## Muscles and Feelings

The shape of our body is determined by the bone skeleton and the muscles. More than 600 muscles keep us moving day and night.

The musculature is the motor element of the body, which can generate an infinite number of precisely coordinated movement patterns by contraction and relaxation.

There are two types of muscle: skeletal muscle and smooth muscle. Skeletal muscle is striated in structure, tapered at both ends, and merging into tendon fibers that are attached to bone. It is subject to the will and thus controllable.

Smooth muscle has a smooth structure, it is found in organs such as the heart, intestines, bladder and also in the veins. These muscles cannot be controlled at will. (The cardiac muscle is a special case, being striated but an involuntary muscle nonetheless.)

Johannes Michalak, a psychology professor at the University of Hildesheim, found that certain movements or postures are associated with emotional states.

He found that “people remember positive concepts better when they sit up straight or when they walk with a swing. On the other hand, if they are slumped or shuffling, their attention to negative words is increased. ‘If I adopt a positive attitude, the system is more likely to be configured to process positive information.’

[...] Johannes Michalak wants to investigate whether special exercise training might help against depression or prevent relapses. He found that depressed people walked more slowly and hunched than mentally healthy people. The problem: ‘If you go depressed, then negative emotional states tend to be activated,’ says Michalak. It is also possible that depressed

people find it so difficult to break out of their negative world because their movement pattern keeps them trapped in it.”

In order to prevent recurrence, patients not only have to change the way they think, but also learn to move differently again. Michalak wants to research the effect of walking training for depressed people.

“As part of her habilitation at the University of Heidelberg, the psychologist Sabine Koch showed that targeted movements briefly lift the mood of depressed people. Koch researches the effect of dancing on mental disorders and found that an Israeli circle dance with pronounced hopping movements could temporarily alleviate depressive symptoms in patients. [...]

Koch also tried out different dance styles with anxious patients. Rocking rhythms in particular had an anxiety-reducing effect on them. ‘Side-to-side movements, preferably in 3/4 time, are best for relieving anxiety,’ says Koch.

[...] It has been proven that dancing has a fundamentally positive effect on the psyche. Dance groups have been used at the University of Heidelberg for some time, for example for depressed mothers and their children. And dance therapy is just as effective in the follow-up care of breast cancer patients and the treatment of pain and trauma patients as in psychiatric and psychosomatic disorders such as schizophrenia, autism or eating disorders. It increases quality of life and well-being, relieves stress and symptoms such as anxiety and depression.”

In my work as a sports and gymnastics teacher, I had to and was allowed to experience, implement and pass on all of the (apparently) new knowledge listed above for a long time.

In physically or mentally difficult times, movement, gymnastics, and dancing have always helped me to “get back on my feet”. Moving has often brought me back down to earth. Because I have experienced all this on my own body and felt the effects, I can pass this on in my courses - I think I can



understand people and assess what is good for them at the moment.

I want to convey to them how important the right posture is for well-being, especially for the psyche. My principle: “No matter how I feel and what the circumstances are, I try to go through life with my head held high. This includes: corners of mouth upwards, look straight ahead.” In my experience, I can outwit my whining soul with this. The upright posture increases my muscle tone as a positive side effect, which in turn is good for my back and pelvic floor muscles.

## **Stress factors and hormones**

Under stress, the body releases the hormones cortisol and adrenaline, causing the heart to pump faster and with more pressure. The body is set for action. In itself this is not harmful. However, prolonged exercise can lead to chronic high blood pressure, which in turn can cause hardening of the arteries, which is closely linked to heart attacks.

In extreme cases, the influence of the psyche can be life-threatening: Experts estimate that it was the decisive factor in four out of five heart attack patients.

Heart disease and depression are a dangerous couple. The chances of survival for people with depression after a heart attack are significantly lower than for those whose soul is not suffering. [...] More and more clinics have psychocardiological wards that focus in particular on the interplay between heart and soul. (Hauschild et al. 2013)

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# Life in balance

## *Balance - what is it?*

The lexicon defines balance as a mental state characterized by inner peace and harmony. Balance brings about a balanced, stable state and leads to a feeling of balance. Balance means being in harmony and in flow.

These terms appear again and again in esotericism. In order to achieve this state, a wide variety of practices and methods are used.

I too have tried to find this inner peace and contentment in many esoteric areas, unfortunately in vain and almost with a tragic outcome (Amend 2010).

Of course, every person in this world longs for this harmony, this inner peace. We all want happiness and contentment, security, acceptance and love. We want to be understood when it comes to our physical and emotional needs. We find recognition, health and prosperity worth striving for. All these aspects belong to a “life in balance”. A very high claim. Do you also have this longing in your heart?

Then yes then everything would have to get out of balance and the world would turn into chaos

unless the same spirit of harmony and love sustain them,  
who also sustains us.

Susette Gontard (1769–1802), Hölderlin’s “Diotima”

For the secret lover of the famous poet Hölderlin, this topic was

already up to date at the time.

What spirit of harmony and love is she talking about? Let's hope she found the "right" spirit back then.

And I wish you too, dear readers, that you will find "the right spirit" and be able to lead a life of personal balance in it. I hope that what I have said so far and also the following lines can help you.

One aspect that is essential to living in balance is healthy relationships and a lifestyle of gratitude. I can be perfectly healthy, financially secure, and successful at my job—but when my relationship with my loved one is dysfunctional, everything else can quickly fade into the background. Each of us has experienced this in some form "in our own hearts".

## **Important orvoid?**

What is really important in life? Every day we face the challenge of discerning and deciding: What is really important to me - and where do I run the risk of wasting my time with trifles?

Heike Malisic and Beate Nordstrand tell a little story in Live lighter:

### **The story of the flowerpot and the beer**

A philosophy professor in a classroom full of students had some items in front of him. When class began, he wordlessly picked up a large flowerpot and began filling it with golf balls. He asked the students if the pot was full now. They agreed.

Then the professor took a container of pebbles and poured them into the pot. He moved the pot gently and the small pebbles rolled into the voids between the golf balls. Then he asked the students again if the pot was full. They agreed.

The professor next took a can of sand and poured it into the pot. Of course, the sand filled the smallest remaining space. He asked again if the pot was full. The students unanimously answered, 'Yes.'

Then the professor got two cans of beer from under the table and poured the entire contents into the pot. The sand was sodden and the students laughed.

'Well,' the professor said as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to think of this pot as a representation of your life. The golf balls are the important things in your life: your family, your children, your health, your friends, the favorite, even passionately loved aspects of your life. If everything in your life were lost and those people and things remained, you would still describe your life as fulfilled. The pebbles symbolize the other things in life like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else, the little things. If you put the sand in the pot first,' continued the professor,

'there is no more room for the pebbles or the golf balls.

The same applies to your life. If you invest all your time and energy in small things, you will never have room for the important things. Beware of the little things that threaten to overshadow the most important aspects of your life. Play with the kids. Take the time to go to the doctor. Take your partner out to dinner. There will still be enough time to clean the house or work overtime. Pay attention to the golf balls first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.

'One of the students raised his hand and wanted to know what the beer stood for. The professor chuckled, 'I'm glad you asked that. The beer should show you: No matter how difficult your life may be - there is always room for one

or two beers.' (Quoted from: The Laughing Manager 2006)

If we set the right priorities in our lives, we distinguish between

the important and the unimportant.

It's not because we're busy that we're stressed,  
but because we do the wrong thing first.

Some aspects that can help:

## **Take myself seriously**

In the professor's flower pot, the golf balls stand for the most important things in our lives. One of those golf balls should be our own needs. If I run over myself in this area, substitute gratifications may occur. In addition to rest, time for ourselves and time with friends, our "own needs" also include our dreams. Do you still have dreams? Or are

Have you lost them in the heat of everyday life and in the vicissitudes of life?

We can only realize our dreams

if we decide to wake up from it. Josephine Baker

We all know the advice:

Do not dream your life, live your dreams.

Stop for a moment and ask yourself: What about my dreams?

Maybe you can close your eyes and listen to yourself.

## **Gifts - Talents - Vocation**

Only a few people know when they are in elementary school why they are in the world and then go straight into fulfilling

their calling. If you're not one of the lucky ones, it's never too late. Take a quiet hour and ask yourself: Where are my gifts, my abilities and talents, what really gives me joy?

Find out what your greatest gift is and use your time to apply it. Ronald Brown

This truth can be a help to no longer live in the day, but to use life to change things and savor the time.

If we use and promote our talents and gifts, we have come a long way towards our goal of a life in balance.

Every person has good and bad qualities. Our gifts include strengths and weaknesses. It is now a matter of finding out these two sides, promoting the strengths and getting the weaknesses under control.

I learned that not least from Heike Malisic and Beate Nordstrand. They recommend that you also allow yourself to make mistakes in this finding process – it is quite normal that you have your little struggles every day. But once you've found your strengths, you can ignore your weaknesses.

This self-acceptance would then come from within, then you look at yourself and the world lovingly and you can say: "That's me, no more, but definitely no less."

## **Optimist - Pessimist: Two extreme attitudes**

We humans are all "knitted" differently, each person is unique. We want to consider two extreme main characters.

### **optimist**

Optimists are solution-oriented. They believe in themselves and in what they can do. They keep telling themselves, "I can do this, I will do it." They believe that they can achieve a goal they have set themselves and overcome an obstacle. They are not so easily discouraged or dissuaded.

Incidentally, having achieved a set goal gives you a lot of self-confidence and enables you to break new ground and tackle new projects. You get the feeling that you can achieve anything.

It is easy for the optimist to seize these opportunities. The decision to do this is entirely his own part, nobody takes this decision from him. The first step is up to himself.

The optimist has the courage to take risks. He realizes that courage is not absence

of fear, but the realization that other things are more important than fear.

Courage for passion is also often characteristic of these people.

You dare to live a passionate lifestyle. The better they know their passions and talents, the braver and freer they become. This makes it easier for them to get involved, to express themselves and to live out their talents and dreams.

This makes the life of an optimist more intense, passionate and exciting. Light and color come into life.

You can't add more days to life, but you can add more life to the day.

## **Pessimist**

The characteristics and character traits of a pessimist are very contrary to those of an optimist.

He likes to take on the negative at first and tends to have a fundamentally negative attitude. The pessimist often sees everything black. If this mental darkness then increases, a

clear decision may be needed to break away from it. Outside help is often useful or necessary.

No matter how I am, it often takes a change in my thoughts and behavior. This is possible, but it is a process that takes time and sometimes lasts a lifetime.

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# 7

## **The chemical plant below hair line**

Our brain consists of about one billion (1,000,000,000) “trees” on each of which 70,000 “branches” can grow - neurons and their dendrites. That means you have storage space in your brain for around 3 million years of information!

A large number of studies make it clear that up to 80% of the physical and mental illnesses of our time can be seen as a direct result of our thought life. In fact, it's scientifically proven that thoughts can be measured, that they affect every aspect of our lives, and best of all, that the brain can actually change for the better.

Dr. Caroline Leaf, a neuroscientist from the USA, has a doctorate in communication pathology and is a specialist in neuropsychology. She has been researching the connection between thinking and the brain for three decades. In her clinical practice in communication pathology, she developed tools and processes that help people to develop and change their thinking and subsequently their behavior. Her scientifically based thought technology has helped patients with brain trauma, the learning disabled, the emotionally traumatized and thousands of young students to turn their lives around for the better and to realize their potential.

In her book *Who Turned Off My Brain? Overcoming Toxic Thoughts and Emotions* describes Dr. Leaf's new findings in brain research and how we can use them. An important topic is the effects of good and bad thoughts.

### **What I think?**

Toxic thoughts are thoughts that trigger negative and fearful feelings, which in turn produce biochemicals that stress the body. They are stored both in your mind and in your body cells.

Dr Leaf continues: “Thoughts are basically electrical impulses, chemical substances and nerve cells. [...] This means that your mind and body are truly inherently connected, and that connection begins with your thoughts. [...] In fact, for every memory you have a corresponding emotion associated with it, which is stored in your brain and a copy in your body cells. [...]

For this reason, hostility and anger are at the top of the list of toxic emotions. [...] These negative thoughts are driven by fear. In fact, research shows that fear triggers more than 1,400 physical and chemical reactions known to date. Together, these activate more than 30 different hormones and neurotransmitters that put the body into a frenzied state (Leaf 2013, pp. 23–37, 36, 45).”

About the heart, Dr. Caroline Leaf:

Toxic stress is particularly severe because the heart is not just a pump. It’s actually more of a brain. [...] There is at least 40,000 neurons (nerve cells) in the heart (Leaf 2013, pp. 49–50).

On the immune system:

resentment, bitterness, unforgiveness [the conscious or unconscious refusal to forgive wrongs suffered; grudges, unforgiveness] and self-loathing are just a few of the toxic thoughts and emotions that can also trigger immune system disorders.

Science clearly shows a connection between your thoughts and emotions and your physical and mental well-being.

She advises, “If you can make your thoughts life-giving rather than life-threatening, you will be far less likely to suffer from physical ailments and illnesses (Leaf 2013, pp. 51, 55).”

About the hypothalamus, Dr. Leaf:

The hypothalamus is often referred to as the “brain” of the endocrine system. Among other things, it controls thirst, hunger, body temperature and how your body reacts to your emotional life. The hypothalamus is like a beating heart that responds to your emotions and thought processes, largely influencing how you function emotionally and intellectually (Caroline 2013, p. 71).

At the end of the book, Dr. Leaf is a guide to renewing your thoughts and removing the toxic substances from your brain and body caused by negative thoughts. This is an exciting topic, as we experience so often that the past wants to catch up with us and we don’t manage to reconcile ourselves with our biography. But that is precisely what is essential in order to live in peace with oneself and within oneself.

## **Forgive or addendum?**

Carrying grudges, being unforgiving, not having forgiven – called “unforgiveness” in the book – is according to Dr. Leaf a source of “toxic thoughts”. We all know it: Certain experiences and memories keep occupying us. They gnaw at us. A silly remark by someone, a hurtful act, a horrible experience can be distressing and blocking. Every human being inevitably experiences such things in the course of his life.

It wasn’t difficult for me to understand what Dr. Leaf describes – she can even measure it: If I am angry with

someone or something, I can feel it mentally and physically, “it is affecting me”. But I was also able to experience how healing and liberating it is to cleanse these poisonous thoughts and eliminate them forever. Personally, I’ve made the decision to forgive myself first, and then forgive everyone else who, knowingly or unknowingly, has hurt me. Writing my biography was an opportunity for me to come to terms with my past and stop holding grudges.

It can be very liberating to tackle issues that have been “on your stomach” for a long time. Even if they have been “swept under the carpet” for years and decades. Of course, that’s not always easy. It takes courage, mostly it also needs trustworthy and competent interlocutors, and we have to make a decision about it - and then it presents us with new decisions, which are however worthwhile and fruitful. First, there is the decision to forgive those who have wronged us; we stop being destiny’s judiciary and law enforcement officers - and so we become free and can make further decisions. This process is very good for my soul and ultimately also for my health.

## **what am i talking about**

What I say is closely related to our thoughts. What do I think and talk about others, about everyday and life situations and above all about myself?

Watch your thoughts, they become words! watch your words

because they become habits! watch your habits

because they become your character! take care of your character

because he becomes your destiny!

This old saying is a wonderful summary of what thoughts and words can do and what effect they can have on our entire life.

It would certainly be worth stopping for a moment before speaking and considering what we are about to say – certainly not an easy exercise for some of our contemporaries.

## **What do I think?!**

“Faith moves mountains.” We all know this saying, it actually comes from the Bible. Another thing like this: “He who believes will be saved!”

Who and what do I believe? Do I believe my imprints, do I believe what the general public says? Do I believe the beliefs of others, do I believe the media or other people?

Faith involves trust. I can only firmly believe in something when there is a basis of trust.

Faith and trust release good, beneficial chemicals that calm and invigorate the body. Emotions based on faith include love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, self-control, and patience.

Kurt Osswald writes in the Z for future:

Not long ago, the Viennese brain researcher Raphael Bonelli (lecturer at the Sigmund Freud University in Vienna) and the psychiatrist Harold G. Hoenig (head of the Center of Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University in the USA) conducted a large-scale worldwide Studies were compared to show

What do I think?!<sup>47</sup>how faith and health interact. ‘If faith were a pill, it would probably be approved as a medicine today,’ says Bonelli.

All research on the impact of belief on mental health published in major peer-reviewed journals worldwide since 1990 was reviewed. 72% of studies show that a person’s mental health is related to their level of religious and spiritual activity. The clear result was overwhelming for the two researchers: the protective function of belief is sometimes extremely strong,

especially in the case of addiction, depression and the risk of suicide. But believers also had better results with dementia (the result was published in the Journal of Religion and Health). (Osswald

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## Tips for everyday life

Finally, a few tips that I have tried myself and with success apply:

- Drink a glass of lukewarm non-carbonated water in the morning. You can mix in some apple cider vinegar or lemon.
- Short morning exercises.
- When losing weight or fasting, drink enough so that the toxins can be flushed out and the body does not over-acidify.
- Drink a glass of water before eating to quell any cravings.
- Don't eat without feeling hungry.
- Make sure your bowel movements are regulated – i.e. drink plenty of fluids and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables to stimulate bowel activity and avoid constipation. (It is best to defecate before the next large meal.)
- Not comfort, but sportiness creates a feeling of lightness.
- Regular exercise intensifies memory (sport from childhood).
- “We would feel better if we walked more” (Beate Nordstrand).
- Plenty of fresh air in daylight (sun); Light increases our serotonin level (“happiness hormone”).
- Always incorporate moments of relaxation into your daily routine.
- Watch your words because words have power.
- Cultivate gratitude and forgiveness as a lifestyle.

# Enough

It is my heartfelt wish to be able to contribute something so that you can find your personal balance in your life. If you, dear reader, have been able to gain valuable insights for your own life from this book and can also implement just a few of these numerous thoughts, suggestions and impulses, I will be very happy.

If you have any questions or suggestions, or if you want to let me know how this book has helped you, please feel free to contact me.

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## **What you get out of this essential can take away**

- Health is the result of the complex interaction between body and soul - you can influence it.
- Find the healthy balance between hostility and narcissism, between physical inactivity and exercise addiction.
- Scientific findings prepared in a way that is suitable for everyday use, the author's personal experiences, quotes and suggestions for shaping one's life encourage people to do something good for body and soul.

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