

Conquering Cultural Stress

My mission is to teach people how to achieve whole-body wellness, effortless weight management, and freedom from stress by returning the body's cells to more youthful qualities. And my approach is unlike those of other doctors and lifestyle experts who focus solely on diet and fitness. You're not about to read about good versus bad carbs, or why you should start measuring your blood sugar and take up running. In Part 1, I'm going to show you a revolutionary way to understand health and aging, as well as how to maximize your well-being. I'll reveal that by getting in touch with the unencumbered, free-spirited child you once were—whose potential was unlimited—and maintaining high levels of cellular hydration that you also had as a youth, you can age in a healthy fashion that allows you to look and feel as vibrant, happy, and young as possible. As you're about to find out, wellness, joyfulness, cellular water, and aging share a unique synergy that informs how we should live to become the best that we can be.



How the Toddler in You Can Save Your Life

Eighty percent of health resides in the brain.

Take a moment to think about what it must have been like to be a two-year-old, because you probably don't remember those days from your own life. But you can certainly conjure something up just by looking at a toddler today or perhaps recalling the memory of your own child. Toddlers reflect the essence of youth. They are daring, creative, and inquisitive. They don't doubt or worry. "Stress" is not a word in their vocabulary. And before they were talkative little creatures, they fell down thousands of times, skinned their knees over and over again, and met more failures in their day than any adult could handle. Trial and error is their game. It's how they master scooting, crawling, then walking, and later running. And they are spontaneous in all that they do—no sense of meticulous planning for the future or aggrieved reminiscing about the past. They pretty much live in the now and are chiefly concerned only about themselves. They take things as they come and try something new every day. Their emotions are real and expressed. Whether they are screaming mad with frustration or laughing so hard that their belly aches, two-year-olds

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don't hide anything. They don't know how to—yet.

Then, by around the age of three they've learned to say no and to assert their wants, and they begin to fear failure. No longer are they trying to just learn from an innate sense of self and instinct. And no longer are they happy with the imperfections of their first two years. Now they want to achieve successes quickly, experience instant gratification, please their peers and parents, meet expectations, and rely less on intuition or more on the wisdom—and approval—of others. They start to be competitive and perfectionistic, and they are excellent self-critics, even if they don't know what that means. They also are acutely aware of their shortcomings and flaws. The words “I can't” begin to emerge. While they may have once possessed a primal attraction to some activity or form of learning, such as enjoying music, playing sports, watching nature, or playing with their hands in a bowl of wet paint, now they are more calculating and restrictive with their pursuits. It's as if they've lost touch with an innate spark that reflects “reckless abandon,” for now they are more likely to reject their inner wisdom and instead listen to others—parents, teachers, peers. They are, in a lot of ways, adults at this juncture and highly vulnerable to the surrounding environment and culture. Much farther down this road, they may end up choosing careers that promise money but not happiness because they don't follow career paths that tap their innermost unique spirit and reason for being on earth. Or they may find themselves in unhappy relationships because they don't know how to be their authentic selves and find someone who can help them do that.

Now think about your own life for a moment. Are you not spontaneous and carefree, not one who tries new endeavors frequently? Do you find yourself calculating your risks before you leap forward in an unfamiliar adventure? Do you worry about the future and harbor regrets from the past? Do you avoid your gut instinct sometimes and follow someone else's lead or advice? Do you feel down,

moody, and depressed sometimes? Even though you stay tuned in to everything thanks to computers and smart phones, do you often feel isolated and disconnected from people? Do you ever hide your emotions? Do the high expectations you place on yourself as well as those coming from others and the need to stay consistent with them all wear you down? Do you fear that you'll fail or that you're just not good enough? Do you compare yourself to others and criticize yourself in any way (looks, weight, accomplishments, income level)? Are you easily frustrated? Would you consider yourself stressed out more than you'd like? Would you call life complex, hard, and overwhelming? Are you living an inauthentic life and missing out on nourishing relationships that can help you manifest your authentic self?

If you said yes to any of these questions, you're not alone. And you're indeed like millions of adults today who walk around wishing they had the secret to a peaceful, healthful existence despite the demands and rigors of modern life. I'm here to share that secret, which has everything to do with gleaning the wisdom of a two-year-old with the sophistication and intelligence of your adulthood. Put simply, if you can return to the vibrant mentality of a toddler, you can actually build youth back into your cells and function optimally physically, emotionally, spiritually, and in any other way possible; you can also become your truest self. Let me explain.

» A Doctor's Greatest Discovery: What More than Thirty Years Treating Skin Has Taught Me

At this point you're probably wondering how someone who has made a name for himself in the skincare industry could possibly write a book about overall health and wellness (let alone the fountain of youth). You'd be surprised by what my experience has taught me over the years. The years I spent treating skin were my training grounds for establishing an inclusive approach to health that goes far beyond the surface of the body. And my whole mission—and medical

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practice—has shifted dramatically since discovering what I think is today's most pervasive accelerator of aging: cultural stress.

Just what is cultural stress? Cultural stress is proving to be the sneakiest silent killer of all. And it has nothing to do with the everyday stress that acts as background noise in your life or even the acute stress you experience when you're trying to meet a deadline or avoid an accident. Cultural stress is much more insidious and stealthy in nature. It's what you experience when you're merging onto a congested highway with thoughts of being late again and not having time to check your e-mail before 9 o'clock or respond to the twenty messages marked high-priority from yesterday. (And despite your hyperconnections to others through modern technology, a part of you feels lonely and isolated.) This widespread scenario has nothing to do with "survival of the fittest." Cultural stress is wearing and tearing us down daily in ways we never thought possible—so much so that I've launched international studies to explore its impact, as well as offered grants to researchers who investigate cultural stress.

Cultural stress enters our lives sooner than we think. As soon as society began to affect you, around the age of three, and you became cognizant—however subconsciously—of your world, you began to age. This phenomenon is the core subject of this book, which may be the most important one I write in my long career. It has taken me nearly forty years to arrive at this simple conclusion that is finally backed by solid science. Most people wrongly assume that I address just skin issues. This couldn't be further from the truth. Today, most of my work entails teaching people how to change their attitudes about themselves first and foremost and build youth from the inside out via a set of practical strategies that can combat cultural stress and simultaneously encourage their cells to behave younger from the inside out—from all the way down in their DNA to the skin the glows on the outside. And this is what I'm going to show you how to do in this book, too.

How the Toddler in You Can Save Your Life

Although I have devoted my life to making beautiful, healthy skin attainable for everyone and have always rooted my practice in the idea that skincare can lead the way to overall health, skin is a microcosm of the entire body—it reflects what is going on inside. People who come to me experience an evaluation of their health that unlike any they get in a doctor's office today. Are they happy? Do they have unresolved problems in their lives? Is their stress taking a hidden toll and triggering the physical aging and health challenges that they now have and are prepared to address? Do they feel like they are living truly authentic lives attuned to who they want to be or become?

Case in point: I once had a patient who was a very successful individual in his professional life. He came to me for an evaluation in the hopes I could make him look younger than his fifty-odd years. He seemed to be happy, and he ranked everything an 8 or 9 out of a perfect 10 when I asked him questions about the quality of his life. When I asked him to pick out a mantra among several that I gave him to consider for himself, he chose “Become yourself.” This was somewhat surprising to me because I thought he was already “himself” and happy with who he'd become. But then he dived into talking about the pressures he faced to keep his success going and said that he no longer felt like he was the person he wanted to be. He felt like he lived his life for others and was always at the mercy of other people's needs and expectations rather than his own. At that moment, I knew exactly what was causing all the accelerated aging that was so apparent on his face and that he was so concerned about. When I performed a more in-depth examination of his physical health with the help of standard lab reports, he showed further signs of advanced aging at a cellular level that were well beyond his chronological age.

The manner in which I treat all my patients typically leads to clues I can use to help them acknowledge their own emotional challenges that get in the way of their experience of true health—and looking as youthful as possible. Obviously, I'm not talking about people who

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have severe clinical depression and who would do well with traditional medicine to treat their illness. I'm referring to the millions of us who walk around dreaming of a better, more fulfilling life where we radiate health from a deeply rooted sense of contentment and peaceful well-being. In fact, when I ask people what the one thing is that will make them happy, they rarely mention money, a better career, or a facelift. Instead, they refer to the holy grail: being 100 percent comfortable and confident with who they are. Isn't that the ultimate goal? I know that for myself, my job today as a doctor who helps people identify with themselves in ways that support health and maximize their potential is what's been my own "becoming." I've become the real me after years developing my practice, establishing an inclusive health center, and learning from patients and research alike about the true path to wellness.

I treat an enormous array of people, from those who seem to have no reason to complain about feeling and looking older than the calendar says to individuals struggling with persistent conditions that call for constant attention. We all know that chronic illnesses besiege millions today and dominate our health challenges, including insomnia, obesity, chronic pain, arthritis, anxiety disorders, depression, headaches, chronic fatigue, panic anxiety, allergies, irritable bowel and other gastrointestinal problems, and skin disorders such as acne and eczema. Although rarely do patients come to me to treat a chronic condition unrelated to skin, the vast majority of them experience relief from their maladies once they go through my program. It can work in brilliant synch with any other form of treatment with another doctor, including the use of prescriptions. So yes, my practice may be different from that of other doctors, but one thing we increasingly all witness is the growing number of patients suffering from chronic conditions that are often reflected in their skin and that demand that to be taken into consideration when we drum up a solution.

» How Skincare Clued Me into the Ultimate Health Care Secret

About twenty years ago I increasingly realized that I could no longer serve my patients by just playing the role of a traditional dermatologist—diagnosing skin conditions and treating them accordingly. After all, it's pointless to neglect the 80 percent of skin that topical products cannot reach. It's also futile to spot-treat our exterior as if it's not attached to the rest of the body and mind. Treating the skin alone as an isolated component of the body is like using a small brush to touch up the outdoor paint on a house rocked off its foundation and about to crumble under years of neglect and disrepair. So I began to develop another approach, one that could address both the inside and outside to improve the health and appearance of my patients by strengthening *each cell in the body* and helping patients gain control of the cultural stress in their lives. This new way of looking at treatment earned me recognition as the “Father of Internal Skincare.” It also opened the door for me to discover the Water Principle, one of the founding principles upon which my philosophy is based and that you'll read about shortly.

In 2007 I opened my new Inclusive Health Center in Los Angeles, a diagnostic and medical spa completely based on an integrative approach that incorporates healing and medical philosophies from all over the world—Western and Eastern practices, nutrition counseling and therapeutic bodywork from leading experts, and comprehensive analysis of every aspect of a person's health: physical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural. I could not have predicted the feedback I got from people about their fantastic life changes just a few months after the opening of my new facility. You'll read about some of them in this book.

Admittedly, this isn't the first time I've written about my discoveries. But it's the first time I've had the advantage of hindsight for long enough to really make bold and declaratory statements about

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the secrets to aging gracefully and feeling as young as possible each and every year. Since the publication of my last book in 2010, I've noticed a surprising pattern in what predicts those who succeed and those who fail in their attempts to achieve better health. The single most powerful factor in my patients' lives is not the daily skincare regimen they keep nor their attention to diet and exercise; it's their ability to manage cultural stress. When I went back to pore over the scientific data I'd collected over the course of more than ten years of scientific research and from more than four thousand patients following my prescriptions, the results were shouting out to me loud and clear: overcoming cultural stress could be the most essential and effective strategy to sustaining positive changes in well-being, especially with regard to weight loss and overall happiness. The people who shed the most weight, boosted their metabolism and increased their muscle mass the most, improved their looks and skin health, and reported feeling younger and gaining higher self-esteem all had one thing in common: lower levels of cultural stress.¹

» Controlling Your Genetic Destiny

Over the past couple of years, I even went so far as to put my theory to the test, conducting a pilot genetic study with people who were clearly living under the weight of a lot of cultural stress.² Lo and behold, my study found that once they gained control of this stress using the same strategies outlined in this book, they experienced a significant decrease in their cultural stress *at the genetic level*, as measured by changes in the expression of certain genes associated with aging and longevity. That's right: they were able to decrease their body's negative response to cultural stress and enjoy numerous benefits, including turning back the clock on their innate biology and physiology.

So if you have been frustrated or unhappy with how you feel and look, despite personal health challenges or conditions, then you've

come to the right place. Chances are, you picked this book up for a reason. Maybe it's the chronic exhaustion, the lack of a healthy glow, the thinning hair and brittle nails, the extra ten or fifteen pounds you didn't have a year ago, the "older" person looking back at you in the mirror, a recent diagnosis at your doctor's office that scares you, or simply the fear of getting sick and watching your life hit an abysmal ditch. Or perhaps you're among those lucky few who are in excellent health now but you want to do more and learn a fresh approach to preserving your longevity. I'm going to present a revolutionary way to think about taking care of yourself, and you'll soon agree that your frustrations with aging have nothing to do with wrinkles. They go much deeper than that. My hope is that you'll finish this book with a whole different perspective on yourself and your approach to health.

It never ceases to amaze me how my patients have watched their medical problems diminish or in some cases, completely *vanish*. Among the hundreds of thankful letters that I receive routinely from people who've taken my ideas to heart, a singular thought is spoken many different ways: "I feel amazing—better than I've ever felt in my life." Patients share not only how their skin problems have cleared up since they started following my program but how their health—both physical and mental—is changing significantly for the better. *Significantly*. Medical problems are lessening that had not responded to other treatments by other physicians. Excess weight is melting away. Patients report sleeping better, growing stronger hair and nails, and feeling energy they haven't felt in years. Just as I had personally observed changes in my own body while following my own advice, my patients are confirming what I've known for years. Indeed, their bodies are acting younger, and so will yours.

When you begin to take care of yourself, you do a lot more than regain your health and beauty. You build confidence. Self-care helps you take control of your life when it seems off balance. Then you find it transfers to other parts of your life as well. Every person who walks

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through the doors at my Inclusive Health Center soon realizes this once he or she commences a personalized program. But I know that not everyone can visit my center and participate in all that it has to offer. For this very reason I bring you this book. Just as I do for people at the Inclusive Health Center, I will show you how to take years off your body's age—no matter what your chronological age is. And it will make everyone (including yourself) notice.



The Mystery of Happiness and the Wonder Of Water

Water loss is the final common pathway to all aging and disease.

As you can imagine, I'd been living by my principles about health and wellness for decades by the time I reached my seventies. These included practicing the fundamentals of diet and exercise, taking care of my skin, and supporting my emotional self. My principles kept me healthy and happy for the most part, and I knew they worked because I'd taught them to an untold number of people through my work as a professor, lecturer, formulator of products, and clinical doctor. And these individuals were also taking my ideas seriously and reaping the rewards in their well-being. But then something happened: just a few years ago I had an experience that profoundly changed the heart and soul of my principles. It dramatically shifted the way I look at life, interact with others, and approach the entire practice of medicine. And it helped me see everything more clearly and tap a hidden personal potential that I had hardly known existed.

During the fall of 2006 I began to have serious trouble with my eyes. I was on a trip to Hong Kong when I noticed that my vision had suddenly gotten blurry. So I called my wife, Lorelee, and asked her

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to make me an appointment with an eye doctor. The diagnosis was a detached retina, which required corrective surgery. After the operation, I was forced to keep my head down with my chin on my chest for nearly a month while the retina healed. This was painful, and, of course, it forced me to sharply limit my activities. But I had to do it. It was either that or risk losing the vision in the affected eye altogether.

An experience like that would be difficult for anyone, but it was especially hard on me. I've always been a very energetic and active man, so the lack of mobility—not being able to work, exercise, take my long hikes, and follow my usual routine—was, to say the least, challenging. Somehow I had to find an interesting way to fill the hours. It turned out my recuperation became an opportunity to discover a hidden talent. Lorelee suggested I use some of the time for art. The previous year, during a stay in Ojai, California, I'd taken an art class for enjoyment. I had never thought of myself as the art type or as someone whose creative instincts leaned in that direction, but we took the class together. It was a very basic lesson and lasted only about an hour. The teacher introduced us to a few materials and techniques and then left us on our own. At the end of the hour I had completed eleven pieces. The teacher glanced at them and said, "I don't recommend you take any formal art classes because they will spoil you. Your style is unique and lessons will ruin it." Clearly, she wanted me to have fun and find time to experiment with art on a regular basis.

Flash-forward about a year. Here I was, cooped up at home with a bad eye and a set of art supplies that I had purchased long ago. They'd never been used. So I fished out the supplies from a closet, sat down at my desk, and started to paint. And paint some more. And some more. The dozens of pieces that I've since created now adorn my office and have been showcased at several institutions, including the University of Southern California. They are constant reminders of this other talent I have that had gone unnoticed for most of my

life. They also remind me to stop my typical routine and play with my creativity—just like a kid—once in a while, to color beyond the lines we draw in our adult lives. I sometimes wonder, what else will I discover about myself? Out of a painful and frustrating experience with my eye came this wonderful revelation about myself. And I also started to see the world differently, both literally and metaphorically. It was as if I was now seeing in Technicolor, whereas everything was just black-and-white before.

I've always said the best is yet to come, and I firmly believe in that statement. Not just for me but for everyone who puts a positive effort and attitude forward and reveres one of my most important tenets: be imperfect; live longer. And become free to be yourself. This may be the ultimate path to health and happiness. Put another way, being an emotional youthful person who embraces the power of imperfection and who being that genuine and capable person you really are is the key. It's also the secret to conquering cultural stress.

I'm not equating emotional youthfulness with emotional immaturity. Much to the contrary, I'm referring to the person who is eternally playful, spontaneous, eager to learn something new, unafraid to take risks, unencumbered by fears of failure, and joyful in the company of others. Think about all that you had to learn on your own when you were just figuring out how to crawl, sit up straight, walk, and eventually talk. You went through copious rounds of trial and error. You failed oh-so-many times. And along the way you probably laughed and cried so hard out of sheer bliss or frustration that your belly hurt. When's the last time you had that experience? Those are emotions we all have, but as adults we've learned to hold them in. And as adults, we fall into the perpetual trap of judging ourselves, being overly critical of ourselves, trying to be perfect, and living very controlled lives. We rarely give ourselves permission to say no (like a toddler being defiant!) and instead take on too much in our daily responsibilities.

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Is it any wonder we have record rates of depression and chronic illness today? While on the surface there may not seem to be a link between happiness and certain diseases, such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and dementia, I think attitude paves our path in all health-related areas. Science is finally revealing just how strong this connection is: over the past decade numerous studies have proven the correlation between a positive outlook and staying healthier as one ages. In one of the most recent longitudinal studies, published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* in early 2014, researchers highlighted the detrimental physical effects of negative emotions on the body when they analyzed data on more than three thousand men and women aged sixty and older.¹ About 21 percent were deemed to have a high level of enjoyment of life, 56 percent a medium level, and 23 percent a low level of enjoyment. Over the course of eight years,

Don't focus on the minutia in life. When you come to a wall in the road, life is telling you to make a turn. Go for it.

these individuals experienced increasing problems with day-to-day tasks as their mobility declined. About 4 percent of those most upbeat about life developed two or more new functional impairments compared with 17 percent of those who enjoyed life the least. During this time, people who were assessed as enjoying life at a medium or low level were about 80 percent more likely than their happier counterparts to have developed mobility and functional problems.

Even when it comes to stress, which is inevitable and virtually impossible to eradicate, how we deal with and approach that stress is what makes the difference. It's much easier, and more effective, to change your attitude about stress than to change stress's existence. And this has everything to do with our happiness.

» The Mystery of Happiness

What makes people happy? It has been said that an innate feature of the human psyche is to constantly seek self-improvement. Some believe that perhaps one derives happiness within this pursuit. As humans, we are hard-wired to attain happiness and universally yearn to feel it. Because of this, it is logical to conclude that when happiness cannot be achieved, we mourn; we become unhappy. Aristotle believed that happiness is a destination that can be discerned only at the end of life. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he explained that happiness is a measure of virtue, which is realized through the practice of doing ethical, moral works and of amassing “goods” such as health, friendship, and wisdom. Aristotle was also a proponent of achieving a virtuous life through making good decisions and keeping the future in mind. As such, he would not be a fan of today’s culture of instant gratification, which he’d view as behavior that’s a hindrance to happiness.

Whether you agree or not with Aristotle, the fact remains that happiness is a subjective topic. If it is a destination, then most of us are still trying to find it. However elusive happiness is, countless researchers have attempted to define it, calculate it, describe steps for attaining it, and explain it. Because happiness lacks a universal definition, it’s difficult to study. This is perhaps because happiness touches on every aspect of humankind such as our global culture, economics, environment, and relations, as well as other transcendent categories like religion and spirituality. At the individual level, this is also why my multidisciplinary approach to health, which you’ll learn about in the next chapter, works.

No doubt happiness is ingrained in the human mind, so much so that whole societies were (and are) built simply to create more for its people. Our forefathers, for instance, wrote in the Declaration of Independence that the pursuit of happiness is a right—one that is bestowed simply because a person has life. And because of this

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definition, some feel that it requires little self-involvement, that it should just come—and possibly for some, it does. However, for most, work is involved and this work probably includes the removal of barriers that prevent the flow of happiness externally, internally, and emotionally. My approach takes this into account and can be effectively used to remove obstacles that would limit the achievement of happiness and actually encourage the appropriate brain chemistry to promote it.

Happiness can mean something different to different people and cultures around the world. Americans tend to associate happiness with achievements (even though we'd be better off taking pleasure in every minor success, however small or trivial). On the other hand, the Japanese believe happiness is the ability to experience social har-

Happiness does not require luxury. Happiness means finding beauty every day.

mony. The Germans believe happiness is the ability to make good choices. For the people of India, happiness is peace and is defined through family relationships. While some scholars asserts that happiness is a measure of income—\$75,000

per year, per household in the United States—others have gone so far as to suggest that happiness can be measured through a country's gross domestic product (GDP), though sometimes wealthy nations rank the least happiest as we'll see shortly.² Clearly, higher income does not necessarily mean higher well-being, especially once the \$75,000 threshold is surpassed.

In contrast to the belief that GDP is an indicator of happiness, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, in 2009, proposed that his country and others replace the GDP figure with the idea of a gross domestic happiness (GDH) measure—a socioeconomic development metric that accounts for factors such as health care availability, leisure time, subjective happiness, and sustainability. Following France's lead, Britain began compiling, in May 2011, a national happiness index,

a move that many psychotherapists have lauded as mentally more healthy. Interestingly, the original idea of GDH came from Bhutan in 1972 from then king Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who based his concept on Buddhist principles. It's difficult to be specific on what exactly the GDH metric examines. It has been said to analyze seven areas of wellness including categories such as economic, environmental, physical, mental, workplace, social, and political wellness, but there remains no exact measure.

In another attempt to find the happiest places on earth, the Gallup Organization ranked a list of 148 countries and areas that were examined in 2011. The results are based on five questions that have to do with whether one experienced a lot of enjoyment the day before the survey and whether he or she felt respected, well-rested, laughed and smiled a lot, and did or learned something interesting. The following list shows where the most positive people reside in the world. We didn't make the top twenty (we're number thirty-three, and there were several ties). Note, too that residents of Panama, which ranks 90th in the world with respect to GDP per capita, are among the most likely to report positive emotions. People who live in Singapore, however, are the least likely to report positive emotions—and Singapore ranks fifth in the world in terms of GDP per capita.³

1. Panama
1. Paraguay
3. El Salvador
3. Venezuela
5. Trinidad and Tobago
5. Thailand
7. Guatemala
7. Philippines
9. Ecuador
9. Costa Rica
11. Canada

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- 11. Columbia
- 11. Malaysia
- 11. Netherlands
- 11. Ireland
- 16. Denmark
- 16. Kuwait
- 16. Oman
- 16. Indonesia
- 16. Honduras

I'm not surprised that most Americans don't claim to be the happiness people on the planet. I witness the unhappiness daily in my work with patients. It's achingly palpable. And it stems from all kinds of issues—work stress, family strife, illness, divorce, death of a loved one, loneliness, and, of course, cultural stress, a real phenomenon we'll explore in chapter 3.

I should point out, however, that other methods of evaluating happiness across various cultures and countries have arrived at better results for us Americans. In 2014, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released its latest "Better Life Index," which ranks countries according to 11 criteria it considers essential for a happy life. These include data on health, education, income, and environment. The survey also takes into consideration people's responses about their priorities in life and evaluates their "sense of happiness." The top 10 countries:⁴

- 1. Australia
- 2. Norway
- 3. Sweden
- 4. Denmark
- 5. Canada
- 6. Switzerland
- 7. U.S.
- 8. Finland

9. Netherlands

10. New Zealand

We as humans are by nature compassionate beings capable of manipulating the way we interact with our environment and how we perceive our experiences. As such, we work hard, attempt to deflect conflict, seek to maintain stability, and perhaps spend most of our time chasing desires, whether external, internal, or emotional. There is something to be said for those who “learn” to be happy or who work through processes to cognitively create their happiness. But whether happiness is a biologically controlled function, a learned state of mind, or a cognitive process remains the subject of countless studies, with pharmaceutical companies leading the way on the biological studies.

The Happiness Test

Which of the following makes people happier?

- Making more money.
- Finding a soul mate.
- Losing ten pounds.
- Moving into a new house.
- Achieving success.
- Having better genes; happiness is genetic, just like the color of one's eyes and hair.

Answer: None of the above is true. New science proves that happiness is a process—not a goal. And it's not necessarily about having fun either. As I clearly stated in *The Water Secret* based on research, happiness is about 50 percent genetic, 40 percent intentional, and 10 percent circumstantial.⁵ That 40 percent category—the intentional one—is the most important. Circumstances can change, or you can become accustomed to them (e.g., a new car, a bigger house, a promotion) such that they no longer make you happy. On the other hand, when you are engaged in a life purpose that has meaning to you, which can be anything from rearing children to doctoring the elderly in underserved areas, happiness finds you in the way you live and look at the world. In other words, happiness is more a choice than an outcome or destination. It's an action, not a result.

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The reality is that happiness is probably a combination of all three elements—biological, learned, and cognitive—and this is what my approach to wellness honors. How much is biological, learned, or cognitive is unknown, but when people use my three-step program, this is irrelevant. And I think we can all agree that regardless of how each one of us defines happiness, it's a state of mind and its destination is the brain.

» Turning Back the Clock through the Water Principle

While studying happiness from a purely scientific perspective may be hard, it's not as challenging to study aging. And everyone has an opinion in this realm. Years ago, I myself started looking for the most comprehensive approach to understanding health, aging, and happiness. Theories about chronic inflammation and free-radical damage, among countless others, weren't enough for me. (The last time I checked, I found more than three-hundred ideas on the causes of aging). In 2009, the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to three Americans whose experiments were pivotal in our understanding of telomeres, the protective coverings on the ends of chromosomes that impact cell division. The amount of the substance in the body that builds telomeres, called telomerase, ultimately influences cell death and, in the larger scheme of life, aging.

But none of these theories paint the whole picture for me, as if they are merely plot twists in the mystery book of life. Certainly these biological events and substances play a proven role, but I sense that they do so within a much larger and universal context.

So with every idea that emerged on aging, at the back of my mind continued to sound the famous words from the Nobel Laureate in Medicine Albert Szent-Gyorgi von Nagrapolt: "Discovery is seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody else has thought." And even though I've led plenty of pioneering studies

about the importance of controlling inflammatory pathways and nourishing the body with good ingredients, I've always felt something was missing. Like a house with a caved-in roof after a light rain, it does no good to replace the roof if you don't take care of what really brought it down in the first place, such as termites that weakened the structure before the storm hit. In the body, if you're not addressing root causes of disorders and disease, or the triggers of inflammation, you're not going to support its inherent healing powers to maintain a strong and robust body.

By the time I started painting and embracing the gifts of imperfection, I had already built my health center. Adding the importance of emotional youthfulness was the finishing touch on my whole philosophy. It further allowed me to understand the aging process and teach what I believe has become my most important contribution to science: the Water Principle. Let me briefly take you back to the events that led up to my theory, for my discovery didn't happen in a lab or other traditional medical setting. As with many scientific breakthroughs, it evolved slowly over time as I tried to understand my patients and gather evidence from them. It's amazing what you can learn from patients when you delve into their habits and personal "secrets" to staying young, especially when you witness tens of thousands pass through your office from all walks of life. Some seem to defy their age as if by magic while others show clear signs of having jumped too far ahead into the future before their time. Genetics and luck aside ("luck" meaning avoiding diseases like cancer or other serious illnesses of unknown origin), I saw clear patterns among those who were aging exceptionally well and those who looked desperate for a reboot.

One patient in particular has always stood out in my mind. When Ted walked into my office more than a decade ago, he was in supreme health for a man of his eighty-eight years. He never got sick. He hiked every day, stayed active in community events and organizations, had

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a positive outlook on life even though he'd lost his wife a few years previously, and enjoyed a healthy diet that included eggs every other day. Ted may have had a good set of genes, but I knew that his chosen lifestyle dictated how well he lived more than anything else. He was just one of thousands who offered me insights into aging well, and I took his wisdom to heart. After all, I myself was looking for the recipe to feeling and looking as vibrant as possible. Patients like Ted helped me see where I could make improvements and then share that knowledge with others.

One feature that emerged from my gleanings was the fact my healthiest patients shared the ability to hold water without the classic “water retention” in the wrong areas. In other words, they were

Life can be described as a process during which the highly hydrated state of fertilized oocytes, embryos, newborns, toddlers, and so on, is transformed into a gradually more and more dehydrated one.

well hydrated (and looked it) yet were not bloated and did not have to lug around bottles of water all day. My own experience as an avid hiker who continually felt dehydrated on strenuous climbs inspired me to think in a new way about how to encourage my cells to hold more water. I theorized that the water conserving strength of the cell's membrane—its ability to

keep water *inside the cell* (hence, *cellular water*)—was the fundamental marker of health and youthful vitality. The diets of my healthiest patients like Ted were rife with the very nutrients that make up cellular membranes, the outer yet permeable boundary of a cell that envelops its interior and allows certain molecules to enter or exit the cell.

Eager to translate this theory into practice, I used my background as a pharmacist and a physician to attack the problem of cellular water loss. I naturally became the first case study as I experimented on myself by taking various nutrients in the hopes of creating an

ideal environment for maintaining the building blocks of healthy cells. This included supplementing my diet with antioxidant minerals, vitamins, and plant-based compounds; adding anti-inflammatory agents to the mix to prevent free radicals from forming in the first place; and finally throwing in some omega fats to draw more water to the cells. (And, like Ted, I started to eat eggs every other day.) My weekly hikes afforded me the perfect testing grounds.

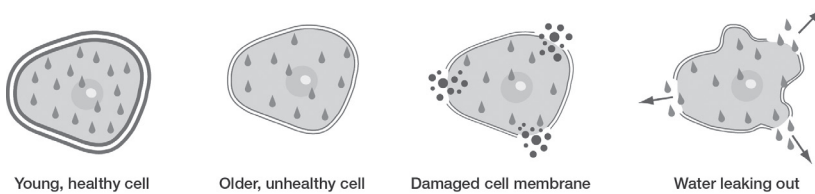
Flash-forward several years. By the mid-1990s, I was convinced enough of my theory from my own experience to share it with a few hundred patients whose health needed a boost. Not to my surprise, I found that those who took advantage of my internal care program felt better, slept better, and had a remarkable reduction in the severity of common skin disorders such as dryness, acne, and cellulite. I also found that their skin had an apparent increase in structural strength and resilience that made it appear firmer, plumper, brighter—more like young skin. And I knew, as every dermatologist knows, that the outer appearance reflected what was going on inside.

With the help of new technologies that were emerging to measure cellular integrity and these patients' bodily ratio of water *outside* their cells versus *inside* their cells, I further validated my theory. The people who had robust cellular water content were overall healthier. And I noted clear parallels between aspects of these individuals' lives that contributed to health or, conversely, ill health, and their cellular water. Someone who was sick or unhappy didn't show a lot of cellular water. On the other hand, people with outward signs of health and well-being and who maintained healthy lifestyle habits scored high in the cellular water department. They were also the happiest, despite difficult life circumstances.

By the year 2000, I'd hired a research staff and put my theory through more rigorous testing both in the lab and in a clinical setting. I also put patients through my three-part program to see if I could change their cellular water for the better and improve their health.

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Lo and behold, thousands of people did indeed transform their lives in uniquely individual ways just by following my simple protocol. Take Monica, a thirty-eight-year-old type 2 diabetic who came to me with a persistent case of acne. After a month following my program alongside a specific treatment for her acne, her blood sugar stabilized and her acne cleared. Or consider Stewart, a fifty-seven-year-old man suffering with depression largely due to the ongoing pain of rheumatoid arthritis. He adopted my strategies and three months later found that his arthritis pain was considerably reduced and his depression was lifting. And I'll never forget Jessica, a twenty-nine-year-old woman already burned out from her job as vice president of publicity for a large corporation. She looked ten years older and was already complaining of advanced aging. Ten weeks later, after following my program, she felt like she had reclaimed her life. (And she looked *younger* than twenty-nine, believe it or not.)



The Water Principle

So I knew that my program was working, but then in 2012 I upped the ante on my investigations further by conducting a genetic study.⁶ This really put my program to the test. Although it was a very small study, involving six women, the results spoke volumes. It compared blood and skin biopsies collected at the start of the program and after twelve weeks and again at twenty-four weeks. We examined changes in certain genes known to be big players in aging, such as those responsible for DNA repair, the birth of new cells, metabolism, fat burning, and immunity. And what we found surprised even me:

the simple lifestyle modifications I had these women make led to significant changes at the molecular level, which resulted in their bodies acting and behaving much younger than their chronological age. We were also able to confirm what I'd long thought to be true: health could be measured by how strongly the cells were holding water. The results indicated that the women's genes were expressing themselves in positive ways thanks to well-hydrated cells. In other words, they were less susceptible to disease.

Moreover, these women, who ranged in age from forty-six to fifty-three, were uniquely vulnerable to depression at the start of the program. In fact, on average they had a 33 percent lifetime risk of suffering from depression based on certain laboratory measurements. (In the general population, one's average risk is about 16 percent.) But after just twelve weeks, they had reduced their levels of risk by nearly 20 percent.

While you might think these lifestyle modifications were all about diet and exercise (e.g., chewing on raw kale and using a treadmill), that's far from the case. At the core of the program was what I've been talking about since the beginning of the book: tapping the power of imperfection and gaining control of the cultural stress in their lives. This, it turns out, has a huge say in your body's ability to turn back its clock and turn on its youth genes. These women harnessed the power of maximizing the 40 percent of happiness that's under one's control and reaped big rewards that could be clinically measured. And contrary to what you might think, they didn't do it just by switching up their diets and taking daily walks. By the time I was treating this group of women and taking them through my program, I knew that among the most powerful things I could do for them at the start was share my words of inspiration. Over recent years, I've amassed a library of insights that I use on patients, finding that they help the most to encourage people to make the initial shift in attitude that can then open the door to a new, better life.

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The results I was getting from these insights alone were helping me make the ultimate connection between my theory of aging and the impact of emotional health on maintaining robust, hydrated cells. In addition to sprinkling my saying throughout the book, I have listed them in appendix A and invite you to read through them to find ones that resonate with you. Read them aloud to yourself and really think about them. In general, these insights encourage you to think the way you thought as a toddler and to become your authentic self.

Your Wellspring

Despite what your high school biology text taught you, you are *not* 75 to 80 percent water. You once were—long ago when you were a babbling baby fresh from your mother’s watery womb. But now you’re closer to 50 percent water. What happened? Well, you’ve aged, and since your early years, internal and external factors have damaged your cells and weakened their ability to retain water. This explains the signs of aging that probably emerged in your late twenties or (if you were lucky) early thirties: your skin began to become drier, fine lines and wrinkles appeared, your sleep patterns changed, your flexibility took a hit, your digestion slowed, and your energy wavered. You started to complain about more aches and pains, need more caffeine to get through your day, and have a tougher time keeping excess weight off. No, this didn’t happen overnight, although it may have seemed that way one random day when you “suddenly” noted all these changes in a mirror, on a scale, or in your doctor’s office.

What’s been going on has been a slow, inevitable decline in your cells’ capacity to hold water for good use. If you drank a gallon of water a day and I called you dehydrated, would you believe me? Probably not. But it’s true: unless your cells can retain the water they require to support cellular functions, then drinking all the water in the world won’t make much of a difference (and you’ll need to keep drinking). Every part of the body, from your brain to the tendons and ligaments

in your feet, needs water to function properly. Without enough water in their cells, organs cannot perform their normal operations or communicate with each other.

Which brings me to another fact that goes against the grain of conventional wisdom: not all water is created equal. As you've probably figured out by now, your body contains two types of water: *wellness water* inside your cells and *wastewater* floating in between your cells, the kind that will age you and make you feel fat and sluggish. Puffy eyes, swollen ankles, and a bloated stomach, for example, are all examples of extracellular waste fluid and signs that the body isn't handling water efficiently. Cell damage can occur anywhere, including in the blood vessels, heart, skin, liver, and muscles. Picture a blood vessel that's as strong and sturdy as a brand-new hose. Now picture that same hose riddled with microscopic holes, leaking water. That water escapes and become waste.

Wellness water, on the other hand, sustains cellular activities and thus life; this is what allows you to remain healthy, trim, and beautiful. The caveat, of course, is to keep water where it's supposed to be if cells are somehow compromised and porous as an outcome of aging. First, you have to sew up the cracks, and then you have to ensure you're getting high-quality water, which you won't necessarily find in a bottle or faucet. You'll shortly come to understand what I mean, as I take you through my "Pitcher of Health" and train you to choose foods and beverages that optimize your hydration.

When patients ask me to explain how such a focus on water could be so critical, I offer another perspective: you've gone from being a glass nearly full with water when you were born to a glass that's half empty. And a glass that's half empty can't handle the rigors of daily life as well, from those pesky free radicals that swarm in response to certain lifestyle habits and exposure to UV rays and pollution to chronic inflammation or any other factor that accelerates the aging process. I often find myself fielding questions about inflammation

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in particular, a concept that has been running rampant in scientific circles lately. Billions of dollars and the most brilliant minds in the world have been unraveling the mystery of how inflammation causes your body to self-destruct. But this has caused much confusion among the public, who now seem to think it's a disease itself.

Inflammation is routinely advertised as something bad for you. The truth is, inflammation is a warning sign that the body is trying to heal itself. It's key to survival. And it's far from a disease. Inflammation, in fact, is a *symptom*—a sign of something else going on in the body that ushers in the inflammatory response for help. Think of it as our body warring against harmful agents, an indication that the body is in the process of repairing itself. You would die without an inflammatory response. It's critical to the immune system. It tells us our immune system is working. If we never had inflammation, no action would occur in the dynamic cellular immune system network to offer assistance within the body. When we know this, it becomes clear that inflammation in a healthy body, when it's not an overreaction, chronic or irreparable, really results in increased general health because of the repair process that's happening at the cellular level.

Here's a prime example to explain: when you cut your finger, the inflammation process begins, ultimately to spur the healing. Once the skin is healed, the inflammation goes away. In the case of more serious forms of inflammation, such as heart disease, the same holds true. If you were to take care of the underlying cause of the heart disease—chronic high blood pressure and plaque formation on the arterial walls, for example, then the inflammation would go away—and so would the disease. It's very difficult, if not impossible, to “treat” inflammation. You have to treat the *causes* of inflammation. But treating all the causes of aging is a mighty tall order. What if you could address what happens as a result of the aging process and then essentially reverse-engineer the treatment? That's what the Water Principle does. Because the Water Principle offers a unifying theory

that helps us make sense of the aging process, it tells us *how to slow it down*—and in some cases *reverse* it—from a singular focal point. What's more, it reveres the body as a whole. We all have multiple issues to deal with when it comes to health, which is why an inclusive approach is ideal.

Regardless of what causes aging or disease, the final common pathway is the reduction of water in our tissues. Yes, we can say life is simply a slow process of continual dehydration. We wilt and wither over time, just like that plant you forgot to water until it was too late. Even Hippocrates, the father of medicine, thought of the human body in terms of four main climate-like categories more than twenty-three centuries ago: humid, dry, warm, and cold. He said when we are young, we are humid and warm, and when we age, these two factors no longer prevail—the body moves into the dry and cold categories, which eventually dominate. As our cells lose their integrity, we become more vulnerable to all the aspects of aging, such as oxidative stress (free radicals), inflammation, psychological and cultural stress, and disease. It's a vicious cycle: our cells and connective tissues hold less and less water as we age, and we age as a result of that inability to hold on to water.

One of the easiest ways to remember the power of the Water Principle is to think of driving a car across the country. You'll encounter some tough terrain along the way, including dirt roads, bumps, and steep inclines. If your tires get little holes in them, they will hold less air and the engine will have to work harder to go the distance. The car will become fuel inefficient as it chugs along, demanding more work from other parts of the car to keep going. Eventually that extra-hard work begins to exhaust your transmission and the car begins to slowly fall apart. A good set of tires can make all the difference. And so can a good set of body cells. Everything about you will benefit.

Weight Loss, Not Water Retention

One question I often get soon after explaining the Water Principle is whether or not people who follow it gain weight due to water retention. True?

Not so fast. In fact, the opposite is true: people who live by the Water Principle *lose* weight as their bodies become more efficient. You will weigh more if the water is in the wrong place—like puffy eyes or swollen ankles. Water in your cells not only allows you to function at a higher level but also increases your basal metabolism rate so you burn even more calories at rest to lose more unhealthy weight. Here's another way to look at it: as your cells become more hydrated, they function optimally and utilize more energy. In all my studies of people following the Water Principle, the one common thread among patients is a heightened metabolism and a reduction in body fat.

Integrative, Preventive, or Inclusive Health

It's amazing to me how many resources we have at our fingertips these days and yet we continue to battle chronic diseases. We have the wonder of powerful new drugs on the market, access to the best medicine that money can buy, spa-like retreats sprinkled throughout the country, and the knowledge to tell the difference between what's good and not so good for us. Yet we aren't all functioning at our best and feeling and looking the best we can be. We're still not 100 percent healthy. Why is this happening?

"Integrative medicine" and "preventive medicine" have become buzzwords in the last decade. We seem to think that these practices help solve our health problems, but they, in fact, perpetuate another problem: focusing on a single condition or disease. Take, for example, heart disease, which is the leading killer in America. If you are a heart patient, chances are you'll be taking medications prescribed by a traditional doctor. You'll be told to watch your diet and avoid unhealthy

fats that can clog your arteries. You may even be recommended to an acupuncturist known for heart-healthy treatments.

That's all fine and good, but it still puts the focus on a single organ, your heart. What about your stress level and emotional health that's contributing to high blood pressure? What if you've got an undiagnosed problem festering in your lungs or brain that's exacerbating your heart condition? This is akin to not seeing the forest for the trees.

What I love about the Water Principle is that it not only regards the health of the whole individual but does so by considering every single cell in the body. When every cell functions at its highest level, the body's environment is optimized for the health of every organ and system—not just one. So let's take, for example, the theory about telomeres again for a moment. Like plastic tips on the ends of shoelaces, telomeres sheathe the ends of chromosomes to keep them from “fraying” and losing their genetic content. Without telomeres, the chromosomes and the genes they hold would come apart. Telomeres are necessary for cells to divide and are involved in directing the number of divisions. In essence, telomeres have a say in cell life (or death) and how well we age. So how can you protect your telomeres?

Well, think about it. Telomeres are part of a cell. To protect our telomeres, we have to protect our cells. We have to preserve normal cellular functioning. And that is exactly the goal of the Water Principle. Another way to think about it is to see the Water Principle as the means by which we gain control of our cellular health. It supports optimal functioning of *all* cellular roles, from maintaining telomeres and encouraging cell division to reducing dangerous inflammation and removing waste products and pathogens. It acknowledges and values both the forest *and* the trees, so to speak.

Hence, *inclusive health* relates to the whole body and all its trillions of cells. Wouldn't you rather address every single cell in your body than treat just a cluster in your heart or liver or brain? Everything in your body is connected. Though it's become customary to see your

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heart, for example, as operating separately from your brain, both are inextricably linked. So are your toes and eyes, and your kidneys and ears. It's time for a new—inclusive—perspective. If you can begin to view your health in an inclusive manner, then you've already taken a huge leap. Now you just have to follow through and learn how to take care of yourself inclusively.

Most people falsely accept signs of aging such as weight gain, fatigue, and familial patterns of disease as inevitable. The truth: Upwards of 80 percent of longevity is attributed to *lifestyle*—not your encoded DNA. I see this fact played out every day in my practice and have done so for the past thirty years. Even when it comes to the risk of getting cancer, lifestyle plays a much bigger role. The vast majority of women (70 to 80 percent) who are diagnosed with breast cancer, for example, do not have a family history of the disease.

As soon as we're born, aging begins. With every birthday, new symptoms emerge—a new face line here, a stiffer joint there. And when we aren't careful, this inevitable decline accelerates. The door

By the time you reach fifty, your lifestyle determines eighty percent of your aging process. The difference between a sixty-year-old who looks forty-something and a forty-year-old who looks sixty is maintenance. But it's never too late to turn back the clock physically and from a cellular standpoint.

to illness and disease widens. None of us can escape aging. It's a certainty that Benjamin Franklin neglected to add to his short list alongside death and taxes. The anti-aging market has fueled the skincare and spa industries for decades as aging individuals continue to seek new roads to youth. And it's not just youth in looks but more importantly youth in how they feel. No one likes to feel lousy even if all looks relatively good on the outside.

If you don't have your health, nothing else—not even a youthful appearance—really matters.

In the 1980s, when I introduced alpha hydroxy acids to the

professional skincare industry, women flocked to their estheticians to exfoliate away their top wrinkly layers. As years passed, we found better vehicles for our ingredients. At my company, we discovered the power of stable vitamin C used in an anhydrous silicone formula and other topical antioxidants, and we started to see remarkable improvements in skin. But there were limitations on how much skin could improve. Regardless of what we did on the outside to maintain the results, and no matter how much sun protection was used, we continued to see the gradual changes from aging creep in. It was clear that skin aging involves more than just external influences, so research would have to go beyond skin's outermost layers. These were still the days when estheticians, doctors, and lifestyle practitioners followed their own divergent paths without considering the value of sharing knowledge or collaborating.

As I noted earlier, my own search for new approaches to help my patients led me to create an interdisciplinary approach to skincare. I had to look beneath the surface of the skin and to examine the relationship of the internal aspects of the body, unfolding the mechanisms of inflammation, disease, and hormones, to the health of the skin. My research confirmed what I knew instinctively: making changes in internal health and emotional composition, in addition to therapeutic skin treatments, produced profound results in not just skin health, but total health. Moreover, my continuing work with the Water Principle showed me, through direct clinical examination, that the key to longevity, youth, and health is found at the cellular level.

In my quest to find the next "it" ingredient or method that would take us to new levels of rejuvenation, I was faced with the grim reality that there really is no way to stop aging. In fact, if you were to ask different scientists what it means to "age," you'll get different answers. We don't even have a clear definition of what that verb means. The only thing that stops aging assuredly is death. Aging has perplexed humans for millennia, and scientists have explored cellular aging ad

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nauseam. In the process, researchers have presented more than three hundred theories on the causes of aging. It's difficult to say which theory is correct and which is not, as the answer may stem from a combination of theories—and new theories will no doubt continue to emerge. Free radicals and inflammation, for example, tell only part of the story.

All these theories on aging aside, on closer inspection, a distinct and undeniable pattern emerges. It seems the largest clue to solving the mystery of aging starts small, at the cellular level, and simply with life's most natural and valuable element, water, as the key. When our cells are not fully hydrated, they cannot function at optimal levels, and this leads to aging. When cells deteriorate, disorders, diseases, and death occur. Studies show that the elderly, especially if diseased, have low levels of water inside their cells. My own studies of people at both ends of the spectrum—those in poor health and those in supreme health—also show distinct differences in their cellular water content. Hence, the net effect of aging is cellular water loss—which, as you know by now, is the foundation of the Water Principle.

» The Science of Aging

Think of your body as composed of two components: cells and connective tissue. Both harbor and use water to sustain life, so in a sense you can think of your body as made up of cells, connective tissue, and water. That's it.

Cells make up your muscles and organs, including your skin. Though skin cells are not the same as, say, heart cells, their basic traits are the same. All cells have a protective membrane composed of fats (lipids) and lecithin, a natural antioxidant and emollient found in all living organisms that's essential to cell membranes. Within the cell membrane is a substance called cytoplasm, and within the cytoplasm is the cell's nucleus. The nucleus is the control center of the cell, and damage to a cell's outer membrane is as lethal to the cell as

direct damage to its nucleus. Both the cytoplasm and the nucleus are predominantly made up of water. Your heart, brain, bones, and outer skin layer are all made up of cells.

Connective tissue is the fibrous material that binds your muscles and organs in place and connects one organ to another. This tissue has very few cells and contains what's called the body's matrix, which is a semisolid matter made of materials such as hyaluronic acid, a water-loving substance that can actually attract up to one thousand times its weight in water. Collagen and elastin, two structural proteins you'll learn more about later in this chapter, keep the connective tissue firm and hold its shape. You get the tools you need to manufacture collagen and elastin from the amino acids in the foods you eat. Blood vessels, nerves, tendons, ligaments, and your internal layers of skin are all connective tissue.

As we age, our cells and connective tissue break down. They lose the ability to attract and hold on to all the water they need to function at their best, like they do in a baby's new body. The water that seeps out wanders aimlessly through the spaces between cells and connective tissue. This, as you know by now, is what I call wastewater.

Not only is wastewater useless, but it can cause problems. It can build up in inconvenient ways, leaving you with puffy ankles or eyelids. Your body can be full of this wastewater and still be dehydrated because the water can't reach the cells and connective tissues where it's

needed most and where it keeps your heart, lung, brain, liver, and skin healthy and vital. Can anything be done about this wastewater?

What happens when you age?

- Wrinkles
- Sun damage
- Less hair in some places, more in others
- Poor memory
- Lack of sleep
- Lack of energy
- Poor digestion
- Reduced circulation
- More stress
- Chronic disease
- And more

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Absolutely. First, it helps to understand what factors in to this water loss and then take steps to reduce that buildup of wastewater by repairing your cell membranes and strengthening the structure of the connective tissue.

Only one word describes what happens over time—"aging"—but this process actually has different reasons and triggers. Let take a look at the three main types of aging. This will help you to completely grasp how to take control of the process.

Intrinsic Aging: A Fact of Life

Indeed, part of aging is just that—aging. It's simply a natural process that happens no matter what you do to halt it. It's what would occur had you never been in the sun, swallowed toxins, taken a stressful

*Don't deal with what
you could have done.
Deal with what you are
going to do.*

exam, smoked a cigarette, partied past your bedtime, breathed metropolitan air, and so on. It's what would occur despite living in a bubble and getting Botox till your face is stone cold. Genetics play a key role in intrinsic aging. If your parents aged well, odds are, you will too. In the body, intrinsic aging results in a loss of collagen and elastin and a reduction of water in the cells.

Environmental Aging: Inevitable but Controllable

Extrinsic aging is also known as "environmental aging," a term I introduced back in 1993. Extrinsic or environmental aging is exactly what it sounds like: aging from the combination of injury to your outsides and compromised cellular functions on your insides. Luckily, this is the type of aging that we can control to some degree. Factors such as excessive sun exposure, pollution, smoking, stress, poor diet, and intake of drugs or alcohol contribute to this type of aging.

The classic signs of environmental aging are usually written all over a person's skin in the form of redness, dryness, thinner skin,

sagging and wrinkles, and hyperpigmentation (e.g., “age spots”). You probably can’t see the water loss in the cells, but it’s there. The good news is, the effects of environmental aging can be minimized through both preventive actions and treatment.

Hormonal Aging: Another Fact of Life

Hormonal aging has gained tremendous attention in recent years and has no doubt spurred much conversation, especially in women’s circles. Hormonal aging occurs as levels of estrogen decline, which starts happening long before menopause. In fact, by the time a woman reaches her twenties, she will have begun to age and her skin will probably show it. The reasons why this happens vary and include many factors such as stress and lifestyle.

Hormonal aging in men, called andropause, can also occur as levels of testosterone decline. It is less talked about in general but the effects in men are also widely visible when you consider the hallmark signs: sagging breasts (which is pronounced if they are overweight), excessive hair growth in atypical spots such as the ears and eyebrows, and thinning hair on top of the head.

Just as testosterone is present in both men and women, so is estrogen. In men, estrogen is made in small amounts as a by-product of the testosterone conversion process. This estrogen helps support bones, a healthy libido and heart, and brain function. As with women, age can precipitate an imbalance of men’s natural hormones. Too much estrogen, for example, can reduce the levels of testosterone and trigger a loss of muscle tone and sexual function. It can also cause fatigue and increased body fat.

Although the eventual dryness and inelasticity of skin that come with age are inevitable facts of life, the aging process is a cumulative one that occurs at varying rates from individual to individual. Hormonal aging does not turn on like a light switch; rather, it’s like a dimmer that slowly brightens as one’s chronological age progresses,

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and the speed at which it brightens is different from person to person. Most women are all too familiar with the ravages of low estrogen levels: weakening of the collagen and elastin fibers makes them look old as their skin becomes thinner and more fragile. Adding insult to injury, facial hair and breakouts increase, and water content in their cells decreases. In short, they don't look like a glowy youth anymore, and nothing is more frustrating than the combination of dry skin *and* acne.

So why does this loss of estrogen lead to so many skin-damaging effects? Estrogen is your skin's best friend. It helps prevent aging in three big ways: it prevents a decrease in skin collagen in postmenopausal women; it increases the skin's collagen content, which maintains skin thickness; and it helps skin maintain moisture by promoting the production of certain substances in the skin that boost hydration.

Because everything in the body is connected, shifts in hormones through the years can have profound effects on the body. Hormones are simply chemical messengers that travel in the body's blood vessels to target areas where they have an intended effect. The chemical messages, which are tiny in volume, have many large and important jobs such as regulating metabolism, mood, growth and development, and tissue function. The body's hormonal system includes the sex glands (testes in men, ovaries in women), the kidneys, the pancreas, the hypothalamus and the pituitary, pineal, parathyroid, thyroid, and adrenal glands. In addition to estrogen, the most familiar hormones include progesterone, cortisol, adrenaline, and androgens like testosterone. Every organ has certain hormones, and many hormones have multiple functions that overlap. When all hormones are balanced, the body works as it should, organs function properly, tissues are supple and resilient, and skin is youthful. Conversely, the smallest variation in hormone levels can cause great, catastrophic effects all over the body and on the skin.

While the study of menopause-related skin issues began in the mid-1990s, well before then I noted many hormonal skin patterns that exist in women. As I began to isolate certain factors and sift through my data, I was startled to find some direct correlations between hormones and skin conditions. While the term “menopausal skin” became quite popular as some of my contemporaries believed that menopause marked the beginning of skin issues due to hormone decline and imbalance, I knew this to be false based on my patients and hands-on experience.

The truth is, as we age, so do our organs and glands. In women, estrogen and progesterone production declines. And as I just stated, hormonal aging does not just happen once a woman reaches menopause. The true beginning of hormonal aging occurs decades before menopause sets in and continues to occur well after menopause.

Unlike environmental aging, for which we know clear and wise lifestyle strategies to prevent and reduce it, hormonal aging is most troublesome to treat effectively. It requires an inclusive approach and a great understanding of the body’s systems and complex interactions. That said, I won’t ask you to learn all those systems and symphonic interactions. By following the three-step program outlined in part 2, you’ll be putting into practice the very methods to heal and control hormonal aging. This is incredibly important because one of the chief side effects of hormonal aging is a decline in cellular immunity. As dried-out, aging cells lose their ability to renew themselves and operate properly, their functionality slows down—similar to a used piece of equipment that doesn’t work like new. For this reason, women approaching menopause or beyond it become more susceptible to cardiovascular disease, cancer, hypothyroidism, polycystic ovarian syndrome, autoimmune disorders, high blood pressure, obesity, insulin resistance, and more. They become vulnerable to a bevy of health challenges.

Die Late, Not Old

All humans experience a combination of the three types of aging to certain degrees. Despite the fact that hormonal aging is the most troublesome to address effectively, fundamentally it and the other two types of aging can be addressed with one simple element—water.

What I love about the Water Principle is that it offers a unifying theory that helps us make sense of the aging process. It tells us how to slow that process down—and in some cases reverse it—from a singular focal point. If water is addressed at the cellular level, then all skin and body issues can be managed more completely.

Why is this so revolutionary? Because for the past century we've been focused on disease treatment and studying diseases on a case-by-case basis. Only recently has science turned to slowing the biological processes of aging as a way to prevent and fight a multitude of diseases. Some still think of cancer, atherosclerosis, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, immune dysfunction, and skin aging as unrelated. But that insular way of thinking is beginning to change. Until recently, in fact, the notion of reversing human aging was a mere fantasy, absent any scientific support. In the last few years, scientists have gained tremendous grounds on demystifying the aging process and how to manipulate it—forward or backward.

In 2008, for instance, a group of aging experts from both the United States and United Kingdom reported in the prestigious *British Medical Journal* that slowing aging is the best way to combat diseases in the twenty-first century.⁷ In other words, the traditional medical approach of attacking individual diseases—cancer, diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and so on—will soon become less effective if we don't determine how all these diseases either interact or share common mechanisms with aging. It's true that middle-aged and older people are most often impacted by simultaneous but independent health problems, a condition technically known as comorbidity. I'll see a sixty-five-year-old man with

diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, arthritis, gastric reflux, and a history of depression. The number of medications he's taking is mind-boggling. Or picture an elderly woman suffering from at least ten different ailments and juggling an expensive, confusing cocktail of medications every day. What's more, she's been prescribed other medications, but they cause intolerable side effects, and the more drugs she takes, the greater the risk of dangerous drug interactions. Her predicament is not an unusual one.

Two-thirds of people over age sixty-five and almost three-quarters of people over eighty have multiple chronic health conditions, and the majority of Medicare spending goes to people who have five or more chronic diseases.⁸ As a group, these patients fare poorly by any measure. They stay in hospitals longer, experience more serious health complications that could have been prevented, and die younger than patients with less complex medical profiles. Sadly, they are often not treated as whole human beings. Medicine attempts to spot-treat each complicated medical problem to no avail because medicine cannot yet see the forest for the trees.

The authors of the study published in the *British Medical Journal* point out that a cure for any of the major fatal diseases would have only a marginal impact on life expectancy and the length of a healthy life. For example, if we cured cancer or heart disease today, what would that mean for the general population's life expectancy tomorrow? Not much because something else would take people down. You may be able to save yourself from a heart attack or colon cancer, but you won't escape another age-related ailment like kidney disease or a stroke.

I agree with the authors of this study that the potential benefits of slowing aging processes have been underrecognized by most of the scientific community. It's time for an attack on aging itself. To that end, I hope that the Water Principle becomes a much-embraced strategy in that arsenal. It offers a new paradigm of health promotion and disease prevention that could result in longer, more satisfying

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lives. Because it doesn't focus on just a single disease or condition, it stands to have a much greater impact on the health and wellness of people who take its tenets to heart.

While it's common knowledge that with aging comes disease, few people stop to think about what happens when you reduce aging: you reduce disease. Not only do you reduce the risk factors for disease, but you can even reduce the likelihood that a certain disease will have a maximal effect on you. In other words, when you equip your body with what it needs to function optimally at the cellular level, you effectively shield yourself from age-related diseases, forcing your body to live younger for as long as it can.

» The Three Fountains of Youth

Keeping your vital waters in your cells is the whole point of the Water Principle, but as I've said, this has very little to do with the water you drink. True hydration can originate from unlikely sources. Think of a time when you splurged on a facial or got a massage. Chances are you looked and felt better afterward. Have you ever noticed that after a great night's sleep or just a catnap in the afternoon, you looked fresher in the mirror? How about the last time you went on vacation and came back looking younger and feeling more energetic? This brings me to my three fountains of youth, which reflect the three areas on which to focus that embody the Water Principle. Each of these will be addressed in the three-step program outlined in part 2.

Fountain of Youth I: How You Think and Take Care of Your Emotions

Reducing the negative effects of emotions and stress on the body is key to optimal health. This, of course, includes abandoning the strife for perfection. Patients may come to me with specific dermatological problems to solve, but I can't help them effectively without addressing their psychological and social balance in tandem with

their skincare. Science is just beginning to uncover the relationship between our physical and psychological health for it's finally well documented that moods and a condition as serious as depression can increase one's risk for stroke.⁹ And of all the "prescriptions" I give patients to help them to look and feel better, the hardest one for them to take is to give themselves permission to live a more imperfect, playful life in the pursuit of happiness and total well-being. In the next chapter, we'll explore the concept of cultural stress, which, as I've already I pointed out, is the most pervasive, harmful type of stress around these days.

The Greek philosopher Plato once described necessity as the mother of invention. Through the years, I've witnessed confirmation of this ancient wisdom in the countless scientific discoveries that began with doctors searching for new and more effective ways to meet the needs of their patients. These findings have shaped, and continue to shape, treatment options and educate professionals in every field of medicine and therapeutic care.

Despite the fact that aging is part of the life cycle, as is the continual decline in function of all your body's systems, we are not on a path of decay and deterioration from the day we are born. Much to the contrary, the body is a remarkable machine—continually repairing itself, replacing lost cells and damaged proteins, making new mitochondria and new molecules, and fixing DNA. Every day your body gives birth to new cells and tissue—out of necessity. Ultimately every cell in your body turns over, from skin cells to heart, lung, and liver cells. Different cells turn over at different times, some faster than others. Imagine the work involved behind those scenes and the compromises that must occur when the body lacks the right raw materials needed for it to function at its optimal level. As the body ages, it requires an increased quantity of these raw materials, and the better you are at supplying them, the more successful you will be at slowing down your aging process.

Fountain of Youth II: What You Put in and on Your Body

It's no surprise that proper nutrition is one of the keys to good health, but what's not commonly understood is that you can maximize your body's capacity to heal itself and support production of robust, healthy, hydrated cells through the foods you put in your mouth. Providing your body with the right raw materials allows it to maintain a healthy water balance, stimulate new cell growth, and repair vital structures. In addition to providing nutrition, we support our skin's health; skin, after all, is your largest organ and the first line of defense against assault from pathogens, UV radiation, chemicals, and physical impact. Because it's a visible organ, it's usually the first place we find signs of aging.

Although we tend to think of the skin as a separate organ, not related to anything else, it's connected to every system in the body—from your cardiovascular and digestive systems to your immune, muscular, reproductive, endocrine, lymphatic, nervous, urinary, and skeletal systems. All must work in synergy for total body health. Both heart and skin, for example, rely on blood veins. This helps explain why when you get angry, your heart beats faster and your face reddens. This interconnectedness between the skin and internal body is largely forgotten by people who see the skin as a separate entity. It's a two-way street. When we damage the skin, we damage our insides. Similarly, what we experience inside our bodies could have manifestations on the outside. As a dermatologist, I came to understand this whole-body connectivity early on, leading me to seek more and more solutions to external skin problems by turning inward and including systemic factors in skin health.

Looking at skin provides a window into cellular and connective tissue health throughout your body. The cyclical process of cellular turnover—the complex phenomenon of tissue growth, repair, and breakdown—says a lot about how we age. When we think of aging on the outside, we are really talking about how fast our collagen

and elastin—which keep our external skin springy, resilient, and vibrant—deteriorate over time. Once damaged, these fibers lose water and become dry and brittle, leading to wrinkles and sagging. Water, in fact, is lost from every component of the skin, which explains the difference between a twenty-something's dewy complexion and your grandmother's.

Every system in the body is carefully engineered to operate at a certain balance point for optimal performance. The process through which this balance is maintained is called homeostasis. When anything goes awry, the body automatically goes to work to correct it and bring it back to this balance point. This is why you sweat when your body temperature rises. The sweating cools you off, keeping your body temperature at an ideal 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. If tissue is damaged or injured, your body will innately know that something is out of alignment and attempt to rebuild it from its components. It's adept at rebuilding tissue as long as it has the parts available. Unfortunately, that is not always the case, ultimately resulting in preventable disease and premature aging as damage builds up and goes unrepaired.

You also need to provide amino acids, the building blocks for collagen and elastin, which help keep your blood vessels firm and hold their shape. Briefly, the breakdown of collagen and elastin is responsible for the primary differences in appearance between an old face and a young face. But internally, the aging of the blood vessels and heart, sometimes called arterial aging, can be deadly. It's responsible for so many age-related diseases that either reduce one's quality of life or just cut life short: strokes, heart attacks, memory loss, and a loss of blood and nutrients to critical organs.

Your body requires nutrients to rehydrate its blood vessels and to attract wasted water back to them. My program focuses on giving you what you need for every system in your body to function optimally—from the cellular level up.

Despite what you might think, there are lots of ways to treat the

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Your skin, which accounts for 12 to 16 percent of your body's weight, is not just your largest organ but also the most interconnected. Poets call the eyes the windows to the soul, and perhaps they should call the skin the mirror of your heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys. Classic examples of this connection are the yellow tinge the skin takes on when the liver is in trouble, the red face that can indicate heart trouble, and the edema that indicates kidney trouble.

skin that will reverse visible signs of aging and help prevent further decline. This includes appropriate topical skincare regimens that you can follow at home, or with the help of an esthetician at a spa, and cosmetic medical services—all of which I'll cover in chapter 5.

Fundamentally, we now know that the key to healthy skin is found at the cellular level and that a youthful outer layer relies on optimizing the condition of your outermost cells, which are constantly under siege by the environment. Healthy skin cells that can function properly and replicate predictably will preserve your health, hold healthy water in, and ultimately slow down the natural aging process. People often forget that skin cells need the same constant supply of water, oxygen, vitamins, and nutrients as every organ and tissue in the body does. Skin also contains connective tissues that thirst for attention, just like the connective tissues found in blood vessels, nerves, joints, tendons, and ligaments.

Fountain of Youth III: The Magic of Movement

The benefits of exercise are well documented, but if I were to ask you what some of those benefits are, chances are you'd list items like lower heart rate, stronger cardiovascular system, higher lung capacity, weight management, and so on. Indeed, the advantages of being fit are plentiful, but here's one no one mentions or even considers: lower levels of cultural stress and, at the cellular level, better hydration. That's right: in the lab we find that people who maintain a regular physical exercise program—even just a simple, minimal routine a

few times a week—have a higher cellular water content. They are able to stay hydrated much more easily than a sedentary person. Why? Muscle—not fat—is the ultimate compartment for cellular water. It holds much more water than fat does, which also explains why bioelectrical pulses sent through a body to measure its composition move quickly through people who carry more muscle than fat. Those pulses speed through water and trip on fat. How fast those pulses move determines your fat-to-muscle ratio.

The lesson: the more muscle you have, the better your chance of supporting cellular water. Exercise ultimately fosters hydration; the fitter you are, the less water you need to drink. (By the way, this has nothing to do with “bulking up.” When you build lean muscle, you melt away fat and uncover a toned, healthy, and *hydrated* body. No wonder people glow after exercise!) Being physically active will also spill into other aspects of your life that honor the Water Principle. As you shape up, you’ll reach for healthier foods and generally feel motivated to pay greater attention to your lifestyle habits. You’ll also be able to combat cultural stress.

Although the power of exercise in reducing stress in general is well known, here’s something you might not have known: exercise makes your blood circulate more quickly, transporting the stress hormone (and fat-friendly) cortisol to your kidneys and flushing it out of your system. Cortisol encourages your body to store fat—especially dangerous belly fat—which releases fatty acids into your blood, raising cholesterol and insulin levels and paving the way for heart disease and diabetes. This is why several studies have shown that regular exercise can dramatically help control blood sugar and reduce the risk for metabolic disorders like insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. One study found walking briskly for a half hour every day reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 30 percent.¹⁰

The physical benefits of exercise are no doubt a powerful force against the ravages of aging. And on the flip side of the coin,

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sedentariness is a destructive force. But if you were to ask me about the biggest common denominator of all when it comes to living a vibrant, long life, one that connects all the information I've given you so far, it's this: combatting cultural stress. I've already mentioned and briefly defined this term, but let's get up close and personal with the concept now that you've gained a broad understanding of my healthcare approach and underlying philosophy. It turns out that combatting cultural stress through the lens of the Water Principle is the ultimate key to reversing aging—and looking and feeling great.

» What's Your Living Age?

I covered a lot of territory in this chapter, and you may be wondering how it all fits together. I started by talking broadly about happiness and how, as we get older, we tend to lose that joyful inner zest like that of a child. It becomes harder to keep a positive attitude given life's trials and our exceedingly high expectations of ourselves. The irony is that as we expect more and more from ourselves and strive to be perfect, we simultaneously fail to put ourselves first and really take care of our bodies from the inside out. Stress becomes more of a challenge to manage, and it shows up in clinical conditions ranging from general anxiety disorders to severe depression. And the more stress you suffer, the unhappier you feel and the faster you age. This can be seen generally in one's overall outer appearance as well as deeply inside via molecular and cellular signs that the body isn't working at optimal capacity—it's not, as it were, keeping its youth and "happy genes" turned on.

Then I went on to explain my Water Principle, which is the idea that aging is directly correlated with the loss of cellular water as your cells become unable to hold vital water to perform optimally and to sustain life. When we are young, we naturally have more water in our cells; as we age we have less. Similarly, when we are happy we have more water in our cells; when we are sad we have less. Note the

relationship: cellular hydration is the key to health, happiness, and youthfulness.

In my clinical work and laboratory studies, I've found a parallel relationship between people's general contentment and their cellular water content. Happy people have increased cellular water and look and feel much younger than their chronological age (as much as ten years younger). They also are a lot more adept at handling stress, even when it's constant and severe at times. Conversely, those who show signs of advanced aging usually report being dissatisfied with life, unfulfilled, and unhappy. They let every little stress get to them, and they typically experience much more cultural stress than the average person. And when you quantify their cellular water content, they are indeed "dehydrated." Their cells are not retaining water, and therefore are not performing optimally. (Think about it: when you're under acute stress, one of the body's first reactions is to make you sweat; hence the "sweaty palms" saying. Imagine a similar process going on at the cellular level. Granted, cells don't sweat, but when under stress they can most definitely lose the precious water that holds the nutrients they need to thrive.)

There's a reason why happiness can make your skin glow; the connection between our psychological well-being and physical health is powerful. Picture an ebullient, carefree child (who obviously doesn't have a cell phone or an e-mail account yet). She's young, happy, and hydrated. Now picture the opposite, an old, grumpy woman who has no passion for living. She's no doubt lost cellular water through the normal process of aging, but her water loss will be significantly greater than a peer who kept her inner toddler alive and well throughout life.

People who "age well" don't look their age because they don't act their age.

At least twice a week I hear adults in my medical practice complain that their lives are in a rut—that they feel stuck and have lost the

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drive and fun factor that they once had in their youth. Every day is the same, and even though they may be very active with social media or busy themselves with a lot of work, at the same time they feel isolated and lonely. It's as if their lives have lost meaning. Nothing gets them excited anymore, and their despair and apathy are practically palpable. Little do they know, however, that a solution exists that has nothing to do with pharmaceutical drugs and everything to do with reigniting the playfulness, creativity, and novelty-seeking behavior of a child. And when they make that change, it's as if magic happens. Something literally gets turned on inside as they go from lifeless to lively. From hopelessness to happiness. From aging fast and losing cellular water to aging gracefully and *using* cellular water to promote health. All of this, in turn, feeds a beautiful cycle of wellness. It is what I call my Circle of Life.



CIRCLE OF LIFE

When new patients go through my program at my health center, I have them first complete an assessment to determine their Living

Age. It's a way of measuring how their current lifestyle is affecting how well they are aging. This is an excellent exercise to do, and below you'll find the same twenty questions my personal patients answer. Answer them all truthfully and score yourself.

This is unlike other health tests you may have taken in the past because it won't ask you about your cholesterol level or number on the scale, so don't panic. Be honest with yourself as you answer these questions; don't try to cheat by giving a "right" answer that you think will boost your score. (i.e., lower your age). There's no one here but you and these responses. The more truthfully you answer these, the better your capacity to transform yourself starting today. Once you've added up the values for all twenty questions, you then add that to your chronological age. So, if the sum of your answers totals -5 and you're forty years old, then your Living Age would be thirty-five years old. Conversely, if your responses amount to +7, then your Living Age would be 47.

A Younger You Assessment

What's Your Living Age?

Use this assessment to determine how your current lifestyle is affecting how well you are aging.

1. When I tell people my real age, they are:
 - A. amazed—since I look younger
 - B. not surprised—since I look as old as I am
 - C. trying not to admit I look older than I really am
2. People would describe me as:
 - A. rigid and set in my ways
 - B. someone who sets reasonable boundaries
 - C. a pushover
3. I use sunscreen:
 - A. rarely—since my skin doesn't burn

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- B. when I plan to be in the sun
 - C. every day
4. I have _____ close friends (or family members if you have a close relationship):
 - A. none of them
 - B. 1~2 of them
 - C. all of them
 5. Of those friends, I see _____ on a regular basis:
 - A. None of them
 - B. 1~2 of them
 - C. all of them
 6. I think of manicures, pedicures, and massages as:
 - A. a necessity
 - B. a luxury
 - C. something I wish I had time for
 7. The most important person/people in the world is/are:
 - A. my family
 - b. me
 - C. I can't decide
 8. I splurge on tasty treats:
 - A. never
 - B. about 20 percent of the time
 - C. pretty much whenever I get the chance
 9. I exercise:
 - A. rarely—if at all
 - B. 3~4 times per week; I do something I enjoy like bike riding, gardening, golfing, of dancing
 - C. 5 or more times each week
 10. The last time I did something fun and spontaneous was:
 - A. yesterday

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- B. earlier this year
 - C. I don't remember
11. I spend about _____ of my time in the sun each week:
 - A. more than 40 percent
 - B. 30~40 percent
 - C. 20 percent or less
 12. When thinking about the next chapter in my life, I am generally:
 - A. excited and looking forward to whatever life brings
 - B. terrified—because I worry about the future
 - C. I don't really think about it or care
 13. My daily skin treatment consists of:
 - A. a cleanser, a moisturizer, treatments, and sunscreen
 - B. usually just a cleanser and a moisturizer
 - C. I don't have a daily skin treatment
 14. I check my e-mail:
 - A. every time it dings
 - B. every couple of hours
 - C. only during working hours
 15. I eat _____ servings of fruits and vegetables each day:
 - A. 4 or more
 - B. 2~3
 - C. 0
 16. The nutritional supplements I take include:
 - A. a multivitamin
 - B. a multivitamin plus additional supplements
 - C. I don't take any supplements
 17. I eat red meat:
 - A. Very rarely, when I'm craving it
 - B. never
 - C. pretty much every day

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18. I experience stress
 - A. chronically—it's never-ending
 - B. more times than I'd like to admit
 - C. only occasionally
19. When I feel stressed, I:
 - A. react with anger
 - B. retreat within myself
 - C. take a deep breath and take it all in
20. I make time for a hobby or do something I love:
 - A. every day
 - B. once a week
 - C. I don't know

Your Living Age tells you whether the way you live and the choices you make are adding years to or subtracting years from your real age.

Scoring: In the table below, circle your answer for each question and write the value on the line. Add up the 20 values to calculate your Living Age.

1. A=-1, B=0, C=+1 _____
2. A=0, B=-1, C=+1 _____
3. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
4. A=+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
5. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
6. A=-1, B=+1, C=0 _____
7. A=0, B=-1, C=+1 _____
8. A=0, B=-1, C=+1 _____
9. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
10. A=-1, B=0, C=+1 _____
11. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
12. A=-1, B=+1 C=0 _____
13. A=-1, B=0, C=+1 _____
14. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____

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- 15. A=-1, B=0, C=+1 _____
- 16. A=0, B=-1, C=+1 _____
- 17. A=0, B=-1, C=+1 _____
- 18. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
- 19. A+1, B=0, C=-1 _____
- 20. A=-1, B=0, C=+1 _____
- YOUR LIVING AGE: _____

» Turning on Your Happy Genes

You can't change the fact that you will age, but by striving to maintain a happy, youthful attitude and youthful levels of cellular hydration, you can actually enjoy the aging process. This theory explains the disparity in apparent age between two people of the same age. The closer a person mirrors the fully hydrated state and happy care-free attitude of a toddler, the younger they will look and feel—and truly embracing the inclusive health lifestyle puts you back in touch with the toddler in you. Indeed, you can flip the switch on those happy genes—the genes that relate with increased longevity and psychological well-being. And the key, as you're about to find out, is to conquer cultural stress.