

Chapter 1 A Busy Woman's Route to Wellness

"Do not believe anything I say. Rather take from this book only that which holds the ring of truth for you" Dwal Kuhl

Tara was having a wonderful day; all the women from the Moonstone Cave were out picking blueberries. Her lips were blue from the biggest and fattest berries that somehow just didn't want to go into the basket. The clear autumn sunshine was sparkling off the yellows and reds of the leaves of the woodland trees. Tara's happy laugh rang out as young Katyer, who was just budding into her womanhood and attracting the eyes of all the young men of the cave, was telling a funny story about how Kurt had been showing off the night before, trying to attract her attention and ended up flat on his bum.

Tara looked around to find her daughter Ursula, who was getting around so fast now on her chubby little legs and had a moment of horror when she couldn't see her. Then there was a crash and a scream from around the corner of the blueberry patch, then Mummeeeeeee! Tara rushed around the corner and to her horror saw a hole in the leaves where Ursula had fallen into the pit trap, dug by the men to try and catch a bear feeding on the blueberries. She flung herself on the ground and looked down the hole to see Ursula lying in a crumpled heap at the bottom of the pit, with a nasty looking gash in her leg from one of the sharpened sticks planted in the bottom of the hole.

Everyone else was gathered around by then, so she got Melanie and Lucie to hold her legs while she wriggled herself as far she could get down into the hole, but she was still way short of Ursula's outstretched hand. Young Katyer, who was a renowned climber, often seen perched high on a rock on the cliff behind the cave, ran to grab her deerskin wrap which she had flung on a bush as the afternoon got hotter. "Here you go," she said, "you two hold this end and lower me down, and I will be able to reach her". To Tara's relief, Katyer soon had Ursula in her arms, as she rocked her to soothe her agitated cries for Mummy. Once Ursula had calmed down, they soon had them both out of the hole, and Tara had her baby safe in her arms again. Then all the other woman gathered around, laughing and crying with relief, stroking and touching Tara and Ursula to make sure she was real.

Then Melanie, who was the caves healer, took charge, sending Katyer to run back to the cave to build up the fire and heat some water. She then ran her hands gently over Ursula's little body to make sure nothing was broken. "She's fine," she said, "let's get her back to the cave so that I can put some salve on that little gash, and we can all have a hot cup of herb tea to calm us all down".

My little story certainly seemed stressful for the woman involved, but did the woman's reactions sound like 'fight or flight' to you?

Observing these types of behaviours in women, it certainly didn't to a group of

women researchers from California, who realised that the classic stress response of 'fight or flight' just didn't describe the way women behave under stress at all. They quickly realised that the 'fight or flight' model was described by men, and only applied to men.

They then went on to look deeper into women's hormonal response to stress, and used this information to describe a new model for the way that women respond to stress, which they called 'tend and befriend'.

I will come back to this new idea shortly, because it's important to understand how women respond to stress differently from men, as this has major implications for how you can organise your life to minimise the impact of stress on the way your body feels and on your wellness.

Have you heard of the idea of 'tend and befriend' before? I would be surprised if the answer isn't no, yet this important concept is not new science. This unique female stress response was described first seventeen years ago. Interestingly, a 2011 study showed that the time lag from the initial research to implementation in medical practice is usually about 17 years, but can be as high as 50 years.

This is why I wrote this book for you, because there is a lot of recent groundbreaking research which is not yet being applied to help you achieve wellness.

Through an intensely patriarchal age, even much of what science, folklore, and food manufacturers got right (and a lot of what they got wrong) was based on either the studies of men or the priorities of men. That is only now beginning to change, with an increasing focus on the distinctive biology and chemistry of women. Women face different challenges from men and require different answers.

When I was in my early 40s, my youngest son had a bad reaction to his MMR immunisation at the age of two and ended up with severe eczema and food allergies, and trying to scratch himself bleeding day and night. Two and a half years later somebody gave me a bottle of imported flaxseed oil for him, saying, "it's really good for the skin". That turned out to be the understatement of the year, and within a couple of days, his skin was magically better (for the full story see waihobush.co.nz/olivers-story).

The scientist in me wanted to know how and why this had happened, so I started avidly reading the research literature about flaxseed oil. What I read very quickly convinced me to start taking it myself, and even though I was pretty fit and healthy and ate reasonably well (I thought), I was amazed at the improvements in my energy levels and skin and just how well I felt all the time.

I was working as a research scientist in agriculture at the time, but I quickly decided to start my own company to bring the benefits of good tasting flaxseed oil to New Zealand. So for the past twenty-seven years, I have been studying nutrition, and more recently, how a woman's hormone system works so that I can design and

manufacture food products that support wellness.

A few years ago, when a woman from a past relationship was in a very menopausal state, she told me “I am going to have to go on to HRT in spite of the risks, otherwise I will probably kill someone, and that’s most likely to be you”. That worked for me as an incentive to find out a whole lot more about woman's hormones, and within a couple of weeks she was on a supplement of natural progesterone and feeling wonderful and “like she was in the second trimester of pregnancy”.

Again, the scientist in me wanted to know how and why this had happened and why so many women really struggle around menopause and their periods, which should be something that just happens naturally. This research led me on a path to where I was able to completely disappear my own quite severe prostate issues (which has similar hormonal origins) and ultimately to this book.

When I first set out on my journey to write this book, I really struggled to see how a 71-year-old agricultural scientist could credibly write a book for women on how to be well. They were already books on the market written by women doctors, but several factors that they were writing about didn't fit with the current science, as I understood it, so I decided to write it anyway.

When I was researching the chapter on stress hormones, I quickly came across the new ‘tend and befriend’ model. I hadn't read about this in any book on the subject (and I still haven't), but why not?

I suddenly had a ‘light-bulb moment’, that my lack of medical training is actually to your advantage in my writing this book, because I didn't have any preconceived ideas on how things were, based on my training. This has left me free to bring you the current science as it really is.

The reality is that by modifying your lifestyle, in the ways that I recommend in this book, is backed by current research, which supports the idea that your body has an amazing ability to heal itself, but only if you choose to support it to do that. Not many people choose to do the things necessary to achieve these results, but the important idea is, that you can if you choose to. This book is designed to support you through the process of choosing to do that for yourself.

For instance, for over 35 years Dr Dean Ornish has promoted a program scientifically proven to reverse heart disease. Since 2010 this program has been funded by Medicare and other health insurance companies in the USA. His programme has now helped thousands of people, who have chosen to take back their lives. His comprehensive program teaches how to eat real food, reduce stress, exercise regularly and tap into the healing power of community.

When you make big changes, you get big benefits. And you feel so much better, so quickly, that – for many people – those choices are worth making. Not only to live longer, but live better.” Dean Ornish, M.D

We have also known for some time now that similar approaches can also reverse diabetes, autoimmune conditions and cancer. As of 2014, we also now understand that the amyloid plaque, that we used to think was the cause of Alzheimers, is actually you brains protective response to multiple assaults from an inflammatory diet, infections, stress and toxins. So by addressing all these factors, we know we can, in most cases, reverse Alzheimer's and dementia. This is not to say that ongoing research won't improve on what we know now, but we do already know how to reverse the major health conditions of our day.

1.1 The Science of Women

Wellness for women includes some particular challenges.

Women have a more difficult time with their hormones than men, for the simple reason that you have a monthly cycle, which is driven by the ebb and flow of your sex hormones. Everyone has daily cycles of stress, thyroid, and metabolic hormones, but the complications that arise from overlaying these rhythms on top of a woman's monthly cycle makes a woman a lot more vulnerable to the effects of hormonal upset.

A simple example is that a healthy woman will be producing large amounts of progesterone immediately after ovulation, to prepare your body for if you get pregnant. However, your body uses progesterone to make the stress hormone cortisol, so if you are highly stressed around ovulation, making cortisol becomes the priority for your body, leaving you low in progesterone, oestrogen dominant, and likely with PMS and feeling pretty miserable, because progesterone is a prime happy hormone for you.

A woman's path to wellness is littered with such paradoxes and challenges, which I aim to unravel for you.

1.2 The Science of Wellness

At the same time as I have been studying the science of wellness, I have been acquiring some wisdom about how I can be the best possible version of me, free of limiting beliefs and mind talk. As a result of these studies, at 71 years old I can now put my wellness as 99 out of 100. I can challenge myself physically, without my body limiting me in any way, and life is very full and wonderful.

I have discovered that not feeling old is not difficult; it just takes knowledge and a little bit of self-love to motivate you to apply that knowledge. This book is my way of sharing all my knowledge and wisdom with you in the hope that your life can become as joyful as mine is.

I have drawn on 27 years of research into food and wellness and put it all together in one place, as a roadmap of a woman's path to wellbeing. You will not find all this information in one place anywhere else. Nor will you get it from your doctor because as an experienced research scientist, I have written this book based on the published

science - the way it really is; there have not been constraints to my thinking coming from prior medical training. And I have the benefit of having tested much of the science in satisfying my customers, and in forging my own path to wellness.

1.3 Where it all Begins

Let's see, you're feeling tired, overwhelmed, anxious, overweight, unsexy and often just plain cranky – you 'Feel Like Crap' (Dr Mark Hyman first talked about the FLC Syndrome – wonderful term!).

Add to that; you're totally frustrated with your weight. You've tried everything but failed, so you tried again, and you failed again.

This pattern really starts to do your head in and makes you feel like a failure, and you just want to give up, as you start to fall into a downward spiral of low self-worth. Maybe you've even been to your doctor and been told: "I've run a few tests and they are all normal, so maybe you just need an antidepressant ". If so, you're not alone. In fact, a staggering one in four women in the United States is on some form of antidepressant medication.

Such a scenario is very common, but is this normal or necessary? Absolutely not!

So how does it happen that we feel like this so frequently in this modern world?

Unfortunately, our bodies evolved at a very different time, so cumulative effects of modern living tend to push your hormones and gut out of balance to the point that you start to feel like crap.

To find the answer to why this happens, we have to go back around ten thousand years to when our species lived as hunter-gatherers as we moved out of Africa to colonise the world. What made us so incredibly successful as a species is our amazing brain that allowed us to develop the capacity for abstract thought and communicate a wide range of emotions.

Underneath that amazing human brain is the primitive core of your limbic system. Its key functions are to keep you alive and to urge you to reproduce. Unfortunately, our food supply in those days was often erratic, so our bodies developed some very powerful hormonal systems to make sure any excess food was stored for emergencies – as fat!

One of the key functions of your brain's limbic system is to continuously and unrelentingly scan your environment to see whether you are 'safe'. If it decides you are 'not safe' then it starts a hormonal cascade called the adrenaline response or very commonly called the 'fight or flight' response.

Now, this is where the confusion begins.

The 'fight or flight response' was first described in the 1930's by Walter Cannon and became the very widely accepted model to describe what happens to your body

when you get a fright or come under stress. So the accepted picture has been that all the physiological changes that happen when you get stressed are designed to help you to either fight a lion, or the neighbouring tribe, or if things get really sticky, be able to run away to save your life.

But most of the research that was done to develop this 'fight or flight' model was done on men!

In the hunter-gatherer societies we lived in for nearly 2 million years, the key role of men was to go out and kill animals for food or to defend the settlement from attack. This means that in men, the primary response to stress is to fight (confront the stressor with aggression) or flight (flee from it – or in the modern world, social withdrawal or substance abuse).

So for men, the powerful chemical cascade that follows from a surge of adrenalin, to prepare them for extreme physical activity and to minimise the damage to their body if they're wounded, is overlaid by the psychological changes that come with a surge of testosterone.

1.4 Tend and Befriend

A group of researchers in California, led by Dr Shelley Taylor realised that this model doesn't describe the way women behave under stress at all. (Surprise, surprise.) So their new model, which seeks to describe better how women behave under stress, they called 'tend and befriend'.

The inherent way women respond to stressful situations takes them into protective mode for their children and 'tribe' – the 'tend' part; and by seeking out a wider social group, usually women, for mutual defence (or calling your girlfriend or mother for support) – the 'befriend' part.

The major downside of this response, for an individual women's health, is that whenever they are stressed, women have a very strong inherent urge to look after everyone else, **at the expense of looking after themselves.**

It's clear from the latest research that this 'tend and befriend' response has evolved in the context of women being the primary caregivers for their children, when fleeing too readily at any sign of danger would actually put their children at risk.

All the adrenaline responses in women still happen, with the chemical cascade that prepares you for extreme physical activity and to minimise the damage to your body if you're wounded. The key difference from men is that instead of getting a surge of testosterone, for women their response is overlaid by a surge of the hormones oxytocin (your cuddle and bonding hormone) and oestrogen (which reinforces the effect of oxytocin).

It is oxytocin which promotes the psychological behaviours that promote caregiving behaviour and underlies the attachment between mothers, their children, their

'sisters' and their partners – the 'tend' part. Some studies also suggest that oxytocin enhances social contact and reduces aggression – the 'befriend' part.

In situations of long-term stress, the main stress hormone at work becomes cortisol, again overlaid with oxytocin, which gives you a hormone-driven way of being able to cope, which can have very subtle but highly undesirable effects on your feelings of self-worth and your feelings around your relationships.

The reality is that you're of reduced use to anyone else if you are not well, so making your own health a priority makes sense. Yet, if you're not dealing with your stress, then your stress hormones are giving your limbic brain a very subtle feeling that you need to look after everyone else first.

The programmed need to tend or look after other people means that you are likely to feel that you need to take on a range of tasks, just because "I'm fine. I can do that for you". In fact, others can probably take on these tasks instead of adding to your already stressful and overloaded day. You might recognise this as you making lunches for your teenage children and partner, or maybe rushing home from work to prepare a meal for the rest of the family. When what you would really prefer to do is to pop into the gym for a 20-minute workout (Yes, that is all that it needs to take, see Chapter 12 Move Your Body).

Because you are already stressed and overloaded, adding another layer of tasks to be done can add to your feelings of "I'm not good enough" because the reality is, you are not fine. You're overloaded. So you start to feel overwhelmed. You can also set yourself up for feelings of resentment against the people you are tending, which can have a very damaging effect on your relationship with them.

Enter 'light-bulb moment' number two.

I was driving my tractor cultivating a paddock, which is always quality thinking/listening time for me. I was listening to a panel discussion by four women, all specialists in the field of female sexuality, who were discussing why many women struggle to have a healthy libido.

One of them mentioned that her husband often felt to her like "just another child she had to look after". This unleashed a frenzy of agreement from all the women on the panel that they often felt the same way, and that feeling like this really messed with their desire to have sex with their partner. None of them had any real explanation as to why this should be so.

It suddenly dawned on me that this was the combined effect of their 'tend and befriend' response to stress, and the resulting lack of sexual polarity, yet none of these professionals in the field seemed to know anything about these effects.

You see, one other subtle effect which can happen if you take on doing tasks for your partner, which he or she is quite capable of doing (and maybe didn't ask you to

do them in the first place), is that you are actually treating your partner a bit like a child. If you really want to kill your desire for an intimate sexual relationship with someone, then treating them like your child is a really good way to achieve this.

This was when I knew I had to write Chapter 17 Take Charge of Your Sexiness – now there's a challenge for a guy if ever there was one!

1.5 It's Not all Gender and Genes

Although the 'tend and befriend' model does emphasise the differences between the genders, there is no suggestion that your response to stress is written in your genes.

It really comes down to the question 'who am I?' and in any given situation we are very different people, depending on the circumstances.

So for example, who I am when I'm on the ski field, waiting at the top of a half-pipe, with six meter high snow walls, preparing myself to ski down, is a very different person from the person I am when I am cuddled up with my partner watching a romantic movie and the fire alarm goes off.

In the first situation, my body is in full adrenaline response, overlaid with a surge of testosterone, which puts me fully in my masculine energy. But this is eustress – a beneficial form of stress (because I chose it). I am doing this deliberately for the pure joy of pitting myself against the mountain.

In the second situation, my body goes into distress (I didn't choose it) and a full-on adrenaline response, but this time it is overlaid with oxytocin because we have been cuddled together, which puts me more in my feminine energy. So my first instinct is to make sure my partner is safe before I go to deal with whatever set the alarm off.

We can all think of how some women can behave in the work environment (when they tend to be more testosterone-fuelled and in their masculine energy) when they are under stress they can be just as aggressive and in 'fight or flight' mode as any man. Similarly, when a man is looking after his children (when they tend to be more oxytocin fuelled and thus more in his feminine mode), and the children are threatened, they will also likely go into their 'tend and befriend' mode to look after them.

It's important to realise that you are more than the primitive responses of your limbic system. You have the potential to modify how you respond to your limbic system's instinctive feelings by using your higher cortical mind and your intelligence to find an alternative way of responding.

By being aware of these potential reactions to stress that may be happening in your life, then you may find a better way to talk to the others involved to find a solution that works for everyone. You may also be able to use the techniques described later in the book to get your stress hormone levels back in balance.

1.6 The Impact of Stress

It's important to realise that in any given situation, while the symptoms of stress in a man can be quite different from the symptoms displayed by a woman, underneath both behaviours, the entire stress hormone cascade is still going on, and doing considerable damage to your body, if you do not take active steps to de-stress, ideally on a daily basis.

A lot of this book is about the impact of those stress reactions on how your body burns or stores energy as fat. It focuses particularly on how stress changes the way your brain and your gut work. Also on the way your body responds to changes in your body chemistry – particularly your thyroid hormones, your sex hormones and your metabolic hormones – in other words, 'your happiness, belly fat, and sexiness'.

This book is also about how to be well, and empowering you to choose to live a long and joyful life – the life of your dreams, without limitations imposed by your health and the way your mind works.

I find it sad, that when I give a talk and ask my audience to tune into their body and choose a number between 100 and one on how well they feel, I have only once had someone put their hand up at 90, and many still haven't put their hand up at 50.

Personally, I will put my hand up for 99 and getting closer to the elusive 100. At 71 years of age, I don't do anything obsessively, but I mostly choose my food with some care (in other words I generally eat dark chocolate), and I do love butter (but saturated fats are NOT bad for you). I don't do exercise for exercise's sake, but I am very fortunate that I can easily go out and ground myself in a very beautiful piece of nature and mostly get enough exercise working my 110 Ha organic farm. I do meditate most weekdays and usually do some yoga about once a week.

In other words, I don't stress if I don't do my 'routine' every day – because after all, it's what you do most days that determines your health and happiness - it doesn't matter if you miss occasionally.

To me, it's important that even at my age my body doesn't limit me in any way. I will happily point my skis straight downhill for the thrill of speed (and last winter I once nailed three jumps in a row in the terrain park) or spin my partner on the dance floor in a fast milonga until we collapse laughing.

Trust me: getting old does not mean you have to forgo things you enjoy, or have brain fog, or be painful, or tired, or have low libido, or 'Feel Like Crap'. I believe we were born to be happy here on earth NOW – not in some future realm, but we have to consciously choose to live for happiness and joy and not just let life happen to us, because of the unconscious choices we have made in the past.

Sidebar:

I read recently, that if you have survived to reach the ripe young age of fifty,

statistics show that you are probably about halfway through your life. If you are roughly in this age bracket, I suggest you ask yourself the question:

‘Do I want to feel the way I do now for the second half of my life?’

If the answer to this question is NO, then it’s time to take charge of your own health and make some changes, probably in several areas of your life.

The reality is that studies have shown that it's much easier to prevent health problems than it is to reverse them. So the longer you leave this decision to seek wellness, the more difficult it's going to be to get to a place where your life is full of juiciness and joy - which is surely where we all really want to be.

That said, the food you eat gives your body very powerful hormonal messages – a calorie is not just a calorie. Food is information to your body, so your body and DNA respond to and metabolises the four major food groups very differently - carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and dietary fibre.

This means that for most people, a few simple changes in the areas of your life detailed later in the book can make a major change to the way you feel within a few days.

I have written this book around two basic premises.

1.7 How’s your stool?

Firstly, that not feeling well in any area of your life is caused by your particular combination of the three following factors. These are what I like to think of as the three legs of the stool of wellness because if you neglect ANY of these three areas, your wellness stool will fall over at some point – probably when you least expect it.

The three key areas are:

The Food You Eat

Do you get optimum amounts of the 40 odd essential nutrients every day – the ones that your body cannot make for itself, so you have to get from your food or supplements?

Please focus on the word ‘essential’, because lack of any of them in your diet every day means that the millions of new cells you are growing every day are less than perfect.

There are also a few foods that are no no’s, which you do need to avoid actively (most of the time). Note that I deliberately said avoid, not eliminate (except maybe in the short term). Life doesn’t have to be difficult to be fun.

Toxicity of the Mind

When we are young, our minds act as a virtual sponge and we believe pretty much everything that is told to us, including negative comments. Your beliefs are acted out

in your (usually negative) mind talk – the unpleasant little voice at your shoulder, which I will call your ego, which brings a lot of mental and emotional stress into your life.

Every time you say “I can't do because of” you are accepting a negative self-belief, which is not actually true, although your ego would like to have you think it is true. Similarly, most of us grow up with some form of the belief: “I am not lovable”, which means that until you can let this belief go and love yourself, you are unable to enjoy the wonders of truly loving another person fully.

“The primary driver of chronic disease in the industrialised world is now environmental toxins” Joe Pizzorno, ND.

Toxicity in the Body

Unfortunately, our modern world is rife with chemicals produced in factories. While there are a few natural chemicals that are toxic, nearly every chemical produced in a factory is toxic to some degree, including so-called ‘foods’. For instance, I include margarine as a toxic chemical; because there are no enzymes in nature that can digest margarine (‘butter is back’ – see Chapter 11 Good Oils Make You Slim and Healthy).

Before the 1970s, the primary drivers of disease were the choices you made, for instance, nutritional deficiencies, nutritional excesses, lack of exercise and smoking. However, over the last 50 years, the use of chemicals in industry, farming and personal care products has increased dramatically. This background toxicity, driven by our widespread use of these chemicals has led to a strong trend for people to become sick, because of the passive effects of their exposure to toxins in their food and environment – it's no longer being driven mainly by your choices.

This background environmental toxicity, which is very difficult to avoid, means that unless you are actively supporting your body to detoxify on a regular basis, your liver, bowel, kidneys, and skin detox systems are almost certainly overloaded and need your active support.

How these three factors manifest in you not feeling well is totally dependent on your unique combination of the fundamental factors. Nobody else in the world will have your exact combination.

1.8 The Thirteen Most Common Pancakes

My second premise is that ill health is always caused by multiple factors, mostly from just living in our modern world. For reasons that I will explain later, I have chosen to call these factors: Pancakes. For most of you, unless you are specifically working to minimise them, to a greater or lesser extent all these Pancakes will be impacting on your health. The rest of the book is devoted to explaining these Pancakes and how you can minimise or eliminate them, to restore the legs of your stool of wellness.

I explain my pancake theory in detail in Chapter 12 Detoxing Your Body and in Chapter 15 Heal Deeper.

1. Ongoing issues with self-destructive mind talk from your ego, which seeks to keep you in the past or worrying about the future, rather than living in the NOW. Chapter 2 How Your Brain Works
2. Sufficient distress in your life to be causing your body some health issues from the elevated stress hormone levels. Chapter 4 The Effects of Stress on your Body.
3. Issues with a stuttering thyroid, which comes from the impacts of toxins, stress and mineral deficiencies. Chapter 5 Your Energy Hormone - Thyroid
4. Less than optimum amounts of all the essential minerals you need to be well. Chapter 6 How to Heal Your Thyroid
5. Some degree of oestrogen-dominance, which comes from ongoing exposure to the toxic xeno-oestrogens in our environment and food, that disrupt your hormone balance. Chapter 7 Why Your Sex Hormones Are Out Of Balance
6. Some degree of insulin and/or leptin resistance and metabolic syndrome, because of your intake of sugar and refined carbs. Chapter 8 The Hormonal Reasons Why Diets Don't Work.
7. Some degree of imbalance of your gut and skin microbiome and the leaky gut that goes with it, because of our overuse of antibiotics, sanitisers and prescription drugs. Chapter 9 Bugs Are Important
8. Some degree of gluten intolerance and damage to your body from eating too many refined carbs. Chapter 10 Bad Carbohydrates Make You Fat and Sick
9. The essential fatty acid balance in your body is heavily laden towards Omega-6 dominance and you are not eating enough good fats. Chapter 11 Good Oils Make You Slim and Healthy
10. A degree of chemical toxicity, which is underlying some of your health issues. Chapter 12 Detoxing Your Body
11. A need to move your body a bit more (or maybe even a bit less) to achieve the wonderful benefits that accrue from exercise. Chapter 13 Move Your Body
12. Some degree of sleep deprivation and negative mind talk coming from your ego. Chapter 14 Detoxing Your Mind
13. Less than optimum amounts of all the essential vitamins, proteins and phytonutrients you need to be well. Chapter 16 Advice For Action

The widespread occurrence in people's lives of the thirteen Pancakes listed above can lead to extreme frustration in your search to alleviate your symptoms and achieve greater wellness.

Unfortunately, the majority of medical doctors are highly trained in 20th Century medicine, which focusses on 'what' you have, so they can fit your particular set of symptoms into a box called a 'diagnosis', which leads to a 'treatment' - usually a pill. (In fact, the better doctors are at finding a 'diagnosis', the more highly they are regarded by their peers).

When your body is telling you that things are just not right, it can be extremely comforting to get a diagnosis from your doctor. You finally know what's wrong with you. 'Oh, the relief!'

The problem with a 'diagnosis' is that it tells you little about how your particular combination of diet and toxicity of the mind and body brought you to that place. So having a diagnosis can actually get in the way of you finding what changes you as an individual need to make to get you to a state of wellness.

1.9 The Big Three

We have known for some time how to prevent and even reverse conditions such as heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Not many people choose to do that, but we know how they could achieve this if they wanted to. More recently we have learned how to prevent and even reverse cancer and Alzheimer's – this science is very new.

At the same time, as a population, we are getting fatter and sicker. Why is this? A big part of the problem is that there is an awful lot of money to be made from the existing system.

Big Food - produces abundant, cheap 'food', rich in available energy, but often almost devoid of available nutrients because it is processed at high temperatures, denaturing many of the essential proteins and vitamins. Many such foods contain lots of damaged oils and preservatives; both added to give them a long shelf life. They also employ teams of scientists equipped with sophisticated brain scanners, to make sure that their products are very tasty, have exactly the right crunch and light up the addictive centres of your brain as much as possible (see Chapter 10 *Bad Carbohydrates Make You Fat and Sick*).

Big Pharma - produces a wide range of drugs designed to suppress your symptoms, but which usually do not do anything to treat the underlying cause. They all come with side effects that affect some people, often necessitating another drug to suppress the side effects.

They all deplete your body of essential nutrients - which ones depend on the drug. For instance, statins seriously deplete your body of enzyme CoQ10, which is vital for your mitochondria (the little energy factories in your cells) functioning, which leaves you low in energy.

Some drugs are little or no more effective than a placebo. For instance, SSRI's widely used to treat depression are no better than placebo for mild-to-moderate depression. Again, in spite of billions of dollars being spent on developing and testing drugs for Alzheimer's, the currently available drug only helps to manage behavioural symptoms and sometimes slow the development of more serious symptoms; there are no drugs available yet to halt or reverse the progression of this scary disease.

Big Media – are highly paid by the first two to promote the status quo and to keep you confused about what best to do for your health. Dangerous myths, such as the old food pyramid from the USDA (1992), which promotes the high-carb-low-fat mantra, or that eating saturated fat is bad for your heart, are still widespread in the media.

In some cases, this disinformation campaign even extends to the scientific literature. In 2016 it emerged that in the 1960s, the sugar industry paid Harvard scientists to publish research in a prestigious, peer-reviewed Journal, which downplayed the role of sugar in causing heart disease, at the same time highlighting the hazards of eating fat.

Given these three extremely well-funded forces working against you feeling well, is it surprising that you may struggle with your life and have some degree of FLC syndrome?

1.10 Functional Medicine

20th Century medicine does an amazing job of helping with acute, or short-term conditions like broken bones, or a chopped off finger or a lung infection or a baby born with malformed heart. It is not well equipped to reverse complex, long-term chronic conditions like diabetes, thyroid malfunction, autoimmune conditions, heart disease, Alzheimer's, and cancer.

On the other hand, 21st Century medicine now focusses on 'why' you have a particular set of symptoms, so that practitioners can use evidence-based medicine to understand the whole-body implications of your unique set of symptoms. They are also using technology to crunch the numbers as part of the process of learning to understand how our microbiome and other factors interact. So science and technology are disrupting the way we will practise medicine in the future, in the same way they are disrupting so many other fields.

Once they understand the 'why', then a 21st Century medicine practitioner will work with you towards achieving a life free of symptoms. Such an approach is often called Functional Medicine or Integrative medicine. To illustrate the importance of 'why' for you - if your 'diagnosis' is that you have low thyroid function, with low energy levels, and you struggle with your weight, then this could have come from any of the legs of your stool of wellness e.g.:

1. The food you eat is lacking in the building blocks of iodine, selenium, and

iron, and low in Omega-3.

To deal with these issues, you would need to start eating and supplementing differently, in a comprehensive programme, including some high-quality sea vegetables and an Omega-3 supplement, such as flaxseed oil and move to a diet rich in healthy fats.

2. Your mind is not dealing with long-term stress coming from negative personal relationships, a job you really hate, or feelings of overwhelm about your life as a whole.

Such stress leads to high levels of cortisol, which majorly interferes with your thyroid hormone function. I share some ideas on how to deal with such issues around stress in Chapter 14 Detoxing Your Mind

3. Toxicity in your body and/or leaky gut, often leading to Hashimoto's thyroiditis, which is an autoimmune condition, where your immune system starts to attack your thyroid gland.

To deal with these issues you would need to undertake a comprehensive whole body detox programme, with particular emphasis on your liver and gut, and in the short term, go onto a low carb, gluten-free diet as part of a strategy to allow your gut to heal.

As you can see from these examples above, what you need to do to correct the underlying low thyroid function, completely depends on 'why' it's malfunctioning in the first place, so that taking a synthetic thyroid drug is unlikely to lead to you having a long and healthy life.

If you are fortunate enough to be under the care of a skilled Functional Medicine practitioner, you are likely to find that all your symptoms are reversed, by addressing some of the causes of your ill-health. Wonderful.

1.11 Heal Deeper

"Mainstream medicine ... in the Western World is focused on treating the smoke but ignoring the fire ... of inflammation" David Perlmutter, MD, FACN, ABIHM

I personally believe we should aim higher than this, by addressing all thirteen Pancakes, which are almost certainly impacting your health. In different ways, all these Pancakes cause inflammation, and there is a rapidly growing consensus among health scientists that inflammation is the major underlying factor in all disease.

The science around longevity is expanding rapidly, and there is some evidence that humans should be able to live a healthy and productive life for about 120 years. Can we really do this?

Up to now, there have been five so-called 'Blue Zones' identified, where people routinely live to be over 100 years. These hotspots of old age range from Sardinia in Italy, to Okinawa, Japan, to Loma Linda, California. There have been some things in common identified between these five zones. I address them all in this book

In this book, I outline the factors that are causing inflammation in your body and my recommendations for a comprehensive set of lifestyle changes. These are all aimed at dampening down the fires of inflammation, to set you on the road to wellness.

Hopefully, this book will empower you to make the choices you may need to make to modify your three fundamental factors, with the objective of helping you along your own journey to wellness.

I have had it said to me, “That sounds like a lot of hard work.” I don't see it that way.

It has only taken knowledge for me to feel wonderful at 71 and not feel limited by my mind and body. I don't see it as hard work to do any of the things I do. I see that my life is full of fun things to do, wonderful food to eat and wonderful, often challenging, but very satisfying, relationships.

The wonderful thing is, that once you start the process of becoming fat adapted, your body runs on ketones (little packs of energy made from fat that supercharge your brain and your body – see Chapter 11 Good Oils Make You Slim and Healthy), so it rapidly turns into a virtuous circle.

So you have stable and abundant energy and a clear brain, which makes you more productive, so you feel good about yourself, so you can easily make time to exercise, or play with your partner, children or pets, which improves your relationships, which boosts your libido, and so you can easily make time to de-stress, which helps you to sleep better, which means you wake up in the morning full of energy, which makes it easy to make good choices about what you eat for breakfast and the rest of the day. It can be as easy as that.

Only you can know the state of your ‘stool of wellness’ and its impact on your body and your life. This book is my gift to you, to give you the knowledge of the potential harm any shakiness in your stool’s legs could be doing to you, and then give you the knowledge of what you can do to change things and so empower you to choose what you want to do about it.

I hope you enjoy the journey to wellness. I am personally aiming for 169 years – my magic number.

“Fear is good because it tells us what we have to do, and the more scared we are of something, the more sure we can be that we have to do it.” Robert Kiyosaki