



My

**LIVE IT**

**Philosophy**

A Doctor's Simple Guide to Thriving

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## **In this eBook you will:**

- Learn about a specific kind of holistic thinking that promotes total wellness.
- Learn an easy to use approach to overall health in mind, body and spirit.
- Learn a 6-letter acronym for remembering this simple formula for making the shift from surviving to thriving.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#"><u>Page 5</u></a>	Introduction
<a href="#"><u>Page 9</u></a>	What is the LIVE IT Philosophy?
<a href="#"><u>Page 11</u></a>	Learn
<a href="#"><u>Page 14</u></a>	Incorporate
<a href="#"><u>Page 16</u></a>	Vitalize
<a href="#"><u>Page 20</u></a>	Exercise
<a href="#"><u>Page 22</u></a>	Imagine
<a href="#"><u>Page 24</u></a>	Thank
<a href="#"><u>Page 26</u></a>	Pulling It All Together

## BONUS MATERIAL: REFERENCE GUIDE

<a href="#"><u>Page i - iii</u></a>	Websites, Useful Apps, Books
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## MY STORY

I see my life as a prayer of sorts. Medicine, for me, is in many ways a spiritual calling to serve. There is a divine connection. There is mystery. There are ties to the earth, to nature, to something much, much bigger than any of us can fathom. There is also a connection to basic common sense, to the here and now.

I grew up in Connecticut as the first doctor in a family of educators. As a middle child I was often driven to compromise and see all sides of any equation. The workings of the brain have always fascinated me so I chose psychology as my undergraduate major at Harvard University.

After college I was granted a fellowship to travel to learn from a culture different from my own, so I deferred medical school for a year and spent it in Bangladesh. While in that part of the world I was able to meet Mother (now, Saint) Teresa of Calcutta and see the world, humanity and resilience through a very different lens. This experience was key in many ways to my life. I was struck by how human Mother Teresa was, how petite and frail but at the same time tough and disciplined. Learning about another culture and understanding how blessed I am to have what I have in this deep sense, set the stage for me just before I started medical school.

My mother was very ill with Crohn's Disease when I was young. So as a little girl, I wanted so much to be a doctor so I could help my mom feel better. I observed many pros and cons to the medical system that simply wasn't making her better. And my dream paid off. When I got to medical school I was able to help her discover her Vitamin B12 deficiency. Once treated, this greatly helped her regain her health.

My grandparents were also very important in my life. I found I had a passion for geriatrics even before college, as I witnessed those I loved navigate the challenges of aging. I also noted how listening attentively and being heard were very powerful.

Considering all of this, choosing family medicine as my specialty after medical school was a natural choice for me because of my love for people of all ages and the multifactorial approach it offered. Years of hectic conventional practice reinforced the importance of my training; yet I had always longed for more and valued the importance of how care was delivered. Learning about Integrative Medicine finally opened my eyes and truly resonated with my heart and soul.

The combination of Family Medicine with Integrative Medicine was also shaped by an experience of going to work one day as doctor and leaving in an ambulance as a patient. Our oldest son was born early at 28 weeks gestation and weighing just 2 pounds. After being whisked away to a hospital that had better neonatal resources I was forced to learn things as a mother and a patient that have shaped my journey exponentially. These valuable lessons continue to shape how I practice. The blending of the lifesaving modern medicine that was available at my son's birth, along with the power of prayer and touch as we "kangaroo" snuggled him during his first few months beautifully illustrated the wisdom of a balanced approach to living and healing.

It is easy to burn out practicing medicine. I've felt the pressures. I've experienced the symptoms. My professional training in an integrative philosophy for life and medicine for me was not only to find a better way to practice, it was also a chance to live what I preach and teach. It helped me find a practical way to stay healthy myself! When I first started my training, it felt like I suddenly had permission to move away from fear-based medicine and celebrate the sacred.

And that is what the **LIVE IT** philosophy is all about to me. There is such value in both modern medicine and ancient wisdom, and we can use both to live well. Fear and survival certainly play a part in times of our lives, especially during health crises. But when we are able to reframe our challenges in a sacred context, we can live our lives more fully and with more meaning.

# MY MISSION WITH THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guide is all about our life journeys. What I share with others is what I want to practice for myself. I am intrigued by both inner and outer journey.

We are all on this journey together and if you are reading this ebook, somehow our journeys are connected. We are in the boat together and we share the perplexities of life together.

My goal as a physician is to empower my patients - and that also means, you, my reader. I want to help you be a leader in your own life. My goal with this book is that it serves as an invitation to your own calling, and an easy to follow guide to a balanced, healthy way of life.

The tool belt of resources I can offer patients continues to grow. After I completed my Integrative Medicine fellowship in 2011, it made sense to “go rogue” from conventional medicine and offer all that I know to my patients. Continuing to cultivate the latest scientific knowledge and combine it with timeless wisdom and a variety of modalities is a part of my daily path in my unique practice.

I use my **LIVE IT** philosophy both in my life and in my work as a physician, and I want to help you do the same!

Navigating the worlds of medicine, health and wellness can be overwhelming at times. We hear mixed messages and so much chatter online and in the media about all the things we should or shouldn't be doing. Too many choices can be paralyzing. The words “diet” and “exercise” often trigger negativity or relay the message that we just require a temporary fix and then all will be well. It's hard to know what the best actions for staying healthy are. It seems that advice is offered everywhere.

The way I practice my mission is to be empowering. I'm not about demonizing anything. I simply want to educate you and help you move to your health decisions not out of fear or survival, but from a place of fullness and accountability. This may seem a subtle difference; but it's not about shame - it's about love. That doesn't mean that some things don't have negative aspects, but rather that we look at them in the context of the complete picture.

And we don't try to be perfect.

I've found that true health and real balance are a constant process. I use a positive, simple acronym to help organize a holistic approach in my own life and with my patients, and I want to share it with you in order to help guide you on your journey through life.

## **The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are.**

- Joseph Campbell

One of the biggest responsibilities of this privilege that Joseph Campbell reminds us of is taking responsibility for maintaining healthy bodies. We only get one in this lifetime of "being who we are."

True success with the **LIVE IT** approach is dependent on being able to answer "yes" to two things:

1. Are you willing to be awake and empowered to optimize your individual health needs?
2. Are you ready to make some changes in how you think and take steps to improve how you live your life?

If you can answer "yes" to these, you're on your way.

Most of us can refine our diet, our habits and our attitudes to better serve our bodies, minds and spirits. And we're not perfect. We shouldn't try to be. So I hope this little guide will serve as a checklist or even a virtual vision board for your life. It's a simple overview designed to be referred to again and again as you take small, regular steps and re-inspire yourself regularly to do better.



# WHAT IS THE LIVE IT PHILOSOPHY?

The acronym “**LIVE IT**” came to me when I first started working on my training at AzCIM (University of Arizona’s Center for Integrative Medicine). I wanted an easy way to remember and organize the new information that was expanding my paradigm.

So many programs are full of “shoulds” and shame. I use the **LIVE IT** acronym to fully embrace a holistic way of staying healthy. This way of working with your health doesn’t freeze time, but rather reminds you to embrace change and continuously optimize your health no matter where you are on the path to vitality. And as you find you’ve stepped off of your ideal path, you simply step right back on, right where you are.

One day, noticing the contrast between the word DIET and LIVE IT I had a perfect “aha!” moment for me to shape my philosophy further.

Take, for instance, all the medications that are *anti*this or that -like *anti*hypertensives, *anti*biotics, *anti*depressants. They represent the old way of looking at medicine. Yes, these are sometimes needed. We can certainly fight a battle when life is at stake. Yet research has validated over and over what I realized in my aha moment:

**Health outcomes and quality of life improve when we focus on what we want to create, rather than what we want to avoid.**

And the **LIVE IT** philosophy goes deeper and sits in a larger, more empowering context. Find what you want to amplify and focus on that.

We are the only ones that can truly heal ourselves. And we have better and more sustainable willpower if it is rooted in positivity rather than fear or negativity. Many people feel harmed and labeled or restricted by diagnoses or labels, often created out of good intention by our current healthcare system.

**We are not our diagnosis or our labels.**

We become what we practice, in our thoughts and in our habits. After many years of sharing this individually with patients, I’ve decided to put this format and some of these concepts right at your fingertips.

## So, here is my positive LIVE IT philosophy.

**LIVE IT** is a simple acronym that I use to provide a structure to help you remember the most important ways to achieve your personal health goals in a balanced way.

- **L**EARN
- **I**NCORPORATE
- **V**ITALIZE
- **E**XERCISE
- **I**MAGINE
- **T**HANK

Now let's break down what each of these mean to me. They may be slightly different for you depending on your circumstances and unique biology.

At the end of each section you'll find my favorite take away tips!



## LEARN

Learning to stay healthy is a lifelong process. Our knowledge of what it takes to stay healthy in our modern world is growing and changing constantly.

If you understand something, it is much easier to adapt to the lifestyle change. Understanding a concept helps you answer the question “WHY?” One of the steps to being responsible for your health is understanding why you should make certain decisions.

I encourage patients to do something not simply because I told them to, but to ask “Why?”

For instance, do you think sugar is evil and should be avoided at all costs because that’s the popular thought? Or do you truly understand the relationship between sugar and inflammation? What about gluten and food additives?

The point is that learning lends a context to the choices we’re contemplating. Understanding more about the many layers that make up a healthy lifestyle will help empower you to decide what changes you wish to make and why you may wish to make them.

Each of us has a different threshold for what we want and need to learn. Many people just need the context, while others want all the fine details. Whichever style is your own, there are a few basic things that everyone would benefit from understanding in order to stay healthy.

Our bodies are like gardens. What we eat, how we think, the choices we make in life - much like the soil, water, and fertilizer in a garden - these are all the building blocks that help create the tissues, organs, hormones, neurotransmitters, and more that make up healthy bodies.

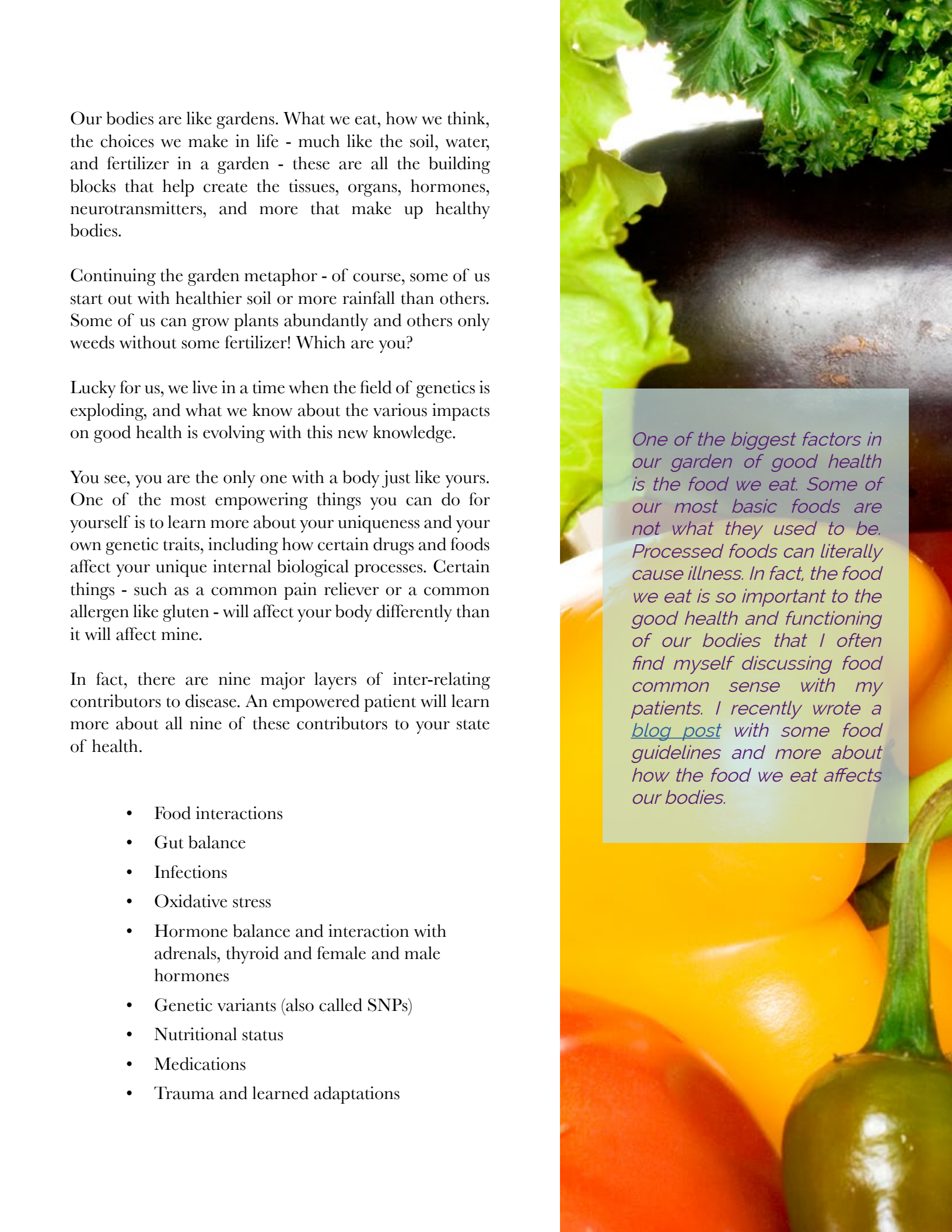
Continuing the garden metaphor - of course, some of us start out with healthier soil or more rainfall than others. Some of us can grow plants abundantly and others only weeds without some fertilizer! Which are you?

Lucky for us, we live in a time when the field of genetics is exploding, and what we know about the various impacts on good health is evolving with this new knowledge.

You see, you are the only one with a body just like yours. One of the most empowering things you can do for yourself is to learn more about your uniqueness and your own genetic traits, including how certain drugs and foods affect your unique internal biological processes. Certain things - such as a common pain reliever or a common allergen like gluten - will affect your body differently than it will affect mine.

In fact, there are nine major layers of inter-relating contributors to disease. An empowered patient will learn more about all nine of these contributors to your state of health.

- Food interactions
- Gut balance
- Infections
- Oxidative stress
- Hormone balance and interaction with adrenals, thyroid and female and male hormones
- Genetic variants (also called SNPs)
- Nutritional status
- Medications
- Trauma and learned adaptations



*One of the biggest factors in our garden of good health is the food we eat. Some of our most basic foods are not what they used to be. Processed foods can literally cause illness. In fact, the food we eat is so important to the good health and functioning of our bodies that I often find myself discussing food common sense with my patients. I recently wrote a [blog post](#) with some food guidelines and more about how the food we eat affects our bodies.*

These factors all affect the expression of your genes. Learning more about these and how they interact by reading up on the topic of epigenetics is empowering. By alerting ourselves to what we can do to influence our genetic inheritance, we can help control the destiny of our bodies.

It's important to remember that it's how our genes are expressed that matters. In other words, just because you have a particular gene connected to a certain disease does not mean that you'll get the disease.

Modify your lifestyle to optimize your health and those genes may never be expressed!

Learning about all of the various layers that add up to impact your health can inform your lifestyle and help you make needed changes. I explore these layers with my patients and you can do the same with your health provider.

*CAVEAT: Researchers beware. Not everything you find on the internet is useful. Too much information or the wrong information can be harmful. It can be a slippery slope. That's why I've added a trusted resources section at the end of this guide. Always vet your sources!*

## Take Away Tip:

Choose one of the above described layers of health impactors and learn more about it each month. Next month, choose another layer such as food interactions or trauma. In nine months, you'll be a **LIVE IT** expert!

Here's a suggestion for the genetic variance layer:

*Each of us has different variants of protein codes in our DNA that impact how we interact with our environment. This information can help shed light on why we each respond the way we do to toxins, medications, and nutrients. Read more about SNPs in this blog post and consider some specialized genetic testing for your own health insights.*

*“An object at rest stays at rest and an object in motion stays in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted upon by an unbalanced force.”*

Newton's first law of motion, or the law of inertia.

## INCORPORATE

This guide is designed to help you overcome inertia. The LIVE IT step of incorporation is perhaps the most important, as it bridges you into motion towards your health goals. This is your moment to start the process.

Also, we have to ask if we're creating motion in a harmful direction.

When you start putting some of the things you have learned into your life, you are literally creating positive momentum that you can continue to build upon.

Learning is the “what” in the **LIVE IT** philosophy. Incorporate is the “how.”

Once you learn something, you can individualize a rule or a change that works for you. Your lifestyle and your biology are unique. Finding a way to hardwire what you learn into your day and regular routine is one of the hallmarks of the **LIVE IT** philosophy, and a smart wellness-inducing lifestyle.

Pair what you know with something easy to add or an adaptation of something you already do. Praise yourself for the changes. This is not shameful, but empowering.

It's also important to realize that no one is perfect. Mistakes are normal, and tomorrow is a new day to get back on track.

A balance of mind, body, and spirit plus not feeling punished - but rather excited or challenged to meet a goal - that can help us become stronger. This is true resilience, one of the biggest contributors to good health.

Start with something simple. Almost all of us need to incorporate more movement into our day or whole foods into our diet, for instance.

[HINT: If a food isn't something your grandmother would recognize, or has more than 5 ingredients - it's not *really* food.]

One thing I've found that helps with incorporating a new habit is to plan ahead.

It is much easier to incorporate changes if you think it out ahead of time, anticipate temptation, prepare yourself, and have an awareness of your patterns. If you give your changes structure, it will be easier to incorporate them.

When we attempt change unprepared, it's easy to revert to our preprogrammed ways.

And if we feel we are being deprived, we're setting ourselves up for a lack of fulfillment. If we feel we are making positive changes for ourselves, then there is a complex hormone cascade in our brains that will help us practice the healthy behaviors.

Adopting new habits takes practice. Set a reminder. Do it. Repeat. Do it again. And don't forget to smile and praise yourself for your efforts!

Newton's law is relevant to incorporation of new habits because we need momentum to redirect whatever movement in the wrong direction that has led to loss of energy and optimal health. Motivation and willpower are key concepts here. And if you need extra momentum, ask for help.

Involving trusted people into a campaign to make life changes is smart. Bring a friend, a coach, or other helpers into your efforts. Do whatever it takes to meet your goal. You deserve it.

## Take Away Tip:

Not sure how to go about incorporating the things you know you need to do to get healthier? Here are some easy steps:

- Take one step at a time. Don't try three new things at once.
- Practice. If at first you don't succeed, just try it again. And again. Until it sticks.
- Plan ahead. Gather all the tools, make space in your schedule, and lay the groundwork for success.
- Take care of your other needs. Don't overfocus on this single task.
- Congratulate yourself for double dipping. You are working on a goal and also retraining your brain. Win-win!

If you need extra inspiration watch Stanford psychologist [Kelly McGonigal's TEDx talk](#) about how rethinking self-control can help you reach your goals and make difficult changes.

# VITALIZE

*The word "vitamine" was coined in 1912, as an abbreviated term meant to capture the notion of important factors in the diet, or "vital amines."*

Sometimes we all need a little help. It can be as simple as a need to add a little (or in some cases, a lot of) natural life force or energy. This can come in the form of vitamins or supplements, or even in the form of a pharmaceutical if indicated.

There are also many wonderful vitalizers available to us that are free and readily available to all. As human beings we have an innate need to be connected to wild, natural spaces. What is more vitalizing than the wholeness found outside: the deep blue of the sky, the freshness of the air, the running of water?

It's important to look at your overall stress level when considering what vitalizing boosts are best for you. Many times what your body needs is determined by the specific stresses you face.





- Have you just experienced a loss or a personal transition of some sort? You may need extra B vitamins to help with detoxing from deep emotions and keeping your mood stable.
- Have you taken an antibiotic recently for an infection? Then taking a probiotic can help offset this sometimes necessary medication's negative effects on the microbiome.
- Do you work inside at a desk all day? Get out in nature after work!
- Some of us may need hormones to help vitalize, especially after a certain age when hormones are on the decline.
- Water is an essential vitalizer. Very few people drink the recommended amount. See the Resource Guide for a simple formula for ideal water consumption.

We also vitalize by being around others who have a positive, strong life energy. Who doesn't feel better after giggling and playing peek-a-boo with a young child? Really.

**Basically, vitalizers are the things that our body needs that give us energy.**

# LET'S TALK ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS

Some common vitalizing supplements are included in my regular patient recommendations. I call these the LIVE IT Vitalizers. Many people can benefit from adding these nine helpers regularly to maintain greater vitality. You should, of course, check with your own physician before taking any supplement. Even though available over the counter, many supplements can interact with prescription medications or even be contraindicated for some chronic health conditions.

## Vitamin D3

What: 2000-5000 iu per day depending upon your blood test results

Why: The “normal” range of serum blood levels is 30-100 and in general levels 50-70 help keep you vitalized. It is fat soluble, so take it with a meal. You probably learned as a kid that we get Vitamin D from being in the sunshine; yet often this is simply not enough to maintain optimal health.

## Omega 3 Fish Oil

What: Around 1500 mg per day of DHA/EPA

Why: These are essential fatty acid that are anti-inflammatory. Intake goal should be around 1500 mg per day of DHA/EPA. Read the label and make sure it is not the total fish oil but the DHA/EPA as these are important parts. This is good for skin, brain, heart, joints and more.

## Probiotics

What: Strains and amount depend upon your issues and where they are located in the digestive tract. In general, a 20 B.U. diverse strained probiotic can protect from antibiotic use, as well as help digestive issues, skin, mood, and immune system.

Why: The microbiome in our digestive tracts is truly complex and linked to many essential processes in the body, even our moods. Think of probiotics as the peacemakers in your gut. They dilute other bacteria while your body sorts things out. Listen to how your body feels and responds when you take a particular probiotic. Individual cases may require adjustment.

## CoQ10

What: Depends upon your health issues and blood levels can be checked. Some prescriptions can lower CoQ10 levels. A general starting dose is 100 mg.

Why: This is an antioxidant that helps protect both our hearts and our nerves.

## B vitamins

What: Dosage is highly personal. Blood tests can determine levels and which ones are needed.

Why: These are essential for cellular and brain energy. There are 8 different B vitamins and we get them from animal and plant sources in our diets. Some of us genetically benefit from more specialized forms of B vitamins. Deficiencies can be caused by this genetic trait or from lack in the diet or even interaction with medications. High doses should be supervised by a physician but short term B-complex for stress can be helpful.

## Magnesium

What: 120 - 150 mg 1-4 per day, depending on your condition

Why: This is a very important element that plays a part in over 300 enzyme systems in our bodies. Blood level tests for this are not usually informative unless very low. Magnesium comes in several forms. Mag Citrate if you tend towards constipation and related issues; Mag Glycinate or Threonate for muscles, anxiety and heart health. Low levels of Magnesium can lead to muscle fatigue, muscle cramps, anxiety and more. Sometimes people benefit from both, and that is ok.

## Multivitamin

What: Pay attention to the serving size when you look at the label. In general look for 70-100% of the Daily Value (DV) for vitamins A, B1, B2, B6, B12, C, D, E, folic acid (or I like methylated folate) and niacin; and if over the age of 50, even more B12 (25 mcg).

Why: Think of it as a nutritional seat belt with small doses of many required nutrients, especially if you're not taking several of the others in singular form.

## Iron

What: This can be supervised by your physician and iron levels can be checked as genetic and other factors can impact dosage advice on iron.

Why: For people who are low and menstruating women. The most important reason people take iron is that if your level is too low - as in the case of leaky gut, poor absorption, or low dietary sources - your body can't make hemoglobin and carry oxygen efficiently to your tissues.

## Hormones

What: Highly individualized, levels required, physician supervision necessary.

Why: Natural hormone balancers or bio-identical hormones may be prescribed by your physician as possible vitalizers to rebalance your body as you age. Ideally our body will make its own hormones; and there are various factors that may be unique to you that can cause these to decline. I do not advocate for blanket use or mega doses. I do find these to be needed and helpful vitalizers for many.

## Take Away Tip:

These are some of my favorite vitalizers. Pick one to try this week.

- Time in nature. Get out and enjoy the outdoors.
- Getting 8 hours of sleep
- Laughing more
- Spending time around positive people
- Listen to or play music. Sing along.
- Dance, exercise - move your body!
- Paint, draw, use coloring books, or look at art
- The **LIVE IT** Vitalizers, or your own physician's recommendations



*Our issues are in our tissues.*

## EXERCISE

I'm not sure who initially came up with this quote, but it's repeated often in Integrative Medicine when discussing the patterns of how our bodies hold on to tension, inflammation, and pain. One way to help the energy not get trapped in our tissues, it to move them.

Simply put: Our bodies are made to move.

Too often we sit all day in a classroom or at a desk, staring at a computer. Yet our heart still pumps blood and oxygen to our whole body and we have 360 joints that are designed to move and to articulate. What a waste if we don't use all this genius.

Just starting with something simple like being aware of your breath and the movement of oxygen can be life enhancing. You've no doubt read a lot about antioxidants and their health benefits. Start with deciding to get more oxygen into your system. You do this by breathing and moving!

## Exercise:

- Decreases inflammation
- Increases glucose receptors
- Helps regulate cortisol
- Heals blood vessels

If exercise for you means running long distances, great. Most of us need to start by simply becoming aware of our bodies and moving them more.

High intensity bursts of movement - even for one-minute intervals - can work what seems like magic - it yields more energy. Look for ways to incorporate short bursts of high intensity movement into your normal daily routine, yet don't overdo it.

The idea is to make sure that moving your body is simply a part of your every day. Walk. Try a sun salutations the minute you get out of bed. Dance to music while you cook. Stretch while you fold clothes. Take the stairs. Park as far away from the grocery store entrance as you dare.

Bottom line? Use this body you've been given!

## Take Away Tip:

I love the 4-7-8 breath exercise. It goes like this:

- Breathe in for 4 sec
- Hold for 7 sec
- Blow out for 8 sec
- Repeat for a total of 4 times.

When we breathe out for longer than we breathe in, it increases the parasympathetic nervous system and decreases the flight or fight response in the central nervous system. So this simple little exercise, done for just minutes a day, can pay off big time in your desire to maintain a healthy body.



*The mind-body connection is amazing!*

## IMAGINE

We literally are what we practice. We reinforce certain patterns in our brain with our thoughts and actions every day, every moment. Did you know that you can use your thoughts to influence your body's responses? We have discovered through science that the brain changes throughout life. This concept is called neuroplasticity.

Imagine and train your brain for stillness in the chaos. Be creative. Daily meditation or lack of it, impacts our bodies on a genetic level. It can actually influence our vulnerability to things like heart disease and cancer.

Some thought patterns are well paved due to the influences of our past history and societal influences. Old thoughts and habits inadvertently repeated over the years don't have to rule us. It takes practice and repetition to pave new paths over the old habits.

***If you can imagine yourself safe and relaxed, then your body can relax and recover to do the next great thing that it's designed inherently to do.***

When we connect to the greater universe, a personal spirituality, quantum physics or even simply a greater purpose or higher good, it heals. Doing this helps our bodies get out of fight, flight or freeze mode.

Engaging spiritual or imagination sources relaxes the body and allows it to reset. The latest neuroscience research now supports what many wisdom traditions have known through the ages.

What I find most exciting me about the power of the Imagine step is that we now have scientific evidence of the mechanisms that are supported by what many would see as mysticism. We know with evidence that we can slow down cellular aging, help our immune systems and so much more by adopting a daily meditation or visualization practice using tools of the imagination.

There are many ways to harness this powerful healing tool for yourself.

### Take Away Tips:

- Visualize yourself in the health state you wish to be.
- Try a [\*guided meditation\*](#) for your biggest wellness challenge.
- Have a dialogue with a part of your body that is experiencing symptoms. Ask it what it wants from you and follow through on its request.
- How do you like to connect to something greater than yourself? Do that!



## THANK

Gratitude is an essential key to happiness in life. It's literally like the golden ticket to a cascade of neurotransmitters and hormones that help heal and bring joy.

Scientific studies have shown that gratitude or thankfulness improves immune function and helps us better manage stress. It increases the flow of dopamine and other positive neurotransmitters. It also improves sleep, blood pressure, blood sugar, and mood. If it were a medication it would be a best seller!

**Gratitude is free, it's safe, and I prescribe it for everyone.**

It's rather easy to practice being thankful for material or outside things, events, situations, and people. We should also focus on the internal. Be thankful for the work you've done that got you to where you are now. Be thankful for where you are at this moment and that you have the dreams and goals that you do. Try to find ways to even be thankful for the past trials and challenges you've met.

*Pause before you eat. Taking time to bless your food helps with digestion and maintaining the attitude of thankfulness that is one of the doorways to gratitude.*



It's easy to go through each day and not note the many miracles, accomplishments, and simple things that are all around us. Just for today, take time to notice them. The easy gratitude journaling technique I share at the end of this section is a truly simple way to start doing this.

Generosity is also part of gratitude. If you're thankful for what you have, it's a natural thing to give more freely to others. Next time you're in a bad mood, try this!

## Take Away Tip:

### *Three & Three Easy Journaling*

My simple prescription for all of my patients is to take a few minutes each day to journal very simply: Write down 3 gratitudes and 3 goals.

They can be simple. What are you thankful for today? What do you want to see happen? It's not time consuming but the benefits can be tremendous to your sense of well being.

Here is an example of a few gratitudes:

- I am thankful for the beautiful weather today.
- I am thankful for my college education.
- I am thankful that my ankle feels better.

Here is an example of a few goals:

- I want to feel better
- I want to go to Hawaii on vacation
- I want to lose 10 pounds

Try keeping a pretty journal or notebook and a cool pen in your favorite color right by the bed. Or where you drink your morning coffee. Try it!

## Pulling It All Together

I've given you my basic formula, its acronym to help you remember it, and a few tips at the end of each section. Now let's pull it all together.

Here is my overall **LIVE IT** prescription for you:

1. **Learn** about how your lifestyle can affect your health. Be honest with yourself. Is there something your body is asking you to do differently or to shift? Empower yourself by continuing to learn about your body and health.
2. **Incorporate** a healthy change. Set a goal. It may be simple or more complex. Decide what is realistic for you and start there.. Eat less sugar. Drink more water. Don't eat after 7 pm. Try a new vegetable.
3. **Vitalize**. Add your doctor's recommended supplement protocol to your day. Surround yourself with good people. Get enough sleep. Get out in nature.
4. **Exercise**. Make time to move daily. Tune in and be more aware of your body and how each part feels.
5. **Imagine**. Try some mindfulness meditation or guided meditation daily. Work up to 20 min twice per day. Start with even two minutes! Slow down each day and reinforce what you want and let your body know it is safe. You can even talk to the parts that aren't happy!
6. **Thank**. Be kind to yourself. Pause and thank yourself for your efforts. Write down three things you are thankful for each day. Smile at yourself in the mirror and those you come in contact with.

Take some action to **LIVE IT** today and repeat daily.

We are all on this journey to **LIVE IT** together!

*Dr. Julie*

# LEARN WELL: The LIVE IT Health Reference Guide

If you want to dive deeper into increasing your vitality and wellness, here are some trusted sources for further information.

These educational resources cover many of the LIVE IT chapter subjects, as well as most of the nine key interrelating contributors to disease covered in LEARN.

## WEBSITES

### **General Information**

The following two professional accrediting organizations maintain extensive educational libraries.

#### [Institute for Functional Medicine \(IFM\)](#)

Functional Medicine books, magazines, blogs, recipes and more

#### [Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine \(AZCIM\)](#)

Online courses on anti-inflammatory diet, nutrition and cancer, nutrition and mental health, and more

### **Environmental Stress and Toxins**

Be aware of your exposure to chemicals. Don't microwave in plastic. Avoid cosmetics with questionable ingredients or other things your skin and body will be in contact with. A good rule of thumb is this: If you wouldn't eat it, it shouldn't go on your skin! These resources are trusted sources of the latest information on environmental and toxic stress.

#### [Consumer Labs](#)

Unbiased reviews and research on health and natural products, covers many products and brands (requires membership)

#### [Environmental Working Group](#)

Information on environmental stress and toxin exposure from consumer products, farming, fishing, food and water.

### **Illness-Specific Education**

#### [National Center for Integrative Primary Health Care](#)

Great integrative patient education on dozens of issues including allergies, headache and progressive muscle relaxation

### [The Wahls Foundation](#)

Great autoimmune resource. This doctor has MS and has greatly improved her own health

### [Heart Math](#)

Meditation tools, breathwork, heart health, trauma healing and coherence with the greater world. Great for stress management.

### [American Heart Association](#)

Getting healthy resource/program

### **Meditation and Mindfulness**

Stress, and even more accurately perceived stress, really does impact our health and our health journey. Stop, listen, and learn from your stress. Here are some tools to help get you started.

### [Health Journeys / Belleruth Naparstek](#)

Guided imagery and meditation

### [Meditation Video](#)

Super easy meditation for beginners - featuring ABC's Dan Harris

### **My Favorite Mindfulness Apps:**

Insight Timer - Has silent or white noise meditations and guided.

10% Happier - Great information on mindfulness and meditations

Headspace - Some of my patients have loved this.

### **Exercise**

#### [Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire](#)

Good to do if you are just starting more exercise and to see if you should go slower or not.

#### [Desk Exercises Handout](#)

This guide on my website can help you plan a great exercise routine for your coffee breaks without leaving your desk.

## **BOOKS**

### **The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It, Kelly McGonigal, Ph.D.**

Excellent book about how to get from WHY to HOW and how to overcome willpower challenges

### **Little Book of Gratitude, Robert A Emmons**

### **Food Rules, Michael Pollan**

Easy to read book with great common sense advice

**Life is your Best Medicine,** *Tieraona Low Dog, MD*

Great book for honoring body, mind and spirit by one of my Integrative Medicine mentors

**The Disease Delusion,** *Dr. Jeffrey Bland*

Great book explaining the functional medicine perspective on chronic disease

**The Blood Sugar Solution,** *Mark Hyman, MD*

Another great book explaining how diet and blood sugar can impact your health, complete with action steps

**Super Genes,** *Deepak Chopra, MD and Rudolph E. Tanzi, PhD*

Explains how our genes and lifestyle interact.

**Spontaneous Healing,** *Andrew Weil, MD*

A classic book by my Integrative Medicine mentor reminding us that the answers are within us.

**8 Weeks to Optimal Health,** *Andrew Weil, MD*

Another classic book that was one of the first I read during my training