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## **Taking Stock of Our Health**

When we are working on a project it is a good idea to maintain good records and to occasionally review progress and set new goals. So it is with our health. It is a good idea to take stock once in awhile. This review should not deflate us but rather inspire us to set goals for improvement. In some cases we will see that we are on the right track. In other cases we may receive a reality check. Either way there is always room for improvement.

Creating a baseline is generally helpful to everyone. Let's look at the two categories that go into this baseline; past history and present condition. With regard to past history there are two to concern ourselves with; our personal health history and our family history. Both are important because they contain clues to where we are today and what potential challenges we may be faced with tomorrow. With regard to our present condition a few things to consider are habits, complaints or symptoms, and the results of a variety of tests. Taken together, this information creates a picture that contains the keys to optimal health.

Let's look at personal health history first. It is a good idea to have a record of our health beginning before birth if possible. Questions like how was the pregnancy? Were there complications during the birth? Any vaccination reactions, allergies or childhood diseases? Any injuries as a child or adult? When and how severe were they? Consider mental and emotional challenges as well as physical issues. Is there a history of anxiety or depression? How about feelings of guilt, anger or resentment? How about perfectionism? Does everything have to be just so? Take some time to develop a timeline that includes dates and conditions.

As valuable as it can be, family history can be a bit more challenging to gather. In theory we can talk to our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and great grandparents if we are lucky enough to have them around. We can ask them about their health issues, lifestyles, and attitudes. For those who have passed away we can record how old they were when they died and what caused their death. In some cases we don't know our parents let alone family from other generations however what ever we can gather will be helpful. We learn what "runs" in our families. It could be perfectly good health and living to a ripe old age or it could be addictions, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis or other things. We should not be afraid to bring these facts into our consciousness.

A tool that can be helpful to those of us who don't know family history or for those who desire a clearer picture of what may be most relevant to us personally is a tool called iridology (a non-invasive and detailed analysis of the iris or colored part of the eye performed by a trained iridologist). The color and structure of the iris reveal what we have inherited for strengths and weaknesses because every organ and organ system can be found reflected there. Our eyes tell their own story about us both physically and emotionally. They even reveal information about our personality. Taken together with personal and family history, our health picture begins to come into focus.

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Now that we have a timeline for our health and we have some picture of what our families may have passed on to us, let's add information about our present condition. It is important to be clear about current dietary habits – predominantly fast foods or whole, organic foods? Are good quality supplements part of our daily routine? What about exercise – active or sedentary? What about stress? What about bathroom habits, specifically bowel movements (two to three times each day is optimal)? Take stock of it all.

Complaints or symptoms as well as general status are important considerations as well. What is our general energy level? Are we energetic or dragging most of the time? Any aches or pains? How about outlook? Is it positive or negative? Is the glass half-full or half-empty? What about weight – or better yet BMI (body mass index)?

As we gather all of this data we have some good details to discuss with a healthcare provider. Together with a health provider we can determine specific medical tests that will provide key measurements related to the organs or functions we want to monitor and support. Likewise, we can learn what we must do with our diet, activity level, attitude and other things to optimize what we have and avoid trouble in the future.

It is important to bring this picture into focus so we can understand the connections between what we have inherited, what we have experienced, what we do today, and what we can expect tomorrow. It is in this review that we gain insights and possibly, finally, the courage, the will, and the ability to make the necessary changes. It is also important that we not only share this information with our healthcare providers but that we become actively involved in determining what test results mean. After all, it's our health and we are responsible for it.

*BIO:*

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