

Dr. Spencer Baron's

SECRETS OF THE GAME:

*What Superstar Athletes Can Teach You about
Health, Peak Performance, and Getting Results!*

"If you're having a rough time keeping up with the kids, or finding yourself hitting the wall when it comes to getting critical things done in your life due to a lack of energy, then you owe it to yourself to read this book.. I've known Dr. Spencer Baron since we were kids, and I can tell you he is the real deal. This guy walks the talk and is the go to guy to all the top performers. If he's in your area, do not miss his special presentation."

Carlos Castellanos
Syndicated Cartoonist
Baldo Comics - Co creator

"Ok please put me on the VIP list for the book signing - I want to be first in line! BTW, just returned from Chicago - Team USA Karate trials for Maccabiah Games 2009. I have been appointed to the coaching staff for the Games and served on the Selection Committee to pick our teams. I would love to use your book to keep our team healthy and strong, so bring it on Doc! I have always endorsed your work!"

Caren Lesser
Attorney
Black belt

It appears some of the world's most gifted athletes have learned how to access a set of universal performance secrets. I believe these principals represent the frontier of performance based medicine.

*Spencer Baron, D.C., D.A.C.B.S.P. has taken his experience in working with elite and professional athletes thru out his career and distilled these "performance principals" into a simple yet comprehensive formula for success, not just in athletics, **but in life!***

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Spencer Baron



New York

Secrets of the Game

What Superstar Athletes can Teach you About Health,
Peak Performance and Getting Results

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Dedication

My two sons Hunter and Heath

These two are the real healers in my book and in my life. Even though I have spent my adult years taking care of people and have completed many years of education to be the best doctor possible, I am no match for what special healing powers my two sons possess. They are magical, and with no effort whatsoever. They have no training in healing the sick, no idea how to diagnose a condition and don't care what results blood work or x-rays show, yet their unconditional love is the best medicine in the world. I am honored to be their father and mentor as they approach the next chapter in their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There have been certain people in my life who have galvanized me to grow... not slowly...but with an unbridled passion and laser beam focus. These special human beings have a similar energy to mine and together, we've formed a synergy that brought about the creation of this book. I am forever grateful for their special skills, enthusiasm and love for me.

The following folks have risen far and above the level of dedication I ever expected:

Everyone needs a coach, mentor and guide to help with life's challenges. Despite how talented you may be, a good coach helps you achieve what you may never have been able to do alone. Nancy Powers has been my life coach and in my corner teaching, training, conditioning and strategizing on how to claim a victory in this boxing match of life. No one should be without a coach!

Since seventh grade, my life long friend, Carlos Castellanos has been working on projects with me. Our friendship is complete with the most memorable experiences whether it was running for high school class president or more recently striving for a global healthcare shift in consciousness with me, he is part of my family, or as he would say, "familial!"

I've been trained to believe that "there are no accidents," yet it is still quite fascinating that a complete stranger can suddenly step into your life and bridge the gap between wandering aimlessly through writing your first book and showing you the "yellow brick road." Anne Akers, the owner of MD Publish, has been my "good fairy" and every time I click my red running sneakers together, she appears with the most beautifully elegant and stately prose, that I am transported to the land of book publishing Oz.

What in the world would I have done without Paul Buckin? He started out as a patient, then a friend, then my savior during one of the toughest times of my life. Every person or animal that he meets loves him! His superior intelligence comes complete with what I refer to as "editing freakishness." He spots EVERY misspelled word, grammatical error and instances of improper syntax. He's not autistic, but he is my "Rainman" of the literary world.

How fortunate I am to have a patient and friend who is also the producer of ESPN news radio. Beth Faber is the talented person who also happens to be representative of the audience I choose to appeal to most —Moms and those that are athletically-minded. Beth has been the "fuel to my fire" as

she cheered from the sidelines with comments of what makes up a superstar athlete. She has always believed that the public deserved to know the good side of professional athletes and their collective healthy habits. Despite her rigorous schedule, she still found time to assist me with interviewing tips and also which stars were most deserving and appealing.

Having appeared together on Home Shopping Network some 13 years ago, Mindy McCortney was the perfect show host. Since I also was a part of this network for awhile, she and I became friends and then ultimately book collaborators. She reviewed my first manuscript and within 24 hours, had questions and suggestions. Mindy also fits the image of my target audience as a single parent of two teenage boys. She's a voracious reader and her ideas were compelling as a "family healthcare decision maker."

Kevin O'Neill, one of the most highly respected head athletic trainers in the National Football League. After being with the Dallas Cowboys, he came to the Miami Dolphins and has been one of my favorite friends for the past 12 years. He is revered by his fellow trainers in and out of the NFL as highly intelligent, extremely conscientious, a great communicator, very diplomatic and open minded. He scoured through this book making sure there were no scathing comments, sensationalized stories or inappropriate "secrets" prepared for the "media game." His opinion and guidance has been priceless in this book and in my life – it's evidenced by his amazing children.

Every wonderful book has an amazing editor, Dr. Mara Schiff. Yet, not every wonderful book has a serendipitous story behind the discovery of its editor. Dr. Schiff, the ideal candidate, had been literally sitting in front of me for years as a patient. Not only was she a patient, but she was the creator of a book club that I was fully immersed in. One day when none of the other members showed up for our book review, we talked about our goals and I described the ideal editor and she said, "that's me!" Even though Mara had only worked on text books, she emailed a fresh sample of her writing to my book agent and it was love at first byte (megabyte).

Rene Harte had nothing to do with the writing of this book, nor the inspiration of its completion. More importantly, though, the partial owner of five comedy clubs believed in and adopted the nutritional and the physical aspects of my teachings and promptly lost 30 pounds. Her excitement began to bring this book alive and with her extreme creativity, ingenuity and passion for what we now call, "The Energy Tour," a new era has begun in my life. We've already commenced to the 50 city, education and entertainment performance

platform that has enthralled and motivated all who experience it. I can't thank her enough for her faith, confidence and belief in me.

It's been 30 years since this woman was in my air space but it feels as if it was yesterday. Kathryn Lorusso is not only a highly intelligent former journalist and current high school guidance counselor, she is an extremely avid nutritional and exercise enthusiast and my best friend. She has flavored my writing with a most smooth and eloquent flow and when someone can turn my artwork into a masterpiece, they've got my attention... big time.

Joy Baron ... hmm, a little unusual for an ex-husband to express appreciation to his ex-spouse but Joy's influence on the book went a lot further than being a good mother to our children. Even though our divorce unfolded as this book was being written, she showed compassion for the process and because of that some of the most important aspects described in the book were able to develop. I am grateful for her continuing help and influence with the two little men who mean the world to me.

Lucy Unsworth is responsible for the proverbial "icing on the cake" - the cover of this book. Her skills go way beyond photography and encompass creativity, thoughtfulness, communication, and sincerity. She willingly took charge of the visual side of the book and showed the flexibility and freedom to allow anything to happen. The real beauty is what I observed behind the camera (not in front of it). Her exterior is as gorgeous as her interior is uniquely special. It takes an emotionally connected, insightful and optimistic individual to pull off a successful cover shoot.

Above all, I am happiest to know my mother is still here to read this book. Her unconditional love and commitment to her children and grandchildren are the reasons I've made it my mission to inform the public of the most powerful healing habits behind the locker room doors of America's superstar athletes.

And to all the professional athletes, doctors, athletic trainers, healthcare providers and coaches who have been mentioned in this book and have dedicated themselves to the advancement of the "new mainstream" of health awareness, I thank you with all of my heart.

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Introduction

WHY ARE WE HERE?

In Other Words, Who Is Dr. Spencer Baron? And Why Should I Believe Anything He Says?

Pssst ... Hey you ... Yeah, you ... over there, come here; I want to tell you something.

It's about my secret love affair, and I want to introduce you to her.

Actually, she's not just my own. I hear similar stories from many professional athletes who have also fallen under her spell and now chase the same allure that I do.

OK, so maybe it's not so secret. Considering how much time I'm away from home satisfying my passion, you'd have to be pretty much blind to miss it. And every time I'm with her, I'm on an emotional rollercoaster; I go from joy to anger to frustration to deep love, and I've been with her over twenty years now. My former wife knows about it; my kids know; all my friends know. Now I'm about to share her with you, too.

No, she's not some hot, sexy, young blonde on whom I'm fixated. Instead, my deepest love is my fascination with health management and preventive medicine. And I'm far from alone in my fascination. Indeed, the world has also become preoccupied with this fixation on improving health through eating better, exercising more, and including nutrition and vitamins in the diet. In addition, the three thousand-year-old healing art of acupuncture and the manipulation of muscles and bones through chiropractic and massage have also become standard treatment methodologies. And then there are lasers, oxygen chambers, biomechanical evaluations under high-speed photography, specialized psychologies, sophisticated blood analysis, and even the resurrection of grandma's home remedies.

You may have dabbled with a few of these alternatives. Maybe your doctor has, too. Maybe you've never heard of any of them. Maybe your doctor hasn't, either. As the world simultaneously shrinks in size and grows in its need for a way to treat the planet's crushing health problems, some alternative treatments are becoming more mainstream, while their previously popular "traditional medicine" standbys are falling into disuse after years of inefficacy and lackluster results.

What has happened is that American healthcare is waging a battle—with itself. This "battle" is between two prevailing belief systems: traditional western medicine versus new ideas about holistic wellness. It is a battle that has been raging for decades, and it is not being fought on the battlefield by huge battalions or armored divisions, but rather in the corporate boardrooms of hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and health insurance companies. If we are lucky—no, not lucky but *smart*—curious, health-conscious individuals like yourself, one informed consumer at a time, will ultimately win the battle.

Whether you realize it or not, you are the product of years of traditional medicine, sired on decades of sitting in your family doctor's waiting room, staring at Norman Rockwell prints of white-coated physicians bearing stethoscopes around their necks and lollipops in their pockets. Unfortunately, these doctors have also been educated, for better or worse, in a treat-the-symptoms-not-the-cause mentality that has cost you thousands of dollars in medical bills—and untold months of potential wellness. This form of medical care definitely has its place and has made enormous contributions to increasing the health and

well-being of the vast majority of the population. However, traditional western healthcare may be unintentionally, and systematically, dismembering you limb by limb.

In this view of medicine, your body is seen as a system of disparate parts to be independently treated and “cured.” For example, if your head hurts, you take an aspirin to dull the pain rather than seek what may be the underlying cause of that headache, such as tension from an unhealthy lifestyle, dehydration, or lack of sufficient vitamins and minerals in your diet. For examples of how prevalent this is in our current culture, consider the stream of commercials you saw when you watched television last night. You could take one medication to treat your insomnia, but it may simultaneously cause impotence, stomach upset, and dizziness. While another prescription may help your gastritis, it concurrently causes an ulcer, migraine headache, or insomnia. You can take one pill to lower your blood pressure, another to treat your elevated cholesterol, and yet another to control your psoriasis, but each of these will potentially cause some new problem requiring some additional treatment. Each new “cure” creates some other illness, requiring some other drug to treat it. Your body is cut into disconnected pieces as individual components are examined and treated. When does it end? At what point do we say, “Enough!” and start treating our bodies as the extraordinary, self-healing, and unified mechanisms they are designed to be?

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

**Our current treat-the-symptoms-not-the-cause
mentality has cost you thousands of dollars in medical
bills—and untold months of potential wellness.**

One arena that has seen amazing advances in how to respond to and treat the human body is the world of professional sports. A professional athlete's body is a finely tuned machine, required to consistently operate at peak capacity in order to command the millions of dollars the athlete receives in salary and endorsements. An athlete's body does

not belong to him or her alone. It also belongs to the team that pays for and depends on it. It belongs to the companies that invest in it and will receive millions of dollars from the product sales it generates. It belongs to the public who spend thousands of dollars each year to watch it. It is a *moneymaking machine*.

Not only are millions of dollars made from this high-powered machine, but equal amounts are invested in keeping it healthy and functioning at peak performance. Coaches, athletic trainers, team doctors, yoga and meditation masters, acupuncturists, and herds of others are employed to keep professional athletes functioning at their best, all the time. No one makes a nickel if the player can't play. No one wants to watch a tired, bruised, and battered competitor dragging his way onto the field for another painful round. The world of professional sports is often on the cutting edge of new treatments and therapies designed to keep its athletes functioning at top physical, mental, and nutritional capacity.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

The body of a professional athlete is a moneymaking machine, and millions of dollars are invested in keeping it functioning at top mental, physical, and nutritional capacity.

So, how does this relate to you?

Well, you have an important decision to make. Are you willing to open your mind to new and alternative ideas about health, medicine, and your overall well-being that come from the world of professional sports and its multimillion-dollar investment in the health and well-being of its players? Are you willing to consider how these top secret treatments, cures, and principles may be able to work for you and your health?

Your health is your most important asset. In traditional health care, you entrust your care to others who, you believe, know what is best

for you and who, you believe, are operating in your best interest. Your doctor, your health insurance company, and the drug companies are all trying.

Consider for a moment that this may not be true. The information provided to you by others may be tainted with their own values, biases, and self-interests (read: *profit*) that may not be consistent with your own. In professional sports, however, everyone has the same interest—making money off the players. That can only happen when the players are in top shape and operating under the care and guidance of trained health-care professionals who, let’s face it, also profit from the well-being of their athletes.

And that is where you have a decision to make.

You are your own best advocate and the best person to make decisions about your life, your body, and your health. But this is only true *if* you are well informed about your choices, your body, and the possibilities available to you for self-care and healing.

DR. BARON’S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

Your health is your most important asset. You are the best person to make decisions about your life, your body, and your health, but only *if* you are well informed about your choices, your body, and the possibilities available to you for self-care and healing.

The purpose of *Dr. Spencer Baron’s Secrets of the Game* is to introduce you to a new possibility—the idea that you can have the extraordinary health and fitness of a superstar athlete without the million-dollar price tag. Health is an equal-opportunity resource; it is there for the taking, if only we will shake off the fog of traditional medicine’s “treat-the-symptoms” mentality and open our eyes to the possibility of having all the *Secrets of the Game*.

Who Is Dr. Spencer Baron? And Why Should You Trust Me?

So why should you believe anything I say? Before I launch into my professional background that qualifies me to write this book and to give you advice on your own health and well-being, I want to share a story with you. This story is important because, although it happened a long time ago, it made me who I am and set me on a lifelong path dedicated to healing others.

In 1977, I was a recovering nerd wearing thick, black, plastic glasses with shockproof lenses, sporting a bushy white-boy Afro on my feeble 127-pound frame. Having spent much of my youth fighting to defend myself and most of my geeky, outcast friends, I was a remarkably good fighter, despite my unseemly appearance. When I discovered wrestling, my whole life changed.

In eleventh grade, I became a high school wrestling sensation. In October of that year, I was a sixteen-year-old, hotshot wrestler competing in a preseason qualifying tournament. My third match of the evening appeared to be another easy win with an advance to the semifinals. I was up two points and nearing the end of the second two-minute round. While my awkward opponent held me in a headlock, I felt a subtle snapping in my neck; the discomfort was dulled, however, by the adrenaline and anticipation of victory. After the match, I mentioned the mild discomfort to Coach Frayer, who suggested I forfeit the tournament rather than risk getting injured. Of course, my teenaged belief in my own invincibility sent me straight back onto the mat.

In the third and final round, I was mildly stiff but immensely determined. I was behind by one point and ready to take my opponent down. On both feet, facing my adversary and ready to lunge like a starving tiger, I went in for the takedown. Suddenly, both arms got tied up, as I tripped over my opponent's foot with nothing to brace my fall. I landed on my head and, as I went tumbling down, I heard a sickening CRACK that sounded like a dry branch snapping in a quiet forest. As I crumbled to the mat, the coach, the team, the referee, and the spectators knew something was gravely wrong.

Through the searing pain, I could hear Coach say to me, "Move your fingers ... How 'bout the toes?"

I somehow successfully passed the test and got up, despite the

sensational pain that accompanied every breath. The long drive home was torturous, as my parents waited tensely by the front door.

Desperate to calm my overanxious mother, I continued to try to suppress the pain throughout that night. I was sure aspirin and an electric heating pack would do the trick but, by morning, the pain had worsened significantly, and my parents worriedly drove me to the hospital. I thought my head would explode from the pain of that drive.

After several X-rays and the medical doctor's evaluation, there were still no answers. My parents and I were terrified of what awful news the doctor might deliver as we sat, exasperated and bewildered, bracing ourselves for the worst and hoping for the best. We unquestioningly trusted the all-knowing doctor.

Finally, the doctor reappeared. "We need to check in the patient," he said. "We still don't know what's wrong, but we want to keep him in traction and under surveillance." The next thing I heard blew me away. "There is too much muscle development around his neck, and we are unable to determine if there is a fracture or not."

Wow, I thought, *that's actually kinda cool*. Too much muscle? I'd never heard *that* associated with *me* before. However, as the reality set in and I realized I was going to miss a week of school and, more importantly, wrestling practice, the glow began to dim.

The pain began to improve, although I was unsure whether that was because the medication was dulling the discomfort or actual healing was occurring. As friends visited the hospital, there was not much time alone to dwell on the problem. (I'll never forget Fran, my dream girl, sauntering through the door. She was tall, supercool, and beautiful—someone who would *never* like me. When she leaned over to kiss me goodbye, I could almost bear the searing pain that threatened to overwhelm my body. It *truly* was worth it!) I was released after a week in traction with still no answers as to what happened to me. Moreover, I would now have to spend the next three months confined to a hard, plastic neck brace—a daunting prospect for a young, active kid.

When I was allowed to walk again, I stumbled back to be part of my team. With a rigid cervical collar protecting every head movement, my participation was limited to supportive cheers from the sideline as my teammates smacked down their opponents. I sullenly watched

the guy who took my place immersed in the “thrill of victory.” Good sportsmanship notwithstanding, for me, it was really the “agony of defeat.”

Over time, the physical pain eased, but the emotional anguish became intractable. I cried alone almost every night as I felt stripped of my most wondrous privilege—the opportunity to compete and win in a sport and to escape the miserable prospect of being a 98-pound, weakling dork forever. As a teenager, my identity and self-esteem were all wrapped up in my wrestling success, and I felt undeservedly robbed of my dreams. I have never quite lost the feeling of being that poor, despondent kid feeling destined to the life of a misfit.

When I sit across from a patient faced with a debilitating injury, I am transported to that childhood bed in the dark and my own secretly wept tears. It doesn't matter if he is a world-class athlete or she is a mom who can no longer pick up her youngest daughter because of her pain. It has become my deepest passion to heal my patients' injuries by using use all of the principles I have dedicated myself to learning since that event. I am 100 percent committed to making that person better. I *know* I can do it, and with the right health-care team, it can happen faster and more efficiently than most of the health-care professionals out there can make it happen.

In my practice, we see patients every day who are faced with similar conditions to the one I sustained as a teenager, but we can get them better in a week or two and, more importantly, give answers and a prognosis that allows them back into regular activity almost immediately. As a result of that adolescent trauma, I discovered my life's mission—to serve and empower others to heal themselves through better, more efficient, and powerful health care.

My Professional Credentials

I went on to dedicate my life to health and healing. I knew traditional medicine was not the path for me, so I enrolled in and subsequently graduated from Texas Chiropractic College in 1985. I continued my postgraduate training and became a Diplomate of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians, which has only certified 211 such doctors in the entire world.

With this specialty certification in sports injuries, I became the

chiropractic consultant to the Miami Dolphins football team and the Florida Marlins baseball team, for which I both still serve. I was subsequently requested to be the chiropractor to Barry University, as well as to treat the Nebraska Cornhuskers, the New York Mets, the San Francisco Giants, and the Colorado Rockies. I am currently the president of the Professional Football Chiropractic Society, a professional organization consisting of all the chiropractors representing each of the thirty-two NFL teams. Until selling my practice in 2007, I had a thriving chiropractic office in Miami, Florida, wherein I treated hundreds of patients of all sizes, shapes, and colors, including, but not limited to, professional athletes.

I was president of the Council on Sports Injuries and Physical Fitness of the Florida Chiropractic Association from 1990 to 1992 and was Director of Sports Injuries for the Dade County Chiropractic Society for six years. In 1993, the American Chiropractic Association Sports Council chose me to serve as the delegation leader to a team of eighteen sports chiropractors in an educational exchange with the Sports Medicine Physicians of the National Chinese Olympic Training Center in Beijing, China. In 1992, I became the first on-staff chiropractic physician at Doctors Hospital of Hollywood, a position newly created for me and unparalleled in any other hospital throughout the country. In 1994, I was designated head of the department for the Chiropractic Division with Golden Glades Regional Medical Center.

Some of the most gratifying moments in my 18-year career have been spent treating the casts of *CATS*, *Crazy for You*, *Les Misérables*, *The Rockettes*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *West Side Story*, *Damn Yankees*, *Chicago*, and *Celtic Fusion*, as Broadway shows have begun seeing the extraordinary virtue of using chiropractic to treat their cast members.

Why This Book and Why Now?

So why should you believe me?

The answer is: *You shouldn't.*

There is only one way you will know if I am worth my salt. Try for yourself and see if the treatments, therapies, and lifestyle suggestions I offer in this book make a difference for you. I am absolutely certain that I can enhance your life, as I have done for countless others—athletes and nonathletes alike. The fact of the matter is that, simply by picking

up this book and reading it, you are already on your way to the best health of your life. But don't just take my word for it.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

**You are already on your way to
the best health of your life!**

If you are already in your best shape ever, and you believe there is nothing else for you to learn, then great. But if you are not, I invite you to consider some new possibilities that may not fit into your “box” of what you think is the best and most appropriate health care for you. Even though I have suggested that you don't trust me, I am going to ask you to trust the ideas and therapies I present in this book—not because you know me personally and can attest to my trustworthiness but because I have helped thousands of people experience their lives and their bodies in unprecedented ways.

The rest of this book is devoted to a few simple, yet effective, ideas. First, I want to share with you how our current health care went from Point A to Point B—that is, how the history of Western medical practice developed in such a way that you have been systematically trained to believe that a particular brand of care is the right, best, and only way to go. Yes, I'm sorry, but you have been a bit manipulated. Well, not a bit ... a lot. Read it and weep, my friends. (By the way, if you think this historical journey might *bore* you to tears instead, you have my permission to simply trust me and jump into the “meat” of the strategies; you can skim chapters 1, 2, and 3 and jump right on into chapter 4 on “Secrets of the Mind.”

Second, I want to show you some low-cost physical, mental, and nutritional approaches to getting healthy and staying healthy—strategies that America's superstars utilize behind the scenes. I want to offer you insights into how “A-list” athletes have achieved their success, how they maintain their drive and ambition, and, most importantly, how they continuously push their bodies and minds to extreme limits—quite successfully.

Finally, I want you to see for yourself what some of these amazing

athletes and the teams of professionals employed to keep them in top shape say about the strategies I present to you in this book. You will read quotes from these individuals regarding how to achieve your goals, whatever your goals may be, and how to become a “superstar” in your own life. The tools are here; you decide if, when, and how you want to use them.

The idea is simple. You must be willing to let go of some of your old ideas and old ways of thinking in order to let some new information in. The results will eventually speak for themselves.

So, put on your literary running shoes and let’s get moving!

DR. BARON’S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

You must be willing to let go of some of your old ideas and old ways of thinking in order to let some new information in. The results will eventually speak for themselves.

Chapter 1

THE BATTLE OF BELIEF

Athletes have gotten smarter, better with nutrition and rest, more attuned to what their bodies need. That awareness has become greater over years gone by as heightened awareness in society has facilitated this perspective. Whereas, maybe thirty years ago, a guy got injected and was told, "You're playing this week." this approach is not taken anymore, anywhere.

Kevin O'Neill, Miami Dolphins Head Athletic Trainer

Did you know that the first surgeons were actually *barbers*? Yep, that's right—the kindly old man who trims your hair and beard in a chair with a candy-stripped pole out front, once was also the guy who removed your appendix, pulled your teeth, and stemmed your internal bleeding. Until the mid 1700s, it was commonly held that barbers could perform amputations; remove odd, external growths; and perform other surgical feats. The absence of anesthesia and sterilization was directly related to the amount of blood lost and trauma suffered. Here's a little-known fact: You know where that symbolic candy-stripped pole came from? It is derived from the blood and bandages that would

The Battle of Belief

hang out to dry by the barber-surgeon's shop. Yikes! You'll never look at one of those quite the same, will you?!

This notion of the barber-surgeon was the genesis of Western medicine's outpatient care model. Did you ever stop and wonder what happened to the doctor who used to make house calls and take care of your *whole* body? Today, we call them "general practitioners," but even these guys are becoming obsolete in the world of highly specialized care. If your foot hurts, you go to a "foot doctor," known as a podiatrist; if your shoulder joint hurts, you go to an orthopedist, who takes care of bones and joints; the neurosurgeon handles your brain and spinal cord. When you have a pain in the butt, you go to your proctologist (or the corner bar!), and so on. This medical model is known as *allopathic medicine*, in which disease is identified as a set of symptoms that can be isolated from other body parts and functions and then independently treated. For example, you get treated for chronic pain in the shoulder blade (scapula) nearest to the spine, only to find out the origin of the problem is in your gallbladder, which remained untreated because it hasn't been identified as or even linked to the cause of the problem in your scapula. We call this "referred pain," and it can be a tricky symptom if not properly diagnosed.

In contrast to practitioners from the Western hemisphere, who focus on a *mechanistic body* paradigm, wherein the body operates as a slick machine composed of independent parts, practitioners from Eastern, or Oriental, traditions advocate a holistic approach to healing, in which the mind and body are mutually dependent. In this paradigm, each individual body component is essential to the body's overall capacity to function and heal from illness and injury. In our culture, practices associated with this latter paradigm are generally referred to as *alternative medicine*.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

Western practitioners focus on a *mechanistic body* paradigm; Eastern practitioners advocate a *holistic mind-body* approach to healing.

This divergence of opinion between “traditional” medicine and “alternative” healthcare continues to clash, perhaps even more fervently than ever. But, before I get ahead of myself, let me offer you a brief course in Western versus Eastern Medical Philosophy 101 to bring you up-to-date how on we arrived at the set of beliefs that currently dominate our healthcare approach. Please bear with me; while this may seem like a tedious trip into historical trivia (though I promise to entertain along the way), for you to benefit fully from the concepts I present in this book, it is essential that you understand why you believe what you do, how you have been systematically trained to think *exactly* that way, and why you are powerless to change unless you see how you may have been manipulated.

Now pay attention because this is important: **NOTHING I SAY HERE IS “THE TRUTH.”**

Everything I suggest in the following pages is simply a *possible way of understanding* how the world of health care works. I am recommending that you “try on” the perspective I am presenting—you *always* have the choice to take what works for you and leave what does not. If I communicate one simple message to you as you read this book and nothing else, it is this: YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

And don’t you *ever, ever* let anyone tell you differently.

DR. BARON’S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

You *always* have a choice about your own health care.

A Brief History of Western Medicine

While the barber-surgeon may have been responsible for the original “cut-and-paste” model of healthcare, in 1616, a medical doctor in England named William Harvey further dissected the body’s component parts, focusing on the role of blood in the body. Harvey first understood and popularized the concept of a central circulatory system (like a computer’s primary “operating system,” for all you PC and MAC users) that pumped blood into and through the heart.

The Battle of Belief

His insight was the first to begin redirecting practitioners' thoughts away from the traditional practice of bloodletting as a cure for disease toward an understanding that blood flow was essential for circulation and, thus, for the body's ability to function. Bloodletting was the practice of cutting open a vein to allow blood to drain out of the body, with the expectation that eliminating the "bad" blood would eliminate the "bad" disease. Sounds preposterous, right? Well, before Harvey's groundbreaking discovery of the importance of blood and the circulatory system, bloodletting was quite standard.

While Harvey's experiments considered how body parts and organs could be isolated and treated, he was, nonetheless, at this time still practicing within an overall context of the body as an integrated and interdependent unit. Mind and body had still not been completely severed. Awarded much merit on his mechanistic approach to the body, and consistent with the "Cartesian philosophy" (after philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes, whom we will discuss in more detail later) that informed most scientific practice, he dismantled the body like Mark Martin's pit crew during a Daytona 500 race.

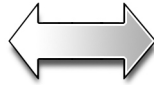
In this pre-seventeenth century world, mind and body were still linked in an overall model, wherein mental, physical, social, and environmental factors were considered equally essential to overall health and well-being. Prior to the seventeenth century, medical practice was based on the philosophy that the mind and the body were fundamentally linked and, thus, mental processes influenced physical outcomes, and physical symptoms were related to mental conditions.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

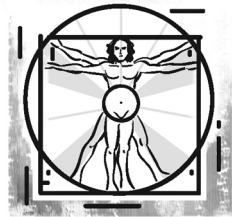
Prior to the seventeenth century, the mind and body were fundamentally linked in health-care treatment models.

Pre-seventeenth Century Beliefs

MIND



BODY



Up until about the eighteenth century, the health-care world viewed the body as a fully functioning and integrated organism. Homeopathy, a therapeutic model designed to treat the *whole* patient, was the widespread and standard treatment system of choice. This model contends that disorder and disease are expressed as a complex “collision” of events that result in physical, as well as emotional and/or mental, symptoms. Thus, body parts may not be independently isolated and *all* components need to be treated concurrently.

Louis Pasteur’s “Germ Warfare”

One of the most rigorous debates in health care occurred during the nineteenth century, when Louis Pasteur, the famous microbiologist best known for establishing the relationship between germs and disease, battled it out with renowned physiologist Claude Bernard. Under Pasteur’s view, disease was caused by particular microbes. From his perspective, one single and predominant factor—a germ—caused disease, rather than a constellation of physiological, emotional, and dietary factors that *simultaneously* affected the human body. The medical profession swiftly accepted this idea. You might think of it this way: if you have rats in your house, rather than cleaning up the food, throwing out the garbage, plugging up the holes, or buying a cat, you just kill the rat, and the problem disappears.

Pasteur was not only revered as an outstanding scientist, but he was also a skilled and vigorous debater with a flair for dramatic presentation.

The Battle of Belief

He presented his viewpoint with such charismatic panache that it was easy to get others to accept his ideas. (He would have made a great Super Bowl commercial!) Interestingly, while Pasteur's ideas have much merit and have dominated the health-care treatment "debate" for centuries, he boldly suggested in later writings that mental states *can* affect resistance to infection. Indeed, he ultimately validated the "mind/body" connection he initially disregarded. As a result, his legacy eventually corroborated homeopathic belief.

On the other hand, Claude Bernard advocated that illness was a disruption in the fine balance between external, or environmental, factors and internal body dynamics. Specifically, Claude Bernard first described how the body possesses control systems, or *thermostats*, which will adjust to exchanges with its surrounding environment. That is, the body compensates for *signals* it receives from external conditions. To ensure that the body remains in a constant state of equilibrium, or health, this thermostat will regulate the only thing it can control: its internal physical environment.

Here is an example of how this works, though, in this case, not necessarily to your benefit. Ever heard a story of someone who went to the doctor for a routine checkup and was told he had a cancerous tumor raging in his body that would require immediate treatment—or, worse yet, that the condition was not treatable and the patient should prepare for the worst? The devastated patient then wondered, *How is this possible? I felt nothing; there was no pain at all!* This is because we can have cancer cells or other infectious diseases brewing within us at any time and never know it because our immune system, or thermostat, has been working hard to fight the intrusion and keep us healthy and strong. The patient felt a little tired, but that was all (rather like Lance Armstrong describes his experience with cancer in his bestselling memoir *It's Not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life*).¹¹ Well, the tiredness resulted because, while the body's immune system was working in overdrive to keep the body functioning and "healthy," it was actually overcompensating to fight the body's disease. While this is not the most optimistic example I can provide, it is perhaps the most dramatic and shows how amazing your body truly is.

¹ ¹ Lance Armstrong, *It's Not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life* (USA: Penguin Group, 2001).

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

Your body has a self-regulating thermostat that will always try to maintain equilibrium.

Cartesian Philosophy and Reductionistic Theory

Enter René Descartes (1596–1650) from left field. A historic French mathematician, philosopher, and physiologist, *not* a medical doctor, Descartes first questioned the relationship between the mind, the brain, and the nervous system. While the great philosophical distinction between mind and body in Western thought can be traced to the Greeks, it was René Descartes who first suggested the mind/body relationship by identifying the pineal gland (located in the skull at the base of the brain) as the physiological location where the soul and the body intersected. His intention was not to deny the connection between the mind, body, and soul, but rather to explain and understand these in scientific terms. However, the unintended result was ultimately to disenfranchise the mind from its affiliated body.

Cartesian philosophy was the first to begin dissecting injury and illness down to its physiological cellular level. This led to use of the term “reductionistic theory” to describe the process of breaking something down further and further into its smallest component parts. As the effects of the body became increasingly separated from the mechanisms of the mind, ailments were progressively forced into being either physical or mental, but not both.

Over time, Cartesian philosophy became synonymous with reductionistic theory. While seemingly insignificant at the time, indeed this belief system permanently changed the face of modern medicine. It began the irreversible journey away from the historical mind/body connection into the now ubiquitous model where all physiological phenomena can and must be explained scientifically and

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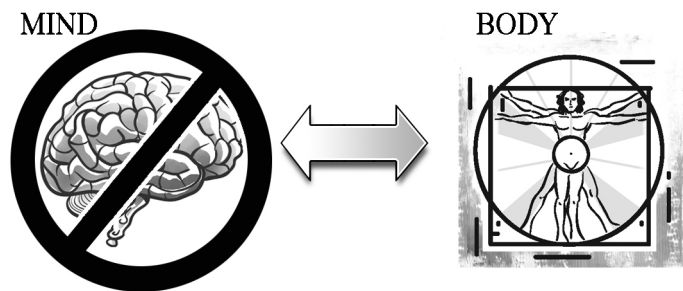
where *specialized medicine* for individualized body parts dominates the health-care landscape.

Today, reductionistic thinking demands that physicians diagnose and label a disease as either physical or mental but not, heaven forbid, as both. Patients then begin to feel as though their disease must be one or the other; for chronic pain sufferers whose doctors cannot name and diagnose the source of their pain, the fallback position becomes the *other* culprit—that inexplicable, notorious, and uncontrollable mind.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

By the seventeenth century, reductionistic theory began to separate mind and body when treating disease; this approach continues to dominate modern medicine.

Seventeenth Century: René Descartes' Cartesian Philosophy



Medicine Meets Politics

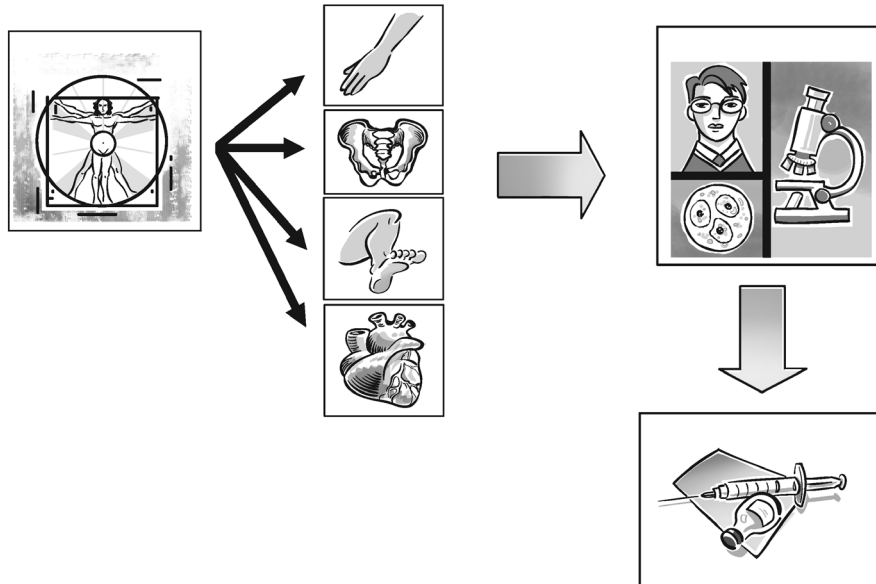
In 1806, the world of health care in the United States was changed forever when a small but highly politicized group of health-care

practitioners created “licensing laws.” These new laws required that “medical doctors” must be licensed by the government; anyone caught practicing “medicine” without such a license could face either fine or imprisonment or both. Remember that “medicine” at this time was a vague and varying concept that included bleeding, purging, blistering, and poisoning patients with mercury—among other “scientific” treatments.

Though disguised as an effort to standardize and thus ensure the safety of medical practices, the regulation of “medicine” was *not* entirely intended to produce better, more consistent, or more reliable health care. Rather, it was expected to limit the number of practitioners able to treat patients, in a capitalistic endeavor to reduce supply, increase demand, and thus increase profit. By limiting the number and type of persons allowed to treat illness, “doctors” would become the sole source of legal treatment available to citizens who had previously been able to seek effective variety of treatment in the form of hydrotherapy, eclectics, Indian Medicine, homeopathy, herbalism, midwifery, osteopathy, chiropractic, naturopathy, a regular physician, or any combination of these. In 1847, these medical doctors united to form the American Medical Association, a powerful political lobby that would dominate, determine, and direct the face of healthcare into the twenty-first century.

This regulation became the genesis of *specialized medicine* as we now practice it. So, what becomes apparent is that this style of health-care delivery was not borne out of a desire to provide better or more efficient treatment; rather, it was a political maneuver to ensure increased profit for individual physicians with unique and specialized training.

Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries:
Cartesian Philosophy and Reductionistic Theory



So, to summarize, what we now call “scientific medicine” has become the tendency to reduce body parts to their smallest identifiable unit to understand how each one functions individually. This has been legitimized and venerated as the highest and best practice, not because of its inherent scientific merit, but rather because a small group of smart, savvy, and politically astute observers (doctors) realized that they could profit from organizing health-care provision as a capitalistic venture.

DR. BARON’S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

The American Medical Association was originally designed as a political organization intended to restrict access to health-care practitioners.

Unfortunately, what has been lost in this journey is the critical importance of how each organ and body part relate to and depend

upon the others in order for the body to function effectively and efficiently. And at the same time, the value of a variety of types and methods of therapy in an overall scheme of holistic treatment has been diminished. This process of breaking down and rendering treatment to isolated elements is the medical version of the mechanistic, assembly-line approach that has dominated Western industry since the early nineteenth century. It's like trying to review a movie by watching all the scenes separately—and maybe even out of order.

So, now here we are, deeply immersed in a medical model that treats symptoms rather than causes and reduces the body to independent, rather than *interdependent*, components. Having been indoctrinated to believe this is the best approach, we are left with limited choices because this “way it is” is so deeply engrained in our psyches, as well as our health-care delivery systems and the finances that support this structure (in terms of insurance, specialized doctors, and governmental regulations), that it is difficult to see what may be available outside the walls of this restricted box.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

We are now deeply immersed in a model of specialized medicine that treats symptoms rather than causes and reduces the body to independent components.

So the critical question becomes this: What's the alternative? If this is “the way it is,” what choice do I really have? Well, that is what I am here to share with you, based on my own experience working with a variety of treatment modalities, superstar athletes and athletic teams, and by sharing with you what the “experts” have to say. Before we can move forward, however, I first want to offer you another perspective on health-care history that originates in the Eastern hemisphere and that suggests another way of understanding how the body works and how best to treat it. The next chapter will offer you some insights into traditional Eastern medicine, homeopathy, and how to integrate these with Western practices within an overall strategy for optimal health.

Chapter 2
A HAPPY MARRIAGE:
West Meets East

As chapter 1 explained, the history of Western medical belief through the nineteenth century was layered with extraordinary breakthrough discoveries and a corresponding movement toward diminished access to health-care services. This exclusivity was institutionalized by the emergence of the American Medical Association in midcentury, which restricted access to all health-care providers other than licensed medical doctors who would care for patients only with agreed-upon treatments. While these developments were dominating health-care trends in the West, another movement was also gaining recognition as a viable alternative and effective form of care. This type of treatment was not based on the idea of a “mechanistic body,” wherein the body was regarded as an assembly line built of independent parts; this movement saw the body as intrinsically interconnected and interdependent.

Now, I’d like to share with you an alternative version of medical history. In this version, health care addresses the body holistically;

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in other words, it maintains that each system functions as a direct reflection of the health and well-being of the others, that no body part operates in isolation, and that each system depends on each of the others for optimal well-being. If one body part, system, or function is ailing, so too are all the others, and *all* need to be simultaneously addressed and cared for.

Eastern Homeopathy and Western Allopathic Medicine

A German doctor named C. F. S. Hahnemann advocated a system of medicine called homeopathic medicine. This model suggested that substances could be ingested or applied to the body to mimic the symptoms of a particular disease or condition and thus build the body's tolerance to that disease or infection. The purpose was to build up and strengthen the body's *own* ability to cure itself before the illness could overtake the body, rather than relying on the introduction of some additional substance (a drug) to cure the illness. Hahnemann coined the term *allopathy* in 1842 to distinguish his homeopathy from the more traditionally accepted Western style of medicine, which he found less effective and inefficient.

Traditional Western allopathic medicine administers a dose of some drug to reproduce the symptom of health in a person's body or, put another way, to induce symptoms different from those produced by the disease. While this sounds logical, the key word here is *reproduce*. Reproducing a symptom is not the same as actually producing it. It is mimicking something but not actually causing it.

Remember that thermostat we discussed earlier? Homeopathy uses the idea that the body's own immune system can be efficiently stimulated to achieve equilibrium or health. By administering small doses of a foreign substance, the body develops immunity to the disease-causing agent and can then tolerate the symptoms of the disease. Consider the drug addict who needs more and more of a drug over time to get high because smaller doses have less effect. The body has developed a tolerance or immunity to the foreign substance—the drug. Homeopaths use this principle to the body's advantage by producing and stimulating health rather than disease.

Hahnemann originated the term *allopathy* to differentiate a rival approach that used substances that produced the opposite of a disease's

symptoms to heal people. The term *allo* is Greek for “different,” while *homeo* means “the same.” So, in allopathy, a drug mimics health as a means of convincing the mind that the body is indeed healthy. For example, a fever reducer mimics the feeling of health but does not address the original cause of the fever. A fever is the body’s way of telling you that there is an infection somewhere and it is heating the body to, in essence, isolate and “fry” the infection and thus eliminate it. Homeopaths began using the term *allopath* in the nineteenth century as a derogatory term to describe practitioners of “traditional” medicine who used what the homeopaths believed was a limited and imperfect practice of simply treating symptoms.

While homeopathy did not originate in the East, it was conceptually similar to traditions used by practitioners of Chinese medicine. By relying on natural roots and herbs and considering the genesis of disease in the body’s basic immune system functions, it was more consistent with Eastern than Western medical philosophy. While homeopathy became quite popular in the United States and Europe in the 1800s, it also became the object of deep-seated animosity and vigilant opposition from the traditional medical establishment. Even though its strongest advocates included European royalty, American entrepreneurs, literary giants, and religious leaders, the conflict between homeopathy and orthodox medicine was prolonged and bitter. It’s pretty obvious who won the first round (at least in the United States. In Europe and the other Americas, it’s quite common to see homeopathic pharmacies as often as other drugstores). The United States is coming around, however, as more comprehensive and holistic approaches to healing are becoming popular.

DR. BARON’S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

Western allopathic medicine treats individual symptoms of disease; Eastern homeopathic medicine uses holistic approaches to treat the whole body.

Here is another way to think of it: a homeopathic response to infection would be to administer minute doses of the infectious agent

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to the body in order to build up the body's own resistance to that agent. Consider the child who plays in the dirt, gets covered with muck, and then goes inside to eat lunch without washing her hands. While that may seem a bit gross and the child may get an unpleasant stomachache, she also may develop a tolerance for the natural muck that exists in her environment so that it may not affect her so drastically the next time. Don't misunderstand me, I am not advocating that you don't wash your child's hands before he or she eats—quite the opposite. Washing hands regularly is essential for good health, and good old soap and water are powerful tools in fighting disease and infection. However, the antibacterial washes that are all the rage have the unintended consequence of lowering our resistance to disease by thwarting our body's own ability to deal with various natural germs and microbes in our environments. A little muck may not necessarily be such a bad thing!

A typical allopathic response to infection is to kill it with antibiotics. While this may make sense on the surface, it also ignores the simple yet obvious concurrent strategies of educating the patient on the importance of washing hands, getting rest, eating nutritious foods, eliminating emotional stresses, and exercising as a means to prevent infection in the first place. From a social perspective, allopathic medicine developed as an approach to compensate for the unhealthy lifestyles that most of us are content to live. From an economic perspective, allopathic medicine generates millions of dollars for doctors, insurance providers, pharmaceutical companies, and others who profit from this form of specialized and isolated treatment. No one profits from washing hands, eating right, and getting enough sleep!

Think of it this way: if you have a headache, you take an aspirin, and your headache is gone, right? Wrong. The aspirin is simply *reproducing* the feeling of wellness. It is not actually making you well. It is covering up the feeling of the headache by blocking your body's pain receptors. The headache is still there—you simply can't feel it. If you have arthritis, allopathy treats the pain by masking the symptoms, but the arthritis itself doesn't go away. If you have high blood pressure, drugs may lower your blood pressure, but they do not alleviate the causes for your elevated blood pressure. If you stop taking the drugs, your blood pressure shoots up again. If you don't take the painkillers, your arthritis still hurts.

The type, degree, and effect of this type of medicine exist on a continuum. Cancer-fighting drugs used in chemotherapy *are* in fact attacking the disease with the goal of eliminating it. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this. The problem is that chemotherapy also attacks other healthy organisms in the body as well and makes them sick. Hair loss, nausea, immune-system deficiencies, and decreased white blood cell counts are all examples of how the cancer-fighting drugs create additional problems in the body by attacking only one area independently and ignoring the rest. Allopathic doctors must therefore prescribe additional drugs to address symptoms that emerge in other parts of the body. As disciples of Western medical tradition, we have come to accept this process as a “normal” and routine part of the cancer-fighting process.

Eastern Homeopathic and Holistic Methods

While modern allopathy treats cancer as a disease itself, homeopathic philosophy holds that cancer is, in fact, indicative of some broader systemic disorder (or dis-ease) within the body that needs to be treated. The actual *cause* of the disease is a toxic, acidic terrain in which the body’s overall immune system has been congested and has allowed “bad” cells to replicate. Allopathy treats this systemic problem by chemically attacking the individual cells associated with the cancer or, sometimes, by simply cutting them out, as in recommending double mastectomies for women with breast cancer, so as to eliminate the body part in which the cancer cells manifested. Please understand, I mean no offense here to women who have chosen this course of treatment as the right one for them; I am simply using this graphic example to make my point that surgical solutions are a standard and acceptable form of treatment in allopathic care.

Homeopathy also treats “according to the symptoms” (cancer, in this case) but not by attacking. The homeopath gives the body a minute quantity of substance that provokes the body to develop its own infection-fighting capabilities. In cancer treatment, for example, a homeopath might select a remedy that matches the symptoms of the tumor itself and focus on targeting the tumor to reverse its growth. Some homeopaths might also give remedies at the tumor site itself (in the form of an injection) to more aggressively stimulate a response. A homeopath might use remedies that assist in healing the patient’s

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eliminative channels (kidneys, urinary tract, lymphatic system, liver, and other cleansing organs) to strengthen cell detoxification. Finally, another homeopathic approach might be to address the overall constitution of the patient by doing a complete assessment of the patient's mental, emotional, and physical symptoms and then selecting the best match accordingly that will, in turn, directly affect the tumor. These may sound ludicrous to a Western-trained mind, but the key in homeopathy is to manage *all* the body's parts and thus eliminate symptoms *before* the body is overwhelmed by the problem.

In Eastern medical philosophy, health is more than just the absence of disease and injury; rather, it refers to the optimal balance of health. When applied to health, there are three components that, together, result in *homeostasis*, or equilibrium:

1. Mental health
2. Physical health
3. Nutritional health

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

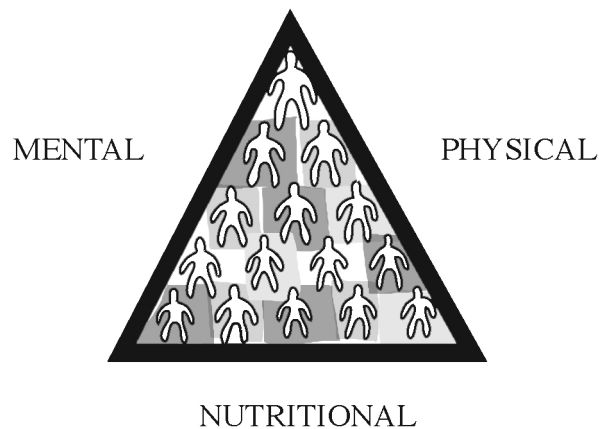
The three essential components to optimal health are mental health, physical health, and nutritional health.

Organisms and cells have the ability to maintain internal equilibrium by adjusting any one or all of these processes to adapt for dysfunctions in the others. For example, when the body ingests too much caffeine (a nutritional substance), it reacts by causing the nerves to become hyperexcitable (a physical process), which causes overstimulation and muscle spasm resulting in what you may experience as anxiety or stress (a mental state). Or, let's say you lift heavy items at work and you injure your back (a physical symptom). The injury causes some anxiety (a mental process) as you cannot carry out tasks, have sex, sit on the toilet, or pick up dropped items. This, in turn causes poor eating habits (a nutritional effect) as you eat to compensate for your feeling of incompetence or deprivation (a mental process).

Not clear yet? Try this one: That hottie you've been dating breaks

up with you, and you are devastated (a mental condition), so you lose your appetite (a nutritional symptom), which leaves you weak and tired with decreased muscle density, which results in less energy and stressed joints that cannot manage regular exercise. So, you are getting fatter and experiencing a series of strains and sprains (a series of physical symptoms). Make sense now? I would bet money you've seen something like this happen to someone you know!

Chinese (Eastern) and “alternative” health-care philosophies operate on a triangulated system that equally considers the three essential components—mental, physical, and nutritional—in understanding total health:



This is the foundation of traditional Chinese (Eastern) health care and what has become known in the West as “alternative” treatment philosophies. According to Eastern tradition, when effectively balanced with one another, these three elements are the fundamental keys to optimal well-being.

Reconciling the Two Perspectives

Let me share a personal story. In 1991, I was sent to the National Olympic Training Center in Beijing, China, for an educational exchange with their Asian medical doctors. While walking through the compound, I waved to a man as he rode his bicycle with one hand and held an acupuncture mannequin with the other. It was one of the Olympic team’s physicians. What I saw over the next two weeks astounded me.

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The primary health-care system in this impoverished country (which, by the way, placed *fourth* out of 52 countries in the 1992 Summer Olympic Games) consisted of manual therapy (spinal and joint manipulation), herbs, Tai Chi, Qui Gong (therapeutic exercises developed for health and well-being), and acupuncture. During tours of traditional Chinese hospitals, I saw acupuncture in the emergency rooms, enormous herb pharmacies, and Qui Gong. Ironically, a lowly little “American pharmacy” went pretty much unnoticed by passersby.

I was rendered speechless (and for those who know me, this is pretty remarkable!) by the practices I witnessed and by the entire health-care delivery system as I saw it practiced in China. I was so moved by this experience that I reoriented my own practice to include and reflect what I learned. Moreover, I have continued to learn and expand upon teachings I first witnessed on that trip. My personal approach has consistently been oriented around utilizing the best of both worlds (Eastern and Western) by encouraging health-care providers to work together so that they may identify the most appropriate level and type of treatment that best serves the patient—the ultimate triage. I have found that integrating these three essential components works extremely well for professional athletes, whose bodies are “hot commodities” worth hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars. Their expeditious recovery is critical, as I have witnessed extraordinary healing as a result of consistently integrating mental, nutritional, and physical modalities.

Interestingly, a recent study empirically validates my own experience and demonstrates the effectiveness of this form of health care for athletes. In 2005, a Taiwanese study examined injury management models of elite athletes. The study included 393 study subjects, who averaged around 21 years old and whose average athletic experience was just under 10 years. Interestingly, 14.5 percent chose Western treatment alone, 8.1 percent chose Chinese medicine alone, and *75.4 percent received combined treatment*. The study concluded that elite athletes preferred a combination of Eastern and Western treatments for sports injuries and suggested that, “Doctors trained in Western medicine should learn these alternative treatment methods and apply them effectively in athletes, so that a better medical network can be established.”²

2 SK Chen, YM Cheng, YC Lin, YJ Hong, PJ Huang, and PH Chou PH, “Investigation of Management Models in Elite Athlete Injuries,” *Kaohsiung Journal of Medical Sciences* 21(5) (2005): 220-7. Department of Orthopedics, Kaohsiung

America has come a long way, yet we still manage to miss some critical components of effective health-care delivery. Despite the fact that, according to World Health Organization statistics, the United States ranks *number one* in health-care spending, it ranks number twenty-four in health life expectancy. In comparison, Japan is number one in health life expectancy, yet the country uses less than half the amount of money spent by the United States. Something is wrong with this picture. The striking disproportion of cost versus effectiveness in the United States is startling.

Some suggest that all nonmechanistic health-care modalities are “quackery” or too “New Agey.” Despite having a more than 5000-year history, much in Eastern philosophical thought is now considered “new” as it reaches Western minds in a variety of forums and formats. And, as often occurs with most “new” philosophies, there is a lack of clear definition about what *it* is; this lack results in a variety of practices and processes that fall under the umbrella of “care” and “healing,” which may in fact be less than reliable. However, what is important is not whether one or the other philosophical approach is “right” or “best,” but rather whether a variety of modalities can coexist under a continuum of care model and be used together to most effectively treat illness and injury. A popular fable offers a useful allegory for this perspective:

Six blind men were asked to determine what an elephant looked like by feeling different parts of the elephant’s body.

The blind man who feels a leg says the elephant is like a pillar; the one who feels the tail says the elephant is like a rope; the one who feels the trunk says the elephant is like a tree branch; the one who feels the ear says the elephant is like a hand fan; the one who feels the belly says the elephant is like a wall; and the one who feels the tusk says the elephant is like a solid pipe.

A wise man explains to them: All of you are right. The reason every one of you is telling it differently is because each

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one of you touched a different part of the elephant. So, actually the elephant has all the features you mentioned.³

Thus, one animal may look different to each observer. Likewise, health care suffers from the same limitation; each perspective results in a different analysis of what *it* (disease or injury) is and, thus, limits how to treat it.

As I have suggested before, there is no such thing as *The Truth*; “truth” appropriately resides in the mind (and body) of the beholder. I hope to offer you the tools to identify what *it* is yourself and then seek the best treatment to resolve your problem. For some of you, the benefits of homeopathy will seem logical and intuitive. For others, its attributes may seem less apparent. That’s fine. My job is not to convince you that one system is better than another; rather, it is to provide you with sufficient information so that you are able to make an *informed choice* about your own health-care options.

DR. BARON’S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

My goal in this book is to provide you with information to make an informed choice about your own health care.

So, now you are faced with a critical question.

How do you, as the ultimate health-care spectator, get more than just a ringside seat? In other words, how do you start actively playing *on the court* of your own health and well-being, rather than simply observing from the sidelines while others make game winning, or losing, choices and decisions for you? The fact of the matter is that the less informed you are, the more dearly you continue to pay—with substandard treatment, less medical coverage, and greater apathy from your healthcare provider.

³ *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Blind Men and an Elephant,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_Men_and_an_Elephant#_note-JainWorld (accessed December 9, 2008).

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

**The less informed you are, the more dearly you pay—
with substandard treatment, less medical coverage,
and greater apathy from your health-care provider.**

That is, until you ask yourself, “What else can I do?”

CHOICE: The Undisputed Champion

Often in my 21 years in practice, I have heard the same things from patients: “I don’t want surgery.” “I don’t want medication.” “I don’t want to continue being injured or sick.” “I’ve tried everything; isn’t there another way?”

So many of the “specialists” my patients had seen before coming to me were, indeed, limited by their own brilliance.

Huh?

Yes, these “brilliant” doctors and other health-care professionals were limited because, while exceptionally talented, competent, and accomplished, their expertise was limited to only one area. Their very narrow views were often presented, and thus interpreted, as the “only option.” Moreover, often that “only option” would offer only a short-term solution alongside what, in fact, was a long-term failure. In other words, “Give a man a hammer, and everything is a nail,” wrote Mark Twain. To a surgeon, most everything is operable; to an orthopedist, most everything requires an orthopedic solution. My chiropractic colleagues and I would often marvel at the untapped array of treatments that could have safely and expeditiously restored a patient’s well-being when a “traditional doctor” assured him or her that surgery was the only option.

While no one treatment is the panacea or the end-all miracle cure, typically there were multiple treatment options available that most of my patients had never even heard of, let alone considered relevant to their unique problems. Some approaches seem inaccessible because they

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remain very expensive. Others seem unavailable because “big business” has not done a commercial for them and thus you do not know they exist. You may have missed a treatment option due to its margin of profit, which is too low to make it widely available; or perhaps it derives from a natural resource that hasn’t been bottled or packaged. Sometimes these treatments are so cutting edge that they have not hit the mainstream market yet.

The point is this: the persistent and undeniable truth in health care is that you *always, always* have a choice. To that end, I have two goals in writing this book. First, I want to broaden your knowledge and understanding of the health-care options available to you and offer you a concise and readable reference guide about those options. Second, I believe that the most impressive array of multiple strategies and methods of using them effectively are employed in treating professional athletes, for the purpose of optimizing their performance and well-being. That is, due to professional sports’ underlying profit motive, the most amazing variety of health-care providers unite for the benefit of the athlete and his or her ongoing performance. I want to share those strategies.

What Does All This Mean To You?

In general, most of us tend to think of doctors, hospitals, and medicine as above repudiation and beyond reproach. And while health-care professionals, like those in law enforcement, education, and a variety of other fields, may ultimately be committed to a higher calling of service to others, medicine does not exist in a vacuum. Good health care takes money, and lots of it, just like everything else. Indeed, health care has been, and always will be, one big sales pitch. (In case you are not quite convinced, just for fun, the next time you sit down to watch television, count how many of the commercials in your favorite nighttime one-hour drama are about drugs or some other health-related topic; next time you read your favorite magazine, note how many full-page, glossy ads are devoted to drugs.) Often presented as science, a really emotional commercial, sex, or just something your “trusted” doctor tells you, what you hear, see, and feel (and sometimes smell and taste) convinces you to try the latest drug or treatment option.

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

Exploiting the best of Eastern and Western health care is, unquestionably, the best approach.

My experience and training over the years has firmly convinced me that exploiting the best of both Eastern and Western health-care worlds is unquestionably the best approach. Fortunately, and consistent with my own intuition and education, this perspective is now shared at the level of professional athletics. And the bottom line is that professional sports are all about pleasing you, the consumer, without whom there *are no* multimillion-dollar contracts and corporate support. Because of you, superstar athletes are worth millions of dollars in revenues, endorsements, and corporate sponsorship, and nobody wants to lose a dime of those profits. Therefore, expeditious recovery for athletes is critical, and preventing injury and illness in the first place is an even higher priority. What I have seen is that the constant integration of mental, nutritional, and physical modalities offers the best and most consistent road to recovery and ultimate health.

The bottom line is that if you understand this simple idea, *YOU WILL WIN.*

DR. BARON'S SUPERSTAR HEALTH TIP:

**Superstar athletes get the best care because the world of professional sports spends millions of dollars are spent to keep them in peak performance shape.
You, too, can have this level of care!**

