

Chapter 1 – Pillar 1: Unshakeable Health

Like any new journey, our initial steps set the course for our destination. There is no time to waste. The 4 PILLARS shows us precisely how to take control of the specific areas in our lives that have the greatest impact on our happiness.

Our health is our most important asset. It serves us throughout our entire life. With the right time and attention, we can appreciate the gift of our health, learn the way it communicates to us and develop the right steps to maintain it.

Recently, I was reminded of how the body communicates. I woke up at 12.30a.m. and couldn't get back to sleep. I felt stress building in the center of my chest for the day ahead and listened for the deeper message my body was sending me.

Although I knew I needed to do something about my job before it impacted my health, I had spent the entire weekend working towards solutions. At 12.30a.m. that Monday, the anxiety was there, keeping me awake.

I had two choices: get up and do something or try to sleep it off. I knew from past experience that sleeping it off wasn't going to happen, so I got out of bed. I listened to a yoga nidra meditation for 15 minutes, focused my mind on the challenges at work, and then went back to bed. Within a few minutes, I was asleep. When my alarm went off in the morning, although still tired, I knew I had looked after myself and was in a better frame of mind.

While there are still times when I fail to listen to my body, applying simple techniques affords more control over situations like these. Obtaining knowledge is one thing; knowing when to act on that knowledge is wisdom. That is what the HEALTH PILLAR is all about.

The 4 Pillars

The HEALTH PILLAR includes everything we need to exercise, nourish and recover so we can be at our absolute peak physical condition each day. We wake up each morning prepared for the challenges ahead and satisfied we are doing everything possible to feel our best. We take responsibility to feel unshakeable when the world around us begins to crumble.

Feeling unshakeable is more than being free from disease. Unshakeable health means being prepared for physical challenges throughout the day and navigating through life requires a reservoir of vitality. Unshakeable health is an expression of the energy that enables us to finish the day as well as we began. People with this energy are magnets for great opportunities. They create this energy through their choices, their mindset, and through the circumstances around them.

The Health Pillar also includes the presentation of our body to the world. Presentation is the clothes we choose to wear, the effort we put into our appearance, and the care we give to our physical form. It's our body language and engagement when meeting a person for the first time and the decisions we make around what food to eat at the end of a challenging day.

Our primary care to ourselves is the basis for providing care to others. We cannot give what we don't have and taking care of our physical health is the first step in authentically helping those around us.

The total health care championed in this book does not come naturally for many people. Our task is to take responsibility and prioritize our wellbeing even with people in our lives who depend on us. Throughout this book, we'll explore how many small, consistent changes lead to significant progress.

Total health care reminds us that the harder we are on something, the faster we wear it out. This principle applies in how we drive our cars, enjoy our intimate relationships and how we care for ourselves. In relation to health, the harder we punish ourselves through excessive eating or extreme and punishing

exercise regimes, the earlier we will see signs of wear and tear. Visible through aches and pains, injuries or a growing waistline. Even small actions of care can have large impacts on health, wellbeing and vitality.

There Are No Shortcuts

There are no shortcuts in developing and maintaining optimal health. Like many people, I have looked for shortcuts and easy answers when there weren't any. Short cuts like popular dieting trends or fad exercise routines resulting in inconsistent results. The health pillar invites us to appreciate that there are no shortcuts in developing unshakeable health.

Now is the time to eradicate the mindset that looks for easy answers for our health. Answers that we have outsourced to third parties. Now is the time to become the expert on YOUR health. To understand and appreciate your body, how it functions and what it requires to be at its best.

This is particularly important as we age. In our youth, we can take our health for granted and get away with it. We can endure the late nights, the poor eating habits and the substance abuse that comes from excess. However, as we age, the consequences for this mistreatment can accumulate. Untreated sporting injuries, a growing waistline or lack of vitality are all symptoms of a body in need of assistance. The health pillar is our foundation for regaining control with our life.

Who says that as we age, we cannot enjoy remarkable health and vitality? Society may push the story of depletion and disease as we age but I am sure we all know people who maintain vibrancy well into their 80's, 90's and beyond!

Focusing on the health pillar allows us to appreciate how progress in one area has the potential to influence the remaining pillars. It's easy to think that each pillar operates in its own

The 4 Pillars

silos. However, each pillar is interrelated. Improvement of one pillar can substantially enhance and stabilize the performance of the others.

For example, if we are feeling good about our physical appearance, feeling physically strong and fit, and presenting ourselves at our best through the food we eat and the clothes we wear, our mindset will be strong and positive. From this place, we feel good about our relationships and have the confidence to take positive action in those relationships, leading to enhanced self-worth and happiness. Once we see our work into action, it becomes addictive, pulling us further forward.

Defining Health Success

Discard the perception of obtaining the perfect body. Perfection in anything is a state of mind and only sets us up for failure. Remember, the body includes not only our physical health and wellbeing but also our nutrition, sleep and presentation. Our body is constantly changing and by comparing our physical body to others will only lead to self-judgement and a negative mindset. Understanding what our body requires allows us to make more informed decisions along a path toward unshakeable health.

Take sleep, for example. How much sleep do we need each night to wake up feeling refreshed and energized? For some people, it may mean only five to six hours. For others, it might be substantially more. The exact number of hours isn't as important as getting a feel for what we need in order to be at our best. Some days, too, we need more sleep than others and that's fine. Over time, developing an understanding of our requirements allows us to determine when we need to be in bed to function at our best. Knowing the impact of not getting enough sleep and how it affects our performance also assists us in determining our sleep patterns. Some people are early risers

and are more productive early in the morning, while others function better in the evening. Experiment with what works for you until you have a baseline. We know intuitively what our body needs and creating structure and habits to support our requirements helps us stay on track.

Nutrition is another example of contradictory information. High or low fat, high protein, low carbohydrates, and other confusing recommendations have come and gone over the last 50 years and can overwhelm our best intentions. Everyone has a different body that requires a different nutrient approach and what may work for one person may not work for others. Our bodies and our nutritional needs are constantly changing, so just because we ate a particular way in the past, does not necessarily mean that it still serves our needs today.

Read that passage again. Are we attached to a diet or pattern of thinking that may have worked for us in the past and no longer serves our needs today? To create a life on our terms, are we open to surrender old habits, routines and even foods that were once important for us?

There have been times when I have loved a meal so much that I thought I would be eating it for the rest of my life. A particular type of breakfast would satisfy my needs so much that I would envisage consuming it for the rest of my life. However, as I have gotten older, new foods and combinations have come up on my 'must have' list. All exemplifying our ever-changing nutritional needs. Consciously exploring and observing the impact different food has on our energy levels, our productivity and fluctuations in our emotions can empower us to make healthy adaptations as we age.

We are living examples of the food we eat. What we put into our mouths becomes who we are. Dr. Alberto Villoldo, in *Grow a New Body* (2019) insists that with the right combination of nutrition and food, we can not only heal ourselves physically but also spiritually transform our being. As a psychologist and