

Lifestyle Management  
In the Age of Technology

**THE  
WELL-ADJUSTED  
LIFE**

Will Nelson

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## **Part I**

# **Living and Learning**



# VitalObserver

## 1

A sort of life expeditionary, I was born with an agile mind, an insatiable curiosity and thirst for information, and a serious case of wanderlust. I vividly remember much of my childhood because it flowed from one startling experience to another. With the steady pulse of commotion in my family and the hushed undercurrent of uncertainty, I observed and learned from an acute sense of hyper-vigilance.

My earliest memory is the morning an ambulance took Daddy-O to the hospital. He had an episode of severe swelling as if a tire pump had been attached to him and started going to work. The incident happened overnight, so he was rushed to the hospital. He underwent multiple tests before there was finally a diagnosis.

I was always fairly attuned to the felt state of a room, the dynamics of a group, and ultimately other people's minds. Consider the difference between walking into a funeral home and a football stadium on game day. After Daddy-O's ambulance escort, I felt the change reverberating first in Mama Florence.

She was a short woman of slight build with a graceful walk. She smiled easily and always kept a neat appearance regardless of her circumstances. In keeping with the style of the time, she wore those classic "house dresses." Those long one-piece numbers weren't particularly flattering, but their numerous pockets were highly functional and quite fitting for those conservative years.

At the age of three, as short as I was, the best embrace I could manage was clutching her house dress around her knees. But now when I reached up to her, I noticed she didn't feel the same any more. I sensed she had gone somewhere, leaving behind a distant, hazy awareness of me and her surroundings, but nothing more. In the years to follow, her separation would become a permanent condition.

## 2

Childhood is the sum of three parts. First is the native or innate personality, abilities, and non-abilities present at birth. Second is the environment you're born into: people, circumstances, and the dynamics of the social, economic, and family structure. The times themselves and the impact of the dominant culture is the third.

All the disjointed aspects of my childhood, sometimes painful but never boring, ultimately pointed me in the right direction. Talk about sucking the sweet out of the gum. I was into heavy chewing and the supply was seemingly endless — though the gum got stuck in my throat a time or two. There were long stretches when I was young and even into early adult life when I did *not* think the events would coalesce into a positive outcome.

Life lessons manifested quickly and poignantly. Motivation was the subject of one early lesson. My friend Cindy B. taught me that. We were four or five and played together when she occasionally came over with her mother, who was divorced. Back then divorce was a dirty word along with sex and mortal sins, all of which the Catholic Church incessantly harped on. At that age, I had no choice but to go along, since Mama Florence was 100% Polish and Polacks were Catholics. That much we were secure about.

Turning up with her divorced mother added a pinch of drama and intrigue, not that Cindy herself needed any. Cindy was “talent” — the kind of little girl that melts little boys’ hearts and makes their minds go blank. Then we gush over trivial matters and assorted nonsense, until the girl warily looks at us and says, “Uh, shut up.”

Well, Cindy observed that I could not tie my shoes. On that basis alone, she saw absolutely no future for us. Guess who learned to tie his shoes *that day*? That was motivation at work. She wasn't getting off the hook that easily.

Once past the shoe-tying episode, our meetings followed a routine. Our mothers would get together for coffee and klatch while Cindy and I scurried down to the basement. The play area had a comfortable sofa and floor space for our toys. But the toys were just a ruse.

We were only interested in pulling the couch forward enough to squeeze our little tushes behind it. Then, in the secretive darkness we

engaged in *the* most delicious hugging and kissing. (Wasn't it great when you didn't know anything about sex and potential consequences? There wasn't any right or wrong — just total presence in the moment.)

Occasionally, the conversation upstairs got quiet. This alerted us that one of our mothers was creeping down the stairs, about to peek around the corner and check on us. We quickly scrambled back to the toys, while looking and acting nonchalant, the faces of innocence. (Don't think we took our clothes off pal, we didn't. We just messed them up a little along with a bit of "bed head.") We played with the toys until the parent went back upstairs, then we got back to the really fun stuff. Ah, Cindy B., my first love.

### 3

Fortunately for me, I grew up during the transition from the Baby Boomers to the Gen X'ers. While I could extol the virtues of this *ad infinitum*, it would likely turn into *ad nauseum*, so I'll just hit a couple broad-strokes. I was among the last of the generations of the "free roamers." In those times, we didn't contend with the safety issues so prevalent today. We had, "Get out of the house, go play, stay out of trouble, and don't come back till dinnertime." I loved it.

My neighborhood was street upon street of modest, but neatly appointed one-story homes with basements. The neighbors knew each other well, providing the glue that formed the basis of our community. Here existed the last remnants of conformity, right as Viet Nam and the peace movement came along, forever obliterating *that* innocence.

Years later, I went by our house and thought, "Criminy, this is *tiny*. Six people lived here?" It's all relative, and the smaller you are, the bigger everything else appears anyways. Back then, everyone around me lived this way. That was the lifestyle of the lower middle class: the men worked and the women stayed at home; there was one car per family as well as one phone and one TV.

The most abundant commodity in my neighborhood was other kids. Like everyone else, I wanted to fit in, and it took a while to formulate my approach. Soon I discovered that I could become invisible, not draw attention to myself, and observe. This was my best strategy, along with

# VitalBody

How old would you be if you didn't know your exact age? There's an old adage, "If I knew I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself." Fortunately for us, our bodies are incredibly adaptable and amazingly resilient. As far as helping it along, a little goes a long way. Our bodies are like little seeds looking for some soil, sunshine, and water. For our bodies to flourish today is no small task. It's a fairly serious endeavor, not for the timid or lighthearted. It's not something you can come at lightly; I'd be lying if I said otherwise.

## Why VitalBody

As I mentioned earlier, bodies have been talking to me ever since I was a kid. To sum up what I have experienced in a word is "possibility." Taking care of your body is likely not necessarily a life's calling for you. Yet, if you can help it out at least somewhat, the rewards are pretty spectacular.

We've all heard of people who took unbelievable care of themselves and still died young or found themselves greatly physically debilitated. We've also heard of others who took horrible care of themselves, paid no attention to any of it, and outlived everyone else and died with their boots on. Nobody said life was fair.

Somewhere, between those two extremes, the rest of us will reside and live our lives. The key is maximizing our assets and minimizing our liabilities. The design of the body and its ability to withstand the forces of life are unrivaled, frankly. Ultimately, it's not how old we live to be, but rather the quality of life we have while we're alive.

Like most of us, the body itself just needs a little helping hand. What that help looks like, especially today in a world driven by technology, is what this next chapter covers. While I would relish fostering your interest in matters pertaining to the body, in truth, it likely won't happen.

What is important, though, is for you to master some axiomatic truths that can improve your quality of life dramatically.

Improving our minds and bodies is an ongoing endeavor. I suggest to people that they first work on their bodies because I believe when you “Free the body, the mind will follow.” Now, many people at first glance think the opposite is true, that first you free the mind, and the body will follow. Here’s a little secret. It is.

*But*, you have to start somewhere. The mind and body are like two sides of a coin, inextricably woven together. If you start with your body, you can better eliminate the problem of your mind making promises that your body can’t keep. Getting your body functioning better, even if only slightly, is progress you can see and more importantly *feel*. Now you have momentum going for you.

We all need momentum. It’s the invisible glue that gets everything done in life. It’s typically easier first generating momentum in the body. Then carry that into the mind. When we feel better, life automatically looks better. And now that it’s looking better, we have generated the magic of motivation.

Other than reading this book, I’m only going to ask you for a couple minutes of your time each day — and I mean that. I have no equipment to sell you or special supplements to get you to buy. I want you to see your body as your friend. I want you to see your body in all its glory. I want you to believe that your body is capable and rests in competent and knowledgeable hands. Your hands. Your body. Your life. I have a boatload of good news for you to assist you in your journey.

## **Your Body Knows What to Do and What It Needs**

You have a human instinct to stretch. This instinct is part of your self-preservation. You already know how to do it. Well, your body does anyway, because this is how your body helps you physically prepare for daily life. It is a most beautiful thing and arguably the best news you’ve had today, because likely you weren’t aware of its existence. Consider this found money — maybe not Fort Knox, but the lottery at the very least. I am going to teach you how to consciously access this process.

If I were a fly on the wall in your life, watching you all day long, I would see you constantly exhibit certain habitual gestures. Some would consider them little “tics.” But these gestures are not from nervousness or being self-conscious, nor from any neurological disorder. They occur simply because your body is trying to correct the stiffness that is inhibiting your flexibility. Your body is also attempting to regain proper alignment. Your body does this to conserve energy. This leaves you with more energy for tending to your life. Your body will readily express its instinct to stretch if you simply get it started in the right direction. That is *no* exaggeration.

All of us have a unique manner in which we constantly jerk, pitch, and twitch about. This is an unconscious effort to straighten out our bodies. The fundamental purpose behind VitalBody is taking that intuitive, internally driven instinct to self-align and make that natural course-correcting feature a conscious act. Homeostasis means steady state, everything working properly. This means both ready to go *and* good to go. That’s what we want to achieve.

The human instinct to stretch is best activated by *random movement*. This is precisely what we *don’t* get — a consequence of technology and the demands thrust upon us by the speed and mechanization of life today. If you have small children or remember when your children were young, you likely noticed how they always stretched when first awakening. They did this every time, day in and day out, without fail.

The same is true with animals in nature, even domesticated pets. Activating the instinct to stretch is how humans and animals historically prepared themselves for daily life and the daily activity of their body. But as adults, our lives speed up and external forces take over — like getting to work on time and rushing around to meet our seemingly endless obligations. Thus, we fall out of the habit. The instinct becomes dormant.

Our lives today operate counter-intuitively to the functional design of our bodies. The main culprit is all the sitting we do. That said, you’re not going to stop sitting all day if you make your living that way. So you have to interrupt the sitting often enough, radically enough, and with conscious intention to give your body what it needs. What it needs, more than anything else, is vibration.

Your car mechanic will tell you that nothing loosens up parts in your car quite like vibration. The same is true of your body. So before you consider exercising your body, or even moving it much, first consider vibrating it with some random movement to get all the parts loosened up.

Once your body is adequately loosened up, given the availability of time and motivation, *then* consider doing “exercise.” Many of us spend our waking hours primarily sitting, standing, driving, and maybe doing a little walking. Going from one extreme of doing essentially nothing with our body, to the opposite extreme — a vigorous workout with little warm-up — is *not* in our best interest.

### **Shaking is Your Best Move: Simple, Easy, Powerful**

A new foundation for caring for ourselves is imperative because of the life we live today. Think of it as the “new movement” movement. It starts with shaking your body. If you want to make shaking sexy, given our predilection to sexualize everything, well then, shake your booty — and everything else too. Shaking your body only takes a minute to be effective. It loosens you up like nothing else and completely engages your human instinct to stretch. Nothing else more perfectly prepares you for daily life — regardless of any vigorous activity of your choosing.

VitalBody shaking is a *full* body vibrational movement. Imagine a swimmer shaking off water when exiting a pool. In a standing position with both feet on the floor, you start by shaking your legs back and forth. As this becomes more comfortable, you will feel your feet, knees, and hips warming up. After a half minute, it will resemble quick and somewhat jerky movements.

Think of your body’s response when you’re shivering. That’s exactly what you’re doing here. Shake your arms in every direction — up, down, sideways, and all around. Shake out your hands vigorously — which is especially good when working at the computer. Soon your body will take over and start shaking you as your instinct to stretch comes alive. Now you’re shakin’ all over — a whole lot of shakin’ goin’ on here.

Next, stand still with your feet and knees a few inches apart. Then bounce up and down in short, jerky movements, like you're trying to push through the floor. You will feel vibration and trembling throughout your body. Then try this variation: simply raise your heels off the ground an inch or so and then quickly drop them. You can twist your upper body from left to right at the same time.

You will soon discover that shaking has endless variations. I have been teaching people how to shake their bodies for decades and *still* we come up with new techniques. Once you do a bit of shaking, your body will literally direct you in terms of the variations you require at that time to loosen up your body most expediently. This means we all shake differently and you yourself will shake differently from day to day. It's all about what your body requires at that moment. While you're doing it, just think, "I'm pickin' up good vibrations. It's givin' me ex-ci-ta-tions. . . Good, good, good, good vibrations."

But wait, there's more. Simply shift your weight from left to right while you shake your body. Or, if you want to work your balance and coordination, lift one foot up as you shake your body with the other leg. By shaking more aggressively, you can add more velocity to the movement. As you loosen up and can shake more vigorously, you will start to get cardiovascular benefit as well.

**Video:** [thewelladjustedlife.com/videos#shaking](http://thewelladjustedlife.com/videos#shaking)

Exercise itself encompasses four components. Strength training concentrates on working your muscles. Cardiovascular involves heart/lung efficiency. Range of motion develops the ability to move the body over a greater distance utilizing more directions of movement. Balance and coordination allows you to move about and keep the body stable without feeling dizzy. VitalBody shaking facilitates all of these at the same time without equipment (multitasking now applied to exercise). Not only adjustable to all ages and abilities, shaking can also be done *anywhere, any time*.

After you shake a minute or so, your body will begin directing you to move in certain ways — you may not understand why, but boy does it feel good. This will also occur right after you stop shaking and find your body randomly moving itself here and there, continuing the loosening up process. It will feel to you like your body has a life of its own. It does,

my friend, as it demonstrates your human instinct to stretch. Every time you do it, you get huge bonus points!

Along the way, you will experience what Vitalogy calls “facilitations.” These are moments when your body instantaneously realigns itself as the various joints and spinal vertebrae loosen up, the muscles lengthen back out, and the body works to naturally improve its posture. Shaking involves a new way of thinking. Ultimately, it’s not something you do to your body. It’s something your body does to you.

Shaking is the most fundamental physical movement you can perform. It is the perfect antidote to today’s stressful, fast-paced lifestyle. It’s safe, simple, and cost-effective (free!). It’s adjustable for the times you feel stiff starting out (going easy at first) and the times you immediately feel relatively loose starting out (more energetic right from the start).

I have never known of people injuring themselves by shaking. It is the perfect warm-up for any and all activity. It manifests the random movement the body so desperately needs, since we live in an environment of repetitive movement day after day.

I know. It’s hard to believe something this simple could be this effective. But it is. Trust me long enough to try it for a week or at least a day. Or even one time, but *please* try it. (Don’t make me get down on my knees!) Technology has conditioned us to believe (with help from the marketers) that we need the fancy equipment; that making matters more complicated is somehow better because it means you’re smarter or more committed. Fagetaboudit (all that complication) and simply shake your body. Dare I say shaking is a miracle? Yes, I do.

### **Exercise Equipment: to Buy or Not to Buy**

Here’s the scenario I see far too often with the fancy exercise equipment. We decide we’d better do something. Our body is getting flabby. Father Time is a-calling. The couch has become way too comfortable. Energy is waning. Inertia is starting to overcome thee.

In the middle of the night, we are watching the ubiquitous, quintessential American phenomenon — the infomercial — with great scrutiny. The actors exhort us: we can be buff; we can be beautiful;

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