

## **Is Ignorance Really Bliss?**

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We've all heard the phrase, *ignorance is bliss*. And yes, there's a lot of truth to that. For if we knew just how inhumane general *big business* can be, we'd be so outraged there would be daily rioting in the streets. Pharmaceutical companies propagate medications with lists of side-effects sometimes more detrimental than the benefits. And the concept of universal and affordable quality healthcare is practically ignored by the government of the world's most affluent country. As seen in Michael Moore's "*Sicko*", we could learn a lot from other countries with substantially less money yet dramatically healthier populations. Oprah has said "If you're an American, you need to see this movie."

In some societies, when a person falls ill the family comes to that person's aid, partly because the feeling of being supported boosts the immune system which can handle any malady given the right circumstances. While in some cultures growing old is revered and respected, we here in America want to hide the elderly and the ill. This is our own fear being swept under the rug of ignorance; however, ignorance is not blissful for those being ignored. One walk through a nursing home is enough to make any sane person begin to start asking questions, but we don't. We accept this outcome as the only reality. Is it? My Grandmother was teaching ballroom dance until the young age of 92 and we celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in February, 2007. Her M.O. was "everything in moderation."

Most of us have to live in ignorance because the reality is too painful to truly take in and actually deal with. The fears of illness and death predominate over what can be an opportunity and what is a transition, respectively.

This is not a commentary on the people involved in healthcare are at all; I do believe that all doctors and healthcare professionals are seeking their highest purpose thorough service to others and should be applauded; however, it is the system in which we've all been raised that is in question.

This system paints a monochromatic picture of the aging process; one with more and more dependence on medications and less and less on empowerment and self care. This system says that growing old needs to be costly, arduous, and downright painful for the aging and the ones watching them deteriorate. While we can't expect big business to all of a sudden become conscious or even compassionate, we can take matters into our own hands. In fact, as we become healthier, they by necessity will have to look at and begin paying for the only thing that really matters, prevention. (Much more on prevention in my book!)

It is never too late to begin an exercise routine. Challenging the body to grow and stay fit should be of primary importance at any age. The benefits of an active lifestyle are well documented and don't need to be repeated here. It is never too late to start eating healthier. Trade in soda for any fruit drink not laced with high fructose corn syrup. Your body will thank you! Buy organic foods whenever possible; yes, they cost more, but *you*

*will pay one way or another.* Would you rather pay with your wallet or with your health? Which is renewable? Likewise, it is never too late to learn anything new; not challenging the mind can lead to what is called Alzheimer's.

I plan on lecturing and still writing at 100 years young. With your help, I won't need to. So if for no other reason, begin and stay on a healthy prevention plan so I can retire in good health in Fiji! Stop being so selfish! But seriously, just the fact that you are reading this should tell you that you are raising your own awareness. Congratulations! Now it's time for action. Do you want to feel better today with hope for a great tomorrow while planning for an amazing next year? You owe it to yourself and your loved ones to begin taking better care of yourself today. Now get to it!