

What Has Dr. Shook Been Reading?

Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Guide to Your Physical and Spiritual Well-Being.

By Andrew Weil, M. D.

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We all know that a sedentary lifestyle, a diet of processed foods and the consumption of excessive toxins leads to obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and loss of mental acuity. And we all know that obesity, heart disease, cancer and loss of mental acuity can lead to some seriously bummed physical and lifestyle changes. And these same diseases and the lifestyle changes associated with them are frequently associated with growing old.

Dr. Weil is a graduate of Harvard Medical School and a clinical professor of medicine and director of the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. A prolific writer, Andrew Weil has been called America's best-known complementary care physician.

It was no surprise that his book *Healthy Aging* encourages a healthy/anti-inflammatory diet (vegetables, fruit, and lean protein), moderate exercise (strength, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance) and stress reduction (breathing exercises and meditation) as strategies for living a long healthy life. Being well versed in both conventional medicine and alternative healing practices Dr. Weil encourages the use of various herbs, dietary supplements, massage, visualization techniques and social contact. He also encourages working closely with your medical doctor, keeping current with immunizations and learning about recommended screening tests.

Dr. Weil debunks the high dollar industry of magic potions, injections and surgical nip and tucks that promise a more youthful appearance. It is not about staying young, turning back the clock or achieving immortality. No, *Healthy Aging* is about how to age gracefully, reaching the twilight years alive, alert, agile, enjoying life and minimizing the time spent in physical decline before the inevitable end. Making a comparison between human aging and fine whisky, Dr. Weil points out that given the right ingredients (or genes), the aging process, if conducted under the right conditions adds character and flavor to the finished product.

Other topics include sleep, sex, touch and spirituality.

Healthy Aging is not bashful about delving into technically challenging topics, enzymatic activities, oxidative stresses, the inflammatory response, glycemic load, prostaglandins, dehydroepiandrosterone and several theories of how and why we age. There is a glossary of terms, appendix, index and a notes section of referenced materials.

At 63 years of age, with bald head, full white beard and a bit of a belly, Dr. Weil is no longer the young pup who wrote about LSD and Marijuana in *The Natural Mind: A revolutionary Approach to the Drug Problem* (1972). With *Healthy Aging* it seems clear to me that Dr. Weil has a plan for developing character and flavor as he gracefully ages.

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