



The co-founders of Landmark Urology and Complementary Medicine, Dr. Mark McClure and Cheri Elliott, ANP.

Movement Manifests

In Many Ways

By Mark McClure, MD
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It's been a long time since I've heard someone involved in health care express the view that exercise has no real health benefits.

We've come to the place of knowing that exercise—intelligent movement—is not only beneficial but actually essential to attain and maintain good health. Exercise helps lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and improve mood. It helps prevent many chronic diseases, including cancer. Prostate cancer, for example, a special interest of mine for many years, can be decreased significantly with a regular form of exercise—along with proper diet and supplementation.

These are important health concerns, and quite honestly, I am equally intrigued by manifestations of the magic of movement in other ways.

There is, for example, the joy found in movement toward health. As a healer, I share the great joy as I see people move in the direction of optimal health. Sometimes they are motivated by what we can legitimately call a near-death experience—a certainty that their life is threatened by disease, usually cancer. Sometimes they learn that's not the case—the blood in their urine doesn't signify the presence of cancer, after all. Wise patients often take a deep breath, feel like they've dodged a bullet, and make a quiet, solemn vow to move with energy in the direction of good health. Often that simply means finding ways to reduce the burden of stress—one of the blessings of exercise—and adopting a healthy, sensible diet.

Of course, in other instances, the result of testing brings the unwelcome news that cancer is indeed present and needs to be dealt with. I am filled with wonder and admiration for those patients who, along the journey of living with cancer, come to tell me that this diagnosis was one of the most meaningful events of their lives.

These are the patients who felt empowered to research their illness thoroughly, using their physicians and other caregivers as a support team and sounding boards. They formulated and executed their own treatment plans, and because they followed their own path, they moved into the light of understanding that each moment is precious.

THE BEST TIME IS NOW

Certainly you don't have to wait for a diagnosis of cancer to move in the direction of optimal health. Now is the very best time to reach for mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

I'm reminded of a couple who came to me recently. They had allowed themselves to slip into a vicious cycle of recriminations. The husband had erectile dysfunction. His wife chose to believe she was the cause of the problem. They found it almost impossible to talk about the issue. But fortunately they came to understand that sharing their thoughts and anxieties could and did move them to a deeper sense of commitment to their relationship. They also found out that the condition could be addressed very effectively.

Prevention is a hallmark of this practice. We put a lot of time and energy into helping our patients prevent illness, along with diagnosing and treating their maladies.

Certainly that is true of kidney stones. We do appropriate testing, find the problem, and offer a number of very effective treatments. And we help the patient formulate a plan to move towards preventing future stones.

At another level, we're aware, along with our patients, that our bodies communicate with us in meaningful ways. With kidney stones or any health problem, sometimes there's a deeper message waiting to be heard. Kidney stones are hard. They may reflect the hardness in parts of our life. It may be a hardness that is yelling to be heard.

Our body speaks to us in language that we can understand. We see people who experience a burning sensation when they urinate. They may be very upset with themselves, or with someone else, or carry a lot of bitterness. They may be burned up about something that is consuming their emotional energy.

When I talk with a patient who clearly has symptoms for which there is no objective cause—no evidence of infection or anything else—I ask them to look within, and move as they are led, where their intuition takes them. I often ask patients

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with symptoms, “Well, what do you think is going on? When did this first appear? What were you doing at the time? What was going on in your life?”

Often those simple questions introduce an epiphany. I often advise people to listen to their gut—all of us have heard about gut reactions. That's another phrase for intuition, which is talking to us through out symptoms.

MOVEMENT IN MEDICINE

I'm also impressed with the movement in medicine in the last several decades to a broader, deeper understanding of health and healing. There's a growing understanding in conventional allopathic medicine that there are pearls of wisdom, if you will, in what is now called integrated medical practice. The whole notion of understanding and promoting the benefits of exercise and movement is a reflection of those changes.

We've experienced in other ways, through a deeper understanding and appreciation of the mind-body connections, that there have been great breakthroughs in helping people with chronic illness. And I'm convinced that the best is yet to come. We have the potential to take our extraordinary technical skills and blend them with basic and profound healing arts to achieve wondrous outcomes. It's an exciting time to be a practitioner, and a better time than ever to be a patient. **hkh**

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