

Wellness words

How to think, speak and feel great



Dr Dov Phillips

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and feel great

By Dr Dov Phillips

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To my beautiful, loving wife, Joy.

I love you.

Acknowledgments

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1

Introduction

Introduction

Many words lose their meaning over time; they become diluted by people using them incorrectly. Sadly the word 'wellness' is the perfect example; wellness has become a marketing buzz word. In this book I relate the true meaning of the word and this will teach you how to live a life of increased wellbeing.

Words are powerful they can move us in and out of strong emotional states in seconds. They have led us to war and have created revolutions. They also control the quality of our lives.

Mostly, the effect that words have on us lies outside our awareness. One of the purposes of this book is to shed some light and to increase your awareness, so that you can be in control of how you feel, think and act. This naturally moves you into a healthier state of mind.

I have purposefully repeated some concepts throughout the book. I did this with the intention of pointing out the areas of great importance; to establish, if you will, a foundation of living well. I have also simplified some things from how they really are in life. This is because we often overcomplicate issues and I wanted you to get the message.

Very often I talk about 'our culture' or 'our society' by this I mean the modern day, western world and its influences on our life.

I often use stories to illustrate a point. These stories can be read and understood for what they are, or you can appreciate them for their deeper, covert meaning. I hope that you will find the deeper meaning in these stories and, in this way, allow them to impact your life. I encourage you to stop often and think about the message I am making and how it will affect your life and those around you. Occasionally, close your eyes and play out a possible future scenario with what you have learnt, this will make the book come to life.

Come back to this book from time to time and have a flick through. Each time you will tap into a part of you that desires a life of increased wellbeing. This will grow over time.

Enjoy your journey.

2

What is wellness?

What is wellness?

Wellness is a choice. It's a decision, a view point, and a way of life. Today the word wellness is a buzz word, a marketing word which has sadly lost much of its meaning. We have weight loss wellness clinics, health food wellness stores, and you can even have a wellness check-up at your local GP. Many businesses have a wellness package, this is where someone tells you how to sit at your desk and comes around every now and then and takes your blood pressure, tells you something obvious and unhelpful about stress, and then you get back to doing things the same way you always used to. So, nothing changes.

None of the above is Wellness.

Did you know that you can be overweight, never do any exercise, never take health supplements, have high blood pressure, and still be feeling well? You can even have cancer and be feeling well.

In contrast, you can be totally healthy, have the perfect BMI (Body Mass Index), eat well, and still be miserable, sad, depressed and anxious. Being able to experience 'wellness' is about the way in which you perceive the world.

The aim of this book is to teach you how to attain a wellness

mindset by becoming aware of the words you use and the thoughts you think.

The rest of this chapter illustrates how we ‘think our way’ into illness. It will show you how you can see things from another perspective, one of wellness. Please remember that while reading this book, be aware of the difference between illness and ill health, disease and sickness. It has everything to do with our internal subjective state of what’s going on around us and what ‘it’ means for us.

It’s all too much

He sat across from me, with his head slumped down, his posture hunched over, his respiration rapid and shallow, and his voice sounded as if he had just lost everything, including his will to fight. Peter came to see me because he was referred by his friend who said ‘go see this guy, he can help you.’ Peter was at the worst place he had ever been in his life. He said that he was at such a low point that he was even considering suicide. I asked him on a scale of 1-10 (10 being a state of bliss and 1 being completely miserable) where he was, he told me 1.

Hundreds of thoughts were spinning around his head, over and over again, stuck in a loop. He felt tired in his body and very disconnected with everything. Peter had a story, not that different from thousands of other people, involving a relationship breakup, financial trouble, business trouble, and

tension in many other areas of his life. It all built up to a point where it became all too much and he felt he could no longer hold it together. Peter was a perfect example of someone who was physically healthy, but who experienced a complete lack of wellbeing in life.

In contrast to Peter's negative state he had a desire to feel better. Imagine a light bulb that is on, but with the dimmer-switch turned all the way down, the light is barely glowing. It is with this dim light that we began our work, building the intensity and turning the light back up to its full intensity, its full potential. Four weeks later I asked Peter how he was feeling on a scale out of 10, as I asked during our first meeting. He said it varied, but on average it would have been a 6.

What was all too much a few weeks ago for Peter became achievable; rather than treading water he felt as if he was making progress. Rather than having thoughts overwhelm him and becoming caught in a loop, he learnt to control his thinking.

Afterwards I asked Peter which of the techniques that we had talked about helped create the biggest change in him. The tools he used to improve his life are all contained in the following chapters.

So often while working with a client, it is a single

conversation or a passing comment that I make that results in a massive shift to improving their life; taking them out of their ill state and towards a life of greater wellbeing and happiness. Many of these conversations are held within the pages of this book. Read on and enjoy.

Take What You Want

‘What would happen if you were to drink from a fountain of positivity?’

We all have our own collection of sayings that we have heard throughout our life that we like for some reason. Some sayings that we hear resonate with us and so we hold on to them. Likewise, parts of what I write may, for some reason, resonate with. You do not need to know why at this point, just be aware that at times you will walk away with a new thought or idea, and when you feel that it has a positive influence on your life simply allow it to become apart of you. It may not make sense now; however, in the future, it will become clear.

What Is Illness?

We need to understand the topic of illness because within these ill states are the ‘signs’ for becoming and staying well. It can be best described if we break them up into five smaller categories and discuss how they create illness; these include:

- Caught up in the past
- Worry or fear of the future

- Identity and conformity
- Living in your head
- Lack

These are really simply the five different ways in which we habitually respond to the stress of everyday life.

Caught Up In The Past

‘The stronger the breeze the stronger the trees.’

‘I can’t do it. I have never been able to do it before. I am a failure. Nothing works for me.’

Our entire past is accumulated and stored in our memories. Obviously, some events are more memorable to us than others, especially the ones with large emotional components. For example, something traumatic may have happened as you were growing up. This one experience, this one memory, is never just one memory or just one experience; since this one event will probably be played over and over again in your mind many times throughout your life time. This one event could change the way you think about who you are, altering your identity. When this happens, the event has gained its own momentum and its own life, and can live forever or as long as you feed it. To many people this one traumatic event taints all other events, it becomes so big it blocks out other memories and experiences.

While growing up, we may have been told that we were not

good enough, or that we were dumb. Even worse, we may have believed this to be true and the power of a self-fulfilling prophecy turns this into our reality. There are millions of people who have small setbacks, and these small setbacks create major difficulties in their lives.

On the other hand, there are many people who have had terrible things happen to them throughout their life, and yet become happy, confident people. In fact, some of the greatest people had very rough beginnings. Just think about Oprah Winfrey and Nelson Mandela. How did they achieve so much and do so many great things for humanity?

I am always fascinated that the people who seem to have the biggest problems are the ones who spend the most time focusing on themselves. They also justify why they have the problems and know who to blame for their predicament. In contrast, I have had clients who have experienced traumatic events in their life that would make any sane person feel sick, yet these past experiences don't seem to be destroying their life; this is partly because they control their thoughts and are more focused on getting ahead rather than play victim. They also seem to focus more on helping other people than worrying about what has already happened to them. They amaze me with the depth of their compassion and the amount they contribute to others.

Why is it that two people can experience a very similar and

traumatic event, and be affected so very differently? For one individual the negative experience ruins their life; whilst the other one uses it to build success.

We have the ability to focus on what we want to. We have the capacity to control our mental world. Unfortunately, most of us are simply unaware of this power. Many people simply repeat a traumatic event over and over in their head. It's like watching a bad movie again and again. You wouldn't do it with a bad movie, so why do it in your head?

I was working with a client who, on his first visit, was telling me about all the people who had passed away in his life. He had lost seven close friends and relatives within a year. Each death would have been very challenging on its own.

As he told me why this was so stressful, going through the traumas of each sudden death, he was becoming caught up in them. He was speaking rapidly, losing his breath, clearly getting choked up. Out of nowhere I asked what seemed like a trivial, random question: 'Do you remember a cake that you had on one of your birthdays?' He was a bit stunned by the question at first, but then he thought about the answer, smiled, and started to tell me about this cake. When he finished I asked him if he realised how that question made him feel, how he spoke more slowly and already seemed happier. He was shocked at what I was saying, because he was aware of this only after I pointed it out to him. At that

moment he learnt that he was feeling terrible so much of the time because of what he was focusing his mind on.

It follows then that if you look back, and all you see is the pain of past events, then you will not feel well. These painful memories can pull you down, and can drown you.

To be well we need to learn how to turn the coal into diamonds. We need to be able to see how what has happened to us, is responsible for getting us to where we are right now. We need to know that it is an essential part of our development and therefore is responsible for the gifts and contributions that we will make to the world.

Worry or Fear of the Future

I was helping my friend move into his new flat. He went through the house systematically showing me what we were going to move. We came to a couch, which was one of those old-styled, foldout beds; the ones with the real heavy frames. I asked jokingly if we were going to be taking it, not for one minute thinking we were. Unfortunately for me, we were! I had no idea how we were going to get it down the very narrow stairway without damaging the place or ourselves.

Apart from the big couch everything else was relatively easy to move. I noticed after a while that I was not feeling so high spirited, almost as if something was bothering me; but I had no idea what it was. Then it became obvious to me that I was dreading moving the couch; in fact, I never really let it go. In

my head I had created scenarios of what would happen when we tried to move the couch, some not so pleasant ones too. I had not even gone through one scenario of it working out well. The more stuff we had moved, the closer we were to the inevitable. This meant the closer I was getting towards something I was not looking forward to. No wonder I was feeling a bit bothered, and that this feeling was becoming more intense.

However, as I was aware that I was responsible for creating my own ill state I also had the skills and awareness to turn it around. I simply asked myself, '*How can I enjoy this?*' I became curious, really curious, about how we were going to move it. I wondered what would happen, how we would respond. The more curious I became, the more intrigued I became. Almost instantly the ill state vanished and I started to experience the new feeling of adventure and excitement.

You simply cannot be feeling well if you are not looking forward to the future. This is because the future contains information that is important to us that we may need to respond too. Let's use an example from a few hundred years ago: the need to prepare for the upcoming winter. If winter is fast approaching and you have nothing prepared it would make sense for you to feel uncomfortable, even stressed about the future. This unease is a natural signal simply telling you to act, so you can do what you need in order to be prepared for a safe winter.

Instead of listening and responding to the warning sign we often just focus on it, and see the symptom as the problem. Naturally, if we don't respond by making the necessary changes the signal needs to become louder for you to act; ignore it again it will just get louder making you feel worse each time. The 'signal' or bad feeling will therefore become much worse and has the potential to become a vicious cycle, getting more intense. This downward spiral will continue until we respond by taking action.

Here is another example about how a simple phone call can change the way you feel. One sentence creates a fear of the future, the other creates excitement. Imagine its 11am on a Sunday morning, the phone rings and you are informed that on Monday 10 of the 30 employees where you work are going to be fired.

Now imagine the phone rings but this time 10 of the 30 employees in your office are about to receive a massive 20% pay rise.

As the rest of day unfolds it would make sense that you would be feeling more and more anxious or you would be feeling more and more excited, probably already imaging how to spend the extra money.

You are in the same position that you were in before you

answered the phone. However, even though nothing has changed, and it might not either, you can be sure that both sets of news creates a very different Sunday afternoon, evening and night sleep based upon nothing more than an *'imaginary possibility.'*

Remember fear of the future is just an imaginary possibility. While you are thinking about improving any aspect of your life, make sure you remember to create a compelling future.

Identity and Conformity

Who am I?

We are taught from day one how to be, what's right, and what's wrong. We are taught directly from our parents, from what they say and, more importantly, from what they do. We also learn from our peers, teachers, TV shows and role models. In fact, we never stop learning. Amongst all this telling someone who they are and how they should act there is a personality, a certain predisposition, a natural way of being that wants to express itself in the world.

Your teenage years are when you begin to create your sense of identity; who you are in the world. Unfortunately, our modern-day, western culture does not encourage people to discover their true, unique self. Indeed, as soon as someone steps outside the set of rules laid down by their culture, the culture brings that person back in line by punishing them on

some level. Just think of a school girl who, wearing her own style of clothing, is ostracised by her peers for wearing anything other than what fashion dictated they are allowed to wear. In any other subset or larger group of society the same principle of conformity applies.

You grow up being positively and negatively reinforced. Someone said you're a good boy when you looked after your brother who was not feeling well, they told you that you were a bad boy when you did not share your toys. Over your life you learn how to get love from people based upon reinforcement.

It follows that so many of our actions today are based upon doing things to 'get love' or attention from others. This is simply so you can feel good about yourself. So you want to be the best parent you can, be the best sibling, the best child the best--_____ (occupation), the best friend, the best... and the list goes on. Unfortunately, it can be like a drug that needs to be satisfied. This means you go around trying to please everyone to get love so that you can feel good about yourself. However, because you have to please everyone, which is impossible, you end up feeling immensely frustrated. This can cause a massive amount of anxiety and sense of failure.

By always trying to please everyone else, you have also lost the real you inside. We all try at times to come out and brave

the world, and show our true selves. The essence of my job is to help people live life being happy with who they are and even happier with who they are becoming. What I have noticed is that when we feel safe to be ourselves we can explore our uniqueness. Remember, there is only one you in the world. Only you have your particular experiences and worldview. You are not just a separate individual, but apart of the whole of humanity. You are an important part of the greater picture and you contribute so much by simply being happy being you.

Living in Your Head

‘The stories that you have create the filters with which you see the world.’

We enter the world not really knowing what’s going on around us. The world is a blur and we are dependant on others for our survival. Over time we learn a lot. Humans have a strong desire to want to learn everything, how it works, why it works.

Our success in our society comes largely from using our mental faculties. For most of us our mental intelligence is more developed than our physical intelligence or emotional intelligence or even our spiritual intelligence.

Something happens to us; let’s say someone mugs you while you are walking on the street. Your mind will come up with

some reasons why this happened to you, you might create a story that you have bad luck, it might be that the environment is not safe, it might be of a racial tone. The mind comes up with reasons why stuff happens to you, it does this so it can protect you in the future.

We place meaning into events, we do this by creating a story. The story that you create about what happens is never the truth, it is just a view from your perspective. To understand this, think about the difference between a map and a territory. The territory represents our reality and the map is a 'picture' of that reality, just one perspective. This map will always be biased and never be complete. And yet, we always see our stories as real, we always see our maps as being the actual territory.

Because of our hunger to understand what is going on in our world, we are constantly creating stories. Often this takes us out of our body, out of our feelings and we live in our heads. When you are thinking you are not feeling, and being well is a feeling. Thinking about love is nothing compared to being in love.

There are stories that can heal you and there are ones that can kill you. Become aware of the stories that you have and how much they affect you. Let go of thinking and start feeling what's really going on.

Lack

Imagine if your spine is like a receiver picking up incoming frequencies. In just the same way as you can move the dial in your car and change the radio station, having your spine in a different posture creates different states. This becomes obvious when you think of someone who is down in the dumps and depressed. You know how they walk around, how they hold themselves, and it's very different in contrast to someone who walks around confidently and with an abundance of happiness. What 'station' are you connecting to?

I have noticed that there is a certain holding pattern in the spine (think of a rigid tight spine), which seems to always be present in young children after their parents have separated. This holding pattern is associated with the feeling as if something has been taken away from them.

I was on holiday visiting my family. Being in a small city it felt like there was nothing to do. Both my partner and I noticed that we were feeling bored, which is very unusual for us. We realised that this feeling we had incorrectly labelled as boredom was simply us focusing on the fact that we were in lack. We were focusing on there not being enough fun things to do. More to the point, when we became really honest with ourselves, we were playing victim, blaming the environment for our lack of initiative. Luckily for us we knew that this

feeling meant we should do something, take responsibility, stop blaming the external and make a change within. Within an hour we had bought roller blades (something we had been planning for months), and had found a great park where we had a go on the blades and ate an ice cream. Before we knew it we had more and more ideas of what to do and we felt great.

It may be that you are lacking support, money (you can't afford roller blades), knowledge, friends, time or anything. It's not important what you are lacking it is important to understand what the feeling of lack is all about. The feeling is not for you to feel bad about yourself and blame the outside world, which most people do. The feeling is simply a 'signal' for you to do things differently and take action.

Our feelings of depression, boredom, etc are often caused by focusing on lack. Sometimes we see more in other places and this creates a polarity of lack. Let me explain. You are in a class with someone who is extremely intelligent. This person is so smart that, comparatively, everyone else is dumb. If they compare themselves with this genius then they will feel less than desirable, especially if being smart is rewarded.

The truth is, we are where we are for a reason. If it hurts, it might just be your body's way of telling you to get your act together, to take action and keep taking it until you are where you want to be. Once again, lack or abundance comes

down to perception. You are extremely abundant, especially if you live in a first-world country. Even if you are struggling to pay your bills, you are more likely to be better off than billions of people in the world today. The quickest way to experience this abundance is through gratitude.

Seeing Wellness

When you are well you are happy with who you are, you are excited about who you are becoming and what lies ahead. You enjoy being unique, knowing that you are the only you, and it is simply your job to be you. You make decisions based upon instinct, intuition, feelings, your higher-self and the trust that you made the perfect decision. You feel the abundance in your life. You experience moments of gratitude and awe for how profound the world is and how beautiful it is to be alive. Essentially, you are experiencing heaven on earth. Every challenge that comes along is there to help you further embrace who you are.

It's in Our Make Up

When we are aligned (congruent), that is when our life's goals, passions, purposes, and, most importantly, actions, all line up, we feel great. When we feel great we have an increased capacity in which we can give to others.

Let's understand this from an evolutionary perspective. It serves our species if we, as individuals, can give to one

another; if we are all interconnected and live in a community. It is selfish to live in an isolated fashion, to go into a cave and meditate, and not interact with others. Our gift may be compassion, intellect, motivation, humour or a million other things, but it helps no one if you are the funniest person in the world and you keep this humour all to yourself. Remember a gift is for giving. The purpose of a community is to have a lot of parts come together to make a whole, so that the whole species can benefit and progress.

If you are naturally funny and wish to share this gift with the world, but you are scared and therefore never take action due to fear of ridicule or failure, then you will feel terrible. You will probably be working in a job that you don't enjoy. Not necessarily because the job is not great for you, but simply because you want to be doing something else with your time. This means that you are not aligned, you are not congruent with what you want and so your actions don't match.

Let's go back to the example of a naturally funny individual who wishes to become a comedian; but, this time, imagine he is living in a state of wellness. So he has a different perspective, he knows that he will have times when gets up on stage and bombs. He also knows there are going to be very awkward moments. However, he sees these as natural stages in his learning and he can almost look forward to them because he is curious as to how he is going to respond. He is driven by his excitement and passion and for this he

earns success, whether success is popularity or self-satisfaction with being able to do what he loves.

Another quality that people who live in a state of wellness have is that of knowing when they are not well and knowing what to do to get themselves to a better place. The quicker this process takes place the more time you will spend feeling well and less time feeling stuck or frustrated. To do this we have to understand symptoms in a slightly different way to what our culture often teaches us.

Warning Signs

Symptoms are nothing more than ‘warning signs.’ They are there to tell us that something is wrong. We need to figure out what (on some level) and then we need to do things differently; this means to take action.

If an overweight person is desperately trying to be healthy and slim and is constantly breaking her diet and exercise program then her actions are far from being congruent. It makes sense for her to have a symptom so that she can become more aware of what she is doing to herself. In this case, let’s say she is feeling sad about her inability to do what she knows she must. Unfortunately, she feels sad so much of the time and is not sure why; so, she believes that she has depression. She is treated for depression and, as a result, does nothing to help herself, believing she can’t. She ends up playing victim. This is an example of how someone becomes ill from not understanding their symptoms.

However, from our view, the wellness view, it is becoming increasingly clear that the symptom is a signal, saying 'let's get congruent.' In her case: 'let's stick with the program.' When we break the gym or eating program we need to be honest that this is what is causing our pain, by becoming aware that this action is forcing us out of alignment. We can use this frustration as a 'fuel source,' to move us into growth, to take action, to be accountable. By understanding your symptoms you will improve your the quality of your life.

The Symptom Trap

The hard thing about understanding your symptom is that it is painful. The very nature of 'it' being painful means that as soon as it comes to your awareness you naturally want to get rid of 'it'. As soon as you feel yourself in pain, you want it gone. This is partly due to our culture that teaches us to get rid of it, to remove the symptom as soon as we can because it is a 'bad' thing. We have been taught to view the symptom as the problem itself rather than simply containing the message or the much needed gift.

To illustrate this, a client came in to see me with a neck ache that he had for many years. He has seen many doctors, specialists, healers and he was still no better off. The medical doctor took x-rays but could find no pathological problem; the physiotherapist told him it was a muscle imbalance; the chiropractor took more x-rays and told him his atlas (first

cervical vertebra) was out of place; the acupuncturist told him he had an energy blockage. They all looked at him and saw him as being broken; they all looked for what was not working with the intention of being able to fix him once they knew what was wrong.

They all had their chance to work on him over a few years, and the interesting thing is that they were all helpful; at least they were all able to remove the symptom temporarily. But, nobody could stop it from coming back. So, all he ever got was relief for a couple of weeks at best. He began believing that he had to live with this pain for the rest of his life.

Who was right? Could they all be right? They were all well respected and came highly recommended; so why could they not help our friend in any lasting way?

Quite simply, he was not broken. Which raises the question - how can you fix what is not broken?

He was a really nice guy, who became really stressed about trying to meet his deadlines. He had huge work pressures, which were self imposed. He was struggling to get enough home-time with his wife and two young kids. The interesting thing he told me was he knew the neck aches were stress related. But he could not seem to work out why the breathing techniques that his psychologist had taught him and the relaxation massages he received were not helping.

He was worrying about what he could not change, and this was consuming him. I asked him to place both of his hands on his neck and to simply ask out loud ‘what do you want’ and wait until he got the answer: ‘let go, trust, everything will be all right, just let go.’ So he did let go and trust that everything would be all right and, as a result, the ache went away. When he stopped trusting and tried to control everything his neck started hurting again, and he knew what to do.

So now whenever his body talks, he listens; and, the greatest thing is, even greater than him not having any neck aches, is that his life has improved on many levels. Now he always listens to his body. Whenever he is out of alignment his body gives him a friendly, gentle reminder; but, if he ignores it, it gets louder, until he responds.

Basically, any pain – physical, emotional or mental – can be used as a way of helping you become more congruent with who you want to be. This is wellness; being happier with who you are.

Constant Change

‘A mind once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions.’

The challenge with being congruent is that we are constantly changing. What we want at one time, one day, can become

irrelevant or undesirable at a later date. New things come into our life; for example, we may read a book and the author helps us become aware of a whole new world, so all of a sudden we want new things.

Life constantly changes and so do we. However, the way we see ourselves often does not change so quickly. Every part of every day the image of who you are could in some way be different. If you learn a new fact you are different. Once you learn something there is no going back; the same with experiences. Every experience changes your life. Yet, often, we don't notice these changes because they are far too subtle for our awareness. But, just because we don't notice them does not mean they're not there. Slowly, over time, these changes build up until you realise you are quite different.

A lot of our suffering comes from us resisting change. Something happens to us – let's say you lose a leg in an accident – from this one point in time your whole life will be different from how you imagined. Your dreams may be shattered and your interactions with people will have to change. All of your relationships will be different, at least on some level. Now if this happens and you hold on to your old dreams and old way of life, then you will be stuck in the past. This will, of course, feel bad. You can mope around, but that won't change anything.

As soon as you face where you are in life, as soon as you

accept what has happened, then you can re-adjust. Basically, every moment holds the possibility for change, and with change comes the chance for you to be more congruent and happy; to be more aligned. You may need to reassess what you want to do and how you can do it. It might be you need to alter the way you communicate with people, or it might be that you simply need to spend more time listening to your body and then acting accordingly.

As we accept that our lives are constantly changing and that to be well we need to be congruent, we accept that wellness is a way of life. It is something that you need to constantly pursue and the reward is in the journey. Wellness is the journey of growth and self discovery and this is why it is so rewarding and feels so great.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this preview to 'Wellness Words' I have received such great feedback from this book and to be honest it surprised me. I remember the first time I got an out of the blue email from someone who I had never met before thanking me and letting me know that this book had changed her life.

Often people tell me that this book is very easy to read and full of easy to access information without the fluff. If that interests you, and you have enjoyed this snippet then please consider buying the book if you would like to increase your well being - but be warned, you will often lend this book to one of your friends and may just need to get another copy. As somehow this book has turned into a very good book for a gift.

You can buy it online via amazon, or you can order from our website www.inspiringwellness.co.nz We also have ebook versions available.

If you have any questions please ask me via email at drdov@inspiringwellness.co.nz

And if your interested in having a session with me, just ask. I would be honoured to facilitate you on your journey to living a life of greater well being.

with love, Dov