The Role of Aging
Frequently, Friends of a certain age ask me what I am doing in my retirement.
Surprised to learn that I continue to work. They say, Oh, you are still practicing. My reply. No I think practice is no longer necessary.
Now it is pretty much a learned effort as in good judgement comes from experience and experience from bad judgement.

Some Patients and young acquaintances reflect that they remember when my father was practicing medicine and seem surprised that I am the same surgeon who was here 40+ years earlier.

Others humor and flatter me by remarks like "you never change' you always look and act the same. No aging. What is your secret?

Most of you know that I continue to appreciate the blessings of good health, consisting of the combinations of reasonable physical, cognitive and dexterous abilities.
For these blessings, I am truly grateful.

So in reflecting with my special friends and advisors regarding an appropriate topic for today: By The Book We thought that I should share with you what have been the transformational books that have guided my path to the concept of:

FOREVER HEALTHY
While this transformation might be describes as an Epiphany, that is, an experience of sudden and striking realization used to describe breakthrough scientific, religious or philosophical discoveries. It has been a life changing experience for me and Susan. We are all exposed to experiences capable of sparking transformation but not all of us recognize the opportunity. We hope that this discussion today will be an
The First book:
Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl, generated an important lesson, one that has increasingly found meaning in my later years.

Frankl, a Viennese psychiatrist, was a Holocaust survivor who later established a new school of psychotherapy called Logotherapy. For Frankl, the driving force in life is: To find meaning: contrasted to pleasure for Freud.

Meaning can be found in 3 different ways:
1. By creating a work or doing a deed.
2. The attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering.
3. By experiencing something or encountering someone.

For Frankl, the Optimal, the Best in life comes when human suffering is turned into achievement and accomplishment, when one responds to an experience to change for the better, or when one uses an incentive derived from life's experiences to take responsibility for personal action.

I must confess that the philosophy of Frankl did not exercise much influence when first read in my early career.
Increasingly, when faced with failure and multifaceted suffering, Viktor Frankl began to resonate with experiences that give real meaning to my life.
One the top 10 influential books in world( library of Congress). Over 12 million copies in circulation.
The Second Book: Anatomy of An Illness, appeared first in a periodical, The New England Journal of Medicine, a publication of world wide distinction that rarely prints works by lay persons. The Dec 1976 journal report was subsequently amplified in a book by the same name. At the time, 1979, Norman Cousins was the editor of the enormously renowned, Saturday Review. In my opinion, this book created a principal stimulus to the movement that is today know as Holistic or Integrative Medicine.

At the center of Cousin's philosophy were two basic principals:
1. The life force is the most powerful and least understood force on earth.
2. One cannot underestimate the capacity of the human mind and body to regenerate and heal even when the prospects seem most wretched.

Cousin's personal story relived his battle with a life threatening auto-immune disorder that he conquered with the aid of laughter, vitamin C infusions and a cooperative physician.

Cousins likened the life force to the physician inside each of us. If true, we physicians will be wise to listen carefully to these inner forces and align our practices with the expression of concern and hope uttered by our patients. Further, the health care system may become most effective when we educate our citizens and empower them to assume responsibility for their own well being.

This education must create knowledge that will change behavior governing the practices of tobacco, drug use, nutrition, and other personal behaviors.
1st Quote
Since Hippocrates wrote "Let Food be Your Medicine" we have dedicated much time and resources to ensure that we consume the proper measure and composition of food and supplements.

Today, the public hunger for nutrition information and products is greater than ever. Yet, confusion concerning the relationship between nutrition and health continues to consume enormous energy and resources.

Despite the most advanced medical technology in the world, we are sicker than ever, largely with chronic diseases. Two of three are overweight, adult onset Diabetes especially in our youth, is exploding.

Heart disease, cancer and stroke remain the leading causes of death despite 15% of GDP dedicated to health care. Many of our citizens suffer from a increasingly diverse list of degenerative and auto-immune disorders.

Is it possible that there can be a single solution to many of these problems?
The Third Book:
In The China Study by Colin Campbell PhD., we have the most comprehensive study of nutrition ever conducted. Campbell who spent his early years in basic laboratory research of animal nutrition, the cornerstone of which was to enhance the production animal protein, which at the time was the basis of best nutrition.

These animal studies and other observations lead Campbell to document that diets high in protein were most likely to produce cancer of the liver whereas the tumors could be prevented or caused to recede by restricting the level of dietary protein. Fact: Dietary protein proved to be so powerful in its effect that Campbell's research proved that carcinogenesis could be turned on and off by manipulating the level of protein consumed. Not all protein had this effect, but casein, which makes up 87% of cows milk protein, promoted all stages of the cancer process. Are there profound implications here for breast cancer? What protein did not produce the cancer producing effect ever at highest levels? The safe proteins were from plants, including wheat and soy.

Recognizing that there were skeptics of the animal studies, Campbell organized the most comprehensive epidemiological survey of humans. Supported by Cornell, Oxford Univ and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, the project surveyed a vast range of diseases, diet and life style factors in rural China and Taiwan. Known as the China Study, the NY Times called it the Grand Prix of Epidemiology, the project produced more than 8,000 statistically significant associations between various dietary factors and disease.

Campbell sought out the results of other researchers and clinicians for analysis.

The findings that are relevant to nutrition and disease are:
1. A strong association between animal based foods and chronic diseases exists.
2. The health implications of consuming animal versus plant based nutrients were remarkably different.
3. Heart disease, Diabetes, and Obesity can be reversed by a healthy diet.
4. Various cancers, auto-immune diseases, bone health, kidney health, vision and brain disorders in old age(cognitive dysfunction and Alzheimer's Disease are convincingly influenced by diet.
5. Most importantly, the diet that consistently reverses or prevents these diseases is the same whole food, plant based diet that was found to promote optimal health in laboratory research, in the China Study.
Fourth Book: Whole.

In the 8 years since the publication of China Study, many have recognized the wisdom of this science but the reductionist self serving model continues to exercise great influence among medicine, media, big Pharma, governmental and philanthropic groups while blocking the public from the nutritional truth to optimal health. In his second major book, Whole, Campbell articulates these principles in scientific measured tone that convincingly documents that whole food, plant based nutrition is the most effective model for optimal health and longevity.
The findings of other credible scientists and clinicians like Drs. Esselstyn and Ornish document that heart disease can be prevented or reversed by nutrition-based cure.
Collaboration between Campbell, Esselstyn and others created an award winning documentary.

Provides a model for changing our future.
Plato wrote: "For man to succeed in life, God provided him with two means, education and physical activity. Not separately, one for the soul and the other for the body, but for the two together. With these means, man can attain perfection."

—Plato, 427-327, BC

God gave us education, that education has taught us that the whole as in nutrition is more important than the part, that behavior is more important than genetics, our DNA.
“Walking is man's best medicine.”

—Hippocrates

460 BC – 370 BC
Fifth Book:
In Spark, the Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain, researched, practiced and written by Harvard Psychiatrist, John J Ratey MD we learn why Plato was correct that education and exercise are Important to the Whole as food and walking are the best medicine according to Hippocrates.

Better said, the relationship between food, exercise and learning are hard wired into our brain circuitry.

Early in his professional practice, Ratey learned that physical exercise was capable of reducing or eliminating the need for medications in young patients suffering with ADHD(Attention Deficit-Hyperactive Disorders)
For this observation, swimmer Michael Phelps, winner of 12 Olympic Gold Medals, is the poster child of how exercise improves learning, reduces stress, and improves mental conditions such as ADHD. At age 9 he started taking Ritalin. At age 11 he started swimming and the Ritalin was discontinued. Now he’s a professional athlete, perhaps the greatest swimmer in history.
Subsequently, Ratey and others demonstrated the empiric efficacy of exercise in the treatment of depression. An observation that was initially suggested to related to arousal rather than neurotransmitter effect.

Rapidly, diverse studies led to recognition that exercise causes release of BDNF (Brain Derived Nerve Factor) a complex protein neurotransmitter that is capable of not only inducing brain plasticity, ie, proliferation of brain connections(2000 Nobel Prize for Eric Kandel) but actually leads to NEUROGENESIS, ie growth of new brain cells in the Hippocampus and Amygdla. These two brain areas are associated with memory and are connected to the frontal lobe, the center of executive brain function.

Carl Cotman of UC Inst Brain Aging and Dementia discovered that learning in aging mice was improved with exercise, and that the phenomenon was related to neurogenesis in the Amadygla where increased levels of BDNF were found.

Ratey coined the term Miracle Gro for BDGF.

Today, the significance of discoveries reported in this book assume unique importance.
Sixth Book: Gift of Ageing

In the last century, the age expectancy has doubled. The incidence of Centenarians has doubled in the last 15 years. 80,000 in the US in 2010. Centenarians are now the most rapidly expanding segment of the population.

Aging is unavoidable so remaining forever Healthy must be our goal.

Brain health is uniquely tied to body health.

Diseases that afflict the arteries impact the brain.

All chronic diseases rob the elderly of normal mental and physical function.

Recently, this teaching was reinforced by Pope Francis when he taught that “the two most serious evils afflicting the world today are youth unemployment and the practice that consigns many elders to a life of solitude” where we know meaning may be missing.

I lived with my Grandparents until their death. They were my first teachers and living models of life lived with meaning.
Then it is possible to integrate the lesson of our books together because as Frankl teaches,

Meaning in life is essential for survival and dignity.

Cousins legacy of hope and responsibility can prevail even in the most wretched of moments. Because when it become dark enough, we can see the stars.
From Campbell and Ratey, we learn that Behavior trumps genes, our DNA. That heart, vascular diseases, diabetes and obesity can be reversed or prevented by a Whole Food Plant Based nutrition. That many forms of cancer, immune and degenerative disorders can be reduced by nutritional decisions. Than physical and mental exercise enhance optimal brain health and longevity.
Our Challenge in this community is to grasp this learning moment and work together to Change the Future.

How can we join together to meet this challenge?

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Questions

Download this lecture at www.mayfieldclinic.com/MC_bios/bio_Tew.htm

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