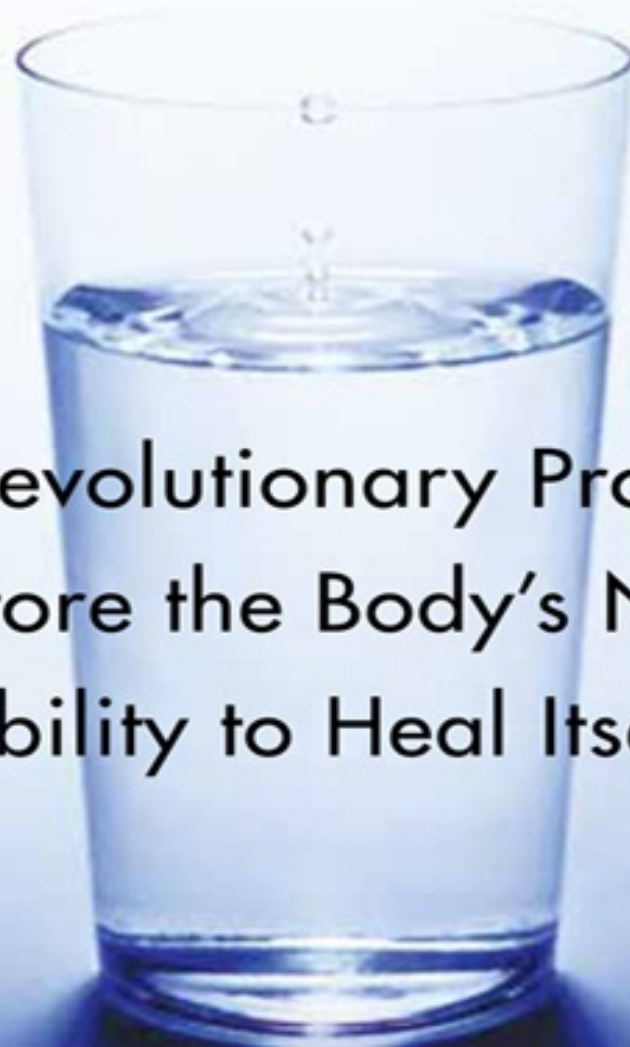


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CLEAN

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*New York
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The Revolutionary Program
to Restore the Body's Natural
Ability to Heal Itself

ALEJANDRO JUNGER, M.D.

WITH AMELY GREEVEN

CLEAN

The Revolutionary Program to Restore
the Body's Natural Ability to Heal Itself

Alejandro Junger, M.D.



HarperOne

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Dedication

*I dedicate this book to my daughter Grace,
my greatest teacher and doctor. She provided the most
profound experience of my life, which is also the
most powerful healing medicine: unconditional love.*

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Testimonials for Clean

I always thought that I lived a fairly healthy lifestyle, but then I think, as it is with a lot of people, our situation started me down the slippery slope to bad habits. The outcome was chronic insomnia, dull skin, and puffy skin, a few extra pounds, headaches, and more colds. I had absolutely no energy or lust for life, and a terrible sweet tooth to boot. I thank God that this very important book by Dr. Alejandro Junger was brought to my attention. I read this book in one sitting and began to really believe that I could at last do something about how I felt.

My often bumpy ride through detox was aided by the help and support of the Clean Team and the online community. They are a great resource for information, recipes, and encouragement. They really were my cheerleaders, and have sparked a new and avid interest in all things healthy.

Twenty-one days is all it took to change my life around. I thank Dr. Junger from the bottom of my heart. I feel amazing. To sleep a deep sleep throughout the whole night is pure bliss. I have so much energy. I've lost the puffiness AND six pounds. I have toned and tightened up all over. . . . My skin is smooth and clear, seemingly with no pores. The sugar cravings have left me. I also am so much more aware . . . my head is clear and I'm no longer on autopilot. In fact, I have discovered that my body is incredibly smart, and I've learned to listen.

Today is the last day of detox. I've been dancing and singing all day. My face is sore because I can't stop smiling. My boyfriend called me a "radiant, beautiful, and joyous bundle of energy." THAT right there folks, is the most amazing compliment I have ever received. Oh joy. . . . life feels great!

I have traveled the world for the past 30 years of my life, and my mind, body, and soul have never experienced such a wonderful and enlightening journey as this one. The journey had its share of rocky roads, but I would have endured much, much more to experience the LIFE I feel right now. The destination you all have in mind is such a wonderful place to be!

Keep strong people, because it is SO worth it.

—Sally-Ann Webb, 40
Auckland, New Zealand

The single most important resource that keeps me strong when on the Clean Program is the practice of mindfulness. More correctly, my Zen mind helps me with the Clean Program, and the Clean Program helps my Zen mind. How? Clean is a powerful tool of mindfulness training. It's a workout in patience and restraint, in discipline and concentration. Food is life, and the way we take our food reflects our attitude toward life. So much of ourselves is manifested in the way we approach the plate. With Clean, I am invited to approach each meal with attention and moderation, with gratitude and respect, with a mindfulness aware of the grand picture—of our privileges and the global injustices—while totally dedicated to savoring the food that gives me energy and life. With Clean, the time and energy that are freed from obsessing about food can now be spent exercising the mind to stay in the moment, and to learn to deeply and joyfully live it—to the tiny bite. Eating becomes an important, almost solemn, activity. As such, it makes sense to start it with a deep breath, a little bow, and a smile. By doing so—along with eating—it is my whole attitude toward life that I am training. I bet that you can bring yourself to be free of self-indulgence, overconfidence, and wastefulness in your life if you learn to eliminate these evils from the way you eat. During Clean, you unclutter your body and mind. The found "lightness" is a terrific gift (especially to a humble martial arts student like myself) that enables me to find m

center, and to stay centered in body and mind. Not to mention that my enhanced supply of patience, restraint, discipline, and concentration allows me to efficiently and successfully steel my resolve on any task I have before me (including staying on Clean!). It's a virtuous cycle!

—Paola Ferrari, 4
Houston, Texas

Hi fellow Cleaners—For those of you just starting or contemplating starting, I want to give you a glimpse of what you have to look forward to.

In twenty-one days, Clean changed my body, cleared up my skin, and brightened my eyes. I am now sleeping through the night without clenching or grinding my teeth, and this has eliminated my need for a night guard. My chronic TMJ pain is gone. I would have done the cleanse for this benefit alone. I feel more rested and positive. Clean has helped me form a new relationship with food, and has opened my eyes to what true health is.

I am now on day forty. I have changed very little in my diet since my initial twenty-one-day cleanse because I feel so wonderful! Really I can't say enough about this program. Clean is so simple and effective! I love it!

Thank you to everyone on the message boards and to Dr. Junger, of course!

—Darrick Draper, 3
Astoria, New York

What a great gift. I never thought it would be possible, nor did I ever think I could be capable of breaking my cravings and dependencies. Clean is a POWERFUL program that exceeded my expectations. In turn, I was able to exceed my own expectations to what I am capable of doing—physically, mentally, and emotionally—running up the hill that makes me cry every time we try to run up it, going for the bigger set of waves and committing, swimming a mile without flinching, going after clients I was too scared to go after before, providing advice, suggestions, and strategies where before I would've taken a backseat, meditating a peaceful start to the day, and being proud of myself enjoying more from each day than I have ever done before, being grateful for all the things in my life big and small.

—Ria McVeigh, 3
Santa Monica, California

Introduction

Fernando visited me three years ago from Uruguay on the recommendation of my sister. He was concerned about a nagging health issue for which his doctors didn't seem to have any answers. He was diagnosed with a condition called "fatty liver." In many cases this condition is associated with alcohol consumption, but Fernando did not drink. His doctors told him that his case was severe enough that it might end up damaging the liver's functionality. He was warned that he might need a liver transplant. After the appointment, his doctors sent him home and asked to see him in a few months to check his liver function and to monitor the progress of his disease.

Fernando flew to the States and stayed with me for three weeks. When I first saw him, he was slightly overweight, looked older than his age, and reported being extremely low in energy. I recognized the problem immediately and started him on the Clean Program. I explained that his liver was retaining fat to defend itself from the irritation of toxic chemicals. His body was experiencing significant toxic overload and the fat, which had developed as a defense mechanism around the liver, was slowly destroying it.

A healthy liver regulates fat metabolism, is the primary fat-burning organ in the body, and is where the bulk of the critical detoxification work occurs. A fatty liver stores fat when it should be burning it and removing it from the body. Storing more and more fat, the liver is soon unable to function and toxins accumulate. If the cause of symptoms is not found, the severely compromised liver will have serious consequences for long-term health.

Fernando was an ideal patient and closely followed the Clean Program. Within a few days he started feeling better and by the time he left he had lost close to twenty pounds, his lethargy had completely disappeared, and he looked many years younger. As soon as he returned home, he visited his doctor for new blood tests and a liver scan. His doctor initially had told him not to come in as it was too early to re-test, that nothing could have changed enough to make a difference in such a short period of time. But Fernando insisted. When he showed up at the doctor's office, the doctor was shocked by the immediate physical change he saw that he decided to test him anyway, and to his amazement, there was no sign of fatty liver whatsoever.

Fernando told the doctor about Clean, and the doctor asked for a copy of the book in Spanish. Fernando called to tell me the good news and said, "Please, you have to translate the book into Spanish. Your country needs it."

With 2011 coming to an end, another full circle has completed in my life. After being translated into thirteen languages, *Clean* has just been translated into Spanish, my mother tongue, and printed in Uruguay, where I was born. I was invited to appear in two of their most popular TV shows and at a conference that was organized for me to present the new Spanish version. At the end of the conference many of the people there lined up to congratulate me and ask me to sign their books. Fernando was there and as we hugged he thanked me for such a life-transforming experience.

Incredible stories continue to flood in from around the globe. With the Clean Program, individuals told by their doctors that their conditions would require surgery and/or medications for the rest of their lives were able to avoid the knife and drop their medications completely. But not only did the

reverse their diseased conditions; in the process these individuals took unwanted weight off, found new energy, and looked younger than they ever imagined.

Such is the case with Kathy, who called me from Copenhagen for a second opinion. She started experiencing back pain and was given painkillers and sent to a back specialist for further evaluation. There, she underwent X-rays that did not show any bone structure problems but revealed a shadow on the right side, near her lower vertebrae. A CT scan confirmed it, and a sonogram showed that she had a cyst growing in her right ovary. Kathy was told that the cyst was pressing on a nerve and causing her back pain. She was referred to a surgeon who wanted to operate right away. The surgeon explained that nothing else would help. Kathy's blood tests had revealed that she was anemic, which increased the probability that she would need a blood transfusion during the surgery. She was wary of a transfusion because one of her best friends had been given contaminated blood during a transfusion and had been infected with CMV (cytomegalovirus).

Seeking alternatives, Kathy contacted me. After listening to her story and reviewing her labs, I told her that it may well be true that surgery would be needed. I asked her not to cancel the surgery but instead to start the Clean Program immediately, while she was waiting the six days until the procedure. She started the program right away and did so meticulously. By the third day on the program, her back pain started to improve. On the fourth day it was so noticeably better that she stopped the painkillers. On the fifth day, the pain was completely gone and she cancelled the surgery. Four weeks later, I ordered new blood tests and an ovarian sonogram. The results were just as good. Her cyst had reduced to less than half its size and her anemia had completely resolved. It's been almost a year since she completed the program and the symptoms never returned. In addition, her overall energy levels have not been this good since her twenties (she is in her late thirties now), and she is enjoying a level of productivity that she hasn't experienced in a decade. I explained to her that the cyst was the way her body was trying to survive a situation in which her diet—and the toxic chemicals that came with it—were disrupting her body's functions. Once we removed the obstacle, her body was able to return to its natural state of health.

There are stories of patients who have much more common issues, problems for which most people rarely seek a second opinion. Such is the case of Divakar. Divakar heard about Clean in Mumbai. For the past few years he had progressively gained weight and during subsequent visits to his doctors had been diagnosed with a laundry list of different problems. First, he had consistently elevated levels of blood sugar and was told he was diabetic. He had been given metformin, a common drug for diabetes around the world. Then, he was told by his doctors that he had high blood pressure, and a second medication was prescribed. And later, to top it off, he was told that he needed cholesterol-lowering medications, which he obediently added to his daily pill consumption. Not surprisingly, these pills did not make Divakar feel better. But his doctors told him that the pills were working, that his blood pressure and his sugars were under control, and that his cholesterol was now in a normal range.

When Divakar reached out to me his first question was, "Doc, if the pills are working, why am I feeling so much worse than when my sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol were through the roof?" After our appointment, I agreed to start him on the Clean Program with his doctor's supervision. I spoke to his doctor and we agreed to take Divakar off his medications, one at a time, during the twenty-one day program, while monitoring his blood pressure and sugars. First, we stopped his cholesterol-lowering pills. Then, three days into the Clean Program, we stopped his blood pressure pills. His blood pressure not only did not go up, but went even lower than it had been with the medication specifically designed to lower it. On day seven, we stopped his metformin and his blood

sugars went up for two days, but then normalized. We did not measure his cholesterol levels until a couple of weeks after completing the program. These levels do not “settle” immediately and can be confusing during the program, but when they did, not only did his “bad” cholesterol go down, his “good” cholesterol significantly improved, and his triglycerides were lower than they had ever been on or off his pills.

In the process, Divakar lost twenty-five pounds, his seasonal allergies disappeared, and his back aches were gone. People stopped him wherever he went and asked him what he had done. Even though he felt embarrassed to tell me, he said his sex life was as good as it was during his honeymoon.

What happened to Divakar is happening with thousands of people all over the world. Finding the root cause of the condition, getting off of unnecessary and toxic medication, and discovering the incredible benefits of what I call true health. With each new story, it becomes clearer that the Clean Program's broad and powerful effects have the capability to improve millions of lives. My commitment is to reach as many people as possible and to show them what is achievable when they restore their body's own incredible ability to heal itself.

This is a journey I could not do alone. Thankfully, I don't have to. I have an army of Wellness Warriors working with me. The team that my partners Dhrumil and Albert and I have put together is committed to bring the Clean Program around the world, one person at a time.

In order to support people during their experience with Clean we have created the Clean Team. This is a dedicated group of trained individuals who inspire, educate, and guide people through every aspect of the Clean Program and beyond. To them I owe the most profound respect and gratitude. Also, this journey involves 35,000 (as I write) individuals who joined our Clean community through our website. They are instrumental in spreading the word, guiding others with tips and feedback, and keeping us all up to speed on what is possible. As I was creating the Clean Program nearly five years ago, I never could have imagined that Clean would turn into a worldwide movement. I am humbled and inspired.

Day by day on this journey, I am inspired by my wife Carla who instinctually lives by the principles that it took me so long to learn and apply in my life. I thank her for guiding me as I continue to learn to live and share the gifts of a Clean life.

Having witnessed so many individuals like Fernando, Kathy, and Divakar discover the transformative capabilities of Clean, I urge you to take the next step in returning your body to its natural state of well-being and discovering what rightfully belongs to you—health, vitality and peace of mind.

—Dr. Alejandro Jung

CHAPTER ONE

Why Clean?

You are sitting on a box, begging for pennies to survive, unaware that inside the box is a treasure that not only will fund your survival, but will also provide you wealth beyond your wildest dreams.

You are not alone. Millions of people worldwide are doing the same thing. Maybe you're begging for help to solve a small but troubling health problem, like extra weight, ongoing fatigue, allergies, depression, or a digestive disorder. Maybe you need help to avoid developing a bigger problem, like one of the so-called diseases of civilization—cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity, and autoimmune disorders. Or maybe you want to look and feel younger and more radiant, to slow down the onset of aging.

People may be throwing you pennies in the form of prescription medications and surgeries, and you believe they are essential to fixing your problems. So you continue holding your hand out and collecting what you can, waiting for the help drug companies and advertising promise you.

But the truth is different. The power to heal lies somewhere much closer. You already have it, and you don't need prescriptions, treatments, or expensive experts to get it. In fact, you're sitting right on top of it.

That box you're on is your own incredible, naturally intelligent body and the wealth beyond belief inside is the vibrant well-being and longevity that are your birthrights.

The treasure inside that will deliver this state of vitality, beauty, and vigor? It's something you probably haven't been taught to value. It's a system that is designed by nature to keep you healthy, youthful, and happy, if you only help it carry out its functions. It is the missing part of the health puzzle—an untapped source of healing, regeneration, restoration, and even rejuvenation. It is the intuitive system that makes you and keeps you Clean, your very own system of detoxification.

This system, which is composed of many organs and physiological processes working together throughout the body, is a wellspring of health. But its value has been forgotten. Modern medicine's fascination with molecules and microtechnology has targeted attention obsessively on smaller and smaller aspects of our biology while losing interest in looking at the big-picture systems in the body that keep us surviving and thriving. This is a mistake. Many of the health problems that trouble so many modern humans and cost society so much money can be alleviated when—instead of getting *more* detail-oriented in your approach, recruiting *more* superspecialists, inventing *more* technology, and adding *more* medication—you take a broader perspective and do something simpler: turn your attention to the treasure that is already there, the detoxification system, and reactivate its potential.

A focused period of detoxifying is a reset for the whole physical and mental body. It delivers an all-access pass to boundless reserves of energy you didn't know you had. You find that every part of your body works better, imbalances are rectified, and irritating symptoms get a chance to melt away on their own—all by your simply “switching on” a system that you were born with and that has been patiently waiting to serve you.

Imagine your right arm has been taped to the side of your body since birth. You grow up using

only your left arm, thinking this is normal, because everyone else was exactly the same. As an adult, you take on carpentry, and your business starts doubling each year. Just when you are about to collapse from the intense workload, a stranger rings your doorbell. He untapes your right arm, and to your surprise, without ever having dreamed of it as a possibility, you accelerate from a state of overload, unable to fulfill your orders, to operating up to your unbounded true potential and doing more than ever before.

The stranger arriving at the door is the Clean Program contained in this book. Untaping that arm is the act of uncovering and accelerating the detoxification system's full potential. The flourishing productivity that results is your body's natural ability to maintain steady energy, avoid colds and the flu, heal allergies, age gracefully, and avoid disease.

Who is a candidate for using this program? Everyone who lives a modern life, eats a modern diet, and inhabits the modern world.

For thousands of years, humanity has recognized the existence of toxic influences that cause dysfunction, damage, disease, premature aging, and death. These toxins have the potential to irritate and stress us and ultimately cause the body to suffer in many ways, small and large, from the unmeasurable realm of thought and emotion to the material chemicals generated as the waste byproducts of our cells' daily lives. Ancient cultures also knew that we are equipped with a grand system of detoxification, which is the result of the harmonious collaboration of several smaller systems. This system is continuously working; in fact, it keeps us alive every second of every minute of every day. If the body didn't constantly coordinate its complex symphony of activities, these waste products would build up, we would become sick, and we would eventually die. The baseline detox mode that is occurring at every moment of our lives is part of the basic formula of life. It makes our very existence possible.

What the older traditions of healing understood very well was the crucial importance of harnessing the detoxification system and using it to our advantage in order to achieve our maximum mental, emotional, and physical potential. The sages and healers of many cultures, across borders and eras, all possessed the knowledge that this grand system must periodically be allowed to enter a deeper detox mode than its ordinary day-to-day function in order to handle the accumulation of toxins that can build up so easily in times of excess eating, activity, and stress.

Practitioners of these early healing traditions understood that resting some of the major body systems, especially the digestive system, was integral to life. Fasting, silent retreats, and contemplative times were considered essential to a peaceful, healthy, and fulfilling experience of life. It wasn't just an esoteric concept. Human beings' genetic evolution—the way our bodies work best—has been shaped by the fasting that was imposed on us by the hunter-gatherer way of life. For millennia, humans experienced periods of feasting followed by periods of imposed fasting. Long periods of having an empty belly were inescapable, but this proved to be a key to health. The detoxification system could switch on and stay on with plenty of time and energy to do its essential cleanup work, liberating the body of a whole backload of waste products trapped inside, because it wasn't competing with the digestive system for fuel.

Today, life has changed. We are newly waking up to something of an evolutionary paradox. The more the toxicity of modern life increases, bombarding us with unnatural toxins from our diet and the environment, the more the demands to *detoxify* have increased. Yet our body's ability to handle the load hasn't accelerated at the same rapid pace. How could it? The world might have changed dramatically in one century, but our bodies take many generations to make one genetic change. The more dangerously toxic life has become, and the more depleted of vital nutrients our diets have

become, and the more rushed life has become, the more our grand detoxification system has gotten overwhelmed. It is almost hibernating: it is still there, doing the daily baseline work that allows us to live, but it is faltering under the additional twenty-first-century burden of poor diet, environmental toxins, and stress.

We are all dealing with the effects of this to different degrees. Commonplace complaints such as headaches, bowel irregularities, allergies, weight problems, depression, anxiety, and pain are largely caused by failing detox systems. Looking older, feeling more tired, and losing the radiant luster of health are also directly related to this overburdened state. Yet all of this can be reversed and frequently, healed when we pay attention to detoxification.

Tragically, most premature deaths today are a direct result of failing detox systems. One of the most common consequences of poor detoxification functioning is inflammation, the body's necessary but now dangerously overused, survival strategy. Modern medicine has only recently awakened to the fact that chronic inflammation is a common condition underlying the diseases that have become epidemics today, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders. Yet it is still blind to the root of the problem, the toxicity of modern life, and our bodies' weakness in dealing with it. Only when we start the treatment there, targeting the seed of the problem, can we truly begin to ward off disease.

When I first consulted with Ellen at the Eleven Eleven Wellness Center in downtown Manhattan where I see patients several days a week, she was frustrated. After her yearly physical exam her doctor had told her she needed to take medication to lower her blood pressure. She was extremely reluctant to do so, because she believed there had to be a more natural way to lower it, but her physician offered no alternative, instead presenting her with what she described as a "case closed, God has spoken" diagnosis and a prescribed course of drug treatment. It didn't suit her; she was someone who wanted a partner in building her own health, not a dependency on expensive medication. She also sensed that taking chemical drugs daily would have a taxing effect on her body, though she couldn't explain exactly why.

To start her on the path to lowering her blood pressure, I asked Ellen to do the Clean Program. She hesitated for just a moment, concerned that it would disrupt her performance at work too much, but told me she was so eager to avoid blood pressure medications that some inconvenience didn't matter to her. She followed the program to the letter, maintaining her usual five-day-a-week exercise routine but toning down its intensity slightly. After completing Clean, Ellen's results were impressive: her blood pressure decreased by 25 percent, she lost 21 pounds, her body-fat percentage dropped by 10 percent and her cholesterol levels fell by 40 percent. She was never hungry, had plenty of energy, and slept soundly. Even her physician congratulated her on her results. By putting some of her regular eating habits on hold and resting her digestive system, Ellen had initiated a way for her body to find its way back to health. By taking early action, she had lowered the high blood pressure and high cholesterol that, untreated, could have landed her in a cardiologist's office.

Detoxification has become a primary area of concern; I created the Clean Program to boost this essential function, and it is a tool I use frequently in my practice. Although as a physician I specialize in diseases of the heart, I am constantly amazed by the ability of a detoxification program to transform all aspects of my patients' well-being in such a simple, commonsense manner. Many of those trained in Western medicine still view "cleansing" as an activity done on the fringes of alternative healing. But the integrative model of medicine combines the wisdom of old and new, and today my understanding of detoxification is in complete resonance with what I learned during years of medical school training and practice. Detoxification as a complete and essential wellspring of health

was never presented to us Western-trained doctors in the complete way that I understand it today, yet its power to heal was always there, right under our noses.

This book and the cleansing-detoxifying program it presents have grown out of the experience helping many people jump-start their way back to the higher levels of health they deserve—becoming slimmer, brighter, happier, more resilient, and less burdened by poor health conditions that once slowed down their lives. It will clearly distinguish for you the connection between toxicity and most diseases. In fact, I think “disease” should be written “dis-ease,” to highlight the loss of a sense of well-being and ease, in addition to outright illness, that result from toxicity. *Clean* will show you how toxins, far from being invisible agents floating somewhere “out there” in the environment, actually enter your body and corrode it from the inside. As toxicity accumulates, your body systems are damaged one by one, starting with your intestines.

You will discover how the early signs and symptoms of toxicity are confused and ignored in our culture, often written off as the “normal” wear and tear on our body parts, as if nothing can be done. This failure to catch the early symptoms means that more serious signs and symptoms appear later on. Typically they are suppressed by means of drugs and surgery, and once more the underlying primary cause remains unexamined and unaddressed. Finally, overburdened with toxicity, one or more systems in the body collapse and the chronic diseases that take so much effort to manage and mediate set in.

Modern medicine is still blind to this toxicity-disease connection. Instead, doctors generally wait until a crash happens in the form of an acute, emergency problem, and then they desperately call in the big guns (harsh drugs and surgery) to save the day. This medical artillery only adds to the toxic burden; instead of healing the problem at the root, the treatment results in more toxic residue for the body to eliminate.

Clean will reveal to you the connections that—like that familiar box you didn’t think to open but have been sitting on for years—have been ignored by most of society and most of modern medicine. It explains how intestinal irritation caused by dietary and environmental toxicity can present as a range of symptoms you might never have thought could be connected to toxicity, such as seasonal allergies, skin rashes, depression, or simply a lack of enthusiasm for life. *Clean* provides clarity among the hundreds of different cleansing-detox programs that have flooded our market and explains the science that ties them all together. It details what these toxins are, where they are, how you are exposed to them, and how they affect your life and health. It is a primer to surviving and thriving in a toxic world.

But more important, *Clean* will give you the tools to reactivate your detoxification system to its fullest, giving it a chance to go into deep-cleaning mode and restore your body’s own ability to heal, regenerate, and even rejuvenate itself. The Clean Program is a simple, safe, and medically proven way to put this powerful ancient knowledge to work in practical, modern ways. It will show you how a cleansing-detox program does not have to be disruptive to daily life or make you feel deprived. It can be incorporated into a regular schedule and support your need for energy while gradually eliminating the toxins that have blocked optimal functioning of body and mind. You can start slowly on your first ever cleanse by doing a one-week program, make a bigger commitment with a fourteen-day program, or jump right in for a full commitment of three weeks. Whether you complete seven, fourteen, or twenty-one days of the Clean Program, every day spent on the program will help you avoid becoming one of the statistics that we hear of constantly, telling you that heart disease, cancer, and other modern diseases are almost inevitable and that with aging comes degeneration, hospitalization, and dependency. Each time you Clean, you are empowering your own ability to create, and then sustain, the high level of health that your body is so well equipped to experience.

What Is Clean?

Clean is a tool that anybody can use for restoring, rebalancing, and healing. Designed with the needs of busy people in mind, Clean is a simple and practical detoxification plan that fits into day-to-day life instead of asking you to put your life on hold. It is different from other detox plans that are gaining popularity in beauty and alternative-health circles, such as intensive juicing or fasting plans and the milder raw-foods diets. Extensive clinical and personal experience have shown me that these practices demand too much time, energy, or attention for most people. They work best for those who have already done months or years of dietary cleanup, and they are better suited to retreat settings. Such demanding programs can even in some cases be dangerous. Stripping away waste materials from the body without simultaneously carefully replenishing essential nutrients can cause a state in which toxicity is increased, not reduced. Intensive detox programs can leave a person depleted or, worse, in danger.

The Clean Program is designed with safety and effectiveness in mind. It is backed by cutting-edge scientific understanding of how our organs, hormones, and enzymes function. At its core, however, are these very simple easy-to-understand concepts:

1. Toxins and stress create obstacles for the normal functioning and self-healing capabilities of our bodies.
2. Modern eating habits and lifestyles pollute our bodies and don't provide the nutrients necessary for them to function at optimum levels.
3. By removing the obstacles and providing what is lacking, our bodies bounce back into health, energy is restored, and we begin to look and feel our best.

The Clean Program breaks down into three one-week plans, with a preliminary phase consisting of an elimination diet to prepare for the cleanse. Ultimately, you will work your way toward a three-week cleanse. It will be your choice whether to take Clean all the way through and complete the three-week program, or to work up to the three-week cleanse in incremental phases, completing a slightly longer program each time you do it (in most cases I recommend doing Clean once a year). Know that any step taken in the Clean direction will have positive impact, and over the long term doing cleanses on a regular basis will have a cumulative effect.

Three Steps of Clean

One-Week Cleanse. Your first three to five days on the program will be a lesson in how the body resists changing the deeply engrained habits around eating and drinking, even habits that your mind understands to be toxic and wants to let go of. You are encouraged to finish at least the first full week of Clean; by the end of this time you will experience a surge of vibrant energy and clarity of mind, toxins are released from the tissues they have been trapped in and are recirculated for neutralization and subsequent elimination.

One week is enough time for your body to take advantage of this new state that you are creating. The Clean Program optimizes the conditions needed for our bodies to fully express their miraculous potential of regeneration, repair, and healing. You will also have an opportunity to explore one of the

dysfunctions that keeps Americans overweight: hunger. We so commonly say “I’m hungry,” but most of us don’t really know what hunger is. That bodily sensation that you call hunger may be something different. During Clean, you will finally be able to rename that sensation for what it really is. Clean guides you through a very effective way of doing just that.

More important, it is very likely that by the time you complete your first week, your motivation will soar and you’ll continue on. Some of my successful cases started with patients who were skeptical and gave me just a few days to prove my theory to them in practice.

Two-Week Cleanse. If you are able to continue, don’t stop. Set a goal of carrying straight on and accomplishing a second week on the program. Two weeks on Clean will deliver to you great benefits, as systems in your body that had been blocked and slowed begin to be optimized again, while other systems that had been on “red alert” to help you survive the insult of the toxic world get soothed and settled. Long-standing symptoms of imbalance on the “surface,” such as skin problems, weight issues, allergies, and intestinal issues, begin to disappear.

Three-Week Cleanse. The completion of your third week will show you how it feels to slow down and even reverse the aging process. You are able to feel how vital, clear, and optimistic you should really feel for your true physical age, not your chronological age. The transformation in those who follow the Clean Program in its entirety is often remarkable. They finally drop stubborn pounds. Their complexions firm, tighten, and glow. The whites of the eyes get whiter and brighter. They sleep more soundly and have a higher energy level throughout the day. Patients can finally find relief from many of the discomforts that they have been struggling to get rid of, from constipation to sinus infections to joint pain. Disease processes assumed to be chronic or only manageable by drugs are often slowed down and even reversed. As you experience your body’s ability to restore order on its own, you will no longer see conditions that once had a frightening hold on you, from high blood pressure to high cholesterol and more, as life sentences.

Improved physiological balance can have a positive effect on psychological and emotional levels, too. Moods improve, and a sense of mental clarity returns. After completing the program, many find that their cravings are reduced, poor foods and highly caffeinated drinks lose their appeal, and a mindful relationship to meals is restored. Most report that their work and relationships get a boost from what they can only describe as a heightened state of self-awareness. At a level beyond the physical, completing the three-step Clean Program can feel like cleaning dirty spectacles: you get a fresh vision of your world.

The Importance of a Wellness Plan

A plan is essential to any endeavor where we want to see growth and success. We make a business plan, investing time and money, on a new startup. We spend huge amounts of time and money hiring experts to help us make savings plans, wedding plans, career plans, vacation plans—and sometimes even funeral plans. What this comes down to is breaking a big task into small, achievable steps and putting them on a calendar. Such planning makes a goal much easier to achieve. Yet in many years of working in medicine, I have rarely met a patient with a Wellness Plan.

As you’ll learn in chapter 8, in order to truly survive in a toxic world, you need to put a Wellness Plan in place. A reasonable yet organized Wellness Plan that sets out small goals for the year empowers you to achieve the ongoing state of health you need to thrive in our toxic world. Conventional health-care protocols do not cover all the bases that are essential for ongoing health in our stressed environment. For example, almost no family doctors routinely test for vitamin D levels.

something I believe should be a priority, nor do they help you decide which supplements to take and when. Should you want to test for certain lingering toxins, you're also usually on your own. I'll show you how this, too, can be achieved on your plan for the year.

The Clean detox program helps you get clarity on your health goals and priorities. It can also be used to bring you back on track when your commitment to good eating weakens and you deviate for a few weeks. Like a mile marker you can always find your way back to, Clean can realign you with your Wellness Plan and get you back on track.

Clean is safe for almost everyone. Note, however, that all cleanses can have an effect on the way prescription medications are absorbed. Some treatment regimens will exclude you as a candidate for a detox program. If you are currently taking prescription medications, please read on carefully before proceeding with the program.

The Clean Audit

Answer the questions on this list and note your "yes" answers.

Do you have headaches more than occasionally?

Do you tend to get colds or viruses each year?

Do you have bowel movements less frequently than after every meal?

Do you have bowel movements that are not soft and easily passed?

Do you have diarrhea more than very rarely?

Do you get itchy or watery eyes and nose at certain times of year?

Do you have allergies or hay fever?

Do you often get congested or mucousy?

Do you get bloated after eating?

Do you have extra pounds that won't come off with diet and exercise?

Do you have puffiness in areas of your face or body?

Do you have dark circles under your eyes?

Do you get heartburn?

Do you have gas more than occasionally?

Do you have bad breath or body odor?

Is there a thin white coat on the back of your tongue when you wake up?

Do you get cravings for certain kinds of food, especially sugary, starchy, or dairy foods?

Do you have a tendency toward restless sleep?

Do you have itchy skin, pimples, or any other troubling skin condition?

Do you get pain or stiffness in your joints or muscles?

Do you have low moods or a foggy mind?

Do you find that you are forgetful, have difficulty concentrating, or can't find words?

Do you feel apathetic and tired?

Do you feel anger or bursts of irrational frustration?

Do you have higher than average sensitivity to odors?

Have you noticed an increasing sensitivity to toxins in everyday life, such as feeling more nauseated when you smell dry-cleaning fluid or fill up your car's tank with gas, noticing strong effects of certain food additives, or having reactions to cleaning or personal-care products?

Do you use multiple prescription medications?

Do you use many potentially toxic chemicals in your home or work environment?

Do you have musculoskeletal aches and pains or symptoms suggestive of fibromyalgia?

Do you have tingling or numbness on one side?

Do you have strange reactions to medications or supplements?

Do you have recurrent edema?

Have you noticed a worsening of any troublesome symptoms after anesthesia or pregnancy?

These could all be symptoms of toxicity. It's hard to find anyone who doesn't answer "yes" to at least one or two of these questions. Some people have many more "yes" answers than that. Whatever your response, affirmative answers to any of these questions indicate that you would benefit highly from Clean, which has been shown to improve and clear up these symptoms and many others.

Clean is not a magic bullet. It is not designed to cure every ailment. It is designed to be a jump-start—a reboot that gets all systems running better. Once you've completed part or all of it the first time, it is a preventive tool that you'll use periodically to shed accumulated toxins and switch on deeper healing. Meanwhile, you will create an ongoing Wellness Plan to achieve a set of longer-term toxin-beating goals.

Clean is not the result of multimillion-dollar clinical trials or pharmaceutical company sponsorship. This modern detox program came to life in the same way that many great discoveries are made, when one person went on a journey to find a solution for his own suffering. In the case of Clean, that person was me.

CHAPTER TWO

A Doctor's Journey

I was born in Uruguay in 1964 to Jewish parents who survived World War II. My mother left Germany days after she was born. My father survived a concentration camp in Hungary and went to Uruguay after the war, looking for his sisters. He found them, and my mom.

Life in Montevideo and Punta del Este was slow-paced. We shopped at the local farmers' market and almost always had lunch or dinner sitting at the dining-room table, all together as a family. Our city was safe, and children played in the streets without supervision.

Early on I knew what I wanted to do when I grew up: I wanted to become a doctor and help alleviate people's suffering; help them become healthier and live longer and better lives. I went to medical school and fell in love with medicine. Our family doctors used to do house visits, spend hours with us, and teach us all kinds of interesting things. I wanted to be like them.

When I graduated, I decided to become a cardiologist. Something about the heart attracted my interest. The fast thinking necessary, the lifesaving decisions made in a split second, the satisfaction of saving someone's life without having to wait for months to see if the pills were going to work—these things left me with no doubt of my choice of specialty.

After graduating I wanted to study in the place where my medical school textbooks had been written. I got a position as an intern at New York University's Downtown Hospital in Lower Manhattan and moved there a week after my graduation to complete three years of training in Internal Medicine. At the end of the three years I was twenty-six years old.

Life in Manhattan moved at a lightning-fast pace, very different from my home. Medical training was tough. Being on call for up to three days in a row, always busy, I had no time to prepare meals. My main sources of nourishment were takeout, vending machines, nurses' potlucks (lots of them), and the hospital cafeteria. If I had some extra time, I visited the nearest supermarket. I was fascinated by all the packages, the colors, the smells, and the fact that with a microwave oven, anyone could have dinner in minutes. I felt like an aboriginal who finds himself in the magical modern city, and I often found myself thinking, "Boy, these Americans really know how to make things easy."

But life as a trainee doctor in one of the busiest cities in the world started taking a toll on me. I was gaining weight and started sneezing like crazy with every change of season. I was exhausted, but I could not get much sleep. Overall I still enjoyed the experience of learning from doctors, some of whom were considered the top in their field. As to the deterioration in my well-being, I figured, "Once I graduate, things will change."

After three years of internship and residency, I moved to Manhattan's Upper East Side and started my training in cardiology at Lenox Hill Hospital. Running the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit, admitting patients from the emergency room, and consulting all over the hospital added the weight of responsibility to my shoulders and the weight of bagels to my belly. In those second three years of training my allergies got so bad that I had to take antihistamines and use steroid inhalers several times. My digestion was turning into a nightmare. I was often bloated, and I had abdominal

discomfort and alternating bouts of constipation and diarrhea. This was alarming.

I decided to ask one of our attending gastroenterologists for help. Within minutes of listening to my story, he ordered an upper and a lower endoscopy, abdominal sonogram, and full blood work. Every test came back absolutely normal. The specialist's diagnosis was "irritable bowel syndrome." Not much could be done, I was told, except try to control symptoms with antispasmodic and antifatulence pills, painkillers, and antidiarrhea medication alternating with laxatives. Nobody asked me what I was eating—which was not surprising, since I had never had a nutrition class myself.

A few months before finishing my fellowship I started waking up with chest pain. If I hadn't already been a cardiologist myself by then, I would have gone to see one, but I knew the heart muscle and its arteries were not the problem. That other aspect of the heart, the one I had not had a single class or discussion about in all my years of training, was the problem. I was sad. In fact, I was depressed.

This to me was unbelievable. There was no history of depression in my family. My life was busy but I liked working hard and I was good at what I did. Something was very wrong, because my feeling of impending doom was not justified by whatever difficulties I had at that time.

And soon I started noticing something even more alarming: from the moment I woke up until the moment I went to bed, my mind did not stop thinking. There were always thoughts rolling through my mind. It was not me choosing to think them. In fact, if I had a choice I wouldn't be thinking 90 percent of the thoughts that were happening day in and out. Sometimes there were dialogues in my mind. I noticed that there was only one difference between crazy people talking to themselves in the subway and me: they were doing it out loud.

The thoughts were louder at night. I could not sleep. Which only led to more thoughts: If I was not choosing those thoughts, who was? Where were they coming from? Was I going mad?

At one point it got so bad that I decided to seek help from a top psychiatrist in New York. After one session of questions he solemnly said, "You are depressed. You have a chemical imbalance." He explained that my brain was not producing enough serotonin. He wrote me a prescription for Prozac. In the elevator on my way out of his office building I looked at the piece of paper in my hand and wondered, "How did my cells forget to do their chemistry? How did they become imbalanced?"

I didn't like the idea of taking a medication for the rest of my life, so I decided to get a second opinion. It took the new psychiatrist two sessions before he declared, "You have a chemical imbalance in your brain," and wrote a prescription for Zoloft, a cousin of Prozac. This doctor talked a little longer, saying that a chemical called serotonin, a neurotransmitter, is responsible for the feeling of well-being, of happiness. He said my serotonin was low. Zoloft would ultimately raise the levels of serotonin in my brain and resolve my symptoms. When I asked him what had *caused* my cells to reduce the production of serotonin, he answered that it was not well understood, but that I was not alone. He was starting to see depression in almost epidemic proportions.

Instinctively I rejected the idea of being on prescription drugs for the rest of my life. The psychiatrists had no answers to my questions. Neither did a number of other therapists, social workers, teachers, and friends whom I asked. I wondered if anyone else would be able to satisfy my need to understand what was happening. So I started going to bookstores. I quickly discovered that New York has amazing bookstores (even more impressive than its supermarkets) where a person could sit and study for hours without buying a thing. I took full advantage, starting my research in the psychiatry and psychology shelves. "Thinking" . . . "thought" . . . "the mind" . . . I read everything I could get my hands on to answer my burning questions: Where are my thoughts coming from? How are they affecting my feelings to the point of despair? How can I stop this madness?

Every time I read something that resonated with me, I made a note of the reference, and immediately I'd go look up the book that was referenced. In this way I found myself shifting from the psychiatry section into the self-help section and then into the New Age section of the bookstore.

One day, following the trail of references, I found myself looking for a book in the Eastern Philosophy section. As I was browsing the shelves, a book literally fell into my hands and opened up to a chapter titled "Meditation: Silencing the Mind." As I read the first few paragraphs, it was as if the skies were opening up. It said that through the practice of meditation one could slow down and even stop the incessant habitual thinking process. The mind was described as the "monkey mind," always moving from one thing to another, always busy; some people also call it "radio playing." The information was exactly what I was looking for.

I laughed at how close the names of these two approaches were: medication and meditation. So close and yet so far apart. I immediately made up my monkey mind. I had to meditate.

Finding a meditation teacher was not easy. After a couple of awkward experiences, my friend Fernando offered to take me to a specialist. We drove upstate to a school of meditation that same day. It's a monastery of sorts, where seekers can come to study and learn. This meditation school was led by an Indian meditation master. As soon as I met her there was no doubt in my mind she would have some of the answers to my questions. She was fully present to such a degree and so profoundly calm within that it was felt by everyone around her. I had such an intense experience from simply being in her presence that my thinking brain fell completely silent for some time. When my mind started the incessant radio playing again, it was different: I could remember the experience of silence. I had a reference point. I had a sneak preview of what was possible—and I resolved to acquire that ability, to silence my mind, to become present. The course of my life changed at that moment, and it has never been the same.

I started reading all the books that this Indian teacher had written, and the ones her teacher had written before. I also drove every weekend to the meditation courses offered at the school for meditation at that time. On one of these weekends, an announcement was made that a volunteer doctor was needed for the medical clinic at their meditation school in India. A series of magical synchronicities ended with a firm decision: I would go to India. To the shock of my colleagues and family I turned down all the offers I'd had to join very lucrative cardiology practices, packed my bag, and left.

In India I studied yoga. I learned how the physical movement routines that were starting to become a great fashion in America were only one aspect of yoga. There are eight "limbs" of yoga in total: *yamas*, personal attitudes toward the world and others; *niyamas*, attitudes toward self; *asanas*, body postures; *pranayama*, breathing exercises; *pratyahara*, control of the senses; *dharana*, concentration; *dhyana*, meditation; and *samadhi*, enlightenment, firmness in the present moment. It is an expansion of awareness and opening of the mind. And that was exactly what happened to me.

As my form of service I directed a team of volunteer health practitioners from all over the world. There were Ayurvedic doctors, Chinese medicine doctors, chiropractors, nurses, massage therapists, hands-on healers, meditation instructors, and many other practitioners, all with different philosophies and all practicing different techniques. Our mission was to treat the meditation school's large population of students and to take our traveling hospital—a converted school bus—to the surrounding villages, some of the poorest places on the planet. We took on every case as a team, discussing each patient's condition from everyone's point of view. It was a truly integrative approach. I had never heard of "integrative medicine" before, but suddenly I was practicing it.

As I heard the other doctors explain their views on patients and diseases, I was blown away by how

much sense they made. Even more impressive were the results I was witnessing from using herbs, acupuncture, diet, massage, chiropractic care, and hands-on healing. These were being used in a subtler way than Western medicine knew—to find the root cause of imbalance in the body and mind, not just put out the fires of symptoms. It struck me that what we were practicing could not be categorized as “alternative” or “traditional.” It was, simply, common sense. On certain occasions when the Western medical approach using drugs or surgery was absolutely necessary, and the advanced technology available was life-saving. But this was rarely needed. Given the right support and conditions, the body’s natural healing ability was restored without drug intervention. My mind, which had been rigorously schooled in the paradigm of conventional medicine, was cracked wide open. And meanwhile, my own mental and physical health, though far from optimal, were getting better by the week.

By the end of my year of volunteering at the meditation school I had erased many categories of medicine from my mind: “alternative,” “traditional,” “Western,” “allopathic,” “Eastern,” “Ayurvedic,” “Chinese.” All these medical traditions and practices blended into one integrative category that I called “open-minded medicine.” It was, I decided, the process of bringing the best of Eastern and Western medicines to the table without judgment in order to best serve each and every patient as a unique individual. By the time I returned to the United States, I was determined to bring this new style of practicing medicine into the hospital system—to change it from within. I returned to the States and took a job as an attending cardiologist in a busy practice in Palm Springs, California with admitting privileges in the four local hospitals.

Before I knew it I was back in the all-American rat race—personally and professionally. It was much harder to maintain peace and well-being here than it had been at the meditation school. Constant commuting in the car, responding to beepers, and inserting pacemakers and IV drips became my reality. The pressure was on to make the rounds of wards and intensive-care units as fast as possible to keep the practice profitable. On paper the job was enviable. If I stuck it out, in three years I’d be a partner in a very successful practice. But treating patients this way was killing my spirit. I had no time to listen to my patients’ symptoms or even recognize their basic humanity. They received, on average, seven minutes of attention, and the system treated them like commodities: a way to do more tests, write more prescriptions, and make more money. The patients who came to me were often taking five or more prescription drugs. Neither I nor they completely understood how all these chemicals interacted in their bodies. The system was set up to encourage someone in my position to add more medications to the already full load. This was not the dream of healing I’d grown up with.

Not surprisingly, the effects of stress, cafeteria food, and late-night dinners piled up again. My own symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and the foggy mental state that before had made me sad now returned. In private moments I had to ask myself if my health was much better than my patients’.

Things changed abruptly again one day with the arrival of an unannounced visitor. My friend Eric, a stressed-out movie producer, showed up at my Palm Springs house. I almost fainted when I saw him. Ten days before he’d been his usual bloated, overweight, sallow-skinned self. Now a different man stood before me: fifteen pounds lighter, with shiny glowing skin, and with eyes whose whites were whiter than any I’d ever seen. He was also exuding a sense of calm and joy that were highly out of character. Sensing my astonishment, he told me he’d just completed a detox program at a holistic center located minutes from my home, out in the desert. He’d abandoned his usual routine of restaurant meals, alcohol, and all-night movie shoots for a retreat based on green juices, colonic massage, sunshine, yoga, and meditation. This shiny new Eric was the result.

It was an “Aha!” moment for me. This was exactly the kind of result I wanted to offer to my patients. I got the address of the center, named the We Care spa, and signed up for my own program.

With my overloaded schedule, I had to improvise. Instead of booking myself in as a guest, I drove to the center on my lunch breaks, where I would fill my jars with fresh juices and take natural supplements. Every day I’d get a colonic hydrotherapy treatment to help flush out the toxins that were getting released from my tissues via my intestines. And then I’d go back to work until late at the multiple busy offices under my care. I committed to two weeks of this intensive juice fasting program and made sure to keep my mind wide open, because although I’d trained hard in fitness in the past and had months of eating very simply and wholesomely in India, this was different from anything I’d ever done.

By the third day of the detox program, my fatigue, hunger, and headaches had disappeared. By the seventh day, my IBS had completely vanished and has so far only threatened to return at times when I disregarded my lessons. After two weeks of following the center’s cleansing program, my depression—or whatever was left of it—had completely lifted and I had lost fifteen pounds, just like my friend who had not felt better since my teens.

I was floored. My own body had reset itself. The irritation I’d been experiencing in different areas—mood, energy levels, allergies, and digestive function—had all been connected. They were different ways that my body was showing it was toxic, damaged, and out of balance. By detoxing, I had restored that balance and repaired the damage. As a result, my cells were remembering how to do the right chemistry. My guts were restored their normal functioning without medication, and my serotonin levels had gone up. Nobody I’d consulted in modern medicine had suggested these separate symptoms were linked—or had told me that I could heal them myself. It was knowledge that no medical school or specialist seemed to possess. Several times a day, colleagues stopped me at the hospital and said, “Alex, you look ten years younger!” I wondered, had I just reversed the aging process? Was that even possible? If so, it was a subject that—just like nutrition—was missing from my medical school curriculum.

This was a turning point. I finally saw my path clearly. I quit my job at the hospitals and moved to Los Angeles, one of the most polluted cities in the world but also, luckily, home to some of the most progressive thinkers and health practitioners in the world—and lots of open-minded patients. I started studying everything I could about detoxification, from the ancient traditions to the new scientific studies that had come out explaining the biochemistry of detoxification in detail. I immersed myself in the study of the emerging field of Functional Medicine, which translates the Eastern paradigm of health to fit the Western terminology and tools with incredibly effective results. Every week I drove back to the desert for two days and worked as the medical consultant for the We Care spa. Susan Belen, the center’s visionary founder and owner, and I guided many different kinds of people through their juice fasting experiences, developing our understanding of the process and sharing our findings with each other and the guests.

I began to treat patients as an M.D. and cardiologist who worked with an expanded toolkit. It still contained lab tests, medications, and surgical interventions when needed. It also contained detoxification aspects of Chinese medicine, and a huge emphasis on dietary change to build wellness from the inside. It was my vision of open-minded medicine, and I had finally come full circle—putting the pieces of my own story into practice with others.

In those early days, I sent many of my Los Angeles patients to We Care and watched them have similar transformations through detoxing, sometimes coming back to life after long periods of dealing with uncomfortable symptoms. But leaving town wasn’t practical or affordable for everyone, so

started to research and design a way to achieve the same results without the need to go on retreat,
~~way of detoxing that everyone could afford. This is what I present to my patients and to you as the~~
Clean Program.

CHAPTER THREE

Global Toxicity: Another Inconvenient Truth

Ever since my first consultation with a psychiatrist in New York, I constantly found myself asking, “How and why did my brain cells forget their chemistry?”

The low serotonin level in my brain, which I was told explained the problem, was simply a description of *what* happens when the chemistry is forgotten by the neurons. I wanted to find out *how* and *why*. In medicine, understanding how and why is the real diagnosis. This is what doctors do.

Doctors used to pride themselves on diagnosing a problem by observation and deduction: they take a good patient history, listen, and observe. Modern doctors, pressed for time and fearful of lawsuits, heavily rely on blood tests, X-rays, sonograms, endoscopy, and many other laboratory evaluations. In India, working out of our bus-turned-mobile-hospital, with no equipment other than a stethoscope, our ears, eyes, and noses, my colleagues and I returned to the simpler methods of observation. Eastern schools of medicine don't see patients as isolated from their environment—including family, village, and spiritual path. Changes in environment or the predominant quality of one's thoughts are considered equally important as changes in body temperature. All aspects of a patient's life are believed to affect each other significantly and play a role in the maintenance of well-being. The root of disease is also found this way, by looking at both the bigger and the smaller picture together. Physical, mental, emotional, social, and environmental symptoms are all taken into consideration when making a diagnosis. Finding the common thread that ties them together often reveals the underlying imbalance at the origin of disease.

Back in the United States, chronic diseases were on the rise, often with such difficult and intimidating names that patients and doctors forgot to ask how and why. The name “became” the disease. The meaning of the word “diagnosis” changed. It did not mean understanding how and why anymore. It became the title of a list of symptoms and test results that matched most of the ones the patient presented with. It had become a code. A diagnosis could be entered into a computer and a list of medications that were covered by insurance companies for that specific code would appear on the screen. It also showed how many days of hospital stay were approved for that same code. What the doctor thought did not matter as much anymore.

The practice of medicine was looking a lot like the supermarkets that early on had impressed me so much. It was very evident that I wasn't the only one whose cells were forgetting their chemistry. The growth in the rates of depression was all around me. More and more patients were antidepressants. Health news was full of reports on the rising epidemic of diseases connected to diet and lifestyle. And the financial news echoed with reports of the meteoric rise in the value of stock of pharmaceutical companies, especially the ones that had patented antidepressants. My specialty, heart disease, headed the list of problems, followed by cancer. The World Health Organization announced that these diseases occurred at higher rates in industrialized countries than in developing nations.

It didn't make sense. On one hand, science and technology were advancing in giant leaps. We had broken the genetic code, invented nanotechnology, and created robots that perform surgery. There was

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