

Illness is Not Inevitable

by Dr. William L. Esser (*Natural Hygiene*, June 1958)

The average American has developed “the habit of being sick.” Seeking cures from curers is the tragic national pastime. Cures are as elusive and unreal as mirages. The time is long overdue for thorough renovation. The *causes* of fear must go. Man has nothing to fear except himself and his disease-building habits.

Years ago, when the microscope enlarged tiny organisms to a size that made them look ferocious and dangerous, a wave of fear swept the land. It was decided that these caused most of our diseases; and as a consequence, a sterile existence was frantically sought after by all who wished to be healthy. Today the fear of germs is mostly a thing of the past, but another phobia—more mysterious but less tangible—the “virus” has taken over to explain disease. Illness results from man’s own violations and indiscretions, his own sins against himself. When he ceases to make himself sick, he becomes immune, and disease no longer exists.

The animal kingdom has its claws, teeth, beaks, and other instinctive defenses for protection and for securing food for its young and itself. But man has his mind, which gives him dominion over everything else on earth. He has opened many doors and unlocked many mysteries with his mind. Unfortunately, he knows more about things outside himself than he knows of himself. The results of this ignorance, plus lack of self-control, are sickness, pain, and premature death. Unless man learns to know himself, he will destroy himself.

Sickness is unnecessary. Those who possess good health should know why they are well. If the only reason they can give is that they have always enjoyed good health and that their ancestors were good specimens of longevity, they have no reliable knowledge with which to keep the good health they possess. Their good health potentials and sound constitutions can easily be frittered away. The fact that parents and grandparents lived to a ripe old age gives one a fine feeling of security, but it is very much like an athlete who rests on his laurels: unless he continues to train and maintain his achievement, he will soon find his records toppling.

The asset of long-lived forebears can be offset easily by rush, worry, and business, or by a frantic social pace that outdistances that of our fathers by at least five to one. Today there are many advantages over previous decades, but there

are also disadvantages.

The machine age, with its push-button existence, enables men and women to achieve many things with great efficiency. But it does nothing to relieve the grueling pace and tension that goes hand in hand with it. The nervous and digestive systems, brain, and heart are taxed far beyond their endurance. In order to keep up with demands of competi-

tion, tobacco, coffee, and other drugs are relied upon to stimulate flagging nerves and functions.

The man is wise who from time to time withdraws from the insanity of today’s graceless living for somber contemplation of true and eternal values. Natural laws are unchanging.

They govern each of us. To push beyond individual requirements in working, eating, sex, and pleasures without sufficient rest to replace what has been spent, promotes much suffering and earlier death.

It is not the aim of *Natural Hygiene* to invalidate the definite advances that man has made since the beginning of time. It is, however, necessary to point out the flaws in civilized living, and the false security that comes from depending upon doctors for health rather than upon obedience to natural law.

Commonsense care of the body is all that is necessary, not some peculiar kind of food or vitamin preparation, nor a disagreeable asceticism. Live in keeping with Natural law; determine to be moderate and poise of mind, and the body will be the natural result. The difficulty lies in disentangling oneself from the web of convention and synthetic living; cold, analytical investigation is the key.

Dr. William Esser was a co-founder and past President of the NHA (formerly known as the American Natural Hygiene Society). 

