

Health & Fitness 2011

FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH

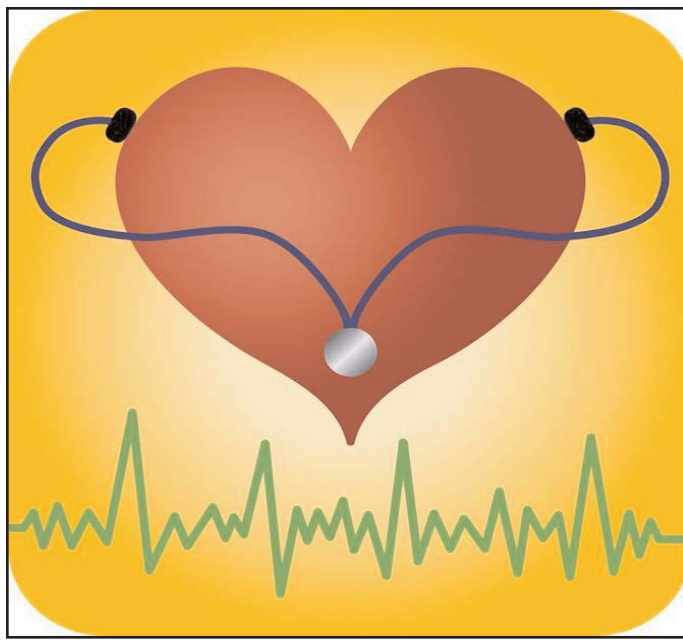
Take Your Health... to Heart

Heart Disease: Prevention is the New Cure

As medicine enters the 21st Century, we are dazzled by new developments. Discoveries in genomics, regenerative medicine, and imaging, are transforming our understanding and treatment of disease. At the same time, we understand more thoroughly than ever, that our most important weapon against disease may be the most simple - prevention. We now know that we can prevent some of our deadliest and most common diseases simply by making the right choices in our lifestyles and health care. Especially heart and vascular disease.

The single most powerful thing any of us can do to prevent heart and vascular disease is to quit smoking. Cigarettes play a major role in causing or aggravating the most common and dangerous forms of heart and vascular disease. If tomorrow morning, scientists discovered a magic pill that could save hundreds of thousands of lives a year, it would be front page news. Smoking cessation is that magic pill.

Other choices can also have a strong effect on our cardiovascular health. What we choose to eat, for instance, is a major decision for our heart. Eating fast foods, fatty foods, and foods that are high in trans-fats can contribute to coronary artery disease - a leading cause of death in the western world. They also



contribute to obesity, which increases the risk of diabetes, which is also linked to heart failure.

There are many heart healthy diets available. The Cleveland Clinic Department of Preventive Cardiology has an informative website (www.clevelandclinic.org/heart), that gives you the latest information on how to prevent heart disease by making lifestyle changes. The sections on diet and nutrition can be especially helpful. Regular exercise, at least half-an-hour a day, can lower your risk of heart disease, as well as obesity and its related conditions.

The notion that we should be preventing disease as well as treating disease is revolutionizing medicine. As more of us take responsibility for our own bodies and our own health, America's health care system will be able to use its resources more efficiently. This will bring about lower costs, and allow health care professionals to focus their energies on patients with non-preventable ailments.

Taking responsibility for our hearts is a gift to our loved ones and future generations. It's should be part of everyone's personal program of healthcare reform.

Technology vs. The Human Connection

Eric has been a friend of mine for over 20 years. He always was on the shy side. I recall when we would go out, we would really have to push him because he either did not feel comfortable or confident around people. However, when cell phones started to have these marvelous capabilities such as texting, Eric suddenly became very sociable. But not really. Being the complete geek that he always was, he was suddenly in a comfort zone when it came to communicating with people without having to see them.

Eric always wanted to socialize but his anxiety was the stumbling block. So on nights when his friends went out, he would take a retreat on computer and video games. So texting methods were not a real solution for him but it was clearly the lesser of the two evils. Before the arrival of smartphones, Eric would at least talk to his friends on the phone for brief periods of



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time. But he knew talking on the phone would still make him rather anxious. So now Eric had complete justification in his mind to limit almost all of his communication with other people to text and email.

Technology: A Blessing or a Bane?

It is unquestionable that technological advances have led to astonishing accomplishments by humans. However, we must look at some of the consequences which have affected human relationship in

profound ways. I believe that technology has made us much more efficient in various manners, but at the same time, in many respects, it has created enormous distances between people. Imagine somebody being head over heels in love and getting a text message about breaking up. That is a good example of how technology despite all its benefits provided us with a perfect alibi to be impersonal and cold.

Digital Dating

With the latest trend of internet dating, dating websites, Facebook and Myspace, people only have virtual meetings with people they may be interested in. Or they meet people without knowing much about them. Once again, while these technological advances provide us with easier ways to contact or search for people, they also offer a façade behind which people can hide. Recently released movie 'Cat-

fish' is based on a true story where a woman was able to create a whole new identity for herself through Facebook. She took to the point of even talking on the phone with her internet partner impersonating three different characters, casting an elaborate web of lies.

Hand-held gadgets

What about the X-Box, Playstations, Nintendo's and XConnect? Once again, when used properly and judiciously, these devices could offer healthy and interactive entertainment for the family; on the other hand, these have shown to cut into the total amount of relaxed, quality family time. Often kids get "hooked" to these devices and don't want to read books, do household chores, play outside or just sit and talk with family. The ever increasing number of adults are also seen to have taken to these devices.

Have you recently gone out

with your friends just to notice that some of them are peaking over at their cell phones every few minutes or even texting while they are talking to you? That scenario is very common and now it is generally accepted as normal behavior. I do believe these behaviors weaken interpersonal and social bonds.

Technology and Privacy

All decent human relationships are based on mutual respect and feelings which are very private. However, it seems that with widespread use of Facebook and Myspace, it seems everyone's private life is being played on a public stage. This is not only unhealthy, but also can create severely conflicting and tragic situations. We should never forget what happened to Tyler Clementi of Rutgers' University among other unfortunate deaths.

Next Week: Sex Education

The purpose of this article is

for educational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose or treat any medical or psychiatric issue. Dr. Rakesh Ranjan is a practicing psychiatrist and a researcher. He is a recipient of several research awards and has authored several peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters on psychiatric illnesses and their treatments. He is a national speaker for several organizations and serves on the medical advisory board for the NAMI of Greater Cleveland. If you or a loved one is experiencing any symptoms that would lead you to believe that there could be a mental imbalance, please e-mail your questions to Dr. Ranjan at askthedoctor@charakresearch.com. Each Wednesday, Dr. Ranjan will address some of these questions in this column. All contact info will be kept confidential. Check our recently redesigned blog at...www.drakeshranjan.blogspot.com

Fully-Alive Living...

How could I not say something?

After all, the Taco Bell staff was still working on my food. It's not like I couldn't hear the four teenage guys at a nearby table.

"We've all been with that girl. She's such a [expletive] HO!"

That was it.

In the five minutes I'd waited for my order, these fifteen-year olds had taken over the atmosphere of the restaurant with every swear word possible.

This was all before the "HO" comment - street slang for a prostitute.

"No doubt, dude. She's a [expletive] ugly skank. Just look how small her [body parts] are..."

Awkward silence.

Mainly because I was now standing right next to their table. I hadn't said a word, yet everyone's demeanor had changed... as if they knew what they were doing was



TONY MYLES

wrong. Apparently all it took was an adult willing to be an adult in their presence.

Hmm.

"Hey," I smiled, like I was one of them. "Who are you talking about?"

They looked at each other. "Um, nobody," one sheepishly answered.

"Seriously, who are you talking about?"

"A... friend," he again offered, hardly looking up.

"Really, because I think you're talking about my daughter," I pressed.

"No, it's not your daughter," he said, a bit confidently... as if I'd bluffed him and he'd caught me. Time to lay the cards down.

"No, it is my daughter," I replied. "Or maybe my sister... or one of your sisters. Any of you have sisters? Because imagine what it would be like for some guys to talk about your sister like you just did about this girl."

Even more of an awkward silence.

I felt a surge within me of both nervous energy and confident truth. I had to pick which one would win... my heart was breaking for these kids.

"It's weird that you called this girl a friend because you're ripping her to shreds. She's not even here to defend herself."

The spokesman said it first, then the rest chimed in.

"Sorry." "Yeah, sorry." "Sorry."

"Guys, you can say you're sorry, but how about being

sorry? By not doing it again?" "We won't." They still didn't get it.

"Listen, I don't just mean here. I mean stop treating her that way."

This was it - I was about to plant a seed I hoped would last forever.

"Guys, I know how this works. You're feeling weird now because we're talking, but as soon as I leave you'll try to sound tough by ripping me to shreds, too. So let's be honest - plain and simple, will you let this be the moment that you decide to become real men instead of what just happened here? And by the way, don't answer me - but each of you needs to answer that question, whether it's later today or at night when you're lying in bed. We clear?"

A few head nods. "Yeah."

"Yeah, sorry." "Sorry."

My food was ready. I thought about taking it to go, but decided to instead sit two tables away from the guys and

let God do His thing on their hearts through the continued awkwardness.

A friend of theirs who'd been in the bathroom during our discussion came back. He sat down and looked around.

"Alright, what the [expletive] did I just miss?"

In the Bible, we're reminded of what happens when we don't lead the next generation in the right direction by our own example.

"You will watch as your sons and daughters are taken away as slaves. Your heart will break for them, but you won't be able to help them." (Deuteronomy 28:32)

Maybe our kids won't become slaves in the traditional sense, but what values (or lack of values) will they become slaves to?

Receive the same challenge I offered those guys. Decide right now that this is the moment that we stop lowering the morality bar, and become

active mentors and strong parents versus passive chaperones and cool buddies.

Let your heart break for what you've become tolerant to.

Until then, see you next week... if not around town.

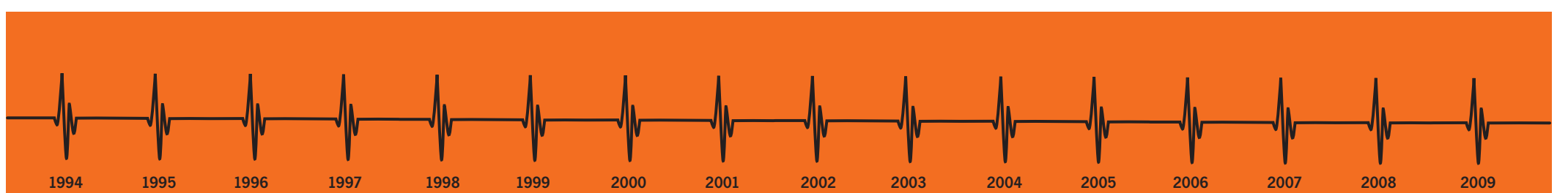
"Fully-Alive Living" offers weekly insights to serve you in taking another step forward in matters of the heart, soul, mind, body, and relationships. With over 20 years of experience and advanced education in working with people of all ages, Tony Myles and his family live in Medina where he serves as the Lead Pastor of Connection Church.

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