

DISCIPLINE

Brent D. Anderson, PhD, PT, OCS
Polestar Pilates President



To truly be healthy one needs to be disciplined. Joseph Pilates was a great believer in discipline. His second guiding principle, Whole Body Commitment, refers to "...having the discipline to maximize one's potential."

What does it mean to be disciplined? All greatness in life is a result of one's discipline. Take for example a great actor, musician, dancer, athlete, engineer, mother or physician. The root of greatness begins with a desire that is successfully executed through discipline.

When it comes to our health as a nation, I believe we have lost the vision; the desire and the discipline to be healthy. We are seeing the highest incidence of adult and childhood obesity, secondary diabetes and heart disease in our history. Cancer is rampant. Almost every adult and even some children, complain of back ache, arthritis and headaches. Why is this so, if our country has such an amazing knowledge bank of evidence based research and readily available health services? Imagine how different our commitment to real health would be, if there were no doctors, no pharmaceuticals, no insurance and all we had was knowledge, as our sole resource for health. We would very quickly, experience an incredible national paradigm shift, towards a healthier lifestyle.

I think we have been duped as a nation to believe that others are responsible for our health and well being. We have come to expect for our government, employers, hospitals and doctors to take care of us. Should we be entitled to health and preventive care because of our lack of commitment and discipline to live healthy lives? We have become a nation dependent on the quick fix. Feel a little sad after a break-up with a girlfriend? "Have an anti-depressant." Having difficulty sleeping because we are overweight, have high blood pressure and consume too much caffeine? "Take a sleeping pill." Overweight because we overindulge and don't exercise, "Get a little liposuction,

take speed...we'll fix you right up." This does not mean that medicines don't have a place, they certainly do, the question I am posing is whether or not we are dealing with the root of our problems or simply putting band aids on them?

As I mentioned above, I am not against medical advances and pharmaceuticals, quite the opposite in fact. I am grateful for all of the advances of modern medicine. What concerns me, is the loss of responsibility that is being taken over one's own health and quality of life. If we desire to be healthy, we should discipline ourselves to eat better, exercise more, screen out risk factors, manage stress, balance work, play and rest and consult with professionals who we trust will guide us into well being of body, mind and spirit.

Many clients ask me, "where do I start?" Begin with any activity that will increase self awareness, like Pilates, yoga, Feldenkrais, Gyrotonic or meditation. This will help us to see where our imbalances are and possibly direct us in the optimal direction for our health. Our reality is not always pleasant, but we need to acknowledge it in order to be able to take ownership of it and work towards changing it.

We must first realize that there really isn't a magic pill that cure everything. It comes down to DESIRE and DISCIPLINE. Choose one issue and tackle it. Don't get overzealous and try to change too many things at once, because that is when we burn out and become discouraged.

If you can afford it in any way possible, find a professional that can help you introduce change into your life, that you can take responsibility for. It will be a challenge, but commit to a six month window to modify a certain behavior and make sure that you stick to it. Keep a journal if needed, to track your progress. This way you will be able to see the extent of the change that has taken place.

Stay disciplined until you have reached your goal. Once you achieve your first goal, you will feel infinitely better and become more aware of other challenges you need to tackle to improve your health. Take responsibility for your own health and accept that discipline is the only way to make true, lasting change. If we sit idle and wait for others to make us healthy, change will never come our way. We must discern our desires, take responsibility, take action and become completely disciplined. LOOK WITHIN.

Brent D. Anderson, PhD, DPT