

The Nutrition Reporter™

EXTRA

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The independent newsletter that reports vitamin, mineral, and food therapies

Reviews of Recent Health Books

We appreciate the many publishers who have sent us review copies of recent health and nutrition books. You can use your internet search engine (e.g., Google) to learn more about the content of these books. To order, we encourage you to first visit nutritionreporter.com, then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the link to amazon.com.

Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey Out of Depression, by James S. Gordon, MD. (Penguin Press, 2008, \$25.95). Early this year I happened to use the word “stuck” to describe how many people are so set in their habits that they seem incapable of creating a better life for themselves. Then I heard about Dr. Gordon’s latest book, *Unstuck*. Gordon is one of the most remarkable physicians I know – a giving person and a humanitarian who has always provided me with a fresher and clearer perspective on issues. The book is about recovering from depression, and Gordon distills the essence of his thinking in the first couple lines: he writes that “depression is not a disease...it is a sign that our lives are out of balance, that we’re stuck.” His writing is eloquent and almost poetic. (Who says that nutrition books can’t capture the heart?) Gordon is an integrative psychiatrist in the best sense of the word, someone who really understands the body-mind connection, and he brings together discussions of nutrition, spirituality, and self-discovery, all parts of the path to rise above depression and gain new insights into oneself. This is a wonderful and especially well-written book.

Clinical Natural Medicine Handbook, by Chris D. Meletis, ND, et al. (Mary Ann Liebert Publishers, 2008, \$99) As the title suggests, this book is written for practicing physicians, and it’s priced for this audience. Although it can be technical at times, the book is also meaningful for the serious students of nutrition and natural health. Its 39 chapters cover a wide range of health issues, including stress and adrenal fatigue, heart disease, cancer, detoxification,

behavior, cognition and memory, vitamin and herbal therapies, and therapeutic enzymes. In the time I’ve had the book, I have found it an excellent reference and rewarding to simply thumb through from time to time. It’s not an A-to-Z guide of diseases or supplements. The book’s strength is its clinical perspective and orientation toward the treatment of many common health problems.

The Fountain: 25 Experts Reveal Their Secrets of Health and Longevity from the Fountain of Youth, edited by Jack Challem (Basic Health Publications, 2009, \$24.95). In this book, 25 physicians, nutritionists, and researchers offer their personal and professional thoughts for living a long and healthy life. The book is almost like an ala carte menu of options that focus largely on eating habits and supplements, but also include discussions of the value of exercise and personal relationships. As the editor, it was fascinating to read both the similarities and differences in views. I wrote one chapter, as well as the introduction and afterword to provide overall context for the information.

Spent: End Exhaustion and Feel Great Again, by Frank Lipman, MD. (Fireside/Simon & Schuster, 2009, \$25) The relationship between nutritional imbalances and deficiencies and fatigue is of great professional interest to me – after all, fatigue is one of the most common of all health complaints. Dr. Lipman, who practices a blend of Western and alternative medicine in New York City, understands that many people simply feel “spent” – physically burned out, overwhelmed by their health problems, and frustrated by the inability of modern medicine to provide any kind of rational path to improvement. That path, of course, doesn’t come from drugs, but from taking control of one’s life. Lipman writes about the aspects of contemporary life that set the stage for feeling spent, including stress, inadequate or irregular sleep habits, a lack of natural light (which influences levels of some hormones), and

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eating too many sugary and high-carb foods. Lipman's six-week plan is a healing plan. The weeks focus consecutively on clear advice to nourish, move, adapt, release, balance, and sustain, which together form an integrated program. Within this plan is advice for eating healthier, sleeping better, and learning simple ways to relax and meditate. The book includes variations of yoga and meditation poses that are easy to follow, even if you are out of shape and not very flexible.

The Healing Power of Meditation, by Gabriel Weiss, MD. (Basic Health Publications, 2008, \$24.95) I suspect the majority of Americans consider meditation an alien practice, something done by Buddhists and counter-culture types. If you can breath deeply, or close your eyes and visualize a calming experience, you can meditate. Meditation can be a way of focusing the mind or simply clearing clutter out of the head. It is a wonderful stress-reducing activity that works within minutes. I think everyone is capable of meditating, but each person must find a comfortable approach. Dr. Weiss translates Eastern concepts of meditation into activities that can be incorporated into your daily life. In the process, he describes how meditation can be included in wholistic treatments of various diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Stop Clutter from Stealing Your Life, by Mike Nelson. (Next Page Books, 2008, \$15.99) Not long ago I met someone I would describe as having a cluttered house but an empty life. That's often the nature of clutter – it takes over your life. Many people are inveterate collectors, or they have difficulty organizing or throwing things away. They fill up their physical surroundings and emotional lives with objects, but the clutter prevents them from seeing or thinking clearly. The author notes in the introduction that the book is about more than just decluttering – it's about balance, and a cluttered house or apartment reflects an unbalanced life. That's all true. But decluttering also helps us think more clearly, and it can be liberating. That's because possessions have a way of possessing their owners. None of this means that you have to adopt the austere life of a monk. It just means you can create a little more room in your home and maybe, just maybe fill the resulting space with something more meaningful.

Orthomolecular Medicine for Everyone: Megavitamin Therapies for Families and Physicians, by Abram Hoffer, MD, PhD, and Andrew Saul, PhD. (Basic Health Publications, 2008, \$19.95) Dr. Hoffer recently passed away at age 92 – mentally sharp until

the very end – and this book is one of his legacies. It was originally published 20 years ago as *Orthomolecular Medicine for Physicians*. He and Dr. Saul updated and expanded the book, modifying the title to encourage consumers to use it as a guide for improving their health. The authors note at the very beginning, "The basis for health is good nutrition. When malnutrition or starvation is present, it is impossible to respond effectively to any medical treatment." Nobel laureate Linus Pauling, PhD, coined the term orthomolecular in 1968, and it essentially means to straighten out the molecules of the body by using optimal levels of nutrients, which provide the chemical basis of our genetics and biochemistry. In this book, Hoffer and Saul discuss the importance of specific nutrients and their use in health problems, including cardiovascular diseases, arthritis, behavioral disorders, and other common health problems. I have always admired the no-nonsense simplicity and clarity of Hoffer's writing, and with his passing I will cherish this book.

Prescription for Drug Alternatives, by James F. Balch, MD, Mark Stengler, ND, et al. (Wiley, 2008, \$24.95) Three-fourths of Americans are taking at least one prescription drug and, incredibly, the average American is taking 14 prescription drugs. I don't take any, so statistically someone else must be taking 28 drugs. And this does not include over-the-counter medications. Nearly all of these drugs cause undesirable side effects that amount to iatrogenic (physician-caused) disease. What's the solution? In this book, Drs. Balch and Stengler cover 23 major health problems, the drugs typically prescribed and their major side effects, and natural alternatives. The alternatives, consisting mostly of dietary and lifestyle improvements, as well as supplements, are less expensive than drugs and have few side effects. They can also help you exercise more control over your health – and help reduce your health care costs. –JC

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