

Planning Your Lifestyle Change

How to create the healthy lifestyle of your choice

by Ingela Berger



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All the links in this booklet are clickable and lead to more information about the current topic.

Choosing a healthy lifestyle

Congratulations, you have made a conscious choice! That is the first step to your new and healthy lifestyle. In fact, it is the most important step. Without choosing we don't get much done in life. Changing your lifestyle is not something you do on your coffee break. It's a long-term process. It's a journey. And as you know, every journey starts with the first step.

You are courageous. I really admire everyone who has the courage to make changes in life. It's so easy to just sit on your behind and let opportunities pass by in front of your eyes. And most people seem to do just that, sadly enough. But you have made a decision not to let the possibilities of life slip through your fingers. I'm glad you have. And I want to try to encourage you to keep working on your lifestyle change, because I know it is so rewarding! It's never too late to create a new lifestyle.

Why change?

Now you have to come up with a plan for your lifestyle change. You have to set some goals. And you have to decide to stick to your goals and act. We will cover those bits in a while. First, I'd like to ask you a question: Why do you want a lifestyle change?

Think about that and try to find an honest answer. It's important that you know the answer to that question, not for me, but for you. If you want a lasting change you need a good reason. Because it's not going to be easy, as I'm sure you know. And when doubts and fears come, and you are almost giving up – you need to remember that reason. It has to be good enough to get you back on track again.

Perhaps you are experiencing a feeling of dissatisfaction or frustration, or being held back by self-imposed limitations. Your self-esteem or your job might make you feel bad about yourself. You may need to lose some weight,

your eating habits could be better. You might be tired or depressed, or you have a lot of stress in your life that you want to handle more wisely. You have head aches or suffer from insomnia. Maybe you want to stop smoking or drinking. Or maybe you have a doctor's diagnosis of some illness that makes you want to or have to change your lifestyle. You may just want to have a long and happy life and blossom and grow as a human being. Whatever your problem is, you can use the information and the resources in this booklet to create a solution and get started on your new lifestyle – a lifestyle that will bring you lots of pleasure and happiness.

Here are some results you can achieve after and during your lifestyle change:

- Increased self-esteem
- Increased energy and vitality
- Physical fitness
- Reduced stress
- Strengthened immune system
- Decreased risk for diseases like cancer, diabetes and heart disease
- Diminished anxiety, headaches, insomnia and depression
- Improved memory
- New knowledge
- More happiness
- Your own way of life

But back to the question: **Why** do you want to achieve this? Why do you want to reduce stress, gain physical fitness, or improve your self-esteem? Why is it important and what will it mean to you? What kind of life will you have when you have reached that goal? It is important that you make yourself aware of what your reason is. If this reason is connected to a desire, it will be a lot easier. Re-experiencing this desire is what will keep you going.

For example, changing your eating habits or exercising habits is not just about losing weight. If we need to lose weight we will most likely do that when we have made a few important changes, but the reason for wanting to lose weight is not the weight loss itself; it is the feeling of well-being and

satisfaction that comes with our new lifestyle. If you want to lose weight (this is only an example and can be applied to any change you want to accomplish), then imagine what it will feel like having reached your goal. Picture the kind of life you will be able to have, the way you will be able to move your body more freely, the way you will look, and how good you will feel about yourself. That feeling should be your desire, your goal and the reason that keeps you going. Hang on to that desire, keep it close to your heart, and remind yourself of it often. You are on your way.

I have gone through many changes in my own life. Some of those I chose, some just happened to me. That's the way life is. And even though I have developed through both kinds of changes, I prefer the changes I have accomplished by making conscious choices, because they make me feel I am in control. I hope you will feel you are in control of YOUR life after reading this through.

This is just an introduction booklet on lifestyle changes. I do not claim to be complete or to cover everything you need to know. But I have included some links to resources that may be helpful to you when you have read this booklet. We all have different needs, and I have made great efforts to find top quality web sites for you, whether your lifestyle change is to be about eating habits, exercise, self-confidence, stress, career, recovering from illness, or something else. Here's to your new and improved lifestyle! Now, let's find out what health really is.

What is health?

Many people have tried to define the word health. When I have studied health communication I have come to realize what a huge subject health really is. It covers nearly everything in life, from eating habits and fitness to empowerment and individual influence in society and politics. So it's not surprising that the definitions vary from person to person depending on what the person in question happens to find most interesting. Here are some of the most important suggestions of modern time:

WHO definition

The World Health Organisation defines health like this:

"The following principles are basic to the happiness, harmonious relations and security of all peoples:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition."

The interesting thing about this definition is that it acknowledges the holistic view, stating that health is not just about the body and its diseases. Health is much more than that.

Another interesting thing is the way WHO connects health with "happiness, harmonious relations and security of all people". This appeals to me as I believe that when we are healthy we are happy.

WHO has been criticized for using the word "complete" in the definition. I agree. Health does not have to be complete well-being in my opinion. A person who has a disease or who is disabled in some way can experience health and think of herself as healthy. Health is a quite individual thing.

Life quality

Some define health as life quality. What is life quality? To answer that question you will have to ask a number of people and you will get a large number of different suggestions. To one person life quality could mean to be driving a motor bike on the country roads of Scandinavia; to somebody else it could mean being able to watch the sunset every evening. To a third person life quality may be baking his own bread and eating it with a cup of tea made from herbs that has been growing in his own garden. To yet another person it could be walking in the park every day, listening to her favourite music on her mp3-player. Life quality could be simple things like putting a new cloth on the kitchen table, placing some fresh flowers on it and lighting a candle on a dark autumn's night. To a person living in a big city, life quality could mean being able to breathe fresh air in the countryside once in a while. Knowing about the environmental problems of this planet today, many people would say life quality is being able to choose natural and organic products, for groceries as well as skin care, cleaning, and washing, or being able to drink fresh water.

I love all kinds of creative arts, and could not imagine life without music, theatre, literature and art, so that's one thing life quality means to me. Some people play an instrument or sing. Others come to listen when somebody else is playing. Both are important and create life quality for the performer as well as the consumer. Looking at a painting, reading a book, or watching a play can stimulate people's imagination, and that is good for our health. So is painting, writing, singing and engaging in any other creative activity. Scientific research is becoming more and more convincing that this is in fact so.

Life quality can be anything that makes you happy, that enriches your life - Having a comfortable and cosy sofa to sit on, having a family, friends, building a sand castle on the beach, walking in the forest, more time for yourself, your interests and hobbies, and so on.

These suggestions all have one thing in common. They make people feel good. Maybe you noticed that many of the examples outlined above do not require a lot of money. And that's just the essence of life quality – it's

not about being rich in the material sense of the word first of all. It's a deeper kind of wealth and it can be much more satisfying than money.

Life quality

- is individual and personal
- can be experienced despite physical or mental illness
- gives a sense of well-being
- cannot always be bought for money

What is wealth? Is it really just about money and material riches? I don't think so. People don't really want money. What we want is to feel happy and satisfied deep in our hearts, and sometimes, but far from always, money can buy us that. Being financially successful is of course a nice thing for many people (although not for all). We can realize some of our dreams when we have money. But money does not come with a happiness or satisfaction guarantee. The real wealth, the great value in life is not about being rich or having a certain position.

Life quality is the way you arrange your life to fulfil your needs and give you the most of life. Whatever your definition of life quality may be, it makes you feel good and it gives your life a meaning. It makes you feel rich in the immaterial sense of the word.

As you are reading this booklet maybe your idea of life quality is to have a lifestyle that includes healthy habits like nutritious food, exercise, good sleep, happiness, and success, having an interesting career, or being able to be all that you can be, in every area of your life. There is always room for improvement. Making a decision to keep improving, one step at a time, is the beginning of life quality.

Health against the odds (The salutogenic view)

The salutogenic perspective, as described by Aaron Antonovsky in his book [Unraveling the Mystery of Health](#) (1987, unfortunately out of print when I am writing this, but I am including the link just in case) tries to understand why people feel good, sometimes despite difficult circumstances. His book is considered essential reading by academic health promoters. When others ask “why do we get sick”, Antonovsky asks “why do we stay healthy”. A survey he did in 1970 showed that 29% of a group of women who had survived the concentration camps were in good general mental health. He didn't just stare at the fact that the figure of the control group was 51%; no, he asked himself: How is it possible that these 29%, after all the unbelievable horror they went through, they could be in good health? Later on he found his answer in the term “*sense of coherence*”, which included the three dimensions *meaningfulness, comprehension, and manageability*. When we experience a sense of coherence in life, when we comprehend the situations and circumstances we are in, when we have ways to manage our situations, and when we find our lives meaningful, we are more likely to stay healthy, even through the hard times we are facing. In other words; when life makes sense, when life has meaning or purpose, and we feel we are in control, we can experience health despite bad odds.

All of these definitions represent a holistic approach to health. Today, most people agree that we have to look at the whole person and her social, psychological, and physical situation when making a diagnosis; and not just the part of her body that happens to show symptoms. Although doctors still tend to be slow in learning this “new” approach, it is gaining ground steadily.

Health creating factors

What makes you feel good? What gives your life a meaning? These are questions we have to ask ourselves when we are planning a lifestyle change. The following factors help us feel good but they are not to be seen as requirements for health. You don't have to live up to them to achieve health and well-being. As we have seen; health, defined as life quality and well-being, can be obtained against all odds, despite broken legs, mental wounds, cancer treatments, difficult or horrific experiences. But these factors, which cover most areas in our lives, all contribute to our health and well-being, and knowing about them helps us set the goals for our lifestyle improvement.

Some of these factors are on a society or workplace level, and are difficult to control for many of us. We need support from our society to reach optimal results. It is important that we take an interest in social and political issues to be able to make changes in all areas of our lives, and on a larger scale. But let's focus on the individual level as it is easier to control. When we realize that we have a great deal of power, we can make a considerable difference.

These are the health creating factors:

- A secure and peaceful society with fair access to service, good health service etc.
- Empowerment, being able to make independent life choices, enjoy influence and leverage in society and work
- Access to other people, friends, family, "social capital", support, social acknowledgement and group belonging
- Love, sex, intimacy, a person to be close to and be yourself with
- A meaningful pursuit, hobbies, interests, creative activity, play
- A good standard of living
- A good self-esteem and self image
- An ability to acknowledge, like and respect other people, and wish them well
- Options/ opportunities to express our personality

- Opportunities to develop and grow as a person, intellectually, psychologically, mentally, socially and spiritually
- Humour, laughter, expressing feelings and thoughts
- A secure, healthy, and stimulating environment free from negative stress (at home, at work/ school, in society)
- Creative arts (theatre, music, literature, art, film, dancing...)
- Cherishing the aesthetic values around us, building good things
- To have, express, and to be acknowledged for talents, gifts, fantasy, imagination, creativity, skill, and knowledge
- Nature, recreation, reflection
- Time for rest, reflection, and contemplation
- Physical activity, exercise habits
- Good eating habits
- Good sleep
- Freedom from addiction to or misuse of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or gambling
- Hereditary characteristics

As you see there is a large number of areas that we can use to implement health and well-being. Most are environmental and can be controlled. Which areas would you like to improve? Choose one or two that you feel are the most important to you in your present situation.

Let's talk more about some different aspects of a healthy lifestyle before we actually start planning. I hope this will help you formulate and verbalize the lifestyle of your choice.

Physical well-being

Eating healthy food, well prepared – that is life quality to me. It hasn't always been that way. As I have already told you, I have gone through changes myself. I used to get a stomach ache after eating meat, especially minced

meat. I excluded all meat except chicken and fish, and I got better immediately. That was the start of a healthier lifestyle, and gradually I have learned more about healthy food and nutrition, and I have discovered a whole new world of delicious and healthy food.

Most people in the western world of today need to change their eating habits. And it can be quite a job if we try to do it all at once. If you just want to make one small improvement I would suggest you exchange all the saturated fat with olive oil, reduce sugar, and eat more vegetables. That would be an important start that you can be proud of. But if you have your mind set on it, and you want to make a total change of your eating habits and explore the pleasures of healthy food - this is what I would suggest that you do:

- Reduce the fat, especially the saturated fat, which is mostly found in meat and dairy products. Exchange the butter and margarine with extra-virgin olive oil. Avoid oils with high percentage of saturated and polyunsaturated fat. Use oils which contain mostly monounsaturated fat. Using the right kinds of fat (with moderation) is more important than reducing the fat in general. Instead of milk you may want to drink yogurt (containing live cultures) which is better for the stomach.
- Eat fish at least twice a week. If you don't like fish, make sure you get enough of the omega-3 fatty acids. One way to do this is to eat flax seed.
- Eat lots of fresh fruits, vegetables, beans, cereals and whole grain.
- Make the vegetables the main part of the meal. Rice, pasta, potatoes or couscous and beans are priority number two. Eat fish, chicken or a small slice of meat with it if you like, but it is not necessary. You will feel better if you exclude the meat and spare yourself the saturated fat.
- Eat soy products regularly (e.g. tofu, tempeh, and miso, or vegetarian beefs made of soy beans). There have been

discussions about soy and its health risks, but the benefits seem to be greater than these supposed risks.

- Drink water with every meal and when you are thirsty.
- Use fresh ginger (the root) and garlic in your cooking. Goes well with nearly everything. Both can be pressed in a garlic press.
- Use fresh and dried herbs in all cooking.
- Reduce the coffee. Preferably switch to green tea. If you drink black tea, replace it partly or completely with green tea.
- Reduce the sugar. Don't use artificial sweeteners. They are not healthier. There is no evidence to suggest that using artificial sweeteners would help you lose weight. Pure sugar is OK (raw sugar is slightly better than white), just use it with moderation. Read package labels for information about sweeteners and other additives.
- Take some vitamin and mineral supplement every day.
- Sweets should be consumed with moderation. Only a few small sweets in the weekend. Dark chocolate is good (but still with moderation because of the sugar). Nuts can be an alternative to sweets (still with moderation).
- Alcohol should be used with moderation if at all. A glass of wine on Saturday evening does no harm if you are not oversensitive.
- Choose ecologically or organically grown products whenever possible.
- Try a day of fasting from time to time to rinse your system. Drink only fruit juices, water and green tea that day.

This plan will lead to a healthier and more fulfilling lifestyle. It will make you lose weight without having to be hungry. Take one step at a time. A small change can make a big difference. You will be rewarded if you are determined to really try. Notice how good you feel after just a couple of weeks with these new habits.

When you follow the advice above you will not need much meat. Protein can be added through beans, soy and seeds for instance. If you exclude the dairy products or some of them, make sure you get enough calcium

through for instance calcium fortified soy milk and orange juice, and through green vegetables. If you exclude meat completely, be sure to get enough vitamin B12 from fortified soy milks or cereals or by taking a supplement.

Of course, you can have that little special treat now and then. The idea is to enjoy and have fun! If you feel like a prisoner you will not enjoy your new habits. But remember, if special treats come too often, they are not special treats anymore.

As I said earlier, changing your eating habits is not just about losing weight. If you want to lose weight, make sure you get the nutrition that your body needs: carbohydrates, some fat and protein, vitamins and minerals. Don't lose weight at any cost. Do it in a healthy way. Get information and knowledge before you go on a diet.

Dr. Andrew Weil has written "Eight weeks to optimum health" - a program for taking full advantage of your body's healing power. I recommend it to anyone who wants to live a healthier life. Dr. Weil has also written "Spontaneous healing" - in my opinion, one of the most important books on health ever written. The book has a holistic view, explains what nutrition is in a simple way and teaches you how to strengthen your immune system and improve your well-being in all areas of your life.

Food can actually be used as medicine towards health, energy and a stronger immune system. There is a lot to learn about that. Julianne Koritz, a registered, licensed dietitian provides advanced nutrition knowledge and guidance in [this email-course](#).

Do you have a problem with emotional eating? You are not alone. Here is a hypnosis download to help you put a stop to your habit:

[Stop Emotional Eating](#)

There is also one for comfort eating:

[Control Comfort Eating with Hypnosis](#)

[Mother Nature](#) natural and environmentally-friendly health and beauty products, vitamins, supplements and more.

[Generation Tea](#) sells fine White, Green, Oolong, Pu-erh, Black and Herbal Teas. They are direct importers of their teas; many are organic teas and high in anti-oxidants.

Let your mind decide your kind of training!

There are thousands and thousands of fitness tips, training techniques, fitness equipments and experts that tell you how to gain fitness and what the best ways are to train your body. It's easy to feel confused and to spend large amounts of money on things that later turn out to be disappointments. And then you might never want to try again.

You don't have to follow other people's ideas of fitness and training. There will always be new trends and fashions in all aspects of life. To gain fitness, the least important thing is caring about the latest outfit or expensive training equipment.

The important thing is to ask yourself these few questions:

What makes me feel good?

What do I like to do?

When am I happy?

Make a personal choice!

After asking yourself these questions you should make your own choice. You need to find your own personal ways to keeping fit. If you don't want to go to the local gym or join the football club, maybe you prefer putting on some good music and creating a new dance of your own in your living room a couple of times per week? Or maybe you'd want to play hide-and-seek in the park with your next door neighbours every Friday? Let your mood be the driving force! Discover the feeling of joy and pleasure that comes with moving your body! What makes you feel happy? Don't ask yourself what others might like. Find your own way! Have fun! And be brave enough to try new things that may enrich your life!

To be successful and reach your goals you have to choose a training technique that you really feel happy with. Exercise at home or in a gym, go swimming, biking, skiing, skating or whatever you prefer. Go for a long walk, dance, play a ball game. The important thing is not what you choose, but that you do choose.

When we take care of body and soul, by giving them the nutrition and the exercise they need; we create life quality.

If you want to change your exercise habits I recommend:

[Global Health and Fitness](#) - GHF - Award-winning online fitness program

[Free Fitness e-Book](#) - "Ultimate Fitness Secrets Revealed"

[Free Fitness Analysis](#) - and free e-book from GHF.

(Use [THIS](#) link and you will get yet another free e-book from GHF.)

By making changes on the outside, like changing eating habits or exercising, we can also experience a change on the inside. There is a connection between body and soul, which we can take advantage of to accomplish things we want in our lives. If you want a deeper change, which includes your personality and mindset, and you want to get in touch with your true self, then you might need to learn how to use those outer means to accomplish change on the inside. I have written more about that in my book ["The Role of Your Life"](#).

Mental well-being

To stay healthy we need to have time for reflection. Our stressed out society with all its demands makes it difficult for us to stay balanced and calm. Don't try to be the perfect employee, the perfect partner or the perfect parent. Stress can cause mental as well as physical health problems. Start with reducing the unnecessary stress, and then learn to manage the necessary in a way that is good for your general health.

Stress management

I do believe that society and employers must take their responsibility to reduce stress. People need time and energy for more than just their duties at work. Life is much more than a career. We must never stop demanding better working conditions. However, that's a topic that would fill a whole book in itself. Let's focus on what we can do on the individual level:

- Say no
- Exercise on a regular basis
- Eat healthily
- Sleep well and enough
- Take a break often
- Learn to relax
- Delegate (Are you really irreplaceable?)
- Lower your demands
- Be good to yourself
- Laugh! Have fun!
- Try to get away and get some time to yourself now and then

[Mind Tools](#) is an excellent resource for stress management and career development. Their [Stress Management Masterclass](#) teaches you how to tackle the deep structural problems that cause stress in your working life. The course helps you to cope with work overload, manage performance stress, build defences against stress, avoid or recover from burnout, and more.

Breathe!

To conquer stress, and for your general well-being, I would advise you to learn to use your full capacity of breathing. Did you know that 70% of our body's waste products are eliminated through breathing? 20% leave the body through our skin, and only 10% through faeces and urine. Most people

are unaware of how much it means to have a healthy breathing. We can improve our health by breathing effectively. Susanna Ehdin, Ph.D., writes about this in her best-selling book "The self-healing human". She considers deep-breathing a main ingredient in a long and healthy life.

Sleep!

Sleep tight! The most common reason for sleeping problems is lack of exercise. My best tip for better sleeping habits is a short walk before bedtime. Other tips: Don't eat a full meal close to sleeping time. Let at least one hour pass after eating the last meal of the evening. Let some fresh air into the bedroom before you go to bed. Avoid pondering about difficult problems and worries close to bedtime.

Some useful help can be found at [Dream Essentials](#).

Laugh!

Laughter and humour are important factors in creating health. You can explore the theory of **laughter therapy** and apply it to your life to boost your immune system and relieve tension in this [Self-Healing Expressions email course](#) lead by Lynne Shaw. Jacki Kwan, humour therapist, says about the course: *"Lynn Shaw has invited us to use laughter, a gift we all have at our disposal, in our daily lives. She offers information, inspiration and instruction on how and why we need to accept and celebrate this gift."*

Other recommended resources on stress:

[StressLess](#) offer over 1460 stress reducing products and programs, e-counselling and coaching. One of my favourites. Great site.

[Dream Essentials ~ Health and Rejuvenation](#)

[Massage products](#)

A cure against depression:

Depression strikes most of us and it can make us paralysed. Therefore it is essential that we do not let it get too much influence on our lives. Practise this cure on a day off.

- Have a healthy and balanced breakfast in your dressing gown.
- Take a warm shower or sauna.
- Rub your skin with body lotion and your feet with foot crème.
- Put on some comfortable clothes.
- Go for a long walk.
- When you come back home, make yourself a cup of hot tea on herbs as St. John's Wort, Rose-Mary or Lavender.
- Make yourself comfortable in your favourite armchair.
- Read a good book or magazine.
- Listen to your favourite music. (It should be cheerful.)
- Make sure you are warm. Slippers and a blanket may come handy.
- Be sure to have fresh air in the room. Take some deep breaths to fill your lungs.

This cure can also be used against stress. Just choose calm and relaxing music instead.

If you need more advice, or you need natural supplements against depression, stress, or to improve your general health, visit [Xtend-Life](#).

To improve your self confidence:

What does it mean to be self confident? Self-confidence.co.uk describes this very well: "...Not arrogant, not loud and annoying, just easily, calmly confident about who you are and what you can do.... Confidence is much more about tolerating uncertainty: being cool with not knowing what is going to happen." Great self confidence can be learned. Some tips:

- Write down your positive achievements, all that you can remember; educations, jobs, loves and relationships (even if they ended, you still achieved them), friendships, children, driving licence... Look at what you already have and realize you have done rather well.
- Write down good things that others have said about you. Read through old documents from former employers or teachers that state all your strong sides. Maybe you forgot?
- Make plans. Ask yourself what can be done. What can you change to make things better? Write down precise goals and write a step-by-step plan on how you intend to achieve your goals.
- Decision. Make a decision that tomorrow you will start dealing with the first step of your plan.

When you read what you have written you will realize that you have grown and developed over the years. That also means that you can grow and develop further.

I recommend you take a look at Self-confidence.co.uk. They offer a free e-mail course on self confidence, I have read it and it's very good. Or maybe you will like this hypnosis download even better:

[Build your self esteem now!](#)

Finally, StressLess have a complete [Feel better kit wellness program](#), which covers all areas in health and lifestyle change. The program is developed by a renowned team of psychologists, physicians, nutritionists, physiologists, and seasoned executives.

Personal development and self improvement

What do you want to be? Who do you want to be? Where do you want to go? What kind of life do you want to live? How can you get what you want from life?

As we go through life we learn things, we develop. We keep moving on to explore new domains in life, new directions and experiences, and new ways of looking at the world. We must never stop learning new things, and trying to see things from new angles, putting ourselves into the eyes of other people. When we constantly try new things, create new habits, broaden our views, we grow and feel good.

Career

To stay healthy it's essential that we are happy with what we are doing. All too many people have jobs they don't particularly like. Many people stay on jobs they dislike for many years, maybe a lifetime. Whether we have the right job or not, we need to listen to our inner voice and act when our body or soul tells us something is wrong.

If you want more than a career change... if what you really want is a meaningful life change - Discover what it takes to create a more meaningful, balance life doing work that feeds your soul. [Changing Course](#) is a resource-rich site that features free articles, helpful advice and links, support, and inspiration to help you find your life mission and live it.

[Making dreams happen](#) is an audio program from Changing Course by career-change experts Barbara Sher, Barbara Winter and Valerie Young. In this superb course they will help you "tap into your deepest passions, hopes, and dreams", and then "explore the practical matter of turning those passions, hopes, and dreams into a livelihood". Read more about it [here](#).

Another excellent resource – for goal setting and stress management (including a tool for managing work overload) is [Mind Tools](#). You can learn about time management, communication skills, decision making, problem solving and more.

Mind and thoughts

Mental training is an exciting field that has lots to offer anyone who wants to accomplish changes in life. By taking advantage of the power of our thoughts and our minds we can create health and well-being. We have only just begun to explore the capacity of the brain. Using the metaphor of a computer that can be reprogrammed makes it a little easier to grasp the possibilities that brain science opens up for us.

"As A Man Thinketh" by James Allen is the old classic on the subject, but still current and well worth reading. You can download a free copy of it [here](#).

"Holosync" is a program for self improvement from [Centerpointe](#) Research Institute that works in quite a profound way. I haven't tried it yet, but from reading the information on their site and some extra information I asked them for, I think this program could be a very effective tool for changing and improving your life. The program is based on scientific brainwave technology, and uses sound frequencies to stimulate the brain. This stimulation causes the brain to create new neural pathways and increase the communication between left and right hemispheres of the brain. It also increases the production of pleasure-causing endorphins, and the result is a number of benefits including lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, increased learning ability, improved focus and concentration, and less fear, anxiety, anger, and depression. The program slowly adapts the brain to these changes over a period of time, which usually is months or years, if the user wishes to continue the process (most do according to Centerpointe). So, when one level is reached you carry on to the next, and you get new audio CD:s to listen to. The difference between the levels is the frequency of the sound. Gradually the frequency is lowered to deeper frequencies. [See for yourself](#).

[Immrama Institute](#) has similar products based on brainwave audio technology, but they claim the process does not have to be a multi-level program. They have developed what they call a "harmonically layered technology", which is one factor that makes their CDs different from other "binaural audio products". The two products are similar in the type of results listeners can achieve. They both have the same benefits, including

whole brain synchronization, neural stimulation/development, and deep relaxation.

One way to grow, which I have come to value highly, is to read books and listen to tapes, CD:s or mp3-files with authors and experts in the field of self-help and personal growth. When I do this, I am making a personal choice as to what I let into my life and my mind. This is not brain washing, because brain washing means that somebody else controls you and your mind. When you are in control, you can feed yourself with good things like books or motivational speeches on building self-esteem, overcoming procrastination, or managing stress, because you know that you need it, and you have chosen to do so for your own personal growth.

I usually kill two birds with one stone and listen while I am out walking or exercising, or while I'm preparing dinner.

Recommended resources for listening:

[Jim Rohn's special collection](#)

[Nightingale-Conant](#)

[mp3motivators.com](#)

[AudioMotivation.com](#)

Another effective way to develop and grow could be the use of hypnosis or self-hypnosis. Hypnosis is similar to meditation; you are in full control and can use this state of mind to accomplish and implement changes that you yourself choose. This is another way to take advantage of the power of your mind. Roger Elliott of [Hypnosis Downloads.com](#) states that "*hypnosis is moving **out** of the realm of wizards, magicians and magic and **into** the clear light of modern science - exactly where it belongs*". I agree. There is nothing magic about it and it can be very effective. Self-hypnosis can help you solve problems and improve your performance. You can use it as a tool to improve your well-being. Roger Elliott also says: "*Hypnosis is simply the deliberate use of the **imagination**, paralleled with strong focus and relaxation*". You are in control.

Hypnosis resources:

[Hypnosis Downloads.com](#)

This whole book is really about improving ourselves. What can you improve? What makes you happy?

Self improvement is about making conscious choices. We have the power to choose what we let into our lives. We can choose what we will be influenced by. If we don't choose, chance will choose. If we don't take control, something else will control us, like other people or maybe "fate". If we don't make conscious choices, we will be influenced by whatever comes our way.

Everything we consume with our senses has an influence on our lives. Be careful with what you let into your life. It's **your** life. The only person who can get you where you want is you. The only person who can create a good lifestyle for you is you. The sense of coherence that Antonovsky talked about can be improved. You have the power to make changes.

Choose your actions, your words, your thoughts, and choose as much as possible what you will allow to enter into your life; what to read, what TV shows to watch, what to listen to, and so on. Everything you invite into your life will mould you. No one else can decide what you want to bring into your life. No one else can give you the lifestyle you desire. Be in charge. Take control.

[Believe in yourself and fulfil your potential!](#)

[Science for Success](#) – They have a video series, "Mind your brain – Greater Achievements by the Numbers", that has remarkable information about the brain, and teaches you how you can benefit from it.

Creative arts

Music, theatre, dance, film, literature, and art are fantastic ways to grow and develop if we let them into our lives. Scientific research is becoming more and more convincing that the creative arts do in fact have a positive influence on our health. It doesn't matter so much whether you are the performing artist or the audience or consumer.

The arts yield life quality and well-being. Listen to your favourite music, go to the theatre, sing in a choir, or join a painting class. Whatever you prefer, fill your life with the energy and joy that comes from the creative arts.

[The spiritual cinema circle](#) is a different kind of DVD club.

Your goal – the lifestyle of your choice

Goal setting can be a very pleasant thing when your goal is something you really want. But it is never easy to reach your goals. You have to work, sometimes work hard to reach them. You might have to change a habit or two, or maybe more than two. Habits are hard to implement, and hard to break. Your current habits took time to put into practise. That also applies to your new ones, but once you have made them a habit, they will be hard to break, just like the old ones.

You can choose your habits. Your habits are your choice. You are in control of your life. You can create the lifestyle you desire by making conscious choices. If you do not choose, that is a choice too; so take control and start moving in the direction you want to go.

The action plan

I will show you a plan to follow. The plan consists of ten steps:

1. Identify your problem
2. If there is more than one – prioritize (you can't change everything at once)
3. Know what you want
4. Know why you want it
5. Set your goals (Make an action plan)
6. Identify your resources
7. Decide methods and strategies
8. Decide to stick to the plan
9. Act!
10. Reward yourself when you have reached a goal

We have already covered the first four on the list. Now, let's focus on the fifth step of this plan: Set your goals (or make an action plan). Goal setting can be explained as an itinerary in three parts. The first part is **where you are now**. The second part is **where you want to be**. The third part is the **action** that will lead you to where you want to be.

So, first you need to know what you want, where you want to go. Your goal must be defined very specifically, in detail. If you want to lose weight, say "My goal is to lose 10 kilos (about 22 pounds) and be able to walk and run easily like I used to" instead of "My goal is to lose weight". If you want to improve your self-esteem, don't say "My goal is to improve my self-esteem". Say for example "My goal is to be able to speak in public without blushing and to get rid of my stage fright". Be specific and exact. This will help you measure your success, and when you look at your written goals at a later date, it will be easy for you to see what you have accomplished.

Like I said earlier, you also need to know **why** you want to reach that specific goal. If you don't, you will never be able to motivate yourself to accomplish it. **Why** do you want that change? What is your driving force? Why is it important to you?

Next you have to think about **how** you are going to achieve your goal. What method or strategy are you going to use? What inner and outer resources do you have that you can use? This is where your action plan comes in.

Open a Word document or get a piece of paper. Make a number of columns for your main goals. (If you have three goals, make three columns, if you have one goal; use the whole space for it). At the top, write down your main goals, for example: *Speak in public with calm and confidence, Stop smoking, eat healthy food every day, walking 45 minutes every day, or start a new satisfying and interesting career.* Now write down the main reason you want to reach your goal. This is to motivate you and remind you of what a good life you will have when you have reached your goal. The main reason should express your desire to achieve your goal, and it should be formulated in terms of feelings; for example: *"I am going to feel good about myself and enjoy my own company as well as the company of other people"*. Re-experiencing this desire is what will keep you going.

Breaking your goal down into smaller goals will make it easier for you to keep working on it. So, below each main goal, write a small goal, something you wish to accomplish rather soon. Decide a date when you want to have reached each specific goal, and write it down. Make the date soon enough to make you work hard, and late enough to make you feel it is realistic to think you will have reached the goal by this date. Then write down a second goal for every main goal. This is step two in your action plan. Write a date for it. For example: let's say your main goal is to walk 45 minutes every day. So you write as your first step: "walk 10 minutes every day" and set the date within one week. Then you should, as a suggestion, increase the time with 5 or 10 minutes every week, and set the second goal to "walk 15 minutes every day", and your final goal could be reached within approximately nine weeks. Do the same thing with all the goals that you want to achieve.

Also, write down exactly how you are going to reach your goal. Plan your strategy, and make use of your resources. You do have some, and it doesn't have to be money.

Your plan could look something like this:

<p>Main goal: Losing 5 kilos and being able to walk and run easily like I used to.</p> <p>My reason: I am going to feel strong, proud, and happy and I will get my energy back when I reach my goal. My self confidence will be stronger and I will feel much better and look good.</p> <p>How: By walking 45 minutes every day and replacing saturated fat with olive oil and reducing sugar.</p> <p>Resources: My new shoes, the forest, comfortable training clothes, my mp3-player, a water bottle, olive oil...</p> <p>My reward: When I have reached my main goal I will buy myself a new...</p>	<p>Date: 21 December</p>
<p>Step 4: Walk 40 minutes a day</p> <p>Step 3: Walk 30 minutes a day. No candy or sweet drinks until the main goal is reached.</p> <p>Step 2: Walk 20 minutes a day. No sugar in my coffee and tea. Eat smaller portions.</p> <p>Step 1: Walk 10 minutes a day. Stop using saturated fat (as far as it is possible).</p>	<p>Date: 14 December</p> <p>Date: 1 December</p> <p>Date: 14 November</p> <p>Date: 1 November</p>

Personally I prefer to write the goals from the bottom up, so that the first goal comes at the bottom, and the others closer to the top, but you can do it any way you like, as long as you can read and follow the plan. Your action plan can be applied to any area of your life that you want to change or

improve. When you have written this plan in detail you must make a decision to act. No action means no change, no result. In your plan you have stated what steps you will take and exactly how you will do that. Stick to the plan.

Don't forget to reward yourself every time you have reached a goal. This will encourage you to keep going. Be good to yourself, but stay focused on the plan.

Don't give up. Follow your plan, and don't rush it. Don't change everything in one week. You will be exhausted and give up the whole idea. Stick to your plan, if it seems to be too difficult for you or if it doesn't work, then make necessary adjustments and start again.

If people around you aren't supportive and encouraging, don't tell them about your goals. You don't need to be discouraged. If you want to tell someone about your lifestyle changes, tell someone who you think will support you and believe in you.

You are on your way. Keep working on it. Be persistent and you will succeed.

Some days may be harder than others. To stay motivated, here is an audio file from Hypnosis Downloads.com:

[Boost your motivation now!](#)

Josh Hinds and Andy OBryan have a web site that gives you new, inspiring audio messages of motivation and personal development that will drive you to succeed both at home and at work. It's called, appropriately enough, [AudioMotivation.com](#).

Summary

To create a personal and healthy lifestyle you have to make a plan that includes every aspect of your life that you want to change. When the plan is down on paper, you must act. No change will occur without action.

Implement each new habit slowly. You can't change everything at once. It is a process that needs time and patience. But if you are motivated, with persistence – you will reach your goals.

Finally, I would like to share with you my own best tips for a healthy lifestyle. My 15 health tips cover many of the areas we have been talking about in this booklet:

1. Refuse stress! Miss the bus rather than run!
2. Learn a relaxation technique and use it once a week at least (include breathing exercises).
3. Go for a walk every day. It will help you unwind.
4. Drink water with every meal and when you are thirsty.
5. Eat and drink healthily every day. Special treats only on weekends. If you easily gain weight: eat SMALL portions.
6. Choose an exercise technique that suits you, and practice it once a week at least.
7. Go to a professional masseur once a month at the very least. Or exchange services with your partner or friend, read a book about massage and practice it.
8. Stop smoking.
9. Sleep enough and well. (The most common reason to sleeping problems is lack of exercise.)
10. Get to know yourself, and realise you are worth a good life.
11. Look around you - what can be changed in your life and your environment to make you feel better?
12. Keep developing - learn new things, try different paths in life.
13. Be good to yourself. Let ambition rest sometimes.
14. Think positively about other people and wish them well!
15. Do things that you love. Enjoy life!

On my web site, [Lifestyle Plans](#) you can find more information and ideas on health, personal development, lifestyle changes, and career choices. If you want to get in touch with me there is a form on the site for you to use on the "About Me" page. Any questions or opinions are always welcome. I promise to reply to you as soon as I can.

I also invite you to subscribe to my ezine [Lifestyle Possibilities](#), if you haven't already. It will give you useful tips and new ideas on personal development and health and lifestyle topics. The ezine is free of charge.

I hope you have found this booklet helpful. For your convenience I have arranged the resource links by category below. I wish you a healthy, happy and fulfilling life!

Angela Berger



Resources and recommendations

General health:

[Shop for Health products at Gaiam.com!](#)

[Xtend-Life.com](#)

[Feel better kit wellness program](#)

Stress/relaxation:

[Mind Tools' Stress Management Masterclass](#)

[StressLess](#) – Over 1460 stress reducing products and programs. E-counselling and coaching. One of my favourites. Great site.

[Dream Essentials](#) – health and rejuvenation.

[Massage products](#)

Food and nutrition:

[Shop Organic at Mother Nature.com](#)

[Lower your cholesterol without dangerous drugs](#)

[Calorie Chart](#) – The new calorie chart and diet solution

[Generation Tea](#)

Fitness:

[Global Health and Fitness](#) – Award-winning online fitness program

[Free Fitness e-Book](#) – Ultimate Fitness Secrets Revealed

[Free Fitness Analysis](#) – and free e-book.

(Use [THIS](#) link and you will get yet another free e-book from GHF.)

[Shop for Yoga and Fitness products at Gaiam.com!](#)

Personal development:

[Changing Course](#) – a great resource for finding your true calling

[Self-confidence.co.uk](#)

[AudioMotivation.com](#)

[Self-Healing Expressions](#) - provides holistic and alternative approaches towards health, wellness and living; and is set up to deliver these healing messages - or lessons of wellness – to kindred spirits via e-mail.

[Jim Rohn's website](#)

[CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS, CHANGE YOUR LIFE](#) - Download a FREE e-book of James Allen's "As A Man Thinketh" - the book that's changed the life of millions.

[Science for Success](#)

[Mind Tools](#)

[Immrama Institute](#)

[Nightingale-Conant](#)

[mp3motivators.com](#)

[Centerpointe](#)

[The spiritual cinema circle](#)

[Laughter for the healing heart](#) – a powerful resource!

[Discovering Your Life Purpose: Living the Life You Were Born to Live](#)

[More Power to You: Personal Power Through Self-Awareness](#)

[Hypnosis Downloads.com](#)

[Shop for Mind and Spirit products at Gaiam.com!](#)

Stop smoking:

[Final Smoke](#)

Books:

[Mind/Body Nutrition](#)

The self-healing human, Sanna Ehdin

[Unraveling the Mystery of Health](#)

[Barnes & Noble.com](#)

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About the author

Ingela Berger was born just outside Stockholm, Sweden, where she still lives with her husband and youngest son. She has schooling in theatre directing and acting, university studies in history of art, history of ideas, leadership psychology, and health communication. She has been working as a director, translator, arts and culture administrator, course leader, and at a travel agency.

Since childhood Ingela has been engaged in theatre, music (she writes her own songs), art, and literature, always following her heart and peeking round the next corner to see what else there is to conquer in life. Through some difficult times, including the loss of her 15 year-old son, she learned that life should be lived fully instead of being wasted on things that do not really matter in the long run. Personal development and life quality are

central themes to her as she now is dipping her toes into the "self-improvement ocean", and she brings her knowledge from the art world and her life experience with her when encouraging others to grab the possibilities and create a fulfilling and healthy lifestyle.

In her latest e-book "[The Role of Your Life](#)" she utilizes her theatre knowledge to create a unique method for personal development and lifestyle changes. Visit her web site: www.lifestyleplans.com.

Disclaimer:

I do not guarantee that you will be successful or healthy by reading this booklet. Every individual is different and general advice can of course not be applied by anyone. Following the advice is on your own responsibility. Before you begin any weight loss or exercise program, or if you have physical or mental symptoms or a disease, you should seek a doctor's advice as a complement to the advice in this booklet. Remember that natural medication and herbs, just like any other medication, can be strong or have side-effects, although taken in small quantities they are not generally harmful.

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