

AMERICAN INDIAN

Living™

It's
NATURAL to
Trust

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CONTAINER
Gardening

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NATURAL STRATEGIES
for **BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL**

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TRUST

Letter from the Publisher



As I went through my day today I realized how much I trust. I trusted the weatherman and his report for the day. I trusted the water company to provide clean water as I showered and readied for breakfast. I trusted that the farmers didn't use harmful cancer-causing chemicals on the food I ate. I trusted my Creator, that He was listening, that He cares for me and would consider my prayer to be productive, safe, healthy and helpful to others during this day. I trusted my spouse as I left for work. I

trusted the other drivers to follow the laws. My day was full of trust.

At the end of this day I reviewed and found that my faith and trust had increased for everything and and everyone (except the weatherman), but especially my Creator. Throughout the day I encountered numerous situations of stress in business, safety in travel (near-missed accidents by others), and the enjoyment of nature. My Creator showed I can trust Him in all things. I developed new friends as I do every week. All these relationships begin with a level of trust and grow as we share, work together, and depend on each other in some way.

Can we make it though the day without trust? What would life be like without trust? What would hope in our lives be without trust? Do people reach a point where life loses meaning; when we lose trust in others and ourselves? Loss of hope follows close behind. Who can have hope when you can trust nothing?

Our youth, too, often lose trust in what they are told, in friendships, in direction and in hope. This leads to suicide. Too many members lose trust in the future and hope and they turn to alcohol and drugs. Our families need to find more trust in their days and lives.

We trust and hope that this issue of *American Indian Living* can give inspiration and the hope needed to encourage the building of trust in our lives and a trust in a higher power.

ne' sgeñ·noñ' naesaihwiyosdik goñdahgwih

Robert Burnette
Onondaga

AMERICAN INDIAN Living™

Volume 7, Issue 1

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TRUST



Health is an issue that inspires us to eat healthier and be more active, but did you know that trust is also vitally important to your health? You may wonder, “What in the world does trust have to do with my health?” Quite a lot, actually. The trust that affects your health is trust in the Creator Himself.

Trust in our Creator is developed the same way as it is with any other person: through a close personal relationship with the individual. Trust means to have faith and reliance in someone. Many studies show that people who trust in the Creator have increased health and happiness. A study by a Gallup Spiritual Index found that a whopping 70% of Americans believe their lives have meaning and purpose because of their faith, and a majority of Americans “find meaning in life through faith and spirituality.”





Trust + Wellbeing

Trust in the Creator allows us to more easily deal with spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and social issues. Dr. Bernie Seigel, a Yale University physician and author of the best-selling book, *Love, Medicine and Miracles*, works with cancer patients to help them experience the blessings of love and other positive emotions. He writes that “unconditional love is the most powerful stimulant of the immune system. The truth is: love heals.”

Put another way, even our cells respond positively when we feel love. *Prevention* magazine found that “love appears capable of sparking healthy biological reactions in much the same way as good food and fitness.”

Other research confirms the power of love between our Creator and mankind:

- Higher self-esteem
- Higher levels of self-efficacy (sense of mastery)
- Less depression
- Less physical disability
- Greater self-rated health

Families experience incredible health from love and trust. Harvard University conducted a longitudinal study on students who reported receiving love from their parents. Thirty-five years later, the study revisited those students and discovered that warmth and closeness between the students and their parents were directly related to the reduction of morbidity of several chronic diseases diagnosed in midlife, such as coronary artery disease, hypertension, duodenal cancer and alcoholism. In fact, students who said they had loving relationships with their parents even had lower rates of cancer mortality.

Developing Trust

When we care about others, we show love. Love is a powerful agent of wellness and healing that unlocks our potential to live our best life despite challenges, setbacks or disappointments. We can accept our Creator’s love for us and help and support someone who needs our love. Love heals and transforms as we share it with others.

Praying is the most common form of worship and data from various surveys show that the proportion of those who report praying to the Creator has remained at around 90% for the past 50 years. Frequent prayer is associated with better health, emotional well-being, along with lower levels of psychological distress. Researchers have found this to be true irrespective of ethnic or group or religious denomination in a variety of longitudinal studies.

Our personal worship could be in the form of singing praises, praying or attending a church service, and when performed regularly, “attending religious services increases chances for living longer,” according to Dr. David B. Larson, President of the National Institute for Health Care Research. Church services provide opportunities for social connections and support, a place where you can find comfort, forgiveness and meaning in life from your faith. This support system can help people cope during times of stress because trusting relationships give a sense of love and belonging that are essential to enjoying life.

“Unconditional love is the most powerful stimulant of the immune system. The truth is: love heals.”

– Dr. Bernie Seigel





Trusting and loving other people also plays a big part in helping your body to heal.

Trust + Coping

Several studies demonstrate that faith is the single most effective coping strategy we may have when dealing with loss events, especially the death of someone we love. Sadly, there was a 400% rise in teenage suicides in the U.S. from 1950-1990. More than 60 scientific studies have found that there is a significant relationship between people who practice religion or identify themselves as religious, and a reduced risk of suicide. In fact, these people have 85% lower rates than those who do not claim any religious activities or beliefs. In other words, the more we trust in our Creator, the greater peace, improved immune system and more meaningful relationships we have, all leading to less anxiety.

Trust + Relationships

Trusting and loving other people also plays a big part in helping your body to heal. A study in the 1994 *Journal of the American Medical Association* reviewed pain medications from the previous 25+ years, and found an interesting connection between a patient's pain level and their trust in their physician: patients who had more trust in their physicians experienced less pain and greater results from their medication than patients who trusted less.

When you are with a person you trust, your brain releases a chemical called oxytocin, an amazing hormone that is responsible for the feelings of well-being associated with interacting with close friends. This "trust hormone" helps you to interact and open up with others, and it also inhibits the stress hormone cortisol.

Trust + Healing

Trust that has a foundation in spiritual or religious activities consistently predicts a lower risk of alcohol and drug abuse. Numerous research studies have found that people who are more religious have lower alcohol use/abuse, including the high risk group of adolescents and young people. Alcoholics

Anonymous (AA) invokes a higher power to help alcoholics recover from addiction, and people who attend AA meetings are more likely to remain abstinent after inpatient or outpatient treatment.

Forgiveness is a powerful component of trust. After all, your ability to trust God comes from the fact that He has first forgiven you. By learning to forgive others, you'll actually be doing your health a big favor! People who are able to forgive and move away from past hurts are freeing themselves from carrying the heavy burdens of hatred, resentment, and bitterness. Researchers have found that when subjects were encouraged to think forgiving thoughts, their stress response was diminished. For example, you are less likely to turn to alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism when you have forgiven the hurt and pain caused by another person.

Experiencing Trusting Relationships

How can you experience this love and trust and improve your health?

- Set aside a time every day to be with the Creator and your family
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Surround yourself with a healing, health-promoting environment
- Have an active mind and body
- Trust fully in God
- Enjoy interpersonal relationships and serving others
- Have a positive outlook
- Eat for strength, vigor and health

Why do these choices matter? When we trust our Creator with our plans, hopes and dreams, everything we do becomes an attempt to improve our health and well-being, and the health and well-being of those around us.

Trusting others will help you to be the best you can be. A trusting relationship with our Creator allows us to relinquish our worries and challenges while connecting to a community of faith. ■



Adapted from CREATION Health (Florida Hospital Mission Development, 2014). Used with permission.



CONTAINER Gardening

BY SHERI GREGORY

Everywhere I have lived as an adult, I have tried to make room to grow things by immediately planning a garden. Through the years, the challenges of growing my own vegetables in upstairs apartments, rental properties, and grass-manicured neighborhoods have provided me with both successes and failures.

For instance, I learned that it is hard to grow enough corn on a second-story balcony to get proper cross-pollination, and that some tiny plant starts will need a remarkably large container before the end of summer!

Guidelines FOR CHOOSING THE SIZE of the Growing Container

SIZE	DEPTH OF SOIL	PLANT SUGGESTIONS
EXTRA SMALL 1/2 GALLON	6 inches or less	Lettuce, Spinach, Radish
SMALL 1-2 GALLONS	6-10 inches	Carrot, Onion, Peas
MEDIUM 2-5 GALLONS	10-16 inches	Bean*, Beet, Cabbage, Cucumber*, Eggplant, Pepper, Potato, Summer Squash*
LARGE 6-10 GALLONS	18-24 inches	Tomato*, Winter Squash*, Pumpkin*, Melon*

**These plants may need extra support or room for vines.*

However, there are ways to have a bountiful harvest from plants grown in small places that do not require digging up the yard. The rewards of having the convenience of healthy produce at the back door are numerous, and the taste and freshness of homegrown vegetables cannot be surpassed. The anticipation of watching a tiny plant grow into an edible piece of goodness reaffirms patience and is one of the great miracles of life.

Seeds and plants will grow just about anywhere, but giving them close to ideal conditions enhances the health of the plants and provides the best yields. Seed packets and plant tags provide additional growing tips. Here are five considerations when growing in this nontraditional method:

Containers—Containers can be any shape: square, round, rectangle, long or wide. They can be made of plastic, wood, or fabric. Try finding fun patterns, designs, or colors that reflect your personality, especially if your containers are indoors. Just about any container that has excellent drainage will work as it is important that

water is able to drain from the bottom. Small containers must have at least one drainage hole while larger containers should have multiple holes (easy to add if needed). If the container is going to be sitting flush to the surface of the ground, then make side holes near the bottom.

The type of plants you will be growing will determine how deep the soil needs to be for optimum root growth. The bigger the pot, the better for your plants.

Listed above are suggested soil depths for growing common vegetables.

Soil—The use of a lightweight growing medium is an essential factor for growing plants in containers. Using a very light commercial soil, such as seed-starting mix, is ideal when mixed with organic compost. If you are planting in a large container, make sure your soil is formulated for that size. Some gardeners also add a generous amount of perlite (little pieces of baked volcanic material). This very light soil mixture improves water retention and makes it easier to move large containers. Additionally, ensuring that the soil is free of chemical fertilizers and pesticides will

give you confidence of healthy produce. Plants grown in containers will benefit from an organic fertilizer and/or compost at regular intervals in the growing process.

Plants—Certain varieties of vegetables have been specifically developed for container growing, such as tomatoes marketed as “patio” plants. However, if provided optimal conditions such as sun, water, support, and soil depth, most vegetables should grow successfully. Some plants do better when grown directly from seeds, such as lettuce, greens, beans, squash, cucumber, and pumpkins. For others, including tomato, eggplant, pepper, and melons, it is best to begin with already established plants.

Water—Plants growing in containers will need more water than their growing-in-the-ground counterparts. During hot summer days, additional watering may be necessary if rain is not abundant. A one- or two-inch layer of mulch on top of the soil will help with water retention and suppress weeds. Chemical-free mulches such as grass clippings and shredded leaves work well in addition to being free and easy to obtain.



Location – For most vegetable plants the more sun the better, especially morning sun. However, if growing in a very hot location, afternoon shade may help with water retention. Greens like lettuce and spinach are exceptions that enjoy partial shade and can be planted beneath taller plants. Some plants will need support, trellising, or a place for vines to trail. Additionally, containers placed on elevated surfaces, such as picnic/patio tables have the advantage of minimizing the gardener’s need to bend! Although not required, having flowers nearby is a bonus for attracting pollinators and delighting the gardener.

As mentioned, frequent watering is essential with this type of gardening so consider the proximity of the water source. Also, your container garden needs to be in a spot where it is ok for excess water to drain from the bottom. Placing a barrier such as thick cardboard between the bottom of the container and any material that may be considered toxic could help reduce the exposure. Last but not least, one should consider protecting plants from severe weather conditions and hungry wildlife.

Even though I now have more garden space than I have energy to garden it all, I am once again using the above growing strategies. In fact, I have lettuce and greens growing in containers all winter in my basement. My container-grown herbs sit next to my back door during the summer. This winter I sewed fabric bags for growing pepper and eggplants this summer. Maybe I will even try growing a few potatoes with that method as well. I do know that wherever and however I choose to grow, there is something to learn. ■

ALASKA

<http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/districts/anchorage/horticulture/Container-Veg-Gardening-web.pdf>

ARIZONA

<https://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/vegetable/container.html>

IOWA

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/Container-Vegetable-Gardening>

MAINE

<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2762e/>

MICHIGAN

<http://msue.anr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/containerGarden-VeggiesHerbs.pdf>

NORTH CAROLINA

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/how-to-create-a-container-garden-for-edibles-in-the-north-carolina-piedmont>

OREGON

<http://horticulture.oregonstate.edu/content/growing-edibles-containers-video-0>

TEXAS

<http://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/container-gardening/>

Sheri Gregory's Haudenosaunee ancestors grew food in the northeast.



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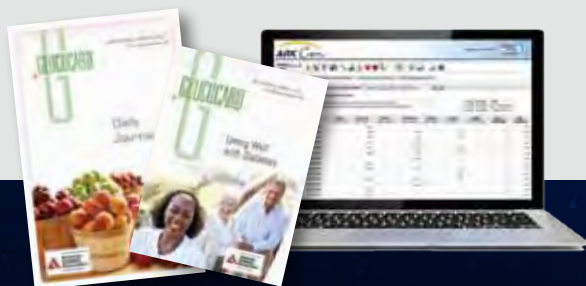
- + Identify goals of conversion
- + Identify and meet with all stakeholders
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IT'S NATURAL TO TRUST

BY ED DUNN, Ph.D.

It is with great humility that I try to express the thoughts of my heart on trusting our Creator. There are many misunderstandings about spirituality and I don't want to add to the confusion, but as a First Nations' Elder, I have some thoughts to share with you.

Some of the misunderstandings come from past broken promises, abusive relationships and cultural differences. Without doubt, various entities have taken advantage of us. Governments have blazed a long line of broken promises such as broken treaties, forced removal from our land, refusing to recognize us as equals, etc. Even most of the European churches have done some of the same things, while they worked with the governments to operate residential (boarding) schools. The record speaks for itself: a trail of mistreatment and abuse of various forms. People or systems may call

themselves Christian, but how do they act toward others? Like our elders say, "It's not the words, but the actions that speak loudest." Some of these people and institutions have said they represent the Creator, when in fact they demonstrated the attitude and actions of the enemy, the evil one. This mistreatment has resulted in turning some of our people against our Creator, so now there is a lack of trust in Him.

But we have always believed in our Creator. For example, I quote from one of our great Native American leaders, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce (1840 – 1904) who said:

"Our fathers gave us many laws, which they had learned from their fathers. These laws were good. They told us to treat all men as they treated us; that we should never be the first to break a bargain; that it was a disgrace to tell a lie; that we should speak only the truth; that it was a shame for one man to take from another his wife, or his property without paying for it. We were taught to believe that the Great Spirit sees and hears everything..."

And near the end of his speech Chief Joseph said, "Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other,

then we will have no more wars. We shall all be alike – brothers of one father and one mother, with one sky above us and one country around us, and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land...All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief.”

Handsome Lake (1735–1815), a Seneca religious leader of the Iroquois people, said, “Our religion is not one of paint and feathers; it is a thing of the heart.” It seems he was expressing the true center and root meaning of Native Spirituality, the heart, and how it connects with our Creator. Similarly, in her book, *Exploring Native American Wisdom*, Fran Dancing Feather said, “So in our daily communion with Creation, we ask our Creator for serenity, courage, and wisdom.” Yes, we can say of ourselves, “We are a spiritual people”. We know that our Creator gives us peace and happiness as we walk and live in harmony with Him.

The Book of Heaven, which originated in the Middle East, gives us the same teaching. It was designed for everyone, but the difference in understanding that teaching is apparent when people claim to practice spirituality of the heart, but they don’t really; they behave like evil people and force their evil way on others.

We are people of the land. Included in our spirituality is a strong reverence for animal life, the environment, and each other. We are all connected and depend upon each other. It’s like we are the keepers of the land for the Creator. First

Nation/Native American spirituality is not the same as the religion of most people. To some people, religion means a list of outward things you must do to be accepted by God, even though your heart may be having ugly thoughts, but spirituality involves the heart being in harmony/connection with the Creator. We know that when someone (girl/boyfriend, spouse) has our heart, our thoughts and our behaviors are influenced by them. The same influence is demonstrated when our Creator has our heart: we are motivated to live a life that will be a blessing to the people around us and to our Creator. Yes, we can trust our Creator.

Our Native American history shows us that spirituality is meant to be a way of daily life. Our Creator starts this spirituality in our heart, but it doesn’t stay there; it articulated in everything we say and do. For example, from my Ojibway heritage come the Seven Sacred Teachings:

Wisdom - To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom

Love - To know love is to know peace

Respect - To honor all of creation is to have respect

Courage - Bravery is to face the foe with integrity (being complete or undivided)

Honesty - Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave

Humility - Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation

Truth - Truth is to know all of these things.

Coincidentally, these Seven Sacred Teachings are very similar to the Fruits of the Spirit listed in the Book of Heaven in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. I believe these two lists were breathed from the same source — our Creator.

Another important part of our spirituality is prayer. The first sentence of a Thanksgiving Prayer goes like this: “Great and Eternal Mystery of Life, Creator of All Things, I give thanks for the beauty You put in every single one of Your creations.” Prayer usually means being in the presence of our Creator, talking to Him and being moved by His blessings. It brings peace, happiness and harmony. Ceremonies of purification were often symbolized in several different ways, but mostly the meaning was to cleanse one’s heart or inner life so there wouldn’t be any interference between you and others or your Creator.

There is so much more that could be said, but I have tried to show to a small degree that our Creator is trustworthy. He made us, He knows what we need and will make us happy, healthy, and in harmony. From my own experience, I can say, “I once was young, and now I am old, but as I look back over my eventful life, I can see how my Creator has led me all through my life.” I have relaxed in His presence, appreciated His guidance, cherished His companionship and been inspired by His encouragement, and yes, I can say with certainty, “You can trust your Creator. He created you – He cares for you.” ■

Ed Dunn is an Elder of the Mississauga Ojibwa First Nation in Ontario, Canada. He holds a Ph.D. in Public Health.

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Carefully AND Wonderfully MADE

BY ZENO CHARLES-MARCEL, M.D.

The human body is one of the most incredible “machines” that exists. You didn’t come into the world just by accident. Anything as complex as “us” has to be the result of superb craftsmanship, infinite loving care, and great attention to detail.

From the bottom of your feet (each of which houses 26 bones, 20 muscles, and an array of sweat glands, nerves, and vessels), to the top of your head (which has more than 100,000 hairs that grow at the rates of about 15 centimeters per year), you are no small feat! The average person in the United States lives to about 75 years of age. During that time you will accumulate enough steps to make up approximately 110,000 miles. That is enough to walk around the world at the equator a little more than four times!



It is pretty amazing when you think of it. To do all this walking, you have to pump the 60-75 trillion blood cells in your body around the blood vessel circuit continuously. We each have an average of five quarts of blood (which is what is housed in the typical adult human body), and the entire quantity of blood makes the trip around your body and back to your heart every minute of every day that you live.

This blood carries food and life-giving oxygen to every part of the body and even removes the waste produced by our cells. Oxygen is carried in red blood cells. Each

red blood cell contains more than 250 million iron-containing protein molecules called hemoglobin. Each hemoglobin molecule can take up to four molecules of oxygen—assuming you don't have too much carbon monoxide from smoke and pollution in your system. That result, however, is a single blood vessel that can transport up to 1 billion molecules of oxygen.

The heart beats on average 70 beats per minute while you are at rest. This means that it beats more than 4,000 times per hour or about 100,000 beats per day (even more if you are excited or exercising). Working

these numbers out, if you were to live for 75 years, you would have had approximately 2.75 billion heartbeats. That is, if you are sedentary! The five quarts of blood are pumped through arteries, capillaries, and veins, which, if laid end to end, would stretch out to about 60,000 miles in children and more than 100,000 in adults. That is enough to wrap around the earth about four times...and you thought you were just ordinary! When you consider all that goes into just living for just one second or one minute or one day, you will come to the conclusion that indeed you were carefully and wonderfully made. ■

Zeno Charles-Marcel, M.D. has served as a medical missionary in India, the Middle East, and Latin America. He served in administrative leadership in US governmental and denominational systems, overseas mission hospitals, lifestyle centers, and academic programs. He holds adjunct faculty appointments at three universities and is an Associate Director of Adventist Health Ministries in Silver Spring, MD.

Health | Prevention



NATURAL STRATEGIES FOR Blood Pressure Control

BY DAVID DEROSE, MD, MPH; GREG STEINKE, MD, MPH; AND TRUDIE LI, MSN, FNP

If as many lives were claimed by a natural disaster we wouldn't be so complacent. But since the villain is hypertension—and because it resides in so many of our homes—we're in danger of tolerating its presence.

However, when it comes to loss of life, *hypertension* (the medical term for high blood pressure) wreaks far more havoc worldwide than all natural disasters combined. Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that 9.4 million people die annually from only the cardiovascular complications of hypertension. Compare that to less than 80,000 deaths annually from natural disasters. In other words, high blood pressure claims over 100 times as many lives as the admittedly heartbreaking effects of all natural disasters combined. The tragedy is intensified when we realize hypertension's complications are largely preventable with essentially side-effect-free natural strategies.

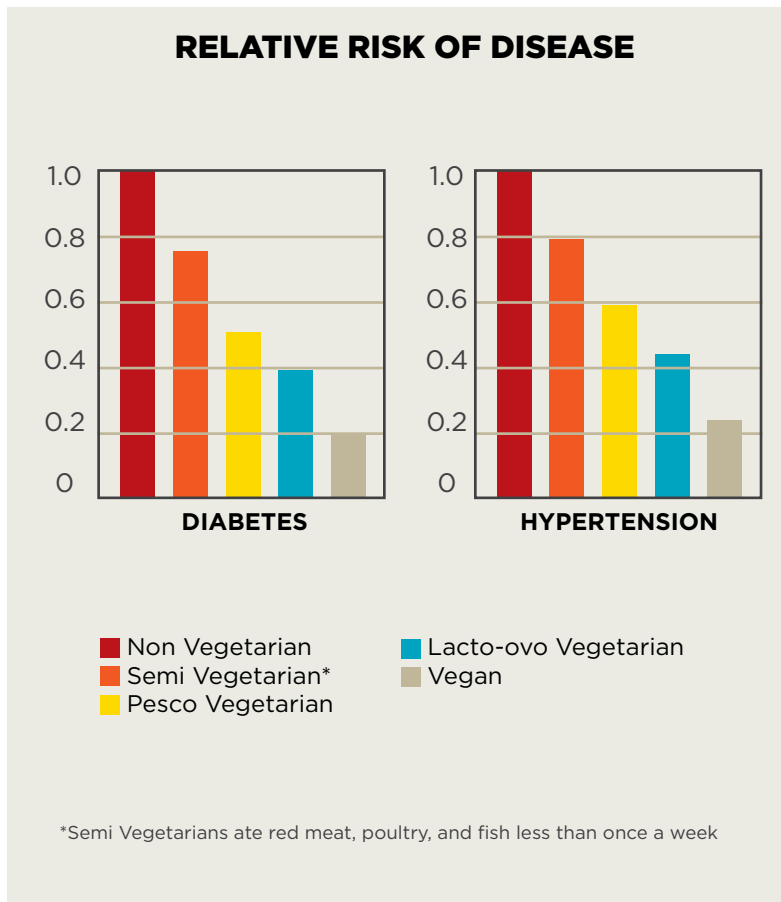
Testimony to the cavalier attitude many take toward high blood pressure are the relatively poor rates of blood pressure (BP) control in America. Only about 50% of those with hypertension have their numbers as low as medical experts recommend. This is a huge concern because it is largely *uncontrolled* BP that maims and kills, increasing our risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and blindness.

With such high stakes, why is America, and the world, doing so poorly when it comes to blood pressure control? In 2016 when we wrote our bestselling book, *Thirty Days to Natural Blood Pressure Control: The No Pressure Solution*, we argued that drug side effects were among the reasons for poor rates of BP control. When you realize most people with high blood pressure feel fine in spite of their high numbers, it comes as no surprise they would be less than excited to take medications that can cause adverse effects. Listen to a list of *common* side effects of common blood pressure medications: frequent urination, fatigue, dizziness, uncontrollable cough, exercise limitations, sexual dysfunction, and depression.

We proposed a better approach to dealing with high blood pressure than the common scenario of adding more and more side-effect-laden medications. “No Pressure” is a solution where each of the ten letters in that two-word acronym pointed to a category of natural blood pressure controlling agents. That list is illustrated as follows:

NoPressure

- N Nutrition
- O Optimal Choice of Beverages
- P Physical Activity
- R Rest
- E Environment
- S Stress Management
- S Social Support
- U Use of Natural Adjuncts
- R Refraining from Pressors and Excesses
- E Exercising Faith in God



Native Americans have historically valued such non-drug approaches. Consequently, many First Nation peoples are happy to build on the wisdom of their elders and use natural approaches rather than resorting to more medications. Let's take a quick survey of these natural agencies and recognize their power.

NUTRITION.

In *30 Days to Natural Blood Pressure Control* we focused on three categories of nutritional practices that can lower blood pressure: emphasizing plant sources of nutrition, losing weight (if overweight), and decreasing salt intake. Each of these practices can make a powerful impact on blood pressure. Let's focus on eating more plant foods. Plant foods, of course, are at the heart of traditional dietary practices throughout the Americas. For example, from the Southwest to the Northeast, a number of tribes have historically revered "the three sisters" of corn, beans, and squash. The power of moving to a plant-dominated diet when it came to both high blood pressure and diabetes was documented in a study of nearly 90,000 individuals. The results are illustrated above.

If you're not familiar with reading medical studies, we'll try to make this simple. As you move from left to right you're looking at people who are eating progressively more plant products and fewer animal products. When you get to the vegan group, you're looking at a group who are

eating a diet that comes entirely from plants.

Research shows that more plant food consumption increases the intake of nutrients including phytochemicals (helpful constituents found in plants) that have direct blood pressure lowering effects. Message: if you want better blood pressure, eat more like most Native American ancestors—or modern-day vegetarians.

OPTIMAL CHOICE OF BEVERAGES.

If you want the best blood pressure and the fewest cardiovascular complications, you'll drink more water and less other beverages. Over a decade ago this was illustrated by Dr. Jacqueline Chan and her colleagues at Loma Linda University. They found that those who drank more than five glasses of water daily had roughly half the risk of dying from heart disease as those drinking two or fewer glasses daily. Drinking other beverages had the opposite effect: heavier consumers of all other beverages had a greater risk of heart attack death.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

It probably comes as no surprise: Increasing physical activity is associated with improved blood pressure. This ethic of physical activity is also deeply ingrained in Indian Country. If you have a question as to what a safe level of exercise is for you, check with a health professional.

REST, ENVIRONMENT, AND STRESS MANAGEMENT.

If you cut yourself short on sleep, your body will ramp up stress hormones to keep you going. If your body can't jack those hormones up on its own, there's a good chance you will turn to caffeine to give you the needed boost. Either way, stress hormones rise and blood pressure is, as a result, ramped up. The important association is this: anything that interferes with quality or quantity of sleep tends to raise blood pressure. If you want to sleep better, check out our free sleep handout at <http://www.compasshealth.net/sleep-hygiene/>.

Along these lines consider a connection between environment and high blood pressure. The closer you live to a busy street the higher your blood pressure will tend to be. Medical research has documented that moving your sleeping room to the side of your home or apartment *farthest away* from a busy road can actually lower your blood pressure. By contrast, imagine the blood pressure benefits traditionally experienced by First Nation peoples who were surrounded by the quiet of nature.

These discoveries by sleep researchers make an eloquent point that we spend an entire chapter on: if you want the best blood pressure you need to keep your stress hormones as low as possible. This applies to more than sleeping practices, of course. As a general rule: more stress, higher blood pressure.

SOCIAL SUPPORT.

Why do we feel social support is so vital? Let's journey to Switzerland to gain some insights into the answer. There, researchers studied 22 individuals with high blood pressure and compared them to 26 subjects who were normotensive (had normal blood pressure). They found those with hypertension had significantly lower levels of perceived social support than those with good BP readings.

Furthermore, lead author Petra Wirtz and her colleagues uncovered *why* social connectedness helped lower blood pressure. By actual measurement, they discovered that low social support was associated with, higher levels of the stress hormone epinephrine (adrenaline), a compound known to raise blood pressure.

For this reason we encourage you to associate with people that value you—and value your health. The tribe and clan traditionally provided these benefits to Native Americans. Consequently, for some people the answer to their blood pressure problems may be as simple as saying “good bye” to their drinking buddies and attending more tribal functions—or even a good church. (If you were wondering, alcohol consumption tends to raise blood pressure.)

USE OF NATURAL ADJUNCTS AND REFRAINING FROM PRESSORS AND EXCESSES.

These two categories provide another powerful message: the agents we consume—both natural and pharmacologic—can have a powerful impact on our blood pressure. Among the pressors (agents that raise blood pressure) to avoid are NSAIDs, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. If you're taking an over-the-counter or prescription pain reliever that is non-narcotic and not acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®), then you're probably taking an NSAID. These drugs can raise BP up to 14 points in those with hypertension. For this reason, we recommend using natural pain relievers that have blood-pressure-lowering properties like omega-3 fats (think ground flaxseed) or turmeric (a natural orange-colored spice).

Other natural adjuncts can further benefit blood pressure. One of the more promising supplements is coenzyme Q10 (usually referred to as simply CoQ10). This compound has been the subject of a number of scientific studies, some of which were collectively reviewed in 2007. A meta-analysis (pooling of studies) at that time encompassed 12 clinical trials with 362 patients. The blood pressure improvements were remarkable with drops in the range of 15 points systolic and 8-10 points diastolic.

EXERCISING FAITH IN GOD.

This may sound like a surprising blood-pressure lowering strategy, but the medical research reveals that personal spirituality as well as faith-community attendance generally lowers blood pressure. Thus Native American beliefs in a Great Spirit or Creator would be expected to help combat hypertension. In *30 Days to Natural Blood Pressure Control* we devoted a 60-plus page chapter to this evidence. There we argued that Jesus' Beatitudes from His Sermon on the Mount provide keys to spiritual health, keys that modern science is validating can help everyone: devout religionists and atheists, Native Americans and native Europeans, Jews and Muslims, Christians and Hindus. Of that extensive chapter Harold G. Koenig, MD, MHSc, Director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University, said: "The authors are to be especially commended for their beautiful chapter 14 dealing with spirituality and health. This may be the most transformative chapter in the book, speaking powerfully to readers regardless of their denominational backgrounds or spiritual persuasions. I predict this will be the part of the book that moves people the most, and likely changes their lives in ways that affect far more than blood pressure."

The message of the “No Pressure” approach to high blood pressure is simple: Reconnect with the values of your ancestors. Embrace a more health-enhancing lifestyle and you will make giant strides toward avoiding the stealthy killer known as hypertension. ■



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

2017

- ▶ **2017 Mid Year Conference & Marketplace**
Jun 12, 2017 - Jun 15, 2017
Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT
- ▶ **2017 National UNITY Conference**
Jul 6, 2017 - Jul 10, 2017
Denver, CO
- ▶ **SGAC/TSGAC Self Governance 3rd Quarter Advisory Committee Meeting**
Jul 18, 2017 - Jul 20, 2017
- ▶ **Tribal Interior Budget Council,**
July 25 - 27, 2017
Jul 25, 2017 - Jul 27, 2017
*Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort
22181 Resort Blvd, Flagstaff, AZ*
- ▶ **NCAI Impact Days**
Sep 12, 2017 - Sep 14, 2017
Washington, DC
- ▶ **HG Foundation - 13th Annual Human Growth Foundation Awards Gala**
Sep 15, 2017
*The National Press Club
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045*
- ▶ **NIHB Annual Consumer Conference**
Sep 25, 2017 - Sep 29, 2017
Billings, MT Area
- ▶ **Fourth International CREA Conference**
Sep 27, 2017 - Sep 29, 2017
Chicago, IL
- ▶ **NAFOA 2017 Fall Finance & Tribal Economies Conference**
Oct 2, 2017 - Oct 3, 2017
River Spirit Casino Resort, Tulsa, OK
- ▶ **National Indian Education Association Annual Convention and Trade Show**
Oct 4, 2017 - Oct 7, 2017
Caribe Royale in Orlando, FL
- ▶ **74th Annual Convention & Marketplace**
Oct 15, 2017 - Oct 20, 2017
Milwaukee, WI

Go to <http://www.ncai.org>
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NATIONAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD

2017

- ▶ **NIHB National Tribal Public Health Summit: Together We Rise: Sustaining Tribal Public Health as a National Priority**
Jun 6 - 8, 2017
Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center
600 W 7th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99501, USA
- ▶ **Public Health Improvement Training**
Jun 13 - 14, 2017
Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown
2600 Louisiana Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
- ▶ **Public Health Improvement Training: Advancing Performance in Agencies, Systems and Communities**
Jun 13 - 14, 2017
Albuquerque, NM
- ▶ **The Second Annual Native American Nutrition Conference**
Sep 18 - 20, 2017
- ▶ **Diabetes in Indian Country Conference**
Sep 19 - 21, 2017
Hyatt Regency Albuquerque
330 Tijeras Ave NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102, USA
- ▶ **NIHB - National Tribal Health Conference**
Sep 25 - 28, 2017
Seattle, WA, USA

Go to <http://www.nihb.org>
for more event information.

Oklahoma Native Health *and* HERITAGE CAMP

BY CHRISTINE CUMMINGS-WEIS

Basket-weaving, swimming, horseback riding, a healthy dose of stick ball, and avoiding diabetes: welcome to Native Health and Heritage Camp in Wewoka, OK. The camp is sponsored by the Native Ministries department of the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is free to Native American campers.

Crafts at most summer camps usually involve glue and popsicle sticks. Here, Native craftsmen are brought in to teach time-honored traditional handcraft within the context of heritage. Diabetes prevention and Native American concerns are paramount, but presented in a joyful atmosphere. “We just have a lot of fun,” says Jim Landelius, Native Ministries director. The summer camp experience at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center is for Native youth ages 7-17 and in 2017, the fun and heritage activities will run from May 28 to June 2.

Diabetes prevention is crucial for the Native American community. “Type 2 is the predominant form of diabetes, and is linked to obesity and inactivity,” says Landelius. Thus, the camp is dedicated to physical activity and teaching health principles involving the original Native diet of whole foods and whole grains, shunning the industrialized processed food diet that has harmed every culture it touches. “Diabetes is a huge issue and we’re here to meet that need. Diabetes management is addressed as well. Diabetes is one thing; letting it ruin your kidneys, your sight, or

amputate a limb is entirely another.”

Campers will hear from Principal Chief Leonard Harjo of the Seminole tribe about the importance of respect. Ernie Johnson, Assistant Chief of the Seminole Nation, will share the sound and beauty of the Native flute. Various storytellers will share inheritance through their traditional craft. And Scott Robison of Indian Health Services in Wewoka, will get blood pumping with stick ball. “The best thing about camp for me is seeing kids reconnect with their heritage,” Landelius emphasizes. “There is great joy in being a Native.” ■

CONTACT JIM LANDELIUS AT 405-273-1042
to benefit a youth with this experience



Long-time public school nurse and former educator for Oklahoma teens, Sherry Fisher, RN, has seen the positive outcomes of

diabetes prevention. A lifestyle that includes fun exercise such as sports, healthful eating and awareness can help reverse the Oklahoma Department of Health statistics that show “American Indians in Oklahoma have been diagnosed [with]

diabetes at the highest rate of any other race or ethnic group in the state.”¹ Camps like the one at Wewoka Woods reinforce positive family values, native traditions and diabetes prevention. It’s fun for everyone!

Sherry Fisher, RN, BSN
*Former Director of Health and Physical Education,
Oklahoma Dept. of Health*

¹ <https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Diabetes%20FactSheet%202013.pdf>

A LONG-LASTING LIFESTYLE

Change

BY CHERYL ALLEN

Lifestyle changes are often hard to make: many of us know that a change is needed, but we are unaware as to what and how to change.

In 1999, I was going through this same dilemma. I was unsatisfied with my weight, lack of exercise, my job, my spirituality, and my lifestyle in general. I also knew that between my family's health history and being of Native American descent, I was susceptible to many diseases. I was constantly fighting with the urge to change things in my life. It seemed as if time did not permit a lot of the changes I needed, especially being a working mom, wife, and active church member.

One day I just asked in quiet prayer for the Lord to help me to change. And slowly I started to exercise and change my diet. As I was doing this, one night I awoke with great pain in my back and went to the hospital. There I discovered I had a kidney infection in addition to a low white-blood cell count. It was then that I knew I needed more direction in regard to a lifestyle change. Oddly enough, I had been investigating various health programs that I was hoping to introduce to my tribe. My brother had given me information on the Lifestyle Center of America¹ in Sulphur, Oklahoma, and that is where I decided to go to see how it might help in my quest for change.

I found the program there to be a blessing. There was so much I learned that helped me to change my life for the better. I found that God's eight laws of health—nutrition,

exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in God—are very powerful, simple tools that God has given us to be healthier, happier people. I have since lost the weight I wanted to lose and have been able to keep it off without much effort as long as I stick



CHERYL ALLEN

with the lifestyle changes. I am able to think more clearly and discern things better. It's amazing how confused and clouded our thinking is when we are not taking care of ourselves! I feel better and have more energy than ever before. I continue to visit my doctor for yearly physicals and have been blessed with good medical reports, along with a

doctor who says there is no advice he can give me, because I am doing everything right.

A changed lifestyle is not always easy with the temptations and busyness of life, and I still have much to learn. But I have found that the success I have experienced has come from a decided choice to follow the blueprints of our Creator and to rely on His strength to help me stick to it. Truly, who knows how to maintain and repair our bodies more than the One who created them? ■

Cheryl Allen is a member of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation in Ledyard, Connecticut.

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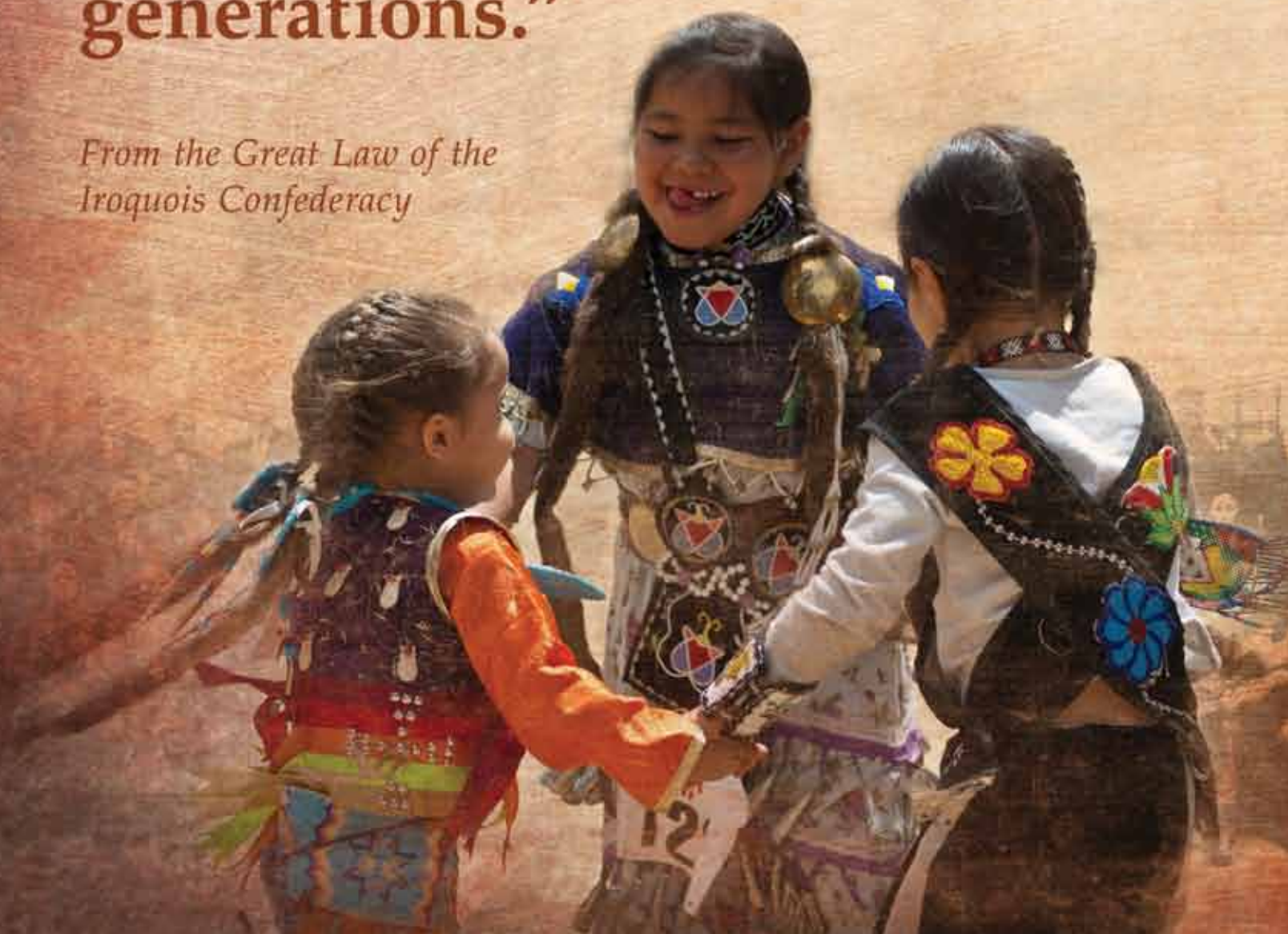
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generations.”**

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For the seventh generation.*

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Founders of the National Congress of American Indians at the first meeting in 1944.



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