

Three smooth, rounded stones are stacked vertically in the center of the page. The top stone is light-colored, the middle one is dark brown, and the bottom one is a medium brown. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

What happened at that big "Life and Wellness" weekend in Mammoth? Oh, you mean that yuppie spa festival at the ski area? Well, for once, for three golden autumn days, Mammoth was the stage for something a lot deeper than powder, parties and investment potential. There were more sessions than any one health junkie could attend, much less grasp, but on Sunday afternoon I left with a straighter back and a cranium streaming with new impressions and illuminations about what our human organism needs to thrive. Here are clips from the stream as I waded through it.

Stand with your eyes closed. Feel your feet on the floor, your hips over your feet, your head over your hips. Breathe in and expand your torso upward, and feel your head stacked over your neck, all the way down through your spine, and over your feet, just like a building...Gravity is our friend, it gives us our muscles, it makes us who we are...[ISABRINA NIOCHE]

Oh my gosh, hello, here I am, inside this dark tower of muscles, bones, fissures and fluids, sort of managing the whole thing. Have I never really stood inside this body before?

Hold yourself over the center of your feet, feel your weight subtly shifting around on the soles. The center is not a pinpoint spot, it's a zone of dynamic balance...Now when you hold your center stable, your limbs are free, they can move much more freely...[ISABRINA NIOCHE]

Now that your partner is in good posture, press down on his shoulders again. A lot more solid, right? Like a building. (Murmurous wows rise from the participants.) Yes, that's your first Aha! moment...Now to start running, here's all you do. Just lean forward from the ankle, and relax. Let gravity pull you into running, and you just run, into the wind....To run faster, all you do is lean farther forward and relax even more. [KATHY GRIEST]

Actually, I didn't learn a thing. I just un-learned all the strain I'd acquired in 30 years of running.

Clinical heart studies are confirming what ancient Chinese practitioners have known for thousands of years, that the heart is at the center of the connection between mind and body....

The heart sends off more information to the brain than it receives.... During frustration, a child's heart rate fluctuates wildly. When you bring their pet dog back into the room, the heart rate stabilizes, instantly....

Fitness is far more important than fat. Obese people who exercise regularly are far less likely to have heart attacks than lean people who don't exercise....

We can measure the heart's electromagnetic field outside the body; during negative emotions it contracts, and during meditation and positive emotions it extends as far away as fifteen feet....When people are holding hands, we can see in the EEG's that variations in heart rates start to synchronize. [DR. MIMI GUARNERI]

Geeters, synchronizing across the skin? That's kind of scary.

Pets are highly protective against heart disease, especially dogs....Isolation is very correlative with heart disease, so much so that they are almost equivalent.

I guess that's even scarier.

...Anger is the most toxic emotion. Anger outbursts increase heart attack rates by 230%...Love is the most potent emotion....The first heart medicine is forgiveness. [DR. MIMI GUARNERI]

Do less better, not more worse. [JULIE DUFF]

Everything we eat or do or see or hear is either a nutrient or a toxin...Our habits create our health....Ayurveda is all about building health by maintaining balance in the three main energies within us: movement, metabolism and stability. [MARY THOMPSON]

Most of this stuff is just about paying attention to your body. It's like what Woody Allen said, 80% of life is just showing up. Hey, where are all the men? In every session it's about 20 to 1. It's like I've entered a future world with only women.

When men look to get healthy they play sports....For a woman, starting with puberty and going through menopause, things happen to our bodies, and we naturally become more concerned about what our bodies are doing. Men don't experience that sort of thing, and they are more able to compartmentalize things, to disassociate from their bodies. And women love groups, they love communication. [KATHY SMITH]

Men go out and slay dragons.

What about the people who can't afford this? What about the person who maybe would like to exercise more and eat better but says, hey, I'm in the trenches, I'm in the nursery room or in the construction yard and if I want to feel better about myself I sure as heck am not going to go hang out with rich people in Mammoth?

You're right, we need to realize that most places don't have fresh berries and wild salmon year-round, and we've got this crazy system where a fast-food burger is way more affordable than a bowl of fruit.

Individual health has a lot to do with how healthy the society is at large.

And you're right, we need to reach out to people who can't afford this sort of thing, we need to have things like community power walks and yoga classes, free to people who really need it. [KATHY SMITH]

The \$99 full daytime pass they offered I think has brought in quite a few people.

We need to shift our focus from treating disease to generating health.... Hippocrates said it over 2000 years ago. We should revere the healing power of nature. Every body has an amazing ability to heal itself, and what Integrative Medicine is about is facilitating that process. Take antibiotics, for instance. Do they really cause the cure of a disease? No, really what they do is reduce the germ count to where the body's immune system can win the fight. That's the model we need to work from.

Our medical system is engulfed in a for-profit system. Medicine was never meant to be practiced that way, and it has to change....Hard-nosed economic analysis is what will push us into Integrative Medicine. In large areas of health care it both lowers costs and improves outcomes....The CEO of General Motors has said that they can no longer compete around the world because their health care costs are so high....

There are entrenched interests fighting for the status quo....The industrial food refiners have ruined everything they've put their hands on.... We need to accept a collective responsibility—individuals, corporations and government.

There is an enormous and rising discontent among doctors. I can't tell you how many now say that they would never let their son or daughter go into medicine....I can tell you with complete confidence that we are witnessing the complete collapse of our health care system.

The most broadly effective and popular therapy is also the cheapest—breathing. Breathing is the only thing we can do both voluntarily and involuntarily; it links both branches of our nervous system....

The literal meaning of the word "conspiracy" is "to breathe together." So we all are in a conspiracy to transform our health. [DR. ANDREW WEIL]

Wow, a whole auditorium of hundreds of people, including former linebacker and Mammoth CEO Rusty Gregory, is sitting up straight and following a white-bearded man in pranayama breathing.

Andy Selters is a mountaineer, photographer and author whose latest book is "Ways To The Sky—A Historical Guide to North American Mountaineering."