

# *It's Not Just About Your Spine It's About Your Life*



*by Dr. Michael Kooby*

In the 1950's a small in Northeastern Pennsylvania town called Roseta drew overnight attention. It appeared that the people of Roseta had mortality rates that were incredibly low, as compared to surrounding towns or even to the rest of the United States. There were 30-40% fewer heart attacks among its citizens, despite there being no discernable difference between it and any of its neighboring towns. It even had the same water supply as its neighbors.

Scientists and researchers descended upon this small town in order to discover its citizens' secrets, expecting to find people who exercised regularly, ate well, had lower stress levels, were in great physical shape, were calmer, and had some sort of stress-relieving lifestyle.

Instead they found the opposite. The town consisted of immigrant Italian families who were consistently overweight, ate pork regularly, drank wine with meals, shouted at each other from across the dinner table, and did nothing that scientists before could have attributed to their longevity. Their DNA was examined to see whether they had some sort of "special genetics" that would allow them to live so long, despite their unhealthy lifestyle choices. Finding nothing noteworthy, scientists and researchers were baffled.

The finding that researchers at last came to was that it was the community environment that people lived in that had more to do with their health, happiness and longevity than all the little minutia of what they ate in what proportions, how many hours they spent on a treadmill and how much yoga or meditation they practiced on a daily basis.

That is not to say that healthy practices do not influence a healthy, happy life. But when you split apart elements of life and examine each variable separately from the rest of life, the factors don't add up.

Reductionistic science is just that. A reductionist breaks the whole into parts and examines the parts as separate entities from one another. The whole is simply the sum of all its parts and no more. In other words, the heart is healthier when it gets a minimum average of 20 minutes of cardiovascular activity, 3 to 4 times weekly. But what happens to the heart function of a woman who's just lost a child?

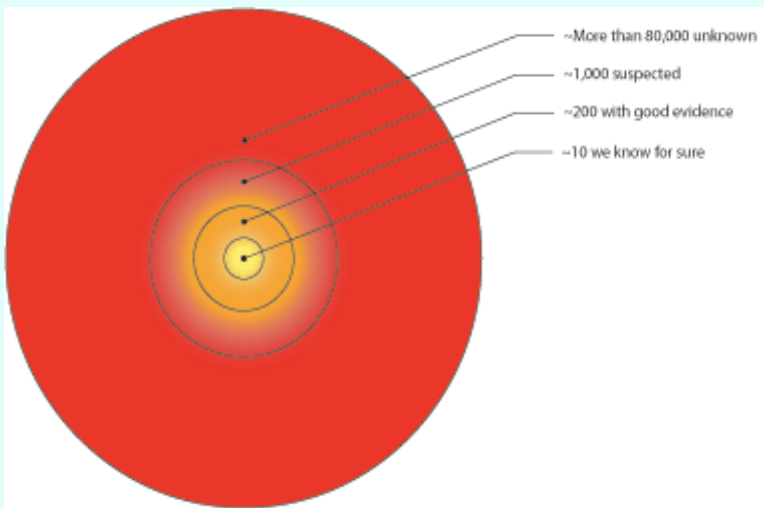
Author Michael Crichton (of Jurassic Park fame) was also a graduate of Harvard Medical School in the 1970's. During his residency, he decided he had no interest in practicing of medicine, so he decided to use his time to interview people. When he asked men who'd survived heart attacks why they felt they had the attack, each one answered that they were either under severe stress over some family or career situation or that someone had just broken their heart. When asked why they survived, each one shared that there was someone they survived for. Not one of these men mentioned their cholesterol levels.

Vitalism on the other hand views the whole as greater than its individual parts alone. It is the function of all the parts together that creates life, and all the cells in our bodies are in constant communication with one another, responding to life from moment to moment.

For the same reason that the residents of Roseta, Pennsylvania, some of the healthiest people in America in spite of their unhealthy dietary and lifestyle habits, knew the key to health and longevity that baffled scientists for so long. They had an innate understanding of the concepts of vitalism in their day-to-day lives. They understood the value of family and relationships, despite the stresses they incur. The whole of the community was important for the health of each individual.

Simply stated, it's not as much about the details, but more about how you do your life. Eating an unhealthy meat and pasta dinner in the company of family and friends, with a glass of wine, while screaming across the room does more for your well-being than sitting alone and eating the healthiest foods.

And while we realize now that life does not mimic an experiment in a Petri dish, we are just at the cusp of realizing how truly responsive we are to all facets of our environment. Take a step back for a moment and examine your own lifestyle choices. Are you focused on the minutia, or "sweating the small stuff" in reductionist fashion? Or are you aware of the interconnectedness of things and the general gestalt of things in a vitalistic way? You may find that happiness is as simple as letting some of those consuming details go.



## Did You Know?

By contributing author *Laura Abulafia, MHS*

It is well known that many factors can contribute to your personal health. This includes diet and exercise, genetic inheritance and lifestyle habits, and, significantly, your emotional and spiritual life. There are things we can do to stay healthy on a day to day basis: eat high quality foods, drink clean water, breath clean air free of cigarette smoke or other air contaminants like mold, and take care of the internal body.

Exposure to a wide range of potentially harmful chemicals from conception to death is unavoidable. There are about 80,000 registered chemicals in use in United States. Approximately 3,000 chemicals are produced in quantities greater than 1 million pounds per year. Health effects are not always documented for these chemicals, and when they are, there is often weak regulation of these chemicals.

Some of these chemicals are neurotoxic, effecting the developing brain and the nervous system, and other chemicals are linked with diseases and disorders such as cancer, learning disabilities, autism, asthma, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, and even obesity.

Toxins can accumulate in the body in many places: your organs, fatty tissues, brain and bones are all susceptible to environmental exposures. Doing something protective of your health that safely removes toxic buildup can make tremendous improvements in overall health. Whether it's choosing to eat organic, unprocessed foods, or minimizing exposure to toxic cleaning agents or plastics, you can take small steps that add to your healthy lifestyle in a variety of ways.

The human body has an incredible ability to heal and we can significantly impact our quality of life through taking simple steps toward health. The body wants to be healthy, and there are ways that you can support that through your daily habits.

It is important to support the body's natural ability to heal itself, especially if your personal genetic inheritance is fragile, your nutrition is not optimal, or when stress and lack of exercise threaten your quality of life. Keeping a healthy body in spite of these toxic exposures is an essential way to maintain a safe and healthy life.

For more information please email Dr. Michael Kooby at [mkooby@gmail.com](mailto:mkooby@gmail.com). Thank you!