

BEING HEALTHY IS A

REVOLUTIONARY ACT

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**A MANIFESTO
FOR THRIVING IN A
MIXED-UP WORLD**



BY PILAR GERASIMO

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED,

we live in a society where the idea of health and fitness is wildly popular, but where actually becoming a truly healthy person can be mighty tough to pull off.

There's a reason so many of us are sick, overweight, depressed and stressed out: We're living in a society that is *wired up* to make us sick, overweight, depressed and stressed out.

WE CAN CHANGE THIS MIXED-UP REALITY.

We can reclaim our well-being and create a better, more blissful world. But it's going to take some revolutionary moxie to make it happen.

This manifesto is a collection of ideas, reality-checks and insights designed to help those of us who value our health create and sustain healthy change — even in the face of some daunting challenges.

If you're up for that, way to go, friend — and welcome to the revolutionary club!

HERE ARE REVOLUTIONARY TRUTHS

that a growing number of us
hold to be self-evident . . .

10

1



THE WAY WE ARE LIVING IS CRAZY.

THE UNITED STATES currently produces more obese, chronically ill and depleted people than it does vital, fit, resilient ones — and this trend is worsening.

Two out of three U.S. adults is overweight or obese. At any given time, half of us are contending with at least one chronic disease. A growing number of us are reliant on pharmaceuticals whose side effects and interactions undermine our health and quality of life.

Our children, too, are becoming ill and prescription dependent at ever-younger ages, and their life spans are being shortened as a result.

Enough already! Our collective lack of vitality has become an oppressive source of misery and waste, one that threatens to impede our lives, our liberties, and our pursuit of happiness.

We can change this. We must change this — together.



THERE ARE POWERFUL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FORCES UNDERMINING OUR HEALTH.

OUR CULTURE didn't get this unhealthy by accident. From the processed-food industry to pharmaceuticals, well-funded interests rake in huge amounts of money off our unhealthy population. They've been doing it for decades, and they pay billions of lobbying dollars to make sure they can *keep* doing it.

These special interests not only manipulate public policy and the media to our disadvantage, they conduct huge misinformation and marketing campaigns designed to keep us buying into products and behaviors that hurt us.

Their message? That their health-sapping options are wholesome, easy, appealing, cool, fun, affordable, delightful indulgences (or absolute necessities) that will make us and our lives oh-so-much better.

And we've taken the bait. We have been brainwashed into adopting daily behaviors and choices that poison our bodies, fog our minds and cost us billions in medical bills.

Here's what those powers-that-be won't tell you: Buy into what currently passes for "normal" in America, and you're unlikely to stay healthy for long.

3.



THE TIME FOR COMPLICITY IS OVER.

TEMPTING AS IT MAY BE, we can't blame this *all* on a conspiracy of health-sapping influences.

Yes, it is true that we're surrounded by supersized junk foods and sedentary pastimes. Yes, we've been saddled with misleading labels and industry-influenced dietary guidelines. Yes, we've been bombarded by demoralizing media, manipulative advertising, and downright lousy advice.

But still. We've taken a lot of that sitting down.

For too long, we've allowed ourselves to be overprescribed, overfed, underinformed and

overindulged. We've been quick to embrace superficial solutions and half-baked ideas.

We've permitted ourselves to be pandered to in the name of ease, convenience and "value" — and we've grown passive, expecting effortless cures to come from the outside.

Conspiracy theories notwithstanding, the greatest threats to our well-being lie in the health-sapping decisions we make every day by default. Because healthy choices have been rendered tougher than they ought to be. And because — like frogs in hot water — we've been willing to tolerate the intolerable. Until now.



THE RESISTANCE IS ALIVE AND WELL.

EVERY DAY, more and more of us are waking up to the realization that no one is going to save us but *us*. We're getting clear that if we don't want to get sucked into an unhealthy quagmire, we've got to start swimming against the tide.

So we are learning about our bodies and minds, and doing what it takes to keep them strong and well.

We are growing, buying and preparing more whole, nutritious foods and avoiding processed junk.

We are moving and sweating and exploring. We are resting and playing and connecting.

We are reclaiming control of our healthcare choices. We are dealing with the root causes of our health challenges, rather than simply suppressing our symptoms.

In short, we are treating our health like the fundamental priority it is.

We are rising up to take back the power for our own well-being. And we are discovering just how good that feels.



BEING HEALTHY IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT.

THROWING OFF THE CHAINS of poor health and reclaiming our full vitality is both our individual right and our collective responsibility. And there is perhaps no more life-transforming choice.

Being strong and healthy in an unhealthy culture makes you part of an empowered minority. It gives you freedoms and opportunities that poor health and fitness prohibit. It endows you with the energy, clarity and resiliency

to fully enjoy your life, and to make bigger, more meaningful contributions in anything you do.

Choosing a healthy way of life involves making some revolutionary choices, and it also has revolutionary results.

Because when you change your health for the better, you change the lives of everyone around you for the better, too.

In a very real way, you change your world.

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THIS IS **NOT** ABOUT **SIX-PACK ABS** **AND SKINNY JEANS.**

SURE, HEALTHY IS SEXY and beautiful. A strong, fit body looks as good as it feels. But the most valuable rewards of good health and fitness have very little to do with rippling muscles or thin thighs.

You'd never know that by looking at conventional media, though.

All those sensationalized headlines, sexy images and instant-results promises may get our attention and appeal to our vanity, but they can also make getting healthy seem like a self-indulgent undertaking or a trivial, out-of-reach fantasy.

Worse, the unrelenting focus on largely unachievable ideals has a

way of playing to our body-image insecurities.

Those superficial obsessions can also distract us from the deeper, lasting motivations that matter more.

So if mass media is messing with your mind or sapping your self-esteem, tune out the hype and turn your attention elsewhere. Like the reasons being healthy matters to *you*.

Maybe you have your heart set on six-pack abs and buns of steel; maybe not.

Either way, connecting with your own authentic healthy-life vision and values is the best way to start.

7



INACTION IS NOT AN OPTION.

THE TIME FOR passivity is past. Today, nearly every U.S. household is touched by obesity or chronic disease. And most often, when one family member's health is compromised, the whole family suffers.

It's time for that suffering to stop. But simply suppressing symptoms and "managing" diseases is not the answer.

As you read this, approximately 75 percent of our healthcare dollars are being spent ineffectively on chronic conditions, many of which can only be resolved through lifestyle change.

These burdens of chronic illness are simultaneously gutting our economy, our communities, and our whole population's ability to thrive. They're undermining the lives of our children, and the potential of future generations.

It's time to face the reality that unless we're part of the solution, we're part of problem. And the problem is plenty big already.

None of us can afford to sit this challenge out. None of us deserves to live less than the best, healthiest life at our disposal.

So raise your sights. Raise your standards. Restake your claim to a vital body and mind. And never, ever back down.



THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE.

IN THE BATTLE for our well-being, the forces of ill health may have won the last few rounds. But we've got some crazy judo moves they aren't expecting.

Like giving up on diets and self-denial, and focusing on nourishing our bodies instead.

Like giving up on spot reducing and calorie counting and finding feel-good ways to get active and fit.

Like investing in healthy foods, stress management and proactive health support now — instead of paying gigantic medical bills later.

The healthier and more clear-headed you are, the better your chances of fending off the

unhealthy influences that besiege you on a daily basis.

The stronger and more resilient you are, the better your chances of weathering the challenges that come your way.

And the more of us healthy, happy people there are, the better our shot at creating the kind of world in which *thriving comes more easily for everyone*.

So don't let your guard down, and don't let anyone convince you to settle for less than full-throttle vitality.

Remain vigilant. Defend your right to be well with unflinching determination and all the mojo you can muster.

9.



FORGET ABOUT QUICK FIXES.

NO MAGIC DIET, powder, pill or elixir is going to solve the problems we're wrestling with now. And forking over cash for quick fixes only lines the pockets of the quick-fix hucksters who helped get us into this mess.

So instead of squandering your valuable time and money on miracle cures, invest in making healthy life changes for the long haul.

If you're having trouble with that, know that you are not alone. You are not a bad, weak, lazy or doomed person — you're just up against some tough opponents.

If you're willing and determined, you can defeat them. Handily.

It may require developing new skills, strategies and perspectives.

It might mean connecting with new support systems and role models.

It could mean nursing some healthy indignation and cultivating some well-deserved self-compassion.

Almost certainly, it will require connecting with your own deepest sources of healthy motivation and stoking them into revolutionary action.

All this takes time and awareness and a willingness to experiment. And there's no better time to start than now.

10.



SOLUTIONS IN THE MIRROR MAY BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR.

THE SCOPE AND SCALE of our national health crisis is so massive that it may seem beyond all hope. But it is not.

In fact, each of us has an important role to play in solving these problems for ourselves, and for each other.

Every time one of us starts taking the steps necessary to build and protect our health, we rescind our support of the nasty systems that are breaking millions of us down.

And if enough of us start treating our own bodies well, we will create new norms of vitality and well-being.

If we band together to demand and embrace healthier options — in our

grocery stores, cafeterias, homes, workplaces, schools, healthcare centers, neighborhoods — we can reverse the trends that have been depleting our life force for decades.

Most of the trends and public policies responsible for our country's ill health have occurred over the past 40 years — in large part, by design. And they can be turned around in a fraction of that time by a swell of grass-roots insistence.

So if you can help make that happen, do. Connect with others who share your healthy convictions. Then go boldly forth and start thriving — one conscious thought, one empowering choice, *one revolutionary act at a time.*

101 REVOLUTIONARY WAYS TO BE HEALTHY

Here's a few to get you started. Find the rest (and share your own) at revolutionaryact.com.

1. DEFY CONVENTION
Do the healthy thing, even when it's challenging, inconvenient or considered weird. Take pride in that.

REPOSSESS YOUR HEALTH

5. Reclaim responsibility for your well-being; own your daily choices; minimize your reliance on the broken sick-care system.

BEWARE THE USDA FOOD PYRAMID

It is a whole lot healthier for Big Ag and Big Business than for humans. Fill two-thirds of your plate with an array of vegetables, add in some other whole foods you enjoy, and don't let the rest of the Pyramid's propaganda confuse you.

20. AIM FOR 85%

You don't have to make 100%-healthy choices all the time. It's what you do most of the time — day in, day out — that counts. The healthier you get, the easier and more automatic healthy choices will become.

31.

GO EASY ON THE SUGAR AND FLOUR

These two ingredients (combined with unhealthy industrial oils) have a starring role in most packaged foods we eat. More than any other culprit, they fuel inflammation, obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease and cancer.

43. REDEFINE YOUR GOALS

If you've been trying to lose weight and are struggling, make it your goal to get superbly healthy, well nourished, fit and energetic instead. Don't be surprised when the excess weight starts melting off.

65.

REST UP

Rest = recovery, repair and resilience. Exhaustion = illness and messed-up metabolism. Prioritize sleep time as the health essential it is.

INVEST IN YOUR HEALTH

81. Money spent proactively on your health delivers far better returns than money spent reactively on treating illness and disease. When healthy choices seem "too expensive," consider the long-term costs of health-sapping alternatives.

97.

FOCUS ON ACTION, NOT OUTCOMES

Live the life of a healthy person, and the results will take care of themselves. Every healthy step is a victory. Every day is an opportunity to feel, live and be better than the day before.



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