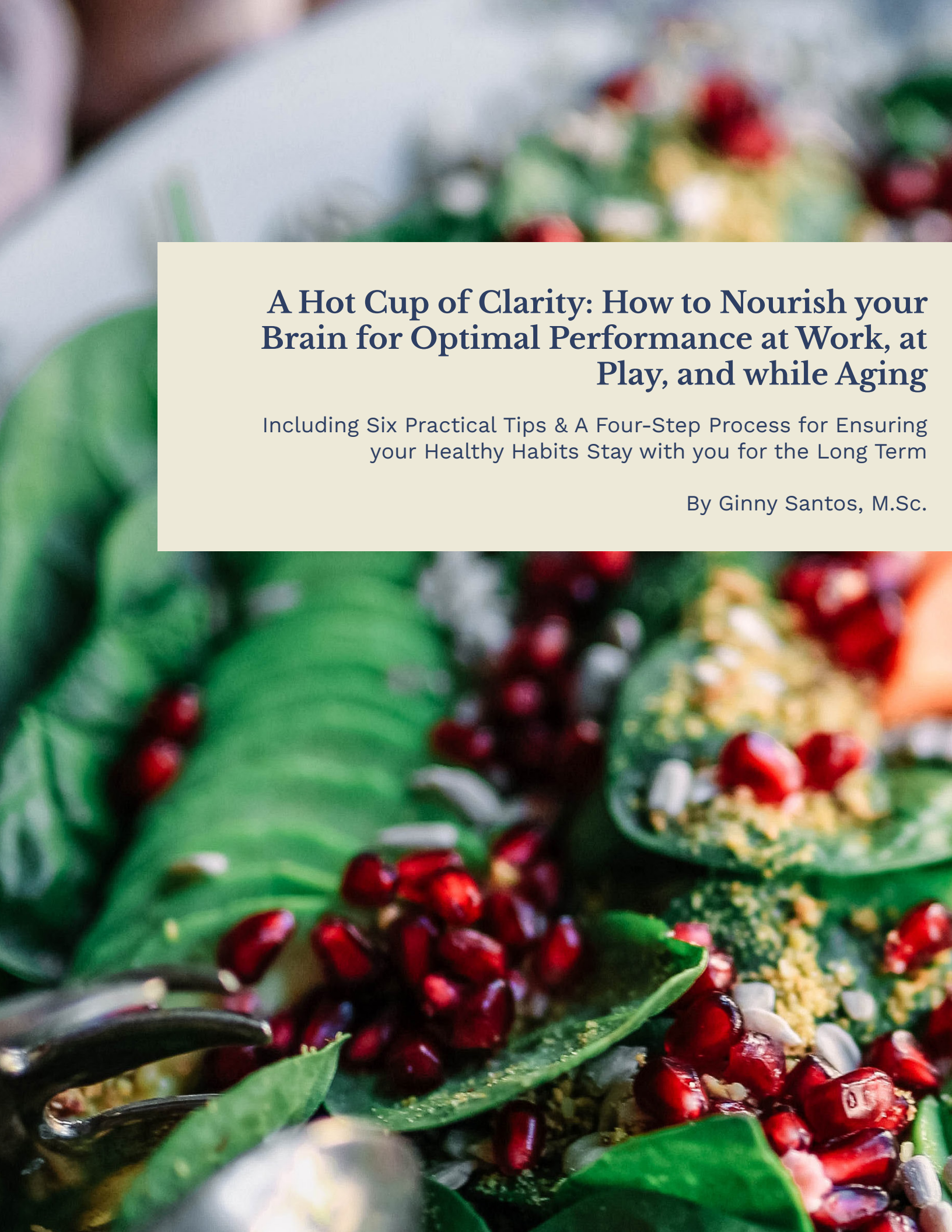
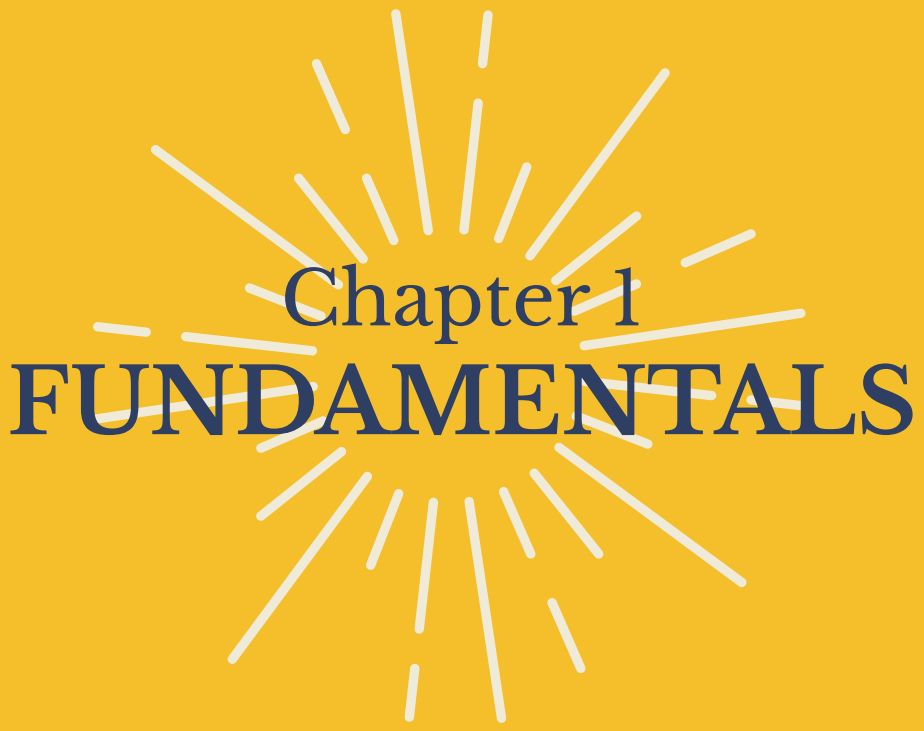


A Hot Cup of Clarity: How to Nourish your Brain for Optimal Performance at Work, at Play, and while Aging

Including Six Practical Tips & A Four-Step Process for Ensuring your Healthy Habits Stay with you for the Long Term

By Ginny Santos, M.Sc.



Chapter 1
FUNDAMENTALS

It has become very clear to me that there are good and bad innovations. For example, the fact that my car has seat warmers is an amazing innovation. The fact that surgeons can do open-heart surgery is even more amazing. But the fact that corn can be refined into high fructose corn syrup and added to countless snack products to extend shelf life and increase the product's addictiveness – therefore guaranteeing repeat sales, and all for a very low cost and a very high profit margin – is an innovation that is good for business but bad for people's health AND especially bad for your brain health.

Unfortunately, there are many innovations in the food industry (both in product development and in marketing strategy) that are nothing but bad for us. As a result, many of us aren't living the energetic and healthy lives that we could be living. For example, the rates of cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases are increasing and affecting us at a younger age than ever before. In 1990, the average person could expect to have good memory and a well-functioning brain at least until age 70. Now, doctors are diagnosing more and more

people with younger onset dementia in their 40s, 50s and 60s. It is now estimated that less than one per cent of Alzheimer's cases have a direct genetic cause. The other 99% are linked to lifestyle, the environment, and your immune system's ability to fend off viruses.

The good news is that you have a lot of power to improve your lifestyle and support your immune system.

From Innovation Consultant to Brain Health Advocate

Because of the work I do, I end up at a lot of conferences, meetings and events with catered meals. At least I did pre-COVID.

In the past, whenever I was asked, “Do you have any food restrictions or allergies we should plan for?”I was proud to say that I ate everything. That’s what I had learned from my dad who had grown up with seven brothers and a widowed mother. “If you want to survive, you have to learn to eat and appreciate whatever is offered to you.” All my life, I had been making food choices based on a completely irrational fear of starvation and a deep need to avoid being a burden to others, rather than making food choices based on an aspiration to live a productive, long and healthy life. Were you also taught to eat everything that’s offered to you and to always finish up the food on your plate, no matter how full you already are? When I realized that living an optimally productive, long, and healthy life was something that I wanted for my whole family, I realized that I needed to change the habits that were deeply ingrained in me.

I had long thought of myself as a healthy person: I only ate fast-food once in a while, I had been vegetarian for most of my twenties, I didn’t smoke, and I usually bought only the healthier kinds of breakfast cereals. I thought that it was perfectly normal to catch a cold every winter, fall and spring (and even summer), that it was perfectly normal to have some acne as an adult, that it was perfectly normal to feel grumpy and sensitive leading up to my menstrual cycle, that it was perfectly normal to rely on coffee to focus and fully concentrate on my work, that it was perfectly normal to want to nap after lunch, and that it was perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed by all my professional and family responsibilities.

Until I discovered that it didn’t have to be that way.

What I thought of as being healthy was only relative to the average North American but not relative to an optimal version of myself.

I was also motivated to make changes to my lifestyle because I wanted to have more energy for my children. You see, when I was 9, my mother died of cancer. Up until then, I did not even think it was possible for a mother to die. Your mother is supposed to always be there for you, or so I thought. Now, I know that only 20 percent of your health and longevity is determined by your genes; the other 80 percent is determined by lifestyle, and lifestyle is greatly influenced by the good and the bad innovations available to us.

What we choose to eat and what is offered to us at work, at conferences and at family or social events, has a direct impact on our performance at work, at play and as we age

As I changed my eating habits, my mental capacity and energy increased. For the first time in my life, I felt that I could do more than what I was already doing, and so I decided to go much deeper into the study of health and nutrition so that I could go beyond helping myself and help my clients too.

The Key Questions Addressed in this E-book

1. What are the optimal brain foods? And
2. How might you optimize your eating habits?

The answer to the first question is common-sense, but not always common-practice. That's why we need to answer the second question. It's one thing to have knowledge about what foods are optimal for the human body and brain; it's another thing to develop the skills and habits that allow you to transform your everyday choices.

But first, there is one thing you should know about MRIs which will help you understand why the second question is SO important.

MRIs for good or for bad?

Brain imaging technology is an innovation that is both good and bad, depending on who is putting it to use. You see, MRIs have made it possible to detect disease in time for a cure. MRIs have also made it possible to learn a lot more about the brain.

But brain scientists are not the only ones interested in understanding the brain. With this new technology, a whole new field has emerged: “neuromarketing.” Have you heard of it? Most people haven’t. Neuromarketers use brain imaging technology to understand what makes us buy what we buy and what advertising will drive us to buy what they want us to buy.

Here’s an example:

In 2008, Cheetos were selling really well as a children’s snack, but the strategists at Frito-Lay wanted to enter the adult market. So, they hired a neuromarketing company to research what adults might enjoy about eating Cheetos and what might get them to buy the snack for themselves. What they discovered is that the parts of the brain that lit up when thinking about eating Cheetos were associated with the areas of subversion. So, they designed an ad campaign that had adults behaving in subversive ways while eating Cheetos – resulting in $47.6 million in INCREASED revenues for that year.

And yet, when surveyed, most people say that their shopping decisions are not affected by marketing. This is why the second question addressed in this ebook is actually more important than the first one. Because given all the advertising strategies and social pressures that influence our decision making, optimizing your eating habits takes a real conscious effort.

In this ebook, I'm going to introduce you to:

- the elements of optimal health
- the types of nutrients that the human body and brain require
- the types of hunger that drive us to eat a variety of foods
- the types of foods or ingredients that are harmful to our brain
- how to create new habits so that you can optimize your performance at work, at play and as you age.

I will share six very practical tips throughout the e-book. Make sure you look out for them!

When does the brain need the most energy?

The brain needs an even and constant supply of energy even while sleeping. But there are minor variations to the amount of energy required by your brain for different cognitive tasks. For example, when you are thinking two main thinking systems are at work. One needs a lot more energy than the other.

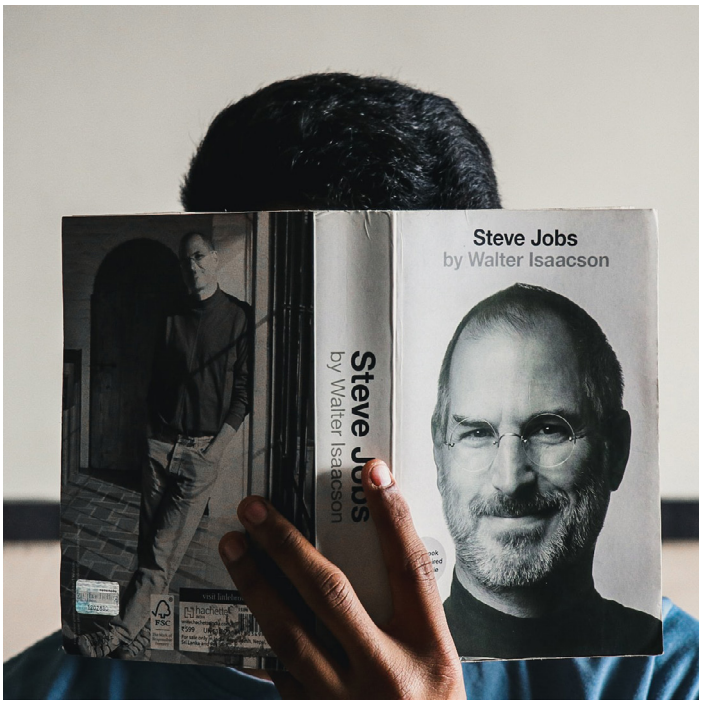
While these thinking systems are explained in detail in Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman, here's a basic summary.

System 1 is fast, automatic, emotional and subconscious. System 1 Thinking is what you use when you are asked a question like this: What is 4 + 4? The answer is automatic; you barely have to think at all.

System 2 thinking, on the other hand, is slow, effortful, analytical and conscious. It's the type of processing your brain would use if your boss asked you to multiply 38 by 289. The real question is, would you try to come up with the answer on your own, or would you reach for a calculator? By reaching for a calculator, you are conserving your brain's energy requirement; that's a good thing. But what about the times when a

calculator can't do the job? That's when you need System 2 Thinking.

What's most important for you to understand is that System 2 Thinking requires a lot more energy for your brain than System 1 Thinking. The brain is a very energy-efficient organ. It is not going to bother doing System 2 Thinking unless it truly needs to. That's why you probably prefer to reach for a calculator any time you are asked to multiply triple digits. This is also why the majority of decisions that we make throughout the day are made quickly and unconsciously, often based on habits and intuition, which are most energy efficient for the brain. In fact, companies like Frito-Lay want you to make purchasing decisions with your System 1 Thinking. They don't want you to analyze, compare options and make a conscious decision. They want you to make a subconscious decision and to form a habit of buying their product.



Steve Jobs understood the difference between System 1 and System 2 Thinking, and he made conscious efforts to conserve his cognitive energy. Steve was known for wearing the same clothing day after day: jeans and a plain black t-shirt or turtleneck. When asked why he always dressed the same, he explained that he didn't want to use up his thinking energy on such trivial things. He preferred to save his thinking energy for more important problems and decisions.

The reality is that the brain needs energy whether it's engaged in high level thinking or not. But the better nourished it is, the better it will function and the more System 2 Thinking it will be able to handle.

> **Most people's brains are underperforming because they are undernourished. As the most metabolically active organ of the body, the brain has nutritional needs that are ten times higher than that of any other organ. The brain is therefore the first organ to falter when it is improperly fed.**
>
> *Aileen Bouford-Mason - Immunologist and Cell Biologist*

In fact, modern brain imaging technologies have made it possible to follow the uptake of nutrients into the brain and have shown that the harder we work our brain the more nourishment it uses. It's no surprise that permanent damage can occur when the nutrients the brain needs for daily functioning, repair and maintenance are undersupplied on a regular basis.

So what is involved in properly feeding the brain?

Just like the rest of the body, what the brain needs most is nothing but oxygen. J Think about it: you can go without any food at all for weeks, and you will still be okay. You can't go without water for more than a day or two, and you certainly can't go without oxygen for more than a few minutes. In fact, when deprived of oxygen, the first organ to suffer long-term damage is the brain.

The brain represents just 20 percent of body weight, yet it uses about 20percent of the body's oxygen supply. Without oxygen, the brain can't perform even the most basic functions. The brain relies on glucose to power neurons that control everything from conscious functions like planning and thought to automatic unconscious processes like heart rate and digestion. Without oxygen, the brain's cells cannot metabolize glucose and therefore cannot convert glucose into energy.

The best way to increase oxygen flow to your brain is to exercise. Walking, jogging and weight lifting strengthen your cardiovascular system and increase your breathing rates, which in turn deepens your lungs and allows them to absorb more oxygen. Even just taking a minute to step away from your desk to stretch or going for a brisk afternoon walk in fresh air, makes a real difference to the amount of oxygen your brain gets.

Common Sense vs Common Practice

I'm sure this is nothing new to you. You already know that it's important to exercise. It's common sense, right? But why isn't it common practice? Let me bring something to your attention:

Having an optimal lifestyle is easiest when all of the following elements are in place:

1. Your social and physical environment support an optimal lifestyle
2. You have enough knowledge to make informed decisions and the skills to take action on those decisions
3. You are personally and socially motivated to make the right decisions and take action on those decisions.

Let's use house plants as a metaphor. Most of us have house plants in our homes or offices. The difference is that some of us take care of our houseplants and some of us don't. In my case, my house plants are really not doing as well as they could be doing. First, I don't really have the **knowledge or skills** to take care of them properly. Second, I don't feel **motivated** enough to learn how to take care of them, and since all my friends and relatives who visit are so polite, none of them pressure me to take better care of them either. The only thing that works in my houseplants' favour is **the social and physical environment** that they are in. Luckily my house has a lot of south-facing windows with lots of daylight coming in, and my youngest son likes to fill the water jug and pour some water over the plants every once in a while.

But I know people who are really good at taking care of houseplants. They know what each plant needs, and they know when to give them what they need. And since their houseplants are important to them, they even make special arrangements for their care before going away on vacation. Their houseplants are healthy because they have the knowledge and motivation to take care of them, and they create an environment that is conducive to their health.

What about taking care of your brain?

Does your **social and physical environment** support your brain's long-term health?
Do you have the **knowledge and skills** necessary to take the best care of your brain?
Do you know how to increase your **motivation** so that you take care of your brain despite the challenges you face?

"Humans are food dependent creatures. Do not feed them and they will die. Feed them improperly and parts of them will die."

Aileen Bouford-Mason

When we've had a long day at the office, we decide to give ourselves a break from exercising or we say, "I'll take the elevator. I'm too tired to go up the stairs." Our environment is set up in such a way that we have the opportunity to sit for more hours of the day than we have to stand, walk or jog. When we go on vacation or go out to celebrate something, we give ourselves a so-called "treat." Imagine you did the same with your houseplants: If you were proud of your favorite houseplant and you wanted to give it a treat, would you give it some sugar-water? Or would you mash up a nice chocolate chip cookie and gently press the crumbs into the earth around its roots? No, because everyone knows that's no way to treat your plants, yet we do it to ourselves all the time, don't we?

We have the knowledge and skills; the problem is that we live and work in an environment that is not conducive to doing exercise or eating healthy, and we are subjected to so much advertising and social pressure to eat a sub-optimal diet, that making better choices requires a very strong connection to your deepest motivations.

I invite you to reflect on this question: What do you hope will be different for you after you complete the ebook?

Below is a list of the most common answers that people who attend my live workshop have shared. Go ahead and highlight the ones that you connect with the most, or add your own unique motivators.

What do you hope will be different for you after you complete this course?

- ☐ I will be able to concentrate and focus for longer periods of time.
- ☐ I will feel motivated to eat healthy.
- ☐ I will be able to prevent headaches.
- ☐ I will know more about food and nutrition.
- ☐ I will know more about preventing dementia and Alzheimer's.
- ☐ I will know what I can do to get sick less often.
- ☐ I will know what I can do to feel more energetic.

Other:

Chapter 2

THE ELEMENTS OF OPTIMAL HEALTH

Your brain is part of the whole

Here's a somewhat controversial statement: Your brain is healthiest when your whole being is healthy. When your whole being is healthy, you live disease-free.

What do you think? Is this true? When I ask people in my workshops, they often agree that only the first part of the sentence is true but not the second part. I say that the second part is true only if you have a broad understanding of what is meant by "your whole being." It appears that living disease-free depends not only on your nutrition but also your social and emotional habits.

The Blue Zones

Let me introduce you to the Blue Zones.
The Blue Zones are five places around the world where people routinely live to be over a hundred years old without any chronic disease (no heart disease, dementia, diabetes, or cancer).

LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA

Members of this Adventist community outlive the average American by a whole decade. They eat a vegan diet rich in leafy greens, nuts and beans. They observe the Sabbath, meaning a whole 24 hours of downtime every week. They are full of purpose, often working until way past age 65 and doing a lot of volunteering.

NICOYA, COSTA RICA

Nicoyans have a strong sense of faith and family. They frequently visit neighbours and usually live in the same household with several generations. They have an early light dinner, eat little or no processed food and plenty of tropical fruit. They have hard water with high levels of calcium, which helps bone health.

SARDINIA, ITALY

Home to the longest-lived men in the world, mostly shepherds who walk five miles across mountains every day. They are in constant low-level physical activity throughout their day. Sardinians eat a Mediterranean, plant-based diet and reserve meat for Sundays and special occasions.

IKARIA, GREECE

Ikarians take an afternoon nap, which conveys a 35 percent lower chance of fatal heart disease (naps possibly lower stress hormones). They have a relaxed pace of life that ignores clocks. They eat a Mediterranean diet full of herbs, olive oil, vegetables, greens and grains. Ikarians do short fasts regularly throughout the year.

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Home to the longest-lived women in the world, here people form “moais”—groups of 5 friends that can truly depend on each other for life. They place importance on “ikigai,”, a sense of purpose formed by balancing doing what you love, what you’re good at, what others need from you, and what you’re paid to do.

“Hari hachi bu” is Okinawan for “stop eating when you are 80% full.” They also eat their largest meal in the early or middle part of the day. They eat only a little in the early evening and then fast until the next day.

What the Blue Zones Have in Common

If you already know about the Blue Zones, you probably know that they share the following:

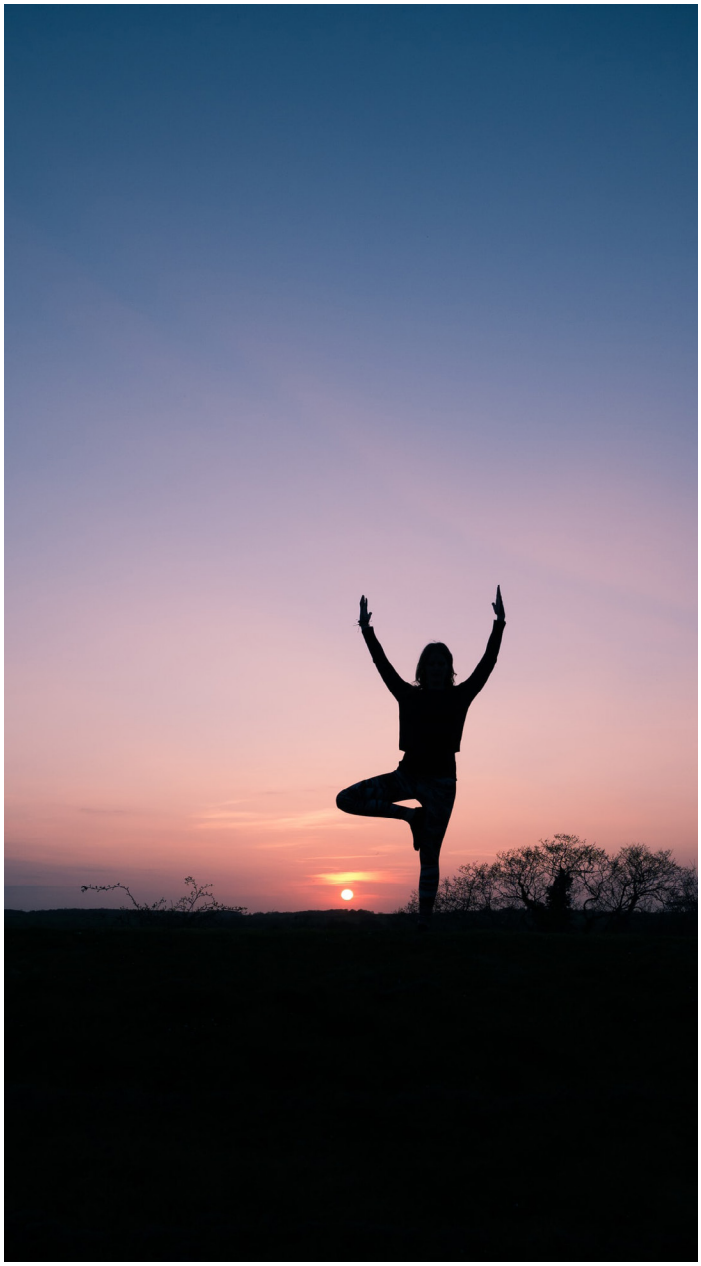
- They all have plant-based diets. That means that they eat primarily foods derived from plants, like fruits, leaves, roots, nuts and seeds combined, in some cases, with occasional animal products. There is no smoking in any of the Blue Zones.

- There is no overeating. In fact, all the Blue Zones practice some form of regular fasting. Some fast for religious reasons, and others fast because there are periods of low food availability. Some fast for several weeks, once a year, and others fast for a shorter period on a weekly or daily basis. In Okinawa, they have a very unique practice called Hari hachi bu. It means stop eating when you are 80% full.

- They have a strong sense of purpose and belonging built into their lifestyle. They are either active in a faith-based community, or they are very connected to their extended families long into old age. Constant moderate physical activity is built into everyday life. Red meats are only consumed occasionally, if at all. One of the Blue Zones does not consume any meat at all, and the others do not have it more than once per week.

- None of the Blue Zones have heavy meals late in the day.

- Relaxation rituals are built into their routines. All of the Blue Zones dedicate time to slow down. Some use prayer time as the time to slow down, others just pause to express gratitude or take a short nap. Some just take 15 minutes out of each day, and some take a whole day out of every week.



What are the differences?

There are also some differences, mainly that some eat lots of healthy fats (like fish, avocado, olive oil & nuts) whereas others have low-fat diets. Some consume small amounts of alcohol, and others do not have any alcohol at all. Some eat small amounts of dairy like yogurt and aged cheese, while some don't have any dairy at all. Some are highly religious, but not all.

These differences show that there isn't one specific lifestyle that has been proven to nurture your longevity and overall health. But there are components of a healthy lifestyle that are unquestionable.

TIP #2

Slow down your eating so that you learn to recognize when enough food is enough. Remember Okinawa's 80% rule: if you eat until you are 80% full, there's a very good chance that 20 minutes later you will actually feel full. The scientific explanation for this is that it takes 20 minutes before our brains register the feeling of fullness. But that's if you are eating whole foods. Studies have shown that if you are eating ultra-processed foods like microwave dinners or packaged snacks, the nerve that is responsible for registering fullness, called the Vagus Nerve, fails to activate. It is unclear why that's the case. What is clear is that this failure of the nerve to register fullness, works in favour of the big food manufacturers who are always looking for ways to make you hungry for more.

There is also another reason why eating slower is a good idea: Speed-eating means that you are likely not chewing your food as well as you should. The mouth is where the digestive process begins. When you chew too quickly, you are also more likely to overeat and overload your digestive system, triggering an increase in blood flow to your stomach and intestines and away from the brain. That's one reason why so many people feel tired after a meal.

Learning Experiment

Now is a good time to remind you that reading this information is not enough. If you really want to get value out of this ebook, I encourage you to put the tips into practice and do some learning experiments. So here is your first learning experiment.

- Grab a small piece of fruit. Something like a raisin or an olive, a grape or a blueberry would be ideal. The purpose of this experiment is to really slow down your interaction with this piece of fruit and do something known as Mindful Eating.
- Before you put the food in your mouth, take as much time as you need to observe it: notice the colour, the texture, how it feels as you grab it with your thumb and your index finger, how it smells, etc. Slow down time and notice as much detail as you can.
- Now, bring it close to your lips and really notice how it feels on your lips. Slowly let it drop into your mouth, but don't chew it just yet! Move it around the inside of your mouth a couple of times, using your tongue to play with it. Once again, notice the taste and the texture. Do you feel an urge to chew and swallow? Wait! Keep it whole for just a little longer.
- When you are really eager to discover the inside of the fruit, you can slowly chew it. Keep noticing what you notice. Is there a difference between how it tasted before chewing it and how it tasted when you bit right into it? How does it feel as it goes down your throat and into your stomach? What are your thoughts and feelings?

Most of us are in the habit of eating so quickly that we barely notice micro-flavours—we barely enjoy the taste of food. When you slow down, you create an opportunity to really connect with your food, enjoy it more, notice when you are starting to get full, and ultimately give your digestive system a much easier job. Give your stomach the information it needs and the time to produce the appropriate digestive enzymes which gives your nervous system the signal to relax and activates the "rest & digest" parasympathetic system.

Chapter 3

REAL HUNGERS AND ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

In this chapter, we are going to look at specific nutrients and types of hunger. For this to make sense in your own context, it will be really helpful if you take some time to think about what you ate in the last 24 hours. List everything you ate and drank in as much detail as possible. If you find it hard to remember what you ate, you can do this exercise over the next 24 hours instead. Just take note of what you are eating and drinking as the day progresses.

	What I ate	What I drank
Morning		
Afternoon		
Evening		
Night		

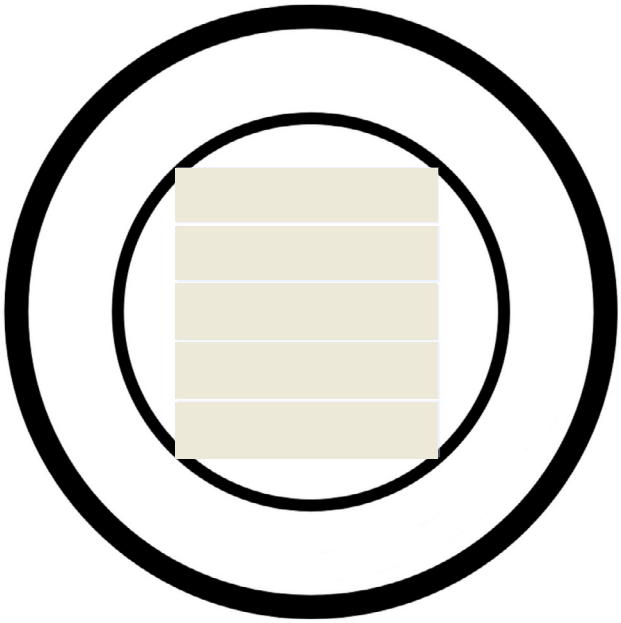
Good to Know

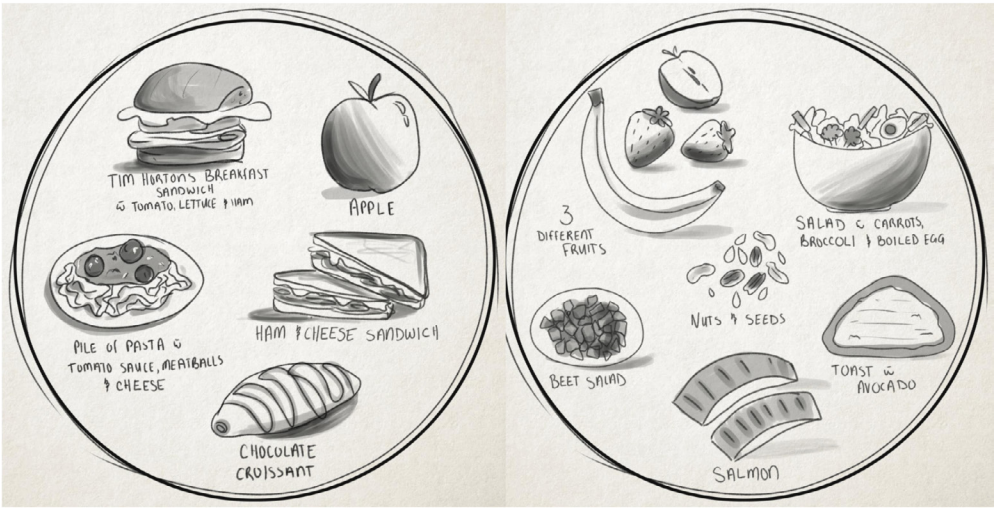
Most countries have a set of food guidelines. This is Health Canada's Food Guidelines' mission statement:

"Health Canada is committed to improving the lives of all of Canada's people and to making this country's population among the healthiest in the world as measured by longevity, lifestyle and effective use of the public health care system." In order to work towards this mission, Health Canada uses the best available scientific evidence to create a set of healthy eating guidelines for Canadians.

And this is what Health Canada recommends that you eat throughout one day:
"Half of everything you eat throughout the day should be vegetables and fruits. One quarter of everything you eat should be proteins, and the other quarter should be whole grains. And your primary drink should be water."

If everything you eat in one day could fit on one plate. What portion of the plate would be fruit, vegetables, grains, proteins, desserts or salty snacks?
What drinks would be around your plate?





These were the drawings done by one of my coaching clients on the first day we met and three.

Reflect: What similarities and differences are there between these drawings and the food you ate over the last 24hrs?

There are many ways of approaching a healthy meal. Your first step is going to be to understand the six types of hunger that you experience at any given time. Some of these hungers you should listen to and learn to satiate with nourishing foods, others are not satiated with food but require different strategies depending on the type of hunger. Let's look at these in more detail.

If you are interested in a deeper dive into the Six Types of Hunger and how you can optimize your eating habits, I highly recommend watching this Free Masterclass with Eric Edmeades and consider doing the 90 Day Challenge with him.

Hydration Hunger

Hydration hunger happens when you are thirsty, but your body might communicate it as a feeling of hunger instead of thirst. The reason for this is that early humans evolved in an environment where they didn't always have access to drinking water. And they certainly didn't have water bottles to carry around with them. So, they got a good amount of water from eating and chewing on plants (or fruits when available). That's why you can sometimes feel hungry, and that feeling can go away after you have a nice drink of water.

The brain is the organ that is most sensitive to dehydration. So even minimal dehydration like a 2 percent water loss in the brain can really trigger neurological symptoms like brain fog, dizziness, confusion, or memory slippage. Brain scans show that brain shrinkage associated with dehydration can be easily reversed by just drinking more water.
The quality of water is really important. A lot of people just don't drink nearly enough water to start with. And even people who do drink water are not necessarily safe because they mostly drink purified water. For water to be really helpful to your brain and helpful for your body as a whole, it really needs to contain electrolytes: essential minerals and salts that promote hydration. If these minerals are taken out, as is the case with purified water, club soda or seltzer, you still get the fluids, but you don't get the nutrients that your brain needs to function properly. So the brain doesn't just need something wet, it needs the electrolytes that natural spring water provides.

TIP #3

Make sure you drink six to eight glasses of natural spring water every day. Tap water is not a bad option either assuming the tap water in your region is safe to drink. Drinking coffee or tea does not count as drinking water! Coffee and tea do not help hydrate you, so you still need to get those six to eight glasses of water per day. And if you are going to travel in an airplane or engage in some high-intensity sports, you want to increase your intake of water leading up to that date and not just on the day itself. You see, if you get dehydrated it's not because you didn't have enough water that day; it's usually because you haven't stored enough water over the last few days.

Nutritional Hunger

This is the hunger we feel when we need nourishment. And the type of nourishment the human body needs is a combination of healthy carbohydrates, healthy fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals. Let's look at these nutrients in a little more detail.

Carbs

When it comes to carbs, there are good and bad carbs. The good ones energize your brain and satisfy your nutritional hunger, whereas the bad carbs drain your brain, put stress on your gut and your liver, give you that post-lunch coma, and make you feel hungry again and again.

Healthy Carbs

- Healthy carbs are nutrient dense
- They give you long-lasting energy
- They feed your gut and protect your liver
- Some of the very best sources of healthy carbs are fruits, root vegetables, the squash family of vegetables, and some beans or legumes (ideally sprouted for ease of digestion)

Whole grains like barley, brown rice and quinoa (which is technically a seed but often classified as a grain) are relatively healthy but not as nutrient dense as the healthy carbs listed above. They often act as filler foods, but are certainly a better option than the "unhealthy carbs" listed below.

Unhealthy Carbs

Unhealthy carbs are often referred to as simple carbs because they are nutrient deficient. They are the ones responsible for spikes in your blood glucose levels which overloads your pancreas. These carbs are not only bad for you overall, they are also bad for your microbiome – a giant colony of healthy bacteria that plays an important role inside your gut. Simple carbs include white rice, wheat (pasta, bread), sodas, and pastries.

Eating simple carbs every now and then, is not a problem. The problem grows when these carbs form part of your daily routine. Simple carbs are great for periods of famine or to prevent starvation but no human can thrive in the long term on simple carbs.

As Dr. Buford-Mason says, choosing healthy options on a daily basis will reduce your risk of dementia by 35 percent in old age.

Fats

Fats are the other type of nutrient that our bodies and brains need in order to satisfy our nutritional hunger. But once again, there are good fats and bad fats. What's useful to know is that the brain is 60 percent fat. This means that healthy fats are the building blocks of the brain. Healthy fats are unsaturated fats that include Omega3 and Omega6 fatty acids.

The tricky thing here is that our brains need a balance of Omega3 and Omega6, and if you are in the habit of eating processed foods you are likely to be getting a lot more Omega6 than Omega3. This unbalance causes inflammation and has been shown to contribute to diseases such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. By prioritizing healthy fats found in whole foods (as opposed to processed foods), you are more likely to benefit from a healthy balance of omega fatty acids.

What's also great about healthy fats is that they help us absorb vitamins like A, D, E and K.
Good fats can be found in avocado, seafood, fatty fish, nuts, eggs and olives.

Fun Facts

Did you know that humans are the only land mammals born with fat? The fat is there to serve as a reservoir for fuel and growth for the rapidly developing brain. Dolphins are also born fat, and they are also a pretty intelligent species.

Proteins

Proteins are important because they regulate our metabolism and are the building blocks that make up your hair, nails, bones, and muscles. Protein gives tissues and organs their shape and also helps them work the way they should. But proteins are often misunderstood. People think that you can only get protein from meat, fish and dairy products. Those are certainly sources of protein, but the reality is that everything has protein – even plants and fruits. In fact, beans, nuts and whole grains are all sources of protein.

The same as with carbs and fats, there are good proteins and not-so-goood proteins. The best sources of proteins are the following:
Animal sources: grass-fed beef that is antibiotic free and hormone-free, poultry and eggs from free-run chickens.
Plant sources: sprouted beans, nuts and seeds.

The average person in the developed world gets more protein than needed so you are not likely to experience Nutritional Hunger because of a lack of protein. You are much more likely to experience nutritional hunger if you aren't getting enough of the other key nutrients.

Vitamins and Minerals

And finally, the last two types of nutrients are the vitamins and minerals found in healthy carbs, fats and in all vegetables and fruits. All veggies and fruits are rich in vitamins and minerals.

- They are the ideal source of most vitamins and minerals
- They are rich in fiber when unprocessed, which helps feed and maintain our microbiome
- They provide a sustained release of glucose (which is the brain's main fuel)
- They replenish your magnesium and vitamin C stores, which allows you to maintain your focus and attention for prolonged periods of time.

TIP #4

Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables to 10 servings per day.

Remember that fruits and veggies contain healthy carbs, some protein, fiber and many vitamins and minerals. The way to get the most vitamins and minerals from them is to eat them whole or unprocessed. Slightly steamed or stir fried is also fine. But overcooking or over processing fruits and vegetables lowers their nutritional content.

Fiber

Satisfying our nutritional hunger is not only about feeding ourselves. **We also have to feed our gut bacteria, and the best way to do that is to eat fiber.**

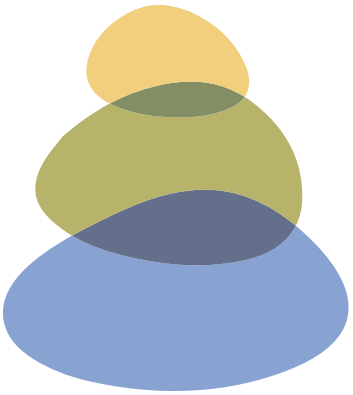
Researchers around the globe are now looking at the so-called gut-brain connection and, specifically, the relationship of our gut bacteria to brain health and functionality. More recently, we've been seeing research publications that actually connect changes in the gut bacteria to Alzheimer's Disease risk.

It turns out that the level of inflammation in the human body is very much regulated by the health and diversity of the bacterial species that live within us. Bacteria make it their job to maintain the lining of the gut. When there are deficiencies in the gut Lining, there is what we call leakiness or leaky gut whereby certain components that make it into your gut can leak across the gut lining and get into your circulation. This is what causes the inflammation that is so damaging to the brain and may underline Alzheimer's disease.

So, we really have to do everything we possibly can to keep the gut bacteria healthy and happy. We want diversity and we want functionality. Diversity and functionality are brought about primarily by our food choices and limiting our gut bacteria's exposure to things that are actually toxic. Without question, the most important influence we have over the health, diversity and functionality of our gut bacteria are the foods that we choose to eat. Our gut bacteria thrive in an environment that's rich in prebiotic fiber, that has high levels of good fat, and that restricts simple sugars as well as refined or simple carbohydrates.

But not every day is the same! Here's what you need to know about periods of high stress.

Now that you know all the nutrients that you require for optimal performance, you know how to satisfy your nutritional hunger under normal conditions. But what about during periods of high stress?



It shouldn't be any surprise that the brain needs extra nourishment when you are feeling stressed. In fact, stress depletes your Vitamin C and your B vitamins. Studies have also shown that people who are prone to depression and anxiety require more vitamins and minerals than the average person.

It turns out that animals such as goats, rats, mice and dogs synthesize their own Vitamin C so they don't need to get it from their diet. When tested in labs, scientists have proven that these animals triple their own Vitamin C production when they are under stress. However, guinea pigs, gorillas and humans don't have the ability to create Vitamin C; we need to get it from our diet.

Think of the last time you were stressed: did you pause to eat a healthy snack or at least drink some water? Unfortunately, many of us gravitate toward junk food, coffee and sweets when we are feeling stressed or down, which unfortunately is the opposite of what our brains truly need. **The best way to prevent deficiencies resulting from high stress is to eat a nutrient-dense diet as consistently as possible.** What you ate last week has a direct impact on your wellbeing this week.

Variety Hunger

Variety Hunger is very closely linked to Nutritional Hunger. We naturally crave variety because that's how our bodies ensure we get a wide range of vitamins and minerals rather than too much of one nutrient at the expense of another. This explains why most of us don't want to eat the same meal all week long. In fact, our ancestors would consume around two hundred different plant species per year, whereas the average person today has less than ten different plants per year.

People in my workshops and the people I coach often ask, **"Can't you give me a list of ten foods that are good for the brain?" And the answer is, "Yes, but I would have to give you a different list every month or so."** The Hunger for Variety is a real hunger. And the simple truth is that the brain needs healthy sources of all the nutrients I have covered in this chapter. But it isn't always possible to get all the necessary nutrients in one day. What matters most, is that you get a variety of nutrients within a week, within a month and throughout the year. For example, it is only natural to have more access to citrus fruits in the summer and spring than the rest of the year. You do not need to eat an apple every single day to keep the doctor away. You do have to eat a variety of whole foods throughout your lifespan to support your optimal health.

You could go on a low carb, ketone-inducing diet for several months, and your brain would be perfectly nourished by the healthy fats in your diet without needing any fructose. You can certainly experience optimal brain performance on a high fat, low carb diet while not eating any fruit at all. Continuing to eat a wide variety of green vegetables while practicing a low carb diet would be most beneficial.

Or you can experience optimal cognitive performance while eating a sweet fruits, as long as you are eating them raw and with all the fiber and not in the form of fruit juice.

Some fruit, high in antioxidants, are especially good for the brain. Some examples of these are blueberries and strawberries.

There are fats that have a higher concentration of Omega 3 fatty oils, which are especially good for the brain, such as fatty fish and avocados. But if that's all you ate, you would quickly find yourself lacking other nutrients, so I cannot overemphasize enough the importance of variety.

I used to be one of those people that settled on four or five different vegetables and three or four types of fruit. On my weekly shopping trip, I would be on autopilot, grabbing apples, bananas, broccoli, onions, tomatoes, spinach and carrots, every single time. These were my main go-to vegetables and fruits all year round—the ones I knew my kids would eat.

Then, I learned that our hunter-gathering ancestors used to consume upwards from 200 different varieties of plants. This information really drove home the importance of variety. As a result, I invited my youngest son to push me out of my own comfort zone and force me to expand my gathering habits. Every time we went to the grocery store, I asked him to find one vegetable and one fruit that he had never tried before. He loved this challenge and would run off to find the most unusual things. Once he came back with this long leafy green that looked familiar to me. On closer inspection, I realized it was the weed I would pull out of our backyard obsessively every summer – dandelion leafs! You gotta be kidding? I spend hours digging these things out and throwing them onto a compost pile, and now I'm about to pay for them and bring them into our kitchen? It turns out that dandelion greens are full of a variety of nutrients including Vitamin C, Calcium and Potassium.

You won't always enjoy eating new things, but I invite you to enjoy experimenting with new textures and flavours. That's how we made a habit of trying new things and adding variety into our meals.

Hydration Hunger, Nutrition Hunger, and Variety Hunger: if these three types of hunger are well taken care of, your brain will have all it needs to function at its best, as long as it's also getting a healthy amount of sleep, which it needs to repair and maintain itself. If sleep is your bigger challenge, then I highly recommend you explore the work of The Sleep Doctor. Start by watching this very **insightful video** on The Mastery of Sleep.

Pause & Reflect

Now is a good time to pause and jot down some reflections. Remember that knowledge is only power if you put it into practice. In fact, there's a famous Chinese proverb that says:

- What I hear, I forget
- What I see, I remember
- What I do, I understand

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions before moving on to the next chapter.

From what you have heard so far, what is most interesting to you?

How might you apply it in daily life?

Why would you want to apply it?

When might you apply it?

Chapter 4

THREATS TO OPTIMAL BRAIN PERFORMANCE

Now that you know all about the hungers that nourish your brain, let's talk about the remaining hungers. These are the hungers that threaten your optimal performance. You might experience them as hungers because the feeling originates in your gut, but I often call them "fake" hungers. This is because even though you might have a feeling of hunger, the way to satiate these hungers is not through food or water.

Blood Sugar Hunger

One of the fake hungers we experience is blood sugar hunger. This is when you experience a drop in your blood-glucose levels, which drives you to crave anything with sugar. But here's the thing: if you were getting all the nutrients you needed from healthy foods, your blood glucose levels would remain steady. The problem is that we are constantly offered and sold products that are high in simple carbs. Simple carbs create a sugar spike in our blood followed by a steep drop that makes us feel hungry again. It's a vicious cycle.

Empty Stomach Hunger

The next fake hunger is the feeling you get when your stomach is empty. But it doesn't mean that you need to fill it each time. In fact, your stomach needs to be empty on a regular basis in order to clean and repair itself. The problem is that our stomachs are in the bad habit of overstretching to accommodate all the food we take in. This was an evolutionary advantage at one point in time. You see, up until recently, the main cause of human death was starvation. Throughout history, food just wasn't readily available to us. That's why our stomachs evolved to be able to triple in size so they could take in as much food as possible when it was available. It's good to let your stomach shrink back to its original size and give it some time for self-cleaning and repair.

Those who practice intermittent fasting or prolonged fasting have become accustomed to the empty stomach hunger and know that it's a passing feeling and that it is not a real hunger. If you are new to fasting, I do not recommend that you jump into experimenting without professional support. However, what you can do is allow for 12 to 14 hours between your last meal of the evening and your first meal the next day. That means no mid-night snacks!

Emotional Hunger

Lastly, the hunger that is perhaps the hardest to tackle is known as Emotional Hunger. Our emotional hunger triggers us to eat when we are feeling an uncomfortable emotion. It's often a result of associations to food that we made during our upbringing. For example, when a child gets hurt or is upset, the parent or caregiver will often try to make the child feel better by offering a cookie or any kind of sweet or salty snack. That child then associates feeling better with eating something tasty. We call these things "treats," but I invite you to think about this for a minute. When you give yourself a "treat," how does that treat actually treat your brain and body? Does it bring in any real nourishment? Or is it more of a threat to your health than a treat?

Threats, Not Treats

There are ingredients in foods (or so-called foods) that are actually bad for our ongoing health. I call these Threats. Let's focus on five key threats that are common in processed foods:

- Sodium, when consumed in excess
- Refined sugars
- Artificial sweeteners
- Excessive saturated fats and
- Trans fats

In fact, Health Canada's Food Guidelines say:
"Processed or prepared foods and beverages that contribute to excess sodium, free sugars, or saturated fat should not be consumed regularly. Free sugars include 'added sugars' And all trans fats should be avoided."

The World Health Organization's public health recommendation is to reduce the intake of trans fats by the majority of the population to less than 1 percent of total energy intake. Canada and many other countries are banning all Partially Hydrogenated Oils, which is the main source of trans fats. Generally speaking, you are safe from trans fats, although the occasional product might still be circulating in the supermarkets. Additionally, foods containing less than 0.5 grams of trans fats per serving are labeled as having 0 grams of trans fats. Here's a list of seven foods that still contain trans fats.

A Deeper Look at Sugar

Now let's look at sugars and why added or refined sugars are a threat to your brain's health:

- They raise our blood glucose levels repeatedly, in a way that our bodies have not evolved to handle. Over time, this contributes to the development of Type 2 Diabetes, liver disease, Alzheimer's or Dementia, mood disorders and many other chronic conditions.
- They change our taste buds, resulting in a dislike for healthier foods like greens, and interfering with our desire to eat healthy foods.
- Sugar and refined sugars are as addictive as heroin and eight times as addictive as cocaine. You become dependent on them, and when you try to quit you are likely to experience withdrawal symptoms. Over time, you will need more and more sugar for your brain to sense the same level of reward.
- Even a single instance of elevated glucose in the bloodstream causes inflammation in the brain, which slows cognitive function and creates temporary deficits in memory and attention.
- Frequent sugar spikes increase your brain's resistance to insulin. Insulin resistance leads to a deficiency in fuel for the brain, which results in the loss of neurons (or neural degeneration).

The American Heart Association recommends an upper limit of 25 to 37 grams of sugar per day for adults (on the lower end for smaller adults, and the higher end for larger adults), and 9 to 10 grams per day for children.

The problem is that the average Canadian adult, according to StatsCanada, consumes

TIP #5

For those of you who have the tradition of eating something sweet after a meal, here's a little tip for how to change that habit. Give your taste buds a change in flavour after the meal, but instead of a sweet, get into the habit of having a cup of herbal tea or chewing on a mint leaf. You will see that the craving for dessert will often go away.

93 grams per day, and the average child consumes 101 grams per day! It is no surprise that the number of people with Type 2 Diabetes, Dementia and Alzheimer's is increasing every decade.

The good news is that if you create the optimal conditions for a better lifestyle, it will become easy to quit eating refined sugars. I highly recommend watching this free masterclass to discover how to develop food freedom.

Hidden Sources of Sugar

Sugars come from many sources and are refined into many different products. That's why sugars might be listed under more than two hundred names in the ingredients list of any product. It's not enough to know that added sugars are bad for you. You really have to play detective to find out if a packaged food has any added sugars. Below is a list of 37 common names for sugar, along with a crossword puzzle to help familiarize yourself with the various names.

But really, the best way for you to practice identifying added sugars is to start reading the ingredients lists of the products in your kitchen and get into the habit of avoiding any products that have more than 5g of sugar in the nutritional label. You also need to avoid products that have sugars listed amongst their top three ingredients, or multiple types of sugars within one product.

37 Names of Sugar

AGAVENECTAR
BROWNRICESYRUP
CANE
CAROBSYRUP
CORNSWEETENER
DEMARASUGAR
DIATASE
FRUITJUICE
ICING
MALTOSE
MOLASSES
ORGANICRAWSUGAR
TURBINADO

BARLEYMALT
BROWNSUGAR
CANEJUICE
CASTERSUGAR
CORNSYRUP
DEXTRAN
ETHYLMALTOL
GALACTOSE
LACTOSE
MALTSYRUP
MUSCOVADOSUGAR
PANELA

BEETSUGAR
BUTTEREDSUGAR
CARAMEL
COCONUTSUGAR
DATESUGAR
DIASTATICMALT
FRUCTOSE
HONEY
MALTODEXTRIN
MAPLESYRUP
OATSYRUP
RICEBRANSYRUP

R O C O P A M O A B B P P R P H O E E F
E A B O L U A O A N U D A C U D W T C R
D S G E R T R R L R A G G D R I N H I U
W E N U S N L Y Y A U I A R Y A I Y U C
C A M Y S E S S S S S T B H S S R L J T
P A R A Y W E W O B E S Q B E T T M T O
N U N M R L A D E S O E E M C A X A I S
P A A E P A A R U E R R R S I T E L U E
V L R A J V S G C A T I A C R I D T R C
T L M T O U A U T I C E I C N C O O F O
H Q E C X R I C G E N N N I W M T L P R
M H S B B E E C B A G A G E O A L K U N
I U O L M N D R E N R Q G S R L A O R S
M D T N E R A G U S N W O R B T M T Y Y
R Y L V E N R A G U S T U N O C O C S R
E N A C S Y K V G B E E T S U G A R T U
X G M Y B U T T E R E D S U G A R O L P
A L R E S O T C A L A G A L E M A R A C
Z U S F N T U R B I N A D O H G H O M W
P C A S T E R S U G A R D I A T A S E C

Sad Fact

Eighty percent of packaged foods have added sugars. Just because some of the ingredients in the package appear to be healthy doesn't mean that the product is healthy.

A glass of orange juice actually has more sugar than a bowl of cereal. I know what you might be thinking: "The orange juice has tons of vitamin C!" Yes, that's right, and most cereals are fortified with vitamins but that doesn't make them healthy. Both, juice and cereal are examples of foods that overload your liver, your pancreas and your bloodstream with glucose. Think of it this way: It actually takes three oranges to make one cup of juice. You are not very likely to eat three whole oranges in one sitting, and even if you did, the amount of fiber you would ingest along with the oranges would slow down the processing of the fructose to the point that it would have no detrimental effect on your liver or your pancreas.

The amount of sugar in a can of Coke is just as bad as the amount of sugar in a bottled green smoothie. The only positive thing about the green smoothie is that at least it's made with real ingredients and does have some nutritional value.

9.7
Teaspoons of Sugar

9.25
Teaspoons of Sugar

Are there healthy sugars?

The best sugars are those that occur naturally in whole foods such as honey, fruits and vegetables – assuming that you are eating the whole fruit or vegetable. As soon as you extract and refine sugar for the purposes of adding it to a processed product, it becomes an added sugar.

It really is quite interesting that so many people opt for artificial sweeteners when they get the message about the dangers of sugar. Unfortunately, artificial sweeteners are among the worst for the health of your gut bacteria. In fact, a recent study published in the journal Stroke indicated that those people who regularly consume artificial sweeteners may have a three-fold increased risk for the development of Alzheimer's Disease[1]. Think about that! Consuming diet drinks may dramatically increase your risk of developing this disease for which we have no meaningful treatment.

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1 Pase, M. P., Himali, J. J., Beiser, A. S., Aparicio, H. J., Satizabal, C. L., Vasan, R. S., Seshadri, S., & Jacques, P. F. (2017). Sugar- and Artificially Sweetened Beverages and the Risks of Incident Stroke and Dementia: A Prospective Cohort Study. Stroke, 48(5), 1139–1146. https://doi.org/10.1161/STROKEAHA.116.016027

TIP #6

For most people, cutting sugar is the hardest thing to do. But avoiding unhealthy fats and sodium is not all that easy either.

If you want to avoid all three of the THREATS, tip#6 is your best friend:
Always prioritize whole foods over packaged foods. If you need to carry around a snack, choose nuts and seeds, fruits or pre-cut veggies.
If you don't have an option, choose processed foods with LESS THAN 5 gm sugar, less than 5 percent sodium, less than 5 percent saturated fats, and 0 trans fats.

What about food freedom?

Don’t get discouraged by how difficult it is to cut out the bad stuff. Remember that the MOST important way to take care of your brain—and your whole body for that matter—is to make sure you give it enough of the good stuff. Let me say that again: **It’s more important to get enough of the good stuff than it is to eliminate the bad stuff.**

I learned how to prioritize getting enough of the good stuff instead of worrying about eliminating the bad stuff from the founder of WILDFIT, a 90 Day Challenge that is transforming the health of tens of thousands of people all around the world.

Don’t get discouraged by how difficult it is to cut out the bad stuff. Remember that the MOST important way to take care of your brain—and your whole body for that matter—is to make sure you give it enough of the good stuff.

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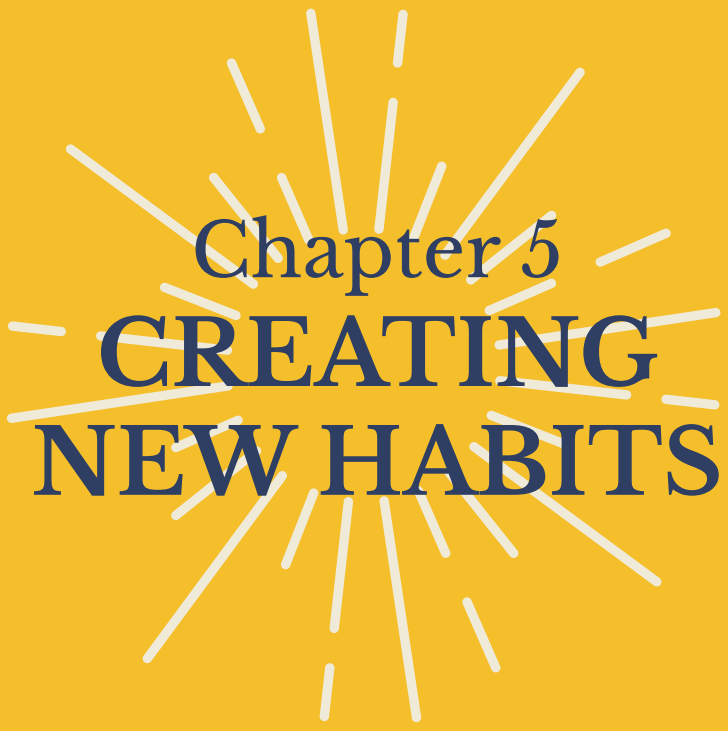

Chapter 5

CREATING NEW HABITS

The Four Steps that Will Make all the Difference

Okay, I think you now have all the knowledge you need to optimize your brain nutrition. But contrary to popular belief, knowledge is not power. Knowledge + Action = Power.

Let me make the same point from a different angle: There is a common saying that **Practice Makes Perfect.** But truthfully, practice doesn't make perfect. **Practice makes habits, and habits can be good or bad.** To change bad habits, you have to first become aware of them and then make a decision to change them.

What habits do you wish to change?
What I want to invite you to do next, is combine your newly gained knowledge (or the knowledge you have just re-learned) and empower yourself to take action.

How to improve your habits in 4 steps

Identify your currents habits and routines and choose one habit you wish to change or improve.

The one habit I wish to change or improve is...

The following exercise will help you uncover your deepest motivations. Start by brainstorming a list of wishes or best hopes. The more faith or hope you have in what's possible, the more likely you are to succeed at changing habits. Add anything that comes to mind to your list.

For example:

- I wish to have good memory my whole life.
- I wish I didn't get any headaches.
- I wish I were more productive in the afternoons.

Try to write at least three to five different wishes or best hopes.

Brainstorm wishes or best hopes:

Next, ask yourself: Why is this important to me?

For example, why do I want to have good memory my whole life? Your answer might be, “Because I want to enjoy life for as long as possible.” Now, that is another wish that you can add to your list.

Why else do you want to have good memory your whole life? You might answer, “Because I want to enjoy time with my grandchildren or because I want to maintain my independence.”

The more you ask yourself why something is important to you, the more you will uncover your deepest wishes and hopes. You might have started off wanting to maintain a good memory, but your deepest wish is to maintain your independence in old age.

Doing this exercise will help you get in touch with your deepest motivation to optimize your lifestyle.

Go ahead and complete this exercise now.

This is important to me because....

Engage your Supporters

Now let’s have a look at your social motivation. Reflect on the following questions:
Who will help you to stay on course?
Who is on board with your deepest wishes?

Brainstorm a list of supporters. This could include family members, colleagues, friends or even an imaginary version of your future self. Think of the default version of yourself – if you continue your existing eating habits, what would an older version of you say to you now? What would a healthy older version of yourself say to you now?

Brainstorm a list of supporters:

Who/What will motivate you to stay on course?

Who is on board with your deepest wish?

Make sure you share your deepest wishes with the people who will support you. Ask them to help you stay on course. This is where having a holistic coach can be especially helpful.

4

Create a Supportive Environment

Now that you have your personal and social motivators in place, it's time to make some changes to your environment. Reflect on these questions so that you can create a supportive environment for yourself:

What can you change about your social and physical environment to ensure your success?

Think of what foods and snacks are most easily available to you. Plan for ways in which you can make it easier to access healthy options and make it harder for yourself to choose the unhealthy ones.

How can you make it easier to make healthier choices more often than not?

How might you make healthy eating the new normal?

The next time you are invited to a social event that involves food, make sure you contribute a healthy dish or bring some snacks so that all six of your hungers are satisfied before you get tempted by the saturated fats, bad carbs, and sugar-filled foods that have become so common at gatherings and events.

One way I have created a supportive environment for myself is that I give creative names to junk food. Instead of thinking: “I should have a healthy snack before going to the pizza party,” I think: “Let’s have some nuts and celery sticks before going to the ‘chewy-dough-with-plastic-cheese’ party”. Or when my kids see the ice-cream truck at the park, I say: “Do you want some frozen chemicals with white dye in a cone?” I find that this lowers my own temptations just as much as theirs.

If you start creating your own marketing messages and reframing the way you think of unhealthy foods, you will quickly start making better choices. That’s because our beliefs and feelings inform our behaviour. Marketers know this very well; that’s why they make us believe that something is good for us or that it will feel good to eat it. Your job is to reframe your beliefs and feelings towards food so that you are in control of what you eat. Being able to freely choose what to eat—understanding the ingredients instead of trusting the marketing—is what gives you real freedom to make your own choices.

5 Keys to Optimal Brain Health

What you put into your body is one key to nourishing your brain, but it's not the only one. If you want to optimize all 5 keys, I encourage you to focus on one at a time.

1. Prioritize whole plant-based foods
2. Exercise regularly
3. Manage your stress
4. Get enough sleep
5. Always keep learning

You will notice that making improvements in one area has a beneficial effect on all the other areas. The better you eat, the more energy you have to exercise. The more regularly you exercise the better you sleep. And the better you eat, exercise and sleep, the better able you are to handle stressful situations or chronic stress, and the better able you are to keep learning throughout life.

If you find it hard to make changes on your own, or you are not sure where to start, I highly recommend these online programs:

- For making gradual (and transformative) changes in the way you eat, start by watching the Free Masterclass about the WILDFIT 90 Day Challenge.
- If you have a relatively healthy relationship with food and want to explore intermittent fasting for health and longevity, start by watching the Free Masterclass for Beyond Fasting.
- To begin your journey into Strength Training when you have time limitations, start by learning about the 10x method.
- If you need practical ways of managing your stress and anxiety, start by watching this free video on Everyday Bliss.
- If your biggest challenge is getting enough sleep, start with any of the above, or learn some practical tips from the Sleep Doctor.

I have personally completed and benefited from each of the above recommendations, and can't recommend them enough.

Make the Learning Stick

We have reached the end, but you know that this is only the beginning of your optimal lifestyle. And the best way to begin is to make a commitment. The following three questions will set you up for success:

What do you want to remember most from this ebook?
(List 2 or 3 things that stood out for you)

How will you make sure you remember? (Write down one action you can commit to)

Why do you care to remember this? (Write down one key motivator)

If you are someone who is highly disciplined, you should now have all the information you need to optimize your cognitive performance. However, if you are less disciplined or more deeply stuck in old habits, don't miss the opportunity to get new resources, tips, and invitations to our free events focused on maximizing wellness, creativity and engagement in hybrid and remote workplaces. Sign up for Neolé Connections.

Congratulations for reading this far! From the bottom of my heart, I hope you get to enjoy the most precious luxury any human can enjoy - the luxury of a healthy lifespan.

About the Author

Ginny Santos has dedicated her life to boundless discovery. Throughout her quest to create a better world, she was arrested for political activism in three different countries before the age of 22. This sparked her exploration into more creative ways to contribute to a brighter future for humanity. Ginny is now passionate about socially responsible entrepreneurship; owning three purposeful ventures, while also teaching creativity and innovation to executive MBA students.

Ginny has a Masters of Science in Creative Problem Solving & Change Leadership, and is certified in Solution-Focused Coaching, Productive Thinking, and FourSight. She is the CEO at Neolé Inc. and a dedicated holistic coach with various certifications in health and nutrition. Ginny is a life-long learner on a never-ending journey to help you re-imagine the life you are most excited to live.

Ginny believes a gift as precious as life is a gift worth carefully crafting. As such, her mission is to guide brilliant human beings through a journey of self-discovery that results in designing a life worth living with pride and courage.

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