

An Inconvenient Life

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Modern industrial life has not only caused damage to the external environment, it has done similar damage to our internal environments, both spiritual and biochemical.

Most of us don't have to worry about the basics--running water, roof over our heads, basic nutrition. Psychological research has shown that once our basic needs are met, all the extras do not assure happiness. We see evidence of this every day on the news, where "successful", rich, privileged people and their families seem to suffer as much as we do, in many cases because of their celebrity.

The evidence of the un-healthy nature of our lifestyles is un-escapable. For the first time in history, our children's generation are less healthy than their parents. This is a combination of poor nutrition, toxins, and the wrong messages being conveyed in their upbringing.

Convenience

What is convenience, anyway? It is defined as: "something conducive to comfort or ease". In other words, "easy". We go to the convenience store rather than travel a greater distance to get a cheaper or more healthy food. Fast food is based on convenience. The idea of meal planning and food preparation seems like a burden, rather than a privilege, even though we have the most incredible assortment of fruits and vegetables in our stores, and food processors, dishwashers, and other tools to make it easy.

It was not that long ago that mothers were convinced that bottle feeding was more convenient and even better than breast feeding. Fortunately that un-truth was corrected in only one or two generations. We're beginning to outlaw certain food additives, such as hydrogenated oils, because the convenience of their shelf life ultimately caused an inconvenient burden on public health, both short-term and long term.

The convenience of pesticide-protected fruits without worms or other insects has eradicated bees in China, where humans now have to pollinate fruits by hand. The world's fruit and vegetable sources are seriously threatened by the decline of bees and the introduction of genetically modified plants such as corn and soy.

Therefore, it seems that convenience, at least the way we think of it, is a toxic illusion. Convenience is a major cause, if not the major cause, of inconvenience epidemic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, autism, depression, asthma, heart disease, and gastro-intestinal disorder.

There are certain in-conveniences that we already tolerate because we understand that in the long-term they

will make our lives better (more convenient!). These include brushing our teeth as children, going to school, paying taxes, paying for certain insurances, and putting money away for retirement.

Psychological studies have proven that we are quite irrational in our assessment of convenience and economy. For example, we don't spend \$2.99 for an organic fruit, and then spend the same or more for a bag of chips. We drive around for hours to find a parking spot close to the mall, then walk for hours.

The critical question that we must ask is what assumptions, practices and habits that we have developed should be reevaluated to enable them to become more inconvenient, and therefore better for ourselves, our children and our planet.

Sometimes we resist inconvenient choices because we see our neighbors "getting away with murder", or resent companies that will benefit from our conservation, such as when we forego the shopping bag, or chose the more expensive or recycled product. However, we need to let these feeling of entitlement and fairness yield to the higher understanding that we must set an example, and not let our pettiness create harm.

When we do something that we know to our core is good, it is a feeling that bolsters us for hours, days, weeks and years. The paradox of our situation, is that by letting go, by giving up the burden of our materialism or sense of entitlement, most of us feel better. In general, spiritual crisis is caused by not having a sense of meaning or purpose. When taking action to make our families, communities and planet better, we feel better spiritually. If for no other reason, let this selfish reason power your intention to simplify.

An Inconvenient Lifestyle

Here's just a small list of the things we can do.

1. Buying local organic produce, which is healthier for our families, and is better for the environment not only because of eliminating pesticides, they require less shipping, as well as less of a chemical load.
2. Moving to a more vegetable-based diet. The water, food, waste management and shipping involved in the beef and animal product industry produce an incredible amount of greenhouse gases and produce less food per unit of resource (land, time, money, etc).
3. Making a commitment of time to a spiritual and physical practice, such as yoga, where that investment will yield a "wealth of health" in the future.
4. Being mindful of water usage.
5. Purchasing products that are re-cycled and have less packaging. Bringing shopping bags to the grocery store.
6. Volunteering to help others who are financially

challenged; doing pro-bono work. Not only by giving will we get, but by seeing others who have less (some of whom are happier than we are), it puts our lives in perspective. Those seemingly major problems become minor.

7. Volunteering to help others who have health issues and/or have become handicapped. Again, this will help us appreciate our health and independence.

8. Buying products that are refillable rather than disposable. These include computer cartridges, razor blades, etc.

9. Insisting on less packaging when buying products.

10. Printing to a computer file rather than making a hard copy. The piles will decrease, and it is actually easier for a computer to search for a file electronically than to search through drawers, piles and boxes.

There are myriad examples of how we can make our lives more inconvenient. Even in the doldrums of the post-holiday winter, when our resolutions begin to fade, we can resolve to take at least one in-convenient action every day.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This educational material may not be used to make decisions about medical care without the help of an experienced practitioner.

For More Information

- O See Dr. Cheikin's related articles on: Detoxification, Hormone Havoc, Adrenal Fatigue, Thyroid Disease and others
- O Dr. Cheikin's website, www.cheikin.com, has helpful articles on related topics
- O Dr. Cheikin offers workshops on various holistic health topics and classes in yoga, meditation and other wellness methods. Please call to be placed on his contact list or if you wish to host a Workshop.
- O Bland, Jeffrey: The 20-Day Rejuvenation Diet Program. Los Angeles: Keats, 1999. ISBN 0879-839-805.
- O Boutenko Victoria: Green for Life. Raw Family, 2005. 0970-481-969.
- O Pizzorno, Joseph: Total Wellness: Improve Your Health by Understanding.... Prima, 1997, ISBN 0761-510-94X.
- o Sivananda Center: The Sivananda Companion to Yoga. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. ISBN: 0684-87000-2.

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