

## YOU ANIMAL YOU

**Y**ou may not have thought about it much lately, but you really do have a lot in common with your dog. And your cat. And the robin outside your window. And the animals of the Rocky Mountains. In spite of your intellect, you are still an animal. Physically, biologically, biochemically, you're an animal. The last few hundred years have seen such a huge increase in technological advancement by humans that it is very easy to delude ourselves about the consequences of our behavior. Hunger has been all but eliminated in civilized societies. Medical care is widely available in Western societies. Few suffer from extremes of cold or heat, wind or rain. The condition of extremes of natural elements killing significant numbers of humans happens in only the most backward and repressive societies.

Humans evolved over the last 100,000 or so years. From that time up until about 1900, most humans led a very hand to mouth existence. Very few people earned a living performing some relatively sedentary task. Most applied their knowledge to some physically demanding endeavor, from hunting and gathering, as early man did from dawn to dusk, to woodworking, farming, etc., later on. In modern times most work involves service or information transfer. The point here, of course, is that for most of human history, if you did not perform some physically demanding task from dawn to dusk, there was a much higher chance you were going to suffer the pain of hunger. People were highly motivated to get off their asses. Lazy and sedentary behavior was rarely tolerated. If an individual was not constantly moving around in a productive manner he or she was less likely to obtain enough to eat, and therefore survive long enough to

reproduce. The perfectly natural response to that is to feel like “I sure am glad I don’t have to work that damn hard”. The point being, the need for regular exercise probably runs much deeper in our genetic makeup than we are used to thinking. As omnivores, we humans share characteristics with both carnivores and herbivores.

A pack of wolves may hunt for weeks to succeed in a large kill, such as an elk. During that time they will hunt tirelessly, motivated by hunger, sustained by body fat stores and an occasional grouse or rodent. When the pack kills a large animal they will eat until gorged, relax and digest, then gorge again. It is only during this temporary abundance that daytime rest will occur. The logic is simple and yet perfect. A full belly tells the body to remain quiet and shift into converting food into fat and storing it. That fat will then sustain the wolf as needed in the future. When food is plentiful and kills are frequent, wolves do not become obese. Instead, nature and evolution prescribe that during times of abundance, more wolf pups are born. Wolves are pack animals and there is benefit to the pack as its numbers increase. The elk that is hunted by the wolf is an herbivore, eating primarily grass. Grass as a food source is not a highly packed source of nutrition. Therefore, the elk must graze continually throughout the day and travel to water to get enough to eat. Again, when it fills its belly, the elk will rest as the food is converted into fat. The elk is driven by nature to keep its belly full as the winter snow will all too soon cover the grass and induce a season of deprivation. Elk without a store of fat in the fall will starve to death before the spring rains replenish the grass. Years of abundant spring rain result in more grass growing thicker and more widespread. Less work is required to find its food so the elk can spend more time digesting and forming fat. This results in more calves being born and rapid growth to a size large enough to survive winter. This sedentary behavior of fat formation is optimum activity for elk survival and it is perfectly natural that the elk seek this condition. Needless to say, the factors that effect elk and wolf survival are much more complicated than this simple analysis. What this simple example is designed to show is how fundamental, basic, and perfectly natural it is for humans to seek a state of satiation and sedentary fat conversion.

Humans have spent most of their waking hours for the last 100,000 years, seeking this state. The more time an animal can spend in this state, the more likely it has the biochemical fuel{fat} necessary to reproduce. The more likely it is to pass on its particular genome to its progeny which, sadly to say, is the goal of survival and reproduction. In the quest of modern man

to accomplish tremendous feats in science, the arts, engineering, scientific discovery, philosophy, capital accumulation, political power, athletic achievement, or just who catches the biggest damn fish. Stop.

You won't believe this. How successful an individual of a species is dependent on how many grandchildren you have. This is not just arcane environmental ecology theory. If you take the time to study the subject it makes sense. Animals and plants and insects go to tremendous lengths to reproduce, huge self-inflicted expenditures and sacrifices for the result of reproduction. From a perspective of evolutionary ecology, there is not direct benefit from reproduction.

Let's look at a pair of ladybugs as an example. Many if not all of the offspring of a pair of ladybugs will die this year. This means that those two lady bugs put their effort and material into an effort that yielded no benefit to them. It is only when the offspring of the two ladybugs survive long enough to reproduce themselves that the ladybug reproduction is deemed successful. As individuals we do some of this, as parents and grandparents put away money for future college educations, for instance, so a lot of this behavior is "perfectly natural." Part of the reason I point some of this out now is that by the time we get to the end of this book, I'm going to implore you to engage in some "unnatural behavior". What we are going to talk about in terms of food and exercise are going to run contrary to your natural inclinations. The goal is going to be to provide you with the knowledge and disciplines to enjoy a happy, productive, and active life, well into old age. Look around you. That is not the norm. A large fraction of people are already getting fat in their twenties. Most people in their forties and fifties are so physically inept they are incapable of any arduous physical activity. What we are going to teach you in this book and in a series of dvds is going to keep this from happening to you. We are going to keep things relatively simple. There isn't a single breakthrough idea, diet scheme, workout technique, or life-altering epiphany to be found in these pages. What you will find is a lot of common sense, numerous small steps you can reasonably implement, efficiencies you can capture, burdens you can cut out. The goal is feeling good and getting the most enjoyment out of every day that you do have left on this earth. This process of becoming truly physically fit will not only allow you to enjoy all of your activities more fully. It will help eliminate a couple of the worst anxieties people have about aging. Becoming fit will go a long way toward reducing anxiety about what the future holds for your health. You are going to have a much greater feeling of control over that future. As you get stronger, you will

feel less threatened by an increasingly younger and faster world. Again, a lot of what we are going to be doing runs contrary to what the natural animal in you wants to do. It is entirely likely that you are already familiar with the tug of war between the donut and the carrot, the sofa and the Stair-master. We're not going to eliminate that struggle, but we'll show you some common sense ways to have both. After all, I like Mexican food and beer as much as I like training, and a very big goal is to be able to **enjoy everything**. There is no guilt in an éclair that is accompanied by a hundred sit-ups. In the process, your abs are stronger, you really enjoyed that pastry and there is no self-loathing. So along the way we'll employ our human intellect to balance out and counter some of our natural tendencies. Nothing new there.