

TREASURE OR BACON

Recovery or cure

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Neurodegenerative and autoimmune disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy and Ankylosing Spondylitis (plus many others) are generally considered to be progressive, degenerative and incurable. All evidence to date points to this, yet some people continue to get well. Are they "**cured**" or do they "**recover**"? Is there a difference?

Curing is what we do to bacon; we take a pig, slaughter it, cut it up, smoke it, salt it, preserve it, then serve it as breakfast. We **cure** ham, plastic and concrete¹. Some disease symptoms can also be cured by cutting (surgery), poisoning (chemotherapy) or burning (irradiation).

When we lose a treasure, we don't **cure** it, we **recover** it. Illness indicates that we have lost our health – surely the greatest treasure of all. So we can work to **recover** our treasure; our health.

In 1995, I developed symptoms of advanced Parkinson's disease with some symptoms of early stage Multi System Atrophy. I was told by Western and Complementary Medical practitioners alike that the best I could do was control the symptoms for a little while; inevitably, I would become more and more helpless and, eventually, require full time care^{2,3,4}. As I was only 52 and felt that I had yet to fulfil my life, this was not a pleasant outlook. I set off on a journey of discovery to try and find ways to survive each day a little better, with less pain and improved energy. I had no thought of **cure** or **recovery**; I wanted simply to find enough wellness to look after myself. By mid 1998, I found that I was free from symptoms (**recovered**) and set about finding out why I had achieved this when it was thought impossible.

My journey is similar to other, more famous journeys. Petrea King and Ian Gawler both recovered from "incurable" cancer. Each, in their own way, set about making each day more beautiful and survivable without looking for **cure** or **recovery**^{5,6}. Barbara Brewster, Rachel Breslow and Deborah Spring have all recovered from diagnosed Multiple Sclerosis. Each walked their own journey, yet showed similarities with Petrea King and Ian Gawler in finding peace, coming to terms with their own integrity and honesty, and using meditation as one of the vehicles for this^{7,8}. Four Australians, other than myself, have recovered from Parkinson's disease, including one who was even more debilitated than I was in 1995.

Since my own recovery, I have worked with over two thousand people diagnosed with a variety of neurodegenerative and autoimmune disorders. Each person has told their story with insight and honesty as we worked together; sometimes the full story was revealed at the first visit while, with others, it took many months and several visits to find the details of their descent into illness. Each story included similarities with those of us who have recovered.

With evidence from stories of recovery, plus research from around the world, we now have a much clearer picture of why we experience serious, chronic and degenerative illnesses that may be life threatening, or become life sentences – imprisoned in frustration, pain, debility and helplessness^{9,10,11}. We believe that the initiating circumstance that begins the long, usually slow decline into a chronic nerve disorder is the suppression of the fight/flight/freeze response early in life; probably between conception and late teens. This creates a redistribution of chemical energy and water from areas not needed during running and fighting ("fight/flight") into areas most needed for immediate action².

The fight/flight/freeze response is a beautiful, life-saving process required for individual and species survival when it is resolved in reasonable time through action. However, the

“dangers” we encounter so often today are very different from the clearly delineated dangers encountered and survived by our hunter/gatherer ancestors 40,000 or more years ago. In those days, our ancestors faced fire, cold, lack of food or water, predators and enemies as basic, easily recognised dangers. Other circumstances were safe and our body reacted accordingly^{2,9,10}. Now we live in a society that may impose dangers on our body even though, intellectually, we feel safe. For instance, there are over 160,000 neurotoxic chemicals in our environment that were not there 50 years ago¹⁰.

Many other traumas are obvious – abuse of various types, loss of a parent, child or sibling, life-threatening disease or accident. Some are not so obvious. For instance, a woman who was implicitly blamed by her Father for her Mother’s miscarriage; a woman adopted into a loving family after nine months of bonding to her birth Mother; a man whose Father was a workaholic and was not around for any of his son’s activities, or to develop a relationship.

Sometimes it is simply being born at a time or in a place that is traumatic. For instance those born in Europe just before or during WWII, or in Eastern Europe during the Soviet occupation. Their families lived in fear and uncertainty; babies were conceived and born into traumatic circumstances. For those predisposed to neurodegenerative or autoimmune disorders, this may be the initiating stress overload.

Stress can be good for us as it motivates us to activity, and provides the physiological resources for that activity¹⁰. Trauma need not be physically damaging if it is treated and resolved healthily and holistically¹⁰; but this is rare in the sorts of trauma mentioned above.

Prolonged stress and unresolved trauma trigger our body into continuous stress reactions that, over a long time, become damaging^{2,10}.

The initial physiological reaction to any type of significant stress or trauma is the fight/flight/freeze response. Simply put, the process is this:

- Some adrenal hormones are directly triggered by stress and trauma
- Stress and trauma stimulate the **hypothalamus** to release Corticotropin-releasing Hormone (CRH).
- CRH stimulates the release of Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone (ACTH) from the Pituitary Gland.
- ACTH regulates excretion of other hormones from the **adrenal glands**.

Major hormones released by the adrenals are:

Adrenaline
Mineralocorticoids (aldosterone)
Glucocorticoids (cortisol)
Adrenal androgens (testosterone)

Adrenaline

- Increases blood glucose
- Increases glycogen breakdown
- Increases intracellular metabolism of glucose in skeletal muscles (ready for action)
- Increases breakdown of fats in adipose (fatty) tissue
- Increases heart rate
- Increases force of heart contraction
- Constricts blood vessels in skin, kidneys, gastrointestinal tract and other organs not needed for fight/flight
- Dilates blood vessels in skeletal and cardiac muscle.

Aldosterone

- Increases rate of sodium re-absorption in kidneys, leading to
 1. increased plasma sodium
 2. increased water re-absorption
 3. increased blood volume
- Increases potassium excretion
- Increases hydrogen ion excretion (leading to acidic urine)
- Changes in sodium/potassium balance can affect
 1. cellular hydration,
 2. cell membrane function and
 3. transport to and from cells.

Cortisol

- Increases catabolism of fats
- Decreases glucose and amino acid storage in skeletal muscles
- Increases glucose synthesis from amino acids in the liver leading to increased blood glucose
- Increases protein degradation (leading to muscle weakness/atrophy, osteoporosis)
- Decreases inflammatory response by decreasing number of white cells and the expression of inflammatory chemicals (leading to a depressed immune system)

Testosterone

- Increases pubic and axillary hair
- Increases sexual drive (but may reduce potency)

Short-term stress is a normal part of life. We need it for motivation, and we need the physiological responses to stress in order to survive. Our forebears faced immediate dangers and stimuli every day in living as discussed above ^{2,9,10}. In all these cases, the stress was resolved quite quickly – they won or lost, caught the prey or waited until the next day, got away or got eaten ^{2,10}.

We have negative feedback systems to adjust levels of adrenal hormones so they do not become damaging. However, **continuous stress can override these negative feedback systems** so that we go on hyper-producing these chemicals ^{2,10}. Evolution, deciding that a response to all stress was necessary, didn't bargain on the long-term stresses of Western society. Furthermore, Western society has developed so quickly that our evolution processes can't keep up; our physiological ability to cope with modern stresses has lagged way behind the development of those stressors ^{2,10}.

Many stresses in this society are not resolved, and many traumas go unrecognised ¹⁰. We live surrounded by noise, pollution, busy-ness and poisons. Child abuse is the world's best-kept secret; family breakdown is seen as traumatic for the partners, but not necessarily for the children; the loss of a sibling or grandparent or friend is often borne in silence by the young in our society.

Prolonged and unresolved stress or trauma can result in:

- Increased plasma sodium and decreased potassium, affecting many body functions
- Cellular dehydration through hypothalamic changes
- Chronic heart stress and failure
- Alkalosis and reflux
- Hypertension
- Weak skeletal muscles

- Acidic urine
- Hyperglycemia (diabetes)
- Deficient immune system
- Muscle atrophy
- General weakness and debility
- Osteoporosis
- Weak capillaries
- Thin skin that bruises easily
- Impaired wound healing
- Inappropriate fat distribution
- Mood swings
- Menstrual irregularities

People facing prolonged, unresolved stress or trauma will respond in different ways, possibly dictated by their genetic inheritance and/or environment. Some will develop heart disease, cancer, arthritis, diabetes, skin disorders, depression or other psychological disorders, gastric ulcers or inappropriate behaviours such as substance addictions, addictive gambling or violent behaviour ¹⁰. Some will develop neurodegenerative or autoimmune disorders such as Parkinson's disease.

The reprogramming of the hypothalamus and cellular dehydration, as well as many of the other effects shown above, allow some brain cells to become damaged, inactive, or even die, over many years, ultimately resulting in the expression of Parkinson's disease symptoms. Unresolved stress/trauma is not necessarily the "cause" of Parkinson's disease, but can begin the slow degeneration that leads to cell fragility and damage ^{2,10}. All those I see also have a history of stress triggers throughout life, and a high degree of imposed responsibility for others. This is also a factor in disease development.

Once we recognise that our diagnosed Parkinson's disease is not our fault, and there is a logical development process, we can create strategies to reverse the process and, perhaps, recover. We can also largely ignore the name (diagnosis) given to our disorder as the process of development is always the same.

The development process revolves around the hypothalamus/pituitary/adrenal axis (the organs and control centres that demand the over-production of the stress hormones). For many years, practitioners sought to relieve the common symptoms of fatigue and anxiety by boosting adrenal strength and activity. However, since 1997, it has become far more helpful to work with the hypothalamus and change the way our body distributes water and energy ².

The important aspect of this change in emphasis is that we have the power to change much of our hypothalamic activity without resorting to practitioners or expensive remedies. Certainly there are no satisfactory drugs to do this, and a only few Complementary Therapies to help us, so it's primarily up to us as individuals to reverse this process of degeneration, thus reversing our symptoms.

Firstly, our hypothalamus responds to thoughts, impressions and perceptions; therefore, changing the way we view ourselves through affirmations, self-talk or similar techniques may begin the move towards better health. Our hypothalamus may produce less CRH thus reducing production of stress hormones ².

We, individually, provide most of the perceptions entering our hypothalamus as we respond to our environment, relationships and interactions. Our thought processes and "auto-responses" become the trigger for our hypothalamus to produce neuro peptides that instruct our brain, nervous system and body how to behave ^{2,11}.

Most of us are taught from childhood that we should put others first, and give ourselves only what love is left. We also often fail to meet our own expectations, so become dissatisfied with ourselves and our performance in life.

To be truly well, we need to reach a state of complete acceptance of ourselves, loving us with all our faults and weaknesses, recognising all our strengths and beauty. To do this, we may need help from counselors or other therapists of various modalities, and our loved ones. However, our most important and powerful “doctor” is ourselves.

The exercise described below is one that I used often during my recovery journey. I had been taught that I was worthless unless I was helping others or doing what someone else wanted. During crises in my own life, my family and friends were not available for support or assistance, so I came to believe that I deserved to struggle on my own, and use whatever energy I had for the good of others.

With the help of counsellors and mentors in my spiritual development group, I came to understand that this was ridiculous and damaging, but needed a strategy to change my physiology to be in line with my new beliefs. Try this yourself, no matter how well you feel; you will be surprised at how hard it seems at first, and how rewarding it becomes with persistence:

1. Face yourself in a mirror, and look at your face, into your eyes, see all the features of your face, including all the wrinkles you have worked so hard to achieve.
2. While holding your gaze in the mirror, say, “..... (your name) you are wonderful. You have achieved a great deal in life. I love you completely”. You may wish to vary the words, but the meaning needs to be there.
3. You may find this very difficult at first. We are not used to giving ourselves love and praise. But persist; it gets easier and more rewarding.
4. Do this every day for at least two years.

When we think and speak lovingly about ourselves, we reduce the production of stress hormones from the adrenal glands, and increase production of anandamide, dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and many more useful, healing chemicals. This is not a vague hope; we have many scientific studies to prove that this happens. So, go on, love yourself; the worst thing that can happen is you will get better.

Meditation is another powerful way to change the programme of our hypothalamus and move towards wellness. It is important to note that ***all those who have fully recovered from any neurological disorder have spent a great deal of time and dedication in meditation and personal/spiritual development of some sort.***

Meditation was considered weird, whacky and way out by conservative therapists for many years and most doctors felt it had no place in modern medicine. Studies over the past few years, however, have changed that perception dramatically. We now know that meditation, practiced daily over time, can help us maintain or regain health ^{13,13,14,15}. Controlled trials, open surveys and electroencephalograph (EEG) studies are all showing positive health benefits for those who meditate regularly ^{13,13,14,15}.

Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn, Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, conducts eight-week courses called the Stress Reduction and Relaxation Program in the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre ¹³. Those completing the eight-week programme, and practicing meditation at home daily, find that their illness symptoms reduce by an average of 37 percent without any other change to treatment ¹³. The Stress Reduction and Relaxation

Program does not focus on any person's condition or specific symptoms; participants learn to meditate in a certain way, and practice that daily.

Long-term studies have shown that meditation can lower levels of stress hormones such as adrenaline (one of the chemicals implicated in the onset of Parkinson's disease), which can have beneficial effects on blood pressure and cholesterol levels ¹⁴. EEG studies show that meditators may improve blood circulation, lower levels of lactic acid (leading to reduced pain and anxiety), reduce their heart rate and enhance their immune system ¹⁴.

Dr Jill Marjama-Lyons, neurologist from Jacksonville, Florida, says "recent studies in psychoneuroimmunology show that the mind can communicate with the nervous, immune, and endocrine systems," ¹³ "mind-body techniques are particularly useful in the stress-reduction areas, helping to reduce blood pressure, pain, headaches, asthma, and other illness with a strong stress component." ¹³

Meditation is simple and rewarding. It requires us to set aside some time each day (5 to 60 minutes) and fill our mind with a thought of beauty and peace. It's like practicing the piano or training for sport; the more we do it, the more natural it becomes. And it's free! There are some very useful guided meditation CD's available from various shops, plus binaural frequency meditation CD's that help our brain produce "meditation frequencies", enhancing the meditation experience. These cost only around \$30 but need to be played through stereo headphones ¹⁶.

Here is a simple way to start meditation (or "contemplation" as I often call it). Find a quiet, comfortable spot in your house or garden. You may sit, stand, lie or walk gently. Set a designated time for your meditation so that you are not distracted by thoughts about what you have to do later in the day (say 5 minutes to start with then, when you are used to it, slowly increase up to 30 minutes). Fill your mind with the most beautiful calming image you can remember or imagine (yes, it may be somewhere you have been, or something you have experienced, or somewhere you want to be). Hold that thought in your mind and really "live" the experience – feel it, hear it, taste it, smell it, touch it; let every fibre of your body be part of the peaceful experience for the few minutes allocated. If your thoughts start to intrude, just fill your mind again with your peaceful thought until your time ends.

This is very simple and grows easier the more we do it. Your body will respond to this peaceful meditation and you will enhance your wellbeing.

We all know that laughing makes us feel good. We enjoy chuckling, giggling, laughing out loud, a good belly laugh. But we don't always realise why we feel good. Scientists studying the physiology of laughter have found that many of the chemical changes that happen during laughter are the same as those that occur during exercise ^{13,17}. Endorphins (our natural painkillers) and many neurotransmitters are boosted during laughter, while stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline are suppressed ^{13,17,18}. Laughter also improves our immune system. Cells that produce antibodies, T-cells and natural killer cells increase in number ^{13,17,18} while gamma interferon and immunoglobulin A are preserved or increased in production ^{17,18}. So laughter not only makes us feel good, it IS good for us. ^{17,18}

Okay, you're feeling pretty down about being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, you're struggling to do many of the things you used find enjoyable, and you just don't see that there's much to laugh about. Don't worry about it, PRETEND to laugh; even faking a laugh will bring about the physiological changes that are good for us ¹⁷. Even better, watching humorous movies, hearing jokes or reading funny books without laughing will still bring positive changes ^{13,17}. People recovering from surgery in a Florida hospital who were allowed to watch their favourite funny movies needed less painkillers than those who watched no humour or who had to watch what they were told ¹⁷.

Laughter can boost our immune system, reduce pain, exercise our body and make us feel good. There are no toxic side effects and laughter costs nothing! But we don't do it enough! Children playing in a safe environment laugh between 300 and 400 times each day^{13,17}. As adults, we laugh, perhaps, fifteen to seventeen times daily^{13,17}. What a reduction in self-help that is! Just by laughing, or PRETENDING to laugh thirty times each day, we can double all the health benefits.

Stop watching all those news and current affairs shows; they are full of misery and drag us down too. If news is big enough to affect us, we will hear about it quickly enough. We know bad things happen in the world, and we can donate our money, or time and effort to assist, but we don't need to feel miserable every day by watching them on TV. Look for comedy shows or uplifting documentaries. Find DVD's of comedies, or amusing movies. These will help your body grow stronger and enhance your Love and Meditation.

The **Aqua Hydration Formulas**, homeopathic remedies available from many health food stores and pharmacies in Australia or online anywhere in the world, are the only remedies I have found to genuinely reset the hypothalamus to distribute water to cells dehydrated over many years¹⁹. These remedies are very powerful and need to be used cautiously to achieve the best results (although they are totally safe and non-toxic)².

Water is absolutely vital for life. Maintenance of water volume, pH and electrolyte concentrations within narrow limits is essential for survival. Water continuously moves through cell membranes, from blood to lymph to plasma, and through the fascia, transporting nutrients and extracting wastes. About 40% of our body weight is composed of intracellular fluid, which is mainly water. Another 20% of body weight is extracellular fluid.

Homeostasis (the efficient balancing of our body's metabolism) requires that our water intake must equal its elimination via kidneys, liver, skin and respiration. This means that we must ingest a relatively large volume of hydrating fluids during each day in addition to the water we gain from food and cell metabolism. We need between 1.5 and 3 litres of water each day to maintain this balance.

Our water intake depends, to a large extent, on our thirst sensation. This sensation results from an increase in the osmolality of the extracellular fluids and a reduction in plasma volume. Osmoreceptor cells in the hypothalamus detect these changes and initiate activity in neural circuits that give us a sensation of thirst.

We live in a very dehydrating society. Chemicals in our food, air pollution, eating and drinking habits, air conditioning and stress all rob our bodies of vital water. Even the water supplied in many cities is polluted with fluoride and chlorine which rob us of the benefits of water. These same chemicals also reduce our thirst sensation. In fact, the less we habitually drink, the less we feel thirsty – especially if we try to make ourselves feel “better” by nibbling on biscuits or drinking coffee.

For our bodies to operate efficiently, we must both take in adequate quantities of water (at least 6 to 8 glasses daily) and be able to utilise this water effectively. This means that our bodies must be able to transport that water right into our cells to ensure the proper production of chemicals, disposal of waste products and transport of the chemicals produced to where they are needed; this is why we often need help from remedies like the Aqua Hydration Formulas.

By drinking too little water, we reduce the effectiveness of our physical defences. Our skin becomes dry, brittle and porous, so allowing intruders (micro-organisms) to penetrate our first line of defence. Once inside our “fortress”, these intruders are faced by a very weakened immune system – weakened by the lack of water. Disease fighting cells are produced less efficiently and are slow to get to where they are needed because our lymph system and fascia transport systems have slowed down.

The **Aqua Hydration Formulas** (Aguas) have been developed to improve hydration by increasing both intake and uptake of water via the hypothalamus, thus improving metabolic function and elimination of wastes. The Aquas consist of four separate formulas specific for males and females, morning and evening. They are composed of homeopathics, Bach Flower Remedies, herbals and, in one case, alpha-tocopherol. These formulas are designed to:

- improve the uptake of water under hypothalamic control
- improve the bioavailability of water at cellular level
- improve hydration throughout the body
- work with emotional levels which may effect hydration.

We can reprogramme our hypothalamus using Love, Laughter and Meditation over a long period. The Aqua Hydration Formulas enhance and may speed up this process, provided we do our part.

There is much fine research into the relationship between food, gut function and brain health, and a lot of new knowledge is now being presented to health practitioners. However, one fact stands strong through all the research; we still have a hunter/gatherer body, and need to move as close as possible to a hunter/gather diet ("Paleo eating"). Too great an emphasis on saturated fats and grains creates a chronic inflammatory condition in our body, causing discomfort, pain and suppressing our immune system. We have a great deal of control over what we eat, even though we may struggle to find fresh, organic food.

My own experience indicates that a diet **high in omega 3 fatty acids**, and **very low in saturated fats, sugar and refined carbohydrates**, modified for your individual needs, is probably the most beneficial of all ². We require omega 3 fatty acids for cell membrane integrity, and many activities in our body. Omega 3 fatty acids are most easily obtained from fish, flax seeds or flax seed oil, avocado, nuts and other seeds. One or more of these foods should be eaten every day.

Omega 6's (from margarine, common cooking oils, meat - especially organ meat, dairy products, and other animal products) are required for inflammatory responses when needed. However, our hunter/gatherer ancestors ate a ratio of four omega 3's to one omega 6, while we commonly consume only one omega 3 for every eighteen omega 6. Is it any wonder we see so many chronic inflammatory disorders?

One of the best ways to start modifying your diet is to keep a **food diary** for two weeks writing down absolutely everything that you eat and drink each day. Nobody has to see it except you, so you can be completely honest.

We need to base our eating around **fresh vegetables** (raw or steamed), plus fresh fruit, nuts and seeds. Deep-sea fish three times a week plus flaxseeds will boost omega 3 intake, plus small amounts of very lean meat (young and preferably "game") can enhance iron intake. At least **70% of our diet must come from vegetables** – more if we can manage ². Vegetables are the most "natural" complex foods available to us today.

Dairy products may be replaced with Soy, Rice or Oat milk (in moderate quantities) if you need "milk" (milk is **not** a natural food for humans). While cows milk contains a lot of calcium, it is very difficult for humans to absorb, because of a very large molecule size, and may inhibit calcium absorption from other foods ². Those societies consuming the highest rate of dairy products also show the highest rate of osteoporosis. Calcium is more readily available from green vegetables (especially broccoli stalks), sardines, tuna, sesame seeds and a variety of other foods ².

Eggs provide excellent protein and can be safely eaten several times each week. They are often maligned by people scared of cholesterol. However, we manufacture about 80% -

100% of our cholesterol in our body and this is utilised for a large number of important functions. The cholesterol in fresh, free-range eggs is well utilised by most people. Eggs, as part of a sensible low-fat, high natural fibre diet are good food.

Sugar needs to be limited to very small amounts, while refined carbohydrates, food colouring and flavouring, and processed foods should be eliminated.

Diet drinks are particularly toxic as the aspartame sweetener is up to five times more active when combined with other drink ingredients. Aspartame, and the newer version known as Neotane, is one of the most neurotoxic chemicals known! Never consume it or any other artificial sweetener in either food or drink.

Drink 1 to 2 litres (5 to 8 glasses) of clean, pure water daily (without fluoride or chloride if possible), plus dilute fruit juices, herbal teas and/or coffee substitutes. **Fresh vegetable juices** are an excellent way to improve enzyme activity and boost energy.

We need to continue to move our body to the extent of our ability, then stretch ourselves to exceed our expectations. Exercise is very important because, if we sit and feel we “can’t” do what we want, we will never be able to do them. If we try, and keep on trying, there’s a really good chance we’ll succeed ².

When I was displaying gross signs of Parkinson’s disease, I could not walk unassisted more than 5 metres before falling. So I learnt to walk again by falling over as often as possible each day. I would stagger as far as I could until I fell, then get up and start again. Within four weeks, I could walk 50 to 100 metres at a time, and continued to improve; because I tried. I learnt to speak coherently the same way; trying and failing many times until I could speak well again. It took longer than learning to walk, but I did it.

Eliminate “can’t” from your vocabulary and continue to move, stretch, exercise, walk, swim, jump and laugh. Seek help from empathic Pilates or Yoga teachers who can help you develop muscle strength and flexibility. I have seen “miracles” happen when combining all the strategies and therapies noted above with Pilates and Yoga.

A wonderful, gentle, Australian-developed bodywork called Bowen Therapy ^{20,21,22} can also assist progress by hydrating fascia (enhancing the work of the Aqua Hydration Formulas), improving flexibility and reducing pain. There are a number of fine Bowen training schools around the world, and many experienced therapists to choose from. You may even find a specially trained therapist near you ⁴. Having Bowen Therapy each fortnight can certainly make your reversal of symptoms much more effective.

There are many therapies in Western and Complementary Medicine that may help us. We can choose, and need to be alert for those therapists who brush us off, refuse to answer questions, or try to dictate to us.

If we truly love ourselves, laugh a lot, meditate every day, eat the best food available and use proven remedies wisely, we can improve our health and face the real prospect of recovery.

This is our body, our journey and our responsibility.

We can improve our health. There may not be a **cure**, but I, for one, much prefer to **recover** my treasure.

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By August 1995, John Coleman had lost his power of speech and was wondering how he could go on living. Suffering symptoms of stage IV Parkinson's disease, diagnosed by six medical and complementary practitioners, he was unable to walk more than 5 metres without assistance and took up to an hour and a half to dress himself. Severely dissatisfied with the treatment and prognosis he received from western medical practitioners, John decided to pursue other pathways to health. With the aid of Homeopathy, Aqua Hydration Formulas, Bowen Therapy, Craniosacral Therapy, Flower Essences, Counselling, Meditation and Spiritual Development, John was completely symptom-free by April 1998.

John, Naturopath and Bowen Therapist, was co-founder of Very Special Kids in 1984 and founder of the neuro recovery foundation in 2001. He lives in Melbourne, Australia, with his partner Nichol, among peace-giving trees and shrubs, conducts Neuro Recovery Pathways programmes at his beautiful premises, and lectures around Australia to practitioners and members of the public. During 2006/7, he also visited Europe, UK, USA and Canada. His first book, "Stop Parkin' and Start Livin'", was released by Michelle Anderson Publishing in 2005.

John was a finalist for the **Pride of Australia Medal for Courage** in October 2007.