

# BE SMART LIVE SMART

EAT SMART, SLEEP SMART, FIT SMART,  
LIVE SMART



**Chris Nihmey 2021**

## LOOKING UP AND MOVING FORWARD



You are not alone in your struggles. I realize we all share a similar feeling. It is called anxiety. It becomes fear. Often, a fear of moving forward. I understand. Having lived through the deepest depression I could ever experience, I know the anguish and pain of sadness. I cannot take it from you but, I assure you, you will come out stronger and more resilient than ever. Pain will lift, joy will come. However, you have to WANT this more than anything in the world: to be happy, to be whole, to be healthy, to rise from the depths and stand tall.

With each step you take, you will strengthen and feel more confidence. Anxiety is fear, and fear can be overcome. Never ever feel shame or regret for things you could not control. This only hinders healing. It is not your fault that illness hit you.

Move forward, walk in light. Even in darkness, the light is there. There is no shame in sharing: EVER. You need to. Trust me. I have shared the deepest of things with others. I feel no shame in talking about things that were beyond my control, that were not really "me". *See the person, not the illness.* No matter what has happened in the past, it doesn't matter now. Heal, seek forgiveness, look forward and march on. Forgiveness holds a lot of people back from healing. If you've hurt others, make this a top priority. Forgiveness will speed up the healing process.

Healing is a process. But it works. It is possible if you believe it is so. With every positive action you take, you begin to develop habits that move you forward. YOU are the initiator of these habits. You must take action; otherwise, nothing happens. You remain in pain. With action, momentum

builds. You have to want to heal. Find purpose beyond the pain you feel. Find something greater than you, something that you want to attain. In my own journey, my purpose came in writing. When I picked up a pen in 2007, my life began to transform. It was a pivotal step in my road to recovery. It made me want to better my life, to heal, to live again. It was a driving force in changing my lifestyle and implementing successful habits and strategies that would breathe life back into me. I finally “wanted” to heal. I believed it was possible. I saw beyond the crap that I was embedded in. And so I moved forward.

***“With a “want”, there’s a way.”***

Never let go of your faith in all of this, whatever that faith may be, even if it as small as a pepper grain. Hang onto it. You cannot do this alone. Have faith in God, or your family, or your friends, yourself. There were times I shoved my faith under a pillow or a rock. Remember, that even when you are not looking, faith is seeking you. Be it God, a family member, a friend. You are not alone. In any of this.

You need to take the reins of your life and make your healing a top priority. The more we work on ourselves, the further we go. It really is exponential. Small steps lead to leaps and bounds. I’ve lived it. I’ve experienced this phenomenon. It works. And when you are feeling good and healthy, and things are going smoothly, it is even MORE essential that you continue to work on strengthening your mind, body, spirit, and changing your habits into positive ones. It is when you are on the horse, the biggest healing happens. Not when we are down and out. When things are going well, it is crucial to keep working on YOU. Compile strategies, find outlets, acquire talents and find your supports. Unfortunately, stumbles or falls are part of the process, however, if healing continues when you are up, you will have gathered the tools to make a fall and a landing softer, thus, the path to recovery will be smoother and quicker.

Any successful healing regiment must begin with a base or baseline. Without a solid foundation of lifestyle changes and professional and loving support, one is bound to fail and fall. A successful road to healing must begin with what I’ve termed the “Two Trifectas”. If these are in play, the road to healing will be shorter, smoother, and successful.

# THE TWO TRIFECTAS

Alongside a BALANCED FAITH LIFE (be it a faith in God, or family, or friends), two trifectas MUST be in play for healing to be optimal, efficient, and effective.

## TRIFECTA ONE:

1. **DOCTOR** (psychiatrist preferably)
2. **DOCTOR PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS**
3. **LOVING SUPPORT**

## TRIFECTA TWO:

1. Daily **EXERCISE** (cardio & strength exercises)
2. **HEALTHY EATING** (reducing or eliminating sugar)
3. Deep and sound **SLEEP** (7-9 hours is optimal)

With these two trifectas in play, and a “belief” that healing DOES and WILL happen (as this is a necessity in healing), you will improve dramatically. Without these in play, struggles and difficulties will prevent a person from moving forward efficiently and effectively. Once implemented, the sufferer can work on talents, writing, volunteering, meditation, mindfulness, spirituality, reading, sharing their story with people they trust, etc. Building yourself is a lifelong process, but these two trifectas will ensure that healing happens.

## HEALTHY STRATEGIES TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY

1. Start taking a 15 minute walk every day when you get up. Take in nature; take in life. Be mindful of what you see. Use your senses and take it all in.
2. Make a tea or coffee each morning. Go online and do one word search, word puzzle, or mind binding activity daily. Be alert. This will strengthen your thinking process.
3. Buy a journal that you can record things in. Every day, write 5 things you are grateful for in your life. Write your feelings, your emotions. Write positive affirmations. Feel purpose and inner joy.
4. Try some morning boosters: push-ups or sit-ups, read an inspiring book, some prayer time, listen to some uplifting music, write in your journal, etc.
5. Try some meditation (clearing the mind) and mindfulness (focussing on the moment and the 5 senses). YouTube has a multitude of videos to guide you in these areas. Type in the words and you are on your way.
6. Pick a talent and spend 20 minutes on it. Enjoy it. Fall into the ZONE, the flow of the activity. This is very therapeutic.
7. Pick up a positive book and read 20 minutes or more every single day. Try a self-help book. Work on yourself. Reading also strengthens the mind in so many ways. Ultimately, reading is food for our brains.
8. To reiterate. Eat healthy. Food gives you energy. High vegetables and 2-3 fruit per day. Hit the beans, the grains, the nuts. Limit sugar intake. It is often compared to heroin and cocaine in its addictive qualities. Use wisely. Moderation or abstinence. I'm learning more and more about the power that foods have on our gut, and on our brain. Research the "blood-brain barrier" that lies between our body and brain. Eat smart & be "brain" smart.

***“As much as your brain affects your body, the body affects your brain. Be selective, be smart, and your brain will continue to think smart.”***

9. Avoid self-medication with alcohol or drugs (including marijuana). Although these can give you some temporary/momentary relief (fixing symptoms you may be feeling), they affect you in other negative ways. Marijuana is a depressant and can cause symptoms of psychosis. It decreases motivation and can increase anxiety. Any type of self-medication is detrimental to healing. These vices counter against, and hinder, the positive effects of prescription meds. Tapering off any substance can be a slow and painful process, but the pleasure of a healthy lifestyle far outweighs the cons involved in changing.

### ***SAVING THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR LAST:***

***CONTINUE TO TALK & TALK often – with me, with your doctor, with your loved ones. Suppression of thoughts and emotions will eventually lead to explosion. Like a pop bottle, if the cap stays on as the bottle is being shaken, there can be an eruption leading to a mental breakdown. Be preventative. Be proactive. TALK, SHARE and receive the CARE you need.***

Begin with these strategies in your journey. You will adopt others. Write them in your journal daily and check them off on a chart as you do them. Record every positive thing you do. This builds momentum and intrinsically rewards your behaviours. There is something about a “checkmark” or filling a square that makes you feel good. As you move along, add more to your chart. You have to want this. So want it. Here is an example of a chart I created to track my strategies and habits. I used the Microsoft Excel program. You can use any method you wish. Even drawing a chart on paper will do. The key in all of this is ... JUST DO IT. None of this happens without taking action. With every action you take, momentum will build. Small habits add up. Just get started and see the miracle happen.

<b>POSITIVE HABITS</b>	<b>MAY.24</b>	<b>MAY.23</b>	<b>MAY.22</b>	<b>MAY.21</b>
<b>WORKOUT OF THE DAY</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>5 CHECKINS WITH OTHERS</b>				
<b>15 MINUTES PIANO</b>				
<b>SPRITUAL TIME</b>				
<b>LIST 5 THINGS I'M GRATEFUL FOR</b>				
<b>RELAXING TIME</b>				
<b>BOOK WRITING AND READING</b>				
<b>BREATHING &amp; MINDFULNESS</b>				

## SOME INSPIRING BOOK SUGGESTIONS

1. **MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING** - holocaust survivor, **Viktor Frankl**, was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp during WWII. He found purpose and meaning in the worst situation imaginable. In his book, he lays out the concepts and strategies that saved his life and helped him survive daily amidst the worst pain and suffering one could ever endure.
2. **ATOMIC HABITS** by **James Clear** – building positive habits and getting rid of negative ones. How the smallest positive habits we adopt in our repertoire add up to monumental changes. This is a wonderful tool on positive habit building.
3. **ULTRA MIND SOLUTION** by **Mark Hyman** – how diet, sleep, and exercise influence our brain. Intense read, but it makes complete sense.
4. **TWO SIDES TO THE STORY: LIVING A LIE** by **Chris Nihmey** – my memoir, my personal story and journey to healing. Silence is deadly. I lived a lie. This made my road to recovery long and tedious. A decade longer than it should have been. This book is a wake-up call to all sufferers. Speak up immediately and often. Get the help you need NOW. Talking saves lives. Also read about the healing power behind finding purpose and meaning in your life. I found purpose through writing. Writing became a catalyst to healing my body, mind, and soul. I took the reins of my life and never looked back.

## I HELP YOU, YOU HELP ME

2000 years ago, Jesus Christ came into the world. He spoke, he taught, he inspired, and he proved that healing is possible right here on earth. He told his followers that they could do the same, and even more. He emphasized that healing happens when love is at the forefront. A pursuit of goodness and what is right. With a positive mindset, a “see out-not in” selfless approach, healing will happen, not only for the individual being *helped*, but also for the individual *helping*.

I cannot emphasize this enough, because I have experienced this healing phenomenon in my own journey of recovery. I have been a volunteer at Royal Ottawa Place for 11 years now, a residence affiliate of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. Giving is truly living. Be of service to others. Reach out to your neighbours with love and respect. Volunteer, call the lonely, reach out often to loved ones and neighbours, offer your services, share your gifts and talents. These are all strategies to massive internal healing. Do it for them and see what happens in your own life. When you give of oneself, miracles happen inside and out.



For anyone with addictions or struggles, this poem and these inspiring words have always been a comfort ... I leave them with you.

# FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

One night a man had a dream.  
He dreamed he was walking along the  
beach with the Lord.  
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.  
For each scene, he noticed two sets of  
footprints in the sand; one belonging to  
him, and the other to the Lord.  
When the last scene of his life flashed  
before him, he looked back at the  
footprints in the sand.  
He noticed that many times along the  
path of his life there was only one set  
of footprints.  
He also noticed that it happened at the  
very lowest and saddest times in his life.  
This really bothered him and he questioned  
the Lord about it.  
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow  
you, you'd walk with me all the way.  
But I have noticed that during the most  
troublesome times in my life there is only  
one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why when I needed  
you most you would leave me."  
The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child,  
I love you and I would never leave you.  
During your times of trial and suffering, when  
you see only one set of footprints in the sand  
it was then that I carried you."



**Chris Nihmey 2021**

[chrisnihmey.com](http://chrisnihmey.com) / [cnihmey@gmail.com](mailto:cnihmey@gmail.com)

**613-601-4256**

**Reach out anytime.**