

# The Fayetteville Observer

## Op-Ed: Sid Gautam - A small movement miracle for emotional and physical health

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### Sid Gautam

Motivational speakers often quote the philosopher Lao-tzu to inspire people: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

When I was writing my book, I discovered it translated from the original Chinese this way: "The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath your feet." This translation lends more support and encouragement to people fighting the battle of the bulge and its inevitable consequences.

### Good sense and cents

The Feb. 15 Fayetteville Observer carried a front-page story on the incentives county officials are using to encourage employees to improve their health and wellbeing, and thereby reduce constantly rising health-care expenses. We should praise these efforts. But they require far more than a simple financial incentive. The greatest challenge in fighting obesity is the high rate of dropouts. More than 90 percent of the people who join gyms to fulfill a New Year's resolution drop out in a couple of weeks.

Our problem was well described by Woody Allen when he said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." We have to develop an environment where people start and don't drop out.

We have been conditioned to seek a pill for every health problem. Big pharmaceutical companies have spared no tricks to reaffirm our faith and confidence in pills to cure all our health problems. No wonder the consumption of pills is rising at an astronomical rate. The pharmaceutical industry spends nearly twice as much on advertising as it does on research. Prescription drug overdoses have overtaken car accidents as the top cause of accidental deaths in the United States.

### Help for depression

The time has come to move away from the dependence on pills. Dr. Irving Kirsch, Associate Director of Programs in Placebo Studies at the Harvard Medical School has published a book, "Emperor's New Drugs: Exploding the Antidepressant Myth." This book has made public the dirty little secret of the pills prescribed for treating depression. After studying published as well as unpublished studies hidden in the secret vaults of Big Pharma, he emphatically concluded that the placebo is 80 percent as effective as prescribed antidepressant pills.

Leading medical institutions and universities have researched the benefits of small and steady physical movements on improving health and wellbeing. Dr. Stephan Ilardi, associate professor of psychology at the University of Kansas and author of "The Depression Cure," says simple exercises are the best cure for depression.

Dr. Tieraona Low Dog, director of fellowship for the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine and a member of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine, recommends people get off their soft chairs and start moving.

Gretchen Reynolds is an award-winning journalist who writes the "Phys Ed" column for The New York Times. Her book, "The First 20 Minutes: The Myth Busting Science that Shows How We Can Walk Faster, Run Faster, and Live Longer," says simple and easy physical movements can create miraculous results for sedentary people. Her findings are based on research by leading academic and medical universities.

The heart of Happiness Yoga is to encourage individuals to develop the habit of practicing these simple but crucial movements daily. The next program will be held Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Kiwanis Recreation Center.

### Digestive help

Dr. Wes Jones, a Fayetteville gastroenterologist, has written a book "Cure Constipation Now: A Doctor's Fiber Therapy to Cleanse and Heal." He concludes that all digestive problems have a common underlying source - constipation. Most of us are literally dying of constipation and are not aware of it. Dr. Jones will make his presentation starting at 9 a.m. and will explain how to effectively incorporate fiber into our diets and rid our bodies of harmful toxins.

Following his presentation, Andre Joseph will teach simple exercises to revitalize our lives and bring back new energy, agility, improved alertness and a happy life. All of these physical movements are done while sitting on your chair.

The program is free. No sugary drinks or foods are allowed inside the hall. You are free to bring bottled water. Since space is limited, please call the Kiwanis Recreation Center at 433-1568 to reserve your place.

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