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# RAWHIDE HEALTH – MEDICINE IN A BETTER WAY

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St. Maries, Idaho – Telephone 208.582.3056 – [RawhideHealth.com](http://RawhideHealth.com)

## *Differently*

by Dr. Dale J. Ross, M.D.

Waving a magic wand and muttering something either cerebral in Latin or unintelligible in any language can actually make a difference – the placebo effect is well known in medicine and consistently provides a 20 to 30 percent improvement in the majority of medical treatments for true pathology, from better management in diabetes and blood pressure control to improved knee pain in sham surgery and better functioning in major depressive disorder. I adamantly do not recommend doing nothing however, because making change with purpose will reward you so much more!

The first thing that must come out when you are looking at treating a new or even an old diagnosis, or in undertaking to prevent undesired medical outcomes – the “bad stuff” which is much more personally defined than I could possibly list – you as the patient must decide what is important to you. If your individual life goals are not understood by you, you will have a heck of a time working with a physician who will have to substitute in the by-laws, legal precedent, and case studies that have brought him to where he is. Even if you do know what you really value, now you must explain it to your doctor so that he can then use that to help teach you what is possible for those goals in medicine and then how he can help you achieve those goals. You will also need to have a good doctor that cares enough and will spend the time you need to actually listen and explain so that you “Get it.” If the patient and doctor both walk away shaking their heads going, “Boy, he/she is really nice, but I just don’t think they get it.” Nobody is getting all they should out of the time and money spent. What a waste; and I have seen the harm that that builds day after day and year after year.

Say that you have hypertension. This is not good as it could lead to atherosclerosis, plaque rupture, a heart attack and then death, so we say it needs treated. We find the most effective medicine for lowering your blood pressure, but it happens to have a significant side effect regarding sexual dysfunction. If you have no interest, plans for, or desire regarding sex the medication may work wonderfully for you. If however you happen to really enjoy sex and your wife or husband does too, this drug could lead to problems for you. What if the drug tends to stimulate eating behaviors (you gain weight), or increases dizziness and therefore falls, what if the medicine that works best *slightly* increases the risks of certain types of cancer?

There are thousands upon thousands of possibilities and interactions and choices involved in finding the right help for any individual patient, but somebody is not doing a very good job of getting all of the information out on the table and then applying it very well. National studies have shown that fully two-thirds of all medical prescriptions are not taken as they were directed. Almost half of all prescriptions are not even picked up from the pharmacy. There are many reasons for this. Mostly though it comes down to what is most important; important based on how we actually choose to live, what we decide to do. Is a loaf of bread on the table for the kids or yourself more important than taking the medicine and

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preventing a heart attack, that is a choice that must be made? Think though, if you do not prevent the heart attack, who provides the loaf of bread for the children?

Usually there is somewhere that we can look and see what is most important and not have to place our health and future on the back shelf. Difficult introspection and honest personal evaluation to be sure I grant. Often I have found patients have reasons for what they choose such as the car payment for that newer than you might need vehicle, or a pack of cigarettes a day, or eating out two less times per month, or *somewhere* that if we look hard enough we might find one more place to turn. It may not be easy or what we really want to do, but our choices show us where we place value.

Making a choice to take the medicine, and do so consistently as directed, is very big when medicine is needed. What about what you can do to not need the medicine any more, or even in the first place? How about taking 20 minutes a day five days a week to build your body up? I know many, even most, people are giving 40, 60, 80 hours and more per week to their boss and his bottom line, but do not give mere minutes for their own life.

Doing life differently means thinking about what is better for your health and then choosing to place just a bit more effort into achieving that. If each day brings a new choice and each day you decide to do it just a little bit better, your life becomes about building yourself up and not tearing it down or waiting for it to fall apart. This prioritization away from taking care of yourself is what I see in the hospital on a regular basis. Starting somewhere to choose better is what will allow your body to be there when you need it; it will allow you to be there and in a better way for your family and loved ones; it is what will enable your legacy, your example of life, to be a positive one for others to look up to and remember rather than a sorry acknowledgement that “it shouldn’t have happened that way.”

Life carries forward by and because of the choices that we make. Medicine really is complicated, but good health should not be a mystery. Take a few moments and consider just what you place value on and ask yourself what you are doing to make the most of what you believe in. If it is at all possible to make something even just a little better, do you think you can? I dare you to try!

*Further articles on nutrition and exercise coming soon*