



BEYOND the BELL

Newsletter for the Retired Education Community Fall 2023



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Outlive: the Science and Art of Longevity

by Peter Attia, MD



Peter Attia is the latest doctor to write extensively about how to achieve healthy aging. He puts forth an interesting focus on *health-span* – the amount of life during which we have good quality of life – rather than *lifespan* in a guide to living better and longer, his very popular book *Outlive*. Dr Attia challenges the conventional thinking on aging and suggests ideas to prevent chronic disease and ways to extend long-term health; he also has a daily podcast on this subject.

Dr Attia received his medical degree from Stanford University School of Medicine, and trained for five years at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in general surgery, where he was the recipient of several prestigious awards. He spent two years at the National Institute of Health as a surgical oncology fellow at the National Cancer Institute, where his research focused on immune-based therapies for melanoma.

As a doctor, Attia became discouraged with the futility of only reacting to disease, and found he had much more interest in proactively preventing disease. To this end, in his book and podcast, he discusses the concepts of Medicine 2.0 versus Medicine 3.0.

Medicine 2.0 is what the medical system is currently: a *reactive* system. It does not act to prevent sickness and disease, but rather to treat it after it has occurred. The business model of Healthcare 2.0 endorses this reactive system: there are few reimbursement codes for doctors' preventive interventions. A doctor doesn't get paid much to assist a patient to change the way he/she eats, or to monitor blood glucose levels regularly... yet medical insurance will pay for this patient's insulin after being diagnosed

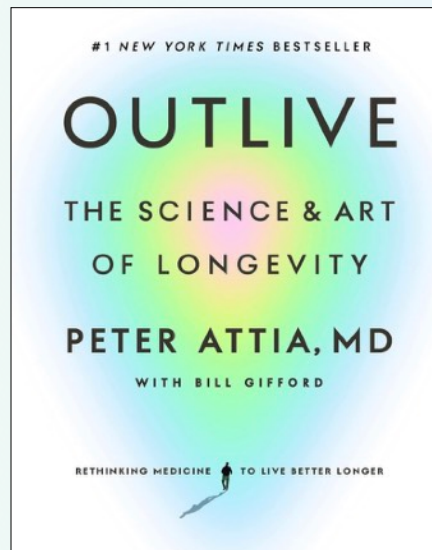
with diabetes. Diabetes should be prevented by the medical system, not just treated.

Research has shown that we have much more control over disease prevention than previously thought, and that our lifestyle choices determine our health-span and lifespan significantly more than genes do. Many of our good or bad habits are learned and practised in our family, which to a great degree is why there are family trends of disease and conditions. More than 50% – some research suggests as high as 70% – of risk in our health destiny is in our own hands.

Medicine 3.0 is what Peter Attia thinks we should be striving for, that is, a proactive preventive system of health care, rather than disease care. Medicine 3.0 pays attention to developing skills to maintain health-

span, rather than just lifespan. Medicine 3.0 is a set of beliefs and actions in which money should flow to prevention; it does demand more of us in our own health care, whereas in a system of Medicine 2.0 we are passengers being carried along, somewhat passively, with the doctor as captain.

Medicine 3.0 demands that we are well informed, medically literate to a reasonable degree, clear-eyed about our goals, and cognizant of the true nature of risk we put ourselves in with certain actions and choices. We must be willing to change habits, accept challenges, and venture outside comfort zones to the nurturing of our health-span. We are always participating, we are captain of the ship and we are never passive in our healthcare. We confront the problems that can affect health, even uncomfortable or scary ones, rather than ignoring them. We are proactive in creating our own health-span.



Dr Attia says there are four horsemen from which we need protection:

- ◆ Heart disease
- ◆ Cancer
- ◆ Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases
- ◆ Type 2 diabetes

Living longer means delaying death from all four of these horsemen. The horsemen do have one common risk factor: age, because as we grow older, the risk of these four horsemen grows exponentially. Aging is traditionally characterized by a progressive loss of physiological integrity, leading to impaired function, and creating increased vulnerability to death – but it does not have to.

The Medicine 2.0 mentality means seeking a fix to the problems created by the four horsemen, while Medicine 3.0 places far greater emphasis on prevention than on treatment. The latter mentality entails becoming a master strategist to avoid and limit the four horsemen before they begin; it is a scenario in which we live better, for longer. We *outlive* textbook life expectancy and exceed society's expectation for what later life is supposed to look like. Instead of a marginal last decade we should get to enjoy what feels like a bonus decade – or decades. Live a later life to enjoy, not one of diminished ability due to disease and breakdown of the body and mind.

Instead of treating each of the horsemen separately, understand that they are all related. What is good for the brain is good for the gut; what is good for the gut is good for the heart. Preventing Type 2 diabetes reduces the risk for cancer, cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's disease. Some types of exercise reduce the risks of all chronic diseases, while others maintain physical and cognitive resilience.

Medicine 3.0 encompasses five broad domains:

- ◆ Exercise
- ◆ Nutrition
- ◆ Sleep
- ◆ Emotional health
- ◆ Exogenous molecules (drugs, hormones and supplements)

Exercise is broken down into strength, stability, aerobic efficiency and peak aerobic capacity. We need to maintain physical strength, stamina and stability across a broad range of movements while remaining free from pain and disability. Exercise is actually the most potent longevity drug in our personal arsenal in terms of health-span.


Nutrition is the second important domain. The best science out there says that what we eat matters but the first order is how much we eat and how many calories we take in. A good nutritional strategy allows us to adopt new tactics and discard old habits in service of appropriate nutritional objectives. Being overweight is very detrimental to health-span. Plants are best to eat; animal protein is safe to eat. Alcohol is a carcinogen, so if we feel the need to drink, we should try to be mindful about it.

Sleep is the third category and it is one that has been ignored for far too long. Good sleep is critical to our physiological repair process, especially in the brain. Poor sleep triggers a cascade of negative downstream consequences from insulin resistance to cognitive decline, as well as mental health issues. Eight hours of undisturbed sleep is best and there are many ways to work towards achieving this. Don't obsess about sleep, but try to develop good sleep habits that result in eight hours of undisturbed sleep.

Emotional Health is every bit as important to health-span as the previous factors. If we are putting effort into living longer, we need to be putting energy into living the most satisfying way with the least amount of suffering. Meditation is valuable, as are strong social relationships.

The book goes on with a very detailed and complex discussion of all of the things that we can do to take control of our lives. To give you the Coles Notes version: eat less to live longer, exercise vigorously in a number of ways, sleep long, push your brain daily and get involved socially.

We have to start early with the healthiest habits to avoid the 'four horsemen'.

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Exercise is so effective against the diseases of aging and the four horsemen that it often has been compared to being a medicine. Zone 2 is a vigorous way of exercising. For instance Zone 2 walking is walking fast enough that you can still talk, but the effort makes you not want to talk. Endurance exercises done in Zone 2, such as running or cycling, help generate another potent molecule called brain-derived neurotrophic factor, or BDNF, which improves the health and function of the hippocampus part of the brain. This plays an essential role in memory exercises and helps keep the vascular brain healthy; it may also preserve brain volume, which is why exercise is viewed as particularly important in the toolkit for seniors at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

As we know, weight training is also very important, having a direct effect on the quality of the brain.

Regaining muscle is very difficult, so try not to lose it as you age.

Too often we expect 90-year-olds to be sitting most of the day, unable to do many activities independently.

While exercising, we can motivate

ourselves by thinking of ten things we want to continue being able to do when we are 90 years old; for instance, pick up a young child from the floor, carry our own luggage, swim half a mile, climb two flights of stairs, play 18 holes of golf, push a lawn mower for half an hour, lift grocery bags into the car. An exercise routine involving weightlifting, balancing, walking and stretching will develop and maintain the strength, balance and energy to continue doing those daily activities.

The book is a detailed and relatively difficult read, but this gives you the general ideas that are being put forward. The book *Outlive* is available at the Bracebridge Public Library – in print and online – as well as in book stores.



<https://district46.rtoero.ca/>



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Change is in the Air

It has been an interesting few months in Muskoka. With the easing of masking, we hosted a summer picnic and two after-school events for our members who are still working in education. Our Executive returned to meeting in person with lunch included over the summer. The dedicated volunteers who serve RTOERO members locally are listed in the chart on page 5. You will notice that we need more volunteers as some of us are responsible for more than one duty! Currently we are seeking volunteers to fill the roles of Secretary, Bursary Chair, and Political Advocacy. Now to make matters more complicated, my spouse and I have moved to New Brunswick and I will have to give up my duties - so we have openings for President and Member Services Coordinator as well. It is good to get out and meet with our other volunteers in person over an expense-paid lunch. You should consider volunteering!

Happily, a somewhat recently retired volunteer, Sharon Mortimer, took on the Health Benefits Representative position and is active in helping to get our Benefits information to education workers who are planning to retire.

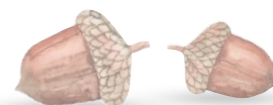
On October 21st many of our executive were involved with a Retirement Planning Workshop in Gravenhurst. We have done our best to reach out to all who are considering retirement and it was great to see a full room of almost-retired education workers.

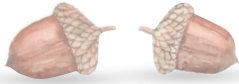


Contact me at 705-646-3031 by text or phone, or email president46@districts.rtoero.ca if you are interested in joining our team. I will continue to serve remotely in the interim.



Laurie Fountain,
President, District 46 Muskoka





CONTACT INFO

Executive Committee members may be reached via the president's email:

president46@districts.rtoero.ca

<i>President</i> Laurie Fountain	<i>1st Vice President</i> Position open
<i>Past President</i> Joanne Garvey	<i>2nd Vice President</i> Position open
<i>Secretary</i> Position open	<i>Goodwill Representatives</i> <i>Bala and Port Carling</i> Carolyn Dunn Rapson
<i>Treasurer</i> Joanne Garvey	<i>Bracebridge</i> Norma Kaye
<i>Membership</i> Laurie Fountain	<i>Gravenhurst</i> Kathy Allison
<i>Benefits Representative</i> Sharon Mortimer	<i>Huntsville</i> Doris Macdonald
<i>Political Advocacy</i> Position open <i>with</i> John Beatty	<i>Member at Large</i> Position open
<i>Newsletter</i> Lorna Walkling <i>and</i> Jennifer Lyndon	<i>Bursaries</i> Position open <i>with</i> Susan Betteridge



UPCOMING EVENTS

There are no events scheduled at this time as we are in need of volunteers to plan and organize future local gatherings.

Consider joining the executive as Member at Large, a flexible entry-level position which allows you to get a feel for the benefits of being involved.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

RTOERO offers free membership until retirement to anyone actively working in the **education community in Canada**. Please visit <https://rtoero.ca/> for information on pension, insurance and the many benefits of RTOERO membership.

After 4 Beyond the Bell Reception *Muskoka Highlands* **September 7th**



In place of the traditional Bell Breakfast, this year we enjoyed getting together at Muskoka Highlands Golf Club to celebrate the first day of school.



***Joanne, Sharon, Dona, John, Lorna, Caroline, Kim S.,
Kim G., Diane, Jennifer, Glenn, Steve***



BURSARY NEWS

Top award recipient to study Political Science and Law at Lakehead University



This year's top prize of \$3000 has been awarded to a graduate of St. Dominic's Catholic S.S., with \$750 awarded to each of four other grads from across Muskoka. Fields of study include Environmental Science at Guelph University, Business Administration/Marketing at Guelph, Early Childhood Education/Social Work at Canadore College and History/Education at Laurentian U.

District 46 has proudly supported Muskoka's secondary school graduates for the past 18 years. It has been a pleasure to chair the Bursary Program, working with my

teammates Susan Betteridge and Lorna Walking, but now it is time for Lorna and me to offer our seats on the Bursary Committee to new volunteers.



***Pat Schofield,
Bursary Chair***





Ramblings from Raymond

Life has a way of balancing out the tough challenges with good times, and I have been very fortunate to enjoy a wonderful summer with my time divided between Lake Temagami, my farm in Muskoka and two amazing bluegrass festivals in Tottenham and River Valley. I hope you've had a great summer, too!

It was fun to see some *more-recently-retired* and *almost-retired* familiar faces at the September 7th gathering at Muskoka Highlands. As you can see on page 3 under Contact Information, life has taken some of our long-time executive members in new directions, or the realities of aging make it impossible for them to carry on what they've been doing since their early retirement years. I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to Laurie Fountain, Pat Schofield, Rod and Anne Mundy and Bob and Shirley Harris, to name a few recent losses from the executive, and to extend a warm welcome to Sharon Mortimer as Health Benefits rep and Thelma Jarvis as a member of the newsletter committee. I thoroughly enjoyed reading Thelma's book report on pages 3-5 and I look forward to working with more new, younger faces in the near future.



Some of you may be interested to know about another new book to be released this fall. Ken Dryden's latest book, *The Class*, is about Ken's Grade 9 class at Etobicoke Collegiate in the west end of Toronto. Early in 2020, he decided to try and find his classmates and see where their lives have taken them, and he was successful in connecting with all but a few of the 35 students enrolled in 9G on September 6, 1960. They talked for many, many long hours, and then he wrote. I was one of those students and I was honoured to attend the book launch party on October 17th in the old library at ECI. I can't wait to read what Ken has written!

Please consider becoming involved with our local bursary program so that it may continue to support students in need of financial assistance as they head off to post-secondary education programs. In my

18 years as a member of RTOERO District 46, I have thoroughly enjoyed my involvement with the bursary committee and I'm hopeful that one or two of our younger members will be able to continue this important work of our organization. It is not overly time-consuming and can be done electronically. Please get in touch with me, Pat Schofield or any member of the executive if you'd be willing to help with this.

Sincerely,

Lorna



In Memoriam

Although the list may not be complete, we are saddened by the loss of the following members and extend our condolences to family, friends and colleagues:

- Mary Bradshaw (August)
- Catherine Pickard (September)
- John Purdon (October)
- Sheldon Brubaker
- Stanley Byrne
- Janet Evans
- Wayne Holmes
- Glen Schroeder

Please be sure to notify a member of the executive if you know of a member who has passed on.

RTOERO Foundation donor-funded grant focuses on mentally healthy living in the later years



The RTOERO Foundation is thrilled to announce the results of a donor-funded grant, *Mentally Healthy Living After Social Distancing—A Study of Older Canadians*, now available as a free download for all RTOERO members. This project led by Dr. Gail Low, associate professor of nursing at the University of Alberta, was carried out by the Living Well Research Team.

Funded solely by the RTOERO Foundation, *Cooking up Calm* was designed to promote mentally healthy living in the later years. The booklet highlights findings from the team's research study and pairs the results with easy-to-make, nutritional recipes to support good physical and mental health.

Included in the cookbook:

- ♦ Overview of the study
- ♦ Benefits of cooking beyond nutrition
- ♦ Five easy-to-make recipes
- ♦ Actionable tips based on the six most effective mentally healthy living strategies to emerge from the study

- ♦ Quotations from study participants
- ♦ Guidance for accessing more help when needed

As part of a follow-up research study, the Living Well Research Team will be surveying RTOERO members to gather their feedback on the booklet. So, make sure to download and share the cookbook with family and friends today, here <https://rtoero.ca/mentally-healthy-living/>.

In an effort to achieve our mission of a society in which all seniors live with dignity and respect, the projects the Foundation funds address the complex needs of older adults. Projects supported by the Foundation are made possible by the generosity of our donors, many of whom are RTOERO members. For more information about the RTOERO Foundation's granting program, please visit our website - <https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-foundation/> - or email Deanna Byrtus at dbyrtus@rtoero.ca.

District 46 member Audrey Clark celebrates 103rd birthday



Thank you to Norma Kaye who has shared these photos of Miss Wilson, her former typing teacher at Bracebridge High School in the 1950s. Miss Wilson, aka Audrey Clark, a member of District 46 living in Toronto, is our only member over the age of 100! We hope to be able to include an article in a future newsletter about her career in education.

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Bracebridge High School Staff 1952-53

Seated: Miss Wilson, Miss Hallet, Miss Millar, Mr. Wright, Miss Jackson, Miss K. Jackson, Miss Cunningham

Standing: Mr. Fan, Mr. Farmer, Mr. Watson, Mr. Moncur, Mr. Colmer