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**To Hell In A Handbasket; Men Who Crash And Burn**

**By Dr. Gavin Lange**

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What's up with men? Why do we push our bodies to extremes? Why do we so often ignore our body's signals that we're doing too much, going too fast, trying too hard? Why do we indulge in excess, and constantly exceed our "envelope of tolerance"?

A lot of us, it seems, are just too tough for our own good. A neighbor I talked with recently expressed this attitude after telling me about his chronic pain, stomach symptoms, and sleeplessness, "I'm just gonna keep on truckin'," he huffed. He wasn't going to change anything about his life, his habits, or his health – not really. He was going to suck it up, maybe have a few drinks, take it on the chin, pop a few pills, and just "keep on truckin". That was his master plan.

Since losing my father, aged 55, to an accidental overdose of prescription drugs, I began to be more aware that most of us guys don't know the first thing about how to live. Don't get me wrong, we think we are bad to the fuckin' bone, just ask my dad. He was a bad-ass lawyer, never lost a case, he knew his shit, everybody loved him, or did nobody love him, whatever. The point is that most guys will tell you how fuckin' great they are at one thing or another, they might even pump iron just like my dad... real fuckin' cool, healthy as all shit... then we crash and burn. So when my neighbor recently told me about his butt-load of problems and that he was just gonna keep on truckin', I thought okay go for it, but I couldn't help but wonder where his truck was headed. Actually, to tell you the truth, I know where his truck is headed... he's headed straight to hell. I don't mean hell in a religious way. I mean there are two roads, literally. The road to health and the road to suffering and disease. My dad, my neighbor, and frankly most of us (nice biceps aside) are on the road to suffering and disease.

What I can tell you, for those of us who are interested in a better way, are that the road to disease is a well marked path and there are distinct signs and symptoms along the way. If we know a few things about the signs and symptoms, the early warning signs, and we practice staying in touch with our body, instead of ignoring it while we truck on, then we can stay off the road to disease and we can practice staying on the road to health. It's a matter of understanding that the road to disease is a three

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stage journey. In the beginning, it is easiest to ignore the signs and symptoms. As we progress further in this stressful and unhealthy direction however, our 'adaptive power' is increasingly depleted. Eventually we are faced with a full blown health crisis and we crash and burn. Why should we keep on truckin', all manly style, if we are simply headed toward a crash? How much better to understand the process of health and disease, the big picture, and take steps early on to prevent the otherwise inevitable crisis.

### THE ROAD TO DISEASE: STAGE

When a man is young, he is generally full of "adaptive energy." This means that he has the energy he needs for coping with life, with stress, obstacles, setbacks, relationships, and just about whatever life throws at him. When we're younger, our adrenal glands are still strong and capable of pumping out loads of "cortisol" and other powerful anti-stress hormones. If we eat things we shouldn't, indulge in excesses we know are not healthy, it's pretty much okay, maybe not really, but it seems like it for the

time being.

During stage I, stress hormones, like cortisol, can work wonders; they kill pain and neutralize inflammation, reinforce our personality, regulate glucose levels and energy production, and prevent dehydration. In short, our body produces anti-stress hormones to help us cope with any and all types of stress. As long as our adrenal glands can produce sufficient amounts (usually EXCESS amounts) of anti-stress hormones then we can "keep on truckin'" and faintly notice that anything is amiss. We're basically good to go, even when things are very wrong.

Did you know that most of us guys, yes, the vast majority of us, have a long history of blood sugar problems, chronic stress, sports injuries, nutritional deficiencies, chronic dehydration, sleep deprivation, accumulated toxins, even touch deprivation. Our nervous systems are shot, our muscles are too tight, our bones and joints are compressed and torqued, and most of us are holding huge amounts of tension and repressed pain from head to toe? We're so accustom to these things that we're actually IDENTIFIED with them, even defensive about letting it go. We've been this way so long, we don't know WHO we would be without it. This is how and who we are. Lucky for us the adrenal glands have always been there, pumping out (excess) cortisol, so in spite of our chronic problems, we can, like our neighbors and co-workers, keep on truckin.

### THE ROAD TO DISEASE: STAGE II

Now for the bad news. The adrenal glands do get tired, and when they do, all hell breaks loose. If our life has been chronically stressful, and our body/mind has suffered a lot of neglect and abuse, our adrenals begin to falter. At this point, the tuff guy, who has always been, more or less "just fine," begins to experience symptoms he has never felt before. The neck and shoulder pain becomes worse, inflammations of all kinds (from the intestines to the skin) begin surfacing. We begin to lose energy and our personality weakens. The enthusiasm of youth that we remember having turns to depression, frustration, pain, violent and even suicidal thoughts. What happened to the guy who was once practically invulnerable? What happened to just enjoying life? We muster every ounce of energy we have left, but it's getting harder and harder to deny it – we're not what we used to be, we're crumbling

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and falling to pieces. We're more prone to infections. We feel old and tired and stiff. We throw our hands in the air, or pull the sheets over our head, or increase our self-medication. We wonder if anyone else can see through the remains of our persona.

### A SINKING SHIP

When we were eighteen, if we hurt or stressed our body in one way or another, our adrenal glands would cover for us, recovery was quick, and we were back in the saddle again. This creates the impression that we are strong as an ox and pretty damn resilient. Pride enters the picture. Guys tell me that they used to be able to eat anything, a "cast iron stomach" or whatever. Now, one bite of the wrong thing and they have pain, indigestion, bloating and various reactions. There's a million variations on this theme. The common denominator though is that the adrenal glands and the body's adaptive reserves are becoming depleted. In the past, the same food, stress, or indulgence was definitely a problem, we just didn't feel the problem because all that wonderful cortisol would kill the pain, quell the inflammation, and life went on undisturbed. (Ah, the good ole' days.)

So why are millions of dudes going down the tubes? You might think that more of us would have wised-up by now, and some of us have. But, most of us are still pretty clueless, and our sad state of physical and mental health proves it. After too many years of unhealthy habits and chronic stress, our

adrenals have been worked to the bone, and then, what seems like all of the sudden, they just can't cover our asses for us anymore with all that powerful anti-stress cortisol. Pretty soon it's the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back, and down we go, a sinking ship. Just like the Titanic, preventable as it was, we didn't even see it coming.

### HYPERCORTISOLEMIA: CHRONIC STRESS

Did you know that if you run your system chronically dehydrated, cortisol can save your life? That's it's job. When you are not drinking enough water, cortisol makes your body retain salt and fluid so you don't die. Thanks to cortisol, we can be chronically dehydrated and not even feel thirsty. If I was stranded in the middle of a blazing hot desert with an empty canteen, I know I wouldn't want it any other way. And it's the same story with blood sugar. If our blood sugar is falling too low, cortisol raises it for us so we don't drift off into a coma behind the wheel of our new Hummer. This is cortisol's top priority, to save us from pain and death. Stranded in any survival situation without fuel, water, shelter, and a life threatening situation on our hands, it would be cortisol to the rescue. Whew!

Unfortunately, there is a catch. Millions and millions of men are "hypercortisolemic". This means that our daily lives are generally sufficiently stressful to keep our adrenal glands in chronic survival mode. And as powerful as cortisol is for helping us face the stress of life, cortisol is a "catabolic" hormone, and too much of it is a very bad thing.

Ever wonder why it's hard to build and keep muscle mass? Why your metabolism isn't where you'd like it? Why fat seems to accumulate around your waist? Why your immune system just isn't up to par? Why your skin and hair aren't looking so great either? Chalk it up to cortisol. This stuff is powerful. Just to keep you "truckin'" it will basically eat you alive, destroying muscles, bones, nerves, skin, immunity

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and whatever else it can get its hands on. Cortisol slows our metabolism so that we conserve energy, so we store energy as fat. So guess what? The truck is consuming itself just to keep on keeping on! This is where you should say, "Holy shit!" or at least swallow hard.

### THE ROAD TO DISEASE: STAGE III

Doctor Ward Coleman, N.D., Director of Men's Health at Four Mountains, Inc., says, "There's an epidemic of adrenal depletion among men today. The increased stress of life we have been experiencing since 9/11 is nothing less than a war on health. Guys are dropping like flies. They're losing their minds, their vigor and vitality. Even young men, teenagers, are manifesting symptoms typically associated with old age. We're really seeing an accelerated rate of wear and tear in all the body's systems. To turn this around, lifestyle intervention is critical. We need to get men thinking about and practicing a Wellness Lifestyle."

Even so, most of us guys don't want any health help, or feel that we don't need any, that is, until stage III, when our adrenals are finally exhausted. Until this point, we actually don't know the extent of our problem. The cortisol has kept us at least partially numb. We didn't pay attention to the early, subtle signs and symptoms of stage I. We did our best to deny and medicate the signs and symptoms of stage II. After all, we're not pussies, right? It's under control. We've got it together. There's no problem, got it! Well, yeah, I guess. However, one morning when cortisol levels don't climb as high as they used to (cortisol follows a circadian solar cycle) we have reached a depleted, exhausted condition. We're beat to hell, and all the symptoms come rushing home to Papa. This is the end of the road, man.

Finally, after years of screwing around and crossing the line, the chances may improve that a man will

seek help. It's too bad we're not more keen on prevention, early intervention and general lifestyle modification sooner rather than later. But hey, we thought we were fine the way we were. We didn't even know we were beating our adrenals to death. We just didn't see the big picture, or understand "metabolic fitness." Maybe we took some crappy vitamins here and there, tried to avoid Big Macs and whatnot. But metabolic fitness? What the hell is that? Anyhow, now it's too late, our adrenals are toast, our body is atrophying, our mind is a gloomy place (albeit arrogant), and we don't sleep very well. We're basically fucked.

"Hold on partner! Don't write me off completely just yet. If you ask me, I'm not doin' that bad," he insists one last time. But seriously, the denial isn't quite as impenetrable as it used to be. In fact, if you catch him at a particularly painful or honest moment, he will go ahead and tell you that he is falling apart and he's maybe thinking about killing himself. He may even oscillate between saying he's great to being suicidal from one day to the next. But, he just can't cope with anything anymore. He's done. This is symptomatic of physiological exhaustion, stage III. This is also when the doctor offers up his expert "hate to tell you buddy" diagnosis - heart disease, cancer, diabetes, depression, dementia or whatever, and/or some auto-immune disease. Impossible! The Titanic was supposed to be unsinkable! (Now do you take the big light orange one or the little whitish red one with the blue dot for this?)

### SEEK HELP: FREE ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION

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So let's get to some good news for a change! It doesn't have to go down this way. It's not even that difficult of a situation to fix. So let's fix it! Just steer a little to the left, a little to the right, and sail straight past that huge iceberg. To do this, Coleman encourages men to start on a Wellness Program today, "We'd love to see all men on a good Wellness Program that addresses the key issues like hormone performance, prostate health, heart health, stress management, immune enhancement, and so forth. Our Male Renewal and Anti–Stress Program were designed to do this, and we've always had great success." Ask Coleman if a Wellness Program is really necessary for most men and you'll get a thundering yes, "If they want to be well they sure do! That's the point, men need to care about prevention sooner rather than later. It couldn't be simpler, order one of our Wellness Programs, or sign up for our FREE ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION. You'll learn how to prevent illness and optimize aging."

According to Four Mountains, what most men need is a total lifestyle overhaul. So they've launched a FREE ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM that you can sign–up for by E–mailing [fourmountains@earthlink.net](mailto:fourmountains@earthlink.net) and mentioning FREE HEALTH EDUCATION in the subject. "The education we provide men who sign up for our program is extensive, covering every area of body/mind and lifestyle. It's designed as a step–by–step educational process. Once a month men receive a Wellness Tool in their Inbox that teaches specific principles for optimizing health, stress reduction techniques, and tips for taking care of their organs, mental health, and advice for balancing their whole lifestyle," Coleman explains.

In the FREE ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM from Four Mountains, men receive lessons in things like "Pacing", "Your Liquid Foundation", "Dr. Sunshine & Nurse Darkness", "Inward Calm", "Slow Deep Breathing", "Space of the Heart", "Glycemic Regulation", "Soft Eyes Half Smile", and many others. The entire e–mail curriculum encompasses more than 85 unique lessons and focus on teaching all the most important key principles of health and disease prevention. "If men will take these free lessons and begin to practice these techniques, and hopefully teach the information to their families, we would see a tremendous impact in our national wellbeing."

Coleman says they developed the FREE ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM because, to put it bluntly, he thinks men don't have a snowball's chance in hell of getting healthy or staying healthy without this information. "Stress kills," he says, "Pumping iron and taking vitamins willy–nilly won't cut it. This is a new day. It's not the eighties anymore. Men need to evolve their bodies, minds, and lifestyle. This is a holistic project, an evolution of health project. And it's really not optional, men need to be open to learning and growing. Join in or get left behind," is Coleman's attitude.

The point he makes is that the time has come for all men to be more receptive to so–called alternative health. Anyway, what alternative do we really have?

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Four Mountains, Inc. was founded in 1992 as a clinical and research organization dedicated to

synthesizing all available data in the fields of alternative medicine, disease prevention, wholistic mind/body health, and anti-aging technology. Their detailed study of the world's diverse healing traditions and extensive interdisciplinary research has yielded many unique insights and significant breakthroughs. Based on findings from the fields of Nutrition, Herbology, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Yoga, Psychology, Iridology, Chinese Medicine, Cosmetology and Spirituality. Four Mountains has pioneered new and comprehensive models of health, human potential and disease prevention.

Their contribution to human health and healing has been to continue and extend the work of many who have gone before, including: Albert Einstein, Neils Bohr, Dr. Hans Seyle, Dr. Royal Lee, Dr. Weston Price,

Dr. Robert Moore, Yogi Bhan, Thich Nhat Hanh, Dr. Bernard Jensen, Dr. Paavo Airola, Dr. V.G. Rocine, Dr. Dick Versendaal, Dr. Carl Jung, Dr. Alfred Adler, Dr. Heinz Kohut, Theodore Milan, Dr. John Upledger, Dr. Jean-Pierre Barral, Dr. Mircea Eliade, Dr. Norman Sheldrake and many others to whom humanity is indebted.

Cross-referencing and synthesizing interdisciplinary sciences with their own clinical and laboratory studies, Four Mountains, has been able to formulate advanced systems and new models of human health, foremost of which are their phenomenal Wellness Programs™, and the innovation of their Wellness Tools™, the Wheel of Healing™, Telesomatics™ and Oshun SkinCare™.

Based on their expansive interdisciplinary research, breakthrough evolutionary discoveries, clinical successes and innovative contributions, Four Mountains, Inc. has established itself as a leader in their field.

## **Log Homes And Log Furniture - The Norman Rockwell Effect**

### **By Tom Heatherington**

In case you haven't noticed, the world is "going to hell in a handbasket". No one knows where that phrase comes from or what it means exactly, but the implication is understood by anyone who hears it – that things seem to be out of control. If you watch the evening news, read today's headlines, or listen to the radio then you know what I am talking about. The world is going to hell in a handbasket. So what does the world's demise have to do with the title of this article? That's easy, in a world out of control, there's just something miraculous about logs that creates peace and tranquility in my life.

If that sounds a little bizarre to you, permit me to explain. Your house may be of a contemporary design, or a Mediterranean style bungalow, or perhaps you make your home in a French chateaux, but for me there is no warmer, or more peaceful environment than a log home richly decorated with rustic and log furniture. I call it my "Norman Rockwell effect".

The late Mr. Rockwell had a distinctive painting style and his prints portrayed an optimistic depiction of everyday life in America. Even while the world was at war and our nation was climbing out of the great depression, Rockwell had an uncanny knack of reinforcing what was really important to ordinary Americans. The imagery his pictures produced inspired us to be decent people and live a good life.

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They evoked a feeling of calming and harmony. I experience that "Norman Rockwell effect" every time I walk into my cabin in the woods.

There is this undefined something about a log home and log furniture that literally transfixes me in an extraordinary way. How best can I describe this to the uninitiated? When I look at a wall constructed of logs, I get a sense that it vibrates at a different intensity than the rest of its surroundings. No, I am not some new-age metaphysical tree-hugger, I'm a guy who appreciates natural beauty and I connect with things created from logs.

Consider if you will that a pine log and a 2x4 (or 2x10, etc.) are both wooden building products of the same matter and used for the same purposes. However, if one were to erect a wall using both materials, there is no similarity in the visual experience, the character or any aspect of the two walls. The logs with irregular lines, bold grain, conspicuous knots and uneven coloring produce a visual rendering that Mr. Rockwell strove to achieve with every brush stroke. To me, logs exude a sensation of warmth, of strength, a sense that all is right with the world... and that is a lot to expect from a dead tree.

So what is it about logs that give me this near spiritual experience? I think it is an implicit appreciation of a sense of perpetuity, of history, strength and permanence. America was built from logs. The first structures erected across this land were more often than not constructed of logs. For hundreds of years, people carved their homes, shops and churches from the wilderness using the most plentiful resource available, trees in their natural form. In addition, we Americans like to be noted for being individualists, and at a time when most of the population live in city apartments or suburbs with cookie-cutter houses, a log home sets one apart from the crowd. In that same rationale, log furniture is not generally available at ordinary furniture stores. One must venture out to the wilderness (or at least exit the shopping mall) to find quality log and rustic furniture.

Okay, I will admit to having some plastered walls in our home and yes, we even have several furniture

pieces that one might label as "conventional", but visitors to our home invariably remark about our log furniture and log accents. To date, no one has yet to compliment us on our marvelously plastered bathroom.

I began this dissertation with a cliché about our world going to hell in a handbasket, and how that related to my love and appreciation for all things log. I am confident that my opinion on both matters is sound. We inhabit a turbulent and chaotic planet, but I live in a log home with hand-made log furniture. For that reason, all is right with my world. Now don't anyone turn on that darn TV while I'm reading my old issues of the Saturday Evening Post.

Tom Heatherington is author of "The Complete Small Business Internet Guide". He is principal of The Webunet Group, and founder and editor of the

and

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