



## *The Fire Station and the Hospital: How to Avoid Both*

### **How often do you need to call the fire station?**

One of the most devastating sights is a house burning down. Fortunately this is rare enough that it is often covered in news reports on TV. The chance of your house catching on fire is 1 in 300 in USA in a year. A fire is something that can easily start in a home. People use fire to cook, heat the house. Electric wires run all over the house and a small error in wiring can start a fire. Some people smoke. Then there are candlelit dinners and Christmas trees and fireplaces and space heaters. In fact it is quite surprising that more homes don't go up on smoke. However, a smart homeowner can easily ensure that the probability of a fire starting is near zero.

The reason is the enormous effort that has been made through technology and legislations and certifications to ensure there is no fire in a house. A smart homeowner does all he or she can do to **never** need the Fire Station. You use fire-retardant bedding and clothes. You place smoke detectors and have checks on your electric and heating units. You develop best practices to avoid kitchen mishaps. Heaters are inspected regularly. Electricians who wire are house are specially trained, workers who work in our homes are expected to be licensed so home safety rules are followed. We plan our living so that we will never have to call a Fire engine to our home. Shouldn't our approach to needing the Hospital be the same? Apart from occasional checkups we *should plan our wellness believing that we will not need the doctor.*

Yearly inspections of heating units, smoke detectors, fire-retardants, no smoking in bed and other techniques ensure you (almost) never need the fire fighters. The doctors should be needed the same way.

Make sure the body does not breakdown. Make an effort to leave the sickness—health-sickness cycle!

### **Health and Economy**

There are a number of challenges to healthy living. Some of these challenges arise from our economy. Our economy has been built around practices that are often unhealthy for us. This is not because of some evil conspiracy but because of the random manner in which businesses have developed. Businesses employ people and provide support for societies. In the South the economy was based on tobacco and partly as a result the culture accepted and even promoted smoking. In many parts of the world economy is strongly linked to alcohol. In other parts beef or chicken or pigs are woven into the economy and therefore a vegetarian lifestyle would upset the economy. However, one has to realize that a healthy lifestyle does not mean no consumption – it is the consumption of healthy services and products. No one needs to live like monks to be healthy. Living like monks will destroy the global economy and leave millions of people poor and destitute.

For healthful living one does need to shift the way we consume and integrate our lives with others. One may need to decrease certain kinds of consumption and increase other kinds. It may mean less consumption of burgers and fries and greater consumption of yoga lessons. More picnics with friends to takes hikes and walks in nature. More massages at home and at work and less alcohol fueled parties.

If everyone started to eat healthy, live a holistic lifestyle, perhaps half of the jobs in USA will disappear and it will create a major catastrophe with widespread recession and depression. For a healthy population to stay engaged and employed the nature of businesses has to evolve. Just as the economy has evolved from agricultural to industrial to service and information, a holistic lifestyle will force the economy to evolve to the next level where jobs are related to holistic living.

### **Altering Our Thinking on Health**

What is the mind-set that allows you to think: I can lead a healthy life without need to medical intervention? Most of us grow up assuming that injuries, diseases and aging in the usual way is just part of our being. States of ill health are considered just normal part of life. Injuries of the body and mind are considered normal.

Let us examine the eight-limbed yogic approach to fire prevention and sickness prevention:

*Yam:* Learn about fire prevention --- find what is needed for healthy living. Learn to eat mindfully, develop non-toxic relations, rest and minimize worries and anxieties. Understand things that you are allergic to so you can avoid them.

*Niyam:* Best practices in fire prevention require discipline: turn off the iron, no smoking, preventive checks on the furnace, ovens, ... Develop discipline in your own living: discipline on sleeping, drinking water, eating fruits, vegetables, working out time set aside, meditate daily to release stress, enjoy the company of other healthy friends.

*Asan:* Fire retardant furnishings, nightclothes, etc. --- Build such a strong body and mind that the threshold for becoming ill is very high.

*Pranayam:* Water the plants around, have water and fire extinguisher to put out small fires if needed. For your own health, nourish your body and mind so illnesses can be held at bay. Use clean air to breathe, have love in your life to nourish your soul, take walks in nature to feel the wonder of the Universe.

*Pratyahar:* Gadgets that turn off when they are too hot (self turning off irons; toasters...) --- Self awareness to know when your body and mind is reaching a level of stress at which you get ill;

*Dharan:* Making sure the vegetation around your home is not dry and is of the kind that doesn't burn easily --- Keeping the environment around you as healthy as possible (work in clean air, drink clean water, have healthy relations that don't degrade you...)

*Dhyan:* Vigilance in making sure the best practices is followed.

*Samadhi:* In the rare event a disaster strikes use the help of the fire fighters and protect your life ---- in case of illness use the hospital and follow the doctor's advice.

### **Tools for Daily Life:**

Use of dental care model in other aspects of wellness

Clean water; toothbrush, floss, avoidance of soft-drinks, ...

Learn to eat mindfully and just enough so you finish eating without a sense of heaviness.

Develop non-toxic relations;

Minimize worries and anxieties.

Understand things that you are allergic to and avoid them.

Listen to your body and rest when you are tired and eat healthy food when you feel famished.

Practice Shvas daily.