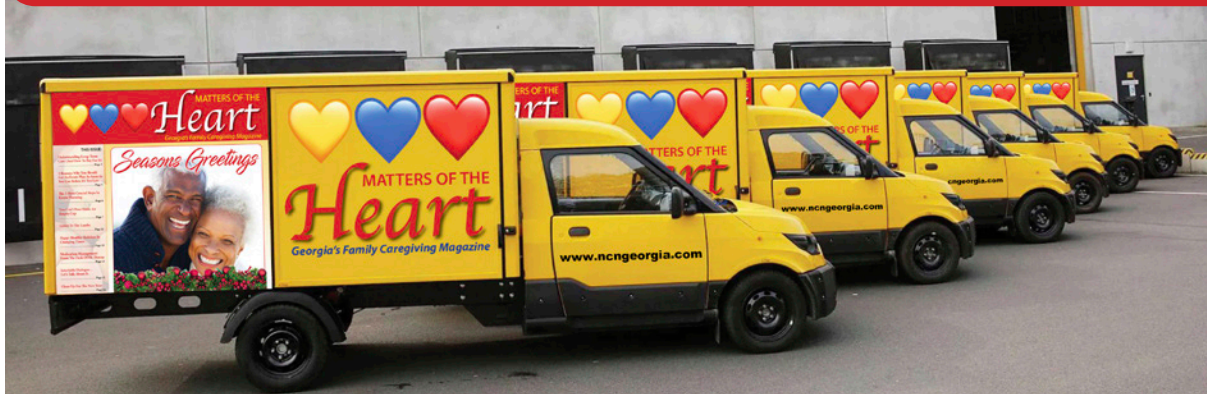




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# MATTERS OF THE Heart

Georgia's Family Caregiving Magazine

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## THE LEGACY READERS THEATRE STORY 2008 - 2023

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The Ultimate Resources For Family Caregivers

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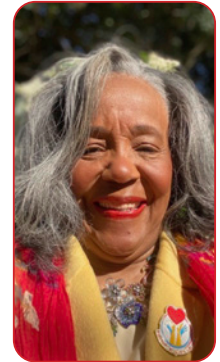
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## Welcome to Matters of The Heart

A Message from the Editor-In-Chief, Publisher, Shirley Morman

### Stranger Compassion

### Is All Around Us



When you look carefully, you will see that compassion is all around us since the pandemic. During the pandemic, we were caught in an inescapable lifestyle, tied to our families and our place of residence. Whatever affected one family member affected all, including those families and individuals that we could not see. Compassion and concern for the health and well-being of each other and strangers became a way of daily life, as we all sheltered in and stayed in touch as best as we could through letters, cards, technology and telecommunication.

In the aftermath of all of our concerns, it appears to me that we may be connecting to the belief that we can offer love and respect to each other, offer support and compassion to all, even strangers. It seems that we are taking more time to consider others and to offer compassion as a sign of gratitude.

When I carefully look around, it seems that the minds and hearts of people seem to have a more compassionate disposition towards others, although we may be still going through the transitional nature of things, especially in the daily structured activities of hospitals, healthcare homes and rehabilitation centers for the elderly, churches, schools and in family lifestyle. To me, it seems that people are demonstrating what they have learned in so many ways and people seem more intimately connected to the world around them, the world in which they live. They are more attentive to the wheel chair-bound, the disabled-special needs, the sick, the elderly and, in their patience with children as you look around. People seem to be simply thinking more about helping someone, as if the pandemic fostered greater interest to be in touch with others, in its aftermath. People are offering themselves more and doing what they can do to help someone else.

I believe that we all take seriously the compassion left by the pandemic. The Pandemic seems to have made people more thankful, more grateful, humbler. We all remember the spirit when we resumed our normal lifestyle. We all remember when we were out and about after the pandemic and how spending time with family and friends and seeing and helping one another were more valued. We remember because the pandemic did not have a race, a color or a creed. It seems that the pandemic fostered a more rejoiceful, more grateful, more thankful and a more appreciative spirit for daily life and living!

Look around, pay attention to people, especially elderly people at the entrance of stores and restaurants, in shopping areas, parking lots, inside stores, walking into medical facilities, grocery stores, and watch for the politeness and courtesies extended; you will notice people are more compassionate, more helping. They are opening doors, helping others to carry things to the car, holding doors open for people to enter or exit, saying thank you, offering compliments, greetings and extending other courtesies-asking if you need any help.

It seems that people realize that taking the time to consider others and offer compassion is a sign of respect and an example that we must set; it seems that compassion is transcending from our families, our residence to our community and ideally to families giving care and, to others who need the reminder.

We do not know how circumstances and situations get us to where we are trying to go! We are just happy to be there! I am!

Enjoy Your Spring 2023!

*Shirley A. Morman*

**Shirley A. Morman, Publisher & Editor-In-Chief**  
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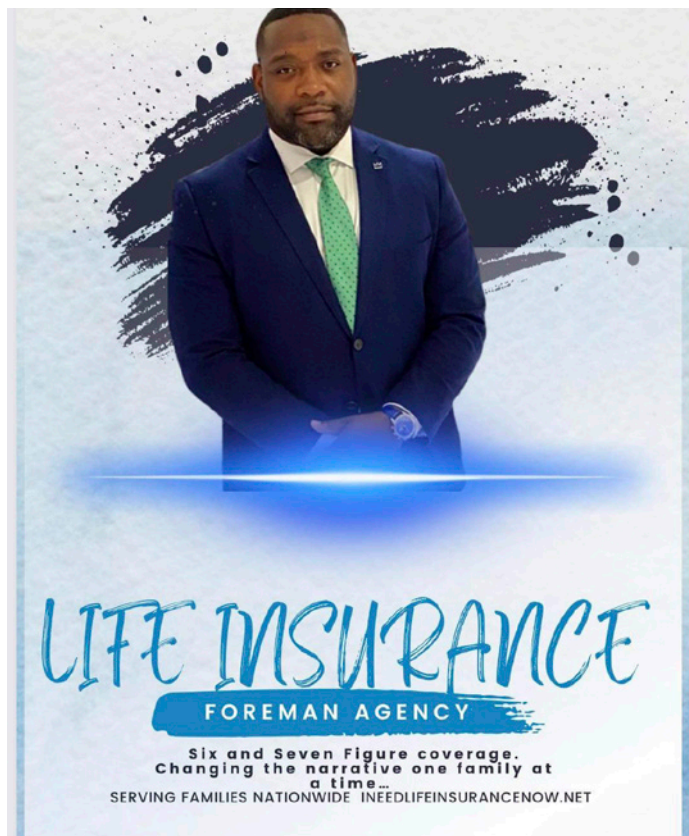
# The Life Insurance Application: What You Need to Know

By Joseph Foreman

According to Annuity.org, about 50% of Americans do not have life insurance coverage as of 2022.

There are many people, as of this article, who feel like life insurance is just a normal bill, that is, a burden on their financial resources, until someone leaves the world unexpectedly! My friends, I'm here to tell you that I have yet to meet a man or woman rich or poor, billionaire or hundredaire, who figured out how to get out of this life alive! So, why is it that close to 50% of Americans do not have any life insurance coverage whatsoever? Why is it that 6 out of 10 people have \$2,000 or less in their savings? It's not from a lack of work. There's plenty of work out there and people still end up with more month than they have money! Does that sound familiar?

My goal is to educate you and give you some ground level information to help you avoid making costly mistakes, save money and or, put you in a position to make better decisions as it pertains to your last name! First and foremost, I want you to know that life insurance applications ask very detailed questions. So, before you apply for life insurance you should know how to access your medical records, what medical professionals have noted in your medical files and, how to get access to your medical records. To access your medical records, you can go to MIB.COM and provide the information requested; afterwards they will mail you your information. I want to emphasize that you should cross check all information for accuracy because medical professionals make mistakes just like credit bureaus make mistakes. Many of you may be named after a relative or could be a Jr, 3rd, or 4th which means their information could be in your medical charts, which is false. Example: I had a young man in his late 20's and he was named after his father. The father's information was in his chart which resulted in him getting declined for life insurance. Later, we discovered that the medical information reported on him was wrong. Once that was corrected, he was able to get \$400,000 worth of coverage with no questions asked.



I will be dawning you all with many jewels that I believe will benefit you going forward. Many of you may have applied for life insurance and may have been rated for life insurance based on false reporting in your file. Again, please make sure you cross reference your report and clear up any inaccuracies. Clearing up the inaccuracies could result in you getting better rates, save you money, and afford you day one coverage without a waiting period.

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# NUTRITION



## for Your BEST HEALTH

### How to Live a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life!

Doc Wilson, Ph.D.

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The field of Nutrition is full of opposing, contradictory concepts and recommendations, as you probably know all too well! Thus, if the “experts” are not all on the same page, no wonder YOU might be very CONFUSED!

The purpose of this article is to provide some practical clarity about Nutrition as it applies to “the statistical average (probably mythical) person.” This should help you to be both, healthier and happier, which, in turn, would increase your statistical odds for experiencing a longer, more productive, more satisfying life!

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Of course, there are few guaranteed things in life – except the proverbial, tongue-in-cheek “death and taxes!”

My bottom-line hope is that your physical and mental health will benefit from the messages herein!

IMPORTANT NOTE: Be sure to check with your doctor before making any major changes in your life with respect to Nutrition, etc.! For example, you might be on a prescription drug that could possibly interact adversely with certain foods; similarly, changes in your exercise regimen (if you have one), or addition of an exercise regimen, could adversely impact your health in certain (but usually rare) instances! Your doctor will be able to guide you in these areas.

## Chapter 1. Why Learn About Nutrition?

In 2018, Lasalle, et al. published a review article in the prestigious journal *Molecular Psychiatry* that concluded that great nutrition has strong, positive effects on both mood and mental health; since then, many other research articles have further confirmed this conclusion! (Henriques, et al. 2020; Fontana, et al. 2021; Estrada & Contreras, 2019; Garcia-Montero, et al. 2021; Lombardi, et al. 2018).

These five articles are representative of research-based, peer-reviewed publications in the last six years or so. From their titles, you can see that mental health can be influenced, for example, by such things as the bacteria in the intestines (the microbiota). Furthermore, you can probably appreciate how complicated mental health can be because of the impact of its multitude of factors (not only lifestyle factors, but also personal interactions with people in your life in your neighborhood, at work, at your church/synagogue/mosque, etc.) that can affect your brain and the nerves in your body.

So, why should everyone learn more about nutrition? To me, learning more about nutrition is only important to those who care about having healthier, happier, and/or longer lives! It really is that simple!

However, having said all of that, it is important to recognize that some people will not realize that they have a mental health problem because it may not manifest in a clear, easy-to-diagnose and easy-to-perceive way! In that sense, mental health can be like high blood pressure, which is called “a silent killer” because there can be NO DISCERNIBLE symptoms of a life-threatening condition! Thus, the need to measure your blood pressure on a regular basis. With mental health, many people, unfortunately, may not be tuned-in to all of their emotions, and therefore unable to reliably assess the state of their mental health. Of course, a partial – but powerful – solution is to start by applying the principles of very healthy nutrition!

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[NOTE: This reference shows the chemical structure of the most common anthocyanins, including those in blueberries.]

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## Chapter 2. Nutrition Basics

To put it succinctly, the healthiest nutrition is 100% plant-based! However, this is an area that is controversial among nutritional scientists! My proposed “compromise” is to eat meat (especially meat from mammals, such as cattle, bison, rabbits, squirrels, pigs, sheep, etc.) ONLY occasionally – ideally ONLY ONCE a week. Also, based on published data on certain foods that are rich in a class of chemicals called omega-3 fatty acids (for example, wild salmon – but not farm-raised “wild salmon”) conclude that these meats are relatively healthy and much healthier than beef; omega-3 fatty acids are found in a wide range of foods, including beans, nuts, shrimp, scallops, kale, blackberries (in general, berries are a very rich source!), squash, wild rice (but not white rice, and not most brown rice, which usually has been “too refined” by eliminating most of the external hull!), etc.

The following categories of foods should be the main focus for great nutrition:

- FRUITS: 4 to 5 servings each day (or more), and with variety
- VEGGIES: 4 to 5 servings each day (or more), and with variety
- NUTS & SEEDS: 3 to 4 servings each day (or more), and with variety. This category includes beans and lentils, and should be the MAIN SOURCE of PROTEIN
- Some people embrace the “rainbow rule” – meaning aiming for eating foods having the colors of the rainbow, plus white/grey for mushrooms and onions, which are very healthy!

## FOODS to AVOID

- Milk from cows, as well as other dairy (cattle) - based foods; however, for infants, human breastmilk is very healthy! Furthermore, milk, cheese and yogurt from goats is generally much healthier than those from cows. Also, consider “nut milks,” such as almond milk.
- ALL DEEP-FRIED foods (think French fries and fried chicken, for example); however stir-fried foods are OK.
- ALL foods with lots of added SUGAR! This category also includes what I call “sugar equivalent foods,” such as most cold cereals [think virtually ALL the cereals boxed for children (and for adults, too)]!!! Foods that are sugar equivalents become sugar in the body because powerful enzymes (amylases) in the saliva of the mouth break up the starches in foods into the thousands of individual sugars that are like beads coming off a necklace! Other foods to avoid: pastries, doughnuts, “munchies” (such as potato chips and tortilla chips), and so forth.
- ALL FOOD in CANS; however, food sold in glass jars is OK. I strongly advise NEVER eating any food that is sold in a can. This is because known carcinogenic chemicals too often line the insides of the cans to prevent acids in foods from dissolving metal that could be harmful. One such chemical is abbreviated BPA (Bis-phenol A). You will see some food that is sold in cans with the verbiage “BPA FREE.” However, some of the other chemicals that manufacturers use on the inner surfaces of their cans are just as carcinogenic as BPA; and we cannot trust all manufacturers to be truthful about the chemicals that may be in their cans; so, I strongly urge avoiding food in cans!
- SOFT DRINKS: Sugared versus with Artificial Sweeteners. Do NOT be sucked into believing that artificial sweeteners are healthier than those with sugar; they are NOT healthier! Thus, ALL SOFT DRINKS ARE VERY UNHEALTHY!!!

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## Chapter 3. Body Weight & Health

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight not only the general concept of “healthy body weight,” but also to detail the unhealthy consequences that occur in the body of a person who is overweight. More specifically, this chapter illuminates the possible, as well as the probable and the known, dangerous effects of overweightness.

The following is a partial list of well-known, but often unrealized, effects of being overweight:

- From the excess fat: release of highly inflammatory compounds, including various cytokines and neurotoxins
- Increased risk for having a stroke
- Increased risk for having a heart attack
- Increased risk for having Dementia, including Alzheimer’s Disease
- Increased risk for having kidney failure and being on hemodialysis the rest of your life
- Greatly increased risk for having or developing Type 2 Diabetes
- If you become a Type 2 Diabetic, you will have increased odds of needing amputations of toes, feet, entire legs, etc.!
- Increased risk for poor mental health – possibly including major depression, anxiety, and feelings of low self-worth (even with thoughts of committing suicide!)
- Increased risk for having High Blood Pressure
- Etc.!

### **How to tell IF YOU ARE OVERWEIGHT**

STEP 1. Stand with your back against a wall or door, with your knees slightly bent.

STEP 2. Reach wide as you pinch the fat around your belly button with your forefinger and your thumb – pressing gently down to the underlying muscle.

STEP 3. Measure (or estimate with your eyes) how thick the fat is that is being pinched between your thumb and your forefinger.

DIAGNOSIS: If the fat being pinched is over 2 INCHES, you are overweight.

ALTERNATIVE TEST: When you view yourself in sideview in front of a mirror, if you look like you have a “beer belly,” and you are not sucking your stomach in, you are overweight.

If you are overweight according to either one of the above tests, then you are overweight!

## Chapter 4. Additional Nutrition Topics

### Raw versus Cooked

Some tout the benefit of eating ONLY raw food. This is ridiculous! Research has shown that some foods are more nutritious when eaten raw, some foods are more nutritious when eaten cooked, and some foods are equally nutritious when eaten raw or cooked! (Link & Potter, 2004). In this paragraph, being “more nutritious” means releasing more beneficial nutrients from the food when it is eaten and digested.

### How Best to Cheat

No, I am not sanctioning cheating on one’s healthy eating choices! However, if you are going to attend a party in which there will be cake, for example, eat three or four handfuls of nuts before you go; this will prevent your blood sugar from rising “sky high!” Yes, your blood sugar will rise, but not as high as if you had not eaten the nuts; this is beneficial because, the higher your blood sugar rises, the more damage your body will experience. (Del Gabb, et al. 2015; Luu, et al. 2015; Moreira Alves, et al. 2014; Weng, et al. 2016; Yu, et al. 2016).

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## Chapter 5. Exceptions

**MULTI-VITAMIN PILLS:** Many believe that they are healthier because they take a multi-vitamin pill every day. Others go even further astray when they believe that, because they take a multi-vitamin pill every day, they are covered such that they can then eat whatever foods they fancy with no negative consequences!

Both of these categories of people are way off track; both are in poor nutritional health!

Nonetheless, there are a few exceptions:

- **VITAMIN D3:** 1,000 International Units per day will help make up for not getting enough sunlight. Of course, those living closer to the Equator will have less of an issue here because of the more-dense rays of sunlight – of which the ultraviolet rays assist the body in producing more Vitamin D3 than latitudes far from the equator.
- **VITAMIN B-12:** As people age, some will experience a deficiency in Vitamin B-12 because their gut can no longer absorb it. The solution is to take Vitamin B-12 that is fast absorbing – made for sublingual use (under the tongue) in which it is not swallowed, but is allowed to dissolve and be absorbed into the skin of the mouth (for example, 1,000 micrograms every other day). At your annual physical, you should ask your doctor to include a test for Vitamin B-12 in your blood to be certain that you are not deficient in it.
- **IRON:** Generally, testing for blood iron levels is not necessary unless you are pregnant or are severely deficient in healthy nutrients because of very poor nutrition.

**NEAR INFRARED LIGHT EXPOSURE (Near IR):** A few studies have come out recently about receiving benefit from exposure to Near IR from sunlight. Stay tuned for data in this developing field.

**GLUTENS:** This is a controversial area. Glutens are found in products made with wheat, rye, and/or barley. I believe that the healthiest people (from the perspective of nutrition, but not from the perspective of other lifestyle choices, such as exercise, sleep, and stress reduction) are those who have a 100% plant-based nutrition, and also a 100% gluten-free diet. It is noteworthy that glutens are used as thickeners in sauces, salad dressings, etc. Thus, it may not be possible to be totally free of glutens.

I do three things. First, I do not eat products made from wheat, rye, or barley. For example, I do not eat bread and pastries. Second, I only use salad dressings that are relatively “clear,” such as vinaigrettes. Third, if I am eating out, I ask if the restaurant has a gluten-free menu.

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## Chapter 6. Parting Perspectives & Comments

### The Weakest Link Concept

If you have read every word up to here, you probably are interested in having great health; if that is true, then, as the final important topic, you need to know that

you are ONLY as healthy as your WEAKEST LINK!

Thus, if any ONE or more of the following apply

- you smoke
- you are overweight
- you eat lots of junk food
- you do not get a sufficient amount of deep sleep virtually every night
- you do not get enough of the right kinds of exercise (both strength-building and cardio strengthening (that is, aerobic- enhancing) exercise, or
- you are NOT relatively free of heavy-duty stress,

THEN

you are CLEARLY UNHEALTHY!

Therefore, I present THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE OF YOUR LIFE!!!

ARE YOU Living FOR

SUPERIOR HEALTH

or just

NON-OPTIMAL, LESS-THAN-PERFECT

MENTAL HEALTH

PHYSICAL HEALTH

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

&

OVERALL HAPPINESS?

## *Sunshine for My Soul*

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Whether it be a kitten's or puppy's face – a waterfall or butterfly,

my soul feels the warmth of sunshine pouring from the sky!

Whether it be an exquisite, delicate, beautiful flower – or a placid lake at sunset,

my heart is warmed, and my soul is kindled – how much better can it get?

Whether it be rhythmic or pounding waves kissing at the shore,

my soul is caressed fully to the core – and always seeking more!

Whether it be the joy of children laughing, or a trickling, gurgling stream,

my soul experiences solace – much like a pleasant midnight dream!

So, seek ye peace, love, and harmony – and become all that you were meant to be!



## **CANCER:**

**CAUSES, PREVENTIONS, CURE**

By Doc Wilson

Doc Wilson's ground-breaking book, **CANCER. CAUSES. PREVENTIONS. CURES**, (*subtitle: What the Food and Beverage Does NOT Want You to Know!*) addresses critically needed information that is not readily available from most members of the medical community.



Doc Wilson, Ph.D.

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## Advocating for A Child When Parents Are Aging or Have A Medical Emergency

I recently experienced this with my 22-year-old nephew (we will call him Jacob.). He has Down's Syndrome, Autism, Epilepsy, and a pacemaker in the upper and lower chamber of his heart that he has had since he was an infant. Jacob's Epilepsy is so severe that last December, he had surgery to separate the two hemispheres of his brain to keep them from crossing over. He is total care and non-verbal and has to be watched 24/7. My brother (we will call him Joseph) is his guardian, and my nephew Jacob lives with him.

After Jacob aged out of high school, he was placed in an Adult Day Care, where he remained for several years. In 2020 when COVID-19 invaded our country, Jacob received the vaccines, which adversely affected his seizure disorder. His seizure went from "Absence seizures to Lennox-Gastaut syndrome," which are the most severe. When this happened, the adult daycare did not feel they could keep him safe, so they discharged him from their services.

When this happened, our journey to finding providers to help us began. Jacob is on disability and has every kind of payment source available for someone with disabilities. Even though we had the funds to pay for services, no one could find providers willing to help.

I am a Geriatric Case Manager with 25+ years of experience, and I could not get anyone to come together to help my own family! My brother was now a full-time caregiver for his son, which meant he could not go to work and had to work from home. His boss finally said he had to be in the office three days a week or he could lose his job. On top of this, Joseph got a staph infection in his knee and had surgery where they removed his knee and put a spacer in for 8-10 weeks while he was on IV antibiotics. After four days in the hospital, he was sent home on IV antibiotics and told he could only walk from his chair to the bathroom, kitchen, and back. Joseph can no longer provide care for his son; he can't even take care of himself! Once the infection is gone, he will have another knee replacement surgery and be out for another eight weeks.

*Provided By*

I called Jacob's social workers, who said they would love to help but could not find anyone to take Jacob. I reached out to over 30 skilled nursing homes who told me they don't admit individuals that young or with such heavy care needs (REALLY, I was under the impression that that is what nursing homes are there to provide for individuals with heavy care needs.) I then reached out to home health agencies and was told time after time they did not have the staff to help. I tried getting him into emergency respite care, but there were no openings. I finally hot lined the situation and was told I may need to take Joseph to a hospital and leave him, telling them no one can care for him. I could not do that to Joseph, he is the only innocent victim here, and I refused to drop him off at a hospital and walk away!

I was stunned by the lack of help from other professionals but now knew I would have to advocate for Joseph because all the agencies tasked with helping him have given up. After being turned down by all his case workers, social service agencies and home health, adult day programs, and nursing homes being told there are no emergency respite services available, and then finding out that even the hotline could not give me a reasonable solution I decided to go straight to the top. I live in Missouri, so I emailed the Director of Social Services in Jefferson City, explained my situation, and told him everything I had done to try and get Joseph help.

The following week I got a call from one of the case managers who told me there would be a meeting with all the agencies tasked to care for Joseph, with the case managers and their supervisors, and that my brother and I are to be on the call. When we had the call within 30 minutes, we had a commitment of 10 hours of in-home care a day Monday-Friday, along with 5 hours each weekend. We were given a list of 3 home health agencies that could provide the care. **Joseph was marked as a priority one case** so that he would receive services first in an emergency. It took a few weeks to start services because they had to amend his plan and get approval for the billing. We got the final approval last week, and the service has begun. We are still working out a few issues with staffing, but things are well on their way to getting resolved.



I am writing this article for two reasons. First, I know that our situation is not an isolated incident. There are many **parents of children or adults with disabilities** who are aging and worry about something like this happening and not having a provider who will step in and help their child. Secondly, individuals need to know what to do when the system is not working for them. Too often, when someone is told that nothing can be done, they give up. **Please don't give up; your child depends on you to ensure they get the help they need.** When I train advocates, I tell them that true advocacy starts when you are told it can't be done; that's the point true advocates start working. There is no situation that can't get resolved if you get to the right person.

Now that I have become aware of this situation, I will be working on a more permanent solution, so other families don't have the experience I have had. As a country, we need to address this issue. **We cannot leave our most vulnerable citizens without the help they need.** If anyone reading this article would like to help me develop a campaign to address this nationally, please get in touch with me, and let's start the conversation.

Cheryl J. Wilson, M.S.  
Advocacy4seniors.com



Cheryl J. Wilson, M.S.  
Advocacy4Seniors.com

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# THE LEGACY READERS THEATRE STORY

## 2008 - 2023

By  
**Frenchy J. Hodges**

Every Tuesday, for a number of years, two friends who had relocated to their hometown, Dublin, Georgia, met in collaboration desiring to write a drama that would impart the great lessons learned while experiencing life in other parts of the world. Both of us wanted to create a drama which would teach life lessons through culture bearing activities. So, one day, one of us suggested that, while waiting for the muse to arrive and inspire the writing of that definitive drama, why not select and share the sustaining words of our great writers—past and present poets/essayists/preachers/leaders/etc. and balance the spoken word with our beautiful classical traditional songs—spirituals and other contemporary music, and further grace the whole presentation with interpretive and liturgical dance. We both agreed to this; thus, in 2008, Legacy Readers Theatre was established in Dublin, Georgia.



**Frenchy J. Hodges and Dedrick Guyton**  
 Spoken Word and Music Directors, respectively



**Frenchy J. Hodges & Yvonne Lamb-Castillo**  
 Co-Founders/Directors/Producers

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**The 2023 Legacy Readers Theatre Group**

1<sup>st</sup> row: Dedrick Guyton, Joyce Davis, Frenchy Hodges, Joe Ann McBride, Lois Stroman; 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Jerome Pullen, Zellene Sirmons, Franeida Jackson, Ieshia Redd, Belinda Fullwood, Nanyamka Johnson, Maurice Sizer, Ina Cooper, Carol Carswell, Martha Mincey, Vernon Lloyd and Layla Martin. Not Pictured: Alexis Brantley, Charles Howard and Tatiana Mitchell.

Readers Theatre is particularly adaptive for our small town lives and sensibilities in that it can be achieved with talented volunteers who are otherwise too busy or involved for traditional theatre.

In late 2009, we incorporated and are now: LEGACY READERS THEATRE, INC. We believe we are *teaching life-lessons through culture bearing activities, including the spoken word, traditional music, and dance expression* (mission statement).

**The Co-Founders of Legacy Readers Theatre Speak—  
 Frenchy J. Hodges and Yvonne Lamb-Castillo**

**(Frenchy’s Statement) WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE**

When I was a child, I learned and recited selections of poetry from the great collection of world- poetry. When I was 14, or thereabouts, I learned and recited “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” This poem raised a multitude of questions for me: where were these rivers; when were dawns young; what did the Mississippi have to do with the Euphrates and the Congo; In fact, where were the Euphrates and the Congo?

I daresay, this is the time when I became conscious of the Continent of Africa as other than Little Black Sambo. Ten years later, in the mid-sixties, I found myself in a cultural melting pot when I migrated to Detroit for 10 years, with a year off to study at Atlanta University, taking a degree in African American Studies. Long had been the battle for the inclusion of our African roots story in the annals of higher education, and great strides were made to make the inclusion of this history usual in all history classes in public school education rather than set-apart and specially looked at or presented only at special times of the year.

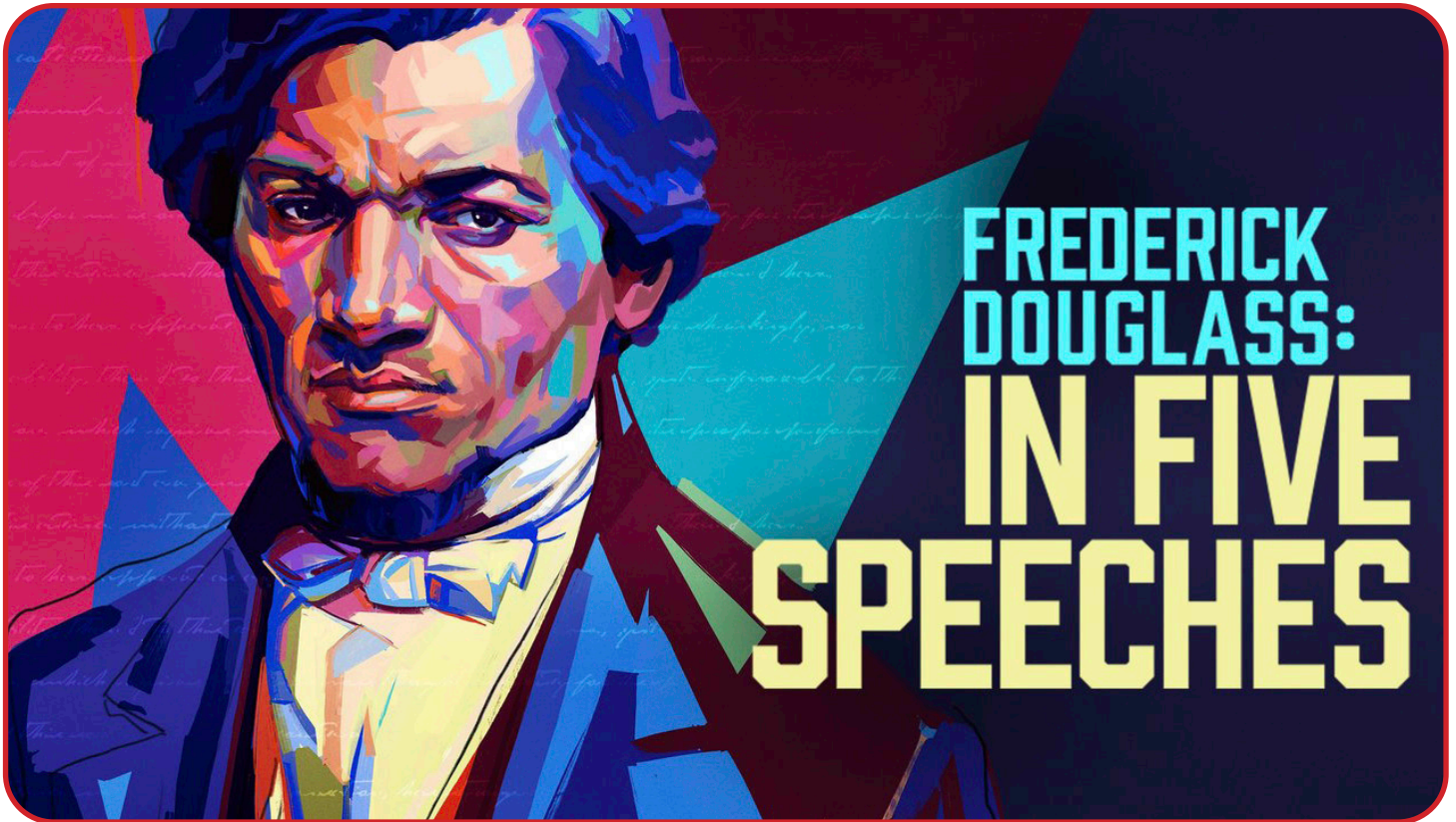
We now find that “inclusion” was not what it purported to be. Many of our people still do not know our story, where we came from and how we got here. Long were the hours and many were the ways I sought to inspire students to develop curiosity about our beginnings, revealing little snippets of our story in poetry, song and dance.

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Graphic for the HBO Production of Frederick Douglass in Five Speeches

My other love is theatre. I love the curtains; I love the players; I love the audience. I love the excitement of learning and reciting lines. I love the depiction of story and the revelation of character that can be achieved and shared with an audience in two hours or less. Theatre can be a great teacher.

Now, in small town Dublin, Georgia, there are not enough people interested in classic theatre to start a small repertory theatre. But there are enough interested people to commit for two months of rehearsals in reading poetry and other spoken word documents expressively, accompanied by *a capella* singing of our sorrow songs, and other contemporary message-bearing music all rounded out with interpretive dancing.

This, I know for sure: each and everyone has a story to tell. Some of us have left our music and our story and our dance behind. We must go back and get our story, tell it and take it with us so that we may ever go forth with knowing and thus, navigate the world.

For sixteen years, Legacy Readers Theatre has tried to do just that: tell our stories; sing our songs; and dance our dances.

This, I believe, and know for sure: Each of us has a story. Each of us can be storytellers. We must go back and get our stories, and when we tell them or sing them, or dance them, our loads won't be so heavy.

**(Yvonne's Statement) WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE**

Of all the skills, especially communication skills, that I have been taught, or acquired through association, work, travel or any number of other avenues, listening has brought me more of every reward than I could imagine. Whether listening to people who are talking to me, or listening as I observe scenarios of life that may be going on between other people, going into new and unfamiliar situations, or even when I really tune in and, as poet/songwriter Rod McKuen would say, I "Listen to the Warm."

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Now the listening of which I speak, is not just with the ears, but the third ear, the heart, the mind and even the instincts. It may also encompass listening to the deafening sound of silence. What I do know, is that what I glean from the art of listening, can't be matched by anything else I know.

Sharing other people's worlds, tapping into the true essence of perspectives that are not my own, understanding feelings and emotions that have created new places in my heart, all have brought me to a place of peace, where I can embrace things in life, but not become attached to them.

These years with Legacy, as we have delved into our past through our stories and our songs, afforded a deep look and pride in where we are today. The association with the readers and singers confirmed for me the profound value of listening.

### **About LEGACY READERS THEATRE –A CHANGING OF THE MUSICAL GUARD**

Before our 2018 production, Yvonne Lamb-Castillo left Legacy Readers and Dedrick Guyton came on board as Musical Director. He most recently directed the music for our most recent production: *FREDERICK DOUGLASS IN Five Speeches*.

### **List of Presentations ~ 2008 – 2023 - Featuring Poetry, Song and Dance**

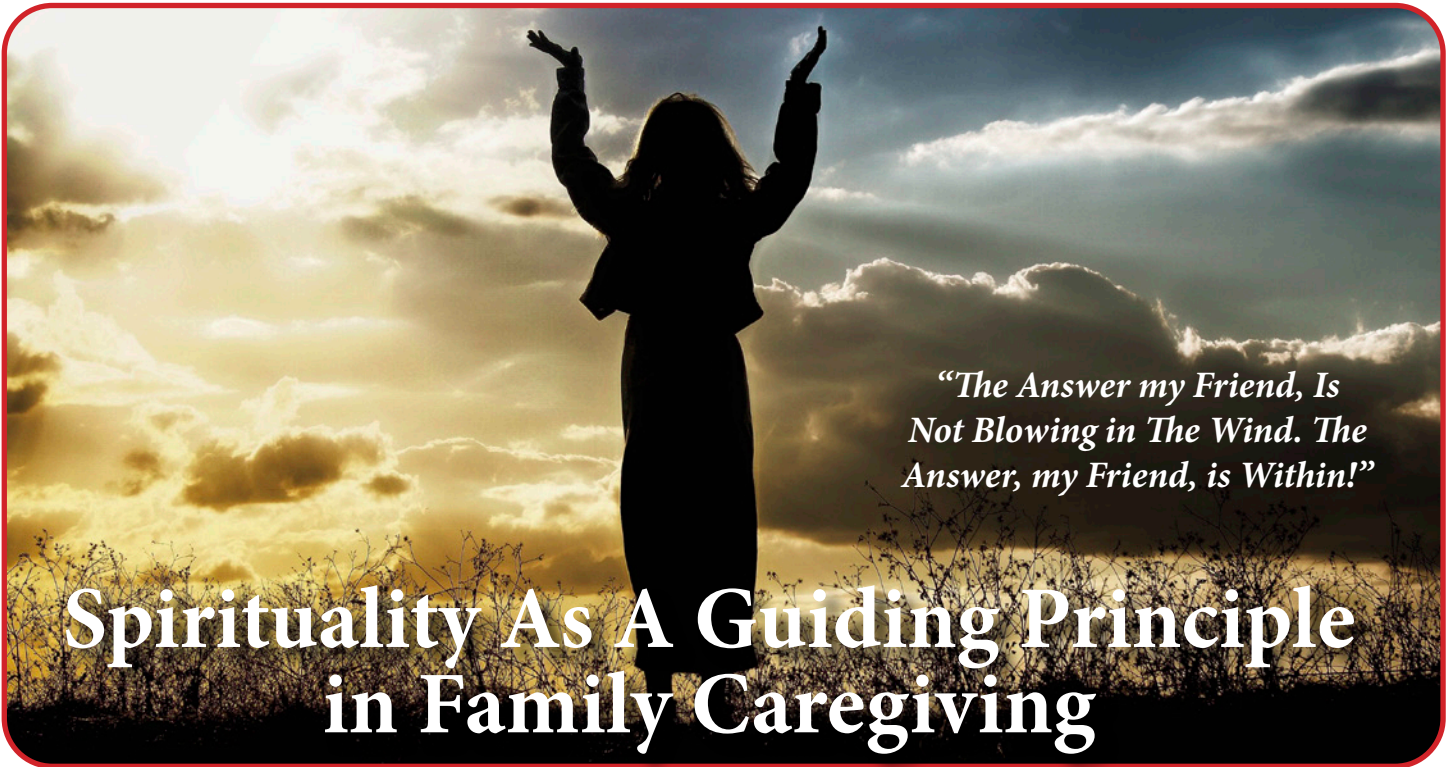
- 2008 - *Legacy I: Our Story, Our Song* - February 24, 2008
- 2009 - *Legacy II: Our Story, Our Song* - February 22, 2009
- 2010 - *God's Trombones* - February 21, 2010
- 2011 - *A Woman Called Truth* - February 20, 2011
- 2012 - *A Hand is On the Gate* - February 19, 2012
- 2013 - *Blues, Ballads, Bones 'N Blessings* - February 09, 2013
- 2014 - *The Great Migration* - February 22, 2014
- 2015 - *Still Laughin'* - February 28, 2015
- 2016 - *From Behind Bars... –* February 27, 2016
- 2017 - *The Best of Nine... Saturday*, March 04, 2017
- 2018 - *Hair Too Nappy, Skin Too Black... Saturday*, March 03, 2018
- 2019 - *For My People, Still I Rise... Saturday*, March 02, 2019
- 2020 - *Judge, Your Honor, Slavery is a Living Wound! ... Saturday*, February 29, 2020
- 2021 - *The Corona Virus Blues ... Saturday*, February 13, 2021
- 2022 - *A Knock At Midnight ... Saturday*, February 19, 2022
- 2023 - *Frederick Douglass in Five Speeches ... Saturday*, February 18, 2023

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*“The Answer my Friend, Is  
Not Blowing in The Wind. The  
Answer, my Friend, is Within!”*

## Spirituality As A Guiding Principle in Family Caregiving

**W**ithout a doubt, the number of Seniors living past the 3 score and ten years cited in the Bible is increasing; and according to AARP *“Caregiving in the United States 2020”*, more than one in five Americans (21.3%) are caregivers, providing care to an adult or child with special needs at some time in the past 12 months.

Continuing my assigned focus on Relationships, and personal emphasis on Spirituality, I am inclined to share my experiences relating to the care of my beloved spouse of 59 years and counting. At the age of 97, embracing and managing type 2 diabetes, legal blindness, and mobility issues, compounded by a change from being solely responsible for day-to-day management to co-dependency, on me and others, while giving attention to the best health and wellness practices in general; my role as Caregiver, commands strategies for doing more than just surviving day to day challenges.

It is further reported by *“Caregiving in the U. S. Report AARP”* that 44.6 hours per week are spent by a spouse/partner caring for their loved one. While I do not dispute the data, the **true** caring, empathy, and emotional time is immeasurable.

Where does one go and what does one rely on to BE throughout the needed and demanded services to be rendered? There are books, journals, magazines, technology and all sorts of resources, including humans who counsel, mentor, guide, and assist in so many ways.

One thing is certain, it is much, much more, than cleaning, feeding, administering medications, doctors’ appointments, monitoring, etc. to help those needing and dependent upon Caregivers’ services. Much is also written about Caregivers’ burnout and concern about the health and wellness of these and other essential responders.

As a Contributing Writer for Matters of The Heart Magazine, I am inspired to reference a topic included in my book *“Under The Influence”* (Hill, 2019) regarding Vitamins. One of my daily tasks is to administer my spouse’s medications, which also include essential vitamins. In doing so, my thoughts immediately went to the role vitamins play in keeping the body’s immune system balanced and them being a supplement to prescribed medications.

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From experience, I sort of concluded that prescribed medicines are specific to the pain or dysfunction and taken for a given time period for effectiveness; while Vitamins are usually on-going and recommended, in some cases to precursor a possible medical condition to delay or ward off an illness. I admit that over the years I have “played doctor” for myself. Even taking Castor Oil for internal cleansing of toxins perhaps twice yearly, and purchasing over the counter vitamins from hearsay or practices recalled being used by parents, grandparents and others.

The intent in this Article is to refer to what Vitamins are taken for and their intended effects upon the body. In my Book, I reference vitamins, including them as recommending tools for Counseling and Counselors, to improve the wellness of practitioners and their clients.

Listed below are the Recommended Daily Supplements/Vitamins and their intended remedies; and I use them to help maintain Spiritual and emotional balance. I will hasten to say they work for me and are highly recommended:



**A. Vitamins A, A1, & A2**, are to prevent night blindness. Caregivers would be wise to embrace virtues adopted from these, such as **Attentive**, **Altruistic**, and **Adaptable**. It is imperative that focus is **always** on the needs of the receiver, it is selfless and focuses on promoting the welfare and concerns of the receiver. **Always** championing the rights of others (especially those who are ill and infirmed) is essential. **(Daily)**

**B. Vitamins B2, B6, B12 and B Complex** give opportunity to focus on being a **Backer** (supporter), a **Balm** (soothing, healing, and comforting agent; a **Bank** (place for safekeeping; a **Buttress** (sustainer, prop, reinforcer); a **Bosom** (providing closeness likened to being held in a warm familial embrace); and **Broadminded** (having or showing an inclination to respect views and beliefs that differ from one’s own). **(Daily)**

*Note: These tools can only empower one to be all that we need to be to bring about a state of wellness for individuals who are ill and emotionally beaten down by the everyday complexities of life. Hurting people need to experience the balm of caring from an empowered individual. We find ourselves surrounded by needy persons who are just waiting for the above behaviors to make the difference in their lives. Don’t leave home without ‘them’.*

**C. Vitamin C** is in a league all by itself; preventing scurry or bleeding gums and under the skin. **Character** bespeaks what we truly are! **Character** is constant. When Caregivers set out on a new day with **Character**, nothing but good can prevail! Caregivers must consciously decide each day, prior to beginning our day’s work, to armor ourselves with the necessary tools for health, wholeness, productivity and success. It does not happen automatically. The same way we reach into our medicine cabinets or drawers and pull out our vitamins to ward off diseases and build up certain immunities, we must consciously make the time to program our subconscious minds for virtues and practices to demonstrate and model behaviors for success.

**D. Vitamin D, D2, and D3** help the body absorb and retain calcium and phosphorous, both critical to build bone, reduce cancer cell growth and to help control infections and reduce inflammation. The vitamins help. Caregivers become and stand out because of their **Dedication-** being a **Devotee**, and **Down** to earth. Family Caregivers in particular, should be able to give positive reinforcements because of these virtues. Many Family Caregivers find these critical as many have power of attorney roles and act on behalf of the receivers of care to ensure that essential business matters are also facilitated on their behalf. A balance between clinical responsibilities and roles as a loved one is a must. Becoming a caregiver for a partner is rarely an anticipated future responsibility at the onset of a relationship. An estimated 6.36 million U. S. adults ages 18 and older are considered caregivers to their partners, according to the Caregiving in the U. S. 2020 report from AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving. Although not anticipated, the data supports the strong need to prepare for life’s uncertainties. **(Daily)**



**E. Vitamin E** is taken to treat sterility and abnormalities; therefore, **Empathy** allows Caregivers to identify with, and understand others' situations, feelings, and motives. I am convinced that it is of utmost importance, if, and when, family members are willing and able to take care of their love ones. Individuals who are ill can act out in ways different from behaviors practiced prior to infirmities and disabilities. Doctors can explain the different side effects of certain medications, some that perhaps even alter thought and behaviors. A look of **Empathic** understanding, a word of encouragement, and speaking truths of healing and Victory, are priceless gems and jewels. (Daily)

**G. Vitamin G** promotes growth. Being a **Good-Samaritan**. Helping someone when others fail to try. Family Caregivers, perhaps, rise to occasions to make a difference in the lives of loved ones; and often enlarge the caregiving network among other family members. Seniors in rehabilitation facilities or nursing homes receive diversity in ranges of health and wellness activities; however, the familial attention given to recipients is noted by members of Long Term and Short-Term care agencies. While participating in the care of my mother, who resided in a Rehabilitation Center; it was duly noted that her Church family visited often and were exceptional **Good Samaritans**. (Daily)

**H. Vitamin H** is essential for enzyme systems. Being a **Humanitarian** is to show concern for human welfare; to believe that the sole obligation of man is to aid the improvement of others; speaking up for others who are not gifted in the use of words; any acts of kindness.... being thoroughly **Humane**. (Daily)

**K. Vitamin K, K1, K2**. These Vitamins reduce blood clotting and prevent hemorrhaging. To be **Keen**- having or marked by quick intelligence and acuity; sharp, vivid, strong, ardent. Being a true advocate for the one being cared for! Listening to the Doctors, learning about medications and their effects, etc. Also, a **Keeper**- one who retains possession of, attends to, and guards. Each day brings a myriad of opportunities for true heart-felt caregiving and brings joy and satisfaction to the necessary work of making a difference in the life of a loved one. (Daily).

**P. Vitamin P** promotes capillary resistance. **Perspicuous**: meaning clearly expressed or presented, easy to understand. Although a term not often used, it drives home the greatest challenge and clearly accentuates my Spiritual activities.

I am daily consciously and subconsciously reminded by that which in me is Greater (I AM Spirit of God) than me-that I am (human) not able to BE what I truly should be to my entrusted ones or others without a Supplement! Thanks Be to God Who gives me the Victory! I don't have to struggle for the impossible. It is available to me as it is to others, and prayerfully, we will make the lives of those dependent upon care from family members as well as others, become and/or remain a journey to embrace with a Blessed Assurance of Peace and wellbeing.



Myldred P. Hill, Ed.D.

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## The Power of Knowledge and the Vitamin D Experience

**Dr. Sonja Shavers, LCSW, Ed.D., Personal Wellness Strategist & Certified Health Coach**

**T**he bible says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (Hosea 4:6). This has never been truer when it relates to our health. We have so much untapped power to positively impact our health if we would only seek and adhere to the information that can make the difference. This is in part what motivates me to continue teaching and coaching and using lifestyle changes. These include improvement in nutrition, sleep, movement and water. Yet, there are times when supplementation is necessary such as the body's need for Vitamin D.

My last writing outlined some of my journey towards my personal health goals. I spoke particularly about my discovery of my own low level of Vitamin D. My Vitamin D level was 18 but after three months on vegan Vitamin D3, my level had risen to 37! This recovery to a healthier level could not have been easier. For others like me who had never had any reason to check Vitamin D labs, continued Vitamin D insufficiency may have eventually become seriously risky. I planned to follow up on questions posed concerning Vitamin D and African Americans and long term effects of Vitamin D deficiency.

According to the National Institutes of Health, "Vitamin D insufficiency is more prevalent among African Americans (blacks) than other Americans and, in North America, most young healthy blacks do not achieve optimal concentrations at any time of the year" (Harris, 2006). We are further advised that the reason for this insufficiency is that our dark skin pigmentation reduces Vitamin D production. Harris (2006) advises clinicians and educators to promote improved Vitamin D status among blacks and others since there is low risk involved and low cost, but with broad health benefits!

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Harris (2006) further states that “it is becoming increasingly apparent that Vitamin D protects against other chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some cancers, all of which are as prevalent or more prevalent among blacks than whites”.

I was also personally pondering the relationship between my low Vitamin D level and my A1C. According to Healthline (Bailey2023), researchers are reporting that Vitamin D supplementation can slightly reduce the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes for people who have been identified as prediabetic. I am happy to report that during my last primary care visit after 3 months on a vegan Vitamin D product, lab results show my A1C level at 5.7. Perhaps, Vitamin D3 consumption along with heavy emphasis on plant based nutrition, movement and sleep all contributed to this outcome. This A1C level removes me from the prediabetic status, according to my primary health care provider. I have been so excited to know that my lifestyle changes and Vitamin D supplementation have led to indisputable progress as evidenced by my lab results. Yet, there is more.

I wanted to share my latest journey that began with a health scare. A couple of weeks ago, I scheduled a visit to my gynecologist out of concern and the fact that I was overdue for a gynecological visit and evaluation.

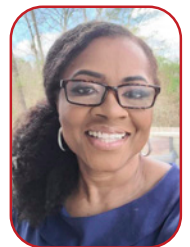
I was told that I had a rather large cervical polyp and I was urgently recommended to return at the earliest opportunity to have it removed. A pap smear was performed during the same visit and the possibility of a hysterectomy was presented. I asserted my desire to postpone further discussion of major surgery until lab results were complete. I was also referred for a mammogram and scheduled for an ultrasound (fibroid status), and endometrial biopsy. I had these procedures done one week later. Of course, this was concerning and even stressful, but I could only wait for results.

Results were as follows:

Pap (normal), Endometrial Biopsy (benign), Polyp (benign), mammogram (normal), Ultrasound (benign-small fibroids)

I was also referred for a sleep study by my dentist who had completed recent training in the connection between dental health and sleep. Again, the results were normal with mild/snoring.

What a relief this was for me! I am so full of gratitude and praise for the God that I serve! I am also thankful that he led me to a higher level of consciousness towards health! I believe that all the health-related zooms I have attended, all the shreds I've done, all the plant powders I've swallowed, and all the plant based complete shakes I've consumed and the overall improvement in wholefood nutrition, have helped me in my health journey, especially with prevention! If you are like me and are current with annual physicals but overdue in other areas, get caught up! Let us all celebrate the power of knowledge and the impact it can have if we apply it to our health. Let us seek knowledge with the same vigor that we seek anything meaningful. This is my testimony! My journey continues. What about yours?



Sonja Shavers, Ed.D.



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