

My First Half-Century in the Iron Game

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If I could do it all over again, just what part of my life would I change? Damned near all of it.

But, in order to do that, I would have required the knowledge that I now have at the start of my life; which, of course, was impossible.

20/20 hindsight is usually far more accurate than foresight; if we could look accurately into the future, I doubt that we would have done most of the things that we actually did. Almost nothing that I ever did turned out, after the fact, so have much in common with my expectations or hopes.

Sometimes things turn out to be better than you expected in advance, but most things turn out to be worse than you expected. As somebody once said ... "I was depressed, but a friend told me to cheer up, that things could be worse; so I cheered up, and, sure enough, things got worse."

So is it even possible to ever be satisfied with anything? Briefly, perhaps. Which may make you feel good for a while, but which will usually cause you to reduce your efforts, which is a mistake. Boyer Coe once told me that he felt like he had spent his entire life trying to roller-skate up the side of a vertical mountain.

There is no such thing as "stasis" in nature, nothing remains unchanged, everything is changing constantly; if you are not getting stronger, then you are becoming weaker. It has been clearly established, proven beyond any shadow of a lingering doubt, that total immobilization of a joint in the human body unavoidably produces changes in the muscles, the tendons, the ligaments and the bones that are very difficult, and frequently impossible, to repair.

Only a few years ago most doctors were using total bed rest, or at least total immobilization of a part of the body, following an injury; but we now clearly understand that such treatment is usually the worst thing you can do. Even a few days of total immobilization will produce tissue changes that may require months, or even years, to repair. Carried far enough, total immobilization will produce tissue changes that can never be repaired; you will never return to "normal."

At the moment, there are literally dozens of treatment protocols being used during rehabilitation following an injury, heat, ice, rest, total immobilization, electrical stimulation and a long list of other things; but, in fact, none of these treatments is productive in any real sense of the word, they may help to temporarily reduce or remove pain, but they do not "produce" tissue changes in a positive direction. Only exercise is truly productive during rehabilitation. Surgery, of course, is sometimes required; although not as often as it is now used.

Thus you may assume that physical therapists are being taught a great deal about exercise, and it is certainly true that most of them have strong opinions on the subject; but, in fact, to the best of my ability to determine the facts, it appears that most physical therapists are actually taught little or nothing about exercise. There are exceptions, of course, but most of these rather rare exceptions are "self taught" and did not learn much, if anything, of value about exercise while in school.

Careful research conducted recently in Europe, and paid for by the Dutch government, has clearly established that all of the treatment protocols now being used there for patients with spinal pain are utterly worthless for their intended purposes, a total waste of time and money.

With few exceptions, the same situation exists in this country. Why?

Because most cases of spinal pain are "acute" cases; the pain suddenly comes, and you seldom know why, and then after a rather short time it goes away, and you still don't know why. The cause and effect relationship that causes back pain is clearly established in less than ten percent of all cases. Thus, in acute cases of spinal pain, the pain will usually go away almost without regard for any treatment provided, the body heals itself; but, in such cases, the credit for the supposed "cure" is given to whatever treatment was tried most recently; when, in many cases, the treatment did nothing of any value and may even had delayed full recovery.

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But the real problem results from “chronic” lower-back (or neck) pain; where the pain comes but does not go away. Such chronic cases probably represent less than ten percent of all cases of spinal pain, but are responsible for more than 90 percent of all costs resulting from spinal pain. Total costs for such chronic spinal pain are now costing people in this country about \$300,000,000,00 a day, 365 days a year. Which amounts to about twelve percent of the total costs for all health care in this country.

Unfortunately, a committee of supposed “experts” that was recently formed for the stated purpose of determining just what treatment is of actual value in cases of chronic spinal pain consists of a lot of people who generally know little or nothing about the actual cause and effect situation which causes most cases of chronic spinal pain. Somebody once said that a camel is a racehorse designed by a committee.

During the last twenty-odd years I have attended more than a hundred supposedly scientific meetings, and have listened to literally thousands of supposedly scientific papers being presented at these meetings; and, with very few exceptions, most of the conclusions that were stated were utterly ridiculous. Of no slightest value, usually not even true, sometimes dangerous.

And if you try to present the facts, something of real value, they usually will not permit you to make such a presentation; because any real facts would clearly put the lie to their own opinions.

During the many years that Iron Man was published by Peary Rader, the magazine was usually afforded far more respect than any other muscle magazine, then being published; primarily, I believe, because it did not limit its articles to things that promoted the “Company Line.” And while it is certainly true that a great deal of outright hogwash was printed even in Iron Man during those years, it is also true that Peary Rader would print almost anything that was sent to him; which attitude, of course, is the best one; because, while such a policy does result in the publication of a lot of outright hogwash, it also gives a “voice” to many people who otherwise would never be heard from and a surprising number of such people do come up with very valuable ideas from time to time. Ideas that would never reach many people if not published.

So the best policy for any publication is to print literally anything and everything that is submitted, totally without regard for the “source” of any such article. Most of it will almost certainly be foolish, but some of it will provide to be very valuable.

Some years ago, Ellington Darden, a PhD who worked for me for a number of years, submitted an article on the subject of high-protein food supplements to a muscle magazine; whereupon the editor called him to say that they could not publish the article because it was contrary to Company Policy, did not say what they wanted to be believed. So it was rejected. Most scientific articles have what is called a “bibliography,” which is a list of other scientific articles that support the same points that are covered in the article; and Darden’s article had such a bibliography.

Then, a few months later, the magazine published an article that supposedly was a translation of a Russian article; an article that did support the company policy, said what they wanted to hear; the opposite of what Darden’s article stated. And, guess what? Tacked on to the tail end of the supposed Russian article was a copy of the bibliography from Darden’s article, word for word. If anybody had bothered to obtain and read the articles included in that bibliography they would have discovered that those articles stated an exactly opposite viewpoint from the one presented in the supposed Russian article, rather than supporting the supposed Russian article would have clearly put the lie to it.

While in school working towards his PhD, Darden was a subject during a research program designed to determine the value, if any, of several food supplements; everything he consumed was carefully measured, and everything that came out the other end was carefully measured and evaluated; and the conclusion was that he probably had the most expensive urine and feces in history.

For a while, during the early years of the Second World War, military establishments and defense plants had large numbers of machines that dispensed salt tablets and everybody was strongly urged to consume at least several salt tablets every day; then, suddenly, literally overnight, all of these machines disappeared. And the signs urging people to consume more salt also came up missing. Why?

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Because they had discovered that they were literally poisoning people, giving them far more salt than they needed and sometimes more than they could stand; a few people were actually killed by these salt tablets. In fact, if you eat enough to stay alive, and almost regardless of what you eat, it is all but impossible to get too little salt, but easily possible to get too much. So long as your sweat and urine retain a salty taste, you are consuming too much salt; and your body is doing everything it can to get rid of this excess salt. I suppose that it might be possible to consume too little salt, but doing so would be damned difficult; almost everybody consumes far too much salt.

The same thing is true in regard to many other things; they used to print pictures of starving African children and point out the fact that they had protruding stomachs, which was supposed to be proof of a protein shortage in their diet. But they later discovered that the problem was actually a result of too much protein and not enough carbohydrates. If some is good, it does not follow that more is better, and it is frequently worse.

Vitamins were discovered by an American military doctor in the Philippines during the Spanish/American war. He was eating a lot of chickens, but the native chickens were scrawny and filthy, so he built some cages, put his chickens in the cages to keep them clean, and fed them on scraps of white rice left over from the mess hall; and they all died, while the native chickens, in spite of their bad appearance, continued to live.

And he was then smart enough to figure out that his caged chickens were not getting something in their diet that was "vital for life," and thus the name. And then he noticed that the native chickens were not eating white rice, but rather were eating whole rice grains, hulls and all; so he investigated and learned that the hull of a grain of rice contained something that a chicken required in order to live, a factor that was missing with white rice. When he started feeding a new batch of caged chickens whole rice, they remained healthy and clean. Which is how anybody learns anything from their experience, primarily by noticing their mistakes.

And, yes people required vitamins also; but not in massive dosages, and some vitamins are dangerous as hell if consumed in large amounts. If you eat the liver of a polar bear it will kill you stone dead because of a very high level of one vitamin.

I seldom watch television, but today I happened to see part of a program where they were talking about the supposed "dangers" of using a cellular (mobile) telephone; some guy is claiming that a mobile phone caused him to have a brain tumor and has filed a law suit against a phone company for supposed damages. And what did the "experts" say? Some said that he did not have a tumor, some said he did, some said such phones were dangerous as hell, some said they were perfectly safe. Take your pick.

As usual, you can find "experts" who will say whatever you want to hear. Whatever you pay them to say. All of which experts, of course, claim that they have no bias on the subject. Sure. Then why are they appearing on the show?

Some years ago a guy in California sued Nautilus on the grounds that he caught his penis on a sprocket in a leg-curl machine, and stated that the accident "stretched" his penis several inches, and that it remained much longer than it was originally.

Well, to begin with, it would have to be about 18 inches long in order to reach the sprocket that he claimed caused the injury, and very thin. And when he read the charges this guy was making, one of my employees asked me ... "Do you think we could get this guy to show us how the accident occurred, so that we could duplicate it?"

Another guy sued us on the grounds that he broke his back while using a Nautilus Hip and Back machine; and he probably did, but he would have broken his back that day if he stepped off a curb, or sat down in a chair, or put a hat on his head. We established in court, from his own military medical records, that he had suffered a loss in height of more than six inches as a result of advanced osteoporosis that was caused by syphilis. When we measured the level of force that was imposed upon his spine by the machine at the time of the accident it proved to be less than 25 pounds. Which was the highest level that it could have been, but since he was not sure of the exact level of resistance it may well have been as little as 10 pounds.

A couple in Massachusetts ran into the back of one of our trucks, did nothing in the way of damage except for a small scrape in the paint, and later sued us on the grounds that they were so "traumatized" by the accident that they could no longer perform sexually. This in spite of the fact that the law clearly states that if you hit somebody from behind it is

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your fault regardless of any other circumstances, and in spite of the fact that a cop saw the accident and issued a ticket against them for causing the accident.

When the accident happened they were not married, were married a few months later; which makes you wonder just why they got married if they were unable to perform sexually.

Such utterly frivolous law suits cost people in this country billions of dollars every year; as Shakespeare said ... "The first thing we should do is kill all of the lawyers."

In their ads on television, lawyers tell you that there will be no cost to you for their services unless they collect money for you. Sure. But in practice that is not exactly the way it works out. A year or so ago, in Miami, a guy was awarded \$1,000,000.00 in compensation for damages in an accident; and the lawyer gave him \$18,000.00 of this while keeping \$982,000.00 for himself. How can that be justified? It can't, but what you may not notice is that lawyers in such cases take a certain percentage, 30 or 40 percent, "off the top" of any awards, plus their "expenses." Which expenses are whatever they say they are.

What they do is, first they take their percentage off the top, then they take whatever is left and divide that by their hourly rate, \$200.00 or more an hour for their claimed time on the case, and then bill you for whatever number of hours are required to eat up whatever amount is left.

In the case mentioned above, this got into the Miami newspapers, and a few people seemed to feel that the victim got screwed, which he did; so a group of lawyers got together to investigate the case in order to see if the victim was treated fairly. And they decided that the lawyer should give the victim another \$15,000.00.

But this group had no power to force the other lawyer to do anything; so he may or may not have followed their suggestion, probably did not. But even if he did, that would mean that the victim got \$33,000.00 while the lawyer got \$967,000.00. The victim got only 3.3 percent of the award, while the lawyer got 96.7 percent.

An unusual case? Far from it, a typical case. Some are far worse. And what do you have when you have 1,000,000 dead lawyers? A good start.

A very meaningful part of current medical costs are a direct result of such outrageous law suits; some doctors in this state must pay \$250,000.00 a year for malpractice insurance, and even that offers a great deal short of total protection. Additional costs are produced by the need for doctors to practice "defensive medicine," they must order all kinds of expensive tests that serve no purpose just to protect themselves against the possibility of a future law suite.

So if Clinton's wife is really serious about straightening out the current mess in the health care system, the first thing she should do is kill all the lawyers.

And if you think the cases outlined above are outrageous, I could tell you about a few other cases that would make your hair turn white overnight. A guy that I met a few years ago later was hauled into court during a divorce, and when the judge said ... "Well, Mr. Bevins, having heard the charges, what do you intend to do about them?" Bevins replied ... "I'll tell you what I'm going to do about it, I'm going to kill every son of a bitch in this courtroom." And hauled out his gun. Killed his wife, her lawyer, the bailiff, and shot the judge in the ass as he was running out the door of the courtroom.

Later, a friend of mine who knew Bevins far better than I did, visited him in prison, and asked him why he did it.

And Bevins said ... "Hell, Earl, I was going to end up in here anyway, and I'll get out of here a long time before they get out of those boxes. And, besides, I was drinking myself to death, and now I've kicked the habit and sit up here every day playing poker with my friends, which is better than being dead."

Dealing with lawyers is frequently worse than being dead.