

The Beginning

December 17, 2020

It is 6:00 AM. As I look out of the window, the gradually increasing light outside suggests that the sun is about to rise. As a habit, at this hour, I step out and go for a run at the Mini Forest—a patch of lush green stretch near my home in Bangalore.

However, today's morning is going to be special because I am in a hotel that is on the coast of the Arabian Sea, and as a result, I will get a chance to run on the beach. So, I step out and start walking towards the sea. As I reach the seaside, I am pleased to find a clean, crescent-shaped white-sand beach—a perfect place for a morning beach run.

Like anyone else who comes to the sea from a place deep inland, I too am excited. And, in my excitement, as I am looking around, I see the beautiful palm trees. They are standing tall at the edge of the beach, lined up in a row for as far as the eye can see. And their fronds, oh my! They are swaying in the wind as if they are dancing to the tune of a soft melody. But when I take a closer look, it appears that the palm trees are like sentries standing guard on the beach to stop human beings from littering.

The scenery is breathtaking, so much so that it can be the face of a postcard depicting heaven on earth. And, if that isn't enough, the lovely weather adds itself to the scene in the way a musician sets a tune to a lyric. It's the perfect setup for a morning beach run.

Dear reader, We are at Palolem. It is a beautiful white sand beach located in south Goa—a tropical paradise situated along the coast of the Arabian Sea. This time around, I have



come here to write my book because, on an earlier visit, I felt that, with the right frame of mind, I could draw a lot of inspiration from the sea here.

After seeing around for a while, I am flabbergasted when I gaze up at the sky. Amazing! The sky has a classic blue hue to it, what we refer to as the sky-blue color.

Unlike the choppy seas that occur during stormy weather, today it is bright and sunny; therefore, the sea is calm with tides carrying the seawater to the shore. When these tides head towards the shore, they culminate into individual waves of seawater that produce the incessant sea sound that makes us feel the presence of eternity, and when they hit the shore, one after the other, they froth at the edge before losing their existence.

The unending expanse of the sea, the relentless waves, and the mystical sea sound—their cumulative effect makes me feel timelessness in the universe. However, on the other hand, when compared, ah, our lifespan seems no more than a blip on the radar! No wonder writers find a lot of inspiration by the seaside.

After a while, as my gaze shifts from the shore to the deep sea, I see a large ship anchored around the harbor. While I am still looking at the ship, my thoughts shift again, this time from the ship to the crew manning it. I begin to think about their life habits when they are on a voyage—how they walk for health—perhaps they use a treadmill.

As the topic of walking for health comes to the fore, allow me to introduce a revolutionary new way of walking for health that I have conceived. I call it *Woxy*. If you walk for health, from now on, you may instead *Woxy* for health. And if you do, its remarkable impact on cells will help you become so healthy that you can live a disease-free, long life.

- While doing *Woxy*, we use breathing as a tool.
- It is performed for 30 minutes a day in three phases of 10 minutes each.

In addition, there are a few other steps that need to be followed during *Woxy*, which are detailed in Chapter 4.

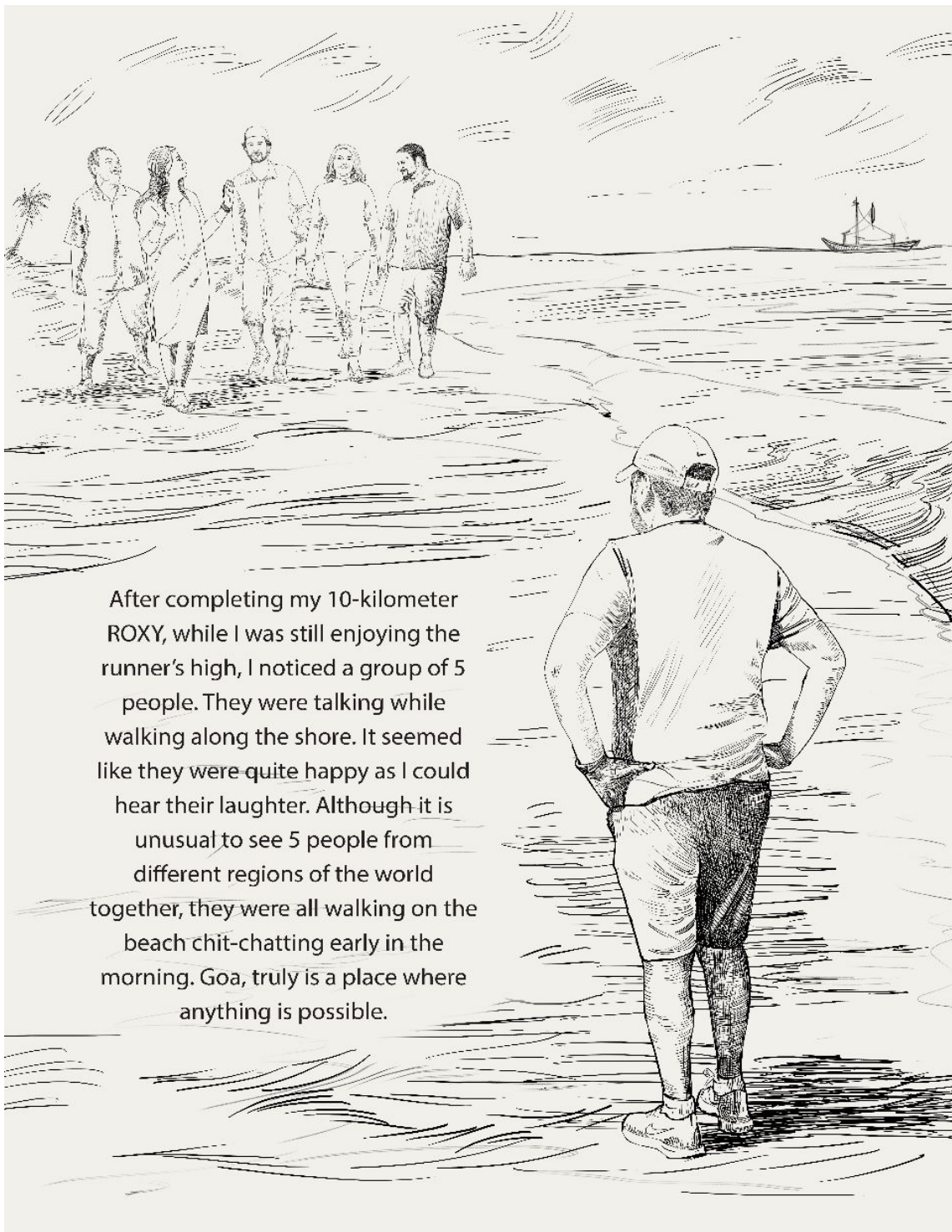
As my thoughts settle down and I begin to enjoy the beach, I get a desire to *Roxy* on the beach. I think the temptation is inevitable because, one, I love to run on a beach, and two, it is a white-sand, crescent-shaped, clean beach with a shore that is very shallow, almost like a flat surface, sloping gradually into the sea.

Dr. Tibrewal, what is this *Roxy* that you are so excited about?

Roxy is a term that I have coined for a type of running where our focus is on breathing, not speed. During *Roxy*, we run at a fast enough speed that makes us breathless while we

make a conscious effort to inhale deeply and exhale fully. This way, during Roxy, we channel our effort into maximizing deep breathing at our best running speed.

Running on the beach is very special to me because the endless waves and the incessant sea sound make me go on and on until I hit the runner's high. With these thoughts in mind, I begin a joyful Roxy at Palolem Beach.

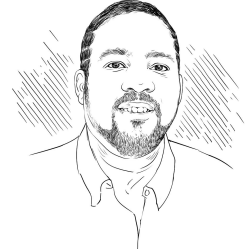


After completing my 10-kilometer ROXY, while I was still enjoying the runner's high, I noticed a group of 5 people. They were talking while walking along the shore. It seemed like they were quite happy as I could hear their laughter. Although it is unusual to see 5 people from different regions of the world together, they were all walking on the beach chit-chatting early in the morning. Goa, truly is a place where anything is possible.

As I was getting increasingly curious, I decided to say hello.



“Hello, friends! I am Dr. Deepak Tibrewal. I am a medical doctor from Bangalore.”



“Hello, Dr. Tibrewal! I am Roberto, a businessman from Argentina.”



“Hello, Roberto! Nice to meet you.”



“Hello, Doctor! I am Jane, a teacher from Florida, USA.”



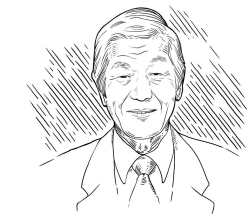
“Hello, Jane! It’s a pleasure to meet you.”



“Hello, Doctor! I am Abdul, a civil engineer from Abu Dhabi, UAE.”



“Hello, Abdul! Nice to meet you.”



“Hello, Dr. Deepak! I am Suzuki, a lawyer from Okinawa, Japan.”



“Hello, Suzuki! It’s good to meet you.”

“Hello, Dr. Deepak! I am Maya, a software engineer from Mumbai, India.”



“Hello, Maya! It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

What a diverse group this is!

I can’t stop wondering why five people from different countries with such diverse backgrounds have stepped out together for a morning walk. A myriad of questions flood my mind, but primarily, how they must have met and what they are doing here. I am thinking to myself: There must be something common driving them. I am curious to find out what it is.

As we keep talking, it transpires that all of them work for a multinational company and have health issues. Hence, to find a long-lasting, alternative solution, they have come to attend a lifestyle medicine retreat in Goa.

“Doctor, I was watching you run. Your running style seemed so different—it looked quite effortless. I have not seen anyone run like this before.”

“Thanks, Roberto! I call it Roxy. It is a form of mindful running where your focus is on breathing, not speed. During Roxy, you run at a fast enough speed that makes you breathless while you make a conscious effort to inhale deeply and exhale fully. This way, during Roxy, you channel your effort into maximizing deep breathing at your best running speed. That said, Roberto, from the depth of your observation, it seems like you also run.

“Yes, earlier I used to run, but due to knee pain, I stopped running. What is your specialty, doctor?”

“I am a medical doctor. After studying modern medicine (MBBS) in India, I studied homeopathy at an NHS hospital in London. As a medical consultant, I treat children who suffer from respiratory tract allergies and autism. And, when it comes to my adult patients, a lot of them suffer from issues like nonalcoholic fatty liver (NAFL), also known as fatty liver, diabetes mellitus (DM), polycystic ovarian disease (PCOD), allergies, obesity,

joint pains, etc. Besides helping sick people, I also work with people to help prevent diseases from developing and give advice on promoting longevity.

“Hmmm...preventive care and longevity—that sounds very interesting!

“Yes, Jane, it is a wonderful branch of medicine. Here, first, I advise people on how to update their existing beliefs and habits to the latest science-based version and then follow them. These updated beliefs and habits prevent, or at the very least delay, the onset of many diseases and slow down aging. Besides, when you practice preventive care, you are proactive in your approach. Remarkably, most people enjoy this journey because it is filled with positivity and hope, and that keeps them motivated. I think those of us who understand the difference between healthspan and lifespan are the ones most motivated to pursue preventive care.”

“What is the difference between lifespan and healthspan?”

“Jane, lifespan is the total number of years you live, and healthspan is how many of those years are relatively disease-free. In fact, invariably, when I ask people, do you wish to live for 80 years? It is no surprise that most of them say only if most of those years are relatively disease-free.”

“We all want to live a disease-free, life for as long as possible, don’t we? Besides, if we invest in health, we can prevent many diseases from happening, such as diabetes, osteoarthritis, etc., to name a few.”

It is quite encouraging to hear that Roberto is talking about investing in health because, when it comes to health, most people are reactive—act only when they fall ill. Unlike that however, preventing illness by pursuing health is smarter—Albert Einstein said, “Intellectuals solve problems, geniuses prevent them.” Besides, prevention bestows on us a longer lifespan and healthspan.

“Yes, Roberto, if we follow certain rules, update our existing *beliefs and habits*, and practice them regularly, then, aside from preventing many diseases, we can easily live up to 100 years and beyond.”

“Doctor, can you tell us more about these *beliefs and habits*?”

“Yes Maya, why not? I’ll be more than happy to share my knowledge of it. It all began many years ago during a period of my life when I went through a very rough patch. It was a time during which life tested me thoroughly, causing enormous physical, mental, and emotional pain. It was so overwhelming that I could not keep my wits intact; I lost all control and became very undisciplined. I found refuge in recreational eating and excessive smoking. Even though my alcohol intake was relatively low, the outcome was terrible. I put on a lot of weight, and one day my blood pressure shot up to an alarming level. What

followed next was that I was put on several tablets for blood pressure. In addition, I was advised to stop smoking, walk regularly, and eat discreetly.

I did all of that.

As a result, my blood pressure settled down, and a general sense of well-being followed. However, I could feel that even though these measures reduced my blood pressure and body weight, they seemed inadequate in restoring my health fully. I was not at ease with the constant feeling that, to become healthy again, I had to do more than just take the tablets. My curious, research-oriented nature came to my rescue, as it set me out on a quest to discover the secrets of Mother Nature that bestow upon us eternal health.

It is no surprise that they say, “Luck favors those who try.” When I began the quest, it led me to an incessant search, i.e., for weeks and months leading up to a couple of years, I read and listened to the leading scientists like, David Sinclair. In due course, when I discovered the health secrets of Mother Nature, I updated my beliefs and habits accordingly. Thereafter, I started applying them to myself. Consequently, Mother Nature rewarded me, and as a result, I am a healthy person today.

Out of gratitude, I want to share those ‘changes’ with people the secrets of Mother Nature entailed and how, using them, I have updated my beliefs and habits that transformed my health.

This journey has been quite fascinating, with more ups than downs because, as I began to follow them, I started to become truly healthy. I lost a lot of weight and, better yet, I could reduce my blood pressure medication. To that end, I still remember what my doctor, who was treating my blood pressure said to me when I asked him to reduce the medication: “You can never reduce these blood pressure medications because you are suffering from malignant hypertension.”

Ever since then, every day, I follow these health-restoring habits. Amazingly enough, even though updating these beliefs and habits appears to be a set of very simple tweaks to our daily routine, it has an unbelievable impact on our health. Now I understand why small changes bring big results when applied consistently. In addition, we must also follow the maxims of this book—one at a time—while updating and implementing these beliefs and habits. Friends, do you want to know more?”

“Yes, please!”

It is quite invigorating that all of them respond with a “yes.” It means they are serious about learning what to ‘change’ and how to do it!

“Okay friends, let us begin! In my clinic, I explain how to identify and update existing beliefs and habits using my own example. I take my patients through a day in my life,

explaining to them very briefly how and why I do what I do. This method makes the entire process simple and easy for everyone to understand. I think I should use the same method to explain the 'changes' to you as well. What do you say?"

"As you deem fit, doctor."

"Thank you friends! We will begin by analyzing our existing behavior, then we will deliberate on the important changes that we need to make in those behaviors, and thereafter, we will start with the 'change' of habits—such as the blue sky, Woxy, etc.

If we address these behavioral bottlenecks before we start to update our beliefs and habits, it will help us to persist despite the lack of results.

To further simplify, I have numbered these habits and listed them in the table of contents so that you can pick a particular habit that you want to 'change' first and work on it. This simple process will make the entire exercise easy and effective.

Let me begin with the first change: the concept of how to recognize your cookies and use them to fuel your motivation.

H1: Your Cookies

To get a head start, let us begin by counting our existing cookies.

As you start updating and applying the beliefs and habits, you may find that you are already following a few of them. And when you do, add them as the first few cookies to the cookie jar. For example:

- You already have the habit of walking for health in the morning.
- You already give due importance to maintaining quality relationships.

Friends, these are your initial few cookies—collect them and start enjoying the journey. After having done that, as you move forward, pick a new habit that you want to change or develop from the table of contents and start working on it. Once you can follow that habit for 21 days, add that practice as a new cookie to your cookie jar.

At the outset, this may appear to be a trivial exercise. However, since the compounding effect of small gains has a phenomenal long-term impact, you will feel its impact when your cookies start adding up because, as they do, they motivate you to keep going."

"How do we collect the cookies?"

"Maya, you do that by writing about the habit that you can follow successfully for more than 21 days. To do that, you may use a notebook and write it as a small note or add it to a mobile app like 'Notes'.

After we have learned about the importance of cookies, let us now reflect on how to get through the crucial ‘period of disappointment’.

H2: Period of Disappointment

Even after making a consistent effort, we get results only after a certain period. This duration—from starting to make an effort to the point when results start coming—is the latent period, which is very disappointing. Hence, do not try to measure the result in haste. Furthermore, this period is not only universal, but it also varies considerably—from person to person—and for different activities as well.

It is in our nature to feel happy when we get results, but the happiness vanishes the moment we start measuring the results. This disappointment due to a poor result can break your resolve and demotivate you from continuing.

A better strategy is to not look for gains in haste and, when they start to happen, not quantify them. Instead, you should be happy that the desired gains are small in the beginning because gradual change is healthy as it allows tissues to adapt. Besides, when you are happy with the gradual change, it will keep you motivated to continue.

Take a classic example: When we start pursuing a weight loss goal, some people lose only inches in the beginning, but if they remain satisfied with that and continue, eventually, even the grams on the scale start reducing. By following this strategy, we can overcome the latent period—the period of no result, also known as ‘the period of disappointment’.

Now that we have discussed how to deal with the period of disappointment, let us move on and reflect on a very critical behavioral tool—writing small details, getting a big impact.

H3: Measure It, to Improve It

In the beginning, if you make note of your body parameters, it will become easier for you to accurately assess your progress. You can make note of the following:

- Body weight
- Chest circumference
- Abdomen circumference at the navel
- Waist circumference
- Hip circumference
- Thigh circumference
- Blood pressure
- HbA1c, blood lipids, blood urea, and nitrogen

All these will be valuable data points to look back on to evaluate progress. Friends, other than its usefulness, you should also know these interesting facts about data:

- ‘Anything that can be measured can be improved.’
- W. Edwards Deming, an American statistician and management theorist, once said, "In God we trust, all others must bring data." However, I have a rather different take on this. According to me, "God can do without it, but if you want to be successful, look at the data."
- Even after knowing this, we are not able to develop the habit of collecting data because, as humans, even though we are curious and result-oriented, process following is not in our nature.
- Although process following has developed in some societies where generations have gone through the industrial revolution, necessitating them to follow the 9-to-5 job culture, in most other societies, process-following is still almost non-existent.
- Because neuroplasticity—a capacity to learn anything new—starts reducing after seven years of age, in later life we have to repeat an action several times to learn a new habit. Therefore, developing the habit of collecting data will require discipline and repetition.
- To collect data, please use a small notebook and a pencil."

"Why should we use a notebook and pencil for collecting data? Is there any particular reason?"

"Abdul, I can think of a few reasons for using a notebook and pencil to take notes:

- You can carry them anywhere in your pocket or a small bag.
- It is very easy to use them.
- In the beginning, when you start the practice of writing notes, small mistakes will happen. If you use a notebook and a pencil because you know you can erase and rewrite, you will attempt to write more freely. After all, it is a process of self-examination—it is hard in the beginning!



- Next, when you erase a mistake in writing and subsequently rewrite it correctly, you develop the habit of accepting your mistakes and making an effort to correct them. It seems unimportant when viewed casually, but on second thought, you will know

how transformational this could be in the long run. Doesn't that seem like a good habit to cement, Maya?

- Besides, the mechanical effect of erasing and rewriting using paper and pencil will have a strong impact on our habit formation—while writing, the brain will register the sensation of the hand's skin and small muscles, along with the emotions associated with making and correcting mistakes. In comparison, deleting and typing on a computer or a mobile device will not have such an effect."

"Jane, do you agree with the idea of using a notebook and pencil to make notes?"

"Yes, Abdul, I do. I even think using a notebook is a good idea. Because it is a lot easier, we can carry it in our pocket or in a gym bag to make a quick note. And I also believe that, if it is not easy, it is unlikely to stick and develop as a habit."

"Abdul, Jane, Even though alternatively you might consider using your smartphone, particularly when you are outdoors, remember the fact that using a smartphone can make you procrastinate. Hence, when you are in your saddle (at work or home), try to use paper and pencil.

Friends, before concluding today's session, let us look at how pleasure and happiness influence our lives by pondering the differences between the two. Following that, we will very briefly touch upon the important time points of the day.

H4: Pleasure Kills but Happiness Builds

To do that, let us reflect on our perpetual preoccupation—the desire to feel nice. As human beings, we want to be in a constant state of feeling nice. For this reason, we keep pursuing it unabatedly by engaging in activities such as eating, drinking, smoking, reading, walking, etc.

Roberto, even though these activities make us feel nice, there are important differences in their functioning and the way they affect us—mentally, physically, and socially. To understand that, let me begin by dividing the sensation of feeling nice into two technical categories: 'Pleasure' and 'Happiness'.

Let us deliberate on 'Pleasure' first.

- The neurotransmitter dopamine mediates the pleasure sensation.
- Pleasure is easy to get.
- It is short-lived.
- It is produced by consuming physical materials, which are invariably detrimental to health.
- It stops as soon as we finish the act; hence, we need to keep repeating it. As a consequence, it tends to develop into an addiction.

- Examples: eating, drinking, smoking, etc.

Happiness, on the other hand, operates differently.

- The neurotransmitter serotonin mediates it.
- It tends to last longer—the effect continues even after we stop the activity that triggers it.
- Examples: planting, reading, walking, exercising, etc. We continue to feel happy even after we stop reading a book or even after we have finished planting a sapling as part of a reforestation drive.”

“Doctor, why should we prefer happiness over pleasure?”

“Suzuki, when we indulge in pleasure-seeking activities, we often end up becoming addicted to them. That, my friend, invariably leads to suffering. For example, eating ice cream daily can cause weight gain and diabetes, while smoking and drinking cause serious diseases like cancer that kill.

On the other hand, there is no such thing as an addiction to happiness. Rather, they are revered as habits that build. For example, reading habits, exercising habits, etc. Besides, most activities that make us happy also make us healthy.

To keep enjoying good health, along with following the updated beliefs and habits, we must strike a balance between pleasure and happiness in our lives. You can do that by remembering to perform at least one activity every day that brings happiness, such as reading a good book, performing an aerobic activity, talking to a friend, etc.

Friends, it is no surprise that a happiness-driven way of life is healthier.

Let me end today’s session by introducing Dr. Tibrewal’s clock and sharing a few details about the sessions that you will be attending tomorrow.

Dr. Tibrewal’s Clock

When I conceptualized the idea of writing ‘One at a Time’, I needed to showcase my 24-hour routine—Dr. Tibrewal’s clock is the invention of that necessity. The design of this clock is unique for two reasons. One, it gives you a precise orientation of twenty-four hours. Because, unlike other clocks, in Dr. Tibrewal’s clock, there is no overlapping of morning and evening hours. For example, there is a specific space to show both: 06:00 a.m. and 06:00 p.m. Two, by orienting your time on the block of space displayed for each hour of the day on the clock, it helps you feel the passage of each wakeful hour.

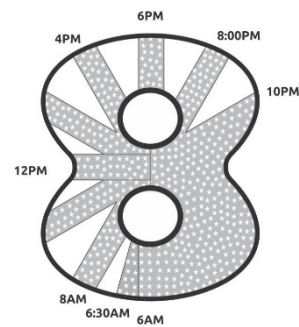
There are eight time-points on the 24-hour timeline depicted on Dr. Tibrewal's clock. At each of these time points, the listed beliefs and habits are mounted, which you will learn about in the next eight sessions.

These are indicative time points. You can adjust them according to your convenience—except for 06:00 a.m. and 06:00 p.m.

After designing it, I applied for and got an intellectual property right—© 2023, Dr. Deepak K. Tibrewal on the design.

The time points are:

- 06:00 AM
- 06:30 AM
- 08:00 AM
- 12:00 PM
- 04:00 PM
- 06:00 PM
- 08:00 PM
- 10:00 PM



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Friends, tomorrow is the first of the eight sessions spread over eight mornings, where we will discuss how getting up with the sun, and owning your morning can transform your health.

The To-Do List

Collect Data

It is an essential exercise to observe and make note of the following in the beginning, as it collects information that serves as a reference point to analyze the progress later.

- Body weight
- Chest circumference
- Abdomen circumference at the navel
- Waist circumference
- Hip circumference
- Thigh circumference
- Blood pressure
- HbA1c, blood lipids, blood urea, and nitrogen.

Low-Hanging Fruits

Friends, if you begin by taking the following steps, it becomes easier to continue your quest to become healthy and prevent diseases:

- When you start to take note of and write about your existing health-promoting habits, it is a good beginning.,
- When you do not buy new clothes just because old ones have become tight, that is a good step in the right direction.
- When the clothes start to fit better even though the weight seems constant, treat it as a remarkable 'change' and a new cookie for your cookie jar.
- When you develop the habit of measuring your parameters regularly, such a habit is worthy of being treated as a cookie for your jar."

We stop at this point, as they don't want to be late for their session at the health retreat. I, too, feel that it is getting late. The sun has ascended higher in the sky. After they leave, but not before making a promise to come back tomorrow to continue, I sit down on the bench and practice mindful breathing for 10 minutes. Thereafter, as I am walking back to my hotel, I start preparing a mind map of the healthy activities performed in the morning, such as rising with the sun, drinking water before leaving the bed, and answering nature's call, that I want to discuss tomorrow. With these thoughts in mind, I feel both happy and excited as I am thinking to myself—like so many of my patients, upon updating and following their beliefs and habits, these friends will also be able to transform their health.