

## EXECUTIVE VITALITY: MIND-BODY CONNECTION

We are believers in the mind-body connection. Each affects the other—no way around it. Therefore, we thought it would be useful to seek out some information from a specialist in holistic medicine. We sought advice from functional medicine doctor, Robert Hedaya, M.D., who takes a holistic physiological and psychosocial approach to health and mental health. We asked what, in his opinion, might be some controllable factors that could enhance your work performance. We thought you might be interested in what he had to say.

According to Dr. Hedaya ([www.wholepsychiatry.com](http://www.wholepsychiatry.com)), any or all of following action steps, if tried for two weeks in conjunction with an accountability partner, such as a coach, may result in an uptick in your vitality.

**Underlying Rationale:** Dr. Hedaya points out that the brain has more immune cells than neurons and that brain cells react to inflammatory processes in the body, such as infection and digestive disorders. Once affected, these cells change the action of neurotransmitters as well as the levels of hormones such as melatonin (sleep) and cortisol (stress response).

**Action Step:** Ask your doctor to measure some hormones levels and your inflammation markers. Then, cut out wheat, dairy, and sugar for two weeks. Add a probiotic such as Culturelle ([www.culturelle.com](http://www.culturelle.com)) or Align ([www.alinggi.com](http://www.alinggi.com)).

**Underlying Rationale:** Dr. Hedaya says that specific nutrients are known to turn on and turn off certain genes. This means that your grandparents' nutrition and their stress levels years before they ever conceived your parents shape the expression of your brain function and mental health decades later.

**Action Step:** Get lab tests to determine your levels of basic nutrients such as essential fatty acids, B vitamins, and amino acids.

**Underlying Rationale:** Dr. Hedaya notes that the same physiological systems are at the root of both mental health and chronic illnesses (e.g., diabetes, heart disease) and that therefore people who have diabetes are much more likely to also have a psychiatric disorder such as depression. Memory, mood, cognition, and drive are all seen as subject to the condition of one's physiology.

**Action Step:** Do a good deed every day. Good deeds release the “feel-good” hormones. Think “systemic self-care”: maintain a consistent sleep cycle; nap for 20 minutes between 12:00 PM and 3:00 PM; limit stimulants like coffee to the morning; have only one alcoholic beverage a day, or none.

We agree that good health has great downstream benefits. You may want to think about taking an approach similar to any of the above. If you do, we would suggest the following:

- Measure again after any intervention.
- To supplement any clinical measurements, keep a journal. How are you sleeping as you make these changes? What is your response to stress? Have you seen changes?

- Talk to your physician and perhaps a nutritionist about any clinical tests to understand the implications and what you can do to influence those levels.

*What can you do today that will both improve your health and your ability to be top-notch in your job? Are there any controllable factors that may be making it harder for you to succeed than is necessary?*