

# Why We Need a Revolution

*First, let's check out the definition:*

*rev-o-lu-tion<sup>1</sup>*

- 1 a: a sudden, radical, or complete change***
- b: a fundamental change in political organization***
- c: activity or movement designed to effect fundamental changes in the socioeconomic situation***
- d: a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualizing something : a change of paradigm <the Copernican revolution>***
- e: a changeover in use or preference esp. in technology <the computer revolution> <the foreign car revolution>***

**T**he seventeenth-century English writer John Milton saw revolution as the right of society to defend itself against abusive tyrants—creating a new order that reflected the needs of the people. To Milton, revolution was the means of accomplishing freedom.<sup>2</sup>

The eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant believed in revolution as a force for the advancement of humankind—a “natural” step in the realization of a higher ethical foundation for society.<sup>3</sup>

The nineteenth-century German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel saw revolutions as the fulfillment of human destiny, and he saw revolutionary leaders as necessary to instigate and implement reforms.<sup>4</sup>

These insights aptly apply to the wellness revolution.

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**Entrepreneurs and revolutionaries are really the same kinds of people born into different circumstances. Both see the status quo in need of change, and both**

**are willing to take the risks, and reap the rewards, of changing it.**

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The emerging wellness industry is as much a reaction to the tyranny of the sickness and the food industries as it is to every person's desire for the freedom wellness offers. Wellness is the next natural step forward in our destiny and in the advancement of humankind. By extending your years of strength and wellness, you can accomplish those things you want to accomplish.

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**The revolutionary leaders in wellness are the entrepreneurs who grow and procreate wellness, the inventors who instigate wellness services and products, and the practitioners and distributors who carry the wellness message throughout society. Take your pick of how you want to be a leader of this new industry.**

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Revolutions and entrepreneurial journeys often begin with an epiphany—an illuminating discovery by an individual that typically sets him or her out on a quest. For everyone, this trigger will be different. For you, it could be what you learn from this book, or it could be a sickness experience—your own or that of a loved one—that could have been prevented. My epiphany occurred during a speech I was giving in 1996.

## **How Wellness Became My Cause**

When I was growing up in the 1950s, economic issues seemed to dominate 95 percent of our waking lives. My father left for work at 5:30 A.M. and returned home after dinner, just as my mother was putting my brother and me to bed. He did this six days a week. All our neighbors and relatives lived a similar existence, except those unlucky enough to be out of work. And, although everyone talked mostly about economic issues (how to make money, where to find work, etc.), no one seemed to have solutions for how to achieve economic success. This is why I became an economist, to find these solutions—solutions to what then seemed to be the most important problems facing my society.<sup>5</sup>

Twenty-five years later, while giving a speech in the Midwest, I realized that I was now in the wrong profession.

It was Saturday, September 7, 1996, at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. I was getting ready to go onstage as the keynote

speaker before 45,000 people to discuss my latest book, *God Wants You to Be Rich*. My speaking fee had just been handed to me in a sealed envelope—more money for a 45-minute speech than I used to make in a full year when I graduated from Wharton and started working at Citibank.

I should have been elated. But instead I felt guilty. As I watched the audience file into the stadium and began my speech, I felt as if I were about to rip them off.

Like much of America, half of the audience was unhealthy and overweight, a direct consequence of diet and lifestyle evidenced by the fatigued look on their faces and the size of their waistlines. Nothing I was about to say about economics was going to improve the quality of their lives until they first learned how to care for their bodies.

A strange urge seized me to scrap my prepared speech and tell my audience that good health was more important than any riches they might acquire, but I chickened out. I didn't want to offend my hosts. And truthfully, I didn't know back then what actions would allow most people to take control of their health.

On the flight home early the next morning I began to wrestle with this question: Why would intelligent people spend time and money to improve their lives in every area *except* the one in which they most obviously needed improvement? And, more significant, what should a person who is unhealthy and overweight do to begin taking control of their life?

## **Why We Need a Revolution: Two Nations Divided by Great Want<sup>6</sup>**

I arrived in Los Angeles around 10 A.M. that Sunday morning and rushed to Pacific Palisades to meet the contractor who was renovating our family beach house. As we stood outside discussing the construction, neighbors jogged or biked by on their way to the beach. I was struck by how fit and healthy everyone appeared. Compared to some of the people I had just seen in Indianapolis, these neighbors seemed to be inhabitants of a different planet.

That week, as I began the research that led to this book, I became excited about why an economist needed to write about health and weight.

I quickly discovered that the major reason so many people are unhealthy and obese has more to do with economics than with biology.

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**Incredibly powerful economic forces are preventing people from taking control of their health and actually *encouraging* them to gain weight—forces so powerful that nothing short of a revolution will be able to stop them.**

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For many individuals, it may be impossible to take control of their health until they first understand the \$1 trillion food and \$1.5 trillion medical industries that represent a quarter of our national economy.

I discovered that the effects of obesity and poor health go far beyond a person's mere appearance. In our new millennium we have replaced racial and gender discrimination with a new kind of discrimination based on a person's weight and appearance. Whereas in the past poverty was associated with thinness and obesity with wealth, most people who are overweight today occupy the lower rungs of the economic ladder. *Rich fat man* has become an oxymoron, and *poor* and *fat* have become synonymous.

Incredibly, despite the fact that we are enjoying the greatest economic prosperity ever known to humankind, 61 percent of the U.S. population is overweight, and a staggering 27 percent are clinically obese. Both of these figures increased 10 percent in just five years (from 1994 to 1999), and obesity has almost doubled since the 1970s.<sup>7</sup>

Weight and appearance now define social and economic opportunities just as family name and birth did in the nineteenth century. When a person is fat—not just 15 pounds overweight, but clinically obese—it is hard to find a job, a relationship, or the energy to stay on top of the everyday demands of even a simple life.

Even most people of normal weight are unhealthy, although they often don't know it. Modern medicine tells them to accept headaches, stomach distress, body pain, fatigue, arthritis, and thousands of other common ailments as inevitable symptoms that afflict an aging population. Yet these ailments, like being overweight and obesity, are the direct result of a terrible diet.

## **How Economics Perpetuates Obesity and Malnutrition**

Economics is largely to blame for this state of affairs. A powerful trillion dollar food industry bombards us with messages calculated to make us eat more and more of the worst possible food.

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**Understanding how the food industry works today is critically important for entrepreneurs wanting to lead and/or participate in the wellness revolution.**

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Packaged food companies, such as General Foods and Procter & Gamble, employ some of the best and brightest minds to study customer psychology and demographics. In trying to decide what sorts of foods to sell us, they invariably apply one of the great unwritten laws of marketing: It is easier to sell more product to an existing customer than to sell that same product to a new customer. In other words, it is easier to influence a regular customer to eat four additional bags of potato chips per month than it is to persuade a new customer, who may never have tasted potato chips, to buy even one bag of this exotic new substance.

Most processed food sales, products such as Hostess Twinkies, Oreo cookies, and McDonald's Happy Meals,<sup>8</sup> are governed by what those in the business call a "potato chip marketing equation." According to this law, more than 90 percent of product sales are made to less than 10 percent of their customers. In the case of processed foods, that coveted 10 percent consists largely of people weighing more than 200 pounds and earning less than \$25,000 per year. The targeting of overweight customers is especially lucrative since these unfortunate individuals typically consume twice the amount per serving as a person of normal weight.

Each company studies its 10 percent, known as the *target market*, like rats in a laboratory. Customer surveys reveal their likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, heroes, and desires. High-consumption customers are recruited to take part in focus groups, where they are asked to sample new products, view advertising, and offer opinions.

No expense is spared to hit every psychological button that matters to the target market. If people in that market like a particular actor or singer, that very celebrity will soon appear on radio or television, praising the product. If a certain look, feel, or lifestyle appeals to people in that market, legions of stylists and designers will descend on the studio to simulate it. Like a deer caught in the telescopic sight of a hunter at close range, the target never has a chance.

At times, the ruthlessness of the process troubles the consciences of the \$200,000-per-year marketing executives in charge of it. Some actually refuse to attend their own focus groups. Rather than confront their future victims in person, they prefer to review tran-

scripts in the safety of their offices. Imagine the table talk in the homes of such executives. “Today, I met ten 200-pound women who barely had the energy to participate in the group,” they might report to their families over dinner. “If my team can get each of them up to 210 pounds by April by increasing their consumption of our potato chips, we’ll make our first-quarter sales numbers and I’ll get the bonus we need to take that vacation in Barbados.”

This executive is probably eating a healthy meal, even as he speaks these words.

One of the great scandals of the junk-food culture is the extent to which its most enthusiastic promoters personally avoid the very products they are pushing. Moreover, many of the emotional and medical challenges some people face today, from controlling one’s temper to depression to cancer, are as much products of these junk-food companies as are frozen pizza and low-fat cookies.

These food companies do something even worse than targeting lower-income, unhealthy, overweight consumers for their products. Once the target actually tries the product and becomes a customer, company chemists ensure they will never be satisfied with eating just a healthy amount of it.

Say, for example, I give you an apple, a banana, a stalk of asparagus, or almost any food in its natural state. After eating two or three apples or bananas, your body begins craving a different type of food as the pleasure you feel in your taste buds lessens with each bite. But if I give you a chocolate bar, a McDonald’s french fry, a can of cola, or almost any other item of processed food, you almost always crave more and more of the same item because the chemical flavorings have been altered to ensure that “nobody can eat just one” of them. This chemical alteration causes great overconsumption, promoting obesity and destroying the natural tendency of our taste buds to seek variety in what we eat.<sup>9</sup>

The human body requires a daily intake of 13 essential vitamins,<sup>10</sup> most of which the body cannot manufacture on its own. These vitamins, along with certain minerals, are necessary to sustain the millions of chemical reactions our bodies perform each day. Eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the day gives us all of what we need, and our bodies are naturally programmed to seek out the different types of natural foods we require. But, the majority of Americans are not getting the minimal amount of these vitamins and minerals that their bodies require because of the chemical alteration of the processed and fast foods they consume.<sup>11</sup>

Over the short term, these deficiencies manifest themselves as mood swings, lack of energy, joint pain, failing eyesight, hearing loss, and thousands of other ailments that medical science tells us

to accept with advancing age. Over the long term, these deficiencies cause major illnesses like cancer and heart disease.

In the twentieth century, U.S. tobacco companies altered the chemical composition of their products to increase consumption—creating lifelong customers by getting children addicted to specific brands of processed tobacco. Recent legislation has forced Big Tobacco to curb some of these activities when it comes to promoting cigarettes, but they are not letting their acquired expertise go to waste—they have been purchasing the major brands of addictive processed foods. In 2001, Philip Morris, the world's largest tobacco company, purchased some of the most popular children's processed-food brands, including Oreo cookies, Ritz crackers, and Life Savers candies.<sup>12</sup> This makes Philip Morris, which produces everything from Oscar Mayer bacon to Post cereals to Philadelphia cream cheese, the world's second largest food company after Nestlé, Inc.<sup>13</sup>

## How Economics Perpetuates Sickness

As my research led me to the medical industry, I encountered large multinational companies whose nefarious practices made those of the food companies pale by comparison. It quickly became apparent to me why an economist needed to write about obtaining good medical care along with how to obtain food for a healthy lifestyle.

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**Understanding how the medical (i.e., “sickness”) industry works today is critically important for entrepreneurs wanting to lead and/or participate in the wellness revolution.**

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When patients go to see a physician, they believe they are receiving a prescription for the best drug or treatment available for their specific ailment. Not likely.

Just as obese consumers are the target market of the food companies, physicians are the target market of the medical and pharmaceutical companies. Patients receive the drug or treatment that is most profitable for the supplier of the treatment, the health insurance company, and, in some cases, even the individual physician. This may or may not represent the best medical treatment available. In the United States, doctors typically prescribe completely different treatments for the same ailment depending on which drug company has the dominant market share in their region.

Medical technology and pharmaceuticals change so fast today that what physicians learn in medical school is often obsolete by the time they graduate. In practice, doctors learn about new drugs and treatments from a special type of salesperson, called a *detail person* in the medical industry. Detail person is actually a euphemism for “a very attractive, highly paid young person of the opposite sex.” Detail people lavishly hand out free samples and handsomely reward physicians and their staff in proportion to the amount of prescriptions they write for their company’s product. Physicians and their families receive expensive dinners, cruises, and tax-free trips to resorts, where they “learn” more about such products at taxpayers’ expense.

Although the ethical (prescription) pharmaceutical companies around the world justify the very high prices of their drugs by citing the high cost of research and development, drug companies actually spend much more money marketing drugs than they do on research and development. Moreover, a considerable amount of the research and development that leads to the creation of new drugs is funded by the federal government through grants to nonprofit entities such as research labs at universities and medical schools and the National Institutes of Health.

When your wellness customers pay staggering prices for prescription drugs, they are also paying for the marketing campaign that successfully induced the doctor to check the box on the prescription form that reads “DAW”—*dispense as written*, meaning the prescription will be the more expensive name brand rather than the cheaper generic that is available for about 90 percent of all prescriptions. Drug company profits often come from outdated name-brand drugs taken on an ongoing basis by patients prescribed years before when they first developed the condition. Prescription drug companies limit informing customers and physicians of improved products in cases where they could lose existing customers to competitive brands when patients visit their doctors for revised prescriptions. Generic drugs are sometimes safer or better than the brand-name products they replace because they have been prescribed more recently and thus contain improved formulas.

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**There are enormous business opportunities in educating consumers about the prescription drugs they are already taking: how to obtain alternative prescription drugs that are more effective, less expensive, have fewer side effects, or all three.**

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In recent years the pharmaceutical companies have hired the same advertising firms as the food companies and have begun direct image-based advertising to consumers. In these advertisements for prescription-only items that may be legally dispensed only on the written recommendation of a doctor, the patient is *directly* urged to demand the product and told to “ask your doctor” for a DAW prescription—with the knowledge that if the doctor refuses to write the prescription, the presold patient will simply find another doctor who will.

Sadly, most physicians have become “technology dispensers” for the products and services of the large multinational medical companies—companies that always seem to tip the scale between profits and patients in favor of profits.

These practices have pushed the price for U.S. drugs so high that patients cannot afford to fill approximately 22 percent of the prescriptions written each year. Prescription drugs now represent the single largest monthly expense for most over-65 U.S. citizens, approximately \$300 per month, and millions of people are forced to make the terrible choice between purchasing food or medicine. Medicare pays for doctor visits but generally does not pay for prescriptions.<sup>14</sup>

This and hundreds of other examples are symptoms of the two underlying problems with medical care in the developed world today—both of which are almost entirely economic rather than scientific.

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- 1. It is more profitable for medical suppliers to produce products consumers use for the rest of their lives than to make products that a consumer might use only once. Invariably, *this means spending research and development funds on products that treat the symptoms of diseases rather than the causes or the cures.***
  - 2. The third parties paying for most medical treatments—insurance companies and, ultimately, employers—do not have a long-term financial stake in the health of their employees. Individuals bear little or no direct responsibility for their medical expenses, and almost all expenses to prevent illness (e.g., exercise, vitamins, nutritional supplements) are disallowed for reimbursement.**
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As I discuss in Chapter 6, the American health insurance system is really a disguised payment and discounting mechanism designed to extract the most out of those who can often afford the least.

## No Solution in Sight

The more I pursued my research, the more distressed I became that there might not be a solution to this plague of obesity and ill health that afflicted the majority of our population.

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**Although there was obviously no direct conspiracy between the \$1 trillion food industry (which causes most of the problems) and the \$1.5 trillion medical industry (that treats just enough of the symptoms to get the target consumers back to work and consumption), the economic effect was the same as if these two industries were conspiring against the American consumer in the most sinister fashion.**

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On a microeconomic level, each time consumers got real information that could help them take control of their health, the food and medical industries, acting in their own economic self-interest, manipulated this information against them.

For example, prior to 1990, consumers were told that eating too many calories caused obesity. When the public became aware that the amount of fat in their diets was a major cause of obesity, the food industry reacted with enticing low- and nonfat foods, advertising that consumers could now eat as much as they want without gaining weight. The food industry went so far as to repackage many products that *never* had fat in them, like sugarcoated candies and pretzels, to suggest that they had created new, healthy, nonfat versions of these products.

What their massive advertising didn't tell consumers was that these low- and nonfat products had extremely high levels of sugar and carbohydrates, which turn to fat once ingested into the body, not to mention more addictive chemicals that made them worse in the long run than the "fattening" products they replaced. Throughout the 1990s, obesity, as well as the sales of low- and nonfat foods, steadily increased.

On a macroeconomic level, it seemed as if there would be no escape.

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**When it comes to attempting to control our federal, state, and local governments, the food and medical companies follow their own Golden Rule: He with the gold makes the rules.**

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Lobbyists for the food industries have created mandatory school lunch and milk programs that hook children on addictive processed foods. Pharmaceutical companies have helped create government-sponsored programs that put millions of children on dangerous drugs to combat the effects of their terrible diets. In some cases, such as when Ritalin is used to control hyperactive children, parents are threatened with losing custody of their own children if they refuse to force them to take such drugs for alleged disorders.<sup>15</sup>

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, originally designed to protect consumers from unhealthy products, now often protects the very companies it is supposed to regulate by keeping out competition and prolonging the economic life of the drug companies' government-sanctioned patents.

Typically the news media, acting in its own self-interest for publicity and ratings, leads society in exposing such heinous activities. But in this case the media is all too often ineffective. As consumers themselves, the members of the media are subject to the same disinformation and thus largely unaware of the problem. Moreover, a major funding source for the media—especially network television advertising revenue—comes from food and drug companies.

For example, the detrimental health effect of drinking cow milk has been widely known for years in the medical community but has rarely been covered by the media, which reaps fortunes each year running ads for the American Dairy Association. Imagine the hypocrisy of celebrities who sport milk mustaches in paid advertisements but themselves drink only soy-based milk products.

The scandal of these celebrities goes even deeper than endorsing products that they would never consume themselves. Leading actors, singers, and models make literally millions of dollars each year on their looks. Most of them lean toward vegetarian diets lacking in processed and addictive fast foods. Yet these societal role models for fitness and beauty are cautioned by their managers not to let their elite dining habits become known to the press, lest they be boycotted by television producers in an industry where most of the revenue comes from advertisements for processed foods and fast-food restaurants.

Despite the fact that many young people admire them for more

than just their professional talents, celebrities today have learned not to take positions on controversial issues that could affect their careers. As one Hollywood manager once told me, no one wants to become the “Jane Fonda of healthy eating”—referring to the talented actress who was boycotted by some theatergoers in the 1970s because of her controversial left-wing political views.\*

In a free-enterprise system, when people want something that can’t be provided by profit-seeking entities, they typically turn to government (“the provider of last resort”) for assistance. This worked well in the 1970s, when consumers demanded that government restrict the actions of businesses that were destroying the environment.

But in this case, government seems helpless. Like the media, our elected officials are consumers who are subject to the same disinformation and thus unaware of the health issues. Take a look at the waistlines and the diets of most politicians if you want to know what they think of food and health! Our politicians have been effectively controlled by the food and drug companies for so long that our government is now a large part of the problem rather than poised to be part of a solution.

It seems incredible to me that although we won the cold war and democratic ideals are more universally cherished than ever before in history, we also must admit that half of our people have become personally enslaved to a lifestyle that limits their daily lives, dreams, and happiness as much as would any authoritative government or dictatorship.

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**The thousands of companies that comprise the \$1 trillion U.S. food industry and the \$1.5 trillion U.S. medical industry are governed by universal laws of economics that cause them to act in concert as though they were part of a vast nefarious conspiracy.**

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While I was conducting most of my research, between 1996 and 2000, the percent of the U.S. population who are overweight and obese increased by an additional 10 percent, to 27 percent obese

\*One notable exception is the talented Alicia Silverstone (born in 1976), star of *Clueless* (1995), *Batman & Robin* (1997), and 13 other major films. Although there are many famous vegetarian actors (Brad Pitt, Kim Basinger, Richard Gere, Alec Baldwin, Drew Barrymore, Paul Newman, Liv Tyler, William Shatner, David Duchovny, Daryl Hannah, Dustin Hoffman), Ms. Silverstone, to the detriment of her career, is one who consistently uses her celebrity status against the dairy and processed food lobbies in trying to teach healthy eating to her young fans.

and 61 percent overweight, and medical costs rose from \$1.0 to \$1.5 trillion. It became depressing to me to think of these numbers in terms of human suffering—77 million Americans clinically obese and 184 million overweight and unhealthy because they lacked the resources, information, and motivation to safeguard their most precious asset: their wellness.

It seemed only a question of time before virtually everyone in the United States would be overweight, and more than half of the population would be obese and unhealthy. I decided to take a closer look at the healthy, nonoverweight 39 percent of the U.S. population to see how much time we had left.

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**When I began examining the 39 percent of our population that was not overweight, I stumbled across the seeds of the revolution about to take place.**

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## **An Economic Solution to an Economic Problem**

When I looked closer at the nonoverweight 39 percent of the population, I found a growing group of millions of Americans who are eating and living healthier than ever before in history. This wellness-based group includes most of the movers and shakers in our society as well as celebrities who literally make their living on how they look. This group has quietly embraced a revolutionary new approach—to diet, to exercise, to vitamins, to nutritional supplements, to medical care, and, most important, to the aging process itself.

In ancient Greece, physical strength, health, and beauty were just as central to one's *arete*, or "excellence," as were creative talents, intellect, industriousness, or moral character. Indeed, outward beauty was believed to reflect the beauty within. For obvious reasons, the people today most dedicated to *arete* are the "professionally beautiful," those people who economically depend on maintaining their health and appearance. Movie stars, talk show hosts, entertainment professionals, and many leading business executives inhabit a secret world in which the physical fundamentals of life (food, exercise, vitamins, nutritional supplements, medical care, and aging) are seen from a perspective radically different than that of most human beings.

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**To the wellness elite, each act of apparent pain or denial, from sessions with their personal trainers to**

**navigating through menus at exclusive restaurants, is a positive, almost religious experience.**

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These people focus on how they will feel hours later *because* of each laborious exercise, or they focus on how much stronger they will feel that evening *because* of what they are not eating for lunch or dinner. Thus, what may seem painful to others becomes to them a euphoric experience with its own almost immediate rewards.

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**At first I thought that this revolutionary way of forward thinking about the impact of food on your health might be only a Hollywood or West Los Angeles phenomenon. But further research quickly showed this to be a world-wide movement with revolutionaries throughout the globe.**

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The reason is simple. Everyone, no matter how healthy or fit, wants to be even healthier and more fit. Everyone wants to look and feel more youthful. However, until recently, there was very little anyone could do to obtain efficacious wellness services and products. Until now, the few wellness products and services available were affordable only by the very rich. Now that they are becoming widely available and affordable, entrepreneurs are rushing in to provide wellness products and services to a delighted public—creating an economic solution to what is essentially an economic problem.

When I was growing up, mealtime conversation seemed to center around personal economic issues. Today, mealtime conversation is becoming more and more centered around wellness issues—which foods to eat, which supplements to take, how to exercise, and how to avoid getting sick and to limit the effects of age. This is only the beginning of a huge new wave of wellness.

## **The First \$200 Billion**

When I began the research that led to this book, I had two objectives in mind: (1) exposing the nefarious practices of the food and medical industries and (2) teaching people the correct choices to make in order to be healthy and obtain good medical care. Explaining a new business opportunity that would allow people to make money was not one of my objectives.

The more my research progressed into obesity and sickness, the

more upset I became with the status quo. The more upset I became, the more I felt that nothing short of a revolution was needed in the way we think about health, eating, and the practice of medicine. I could see that this revolution might eventually take place, but the most surprising part of my initial research was how far the revolution had already progressed.

**The nascent wellness industry today encompasses some of the following businesses:**

**Vitamins**

**Nutritional supplements**

**Cosmetic plastic surgery**

**Voluntary eye surgery (LASIK™, radial keratotomy)**

**Cosmetic dermatology**

**Genetic engineering (sex selection and fertility enhancement)**

**Cosmetic and reconstructive dentistry (caps, implants)**

**Preventative medicine**

**Medical Savings Accounts**

**High-deductible (wellness) health insurance**

**Fitness clubs (including trainers)**

**Fitness and athletic equipment**

**Voluntary pharmacy: Viagra (for impotence), Rogaine (for hair growth)**

**Health food products**

**Health food restaurants**

**Weight loss products**

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**Although most of these businesses did not exist at an economically significant level just two or three decades ago, by 2000 they already totaled approximately \$200 billion in annual sales, about half the amount spent to purchase U.S. automobiles.<sup>16</sup>**

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When I saw that wellness had already achieved sales of this magnitude, I knew that the wellness industry had already jumped far

beyond being products for only the wealthy or the “professionally beautiful.” I began to focus on which segments of our society were consuming most of this \$200 billion and on the potential demand for future consumption.

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**It became apparent that wellness would reach sales of \$1 trillion or more over the next 10 years and that wellness would be the industry in which the greatest fortunes of the new century would be created—fortunes eclipsing even those of the Internet billionaires of the late 1990s.**

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However, before we examine in the next chapter why this is so and where the wellness industry is headed, it is important to understand where the wellness industry has been and why the concept of wellness has come so late to our food and medical industries. The wellness industry really began when entrepreneurs were legally allowed to explain the benefits of their products and services in the late 1970s.

Our wellness industry today exists in large part thanks to a historic battle won in the 1970s by the greatest wellness revolutionary of our time: the late J. I. Rodale, founder of *Prevention* magazine and Rodale Press (*Men’s Health*, *Runners World*).

## **How Rodale Paved the Way for the Wellness Revolution**

In 1954, entrepreneur and author J. I. Rodale had a lot to lose. His company, Rodale Press, was just getting his fledgling *Prevention* magazine off the ground. *Prevention* was dedicated to teaching readers how to prevent disease versus just treating the symptoms of disease.

Rodale had concluded that eating large quantities of red meat and dairy products dramatically increased the risk of heart disease and that physical activity actually decreased the risk of having a heart attack. This was at a time when the U.S. government was spending millions encouraging Americans to eat more red meat and dairy products at every meal, three meals a day. Doctors were telling patients with heart disease to reduce or eliminate physical activity entirely. No wonder heart disease was the leading cause of death in the United States!

Rodale wrote about his new findings in two books: *How to Eat for a Healthy Heart* and *This Pace Is Not Killing Us*. He was con-

vinced that this information could save millions of lives. But, like many writers in the 1950s, he was not on an approved list drawn up by Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee, so his publisher refused to publish his new books.

This situation forced Rodale to print the books himself and try to sell them through bookstores along with his other Rodale publications. But many booksellers refused to distribute his new books. Undaunted and convinced that the public needed this information as soon as possible, Rodale took full-page advertisements in national publications and offered his new books via mail order at a special price.

The Federal Trade Commission ordered Rodale to stop advertising and selling the books, claiming that the medical advice given in his books was unsubstantiated. The FTC had successfully taken similar action against other publishers who had promulgated then-unconventional medical advice.<sup>17</sup>

Rodale was furious! He felt that the FTC action was a blatant violation of the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of the press.

The FTC scheduled hearings in 1955 at which Rodale was ordered to present proof that people who purchased the books and followed their advice would, indeed, reduce their risk of heart disease. Rodale refused to attend, claiming that the First Amendment gave him the right to publish any information he wanted, regardless of its efficacy.<sup>18</sup>

At these hearings, the nation's most respected medical professionals testified that (1) there was no correlation between heart disease and eating large quantities of red meat and dairy products and (2) following Rodale's advice on increasing physical activity to avoid heart disease could be injurious, if not fatal. The FTC ordered Rodale to "cease and desist" from claiming, directly or indirectly, that readers of any of his publications would improve their health.<sup>19</sup>

Rodale appealed the case, mainly on the grounds that the First Amendment prohibited the FTC from regulating information-based products. His legal battles with the federal government dragged on for almost two decades, at times putting his entire personal net worth at risk. Over the years, the FTC, fearing that they would lose their case on constitutional grounds, attempted to settle with Rodale. But despite financial hardship, Rodale refused to back down unless the FTC agreed to acknowledge that the First Amendment prohibited them from regulating books and printed material.

In the later years of the case, Rodale's lawyers introduced new

testimony from some of the same leading medical experts that the government originally used at the initial FTC hearings almost 20 years earlier. One by one, these “experts” refuted their original testimony, claiming they “didn’t know back then,” and admitted that many of Rodale’s original claims had since become established medical facts. Rodale felt that there could never be a better example of what our Founding Fathers had in mind when they made freedom of the press the very first item in the Bill of Rights.

Then, in 1971, while describing his legal problems with the federal government on national television, J. I. Rodale dropped dead. Until he actually stopped breathing and turned blue, everyone watching *The Dick Cavett Show* thought Rodale was facetiously faking a heart attack in order to make a point about his troubles with the FTC.

The case never reached the Supreme Court.

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**Soon after wellness pioneer J. I. Rodale passed away, the U.S. government reversed its position, stating that the FTC would no longer require advertisers of information-based products to establish the efficacy of their claims. This policy change opened the door for the free flow of wellness information, allowing the vitamin, nutritional supplement, fitness, and alternative medicine industries to grow to their current level, laying the foundation for the wellness revolution.**

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Today *Prevention* magazine has 12 million readers, and Rodale Press is the largest health-oriented publisher in the world, publishing over 100 new wellness titles each year that sell a combined 20 million copies per annum.

## **Why We Often Reject New Ideas**

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**One of the greatest challenges facing Rodale, and facing many entrepreneurs like you today who base their businesses on a new technology, is human rejection of the new or unknown, especially when the new technology forces people to rethink established beliefs.**

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Understanding the cause of this phenomenon, and how to surmount it, is crucial for the entrepreneur seeking success.

The human quest for knowledge, in both religion and science, is really the quest for order in our lives. Once people believe they have found such order, they will often risk heaven and hell to preserve their beliefs, even in the face of irrefutable evidence to the contrary. For example, until roughly the fourth century B.C., it was commonly believed that the mysterious lights in the sky were gods wandering about the heavens. In fact, the word *planet* comes from the Greek word meaning “wanderer.” This is how most people explained the disorder in their daily lives. The gods (planets) wandered about in the heavens, and their wanderings caused the crops to grow, the rain to fall, and the tragedies and joys of a disorderly human existence.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle refuted this belief. Aristotle believed that there was an order to things that people could understand and use to bring order to their lives—particularly in the area of understanding the seasons and their effect on agricultural production. In 340 B.C., Aristotle theorized that the planets and every other object in the heavens were not gods, but were simply spheres that revolved in fixed paths on a schedule around a stationary earth.

The Aristotelian geocentric view of the world, although wrong in its fundamental assumption that the earth, rather than the sun, was at the center of our solar system, became the bedrock of civilization for the next 1,800 years. Looking back, we can see that its endurance was hardly surprising, as it agreed with the evidence of one’s senses. After all, from our vantage point on earth, it certainly looks as if everything revolves around us.

But the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic calendar was not accurate, because it incorrectly placed the earth at the center of the universe. Every 100 years or so it would snow in Rome in July, and the pope would have to set the calendar back about six months. This led to a great quest among astronomers to discover a working model of the universe that could more accurately track the months and predict the beginning of the seasons—the use of which could greatly increase agricultural and economic output.

It wasn’t until the early sixteenth century that the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus succeeded in this quest. By manipulating mathematical equations, Copernicus determined that the sun was at the center of the solar system and that the heavenly bodies—including the earth—revolved around it. Fortunately for Copernicus, his *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* was not published until he was on his deathbed in 1543, and his heliocentric view of the universe did not become known for over half a century.

In 1609 the Italian mathematician and physicist Galileo Galilei began observing the heavens through his new invention, the telescope. He was able to see that the sun rather than the earth was at the center of our universe, and he wrote a treatise about Copernicus's theory in colloquial Italian, which could be read by the masses, rather than in the traditional Latin of academia. This treatise soon attracted widespread support for the heliocentric model of the universe.

The bulk of that support, however, came from outside the establishment. The reaction from inside was quite different. Galileo was bitterly attacked by both scholars and theologians, and in 1616 the Church commanded him, under penalty of death, never again to "hold, teach, or defend the Copernican system in any way whatsoever."

Nine years later, in 1623, Galileo's childhood friend Maffeo Barberini became Pope Urban VIII. Emboldened by his friendship with the pope, Galileo again began to write about the heliocentric theory. The reaction from the Church was swift. Galileo was forced to kneel in front of the Inquisition and recant his belief in the Copernican system. While his friendship with the pope probably saved him from being burned at the stake, Galileo was condemned to life in prison for having disobeyed the 1616 order. His works were placed on the pope's *Index of Prohibited Books*, and only in 1992 did the Roman Catholic Church formally reexamine the case and admit its mistake.

Looking back, it seems difficult to understand why the pope thought it was his duty, as God's emissary on earth, to so vigorously defend the geocentric model of the universe. After all, what does believing in Jesus Christ have to do with whether God put the earth or the sun at the center of our universe? Yet surprisingly, and perhaps on a different scale, most people today behave similarly in clinging to their established beliefs.

As children, people are typically taught beliefs about religion by their parents, then spend their adult lives looking for reinforcement of those beliefs—including outright rejection and avoidance of anything that might challenge them. When was the last time you visited a different church, synagogue, or mosque than the one you were brought up to believe in to see what they had to offer? When was the last time you read a book by someone you knew held political opinions opposite from yours?

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**The reason we do not embrace opposing views is that our human mind fears disorder—and automatically**

**avoids or rejects new ideas that challenge the existing order.\***

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A lawyer friend of mine who tries death-row cases believes that some trials are decided the very instant that the jury first sees the accused. Individual jurors, particularly in high-profile capital crime cases, are anxious to solve their own personal “disorder” problem of guilt or innocence as soon as possible. To do so, they sometimes make up their minds on first seeing the accused enter the courtroom. Then, throughout the trial, they nod and listen attentively to evidence that supports their prejudicial decision, rolling their eyes when a conflicting view is being presented.

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**When presenting a new hypothesis that might challenge the status quo, it is important to be able to explain the history behind an established belief and to be able to explain where our society may have gone wrong when such a belief was first established.**

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Here’s how most people developed incorrect views of many wellness treatments.

## **How Traditional Western Medicine Rejected Wellness**

Throughout history, people, especially the very rich, have sought wellness. In every civilization from ancient Egypt to medieval Europe, alchemists believed that gold dissolved in *aqua regia* was the elixir of life, and they consumed fortunes trying to discover the correct formula.<sup>20</sup> In the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, monarchs backed expeditions like those of Ponce de León to find the mythical Fountain of Youth.<sup>21</sup> While some of these quests proved fruitful in other areas (like the alchemists’ discovery of chemistry or Ponce de León’s discovery of Florida), they all failed miserably in their quest for wellness, and wellness practitioners were often characterized as charlatans.

Then, in the twentieth century, scientific discoveries linked disease

\*This also explains why direct selling (person-to-person versus television-to-person or store-to-person) is often the best way to explain a new product or service that challenges an established belief. When most people are confronted with such a challenge, they simply change the channel or continue to walk down the aisle—something that politeness prevents when listening to a friend or acquaintance.

and aging to food and exercise. In 1908, Polish-born biochemist Casimir Funk discovered that there were four ammonia-based substances vital for life, which he called “vital amines” or “vitamins.”<sup>22</sup> Studies of longshoremen and other laborious occupations showed that physical exercise was beneficial to overall health and to the avoidance of chronic disease. But for the most part, these and other now-accepted wellness discoveries were rejected by the Western medical community. Here’s why.

Prior to the nineteenth century, doctors administered the few medicines that existed, and by trial and error observed which medicines cured which diseases. Medical knowledge was accumulated like this over centuries and occasionally diffused between cultures.<sup>23</sup>

But when a medicine or treatment worked, doctors didn’t know *why* it worked. The underlying theories that explain infections, and the inoculations and antibiotics that these theories produced, had to await the widespread use of the compound optical microscope (which was invented at the beginning of the seventeenth century but didn’t become ubiquitous until the late nineteenth century). The microscope led to the discovery of cells and bacteria and allowed scientists to actually see how they worked.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientists became international heroes as they eliminated, one after another, the major diseases that had been the scourge of humankind (e.g., smallpox, tuberculosis, typhoid, polio).

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**Emboldened by this success, and partly to distinguish themselves from charlatans practicing magic more than medicine, Western medical science began arrogantly rejecting age-old treatments and cures whose function could not be scientifically explained by the then-current level of technology.**

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The basic unit in biology, the cell, is about 20 micrometers in diameter. It takes about 10,000 human cells to cover the head of a pin. For physical reasons, an optical microscope cannot resolve two points that are closer together than approximately one-half of the wavelength of the illuminating light—and an individual bacterial cell, for example, is approximately one-tenth the wavelength of visible light.<sup>24</sup>

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**Today we know that the critical biochemical functions performed by exercise, vitamins, minerals, and nutri-**

**tional supplements take place on a molecular versus a cellular level. And because each cell is composed of trillions of molecules, these functions cannot even be detected with an optical microscope.**

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Until the relatively recent invention of the electron microscope, which is still not as widespread as the optical microscope was in the 1800s, scientists were unable to study the molecular structure of cells and how they function.

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**This led most Western medical school training to virtually ignore, still to this day, the importance of nutrition and the effect of vitamins, minerals, and natural supplements.**

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Meanwhile, during the twentieth century, while Western medicine was ignoring the importance of diet and exercise in preventing disease and aging, the amount of exercise performed by individuals declined due to labor-saving devices in the home and to machines in the workplace. The quantity and variety of vitamins and minerals in our diets declined as food became more processed and less varied. And the percent of fat in our diets increased by 75 percent—from about 20 percent of our calories in 1910 to about 35 percent of our calories today. These and other factors contributed to the epidemic in obesity and ill health we have today in the United States, sowing the seeds for the wellness revolution that is about to take place.

## **The Wellness Revolution Is about More than Just Making Money**

In the rest of this book we will examine the increasing size of the wellness industry and the thousands of fortunes that will be created through wellness.

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**As you read ahead and start to think about your place in this emerging industry, keep in mind that there is something even more important than your personal economic reward—your impact on the world in which we live.**

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Economically, we live in halcyon days that have far surpassed the wildest dreams of our forebears, who fought so hard and lost so

much to create what we have today. Yet due to our plague of obesity and ill health, we begin this millennium with more human unhappiness than at any time in our history.

Fully 61 percent of Americans are trapped within their own prison of being malnourished and overweight, and almost half of those, about 27 percent, are clinically obese—overweight to a point where they are hopeless and have no idea where to turn for help.

These Americans are malnourished to the point where they live with constant headaches, body pain, stomach distress, heartburn, fatigue, arthritis, and hundreds of other ailments—ailments that medicine wrongly tells them to accept as symptoms of advancing age. Medical companies sell them billions of dollars worth of products (e.g., aspirin, laxatives) that treat only their symptoms while ignoring their cause. A similar situation exists in Western Europe, Taiwan, and most other developed nations.

However, all of this is about to change, thanks to the wellness revolution. Never before in history has a business opportunity had the potential to have such an incredibly positive impact on the lives of its customers.

**Before Proceeding to the Next Chapter***Action Plan for Entrepreneurs, Investors, and Distributors*

1. Make a list of 10 potential wellness businesses that interest you.
2. Assess how you could participate in each of areas:
  - a. Entrepreneur
  - b. Investor
  - c. Distributor
3. Analyze each business area with respect to the five characteristics of pervasive industries (outlined in the Introduction).
4. Choose the three best areas for you to pursue based on your prior skills and experiences.
5. Analyze why each of these three areas of wellness business opportunity does or does not yet exist. For those that do exist, analyze your potential competition and the opportunity for growth in each area.
6. Rethink your choices of your three best areas of wellness business opportunity, and perhaps choose a different three based on your analysis thus far.

Now read Chapters 2 through 9, and at the end of each chapter, think about dropping and replacing any or all three of your chosen areas of wellness business opportunity.