UP front

Some Skinnie issues are organized around a theme. This is one such occasion, emphasizing health and wellness. The domain of health-and-wellness spans several dimensions – physical, mental, and spiritual quickly come to mind. Attending to, nurturing, improving in these areas are perpetual pursuits. Success requires significant quantities of both desire and effort.

In 1980s fitness phraseology: "No pain, no gain." But the catchphrase predates spandex. In *The Ethics of the Fathers*, a Jewish text that was written some 300 years before the birth of Christ, the sages observe, "According to the pain is the gain." Sophocles' 5th century play, *Electra*, asserts, "Nothing truly succeeds without pain." More than a millennium later, Ben Franklin, in *Poor Richard's Almanack*, proclaimed, "There are no gains without pains."

Those of us who work to improve aspects of ourselves know it to be true. Generally, good things don't come easily. The pursuit of wellness requires habit-forming discipline and inspiration from as many sources as one can pull. If you go to church every week, you're likely to experience spiritual growth. If you reduce sugar in your diet, you'll feel "better." If you exercise regularly, the benefits are manifold.

I was fortunate to be born into a physically active family. My dad bought me a barbell, weights, and a 10-exercise guidebook when I was a little boy. He anchored a rung-ed contraption into our basement paneling to accommodate a decline sit-up bench. We had the only home wrestling meet I have ever seen. Fitness was "normal" for us, a frame of reference that has heavily influenced my life for more than 50 years.

Another modeled behavior that has imprinted itself in my family's DNA – the impulse to be one's own boss. We work well, but I'm not sure we are at our best when working for others. The instinct towards mastery over one's circumstances is primal, borne of fear and necessity in prehistoric humankind. The same dogged determination that yields a well and fit life enables an entrepreneur to create things of value, both to herself and to the world.

The French word – "entrepreneur" – means "to undertake," not in the mortician sense, but in the taking-action way. French economist Jean-Baptiste Say, in the 19th century, defined an entrepreneur as "one who shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield." Ask Google and it says an entrepreneur is "an individual who identifies an opportunity and creates a business to capitalize on it, typically taking on significant risk and responsibility." My definition? A person who has the audacity to conflate dreams with reality and the will to break the barriers between the two.

It's an interesting coincidence (and it's purely so, not planned) that the day on which I edit the features and compose an essay for The Skinnie's health-and-wellness issue is the day that my younger daughter launches her digital fitness enterprise. GG Studio is the app (available in App Stores and easily searchable online and through social media platforms), and it's a very cool thing for a dad to witness. Also, the content, the brand components, the infrastructure, and the strategy are really, really good. Trust me – the workouts work. Gabby has worked incredibly hard on her business, just as she has done on her multi-dimensional wellness, and the toil shows clearly in both. Those of us who are fortunate enough to love her are very, very proud.

So, too, are we grateful for and proud of our neighbors. Several local health-and-wellness entrepreneurs have contributed articles for this issue. Give them a read. You're likely to find something useful in your pursuit of your best life.

To contact us with your ideas, responses, letters and more, email us at mail@theskinnie.com

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