

Q&A: Allan Magaziner

by Charles Stuart Platkin

Allan Magaziner, D.O., founder and director of the Magaziner Center for Wellness and a practicing compassionate physician, is one of the nation's leading authorities on nutrition, preventive medicine and environmental illness.

Name: Allan Magaziner, D.O.**Birthday:** 2/19/57**Location:** Magaziner Center for Wellness and Anti-Aging Medicine, New Jersey**Q: Tell us how you got to where you are now.**

When I was 15 years old my mother became very sick with hepatitis. For more than six months, she underwent conventional treatments, but didn't get any better. Then, she heard about a physician who worked with alternative forms of treatment. He significantly modified her diet, placed her on nutraceuticals, natural supplements and herbs. Within six weeks she felt wonderful, like a new person. After three years of feeling great, she opened her own health food store. I worked there through high school and into college, and I heard story after story of people who had been helped with supplements and lifestyle modifications. By the time I was in my second year of medical school, I became very interested in this field. While working in the hospital, I felt that most of the time we were treating symptoms, but not modifying the disease process. So I began to study natural healing techniques. After I graduated from medical school, I spent 2 ½ years training with specialists in complementary integrative medicine. And, following several years of traveling and studying around the country, returned in 1986 to open my practice in my hometown Cherry Hill in 1986.

Q: Define and discuss failure?

Failure is when you've put your efforts into a project, and you weren't satisfied with the results. But it's also all in how you look at it. Failure can be turned into a positive and lead to future growth. It can also inspire you to continue to strive and reach goals.

Q: Is there anything about yourself that you've changed your mind about in the last 20 years?

As years go on, I realize how we're not invincible, and while we have some control over our destiny, we don't have full control. The more I learn, the more I realize how little we really do know.

Q: What's the next major item on your "to-do" list?

I've written four books in the past seven years, and they've all been on medicine. But I want to tackle another writing project -- an inspirational book relating to athletes and how their careers can motivate others.

Q: Define individual responsibility and how you react to adverse situations?

I absolutely think people should take responsibility for their own actions, in everything they do. Too many people don't take responsibility and blame failures on other people. In my practice, I not only take responsibility for what I do, but I also feel responsible for my team of staff members. When I face an adverse situation, I do my best to listen to what the person has to say, and understand their feelings and sympathize with them. I take the "customer is always right" approach. I prefer to solve problems by finding a compromise with minimal conflict. The goal is to create a win-win situation for everybody involved.

Q: When do you have time to think about your mistakes, mishaps, achievements, and minor victories; in other words, do you have any reflective time for yourself of your career?

When I jog or ride my bike, I have time to reflect and think creatively. Uninterrupted time outside is where I do my best thinking.

Q: What is your most influential story, fiction or nonfiction, from a film, book, magazine, newspaper or parable? Explain its impact on your life?

Three films come to mind: Shawshank Redemption, One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest and Europa Europa. Each dealt with difficult subjects, and each left me feeling angry toward perpetrators and sympathetic toward the victims. I have a very compassionate heart and all three of these movies brought out my deep inner feelings and compassion for human life.

Q: What's your favorite saying?

You're not what you eat but what you digest and assimilate.

Q: Was there a defining moment in your life when you made a decision that changed the course of the rest of your life forever?

When my mother was sick with hepatitis. Had she not gotten sick and been helped by a doctor practicing alternative medicine, I may not be where I am today

Q: What's the most bodacious chance you've ever taken?

I took a risk by purchasing the real estate for my office when I was only 29 years old and opening my practice when I was 30.

Q: What's the biggest lesson you've learned about yourself?

To trust my instincts and follow my heart.

Q: What's the biggest lesson you haven't learned?

I'd like to be less of a micro- manager.

Q: What keeps you going (your motivation)?

When I see patients who are very debilitated improving and getting their lives back, it's all

worth it. Also, my family motivates me; my wife and three children keep me going.

Q: What is your particular area of expertise?

I work by healing the body naturally. Beyond just treating symptoms, we address prevention and causes of disease.

Q: How did you decide what you wanted to focus on?

My dad had a heart attack about 18 years ago, which led me to focus a good bit of my practice on the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease.

Q: What do you think are the biggest differences between the kind of medicine you practice and conventional medicine?

Our goal is to use natural therapies first before pharmaceutical agents and surgical intervention.

Q: What is your experience with conventional medicine?

I am board certified in family practice, so I consider myself well trained in conventional medicine. I just find it limited, and sometimes it can be invasive, with so many side effects. I'm not adverse to conventional treatment, I just think we need to keep an open mind and not be myopic one way or other.

Q: Do you think alternative methods can work synergistically with conventional methods?

Absolutely. The two are not diametrically opposed. As a skilled practitioner, I can integrate the best of all worlds, from around the world. It's important to remember that what is considered alternative medicine to us, such as working with herbs and acupuncture, is seen as conventional in other countries.

Q: It seems that many alternative approaches to healthy living have been making their way into the mainstream in the last ten years. What do you attribute this to? How do you see it effecting both conventional and alternative medicine?

Public demand and outcry is the driving force. The public is becoming much more knowledgeable about health issues. When people feel that they aren't deriving full benefits from conventional treatment, they want alternatives. I think both traditional and alternative medicines are here to stay and can work in harmony. We're now seeing many medical schools teaching aspects of alternative medicine. There's really a natural fit between the two modalities.

Q: What do you think the future of your focus will be? What developments and changes do you predict in the next 10-20 years?

Evaluating and treating people with chronic degenerative diseases, and having them both feel and look good. I also plan to concentrate more on non-surgical anti-aging treatments.

Q: What dessert do you dream about?

My favorite dessert is ice cream, any flavor.

Q: If there were one healthy food item (something you love) that you had to eat every day, what would it be?

Pineapple – I love it. It has some digestive benefits along with natural anti-inflammatory properties.

Q: What's the best book about health that you've read?

Honestly, I haven't read one in years. I must say, I really like my own book, *All Natural Cardio Cure*, which I wrote in 2004.

Q: What are your two favorite health magazines?

Let's Live and *Alternative Medicine*.

Q: What do you consider the world's most perfect food?

Blueberries. They're rich in antioxidants, vitamin C and polyphenols.

Q: What physical activity do you do to keep yourself in shape?

Run, bike, play basketball.

Q: Do you have a favorite healthy recipe or cooking tip? If so would you share it?

My wife cooks – I'm not a good cook. On the weekend mornings I do make my kids oat bran cereal.

Q: Do you have a Calorie Bargain? What food did it replace? Was that an important food in your diet, since you ate it so often?

No – I've been eating healthy for 35 years.

Comments

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