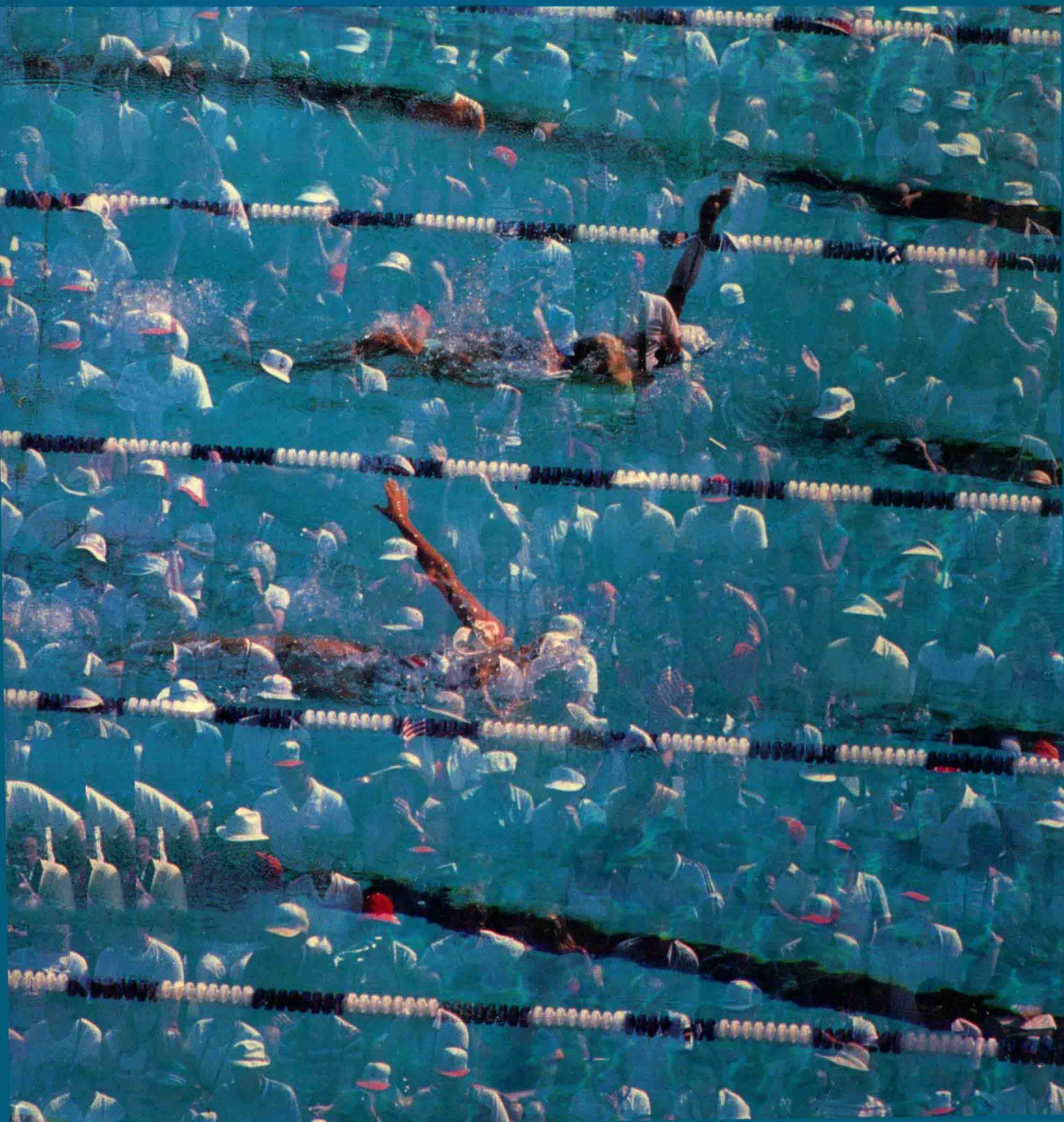


Peggy Blake  
Robert Frye  
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# DISCOVER YOUR HEALTH BEHAVIORS

A Self-Assessment and  
Behavior Change Manual



# **Discover Your Health Behaviors: A Self-Assessment and Behavior Change Manual**

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This is an abridged version of *Self-Assessment and Behavior Change Manual* by  
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Random House  
New York

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First Edition

98765

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ISBN: 394-35824-4

Manufactured in the United States of America

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# Preface

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If you flip through the following pages, you will notice that they contain numerous tests. But why would students want to subject themselves to more tests?

These tests are all *ASSESSMENTS* of yourself, designed to help you become more aware of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors as they relate to your health and well-being now and in the future. Social, physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of health are all related to your total life style, and these assessments help you see how.

In addition to the assessments included in this booklet, a computer-scored and -analyzed test, the *Health Risk Appraisal Program*, is available through Random House. Ask your instructor for information on how to obtain this health-assessment tool. It can provide you with pertinent information to add to and combine with what you learn in the chapters of this book.

In addition to the assessment tests, this book contains exercises to help you apply what you have learned to your own life. These *PERSONAL APPLICATIONS* develop further self-awareness and, in some cases, suggest methods of changing health-related behaviors.

The book concludes with an *ACTION PLAN*, which will help you put your self-knowledge to work. Included in the plan is a chart to help you select a personal behavior to change.

Your instructor may require you to select a few of your own behaviors to change throughout the duration of the course and to write a contract outlining your goals and methods. Therefore, you might want to browse through this book early in your health course to see if there are particular areas you wish or need to work on.

Ultimately, all assessments and personal applications should be useful to you. Optimal health is a matter of maintenance as much as remediation; so, even if you are not at risk now, you might want to know how to stay that way. Also, behavior-change techniques discussed in any given chapter usually apply to other chapters as well.

This booklet is a condensed version of the *Self-Assessment and Behavior Change Manual*, which contains many more assessments and is available through Random House.

(Please note that the assessments, personal applications, and action plans in this book are all *educational* tools. They are not intended to be diagnostic or prescriptive and should not be interpreted as such. The assessments allow you to find out where you stand in regard to general factors that tend to influence most people's health. But you are not "most people"; you are yourself. If you are concerned about the accuracy or meaning of your results on any assessments, please consult your doctor for clarification. Under no circumstances should the information you gain from this book cause you to disregard any advice you have received from a professional health practitioner.)



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# Introduction

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Most people your age are probably about as healthy right now as they ever will be. But if *you* choose, you have a good chance of enhancing your current health status and maintaining it for years to come.

The major techniques of staying healthy are anything but obscure. In fact, most amount to little more than “common sense.” Controlling weight, eating a balanced diet, exercising, resting, managing stress, avoiding unnecessary risks (for example, drugs and fast driving), and many other wellness-promoting activities have been taught to us since we were old enough to learn.

We might not know all of the technical facts about health, but most of us are at least generally aware of which of our behaviors are health-promoting and which are not. So, why don't we practice what we know?

One reason, for a person your age, is that you probably feel and look relatively healthy; therefore, you have no motivation to change your immediate life style in order to enhance your health. Or perhaps you take your health for granted and assume little responsibility yourself: You feel that the cafeteria dietitian is responsible for getting the proper nutrients to you, the town water department is in charge of the safety of your water, the school physical education department organizes your physical activity, the student infirmary is there to make minor repairs on you when necessary, the police have the job of regulating your driving behavior and assuring your general safety, and so forth.

The following points might *not* be apparent to you:

- Your body, because of its youth and resilience, can take abuse now that it cannot handle later, but the health-related habits you form now are likely to stay with you.
- Health problems often result from cumulative abuses; in other words, what may not cause much harm if done only a few times can be dangerous if continued over a period of time.
- You might not be as healthy right now as you think, or you might not be aware of how much better you *could* feel and look; optimal health is not the same as “getting by.”
- As you age, your responsibility for all aspects of your life tends to become greater, including your responsibility for your own health and that of others, but you could be unprepared to handle that responsibility if you have had little practice.

- Health problems in modern times have to a great extent become the result of *personally chosen* life styles rather than of “natural” and essentially uncontrollable forces.

In summary, your health, now and later, depends in large part on your willingness to *assume responsibility now* and your motivation to *act now*, even though you might think that you look and feel fine. This chapter will help you to determine where you stand in regard to these important factors of motivation and willingness to assume responsibility.

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# Self-Actualization Inventory

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**Overview** A self-actualized person is one who is meeting all of his or her needs. Few of us are at that point. However, awareness of the degree to which we are successful in meeting our needs, and awareness of which needs remain, can help us to plan specific actions through which we can approach true self-actualization. The following assessment will help with this process.

**Directions** Circle the number that best characterizes you for each of the descriptions below. Use the following criteria:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Almost never
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Almost always
- 5 = Always

**Assessment** How often do you feel that you possess the following characteristics:

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. You have a clear understanding of reality.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. You have the ability to handle uncertainty.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. You have the ability to respond in a spontaneous fashion.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. You are comfortable with your surroundings.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. You are creative.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. You accept yourself.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. You are independent.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. You are able to give love to others.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. You can deal with problems of others and are not self-centered.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. You have a zest for living.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. You enjoy others but also enjoy serene, alone, and quiet situations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. You have a purpose in life.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



## 2 DISCOVER YOUR HEALTH BEHAVIORS

**Scoring** Add *all* the circled numbers. Your score is the total.  
Total \_\_\_\_\_

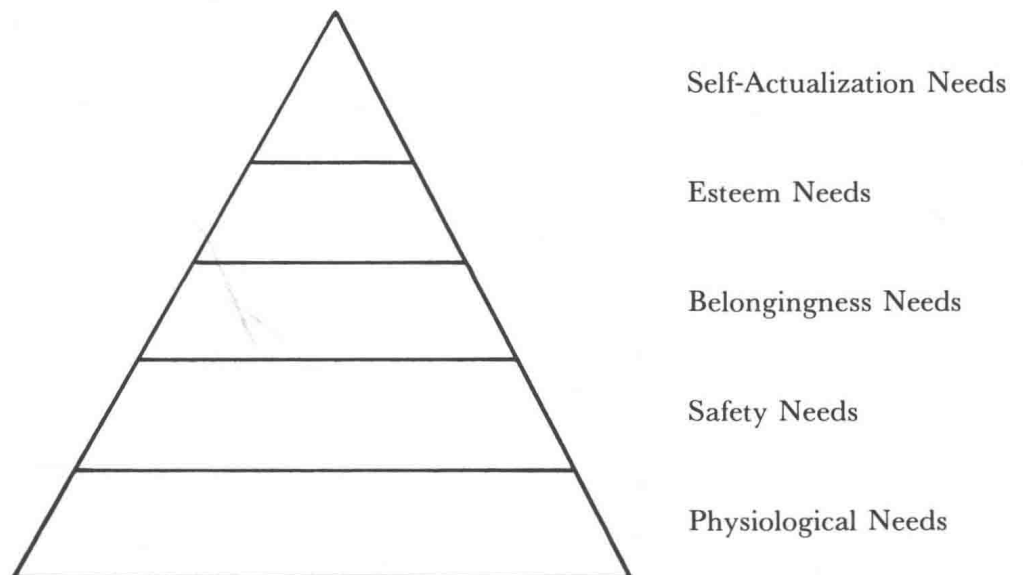
**Interpretation**

- 40-60 = Self-actualization has virtually been reached
- 30-39 = Self-actualization is being approached
- 20-29 = Average self-actualization
- < 20 = Below-average self-actualization

The Self-Actualization Inventory, although not reliable for all mental-health areas, does give you an opportunity to take a look at where you are in terms of Maslow's developmental framework.

Abraham Maslow, through his studies of *healthy* personalities, theorized that individuals grow from needing the basics to needing fulfillment through a variety of experiences, very often outside of *self*. A person who is not approaching self-actualization may not be meeting his or her higher needs and hence may experience such things as psychological stress, illness, anxiety, a lack of motivation, and boredom.

The following figure shows Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Maslow, people tend to work on fulfilling needs at their own level, and most of us are not interested in or successful at fulfilling needs that are much further up in the hierarchy than where we are.



You might notice that health per se is not on the list of needs. This means that few of us strive to be healthy, for its own sake. In fact, we seem willing to risk our own health in order to accomplish fulfillment of the needs that are important to us at our own given level of the hierarchy. An example is the person who partakes of alcohol in order to maintain status in his peer group, even though he may know that alcohol is unhealthy.

If you agree with Maslow that his hierarchy of needs reflects the motivating forces behind most human behavior, and if you agree that health, even if it is not a basic need, is necessary to achieve fulfillment of all needs, then you will agree that *the best course of behavior is to search for healthy ways of meeting our needs*. For example, a person might seek another peer group which does not emphasize alcohol use as a criterion of membership, or might develop assertiveness skills so that membership could be maintained without consuming alcohol.

## Personal Application

In the following chart, the needs from Maslow's hierarchy are listed in the first column. Read each need and then determine how you can meet this need in an unhealthy way. Record your answer in column 2. Then determine how you can meet this need in a healthy way. Record your answer in column 3.

NEEDS	UNHEALTHY METHOD OF MEETING NEED	HEALTHY METHOD OF MEETING NEED
Physiological needs		
Sleep	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____
Safety needs		
Security	_____	_____
Safety	_____	_____
Belongingness needs		
Affiliation with others	_____	_____
Acceptance	_____	_____
Belongingness	_____	_____

#### 4 DISCOVER YOUR HEALTH BEHAVIORS

Esteem needs		
Achievement		
Competence		
Approval		
Recognition		
Self-Actualization needs		
Pursuit of knowledge		
Beauty		
Creativity		

Now answer the following questions.

- Do you tend to satisfy your needs in healthy ways or unhealthy ways? Explain.
- Would you like to change the way you satisfy a need? Explain.
- Why do people often take self-defeating measures to satisfy their needs?

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# Locus of Control

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## Overview

Some people seem to feel that their own health is beyond their control. Others are overly confident that they are completely in charge and are surprised when they become ill. These different outlooks reflect different upbringings, different personal experiences, and different levels of health education. This questionnaire will help you to determine the sort of outlook you have and help you decide whether you might want to increase your responsibility in determining your own health.

## Directions

For each statement in the following questionnaire, circle the letter that best reflects how well you feel the statement represents your own views. Answer honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

## Assessment

	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE
1. If the government has approved a drug and my doctor prescribes it for me, I don't need to question whether I should take it.	a	b	c
2. I can have an effect on reducing environmental pollutants produced by private businesses and industries.	a	b	c
3. By the time I might suffer from the long-term effects of unsafe health practices, medical researchers probably will have found a cure for them.	a	b	c
4. If none of my friends or roommates regularly exercised, I probably wouldn't either.	a	b	c
5. From my experience, people who never get sick are simply lucky.	a	b	c
6. As long as I have a good health and disability insurance policy, I will have little reason to be concerned about my health.	a	b	c
7. If my physician doesn't tell me to quit smoking, lose weight, or get more exercise, then there is no reason why I should consider doing these things.	a	b	c

## 6 DISCOVER YOUR HEALTH BEHAVIORS

	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE
8. Since we all have to die of something sometime, there is no point in trying to control our own health status.	a	b	c
9. I have little say over my nutrition since I can't control what food producers, manufacturers, processors, and preparers do to food.	a	b	c
10. Most people, including myself, are basically healthy or basically unhealthy, and there is little way to change that.	a	b	c
11. Until medical science has advanced further, there is no way I can understand and prevent the causes of ill health.	a	b	c
12. Since the world is full of odd diseases that seem to strike unpredictably, there is no reason why anybody should spend a lot of time and energy trying to stay healthy.	a	b	c
13. When I set health goals for myself, I feel that I can usually achieve them.	a	b	c
14. If a medical authority gave me advice or directives, I would probably challenge him or her or ask questions.	a	b	c
15. If I felt there were something wrong with me but friends and relatives all said I looked and acted fine, I probably would seek a professional opinion anyway.	a	b	c

### Scoring

If your answer is the same as the answer in the "Response" column, give yourself one point in each space on the line corresponding to the statement. For example, if your response for number 1 is c, then you would place 1 point in the "General Points" column and 1 point in the "Reliance on Others Points" column.

STATEMENT	RESPONSE	GENERAL POINTS	FATE POINTS	RELIANCE ON OTHERS POINTS	PERSONAL EFFICACY POINTS
1.	c	_____		_____	
2.	a	_____			_____
3.	c	_____		_____	
4.	c	_____			_____
5.	c	_____	_____		

STATEMENT	RESPONSE	GENERAL POINTS	FATE POINTS	RELIANCE ON OTHERS POINTS	PERSONAL EFFICACY POINTS
6.	c	_____		_____	
7.	c	_____		_____	
8.	c	_____	_____		
9.	c	_____			_____
10.	c	_____	_____		
11.	c	_____			_____
12.	c	_____	_____		
13.	a	_____			_____
14.	a	_____		_____	
15.	a	_____		_____	
TOTALS		_____	_____	_____	_____

## Interpretation

If you scored 15 or close to it in "General Points," you have a very strong tendency to acknowledge your own capacity and responsibility for determining your own health. If your score is near zero, you probably feel pretty helpless, possibly even apathetic, about the influence you have on your own health.

The statements to which you have responded also can be examined with reference to several areas of control over health status. For example, statements 5, 8, 10, and 12 deal primarily with your attitude toward "fate." Interestingly, if you believe strongly that fate controls your health, it probably will! You would be unlikely to intervene in a process over which you had no control.

Statements 1, 3, 6, 7, 14, and 15 indicate the extent of your "reliance on others" for your well-being. A low score for this set of statements indicates that you don't necessarily leave your health to fate, you leave it to other people! You might, therefore, want to examine the sources of these beliefs and decide for yourself if they are really useful.

The remaining statements concern the degree of your belief in your own "personal efficacy." Thus, a low score on statements 2, 4, 9, 11, and 13 might say that you feel as if you personally have little power to cause change, even if you think that change is possible and desirable. This attitude could be related to your own self-confidence, your opinion of your own will power, your conception of the potential political power of individuals—especially yourself—or even your confidence in your ability to understand new information.

The importance of this assessment lies not so much in your responses to individual questions as in any general trend that may be revealed. For example, if you had practiced every reasonable precaution but still caught a cold that had been "going around," you might as well ascribe it to "fate" as any-



thing else. But if you blame fate for every health problem that exists, you probably are not doing yourself any favor! The more strongly you believe that you are in charge of your health and the more willing you are to take action in your own behalf, the better off you will be.

## Personal Application

An internal locus of control is very important in promoting and maintaining your own health. Sometimes it is necessary to rely on others—for example, we rely on others to inspect the kitchens of the restaurants we eat in. But for the most part it is up to each of us to initiate our own behaviors to enhance our well-being. Sometimes we don't realize how many choices we make about our health behaviors.

In order to give yourself an overview of your own role in affecting your health, complete those of the following statements that apply to you. Answer honestly!

- I choose to jog or exercise regularly because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose not to jog or exercise regularly because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose to eat junk food because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose not to eat junk food because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose to skip breakfast often because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose not to skip breakfast often because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose to have regular dental check-ups because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose not to have regular dental check-ups because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose to express my emotions and not to bottle them up because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I choose not to express my emotions and to bottle them up because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

- I choose to take time to relax because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to take time to relax because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to smoke cigarettes because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to smoke cigarettes because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to drink alcohol because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to drink alcohol because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to use seat belts in cars because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to use seat belts in cars because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to develop a variety of close interpersonal relationships because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to develop a variety of close interpersonal relationships because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to be overweight/underweight because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to be overweight/underweight because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to get enough sleep at night because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to get enough sleep at night because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to drive after drinking because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to drive after drinking because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

- I choose to seek help when I feel depressed because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to seek help when I feel depressed because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to worry excessively about things because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to worry excessively about things because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to prepare (or select) nutritionally balanced meals because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to prepare (or select) nutritionally balanced meals because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose to avoid situations where I might meet and form relationships with persons of the opposite sex because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I choose not to avoid situations where I might meet and form relationships with persons of the opposite sex because \_\_\_\_\_ .

Now consider these questions:

- Do you see any patterns in your responses—for example, lack of will power, ignorance, fear, laziness?
- Are there any behaviors in the list that you feel you absolutely couldn't change if you chose to?
- Do you believe that the person most responsible for your health is you?

The remaining chapters in this book should give you insights into your own behavior, lead you to methods of changing your behavior, and acquaint you with additional information about your health and its value. But the bottom line is: It's up to you!