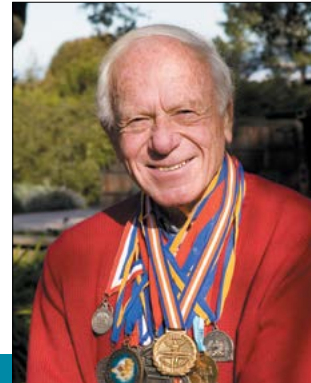


Wealth Or Health

By Walter M. Bortz, II, MD



Dr. Walter M. Bortz, II is one of America's most distinguished scientific experts on healthy aging and longevity. He spent his entire career at Stanford University where he holds the position of Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine. An active marathoner, he has written seven books including "Dare to Be 100" and "Next Medicine." To learn more, visit walterbortz.com or email: drwbortz@gmail.com.

For a number of years I had the happy opportunity of giving the first lecture to the prestigious Stanford Business School executive program.

These high level financiers fly in from Zürich, Cape Town, Wall Street and Dubai. They crowd in with the grand hope that somehow they will learn how to get even richer.

The assemblage logically anticipates a Nobel worthy economist to lead off. Instead they get me—a weathered geriatrician who still makes house calls.

I begin, "What's your most important asset?" The audience stirs. This challenge is followed immediately by "who owns that asset?"

The imperative answer to the first question is health, no equivocation allowed. The second answer is "you do."

You cannot download the responsibility for your health on any other person or institution. Only you own your most precious asset. You are your own best physician.

My perspective streams directly from the reality that personal behavior is the root cause of most illness. And in accord with that truth, it is susceptible to change—"Serenity Prayer." Prevention is infinitely more desirable as a ruling strategy than is cure which is often uncertain, unpleasant and frightfully expensive.

This perspective is aligned with the punch line of my favorite Jack Benny skit. Confronted by the robber "your money or your life?" Jack responds, "I'm thinking it over."

There is an inevitable close relationship between health and money. My idealism demands that health has the higher priority.