



FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen

Issue #106
February 17, 2023

*NB: I receive commissions for purchases made through the links in **bold** in this post.*

The Primal Blueprint

I just finished reading [**The New Primal Blueprint: Reprogram Your Genes for Effortless Weight Loss, Vibrant Health, and Boundless Energy**](#) by Mark Sisson, who is a longtime athlete, coach and wellness enthusiast and runs the [Mark's Daily Apple blog](#). It's by far the best book I've ever read about health and wellness, so it's 5 stars and a Must Read. I have the 2017 hardcover version (542 pages), which is a gorgeous, college textbook-quality book. It often goes into as much scientific detail as you might want to see, but it's also very readable.

The book's thesis is that the primary reason why so many people are unhealthy, sick, dead (prematurely) or mentally or psychologically unwell is that our modern lifestyle is very different from what it was like for millennia, and thus also very different from what our genes expect from us. So we have to do some extreme things (by today's standards) just to get back to normal. When we make decisions about what to eat, drink or do, we should ask ourselves, "What would Grok do?" (Grok is Mark's affectionate sobriquet for prehistoric man.)

Also, our genes are not merely the physical traits that we inherited from our parents.

They're also like switches that can be turned on or off. So through diet and lifestyle, you can program your genes to express themselves in a way that results in optimal health.

The book is centered around 10 primal blueprint laws:

Law #1: Eat Plants and Animals

More specifically, those that were raised like they were for millennia before modern chemicals and agricultural practices came along.

Law #2: Avoid Poisonous Things

Mark quotes Loren Cordain, author of [The Paleo Diet](#): "...our genetic makeup is still that of a Paleolithic hunter-gatherer....Agriculture is generally agreed to be responsible for many of humanity's societal ills, including whole-scale warfare, starvation, tyranny, epidemic diseases, and class divisions." Jared Diamond (author of [Guns, Germs and Steel](#)) says that agriculture was "the worst mistake in the history of the human race."

Mark writes that "The flourishing of agriculture paralleled a reduction in average human life span [!], as well as body and brain size, increases in infant mortality and infectious diseases, and the occurrence of previously unknown conditions...."

Next he takes aim at what misinformed nutritionists, the (captured) federal Department of Agriculture, and the Agriculture Industrial Complex refer to as "healthy whole grains": "Grains offer the great majority of their calories in the form of carbohydrates, so they cause blood glucose levels to elevate quickly....high-carbohydrate foods such as sugar and grains...shock our delicate hormonal systems....Please realize that you are mismanaging your *Homo sapiens* genes by consuming a high-carbohydrate diet...."

Then he turns to the sweet poison of sugar, which (along with wheat) "...has addictive properties similar to those of hard drugs....sugar drives excess insulin production/fat storage, causes cravings, and disturbs your appetite, satiety, and fat-storage hormones (locking you into a carbohydrate-dependency/fat storage pattern), suppresses immune function, is pro-inflammatory, and causes oxidative damage to important cells and organs."

Sugar "also overstimulates the [fight or flight response], because an insulin-driven blood glucose dive is perceived as a stressful event by the body, prompting the release of cortisol....When this happens over and over again throughout the day, you get the chronic overproduction of stress hormones that leads to burnout." Is it any wonder that so many people are anxious and stressed out and at each other's throats?

Mark explains how the food and restaurant industry have been able to get us hooked on their products: "Our genetic addiction to sweets is a survival mechanism. When our ancestors discovered sugar (typically during narrow ripening seasons for wild fruit), reward systems in the brain encouraged them to gorge on it and fatten up in preparation for the winter's diminished food supply. Today we don't really need to fatten up for

winter, but we still have those same neurological reward pathways giving us pleasure for eating sugary foods....The problem with a sugar-based diet is that glucose molecules are toxic in the bloodstream....If I had to pick a one-liner to summarize the number one health problem facing modern society—the gateway to type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and cancer--'chronic excessive insulin production' is it.”

Law #3: Move Frequently

“...it's not about the calories burned, *it's about the frequency of movement*. If you are a cardio enthusiast, slowing down the pace of your workouts will promote fitness more than a chronic pattern of overly-strenuous workouts [what Mark calls “chronic cardio”, which are extended cardio workouts where your heart rate goes higher than 180 minus your age] that compromises hormone, immune, and metabolic function....Focus on taking incremental measures to accumulate more total movement in everyday life....Make an effort to integrate flexibility/mobility activities...things like yoga, Pilates, tai chi, basic stretching, and even self-myofascial release (foam rollers)....”

Law #4: Lift Heavy Things

“...you can get extremely fit in just two intense workouts a week, lasting as little as 10 minutes and not more than 30 minutes.” The four recommended exercises (pushups, pull-ups, squats and planks) can be done anywhere, and almost no equipment is necessary. These “work the entire body in a functional manner to develop broad athletic competency.” Strength training helps prevent the natural loss of muscle mass as you get older and also helps you sleep better.

Law #5: Sprint Once in a While

I wrote about this in [Issue #94](#).

Law #6: Get Plenty of Sleep

“Melatonin production has been triggered by darkness for all of human history. When you keep your evening environment unnaturally bright with artificial light or blast your eyeballs with digital stimulation...cortisol levels spike and carbohydrate cravings can occur, leading to sleep deprivation and excess body fat storage. As soon as it gets dark, minimize artificial light in your home....Mellow things out after dark by choosing relaxing endeavors such as reading and talking....Create an ideal bedtime environment: quiet, as dark as possible, cool...and keep it exclusively for sleeping” or cuddling, which is also great for your wellbeing.

Law #7: Play

Humans have been playing for millennia. For example, the nearby town of Ball Ground is the site of an old Native American ball field. Yet few Americans have the opportunity or take the time to play anymore. I play pickleball several times a week (weather permitting), and the exercise, sweat, fresh air, fun, laughter, socialization, [flow state](#) and

outdoor scenery are very therapeutic.



Law #8: Get Plenty of Sunlight

This provides the vast majority of Vitamin D, which is critical to your overall health. It also helps keep your body's internal clock accurate. Our genes are not used to spending so much time indoors.

Law #9: Avoid Stupid Mistakes

“Our ancestors required [a keen sense of observation and self-preservation](#) to avoid danger. They were always scanning, smelling, and listening to their surroundings, ever aware of potential trouble from saber-toothed tigers, falling rocks, poisonous snakes, or even a twisted ankle from a careless step. Keen vigilance and risk management were premium skills honed to perfection every day. Even minor mistakes could prove disastrous....”

Law #10: Use Your Brain

This could include anything from reading to doing crossword puzzles. Watching TV in a La-Z-Boy for hours a day will lead to dementia and an early death.

Throughout the book, Mark encourages a common sense, intuitive and compassionate approach. He recommends that you listen to your body and eat when you're hungry (instead of at set times) and do strenuous exercise only when you feel well rested. To be

healthy, you don't need to starve yourself with an unsustainable diet or spend hours doing exhausting workouts at the gym. Just avoid sugar, wheat and processed foods, move more, and a few times a week, do some strenuous (but short) strength training and sprints (of some type). Rest and relax, spend time outside and in nature with family and friends, get some sunshine, and play and have fun.

Mark concludes, "...the first step toward transformation is to clearly understand the consequences of each and every food (and lifestyle) choice that you make, whether they are aligned with your primal genes or not. It is then that you accept personal responsibility for your health...."

[Newsletter Archive](#)

I would love to hear from you! If you have any comments, suggestions, insight/wisdom, or you'd like to share a great article, please leave a comment.

Disclaimer

The content of this newsletter is intended to be and should be used for informational/ educational purposes only. You should not assume that it is accurate or that following my recommendations will produce a positive result for you. You should either do your own research and analysis, or hire a qualified professional who is aware of the facts and circumstances of your individual situation.

Financial Preparedness LLC is not a registered investment advisor. I am not an attorney, accountant, doctor, nutritionist or psychologist. I am not YOUR financial planner or investment advisor, and you are not my client.

Investments carry risk, are not guaranteed, and do fluctuate in value, and you can lose your entire investment. Past performance is not indicative of future performance. You should not invest in something you don't understand, or put all of your eggs in one basket.

Before starting a new diet or exercise regimen, you should consult with a doctor, nutritionist, dietician, or personal trainer.