

Thriving (Men's Health)

Why do American men rank fifteenth in the world in longevity when the United States has one of the highest standards of living in the world; have a life expectancy seven years shorter than women; account for 80% of all suicides and 80% of serious drug addicts; suffer from alcoholism three times more often than women; and wind up in prison twenty-five times more often than women? The answer to these questions, according to Robert Ivker and Edward Zorensky, co-authors of the book *Thriving: The Complete Mind/Body Guide for Optimal Health and Fitness for Men* (NY: Crown Publishing, Inc., 1997), it's because men don't take care of themselves, neither physically, emotionally, nor spiritually. Fortunately, though, *Thriving* provides an antidote, information that men can use to prevent or reverse these dismal statistics.

The first step is to define the problem. Before starting on their quest, men are encouraged to take a 'thriving self-test.' They are then guided through a careful analysis of the test results. The analysis helps men identify inherent strengths and weaknesses in three interdependent areas – their bodies (physical and environmental health), their minds (mental and emotional health), and their spirits (spiritual and social health). Then, building upon this information, Ivker and Zorensky spend the first half of the book helping men tailor a personal thriving program, which will empower them to achieve optimal health.

In order to reach their goal, though, men have to do more than just talk the talk; they have to walk the walk and implement their personal health program. Success requires commitment to gradually but consistently substitute healthy habits for unhealthy ones – permanently. The 'thriving' program promotes success by phasing in changes in a stepwise fashion; this is, not by revolution, but by evolution. The authors understand that one of the hardest things in the world to accomplish – even more difficult than getting a person to change his or her religion or political affiliation - is getting a person to changing his or her behavior. They acknowledge that achieving optimal health requires sacrifice and hard work. One of my favorite quotes in the book puts things into proper perspective. In the immortal words of Vince Lombardi, "The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must all pay for success [optimal health]."

Finally, the last half of *Thriving* provides men with a holistic health manual which they can use to prevent, treat, or even reverse a wide

assortment of maladies including: prostate and sexual problems; chronic respiratory diseases; arthritis, back and knee pain; depression, anxiety, and addiction; high blood pressure and heart disease; diabetes; and gastrointestinal problems.

Don't become one of the sad statistics listed above. Run, don't walk to the nearest bookstore and buy *Thriving*. I dare you to live a healthy life and THRIVE.