

Copyrighted Material

CONTENTS

Foreword by Mark Hyman, MD	xiii
Introduction: Toward Life	1
SECRET I: YOU ARE HERE FOR A REASON	11
Chapter 1: The Juice	13
Chapter 2: Why Am I Here?	19
Chapter 3: Like Pieces of a Jigsaw Puzzle	27
Chapter 4: Where Should I Pour My Juice?	33
Chapter 5: Connecting with Desire	39
<i>Practice: Finding Your Juice</i>	42
SECRET II: ALL LIFE NEEDS TO MOVE	45
Chapter 6: Feeling Stuck	47
Chapter 7: Life Is Always Moving	53
Chapter 8: Moving Through Pain	59
Chapter 9: Locked in Shame	65

Chapter 10: Releasing What Doesn't Matter	71
Chapter 11: Removing the Blockage	77
Chapter 12: Look for the Trickle Around the Dam	83
<i>Practice: Letting Go</i>	85
SECRET III: LOVE IS THE MOST POWERFUL MEDICINE	87
Chapter 13: Love and Fear	89
Chapter 14: Choice	95
Chapter 15: The Role of Self-Love	99
Chapter 16: How to Let Love In	105
Chapter 17: Giving Love to Others	109
Chapter 18: Love and Miracles	113
<i>Practice: Loving Yourself into Healing</i>	117
SECRET IV: YOU ARE NEVER TRULY ALONE	119
Chapter 19: Life Is Connection	121
Chapter 20: Embracing Imperfection	127
Chapter 21: Find Your Friends	133
Chapter 22: How to Set Boundaries	139
Chapter 23: The Power of Listening	145
Chapter 24: Angels Appear	149
<i>Practice: Weaving Together the Fabric of Life</i>	155
SECRET V: EVERYTHING IS YOUR TEACHER	157
Chapter 25: A Lesson in Everything	159
Chapter 26: How to Stop Fighting	165
Chapter 27: The Role of Dreams	171

Chapter 28: When You Just Keep Hurting	175
Chapter 29: In the Impossible Moments	181
Chapter 30: Lesson After Lesson	187
<i>Practice: Finding the Teaching</i>	191
SECRET VI: SPEND YOUR ENERGY WILDLY	195
Chapter 31: Energy as Investment	197
Chapter 32: What's Worth Your Energy?	201
Chapter 33: Making Space for Miracles	205
Chapter 34: Feeding the Positive	211
Chapter 35: Shifting Your Attention	215
Practice: Embracing Your Life	219
Conclusion: You Are Right on Time	221
Acknowledgments	231
Notes	237

Copyrighted Material

Over the course of eight decades in medicine and ten on the planet, I've worked with thousands of people. I've included many of their stories here, as best as I can remember them. In the interest of privacy, I've changed many of their names, shifted crucial details in their stories, and in some cases combined several people's experiences into one. What I haven't changed is the profound soul transformation I witnessed in them and the equally profound effect each of them has had on my own soul's path.

Copyrighted Material

FOREWORD

Mark Hyman, MD

When I first met Dr. Gladys, I knew I was encountering one of the great healers and wise elders of our time. Countless others have had the same reaction when meeting her. One has the sense that this is a person who has a profound understanding of the human condition—its joys and its sorrows, its inevitable struggles and its savored celebrations. She’s a natural healer with an uncommon warmth and hard-earned wisdom. Meeting Dr. Gladys in these pages is no different. Her first popular book is over a hundred years in the making, and it was worth the wait. Dr. Gladys is a global pioneer who has helped transform our very definition of health and healing. Her extraordinary book will offer millions of readers the simple yet revolutionary secrets to discover true health and happiness at any age.

Dr. Gladys has spent nearly eighty years in the medical field—more, if you count her unofficial training in assisting her medical missionary parents as they tended to some of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised patients in India. Dr. Gladys has long been known as the mother of holistic medicine, although “grandmother” or perhaps “great-grandmother” would be more accurate now. After training as a doctor during World War II, facing significant sexism

as one of the pioneering women in the field, she went on to form the American Holistic Medical Association in 1978 as the only female founding member. Her boundless curiosity in exploring effective alternative practices led her to study a range of healing methods from Western, Eastern, and Indigenous cultures and apply them to her practice, long before such an approach was practiced by other physicians. Her belief in honoring mothers and demedicalizing natural processes led her to champion safe home births throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Dr. Gladys was also an early advocate of nutrition in the allopathic field, realizing that what we eat affects every cell in our body—an understanding that has had an important influence on generations of doctors. Finally, her belief that our illnesses can offer us insight into our lives and our souls' growth remains radical in the medical field.

The Well-Lived Life will become a classic not just for generations of patients and practitioners, but also for people who are simply longing for a richer and happier life. Like Dr. Gladys herself, it seems to speak as much to the aches of the soul as to those of the body. This book explores the deepest source of where illness and health, dis-ease and well-being originate. The healing she advocates for is as much spiritual as physical. Dr. Gladys explains that true health is about transforming our relationship with life's inevitable challenges, suffering, and illnesses so that we can experience profound joy and fulfillment.

Providing a road map for how to experience all that life has to offer, Dr. Gladys models everything she teaches. She gives readers a shining example of life as it is meant to be experienced: as a moving, evolving process where we spend our energy wildly and “age into health.” In a world that is often anti-aging, Dr. Gladys offers us a positive vision of what our inevitable march of years can become—a source of ever greater joy and fulfillment as we continue to learn and fulfill our soul's true purpose. In other words, how we can live our best life in every moment, so that when our days come to their eventual end, we can know they were truly well-lived.

Dr. Gladys's six secrets are brought to life by her inspiring personal stories and those of her patients, many of whom experience truly miraculous healing. Her patients don't just heal their diseases, they heal their lives. This book is the culmination of everything Dr. Gladys has learned and taught for a century. And while many may consider her life well-lived, it's worth noting that she's not done living it yet. Dr. Gladys lives a more active life than many half her age, and she still has a ten-year plan. As she proudly states, at nearly 102, she's just getting started.

Copyrighted Material

Introduction

TOWARD LIFE

I turned 102 this year. As a doctor in her second century, I am often asked the secret of a long, healthy, happy life. Do I run? Do Pilates? Eat cake?

No, I don't run. I do occasionally do Pilates. And yes—I do eat cake. In fact, I really love cake. I even popped out of one for my ninety-fifth birthday.

After nearly eight decades in medicine, I've treated many patients who were so bent on finding the perfect diet that they made themselves sick; others who were so afraid of dying that they nearly gave up living; and almost all of them hoping I might tell them what to put into their smoothies so they could live forever—or at least an extra few years.

Unfortunately, even after more than a hundred years on this planet, I still have yet to discover a secret ingredient that has been proven to ensure a long and healthy life—well, not one you can put into a blender, anyway.

But I can help you discover the secrets of true health and happiness. They have nothing to do with vitamins or supplements. Instead, they're based on a simple shift in perspective.

Over my many decades in practice, I've come to understand that the point of medicine—and of life—is quite different from what I was taught in medical school. Most people think that the role of medicine is simply to promote physical well-being through putting a stop to whatever ails us. Yet the greater aim is to create a suitably healthy environment—the body—in which the soul can fulfill its purpose.

Each of us came here to do something. And as I see it, true health has nothing to do with diagnosing a disease or prolonging life just for the sake of it; it's about finding out who we are, paying attention to how we're called to grow and change, and listening to what makes our heart sing.

This perspective reflects my larger philosophy: that each individual is part of a greater whole. Just as all the cells in our body work together to sustain life, all living things work together to create the universe we live in. Each of us is therefore both unique and essential.

To understand this broader and more complete view of illness and healing—and of life itself—we need to understand how well-being really works. Contrary to what the medical establishment believes, doctors don't heal patients; only patients can heal themselves. As doctors, we apply skill, knowledge, and ingenuity to treating our patients. We care deeply about people, and we funnel that compassion into our work. This is our sacred role on Earth. Yet ultimately, the best doctors know that healing comes from within.

This may be a surprising admission to hear from a medical doctor like myself. Yet I'm no stranger to alternative views on health. I was born to osteopathic physicians—my mother was one of the first women to graduate with a DO, and my father was both a DO and an MD. They raised me in India, where I was exposed to a wider range of experiences than most of the peers I trained with in medical school. Starting in the 1950s, alongside my husband, Dr. Bill McGarey, I began to research and discuss ideas that were cutting edge at the time: the thought that we are souls having a human experience, that some part of us is interconnected with other people, and that we come here as part of a personal and collective mission of growth

and healing. Bill and I were part of the small team that cofounded the American Holistic Medical Association in 1978 with the goal of bringing a holistic understanding—one that unites body, mind, and spirit—to modern Western medicine. I've remained dedicated to that mission ever since.

It's important to note right at the start that holistic medicine is not necessarily what we call alternative medicine; it incorporates a variety of healing modalities, including the allopathic treatments that many know as modern medicine or Western medicine.

The term *holistic medicine* refers not to the strategy but to the approach. It's about treating the whole patient, not just the disease. It's about seeing each individual as a complete and complex being, one with a unique set of physical, psychological, and spiritual characteristics, as well as a personal set of goals to complete in his or her lifetime. The word *holistic* combines *whole* and *holy*, not in a specifically religious sense but in a way that deeply respects the perfection of each human soul and sees the body as an instrument that assists the soul in its tasks. Diseases and symptoms—from simple aches and pains to metastatic cancer—are also part of that perfect design. By showing us where the body is hurt, they show us precisely where the soul needs to work next.

That's why when someone comes in with a headache, I might ask him about his dreams, or when someone comes in with a chronic illness, we might spend our session talking about what happened to her in her childhood. It's the reason many of my patients don't just come to me to discuss only their physical challenges but their emotional and spiritual challenges, too. Each of us is a complex ecosystem of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and sensations, all of which play into our state of health. I'm not just interested in relieving my patients' symptoms; I'm interested in helping them see their current distress in the context of the greater journey their soul is undertaking.

Life's challenges point us to the part of our soul that is ready to transform. As an acute form of challenge, suffering is a blaring siren that is sure to get our attention. It screams, "Wake up! Pay atten-

tion! You have work to do!” Of course, each of us can work to avoid suffering, and we should. But when we approach our own suffering with curiosity, asking it what it may have to teach us, it takes on new meaning. This is true of any kind of suffering—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

When the holistic medical profession says that the mind can influence the body, some people worry that we are saying that the patient caused his or her illness. Others hear that we can learn from our suffering and think that means we deserve it. I understand that people might misinterpret this approach, so I want to clarify: I am not encouraging martyrdom or suggesting that suffering is deserved. I’m also not suggesting that shifting your perspective is the only part of the work. When you have a broken bone, it may need to be reset; when society has a major problem, it may need to be uprooted. Yet even as we work to attend to the physical realities of our bodies and our world, some degree of suffering is unavoidable, so we may as well use it to guide us forward.

This is because although our well-being is *related* to the challenges we face, it isn’t entirely *governed* by them. Many people live with diseases and even great pain while remaining joyfully connected to their purpose. Others are disease-free and still wake up not wanting to be alive. Health doesn’t require us to live in a problem-free body, just as happiness doesn’t require us to experience a problem-free life. Health and happiness are about being so connected to our own life force that we feel we fit into the world around us.

True health is about living *with* the world around us as an engaged, participatory experience. It’s about cooperating with the living force within us: our will, our desire to be here and to share our gifts with the world. Our willingness to do so becomes our sense of purpose, and once we have that, our souls can be healthy in any state.

In this book, I will guide you in finding and activating your healing and your learning throughout your life so that you can live each day to the fullest. I will share with you the six profound secrets that can help us in the process that I call *turning toward life*. But you are ultimately in charge of the process. You are the one living your life,

and in the end, you are the one who can truly heal it. Your health and vitality—and, yes, your purpose and your happiness, as well—depend on creating a doctor-patient relationship with your own self where you are listening closely to what feeds you and brings you joy, as well as prescribing, for yourself, the healing you most need.

If I could distill my life's work—and my purpose in writing this book—into one sentence, it's this: **To be truly alive, we must find the life force within ourselves and direct our energy toward it.** This shifts our orientation, calling us to face everything in life and engage with it. You may be thinking to yourself: *I engage with my life! After all, I'm the one living it!* But I'm referring to a joyful, participatory engagement that extends to every breath and every moment. I'm talking about dancing a two-step with life itself, finding our willingness and our positivity to keep dancing no matter what it throws our way. When life gets tough, we don't drag our feet; instead, we become curious and we engage even more. Even in the depths of our challenge, we still have access to gratitude.

Along the way, I'll introduce you to some of the incredible patients whom I have had the privilege to support as they connected more deeply with their soul's purpose, embraced joy more fully, and learned how to accept love and care from sometimes unlikely sources. In some cases, their healing was nothing short of miraculous, but there was a science behind those seeming miracles. It involved their aligning with the life energy within themselves.

You'll notice that each of those people had to actively participate in their healing. They had to shift their perspective willingly, using whatever life force they had. I treated them all with love as I helped them face their challenges. Some healed from their physical malady, while others learned to make peace with a chronic condition. Some eventually died, while others lived nearly as long as I have. All got closer to their soul health. They reconnected with their reason for living, and they lived well.

In addition to these stories from my practice, I'll share stories from outside the clinic. My unusual life path has taken me all over

the world, and it's been long enough to give me some good stories to tell. I get as much purpose from my role as a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and now even great-great-grandmother as I have from my role as a doctor, so I've included bits about that as well. I learn something new every day, and I've had many opportunities to practice what I preach.

I was also blessed to be influenced by a host of extraordinary people. I'll introduce you to my parents, Dr. John Taylor and Dr. Magdeline Elizabeth "Beth" Siehl Taylor, who were pioneering osteopaths and people of faith. They devoted their lives to treating underserved populations in India and raised me and my four siblings there between world wars I and II. You'll meet two of those siblings—my brother Dr. Carl Taylor and my sister, Margaret Taylor Courtwright—both of whom joyfully faced every moment right up until they died. You'll meet my uncompromising Aunt Belle and Harday, our beloved nanny, whom we called "Ayah." (Ayah and her husband, Dar, who cooked for us, were members of our family, though I acknowledge that we would likely call her by a different name today.) You'll also encounter several familiar names of trailblazing public figures whose lives serendipitously intersected with mine.

As you read the stories of my patients and my life, I hope you'll be able to make more sense of your own. It's my intention to help you explore what might be happening to you, so you can understand your own unique body and soul and take charge of your own life and healing. I've treated thousands of patients, and no two were the same. You're forging your own path in life. Your soul is on its own sacred mission, housed in your unique and brilliant body, and only you can direct that process.

Through these stories, you'll connect with my six secrets on a personal level. Much of my philosophy used to be on the edge of accepted truth, but science is catching up! I maintain that it's important for us to embrace science, because it provides us a clear, concrete way of understanding the world. I'm pro-science because I'm pro-question—I like to dig into things and figure them out. At the

same time, being pro-question means understanding that there is plenty that science hasn't explained yet. It's always worth asking a question, even if we don't yet know the answer.

I'll also help you ground my six secrets in your heart and body through a series of simple exercises. Each secret includes a small contemplative practice, which I encourage you to do however you see fit—on a walk, with pen and paper, or any other way that calls you. None of these is a cure-all; they're more of what my mother would call "make-dos," which ask us to make the most of what we have been given. And they certainly aren't homework, because I always hated homework! Instead, they are small practices that can inspire a new, holistic perspective on how to live life well.

Hopefully, if you practice them enough times, these exercises can become habits that you can bring into your daily life. You are welcome to adapt them however you need, because if you take one thing from this book, I hope it's that you are absolutely capable of directing your own health and healing as well as your own life and learning. I believe that it isn't enough to just talk about these ideas, we also need to live them—we need to make them real by feeling them in our bodies. So as you're thinking about these topics, I've offered simple ways for you to act them out, feeling into them through embodied practice.

If you've picked up this book, you're already on the journey of aligning with your soul and connecting with your purpose. But none of us can do this alone—especially not right now.

Throughout our lives, many of us find ourselves asking deep, burning questions: *Who am I, truly? Why am I here? How should I spend my days—doing what, and with whom? When this is all over, what is going to have made life worth living?* Faced with uncertainty from all angles, these questions feel even more urgent today.

I want you to access the wisdom deep inside you that enjoys engaging with these questions and isn't in a rush to answer them. I want to help you see what's possible when you connect with your own truth—no matter what anyone else has to say about it.

Before we get started, I have a story to share.

In early 1930, I was onboard a train from Delhi to Bombay (now Mumbai) with my family, feeling sorry for myself to be returning to the United States, where I would be subjected to ironed dresses and proper manners and other things my wild-hearted being just couldn't bear. I'd finally had a teacher I liked at school and was devastated to leave, but my parents assured me that we'd be back soon enough. They had been granted a furlough, and we were going to stay near my father's family wheat farm in Kansas. Little did I know that when we were there, the Great Depression would begin, grounding us in Kansas for more than two years—at nine, I could not comprehend such things. All I knew was that we were leaving India, saying goodbye to Ayah and Dar, and going to a faraway land I had visited only once and didn't remember.

My dusty face was pressed against the bars of the window, watching the beloved land of my birth go by, when the train started to slow. A crowd had gathered along the railroad tracks, following a procession ahead. The women were dressed in their best clothes, and children were dancing and throwing flowers. Up ahead, in the first-class part of the train, everyone continued to sit primly as if nothing were happening. But in the third-class car, where we were sitting, people were climbing out of the windows and running to join the crowd; others ran along the tops of the train cars, their feet thundering on the metal roof.

As the train inched forward and overtook the procession, the people marching ahead began to come into view. In front, there was a small man wearing a simple white *dhoti*—a cloth wrapped around his waist and thighs—and carrying a *larthi*, a wooden staff. Though the sun beat down on him, he sauntered along with joy, fully engaged in his life and purpose. By then people had begun to shout his name, but I already knew I was seeing the legend my parents had told me about with such respect, the man who was lifting the people out of their oppression and into the light of empowerment: *Gandhiji*.

The train stopped, and after hours of feeling its monotonous rumble through my body, the sudden stillness felt electric.