



AGING TODAY

Embrace the Plateau to Master Heart Health



By Bob Roth, Managing Partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions

My Aunt Viv, of blessed memory, attended a conversational Hebrew class for most of her entire adult life. Once a week the students gathered and discussed current events, culture, and family, entirely in Hebrew. I was always in awe of Aunt Viv's self-discipline and dedication, but what I now understand is that this lifelong pursuit of mastery was mostly about the journey. The end-product of her effort was the process itself, the comradery and how it felt to be alive and learning. Hers is a great example of a life well lived.

February, National Heart Health Month, is a great time to mirror the concept of mastery by celebrating the process. Visualize the practice of a heart healthy lifestyle journey with many inevitable bumps in the road and challenging plateaus. The rewards are profound and realized with positive changes put into an action plan. With one calendar page turned on 2019 and the power vested in me by my readers and fellow baby boomers, I hereby grant amnesty to embrace the plateau. If we embrace the process without expecting perfection, there is a far greater likelihood to make a heart healthy commitment a way of life.

I started thinking about the concept of mastery observing the progress that my wife Susie has made as she took up the sport of tennis. Beyond the very real thrill of victory and agony of defeat is the confluence of training props, YouTube videos, endless shadow swings, and tennis specific Instagram hash tags. Subconsciously, I know she would love to give me a whoopin' on the courts. Reality is that I love seeing her living the process embracing the plateaus.

I think most of us have a very goal-oriented view of the concept of mastery. We think about our childhood sports idols, great inventors and scientists, writers, business leaders, and activists.

We learn of the journey to reach the pinnacle, the destination, the accolades and the applause. The plateaus and frustrations are often discussed only to highlight how the seemingly immortal reached mastery.

Most people embark on the road to mastery in an area that holds interest. With heart disease causing 1 in out of every 4 deaths per year, this gives great motivation to spark interest. If you want to spend your golden years traveling, perfecting your golf game, or learning to play bridge it matters how you live right now.

If we stop to consider those who paved the way for us. The great scientists, inventors, and thinkers whose dedication to mastery enables us to live free, in temperature-controlled homes, driving and Ubering to our destinations. The good life gives us the choice to consider what is next. Imagine if we were still battling polio and other diseases for which the road to mastery gave us vaccinations.

A life of abundance and indulgence allows quitting as an option. This quick fix anti-mastery mentality has crossed over to how we care for our own health. Why worry about high cholesterol when you can pop a pill to keep it under control.

Heart disease prevention is about making choices for your future by being physically active, eating right, controlling stress, limiting alcohol, and getting quality sleep. Stay on the road to mastery to good health by making small changes and steady progress. Embrace the plateau. Celebrate the fruits of your accomplishments knowing that a new plateau awaits just beyond them. My hope is that as a society we can live a healthy lifestyle and learn to love the process.



This column was published in [Lovin' Life After 50](#) and [Jewish News](#) as Cypress' monthly contribution.

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