

Role Models of Health

Be True to Yourself.

by Greg Damian (2006)



When Cory Holly was eight he dreamed of traveling around the world. It started Christmas day when he received a 12” globe of the world. He would spin and twirl that globe around for hours, dreaming of where he wanted to go and what it would be like. That dream came true at age 19 when he left home by himself returning almost a year later.

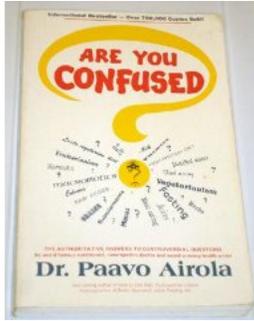
Cory continued to travel throughout his life. He has traveled to all continents except Antarctica. He has a goal to go to every country in the world. So far he has been to 60. During his journeys, Cory lived and worked with people from many different cultures. He observed what they ate and how they moved their bodies. When he saw people eating high quality food (unprocessed and organic) in combination with physical activity there was without exception vibrant health.



Cory is health and fitness. Everything he thinks and does is somehow related to health. He works in both the health food and fitness profession and he really lives the life. Born and raised in Alberta Canada, Cory always had a natural interest and affinity for sports of every kind. He didn't think about anything else. He just wanted to play sport. At age 12 he started lifting weights and fell in love with natural bodybuilding. He quickly solved the riddle of steel. He discovered that his mind was more powerful than the iron.

School was just a vehicle to play sport. He would bring extra hockey sticks to school just so he could invite others to play hockey with him before morning class. He would skip out of regular classes so he could attend other physical education classes. Cory didn't care about winning or losing, he just loved playing.

Cory learned a great deal about other people by playing. He believes that sport does not build character, but only reveals it and he could determine through close observation if people were real and if they had integrity based on how they played sport. Just as importantly, sport became the expression of the joy of living for Cory.



At age 17 after moving to British Columbia, by chance Cory came across the book, *Are You Confused?* by Finnish naturopath Dr. Paavo Airola. Cory feels like it was written for him. On the page he turned to it said that eating white flour, sugar, salt and refined food as a staple would destroy his health, reduce his healthspan and actually cause heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity.

This was the first time he had heard anything like this. The people in his life including coaches, physical education teachers, parents and other athletes had never mentioned that nutrition had anything to do with anything.

Food was just fuel for the fire. Dr. Airola's book suggested that the best way to live your life is to nourish the body with whole food and supplements and maintain a high standard of physical fitness. Dr. Airola became the first of many mentors for Cory. Cory learned it was possible to stay well and remain disease free for life by applying specific principles defined in biological medicine.

Cory grew up without a father but deeply respects and loves his mother. At about the same time he came across *Are You Confused?* his grandfather had a heart attack. Cory says that his grandfather, who he greatly admired, worked excessively, smoked tobacco, ate refined food, engaged in no physical activity and was unhappily married. Cory believed his death was premature and could have been prevented. This loss affected Cory profoundly but taught him a great lesson.

Achieving recognition for his success in sport, Cory received a scholarship at Western Washington University where he played football, threw the hammer and wrestled. To provide additional income, he also worked in a local gym. This is when Cory really made the connection that nutrition was totally relevant to the size and strength of muscle, to the density of bones, to athletic performance, recovery and the prevention of sports injuries.



It also solidified his conviction to health on a personal level and led him to a great sense of personal power. Cory became extremely clear and confident about what he wanted. To stay well life-long became his overwhelming passion, but to achieve this goal he needed to know what the science said in terms of what to take, when and how much.

When Cory returned to Canada, he immersed himself in the health food and fitness business. He was working out at a gym named Spartacus that he ultimately co-owned and managed with his wife Tracy Holly. During this time Cory completed his Doctor of Naturopathy degree through the Clayton College of Natural Health and began writing his first health and fitness column for a national health magazine.

Cory wanted to learn everything he could about the entire health food industry, so he started working in retail health food stores. Then he managed them. After that he managed chains of stores and soon came to own one. Finally he worked the supply, distribution and wholesale side of the business before becoming an independent consultant to the industry and a supplement formulator.



Cory learned a great deal about the health food business through his experience. Because of his love for exercise and sport, he decided that sports nutrition would be his major focus of research and investigation. This is how he met his friend and mentor Dr. Michael Colgan.

Cory learned that not everyone in the health industry was noble, honorable and committed to health. Cory estimates that only 20% of the people in the health food business are truly committed to health by action. He feels that at least part of the reason is that education in the health food industry is not compulsory or regulated. He also realized that the health and fitness industries, although intrinsically related, function as two separate camps.

Most of the people associated with the health food industry are interested in organic whole foods and natural health products but lack the fitness and training component. The gym crowd is fit, but commonly eats refined food without discretion. The significance of hydration is not well understood and natural food is seldom used as medicine to prevent disease. Although this is changing, many athletes do not understand the restorative power of whole food or the enormous value of dietary supplements.



In order to provide standard education for the health food and fitness industry, Cory developed the Certified Sports Nutrition Advisor (CSNA) program from scratch. Retailers can't sell products they don't understand or engage with customers professionally without product knowledge and quality sales training. Beginning in 1990, the CSNA program evolved over fifteen years before completion to include many topics including naturopathic medicine, sports physiology, biomechanics of body, biochemistry, anatomy, emotional, spiritual and metaphysics.

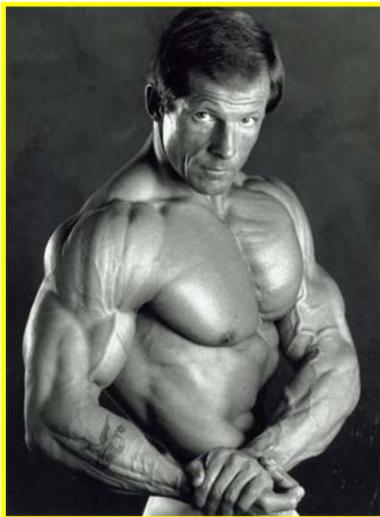
Cory compares the CSNA program to an instruction book or an owner's manual for life. It is designed to teach students how to preserve function and stay well for the duration of their entire life.



Cory ultimately incorporated himself and formed the Cory Holly Institute. The Institute is committed to educating the world in sports nutrition, health and fitness. This objective is achieved by providing people of every age and background with the educational tools and learning resources they require.

The Institute distributes the CSNA education program, a monthly audio series called Sports Nutrition Update (SNU) and publishes a variety of health and fitness books. Cory encourages everyone to absorb as much objective, science based health and fitness information as they possibly can. Information that when applied overcomes superstition, confusion, fear, apathy, grief, purposelessness and negative emotions.

Cory's connection to exercise and sport is relentless. At age 48, he trains 6 days per week to keep his body strong and resistant to disease. Cory desires wellness above all and enjoys looking good in the mirror. He emphasizes a mix of functional training and bodybuilding to prevent physical impairment that might keep him from playing sport. As a Master's athlete, Cory participates in track & field and natural bodybuilding. At age 40 he won the Masters Men category in the CNBA Western Canadian Natural Bodybuilding Championships. In 2003 Cory was the recipient of the Canadian Health Food Association's Sports Nutrition Hall of Fame Award. In 2004, he won the Masters and Overall Men's Category in the WNSO Canada West Natural Bodybuilding Championships.



Cory loves the challenge of competing as a Masters athlete and is inspired by athletes who compete in their 60's, 70's and even their 80's and beyond. He sees these people as living examples and proof that we can remain functional and fit life long provided we stay active and nourish our bodies with excellent nutrition.

Cory believes that one of the major reasons people struggle with the management of their personal health is low self-esteem. That is, how they feel about themselves and how they view the world.

Countless numbers of people are disillusioned or confused about their purpose and existence. Many dedicate their lives solely to the acquisition of money, material possessions and titles instead of getting inside of themselves and learning who they are. Cory calls this the “Journey of Self Discovery.” People often believe things about themselves told to them by others that are not true. Until people find approval in themselves and not in others they are never able to release themselves from their self-made prisons and pursue their goals and heart felt ambitions. Cory believes that true freedom comes through self-reliance and faith in your own judgment.

Cory encourages us to be true to ourselves, to believe in ourselves and to get in touch with the dreams we had as children but forgot or stopped believing in. Cory says, “A truly successful person is one who loves, honors and respects themselves, takes excellent care of themselves and has the courage to think for themselves. Thought is the most powerful force in the universe. All action is preceded by thought. We think everything into being. We choose the path that we take and how we respond to all of life’s situations.”

Cory invokes the Greek model as he describes the complete person as one who is lean, healthy, fit, strong, agile, athletic and highly functional. His ideal is self-made, possessing a massive interest in searching for truth and above all, is kind, compassionate and non-hostile. Cory believes in two major principles regarding human conduct. The first is also the prime directive of natural medicine (*Primum non nocere*) “First, do no harm.” The second fulfills a practical code for living in the world, “Stay out of harms way”. Cory goes on to say that the purpose of life is to pursue excellence, demonstrate progress and enjoy yourself – have fun! Focus less on winning and more on how you play the game of life. A simple basic review of everyone’s ultimate end is that no one really wins, no one owns anything and no one has any real advantage over anyone else.

The purpose of Cory’s life continues to be to live according to the statutes and principles that govern optimum health and wellness. He is compelled to promote health and wellness with integrity by being true to himself. He calls this “The Science of Living Well”. His reward is a functional, lean, muscular body free of disease plus the satisfaction of knowing that he has made a positive worthwhile contribution. His children, family and friends are his treasure. He encourages everyone to lay down their weapons and make the acquisition of optimum health and wellness their most important and number one personal objective in life. Cory truly believes that Health is our greatest Wealth.