

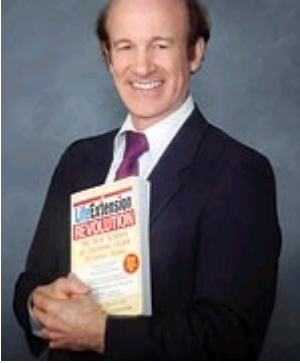
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## Wellness PROFILE

### Dr. Philip Lee Miller

Leading the "Life Extension Revolution"

By Dale Kiefer



Dr. Philip Lee Miller, author of *The Life Extension Revolution: The New Science of Growing Older without Aging*, is one of the world's leading authorities on anti-aging medicine. Dr. Miller is among 16 cutting-edge anti-aging doctors interviewed by actress and bestselling author Suzanne Somers in her new book, *Ageless: Bioidentical Hormones and Beyond*.

Although he founded and now serves as medical director of the thriving Los Gatos Longevity Institute in California's Silicon Valley, Dr. Miller came to anti-aging medicine only after a "wake-up call" from his own aging body. After spending years on the front lines of conventional pathology-based medicine as an emergency department physician, Dr. Miller was alarmed to learn that his own cholesterol and triglyceride levels were soaring into the stratosphere.

#### PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF

In the ER, Dr. Miller had treated a steady stream of people in crisis. As he notes in his introduction to *The Life Extension Revolution*, "Even then, I knew that most of them were suffering from conditions that could have been avoided through a healthier lifestyle, nutrition, and preventive medicine." Now it was his turn to face the consequences of years of constant stress combined with less-than-ideal dietary choices.

Against the advice of his internist, Dr. Miller decided to trust that drugs are not always the answer. He had begun training at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, where he was learning a new approach to medicine—one that emphasized nutritional therapies for preventing and treating illness. Dr. Miller decided to begin practicing what the Whitaker Institute was preaching. He eschewed drugs, opting instead for a combination of dietary modifications, lifestyle changes, and nutritional supplements. Within five weeks of adopting his new regimen, Dr. Miller's blood lipids had normalized significantly, reducing his risk of early death from stroke or cardiovascular disease. Less than a year later, his lipid profile was excellent, he had lost substantial excess weight, and he felt younger and more energetic.

This transformation proved instrumental in propelling Dr. Miller's career in an entirely new direction. After attending an early meeting of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, he opened his own center for comprehensive, anti-aging medical care. Today, he is recognized as a pioneer in the practice of functional, integrative anti-aging medicine.

#### A NEW WAY TO PRACTICE MEDICINE

The differences between Dr. Miller's current approach to medicine and the pathology-based medicine he formerly practiced are striking. "The way we work is the very opposite of what I call 'drive-through medicine,'" he explains. In contrast to the fast-paced, high-volume practice of emergency medicine, Dr. Miller's anti-aging practice is low volume. This allows patients and clinicians alike to interact in a less stressful environment. "Now I'm able to spend lots of time with my patients, getting to know them, getting to the root cause of their complaints, and treating them from the bottom up," says Dr. Miller. "This is the way I always wanted to practice medicine." His patients could not be happier, with results that go beyond merely looking younger or feeling better. "We not only restore function and productivity," he notes, "but also a measure of inner peace and happiness."

No wonder, then, that actress, author, and anti-aging activist Suzanne Somers sought Dr. Miller's advice while researching her first book on growing older gracefully, *The Sexy Years*. With the publication of her newest book this autumn, his expertise is on prominent display. Somers devotes a chapter to Dr. Miller's views on the relationships between hormones and stress, and their implications for aging and health.



Although Dr. Miller named his clinic the Longevity Institute and is a member of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, he is more likely to describe his approach as functional medicine. "We restore function," he explains. "We're the first generation in human history that I think can focus on thriving, not just on curing disease." Dr. Miller emphasizes that this new approach is more integrative and collaborative than conventional medical care. "If I had to choose one label that best describes what I do, it would be integrative medicine," he says. "It is a more eclectic and inclusive approach, combining 35 years of medical experience using conventional approaches with what is now called alternative medicine."

The benefits of this new approach are numerous. "It means using a larger 'tool box,'" says Dr. Miller. "It is more creative because it goes beyond conventional medical practice as determined by insurance companies, HMOs, and other governing bodies, and includes so much more that can benefit the patient. In cardiovascular medicine, it means treating the heart in standard ways, but then using testosterone to strengthen the heart muscle, as well as CoQ10, carnitine, taurine, and much more. My goal is to keep patients out of the hospital and healthy and productive far longer."

Dr. Miller notes that various terms have been proposed to describe this emerging specialty, including longevity medicine, rejuvenation medicine, and age-management medicine. "They're all an attempt to find the most descriptive and acceptable terminology for the profession and the public," he says. "I'm proud to foster the 'anti-aging revolution' or the 'life extension revolution.' But make no mistake—it is a fresh and new approach to the patient."

### **HELPING PEOPLE "FEEL LIKE THEMSELVES AGAIN"**

This innovative approach allows practitioners such as Dr. Miller to focus on restoring function to aging individuals and helping people feel like themselves again. "Many of my patients are not in optimal health—they're not diseased, but they just don't feel right," he explains. "They may feel weak and unfocused, or have low energy or feel unmotivated. They may be experiencing decreased productivity or performance. In other words, they're not functioning optimally." One of the drawbacks of modern medicine as currently practiced in the West is this failure to serve older people who are in suboptimal health. "These people are not being cared for," says Dr. Miller. "The health care system is not addressing their needs."



Dr. Miller is clearly no fan of modern medicine as it is commonly practiced. "The conventional approach is based on pathology," he notes. "We need a paradigm shift. There's a real sense that something's not right with our health care system—it's almost a national consensus." Dr. Miller feels that our current system of medical care is predicated not on maintaining optimal function, but rather on the simple question of "who's going to pay?" We need to have a national discussion regarding the coming paradigm shift," he maintains. "We need a new way of approaching medicine and patient care. Focusing on the economics of the system is not going to accomplish this."

According to Dr. Miller, with the aging of the baby-boom generation, America is poised to enter a new era of medical challenges, as millions of patients make increased demands on a dysfunctional medical system. "The system is imploding," he says. "We need to move to a new system based on collaboration, on functional recovery and rejuvenation—not on masking symptoms."

Of course, Dr. Miller adds, we will continue to need hospitals and crisis-intervention approaches to medicine. Broken bones and heart attacks will still require immediate treatments that respond to existing, urgent medical needs. "That won't go away," he notes. "But the entire system needs to look at this larger reservoir of patients who aren't feeling right."

### **ANTI-AGING MEDICINE COMES OF AGE**

Unlike many who call for radical health care reform, Dr. Miller insists that universal Medicare or some other single-payer system would stifle competition and innovation. "Allowing the government to be responsible for patients would be disastrous," says Dr. Miller. "We need a more creative and nimble approach, renewing the art and discretion of each physician to properly apply these principles." Ideally, he would like to see a reassessment of our assumptions at the highest levels of national decision making. "I want to see a reduction in the need for late-stage crisis medicine," says Dr. Miller. "Quite simply, we need a new paradigm."

In this perfect world, functional integrative medicine would gain new respect, and anti-aging medicine would be taught in medical schools around the country. "All new specialties in medicine need to mature and develop a sense of legitimacy," Dr. Miller notes. "All new ideas are resisted initially. Schopenhauer said, 'All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is

violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.' I've already seen this play out in emergency medicine, then urgent care medicine, and now anti-aging medicine. It is the price we pay to constantly stay at the forefront of medical frontiers."

Anti-aging medicine goes beyond preventive medicine's familiar admonishments to eat right, exercise, and get plenty of sleep. "Where anti-aging medicine comes into its own," says Dr. Miller, "is in rebalancing hormones to restore mental health, clarity, youthfulness, and vigor." This delicate orchestration of hormonal balance, achieved by tweaking existing hormone output and occasionally adding bioidentical hormones to the mix, requires the services of an experienced physician with expertise in endocrinology.

Hormones, as it turns out, are a loaded topic. As Dr. Miller acknowledges, "We haven't developed a national consensus regarding the benefits of hormones." This is despite the fact that everyone's hormone levels decline with age and these declines often correlate with similar declines in energy, mental clarity, and sexual health, among other hormone-related deficits. "These conditions may not be diseases, but they are severely debilitating," says Dr. Miller.

Fortunately, with the help of pioneers like Dr. Miller and the tireless efforts of proponents such as Suzanne Somers, millions of health-conscious adults are learning about the importance of hormone balance and the promise of anti-aging medicine.

*For more information on Dr. Miller and the Los Gatos Longevity Institute, please visit [www.antiaging.com](http://www.antiaging.com) or email [drmiller@antiaging.com](mailto:drmiller@antiaging.com).*

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