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PROFILE

Strength From Within An obscure, life-changing accident fuels a cause

July 7, 1978 started as just another day for Dave Kekich. He was working out in the gym... without a care in the world. The next day, he found himself staring at a hospital room ceiling, connected to machines, unable to move anything below his arms.

In the twinkling of an eye, this long distance running, weight lifting, exercise fanatic became a spinal cord injured cripple.

He spent the next 15 months on a round-the-world odyssey, looking for a cure that didn't exist—and finally came back home to Pennsylvania. He spent the next 19 years raising money for paralysis research, with one main goal: to walk again.

Those agonizing years gave Kekich lots of time to think. And what he discovered was, "Sure, with all the technological breakthroughs, I will probably walk again. But will I be young enough to fully recover and enjoy life like I did before?"

The hard answer was "No."

However, he discovered that extending life spans and even recovering some youth may be even more possible than curing paralysis. Suddenly, Kekich's long-term goal—walking—took a back seat to a bigger and more important goal: dramatic life extension.

He said, "If I could walk tomorrow, I'd still be faced with old age and all the horrible diseases of aging—cancer, heart disease, arthritis, stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, vision and hearing loss, osteoporosis, prostate problems, diabetes, loss of strength and energy and more.



"Aging related diseases have two things in common. First you suffer horribly. Then you die. I got a good taste of this in 1998. My mother died unexpectedly. Then, one of my two aunts, three of my four uncles and one of my business partners and best friends suddenly followed. Early the next year, another aunt had a stroke. And my dad finally died a few months ago, after his brain slowly disintegrated, one of the country's four million Alzheimer's victims.

"The sad part is, people accept these tragedies and focus their lives on secondary comforts, diversions actually. Maybe that was necessary up till now. But I firmly believe that is no longer the case. Thanks to breakthroughs in computer science (research that took 10 years can now be done in an afternoon), genomics, proteomics, nanotechnology and various biosciences, I believe that science finally has the tools to seriously attack the human aging problem."

That's why Kekich formed the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Maximum Life Foundation (www.MaxLife.org), and moved across the country from Pennsylvania to California, to be closer to the biotech industry.

He says simply, "I'm 58 years old and can't afford to wait for someone else to slow the aging process. So I devoted my life to the life sciences."

The Maximum Life Foundation's mission is to identify and fund the world's most promising anti-aging research, technologies, products and services. It is also working on a project to establish a synergistic "Mayo Clinic" type atmosphere where scientists and researchers can share ideas and collaborative research.

In the course of his research, Kekich read everything he could lay his hands on that might teach him how to live longer and healthier. That's when he discovered Life Extension Foundation (LEF), and has been a member now for over 20 years.

One benefit was that while all his friends noticed they were aging, Dave seems to have stood still in time. The older he got, the more awed his friends became. Now, every time he tells someone his age, they're usually shocked at how young and healthy he

looks.

“Some members simply want a few extra years in healthy vibrant bodies. Others seek middle age health and vitality till age 100 and beyond. But they’re all united in wanting to protect and preserve their health and the health of their loved ones.

“I believe that the efforts of Life Extension Foundation, along with the mutual efforts of groups like mine and others, will accelerate the day when we can slow, avoid and cure all the aging related diseases that ravage our minds and bodies.”

Why is this critical?

How often have you heard (or made) comments like, “Tell ‘them’ to hurry up with this or that.” Or, “Why doesn’t someone do something about it?” Well, says Dave, “I took up the challenge.”



When asked why, he says, “What if I decided to wait for ‘others’ to do something about this ‘aging business’? Sure, I could do that—knowing that there are groups like LEF spending millions and doing all the work. I could take the easy way out and let them do it all. So, let’s say I do that. However, what if one year before a life extension breakthrough one of the aging related diseases catches up to me? Then I suffer and die. But what if, by my getting involved, I help in some small way to speed up research by just one or two years. It might make the difference, literally, between my life and death. And millions of other lives, or deaths.

“Picture this: let’s say that an accelerated breakthrough gives me another ten healthy robust years. The next breakthrough might come just five years later. Because medical knowledge doubles approximately every four years now, and soon it will be three years, then two and so forth, that one extra year you added to your life positions you to enjoy who knows how many more years. Now your chance for lots more healthy life suddenly jumps from 0% to something infinitely greater!”

Kekich pointed out we don’t even have to wait for that first breakthrough. Right now, with simple life-style changes and taking supplements, you may be able to add up to 5, 10 or even 15 more vibrant disease-free years to your expected life span.

“We think science will be able to avoid and cure all diseases, but I believe it will also be able to reverse many of the ravages of aging. In other words, substitute decrepit old age years with extended years more resembling healthy middle age than ‘old age.’ ”

Doesn’t that sound like something worth working toward? LEF thinks so. “I think we should do our part to help them reach their goals, because these are also our goals—yours and mine. Just imagine what would happen if more people got involved in this cause. Even those who don’t have the time or ability to help out ‘in the trenches’ can still do ‘something.’ For example, every time someone purchases products from LEF, they are supporting life extension research.”

So, that’s what Dave was doing when he attended a July 4th BBQ a couple of years ago and met Kat Cotter.

One of the “Baby Boomers”

Born in 1957, Kat Cotter is one of the so-called “baby boomer” generation. Almost 25 years ago she was a fitness instructor and later became certified as a personal trainer. At about the same time, she was training in a hospital E.R. as an emergency medical technician in order to gain experience before she entered medical school.

However, she was surprised and saddened by the amount of people who came into the emergency department with illnesses and diseases she felt sure could have been avoided with a healthier lifestyle. Sometimes something as little as exercise or a change in diet could have been their prescription. So many of them looked, literally, 10 or 15 years older than their actual age. It was during that time that she decided that she wasn’t interested in the traditional medical field and she began to study holistic and naturopathic medicine.

Her interest in the human body and how proper exercise and nutrition affect the way we look and feel led her to become a chiropractor. She has devoted more than 20 years to the study of alternative and natural medicine and has trained extensively in clinical nutrition.

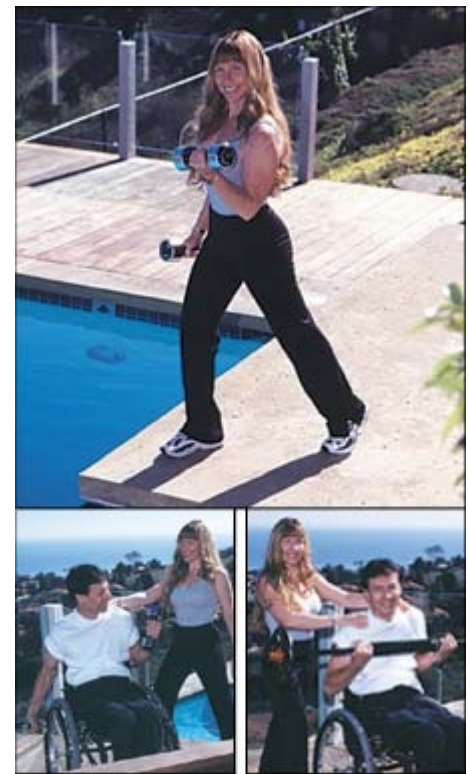
At first, Kat believed that preventive maintenance and a good lifestyle were all someone needed. But as she—and her patients—began to notice age related changes (in their skin tone, eyesight, energy levels, etc.), she realized that there was a great deal more than just “taking good care of yourself” if you wanted to look, feel and actually be as young as possible. It was then that she began to center on longevity, anti-aging and life extension and became certified as an anti-aging physician.

When she and Dave first met about two years ago, she was the Director of the Lifespan Anti-aging Center in Los Angeles. “I am very interested in all aspects of anti-aging and life extension, and I believe we can all look and feel 20 years younger,” says Kat. “I think people need to take charge of their own lives. They must realize if they don’t take care of themselves, no one else will. It’s up to us individually.”

Kat added, “For those who’d like a little advice in their quest for ‘optimum health,’ I’m happy to share my interest and experience with longevity over the past two decades. One of the things I’m always telling people is the great discovery I made when I found Life Extension Foundation. My favorite product is Life Extension Mix, and I recommend it to people all the time. I tell them to hold up the Life Extension Mix label to whatever multi formula they now use. I guarantee they’ll throw their bottle away.”

She said she actually spent several years researching different products because patients would ask her what she thought of a certain brand or if she’d seen a particular advertisement. They counted on her for advice, so she really did her homework. “And I haven’t found one that comes close to Life Extension Mix,” she says. “LEF has raised the bar and set the standard when it comes to products for health and longevity.”

So, on that day in July, they were both on different paths — but leading toward the same destination.



“In a way,” says Kat, “you could say that Life Extension Foundation brought us together. We met at a BBQ and started talking. The subject led from one thing to another and I started doing what I always do—talking about everything from nutrition and diet to ways of protecting ourselves against age-related conditions. When I mentioned supplements, Dave said, ‘I’m way ahead of you there. On a daily basis, I probably take more supplements than you do.’ As the conversation continued, we found out we both took Life Extension Mix, plus lots of other things (but he was right—he does take a few more supplements than I do).

“Dave and I both take Life Extension Mix as our multivitamin, along with the Booster, Cognitex to fight brain aging, SAME, Mega Soy, Super CoQ10, Chronoforte, Glucosamine/Chondroitin, Melatonin and DHEA before bed, the Herbal Mix and vitamin K.

“I also take Bone Assure to protect against osteoporosis, and CLA (because I’ve been reading about research showing that it may actually shrink fat cells). Dave also takes TMG to help keep his homocysteine levels down, Calcium Citrate, Perilla Oil and Super Saw Palmetto/Nettle Root. I’ve also been using Rejuvenex during the day and the Dream Cream at night and friends tell me my skin has never looked better.”

Kat joined the Maximum Life Foundation and began working with Dave last year. They got married last June and now work together

full-time. When asked how they get along as a newly-married couple in that “first year” of marriage, which is sometimes called the hardest one, Kat says, “We are actually overjoyed at being able to work together. Since Dave and I are so committed to the same things and work together on the same projects, we get along wonderfully.”

Says Kat, “Until I began working with Dave I’d only worked with people on a one-on-one basis. Working with the Maximum Life Foundation gives me the chance to affect a huge number of people, myself included.

“One project we’re currently working on is a kind of ‘anti-aging super conference’ called The Longevity Bootcamp.” The idea behind the Bootcamp is to put together a lineup of pioneering experts, as well as other experts in the areas of nutrition, exercise, stress management, preventive tests and more. The list of experts is impressive. Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw, authors of the 1980 book, *Life Extension — A Scientific Approach*, are pioneers in the field of life extension and the inventors of Durk and Sandy products that are sold through LEF. Karlis Ullis, M.D., is the author of *Age Right*, a ground-breaking book on anti-aging therapies. Dr. Ullis first began developing his theories on anti-aging medicine while at UCLA where he worked with some of the world’s greatest athletes, including Olympic Gold Medalists Gail Deevers, Jackie-Joyner Kersee, Mike Powell and “Flo Jo” Joyner, among others. He is one of the world’s foremost sports medicine physicians, and is on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Life Extension Foundation. Ward Dean, M.D., a specialist in anti-aging and life extension medicine, has authored over 100 articles on the biology of aging, and is the founder and Medical Director of the Center for Bio-Gerontology in Florida. And the list goes on. . .

“The concept behind The Longevity Bootcamp is the same as that of Life Extension magazine. No one person, no matter how much he has learned, has all the answers. I know more about anti-aging and life extension than the average person. But I wonder about everything I don’t know.” Says Kat, “Are there things I could be doing right now that could affect my own aging? Things that I’m not even aware of that could slow it down?”

“For example, I was talking to an expert in the field of exercise, and he seemed to have an answer for every question. But when I asked him what he thought of CLA for weight loss, he didn’t even know what it was. So, the point is, no matter how much of an expert someone is in their own area, no one person can know everything about every aspect of health. However, each of us should know when and where to seek out the experts. If we can do that, we can benefit from their knowledge without having to spend months or years learning it for ourselves. Other questions I often hear are, ‘I’m over 40 (or 50 or 60). How can I stay in shape without excessive wear and tear or injuring myself?’ Or, ‘What supplements should I be taking to stay as young and healthy as possible for as long as I can?’ (LEF members could probably answer this one!)”



Kat says that she subscribes to several magazines and journals, but that Life Extension is her favorite. “It is cutting-edge, and seems to cover what is in the news or on my mind that month. And I love reading the profiles. Whatever we are doing, it always helps to know there are others interesting in doing the same things. Being an LEF member is like being part of an exclusive private club—but instead of a membership to play golf, I get a membership in staying younger and healthier. Not a bad club to belong to!”



Have you ever wished you could go back in time 20 years and get a second chance? Well, if Dave Kekich and Kat Cotter have anything to do with it, you probably will!

To contact Dave or Kat regarding the Maximum Life Foundation, The Longevity Bootcamp or any other matter, go to www.maxlife.org or call 1-800-881-5346.



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