



# The Primal Connection: Follow Your Genetic Blueprint to Health and Happiness

*Mark Sisson*

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Mark Sisson, the leading voice in the Evolutionary Health movement and author of the bestseller *The Primal Blueprint*, extends the primal theme beyond the diet and exercise basics in this much anticipated sequel. *The Primal Connection* presents a comprehensive plan to overcome the flawed mentality and hectic pace of high-tech, modern life and reprogram your genes to become joyful, care-free, and at peace with the present. You'll make scientifically validated, highly intuitive connections across the board, emerging with a renewed appreciation for the simple pleasures of life and our most precious gifts of time, health, and love.

The connections are organized into 6 categories:

- **Inner Dialogue:** Reject self-doubt and gain mastery over your thoughts and actions by following the Ten Habits of Highly Successful Hunter-Gatherers.
- **Body:** Rediscover the pleasure of touch. Rethink footwear to cure foot and back pain; learn correct posture and biomechanics, maybe for the first time ever!
- **Nature:** Relieve stress at the biochemical level simply by immersing yourself in pleasant natural surroundings – anywhere, even if you are city-bound.
- **Daily Rhythm:** Prioritize healthful sleep habits, wholesome diversions, solitary downtime, and limit technology to remain focused, creative, and productive.
- **Social:** Withstand the pull of instant gratifications and narrow your social circle to honor real-life friends over Facebook. Build a supportive and nurturing tribe.
- **Play:** Rediscover your innate cravings for daily doses of spontaneous, physical fun! Finally understand the true meanings of pleasure and leisure.

*The Primal Connection* allows you to have it all; you'll honor your ancient genetic recipe for health while still enjoying the comfort and convenience of modern life.

*Q&A with Mark*

### 1. How does this book differ from *The Primal Blueprint*?

*The Primal Blueprint* focused on the ten lifestyle laws of our hunter-gatherer ancestors, with particular emphasis on what seem to be the most urgent and obvious life changing elements of the Evolutionary Health movement: eating primal foods and exercising in a manner aligned with optimal gene expression. *The Primal Connection* extends the primal theme to matters of the psyche and the disconnects inherent with high tech modern life and how to fix things.

### 2. What are the overarching themes of *The Primal Connection*?

You'll embrace three critical themes that will help you withstand the destructive forces of modern life. First,

your genes expect certain inputs to make you healthy, strong, and happy. If you create a different experience?slamming junk food or blasting artificial light and digital stimulation after dark, you'll compromise long-term health, period. Your genes don't know, or care, whether the inputs they receive are health-promoting or health compromising, they are simply programmed to fight for homeostasis at all times. Drink a soda and your genes respond by prompting the release of insulin to regulate blood sugar levels. In this refrain, the development of type 2 diabetes from prolonged excessive insulin production, and the subsequent resistance of cells to respond to insulin, is not a genetic defect but an example of gene expression at work. Your genes will fight valiantly to moderate the wildly excessive intake of carbohydrates in the Standard American Diet by producing insulin until this genetic mechanism becomes utterly exhausted and a diabetic condition develops.

The second theme is that abundance and scarcity are often mismatched with our genetic expectations. For example, our ancestors had abundant leisure time and scarce material possessions. This is something our brains are still wired to expect and appreciate, but the exact opposite often plays out today. Consequently, we feel stressed and anxious about busy schedules and consumerist, "affluenza" mentalities because they in conflict with our hard-wired genetic reference point. As Dr. Art DeVany, PhD expressed, "Modern life leaves our minds restless and under-utilized because we are confined, inactive, and comfortable. We cannot be satisfied with more and more, because we are evolved for another lifeway in which material goods do not matter. The result is that we are deeply unsatisfied with modern life and don't know why." Our genes simply don't know what to make of all our "stuff", and our lack of physical or cognitive down time to get refreshed and rejuvenated for the challenges of daily life.

The third theme is that your deep primal drive to pursue behaviors that generate feel good hormones?the key to prevailing in the survival of the fittest game?must today be tempered with common sense and evaluation of long-term repercussions. For example, we are hard-wired for a sweet tooth because we experienced an adaptive benefit to avoid poisonous plants (plant life that is sweet is universally safe to consume and rich in calories and antioxidants?survival promoting!) and consume seasonal fruits and tubers that enabled our bodies to store energy for winter months of minimal caloric intake. Yep, our ancestors fattened up for the winter! Today, with massive amounts of sugar at our disposal and few modern citizens wishing to fatten up for the winter months, it makes sense to temper this sweet tooth wiring with sensible caloric intake that is aligned with long-term health. For example, emphasizing seasonal fruit intake but refraining from year-round intake of overly cultivated, overly sweetened fruits. The same is true for the massive amount of digital stimulation we are exposed to daily. We are hardwired to be attuned to novel stimulation in our environment and kick into the fight or flight response at a moment's notice.

### **3. What are some examples of actual Primal Connections?**

**Go barefoot:** Forget motion control shoes, custom-made orthotics and other modern comforts and supports that weaken your feet, promote inefficient mechanics and promote pain and injury. Transitioning to a barefoot or minimalist shoe lifestyle promotes correct walking, running and standing technique and relieves foot and back pain. *The Primal Connection* details the right way to do it so you don't get injured or discouraged.

**Darken your evenings:** Soon after the sun sets, our genes are programmed for an elegant chain of hormonal processes that make us feel sleepy and facilitate a smooth transition from a wakeful state to sound sleep. Unfortunately, today's artificial light and digital stimulation after dark short-circuit our circadian rhythms, one of the most fundamental and health-critical natural cycles on the planet. Make your evenings as dark and mellow as possible by wearing orange or yellow-tinted sunglasses, switching to orange light bulbs or candlelight around your house, and avoiding digital screen use in the final hours before bedtime. Mellow, darkened evenings will help reconnect you with your circadian rhythm, promoting restorative sleep and

high-energy mornings.

**Stand up at your work desk:** Warning?the chair is a modern creation of dubious value. Prolonged use can be hazardous to your health and body composition goals. Retrofitting your workstation to include a standing option (okay to switch back and forth of course) will improve concentration and fat metabolism.

**Don't fear the sun!** Sunbathing helps prevent cancer?especially the most serious form of skin cancer, melanoma. Strive to maintain a slight tan (never burn of course) during the peak season. Go ahead and screen sensitive areas, but make a point to expose large skin surface areas to direct sunlight regularly. This will ensure that your body produces healthy levels of vitamin D, which helps to regulate healthy cell division and thus protect against all forms of cancer.

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