



May 10, 2010 – Grand Rapids, MI

I'm Alive V2.41

I woke up this morning and the first words out of my mouth, just as has been the case for the past 21 years or so, were "I'm alive." That's why this message is a little late—I had to wake up before it was sent. Once again this year, because there are so many new readers, I'm going to take the time to explain the significance of that statement.

My father died in his sleep on May 10th, 1969, probably of a heart attack. He was 41 years old and I was just 17. It hardly seems like 41 years ago, but it has been. He was a heavy smoker, very overweight, probably a diabetic, and he drank heavily. By the time he died, he'd graduated to a fifth of vodka every day. By all accounts, he was a functional alcoholic. He never missed a day of work, but there is no doubt he drank every day.

Why is the fact I'm alive today meaningful? For some reason I'm not quite sure about, I've come to believe that if I wake up this morning, it means I have at least one more year. It makes no sense, but I can't change the way I think about this one thing. My lifestyle is nowhere near what his was. I don't smoke. I exercise. I don't weigh what I want to weigh, but I'm on my way to maintaining a lower weight albeit a lot slower than I would like. I love the taste of Samuel Adams Boston Lager, and I would drink it all day long if it had no alcohol in it—but it does, so I limit my intake. I seem to be able to manage stress and try not to cause Paula too much. I get my fitness level tested regularly, and I'm in great shape for a 58 year old.

So what's going to happen in the next year? I'm going to focus more on men's health because way too many men are dying before their time, and if they're not dying, they have one step in the grave because they just won't do a few simple things to help themselves. I said in *Dr. Chet's Health Tips for Men* that I was done being nice about the way men ignore their health, especially baby boomer men. We're not used up and ready to be put out to pasture to live out our days—our best time is just beginning. Getting our health in line is the first step in personal leadership we need to develop. Get ready, men.

There's a lot more coming to help everyone of any gender and age to become healthier and more fit. I woke up this morning, so I have a whole year to teach, motivate, and help you get there in any way I can. But in the end, no matter what I do for you, it all comes down to a single question:

What are *you* prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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