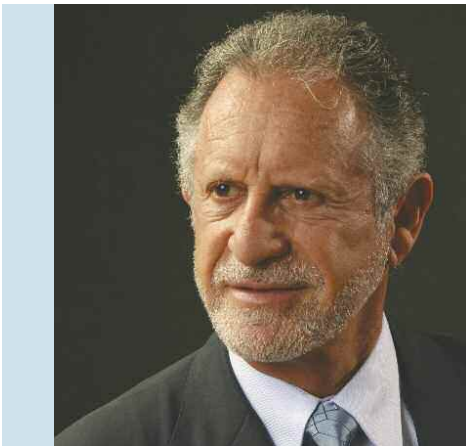


From the EDITOR



Dr. Wulf H. Utian, consultant in women's health and reproductive endocrinology, has served as Editor-in-Chief of *Menopause Management* since its inception in 1988. The Arthur H. Bill Professor Emeritus of Reproductive Biology and Obstetrics and Gynecology, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, he is also Consultant, Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women's Health Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, and Executive Director of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS). He is Chairman of the Advisory Board of Rapid Medical Research, Cleveland. He received his medical degree from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, and his PhD from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and is a Fellow of the Royal and American Colleges of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, as well as the International College of Surgeons. In 2007 he earned the DSc(Med) degree from the University of Cape Town, its highest degree and only awarded 11 times in over 100 years.

A pioneer in Women's Health issues and menopause research, in 1967 he established the Groote Schuur Menopause Research Clinic in Cape Town, the world's first such clinic. He was one of the three original founders of the International Menopause Society in 1976, of which he is Honorary Past President, and founded the North American Menopause Society in 1989.

He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and research grants, and is still an active investigator with multiple grants. Dr. Utian has written over 200 papers related to the reproductive system in women and has authored five books on menopause and its effects on women. He is editor of *Menopause: The Journal of The North American Menopause Society*.

Life is a Book, and it is Time for my Next Chapter

Have you ever truly contemplated life—your own life, in particular? The approach of 2010, a year of radical transition for me, has inspired me to do just that.

The only certainty in life is death. Until the inevitable occurs, I look backward and forward on my life as a book, the narrative of a journey. Each chapter has had its share of ups and downs, thrills, successes, failures, ecstasy and tragedy, mistakes to be learned from and experience gathered to carry forward. There have been some constants and some aspects never to be experienced again. Now I look forward to my next chapter—hopefully not the last—with excitement, anticipation of the unknown direction of this journey and a burning desire to identify and conquer a new challenge.

My Book of Life Up to the Present

Please bear with me as I rapidly review aspects of the existing chapters of my life. In thinking about them I am given pause to consider what Malcolm Gladwell stated so eloquently in his book "Outliers – The Story of Success" (Little Brown, New York, 2008):

"People don't rise from nothing. We do owe something to parentage and patronage. The people who stand before kings may look like they did it all by themselves. But in fact they are invariably the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies that allow them to learn and work hard and make sense of the world in ways others cannot. It makes a difference where and when we grew up. The culture we belong to and the legacies passed down by our forebears shape the patterns of our achievement in ways we cannot begin to imagine. It's not enough to ask what successful people are like, in other words. It is only by asking where they are *from*

that we can unravel the logic behind who succeeds and who doesn't."

To that I would add the necessity and ability to recognize opportunities and to nurture them—to grasp the golden ring.

In this spirit, I gladly pay tribute to all who influenced me as I wrote the chapters in my book; working-class parents who taught me honesty and integrity as they sacrificed for my future, teachers who inspired me, friends who introduced me to the ways of the world, a wife constantly propping me up (it is true, behind every successful man is a remarkable woman), colleagues to share science and experience, patients placing their trust in me as they taught me more than I ever taught them, and the shoulders of giants to stand on and reach for ever higher goals.

But Gladwell is correct about serendipity. A few events on just a few days shaped my life. There was the consultant in my first residency year (in 1963) who gave me a paper from the *American Journal of Geriatrics* to review for the journal club entitled "The Fate of the Non-treated Postmenopausal Woman—A Plea for Adequate Estrogen from the Cradle to the Grave." This triggered my initial interest in menopause despite the subject meriting just one line in medical textbooks at that time. There was the off-chance meeting of Bob Edwards, father of in vitro fertilization, in 1967 in London when he came into the tea room at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, trying to find a way he could harvest human eggs. This was the stimulus leading me to research and develop infertility treatments. Most remarkable was the day in Geneva in 1973 when I met Pieter van Keep, Director General of the International Health Foundation, who was to become one of my closest friends in life before his premature death. As we wandered from pub to pub we decided to form a menopause club, later to become the International Menopause Society, and a newsletter that became the first medical journal devoted to menopause, *Maturitas*. My enthusiasm for starting and nurturing national menopause organizations and publications came out of that. I could go on and on, but you get the message. Achievement develops

from where you are, who you meet and how you grab the opportunity and move forward.

Lessons Learned, Lessons Offered

I have often wondered what makes someone street smart. Is it a skill acquired in the school of hard knocks? Is it the ability to observe and really see? It is one thing to be brilliant, quite another to be smart. What differentiates a good politician from another? Why is one person

Make your own opportunities; don't wait in anticipation for something to happen. If you have a good idea, act on it and don't sit on it.

successful and another person, with a similar background, not successful? Is it luck and good fortune, an ability to read the tea leaves, a eureka moment, greater ambition, a desire to prove a point, a search for treasure, any of these or none of these? While I cannot answer these questions I do know that one learns from one's elders, peers and the younger generation. So, hopefully without seeming trite or condescending, let me offer a few lessons from the things I have learned along the way.

- Be ambitious but not too ambitious; the extreme is fanaticism.
- Grasp every opportunity to travel, absorb other cultures, broaden your mind and make a cosmopolitan group of friends. Start by introducing yourself to the international attendees at the annual NAMS scientific meetings.
- Make your own opportunities; don't wait in anticipation for something to happen. If you have a good idea, act on it and don't sit on it.
- If you make a mistake, admit it, correct it and move on. Don't compound your errors.
- If you have something to say and are convinced you are in the right, then say it—

good or bad. Don't sulk and stew over things.

- The caveat to the above is that you should think carefully before you decide what to say, and even more carefully about what you commit in writing. In this age of info technology, literally everything you document, from e-mails to social page entries, will be stored somewhere for posterity. You never know what may come back to haunt you!
- Plan the future but do not forget the pres-

Now is the time for the next generation. I am not retiring, just changing direction, tacking against the wind and seeking new horizons.

ent. My wife Moira is always reminding me that "life is not a dress rehearsal".

- When interviewing potential employees don't dwell only on their past and the present; try to get into their minds and read their hopes and ambitions for the future. You will often be surprised by what you find. Those who have "it" should be nurtured. Who you employ will determine your own success or failure.
- Manage but don't micro-manage. Give people a place to grow. If there is one real thing I have learned, it is not to judge a book by its cover. Employees given adequate rope will more often than not far exceed your expectations, and rarely hang themselves. The benefit to you and your organization is that the rising tide lifts all ships.
- When presented with a problem, clearly define whose problem it is, yours or the presenter. Don't adopt other people's problems except in rare instances.
- Expect the least return from those you have helped the most. That way you will not be disappointed.
- Treasure free time and enjoy your family

while you can. Time fleets faster than you think.

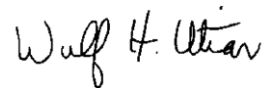
- I have always had the philosophy to leave like a good guest. Step down when you think you are at your acme. Move on to other things when you are still wanted and welcome, and have the skill and energy to take on a new challenge.

The Next Chapter

The bully pulpit of *Menopause Management* has been a privilege. For well over 20 years I have had the editorial freedom to express my opinions in these editorials and enjoy your responses. Sometimes the silence has been deafening—sometimes the response overwhelming! While I have always tried to be honest, responsible and balanced, I recognize that I have not always gotten it right. I have just reread them all, and stand by all I wrote. Hindsight is 20/20, but when looking at an editorial of 20 years ago, let's give due respect that what was said was within the existing framework of science at that time. This needs also be said about the unfortunate spate of medical liability lawsuits suffered by so many of our colleagues, who find themselves forced to defend an event of, for example, 1985 against the science of 2009.

Now it is time for the next generation. I have an exciting career ahead of me as an artist, a mountaineer, a golfer, a better family man, a friend and, yes, a consultant and teacher to all those who care to share my experience. I am not retiring, just changing direction, tacking against the wind and seeking new horizons. I hope to share this time with many of you worldwide, and thank all concerned for the support, hard work, dedication to women's health and NAMS, and, above all, the pure and unqualified friendships.

To all of you I say: Forget the destination and enjoy the journey. Bon voyage!



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