



# **A Man's Search For Meaning - BODYMAGIC (Bodymagic - A Great Body At Any Age Book 11)**

*Gary Walsh*

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For the Author, a mature student, the University experience was quite simply life transforming. An awakening, the jigsaw of his life came together in a coherent fashion. This book was submitted in this exact form as a dissertation to gain a First Class Honours Degree in Sports Science. Cited by the marking tutor as "The best dissertation he had ever had the privilege to read". Much more than a bodybuilding identity construction research paper it explores and shapes the meaning of the life of the author. A testament to the University experience for the mature student over the conformism of the school, college and university route expected of our young people. Many of whom are to be brutally honest too inexperienced and naive about real life to ever fully appreciate the university experience as active individual participants, within society. With a participants unique story to tell. I made the decision to attend University as an assist to writing a book on health, fitness and nutrition at the age of 49. I had recently made the decision to change my once turbulent, externally determined and out of control life to a life where I fulfilled my lifetime passion for writing, selling some small pieces while I wrote my book. I wrote and still write about anything and everything daily. I had left full time education in 1976 at the age of 16. English had never been a strong subject. Originally I opted to study sports science as I thought that would best suit my needs at that time. During the first year one of the units was sociology, a subject I had never come across before. I remember the subject was difficult at first as it seems to have a language all of its own. Much of the required reading was a chore but the subject awoke something in me, all of a sudden all kinds of issues that had occurred in my life were starting to make some sense. I was always well read and had always had what Foucault would call a critical attitude but had never been provided with any structure or theory to my world or to my way of thinking. For my second year I changed away from what I called the facts and figures subjects and changed to a sports studies degree course. A course that I considered would provide more meaning and understanding to the world and in particular to my world. Also an introduction to some basic philosophy, which I find fascinating. Towards the end of the second year we were introduced to the thinking of Foucault and I lost myself in the require reading something I rarely did as I normally tried to find my own related reading as I found the required academic texts often very hard going and dogmatic. I also read anything else I could find that would explain Foucault to me coherently. Actually purchasing books as treasured possessions to refer to in future projects. I have amassed quite a library in the last 3 years and I often look at the change from what I used to read to my choice of reading these days as an indicator of my journey, staring down at me from the shelves. I smile at some of my previous purchases. This was the time it finally dawned on me that I was in that moment living Foucault's concepts within the University, we all were. I had an excellent understanding of all of the course subject matter and yet often fell short of top marks. I was told on numerous occasions that I had to play the game to get top marks. So here I was in the midst of power relations, myself wanting to be creative, individual and unique but under pressure to conform. I wanted to maintain a writing style, my style, and look for unique angles to discuss. "THEY" wanted me to write the same as everyone else, the created object of academic writing, and stick religiously to what they had been teaching. In a strange, maybe warped way rather than frustrate me this made the whole degree experience so much more exciting for me and as I type this I still feel the that buzz of excitement.

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