



Meet Dr John

Dr John DeMartini is a global phenomenon and a powerful influencer on positive thinking. How did this dyslexic high-school dropout achieve such success?

As a performance and behavioural specialist, Dr John DeMartini has run events and workshops around the world for over 40 years, travelling for more than 300 days a year. He has nine international best-selling books, which have been published in 38 different languages, and he has appeared in some of the most influential films around positive thinking and health of our time. Amy Taylor-Kabbaz talks to DeMartini about where his focus comes from, and how it built his signature program, 'The Breakthrough Experience'.

Tell us about 'The Breakthrough Experience' ...

'The Breakthrough Experience' is what I have been presenting and teaching since 1989. I've done it about 40-something times a year, and in 61 countries. And what it is, is my way of sharing what the gentleman Paul Bragg did for me when I was 17 or 18 years old, and which sent my life into a whole new trajectory. It's my way of helping people transform whatever they're perceiving in their life and to help them get clear about what it is they really desire and how to create the outcomes that they want. To set clear goals, and teach them how to determine their values. I show them how to dissolve the emotional baggage that weighs them down and holds them back and turn that into fuel. I believe that people deserve to live an extraordinary and inspired and magnificent life. I've been blessed to do that for all these years.

What was that breakthrough experience when you were 17?

Well, at the time, I was living on the North Shore in Honolulu, and spending most of my days surfing,

sleeping in a tent, and living off local plants - which I didn't realise had toxic chemicals in them. After a while, these toxins accumulated and I had what looked like cyanide poisoning. It started cramping up my fingers and toes. I was surfing 11 hours a day, going out in the morning until about 11, coming back to eat something and then go back out. Then I'd come back, eat something, and go back out again until it was dark. So everybody thought that my hands and toes were cramping because I was in the cold water too much every day.

But then one day, when I was out in the water, my diaphragm stopped working: I couldn't breathe. I thought I was going to die. I eventually came to some rocks in the water and when I got there, something happened and I could breathe a little again. I tried to head to the beach, but I fell off the rocks - I got pretty beat up on the rocks - but eventually I got to the beach and I walked into the town and straight into the supermarket and looked for a buttermilk. Now, I've never had the desire to drink buttermilk my entire life! But I went in there and started guzzling buttermilk, right from the fridge. I didn't even pay for it. I just walked out of there, dizzy and nauseous, and passed out. Three and a half days later, I found myself in a tent. I don't know how I got there - there's a gap between the parking lot where I passed out and being in that tent. But three and a half days

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later, a lady found me there. She had heard groaning coming from inside the tent, and as soon as she found me, she ran off and came back to bring cash and fruit juice and liquids, and helped me to recover.

Within a few days, she'd cleaned up the tent, as I'd been pretty sick in it, and she took me to a wholefoods store. I started going to this store every day, and it was in that store not long afterwards that I saw a little flyer on the door about a special guest speaker, Paul C. Bragg, who would be speaking at a local recreation hall, and the evening included yoga, which I'd been told I needed to do to help with my spasms. So I went along, and he spoke for just under an hour - and I'm telling you, it was the most inspiring thing. He said: "We have a body, we have a mind, we have a soul, and the body must be directed by the mind and the mind must be directed by the soul. That's what we are. And we have something extraordinary to do on this planet, and we have the capacity to do extraordinary things."

Nobody had ever spoken to me like this! I was told when I was in first grade that I would never be able to read and write and communicate. I was a high school drop-out and a street kid. But that night, he inspired me to believe that I just might be somebody some day. That night, he took us into a guided imagery and meditation experience and I saw a vision of what I wanted to do. I saw a vision of me standing in front of so many people, sharing about the power we have inside to heal and to let it inspire our lives. It was the most amazing thing. I have a painting of that image now; a famous painter painted it for me and it's sitting in my office today.

And so, I started studying with Paul Bragg for three weeks. Every morning, I travelled from Honolulu to his class, and I was the only teenager

there. He taught me a lot about what we think about - what we visualise, what we affirm, what we feed our minds. My life changed completely, and all I wanted to do was try to overcome my learning difficulties and get healthier.

How did you then go on to get such an amazing education and qualifications?

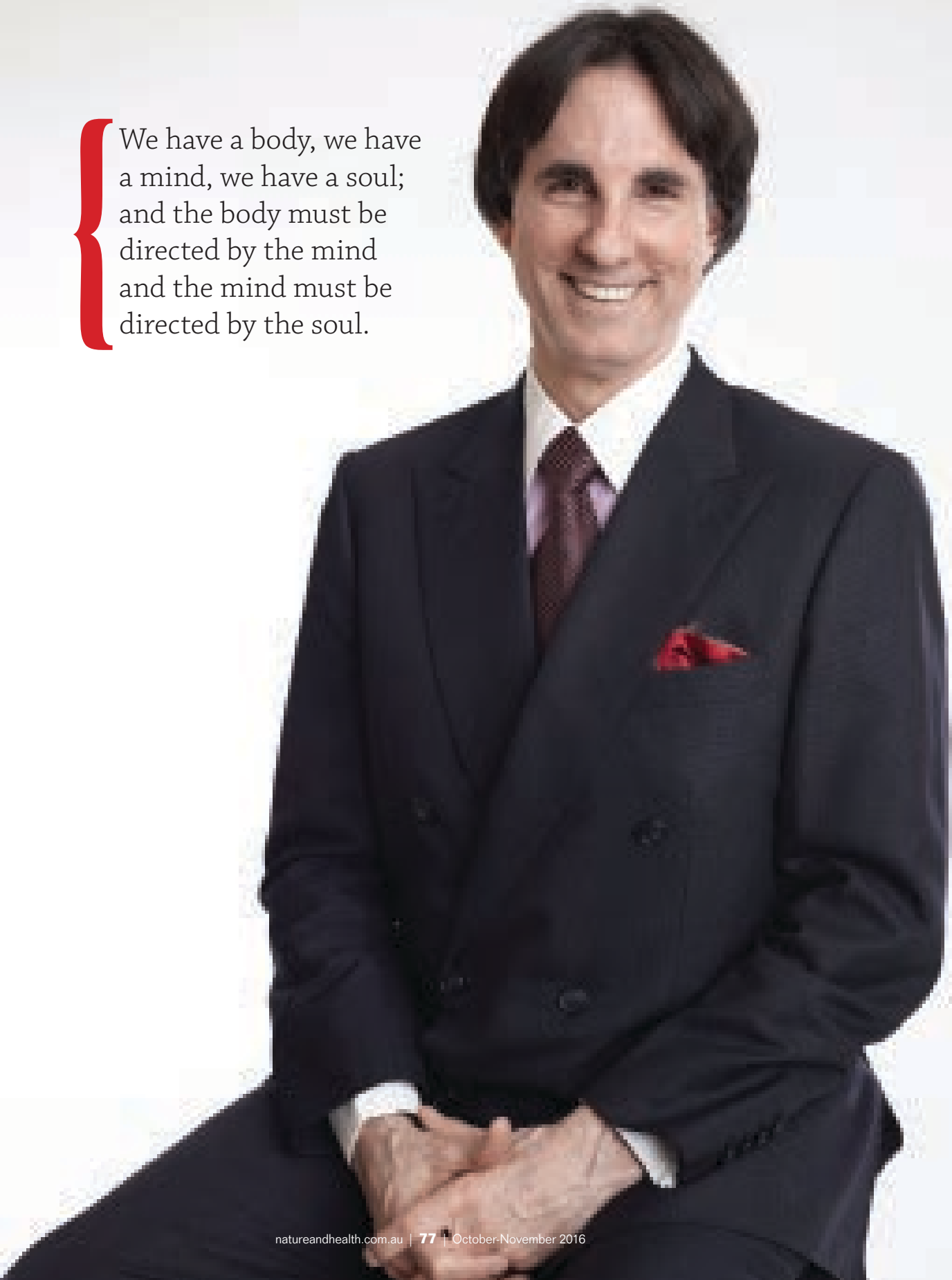
Months later I flew back to California, and I sat my high school test - and I passed it. Paul Bragg had told me that if I told myself every single day that I am a genius, then I would change my life. And so, I've never missed a day in 43 years saying I'm a genius. I didn't know what a genius was at the time, but I'd say it anyway. Now I know that a genius is your inner voice, your vision, your soul, so I started saying it and I passed the test, and I went on to the college entrance test and I passed that, too.

Then I tried to go to college - but I failed miserably. In fact, on the very first test, I only got a 27. I went outside to my car and I cried. I cried all the way home, because all I could hear was my first grade teacher saying, "You'll never read, you'll never write, you'll never communicate, you'll do nothing with your life." And I curled up in a foetal position at my parents' house, and I thought to myself, this whole idea was crazy; it was a delusion. Then my mum came home and she saw me and asked what had happened. I told her I blew the test, that I had failed. I said, "I guess I don't have what it takes." And she just looked at me, put her hand on my shoulder and said, "Son, whether you became a great teacher, healer, and philosopher, and travel the world like your dream, or whether you return to Hawaii and ride giant waves, or whether you return to the streets - I just want you to know that your father and I would love you, no matter what."

When she said that, I learned what love was. I learned what presence was. I learned what gratitude was. And that was all I needed. When I looked up, I once more saw that vision of me speaking in front of a million people, and I said to myself, "I'm going to master this. I'm going to master teaching, and healing, and I'm going to do whatever it takes." So I started reading the dictionary from the very beginning, every single page. I memorised 30 words a day. I spelled them, pronounced them, and presented it to my mum. This grew my vocabulary, so I passed the entrance test and excelled at college.

About a year later, my mum asked what I wanted for my birthday, and I told her I wanted the greatest teachings ever created in the world. So she called her brother, who was a physicist and chemist professor, and he sent two giant wooden crates of books on flatbed truck down to my parents' house. I filled my room with nothing but books. I had a little yoga mat in the centre of my room and I sat and I read for 18 hours a day, 20 hours a day. I read everything - mathematics, science, cosmology, philosophy, theology! And I did yoga the rest of the time.

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That moment when you heard your teacher say you would never amount to anything - that's the moment many of us give up, isn't it? Well, I think a lot of people don't have a mum like mine was in that moment ...

So how does someone do that for themselves? Well, if a person doesn't stop and become mindful to reflection and meditation and they let the noise ruin their life, then their outer world will dictate

their destiny. So I would tell them to stop, close their eyes, and ask themselves these questions: What is it that I would love to do in my life? What can I do to get paid to do this? What are the high-priority actions I need to take day to day to make it happen? What obstacles have I run into already, and how do I solve them in advance?

If you answer questions like these every day, amazing things start happening. You've got to give yourself permission to do the extraordinary, and you've got to give yourself the right questions and the right environment to bring it out, by sitting in meditation and thinking about what you're craving and then asking those types of questions and giving yourself permission to go after what you really want.

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If you don't have anybody who believes in you, and you are not believing yourself either, you may fall prey to the outer world and what people say and think about you. I really believe that everything that happens in your life is trying to get you to live fully. We just misinterpret it, and if we don't have anybody to show you how to reinterpret your life, you miss the messages that it's trying to show you.

So - what's the dream now, then?

I'm just going to continue! I haven't hit every country yet. We have with the Internet of course, but I haven't actually stepped in every country yet. I said when I was 20 years old that the universe is my playground, the world is my home, every country is my house. This is the platform where I share my heart and soul. I just love it.

One last question - did you ever see that woman who found you in the tent again?

I wish I could say I did, but I never met her again. And I never got to see Paul Bragg again after I left Hawaii, but I'm good friends with his daughter. She came to see me speaking in Hawaii about eight years ago, and there she was, sitting in the back of the room. In the break, she came up to the front and grabbed my hand, looked up to me - as she's very tiny - and she said, "You remind me of my father." It was so inspiring to hear that, because he was the one who inspired me to do what I'm doing today. ✨

✨ **Grace and gratitude**

DeMartini has been involved in several movies, including *The Secret*, which was phenomenally successful, and most recently, *Overfed and Undernourished*, which was based on following the story of a young boy who was overweight and depressed and totally lost.

"I thought they did a magnificent job with the film," says DeMartini. "The young boy's life was changed. I can't say I played a major role in it by any means, but I feel very privileged that I was able to participate. At the preview, I broke down in tears, because I was so touched by the movie and its objective.

"Looking at the phenomenon of the global health crisis, what I feel is at its core is this: if you're living congruently and in alignment with what is truly meaningful to you - with your highest values and with what inspires you - then you are in alignment with your forebrain, which is what governs order, self-governance, vision, strategies, and self-mastery. But if you don't live with this congruence and alignment, you automatically go down into the layer of the brain where you seek pleasure or pain and gratification from consumption of clothes, shoes, food, overeating, sugar, addictions, salt. Paul Bragg taught me: 'Don't live to eat, but eat to live', and to have a mission to your life. And so I eat wisely, because I've got a mission to fulfil. I don't want to put anything in my body that's not real food. It's not a very wise thing to do and I don't want to overeat either, because that's a symptom.

"You know when you have something that's absolutely inspiring and vitally important to you and you want to get in shape for it, and part of that is being very disciplined with your diet? Well, I like to use this analogy: let's say you're about to get married. You've got a wedding coming up in a while, so you're not going to be pigging out, or partying hard, or skipping

sleep - you will do what it takes to look and feel phenomenal on the day. You have a mission now. Now - imagine if you had that same kind of mission in your mind's eye, week by week by week, all the way through your life. If you fill each day with high-priority actions which inspire you, you just keep going. People ask me why I don't burn out - and I say, you don't. I do 18 to 20 hours a day, all the time, but no, I don't feel burnt out. You're only burnt out if you spend 18 to 20 hours a day doing stuff that isn't meaningful. You don't burn out if you're doing something you love.

"This is the key to balancing it all. That, and gratitude. I write a lot of letters and thank-you notes to people. I stop and count my blessings, and I am grateful for what I get to do each and every day. I believe that we have to be clear about our vision and focus on that vision every day. I will sometimes spend two hours on just one paragraph that I am writing, until I am satisfied that I have articulated exactly how I want something to show up in my life. I want to make sure that I have clearly defined what I'm going to do, how I'm going to do it, and what I'm going to accomplish. I remember setting a goal that I would reach a billion people with my work, which I wrote down in 1990. I wrote I wanted to reach one billion people through radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and events - and then I kept records of what I did. Literally - I monitor everything that I'm doing. And in 2006, I reached the first billion. It took me 16 years. We are now at a reach of 3.8 billion. You can live the dream - if you believe that you can live the dream."