Stupid Whole Foods Tricks

By Josh Bloom — November 1, 2016

If not for the pies, I wouldn't be caught dead in a Whole Foods. Yet this past weekend, the need for pie overwhelmed the necessity of a conscience, so I found myself inside the wretched place. OK, this is only partly true (1).

Perhaps, in a feeble attempt to offset the lack of even a modicum of conscience, I deluded myself into thinking that by making a (very) small contribution to the world of science outreach, it would somehow offset the appalling lack of integrity that I exhibited, and continues to plague me long after the pie (blueberry) is gone.

That was some damn fine pie. It's too bad the same cannot be said for some of the other products that people were wasting their money on there. For example...
OK, so if I've got this right, a company deionizes water and then puts in electrolytes, which are... ions.

Does this make any sense? I think not. Unless you think that taking the trouble to add caffeine to decaffeinated coffee is a good idea.

Likewise, if I take a leak (2), do I go to the bathroom 10 minutes later and try to pump the urine back into my bladder?

While we're in an aqueous mood, this next one isn't so funny—high pH water:
After all, what could be bad about slightly basic water? Same thing as adding a pinch of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to a glass of water.

But it's what the bottle doesn't say that is meaningful. Because they can't. Why? Because it sure seems like they are trying to trick you into thinking that this crap can prevent you from getting cancer.

The alkalinity-cancer myth has been around for almost 100 years, and it's just as ridiculous now as it was then.

And, just when you thought that there wasn't anyone in the universe dumber than Joe Mercola—not unlike beating Steph Curry in a 3-point shootout—who believes that the pH of water has something to do with cancer, here comes Jon Barron.

Barron, the founder of the Baseline of Health Foundation[^1], who just happens to sell his own supplements online, hits nothing but net from half court. Barron, disagrees with one of the only things that Mercola has ever gotten "right"—that slightly alkaline water does NOT prevent
cancer—not because it's alkaline, but not alkaline enough (3).

Before we get to that, do these guys look alike or what?

Left: Jon Barron. Right: Anthony Weiner. Or is it?

Let's not give Mercola too much credit. Sure, he had enough synapses firing to know that high pH water does not prevent cancer, he gets it right for the wrong reason:

Talk about fighting fire with fire - they are fighting acid-loving cancer cells with acid! LESS alkalinity inside a cancer cell seems to be what you want, not more. So, all of those salesmen promising alkaline water will lower your cancer risk are completely clueless when it comes to what the scientific research actually shows.

Wonderful. While various slimeballs are battling to sell you a pH-altering product which will do precisely nothing, Whole Foods plays it sneaky. Why are they selling baking soda water with pH 9.5 so prominently displayed? Perhaps it's because if you do a Google search of "alkalinity" and "cancer," you'll get 426,000 hits. Yes—many alternative medicine lemmings buy into this mentality. Is Whole Foods aware of this? You tell me.

Let's move on to the dairy aisle. Is Whole Foods trying to milk you?
The store is sure proud of not selling any butter that is made from cows that were given that icky rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone) in its butter, as is evident from the prominent display on the front, so that stuff has got to be really bad for you, right?

So it's a bit odd that in MUCH smaller letters on the back is a statement from the FDA that not only is there no difference in the butter from cows, regardless of whether they have been given the stuff, but there isn't even a test that can tell whether the BGH in the cow was there because that's what cows have, or they were given some extra.

Then there's this, which if you have a child, is all but indispensable.
Whole Foods’ environmentally sustainable, easy to grasp, motor skill stimulatory, VERY large Baby Thingy

Which looks disturbingly like this, no?

And, as long as you’re gonna walk around incinerating your money, you might as well have comfortable feet while doing so. And what could possibly do a better job than...
Whole Foods' Organic Knee Socks? This is no joke. Seriously. They were right there in the organic sock department. There is no power on earth that is gonna get me to wear these, regardless of the alternative...

So, maybe the trip wasn't as bad as, say, Knicks' season tickets, but it was still pretty bad. Except for the pie. Delicious AND gluten free! Mmmm!

Notes:

(1) This is what I left out: A female asked me to go there, AND I bought the pie. So, the second sentence should really read: "Yet this weekend, the need for pie overwhelmed the need for a conscience, and the lack of a spine, so I found myself inside the wretched place

(2) Never really cared for the expression "take a leak." You don't take the leak. You leave the leak behind. Perhaps a discussion for another time.

(3) From Barron's website [2]: "But the most famous mountain waters in the world, waters
renowned for their healing properties, are highly alkaline. I'm referring to the waters coming down from the Himalayas, and specifically to the waters of the Hunza Valley, which have a pH that runs between 9 and 11."