Moving Beyond Wellness to Wellbeing

By Andrea Lyle, RN

The terms wellness and wellbeing are often used interchangeably. However although similar, these terms mean very different things. Wellness is most often associated with one's physical health. If you are not suffering from any physiological malady, you are considered “healthy.” Wellbeing, on the other hand, is more holistic and is characterized by overall contentment and balance in all areas of your life -- mental, emotional, physical and spiritual.

These days, more and more doctors, employers, and individuals are moving their focus beyond simple physical health to wellbeing. Corporations are hiring wellness consultants to help employees address issues in all areas of their life for a greater sense of wellbeing, which, in turn, increases their work productivity. The medical community is embracing a variety of complimentary holistic approaches, while patients take a more proactive role in obtaining and maintaining their own wellbeing.

Allan Watkinson, engagement manager at Gallup Consulting, has identified five essential elements of wellbeing:

**1. Career Wellbeing**

How many people do you know love what they do each day? More importantly, do you? For most, what we do for a living takes up the largest part of our day, making career wellbeing the most important of the five elements of wellbeing. Doing work you do not enjoy on a daily basis is a stressor -- not only physically, but mentally and emotionally.

According to Alexander Kjerulf, “Chief Happiness Officer,” wellness consultant and author, hating your job causes anxiety that can result in in a depressed immune system, increased blood pressure, depression, damaged relationships, insomnia, weight gain, and serious illness. If you hate your job, you should either figure out how to improve your current work situation or find another job where you can be happy. When you find something that you love to do each day, happiness will spill over into all aspects of your life. Your health is better, relationships flourish, you have more energy, your self-confidence soars, you are more fulfilled, more motivated, more productive, and more creative.

**2. Social wellbeing**

There is compelling evidence that strong relationships contribute to a long, healthy, and happy life. Conversely, the health risks from being alone or isolated in one's life are comparable to the risks associated with cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, and obesity.

There is a basic human desire to have social interaction, to love and be loved. This desire does not refer to only romantic love, but includes an all-encompassing love for others and for life itself. Our ability to give and receive love openly and easily increases our overall happiness, which in turn improves our health, our satisfaction, our attitude, our ability to deal with stress and adds years to our lives. These are all good reasons to find healthy social outlets, look for ways to be of service to others, remain open to the love that naturally flows within you, willingly express it outwardly, and be ready to receive love in return.

**3. Financial Wellbeing**

Money helps shape our day-to-day lives. It dictates where and how we live, what and how much we buy and, to some extent, our position in the social order. Money is also intimately linked with our inner lives. Its presence -- or lack thereof -- has profound physical, mental and emotional repercussions.

More money is not always better. Many very wealthy people are also very unhappy, confirming the validity that money doesn’t buy happiness. Happiness is more directly related to satisfying relationships than to the amount of money in your bank account. Developing a healthy attitude toward money, making wise financial decisions, and not allowing money to rule your life can all increase your financial wellbeing.

**4. Physical Wellbeing**

By Gallup’s definition, physical wellbeing means having good health and enough energy to do the things you need to do. What’s more, having adequate energy includes keeping an eye on what you eat, how you move, and how well you sleep. Keep in mind your physical health and energy levels are directly related to your thoughts, beliefs and emotional health.

**5. Community Wellbeing**

Our need for social interaction is undeniable. In today’s technologically connected society, we are more disconnected from one another than ever before. Being involved in community -- in something bigger than yourself -- gives more meaning to life. There is a greater sense of achievement when you work and play with others, especially if you are giving back to the world in some way.

It is not always easy to look beyond your physical health. For those desiring to take a deeper look at their overall wellbeing, a wellness consultant can help. In much the same way a chiropractor works to bring the spine back into alignment so the body functions better, a wellness consultant helps you explore all aspects of your being -- mental, emotional, physical and spiritual -- to discover where you may be “out of alignment.” The consultant then helps create a plan to bring your mind, body and soul back into balance, which can help ensure your health and wellbeing for years to come.

*Andrea Lyle has worked as a registered nurse for 30 years. She is now a holistic wellness consultant and SoulFit Coach. If you want a greater sense of overall wellbeing, call her at 970-903-6047 or email her at* *soaringspiritstudio@gmail.com* *to schedule your free, no obligation discovery session.*