Social Wellness

“The ability to form and keep loving relationships and supportive people in our lives is essential to striving for wellness. Social health consists not only of our personal relationships but also our relationship to our community. The contributions we make to society make our lives meaningful and leave a legacy of purpose and commitment for those who follow us.

We are all social beings. Every day we interact with others in countless numbers of ways, from getting together with friends and family to talking with students. It is important to have the skills to relate with people in a variety of settings, and to peacefully resolve interpersonal conflicts when they arise.

The social dimension of wellness emphasizes the inter-dependence with others and nature. It is important to examine the degree of connectedness you currently have with individuals, your community, and nature.

By fostering a positive self-image and improving interpersonal skills, one can enhance the building of a just and caring community. You’ll take an active part in improving our world by encouraging a healthy living environment and initiating better communication with those around you. You’ll discover that you have the power to make willful choices to enhance personal relationships, important friendships, your community environment, and ultimately the world” (Santa Clara University, 2004).

Tips for optimal social wellness:

- Communicating your thoughts, feelings and ideas
- Contributing time or money to community projects
- Developing family harmony
- Cultivating healthy relationships
- Getting involved
- Sharing your talents and skills
- Creating a support network of friends and family members
- Showing respect for yourself and others
- Contributing to your community and to the world

We all have the power to improve our social well-being. It takes desire and commitment to make the necessary changes for improvement.
“Maintaining and building positive relationships is one of the important elements in a healthy lifestyle. Dr. Wendy L. Watson stated in her book *Rock Solid Relationship*, ‘if we have been hurt in a relationship, we often gather an arsenal of weapons, thinking they will protect our hearts from further damage. But ironically, such weapons can injure us in addition to those we are defending against. These weapons of war are thoughts, feelings, and behaviors such as harsh judgments, jealousies, and sarcasm that keep us feeling separate, isolated, and lonely. If you are unable to find love and peace and joy in your relationships, could it be you are carrying around thoughts that wound love? Feelings that bruise peace? Actions that kill you’” (Brigham Young University, 2011).

**Facts & Tips**

- Socially isolated people are more susceptible to illness
- People who maintain their social network and support systems do better under stress
- Laughter really is good medicine
- Cholesterol levels go up when human companionship is lacking
- Warm, close friendships cause higher levels of immunoglobulin A (an antibody that helps keep away respiratory infections and cavities) (California State University Chico, 2011).

**Signs of Good Social Wellness**

People who are socially well see the value of living in harmony with others as well as preserving the beauty and balance of nature and the community. The following are signs of good social wellness:

- Ability to adjust and develop new friendships when you move to a new place
- You aren’t afraid to go to places where you might not know anyone
- You value diversity and treat others with respect
- You value time alone
- You perceive that people enjoy being with you
- You maintain the same values, beliefs, and attitudes when you’re interacting in a group, as you do when you interact with just one other person
- You are aware of the social concerns in your community and are involved in solving community problems
- You keep yourself informed of local, national, and world news (Santa Clara University, 2004).
The 100/0 Principle

80% of life’s satisfaction comes from meaningful relationships.
-Brian Tracy

Relationships surround us, confound us, and sometimes lead to our defeat. We’re immersed in them 24/7. At home, at work and everywhere in between, each encounter with another person is a relationship in which we can present our best self… or not. The truth is, good, effective relationships make almost everything more enjoyable and more advantageous.

Think about the way you interact with others, about the way you approach relationships, about your expectations and assumptions. Are you unconsciously sabotaging yourself? Are you standing in the way of your own success?

When it comes to family, friends, coworkers and customers, our relationship is more important (in fact, much more important) than our assessment of how right or wrong the other person is. In these circumstances, it behooves us to take 100% responsibility for the relationship, expecting nothing in return.

The 100/0 Principle: You take full responsibility (the 100) for relationships, expecting nothing (the 0) in return.

Two keys to implementing the 100/0 principle in organizations and lives: Awareness and choice. By having an awareness of your natural tendency to react to someone, you’ll be able to make a choice to respond in a more effective – often counterintuitive – manner. Train yourself to be aware of your automatic, judgmental tendencies, then consciously and intentionally choose how to respond.

Most of us see clearly the connection between action and results. What we don’t see as clearly is the connection between relationships and results. A powerful formula for success is: actions + relationships = results. An equal commitment to both actions and relationships, never compromising one for the other is the big key to success.

A lesson on relationships from great coaches:

“Some years ago, we were fortunate to work directly with two of the universally acknowledged great coaches in American sports: Red Auerbach, former coach of the Boston Celtics and winner of nine NBA championships, and John Wooden, former coach at UCLA and winner of 10 NCAA championships. We asked them the secret to their masterful success. Their answers to our question were quite revealing: ‘Most average, and even good, coaches have a clear commitment to winning (results). We, on the other hand, also had that commitment to winning, but we had an equal commitment to rapport and chemistry (relationship), and we never compromised one for the other. That’s what made us and our teams successful’” (Ritter, 2004)!

The 100/0 Principle applies to those people in your life where the relationships are too important to react automatically or judgmentally. Each of us must determine the relationships to which the principle should apply. For most of us, it applies to work associates, customers, suppliers, family and friends.

- **Step 1:** Determine what you can do to make the relationship work… then do it. Demonstrate respect and kindness to the other person, whether he/she deserves it or not.
- **Step 2:** Do not expect anything in return. Zero, zip, nada.
- **Step 3:** Do not allow anything the other person says or does (no matter how annoying!) to affect you. In other words, don’t take the bait.
- **Step 4:** Be persistent with your graciousness and kindness. Often we give up too soon, especially when others don’t respond in kind. Remember to expect nothing in return.

When you take authentic responsibility for a relationship, more often than not the other person quickly chooses to take responsibility as well. Consequently, the 100/0 relationship quickly transforms into something approaching 100/100. Remember it’s about giving, not taking; it’s about the heart, not the head; it’s about kindness, respect and patience. It’s a little thing that can make a big difference. Be 100%… it could change your life (Ritter, 2010)!

Resources: Exploring the Social Dimension Locally...

CITY OF MARQUETTE:
www.mqtcty.org

Calendar of events
Getting involved: city boards, commissions, and committees
Arts and culture calendars
City news

NMU:
www.nmu.edu

Calendar of events
Volunteer center website
Athletic events
Group exercise classes

REFERENCES:

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
WELLNESS COMMITTEE

1401 Presque Isle Avenue
PEIF #126
Marquette, MI, 49855
Phone: 227-2519
Email: wellness@nmu.edu

Graduate Assistant: Megan Meeuwsen

Check out www.nmu.edu/wellness