

CREATING NEW MAPS OF SERVICE

By Christopher Forrest McDowell, PhD

I have always been a sort of maverick. In fact, in my life it comes easily, and of course in the process has sometimes caused me trouble. So, my life has also been unpredictable --- to myself, my family, friends, and colleagues. But I have also come to appreciate the essence of my maverick nature, I have taken deep moments of contemplation to arrive at an understanding of its value in my life. And the value is this: I have been able to maintain a sense of openness, receptivity, curiosity about life. By staying curious and receptive, I am sure I have become a deeper inquisitor, a deeper optimist, a deeper adventurer. I know how to read only enough of the main roadways in the map of life to not let them get in the way of discovering just as equally valuable byways.

The sharing of my discovered byways in certain professional arenas has often led others to identify my ideas as being "on the cutting edge." To which I may add that being on the cutting edge carries a great deal of responsibility, only because others come to "lean," sort of speaking, on your every word or idea for their own direction. It is no wonder, therefore, that the initially maverick idea of wellness became a byway worth exploring in my life over thirteen years ago. And the process throughout has been almost like a new world cartographer, exploring and discovering the inner and outer worlds of myself, and attempting to make such maps understandable in service to others.

Well, you must become aware that if you are to explore the world of wellness for yourself and others, you are in a sense engaging in a new form of map-making. As I have alluded to earlier, the traditional forms of therapeutic services have long held the helping care map in the hands of their knowledge, technology, and ability to sell "health care" through the media. The problem with this has been clearly shown in light of newer, alternative forms of service. First, is the realization that the traditional focus toward therapeutic intervention needs a whole new map. Second, is the obvious fact that the old map has been held in the traditional health care provider's hands too long. Wellness care is an attempt to develop newer, more integrated systems of health care, both by the facilitator and the individual. The old map is not discarded, mind you; it's just that highways and byways have been rerouted, re-emphasized, if not abandoned. And, most importantly, the resulting new map has become much more readable and understandable to the lay person.

So, it is my great honor to welcome you onto the cutting edge yourself. You have just leaped into the world of mavericks. And if you don't believe me, just wait until you try to sell some staunch

hard-line traditional health care administrator, team, or facility on the benefits of incorporating wellness processes into present delivery systems!

It would appear that if you are going to trust that a wellness map can in fact lead you to higher states of feeling good, you must have a deeper conceptual appreciation for the map in the first place. You see, the wellness map is your world of wellness. It is your lifestyle and your environment. It is your wisdom toward fitness, nutrition, stress, the environment, and self-responsibility. And it is these five determinants integrating with your roles in family, vocation, leisure, education, community, and spirituality. So, what moves you along in your personal world of wellness? I will attempt to answer that question in this chapter.

In this chapter you will become acquainted with some key conceptual vehicles with which to explore wellness within yourself and others. First, you will obtain a good working knowledge of what I call a "wellness cosmology." Next, you will become familiar with what I believe to be a critical concept within wellness, that of regeneration. Lastly, you will learn what self-care is and how it acts as the "hands on" process for taking the wellness map into one's own responsibility. So, let's begin our journey.

A WELLNESS COSMOLOGY

It cannot be understated: Wellness care strives to integrate the person's consciousness of bodymindspirit as a whole being evolving in a positive direction. Perhaps the best image to keep in mind is that of a continuum where illness, worseness and premature death are on one end, and high level, vibrant wellness is on the other. This duality of consciousness often pervades people's notions of health/wellness on one hand and illness/death on the other. Therefore, it is accurate to represent these bodymindspirit states as bipolar axials of a general wellness cosmology. A cosmology, in its simplest description, is a way of looking at life or any of its aspects. In a wellness cosmology we are afforded a window through which to view our client's (as well as our own) state of bodymindspirit and the direction it appears to be going. In a sense, at any moment in time, we should be able to determine if a person is moving toward a illness/worseness preoccupation (which would be toward the left polar axis of our cosmology) or toward a wellness preoccupation (which would be toward the right on the axis).

At this point it would be hard to conceptualize the practical value of this wellness cosmology if it could not be visually shown. Therefore, take a few moments to thoroughly review the wellness cosmology shown on the accompanying page. Let's now clarify its essential characteristics.

To understand a wellness cosmology may demand a personal re-visioning of reality somewhat. The concepts of life force, objective and subjective consciousness, inner path and world path, even pathological and ecological lifestyles are all important characteristics of a wellness cosmology. And they are necessary in understanding the most complex system ever conceived, the human being.

Life Force Energy

The concept of life force energy is indeed intriguing. Life force is somewhat like a fuel in the human system. On one level we can say this fuel is combusted from the food we ingest. On another level beyond food, life force can be associated with our breath. After all, without our breath we could be considered dead. But what really is breath but the air we breathe, correct? Well, not necessarily, simply because not all the air we breathe is desirable to breathe in the first place. So, it does not make sense to believe that all air we breathe is a source for our life force. Throughout history, most cultures have used the same words to describe breath and spirit. The Latin *spiritus*, the Greek *pneuma*, the Hebrew *ruach*, the Sanskrit *prana*, each of these describes a universal life force, or spirit, which proscribes to an omnipotent God. It is this cosmic source of potency in the atmosphere that somehow permeates every animate and inanimate thing.

What we are left with is the belief that life force is a type of energy received from food or breath or air or spirit. And the truth is, life force energy is a synthesis of all these factors, although on a very concrete level one can still be alive without eating or breathing, as advanced yogis and those advanced in meditation demonstrate. At such levels it could truly be said that one is living by using some powerful spiritual force.

Throughout our day, we intuitively sense our energy levels and those of others. We might say to another, "You seem down in your spirits," recognizing their sort of listlessness or depression. We might also recognize someone who has wonderful "high spirits," which of course infers great joy, happiness, and confidence. We can feel a cold or illness coming on, often because we start feeling drained. We are also familiar with the exhilarating effects of being out in nature, especially near water and wind sources and green foliage. The reason has to do with an abundance of negative ions in the atmosphere which act

as "charging agents" for our life force battery. On the other hand, scientists have shown that in places filled with too many positive ions, which pretty much describes most work settings (especially those which use artificial lighting), stuffy offices, houses, public lounges, smoky environments, and basically most of city life, there is a gradual drain on a person's energy, even if they are not aware of it.

The gist of all this is that we must recognize the basic importance of life force in wellness. First, this life force energy permeates, in fact drives, the collective bodymindspirit. It has a qualitative aspect to it, much as different grades of gasoline. The life force can be somewhat dull, listless, hopeless; it can be moderately generative fluctuating dramatically in energy; it can be decidedly vibrant and invigorating. Indeed, it could be accurately inferred that motivation is an inherent outcome of the use of life force energy. Many people are not motivated because their collective bodymindspirit energy is puny. Secondly, and important to accept as well, is the idea that life force can be focused or absent in any subsystems of a larger system. In a human, for example, an injured part of the body may express a decrease of life force. This is most dramatically evident with paraplegics in which the life force is cut off from traumatized areas of the spine and subsequently to various limbs and organs of the body. Stroke victims suffer from a similar traumatized situation stemming from a part of the brain which has become absent of life force energy. Those who use drugs, alcohol, and other stimulants artificially affect their life force energy's performance in their collective or autonomous bodymindspirit system(s). Third, and finally, the concept of a life force energy continuously permeates the world outside one's self. An environment has its own constructed energy field which is nothing more than a synergization of all its individual components. As humans we can often move into a setting such as a room, building, vehicle, park bench, whatever, and feel the energy as it has been coalesced from other beings or objects there, or who have been there. From such a feeling, our energy field can respond with comfort or disease.

In a final analysis, it could be said that our unique life force energy is in strong cahoots with our consciousness, that strong force of awareness which perceives life and makes adjustments in the bodymindspirit according to will. As such, we can just as easily will our energy to be worse or to be well; to be degenerative in our hopelessness and helplessness or to be generative in our courage and hope to go on.

Objective and Subjective Consciousness

Basically, a person's reality is shaped by the way they perceive and interpret life from the intermingling of their objective and subjective modes of consciousness. These modes are vital in determining an individual's relationship to life and to wellness. In the wellness cosmology diagram, objective consciousness is depicted by any movement toward the left, whereas subjective consciousness is associated with any movement toward the right. Of course, in the space of a day a person weaves in and out of both of these states of consciousness many times. This is a fact most of us can attest to. The value to wellness is knowing how to integrate in every way possible the most effective aspects of both modes of consciousness.

When the individual is operating within an objective mode of consciousness, they are oriented and responding to the world outside themselves in a primarily rational way (implying deductive reasoning). We may call this a World Path, but what does this really mean? This phrase has come to be associated with a mental preoccupation with the physical plane of reality. Therefore, this is a consciousness of the body and other sensate matter, such as objects, animals, nature, other people, etc. Interestingly, however, it can also mean a preoccupation with the mind itself, simply because it receives sensual cues from the sensate world and translates these into thoughts and desires. Therefore, a person can have a decidedly intellectual, analytical, rational view toward life; they can also become stuck in their mind's eye, seeing themselves as exceptionally worthy (called pride, vanity, or egotistical) or unworthy (low self-image, helplessness, apathetic). In short, objective consciousness keeps us moving in the sensate-mental world of reality. The question is, How often do we sort of camp out in this mode of visioning the world at the expense of the inner world of our emotional/spiritual selves?

When the individual is operating within a subjective mode of consciousness, they are oriented and responding to the world inside themselves in a primarily feeling-intuitive way. This has often been called an Inner Path of consciousness, for its preoccupation is with receiving cues based upon emotion/feeling, intuition, wisdom, and a sense of spirit. Of course, this does not imply that a person may have integrated all these components optimally and especially relative to the world path. For example, someone may appear to be especially sensitive regarding emotions; they simply seem to be regularly emotional toward life and this gets in the way of effectively relating to others, if not to their own mental reasoning. In another extreme, a person may be totally absorbed in a sense of holiness (spiritual preoccupation) which makes them somewhat inaccessible on any other plane of interest. On the other hand, a person who has integrated the inner path qualities fairly well is in touch with their feelings and the appropriateness of their expression. Such a person also makes use of intuition (what "feels right" to do or behave), discriminative decisions and choices (wise knowing of risks, alternatives,

consequences synthesized from mental reasoning), and the replenishing and regenerative power of the spirit of joy, love, compassion, peace.

The states of objective and subjective consciousness are not an either/or question. However, if we look closely at ourselves and those we serve, we can begin to perceive a sort of leaning. In fact, we can see such a leaning in broader cultures. For example, we in the United States have a marked leaning toward an objective orientation to life. We have a love affair going with our body, vis a vis beauty care, health care, physical fitness, even pop hero worship. We have also had a strong thing going with nature, electing to explore and exploit its many possibilities. And of course, we pride ourselves for our intellectual achievements which have created advanced systems of technology, science, economics, education, politics, military, sports, marketing, even forms of free religious worship and speech. I want to talk more about this leaning state of consciousness which affects wellness. The reason is because our lifestyle is so often an outcome of the way we think and feel. So, let's go a little further into the wellness cosmology and look at the concept of pathological and ecological lifestyles.

Pathological and Ecological Lifestyles

Before we continue further exploration of the wellness cosmology, it might do well to clarify an important characteristic regarding movement along the continuum, that is, either rightward or leftward. The clarification is necessary because a simple two-dimensional diagram as shown cannot entirely do justice to the multi-dimensional qualities of real life.

To get the most use out of the wellness cosmology continuum, it is important to remember this critical aspect: Wellness implies wholeness and integration; worseness implies segmentation and disintegration. Therefore, consider your present state of wellness to be at a specific point along the continuum; for example, let's say you believe your present state of feeling well is kind of low, so you identify a position somewhere to the left of the human figure in the middle of the diagram. If you decide to increase your present level of wellness, you are attempting to move rightward. You are now being drawn toward higher levels of wellness by more subjective conscious will. This inner need for wholeness is driven by your feelings about wellness/worseness, your desire for more discriminative behavior which will improve your life condition, and perhaps a more elevated spirit. However, because wellness is wholeness and integration, any rightward movement also draws with it those perceptions you have about your body, mind, and other sensate matter. Furthermore, because a wellness orientation is

also positive and optimistic/receptive, the perceptions you have about body, mind, and sensate matter become more positive and appreciative as well.

Now, let's consider that at any point on the wellness/worseness continuum you begin a leftward movement. The inference here is segmentation and disintegration of your potential for wholeness. Therefore, your objective conscious will become more identified with any host of bodily, mental, or other sensate worldly experiences and thoughts. In a sense you close yourself off from the heart of yours and perhaps others' feelings, wisdom, and sense of spirit, which are just as critical in attempting to relate to life.

As I suggested earlier, during the course of a day we fluctuate in our leftward and rightward movements. This fluctuation is a natural outcome of the way our bodymindspirit life force is living at any given moment in response to a particular environment and its accompanying stimuli. We could call this present-moment states of wellness. However, it might also be said that we display a broader orientation toward wellness, one which embraces our overall lifestyle attributes.

When a person's life force and lifestyle energy basically pulls them into a preoccupation with negative body or mind states (as practitioners we can attest this to be the case with most of our clients), a host of disintegrative characteristics describe their wellness cosmology. As you can see in the diagram, these characteristics are quite familiar and broad. We can sense an imbalance occurring, a degree of being closed off from others. One may also perceive rigidity in thinking, even an expression of apathy and stagnancy. Often, thinking may appear to be sex-typed, stereotyped, egocentric. Finally, there may be a strong sense of victimization accompanied by thoughts of helplessness and hopelessness. Using terms familiar to the practitioner, a focusing of energy towards illness/worseness results in dysfunctional behaviors, minimal spontaneity, focus on symptoms, trouble adapting, negative addictions, acting out, loneliness, giving up, and fear, among others.

Wellness practitioners identify the above disintegrative conditions as indicative of a pathological lifestyle. This style of life may very well describe many people, for it permeates to some degree the wellness determinants. For examples, just consider the many people who experience excess stress or mental depression, low physical fitness, lack of conscientious nutritional habits, little sensitivity for the well-being of nature and other social/cultural environments and species, dysfunctional familial relationships, leisure dis-satisfaction and illiteracy, educational and vocational dispondency, and so on. Can it be questioned in any way that a strong lifestyle leaning toward a worldly preoccupation of bodily, mental, and material concerns is clearly a fascination with pathos? And furthermore, that a whole health care system (more accurately illness care) and a similarly potent marketing and media persuasion industry have contrived to keep people actively involved in such a pathological fascination?

The major reason such a pathological lifestyle appears to be disintegrative, as suggested earlier, is that the body and mind states seem to be removed from the empowering element of spirit which embraces effective expression of positive feeling states and the continued seeking of key knowledge in which to make informed (wise) choices and directions. Indeed, the positivity of wellness relies heavily on the integrative pulling power of an intuitive path/direction of consciousness. In the wellness cosmology diagram, observe that a positive orientation toward wellness integration is associated with and influenced by a consciousness that believes in hope, courage, autonomy, control, compassion/empathy, openness, flexibility, cooperation, growth, a sense of selflessness, a need for balance, and the exercising of willpower. As practitioners we can see such positive characteristics of wellness manifest in such ways: expressed positive self-image, loving behaviors, self-discipline and worth, coping well, healthy behaviors, voluntary simplicity, maximizing potential, celebrative and challenging involvements, valued intimacy, among others.

Wellness practitioners call the above positive indicators of behavior an ecological lifestyle. The body and mind states are pulled into unity with one's spirit, not by forces outside the individual but by forces inside. The result is a person operating with a relatively balanced and empowering integration of bodymindspirit. They are invigorated by life because they value its many aspects. In short, they strive to improve upon the human condition and the earth with an evolving mindfulness and heart-feltness.

Summarizing the Wellness Cosmology

As practitioners we have all seen this wellness cosmology at work in one way or another with our clients. We have witnessed those people who literally drown themselves in a pathology of bodily, mental, and societal conditions. They have little or no sense of self-empowerment which can move their whole selves. They see themselves as fragmented beings and perhaps expect to be treated in similar impersonal and segmented ways. Often we have witnessed that the success of rehabilitation is directly proportional to the extent of their pathos as it may be identified by those behaviors described above. It may also be proportional to benefits obtained within the often parental therapeutic societal crib. That is, one may perceive that there is no reason to get better (more well) because the care they receive already may be much easier to obtain than the self-care responsibility expected of them in broader society.

Many of our clients believe they are their bodily or mental or social condition. Therefore, they may feel victims to some cruel god or to some social injustice. They rationalize their helplessness and hopelessness in this light. And as such, their life force energy suffers almost attracting to it the very

vibrations of victimization from others. I am sure this is why motivation is such a key concern among most helping care professionals.

However, the power of the coalescence of body, mind, and spirit is a tribute to some great unseen force which can lift one out of a preoccupation with so-called disability, handicap, dysfunction. We have seen this force at work with many of our clients as well. These seem to be people who are so inherently receptive, or are so hell-bent on getting better, that they decide to take on the great responsibility of care themselves. Without a doubt we could say they have manifested a strong life force energy, in spite of their apparent condition, which serves to shape their mental and emotional orientation toward life.

For me the wellness cosmology helps to clarify something I have often seen in life. I know, for example, a young man who was born without any legs. Yet, he is perhaps the most integrated well person I have ever met. He is a vibrant being on all levels and carries that aura of vibrancy into every environment he goes. As he says, "How can I be handicapped, when this is what I have known to be me all my life!" I have met many people who, in spite of their conditions, are unqualifiably more well than so-called "normals." How can this be so when normals (sounds funny, doesn't it?) have so much more going for them? I don't believe that a person's "dis-ability" inherently causes them to try harder to be well, almost as if nature gave them the will to try to catch up to the standards of fitness, intelligence or whatever of a normal. No, I don't think it is that at all.

I will tell you what I think. I believe that any person, with or without any condition, can be inspired to improve their lot in life. You see, there is a gift in which only humans can revel in, that of free will. It is getting in touch with this sense of free will that coalesces our life force desire to improve our bodymindspirit. As compassionate practitioners, it is we who saw into the free will of those we used to call mentally retarded and whom we locked away in isolated cells and hospitals for centuries. It is we who gave them new found opportunities to exercise their free will in society and educational settings. This is but one special group of people that I am talking about, but there are many others whom compassionate beings have given a "new lease" on life.

The wellness cosmology, therefore, allows a person to find themselves at any point on the continuum, and discover that they can move toward wholeness. They can do so in fitness, nutrition, management of stress, environmental sensitivity, and self-responsibility. They can afford themselves of opportunities, according to their will and capability, in education, vocation, leisure, family, community, and the realm of spirituality. In short, they can be all that they can be, or at any moment decide to settle for less than their human potential. Perhaps in the final analysis, it can be said that people who use their

free will in a conscious positive direction, i.e. toward higher levels of wellness, have tapped into some inner regenerative dynamo at the core of existence. If so, it would be worthy of taking a look.

THE POWER OF REGENERATION

I think perhaps the most amazing thing about our bodymindspirit is its regenerative ability. We have an incredible capacity for healing ourselves. And often, if we do not consciously will it ourselves, our body or mind or some compassionate spirit will attempt to heal us anyway. It does not matter where we may see ourselves on the wellness/worseness continuum, we always possess some regenerative capacity which can make us more well, or at least have the feeling of being well, in some way. The power of regeneration, therefore, is indeed a miracle we should give great thanks for.

If you contemplate life in terms of regeneration, you will open up a whole new mode of seeing reality. The truth is, everything appears to be attempting to regenerate its existence in some way. Scientists have determined, for example, that all of the cells in our body are regenerated every nine days. New ones simply take on the responsibilities of the old. We know from personal experience that an injury invokes a healing process within the body. Similarly, if we ingest too much alcohol or drugs, a natural process of sleep and rest will regenerate a sober state. On another level, if we feel depressed, in need of inner healing, or simply desire to enhance our feeling of goodness, we might find spiritual regeneration through prayer or meditation. If we feel excess stress, we may also find regenerative relief through laughter, taking a long walk, listening to soft music, focusing on breathing, among many other possibilities. You see, the potential for personal regeneration is seemingly endless.

Nature is also always involved in a regenerative process. The four seasons are a perfect example of restoring balance to the natural system. Biologists all agree that Autumn is the greatest transference of energy on this planet. The great productive cloak of Spring and Summer is shed to replenish the earth and its inhabitants before Winter stills the juices of life. Consider also the ways in which humans pollute and erode the natural environment, and then consider how nature attempts to regenerate itself almost in an act of forgiving.

The point I am trying to make in such examples is that life in all its myriad forms has the innate capacity to regenerate itself. There is always this inner dynamo force that firsts considers the option of healing and restoring some sense of balance, before it succumbs to a degenerative process. In a sense, I have just described the two laws of thermodynamics, that scientific structure which accounts for the

existence and use of all energy of life. The first law recognizes the constancy of energy in the universe, stating that it cannot be created or destroyed; only its form can change but never its essence. This law speaks well to the regenerative process of life. The second law of thermodynamics is harder to swallow. Known as the entropy law, it states that matter and energy can only be changed in one direction, that is, from usable to unusable, or from available to unavailable, or from ordered to disordered. Obviously, this speaks to the degenerative process of life.

Clearly, we can see that regeneration implies a wellness orientation and degeneration implies a worseness/illness/death orientation. The question obviously arises, then, if entropy is inevitable, no matter what form it takes, then how can regeneration be effective, of what value is it in the long haul for our personal bodymindspirit? The answer is simple, and once again points to the incredible way in which our existence was thought out by some cosmic force. You see, the entropy law governs only the world of time, space, and matter. It deals only with the physical realm, which in terms of human existence speaks only to the body. But as you know, you are more than just your body. You have an enormous mental capacity and, if you can accept it, an even more boundless spiritual capacity. In other words, even though you know you may eventually experience bodily injury or disability, and in fact are going to have to give up your body to death, you have an enormous mental/spiritual capacity to sustain your existence. In short, your will to heal and/or improve your condition in life is the result of a powerful coalescence of your mindspirit.

Sustainable Wellness

When the power of regeneration is accepted as a viable miracle of life we personally own, we open ourselves to a lifelong process which I have come to call sustainable wellness. This process is the constant renewing of our will to maintain and enhance the state of wellness of our human system.

The sustainable concept recently has been used in terms of preserving some sense of integrity of the natural environment. The ideas of sustainable agriculture and sustainable forestry, for example, are beginning to be well explored and promoted. The attempt at sustainable practices is to prevent worsening states of natural systems; to prevent erosion, to prevent toxic build-up of soil and food sources, to prevent degeneration of watershed, endangered species, and the risks inherent in mass clear-cutting or the growing of mono-cultures of trees and crops, and so on.

Perhaps the bottom line of sustainable processes is to support a key dictum of regeneration: Things regenerate not because they receive a great amount of support from outside but because they

renew themselves from within. What this dictum clearly says is that a system's ability to regenerate itself is limited by too many inputs external to that system. In other words, regeneration works best if the system, human or natural, is allowed to take care of itself and/or is supported, if necessary, with minimal inputs which preserve and enhance the sustainable integrity of that system.

Let's see if we can give a quick example of the differences between internal resourcefulness of a system and a system run by external inputs. Let's compare sustainable agriculture with the all too familiar alternative.

Now, let's bring the idea of sustainable wellness closer to home. Figure 2, entitled "Sustainable Wellness Resources," shows the difference between regenerative and reparative inputs. Reparative inputs can sustain our wellness, to be sure, but there are some key things to keep in mind when considering them as the primary source in which to affect wellness. Let's briefly summarize what the figure is attempting to say about the regenerative and reparative choices of care.

1. Abundance vs. Scarcity. Most regenerative resources represent abundance, whereas reparative inputs depict scarcity. Very often our inner resources --- our thoughts, knowledge, will, courage, spirit, etc. --- are without any upper limit we can see. According to our will and capability, and given an opportunity, we can learn to think about and use our body, mind, and other things in ways that sustain their usefulness while delimiting their waste and degeneration. We recognize, in short, something's value to us because we are an integral part in sustaining its integrity. Our abundant inner resources, therefore, are committed to having an active and involved stake in regenerative wellness practice.

Reparative inputs, as is now evident from the figure, primarily represent external resources. Such resources, in a relative sense, are scarce. Sure, in Western society there exists a great network of treatment care, so one could argue the point of scarcity. But there is another level of scarcity which reparative resources represent, and that is dollars and cents. The fact is, there is an enormous cost to health care when it is sought primarily external to oneself. The other fact is, the necessary forms of reparative care may not be readily accessible to every person. There simply are not enough treatment services and facilities available in all our communities. It is such relative scarcity of resources which creates a great value for them, and therefore drives up the expense of service.

A consciousness committed exclusively to reparative care asks someone else to have the active and involved stake in our well-being. We value their intelligence and their resources and skills. In a

sense, we ask them to sustain our existence. A regenerative consciousness, on the other hand, encourages us to put our own mind to work finding strategies and uses for things that cost us nothing or very little. We make attempts at self-care until we realize that therapeutic care becomes necessary.

2. Personal Capacity vs. Uninformed Wants/Needs. If you know what your capacity is to do things on your own, you can often make better decisions/judgments about what your real needs and wants are. The regenerative processes shown on the left side of the figure are really an inventory of your capacity to create wellness by living in ways that help you avoid problems which could require reparative services shown on the right side. The truth is, the more you use your wellness enhancing capacity on the left side, the less you will want or need the treatments listed on the right.

Knowing your personal capacity for self-care, you may also better intuit the overall effects of treatment you desire. In many cases, what you do tends to improve your total bodymindspirit. Reparative processes, as is well known, may of necessity jeopardize or disturb total bodily or mental function to achieve repair. This is evident in acute or chronic side effects of treatment through the use of surgery, drugs, prosthetics, behavioral therapy, and the like.

Finally, in knowing your capacity for self-care you may also have a keener insight about the way in which reparative health care is promoted. The medical industry is tremendously influenced by the pharmaceutical industry and its ability to use the media to influence people's use of products and health care services. What people think they need and want is very often in response to persuasive marketing strategies. Such marketeering creates a mindset in the populous that suggests they cannot think for themselves, let alone take care of themselves, in informed preventive ways. Only a person committed to a wellness-enhancing lifestyle, or an individual who has an opportunity to be guided toward a wellness consciousness, can understand that feeling good has more to do with one's inner resources than the mind-boggling array of external inputs.

Summarizing Regeneration and Wellness

It might do well to capsule the importance of regeneration concepts in terms of wellness care. The following serves to summarize many of the points stated above.

Regeneration is healing, and healing is something we own totally ourselves.

The healing process happens entirely within us, whereas treatment (whether self- or other-prescribed) comes to us from outside and may or may not accelerate/effect healing. As practitioners, we must realize that we are not healers. A person is their own healer. One's ability to regenerate is not necessarily because they receive a great amount of support from outside, but because they renew from within. Therefore, too many inputs may inhibit the regenerative process. Once again, as practitioners we must consistently monitor the therapeutic inputs we feel impelled to subject our clients to. We must open ourselves to an intuitive process of providing care just as we are expecting that from our clients.

Healing is an extremely powerful force.

Healing is the direct result of positively directed will as integrated via the bodymindspirit. Our life force will attempt to regain a sense of balance to the overall human system before being subjected to natural degenerative (entropic) processes. If we can consciously attune to our capacity and power to heal, personal wellness can be pushed beyond any level prior to initiation of the healing process. Exercise is an excellent example for experiencing the benign healing process. The actual use of muscles, bones, cardiovascular organs, etc. positively stresses them (in the case of muscles, they are actually "torn" to some degree, recognized to most people as a type of burning feeling in the muscle; in the case of the cardiovascular system, we talk about "target heart rate," that point in exercise in which the heart is being benignly pushed to work harder), thereby causing the body to respond in a healing process which actually strengthens them further.

Disturbance comes first, regeneration/healing follow.

The human system, as an open system, is always in a process of change called dynamic equilibrium. It is always responding to forces entering from without, and it is always attempting to adjust its own inner forces. As such, the whole system is constantly responding to disturbances which innately activate regenerative processes. Wellness practices benignly sustain the natural regenerative process. Illness still activates the process, but unless conscious effort is made to enhance/regain a higher level of wellness (than the present illness/worseness state), regeneration will be delimited by more pronounced degeneration.

There is no upper limit to health or well-being.

Rene Dubos, in his *Mirage of Health*, has likened health/well-being to a mirage that recedes before us as we approach it. On the surface, this sounds demoralizing. But, Dubos goes on to say that, as you move toward that "mirage of health," you actually acquire more of it. As I have suggested over

and over again, we have a tremendous capacity to experience high level wellness, no matter what our personal wellness cosmology looks like. The key is that we must simply TRY to move toward that imaginary mirage or ceiling of well-being. We must orient our sacred free will in a positive direction that enhances the integrity of our human existence and that of every animate and inanimate being/object on this planet.

At present, we have led ourselves on an interesting journey. This journey has attempted to give us a better understanding of wellness through the concepts of a wellness cosmology and regeneration. By now it is probably firmly etched in your mind that wellness is a personal responsibility. It is a process of benignly taking care of yourself. Pure and simple. But what really is self-care? What characterizes the process of self-care, and how can we effectively determine if an individual is optimizing his/her ability to engage in self-care? The next section of this chapter will attempt to answer these important questions.

SELF-CARE

Earlier, I discussed the importance of free will in the evolution of our consciousness. But free will is a rather nebulous concept if it is not tethered to direct experience. In terms of wellness care, I have suggested that people may use their free will to engage in regenerative care or reparative care, or some integration of the two. No matter what care they choose, people innately want to sustain feeling good in some way, even if they desire to feel good about feeling bad! (Most practitioners perhaps know quite a few clients who characterize the latter group.) However, I don't care what anybody says, the best way to feel good often is to direct your free will personally in a process of taking care of yourself. This is really owning yourself and your own power and dignity.

Warner (1978) has pointed out that of the 400 or so major and minor health problems an average individual encounters in a lifetime, only about 5% are treated by health care professionals. Family and friends, non-professionals (such as volunteers, caregivers, and the like), and mutual support groups/services treat about 20%. But a whopping 75% of all treatment is done by oneself! Think about this for a moment, for something is not right. And what is not right is the common knowledge that professionals, in spite of their limited role, have a tremendous amount of power, so much so that most people have become stuck, if not powerless, in a role as passive-dependent consumer of health services. Why oh why have people become so powerless if most care is actually done by oneself? The answer to

this question would take immense discussion, for the reasons are both simple and complex. Throughout this book thus far, I have attempted to share some of these reasons in brevity. What is more important to focus our attention upon, however, is how a person can begin to consciously enact a self-care process that has as its motivation the desire to sustain wellness.

Before I introduce the components of an effective self-care process, it might be useful to summarize and clarify the various options an individual has to choose from in approaching care. Ferguson (1980) has provided a succinct depiction between the choices of expert care vs. self-care, and traditional health care service vs. alternative health care service (most commonly associated with the wellness movement). Notice these choices in the grid below.

Now, to understand the usefulness of this grid, consider these wellness care experiences:

If you go to a physician to have your sore throat examined or to have reparative surgery; or if you use the services of a psychiatrist, social worker, counselor, or any number of adjunct therapies, you would be making use of expert-administered traditional medical/health care, represented by the letter A.

If you learn to use a blood pressure cuff to keep track of your own blood pressure, if you use a stethoscope to listen to your child's lungs when she has a bad cold, if you start keeping a copy of your own medical record, if you learn to intravenously inject yourself with necessary medicine, antibiotics, or insulin, among other similar processes, you would be practicing self-care using the tools of traditional medicine, shown as letter B.

If you consulted a spiritual leader, a practitioner of acupuncture, a chiropractor, a naturopath, a reflexologist, a licensed massage or body therapist, a Rolfer, a midwife, among many other choices, you would be making use of expert-delivered alternative wellness care, shown as letter C.

If you started an exercise program, practiced yoga, meditation, tai chi; used deep breathing and other stress-reducing skills; developed a devotion to organic/natural foods and a primarily vegetarian nutritionstyle; used homeopathic remedies incorporating natural aromas, plant and flower tinctures and the like, among many other choices, you would be practicing alternative self-care, letter D.

I show you this grid of care alternatives to point out an important fact. The care given in three-fourths of the grid, that of B, C, & D, can be considered the basis for what is meant by self-care. Letters B & D are wholly self-care, but because letter C (alternative expert-care) is really an aspect of the field of wellness care in the first place, it can be expected that these wellness practitioners and professionals will also give to the client various self-care strategies. So you see, self-care is a conscious choice we can make in sustaining health/wellness, 75% of the time! Let's now become familiar with the actual self-care process.

The Self-Care Process

It was about 1980, after diligently applying my energy in a long process of personal wellness care (after all, you do have to practice what you preach, or someday you are going to get caught!) that I contemplated just what process I was enacting. I thought, how could this self-care process be shown to others? About that time, I discovered Richard Bolles' *The Three Boxes of Life*, wherein he discussed a life issues pyramid. The life issues pyramid is simply a way to consciously deal with issues as they arise. The suggestion is that we are always hit first with the question, *What's Happening?* when some issue arises. Next, we attempt to integrate the issue resolution with Survival concerns. Then, we strive to develop a Meaning & Mission to deal with the issue. Finally, we assess some level of Effectiveness in resolving the issue.

The life issues pyramid provided me with an important conceptualization for my own self-care process. It provided me with a safe structure, sort of speaking, in which to move with my own wellness care ideas. Of course, and as some of you may already know in reading my other materials, the life issues pyramid and self-care process have had a happy marriage. In fact, in my book *Leisure Wellness: Concepts & Helping Strategies* (1983), a whole section (identified as Booklet 6) was devoted to the life issues pyramid application to leisure and the self-care process. In this book, Chapter 5 ("A Leisure Wellness Model") will also further discuss the relationship between the two. For now, however, let's look briefly at just the self-care process.

The self-care process basically consists of seven essential and interrelated steps:

Step 1 - Awareness

Step 2 - Knowledge

Step 3 - Skills

Step 4 - Resourcefulness

Step 5 - Strategies

Step 6 - Affirmation & Assertion

Step 7 - Reflection & Evaluation

Whether we do so conscientiously or not, all of us initiate our own version of this self-care process. It may take us split-moments or extensive planning, but it happens. We become aware of something happening to our bodymindspirit system, we assess our own bank of knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness to deal with the wellness issue/concern, we assess a plan of attack (strategies), we affirm a choice/direction and assert our will, then we determine in reflection/evaluation the effectiveness of our self-care.

This, my friend, is self-care as wellness care. But as we know, a powerful and persuasive medical and media model often convinces us that we have little skill to continue the process beyond Step 1: our initial awareness of needing care. Accordingly, we opt to seek the most dependable expert-administered medical care (frankly, it doesn't matter if it comes in the form of a person or a bottle the contents of which is endorsed by the American Medical Association), and let someone else use their knowledge, skills, and resources, their exclusive strategies, choices, and directions for our palliative care.

The wellness field recognizes that in most instances the map of self-care can just as easily be held in the hands of the lay person. The seven-step process is the guide to traveling in the land of sustainable wellness. People do have the capacity and the will to increase their knowledge, skills, resourcefulness, and to develop their ability to use strategies. They do have a desire to exercise informed/intuitive choices and to evaluate their own personal effectiveness. In short, people have the need to first and foremost affect their own levels of wellness through informed self-care, before they make a decision that it would be best to obtain expert-administered care, whether that care be administered within traditional medical or alternative (holistic/wellness) processes.

Let's get just a little closer to the steps in the self-care process and make a clear connection to some wellness principles.

Awareness (Step 1)

Before we can expect to initiate a care process, we must be conscious of something going on (or wrong) inside our bodymindspirit system. Often we get the hit that something just doesn't "feel right." It's as if our system is knocked out of its state of dynamic equilibrium and is responding to the call of awareness: "What's happening?!"

A wellness principle states that disease/illness, or dis-ease/discomfort are messages from within. That is, they always have meaning first in terms of our inner "feeling" state, and then are likely to find expression in overt behaviors or conditions. In this sense, illness and discomfort are not necessarily bad; they merely are important psychosomatic messages to gain information from and to use for creative growth.

It is absolutely critical, therefore, not to exclusively delimit the "feeling bad" state to only its overt symptoms. This perhaps is one of the greatest flaws of the traditional medical model with its extensive attention on treating symptoms instead of primary causes. Wellness practitioners, on the other hand, have a respectful interest in the entire person --- their frame of mind and emotions, familial, social, and work structures which may cause stress or support, overall health/history, and so on.

Awareness of imbalance within our whole system is really the true sign that we are not a closed system. In most cases, when we hurt in some way we have a very good idea as to its primary source, either external or internal to ourselves. Whether we can admit this to ourselves, or to another, is often a test of our receptivity to take responsibility for our healing. If we desire to continue toward self-care (healing), we must therefore integrate the next three steps into the regenerative process.

Knowledge, Skills, & Resourcefulness (Steps 2, 3, & 4)

Having first become aware of illness/dis-ease, we quickly move to a question of "What are my needs to resolve this particular bodymindspirit state?" Very often, success of self-care is based upon a pool of personal knowledge and skills in which to enact that knowledge. Deeper still is the ability to tap into the well of resourcefulness within ourselves (often described as intuition, courage, inner strength, spirit, God-energy, and the like), and/or others. The fact is, effective wellness care is an important blend of knowledge and skills gained from others as well as from one's own reasoning and intuitive abilities.

Another critical wellness principle states that any practitioner should be a facilitator who provides information, guidance, and resources for people to take care of themselves. They should also be prepared to help people develop self-maintenance skills. In this sense, the client's role is one of participator in their own healing and chooser in an egalitarian relationship committed to exploring and supporting optimal wellness strategies. The result is expected to be an empowered individual who is

more in touch with their prosumer role in wellness care, as contrasted with the more familiar passive-dependent consumer role seen in most health care professional-patient relationships.

In some ways it could be said that wellness education has taken health education out of the classroom, and as seen earlier, has broadened the scope of health per se to include assuming personal responsibility for the five determinants of wellness as they permeate our various life roles. The wellness movement has attempted to demystify the knowledge, skills, and resources a person needs to engage in primary and secondary preventive (health care) processes, as discussed in the last chapter. The effects of this demystification can be seen today in a broad display of public education offered by a large host of agencies and corporations, at no costs! (Safeway Foods, Inc., for example, has an excellent nutrition education program; informative brochures are available at every store at special display counters near the check-out stands). Whereas only five or more years ago there was just a smattering of magazines related to any of the wellness determinants, today there are an untold number. Whether it be insurance companies, health maintenance organizations, professional organizations, the Fortune 500, or even popular media stars (Jane Fonda comes to mind with her mega-popular aerobic exercise videos), today there is a mind-boggling proliferation of information to be had in which to develop wellness strategies.

Strategies (Step 5)

Often our knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness are potentially many compared to the specific strategies necessary to take care of ourselves at any point in time. Identifying strategic options, therefore, is a way of focalizing our array of knowledge, skills, and resources.

A wellness principle states that strategies are only as useful as our ability or desire to use them, to select them among an array of alternatives, and to understand relative risks and consequences. This is an important principle to understand for a couple of reasons. First, as an outcome of our present system of education and the powerfully persuasive effects of media marketing (what I call "aducation"), many people can be accurately described as possessing a "pseudo-sophistication" about health care (if not about everything!). The truth is, most people know more than they understand. Wellness education could fall into the trap of promoting such superficial knowing/understanding, if it weren't for such a strong emphasis on the person actually trying out and experiencing their knowledge and skills. Strategies, therefore, take a person one step deeper into knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness; they insure that the individual will remain a participator (or not) in the healing process.

Strategies, moreover, also expand the individual's options in the healing process. Strategies in wellness care are not limited to traditional pharmacological, surgical, or sociopsychological methods. There is room to engage the technologically specific and practical, to be sure, but wellness strategies

very often may embrace the intuitive, the spiritual, even the magical. Love, prayer, meditation, bioenergetics, visualization, vision quests, even a dab of mud from good ol' Mother Earth, among countless other examples can be powerful healing mediums if the desire to heal or be healed is strong enough and sincere enough.

In the final analysis, strategies give self-care a meaning and mission. They are broad enough to include a very contrived process based upon specific reasoning, or a highly intuitive, if not serendipitous, approach based upon what "feels right" at the moment. In any case, strategies lead us to a point where we must then affirm and assert the entire self-care process (all the previous steps) into actual action/experience.

Affirmation & Assertion (Step 6)

On one level, affirmation implies a simple "yes" or "no" to a health care approach. But in wellness terms, affirmation actually goes deeper. The reason is obvious: By the time a person has assessed their situation, plugged into their bank of knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness, and identified an optimal strategy apparently worth trying, their desire to affirm healing or wellness-enhancing processes is embraced by a depth of information. This knowing and feeling informed, whether from pure rational or intuitive/spiritual dimensions, releases itself in an overriding conviction or sense of rightness.

Affirmation, therefore, is simply putting the will of our bodily, mental, and spiritual life force energy into the idea and belief that our personal sense of wellness has potential to be experienced and enhanced through a particular involvement or care strategy which feels "right" and which we have chosen. This sense of wellness often becomes quite power-laden if invoked through the integration of positive thoughts, positive visualization, and positively spoken words.

Of course, we are all familiar with such affirmative processes, but how often have we considered them to be critical components of self-care responsibility which we can instill in our clients. As we have seen, a key wellness principle is that a person is their own healer. The world's greatest therapists and technology can attempt to heal an individual, but if that person does not will a life-affirming consciousness themselves there is no hope. It is paramount, therefore, that practitioners attempting to instill a wellness consciousness in their clients must incorporate the learning of affirmation processes. So important is this concept, I believe, that examples of affirmation learning processes have been included in the second section of this book.

Following on the heels of affirmation, of course, is assertion. Assertion is will in action, it is effective doing. Assertion in and of itself does not assure that desired healing or wellness enhancement will actually occur.

Oftentimes, the act of self-care must be instilled with attentive consciousness, patience, and hope. It is an overall commitment to stay with the wellness process that provides continuous information in which to assess and reaffirm regenerative strategies. In a sense, it is every person's right to experience increasing wellness. As practitioners, we must continually support this right; we must recognize, however, that the intensity to which a client may desire to affirm and assert his/her wellness right is often out of our hands. The fact that we have made a commitment to lead an individual to the wellness threshold of consciousness, whether they decide to pass through it or not, is quite often our most important and sometimes only role.

Reflection & Evaluation (Step 7)

As we well know, the final measure of effectiveness in anything we do comes from purposeful reflection and evaluation. Sometimes, as in the case of responding to mediate stress, the reflective/evaluative process follows quickly on the heels of the entire self-care process, even as the stressful experience unfolds! In many cases, especially when we are changing or modifying our lifestyle approach to wellness (for example, incorporating a sustained exercise routine in our daily and weekly regimen), reflection/evaluation may come after the passing of a certain amount of time.

It is the belief in wellness care that all healing and regenerative care is cyclical. Treatment is not a linear process beginning with awareness of symptoms and ending when evaluation shows they have gone away. Self-care as wellness care sees reflective/evaluative processes as cycling back to the initial point of awareness. Afterall, it was this point of awareness which provided the baseline of wellness from which all other self-care processes were activated.

Basically, reflection/evaluation is an inner sort of affair before explicate evaluative processes may give us more information. At the inner level we need to ask ourselves: "Given where I was, is where I am now where I really want to be?" The answer to this question determines not only a new baseline for personal wellness, it also suggests whether any parts of the self-care process are worthy at present to reactivate. Furthermore, reflective and evaluative processes may also determine our sense of devotion to a particular form of wellness care. It has been my experience, for example, that most people who come from the traditional medical/pharmaceutical "quick-fix" approach, and who try certain alternative approaches, such as homeopathic remedies or relaxation techniques, often prematurely evaluate their effectiveness. They expect quick results and do not understand that feeling well naturally

is often a subtle process that is not time-dependent. In any case, wellness care implies a sense of devotion to self-care processes, and continuous contemplation on our actions or those of others helping us is often a measure of our devotion to a particular wellness strategy/treatment.

Summarizing Self-Care & Wellness

At its root, it could be said that self-care is a choice. When it comes down to taking care of the body/mind/spirit system, we can choose to do so ourselves or depend upon others. Of course, as pointed out earlier, most of the time we choose to take care of ourselves. However, we may not always do so properly, skillfully, knowledgeably for various reasons. The wellness movement began acknowledging the fact that too much useful information had been withheld from people by the very medical/therapeutic industry which attempted to help them. The movement believed that basic health care should not be delivered but promoted and encouraged. Therefore, people can be trusted with information, knowledge, skills, and resources to enhance not only their health/wellness but their base of strategies with which to treat themselves in the first place. The wellness movement, in short, has attempted to prevent people from getting stuck in a routine of limited choice which inhibits effective coping.

And it has begun to work! Especially in urban settings, a person would have to be particularly disoriented or naive if they were not aware of an ever-expanding network of services dedicated to enhancing self-care. It would appear that there is an opportunity for a person to address any issue within their life with the support of other helpers absolutely dedicated to that particular issue.

Self-care is also deeply rooted in the idea of dignity. For those people with even the slightest glimmer of hope and courage, dignity is restored if they know they can do something themselves. The seven-step process described above is not meant to impose a rigid lockstep structure to assuming personal responsibility for wellness. At times it may provide a valuable rational structure, but its value is also in its intuitive application. And this too is what helps to enhance people's dignity: to know that they can intuit what basically "feels right" to do; that they can actively participate in their healing or enhancement given a good base of knowledge, skills, and resources, or they can creatively participate as well.

SOME CLOSING, LOVING THOUGHTS

As you can probably tell, I have some pretty convictual feelings about wellness. Years ago I gave up trying to write objectively and pedantically. When I read something I want to feel the heart and soul of the author. And when I meet a peer helper I want to feel the heart and soul of their commitment to serve others and themselves. The wellness field continuously assures me that very sincere, sensitive, and devoted people are changing the course of helping fields and services. New maps of care are being developed by people with a vision, with a burning inside.

Just what is this vision, this inner burning all about?

I think I know, but of course I am not the only one. We all know what it is, if we but quiet our restless mind for a moment and open our heart. Inside each one of us is a burning desire to love and to be loved. Pure and simple. It could be said that each one of us is on a journey in this life to find this love, to shape our ability to give it, and to receive it without expectation.

As practitioners, sometimes our greatest challenge is to envision our role as couriers of love, and to remain open channels for compassion and caring to flow through. Criminals, juvenile delinquents, schizophreniacs, drug addicts, hardened elderly, and the like, are often the hardest people to determine if our compassion means a damn thing. It is harder still to know to what degree they may be receptive to wellness processes.

But none of that should be our concern, for if we focus on the idea that we give so much of ourselves and receive little appreciation or respect in return, we are placing our vision of service on the wrong thing. We are making our service a business affair where the expectation is to give or get under certain conditions.

Real compassion and caring, as genuine expressions of love, have no conditions. This is selfless service: to know that your place in the human drama is unquestioned; that you cannot afford to be affected by the conditions of your clients even as you attempt to affect theirs; that your need to serve others is boundless and is, in effect, merely a way of serving yourself with the same heart-felt compassion you give. Is it possible for you to understand such thoughts?

Dr Bernard Siegal, the author of *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*, is a beautiful example of a surgical doctor working in traditional medical settings, but who compassionately and regularly shows his love for others. But that is not all, for Dr. Siegal's commitment is also to get people in touch with a love they need to have for themselves. This is also the approach of another well known author and psychiatrist, Dr. Leo Buscaglia, whose books on loving oneself are constant best-sellers.

Practitioners who are indeed in touch with a sense of service based around selfless love, these are the people who ceaselessly try to lead others to the wellness/wholeness threshold. These are the helpers

who try to prepare an individual for their own healing journey. And at the heart of that journey a beautiful discovery is to be made that truly is that regenerative dynamo of life: we can love ourselves!

Wellness, in essence, is about loving ourselves. It is about getting in touch with the integrity of life in all its forms. It is about adoring life and all its potential, and it is about respecting life within its flow.

Many people suffer from a constipative dis-ease that prevents them from loving themselves as an aspect of life. This chronic inner discomfort is what I amusingly call Opticalrectumitis. With opticalrectumitis a person is shut off from their heart space by a mind clogged-up with negative thoughts, emotions, attitudes, habits. The result is a shitty outlook on life, including themselves. Such people are easy to spot, for they are veritable grouches and pessimists. They also never smile or laugh. The glimmer of hope, courage, joy has gone out of their eyes. They are skeptical and distrustful of any help, and always wonder, Is this what life really comes down to? They are, as Ashley Montagu would put it, "diseased children." Life has become a sentence, their particular conditions their ball and chain.

I am, however, an untiring optimist. I love life and my service role to others. My journey into selfless service has been among countless teachers. These teachers have come to me in all sizes and shapes; you name the condition, they have had it. But there is no way I could have believed that they were worthy of helping if I did not believe I was worthy of loving. There is no way I could have believed that their bodymindspirit could be re-fused if I had not already experienced to some degree my own wholeness. Finally, there is no way I could have believed they could trust me to help them on their life's journey if I could not extend both hands as a loving gesture from the heart.

People respond to sincerity of expression, whether it is loving love or loving anger. And this is what is the best cure for opticalrectumitis. To be genuine to each other strips away the cloaks of helper and client. Each one of us can discover we are gifts of life; that we want to help each other experience life's potential. Sure, to be genuine makes us vulnerable, whether we are helper or lay person. It makes our feelings and thoughts appear to be too accessible. But that is exactly what a consciousness that is positive- oriented thrives on: the ability to be a clear channel of our thoughts and feelings and those of others so that wellness may flow through at will.

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