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Question What has been the single biggest challenge to your wellbeing this past year during the pandemic?

Answer I have always had a challenging “on again, off again” relationship with exercise. Prior to the pandemic I was very much in the “on again” phase. I looked forward to running 2-3 miles every other day. Though beginning the exercise regimen has always been utter and sheer torture, once in full swing it is almost like an addiction – I look forward to my “run day,” I feel better physically, my outlook is more positive, and I frequently find myself problem solving to the rhythmic pounding of

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my feet on the treadmill. Give me a problem and I will have mapped out the next steps towards a solution by the end of my run!

When things shut down with the pandemic this routine fell apart too easily. It became too easy to justify why I couldn't exercise: "The gym is closed." Grieving the loss of normalcy made it easy to give up the normal routines. While the excuses to not exercise were flimsy at best before, now they had the added weight of stress and anxiety, the justification of the pandemic, the rationale of being in a crisis mode. Nothing was normal anymore.

Question Wellbeing likely meant something different to you in 2019 than it did in 2020. The year of 2021 probably means something different yet again. What does wellbeing mean to you right now?

Answer Wellbeing in 2020 was more about surviving the pandemic. 2021 is about not only resiliency but about thriving and growing and for that both physical and mental wellbeing are crucial.

Question What is the gap right now between you and the place you would like to be in terms of your wellbeing?

Answer My fall off the "exercise-wagon" is the gap I am working on closing, working my way through the phases of "pre-contemplation," "contemplation," and currently in the "planning" phase! I want to get back the feeling of exercise-induced endorphin release that makes you feel you could take on almost anything.

Question What is the one thing in particular that would make you feel better and overall healthier?

Answer I look forward to reclaiming my run routine – ear-buds in my ears, my feet keeping pace with the music, achieving the "second-wind" where I feel I can do this forever!

Question Is there one small step you would be willing to take right now to begin heading in that direction?

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Answer Absolutely. My first small step was walking daily and now I am ready to increase the pace and turn the walk into a run, ready to get back on that treadmill!

Question What would be different 6 weeks from now if you were to consistently take that step? (More endurance, lower blood pressure, greater sense of peace on a scale of 1 – 10, more veggie-heavy dinners a week, a walking routine... there are no rules or targets for what these bites add up to other than they advance you down the path to recovering a greater sense of wellbeing)

Answer 6 weeks from now I want to be at a place where I don't think of exercising with dread!

Question What are you passionate about and what impact would feeling a greater sense of wellbeing -- however you have defined wellbeing -- have on you and the things you are passionate about doing?

Answer At the height of the recession in 1992 my husband lost his job which had brought us to New Mexico and Texas. As we made our way back to the East coast, we decided to explore national parks. He hasn't let me forget the time I couldn't complete the hike with him to the bottom of the Grand Canyon! I love exploring the outdoors with my husband and I want to keep up with him. Redemption!

Question If you were to begin consistently taking that step how would you go about doing it? That is, what would be your specific plan for clearing the path of obstacles so this step would fit into your day?

Answer I plan to start with 10 minutes on the treadmill every other day and slowly increase the pace till I am running again!

Question Are you willing?

Answer YES!

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