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

Answer Paranoia over getting infected with COVID. This paranoia and fear caused me to get upset at times when our clinic had to deal with patients who needed a COVID test done. Part of this stemmed from me being something of a news junkie and seeing way too many stories of patients dying alone, on a ventilator or otherwise, with family goodbyes through an iPad. At the beginning

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of the pandemic I would have the Johns Hopkins web site that was tracking number of cases across the country by state open on my computer. After a time, I realized this wasn't good for my mental health and I stopped doing that. But I continued to watch the cable news programs in the evening. I also tried to remind myself that I just work at an outpatient clinic, and I wasn't someone working on the front lines of a COVID floor at a hospital. Those were the people who were putting themselves at risk every hour of their workday.

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 At this point the fact that we seem to be getting closer to the end of this pandemic and getting back to whatever the new normal will look like, it means figuring out what that means for me and how I will have to adjust and adapt my routines to the new normal. I have always tended to be a person who kept to himself a lot. Being forced to isolate (outside of work) for a year has shown me that I need to get out and interact with people more. Also seems to have magnified other issues for me related to my health so losing weight (which I'm doing, 35 lbs in the past year), getting more exercise (still a work in progress), and getting more sleep (tough for a night owl) are all part of wellbeing in my book.

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

Answer First instinct is to say 'Me' is the biggest gap in the way of getting to where I want to be. Kind of feel like I know what I need to do, it's just a matter of doing it. And I don't have a good excuse for not doing it, except "old habits die hard". Having the pandemic be over and returning to the 'new' normal would be a big help, though.

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

Answer Hard to pick just one. More in-person interactions for my mental wellbeing. More exercise for physical well-being. A set meditation routine (maybe even a little yoga) for my spiritual well-being. But if I had to put my finger on just one, I think it would be better sleep habits/pattern since I think it would have a trickle-down effect to all the other things I want to do.

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

Answer Setting a bedtime for myself. Difficult because I'm such a night owl but work a day shift.

Question What would be different 6 weeks from now if you were to consistently take that step?

Answer More energy, better attitude, better focus.

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 Sometimes I feel like there are too many things I'm passionate about, which makes it difficult to devote enough time to any of them since I feel I'm getting pulled in different directions. When that happens, I have a habit of shutting down, and not doing any of them, or doing them only half-way at best. Some of the things that are most important to me are family, especially in the summer. We have a family camp on a lake and it's great when family members come up for their vacations. I'm the only one in the family that lives in Maine year-round. Also, I do a weekly 2-hour radio show, which is literally a dream come true, and I thoroughly enjoy being able to do the show. I also have some strong opinions on many political and social topics, and because of that I spend a lot of time watching news programs to keep up with everything going on. I think a greater sense of wellbeing would a) allow me more energy and focus to do some of these things, and b) allow me to prioritize what is most important to me and do a better job of "triaging" my priorities, and maybe even do a little on all of them by better rationing my time and energy.

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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 Since I'm a night owl and tend to be watching tv in the evening, having a specific time every night to turn off the tv. From there creating a specific "head on the pillow" time for every night, weekends included. TV off at 10 pm, head on the pillow by 11:30 pm would be the goal. I'm aware that I can be easily distracted

by the latest current events and wanting to keep informed about that particular topic; or wanting to check out new music and see what I might like to use on the radio show (so much music, so little time!); or just hanging out with family in the summer. All these things could make it difficult to begin a wind-down at 10 so I can be on the pillow by 11:30. Setting an alarm on my phone for 10 pm can provide a reminder that's it time to shut down the tv or computer and begin getting ready for sleep.

Question Are you willing?

Answer I know for me that "old habits die hard", but I am willing to try.

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