



Christopher "Chris" Ouellette

Talent Acquisition Specialist
Northern Light Health

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

Answer The single biggest challenge to my wellbeing during the pandemic was strangely the feeling of isolation. I've worked a lot on spirituality, mental health, and centering strategies especially as an introverted person, but the pandemic prevented the social aspects we were all used to which was significantly impacting me. Luckily, technology was accommodating to still be in

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touch with family, friends, and colleagues in order to continue to foster the growth of relationships despite the COVID-19 process.

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 to me has been the collective upkeep of an individual's spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and universal needs. Often times we hear about the interconnectivity of our body's anatomy, such as the relationship between diet and exercise, but we often see (outside the clinical realm more often) how mental health is stigmatized; spiritual health is skewed towards only Christianity; and universal health neglected from our desire to seek comfortable information rather than challenging our own knowledge. When I consider wellbeing in 2021, I believe that there is a need to empathize more with one another, choosing to see the human within the being, which means a lot of reflection, conversation, and putting that into action.

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

Answer The gap to where I am now versus if I were to be at the center of my wellbeing certainly flows and changes throughout different life events and experiences, however, I would say that even with the pandemic, my wellbeing has become more centered. I may have eclipsed the first gap through a career change from higher education to healthcare administration. I do believe post-PhD I will be at another discovery of a gap but at this time it will likely be as you stated, in retrospect. The perspective of realizing a gap for me and addressing it is something which is fairly quick for me, so I'd imagine the realization afterward is more likely.

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

Answer Who wouldn't love to win the PowerBall!? Joking aside, I think some of the research I've been doing has driven me to begin looking at my physical health as much as I would hope of my

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family and friends. Stemming from my master's in Health and Human Performance, as well as information provided from health appointments, I've decided to research more possibilities within my capabilities as far as diet and nutrition are concerned. Realizing that, I am likely consuming more red meat than lean meat as well as choosing appropriate snacks! Having a health coach in Jennifer Fitzpatrick [of Beacon Health] has also been great for accountability, recognizing small wins, and seeing how small changes and building healthy habits benefits in the long-term. Working with different departments and offices, my colleagues are also a part of this journey and I want to just say that the care I've received is absolutely noticed! Having some complications with my digestive system has brought about challenges but isn't something I'm shy to speak on. The impending appointments for milestone check-ins as well as seeing a professional specializing in diet and nutrition will likely catalyze healthier changes in my life.

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

Answer Considering I purchased a home gym at the beginning of the pandemic and it's done a better job at keeping weight off than me, I should probably get back into working out!

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

Answer If I consistently took this step and progressed towards a routine of 4 or 5 times a week, I absolutely know for certain that I would see overall improvements to my cardio-respiratory health, as well as physical strength. I think it would certainly bring about more routine and structure throughout the day which is certainly beneficial, but would also allow me to be more capable of hiking, swimming, and doing other activities I love (especially throughout the summer).

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 I'm incredibly passionate about diversity and inclusion which for me means being a productive ally, anti-racist, and educating myself as much as possible while amplifying the voices of the incredible people of color in our communities. The more and more that I have made conscious efforts into my own wellbeing, I've found more empathy, understanding, and desire to promote equitable change wherever possible. I also believe this to be an area where I could make significant growth through more opportunities to engage in conversations geared to create solutions. I think having more physical health will allow me to function optimally so that I am capable of having more quality rest, more sustenance in my diet, as well as having more freedom to be involved in my community in meaningful ways without the added variables of physical challenges. This also

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will mean that my physical body will be able to have more endurance throughout the day, especially mentally as physical activity will also directly impact cognitive function, improving my ability to be focused and productive.

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 think having a consistent hour scheduled within my day to accomplish a workout would be reasonable. Ideally this would be consistent and something I would be able to do uninterrupted, however, typically I have two husky-shepherds and my five-year-old son to keep me on my toes! Understanding that prioritizing the care of loved ones does not mean the neglecting of my own needs has been part of my centering and mindfulness journey. There's most certainly going to be times where I have to be flexible in order to accommodate others' needs, but consistency in achieving self-growth goals would also be beneficial for my little family as well. I'm envisioning having a workout to begin at least three times a week for the first two weeks, increasing to four times a week thereafter. I'm going to target 9pm as this is when I'm typically free from any obligation whether that's putting my son to bed or from work activities. The goal will likely be measured from weight as I've neared the 195 mark when I would ideally like to be around the 180 mark. Each workout should be a minimum of three super sets for muscle groups: legs, chest and triceps, back shoulders and biceps, with core work out each day! Off days will likely have some activity with walking the dogs with and without my son as well. I feel as though it's an attainable goal as I have done this before but am certainly going to ease into it this time rather than just ignorantly jump back into a difficult routine.

Question Are you willing?

Answer YES!

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