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

Answer When COVID began I was in nursing school and in a program called Work and Grow that is sponsored by Northern Light EMMC. I was working 16 hours a week, in nursing school and trying to run a household with 3 children who were now being home schooled. For the past 4 years through nursing school I had only survived because of my ability to keep to a schedule. My

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planning a schedule had been completely abandoned and I had to figure out how to deal with a new reality. I became part of a cohort that was expedited to graduate early. The one thing I know suffered was my mental health. I also had to stop going to group exercise classes which had helped with my physical and mental health.

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 means for me taking time to do something just for myself. Whether it means going for a walk with my dog and kids or taking a few minutes to just be. I think as caretakers nurses and nurses aids tend to struggle with caring for their own needs.

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

Answer I struggle with self care and I think the reason I struggle is because of time. I have 3 kids , a puppy, a house to run and my work life. I tend to care for everyone else and leave myself for last. I think the gap is wanting to try to do it all on my own. Sometimes we need help and its hard to ask for.

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

Answer I think taking the time to truly get back to my group exercise classes (even though they look differently now), consistently eating well and sleeping (this is hard on nights and with over time!).

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

Answer Yes

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

Answer Lower blood pressure overall health.

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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 Group exercise and eating balanced. I have always enjoyed working out but about 10 years ago I began going to Gold's Gym. I found that working out in a group truly motivates me. The instructors and those that were in the class truly

made me feel like I belonged, and I found it comforting to know that we were all working toward a similar goal. I also found that many of the people in the class were fellow co-workers. It is a stress relief for me to have 1 hour to myself.

A few years back a co-worker introduced me to a "diet" called Whole 30. It is basically clean eating at its best. I feel so much better when I follow this plan -- I sleep better and I'm less tired. It is time-consuming sometimes because I have to meal prep and can't just stop and grab something to eat. Not only do I feel so much better when I exercise and eat balanced, but I really love living that way, too. The hard part is figuring out how to blend it into my life.

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 Making time for myself and enjoying it I am hoping to get back into group exercise at least 3 times a week. I think it is easier for me to be sure to go right before for work. The things that make this hard are not having dinner prepped and my kids' sports schedules and having to transport them. I have already set up rides for my younger son's lacrosse and my older son is only once a week.

Another thing that has prevented me is the fact that they gym was only allowing 10 people in a class in the winter months because of COVID. Now that the weather is warmer, classes will be outside in the parking lot and that for me works very well!

Question Are you willing?

Answer YES.

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