



Wellness and Holistic Life



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FOR MANY YEARS THE concept of wellness has been the goal for those of us who are working in the health care field. The deeper I went into what real healing was all about, the more I realized that if wellness was our only goal we were limiting ourselves. We all have corns or constipation or something, but I am much more interested in “holness.” I have worked with many people who have conditions which they will never ‘cure’ but have lived lives which are complete and holistic. (Holness can be spelled with an H or W. When we started the American Holistic Medical Association we chose H because the root word we were working with was Health, Holy, and Healing. It took us two years to make the decision so I think either is OK.)

Let me tell you about a friend and patient who is a perfect example of this reality. This lady is now 69 years old and in spite of experiencing a cerebral episode three weeks ago was able to go to a movie with me yesterday and one would never believe what she has lived through.

When she was 18 months old she climbed a ladder up to the second-story window where she saw her mother’s face, let go of her hold on the ladder, and fell headfirst into a tar bucket, fracturing her right clavicle and right elbow.

Her arm kept her head from going into the tar, but severely damaged her right kidney. Her kidney had to be removed and until she was eight years old, she was on dialysis with drainage tubes which drained into gauze pads when she was not on dialysis. When the rest of us talk about our childhoods, she has nothing to say, because she spent most of hers in hospitals and her schooling was with tutors. By the time she was 11 she had developed pyelonephritis in her remaining kidney, which fibrosed and left her with less than half of one kidney.

She went through high school and college and gained advanced training and work in neurophysiology and pharmacology.

She had three miscarriages and one full-term pregnancy which, sadly, was a stillborn


because of toxemia. She then had a hysterectomy at age 27 and bilateral mastectomies at age 39. She has continued to live her life fully, facing each of life’s challenges as they come her way and there have been many more. Today she said to me, “Illness has never defined me and I refuse to let it do so now, even with this new bump in the road.”

She has taught me many lessons, not the least being to pay attention to what she tells me. She knows her body and how it functions for her, what she can handle in the way of medications and procedures, what life situations are good for her and which are not. She learned much from her mother and caring doctors who paid close attention to her responses. Her mother never treated her as an invalid and never put up with what she called a “pity party.”

Whatever the situation was they dealt with it with as little drama as they could and she always thought of herself as a healthy person because she dwelt on what was right and working well in her body—not what was wrong.

If something was suggested in the way of a therapy which she knew was not right for her she stood her ground, sometimes getting answers from her dreams. She is not reckless, but thoughtful and clear about her life.

She will never be totally well but she has found a way to live her life to the fullest. She has always been “aging into health” because her focus is on Life, not any disease or part of her life which is not functioning fully. She has a choice, as we all do.

I know of many other people who are living with some chronic disease but they are examples of a holistic life and I am sure that we all know people who are doing the same. When we focus on Life, not an illness or what we see as that part of our life which is not well and then spend our life force looking for what we don’t have, we may miss out on Life, which is the real healer. If we choose to live our lives abundantly, our choices will be filled with living energy, hope, and light. There will be difficult and dark times in our lives, but we live through them and do not get stuck. 

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