




# **Are You Healthy or Are You Well?**

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August 20 2019 4:26 PM





EDWARDSVILLE - Do you believe yourself to be healthy? Do you believe yourself to be well? Right now you are probably thinking that these two words are interchangeable or that I'm just trying to confuse you. That's understandable. The World Health Organization believes them to be the same as well. Which is why in 1948 they defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The WHO believes this definition was so profound that they use it currently to define health.

Yet, in our current medical model, health care and wellness care are not interchangeable. Unfortunately, allowing medicine to become so specialized has broken down the communication necessary to see the bigger picture. This is why the following is the most basic way to view traditional versus wellness care: traditional (sick) care is putting the fire out whereas, wellness care is fire prevention and investigation.

Therefore, true wellness is an essential blueprint needed to build a healthy foundation. It's an ACTIVE process of becoming AWARE and making choices that in-turn increase your QUALITY of life through the absence of disease. What wellness isn't... is the trendy word that is used in so many tangible products in the world of beauty, fitness and weight loss. Although those products can aide in obtaining results, they truthfully aren't wellness care. Actual wellness care involves bringing eight interrelated dimensions into balance to create a sturdy foundation.

The eight dimensions of wellness are: physical, emotional, intellectual, occupational, environmental, social, spiritual and financial. People often associate wellness within the constraint of physical health — nutrition, exercise, weight management, etc., but it encompasses so much more. Overall, wellness is an integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, fueling the body, engaging the mind, and nurturing the spirit. Although wellness always includes striving for health, it's more about living life fully. It is a lifestyle and a personalized approach to living life in a way that allows you to become the best kind of person that your potential will allow.

Our health thrives when we have a positive relationship with our body. Hating one's self into healthier habits only leads to failure and further sickness. In the pursuit of optimum health, consistently trying to achieve balance in each of the eight dimensions will lead to a QUALITY life. To truly be well, you must understand each dimension, be honest with your faults and know what changes are needed to bring them into balance. Although, it is crucial to understand that it's ideal to have each area in balance, which area gets more attention will depend on what stage of life we are in.

So, why should you want to be well instead of just healthy - for the key reason that maintaining an optimal level of wellness is absolutely imperative to living a higher quality life. Wellness care matters because everything we do and every emotion we feel relates to the health of our well-being. In turn at what level our well-being is functioning directly affects our actions, emotions and ultimately our success in life.

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