

Story Block: Wellness

*Exploring the art and
science of Wellness*



in partnership with

HOLSTEE

Story Block: Wellness



I wanted to share a view from my back yard this past weekend:



Rainbows occur when sunlight (which appears as white light but contains all color wavelengths of visible light) shines through water droplets in the sky. That splintering of the white light creates the brilliant array of color that we call rainbows. In many cultures, rainbows are a sign of hope and a promise of better times ahead. After what felt like a long and sometimes dark winter, this was inspiring to behold.

We wish you Wellness in the season ahead!

Bud

Wellness

What makes you feel whole?

What makes you feel strong?

What makes you feel like you?

There is no shortcut or single path to wellness. It starts with the self. Nurturing every aspect of our lives, holistic care allows our body, mind, and soul to achieve harmony.

Wellness *noun*

well·ness | 'welnəs

The quality or state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort.

Dictionary.com © 2020

In this guide, we explore the many ways to prioritize holistic Wellness daily and for the long haul.

On the following pages, we share poetry, philosophy, and a range of activities to help you reflect on the role Wellness plays in your life.

Learn how to improve your six dimensions of Wellness through a self-assessment designed to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Then hop into the teachings of Gretchen Rubin to adopt healthier habits during your daily routine, a body-scan meditation, exercises for cultivating more patience, and more.

Use this guide as a tool to grow your self-led mindfulness practice as well as create a deeper dialogue with your community.



The Violet

Down in a green and shady bed,
A modest violet grew,
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its colours bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet there it was content to bloom,
In modest tints arrayed;
And there diffused its sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go,
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

Introduction

Wellness is important, but often we don't prioritize it until it becomes urgent or we notice an extreme deficit in one or more categories. In this guide we'll review six dimensions of wellness, reflect on our relationship to each one, and explore how we want to improve.

First, let's break down six dimensions of wellness:

Physical wellness is maintaining a sound body through regular exercise, proper nutrition, sleeping well, and avoiding harmful habits. Simply put, it means taking care of our bodies, and recognizing the effects of our daily habits and behaviors.

Spiritual wellness refers to an understanding and connection to things larger than ourselves and our experiences. It is our journey to discover what we value and our place among them.

Occupational wellness is the personal satisfaction and enrichment we gain from our work.

Emotional wellness is an awareness of our feelings and the ability to express them freely. It allows us to create healthy relationships, manage conflict and stay grounded, even in stressful times.

Intellectual wellness is continued learning, problem solving, processing and creativity. It involves engaging the mind to stimulate continued growth and development through life.

Social wellness is being comfortable in our own skin while valuing diversity and treating others with love and compassion. Oftentimes this comes from creating and nurturing a healthy support system that includes friends and family.



Self-Assessment

These dimensions are not something we do or don't have. They exist on an ever changing continuum. Take some time and identify where you are on this continuum at this particular moment in your life.

Mark the section that represents where you are with each dimension of wellness from **1** (a personal weak spot or dimension you need to work on) to **5** (a dimension you feel you have a very good, strong handle on).



Which dimension did you rate the highest? Why?

Which one did you rate the lowest? Why?

Which dimension are you most excited to improve? Why?

Let's dig into the dimension you'd like to work on: What does success in this dimension look like?

What do you need to do differently to get there?



“Wellness, I came to realize, will not happen by accident. It must be a daily practice, especially for those of us who are more susceptible to the oppressiveness of the world.”

J E N N A W O R T H A M



Habits

One of the ways we can cultivate wellness in all six dimensions is by establishing good habits. Gretchen Rubin, author of “Better Than Before” says, “Habits are like the prequel to a happy life. If you have habits that work for you, you’re much more likely to be happy, healthy, productive and creative.” In this section we’ll work through a few exercises and provide you with actionable goals and tips for establishing habits that work for you and encourage overall wellness.

Physical Wellness

“In short: If your motivation is some abstract, fuzzy future goal like losing weight or being healthy, you have the wrong ‘Why’. We want to re-frame our ‘Why’ so it’s focused on the IMMEDIATE benefits we get—shifting from the “chore” we have to do to a gift we get to give ourselves.”

— Michelle Segar

On a scale of 1 to 5 — with 1 being ‘a chore to accomplish’ and 5 being ‘a gift to give yourself’— **circle the number that best describes how you feel about exercise:**

1 2 3 4 5

What is one way to make your exercise feel less like a chore and more like a gift you look forward to each day?

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Spiritual Wellness

No one likes to suffer, but we go about getting happy the wrong way. We go about it by distracting ourselves.

P E M A C H Ö D R Ö N

Set aside time for calm, reflective moments. It could be to journal, read, draw or meditate. Spiritual truths often have a gentle voice and are hard to hear above the chaos of life.

One exercise we suggest trying is author Julia Cameron’s Morning Pages. **Morning Pages are three pages of longhand, stream of consciousness writing, ideally done first thing in the morning.** The idea is that if you give yourself the space to get your thoughts, worries, concerns and ideas out on paper first thing in the morning when your ego and self-censorship are still turned off, you’ll feel clearer and better in touch with yourself and your values.

Occupational Wellness

Set aside time at least once a year to ask yourself:

1. Where do my strengths and interests overlap in my career? How can I focus more energy into that overlapping section, my sweet spot?
2. What are my short and long-term occupational goals?
3. What changes do I want to make in my work environment to feel more fulfilled? What changes can I implement now?



Emotional Wellness

Taking time to acknowledge how you feel about your day-to-day experiences is essential to improving emotional wellness. Try this exercise to foster awareness of your emotions:

1. Create a habit of checking in with yourself by asking a simple question: How are you? The goal is not to judge whether what you're feeling is good or bad, but simply to be aware.
2. Then, ask yourself: What (if anything in particular) is affecting how you feel? Check in with yourself three times a day — morning, noon and night.
3. Try jotting down your answers over a given week or month and see if you notice any patterns.

Intellectual Wellness

Intellectual wellness can be cultivated by challenging yourself to get out of your routine and use your brain in new ways. **Here are few ideas to get you started:**

Be A Novice. Take a cooking class, sign up for a pottery workshop, or teach yourself a foreign language—just try and learn a skill that's completely new to you. It's good for your brain (and helps keep your ego in check) to be a complete beginner at something as an adult.

Read, Read, Read. Choose a book with the sole intention of expanding your knowledge horizons. Read the biography of someone you've never heard of, pick up a book on astrophysics, or read a classic that didn't make it onto your high school reading list.

Gain Perspective. Challenge yourself to see more than one side of an issue. Question your assumptions. Practice empathy.

Social Wellness

“Being who we are requires that we can talk openly about things that are important to us, that we take a clear position on where we stand on important emotional issues, and that we clarify the limits of what is acceptable and tolerable to us in a relationship.”

— Harriet Lerner

Make Commitments. We all have busy lives, and there will always be times when unexpected things come up, but aim to prioritize commitments you make with friends and family. Be someone they can count on.

Snail Mail. Write a letter to a friend. Send a postcard — or last month's art from your Holstee Membership! Do something that shows a friend that you really value them.

Connect With Your Community. One major part of social wellness is feeling connected and contributing to the larger community around you. Volunteer at a local non-profit, get involved with an activist group in your city or rally for a cause that means something to you.

“Wellness is not a ‘medical fix’ but a way of living — a lifestyle sensitive and responsive to all the dimensions of body, mind, and spirit.”

GREG ANDERSON, AUTHOR AND FOUNDER
OF THE CANCER RECOVERY FOUNDATION



“When we nourish ourselves with good people, projects, surroundings, love, magic, beauty and self-care, we radiate light into the world and continually sharpen our vision, perception and clarity all at once.”

V I C T O R I A E R I C K S O N



Cultivating Patience

It's nearly impossible to avoid stress. It comes from big things — anxiety over work, family, and macro issues like politics. But it also comes from little things — those small, petty annoyances that you experience over the course of a day.

We're going to look at one powerful tool for dealing with this kind of day-to-day stress: patience, the ability to “wait calmly in the face of frustration or adversity”.

Cultivating patience can impact every dimension of wellness. In a study from the University of California-Davis and Fuller Theological Seminary, researchers [Sarah A. Schnitker](#) and [Robert A. Emmons](#) found that patient people experienced less instances of depression, felt fewer negative emotions, and reported a greater sense of mindfulness, gratitude, abundance, and connection to mankind and the universe. The same study reported that patient people were less likely to experience stress-related health issues like headaches, acne, ulcers, diarrhea, and pneumonia.

Patience has long been recognized as a human strength and critical component of moral excellence... Familiar maxims such as ‘patience is a virtue’ exemplify the desirability of the trait, and moral philosophers and religious leaders emphasize the importance of developing patience to achieve the ‘good life’.

SCHNITKER & EMMONS

There are many ways to express patience, which Schnitker has organized into a “3-Factor Patience Scale”:

Interpersonal — patience when dealing with others

Life hardships — patience in overcoming a serious setback

Daily hassles — patience with little annoyances and irritations

If you don't think of yourself as a particularly patient person, don't panic! Schnitker's research demonstrates that patience isn't something we are born with — it's something we develop.

In a recent New York Times article, writer [Anna Goldfarb](#) spoke with experts to identify several ways to get started:

Identify your triggers

Impatience is typically a reaction (and often an overreaction).

Anticipating the situations that set us off can help us avoid them altogether or soften the blow. If you prepare yourself to sit in traffic or deal with a tricky coworker, you can see those moments for what they are and not situations that can ruin the whole day.

Reframe the experience

Psychologists use the term “cognitive reappraisal” to describe the process of thinking about a situation differently and connecting it to a larger story. A shift in perspective can particularly help us empathize and cultivate compassion for people who test our patience.

Train, don't try

Patience takes consistent practice. When we practice patience in lower-stakes situations, it becomes a muscle we can flex when we really need it.

Think about a typical day. When do you have the hardest time practicing patience?



“Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.”

T H E N A T I O N A L W E L L N E S S I N S T I T U T E



Mind and Body

In a given day, when do you most tend to notice how your body is feeling? For many of us, it is when something is wrong: when we feel pain or are tired, stressed, hungry, thirsty, depressed, or restless.

And often, the answer to our wellness woes (or even just where to begin) comes from looking inward.

Take a few minutes to be still, focus on your breath, and check in with yourself with this Body Scan Meditation.

★ We recommend reading through the script in full before you begin so you don't have to interrupt your meditation to read. You can also listen to an audio version of this meditation at holstee.com/breathe.

Body Scan Meditation

1. Begin by finding a comfortable seated position with your feet on the ground and your hands resting gently in your lap.
2. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth, relaxing your jaw, and closing your eyes if that feels most natural to you.
3. Starting with the top of your head, begin to slowly scan down through your body, noticing how each part is feeling.
4. Notice your forehead, eyebrows, and eyes. With each breath, continue. Notice your neck and shoulders. Let them be soft.

5. Notice your chest, your arms and elbows, your hands resting in your lap. Feel the weight of your body in the chair. The tops of your legs, your knees, your feet against the ground. Try to notice without judgment.
6. Breathe deeply and become aware of your whole body, present in this moment.
7. Take as much time as you need, and when you're ready, open your eyes and slowly bring your awareness back into the room.

Great job! You're on your way to greater awareness and understanding of what you need. **Take a moment to jot down any thoughts about your experience:**

A large grid of small dots for taking notes.



“Each day presents an opportunity to learn more, do more, be more, and grow more. Keeping yourself in ‘permanent beta’ makes you acknowledge that you have bugs, that there’s more testing to do on yourself, and that you will continue to adapt and evolve.”

J O C E L Y N K . G L E I



Reflect & Discuss

Use these questions for self-reflection or to spark meaningful conversations.

ICEBREAKERS

What aspect of wellness do you find most challenging to maintain?

What was your favorite physical activity as a kid? How did it make you feel?

If you had to lose one sense (smell, touch, taste, hearing, sight) which would it be and why?

DEEPER QUESTIONS

Can you easily identify what you're feeling most of the time?

What is one thing you could do every day to improve your well-being? What (if anything) is stopping you?

Describe a moment in your life where you felt like you were 100% whole.

Do you believe you have a soul? If so, where in your body does it live?



”What is necessary to change
a person is to change his
awareness of himself.

A B R A H A M M A S L O W

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