

Are You Spending Tomorrows Happiness Today?

“Wellness Matters”

By Lisa Schilling

The new media buzz phrase seems to be the “obesity epidemic.” Long-term studies are now beginning to correlate the multifaceted damage that occurs as a result of being obese. This new “awareness” could also be driven by insurance companies who are forced to pay out more claims for preventable disease and conditions caused from lifestyle choices.

To me, this is the key issue, lifestyle choices. People routinely choose the short-term behaviors that result in long-term harm. It is this preoccupation with immediate gratification and comfort that causes people to suffer later in their life. Later always comes, but people seem able to block that out when making daily choices.

So far, the focus of dealing with this issue has been to educate those who find themselves suffering the consequences. This may not be the best use of time, money or resources. Most people understand that they need to move more and eat less. That is not the problem. The problem is that they just don't want to.

The best measure to help more people improve their personal wellness is to help them develop a personal reason to make healthy changes in their daily lifestyle. Without this motivation, most people will not have the fortitude to maintain the changes for the long-term. By starting this process at an earlier intervention point, you increase the chances of seeing long-term positive results.

For each person, there is a unique reason that would cause them to make and stick to healthier habits. If this can be discovered and utilized as part of a wellness plan, the success rate would increase exponentially. Having a way to create accountability for following through with that plan is another key component to increasing compliance.

I foresee insurance companies, in the future, making people pay more for preventable conditions, and rewarding people who are making and maintaining healthier changes. How could this happen? Simple tests like, cholesterol finger sticks, Height/Weight/BMI analysis, along with body fat and muscle ratios. These can be obtained in a simple “health fair” type environment.

If you were held accountable for your progress toward your goal, and then ultimately the maintenance of your goal, would you be more likely to follow a wellness plan? For some that might be enough to get them looking for ways to create a healthier lifestyle, for others it still would not be enough.

If this started out as an optional program, to lower your insurance premiums, would that be enough to get you making a serious dent in your goals? Only you can answer that question. My challenge is for you to discover this, “What would it take to make you alter or stop your negative health habits and start adopting healthier ones on a consistent basis?”

When each person finds the answer to that question, they can begin move past previous roadblocks and move forward into the life they have wanted in the long term, not just short term. In the end short term pleasures will leave you just coping day to day instead of living a full and rewarding life. It is to step back and look at the big picture.

Most American's are spending tomorrow's happiness today, and suffering more and more in their future. Continue on the path of what feels good now, and your quality of life will deteriorate to the point you will need assistance with even your basic daily activities.

Until people realize the long term consequences of short term behaviors, they will not begin making improved daily choices. That is where the battle is truly fought, in your daily choices. What and how much will I eat? Will I make time to move and exercise today? Will I smoke or drink too much? Will I use drugs or other substances? Will I plan time for my personal relaxation or development? Will I devote time to developing meaningful relationships?

It is these daily choices that add up to the sum of your total wellness. Decide today what it will take to make that difference in your life. Then begin making the daily choices that will ultimately change your lifestyle for the better. Begin to expand your vision, because your future depends on each choice that you make today.