

Wellness Newsletter

Special Edition

This edition is special because it is my last as Wellness Director with Rose & Kiernan. I am choosing to move on in order to resolve some long-standing (and very solvable) health issues. Be assured that Rose & Kiernan will continue to provide you with monthly health and wellness tips. As John Lennon sang, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Although I hadn't planned this career change, I look forward to what the future holds. However, I will miss the chance to inform, engage and hopefully inspire you. I shared the lessons I've learned from my own health and well-being challenges with the intention that they help you to realize your own unique healthy destiny. If you'd like to continue to hear my thoughts, ideas, and personal experience about what I call a "WellNested Life", please visit www.TheWellNestedLife.com. On this note, I'd like to leave you with my Top Five Well-being Maxims, culled from the past few years of my Wellness Corners. Thanks for listening and be well!



Karen DeBonis
Outgoing R&K Wellness Director

Karen's Top 5 Maxims for Well-being:

1. I'm open to the possibility.



There's so much about our world that we still don't understand. And most of our life experiences are filtered through our own naturally biased mindsets. But there's almost always another way to look at things. I recently discovered that certain foods formerly on my personal "black-list" are actually healing for me now. That was a tough bacon-bit to swallow, but I'm glad I did. It's wise to have a healthy skepticism

of unproven theories. However, with science and medicine changing recommendations about what's good or bad for us *daily* (or maybe it just seems that way), it makes sense to consider new ideas. You may find the key to unlock your best self. Being open to the possibility applies to other areas of life as well, like relationships. When it becomes plausible that other perspectives have value, you'll deepen your understanding of the other person. And during times of conflict, you'll come to agreement or compromise much sooner. Think about where you may be stuck in the closed position. Are you convinced that only *your* solution will resolve a work problem? Are you *sure* your estranged relative intended to be hurtful? *Still* insist that you hate vegetables? Try being open - the possibilities are endless.

2. Laugh lots

Dr. Norman Cousins is a famous author and professor who allegedly recovered from a severe illness through daily belly laughing. There are lots of people with similar tales. If your life doesn't naturally include people and things that tickle your funny bone, seek them out intentionally. Now with YouTube, there's no excuse not to find something hilarious. I'm not naturally an easy laugher, so I put a reminder in my phone. If I don't have access at the moment to a source of laughter, I just belt out a good guffaw anyways, which makes me feel so silly that I get the giggles for real. Of course I do this in private, but if you have a close enough friend to share this experience, you can quickly get each other chuckling. And just as I wouldn't advise laughing *at* someone else, but laughing *with* them, extend yourself the same courtesy. Laugh at your mistakes and don't take yourself too seriously, but be sure this practice lifts you up and doesn't pull you down. You'll know the difference when the laughing is over. If you feel better, you're laughing *with* yourself, if you feel worse, you're laughing *at* yourself. So whether you laugh alone, laugh with others, or laugh *with* yourself ... do it lots.



3. Think it, say it, and make it come true.



I start every day by announcing, “It’s a glorious day!” as I throw my head back, reach out my arms, and smile. I do this regardless of how well I slept, how I feel or what the day holds. In fact, when I feel lousy

or grumpy, I do it even more vigorously. Does my “glorious day” instantly relieve my aches, pains, and moods? No. But it makes it harder to feel negative throughout the day. The key is to create intentional thoughts that reflect the reality you *want*, not the reality that currently *is*. Then say these thoughts aloud. No matter how I feel at that moment (my current reality), I state that it’s a glorious day (the reality I *want*). Note I don’t say, “It’s *going to be* a glorious day.” That’s a hope for the future, not a reflection of the present. Positive thoughts and statements aren’t magic or even rocket science. What I believe is that the more you verbalize a positive thought, the more you will change your behavior in subtle, possibly imperceptible ways to make it come true. I am convinced that positive thoughts are transformative in ways that science can’t prove. They certainly make a difference in my own life and I hope they will in yours. Sorry—let me correct that: “*Positive thoughts DO make a difference in your life.*”

4. Food feeds our bodies and sometimes, too, our souls.

You’ve probably heard the analogy that our body is like a car engine - it needs fuel and tune-ups on a regular basis. Use high-octane fuel and it will run better and longer. Use cheap stuff, or run dry frequently, and you’ll be paying more than your fair share of the good doctor’s vacation home. Every morsel or sip that passes our lips either fuels or gums-up our system. But food is more than just fuel. Food is a bond between and among family, friends, and strangers. It’s a celebration, an expression of love, a creative outlet, a comfort. In this sense, food feeds our soul. Other soul-food can include a beautiful sunset, a satisfying hobby, meditation, spending time with loved ones, and myriad other activities. I encourage you to develop a repertoire of ideas that don’t involve eating so you have many options when your soul needs nourishment. When you do use food for your soul, make it count. Turn down the cheap mass-marketed junk and hold out for the best quality you can find. Then be sure to savor every last crumb or drop. I like to feed my soul with a Friday evening glass of Chardonnay out on the porch swing, or in front of the fireplace, or on a sunny patio, depending on the season. Wherever I land— it’s heaven! - and my soul says “thank you.”



5. Perfect – isn’t.

Perfection leaves no room for improvement and therefore no opportunity for personal growth. Therefore, perfect is *not perfect*. Perfection is an illusion anyway. There is no perfect lifestyle, job, relationship, or family. If you were somehow able, in an alternate universe, to achieve or obtain the perfect life, it would be fleeting because as soon as it arrives, it inhibits growth and stops being perfect. As I embarked on my adult life many years ago, I envisioned a perfect life – perfect kids, spouse, career, house, body, hair, etc. The quest was exhausting and futile.

At this stage of my life, I’m working toward *authenticity*, which is so much better. I have lots of flaws and much still to learn in life and every bit of it makes me fully human. Embracing life’s struggles is hard, but learning the lessons from the struggle is incredibly rewarding. And that satisfaction trumps perfection anytime. You may at times experience a perfect moment or even a whole day, and I wish many of those for you. But stop trying for anything broader or longer lasting than that. Authenticity – embracing you and your life complete with all the failings, conflict and pain, and learning and growing from the imperfection – that is – dare I say it – *perfect*.



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