

# Behavioral Guidelines *for* *Health* *&* *Wellness*

Brent Q. Hafen

Alton L. Thygerson

Kathryn J. Frandsen

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**Brent Q. Hafen**  
*Brigham Young University*

**Alton L. Thygerson**  
*Brigham Young University*

**Kathryn J. Frandsen**



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# 1

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## *Introduction*

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*You, the individual, can do more for your health and well-being than any doctor, any hospital, any drug, any exotic medical device.*

*—Joseph A. Califano, Former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare*

Most of us think of health merely as the absence of some physical disease — the absence of some specified illness with its range of clearly defined symptoms.

Seen from that limited perspective, health is easy to measure. The silvered bulb of a thermometer is poked under a tongue, and the mercury that inches its way along a measured scale gives us the evidence we seek. The cold metal of the stethoscope probes for the faintly distinguishable rhythm; the drop of crimson blood is smeared beneath the powerful gaze of the microscope.

Health — in its truest sense — is not easy to define; some, in fact, agree that it is almost impossible to measure. The World Health Organization, clutching at an elusive definition, earmarks health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” The key word may possibly be well-being — and true health may actually encompass a condi-

tion in which we are able to avoid illness even if we are predisposed to it.

Seen as a much greater condition of overall well-being, “health” transcends the usually limiting connection with disease that we have given it.

“Health,” then, begins to assume a condition of **wellness** — not just an absence of sickness. Jesse Williams, a pioneer of modern health education, introduced the concept that health is “that condition of the individual that makes possible the highest enjoyment of life, the greatest constructive work, and that shows itself in the best service to the world . . . . Health as freedom from disease is a standard of mediocrity; health as a quality of life is a standard of inspiration and increasing achievements.”

Are there really such marked differences between “health” as we have traditionally viewed it and a concept of “wellness” that Williams refers to?

Absolutely!

Health is a **state of being**; either you are healthy,

or you are not. And when you are ill, you cannot at the same time be healthy. Wellness, on the other hand, is a **process** — a continuous moving toward a greater awareness of yourself and the way in which environment, interpersonal relationships, nutrition, fitness, stress, and other factors influence you. You work toward becoming the best you can be, without traditionally accepted limitations regarding your age, your race, or your genetic blueprint. Illness and “health” are opposite states, but you can be ill and still enjoy “wellness” if you have a purpose to life, a deep appreciation for living, and a sense of joy.

Bound by the strictures of traditionally defined “health,” you wait until some disease state has crept up on you — and then you consult a professional to evaluate your condition and prescribe treatment. Simply put, you turn your “health” over to someone else. Wellness, on the other hand, becomes a matter of self-evaluation and self-assessment. You continually work on learning and on making changes that will enhance your state of wellness; **you** take the reins. You can delegate your “health” to someone else; wellness, on the other hand, requires a deep personal commitment.

“Health” is a pretty simple concept; wellness, however, is a multifaceted and complex concept that involves much more than simple physical condition. And, perhaps most importantly, “health” is something not available to everyone. Wellness, on the other hand, can be enjoyed by everyone — despite physical limitations, disease, and handicap. Wellness is a full integration of physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being — a complex interaction of the factors that lead to a quality life.

If we are to accept a definition of “health” that goes beyond mere freedom from disease and encompasses the notion of wellness, we must also accept a notion that calls for a dramatic change in the way we deal with health. For centuries, our emphasis has been on identifying bacteria, classifying viruses, and waging a determined war on devastating disease. We have concentrated, with an almost exclusive vigor, on treatment — on carefully measured doses of pills and potions dispensed from the pharmacist’s crowded shelves. But if we are to redefine health to reflect a condition of wellness, we must also redefine the ultimate goal of our health

efforts: We must concentrate on a way of preventing disease from occurring in the first place instead of merely diagnosing and treating it once it occurs.

Inherent in that task is the recognition that behavior — physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual — plays a key role not only in the development of disease, but in our ability to resist disease and maintain optimum health. We must begin to recognize a growing movement in “behavioral health” — a philosophy of health promotion that assigns to the individual conscious and active responsibility for optimum wellness of the whole person, concentrating on behavioral and lifestyle factors.

Embodied in a definition of behavioral health is a philosophy of wellness that calls for consideration of the “whole person,” not a segmented fractionalization into separate parts. We need to consider ourselves as we interact in our environment — not separate complaints or body parts in a sterile laboratory or the unnatural environs of a physician’s examining room. It stresses a conscious and active commitment on the individual’s part, refusing to admit that optimum health is something that “just happens.” Most significantly, it calls for concentration on the factors that precede illness instead of being concerned solely with the anatomy of disease once it strikes.

Importantly, it takes into consideration the sobering statistics on the causes of death in the United States.

Are we a nation in need of an expanded definition of health and a commitment to wellness?

The answer lies in statistical evidence. Consider this: According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Americans spend more than \$1,500 per person every year on health care — the highest in the world! (For comparison, the British spend about \$500 per person each year on medical care, and live one to three years longer than the average American. The Germans, with a comparable lifespan, spend about \$800 per year.)

That’s not all. Americans have a higher age-adjusted mortality rate and a higher infant mortality rate than a number of nations. Of twenty countries studied by researchers at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, the typical American diet was highest of all in the percentage of fat. Only a few nations ranked higher in the amount of artery-clogging cholesterol consumed, say the research-

chers. And, to top it off, the typical American diet is the lowest in dietary fiber.

The result?

We are one of the fattest nations in the world. Approximately two-thirds of our middle-aged men are overweight. Compare that to only about one-third of men in the same age group in the Netherlands — and only **3 percent** of the middle-aged men in Japan!

There's more. We have the highest rate of heart disease among the nations of the developed world. And we have some of the highest rates in the world of cancer of the colon, rectum, breast, and lung.

Considering how much we as a nation spend on medical care, we should outshine the world — but we don't. Why? Because we have too often forgotten that we hold the keys — that it is our **lifestyle**, not some mysterious and overpowering force, which dictates our level of wellness. Of all those who died each year in this nation as this decade was beginning, only 10 percent succumbed because of inadequate health care. Only 20 percent died because of environmental or biological factors. Fully

one-half — 50 percent — died as a direct result of an unhealthy lifestyle.

What does this message say to you?

Researchers have identified three basic determinants that make up health — heredity, environment, and behavior. You may not have much control over your environment: You may live in the midst of poverty or affluence, you may breathe in air choked by industrial pollutants, or you may live in an area torn by war and riots. Nor do you have control over your heredity: Your genetic blueprint was determined at the moment of conception and defies change.

But you **do** have complete control over your behavior. You choose whether you exercise daily. You decide how much sleep you get each night. You determine whether you eat at breakfast each morning. You call the shots on dozens of habits, all of which contribute to your level of health and wellness.

Your level of health and wellness, influenced immensely by your lifestyle, is the sum of the way you behave on a physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual plane.

## Ten Qualities of the Super-Well

- Deeply committed to a cause outside oneself.
- Physically able to do whatever one wants with intensity and great energy — seldom sick.
- A caring and loving person on whom others lean in a crisis.
- In tune with the spiritual — having a clear sense of purpose and direction.
- Intellectually sharp, able to handle information; possessing an ever-curious mind and a good sense of humor.
- Well organized and able to accomplish great quantities of work.
- Able to live in and enjoy the present, rather than focusing on the past or looking toward the future.
- Comfortable with experiencing the full range of human emotions.
- Accepting of one's limitations, handicaps and mistakes.
- Able and willing to take charge of one's life, to practice positive self-care and to be assertive when necessary.

— *Ten Qualities of the Super-well  
Structured Exercises in Wellness  
Promotion, Vol. 1, p. 16.*

## *Physical Health*

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Physical health, of course, is the kind most commonly associated with being “healthy.” A person who has good physical health is one who eats the right kinds of foods, gets plenty of exercise, maintains proper weight, and restricts the intake of harmful substances — such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and drugs. His body is trim and fit; he has an eager stride, he stands up straight, and his eyes are bright with energy. This level of optimum physical well-being is one of the foremost characteristics of a healthy person.

## *Mental Health*

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Mental health has fallen into the same kind of trap as physical health: Too often, it is regarded as merely the absence of mental disease or illness. But just as physical health embodies much more than just absence of disease, so mental health is characterized by signs of positive wellness. More than 2,000 years ago, philosophers Homer, Plato, and Aristotle speculated on the relationship between the mind and the body; today, proponents of behavioral health recognize that the relationship is close and that mental behaviors have a striking impact on health and wellness.

## *Emotional Health*

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Emotions, we have learned, are of both the mind and the body — and, as such, they can bridge the gap between the mind and the body. We have learned, too, that our emotions are extremely complex, and that they can make us desperately ill. It has long been accepted that emotions are a contributing factor in a number of diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, bronchial asthma, peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis, hypertension, and der-

matitis; through the principles of behavioral health, we are struggling to identify new ways in which the emotions affect health.

## *Social Health*

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Health, and the accompanying self-image it gives us, endows us with the ease and confidence to be outgoing, friendly, and affectionate toward others. The healthy person is confident of his own abilities and his own needs, and he doesn't feel that he is jeopardizing himself by opening up to others.

One of the hallmarks of good health is the ability to relate to others — to reach out to other people, both within the family unit and outside it. A healthy person is honest with others and loyal to them; his own balance and sense of self allow him to extend respect and tolerance to others.

Healthy people have the ability to be intimate, but they are not promiscuous. They organize themselves in family groups, and they are loyal and faithful to the members of their families. They are trustworthy and loyal to those outside the family unit, and they have the ability to make and keep friends.

Health brings with it the ability to master the social graces. A healthy person is affectionate, polite, and helpful toward others; he can handle conflict without exploding, and he is true to his ideals and beliefs while allowing others to be true to theirs. He does not interpret a difference of opinion as the basis for destruction; instead, he is tolerant and secure. He has the ability to say “no” when he should and is sensible in responding to the needs of others without sacrificing his own.

## *Spiritual Health*

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Spiritual health gives meaning and direction to life. Every human being needs the sense that life is meaningful — that there is purpose and direction

## Spiritual Health

"Optimal spiritual health may be considered as the ability to develop our spiritual nature to its fullest potential. This would include our ability to discover and

articulate our own basic purpose in life, learn how to experience love, joy, peace and fulfillment and how to help ourselves and others achieve their full potential."

— Larry S. Chapman  
*American Journal of Health  
Promotion*

to what he is doing.

Health embodies commitment to a worthwhile purpose. In health, there is faith and peace; there is an undaunted comfort with life and its outcome.

Our basic attitudes toward life fashion our conscious beliefs and awareness; the healthy person has an attitude characterized by faith and optimism. Essential to this attitude is a hope that sustains him throughout whatever life has to offer. Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* defines hope as "Trust, reliance . . . a desire accompanied with expectation of obtaining what is desired or belief that it is obtainable." Hope and optimism, say researchers at Harvard Medical School, can enable healthy individuals to withstand even the most massive stress, a conclusion drawn from the study of individuals who survived Nazi concentration camps. Those who went on to lead successful, happy lives were those who possess the qualities of hope and faith.

## Risk Factors That Compromise Wellness

Is it so important to know what risk factors you may face?

Yes — because of all the factors that affect your well-being and quality of life, **more than half are**

**lifestyle factors that you control!** What does that mean to you? It means that you can take an intelligent, well-planned approach to eliminating risk factors that may compromise your health and well-being.

To get a graphic understanding of how risk factors impact you, take a look at the leading causes of death at the beginning of this century as compared to the beginning of this decade. In the year 1900, the leading causes of death were pneumonia and influenza; they were followed, in order, by tuberculosis, diarrhea and enteritis, diseases of the heart, intracranial lesions of vascular origin, nephritis, accidents, cancer, senility, and diphtheria.

Take a hard look at those ten leading causes of death. Six of them — tuberculosis, diarrhea and enteritis, intracranial lesions, nephritis, senility, and diphtheria — no longer even rank among the ten leading causes of death. Medical research, with its antibiotics and immunizations, has all but eliminated what used to be major killers.

Now look at today's picture. Heart disease, the fourth leading cause of death in 1900, has moved to number one. Number two is cancer — almost at rock bottom in 1900, coming in at eighth. The third largest cause of death today is cerebrovascular disease, which didn't even make it on the chart in 1900.

What do those three causes of death have in common? **They are largely caused by the lifestyle factors we choose to adopt!** Diets high in fats and cholesterol, diets low in dietary fiber, cigarette smoking, and inactivity are among the leading risk factors.

The only two leading causes of death from 1900

that still remain on the list today besides heart disease and cancer are accidents (in fourth place) and pneumonia and influenza (in sixth place). Rounding out the leading causes of death in this decade are a group of conditions linked undeniably to lifestyle: Chronic, obstructive pulmonary diseases; diabetes mellitus; cirrhosis of the liver; atherosclerosis; and suicide.

What does that tell you? According to the American Council on Science and Health in a landmark report on America's health, the five leading causes of death — heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, accidents, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease — claimed the lives of nearly one and a half million Americans in a recent year. Almost one-third of these deaths, the council claims, could have been prevented by modifying just three risk factors: Smoking, hypertension, and alcohol abuse.

There's no getting around it — our lifestyle dictates our risk factors. Figures from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta paint the sordid picture: Every year, there are almost 150,000 new cases of lung cancer. More than 25,000 deaths result from drunk driving. Almost 50,000 people die in this country each year in situations where alcohol was an underlying or contributing cause. And then there are the alarming results of the sexual revolution: Almost a million new cases of gonorrhea each year, and more than 8,000 new cases of AIDS diagnosed each year with almost certainly fatal results.

Behavioral health — the role of lifestyle in health — brings with it solutions that seem simple in comparison to the array of scientific texts, the complex chemical formulas, the glass dishes and test tubes, the powerful lens of the microscope. Researchers have found, for example, that seven simple lifestyle habits can add significantly to longevity:

1. Sleeping for seven to eight hours each night.
2. Eating breakfast every day.
3. Not eating between meals.
4. Maintaining an ideal weight.
5. Exercising regularly.
6. Drinking only moderate amounts of alcohol (or no alcohol at all).
7. Not smoking cigarettes.

Researchers have also found that five common factors directly or indirectly cause seven of the ten

major killers in this country — and that all five of those factors are behavioral. What are they?

1. Eating foods high in fats.
2. Smoking.
3. Lack of regular exercise.
4. Drinking too much alcohol.
5. Failing to take prescribed hypertensive medication.

According to the American Council on Science and Health, four of the five leading causes of death are directly related to cigarette smoking. It is estimated that smoking is responsible for 30 percent of all cancer deaths, 30 percent of all heart disease fatalities, 85 percent of all chronic bronchitis and emphysema deaths — and that it is an “unquantifiable risk factor” for cerebrovascular disease.

According to the council, infant and fetal mortality could also be substantially reduced by decreased cigarette smoking. Smoking is responsible for elevated rates of spontaneous abortion and stillbirth and accounts for up to 14 percent of all premature births in the United States.

The official position of the World Health Organization on smoking is clear: “The control of cigarette smoking could do more to improve health and prolong life in developed countries than any other single action in the whole field of preventive medicine.”

In a nutshell, what are some of the risk factors you can eliminate to enhance your chances of wellness? Eat a well-rounded, balanced diet low in fats and cholesterol and high in dietary fiber — and make sure you eat a good breakfast every day. Get at least thirty minutes of moderate exercise at least three times a week. Get a good night's sleep. Take any medication **your doctor has prescribed** — and be consistent in following precise directions. And, above all, stop smoking and limit your intake of alcohol.

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## *Characteristics of Healthy People*

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While others endure mild aches and pains and

have a medicine chest well-stocked with aspirin, antacids, and other pills and potions, the healthy individual is more free from everyday aches and pains. You can spot a healthy person by the way he reacts to the occasional sore throat, headache, or bout with indigestion: He doesn't moan around complaining about it. He's confident and optimistic about his ability to take care of the problem; for him, it's not something that prevents his enjoyment of life.

Physical health brings with it an almost remarkable resistance to disease. The right combination of nutrition and exercise renders a healthy person capable of resisting the common colds and influenza that wipe out dozens of his associates — while he is surrounded by the sniffing and wheezing that is almost expected as the blustery winter winds drift the January snow along the roadsides, he is symptom-free. While dozens of his colleagues or classmates toss between damp sheets with the discomfort of a fever, he is at the office or in the classroom reading the headlines about the latest flu epidemic.

A person who enjoys good physical health is intelligent about his health; when he **does** develop an unusual or irritating symptom, he does what is necessary to relieve it. If symptoms persist, he checks with a doctor. Besides getting early medical attention for his occasional problem, he is careful about getting regular physical checkups to detect any potential problem. He concentrates on **preventing** illness rather than on chasing dubious cures once he is stricken.

Whether or not the healthy person is muscular, he is usually physically powerful; exercise attunes his muscles and endows him with a high level of physical coordination and self-confidence. Instead of shying away from a physical challenge, he accepts it with enthusiasm, confident that he can make his body work for him. Reaction time is good, strength is obvious, and endurance is high.

Healthy people have an active lifestyle; they love to be outdoors and usually expend their energy enjoying a fast-paced bicycle ride along a roadside choked with apple blossoms or a vigorous game of touch football on a crisp autumn afternoon. They have the energy they need to do the things they enjoy — and the energy they need to complete a demanding task at work, breeze through final exams

on a wink of sleep, or clear all of the debris out of last year's vegetable garden.

Most important, healthy people respect and like their own bodies. They enjoy a natural grace and ease; you can see their health in the way they move. Beauty in the traditional sense of the word has little to do with it; a healthy person makes the most of his own body, and he delights in it.

The mental aspect of health takes into consideration the individual's ability to think clearly. The healthy person is quick to catch on to new concepts, quick to pick up new ideas. Instead of being intimidated by facts and figures with which he is unfamiliar, he embraces the chance to learn something new. His confidence and enthusiasm enable him to approach any learning situation with eagerness that leads to success.

A healthy individual is a creative person. While some of his colleagues seem burdened with the task of getting a job done, he seems to have the ability to approach the same task in a new way. He doesn't seem restricted by what has always been done before: He is willing to tackle the chore from a different angle, one that lets him exercise creativity and initiative.

Logic is a basic attribute of good mental health. A person who is suddenly confronted with an unfamiliar situation may tend to experience mild panic; the healthy person is able to use common sense and logic to reason his way through.

The healthy person is curious, and his genuine sense of curiosity leads him to a world that is always new and challenging. Where others accept what life has to offer with quiet resolve, the healthy individual grasps each aspect of his life with a desire to understand. He is the person who knows why the surface of a lake is so blue, how a newspaper is printed, or the way a robin can tell that spring has arrived. Why? Because he asks. Some people may pass a flowering hedge and notice that it is beautiful; a healthy person wants to know why the blooms are so pink, what kind of hedge it is, and how he can grow one like it.

Along with alertness and sharpness, the healthy person is stimulating and capable. He has a good memory, and he can use it to his greatest advantage. He is skilled in his chosen area of expertise, and he is usually the one who is always open to new ideas and suggestions. He relishes the chance to

improve himself or learn something new.

Health brings with it vision and promise. More than anything else, the healthy person is open-minded and accepting of others. Instead of being threatened by those who are different than he is, he exhibits a respect and curiosity without feeling that he has to conform. He is faithful to his own ideals and philosophies, but does not hesitate to allow others the same privilege. His self-confidence — that all-important self-image — guarantees that he can take his place among others in the world without always having to give up part of himself and without requiring others to do the same.

The hallmark of good emotional health is a deep and abiding happiness — not a happiness that is dependent on some frail set of circumstances, but a happiness that stems from a powerful inner contentment. Instead of being dependent on a certain income or status in life, the happiness that signals real health is an emotional anchor that gives meaning and joy to life.

Statesman Thomas Jefferson, in penning the Declaration of Independence, promised three things to all Americans: The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He did not promise happiness itself, because he knew that the government could not deliver it.

Why?

Because “happiness” is not a fleeting emotion tied to a single event, but a long-term state of mind that permeates the various facets of life and influences outlook. It’s possible to experience true happiness and temporary unhappiness at the same time — happiness may seem to temporarily vanish, giving way to bursts of depression or disappointment, but it returns. As Harry Emerson Fosdick stated, “One who expects to completely escape low moods is asking the impossible. Like the weather, life is essentially variable, and a healthy person believes in the validity of his high hours even when he is having a low one.”

No one has ever come up with a simple recipe for producing happiness, but researchers agree that certain “ingredients” seem universal among those who experience the kind of true, abiding happiness characteristic of healthy people. Those who are happy are generally part of a family; they are partners, parents, or children. They love others, and they feel loved themselves. A healthy, happy person

enjoys friends, works hard at something fulfilling, gets plenty of exercise, and knows how to enjoy play and leisure time. He knows how to laugh, and he does it often. He gives of himself freely to others and seems to have found deep meaning to his life.

An attitude of true happiness signals a freedom from the tension and depression so many suffer. The healthy person is obviously subject to the same kinds of depressions and temporary unhappiness that plague all of us once in a while, but the difference lies in the healthy person’s ability to bounce back. He takes a minor setback in stride and has the uncanny ability to enjoy his life despite it all. When something unhappy happens, he puts it behind him; he never wastes energy or time recounting the situation, wondering how he could have changed it, or dwelling on the past.

The spirit of optimism basic to the healthy, happy person enables him to focus his energy on the present. He recognizes that the past can hold powerful lessons, but he does not let it control the here and now; instead of worrying about what he should have done differently back then, he concentrates with enthusiasm and energy on what he can do today.

In addition to avoiding the pitfalls of the past, he also avoids the temptation of pinning all his hopes and dreams on his future. He is goal-oriented and ambitious but he has the ability to enjoy himself **today**. He isn’t waiting until he has his home paid for, until he has graduated from college, until he gets married, or until he is the president of the company; he is happy today in the circumstances he is in. He may aspire to pay his mortgage, graduate with honors, marry his sweetheart, or gain the top spot at the firm, but he will be happy regardless. He knows that happiness is not related to some **thing**, but is instead a condition of the person.

Part and parcel of his happiness is his acceptance of himself. He values himself as a person who has something to contribute and who is someone worthwhile. The healthy person enjoys a sense of success — not as traditionally measured by the world, but as measured against his own standards. He knows what is important to him, and he has the confidence he can achieve it. He is in touch with himself to the point that he has a clear definition of his own needs.

Health brings with it a certain stability — an

ability to look both success and failure squarely in the face and to keep moving along a predetermined course. When success is evident, the healthy person radiates the joy and confidence to be expected. When failure seems obvious, the healthy person responds by making the best of circumstances and moving beyond the failure. Wellness enables us to move ahead with optimism and energy instead of expending time and talent worrying about a failure. We learn from it, we identify ways to avoid it in the future, and then we go on with the business at hand.

The optimism that enables a healthy person to keep moving forward also keeps him from moving too far ahead. Healthy people know that it is pointless to worry about the future: No amount of worrying and anxiety will change the future. Planning and action will. Where many are worried, the healthy person is optimistic. Instead of being afraid, he is confident; instead of being anxious, he is careful. He is spontaneous and energetic, and he does what he needs to do toward achieving future goals without the burden of worry.

Emotional health also embodies the ability to get in touch with your own feelings. Because a healthy person has a good self-image, he does not worry about showing his feelings or sharing them with others — he is not concerned about what others think of him. He does not feel the need to prove himself to others, nor does he feel he has to force others to accept him or his point of view. He has a quiet, peaceful acceptance of himself and is able to move freely beyond that to accept others.

Sensitive yet independent, the healthy person accepts himself to a degree that he is able to be extremely insightful about both himself and others. Health brings with it a necessary frame of mind that allows involvement with other people; a truly healthy person is one who enjoys others and who is not threatened by what other people might do or say.

Health also brings with it a maturity that allows the individual to forgive others. The healthy person accepts responsibility for his own happiness instead of blaming others when he is unhappy. He is free from anger and resentment, because he recognizes that anger is almost always destructive. By accepting the responsibility for his emotional well-being, he frees himself to achieve it.

More than dictating happiness and optimism, emotions play a profound part in physical health and the avoidance of disease. Biobehavioralist Norman Cousins maintains that “what you think, what you believe, how you react to experiences can impair or aid the workings of the body’s immune system.”

Cousins illustrates the strength of emotion on health by relating the example of an incident at a Los Angeles football game. When approximately half a dozen spectators at the crowded stadium fell ill with food poisoning, the attending physician learned that all of them had been drinking soft drinks they had purchased at a dispensing machine under the stands. In an effort to avoid more illness, he directed stadium officials to make an announcement: Loud and clear over the public announcement system came the message that the drinks from the suspect machine were tainted and that some of the spectators were already ill.

According to Cousins, the stadium became “a sea of retching and fainting people.” Swarms of people reported to the stadium office with the unmistakable symptoms of food poisoning, regaling tales of the sudden onset of the illness after consuming the tainted soft drinks. The situation became so grave that more than two hundred people had to be hospitalized.

Then it was discovered through laboratory analysis that the soft drinks had nothing to do with the original half dozen cases of food poisoning. When that fact became known, everyone’s symptoms cleared up!

Cousins relates still another example of the power of emotions over the state of health. When he saw an ambulance on a local golf course, he approached it to see what was wrong; on a stretcher next to the ambulance was an ashen golfer, the victim of a heart attack. The man was trembling; the paramedics worked methodically and systematically to save his life, administering oxygen, hooking him up to a cardiograph, and inserting a heparin lock. Cousins could see from the cardiograph that the man was in serious condition, but he noticed that no one was speaking to the man.

So, he said, “I lied to the man. I put my hand on his shoulder and I said, ‘Sir, you’ve got a great heart. It’s been very hot out here today; you’ve probably dehydrated on the golf course and that upset the

balance of sodium and potassium that provides the electricity your heart needs for the next flip. But you're in good hands now. In a few minutes you'll be in one of the best hospitals in the world. You'll be just fine.' "

Within thirty seconds, Cousins relates, the cardiogram began to change. With a new-found equilibrium and the emotional strength he needed to cope with his situation, the man on the stretcher took control. Within two minutes, his cardiogram was normal.

A study of terminally ill cancer patients shows that those who survive share one feature in common: Their utter refusal to give up hope. Cousins says, "Nothing is more wondrous about the 15 billion neurons in the human brain than their ability to convert thoughts, hopes, ideas, and attitudes into chemical substances ... Every emotion, negative or positive, makes its registrations on the body's systems." Cousins himself is proof positive of his assertion: He fought off a crippling degenerative spinal disease with vitamin C and massive doses of laughter. His hope and his refusal to give up made him a survivor.

"We must learn never to underestimate the capacity of the human mind and body to regenerate — even when the prospects seem most wretched," Cousins explains. "The most important thing I have learned about the power of belief is that an individual patient's attitude toward serious illness can be as important as medical help. It would be a serious mistake to bypass or minimize the need for scientific treatment, but that treatment will be far more effective if people put their creative hopes, their faith and confidence fully to work in behalf of their recovery."

Another famed physician who has spent his medical career working with cancer victims remarked, "I can say from my own experience that patients who have given up, who have come to me feeling defeated and desperate, feeling that nothing can possibly help them, have often made their own predictions come true. The fighter-type patients who are willing to try anything that has a chance to help them, who have real faith in their survival, always do better."

The spiritual aspect of health enables the individual to preserve a firm sense of self, to strive toward meaningful purpose, to seek the new and

interesting. The healthy person is authentic and honest; whether he is tall or short, athletic or unathletic, brilliant or of average intelligence, he accepts himself fully and completely. Rather than wishing he were somewhere else, he develops himself to his fullest within the realms of his own potential.

He is humble, compassionate, and tender; he has a deep and abiding respect for the beauty of the universe. Spiritual health brings with it a genuine delight in life and a special reverence for the meaning of life.

Spiritual health also allows us to be "well" even in the midst of illness and death. The eventuality of our own mortality is another aspect of human experience and development. Real health and overall wellness enable the healthy person to come to terms with that reality — to cope with the idea of death, and to accept the occasional reality of crippling illness. The healthy person does not let illness nor the acceptance of eventual death inhibit the acceptance of life. While he is alive, he lets hope and optimism and meaning give a fullness and joy to his life.

Healthy people love themselves. It's not a vain, self-centered kind of love that causes them to develop an overinflated image of themselves. Instead, it's the kind of love that enables an individual to feel secure enough, confident enough, and good enough about himself to reach out to others. Before you can love others, you must be able to love yourself. The healthy person relishes touch — especially hugging — as a vital, irreplaceable means of communicating caring and concern for others. Long-term research by experts in a variety of disciplines has confirmed that touch is critical to well-being. San Diego psychologist James Hardison wrote, "It is through touching that we are able to fulfill a large share of our human needs and, in doing so, to attain happiness. By touching someone we can affirm our friendship or approval, communicate important messages, promote health, and bring about love."

Unfortunately, Hardison continues, too many people put up barriers to the language of touch, equating "touching with either sex or violence. Consequently, many people avoid the simple acts of touching — pats on the back, heartfelt handshakes, cordial hugs — that affirm goodwill."

Healthy people have the unique ability to see beyond the isolated event — to, in a word, envision

the whole picture. A healthy person sets realistic goals and sets about reaching them with hope, enthusiasm, and determination, but those goals are never the end result. Instead, they are part of the whole, cogs in the larger machine in life. Healthy people are always enthused about what lies ahead, not content with what has been accomplished in the past.

That's not to say that healthy people never experience disappointment. But a healthy person is able to bridge the gap from one success to another, is able to develop the fortitude necessary to keep going. A healthy person doesn't dwell on discouragement, but mobilizes his inner resources to reach the next pinnacle.

A healthy person — whether in the office, at home, in the classroom, or in the factory — develops a spirit of teamwork with those around him. He does not view others with suspicion, jealousy, or contempt; he finds no satisfaction in the thought of outdoing, putting down, or getting ahead of others. He finds great joy in cooperation, mutual support, and working together to accomplish something of lasting value for all.

The healthy person, like all of us, has disappointments, setbacks, failures. Instead of envisioning them as craggy stone walls, he sees them as smooth stepping stones, inviting him to keep going — inviting him to make his way, carefully but securely, to “the other side.”

## *Wellness Through Behavior Change*

What does all of this mean to you?

Simply put, you're in charge.

**You** have the means to improve your health and wellness in all the dimensions of your life — the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. We know a great deal about what causes illness and disease, and we also know a great deal about the simple things we can all do to promote greater wellness.

To begin with, start today to accept responsibility

for your own health and awareness. Recognize that there are plenty of things within your grasp and under your own control that can help. Review this introduction, and study the information in the chapters that follow. Then start making changes. If you smoke, quit. If you're overweight, trim down. If you haven't been for a brisk walk around the block in ages, get going. If your diet is packed with foods high in fats, learn to savor the taste of crunchy vegetables, nutty whole grains, sweet fresh fruits. Make the simple changes that can make a profound difference: Wear seat belts. Get regular pap smears. Perform a monthly breast self-exam. Get a regular physical check-up.

With the knowledge of what causes ill health comes the tremendous responsibility to help change the conditions that prevent us from attaining optimum health. You as an individual must be responsible for implementing the necessary lifestyle changes. The guiding principal of behavioral health is that **a state of high-level wellness is within the reach of every person. In order for you to achieve a high level of wellness, you must accept full responsibility for your own sense of well-being.**

If you accept that responsibility and make the necessary changes, what will you get in return?

Freedom from debilitating disease. The eradication of painful illness. The sense of optimum wellness that will endow you with courage, optimism, hope, happiness, and the ability to face the future with enthusiasm. Fulfillment and balance, perspective and purpose, and the kind of high-level wellness that is available to all of us.

With this notion of individual responsibility and power, we seek to rise above the common concept of health, the ordinary expectation, to a holistic view of health that takes into consideration the almost countless behavioral factors that lead to positive well-being. We seek a **conscious** commitment to high-level physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual development and achievement — integrated, not considered as separate factions, and considered within the natural environment as a solemn individual responsibility.

One of the greatest impacts of the notion of individual responsibility for health and wellness will be on your reaction to illness. When you leave your doctor's examining room clutching a hastily pen-

ned prescription form, you will finger the bright capsules as the cap snaps off the medicine bottle — but you will also leave with information on changes **you** can make to speed your recovery and to avoid getting ill again. You might know how to eat better or how to sleep better. Your standard will become the ultimate goal of preventing disease from occurring in the first place, not just diagnosing or treating it once it occurs.

With this standard — “a standard of inspiration,” as Jesse Williams phrased it — health becomes not only a condition of physical fitness. It becomes, too, a condition of vitality that allows for clear thought, enthusiastic attitudes, and growth. The healthy person can climb a flight of stairs without getting breathless — but he can also gain reward from work, pleasure from leisure, and stimulation

from the world around him. He feels good, but he also feels good about himself.

The healthy person is not perfect. He has shortcomings, but he has learned to compensate for them. He has limitations, but he has learned to appreciate them and to explore other directions. He stumbles and falls occasionally — but his overriding optimism and spirit of hope enable him to get back up with renewed vigor. He has a purpose, and he has found meaning in life — whatever his circumstances.

This condition, this state of being, is within your grasp. Use the information in the pages that follow to make changes. Take on the ultimate responsibility, and become well. You **can** do it ... and it **is** worth it!

## Self-Assessment Scale

*Directions:* Carefully read the chapter, giving special attention to the factors related to health listed below. Then for each applicable factor's "scale of wellness," select your present wellness level by placing an 'X' in the appropriate square on each scale.

If any of your assessments are below "Reaching adequate level of wellness," you should consider developing a self-directed behavior change plan (see Chapter 11, pp. 417-434).

To complete this assignment, choose any one relationship factor you would like to change and complete the "Self-Directed Behavior Change Planning Sheet" on the next page (see sample in Appendix I, p. 435). Be prepared to submit this completed self-assessment scale and the planning sheet on the next page to your instructor.

NAME	
DATE	
CLASS	
SECTION	

## Introduction

### Wellness Levels . . .

Perfect level of wellness							
Very high level of wellness; Very health enhancing							
High level of wellness; Health enhancing							
Reaching adequate level of wellness							
★ Improvement still needed							
Keeps me from reaching my wellness potential							
Seriously limits my level of wellness							
Critically limits my level of wellness							

### Factors Related to Health . . .

Qualities of the  
Super-Well

Physical Health

Mental Health

Emotional Health

Social Health

Spiritual health

Risk Factors that  
Compromise Wellness

Characteristics of  
Healthy People