

# FIVE WELLNESS MISTAKES



*How They Compromise Your Health and Happiness  
and  
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**At Holistic MindBody Healing, we believe that wellness is your greatest asset. Do you?**

**In today's crazy world, we are dealing with a number of factors that are impacting our health and happiness.** Our lives move at such a fast pace nowadays that it's easy to lose sight of what really matters. We take a narrow view of wellness. We sacrifice health to pursue wealth and the next greatest thing, forgetting that ultimately, happiness and quality of life are intimately linked to our state of health and wellness in all its facets.

As long as our bodies are not sick and take us where we want to go, we try not to worry too much. As long as we can convince our minds to tolerate and suppress being out of alignment with our dreams and feelings of well-being, we soldier on. Yet as mid-life approaches and time slips by, our minds and bodies turn up the volume on the signals that all is not well.

Even still, it is usually only when crisis strikes – personally or to someone near and dear, that we wake up long enough to realize it's time to take action.

**As mid-lifers deal with these challenges, they all too often look for solutions on how to be healthier and happier.** It is the time of life when they realize something has to give. Often, they focus their attention and effort on their physical bodies, while forgetting to consider other factors that are important aspects of wellness. And when they do glimpse the whole picture, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by their perceived need to change, and the abundance of information, much of it conflicting, telling them how to do it all.

With all of that, and their comfort zones calling them back to the 'safety' of the routine and status quo, it is tempting to just 'shut down' instead of changing their lives for the better. They make false starts and take random action. And they are probably making at least one, if not all, of these five mistakes.

## **Mistake #1: You approach your health as if you were a bunch of parts.**



Parts is parts when it comes to automobiles and mechanical items -you only need to fix or replace what's broken and off you go.

Not so with living beings who are much more complex.

It's easy to see how this point of view took hold, when you consider our current system of health care. Rare is the family doctor who cares for young and old, from diagnosis back to health, for all but the most serious cases. Instead, your primary care doctor is often just that –first.

From that starting point, you are likely to be referred to one or more specialists for anything more than basic health care. There's one for your heart, another for your eyes, yet another for your GI tract. If you have mental symptoms, there are specialists for that too.

Of course, specialized treatment is important and has its place. Heaven knows it has saved many lives. Who wouldn't want a heart specialist monitoring your leaky valves and doing your bypass surgery?

That's not the problem. This is. When your care is focused solely on one body part or system, it seldom takes you to the cause of your symptoms. Treatment starts and stops at the symptoms. The offending part is medicated, suppressed, or cut out. This is akin to shooting the messenger or putting a band-aid on skin cancer so you don't see it. Your numbers may look normal, but behind the scenes, in the inner workings of your mind and body, it is anything but normal. You may actually get worse as you fight your body's innate ways of trying to bring balance and heal – your symptoms. You are not only ignoring the mind body connection, but the connection between systems in your body.

It is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to connect the dots and get to the root cause. Traumas and chemical exposures as a young child may be long buried in your subconscious and your body. Still, the questions beg asking. Why now? Why in that system? What triggered it after all these years?

This parts approach is not limited to health care. It plays out in relationships and other areas of life.

Here is a common scenario. Someone blames you for making him upset and cuts himself off from you. You think he is over-reacting, and may not even be sure why he got upset. It never occurs to him that your comment triggered something within him from the past, and really has little, if anything, to do with you. His limited view appears to create a solution, but does nothing to heal the real wound inside.

**The fix: In all things health and happiness, take the whole person view.**

Why is this important? Although mind body healing is thousands of years old, modern medicine has only recently begun giving it attention. Yet more and more research is showing that it is a critical piece in healing. Chances are, if someone is suffering from a variety of symptoms at the same time – mental and/or physical - or in succession, they are connected. To piece them out will delay a proper diagnosis and resolution.

Consider another common example: You have twenty pounds to lose. No mystery there. You know the drill - eat less and exercise more. Until you hit a wall. The weight does not come off, you get discouraged, go back to your old habits and end up with five additional pounds.

Why? You are approaching weight loss from a parts, or limited perspective. What about your disrupted hormones and your thyroid that has slowed down from years of abuse? What about your environmental challenges and your inner programming that says sweets equal love? Are you starting to see the bigger picture?

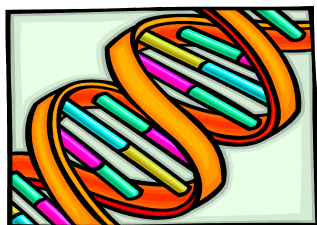
This is a recurring theme here at Holistic MindBody Healing. Everything – your physical body, your environment, relationships, finances and career all play into your health. If emerging research is correct, then perhaps the most important factor is your mind – your thoughts and beliefs that shape who you are in all ways, including your physical health.

Years ago I heard a prominent oncologist tell a story to back this up. His wife was the social worker on many of his cases. After three years of working together he had to acknowledge her uncanny ability to predict who would survive long-term and who wouldn't. She told him that the patients who made the tough choices and made changes in their lives. (ie: divorces, new job, etc.) lived. Those that continued in difficult situations didn't make it.

No one knows for sure if those life stresses caused the cancer, but it is evident they played a part in the disease process. It is also evident that relieving the source of those stresses was critical. For some it was a literally matter of life and death.

Addressing the needs of the whole person – mind, body and spirit made the difference.

## **Mistake #2: You believe you are at the mercy of your genes.**



We were taught and believed the myth of the big bad genes for far too long. If only it were true – then we could abdicate personal responsibility and engage in whatever bad habits we wanted to without repercussion.

For many years scientists believed and taught that our genes dictated our health future. Our genes were thought to be the primary cause of how we aged and the diseases we would eventually get. To a large extent, it was believed they even control how we behave.

It makes sense, right?

Many of us can track a family history of disease through several generations. My health records include a long family history of breast cancer. For my husband, that history includes heart disease.

And don't you put your hands on your hips when you talk, just like mom and grandma?

### **The fix: Accept that genes play a part, but lifestyle and learning rules.**

Once the genome project was completed and the study of epigenetics emerged, scientists learned the surprising truth. We have far fewer genes than previously believed and they are not the masters of our fate.

Your physical make up is hereditary. About 50% of your 'hard wiring is also genetic. It is what makes you human. You have your innate talents, intelligence and personality traits. But even these are malleable.

For example, a child raised in a stimulating, language-rich environment can gain 20 IQ points over a child born with similar intelligence raised in a home where she is plopped in front of the TV and is rarely spoken with or read to.

When it comes to health, inherited genetic disorders such as hemophilia are at the mercy of our genes. This is not the case for what are now known as the lifestyle diseases - cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. These diseases were rare until the early 1900's and have escalated ever since.

Although genes may predispose us to certain conditions, the environment the cells live in actually has more control.

So in truth, when it comes to degenerative diseases, you are really destined by your lifestyle and the effect it has on your genes. The environment you create for your cells to live in accounts for approximately 80% of your risk for lifestyle diseases. When conditions are good, you can be the exception to what appears to be the family rule. When you create an unhealthy environment for your cells, then the predisposed genes turn on and family vulnerability becomes your reality too.

This environment is affected by our thoughts, perceptions, nutrients, chemicals, sleep, exercise, and stress. It can also be affected generationally.

For example, a pregnant mother who eats too much sugar can cause her developing daughter's eggs to become more insulin resistant. This mother is literally affecting her grandchildren's health directly through the daughter she is carrying. That is something to think about.

And what about all the family similarities we share?

When it comes to our thought process and behaviors, much of what we attribute to genetics is learned. Believe it or not, learning starts in the womb. For the first six years, children are like little sponges. They absorb the bulk of the language, mannerisms, behaviors and beliefs that will shape their lives.

As adults it is also possible to learn and change. Your brain is always 'plastic' and able to create new pathways. As a matter of fact, it is lifelong learning, staying mentally active, and challenging yourself to grow that helps your brain stay healthy.

Habits may be hard to change, but that is because of learned programming, not genetics. You may have a 'set point' for personality traits or physical abilities, but you can affect these positively or negatively by your thoughts and actions.

Thanks to scientific research, you are now free of the disempowering victim story of your genes leading you on an inevitable path toward disease, premature aging and predestined behaviors.

Now you can use this new knowledge to inspire and empower yourself to create new behaviors and realities that support your mind, body and spirit. This will help keep those vulnerable genes turned off and your good health turned on for many years to come.

### **Mistake #3: Your lifestyle favors poor health habits.**



Quite simply, just about everything you do tips the scales in favor of enhancing or negating your health whether you realize it or not.

Unfortunately, when it comes to everyday living, and your health in particular, it is easy to go on auto-pilot. Instead of creating your life on purpose, you create it by default. It's natural to let your programmed behaviors and habits run the show instead of taking control (which is why the gene myth seems so real).

You fail to connect the dots between all aspects of your life and their effect on your physical and mental health.

To make this more difficult, our modern lifestyle lends itself to situations and behaviors that tip the scales toward bad health. Frankly, I find it amazing that our minds and bodies hold out as long as they do. When you factor in the job, financial and relational stresses on personal, national, and global levels, the barrage of negative self-talk we heap on ourselves, an overabundance of toxic chemicals in our food, water and air supply, genetically engineered, poisoned, nutrient poor foods, and lack of exercise and sleep, it's a wonder most of us survive to adulthood.

I'm not trying to paint an overly grim picture, but the truth is the above scenario barely scratches the surface.

On a more personal level, a common health-negating habit is putting yourself and your health last in the most important ways. You burn the candle at both ends, eat poorly on the run, and fail to nurture your body mind and spirit with love, acceptance, and things that make you truly happy and fulfilled.

#### **The fix: Consistently practice health-promoting behaviors.**

This sounds so obvious. And it is easier said than done. The bad news is that it is not possible to eliminate some of these problems entirely. However, with a good plan and consistent, conscious effort you can tip the scales in your favor. It is so worth it.

Remember to take a whole self approach. Make changes slowly. It is always better to take one step at a time and have success, than to try to do it all and end up back where you started three weeks later.

Some things to consider: Use techniques that help can help you dump your mental trash and replace it with life-enhancing thoughts and beliefs. Purchase and eat quality foods whenever available, especially in season. Carve out a few extra hours a week for exercise, much needed sleep, and fulfilling activities. (For many of us that simply means turning off the TV or computer).

Here's a very simple, easy no-brainer tip to get you started. Replace your toxic household cleaners and personal toiletries with non-toxic supplies. This healthy habit alone will make a significant impact over time in terms of health enhancement for you, your family, and the environment.

In my own home I've upped my commitment to using non-toxic products. There are so many available now and I find they are just effective for most jobs. I started with plant-based laundry soaps and progressed to general cleaning supplies. Next went the artificial (chemical) sweeteners. My most recent switch was to organic shampoo and conditioner. And when I get tempted by a less expensive bottle of shampoo or an artificially sweetened diet drink I remind myself that chemicals disrupt my hormones and cause cancer. No thanks.

When you weigh your thoughts, beliefs, habits and life choices on the enhancing or negating scale, the value you place on having a healthy, happy life becomes surprisingly clear. Don't feel discouraged. Claim your power and know that it is never too late to make positive changes that tip the scales in your favor.

## **Mistake #4: You abdicate responsibility for your health and happiness.**



I don't know what you heard growing up, but when it came to health decisions, the adults would say, "The doctor knows best."

Of course, this is sometimes true. But when common-sense gives way to the conventional medical wisdom of the day, something is amiss. Remember when new mothers were encouraged to use formula instead of breast-feeding? Or you were told to substitute (trans-fat filled) margarine for butter and to avoid coconut oil? The 'experts' told us it was 'better' even though we now know this was faulty information. And the list could go on.

People willingly abdicate personal responsibility for their health and place it in someone else's hands, especially when there are difficult decisions to be made and the other person is perceived to be an expert.

We abdicate our responsibilities in other ways as well. We expect other people to meet our needs and make us happy. We expect the government to take care of us. We rationalize that our small individual role in polluting and littering make no difference. As we see the repercussions of this kind of thinking manifesting in our homes and on a national scale, it's easy to see we have created a recipe for disaster.

### **The fix: Take responsibility for your well-being.**

Listening to someone who is an expert is wise. So is considering their record of success and experience. That is not abdicating responsibility, it is part of acting responsibly.

We see the old pattern of acting on blind faith, however, shifting to more personal empowerment. We see this 'stepping up' playing out on a grand scale today in different arenas. It is playing out in relationships when people no longer expect others to take responsibility for their happiness. You have probably heard Dr. Phil ask, "How's that working for you?" He usually asks to prompt people to acknowledge that pushing their agenda onto someone else is not working.

We see personal empowerment growing in health care arena as conventional medicine goes up against the renaissance of holistic healing and consumers who are saying, "No More!" to unnecessary surgeries, medications, and suppressing symptoms while they grow sicker.

Patients are beginning to challenge the status quo. They are exploring options, demanding access to natural healing methods and getting them. They expect to have a say in their treatment plans. And this is a good thing. Research shows us that 'difficult' patients who speak up and take an active role in their recovery heal faster and do better.

Even though I have a great deal of respect for medical professionals, there are times I know I can be an annoying patient. I ask a lot of questions, make my own decisions, and challenge some protocols. One of my doctors fired me. That's okay. It's my health and I accept full responsibility for it.

I view my relationship with my medical providers as a partnership. I expect to be wisely guided by more than legalities and fear. I expect to be respected, fully informed, and have the final say in my health program. I don't expect my doctors to play God. Like the rest of us, they are imperfect people who make mistakes.

Carry this approach into other areas of your life as well. Accept responsibility for your own happiness. Speak up, step up, do what it takes. Don't expect another to carry that burden. It never really turns out well when you do.

Giving up the victim mentality and passivity to and accepting self-responsibility requires you to grow in awareness. It is a process that takes time and personal growth. It is a shift in thinking and behavior that will pay off in all areas of your life.

## **Mistake #5: You don't mind your mind.**



Not only is it important to consider all aspects of health in your wellness plan, it is also important to consider the role your mind plays in healing and well-being. You can have the best doctors, the best plan, and the best methods, but if your mind is not on board, your chances of creating health and happiness are minimized.

In the old days, witch doctors and shamans went to great lengths to inspire belief to promote healing through rituals. They would chant, dance and drum. Patients would 'journey' or take a potion.

Today, we have different rituals, but they affect our minds in much the same way. We have doctors in white coats, pills in bottles, and surgeries. We have energy healers, supplements, and ceremonies. Depending on your individual and cultural beliefs, one or more of these images will inspire your mind to initiate the healing process.

It is important to understand that believing does not mean conscious will-powered belief. It is the programmed belief that is powered by your unconscious mind. Many of these beliefs were installed before you were five years old.

Have you ever had an ache or pain that wouldn't go away. You wait it out for weeks to no avail. Finally, you 'break down' and make an appointment. On your way to the doctor's office the pain disappears. You explain apologetically, "the pain was right here, for weeks!"

How would you explain this? Chances are, you have a deep belief (as most of us do) that you need a doctor's help to get better in certain situations. The act of making the appointment, or getting in the car and heading to her office set the healing in motion.

On average, one-third of all research subjects get better when given a sham surgery or drug. The placebo effect is due to the power of your mind. Quite simply, as you believe in your subconscious mind, so it is.

The reverse is also true. If you believe something will hurt you or is bad for you, it will be. That's why subjects receiving sham chemotherapy drugs experience even severe symptoms. Someone with authority (and probably in a white coat or uniform) told them to expect those side effects.

**The fix: As much as possible, become conscious of what is in your mind and shift to beliefs and thoughts that are aligned with your desires.**

Hopefully by now you are churning with possibilities for putting your mind into action to positively affect your health and your life. But how?

Again, this is a process. You have to 'overwrite' the old programming and install new beliefs. You cannot trick or overpower your subconscious into changing. That simply doesn't work .

Sometimes, you may have to 'power through' with a bit of will-power, but after a few months of consistent action your subconscious runs the new programming and you have healthier habits that are easy to maintain.

Hypnosis, energy flow techniques, and visualization are three popular methods for facilitating unconscious change. Developing self-awareness and designing supportive environments, internally and externally, are also important.

When you master you mind, change and growth become much easier. It is key to creating the health and life you want.

**So where do you go from here?**

**In this report, I have outlined five important wellness mistakes and five shifts in thinking or practice to correct them.** There are more factors that help you create health and happiness, but these five factors provide the foundation for creating a *sustainable* holistic wellness.

If you would like some guidance in applying these wellness keys to your health, a good place to start is to simply review each of the newsletters when you receive them, and apply some of those concepts to your personal growth. Share these concepts and techniques with your family and friends. Take a look at the articles on-site and other resources, contribute to the blog and the community, and participate in the wellness challenges.

**If you want to make a major shift in your level of wellness, I invite you to connect with me to schedule a complimentary Wellness Strategy Session.** During this session we'll explore your wellness challenges, current situation, results you'd like to achieve, and determine if coaching or other programs are a fit for you.

**The conversation will take about 30-45 minutes by phone.** [Apply for your complimentary session.](#)



**About Val Silver:** Val is the founder of Holistic MindBody Healing and TapInfinity.

She is dedicated to inspiring mid-lifers to make their health and happiness a priority through timely and meaningful change that will positively impact their lives, and through them, the lives of others.

For more information: [Contact Val here.](#)