

*“Folks are usually about as happy
as they make their minds up to be.”*
—Abraham Lincoln

Wellness Redux

C. Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR



I think Lincoln hit it on the head. Something about the mindset of being happy is self fulfilling in many cases. Not always, but often. We're super concerned about "wellness" these days. I've seen institutions with so-called "deans of wellness," a high-level administrative position (inarguably highly paid) that in my mind is a person in an office with a large-screen TV and a great sound system playing comedy movies on an endless loop while they themselves are throwing darts at a dartboard. They have a scotch cabinet in the corner with a great single malt in their other hand. You may get invited in to have a game, if you're lucky or complain a lot. I digress.

Do you all remember wellness in the prior era? I certainly do:

ME: "I'm not happy."

ADMIN: "You've got a job. You're happy."

ME: "Hmmm, you've got a point there. Thanks for the pep talk."

Now, we fret over everything that someone has in some fashion linked to our job happiness. I'm not saying this is all wrong, please understand. I'm just saying that it seems that the wellness cart may be way out in front of the job/stress horse.

Wellness in the current era:

ME: "I'm not happy."

ADMIN: "Well, obviously it has nothing to do with that ever-expanding worklist, decreased staff,

fewer support personnel, and constant demand for higher productivity. Maybe we should get you an hour massage at a local spa this weekend, eh?"

A short list of things that have recently been proposed to me as wellness solutions for radiologists: improved mouse pads, ergonomic keyboards, curved monitors, white-noise generators, stand-up workstations for reading, jogging workstations for reading, low UV lighting, classical music, jazz music, programmed coffee/snack times, shorter workdays, segmented workdays, team-building exercises, bowling outings, sports outings, AI (in every guise possible), auto-dialing services to call clinicians (who won't answer the phone anyway), yoga breaks, Pilates breaks, conversation breaks The list goes on, approaching forever at this point.

Gandhi said, "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." What we do is pretty cool, I think. I've pretty much always liked looking at images and formulating an opinion about the findings and hopefully training some residents and fellows and, as a bonus, working with other clinicians to help patients. I'm all for wellness. I just have other opinions as to how to scratch that itch.

Stay well, seriously.

And keep doing that good work. Mahalo.

Dr Phillips is a Professor of Radiology, Director of Head and Neck Imaging, at Weill Cornell Medical College, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, New York, NY. He is a member of the *Applied Radiology* Editorial Advisory Board.