

## Choosing to Look at How We're Doing

This is birthday week for me, and I just had a chance to spend time with a group of Kendal Fellows, in shared processes of personal reflection and mutual support. For those who have had a few trips around the sun since I've been offering Wellness programs here at Lathrop, you'll suspect that this work is "right in my wheelhouse." As valuable as this time was for me personally, I wanted to make sure I brought some value back to the residents whose support made it possible. I carried the question of how this time away from our community could make me better able to serve within our community. So here is a brief report from the Kendal Fellows program, and something by way of reminder of what the Wellness support program is here at Lathrop.

The goal of the Kendal program is to strengthen the participants' ability to serve as leaders in their community, supporting the work of their employees and their peers and of course, the experience of the residents they serve. In this second of three sessions, the key theme was vulnerability. Beginning from our first gathering we were asked to solicit evaluative feedback from a mixed panel of people who know us well, from both inside and outside of our organizations. Across a full spectrum of both positive and negative attributes, we received a normative rating compared to thousands of organizational leaders. This 360° evaluation gave us all a great deal of honest and sometimes uncomfortable insight as to how we meet our own and other's expectation of our role as leaders. Throughout the program we are being encouraged to develop the habit of active self -inquiry, with a variety of tools: analytical, artistic and collaborative.

As to the question of bringing value to my work at Lathrop, I see that in practicing what I preach. The annual Vitalize conversations are a practice in vulnerability and self-assessment, and it's useful to know what it is that I'm encouraging from you. Looking at how we are doing is the cyclic beginning point of the Wellness approach. In the first meetings when you arrive we lay out your story to make the feedback you receive more relevant and hopefully more insightful. The model uses 6 dimensions of a human life (see below), and we reflect together to explore how your current choices compare to your hopes and expectations. My role is to offer perspective, to help you compare yourself to the norms of the community and the indications of the available research. It's not always comfortable. One could do this work alone, and I would certainly encourage trying to incorporate the Wellness mind set, but I know for myself in the privacy of my own mind it's easier to deflect or deny what's going on. (And I've never gotten as much from yoga in my living room as that shared with a class.) It may not seem so valuable every year, though there are some residents committed to an annually checking in and taking stock. After the initial conversations, others have chosen not to take advantage of this opportunity at all. Yet they will continue to be invited to do so.

Either way, I am willing to find a time to sit and help you weave the spokes of the wellness inquiry wheel anytime you feel change calling or just need some perspective as you nudge life to the next phase. What is helpful to me, when your annual invitation arrives, is to hear back from you with a phone message or brief note so I know you've chosen one way or the other, and didn't just miss the invite. (If you've lost the letter in the perpetual chaos of your life maybe we do need to talk...)

My 360 review process is not completed. There is the Action plan still to come, and I have a group of Fellows explorers pledged to help me shape and execute that. I hope you feel you do too. As long as the community will have me, you have at least one.



The Wellness Inquiry- How well have I committed time or developed practices to:

- Support optimal life in this body? (fitness, sleep, diet etc.)
- Build a supportive social network
- Manage stress, move through grief or exercise joy?
- Stimulate my mind with new learning?
- Feel productive on behalf of my community or my muse?
- Deepen my understanding of my place in creation and the truth of my end?