

Tomorrow's Life Coach

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The Wellness Coach: Lifestyle Prescriptions© Filled Here

A healthcare provider reaches for a pen and writes out a prescription for medication. The patient fills it their favorite pharmacy. This happens thousands and thousands of times every day around the world. It's easy. There is a whole system in place to make it that way.

Knowing that the way their patient's lifestyle impacts their health to a greater degree than any other single factor, the knowledgeable healthcare provider might also "write" another type of prescription. They may tell/suggest/implore their patient to improve their lifestyle, to essentially change a very significant set of behaviors in a radical way. Eat healthier. Exercise more. Do more of this and less of that, they are told. The same healthcare provider rarely, if ever, has any time to show the patient how to do this, or to help them through the process of real change.

The chances of their patient completing the behavioral change process successfully (significant change that lasts) by themselves, are actually rather remote. Though some succeed solo, most lose motivation, lack behavioral change information, strategies and support. The whole business of helping people to change behavior is, of course what professions like psychology and coaching are all about. Enter the wellness coach.

Sometimes it is the healthcare provider "writing" the prescription. Sometimes it is the person themselves. They know all too well what change is needed for their health to improve, to prevent illness, or perhaps to simply feel and perform physically and emotionally at their best.

There is a role for the wellness coach to become the ally of the healthcare provider and the client/patient who wants to know where to go to get the "lifestyle prescription" filled. If one's lifestyle is such a key, then the health and well being of countless numbers of people can be improved by the development, worldwide, of a profession of service providers who specialize in wellness coaching.

The field of wellness and lifestyle improvement has made great strides in the past thirty years. Much of the emphasis has been on understanding ways to help large groups of people to reduce health risks and improve their lifestyles. Work with corporations, organizations and community groups has seen some success and, of course, some real challenges, especially as budgets have been cut.

Perhaps one of the strongest trends to emerge in recent years in the wellness field has been one-on-one wellness work. More wellness

professionals are spending increasing amounts of time working with individuals who want to change. At the same time, as we look at what economist Paul Pilzer says in *The Wellness Revolution: How to Make a Fortune in the Next Trillion Dollar Industry* (2003), there is an increasing trend to take wellness products and services directly to the consumer.

The need is there. Our challenge as coaches is to become competent in the skills to help people create lasting lifestyle behavioral change, and to create a delivery system that positions us as the optimal resource for filling the lifestyle prescription.

Dr. Michael Arloski (www.realbalance.com) is a coach, psychologist, trainer and speaker who has presented on wellness on four continents. He and Dr. Pat Williams are teaching a course through The Institute For Life Coach Training program to provide a certificate in Wellness Coaching.