

Daily Union Article
Saturday, May 4, 2019
Title: How's Your Well-Being?

At a recent training I attended, the participants explored the results of the 2017 Gallup-Sharecare State of America Well-Being Index. This report was generated from the responses of more than 2.5 million surveys. Each survey asked people to identify how they feel about and how they experience their daily lives. The report looked at the level of national well-being as well as how well-being varies from state to state based on five elements of well-being:

Purpose: liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

Social: having supportive relationships and love in your life

Financial: managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security

Community: liking where you live, feeling safe, and having pride in your community

Physical: having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

How did Kansas fare in this report? Unfortunately, not so well. Out of the 50 U.S. states, Kansas ranks 33rd. This puts us in the bottom third of the states. What contributes to this ranking? You need to look at each of the five elements individually to get a better idea of why we rate so low.

Purpose: Kansas ranks very low weighing in at 42nd of the 50 states.

Social: As the lowest element rating, Kansas falls down to 47th of the 50 states.

Financial: This element ranks the highest among the five coming in at 20th of the 50 states.

Community: Kansas falls in the middle of the pack with a ranking of 25th of the 50 states.

Physical: Kansas weighs in with a ranking of 32nd of the 50 states.

Data reports such as Gallup, referenced here, give business and industry an insight on what they could expect from the workforce should a company decide to establish their business in the state. It can also impact the decision a person, or a family, makes when deciding to move to our state.

In addition to affecting our community, the numbers shared in this type of report is a reflection of the health and well-being of each person residing in Kansas communities. To improve our ranking, we have to individually commit to improving our well-being indicators. How can you help create momentum to improve our ranking? Commit to developing habits that promote well-being.

Purpose: A key to developing purpose is to first identify what is important to you, what you value, and where you want to be in the future. Here is an example of a personal purpose statement geared toward a professional life: "My purpose is to help people improve lives through education, melding teaching and learning, as we work to create positive change." A more intimate personal purpose statement is "To appreciate and support my family by modeling my expectations and values couched in unconditional love so that they can offer positive contributions to each other and the community they live in."

An article by Susan Barnett, through the Academic & Career Engagement Center at Northwestern State University in Louisiana, provides a number of personal purpose (or mission) statement templates. Here are two that might help you get started on your own personal purpose statement: "I value [choose one to three values] because [reasons why they are important to you]. Accordingly, I will [what you can do to live by these values]."

"To appreciate and enjoy [things you want to appreciate and enjoy more] by [what you can do to appreciate these things]."

Social: There are a wide range of ways you can promote your social well-being, but all of them center around building healthy relationships. In a University of Arkansas Extension publication titled "Getting Our Hearts Right: Three Keys to Better Relationships", authors H. Wallace Goddard and James P. Marshall focus on three areas of healing that a person needs to navigate that will help improve their potential for building and maintaining healthy relationships. They are: learn and live with humility, develop a strong sense of compassion, and adopt an attitude of positivity. Check out the full publication posted on the Geary County K-State Research and Extension website at <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>.

Financial: Tasks related to maintaining financial well-being include: keeping pace with day-to-day expenses, reaching financial goals, planning for life's unexpected events, and securing their financial future. You can work on developing your skills in these tasks by taking a personal finance class at your local community college, exploring how to create a functional personal budget followed by building one for your family, and implementing a savings and investment plan to ensure your family's financial stability. This helps families achieve financial well-being by – keeping pace with day-to-day expenses, reaching financial goals, planning for life's unexpected events, and securing their financial future.

Community: To improve and maintain community well-being, individual residents should find ways to contribute to the safety, appearance, and welcoming nature of the community. Volunteering to be part of a neighborhood watch is one way to promote safety. Participating in frequent clean-up days by working within your own neighborhood or contributing your volunteer time at local public spaces, such as parks, is another way to promote community well-being.

Physical: Maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, and adhering to a schedule of preventative health check-ups all contribute to your physical well-being. It is just as important to take care of yourself as it is to support the health and well-being efforts of those you care about.

Kansas is an amazing place to live, but our numbers don't always show it. Each of us can make personal choices to help move the status of our state's well-being in a positive direction by committing to develop a purpose, being socially engaged, establishing our financial stability, contributing to our community in positive ways, and taking care of our personal health. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!