

Here's to Your (and Your Project's) Health

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP®, Chief Cheetah and Founder of Cheetah Learning, and Kristen LaBrosse, Co-Author, CAPM®

It is a basic concept, but it is something that many of us have forgotten how to achieve in our ever-busier lives. It is a frame of mind that can be all too quickly brushed aside in the name of efficiency, career advancement, or other obligations. What is this illusive concept that I am referring to? WELLNESS!

Wellness has been on the backburner for many professionals striving to make careers for themselves in their chosen profession. These people may have been under the notion that in order to be the best they had to give up their personal needs. Things like rest, exercise, and time with family and friends were thrown by the wayside in order to reap the benefits of hard work in a career. Finally, there is a new wave of individuals who are challenging this way of life and are claiming their rights to wellness.

I recently received an email from Mike Lamitola, PMP®. Mike wrote to me in appreciation of Cheetah's article, published in the Cheetah PHAST Magazine (www.cheetahphast.com), entitled "Wellness Buddies." Here is part of what Mike had to say:

"I went through the Cheetah Exam Prep course with Jeff Allen and was so impressed that Cheetah used nutrition and basic yoga/breathing exercises to help increase alertness and mental clarity. After 12 years working in the construction industry and living the business professional life I've had some eye opening experiences and have seen some serious struggles with fellow coworkers. I became such a huge advocate for health and wellness that I decided it was time to move in a new direction that was calling me."

Mike's new direction was to enter the wellness profession as a Health Coach/Nutrition Counselor through a company that he and his wife started called "Welcome to Wellness!" (welcometowellnessnow.com). In his website, Mike says: "Life is a series of projects. Some big, some small and some all happening at the same time. We need to make time within these projects to focus on our well being." So, how do you make time to maintain your health to ensure that you are successful in all of your endeavors, including being the best project manager you can be?

The good news is that a lot of the same ideals that are followed to maintain optimum health can be translated to project success. Follow the tips below to achieve ultimate health, for you and your projects.

Plan for Longevity. How many of you start a project, planning on failure? If you do that, you will be out of a job quicker than you can say "negative Nick." Likewise, when you begin a wellness plan, you need to think about the future you, 10 years down the road, and have positive expectancy. What activities and habits can you

form today that will benefit your wellbeing? What activities can you eliminate that will ultimately cause harm? In order to enhance the quality of your life, realize that every day counts toward your wellness goals, and set up your day-to-day actions with the mindset of achieving a lifetime of healthy living.

While projects are usually shorter than a lifetime, the same philosophy applies. While working on your project day-in and day-out, keep your end goal in mind. Don't let daily hiccups deter you from your project's end goal. When you plan for longevity you give yourself, and your projects, a life force that can pull you, and your projects, through hard times.

Live in the Moment. Being present with our surrounding and ourselves is easier said than done. When there is all that noise running through your mind, you may find yourself saying, "Excuse me, what did you say?" far too often. An important part of your wellness is to be present in each and every moment, because the past events and future possibilities are inconsequential compared to what is happening in the here and now.

This practice can be greatly beneficial to the projects you work on as well. Instead of getting lost in the anxiety that can come with worrying about what might go wrong in the project tomorrow, or how stupid that mistake was that you made yesterday, focus on the task at hand and what needs to get done today. By being fully present in your project tasks, you are better able to perform them correctly with clarity and confidence.

Stakeholder Buy-In. As a project manager, you are the master of communicating with stakeholders and ensuring the project you are working on is meeting the needs of the various stakeholders in order to get their buy-in.

Use these same skills in your wellness project, and treat yourself as the primary stakeholder. Analyze what your needs and wants are to maintain your wellness goal, and recognize other stakeholders that might be involved with you achieving wellness. For example, your stakeholder might be your significant other, and the buy-in might be to cook dinner every other night so that you can work out after you get home from work. When you get buy-in from all stakeholders, you have set up their expectations of you appropriately, and are more likely to achieve your wellness goals.

Celebrate Progressive Achievements. When you have achieved a wellness goal-celebrate! After all, you worked hard for it, and will be more motivated to achieve greater states of wellness if you take the time to acknowledge your efforts and awesomeness. This is also true for your project team. When your team members, either individually or as a group, accomplish a major project milestone, don't let it go by unnoticed. Celebrating intermittent achievements fuels the fire for the entire project.

After you read this article, take a moment to evaluate your own wellness goals and how you are achieving them. If you are not where you want to be in terms of wellness, find out what the specific barriers are that are keeping you from getting there. You are, after all, a resourceful project manager that procures resources when needed, manages and communicates with important stakeholders, and brings a project from start to successful finish. Use your skills today for the biggest project of your life: your wellness project.

About the Author:



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun, and fast. She is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), the [author](#) of the [Cheetah Success Series](#), and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 30,000 people have become “Cheetahs” using Cheetah Learning’s innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Recently honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle was previously recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.

Michelle’s articles have appeared in more than 100 publications and Web sites around the world. Her monthly column, the [Know How Network](#) is carried by more than 400 publications, and her monthly newsletter goes out to more than 50,000 people.

She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School’s Owner President Manager’s (OPM) program and also holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton.

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