

## **GREMLINS, RUN-AWAY EMOTIONS, AND LIFE ON AUTO-PILOT**

I am often asked how wellness differs from good health. Wellness is a whole body approach to health that integrates mind, body, spirit, relationship, and environment to improve health and well-being so that life will be more fulfilling and productive. The first step to achieving wellness is to rid ourselves of the contaminants that prevent optimal wellbeing, primarily Gremlin thoughts, run-away emotions, and living on auto-pilot.

How many times today have you heard voices in your head whisper (or loudly shout) a self-defeating, judgmental thought? In the profession of wellness coaching, we call these thoughts Gremlins. They pollute our minds with thoughts like “I’m not smart enough...; I don’t have what it takes...; I’ll never get this right... I’m not a good...” And those thoughts lead to self-limiting beliefs that impact our behavior by squelching our energy and deflating our enthusiasm. Gremlin messages are the toxins that rob us our confidence, causing us to avoid even minimal risks or new opportunities. Most of us have such an overflowing supply of these messages that we often don’t even question their validity.

One way to detoxify from the pollution of Gremlin messages is to pause, take several centering breaths and ask the following question: “Is this true?” Follow that with a very direct answer, “No, this is not true. What is true for me is ....” When you are able to do this, you are well on your way to detoxing your thoughts and taking confident steps toward your purpose and dreams.

Another pollutant that prevents optimal wellness is run-away emotions. We’ve all experienced times when we let our emotions override our best interest, resulting in regrettable behaviors and decisions. Contrary to popular belief, emotions are not good or bad. They are complex, neurologically based messages that help us navigate through life. Emotions create challenges, however, when we interpret experiences as reality because we’ve had a real emotional response to them. For example during an intense movie, have you ever felt yourself becoming anxious as if the event on the screen is actually happening to you. I bet you have. Our bodies do not know the difference between perceived danger and real danger.

If you want to detox your body from the negative impact of run-away emotions, practice creating a gap between your emotional response and your behavior. This intermission, enhanced with centering breathing will help you regulate your thought process and make decisions that support your well-being.

Most of us go through our day on auto-pilot. Your to-do list is never ending as you scurry through life without taking time to notice the world around you. Living life on auto-pilot is as toxic to your wellbeing as any other health decision. A detox for stress-inducing habits is to become more mindful. Spend a few minutes every morning simply noticing the world around you. Become more attentive to life – when you eat, pay attention to taste and texture; watch the sunset; be still and listen to the sounds around you. When you do, you will live life with more consciousness and awareness. To create more wellness in your life – regardless of your circumstances – breathe, create a gap between emotional triggers and responses, and put a “stop” on negative thinking. Give yourself the gift of creating new neurotransmitters with positive thoughts.

Create the positive thought that is most relevant to you. Here are some common replacements.

- *It’s okay to feel anxious, sad, and afraid sometimes.*
- *I can think different thoughts if I choose to.*
- *My feelings are like a wave that comes and goes.*
- *I am strong enough to handle what’s happening to me right now.*
- *This is an opportunity for me to learn how to cope with my fears.*
- *I can take the time I need right now to let go and relax.*
- *My thoughts don’t control my life.*
- *I am ok.*