

The Healthy Living Learning Series is part of the Personal Health Plan Project designed by Church Health Services, Inc. (www.churchclinic.org) and funded in part through a grant from Wheat Ridge Ministries (www.wheatridge.org).

Building a Foundation for Health



The Healthy Living Learning Series

3 Important Health Beliefs

1. I am Healthy or Sick for Many Different Reasons.

- My Body
- My Thoughts and Feelings
- My Relationship with Family and Others
- My Relationship with God

2. Being Healthy Is More than Not Being Sick.

3. I Have a Responsibility for My Health and the Health of My Neighbor.

As you begin the important work of improving your health, it is good for you to stop and think about what you believe about health and illness. These beliefs are called your health beliefs. Just like a solid cement block foundation, as shown in Figure 1, is important to a home, solid beliefs about health and illness are important to the state of your personal health.

“My Building Blocks for Health,” as shown in Figure 2, is an important health message containing three basic health

beliefs. The first health belief or building block, *“I am Healthy or Sick for Many Different Reasons,”* refers to the many parts you have as a whole person. *“My Body”* is the physical part of your person that can be touched or measured by testing as shown by the example of the blocked heart artery in

Figure 3. This person had a high blood cholesterol and her body was affected by blockages developing in the arteries of her heart. *“My Thoughts and Feelings,”* as shown by the grandfather deep in thought in Figure 4, is the psychological part of your whole person. This part is involved with thinking



Fig. 1. As important as this foundation is to its home, so are your health beliefs important to the state of your personal health.

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and learning, as well as experiencing feelings such as happiness, sadness, and anger. Stress and depression can not only make you feel lousy, but they can also cause heart trouble and many other illnesses. *“My Relationship with Family and Others,”* as shown by the friends in Figure 5, is the social part of your whole person. Relationships can bring health and healing, but they can also bring pain and illness. One research study even reached the conclusion that the length of a person’s life may be determined in part by the number and quality of relationships they have with others. The last part, *“My Relationship with God,”* is the spiritual part of your person. This part is shown by the example of men praying in Figure 6.

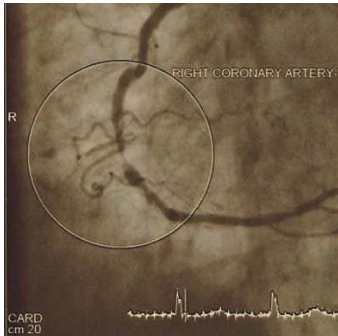


Figure 3. X-ray shows blocked heart artery deep within the body.



Figure 4. Grandfather thinks about various life events.

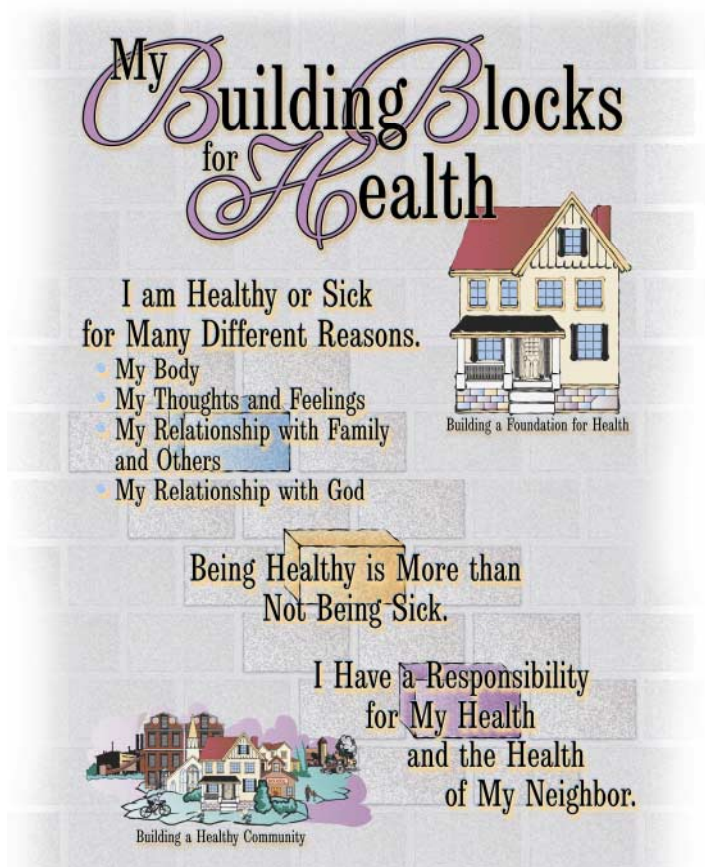


Figure 2. This poster, describing whole person health, wellness, and personal responsibility, is available in various formats from Church Health Service, Inc. at www.churchclinic.org or 920-887-1766.

Many research studies describe how people who have a closer relationship with God tend to be healthier in many ways. Two examples are having lower blood pressure and healing faster from surgery. Each part of your whole person is important to your health

and each deserves attention. The second health belief or building block, *“Being Healthy is More than Not Being Sick,”* refers to the idea of fitness or wellness. When you or some part of your whole person

is really healthy or well, one could say things are going very, very good – often at the best possible level. Another way to look at this is that when you are well, you are functioning at the level God has planned for you. The poem to the right compares and contrasts the state of “not being sick” with the state of “being well” for each part of the whole person.



Figure 5. Friends share a great relationship with each other.

The message of the poem is that just because you are not sick or ill, does not mean you are healthy or well. Sometimes people can be much closer to illness than they realize. Unfortunately, it has been the tendency of many people to be concerned about health only when they get sick. We need to start putting more of our energy into striving for



Figure 6. Men focus on their relationship with God through prayer.

HEALTH IS MORE THAN NOT BEING SICK

You may not be having a heart attack,
but are you physically fit?
You may not be crying and depressed,
but are you happy and content?
You may not be in the midst of divorce,
but are you loving your spouse?
You may not be cursing the Lord above,
but is He Master of your life?
By Mike Augustson, M.D.

health and wellness. This is a life-long and never ending process, but progress can be made!
The third health belief and final building block, *“I Have a Responsibility for My Health and the Health of My Neighbor,”* refers to your personal responsibility for your own health and the health of others. Figure 7 contains an example of

a man taking responsibility for his health by doing what he can do to get more daily exercise. Too often people regard doctors and other health professionals as being the people responsible for health, but people need to realize that they have a lot of responsibility for their own health. Half of all deaths in the United States are related to the personal decisions people make day in and day out. Tobacco, diet, “couch potato” lifestyle, alcohol, firearms, and sexual behavior are the activities that account for many of these deaths. We have control over whether we participate in these activities or not. It is also true that every illness is not the person’s own fault. Many illnesses can be the result of factors people have



Figure 7. This man is taking responsibility for getting more exercise by choosing to walk and not drive to and from the grocery store.

little or no control over. Despite this reality, we do have a responsibility to make the best of situations we are presented with. We must also remember we are to help our family, friends, and neighbors with their health. While many of us are not health professionals, there are many things we can do to help. In some situations it is the person who is not the health professional who is best suited to do what needs to be done. What happens when we fail in this responsibility for ourselves and others? First of all, we are to recognize it and then realize failure is part of being human. Next, we are to ask forgiveness from God, others, and even ourselves. Forgiveness is not to be taken for granted, but to be viewed

as a way to restore a level of energy that allows us to keep on trying. *“My Building Blocks for Health”* contain a health message that could greatly improve your health and the health of this entire nation. Whether you realize it or not, you are the manager of your health. It is not

someone else. It is you. Be the best manager you can be. Take these health beliefs of whole person health, wellness, and personal responsibility, and make them your own. Put them into action. They represent the truth about health and illness. They are the foundation of good health for you and your neighbor.

Congratulations!

For more information please contact:

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