

COVENANT

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Journey to Wellness

By Susan Roncadin, RN, CPMHN(C)



When asked to write an article on some aspect of self-care and its effect on physical wellness, I agreed. However, I never thought of it again, until the due date. I wonder what Freud would make of that? But that is just what we humans so often do; put self-care out of our minds. We spend time caring for family and friends and pets and our possessions. We care for others and see it as our responsibility or perhaps our joy. But when it comes to caring for ourselves, it is much more complicated. Today, more than ever before, we have unlimited access to information on attaining and maintaining physical wellness. But without willpower, determination, acceptance, enthusiasm, knowledge, planning, and most of all self-love, we just let it go, hoping that we will get lucky and stay healthy. But it isn't about luck.

When we are feeling well we forget. It's human nature. However, when it comes to physical wellness we can't risk forgetting. Remember how horrible just having a common cold feels? We take for granted the freedom that is the gift of every healthy day. So as I write to meet this deadline, I am thinking of the many gifts that good self-care brings in the hope that I will remember.

During my sixteen years at Southdown I have performed hundreds of health assessments. An important part of helping residents improve their health is assisting them to understand their own personal barriers to self-care. I hear the same excuses over and over:

- I'm lazy.
- I'll never be able to change.
- It's too late to make a change.
- I don't have time.
- It's too hot, too cold, it's raining.
- I'm happy the way I am.
- I never succeeded.
- I'll just have one more and then quit.
- Maybe I'll start next week.
- My doctor retired.
- I'll wait my blood work until I ...
- I'm afraid that if I try I will fail and then I will feel bad.

Many of these excuses appear on my personal list of barriers to physical wellness. However, I am learning to challenge them. I remind myself, yes I can be lazy

at times but if someone needed me I wouldn't think twice but to respond. And when I think that I have difficulty changing my ways, I remind myself that I have changed over the years—I read nutrition labels, I adapt recipes, I buy more fruits and veggies. And as for fear of failing and feeling bad, I ask myself how I really feel when I am neglectful of self-care.

My intent in sharing is to invite you to make your own list of barriers that impact negatively your self-care and to proceed to challenge each and every one of them. And when you have compiled a list and challenged your excuses, go on and make a list of self-care smart goals and commit to them.

Here are some ideas to inspire you on your journey to wellness:

1. Take the time to impress yourself with a healthy home cooked meal. Who cares if no one else is home.
2. Look at your hands and think of all they have done for others. Take time each day to put cream on them and massage them.
3. Floss. Find that free sample from the dentist or buy a new one, but do it today—not for your dentist but for you.
4. Throw out your old pillow and buy yourself a good one.
5. Laugh.
6. Watch the sunset.
7. Chew slowly.
8. Let others love you.
9. Notice others who are good at self-care and emulate them.
10. Don't treat yourself with unhealthy offerings. Choose flowers, or a concert. And just for once, splurge on the best seat in the house.
11. Make one small change a week.
12. Don't focus on weight scales. Make healthy eating and exercise your goal, and your weight will normalize.
13. Park farther away. Or better still, walk. And consider a pedometer.
14. Have that physical exam and take ownership of your health records.
15. Be honest with your doctor and yourself.

Go ahead. Take the time to make your list. Because time—healthy time—is the goal. ■

Always Connected?

By Elaine Dombi, SSJ, MA, ICADC



I find that gathering facts and statistics often helps me to grasp the depth, immensity and reality of an evolving phenomenon such as the Information Age or the Digital Age. The

Digital Revolution started in the 1970s with the introduction of the Internet and personal computer followed by technology advances that continuously provide us with greater capability to communicate and exchange information. Since then, all these technological changes have been affecting our daily lives and humanity.

The new digital developments enable us to receive and transfer information freely and quickly which in turn affect the way we live, communicate, socialize, recreate, diagnose/heal, conduct business and research. We have a plethora of media and devices that have become our means for interacting in society as we meet our responsibilities, engage in relationships and maintain sustenance.



The Internet is the crucial technology of the Information Age, and with the explosion of wireless communication in the early twenty-first century, we can say that humankind is now almost entirely connected, albeit with great levels of inequality in bandwidth, efficiency, and price.

Manuel Castells

Today, approximately 40% of the 7.4 billion world population has Internet connection, while in 1995, it was less than 1% (Internetlivestats.com). According to a report, *Digital in 2016* (wearesocial.com), there are 2.3 billion active social media users, which is up from 1.8 billion in 2014. In the United States and Canada, about 88% of the population are Internet users and 58% are active on social

networks. In 2015, with sales of 2 million smart phones per day worldwide, close to 1 million of new mobile social media users were added every day. That is 12 new users per second. There were 1.65 billion active mobile social accounts in 2015.

The Internet has evolved from primarily offering information upon request to enabling individuals to communicate and engage online with other individuals or groups (communities). One of the earliest forms of social media, Blogs, are websites that display date-stamped entries and vary from a personal diary format to summaries of pertinent information in one specific area. Later developments in social media allowed sharing a wide range of media content between users such as books over BookCrossing, photos over Flickr, videos over YouTube, PowerPoint presentations over SlideShare. Users of these media are not required to create a personal profile page to participate. More recently, social networking sites have enabled users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles and exchanging messages. These profiles can include any type of personal information. Wikipedia indicates that Facebook is the largest US-based social networking site.

Another type of an online community is the Virtual Game World, which comes in two forms. One form requires the users to behave according to strict rules in the context of a multiplayer online role-playing game. Another form allows participants to choose their behaviour more freely. The users of both virtual social worlds participate as avatars and interact within a three-dimensional virtual environment. In this realm, there are no rules restricting the range of possible interactions between players.

Recent research by Amanda Forest and Jennifer Wood from the University of Waterloo revealed some insight into the usage and effects of social media. The research showed that for persons with low self-esteem, social media seemed to be an appealing place to connect with people. However, their interaction on Facebook was not a positive experience since these individuals expressed mainly negative emotions and did not receive too many 'likes.' Alternatively, persons with high self-esteem who posted positive status updates were rewarded with positive comments and more 'likes' by cyber friends.

In another study, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business gave out 205 BlackBerry phones to people between ages 18-88 in Germany, then tracked how much they wanted to use social media. The study found that regardless of age, people's desire to participate in social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter was only surpassed by the desire to sleep and have sex which reinforced the human need to stay connected. Research also showed that different generations are using social media in different ways. Older generations are using media to see and show family pictures and to boast about their latest accomplishments while younger generations use media, primarily by mobile phone, to chat, gossip, plan and pass time. They participate in online communities that provide a social context for them.

For persons who are actively engaged in online activity, it is challenging to imagine life before the Internet. In our everyday travels to ministry, social events, or for vacation, we are regularly dependent on and grateful for our smartphones and social media which enable us to easily and inexpensively maintain connection with colleagues, family, friends and the broader world. It took me a bit of time to grasp the research which indicated that the more we use mobile phones, the more they become extensions of ourselves. Does this have validity for you?

At a recent conference with primarily priests, brothers and sisters, about 99% of participants raised their hand when asked who had cell phones with them in the conference room. About 90% raised their hands when asked if they placed their phone in the bedroom when they slept. We, in society and ministry, are strongly connected to which ever and how many devices we have. We are lured to look for incoming information and communication even when it is untimely. Along with the immediacy of communication, we have developed a compulsive need to know who is connecting with us or what information is coming to us. We wonder if it may be an emergency or if it may offer the answer we seek. Many people hypothesize or tease about having an addiction to their email, Facebook, Internet games, Instagram, etc. In fact, some persons develop a compulsive usage of technological devices over time.

If you are concerned about yourself or someone else regarding social media addiction, I ask you to reflect on some of the following indicators of addiction. If you experience any of these signs, you may want to consider making a change.

- Preoccupied with Internet or specific Internet destination.
- Defensive about time spent online.
- Spends money on devices or online that should be used for bills or groceries.
- Failed attempts to control behaviour.
- Heightened sense of euphoria while involved in computer and Internet activities.
- Loses track of time while online.
- Sacrifices needed hours of sleep to spend time online.
- Becomes agitated when not online or online time is interrupted.
- Checks messages compulsively throughout day.
- Spends time online in place of responsibilities.
- Prefers an online experience opposed to spending time with friends, community.
- Seems preoccupied with getting back online when away from computer.
- Loses interest in activities that were enjoyable before online access.
- Escapes into the Internet to avoid responsibilities, painful feelings or troubling situations.

It is important to state that the technology is not the root cause of Internet addictions, rather the culprit is the poor judgement of the individual in using the technology. Even if you have healthy boundaries regarding technology and social media, ask yourself: Are you taking your phone or your laptop to bed each night?

In the next edition of *Covenant*, we will address Internet pornography. ■

FROM MY DESK TO YOURS:



This has been a spring for celebrating and recalling the past and looking forward to the future. Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, recently wrote, "What we cease to celebrate we will soon cease to cherish." Thank you, Fr. Ron, for such great wisdom words! In recalling our past, we hold in prayer those who have grown because of the support and care they received while at Southdown. These are cherished memories for staff and constituents, and we look forward to making many more.

Since our last Covenant, there have been a number of events. In April, Dr. Karl Loszak shared with 100 attendees the importance of Forgiveness. To forgive is a life giving experience and one that comes from hard work and personal reflection. Our invitation to Dr. Loszak was precipitated by the awareness that forgiving is a challenge for many of us. As we live in the Year of Mercy, it is an important component to practice.

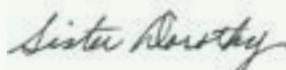
Emerging issues that surfaced during the Critical Personnel Issues conference in Toronto included challenges with community living when a member is experiencing cognitive difficulties, the growing impact of Internet addictions as well as addictions in general, and the increasing awareness of multicultural issues and accepting differences. We look forward to finding ways to address these in the coming years.

Celebrating our 50th anniversary at the Annual Benefit Dinner was definitely a highlight in May. A few images stand out: the presence of so many friends of Southdown; the inauguration of a song written specifically for the occasion called *With the Gift of Every Breath* by Pat Byrne; the presence of the Thomas Moran family; Dan Moran, son of the co-founder, sharing his reflection on the inspiration and founding of Southdown; the inspiration of Fr. Raymond Dlugos, OSA, former Chief Executive Officer of Southdown (2003-2008), on the humanness of those we walk with, the reminder for all of us that being human is our life long task and that although we are not Lourdes, we see miracles happening regularly; and, the announcement of the Board Emeritus comprising past board chairs. In closing the evening, Thomas Cardinal Collins expressed his gratitude for Southdown's mission and ministry that supports the work of the Church. Taking a snapshot of the faces and the conversations throughout the Villa Colombo will take more space, but I believe it is fitting to say it was a celebratory evening. We look forward to repeating the joy on May 11, 2017.

Summer is upon us here in Canada and hopefully, whatever the season is, you are experiencing a change of pace. In North America, this time period means attending leadership conferences. It was great to see so many of you at CRC in Montreal, QC last month, and I look forward to seeing many of you at CMSM in Columbus, OH and LCWR in Atlanta, GA. Please stop by our exhibit and say hello. It is always a pleasure to visit with you and meet new leadership members.

Wishing you a summer with some relaxation—a great novel, inspiring poetry, a hike among nature or a visit with loved ones.

Until our next visit, peace and all good,



Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF, MSW, ACSW, RSW
CEO, Southdown



History of Southdown

From the inception of a dream in 1964, the establishment of The Emmanuel Convalescent Foundation in 1965 and the opening of the first facility in 1966, Southdown continues its commitment to the vision of its founders: to provide a healing space and supportive community for Religious and Clergy experiencing the psychological and emotional distress of alcoholism.

After years of struggling with alcoholism and eventual healing, the late Msgr. Clement Schwalm envisioned an environment managed by laypersons where Clergy would not be alone in their battle. Msgr. Schwalm recruited the assistance of two energetic and devoted Catholic laymen, Thomas Moran and David Menzies. Together, they approached the Canadian Bishops who endorsed their plan in principle and agreed to assist in startup debentures.



Msgr. Clement Schwalm

On December 15, 1966 the facility in Aurora, Ontario known as Southdown welcomed its first residents. Early on the need for mental health services along with addiction treatment was identified.

In 1976 the Canadian Religious Conference joined in the effort with a request to expand services to women. This precipitated the acquisition of the Lakewood property for women. The integration of men and women in the main residential building was achieved in the early 1980s. In 2001 The Carter Centre for Excellence in Leadership opened with a mission to facilitate opportunities for leadership development and education.

With the increase in residential development in Aurora over the last two decades, Southdown's environment of privacy and serenity was changing rapidly. Through economic analysis and financial planning, the decision to construct a modern facility in keeping with Southdown's mission culminated with the opening on December 7, 2013 of Southdown in its new location, Holland Landing. The pristine pastoral setting on 37 acres supports the integrated psychological, spiritual and holistic components of care.

Southdown has been a place of love, peace and forgiveness to thousands who have served the Church with many having returned to active ministries. Programs and services continue to evolve in response to the changing needs of the times in Congregations and Dioceses. ■

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Covenant is produced and published by The Southdown Institute. Its purpose is to inform and educate the readership about clinical issues that surface in our work and to invite integration of the emotional and spiritual aspects of our lives.



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