



Weighing in on wellness

I've spent most of my married life — the past 20 years — dodging our bathroom scale. In ducking this weighty issue, I've spawned a virtual Dockers store: My closet now overfloweth with dozens of pants spanning 34-, 36-, 38-, 40-, 42- and 44-inch waists.

My mother has lovingly nudged me to lose weight for years. But her latest plea finally struck a chord deep within me: "I can't lose another son," she shared with pained eyes and broken heart.

Mom's vulnerability, and mine, were front and center. I couldn't help but flash back to 1989, when we lost Dad, without warning, to a heart attack. A tough blow for any wife, never mind a mother of 10.

Twenty years later, Mom had to bury one of her children — their first-born son, who shared Dad's name and birthday — again, without a goodbye. After suffering a heart attack at age 47, Jim left behind a wife and three children. We buried Jim on Valentine's Day 2009.

No longer is it just about me and feeding my love of pizza, burgers, fries, soda and sweets. It's about Mom.

*The sweet six
The best six doctors
anywhere
And no one can deny it
Are sunshine, water,
rest, and air
Exercise and diet.
These six will gladly
you attend
If only you are willing
Your mind they'll ease
Your will they'll mend
And charge you not a
shilling.*

— WAYNE FIELDS,
What the River Knows

It's about my lovely bride, Bridgid, and our three great gifts from above: Mickey, 17; Jamie, 16; and Meg, 14. It's about my eight surviving siblings, 26 nieces and nephews, and numerous in-laws, friends and co-workers.

It's also about honoring Jim's life through mine. Adopting a healthier lifestyle gives me a better chance of having more days to live, laugh and love as large as Jim did.

On March 3, Mom's 80th birthday, I began my quest for wellness — a single word that encom-

passes all types of fitness: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Wellness cannot be measured solely by a scale. However, a scale can serve as one of a number of useful indicators of an individual's physical wellness.

In its infancy, my wellness program so far has included a soul-enriching retreat and heightened honesty and accountability regarding my "eat less, move more" resolution.

Today, I maintain a daily food diary. If I bite it, I write it: the food type and amount, calories, and fat and carbohydrate grams. I'm making healthier choices, one day, one meal, and sometimes one moment at a time. Heck, I'm even exercising a little: family bike rides and an occasional game of hoops with Mickey.

The few changes I've made so far are working. I'm finally walking toward wellness. The bathroom scale agrees: I'm down 57 pounds.

Equally important, I'm reducing stress with deep-breathing exercises, and trying to strike a better balance between my work and family lives. I've evolved into quite the workaholic the past several years. I need to spend more time away from the busyness of business, staying connected with loved ones and our loving Creator through prayer and service.

Pleasing the workaholic in me, countless studies have proven the direct correlation between an individual's wellness and productivity. No matter how one looks at it, wellness programs work ... if we work them. Won't you please get well with me?

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