

# My Life's Orchestra Is Now A Trio

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I have been thinking a great deal about well-being and how it is impacted by this current pandemic situation, with all its restrictions. I keep reflecting on how negatively-impacted our wellness has been, how it has been muted and can only be a fraction of what our

wellness was pre-COVID19.

When I conceptualize well-being with clients, I think about 5 different realms. They are:

1. Social- our personal relationships and connections, our community, our “peeps”
2. Emotional/psychological- how we feel inside and what our energy, engagement, and motivation is like
3. Physical- how we are feeling physically and what we are doing to take care of our bodies (e.g., what are we eating and drinking and how are we exercising, grooming and pampering)
4. Spiritual- what feeds our spirit or soul (e.g., religion, being in nature, making or experiencing art, cooking/baking)
5. Financial/productive- how we are doing financially, how we are engaged in productive work and feel that we are contributing

During our new normal of social isolation, we can still hit on all of these components of wellness, but we cannot fully engage in them. Let us take Social Wellness, for example.

We are social creatures, and we are hard-wired to be around other people. Our brain's activity

is modulated by others, and our brain releases chemicals in response to another person. When we experience being with someone, we engage all our senses. Not only do we see and hear them fully, we also may touch or sense them physically. We may smell them. And we may eat and drink with them.

However, we cannot do that nowadays. Don't get me wrong. I am so grateful to have video chat as a way to communicate in the current time. However, as I heard someone say, using video chat is like eating processed food. This really resonated with me. Eating processed food will do the trick and fill you up, but it will not be anywhere as satisfying or filling as when you eat real, whole food. When we video chat, we can partially see and hear someone, but we cannot see or hear them fully. There are gaps and lags in the video feed that frustrate our innate practice of turn-taking in conversations. And, it is emotionally draining to engage in this artificial and partial interaction. We are missing the full experience of being able to really connect. And all components of our well-being are similarly muted at the moment.

It feels like the symphony orchestra that was our lives is now merely a trio. We can hear the melody and appreciate its beauty, but the all-encompassing richness of our orchestra is missing; it's gorgeous sound is missing. We also cannot really feel it in our bodies in the same way an orchestra would viscerally impact us. Although, I do appreciate hearing a trio, I really look forward to my life's orchestra returning. **HR**

*With over 20 years of experience as a licensed clinical psychologist, Ivy League professor, and well-being consultant, Heather brings warmth, compassion, and wisdom to help people move forward in their lives. Heather supports organizations by doing “deep dives” into an organization's emotional health and well-being. She is also an engaging and innovative presenter. After her workshops, participants leave with skills and tools to help them thrive. Heather can be found at [thrivewell-being.com](http://thrivewell-being.com).*