

The “Wells” We Drink From”

Wells are not something we think about because we have ample water in this modern-day culture of ours.

A well is basically a hole that has been drilled, bored, or dug into the ground to access water. One of the first steps in establishing a healthy community is to ensure they have access to clean water. This clean water is necessary for drinking, sanitation and for irrigation. This requires someone dig a well, the people use the well and the well be protected from contamination and blockage. But my real interest in wells is not so much scientific or geological as it is metaphorical. I would have to credit former Morehouse College President Dr. Robert Franklin as the one who got me first thinking about wells when he established the expectations that all Morehouse Men must meet. Even in our daily conversations we subconsciously place a lot of emphasis on wells.

“All’s WELL that ends WELL”

“He’s alive and WELL”

“Leave WELL enough alone”

If we are going to do WELL, be WELL, represent WELL and finish WELL then someone is going to need to dig some WELLS, drink from those WELLS and maintain those WELLS. The Dominican priest and theologian Gustavo Gutierrez was correct when he said, *“We Drink from Our Own Wells.”* Could it be that our society is not healthy because one of the first steps to being healthy is clean water and in this modern culture of digital media, entertainment and influence we have begun ignoring our wells? I guess it is indeed true that *“you never miss your water until your WELL runs dry.”* What wells am I referring to?

Well **ENGAGED** – We must become more active and involved in our community and in the lives of our families. A lack of parenting coupled with complacency must be two of the more pressing issues of our day. When parents allow television programming to engage their child more than they do, there is a problem with the well. Television changes the way the brain develops, shortens attention span and even changes brain chemistry. Despite the digital craze around learning there is still no substitute for a caring adult in the life of a child.

Well **EDUCATED** – It is a “type of salvation.” No, education can’t get me to heaven but is sure makes the trip around earth a lot easier. The world is changing, and we must keep pace. Education is vital to advance contributions to civic, political and community life. Education is necessary for its role in advancing social justice and to open the worlds of cultural and artistic

excellence. Being well educated means being well read. It is too much we need to learn to ever have gaps of idle time. We should always have a book with us. Until we, as a society, value conjugating the verb “ to be” as valuable as running a touchdown, dunking a basketball or gyrating on stage then the water of a respectful, balanced society will not flow.

Well **EMPLOYED** – Work will always be a tool for life fulfillment. I am grateful for the work ethic instilled in me by my parents. It is this work ethic that breaks the spirit of entitlement and ensures that we contribute to our surroundings. Everyone should be required to do something in the place they dwell in. If everyone in the home benefits from the environment then each person should have a definite, measurable, and active role to play while there. It is dangerous to raise children who will become adults with an unrealistic, unmerited expectation of a favorable outcome at the hands of someone else. Watch how easy it is for a person to eat your food and leave the plate on the table or to walk past something on the floor or to leave a bed unmade.

Well **ENTRUSTED** – Integrity is always going to be en vogue. Whatever we do we should do it well and to the best of our ability. We should finish what we start; return things where we got them; pay back the money we borrow; keep our promises; be punctual; not allow circumstance to dictate our behavior; and just learn to show up.

Well **EXPOSED** – There is more to life than the family, county, city or school I grew up a part of. Until we learn to value experiences more than things, we will forever be stuck in a shallow world that only the least desirable fish swim in. Exposure, especially through travel is a means of personal development and aids us in both appreciating where we come from while simultaneously creating in us a desire for better.

Well **EXPRESSED** – Before people really know us all they can do is see us and hear us, so self-expression through our wardrobe and our words become paramount. We have always worn clothes, so I guess this well has just become contaminated and is evidenced when pajamas are worn in public; underclothes are readily displayed; sunglasses are worn inside; women abandon dresses and men disdain a blazer and tie. Compare the attire and apparel of the college students sitting at the Woolworth counter in 1960 to protest segregation and the college student of today or the clothing worn while crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge compared to clothing today while just crossing the street. Our words are representing us no better. We must be well spoken and strive for meaningful and valuable conversation learning how to effectively communicate our complex emotions and ideas.

Well **ESTABLISHED** - This means we must become grounded enough and stable enough to be able to give back to our society. Whether we are a Jew embracing the Tikkun olam ([Hebrew](#): תיקון עולם) meaning "repairing the world" or "perfecting the world; " A Muslim paying Zakat (a proportion of surplus wealth which must be given on a yearly basis to poor and the needy) and voluntary charity; or A Christian loving our neighbor as ourselves and being our brother's keeper we all have a personal responsibility to be keepers of the wells that other people will drink from. When we are mindful of the wells we are digging and the wells we are drinking from I would imagine we could all say, "It is WELL with my soul."

What WELLS would you add to my list to ensure our society remain healthy? I welcome your feedback.