Financial Advisers as Well-Being Advisers

Enhance your clients' well-being by understanding its four domains

by Meir Statman, Ph.D.

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Author's note: This article draws on a BlackRock survey and interviews.

Financial advisers often refer to themselves as wealth managers, yet financial advisers serve their clients better as well-being advisers, knowing that wealth is only a way station to well-being. Well-being advisers identify clients' wants and help clients assess those wants, balance them, and avoid cognitive and emotional errors on the way to satisfying them. And those wants are satisfied by the full range of utilitarian, expressive, and emotional benefits.

Well-being in the context of finance usually implies financial well-being. Discussions about enhancing well-being are typically about enhancing financial well-being, such as saving during our working years to sustain us in retirement. However, well-being is broader than financial well-being, and enhancing well-being involves more than just enhancing the financial element.

In addition to finance, the domains of well-being also include: family, friends, and communities; work and activities; and health—both physical and mental. Yet financial well-being underlies well-being in all its domains, and well-being in each domain is impossible without financial well-being.

Financial advisers do well when they serve as well-being advisers, enhancing clients' well-being in all its domains. This article will give you insights into each domain to begin your path toward becoming a well-being adviser.

4 Domains of Well-Being	
Finances Financial well-being underlies well-being in all its domains, and well-being in each domain is impossible without financial well-being.	**Family, Friends, and Communities**
Work and Activities	**Health, both Physical and Mental**

Note: Easterlin and Sawangfa (2009) identified finances; family and social circle; work; and health as the main domains of well-being and found that they combine in a way that explains quite well overall well-being, and no single domain is invariably the key to well-being. Kapteyn, Smith, and Van Soest (2013) identified the same domains, describing them as income; social contacts and family; job or daily activities; and health, and found that social contacts and family had the highest impact on well-being, followed by job and daily activities, and by health. Income had the lowest impact.

The Four Domains in Action with Clients

I have learned much about financial advisers as well-being advisers from frequent interactions with them and their clients.

An adviser spoke to me about well-being in the domain of finances, describing the problem of a couple who spends everything they have today because "you never know what tomorrow brings." The wife worries about having enough for college expenses for their two daughters and for their own retirement. When they meet with their adviser, the story repeats. The husband agrees they need to do something about saving because he loves his daughters and his wife. He sees the need for saving while it is being discussed. Yet, after a few short days, they're both going on summer cruises with the daughters and other family members since that's a "tradition."

Another adviser spoke about well-being in the domain of finances, describing a client with the opposite problem: spending too little when he can spend much more. That client, according to the adviser, "owns a good part of the known world. When he travels, he counts every nickel and considers economy-class flights a luxury. As with many of our clients, my primary discussion is to encourage him to spend more; he could easily quadruple his spending and not make a dent in his estate. Haven't been successful so far."

The same adviser spoke about well-being in the domain of work, describing his favorite client, a physician in his 80s. Following an analysis, the adviser explained that continuing his practice would cost the physician about $40,000 per year, factoring in his abbreviated hours, office overhead, and insurance costs. Then the adviser recommended that the physician continue to work, because retiring would cost $60,000 in psychiatry bills to deal with depression. "You've never seen a happier client leaving our office," the adviser shared with me.

Other advisers I've talked with have spoken about well-being in the domains of families and health. One described working with clients suffering mental illness and clients caring for family members suffering mental illness. Clients suffering bipolar disorder are apt to spend recklessly when in manic states. He keeps careful watch when such clients request to withdraw large amounts of money. That financial adviser is most gratified when working with parents who are helping adult children suffering mental illness. These parents regularly pay for housing, food, and other expenses, keeping a close watch while allowing their children as much autonomy as possible.

The Cantril Ladder

"Happiness" is regularly used as a synonym for "well-being," but happiness is a term of many meanings. Indeed, it is best to think of happiness as an emotion, side by side with sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. Assessment of well-being, unlike emotion, calls for cognitive reflection.

The Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale (Cantril 1965), commonly known as the Cantril ladder, is a widely used measure of well-being. Gallup uses this measure in its World Poll, which asks: "Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally stand at this time?"[1]

Nobel Prize-winning economist Angus Deaton found that people of different countries stand on different steps on average, from around 4 in African countries, to between 7 and 8 for the rich countries of Europe and the English-speaking world. Women place themselves somewhat higher on the ladder than men, except in Africa. People in rich countries tend to descend the ladder as they go from youth to midlife, and ascend it as they grow older, but this pattern of descent and ascent is less evident in poor countries (Deaton 2018).

This article includes the results of a BlackRock survey of more than 8,000 Americans in 2018, including extensive interviews with more than two dozen people ranging in age and gender (whose names have been changed here to preserve anonymity). The BlackRock survey revealed age and gender patterns similar to the one found by Deaton. The proportion of people who placed themselves on the high 8–10 steps of the ladder was 29 percent among those 25 to 34 years old, declining somewhat to 25 percent among those 35 to 64 years old, and increasing substantially to 65 percent among those 65 to 74 years old. Women generally placed themselves on higher ladder steps than men, but not by much.

People with high well-being save more and spend less.

The Domain of Finances

Finances—including wealth, income, spending, saving, and investing—have a special place among well-being domains, because they also underlie well-being in all other domains. We need income and wealth to support ourselves and our families, paying for food and shelter now and in the future. We need income and wealth to maintain our own health and that of our family, seeing physicians when we are ill. And we need income and wealth to pay tuition for education that improves our work prospects and, in turn, can yield income and wealth.

Paul, a 70-year-old man with investable assets in the $50,000 to $100,000 range, said: "I think of money as fuel. It is like gas in a car. If I have plenty of gas, I can go anywhere. But if my tank is empty, I have to stay home." Indeed, the BlackRock survey revealed that finances were the most important source of stress. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed ranked money as the most important source of stress, followed at some distance by stress over work, health, family, and social life.

Well-being in the domain of finances comes from utilitarian, expressive, and emotional benefits. The three kinds of benefits are evident in the words of Divya, a 33-year-old woman with more than $500,000 in investable assets: "My financial status enabled us to purchase this home that is well out of reach for many individuals in my age group and place in life. I felt proud that my family could make the decision to purchase this type of home." This home provides Divya utilitarian benefits as a shelter; it provides her expressive benefits as an emblem of high social status; and it provides her emotional benefits in pride. Moreover, finances underlie all of these benefits.

Wealth needs not be immense to support well-being. Priya, a 33-year-old woman with investable assets in the $100,000 to $250,000 range, said: "Wealth in my opinion is just a way of leading a secured life without struggling at every instance or a crisis. Financially stable is the better word in my opinion."

Our identities as savers and investors. Our identities consist of many roles, including father, mother, son, daughter, friend, physician, policeman, volunteer, and more. The role of investor is part of the identity of some, but not all. Yet a place for the role of investor in our identities increases our well-being.

The BlackRock survey revealed that people whose identities included the role of investor placed themselves higher on the Cantril ladder of well-being, regardless of income, age, or gender. They also described themselves as optimistic, and agreed with statements such as: "My life has a clear sense of purpose," "What I do in life is very valuable and worthwhile," and "I feel a sense of belonging in my community."

Financial economists and investment professionals commonly define savings as money not spent. They define investments as the destination of these savings, whether saving accounts, CDs, stocks, bonds, or real estate. Yet many ordinary people think of savings as bank saving accounts or CDs, and think of investments as stocks, bonds, or real estate.

Some who identify themselves as savers rather than investors shy away from investing because they believe, in error, that they must acquire much investment knowledge before investing. Others identify as savers rather than as investors because they misperceive risk as daily returns volatility and potential losses.

We see common misperceptions of risk in a comparison of "mass affluents," people having between $100,000 and $1 million of financial assets, to all people. Mass affluents in the BlackRock survey were more likely to identify themselves as investors. The share of people who perceived traditional investments such as stocks and bonds as "risky" was 35 percent among all people, but only 27 percent among mass affluents. The proportion of those who felt stressed by traditional investments was 25 percent among all people surveyed, but only 16 percent among mass affluents. And whereas 23 percent of all people felt confused by traditional investments, only 13 percent of mass affluents did.

People with high propensity to plan agree with statements such as: "Before going on a vacation, I spend a great deal of time examining where I would most like to go and what I would like to do" (Ameriks, Caplin, and Leahy 2003). Such people save more of their incomes than people with low propensity to plan, save, and invest. Moreover, well-being bolsters saving and investing.

People with high well-being save more and spend less; they take more time for making decisions and have more control over expenditures; they expect longer lives and their concern about their future leads them to invest for that future (Guven 2009).

Relative wealth and social status. Wants for expressive and emotional benefits are evident in our tendency to compare our income and wealth to others in our comparison groups. As philosopher Bertrand Russell quipped in his 1930 book, *The Conquest of Happiness:* "Beggars do not envy millionaires, just other beggars who are more successful." This is true for people who socialize with neighbors, comparing their incomes to the neighbors.

The association between such people's well-being and the incomes of neighbors is substantial. An increase in neighbors' income reduces a person's well-being as much as an equal reduction in that person's own income (Luttmer 2005). But this is not true for those who socialize with friends outside the neighborhood.

Anne, a 53-year-old woman with investable assets in the $50,000 to $100,000 range, made a list of things to do: "Eat healthy. Read the Bible. Attend church. Thirty minutes or more of exercise per day. Don't compare yourself to others. Focus on the good. Do something kind for someone else every day. Leave the world just a tiny bit better than you found it. Dream. Remain grateful."

Yet, she added: "The hardest goal for me would be to not compare myself to someone else."

The Domain of Family, Friends, and Communities

Relationships with family and friends are most important in well-being. Answering "yes" to the question: "If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?" is the single most important variable explaining differences in well-being (Helliwell, Huang, and Harris 2009).

The importance of relationships with family, friends, and community is also evident in the BlackRock survey. People with high well-being were more likely to agree with the statements: "There are people who appreciate me as a person," and, "I feel a sense of belonging in my community." Jonathan, a 67-year-old man with investable assets in the $100,000 to $250,000 range, said: "My sense of well-being gave me a sense of calmness and confidence that, with family life in order, and helping friends with situations that I thought I could be of help and positive advice for them, it created a better life for me as well."

The domain of family, friends, and communities is intricately linked to that of finances. Bill, a 52-year-old man with more than $500,000 in investable assets, said: "My relationship with money is very good. I have always been a saver and tended to make more money than I wanted to spend. Now that I have saved enough to stop working, I am focused on spending our money in ways that best support our family. I view money as a way for us to have the time we want and to have the experiences as a family that help bring us together."

Acts of kindness and generosity improve relationships and promote well-being in both the giver and receiver. People who volunteer in their communities enjoy higher well-being than those who do not volunteer (Borgonovi 2008).

Parents and children. Parenthood is a fluid and complex process whose well-being effects change over time (Nelson, Kushlev, and Lyubomirsky 2014) yielding a rise in well-being at first, followed by a decline (Margolis and Myrskyla 2015).

Parenthood increases the well-being of fathers more than that of mothers; fathers also enjoy higher well-being than men without children, but mothers' well-being is no higher than that of women without children (Nelson, Kushlev, English, Dunn, and Lyubomirsky 2013). Play yields the highest well-being across activities with children, whereas basic childcare carries low levels of well-being (Musick, Meier, and Flood 2016).

Marriage. Married people enjoy greater well-being than unmarried people (Nelson-Coffey 2018). David, a 71-year-old man with investable assets in the $100,000 to $250,000 range, said: "Feeling love and being loved gives you that sense of well-being… . I have found a great partner. She makes me a better person, is loving, and inspirational."

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Marriage promotes the well-being of men more than of women (Haring-Hidore, Stock, Okun, and Witter 1985; Coombs 1991). This might be because men benefit more from the social support they receive from their spouses, whereas women do not rely as heavily on social support from their spouse (Antonucci and Akiyama 1987; Gurung, Taylor, and Seeman 2003). Relationship quality, however, tends to be more strongly associated with well-being for women than for men (Proulx, Helms, and Buehler 2007).

The well-being benefits of marriage generally equal those of cohabitation, but these benefits are larger in cultures with strong religious and social norms against cohabitation (Lee and Ono 2012). And the well-being benefits derived by same-sex couples are equal to those of opposite-sex couples, all dependent on trust, communication, and conflict-resolution styles (Balsam, Beauchaine, Rothblum, and Solomon 2008).

Links between marriage and well-being go both ways. High well-being increases the likelihood of marriage, and marriage promotes well-being. In Harker and Keltner (2001), women's positive emotional expressions in their college yearbook photographs were associated with greater likelihood of being married at age 27 and greater marital satisfaction at age 52. Another study (Williams 2003) examined how marital quality is related to well-being. Low marital quality, reflected in high marital stress and low marital harmony, predicted decreases in well-being.

Acts of kindness and generosity improve relationships and promote well-being in both the giver and receiver.

Much of marital stress or harmony centers on finances. Unresolved marital stress sometimes leads to divorce. Meredith, a 31-year-old woman with investable assets in the $50,000 to $100,000 range, said: "My parents had wildly different approaches to money, and it was a huge factor in their divorce… . My mom saves everything, and my dad spends everything. I think because my dad grew up in a really poor family (not that my mom was wealthy by any means), his entire family spends money as soon as they get it, like they're worried someone's going to take it away if they don't spend it first. They're both around 70 now and I can see who's living a better life (spoiler alert, it's my mom)."

Communities. Communities vary in levels of trust. The most common measure of trust, often referred to as "social trust," is based on answers to the question: "Do you think that other people can generally be trusted, or (alternatively) that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?" Social trust, measured by this question, is highly correlated with well-being (Helliwell, Huang, and Wang 2014; Helliwell and Wang 2011).

Trust levels in workplaces and neighborhoods add well-being beyond that associated with incomes and health. Communities where trust levels are high are also more resilient when facing community-level shocks. Moreover, people in high-trust communities are more resilient to personal shocks (Helliwell, Huang, and Wang 2014).

The Domain of Work and Activities

Our work and activities, paid or voluntary, are a domain in our well-being. Are we passionate about our work, or do we do it grudgingly, waiting for the weekend or retirement? Do we respect our colleagues, and are we respected by them?

Work provides the utilitarian benefits of earnings and many expressive and emotional benefits. We express our identity, whether that of a professor, policeman, technician, physician, or financial adviser. We take pride in a job well done, satisfaction in a contribution to society, and a sense of belonging to a community of colleagues and friends. When we lose a job, we lose more than money—we lose part of our identities, pride in our accomplishments, and membership in our communities.

Attitudes toward jobs illustrate the difference between happiness as an emotion or affect, and well-being as a cognitive reflection. Jobs enhance well-being more than they enhance happiness. Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman and economist Alan Krueger assessed net affect of activities such as work, socializing after work, watching TV, and commuting by the average of three positive adjectives: (1) happy, (2) warm/friendly, and (3) enjoying myself; less the average of six negative adjectives: (1) frustrated/annoyed, (2) depressed/blue, (3) hassled/pushed around, (4) angry/hostile, (5) worried/anxious, and (6) criticized/put down (Kahneman and Krueger 2006). They found that intimate relations ranked first in net affect, followed by socializing after work. Work ranked next to last, lower than evening commute and higher only than morning commute.

Yet, economist Andrew Bryce found that most people are satisfied with their jobs and find work more meaningful than consumer purchases, socializing, relaxing, or leisure (Bryce 2018). Other economists have found that employed people stand on a Cantril ladder step that is approximately 0.6 "points" higher, on average, than the step of the unemployed (De Neve and Ward 2017).

Jobs enhance well-being, but not all jobs enhance it equally. According to De Neve and Ward (2017), blue-collar jobs yield lower well-being than white-collar jobs in all labor-intensive industries such as construction, mining, manufacturing, transport, farming, fishing, and forestry. They also found that managers, executives, officials, and professional workers place themselves, on average, higher than the sixth step of Cantril's ladder, whereas people working in farming, fishing, or forestry, place themselves, on average, lower than the fifth step. Yet, averages can mask job fit considerations. Few jobs fit everyone. People enjoy well-being in jobs that fit their interests and personalities (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005).

De Neve and Ward (2017) also found that the relation between employment and well-being varies by gender. Both men and women of working age who are out of the labor force report lower well-being than those in full-time work, but the effect is much stronger among men.

Links between work and well-being run in both directions. Having a job enhances well-being, and well-being enhances job market prospects and outcomes. Jobs enhance well-being not only by earnings, but also by social status, social relations, daily structure, and goals. Jonathan, the 67-year-old man with investable assets in the $100,000 to $250,000 range, said: "My best well-being story was back in 1988 when I received manager of the year [award] at the medical company I was working for at the time. The award included a trip back to New York and a very nice bonus; a sightseeing trip was included, as well as a visit to Yankee stadium for a baseball game. Very memorable."

Conversely, the loss of job can devastate well-being. Jonathan said further: "My worst feeling of well-being is also job related. The company I was working for decided to downsize, and the division I was in was eliminated … . I felt so empty and lost. Where do I go from here? How will I support my family? Where do I go for help? This low well-being was a shock to my system. I did not handle it very well and I was totally lost and frustrated."

Unemployment remains a scar on well-being long after regaining employment (Knabe and Rätzel 2011). Moreover, unemployment has spillover effects on everyone, even those employed, because it tells employed people they might be next on the unemployment line (Di Tella, MacCulloch, and Oswald 2001).

Part-time employment, unlike unemployment, does not necessarily diminish well-being. Much depends on whether one actually wants to work any more hours. Indeed, part-time employees who do not seek full-time employment enjoy higher well-being than full-time employees, and lower stress and worry. This particular finding, however, applies mostly to women rather than men (De Neve and Ward 2017).

Work and self-identity. "Self-identity" refers to a person's sense of self in terms of "who I am." What we do for work defines us and affects our well-being, and this effect varies throughout a person's working life and into retirement. Jobs that are closely linked to a person's self-identity yield high well-being. Retirement from such jobs cuts the link between the job and self-identity, causing significant drops in well-being as people must develop new self-identities independent of their jobs (Appau, Churchill, and Farrell 2017).

Most workers care about holding a socially useful job and suffer when they consider their job useless. Jobs that offer personal autonomy and pro-social impact are rated as the most meaningful, including those of physicians, therapists, nurses, teachers, and social workers (Bryce 2018).

In Chandler and Kapelner (2013), workers were asked to label tumor cells. Some workers were told the purpose of their task was to identify tumor cells, while other workers were not told anything about the purpose of their work. When the task was framed in terms of meaning, workers were more likely to participate and, when participating, labeled more images.

Another study (Ariely, Kamenica, and Prelec 2008) manipulated the meaningfulness of a task— assembling a Lego structure—by varying whether the assembled structure was dismantled immediately after completion, or whether it was kept intact. When the structure was dismantled, people asked for a 40 percent higher wage to do the assembly task compared to when the structure was not dismantled.

Social capital and trust. Social capital in the workplace matters in well-being. Helliwell and Huang (2011) found that adding one point on a 10-point scale of trust in management adds to well-being as much as a one-third increase in household income.

Social capital, however, seems to be more important for women than men. Fortin (2008) and Helliwell and Huang (2009) found that women attach more value to trust in management and less to income than men.

Bosses also matter in well-being. Artz, Goodall, and Oswald (2017) found that workers' well-being increases when their bosses gain competence, and diminishes when their bosses lose competence.

Having a job enhances well-being, and well-being enhances job market prospects and outcomes.

For most workers, weekends and holidays are significantly happier than weekdays. Yet weekend effects are very small among workers who think of their immediate superior as a partner rather than a boss, and who report a high level of workplace trust. And the weekend effects fall to zero among people whose number of social hours on weekends equals that of weekdays (Helliwell and Wang 2014, 2015).

The Domain of Health, Both Physical and Mental

Our health, both physical and mental, is an ingredient in our well-being, and so is the health of our family. Health enhances well-being by the utilitarian benefits of earnings from work unimpeded by illness or disability, and by savings on medical costs. Health also increases well-being by expressive and emotional benefits—expressing ourselves as active rather than confined to a wheelchair or bed—and the emotional benefits of capacity for physical activity and freedom from pain.

The domain of health is closely related to the domain of finances.

Well-Being Comes from Utilitarian, Expressive, and Emotional Benefits

Utilitarian Benefits

These benefits answer the question: What does it do for me and my pocketbook?
Examples: The utilitarian benefits of watches include time-telling; the utilitarian benefits of restaurants include nutritious calories; and the utilitarian benefits of investments are mostly wealth.

Expressive Benefits

These benefits answer the question: What does it say about me to others and to me? (conveying to us and others our values, tastes, and status)
Examples: Luxury watches express prestige; the best tables at Michelin-star restaurants express high social status; and socially responsible mutual funds express virtue.

Emotional Benefits

These benefits answer the question: How does it make me feel?
Examples: Luxury watches make us feel proud; the best tables at Michelin-star restaurants make us feel special; insurance policies make us feel safe; and lottery tickets and speculative investments give us hope.

The moral of the grasshopper and ant story, as usually told, is that people should deprive themselves of well-being when young, saving rather than spending, to assure themselves of well-being when old. Yet savers enjoy expressive and emotional benefits even when young, proud to express themselves as financially independent with funds for emergencies such as car repairs, and short-term goals such as a down payment on a house, not only funds when retired.

—*Meir Statman, Ph.D.*

Retired people and those nearing retirement keep close watch on their income and investments, concerned that health care expenses—especially nursing home expenses—will leave them destitute. Bill, the 52-year-old man with more than $500,000 in investable assets, said: "I think our biggest financial worry is that the cost of our health care grows beyond our budget. We have a number of different things that are going very well, but our health care costs are going at a pace that we are very concerned about. I have talked to my [financial] adviser about the health care issues. He did not have a solution for health care other than to include the projections for increased costs into our long-term plan."

The domain of health is also closely related to the domains of work and family, as most health insurance for workers and their families is provided through work.

Financial health facilitates physical and mental health. Jean, a 31-year-old woman with investable assets in the $50,000 to $100,000 range, said: "Health and financial well-being are definitely linked. When I'm stressed about money, it impacts how I feel mentally and probably physically, too. When I am feeling good about my financial situation, I can afford to do things like eat organic or take a fancy gym class."

People enjoying high well-being benefit from high perceived health, low self-reported pain, and low medical risks (Boehm 2018). Nuns who expressed more positive emotions early in life, reflected in autobiographies they had written in their 20s, lived longer than those who expressed fewer positive emotions (Danner, Snowdon, and Friesen 2001).

High well-being is associated with more frequent exercise; healthier diets comprised of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; reduced likelihood of cigarette smoking; higher-quality sleep; and more preventive health care visits (Conner, Brookie, Carr, Mainvil, and Vissers 2017).

Some studies found that high well-being is associated with good health outcomes, including longer life span (Cross, Hofschneider, Grimm, and Pressman 2018). Other studies, however, found no such association; for example, Cassileth, Walsh, and Lusk (1988) and Lillberg et al. (2002) found no relation between well-being and cancer survival rate or recovery from physical disability.

Life purpose. Life purpose, the ability to find life meaningful, is an important part of well-being. The BlackRock survey revealed that people who agree with the statement: "My life has a clear sense of purpose," also enjoyed high well-being. A stronger sense of life purpose was found to be associated with better physiological function and physical health, including better glucose control, lower cholesterol, fewer disabilities, and increased longevity (Kim, Sun, Park, Kubzansky, and Peterson 2013).

Optimism. The BlackRock survey also revealed that optimism is associated with well-being. People enjoying high well-being also tended to agree with the statement: "I am optimistic about my future." Studies show that optimistic people recover faster from cardiovascular surgery and have better disease prognosis (Rasmussen, Scheier, and Greenhouse 2009).

Other studies show benefits of optimism for chronic pain patients, and patients with diabetes and carotid atherosclerosis (Costello et al. 2002).

Yet the power of optimism is limited. No study has found that optimism aids in cancer remission.

Mental illness. Mental illness can devastate well-being. Occasional sadness after a door closes leads us to pause, contemplate, and find open doors—perhaps leading to better destinations. Yet persistent sadness can descend into major depression, devastating well-being as people shut down (Goodman, Doorley, and Kashdan 2018).

Wealth is only a way station to well-being.

Indeed, physical activity protects against the mental illness of depression (Schuch 2018). Katie, a 28-year-old woman with less than $50,000 in investable assets, said: "I stay active, get outside as much as possible, and hang around people who have a positive influence on me in order to maintain well-being in my life. I exercise regularly and eat healthy and this, in turn, makes me feel better about myself."

And Helen, a 56-year-old woman with more than $500,000 in investable assets, said: "As I'm getting older, I'm finding that mental stress has a bigger impact on my physical health. Stress creeps in slowly sometimes, and I have to make a conscious effort to pinpoint and combat it. Likewise, my store of physical energy affects how well I handle stress. I try to allow myself enough rest to face the challenges to my well-being."

Conclusion

Recall that wealth is only a way station to well-being, where wants are satisfied by the full range of utilitarian, expressive, and emotional benefits. Wants vary from person to person, and so do benefits, costs, and trade-offs. Financial advisers do well when they serve as well-being advisers, enhancing clients' well-being in all its domains. Well-being advisers listen carefully and probe gently for wants that clients are embarrassed to admit. And they help clients trade off and balance those wants. ■

Endnote

1. See "Why World Leaders Must Track Gross National Well-Being," by Jim Clifton. Posted Jan. 15, 2013 by Gallup. Available at news.gallup.com/businessjournal/159599/why-world-leaders-track-gross-national-wellbeing.aspx.

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