

# WELCOA's News & Views

How To Influence Lasting Lifestyle Change:

## The Benefits of Wellness Coaching



**Part Two** Of An Interview With **Dr. Michael Arloski**  
On The **Art & Science Of Coaching**

For more interviews, visit  
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## ABOUT MICHAEL ARLOSKI, PhD, PCC, CWP



**Dr. Michael Arloski** is CEO of Real Balance Global Wellness Services ([www.realbalance.com](http://www.realbalance.com)) and dean of the Wellness Coach Training Institute. He is a licensed psychologist and professional certified coach with over 30 years of professional contribution to the field of wellness. Thousands of wellness and health coaches worldwide have been trained by his company's program, which is recognized and approved by The International Coaching Federation, The American College of Sports Medicine, The American Holistic Nurses Association and The National Commission for Health Education Credentialing.

Dr. Arloski is the author of *Wellness Coaching For Lasting Lifestyle Change*, a foundational book of the wellness coaching field used by many universities and training schools. Michael is an Adjunct Professor in Integrative Health Studies at The California Institute for Integral Studies, and is a member of the National Wellness Institute Service. He is a founding member of the leadership team of the National Consortium for Credentialing Health & Wellness Coaches.

# WELCOA's News Views

An Expert Interview with  
**Michael Arloski**

## ABOUT DAVID HUNNICUTT



Since his arrival at WELCOA in 1995, David Hunnicutt has interviewed hundreds of the most influential business and health leaders in America. Known for his ability to make complex issues easier to understand, David has a proven track record of asking the right questions and getting straight answers. As a result of his efforts, David's expert interviews have been widely-published and read by workplace wellness practitioners across the country.

David Hunnicutt can be reached at [dhunnicutt@welcoa.org](mailto:dhunnicutt@welcoa.org).



**W**hen implemented as part of a workplace wellness program, health coaching can make a huge impact on employee lifestyle change. Unfortunately, despite its popularity, far too many companies don't realize how to fully harness the power of coaching. WELCOA president, Dr. David Hunnicutt, recently sat down with professional wellness coach and CEO, Dr. Michael Arloski, to talk about the benefits that wellness coaching can bring to existing workplace health initiatives.

In part two of this WELCOA Expert Interview, Dr. Arloski discusses the practical side of coaching—from the training process for wellness coaches to criteria organizations can use when selecting a coaching firm. When it comes to implementing a coaching program, Dr. Arloski shares the lessons he's learned in 30 years of pioneering the field and provides some major takeaways for practitioners. In the pages that follow, you'll read Dr. Arloski's advice about wellness coaching, including how coaching can help those with chronic conditions as well as keeping healthy employees healthy.



**Dr. David Hunnicutt: How can companies go about selecting a coaching firm for their organization or employees? What criteria should they use?**

**Michael Arloski:** There are several ways we see companies approach providing a wellness coaching service to their employees. Some companies create an internal coaching service and either hire an onsite coach or train the people that are already on staff as coaches. They often designate a staff person (who often has other obligations) and give them the task of being the wellness coach and setting up the wellness program for their employees. When a company keeps the program internal, it is important that the people given the responsibility of wellness coaching are specifically trained in wellness coaching and to know how to work in small groups or one-on-one with people—and be given the time to do the work.



### Wellness Coaches Are Allies For Behavior Change

Wellness coaching is a way of working with a person, as an ally, to help them take stock of their wellness and see a vision for change, then helping them to implement a real plan to successfully make the changes last.

For more information on Dr. Michael Arloski's coaching methodologies or coach training opportunities, visit Real Balance Global Wellness Services at:

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Other companies select a coach training organization to train all staff involved with the wellness program or patient care. When a company chooses this path it is important to select a training program that has been approved for either full Accredited Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH) by the ICF (International Coaching Federation), or approved for continuing education credit by major professional organizations such as the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the National Commission for Health Education (NCHEC) which certifies Health Educators (CHES), The American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA) and/or the ICF.

The other way we see companies providing wellness coaching services for their employees is to contract with an organization that delivers coaching services, such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a disease management company, or a new emerging wellness and health coaching company. We are seeing many EAP and disease management companies that are well-staffed with professionals becoming more coach-like in the way that they deliver services. Insurance companies, EAPs, and disease management companies are doing their best to integrate coaching into their service delivery so that they can be more effective at behavioral change as well as medical compliance.

### DH: What do you think of telephonic or distance coaching?

**MA:** In general, I would tell a wellness leader to look for a company that invests in the personal interaction and does not follow scripts, or what I call “robo-coaching.” Everything we know from the study of psychotherapy and coaching says that relationships are the critical factors for success. Coaching is about having an ally. It’s about having a real alliance with someone who will hold you accountable and talk to you on a continual basis. Aps and software can support the coaching alliance, but it cannot replace it. Go with a company that assigns one coach to an individual client. Get the details—ask how many sessions the coach will have with the client and how long the sessions are. Get a sense of the process or method of coaching being used. Stay away from the companies that promise slick, brief, and computer-based delivery of services.



**DH: Can anyone become a coach?**

**MA:** Certain personality types tend to make better coaches and they are often the people drawn to the profession. A person who wants to help and support others, is interested in empowering their clients, and is willing to gain the education and skill level needed can become a good coach. Some of these people will have health and wellness backgrounds and others will not. When a coach relies on the coaching process and leaves the medical treatment to the medical experts, a medical background is not needed. In fact, there are some companies who prefer people that do not have a medical background. They find that those folks rely more on the coaching process and less on their expertise. People with medical backgrounds need to learn how integrate their dual role in such a way that it is clear to the client when they are in the coach role and when they are in the medical expert role.

I think the key is the nature of the training that the person doing the coaching receives. There is a wide disparity in the quality of the training programs offered. I am a real proponent that coaching is an interpersonal skill and an interpersonal process, therefore, it needs to be taught in a fully interactive way. In other words, it is not something you can study online by yourself. I really believe that is an inadequate way to learn the process of coaching, much less wellness coaching.

There is an art and science to health promotion and behavior change that must be integrated into the wellness coach training program. Companies should look for coaches who have been well trained in wellness coaching, not just life coaching, by a reputable company or school. Individuals who would like to become wellness coaches also need to gain their wellness coach education and certification from a reputable program.

“A person who wants to help and support others, is interested in empowering their clients, and is willing to gain the education and skill level needed can become a good coach.”

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### DH: How does someone go about becoming a wellness coach?

**MA:** Do your research. It has really been gratifying to see the field grow. Someone looking to become a health and wellness coach needs to seek a program that is high quality—one that is based on real behavioral change methodology and is delivered in a fully interactive way. Find a program that is focused on wellness coaching and ask for the course content outline. Also ask if the program has accreditation or approval by other organizations.

There currently seem to be 2 paths to becoming a wellness coach:

**Wellness Coach Training:** A person with a wellness, health, or coaching related background adds an industry standard Wellness Coach Certification to their existing knowledge base and skills. These are programs—like our “Wellness & Health Certification” program—that provide wellness coaching skills and methodology to people who are creating a niche in wellness coaching, or for wellness and healthcare professionals who are adding wellness and health coaching to their services. Most of the programs are 20 to 60 hours in length. You want to make sure that any program you choose is interactive—online or via cd does not work for wellness coaching. This is the industry standard certification that most companies (providers of wellness and health coaching services) are asking wellness coaches to gain.

**Wellness Coach Education or the Integrated Medicine Approach:** These are longer programs and cost a great deal more. This type of program is generally 1-2 years in length, focuses on all aspects of integrated medicine, and includes wellness coaching in its content. Duke University, University of Minnesota or the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) have solid programs. I am an adjunct professor with CIIS.

The National Consortium for Credentialing Health and Wellness Coaches ([www.nccwhc.org](http://www.nccwhc.org)) is in the process of creating a national standard and credentialing for coaches. In the meantime, look at programs that have had their program approved for continuing education by outside organizations as I mentioned before. Through this process, curriculum and processes are examined rigorously and it is often a marker of high quality standards.

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**DH:** When it comes to coaching others, can you share any major lessons that you have learned along the way?

**MA:** The first thing that comes to mind is: “trust the coaching process.” Many times, we coaches draw upon all of our education and the countless research and articles we have read. There is danger in thinking and believing you know what’s best for your client. If we don’t stick with the coaching process, we often do not listen well enough and end up guiding people in the wrong direction. One of the things I learned many years ago was when I paused for a moment and waited silently, the client would start talking. And the client’s direction was entirely different than the wonderful idea that I had been formulating in my mind, but it was the best direction for them to go.

Rather than thinking that we know it all or that we have all the answers, it comes back to that old coaching expression: “the coach has the questions and the client has the answers.” That is the cornerstone of coaching and is really the second major lesson for me. You must ultimately trust your client. We hold our clients to be naturally creative, resourceful and whole. We believe that when given support the client can find the answers within themselves. And coaches need to trust that.

“...It comes back to that old coaching expression: “the coach has the questions and the client has the answers.” That is the cornerstone of coaching...You must ultimately trust your client.”

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### **WELCOA Offers Premier Webinars**

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**DH:** If there is one piece of advice you could give wellness practitioners and HR executives about coaching, what would it be?

**MA:** For Wellness Practitioners—Wellness coaching is a modality that integrates well with other practices. A good wellness coach can integrate into an existing wellness program. Rather than attempting to be experts in all areas, good wellness coaches focus on being behavioral change experts. Trust the process, focus on being a behavioral change expert, and invest in your professional and personal growth as a coach.

**For HR Executives**—Know that wellness coaching programs are growing because they work! Contracts are being renewed because wellness coaching saves organizations money. Also be very selective about whom you have do your coaching. Make sure the program is well thought out, has employee buy-in (understanding), and that the wellness coaches are well trained. Nothing is static. Continue to evolve and evaluate your wellness coaching program. Continue to invest in training your wellness coaches. Set up the wellness environment and coach approach from the top down!

“Know that wellness coaching programs are growing because they work! Contracts are being renewed because wellness coaching saves organizations money.”



**DH: How can wellness coaches and behavior change help people with multiple health risks, including chronic health conditions?**

**MA:** One of the things we see currently in the wellness field is that it's not just about prevention anymore. We used to think that wellness was mostly about that, and that treatment got people well enough to take their lives forward. However, we started to realize that the person who already has a health challenge needs lifestyle improvement as much as anybody. In fact, the entire field of lifestyle medicine has emerged with astonishing proof and evidence that our lifestyles tremendously affect the course of an illness. Wellness coaches can help a person make the behavioral changes needed to impact the risk factors for ill health. All health challenges and diseases have a lifestyle component and a wellness coach helps the client fulfill the lifestyle prescription written by the medical practitioner.

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Think of a middle-aged person with diabetes who does or does not make behavioral change. We see a tremendous effect on their health, one way or the other. What usually happens is that coaches receive client referrals based on health risks and/or chronic illness. Quite often, those people are identified in an employee population and they are invited to come to wellness coaching. The majority of people that a health and wellness coach works with already have high blood pressure—they already have heart disease or diabetes, COPD, or some health risk or challenge.



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# Notable & Quotable

from Michael Arloski

## On The Importance Of Building Relationships...

Everything we know from the study of psychotherapy and coaching says that relationships are the critical factors for success. Coaching is about having an ally. It's about having a real alliance with someone who will hold you accountable and talk to you on a continual basis. Aps and software can support the coaching alliance, but it cannot replace it. **PAGE 4**

## On Wellness Coach Training...

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## On Implementing A Worksite Coaching Program...

Be very selective about whom you have do your coaching. Make sure the program is well thought out, has employee buy-in (understanding), and that the wellness coaches are well trained. Nothing is static. Continue to evolve and evaluate your wellness coaching program. Continue to invest in training your wellness coaches. **PAGE 8**

## On The Benefits Of Coaching For Those With Chronic Conditions...

A good health and wellness coach can work with individuals who are experiencing health challenges and become part of their treatment team, even though the coach is not delivering treatment. Wellness coaches empower their clients to follow the lifestyle prescription their physicians and health care team wants them to follow. Wellness coaches can really help their clients make lasting lifestyle behavioral change—have better health outcomes and greater quality of life. **PAGE 11**

A good health and wellness coach can work with individuals who are experiencing health challenges and become part of their treatment team, even though the coach is not delivering treatment. Wellness coaches empower their clients to follow the lifestyle prescription their physicians and health care team wants them to follow. Wellness coaches can really help their clients make lasting lifestyle behavioral change—to have better health outcomes and greater quality of life.

### DH: On the flip side, can companies use coaching programs to keep their healthy employees healthy?

**MA:** Yes. For businesses, there is an economic necessity for keeping healthy people healthy. If we do not keep the people who are healthy - healthy, they will inevitably become part of the ever-increasing high health risk population that is so costly, just like our colleague Dee Edington loves to tell us. High-risk employees cost the entire system a lot of money and they experience so much suffering. So, wellness coaching can help keep the healthy people on track. If the average American gains over two pounds a year, it's our job to help them prevent that weight gain by helping them create a wellness plan for staying healthy. We need to set up environments that support wellness and wellness coaching to the level of client/employee need. Together we can keep healthy people healthy, and help those who are not healthy gain back as much of their health as is possible.

“...Wellness coaching can help keep the healthy people on track...Together we can keep healthy people healthy, and help those who are not healthy gain back as much of their health as is possible.”

One example; the American Diabetes Association says if someone can be identified as being pre-diabetic, 70 percent of the time they can completely avoid the onset of full-blown diabetes if they can be successful at lifestyle improvement. That is a gigantic nod to the power of behavior change. So, there is an amazing opportunity for health and wellness coaching in a low-risk population as well. 



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### JANUARY

**Title:** *An Examination Of The Health Habits Of Americans: What's Going On With Us? Do We Really Know How To Live Healthier?*

**Registration:** This webinar is now closed.



### APRIL

**Title:** *10 Simple Solutions to Stress: How to Help Your Employees Tame Their Stress in the Workplace*

**Date:** Thursday, April 12, 2012  
**Time:** 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM Central Time

**Registration:** This webinar is now closed.



### OCTOBER

**Title:** *Fitness That Works: Simple Moves To Make Exercise Happen Between 9 And 5*

**Date:** Thursday, October 25  
**Time:** 9:30 - 11:00 AM Central Time

### FEBRUARY

**Title:** *Creating A Culture of Health: Breakthrough Strategies To Change The Way Your Organization Does Business*

**Date:** Thursday, February 23, 2012  
**Time:** 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM Central Time

**Registration:** This webinar is now closed.



### JUNE

**Title:** *Bonus Webinar: EconoHealth ROI: A Revolutionary Way To Calculate ROI and Establish Strategic Priorities For Your Organization's Wellness Initiative*

**Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2012  
**Time:** 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM Central Time

**Registration:** This webinar is now closed.



### NOVEMBER

**Title:** *Evaluating Health And Wellness Programs: A Practical Approach To Determining The Impact Of Your Programming Efforts*

**Date:** Thursday, November 29  
**Time:** 9:30 - 11:00 AM Central Time

### MARCH

**Title:** *Bonus Webinar: Introducing SWELL: Harnessing Social Media To Improve Your Health and Wellness Programs*

**Date:** Thursday, March 15, 2012  
**Time:** 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM Central Time

**Registration:** This webinar is now closed.



### JULY

**Title:** *The Anatomy Of A Business Plan: A Step-By-Step Guide To Developing A Great Business Operating Plan That Will Improve Employee Productivity and*

**Date:** Thursday, July 12, 2012  
**Time:** 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM Central Time

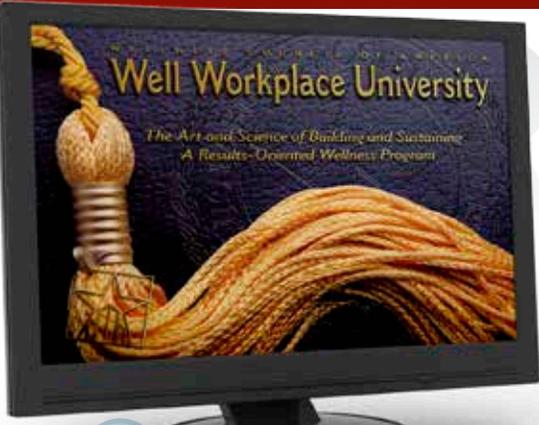
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“WELCOA offers valuable information that is greatly appreciated.”

“...it is comforting to know that... WELCOA exists, and that they are pushing us in the right direction.”

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### JANUARY

**Title:** Well Workplace University—Building A Results-Oriented Workplace

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### AUGUST

**Title:** Well Workplace University—How To Effectively Utilize Health Coaching To Improve Employee Health

**Dates:** Wednesdays 8/15, 8/22, 8/29, 9/5  
**Time:** 9:30 - 11:00 AM Central Time



### OCTOBER

**Title:** Well Workplace University—How To Demonstrate A Return-On-Investment

**Dates:** Wednesdays 10/10, 10/17, 10/24, 10/31  
**Time:** 9:30 - 11:00 AM Central Time

### MARCH

**Title:** Well Workplace University—Linking Wellness Initiatives To Employee Retention: The Missing Link In Creating A Successful Wellness Program

**Dates:** Wednesdays 3/15, 3/22, 3/29  
**Time:** 9:30 - 11:00 AM Central Time

**Registration for this webinar is now closed.**



### MAY

**Title:** Well Workplace University—The Art And Science Of Changing Unhealthy Behaviors

**Dates:** Wednesdays 5/15, 5/22, 5/29  
**Time:** 9:30 - 11:00 AM Central Time

**Registration for this webinar is now closed.**





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