



# THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

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## **What are the most significant global issues facing us today?**

Planetary well-being: Whether we cause global warming or not, the planet has limited resources and we cannot continue to produce tons and tons of non-biodegradable plastics and other pollutants and not expect this to catch up with us.

(see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201108/positive-psychology-and-climate-change.html>)

Population and urbanization: The population is growing and getting wealthier and more urban. The wealthy West has modeled a way of living that does not take into account our planet or future generations, and now, other large nations that have been aspiring to live that same kind of lifestyle are gaining access to it.

Food: Both the above issues have massive ramifications for how we produce and consume our food. How we feed the urban masses in an ethical and sustainable way will be a major topic for debate in the decades to come.

Questioning capitalism: The messy relationship between money, politics and well-being is finally in the international spotlight. Governments and citizens alike are questioning how society can produce a better life, not just a better mousetrap.

(see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201202/economy-goes-down-health-goes-up.html>)

War and peace: With the increased accessibility of massively destructive technologies, we will have to find better ways to resolve our differences.

## **What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world, those which are game changing and/or disruptive?**

Cloud computing: Soon all data will live in the “cloud,” eliminating a need for memory space on devices and further shrinking technology.

Haptics and GPS: The combination of touch (as in touch-screen) technology and motion or location sensors opens up infinite possibilities to integrate new technologies into different areas of our lives (e.g. “smart” clothing, “smart” refrigerators, etc.)

(see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201104/haptics-the-new-science-of-touch.html>)

Micro-finance: New ways of delivering capital to the bottom of the economic pyramid are rapidly growing the economies of third-world markets.

Information revolution: The cost of information and education via the internet has been dropping substantially. People are learning more and faster than ever before and the value of a conventional education is plummeting rapidly. I predict an education revolution in the next decade.

## **What do you see as the main innovations in the spa/wellness industry (existing and future)?**

Personal biological monitoring: People are using technology to measure and track health statistics more than ever before (see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201105/personal-biological-monitoring-the-future-of-health-diagnostics.html>).

Nanotechnology: micro-technology will allow new technologies that can enter the body and perform reparative or preventative interventions.

Positive psychology: This new branch of the science acknowledges the importance of creating greater health, flourishing and well-being rather than the prevalent disease-/illness-management model.

(see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201009/why-psychology.html>).

Personalization and integration: Software advances allow spas and other wellness businesses to learn more about their customers, to personalize our services more and integrate them better into their life outside the spa.

Social and gaming wellness: Increasingly there are ways for people to join communities with similar wellness goals for mutual support, collaboration and peer pressure. This brings new ways to make wellness fun.

Mindfulness: There is a growing body of scientific literature showing the value of mindfulness practices. I predict mindfulness will be the next big health trend.

### **What do you see as the greatest opportunities/challenges for the global spa and wellness industry?**

The greatest challenge is to establish credibility and take a leadership role in the world's inevitable move towards a more holistic health model. Currently the spa industry is not taken seriously by most health institutions and the spa world does not get the credit it deserves for a growing trend towards "spaification" of a variety of health offerings.

The greatest opportunity is for spas to play to their strengths as leaders in holistic and preventative healing offerings (see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201105/spas-could-lead-the-way-in-the-art-and-science-of-healing.html>).

### **What are some practical ways for businesses to create a climate for creativity and innovation?**

Be dictatorial. Collaboration gets ideas that are safe. Innovation often comes from one person who has the power, authority or the leadership skills to drive others to bring their bold vision to reality. If it was an idea that everyone agreed with, everyone would be doing it already, so new ideas often come from someone who is strong enough to bring their ideas to fruition in the face of opposition from the crowd (see <http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201012/where-does-radical-game-changing-innovation-come-from.html>).

Fail faster. One of the hardest things to do in business is create a culture where associates feel safe to experiment and make mistakes. Leaders can foster a culture of creativity by creating a safe space for low-stakes failures to occur.

Take breaks. I get a lot of good ideas when I'm lying on a massage table. People need down-time for their brains to function at their best. To encourage creativity, create space in the day for intermittent breaks for rest and/or play.

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