

I feel good!



In a world that can wear you down, find out how to increase your happiness, wellbeing and inner reserves.

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For coaching, training and copies of this book, go to

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I feel good!

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I feel good!

it's wonderful that you've joined the I feel good! program!

I imagine what you want from the program is pretty simple. You want to feel happy and good in yourself, and you want to bring your best to your life and work so you can live life well, get better outcomes, and achieve what's important to you, without running yourself into the ground.

The I feel good! program gives you knowledge and life skills about building wellbeing.

You see, our society is not very good at teaching us how to build the type of wellbeing that will make a positive difference in our life. The type of wellbeing that builds the capacity to meet the challenging nature of what we face.

And the pressures we face seem to be getting more intense. Our lives are busier, and the demands seem greater.

We know that we need to look after ourselves in order to operate well, and to protect ourselves against the pressures we face. And so you'll find in the press, magazines, TV, and in books, lots of information about the 'The top 10 tips for beating stress', or 'How to live a happy life'.

Unfortunately, as good as a lot of this information is, it rarely makes a real difference. At best it gives us a list of things we know we should do, putting even extra pressure on us. If we lack the understanding of how wellbeing really works, the great advice doesn't make it into our life.

The end result is that in our western society we often undersell ourselves when it comes to wellbeing. We don't really scratch the surface in terms of just how powerful a skill it is to have when you know how to build wellbeing.







Whether you are going from struggling to ok, ok to good, good to great, or great to flourishing, understanding the principles behind stress and wellbeing makes all the difference. It provides a strong foundation for real improvements, makes your efforts much more effective, and you see much greater benefits than you had previously imagined possible.

How The **I feel good!** program works

Rather than change you, this program aims to **grow** you, so that you have more at your disposal to meet the challenges and to flourish.

The program provides 6 key lessons that develop and build your wellbeing.

To get the most out of this program.....

-  **Start small, start with where you are at.** It's more important to accept where you are at and work from there, than trying to have wellbeing. This isn't a competition or something where you are trying to get over an imaginary line in your life that either you or others have set for you. It's about being real with how things are now, and from there learning and growing one step at a time.
-  **Don't be discouraged if you can't feel something positive.** Wellbeing is like a muscle and gets stronger over time as you learn how to foster it. Accept where you are at.
-  **Think about things** in this program, delve into them and apply them to you
-  **Write down your responses to the activities.** It provides a further level of clarity. Don't try to have a 'right' response or feel disappointed that something is not good enough. Just be gentle on yourself and notice whatever comes up from a place of kindness.
-  **Do the program with a partner** - If it feels ok, and you can find the right person,. It means that you can talk about what you're discovering along the way, and how it applies to you. Make sure it is someone who is supportive, encouraging and believes in you.
-  **Keep a journal of your experiences**

And along the way, if you get stuck or would like to ask a question, then email me at peter@heartandsoulcoaching.com.au

Let's Get Started!!

Lesson 1 - Getting clear



“There must be more than this! I’m emotionally worn out, doing so much just to survive, and at best wellbeing in life is just something to fit around the constant grind of survival. Getting through is what it’s about, and if I’m ‘happy enough’ that’s a bonus.....”

Wellbeing – that underlying sense of feeling good - can seem so elusive, and flourishing can seem like a myth. It can seem so far away when the worries and things on your mind seem bigger than the joys, when you are constantly under pressure, or when you are tired and worn out.

And it doesn’t have to be the ‘in your face’ type of problems. Sometimes it’s just a quiet drift and all of a sudden you wake up and realize that life doesn’t hold much ‘life’ anymore and you don’t know how to get it back.

So we look for something to fill the gap, to take away the emptiness or pain, and to give some emotional relief. We do things like shop, watch too much TV, sleep too much or stay up too late, escape into books, drink too much, eat too much and of the wrong sort of food..... and somewhere inside we know when we are doing these things because we are covering up a greater need. What we want is to have wellbeing and sense of feeling both connected to and good in ourselves.

Finding wellbeing doesn’t have to be luck, out of our control, or some hard to achieve mysterious process. With a bit of knowledge and knowing where to put your efforts it’s something we can learn.

Whether you are struggling, if you want more from life, or if you want to be at your best, wellbeing can help.

The first step is to get clear on where you’re at and what you’re looking for....

So which of these fits you?

- **You want your experience of life to be better,**
you want to enjoy life more, to feel more positively connected to your life so that you feel nourished and resourced and your life is richer and fuller. You want to live and work in more sustainable ways. You want to know the experience of positive feelings welling up inside, and trust that this can happen regularly.
- **You want more stability and solidity.**
You want to be more centred, more at ease in yourself, and know that even when things might be tough, that underneath it all you are ok.
- **You want to be at your best.**
Getting by is not enough. You're not happy with OK. You want to flourish, not just in your life, but in what you do, your work or business. You want to be at your best so you can reach something or achieve something, and you want to feel the satisfaction that comes from living and performing at your best.

Take a moment

Imagine a scale with 'struggling' at one end and flourishing at the other.

Struggling |—————| Flourishing

Where would you put yourself? Imagine your best life in 6 months time and in 5 years time? What would you like to be different – What do you want more of, what would you like less of? How would like to be in yourself? What sort of qualities would you have?

What motivates you to improve your wellbeing? Just put down what it is whether it is small or indecisive, big or strong?

Keep this list going as you work through this program.

Understanding Wellbeing

Let's take a closer look at what wellbeing is. Very simply

It's when you feel good. You feel enriched and nourished, and there's joy, happiness and peace in your life. You're positively engaged with life and have a love of life.

You are positively connected. Connected to yourself, your heart and soul. You know how to care for yourself and respond to yourself in ways that meet your needs in life sustaining and enhancing ways. You are connected with others. You are connected to your environment, nature, and with God or a sense of 'something greater'.

You have meaning and purpose. There is an appreciation that you are part of something bigger and that there is value and purpose in what you do and how you live your life.

You do things you enjoy. You have activities that you do for pleasure. You might get lost and absorbed in them. You look forward to the time you'll do them next.

You are achieving things. You do things that give you a sense of accomplishment and achievement. You are able to make a difference in the things you put your energy into.

You are resilient You have the capacity to work through difficult times

When your wellbeing
is high you
Flourish
in life

You will have learnt a lot about wellbeing already in your life and what you have learnt is important.

Take a moment...

What have you learnt about wellbeing and its value in life? What's been unhelpful, what's been helpful? What has stood the test of time? What things do you believe, but don't practice as much as you would like to in your life? What does the way you live your life, the way you think, act and feel, say about what you believe about wellbeing?

What things in your life would you like to hold on to, what would you teach someone else, someone you love, a friend or your children about what brings happiness and wellbeing in life.

Here's 7 important things to know about wellbeing

1 Wellbeing can be built.

It's not just luck. True, some people are born with more natural amounts of wellbeing and happiness, but you can improve your wellbeing, you can learn how to flourish in yourself and in life.

To build wellbeing you need to understand

- what wellbeing is
- The valuable role it plays in your life
- how it is built

And you need to put the things that build wellbeing into practice.

I'm all for life changing events that improve your wellbeing. Yet it's good to know that strong and lasting wellbeing is built and maintained more by the accumulation of small everyday things that are easy to incorporate into your life. And the more you grow wellbeing the better you get at growing it, leading to an upward spiral in your life.

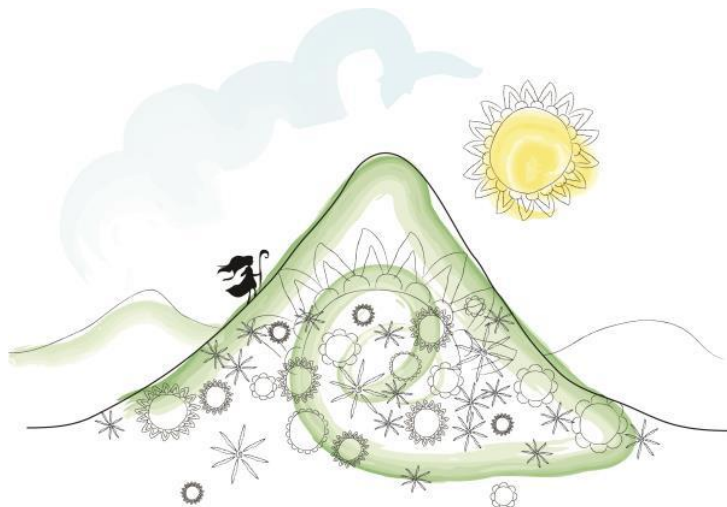


Well-being can be built

2 Life will always have its ups and downs

No matter how high your wellbeing is, it won't stop your life from having ups and downs. You will still encounter tough situations, you will still have frustrations and down periods, and life will still be hard work at times. The image that when you flourish life will be a breeze and you will have a permanent smile on your face is an unhelpful myth.

However, improve your wellbeing and your life will be better. It will mean that you have much more capacity to deal with difficulties, and you will bounce back quicker. Your life will be richer, and



Life will always have it's ups and downs

of course the good times will be much better and more often.

Wellbeing also opens up possibilities that weren't previously available to you. We cover this in greater detail later, but for now, know that there are heaps of positive spin offs for wellbeing, and it's exciting to see them blossom in your life.

3 Chasing happiness doesn't bring wellbeing

Chasing happiness through a consequence of something good happening, for example, buying something nice, getting a pay rise, having your problems go away, winning lotto, doesn't bring long lasting or strong wellbeing.

These things *are* wonderful, but before long you adapt to whatever good thing has happened and find yourself looking for the next thing that will make you happy. Your hunger for what you are really looking for is never really met



It can get particularly unhelpful when what you're really looking for is to escape and cover up some emotional pain, or when you use things like alcohol, drugs, or food to give short term happiness, but they cause more problems down the track.

So, the happiness that comes from outside things is absolutely wonderful to have, and given it's not damaging, should be enjoyed and celebrated. But these things are only part of wellbeing and not the 'main meal' when it comes to building longer term happiness or wellbeing.

Rather than locating wellbeing as stemming from outside things, you can learn how to build and maintain an inner happiness.

The Treadmill that doesn't get you fitter.

Researchers use the term the Hedonistic Treadmill. It refers to when we are constantly seeking good events or outside things to provide happiness, but because the happiness wears off it's not too long before you're back on the treadmill searching for more.

But what if you win lotto? Even this doesn't seem to substantially improve your wellbeing. Check out these sites [New Republic](#) [Forbes Magazine](#)

Take a moment...

what do you hope will bring you happiness? In what ways do you try and find happiness that you know deep inside doesn't meet what you're really looking for?

4 Don't wait for life to change

When the boss leaves, when your partner changes their behaviour, when the economy improves, when you have more money, when you're less busy, These types of changes might ease things in your life, and they might be good, and yes, they can influence your wellbeing. But if your wellbeing depends on them alone they leave your wellbeing at the mercy of these things changing. It's not to deny any of the difficulties you might be facing, it's about giving you greater means to nourish and resource yourself within your current circumstances so you are more able to cope, and are better equipped to respond. You can build wellbeing despite difficult circumstances.



Don't wait for life to change

Take a moment

What do you hope will change for your wellbeing to improve? (remember, it's perfectly ok for you to want these things to change.)

5 Wellbeing isn't expendable

We learn that constantly putting your wellbeing aside is ok, and other things have a much higher priority. We learn that it's ok to drop wellbeing down the priority list, and for other things (and often other people) to come first. We can learn that not only *should* you sacrifice your wellbeing in order to achieve other things, that it's actually necessary....the reality is that these beliefs do us a disservice. You're missing out on an incredible resource.

In reality what tends to happen is that when you sacrifice your wellbeing and push it down the list, you are less likely to achieve the things you're trying to achieve, and are unhappy to boot.



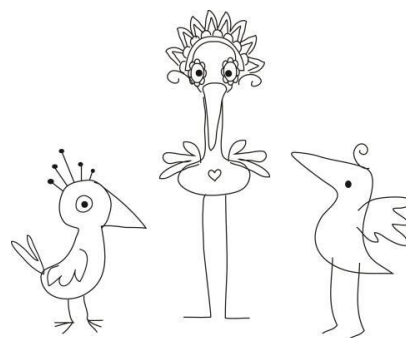
Wellbeing isn't expendable

Take a moment

What value do you put on your wellbeing? When do you put your wellbeing on hold?

6 Wellbeing is personal

We all have our own unique way of experiencing wellbeing. Some people laugh more, some are more serious, some are quieter, some are louder, some are sensitive, some are more bullet proof, we like different things....we are all different and what wellbeing means to you will be unique. Your journey is about finding what brings your heart and soul alive.



Wellbeing is personal

Wellbeing is about becoming more of who you are

Take a moment

What's your picture of wellbeing for you? What is part of your make up now, what is wellbeing you would like to develop?

7 Wellbeing is a hidden treasure



You can never know just what is possible with wellbeing. Your understanding of wellbeing is based on your current frame of reference. Building wellbeing holds delights and surprises as new territory and possibilities are opened up. Some things will be brand new – others will be a much better understanding of something you already know. The building blocks to wellbeing also equip you to flourish in your life and work.

Lesson 1 Activities

Start collecting pictures, and noticing the things that you see as having wellbeing for you.

Draw a picture/put down words that show the wellbeing you would like to have.

What things do you enjoy?

When do you feel positively connected to yourself, others, your environment, nature, God?

When do you feel a sense of achievement or proud of something?

When do you feel a sense of purpose and meaning?

Lesson 2 - How to build wellbeing

So how do you go about building wellbeing?

If you want to build wellbeing, it's important to know what you are trying to build. I find it helpful to think of 4 different sorts of wellbeing.

Inactive/Understood Wellbeing

This is when you identify that you have wellbeing, but you don't actual feel or experience it. For example in some of the research I have done people might say that their wellbeing is high in regards to connection with their family, yet they may not have had particularly felt that in the last couple of weeks.

This can happen for a whole lot of reasons, and it doesn't mean the wellbeing is not there.

It does mean that you're not tapped in to it.

Surface level wellbeing

This is when you feel good on the surface, but it doesn't get any deeper. You register positive experiences, but they don't get in. It's not heartfelt, or it doesn't light up an inner response. The positive experiences are just interludes, but don't nourish and sustain you.

Often that's because we are in the everyday and caught up in what we have to do, or we have a level of stress that inhibits us feeling the wellbeing at a deeper level. It's a bit like how soil can become water resistant in a dry period. Feels good when it's raining, but it runs off the surface and doesn't penetrate and get to the roots.

An example of Surface Level Wellbeing was when I was walking out of the shops one day and there was a magnificent rainbow. A lot of other shoppers saw it but it hardly registered as they were too busy in the shopping experience, hurrying to get home to do everything that needed to be done. Their response was, if anything, a hurried 'that's nice'. The experience stayed on the surface.

Heartfelt Wellbeing.

Heartfelt Wellbeing is when you have a heartfelt sense of feeling good.

Let's take the rainbow example mentioned in the 'surface level wellbeing' section. Whilst some people hardly registered it, others would stop and you could see in their faces their joy and wonderment on seeing the rainbow. A deeper response was activated than the surface level responders. These people had a heartfelt response.

Barbara Fredrickson, a guru on wellbeing, calls these experiences 'heartfelt positive moments'. They're the times when your heart lights up.

Sometimes it will be 'goose bump' strong with your heart singing, other times it will be quiet and gentle, like a breeze.

Underlying Wellbeing.

Underlying wellbeing is a sustained feeling of wellbeing, that's not a response to something that's happened. You don't feel good *because* of something, though you could come up with lots of reasons why you were in a good space if someone asked.... you just feel good in general. it's your base level of being, and not just "I happened to wake up feeling good this morning" by chance.

Underlying Wellbeing like having a spring of pure water flow through your experience of life. You experience things with greater richness. Life is in technicolour rather than in washed out colours, or worse still, greys. You naturally have a positive interest in life, and live life fully. You're not emotionally rigid, but flow through different emotions as life takes its course, all the while holding that underlying sense of wellbeing.

And because you just feel good, and your 'inner well' is full, you bring that capacity and positive sense of feeling good to your life, your relationships, and your work.

So how do you build an underlying sense of wellbeing.....?



Heartfelt wellbeing



*To build wellbeing,
build up positive and enriching
moments in your life*

An underlying sense of wellbeing, where you bring to life a positive outlook, feel good, and have emotional reserves to bring to life, is built by accumulating individual heartfelt positive moments.

You see, each moment is more than an individual experience that comes and goes. What happens is that each time you experience these heartfelt moments you are enriched and nourished. It's food for your heart and soul.

The more experiences you have, the more you are enriched and nourished, building and growing your underlying wellbeing.

It sounds so simple, yet many people's lives lack wellbeing because they are not getting the nourishment they need through positive experiences.

Let's look at some examples of what these positive heartfelt moments look like.

These are ones I've experience recently

Listening to the birds as I write this it's just really nice to hear the birds, and morning is my favourite time of day. This morning there was a nice 'reddy' glow as the dawn shone through mist....beautiful!

Warm in bed – Ever had those times when you are in bed, warm, relaxed and oh so comfortable? Or that feeling at the end of a long day when you're tired and it feels so nice to lie down and rest? Love it!

Wonderment when I go for my walk I see the sun on the mountains, the fresh air – combination of awe and appreciation. It's *really* special when I see a platypus.

Writing – ok, at times it's frustrating and incredibly hard work, but I love writing this program, especially when it starts to take shape and my ideas come to fruition, or when I write a sentence that reads well, and knowing the positive difference it will make to people.

Creativity and music – I listened to one of my favourite pieces of music today and it energized and inspired me. I also appreciated the skill of someone who can sing like that.

A smile – I shared a heart warming smile with a stranger in the super market when negotiating our trolleys past each other.

Remembering these positive moments! – it's so nice!

A friend who was there when I needed them – all I can say is thanks.

It's at the heartfelt level where wellbeing creates the benefits and magic in your life, taking you to greater levels of inner happiness, repairing, nourishing, and resourcing you when you are in a stressed state, and enabling you to be at your best.

Here's some other examples

Having a laugh with someone – you feel happy and energized. You also feel a moment of connection with the other person. (it brings the connection into life, pushes the button)

The warmth of the sun – warms your body and soul

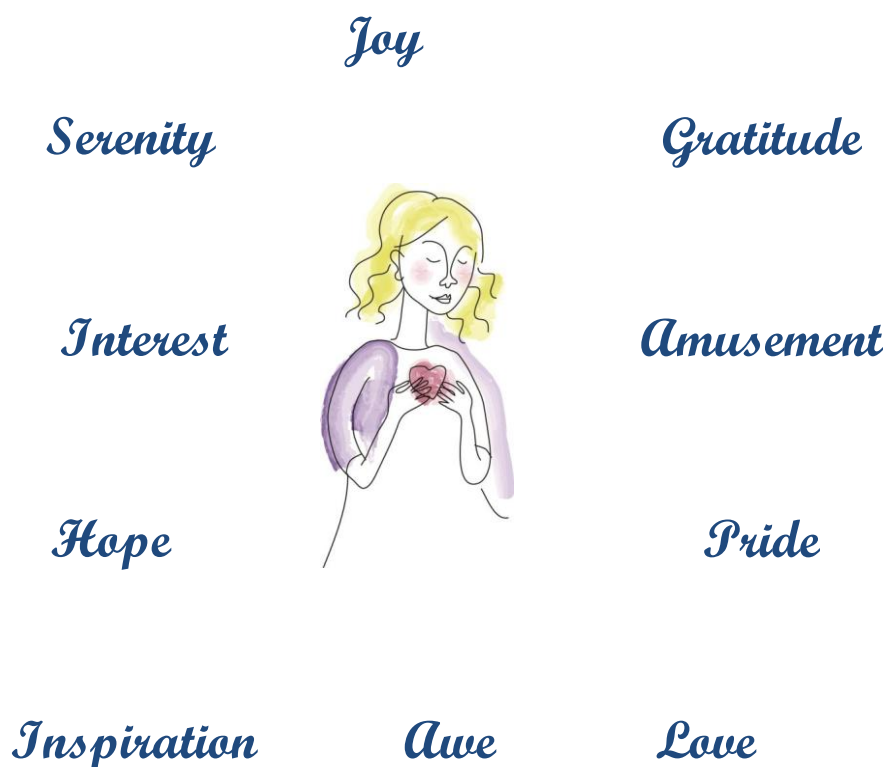
Providing comfort to an upset child - comfort and love, feeling the warmth that comes from the closeness and connection.

And the list could go on and on!

Notice how they vary in size – some are special, some are really small moments in the day. They are all valuable.

Happiness is a wonderful part of wellbeing, but as you can see wellbeing also includes a whole host of other things as well.

Barbara Fredrickson, lists 10 different types of positive experiences. They are



Now it's your turn to have a look at what some heartfelt positive moments are for you. And what's cool is that it's fine to put things down in hindsight, things that you may not have responded to at the time, but looking back you **appreciate now**. The important thing is the heartfelt feeling of appreciation, it doesn't matter what brings it on.

Take a moment.

Think over the last couple of days and make a list of the times that have brought a positive response to your heart. What was the positive responses (it can be more than one)? I've left lots of space so you can keep adding to it over the next couple of days!

If you have trouble remembering the positive times, don't worry, it takes practice. But hey, what a nice thing to do.

Here's some ways you can increase the heartfelt positive moments in your life and in doing so build wellbeing. I've left some space for you to take one of these each day and reflect on it.

You can increase

The number - Notice the ones you might have missed and look for opportunities to have more of them! (now that's the kind of homework I like)

The range – have fun in noticing and experiencing lots of *different types* of positive moments. Use Barbara Fredrickson's list above, but why be limited to this? Find your own words and phrases to describe the moments, and if you don't have the words, take a 'mental and feeling' snapshot of what it's like.

Their intensity – let them in more. Practice noticing the different inner responses and feelings to different heartfelt experiences. You might have to ‘soften’ your state of being to allow them in. Some people imagine it’s like opening inner gateways to the experience. It is a conscious decision, allowing, or inviting this to happen.

Their value/importance – realize the value they have in nourishing and building you. Be appreciative of this. Appreciate their presence no matter how subtle or strong.

Tips on Heartfelt Positive Moments

- *Allow room for Positive Moments. Consciously open the space and opportunities for them to be there.*
- *It can take practice. Like a muscle it builds over time the more you exercise it. And the more you exercise it the easier it comes and greater benefits you get.*



Like a muscle, it builds up over time the more you exercise it.

- *Approach Positive Moments from a place of discovery, rather than trying to achieve something.*
- *Don't force Positive Moments or 'try' to have them.*
- *Be genuine. This isn't about 'faking it until you make it', 'putting on a happy face' or pretending. That's likely to be more damaging than good.*
- *The intensity of the heartfelt response doesn't have to be large or significant, it might be subtle.*
- *Don't 'judge' if you are up to some sort of mark. Hey, it's about finding ways to increase wellbeing, not something to judge yourself on.*
- *It's not about getting rid of things that are uncomfortable or painful, or trying to minimize them. It's not bad or wrong if you don't feel positive at any time. Look kindly on yourself, however you are.*

Lesson 2 Activities

Here's some suggested activities. Choose the one/s which you think will be best for you, or the most enjoyable!

Doing them for 1 week will do you good, 2 weeks is wonderful, 3 is superb. Sometimes it takes longer, but in 3-6 weeks you certainly should start seeing an increase in your underlying level of wellbeing.

Fit

Do things in a way that works for you. Some activities will probably work better for you than others. Feel free to adapt what you do to make it work better for you.

Dosage

Often it is a good idea to spend time each day on your activity, aiming for 5 days in the week. For this to work you need to keep it small and doable. For some people specific exercises work best if they are done once a week, for example many people find that Gratitude and Appreciation exercises are more effective and more sustainable if done once a week as compared to 3 or more times a week.

Having structure and a commitment works for many people, but some people just incorporate it into their day when they think of it. Some people do the 'I'll spend time on this no matter how I feel'; others just play around with it. Some people say they will spend 1 day a week, or 1 week, particularly being mindful of heartfelt nourishing experiences, and for the rest go on as normal. You have to do what works for you, and if it isn't working then look at another approach. No big drama.

For different people wellbeing happens in different ways and different timings. What's important is that on some level make a commitment to yourself. No matter how slow, fast, or up and down the progress, you are following a worthwhile path.

Here's some ideas to help build wellbeing.

- Notice when you feel a sense of wellbeing. Make a note of these times. What do you learn about these times?
- Spend time remembering times when you felt a strong sense of wellbeing, of feeling good in yourself, and when you were 'in the zone', 'in a great space' or at your best. Allow yourself to fully enjoy this.
- Open your heart – this is a great exercise to build your responsiveness to wellbeing. Simply bring to your heart the feelings associated with one type of wellbeing eg, love, appreciation, curiosity, etc. You don't need to think of a particular situation,

just let the general feeling come. This exercise nourishes you, as well as builds your heart's wellbeing muscle so that wellbeing is more readily experienced.

- Draw or create something that represents an experience of wellbeing that you had during the day.
- Bring to heart and mind 3 things that happened recently that you are grateful or appreciative of. Start a Gratitude/Appreciation journal.
- Do something for someone else without expecting something in return.
- Write to someone and thank them for something they have done. Pass on a genuine compliment. Remember, don't fake it. Better to do small, real and sincere, than over the top.
- Be quiet and still for a short period each day. Judge the length depending on what you need. Some days your mind will be cluttered or your emotions going, it's not a problem. Just be still and notice them, sometimes they will quieten down, sometimes they won't, it doesn't really matter. You'll notice the positive benefit during the day.
- Meditate – any sort will do. Loving kindness meditation has been show to be particularly effective for building wellbeing.
- Come up with your own and send them in! I love to share them with others (and of course use them myself ☺)

Take a moment.

Write down how you will approach building wellbeing.

When wellbeing doesn't come easily

Sometimes the pressure, stress, or what you have been taught as you were growing up, can mean that it's difficult to feel nourishing and positive feelings in a heartfelt way. We will talk a bit more about stress later, but in terms of building wellbeing here's five ideas that will help if you're having difficulty experiencing the heartfelt moments.

1. Start small – very small and don't worry about the big feelings or changes. Trust that 'from little things, big things grow'.
2. Bring an attitude of curiosity and experimenting, rather than looking for particular results. If you keep questioning if you are happy or not it has the effect of focussing you on the negatives.
3. Try 'what would it be like if I could feel...(add the appropriate heartfelt response)?'.
4. The 'Open your Heart' exercise is a good one for increasing your responsiveness to heartfelt moments.
5. No matter how you feel, what you think, and what you are doing or not doing, look upon yourself with kindness

Lesson 3 The Benefits of Wellbeing

Wellbeing changes you and your life for the better. When you have wellbeing you are wired differently, giving access to capacities and growth that were previously unavailable to you. In this chapter we cover just how wellbeing benefits you. It is so much more than a nice feeling inside.

Understanding the benefits of wellbeing makes it easier for you to focus your efforts and make the commitment to build wellbeing now, rather than hoping it will come as a result of something you are trying to achieve. And because you know how much good wellbeing brings, it speeds up the positive changes. You are also more likely to maintain your efforts even if you go through a rough patch because you know just how valuable wellbeing is.

7 Benefits of Wellbeing

Here's 7 ways research has shown that wellbeing benefits your life.

1. You feel good, your life is better



It's the reason what many people want wellbeing...they are tired of being worn out, stressed, and feeling that there should be more to life.

With wellbeing you have that inner sense of feeling good inside and you have emotional reserves. You feel more alive, happier, and nourished. Life has much greater richness to it. You are your most loving, most enthusiastic, most vibrant self when your wellbeing is high.

2. Wellbeing counteracts stress levels, builds resilience



People with wellbeing manage stress and difficult times better. They have a much greater range of responses to stress available to them as they aren't as caught up in what's happening and what they're feeling. They stay steadier in themselves and bounce back quicker. They are also more likely to learn from difficult times, emerging with greater capacity.

3. Wellbeing improves your Relationships



Wellbeing improves your relationships

People who have wellbeing have more positive interactions in relationships, tend to stay together longer, and have stronger and happier relationships. They get through the difficulties much better. People who have higher wellbeing, form and maintain relationships better socially, as well as work and business relationships.

4. Wellbeing improves your Health



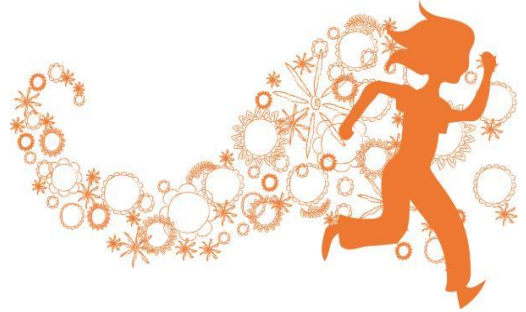
There's heaps of research on this one. Positivity boosts your immune system; you are less likely to get sick and more likely to recover quicker. You're less likely to get a major illness if you are positive. On average those with high wellbeing live up to 10 years longer – say no more! And when your wellbeing is high you feel much younger and have greater energy and vitality.

5. Wellbeing is essential to high performance and success

People with high wellbeing tend to be more successful, engaged, reliable, and perform much better in their work, and are more successful than those with lower wellbeing.

They learn and grow, increasing both their potential and capacity so they have much more to bring to their life and work than those with low wellbeing.

Business teams with high degrees of positivity got much better results in terms of **productivity, efficiency and profit, and were more successful than those with lower amounts of positivity**. They worked better together and were better able to deal with problems.



6. Wellbeing improves your problem solving



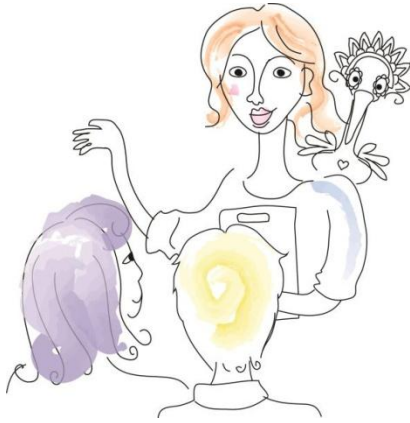
This is one of my favourite bits of research....

Just before a doctor went to see a patient, they gave them a gift of small packet of sweets, elevating their mood and level of wellbeing. They then compared what happened to those that hadn't been given anything.

They found that the ones that had elevated wellbeing worked through complex problems better, gave more comprehensive diagnosis and came up with better ways forward.

Wellbeing improves our ability to work through problems and find the best solution. It also improves creativity and the ability to see outside the box, essential skills in negotiating life.

7. Wellbeing makes for better leaders and managers



An individual with positive energy can create four times more influence than a powerful leader, according to research from Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKbyOmHWYQ>

And wellbeing is closely linked with high emotional intelligence, a key attribute of effective leaders and managers.

Just let this sink in for a moment...

All of these are the **results** of having wellbeing.

It's what underlying wellbeing does **for** you, not you being happier because of these things. Not bad, hey.

How positive change happens

When you build wellbeing you won't necessarily see a change straight away, and when change does come it tends to pop up unheralded. You all of a sudden notice that you feel better in yourself, that something is going better, or that things seems easier. You all of a sudden notice you feel lighter, or more grounded.

Take a moment.

How has positive change happened for you? Take 3 examples of when positive changes have occurred in your life and write down what enabled them to take place. Include factors inside yourself, as well as outside yourself. What positive qualities and strengths did you use?

When you have wellbeing you are at your best.

When you have wellbeing you are wired differently. When you are connected in to yourself and you're in a positive state you perform at your best, think more broadly, and generate more positive energy and enthusiasm around what you do. You are more likely to take action. Because you are coming from a stronger base you can expand the range of actions you take, and do things that are beyond your comfort zone. And because others pick up on your positivity, they are more likely to engage with you, support you, and be positively influenced by you.

Remember the exercise in Lesson 1 where you focussed on a time when you had wellbeing? Let's do a similar exercise, this time having a closer look at when you are at your best, when you are performing well.

Take a moment.

Close your eyes and take a nice easy breath. Remember a time when you were at your best. Take a moment to tune into that space. Where are you, what is around you. What can you hear, smell, what is the temperature, What are you doing? If you are aware of any feelings, how do you feel, where is your focus, what is it like to be in this space? What was your relationship like with yourself and with what is around you? How was your behaviour? If a difficulty came up, what happened in that place of being at your best?

And then slowly come back to the here and now, allowing yourself to bring the experience of being at your best with you. (The more you do this exercise, and the more you build your experience of being at your best, the easier it becomes to get there)

Write down what you noticed about 'being at your best'.

It can be easy to think of 'being at your best' in just one way. And just like wellbeing, the truth is that there are many different ways you can be at your best. For example, when you have gotten yourself organized, when you have entertained people well, when you done something skilfully, when you have responded well to a situation, when you have been especially caring or encouraging, when you have done the best you could in a situation, when you have been focussed and productive. And just like wellbeing, the small moments of being at your best are really significant.

Take a moment

Jot down different times and ways you have been 'at your best'. Think both small times as well as the ones that stand out. Identifying the small times does a lot to help unlock the path to moving forward.

What about Stress and Negativity?

Now what about stress and negativity, I hear you say. Aren't they a critical factor to outcomes and performance and health? Don't we hear how illness is 'stress related'? Isn't performance closely related to stress?

Well yes, but it doesn't have as much influence on outcomes as you would think. Let's take one example.

Researchers Cohen, Doyle, Alper, and Skoner in 2003 gave a bunch of people the cold virus. They then looked at who got a cold and who didn't. Who do you think tended to get a cold? Was it people who had more negative thoughts and emotions?

What they found was that it was the level of positivity that made the difference – people with higher positivity got fewer colds. Their immune system was much better than those with lower positivity.

What about people with higher negativity compared to lower negativity – it didn't make a significant difference at all.

This just isn't true for colds. In all of the areas we have talked about research has shown that compared to negativity, positivity is a much better predictor of success, mortality, happiness in relationships, general happiness, profits in business, better problem solving, influence, ability to cope with difficultiesyou get the idea.

The stress factor is real, but reducing stress or negativity is not enough to produce the positive changes and benefits we are looking for.

In fact as many people reported in my research on business owners and workers in the welfare industry, you can be both stressed and have wellbeing. And it is the wellbeing that provides the resources to deal with the stress.

The bottom line is that to get the benefits we need to build positivity and wellbeing.

Lesson 4 On Being Stressed

Obviously, stress can interfere with wellbeing, and it does. Everyone knows the feeling of being thrown by something, feeling off balance, depleted, worried, or worn out.

Our culture often portrays an idealized concept of what wellbeing is. It includes feeling happy all the time, or being in a really good place in yourself all the time, or being on top of things so you don't have problems or stress...oh and don't forget being slim, good looking, successful, rich, and a perfect parent. Try putting 'wellbeing' into Google images and see what comes up.

True wellbeing isn't like that.

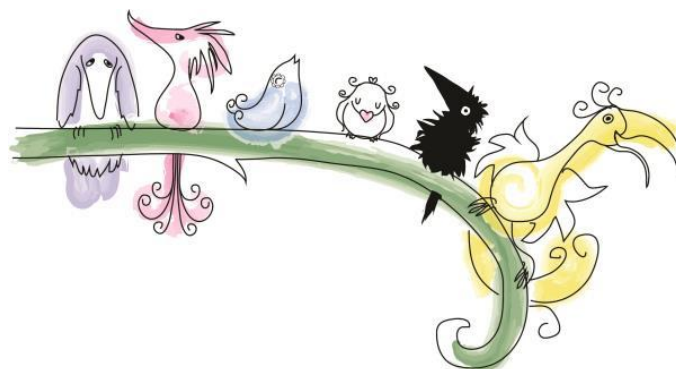
You don't have to be happy all the time, forever humming Zip a dee doo dah, Zip a dee ay (though absolutely go for it if that's your thing 😊 You can check out Paula Abduls version here [Zip a dee doo dah, Zip a dee ay](#).)



Wellbeing *is* about raising your underlying level of feeling good and being happier in your life, but it's not about living in fairy land. It's not some 'Pollyanna state of being' where the difficulties and problems are swept under the carpet or sugar coated and hey presto, lets tell ourselves that everything is rosy.

Understanding how stress works, and the difference between stress and wellbeing, gives you a map and compass to help you navigate your way through the ups and downs of life.

If you're stressed, unhappy or you have been thrown by life, it's not that there is something wrong with you. It's just a part of life. As we learnt in chapter 1 wellbeing doesn't change the fact that you will always have good and bad times in life.

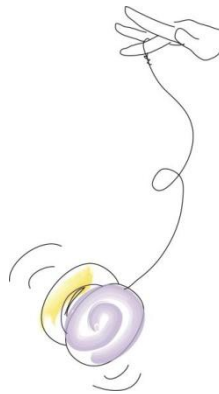


When you grow the green tree of wellbeing in your heart, all types of emotions will still come and visit.

So you will be stressed at times, you will have tough times, that's the reality.

Rather than covering up, ignoring or pretending things are better than they are, wellbeing equips you to turn towards difficulties. It restores, replenishes, and resources you so that you have greater capacity to

- meet the problems
- see them more broadly and consider more options
- heal and restore
- meet them with greater strength and courage
- take action
- show greater kindness and courage to yourself and others
- to make difficult decisions.
- Bounce back quicker



So called 'Negative' feelings that are associated with stress and being worn out are never bad or wrong, and they will always be there. They should be there and are entirely appropriate. And because they are part of us, no matter what they are, they need to be respected. And they can also have a positive role in that they can be the garden bed for growth and learning in our life.

Stress

Stress comes in many different forms. Here's just a few

- I can't do it all, it's all too much, there's too much to do, I can't cope
- It feels like I'm carrying a weight, or that things are closing in on me and I can't get breathing space
- I'm afraid.. What ifhappens?
- I feel out of sorts, I've lost solid footing
- I'm upset, sad, down, worried, pressured and lost the joy of life.
- I can't switch off
- I'm uptight, shaky, on edge
- things are have gone 'wonky'
- Things are out of my control and I don't like what's happening
- 'I'm all over the place'



I'm all over the place....

Take a moment

What form does your stress take? Put a phrase to it.

We get stressed when the pressures we are facing are greater than our capacity to cope.

This happens quite often, and we are able right ourselves fairly quickly and life returns to normal.

The problems tend to kick in if the stress

- is there for too long,
- it accumulates from lots of different sources and we don't release it properly,
- or it's of such intensity that we can't right ourselves.

The Stress Response

Just as with wellbeing, where your brain and body chemistry helps you to be in a state that restores, heals, is creative, and expands you so you're at your proactive best, stress has its own physical, mental and behavioural response. It is a state where your internal system that responds to threat is activated, and your body goes into 'prepare for action mode' or 'respond to danger' mode. Chemicals like adrenalin and cortisol are released in your body, blood is diverted to the major organs, your thoughts and emotions become more focussed, more directed to the threat, more linear, narrowed and tunnel visioned. Other things not directly related to the stress are closed off as you orientate around the threat.

Geared for the short term

The stress response is designed for providing a quick response, and we then need to recover and replenish. Problems can come when we stay in this state for an extended period of time, or if the individual stresses are too much for our ability to cope. With the demands of work and everyday life it is often difficult to stop and replenish. The more the outcome matters to us, the greater the stress.

Underlying Stress



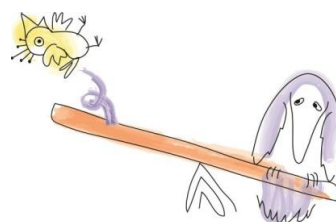
We can also have underlying stress

Just like having an underlying sense of wellbeing, we can have **underlying stress** that's always there in the background. When we are carrying a constant underlying stress it diminishes our life and it takes less to tip us over the edge into more problematic stress.

Sometimes it goes out of our awareness, just like if you live near a train station you stop noticing the noise from the trains. Often it's only if we get the chance to relax or calm down that we realize how uptight we were.

The things that stress us draw our attention

Things that stress us cry out to us that something is wrong, or might be wrong down the track. That something is out of balance either in our life or within us. Whatever it is it's a threat to our stability, safety or security.



Something is out of balance

For this reason things that stress us draw more attention than the positives things that might be there. It makes sense. Because they are associated with a pain or threat, they tend to be louder and more dominant than the positives.

Now stress is a normal response to a threat, to something that has been painful, or to a difficulty that we're finding hard to cope with.

However, sometimes our internal system that responds to threats is too good at protecting us with the result that....



- Our imagination runs wild (I know mine can!). We often overestimate threats, worrying about things that are unlikely to happen or that are unfounded.

- the stress we feel is response to a threat that is past it's 'use by date' and it belongs to past threats and sorrows that have been retriggered, sometimes outside of our consciousness.
- Sometimes we don't even know what is at the real cause of our stress. Sometimes we just wake up with a level of stress or irritability.
- Even for the things that are likely to happen, constantly being in a state of alert can take them out of perspective.

Logical or not, our experience of stress is real and so needs to be respected.

Feeling like we shouldn't be stressed doesn't usually help, and in fact it can make you feel inadequate and bad, adding further to the stress.

Stress Reactions

Most people have heard that when we encounter stress there can be either a **Fight or Flight** response.

There are also some other responses

Immobilize – we can't do anything – it's the deer in the headlights scenario

Submit – We give in and submit to the stronger power, or to the situation.

Accept – we accept the situation as it is, without having to change it.

Tend and befriend – We look after others who are in danger, and befriend others to increase our safety. Seems like women have a stronger tendency to do this than men.

Feel the stress, ignore it, and keep going – Has its place, but can also come at a cost.

Fine tuning your radar

We know when we are stressed when.....

The more we understand what is fuelling our stress and the mechanics of what is happening the greater the possibility of responding differently. Often by noticing just what's happening we can do something to ease out the immediate stress we feel, or at least to limit its impact on us.

Let's look in more detail at how stress affects us and changes our way of being. See if you can identify any of the following...



We get caught up in things.

We go over things constantly in our mind, and in many situations it is always there, even if we aren't consciously aware of it. It's hard to get perspective and see outside of the situation because we get caught up in it.

When stressed we constrict and tense up physically, emotionally, and behaviourally.

We hold our body tight and can feel the tension in our jaw, shoulders, stomach, neck. Similarly we hold tight emotionally, and in our actions and responses. We feel fragmented rather than a sense of wholeness and centeredness. Things seem harsher, our focus is harsher, and we strain. Things have an edge to them and this sometimes comes out in our movements, voice and manner.

The world closes in

Our ability to take in new things drops as it is taking so much energy to hold on. It feels like the world is closing in and we can't get cognitive, emotional, or physical space. Life loses its colour and richness.

The shutters close

We can't take in things that provide pleasure, wellbeing and nourishment easily – You might be sitting in a beautiful place, but don't appreciate it. You might have friends around you who are willing to help, but you don't let them in. You stick to how you are, and often it's only afterwards you realize the full extent of the place you have been in. Sometimes you feel stuck and trapped, and separated from yourself and the world.

We reach our limit.

Our tolerance for stimulation drops – Ever been in a stressed state where you can't stand noise and activity, or people disagreeing with you, or asking too many questions?

We have barriers up

We put up barriers between us and the world to protect ourselves. They can make us feel disconnected from the world and means that our potential to take in the positive moments is also compromised.

We feel off centre

We don't feel like we are in a strong, clear and centred place.

We feel unclear

It's not so much that the situation is unclear, it is we are unclear, and things seem foggy and diffused.

Take a moment

What happens when you get stressed? What do you first notice? What happens when it develops further? What do you say to yourself about the stress you are feeling?

Remember the exercise you did in lesson 1? These are some of the characteristics of wellbeing. Compare them to when you are feeling stressed.

We know when we have wellbeing when we

- Are open
- Have flexibility in our thinking, feeling and behaviour
- Are connected to ourselves, others and our environment
- Are solid and centred in ourselves
- Feel nourished and resourced and giving doesn't deplete us
- Have an inner ease and comfortableness
- Are ok not knowing things
- Feel a sense of expansion
- Are wanting to explore and discover. We want to open our life in new ways

Knowing these differences between stress and wellbeing gives you a much finer way of detecting where things are at than just asking yourself if you are stressed or not. They give you the means of monitoring the specific changes that happen within you, moment by moment, giving you a huge head start in your response.

See how you go applying them to a real example.

Stress and Wellbeing Assessment

Think of a situation that is causing some stress or concern. For the scale 1 is low and 5 is high

How caught up in things/your situation are you? (or How much 'space' do you have between your situation and you?)

1 2 3 4 5

How narrow is your focus? (or how open are you to other things and to others?)

1 2 3 4 5

How much flexibility in your thoughts, emotions and behaviours do you have?

1 2 3 4 5

How solid do you feel in yourself? (or How fragile fragmented do you feel?)

1 2 3 4 5

How much of an edge does your thoughts, emotions and behaviours have? (Listen to your voice, it is often a great indicator 😊)

1 2 3 4 5

How 'whole' and connected do you feel in yourself? How much are you in 'your centre'.

1 2 3 4 5

How tolerant are you of not knowing what might happen?

1 2 3 4 5

How worn out or tired are you?

1 2 3 4 5

How much support do you feel from those around you?

1 2 3 4 5

How connected do you feel to yourself and to the outside world or does it feel like there is a barrier.?

1 2 3 4 5

Try this exercise again for a situation where you feel a sense of wellbeing. Compare the results.

By understanding where things are at, it means that you can pick things up quicker. The sooner you catch things and understand what's happening the more able you are to respond. If you feel some tightness, holding on, or barriers up when they don't need to be, on an 'out' breath try stepping back for a moment, easing out, widening your focus, or 'softening' your body, breath or attention.

Co-occurrence

Often in the midst of stressful situation people will still have moments which are nourishing and positive. Researchers call this co-occurrence... they coexist in the midst of the pain and distress.

These positive moments are far from inconsequential, they play an essential role in calming, healing, nourishing and resourcing you so that you are better able to meet the difficulties.

In the midst of difficult situations it's not about trying to have positive moments. It's more about being open to the positive heartfelt moments that are there, and leaving open the possibility of them coming.. It is not about trying to disregard any of the negatives.

The positive things we experience in the midst of stressful and difficult times can be different, and can take on a different value, to when things are going well. It may be that hope, feeling cared for, connection with others, appreciation of the smaller things, and spirituality might be more prominent. Some things that we appreciated in the past we may not appreciate now, some things we glossed over can become special.

Take a moment

Remember a time when things were difficult. What positive moments or experiences were there?

What positive qualities or strengths did you show?

Some Tips in responding to stress

- *Pause, step back, and breathe.* See if you can find some space between you and what's stressing you.
- *Be kind towards yourself.* No matter what you're feeling, even if you are 'beating yourself up', look with kindness towards that part of you.
- *Think Damage Control.* How can you limit the negative effects of what's happening. Ride out the intense times.
- *Notice, cultivate and foster the positives* to counter the pull of the negatives. It is often easier to build in positives than to shift entrenched negatives and situations that seem unsolvable. The positives will resource and equip you to respond to the difficulties. Start with really small things that you incorporate easily into your day. 'Small and real' is the way to go. Remember, it's not about 'faking it, till you make it' or glossing over the negatives.
- *Lessen the negatives* - there's so many ways to do this. Working things through with someone can be a big help. The benefit of lessening the negatives is that it takes some of the pressure off and gives space for the positives. However, if you don't know how to build the positives you're left with a vacuum.
- *Great article in Psychology Today about stress -*
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201301/cortisol-why-the-stress-hormone-is-public-enemy-no-1>
- *Exercise* - it helps release the physical and emotional tension

Lesson 5 Nourish and Replenish

Worn Out

Sometimes it's not so much that there is a particular stress we can't cope with, it's just that it all gets too much and we get tired, worn out and depleted. Brenne Brown describes it as being 'wired and tired'. In my research of over 150 people, this was the major stress related issue they faced. And not surprisingly, on the other side of the coin, being able to 'Be still and replenish' scored lowest in the wellbeing stakes.



When we get worn out **our world begins to collapse in** and the 'life' is drained from life. It's kind of like we go from life being in technicolour to being in shades of grey. Because we don't have the energy for much else we need to put the precious resources we have into just 'keeping on going'.

We find we have to **continually mobilize ourselves** to meet the demands, and even the simple things that in the past were 'a breeze', become things we have to rise to meet. Over time this comes at a cost as our core reserves drop and our health, wellbeing and emotional stability becomes fragile. A friend of mine describes it as being worn 'thin'.

When we are tired, **we don't function as well** as when 'our well is full'. Think of a runner or swimmer when they get tired, their form starts to deteriorate and becomes less streamlined and effective. Exactly the same happens for us. We can't focus as well, become less efficient and we don't operate at our best. We lose the ability to be what and who we are fully capable of.

Often there is a build up of things, that on their own or for a short period we cope with quite well, but when a number of things come at once, like not sleeping, lots to do, and constant demands, problems can begin to happen.

One of the major problems is that the 'doing and working things out' function within us, our 'on' button, is on too long and we don't know how to switch it off. The 'rest, recover, restore and rejuvenate' mechanism seems out of reach. It is the inability to access this mechanism that causes the problems.

Take a moment

What happens when you get depleted? Think of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual fatigue. Are stress and being depleted linked for you?

Internal and external factors

Both internal and external factors can contribute to getting worn out.

Internal factors can be our expectations and attitudes, for example, having to get things right, believing it is all up to us, no one can do it as well as us, we won't be liked or respected if we stop, others depend on us, fearing that things will fall apart if we let go, needing to have everything done so we feel safe.

External factors are the demands we face from others and the situation we are in. It can be things like being a parent, work demands, high pressure jobs, the need to keep up with everything, social media, information overload. In many jobs it is difficult to switch off if you are linked by technology to your work 24hours a day. The multiple tasks we need to keep up with can mean we don't ever complete one, and rushing from one thing to another we don't have time to close off from one and start the next one with a clean slate. And sometimes the 'problems' we face are unsolvable, especially in the short term, and this drains our energy.

Take a moment

Think of a time when you were worn out. What internal and external factors contributed?

Energy drains and gains

Some situations, activities and people drain our energy which results in fatigue. When we live and act in ways that are away from our authentic self it drains us. Some situations, activities and people contribute to our energy, strengthening and replenishing us. We leave them with more energy than when we started. This is not to judge whether either is good or bad, at this stage we are just looking at the effect on us. Noticing things that drain our energy can then help us decide if it's something that doesn't work for us, and then can we find a way to plug or minimize the drain.

Take a moment

What situations, things or people take energy to do or drain your energy?
You might like to look at different areas of your life, like work, individual, family and parenting, financial etc.

Take a moment

What situations, people and things put energy into your system, replenishing, nourishing and strengthening you? You might like to look at different areas of your life, like work, individual, family and parenting, financial etc.



Rest, Restore and Replenish.

Love those R words! Revitalize, rejuvenate, reinvigorate, can all be added.

Just like needing sleep, taking a break and having down time plays a vital role in maintaining our energy, focus and performance. When our well is full, we can be at our best in life.

Yet, so many people find switching off and unwinding incredibly difficult to do. It's like we half do it, but never to the level we need to really rejuvenate. Life becomes more about 'surviving', than 'thriving'.

Getting worn out every now and again and returning to doing well, is not usually a problem. The second level is getting worn out just enough to take the edge off everyday living, the effects of the tiredness or stress pervading throughout your life. Often this becomes normal life for many people. The next level is more problematic and it's where we enter a cycle of getting worn out, clawing our way back to just below the danger line until the next lot of pressures happen and we find ourselves worn out again. It's not a great way to live at all, but common for many people. The next stage is where you stay longer and longer in the worn out stage and it becomes chronic. It's then we are at serious risk of burnout and other significant consequences.

Given the stress and pressures of modern day life, work or business, getting the rest and replenishment we need is not easy. As the stress and pressures of our situation increases, so

too our skill at being able to replenish needs to increase, and implementing the skills needs to be more intentional and structured.

So how do we find ways to rest, restore and rejuvenate? It's different for each person, but here's some ideas. First some general principles, followed by some specific strategies.

General Principles

Identify the cycle and the pressures feeding into it.

Seeing what is happening for what it is, can help as we often know it's there, but don't really acknowledge, identify or face it. Not really facing it can happen because we don't think there is an answer, or because we are so caught up in it we don't have the mental or emotional distance. Seeing what is happening and any responses should be done gently and with kindness, otherwise it just adds to the pressure.

Understand that we need regular mini, medium and major breaks.

We operate best when we have a short burst of focus and energy, and then have a break. Mini refers to a break every 20, 30 or 40 minutes., Medium breaks are breaks every couple of hours e.g. morning tea, lunch etc. Major breaks are hours or days completely off, and holidays.



Develop your wellbeing skills

These are the skills we covered in lesson 2. They are key to helping you rest and rejuvenate.

Look at your mindset.

The attitudes we bring to what we are doing can drain our energy or keep us in a worn out state. Work at developing more useful attitudes alongside the ones that are draining you. I find it most helpful to look at things in terms of usefulness, rather than being right. Sometimes we hold on to things that 'are right', but cause greater damage to ourselves by the way we hold on to them. For example we get upset by someone not pulling their weight, or doing the wrong thing by us, but the way we hold on to it causes us great anguish.

It takes practice

If you have lost the ability to replenish, it can take time to build them up again. Give yourself time to cultivate the soil and sow the seeds of rest, restoration and replenishment, even if you can't see immediate results.

Some specific ideas

Stop and breathe

Stop, pull back your focus, breathe out and soften your attention and body.

Step back

It doesn't always have to be a physically getting away, it is the mental and emotional break that is most important. Just sitting back and having a drink of water, stretching or giving the

body a shake, looking away at something else for a moment, and then refocus. The key is to stop and step back from what you're engaged in, and to get some distance between you and everything that's going on. In medium and longer breaks there should be a physical change and shutting off from the setting you are in.

Meditation and Relaxation Exercises



Relaxing the body can be great, though if the mind is going strong you may need something to focus on. Practicing relaxation and meditation or yoga techniques away from the situation helps you to be steady when the pressure is on. Some people find guided meditations and visualizations really useful.

Activities

Do things that you enjoy and that take your attention and focus. I used to do indoor rock climbing which was wonderful because it physically gave me a workout and I could think of nothing else except how I was going to get up the climb and hanging on for dear life. Find activities that work for you.

Being with people you like, gardening, exercise, massage, walking on the beach, being out in nature are all great.

Cultivate Fun, Play and Lightness

These are a really effective antidote to the pervasive blanket of heaviness that comes with being worn out. The 'Open your heart' exercise, concentrating on these specific qualities, is a good one as it prepares your heart to experience Fun, Play and Lightness in everyday life. As with all these exercises, you can't force these experiences, but it's wonderful to give room for them.

Having an outlet

Being able to talk about what's happening with someone who can hold a nurturing space or who inspires you.

Let go

Sometimes it's good just to let go of everything in your mind, positive and negative, all the responsibilities, all the things you are holding on to. Just let it go. It's like you pull off the highway of life for a while, even if it is for a couple of minutes or less.

Have a transition routine

When you go from one thing to another consciously separate from the previous activity, clearing the mind and emotions and engage with the next thing. You may like to have a

symbol of this, like the closing of the door behind you when you leave work, or the trip home, symbolizes leaving work at work.

Take a Moment

What helps you unwind? What helps you step back from situations? What would be worth trying?

Nourishing your heart and soul



Filing your 'inner well' is about finding things that replenish and restore you, things that feed your heart and soul.

Different things nourish us at different times, so knowing ourselves and 'reading' what we need at a particular time is useful.

Take a Moment

What activities replenish and nourish you, adding energy into your system?

Nourishing our physical body

Taking care of our health is important. Eating fresh, good food, exercise and sleep, all play important parts in our emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

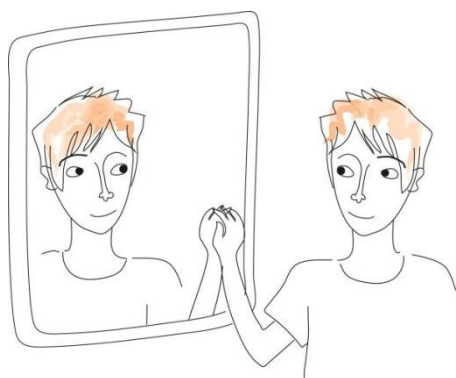


Take a Moment

How is your physical health? What small steps could you take to improve in this area?

Nourishing relationship with yourself

Remember how we talked about what uses up and drains your energy? The same principle applies in how we relate to ourselves. We can hold expectations and relate to ourselves in ways that drain us, ways that are unkind, or that are hard and lack caring.



Having a caring, supportive relationship towards yourself softens the uptightness and holding on to stressful things. With the easing of tension and constriction it allows more room and ability to respond.

There are two aspects to developing a nourishing supportive relationship towards yourself. The first is to look upon yourself, especially the fears, hurts and difficult things you may be feeling or thinking, with caring, kindness and in a supportive way.

The second aspect is to do things, small things, as an act of caring and support, kindness, love and encouragement towards yourself.

As with wellbeing, don't be concerned about times you don't do this. It's not a case of you shouldn't be thinking of yourself in certain ways, it's more incorporating or adding ways that are more life enhancing. It's not so much about the negative thoughts you have, but the amount of kinder, more life enhancing thoughts.

From a place of caring and support, you will naturally find that you are in a stronger, clearer, more centred and grounded place.

From this place, you are much more able to look clearly at what's happening and naturally and much more easily overcome blocks to your wellbeing as you journey to a richer, fuller life and more inner life.

Take a Moment

Regularly look with love and kindness, care and support towards something you are thinking, feeling, experiencing, doing. Write down each occasion and what it was like to do this

Lesson 6 Now go and shine...

As our wellbeing builds we have so much more to bring to our life, to our work, and to what is important to us. We find better ways to care for ourselves when we are under pressure and times are difficult.

As our wellbeing grows we flourish in life and in who we are. A life force is opened within us. It doesn't happen all at once, but is built step by step. We suddenly realize that we feel much better than we did before, that we go from trying to hold back life and protecting ourselves, to bringing fullness to whatever is in front of us.

The essence of wellbeing is about coming more and more into who you are. It's about a wonderful inner freedom. And whilst we may not be there all the time, we will always carry the knowledge and energy of it in our experience.

How each of us experience wellbeing is unique. Our job is to find our particular brand. When we do this there will be natural expression of it out in to the world.

So much the message in the world today is that you have to be different than who you are...that you should reach some standard....that if you just did this or that then you would be successful.

Whilst we want to grow and develop, the best way to do that is to understand that you are not perfect and never will be. And most importantly, you are ok just as you are. It is from a position of accepting that you don't have to be perfect, that you just have to be as you are, that transformation happens.

Here are some quotes that I love.

People need to see themselves as the treasures that they are.

Virginia Satir

*There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. **It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.***

Martha Graham

We were born to make manifest the Glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson

Finding your voice

[Archie Roach - Song to Sing](#) – Love this song as it encourages you to find your unique voice.

[Odetta – This little light of mine](#) – This woman really seems to glow and be connected to her life force.

Discovering your light and letting it shine in your life, work, and in the world happens in very practical, everyday ways. As we build wellbeing, we come to know more and more who we are. We come to know our voice. It is the small gains, the small choices, the small steps, the small occasions when we recognize when we are coming from that authentic place inside of us that make the difference. It is the you that is behind your thoughts and emotions, that is seeking ways to be connected to and heard.

And as we take the journey into greater wellbeing, we realize that the journey is about learning that we are all we need to be, just as we are.

I wish you all the best in your journey.

Peter



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