

What does wellbeing mean to you?

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Feeling anxious and overwhelmed around budgets and money is familiar for many people in today's world of rising house prices, rising debt levels and the cost of raising kids while still trying to live full and busy lives.

Financial stress can take a serious toll physically, mentally and emotionally, with strong evidence indicating that it is a leading cause of relationship breakdown and a major contributor to mental health issues. When we are stressed, it affects all other aspects of life.

Like it or not, stress (financial or otherwise) has an enormous effect on our body, thoughts, feelings and behaviour. More often than not, we might attribute an irritating headache, insomnia or decreased productivity at work to illness or too much coffee, when in actual fact, stress may be the cause. Stress, left unchecked, can contribute to many health problems, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes, so taking steps to manage stress and increase overall wellbeing can have many health benefits.

Stress leads to lack of sleep, increased tiredness, poor food and lifestyle choices,

less sound critical decision making, no energy for exercise, weight gain, increased anxiety and depression, and follow-on health complications... and the cyclical impact on wellbeing continues.

According to Worksafe NZ workplace stress and fatigue not only affect productivity but can also affect the physical and emotional health of workers and the effects of work-related stress are increasingly becoming an issue for workplaces and the community.

The effects of stress, whether work-related or not, vary from individual to individual and can be associated with illness and disease, low morale and engagement, anxiety, low productivity and antisocial behaviours. On the flipside, alleviating stress helps increase longevity, health and happiness. However, stress is only one factor in maintaining overall wellbeing. That said, this begs the





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Wellbeing is “the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy”.

question as to what exactly *is* wellbeing? And how can you assess your own personal state of wellbeing?

Physical and emotional health can then be assessed based on the satisfaction or success an individual feels in this area of their life. Satisfaction is unique to every individual - what may feel balanced or successful for one person may feel stressful or tedious for another. It's a challenge to avoid slipping into 'comparison mode' especially when there is so much access to the intricate lives of others who may seem to 'have it all'

through what they show you on social media. The road to achieving a higher state of overall wellbeing is relative and definitely not a one-size-fits-all magic pill.

Despite popular belief, a person's sense of wellbeing isn't necessarily tied to the amount of money they earn, the type of car they drive or where they live. Each person attaches importance to different aspects of life, complete with their own value system that they judge themselves and others by. While one person may place their career above all, another might care most about being adored

“92% of serious work-related mental health condition claims were attributed to mental stress.”
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by everyone around them. This comes back to their own intrinsic values.

Feelings of positive wellbeing enable people to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what they want out of life. Past experiences, attitudes and outlook can all impact wellbeing, as can physical or emotional trauma following specific incidents.

Although values can play a role in your wellbeing, so can health. In fact, health may be the most important indicator. Even in situations where goals set are fulfilled, a health issue could still throw wellbeing off track and negatively affect someone's sense of wellness.

In other words, health plays a significant role in a person's feelings of wellbeing. Although we can't always control what hand we've been dealt concerning health, we can at least do the best with what we've got. Changing one's mindset can make a significant difference in

their sense of wellbeing – as the saying goes “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade”. It's a fitting way to describe how a change of perspective can help improve feelings of wellness and determine whether or not there is a high or low sense of wellbeing.

Along with working on adjusting mindset, there are many different ways to work on perspective and in turn, increase wellbeing. This includes meditation, practising gratitude, shifting your perspective, and mindfulness. Although these may help to see the glass as half full, consideration should also be given to specific actions that will lead to an increase in satisfaction levels in specific areas of life.

My advice is to do whatever it takes to improve your overall wellbeing, even in just one aspect of your life that you would like to develop and if you want help along the way reach out for support.



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Rebecca Marshall is a HR and Wellbeing Consultant for Baker Tilly Staples Rodway in Hawkes Bay and is also an accredited Integrative Nutrition Health Coach. Rebecca delivers Health and Wellbeing Workshops to corporate clients, and also works one-on-one with people and with groups to support individuals to reach their health goals. While Rebecca focuses on dietary nutrition, there's a larger focus on non-food forms of nourishment like career, relationships, physical activity, and spirituality. Rebecca assesses a person's overall well-being and together they come up with recommendations to help enact basic health-supportive modifications.