



MOVE FROM
SURVIVING TO
Thriving

6 PRACTICAL STEPS TO AMPLIFY YOUR
PERSONAL WELLBEING AT WORK

THEWELLBEINGLAB
A MICHELLEMCQUAID PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

What if, no matter what challenge or struggle you might face at work, you knew that you could move through it with confidence?

What if you could fully embrace the best that life has to offer, without fearing that the worst could be just around the corner?

What if you were able to accomplish this by experimenting with scientifically studied practices that are not only beneficial but are infused with playful energy?

In this eBook we show you how you can turn “What if” into **“What is”** by AMPlifying your ability to care for your wellbeing.

Let's get started!

WHAT EXACTLY IS WELLBEING?

Before we start diving into the “how” we want to start with understanding the “what” and the “why.” There are a lot of myths about wellbeing out there and we want to clear them up right here, right now.

- Wellbeing isn't a miracle panacea for everything that causes you struggle in this world – focusing on caring for your wellbeing will not inoculate you from hard experiences but will provide you with tools and resources to navigate them.
- There is no “perfect” wellbeing score – just a personal level of “optimal” wellbeing developed through purposeful action and playful experimentation.
- Facing hardships or challenges does not mean that your wellbeing is suffering – we all experience hardship. In fact, a large proportion of people that we have surveyed report that they are “living well despite struggles” and this does not statistically diminish the outcomes or levels of satisfaction they achieve.

Now that we know what wellbeing isn't – let's define what it is.

From ancient religious practices to the self-help section in bookstores, humans have been attempting to define wellbeing for centuries. Every author, scholar, and philosopher has their own definition of what “wellbeing” encompasses – but we like to keep it as simple as possible.

We agree with Professor Felicia Huppert that wellbeing is your ability to feel good and function effectively. It gives you the tools to better leverage the “highs” and navigate the “lows,” which are part of every life, so you can move beyond simply “functioning” towards intellectual, emotional, social, and physical “flourishing.”

Researchers have found that people who report having higher levels of wellbeing appear to enjoy all sorts of benefits. From feeling happier and healthier to being more resilient and having more energy, enjoying better relationships, being more creative and productive, earning more money, and being more charitable towards others.

So, what tools do you need to care for your wellbeing?

HOW CAN YOU CARE FOR YOUR WELLBEING?

In 1998 Dr. Martin Seligman flipped the world of psychology on its head when instead of focusing primarily on curing mental illness, he encouraged researchers around the world to focus their efforts on building mental wellbeing. More than 20 years and tens of thousands of research papers later, there is strong evidence to support the idea that not only are there several factors that can impact our wellbeing, but there are practical steps that you can take to improve it.

Based on the research, Dr. Seligman has proposed that your wellbeing comprises the presence of:



POSITIVE EMOTIONS – moments of regular heartfelt positivity – spending time in nature, finding a reason to laugh, taking a break, practicing mindfulness – to fuel your resilience.



ENGAGEMENT – using your neurological strengths – the things you're good at and enjoy doing – to feel more confident, energized, and engaged.



RELATIONSHIPS – making time to genuinely connect with other people – expressing gratitude, showing kindness, being compassionate – and savoring the feelings of warmth and trust.



MEANING – understanding how what you do each day has a positive impact on others and feeling connected to something larger than yourself.



ACCOMPLISHMENT – embracing a learning mindset and challenging your fears to cultivate the grit you need to achieve what matters most.



HEALTH – eating well, moving regularly, taking time to recover and sleep deeply each day to ensure you have the energy to consistently thrive.

This is known as the PERMAH theory of wellbeing.

We've chosen the PERMAH framework as the basis of the wellbeing measure and approaches shared throughout this book. We chose it not because we believe it has been conclusively proven as the roadmap to wellbeing – after all, good science is never proven but an evolving process of ongoing learning and fine-tuning. Rather, we chose it because we've found that the PERMAH framework is an easy way for people to understand, measure, and take action around the well-established, evidence-based elements of wellbeing.

Now, how much you need of each of these factors varies depending on the type of person you are, the situations you're in, and the outcomes you want. This means that the "right" wellbeing approach looks different for each of us.

What we do know is that each PERMAH wellbeing factor matters, so ideally you want a healthy dose of each in your life. The good news is that studies have found that just like muscle groups, or areas of fitness, each factor can be developed through the regular practice of tiny wellbeing behaviors.

Want to know what you can try?

HOW CAN YOU AMPLIFY WELLBEING?

Wait a minute! Before you dive into your PERMAH wellbeing toolbox we want to help you get clear on what success might look like. The truth is that your wellbeing is meant to ebb and flow – it is part of how you learn and grow in life – so simply setting out to constantly improve your wellbeing isn't necessarily a healthy goal.

Instead, our research suggests that as you playfully experiment with the different wellbeing tools on the following pages your goal should be to try to improve your wellbeing through improving your:



ABILITY – Your capacity – the knowledge, tools, and opportunities you have – to care for your wellbeing. Often when people try to improve their behaviors, they go too big, too hard, and expect results too fast. The good news is that when it comes to changing your wellbeing behaviors, tiny is mighty. This eBook is packed with tiny behaviors to help you improve your wellbeing ability.



MOTIVATION – Your commitment to consistently prioritize caring for your wellbeing each day. Unfortunately, caring for your wellbeing is not a one-off exercise. Let's face it, going for one run won't suddenly make you fit, and eating one piece of broccoli won't suddenly make you healthy. That's why this eBook will help you choose the wellbeing behaviors you will find easy to joyfully stick with.



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY – The safe spaces you have to talk honestly about how you are doing with others. Caring for your wellbeing is not a solo adventure. Studies have found that having people you can talk to about what you're trying, how you're doing, and what you're learning about your wellbeing is one of the keys in caring for your wellbeing. That's why this eBook will give you simple ways to check in with others on how you're each doing when it comes to your wellbeing.

Collectively we call these three wellbeing levers your wellbeing AMPlifiers.

WHERE DO I START?

As you get ready to choose the tiny wellbeing tools that might work best for you, there is one very important caution we need to give you. Although every tool in this e-book is grounded in good research, even the best studies on human behavior only tell us what works for some people, some times.

What?! While we'd love to give you "proven" tools, the truth is good science is never proven but is always challenging what we know so we can learn more. Also, while we all have much in common, we are also uniquely different. Just like we all differ in terms of our favorite colors, our favorite foods, the ways we like to unwind and rejuvenate, and the ways we like to connect, we are all different in our preferences for caring for our wellbeing and what works best for us, and that is absolutely OK.

With this in mind, we encourage you to use the evidence-based tools in this e-book to accelerate your knowledge about caring for your wellbeing, inspire your practices, and then playfully experiment with what works best for you. The last thing we want is for you to start judging where you are – instead of focusing on the journey to where you want to be. If you get stuck, stand up, shake it off, and try again.

Remember NO ONE is perfect at this – not even us. The goal here is not perfection, but ongoing, playful experimentation, so as the world around you changes you continue finding ways to care for your wellbeing.

To help you choose where to start your playful experiments we recommend you take a moment to consider your:

1 | ABILITY

WHICH PERMAH WELLBEING FACTOR(S) WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO FOCUS ON?

Step on the scale below to see how you're currently doing when it comes to caring for your wellbeing by thinking about your experiences and feelings over the last week at work. Using the scale of 0 (never) to 10 (all the time), how often has each of the following occurred?

		SCORE
	POSITIVE EMOTION	I felt positive at work.
	ENGAGEMENT	I was interested and deeply engaged in my work.
	RELATIONSHIPS	I felt respected and appreciated by others at work.
	MEANING	I felt what I did at work was valuable and worthwhile.
	ACCOMPLISHMENT	I made progress towards reaching my work-related goals.
	HEALTH	Physically, I felt strong and healthy.

As you reflect on your results, tune into how you feel about your results. Are you surprised? Inspired? Disappointed?

Which PERMAH wellbeing factors does this suggest you might most want to prioritize when it comes to improving your wellbeing abilities? Circle these on your scale or note them down.

*Note: If you want to measure your PERMAH wellbeing factors more fully, use our free wellbeing survey at www.permahsurvey.com.

2 | MOTIVATION

WHICH WELLBEING BEHAVIORS WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO BEGIN PLAYFULLY EXPERIMENTING WITH?

Caring for your wellbeing works best if you choose the behaviors you want to do, rather than those you feel you have to do, should do, or are expected to do. So, with this in mind, as you look at the wellbeing behaviors on the following pages for the PERMAH factor you've prioritized, choose the one you would most like to try first. Put a big star next to it or note the details down and put it somewhere you will see it each day (we've even added a page at the back of this eBook for you to record it if you'd like).

Remember when it comes to caring for your wellbeing, studies suggest that tiny wellbeing behaviors that are done regularly can have a mighty impact. So start small. Two minutes a day of doing something you enjoy and can easily succeed at in order to build your confidence and sustain your motivation is better than no minutes at all.

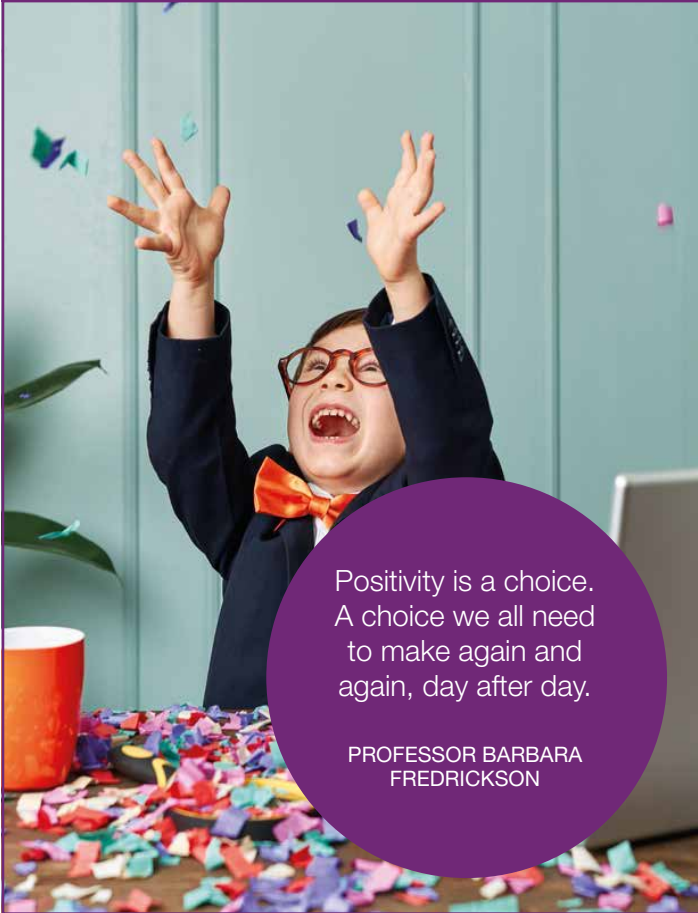
3 | PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

WHO CAN BE YOUR WELLBEING BUDDY – YOUR SAFE SPACE – TO SHARE WHAT YOU'RE LEARNING ABOUT CARING FOR YOUR WELLBEING?

Don't skip this step! Studies show you are far more likely to stick with your chosen wellbeing behavior if you have a buddy – a friend, a family member, a colleague, a mentor, a support group – who you can share your playful experiment with. And if you believe you may benefit from the extra help of a trusted coach, psychologist, or doctor we strongly encourage you to seek their support.

Choose someone who you feel safe to talk with about what is working well, where you're struggling, and what you're learning about caring for your wellbeing. You might want to share this eBook with them or simply let them know that you want to prioritize caring for your wellbeing over the coming weeks and you would like them to be your check-in buddy every now and again (we've even included a little wellbeing check-in guide to help you both at the end of this eBook if you need it).

POSITIVE EMOTIONS



Positivity is a choice.
A choice we all need
to make again and
again, day after day.

PROFESSOR BARBARA
FREDRICKSON

PRACTICING KINDNESS

Acts of kindness help to highlight your abilities, your resources, and your expertise and can give you a sense of confidence, optimism, usefulness, and meaning. What's more, the positive emotions you derive from giving to others have been found to create a positive feedback loop because kindness is contagious – people who witness your kind act are more likely to be kind as well. For ideas and inspiration to build your kindness muscles visit the Random Acts of Kindness website: www.randomactsofkindness.org.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Tracking your kindness:** Keep a journal and note down the acts of kindness you give and receive. These acts might vary in size, but the goal is to increase your awareness of the good you're doing and receiving in everyday life.
- **Having a kindness day:** Choose one day of the week and set yourself the challenge of doing five kind things for others. It could be holding the door open for someone, helping someone with directions, thanking a friend or colleague, or buying a pay-it-forward coffee.
- **Trying loving-kindness meditation:** This is a powerful way to send goodwill, kindness, and warmth to others by silently repeating a series of mantras. Find a guided meditation to suit you at www.positivityresonance.com/meditations.

To learn more about kindness from Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky [click here](#).

CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

Gratitude is much more than being glad for a gift or kind act, it's also experiencing a sense of wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life. It involves noticing and appreciating the good things in and around you. Consistently feeling grateful for the good things in your life and what makes them possible has been found to improve your relationships, boost your levels of energy and positivity, head-off adaptation (when you become desensitized through familiarity), and to help you deal with negative emotions and adversity.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Counting your blessings:** Once a week, take a few moments to write down 5 things that happened that week for which you are grateful and what made each of these things possible.
- **Having a gratitude moment:** Take the time to genuinely thank one person for how they made your day a little better or a little easier. Do it face-to-face if you can, but if not, a call, SMS, or email is fine. Be specific about what you appreciated and why.
- **Carrying a Gratitude Scrap:** Each morning before leaving for work, spend a few minutes writing down 3 things you're grateful for and carry that scrap of paper all day, glancing at it when you need some positivity in your day.

To learn more about gratitude from Robert Emmons [click here](#).

GETTING COMFORTABLY UNCOMFORTABLE

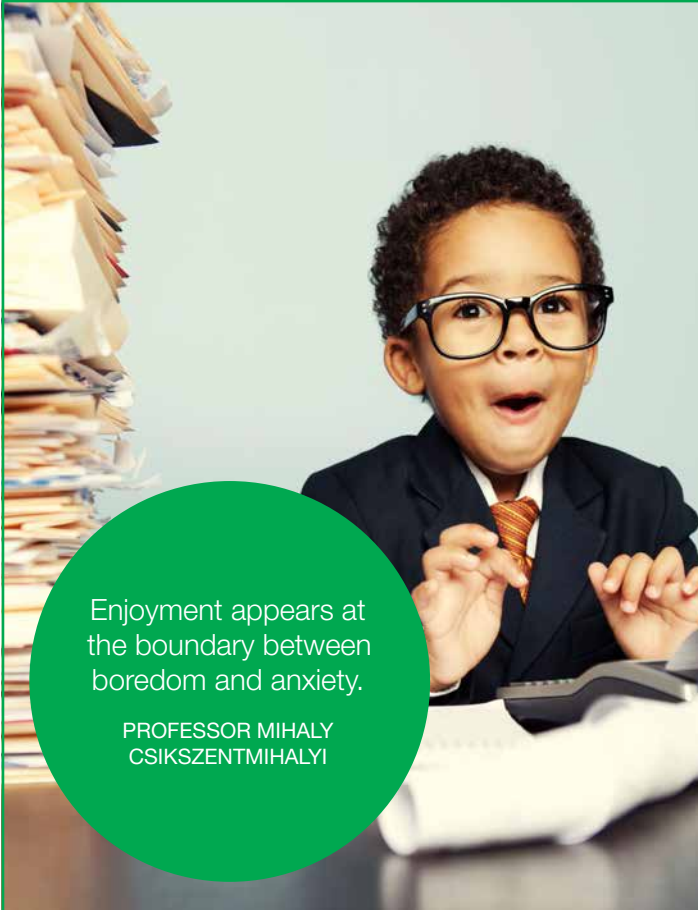
Feelings of rejection, failure, self-doubt, loss, boredom, anger, or frustration are a normal part of life. While it can be tempting to suppress or distract yourself from these feelings, researchers have found that developing distress tolerance – being able to shift to the upside or the downside of your emotions to get the best possible outcome for the situation – can help you become a better learner, be more successful, and experience the deepest sense of wellbeing in life.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Naming your emotions:** When you experience emotional discomfort, take a few moments to notice what's happening in your body, then try to identify and name and gently observe the specific negative emotions you are experiencing and how it passes through your body.
- **Slowing down your responses:** When you experience a strong emotion such as anger, take a few moments to breathe deeply, and slow down your response. Then choose a response that is appropriate, respectful, and helpful for the situation you're in and the outcome you want.
- **Controlling the controllables:** If a situation or person is consistently triggering your negative emotions, make a list of what you can control and identify the actions on which you want to focus your attention, energy, and efforts.

To learn more about emotional agility from Dr. Susan David [click here](#).

ENGAGEMENT



Enjoyment appears at the boundary between boredom and anxiety.

PROFESSOR MIHALY
CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

CREATING MOMENTS OF FLOW

Flow is the feeling you get when you're fully absorbed in what you're doing. It's that feeling of "being in the zone" or "one with the music" that comes when time seems to stop, and you lose all sense of consciousness. In these moments your strengths are fully utilized, stretched to a manageable limit so you're learning, growing, improving, and advancing. Opportunities for flow leave you feeling more involved in your life, having a stronger sense of control, and higher levels of confidence.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Meet your best possible self:** Spend 15–20 minutes journaling about what might be possible in the year ahead if you were using your strengths regularly in moments of flow at work.
- **Craft your job:** Note down all the tasks in your job and divide them into those you enjoy and those that drain you. How could you change the type and number of tasks you undertake, who you spend your time with, or how you think about different tasks to create more opportunities for flow in your work?
- **Weekly strengths plan:** Note down what might be possible this week if you were able to regularly use your strengths in a state of flow and try to prioritize these tasks.

To learn more about job crafting from Professor Amy Wrzesniewski [click here](#).

DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTHS

Studies find that when you have the opportunity to use your strengths (those things you are good at and actually enjoy doing), you are likely to feel more confident, creative, engaged, and satisfied with your work and your life. A strength represents the way your brain is wired to perform at its best, so as you've practiced particular thoughts, feelings, and behaviors so often, you've built up neural pathways that make it easier, more effective, and more enjoyable to work in these ways.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Naming your strengths:** Use one of the easy-to-use online strengths assessment tools. Gallup Strengths Finder (gallupstrengthscenter.com) and the Strengths Profile (strengthsprofile.com) are paid assessments, or we like the free 10-minute VIA Survey (viacharacter.org).
- **Reflecting your best self:** Ask at least five people from different contexts in your life to note down a story about a time when they've seen you really engaged, energized, and enjoying what you were doing. Look for common themes of how your strengths show up in your best moments.
- **Daily strengths reflection:** At the end of each day take a few minutes to journal about what you discovered about your strengths. Which strengths did you use well? Did you underplay or overplay any of your strengths?

To learn more about strengths from Dr. Ryan Niemiec [click here](#).

STAYING PLAYFUL

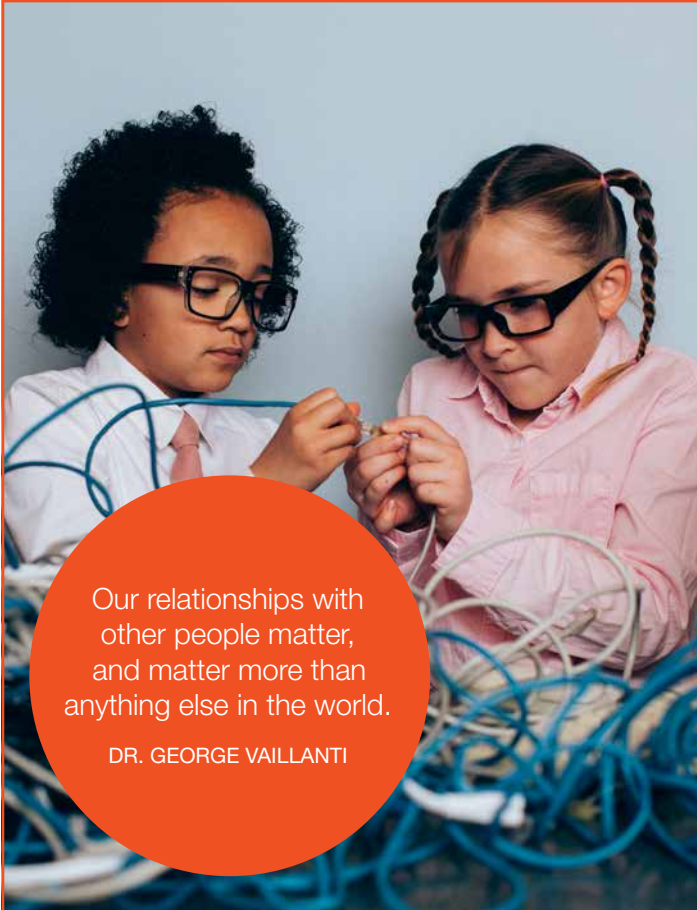
We are built to play and built through play, as it allows you to see things in a different way and explore new behaviors, thoughts, strategies, and ways of being that stimulates your brain for learning, growth, and creativity. Give yourself permission to surrender to your curiosity as you improvise and explore new ways of doing things, losing track of time and any sense of self-consciousness in the process. Enjoy the fun of feeling actively engaged in what you are doing without the need for any bigger outcome.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Creating your play history:** Spend time remembering what you did as a child that really got you excited and gave you joy. Note down ways you might be able to recreate these feelings in your job.
- **Being playful:** Every day find a way to play. It could be sharing a joke with someone, creating something new, or just letting loose for a while. Make time to play, knowing it is a great path to learning, creativity, and innovation.
- **Getting active:** One of the quickest ways to jump-start play is to start moving. Consider setting up a play area at work that involves physical activities – like throwing a ball, Velcro darts, or skittles.

To learn more about play from Stella Grizont [click here](#).

RELATIONSHIPS



Our relationships with other people matter, and matter more than anything else in the world.

DR. GEORGE VAILLANTI

LETTING GO & FORGIVING

Unfortunately harm, trauma, and injustice are common occurrences in work and life that can lead to retribution, condemnation, victimization, and revenge, and as a result individual performance and wellbeing almost always deteriorate. Research has found that learning to forgive and letting go can help you be less hateful, hostile, and anxious. Studies suggest you can do this by practicing compassion and looking for what you've learned and how you've grown from the experience.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Finding meaning:** Spend 20-30 minutes writing about a recent transgression you have personally experienced. Consider how this event could be an opportunity to grow and move forward. Is it really worth holding onto and not forgiving the other person?
- **Building forgiveness muscles:** Make a conscious effort to not talk disparagingly about those who have hurt you. You don't have to say good things, but if you refrain from talking negatively, it will feed the more forgiving side of your mind and your heart.
- **Gifting of mercy:** If you are holding a grudge toward someone who has wronged you, try to see them as a person who behaved badly and forgive them this moment of human learning. We all have them.

To learn more about forgiveness from Fred Luskin [click here](#).

PRACTICING COMPASSION

You can safely assume that there is pain in every room in your organization. Studies are finding that when compassion – your desire to alleviate suffering – is practiced, you're likely to improve your resilience and be more engaged and committed to your organization. Increasing compassion involves being attuned to the suffering of others, not blaming or judging them, showing empathy and concern, and taking practical actions to provide support. Any small thing you can offer may make a big difference to a person's sense of belonging, support, and self-worth.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Being available:** When someone talks to you, give them your full attention. Put aside your tasks, turn away from your computer, and listen carefully to what they're saying.
- **Listening empathetically:** When someone is telling you about a difficult situation or challenge, give them your full attention without interrupting or feeling you need to jump in with advice or to try to fix their problem. Try to be aware, non-judgemental, and curious about their story.
- **Offering micro-moves:** Take small actions or gestures to help the person feel like their suffering is acknowledged. It might be offering to help with their workload or checking in with them regularly to see that they're managing ok.

To learn more about practicing compassion from Monica Worline [click here](#).

SHARING GOOD TIMES

One conversation, one e-mail exchange, or one moment of connecting in a meeting can leave you and the person you've connected with, with a sense of vitality and can benefit the wellbeing and performance of you both. Studies have found that you can nurture high-quality connections by engaging respectfully with others by being present, listening actively, being genuine, and conveying affirmation. You can also help to engage others more in tasks by sharing information, advocating for others, being accommodating to improve their performance, and nurturing their success.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Prioritizing friendships:** Identify three relationships you would like to invest more time in. For each of these, create a ritual (to perform on a daily, weekly, or fortnightly basis) that ensures you are regularly in touch.
- **Responding actively and constructively:** When someone shares good news with you, slow down and take a moment to ask them some active and constructive questions to help them expand and savor their good fortune.
- **Looking For Strengths:** Enter your next work meeting wearing "strengths goggles" – and looking for the moments where your colleagues are at their best. After you spot their strength(s), if the timing is right, tell the person what you saw and why you value their use of this strength.

To learn more about high quality connections from Professor Jane Dutton [click here](#).

MEANING



The single strongest predictor of meaningfulness is the belief that our actions make a positive difference for others.

PROFESSOR ADAM GRANT

CREATING PURPOSE

Your purpose is the driving force behind who you are; it's the internal compass that motivates you to keep heading in the direction of how you want to live your life. It involves tapping into your deepest desires to contribute and to make a difference to something bigger than yourself. Without purpose, you can drift through life aimlessly. But with it, studies have found you'll be more motivated to accomplish the goals that matter most to you, and be resilient in the face of challenges.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **For the sake of what?:** Spend ten minutes writing about what you are willing to get out of your comfort zone for, to risk failure, to put your ego aside and truly show up for. How can you start right now?
- **Making the mundane meaningful:** Write down a task that feels devoid of meaning. Then, draw an arrow to the right and ask: "What's the purpose of this task?" "What will it accomplish?" And write down your answer. Keep repeating this step until you see the bigger value of a little task.
- **Outsourcing inspiration:** Gain inspiration and meaning by connecting to the people impacted by the work you do. Learn more about the challenges they face and the differences your work can make in their lives.

To learn more about purpose from Emily Esfahani Smith [click here](#).

MAKING PASSION HARMONIOUS

Feeling passionate about key activities can become a defining feature of who you are and what makes your life worth living. But over time a passion can become obsessive if it takes control of your life, damages your relationships, and undermines your wellbeing. Instead, when your passions are harmonious – kept in balance with other parts of your life – studies suggest you'll experience higher levels of health and job satisfaction. Choosing which passions you engage in, how you engage in them, and how you balance them can keep them harmonious.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Restoring balance:** After a short burst of obsessive passion to reach a milestone, it's important to rebalance your life and put your passion back into perspective. Remind yourself of the other things you love. Go back to your normal schedule. Revert to who you really are when life is harmonious.
- **Cultivating alternative passions:** Having more than one passion in your life will help you keep a passion from getting out of control. What would you like to pursue purely for the joy of the activity? What lights you up outside of work?
- **Setting boundaries:** Avoid bringing your work home whenever you can. Leave your computer at work, and limit checking your work emails at home or on holidays. You are worth a break.

To learn more about harmonious passion with Professor Robert Vallerand [click here](#).

ALLOWING TRANSCENDENCE

Transcendent states occur when your sense of self washes away, along with all your petty concerns and desires and you feel deeply connected to other people and everything else that exists in the world. It is the feeling of awe that comes when you notice and engage with something so grand and vast that you can't comprehend it. The result is that your anxieties evaporate, your generosity and concern for others increases, life finally seems to make sense, and you experience a deep state of peace and wellbeing.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Being awed by nature:** Find ways to regularly be inspired by the awe of nature. Use mindfulness to be curious and open to the experience – use all your five senses to notice your surroundings as if it was the first time you had experienced them.
- **Finding a spiritual practice:** If you feel there is a higher power guiding you, then make time to connect, to reflect, and to absorb the sense of wonder, love, and purpose that this offers.
- **Getting perspective:** As you are experiencing a sense of awe, try to answer the question: "Who am I?" Write 20 sentences, each beginning with "I am" and allow this to intensify your experience of awe.

To learn more about transcendence with David Yaden [click here](#).

ACCOMPLISHMENT



Grit is living life like it's a marathon rather than a sprint.

PROFESSOR ANGELA DUCKWORTH

PRACTICING A GROWTH MINDSET

People with a “growth mindset” believe that while you’re born with a certain amount of talent and intelligence, with learning and effort you can always improve – and neuroscience validates this belief. As a result, people who practice a growth mindset have the confidence to take on new challenges, re-frame failure and criticisms as teachable moments, and are able to achieve increasingly higher levels of success as their skills improve as a result of these experiences.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Setting learning goals:** Each week have at least one learning goal you want to improve upon. As you tackle this goal try to practice your growth mindset as you let go of the outcome, embrace your mistakes, and identify the processes and efforts you can build upon to keep improving.
- **Getting comfortable with failure:** Write down the three biggest mistakes you’ve made at work in the last year. Now, next to each one list the lessons or insights you gained.
- **Naming your fixed mindset:** Give your fixed mindset voice a name. Start tuning into the stories this voice is telling you when you fear failure or criticism. Try to talk back to it in a growth mindset voice.

To learn more about growth mindsets with Professor Carol Dweck [click here](#).

BEING SELF-COMPASSIONATE

When things go wrong self-criticism is often our first response but the problem with this approach is it leaves your brain feeling threatened, demoralized, and stuck in a cycle of rumination, procrastination, and self-loathing that make it hard to take action. Tapping into your self-compassion, however, can help you to break your patterns of self-criticism while still letting you to be honest about your fears, to remember that no one is perfect, and to enhance your motivation, performance, and resilience.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Creating a mantra:** Consider what a wise and kind friend would say to you in the moments you want to beat yourself up. For example: “You got this. Just slow down. Take a breath.” Or even: “You’re doing the best you can.”
- **Soothing your pain:** Kind physical gestures have an immediate effect on our bodies. Try putting your hands over your heart or placing one hand over the opposite wrist and take eight deep breaths.
- **Self-compassion bracelet:** Wear a self-compassion bracelet, and every time you notice a self-criticism switch the bracelet to your other arm. Acknowledge this is a moment of suffering, that it is part of being human to experience difficulties, and be kind to yourself.

To learn more about self-compassion from Dr. Kristin Neff [click here](#).

BOOSTING RESILIENCE

90% of us have a psychological immune system that allows us to be naturally resilient and recover quickly from these experiences. But the strength and speed of our response is often determined by the stories we tell ourselves.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Challenging your beliefs:** Write down a story that’s causing you anguish and ask: Is this story true? Is it absolutely accurate? Is there another equally believable story that would serve me better right now?
- **Leaning into the suck:** Rather than trying to rid yourself of painful feelings, know that they are part of your brain’s natural protection and healing systems. Let yourself experience the emotions and you will find they pass more quickly.
- **Banning “always”:** Words like “never” and “always” are signs of permanent mistakes in your thinking. By becoming aware of the absolutes you tell in your stories, you can quickly regain a sense of control and choice.

To learn more about boosting resilience from Dr. Judith Beck [click here](#).

HEALTH



Small choices about the way you eat, move, and sleep have a big impact.

TOM RATH

COMPLETING THE STRESS CYCLE

Research suggests that in modern life often our fight-flight-freeze stress response cycle becomes stuck due to lack of a clear signal that the struggle has passed and you are safe. As a result, your neurochemicals and hormones degrade but never shift into relaxation. In order to complete the “stress cycle” we need signal to our body that the stressor has passed and that we’re safe.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Physical activity:** Literally any movement of your body is what tells your brain you have successfully survived the threat and now your body is a safe place to live. Physical activity is the single most efficient strategy for completing the stress response cycle.
- **Affection:** It doesn’t have to be physical affection, though physical affection is great; a warm hug, in a safe and trusting context, can do as much to help your body feel like it has escaped a threat. Animals have also been found to be an effective source of affection.
- **A Big Laugh Or Cry:** By letting it all out with a good cry or encouraging endorphin production through a hearty belly laugh, embodying these emotional extremes allows us to release pent up emotions and complete the stress cycle.

To learn more about stressing less with Loretta Breuning [click here](#).

EATING WISELY

Try to start thinking about food not as calories, but as energy. After all, just about everything you eat is converted by your body into glucose, which provides the energy your body and brain need to stay alert and productive. When you’re running low on glucose, you have a tough time staying focused, your attention drifts and your body becomes sluggish. Eating well not only bolsters your health in the short- and long-term, but it can also improve your mood and keep your energy levels high.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Planning your diet:** Make your eating decisions before you get hungry. Have something healthy on hand to make good eating choices easier.
- **Eating small and frequently:** Start your day right with a high-protein breakfast, then consume smaller, more frequent meals rather than relying on a midday feast or big evening meal to keep up your energy.
- **Tracking and adjust:** Ask yourself if what you are about to eat is a net gain or a net loss for your energy, based on what you know about all the ingredients. By asking this question, you will make better decisions in the moment and be aware of how you’re tracking across the day.

To learn more about eating wisely from Tom Rath [click here](#).

MOVE JOYFULLY

Being active throughout the day can keep you healthy and offset the chronic inactivity most of us experience. Studies suggest that regular exercise not only improves your physical health generally, it also improves your attention, memory, mood and confidence. The good news is that there are literally hundreds of moments in a day when you can embed extra activity in your routine. The key is to find activities that you enjoy doing and are willing to do on a regular basis.

WHAT CAN I TRY?

- **Counting your steps:** Get a Fitbit or phone app to measure the steps you take each day. Start small, and boost your number by adding ten minutes of walking per day.
- **Getting up regularly:** Set a timer that goes off every 20 to 30 minutes and take a movement break for at least two minutes to help improve your creativity, productivity, and wellbeing. If you sit through meetings all day, stand in the back of the room for part of the time.
- **Starting early:** Just 20 minutes of moderate activity could significantly improve your mood for the next twelve hours. Begin your day with a brisk walk, a stop at the local gym, or a yoga session at home.

To learn more about joyful movement from Dr. Kelly McGonigal [click here](#).

BE GENTLE WITH YOUR WELLBEING

We're going to make a safe bet that you don't need anything else to beat yourself up about. Caring for your wellbeing is a lifetime's journey. Remember your goal isn't about improving one score on a survey, but AMPlifying your ability, motivation, and psychological safety so you can better navigate the highs and lows everyone experiences.

Give yourself permission to try, to fail, to learn, and to get up and try again. Remember that signs of struggle are simply an invitation to continue playfully experimenting as you figure out what works best for you and the outcomes you want.

Be honest with yourself about where you are on the journey, knowing now that wellbeing is neither a one-off nor a one-size-fits-all affair. Be open to discovering better ways to care for yourself at different times in your life, knowing that you are worthy of feeling good and doing well.

Just like you, when it comes to AMPlifying wellbeing, we're all learning. It's our heartfelt hope that this book and the online tools we've provided help make the journey a little faster, a little easier, and a lot more enjoyable for you.

BONUS: WELLBEING BUDDY CHECK-IN

As you playfully experiment with new wellbeing behaviors a check-in with a buddy can help you discover what works best for you. This can be as simple as a five-minute conversation on the phone on the way to work, over a quick coffee or bite of lunch, or even over text to ask each other some of the following questions:

- **WHAT TINY WELLBEING BEHAVIOR HAVE YOU BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH?**

This is where you'll share what you've tried. Be honest – remember this is your safe space. If you haven't made much progress, that's okay. This is your moment to explore what's getting stuck. If you're kicking wellbeing goals then share what's happening.

- **WHAT'S WORKING WELL?**

We promise even in your worst moments something small will be working. It might only be the fact that you're having this check-in, but it still counts! Identifying these strengths is how you continue improving your wellbeing ability levels and sustain your motivation, so with humble pride, savor your success.

- **WHERE ARE YOU STRUGGLING?**

Even during your best moments it's always worth thinking about what else you could try to improve or sustain your effort – this is how you build mastery and boost your confidence. And if your list of struggles is long, just remember that signs of struggle are your body's invitation to continue playfully experimenting as you figure out what works best for you and the outcomes you want.

- **WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING ABOUT CARING FOR YOUR WELLBEING?**

At the end of the day, remember that your goal is to AMPlify your ability to care for your wellbeing as the world around you changes. While outcomes are great, it is the learning you take from your playful experiments that you will carry forward to new wellbeing challenges.

- **WHAT WILL YOU TRY NEXT?**

You can continue what you're doing, adjust your approach as needed, try an entirely different wellbeing behavior, or even focus on a different PERMAH wellbeing factor. Just keep playfully experimenting and checking in with your buddy about how you're doing.

WANT MORE?

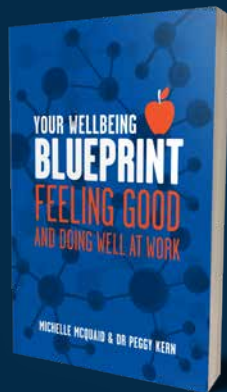
For more ideas, be sure to check out other ways you can boost your wellbeing:



Want to test your levels of wellbeing further? Try the free PERMAH Wellbeing Survey and in less than five minutes you'll receive a detailed report on your levels of wellbeing ability, motivation, and psychological safety and your PERMAH wellbeing factors. You can even create a personal wellbeing plan from our database of more than 200 evidence-based wellbeing behaviors. **Just visit permahsurvey.com.**



Want daily reminders of all the different evidence-based ways you can improve your wellbeing using Professor Martin Seligman's PERMAH framework? Packed with over 50 small, practical, evidence-based interventions, you can use this wall chart for your school, workplace, or your home office. **Just click [here](#) to buy your poster.**



Want to be inspired by more than 100 evidence-based, busy-proof ways to improve wellbeing for yourself and others? Our best-selling book, "Your Wellbeing Blueprint," written with Dr. Peggy Kern, is the perfect way to accelerate your wellbeing knowledge. **Just click [here](#) to buy your book.**