



A new year and new beginning by Andy Holter

2023 is here and now is an opportunity to begin this new year with a new beginning, leaving the old behind and looking forward, not looking back. A wise quote reminds me of the importance of recognising that we cannot change what has passed, but we can change what is to come.

Wellbeing, also known as wellness, prudential value, or quality of life, refers to what is intrinsically valuable to a person. Wellbeing is what is ultimately good for this person and what is in the self-interest. We need to be mindful of our mental health as well as our physical health, and there are five main aspects of personal health: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual. To be considered well it is imperative for none of these areas to be neglected.

So as we enter a new year, many people will have started with new year's resolutions, perhaps eating healthier, improving work life balance and taking the first steps towards developing physical fitness. What can we expect to see for our physical and mental health as a result? A few examples include higher levels of wellbeing associated with a decreased risk of disease, illness, and injury, better immune functioning, speedier recovery and increased longevity. Individuals with high levels of wellbeing are more productive at work and are more likely to contribute to their communities.

Benefits within the workplace include improved morale, better teamwork and social networks, increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, higher job satisfaction and stronger engagement.

As we go forward into 2023, let's remember the five ways to wellbeing:

1. Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

Try to do something different today and make a connection.

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email
- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they reply
- Give a colleague a lift to work or share the journey home

2. Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being, but it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good. Slower-paced activities such as walking can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

- Take the stairs not the lift

- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Walk into work – perhaps with a colleague – so you can 'connect' as well
- Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey to work
- Organise a work sporting activity
- Do some 'easy exercise' like stretching, before you leave for work in the morning

3. Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing and savouring the moment can help to reaffirm your life priorities. Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

- Get a plant for your workspace
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting
- Take a different route on your journey to or from work
- Visit a new place for lunch

4. Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

- Sign up for a class
- Read the news or a book
- Set up a book club
- Do a crossword, Sudoku or Wordle
- Research something you've always wondered about
- Learn a new word

5. Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.



Manifest your intentions and reap the rewards

My new year's intention has been to use downtime in the car to listen to more podcasts, to help broaden my horizons and carve out some mindful time for myself. On day two, I came across Ferne Cotton's Happy Place podcast, which is worth dipping in and out of. She has some truly inspirational guests and shares some easy hints and tips for a more grounded, grateful life. In one episode she talked about the practice of 'manifesting' change. Manifesting is based on the idea that you can think your dreams into reality. By having a clear vision and focusing on it through a variety of manifestation methods, you can attract your dream into your life.

A day or two later, I met up with an FSTM colleague, Morgan from Bournemouth, and in amongst work chat, we too got onto the subject of manifesting and Morgan shared a simple practice she uses, which I'm sharing with you now in the hope that it will help to bring your resolutions to reality.

The method is known simply as '369' and it involves you writing down what you'd like to manifest three times in the morning, six times during the day, and nine times in the evening. Those tech-savvy among you may have come across it on TikTok under the hashtag '369method' – over 165 million views and counting! It's based on the premise that we tend to attract what we give our attention to – hence writing it down so many times in a day, magnetising your dreams into reality.

Sound simple? It really is as easy as this:

1. Write down your affirmation three times as soon as you wake up in the morning.
2. Write down your affirmation six times during the afternoon
3. Write your affirmation nine times before you go to bed

Lastly – bear in mind it's much more likely to come to fruition if you take action too... give it a go and good luck!

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Don't forget to share your wintery photographs with Chris Arnold at atree.kent.hove@cpjfield.co.uk for his charity photo calendar. Every month will be a different image chosen from all images sent – keep them coming...prizes at stake for the best each month and I'm in the running so far...!

This year's top three wellbeing tips from Andy

1. Look after yourself physically, to feel better mentally
2. Practise self-care, especially remember to work on a healthy work-life balance
3. Consider taking a break from social media, even if only for a few days

Potato and Kale Soup

Ingredients:

- 4 strips bacon, diced (optional)
- 4 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 2 cups firmly packed chopped kale leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

In a soup pot, cook bacon until crisp. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon and set aside on paper towels to drain.

Add potatoes, onions, and garlic to bacon drippings in soup pot and cook for five minutes. Add stock, kale, salt, and pepper and simmer for an hour, or until potatoes are soft.

Transfer soup to a blender or food processor and puree in batches. Return to soup pot and thin with stock if necessary.

Looking for more recipe inspiration to get through the darker months? – check out www.annasfamilykitchen.com for loads of quick, easy and delicious mid-week meals. You're welcome!

