

e-teaching

Management strategies for the classroom

Owning my Professional Development – supporting my wellbeing

We all have aims for our future. They may be for travel, career, finances or family, they will all energise our days and give us focus and hope to get through tougher times. We hear a lot about wellbeing in business and schools, and generally recognise that to care for ourselves we must prioritise wellbeing as key. But what is wellbeing and what does it mean to us in our lives? In *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements*, Tom Rath and Jim Hartner identify five aspects of wellbeing to support a thriving life.

Each of these elements needs our attention and will vary potentially from the extremes of suffering to thriving at different points in our lives. Critical to our work and personal lives, we will sense when we are off balance and through use of these individual components reduce a feeling of being overwhelmed and be better positioned to respond to challenges through resilience. Our aim is to thrive in as many aspects as possible and to create resilience through understanding that our lives will have variables depending on external and internal influences, including our family and friends, work commitments and colleagues, external pressures and uncertainty, environmental and economic pressures.

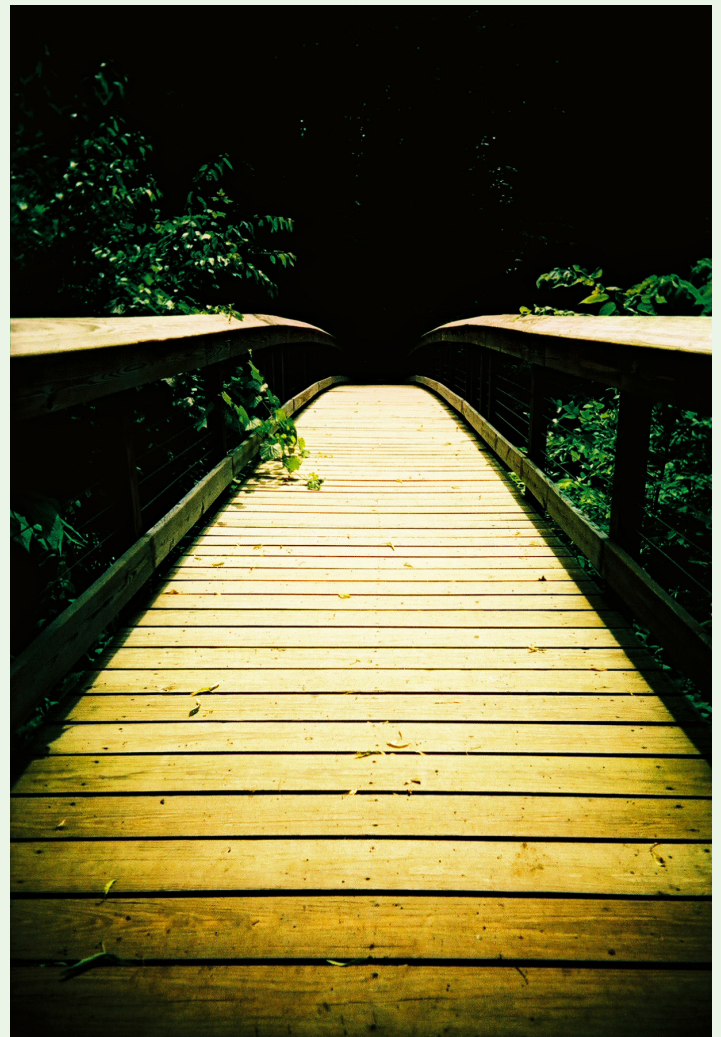
So let's meet these elements.

Career wellbeing

Your week is full of regular activities; this may be working full time, caring for others (children or parents), volunteering or other duties. The role that takes up the bulk of your time and consumes the best part of your week is classed as your "career". It is important to note that it is not aligned to financial gain or paid work as such. Reflecting on my own life, my "career" has varied greatly to include student, worker and caregiver of our children. Unquestionably this is the most impactful of the elements as it takes so much of our time. In corporate and educational settings I see this element having both negative and positive impacts on people and as such being a key point of decision making within their personal choices.

Social wellbeing

Our social wellbeing refers to the time we spend with those we want to, the relationships and people that we love and wish to be with more. The expansion of social media platforms has



supported us in rebuilding or extending social networks globally and has altered the traditional relationship permanently.

Financial wellbeing

Money is often a pressure to us all. Financial wellbeing does not mean having a lot of money or an abundance of assets, rather it is

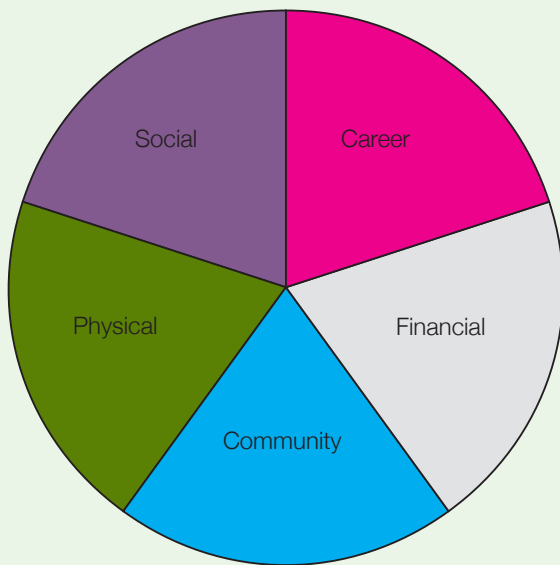
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about comfort with what you do and don't have, the stress associated with your financial circumstances. It is interesting to note that evidence suggests that those in western societies have lower financial wellbeing due to increased expectations.

Physical wellbeing

Heading into summer we wonder if we are fit and healthy. Our physical health has long had an impact on other aspects of our lives. In this sense we are not speaking of "health", rather the behaviours and activities that lead to the greater wellbeing of bodies and minds. Additionally, it is about not having physical pain or suffering on a daily basis.

Community wellbeing

Enriching our lives to a new level, Community wellbeing is about extending the positives in our lives through giving and gratitude. It is about selflessness and appreciation that recognises the quality of the air we breathe and water we drink, as much as how safe we feel in our surroundings. Additionally, it reflects on our social and charitable contributions to "give back" to others.

In planning for our future we need to specify what we want to achieve from our career wellbeing to set a platform for success. This should include self-assessment, realistic goal setting and establishing a support structure incorporating training and development.

In most corporate settings managers conduct a formal annual performance review including self-reflection and manager assessment and often also including peer reviews, commonly called 360 degree appraisals. The aim of such a process is to identify strengths, position for success and to establish a training and development framework to extend and enrich performance.

If your manager doesn't provide this opportunity for you, you can drive the process yourself by asking yourself a few core questions. Aim to answer through tangible and detailed examples rather than one or two word phrases. Enquiry should include:

- 1 Looking back over the past six to 12 months, what are you most proud of? Why?
- 2 What do you see as your three greatest strengths?

- S** Specific to what you are wanting to achieve; ensure your goal has clear purpose and is targeted, ie exactly what do you want to do?
- M** Measurable so that you can see the outcome and recognise when you have achieved what you set out to do, ie when will you know this has happened?
- A** Attainable such that you are able to complete the goal within the framework and expectations you set. Do you have the skills and structure to make this happen?
- R** Realistic, ensuring your aims are possible in the time lines and outlines you have set. Is this something you can do in the manner you are setting your goals?
- T** Time lined in all senses, when you want to complete it and the milestones along the way that will support positive achievement of your goal.

Within your role how do you use these talents?

- 3 What challenge or difficulty did you face in the last six to 12 months? What skills could have prevented it or supported you in resolving the situation?
- 4 Where do you see yourself in one year (alternatively four to five years)?
- 5 What capabilities, experiences or professional development will assist you in getting there?
- 6 Who can support and assist you?

Ideally you should select a trusted person, colleague or manager, to share your reflections with. Through vocalising it has been proven that we commit more to achievement. For example if we share with others that we are exercising to get fit, we are more likely to do it; if we tell family and friends about our improved eating plans, they will encourage us to continue.

Find some space, enjoy a tea and some "me time" while you reflect and identify a maximum of two or three defined SMART goals to drive you and clarify your self-purpose. With clarity comes achievement; with reflection comes increased emotional intelligence.

Reference

Rath, Tom, and James K Harter, 2010, *Wellbeing*, Gallup Press, New York.

Quotes on wellbeing

For a very long time now I've been saying to young women, 'You can have it all, but not all at the same time.' How important it is to take very good care of yourself, of your mental and physical and spiritual wellbeing; it's hard to do. It's easier to be a workaholic than to have a truly balanced life.

Quentin Bryce

Mental health is often missing from public health debates even though it's critical to wellbeing.

Diane Abbott