



June Education: What Is Well-Being?

Well-being is the experience of [health](#), [happiness](#), and [prosperity](#). It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, and a sense of meaning or purpose. More generally, well-being is just feeling well.

Well-being is something sought by just about everyone, because it includes so many positive things – feeling happy, healthy, socially connected, and purposeful. But unfortunately, well-being appears to be in decline (at least in the U.S.). And increasing your well-being can be tough without knowing what to do and how to do it.

Can You Actually Improve Your Well-Being?

Increasing your well-being is simple – there are tons of skills you can build. But increasing your well-being is not always easy – figuring out what parts of well-being are most important for you and figuring out how, exactly, to build well-being skills usually require some extra help.

How Long Does It Take to Improve Well-Being?

Usually when people start consistently using science-based techniques for enhancing well-being, they begin to feel better pretty quickly. In the research studies that I've conducted and read, most people show significant improvements within five weeks.

But you have to stick to it. If you are feeling better after five weeks, you can't just stop there.

Why? Well, you probably already know that if you stop eating healthy and go back to eating junk food, then you'll end up back where you started. It turns out that the exact same thing is true for different types of well-being. If you want to maintain the benefits you gain, you'll have to continue to engage in well-being-boosting practices to maintain your skills. So it's really helpful to have strategies and tools that help you stick to your well-being [goals](#) – for example, a happiness and well-being plan or a well-being boosting activity collection that you can continue to use throughout your life.

So, what are the skills you need to build and the practices you need to engage in to build your well-being? Here's what you need to know:

Where Does Well-Being Come From?

Well-being emerges from your thoughts, actions, and experiences – most of which we have control over. For example, when we think positive, we tend to have greater emotional well-being. When we [pursue meaningful relationships](#), we tend to have better social well-being. And when we lose our job – or just hate it – we tend to have lower [workplace](#) well-being. These examples start to reveal how broad well-being is, and how many different types of well-being there are.

Because well-being is such a broad experience, let's break it down into its different types.

Five Major Types of Well-Being Are:

- **Emotional Well-Being** – The ability to practice stress-[management](#) techniques, be resilient, and generate the emotions that lead to good feelings.
- **Physical Well-Being** – The ability to improve the functioning of your body through healthy eating and good exercise habits.
- **Social Well-Being** – The ability to communicate, develop meaningful relationships with others, and maintain a support network that helps you overcome [loneliness](#).
- **Workplace Well-Being** – The ability to pursue your interests, values, and purpose in order to gain meaning, happiness, and enrichment professionally.
- **Societal Well-Being** – The ability to actively participate in a thriving community, culture, and environment.

To build your overall well-being, you have to make sure all of these types are functioning to an extent.

Think of it like this. Imagine you are in a car. Your engine works great, and maybe your transmission works pretty well too, but your brakes don't work. Because your brakes don't work, it doesn't really matter how well your engine works. You're still going to have trouble going about your life.

The same thing is true for your well-being. If everything else in your life is going great, but you feel lonely, or you're eating unhealthfully, other areas of your life will be affected, and you likely won't feel as well as you want to.

Because each part of well-being is important to your overall sense of well-being, let's talk about how to build each type of well-being.

How Do You Build the Different Types of Well-Being?

Emotional Well-Being

To develop emotional well-being, we need to build emotional skills – skills like [positive thinking](#), [emotion regulation](#), and [mindfulness](#), for example. Often, we need to build a variety of these skills to cope with the wide variety of situations we encounter in our lives. When we have built these emotional well-being skills, we can better cope with stress, handle our emotions in the face of challenges, and quickly recover from disappointments. As a result, we can enjoy our lives a bit more and pursue our goals a bit more effectively.

Here are some of the skills that research suggests contribute to emotional well-being:

- Happiness Skills
- Positive Thinking Skills
- [Mindfulness](#) Skills
- [Resilience](#) Skills

Physical Well-Being

To develop our physical well-being, we need to know what a healthy diet and exercise routine looks like, so that we can implement effective strategies in our daily lives. When we improve our physical well-being, not only do we feel better, our newfound health can also help prevent many diseases, boost our emotional well-being, and limit the number of health challenges we have to deal with in our lives.

Here are some of the things that can help you boost your physical well-being:

- Eating for Health
- Correcting Nutritional Deficiencies
- Detoxing Your Body
- Removing Plastic From Your Home

Unfortunately, it's possible to eat healthy and still be unhealthy. We can accidentally miss important foods or nutrients. Or we can overburden ourselves with toxins from plastic or processed food. As a result, we may need to eat additional foods, detox our bodies, or prevent these toxins from entering our bodies again. This is why it's essential to learn about health, so that we can make the right changes – changes that lead to long-term health and well-being.

Social Well-Being

To develop our social well-being, we need to build our social skills – skills like [gratitude](#), kindness, and communication. Social skills make it easier for us to have positive interactions with others, helping us to feel less lonely, angry, or disconnected. When we have developed our social well-being, we feel more meaningfully connected to others.

Here are some of the skills that research suggests contribute to better social well-being:

- Practicing Gratitude
- [Building Meaningful Social Connections](#)
- [Managing Your Relationship with Technology](#)

It's important to know that building social well-being is one the best ways to build emotional well-being. When we feel socially connected, we also tend to just feel better, have more positive emotions, and we are able to cope better with challenges. This is why it's essential to build our social well-being.

Workplace Well-Being

To develop our workplace well-being, we need to build skills that help us pursue what really matters to us. This can include building professional skills which help us to advance more effectively, but it also includes things like living our values and maintaining work-life balance. These skills let us enjoy our work more, helping us to stay focused, motivated, and successful at work. When we have developed workplace well-being, our work, and therefore each day, feels more fulfilling.

Here are some of the key skills you need for workplace well-being:

- Maintaining Work-Life Balance
- Finding Your Purpose

Because we spend so much time at work, building our workplace well-being has a big impact on our overall well-being.

Societal Well-Being

To develop societal well-being, we need to build skills that make us feel interconnected with all things. We need to know how to support our environment, build stronger local communities, and foster a culture of compassion, fairness, and kindness. These skills help us feel like we're part of a thriving community that really supports one another and the world at large. When we cultivate societal well-being, we feel like we are a part of something bigger than just ourselves.

Although each one of us only makes up a tiny fraction of a society, it takes all of us to create societal well-being. If each one of us did one kind act for someone else in our community, then we would live in a very kind community. Or if all of us decide we are going to recycle, then suddenly we create a world with significantly less waste. In order to live in a healthy society, we too need to contribute to making a healthy society.

Here are some of the skills you can build for greater societal well-being:

- Living Your Values
- Creating a Plastic-Free Home
- [Making Positive Impacts in Other People's Lives](#)
- Kindness

Who Benefits Most From Building Well-Being?

Not everyone experiences the same benefits from building their well-being. For example, lots of research suggests that the more motivated you are to build well-being skills, the greater the impact. Perhaps this is not surprising.

Still other research shows that having skills like a growth mindset or a [positive attitude](#) can actually help you build your other well-being skills more easily. This is why I tend to encourage people to [build these skills first](#) – afterwards, you may be able to increase the other types of well-being more easily.

In addition, building well-being skills is perhaps most beneficial for people who are struggling with well-being the most, particularly if they've recently undergone something [stressful](#). It may be harder to build well-being during this time or for these people, but the impact may be greater, because there is more room for improvement.

