The Art & Science of Personal Wellness

THE ART & SCIENCE OF PERSONAL WELLNESS

A.J. STEPHEN

Fanshawe College Pressbooks London, Ontario



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Feedback

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PREFACE

THE ORIGINS OF INDS-1081



A.J. Stephen, Professor, Fanshawe College. Photo: Helen and Luis Photography, All Rights Reserved

My journey teaching wellness began unexpectedly when I was a newly hired faculty member at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, Canada. I was initially brought on to teach biology and human anatomy, given my background in health sciences. Not long after I started, my manager asked if I would be interested in teaching a newer course called "Personal Wellness" (INDS-1081). It debuted the previous semester, and she needed someone to take over immediately. She figured my health and fitness experience would make me a good fit. After all, wellness is basically just exercising and healthy eating, isn't it? How hard could it be? Though I was not entirely sure what I was getting myself into, I was a young professor eager to prove myself. So, I jumped at the opportunity.

I quickly realized I had a monumental task ahead of me. If a well-designed course is like a functioning human body (i.e., structured, organized, and purposeful), then I was staring at a heap of unassembled bones, tissue, and unidentifiable fragments scattered all over the ground. Some pieces fit; others clearly did not. I had to sift through the mess, find the pieces that mattered, and begin assembling a structure that at least somewhat resembled a course designed to teach students about personal wellness.

It was not easy. Over the following weeks, I spent countless hours stripping away 'fluff', reorganizing material,

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and rebuilding a course that better reflected the essence of wellness. I also spent time reading up on several concepts that I was unfamiliar with – more on that later. By the time the semester began, the course was somewhat coherent, readable (at least to me), and more aligned with what you would expect from a college-level curriculum.

INDS-1081 has since undergone several revisions with the goal of providing students with a memorable learning experience using the most relevant, accurate, and interesting content possible. At Fanshawe, the course has grown from one section (50 students) per term, to over eight sections (400+ students) per term; that works out to over 1000 students taking the course yearly. There are also six other faculty members at Fanshawe who teach the course alongside me.

When presented the right way and received with an open mind, personal wellness is interesting, engaging, and transformative. Seeing students apply what they have learned to improve their well-being, and approach life with greater balance and resilience, has been incredibly rewarding. This experience has deepened my passion for promoting wellness education and reaffirmed my belief in the power of intentional, well-designed learning to inspire lasting personal growth.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE



"Poster Mockup", by RaniRamli, Pixabay License. Modified: Added quote by the author.

In response to student feedback and my own reflection on course content, I found myself diving into book after book, each contributing relevant and unique perspectives related to topics under the wellness umbrella. The good news? Many brilliant minds, whether intentionally or not, have compiled a wealth of wisdom, insight, and practical knowledge on wellness-related topics. The bad news? Accessing that goldmine of information often requires reading or listening to countless books (ain't nobody got time for that!). Not to mention, most of these resources are not free.

This book represents nearly a decade of exploration, reflection, student feedback, and teaching experience all distilled into a straightforward, accessible resource. It aims to clearly define what personal wellness is and offers battle-tested, evidence-based strategies to practice and promote it.

There are undoubtedly more exceptional works out there that are not (yet) included in this book. As new research, information and insights emerge, I plan to keep updating and refining this book via new editions. If

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you believe there is a resource, concept, or topic that should be included or considered, I encourage you to send it my way!

USING THIS BOOK



"Influencer Writing," by expresswriters, Pixabay License

This book is a guide, not a prescription.

While I am a kinesiologist and educator, I am not a psychologist, financial advisor, sociologist, spiritual leader, therapist, physician, life coach, or social worker. Many of the insights shared in this book are drawn from the knowledge, research, and wisdom of experts in these fields, whose expertise far exceeds my own. These experts are listed in the acknowledgments section and cited throughout the book. If you wish to delve deeper or further clarify certain concepts discussed, I encourage you to explore the original works cited.

My hope is that resource empowers readers to thrive in a modern world flooded with misinformation, deception, distractions, and challenges. Wellness is within reach; are you ready?

Interested in adopting this textbook for a course?

If you are an educator interested in adopting this textbook for a course at your secondary or post-secondary institution, I would be happy to support you. For help developing a course outline, creating assessments and activities, and designing for flexible delivery modes, please reach out to me directly. I will gladly help to make your implementation smooth and effective.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT ON EARTH IS WELLNESS?

Chapter Overview

- 1.0 Learning Objectives
- 1.1 "I'm Not Feeling Well"
- 1.2 Defining Wellness
- 1.3 History of Wellness
- 1.4 The Eight Dimensions of Wellness
- 1.5 Related Terms
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Reflection
- 1.8 Knowledge Check

1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define wellness and explain its three main elements.
- Explore the historical evolution of wellness from its early roots to its modern-day conceptualization.
- Define the eight dimensions of wellness.
- Describe how the dimensions of wellness contribute to well-being.
- Differentiate between wellness and related terms.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, Environmental, Occupational, and Financial.

1.1 "I'M NOT FEELING WELL"



Picture This:



Student, Alexandra_Koch, Pixabay License.

You are sitting in class, half-listening as your instructor reads PowerPoint slides you could have just as easily reviewed on your own.

Minutes drag by when suddenly, a wave of nausea crashes over you.

At first, it is subtle. But with each passing moment, the sensation intensifies. You grimace, clutch your stomach, and lower your head onto the desk in defeat. Your classmate beside you leans over, concern etched on their face, and whispers, "Hey, are you okay?"

Without looking up, you mutter, "I'm not feeling well."

In that moment, you are referring to your physical health. Nausea, a symptom of what's likely a passing illness (or maybe that bad burrito you ate earlier), indicates something is wrong in your physical body. With rest, antacids, or another simple remedy, you will likely feel better within hours to days.



"Yoga", by leninscape, Pixabay LIcense.

A Broader View of Wellness

Everyday language often blurs the lines between wellness and health, leading many to believe they essentially mean the same thing. Most people hear wellness and immediately think of themes related to physical or mental health (e.g., symptoms like aching muscles, a runny nose, fatigue, headaches, or feelings of anxiety) that can be treated with drugs, products, or supplements. This distinction is where confusion often arises. Companies capitalize on this misunderstanding, slapping the term wellness on everything from essential oils to online courses designed to make you a millionaire overnight in an attempt to convince you that their product will meaningfully improve your life.

If wellness, or lack thereof, can refer to something as ordinary as a stomachache and serve as a trendy buzzword for "miracle" products, do we actually understand what it means? This chapter defines wellness, explores its historical roots, and introduces its eight interconnected dimensions.

1.2 DEFINING WELLNESS

This book defines wellness as a complex process of making choices toward optimal being.

This definition highlights three key elements:



Let's unpack them.

1. Process



A tree containing the eight dimensions of wellness: physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social, environmental, occupational, and financial. "Tree of Wellness", by Freddy Vale, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Wellness is a process.

A process is a series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular outcome. Wellness is not just a single process per se, but rather a collection of interconnected processes across various dimensions.

The time required to navigate and complete these processes can vary greatly depending on their complexity,

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the amount of effort required, and external influences like resource availability and support systems. For example, learning to boil water to cook a hard-boiled egg is a relatively quick and straightforward process. Developing proficiency in public speaking, a much more intricate and complex process, may take months or even years of effort.

Within the field of health sciences, psychology, and other models, wellness is recognized as an active, dynamic, and evolving process rather than a fixed state (Sagner et al., 2014). Your well-being can fluctuate due to various factors such as life events, health changes, or personal growth. A helpful way to visualize this dynamic nature is as a continuum or scale, as shown below.

Illness - Wellness Continuum



"Illness-Wellness Continuum" by Stayfitmom, Used under FDEd (CAN), Modifications: Colour change, and additional text added.

Image Description

The image depicts a Wellness Continuum, a visual representation of health ranging from Pre-Mature Death to High-Level Wellness. The continuum is divided into three key sections:

Disease Developing (0–3): Shaded in shades of red, orange, and yellow, representing declining health. Zero indicates Pre-Mature Death. Labels include Signs, Symptoms, and Disease, highlighting the progressive worsening of health conditions.

Comfort Zone (4–6): Displayed in green, symbolizing a neutral state referred to as False Wellness. This middle section represents individuals who may not feel sick but aren't actively pursuing wellness. Labelled as the Comfort Zone, implying a stagnant state with potential hidden risks.

Wellness Developing (7–10): Shaded in blue gradients, representing optimal health and growth. Focused on Education, Growth, and Awareness. The continuum progresses towards 10, signifying High-Level Wellness, which reflects optimal health and well-being.

The continuum is flanked by two arrows. A red arrow pointing left towards Pre-Mature Death. A blue arrow pointing right towards High-Level Wellness. A black line runs through the middle, connecting the entire spectrum and illustrating the continuous nature of health development.

2. Choices

Wellness involves choices.

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Wellness largely hinges on the voluntary, deliberate decisions made by you, the individual. Some decisions may be relatively easy, such as taking a ten-minute walk every morning or drinking an extra glass of water at mealtimes. Others may demand great commitment or sacrifice, such as starting a new or challenging fitness routine, setting boundaries for a potentially unhealthy relationship, or addressing chronically high-stress levels. While external factors, such as social support or environmental conditions, may play a role in influencing these decisions, wellness stresses the importance of **personal agency** and self-responsibility for all decisions one makes (themes further discussed in Chapter 3).

The sum of your choices and behaviours determines whether an individual moves closer to high-level wellness or further away from it. Choices that cause improvements in one dimension of wellness may also have a ripple effect on others. For instance, practicing physical wellness by participating in a weekly group fitness class may create opportunities for interpersonal dialogue and, thus, potentially improve social well-being. When taken to the extreme, however, efforts to practice one dimension of wellness can sometimes create unintended adverse effects on other dimensions. For example, choosing to work excessively to build financial wealth may increase stress due to poor sleep (physical wellness) or social interaction (social wellness). It is important to make balanced and well-informed choices that support an upward trend across all dimensions of wellness.

3. Optimal Being

"Optimal Being" is the ultimate goal of wellness.

The term "being" has been adopted from the work of Canadian intellectual, professor, and clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson. Inspired by the work of philosopher Martin Heidegger, Peterson describes "being" as:

 ${m W}$ hat each of us experiences subjectively, personally, and individually, as well as what we experience jointly with others. As such, it includes emotions, drives, dreams, visions, revelations, and our private thoughts and perceptions." (Peterson, 2018, p. 25)



This term was selected for use in this book due to its inevitable nature to be shaped by our decisions and actions; this ties extremely well with how wellness is defined in this book. As Peterson explains:

"Being is also, finally, something that is brought into existence by action, so its nature is to an indeterminate degree a consequence of our decisions and choices – something shaped by our hypothetical free will." (Peterson, 2018, p. 26)

Optimal refers to achieving the best possible outcome under a given set of circumstances. Everyone's definition of optimal will differ, shaped by their goals, values, beliefs, strengths, and limitations. Let's look at an example below using two different people, which reflects how deeply personal and context-dependent some dimensions of wellness can be.

Dimension of Wellness	Person A's "Optimal"	Person B's "Optimal"
Physical	Managing chronic pain effectively enough to engage in meaningful activities	Peak fitness to compete in athletic events
Social	Maintaining a small, close-knit group of trusted friends	Participating in significant community events and networking extensively
Emotional	Ability to cope with stress through mindfulness and relaxation techniques	Developing deep emotional intelligence and empathy

The term "optimal being" is employed in various fields to denote the pursuit of the best possible state of human existence. Closely linked to well-being and quality of life, this concept is expansive, complex, and deeply mysterious, as it explores the intricate balance between personal experiences, emotions, and the shared realities that shape who we are.

Present & Future Being

While nurturing our present being is necessary, the choices one makes must also empower future being. This means prioritizing decisions that foster long-term and sustainable health, growth, balance, and fulfillment. This forward-thinking approach separates true wellness from fleeting self-gratification (i.e., false wellness) and requires discipline, sacrifice, and, at times, discomfort (topics discussed in subsequent chapters). By consistently aligning our daily actions with the growth and well-being of our future selves, we have a more meaningful path toward achieving higher-level wellness.

Personal Versus Group Wellness

There is a clear distinction between personal and group wellness. Personal wellness is centred on the individual who actively makes personal, voluntary, and deliberate choices toward achieving optimal being. In contrast, group wellness focuses on the collective well-being of a community, organization, or social group, which is often shaped by the choices and actions of others. Group wellness is much more complex and challenging, especially in larger groups, because human needs, values, and definitions of optimal being are incredibly diverse and influenced by individual experiences, beliefs, and circumstances.

This complexity makes it difficult, if not impossible, to create a "one-size-fits-all approach," requiring thoughtful strategies that balance collective goals with personal needs. It is for this reason that this book focuses exclusively on exploring and fostering personal wellness.

1.3 HISTORY OF WELLNESS

Although the term wellness first appeared in the English language in the 1650s, defined as "a state of wellbeing and good health" (Australian Wellness Academy, 2020, para 5), the concept itself has ancient origins. Traditional practices such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, and the medical traditions of ancient Greece have long emphasized holistic approaches to health (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.).

O Timeline

Click on each icon in the timeline to learn more about the events that shaped the concept of wellness from its early roots to the modern era in North America.

Text Description

Early Roots:

- Early Indigenous cultures embraced holistic approaches to health (The Medicine Wheel).
- American religious and cultural movements shaped early wellness concepts (The Mind-Cure Movement, New Thought, Christian Science, Fletcherism, Lebensreform, and the American Temperance Movement).

Conceptional Framework:

- 1950's: Halbert Dunn introduced the term "wellness" in his book High Level Wellness.
- 1975: John Travis found the Wellness Resource Center in California and developed the Wellness Continuum.
- 1976: Bill Hettler, Dennis Elsenrath and Fred Leafgren founded the National Wellness Institute (NWI).

The Modern Era:

- 1980's: Companies introduced wellness programs to improve employee health and productivity.
- 1990's: Wellness became more commercialized, shifting the focus from holistic health to pleasure and status.
- Today: A global phenomenon that encompasses a broader scope of eight dimensions of wellness.

Early Roots

In North America, Indigenous cultures have also embraced holistic approaches to health paradigms. The Medicine Wheel, a significant symbol in many Indigenous cultures, represents the interconnectedness of all life and the cyclical nature of existence. It is typically depicted as a circle divided into four sections, each representing different aspects of life, such as the four directions, seasons, stages of life, and dimensions of

wellness (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual). Through ceremonies, communal practices, and a deep respect for the natural world, these cultures have emphasized preventive care and personal responsibility for maintaining harmony within oneself and with others.

In the 19th century, American religious and cultural movements began to shape early wellness concepts. The Mind-Cure Movement, New Thought, and Christian Science emphasized the connection between mental, spiritual, and physical health. Pioneers like Phineas Quimby and Mary Baker Eddy believed that positive thinking and spiritual alignment could prevent and heal illness, laying the foundation for wellness as more than just physical health (Miller, 2005).

During this period, figures like Horace Fletcher promoted mindful eating (known as Fletcherism), advocating thorough chewing of food to improve digestion and overall health. Similarly, John Harvey Kellogg, influenced by his Seventh-Day Adventist beliefs, emphasized a holistic approach to health, advocating for plant-based diets, regular physical activity, and mental well-being through his Battle Creek Sanitarium practices (Miller, 2005).

Other historical movements followed, such as Lebensreform in Germany and Switzerland in the late 19th century and early 20th century. It advocated for a return to a more natural and holistic way of living in response to the adverse effects of industrialization and urbanization, such as overcrowding, sedentarism, processed foods, and increased mental stress. Key aspects included vegetarianism, natural medicine, physical fitness, outdoor activities, organic farming, and simple living. The American Temperance Movement followed soon after, promoting self-control, mindfulness, moderation, and healthier lifestyle choices. While the movement's focus on the prohibition of alcohol was polarizing at times, its emphasis on ultimately prioritizing individual well-being aligns closely with many concepts discussed in this book.

Conceptual Framework

It was not until the 1950s that wellness became a formally recognized concept. Halbert Dunn, often called the "Father of the Wellness Movement," introduced the term in his book High-Level Wellness. Dunn first defined wellness as "an integrated method of functioning which is oriented toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable, within the environment where they are functioning" (Dunn, 1959, p. 447). This dynamic interplay between an individual's capabilities and environment marked a notable shift away from the notion of wellness as merely the absence of illness.

Dunn's work inspired others, including John Travis, who founded the Wellness Resource Center in California in 1975. Travis also developed the Wellness Continuum, emphasizing proactive health behaviours and personal responsibility over traditional medical models focused solely on disease treatment (Miller, 2005).

Building on these foundations, Bill Hettler, along with Dennis Elsenrath and Fred Leafgren, founded the

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National Wellness Institute (NWI) in 1976. Hettler introduced the Six Dimensions of Wellness—physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, and occupational—highlighting the importance of balance and awareness in achieving optimal well-being (Miller, 2005).

The Modern Era

By the 1980s, wellness had gained traction in corporate settings as companies introduced wellness programs to improve employee health and productivity. The 1979 Surgeon General's Report (Healthy People) and the rise of workplace wellness programs reflected a growing focus on preventive care and health promotion (Miller, 2005).

Figures like Donald Ardell further popularized wellness with his 1977 book *High-Level Wellness: An Alternative to Doctors, Drugs, and Disease*. Ardell emphasized personal responsibility and critical thinking, steering the wellness movement toward a more secular, self-driven approach (Ardell, 1977).

In the 1990s, wellness expanded globally and became increasingly commercialized. In Europe, wellness became associated with luxury spas, beauty treatments, and lifestyle products, shifting the focus from holistic health to pleasure and status. This commercialization marked a departure from wellness's original intent, but it also contributed to its widespread popularity.

Today, wellness is a global phenomenon shaped by rising healthcare costs, growing interest in self-care, and the influence of social media. As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) predicts that the wellness economy will grow to \$8.5 trillion in 2027 (GWI, 2024). Its scope now encompasses eight dimensions reflecting a broad and holistic understanding of what it means to truly "be well."

1.4 THE EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

In this book, wellness is explored through eight distinct yet interconnected dimensions. Let's take a closer look at each dimension and what it encompasses. Note that some topics may fall under multiple dimensions of wellness.



"Tree of Wellness" by Freddy Vale, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Physical



Physical wellness is arguably the most well-known of the eight dimensions. It represents the choices one makes to proactively and continually care for one's physical body. In this sense, the body refers to a human's complete physical structure, including bones, muscles, organs, tissues, and any biological processes that support life and function. Several practices are linked to the promotion of physical wellness:

- Regular Physical Activity and Exercise Finding ways to move your body regularly in a structured or unstructured fashion.
- Proper Nutrition Feeling your body with nutrient-rich foods, staying hydrated, and considering portion sizes.
- Adequate Sleep Getting enough high-quality rest to allow your body to recover and repair itself.
- Proper Hygiene Bathe or shower regularly, wash your hands, and be mindful of airborne pathogens that can make you sick.
- Healthcare Check-ins Stay on top of regular check-ups, vaccinations, and any necessary treatments or screenings.

Emotional



Emotional well-being is assessed by one's ability to identify, process, understand, and express emotions in a constructive way. An emotion is defined in this book as a naturally occurring instinctive state of mind. Here are some topics discussed that are closely linked to emotional wellness:

- Mindfulness Staying present and aware of the moment can help you notice emotional states as they arise, giving you a moment of pause before you react.
- Crucial Conversations Handling high-stakes discussions where opinions vary, emotions run strong, and the outcome can significantly impact relationships or results.
- Resilience Adapting, recovering, and growing stronger when faced with adversity, challenges, or stress.
- Self-Compassion Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding you would offer a close friend.

Intellectual



Intellectual well-being is cultivated by one's willingness and ability to learn and broaden their understanding of the world. This includes considering old and new ideas, questioning preconceived beliefs, actively seeking learning opportunities, embracing curiosity, and engaging in creative pursuits. Some concepts linked to this dimension include:

- Critical Thinking-Asking questions exploring different perspectives, and challenging your own assumptions.
- Humility Recognizing that your knowledge is always incomplete, staying open to new insights and being willing to admit when you are wrong.
- Work vs. Play Balancing dedicated effort with moments of fun, spontaneity, and exploration can spark creativity and make the learning process more engaging and sustainable.

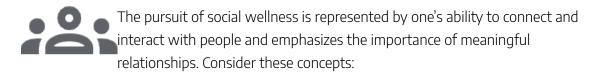
Spiritual



Spiritual wellness involves the pursuit of inner peace, harmony, and truth. This involves connecting with, or growing closer to, something greater than yourself and is typically facilitated by faith, nature, community, or personal mission. Consider these core elements:

- Coherence Creating a set of values or principles and striving not to act in contradiction to them.
- Reflection Spending time alone to thoughtfully examine one's experiences, actions, views, and values.
- Tolerance Accepting and respecting differences in opinions, beliefs, behaviours, and identities in others.
- Forgiveness Deliberately letting go of resentment, anger, or the desire for revenge toward someone who has caused you or someone else harm.

Social



- [Mis] Communication Understanding how the communication process works, identifying where lapses of communication may have taken place and being able to effectively express your needs and feelings while actively listening to others.
- Personalities Recognizing that each person has a unique personality enables you to better understand their behaviours, motivations, and preferred ways of interacting.
- Relationships Cultivating meaningful relationships to help you share joys, handle challenges, and feel less isolated.
- Empathy Understanding and sharing the feelings, thoughts, and perspectives of others.

Environmental



Environmental wellness is practiced with the goal of optimizing one's external surroundings. External surroundings, in this sense, refers to the physical, social, and cultural surroundings in which you live, work, and interact. Consider:

- Safe and Clean Spaces Keep your living and working areas within your control, tidy, organized, and free from hazards.
- Sustainability Reusing, recycling, reducing waste, and being mindful of your consumption habits.
- Connection with nature spending time outdoors, appreciating green spaces, and supporting environmental initiatives.

Occupational



Sometimes referred to as vocational or professional wellness, occupational well-being is assessed by one's ability to find fulfillment from work. Work is defined as any activity or effort (paid or unpaid) undertaken to achieve a purpose or goal. Consider:

- Work-Life Balance Avoid burnout by setting boundaries around your work hours and responsibilities.
- Career Fulfillment Pursuing a career or vocation that aligns with your strengths, interests, and values.
- Opportunities for Advancement Seeking out challenges, additional training, or certifications that help you grow professionally and personally.

Financial



Finances are not glamorous per se, but they remain an integral part of achieving optimal being. Financial well-being is defined as one's ability to achieve financial freedom and stability in the present and future. Some key components include:

- Saving and Investing The power of compound interest and setting money aside for emergencies, future goals, and retirement.
- Loans & Debt Using loans and credit cards wisely, paying balances in full and on time, and avoiding high-interest debt to maintain financial stability.
- Budgeting Tracking income and expenses to avoid living beyond your means.

1.5 RELATED TERMS

Many terms are closely connected to wellness and may sometimes overlap in their meaning. However, each has its own distinct focus and definition. To avoid confusion, it's crucial to understand how these terms differ from wellness.

Term	Definition	
Health	A state of being free from illness or injury and typically refers to physical and mental functioning. Wellness is a much broader, proactive concept that includes emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.	
Well-being	One's overall sense of life satisfaction and measure of an individual's overall standard of living or quality of life. While this term closely relates to optimal being, it does not include the active process and choices required to pursue wellness.	
Self-care	Specific actions individuals take to maintain and enhance their health and well-being—such as eating healthily, exercising, and managing stress. Practicing self-care is one of many choices one can implement with the intent of practicing wellness.	
Happiness	A state of positive emotions and life satisfaction that can contribute to well-being. It does not represent the full scope of wellness' holistic dimensions.	
Balance	A state of equilibrium across various aspects of life, including work, relationships, and self-care. Achieving balance is often linked to the choices one makes in the pursuit of high-level wellness.	
Fitness	Contemporary views recognize that overall fitness includes physical strength, flexibility, endurance, cognitive agility, and emotional resilience. While fitness can be improved via wellness, it is only one part of a multidimensional framework that supports optimal being.	

1.6 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Wellness is a term and concept that is misused and poorly understood by many.
- Wellness is a complex process of making deliberate choices toward optimal being.
- Though formally conceptualized in the 1950s, wellness has roots in cultures and traditions spanning thousands of years.
- There are eight dimensions of wellness (physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social, environmental, occupational, and financial) that contribute to optimal being.
- There are many terms used that relate closely to wellness; each has its own distinct focus.

⊙⇒Key Terms

- **Wellness:** A complex process of making choices toward optimal being.
- **Process:** A series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular outcome.
- **Personal Agency:** The ability of an individual to make their own choices and take control of their actions, decisions, and direction in life.
- **Physical Wellness:** A process of making choices towards the proactive and continual care for your physical body.
- **Emotional Wellness:** A process of making choices involving identifying, processing, understanding, and constructively expressing emotions.
- **Intellectual Wellness:** A process of making choices towards learning and broadening one's worldview.
- **Spiritual Wellness:** Seeking and cultivating inner peace, harmony, and truth.
- **Social Wellness:** A process of making choices towards connecting and interacting with people.
- **Environmental Wellness:** A process of making choices involving the optimization of one's external surroundings.
- Occupational Wellness: A process of making choices towards finding fulfillment from work.
- **Financial Wellness:** A process of making choices towards financial freedom and stability in the present and future.

1.7 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. How does your understanding of wellness align or differ from the concept presented in this book?
- 2. What deliberate actions have you taken throughout the course of your life to optimize your
- 3. What challenges might you encounter in the pursuit of higher-level wellness?
- 4. Which dimensions of wellness do you prioritize most in your life and why? Which dimensions do you feel need more attention?

1.8 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

What is the primary distinction between wellness and health?

- a. Wellness is a temporary state, while health is long-term.
- b. Health involves physical fitness, while wellness focuses on emotional balance.
- c. Wellness focuses on physical health, while health includes emotional well-being.
- d. Health refers to the absence of illness, while wellness is a proactive process toward optimal being.

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following best describes the term "wellness" as defined in the text?

- a. A series of steps taken toward high-level happiness.
- b. A complex process of making choices toward optimal being.
- c. A fixed state of achieving balance in life.
- d. A singular process of achieving physical health.

Multiple Choice Activity #3

What does the term "optimal being" emphasize in the context of wellness?

- a. Balancing physical and emotional health equally.
- b. Living without stress or discomfort.
- c. Achieving peak physical fitness.
- d. Attaining the best possible state of existence based on personal goals and values.

Multiple Choice Activity #4

Which example demonstrates how decisions in one's wellness dimension can impact another?

- a. Drinking water regularly to stay hydrated.
- b. Balancing a work-life schedule to reduce stress.

- c. Practicing mindfulness to cope with anxiety.
- d. Participating in a group fitness class also improves social well-being.

Multiple Choice Activity #5

Why is wellness described as a dynamic process?

- a. It includes only short-term changes to achieve balance.
- b. It is a fixed state that remains unchanged once achieved.
- c. It is primarily focused on immediate solutions for physical health.
- d. It involves constant adjustments and progress across various dimensions.

Multiple Choice Activity #6

How does the concept of personal wellness differ from group wellness?

- a. Personal wellness is simpler, while group wellness is fixed and standardized.
- b. Personal wellness focuses on individual choices, while group wellness addresses collective well-being shaped by others.
- c. Personal wellness is reactive, while group wellness is proactive.
- d. Group wellness emphasizes physical health, while personal wellness focuses on emotional health.

Multiple Choice Activity #7

Which of the following is an example of practicing emotional wellness as defined in the text?

- a. Setting financial goals to achieve long-term stability.
- b. Developing a sustainable fitness routine.
- c. Scheduling regular health checkups with a doctor.
- d. Using mindfulness to process and manage emotional states.

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: d. Health refers to the absence of illness, while wellness is a proactive process toward optimal being.

Activity #2: b. A complex process of making choices toward optimal being.

Activity #3: d. Attaining the best possible state of existence based on personal goals and values.

Activity #4: d. Participating in a group fitness class, which also improves social wellness.

Activity #5: d. It involves constant adjustments and progress across various dimensions.

Activity #6: b. Personal wellness focuses on individual choices, while group wellness addresses collective well-being shaped by others.

Activity #7: d. Using mindfulness to process and manage emotional states.

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 2: MEANING AND PURPOSE

Chapter Overview

- 2.0 Learning Objectives
- 2.1 Dimensions of Wellness Emphasized
- 2.2 Are Meaning & Purpose Truly Necessary?
- 2.3 Possible Sources of Meaning & Purpose
- 2.4 Across the Lifespan
- 2.5 Possible Barriers to Meaning and Purpose
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Reflection
- 2.8 Knowledge Check

2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES



At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define meaning and purpose.
- Explain how meaning and purpose serve as foundational elements of wellness.
- Explore theories on the origin of meaning.
- Identify potential sources of meaning and purpose.
- Examine potential barriers to finding meaning and purpose.
- Explore how meaning and purpose may evolve over the course of one's lifespan.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, Environmental, Occupational, and Financial.

2.1 "THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH"



Picture This:

You're an 18-year-old student with a loving family and friends. One night, armed soldiers storm your home, assault you, destroy your belongings, and forcibly transport you to a concentration camp. Upon arrival, your identity is stripped away; you are no longer a name but a number. For three years, you endured starvation, brutal labour, and constant fear. The guards dehumanize and humiliate you; some take great pleasure in doing so. Then, you are forced on a death march through snow and ice. Your toes are frostbitten and your legs are heavy, but you know that stopping means certain death. Somehow, you survive and are liberated. Yet, you are left hollow, having lost family, identity, and years of your life. Despite unimaginable horror, a faint hope stirs that life could still hold meaning.

This is the very condensed story of Eddie Jaku, a Holocaust survivor and the author of *The Happiest Man on Earth* (Jaku, 2021).

Throughout human history, countless individuals have been subjected to unimaginable cruelty, suffering, and loss through no fault of their own (e.g., survivors of residential schools, domestic and sexual violence, war and genocide). It is understandable how these experiences could lead to despair, emptiness, and, in some cases, a loss of purpose and meaning. Even those who have not experienced such hardship may struggle to cultivate a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

Stories like Eddie Jaku's show that it is possible to reestablish and cultivate meaning and purpose despite immense suffering, injustice, and hopelessness. This chapter will explore:

- 1. The definitions, differences, and connections between meaning and purpose.
- 2. How meaning and purpose serve as the foundation for wellness throughout one's lifespan.
- 3. Practical and evidence-based ways to identify sources and barriers to achieving meaning and purpose.

2.2 ARE MEANING AND PURPOSE TRULY **NECESSARY?**

Practicing wellness with no **meaning** and **purpose** in one's life is like trying to build a house without a foundation – it cannot stand. Think about it; why bother pursuing wellness (and ultimately optimal being) if life has zero meaning? Without meaning, humans essentially become robots, mindlessly performing tasks without intention, fulfillment, or desire for growth. But we are not robots. We are human beings guided by free will, driven by values, and fueled by desires. Our sense of meaning gives life value, energizes us, and makes the pursuit of wellness worthwhile.

Some individuals may feel their lives have no meaning and purpose, yet they still choose to pursue wellness. This choice suggests that they either hold on to some remaining sense of meaning or have faith that it exists and need, or want, guidance to help reveal it. This type of existential frustration is quite common, especially among young adults, and is a natural part of the human experience. As Viktor Frankl wrote in Man's Search for Meaning:

A man's concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an existential distress, but by no means a mental disease" (Frankl, 2006. p. 102).

The connection between wellness, meaning, and purpose. "Positive Feedback Loop" by Shauna Roch, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Research also supports the connection between meaning and wellness. **Positive psychology**, pioneered by Martin Seligman, highlights meaning as a core component of lasting happiness, life satisfaction, and wellbeing (Seligman, 2002). Individuals with a strong sense of purpose consistently also experience better health outcomes, such as lower risks of heart disease, stronger immune function, and longer lifespans (Hill & Turiano, 2014).

Wellness often initiates a cascade or compounding effect when pursued in good faith (i.e., deliberately and freely). Initial efforts to achieve optimal being lead to the discovery of meaning and purpose, which further optimizes being and potentially manifests even more profound meaning and purpose.

So, are meaning and purpose necessary for pursuing wellness? This book argues that they are.

Meaning: Understanding Life's Significance

Meaning involves understanding the value we assign to our experiences and recognizing why certain aspects of life matter to us. It is a reflection of what is most real, both in how we instinctively feel and in how things actually are.

Often reflected in both the past and present, meaning can help us understand and interpret what has happened or is happening and provide a foundation for moving forward. For instance, someone grieving the loss of a loved one might find meaning in their grief by creating a support group, transforming personal pain into a source of comfort and community for others facing similar losses.

Meaning also strengthens our connection to a greater purpose or community. It can be broad, encompassing global causes like environmental conservation, social justice, or advancing scientific knowledge, efforts that impact society as a whole. Alternatively, meaning can be deeply personal, such as nurturing a close relationship, pursuing a lifelong hobby, or honouring a loved one's memory through daily rituals.

Origin of Meaning



"Tree Reflection," by photoeightyeight, Pixabay License

Philosophers, psychologists, and modern thinkers have long debated the origin of meaning. Drawing on his experiences as an Auschwitz survivor and as the founder of Logotherapy, Frankl emphasized that meaning is discovered, emerging from lived experience (Frankl, 1992). It finds you rather than you finding it. This belief is often present in collectivist cultures, which prioritize the needs and goals of the group over individual desires, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. Rituals and traditions, such as rites of passage and communal ceremonies, provide frameworks for individuals to cultivate meaning and thus discover and reinforce a sense of purpose.

In contrast, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche proposed that individuals can create meaning by defining and living according to their values (Nietzsche, 1961). Individualist cultures prioritize personal goals, independence, and self-reliance and tend to follow this path via personal achievement, reflection, and self-expression. This perspective aligns somewhat more closely with the concept of personal wellness, as it encourages individuals to actively pursue meaning rather than let it unfold on its own.

It is possible that meaning may involve a dynamic interplay between what life presents to us (i.e., discover) and how we choose to engage with it (i.e., create). One could argue it is also highly dependent on each individual's experiences, values, and worldview.

Whether meaning is found, created, or both, it remains a foundational pillar to the pursuit of wellness.

Purpose: The Driving Force Behind Our Actions

If meaning represents the "why" behind life's value, the purpose is the "how" that drives us to pursue meaningful experiences. Purpose is inherently future-focused, guiding our actions and shaping our path forward, and channels the understanding of meaning into actionable goals and decisions that foster growth and fulfillment.

Purpose can manifest as long-term ambitious goals or as smaller everyday actions that bring satisfaction and progress. For example, someone with a strong sense of purpose to help others might choose a healthcare or social work career, while another person may find purpose in volunteering at a local shelter or mentoring youth part-time. A strong sense of purpose also builds **resilience** by fostering a growth mindset and encouraging individuals to learn from setbacks or failures. Friedrich Nietzsche famously stated, "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how. (Nietzsche, 1889).

The Relationship Between Meaning and Purpose

The relationship between meaning and purpose underscores the importance of aligning our actions with what we find valuable, creating a more intentional and fulfilling life. To better understand this relationship, compare the terms "meaning" and "purpose" by referring to the table below.

Item	Meaning	Purpose
Definition	The significance or value we assign to our lives and experiences.	The reason or intention behind our actions, and what we aim to achieve.
Focus	Understanding the "why" behind our existence and experiences.	The concrete and specific actions and goals that make life meaningful and fulfilling.
Nature	Subjective: varies based on individual beliefs and values.	Goal-oriented and action-driven; involves setting and pursuing objectives.
Outcome	Provides a sense of fulfillment and understanding of one's "place" in the world.	Provides direction, motivation, and a sense of mission during daily activities.
Example	Connor finds meaning in mentoring students by perceiving it as a way to give back to the community.	Connor's purpose for mentoring students is to help them develop their careers and be successful.

2.3 POSSIBLE SOURCES OF MEANING AND **PURPOSE**



"Countryside," by jplenio, Pixabay License

Recognizing where meaning and purpose might manifest can help those who are looking for a place to start. Consider the following sources in no particular order:

Serving Others

Engaging in acts of kindness, volunteering, and caregiving can uplift those in need while enhancing the giver's sense of purpose and well-being. Examples of this might include volunteering at a local shelter, helping a neighbour in need, fundraising for community projects, or providing emotional support to a friend or family member during a challenging time.

Learning & Achievement

Whether paid or unpaid, meaningful work and goal attainment can foster fulfillment and self-efficacy. This also includes immersive states of "flow," as described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, when one is absorbed in a challenging yet rewarding task (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Dedicating oneself to a healthcare role that improves patient lives, working toward a professional certification, developing a new skill (e.g., public speaking or creative writing), or losing track of time when coding a new computer program can lead to a more profound sense of accomplishment and motivation.

Religion & Spirituality

Faith, spiritual practices, and **mindfulness** offer frameworks for understanding life's purpose and connecting with something greater than oneself (see Chapter 9). This can also involve grappling with existential questions, including awareness of mortality and impermanence, to deepen spiritual insight. Examples include setting aside time for meditation to cultivate mindfulness, engaging in prayer or reflective practices to foster spiritual connection, attending religious services, or using gratitude journaling to focus on life's positive aspects.

Relationships, Community & Legacy

Strong bonds with family, friends, and community foster a sense of belonging and significance. Spending quality time with loved ones through family gatherings or cultural celebrations creates shared memories and closeness. Participating in community work, such as organizing a neighbourhood cleanup or volunteering at a charity, builds camaraderie and mutual support. Mentoring younger individuals, like guiding a colleague or teaching a child essential life skills, creates a lasting legacy that continues to influence others.

Creativity, Play & Self-Expression

Embracing playfulness, humour and creativity in the forms of art, music, writing, and other creative outlets enables self-expression, balance and connection. Writing a poem, painting a landscape, or playing an instrument invites personal exploration, while playful activities, like board games or community theatre, support social bonds and joy.

Beauty, Nature & Adventure

Spending time in nature fosters awe, reflection, and a sense of interconnectedness (Capaldi, Dopko, & Zelenski, 2014). Hiking in a national park, kayaking along a serene river, or stargazing on a clear night encourages mindfulness and gratitude. Travelling to new destinations, whether bustling cities abroad or remote mountain villages, fosters adventure and discovery. Observing everyday beauty, such as autumn leaves or the sound of gentle rain, can inspire renewed appreciation for life.

Self-Responsibility

Taking responsibility for one's actions, choices, and outcomes cultivates a sense of agency and personal growth. For instance, creating and following a consistent exercise routine promotes physical well-being while reinforcing self-care and self-respect. Proactively setting goals and addressing shortcomings, such as mending

strained relationships or improving finances, further strengthens a sense of purpose and control over one's life.

Suffering

Facing personal struggles and adversity can catalyze resilience and transformative growth. By reframing hardships and finding significance in relationships, creativity, or self-responsibility, individuals can derive deeper meaning. To quote Frankl, "The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails gives him ample opportunity- even under the most difficult circumstances- to add deeper meaning to his life" (Frankl, 2006, p. 67). For example, career setbacks can be reframed as opportunities for skill development or new passions. The end of a long, intimate relationship may be an opportunity to reconnect with oneself, explore new interests, or build stronger connections with others.

2.4 ACROSS THE LIFESPAN



"Generations" by Freddy Vale, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Meaning and purpose can evolve throughout different stages of life. Each stage presents unique opportunities and challenges for cultivating a greater purpose, emphasizing the dynamic nature of personal growth.

Adolescence (<18 years)

Marked by identity exploration, adolescents often seek purpose through education, hobbies, friendships, and initial career interests. Guidance and support during this period are crucial, as a clear sense of purpose can help navigate peer pressure, academic demands, and social expectations.

Adulthood (18-65)

Adulthood involves multiple roles such as career development, maintaining relationships, raising children, and personal growth. Life transitions (e.g., marriage, parenthood, or career shifts) may prompt a re-evaluation of goals and values. Many adults also look beyond personal success to give back to their communities, mentor others, or champion causes they care about, thereby deepening their sense of purpose.

Older Adulthood (>65)

Later life often involves reflecting on achievements and exploring ways to leave a lasting legacy. Activities like sharing wisdom with younger generations, volunteering, or nurturing family ties can be especially meaningful. Common transitions, such as retirement or losing loved ones, can challenge one's sense of purpose, making it important to find fulfilling pursuits and maintain social connections.

2.5 POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO MEANING AND PURPOSE



"Girl Sitting" by brenkee, Pixabay License

Research and timeless wisdom have identified several factors that might impede one's ability to cultivate meaning and purpose. Reflecting on these obstacles can guide us toward potential solutions.

Societal Pressure & Unrealistic Expectations

Cultural norms and societal pressures can push individuals toward paths misaligned with their authentic values or interests. Social media often amplifies these pressures, leading to harmful comparisons and a constant chase for external validation, which may overshadow many sources of meaning.

Lack of Self-Awareness, Reflection & Goal Setting

Without regular self-reflection and clear goals, individuals may not fully understand their passions, strengths, or values, making it harder to find a meaningful direction.

Fear

Fear of failure, judgment, or the unknown often prevents individuals from pursuing meaningful goals, leading to procrastination, perfectionism, or avoidance of growth opportunities.

Unresolved Trauma

Traumatic experiences can undermine a sense of safety and identity, making it challenging to engage in life, trust others, or form meaningful relationships (Van der Kolk, 2014).

Disconnection & Loneliness

Human beings are innately social. Isolation or loneliness can erode belonging, a core element of meaning and well-being.

Life Transitions and Identity Shifts

Major life events such as retirement, parenthood, or loss can disrupt identity and purpose, necessitating reevaluation of goals and sources of meaning.



- What steps could someone take to align their goals with their authentic values and reduce the impact of societal or external pressures?
- How might someone cultivate self-awareness and set realistic, meaningful goals?
- What approaches could help someone manage fears of failure, judgment, or the unknown?
- How might someone address unresolved trauma to regain a sense of purpose and safety?
- What strategies could help someone build meaningful relationships and overcome feelings of isolation?
- How can someone navigate identity shifts during significant life changes and find new sources of meaning?

2.6 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Meaning and purpose are fundamental to the pursuit of wellness.
- Meaning is the significance or value we attach to our experiences and understanding of why life matters.
- Purpose is the direction and motivation that drives our actions toward meaningful goals.
- Meaning can emerge through experiences or can be actively created.
- A strong sense of purpose fosters resilience, helping individuals grow from adversity and persist through challenges.
- Relationships with family and community, personal growth, meaningful work, spirituality, helping others, creative expression, and overcoming challenges can foster meaning and purpose.
- Meaning and purpose may evolve depending on which stage of life an individual is in.
- Barriers to meaning and purpose can hinder personal growth but also offer opportunities for reflection, resilience, and transformative action.

⊙Key Terms

- **Meaning**: The significance or value we assign to our lives and experiences (the "why").
- **Purpose**: The reason or intention behind our actions; what we aim to achieve (the "how").
- Positive Psychology: Understanding and promoting positive emotions, meaningful experiences, resilience, personal growth, and optimal functioning, factors that contribute to individual and collective well-being with the goal of helping individuals and communities thrive by enhancing happiness, life satisfaction, and overall quality of life.
- **Flow**: When a person becomes so focused and engaged in a challenging yet fulfilling activity that they lose track of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).
- **Mindfulness**: Focusing one's attention on the present moment by being fully aware of thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the surrounding environment without trying to change them.
- **Resilience**: Adapting and growing stronger in the face of adversity, stress, or trauma by developing the capacity to cope effectively and move forward in a positive way.

2.7 REFLECTION



Text Description Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Reflect on a moment when you felt most aligned with one of the potential sources of meaning discussed in this chapter (e.g., serving others, creativity, nature, etc.). What specifically made that experience meaningful, and how can you integrate more of it into your daily life?
- 2. Consider a significant challenge or barrier you have faced (e.g., fear, societal pressure, lack of clarity, unresolved trauma, disconnection, or a life transition). How did it impact your sense of purpose, and what strategies helped (or could help) you move forward?
- 3. Think about a key relationship or community connection that has shaped your identity. In what ways does this bond contribute to your sense of purpose or legacy, and how might you strengthen it further?
- 4. Recall a time when learning, personal achievement, or self-responsibility played a significant role in deepening your sense of meaning. What motivated you to pursue that path, and what did you learn about your own values and strengths?
- 5. Identify an area of your life that currently feels out of sync with your core values or aspirations. What small, concrete steps could you take to address any fears or obstacles and realign this area with your broader sense of purpose?

2.8 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

According to positive psychology, what is the relationship between meaning and well-being?

- a. Well-being is primarily determined by external circumstances, not meaning.
- b. Meaning is a core component of happiness, life satisfaction, and health outcomes.
- c. Pursuing meaning always leads to increased stress and lower well-being.
- d. There is no proven connection between meaning and well-being.

Multiple Choice Activity #2

How does the chapter differentiate between meaning and purpose?

- a. Purpose is about reflecting on past experiences, while meaning is future-focused.
- b. Meaning is the "why" behind life's value, and purpose is the "how" that drives actions.
- c. Meaning and purpose are interchangeable and have no distinct differences.
- d. Meaning is about taking action, while purpose is about understanding the past.

Multiple Choice Activity #3

Which philosopher emphasized that meaning is discovered rather than created?

- a. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- b. Viktor Frankl
- c. Friedrich Nietzsche
- d. Martin Seligman

Multiple Choice Activity #4

How can meaning evolve throughout different life stages?

- a. It remains the same throughout life, as meaning is fixed early on.
- b. It shifts based on life transitions, such as identity exploration, career shifts, and major life events.

- c. It is most important in adolescence and less relevant in older adulthood.
- d. It only matters in times of crisis or hardship.

Multiple Choice Activity #5

What does the chapter compare a life without meaning to?

- a. A book with missing pages
- b. A house without a foundation
- c. A road with no destination
- d. A tree without leaves

Multiple Choice Activity #6

Research suggests that people with a strong sense of purpose tend to:

- a. Experience more stress because of higher expectations.
- b. Have the same health risks as those without a sense of purpose.
- c. Live shorter lives due to the pressure of achieving goals.
- d. Have greater resilience and better physical health outcomes.

Multiple Choice Activity #7

What role does self-responsibility play in meaning and purpose?

- a. It encourages people to blame themselves for circumstances beyond their control.
- b. It prevents people from pursuing meaning, as it focuses only on discipline.
- c. It fosters personal growth by taking ownership of one's choices and actions.
- d. It has no connection to meaning—external factors determine a person's purpose.

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: b. Meaning is a core component of happiness, life satisfaction, and health outcomes.

Activity #2: b. Meaning is the "why" behind life's value, and purpose is the "how" that drives actions.

Activity #3: b. Viktor Frankl

Activity #4: b. It shifts based on life transitions, such as identity exploration, career shifts, and major life events.

Activity #5: b. A house without a foundation

Activity #6: d. Have greater resilience and better physical health outcomes.

Activity #7: c. It fosters personal growth by taking ownership of one's choices and actions.

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 3: FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND GOAL SETTING

Chapter Overview

- 3.0 Learning Objectives
- 3.1 "It's Not My Fault"
- 3.2 Rights and Freedoms
- 3.3 Victim Discourse
- 3.4 Self-Responsibility
- 3.5 Proactivity Versus Reactivity
- 3.6 Goal Setting
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Reflection
- 3.9 Knowledge Check

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify the major rights and freedoms listed in the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms.
- Discuss how freedoms differ from rights.
- Discuss examples of misuse and understand how Canadian laws seek to address this.
- Describe circumstances where one may be a victim versus adopting a victim mentality.
- Describe how taking ownership of one's actions, thoughts, and consequences fosters empowerment, accountability, and progress toward optimal being.
- Contrast proactive behaviours with reactive behaviours.
- Identify and categorize worries or concerns using Covey's circles.
- Explain the importance of setting specific, measurable, realistic, and time-sensitive goals.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, Environmental, Occupational, and Financial.

3.1 "IT'S NOT MY FAULT!"

Picture This:



"Laptop" by Jan Vašek, Pixabay License

You've always been a "good student," earning top grades throughout high school with minimal effort. You remember how teachers would praise your work, even using your essays and projects as examples for future classes. Naturally, when you start your first year of college, you assume it will be more of the same. No need to make plans or set goals.

So, you stick to what has always worked. You skim through assigned readings, glance over lecture slides, attend every other class, and leave assignments until the night before they are due. Participating in class discussions? Not your thing. If it ain't broke, why fix it? Right?

Then the semester ends, and you check your grades: one failed course and barely passing the others. You have been put on academic probation and are at risk of not continuing in your program. You stare at the screen, stunned. This cannot be your fault.

It must be the professors. Their lectures were dry and hard to follow, and the exams barely covered what they talked about in class. Remember that research paper? The instructions were so vague that you had no idea what they wanted. And the group project? No one took it seriously, and you did most of the work. How is that fair?

Your classmates did not exactly help, either. You noticed people forming study groups after class, but no one invited you. Shouldn't they have thought to include you? I mean, it's not like you are going to beg for help.

Then there is your mental health. The anxiety and stress this semester have been so

overwhelming. Nobody can possibly understand how hard it was to get out of bed some days! Why didn't the professors check in after midterms when your grades started slipping? Shouldn't they have noticed something was wrong? If they had reached out, maybe this whole situation could have been avoided. It's like they aren't even trying to understand what you are going through.

It's clear now: the system is rigged against you. It's not about how hard you work or the effort you put in; after all, you did work hard this semester. It's all about who the professors like. Maybe it's about the students who speak up in class or suck up during office hours. Either way, it's completely out of your control. So, you stay stuck, frustrated, discouraged, resentful, and convinced that no matter what you do, things will not get better.

When life presents unexpected challenges or things do not go as planned, it is easy to shift blame onto others or come up with excuses to justify the outcome. However, avoiding responsibility for things within one's control leads to the same mistakes repeating themselves, which hinder personal growth, self-awareness, and the reflection necessary to cultivate lasting well-being.

This chapter will explore:

- 1. The rights and freedoms we enjoy as Canadians.
- 2. How victim mentality can negatively impact one's pursuit of wellness.
- The importance of accepting responsibility for one's actions and decisions.
- 4. Strategies to identify what is within one's control.
- 5. The connection between personal responsibility and achieving goals.

3.2 RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Fundamental Rights

Rights are entitlements or legal guarantees provided and protected by law or authority and come with specific responsibilities and obligations that society or the government must uphold. They are also enforceable, meaning you can appeal to courts or governing bodies if you feel your rights have been violated. Let's explore the major rights listed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

1. Equality

Equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on determinate traits such as race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.

2. Legal

Life, liberty, and security of the person. The Criminal Code of Canada outlines many offenses that no one is allowed to commit against you, including theft, vandalism, fraud, physical assault, and murder. Additional provisions include:

- Protection from unreasonable search or seizure.
- Protection from arbitrary detention or imprisonment.
- The right to be informed promptly of the reasons for arrest or detention.
- The right to legal counsel and a fair trial.
- Protection against cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

3. Mobility

Include the rights to:

- Enter, remain in, and leave Canada.
- Move to and take up residence in any province and pursue a livelihood in any province.

4. Language

Include the rights to:

- Communicate and receive services in English or French in federal institutions.
- Receive education in English or French, where numbers warrant.

5. Democratic/Voting

Upon turning 18 years of age, these include the rights to:

- Vote in federal, provincial, and territorial elections and run for public office.
- Democratic governance, including a regular sitting of Parliament and legislatures.

Fundamental Freedoms

Freedoms represent the ability to act, speak, or think without undue restriction or interference within the boundaries of the law. You are permitted, and even encouraged, to exercise your freedoms by questioning authority, advocating for positive change, and sharing diverse perspectives.

Unlike rights, freedoms are typically broader and less explicitly enforced. Consider the following:

1. Conscience & Religion

Freedom to practice, teach, and observe one's religion or beliefs.

2. Peaceful Assembly

Freedom to gather peacefully for protests, demonstrations, or other purposes.

3. Association

Freedom to join or form groups, unions, or organizations for any lawful purpose.

4. Thought, Belief, Opinion, & Expression

Freedom of speech, the press, and other media of communication.

Misuse of Freedom

Freedoms may be misused when individuals exploit them in ways that intentionally harm others or violate societal laws and norms. Canada's laws set limits to foster a fair, safe, and respectful society. Consider the following examples of misuse:

1. Harassment

Harassment involves repeated and unwelcome actions, words, or behaviour that offend, humiliate, or intimidate someone. For it to constitute a criminal offense, it must cause a person to reasonably fear for their safety or the safety of others and meet several criteria. Proving criminal harassment often requires

clear evidence of intent, persistence, and the victim's reasonable fear, which can be subjective and difficult to substantiate.

2. Threats of Physical Harm or Violence

Under no circumstances is it legal or justifiable to issue threats of physical harm or violence toward another person, whether orally or in writing.

If you believe a threat made by someone else poses an immediate danger to your physical safety, consult with law enforcement immediately. Document the threat, including dates and any relevant evidence to support your case.

3. Hate Speech

Hate speech is a form of communication that incites hatred, discrimination, or violence against individuals or groups based on protected characteristics (see Equality Rights). Like criminal harassment, this can be difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt since speech is often subjective and interpretive (Chapter 8).

Further, there is a distinction, albeit blurry at times, between speech that one hates, or dislikes, and speech that legally constitutes hate speech. For example, expressing disapproval of someone's actions, lifestyle, or beliefs that are not explicitly tied to protected characteristics is not hate speech.

4. Reckless Speech

Specific forms of speech are restricted because they pose an immediate risk to public safety. For instance, yelling "fire" in a crowded theatre without cause or making false bomb threats could lead to panic, injuries, or other harm.

3.3 VICTIM DISCOURSE

Adversity is an inevitable part of life, and you may identify as a **victim** of circumstances if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. Your Rights or Freedoms Were Violated

This includes instances where your fundamental rights (e.g., equality, language, or mobility rights) were infringed upon, as defined by the Canadian Charter.

2. A Crime Was Committed Against You

Examples include theft, physical or sexual assault, fraud, or other actions punishable under the Criminal Code of Canada.

3. You Were Diagnosed with an Illness

A medical condition or diagnosis is always accompanied by circumstances outside your control.

4. You Were Not the Cause of a Harmful Situation and Were Under No Obligation to Prevent the Harm

Such situations are often challenging to prove and thus apply only in rare and exceptional circumstances where:

• You had no control over the harmful event.

There was no reasonable expectation or duty for you to intervene or prevent the harm.

This could include harm caused by natural disasters or other unforeseeable events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, sudden landslides, or unexpected infrastructure failures (e.g., a bridge collapse or gas explosion). These events are beyond your control, and there is no reasonable expectation for you to have prevented or intervened in such situations.

Victim Blaming

When a victim of a crime, illness, or other harmful act (as outlined above) is held entirely or partially responsible for the harm they experienced, they may experience victim blaming. This phenomenon shifts the focus from the perpetrator or circumstances to the victim's perceived actions leading to the harm.

The term was coined in the early 1970s to describe an ideology used to justify racism and social injustice against minority groups in the United States (Ryan, 2010). Today, victim blaming is commonly seen in cases of sexual assault and criminal harassment, where victims are questioned or criticized for their behaviour, appearance, or decisions leading up to the event. This practice not only perpetuates harm but also potentially discourages victims from seeking support or justice.

Victim Mentality

When trouble arises, tensions are high, or things don't go the way they should, it is human nature to shift responsibility away from yourself and towards someone or somewhere else:

- "Life is just unfair."
- "Why does this always happen to me?"
- "I can't catch a break."
- "They're out to get me."
- "No one understands what I'm going through."
- "It's because of my upbringing that I'm like this."
- "I didn't have a choice."
- "If only things were different, I could succeed."
- "Other people have it easier than I do."
- "There's nothing I can do to change it".

72 | 3.3 VICTIM DISCOURSE

This thought process can lead an individual to claim they are a victim, or adopt a **victim mentality**, an acquired personality trait where a person tends to see themselves (or others) as a victim of negative actions by others in the absence of evidence or when circumstances suggest otherwise.

Victim mentality is a common hurdle for those hoping to pursue wellness because it prevents them from taking accountability for their actions and decisions. This mindset often leads to inaction and a sense of stagnation as their problems are viewed as insurmountable. Those who adopt this mindset often foster deep resentment toward others whom they perceive as "lucky" or "privileged," further isolating the individual.

Chronic victim mentality can create a cycle of negativity that stifles personal growth, damages relationships, and harms overall well-being. This cycle often begins when individuals consistently interpret challenges as things being done to them rather than as experiences they can learn from. Over time, this mindset reinforces feelings of helplessness, which can lead to increased resentment, isolation, and passivity. Similar in mechanism to the meaning–wellness positive feedback cycle discussed in Chapter 2—but in reverse—this negative cycle builds on itself: the more someone sees themselves as a victim, the less empowered they feel to take action, and the more they suffer emotionally and socially. It may also lead to destructive behaviours, as individuals justify harmful actions by blaming external factors rather than addressing their own role in the situation.

Common Victim Mentality Traits

Individuals who adopt a victim mentality often exhibit the following patterns of thought and behaviour:

A World Centred Around Obstacles

- They perceive their life and the lives of others as a series of obstacles directly aimed at them.
- They believe only they (and maybe a select few) experience the challenges they face, making their struggles uniquely burdensome.

A Negative and Fatalistic Outlook on Life

- Most aspects of life are seen as negative and beyond their control.
- Conflict and trouble seem to follow them everywhere they go.
- They often believe their life is inherently unfair and unlikely to improve.

Seeking Sympathy Over Solutions

- They view the challenges in their lives (and others) as deserving of constant sympathy.
- They feel the need to broadcast their struggles so others can feel sorry for them.

A Sense of Powerlessness

- They (and others) are perceived as having little power to change their circumstances.
- Life, or "the system," is seen as rigged to favour particular groups or people in positions of power.
- They believe that taking action to improve their problems is a waste of time, as any effort would likely fail.

Excusing Personal Responsibility

- They rarely take responsibility for their thoughts, actions, or outcomes.
- Once an individual has defined themselves as unjustly situated, oppressed or cursed, nothing is forbidden to them. They rationalize or justify harmful behaviours (e.g., crimes, harsh words, or poor decisions) because of their circumstances.

3.4 SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

Victim mentality can be significantly reduced, and even eliminated, when an individual voluntarily adopts more **self-responsibility**, the state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for things within one's power, control, or management. With this mindset, individuals take full ownership of their actions, choices, and circumstances, fostering growth and empowerment, concepts which are closely linked to wellness and the pursuit of optimal being.

Elements of Self-Responsibility.

All choices you make are personal

Every choice you make is ultimately your own. External influences may shape your decision-making process, but the responsibility for the final decision rests with you. Even in extreme situations, such as facing immense pressure or coercion, the act of choosing remains yours. Recognizing this empowers you to take ownership of your decisions and the resulting outcomes.

How you think and what you do are both actions

How you think and act are deliberate actions within your control. While fleeting thoughts may arise automatically, you hold the power to process them and decide your response(s). Developing this awareness reinforces your ability to steer behaviours and decisions intentionally.

All actions have consequences.

Every action has consequences—positive, negative, or neutral. Understanding this universal principle helps you act with greater awareness and consider the potential outcomes of your decisions.

You must accept responsibility for all consequences.

Taking ownership means accepting responsibility for the outcomes of your actions, whether they were intended or unintended. Avoiding blame-shifting fosters accountability and integrity.

You may not be aware of all the consequences of your actions.

While you may not always foresee the full range of consequences your actions might have, you remain accountable for their impact. This understanding encourages you to approach decisions thoughtfully, considering possible implications and remaining adaptable when unintended outcomes arise.

Who is Ultimately Responsible?

In any conflict between two or more individuals or groups (assuming there are no victims), three principles remain true:

1. Shared Responsibility:

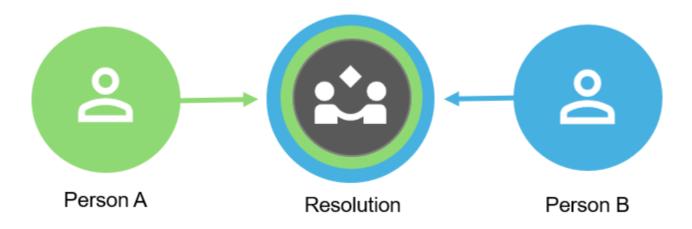
• Both parties are always responsible, to some degree, for the circumstances leading to the conversation or encounter. While one side may bear greater responsibility, this does not negate the fact that accountability exists on both sides.

2. No Absolute "Right" or "Wrong":

• Conflicts are rarely black and white. Neither side is ever entirely in the right or entirely in the wrong. Shades of gray typically dominate disagreements, reflecting the complexity of human interactions.

3. Resolution Lies in Compromise:

• Conflict resolution typically resides in the middle ground, necessitating mutual effort and understanding. While one side may need to compromise more, resolution depends on both parties making meaningful strides toward reconciliation.



"Resolution" by Stephanie Audette, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

3.5 PROACTIVITY VERSUS REACTIVITY

Proactivity and reactivity are two fundamentally different approaches to decision-making and everyday behaviour.

Proactivity involves making intentional and deliberate decisions with a focus on both present and future outcomes. It empowers individuals to anticipate challenges, plan ahead, and act purposefully, leading to consistent progress towards optimal being over the long term.

Reactivity involves responding to situations as they occur, often without preparing or considering future outcomes. This approach is often present in those who consistently seek immediate self-gratification, or only respond when a serious problem arises that could have been avoided. This often results in inconsistent outcomes that may negatively affect physical, emotional, and mental health.

Key Features of Proactivity

- Future-oriented thinking: Guided by an understanding of long-term goals and values, ensuring that actions today contribute positively to future outcomes.
- Ownership and responsibility: Full responsibility is taken for choices and outcomes. Addresses potential challenges by seeking solutions in advance.
- Intentional action: Decisions are made with careful thought and purpose, focusing on what can be controlled rather than reacting to external influences primarily out of one's control.

Examples of Proactive Choices

- Scheduling regular exercise to prevent health issues later.
- Choosing nutritious meals today to enhance long-term vitality.
- Journaling or seeking therapy to address emotions before they escalate.
- Joining a club or group to foster meaningful relationships.
- Setting aside time to connect with family or friends regularly.
- Learning a new skill or hobby to stimulate cognitive growth.
- Setting career goals and pursuing professional development opportunities.
- Meditating or reflecting daily to find clarity and purpose.
- Saving a portion of income for future needs or emergencies.
- Taking initiative to start tasks that need to or should be done.

Key Features of Reactivity

- Short-Term Focus: Prioritize immediate relief or convenience, often neglecting future consequences.
- Lack of Control: Feelings of powerlessness or being overwhelmed leading to emotional or impulsive responses to challenges.
- Dependence on External Factors: Actions are influenced by outside forces, leaving little room for intentional or strategic decision-making.

Examples of Reactive Choices

- Skipping meals and eating unhealthy snacks when hunger strikes.
- Avoiding exercise until a health scare arises.
- Bottling up emotions until they lead to an outburst or breakdown.
- Relying on social interactions only when feeling lonely or isolated.
- Procrastinating on learning or self-improvement until a deadline or crisis looms.
- Taking on too much work without addressing burnout until productivity drops.
- Reacting to financial crises by borrowing or overspending without a plan.
- Waiting to seek medical attention only when symptoms become severe.
- Avoiding career planning until faced with job dissatisfaction or layoffs.
- Waiting for other people to initiate tasks that need to or should be done.

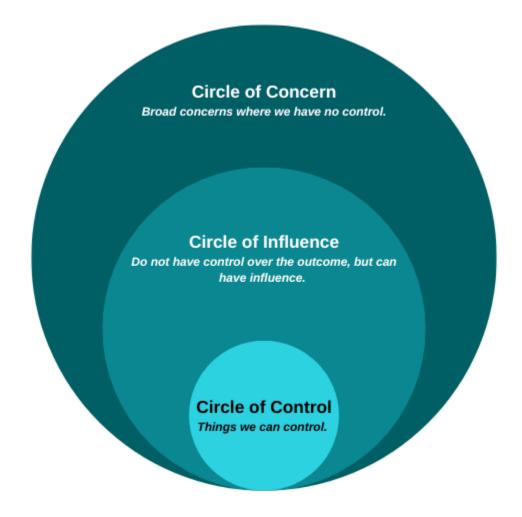
Side by Side Comparison

Aspect	Proactivity	Reactivity
Definition	Making intentional decisions and taking deliberate actions with future outcomes in mind.	Responding to events or situations as they happen, often without planning.
Focus	Long-term solutions and goal-oriented actions.	Short-term fixes and immediate responses.
Approach to Challenges	Anticipates challenges and plans ahead to mitigate them.	Reacts to challenges as they arise, often without preparation.
Sense of Control	Feels in control of their circumstances and actions.	Feels controlled by external circumstances.
Decision-Making	Thoughtful, purpose-driven, and aligned with goals.	Impulsive, often influenced by emotions or external pressures.

Covey's Circles

Proactivity involves prioritizing energy on areas of one's life that truly matter and where tangible impact can be had. But this raises important questions: What do you actually have control over? How much control do you truly have?

Stephen Covey, the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, proposed a simple yet powerful model consisting of three circles to help conceptualize this idea: the Circle of Concern, the Circle of Influence, and the Circle of Control (Covey, 1989).



"Circles of Concern," by Shauna Roch, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Adapted from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen Covey, used under Fair Dealing for Educational Purposes (Canada).

Circle of Concern

Includes everything you might care about or worry about in life that you have little to no control over. It encompasses broad topics such as global events, other people's opinions, or future uncertainties.

While these issues may matter to you, they are often outside your ability to directly affect you. Spending too much time focusing on the Circle of Concern can lead to feelings of helplessness or frustration, as it includes things beyond your control.

Examples:

- Global climate change
- The economy or job market
- Natural disasters
- Government policies
- Other people's choices or opinions
- World conflicts
- A coworker's bad attitude

Circle of Influence

Represents the areas where you can have an impact, even if you cannot fully control the outcomes. For example, you may not be able to change someone's behaviour, but you can influence them through your actions, words, or examples. By focusing your energy here, you can make a positive difference while avoiding the frustration of worrying about things you can't change.

Examples:

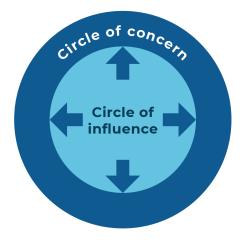
- The morale in your workplace
- Your child's homework habits
- A friend's decision-making (through conversation/support)
- Your overall physical health and well-being
- Your personal financial situation
- Your professional network or reputation

Circle of Control

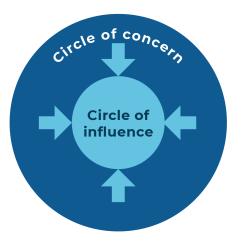
The innermost circle is where your personal power lies. It includes everything you have direct control over, such as how you respond to your thoughts and feelings.

Focusing your efforts on this circle enables you to take responsibility for your life and act in ways that align with your goals and values, thus cultivating a proactive mindset that fosters growth and resilience.

This leads us to the understanding that proactivity and reactivity directly affect these circles. As the figure below shows, positive energy enlarges the circle of influence, and negative energy reduces it.



Proactive Focus Positive energy enlarges Circle of Inlfuence



Reactive Focus Negative energy reduces Circle of Influence

Image by Freddy Vale, CC BY-NY-SA 4.0, Adapted from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey

3.6 GOAL SETTING



"Personal Goals" by Undraw, Undraw License

Adopting self-responsibility and a proactive mindset requires you to set goals. But why are these necessary? And how does one set goals that not only sound good in theory but can also be put into practice effectively?

Why Set Goals?

Setting goals provides direction and purpose, helping you focus your energy on what truly matters and breaking down long-term aspirations into manageable steps. They also boost motivation by giving you a sense of progress and accomplishment as you achieve milestones. Without goals, it's easy to feel aimless and overwhelmed. But with them, you develop clarity, accountability, and a pathway to growth. Viktor Frankl speaks to the role of goals in fostering meaning and well-being. He writes:



t can be said that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become" (Frankl, 2006, pp. 105–106).

Traits of Effective Goals

Specific

Effective goals clearly define what you aim to achieve. Specificity provides a clear focus and makes it easier to create actionable steps. Specific goals are clearly interpreted by multiple individuals and leave little to no room for guessing.

Example: Instead of saying, "I want to get fit," a more specific goal might be, "I will improve my 1-mile run time by 2 minutes."

Measurable

A measurable goal allows you to track progress and recognize when it's achieved.

Example: Instead of aiming to "save money," a measurable goal might be, "I will save \$1000 over six months." Adding numbers or milestones ensures accountability and provides motivation as you progress.

Realistic

Goals should challenge you without being unattainable. Setting overly ambitious goals can lead to frustration, while overly simple goals may not drive meaningful progress.

Example: Learning a new language fluently in two weeks is unrealistic, but committing to 30 minutes of daily practice over six months is challenging and achievable.

Time Sensitive

Every goal needs a deadline to create urgency and maintain momentum. Deadlines help prioritize tasks and prevent procrastination.

Example: Instead of saying, "I want to write a book," a time-sensitive goal might be, "I will write one chapter per week and complete my manuscript in six months."

3.7 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Canadians have fundamental rights, including equality, legal, mobility, language, and democratic.
- Freedoms allow individuals to act, speak, and think freely within the boundaries of the law. Key freedoms include conscience and religion, peaceful assembly, association, thought, belief, opinion, and expression.
- Misusing freedoms undermines societal safety and respect. Limits exist to balance individual freedoms with collective well-being.
- While victimhood may arise when one's rights are violated, crimes are committed, or uncontrollable circumstances occur, adopting a victim mentality can hinder the pursuit of wellness via the abdication of self-responsibility.
- Embracing self-responsibility fosters accountability, empowerment, and personal growth.
- Proactive individuals plan, focus on long-term goals, and take control of their actions, while reactive individuals respond impulsively, often leading to inconsistent or negative outcomes.
- Effective decision-making involves focusing on areas of control and influence rather than worrying about external concerns beyond one's reach.
- Setting specific, measurable, realistic, and time-sensitive goals provides direction and motivation, breaking down aspirations into achievable steps that lead to long-term success.

⊙Key Terms

- Victim: Someone who suffers harm, loss, or disadvantage due to external forces they could not control or prevent.
- Victim blaming: When a victim of a crime, illness, or other harmful act is held entirely or partially responsible for the harm they experienced.
- Victim mentality: An acquired personality trait where a person tends to see themselves (or others) as a victim of negative actions by others in the absence of evidence or when circumstances suggest otherwise.
- **Self-responsibility:** The state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something(s) within one's power, control, or management.
- **Proactivity:** Making intentional and deliberate decisions with a focus on both present and future outcomes.
- Reactivity: Responding to situations as they occur, often without preparation or consideration of future outcomes.
- **Circle of Concern:** Includes everything one might care about or worry about in life.
- Circle of Influence: Represents the areas where you can have an impact, even if you can't fully control the outcomes.
- Circle of Control: Includes everything you have direct control over, such as how you respond to your thoughts and feelings.

3.8 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Reflect on a time when you felt your rights or freedoms were challenged. How did you respond, and what would you do differently if faced with a similar situation now?
- 2. Think about a situation where you encountered someone with a victim mentality. How did their mindset affect their decisions and relationships? How might you approach supporting them while encouraging self-responsibility?
- 3. Reflect on a recent conflict you were involved in. How much responsibility did you take for the situation, and what could you have done to foster resolution by focusing on shared accountability or compromise?
- 4. Examine your own approach to proactivity versus reactivity. Can you identify areas of your life where you consistently react instead of planning ahead? What steps can you take to shift toward a more proactive mindset?
- 5. Consider a personal goal you set but failed to achieve. What were the barriers, and how could the alignment with these goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timesensitive) have improved your outcome?

3.9 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

What is the key difference between rights and freedoms?

- a. Rights are optional entitlements, while freedoms are guaranteed protections.
- b. Rights require legal enforcement, while freedoms are unrestricted and cannot be limited.
- c. Rights are protected by law and come with responsibilities, while freedoms are broader and may have legal limits.
- d. Freedoms always take priority over rights in legal disputes.

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following is NOT a typical trait of victim mentality?

- a. Seeking ways to improve one's situation despite challenges.
- b. Feeling powerless to change personal circumstances.
- c. Viewing setbacks as permanent and beyond personal control.
- d. Believing that other people have an easier path to success.

Multiple Choice Activity #3

Why is setting clear and well-defined goals important?

- a. It prevents failure by eliminating unexpected challenges.
- b. It helps maintain focus and measure progress over time.
- c. It allows goals to change frequently without a clear direction.
- d. It ensures all goals are simple and easy to accomplish.

Multiple Choice Activity #4

Which of the following scenarios best demonstrates proactive behaviour rather than reactive behaviour?

a. Putting off doctor's appointments until symptoms are severe.

- b. Waiting to address overwhelming stress until experiencing burnout.
- c. Skipping meals and only eating when feeling extremely hungry.
- d. Setting aside time each day for exercise and balanced meal planning.

Multiple Choice Activity #5

Which principle is most important when resolving a conflict between two people?

- a. Both parties must find common ground and accept some level of responsibility.
- b. Resolution is only possible when one person changes their perspective.
- c. The person with the strongest argument should determine the outcome.
- d. One party must fully accept blame for the issue to be resolved.

Multiple Choice Activity #6

In Covey's model, which circle should a person focus on to be the most effective in achieving their goals?

- a. The Circle of Control, since it includes their direct decisions and actions.
- b. The Circle of Concern, since it includes everything that affects them.
- c. The Circle of Power, since it includes what others can do for them.
- d. The Circle of Influence, since it includes things they can partially control.

Multiple Choice Activity #7

Which of the following best describes victim blaming?

- a. Encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their actions and choices.
- b. Holding a victim partially or fully responsible for the harm they experienced.
- c. Seeking justice by identifying the root cause of a harmful event.
- d. Recognizing when a person contributes to a situation while still offering support.

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: c. Rights are protected by law and come with responsibilities, while freedoms are broader and may have legal limits.

Activity #2: a. Seeking ways to improve one's situation despite challenges.

Activity #3: b. It helps maintain focus and measure progress over time.

Activity #4: d. Setting aside time each day for exercise and balanced meal planning.

Activity #5: a. Both parties must find common ground and accept some level of responsibility.

Activity #6: a. The Circle of Control, since it includes their direct decisions and actions.

Activity #7: b. Holding a victim partially or fully responsible for the harm they experienced.

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 4: SACRIFICE, BEHAVIOUR CHANGE, AND HABITS

Chapter Overview

- 4.0 Learning Objectives
- 4.1 "What Did I Get Myself Into?"
- 4.2 Sacrifice
- 4.3 Behaviour Change
- 4.4 Habits
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Reflection
- 4.7 Knowledge Check

4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain what sacrifice entails in both historical and modern contexts.
- Identify key characteristics that separate value-aligned sacrifices from those that are misaligned, transactional, or coerced.
- Describe how voluntary and deliberate sacrifice can foster growth, resilience, and alignment with one's core values across various dimensions of wellness.
- Define the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change (TTM) and identify all key stages.
- Summarize the anatomy of a habit loop and explain methods to establish beneficial habits or disrupt counterproductive ones.
- Integrate the concepts of sacrifice, habits, and behaviour change into a practical plan that supports the pursuit of higher-level wellness.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, Environmental, Occupational, and Financial.

4.1 "WHAT DID I GET MYSELF INTO?"





"Bed" by Bella H, Pixabay License

Your alarm buzzes at 5:00 a.m. The room is cold, and the warmth of your bed feels irresistible. But you have made a commitment: wake up early, take control of your mornings, and create a routine that sets the tone for the day ahead. You glance at the book on your bedside table, the meditation cushion in the corner, and your workout gear neatly folded by the door. You have started habits like this before, only to let them slip away when the effort felt too great.

Dragging yourself out of bed, you splash cold water on your face and settle into your chair. The house is silent, and for a moment, you question if giving up your late-night Netflix bingeing is worth it. But as you open the book and begin reading, your mind slowly sharpens. Next, you sit cross-legged on the cushion, focusing on your breath. Your thoughts wander to work, errands, and that extra hour of sleep you sacrificed, but you gently bring your attention back to the inhale and exhale. Finally, you lace up your running shoes and step outside. The cold air stings, and every step feels gruelling, but you push forward, reminding yourself why you started. To feel stronger, think clearly, and create meaningful progress towards optimal being.

96 | 4.1 "WHAT DID I GET MYSELF INTO?"

Wellness is a dynamic, ongoing process of making choices that promote optimal being. This process requires voluntary sacrifice. These sacrifices, combined with intentional and consistent behaviour change, pave the way for developing good habits that enable profound and lasting transformation. This chapter delves into the role of sacrifice, the nature of behaviour change, and the importance of habits in fostering high-level wellness.

4.2 SACRIFICE

Sacrifice is the act of giving up something of value for the sake, or hope, of achieving something greater.

In the context of personal wellness, sacrifice represents a voluntary and deliberate choice to forgo immediate self-gratification or ease, in exchange for choices that contribute to long-term well-being. Rather than being purely a loss, true sacrifice reflects commitment, discipline, and alignment with core values, transforming it into a powerful tool for meaningful change, resilience and the pursuit of optimal being.

Making sacrifices is no easy task. Consider the following quote from Jordan Peterson:



There is perhaps no pattern of action more difficult to enact than voluntary subjugation of the present to the other and to the future, given the conflict of that pursuit with the powerful appetitive, motivational, and emotional forces that strive to possess us and demand immediate gratification (Peterson, 2024, p. 91)."

History of Sacrifice

Throughout human history, sacrifice has been routinely practiced. From ancient rituals intended to appearse deities to community-based sacrifices of time and resources for the common good, these acts reflect a deeprooted recognition that meaningful progress, change and transformation often require giving something up.

Ancient Civilizations

Many early societies, such as the Aztecs, ancient Egyptians, and Mesopotamians, viewed sacrifice as essential for pleasing gods and ensuring good harvests, health, or victory in war.

Religious Contexts

Sacrifice, whether symbolic or literal, is a recurring theme across major world religions.

In Christianity, for example, sacrifice is central to Lent, a period of reflection and self-denial that

commemorates Jesus Christ's 40 days of fasting in the wilderness. During this time, believers often give up certain comforts or engage in acts of charity, symbolizing a form of personal sacrifice.

Similarly, in Hinduism, sacrifice takes the form of yajnas, ritual offerings such as ghee, grains, or even animals into a sacred fire as an offering to the gods, reinforcing the reciprocal relationship between humans and the divine. Over time, the concept of sacrifice evolved beyond physical offerings to include acts of devotion, self-discipline, and the renunciation of personal desires. This is reiterated in the Bhagavad Gita, which teaches that true sacrifice is not merely external but involves dedicating one's actions to a higher purpose, fostering spiritual growth, and transcending the ego (The Bhagavad Gita, 2007).

Modern Expressions

Sacrifice is evident in many aspects of everyday life. Parents taking on extra jobs to provide their children with better educational opportunities, activists dedicating their time and energy to social causes, and individuals modifying their diets to improve their health all exemplify this principle. In each case, the sacrifice is made with the hope of achieving something greater for themselves in the future.

A Prerequisite to Pursuing Wellness

Personal growth is a byproduct of the genuine pursuit of wellness. To grow, you must choose to let go of habits, comforts, or distractions that no longer serve you. Whether it's sacrificing convenience to establish an exercise routine or giving up certain pleasures to create space for self-improvement, voluntary and purposeful sacrifice plays a crucial role in developing new skills or character traits necessary to cultivate optimal being.

Discipline & Self Control

Intentional sacrifice strengthens discipline by training the mind and body to resist impulsive behaviours. The process can be very challenging at first. Setbacks are quite common, especially when someone "bites off more than they can chew." But each act of self-restraint builds momentum, making it easier to stay committed to long-term goals. Over time, this ability often extends to multiple aspects of life and impacts other dimensions of wellness, from health and fitness (physical wellness) to career (occupational wellness) and relationships (social wellness).

Clarifying Priorities & Living Core Values

Sacrifice pushes us to evaluate what truly matters. Choosing to forgo short-term gratification for something greater, whether that be dedicating time to a loved one or passing on an opportunity that conflicts with personal values, sharpens self-awareness and reinforces a sense of direction.

Resilience

Voluntarily giving up comfort and convenience builds mental toughness. Facing challenges and setbacks head-on, rather than avoiding them, strengthens perseverance and emotional resilience. Over time, the ability to embrace discomfort makes it easier to overcome obstacles and continue progressing toward personal and professional aspirations.

Types of Sacrifice

When done correctly, sacrifice can be a powerful tool for growth, resilience, and meaningful living. However, not all sacrifices lead to constructive outcomes. Consider the following:

True Sacrifice

True or **proper sacrifice** is intentional, value-driven, and aligned with a greater purpose or goal. It involves giving up something of perceived value for a cause, relationship, or objective that aligns with an individual's core values and priorities. The act of true sacrifice is inherently fulfilling, even if the benefits do not show up immediately. Consider the following characteristics:

- *Purposeful and Value-Aligned:* The sacrifice directly supports a meaningful goal or relationship, such as giving up leisure time to improve a skill or support a loved one.
- *Voluntary and Intentional:* The individual makes the choice willingly, without coercion or manipulation.
- Outcome-Driven: The sacrifice mainly contributes to long-term growth, well-being, or collective benefit.
- *Intrinsic Satisfaction:* Regardless of the external outcomes, the act of sacrificing aligns with personal principles, creating an internal sense of fulfillment.

False Sacrifice

False sacrifice is misaligned, coerced, or performed with unrealistic expectations of return. It often stems from a misunderstanding of what matters most or from an attempt to control outcomes beyond one's influence. This frequently leads to feelings of resentment, frustration, or unappreciation. Consider the following characteristics:

- *Misaligned with Values:* The action is disconnected from the individual's core principles or priorities, such as neglecting family time to pursue material success at all costs.
- *Transactional or Coerced:* The action is performed with the expectation of a guaranteed return or under pressure, rather than being freely chosen.
- *Ineffective or Misguided:* The action does not contribute meaningfully to the intended goal, often leading to wasted time or effort.

• *Feelings of Resentment:* When the expected return is not received, the individual may feel bitterness or a sense of injustice.

Can you think of some examples in your life where you made true and false sacrifices?

What Should One Sacrifice?

Sacrifice can be applied across all eight dimensions of wellness. Consider the following sacrifices, along with insights from well-known authors.

Comfort for Growth

Growth requires stepping outside your comfort zone, the mental and physical space where you feel safe, at ease, and in control. It consists of familiar routines, predictable challenges, and minimal stress. While it provides security and stability, staying in this zone for too long can lead to stagnation, thus preventing you from optimizing your being. In *Can't Hurt Me*, David Goggins emphasizes the power of pushing beyond perceived limits to unlock true potential (Goggins, 2018). Meanwhile, in *Atomic Habits*, James Clear highlights the importance of small, consistent actions to continually expand your comfort zone (Clear, 2018).

Examples

- Pushing through exhaustion in physical strength training instead of stopping when it gets hard.
- Waking up early to read, learn, or work on a personal goal rather than hitting snooze.
- Leaving a secure but unfulfilling job to pursue a passion that challenges you.

What are you purposefully avoiding because it feels uncomfortable?

Distractions for Focus

The modern world is filled with distractions that are designed to steal time and attention. To achieve meaningful progress towards optimal being, one must sacrifice low-value activities (e.g., social media, endless notifications, and passive entertainment) and cultivate deeper focus. In Deep Work, Cal Newport writes about "deep work," which represents one's ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. He argues that this is crucial for achieving a peak level (Newport, 2016). Meanwhile, in *The War of Art*, Steven Pressfield warns that "the enemy is not lack of preparation, it's not the difficulty of the project... The enemy is resistance," spotlighting the internal barriers that prevent us from doing our best work (Pressfield, 2002).



- Turning off push notifications and scheduling distraction-free deep work sessions.
- Entertainment: Replacing mindless scrolling or binge-watching with skill-building activities.
- Setting boundaries with people who drain your energy and distract you from important goals.

What do you think would happen if you gave up scrolling for a month? How much more could you accomplish?

Fear for Opportunity

Fear often holds us back from pursuing opportunities, whether in relationships, career moves, or personal aspirations. Sacrificing fear means choosing boldness and action over hesitation. In *Daring Greatly*, Brené Brown emphasizes the courage it takes to be vulnerable, noting that vulnerability is not a weakness but a measure of profound strength (Brown, 2012). Meanwhile, in *The 5 Second Rule*, Mel Robbins underscores the importance of taking immediate action—counting down from five and then moving forward before fear paralyzes you (Robbins, 2017).



- Stepping outside your comfort zone to express your feelings honestly or initiate tough conversations.
- Taking a risk by applying for a leadership role or switching industries.
- Starting that creative project or adventure you've been putting off.

What is one fear holding you back from an opportunity right now?

Negativity for Resilience

Negativity is draining and self-destructive, keeping you stuck in a cycle of complaining, blaming, or feeling powerless. Sacrificing negativity means choosing optimism, problem-solving, and mental toughness instead. In *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman emphasizes the power of reframing setbacks, arguing that an optimistic explanatory style can profoundly impact resilience and well-being (Seligman, 1990). In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl illustrates how finding purpose and meaning, even in dire circumstances, can transform challenges into catalysts for growth (Frankl, 2006).

Examples

- Practice reframing challenges as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable problems.
- Channel energy into actionable steps instead of dwelling on negative outcomes.
- Surround yourself with positive influences—people, media, and habits that reinforce resilience.

Do you often complain about things you can change?

Ego for Humility

It is not just pride but ego that can hold us back; our need to be right, to avoid vulnerability, or to maintain a certain image. Embracing humility allows for deeper connections, personal growth, and more authentic communication. In *Ego is the Enemy*, Ryan Holiday argues that unchecked ego stifles learning and progression, emphasizing that true greatness requires humility and self-awareness (Holiday, 2016). Jim Collins, in *Good to Great*, highlights that the most effective leaders exhibit a blend of personal humility and intense professional will, showcasing how ego-free leadership drives long-term success (Collins, 2001).

Examples

- Replace the need to dominate conversations with genuine curiosity about others' viewpoints.
- Own your errors and show accountability, fostering trust and respect.
- Ask for constructive feedback to fuel ongoing personal and professional growth.

Can you let go of the need to be right in exchange for better communication?

4.3 BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Change is often challenging and awkward because it requires wading into unfamiliar territory, modifying old habits, redefining comfort zones, and embracing uncertainty. As Robin Sharma writes in *The 5 A.M. Club*, "All change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end," emphasizing that the initial stages of transformation can be daunting but ultimately lead to a rewarding outcome. (Sharma, 2018).

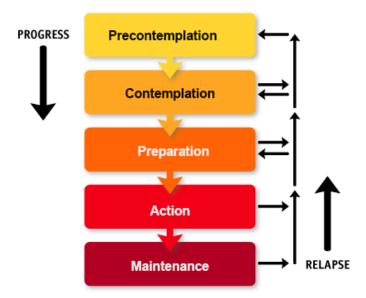
This process is typically accompanied by some form of sacrifice (e.g., giving up late-night snacking, excessive screen time, or unhealthy coping mechanisms in exchange for healthier, more sustainable choices that are more likely to foster optimal well-being). If you are someone who has been living recklessly or constantly seeking self-gratification, making the necessary changes will not instantly make things easier. In fact, it might feel even harder at first, similar to an alcoholic experiencing withdrawal symptoms.

Understanding the stages and staying committed throughout helps make the process more manageable and, ultimately, more successful.

Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change

The Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change (TTM), developed by James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente in the late 1970s, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals initiate and sustain meaningful behavioural changes. It is extensively employed in health psychology for interventions such as smoking cessation, substance abuse treatment, and wellness-related initiatives (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982).

Origins



"Stages of Change" by Todd Atkins, Public Domain. Modified: Font colour

Prochaska and DiClemente drew upon key concepts from multiple psychological theories, including Behaviourism, Social Cognitive Theory, and Psychoanalysis, to create a model that depicts how individuals move through distinct stages when altering behaviours. The TTM emphasizes that change is not a single event but rather a process, often involving progress, setbacks, and cyclical patterns.

Usefulness

The TTM helps practitioners and individuals tailor strategies to a person's current stage of readiness. Instead of a "one size fits all" approach, it encourages specific, stage-appropriate interventions. Recognizing which stage someone is in can inform how best to encourage and maintain new behaviours. For instance, strategies that work for someone in the "Preparation" stage differ significantly from those suited for someone in "Maintenance."

One of the model's most valuable insights is the recognition that people move fluidly through these stages. An individual may progress from Contemplation to Preparation, then circle back to Contemplation if new challenges arise, or even return to Precontemplation under the right circumstances. This cyclical nature highlights the dynamic and sometimes non-linear journey of behaviour change.

Stages of the TTM

Precontemplation

Definition: The individual is not yet acknowledging that there is a problem behaviour that needs to change or is unaware that the behaviour could be harmful.

Characteristics: Lack of awareness, denial, or minimal interest in change. They might believe, "I don't have a problem" or "It's not that big of a deal."

Key Tasks: Increase awareness of risks and consequences, address misinformation, and encourage reflection on how current behaviours align with personal values.

Contemplation

Definition: The individual acknowledges the problem and starts thinking about making a change, but has not committed yet.

Characteristics: Mixed feelings, ambivalence, and weighing pros and cons. "I know I should probably change, but I'm not sure I'm ready."

Key Tasks: Encourage self-exploration, highlight the benefits of change, and reduce fears or uncertainties that might be preventing commitment.

Preparation

Definition: The individual is planning to take action soon and may begin making small changes.

Characteristics: Setting a specific date to start, gathering resources, or telling friends about the intent to change. "I'm going to start my new diet next Monday."

Key Tasks: Develop a clear plan, identify support systems, and set realistic goals that align with personal values or motivations.

Action

Definition: The individual actively modifies their behaviour to create positive change.

Characteristics: Implementing strategies, seeking social support, and facing challenges as they arise. "I've started following a meal plan and exercising regularly." This typically last approximately 6 months.

Key Tasks: Provide reinforcement, track progress, and maintain motivation. Celebrate milestones and learn from setbacks.

Maintenance

Definition: After achieving initial goals, the person works to sustain the new behaviours and prevent relapse.

Characteristics: Ongoing commitment, adjusting strategies as needed, and integrating the change into daily life. "I've made healthy eating and regular workouts part of my routine."

Key Tasks: Identify potential triggers for relapse, continue reinforcing positive habits, and stay vigilant for signs of old patterns returning.

Relapse & The Upward Spiral Effect

Relapse, or returning to old behaviours, is a common and often challenging part of the change process, leading to feelings of guilt, frustration, or shame. It can happen at any stage and is considered a normal aspect of transformation. Instead of viewing relapse as failure, it helps to see it as an opportunity to learn from

setbacks, revisit what led to the slip, and refine strategies for preventing future recurrences. To quote motivational speaker and author Dennis Waitley, "failure is fertilizer."

In the TTM, each cycle of progress and relapse ultimately supports forward momentum. Rather than landing back at the starting line, you carry with you new insights and a sharper understanding of what does and does not work. Research looking at individuals trying to quit drinking shows it commonly takes more than eight attempts before someone successfully stops for good. Each "failed" attempt is a crucial stepping stone, teaching lessons that increase the likelihood of long-term success. This concept, sometimes referred to as the "upward spiral," highlights that even when setbacks happen, they can be harnessed to strengthen one's overall journey toward lasting behaviour change.

4.4 HABITS

Once an individual has successfully implemented a new behaviour over an extended period, it becomes a habit. Habits are the automatic behaviours we perform routinely, often without conscious thought. Formed through repetition, they serve as shortcuts for the brain, conserving energy and simplifying decision-making. According to research cited by Robin Sharma, it takes around 66 days of consistent practice for a new behaviour to become automatic, highlighting the importance of patience and perseverance (Sharma, 2018).

While habits can stem from intentional efforts to change, such as adopting a healthier lifestyle, they often solidify once the maintenance phase of behaviour change is established. As James Clear emphasizes in *Atomic Habits*, small habits, when repeated consistently, can compound over time, leading to profound transformations in our lives (Clear, 2018). Sound familiar? See the positive feedback loop in Chapter 2 for a refresher.

The Habit Loop

Habits operate within a cycle called the **Habit Loop**, a concept popularized by Charles Duhigg in *The Power of Habit* (Duhigg 2012). This loop consists of four key elements.



Click on each hotspot to learn more about each element.

Text Description

Cue: The trigger that initiates the habit. It can be external (e.g., seeing a candy jar) or internal (e.g., feeling stressed). Cues are signals that tell your brain it's time to perform a certain behaviour, setting the Habit Loop into motion.

Routine: The behaviour itself or the action you take in response to the cue. For example, reaching for a snack when you see the candy jar or checking your phone when you hear a notification. The routine is the most visible part of the habit, and where intentional change occurs.

Reward: The benefit you gain from the behaviour. It reinforces the habit by signalling to your brain that the action was worth performing. Rewards can be physical (e.g., the taste of a sweet treat) or psychological (e.g., the satisfaction of a clean desk after tidying up).

Craving: The motivational force behind habits. They represent the desire for the reward, rather than the routine itself. For instance, you don't just crave coffee; you crave the alertness it brings. Understanding cravings is critical for both creating and breaking habits, as they drive the cycle forward.

Creating New Habits

To establish a new habit, you need to create a clear habit loop. Let's look at what that entails:

Step 1: Select a Cue

Identify a consistent trigger that prompts the habit. This could involve laying out running shoes by your bed as a cue to exercise in the morning.

Step 2: Perform the Routine

Perform the desired behaviour immediately after the cue. This could involve going for a 10-minute run once you see your shoes.

Step 3: Receive a Reward

Reinforce the habit with a positive outcome to make it stick. This could involve enjoying a delicious smoothie after the run.

Step 4: Rinse and Repeat

Over repeated loops, you begin craving the reward, which solidifies the habit. For instance, you start looking forward to your morning smoothie, motivating you to maintain the running routine.

Breaking Old or Bad Habits

Modifying bad habits requires disrupting the existing habit loop so the behaviour loses its automatic nature. Both Duhigg and Clear offer insights into how to do this effectively.

Identify the Habit Loop

As noted previously, habits operate in a cue-routine-reward loop. To change a habit, you must first understand its current components (cue, routine and reward) and why it persists (i.e., what craving it fulfills).

Steps to Identify the Habit Loop:

Step 1: Examine the routine

What follows the cue? This is typically the behaviour you are trying to replace, such as smoking, snacking, or scrolling through social media.

Step 2: Understand and experiment with rewards

What inherent benefit does the routine provide? Are you looking for relaxation, distraction, comfort, or something else?

Step 3: Recognize the cue

What triggers the routine? This could involve several sources, including but not limited to:

- Time of day Certain behaviours may happen in the morning, afternoon, or late at night.
- Emotional state Stress, boredom, or frustration can all act as triggers.
- People you are with Specific friends or coworkers might influence certain habits.
- Action immediately preceding the cue A prior activity (e.g., finishing a meal) could cue the routine.

• Location or environment – Physical surroundings (e.g., a living room with a TV) might set the stage for the routine to begin.

Example: If you habitually check your phone when feeling bored (i.e., you are craving entertainment), the cue is feeling bored, the routine is scrolling social media, and the reward is relief from boredom. Recognizing this pattern helps you consider ways to disrupt it.

Remove the Cue

By removing or avoiding the trigger, the habit's routine is less likely to occur. This is not always feasible if the cue is linked to the time of day or one's emotional state; factors beyond an individual's control.

Strategies:

- Reduce exposure: If you want to stop snacking, keep junk food out of sight.
- Change the environment: If you check your phone too much, turn off notifications or place it in another room.
- Avoid habit triggers: If you smoke when drinking coffee, switch to tea to weaken the association.

Example: One study found that hospital employees drank 47% more water when water dispensers were moved closer to their desks (VanEpps et al., 2016).

Replace the Routine

Duhigg suggests that habits are rarely "broken." Rather, the old routine is replaced with a new routine that satisfies the same craving (Duhigg, 2012). This approach is particularly helpful when certain cues are beyond one's control.

Strategies:

• Find a healthier alternative: If stress triggers snacking, try deep breathing, meditation, or going for a

short walk.

- Substitute a productive habit: When tempted to scroll social media, read a few pages of a book or write in a journal.
- Swap behaviours: Chew gum or use a stress ball instead of smoking or nail-biting.

Example: Many smokers successfully quit by chewing gum or using a stress-relief toy instead of reaching for a cigarette.

Reframe the Reward

In line with Clear's "Make It Unattractive" principle, reframing the unwanted habit means focusing on its negative consequences rather than any perceived benefits (Clear, 2018).

Strategies:

- Change your mindset: Stop telling yourself, "smoking relaxes me," and instead tell yourself, "smoking harms my lungs."
- Use accountability: Tell a friend you're quitting to reinforce the decision.
- Visualize long-term effects: Imagine the negative outcomes if you continue this habit for five more years.

Example: Research shows that visualizing negative outcomes (e.g., picturing yourself struggling to breathe if you keep smoking) can strengthen the motivation to quit (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981).

Make the Existing Habit More Difficult or Unsatisfying

If a habit is harder to carry out, you are less likely to follow through. Habits also tend to stick when they are inherently rewarding, so reducing satisfaction can help weaken them.

Strategies:

- Make it inconvenient: Log out of Netflix each time, so you must manually sign in again.
- Implement negative consequences: If you don't go to the gym, you owe a friend \$5.
- Track your failures: Seeing a streak of "bad" habit days can motivate you to break the cycle.
- Use a barrier: Don't buy soda if you're trying to drink less of it.
- Delay the habit: Promise yourself a 10-minute wait; the urge often fades.

Example: Studies show that placing a time delay on impulse purchases reduces spending by up to 50% (Loewenstein, 1996).

4.5 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Sacrifice is the deliberate act of giving up something of perceived value to pursue or protect something greater.
- True sacrifice is voluntary, value-driven, and outcome-focused, providing intrinsic fulfilment.
 False sacrifices are coerced, misaligned with one's values, or driven by unrealistic expectations, often leading to resentment.
- Sacrifice underpins key traits that help individuals move beyond comfort and distractions to cultivate optimal being.
- The TTM explains how people progress and regress through behaviour change, emphasizing tailored strategies at each stage.
- Relapse is normal, and each attempt often brings new insights and skills, raising the likelihood of eventual behaviour change.
- Habits are formed when new behaviours are repeated consistently, driven by a cue-routine-reward-craving loop.
- Modifying habits involves altering one or more parts of the habit loop—making cues invisible, routines harder, and rewards less satisfying.

⊙⇒Key Terms

- **Sacrifice:** A voluntary and deliberate choice to forgo immediate self-gratification, or ease, in exchange for choices which contribute to long-term well-being.
- **True sacrifice:** Involves giving up something meaningful for a cause, relationship, or objective that aligns with an individual's core values and priorities.
- **False sacrifice:** Often stems from a misunderstanding of what matters most or from an attempt to control outcomes beyond one's influence and is misaligned, coerced, or performed with unrealistic expectations of return.
- The Transtheoretical Model (TTM): A model that depicts how individuals move through distinct stages when altering behaviours. The TTM emphasizes that change is not a single event but rather a process (precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance).
- **The Habit Loop:** Habits operate within a cycle called the habit loop which consists of four key elements cue, routine, reward and craving.

4.6 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Think of a specific time when you gave up something (time, money, or energy) but later realized it didn't align with your core values or was driven by external pressure. What were your motivations, how did it impact you emotionally, and what did you learn about your personal priorities?
- 2. Reflect on a negative habit you've struggled to break. Map out the exact circumstances or triggers (e.g., places, people, emotions) that nudged you toward this behaviour. How did your environment reinforce the habit, and what small shifts could help you disrupt that cycle?
- 3. Recall a personal moment when you intentionally chose discomfort (e.g., pushing past physical limits or engaging in a difficult emotional conversation) to achieve a greater goal. What internal dialogue did you have during that pivotal moment, and how did the experience reshape your mindset afterward?
- 4. Describe a situation in which your ego got in the way of learning or progress (e.g., refusing help, denying mistakes, or reacting defensively to feedback). In retrospect, what signals did you miss that could have alerted you to your ego's influence, and how did you reconcile this afterward?
- 5. Reflect on a leap of faith you either took or chose not to take because of fear. How did you weigh the risks and rewards at the time, and looking back, what role did vulnerability or hesitancy play in your decision-making process? If you could revisit that moment, what would you change?

4.7 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

According to the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change, what is the primary characteristic of the precontemplation stage?

- a. The individual acknowledges the problem but has not yet committed to change.
- b. The individual actively modifies behaviour to create positive change.
- c. The individual is unaware or denies the need for change.
- d. The individual has sustained behaviour change for at least six months.

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following best defines "true sacrifice" as described in this chapter?

- a. Giving up something to gain something better that is aligned with one's values.
- b. Giving up something under pressure from external influences.
- c. Sacrificing without expecting any benefit in return.
- d. Letting go of habits or comforts only when forced by circumstances.

Multiple Choice Activity #3

What is the key characteristic of the "Upward Spiral" concept in behaviour change?

- a. Progress and relapse cycles ultimately contribute to long-term success.
- b. Once a person relapses, they must start the change process over again.
- c. The behaviour change process always happens in a linear progression.
- d. If someone fails to change after one attempt, they are unlikely to succeed.

Multiple Choice Activity #4

Which scenario best represents a false sacrifice?

- a. Skipping a daily workout due to unexpected obligations but planning to resume the next day.
- b. Giving up personal ambitions to meet societal expectations, leading to frustration.

- c. Deliberately reducing time spent on entertainment to focus on learning a new skill.
- d. Investing time in a new career path despite initial uncertainty.

Multiple Choice Activity #5

What is an effective strategy for successfully changing a bad habit?

- a. Identifying and altering the cues that trigger the habit.
- b. Completely avoiding all situations where the habit might occur.
- c. Using self-punishment to reinforce discipline.
- d. Relying solely on willpower to stop the habit immediately.

Multiple Choice Activity #6

Which of the following is NOT part of the Habit Loop model?

- a. Cue
- b. Routine
- c. Reward
- d. Motivation

Multiple Choice Activity #7

How does sacrifice contribute to long-term personal growth?

- a. It forces individuals to endure hardship, proving their mental toughness.
- b. It helps prioritize meaningful goals by letting go of short-term comforts.
- c. It eliminates the risk of failure by promoting safe, familiar routines.
- d. It ensures external recognition and approval for personal achievements.

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: c. The individual is unaware or denies the need for change.

Activity #2: a. Giving up something to gain something better, aligned with one's values.

Activity #3: a. Progress and relapse cycles ultimately contribute to long-term success.

Activity #4: b. Giving up personal ambitions to meet societal expectations, leading to frustration.

Activity #5: a. Identifying and altering the cues that trigger the habit.

Activity #6: d. Motivation

Activity #7: b. It helps prioritize meaningful goals by letting go of short-term comforts.

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 5: STRESS

Chapter Overview

- 5.0 Learning Objectives
- 5.1 "Late Night on the Edge"
- 5.2 Defining Stress
- 5.3 Impact on Wellness
- 5.4 Common Stressors
- 5.5 Stress Management
- 5.6 Optimal Stress
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Reflection
- 5.9 Knowledge Check

5.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES



At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define stress as it pertains to wellness and discuss its historical roots.
- List and describe the three phases of the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model.
- Explore how stress can impact all dimensions of wellness.
- Identify common stressors in daily life.
- Apply stress management techniques that align with the principles of wellness.
- Compare and contrast eustress and distress.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, Environmental, Occupational, and Financial.

5.1 "LATE NIGHT ON THE EDGE"





Photo by Marcus Aurelius, Pexels License

It is nearly midnight, and you are slumped over your desk, buried under textbooks, notes, and empty coffee cups. Midterm exams start tomorrow, and despite flipping through an endless stack of flashcards, there never seems to be enough time to cover everything. Your heart races, your palms sweat, and your thoughts jump from one topic to the next. Instead of sleeping, you rely on caffeine and sheer determination to push through.

As the hours tick by, you keep up a steady cycle of memorizing, note-taking, and problem-solving. You might look composed on the outside, but inside, you are carrying a growing weight. Tension knots your shoulders, headaches press behind your eyes, and a small voice wonders if you are studying the right things. Still, you force yourself to continue, hoping your body can endure just a little longer.

Eventually, no amount of coffee or willpower can hold you together. Your body feels heavy and sluggish, your thoughts blur, and facts you knew only hours ago begin to slip away. Feeling cornered, panicked, and defeated, you snap at your roommate, who was only checking to see if you were okay.

Suddenly, daylight floods the room. You realize you have fallen asleep at your desk and missed your morning exam. Strangely, you barely care. You roll onto your bed, close your eyes, and try to pretend none of this ever happened.

You are officially burnt out.

is also one of the most formidable barriers standing between you and the pursuit of high-level wellness. For these reasons, stress gets its own chapter where you will learn about what it is, how it operates, and what you can do to manage it more effectively.

5.2 DEFINING STRESS

Historical Roots

The term **stress** was originally borrowed from physics, where it describes the internal distribution of force exerted on any material. For example, when you apply force to a spring, the metal bends or stretches. If the force is removed before the spring surpasses its "elastic limit," it returns to its original form. If you apply too much force to a spring, eventually, it will become permanently deformed or break.

This physical model parallels what happens to the mind and body under pressure: a certain amount of stress can be managed or even useful, but excessive or prolonged stress may lead to a "breakdown" in health and well-being.

Contemporary Definition

In modern contexts, stress is defined as the body and mind's response to any threat, demand, or challenge, referred to as a stressor, that disrupts one's daily life and sense of balance. Stressors may be external (e.g., tight deadlines, unexpected expenses) or internal (e.g., self-criticism, fear). In response to a stressor, the body initiates a series of physical and mental changes, such as increased heart rate, heightened alertness, and a surge of energy, to prepare the body to adapt to, or address, the stressor. These changes have been essential for humans to survive over thousands of years when faced with real or perceived danger. However, enacted over extended periods of time, they exact a cost known as an allostatic load that can accelerate the progression of disease.

General Adaptation Syndrome Model

In the 1930s, endocrinologist Hans Selye proposed the **General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)** to explain how the body responds to prolonged stress (Selye, 1956). His model consists of three distinct and sequential phases:

Phase 1: Alarm

When first encountering a stressor (e.g., an upcoming exam, a sudden emergency, or a hurtful comment), the body initiates the alarm phase. This phase is also sometimes referred to as the fight-orflight response. This evolutionary mechanism was effective at preparing early humans to survive immediate dangers, such as predatory attacks. Although modern threats are quite different, the same biological response persists. During this phase, chemical messengers called hormones are released into the bloodstream. These messengers increase heart rate, blood pressure (epinephrine and norepinephrine), and alertness (cortisol), providing an immediate surge of energy and focus.

While potent, this stage typically lasts only from a few seconds to about 10 minutes.

Phase 2: Resistance

If the stressor is not immediately resolved, the body enters the resistance phase. Sometimes referred to as the "bend but don't break" phase, the body stays on high alert and keeps hormone levels elevated. During this phase, individuals may feel more capable and in control, even if stressors persist. For instance, a person who continues working long hours to meet repeated deadlines might feel like they have adjusted to the pace. However, this adaptation is temporary. The body is still working harder than usual behind the scenes, and without adequate recovery, energy reserves begin to deplete, increasing vulnerability to fatigue, illness, and mental burnout.

This stage can last anywhere from several minutes to many days, depending on the intensity of the stressor and the individual's capacity for resilience.

Phase 3: Exhaustion

As time progresses, the body's resources begin to deplete and divert less energy to other essential processes, like immune system function, cognitive reasoning, metabolism, digestion and tissue repair. Eventually, this leads to exhaustion or burnout. At this point, the body can no longer keep pace with the demands of the stressor, resulting in severe fatigue and effectively forcing the individual to rest.

Chronic stress that reaches this stage in this response can lead to serious physical and mental health concerns.

5.3 IMPACT ON WELLNESS

Dimensions of Wellness

Unmanaged stress complicates efforts to pursue wellness. Click on each hotspot to better understand the impact of stress on each dimension.

Text Description

- Physical: Symptoms such as headaches, muscle tension, weight fluctuation, sleep disturbances, and weakened immunity increase susceptibility to illness, weight gain, and injury.
- Emotional: Irritability, anxiety, mood swings, and depression-like symptoms often arise, impairing an individual's ability to identify, process, and express emotions in a constructive way.
- Spiritual: Chronic stress can distance an individual from practices, principles, or beliefs that provide inner peace and a sense of meaning.
- Intellectual: Concentration, memory, and decision-making skills become impaired, hindering curiosity and learning.
- Environmental: Motivation to maintain clean, safe, and organized living spaces decreases.
- Financial: Stress can lead to poor financial decisions or avoidance of planning, creating a cycle in which stress and financial strain perpetuate each other.
- Occupational: Productivity declines, job satisfaction drops, and workplace conflicts increase, sometimes resulting in burnout or frequent job changes.
- Social: Interpersonal relationships suffer when individuals become withdrawn, irritable, or too busy to maintain supportive connections with friends and family.

5.4 COMMON STRESSORS



Below are some of the most common sources of stress individuals face today. Click on the cards to reveal an example for each one.

Text Description

- Major life changes: Events like starting a new program at school, divorce, job transitions, moving, or the birth of a child.
- Work or academic pressure: Tight deadlines, heavy workloads, and performance expectations (amplified by procrastination).
- Financial strains: Debt, unexpected expenses, or job insecurity.
- Relationship conflicts: Interpersonal disagreements, family tensions, or loneliness.
- Health concerns: Chronic illnesses or caring for a loved one with a health condition involves additional emotional and logistical challenges.
- Environmental factors: Noise pollution, crowding, and unsafe living conditions.
- Internal pressure: Negative self-talk, perfectionism, and unrealistic expectations.
- Technology overload: Constant connectivity, social media comparisons, and the pressure to be "always on."

5.5 STRESS MANAGEMENT

Effective stress management involves two steps: recognition and action.

Recognition

Recognizing stress includes identifying:

- Whether stress is present
- Whether the stress is too much (or too little)
- Which stage of the GAS model applies

By noticing specific physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural cues, individuals can gauge their stress levels and GAS stage more accurately.

Cues	Alarm Phase	Resistance Phase	Exhaustion Phase
Physical	Rapid heartbeat or breathing, muscle tension, sweating, surge in energy	Persistent muscle tension or headaches, slightly elevated heart rate, intermittent fatigue	Constant fatigue, frequent illness, chronic aches and pains
Emotional	Irritability, heightened anxiety, feeling "on edge"	Ongoing frustration or anxiety, feeling overwhelmed yet continuing with tasks	Persistent sadness or numbness, irritability, feelings of hopelessness
Cognitive	Difficulty focusing, racing thoughts, hypervigilance	Difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, rumination	Inability to concentrate, memory issues, pessimism
Behavioural	Restlessness (pacing, fidgeting), impulsive actions	Changes in eating or sleeping patterns, social withdrawal, increased use of substances (caffeine, alcohol)	Extreme changes in weight or sleep, social isolation, reliance on unhealthy coping (substance abuse, neglecting responsibilities)
Time	Almost instantaneous	Persisting longer than 10 minutes since onset	Several hours or days since the onset

Action

A wellness-centered approach to stress management should not only address immediate concerns but also

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support long-term well-being. Quick fixes like drinking, overspending, scrolling, watching TV or stress-eating may provide temporary relief but ultimately undermine long-term health. Consider the following techniques which promote optimal being over the long term:

Mindfulness & Relaxation

- Meditation, prayer, deep breathing exercises, and progressive muscle relaxation.
- In what situations do I find it most challenging to stay calm?

Physical Activity

- Any type of activity which involves the movement of muscles. This could include walking, running, gardening, yoga, and may more.
- What form of physical activity do I genuinely enjoy?

Setting Personal Boundaries

- When others are suspected to be the source of stress, learning to say "no" can be highly effective. Establishing clear but fair boundaries ensures that you protect your time and energy.
- In what ways have I struggled to say 'no'?

Social Support

- Connecting with friends, family, or community groups provides emotional relief and potentially a fresh perspective.
- Who are the people in my life I can turn to for emotional support, and how can I make more time to connect with them?

Cognitive Restructuring

- Challenging negative thought patterns and replacing them with more realistic, constructive views is a key strategy in cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). A variation of this technique is discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8.
- What are some common negative thoughts I experience under stress, and how might I replace them with more balanced, constructive perspectives?

Scheduling Personal Time

- Allocating dedicated time to engage in hobbies or enjoyable activities, such as painting, drawing, or reading, offers mental breaks and a sense of achievement.
- What activities truly recharge me, and how can I regularly schedule time for these pursuits?

Professional Help

• If stress persists despite best efforts, counselling, therapy, or coaching can offer personalized strategies. Fanshawe College provides counselling services as part of student tuition.

Fanshawe College Services

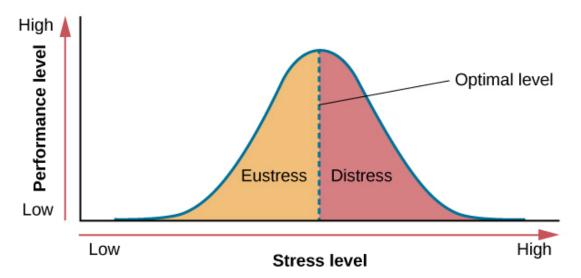


- Mend Student Massage Clinic (A1001) allows massage therapy students to develop skills. For booking information, please see the Mend Student Massage Clinic website.
- Fanshawe Counselling Services (F2010) provides personal counselling, peer support, sexual violence prevention, and support, as well as group and workshop sessions. See the Counselling website for more information.

5.6 OPTIMAL STRESS

Not all stress is harmful. Eustress refers to beneficial, motivating stress—like the excitement before a presentation or when starting a new job. Recognizing this distinction enables you to use stress as a source of drive while minimizing its harmful effects. The key is finding the right balance for you.

Stress and Performance



As the stress level increases from low to moderate, so does performance (eustress). At the optimal level (the peak of the curve), performance has reached its peak. If stress exceeds the optimal level, it will reach the **distress** region, where it will become excessive and debilitating, and performance will decline (Everly & Lating, 2002). Used under FDEd (CAN).

5.7 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Stress is a concept borrowed from physics to describe how forces (stressors) can strain our mental and physical "elasticity."
- Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model outlines three phases (Alarm, Resistance & Exhaustion) to explain how the body responds to stress.
- Stress affects all eight dimensions of wellness.
- Identifying which phase of the GAS model one is in can help implement tailored coping strategies.
- Practices that contribute to both present and future well-being can help manage stress levels low and bolster resilience.
- Stress can be motivating or harmful.

⊙⇒Key Terms

- **Stress**: The body and mind's response to any threat, demand, or challenge—referred to as a stressor—that disrupts one's daily life and sense of balance.
- **General Adaption Syndrome (GAS)**: A model developed by endocrinologist Hans Selye that explains how the body responds to prolonged stress using three distinct and sequential phases alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.
- **Eustress**: This is known as beneficial, motivating stress resulting in peak performance, such as the excitement before a presentation or when starting a new job.
- **Distress:** When stress exceeds the optimal level and becomes excessive and debilitating, resulting in declining performance.

5.8 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Reflect on a period of your life when you felt completely overwhelmed (exhaustion phase). Which personal beliefs, assumptions, or past experiences may have contributed to your prolonged stress, and how do they still affect your capacity to cope today?
- 2. Consider the core values that guide you (e.g., family, career success, creativity, spiritual growth). In what ways might these values conflict or reinforce each other under stress, and how does that interplay influence your decision-making?
- 3. When you feel the initial "alarm" of stress (e.g., rapid heartbeat, irritability), what specific emotions surface, and what deeper fears or insecurities might be driving them? How do these emotions affect your relationships and daily routines?
- 4. Examine the different roles you fulfill (e.g., caregiver, employee, student, or friend). How do these roles interact and sometimes compete under stress, and what does that reveal about your identity, priorities, and sense of purpose?
- 5. Think of a time when stress served as a catalyst for personal transformation or growth in your life. What elements of that experience made it productive rather than destructive, and how can you replicate those conditions in future high-stress situations?

5.9 KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

How does the concept of "stress" relate to its original meaning in physics?

- a. It describes how external and internal pressures create temporary discomfort but has no lasting effects.
- b. It refers to the ability of individuals to recover quickly from challenges, similar to how materials return to their original shape.
- c. It explains how prolonged pressure—whether physical or emotional—can lead to strain and potential breakdown.
- d. It suggests that stress only affects mental well-being and has little connection to physical health.

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following best describes the alarm phase in Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome model?

- a. The body increases hormone production, triggering a surge in energy and heightened alertness.
- b. The body suppresses stress responses to conserve energy for long-term challenges.
- c. The body experiences a delayed reaction to stress, gradually increasing its response over time.
- d. The body immediately shifts to an exhaustion state when stress is perceived as overwhelming.

Multiple Choice Activity #3

What happens if a person remains in the resistance phase of stress for an extended period?

- a. The body adjusts permanently, making stress a non-issue over time.
- b. The body continues functioning at a high level but at the cost of depleting internal resources.
- c. The body stops responding to stressors, leading to emotional detachment.

d. The body eliminates stress hormones completely, reducing the overall impact of stress.

Multiple Choice Activity #4

How can chronic stress impact a person's well-being?

- a. It can contribute to physical health issues, emotional distress, and cognitive impairments.
- b. It can lead to improved adaptability, making future stressors easier to handle.
- c. It primarily affects motivation and productivity but has little impact on physical health.
- d. It strengthens the immune system by keeping the body in a constant state of alertness.

Multiple Choice Activity #5

Which of the following is an example of eustress rather than distress?

- a. An athlete experiencing pre-game nervousness that sharpens their focus.
- b. A student feeling overwhelmed by a final exam and struggling to concentrate.
- c. A person dealing with prolonged financial difficulties and ongoing anxiety.
- d. A professional feeling mentally drained after months of excessive workload.

Multiple Choice Activity #6

What is an example of a behavioural symptom of the exhaustion phase of stress?

- a. Increased reliance on unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as overeating or substance use.
- b. Persistent muscle tension and frequent headaches that worsen over time.
- c. Difficulty processing emotions, leading to mood swings and irritability.
- d. Heightened sensitivity to environmental stressors, such as noise or crowded spaces.

Multiple Choice Activity #7

Which of the following is considered an effective long-term stress management strategy?

- a. Using mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing, to regulate stress responses.
- b. Avoiding all stressful situations, even those that provide opportunities for growth.
- c. Relying on short-term distractions like excessive screen time to escape stress.
- d. Increasing workload efficiency to minimize the need for relaxation or downtime.

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: c. It explains how prolonged pressure—whether physical or emotional—can lead to strain and potential breakdown.

Activity #2: a. The body increases hormone production, triggering a surge in energy and heightened alertness.

Activity #3: b. The body continues functioning at a high level but at the cost of depleting internal resources.

Activity #4: a. It can contribute to physical health issues, emotional distress, and cognitive impairments.

Activity #5: a. An athlete experiencing pre-game nervousness that sharpens their focus.

Activity #6: a. Increased reliance on unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as overeating or substance use.

Activity #7: a. Using mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing, to regulate stress responses.

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 6: EMOTIONS

Chapter Overview

- 6.0 Learning Objectives
- 6.1 "The Dirty House"
- 6.2 Internal Messengers
- 6.3 Emotional Intelligence
- 6.4 Emotional Self-Regulation
- 6.5 Revisiting Your Worst Day Ever
- 6.6 Summary
- 6.7 Reflection
- 6.8 Knowledge Check

6.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explore the benefits and difficulties associated with human emotions.
- Compare and contrast emotional intelligence (EQ) and intelligence quotient (IQ).
- Discuss the process of emotional self-regulation.
- Distinguish between emotions and thoughts.
- List common thoughts (e.g., judgments, assumptions, predictions, interpretations, comparisons, core beliefs) and identify ways to test them.
- Explore assertive communication and empathy techniques to express emotions and thoughts constructively.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, and Occupational.

6.1 "THE DIRTY HOUSE"



Picture This:



"Couple talking while arguing" by Timur Weber, Pexels License

It's 6:30 pm, and you have just returned home after a demanding day at work. You feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and annoyed as your boss made you stay late. As you step through the door, you notice shoes all over the entryway, dirty dishes cluttering the kitchen, and a disorganized living room. A surge of irritation wells up inside you. Your jaw and fist clench, and you can feel a bead of sweat trickle down the side of your face.

You confront your partner lying on the couch with sharp words: "Why are you always so messy!? I worked all day, and this is what I have to come home to. Do I have to do everything around here!?"

Your partner, surprised by your tone, fires back: "Why are you always criticizing me? It's like I can never do anything right. Maybe if you weren't such a bossy control freak, I would be more inclined to help!"

A few more heated comments fire back and forth before you decide it is not worth the conflict and storm off to another room. Sitting alone, you reflect on what just happened. You realize your initial frustration was not just about the messy house. Rather, it was intensified by the stress you carried all day. Allowing your emotions to dictate your actions not only escalated a minor annoyance but also put a strain on your relationship.

can become disproportionate and, in some cases, extreme. These can damage relationships and personal wellbeing. Throughout this chapter, we explore emotions, EQ, and the process of emotional self-regulation, helping us better navigate both the highs and lows of life and thus improving outcomes and optimizing wellbeing.

6.2 INTERNAL MESSENGERS

While there is no scientific consensus on how to define an **emotion**, it is commonly understood as a naturally occurring state of mind and body that can be derived from one's circumstances (i.e., what is happening around us), mood (i.e., how we are feeling overall), and/or relationships (i.e., the connections we share with people, places and things).

Emotions (and more broadly, feelings) can be understood as internal messengers. They are signals your body and mind send to alert you that something meaningful is happening and are often tied to your values, beliefs, or personal boundaries.

Each emotion carries a message. For example:

- Sadness often signals that you have lost something important.
- Anger may indicate that a personal boundary has been crossed.
- Envy can suggest that you desire something someone else has.

While emotions can feel pleasant or unpleasant, experiencing them doesn't make you a "good" or "bad" person. They are not moral judgments; they are simply data. What matters is how you respond to them. For instance, if you feel profound grief after the loss of a parent, that is a natural and valid emotional response. Choosing to suppress that feeling by consuming alcohol might prolong or complicate healing, whereas expressing it by sharing memories with a friend can help you process it in a healthier way.

One helpful metaphor is to picture emotions as one side of a coin labelled "feelings." The other side of that coin consists of physical sensations, such as dizziness, nausea, or brain fog, that often accompany emotional states. From a cognitive-behavioural perspective, these feelings (both emotional and physical) arise from a combination of your thoughts and actions.

Consider how this plays out in the workplace: Suppose you repeatedly think, "My boss is evil, narcissistic, and hates me." These thoughts are likely to evoke emotions like resentment, fear, or helplessness. However, if your thoughts shift to something like "My boss is probably under a lot of pressure and may be struggling at home," you might instead feel empathy, curiosity, or even detachment. The circumstances have not changed. However, the emotional response is based on how you interpret them.

Emotions can also be compared to a double-edged sword.



Click on each side of the sword to see the two sides of our emotional response.

Text Description

- On one edge, emotions like happiness, love, excitement, and gratitude can make life feel vibrant, joyful, and deeply fulfilling. They are what give our best moments that extra spark and add tremendous meaning and purpose. They also help us survive. Fear, for example, can instantly kick your body into gear when you are in danger. If someone suddenly cuts you off in traffic, the fear response helps you react quickly, slamming on the brakes before you even have time to think or process what is happening.
- On the other edge, emotions can intensify life's low points. Sadness, anger, guilt, and resentment can linger and weigh heavily on us. When not managed well, they can lead to withdrawal, conflict, or even physical stress. A breakup, a failure, or being treated unfairly can trigger emotions that overwhelm you, placing you in a deep, dark hole seemingly impossible to climb out of.

6.3 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



"Group of People" by Helena Lopes, Pexels License

Emotional intelligence (also referred to as EQ) refers to a mix of emotional and social skills that help you understand yourself, express how you feel, build healthy relationships, handle stress, and use your emotions in an effective way.

People with high emotional intelligence are often described as "street smart," excelling at reading social cues (e.g., facial expressions, body language, mood shifts), addressing conflicts constructively, leading teams with empathy, and regulating their own emotional responses.

Although there is considerable overlap between emotional intelligence and emotional wellness (both involve harnessing the power of emotions for positive outcomes), **emotional wellness** is an ongoing process of making choices to foster optimal well-being. In contrast, emotional intelligence centers specifically on the abilities and skills one uses to perceive, understand, and manage emotions (see table below).

Term	Definition	
Emotional Wellness	An ongoing process of making choices to optimize and balance emotional well-being with other facets of well-being	
Emotional Intelligence	A set of abilities – recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions effectively (yours and others)	

Emotional Quotient (EQ) vs Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

IQ generally refers to cognitive abilities, such as logical reasoning, problem-solving, and abstract thinking. It remains relatively stable over time and is typically measured through standardized tests designed to assess how well someone can learn, understand, and apply information. High IQ scores often correlate with strong academic performance and problem-solving skills—hence the term "book smarts."

The following table provides a side-by-side comparison of both:

Areas of Comparison	IQ	EQ
Nature of abilities	Cognitive skills (e.g., memory and reasoning)	Emotional/social skills (e.g., empathy, regulation)
Measurement	Tests that yield a numerical score	Behavioural observations, self-report questionnaires, or performance-based tests
Development	Relatively stable over time	Can be developed and refined through self-awareness, practice, and feedback
Impact	Indicates academic or technical potential	Predicts success in leadership, teamwork, and personal relationships

Neither IQ nor EQ is inherently "better." They simply measure different dimensions of ability. Both are valuable for a balanced skill set.

Assessing Emotional Intelligence

To measure emotional intelligence, this book references the EQ-i 2.0 (Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0), a widely used assessment tool developed by Multi-Health Systems (MHS), which examines five competencies self-perception, self-expression, stress management, interpersonal skills, and decision-making. This assessment helps individuals understand their emotional strengths and areas for improvement, offering targeted insights and strategies to develop healthier relationships, enhance leadership abilities, and foster personal growth in these areas (MHS Staff, 2011).



Click on the cards below to learn more about the five competencies used in the EQ-i 2.0 assessment.

Text Description

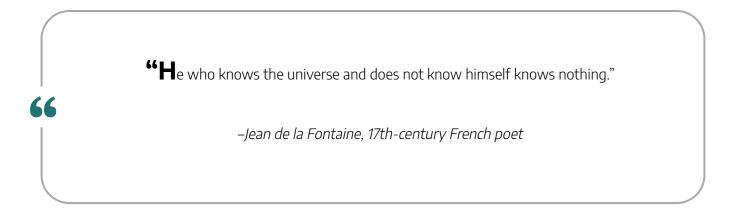
This activity contains a set of dialogue cards, which are described below.

- 1. Self-Perception: Self-Regard, Self-Actualization, Emotional Self-Awareness
- 2. Self-Expression: Emotional Expressions, Assertiveness, Independence
- 3. Interpersonal: Interpersonal Relationships, Empathy, Social Responsibility
- 4. Decision-Making: Problem-Solving, Reality Testing, Impulse Control
- 5. Stress Management: Flexibility, Stress Tolerance, Optimism

Two competencies (self-perception and self-expression) will be unpacked further in this chapter. The remaining competencies listed are discussed in other chapters of this book:

- Stress Management (Chapter 5)
- Interpersonal Skills (Chapters 3, 7 and 8)
- Decision Making (Chapter 4)

6.4 EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION



Understanding ourselves, especially our emotions, is incredibly important. Every day, we feel many different emotions that guide the choices we make. Learning how to recognize, process, and express our emotions is a process called emotional self-regulation. It sounds straightforward, but it can be surprisingly tough to put into practice, especially when we are stressed or overwhelmed.



"The process of self-regulation" by Stephanie Audette, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

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Step 1: "What am I thinking?"

A thought is a mental statement, idea, or judgment about what is happening, or has happened, around you or within you. You can think of thoughts as your internal commentary—sometimes helpful and accurate, sometimes misleading and influenced by false pretenses or assumptions. Consider the following example where thoughts lead to negative emotions:

I think that I am overworked and underappreciated by my supervisors, and company as a whole, in my retail job → this makes me feel overwhelmed, helpless, angry, and exhausted.

Thoughts also play a critical role in how you respond to your emotions because they can calm you down, amp you up, or even distort your view of reality. Below are common categories of thoughts.

Click on the icons to learn more about each category.

Text Description

Judgments: Opinions or evaluations about yourself, someone else, or a situation, often labelling something as "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," etc.

Examples:

- "I shouldn't be upset about this."
- "He's being selfish."
- "I'm no good at anything."

Assumptions: Guesses about what other people are thinking or feeling are often made without clear evidence or checking the facts.

Examples:

- "She must be angry with me."
- "He doesn't care about my feelings"
- "They're ignoring my calls on purpose.

Predictions: Thoughts about what might happen in the future are often negatively slanted.

Examples:

- "I'm going to fail the test tomorrow."
- "If I speak up, everyone will laugh at me."

Interpretations: Attempts to make meaning out of something that happened or how someone behaved.

Examples:

- "She didn't say hi because she hates me."
- "He looked at his watch, so he must be bored."

Comparisons: Measuring yourself or your situation against someone else's or your own past experience. This is often done by overlooking important contextual differences.

Examples:

- "Everyone else is doing better than I am."
- "I used to handle stress so much better."

Core Beliefs: Deeply held ideas about yourself, others, or the world. These usually form over time and guide how you perceive everything.

Examples:

- "I'm not good enough."
- "People can't be trusted."

Fact or Fiction?

Thoughts are often not rooted in truth. This cannot be overstated. There are times when they are indeed based on solid evidence (like seeing your busy calendar and predicting a hectic day), but others are built on shaky assumptions, misinformation, or emotional bias.

Before you accept a thought as truth, especially if it leads to big decisions or strong reactions, consider the following:

- Evidence: What facts do you have to support this thought? Are you potentially overlooking facts that do not suit your narrative?
- Other explanations: Is there another way to look at this situation? If you were in a calmer state, would you think differently? Why would a reasonable and rational person act this way?
- Emotional filter: Notice if you are especially anxious, angry, or sad, which might cause your thoughts to lean negatively. Avoid making big decisions when you are upset.
- Talk/write it out: Sharing your thoughts with a friend, counsellor, or loved one can help you see them from a different perspective. Writing them down is also an

excellent way to process them. Brené Brown refers to this as a "Stormy First Draft" (Brown, 2015).

The Line Model

A helpful tool for assessing one's ability to recognize and process emotions is the "line model," proposed by Jim Dethmer and Diana Chapman in *The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership*. You're either above the line—open, curious, adaptable—or below the line—defensive, rigid, focused on being "right" (Dethmer & Chapman, 2015).

Above the line: open, curious, adaptable

Below the line: defensive, rigid, focused on being "right"

Visual adaptation of the Line Model (Dethmer & Chapman, 2015), by Stephanie Audette, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

According to Thibault Meurisse in *Master Your Emotions*, recognizing when you've slipped below the line is a strong gauge of self-awareness (Meurisse, 2018). Can you tell when your emotional state shifts? How does it affect your thoughts and behaviours? Learning to notice these shifts is the first step toward managing your emotions rather than being ruled by them.

Step 2: "What am I feeling?"

You cannot fully process or express a feeling if you are not sure what it is in the first place. This step involves naming which emotion (or emotions) you are experiencing at the moment. It can be especially difficult if you feel several emotions at once, which leads to many skipping this step completely.

Taking just a moment to pause and check in with yourself can make a huge difference. Ask questions like:

- Am I angry?
- Am I sad or disappointed?
- Am I worried, anxious, or afraid?
- Am I happy but also feeling pressure or stress?

It's normal to experience more than one emotion at the same time. What matters is noticing and acknowledging each emotion instead of pushing it away, ignoring it, or mixing it up with something else.

Classic Emotions

Psychologist Dr. Paul Ekman identified six "classic" emotions that are recognized in nearly every culture around the world (Ekman, 2003):

- Happiness
- Sadness
- Fear
- Anger
- Surprise
- Disgust

Think of these as core emotional building blocks. Other emotions usually come from one (or a combination) of these six. For example, "disappointment" and "emptiness" are different feelings, but both are related to sadness. Recognizing the type of sadness you feel helps you figure out the best way to deal with it.

Here are some useful tools and resources that are helpful in expanding your understanding of emotions:

- The Feelings Wheel [PDF] breaks down each of these basic emotions into more specific ones, making it easier to pinpoint exactly what you are experiencing.
- Atlas to the Heart. Dr. Brené Brown describes a wide range of emotions humans experience in her book Atlas to the Heart. She breaks emotions down into clear, relatable terms—something that can really help you develop a deeper understanding of what you are feeling.

Step 3: "How am I going to respond?"

After identifying your emotion(s) and processing your thoughts, the final step is expression.

You Control the Response

You may not be able to fully control which emotions you feel and every thought that enters your mind. However, no matter how strong your emotions are or how tense a situation might be, nobody can force you to respond in a certain way. Other people's words or actions can influence your response, but the ultimate decision—what you do next—falls squarely in your "Circle of Control" (Chapter 3).

Owning your response means stepping back, thinking about your choices, and making conscious choices that support your well-being and respect others.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the skill of honestly and respectfully expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs. It balances self-respect (knowing your rights, limits, and needs) with respect for others (acknowledging their perspectives and boundaries) to improve understanding and conflict resolution.

An assertive person:

- Expresses their thoughts and emotions clearly and directly.
- Maintains a calm and respectful tone, both in what they say and how they say it.
- Trusts their own opinions and abilities without feeling the need to belittle or overshadow others.

What Assertiveness Is Not:

Aggression:

- Disregarding the rights or feelings of others, often involving hostility, shouting, intimidation, or belittling.
- This approach may get immediate results, but often damages relationships and trust long-term.

Example: "We're doing it my way, and I don't care what you think!"

Passivity:

- Consistently prioritize other people's needs over your own and avoid conflict at all costs.
- Over time, this can lead to unspoken resentment and a loss of self-esteem because one's own needs are not being addressed.

Example: "It's okay, whatever you want," said repeatedly, even if they're uncomfortable or disagree.

Empathy

A cornerstone of emotional intelligence, **empathy** is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It involves mentally and emotionally placing yourself in someone else's shoes, recognizing their emotions, and acknowledging their perspectives without necessarily adopting them as your own.

Take a moment to watch this video by Brené Brown on the difference between empathy and sympathy.

Video: "Brené Brown on Empathy" by RSA [2:53] is licensed under the Standard YouTube License. *Transcript and closed captions available on YouTube.*

Empathy fosters stronger connections by challenging assumptions, encouraging consideration of others' emotional contexts, and enhancing social awareness to navigate

conflicts more effectively. When people feel genuinely heard and understood, trust grows, isolation decreases, and everyone's emotional well-being improves.

An empathetic person:

- Strives to see and understand things from the other person's viewpoint (e.g., "If I were in their situation, how would I feel?").
- Responds in a way that reflects genuine care and insight into the other person's emotional state (e.g., "It sounds like you're really stressed about this; I can imagine how overwhelming that must feel.").
- Maintains respect for the other person's feelings even if they disagree with their ideas or actions.

What Empathy Is Not

Sympathy:

- Pity or feeling sorry for someone's misfortune, sometimes from a distance ("I feel bad for you, but that's your experience, not mine.").
- Unlike empathy, sympathy does not necessarily involve trying to see the world through the other person's lens; it can remain superficial or detached.

Agreement:

• You do not have to agree with someone's decisions or share their beliefs. You can understand their emotions without adopting their viewpoint.

Responding When Feeling Emotionally Distraught

When emotions run high, it's easy to react impulsively. Instead, try to respond with care and intention. Talk it out:

- Open up to someone you trust—a friend, family member, or professional
- Use "I" statements to express your experience without blaming others

Soothe your nervous system by engaging in calming activities to settle your body and mind:

"I'm feeling frustrated. I think I need some space to clear my head."

- Relaxation techniques like deep breathing, stretching, or progressive muscle relaxation
- Physical movement such as walking or light exercise to release built-up tension

6.5 REVISITING YOUR WORST DAY EVER



Text Description

Think of a time you'd consider one of the worst days of your life.

Q1: Recall a tough day. Write down the key events and details.

- What happened?
- Who was there? What was said?
- What do you remember seeing, hearing, or even smelling?

Q2: Describe your experience

- Which emotions were you feeling? (e.g., sadness, frustration, loneliness, anger)
- How did your body feel? (e.g., tense muscles, headache, shaking, fatique)
- What was your mindset like? (e.g., racing thoughts, confusion, numbness)

Q3: Identify your thoughts

- List any thoughts or beliefs that came up at the time.
- Ask yourself: "Were these thoughts based on facts, or were they influenced by strong emotions and assumptions?"

Q4: Check for accuracy and shift perspective. Challenge each thought by asking:

- "Is this really true?"
- "What evidence do I have?"
- "Could there be another explanation?"

Q5: Note your response. Detail exactly what you did.

• Did you withdraw, lash out, talk to a friend, seek help, etc?

Reflection: Even during tough times, you always have control over how you respond. You can choose to reach out for support or find other healthy ways to cope.

6.6 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Emotions can enhance life's best moments but also intensify its challenges; learning to manage them is essential for well-being.
- Emotional wellness is a process, whereas emotional intelligence refers to ability.
- IQ relates to cognitive abilities like logic and problem-solving, while EQ focuses on emotional and social skills; both are important but serve different purposes.
- Emotional self-regulation involves identifying what you're feeling, exploring the thoughts behind those feelings, and choosing a constructive response.
- Emotions can distort your thinking and challenge assumptions and emotional filters by asking for evidence and considering other explanations.

⊙Key Terms

- **Emotion:** A naturally occurring state of mind and body that can be derived from one's circumstances (i.e., what is happening around us), mood (i.e., how we are feeling overall), and/or relationships (i.e., the connections we share with people, places and things).
- **Emotional Intelligence:** A mix of emotional and social skills that help you understand yourself, express how you feel, build healthy relationships, handle stress, and use your emotions in an effective way.
- **Emotional wellness:** an ongoing process of making choices to foster optimal well-being. In contrast, emotional intelligence centers specifically on the abilities and skills one uses to perceive, understand, and manage emotions.
- **IQ (Intelligence Quotient)**: Refers to cognitive abilities, such as logical reasoning, problem-solving, and abstract thinking. It remains relatively stable over time and is typically measured through standardized tests designed to assess how well someone can learn, understand, and apply information.
- **EQ (Emotional Quotient)**: Refers to emotional/social skills (empathy, regulation) and is measured by behavioural observations. It can be developed and refined through self-awareness, practice, and feedback.
- **EQ-i 2.0 (Emotional Quotient 2.0)**: A widely used tool that examines competencies such as self-perception, stress management, interpersonal skills, decision-making, and more. This assessment helps individuals understand their emotional strengths and areas for improvement, offering targeted insights and strategies to develop healthier relationships, enhance leadership abilities, and foster personal growth.
- **The Line Model:** A helpful tool for assessing and processing one's emotional state. If you are above the line, you are open, curious, and adaptable. If you are below the line, you are defensive, rigid, and focused on being "right" (Dether & Chapman, 2015).
- **Assertiveness:** The skill of honestly and respectfully expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs. It balances self-respect (knowing your rights, limits, and needs) with respect for others (acknowledging their perspectives and boundaries) to improve understanding and conflict resolution.
- **Aggression**: Disregarding the rights or feelings of others, often involving hostility, shouting, intimidation, or belittling.
- Passivity: Consistently prioritizing other people's needs over your own and avoiding conflict

at all costs.

- **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It involves mentally and emotionally placing yourself in someone else's shoes, recognizing their emotions, and acknowledging their perspectives without necessarily adopting them as your own.
- **Sympathy:** Pity or feeling sorry for someone's misfortune, sometimes from a distance ("I feel bad for you, but that's your experience, not mine."). Unlike empathy, sympathy does not necessarily involve trying to see the world through the other person's lens; it can remain superficial or detached.

6.7 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. When you notice strong emotions (e.g., rage, despair, intense anxiety), how do you typically respond? How might a different approach (e.g., challenging certain thoughts) alter the outcome of those moments in the future?
- 2. Reflect on a recent situation where you felt the urge to be more assertive: What beliefs or fears held you back from expressing your needs?
- 3. Which emotional reactions do you find hardest to control? What deeper thoughts or core beliefs do you suspect fuel them the most?
- 4. Recall a moment you felt misunderstood or unheard. What actions could you take (or have taken) to clarify your feelings in a healthier, more productive way without sacrificing empathy for the other person's viewpoint?
- 5. Look back on a situation where you hurt someone, even if unintentionally, due to your emotional state. What emotions were driving you then, what did you learn about your own triggers, and how have you grown from that experience?

6.8 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

Which of the following best describes emotional intelligence

- a. A measure of memory capacity and abstract thinking
- b. The ability to score highly on standardized reasoning tests
- c. A fixed trait that does not change over time
- d. The ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively

Multiple Choice Activity #2

In the "Dirty House" scenario, what was the root cause of the emotional outburst?

- a. The partner's laziness
- b. The argument about house chores
- c. The stress carried throughout the day
- d. The condition of the house

Multiple Choice Activity #3

Which of the following is a difference between IQ and EQ?

- a. IQ relates to cognitive abilities, while EQ relates to emotional and social skills
- b. IQ is developed over time, while EQ is fixed
- c. EQ determines academic success, while IQ determines emotional maturity
- d. EQ is measured by math and logic tests, while IQ is measured by emotions

Multiple Choice Activity #4

What is the first step in the emotional self-regulation process?

- a. Identifying and labeling the emotions you're experiencing
- b. Comparing your emotions to others
- c. Expressing your emotions through assertive communication

d. Asking others for feedback

Multiple Choice Activity #5

Which of the following is an example of a thought influenced by a core belief?

- a. "She didn't say hi because she's mad at me."
- b. "I might fail the test tomorrow."
- c. "Everyone else is doing better than I am."
- d. "People can't be trusted."

Multiple Choice Activity #6

What best defines assertive communication?

- a. Saying whatever you feel in the moment
- b. Controlling other people's emotional reactions
- c. Avoiding conflict by agreeing with others
- d. Expressing your needs honestly and respectfully

Multiple Choice Activity #7

According to the "line model," what does it mean to be above the line?

- a. You are overwhelmed by sadness or guilt
- b. You are focused on being right and winning the argument
- c. You are open, curious, and emotionally adaptable
- d. You are withdrawn, closed-off, and emotionally distant

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: d. The ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively

Activity #2: c. The stress carried throughout the day

Activity #3: a. IQ relates to cognitive abilities, while EQ relates to emotional and social skills

Activity #4: a. Identifying and labeling the emotions you're experiencing

Activity #5: d. "People can't be trusted."

Activity #6: d. Expressing your needs honestly and respectfully

Activity #7: c. You are open, curious, and emotionally adaptable

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 7: PERSONALITY AND BEHAVIOUR

Chapter Overview

7.0 Learning Objectives

7.1 "Surrounded by Idiots"

7.2 Personality vs Behaviour

7.3 The DISC Assessment

7.4 Colour Combinations

7.5 How Each Colour Manages Stress

7.6 How Each Colour Manages Anger

7.7 Speaking Each Colour's "Language"

7.8 Summary

7.9 Reflection

7.10 Knowledge Check

7.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Distinguish personality from behaviour.
- Identify the four DISC colours (Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue) and list their core traits.
- Reflect on your own dominant DISC colour(s) and potential blind spots when interacting with others.
- Recognize which colour pairings complement and/or challenge one another.
- Explain how each DISC colour typically responds to stress and manages anger.
- Identify targeted communication strategies for each DISC colour.
- Explain how understanding and adapting to different DISC styles can promote personal wellness.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Emotional, Intellectual, Social, and Occupational.

7.1 "SURROUNDED BY IDIOTS"

Picture This:



"People" by StockSnap, Pixabay License

You are part of a five-person group tasked with completing a project worth 25% of your grade. Teamwork and cooperation are supposed to be critical, but as you walk into the meeting room, you are already focused on efficiency and results. Wasting time is not an option, not when this project carries so much weight, and you have a million and one other things to do.

Without missing a beat, you dive right in. You lay out a clear plan, delegate tasks, and set deadlines. Momentum is building; that is, until Karen jumps in. She's enthusiastic and social, sure, but she cannot seem to stay on topic. Every time you try to move forward, she veers off into random stories or unrelated ideas. You grit your teeth, resisting the urge to shout, "Stop talking! Don't you see we have actual work to do!?"

Meanwhile, Tara and Tom sit in silence, barely contributing. Their calm, easygoing nature might be fine in other situations, but it feels like they do not care right now. You catch them whispering to each other on the side, and you cannot help but wonder if they are talking about you. You try to brush it off, but the nagging suspicion lingers.

Finally, just when some real progress starts to show, Dexter decides it's his time to shine. He launches into a barrage of nitpicky, detail-oriented questions. Sure, details matter, but do we really need to dissect every tiny thing right now? You can practically feel your eyes rolling as he picks apart every single point.

What was supposed to be a quick meeting has now dragged on for over an hour, bogged down

by distractions and delays. Still, you push forward, determined to carry this entire project on your shoulders if that's what it takes to get it done. As the meeting limps toward a close, you pause for a moment and think to yourself, "Why am I always surrounded by idiots?"

No matter how strange or frustrating it may seem, there is no such thing as "normal" human behaviour. The unique ways in which people approach tasks, handle conflict, or respond to setbacks often lead to misunderstandings and tension. By recognizing and adapting to these differences, you can foster stronger connections, better communication, and more effective teamwork, ultimately leading to higher-level wellness. This chapter explores the diverse ways individuals think, behave, and react to difficult situations and offers practical strategies to improve communication with different personality types.

7.2 PERSONALITY VS BEHAVIOUR

In this book, **personality** refers to the combination of characteristics, behaviours, thoughts, and emotional patterns that influence how an individual interacts with the world. Personality encompasses a broad range of factors such as gender, cultural background, psychological influences, and age. These traits shape how individuals handle stress, resolve conflicts, communicate, and form relationships. While certain personality traits are often rooted in one's genetic makeup and remain relatively stable over time, they can also be shaped by life experiences, interpersonal connections, and personal development.

In contrast, **behaviour** refers to an individual's outward actions and responses. These responses are a function (f) of both one's personality traits (P) and situational factors (Sf). Erikson proposed that this relationship can be summarized by the formula (Erikson, 1968):

BEHAVIOUR = f (P × Sf)

This formula implies that knowing the situational context and personality of an individual can help us predict how they will behave. Depending on subconscious or conscious influences, individuals will choose behaviours that best suit, or seem to suit, their surroundings and internal states. You will learn more about specific examples (responses to stress and anger, for example) later in this chapter.

Understanding different personality types can help prevent major communication pitfalls and promote stronger, healthier relationships, which is essential for promoting social wellness. Recognizing and adapting to others' diverse behaviours and communication styles can foster more effective collaboration and empathy in both personal and professional contexts.

Assessing Personality

People are not Excel spreadsheets; they are unique, dynamic, multifaceted, and intricate. No single system can fully capture or categorize the complexity of human personality. Attempting to create a model that accounts for every individual personality would be an overwhelming and perhaps impossible task.

Nonetheless, numerous frameworks and models are available to help us better understand and interpret personality traits.



Click on each card to view some of the most widely recognized models.

Text Description

- 1. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI): Categorizes individuals into 16 personality types based on preferences in four dimensions—Introversion vs. Extraversion, Sensing vs. Intuition, Thinking vs. Feeling, and Judging vs. Perceiving.
- 2. Big Five Personality Traits: Focuses on five broad dimensions—Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism—to describe human personality.
- 3. Enneagram: Identifies nine core personality types, each with its own strengths, weaknesses, and growth paths.
- 4. StrengthsFinder: Highlights an individual's top strengths and talents to help maximize personal and professional potential.
- 5. 16 Personalities: A modern adaptation of MBTI that combines elements from multiple frameworks to provide a comprehensive personality profile.
- 6. Holland Codes (RIASEC): Classifies people based on their career interests and environments—Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.
- 7. Astrological Signs: Though not scientifically validated, many people look to their zodiac signs for insight into personality traits and compatibility.
- 8. True Colours: A simplified system that categorizes individuals into four primary colour groups (often Blue, Gold, Green, and Orange). Each colour emphasizes different motivations, strengths, and communication styles, making it a user-friendly tool in personal development and team-building.

7.3 THE DISC ASSESSMENT

Complete the DISC Assessment



Take a moment to complete the FREE DISC assessments below. This will give you an indication of which colours are most and least like you. Then, compare your results with the descriptions below to gain more insight into your personality and communication preferences.

Text Description

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I naturally take charge and make sure things get done.
- B) I bring energy and keep people motivated.
- C) I support others and keep things running smoothly.
- D) I focus on accuracy and like to have a clear plan.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I make decisions quickly and trust my instincts.
- B) I think about how my decisions affect others.
- C) I take my time and talk to people I trust first.
- D) I do thorough research before deciding.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I speak directly and get to the point.
- B) I express myself with enthusiasm.
- C) I communicate in a warm and thoughtful way.
- D) I value clear and precise communication.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I'm driven by success and overcoming challenges.
- B) I'm motivated by recognition and social interaction.
- C) I'm motivated by being part of a supportive team.
- D) I'm motivated by learning deeply and doing things right.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I face conflict directly and try to resolve it fast.
- B) I keep things light and try to talk it out.
- C) I avoid conflict and prefer to keep the peace.
- D) I stay calm and try to find a logical solution.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I jump into challenges and take the lead.
- B) I get excited and encourage others to join in.
- C) I approach challenges cautiously and look for stability.
- D) I like to plan everything out before starting.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I adapt quickly and take control when things change.
- B) I go with the flow and make the best of it.
- C) I get uneasy when things change unexpectedly.
- D) I need time to adjust and create a new plan.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I spend my free time doing something productive or competitive.
- B) I enjoy meeting new people and socializing.
- C) I prefer relaxing with close friends or family.
- D) I like hobbies that require focus and skill.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I like being rewarded with more responsibility.
- B) I enjoy being praised and celebrated publicly.
- C) I appreciate a sincere thank-you.
- D) I value recognition for my expertise and precision.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I get frustrated by inefficiency and delays.
- B) I get frustrated when I'm ignored or things get boring.
- C) I get frustrated by conflict and sudden change.
- D) I get frustrated by mistakes and disorganization.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I prefer to take the lead in group situations.
- B) I love to brainstorm and share ideas with others.
- C) I enjoy being a dependable team member.
- D) I like to follow structured processes.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I thrive in fast-paced environments.
- B) I'm at my best when I'm engaging with others.

D) I enjoy working in quiet, detail-oriented spaces.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I like to get things done efficiently and move on.
- B) I enjoy being the center of attention.
- C) I take pride in being reliable and easy to work with.
- D) I notice small mistakes that others might miss.

Which of the following is most like you?

- A) I'm always looking for the next big goal to achieve.
- B) I get excited about new social opportunities.
- C) I value long-term relationships and loyalty.
- D) I feel best when everything is organized and in order.

Text Description

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I naturally take charge and make sure things get done.
- B) I bring energy and keep people motivated.
- C) I support others and keep things running smoothly.
- D) I focus on accuracy and like to have a clear plan.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I make decisions quickly and trust my instincts.
- B) I think about how my decisions affect others.
- C) I take my time and talk to people I trust first.
- D) I do thorough research before deciding.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I speak directly and get to the point.
- B) I express myself with enthusiasm.
- C) I communicate in a warm and thoughtful way.
- D) I value clear and precise communication.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I'm driven by success and overcoming challenges.
- B) I'm motivated by recognition and social interaction.

- C) I'm motivated by being part of a supportive team.
- D) I'm motivated by learning deeply and doing things right.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I face conflict directly and try to resolve it fast.
- B) I keep things light and try to talk it out.
- C) I avoid conflict and prefer to keep the peace.
- D) I stay calm and try to find a logical solution.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I jump into challenges and take the lead.
- B) I get excited and encourage others to join in.
- C) I approach challenges cautiously and look for stability.
- D) I like to plan everything out before starting.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I adapt quickly and take control when things change.
- B) I go with the flow and make the best of it.
- C) I get uneasy when things change unexpectedly.
- D) I need time to adjust and create a new plan.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I spend my free time doing something productive or competitive.
- B) I enjoy meeting new people and socializing.
- C) I prefer relaxing with close friends or family.
- D) I like hobbies that require focus and skill.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I like being rewarded with more responsibility.
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- D) I value recognition for my expertise and precision.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I get frustrated by inefficiency and delays.
- B) I get frustrated when I'm ignored or things get boring.
- C) I get frustrated by conflict and sudden change.
- D) I get frustrated by mistakes and disorganization.

Which of the following is least like you?

A) I prefer to take the lead in group situations.

- B) I love to brainstorm and share ideas with others.
- C) I enjoy being a dependable team member.
- D) I like to follow structured processes.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I thrive in fast-paced environments.
- B) I'm at my best when I'm engaging with others.
- C) I'm most comfortable in predictable, steady environments.
- D) I enjoy working in quiet, detail-oriented spaces.

Which of the following is most least you?

- A) I like to get things done efficiently and move on.
- B) I enjoy being the center of attention.
- C) I take pride in being reliable and easy to work with.
- D) I notice small mistakes that others might miss.

Which of the following is least like you?

- A) I'm always looking for the next big goal to achieve.
- B) I get excited about new social opportunities.
- C) I value long-term relationships and loyalty.
- D) I feel best when everything is organized and in order.

This book focuses on the DISC Assessment because of its proven value in both personal development and workplace settings, helping individuals better understand their own behaviour and communicate more effectively. The model was introduced by American psychologist William Moulton Marston in his 1928 book *Emotions of Normal People* (Marston, 1928/2011). Marston, who also pioneered an early form of the lie detector and contributed to the creation of the Wonder Woman comic character, explored how individuals perceive themselves in relation to their environment.

Over time, researchers and organizations built on his work, leading to the questionnaire-based DISC assessments widely used today. The framework also influenced Thomas Erikson's bestselling book *Surrounded by Idiots*, popularizing personality types for a broad audience (Erikson, 2019).

According to the DISC model, personalities are grouped into four main types, each represented by a different colour.



Click on the colours to learn about each personality and how they differ.

Text Description

- Dominant (Red): Reds are the least common of the four DISC personalities. They are driven, results-oriented, and value efficiency.
- Influential (Yellow): Yellows are enthusiastic, sociable, and optimistic. They excel at communication and derive energy from interacting with others.
- Steady (Green): Greens are the most common of the four DISC personalities. They are calm, dependable, and supportive, prioritizing stability and consistency.
- Conscientious (Blue): Blues are analytical, detail-orientated, and precise. They value accuracy, quality, and structure and generally prefer to work independently.

Dominant (Red)

Strengths

Reds thrive on challenges and are unafraid to take charge or make difficult decisions. They typically prefer swift action over lengthy discussion and are direct, decisive, and highly focused on achieving outcomes. If you need something accomplished quickly, look no further than a Red personality.

Potential Drawbacks

Reds can appear overly assertive, impatient and aggressive. Their drive for results might cause them to appear blunt or insensitive. In group settings, Reds may find it difficult to delegate tasks or integrate others' ideas, preferring to do things themselves, maintain control, and keep progress moving.

Influential (Yellow)

Strengths

Their excitement can often be contagious, often sparking motivation and inspiration within teams. Spontaneous, creative, and ideal "people-people." Yellows are excellent at generating new ideas and can bring a lively atmosphere to any setting, whether social or professional.

Potential Drawbacks

Yellows are very prone to distraction and disorganization. They often overlook details in favour of big-picture thinking and are the poorest listeners of the colours. This is because they are often more focused on speaking than hearing others' viewpoints.

Steady (Green)

Strengths

Greens often serve as the "glue" that holds a group together. They are patient, empathetic, and adept at facilitating harmony. If you need someone to unify a team and follow a structured plan, Green is an ideal fit.

Potential Drawbacks

A strong dislike of conflict and a preference for predictability can make Greens resistant to change. They may avoid uncomfortable discussions to keep the peace, delaying necessary resolutions. Greens are also inclined to put others' needs first, which can lead to burnout or underappreciation.

Conscientious (Blue)

Strengths

Blues are excellent at research, precision, and critical thinking. These individuals thrive on logical analysis, methodical planning, and quality control, ensuring that every element meets exact specifications and that nothing slips through the cracks. If you need someone to meticulously verify data, develop structured processes, and maintain high-quality standards throughout a project, Blue would be the go-to choice.

Potential Drawbacks

Blues tend to be overly critical. Perfectionistic tendencies can emerge, sometimes hindering timely decision-making. Their affinity for rules and order might hamper flexibility in rapidly changing environments.

O Did you know?

- 80% of people exhibit a combination of two dominant colours.
- 5% of people show only one dominant colour.
- 15% of people are strongly influenced by three colours.
- 0% of people possess all four colours equally.

7.4 COLOUR COMBINATIONS

Different DISC colours often align or clash based on whether they are task-oriented or relationship-oriented and whether they lean toward introversion or extroversion.

Dimension	Task-Oriented	Relationship-Oriented
Focus	Completing tasks, goals, and productivity	Building and maintaining interpersonal relationships
Communication Style	Direct, structured	Empathetic, people-focused
Decision-Making	Based on logic and efficiency	Considers emotions and group harmony
Motivation	Driven by achievement and outcomes	Driven by team cohesion and morale
Dimension	Introversion	Extroversion
Dimension Energy Source	Introversion Solitude, reflection	Extroversion Social interaction, external stimulation
		Social interaction, external
Energy Source	Solitude, reflection	Social interaction, external stimulation

The following sections illustrate how certain pairings naturally complement one another while others pose more challenges.

Complimentary Combinations



Red & Yellow (extroverted)

Shared Strengths

Both move at a fast pace. Results drive Reds, while Yellows are energized by social interaction. This combination can spark dynamic teamwork, as Red's focus on achievement pairs well with Yellow's enthusiasm and interpersonal skills

Potential Friction

Red might perceive Yellow as disorganized or unfocused, while Yellow could find Red overly forceful or pushy.



Green & Blue (introverted)

Shared Strengths

Both are more reflective and can find common ground in thoughtful decision-making. Given adequate time and space, they can work together calmly and efficiently.

Potential Friction

Blue's analytical critiques might feel harsh to Green, who values a supportive atmosphere. Meanwhile, Green's reluctance to push ahead may frustrate Blue's desire for prompt, logical resolutions.



Red & Blue (task-oriented)

Shared Strengths

Both value efficiency and logical problem-solving. Together, they can be highly productive, focusing on structured tasks and outcomes.

Potential Friction

Red's preference for rapid decision-making can clash with Blue's need for detailed, precise, methodical analysis.



Yellow & Green (relationship-oriented)

Shared Strengths

Both prioritize harmony and positive interactions. Yellows thrive on social engagement, while Greens provide calm, supportive stability, creating a friendly, cohesive environment.

Potential Friction

Green's desire for consistency may clash with Yellow's spontaneous approach, resulting in misunderstandings if Yellow's unstructured style overwhelms Green.

Challenging Combinations



Red & Green

Potential Conflict: Red is direct, fast-paced, extroverted, and focused on results, while Green values harmony, stability, and collaboration. Red may view Green as too passive or hesitant, while Green may see Red as aggressive or dismissive.

Key Challenges:

- Red prefers quick decisions, while Green wants consensus and emotional security.
- Red values efficiency, while Green values relationships and comfort in their work environment.
- Green may become overwhelmed by Red's blunt, task-oriented style, leading to withdrawal or disengagement.

Solution: Red should slow down, show empathy, and acknowledge Green's need for a supportive environment, while Green should express concerns assertively rather than avoiding conflict.



Blue & Yellow

Potential Conflict: Blue values precision, structure, and logic, while Yellow thrives on enthusiasm, creativity, and social energy. Blue may see Yellow as scattered and unfocused, while Yellow may feel restricted by Blue's need for detailed analysis.

Key Challenges:

- Blue is methodical and cautious, whereas Yellow is spontaneous and people-driven.
- Blue needs facts and accuracy, while Yellow is more big-picture and instinct-driven.
- Yellow may struggle with Blue's preference for rules and order, while Blue may be frustrated by Yellow's lack of attention to detail.

Solution: Blue should recognize Yellow's strength in generating ideas and engaging others, while Yellow should respect Blue's need for structure and provide clear reasoning for their ideas rather than relying solely on enthusiasm.

7.5 HOW EACH COLOUR MANAGES STRESS

We spent a lot of time talking about stress in chapter 5. Now, let's apply that knowledge to the colours.



Click on the speech bubbles to learn how each colour responds to stress.

Text Description

Red speech bubble:

- "I don't have time for this just get it done!"
- "I can't believe this is happening! We need to fix it NOW!"
- "This is a disaster, and I refuse to let it fall apart!"
- "I don't care how just make it work!"
- "I'm not giving up. I'll push through no matter what."

Yellow speech bubble:

- "Okay, okay, we can figure this out...right? RIGHT?"
- "This is fine. Everything is fine. I'm FINE! (I'm not fine.)"
- "AHHHH. Okay. Okay. We got this. We totally got this...I think?"
- "Can someone just tell me what to do before I start spinning in circles?"
- "Okay, plan B! Wait, did we even have a plan A?"

Green speech bubble:

- "Okay, let's just take a step back and think this through."
- "I really don't like this chaos. Can we just slow down?"
- "I feel like everything is out of balance, and it's making me panic."
- "I need to fix this before it spirals even more."
- "Let's stay calm. We can get through this together."

Blue speech bubble:

- "I just need a moment to think...please."
- "Why does this always happen? What did I do wrong?"
- "I feel like I'm drowning, and no one even notices."
- "I feel like everything is slipping out of control."
- "I don't want to disappoint anyone, but this is too much."

Red

Reds may become more controlling, impatient, or even aggressive. Their desire for swift results intensifies, causing them to push themselves and others harder. Because Reds value efficiency and progress, prolonged indecision or delay can exacerbate their stress reactions.

Yellow

Yellows tend to become scattered or disorganized when stressed. They might overcommit to ideas or try to maintain a positive front, even if they feel overwhelmed. High stress can undermine Yellow's natural optimism, leading Yellow to take on more tasks than they can realistically manage.

Green

Greens often withdraw and avoid confrontation under stress, seeking to maintain harmony at all costs. They may internalize their worries and struggle to voice concerns. Because Greens prefer stability, any volatile environment or emotionally charged conflict can heighten their stress levels, encouraging further withdrawal.

Blue

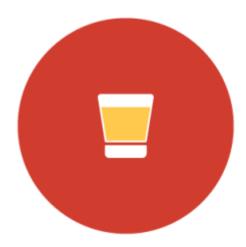
Blues respond to stress by overanalyzing and focusing on details. They may become critical of themselves and others, striving for perfection in an attempt to regain control. Their meticulous approach can be an asset when resolving problems, but relentless scrutiny can drain energy and stall decision-making.

7.6 HOW EACH COLOUR MANAGES ANGER

Thomas Erikson likens each DISC colour's anger response to a different drinking container, illustrating how quickly frustration builds up and how messy the aftermath can become once anger spills over (Erikson, 1950).

Red

A shot glass fills up fast, leading to a small but sudden spill. Quick to make a mess, yet fairly quick to "clean up."



Short fuse: It doesn't take much to make a Red angry.

Anger expression: When triggered, they are often direct, forceful, and confrontational, often raising their voice or using a harsh tone and language.

Aftermath: Outbursts are typically short-lived. Reds usually cool down quickly, returning to normal as if nothing happened.

Yellow

A pint glass holds more than a shot glass, so it takes a bit more time to fill. Once it overflows, you will notice the spill more, and it will take more time and effort to clean up than a shot glass.



Moderate fuse: Yellows take slightly longer to reach a boiling point compared to Reds.

Anger expression: They may become emotional or dramatic, venting frustration through words or exaggerated gestures.

Aftermath: While they can let off steam loudly and for longer than a red, they generally move on once they have aired their feelings and feel like they have been adequately acknowledged.

Green

A barrel holds considerably more than a pint glass. However, a closed barrel keeps everything sealed inside. When it finally bursts, the mess can be substantial.



Long fuse: Greens tend to bottle up anger in an effort to maintain harmony. It takes a lot for them to reach a breaking point.

Anger expression: They often stew quietly, revealing their displeasure through subtle, passive-aggressive, non-verbal hints rather than open conflict.

Aftermath: Because they rarely vent directly, tension can linger and grow over time. When the barrel bursts,

the damage is great and takes a long time to "clean up."

Blue

A barrel with a tap allows for measured release; it does not blow up all at once, but the pressure can still be intense if not relieved properly.



Controlled fuse: Blues can hold a considerable amount of anger before showing it.

Anger expression: Instead of yelling, they often use sarcasm, sharp criticism, or cutting remarks when they feel cornered.

Aftermath: Their anger tends to be more intellectualized than emotional, but it can be just as impactful.

7.7 SPEAKING EACH COLOUR'S "LANGUAGE"

As discussed in Chapter 1, social wellness represents one's ability to interact with other people. While adapting your communication to another DISC colour's style will improve your ability to interact with others, it does not necessarily mean abandoning your own identity. Rather, it reflects a mindful effort to recognize and respect each individual's needs, aligning with Erikson's concept of balancing personal integrity with social harmony (Erikson, 2019).



Click on the flashcards to see how you can adapt your communication style for each DISC colour. **Text Description**

- Red (D): Be direct, concise, and confident. Show that you respect their time and ability to lead. Offer quick solutions and stick to the facts.
- Yellow (I): Engage in conversation, offer positive feedback, and let them brainstorm freely. Encourage their creativity, but help them focus on concrete steps.
- Green (S): Approach them with warmth and patience. Listen actively, provide reassurance, and avoid pushing them too aggressively toward change.
- Blue (C): Come prepared with data, logic, and clear evidence. Respect their need for accuracy and allow time for thorough analysis.

7.8 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- There is no such thing as a "normal" personality.
- Understanding different personality types can help you navigate communication challenges, foster empathy, and build stronger personal and professional relationships.
- There is no single way to categorize every human personality.
- The DISC Assessment, consisting of four traits represented by colours, stands out for its ease of use and broad applicability, especially in workplace and personal development settings.
- Specific colour pairings naturally align, whereas others may struggle unless both sides adapt.
- Each colour exhibits unique coping strategies under stress and when feeling anger.
- Tailoring your approach to another person's DISC style does not mean betraying your own identity. Rather, it is about meeting people where they are and fostering mutual respect and cooperation.

⊙ Key Terms

- **Personality**: Refers to the combination of characteristics, behaviours, thoughts, and emotional patterns that influence how an individual interacts with the world. This encompasses a broad range of factors—such as gender, cultural background, psychological influences, and age.
- **Behaviour**: Refers to an individual's outward actions and responses. These responses are a function of one's personality traits and situational factors.
- **DISC:** According to this model, personalities are grouped into four main types **D**ominant, **I**nfluential, **S**teady, and **C**onscientious.

7.9 REFLECTION



Text Description

- 1. Think of a specific moment when you realized your personality was clashing with someone else's. What cues did you pick up on, and how did your personal history or emotions influence your response?
- 2. Which elements of your upbringing or cultural background do you believe have most strongly shaped your personality traits, and why? How do these roots influence your interactions today?
- 3. Identify one aspect of your own personality that you suspect might cause tension with certain DISC colours. How do you plan to address or mitigate this tendency in future interactions?
- 4. Reflect on a major life event (e.g., a career change, significant relationship, or personal setback). How did it alter your core values, personality, or communication style, and in what subtle ways are you still adapting?
- 5. Imagine a scenario where adapting to someone else's DISC colour might compromise your personal, moral or ethical boundaries. How would you decide where to draw the line between effective communication and staying true to your principles?

7.10 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

Which statement best explains the relationship between personality and behaviour?

- a. Personality and behavior are identical and cannot be separated
- b. Personality is primarily influenced by external factors, whereas behavior is shaped only by genetics
- c. Personality represents internal traits, while behavior is the outward expression influenced by both personality and situational factors
- d. Behavior is fixed over time, while personality changes frequently based on experiences

Multiple Choice Activity #2

In the DISC personality model, which color is most associated with being driven, results-oriented, and decisive?

- a. Blue
- b. Green
- c. Red
- d. Yellow

Multiple Choice Activity #3

Which personality combination is most likely to experience conflict due to differences in decision-making and communication styles?

- a. Yellow & green
- b. Red & blue
- c. Green & blue
- d. Red & green

Multiple Choice Activity #4

According to the DISC model, how does a "Blue" personality typically react under stress?

- a. Becomes more aggressive and impatient
- b. Becomes scattered and disorganized
- c. Withdraws and avoids confrontation
- d. Overanalyzes and focuses excessively on details

Multiple Choice Activity #5

What is the primary strength of a "Yellow" personality in a team setting?

- a. Their ability to take charge and make quick decisions
- b. Their enthusiasm, sociability, and ability to inspire others
- c. Their focus on precision and accuracy
- d. Their patience and conflict-avoidance skills

Multiple Choice Activity #6

Which DISC colour is most likely to struggle with perfectionism and a need for structure?

- a. Green
- b. Yellow
- c. Blue
- d. Red

Multiple Choice Activity #7

What is a key strategy for effectively communicating with a "Red" personality?

- a. Provide logical data and allow for deep analysis
- b. Be direct, concise, and confident in your approach
- c. Engage in brainstorming sessions and encourage creativity
- d. Offer reassurance and prioritize emotional harmony

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: c. Personality represents internal traits, while behavior is the outward expression influenced by both personality and situational factors

Activity #2: c. Red

Activity #3: d. Red & green

Activity #4: d. Overanalyzes and focuses excessively on details

Activity #5: b. Their enthusiasm, sociability, and ability to inspire others

Activity #6: c. Blue

Activity #7: b. Be direct, concise, and confident in your approach

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 8: COMMUNICATION AND MANAGING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Chapter Overview

- 8.0 Learning Objectives
- 8.1 "Confronting Professor X"
- 8.2 Communication
- 8.3 When Conversations Become "Crucial"
- 8.4 Summary
- 8.5 Reflection
- 8.6 Knowledge Check

8.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Describe what communication is and explain its role in the pursuit of wellness.
- Distinguish between verbal and non-verbal communication, noting how each form conveys and reinforces messages.
- Identify the main steps involved in the communication process and list potential barriers that can disrupt effective communication.
- Explore different methods to influence others.
- Recognize when a conversation becomes crucial and how this impacts constructive dialogue.
- Understand the signs and consequences of the two natural and unproductive responses to crucial conversations.
- Distinguish objective facts from subjective interpretation and explain how interpretations can escalate emotions and conflict.
- Explore de-escalation techniques to promote constructive dialogue.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, and Environmental.

8.1 "CONFRONTING PROFESSOR X"



You step into Professor X's office with your most recent test in hand, frustration flickering in your chest.

You: "Hello, Professor. I wanted to go over this test."



"Board" by geralt, Pixabay License

Professor X: "Sure. What's the issue?"

You: "I studied every lecture slide, but some questions felt like they came out of nowhere. It doesn't seem fair."

Professor X leans back and crosses his arms.

Professor X: "Everything on that exam was covered in class or on the posted lecture slides. If you were paying attention, you'd have caught it."

Your blood pressure spikes. It seems impossible that the test perfectly aligned with your notes; some questions came out of left field!

You: "I don't think that's fair. You can't expect us to write down everything you say!"

Professor X sits up straighter, arms crossed, eyes drifting toward the ceiling.

Professor X: "Clearly, you need to pay more attention in class. You're probably spending too much time on your phone."

An indignant flush sweeps your cheeks. You pride yourself on your attendance and meticulous note-taking.

You: "That is completely not true. I attended all your classes and took amazing notes. I always do well on tests."

Professor X shrugs.

Professor X: "Well, it sounds like you just didn't study hard enough. Next time, ask more questions and do a little more prep before the next test."

Your heart thuds as it feels like all your preparation has been dismissed.

You: "You're so wrong. I'm going to the Dean about this. Mark my words!"

The ability to communicate effectively is central to practicing social and emotional wellness. When miscommunication or other barriers arise, casual conversations can quickly escalate into heated confrontations. Often, heightened tension prompts us to either avoid necessary discussions or handle them poorly, resulting in damaged relationships and unresolved problems. In this chapter, we will examine different forms of communication, explore the communication process, and provide strategies to navigate moments when conversations become "crucial."

8.2 COMMUNICATION



"Contact us" by Tumisu, Pixabay Llcense

Communication is the process of conveying information between two or more people. It has existed for as long as humans have, and it underpins not only our personal relationships but also our academic, professional, and societal interactions. While communication takes countless forms across different cultures and species, this chapter focuses on two primary categories relevant to human interaction: verbal and nonverbal communication.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication involves the use of words or language. Such words can be spoken, written, or symbolically represented in two ways.

Oral Communication

Oral communication is the spoken conveyance of a message using patterns of sound or language.

Meanings can be literal (dictionary definitions) or connotative (implied or emotional undertones). For example, telling someone they are "literally slaying right now," does not mean they are battling dragons. The word 'slaying' in this context means they look amazing and are performing really well—that's the connotation, not the literal meaning.

Examples: speeches, conversations, laughter, and song.

Written Communication

Written communication is the conveyance of a message through written words, symbols, or drawings.

Like oral communication, meanings can be literal or connotative. For example, the word "home" literally refers to the place where someone lives, but connotatively it can imply warmth, comfort, and a sense of belonging.

Examples: text messages, emails, emojis, symbols, or letters.

Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication involves conveying information through non-linguistic representations. It can be subtle yet powerful, often shaping how verbal messages are interpreted.

Examples: Body language, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, posture, paralinguistics (tone, pitch, volume), clothing choices, and more.

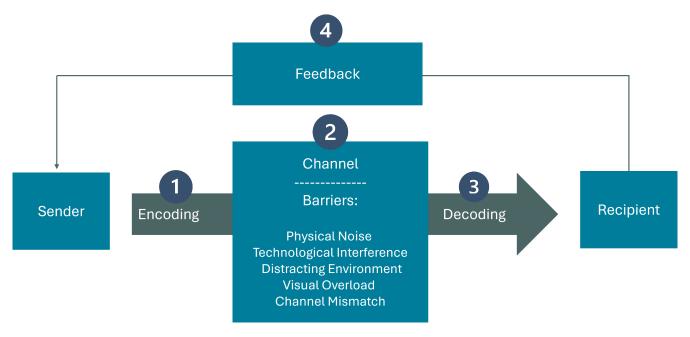
Key Characteristics:

- Ambiguous: Non-verbal cues can be interpreted in various ways and may contradict verbal messages.
- Omnipresent: Non-verbal signals occur in every interaction, whether we notice them or not.
- Multifunctional: Multiple non-verbal channels often operate simultaneously, sending complex messages.

Five Key Roles of Non-verbal Communication

- 1. Repetition: Reinforces and strengthens a verbal message. (e.g., Saying, "Let's go over there," while also pointing in the same direction.)
- 2. Contradiction: Contradicts a verbal message, potentially suggesting insincerity or confusion. Saying, "I'm totally relaxed," but tapping your foot nervously and avoiding eye contact.
- 3. Substitution: Completely replaces a verbal message. Example: Instead of saying "yes," simply nod your head in agreement.
- 4. Regulation: Manages the flow of conversation. Example: Raising your hand in a group discussion to signal you'd like to speak next, prompting others to pause and give you the floor.
- 5. Accenting: Draws attention to specific parts of a message. Example: Placing extra vocal emphasis on a key word—e.g., "This point is crucial"—while briefly leaning forward or using a hand gesture to highlight its importance.

Communication Process



"The Communication Process" by Stephanie Audette, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Image Description

- Step 1: Sender encodes a message
- Step 2: Message is sent through a channel including barriers
- Step 3: Receiver decodes message
- Step 4: Recipient sends feedback to the sender

This process consists of the steps we take to achieve successful communication. Each step carries potential pitfalls that can distort or change the message. See the steps below to learn more about each one.

Step 1: Sender encodes a message

The sender shapes the message in a form intended for the recipient, choosing specific words, tone, or nonverbal cues suitable to the context.

Step 2: Message is sent through a channel

The channel is a metaphorical pathway through which the message travels. This might include the physical environment, technology (e.g., email, text), or face-to-face interaction.

Step 3: Receiver decodes and interprets message

The receiver interprets the message through their own experiences, emotions, cultural background, and biases.

Step 4: Receiver sends feedback

The receiver responds verbally and/or non-verbally, creating a loop that mirrors the entire process again. Feedback can be intentional (e.g., asking clarifying questions orally) or unintentional (e.g., facial expressions, body language).

Potential Barriers

Ongoing dialogue and awareness of potential barriers help ensure a more accurate exchange. Here are some potential physical barriers which may distort the message:

- Physical Noise: A construction site next door creates loud banging and drilling, making it hard for people to hear each other clearly, even if they're speaking face-to-face.
- Technological Interference: A video conference call keeps cutting out due to poor internet connection, causing the speaker's words to drop mid-sentence.
- Distracting Environment: In an open-plan office, multiple conversations and ringtones distract team members from focusing on the intended message.
- Visual Overload: A busy PowerPoint slide crammed with text, images, and animations can overwhelm
 the audience, making it tough to pinpoint the key message.
- Channel Mismatch: Sending a lengthy, detailed message via text message or group chat, where it might get lost among quick, casual replies instead of being delivered in a more appropriate format (like email or a formal report).



Click on the cards to learn how the interpretation of the message can lead to misunderstandings.

Text Description

- Jargon: Using specialized technical terms in a workplace memo that non-experts can't understand.
- Emotional Barriers: Receiving critical feedback right after a personal disappointment, leading to defensive misinterpretation.
- Taboo Topics: Discussing political or religious views in a setting where such topics are sensitive, causing discomfort or miscommunication.
- Language Barrier: A non-native speaker misunderstanding idiomatic expressions like "break a leg" or "hit the ground running."
- Cultural Differences: One culture views direct eye contact as respectful, while another sees it as aggressive, leading to conflicting interpretations.

Communication Techniques to Influence People

Effective communication is not only about exchanging information but also about positively influencing others. Drawing on concepts from Dale Carnegie's classic book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, consider the following (Carnegie, 1936):

- Never criticize, condemn, or complain. People naturally resist criticism and rarely change due to condemnation. Instead of focusing on faults, seek to understand and guide them positively.
- Give honest and sincere appreciation. Recognizing others' efforts and qualities—without resorting to flattery—helps them feel valued and builds goodwill.
- Instead of pushing your own desires, find out what the other person wants and align your goals with their interests to create mutual benefit.

8.3 WHEN CONVERSATIONS BECOME "CRUCIAL"



"Woman chatting" by user1505195587, Pixabay License

According to Patterson et al., authors of *Crucial Conversations*, a conversation becomes "crucial" when the following three conditions are met (Patterson et al., 2012):

High Stakes

There is something significant on the line—be it a project's success, a career opportunity, or a personal relationship. The potential outcome of the conversation carries weight, and failing to address the issue effectively could lead to major consequences.

Opinions Differ

These differences may arise from varying experiences, beliefs, or interpretations of the situation. Because the subject matter is often important to everyone involved, clashing perspectives can make the conversation more tense or complex.

Strong Emotions

Participants feel passionate about the topic or perceive a threat to their values, self-esteem, or goals. Intense emotional undercurrents can escalate a disagreement quickly or cause people to shut down, making it harder to maintain an open, constructive dialogue.

Response to Crucial Conversations

Under these conditions, communication and constructive dialogue often break down, and people usually resort to one of two unproductive behaviours:

Silence (Flight Response)

Silence can be understood as the "flight" in the body's fight or flight response (see alarm phase from Chapter 5). Here, an individual withdraws from active participation to protect themselves from a perceived threat. Rather than engage in direct confrontation, they erect a metaphorical wall to avoid further discomfort, criticism, or tension. Such tactics may feel safe in the moment, but they stall progress and leave the conflict unresolved.

Silence can manifest in several ways, including:

- Masking: Hiding true feelings through vague comments.
- Avoiding: Steering clear of the real issue by changing the subject instead of addressing it.
- Withdrawing: Physically or emotionally pulling away from the interaction.
- Quietness: Responding with minimal or no verbal feedback, offering only nods or short phrases.
- Sarcasm: Using cynical or mocking remarks to deflect tension.

Violence (Fight Response)

On the opposite end of the spectrum lies violence, or the "fight" response. This response does not mean physical violence; rather, the individual seeks to regain control of the conversation using forceful or controlling tactics that disrupt open dialogue and erode mutual respect.

Individuals pursuing this path might adopt the following strategies:

- Trying to Take Control: Cutting others off, refusing to listen, or monopolizing the dialogue.
- Labelling Others: Assigning negative stereotypes or tags to discount someone's perspective.
- Attacking: Verbally harming another person's ideas, character, or intentions.
- Name-Calling & Yelling: Raising their voice to intimidate or humiliate.
- Hurling Personal Insults & Incredulity: Expressing disbelief in a way that demeans the other speaker.

Pulling Yourself Out of Silence or Violence

The first step toward effective communication in a crucial conversation is recognizing when you (or others) have shifted into silence or violence. This requires a high amount of self-awareness and the ability to pause in the moment and reflect on what you are feeling and thinking in the moment (concepts discussed in Chapter 6). Ask yourself:

- 1. "What is really important here?"
- 2. "What do I truly want from this conversation?"

Centering on your genuine goals, such as finding a resolution or maintaining a relationship, can help recalibrate your approach. Recalling your objectives and focusing on the end result helps resist the urge to succumb to unproductive fight-or-flight behaviours.

Discerning Fact, Interpretation and Feeling

Another common challenge in heated conversations is failing to distinguish facts from interpretations:

- **Facts** are typically objective, verifiable, and supported by evidence (e.g., direct quotes, observable actions, scientific research, documented dates and events). They remain true regardless of your personal interpretation or emotional state.
- **Interpretations** (or subjective stories) reflect your personal opinions, beliefs, biases, or assumptions. They may accompany an emotional response or assumption about someone's intent.
- **Feelings** can be described as internal truths. They are not objective or verifiable in the same way facts are; however, they remain real and valid experiences. As discussed in Chapter 6, statements like "I feel hurt" or "I feel anxious" reflect an emotional state rather than an interpretation (or thought). Because feelings reflect a person's lived experience, they cannot and should not be refuted in the same way interpretations can. Instead, they should be acknowledged as meaningful insights into a person's inner world, whether it's your own or someone else's.



Text Description

- 1. Kevin Hart is a very funny man. Fact or Interpretation?
- 2. The capital of Canada is Ottawa. Fact or Interpretation?
- 3. AJ speaks loudly in the class. Fact or Interpretation?
- 4. AJ said, "Everything on the lecture slides is fair game for your test." Fact or Interpretation?
- 5. Donald Trump is an arrogant person and a liar. Fact or Interpretation?
- 6. The Pope is a very humble and kind person. Fact or Interpretation?
- 7. In 1776, the United States declared its independence from Great Britain. Fact or Interpretation?
- 8. My mom yelled at me for not cleaning up my room. Fact or Interpretation?
- 9. Tim Hortons serves the best coffee in Canada. Fact or Interpretation?
- 10. The rights and freedoms of minority groups living in Canada are under attack. Fact or Interpretation?

Correct Answers:

- 1. Interpretation: Humour is subjective; what's funny to one person may not be to another.
- 2. Fact: This is a verifiable geographical fact.
- 3. Interpretation: "Loudly" is an interpretation unless it can be measured (e.g., decibel level).
- 4. Fact: A direct quote is a fact (assuming it was accurately recorded).
- 5. Interpretation: "Arrogant" is an opinion; "liar" is an accusation that would need specific, verifiable examples to be factual.
- 6. Interpretation: "Humble" and "kind" are subjective qualities open to interpretation.
- 7. Fact: A documented historical event.
- 8. Interpretation: "Yelled" might be factual if referring to volume, but the reason ("for not cleaning") is an interpretation unless explicitly stated by her.
- 9. Interpretation: "Best" is subjective, as taste preferences vary.
- 10. Interpretation: While there may be legal debates or policies affecting rights, "under attack" is an interpretation that implies intent and severity.

Problems arise when **interpretations** are treated as though they are indisputable **facts.** This confusion often leads to emotional arguments and conflict escalation. Grounding discussions in observable, measurable data can reduce misunderstandings and foster a more constructive dialogue.

It is helpful to ground statements in observable facts before sharing how you interpreted them. Consider the difference between these two statements:

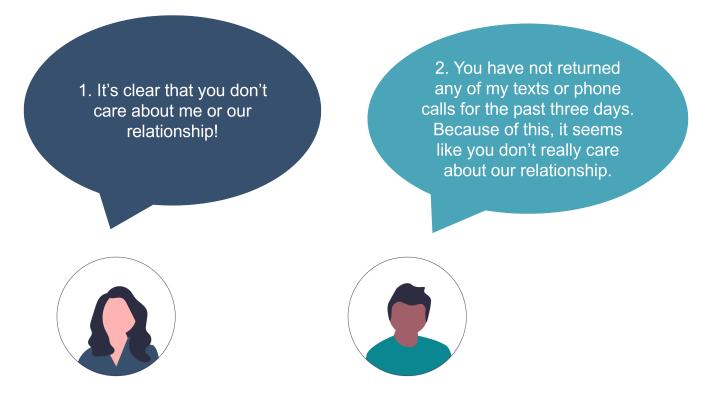


Image Description

- Example #1: "It's clear that you don't care about me or our relationship"
- Example #2: "You have not returned any of my texts or phone calls for the past three days. Because of this, it seems like you don't really care about our relationship"

The first sentence is rooted in interpretation, not fact. It assumes the other person's intent and emotions, which may or may not be true. This phrasing is likely to trigger defensiveness rather than meaningful dialogue

and resolution). The second sentence acknowledges an interpretation but frames it as a personal perception rather than an accusation. This allows space for discussion and clarification rather than immediate conflict.

Other Workplace Conflict Examples

Interpretation only – assumes intent	Fact + Interpretation
"You never listen to my ideas in meetings."	"In the last three meetings, I've shared ideas, but you haven't responded or acknowledged them. It makes me feel like my input isn't valued."
"You don't care about our friendship anymore."	"We used to hang out every weekend, but we haven't made any plans in over a month. It makes me wonder if our friendship is as important to you as it is to me."

By consciously recognizing this pattern (Fact \rightarrow Interpretation \rightarrow Story), you can improve your critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and communication skills, leading to more rational and productive conversations and the pursuit of higher-level wellness.

Freeing the Other Side from Silence or Violence

Even if you manage to maintain composure and use facts to your advantage, your conversation partner(s) may still respond with silence or violence. Here are three key strategies that may help restore safety and trust in the dialogue:

1. Apologize (if appropriate)

Offer a specific, genuine apology for your contribution to the tension. An insincere or vague apology (e.g., "I'm sorry if you felt that way") can be counterproductive. Instead, clearly acknowledge your behaviour or words that led to the conflict.

2. Establish Mutual Purpose

Identify a shared goal that both parties care about. This might include a successful project outcome or a valued relationship. Focusing on common ground reduces defensiveness and fosters collaboration.

3. Use Contrasting Statements

Contrasting statements clarify what you are not trying to do, followed by what you are trying to accomplish. This can dispel suspicion about hidden motives.

"Confronting Professor X" Scenario

Let's go back to our original scenario and help the Professor out with a **contrasting statement** using this formula:

"I don't want X; all I want is Y."

X = What the other person might wrongly assume (e.g., control, criticism, a fight)

Y = Mutual purpose – something that both parties care about (e.g., understanding, teamwork, a solution)

You: "I don't think that's fair. You can't expect us to write down everything you say!"

Professor X: "I don't expect you to write down everything I say. I do want to ensure there is a clear, consistent standard for all students so they can succeed."

8.4 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Effective communication is the process of conveying information between people, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal cues.
- The communication process involves four steps that can be disrupted by barriers (e.g., noise, jargon, biases).
- Influencing others constructively involves empathy, active listening, sincere praise, and aligning mutual interests.
- Conversations become "crucial" when they involve high stakes, differing opinions, and strong emotions, often triggering silence or violent responses.
- Discerning facts from interpretations is vital for reducing misunderstandings and escalating conflict.
- Apologies, mutual purpose, and contrasting statements can help resolve tension and create a safer environment for open, honest communication.

⊙⇒Key Terms

- **Communication:** The process of conveying information between two or more people.
- **Verbal communication:** Involves the use of words or language. Such words can be spoken, written, or symbolically represented in two ways oral or written.
- **Oral communication:** The spoken conveyance of a message using patterns of sound or language.
- Written communication: Conveying a message through written words, symbols, or drawings.
- **Non-verbal communication**: Involves conveying information through non-linguistic representations. It can be subtle yet powerful, often shaping how verbal messages are interpreted.
- **Crucial conversation:** This occurs when high stakes are on the line, opinions differ, and participants feel passionate about the topic or perceive a threat.
- **Silence:** When an individual withdraws from active participation in a crucial conversation to protect themselves from a perceived threat (the "flight" response).
- **Violence:** When an individual seeks to regain control of the conversation using forceful or controlling tactics that disrupt open dialogue and erode mutual respect ("fight" response).
- **Facts:** These are objective, verifiable, and supported by evidence (e.g., direct quotes, scientific research, documented dates and events).
- **Interpretations:** Reflect personal opinions, beliefs, biases, or assumptions. They may include an emotional response or assumption about someone's intent.

8.5 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Reflect on a time when your non-verbal communication contradicted your spoken words. How did it change the course of the conversation? Which strategies from this chapter will help you align verbal and non-verbal messages going forward?
- 2. Think of a moment when noise, jargon, or a distracting environment derailed your message. What did you learn about your communication style, and how can you adapt to prevent similar misunderstandings?
- 3. Recall a recent conversation in which you or someone else withdrew into silence or became aggressive. What triggered those responses? How might you use the techniques in this chapter to manage those situations more effectively?
- 4. Consider a heated discussion where you realized you blurred fact with personal opinion or assumption. How did that affect the outcome? Which strategies could have helped you separate verifiable facts from your subjective interpretations?
- 5. Identify a difficult conversation in which you avoided apologizing or establishing mutual purpose due to fear or pride. How did that decision influence the outcome? Looking back, how could a sincere apology or a shared goal have improved the collaboration and resolution process?

8.6 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

What are the two primary categories of human communication discussed in the chapter?

- a. Written and oral communication
- b. Verbal and non-verbal communication
- c. Digital and face-to-face communication
- d. Interpersonal and mass communication

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following is an example of non-verbal communication?

- a. Writing an email to your professor
- b. Nodding your head to indicate agreement
- c. Speaking clearly during a presentation
- d. Sending a text message to a friend

Multiple Choice Activity #3

In the communication process, which step involves the recipient interpreting the message based on personal experiences, emotions, and biases?

- a. Encoding
- b. Channel selection
- c. Decoding
- d. Feedback

Multiple Choice Activity #4

In the communication process, which of the following is NOT listed as a common barrier to effective communication?

a. Physical noise

- b. Technological interference
- c. Channel mismatch
- d. Personal confidence

Multiple Choice Activity #5

According to the chapter, what is the primary reason people resort to silence or violence in crucial conversations?

- a. They lack the vocabulary to express their thoughts
- b. They want to manipulate the conversation to gain control
- c. They experience high stakes, differing opinions, and strong emotions
- d. They are naturally aggressive or avoidant people

Multiple Choice Activity #6

What strategy can help restore trust and encourage open dialogue in a difficult conversation?

- a. Ignoring the other person's concerns to keep the conversation short
- b. Using contrasting statements to clarify intentions
- c. Talking louder to establish dominance
- d. Focusing only on emotions instead of facts

Multiple Choice Activity #7

What is the key difference between a fact and an interpretation in communication?

- a. A fact is an accepted truth, while an interpretation is a personal assumption
- b. A fact is supported by observable evidence, whereas an interpretation is shaped by individual perception and bias
- c. An interpretation provides deeper insight than a fact and is therefore more reliable in discussions
- d. A fact is based on subjective understanding, while an interpretation is universally recognized

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: b. Verbal and non-verbal communication

Activity #2: b. Nodding your head to indicate agreement

Activity #3: c. Decoding

Activity #4: d. Personal confidence

Activity #5: c. They experience high stakes, differing opinions, and strong emotions

Activity #6: b. Using contrasting statements to clarify intentions

Activity #7: b. A fact is supported by observable evidence, whereas an interpretation is shaped by individual perception and bias

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 9: SPIRIT, SPACE, AND THE SELF

Chapter Overview

- 9.0 Learning Objectives
- 9.1 "Betrayal"
- 9.2 Understanding the Self
- 9.3 Spiritual Terms
- 9.4 The Fruits of Spiritual Wellness
- 9.5 The Enemy of Spiritual Growth
- 9.6 Environment
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Reflection
- 9.9 Knowledge Check

9.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define components of the self.
- Compare and contrast different spiritual concepts.
- Describe various perspectives on the concept of one's Higher Power and their implications for spiritual wellness.
- Identify practices for cultivating spiritual well-being.
- Discuss how ego can impede spiritual growth.
- Recognize the importance of personal, community, and environmental harmony for overall wellness.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, and Environmental.

9.1 "BETRAYAL"



Picture This:



"Smartphone" by Pexels, Pixabay License

For five years, they were your closest friend, confidant, and safe space. When the weight of your struggles became too much to carry alone, you turned to them. You told them everything. The late nights, the shame, the times you promised yourself it would be the last drink, only to break that promise again. You told them because you believed they would keep it safe. Maybe they could even help you, stand by you as you worked through this, and be the anchor you so desperately needed.

Or so you thought.

You wake up the next morning to seven unread messages and two missed calls. Some are from people you know well; others from acquaintances at best. The words on your screen don't make sense at first.

"I'm so sorry to hear about what you're going through. If you need help, just ask."

"You're not alone. We're here for you."

"You're so strong."

Your face burns. Your chest tightens. You don't want to look at your phone, but can't stop rereading the messages.

How do they know?

Then, it clicks. Your so-called friend had decided your story wasn't yours to tell anymore.

Maybe it was casual, a slip of the tongue. Maybe they thought they were helping. Or maybe, just maybe, they enjoyed the power of holding something so fragile and then dropping it just to see it break.

It doesn't matter why.

You stare at your phone, rage simmering beneath your skin, the betrayal sinking in like a stone in your gut.

Later that day, your friend calls to explain. "I wasn't thinking. I didn't realize it would get out like that. I never meant to hurt you." But none of it matters. None of it erases the fact that they took something deeply personal, something you barely had the courage to admit to yourself, and tossed it into the open for others to judge.

They ask for forgiveness, but they don't deserve it.

Because forgiveness feels like surrender, it feels like saying what they did is okay. And it's not. It never will be. Maybe with time, you'll let go of the anger. Maybe one day, you'll stop feeling the sour taste every time you think of their name.

But not today.

In Chapter 1, we defined wellness as a dynamic and ongoing process of making choices that support the best possible state of existence for each individual. While much attention and effort are often given to improving mental well-being (via learning, counselling, and emotional regulation) and physical well-being (via physical activity, nutrition, and rest), spiritual well-being requires equal (if not greater) consideration.

This chapter explores spiritual wellness by examining diverse perspectives on one's Higher Power and how these beliefs shape individual spiritual practices. It identifies practical strategies for nurturing spiritual wellbeing and discusses barriers to spiritual growth. Additionally, it emphasizes how cultivating a balanced relationship between oneself and one's environment contributes to a more enriching and fulfilling life.

9.2 UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

The **self** refers to your entire being as an individual, encompassing your unique identity, beliefs, values, experiences, and how you interact with the world around you. It is a dynamic construct influenced by internal perceptions (e.g., self-esteem, self-image, personal strengths or weaknesses) and external interactions (e.g., how you interact or behave with others).

It can be broken down into three interconnected components:

Body (The Physical Self)



Your body, health, and other physical characteristics, such as biological functions, appearance, and physical abilities.

Mind (The Psychological Self)



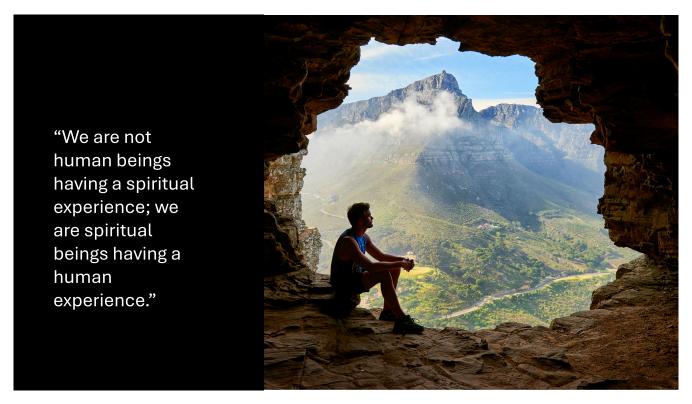
Your emotions, thoughts, beliefs, reasoning skills, creativity, curiosity, and learning capacity. Your psychological self plays a key role in interpreting experiences, making decisions, solving problems, and interacting socially.

Spirit (The Spiritual Self)



Your innermost values, sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to something greater than yourself. It guides your ethical decisions, aligns your actions with your deeper values, and supports inner peace, harmony, and authenticity.

9.3 SPIRITUAL TERMS



"Man sitting in a cave" by M Venter, Pexels License. Modifications: Text added to image

The quote in the image by Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin underscores the notion that the spirit is not only an aspect of the self but is, in fact, much more profound and central to our entire existence. It is what sustains and drives a person beyond experiences that can be directly sensed, felt, or physically interacted with. Rather, it shapes one's sense of purpose, connection, and inner peace.

Spirituality differs from spiritual wellness in that it focuses more on the pursuit and alignment of beliefs and values with one's sense of purpose and meaning rather than the active cultivation of well-being. Below is a list of terms that encompass the spiritual experience:

Term	Definition	Primary Focus
Spirit	The deeper essence or core of a person is the intangible, animating part of one's being that shapes purpose and drive.	Intrinsic aspect of self, beyond mind and body.
Spirituality	The personal or communal pursuit of meaning, purpose, and connection with something beyond oneself.	Exploration or practice of beliefs and values that transcend material concerns.
Spiritual Wellness	A process involving choices designed to seek and cultivate inner peace, harmony, and truth.	The ongoing process of caring for the spirit through habits, values, and reflection.
Spiritual Well-Being	The resulting state of feeling spiritually fulfilled, at peace, and aligned with one's core values or Higher Power.	The outcome of spiritual wellness is characterized by inner peace, harmony, and authenticity.

Role of the Higher Power

Regardless of one's worldview, a key to cultivating spiritual well-being is to align more closely with a Higher Power. This represents an entity, force, principle, or system greater than the individual self that provides meaning, guidance, or a sense of connection beyond the individual self.

One's Higher Power may take different forms depending on one's perspective or belief system. Expand each perspective below to learn more.

Theistic Perspective

A deity or divine force (e.g., God, gods, universal consciousness) that provides purpose, moral and ethical guidance, connection, and direction towards what is "good." This approach finds meaning in faith, spiritual teachings, sacred texts, and personal or communal experiences of the divine.

Agnostic Perspective

An unknown or unknowable force beyond human understanding that influences existence, offering a

sense of awe, mystery, and meaning. This approach embraces mystery, draws wisdom from diverse sources, values personal experience, and finds spiritual fulfillment in awe and wonder.

Atheistic Perspective

A natural or conceptual force that transcends self-interest and personal ego. This approach finds purpose in collective well-being, recognizing our place in the universe, living by core values, and pursuing knowledge and growth.

Is a Higher Power Necessary?



"Person standing near the lake" by Lukas Rychvalsky, Pexels

If someone does not explicitly acknowledge or believe in a Higher Power external to themselves, they risk positioning their personal beliefs, reasoning, and values as their ultimate guiding authority. While this does not necessarily lead to self-deification (claiming to be God), it can impede spiritual growth and well-being. Consider the following:

Subjectivity and Moral Relativism

Without a higher and objective standard of what is "right" or "wrong" (good or bad), morality can become subjective, varying from person to person. This can lead to moral relativism, where what is considered "right"

or "wrong" is based purely on individual or cultural preferences. This makes societal cohesion more difficult due to the absence of a shared, objective foundation for justice, ethics, or laws.

In extreme cases, moral relativism has justified harmful behaviours when individuals or societies redefine morality based on convenience or ideology. Examples from history include the atrocities committed under totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany, where morality was dictated by the state, leading to the murder of over 6 million Jews; the transatlantic slave trade, where entire societies justified the dehumanization of certain groups for economic gain; and the mass purges under Stalinist Russia, where dissent was criminalized, and morality was shaped to serve political power.

Self-Justification

Without an external reference point, individuals may rationalize their actions based on personal preferences rather than genuine moral reasoning. This is known as self-justification and can lead to arrogance, entitlement, narcissism, and an inability to recognize personal faults or wrongdoing.

Limited Perspective and Fallibility

Human beings are inherently limited in knowledge, wisdom, and foresight. When individuals act as their own highest authority, they risk becoming susceptible to cognitive biases (errors) such as:

- **Confirmation bias**: The tendency to seek out information (or research) that supports what they already believe and ignore evidence that contradicts it.
- **Negativity bias**: Paying more attention to negative experiences than positive ones, even if both are equally important.
- Availability heuristic: Overestimating the importance of information that comes to mind quickly, like assuming air travel is dangerous after seeing a news report about a plane crash.

Lack of Ultimate Accountability

Particularly in theistic worldviews, belief in a Higher Power provides a sense of ultimate accountability, where actions are judged beyond human perception. Without this, accountability may be limited to legal consequences or social reputation, which may not always be enough to deter unethical behaviour when no one is watching.

Existential Crisis and Meaninglessness

A worldview without a Higher Power can lead to nihilism, where life is seen as ultimately meaningless. This may cause some individuals to struggle to find enduring motivation, meaning, or reason for ethical living beyond temporary personal satisfaction or immediate self-gratification.

9.4 THE FRUITS OF SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

By practicing spiritual wellness, we cultivate three major "fruits" or qualities that optimize spiritual wellbeing.



Peace is a state of calmness, stability, and freedom from conflict. It is found internally (within oneself) or externally (in relationships or society) and is closely associated with emotional well-being (Chapter 6), a sense of reassurance, justice, compassion, and understanding. Cultivating peace requires the practice of several key virtues:

Acceptance

The *Serenity Prayer*, written by Reinhold Niebuhr (Niebuhr, 1951), captures the wisdom of practicing acceptance:



"Silhouette of Trees" by eberhard grossgasteiger, Pexels licnese Modification: Added text overlay

Acceptance is embracing events and reality as they are, both personally (self-acceptance) and interpersonally (accepting others).

Self-acceptance also means acknowledging our strengths, weaknesses, and past mistakes without judgment. Note this is not the same as self-affirmation, which involves actively repeating positive statements about oneself. Rather, self-acceptance understands that:

- Perfection is unattainable. We all have flaws, and striving for unrealistic standards leads to frustration.
- Growth is a process. Accepting where we are now allows for effective and sustainable self-improvement.
- Our worth is not conditional. We have value beyond achievements or external validation.

Acceptance also acknowledges that people have different beliefs, values, and behaviours. Rather than agreeing on ideas or viewpoints, it means:

- Recognizing diverse perspectives. People's experiences shape their views.
- Letting go of control. We cannot force others to change or conform, nor should we
- Fostering respect. Accepting differences builds stronger relationships and reduces conflict.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is freely choosing to let go of grudges, resentment, or the desire for retribution against those who have caused us harm. This can be very challenging, especially when the wounds are deep and the false sense of control that resentment provides feels comforting.

Forgiveness does not mean justifying harmful actions or the abdication of accountability or consequences (i.e., letting the offender "off the hook"). Rather, it is a choice to release the hold that past pain has on us, creating space for healing and peace.

In his best-selling book *The Book of Forgiving*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu discusses what he

calls the "Fourfold Path" to healing and reconciliation. Tutu developed this framework through his work with South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is a powerful model for forgiveness and moving forward after hurt, injustice, or conflict (Tutu & Tutu, 2014).

Here's a breakdown:

1. Telling the Story

This involves honestly sharing what happened from the perspective of the person who was harmed. Telling the story gives voice to pain and helps others understand the depth of the hurt. It is the first step toward healing, as it acknowledges that harm was done.

Example: A person who was betrayed by a friend shares how the situation unfolded and how it made them feel without minimizing or sugarcoating the experience.

2. Naming the Hurt

You can't forgive what you haven't allowed yourself to fully feel. Beyond just telling what happened, this step involves identifying the emotions involved (e.g., anger, sadness, humiliation, fear, shame). This process is similar to part 1 of emotional self-regulation, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Example: Saying, "I felt completely abandoned and humiliated," instead of brushing it off with, "It's fine; I've moved on."

3. Granting Forgiveness

This is a conscious choice to let go of the desire for revenge or retaliation. It doesn't mean condoning the harm or forgetting it; rather, it means choosing to release its power over your life. Forgiveness is more about freeing the person who was hurt than excusing the person who caused the harm. If someone has harmed you, try writing a forgiveness letter. Don't send it, but write out all your thoughts and make the decision yourself to let go. When done freely and in good faith, you will feel better.

Example: Someone chooses to forgive a parent for past emotional neglect. Not because it wasn't painful, but because carrying that pain is affecting their own well-being.

4. Renewing or Releasing the Relationship

In some cases, after forgiveness, it's possible to rebuild the relationship in a new, healthier

way. In other cases, it is better to let go of the relationship entirely. Both are valid paths depending on the situation.

Example: After forgiving a "toxic" friend, someone may choose not to continue the friendship, but with peace instead of bitterness.

Gratitude

Gratitude is recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life, be they big or small. It is an intentional focus on what we have rather than what we lack, and it can be directed toward people, experiences, nature, or a Higher Power.

By regularly acknowledging the good in our lives, we develop a more positive outlook, which helps reduce worry and fosters inner peace.

Patience

Patience is the capacity to endure delays or difficulties without frustration or agitation. This ties closely with delayed gratification, often required for the reward of true sacrifices to manifest.

The saying "Patience is a virtue" holds true, allowing us to approach life's challenges with greater composure and understanding.

Stillness

Stillness is creating moments of silence (e.g., through meditation, reflection, or simply being

present) to connect with one's inner calm. The modern world is filled with distractions that constantly demand our attention, pulling us away from our inner selves.

Many spiritual traditions teach that a Higher Power speaks in stillness. If our minds are too noisy, we may miss that connection or message.

Fruit 2: Truth

Truth can be described as real, factual, repeatable, and reliable. It requires curiosity, openness, and the willingness to refine one's understanding over time.

It is understood in different ways:

- **Objective ("the truth"):** Facts that exist independently of personal beliefs (e.g., gravity exists whether you believe in it or not). We covered this in Chapter 8.
- **Subjective ("my truth"):** Personal experiences and perspectives that shape individual understanding (e.g., preferences, feelings). Note that interpretations of events or "stories" are not included under subjective truth, only the feelings one experienced during said events.

How do you cultivate or seek the truth? Consider the following:

Humility

The genuine pursuit of truth requires humility, the recognition that although you may know a lot, there is always more to learn. It is also sometimes referred to as meekness or openness.

This means shifting from thinking, "I already know enough," to acknowledging, "There is always more to understand." Historical examples include Socrates, who famously declared, "I know that I know nothing," highlighting continuous learning and humility. Marie Curie, who remained humble despite groundbreaking discoveries in radioactivity and chemistry, became the first person to win Nobel Prizes in two different scientific fields.

Coherence

Coherence means our beliefs, values, and actions are consistent and logically aligned. Just as philosophical systems must have logical consistency (e.g., ontology and epistemology should align within research), personal integrity requires harmony between what we believe and how we act

For example, consider a student who values education and believes that academic success is important for their future. When that student attends class regularly, seeks help when needed, and puts in genuine effort to understand the material, they are demonstrating coherence. Their values and actions are in alignment, which not only supports academic success but also reinforces their sense of integrity and personal well-being.

In contrast, if the same student skips classes, procrastinates on assignments, and puts minimal effort into regular studying, their actions are not well-aligned with their stated beliefs. When someone realizes there is a mismatch between one's beliefs and actions (i.e., a lack of coherence), this may cause psychological discomfort, better known as **cognitive dissonance**.

This discomfort caused by cognitive dissonance pushes individuals to:

- Adjust their beliefs to justify their behaviours: A person who smokes despite knowing
 the health risks might convince themselves that smoking helps manage their stress,
 making it "worth the risk."
- Modify their actions to align more closely with their values: A person who believes strongly in environmental conservation yet frequently engages in wasteful behaviours, may choose to pursue more sustainable solutions to their life.
- Double down, leaving dissonance unresolved: A person who values physical health but regularly eats unhealthy food may choose to rationalize unhealthy choices to reduce discomfort.

Hypocrisy

When cognitive dissonance is unresolved, it can lead to **hypocrisy**—when one's actions directly contradict their professed values. There are two main types:

- **Negative hypocrisy:** Deliberately holding others to standards one knowingly violates (e.g., a leader who publicly promotes honesty and transparency but lies to the public and hides secrets).
- **Positive hypocrisy:** Acknowledging high standards or ideals but occasionally failing to meet them due to human imperfection (e.g., advocating patience but sometimes losing your temper).

The critical difference lies in intent. Negative hypocrisy damages trust and credibility, while positive hypocrisy acknowledges imperfection while aspiring toward higher standards, which is a normal part of growth and development.

The Lie

Between truth and coherence lies the **lie**—a distortion of reality that disrupts integrity and creates internal and external disharmony. Lying may offer perceived short-term benefits, but it ultimately erodes trust, clarity, and coherence—both within ourselves and in our relationships with others. Think of telling a lie as incurring a debt. Sooner or later, it must (and will) be repaid.

A lie can take many forms, including:

- **Deliberate deception:** Intentionally misleading others for personal gain or avoidance.
- **Self-deception:** Convincing oneself of a false reality to avoid discomfort.
- **Distorting facts:** Cherry-picking information to fit a biased narrative.
- **Omission:** Withholding critical information to manipulate perception.

Pruit 3: Harmony

Harmony is the balanced and smooth integration of different elements, or aspects of life, that must coexist smoothly for a sense of balance and unity. These elements can be grouped into three categories:

Personal Harmony

This requires integrating different aspects of the self (thoughts, emotions, desires, and actions) into a cohesive and balanced whole. When personal harmony is disrupted, an individual may feel emotionally unsettled, mentally exhausted, or physically unwell.

Carl Jung described this process as individuation, where an individual reconciles different parts of their psyche to achieve wholeness (Jung, 1961). Similarly, Aristotle argued that true happiness (eudaimonia) is reached by balancing virtues, rational thought, and desires in a way that leads to a fulfilled and ethical life (Aristotle, 350 BCE).

Social Harmony

Social harmony is about building and maintaining positive relationships with others. It involves respect, communication, and a mindset of reciprocity—focusing not just on what we receive from others but also on what we contribute. When social harmony breaks down, relationships suffer, and communities experience tension.

Confucius emphasized the importance of virtue and respect in fostering harmony within society. He believed that strong, ethical relationships create a peaceful and cooperative community (1989/Confucius, 5th century BCE). Martin Buber expanded on this idea through

his "I-Thou" philosophy, which suggests that meaningful connections arise when we treat others as unique individuals rather than as tools to serve our own needs (Buber, 1923/1970).

Environmental Harmony

Environmental harmony refers to understanding our place within a larger system—whether it's our community, society, or the natural world. It means recognizing that our actions have consequences and striving to live in balance with the world around us. Environmental disharmony occurs when people disregard their connection to the world around them, leading to ecological destruction, social instability, and a loss of purpose.

Laozi (Lao Tzu), in the Tao Te Ching, taught that people should live in accordance with the natural flow (Dao) rather than attempting to control or dominate nature. He argued that forcing control leads to imbalance and suffering (Laozi, 6th century BCE/1988). Similarly, Aldo Leopold developed the concept of a **land ethic**, which states that true harmony is achieved when humans respect and preserve nature instead of exploiting it (Leopold, 1949).



Click on the icons below to learn about the elements that make up each type of harmony.

Text Description

Elements of Personal Harmony:

- Thoughts, emotions, and actions: Aligning beliefs, feelings, and behaviours to maintain personal integrity and well-being.
- Mind and body: Achieving balance through self-care, physical health, and mental resilience.
- Desires and responsibilities: Managing personal goals, duties, and limitations to avoid internal conflict.
- Stability and growth: Balancing contentment with ambition and continuous selfimprovement.

Elements of Social Harmony:

- Balancing self and others: Recognizing both personal needs and the well-being of those around us.
- Giving and receiving: Cultivating healthy relationships based on mutual care rather than selfish expectations.
- Diversity and unity: Respecting differences while fostering shared values and understanding.
- Effective communication and conflict resolution: Engaging in open, honest, and respectful dialogue.

Elements of Environmental Harmony:

- Humanity and nature: Recognizing our role in the broader ecosystem and living sustainably.
- Community and society: Contributing positively to social structures, culture, and the collective good.
- Order and change: Adapting to life's inevitable shifts while maintaining a sense of stability

9.5 THE ENEMY OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

One of the greatest obstacles to cultivating the fruits of spiritual wellness is the **ego**, a part of the mind that plays a role in distinguishing ourselves from others, interpreting experiences, and making decisions. More specifically, the ego plays a role in:

- Self-image ("Who I think I am.")
- Personal identity (roles, labels, achievements)
- Self-protection (defensiveness, pride, fear of failure)
- Social comparison (status, competition, judgment)

How the Ego Blocks Spiritual Growth

The ego thrives on separation, pride, comparison, attachment, and control—all of which prevent the cultivation of inner peace, harmony, and truth. Here are some of the ways that the ego blocks spiritual growth:

- Need for control: The ego often insists on controlling situations, people, and outcomes to protect itself from uncertainty or vulnerability. This can lead to conflicts and stress when things don't go according to plan.
- Defensiveness: When challenged or criticized, the ego becomes defensive, interpreting feedback as an attack or threat.
- Pride: When fueled by ego, pride can become a barrier to growth making it difficult to accept feedback, consider new ideas, or admit when we are wrong, because we believe we already know everything we need to know.
- Comparison: The ego fuels constant comparison with others to reinforce its sense of worth. This diminishes internal peace and increases dissatisfaction, envy, and resentment.
- Attachment to identity: The ego often identifies strongly with roles, status, or material possessions. Losing or questioning these external identifiers can threaten self-worth and stability, creating anxiety and distress.
- Resistance to forgiveness: The ego thrives on maintaining grudges because forgiving is seen as a loss or weakness. Holding grudges, however, prevents healing and disrupts inner peace.



Click on the flip cards to read real-life examples of how the ego blocks spiritual growth.

Text Description

- Need for Control: When a parent insists on controlling every aspect of their child's choices, tension can arise, damaging their relationship rather than fostering trust and harmony. Peace would come more easily by letting go of excessive control and trusting the child's judgment.
- Defensiveness and Pride: If a person at work receives constructive feedback on their performance, an ego-driven response might be anger, defensiveness, or denial, causing tension with colleagues rather than collaboratively working toward improvement.
- Comparison and Jealousy: Seeing friends or peers achieve success (like promotions or social recognition) can trigger feelings of jealousy or inadequacy if one's ego is threatened by others' accomplishments, disrupting internal peace and external relationships.
- Attachment to Identity: If someone is deeply attached to their career status or wealth and experiences job loss or financial setbacks, the ego perceives this as an existential threat, causing emotional distress and limiting adaptability and resilience.
- Resistance to Forgiveness: Two family members might remain distant after a minor misunderstanding because each waits for the other to apologize first, driven by ego. Neither experiences reconciliation nor peace.

9.6 ENVIRONMENT



"Nature Benefits" by Undraw, Undraw License

Environmental wellness includes maintaining and improving the quality of the environment around you. This includes your immediate living space, your community, and the broader natural world. It recognizes the interconnectedness of your environment with your health, emotions, and overall well-being. Your environment can be broken down into three categories:

Personal

Your personal environment includes the spaces you occupy daily, such as your home, workplace, and even your digital spaces. A clean, organized, and aesthetically pleasing space promotes mental clarity, reduces stress, and enhances productivity and peace.

Actions to improve Personal Environmental Wellness:

- Cleaning Your Room:
 - Organizing your immediate surroundings can significantly reduce stress and anxiety.
 - ° A clutter-free environment improves focus, productivity, and emotional health.

Tip: Spend 5-10 minutes daily tidying your space to maintain a consistently welcoming and calming atmosphere.

- Creating a Comfortable and Safe Space:
 - Ensure your environment is physically comfortable, with proper lighting, ventilation, and ergonomically supportive furniture.
 - Personalize your environment with items that reflect your personality and values, increasing your sense of connection and comfort.

Community

Your environment extends beyond your home and into your community, impacting your daily interactions and overall happiness.

- Social Responsibility:
 - Participating in community clean-ups, recycling programs, or sustainability initiatives contributes positively to collective wellness.
 - Engaging in activities that enhance community spaces fosters a sense of belonging and social support.
- Interacting with Diverse Environments:
 - Understanding and respecting diverse environments promotes harmony and reduces potential conflict.
 - Being mindful of differences in cultural, social, or personal backgrounds helps cultivate inclusive and supportive relationships.

Broad

Environmental wellness also encompasses stewardship of the planet. Recognizing your role in maintaining the health of the natural world is crucial to long-term wellness.

- Sustainable Living:
 - Adopting eco-friendly practices, such as recycling, reducing waste, and using sustainable products,

positively impacts personal and global wellness.

• Connection to Nature:

- Spending time in natural environments reduces stress, enhances emotional stability, and promotes physical health.
- Nature activities such as hiking, gardening, or simply spending time outdoors can significantly boost mood and resilience.

9.7 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- The self is comprised of three interconnected components: body (physical self), mind (psychological self), and spirit (spiritual self).
- Spiritual wellness involves actively pursuing choices, such as aligning oneself with a Higher Power that brings peace, harmony, and truth.
- Peace is a key fruit of spiritual wellness and is cultivated through acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, patience, and stillness.
- Coherence, humility, and honesty are crucial for aligning beliefs with actions, reducing cognitive dissonance, and promoting authentic living.
- Maintaining harmony across personal, social, and environmental domains significantly enhances overall wellness.
- Ego poses significant barriers to spiritual growth by fostering control, defensiveness, jealousy, attachment, and resistance to forgiveness.
- Environmental wellness involves enhancing your immediate surroundings, engaging positively with community spaces, and promoting sustainability.

⊙⇒Key Terms

- **Self:** Refers to your entire being as an individual, encompassing your unique identity, beliefs, values, experiences, and how you interact with the world around you. It is a dynamic construct influenced by internal perceptions (e.g., self-esteem, self-image, personal strengths or weaknesses) and external interactions (e.g., how you interact or behave with others).
- **Physical self:** Refers to your body, health, and other physical characteristics (e.g., biological functions, appearance, and physical abilities).
- Psychological self: Encompasses your emotions, thoughts, beliefs, reasoning skills, creativity, curiosity, and learning capacity. Your psychological self plays a key role in interpreting experiences, making decisions, solving problems, and interacting socially.
- **Spirit:** The deeper essence or core of a person; the intangible, animating part of one's being that shapes purpose and drive.
- **Spirituality:** The personal or communal pursuit of meaning, purpose, and connection with something beyond oneself.
- **Spiritual well-being:** The resulting state of feeling spiritually fulfilled, at peace, and aligned with one's core values or Higher Power.
- **Spiritual wellness:** A process involving choices designed to seek and cultivate inner peace, harmony, and truth.
- **Higher Power:** An entity, force, principle, or system greater than the individual self that provides meaning, guidance, or a sense of connection beyond the individual self.
- **Peace:** A state of calmness, stability, and freedom from conflict. It is found internally (within oneself) or externally (in relationships or society) and is closely associated with emotional well-being, a sense of reassurance, justice, compassion, and understanding.
- **Objective ("the truth"):** Facts that exist independently of personal beliefs (e.g., gravity exists whether you believe in it or not).
- **Subjective ("my truth"):** Personal experiences and perspectives that shape individual understanding (e.g., preferences, feelings, interpretations of art or music). Note that interpretations of events or "stories" are not included under subjective truth, only the feelings one experienced during said events.
- **Hypocrisy:** When one's actions directly contradict their professed values.
- **Lie:** A distortion of reality that disrupts integrity and creates internal and external disharmony.

- **Deliberate deception:** Intentionally misleading others for personal gain or avoidance.
- **Self-deception:** Convincing oneself of a false reality to avoid discomfort.
- **Distorting facts:** Cherry-picking information to fit a biased narrative.
- Omission: Withholding critical information to manipulate perception.
- **Negative hypocrisy:** Deliberately holding others to standards one knowingly violates (e.g., a leader who publicly promotes honesty and transparency but lies to the public and hides secrets).
- **Positive hypocrisy:** Acknowledging high standards or ideals but occasionally failing to meet them due to human imperfection (e.g., advocating patience but sometimes losing your temper).
- **Land ethic**: A concept described by Aldo Leopold where ethical behaviour must include how we treat the land and all its components.
- **Ego:** A part of the mind that plays a role in distinguishing ourselves from others, interpreting experiences, and making decisions.

9.8 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. When you think deeply about who you truly are (i.e., beyond your roles and labels), what values or beliefs lie at the core of your identity?
- 2. Recall a time someone betrayed your trust. What is currently preventing you from forgiving them, and how might your life improve if you chose forgiveness?
- 3. What is something important about yourself that you struggle to admit or acknowledge openly? Why is confronting this truth challenging, and how might accepting it influence your sense of authenticity and overall well-being?
- 4. Reflect on a recent instance where your actions didn't align with your values or beliefs. What internal or external factors influenced your decision, and how might you better align your actions with your core values in the future?
- 5. Consider your current personal spaces (home, work, digital). In what ways might these environments be shaping your thoughts, emotions, and pursuit of greater wellness?

9.9 KNOWLEDGE CHECK



Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

According to the chapter, which of the following best defines spiritual wellness?

- a. The pursuit of religious beliefs and practices to achieve enlightenment
- b. A process of making choices that align with inner peace, harmony, and truth
- c. A set of fixed moral principles that dictate one's ethical decisions
- d. The rejection of material concerns in favor of a purely spiritual existence

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following best describes the relationship between spirituality and spiritual wellbeing?

- a. Spirituality refers to religious affiliation, while spiritual well-being is a measure of faith.
- b. Spiritual well-being is the process of seeking spirituality through religious rituals.
- c. Spirituality involves the pursuit of meaning, while spiritual well-being is the state of fulfillment that results from that pursuit.
- d. Spirituality and spiritual well-being are interchangeable terms with no real distinction.

Multiple Choice Activity #3

What is a key risk of moral relativism, as discussed in the chapter?

- a. It ensures that individuals always make ethical decisions.
- b. It allows individuals to establish a universal sense of morality.
- c. It can lead to justifying harmful actions based on personal or cultural preferences.
- d. It eliminates the need for ethical reasoning in personal decision-making.

Multiple Choice Activity #4

Which of the following best explains the role of ego in obstructing spiritual growth?

a. The ego encourages self-reflection, making it easier to recognize personal flaws and correct

them.

- b. The ego fosters a strong sense of individuality, which strengthens personal growth and independence.
- c. The ego resists vulnerability, leading to a need for control, comparison, and self-justification that limits spiritual development.
- d. A well-developed ego is necessary to maintain emotional resilience and avoid being influenced by external opinions.

Multiple Choice Activity #5

In what way does cognitive dissonance influence personal integrity?

- a. It strengthens belief systems by reinforcing one's existing values.
- b. It creates internal conflict when actions contradict personal values, encouraging self-reflection or justification.
- c. It eliminates hypocrisy by ensuring that individuals always act in accordance with their beliefs.
- d. It has no impact on personal integrity since values and actions are independent of each other.

Multiple Choice Activity #6

How does the concept of environmental harmony contribute to overall wellness?

- a. It encourages people to take control of their surroundings by shaping them to fit personal preferences.
- b. It promotes an appreciation for natural beauty but has little influence on well-being beyond aesthetics.
- c. It involves balancing personal, social, and ecological responsibilities to create a sense of interconnected well-being.
- d. It emphasizes minimalism and self-sufficiency as the key to achieving a more fulfilling life.

Multiple Choice Activity #7

Why is forgiveness considered essential for achieving inner peace?

- a. It helps avoid conflict by allowing individuals to overlook wrongdoing and maintain harmony.
- b. It allows people to free themselves from resentment and emotional burdens without excusing harmful actions.
- c. It ensures that those who have hurt us recognize their mistakes and take accountability for

d. It reinforces the idea that emotional wounds fade over time, so active forgiveness is not always necessary.

Correct Answers:

their actions.

Activity #1: b. A process of making choices that align with inner peace, harmony, and truth.

Activity #2: c. Spirituality involves the pursuit of meaning, while spiritual well-being is the state of fulfillment that results from that pursuit.

Activity #3: c. It can lead to justifying harmful actions based on personal or cultural preferences.

Activity #4: c. The ego resists vulnerability, leading to a need for control, comparison, and self-justification that limits spiritual development.

Activity #5: b. It creates internal conflict when actions contradict personal values, encouraging self-reflection or justification.

Activity #6: c. It involves balancing personal, social, and ecological responsibilities to create a sense of interconnected well-being.

Activity #7: b. It allows people to free themselves from resentment and emotional burdens without excusing harmful actions.

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 10: LONGEVITY, HEALTHSPAN AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Chapter Overview

10.0 Learning Objectives

10.1 "Into the Future"

10.2 Living Longer vs Living Well

10.3 The Four Horsemen of Chronic Disease

10.4 Preventing the Horsemen

10.5 Physical Exercise and the Dimensions of Wellness

10.6 Types of Physical Exercise

10.7 Summary

10.8 Reflection

10.9 Knowledge Check

10.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES



At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Compare and contrast lifespan and healthspan.
- Recognize the "Four Horsemen" of chronic disease along with major risk factors.
- Explain why a proactive approach is key to improving both healthspan and lifespan.
- Differentiate between physical activity, physical exercise, and physical fitness.
- Explore how physical activity influences multiple dimensions of wellness.
- Describe the purposes and benefits of cardiovascular, resistance, and mobility/balance/ stability exercise.
- Identify common obstacles to regular exercise and propose realistic strategies to overcome them.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Intellectual, and Financial

10.1 "INTO THE FUTURE"





"Grandmother and Grandfather" by Pixabay, Pexels

Fifty years from now, you wake up feeling strong and steady. You walk downstairs without reaching for the railing, lace up your shoes, and head out for a brisk morning walk. Later, you pick up your grandchild with ease, lift a stack of plates into the overhead cupboard, and get down on the floor to clean up a mess your dog made overnight and stand back up without assistance. You are still driving, still laughing, and still living life on your own terms.

Now, picture this:

You wake up and hesitate before getting out of bed. Your joints ache, and you move slowly, worried about falling. Stairs are no longer an option. You need help carrying groceries, rising from a chair, and even dressing yourself. Your world has shrunk to the size of your home. The life you once knew feels out of reach, not because of age per se, but because of chronic diseases and physical decline that could have been prevented.

Which future do you want for yourself?

While genetics and luck play a role in how we age, one factor consistently stands out as a reliable predictor of both longevity and quality of life: physical activity. It is the closest thing we have to a longevity drug, helping keep your body resilient, your mind sharp, and your independence intact. The way you choose to move today plays a key role in determining how you will move decades from now.

In this chapter, we will examine lifespan and healthspan, explore four common chronic diseases that drive mortality and diminish the quality of life, and look at the role of physical exercise as a potent "drug" for not only living longer but also living well.

10.2 LIVING LONGER VS LIVING WELL



"Smiling man and woman" by Tristan Le, Pexels License

Lifespan represents the total number of years a person lives, a measure most people think of when they consider longevity. For example, a person who lives to 80 has a longer lifespan than someone who lives to 78. **Healthspan**, however, refers to the number of years one remains in good physical and mental health, active, and free from serious disease or disability. An individual who lives to 80 but spends the last 5 years in chronic pain or is incapacitated will likely have a shorter healthspan than someone who lives to 78 and passes away suddenly with minimal decline in function.

Wellness is a process involving making choices that are likely to increase both lifespan and healthspan in the future, thus optimizing both present and future well-being. Many people place tremendous focus on living longer, but without also working to maintain or enhance healthspan, extra years may be spent dealing with discomfort, dependence on others, and chronic illness.

When individuals fail to prioritize healthspan early on, aging and disease progression naturally lead to a steep decline in quality of life. This decline does not necessarily shorten lifespan, as demonstrated by those who live many years with pain or disability. At that stage, some will pursue treatment in an attempt to buy a better quality of life. This reactive approach may only help with acute illnesses and has a limited impact on chronic conditions. While it can extend lifespan, it often falls short of significantly improving healthspan and, in some cases, it can even worsen it.

By contrast, a healthspan-focused approach is proactive (Chapter 3). It prioritizes disease prevention, lifestyle adjustments, and ongoing care at the forefront to maintain strength, independence, and cognitive function

for as long as possible. It is not just about adding years to your life but about making those years feel strong, capable, and independent.



Video: "What is Longevity? | Peter Attia, M.D." by Peter Attia MD [3:59] is licensed under the Standard YouTube License. *Transcript and closed captions available on YouTube*.

In his video, Dr. Peter Attia explains the relationship between healthspan and lifespan under three different scenarios:

- 1. No intervention (white line): Healthspan gradually declines over time, with a sharp drop toward the end of life, indicating both a deteriorating quality of life and a relatively shorter lifespan.
- Treatment-based approach (blue line): Healthspan follows a slightly improved trajectory compared to no
 intervention, but still shows a noticeable decline before the end of life. This reflects reactive
 healthcare—treating disease after it arises.
- 3. Healthspan-focused approach (red line): Healthspan is maintained at a higher level for a longer period, with a more gradual decline. Lifespan is also extended. This approach emphasizes proactive strategies like prevention, lifestyle changes, and optimizing overall health to delay the onset of chronic disease and disability.

A Preventative Focus is Key

Focusing on proactive, healthspan-centred interventions not only extends lifespan but also compresses morbidity, allowing individuals to maintain a high quality of life until near the end of life. Notice how those who try to intervene with a treatment-based or reactive approach are often too late.

10.3 THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF CHRONIC **DISEASE**



"The Four Horsemen" Source Below

In his bestselling book Outlive: The Science & Art of Longevity, Dr. Peter Attia highlights four chronic conditions, referred to as the "Four Horsemen of Chronic Disease," that contribute significantly to mortality and declining lifespan and healthspan worldwide (Attia & Gifford, 2023).

Over time, these conditions slowly cause irreversible damage to the body, often without the person even knowing it. Damage often takes the form of reduced energy levels, making everyday activities, like sports or simply staying active, far more challenging. Treatments for these conditions may bring unintended side effects, which can further diminish healthspan.

Preventing or effectively managing these conditions is essential not just for extending lifespan but also for maintaining healthspan.

1. Metabolic Disease

This is an umbrella term for a handful of related illnesses that impact our metabolic processes, such as

maintaining stable blood sugar and insulin levels, healthy blood pressure, and favourable cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

The main drivers of metabolic disease are poor diet, lack of exercise, excessive weight, stress, poor sleep, and hormone imbalances.

Deaths per year: Exact numbers vary because metabolic disease often contributes to other conditions (heart disease, stroke, etc.). According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (2024), diabetes alone was the direct cause of 1.6 million deaths worldwide. Considering complications and related metabolic disorders, the total number of deaths influenced by metabolic disease may reach several million each year.



- Type 2 Diabetes: Characterized by insulin resistance and high blood sugar levels.
- Metabolic Syndrome: A cluster of risk factors (high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess abdominal fat, abnormal cholesterol/triglyceride levels).
- Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD): Excess fat accumulation in the liver that isn't caused by alcohol use and can progress to serious liver damage.
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): A hormonal disorder in women often linked to insulin resistance and metabolic dysfunction.
- Obesity: While not always classified as a disease by itself, obesity significantly raises the risk of other metabolic conditions.

2. Heart Disease

Also known as cardiovascular disease, this includes a variety of conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels (arteries and veins). Heart disease develops over many years without noticeable symptoms, which is the reason why it is a leading cause of death globally.

The main drivers of heart disease are high LDL (bad) cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, and a sedentary lifestyle.

Deaths per year: According to WHO (2021), heart disease accounted for nearly 17.9 million deaths globally.

Examples

- Atherosclerosis: Arteries become narrow and harden due to the buildup of plaque.
- Coronary Artery Disease: Narrowing of the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle. It often leads to:
- Heart Attack: Occurs when the blood supply to part of the heart is severely reduced or blocked, causing heart muscle cells to die.
- Stroke: A blockage or rupture of a blood vessel in the brain, cutting off blood flow and oxygen. Strokes can lead to permanent neurological damage or disability.
- Peripheral Artery Disease: Narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to the limbs (usually legs), causing pain and mobility issues.
- Heart Failure: When the heart can't pump enough blood to meet the body's needs, leading to symptoms like fatigue, fluid buildup, and shortness of breath.
- Arrhythmias: Abnormal heart rhythms (e.g., atrial fibrillation) that may cause the heart to pump blood less effectively.

3. Cancer

Cancer is marked by abnormal cells growing uncontrollably, sometimes spreading (metastasizing) to other parts of the body. It can begin in almost any part of the body, leading to a diverse range of types and outcomes. Early detection and getting the right treatment can make an enormous difference in survival.

The main drivers for cancer are genetics, smoking, exposure to chemicals, obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity, radiation, air pollution, and excessive sun exposure.

Deaths per year: According to WHO (2025), cancer accounted for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020.

Examples

Cancer can develop anywhere in the body. Common sites include:

- Breast
- Lungs
- Colon
- Prostate
- Skin
- Stomach
- Liver
- Thyroid

4. Neurodegenerative Disease

This is a term used to describe a decline in cognitive ability (i.e., memory, thinking, and decision making) severe enough to affect everyday life. This leads to confusion, mood swings, and difficulty with basic tasks like speaking or recognizing faces, even including close loved ones. Over time, conditions progressively worsen, eventually leading to complete dependence on others for care.

Main drivers: genetics, poor heart health, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, a lack of physical activity, insulin resistance, and poor blood flow to the brain.

Deaths per year: Often, neurogenerative disease itself is not the direct cause of death but contributes to fatal complications (e.g., infections, injuries from falls, or inability to manage other illnesses); however, according to the Global Burden of Disease Study (2019) the number of deaths attributed to neurodegnerative conditions approached 2 million globally (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2024).

Here are just a few examples:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Lewy body dementia

"The Four Horsemen" image: OpenAI. (2025). *ChatGPT.* [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Create an image of four men riding horses. They are in the distance and a silhouette.

10.4 PREVENTING THE HORSEMEN

One of the most effective ways to combat chronic disease, improve daily function, and enhance quality of life is regular physical activity. It benefits every system in the body, making it a cornerstone of long-term health and well-being. The scientific evidence supporting its widespread benefits is extensive. To quote Edward Stanley, the 14th Earl of Derby in Great Britain:

"Those who do not find time for exercise will have to make time for illness".

Activity vs Exercise vs Fitness

Physical Activity

Physical activity includes any movement, spontaneous or planned, that causes your muscles to move and consume energy. Examples might include walking to class, carrying groceries, or dancing.



"Dog walking" by Undraw, Undraw License

Physical Exercise

Physical exercise is a type of physical activity that is planned, structured, and done with the specific goal of

improving or maintaining fitness. Examples might include running, lifting weights, or following a workout routine. All exercise is physical activity, but not all physical activity is exercise.



"Bike ride" by Undraw, Undraw License

Physical Fitness

Physical fitness refers to your body's ability to perform daily tasks or exercise with strength, endurance, and flexibility, while minimizing the risk of injury or disease. People with high fitness are often described as having a high capacity for functional movement and recovery.



"Track and field" by Undraw, Undraw License

10.5 PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND THE DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS



Physical exercise supports so much more than physical well-being. Click on the icons to learn more about how physical exercise directly or indirectly impacts the other dimensions of wellness.

Text Description

Emotional

- Regulates stress hormones and boosts mood-enhancing chemicals (e.g., dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin) so you feel happier and more grounded often.
- Builds discipline, perseverance, and emotional resilience.
- Provides a healthy outlet for stress and/or emotional release which helps you feel less anxious and calm.

Social

- Can build meaningful connections by fostering friendships and support systems through group fitness, sports, and shared physical activities.
- Enhances teamwork and collaboration skills through activities like team sports, fitness charity events, or group workouts.
- Improves social confidence by strengthening self-esteem, making it easier to engage and connect with others.

Occupational

- Boosts energy and productivity by reducing fatigue and improving concentration.
- Lower work-related stress by boosting mood, reducing stress hormones, and promoting relaxation, allowing for a better work-life balance.
- Decrease workplace injuries as exercise improves strength, flexibility, and posture, reducing the risk of muscle strain or injury, especially in physically demanding or sedentary jobs.

Intellectual

- Enhances cognitive function, especially with mental sharpness and clarity, which can help with memory retention, making it beneficial for school or work.
- Promotes problem-solving skills and critical thinking, making it easier to tackle complex challenges.

• Stimulates neurogenesis (the process of creating new brain cells), contributing to overall greater brain health and function.

Environmental

- Exercising outdoors exposes the body to natural sunlight, which improves vitamin D levels and allows the lungs to adapt to different weather conditions. This can improve respiratory efficiency and capacity.
- Physical transportation like walking, jogging, or biking reduces carbon footprints, benefitting
 personal health and the environment by lowering pollution levels.
- Engaging in outdoor group fitness or activities helps support eco-friendly practices, promoting community cleanups and awareness about protecting green spaces.

Spiritual

• Exercises like yoga and meditation also promote mindfulness, helping you stay present and centered and foster a deeper sense of peace and spiritual well-being.

Financial

- Improves productivity through improved energy and mental clarity, helping you work more efficiently and potentially leading to career advancement and higher earnings.
- Reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and more, potentially saving on medical expenses.
- Staying fit and maintaining good health allows for longer, healthier careers, leading to more savings with a stable income.

10.6 TYPES OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Cardiovascular (Aerobic) Training

Often referred to as "cardio," this involves any planned activities that raise your heart rate and breathing while engaging large muscle groups. Activities like rowing, running, swimming, cycling, and even brisk walking all fall under this category.

Key Benefits



"Jogging" by Undraw, Undraw License

- Stronger Heart & Lower Blood Pressure: Your heart doesn't need to work as hard, which can reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Better Stamina & Lung Capacity: Everyday tasks, like climbing stairs or carrying groceries, feel easier and more sustainable over longer periods of time.
- groceries, feel easier and more sustainable over longer periods of time.

 Weight Management & Metabolic Health: Burns calories and can improve how your body stores and uses energy.
- Improved Immune Response: Helps your body fight off sickness faster and more
 effectively.
- Higher Energy & Less Fatigue: This leaves you feeling more alert and capable throughout the day.

Heart Rate Zones

Heart rate zones tell you how hard you're working based on your heartbeats per minute (bpm). To use them, you first estimate your maximum heart rate (MHR) by using "220 minus your age." If you're 25, then 220 – 25 = 195 bpm.

Then, each heart rate zone is a certain percentage of that maximum. Using the example, training at 70% of your MHR would mean the heart rate goes no higher than $137 (195 \times 0.7 = 137)$.

"Zone 2" Training

- Heart Rate Range: 60-75% of MHR
- What it is: Steady pace
- How It Feels: A steady pace where your heart is working harder than normal, but you can still speak in short sentences.
- Why It's Important:
 - $^{\circ}~$ Builds an "aerobic base," helping your heart and lungs get better at using oxygen.
 - Teaches your body to use fat for energy, preserving stored carbohydrates (glycogen) for tougher efforts later.
 - Boosting mitochondrial efficiency (how cells produce energy) and lactate clearance (how your body handles fatigue).
- How Often: Endurance athletes may spend up to 75% of their training here to build stamina.
 Regular people can also make substantial and consistent improvements to their fitness with 2–4
 30-minute sessions a week without burning out.
- Sample Workouts
 - Brisk walking outside for 30 minutes
 - Swimming for 15 minutes
 - Biking for 60 minutes

"Zone 5" Training

- Heart Rate Range: >85% of MHR
- What It Is: Short bursts of very hard effort, like sprinting, followed by rest or easy movement. Sometimes called High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT).
- How it Feels: Very, very intense. Can barely get words out. Heavy breathing.
 Why It's Important:
 - VO₂ Max: This measures how well your heart and lungs deliver oxygen to your muscles. A
 higher VO₂ max usually means better overall fitness and lower risk of chronic disease.
 - Pushing near your limit improves heart efficiency and teaches muscles to use energy more effectively.
- How Often: One or two workouts per week can give big improvements. Doing more might cause

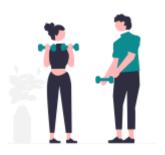
exhaustion or injury if you don't recover well.

- Sample Workouts
 - ° 4×4: Go "all out" for 4 minutes. Recover with a much easier exercise for 4 minutes. Repeat 4 times (up to 6 if you're feeling strong).
 - ° Tabatta: 20 seconds of exercising as hard as you can, followed by 10 seconds of rest. Repeat 8 times.
 - EMOM (Every minute on the minute): Perform a specific exercise or set of repetitions at the start of each minute. Whatever time is left in that minute after completion is your rest. When the next minute starts, you repeat the movement or move to a new one.

Resistance Training

Any exercise where you push or pull against some form of resistance. This may include free weights, machines, resistance bands, or even your own body weight. The main goal is to build muscle strength, size, and endurance.

Key Benefits



"Personal trainer" by Undraw, Undraw License

- Muscle Mass & Strength: Stronger muscles make everyday tasks (like carrying groceries) easier and lower your risk of injuries.
 Bone Health: Lifting weights can help your bones get stronger, reducing the chance of
- osteoporosis as you age.
- Metabolism Boost: Muscle tissue burns more calories than fat when you are resting, making it easier to manage your weight.
- Confidence & Appearance: Having more muscle can make you look and feel better about yourself.

Repetitions and Sets

This type of training involves performing a combination of sets and repetitions of an exercise. A repetition (or rep) is one complete movement of an exercise (e.g., one squat or one push-up). A set is a group of reps done

without a rest. For example, three sets of 10 reps means you do 10 squats, rest, then do 10 more, rest, and do 10 more. But 10 sets of 3 reps means you do three squats, rest, and then repeat this nine more times.

Repetition Ranges

Depending on your goals, you may want to tailor your repetition ranges:

Item	Low Reps (1 to 5 per set)	Medium Reps (6 to 12 per set)	High Reps (12+ per set)
Focus	Maximum strength and power	Muscle size (hypertrophy)	Muscular endurance
Example	Lifting heavier weights for fewer reps (like three sets of 5 deadlifts)	3 sets of 8 to 10 squats or bench presses	2 sets of 15 or more push-ups or resistance band exercises
Benefit	Builds raw strength and trains your nervous system to recruit more muscle fibers quickly	Ideal for adding muscle mass and improving overall body composition.	Helps your muscles keep going longer. Useful for sports, daily activities, and stamina.

Mobility, Balance & Stability

These three elements are all about how well your body can move through its full range of motion while staying controlled and injury-free.

Key Benefits



"Workout" by Undraw, **Undraw License**

- Better Posture & Alignment: Improves how you sit, stand, and move, reducing aches
- Fewer Injuries & Falls: A stable, balanced body is less likely to trip or get hurt, especially in sports or everyday tasks.
- Smoother, More Efficient Movements: Good mobility and balance allow you to
- perform exercises (and daily activities) with better form.

 Enhanced Performance in Other Exercises: Improved joint flexibility and body control help you lift heavier weights, run faster, or play sports more safely.

How to Train

Mobility Work

- Definition: Exercises that focus on flexibility and joint range of motion (e.g., dynamic stretches, foam rolling, gentle yoga flows).
- Why It Helps: Ensures your muscles and joints move freely, letting you perform activities with less stiffness and better technique.

Balance Training

- Definition: Exercises that challenge your body's stability, like standing on one foot, using a balance board, or practicing single-leg squats.
- Why It Helps: Makes everyday tasks (like walking on uneven ground) safer and boosts athletic performance in sports that require quick direction changes.

Stability Drills

- Definition: Movements that strengthen your core and stabilizing muscles (e.g., planks, bird dogs, or stability ball exercises).
- Why It Helps: A strong "center" of the body supports better posture and protects against injuries by keeping joints in proper alignment.

Other Factors to Consider

When you are working on strength, endurance, and overall fitness, there are a few extra things that can make or break your long-term success:

Recovery

Why It Matters: Your body needs time to rebuild muscle, restore energy, and adapt after workouts.

Risks of Skipping: Overtraining can lead to injuries, burnout, and stalled progress.

How to Do It:

- Take rest days.
- Get quality sleep.
- Eat well, especially enough protein to help rebuild and repair muscle.
- Use active recovery methods like light cardio, gentle stretching, or yoga to reduce soreness.

Tracking Progress

What to Track:

- Strength Gains: Are you lifting heavier weights over time?
- Endurance: Can you run, swim, or cycle faster or farther?
- Body Composition: Are you gaining muscle or reducing body fat?

Why It Helps: Monitoring these factors keeps you motivated and shows where you need to adjust your training to reach your goals.

Identifying Barriers

Common Challenges:

- Busy schedules
- Limited access to a gym.
- Lack of motivation
- Persistent injuries.
- Mental roadblocks like self-doubt or depression.

Overcoming Them:

- Do things you like doing. This cannot be overstated. Don't waste your time running if you hate running. Eventually, you will probably stop or hurt yourself. Less chance of quitting.
- Manage time more effectively (e.g., schedule shorter, efficient workouts).
- Set realistic goals you can actually stick to.
- Adapt workouts if you're injured (e.g., switch to low-impact exercises).
- Focus on discipline over motivation—being comfortable with discomfort leads to lasting consistency.

Fanshawe College Fitness Centre

Want to know your body composition?

• Check out the Fanshawe College Fitness Centre and book a free InBody scan! It gives you a snapshot of your body fat and muscle percentage!



10.7 SUMMARY

⊙ Key Takeaways

- Living longer does not necessarily mean living better. Prioritizing healthspan ensures as many years as possible are spent in good health and independence.
- Metabolic disease, heart disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative disease can be delayed and even mitigated by early lifestyle interventions.
- Regular physical activity is essential for preventing chronic disease, boosting immune response, and preserving mental acuity.
- Regular physical activity, both directly and indirectly, positively influences all dimensions of wellness.
- Cardiovascular and resistance training, along with mobility and balance work, each offer unique benefits to improve healthspan.
- Using zones (such as zone 2 for endurance and zone 5 for high-intensity work) helps tailor workouts and maximize training outcomes.
- Building muscle and bone density lowers the risk of fractures, improves posture, and supports healthy metabolism.
- Adequate rest, mindful eating, and progress tracking are vital to preventing burnout and ensuring continuous improvement in fitness.

⊙ Key Terms

- **Lifespan:** Represents the total number of years a person lives; a measure most people think of when they consider longevity.
- **Healthspan:** Refers to the number of years one remains in good physical and mental health, active, and free from serious disease or disability.
- **Metabolic disease**: This is an umbrella term for a handful of related illnesses that impact our metabolic processes, such as maintaining stable blood sugar and insulin levels, healthy blood pressure, and favorable cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- **Heart disease:** Also known as cardiovascular disease, this includes a variety of conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels (arteries and veins). Heart disease develops over many years without noticeable symptoms, which is the reason why it is a leading cause of death globally.
- **Cancer:** Cancer is marked by abnormal cells growing uncontrollably, sometimes spreading (metastasizing) to other parts of the body. It can begin in almost any part of the body, leading to a diverse range of types and outcomes. Early detection and getting the proper treatment can make an enormous difference in survival.
- Neurodegenerative disease: A decline in cognitive ability severe enough to affect
 everyday life that primarily impairs memory, thinking, and behaviour. This leads to confusion,
 mood swings, and difficulty with basic tasks like speaking or recognizing faces. Over time,
 conditions progressively worsen, eventually leading to complete dependence on others for
 care.
- **Physical activity:** This includes any movement, spontaneous or planned, that causes your muscles to contract and use energy.
- **Physical exercise:** This is a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured, and done with the specific goal of improving or maintaining fitness.
- **Physical fitness:** Refers to your body's ability to perform daily tasks or exercise with strength, endurance, and flexibility while minimizing the risk of injury or disease. People with high fitness are often described as having a high capacity for functional movement and recovery.

10.8 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. What deep personal values or life experiences inspire you to stay physically active, and how might you reconnect with those values when your motivation fades?
- 2. Reflect on the biggest barriers (e.g., time, self-confidence, or previous injuries) that have stopped you from exercising regularly. How do these obstacles shape your mindset about physical health?
- 3. How do you feel (emotionally and mentally) right after a workout, and in what ways could these feelings influence other areas of your life, like relationships or academic/work performance?
- 4. Who in your life (e.g., friends, family, mentors) do you trust for encouragement or accountability when it comes to health goals, and how do you see their influence shaping your long-term habits?
- 5. If you had to choose just one daily habit to support your health span in the next six months, what would it be, and why does that habit feel most important to you personally?

10.9 KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

- 1. What is the primary difference between lifespan and healthspan?
 - a. Lifespan is determined by genetics, while healthspan is not
 - b. Lifespan refers to total years lived, while healthspan refers to years lived in good health
 - c. Lifespan can be extended by exercise, but healthspan cannot
 - d. Lifespan measures the number of healthy years lived, while healthspan measures total years lived

Multiple Choice Activity #2

Which of the following is NOT one of the Four Horsemen of Chronic Disease?

- a. Neurodegenerative Disease
- b. Metabolic Disease
- c. Heart Disease
- d. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Multiple Choice Activity #3

Why is a proactive approach to healthspan often more effective than a reactive one?

- a. It focuses only on treating acute illness instead of prevention
- b. It guarantees you will not develop chronic illnesses
- c. It allows for more medical interventions later in life
- d. It addresses potential health issues before they progress to serious conditions

Multiple Choice Activity #4

Which statement best distinguishes physical activity from physical exercise?

a. Physical activity is done in a gym, while physical exercise is only outdoors

- b. Physical activity improves fitness, while exercise does not
- c. Physical activity is unplanned movement, while physical exercise is structured and goaloriented
- d. Physical activity builds muscle, while exercise improves flexibility

Multiple Choice Activity #5

Which of the following is a benefit of cardiovascular (aerobic) training?

- a. Increases flexibility in joints
- b. Increases bone density more effectively than resistance training
- c. Builds large muscle groups
- d. Enhances heart and lung function, supporting stamina and fat metabolism

Multiple Choice Activity #6

Which dimension of wellness is directly supported by improved posture, balance, and flexibility from mobility and stability training?

- a. Physical wellness
- b. Financial wellness
- c. Environmental wellness
- d. Intellectual wellness

Multiple Choice Activity #7

What is one realistic strategy for overcoming barriers to regular exercise?

- a. Focus on perfection to stay accountable
- b. Find enjoyable forms of movement to increase consistency
- c. Only work out when motivated
- d. Push through injuries without adaption

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: b. Lifespan refers to total years lived, while healthspan refers to years lived in good health

Activity #2: d. Chronic Fatique Syndrome

Activity #3: d. It addresses potential health issues before they progress to serious conditions

Activity #4: c. Physical activity is unplanned movement, while physical exercise is structured and goal-oriented

Activity #5: d. Enhances heart and lung function, supporting stamina and fat metabolism

Activity #6: a. Physical wellness

Activity #7: b. Find enjoyable forms of movement to increase consistency

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 11: NUTRITION, SLEEP, AND SELF-CARE

Chapter Overview

11.0 Learning Objectives

11.1 "Why am I so Tired?"

11.2 Nutrition

11.3 Sleep

11.4 Personal Hygiene

11.5 Medical Care

11.6 Technological Hygiene

11.7 Summary

11.8 Reflection

11.9 Knowledge Check

11.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES



At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify the different types of nutrients, common food sources for each, and their role(s) in sustaining life.
- Describe the process of sleep and how it contributes to overall well-being.
- Discuss how inadequate sleep can lead to hormonal imbalance, affecting hunger, satiety, and long-term health.
- Recognize the importance of personal hygiene and regular medical care as self-care components.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, and Environmental.

11.1 "WHY AM I SO TIRED?"

Picture This:



"Sleeping" by Ketut Subiyanto, Pexels License

You open your eyes on a Tuesday morning. Groggily, you reach for your phone and check the time—9:43 a.m. You are exhausted. Again.

Your 8 a.m. class? Missed. And there is no way you'll make it to your 10 a.m. lecture on time. So, you hit snooze a few more times before finally dragging yourself out of bed.

By noon, you shuffle onto campus, clutching an overpriced energy drink like it is the only thing keeping you alive. In your lecture, your head bobs forward, your eyes are heavy, and you are half-asleep but try to look engaged.

At the end of the school day, you complain to your friends. "I'm always so tired. I am definitely not a morning person." But it's not your fault. You blame genetics. After all, your Mom is a terrible sleeper, too.

Never mind the fact that every night, you choose to stay up. Maybe it's Netflix, maybe scrolling TikTok, maybe just lying in bed overthinking every awkward interaction you have had since the seventh grade. Midnight rolls around, and you are still wide awake, scrolling.

And let's talk about your diet. Breakfast? You never have time. Lunch? Whatever is cheap and fast—usually something greasy. Dinner? Pizza rolls at 11 p.m. don't really count as a meal, but you convince yourself they do.

Yet somehow, you are still confused. "I don't get it. I slept for about five hours last night. Why am I so exhausted?"

The next day, the cycle repeats. This time, your professor catches you nodding off in class. Your roommate rolls their eyes when you complain again about being tired. Even the barista at your usual coffee shop recognizes the look of sleep deprivation in your eyes.

At what point do you admit that the problem is not some great mystery—it is you?

They say you are what you eat. There is truth to this. Proper nutrition and adequate sleep are fundamental components that contribute to optimal well-being. Despite this, many individuals fail to connect their constant fatigue and lack of energy to their own lifestyle choices. In this chapter, we explore the critical role of sleep and how not getting enough of it impacts the body and mind. The basics of proper nutrition are also discussed, as well as why what you eat plays a direct role in your energy levels, cognitive function, and overall physical well-being. Other key variables related to self-care will also be touched on.

11.2 NUTRITION



"Bowl of vegetable salad" by Jane TD, Pexels License

Nutrition is a science and process by which the body takes in calories, in the form of food, to:

- Sustain life to ensure that the body has the absolute essentials to keep vital processes running, such as breathing, circulation, and basic metabolic functions. Even if someone is not in peak health, the minimum level of nutrition needed to sustain life keeps them alive, though potentially at risk of deficiencies, fatigue, or illness.
- Maintain health to ensure that bodily functions operate efficiently and optimally. This involves getting
 enough nutrients to support immune function, keep organs working properly, maintain energy levels,
 prevent deficiencies, and reduce the risk of disease.
- Support growth to ensure the body has the nutrients required for building and developing new structures in the body (e.g., muscle mass, bone density, and other tissues). For children and adolescents, it involves the processes of physical maturation, while in adults, it can mean maintaining and repairing tissues.



A **calorie** is a unit of energy used to quantify the amount of energy provided by food. One way to think of calories is like the battery level on a smartphone. If you don't "charge" the body with enough calories, you will run out of energy, just like how a phone that's on 1% battery will not work well for long. Also, if one constantly overcharges their phone beyond what is needed, it can cause issues in the long run (storing extra energy as body fat). The key is to "balance"

the battery" by eating enough to stay charged and active without going overboard.

Food represents any nutritious substance consumed by living organisms to sustain life and promote energy, growth, and cellular repair. It is typically plant- or animal-based, containing a unique combination of nutrients, tiny substances that provide nourishment essential for the maintenance of life and growth.

Nutrients are divided into two main categories – macronutrients and micronutrients.

Macronutrients

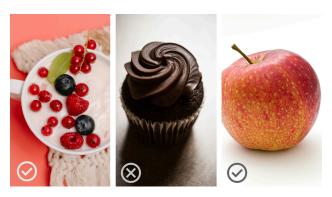
Macronutrients are large nutrients that our body needs in large quantities. Food contains macronutrients, but they are not the same thing as the foods themselves. For example, if someone asks you to name a carbohydrate, you might think of pasta. But pasta contains carbohydrates rather than being a carbohydrate itself.

There are three macronutrients essential for your body to function at its best:

1. Carbohydrates

- Commonly referred to as "carbs"
- Provide the body with a quick and easy source of energy
- Composed of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen (hence where the name comes from)
- Categorized as simple (sugars) and complex (starches and fibre)

Simple Carbohydrates



"Delicious dessert with berries" by Any Lane, "Chocolate cupcake" by Tina Nord, Pexels, "Red and orange apple" by mali maeder, Pexels License. Modifications: Images cropped

These are sugars that your body can break down quickly. Foods like candy, soda, and pastries have a lot of simple carbs. Simple carbs give you a quick burst of energy. However, if they come from superprocessed or sugary foods, they can lead to energy crashes later and might not offer much nutritional value besides calories.

Where You Find Them

"Good" Sources

"Bad Sources"

Foods like candy, soda, and pastries have a lot of simple carbs. You'll also find them naturally in fruits and dairy products.

- Fruits (e.g., apples, bananas, berries),
- Dairy (e.g., milk, yogurt)
- Candy and chocolates
- Sugary drinks (e.g., soda, energy drinks)
- Pastries, donuts, and other sweets

Complex Carbohydrates



"Cereal bowl" by cottonbro, "Lunch meal" by Mart Production, "Bread slices" by hermaion, Pexels License. Modifications: Images cropped

These carbs have more complex structures that take longer for your body to break down. Because your body digests these carbs more slowly, you get a steadier supply of energy. They also often come with vitamins, minerals, and fibre, which help keep your digestive system healthy and make you feel full longer.

Where You Find Them

"Good" Sources

"Bad Sources" (Heavily Refined/ Low Nutrient)

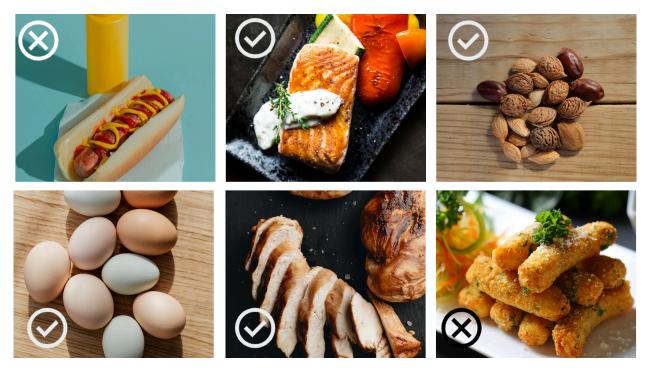
- Whole grains (like whole-wheat bread or oatmeal)
- Beans
- Vegetables and fruits (in addition to their natural sugars) all contain complex carbs.
- Whole-grain bread and pasta
- Brown rice, quinoa, and oats
- Beans and legumes (e.g., black beans, lentils), Starchy vegetables (e.g., sweet potatoes)
- White bread, white rice, regular
- pasta (when refined)
 Sugary breakfast cereals (even if they have grains, they may be heavily processed)

2. Proteins

• The "building blocks" are essential for muscle/tissue repair, growth, and satiety (the feeling of

fullness).

- Adequate protein intake, spaced throughout the day, supports both metabolic health and functional strength.
- One's protein needs will vary. For those who work out frequently, a slightly higher intake may be required to adequately support muscle recovery.



"Tasty hot dog" by Alejandro Aznar, "Grilled salmon" by Malidate Van, "Brown nuts" by Miguel Á. Padriñán, "Multi-colored raw eggs" by Kaboompics.com, "Roasted chicken breasts" by Alleksana, "Chicken fingers" by Shameel Mukkath, and Pexels License. Modifications: Images cropped

"Good" sources offer other important nutrients while being lower in harmful fats or additives:

Good Sources	Examples
Lean Meats & Poultry	Chicken breast, turkey
Seafood	Salmon, tuna, shrimp
Eggs	Whole eggs (yolks contain additional nutrients), egg whites (pure protein, but missing yolk nutrients)
Dairy	Low-fat milk, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese
Plant-Based Proteins	Beans and legumes (e.g., lentils, black beans), tofu, tempeh, or edamame (soy products), nuts and seeds (e.g., almonds, chia seeds)

"Bad" sources (heavily refined/low nutrient value) offer added sugars, sodium, or saturated fats:

Bad Sources	Examples
Processed meats	Bacon, sausages, hot dogs, deli meats (such as pepperoni and salami)
Fried meats or seafood	Fried chicken, breaded fish sticks

3. Fats

Fats have the following characteristics:

- Provide long-term energy storage and aid in nutrient (vitamin/mineral) absorption.
- A main component in the creation of new cells (plasma membrane) and other key structures.
- Classified as "good fats" (e.g., unsaturated fats), "okay fats" (some saturated fats), and "bad fats" (trans fats).







"Sliced avocado" by Thought Catalog, "Assorted cheese" by Polina Tankilevitch, "Fries on a plate" by Engin Akyurt, Pexels License . Modifications: Images cropped.

Unsaturated Fats

Unsaturated fats are often considered "good" because they support heart health and other vital functions. These include:

• Monounsaturated Fats

- Avocados
- Olive oil
- Nuts (e.g., almonds, cashews)

• Polyunsaturated Fats

- Fatty fish (e.g., salmon, sardines)
- Flaxseeds and chia seeds
- Sunflower seeds and walnuts

Saturated Fats

Saturated fats are often viewed as "less good" because they can raise unhealthy cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease if eaten in excess. These include:

- Butter
- Full-fat cheese
- Fatty cuts of meat (e.g., certain steaks, bacon)

Trans Fats

Trans fats are often viewed as "bad fats" and are typically found in highly processed foods, and many places have restricted or banned them. These include:

- Some fried foods
- Packaged baked goods (e.g., certain cookies, pastries)

Micronutrients

Micronutrients are substances your body needs in smaller amounts compared to macronutrients. They include vitamins, minerals, and water, which you actually need in fairly large quantities, even though they are often grouped as micronutrients.

Micronutrient	Definition	Types	Enriched Foods
Vitamins	Organic compounds (they contain carbon) are essential for many body functions, such as immune response, energy production, and bone strength.	 Vitamin C (important for immune function, found in citrus fruits and peppers) Vitamin D (helps with bone health, can be synthesized in the skin through sunlight) Others: Vitamin A, B vitamins (B1, B2, B3, etc.), Vitamin E, Vitamin K 	 Fruits and vegetables (e.g., oranges, spinach, carrots) Dairy products (milk, cheese) Some fortified cereals
Minerals	Inorganic elements (they do not contain carbon) support bodily functions such as bone strength and oxygen transport.	 Calcium: Builds and maintains strong bones and teeth Iron: Helps red blood cells carry oxygen Potassium: Supports muscle function and heart rhythm 	 Dairy products (for calcium) Lean meats and beans (for iron) Fruits and vegetables, like bananas (potassium)
Water	Although grouped with micronutrients, water is something we need in large quantities every day. It's an inorganic compound (no carbon) and crucial for life. It helps regulate body temperature, aids digestion and nutrient transport, and makes up around 60 to 70% of your body.	Tap waterDistilled waterBottled waterSparkling water	 Plain drinking water Water-rich foods (fruits, soups) Other beverages (milk, juices)—though some can have added sugars

Consumption

Calorie Intake

The number of calories needed to maintain adequate nutrition varies from person to person based on many factors:

- Age: Younger individuals often burn more calories because their bodies are still growing and tend to be more active.
- Sex: Males typically have more muscle mass than females, which means they burn more calories at rest compared to females and require more to sustain what they have.
- Activity level: The more active you are, the more energy your body requires to fuel your muscles and

movements.

• Metabolism: It's the process by which your body converts the food you eat into the energy you need to function. Some people have a faster metabolism (they burn calories more quickly), while others have a slower one.

Use this calorie calculator to keep track of the amount of calories, fat, protein, carbs, fibre, and total sugar you consume.

Water Intake



"Energizer" by Undraw, Undraw License

Like calories, daily water intake requirements can vary based on factors such as age, activity level, climate, and overall health. A general recommendation, however, is 8–10 cups (2–2.5 L) per day (Institute of Medicine, 2005).

11.3 SLEEP

Sleep is a natural, restorative state of rest characterized by reduced or altered consciousness and activity and response to one's external environment. During sleep, sensory activity is relatively inhibited, meaning you are less aware of sounds, sights, and other stimuli, and your interaction with the outside world is significantly reduced. This shift allows the brain and body to focus on internal processes essential for recovery and growth.

Stages of Sleep

Sleep is divided into two main types: **NREM (Non-Rapid Eye Movement)** and **REM (Rapid Eye Movement)** sleep. You cycle through these stages multiple times each night, with each full cycle typically lasting around 90 minutes.

Stage 1: NREM 1 (Light Sleep)

- Lasts 1-7 minutes
- You're just drifting off and can be woken up easily
- Transition Phase: Moving from being awake to being asleep
- What You Might Feel: Sometimes, you can experience brief muscle twitches or the sensation of "falling."

Stage 2: NREM 2 (Moderate Sleep)

- Lasts 10-25 minutes
- Deeper Than Stage 1: Your heart rate slows down, and your body temperature begins to drop.
- Brain Activity Slows: This is where your brain begins to relax more, preparing for deeper sleep.
- Important For: Resting, but still relatively easy to wake up compared to deeper stages

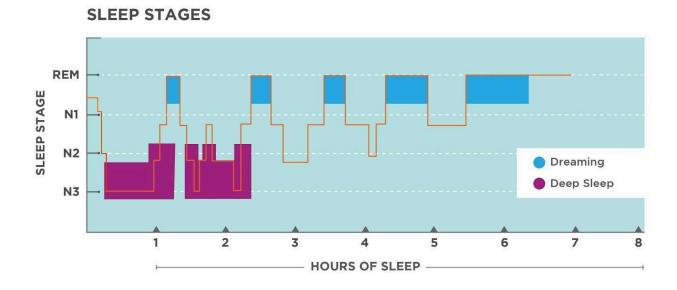
Stage 3: NREM 3 (Deep Sleep)

- Lasts 20-40 minutes
- Also called "slow-wave" or "delta" sleep
- Hardest to Wake From: If someone wakes you up here, you'll probably feel groggy and disoriented
- Body Repairs Itself: This stage is critical for physical growth, repair, and overall restoration

Stage 4: REM (Rapid Eye Movement)

- Lasts 10-20 minutes during early sleep and 30-60 minutes later in sleep
- Your eyes move quickly under your eyelids
- Dreaming: Most vivid dreams happen during REM
- Brain Is Active, Body Is Still: Your brain waves look similar to when you're awake, but your muscles are largely "paralyzed," so you don't act out your dreams.
- Memory and Learning: REM helps your brain process information from the day and store it in longterm memory

The illustration below shows how an individual moves through the various stages of sleep over an 8-hour period. Deeper NREM sleep occurs early on in the night, while the duration of REM sleep increases as the night progresses.



"EEG and Sleep Stages" by Kim Louie for Lumen Learning, CC BY: 4.0

Image Description

This hypnogram illustrates a typical sleep cycle pattern, showing alternating REM and non-REM sleep, with a greater amount of deep sleep earlier in the night and increasing REM sleep in the later hours. X-axis: Represents hours of sleep (0 to 8 hours).

Y-axis: Represents different sleep stages:

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- REM (Rapid Eye Movement)
- N1 (Light Sleep)
- N2 (Moderate Sleep)
- N3 (Deep Sleep)

Colour Coding:

- Blue (Dreaming): Corresponds to REM sleep.
- Purple (Deep Sleep): Corresponds to N3 sleep.

Graph Line: The orange line tracks the transitions between different sleep stages over time.

Sleep Cycle Observations:

- The person enters deep sleep (N3) within the first hour.
- The deepest sleep occurs within the first 2 hours, after which the person cycles between lighter sleep stages (N1, N2) and REM sleep.
- REM sleep occurs multiple times throughout the night, with longer durations later in the sleep period.
- Sleep becomes lighter as the person approaches wakefulness after around 6 hours.

The Role of Sleep

Sleep is much more than downtime when you are not awake. It is an active and critical part of maintaining physical well-being. Consider the following:

Clean-Up

One of the most important functions of sleep is its role in clearing out waste from your central nervous system, which includes your brain and spinal cord. During deep sleep, your brain activates what's known as the glymphatic system, which flushes out toxins and metabolic byproducts that accumulate while you are awake. This process only happens during sleep.

If your brain does not activate its glymphatic system during deep sleep to clear out toxins and metabolic byproducts, you may experience:



- Toxin Buildup: Accumulated waste products can interfere with normal brain function.
- Cognitive Decline: Over time, insufficient clearance of toxins has been linked to issues with memory, concentration, and overall cognitive performance.
- Increased Neurological Risks: Persistent buildup may contribute to a higher likelihood of neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease.

Repair & Regeneration

Beyond the brain, your entire body takes advantage of sleep for repair and regeneration. Muscle growth and repair reach their peak during the deeper stages of sleep, making adequate rest crucial for athletes and anyone engaged in regular physical activity. Your immune system also ramps up during this time, producing and releasing essential cells and proteins that help combat illness and inflammation.

If your body cannot adequately repair and regenerate during sleep, you may face:

 Prolonged Muscle Soreness: Without sufficient recovery, muscles do not fully heal, which can reduce strength and increase the risk of injury.



- Weakened Immune Response: Inadequate sleep can hamper the body's production of disease-fighting cells, making you more susceptible to infections.
- Slower Healing: Minor injuries or illnesses may take longer to recover from due to decreased repair processes.

Memory Consolidation

As you progress through different stages of sleep, your brain actively organizes and stores information from the day, making it easier to recall later. This is why a solid night's rest can significantly improve your ability to retain what you have learned or practiced—whether it's schoolwork, job training, or new skills.

If the brain does not progress through the stages of sleep that organize and store daily information, you may experience:

- Poor Retention of Learned Material: New skills or information may not "stick," reducing the effectiveness of studying or training.
- (1)
- Difficulty Concentrating: Lack of consolidated memory can make it harder to focus on complex tasks.
- Overall Cognitive Impairment: Fragmented or insufficient sleep can contribute to confusion, forgetfulness, and slower decision-making.

Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene refers to good habits and practices that help you get consistent and sufficient high-quality sleep.



Click on the check marks to learn more about good sleep habits to consider.

Text Description

- Keep a Consistent Schedule: Go to bed and wake up around the same time each day, even on
 weekends. Aim for the same bedtime and wake time daily to stabilize your circadian rhythm,
 which is your body's internal clock that helps regulate sleep and wake cycles. Many studies
 have shown that maintaining consistent bedtimes can improve overall sleep quality and
 reduce daytime fatigue.
- Limit Screen Time Before Bed: Avoid using phones, tablets, computers, or television at least one hour leading up to bedtime. Blue light emitted from screens can disrupt your body's production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep, which tricks your body into staying awake for longer. One experiment found that reading on a light-emitting eReader before bed delayed the body's circadian clock, reducing melatonin levels and overall sleep quality.
- Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine: Wind down with calming activities like reading or gentle stretching. Avoid vigorous workouts right before bed.
- Optimize Your Sleep Environment: Keeping your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet and investing in a comfortable mattress and pillows. Environmental factors like ambient light, noise, and temperature have been consistently linked to sleep disruption in clinical studies.
- Watch Your Diet: Avoid large or heavily caffeinated meals close to bedtime, as both caffeine
 and high-calorie foods can interfere with sleep. Studies have shown that caffeine
 consumption, even six hours before bedtime, can significantly reduce total sleep time and
 sleep quality.

Did you Know?

According to the National Sleep Foundation:

- Adults need 7 to 9 hours per night
- Teenagers need 8 to 10 hours per night
- Children need 9 to 12 hours per night

11.4 PERSONAL HYGIENE



"Barber" by Undraw, Undraw License

Personal hygiene refers to the everyday practices that protect your health and boost your sense of well-being. These habits not only keep you looking and feeling fresh but also prevent the spread of infections and illnesses. Key components include:

Handwashing:

- Perhaps the simplest but most effective way to ward off germs and sickness.
- Scrubbing with soap for at least 20 seconds (about the time it takes to hum "Happy Birthday" twice) can drastically reduce the risk of common ailments like colds and the flu.

Bathing:

• Showering or bathing helps remove sweat, dirt, and bacteria that accumulate on your skin throughout the day, keeping skin healthy.

Oral Care:

 Brushing and flossing at least twice daily to maintain dental health and fresh breath. Good oral hygiene also helps prevent cavities, gum disease, and other oral health issues.

Proper Grooming:

• This includes haircare, nail trimming, and using deodorant or antiperspirant.

Beyond the health benefits, feeling clean and well-groomed can significantly boost self-confidence and reduce social anxiety.

11.5 MEDICAL CARE



"Medicine" by Undraw, Undraw License

Medical care encompasses routine and preventive measures to ensure that health concerns are identified and addressed early. It's about partnering with healthcare professionals for check-ups and following through with recommended treatments. Here are some common reasons to schedule a visit with a healthcare professional:

Routine Check-ups

- Annual physicals or well visits can catch health issues before they become major problems.
- Blood tests, blood pressure checks, and other screenings help build a complete picture of your health.

Vaccinations and Preventive Screenings

- Staying current with recommended immunizations protects you and those around you from preventable diseases.
- Screenings like mammograms, colonoscopies, or dental X-rays can detect problems early, making treatment easier and more effective.

Seeking Medical Advice for Persistent Symptoms

- Don't ignore ongoing pain, unusual symptoms, or changes in energy levels.
- Early intervention often prevents complications and supports faster recovery.

Fanshawe London Campus Health and Wellness Services

Fanshawe College offers a variety of ways to support students' health and wellness on campus. See the Health Services website for more information. Services include:



- Fowler Kennedy Medical Clinic (J1004) provides students access to physicians on weekdays. Appointments are required.
- Fowler Kennedy Sport Medicine Clinic (J1004) provides students and community members access to sports medicine physicians and physiotherapists. Appointments are required.
- Fanshawe Student Centre Pharmacy (J1000) provides healthcare products, and students can fill prescriptions.
- *Counselling Services* (F2010) provides personal counselling, peer support, sexual violence prevention, and support, as well as group and workshop sessions. See the Counselling website for more information.
- *The Sharing Shop* provides groceries and toiletries to full-time students with short-term needs. See the Sharing Shop website to learn more.

11.6 TECHNOLOGICAL HYGIENE



"In the zone" by Undraw, Undraw License

Technological hygiene has become an increasingly important concept in today's digital world. It refers to managing your use of devices and online activities in a way that promotes rather than harms your overall health.

Screen Time Management

- Taking breaks from electronics—whether for a few hours or entire days—allows your mind to rest from constant notifications, social media updates, and screen time.
- Helps reduce stress, improve focus, and create more meaningful in-person interactions.
- Setting boundaries on when and how much you use your phone, computer, or tablet.

Mindful Consumption of Content

- Be aware of the quality and type of information you are consuming. Harmful or distressing content can directly or indirectly affect mood and mental health.
- Balancing online activities with offline hobbies or social interaction can prevent digital burnout.

Fanshawe Services

The library provides student outreach services, which include support for learning digital literacy skills. See the Outreach Services website for more information.



11.7 SUMMARY

⊙Key Takeaways

- Proper nutrition involves balancing calorie intake, focusing on nutrient-dense foods, and ensuring an adequate supply of macronutrients and micronutrients.
- Simple carbs provide quick bursts of energy but can lead to crashes if consumed in excess, while complex carbs offer longer-lasting energy and often include beneficial fiber.
- Lean meats, seafood, dairy, and plant-based options can be healthier choices compared to heavily processed or fried proteins.
- Unsaturated fats are generally more beneficial than saturated or trans fats.
- Vitamins and minerals, though needed in smaller amounts, are crucial for immune function, bone health, and transporting oxygen in the blood.
- Adequate water intake is vital for hydration and temperature regulation.
- Cycling through NREM and REM stages is essential for physical restoration, memory consolidation, and brain "clean-up" processes.
- Chronic sleep deprivation can affect metabolic health, mood, and cognitive performance.
- Good personal hygiene, routine medical check-ups, technological hygiene, and consistent sleep habits form the foundation of a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

⊙⇒Key Terms

- **Nutrition:** a science and process by which the body takes in calories in the form of food to sustain life, maintain health, and support growth.
- Calorie: a unit of energy used to quantify the amount of energy provided by food.
- **Nutrient:** a substance that provides essential nourishment for the growth, development, and maintenance of life. Nutrients are required by the body to function properly and are typically obtained from food. They can be classified into two main categories such as macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats) and micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and water).
- **Macronutrients:** These are large nutrients that our body needs in large quantities, such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.
- **Simple carbohydrates**: These are sugars that your body can break down quickly and give you a quick burst of energy. Foods like candy, soda, and pastries have a lot of simple carbs.
- **Complex carbohydrates:** These carbs have more complex structures that take longer for your body to break down, and because your body digests these carbs more slowly, you get a more steady supply of energy. They also often come with vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which help keep your digestive system healthy and make you feel full longer.
- **Micronutrients:** Substances your body needs in smaller amounts compared to macronutrients (carbs, proteins, and fats). They include vitamins, minerals, and water, which you need in fairly large quantities, even though they're often grouped as micronutrients.
- **Vitamins:** Organic compounds (they contain carbon) essential for many body functions, such as immune response, energy production, and bone strength.
- **Minerals:** Inorganic elements (they do not contain carbon) that support bodily functions such as bone strength and oxygen transport.
- Water: Although grouped with micronutrients, water is something we need in large quantities every day. It's an inorganic compound (no carbon) and crucial for life. It helps regulate body temperature, aids digestion and nutrient transport, and makes up around 60 to 70% of your body.
- **Metabolism:** It's the process by which your body converts the food you eat into the energy you need to function. Some people have a faster metabolism (they burn calories more quickly), while others have a slower one.
- Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM): NREM Sleep is broken down into three stages: N1,

N2, and N3. In N1, you are moving from being awake to being asleep. In N2, your heart rate slows, your body temperature drops, and your brain relaxes more, preparing for a deeper sleep. N3 is the state of deepest sleep and the hardest to wake someone up from. This stage is critical for physical growth, muscle repair, and overall restoration.

- Rapid Eye Movement (REM): Occurs 10 to 20 minutes during early sleep and 30 to 60 minutes later in sleep. Eyes move quickly under your eyelids; this is when our most vivid dreams happen during REM. REM helps your brain process information from the day and store it in long-term memory.
- **Sleep hygiene**: Sleep hygiene refers to good habits and practices that help you get consistent and sufficient high-quality sleep.
- **Personal hygiene:** Refers to the everyday practices that protect your health and boost your sense of well-being. These habits not only keep you looking and feeling fresh but also prevent the spread of infections and illnesses.
- **Technological hygiene**: Refers to managing your use of devices and online activities in a way that promotes rather than harms your overall health.

11.8 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. Reflect on a recent meal or day's worth of eating. What specific choices made you feel energized or sluggish, and why do you think that happened based on the nutrition concepts you've learned?
- 2. Reflect on a recent stretch of nights when you struggled to fall asleep or stay asleep. What specific factors (e.g., your pre-bed routine, emotional state, or environmental conditions) do you believe contributed most to your sleep difficulties? How might adjusting these factors help you achieve a more consistent and restorative night's rest moving forward?
- 3. Think back to a period when you felt consistently fatigued or unmotivated. Which specific habits around nutrition, sleep, or self-care might have contributed to this feeling? How did you, or could you, alter these habits to regain energy and improve physical well-being?
- 4. Recall a time you or someone close to you faced a serious health scare. How did factors like nutrition, sleep, or timely medical care shape the outcome? What lessons did you take away that now guide your daily health decisions?
- 5. Consider the cultural or societal norms that have shaped your views on food, body image, and health. Which of these influences serves you well? Which might you challenge or redefine to create a more personalized and sustainable approach to optimal physical well-being?

11.9 KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

Which of the following is a key function of complex carbohydrates in the body?

- a. Build and repair muscle tissue
- b. Provide rapid bursts of energy followed by crashes
- c. Support heart health and reduce cholesterol
- d. Offer a steady supply of energy and support digestive health

Multiple Choice Activity #2

What is the primary role of REM sleep?

- a. Memory consolidation and vivid dreaming
- b. Muscle growth and immune system repair
- c. Clearing out toxins from the brain
- d. Transitioning the body from wakefulness to sleep

Multiple Choice Activity #3

Which of the following is considered a "good" source of fat due to its heart health benefits?

- a. Butter
- b. Bacon
- c. Packaged cookies
- d. Avocados

Multiple Choice Activity #4

What effect does poor sleep have on hunger and satiety hormones?

- a. It disrupts hormonal balance, increasing hunger and reducing fullness
- b. It only affects appetite in older adults
- c. It balances hunger hormones and reduces food cravings

d. It has no noticeable effect on appetite

Multiple Choice Activity #5

Which of the following is an example of a micronutrient important for immune function?

- a. Vitamin C
- b. Carbohydrates
- c. Saturated fat
- d. Protein

Multiple Choice Activity #6

According to the chapter, what is one key component of sleep hygiene?

- a. Limiting screen time at least an hour before bed
- b. Drinking caffeine before bed to stay alert
- c. Going to sleep at a different time each night
- d. Avoiding all food after 4 p.m

Multiple Choice Activity #7

Why is personal hygiene considered an essential part of self-care?

- a. It replaces the need for proper nutrition
- b. It ensures that you do not need regular medical checkups
- c. It reduces the amount of time needed for sleep
- d. It prevents illness and promotes emotional well-being

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: d. Offer a steady supply of energy and support digestive health

Activity #2: a. Memory consolidation and vivid dreaming

Activity #3: d. Avocados

Activity #4: a. It disrupts hormonal balance, increasing hunger and reducing fullness

Activity #5: a. Vitamin C

Activity #6: a. Limiting screen time at least an hour before bed

Activity #7: d. It prevents illness and promotes emotional well-being

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

CHAPTER 12: NAVIGATING FINANCES

Chapter Overview

- 12.0 Learning Objectives
- 12.1 "The Unexpected Expense"
- 12.2 The Micawber Principle
- 12.3 Factors that Promote Financial Well-Being
- 12.4 Saving
- 12.5 Investing
- 12.6 Expenses
- 12.7 Borrowing
- 12.8 Budgeting
- 12.9 Summary
- 12.9 Reflection
- 12.10 Knowledge Check

12.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES



At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain the Micawber Principle and how it relates to financial well-being.
- Describe key factors that influence one's financial well-being.
- Distinguish between saving and investing and identify their respective benefits.
- Distinguish between fixed and non-fixed expenses.
- Describe the role of borrowing and compare loans and credit cards.
- List the advantages and disadvantages of credit card usage and develop strategies for responsible credit management.
- Develop a personal financial plan incorporating budgeting, saving, investing, and debt management strategies.



Dimensions of Wellness emphasized in this chapter: Intellectual and Financial

12.1 "THE UNEXPECTED EXPENSE"



Picture This:



"Pockets empty" by schuldnerhilfe, Plxabay License

You have always prided yourself on being "good with money"—tracking expenses in a budgeting app, skipping frivolous purchases, and paying bills on time. Everything seems fine until the unexpected happens. One afternoon, your laptop dies without warning, jeopardizing your coursework. You look into repair costs and discover they're astronomical, while a brand-new device is even more expensive. Suddenly, your financial safety net doesn't exist: your cheguing account balance is lower than you thought, your credit card is maxed out, and you never opened that emergency fund your dad kept suggesting.

Panicking, you scramble for solutions. You borrow money from friends, apply for a quick loan, and consider an extra work shift. As stress mounts, you realize you never truly understood your budget or how to prepare for life's surprises. Your academic performance slips, relationships grow strained, and your confidence in managing money evaporates.

Feeling overwhelmed and embarrassed, you turn to your parents for help. While they lend you the funds, their disappointment is clear, and it stings.

340 | 12.1 "THE UNEXPECTED EXPENSE"

Money is not everything. However, less financial stress can pave the way for optimal well-being. With more stable finances, you can invest (literally and figuratively) in other dimensions of wellness, such as a gym membership for physical well-being, therapy sessions for emotional well-being, or simply taking a break when you need it without the looming fear of financial strain.

Financial wellness is part of a larger process of making proactive, informed choices that support your journey toward optimal being. This chapter explores the essentials of that process (budgeting, saving, investing, and using credit responsibly), offering practical strategies to help you take control of your finances.

12.2 THE MICAWBER PRINCIPLE



"Wilkins Micawber" by Joseph Clayton Clark, Public Domain

Charles Dickens's 1850 novel David Copperfield (Dickens, 1850/2004) offers a timeless lesson on financial wellness through the character Wilkins Micawber:

"Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds nought and six, result misery" (Dickens, 1850/2004, Chapter 12).

His advice captures the heart of the **Micawber Principle**. Regularly spending more than your income, even by a small amount, leads to stress and instability, while spending less than your income (living within your means) leads to security and contentment.

At its core, the Micawber Principle underlines the importance of balancing income and expenses as a foundation for financial well-being, which is defined as having both security and freedom in the present and the future (see table below). Because financial well-being is highly personal, each individual's definition may look different.

342 | 12.2 THE MICAWBER PRINCIPLE

Benefit	Present	Future
Security	Control over your day-to-day, month-to-month finances	Capacity to absorb a financial shock
Freedom of Choice	Financial freedom to make choices to enjoy life	On track to meet your financial goals

12.3 FACTORS THAT PROMOTE FINANCIAL **WELL-BEING**

Financial well-being, or how satisfied you are with your financial situation, is shaped by various factors—some within our control, others not. Social and economic environments significantly impact each person's starting point in life.

For instance:

- Some individuals grow up with financial security, access to quality education, and strong professional networks—advantages often referred to as economic privilege.
- Others may start with fewer resources, face financial hardship, or have limited access to opportunities.

While starting points differ, financial growth and success are possible for everyone. The key lies in recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities. While some opportunities come through luck, most are created through effort, strategic decision-making, and continuous learning.

The flow chart below demonstrates how cultivating a strong work ethic, making informed financial choices, and acquiring new skills can develop productive financial behaviours. These behaviours not only lead to greater financial stability and satisfaction but also open the door to even more opportunities.



Text Description

A flow chart with the following terms and statements:

- 1. Level 1:
 - Social and Economic Environment: What surrounds you in your family and community?
- 2. Level 2:
 - Personality and Attitudes: How you tend to think, feel, and act.
 - Decision Context: How a particular decision is presented.
 - Behaviour: What you actually do.
 - Available Opportunities: What options are open to you?
- 3. Level 3:
 - Personal Financial Well-Being: How satisfied are you with your financial situation?

12.4 SAVING



"Pink pig" by Fabian Blank, Unsplash License

Savings represent the portion of your income you set aside for future use rather than spending it immediately to cover regular expenses such as accommodation, food, or transportation. It may seem challenging when funds are tight, but it is always possible for everyone, and even small amounts can grow over time.

Income refers to any money received from all sources, including:

- Full-time or part-time jobs
- Side hustles or freelance work
- Scholarships, grants, or government benefits
- Gifts and inheritances
- Investment returns (e.g., dividends, interest)

Why Save Money?

Saving money creates a vital safety net that protects you from financial shocks and provides funds for future goals. Consider the following:

Emergency Expenses

• Unexpected bills (like a laptop repair) or an unexpected drop in income won't derail your finances.

Short-Term Goals

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- Vacation
- Holiday gifts
- Special events

Long-Term Goals

- Down payments on a house
- New car
- Retirement
- Education funds for children

How Much Should One Save?

There is no clear-cut answer to this question. It depends on one's goals and personal circumstances. Everyone has their own opinion. However, one may consider the following popular guidelines:

50-30-20 Rule

- 50% of income to needs (rent, groceries, utilities)
- 30% of income to wants (entertainment, dining out)
- ° 20% of income to savings or debt repayment

The "Wealthy Barber" Approach (10% Rule)

The Wealthy Barber is a classic personal finance book that emphasizes the "pay yourself first" approach to saving (Chilton, 1989). The main takeaway is that saving consistently from each paycheck, even small amounts, can lead to significant long-term financial stability. The author suggests setting aside 10% of every paycheck for savings or investments.

Practical Ways to Save Money

- Automate Your Savings: Have a portion of your paycheck directly deposited into a savings account. Pay
 yourself first!
- Cut Unnecessary Subscriptions: If you're not using it, cancel it
- Buy Groceries in Bulk or On Sale: Plan meals to avoid food waste and minimize eating out
- Use a Money-Saving App or Rewards Program: Collecting points can lead to discounts or cashback
- Beware of Hidden or Excessive Fees: Monitor your bank and credit card statements regularly to catch surprise charges and switch providers if fees are too high.

• File Your Annual Income Tax Return: You may be eligible for tax credits, benefits, or a refund. Don't leave money on the table.

12.5 INVESTING



"Investing" by Undraw, Undraw License

Investing is like planting seeds that can grow into bigger plants over time. While saving focuses on keeping your money safe (like storing seeds in a jar), **investing** aims to help your money grow by putting it to work in different places, such as buying shares of a company or lending money to a government.

Key Investment Terms

- Interest: When you borrow or lend money to someone, the cost or profit is called interest.
- Compound Interest: This is when interest grows on the original amount of money plus any interest earned before, like a snowball getting bigger as it rolls downhill.

Try this online compound interest calculator to better understand how compound interest works.

Why Invest?

- Compound Growth: Reinvested gains can lead to exponential growth over the long term.
- Wealth Building: Helps you outpace inflation so your money doesn't lose value over time.

What to Invest In?

- **Stocks:** These are small parts of a company you can buy. If the company does well, your piece becomes more valuable.
- **Bonds:** This is like lending money to a company or the government with a set term and interest rate. They promise to pay you back with some extra interest later.
- **Mutual Funds:** Your money joins other people's money and is managed by a professional who buys a variety of stocks, bonds, or other assets.
- Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs): Similar to mutual funds, they usually track a market index (like a "basket" of different company stocks) and usually have lower fees.

Risk

All investments carry some level of **risk**—the possibility that you might lose money or see lower-than-expected returns.



Before diving into any investment, it's important to understand your own comfort with uncertainty and potential losses. This is commonly referred to as risk tolerance. If you panic at every market dip, you may prefer relatively stable options like certain bonds or diversified funds. If you can ride out more volatility, you might choose higher-risk, higher-reward investments such as certain stocks.

By knowing your risk tolerance beforehand, you can align your decisions with both your financial goals and your emotional well-being.

12.6 EXPENSES

An **expense** is any outflow of money to cover a cost or obligation. They can be either **fixed** or **non-fixed** (see table below). By categorizing expenses, you can see which are essential, which are adjustable, and which might be reduced to increase your savings.

Item	Fixed Expenses	Non-Fixed Expenses
Definition	Costs that remain the same each month over the course of a year.	Costs that fluctuate from month to month.
Examples	Rent, Insurance, car payment	Groceries, utility bills, and entertainment



Consider the following expenses. Are they fixed or non-fixed? Drag each item to its corresponding type of expense.

Text Description

Two categories: Fixed Expenses and Non-Fixed Expenses

Draggable options: Car Payment, Groceries, Dining Out, Mortgage Payment, Health Insurance Premium, Clothing, Electricity Bill, Transportation, Student Loan Payment, Streaming Subscription

Correct Answers:

- Fixed Expenses: Car payment, Mortgage Payment, Health Insurance Premium, Student Loan Payment, Streaming Subscription
- Non-Fixed Expenses: Groceries, Dining Out, Clothing, Transportation, Electricity Bill

12.7 BORROWING



"Electronic Payments" by MBatty, Pixabay License

Borrowing means getting money from someone else (like a bank or credit card company) to cover expenses you can not pay for right away. You usually have to pay this money back later, often with interest.

In the modern financial system, individuals have access to a variety of borrowing options to help manage expenses, make purchases, and invest in their future. Two of the most common financial tools used for borrowing are loans and credit cards.

A **loan** is a specific amount of money you borrow from a financial institution and then pay back in regular chunks over time (plus interest).

Common types of loans include:

- Mortgage: A loan to buy a house.
- **Student Loan:** A loan for paying tuition or other school costs.
- **Personal Loan:** A loan you can use for different things, like consolidating debt or covering emergencies.

A credit card lets you borrow up to a set limit whenever you buy something. You can repay the borrowed

amount each month, and any remaining balance will collect interest. It's called revolving credit because you can use it, pay it off, and use it again.

Credit cardholders are required to make at least the minimum payment each month. Any unpaid balance typically accrues interest, which can make purchases more expensive over time.

Advantages of Using a Credit Card

#1. Convenience

Credit cards allow for quick and easy transactions, both in-person and online, without the need to carry cash.

#2. Credit Building

Responsible credit card use can help establish and improve a credit score, which is beneficial for future financial opportunities, such as applying for a mortgage or car loan.

#3. Rewards and Incentives

Many credit cards offer cashback, travel rewards, or points that can be redeemed for discounts, flights, or merchandise.

#4. Emergency Financial Cushion

A credit card can serve as a financial backup in case of unexpected expenses.

#5. Fraud Protection

The ease of swiping a credit card can lead to unnecessary or excessive spending.

Disadvantages of Using a Credit Card

#1. High-Interest Rates (often exceeding 20%!)

Carrying a balance from month to month can result in significant interest charges, increasing overall debt.

#2. Debt Accumulation

Misuse or overspending can lead to financial difficulties, making it challenging to pay off outstanding balances.

#3. Additional Fees

Late payments, annual fees, cash advances, and foreign transaction fees can add unexpected costs.

#4. Potential Credit Score Damage

Late payments, maxing out credit limits, or opening multiple credit accounts can negatively impact a credit score.

#5. Encourages Impulse Spending

The ease of swiping a credit card can lead to unnecessary or excessive spending.

How to Use a Credit Card Responsibly

Proper credit card management is essential for maintaining financial health. The following strategies can help individuals use credit cards effectively and avoid common pitfalls:

- Pay the balance in full: To avoid high interest charges, it is best to pay off the full statement balance each month.
- Make payments on time: Timely payments prevent late fees and help maintain a strong credit score.
- Keep credit utilization low: Using less than 30% of the total credit limit demonstrates responsible credit usage and positively affects credit scores.
- Monitor statements regularly: Reviewing monthly statements can help detect errors or fraudulent transactions early.
- Use credit for necessary purchases: Credit cards should be used for planned and essential expenses rather than impulse spending.

12.8 BUDGETING



"Finance" by Undraw, Undraw License

Managing money effectively is a crucial skill for achieving financial stability and long-term financial well-being. One of the most effective tools for managing finances is a budget. A well-planned budget helps individuals track their income, control expenses, and work toward financial goals.

What is a Budget?

A **budget** is a financial plan that outlines income and expenses over a specific period, such as a month or a year. It serves as a roadmap for managing money, ensuring that expenses do not exceed income. A budget helps individuals allocate funds for necessities, savings, and discretionary spending while preventing overspending or accumulating unnecessary debt.

Benefits of Using a Budget

Using a budget provides several key benefits, including:

- 1. Financial Awareness A budget helps track income and expenses, making it easier to identify spending patterns and areas where adjustments are needed.
- 2. Prevention of Overspending By setting spending limits, a budget ensures that individuals live within their means and avoid unnecessary debt.
- 3. Debt Reduction A well-structured budget allows individuals to allocate funds toward paying off debt, reducing financial stress and interest costs.

- 4. Savings and Investment Growth Budgeting helps prioritize saving for emergencies, retirement, or long-term financial goals.
- 5. Improved Decision-Making Knowing where money is going enables individuals to make informed financial decisions and set realistic financial goals.
- 6. Reduced Financial Stress Having a clear plan for managing money minimizes uncertainty and anxiety about financial matters.

Steps to Create Your Budget



Determine Your Income

- Calculate your total monthly income, including wages, freelance work, side jobs, and any passive income sources (such as rental income or investments).
- Use after-tax income (take-home pay) for accuracy.

Track Your Expenses

- Review your bank statements, receipts, and credit card transactions to identify spending habits.
- Categorize expenses into fixed (e.g., rent, insurance, car payments) and variable (e.g., dining out, groceries, entertainment, shopping).

Choose a Budgeting Method

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- Zero-Based Budgeting Assign every dollar a purpose, ensuring that income minus expenses equals zero.
- 50/30/20 Rule Allocate 50% of income to needs, 30% to wants, and 20% to savings and debt repayment.
- Wealthy Barber Ensure at least 10% of your income is allocated towards savings.

⊙ Key Takeaways

- The Micawber Principle emphasizes the importance of living within one's means.
- Financial well-being is influenced by both internal (e.g., spending habits, savings) and external (e.g., social and economic environments) factors.
- Saving is essential for financial security; even small, consistent contributions can accumulate over time.
- Investing helps grow wealth over time, leveraging compound interest and asset appreciation, but it comes with risks.
- Understanding fixed and non-fixed expenses enables individuals to prioritize essential costs and identify areas to reduce spending.
- Credit cards offer convenience and financial flexibility, but they must be managed responsibly to avoid high-interest debt, fees, and credit score damage.
- Budgeting is a key financial tool that allows individuals to track income and expenses, control spending, and set realistic financial goals.

⊙Key Terms

- **Micawber Principle:** Regularly spending more than your income, even a small amount, leads to stress and instability, while spending less than your income (living within your means) leads to security and contentment.
- **Savings:** Represent the portion of your income you set aside for future use rather than spending it immediately. Saving focuses on keeping your money safe.
- Income: Refers to any money received from full-time or part-time jobs, side hustles or freelance work, scholarships, grants or government benefits, gifts and inheritances, and/or investment returns (dividends, interest).
- **Investing:** Focuses on helping your money grow by putting it to work in different places, such as buying shares of a company or lending money to the government.
- **Interest:** The cost you pay when you borrow money or the profit you receive when you lend it to someone.
- **Compound Interest:** This is when interest grows on the original amount of money plus any interest earned before—like a snowball getting bigger as it rolls downhill.
- **Stocks:** These are small parts of a company you can buy. If the company does well, your piece becomes more valuable.
- **Bonds:** This is like lending money to a company or the government with a set term and interest rate. They promise to pay you back with some extra interest later.
- **Mutual funds:** Your money joins other people's money and is managed by a professional who buys a variety of stocks, bonds, or other assets.
- **Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs):** Similar to mutual funds, they usually track a market index (like a "basket" of different company stocks) and typically have lower fees.
- **Risk:** The possibility that you might lose money or see lower-than-expected returns.
- **Expense:** Any outflow of money to cover a cost or obligation. They can be either fixed or non-fixed.
- **Fixed expenses:** Costs that remain the same each month over the course of a year (rent, insurance, car payment).
- Non-fixed expenses: Costs that fluctuate month to month (groceries, utility bills, entertainment).
- **Loan:** A specific amount of money you borrow from a financial institution and then pay back in regular chunks over time (plus interest).

- Mortgage: A loan to buy a house.
- **Student loan:** A loan for paying tuition or other school costs.
- Personal loan: A loan you can use for different things, like consolidating debt or covering emergencies.
- **Credit card:** Lets you borrow up to a set limit whenever you buy something. You can repay the borrowed amount each month, and any remaining balance will collect interest.
- **Budget:** A budget is a financial plan that outlines income and expenses over a specific period, such as a month or a year. It serves as a roadmap for managing money, ensuring that expenses do not exceed income.

12.10 REFLECTION



Text Description

Reflect on the following questions:

- 1. How have your personal experiences and upbringing shaped your financial behaviours and attitudes toward saving, spending, and investing?
- 2. In what ways do societal expectations, cultural norms, or peer influences impact your financial decision-making? Can you think of an example where these influences led you to make a financial choice you later reconsidered?
- 3. Consider a major financial setback or challenge you or someone close to you has faced. What were the key lessons learned from that experience, and how has it influenced your approach to financial well-being?
- 4. If you had unlimited financial resources, how would your approach to money management change? Would you still follow budgeting and saving principles, or would your financial behaviours shift? Why or why not?
- 5. What do you think is the greatest financial myth or misconception that people believe? How does this belief impact financial well-being on a personal or societal level?

12.11 KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Text Description

Multiple Choice Activity #1

What is the key lesson behind the Micawber Principle?

- a. Increasing your income is the best way to guarantee financial success
- b. Spending slightly more than you earn is manageable if you have access to credit
- c. Consistently living within your means is essential for financial security
- d. Debt is unavoidable, so short-term overspending won't significantly impact long-term stability

Multiple Choice Activity #2

According to the chapter, which of the following is the least effective reason for saving money?

- a. Protecting yourself from unexpected expenses that could create debt
- b. Setting aside funds for major purchases or life goals
- c. Keeping extra money in a savings account without a clear financial plan
- d. Budgeting for vacations or short-term planned expenses

Multiple Choice Activity #3

The 50-30-20 rule suggests allocating income as follows:

- a. 50% to needs, 30% to investments, and 20% to entertainment
- b. 50% to savings, 30% to fixed expenses, and 20% to debt repayment
- c. 50% to needs, 30% to wants, and 20% to savings or debt repayment
- d. 50% to discretionary spending, 30% to necessities, and 20% to credit card payments

Multiple Choice Activity #4

Which of the following best describes the role of a budget in financial planning?

- a. A budget is a restrictive tool that limits spending and prevents financial flexibility
- b. A budget is a plan that tracks income and expenses to help manage money effectively

- c. Budgeting is only necessary for individuals with significant debt or financial instability
- d. Once a budget is created, it should remain unchanged regardless of financial circumstances

Multiple Choice Activity #5

What is one significant long-term benefit of responsible credit card use?

- a. It guarantees approval for future loans and mortgages
- b. It provides financial flexibility while also helping build a strong credit history
- c. It eliminates the need for an emergency fund since credit can always be used
- d. It allows you to make purchases without worrying about repayment as long as you make minimum payments

Multiple Choice Activity #6

How does investing differ from saving in terms of financial strategy?

- a. Investing allows for long-term financial growth but carries risks, while saving prioritizes security with limited returns
- b. Savings accounts generate higher returns than most investments over time
- c. Investing is only useful for those who already have significant wealth
- d. Saving is best for short-term needs, while investing is primarily for retirement

Multiple Choice Activity #7

Why is compound interest often considered a key factor in wealth-building?

- a. It allows money to grow at an increasing rate by reinvesting both the principal and interest earned
- b. It guarantees that investments will double in value every five years
- c. It prevents market downturns from affecting investment returns
- d. It only applies to high-risk investment strategies

Correct Answers:

Activity #1: c. Consistently living within your means is essential for financial security

Activity #2: c. Keeping extra money in a savings account without a clear financial plan

Activity #3: c. 50% to needs, 30% to wants, and 20% to savings or debt repayment

Activity #4: b. A budget is a plan that tracks income and expenses to help manage money effectively

Activity #5: b. It provides financial flexibility while also helping build a strong credit history

Activity #6: a. Investing allows for long-term financial growth but carries risks, while saving prioritizes security with limited returns

Activity #7: a. It allows money to grow at an increasing rate by reinvesting both the principal and interest earned

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT. [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat Prompt: Please create seven multiple-choice questions with answers based on the content shared.

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This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.1. If the edits involve a number of changes, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted alongside this book always reflect the most recent version.

Version	Date	Change	Affected Web Page
1.0	April 24, 2025	First publication	N/A

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