

A factor crucial to **wellbeing** is having an altruistic outlook or some form of spirituality. Individuals who relate well to other people, who feel a sense of connection with their community and who are engaged in activities that have a significance over and beyond themselves, tend to be mentally healthier than others, regardless of their particular belief. The primacy of spiritual and altruistic goals over material ones comes as no surprise.

Look after your health

Empowerment - Almost all those with a high sense of wellbeing strongly believed that it was their responsibility to look after their health.

Idea for life

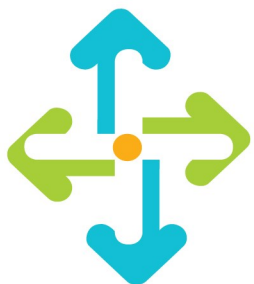
Think positive - Count five things you're glad about before you jump out of bed each morning.

The Road Centre Ltd

Counselling Training Wellbeing

Wellbeing

Developing and maintaining a sense
of wellbeing is within your grasp



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The top five factors which affect **wellbeing** are:

- Feeling in **control**
- Having an **optimistic** outlook
- Being **content** with our appearance
- Having a sense of **belonging** in the community and good relationships with family and friends
- Taking **responsibility** for our own health

Wellbeing tends to increase, rather than dip, as we age, rising from an all-life low at 20, to a peak between 65 and 74, which is when most of us would expect our physical health to decline.

Money doesn't bring happiness. There is no difference in the levels of **wellbeing** among people who earn between £7,500 and £70,000 a year. But earning less than £7,500 does cause **wellbeing** to drop.

You're unlikely to achieve very high **wellbeing** if you have children under 16 living with you.

People who exercise more than two or three times a week are likely to have higher **wellbeing**.



Of the top five factors affecting **wellbeing**, having a sense of **control** over your life and the direction it takes is by far the most important.

It's important to understand that a sense of being in control does not mean having to mastermind every last detail of your life. Instead, it's about feeling pretty well able to navigate day-to-day demands, while also accepting that there are some areas of your life that will forever remain outside your own control.

To well-developed coping skills, add a runner-up requirement, a sense of optimism, and you are well on the way to greater **wellbeing**. The evidence suggests that people who are optimistic by nature, who count their blessings rather than storing up real or imagined slights, not only experience a subjective sense of **wellbeing**, but also enjoy measurably better health.

Reasons to be cheerful are myriad. For starters, having an optimistic outlook - the belief that on the whole people mean well and that things will turn out well in the end - is a habit of mind that we can cultivate. While some personality traits are inherent, we have a much greater capacity for change than we think. You can't change the world, but you can certainly change the way you look at it. A lot of what we experience comes by way of **self-fulfilling prophecy**. If we expect people not to like us, we behave in ways that will get a reaction, which reinforces that belief. With practice and imagination, we can become more a glass-half-full rather than a glass-half-empty person.