

# A-Z

## Guide to Wellbeing

A greater sense of wellbeing provides us with the vitality we need to lead active lives and to interact with each other in ways that are respectful and just.

As individuals, evidence shows that we do better—we are happier and healthier, and more productive—if we feel connected to other people; if we have friends and family around us; if we feel respected, valued and included as part of a community.

As a community, we can achieve better health outcomes by working together. To promote wellbeing we must foster social and community connections, value diversity and work towards reducing discrimination.

Strong social relations are vital and having a sense of community is a positive thing.

**The A-Z Guide to Wellbeing provides a set of ideas on how to improve your overall sense of wellbeing ... and it's only a beginning ...**

**A**cceptance and tolerance of others can work like a tonic to the whole system. A friendly attitude and compassion can boost the immune system and have measurable health benefits. Bullying creates an unsafe place for everyone. Having compassion can lead to a good long life.

**B**e on your own or with others—whatever works best for you.

**C**risis management tools. Have a long chat with a friend or colleague over a cup of tea. This may be just what is needed to interrupt a chaotic moment. Working things out with others can be a real life saver. Think about what essential crisis management tool works for you. And use it when you need it.

**D**ance with someone, or on your own, or simply drum your fingers on the table to your favourite song.

**E**xplore local parks, galleries and public spaces. Check out the 'What's On' section of your local newspaper. For information on art galleries and museums see [www.amol.org.au](http://www.amol.org.au) or [www.deh.gov.au/parks](http://www.deh.gov.au/parks) for parks and reserves around Australia.

**F**riendships and intimacy can give energy and support. Take the time to build them.

**G**ardening. Whether in a pot or a paddock—plant something and watch it grow. Check out [www.abc.net.au/gardening](http://www.abc.net.au/gardening)

**H**ealthy outlook. We all need it. A positive and friendly attitude can boost the immune system and have measurable health benefits.

**I**magination. Imagine activities that are not part of your routine. Take a well-earned break somewhere new, on your own or with a mate. Be as creative as you can.

**J**oin a club or activity group. Think about what sort of things you are interested in. Your local Neighbourhood Centre and Council of Adult Education [www.cae.edu.au](http://www.cae.edu.au) are useful starting points for lists of clubs and activities in your area.

**K**indness. Simple acts of kindness can work like a tonic and friendliness can help keep us well. Small things like lending a hand, saying hello to your neighbour or being there for someone have definite health benefits.

**L**ibraries for reading, listening and talking. Contact your local council for library locations, activities and opening and closing times. Look up [www.nla.gov.au/libraries](http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries)

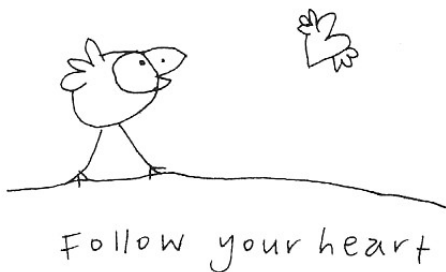
**M**usic, music, music! Listen or play. Free music is advertised in local and metropolitan papers. Watch for special programs in parks, on television or the radio. Get involved in a community band or join a local choir. Sing in the shower.

**N**eighbours. How well do you know the people that live on your street? Say hello to your neighbours. Lacking a sense of community creates more than just sadness, it can affect the immune system and open the way to illness. But on the other hand saying hello and starting up a friendly conversation can have definite health benefits. Get to know the people in your neighbourhood.

**O**utdoors. Check out how to get to your nearest beach, parks, river or forest. Visit [www.deh.gov.au/parks](http://www.deh.gov.au/parks) for information on parks and reserves around Australia.

**P**articipation. Involvement in your community can do wonders for you and others. Research shows the importance of community to good health. Community contribution can create positive change for all of us. Look in your local paper for information and contacts to get involved in a community activity.





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**Q**uiet times are important too. Make sure you make time each day for some peace and quiet.

**R**eading. The bedtime story and being read to does everybody good. It's a simple routine that sets up a pattern of feeling safe and cared for. Read for your own enjoyment and the benefit of others. Join a reading group to share ideas.

**S**ocial connection. Evidence shows that we do better—we are happier and healthier, and more productive—if we feel connected to other people; if we have friends and family around us; if we feel respected, valued and included as part of a community.

**T**roubles are part of life. Make time to talk them over with a friend. Lend an ear or a hand to someone else who may be going through a difficult time.

**U**nder pressure and unsure? Talking it over with someone is a good starting point. Counselling is available. Contact your doctor or call Lifeline 13 11 14.

**V**olunteer. Lending a hand is a great way to get involved in the community. Research shows the importance of community support to good health. To find out how you can lend a hand, contact Volunteering Australia on (03) 9820 4100 or visit [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)

**W**alking. Alone or with others, organised walks or roaming free ... Walking is one of the best forms of exercise, good for your body and mind. Check the internet for contacts for walking clubs in your area.

**X**ercise goodwill .... With yourself and with others. And physical activity or exercise also has a positive effect on your wellbeing.

**Y**oga for some, meditation for others. Join a class or start an activity that benefits your body and mind. Contact your local Council of Adult Education [www.cae.edu.au](http://www.cae.edu.au), local council and Yoga centres for more information.

**Z**est. With laughter and cooperation you'll have more zest in your day.

## Lessons on Life

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly... So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in autumn. When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent and twisted.

The second son said no, it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed; he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life.

He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, fulfillment of your fall.



◆ Life comes in cycles. ◆ Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. ◆ The seed is strengthened through its struggle upwards to reach the sun and in the face of winds and rain. So too we are strengthened through overcoming our struggles.

◆ Persevere through the hard times and better times are sure to come.

Reprinted from the Mental Health Council of Australia  
"A-Z Guide to Wellbeing". Ph: (02) 6285 3100  
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"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*