

# Seven Ways to Help Yourself Straightaway

Here's an overview of my Seven Step Process to well-being and renewal.

R for resilience

E for extending and Giving

N for noticing

E for enjoying

W for wonder and gratitude

A for activity and exercise

L for learning and accomplishment



So, starting with **Resilience**. If you unpack the word, it breaks down into a couple of Latin roots meaning, to jump back, to bounce back. This is probably a good enough definition to be going on with it, but it doesn't mean that whatever happens to you, you just bounce up like an old fashioned Kelly man and aren't affected in any way. That's just unrealistic.

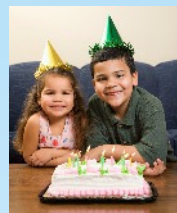
Resilience is more about how you respond to the everyday events of life, large or small, and using more effective ways of dealing with whatever life throws at you. All this can be learned, applied, and practised.

Think about two people who have lost their jobs. Let's call the first one Bill, and the second one Mary. There's no significance in the gender here! Bill has worked in the same company for the last 22 years, and thought it was going to be for life. This company's product has been overtaken by a new and better one, the market for it has shrunk, the company has not diversified, and so the management feel that large-scale redundancies



are the only option. Bill hasn't seen this coming and he is absolutely distraught and beside himself. He thinks, how am I going to manage? What am I going to do? I've got another 20 years to work! I'll never get another job, this is the end of everything. He falls into a depression and really struggles to get new work.

Mary works for the same company. She's also been there for over twenty years, and she quite enjoys the job, but she has a lot of other interests and hobbies that give meaning to her life. She never expected this job to last as long as it did, but it just seemed to be going on, and it seemed a good idea at the time. She's also a bit worried about how she's going to manage, and how she's going to get another job and what's going to happen, but she's not despairing about it. She takes the redundancy money, has three weeks off, thinks about what she's going to do, and eventually comes up with a plan for a small business doing cake decorating from home. She's happy.



*So, two similar situations, but very different outcomes. **What made the difference?** It's all in the interpretation and better ways of doing this can be learned. If you are already bursting to read more about this, the best book I know of on the subject is 'Developing Resilience' by Michael Neenan. You can find it on Amazon [here](#) or get it from your library.*

*For now - think of ONE SITUATION you can interpret differently. Someone didn't phone you, and you think they don't want to be your friend? Well maybe their mobile battery ran out? Or a manager who gives you a hard time? Are they perhaps under stress themselves from above?*

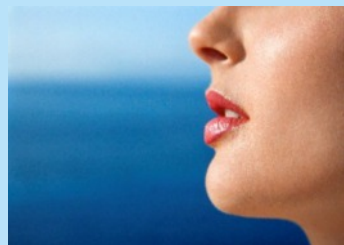


E is for **Extending and giving**. You may have seen in your doctor's surgery a little card listing the Five Pillars of Well-Being. This is based on the fascinating work of the New Economic Foundation and it summarises the things you can do that will improve your well-being. Here's what the NEF found them to be. They are

**Connect, Give, Learn, Notice, and Exercise.** Here I'm focusing on giving and extending your generosity. If you extend your relationships outwards and concern yourself with the lives of others as well as yourself, it is quite simply good for you. You could give items to charity, you could give your time in volunteering, and you can undertake random acts of kindness.

*So - What ONE THING can you do for someone else today? And tomorrow? And the next day?*

**N** Is for **Noticing**. This is really important. Becoming aware of what is happening now in the present moment around you and within you will, with practice, draw you into a sense of mindfulness and calm. Mindfulness has been practised for thousands of years, and it is only in the last 30



years or so that scientists have been able to measure it and realise how very valuable it is. Jon Kabatt Zinn first used the techniques of mindfulness and meditation in a clinical setting in the 1980s when working with people with chronic pain. It was enormously helpful to the people involved. The basic principle is, **paying attention on purpose in the moment**. If you want to know more I recommend his books 'Full Catastrophe Living' and 'Coming To Our Senses' - [here](#) is an Amazon page you can start with.

*For now STOP what you are doing, sit still for five minutes and just notice what is going on. What are the sensations in your body, what is your mind doing? Without trying to change anything, just see what you NOTICE.*

**E** is for **Enjoyment**. In Martin Seligman's positive psychology model, he describes the characteristics of people with high well-being. One of these is positive emotion. In his book 'Flourish' he describes the five elements of well-being - positive emotions; engagement, being absorbed in something; relationships; Meaning; and accomplishment and achievement for its own sake. So enjoyment, pleasure, positive things to do - these are very important for well-being. Ask yourself, what do you love to do? What are your hobbies? . What can you not wait to do 'when you've got the time'? *Do one of them TODAY.*



**W is for Wonder and gratitude.** The biggest question of all, whatever spiritual or philosophical tradition you are in, is really, why is there anything at all? Well, clearly, there is, and it's out there (we think!)- Consider this beautiful-world, this universe, all these unique people surrounding us, and let us wonder and delight In them! So, think, what do you find beautiful and wonderful? Do you look up at the night sky, do you see the beauty in plants and trees? What are you grateful for? What wonderful people are you privileged to know? What small kindness has come your way? Martin Seligman has done some very interesting work on gratitude. It appears that if you express your gratitude it is good for you.

*For now, write down three aspects of your life that you are grateful for.*

**A is for Activity and exercise.** We are all told that exercise is good for us. The human body is designed to move and be active, and it's bad for it to be motionless for long periods. The benefits of exercise are not merely physical, but psychological and emotional as well. You are likely to feel good after a brisk walk.



You might like going to the gym, running marathons, swimming a hundred lengths, but if you don't, the good news is that you don't need that much exercise to make a difference. Current guidelines suggest that half an hour a day is plenty. There is even some fascinating research that suggests that much less in bursts of high-intensity is just as beneficial. So, what exercise do you do, what do you like doing, what can you do more of, how can you build it into your daily routine? *Do ONE THING today.*



**L Is for Learning.** This is related to one of Seligman's elements of well-being, accomplishment or achievement. Modern neuroscience tells us that the brain responds to challenge, by laying

down new neural pathways in response to demand, and this is good for us. It can be very satisfying to master a new skill, to play that piece of Chopin, to speak the language of your holiday destination, to get that degree after all. It really is never too late to learn, and you don't need a piece of paper or a certificate to prove that you have learned something. Life is about learning new things every day. So what do you want to do? Do you want to learn astronomy, do you want to take up the piano again, do you want to learn Russian? It's all out there for you.

Choose ONE THING and start TODAY!

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I hope you have enjoyed this short booklet. Head over to my main website and let me know what you think on my [Facebook](#) page. I look forward to keeping in touch with you!

