



THE PERMAH WELLBEING  
SURVEY: THE SURPRISING  
TRUTHS ABOUT WELLBEING

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GROUP DEBRIEF  
CONVERSATION GUIDE

THEWELLBEINGLAB  
A MICHELLEMCQUAID PROGRAM

## THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY: THE SURPRISING TRUTHS ABOUT WELLBEING

Neither prescriptive nor permanent, your wellbeing results are tools to help you understand how you've been doing recently and make it easier for you to figure out where you want to focus your wellbeing energy and efforts in the coming days, weeks, and months. This way, you can build up your wellbeing intelligence as you playfully experiment with the best ways to care for your wellbeing – no matter what life throws at you.

The good news? You're not starting from square one. The fact is, before you even took the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey, you were already playfully experimenting with different ways to look after your wellbeing – even if you weren't that mindful about it ... yet!

In the words of Maya Angelou, "when we know better, we do better." So, now that you've taken the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey, let's grab your results page (the one with all your charts) and unpack what your results really mean and take you one step closer to more joyfully and effectively caring for your wellbeing.

# YOUR STATE OF WELLBEING | WHY WELLBEING INVOLVES BOTH THRIVING AND STRUGGLE

## ACTIVITY 1 | REFLECTION

In its simplest form, wellbeing is your ability to feel good and function effectively (your levels of thriving) as you navigate the highs and lows of life (your levels of struggle) that enable you to learn and grow. Our studies have found that it is possible:

- To thrive despite struggle. In fact, people who are living well despite struggle often show the most resilience.
- Not to experience wellbeing even in the absence of struggle. In fact, people who are not feeling bad but just getting by often have the most to gain by learning to care for their wellbeing.

There is no shame in struggling with your wellbeing. It is simply your body's way of letting you know that something needs your attention in order to support your learning and growth when it comes to caring for your wellbeing.

*What choices are you making and/or what behaviors are you prioritizing that are making it easier to thrive (even if they're not as consistent or effective as you'd like them to be yet)?*

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*Can you think of an example of when a wellbeing struggle you've experienced led to an opportunity for learning and growth? What made this outcome possible?*

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*Is your current state of wellbeing serving you well right now when it comes to how you want to show up as part of the group and in your community?*

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# YOUR WELLBEING AMPLIFIERS | THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS

## ACTIVITY 2 | REFLECTION

Our research suggests that as you playfully experiment with different wellbeing behaviors, you can AMPLify your wellbeing intelligence by focusing on your:

- **WELLBEING ABILITY** - Your capacity – the knowledge, tools, and opportunities – to take actions that care for your wellbeing. Studies suggest that the most reliable way to improve your abilities is to start with tiny wellbeing behaviors that you can do consistently and be successful at immediately. This gives you the opportunity to build on your wellbeing strengths, and as your abilities and confidence grow, you can experiment with more challenging wellbeing behaviors over time.
- **WELLBEING MOTIVATION** - Your commitment to consistently prioritize caring for your wellbeing. Too often we focus on abstract desires and outcomes (we want to be happier, healthier, wealthier) and the things we feel we “should do.” As a result, your motivation tends to fluctuate (one moment you have it, and the next it’s gone). Sustaining your motivation requires clear future aspirations or measurable outcomes (your “why,” e.g., I want to be fitter) that are matched to tiny, specific, high-impact behaviors that you want to do and can succeed at (your “how,” e.g., run for 10 minutes each morning).
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY** – The safe spaces you have to talk honestly about how you are doing with others. Caring for your wellbeing is not a solo adventure. Studies have found that having people you can talk to about what you’re trying, how you’re doing, and what you’re learning about your wellbeing is one of the keys in consistently caring for your wellbeing.

*What’s the smallest thing you do regularly that has the biggest impact when it comes to caring for your wellbeing? How do you manage to overcome your biggest wellbeing barrier when it comes to this wellbeing behavior? How does prioritizing this wellbeing behavior regularly impact your confidence to care for your wellbeing?*

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What is your most important want-to goal when it comes to caring for your wellbeing this month? What is the measurable outcome **you most want** to achieve (your 'why', e.g., I want to be fitter) and the tiny, specific, high-impact behavior that you most want to do (your 'how,' e.g., run for 10 minutes each morning)?

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When you need a psychologically safe space to talk about your wellbeing, who do you turn to (e.g., a friend, a family member, a coach, a doctor, a group, etc.)? What impact does having someone to talk to have on how you care for your wellbeing? How could we better support each other as a group when it comes to having safe spaces to talk about our wellbeing?

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Ah-Has, Reflections, and Questions:

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## YOUR PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS

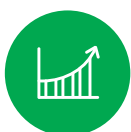
### ACTIVITY 3 | REFLECTION

One way to understand, measure, and act on evidence-based approaches for caring for your wellbeing is by drawing on Dr. Martin Seligman's PERMAH Framework, which points to six wellbeing factors that enable us to feel good and function well:



#### POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Prioritizing moments of regular heartfelt positivity – spending time in nature, finding a reason to laugh, taking a break, practicing mindfulness – to fuel your resilience.



#### ENGAGEMENT

Using your neurological strengths – the things you're good at and enjoy doing – to feel more confident, energized, and engaged.



#### RELATIONSHIPS

Making time to genuinely connect with other people – expressing gratitude, showing kindness, being compassionate – and savoring the feelings of warmth and trust.



#### MEANING

Understanding how what you do each day has a positive impact on others and feeling connected to something larger than yourself.



#### ACCOMPLISHMENT

Embracing a learning mindset and cultivating the grit you need to accomplish the things that matter most to you.



#### HEALTH

Eating well, moving regularly, taking time to recover, and sleeping deeply each day to ensure you have the energy to consistently thrive.

Your goal should not be to achieve “perfect” PERMAH scores – this would not be healthy. Just as a mixture of thriving and struggle compose your wellbeing, it is natural for your PERMAH Wellbeing Factors to ebb and flow with the context, challenges, and learning curves of your life.

How much you may need of each of the PERMAH factors will vary depending on the type of person you are, the situations you're in, and the outcomes you want to achieve. That said, researchers have found that most people are wired with fairly healthy levels of wellbeing and typically score around 70 out of 100. It is important to note that people's levels of wellbeing tend to fluctuate within a normative range of 60 to 80 out of a score of 100 for most people. However, if your PERMAH scores are below 60 and stay that way over time, it would be worth chatting to a wellbeing professional about how you're feeling.

*Which of the PERMAH factors is most supporting your levels of wellbeing right now? Which of your wellbeing behaviors might be contributing most to this PERMAH factor? How do you ensure your biggest wellbeing barrier doesn't get in the way of making this wellbeing behavior happen consistently?*

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*Are there any PERMAH factors that are not where you would like them to be right now? Is there a tiny wellbeing behavior you'd like to begin playfully experimenting with to improve this factor? How can you make sure this tiny wellbeing behavior starts to happen regularly? (Tip: make it tiny enough to comfortably fit inside the amount of time, money, and energy you have available to support your chosen change.)*

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*How can we support each other when it comes to playfully experimenting with ways to care for our PERMAH factors?*

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*Ah-Has, Reflections, and Questions:*

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# WANT MORE?

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For more ideas, be sure to check out other ways you can boost your wellbeing:



**Want to learn more from the world's leading wellbeing researchers?** Tune into our recent interview with him on the free Making Positive Psychology Work podcast. **Just click here.**



**Want daily reminders of all the different evidence-based ways you can care for your wellbeing using Dr. Martin Seligman's PERMAH framework?** Packed with over 50 small, practical, evidence-based interventions, you can use this wall chart for your school, workplace, or home office. **Just click here to get yours.**



**Want to be inspired by more than 100 evidence-based, busy-proof ways to improve wellbeing for yourself and others?** Our best-selling book, "Your Wellbeing Blueprint," written with Dr. Peggy Kern is the perfect ways to accelerate your wellbeing knowledge. **Just click here to get yours.**

Want a way to easily and affordably measure the wellbeing of your school, workplace, or community? **Just click here to learn more.**