

# PERMA for well-being

*PERMA* is a model of well-being put forth by Martin Seligman, a leading psychologist in the field of positive psychology. According to Seligman, the PERMA Model outlines five important elements or building blocks that should be in place for us to experience lasting well-being and happiness. PERMA stands for:

## **Positive Emotions** - *feeling good*

For us to experience well-being, we need positive emotions in our lives. Although we can't be happy all the time, we need to make sure that we experience positive emotions e.g., gratitude, satisfaction, hope, curiosity, love, pleasure, happiness, contentment, peace, joy, inspiration. If you feel that you are not experiencing enough positive emotions, you may want to stop and think about why. Consider your career – do you get to use your talents and strengths in your current role? You could also take a moment to identify people or activities or events that make you experience positive emotions. Are there ways in which you could bring more positive emotions and enjoyment into your daily routine?

## **Engagement** – *being completely absorbed in activities*

When we're truly engaged in a situation, task, or project, we experience a state of flow (time seems to stop, we lose our sense of self, and we concentrate intensely on the present). The more we experience this type of engagement, the more likely we are to experience well-being. While engagement is closely identified with the act of creation, you can also experience deep engagement when participating in a hobby or sports, spending time with friends, or working on projects that you're fascinated with. Are you able to make enough time for a favorite hobby or physical activity? Many of us let this important personal time slip away, especially when we're stressed or overloaded with work. Try to devote time to activities that make you feel happy and engaged.

## **Relationships** – *being authentically connected to others.*

As humans, we are "social beings," and good relationships are core to our well-being. Time and again we see that people who have meaningful, positive relationships with others. This can be with family, friends, neighbors, or colleagues.

Are you devoting enough time to strengthening these relationships? Do you need to make more of an effort to reach out to your friends and family? Relationships take engagement and hard work, and they're often strengthened only when we make an effort to connect with other people.



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## **Meaning** – *purposeful existence*

Most of us want to believe that we're working and living for a greater purpose. Whether this is a specific deity or religion or a cause that helps humanity in some way, we all need meaning in our lives to have a sense of well-being. So finding meaning is important to our overall sense of well-being. It's just as important to look for meaning in our personal lives – certain activities, such as spending time with our family, volunteering, or performing acts of kindness can also improve our sense of meaning in life.

## **Accomplishment/Achievement** – *a sense of accomplishment and success*

Many people strive to better themselves in some way. This could for instance be mastering a new skill, achieving a valuable goal, winning a competition etc. Accomplishment and achievement can also be tricky because it's also easy to take it too far. For instance, in many societies, achievement is highly valued, and, if we're not busy, it can seem that we're not living up to expectations and living a full life. However, if we continually push ourselves, we can drain ourselves or suffer from burnout or simply chase the next achievement without truly appreciating each. If, however feel or think that you are not devoting enough time or energy to accomplishing your dreams or goals, we may want to start.

The awareness of *PERMA* can help you increase your well-being by focusing on combinations of feeling good, living meaningfully, establishing supportive and friendly relationships, accomplishing goals, and being fully engaged with life.

*From "Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being" by Martin E. P. Seligman. Published by Free Press, 2011.*

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