WELL-BEING PLAY BOOK

A HANDS-ON, START-ANYWHERE GUIDE TO WELL-BEING

BY LEYSA CERSWELL KIELBURGER

CHAPTER ONE

READ THE OWNERS MANUAL

THE WE WELL-BEING PLAYBOOK

BY LEYSA CERSWELL KIELBURGER
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM ISLAND
AFTERWORD BY DANIEL J. SIEGEL, MD

SUSAN ALLAN, EDITOR

WE WELL-BEING

FOR

ERIKA & THE

ELKINGTON FAMILY

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

BILL, SABRINA AND THE ERIKA LEGACY FOUNDATION

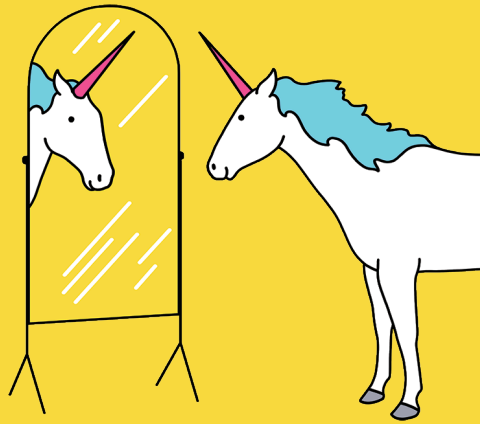
FOR THE MANY WAYS YOU LIVE TO INSPIRE

LITTLE THINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

OUR STARTING EQUATION? YOU = AWESOME

Little things make a big difference. So we've created a hands-on, start-anywhere guide to inform and empower your day-to-day actions and interactions.

This is our top 10— the best of the best recommendations for self-care, maintenance and optimal performance. The actions may seem simple but don't let that deceive you. Each one is based on evidence – we've taken the leading science and made it applicable to our daily lives. Start with Chapter One and work your way to Chapter 10. Experiment. Play. And discover what works for you!



READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL

CHAPTER

01

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU

Let's start with the basics: everything you need to know about you, plus tips and ideas on how to look after that you!

Sleep

Make routine a key to your Zzzz

Want to rest easy? Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.*

Sleep is the Swiss Army knife of health, explains neuroscientist Matthew Walker, director of the Center for Human Sleep Science at the University of California, Berkeley.

"No matter the ailment, it's more likely sleep has a tool within the box that will see you well."

Sleep is the single most effective thing we can do to reset our brain and body health each day, Dr. Walker writes in *Why We Sleep*.

His evidence fills 368 pages of a bestselling book. Just for starters, he explains that proper sleep has the power to boost brain power and decision-making, charge the immune system and lower blood pressure.

Problem is that most of us don't get enough. How much is enough? Shoot for nine hours – more or less.

Dr. Walker has lots of bedtime tips – avoid screens, dim lights an hour before bed, lower the thermostat – but sticking to routine tops his list of advice.

*TOO BUSY FOR ROUTINE? TRY TO GET MORE SLEEP ON WEDNESDAYS AND SUNDAYS.

Do your own sleep research

FOR ONE WEEK
Track your sleep.
Measure your energy.
Observe
the connection.

DISCOVER MORE SLEEP TIPS!

	HOURS OF SLEEP	ENERGY LEVEL
MONDAY		
TUESDAY		
WEDNESDAY		
THURSDAY		
FRIDAY		
SATURDAY		
SUNDAY		

Eat Well

Nourish yourself

When it comes to healthy eating, Serena Williams serves up a simple truth: "You put out what you put in."

Nutrition is key to vitality. It promotes healthy brain development and function and also helps to prevent disease. What's good for your gut is good for your brain – they are connected by millions of nerve cells! The field of nutritional psychiatry continues to discover the many ways food influences mood and well-being.

We don't believe in hard, fixed rules, but here is a little food for thought →

DID YOU KNOW
Healthy eating supports synaptogenesis, the way neurons talk to each other.

1

GET BACK TO BASICS
Choose healthful, whole foods. Doing so will enable your body to do what it does best!

2

TRY THE RULE OF THREES
Eat three meals – including breakfast – and up to three snacks every day. Fuel your body every three to five hours.

3

BUMP UP YOUR INTAKE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
Add color (fruits and vegetables) to most meals and snacks.

4

FEED YOUR BODY AND SOUL
Aspire to make 80 percent of your food nutrient-dense and healthful. Consider that other 20 percent to be soul food – an expression of your love of life.

5

FATS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR BRAIN AND HORMONAL HEALTH
Try avocados, olive oil, salmon, nuts and seeds.

6

BE AWARE OF PROTEIN NEEDS
The body does not store protein, so eat protein at breakfast, lunch and dinner for a steady supply. Protein sources often have calcium and iron, which are key during growing years.

7

PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING
"When walking, walk. When eating, eat."
ZEN PROVERB

DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 7 FOR A MINDFUL EATING EXPERIMENT

Keep it simple, if you can. Notice how different foods change your energy or mood. Remember, there are no absolutes!

WATER IS THE MOST NEGLECTED NUTRIENT IN YOUR DIET, BUT ONE OF THE MOST VITAL.

KELLY BARTON

Hydrate

Just add water

Is the glass half empty or half full?

In this case, the answer doesn't matter as long as you drink up!

Water is key to mental and physical health and performance.

The folks at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health want everyone to know that water improves sleep quality, cognition and mood. It also regulates body temperature and delivers nutrients to cells.

Mom is mostly right. You need to drink about eight cups of water each day, though every person is different.

DID YOU KNOW

About 75 percent of your brain is water. Dehydrated, it struggles to focus, solve problems and co-ordinate motor skills.

TRY THIS

Start with a glass each morning. Consider toting a reusable bottle through the day. Drink water with meals and make it your beverage of choice when you are out at a restaurant. Keep a pitcher in your fridge for quick access. Drink when you are thirsty!

To manage input, keep tabs on output

The color of your pee can tell you if you're getting enough water. The Cleveland Clinic created a color-coded chart to help!

NO COLOR	**YOU'RE DRINKING A LOT OF WATER, YOU SHOULD CUT BACK**
PALE STRAW COLOR	**YOU'RE HEALTHY AND HYDRATED**
TRANSPARENT YELLOW	**YOU'RE IN THE ZONE!**
DARK YELLOW	**IN THE ZONE, BUT DRINK SOME WATER SOON**
AMBER OR HONEY	**YOUR BODY ISN'T GETTING ENOUGH WATER, DRINK SOME NOW**

Move

Get going

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Here is what science tells us about the connection:

→ Exercise stimulates blood vessels in the body and increases blood flow to the brain.

→ It appears to slow or reverse the brain's physical decay and jump-starts neurogenesis, the creation of new brain cells.

→ Scientists are especially interested in the way it increases BDNF, or brain-derived neurotrophic factor. This protein is considered "fertilizer for your brain" and helps to create and maintain healthy neurons. It is believed to improve mood stability and well-being.

A 2018 cross-sectional study of 1.2 million people identified a meaningful link between movement and well-being.* Here are a few highlights from that study:

→ People who exercised had 1.5 fewer days of poor mental health in a month than those who did not.

→ Exercising 45 minutes for three to five times a week was found to deliver the greatest benefits.

→ Team sports were associated with the most powerful effects.

*DON'T LIKE TO SWEAT? DON'T SWEAT IT. "WALKING JUST THREE TIMES A WEEK IS BETTER THAN NOT EXERCISING AT ALL," SAID RESEARCHER ADAM CHEKROUD OF YALE UNIVERSITY.

What is your action plan?

THIS WEEK, I'LL SET ASIDE THE FOLLOWING TIMES FOR MOVEMENT

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE

ONE SIMPLE ACTION I WILL TAKE THIS WEEK IS

DID YOU KNOW

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says physical activity delivers the following benefits to brain health: improved cognition, performance on academic achievement tests, memory, executive function, quality of life. It can reduce the risk of depression, short-term feelings of anxiety and improve sleep.

TEN WAYS TO GET ACTIVE

Build activity into your day with some tips from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Experiment with one thing from the list this week.

What will it be?

1. TRY A VARIETY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES
2. GET INTO A ROUTINE
3. LIMIT SCREEN TIME
4. WALK OR BIKE FROM A TO B
5. PICK A TIME AND PLACE
6. SET A GOAL
7. JOIN A TEAM
8. MAKE A PLAN
9. SPREAD ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE WEEK
10. REMEMBER, EVERY STEP COUNTS!

> **SELF-CARE DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN JOGGING.**
>
> SANDRA OH

Connect

"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

AFRICAN PROVERB

Build your own community IRL

"In real life" relationships are a key to well-being.

Unlike hearts, thumbs up and winky faces in texts and social feeds, building community takes work.

"Tending to your relationships is a form of self-care," says Dr. Robert Waldinger, a psychiatry professor who directs the Harvard Study of Adult Development.

No one is immune to loneliness.

Even if you have loads of virtual pals and followers, encourage yourself to forge real-world connections.

A FEW FRIENDLY SUGGESTIONS

→ Instead of a volley of texts, phone a friend or call a loved one.

→ Join a rec league, faith group or choir.

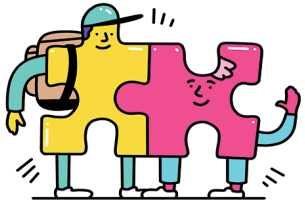
→ Volunteer.

DID YOU KNOW

You can use your smartphone for a voice call? LOL!

In fact, you might want to ... One study of children interacting with their moms noted a release of oxytocin (the love hormone) in the kids who did so in person or by phone. This was not the case for those who connected by text. :(

Social experiment



OVER TO YOU NOW

Write down four things you could try this month to connect with others in real life (IRL).

1

2

3

4

DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 3 FOR A FEW IDEAS ON USING THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT

Disconnect

Get yourself a cheap alarm clock

Chances are you don't own a bedside clock, what with the app built into your phone.

If you keep your phone an arm's length from your pillow – like 89 percent of teens – it will be the first and last thing you reach for each day.

Instant access to social media, text messaging and newsfeeds can delay sleep, disrupt natural rhythms and keep you bouncing from one thing to the next.

In the same way, it will disrupt your focus when the day begins.

Try putting your phone in another room overnight. That's why you may need an alarm clock.

Notice if distance from your phone leads to better rest. Oh, and one more pro tip from sleep doctor Matthew Walker: "Turn the clock's face out of view so you don't worry about the time while trying to fall asleep."

Help Others

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

MAHATMA GANDHI

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

TODAY, I WILL HELP BY

When you help others, you help yourself.

You might even experience "helper's high" – a feeling of energy, inner warmth and calm created by a release of endorphins in the brain. The phenomenon was first identified by Allan Luks when he surveyed more than a thousand volunteers on the connection between altruism and health.

DID YOU KNOW

Researchers have observed the neural golden rule:

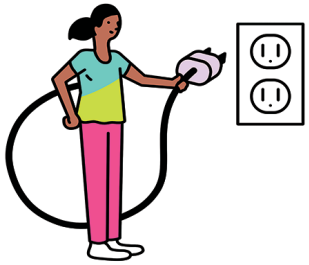
"The more we tend to vicariously experience the states of others, the more we appear to be inclined to treat them as we would ourselves."

“

ALMOST EVERYTHING WILL WORK AGAIN IF YOU UNPLUG IT FOR A FEW MINUTES, INCLUDING YOU.

ANNE LAMOTT

Recharge



Book some time for yourself

Pull out your calendar or day planner and build in some time to recharge.

Pro tip: Safeguard this time using code words like “deep work” or “exam prep” so that those viewing your calendar respect your time.

Switching from “doing mode” to “being mode” is essential in a 24-7 world where it’s easy to be busy non-stop and always available.

The upside of downtime?

You’ll have more energy and may even be better equipped to respond to stress.

USE DOWNTIME TO REVEL IN SIMPLE PLEASURES. SAMPLE FROM OUR LIST OF 50 IN CHAPTER 7!

DID YOU KNOW

Just as a recharge revives your phone, downtime refuels your brain and its ability to focus. It also boosts your get-up-and-go! Research shows it fuels productivity, creativity and our highest levels of performance.

A recent study using brain imaging technology revealed that a great deal of meaningful activity occurs in the brain when the mind is at rest.

FOR 34 SELF-CARE AND RECHARGE IDEAS, DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 2

Be in nature

A breath of fresh air will do you good. Truly! Science says so.

In fact, a 2014 meta-analysis examining the link between "nature connectedness" and happiness suggests a regular dose of the outdoors can be as restorative as it feels, improving attention, emotional functioning and increasing feelings of vitality.

Even short visits to a city park or playground can lower stress!

Those of us in cities have to work a little harder to build fresh air into routine.

Close your eyes and consider your daily routine. Now write down three places you can stop to smell the roses. →

1	2	3

Get Outside

Be Prepared

"Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness. It's a sign of strength."

BARACK OBAMA

In case of emergency

Life is full of stressors – conflict with friends, relationship drama, challenges and deadlines, just to start.

Every one of us has moments when things seem too much to handle alone.

For this reason, it makes sense to identify your support network.

Make a list of your go-to people and safe places to be. File it away for moments when you feel overwhelmed.

Consider your resources – family members, elders, teachers, counselors, co-workers, trusted allies, healthcare providers and community support.

Never be shy to ask for help.

MAKE YOUR OWN EMOTIONAL FIRST AID KIT
DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 2 FOR TIPS

Build your support team

We all need a lift from time to time.

Identify the names and contacts of your support people and those you can turn to when you need an extra hand. While you're at it, identify the places that will provide safety and support.

DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 3 FOR HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

DISCOVER MORE WAYS TO PLAN FOR SELF-CARE AND SAFETY

ENDNOTES

The Well-being Playbook was inspired by ongoing work and conversations with leading thinkers in the world of education and mental well-being. This is a list of books, articles and resources that helped inform our contemplation.

CHAPTER 1

Sleep
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Meg Sullivan, "Your brain may be hard-wired for altruism," UCLA Newsroom, March 18, 2016.

Recharge
Jacquelyn Flaskerud, "Nourishing Mind and Brain," *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 2015.

Get outside
Colin Capaldi et al., "The relationship between nature connectedness and happiness: A meta-analysis," *Frontiers in Psychology*, September 8, 2014.

Don’t miss a single chapter!

01 **Read the Owner’s Manual**
Like any good guide, we begin with key recommendations for care

02 **Be Your Own BFF**
Self-compassion is a source of inner strength

03 **Connect**
Identify your supporting players and champion communication

04 **Tap Into Your Superpowers**
A celebration of gratitude, resilience, altruism and empathy

05 **Feel All the Feels**
A user’s guide to emotions

06 **Flex**
Tips for managing stress, resolving problems and cultivating mindfulness

07 **Know, Grow, Flow**
Explore, revel and marvel

08 **Expand**
The world needs you, at home and at large

09 **Be Your Own GPS**
Chart your course, overcome obstacles ... stretch!

10 **Find Your True North**
You are ready to become a life-long explorer