

Writing for Wellbeing – Frameworks: Five Ways

Wellbeing, put simply, is about ‘how we are doing.’ Personal, social, health, community, leisure – so many facets are included. But there’s lots of different ways to measure it. One tool that is used across sectors is the **Five Ways To Wellbeing** developed by **the New Economics Foundation**. It is used by NHS, social care, workplace, local government, charities etc as a framework.

The five elements of wellbeing are:

1. keep learning
2. connect
3. take notice
4. be active, and
5. give.

KEEP LEARNING

Learn about yourself

We assume we know about ourselves, but those assumptions can always be explored.

- I am...
- I know...
- I think...
- I believe...
- I remember...
- I feel...
- I want...
- I wish...
- I can...
- I wonder...
- I hope...
- I was told...
- I promise myself I will...
- I laugh at....
- I cry at...
- I always...
- I never...

If you feel comfortable share with someone else. Introduce yourself with who you really are!

CONNECT

Have a chat

- We're all multifaceted beings. The metaphor of 'who is on, or driving, your bus?' can be useful to explore the bits of yourself. The 'bus' is the bus of your life. Imagine getting onto a big red bus, and on the bus are all the bits of yourself. Wander around the bus sit and have a chat with one of the parts. You might want to ask his or her name? Notice what they are wearing? What they look like? Their mood?
- Write down two aspects of yourself. This could be your positive mind and your critical voice, or your past self and your current self, your tired self and lively self, or two emotions such as your anger and the peacefulness you would prefer to feel.
- Write dialogue between the two aspects, imagining they are two separate entities. Pick out characteristics. It might help to visualise them as different people – my positive mind is light, smiley, bright eyed girl. My inner critic is old, crooked, tentacles.
- How would they walk and move?
- Ask questions of each other.
- Think about the language you would use - would it be the language of yourself now, or the language that would have resonated with you then?
- What advice would you offer? How have you progressed since this age? Would you change anything? What do you still recognise in yourself?
- How does this help you reframe an idea, an aspect? Can you come at it from a different perspective? How is the story different? Is this a quality or situation you can cultivate?
- At any time we can ask ourselves, 'Who is driving my bus in this moment?' It can guide us to consciously choose who we want to be driving the bus of our life.
- Debbie Ford. 1998. *The Dark Side of the Light Chasers*.

TAKE NOTICE

Notice your feelings

Stop for a moment. Think about how you feel. Not good or bad, but deeply how you feel. Think about the thoughts in your head and sensations in your body. Can you identify a colour that you feel describes your present state of being? By using metaphor and creative description we're able to really take notice and dig into what's present for you. Be more creative with the way that you experience it.

- Is it a bright yellow, a sad blue, or does blue mean bright skies to you, and openness?
- Now write down all the objects, sights, sounds, images and emotions that come to mind when you think of the colour
- Write about yourself as this colour – I am a brightly coloured daffodil; my laughter feels like lemony balm; when she hugs me it's like sunshine on my skin; I'm dancing light on the trees.

BE ACTIVE

Your body

Pick a part of your body, and write about it. How does it feel to you? Can you use metaphors? What does it look like? If it was a song what would it be? Tune into it? Really use your senses to be aware. Feel your toes. Are they hot or cold? What does your clothing feel like on your body? Let the sensory input—not your thoughts—feed your writing. Observe the sensations and start to narrate in your mind what you notice. When you think of your body, the first thought that pops into your head is... because ...

If your body could talk, it would tell you... This part of your body lets you. This part of your body feels good when. This part of your body feels best when.

Create a love letter to the body.

GIVE

Giving time, energy and effort rather than just money or gifts is very much underrated. Imagine you are inviting someone into your home. What would you show them? What stands out as important to them? Walk through either your real or imagined house and share the things that matter to you with your guest.

Reflect on what you've written. What does this tell you about what's important to you.

Finally...

At the end of the day write down the word GLAD. Reflect on something you are Grateful for, Learned, Accomplished and Delighted in.

Enjoy it!

Francesca Baker

<http://www.andsoshethinks.co.uk/>

fbaker@live.co.uk