

# Keeping it simple amidst complexity: tips to improve your wellbeing.

## Savouring, gratitude and creativity

### Professor Kay Wilhelm

NOTE: This is the introduction to a series of modules exploring strategies to enhance well-being by effectively managing stress – and the science behind them. You can find the whole series here: [HETI Wellbeing Resource Corner | HETI Higher Education \(https://heti.edu.au/resources-and-links/heti-wellbeing-resource-corner\)](https://heti.edu.au/resources-and-links/heti-wellbeing-resource-corner)

This section discusses enhancing well-being beyond mindfulness, emphasising the importance of savouring life's moments. It then explores writing as a tool for emotional regulation and improved health outcomes, including heart rate variability and immune response. Such strategies as writing about gratitude and maintaining a night journal are recommended for fostering reflection and planning and, better sleep, alongside physical activities and regular bedtime routines.

#### Savouring life's simple pleasures

Savouring is a means of deepening our engagement with the world around us. By taking mindful walks and allowing ourselves to be immersed in our surroundings, you can make a shift in perspective and cultivate a sense of wonder and appreciation for the beauty in everyday life.

#### The healing power of nature

There are long-term mental health benefits derived from childhood exposure to natural environments. This underscores the importance of green and blue spaces in fostering a sense of serenity and well-being.

#### Writing as a path to emotional well-being

Writing can be a therapeutic tool, while expressive writing (the Pennebaker approach) involves writing about crises or traumatic experiences to facilitate emotional healing. This practice has been shown to improve emotional regulation, heart rate variability, even immune function. Reflective writing and goalsetting are also very useful.

#### Cultivating gratitude

The practice of writing about gratitude, and reflecting on positive experiences and their causes, offers another powerful avenue for enhancing well-being. Three blessings is an example of a simple but impactful gratitude exercise that can shift your focus and foster a more positive outlook, while strengthening emotional resilience.

## The night journal for reflection and goal setting

Keeping a night journal allows for a reflective pause at the end of the day, helping to consolidate the day's experiences and set intentions for the future. This practice not only aids in emotional processing but also contributes to better sleep quality by establishing a calming nighttime routine.

## A holistic approach to well-being

There are multifaceted benefits of integrating mindfulness extensions, nature engagement, expressive writing, gratitude practices, and reflective journaling into daily life. These are all simple practices you can incorporate easily into your day. They offer pathways promoting a balanced and enriched life experience.

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## Some resources

### Savouring

Bryant F, Veroff J. In *Savouring: A New Model of Positive Experience*. Psychology Press, 2017

Levoy Gregg, Sense of wonder savoring walk as experiment in seeing the world from a snail's pace. *Psychology Today* Sep 10, 2015

### Expressive writing

Pennebaker J, Smyth JM. *Opening Up by Writing It Down: 3rd Ed. How Expressive Writing Improves Health and Eases Emotional Pain*, 2016 Guildford Books.

[Download PDF - Opening Up by Writing It Down: How Expressive Writing Improves Health and Eases Emotional Pain \[PDF\] \[3ha696oveq70\] \(vdoc.pub\)](#)

Baikie K, Wilhelm K. Emotional and physical health benefits of expressive writing. <https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.11.5.338> online Cambridge Uni Press: Jan 2018

Krpan et al. An everyday activity as a treatment for depression: The benefits of expressive writing for people diagnosed with major depressive disorder *J Affi Dis*, 150, 13, 2013, 1148-1151  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2013.05.065> [Get rights and content](#);

Ravaging et al. How effective are expressive writing interventions for adolescents? A meta-analytic review <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.01.003> [Get rights and content](#)

Karyotin E.....Kessler RC. Sources of stress and their associations with mental disorders among college students: Results of the World Health Organization World Mental Health Surveys International College Student Initiative. *Front Psychol*. 2020 Jul 30;11:1759. Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01759.

### Gratitude

**Kiss your brain: The science of gratitude | Christina Costa | TEDxUofM**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZWN6lfVYtw>

Interesting blog: [The Neuroscience of Gratitude and Effects on the Brain \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com)

Bryan S, Hamilton M, An overview of gratitude as a mind-body-spirit practice in optimizing health and human functioning, 2024, *Integrative Comp Med* 9. 10.21926/obm.icm.2401008.