

Girls' Guide to Wellbeing



**All new
Dr. Nancy's
advice!**

\$\$=Happiness?



**Plus!
Procrastination.
What's the
deal?**



**What to do
when you work
with difficult
people...**

**Is your glass
half empty?
Take our quiz!**

**Beat the winter
blues with *these* tips!**





Girl's Guide to Wellbeing

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Letter from the Editors

(Left to right)
Megan Sims-Fujita
Amna Khan
Lisa Danovich
Tezra Jennings
(Below)
Nancy Ortiz

Dear Readers,

We hope you enjoy this issue of “Girls’ Guide to Wellbeing!”

Our team of editors has put much thought and effort into compiling a comprehensive and utilitarian guide to increasing positivity and general wellbeing.

The fun and insightful quiz featured in this issue focuses on your perception of optimism, is your glass half full or half empty?

How does framing affect how we perceive situations and ourselves? Well, context really matters and it’s key! We hope to share these ideas with you so you can have a better understanding of why people think and behave in certain ways.

Discussed in this issue is also a great article on money and happiness. It seems we can get lost in the pursuit of money, but does this really lead to happiness?

Also featured in this issue is Dr. Nancy’s advice column. Dr. Nancy offers some simple tips on feeling better, like sharing a smile! She also talks to two readers who share their very personal stories and seek guidance. We hope their stories move you and that you find something in there for you as well.

It’s that time of year, the weather gets colder, the sun hibernates for several months, and you find yourself down. Well, in this issue we share some ideas on beating those dreadful winter blues.

Finally, our goals in this issue were to increase your knowledge of methods to effectively cope with life’s stresses, like procrastination and pessimism. We hope you gain some useful information that you can put into practice, so begin by sharing that beautiful smile of yours!

Happy Living!



Is your glass half empty or half full?



And does it
matter?



26 year old Jessica has a hard time figuring out what all the hype about these glasses is. “Doesn’t it matter what I’m drinking?” she laughs pointing toward her half-empty glass of wine? “Of course I want that to be half empty!” However Jessica’s philosophy about drinking has become detrimental in other areas of life. “It’s not that I’m an alcoholic,” she explains, “that’s not where the problem lies. It has more to do with how I see things in the world. I used to just think ‘So what, if I like things half full? This is who I am! I don’t like to look at the world through rose colored glasses!’” But that was until Jessica learned about the health risks associated with her pessimism. “I started learning about how optimism, sense of personal control and ability to find meaning in life are all protective factors when it comes to my health. And that was a big wake-up call.” Jessica is a nurse and actively seeks out healthy options when it comes to food and exercise. “I guess I never realized my own perspective could be as important as running or eating broccoli!” So she has started looking at the glass half full. “It’s hard,” she admits, “and definitely counter-intuitive at first! But I’ve been working with my therapist at changing some of my thoughts and behaviors.” And this new Jessica is starting to see some of those

glasses as half full. “Change is possible!” she says with a smile, “and believe me, if I can do it, so can you!”



Wondering how you compare to Jessica?
Take our quiz on the page 4 and find out!



Is your glass half empty of half full?

1. You applied to the *perfect* job and just found out they hired someone else. Your first thought is:

a) I'm such a failure! I'll never get any job that is right for me!

b) That's such a bummer. That seemed like a perfect job, but something else I enjoy will probably come along.

2. You have been feeling stressed at work and were looking forward to a vacation from the winter cold to see meet up with some friends in California. The day you were set to leave a huge blizzard rolled in and closed the airport. Upon being stranded alone at home you:

a) Wonder why this happens every time you try to make plans with friends. It feels like winter (like so many things!) is out to get you. There seems to be no escape.

b) Feel bummed that you won't be able to see your friends, but grab the book you've been meaning to read and cuddle up by a fire with some hot cocoa.

3. After coming home from your third miserable blind date in 2 weeks you:

a) Swear off relationships. You haven't met anyone yet you like and probably never will.

b) Feel even more confident than you did three dates ago about what you are looking for. It just hasn't crossed your path yet.

4. You just got pulled over and now have a \$185 speeding ticket. Your first response:

a) Why are the cops always after me? They didn't pull over all of the cars speeding around me! My life is so

unfair! I'll never be able to pay this ticket.

b) That sucks that I got pulled over, but I was speeding ... at least I wasn't going any faster!

5. You've developed a pretty severe cough over the past week. Your mom has been calling every day to see if you've gone to the doctor yet. You've been putting off going because:

a) You're pretty sure you have lung cancer and are going to die. You don't want that kind of news!

b) You've been trying to rest and take it easy. You're sure it's just a little cold that you'll be over in a few days.

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6. You've considered going back to school for an advanced degree. After looking at the entrance requirements for some of the schools you think:

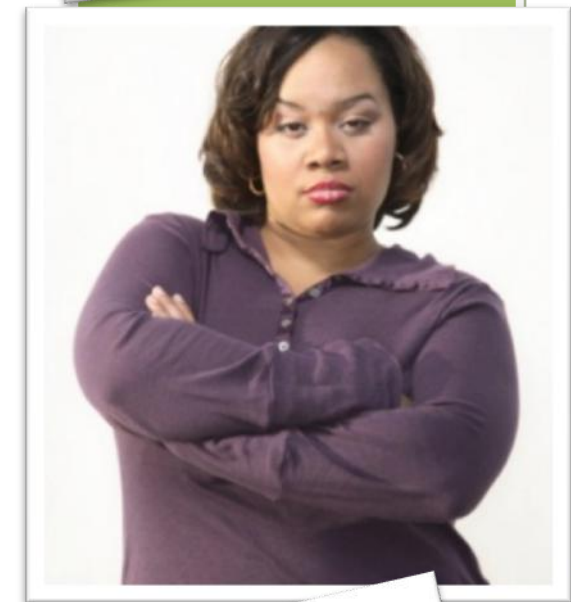
a) There's no way I'll get in! My grades were good in undergrad and I meet the other requirements, but I'm sure they'll pick someone else!

b) I sure hope I get in! My grades were good in undergrad and I meet the other requirements. I might have a pretty good shot!

7. You don't normally bake, but you found a fun new recipe for cookies and decided to bring them to a party your neighbor was throwing. As soon as someone tried them you immediately thought:

a) I can't believe I brought those to a public gathering! I'm a horrible baker and I know they are just lying when they say they like them.

b) Wow, someone one complimented my cookies. I don't care if they are lying, it was kind of fun to try something new.



How did you do?

Number As _____

Number of Bs _____

Mostly As: That glass of yours could use some filling! Jessica is right about optimism being good for your health. If your family and friends can't seem to help you see the light, look up a friendly MSW in the yellow pages and see if he or she could be of assistance. Your health depends upon it!

Mostly Bs: Spread that sunshine around! Your happiness is contagious – so let your neighbors know you are happy and watch the affect is has!



Having Trouble Convincing People?

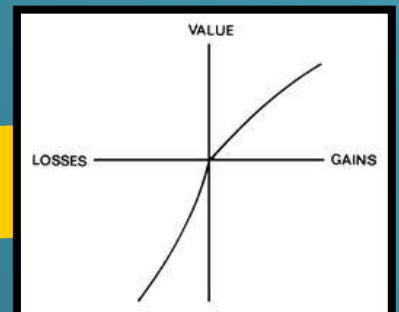


We engage a considerable amount of time in convincing people from all walks of our lives to make particular decisions. At work, you may be convincing your boss to accept your brilliant idea or for your clients to go for your services or products. At home you may be convincing your spouse to start saving, your parents to plan a family vacation or your children to drink milk every day. However, we all know from experience that it's not easy to talk people into doing things which are often beneficial for them. Ever wish you had a magic wand that would do the convincing for you?

Kahneman and Traversky revealed an important aspect of human thought that can possibly serve as your magic wand for convincing people to take certain decisions.

According to their Prospects Theory losses feel psychologically more painful than equivalent gains feel good. For example it hurts more to lose rent money than it feels good to gain it. "Framing", is the presentation of the same option in different ways. Thus by framing decisions as the loss of an option rather than a gain, can have sizeable effects in decision making.

Thus if you're trying to convince people to take decisions in favor of something, highlight what they have to lose if they do not go with the suggested decision as opposed what you think they might gain from that decision and you will be pleasantly surprised!





\$\$ = Happiness?

Are you are stressed because every month you juggle competing desires to make that monthly? Do you notice what others acquire and wish you could be able to acquire those same things for yourself and your family? Do you think, if only you earned a just a bit more, then, voila, nirvana would be yours and stress in your life would dissolve?

Well, not necessarily so according to a study by Daniel Kahneman, et al. (2006). Despite your drive to increase your income, there is actually a weak relation between income and your happiness. You are caught up in a focusing illusion, which could lead to a misallocation of time. Do you have a lengthy commute to a higher paying job that sacrifices time spent with family?

And, above a certain level of consumption of material goods, increases in income have little of a lasting effect on happiness. Why you ask? Because of hedonic adaption—you get used to the change and it becomes your new normal.

Instead of dreaming about how that next pay raise will bring ultimate happiness, Try it Today on the next page has a few ideas that if practiced in your everyday life could bring on your desired nirvana.





Try it today!

Be in the moment and reflect on how much you've already got going, right now. Take on that "attitude of gratitude".

Stop comparing yourself to others on the sliding scale of relativity. Yes we aspire. Try aspiring to internal missions and goals rather than outward displays of material consumption. Desires are insatiable. Value-oriented desires achieved create more self-satisfaction than winning today's material competition.

Have a strong opinion? Take time expressing it within the appropriate conduits - maybe you will inspire positive change. Happiness comes to those able to have personal freedoms. Participate in the democratic process and policy-making that you believe in. The same goes for your spiritual or religious involvement.

Make time for active and passive leisure activities over earning that extra buck. As it has been said, "You can't take it with you when you die." You will not regret that you took that vacation, attended that recital, or spent special times with your family. Having time for leisure and socializing over working for increased earnings creates happiness. Isn't that why we work so hard, after all?

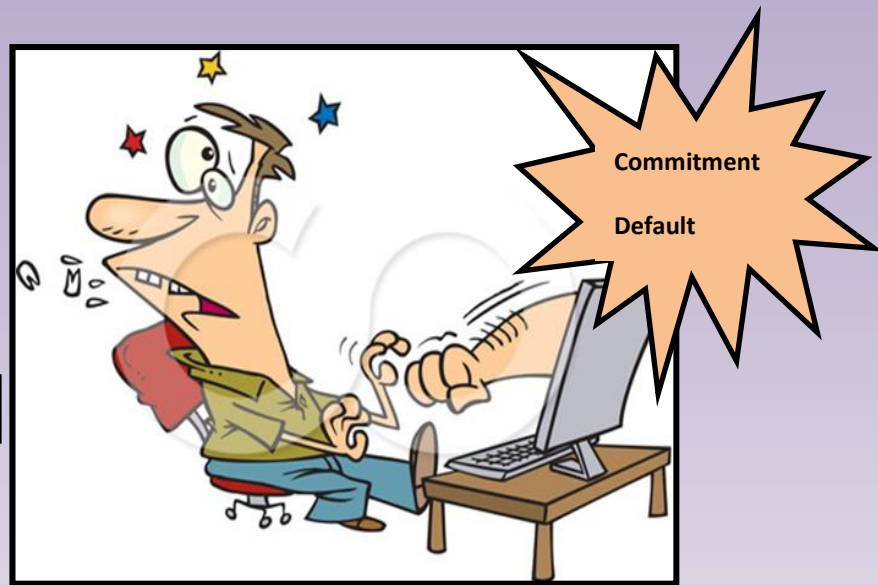


Is Procrastination Beating You Down?

Are you always late to pay your bills? Do you promise yourself to work out tomorrow but your tomorrow never comes? Do you wait till Christmas Eve to do your shopping? Do you keep distracting yourself with emails when you' should be working on an assignment?

YOU can beat procrastination ... and here's how!!

Procrastination



Given the numerous choices we have in any given day for the various things to do, procrastination, an ingrained human trait, makes us avoid picking the choice that seems most difficult, until it's too late. However, it is important to be weary of procrastination as it can be costly in terms of productivity, health and finances. Moreover the cost of inaction now can become increasingly costly over time.

Remember, easy does it! One way of making things easy is by creating default situations in life whenever possible. For example:

- ~ Go for direct deposit options in paying your bills and cut back on the physical effort of making the payments every month to avoid late fees.
- ~ Leave your car at your parents or lend it to a trusted friend thrice a week, so that you're forced to walk to do errands at work or school. Thus you'll achieve your weekly workout by default.

Another helpful tip is making prior commitments, maybe even tying your tasks with these commitments. Commit to go shopping with a friend or family member who does their shopping earlier than Christmas Eve so you're forced to follow through. If you want to work out early morning commit to it the night before by placing your alarm across the room.

Remind yourself of what you're losing when you procrastinate, not of what you might gain if you don't procrastinate (losses loom larger than gains! – page 6). If you don't finish your assignment well and in time, you lose out on grades. This can lessen your chances of getting into a good P.H.D program or prevent you from getting the kind of job you always wanted.

+ Dr. Nancy Says...

Stop dwelling on the past! Do not let your worries overrun your life! Take control, don't be a ruminator, be a motivator!



+ Dear Dr. Nancy,

My boyfriend of 3 years broke up with me right before I started school this semester. I can't help but ask myself, how could this happen to me! I can't stop thinking about the break-up, and all I do is stay in my room and think it over and over...What can I do?

-Ruminating in my room in MI

Ask your distant self why?

Dear Ruminator,

I'm sorry to hear that your boyfriend broke up with you right before school; it's terrible, right? What if I said you could change your perception and cease your constant playback of that painful event? Well, I have great news for you! Let me fill you in on a little secret you can use to shift your perception of this negative event. According to Ethan Kross and colleagues (2005), instead of asking yourself, how did this happen to ME (first person)? Ask yourself, *why* did this happen to her (use 3rd person)? The point here is to distance yourself from the situation and visualize it in a removed manner by using cool words, without invoking and reliving the negative emotions. This will help in shifting your perception and seeing the breakup with new eyes. – Dr. Nancy

5 Day Boost to Feeling Better

- Monday Remember to count your blessings each day. If you don't have many at first, don't worry! Start small.
- Tuesday Bask in the vivid aspects of today's positive attributes. Don't overanalyze,
- Wednesday It's the middle of the week, go ahead and jot down thoroughly the worst part of your day. It's in the past, no longer you.
- Thursday Brighten up your day and your significant others by smiling BIG!
- Friday The last day of the work week, you made it! Go ahead and treat yourself to some great sleep, your mental and physical health depends on it!





Food for thought~
Sometimes it's best to keep to ourselves the wonder and mystery of those great things that happen to us. Share the joy with others in reliving those happy moments, like having a party to celebrate that raise!

Dear Dr. Nancy,

I am 14 years old and I'm living in a tough neighborhood, I hear gunshots before going to bed every night. My mom reads your magazine and I thought maybe you could help me. My mom works two jobs to provide for my younger brothers and me. She is hardly ever at home and when she is, she is always in a bad mood. She is always stressed about money and how she can barely pay bills, food, and clothing for us.

How can I help my mom? I don't want her to be stressed and sad anymore. I'm having trouble concentrating at school and my grades seem to be dropping. My teacher asked to speak to my mom, but I don't want to make her worry anymore than she already does. When I get home from school I pick up my brothers from the sitter and walk home. I prepare them dinner and make sure they do their homework while I try to do mine. How can I do better in school while helping out my mom? ~Marlene



Dear Marlene,

First, let me commend you for your strength and love for your family. Being a teenager already comes with many uncertainties and difficulties. For you this is compounded by your life at home. I can see that your situation and mom's stress is impacting you personally. Let me

share with you some ideas about improving yourself. According to research done at the University of Riverside (2006), researchers look at the effects of writing and talking about negative experiences. They found that when people wrote and talked about their negative experiences, they reported improved and increased mental and physical

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health compared to those who thought about their negative experiences. In your situation, I would recommend you seek out a trusted adult and discuss your situation. Talk through it with someone you are comfortable with.

Also, begin a journal and write down what you are experiencing. Here are a few tips when writing in your journal: envision your best possible self, what do you look like as the best version of you at school, home, with friends. In addition, when writing, try to distance yourself from the negative emotions and try to write as if you are talking about somebody else.

In regards to your studies, go ahead and ask for help from your teachers and counselor. Talk to somebody about your personal family life. Keep in

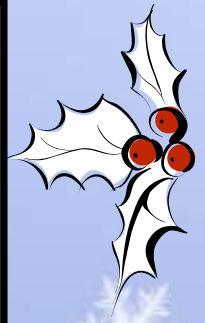
mind that being successful in school is not just done by one person, but by the assistance and support from those around you. The road to success in school is not easy and you will encounter many difficulties, but do not give up when you face a barrier or obstacle. Ask yourself, is this a threat or a challenge for me to overcome and succeed? Unfortunately, your mother's stress and anxiety directly affects you and your brothers. It is difficult for her to provide for you and your brothers and you and your brothers feel that stress she brings from home from work. I would recommend to your mother to seek assistance from social services that can provide assistance with housing, food, and clothing. If you would like a listing of social services in your area, call 2-1-1 for confidential referral services. My best to you and your family.

–Dr. Nancy

Social Well-being leads to... Improved emotional and physical health!



Winter Blues Got You Feeling Burned Out at Work?



With the recent time change and holidays quickly approaching, it's no wonder we're all feeling a little more stressed than usual!

These helpful tips can help you get over the hurdle at the office:

- Focus on one or two things you love about your job, don't make a huge list because it may seem like you're struggling to fill it. This will make you feel like you actually hate your job.
- Conversely, if you make a list of things you hate about your job you may realize it's difficult to fill an entire page. This may help you realize there aren't as many bad things about it as you may think.
- When a fight with a co-worker comes to mind put it in its proper place and realize that it doesn't happen every day. When you remember the last time your boss praised you for your great work, revel in the memory! This will help improve your mood for a longer period of time.
- When you're in a good mood don't think about where it came from, just enjoy the good feelings in the moment. When you're in a bad mood try to find the source and work through it. Remember it's only temporary.

Happy Thinking for Happy Holidays!



WORKING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE



We all encounter people we find less than appealing to work with, but why is that? Could our own perceptions of others be behind our feelings of contempt?

- When we find things in common with others, we associate them as part of our in-group. Sound familiar? We all experience this in high school. Maybe the difficult co-worker feels excluded and just wants to be part of the group.
- Members of our in-group are treated with more understanding and trust than members of the out-group, so try to find something you have in common with your difficult co-worker. It may help you see them in a new light.
- Once trust is broken it can be difficult to regain. Did you break this co-workers trust in the past? Have a conversation- you may make a new friend!
- Try to decide what it is you don't like about the person. Do you perceive them as warm, cold, competent or incompetent? This affects if you view them with pity, contempt, envy or value.
 - Don't think too hard about this list though! Focusing on negative attributes can cause you to dwell on them and dislike the person even more.
- If these don't work, try keeping your distance and focusing on more positive co-workers you like to be around.



"Kindness is in our power, when
even fondness is not."
Samuel Johnson



Is it just me or does American society

The twenties roared with the flappers. With the crash, it was more of “Brother can you spare a dime?” In our current economic crisis, the national unemployment rate is 9%. In some populations unemployment is as high as 16%. That does not include those under-employed and those who gave up the hunt for gainful employment.

Does personal well-being and happiness deflate with the economy? How does unemployment affect persons?

Frey and Stutzer in 2000 published their study of happiness as it corresponds to Income in the United States. Their study measured:

~ **Does high income at a point in time make one happier than those with a low income?**

~ **Does an increase of income over time raise happiness?**

~ **Are persons in rich countries happier than those in poor countries?**



They Found:

A rise in income over time does raise happiness, however it is only transitory. Higher happiness with material things wears off. Hedonic adaption makes people strive for ever-higher aspirations.

In most countries, per-capita income is favorably linked with happiness. This may be related to the increased stability of democracies, developed democratic conditions, and better health and human rights. These may be the basis for the increased income and happiness.

seem more stressed these days?

Personal unemployment makes

people unhappy. Joblessness depressed wellbeing more than any other single characteristic. Especially for persons very involved in their work, unemployment produces depression, anxiety, and results in a loss of self-esteem and personal control. There is also the social cost of unemployment, stigma. In the American world of the individual, one's work often defines one's position in life.

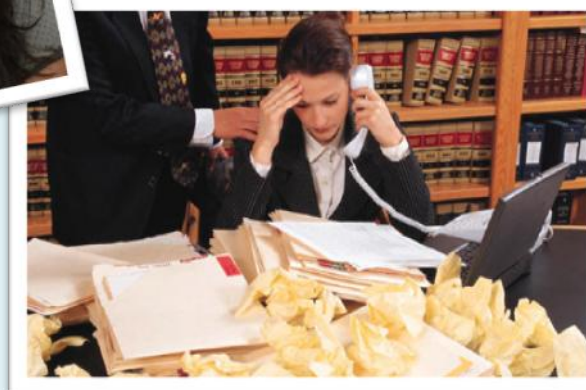
General unemployment makes the

whole society unhappy. People may feel bad for the unfortunate fate of those unemployed, and worry about themselves

becoming unemployed. They feel the repercussions in the economy and on society as a whole, and may fear crime and social tension to increase, and even the threat of violent protest and uprisings.

So as the study indicates, current factors in America confirms your suspicion. We ***are*** feeling a bit more depressed lately, because of high unemployment and decreases/inability to increase income.

By supporting political policy and the politicians that support jobs programs that will increase job openings and income, inequity diminishes, so that American well-being can become elevated- along with the increased per-capita income.



Want to know more? Check out:

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