

Strengthening Career Well-Being and Well-Being

A Primer for Professionals

Lawrence K. Jones, Ph.D., NCC

Juliet Wehr Jones, GCDF, J.D.



The
Career
Key® 

Table of Contents

What is career well-being?	3
How does career well-being affect well-being?	4
Strengthening well-being: looking at the whole picture	6
Strengthening career well-being	7
Doing what you like to do - personality-environment fit	9
Introversion and happiness	10
Becoming a free agent worker	11
Using your motivated skills, your unique strengths	12
Summary	13
About Career Key	14
Endnotes	15

Note:

Black underlined words take you to links within this eBook.

Blue underlined words take you to external Internet links.

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What is career well-being?

“Career Well-Being” is the most important element of Well-Being. As a professional, you want to know what it is and promising ways it can be strengthened. That is our goal in this eBook.

Career well-being includes more than paid work

Career Well-Being is a broad concept. It is feeling good about the work you do. It’s answering “**Yes**” to the question, “**Do you like what you do each day?**” It may be a paid or unpaid job; pursuing a career or college major; volunteering for a social cause; or pursuing a particular vocation, sport or hobby.

When you **do work you like to do**, you are strengthening your:

- Physical vitality,
- Mental eagerness,
- Social satisfaction, and
- A sense of meaning and accomplishment.

Together, they strengthen your well-being. In doing them you feel pride, excitement, happiness, satisfaction, inspired, energized, or valued and worthwhile.

Just as you want to **build your life** so you can do the work you like to do, you want to help others do the same.

How does career well-being affect well-being?

Well-being is positive health and wellness that goes beyond the absence of disease or mental illness. It includes,

- Physical well-being (feeling very healthy, full of energy),
- Engagement (absorption in what you are doing),
- Meaning (what I do in life is valuable, worthwhile)¹,
- Positive self-esteem,
- Optimism, resilience, and accomplishment,
- Positive social relationships.²

Our knowledge of well-being comes primarily from a scientific analysis of data from the Gallup World Poll, a large, continuous, and diverse survey that includes 160 countries, covering 98% of the world's population.

"People's self-reports of their subjective wellbeing are becoming the focus of intense debate in public policy and economics, and the improvement of the wellbeing of the population is emerging as a key societal aspiration."³

Well-being is closely related to health and longevity. Professionals in career counseling and development have a new and unique role to play in this emerging field.

Career well-being is one of five elements of well-being. The other four are social, financial, physical, and community well-being. The five are **interdependent**. They affect each other. They are universal across faiths, cultures, and nationalities.

Career well-being is the most influential of the five. **People who are high in it are twice as likely to be thriving in their lives overall!**

Unfortunately, however, only about 20% of the people give a strong “**Yes**” that they like what they are doing each day.

In “Wellbeing,” the book reporting these findings, the authors write,

“At a fundamental level, we all need something to do, and ideally something to look forward to, when we wake up every day. What you spend your time doing each day shapes your identity, whether you are a student, parent, volunteer, retiree, or have a more conventional job . . .”⁴

Strengthening well-being: looking at the whole picture

Interdependence. As mentioned earlier, the five elements of well-being are interdependent. How you are doing in one affects the others. The Gallup study found that while 66% of the people were doing well in at least one of these areas, **only 7% were thriving in all five.**

So, these are the basic questions,

- Do I like what I do each day? Career Well-Being
- Do I have strong relationships and love in my life? Social Well-Being
- Am I effective in managing my economic life? Financial Well-Being
- Do I have the health and energy to do what I want to do? Physical Well-Being
- Am I engaged with my community where I live? Community Well-Being

Then, based on the answers, you decide what to do.⁵

Moving toward a more thriving well-being. The authors of “Wellbeing” express our thoughts well,

“As we learned from those who are thriving, improving wellbeing in any one of the five areas takes work and accountability. But we hope that after reading this book, you will have a more holistic view of what contributes to your well being over a lifetime.

This will enable you to enjoy each day, get more out of life in general, and perhaps most importantly, boost the wellbeing of your friends, family members, colleagues, and others in your community.”⁶

Strengthening career well-being

“Do you like what you do each day?” Getting to a strong “Yes!”

First, keep in mind that life is complicated and that we, ourselves, have limitations:

The “Wellbeing” authors write:

“ . . . the single biggest threat to our own wellbeing tends to be ourselves. Without even giving it much thought, we allow our short-term decisions to override what’s best for our long-term wellbeing.”⁷

In “Thinking, Fast and Slow,” Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman writes that,

“ . . . both experienced happiness and life satisfaction are largely determined by the genetics of temperament.”

It is far more difficult for us to be rational than we think, and

“ . . . one recipe for a dissatisfied adulthood is setting goals that are especially difficult to attain.” (like, “becoming accomplished in a performing art”).⁸

And, Martin Seligman, the foremost leader in positive psychology, and former APA President writes,

“ . . . drugs and most psychotherapy is only cosmetic [symptom relief] and that the best they can do is to approach 65 percent relief.”⁹

And, patients need to know there is likely to be a recurrence.

When suffering is relieved,

“ . . . drugs and most psychotherapy is only cosmetic [symptom relief] and that the best they can do is to approach 65 percent relief.”⁹

“Patients need to learn the specific skills of positive psychology: how to have more positive emotion, more engagement, more meaning, more accomplishment, and better human relations.”¹⁰

We recommend to people:

- Slow down, take your time to think things out,
- Focus on your strengths and long-term well-being, and
- Be well-informed.

Career Key’s goal is “Career Well-Being for All” ... by sharing with you the best science and practices of our field.¹¹

In that spirit, we recommend the next sections in this eBook:

[Doing what you like to do — personality-environment fit](#)

[Introversion and happiness](#)

[Becoming a free agent worker](#)

[Using your motivated skills, your unique strengths](#)

[Endnotes](#)

For other Career Key web articles, go to our [Site Map](#).

Doing what you like to do — personality-environment fit

“Do you like what you do each day?” If your answer is “Yes”, you are likely doing something that interests you, that matches your “Holland” personality profile.

Many scientific studies show that this match-up, between your personality and work environment affects,

- Job satisfaction and performance,¹²
- Students’ success and satisfaction.

Studies show that the match between college students’ personality and major affects their grades, whether they change their major, and whether they graduate on time. For more, read our free eBooks (PDF): [Choose a College Major Based on Your Personality](#). and the professionals’ version, “[Personality-College Major Match™ and Student Success](#)”

All of this research is based on the “Holland theory of vocational personalities and work environments”. Well over a thousand studies have investigated and validated its main ideas.¹³ ([Holland’s Theory of Career Choice and You](#))

Bottom line: to strengthen your career well-being, choose work that fits your RIASEC personality profile — your interests, values, skills, and how you see yourself.

Next page... Introversion and happiness

Introversion and happiness

In addition to the RIASEC personality types, there is a personality dimension that is related to career well-being — Introversion-Extraversion (I-E). In general, you will be happiest in an environment that fits where you are on the I-E scale. But in a world dominated by extroverts, this isn't always possible for introverts.

In her fascinating and helpful book, “Quiet,” Susan Cain discusses the strengths of introverts: how they can do well in an environment dominated by extroverts.¹⁴

Be aware that positive emotions, like happiness, are heritable to some degree. So, you may be limited to some extent in your ability to experience happiness if you are on the introvert end of scale.

For more go to,

[Introverts, Introversion — Tips for School and Job Success](#)

Next page... Becoming a free agent worker

Becoming a free agent worker

An important way you can lead a more balanced and satisfying life, is to view paid work for what it is: an economic exchange. It is labor for pay. To the extent you have valuable, marketable skills you can be a “free agent”, just as athletes do on professional sports teams.

Marketable skills are the key. With skills that sell in the labor market, you are in control. You can earn more, quit an unsafe job, change to a better one, and find another one more easily if laid off. You can do those things that make you feel good.

You can also look for opportunities of self-fulfillment outside of your job, doing the things you like to do. You can also invest more in nurturing your social, financial, physical, and community well-being. More at,

[The Free Agent Outlook on Work.](#)

Next page... Motivated skills

Using your motivated skills, your unique strengths

The skills you love using are a powerful guide for enhancing your career well-being.

Think about your past achievements, “good experiences”, over the past 2 – 5 years —the ones you feel you did well, enjoyed doing, feel proud of — what were the skills you used? Your motivated skills are among these.

To the extent you can, you want to use your motivated skills in what you do. More at,

[Identify Your Motivated Skills, Dependable Strengths.](#)

Next page... Summary

Summary

Career well-being is one of five elements of well-being, and one of the most influential. The other four are social, financial, physical, and community well-being. The five are **interdependent**. They affect each other. They are universal across faiths, cultures, and nationalities.

As a professional interested in helping others increase their career well-being, you can make a positive impact on their lives.

Start with some of the resources we suggest, like,

Personality-Environment Fit

Introversion and Happiness

Free Agent Workers

Motivated Skills and Unique Strengths

No doubt you know of other resources from your own work to include in your program or outreach. We hope we have given you some ideas and wish you the best in all your efforts to help others find what they love to do - career well-being.

Next page... About Career Key

About Career Key

Career Key's self-service career counseling and academic advising solutions empower youth and adults to clarify career and education direction. Millions of people have relied on its validated personality assessment to match them with careers and programs of study. Through their Career Key match, people find their path to career well-being.

Please visit [Work With Us](#) to learn more about what we do.

Next page... Endnotes

Endnotes

¹ “Meaning” is related to what might be called “Spiritual Well-Being” A leader in the field, Dr. Martin Seligman, notes in his book *Flourish*, “. . . there is considerable evidence that a higher level of spirituality goes hand in hand with greater well-being, less mental illness, less substance abuse, and more stable marriages.” (pg. 149).

Similarly, the *Wellbeing* authors note that, “. . . people take different paths to increasing their individual well-being. For many people, spirituality drives them in all these areas. Their faith is the most important facet of their lives, and it is the foundation of their daily efforts. For others a deep mission, such as protecting the environment, inspires them each day.” Rath, T. & Harter, J. (2010), pg. 7.

² The science of well-being is evolving and encouraging. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) gives an excellent [summary](#) of what is known today, including:

“There is no consensus around a single definition of well-being, but there is a general agreement that at minimum, well-being includes the presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning. In simple terms, well-being can be described as judging life positively and feeling good. For public health purposes, physical well-being (e.g., feeling very healthy and full of energy) is also viewed as critical to overall well-being” (pg. 2).

A special issue of *The Counseling Psychologist* (2015, Vol. 43 (4)) will be of interest to professional counselors and counseling psychologists wishing to learn more about the diverse views of well-being and its relation to the field of positive psychology.

The book: Seligman, M. (2011). *Flourish*. New York: Simon & Schuster is also recommended.

³ Steptoe, A., Deaton, A., & Stone, A. A. (2015). Subjective wellbeing, health, and ageing. *Lancet*; 385: 640-648, p. 640.

⁴ Rath, T. & Harter, J. (2010). *Wellbeing: The five essential elements*. New York: Gallup, p. 15.

⁵ The Wellbeing book is a good resource for ideas. You can find it in most libraries and online.

⁶ Rath, T. & Harter, J. (2010). *Wellbeing*, p. 10.

⁷ Rath, T. & Harter, J. (2010), pg. 7.

⁸ Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, pg. 401-2.

⁹ Seligman, M. (2011). *Flourish*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 53.

[Table of Contents](#)

¹⁰ Seligman, M. (2011), *Flourish*, p. 54. Also in this book, are descriptions of programs that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to promote well-being. Highly recommended reading.

¹¹ Career Key's self-help articles originated with *The Encyclopedia of Career Change and Work Issues*, which received the "Outstanding Reference Source" award by the American Library Association. Each self-help article was written by a leading expert in the field. The articles which are now a part of Career Key's website are frequently updated, and new ones are added as needed. [About the author and editor](#). To review our resources [go to our Site Map](#).

¹² See, for example: Nye, C. D., Su, R., Rounds, J, & Drasgow, F. (2012). Vocational interests and performance: A quantitative summary of over 60 years of research. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 7(4) 384-403.

¹³ Nauta, M. M. (2010). The development, evolution, and status of Holland's theory of vocational personalities: Reflections and future directions for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57(1) 11-22.

¹⁴ Cain, S. (2013). *Quiet, The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. New York: Random House.