

# Wellbeing : Preamble

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With the current interest in work-life balance, I thought you might find this study on Wellbeing :The Five Essential Elements by Rath and Harter (2010) helpful. A quote from the introduction is certainly arresting : “... 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.”

Rath and Harter reported on their study exploring the common elements of wellbeing that transcend countries and cultures. Five distinct statistical factors emerged as the universal elements of wellbeing that differentiated a thriving life from one spent suffering.

Based on these factors, the authors propose that wellbeing is about the combination of

1. our love for what we do each day
2. the quality of our relationships
3. the security of our finances
4. the vibrancy of our physical health
5. the pride we take in what we have contributed to our communities.

Most importantly, it’s about how these five elements interact.

If, in the midst of your busyness looking after students and staff, you wonder who is looking after you, perhaps what this study says will help you towards the answer.

If it appears despite all your best efforts, your staff survey shows a lack of engagement, some of these may be useful pointers.

The authors have called the five areas of wellbeing

1. Career Wellbeing
2. Social Wellbeing
3. Financial Wellbeing
4. Physical Wellbeing
5. Community Wellbeing

Gallup conducted this comprehensive global study of more than 150 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, giving a lens into the wellbeing of more than 98% of the world’s population.

While 66% of people are doing well in at least one of these areas, just 7% are thriving in all five. From the authors’ perspective, our wellbeing is damaged if we’re struggling in just any one of these domains.

*Each area will be covered over the next two weeks.*