



What is Wellbeing?

The dictionary definition is "the state of feeling healthy and happy" but what does it mean to you?

To me it means getting up in the morning, excited about the day ahead, having the energy to bounce out of bed, do all the household tasks, have the energy for a full day's work, which can actually mean a 14 hour day for me; have a level of fitness to walk into town or run 5km without aching the next day. It also means not having a cold or headaches, no IBS or backache; having thick healthy hair, skin and nails, enjoying life and work and feeling younger than I did in my 20's.

Sound too good to be true? If you had asked me two years ago I would have said that feeling this way wasn't possible and that only a super human could experience this level of wellbeing. That was because two years ago I was the complete opposite and was probably like you or someone you know. As you get older and have more worries, waistlines start to spread, headaches become commonplace and you have just about enough energy to move from kitchen table to sofa after your evening meal. Then, if you are really on the wrong path, you end up with symptoms like IBS, eczema, asthma, diabetes or worse illnesses such as cancer.

Perhaps your life is working a 5 day week and escaping to the pub at the weekend to drown out the monotony of the week, or perhaps you reward yourself with a well deserved bottle of wine each night! What if, like me, you decide one day that you don't want to feel unwell any more and want to experience total wellbeing?

Where do you start?

The first thing is to actually decide to do it. It may sound like an obvious thing to do but it is actually a little harder than you think... if it was easy then we would all be doing it as I am sure no one really wants to be unwell.

Taking responsibility for some of your decisions can be quite hard - many of us blame someone else or make excuses. When I made the decision to stop binge drinking on a weekend, my friends were not quite so supportive. They wanted me to join in and was told I was boring for not drinking. I even had to pretend that I was drinking barcardi and coke when I was actually drinking coke to stop the constant pressure. I then started wondering if I was boring as the conversations I used to laugh at suddenly didn't seem quite so funny. But the upside was waking up on a Saturday morning without a hangover and with money in my purse.

After a while it became easier, my friends accepted my decision not to drink, I learned to relax and enjoy myself and sometimes people were unaware if I was drinking or not, but it did take courage and discipline not to give in to social pressure. I have to say I no longer go to the pub as often, probably because I don't hate my work and can happily entertain myself and friends at home, and use the time to try new things.