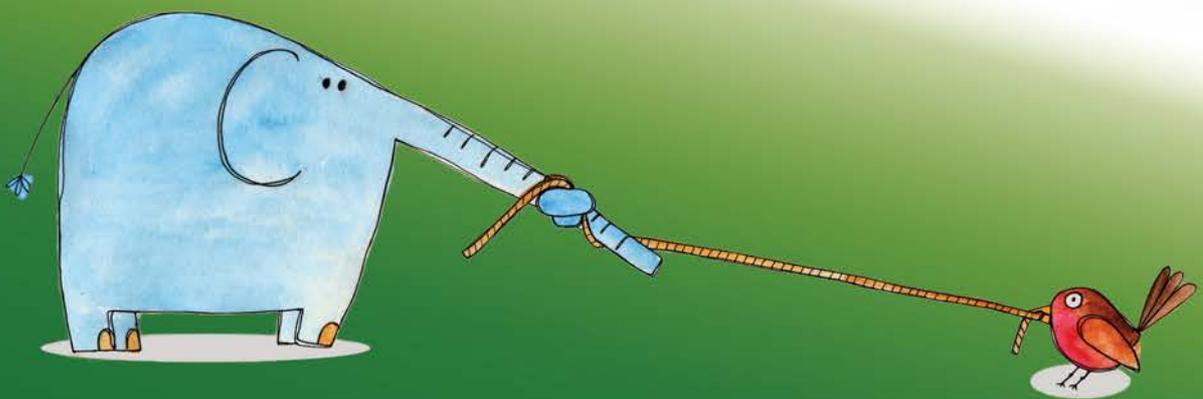
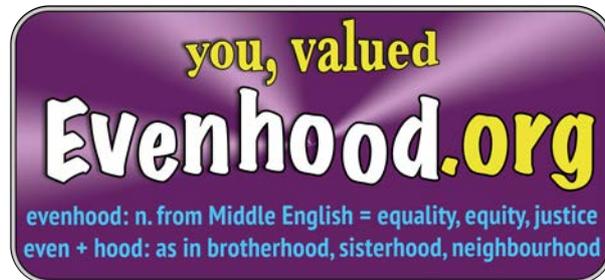


Be a more
RESILIENT
you!



Jonathan Phelan

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First published in 2019. Second edition 2020

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Introduction by Jonathan Phelan

Jonathan is an Author, Speaker, Wellbeing Coach and Resilience Trainer.

He founded Evenhood whose purpose it is to help people manage their wellbeing, strengthen their resilience and have mentally healthy conversations. Through Evenhood, Jonathan helps workplaces, universities and schools improve the support they offer for wellbeing.

Jonathan is also a long-established senior leader in a large financial services organisation with a professional background as a solicitor.



Hello

Welcome to Evenhood.

Let me challenge the thought that your mental wellbeing is all about your mind; and that if things go wrong, the solution lies only in science, medicine and therapy. When we think this way, we narrow our options to the limited supply of medicalised support that's available. Workplaces, universities and schools that approach mental wellbeing from this perspective end up focusing their solutions on signposting employees or students to external support.

Your mental wellbeing is not just about your mind, it's about your environment too. In the right environment, you can thrive. In more challenging environments, you may struggle.

This different way of thinking opens up a world of new and easier possibilities. There's so much that you and others around you can do to help you live in an environment that suits you better. You can mindfully reflect on all aspects of your daily life to discover the things that have the biggest impact on your wellbeing. You can have non-medicalised conversations with others about the things they can do to help you have an environment that is more comfortable for you. Managers, leaders, tutors, teachers, friends and loved ones can all be mental health experts; because they can all do something to help you have an environment which you feel more comfortable in.

'Be A More Resilient You!' gives you some straightforward, practical steps that you can take to manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience and have mentally healthy conversations with others to get their support.

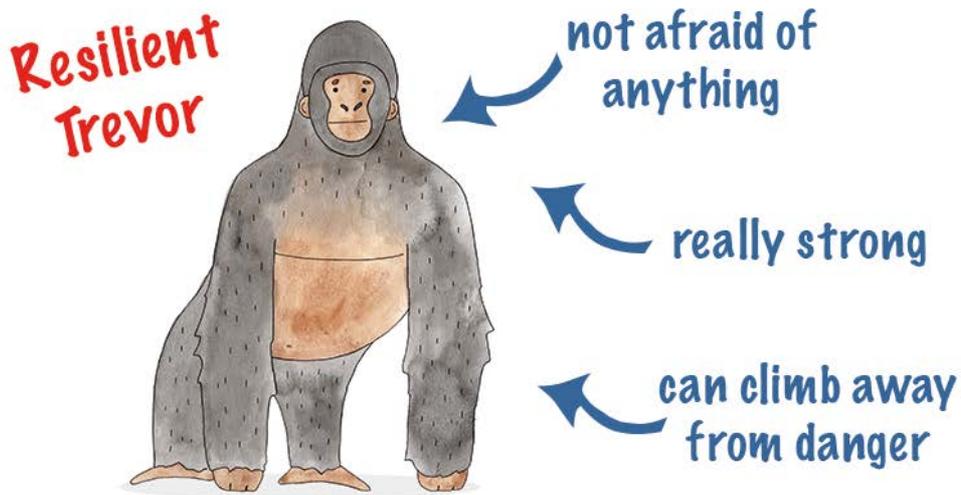
Let Evenhood change your mind about mental wellbeing.

I wish you all the very best

Jonathan

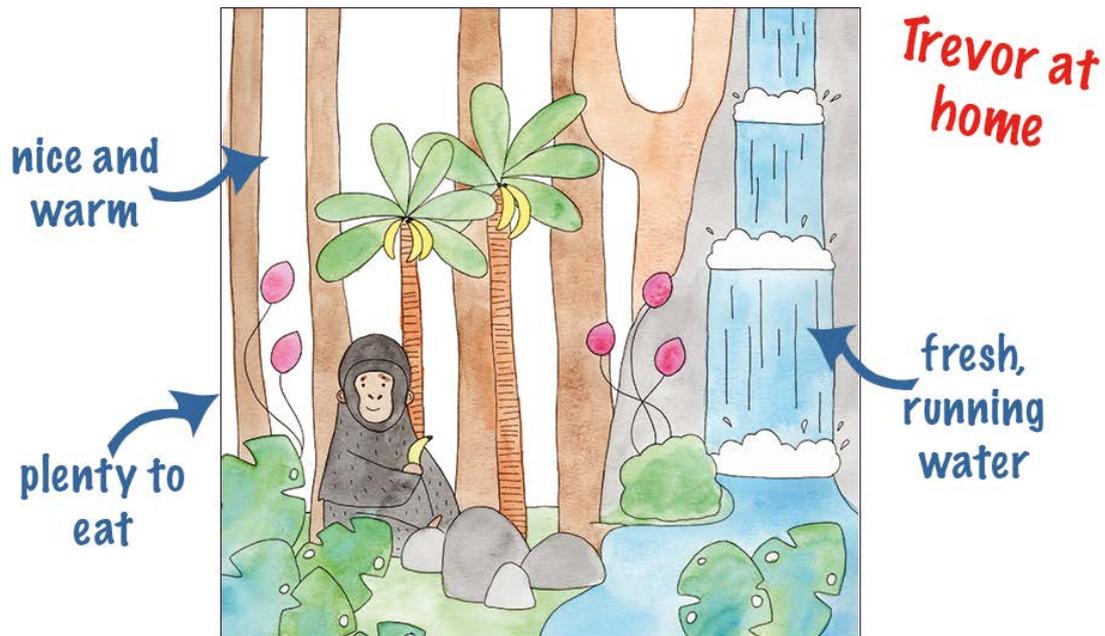
Let's . . . think about wellbeing differently

Here's a picture of Resilient Trevor. If I was asked to imagine something resilient, he is what I'd think of.



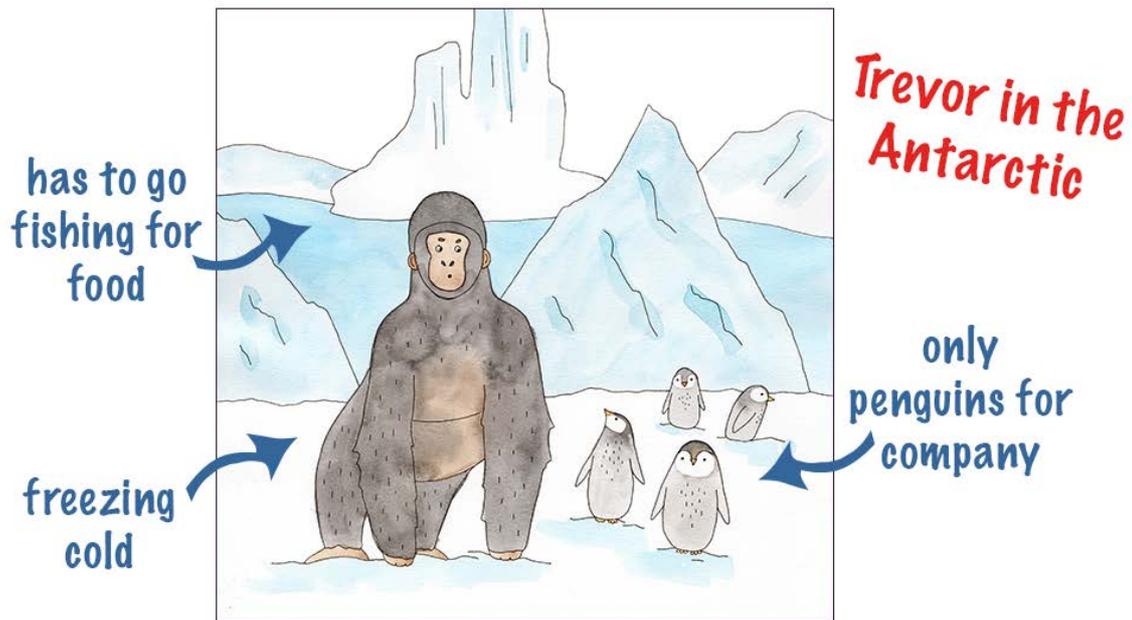
Resilient Trevor is a gorilla. I chose him as a resilient creature because he's strong and not afraid of anything. He faces few threats in life.

Now take a look at the environment that I imagine Resilient Trevor lives in.



Resilient Trevor lives in a lush jungle. He's surrounded by plenty of food; clean, fresh water; lots of trees to climb and soft leaves to make a bed with. All these things help his wellbeing. He is totally suited to his home environment. And his home environment is totally suited to him.

Now let's see what happens if we take Resilient Trevor out of his natural environment and place him somewhere completely different. Let's try moving him to the Antarctic instead of his lush jungle.



What do you think has happened to Trevor’s resilience in this different, unfamiliar and hostile environment?

We’d have to admit that Trevor is not resilient any more. In this new, challenging environment he is weak and incapable. He’d seem scared, depressed and lonely. But is there really anything wrong with his mind? And if we wanted to fix things; would it be easier to work on Trevor’s chemistry and biology to help him evolve into something more like a polar bear? Or would it be easier to just move him to a more comfortable environment - back to his lush jungle?

We learn a couple of really important points from this story. The first is that resilience isn’t absolute. Nothing, and no-one, is resilient wherever they are and whatever their circumstances.

What I’d also like you to learn from Resilient Trevor is that your mental wellbeing is also very much about your environment. The environment you live in is really important to help you stay mentally strong. And it’s far easier to made changes to create a more comfortable environment for you to live, work or study in, than it is to deal with the complexities of the way your mind works.

All it takes is some mindful reflection to discover the situations that have the biggest impact on your wellbeing. Then you need to talk to others and ask for their help to give you what you need so that you can feel comfortable. This wellbeing guide is designed to help you explore your environment and make relatively easy changes so that you can manage your wellbeing and strengthen your resilience.

You can do this for yourself because it doesn’t require any specialist skills or qualifications. For the same reason, other people can help you with it too. And you can help others.

Let’s . . . talk about wellbeing differently

When we look at mental wellbeing in this different way, we also learn to talk about it differently.

A mental health conversation that’s focused on your mind might be about a medical condition or a pattern of thinking that affects you. The person listening to you might not be familiar with the condition and might not feel qualified to help with the way you think. The conversation might be emotionally difficult to listen to, as well as to talk about. You might not get the help you need simply because the person you talk to finds this conversation medically complicated and emotionally difficult. I think this is why we often don’t talk about our mental health, except sometimes with professionals. We think about the mind as if it’s a science. And it is - the mind is a mix of chemistry and biology - literally neurologically complicated stuff.

I want you to discover that we can more easily have mentally healthy conversations when we focus on the environment around us and how it affects our wellbeing. The beauty of a conversation about your environment is that it’s an art not a science. Instead of talking about chemistry and biology, you instead talk about what you did today and how it impacted your wellbeing. And you can talk about how, if you did something different, maybe your wellbeing could improve.

In a mentally healthy conversation you describe the environments that you find challenging. Anyone you talk to can support you if they want to. They can help you avoid or cope better with your challenging environments and they can help you have more of your supportive environments. That's the art of the mentally healthy conversation.

Let's . . . live in Evenhood

Evenhood isn't just the name of an organisation. It's a way of living.

The environment you live in has a massive impact on your wellbeing. And one of the biggest things you encounter in your daily life is other people.

When other people compete with you, assess you, judge you and try to be better than you, or claim that they are better than you, this is an environment that can damage your wellbeing. When other people say that you ought to be able to do something, or you should like something, or it's not normal to dislike something, this is an environment that can damage your wellbeing.

The opposite of this sort of environment is one in which people allow you to be yourself. They value you for who you are. They treat you with kindness, respect and compassion. In this environment we support each other's wellbeing.

I call this approach to life 'evenhood'. Anyone can choose to have a mindset based in evenhood; although, sadly, not everyone does. In an environment where people live in evenhood you will be treated equally to everyone else. You won't be expected to look, dress, behave, act or talk in a particular way; or be anything in particular - except yourself. Indeed, evenhood is a mindset that wants you to be yourself and values you just as you are.

This guide is going to reveal what you need to know about evenhood and how living in evenhood can support your wellbeing.

Let's . . . Be A More Resilient You!

You're now going to take 12 easy steps forward to Be A More Resilient You! There's nothing complicated about this. Nothing medical. Nothing scientific. Just a few straightforward exercises and some mindful reflection.

Your Wellbeing Journal

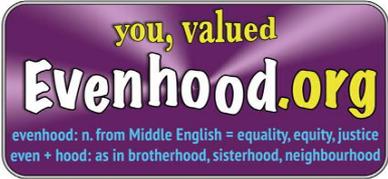
This wellbeing guide take you through a Wellbeing Journal, which you'll find at the back of this guide, and see how it will help you manage your wellbeing and strengthen your resilience. You can print any of the pages, as often as you like, for free, from the Evenhood website which you'll find at www.evenhood.org.

This Wellbeing Journal is designed to be a tool that you can constantly refresh to keep on top of your wellbeing for life.



WELLBEING JOURNAL

Brought to you by Evenhood
A social enterprise - for support, not profit



**Helping you manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience
and have mentally healthy conversations**

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Wellbeing Journal Page 1

Step #1

What does “Resilience” mean to you?

Resilience is a confusing concept. If I asked you to research it, you’d find that it’s about things like: being steadfast, having the courage of your convictions, having elasticity, being adaptable, being flexible, being rigid, being unmovable, not wavering, having the ability to spring back, having gravitas, having authority and so on.

That’s a confusing list of contradictions.

If you look at resilience in the natural world, you’ll find another set of contradictions. We’ve already seen how Resilient Trevor becomes weak and incapable if he ends up in the Antarctic. It’s the same elsewhere in the natural world too. Things that you might think of as more resilient (elephant vs bird, whale vs clown fish, oak tree vs poppy etc) aren’t always resilient. It depends on their environment.

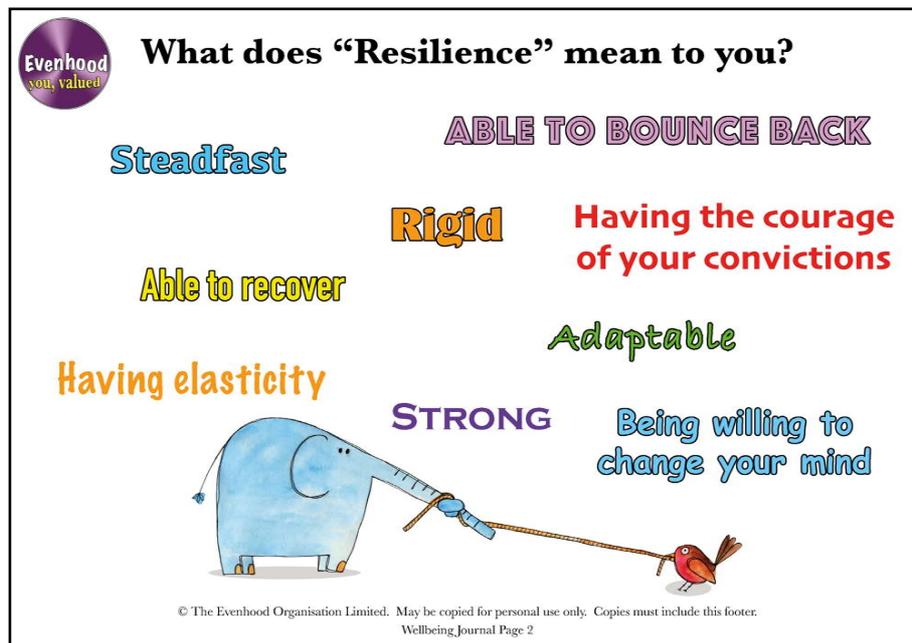
What is more resilient in a drought – the lumbering elephant or the bird that can fly away? What is more resilient when faced with a harpoon – the whale or the clown fish? What is more resilient in a gale – the oak tree or the poppy?

This glimpse into the natural world gives you an idea of how you could think of resilience, because what we find is that it depends on the individual AND their environment.

In the right environment for you, you feel comfortable. Someone else, in the same environment, might be totally uncomfortable. As you move away from your preferred environment you become increasingly uncomfortable.

Your first step to help you Be A More Resilient You! is for you to work out what resilience means to you. This is important - don’t adopt someone else’s definition of resilience. Decide what it means to you.

Take a look at page 2 of the Wellbeing Journal and spend a few moments reflecting on what resilience means to you.



It’s important to understand that other people define resilience differently. In life someone may challenge you for lacking in resilience, when really you just don’t share their view of what resilience is. They might accuse you of being weak because, for example, you changed your mind. They might tell you that you lack resilience because you don’t have the courage of your convictions. You, however, might think that changing your mind is the right thing to do; and shows strength of character, honesty and a willingness to see another person’s point of view. To you, that’s resilience.

If that’s your definition, stick with it. Don’t let others tell you that you’re wrong. Resilience is about you and your preferred environment. If you put a lot of effort into being someone else’s definition of resilience, you run the risk of chipping away at your own wellbeing.

Step #2

Map out your Personal Environment

Everyone's lives are different, and people experience very different situations in their day to day lives. You do too.

Sometimes things might just pass you by and you don't think about them, but everything impacts your wellbeing. All the situations you experience every day have an impact on how comfortable or uncomfortable you feel. You'll find it helpful to be mindful about all aspects of your environment so that you know what sort of situations have the biggest impact on your wellbeing.

Mindful wellbeing is all about you becoming more aware of the situations that have an impact on your wellbeing.

Let's start with one really easy example. Food. Everyone needs food to survive. Food gives you energy. Food has a major impact on your wellbeing. Without healthy food you wouldn't develop properly.

When you have choices about food you might generally choose the right food to help you develop and perform. But sometimes you might choose food that is not good for you.

Food wonderfully illustrates the impact of situations on your wellbeing because food can do various things for you.

First - it can give you a steady release of energy. It can nurture you, help you grow, build your strength, provide you with the nutrients you need to perform and so on.

Second - it can give you a big and instant boost of energy which makes you feel great. You may feel wonderful. Yet when that instant boost of energy runs out, you might feel worn out, low in energy and possibly low in mood too.

Third - it can give you a great experience, because it tastes so fantastic. But it might not actually be that good for you, particularly if you eat it everyday.

Fourth - it can harm you either because you eat something that is not good for you and it makes you ill or triggers an allergy. Or it might harm you because you eat it to excess.

This one example of food opens the door to mindfulness. You could raise your awareness of all the different foods that you eat and think about the impact these might have on your physical and mental wellbeing.

Try taking a small item of food such as a raisin, a grape, a segment of orange, a cube of bread or a small chunk of chocolate. Put it in your mouth, but don't chew. Just bite once to halve it and let it rest in your mouth. Move it around a little and let it pass over your tongue. Notice the texture, the flavour, how it tastes and smells. After a while, bite it again and then move it around your mouth once more. Notice how the texture, flavour, taste and smell change over time. Do this for a while - as long as you can without chewing continuously or swallowing it too soon. Notice as much as you can. That's mindfulness. That's you living in the present moment and noticing things as they happen.

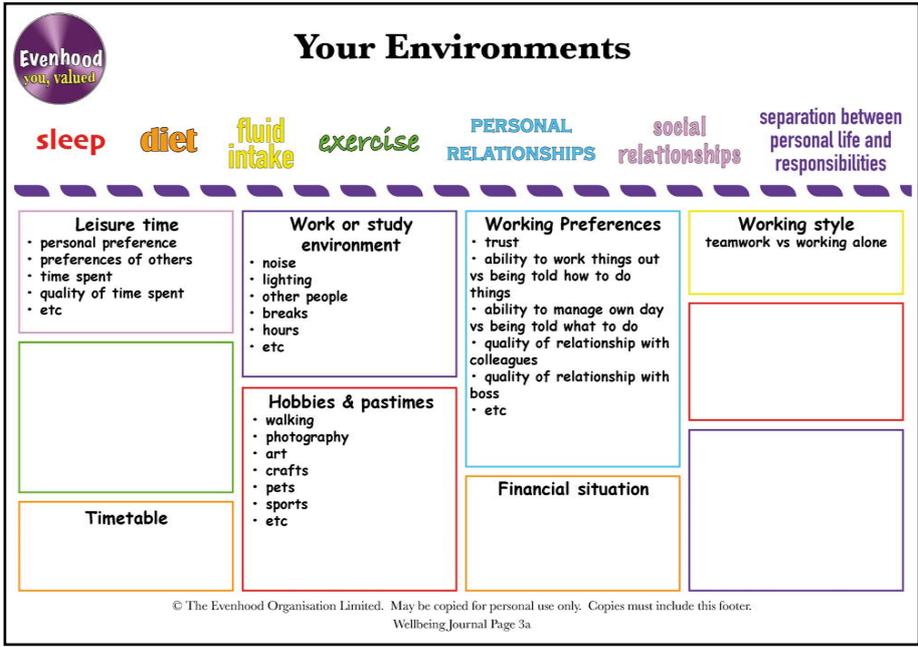
We've now looked at how you can be mindful of the food you eat. Now think about all the other situations you face in your daily life. Not just eating, but your sleep, what you drink, the people you spend time with, the things you do, your hobbies, your studies or your job, the environments you study or work in (lighting, noise, temperature, other people etc), things you watch, music you listen to, books you read and so on.

To help you, here are two pages from the Wellbeing Journal. These pages set out lots of different types of environment that you might find yourself in each day. These might be at home, with family, friends or other people; they might reflect what life is like for you at school, university or in your workplace. Some will apply to you. Some won't. There are spaces on the pages for you to add some more of your own. Look at pages 3a and 3b of the Wellbeing Journal. They capture the very many different environments that you face in life. These might be at home, with family, friends or other people; they might reflect what life is like for you at school, university or in your workplace.

On the top row of the first page there's a list of environments that are relevant to everyone. Most of us have broadly similar needs for these aspects of our life.

We tend to need about 8 hours sleep a night - some a bit more and some a bit less. Our diets and fluid intake are broadly similar. We all need exercise. We all need personal and social relationships with others. And we all need some degree of separation between our personal life and our work, studies or other

responsibilities. The extent to which we need these things varies between different people; but these are all things that we need in order to maintain a healthy wellbeing.



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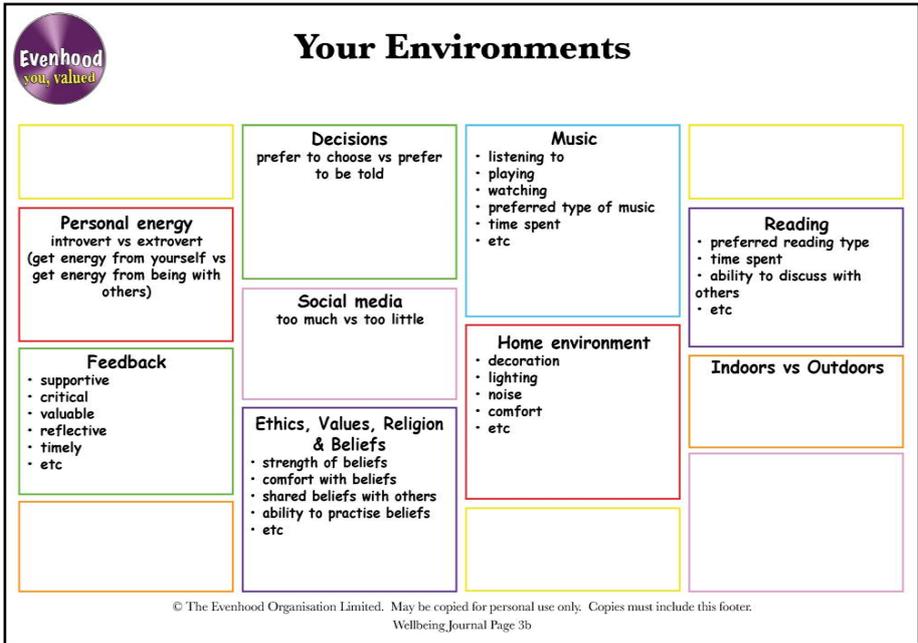
Your Environments

sleep diet fluid intake exercise PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS social relationships separation between personal life and responsibilities

Leisure time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal preference preferences of others time spent quality of time spent etc 	Work or study environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> noise lighting other people breaks hours etc 	Working Preferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trust ability to work things out vs being told how to do things ability to manage own day vs being told what to do quality of relationship with colleagues quality of relationship with boss etc 	Working style teamwork vs working alone
Timetable	Hobbies & pastimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> walking photography art crafts pets sports etc 	Financial situation	

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Wellbeing Journal Page 3a

Beyond this short list, there is then a much more personal list. Everyone's life is different. What you can do next on these pages of the Wellbeing Journal is to reflect on your daily life and create a map of all the different environments you experience in your life.



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Your Environments

	Decisions prefer to choose vs prefer to be told	Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> listening to playing watching preferred type of music time spent etc 	
Personal energy introvert vs extrovert (get energy from yourself vs get energy from being with others)	Social media too much vs too little	Home environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> decoration lighting noise comfort etc 	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> preferred reading type time spent ability to discuss with others etc
Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supportive critical valuable reflective timely etc 	Ethics, Values, Religion & Beliefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strength of beliefs comfort with beliefs shared beliefs with others ability to practise beliefs etc 		Indoors vs Outdoors

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Wellbeing Journal Page 3b

A lot of the time we don't think about many of the environments we face each day. So do take some time to mindfully reflect on different aspects of your day and think about the environments that you face. Mark those that apply to you and use the empty boxes to create a full map of the situations and environments that are relevant to you on a daily basis.

Don't think for now about whether there's any connection between these environments and your wellbeing. We'll do that later. Just focus on creating a complete map of the environments that you face each day.

Step #3

Reflect on your daily wellbeing

Next we're going to take a look at how you feel each day. Turn to page 4a of your Wellbeing Journal. Here you can make a record of how you feel each day. One page covers 28 entries; so that's every day for four weeks, which works well for most people.

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
very uncomfortable (high)																												
uncomfortable (high)																												
comfortable																												
uncomfortable (low)																												
very uncomfortable (low)																												

I've seen people who choose to do this several times a day. Others might just do it every few days. This is fine - it's all a choice and a personal preference. The only steer I give is to do it frequently enough so that you take it seriously and so that you build up a regular picture of how your wellbeing varies over time.

Let's assume you do this every day. When you mark your score for the day you put a cross in the box that best matches how comfortable you feel about the day. I deliberately use the word 'comfortable'. This isn't a medical diagnosis; it's just about how you feel. So there are no big definitions here. It's simply about how you feel when you look back on your day.

You might score a day in the green zone where you feel comfortable with how your day went. Don't do a great deal of analysis about this. Just think about the day as a whole and give it an overall score. Don't get bogged down in thinking about the individual things that happened that day.

If you think back over your day and decide you were a bit low, or down; or if you didn't have much energy and didn't feel like doing things, you might mark yourself in the lower yellow zone. You might mark yourself as being in the lower red zone if you felt really low, deeply depressed or at risk of personal harm.

These amber and red 'low' areas tend to make sense. The opposite 'high' red and yellow areas can be a bit troublesome and need more of an explanation.

Let's say you have a day where you were full of energy, active and felt like you were in a great mood. When you later reflect back on your day; if you say to yourself that this was genuinely a good day for you, then of course you mark yourself in the green zone. Sometimes though, you could reflect back over the day and you might think that you were high-spirited to the point of taking risks, or you were over-confident about your abilities. Perhaps you were pushy with other people and maybe you upset others with your enthusiasm. Or perhaps you were so energetic that you risk burning out - maybe not in a day or two, but over a period of time. If any of this is the case, you might feel uncomfortable when you look back over the day, even though it felt fine in the moment. If so, you would mark yourself in the uncomfortable high yellow or red zones. This sort of high-spirited, high-energy day can sometimes lead to wellbeing challenges down the line.

Over time, this exercise enables you to build up a picture of how you feel each day. What you're going to do next is take this one step further by having a closer look at the environments you face each day and the influence these have on how comfortable you feel.

Step #4

Reflect on each aspect of your environment

In this next step you start to mindfully reflect on each aspect of your environment as you mapped it out in Step #2 and think about how these impacted your daily wellbeing scores from Step #3.

Take a look at page 5 of the Wellbeing Journal. This page covers those aspects of your environment that are common to everyone.



Assess Your Environments

Environments Common to Everyone

How do you feel about . . .	Impact on Wellbeing		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
... the quality of your sleep?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... the quality of your diet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... the quality of your fluid intake (including alcohol)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... how much exercise you take?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... the quality of your social relationships?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... the quality of your personal relationships?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... the separation you maintain between your responsibilities and your personal life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Wellbeing Journal Page 5

Pages 6 to 9 of the Wellbeing Journal help you examine those aspects of your environment that are personal to you. You have three pages of some suggested environments and then some blank pages so that you can assess and record your personal environment.

On these pages your self-reflection is going to go a bit deeper. You're moving on from looking at your overall wellbeing for a whole day. Now you're looking at lots of different aspects of your environment. On the left you can write down a description of each particular situation in your environment. Then on the right you can mark whether that situation has a negative, neutral or positive impact on your wellbeing. You can make some notes to record what that impact is and your thoughts on why.



Assess Your Environments

Your Personal Environment

How do you feel about . . .	Impact on Wellbeing		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
... reading; and do you get sufficient chance to read what you most enjoy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... listening to music; and can you listen to the music you most enjoy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... sports and activities; and do you get the chance to practise them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... your ability to make decisions (do you prefer to have choices or do you prefer to be told)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... religion, philosophy, values and ethics; and can you live your preferred way of life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... whether your environment suits your personality as an introvert or extrovert?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... your use of social media, the internet and digital socialising (too much or too little)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Wellbeing Journal Page 6

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Assess Your Environments

Your Personal Environment

How do you feel about . . .	Impact on Wellbeing		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
... your financial situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... your hobbies and past-times; and do you get chance to practise them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... your home / work / university / school etc environment (light, noise, people interaction, breaks, facilities etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... your free time; and do you get to do the things you enjoy doing to relax?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... the time you spend indoors and outdoors; and is the balance right between the two?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... your timetable; and do you get to choose or are you told how to spend your time (and which do you prefer)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... how you are given instructions; and do you have choices or are you told what to do (and which do you prefer)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Wellbeing Journal Page 7

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Assess Your Environments

Your Personal Environment

How do you feel about . . .	Impact on Wellbeing		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
... your family / friends / partner / others; and do you get enough time together and do the things you enjoy doing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... whether you are able to be yourself or whether you have to make an effort to 'fit in'?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Wellbeing Journal Page 8

Once you do this over a period of days, weeks and months you'll start to notice patterns. The outcome of this exercise is that you will identify a number of things that commonly contribute to you having a challenging day. You might find that sometimes things build up, almost unnoticed, and then eventually result in you having a challenging time.

You will also identify a number of things that commonly contribute to you feeling resilient and having a positive sense of wellbeing.

Some of these things might be well-known to you already. However, doing this exercise can be a really big revelation and you might discover some truly amazing things about the little things in life that have such a big influence on your wellbeing. You may discover all sorts of things that you never realised had such an impact on you.

This is why it's important to map out your environment in as much detail as possible. I've worked with people who find a significant impact from things like the noise around them, the sort of light they experience (natural vs artificial), taking breaks, what and when they eat, how they engage with other people and so on. Without mindful reflection, you might not notice the significant impact that these small things can have.

After doing this exercise for a period of time, you will start to develop a list of things about your environment that make a big difference to your state of wellbeing, both positive and negative.

Step #5

Start to make some choices

The ability to make choices is itself a positive thing for wellbeing. In this next step you will make some choices for yourself. You will choose what to do about the things in your environment that you find challenging. You can also look at the things in your environment that you find supportive and decide how to maximise these things in your life.

Turn now to page 10 in your Wellbeing Journal.

The worksheet is titled "Your Choices" and features a logo in the top left corner that says "Evenhood you valued". The main content is a grid with three columns: "Your Challenging Situations" (red header), "Your Choices" (yellow header), and "Your Supportive Situations" (blue header). The "Your Choices" column is further divided into three sub-columns: "Avoid", "Adjust", and "Adapt". The grid consists of 7 rows and 3 main columns. At the bottom of the grid, there is a copyright notice: "© The Evenhood Organisation Limited. May be copied for personal use only. Copies must include this footer. Wellbeing Journal Page 10".

Using the last exercise, make a list of all those things that you find challenging. Write these down in the column on the left side of the page. On the right side of the page make a list of all those things that you find support your wellbeing.

For your challenging situations you have three choices. This is important. Most of the time you do not HAVE to expose yourself to challenging environments (just like Resilient Trevor doesn't HAVE to live in the Antarctic). So don't let other people tell you that you HAVE to be constantly exposed to one particular challenge or that you SHOULD get used to your challenges. Most of the time there are choices you can make.

These choices are: avoid, adjust or adapt. Let's give you a short statement about what each means.

“Avoid” means that you have no or very limited exposure to the challenging environment. It might not be complete avoidance. That may not be possible or you might not want to completely avoid the situation. There's a lot you can do to make sure that you are not constantly exposed to something that you find challenging, even if it is quite common in your environment.

“Adjust” is where you have to or want to do a particular thing but you find it very challenging. So, you choose to adjust the way you do it. A common adjustment is to collaborate, team-up or share with someone else who helps you out. Or, if appropriate, they might even do the challenging thing for you (and, in return, hopefully you can find something to do for them too).

It isn't always possible to adjust. You can't have someone take an exam for you or do your entire job for you; but there might be aspects of your studies, job or responsibilities that other people can help with. We can do this in family life or in social groups too, where different people play to their own strengths to help each other out.

“Adapt” is where you decide that this is really something that you want to get good at and find less challenging. So you decide to train your brain to become more comfortable with it until the extent of the challenge is softened. Brain training might help you to get to a position where the challenge disappears entirely and becomes something you actively enjoy.

Brain training is something we are going to look at more closely in the next step. So you might want to read that first to see what it involves before committing yourself to adapting to one of your challenging situations.

Let's put these choices into an example. Say that you find that speaking to an audience is a really difficult wellbeing challenge for you. So, you could choose to avoid it as much as possible or totally. This might be fine if speaking publicly isn't an important part of your studies or work. You decide that you don't need to be good at speaking to succeed. You'll do fine without it. So, for the sake of your wellbeing, it's best avoided or minimised.

Or you might do a task which has several components, one of which involves speaking. If you chose to avoid public speaking, you simply couldn't complete your studies or do your job. So, you might choose to team up with someone else. Perhaps you agree to help them out with some research or drafting, which you enjoy, and they agree to take the main speaking role, with you in a lesser role. Or, if practical, they take on the speaking role entirely.

Or you might say to yourself that you really want to conquer this fear you have of public speaking. So you explore some brain training techniques (that we'll come to in the next step) to help you adapt by having less fearful thoughts about public speaking. You get support from others to help you build some experience with some short, low risk practising, before you take on higher profile speaking challenges.

Now that you know your options, you can start to choose what you'd like to do with your challenging situations. Don't worry if you're unsure at this stage. Have a go at making a choice. You can always revisit it later and decide to make a different choice.

Once you've done it, cast your eye over page 10 and just ask yourself: do you feel comfortable with your choices and do they seem achievable?

If your reaction is that they might be a bit unrealistic or difficult to achieve, have another think and make sure you feel comfortable with your choices. Remember - these are your choices. Choose what is right for you - not what you think other people want you to choose.

Step #6

Brain Train to Build Resilience

In just the same way that gradually building up your physical stamina can help you train to run a marathon, so you can gradually build up your mental stamina and brain train to Be A More Resilient You!

Brain training can help you become more comfortable in situations that you currently find challenging.

Brain training is simple to explain. It involves becoming more self-aware about the thoughts going on in your mind when you are feeling uncomfortable, stressed and challenged mentally. Often these thoughts happen at a sub-conscious level. You're not aware of them. Once you discover what these thoughts are, you can change them.

So, you can make your thoughts more comfortable. In turn your mental wellbeing becomes more comfortable.

Let's look at a framework to help you explore how these sub-conscious thoughts work in your mind. Imagine that you have four different brains, all competing for attention in your mind.

Your Instinctive Brain is a primitive brain. Like all animals, humans have an instinctive brain to help us survive by giving us an instinct to do things like eat, drink, run away from danger, sleep, have offspring and so on. Your instinctive brain responds to a situation with an immediate command to embrace or run away; to become loving or aggressive; to eat, sleep and so on (fight, flight and essential survival). Without any conscious thought on your part, this instinctive brain simply says: "I want to . . ." or "I need to . . .".

Your Experiential Brain is the brain you develop over time as you grow up and have more and more experiences. Some of these experiences are good, so you are programmed to want more of them. Some are bad, so you are programmed to want less of them. With your experiential brain you might respond to a situation by sub-consciously going through the filing-system in your memory of previous similar situations. This helps you decide what you want to do now, based on whether you liked or disliked doing the same thing, or something similar, before. You might avoid something that you have disliked before; or do something again that you enjoyed doing before. This more evolved experiential brain says: "I liked this before, so I'll do it again" or "I disliked this before, so I wont do it again".

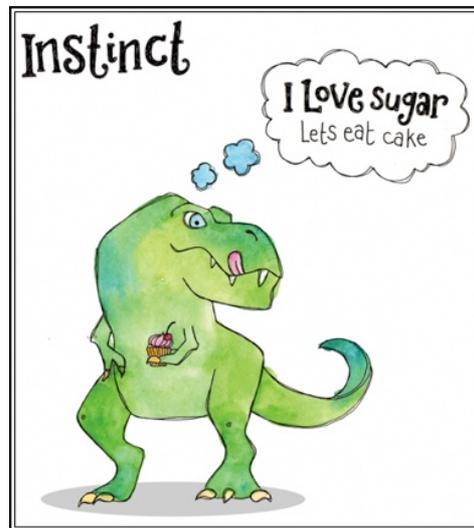
Your Logical Brain is the brain you develop through your advanced ability as a human to think things through. Your logical brain might respond to a situation by working out the pros and cons and deciding what the best thing to do would be. Like a Judge, this logical brain says: "On balance, the best thing to do is . . ."

Your Values-based Brain is the part of your thinking that applies a sense of good and bad, right or wrong to a situation. For some people this might be about ethics, or humanity, or it might be about religion, personal values, social values, family values or being a good person. Your values-based brain might respond to a situation by working out what the right thing to do would be, based on your values. Like a role-model, mentor, or guide, this values-based brain says: "The right thing to do is . . .".

Let's now give this an example to see how these four brains might compete for attention in a way that has an impact on our wellbeing. Let's say that you work or study with several other people. One of them is called Bob and he has brought in cakes for everyone, to celebrate his birthday.

Your brain is now going to help you make a choice about whether to have a cake.

Your Instincts are most likely going to prompt you to say ‘yes’ to food, particularly if you’re hungry. Your instinctive brain usually craves sugar and carbohydrates (admittedly that’s supposed to be sugar from healthy fruits - but this is the instinctive brain, so it’s a bit primitive and can’t work out the difference!). Not everyone has this instinct for cake; but let’s assume you do for now.



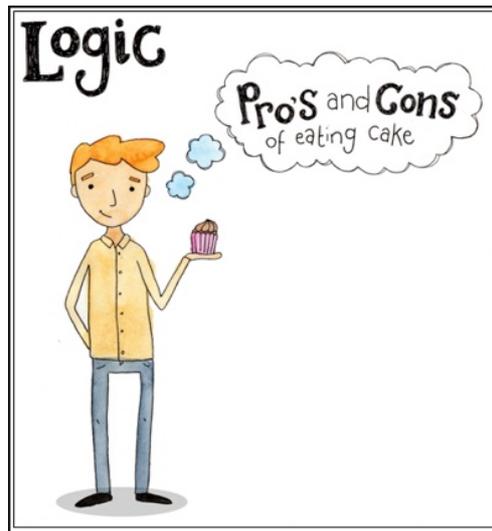
Your past happy experiences of cake-eating might also prompt you to accept the offer of a cake. Cakes are often brought out at happy occasions - birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and so on. So you might associate cakes with a good, happy experience. Your experiential brain may well want to say ‘yes’ to that cake.



Then again, you might have had a recent bad experience from over-indulgence. Or perhaps you have a gluten intolerance or diabetes; in which case your experiences in life would likely lead your experiential brain to say ‘no’ to that cake.

Next your logical brain kicks-in. It weighs up the pros and cons to help you decide what the ‘best’ thing to do is. Perhaps it finds no good reason to not eat cake. You’re hungry, it sounds like a good experience, you’re not on a diet or in an exercise regime and you’re not just about to go out for dinner. So your logical brain concludes that eating cake is the best thing to do.

On the other hand, perhaps you don’t want to ruin a meal out later, or you’re trying to lose weight. In which case eating cake wouldn’t be a good idea. Your logical brain might now want to overrule your instinct for cake and your desire for a good experience.

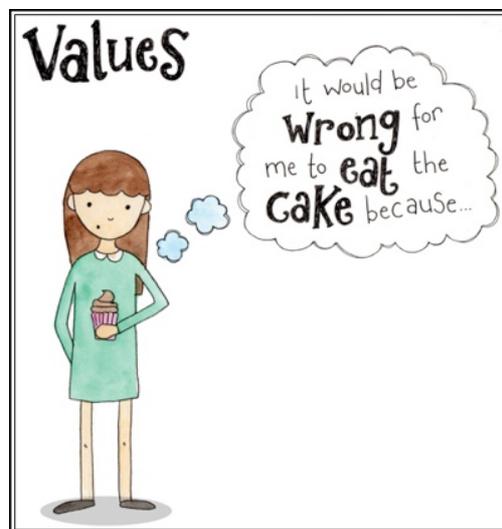


If this happens you've got a bit of a tug-of-war going on between your different brains. You could have instinct and experience saying 'go ahead, eat the cake'. But your logical brain says 'no, don't ruin the meal out later'.

Finally, your values-based brain finally kicks in. I find the values-based brain amazing for the influence it can have on decision-making.

Let's say you really want cake, you see no reason not to have any - you're hungry, cake is fantastic and eating it is not going to ruin a meal later. **HOWEVER**, you know that someone you work or study with has an eating disorder and you don't want to eat cake in front of them as you know they find this difficult. So you politely decline the offer of cake out of your thoughtfulness for the other person.

That's pretty impressive stuff. Your values will stop you from doing something you really otherwise want to do.



Or think about this for an amazing outcome. Let's say that you have no instinct for cake - you're full and have no appetite, you haven't got a particularly sweet-tooth so you don't really find cake that good an experience. And you are going out for a meal later which you don't want to ruin. Nothing about you wants this cake. **HOWEVER**, your values might kick in and say: 'hang-on, this is Bob's birthday. He's gone to the trouble of bringing cake in for everyone. I'd better have some.'

Again, what an amazing outcome. Your values make you eat cake that you don't actually want, just so that you don't upset Bob.

Even in this fairly daft example of deciding whether to eat cake - these four brains can produce a whole range of conflicting decisions. Often, we just work out these conflicts and get on with life; but sometimes they can produce challenges to our overall wellbeing.

In every decision where there's a conflict like this, we eventually have to go-for-it and allow one part of our brain to be more dominant and make the decision. And so we have to live with the conflict. However, these conflicts can niggle away at us and damage our wellbeing.

Sometimes we make decisions by giving more weight to one part of our brain and this can have longer-term harmful effects on our wellbeing:

- In the spur of the moment we might choose a fantastic experience which we later feel guilty about because it offends our values.
- Without putting much thought into it we might follow our instincts, only to regret it later because it didn't turn out to be the logical thing to do.
- We weigh everything up and choose the best decision, having thought through all the pros and cons; and then we have to live with a decision that we just don't like because it's a bad experience.
- We might make a choice out of a sense of values, but find that it really doesn't turn out to be a good experience or the best thing for us.

These conflicts often happen at a subconscious level and they can be confusing and uncomfortable.

Brain training helps you to raise your awareness of these thoughts, so that you can have a better idea of how and why they have such an impact on your wellbeing.

Then you can start to make little changes. You might gradually encourage one part of your brain to have more dominance because this will produce better outcomes for your wellbeing:

- You might, for example, choose to give more power to your values and try to avoid doing things on an instinctive impulse.
- Or (quite the opposite) you might choose to dampen down your values because they stop you from doing things you enjoy and this has an impact on your wellbeing.
- You might choose to put more effort into weighing up the pros and cons before making a decision, because you are prone to doing things that are a good experience at the time, but which you later regret.

Think through what your brains are telling you for each of your challenging situations and try and work out which brain would produce a better outcome for your long-term wellbeing if you allowed it to be more dominant in your decision-making or thinking.

To help you do this, turn to page 11a of the Wellbeing Journal.

Start with one of your Challenging Situations and spend a bit of time thinking about how your brains work in this situation.

The image shows a worksheet titled "Brain Training for Resilience" with the Evenhood logo in the top left corner. The worksheet is divided into three main sections, each with a colored header bar and a large white box for writing. The first section has a yellow-to-green gradient header: "The challenge you'd like to adapt to by brain training is . . .". The second section has a red-to-blue gradient header: "The way you think about this situation now is . . .". Below this header is a small box containing four prompts: "Instinct: You want / need...", "Experience: You like / dislike...", "Logic: The best thing...", and "Values: The right thing...". The third section has a yellow-to-purple gradient header: "The way you're going to think about this situation is . . .". Below this header is another small box with the same four prompts. At the bottom of the worksheet, there is a small copyright notice: "© The Evenhood Organisation Limited. May be copied for personal use only. Copies must include this footer. Wellbeing Journal Page 11a".

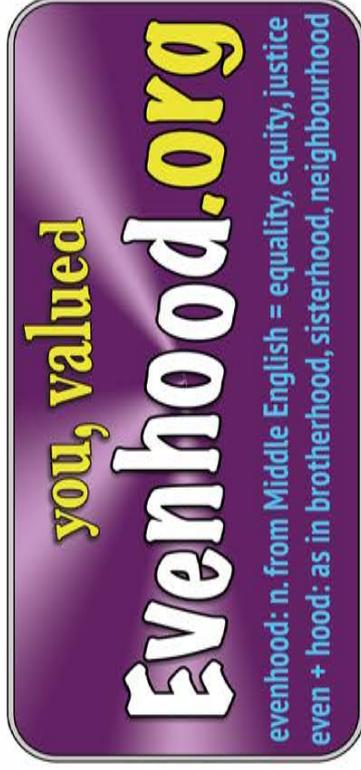
Use this page of the Wellbeing Journal to make a record of what you discover when you think about this particular challenging situation:

- What does your Instinctive Brain say you want or need?
- What does your Experiential Brain say you like or dislike?
- What does your Logical Brain conclude the best thing to do is, when it weighs up the pros and cons?
- What does your Values-based Brain say the right thing to do is?



WELLBEING JOURNAL

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Helping you manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience
and have mentally healthy conversations



What does “Resilience” mean to you?

ABLE TO BOUNCE BACK

Steadfast

Rigid

**Having the courage
of your convictions**

Able to recover

Adaptable

Having elasticity

STRONG

**Being willing to
change your mind**





Your Environments

sleep **diet** **fluid intake** **exercise** **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS** **social relationships** separation between personal life and responsibilities

Leisure time

- personal preference
- preferences of others
- time spent
- quality of time spent
- etc

Timetable

Work or study environment

- noise
- lighting
- other people
- breaks
- hours
- etc

Hobbies & pastimes

- walking
- photography
- art
- crafts
- pets
- sports
- etc

Working Preferences

- trust
- ability to work things out vs being told how to do things
- ability to manage own day vs being told what to do
- quality of relationship with colleagues
- quality of relationship with boss
- etc

Financial situation

Working style

teamwork vs working alone



Assess Your Environments

How do you feel about . . .	Impact on Wellbeing		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
. . . the quality of your sleep?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
. . . the quality of your diet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
. . . the quality of your fluid intake (including alcohol)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
. . . how much exercise you take?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
. . . the quality of your social relationships?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
. . . the quality of your personal relationships?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
. . . the separation you maintain between your responsibilities and your personal life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Your Choices

Your Challenging Situations	Your Choices Avoid Adjust Adapt	Your Supportive Situations



Brain Training for Resilience

The challenge you'd like to adapt to by brain training is . . .

The way you think about this situation now is . . .

Instinct: You want / need...
Experience: You like / dislike...
Logic: The best thing...
Values: The right thing...

The way you're going to think about this situation is . . .

Instinct: You want / need...
Experience: You like / dislike...
Logic: The best thing...
Values: The right thing...



Brain Training for Resilience

The challenge you'd like to adapt to by brain training is . . .

The way you think about this situation now is . . .

Instinct: You want / need...
Experience: You like / dislike...
Logic: The best thing...
Values: The right thing...

The way you're going to think about this situation is . . .

Instinct: You want / need...
Experience: You like / dislike...
Logic: The best thing...
Values: The right thing...



Your Skills, Talents & Abilities

KIND TO OTHERS

ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE

lots of experience

Gets things done

Good decision maker

A good listener

ENTERTAINING

Good at sports

Knowledge

Trustworthy

Good at coming up with new ideas

Helpful

good at planning

Clever

teamworker

Spots problems

Problem solver



Evenhood Card[®]

for wellbeing & resilience

The situations that I find challenging are:

Blank rounded rectangular box for writing.

The situations that help me stay resilient are:

Blank rounded rectangular box for writing.

My skills, talents & abilities are:

Blank rounded rectangular box for writing.



“Let me challenge the thought that mental wellbeing is all about the mind; and that when things go wrong, the solution lies only in science, medicine and therapy.

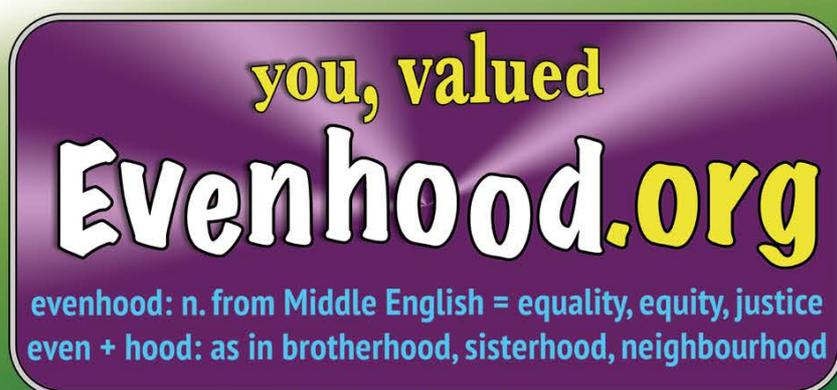
Your mental wellbeing is affected by your environment too. In the right environment, you thrive. In more challenging environments, you struggle.

This different way of thinking opens up a world of possibilities. There’s so much that you and others around you can do to help you live in an environment that suits you best.

‘Be A More Resilient You!’ gives you some straightforward and practical steps you can take to manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience and have mentally healthy conversations with others to get their support.

Let Evenhood change your mind about mental wellbeing.”

Jonathan Phelan, Founder - Evenhood



ISBN 9781916017122



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