

Sustainable Living and Wellbeing

Sustainability



What is Sustainable Living?

Sustainable living is the avoidance of activities that deplete the natural resources of the earth.

This requires a keen awareness of your lifestyle, as many activities that are considered sustainable or labeled as green-friendly, don't actually meet the guidelines for sustainable living.

How to tell what is Sustainable?

There are many factors to consider when determining if an activity is sustainable. A good place to start is to evaluate the ethics involved. Some questions to consider when thinking about sustainability could be:

Is the activity/business local? Large scale practices often leave a large carbon footprint in transportation waste.



Does it provide a service that bypasses another more wasteful alternative?



Does the activity rely on natural resources of power, or carbon based fuels?



What is Well-being?

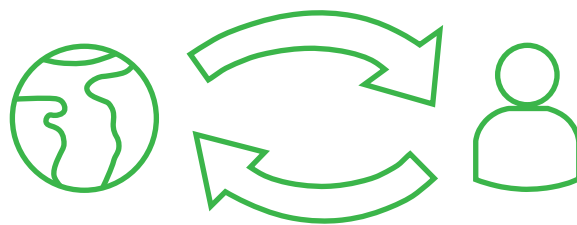
Well-being is the active process of increasing one's awareness, learning, and decision making to support the cultivation of health, a meaningful life, and a sense of being one's best self, with an underlying acceptance that this is a life-long process.

How does Sustainability affect Well-being?

Conceptually, a key factor in mental health is relationships.

We, as humans, have relationships with family, friends, partners, and occasionally passing-by strangers. But we also have relationships with our pets and even inanimate objects we interact every day like food or our phone.

As we grow, we rely upon and build these relationships with everything in our environment and form a strong tie to the environment itself.



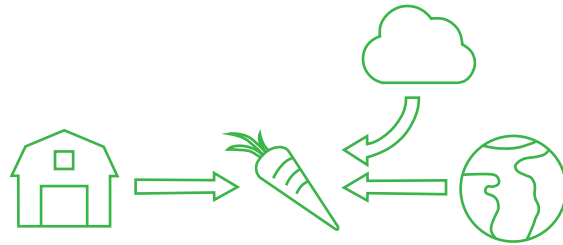
Understanding our relationship with the environment is crucial to determining the benefits from the choice to live sustainably.

By adopting, or even trending towards, living a sustainable lifestyle will make you aware of all these relationships. Like a spider within a web, you then get to make conscientious choices about the decisions you make, and about what you eat and do, based on all the information coming from your web.

Well-being (Continued)



An example of this new decision making process would be thinking about all the factors that go into your food (like where it comes from and how it got there) and using that knowledge to build a better relationship with your food by choosing a more sustainable option.



As you start to make more ethical and sustainable choices, you are likely to feel better about your relationships while making a positive contribution to your environment.

The positive energy that you put into the environment around you is going to give you a sense of meaning and tie deeper connections to others in your life.

It is also worth noting that helping others, including generalities like the environment, is shown to release dopamine in the brain meaning you will likely be feeling better by simply doing more.



Reflection Questions



Reflection Question 1

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Think about your relationship with the environment around you. When was the last time you engaged with your environment? How did that impact you (mentally, physically, etc ?)

TIP: The next time you're outdoors take a moment to really be present in the world around you and observe how it makes you feel, think, etc.

Reflection Question 2//

Reflection Question 2.

What do you think are some of the potential health benefits of spending more time in 'green' spaces?

TIP: try keeping a low-maintenance indoor plant (ie. Succulent) by your desk to green up your space a bit.
