

The 4 keys to emotional well-being

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If you're satisfied with your life, you probably have emotional well-being.

Emotional well-being can be mastered just like any other skill, according to Richard Davidson, founder of the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

How? By developing four key traits, said Davidson, a neuroscientist.

The first is resilience. Research at the Center for Healthy Minds found that, over time, regular [mindfulness meditation](#) can help you learn how to bounce back from adversity. Mindfulness meditation teaches you to become aware of your thoughts and emotions, center yourself and decide how you would like to proceed with the rest of your day. (Find out more at [mindful.org](#).)

Having a [positive outlook](#) is the second key trait—both finding the positive in others and being positive in the way you approach life. Another type of [meditation](#) called [compassion meditation](#) is said to bring measurable changes after two weeks of 30-minute-a-day sessions. The goal is to switch from being judgmental to being caring.

Next is improving your attention level. A Harvard study found most people spend nearly half of their waking hours not paying attention to what they're doing. Letting the [mind](#) wander typically makes people unhappy, the researchers concluded. Practice focusing on the here and now, one task or activity at a time.

Finally, become more generous of spirit. This means feeling happy for others when they do well rather than being envious or bitter, emotions that only hurt you. Generous behavior activates circuits in the brain that promote well-being while enhancing the lives of those around you.

Yes, it takes time and effort to change your thinking and the way you see the world, but the benefits are infinite. And the more you practice, the more natural it will feel.

More information: Find out more about well-being at the [Center for Healthy Minds](#).

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