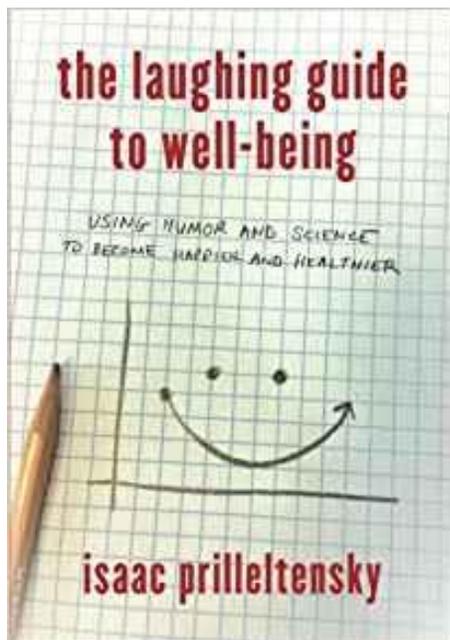


Book Review

Using Humor and Science to Become Happier and Healthier

“The Laughing Guide to Well-Being” by Isaac Prilleltensky

By Anna Zadora



The Laughing Guide to Well-Being: Using Humor and Science to Become Happier and Healthier is an attempt by Isaac Prilleltensky to address the widespread components of well-being with humor and science. The book, for example, addresses the social importance of intelligent laughing as a source of a better life and for an increased personal understanding of the pillars of an accomplished, meaningful, and healthy life. A particular emphasis is placed on concrete advice as an essential part of everyday well-being.

The first chapter, “Your Six Areas of Well-being,” concentrates on the acronym I COPPE (Interpersonal, Community, Occupational,

Physical, Psychological, and Economical well-being). Prilleltensky insets on the importance of “getting organized”—the first step toward well-being—and the book itself proves that: it is clear thanks to a coherent, organized structure. The following chapters explore each of his six areas of well-being.

A key-notion of well-being, for example, is that wealth “is far from money”; rather, it is about gaining capital in interpersonal, community, occupational, physical, and psychological facets of life and the capacity to translate this intellectual capital to a financially rewarding occupation. Prilleltensky differentiates happiness—momentary enjoyment and pleasure—from the more profound notion of well-being, which is the “satisfaction of life overall, relating to a sense of meaning and purpose, and invites individuals to keep in mind the practical application: Know Yourself, Help Yourself, Know Other, Help Other.

Understanding, however, must be followed by action, as reflected in his GREASE (Gradual, Rewarded, Easy, Alternatives, Supported and Educated) strategies. Each action should be reasonable, pragmatic, and result-orientated. To change an aspect of life, a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Time-limited) goal should help.

Interpersonal well-being refers to satisfaction in relationships that matter to us, and in which reciprocity, avoiding judgment, fairness, and co-creation of a sense of community with a “we” modality are

cornerstones. The “best enemy” for interpersonal well-being, he argues, is “to be right about everything,” which is no more than a compensation for incompetence. Effective and emphatic listening involves parking intrusive thoughts; identifying hidden needs, feelings, and beliefs of the other person; sharing with humility your opinions about them; asking open-ended questions; and refraining from judgment.

The following chapter, “Community Well-Being,” touches upon group and effective community building, as reflected in the acronym I VALUE IT (Inclusive host, Visionary, Asset seeker, Listener, Unique solution finder, Evaluator, Implementer, Trendsetter).

The fourth chapter, “Occupational Well-Being,” focuses on organizational efficiency, which consists of concentrating on important professional elements to reduce superficial and irrelevant ones. Feeling engaged and appreciated are among the important criteria for occupational well-being. An engaged, fair, and valued member of an organization is one who is able to help people and improve the organizational culture.

The subsequent chapter, “Physical Well-Being,” concerns how being mindful of the body is essential for health and wellness. Satisfaction with our own bodies starts with banal elements of physical well-being, like consuming healthy food and drinks and partaking in physical activity. BET I CAN (Behaviors, Emotions, Thoughts, Interactions, Context, Awareness and Next Step) provides means for achieving the chapter’s goals.

The sixth chapter, “Psychological Well-Being,” analyzes fundamental aspects of psychological well-being, including satisfaction with life, as well as acceptance and meaningful recognition, which in turn builds community links. Paths to experience self-recognition include self-care, self-acceptance, self-esteem, care, respect, and support. Avoiding negative

judgments that can have heavy consequences and accepting differences are also components of psychological well-being. Early sources of psychological well-being include one’s parents, caregivers, and teachers. Well-being is provided through simple and piratical verbs, such as do, feel, think, relate, observe, and reflect. Negative judgment and stress are the archenemies of well-being. One can build positive experiences through positive thoughts and relationships. Satisfaction, happiness, and meaning are essential for psychological well-being, representing evaluative, experiential, and eudaimonic well-being.

The next chapter, “Economic well-Being,” focuses not only on financial conditions, but also on the cost of living and distinguishing what is necessary from what is superfluous. Economic resources provide financial security for physical and psychological resources for a long time. Improving economic well-being consists in buying experiences instead of goods, buying time, postponing consumption, and investing in others.

Overall, Prilleltensky provides a lot of humor, clear practical examples, illustrations, and advice that relays uncomplicated, accessible, and relevant content to be used easily in everyday-life to improve the quality of life.

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Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky, an award winning community psychologist and humor writer, is vice provost for institutional culture and former dean of the school of education and human development at the University of Miami.

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