

Life lessons: Where psychology stands on living well

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Unfortunately for us, there is no formula for fulfillment or guide to life satisfaction; however, humans have turned to philosophy, religion and science time and again for answers to our existential questions. We may have come a long way since Confucius and Plato, and science continues to piece together some of the answers, but what have we learned so far?

Psychologists Nansook Park and Christopher Peterson from the University of Michigan turned to their own field to ask, "What is a good life and how can we achieve and sustain it?" In their article recently published in *Perspectives in [Psychological Science](#)*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, the authors explored the many ways [psychology](#) has contributed to, and continues to research, the science of living well.

So far we have learned from psychology that a good life includes experiencing more positive than [negative feelings](#), feeling like your life has been lived well, continually using your talents and strengths, having close interpersonal relationships, being engaged at work and other activities, being a part of a social community, perceiving that life has a meaning, and feeling healthy and safe. And while these conclusions may seem like common sense, we as humans fall short on knowing just how to obtain and maintain these qualities.

Psychology still has a ways to go until the perfect formula for a good life is found. As Park and Peterson put it, "At present, psychology knows more about people's problems and how to solve them than it does about

what it means to live well and how to encourage and maintain such a life." They suggest researchers across all disciplines of psychology come together and collaborate on their findings, perhaps pulling together a more complete picture of the human experience.

"In speaking about the psychological good life, we are fond of saying that other people matter," the authors concluded, "It appears that other people matter in science as well."

Source: Association for Psychological Science ([news](#) : [web](#))

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