

Why track? Why these categories?

We start with tracking 8 categories applicable to almost everyone, listed below, and then we add and subtract more individualized categories as needed. Tracking is effective because it helps us to process, reflect, learn about ourselves, see patterns, and make changes. It is easier to hold ourselves accountable to numbers, a graph, or an external responsibility than it is to our internal thoughts and feelings. Here are our 8 Categories:

- **Sense of purpose:** “Accumulating evidence suggests that a global sense of meaning in life is related to physical health, including increased longevity and reduced morbidity...Meaning in life is associated with reduced stress, more adaptive coping, and greater engagement in health-promoting behaviors... Our model proposes that effects of global sense of meaning are potentiated through increased meaning salience, or daily awareness of meaning in the moment, which enhances self-regulation.”ⁱ
- **Sense of control:** “Individuals reporting higher average daily control also experience greater average happiness.”ⁱⁱ
- **Hours of sleep/feeling rested:** The national sleep foundation recommends most adults below the age of 65 get 7-9 hours of sleep a night. Sleep debt is real, and should be addressed immediately just like any other debt or deficiency need. More information and tips for falling asleep can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Stress/coping with stress:** Some amount of stress can be healthy and motivating. How we deal with stress may be more important than inherent qualities of our stressorsⁱⁱⁱ
- **Diet:** 2+ cups of veggies a day according to the USDA.
- **Exercise:** Improves life-expectancy, mitigates and reduces symptoms of ailments including mental health issues, cancers, and physiological issues, and more.^{iv} 150 minutes of Aerobic activity and 2+ times a week of muscle strengthening activity is recommended, more is always better^v
- **Connection with others:** “Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives, the study revealed. Those ties protect people from life’s discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes.”^{vi}
- **Happiness:** The sum total of it all. Tracking it helps explore where it comes from.

ⁱ Hooker, Stephanie A., Kevin S. Masters, and Crystal L. Park. "A Meaningful Life Is a Healthy Life: A Conceptual Model Linking Meaning and Meaning Salience to Health." *Review of General Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2018): 11-24. doi:10.1037/gpr0000115.

ⁱⁱ Larson, Reed. "Is Feeling "in Control" Related to Happiness in Daily Life?" *Psychological Reports* 64, no. 3 (1989): 775-84. doi:10.2466/pr0.1989.64.3.775.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/index.shtml>

^{iv} <https://medlineplus.gov/benefitsofexercise.html>

^v https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/PAG_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

^{vi} <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>