

OUR WHOLE9+



Out and about in the English countryside.

Real wellbeing for me is much more than just food. It's also about essentials like **sleep**, **stress management** and **movement** and **play**.

My vision for Dom's Kitchen is for it to go beyond food and recipes and to instead be a portal of interesting and helpful information on different facets of health and wellness.

My starting point for this is the "**Whole9**" concept put forward by Melissa and Dallas Hartwig over at Whole9 Life. I've modified the language slightly plus added in a couple of extra factors but it's basically as per the Whole9 and hence why I'm calling it "our Whole9+".

THE WHOLE9+ FACTORS

1. Eat Well
2. Sleep Well
3. Move Well
4. Have Fun & Play
5. Be Mindful
6. Be Social
7. Get Outside In Nature
8. Embrace Personal Growth
9. Be Self Aware
10. Be Sustainable
11. Live a Low-Tox Life

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

So first off we have the three pillars that I consider essential to building lives of true wellbeing:

Eat well, sleep well and **move well**. Use of the term “move well” instead of “exercise” is deliberate because, like Melissa and Dallas, I think it better encompasses the wide array of health-promoting activity (such as lifting weights, high-intensity intervals, gym classes, swimming and the like) that play an important role in building a lifestyle of wellbeing.

Next **have fun and play** reminds us that playing (such as in a game of tag or splashing in puddles with your children) is a huge part of the puzzle that is true holistic health.

Being mindful is another critical factor— encompassing as it does a myriad of other factors within it. Here we're talking especially about taking the time to manage our stress levels through meditation and other techniques. Any one of the factors set out above can become a negative stressor in our lives if we do not give it adequate attention: for example, not eating enough, sleeping too little, over-exercising, being socially isolated, or having no fun and play in our lives.

Be social is a reference to creating a healthy support network (including face to face engagement as opposed to relying on online interaction alone). Being social has been shown to reduce stress, depression and anxiety. In addition it provides us with the impetus to be accountable, motivated and inspired into making big lifestyle changes.

Get outside in nature is about everything that is good about being in our natural environments, about getting out in the sun to get the vitamin D our bodies need, but also about being grounded and getting time in wide open green spaces.

I'd like to challenge myself and you to **embrace personal growth**. This can encompass everything from spirituality to expanding our knowledge of the world to charity work. Building goals, hobbies and pursuits other than those related to work or the gym keeps us growing as humans and can have an enormous positive impact on our stress levels and relationships.

Be self aware. What do we mean by that? We mean applying critical, introspective practices to our lives, creating awareness about our habits and preferences. We mean taking a good, hard look in the mirror, and truly owning what we see and taking steps to change things if we don't like what we see! We also mean have the self-awareness to know when it will be helpful to commit to an immoderate life and when it will be best to be moderate.

Finally the two last factors are ones we've added to the Whole9 list: **Be sustainable** is the first additional factor. By this I mean how to live a healthier life in harmony with our environment and in particular to consider deeper issues relevant to food production. The fact is we need to get more people producing food in a decentralized, sustainable fashion. As Robb Wolf says this is "Easy(ish) to say; quite another thing to actually get folks doing this."

