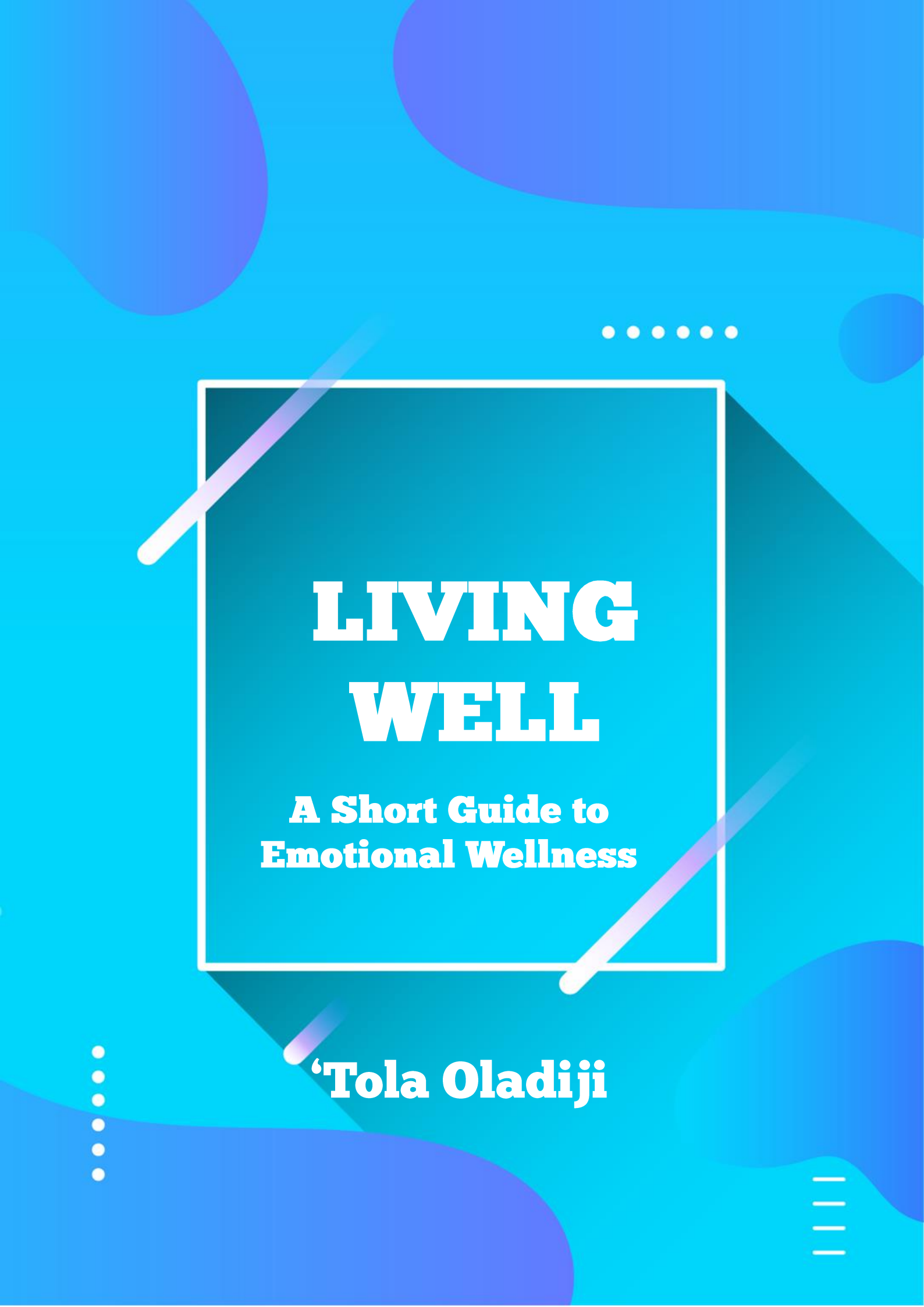




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LIVING WELL

**A Short Guide to
Emotional Wellness**

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‘Tola Oladiji

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About the Author

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Emotional Wellness Coach

Hi! I’m ‘Tola.

Thank you for downloading my e-book. I thought I should introduce myself before you get started.

I am an Emotional Wellness Coach certified with The Academy of Modern Applied Psychology. I am also a member of the International Association of Positive Psychology Coaches and the Life Coaches Association of Nigeria.

Typically, I work with regular people like you who want to learn how to improve their emotional health, so that they can enjoy a better quality of life in their business, relationships and everyday life.

To find out more about how I can help you, visit my website at www.tolaoladiji.com or connect with me on social media.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	02
1 What is Emotional Wellness?	04
2 Recognizing the Signs	11
3 How Do I Improve My Wellness?	18
4 A Final Word	27
Appendix	30

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A Short Guide to Emotional Wellness

INTRODUCTION

Our lives are ruled by our emotions.

From our first day out of the womb to our last day on earth, we are constantly moving through a spectrum of feelings and emotions – both positive and negative. Whether we feel angry at someone who jumps the ATM queue or we feel happy when we get a credit alert, we really cannot escape our emotions.

But being able to feel can be a great disadvantage to us, if we don't learn how they work because our feelings will always influence our behaviors every day, either consciously or subconsciously. For example, you may have noticed that you are unable to focus on work after a terrible argument with your partner, or after having a really bad spat with your boss, you find yourself you find yourself transferring that aggression to your loved ones at home.

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A Short Guide to Emotional Wellness

The reality is that our emotional health or wellness is determined by how we approach the full spectrum of emotions that come with life.

That's why an understanding of emotional wellness is very important if we want to live productive lives.

Some people do a great job at finding their way through the complex emotions of everyday life. They know when to express their displeasure at an event and yet not allow that event mar the rest of the day. They are adept at compartmentalizing and expressing the necessary feelings.

For some other people, emotions are a struggle for them, and expressing whatever emotions they feel without being limited by them is like rocket science. If you're in that category, this book is for you.

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CHAPTER 1

What is emotional wellness?

Emotional wellness describes a state of being that includes having a positive attitude, a high self-esteem, a strong sense of self and the ability to recognize and share a wide range of feelings (positive and negative) with others in a constructive way.

It is also the ability to respond resiliently and effectively to changing emotional states, and effectively cope with situations that present challenges and obstacles in life.

I know that may sound a bit technical, so you can put it this way, *emotional wellness is a state where a person is able to accept and manage feelings through challenges and change.*

Someone who is emotionally healthy can process their emotions correctly. They are able to *respond intentionally* to life's situations rather than just *reacting arbitrarily*.

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I should also mention that the concept of emotional wellness lies within that of mental health. The lack of emotions does not mean emotional health, just as the absence of mental illness does not equate to mental health.

So someone suppressing emotions, especially as a result of behavior learned from childhood, may not be as emotionally healthy as someone vulnerable enough to express their emotions.

Emotional wellness is more of a journey than a destination. This journey involves 3 important parts – awareness, understanding and acceptance of your feelings.

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In a nutshell, emotional wellness is:

1



Living well despite problems or challenges in life.

You can't run away from facing challenges in life. Emotional wellness is being able to keep your mood stable through both good and bad situations.

2



Living life to its fullness by finding the good in each day.

Each day has some good in it. It's just a matter of perspective. Do you have a perspective that helps you focus on the positive?

3



Refusing to be defined by your emotions.

You can live at the mercy of your emotions. Or you can decide to acknowledge them without allowing them define you.

4



Choosing your response to things that happen.

Do you respond to events that occur around you, or do you react to them? A response is well thought out, a reaction is not.

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Why is emotional wellness important?

Emotional wellness affects every area of your life, and if you don't learn how to improve yours, you may end up shortchanging yourself in terms of your productivity and performance.

➤ It Can Affect Your Physical Health

Emotional states can show up as physical symptoms. For example, heartbreak may show up as a pain in the chest, depression may manifest in the form of intense lethargy and fatigue. Some people also report an upset stomach as a symptom of anxiety.

Emotional distress also leaves people susceptible to physical illness. Some studies have shown that ailments like cardiovascular disease and immune system repression can be linked to emotional distress.

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➤ **It Can Affect Your Mental Health**

When you are overwhelmed by emotions, you may observe an inability to process information accurately on occasions you need to. E.g. when studying or working. Poor emotional health may also make you more susceptible to certain mental health conditions. For example, people with a pessimistic explanatory style are more likely to be clinically depressed than people with an optimistic explanatory style.

➤ **It Can Impact The Quality Of Your Relationships**

Social interaction and relationships are a necessary part of daily life. People who have optimal emotional health can appropriately interact with others, whether in times of stress or in times of peace. However when you are emotionally unhealthy, you are not much of a great person to be around which may lead to people avoiding you.

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➤ **It Can Affect Your Productivity And Creativity**

If you are in a state of poor emotional health, then your creativity and productivity is very likely to be impaired as you may find yourself being submerged under the weight of your feelings without knowing how to process them appropriately.

➤ **It Can Influence Your Energy Levels**

People who have a sense of purpose and a positive outlook on life are more likely to be energized as they go about life. On the other hand, poor emotional health will drain you and lead to a state of mental and emotional exhaustion.

➤ **It Can Impact Your Resilience**

Good emotional health is a core part of resilience. I have found that people in emotional distress are more vulnerable when hit by setbacks and challenges. This is as a result of insufficient emotional capacity to deal with these challenges.

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➤ **It Helps You Develop Higher Self-esteem**

How you feel about yourself is a direct function of how your emotions, thoughts and experiences. When you are emotionally healthy, you have a greater awareness of your abilities which increases your self-esteem.

➤ **It Can Foster Personal Growth**

When you know how to manage your thoughts and emotions, you are more likely to make better life decisions and become more productive, as you become better at focusing on and achieving your goals.

➤ **It Can Aid Addiction Recovery**

Addiction begins when people turn to unhelpful coping mechanisms like drugs and alcohol, as a result of stress. In addiction treatment, they are taught how to handle stress and reduce their dependence on the addictive substances.

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CHAPTER 2

How do I know if I am emotionally unhealthy?

1. You don't love yourself.
2. You have self-limiting thought patterns and behavioral habits.
3. You don't believe in yourself.
4. You are harsh and critical with yourself.
5. Most of the relationships around you are toxic.
6. You allow external possessions and material things determine your self-worth.
7. You consciously or unconsciously seek out people or situations that tell you that you are unlovable and unimportant.
8. You have a pessimistic outlook on life.
9. You suppress your emotions.
10. You use busyness as a way to distract yourself from processing your emotions.

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- 11. You feel bad about feeling bad.
- 12. You are always seeking comfort and reassurance from others.
- 13. You harbor anger and resentment in your heart towards people.
- 14. You have difficulty managing or controlling your temper.
- 15. You don't know how to deal with stress.

When your emotional health is in danger, the most important thing you can do is to seek for help. If you or someone you know shows some of these signs of being emotionally unhealthy, coaching is a great place to start. A coach will teach you how to implement keystone habits that help you develop better emotional health.

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What are the signs that I am emotionally healthy?

1. You Are Aware Of Your Emotions

Self-awareness is a strong pointer to emotional wellness. It is being able to embrace your emotions, both positive and negative, as a natural and normal part of life. People who are self-aware are able to handle and acknowledge difficult emotions without becoming overwhelmed by them or denying that they exist. This ability develops throughout the lifetime and is strengthened with continuous use.

True emotional health comes from being able to label, acknowledge and accept tough emotions, but also move forward from them without getting stuck. For example, you might get nervous before going to give a speech, but you don't let the nerves stop you from going out.

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2. You Practice Self-Acceptance

Self-awareness goes hand in hand with self-acceptance. Self-acceptance means having an awareness of your strengths and weaknesses, and feeling satisfied with yourself, regardless of whatever flaws you have or bad choices you have made. It means embracing all that you are without exception.

Self-acceptance doesn't mean you don't work on your weaknesses. On the contrary, your journey to improvement only really starts when you accept every part of yourself, good and bad, with no conditions attached.

3. You Are Intentional About Self-Care

People who are emotionally healthy show high levels of self-care. Self-compassion and care for one's physical body are important to people who also place importance on emotional health. This self-care is intentional and regularly practiced.

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4. You Treat Other People With Kindness And Compassion

An emotionally healthy person treats others with kindness and integrity. They do so without expectation of reward. They interact with the people around them with decency and compassion.

Psychologists call this prosociality. It means being sensitive to the needs and feelings of other people, and thinking it's important to help others.

5. You Like Yourself For Who You Are

You may have heard it said before that comparison is the thief of joy. People who are emotionally healthy recognize this and avoid comparing themselves to other people. They have an accurate assessment of their own personal strengths and consider them to be just as important as those possessed by other people.

6. You Practice Gratitude

Gratitude is about focusing on the positive. Practicing gratitude is

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a way of purposefully looking at your life with a sense of appreciation for what you have, rather than focusing on what you are lacking. Emotionally healthy people understand that and practice gratitude for who they have and what they have.

7. You Lead a Life of Purposefulness

An emotionally healthy person is someone who lives with purpose. Leading a purposeful life is about having a passion, a mission or a larger meaning to life. The lives of such people have meaning, and they see the bigger picture. People like this think about their inner experiences less and focus on how their experiences can serve others.

8. You Place More Value On Experiences Over Possessions

People who tend to highly value attaining wealth, being popular, or staying attractive tend to be less emotionally healthy than people who value self-fulfillment and being there for others.

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Not that there is anything bad about wealth, fame or beauty but if you place too much value on things like that, you are likely to reach a state where it's never enough to satisfy you.

Experiences may be more meaningful than possessions because they enhance bonding with people, help you enjoy the beauty in the world, and cultivate the positive emotions that come with new experiences.

9. You are Flexible

Emotional healthy people are able to adapt to all kinds of situations that life throws at them. They have the ability to assess a situation mindfully and then use these factors to decide what the best course of action is. If you are flexible, you approach life and relationships with a sense of openness and curiosity, knowing that you might need to adjust your course of action when one strategy isn't working.

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CHAPTER 3

Being emotionally healthy is of utmost importance.

We all want to live happy lives, and you're no exception. The good news is that you can influence your own emotional health by picking up new habits that help you develop emotional wellness.

Tips On Improving Emotional Wellness

1. Develop Awareness Of Your Emotions

Emotional awareness is being able to recognize and make sense of your emotions. When you know exactly how you feel, you can learn from them. To develop emotional awareness, try asking yourself questions like *What am I feeling right now? Why am I feeling this way?*

2. Learn Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is being able to exert some form of control over your emotional responses. It is the ability to reduce or enhance your emotions as the situation arises.

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In negative emotional states, **choose** to let it go.

3. Identify Your Strengths

When you know your strengths and use them frequently, you are more likely to have success in several areas. You will feel happier, have better self-esteem, and be more likely to accomplish your goals. However, to use your strengths effectively, it's important to have a clear idea of what they are, and how they can be used. Some of your greatest strengths might be easy to recognize, while others go unnoticed because they feel ordinary to you (even if they aren't).

4. Practice Cognitive Reappraisal

Cognitive reappraisal is a psychological strategy that involves choosing a different perspective when looking at negative events that cannot be changed. By reframing your perception of such events, you can reduce their emotional impact. One way to practice this is to ask yourself, *Is there another way I can think about this?*

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(Problems aren't the problems; it's how you see them, so look for the good in that thing).

5. Take Responsibility For Your Own Happiness

Your happiness is your personal responsibility. Don't relinquish that choice to anybody else. People and things can be enjoyable, but resist transferring responsibility for your happiness to them. In the same light too, resist blaming others for your unhappiness.

Your background and circumstances may influence who you are, but you are responsible for who you become.

6. Manage Your Expectations Of Others

Unrealistic expectations of the behavior of other people may lead to disappointment and even feelings of failure. So, it's important that you keep them grounded in reality. Some people may never like you or treat you right, accept that reality about them and choose not to hold resentment in your heart.

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7. Accept Your Mistakes And Move On

Mistakes are rather inevitable in life. You will make a lot of them.

Accept that as a life truth and you will make much more progress in your emotional health. Every day you wake up, choose not to dwell on your past regrets or beat yourself over your mistakes. Just learn the lessons you need to learn and move on. You must be as kind, comforting, understanding, and forgiving with yourself as you would be with the people you love the very most.

8. Develop Positive Relationships

No man is an island, and if you want to live well, you must develop strong, high quality relationships with other people. You don't need to have a million friends, you just need a small core of people that you can depend on to support you emotionally in your difficult times. Learning to trust those around you and allowing them to support you is also very vital.

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9. Manage Your Stress

Learn how to effectively cope with stressors in life. Don't wait till you burn out. Through effective time management, physical exercise, and acceptance that there will be things that we cannot control; you can effectively reduce your stress level.

10. Learn to Laugh

Find humor however you can. Laughter has been proven to be medically good, so practice it often! Research shows that it can boost your immune system, ease pain, relax your body, and reduce stress

11. Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to a state of being where one chooses to focus on the present, i.e. you are fully aware of what is happening right now. With mindfulness, you are deciding to let go of the regrets of the past or anxieties about the future. It's been proven to be effective at reducing stress and increasing concentration.

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12. Practice Gratitude

Practicing gratitude helps create a habit where we focus on the positive in life. Studies show that gratitude has a powerful effect on mental wellbeing by making us happier and healthier. Among other benefits, it helps reduce stress, increase happiness, and improve self-esteem. Gratitude has two stages, one is the acknowledgement of the good in your life, and the other is recognizing that some of the sources of this good are other people.

13. Take Good Care Of Your Body

We cannot separate the health of the mind from the health of the body. Just as emotional difficulty can contribute to physical illness, many physical problems contribute to emotional distress and can be avoided by a combination of a healthy diet, regular exercise, and good sleeping habits.

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14. Release Anger and Resentments

Yes, people may have hurt you. But you must let go of your anger and resentment towards them, for your own good. This doesn't mean you are saying that it is okay that people have hurt you; it simply means you are willing to acknowledge that you are not in charge of others' behaviors nor their punishment, that you are willing to love yourself enough to let go of the toxic waste of anger and resentment that is poisoning your mind, spirit, and probably your body, as well.

Lifestyle Changes That Promote Emotional Wellness

- Join stress management classes around you. This will help to reduce the risk of many diseases like depression, heart disease, diabetes.
- Register for therapy sessions with a therapist or coach who can teach you how to function better with your emotions.

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A Short Guide to Emotional Wellness

- Attend emotional health related seminars and activities to become aware of how to think positive and remain balanced in every stage of life.
- Do things which can make a positive impact on others like volunteering in organizations that serve the less privileged.
- Get enough rest for at least 6 to 8 hours sleep every night.
When you sleep, you give your body a chance to replenish itself.
- Embrace good and healthy eating habits. Eat healthy and nutritious food like green vegetables and fruits to keep your body and mind active and stress free.
- Exercise more often to relieve stress. Endorphins are released in the body when we exercise, and they help to reduce stress and increases the feeling of happiness.
- Spend more time with people around you. You can join social communities around you like clubs, church groups etc.

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- Avoid use of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs which decreases the brain activity that are directly related to emotions.

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CHAPTER 4

Benefits of Embracing Emotional Wellness

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | It helps you correct negative thinking and behavior patterns. | 6 | It makes you more productive. |
| 2 | It helps you go through life better equipped to deal with the difficulties that will arise. | 7 | It keeps you emotionally balanced and stable. |
| 3 | It helps you increase your sense of self-confidence. | 8 | You are able to identify desires in life and take positive actions which can help to fulfill them. |
| 4 | It helps you develop self-control and improve your concentration level. | 9 | It helps you heal from stress, anxiety, and depression. |
| 5 | It helps you improve your social skills and build stronger connections with other people. | 10 | It helps you develop a full life with new vision and purpose. |

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4 Final Tips On Improving Emotional Health

1. Give It Time

Emotional health is not something anyone can realize overnight. It took your entire life to develop your current emotional understanding. It will also take time to develop the cognitive, behavioral and lifestyle habits that contribute to emotional wellness.

2. Learn From Mistakes

It can be very tough to change your already existing patterns of unhelpful emotional behavior, and you're likely to make mistakes. But the important thing is to learn from them. When you are triggered by an event that causes an inappropriate emotional response like anger, learn from it. Reflect on what you can do differently the next time you're faced with this trigger.

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3. Cultivate Kindness and Empathy

Every other human being around you is experiencing emotions too. Developing a compassionate outlook when interacting with others permits them to experience their own emotions too. Best of all, it also leaves room for allowing yourself to be human.

4. Practice Forgiveness

Some people find it emotionally releasing to forgive themselves and others who have done them harm. Choosing not to judge yourself for your failings and short comings can allow you develop an outlook on life that is emotionally healthy. Forgiveness towards others can also make room for emotions to move, if they are stuck.

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APPENDIX

Test For Emotional Wellness

The emotional dimension involves recognizing, accepting and taking responsibility for your feelings.

Read each statement carefully and respond honestly by using the following scoring:

Almost always = 2 points

Sometimes/occasionally = 1 point

Very rarely = 0 points

1. I am able to develop and maintain close relationships. _____
2. I accept the responsibility for my actions. _____
3. I see challenges and change as opportunities for growth. _____
4. I feel I have considerable control over my life. _____
5. I am able to laugh at life and myself. _____
6. I feel good about myself. _____
7. I am able to appropriately cope with stress and tension and make time for leisure pursuits. _____
8. I am able to recognize my personal shortcomings and learn from my mistakes. _____
9. I am able to recognize and express my feelings. _____
10. I enjoy life. _____

Total for Emotional Wellness _____

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SCORE	MEANING
15 – 20 points	Excellent strength in this dimension.
9 -14 points	There is room for improvement. Look again at the items in which you scored 1 or 0. What changes can you make to improve your score?
0-8 points	This dimension needs a lot of work. Look again at this dimension and challenge yourself to begin making small steps toward growth here.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you see the signs of emotional unhealthiness in yourself?
2. Which of the signs of emotional healthiness are most pronounced in you?
3. Which ones are the least pronounced in you? How can you improve them?
4. Do the people closest to you provide unconditional positive support to you?
5. Write out any three tips on emotional wellness you will commit to practice this week.
6. Who is one person you want to share what you've learnt with? Why?
7. What test questions did you score lowest on? How can you improve on that?

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Hello there. Now that you've come to the end of this book, I hope you were able to pick up a few things you are going to start practicing?

We live in a rapidly changing world, and now more than ever, emotional health must be at the forefront of our minds. The times we are in demand it.

The question is are you ready to take the next step and work with a coach to help you improve your emotional and mental health?

If your answer is **YES**, send me mail at tola@tolaoladiji.com with the subject **WELLNESS COACHING**, and I will get in touch with you.