



Build Your Resilience Through Wellbeing

As we move into another challenging year, it's important to strengthen mind and body. Criticaleye members discuss their health priorities with **David Hobbs** and what they hope for from 2021



It's a new year and time to look forward and seize the opportunities that 2021 will bring. What better way to do that than making sure your mind and body are ready for the challenges ahead. Criticaleye members reveal the health and wellbeing tactics that keep them resilient and balanced.



Michele Faull
Former CFO
Coventry Building Society

How do you look after your own mental health and wellbeing?

I try to get out and walk every day. It's as much about being outside as it is about exercising - I've really made a conscious effort with this since lockdown. I also do mindfulness exercises and meditation. I pack away all my work things when I finish for the day, so they're out of sight. This has become more important since being in one place all the time. Finally, I make sure I do something each day that I really want to do.

2020 forced many people to dig deep on their emotional reserves. How have you maintained your resilience?

A personal coach once told me to be really clear on why I'm doing what I'm doing, and what is in it for me, and that's even more relevant now. It's recognising that even in these circumstances we have a choice about how we spend our time and why we do what we do. A real driver for me in my personal and professional life has been to know that what I do is making a difference.

Do you recommend any resources on maintaining good health?

I use the [Calm](#) app for my morning meditation and if I'm struggling to sleep at night. I'm also a big believer in The Real Deal, which is a very useful personal leadership tool from [PEAK Practice](#). It teaches you to sort out what is really important to you and what isn't.

What is your biggest hope for 2021?

That we can physically meet up with people again properly, both at work and at leisure, closely followed by being able to be in the sun!



Wasil Haroon
Senior Relationship Manager
Criticaleye

Mental health and wellbeing: I practise the Chinese martial art [Wing Chun](#) and also do strength training sessions with free weights and resistance bands three times a week. A morning routine is essential and includes drinking lemon water, going for a brisk walk, praying, some mindfulness meditation, and having a bowl of porridge with a cup of strong black coffee. That really kickstarts my day while a good night's sleep, taking frequent breaks while working from home, and listening to uplifting music also keep me energised and focused.

Maintain resilience: The support of family and friends, being positive, having fun and collaborating with colleagues. Remember to laugh every day - as Lord Byron said, "it is cheap medicine".

Podcasts, videos, books: I use the [Calm](#) app for meditation and [Blinkist](#) to read books on topics including health and wellbeing. I also like listening to [TED Health](#) & [Savvy Psychologist](#) podcasts.

Hope for 2021: That the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is rolled out in the UK as soon as possible, so there are no more lockdowns or social distancing, and we can all start to get some sort of normality back.



Tea Colaianni
SID, Watches of Switzerland
and Board Mentor, Criticaleye

Mental health and wellbeing: I try to stick to a daily routine, so I get some fresh air and movement and I also start and finish the day doing the same things - everything else can be fluid. I also make sure I speak to a friend or relative. My self-care includes home-made facials and reading, so something for the body and something for the soul, while I manage my intake of news and social media to not feel overwhelmed by negativity (I look for positive, feel-good news).

Maintain resilience: It has been really difficult at times. I consider myself lucky as I had a good break with my family in Italy in the summer. That rebuilt my emotional reserve. I have also started a new project which has given me huge energy and focus.

Podcasts, videos, books: I'm following Suki Thompson at [Let's Reset](#). They have great resources, including podcasts on wellbeing and resilience and support for mental health.

Hope for 2021: I hope there will be enough vaccines to protect us all and that we can get back some of our choices and freedoms to see family and friends, enjoy meals out and travel! >



Richard Shoylekov
Board Mentor
Criticaleye

Mental health and wellbeing: The pandemic changed the emphasis on many things that were already part of our lives, such as online shopping and e-conferencing. Perhaps the same applied for aspects of our personal lives. I already had a decent fitness regime and was reasonably good at managing stress through careful time management and mixing up activities. However, I found sitting glued to a screen for many hours really tedious, so I scheduled more breaks.

Maintain resilience: I stay focused on the work and do it the best way possible in the circumstances – address the particular problem and what I can actually do. Generally, I think if you can't change the situation, see if you can change your response to it.

Podcasts, videos, books: [Joe Wicks'](#) online fitness workouts have been a fantastic discovery – clear, no-nonsense and very effective.

Biggest hope for 2021: That we focus more on the climate crisis by collectively taking what we have learned and changing our behaviour. My hope is that we discuss the problem more and more openly, and serious action is taken at government, business and personal levels. In the immortal words of Bob Dylan, “let us stop talking falsely now - the hour's getting late”.



Louise Chaplin
Partner & Head of Board Practice
Eton Bridge Partners

Mental health and wellbeing: I enjoy the outdoors and fresh air, it's a key part of creating a balanced mindset

“ I hope we do not go back to the past. We need a more sustainable economy and society and 2021 should be a new dawn for us all ”

for the day. This usually means an early start and either running or cycling, depending on the season. Physically it's good and mentally it gives me the space to process what's in my day ahead. It's the time of day that I devote to just me.

Maintaining resilience: My early career was in the British Army with tours in Bosnia and Northern Ireland that are reminiscent of lockdown. I had a headquarters role, so every day followed the same routine – it felt like Groundhog Day. What was different with lockdown initially was there was no end date. That was hard to process at first, so I drew on my military experiences to support my emotional resilience.

Podcasts, videos, books: I enjoy reading inspiring books about physical

achievements because often these stories come with mental and physical challenges. One was about [Israel Hilario](#) who had his leg amputated up near the hip and went on to be part of the Peruvian Paralympic cycling team. Everybody looks at lockdown through different lenses and it's important when thinking about our situation to remember the bigger challenges others face.

Hope for 2021: To celebrate having a vaccine and lower COVID-19 numbers and just being with people. As humans we naturally want to be with others, so it will be wonderful to have that again.



Gareth Llewellyn
Former CEO
DVSA

Mental health and wellbeing: A 5k run every weekend is good for the soul and learning to code in Python invigorates the mind – even at my age.

Maintaining resilience: Early in my career I worked in Africa and keeping in mind the poverty I saw then reminds me I am very fortunate – even in a pandemic.

Podcasts, videos, books: Escapism! I find books that take me to a very different place are great for my mental health – books by Matthew Reilly work wonders for me.

Hope for 2021: I hope we do not go back to the past. We need a more sustainable economy and society and 2021 should be a new dawn for us all. ■

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