



Wellbeing Insights

How Steep is the Hill?

If you're like me, with everything happening in life and the world right now, you wouldn't mind if the 'hill' were a little less steep! I'm not sure what your personal 'hill' looks like at the moment, but I suspect it might involve family, friends, work pressures, world issues, work-life balance, health, or perhaps all of the above.

I recently came across an interesting piece of research conducted at the University of Virginia in 2008. In this study, participants were asked to estimate the steepness of a hill in front of them. Some participants were alone as they approached the hill, while others were accompanied by a friend. The findings revealed that "we perceive a hill to be significantly less steep when we are standing with a friend than when we are viewing it alone." The official title of the study was *Social Support and the Perception of Geographical Slant* – you might want to read more about it [here](#).

Researchers were already aware that visual perception is influenced by physiological factors such as fitness, age, and rest, but this study highlighted the importance of a psychological resource: social support. While many may not be surprised by this, as it sits nicely alongside the proverb, "a problem shared is a problem halved," it serves as a helpful reminder for me that if the 'hill' (or mountain) ahead looks and feels steep, I may benefit from having someone by my side.

For some, creating your personal manifesto may be one of the challenges making your hill seem somewhat steep. If we apply the lesson from the study – that tasks ahead feel less daunting with a companion – then we encourage you to think about who you could invite to be your companion(s) on this important journey.

Could you schedule a catch-up with a partner, family member, friend, colleague, or neighbour to discuss an element of the book or a specific step in the process? Before long, you might find yourself in an engaging conversation with a companion, enthusiastically working through the rewarding task of creating your manifesto. Together, you'll be laying the groundwork for your personal manifesto.

We also want you to know that we can be your [companion](#). Would it help if one of us met with you to support you in this work? Would you be interested in joining one of our open-enrolment workshops? You could participate in a 1-hour [online workshop](#) each week for nine weeks, or attend an in-person, [full-day retreat](#). For many, the idea of working alongside others – either one-on-one or in a group – makes the task of crafting a personal manifesto feel much less daunting.

No matter how steep the hill in front of you seems, we hope you'll find that seeking the companionship and support of a trusted friend enhances your perception of what lies ahead. We wish all our My Manifesto mates well as they continue walking their hills – whether trudging, stomping, striding, or race-walking – we wish you well!