



Wellbeing Insights

In Praise of Melancholy

We live in a world that often demands positivity. Social media, self-help books, and well-meaning advice urge us to think happy thoughts, count our blessings, and push through discomfort with a smile. But what if, instead of resisting melancholy, we acknowledged its quiet wisdom? What if we allowed it to sit with us, not as an unwelcome guest but as a gentle companion with something valuable to share?

Melancholy is not the same as despair. It is not the absence of joy but rather a deep, reflective presence – a space where emotions breathe and settle. It allows us to slow down, to notice, to feel. In these moments, we often gain clarity about what matters most. We remember love that once was, dreams that still linger, and truths we might have overlooked in busier times.

John Keats, the poet who understood melancholy better than most, wrote that it is “inseparable from beauty.” Indeed, some of life’s most poignant experiences – watching a sunset fade, hearing an old song, or parting from a loved one – carry both sadness and deep meaning. There is richness in these feelings, a reminder of our capacity to love, to long, and to cherish.

Perhaps the real gift of melancholy is that it fosters connection. When we embrace our own moments of quiet sorrow, we become more compassionate toward others in theirs. We listen more deeply, we understand more fully, and we remind one another that feeling deeply is not a weakness but a testament to being fully alive.

So, the next time you feel a wave of melancholy, don’t rush to push it aside. Instead, sit with it for a while. Let it whisper its truths. In doing so, you may find that it doesn’t diminish you but enriches you, adding depth and colour to the tapestry of your life.

Whilst the word melancholy may not feature in too many people’s personal manifestos, we imagine it will appear from time to time in all of our lives. I trust we can sit with it comfortably.

Go well!