

Lifestyle Balance Wheel

Living a balanced life - has a nice sound to it, doesn't it?

My meaningful life is perhaps a life that is in balance - one in which adequate time is given to the activities that express MY values and priorities. The My Values List – MVL - worksheet may help me rank my values. No matter what those values may be, it appears, as a HUMAN, I might struggle to live my life in better balance, or in a manner that consistently expresses a thing I value most.

It's maybe important to increase my awareness that improving the balance in my lifestyle is likely to take some **time**. It would be great if there were magic involved, however it might take some **effort** to accomplish it. Many tools may be helpful and utilized in my quest to achieve and live more of my balanced life. A tool, as I develop better balanced life skills, may also help me develop LIFE SKILLS in general.

Balancing MY Life

There are two main actions that could lead to my better balanced lifestyle. The first may be to attempt to understand and respect an important area of my life. The second might consist of striving to change my perspective in an area in which I appear to be stuck. The exercise below might help me to see how I'm dividing my time in the "wheel of my life."

To work at creating a healthy, meaningful, greater balance in my life, I might CHOOSE TO:

Take an inventory. As I complete this worksheet, I'll determine and evaluate the areas that I focus my time and energy on, becoming aware of what parts of my life are going well or needing input.

This exercise might help me see an area in my life that I pay less attention to. It will likely help to attempt to accept and sit with my reaction to the picture it shows. What might be my thought or feeling? Which area might I want to spend more time? Why? What fear or discomfort might I be avoiding? What might be keeping me from doing something? If I were able to pay more attention to a lacking area, HOW might I start? When could I begin?

When looking at my wheel, I may find more than one area that I feel could use more attention - it's unlikely I'll have the time to work on more than one at once. Which one is waving its hand wildly and saying, "Me first! Me first! Pick me!" Which is the one beckoning me the most? I'll perhaps go with my gut instinct. It's easier, and probably more fun, working on the area I'm initially drawn to.

In order to pay more attention to an area, it will likely help to make more time for it. When I focus some of my resources on this less tended area, it will likely benefit. Previous change of mine hasn't happened overnight, and it will likely be no different here. I'll look to create a plan and work to stick to it – taking any result as feedback, rather than 'failure.'

Making change is other than easy. As I strive toward making an alteration I choose to make, I'll attempt to get all the outside help and support I might get. I might ask a TRUSTED loved one, a friend, a colleague, or seek professional help. This could make changing the behaviour a little more straight forward. Change tends to be a sloppy process.

If the work I put forth in better balancing my life starts to feel burdensome, I might choose to back off a bit. I am doing this work to become more healthy and more 'whole,' rather than add another 'chore' to my life. I can choose to seek out some fun in my effort, have a good time with the new experience, while exploring this area of my well-being. In the big picture of a thing, as my life becomes better balanced and more well-rounded, the healthier and happier I'll likely be. **I'll attempt to remember to have a bit of fun!**

Getting Started with Lifestyle Balance

1. On a blank piece of paper, I might draw a large circle to represent MY life.
2. Thinking of my life as a wheel, I divide it into slices and then label each piece with an area of my life that is important to ME. Maybe from **my MVL** - e.g. Family, friends, emotional well-being, romance, health, work, recreation, personal growth, money, physical surroundings, etc.)
3. Within each slice, I draw another line as a ruler. I think of the wheel's outer edge as being completely satisfied (10) and the centre as being totally dissatisfied (0). I give a rating to my level of satisfaction in each of the areas I've listed by placing a dot to indicate the **REASONABLE** level of satisfaction I have in each particular area of my life. **Reasonable** – I was able to run a marathon and now can only walk around the block, and I AM doing that!
4. After completing the rating for each slice, I connect the dots to create a new outside perimeter of my wheel. What does it look like? **If it was the tires on my car, what would the ride be like?** Would it roll along smoothly and effortlessly? Or would it be rough and bumpy? Then I ask myself (and answer) the following:

Questions Concerning Lifestyle Balance:

- How close am I to living a balanced life of MY CHOOSING?
 - In what ways are MY true values and priorities reflected in my daily activities?
 - If I had one month left to live, how is this the way I would be spending my time?
 - In what ways is there too much on my plate? Which activities might I cut down or out?
 - How much of my time is spent caring for others? How much time for myself?
 - To what areas of my life would I like to give more of my attention?
 - What dream or desire that keeps getting put off, would I like to focus on?
 - What alterations would I prefer to make? What can I do to help my life be fuller?
5. **To move myself forward to a more balanced lifestyle, I may consider taking steps at providing more time for, and start filling in the areas with gaps - those spots where it looks like a piece of my wheel is missing. When doing so, I am conscious of placing MY AWARENESS around the complete picture of my life, rather than just specific areas. After all, it's maybe MY "big picture" that "living a balanced life" is all about.**

