

The Wellness Compass

Life can be considered as a series of journeys, with highs, lows, and plateaus. We are travelers on paths through unique lives; as such, this book refers to anyone seeking wellness as a wellness traveler. Our choices define where we go, how long we stay at each vista or high point, and how much we enjoy the journey. To reach our destinations, we must begin with a clear vision of where we are going and what we want to accomplish. We also need specific directions as to what to expect on each trip, what to bring, where to stay, and how to negotiate obstacles.

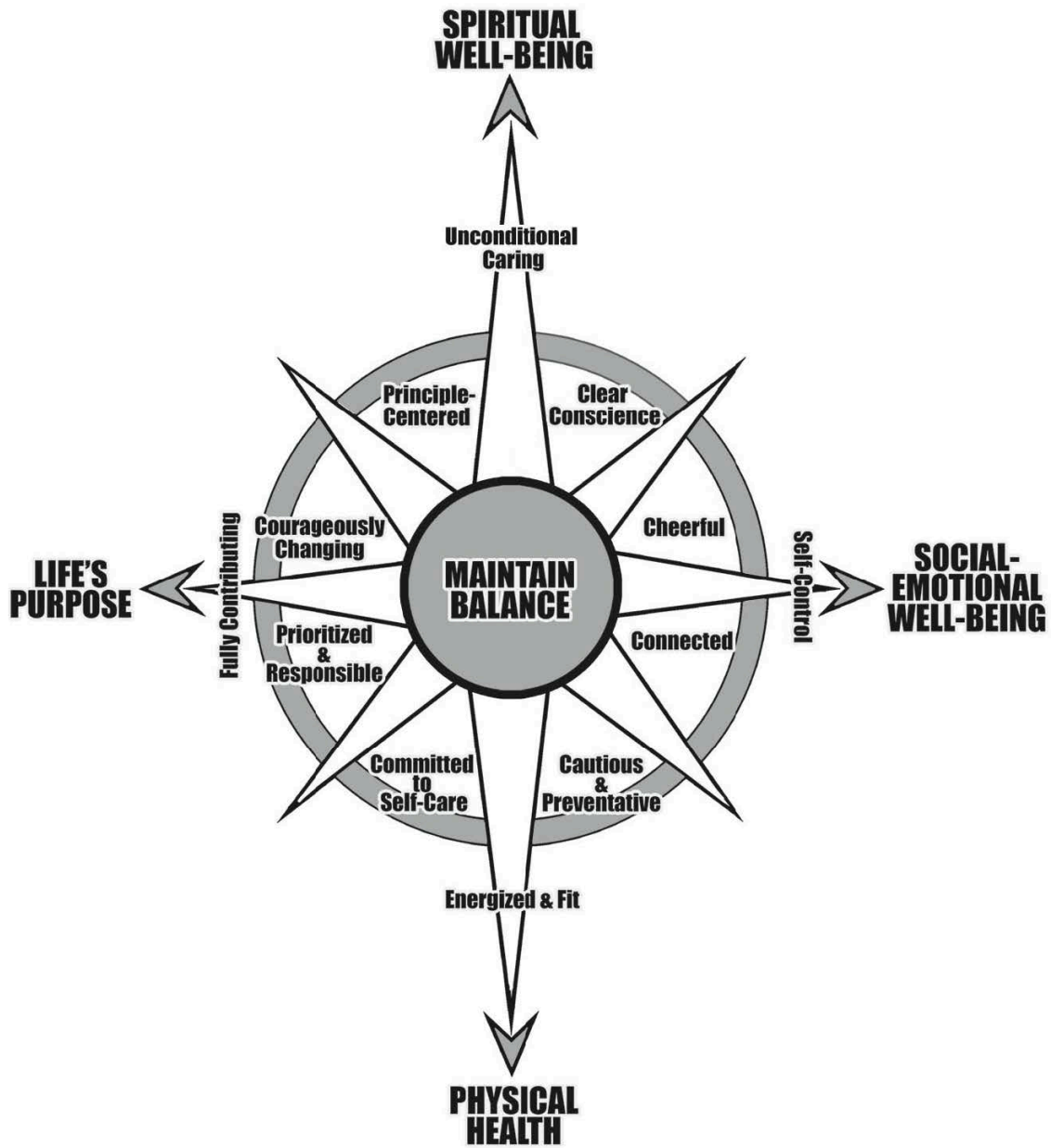
Compasses are one of the oldest and most trusted navigational tools. They've been used throughout history to safely guide travelers to their destinations. They work for anyone almost anywhere or at any time, indicating four primary directions (north, south, east, and west). They work because the pivotal needle in the middle of the compass is balanced and consistently detects magnetic north. If the compass is unbalanced or too close to a magnetic force, the needle spins out of control, rendering it useless.

Wellness travelers are encouraged to consider the Wellness Compass (figure 1.1) as their metaphorical navigational guide to maintaining balanced well-being. The Wellness Compass consists of four directional domains of wellness: spirituality, socioemotionality, health, and life's purpose (intellectual and occupational well-being). A pivotal central fifth domain represents the challenge of maintaining balance and harmony throughout our lives. Each directional dimension of wellness has been broken into three generic goals, for a total of twelve directional goals. A single "maintain balance" goal is also added, for a total of thirteen well-being goals.

Definitions of the five domains (or dimensions) of well-being of the Wellness Compass are outlined on the following page. Each goal is summarized by a key word or phrase. Goals are referred to as generic because they are designed as guideposts or standard targets that are worthwhile to pursue for most people, most of the time. Travelers are encouraged to personalize the wording, and even content, to best reflect their individual aims. Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the eight interior goals (inside the compass circle) are considered foundational, as they form the building blocks required to reach the five self-actualizing goals (four goals listed outside the compass circle and the pivotal center goal of maintaining balance), and to secure the ultimate goal of life: becoming your best self—all that you were meant to be.¹⁰ Although the goals and key concepts are portrayed as being within only one domain, they are understood as all being interconnected in achieving optimal well-being.

¹⁰ A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (July 1943): 370–96.

Figure 1
The Wellness Compass



Definitions of the Five Domains and Thirteen Generic Goals of *The Wellness Compass*

Spiritual Well-Being (chapters 2–5).

Definition: Inner peace, personal appreciation and contentment about our place in the universe, and the use of actions that are consistently in harmony with our values and beliefs.

- *principle-centered* goal—to live virtuously
- *clear conscience* goal—to be free of guilt, shame, and anger
- *unconditional caring* goal—to love oneself, others, and one's world unconditionally

Socioemotional Well-Being (chapters 6–9).

Definition: One's outlook and one's ability to understand and control one's emotions and others' emotions, and one's ability to connect effectively with the key people in one's life.

- *cheerful* goal—to sustain a positive attitude
- *connected* goal—to be supported and support others well
- *emotional control* goal—to maintain self-control

Physical Health (chapters 10–13).

Definition: One's ability to maintain energy, health, and fitness so that one's body can do what one wants it to.

- *cautious and preventative* goal—to minimize health risks
- *committed to self-care* goal—to have a healthy body and body weight
- *energized and fit* goal—to sustain energy and fitness

Life's Purpose (chapters 14–18).

Definition: one's ability to learn, adapt, focus, and make contributions to life, family, and community financial well-being.

- *courageously changing* goal—to overcome any challenge: to continually learn and adapt
- *prioritized and responsible* goal—to complete one's responsibilities well the first time
- *fully contributing* goal—to accomplish one's life's purpose and achieve financial security

Maintain Balance (chapter 19).

Definition: to juggle priorities and manage stress well enough to maintain harmony between competing needs

- *maintain balance* goal—to juggle priorities and manage stress well enough to maintain harmony between competing needs