

Life Balance

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Life can be filled with great joy and fulfillment, as well as real sadness and disappointment. The quality of our life is often determined by our thoughts, feelings and responses to life events. There are many dimensions to life, and the events in our life can affect few, many or all of these dimensions. By understanding the various areas of our life we are better able to improve our overall life satisfaction and quality.

Life Balance Model

A life out of balance is not a rewarding experience, and can often lead to deep regrets. Conversely, there are “seasons” in life where we focus on different life areas. To have the richest life experience possible, it is necessary to understand the various dimensions that make up our lives, determine areas of imbalance and take appropriate actions. In addition, I will offer you some unique insight into life’s seasons, which will add great clarity to this often misunderstood subject. In order to do this, it is essential to start with a useful model or framework to view the various aspects of our life. Following is one such model that you may find helpful - a compilation of the best available research on the subject, from top leaders and authorities in the field. While all us “experts” use different labels for each aspect, most of the categories being described are almost always the same. Most importantly, you can validate these findings for yourself. Please review the “Dimensions of Life” provided on the following page. I believe they will resonate strongly with you as they have with thousands of others I have had the privilege of helping explore this important topic.



Dimensions of Life

Instructions: Number these aspects in order of importance to you.

Profession _____

- Career
- Work
- Retirement

Social _____

- Friendships
- Community Involvement

Finances _____

- Investments
- Cash Flow
- Financial Security

Religion _____

- Belief in God
- Church fellowship
- Tradition

Recreation _____

- Hobbies
- Sports
- Leisure Activities

Health _____

- Physical Fitness
- Emotional Health
- Wellness

Intellect _____

- Personal Growth
- Education
- Intellectual Pursuits

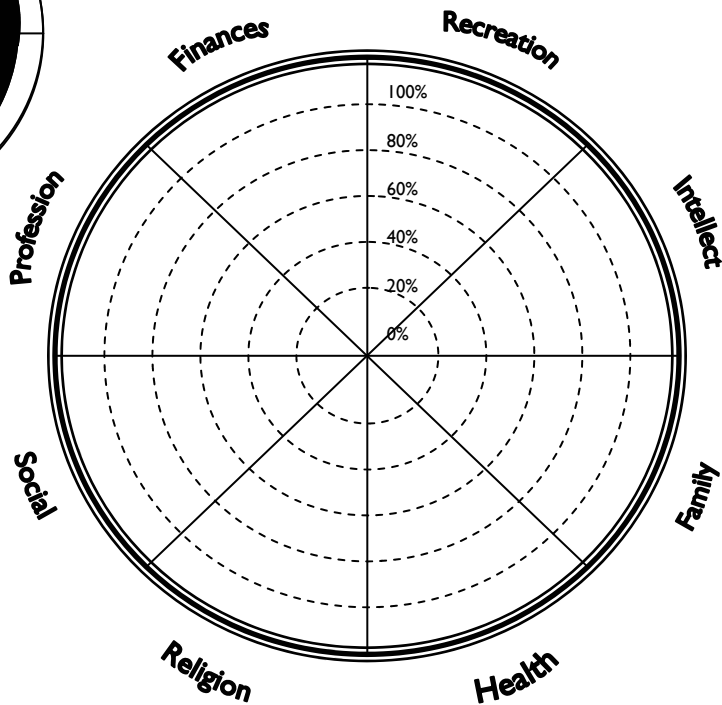
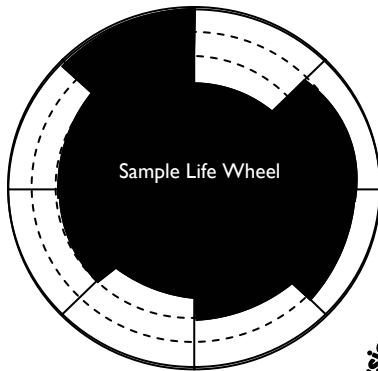
Family _____

- Spouse/Significant Other
- Children
- Extended Family

Life Wheel

Following is a life wheel. It is round. The wheel is one of the most powerful discoveries of all time. The wheel represents the possibility of movement and a round wheel allows for the greatest possible momentum. So, too, a well balanced life allows you to move through life with the deepest, richest and most satisfying experience possible. In order to make the most progress toward this end, you first need to honestly assess your current life balance.

Using the following life wheel, assign a percentage from 0% to 100%, indicating your current level of satisfaction in each dimension of your life today. Following the sample wheel, fill in each section of the circle to your percentage of satisfaction. It is important that you be honest in your appraisal. The benefit you will receive from this process will be in direct proportion to the degree you are able to be rigorously honest.



Assessing Your Life

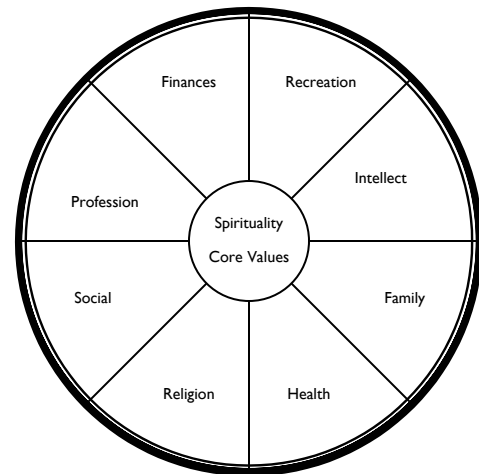
There is a direct correlation between life satisfaction and balance in each dimension of life. You will notice that the areas in which you are least satisfied are usually the areas that are receiving the least attention. As mentioned earlier, there are seasons of life. It is important to discuss these in order to accurately assess where you are in life before you attempt to develop an action plan for achieving better balance in your life.

Seasons in Life

Seasons of life can best be understood by looking at nature in two ways. First, there is a progression as we grow: spring, summer, fall, winter. So, too, there is a progression as we grow from youth, young adult, married, married with children, empty-nesters, senior citizens, preparing to die and ultimately death. Second, there are events that occur in nature, such as fires, hurricanes, tornados, floods and earthquakes. Likewise there are events in life such as illness, injuries, accidents, divorce, death of loved ones and many others. Both natural seasons of life and key events can affect balance in your life. This is why your life wheel will never be perfectly round. There are always going to be tradeoffs in life.

The Hub of Life

At the core of who you are is something very special and unique. Most of the leading experts in this area all point to spirituality and core values as the hub of life. Following is a diagram that better represents you. It has been accurately said that we are spiritual beings having a human experience, and not humans trying to have a spiritual experience. Reflect on this diagram, and review the level of satisfaction and life balance you assigned to the spirituality/core values aspect in the previous diagram. What observations can you make regarding your own hub of life?



Spiritual _____

- Pursuit of Truth
- Meaning of Life
- Sense of Purpose

Weathering the Seasons of Life

As you have certainly experienced, the seasons of life are as predictable as the four seasons, and as unpredictable as what insurance companies call “acts of God.” No matter what shape your wheel, without an effective, reliable hub, rolling through life is hugely problematic. You may have a sense of positive movement, but in the final season of your life the distance you covered or the direction traveled may likely yield significant regrets. Those with a strong spiritual hub at the center of their wheel are infinitely more likely to experience a rich, fulfilling and satisfying life. Therefore, this is the best place to start when looking at life balance issues.

Toward a More Balanced Life

Following is a list of questions to get you started. Other questions you have been asking yourself may also come up. Answer these questions to the best of your ability at this time. Avoid the tendency to beat yourself up for not having what you deem adequate or satisfactory answers. Give yourself the grace to be in a season of life where you are on the road of discovery in this area. Avoid shaming yourself into saying, “I should know the answers to these questions.”

1. In what or whom do you believe?

2. Is your spirituality your own understanding or that of your culture, family, upbringing or peers?

3. What do you think is holding you back from focusing on spiritual growth?

Add other questions you have been asking yourself here:

4.

5.

Understanding Your

Spirituality

Realize that the work you are doing, albeit difficult, is work that will certainly lead you to a deeper relationship with yourself and your spirituality. Ultimately, only you can define what spirituality means to you. You may start by looking at the concept of what Pascal, the famous scientist, called the “God-shaped vacuum”. We all have this hole inside of us to fill. The process of discovering what will truly fill this hole is the place I recommend you start. And, the person who gave you this information may be someone you would like to “coach” you as you seek to grow along spiritual lines.

Spiritual Coaching

Often a spiritual mentor or coach can help you through this process of discovering your higher power or God in your life. Perhaps one such person is the one who is sharing this material with you. Consider asking this person for guidance in this all-important area. Life is short...sometimes all too short, and filled with unexpected seasons. Avoid the natural tendency to put off addressing your spirituality until a later date. Working on this now will prepare you for life’s uncertainties, and serve to help you get the very most this life has to offer.

Additional Resources

Following is a list of additional resources for growth in this area. The person who shared this information with you may have additional resources they may suggest, based upon your dialogue with them, the answers to the spiritual questions we offered and your own list of questions in this area.

Books

- *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
- *Half Time: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance* by Bob Buford
- *Discovery Series*
- *A Case for Faith* by Lee Strobel

Audio Cassettes and CDs

- *The Best of John C. Maxwell on Leadership*
- *Bob Buford’s Top 12 Talks from the Foundation Conference*
- *High Capacity People* by Jack Willome

Web Sites

- www.ipriority.com
- www.halftime.org
- www.injoy.com
- www.leadershipnow.com
- www.solidcoaching.com

Other Suggested Resources

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Action Plan

Actions are the key to spiritual growth. List the actions you want to take, with due dates for growing spiritually. It is most helpful to share these with someone who will serve as an accountability partner in your spiritual development.



Action	Due Date

About the Author

Daniel Mueller is the President & CEO of SOLIDexecutive, Inc. and has over 18 years experience in executive coaching, training and consulting.