

FINDING BALANCE



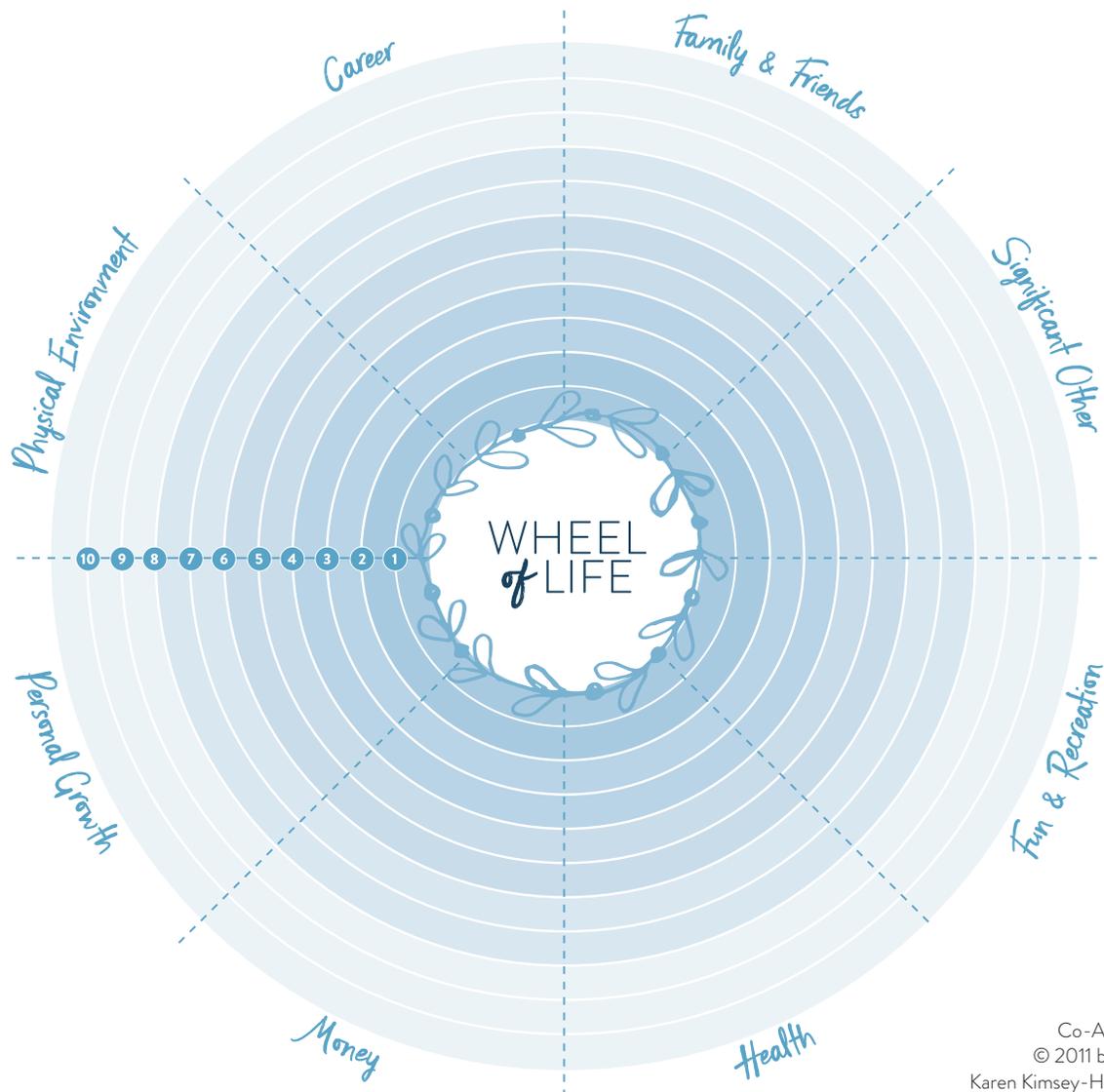
Are you feeling pretty balanced in your life or are there areas you feel like could use some focus or improvement? A great way to begin to clarifying where you are and where you want to go is by creating your own Personal Wheel of Life using the template below. This exercise will help you reflect on various dimensions of life, so you can focus on areas to achieve more harmony, health, happiness... and balance.

DIRECTIONS TO CREATE YOUR WHEEL

- + The eight sections represent different aspects of your life that, together, represent one way of describing a “whole life.” Make sure the wedges reflect the parts of your life that are important to you. Please Note: You can also focus them specifically on more health-related topics, such as: mindfulness, healthy eating, physical activity/movement, mind-body connection, spirituality, relationships and communication, personal and professional development and your physical environment.
- + The center of the wheel is 1 (least satisfying) and the outer edges is 10 (most satisfying).
- + Rank your level of satisfaction with each life area from 1-10. Darken or draw a straight or curved line at your level of satisfaction to create a new outer edge.

The new perimeter represents the wheel of your life, and is a snapshot in time. If this were a real wheel, how bumpy would the ride be? Imagine putting a set of these on a car and driving around. What kind of ride would they give you? Smooth? Comfortable? Bumpy? Unpleasant? Does it match the way your personal life rides?

If your ride is not what you want, or bumpier in certain areas, this is an opportunity to tune in and make an action plan to help improve our quality of life.



REFLECTION & GOAL SETTING

As a result of this assessment, which dimension of the Wheel of Health feels out of balance, and which dimension are you ready and willing to work on?

What is the current state of this area of your life? What is going well? What is missing or not working for you in this area?

Please list 3 changes or small steps you plan to make in the next 3 months.

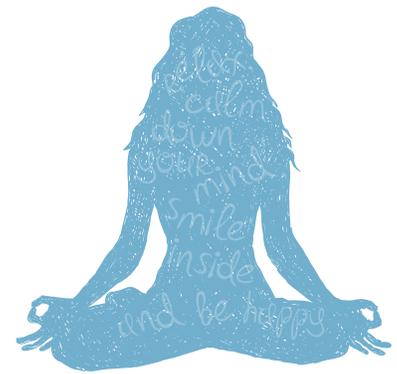
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When considering the 3 changes or small steps for your Action Plan, make them SMART goals:

- + **SPECIFIC** | What exactly do I want to do (what, where, why, when)?
- + **MEASUREABLE** | How much/many do I want to do (frequency, length of time, amount that you can measure)?
- + **ATTAINABLE** | How likely am I to accomplish this goal?
- + **RELEVANT** | Does this goal really matter to me? Your goal(s) should be important to you.
- + **TIME-BOUNDED** | What is the time frame for me to accomplish this goal?

FOR EXAMPLE

- + Over the next 2 weeks, I will meditate or do my breathing practices for at least 5 minutes every morning, before I get ready for the day to help me better manage my stress.
- + Beginning next Monday, I will go for a 20-30 minute walk/jog at least 3 mornings each week before 7 AM.
- + Beginning tomorrow, I will drink at minimum 60 ounces of water – 20 ounces before lunch (7 am – 12 pm), 20 ounces between lunch and when I get off of work (12-4 PM) and 20 ounces after work through the evening (4-9 PM).



Breathing for Balance

- + Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
- + Close your eyes or lower your gaze.
- + Relax all of your muscles beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face.
- + Breathe through your nose.
- + Be aware of your breathing, and just notice.
- + As you breathe out, say an anchor word or number silently to yourself. E.g.. breathe in... breathe out, "one", -in... out, "one", etc.
- + Continue for 10-20 minutes; but even 10 minutes a day can have a profound effect on your nervous system and stress levels.
- + When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes before moving on.

Let go of worry or judgment, there is no "right" or "wrong". When distracting thoughts occur, just notice them, and come back to the breath. Keep in mind, this is a practice. You can do this once or twice daily.

RESOURCES | APPS AND WEBSITES

- + Insight Timer
(Available for Web, iPhone, and Android)
- + The Mindfulness App
(Available for iPhone and Android)
- + Calm | www.calm.com
- + 4-7-8 Breathing by Dr. Weil
www.drweil.com
- + Self-Compassion with Kristen Neff
<http://self-compassion.org/>



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