

A Happy Balanced Life

A Simple Guide for Developing Balance in Your Life

By Edward Aldama, MBA



I think most people would agree that balance in our lives is important for achieving happy relationships and maintaining a positive attitude. As human beings we are blessed with the capacity to appreciate a wide variety of experiences. We can explore the world and learn new things, experiment with our creativity, develop special relationships, and change the circumstances of our environment.

But sometimes, we get caught up with our day to day routines and lose sight of the opportunities life has to offer. We get busy with too much work, too many obligations, and yes, sometimes too much recreation. Paying too much attention to any one area of our lives can lead to a narrowed vision of life and cause us to feel as if something is missing. Luckily, that feeling that something is missing, can be a signal to check the balance in our life.

Every once in a while I get really involved with a great new project, and I get inspired to work long hours because I can't wait to see the finished product. But, because I spend so much time in the office working, I sometimes can feel a sense of loss when I come home and the family has already gone to bed.

As humans we can experience life in a wide variety of ways. We can participate in social and personal activities that inspire and fulfill us on many levels. By taking the time to appreciate things like music, art, recreation and social activities we can enjoy a full and rewarding life.

Recreation is important to me and I love to get involved in activities like working out at the gym or weekend softball games. But all that play can sometimes make me too tired to spend quality time with my significant other. Of course, doing that too often can lead to hurt feelings and tension in the relationship. That tension can lead to an argument, and that is a signal that my life may be out of balance.

The variety of life allows us to enjoy a wide range of experiences, but balance keeps us in harmony with ourselves and those around us. When we are in balance we can more easily sustain both the activities and the relationships that make life worth living. We can appreciate the exhilaration of a brisk walk, the soothing effects of meditation, and the joy of connectedness with the special people in our lives.

So, how do we check ourselves and know if we're in balance?

One of my favorite ways to check the balance in my life is to take some time to think about how satisfied I am in seven major areas of life. By reflecting on each area and asking myself questions, I can explore the amount of energy I am devoting to each. I know my life is in balance if I can identify joy and satisfaction in each area.

Here are the seven areas and a few questions that I use for exploration. You can develop other questions that have more meaning to your life.

Special Relationships

When was the last time I spent special time with my family members?
Was the experience fulfilling and joyful?
When was the last time I spent time with my closest friend?
What special experience did I share with my spouse in the last week?



Social Interactions

When was the last time I expressed appreciation to a co-worker?
Have I taken advantage of opportunities to contribute to a committee?
How active am I in my community clubs, or civic organization?

Leisure Activities

What have I read recently that brings me joy?
What was the last movie I saw, just for fun?
What was the last piece of music that I heard that made me feel like dancing?

Health and Fitness

Am I joyfully consistent with my chosen exercise program?
Am I recognizing the benefits of stretching regularly?
What foods am I eating on a regular basis to support good nutrition?



Career and Service

What was the last activity or project that I really enjoyed spending time on?
Each day, do I celebrate the progress I am making towards my business goals?
What activities do I participate in that support and help others to be successful?

Wealth and Finance

Do I joyfully acknowledge the money that comes to me?
Am I saving money on a regular basis to prepare for the future?
What actions do I take to consistently management money wisely?



Spiritual Development

When was the last time I took quiet time for meditation?
What was the last thing I read that truly inspired my spirit?
When was the last time I spent time with others who share my spiritual beliefs?



Now, let me outline a simple exercise that will help you to explore these areas of life for yourself. Before you begin, keep in mind that while it is important to devote time and energy towards each area of life, it isn't necessary to have equal amounts of activity in each area to create balance. Think of each life area as providing a special and unique contribution to the whole.

An example of this is to think about the ingredients for a cake recipe. The varying amounts of each ingredient contribute to make a great tasting cake. However, if you were to use equal amounts of chocolate, flour, eggs and salt, the cake would not turn out right and taste really, really bad.

So, as you do the exercise don't worry that you have to have equal amounts of activities in each area of life. The amount of attention and involvement will be different for everyone. The important thing is to work towards achieving a comfortable and satisfying blend of all the areas.

Ok, so this is how the exercise works.

Find a place where you won't be interrupted for a few hours and then, using separate sheets of paper for each; write the name of the life area at the top of the page. Below that write the question: What things am I doing now? Skip about half way down the page and write the question: What things do I want to add? Continue until you have a worksheet for each area.

Starting with the first sheet, take several minutes to think about that individual area. What are the things you are currently doing in your life that bring you happiness in that area? Write down as many individual activities or actions as you can. Don't try to judge the activities just write them down. Take your time, don't rush through it and be honest.

Next, think about some of things you aren't doing but you would like to do. You may have thought of some things while you were completing the last section. Write them down. It may help to think of times when you have said to yourself, "When I get more time I would like to..." fill in the blank.

Continue on with the rest of the sheets. Again, take your time and be honest. If it seems that some things overlap into other areas, just put them in the category that fits best for you at that moment. For example, playing basketball could be listed under Health and Fitness, Social Interactions, as well as Leisure Activities; just put it where you feel it fits best.

When you've completed all the areas review your lists. Decide how you feel about your level of satisfaction in each of the area? Are there areas you may be neglecting, or spending too much time in? Are there some activities you would like to add to your life, or stop doing?

Once you've completed this part of the exercise you will have a new perspective on how you channel your energy, and how it contributes to your satisfaction with life. With this knowledge, you can begin to rearrange some activities and create a more satisfying balance.

Choose an area you feel you would like to improve and plan to add a new activity. You may want to add several activities but, don't go too fast. Adding new activities to your life can be fun but it can also create some stress as you try to adapt to a new routine. Take your time, make one or two changes and then give yourself time to adjust, but most importantly have fun with it.

Using this exercise to evaluate the areas of your life will help you to achieve higher levels of satisfaction and nourish your body, mind and spirit. I hope you enjoyed this exercise and I wish you all the best on your journey towards a happy balanced life.

Sincerely,
Edward Aldama, MBA
Author of "The Success Habit Secret: A 21-Day Success Program"

- Get more information on balance and other life goals at, www.YourGreatestself.com
- To talk with a coach or get a Free Review of your life balancing plan
- Ask for a Monthly Life Balance Check-in to keeping your life in balance.
 - It's only \$9.95/mo. and it gives you access to Tools, Tips and Tricks for keeping your life in balance. Just ask, Edward@YourGreatestself.com