

WELLBEING WORKBOOK

A Comprehensive Guide to Creating a Healthy, Happy
Productive, Long Retirement



MALENY MEN'S SHED

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WELLBEING WORKBOOK

Wellbeing Workbook

A Comprehensive Guide to Creating a Healthy, Happy, Productive, Long Retirement

Maleny, Queensland, Australia

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Don't disregard the advice of a health professional, or delay in seeking it, because of something you read.

I need serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can, and

The wisdom to know the difference.

Introduction

THE JOURNEY OF DEVELOPING a personal life in retirement that is fulfilling, sustainable, and transformative is distinctive to you. History, research, and experience shows us that when people reflect, increase self-awareness, and carefully consider specific information in the context of connecting with supportive others, brilliant, life-changing things are accomplished. It's beneficial being both mindful and agile.

With this workbook you will develop greater motivation and commitment to the tasks required for progress. You will go from confusion to clarity, develop competencies, and ultimately arrive at confidence. Once you have quality sustainable systems in place, your goals will be realised. This planning process leads ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results.

Let this evidence-based self-improvement workbook help you focus on the what and how of guiding goals and actions, once you've established your why. You need to harness energy and leverage your strengths. You are a complex being and life is testing, so a clear, comprehensive plan is critical. Success is not about chance; it's about choices thru the chaos. Be strategic and tactical. You hope your retirement will be good, but hope is not a strategy.

Start the process of life planning by engaging in good faith and with goodwill, by completing the activities in the appendices and reading the resource information there too. The activities and information are invaluable to improve self-awareness, clarify understandings, broaden and build your skills, and deepen and strengthen your resolve. Patience and persistence pays off. Then you will more meaningfully be able to complete your very own *Positive Personal Progress Plan*.

Remember, you are a thinking, feeling, behaving (sophisticated) animal with a complex physiology. It's powerful to create value in your existence, develop the influence you desire, and build a retirement that's important and precious for yourself, family, and community.

Planning a good life benefits enormously by using your 3Cs: in my native Italian; *cervello, cuore, e coraggio* - your brain, heart, and courage! This way you'll make impressive progress toward better thinking, improved routines, more resilience and grit, greater agility, enhanced performance, and optimal health, so that you can create who you want to be.

This workbook is where I've put some of the most important, helpful things I've learned. I feel gratitude for these insights and experiences, and I wish you all the very best as you embark on this wonderful journey as you get busy living.



John Barletta PhD

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HEALTH & WELLBEING OFFICER – MALENY MEN'S SHED

Positive Personal Progress Plan

The discipline of writing something down is the first step toward making it happen. (Iacocca)

1. What I **HAVE** that I love (or like), that works well, and that I appreciate:
(that I **care** about, that I am **good** at, and that I **love** doing)

2. What I really **WANT** in my life that I don't have:

3. What I have in my life that I **DON'T** want: (that keep me in a fog; wastes time; gives me a headache)

4. What is **STOPPING** me right now from being where I want to be? And what's the **cost**?

5. What new **BELIEFS** do I need to embrace to become the person I want to be?

(develop a **new story** to tell myself to keep on track, and to activate a helpful **emotional state**)

6. Where I want to be in **1 to 3** years time: (**picture** it; think big picture; be **inspired** and **visionary**)

(write a **wish list** or **bucket list**; or develop a **vision board** or **dream board**; or use *Pinterest*)

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7. **GOALS** that are most important to me (**stretch** beyond my comfort zone; a max of three clear goals):

A _____

B _____

C _____

8. My three **GOALS**:

What's the smallest thing I'd need to do, to consider it a success ?	Why it's important for me to achieve this goal. (i.e., my real reason)	How will I know I've achieved the goal? (e.g., what I will <u>see</u> , <u>hear</u> , <u>feel</u> , and <u>think</u>)	By when do I want to achieve it?
A			/ /20
B			/ /20
C			/ /20

9. The **ACTION** I'll take for each goal **today**, in subsequent days, weeks, and months:
(a sustainable **system**; actions small enough to be **achievable**; **commit** to them)

GOAL A *Action:* _____

Action: _____

Action: _____

GOAL B *Action:* _____

Action: _____

Action: _____

GOAL C *Action:* _____

Action: _____

Action: _____

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10. My **BOARD OF ADVISORS** (*fan club* or *coaching team*) includes: (who **supports** and **challenges** me, e.g., partner, mates, friends, family, neighbours)

11. **ACCELERATORS** of success: (what I will **continue** doing, do **more** of, **restart**, and **start** doing)

Do *more* of what I *love/like*.

12. **OBSTACLES** to success: (what gets in the way and **self-sabotages**? what I'll **stop** doing or do **less** of)

Do *less* of what I *loathe*.

13. The **critical** thing I need to do to facilitate change and **make a significant difference** to my life is:

14. **Commitment**: The score I give myself out of 10 for **how likely** I am to achieve these goals: ____/10

15. If I gave less than **7.5**/10, consider: *What might **stop** me from achieving these goals?*

Then decide; *What I am **prepared** to do about it.*

16. How I will measure **progress** (daily), and with **whom** (fortnightly/monthly) for accountability, motivation, and quality, and to be influenced by **feedback**:

17. What I will do to **celebrate** my progress and gains:

I am committed to achieving these goals and systems by working on these plans.

Initials: _____

Think big. Act small. Fail fast. Learn rapidly. (Poppendieck & Poppendieck)

Appendices

These activities and resources are beneficial for developing your goals and systems.

Great people are not born great, they grow great. (Puzo)

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Be practical as well as generous in your ideals.

Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground. (Roosevelt)

*Appendix 1: Reflecting on your **History of Work**: Activity*

Needs from Work? Needs in Retirement?

An exploration of the motivations and reasons why you worked can be a great way to answer the following very important question:

What are the range of needs that working satisfied for you?

Financial and Psychological Needs most often met from Working:

1. Money (for needs and wants now, and for the future)
2. Stability/Routine (was work a mindless addiction?)
3. Socialisation/Belonging
4. Identity/Status
5. Challenge/Strengths/Engagement
6. Achievement/Growth
7. Fun/Freedom/Creativity/Novelty
8. Purpose/Meaning
9. Fitness - Physical/Cognitive/Emotional
10. Avoiding other problems in life!

What will be your top 5 ways of satisfying your needs in retirement?

What will you do every day, every week, and every month?

For example:

Daily: Family/Friends/Neighbours; Shed; Home; Garden; Dog

Weekly: Money management; Tennis; Men's Shed; Blacksmithing; Yoga

Monthly (or so): JP duty; Golfing; Kayaking; Courses; Travel

If our needs are not met to a satisfactory extent, it can lead to emotional and mental distress, and reduced health and wellbeing. This includes feelings of sadness, anxiety, confusion, anger, frustration, hopelessness, embarrassment, loneliness, self-doubt, and emptiness.

**Retirement is not about withdrawing;
it's about choosing how you want to be with ease in the world,
physically, emotionally, cognitively, creatively, and energetically. (Barletta)**

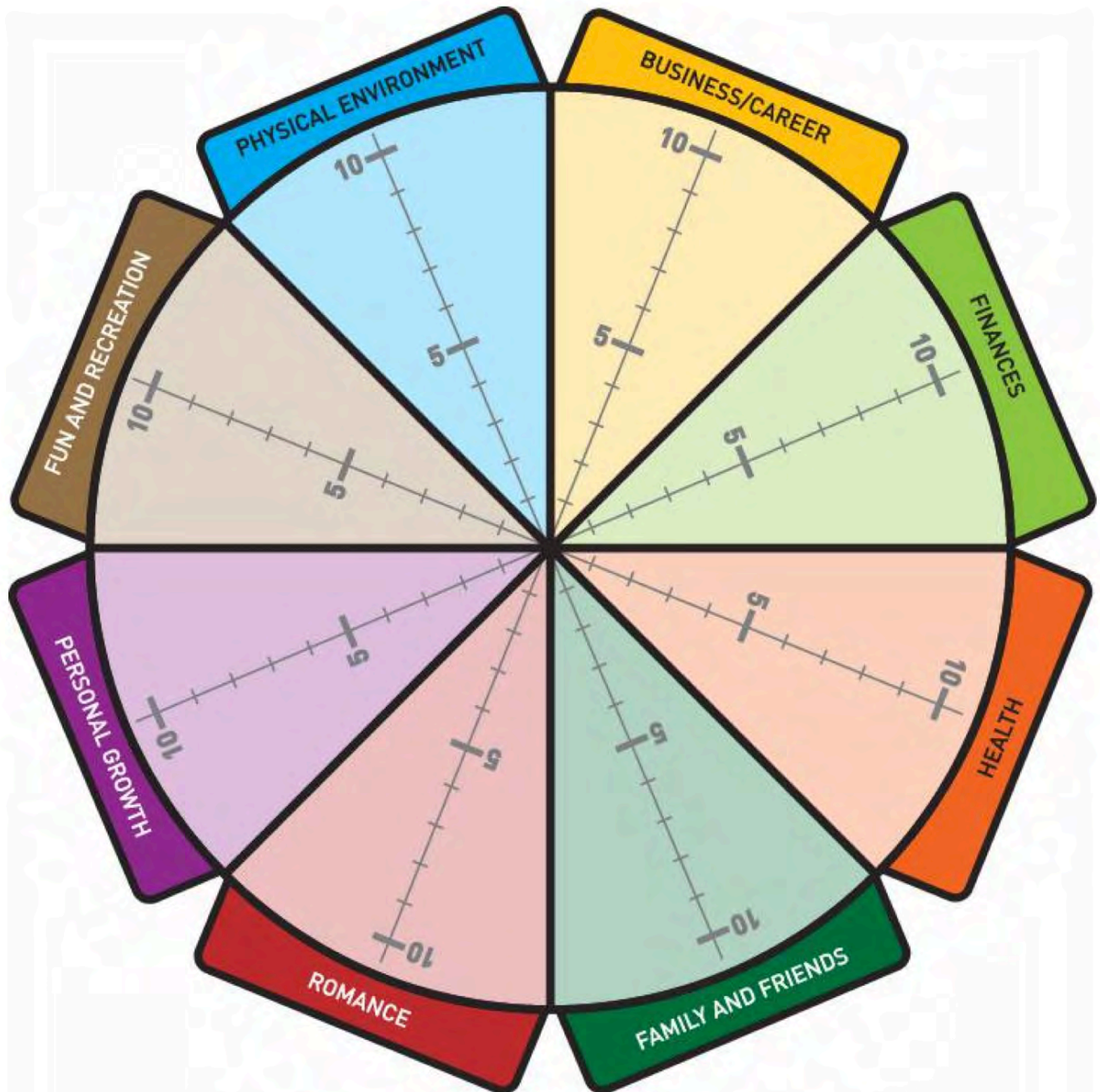
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Notes about my needs:

Appendix 2: Reviewing **Lifestyle**: Activity

Wheel of Life

An exploration of the *Wheel of Life* is very useful to begin the process of self-review. It explores your current wellness reality, and focuses the probability of a *healthier, more productive* life. The success in your *strongest* areas will give you ideas as to how to develop your areas for *growth*.



(Source: Unknown)

1. If you consider the perimeter (outside) of the wheel to be the **best** you want to achieve, place a mark (X) at the relevant point on the spoke of each section, indicating where you believe you generally are at this time of your life.
2. Join all the marks consecutively and then examine the **shape** that is formed. (Is it smooth or bumpy? Small or large?)

Consider why it is important for you to make some changes in your life.

This will help you form goals/systems; be clear, concise, realistic, action-oriented, and specify a timeframe.

I have never met someone who stated emphatically; Yes, I have it all.

Because no matter what any of us has, and how grateful we are for what we have, no one has it all. (Sandberg)

Lifestyle Notes:

Appendix 3: Focusing on **Wellness**: Info Journey of Wellness

The **choice to embark** on a wellness journey brings a satisfaction of knowing that how you grow, to a great extent, is the result of what lifestyle options you select along the way.

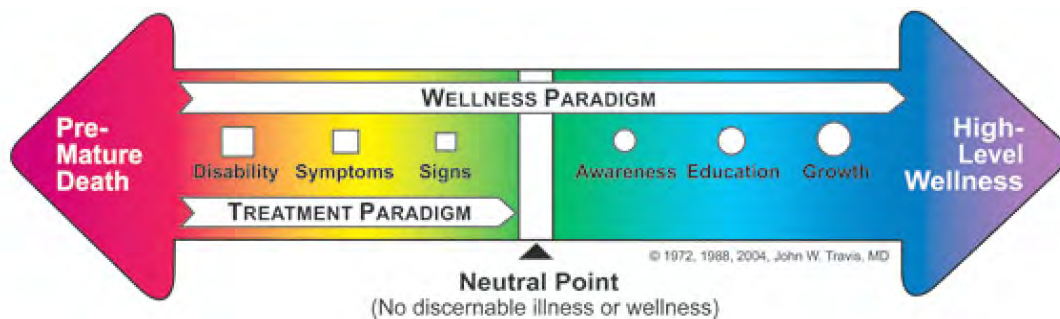
Thanks to the Internet, a lack of information is **no excuse** for not being part of your own wellness journey.

You can progress from being mentally shattered, to flat, to okay, to healthy, to **robust** by your choices.

What a **great challenge and adventure** it is to create a path that leads to health, happiness, satisfaction, fulfilment, and optimal functioning in retirement.



Consider to what extent you address your wellbeing when signs or symptoms of illness appear (e.g., treat pathogens)...or to what extent you have a **deliberate, committed plan** to develop and maintain a sense of **authentic, genuine wellness** (i.e., pursue salutogens).



(Graphics: Travis)

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (W.H.O.)

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Notes for my Wellness Journey:

[illegible]

Appendix 4: Building a **Life Mission**: Activities

Personal Mission Statement

*You need to have **purpose** in retirement and know what's **important** to you so you can **focus** on it daily.*

*The following prompts will help you create **a mission statement** for yourself. This is not only about what you want to do (as found in a résumé or CV), it's about who you want to be (as heard in a eulogy).*

*This is about **legacy** not **vanity**.*

It is my mission...

To live...

To work...

To continue...

To love...

To be...

To become...

To believe...

To promote...

To strive...

To seek...

(Adapted: Covey, Merrill, & Merrill)

What matters is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment. (Frankl)

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Meaningful Notes:

[illegible]

Appendix 5: Exploring **Values**: Activity

Values Clarification

*There are numerous ways to clarify your **core values**.*

*Here are **three** values clarification exercises that are a great place to start.*

*Stay close to your core values as you develop your personal goals,
and they will provide you a compass for your retirement journey.*

A. All the following values are worthwhile. Add any value that comes to mind that is not on the list.

Take five minutes to select **your top 10** (one X); and then refine it to **your top five values** (two Xs).

___ ACHIEVEMENT (accomplishment using skills, practice, perseverance, grit, exertion)

___ ADVANCEMENT (moving forward in life through promotions, goal-setting)

___ ADVENTURE (life that involves risk-taking, travel, or trying new things)

___ AESTHETICS (studying or appreciating the beauty of ideas and things)

___ AUTONOMY (independence, absence of significant direction from others)

___ CARING (love, affection, intimacy)

___ CERTAINTY (routines and a predictable lifestyle, not likely to change over time)

___ CHALLENGE (stimulates full use of your potential)

___ COMPETITION (your abilities against others where there is a win/lose result)

___ COOPERATION (opportunity to be in teams toward common goals)

___ CREATIVITY (being imaginative, innovative, coming up with ideas)

___ ECONOMIC SECURITY (having enough money for now and later)

___ EXCITEMENT (experience a high degree of, or frequent, excitement in life)

___ FAMILY (to spend time and develop good family relationships)

___ FRIENDSHIP (develop close personal relationships)

___ HEALTH (physical and psychological wellbeing)

___ HELP OTHERS (helping people in a direct way, individually or in a group; volunteering)

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- ____HELP SOCIETY (do something to improve the community or environment)
- ____INNER HARMONY (being at peace with oneself)
- ____INTEGRITY (genuineness, sincerity, and honesty)
- ____INTELLECTUAL STATUS (be regarded as an expert in a field; being smart)
- ____KNOWLEDGE (understanding gained through study and experience)
- ____LEADERSHIP (influence/manage others; rather lead than follow)
- ____LEISURE (have time for hobbies, sports, activities, and interests)
- ____LOCATION (live where it fits your lifestyle and allows you to do things you enjoy)
- ____LOYALTY (steadfastness and allegiance)
- ____NOVELTY (varied, frequently changing responsibilities and/or settings)
- ____PLEASURE (fun, enjoyment)
- ____POWER (authority, control)
- ____PRECISION (little tolerance for error)
- ____RECOGNITION (getting acknowledged for your contributions)
- ____RESPONSIBILITY (being accountable for results)
- ____SPIRITUALITY (transcendent dimension where there is a meaning of existence)
- ____TIME FREEDOM (flexible schedules, no specific hours expected)
- ____WEALTH (profit, gain, money)
- ____WISDOM (accumulation and use of knowledge)

B. Here's another way to find what's important to you:

1. Develop a list of your personal values.
2. Now rank each one in importance as 'A' (**high**), or 'B' (**medium**), or 'C' (**low**).
3. Review the **A** and **B** values. Are there any that are essentially the same value, or one that is a subset of the other? If so, collate them and rename.
4. Rank order the remaining list from highest through to lowest priority.
5. You can now identify your **top five core values**.
6. Ask yourself whether these are your true, internal **bone deep** beliefs, or if any are external **should** values. You often don't recognise a lifetime of conditioning that has left you with other people's belief systems. Now replace any *should* values with *your own* values.
7. Examine each core value to ensure that it is your end value and not a means to some other end. For example, wealth is seldom a value in itself. It is usually the *means* to recognition, power, security, freedom, accomplishment, pleasure, or helping others.

My Personal Values

Rank A, B or C

C. And here's a really easy way to see what's important to you:

1. Imagine you are **100 years old** and you're looking back at your life as it has been.
2. Ask yourself:
 - What did I do that made me happy?
 - What did I do that defined me as a person?
 - What did I spend too much time worrying about?
 - What did I spend too little time doing?
 - If I could travel back in time, what would I do differently?***

We have two lives, and the second begins when we realise we only have one. (Confucius)

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Valued Notes:

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features 20 evenly spaced horizontal red lines across the entire page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no margins or additional markings.

Appendix 6: Shifting to a Growth Mindset: Info & Activity

Growth Mindset

Some think that trying something and failing means one is unintelligent, incapable, or unlucky.

Those people believe further pursuit after a failing is a waste of time.

These people with a **fixed mindset** avoid challenges because they think they can't improve, showing themselves to not be learners.

Others know that intelligence and skills can be improved with a learning mentality, and they use failures as motivators and stepping-stones to competence (**a growth, or challenge, mindset**). When you believe you can improve, you invest resources, time, and effort that lead to achievement.

Having to make an effort to achieve something does not mean you lack ability.

It's simply that you need to make thoughtful, committed choices on the journey toward success.

The truth is you have enormous capacity to succeed when you commit effort to a plan.

The first psychology textbook ever published (**in 1890**) referred to **plasticity** as the idea that with practice, you grow new internal (brain) connections and strengthen existing ones, i.e., **you become what you do repeatedly**.

Neuroscience shows that you increase your brain's growth by chosen actions, such as using effective learning strategies, asking thoughtful curious questions, deliberate practice, connecting with others, and following good nutrition and sleep habits. (*Adapted: Dweck*)

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



I can learn anything I want to.
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.
I want to challenge myself.
When I fail, I learn.
Tell me I try hard.
If you succeed, I'm inspired.
My effort and attitude determine everything.



I'm either good at it, or I'm not.
When I'm frustrated, I give up.
I don't like to be challenged.
When I fail, I'm no good.
Tell me I'm smart.
If you succeed, I feel threatened.
My abilities determine everything.

Created by: Reid Wilson @wayfaringpath Icon from: thenounproject.com

...there are two paths you can go by, but in the long run,
there's still time to change the road you're on... (Page & Plant)

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Mindset Quiz

Place a mark (X) in the column that identifies the extent to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.				
2. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.				
3. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.				
4. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.				
5. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.				
6. Music talent can be learned by anyone.				
7. Only a few people will be truly good at creative pursuits like writing – you have to be <i>born with it</i> .				
8. Maths is much easier to learn if you are male or maybe come from a culture that values maths.				
9. The harder you work at something the better you will be at it.				
10. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.				
11. Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.				
12. Some people are good and kind, and some are not – it's not often people change.				
13. I appreciate when clients, coaches, friends, family give me feedback about my performance.				
14. I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance.				
15. All human beings without major injuries or significant birth defects are capable of the same amount of learning.				
16. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.				
17. You can do things differently, but important parts of who you are can't really be changed.				
18. Human beings are basically good but sometimes make terrible decisions.				
19. An important reason why I do my work and read is that I like to learn new things.				
20. Truly smart people do not need to try hard.				

Mindset Quiz – scoring

Circle the numbers in the boxes that match your answers.

45 – 60

34 – 44

21 – 33

00 – 20

Strong Growth Mindset

Growth Mindset with some **Fixed** ideas

Fixed Mindset with some **Growth** ideas

Strong Fixed Mindset

My Mindset: _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
2. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
3. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
4. personality mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
5. personality mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
6. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
7. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
8. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
9. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
10. personality mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
11. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
12. personality mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
13. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
14. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
15. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
16. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
17. personality mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
18. personality mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
19. ability mindset – growth	3	2	1	0
20. ability mindset – fixed	0	1	2	3
Subtotals				
GRAND TOTAL				

(Adapted: www.classroom20.com)

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Growth Notes:

[illegible]

Appendix 7: Prioritising using the MoSCoW model: Info

MoSCoW

MoSCoW is a simple and effective way to sort priorities; to help you quickly see what is essential and what is not, and to get an understanding about where you place importance. Once there is a **clear set of requirements**, it is essential to **rank them**. This ranking helps you to understand what is most important, in what order to develop them, and what to avoid when there is pressure on finances, timeframe, energy, or resources.

MoSCoW refers to:

M - *Must have* - can't live without it, non-negotiable.

S - *Should have* - important to be included, if possible.

C - *Could have* - less critical but desirable, nice-to-have.

W - *Won't have now* - lowest value (but, would maybe have in the future).

(Adapted: Clegg)

The terms (*i.e.*, **Must**, **Should**, **Could**, **Won't**) make it easier to discuss **what's really important**.

The **must** requirements provide a coherent solution, and alone might lead to success.

The ***must*** requirements are fixed.

Failure to deliver even one of the ***musts*** will likely mean a goal or project fails.

You can aim to attain as many of the **shoulds** as budget, time, energy, and resources allow.

Could requirements are desirable, but do not affect the overall success of a project.

It is essential to have a clear set of prioritised and agreed requirements alongside an overall objective, timeframe, budget, quality criteria, and outcomes if **excellence** and **success** are going to be attained in retirement.

Anyone with any degree of mental toughness, ought to be able to exist without the things they like most for a few months at least. (O'Keeffe)

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Notes to Prioritise:

[illegible]

Appendix 8: Identifying **Strengths**: Activity

Character Strengths

This exercise helps you identify your character strengths.

*A strength is something you do well (high performance),
happily (high energy), and often (high use).*

You have all the strengths to some extent, but certain ones will be more potent than others.

*When you leverage your **strengths**, you feel energised, and when you don't, you feel depleted.*

*Take 10 minutes to select (circle) what you think are your **five most prominent strengths**.*

Play to your strengths as you develop your goals and systems to have a quality retirement.

You can take this **free** survey on-line: www.viacharacter.org

Virtue of Wisdom: Cognitive skills that entail acquiring and using knowledge.

1. **Creativity** [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualise and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it.
2. **Curiosity** [novelty-seeking, openness]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering.
3. **Judgment** [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing evidence fairly.
4. **Love of Learning**: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows.
5. **Perspective** [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and others.

Virtue of Courage: Emotional skills that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of external and internal opposition.

7. **Bravery** [courage]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what's right even if there's opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; perhaps physical bravery.
8. **Perseverance** [industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persevering in a course of action in spite of obstacles; showing grit; taking pleasure in completing tasks.
9. **Honesty** [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting sincerely; being without pretence; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.
10. **Zest** [vitality, enthusiasm]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or half-heartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.

Virtue of Humanity: Interpersonal strengths that involve tending to and befriending others.

11. **Love**: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people.
12. **Kindness** [generosity, altruism]: Doing favours and good deeds; helping and taking care of others.
13. **Social (& Emotional) Intelligence** [personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of others and oneself; knowing what to do to fit in social situations; knowing how others tick.

Virtue of Justice: Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life.

14. **Teamwork** [social responsibility]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share.
15. **Fairness** [equity]: Treating all people according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
16. **Leadership**: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same time maintain good relations within the group; organising group activities and seeing they happen.

Virtue of Temperance: Strengths that protect against excess.

17. **Forgiveness**: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful.
18. **Humility** [modesty]: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.
19. **Prudence** [caution, discretion]: Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.
20. **Self-Regulation**: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.

Virtue of Transcendence: Abilities to forge connections to the universe and provide meaning.

20. **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** [awe, wonder]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.
21. **Gratitude**: Awareness of and thanks for good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.
22. **Hope** [optimism, future-minded]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.
23. **Humour** [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making jokes.
24. **Spirituality** [faith]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.

(Adapted: Peterson & Seligman)

My top five Character Strengths are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

A person can perform only from strength. One cannot build performance on weakness, let alone on something one cannot do at all. (Drucker)

Strengths Notes:

[illegible]

Appendix 9: Increasing Happiness: Info

Flourishing via P.E.R.M.A.H.

*Create a good, full life using the **six pillars of wellbeing** based on positive psychology. This information identifies what comprises a sense of **flourishing**.*

As you live a happy, interesting, connected, purposeful, and fulfilling retirement that you deliberately create, you will embrace and appreciate opportunities more fully.

Rather than the medical model (i.e., problems have pathologies that need diagnosis and treatment by specific techniques to remedy deficits), positive psychology focuses on strengths and virtues, not just fixing what is challenging, but nurturing what is best in ourselves.

***P.E.R.M.A.H.** is more than a to-do list. It focuses attention on what's important to build **resilience**.*

P - POSITIVE EMOTIONS (gratitude, pleasure, fun, joy, gratification, playfulness): For you to experience flourishing, be grateful and enjoy positive emotions in your life. Any positive emotion like peace, satisfaction, inspiration, hope, curiosity, and love falls into this category, and it's important to be kind and enjoy *being* (not just *doing*) in the here and now.

E - ENGAGEMENT (losing yourself and being absorbed in work, hobbies, and the moment): When you are truly engaged in a task or project, you experience a state of *flow*. Time seems to stop, you lose your sense of self as you concentrate intensely on the present challenge; you are *in the zone*! This feels right. The more you have this type of engagement in flow, the more likely you are to build resilience and experience wellbeing.

R - RELATIONSHIPS (those who touch your mind, body, heart, spirit): We are social animals and good relationships are central to wellness. People who have several meaningful, positive relationships are much happier and healthier than those who don't. Great relationships with at least a few people and groups are critical for a quality and quantity life.

M - MEANING (purpose, pursue an ambitious vision): Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than yourself. Whether this is working on a personal goal, helping others, volunteering, contributing to a cause or community engagement, a personal mission is critical.

A - ACCOMPLISHMENT (learning and completing endeavors big and small, knowing and using your strengths, fulfilment, satisfaction): Many of us strive to better ourselves in some way, whether you're seeking to master a skill, achieve a goal, or win something. Growth and achievement are important factors that contribute to thriving.

H - HEALTH (sleep, move, relax, nutrition, forgive, nature, pets): Ensure nutrition is balanced and healthy, you are hydrated and consume only modest amounts of alcohol, move regularly (activities/exercise), get about 8 hours sleep, chill-out, and spend time in nature.

(Adapted: Seligman)

When you see a person without a smile, give them one of yours. (Ziglar)

Flourishing Notes:

[illegible]

Appendix 10: Enhancing Mental Wellness: Info

Maximising Brain Health

These **seven daily** activities compromise the set of **mental nutrients** your brain needs to function at its best. By engaging every day in all these behaviours, you promote integration, and enable your brain to coordinate and balance its activities in retirement.

The Healthy Mind Platter



The Healthy Mind Platter, for Optimal Brain Matter

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Essential Daily Activities to Optimise Brain Matter and Create Wellbeing

Sleep Time: Give your brain the rest it needs to consolidate learning and recover from the experiences of the day (**about 8 hours per night**).

Physical Time: Move your body, aerobically if medically possible, as it strengthens the brain in many ways.

Focus Time: Closely focus on tasks in a goal-oriented way, and taking on challenges that make deep connections in the brain (**experiencing flow by being in the zone; creativity; declutter**).

Time In: Quietly reflecting internally (**mindfulness, meditation**), focusing on sensations, images, feelings and thoughts, help to calm and integrate the brain. Remember to be self-compassionate too.

Down Time: Being non-focused, without any specific task, and let your mind wander or simply relax, which helps the brain recharge (**chillaxing; digital detox**).

Play Time: Allow yourself to be spontaneous and creative, playfully enjoying novel experiences which helps make new brain connections (**being childlike; adventures; novelty**).

Connecting Time: Connect with other people in person (**avoid loneliness**), and also take time to appreciate your connection to nature around you, richly activating the brain's relational circuitry.

With time and patience you can achieve anything. (my Dad!)

Brainy Notes!

[illegible]

Appendix 11: Maximising your **Focus**: Activities

Mindfulness Triggers

*Reflecting and focusing on sensations, images, emotions and thoughts helps integrate wellbeing.
Daily activities to focus you in the present are critical for **resilience**, and to facilitate **change**.*

A mindfulness trigger is something that will remind you to break out of **automatic pilot** so you can be aware, spontaneous, calm, and free.

Use **post-it notes** to remind you to smile, relax, or to breathe deeply. Post notes so you will see them first thing in the morning, helping to set the tone for the day. Stick a note to your computer screen or wherever you work, in order to remind you to detach yourself from the mindlessness of habitual thoughts and emotions even for just a few breaths.

Mindfulness triggers can also be ordinary **actions** or **objects** in your environment. You can learn to associate those actions and objects with being mindful so they act as reminders to be aware.

Transitional events can make the best mindfulness triggers. A transitional event is an action that involves changing from doing one thing to doing another. So walking through a door can be a transitional event that acts as a mindfulness trigger, as can getting into your car, or stepping onto a train, hearing your phone ring, or putting down your briefcase.

You can cultivate mindfulness triggers by choosing a particular transitional event, and consciously reminding yourself to be mindful whenever that event occurs, e.g., when the phone rings, remind yourself to smile and to breathe deeply three times before you reach for the phone.

A mindfulness trigger can be a very powerful **wake up call**. You might be in the routine of grabbing habitually for the phone as soon as it rings. This tends to add to pressure, since the compulsive nature of the grabbing reflects that the phone is in charge of you. Since you can't control when the phone rings, you're not in charge of your own life, which is inherently demanding. That small gap that you produce after the phone rings and before you pick it up reminds you that **you have choices**. You can choose to calm yourself by consciously taking a few deep breaths, and you can choose to pick up the phone smiling and in a friendly state of mind.

Other mindfulness triggers can be used in a similar way. Use mindfulness triggers as opportunities to wake up from automatic pilot and to be more fully alive in the present moment. You let go of thoughts of past and future, and in doing so you let go of some of the emotional turmoil that those thoughts engender.

You can associate a phrase or image with a trigger, e.g., you could say to yourself, **opening my heart** as you open the door to your home or shed, and take your awareness to your emotions as you do so.

(Adapted: Hansen)

My Mindfulness Triggers:

[illegible]

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. (Frankl)

Mindfulness of Breath - Activity

1. Bring your attention to your breathing.
2. Follow the air as it comes in through your nostrils and goes down to the bottom of your lungs.
Then follow it as it goes back out again.
3. Follow the air, as if you're riding the waves of your breathing.
4. Notice the air moving in and out of your nostrils...how it's slightly warmer as it comes out, cooler as it goes in.
5. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your ribcage.
6. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your abdomen (belly).
7. Fix your attention on one of these areas, whichever you prefer: on the breath moving in and out of the nostrils, on the rising and falling of the ribcage, or on the rising and falling of the abdomen.
8. Keep your attention on this spot, noticing the movement – in and out – of the breath.
9. Whatever feelings, urges, or sensations arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, gently acknowledge them – as if nodding your head at people passing by you on the street. Gently acknowledge their presence, and let them be. Allow them to come and go as they please, and keep your attention on the breath.
10. Whatever thoughts, images, or memories arise, whether comfortable or uncomfortable, simply acknowledge them, and allow them to be. Let them to come and go as they please, and keep your attention on the breath.
11. From time to time, your attention will become distracted by thoughts or feelings. Each time this happens, notice what distracted you, and then bring your attention back to the breath. No matter how often your attention wanders off – whether a hundred times or a thousand times, your aim is simply to note what distracted you, and bring your attention back to the breath.

12. There is no need to be frustrated or impatient when your thoughts carry you off. It is the same for everyone. Our minds naturally distract us from what we are doing. So, each time you realise your attention has wandered, gently acknowledge it, notice what distracted you, and return your attention to the breath.
13. If frustration, boredom, anxiety, impatience or other feelings arise, simply acknowledge them, and maintain your focus on the breath.
14. No matter how often your attention wanders, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and gently bring your attention back to the breath.
15. When you are ready, bring yourself back to the room, and open your eyes.

(Adapted: Harris)

Mindfulness Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf. (Kabat-Zinn)

Appendix 12: Organising Time and Priorities: Info**Time Management Matrix**

This grid (Eisenhower Matrix) is very effective for organising priorities in retirement.

***Quadrant #2** is critical so that you work **tactically** and **strategically**.*

*Your effectiveness increases as you expand Quadrant #2; **focus on non-urgent, important things.***

Your compass of purpose and values will guide you. Be opportunity-minded, not problem-focused.

	Urgent	Non-Urgent
Important	Q-1: Quadrant of Necessity • Impending deadlines (that are important and have long-term consequence to your life) • Crises/Emergencies • Resolving immediate problems • Certain e-mails that may change your life (e.g., job app, biz opport)	Q-2: Quadrant of Quality and Personal Leadership • Building long-term solutions/systems • Relationship building • Building your dream career/business • Personal/Skill development • Improving your health/wellness • Finding your life partner
Not Important	Q-3: Quadrant of Deception • Interruptions/Distractions • Most phone calls/e-mails • Attending inconsequential meetings • Spending a lot of time on a task (report, e-mail) that has little to no impact to your goals/life in long run • Dealing with others' requests	Q-4: Quadrant of Waste • Mindless TV/web surfing / chatting • Reading gossip sites/forums • Watching/reading news (to an extent) • Certain phone calls/e-mails • Excessive gaming • Idling • Any time wasting activity

(Source: Covey)

Priority Notes:

Appendix 13: Boosting **Emotional Intelligence**: Info

Emotional Intelligence

*Emotional Intelligence (your **EQ**) improves relationships and performance in retirement.*

***EQ** enhances and boosts cognitive intelligence (your **IQ**), and increases satisfaction.*

*Increasing your **EQ** competencies is enormously helpful in moving toward your goals.*

There are six areas of competence within *Emotional Intelligence*:

1. **Self-Awareness** (being **present** rather than disconnected): The skill of perceiving and understanding your own emotions. It represents the frequency with which you consciously consider your feelings and mood states; recognise the causes of your feelings; understand the impact your feelings have on your thoughts, decisions, and behaviours; and know about your strengths and weaknesses.
2. **Awareness of Others** (being **empathic** rather than insensitive): The skill of perceiving and understanding others' emotions. It represents the frequency with which you identify the way other people feel about issues; understand what causes other people to feel specific emotions such as concern and optimism; and demonstrate an understanding of other people's feelings.
3. **Self-Expression** (being **genuine** rather than untrustworthy): The skill of expressing your own emotions effectively. It represents the frequency with which you effectively express how you feel about issues; appropriately express specific emotions such as frustration and happiness; provide positive feedback to others; and express emotions at the right time, to the right degree, with the right people.
4. **Reasoning** (being **expansive** rather than limited): The skill of utilising emotional information in reasoning, planning, and decision-making. It represents how frequently you take your own and others' feelings into account in decision-making; demonstrate to others that you have considered feelings when making decisions; appropriately communicate decisions to others; and consider your own and others' values when making important decisions.

5. **Self-Management** (being **resilient** rather than temperamental): The skill of effectively managing your own emotions. It represents how frequently you explore and manage the causes of things that upset you; engage in activities that make you feel positive; and move on quickly from things that distress you.

6. **Positive Influence (on self)/Inspiring Performance (in others)** (being **empowering** rather than indifferent): The skill of influencing the moods and emotions of self and others. It represents how frequently you help self and others find effective ways of responding to events and requirements; effectively help self and others resolve issues causing distress; and create a positive environment in which to operate.

(Adapted: Genos; Stough)

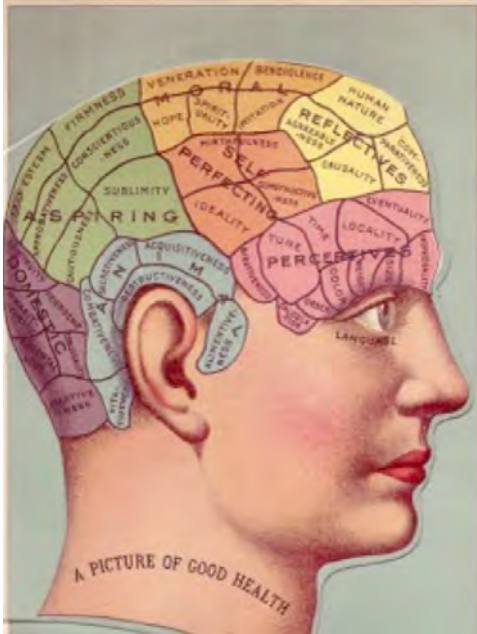
Anyone can be angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not easy. (Aristotle)

Emotional Notes!

Appendix 14: Minimising Unhelpful Thinking: Info

Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs)

*Sometimes you can be **trapped in a vicious cycle** of automatic negative thoughts. Break the cycle of limiting beliefs by **noticing** and gently **accepting** them, or **challenging** such thoughts, or by using a **thought stopping** statement. Then find something that takes your interest and focus toward more useful thoughts and activities.*



(Squash the ANTs!) The Dirty Dozen

1. All or Nothing thinking:

Black-or-white thinking, e.g., *If it is not perfect, it's a failure.*

2. Overgeneralisation:

See a single negative event as a never-ending pattern.

3. Mental filter (negative):

Pick out the negative in a situation and dwell upon it.

4. Discounting the positive:

Thinking that positive experiences *just don't count*.

5. Mind-reading:

Without checking it out, you decide what people think.

6. Fortune-telling:

Predict that things will turn out negatively. e.g., *I just know I am going to fail.*

7. Catastrophising:

See only the worst possible outcome in a situation.

8. Magnification:

Exaggerate the importance of your problems, or minimise the importance of your good qualities.

9. Emotional reasoning:

Assume negative feelings reflect the way things really are.

10. *Should* statements:

Tell yourself that something **should** (must, ought, has to) be the case. If directed inward, a ‘should’ statement leads to guilt and frustration, and if directed outwards, leads to anger and frustration. Try alternative statements such as: *I could..., I might..., I want to...* (**Don’t should on yourself!**)

11. Labelling:

Extreme all-or-nothing style and instead of saying: *I made a mistake*, you say, *I'm a loser* or *I'm stupid!*

12. Personalisation and Blame:

When you personally feel responsible for an event that isn't totally under your control, or think that it's other people's fault when you are actually responsible.

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What I Now Think about My Thinking:

[illegible]

Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. (Shaw)

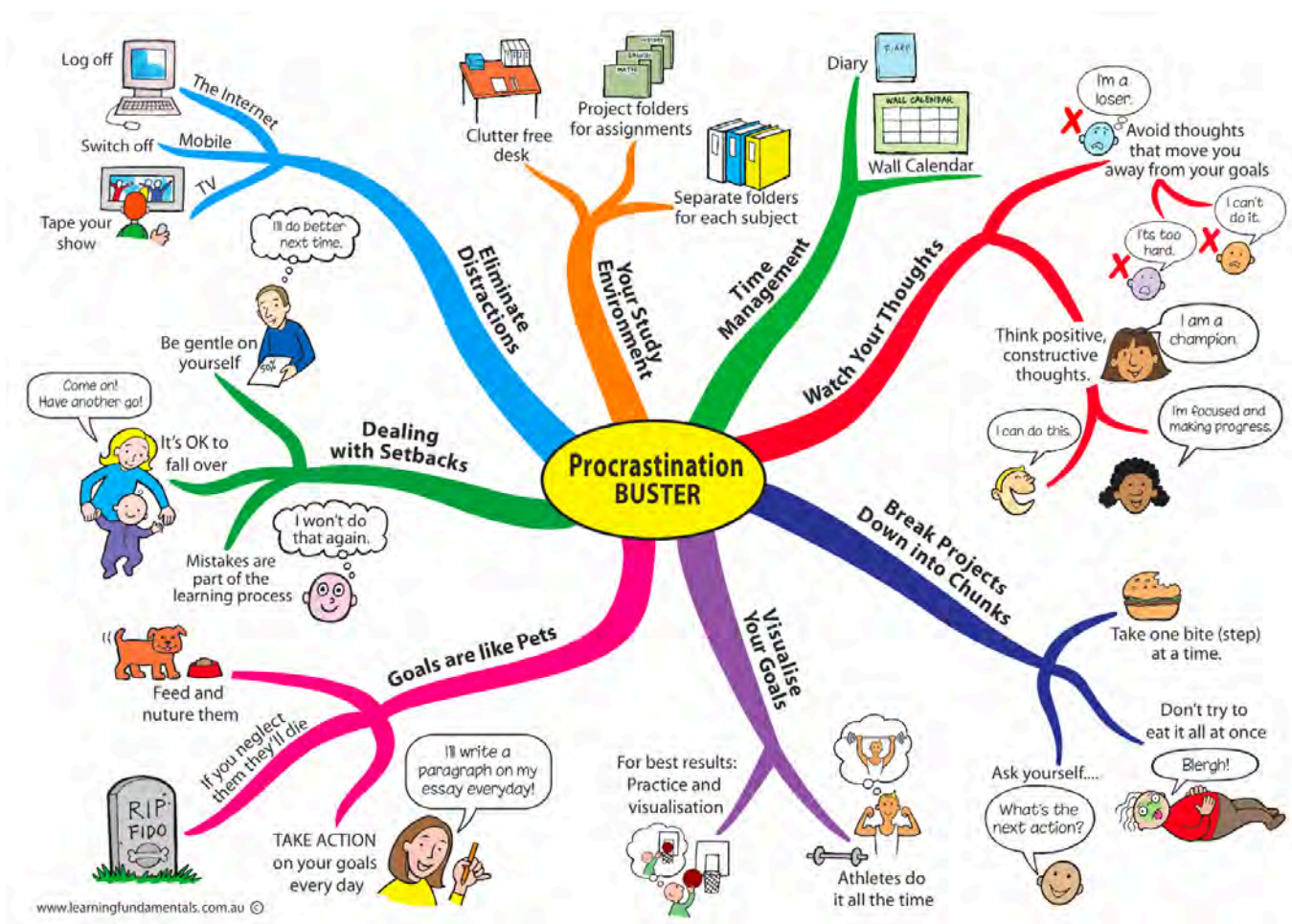
Appendix 15: Overcoming Procrastination: Info

Staying on Track

Procrastination is when you carry out less important (or more pleasurable tasks) in preference to the more important (or less pleasurable ones).

*Procrastination is a way that you get stuck, and **you might not realise you are**, and you create reasons that supply you with logic to delay the task at hand, sometimes indefinitely!*

*Whether you procrastinate due to inadequate self-regulation, laziness, impulsivity, perfectionism, fear of success, low self-discipline, or poor time management, here are **strategies to help...***



What you focus on you amplify. Where attention goes energy flows. (Redfield)

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Notes for Keeping on Track:

[illegible]

Appendix 16: Thinking **Optimistically**: Info

On Being Optimistic

*You will be **happier** in retirement by **understanding** and **explaining** what happens to you, both good things and not so good things, using an **optimistic** viewpoint.*

*Remember, the way you **think** about things changes how you **feel** and **behave**.*

Seeing the glass as half full improves physical and psychological wellbeing. Yet, some struggle to be optimistic because of their **personality**, or their **explanatory** style (i.e., how they explain life events).

The great news is that since this is a thinking style, it can be **learned via repeated deliberate practice**. **You too can be an optimist**. There are three dimensions people unconsciously, that is automatically, consider when explaining a life event which influences whether or not they are optimistic.

First, consider whether the event is **enduring** or **transitory**; ask yourself: *Will time change things, or will things stay the same regardless?* Next, consider if the situation is **global**, your life as a whole, or **local**, a reflection of only one part of life. Finally, do you think **you** or an **outside** force cause events?

Realistic Optimists believe positive events occur because of their efforts, as evidence that other positive things will happen in the future, and also in other areas of their life. Optimists see negative events as not being predominantly their fault, and as isolated situations that have nothing to do with other areas of their life or the future. Pessimists think the **opposite**. (beware of *cruel optimism* that involves perfectionism...)

Pessimists believe they cause negative events, that one mistake means more will happen, and mistakes in other areas of life are inevitable. On the other hand, they see positive events as flukes, caused by things outside their control, and something that probably won't happen again.

An optimistic view is developed by deliberately challenging and releasing negative, self-limiting thinking and replacing it with an optimistic thought pattern and more perspective. You can do it; **I'm optimistic for you!**

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My Optimistic Notes:

[illegible]

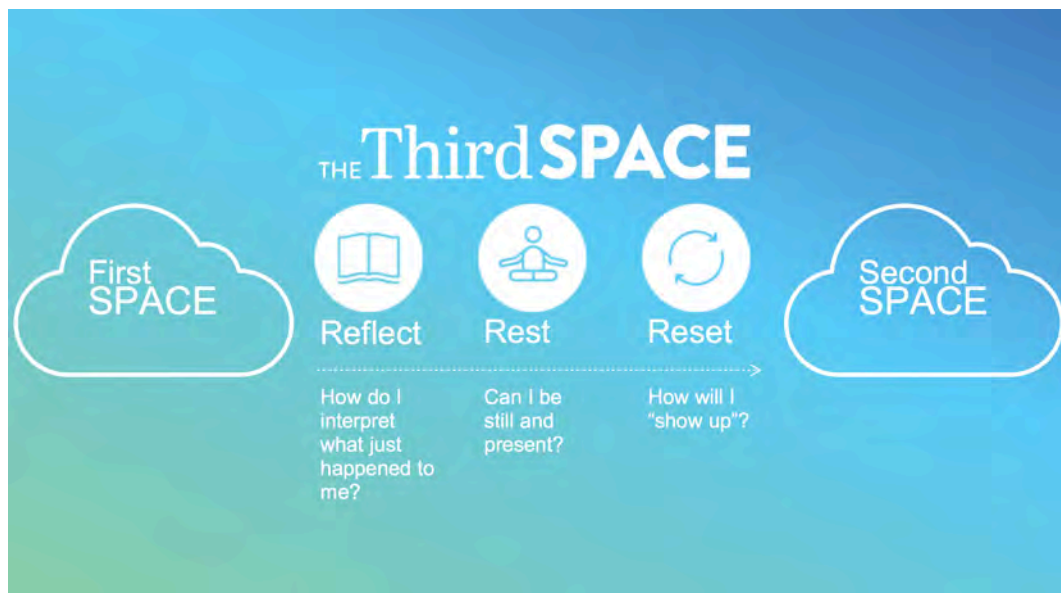
Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened. (Dr Seuss)

Appendix 17: Managing **The Third Space**: Info

Successful Transitions

*In each of your **Roles**, you conduct numerous **Tasks**, within several **Contexts**... often mindlessly!
Here's your chance to overcome the habitual (and sometimes negative)...*

You need to: LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU WORK and PLAY WELL,
BE AS RESILIENT AS POSSIBLE,
MINIMISE UNPRODUCTIVE EXPERIENCES,
RECOVER FROM A BAD EXPERIENCE OR DAY.
FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT, i.e., arriving at *work* and *home* in good psychological shape.



- 1. Reflect:** This is where you reflect on and analyse your experiences. The key is to focus on what you achieve and what goes well. This activity of examining how you grow and improve will increase your level of positive emotion, and develop a growth mindset.
- 2. Rest:** The next stage is to take time to relax and unwind. Being calm and present allows your body and brain to recover from demands. This stage allows you to shift so that you more composed and logical.
- 3. Reset:** This is the final stage where you became clearer about your intention for the next space, and enumerate the specific actions you want to exhibit, e.g., Who's the person you want to be? How do you want to show up when you walk through the door? This is the most important stage that determines if you have good interactions because of how you enter the environment. If you walk in happy, calm and focused, you'll have positive interactions. If you are angry, frustrated or distracted, you'll have negative exchanges.
(Adapted: Fraser)

Transition isn't pretty, but stagnation is hideous. (Rowe)

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Notes for Better Transitions:

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features 20 evenly spaced, horizontal red lines running across the entire width of the page. The lines are thin and consistent in color, providing a guide for letter height and placement. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Appendix 18: Journeying to Expertise and Excellence: Info

Expertise and Excellence

Peak performance, optimal functioning, and expertise is something many people (and organisations) aspire to, yet very few achieve. There is minimal research to support the idea that excelling in anything is a consequence of possessing innate gifts. Sadly, few are born to greatness!

*The reason some retirees are much more effective, expert, or successful than others is related to how they engage in **deliberate practice**, that is, specific intentional repeated exercises that use feedback and are systematic. Much of what we do is mindless, automatic repetition, which is fine for routine tasks, whereas deliberate practice requires focused attention and is conducted with a sustainable system and a specific goal to improve performance.*

Notwithstanding the idiosyncratic habits of a few **positive deviants** (individuals whose uncommon behaviours enable them to find better solutions to problems relative to others against all odds and without extra resources), what most **expert performers** do is:

- start where they have an authentic **passion** (or something they are good at), or they develop a passion,
- focus **attention** and avoid distractions (regular, short time periods with high concentration),
- **regulate** their emotional state to keep on track (with rest times and quality/quantity sleep),
- maintain effortful **exertion** to improve performance, e.g., read in their area, prepare to perform, commit to remediating mistakes (direction is more important than speed),
- receive positive **reinforcement** (internal personal satisfaction, and external tangible rewards),
- **extend** objectives and tasks just beyond their current ability level and comfort zone, to reach beyond their grasp (push to the **stretch** zone...or even to the terror zone!),
- develop and engage in **deliberate practice**, i.e., determine a **baseline** ability or skill level via quality data against which progress can be determined, then structure (often solitary) practice activities designed purely to improve performance with a **clear plan for successive refinement** over time (experimenting to achieve small, measurable goals is costly and demotivating; *focus, feedback, fix*),
- critique and integrate ongoing **corrective feedback** that provides information on progress of skills being learned and/outcomes being achieved, i.e., data, clients, self-reflection, mates,
- commit to guidance from an **expert coach or teacher** (remember, feedback may have a negative personal impact, but it's not personal...it's about what you are doing, not who you are),
- make continuous **modifications** over time via repetition (be in learning mode - a **growth mindset**),
- nurture social **motivation** from mates/friends/family who praise, encourage, and support.

Self-management through regular practice, brief work sessions, realistic systems, and keeping anxiety at bay is imperative. Binge working is usually counterproductive and can be a source for a funk, a block, or exhaustion. As you self-regulate emotion and behaviour to stay on task, you'll lose yourself in your retirement and experience flow and success when you're in the zone; now that's excellent!

(Adapted: Ericsson)

Continual improvement involves an appreciation that there is always a better way to do things irrespective of how much you have achieved or how comfortable you might be with where you currently are in life. (Farr-Jones)

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Excellence Notes:

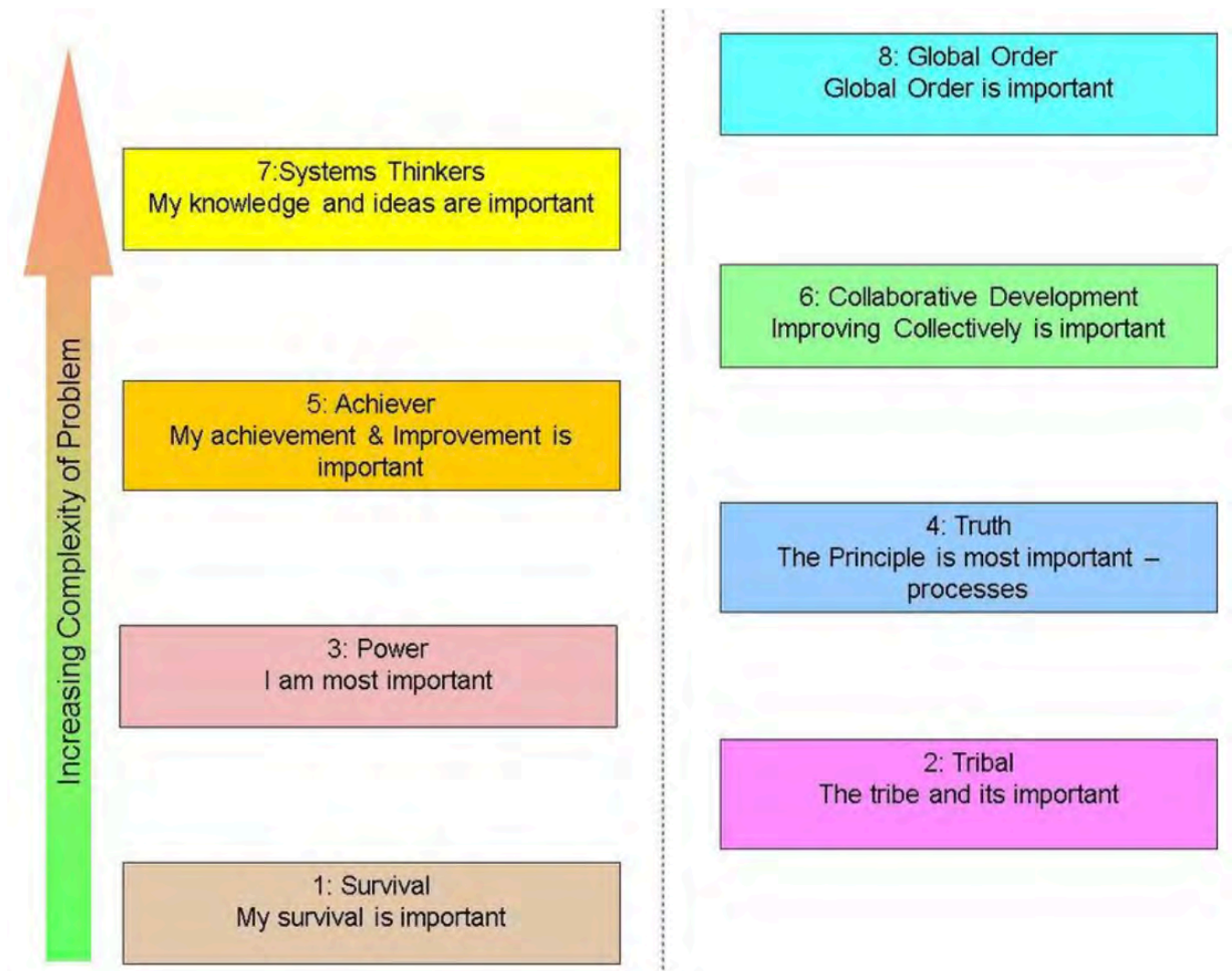
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Appendix 19: Considering your Needs and Consciousness: Info Levels of Existence

*Humans are a **bio-psycho-social** system that evolves from culture and individual characteristics; this dynamic space of behaviour emerges in response to an **interplay of external and internal conditions** with both progression and regression as possibilities.*

*As you choose to adapt to retirement or make your environment adapt to you, a **plateau** on a particular level might occur, interspersed with **intervals of change**, all based on your deliberate efforts.*

*Remember that your six basic psychological needs must be satisfied (i.e., **certainty, variety, significance, love, growth, contribution**) and how you value those needs and to what extent determines the direction and quality of your retirement.*



(Adapted: Graves; Madanes)

Any idiot can face a crisis; it's this day-to-day living that wears you out. (Chekov)

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Existential Notes:

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal red lines across the entire page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no margins, text, or other markings present.

Appendix 20: Engaging in **Journalling**: Info *Journalling Guidelines*

*There are approaches to reflecting and writing that **improve physical and mental health**.*

There are many ways to journal that will be helpful, so think of these as guidelines rather than rules.

***Experiment** with your journal writing to see what works well for you in your retirement.*

Getting Ready to Write:

Find a time and place where you won't be disturbed.

Ideally, choose a time at the end of your day or before you go to bed.

Promise that you will write for a minimum of 15 minutes a day, for a majority of weekdays.

Once you begin writing, write continuously. Don't worry about spelling or grammar.

You should write by hand (avoid using a computer).

Write about the same thing, or about something different each day; it is all entirely up to you.

Prompts for your Journalling:

What have you been thinking about, or worrying about, too much?

What are you dreaming about?

Is your life moving in a positive or negative direction? Why?

What do you feel is affecting your life in an unhealthy way?

What works well about your life now?

How many demands are in your life and where do they come from?

What have you been avoiding for days, weeks, months or even years?

What are you grateful for?

What do you need to accomplish in your life to feel fulfilled?

Who or what is holding you back the most right now, and why?

What people in your life support you and what people drain your energy?

What do you like the most and least about your day?

Try the following for writing:

Over the next few days, write about some deep emotions and thoughts in your life. Really let go and explore your feelings and thoughts about life. All of us have conflicts or demands in our lives and you can write about them as well. You can write about whatever issues you like. Whatever you choose to write about, however, it is critical that you really let go and explore your very deepest emotions and potent ideas.

CAUTION: Some people say that after writing, they sometimes feel somewhat low. Like seeing a sad movie, this typically goes away in a couple of hours. If you find that you are getting extremely upset about a writing topic, simply stop writing or change the subject, or connect with someone to explore what's challenging.

What to do with your Journalling:

The aim when journalling is to be completely honest with yourself. When writing, remember that your journal is essentially only for you. If you ever want to share the sentiments and learnings from your journal with anyone else, like a partner, friend, or coach, please do so. Be aware that over time your writing will change due to your preferences, growth, and the usefulness of the writing process. Always take the journal with you so you can make notes at any time.

Human relationships are not rocket science; they are far, far more complicated. (Pennebaker)

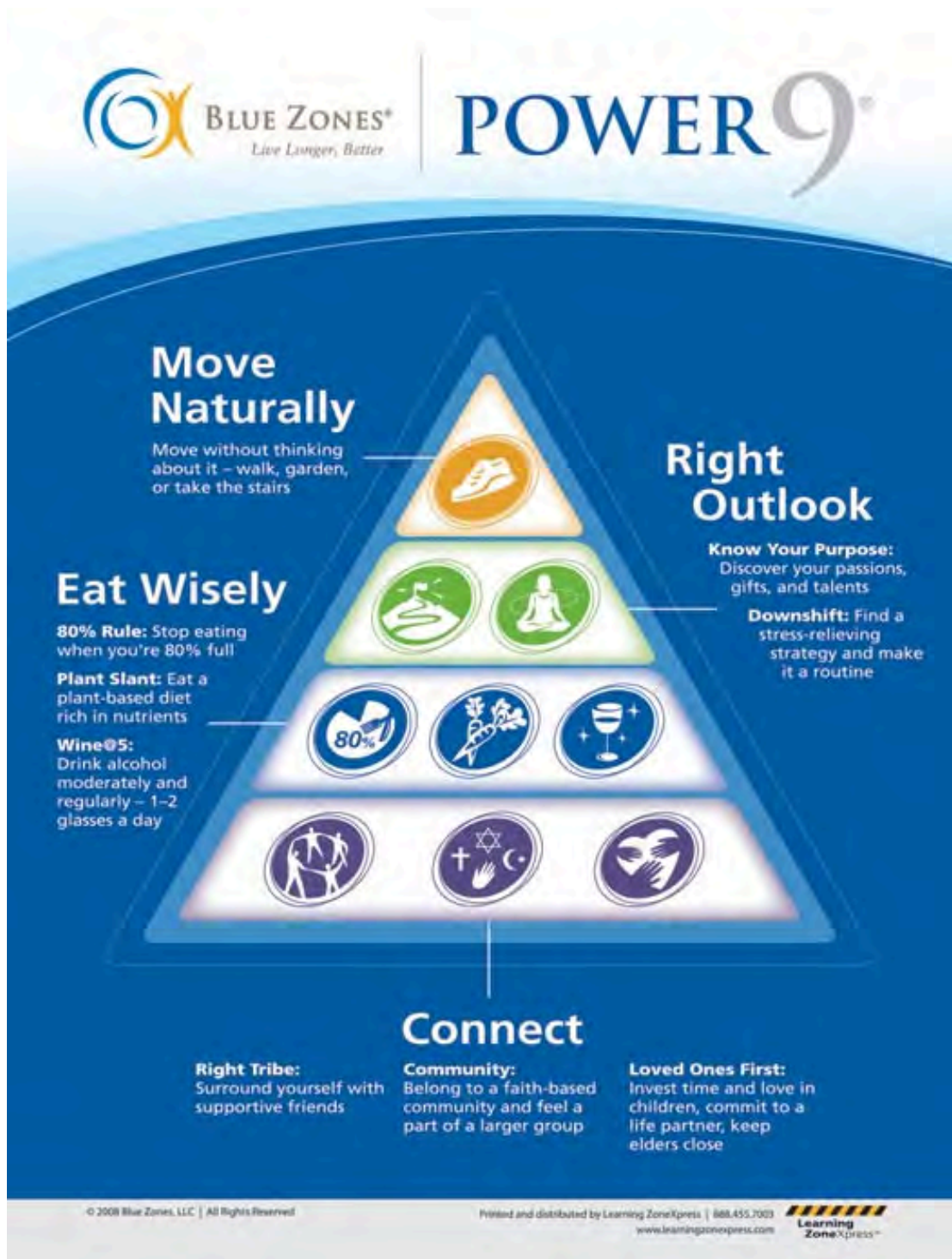
Daily Journal - Template

1. Positives, Successes, Gratitude:
2. Negatives, Challenges, Struggles:
3. Aha moments, Discoveries, Takeaways:
4. Next steps, Plans, To-do list:

**Keeping a journal of what's going on in your life is a good way to help you distil what's important and what's not.
(Navratilova)**

Appendix 21: Extending **Life Expectancy**: Info Living Longer

*You live **longer** and are **healthier** by optimising your lifestyle and surroundings. Here are **nine key lessons** for living longer, from the people who live the longest, so that you can create a positive environment in your retirement.*



My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there. (Kettering)

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Notes for a Longer Life:

[illegible]

Appendix 22: Understanding basic **Body Chemicals**: Info

Brain Basics, Neurotransmitters, and Stress Hormones

Optimal functioning requires a happy brain and a calm body.

You cannot have a great retirement with chronic stress (and the brain and body changes), and you become impaired and mistakenly make judgements and decisions that are unproductive.

*You need to have your brain in the right **state** to enable it to perform optimally.*

*Sadly, many people never get out of the **stress zone**, and it becomes a vicious circle.*

The *reticular activating system* (RAS) is a network of neurons in the brain stem which perform a crucial role in maintaining behavioural awareness, consciousness, and motivation. Your RAS takes what you focus on and creates an intensity for it. It then sifts through data and only presents pieces that are important to your plans. This all happens without you noticing, and works in your favour without you actively doing much. Awesome!

You can train your RAS by taking your deep thoughts and desires, and connecting them to your conscious thoughts; this is **setting your intent**. When you focus on clear plans, your RAS reveals the people, information, and opportunities that will help you achieve them, e.g., if you care about positivity, you will become more aware of and seek out positive people and situations. If you want growth and success, and set your intent, you'll tune in to the right information and people to help you do that, e.g., develop a clear goal or situation you want to influence; consider the experience or result you want to reach in regards to that goal or situation; create a mental picture of how you see that goal or situation ideally turning out; notice the sounds, conversations, feelings, visuals, and details of that picture; replay it often in your mind and see what unfolds.

Stress Hormones: Necessary for life, the body releases the hormones adrenaline and cortisol to provide energy to cope with potential demands. You need to **minimise** chronic stress as it leads to overreaction, being unprepared, and derailment by an unhelpful inner monologue. With chronic stress, there are **less** dendrites (neuron segments that receive stimulation for brain cells to activate) in the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, and **more** dendrites in the amygdala...preventing you from doing complex tasks, impairing memory, and experiencing emotional and reactivity problems.

Adrenaline ↑heart rate/blood pressure/anxiety (↑ = **increases**)

Cortisol ↑problems with memory/concentration/sleep/immune system

Noradrenaline ↑heart rate/blood pressure/blood sugar

Neurotransmitters: Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals that carry, boost, and balance signals between neurons (i.e., nerve cells) and target cells in the body. These target cells are in glands, muscles, and other neurons. Neurotransmitters play a critical role in brain and body communication, influencing everything from movements, learning, and mood. You need to **maximise** (within limits) these neurotransmitters by ensuring a quality, happy life because they enhance the ability to prioritise, prepare for and cope with challenges, and get important stuff done well. Ensure quality sleep, rigorous exercise, fun socialisation, regular relaxation, and control what you can. Foods such as dark chocolate, yoghurt, nuts/beans/seeds, eggs, kimchi/sauerkraut, and spicy meals increase the production of *happy* chemicals in the brain.

Dopamine	↑pleasure/reward/motivation	(↑ = increases; ↓ = decreases)
Serotonin	↑sleep/wellbeing/happiness	
Endorphins	↑wellbeing/euphoria; ↓pain	
Oxytocin	↑bonding/trust/calming/arousal; ↓stress/anxiety	
Acetylcholine	↑learning/memory	
Noradrenaline	↑awareness/concentration/learning/mood	

A Happy Brain and a Calm Body leads to:

Your brain working efficiently; more productivity & engagement (i.e., you perform, persist, perfect); reduced pain; more physical strength; greater endurance; enhanced immune system; better resilience; less burnout.

Neuro Notes:

We see with our brain, not with our eyes. (Doidge)

Appendix 23: Addressing **Behavioural** issues: Info

Managing Conflict

*Conflict management is the process of **limiting the negative** aspects of conflict while **increasing the positive** aspects for growth.*

The aim is to enhance wellbeing in relationships and in your retirement.

*Here is a process to help you respectfully **confront** and **overcome** difficulties, and **enrich** lives.*

*This **Fierce Conversation** model incorporates the first **seven** steps into a 60-second opening statement.*

A

1. Name the issue.

(e.g., I need to talk to you about the way you speak to me, and the effect it is having on the shed and myself.)

2. Select specific examples that illustrate the behaviour or situation you want to change.

(e.g., You often make me the target of your jokes, mocking me, and also rolling your eyes when I'm talking in the shed.)

3. Describe your emotions about this issue.

(e.g., When you do these things, I feel self-conscious, embarrassed, disrespected, and very undervalued.)

4. Clarify what is at stake.

(e.g., The stakes are high because we need to show respect to each other, and the more united we are, the better work we'll do.)

5. Identify your contribution to the problem.

(e.g., I regret I didn't say something earlier, and I know sometimes I laugh along or tease you too. For this, I apologise.)

6. Indicate your wish to resolve the issue.

(e.g., I want this sorted, and our relationship to be respectful, and the way we interact to be positive.)

7. Invite the other person to respond.

(e.g., Also, I want to understand how you see things.)

B

8. Inquire into the other person's view.

(e.g., *I'm interested to know how you see this situation?*)

C

9. What have we learned? Where are we now? Has anything been left unsaid that needs saying? What is needed for the resolution?

10. Make a new agreement and determine how you will hold each other responsible for keeping it.

(Adapted: Scott)

Notes for Fewer Dramas:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

In the animal kingdom, the rule is eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined. (Szasz)

Appendix 24: Enhancing **Relationships**: Info

Positive Relationships

Relationships, whether personal or professional, are foundational to having a good life.

*Quality relationships are based on **interdependence**, therefore you have a responsibility to cater to some of the psychological needs of others, on the basis that others will take care of some of your needs.*

1. Notice when others are doing good things and **let them know they are appreciated**.
2. Every day be kind, and express gratitude for the things you value about others and what they do for you; this builds up the **emotional bank account**.
3. **Really listen** to what others are saying. Suspend judgments and invest effort to understand their needs and desires before responding. Building trust contributes to commitment.
4. Spend time getting to know others' interests, likes, dislikes, favourite stuff, and friends. Remember, people change over time. Updating what you know about each other is essential. Maintaining a **friendship** is critical. Contribute to fulfilling each other's **dreams**.
5. Make deliberate plans to spend time with others by having fun, and building shared experiences and memories. **Quantity time** together is very important.
6. Negotiate, and agree upon, expectations and rules for interactions. Make **requests**, not demands.
7. Conflict is normal. When in conflict with others, look for the aspirations and future goals within that conflict. The presence of contempt, criticism, defensiveness, and stonewalling in conflict is highly destructive. **Repair** relationship strains and ruptures ASAP.
8. Manage your **stress**, anxiety, low mood, and anger levels by learning techniques to reduce your physiological and psychological symptoms such as increased heart rate, tightness in the body, and an unhelpful thinking style.
9. When others bid for your attention, turn **towards** them and show genuine interest. Bids and turns are the basis for human connection (turning **away** and/or **against** is unhelpful). Lots of bids!
10. Breathe and **keep calm**. Speak and listen non-defensively. Validate others.

(Adapted: Gottman)

*Practice, practice, practice! And, maintain a sense of **humour**...*

The smallest indivisible human unit is two people, not one; one is a fiction. (Kushner)

WELLBEING WORKBOOK

Relationship Notes:

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features 20 evenly spaced horizontal red lines across the entire page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no margins or additional markings.

Goal-setting and Action-plan Overview

Complete this overview and keep in your diary, journal, or post it in your workspace so that you will see it daily, and it is a useful reminder for what you will achieve...

Do or do not. There is no try. (Yoda)

	GOAL A	GOAL B	GOAL C
My GOALS are:			
STEPS IN THE PLAN (in chronological order)			
SKILLS and KNOWLEDGE I will need to access			
OBSTACLES to success			
INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, and ORGANISATIONS which will help me			
What I will SEE, HEAR, FEEL, and THINK when goal is achieved			
COMPLETION date	/ /20	/ /20	/ /20

Just start it. (me!)

Notes to Self

I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become. (Jung)

[illegible]

Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken. (Wilde)

About the Author

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COUNSELLING & CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

COACHING & CORPORATE CONSULTANT

FROM A MIGRANT SICILIAN FAMILY, John was born and bred on a farming property in rural Queensland. Since 1984 he provided education and psychological services. John began his career as a teacher, then guidance counsellor, relationship educator, tenured university senior academic, and clinical psychologist, including major studies and work in the USA and Italy. He trained at *QUT* (DipT, GradDipCouns), *ACU* (BEd), *UQ* (MEdSt), *OhioU* (PhD), and *APF-Rome* (post-doc). Energetic, practical, no-nonsense, inspiring, and down-to-earth, John bases his work and life on advanced specialised training, quality scientific research, extensive clinical expertise, diverse lived experience, and ongoing sundry feedback, not crazy pop psychology.

A Member of the *Australian Psychology Society*, and a Fellow and Supervisor of the *College of Clinical Psychologists* and *College of Counselling Psychologists*, John is Registered with the *Psychology Board of Australia*. John has a passion for helping professionals and organisations challenged by change, as well as those seeking greater performance from themselves and others. He promotes health and wellness via the application of integrated positive psychology principles.

John only comes out of retirement when asked to deliver interesting conference presentations, challenging corporate workshops, and fun community talks.

Ohio University flattered him with the prestigious distinguished alumni honour, the *George Hill Memorial Award* which recognises outstanding scholarship, service, and leadership. The author of *The Home Therapist* and *The Practice of Clinical Supervision*, John was the psychology expert columnist for *Style* magazine for well over a decade, and an occasional commentator on *ABC Radio* for psychological issues. With his novelist wife Dr Sandra Antonelli they spend minimal time at their Brisbane pied-à-terre which they like, and most of their time at their Maleny property which they love.



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Retiring from professional work is a challenge and a joy. After a rewarding 38-year career in education and health, I embarked on my retirement journey, and have not regretted it. The delight with retirement comes in great part to the many people, projects, and places with which I am involved. I have said many times in my clinical and corporate work, and it is also true in retirement; *if you choose not to plan, you are potentially choosing to fail*. It is my sincere hope that this workbook helps you with planning for a successful, flourishing retirement.

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