



PositivePsychology.com



# WELLBEING X

A 7-SESSION WELLBEING TRAINING

WORKBOOK

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# Introduction

Welcome to this Wellbeing program!

The upcoming sessions are designed to provide the most effective evidence-based wellbeing knowledge, skills, and support to help you care for your wellbeing – even in life’s inevitable ups and downs.

Wellbeing is a lofty and loaded word, which is why we will take the time to break it down, using Professor Martin Seligman’s ‘PERMAH Framework’ to help you understand that wellbeing is a sum of measurable parts (**P**ositive emotions, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, **M**eaning, **A**ccomplishment, and **H**ealth) that we can focus on and invest in, depending on what we need most at any given time. Each component offers a different avenue to improve how you feel and function, and we’ll explore which ones you might want to focus on more in your life.

In particular, this intervention focuses on cultivating wellbeing at work and in daily life and leveraging its interconnected nature to help you *be well and do well* as individual, and in teams, and organizations in this modern working world.

First, we briefly introduce wellbeing and the field of positive psychology. We’ll then provide an overview of the PERMAH Framework as a means of measuring and leveraging different ‘pillars’ of wellbeing. Next, we’ll explore some surprising science of wellbeing change to help set you up for small, sustainable wellbeing habits that have a big impact over time.

There is no one strategy to help everyone be well and do well, so the more specific and hands-on we can be when exploring our wellbeing, the better. This is why the remainder of the intervention focuses on putting each PERMAH Pillar into practice, helping you experience more positive emotions, meaning, connectedness, choice, and control in your life.

This program encourages you to become an active participant in shaping your wellbeing and the wellbeing of those you work, live, and play with, too. It is not a spectator sport but an interactive exploration of what’s working well, where you’re struggling, and what you’re learning every day about caring for wellbeing in yourself and others.

Let’s begin.

## About this program

### Wellbeing

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*“Well-being is our ability to feel good and function effectively.”*

*- Dr. Felicia Huppert*

There are as many definitions for wellbeing as there are researchers studying it. From Ancient Greek philosophers to everyday people trying to navigate life’s increasingly bumpy rollercoaster, humans are inherently drawn to understanding and obtaining a “good” and happy life. For clarity and relevance, we’ve chosen Dr. Felicia Huppert’s definition of wellbeing, describing “our ability to feel good and function effectively.” As your own understanding and experience of wellbeing develops, we encourage you to create your own definition, too.

Semantics aside for a moment, over two decades of wellbeing research has found that people with higher levels of wellbeing tend to enjoy more fulfilling relationships, embrace learning challenges more readily, and exhibit greater creativity and productivity. They also demonstrate a willingness to help others, achieve higher engagement and success in their careers and greater financial rewards, experience better physical health, and are less prone to substance abuse.

The good news is that research suggests that when cultivating and maintaining wellbeing in work and life, even the smallest of actions can make a significant impact – as long as they are performed consistently. Instead of making big, bold goals (and ending up disappointed when we fall short), regular small wellbeing actions can boost confidence and motivation, and lead to incremental ‘wellbeing wins’ that enhance our overall level of wellbeing over time.

## This Workbook

This workbook was designed for several specific purposes:

- ▶ to summarize the topics discussed in the sessions with your practitioner
- ▶ to design and commit to wellbeing interventions
- ▶ to serve as a working space for completing reflections and homework

After each session, your practitioner will indicate the corresponding homework exercises. Remember to bring this workbook to your sessions so you can refer to your responses in your discussion.

Good luck!

# Session 1

WELLBEING 101



## Goals

The goals of this session are to prepare you for future sessions by:

- ▶ Introducing Positive Psychology and The PERMAH Framework
- ▶ Exploring the difference between ‘Feeling Good’ (Hedonic Wellbeing) and ‘Doing Good’ (Eudaimonic Wellbeing)
- ▶ Understanding that wellbeing exists at the: Me, (Individual), We (Team), and Us (Organization/Community) Levels
- ▶ Leveraging the power of small habits to create wellbeing behaviors we can stick to

## Defining Wellbeing

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*“Wellbeing is our ability to feel good and function effectively.”*

*- Dr. Felicia Huppert*

Humans have been attempting to define wellbeing for centuries, from ancient religious practices to the self-help section in bookstores. Every author, scholar, and philosopher has their own definition of what “wellbeing” encompasses.

When measuring and caring for one’s wellbeing, having a clear, shared definition is essential. By developing a shared understanding and language around what is meant by “wellbeing” – as opposed to “wellness,” “happiness,” or “feeling good” – we’re better able to identify what we want to focus on, the kind of experiences we desire, and the results we hope to achieve.

**Rapid Reflection:** Before reading further, take a moment to consider: How do you define wellbeing? Don’t overthink it; just write something down in the next 30 seconds. We’ll have time to re-draft later.



## Types of Wellbeing

Many researchers have returned to the wisdom of the ancient Greeks to illuminate the nature and core ingredients of a “good life” (i.e. a life that is fulfilling, meaningful, and characterized by wellbeing). More specifically, they examined the distinction between “eudaimonic” versus “hedonic” wellbeing.

### Eudaimonic Wellbeing

Translating roughly to “the good life” or “flourishing,” eudaimonic wellbeing emphasizes “living your best life” or “feeling truly fulfilled.” It’s about more than just having fun or feeling momentarily happy. Instead, it focuses on:

- ▶ Growing as a person
- ▶ Being true to yourself
- ▶ Finding meaning in what you do
- ▶ Doing things well and being proud of your efforts

Imagine a teacher who finds joy in helping students learn and grow. Their satisfaction comes not just from teaching (which might be fun and enjoyable) but from knowing they positively impact their students’ lives. This sense of purpose and fulfillment contributes to their eudaimonic wellbeing.

**Rapid Reflection:** Can you remember a time in your own life when you felt really fulfilled? Maybe it was when you learned something new or did something that felt truly meaningful to you.

- ▶ How did you feel during this period (e.g. energy, mood, social battery, sense of perspective...etc.)?

## Hedonic Wellbeing

In contrast, “hedonic wellbeing” is about seeking pleasure and fulfilling desires, focusing on maximizing pleasure and minimizing discomfort. This type of wellbeing is personal and is often measured by how satisfied you feel with your life and the presence of positive or negative emotions.

In the workplace, while increasing enjoyment can be a positive outcome of job crafting, it’s not the main goal. Cultivating hedonic wellbeing at work might include participating in fun social events, celebrating small achievements with your team, or incorporating play into your breaks, like listening to your favorite song while walking or playing a game with colleagues during lunch.

**Rapid Reflection:** Can you remember a time when you felt pure enjoyment? Maybe it was savoring a delicious meal, relaxing in a hot bath, or simply enjoying a moment of leisure. How did that make you feel?

- How did you feel during this period (e.g. energy, mood, social battery, sense of perspective...etc.)

*Fig. 1.1 Summary of Eudaimonic and Hedonic wellbeing*

EUDAIMONIC	HEDONIC
Self-fulfillment	Maximizing pleasure
Virtue-oriented living	Prioritizing enjoyable experiences
Long-term flourishing	Short-term gratification

In summary, there are two ways to feel good in life;

1. Living with meaning (Eudaimonic Wellbeing): becoming the best version of yourself and living a life that feels important to you. It's like working towards big, meaningful goals.
2. Enjoying life's pleasures (Hedonic Wellbeing): focusing on things that make you feel good right now, like having fun or relaxing.

Even though these two ways of feeling good differ, both are important for living a happy, satisfying life.

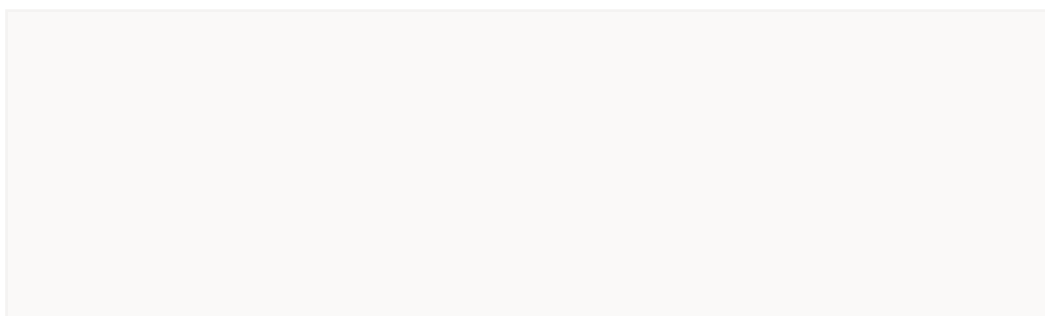
## Our Definition

Taking all these factors into consideration, for this wellbeing intervention, we have decided to use Dr. Felicia Huppert's definition of wellbeing: ***"Wellbeing is our ability to feel good and function effectively."***

We will use this definition because it uses clear language. The word "our" can apply broadly to individuals or groups. It focuses on both feelings ("feeling good") and visible results ("functioning"), and it also applies to both pleasure-focused and growth-focused wellbeing.

There is no universally accepted definition of wellbeing, except that it is recognized as having many parts to it. We'll use this definition as a starting point throughout the program, but the real value comes from discussing what wellbeing means. Although there's no one-size-fits-all definition, wellbeing is generally agreed to be complex with many aspects. Wellbeing is also very personal and can change over time, so we encourage you to think about what it means for you specifically.

**Rapid Reflection:** After learning more about the elements of defining wellbeing, how would you define wellbeing now?



## The PERMAH Framework

While many suggestions for improving wellbeing exist, we will focus on the PERMAH framework because it is clear, measurable, and practical to apply in your day-to-day life. The PERMAH framework aims to improve wellbeing through six key elements that contribute to a fulfilling and happy life: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments, and Health. Let's look at these pillars in a little more detail:



## PERMAH in the Real World

To feel good and function effectively, we must cultivate each of the PERMAH Pillars. But the “PERMAH Pillars” we prioritize and our actions to cultivate them will depend on who we are, our energy levels, our circumstances, and the results we seek.

Your wellbeing naturally ebbs and flows based on what is happening in the world around you and the choices you're making. This is not only normal but healthy. Rather than trying to achieve perfect PERMAH scores or even seeking constant improvement in our scores, researchers advise that we focus on enhancing our ability to tune into and take small actions to care for our wellbeing.

Throughout this intervention, we will explore each of the PERMAH Pillars and experiment with evidence-based, busy-proof ways to cultivate them in our lives. In the meantime, here is a quick overview of each of the PERMAH Pillars:

Let's look at these pillars in a little more detail:

Pillar	Description	Real-World Example
<b>Positive Emotions</b>	Learning to identify, experience, and benefit from a range of emotions.	<p>In the workplace, this might involve noticing moments of joy or satisfaction during your workday, like receiving positive feedback.</p> <p>Acknowledging these emotions can boost your mood and motivation, making your work experience more enjoyable and productive.</p>
<b>Engagement</b>	Leveraging our strengths and interests to feel capable and deeply absorbed in activities.	<p>Focusing on tasks that leverage your strengths and interests. For example, if you excel in creativity, brainstorming new ideas for a project, or designing innovative solutions to problems.</p> <p>If prudence is your strength, planning, and organizing tasks, ensuring all details are accounted for and risks are minimized. Setting aside time for activities that keep you engaged and enthusiastic, like learning new skills or seeking mentorship in areas you're curious about.</p>
<b>Relationships</b>	Feeling safe, loved, valued, and connected with other people.	<p>Making an effort to connect with your colleagues by asking them appreciative questions like "What's going well today?" or "What was the highlight of your weekend?"</p> <p>Spotting their strengths and providing strengths-based feedback, such as "Your creativity really elevated the pitch we wrote today."</p>
<b>Meaning</b>	Having a sense of direction, feeling that our lives are valuable and worthwhile, and connecting to something bigger than ourselves.	<p>Reflecting on how your role contributes to the larger goals of the organization. Seeking feedback about the impact your actions have had on others or clients.</p> <p>Working with your supervisor to "job craft" your role to better integrate your values, strengths, and more productive personal connections.</p>

Pillar	Description	Real-World Example
<b>Accomplishment</b>	Setting and striving for personal milestones with a sense of pride and self-compassion.	Setting clear, achievable, and personally meaningful goals for yourself and tracking your progress with regular reflections.  Celebrating both big victories (like a promotion) and small ones (like finishing a chapter in a book) along the way boosts your sense of capability and confidence.
<b>Health</b>	Developing habits of eating, sleeping, moving, and resting that give us the energy to thrive.	Incorporating small positive changes into your daily routine. This could include taking short breaks to stretch or walk, choosing more nutrient-dense snacks that keep you fuller for longer, or making tiny tweaks to improve your pre-sleep routine.

## Stepping on the Short PERMAH Scale

The best way to begin this process is to assess your current levels of wellbeing by stepping on the Short PERMAH Scale, which measures different aspects of wellbeing. “Stepping on” this scale means evaluating yourself in these areas. This can be done weekly, monthly, or quarterly (or whenever you want to check in on your wellbeing).

Think about your experiences and feelings over the last week. How often has each of the following occurred? 0 = never, 5 = half the time, 10 = all the time?

FACTOR	DEFINITION	SCORE
POSITIVE EMOTIONS	I felt positive	
ENGAGEMENT	I felt interested and deeply engaged	
RELATIONSHIPS	I felt respected and appreciated by others	
MEANING	I felt what I did was valuable and worthwhile	
ACCOMPLISHMENT	I made progress towards my goals	
HEALTH	Physically, I felt strong and healthy	

## Reflecting on Your Score

Instead of focusing on aiming for the ‘perfect score’ or ruminating over your lower-scoring PERMAH Pillars, researchers suggest focusing on:

1. How satisfied are you with your scores in each area of the PERMAH model?

2. From your scores, which elements of your wellbeing do you think need the most attention?

3. Why do you think these areas scored lower?

4. What is going so well in the higher-scoring Pillars?

As we continue on our Wellbeing journey together, we'll explore many different ways to conceptualize and care for our wellbeing. So stay calm, stay curious, and take it one small step at a time.

## The Wellbeing Ecosystem

No human is an island, and this is especially true in our daily lives. Wellbeing isn't solely about individual experience; it involves a complex interplay of personal, relational, and environmental factors. In fact, individuals with higher levels of wellbeing not only benefit themselves but also contribute to the wellbeing of those around them.

### Three Levels of Wellbeing

It makes sense, then, that our approach to promoting wellbeing focuses on all three of these interconnected levels, including the following:

- ▶ “Me” level (Intrapersonal), focusing on individual choices and practices for self-care.
- ▶ “We” level (Interpersonal), emphasizing relationships and collaboration with others; and
- ▶ “Us” level (Systemic), addressing the broader environment, including shared values, culture, leadership, and societal structures that shape collective wellbeing.

### The Ecosystem Metaphor

Describing the systemic nature of wellbeing through the metaphor of a Wellbeing Ecosystem is one of the most helpful ways to explore this concept. Through this lens, each of the wellbeing levels can be conveyed as:

- ▶ The Seed (Me): The individual seed must have an adequate level of health to begin to grow.
- ▶ The Surrounding Flora & Fauna (We): The surrounding plants and animals must be compatible (and non-threatening) with the health of this individual seed.
- ▶ The Environment (Us): The permaculture, weather, and environmental forces must support the survival of each of these individual seeds, as well as the way they coexist together.





A key distinction between plants and humans is our higher level of consciousness, and therefore ability to consciously tune into and take steps to care for our wellbeing on an individual and group level.

## **Example: A systemic approach to wellbeing**

### **The Seed (Me)**

For example, you as an individual (seed) can use internal resources (e.g., your own reflections or experiences) or external resources (e.g., wellbeing surveys or objective health results) to help assess your current wellbeing levels and needs. Questions you might be asked to reflect on your wellbeing include:

- ▶ Are you experiencing enough curiosity, joy, or gratitude in your daily life?
- ▶ Do you feel connected to what gives your life meaning?
- ▶ Are you setting and achieving goals that matter to you both personally and in the bigger picture?

From here, you may identify an area or two you'd like to focus on more (e.g., increasing how often you experience positive emotions in your daily life).

## **The Surrounding Flora & Fauna (We)**

With many positive emotional interventions being relational in nature (e.g., expressing gratitude, exploring common interests, or sharing moments of humor), such a wellbeing focus will be impacted by the nature of the relationships (the surrounding flora and fauna) in daily life. Questions related to this include:

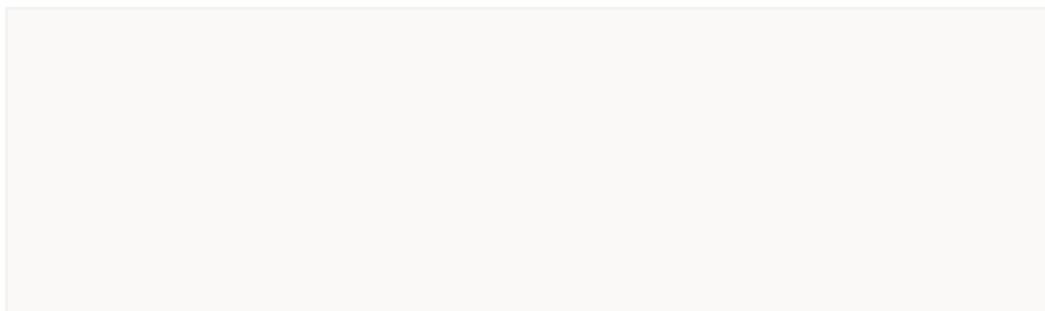
- ▶ What sort of groups or communities are you part of?
- ▶ What are the existing rituals and routines?
- ▶ Do you spend most of your time alone or with others?
- ▶ Do you experience enough psychological safety in your relationships?

## **The Environment (Us)**

Asking these kinds of questions leads to broader inquiries into the larger environment (ecosystem) that has shaped collective norms, such as:

- ▶ What is the overall temperature? Is it one of warmth and safety or fridity and isolation?
- ▶ What societal values, community norms, or leadership influences might be shaping this environment?
- ▶ How do these factors affect interactions within and between groups?
- ▶ Are there opportunities and space to connect with others meaningfully?
- ▶ How is that affecting you?
- ▶ Do you feel capable of connecting to your feelings and others in this climate?

**Rapid Reflection:** Does the Wellbeing Ecosystem resonate with you?



- When and how have you experienced this in your daily life?

## Common Derailers To Wellbeing Change

What is one of the most common excuses for not taking action towards caring for our wellbeing? More likely than not, you've used this excuse yourself many times. Sometimes, it may have even been true. We refer, of course, to the "I'm too busy" trap.

While very common and often meant in earnest, this excuse often masks deeper obstacles that derail our intentions for better wellbeing, especially regarding our health. There are three common derailers underlying this excuse: 'I don't really want to,' 'I'm not sure where to start,' and 'I don't think I can.'

### Derailer #1: I Don't Really Want To

This derailer often reflects a misalignment between what we think we should do and what we actually want to do.

**Example:** Sarah's friends all love yoga class, but she has never enjoyed it and finds excuses not to go. Recognizing this reluctance helps us make authentic choices without feeling guilty about not prioritizing activities that don't genuinely interest us.

### Derailer #2: I'm Not Sure Where to Start

This is when you feel unsure about where to begin, leaving you stuck and disempowered.

**Example:** When Tom wanted to start a healthier diet, he felt overwhelmed by all the information and didn't know where to begin, leading to inaction. Finding support and asking questions, even if they seem simple, can help us take the first step and feel more confident.

## Derailer #3: I Don't Think I Can

This derailer is often driven by fear of failure.

**Example:** Emily wanted to join a weekly networking event but doubted her ability to connect with others, so she kept putting it off. Recognizing that fear indicates the importance of the activity and approaching it with curiosity and a willingness to be a beginner can help overcome this obstacle.

By embracing a mindset of continual learning and leveraging support systems, we can navigate these derailers and make strides toward our wellbeing goals – no matter how little or lofty they may be.

**Rapid Reflection:** Which of these derailers have you experienced in the past?

- Is there one that stands out more than the others, and why?

## The Power of Rooted Routines

Just as strong roots support a plant, small, intentional habits create stability, ensuring that wellbeing is a lasting, continuous journey. Rooted routines ensure that wellbeing isn't fleeting – it's supported by habits that hold firm through life's seasons. These small, intentional practices provide the foundation for personal wellbeing and, when nurtured, can spread to positively impact broader circles.

### Rooted Routines: Nourishing Habits for Growth

Here is how you can create your own rooted routine:

#### Grounded Beginnings

What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment “nurture” the start of your new habit.

#### Nurturing Action

What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?

#### Thriving Moment

Once you've completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small? What will you do to acknowledge your growth? This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.

#### Nourishing Reflection

What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits. How might this habit help you in the future?

## A Rooted Routine Example

Here's a simple example of a rooted routine, highlighting each element – 'Grounded Beginning,' 'Nurturing Action,' 'Thriving Moment,' and 'Nourishing Reflection' – to inspire your own practice.

<b>GROUND BEGINNINGS</b>	<p>What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment "nurture" the start of your new habit?</p>	<p><i>I drink a cup of tea every morning.</i></p>
<b>NURTURING ACTION</b>	<p>What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?</p>	<p><i>When I finish my tea, I will take three slow, deep breaths.</i></p>
<b>THRIVING MOMENT</b>	<p>Once you've completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small? What will you do to acknowledge your growth? This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.</p>	<p><i>I'll say "Well done!" to myself quietly.</i></p>
<b>NOURISHING REFLECTION</b>	<p>What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits. How might this habit help you in the future?</p>	<p><i>I expect breathing will help me feel calmer and more focused throughout the day.</i></p>

## Rooted Routines: Advice

Although small and simple, creating and maintaining a Rooted Routine isn't always easy. We've put together key clarifications, cautions, and considerations to help you stay mindful and motivated while implementing these new behaviors:

1. **Patience and consistency over perfection:** The key to building lasting habits is consistency, not perfection. It's important to be patient with yourself and trust that steady, small actions add up over time. Missing a day or two doesn't erase progress – it's about getting back on track.

2. **Nurture your growth environment:** Surround yourself with cues and support that make your routine easier to follow. This could be setting up physical reminders, finding a supportive community, or simply ensuring that your space aligns with your wellbeing goals. A nurturing environment strengthens your ability to stick with your rooted routines.
3. **Flexibility and adaptation:** Life changes, and so do your needs. Be open to adjusting your routines as you grow. Adaptability ensures your habits stay relevant, sustainable, and supportive of your evolving wellbeing journey.
4. **Align with your values and goals:** A routine is more likely to stick when it aligns with what truly matters to you. Reflect on your deeper motivations and ensure your habits support your long-term wellbeing and personal or professional growth.
5. **Balance structure with ease:** While routines provide stability, they shouldn't feel rigid or overwhelming. Aim for a balance between structure and flow, allowing for moments of spontaneity while maintaining a foundation that keeps you grounded.
6. **Monitor progress with self-compassion:** Track your habits in a way that feels encouraging, not punishing. Whether through journaling, check-ins, or simple reflections, celebrate progress and reframe setbacks as learning experiences rather than failures.
7. **Prioritize joy and fulfillment:** Routines should enhance your wellbeing, not feel like obligations. Infuse your habits with a sense of purpose and enjoyment, whether by playing music, engaging in mindful movement, or incorporating small rewards to keep motivation high.
8. **Reconnect with your 'why':** When motivation dips, revisit the deeper reason behind your routine. Whether it's improved wellbeing, mental clarity, or greater resilience, keeping your 'why' in focus can help reignite commitment and keep you on track.

## Rooted Routines Examples

To help you overcome the "I don't know how" derailer, we've compiled a list of examples of Grounded Beginnings, Nurturing Actions, Thriving Moments, and Nourishing Reflections.

**Note:** Wellbeing behaviors specific to each PERMAH Pillar will be explored in depth in each session. However, in the interest of inspiring you to experiment with the Rooted Routine framework, some example wellbeing behaviors have been provided.

Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflections
Finishing a workout	Do a short body scan	Feel a sense of calm and awareness	Increase mind-body awareness
Putting your phone down before bed	Think of a kind thing you did today	Appreciate your own kindness	Foster self-compassion and positivity
Brushing your teeth	Say one thing you're grateful for	Enjoy the feeling of gratitude	Cultivate a habit of gratitude
Taking a shower	Take a deep breath and enjoy the warmth	Savor the sensation of relaxation	Turn your shower into a mindful experience
Unlocking your front door	Pause and take in your surroundings	Appreciate the comfort of being home	Create a habit of being present and grateful

## Create a Rooted Routine

Your homework this week will be around creating a Rooted Routine. With this in mind, what is an area of your wellbeing that could use some extra attention right now? Perhaps there is something that immediately comes to mind. If not, don't worry. The good news is that when we set out to care for one aspect of our wellbeing, other areas also benefit.

By focusing on one of your "lower scoring" PERMAH Pillars from your Short PERMAH Scale assessment completed earlier, you can benchmark your starting point and track your progress with this Rooted Routine over time.

## Advice

However you select your wellbeing focus, make sure to choose just ONE area to begin with. Rooted routines are simple yet powerful actions that nourish and sustain your wellbeing. By starting with one small, manageable action, you build a foundation for long-term growth.



- My chosen wellbeing focus/Pillar:

- Why does this wellbeing focus matter to me right now?

- How might investing in this area support my wellbeing?

For this session's Homework, you will create, log, and reflect on your Rooted Routine. Then, in the next session, we'll reflect on these experiences and questions together.

## Homework

In this session, you learned about the basics of wellbeing, The PERMAH Framework, and the power of Rooted Routines. For this session's homework, you will:

- 1) Create and action a daily Rooted Routine using the Rooted Routine template.
- 2) Log your experiences in the Rooted Routines Logbook.
- 3) Reflect on your first Rooted Routine experiment.

## Your Rooted Routine Template

Using the list of example Grounded Beginnings, Nurturing Action, Thriving Moment, and Nourishing Reflections in your workbook as inspiration (feel free to create your own, too), complete your Rooted Routine plan below.

Commit to this practice for at least the next week, tracking your progress each day in the Rooted Routine Logbook. Be sure to note any wins, challenges, or questions that arise along the way.

<div> <div> GROUND ED BEGIN NINGS </div> </div>		
<div> <div> NURTURING ACTION </div> </div>		
<div> <div> THRIVING MOMENT </div> </div>		
<div> <div> NOURISHING REFLECTION </div> </div>		

As you playfully experiment with a Rooted Routine, remember that the key to success lies less in achieving a ‘perfect result’ and more in our ability to reflect on and reshape our efforts by asking:

- ▶ *What's working well?*
- ▶ *Where do I notice challenges or resistance?*
- ▶ *What am I learning?*
- ▶ *Based on this, what will I try next?*

## Rooted Routines Logbook

How to Use the Rooted Routines Logbook

1. **Grounded Beginnings:** Identify an existing action or routine in your day that will naturally help you start your new wellbeing habit (e.g. Brushing your teeth).
2. **Nurturing Action:** Decide on a small, manageable action you can take right now to foster your wellbeing (e.g. Take a couple of deep breaths after brushing your teeth).
3. **Thriving Moment:** Reflect on how you will celebrate or acknowledge your success, no matter how small (e.g. Smile at yourself in the mirror).
4. **Nourishing Reflection:** Think about how completing this action will make you feel and how it supports your wellbeing (e.g. Feeling calm and present as you start your day).
5. **Notes:** Add any brief notes, thoughts, or insights you have while completing your habit.
6. **Completed:** At the end of each day, mark whether you completed your rooted routine with a checkmark (✓) for yes or leave it unchecked for no.

Fill in the table for the upcoming week and track your progress each day. Good luck with building your new habit!

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

## Rooted Routine Reflection Round

When it comes to playfully experimenting with your Rooted Routine behavior this week:

- ▶ What's working well?

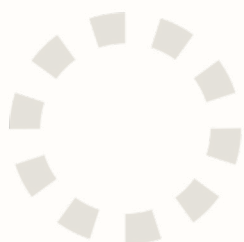
- ▶ Where do I notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?

# Session 2

HEALTHY HABITS



## Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- ▶ Explore our existing health behaviors and attitudes
- ▶ Investigate: Are We Eating Well?
- ▶ Question: Are We Moving Mindfully?
- ▶ Uncover: Are We Sleeping Enough?
- ▶ Discover: Are We Resting & Recovering?
- ▶ Create: A Rooted Routine for Health

In the last session, we explored wellbeing as an individual and shared experience. We also introduced The PERMAH Wellbeing Framework and the science of small habits as a means of caring for our wellbeing in a sustainable, busy-proof way.

In this session, we'll explore the PERMAH Pillar of "Health." Although it is last in the PERMAH acronym, caring for our physical health is essential if we want to have the energy to invest in any other areas of wellbeing. That is why it's our next stop.

We'll begin by exploring the quality of our existing health behaviors and beliefs before exploring how we might optimize these habits with evidence-based approaches to help us eat, sleep, move, and rest better.

Let's get started.

## The Reflection Round

66

*“Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”*

*- Dr. Carl Jung*

### Can We Reflect on Our Health Habits?

Whether it’s a child using their caregivers’ feedback to gradually refine baby talk into effective language that allows them to express their needs and identity, or a child experimenting with the nuances of speed and balance as they learn to ride a bike, humans have been **Trying**, **Testing**, and **Tweaking** their way to mastery since our earliest days on earth.

Whether we are aware of it or not, each of us has naturally engaged in this process of continuous improvement by:

- ▶ **Trying:** Drawing upon our innate curiosity and creativity, we experiment with various approaches to achieve our goals. Whether it’s learning to walk, mastering a language, or cultivating relationships, we playfully explore different strategies.
- ▶ **Testing:** Reflecting on our experiences, we evaluate what’s working well, what’s not, and what lessons we can glean from our efforts. We can refine our approach by recognizing our strengths and areas for improvement.
- ▶ **Tweaking:** Armed with insights from our test results, we adapt our behavior accordingly, striving for consistent progress toward our objectives. This iterative process allows us to refine our skills and capabilities continually.

The Reflection Round helps us build a “growth mindset” (the belief that, with effort and enthusiasm, we can enhance our knowledge and skills in anything) by doing something, reflecting on it, making improvements, and then doing it again.

It folds this learning process into four powerful questions that help us focus on our strengths, address our weaknesses, and finally take stock of and practically apply our learnings. The Reflection Round integrates the three elements of learning and growth by:

- ▶ Reflecting on the most/least successful things we’ve been trying: i.e., “What’s going well? Where do we notice challenges or resistance?”



- ▶ Identifying what we're learning from these peak/weak experiences: i.e., "What are we learning?"
- ▶ Committing to actions informed by our experiences and interests: i.e., "What will we try next?"

This iterative process enhances personal and collective wellbeing by encouraging active participation in shaping one's practices and outcomes.

## Rapid Reflection

Think about what you currently do to care for your health, then consider the following questions and write your responses in the spaces provided. When it comes to caring for your health lately:

- ▶ What has been going well for you?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- What might you try next, based on what you have learned?

## Are We Eating Well?

### Rapid Reflection

Eating well is fundamental to maintaining health and wellbeing. However, our relationship with food is complex and influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, family traditions, and individual experiences.

- On a scale of 1 (terrible) to 10 (ideal), how healthy is your current relationship with food?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(Terrible)					(Ideal)				

- Why might this be?

## Eating: Cultural Beliefs & Behaviors

Whether we like it or not, living in modern society is to be conditioned by it (to at least some degree), and our beliefs and behaviors regarding eating are no exception. Many Western cultures tend to view food primarily as fuel, often prioritizing convenience and efficiency over nutritional value. This can lead to unhealthy eating patterns characterized by consuming processed foods high in sugars and unhealthy fats. By contrast, many Eastern and tribal societies emphasize the communal and holistic aspects of food, viewing it as a vital component of social and cultural identity. These cultures often prioritize whole, unprocessed foods, fostering healthier eating behaviors.

On an individual level, our eating habits are formed through a combination of personal experiences and social interactions. The more we can acknowledge and become aware of these, the better we can understand the origins of our current eating behaviors and begin to make more conscious food choices. For example, recognizing how media, peer influence, and parental attitudes have shaped our relationship with food can empower us to adopt healthier eating patterns.

## Eating Well Essentials

Are eggs healthy or not right now? It seems to depend on the week and who you ask.

For many of us, navigating the realm of nutrition can feel like finding your way through a constantly shifting maze with a never-ending assault of conflicting advice. But among all the chatter, there are a few things most nutrition experts agree on:

- ▶ Individualize your diet as much as you can.
- ▶ Make any changes as small and sustainable as possible.
- ▶ Choose self-compassion and learning over criticism along the way.

As we learned in the previous pages, we inherit our eating attitudes and behaviors from many sources and over many years, so to expect sudden, dramatic improvement is often a recipe for disaster. So instead of crash-dieting, eliminating entire food groups, only to binge on them a few weeks later, or feeling we need to ‘atone’ for occasions where we indulge in that chocolate mousse or burger and chips, researchers like Tom Rath suggest that we take a gentler, “one meal at a time” approach to shifting our eating beliefs and behaviors. Indeed, any nutritionist worth their salt will also remind us that it’s all about balance, so don’t sweat the occasional indulgence.

After all, life’s too short not to enjoy a slice of pizza or a scoop of ice cream every now and then.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ On a scale of 1 (barely) to 10 (very well), how well do you balance eating healthy and treating yourself (both are needed)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(Barely)					(Very well)				

- ▶ Would you like to incorporate more nourishment or indulgence into your life? Why is this?

## Nutrition 101

Nutritionists generally agree on the following as great first steps to quickly improving our health and energy levels:

### Reduce Refined Sugars

Reducing intake of refined sugars and fried foods is crucial for maintaining health, as these items are high in empty calories and linked to obesity and heart disease. Focusing on the quality rather than the quantity of calories can significantly impact overall wellbeing. Foods rich in nutrients, such as whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds, provide sustained energy and support bodily functions more effectively than processed foods do.

## Count Calorie Quality Over Quantity

Understanding that not all calories are equal helps in making better dietary choices. While refined foods like pasta and soda offer quick energy boosts followed by crashes, nutrient-dense foods like proteins and complex carbohydrates offer long-lasting energy and support muscle development, especially when paired with physical activity. A balanced diet rich in healthy proteins, fats, and carbohydrates can enhance not only physical health but also mental wellbeing, reducing risks of depression and anxiety.

## Shopping Cart Swaps

As we've mentioned previously, whenever we trip up with behavior change we can usually trace it back to one of the three common derailers: "I don't really want to," "I'm not sure where to start," and "I don't think I can."

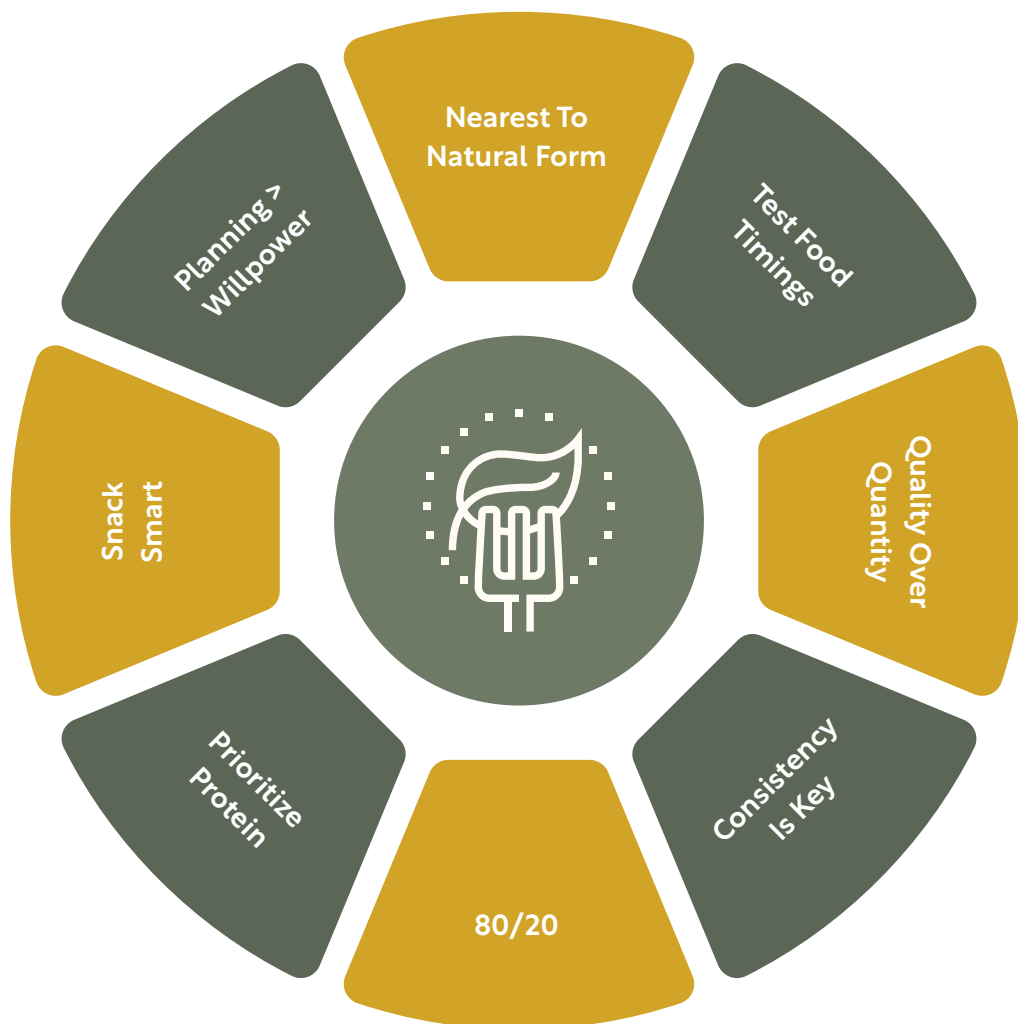
On the following pages we'll help you identify, commit to, and busy-proof an eating behavior you actually want to experiment with, but if you're unsure of how or where to start when it comes to eating a little healthier, here are some swaps you might want to make to your weekly shop. Each swap is aimed at reducing the intake of unhealthy fats, added sugars, and empty calories, while increasing the consumption of nutrients like fiber, protein, and healthy fats to promote better overall health.

Nutrient-Light Option	Nutrient-Dense Option	Benefits
White bread (rapid blood sugar spikes)	Whole grain bread (better fiber and nutrient retention)	Improves digestion and prolongs satiety.
Regular soda (high in sugar)	Sparkling water (no sugar)	Reduces refined sugar intake and related health risks.
Full-fat dairy milk (high in saturated fat)	Unsweetened almond or oat milk (lower in calories and fat)	Lowers risk of heart disease.
Potato chips (high in sodium and unhealthy fats)	Baked vegetable chips (lower in fat)	Reduces unhealthy fat intake.
White rice (less fiber, more blood sugar impact)	Brown rice or quinoa (higher in fiber)	Supports better blood sugar control.
Store-bought cookies (high in sugar and fats)	Homemade oatmeal cookies (control over ingredients)	Decreases processed sugar and fat consumption.

Nutrient-Light Option	Nutrient-Dense Option	Benefits
Sugary cereals (high in sugar and low in nutrients)	Whole grain cereals with no added sugar (more nutrients)	Enhances nutrient intake without sugar spikes.
Cream-based dressings (high in fat and calories)	Olive oil and vinegar (healthier fats)	Improves heart health due to better fat quality.
Salted butter (high in saturated fat and salt)	Unsalted nuts or avocado (healthy fats and lower sodium)	Lowers risk of high blood pressure and cholesterol.
Regular pasta (simple carbs, quick digestion)	Whole wheat or legume-based pasta (more fiber and protein)	Enhances satiety and nutrient intake.
Fried chicken (high in unhealthy fats)	Grilled chicken (less fat)	Reduces fat intake, better for weight management.
Regular ground beef (higher in fat)	Lean ground turkey or chicken (less fat)	Lowers saturated fat intake, better for heart health.
Sour cream (high in fat and calories)	Greek yogurt (protein-rich, less fat)	Increases protein intake, supports muscle maintenance.
Ice cream (high in sugar and fat)	Frozen yogurt or fruit sorbet (lower in fat, can be lower in sugar)	Decreases fat and potentially sugar intake.
Mayonnaise (high in fat and calories)	Hummus or mashed avocado (healthier fats)	Offers fiber and nutrients with healthier fat profile.
White sugar (causes sugar spikes)	Honey, maple syrup, or brown sugar (lower glycemic impact, wider profile of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants)	Reduces risks associated with high sugar intake.
Canned fruit in syrup (high in added sugar)	Fresh or frozen fruit (no added sugar)	Avoids unnecessary sugar intake, provides more vitamins.
Beef sausage (high in fat and preservatives)	Turkey or chicken sausage (lower in fat)	Reduces saturated fat and potentially harmful additives.
Fruit-flavored yogurt (added sugars)	Plain yogurt with fresh fruit (natural sugars, more fiber)	Reduces processed sugar intake, increases fiber.

## Your Positive Eating Pizza

With improved information and ingredients in your kitchen, it can still be difficult to know where to start, which is why we've compiled some top tips for better eating behaviors into a "Positive Eating Pizza."



### Nearest To Natural Form

Consuming foods that are minimally processed preserves more natural nutrients and avoids excessive added sugars, fats, and preservatives, thus supporting overall health and wellbeing.

### Test Food Timings

Eating larger meals early in the day and smaller ones as the day progresses can optimize digestion and energy use, aligning with the body's natural circadian rhythms for better overall metabolic health.

**Quality Over Quantity**

The book highlights the significance of food quality over quantity. Rath advises focusing on nutrient-dense foods that provide more health benefits rather than just calorie counting.

**Consistency Is Key**

Maintaining consistent meal times and eating habits can help stabilize our metabolism, reduce the risk of bingeing, and thereby improve overall health.

**80/20**

Life's too short not to indulge. By taking a balanced approach to eating and encouraging healthy eating 80% of the time, while still incorporating more indulgent (less nutrient dense) indulgences 20% of the time, we make healthy eating more sustainable and enjoyable.

**Prioritize Protein**

Protein (in the form of meat, nuts, dairy, legumes, etc.) is essential for building and repairing tissues, supporting immune function, and can promote satiety, which helps in managing weight by reducing the impulse for frequent snacking.

**Snack Smart**

Choosing snacks that are low in refined sugars and high in fiber and protein helps maintain stable energy levels and mood, reducing the likelihood of overeating later due to hunger spikes.

**Planning > Willpower**

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail, as they say. With only a finite amount of willpower to expend on any given day, planning our meals ahead of time can help in making healthier food choices and avoid opting for fast food or processed meals due to convenience or inevitable dips in self-discipline.

**Rapid Reflection**

- Which of the Positive Eating Pizza suggestions appeals to you most and why?



- ▶ How might you incorporate this behavior into your existing daily routine?

- ▶ What support or structure might you need around this behavior to set you up for success?

## **Are We Moving Mindfully?**

### **Rapid Reflection**

- ▶ What is your relationship with movement?

- Where do you think this has come from?

## Movement Beliefs & Behaviors

In many Western societies, movement, and exercise are often approached as tasks to be completed – another box to tick. This practical view can strip the joy from movement, turning what could be a pleasurable activity into a source of stress. The societal push towards high-intensity, high-impact exercise regimens can intimidate or alienate those of us who might prefer (or only be capable of) gentler, more inclusive forms of movement.

Conversely, some cultures celebrate movement as an inherent part of daily life and community engagement. From the centenarians on the Greek island of Ikaria, who joyfully contribute to farmwork alongside far younger members of their community, to the traditional dances found in the daily life of many African and Caribbean cultures, incorporating movement (as opposed to “exercise”) into the fabric of the culture provides opportunities for building strength, cardiovascular health, as well as a heightened sense of identity, belonging, and community.

## Are You Moving Enough?

If you’re thinking that hitting the gym after spending eight hours at a desk will make up for sitting all day, think again. Recent health studies suggest that regular exercise can’t completely counteract the risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Sitting for long periods – about nine hours a day for most people – can be as harmful as smoking. In fact, sitting for over six hours a day has been linked to a higher risk of early death.

As Tom Rath points out in his book *Eat Move Sleep*, the negative effects of sitting start almost immediately. Our muscles become less active, we burn fewer calories, and our bodies stop breaking down fats efficiently. Even our good cholesterol levels drop, and long periods of sitting can cause our backsides to grow larger due to pressure on fat cells.

## Maximizing Daily Movement

So, what can we do if our job keeps us at a desk? The key is to move as much as possible throughout the day. Small changes like taking the stairs, walking instead of driving, or doing stretches during breaks can significantly benefit our health. Regular movement helps keep our hearts healthy, lifts our spirits, manages stress, and boosts our energy. It's also essential for maintaining a good metabolism and preventing chronic illnesses.

## Keep It Joyful

Moving in ways that feel good enhances stress resilience and mood, due to them prompting the release of positive neurochemicals. It's unsurprising that multiple studies show us that joyful movement promotes consistency, as we are far more likely to stick with activities we genuinely enjoy.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ How do you manage periods of prolonged sitting in your day?

- ▶ What strategies can you use to increase movement?

- What types of physical activities bring you joy?

- How can you incorporate them into your daily routine?

## Your Mindful Movement Wheel

Even with the improved awareness and attitude towards movement, it can still be challenging to know where to begin, which is why we've adapted some top tips for better movement behaviors into a "Mindful Movement Wheel."

### Interrupt Sitting

By getting up and moving every 20 minutes, we can mitigate the negative health effects of prolonged sitting, such as reduced metabolism and increased risk of chronic disease.

### Every Move Counts

By seeing each moment as a chance to move – even a little – we make cumulative contributions to our overall health, enhancing circulation, boosting metabolism, and reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

### Smiling > Shredding

Choosing enjoyable activities over more strenuous "exercises" that you enjoy less increases the likelihood of long-term consistency, as happier activities promote more sustainable habits.

### Nurture Novelty

Incorporating a variety of movements – from solo activities to social sports or classes – keeps you engaged, prevents boredom, and ensures a more balanced development of physical abilities.

**Consistency > Intensity**

Consistent daily movement is better for our long-term health than sporadic, intense workouts, as regular activity helps maintain metabolic health and improves overall physical endurance.

**Team Up With Tech**

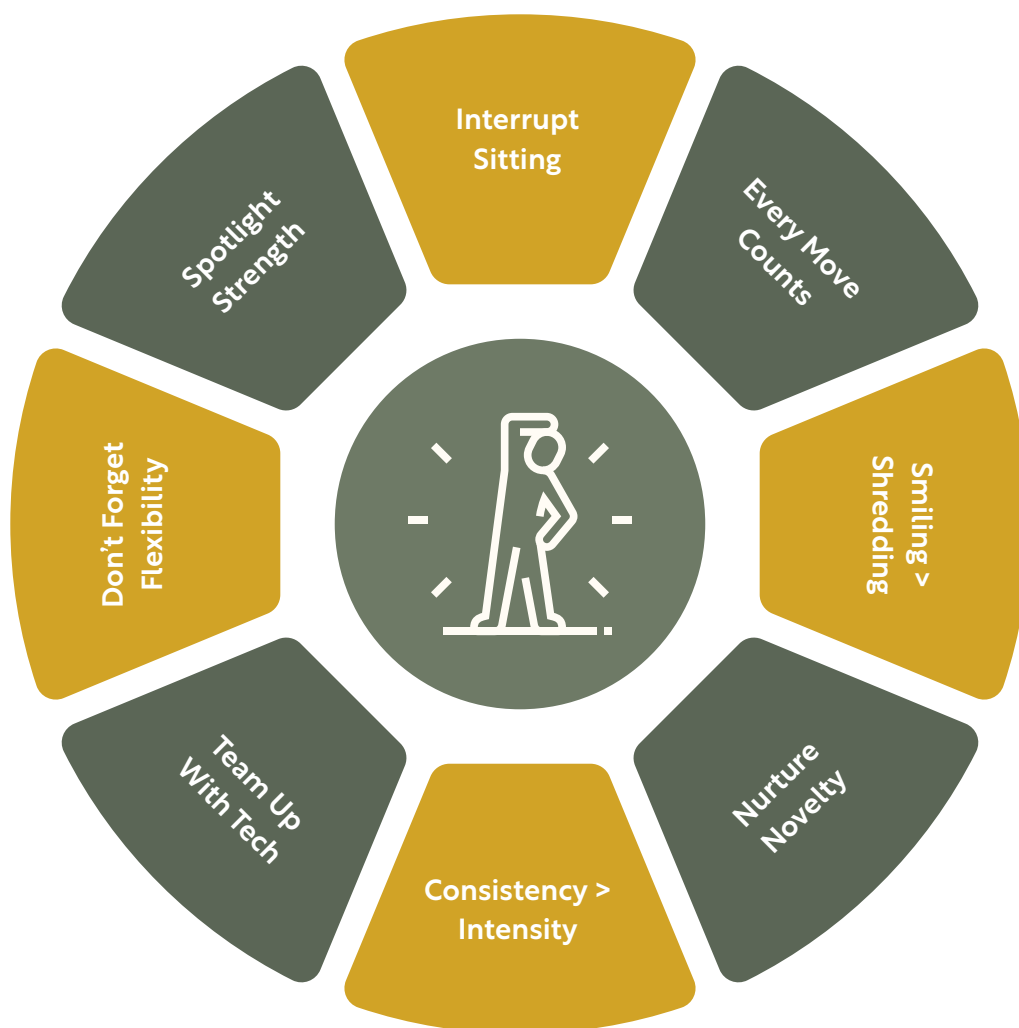
Utilizing technology like apps and wearables can provide motivational feedback and insightful data, helping to optimize our routine and keep us engaged as our movement journey develops.

**Don't Forget Flexibility**

Incorporating flexibility exercises into our routine is crucial as it enhances joint health, reduces injury risk, and improves overall physical performance, especially as muscles and joints age.

**Spotlight Strength**

Incorporating some resistance activities into our week is vital as we age because it helps preserve mobility, prevents falls, maintains our metabolic rate, and reduces the burden on aging joints.



## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Which of the Mindful Movement Wheel suggestions appeals to you most and why?

- ▶ How might you incorporate this behavior into your existing daily routine?

- ▶ What support or structure might you need around this behavior to set you up for success?

## Are We Sleeping Enough?

66

*“The cultural push towards productivity and the ‘always-on’ mentality has led to widespread sleep deprivation, impacting mental and physical health.”*

- Tom Rath

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ When, where, and how much do you sleep?

- ▶ Where have these habits come from?

### Understanding and Setting Your Sleep Schedule

Finding and setting a sleep schedule that supports you in working and playing at your best begins with understanding your body clock type. Researchers suggest the “Night Owl vs Lark” metaphor as a helpful way of deciphering your dominant sleep schedule type. Use the criteria below to assess whether you’re more of a Night Owl or a Lark.

## Are You a Night Owl?

Check all characteristics that apply to you:

▶ Difficulty waking up in the morning.	
▶ Dislike eating early.	
▶ Feeling mentally cloudy after waking.	
▶ Peak mental alertness in the evening.	
▶ Tendency to fall asleep much later than others, often after midnight.	

**Night Owls** have a circadian rhythm that is shifted later compared to typical schedules. This can make it challenging for them to adhere to traditional 9-to-5 work schedules, leading to sleep deprivation and associated health issues

## Are You a Lark?

Check all characteristics that apply to you:

▶ Sleepiness much earlier than most (usually before 10:00 pm).	
▶ Difficulty staying awake in the evening.	
▶ Early morning wakefulness without an alarm.	
▶ Peak mental alertness in the morning, declining in the afternoon.	

**Larks** have a circadian rhythm that aligns with earlier sleep and wake times. They often perform better in tasks requiring early morning alertness but may struggle to stay awake for late-night activities

**Note:** If you identify as neurodivergent (e.g., having ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, PTSD, etc.), you may find that your sleep and rest needs do not fit either of these molds and may be better suited to more interval-based sleeping, resting, and working.

Once you determine your sleep window that matches your body clock type, it's essential to maintain this schedule consistently. Irregular sleep patterns can cause insomnia and fatigue.



## Why Are We Struggling To Sleep?

As much as two-thirds of people are surviving off insufficient sleep, with the top five causes being:

- ▶ **Stress and Anxiety:** High stress levels can make it hard to fall asleep and stay asleep, resulting in poor sleep quality. Anxiety keeps the brain active and the body alert, making it difficult to relax and drift off.
- ▶ **Electronic Device Use:** Evening screen time from phones, laptops, and TVs can interfere with sleep. The blue light from screens disrupts melatonin production, making it harder to fall asleep.
- ▶ **Disrupted Sleep Schedules:** Irregular sleep schedules can lead to sleep disorders like insomnia. Maintaining a consistent sleep routine helps regulate the body's internal clock, promoting better sleep quality.
- ▶ **Physical Conditions and Illness:** Chronic pain, respiratory issues, and other illnesses can greatly impact sleep quality. Conditions like sleep apnea disrupt breathing during sleep, leading to frequent awakenings and limiting the benefits of deep sleep.
- ▶ **Environmental Conditions:** Room temperature, noise levels, and light exposure can affect sleep. A comfortable sleep environment – cool, dark, and quiet – is crucial for good sleep hygiene, but many people sleep in rooms with light pollution or poor air circulation.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Which of these do you frequently experience in your own life?

## Your Smart Sleep Circle

With so many cultural and lifestyle barriers between us and a better sleep routine, it can be all too easy to find ourselves with sleep as the source of our stress, instead of the remedy. Luckily, we've collected some of the best, busy-proof, evidence-based strategies for improved sleep into a "Smart Sleep Circle."



### Stick To The Schedule

Maintaining a regular sleep-wake schedule (that suits your Night Owl or Lark tendencies) helps regulate your body's internal clock, promoting better sleep quality and overall health.

### Create A Restful Routine

Establish a calming pre-bedtime routine, such as dimming the lights, reading a book, or practicing restorative yoga, to signal to your body that it's time to wind down.

**Optimize Your Bedroom**

Optimize your sleep environment by using comfortable sheets, blackout curtains, and maintaining a cool room temperature (around 60–67°F or 15–19°C) to enhance sleep quality.

**Screen Freedom**

Avoid screens an hour before bed and instead engage in relaxing activities like reading, meditating, or listening to calming music to prepare your mind for sleep.

**Nourish For Nighttime**

Eat foods that promote sleep, such as almonds, turkey, and chamomile tea, and avoid caffeine and heavy meals close to bedtime to prevent disruptions in sleep.

**Exercise Often & Early**

Regular physical activity, especially earlier in the day (as opposed to late at night when it may activate your nervous system), helps improve sleep quality and reduces the time it takes to fall asleep.

**Vent The Stress**

Manage stress by journaling, talking to a trusted friend, or practicing somatic stress release exercises such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation to promote relaxation and better sleep.

**Seek The Sun**

Exposure to natural sunlight during the day helps regulate your circadian rhythm, improving sleep quality and duration by signaling to your body when it's time to be awake and when it's time to sleep.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Which of the Smart Sleep Circle suggestions appeals to you most and why?

- ▶ How might you incorporate this behavior into your existing daily routine?

- ▶ What support or structure might you need around this behavior to set yourself up for success?

## Stress, Rest & Recovery

66

*“If you’ve dealt with the stressors but haven’t dealt with the stress itself, your brain won’t let you rest.”*

*- Emily & Amelia Nagoski*

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ On average, over the last week, what % of your time was spent on rest and recovery?

- ▶ What are some of your favorite and most effective forms of rest and recovery?

- ▶ What – if anything – makes it challenging for you to prioritize time for rest and recovery?

## Sources of Stress

Stress can come from external sources or internal sources:

- ▶ **External Stressors:** Things like work pressure, money problems, family duties, not enough time, societal expectations, and facing discrimination.
- ▶ **Internal Stressors:** Things like self-criticism, worries about how we look, identity issues, past memories, and concerns about the future.

Whether we're always consciously aware of these stressors or not, our body picks up on them and sees them as threats.

## The Stress Responses

The stress response is how our body and brain react to stress. Many know the “fight or flight” response, but there are actually four types: fight, flight, freeze, and fawn.

### Fight Response

- ▶ **Body Reaction:** Your body releases adrenaline to prepare for a confrontation.
- ▶ **Feelings:** You might feel angry, aggressive, or irritable. Your fists may clench, muscles tighten, and your heart may race.

### Flight Response

- ▶ **Body Reaction:** Similar to fight, but preparing the body to escape/run away.
- ▶ **Feelings:** You may feel anxious, restless, or have a strong urge to run away. This can look like pacing, fidgeting, or feeling trapped.

## Freeze Response

- ▶ **Body Reaction:** Your body may become immobile, heart rate drops, and you might feel disconnected.
- ▶ **Feelings:** You might feel numb, stuck, or unable to move or respond to the situation.

## Fawn Response

- ▶ **Body Reaction:** Your mind may dissociate (disconnect) from your body and its urges/feelings in order to prioritize the needs of others.
- ▶ **Feelings:** You might feel an urgency or anxiety to know and meet others needs. This can look like quickly agreeing to things or trying to make others happy to stay safe.

The type of stress response we use depends on several factors. **Our past experiences** play a big role; we might have learned to handle stress by fighting, running away, trying to befriend the threat, or disconnecting from it. **The size of the threat** also matters; for example, we might stand up to a rude person but run away from a group of tough strangers. We usually have one or two stress responses that we use more often than the others.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Which of these reflects how you typically behave when feeling stressed?

## The Stress Cycle

Many people think that solving the cause of stress will relax the body. However, the fight-flight-freeze-fawn response can last longer in modern life because we don't get clear signals that we're safe. This means stress chemicals stay in our bodies.

Just telling yourself to calm down doesn't work. Instead, you need to do activities that show your body it's safe. These activities include exercise, deep breathing, socializing, being creative, and relaxing mindfully. We'll explore these strategies in the following pages.

## Your Rest & Recovery Wheel

Despite knowing its benefits to our resilience and performance, integrating moments of Rest & Recovery into our lives can be a daunting proposition. Fortunately, we've collated the best evidence-based, busy-proof tools to experiment with to make sure Rest & Recovery doesn't fall off our to-do List.



**Release The Tension**

Engaging in a good cry by watching a sad film or listening to sad music can be therapeutic as it helps to release pent-up emotional tension, allowing the body to move through the stress response cycle.

**Box Breath**

Box breathing, which involves inhaling, holding, and exhaling each for four seconds, helps regulate the autonomic nervous system, reducing stress and improving focus and calmness.

**Laugh It Off**

Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural stress-relievers, and reduces the level of stress hormones, promoting an overall sense of wellbeing.

**Shake It Out**

Somatic practices like shaking or dancing help to physically discharge the energy associated with the fight or flight response, effectively moving the body through the stress cycle.

**Self-Soothe**

Engaging in self-soothing behaviors, such as gentle self-touch or offering oneself kind words, can activate the body's parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes relaxation and a sense of safety.

**Nurture In Nature**

Spending time in green spaces has been shown to lower stress hormone levels, enhance mood, and calm the nervous system, contributing to overall stress recovery.

**Hug It Out**

Physical touch, like hugging, can increase levels of oxytocin, a hormone that promotes a sense of bonding and reduces cortisol, thus helping to stabilize the nervous system.

**Find The Fun**

Engaging in activities that you genuinely enjoy can boost the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which help signal safety and relaxation to the nervous system, aiding in stress recovery.

## Rapid Reflection

- Which of the Rest & Recovery Wheel suggestions appeals to you most and why?



- ▶ How might you incorporate this behavior into your existing daily routine?

- ▶ What support or structure might you need around this behavior to set yourself up for success?

## Creating A Rooted Routine for Health

Having explored the four main pillars of health (Eating Well, Moving Mindfully, Sleeping Enough, and Resting & Recovering), we are now going to leverage the best in behavior-change science to create a Rooted Routine for Health.

Remember, to overcome common behavior change derailers (I don't really want to," "I'm not sure where to start," and "I don't think I can"), we must choose a behavior we truly want to do and shrink it until we feel at least 8/10 confident that we can do it each day for the next week.

We will have plenty of time to try our new Rooted Routine for Health in coming weeks, however the research suggests that we build our ability and confidence best by starting small and scaling up as our skills and practice improve.

Create your **Rooted Routine for Health**.

- ▶ To decide on your Rooted Routine refer to the theory and your reflections on each of the four Health areas (Eating, Moving, Sleeping, or Resting & Recovering).
- ▶ Refer to the previous chapter for inspiration on Rooted Routines.

<b> GROUNDED BEGINNINGS</b>	What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment “nurture” the start of your new habit?	<i>I drink a cup of tea every morning.</i>
<b> NURTURING ACTION</b>	What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?	<i>When I finish my tea, I will take three slow, deep breaths.</i>
<b> THRIVING MOMENT</b>	Once you’ve completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small? What will you do to acknowledge your growth? This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.	<i>I’ll say “Well done!” to myself quietly.</i>
<b> NOURISHING REFLECTION</b>	What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits. How might this habit help you in the future?	<i>I expect breathing will help me feel calmer and more focused throughout the day.</i>

## Rapid Reflection

- What was one surprising insight you had about the science of creating Healthy Habits?

- ▶ What was the most useful piece of information you received today?

- ▶ Who might you share this information with to create a small wellbeing ripple in your life?

## Homework

In this session, we learned about the four main areas of health: Eating Well, Moving Mindfully, Sleeping More, and Resting & Recovering.

For this session's homework, you will be asked to:

- 1) Create and action a daily Rooted Routine for Health using the Rooted Routine Template.
- 2) Log your experiences in the Rooted Routines Logbook.
- 3) Run a Reflection Round on your Rooted Routine for Health experiment.

## Your Rooted Routine for Health Template

Identify the Health behavior (Eating, Moving, Sleeping, or Resting and Recovering) you'd like to try this week.

Using the list of example Rooted Routines in session 1 as inspiration (feel free to create your own, too), complete your own Rooted Routine Template below.

Commit to this behavior for at least the next week, making sure to note down your progress each day in the **Rooted Routines Logbook**, as well as any wins, wobbles, or burning questions down below:

GROUNDING BEGINNINGS		
NURTURING ACTION		
THRIVING MOMENT		
NOURISHING REFLECTION		

As you playfully experiment with a Rooted Routine, remember that the key to success lies less in achieving a perfect result and more in our ability to reflect on and reshape our efforts by asking:

- ▶ *What's working well?*
- ▶ *Where do I notice challenges or resistance?*
- ▶ *What am I learning?*
- ▶ *Based on this, what will I try next?*

## Rooted Routines Logbook

How to Use the Rooted Routines Logbook

1. **Grounded Beginnings:** Identify an existing action or routine in your day that will naturally help you start your new wellbeing habit (e.g. Brushing your teeth).
2. **Nurturing Action:** Decide on a small, manageable action you can take right now to foster your wellbeing (e.g. Take a couple of deep breaths after brushing your teeth).
3. **Thriving Moment:** Reflect on how you will celebrate or acknowledge your success, no matter how small (e.g. Smile at yourself in the mirror).
4. **Nourishing Reflection:** Think about how completing this action will make you feel and how it supports your wellbeing (e.g. Feeling calm and present as you start your day).
5. **Notes:** Add any brief notes, thoughts, or insights you have while completing your habit.
6. **Completed:** At the end of each day, mark whether you completed your rooted routine with a checkmark (✓) for yes or leave it unchecked for no.

You can fill in the table for the upcoming week and track your progress each day. Good luck with building your new habit!

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

## Rooted Routine for Health Reflection Round

When it comes to playfully experimenting with your Rooted Routine this week:

- ▶ What's working well?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?

# Session 3

POSITIVE EMOTIONS



## Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- ▶ Reflect on your current experience of a range of emotions through a Rapid Reflection
- ▶ Explore: What Are Emotions?
- ▶ Uncover: The pivotal role that both “Good” & “Bad” Emotions play in creating a thriving, meaningful life
- ▶ Clarify: Emotions are data to help us make meaningful choices, not directives upon which we must react
- ▶ Create: A Rooted Routine for Emotion

In the last session, we explored the “Health” PERMAH pillar. We began by illuminating our existing individual and shared beliefs around health behaviors, and discovered how we might optimize our health through evidence-based approaches to help us eat, sleep, move, and rest better.

In this session, we will explore the role all human emotions play in shaping our wellbeing. We’ll discuss how identifying and mindfully responding to our emotions, rather than reacting mindlessly, can give us more choice and control over our emotional health.

Let’s get started.



## Reflection Round: Positive Emotions

66

*“When awareness is brought to an emotion, power is brought to your life.”*

*- Tara Mayer Robson*

- ▶ How many emotions can you list? Take 60 seconds to write down as many as you can.

Most of us struggle to name more than three to four emotions: mad, sad, glad, and scared. When you can't name or recognize different emotions, it's like having a gap in your vocabulary. This makes it hard to understand the important signals your body is sending about what you need. If you can't notice these emotions, you'll struggle to make good decisions and act in ways that feel true to yourself.

To help you gauge your recent experiences around noticing, naming, and responding to your emotions, we're going to perform a Rapid Reflection.

When it comes to feeling and identifying your emotions in the past:

- ▶ What has gone well?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What have you been learning?

- ▶ What might you try next?

## What Are Emotions?

66

*“We are not thinking machines that feel, rather, we are feeling machines that think.”*

*- Antonio Damasio*

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ How would you define an emotion?

- ▶ Why do we experience emotions?

**Note:** This is not an exercise in academic referencing, spelling, grammar, or even “getting it right.” This is a chance to reflect and gauge where you are when it comes to your understanding of emotions. There are no wrong answers!

## The Three Key Elements of Emotion



Experiencing an emotion involves three main parts:

1. How you personally experience the emotion,
2. How your body reacts to the emotion, and
3. How you behave in response to the emotion.

Let's look at each of these components in more detail.

### How You Experience Emotions

This is the personal aspect of emotions. People experience emotions in different ways, often influenced by their life experiences. For example, two people might react differently to the same event based on their personal history.

***Example 1:** John is hosting a birthday party for his wife, Carol. He doesn't know many people and feels uneasy and self-conscious in the crowd. Carol, however, is highly extroverted and knows most of the guests, so she feels excited and appreciative of the celebration.*

***Example 2:** John and Carol are at the park when an off-leash dog runs up to them. John, who had dogs growing up, is thrilled by the unexpected encounter. Carol, who never had pets, feels unnerved and frightened by the unrestrained dog.*

### How Your Body Reacts

Emotions can trigger physical responses in the body, which can vary from person to person based on their emotional state and personal experiences.

***Example 1:** At the birthday party, John's discomfort manifests physically as he feels hot, his hands get clammy, and his stomach feels unsettled. In contrast, Carol feels a rush of excitement, her heart beats faster in anticipation, and she has a warm feeling of happiness.*

*Example 2: When the dog approaches, John's body relaxes, and he smiles, showing physical signs of enjoyment. Carol, on the other hand, feels her muscles tense, her heart races, and she instinctively steps back, showing physical signs of fear.*

## How You Behave

This refers to the actions and behaviors exhibited in response to emotions. These actions can signal to others how you're feeling and are influenced by both the internal experience and physical responses.

*Example 1: At the party, John tries to stay in the background, speaks minimally, and avoids eye contact, behaviors that reflect his discomfort. Carol, enjoying the party, moves around the room, engaging in lively conversations and laughing with friends, which reflects her joy and excitement.*

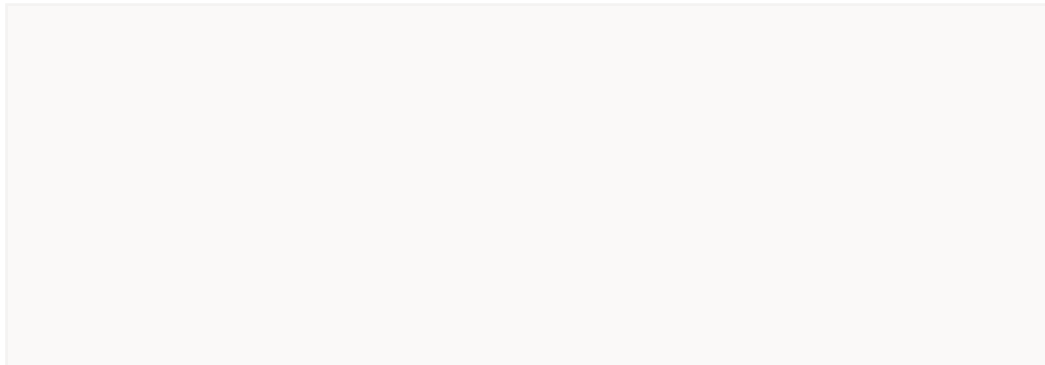
*Example 2: In the park, John reaches out to pet the dog, laughing and inviting the dog to play. Carol, feeling scared, crosses her arms, takes a step back, and asks John to keep the dog away from her. Her actions show her fear and discomfort with the situation.*

These are just some examples illustrating how the same situation can evoke different emotions, physical reactions, and behaviors in different people. They highlight that, while most emotions are universal, each of us will experience emotions differently. The more we can attune to our own unique experiences of different emotions (and appreciate that others have their own ways of feeling and dealing with emotions), the better we'll navigate the ups and downs of life.

## Rapid Reflection

- Which of the three elements of emotional experience are you usually most aware of in yourself?

- What is the impact of each of us having unique, subjective experiences of emotions?



## Our Model

The “Model” is a self-coaching tool designed to help people understand and manage their thoughts, feelings, actions, and results. It consists of five key components:

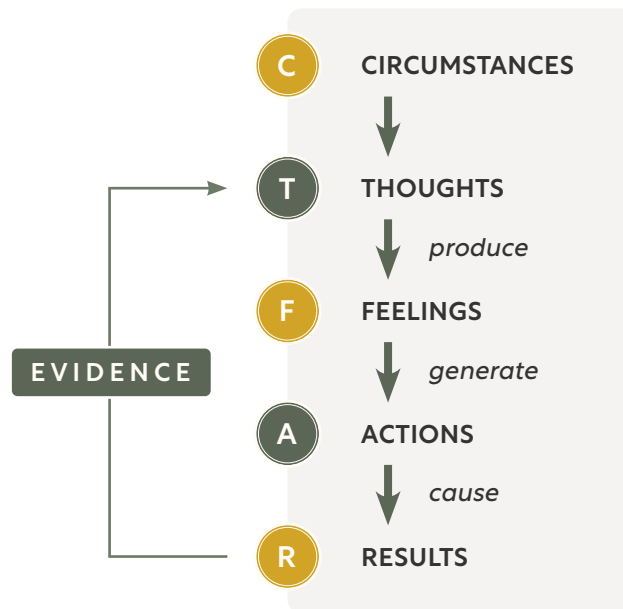
1. **Circumstances:** The facts or situations happening around you.
2. **Thoughts:** What you think about those circumstances.
3. **Feelings:** How your thoughts make you feel.
4. **Actions:** What you do based on your feelings.
5. **Results:** What happens as a result of your actions.

The Model shows how your thoughts influence your feelings, which in turn drive your actions and ultimately determine your results. This approach simplifies the process of understanding how emotions emerge and impact our experiences.

Here is a closer look at each of the five key components:

1. **Circumstances:** These are the facts or events in our lives that are neutral and can be observed or proven. They are objective and not influenced by personal opinions or feelings.
2. **Thoughts:** Thoughts are the interpretations, beliefs, or opinions we have about our circumstances. These are subjective and can vary greatly between individuals.
3. **Feelings:** Feelings are the emotional responses generated by our thoughts. They are the sensations or emotions we experience as a result of our thinking.
4. **Actions:** Actions are the behaviors or reactions we exhibit in response to our feelings. These can be physical actions or verbal responses.

5. **Results:** Results are the outcomes of our actions. They are the tangible or intangible effects that our actions produce in our lives.



## An Example

1. **Circumstances:** A person drives their car in front of yours when you weren't expecting them to.
2. **Thoughts:** That person is selfish and doesn't respect other drivers.
3. **Feelings:** Angry, indignant, unsettled.
4. **Actions:** Yelling at them, beeping your horn, or trying to cut back in front of them.
5. **Results:** Feeling more hypervigilant when driving and becoming a more anxious or aggressive driver.

## Rapid Reflection

- Can you think of your own real-world example of the Model in use?

## Practically Applying The Model

Take a moment to apply the Model in your own unique lived experience. Think of a time recently where you acted in a way you're not proud of or that doesn't reflect who you want to be. It doesn't have to be serious. It can be something small.

Then, use the model to help you unpack this action you took by responding to the following questions:

- ▶ What were the objective circumstances (what actually happened)?  
(E.g., *My partner got home two hours late from work and missed dinner. They didn't call or message to say they'd be late*).

- ▶ What thoughts did you have about these circumstances?  
(E.g., *They don't care enough to tell me where they are or maybe they've been in an accident, etc.*)

- ▶ What feelings were created by these thoughts?  
(E.g., *frustration, resentment, worry, etc.*)



- ▶ What action(s) did these feelings push you to take (or not take)?  
(E.g., *sending an angry message, or calling them repeatedly to make sure they were OK, etc.*)

- ▶ What was the result of these actions?  
(E.g., *an angry texting war, them feeling guilty for not calling and worrying you, etc.*)

**Note:** The Model can be used in any direction/order (e.g., starting with the circumstances, identifying the thoughts, feelings, actions, etc. or by starting with the results in your life, the actions you took, the feelings that lead to those actions, etc.).

The most important thing is that we are building up awareness of the interplay of our actions, feelings, and thoughts.

We will revisit this exercise in an upcoming section, so make sure you've made some clear notes to reflect on shortly.

## Beyond Good & Bad Emotions

### True or False?

Can you spot the emotional fact vs. fiction? Take a moment to mark whether you think each of these statements about emotions is true or false.

Emotions Are Neither Positive Nor Negative	The More Intense An Emotion, The Longer It Lasts
True / False	True / False
We All Experience Emotions In The Same Way	All Emotions Are Useful
True / False	True / False

Thinking back over the past 24 hours, what are some emotions you have experienced?


Looking back at your list above, write a “P” or an “N” next to each emotion, based on whether you think it is a positive or negative emotion, respectively.

- What made you label each of these emotions as either positive or negative?

## Are Emotions Good Or Bad?

Emotions, from strong anger to deep love, are quick physical reactions to important signals around us. When we sense something, like danger or interest in someone, our bodies react by changing our heart rate, muscle tension, and focus. This helps us deal with situations effectively.

However, emotions aren't always accurate. Sometimes they help us understand things clearly, but other times they bring up past experiences that can confuse us and lead to bad reactions. This can make us feel overwhelmed.

Many of us react on emotional autopilot without realizing how much our emotions affect our behavior. Even though we like to think we're rational, we often ignore how much emotions shape our quick responses. By becoming more aware of our emotions and learning to use the information they provide, we can better control our actions and improve our personal growth, relationships, and overall wellbeing.

Emotions are not simply good or bad. Instead, they provide useful information. For example, sadness might show we want something better, social anxiety might push us to improve social connections, and boredom at work might mean we need new challenges. Acting according to these insights can lead to greater happiness and connection in life.

## Name It, Normalize It, Navigate It

Every emotion has a purpose by preparing us for action. Here are some strategies to manage our emotions better:

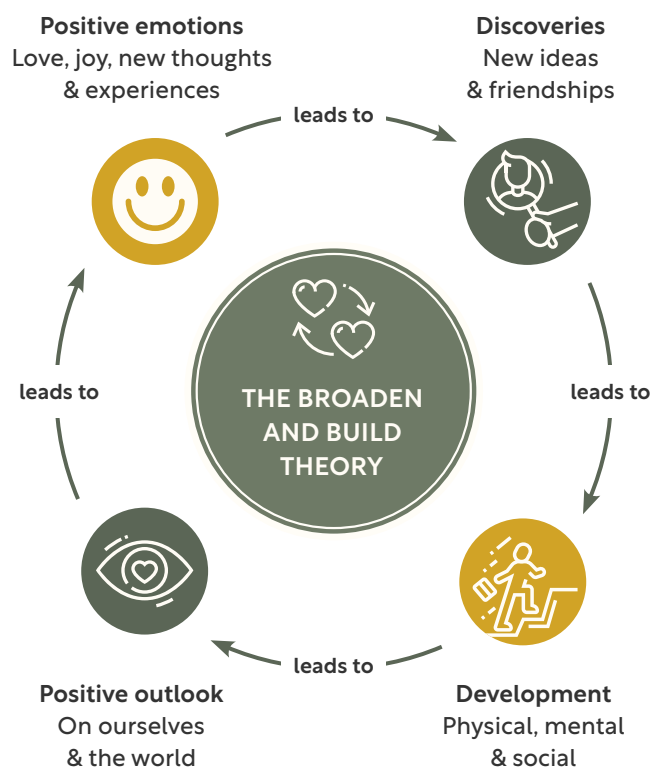
- ▶ **Naming It:** Describe your feelings. Saying "I'm noticing that I'm feeling sad" instead of "I am sad" can help create some distance from the emotion.
- ▶ **Normalizing It:** Accept that all emotions, both good and bad, are normal. Be open to experiencing all emotions without judgment.
- ▶ **Navigating It:** Use your emotions as information to guide your actions, not as commands. Treat them as signs pointing to what you care about most.

The more mindfully we can name, normalize, and navigate our emotions, the more regulated we'll be in our system and the better we'll be able to show up in each (or most) moments as who we truly want to be.

## The Benefits Of Positive Emotions

While no emotion is inherently positive or negative – as psychologist Catherine Tardella puts it, “All emotions are positive, in that they provide vital, valuable information about our desires and needs in the moment” – there is significant research into positive (pleasurable or desired) emotions that deserves our attention.

Experiencing positive emotions – like joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love – can boost optimism, resilience, openness, acceptance, and purpose. As William James famously said, “We don’t laugh because we’re happy; we’re happy because we laugh.”



Positive emotions broaden and build our brains’ responses to opportunities and challenges. For example, her research shows that positive emotions can:

**Broaden your perspective:** When we feel positive emotions, our minds open up, and we’re more likely to see and seize new opportunities. Think of it like having a wide-angle lens on your camera. You can take in more of the scene around you and spot things you might have missed otherwise.

**Boost creative thinking:** Positive emotions can increase levels of certain chemicals in our brains, like dopamine and serotonin. These chemicals help us think more creatively, kind of like giving our brains a spark that helps us come up with new ideas.

**Promote teamwork:** When you feel good, you feel safer and more connected to others. This shifts your focus from just thinking about yourself to considering the group as a whole, making it easier to work together and support each other.

Building up positive emotions can lead to an upward spiral in our growth and development, improving our resources:

**Psychologically:** Positive feelings help you think more clearly and solve problems better.

**Intellectually:** They make it easier for you to learn new things and be creative.

**Socially:** Positive emotions help you get along better with others and build stronger friendships.

**Physically:** Improve your overall health, like boosting your immune system and giving you more energy.

## **Broaden & Build: An Example**

Imagine starting your workday feeling optimistic and curious. In a team meeting, your positive mood leads you to actively participate, ask insightful questions, and suggest innovative solutions. This sparks a creative discussion, resulting in a successful strategy for a project. Teamwork strengthens your relationships with coworkers, boosts your confidence, and reinforces the value of your contributions. This positive experience encourages you to approach future meetings with even more enthusiasm.

## **Your Experience: Broaden & Build**

Think of a time when you experienced the “broaden and build” effect of positive emotions. What happened? Reflect in as much detail as possible.

- What emotions were you feeling?

- ▶ What discoveries or collaborations did this lead to?

- ▶ What connections, skills, or knowledge did you gain from these?

- ▶ How did these experiences change your outlook for the better?

## The Benefits Of Balance

Is it better to feel positive all the time? Or negative all of the time?

Like most things in life, moderation is key.

By this time in your life, you've undoubtedly experienced how negative emotions, like feeling sad or anxious, can sometimes spiral out of control, making you feel overwhelmed or hopeless. The good news is there are ways that you can break this cycle: by bringing a bit of positivity into your life.

To boost positive emotions, you can try various activities like exercising, meditating, spending time with friends, enjoying nature, playing games, being kind, savoring good

moments, using your talents, or simply enjoying small pleasures like listening to your favorite song. Later, we'll discuss how to build small, positive habits into your daily routine.

It's important to keep a healthy balance with positivity. While being positive is generally good, overly unrealistic positive thinking can sometimes lead to disappointment or depression. Also, chasing happiness too hard can sometimes make people feel lonely or more depressed.

Having too much positivity isn't always ideal either. Life is full of ups and downs, and dealing with some negative emotions is a natural part of having meaningful experiences. Experts now suggest a balanced approach to emotional wellbeing, recognizing that it's OK to feel both positive and negative emotions. Finding a mindful balance can lead to greater personal growth and fulfillment in life.

## **Can You Identify Your Emotions?**

As we discovered earlier, most people can only identify three to four emotions – glad, sad, mad, and scared. This limited emotional vocabulary hampers our ability to understand and respond to our needs effectively. By expanding our emotional vocabulary and improving our emotional granularity, we can better attune to our inner experiences and respond to them mindfully.

Emotional granularity reflects a high level of clarity. It is about how well you can distinguish the most subtle differences between emotions and label them precisely, with lots of detail. Put simply, rather than using broad and general terms like “happy” or “sad,” with emotional granularity, you can be specific and distinguish between emotions like contentment, joy, satisfaction, melancholy, and disappointment.

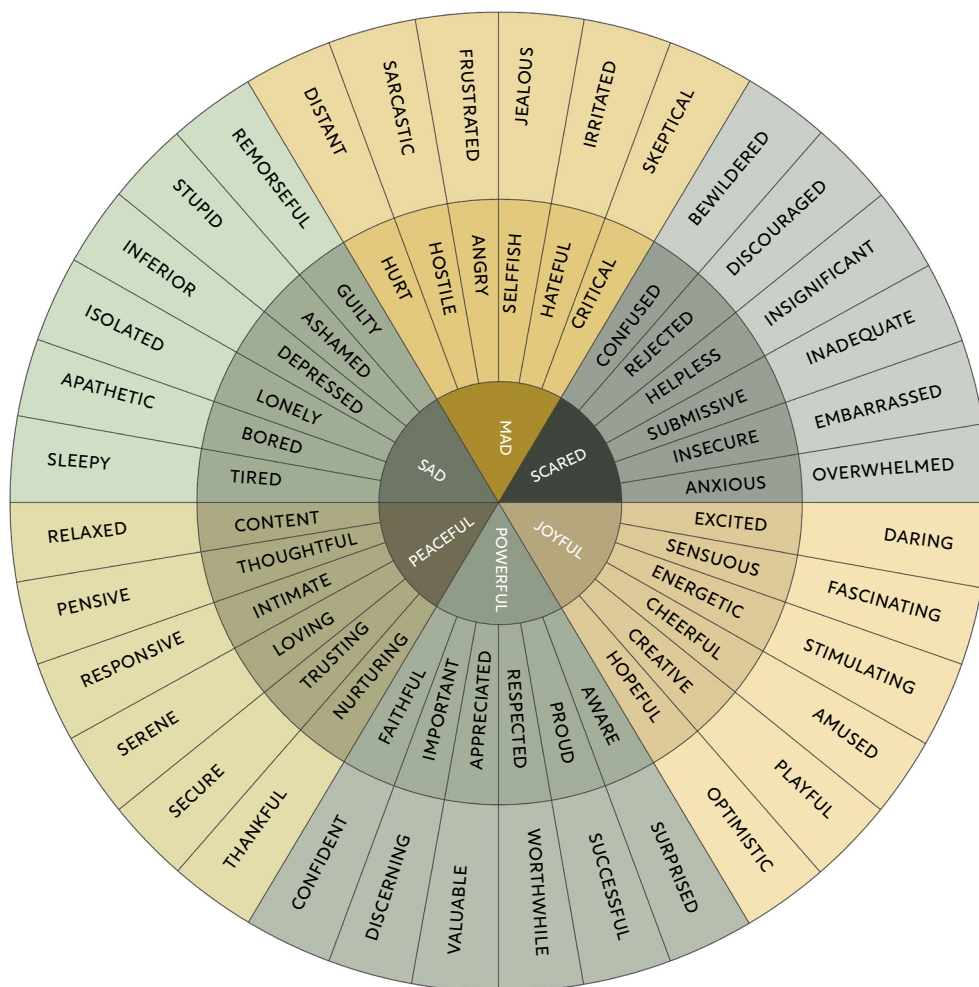
People with high emotional granularity tend to have better emotional regulation, leading to improved mental health and wellbeing. When we can precisely identify our emotions, we gain clarity on what we need at any given moment and can take steps to meet those needs more effectively.

For example, being able to distinguish between feeling “embarrassed” vs. feeling “overwhelmed” may lead to very different actions. Embarrassment may lead us to seek reassurance from a trusted friend or reach for self-compassion through some kind self-talk. Overwhelm, on the other hand, may lead us to delegate or seek practical support in organising our tasks, so that we have time to calm our body and brain and get back to work when we're ready.

## The Wheel of Emotions

One helpful tool for enhancing emotional granularity is the Wheel of Emotions. The wheel visually represents a range of emotions and their relationships to each other, from basic emotions like feeling scared or joyful, to more granular emotions like feeling bewildered or optimistic. Using this tool can help you become more specific in identifying your emotions.

For example, if you experience a generally sad feeling, you can use the outer bands of the wheel to figure out what specific kind of sadness you might feel (e.g. maybe what you are experiencing is confusion or isolation). Note that the reverse can also happen. For instance, by using the wheel, you may realize that feeling inadequate may be rooted in hurt or sadness at a deeper level.

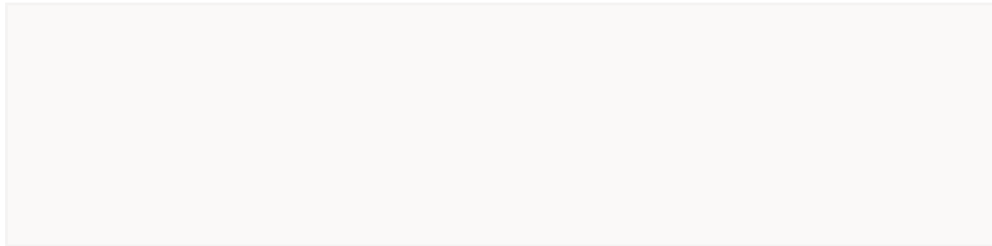




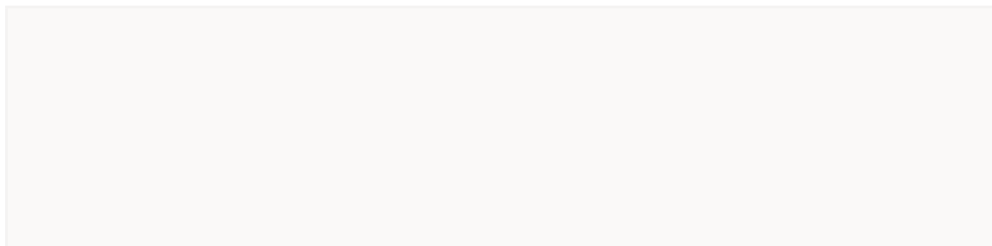
## Using the Wheel of Emotions

- ▶ **Ask “What The Func?”:** Can you use the wheel to identify an uncomfortable emotion you’ve felt in the past week? Rather than seeking to avoid this sensation, ask yourself instead:

What function might this emotion serve?



What is this feeling trying to tell me about my needs? What human need (e.g., safety, connection, fun, reassurance, belonging, autonomy, freedom, etc.) might be going unmet right now, and how might I, or others, meet it?



Researchers also suggest the following:

- ▶ **Journaling:** When journaling, try to describe your feelings in more detail using the Wheel of Emotions. For example, instead of simply writing “I felt bad today,” you could be more specific and say, “I felt a mix of disappointment and frustration because my project was delayed.” This way of writing helps you understand your emotions better and can give you insights into what’s really bothering you, making it easier to address the issues.
- ▶ **Conflict Resolution:** In conflicts, using the Wheel of Emotions can help you express your feelings more clearly. For instance, instead of just saying you’re “angry,” you might say you feel “hurt.” This more precise expression helps others understand your true feelings and can lead to more empathetic and constructive communication. It allows people to see your perspective and can make resolving conflicts easier and more effective.

## Emotions: Data, Not Directives

### Rapid Reflection

Thinking back to the Model for a moment, consider:

- ▶ What is a **result** you had recently that you didn't want?

- ▶ What **different action** might you have preferred to take instead to avoid this result?

- ▶ What **emotional state** would you have needed to be in to be able to choose that action (e.g., in order to think clearly enough to choose a response and not react in a way you'd regret later)?

Emotions should be seen as data, not directives. This means our emotions give us important information about ourselves and our surroundings, but they don't have to control our actions. By seeing emotions this way, we can make thoughtful choices that match our values and goals in life.

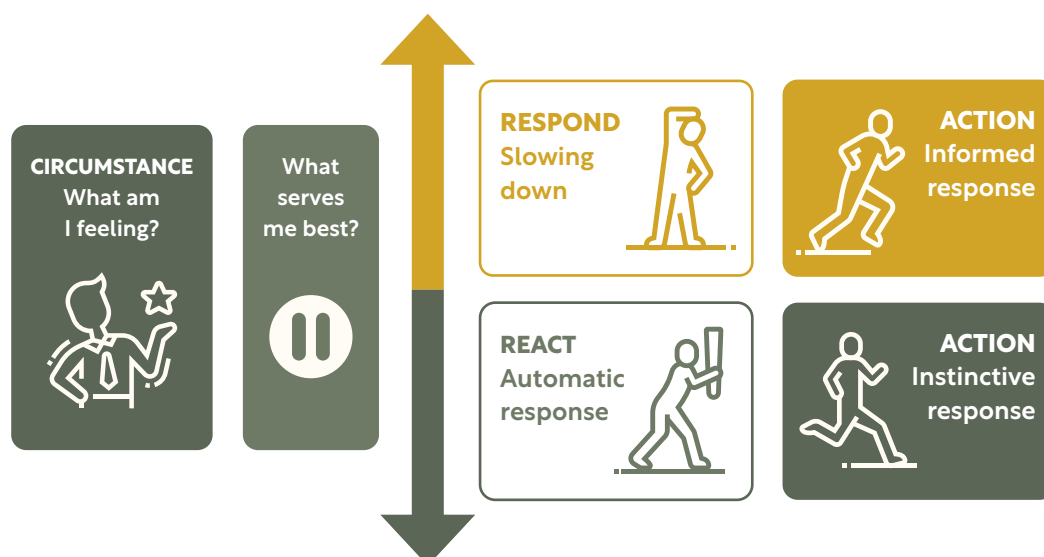
## The Space Between Stimulus and Response

When we feel intense emotions like rage, abandonment, or despair, it's easy to act on these feelings or think they will never end. However, if we let our emotions control us or *react* without thinking, we might behave in ways that can harm our relationships, reputation, and sense of self.

However, psychologist, author, and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl offers hope: "Between the stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom." This idea is central to emotional intelligence – it's about pausing and thinking before we react, using that space to choose actions that reflect who we truly are.

## Reaction vs. Response

When we feel intense emotions, our brains go into survival mode, which is controlled by the older, primitive part called the limbic brain. This part makes us react quickly with fight, flight, freeze, or fawn responses to ensure immediate survival, rather than taking thoughtful, deliberate actions. In this state, it's hard to act according to our higher values and goals. We end up **reacting mindlessly**, often using old coping strategies from our younger years, instead of responding mindfully.



But there's a better way. If we can take a moment to calm down, even for a few seconds, we can re-engage the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for rational thinking, planning, and decision-making. By calming our bodies, we can move from an emotional hijack to a state of clarity and control. This allows us to **respond mindfully**, rather than impulsively, and make choices that align with our true goals and values.

The diagram below depicts these two patterns of thoughts and behavior and the power we have when we take a moment to pause and reflect before we act.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ When have you **managed to stop yourself** being hijacked by your emotions?

- ▶ What did you do/not do that allowed you to pause and reflect, instead of react?

## Calming the Nervous System

To effectively manage the space between stimulus and response, we need strategies to calm our nervous systems. Researchers have found that simply telling ourselves to calm down doesn't work. Instead, we need activities that signal to our bodies that we are safe.

Different techniques work for different people, depending on their nature, nurture (how they've been taught to process emotions) and the severity or intensity of the triggering event/s. It's important to experiment with various methods and find what works best for us.

**Cognitive Techniques:** Practices like mindfulness meditation and cognitive-behavioral exercises help reframe our thoughts and bring calm.

- ▶ *Example: Sarah, a college student, uses mindfulness meditation to manage her anxiety before exams. She sets aside 10 minutes each morning to sit quietly, focus on her breath, and observe her thoughts without judgment. This practice helps her stay calm and focused during her studies and exams.*

**Somatic Practices:** Techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and physical activity can soothe our physical responses and ground us in the present moment.

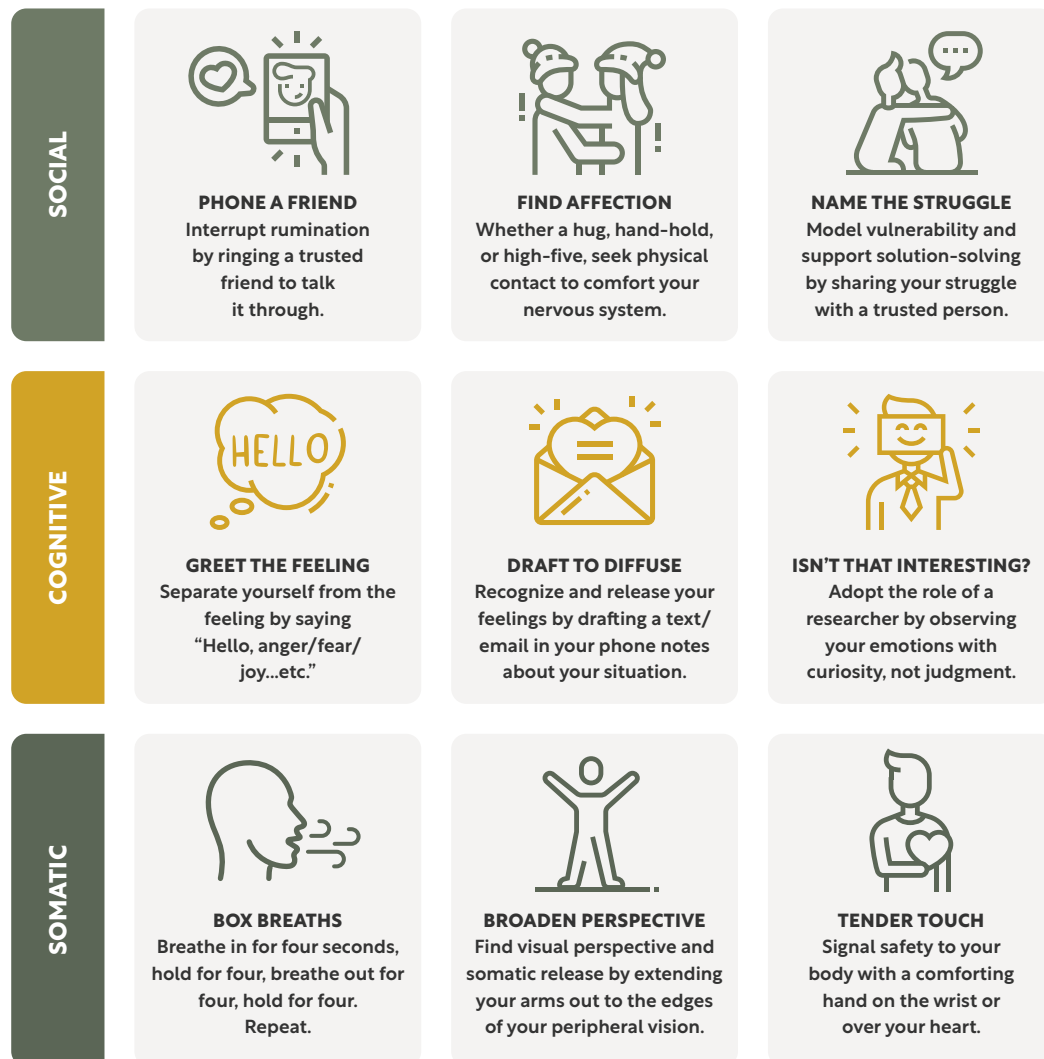
- ▶ *Example: Emily, a nurse, practices progressive muscle relaxation to unwind after her shifts. She systematically tenses and then relaxes different muscle groups in her body, starting from her toes and working up to her head. This helps her release physical tension and promotes a sense of relaxation.*

**Social Support:** Talking to a trusted friend or seeking professional counseling provides emotional stability and reassurance.

- ▶ *Example: David, a teacher, regularly meets with a close friend for coffee to talk about his day and share his thoughts and feelings. This social support helps him feel connected and emotionally supported, reducing feelings of isolation.*

## Evidence-Based Calming Strategies

The diagram below illustrates some immediately actionable, evidence-based strategies for calming our nervous systems.



## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Have you ever deliberately tried any of these techniques (or similar practices) to calm your nervous system before?

- ▶ Which of these techniques are you most curious to test out and why?

## Self-Compassion and Emotional Growth

As we navigate the wide variety and intensity of emotions we may experience, it is crucial to extend kindness and compassion to ourselves. We won't always get it right – sometimes, we will react impulsively to strong emotions, and that's OK. Each moment of reaction offers a learning opportunity, a chance to understand our triggers and refine our responses.

Dr. Brené Brown's wisdom serves as a guiding light: "We need to acknowledge our emotions and let them steer us toward actions that reflect our truest values and aspirations." By embracing our emotions as valuable data, we can navigate life's challenges with greater authenticity and purpose, transforming our emotional experiences into catalysts for growth and connection.

## Creating A Rooted Routine for Emotion

Having reframed emotions as positive, in that they provide vital, valuable information about our desires and needs in the moment, we are now going to create a Rooted Routine for Emotion.

### Choosing Your Habit

While you may create any Rooted Routine for Emotion you like (after all, the best habits are those we're most eager to experiment with), if you're unsure where to start, here are a few suggestions, based on our shared learning during this session. You may wish to form a habit around:

- ▶ Noticing your emotional sensations and using the Wheel of Emotions to help you name the emotion you're feeling at least once a day.
- ▶ Journaling for a minute or two each morning/evening about a particular emotion you've experienced.
- ▶ Cultivating positive emotions (such as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love) through one of the evidence-based suggestions in your workbook.
- ▶ Practicing a central nervous system calming technique (or techniques) each day, etc.

Remember, in order to overcome common behavior change derailers ("I don't really want to," "I'm not sure where to start," and "I don't think I can"), we must choose a behavior we truly want to do and shrink it until we feel at least 8/10 confident that we can do it each day for the next week.

Create your **Rooted Routine for Emotion**:

<b> GROUNDED BEGINNINGS</b>	<p>What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment "nurture" the start of your new habit?</p>	<p><i>I drink a cup of tea every morning.</i></p>
<b> NURTURING ACTION</b>	<p>What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?</p>	<p><i>When I finish my tea, I will take three slow, deep breaths.</i></p>



**THRIVING  
MOMENT**

Once you've completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small?  
What will you do to acknowledge your growth?  
This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.

*I'll say "Well done!"  
to myself quietly.*

**NOURISHING  
REFLECTION**

What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits.  
How might this habit help you in the future?

*I expect breathing  
will help me feel  
calmer and more  
focused throughout  
the day.*

## Rapid Reflection

- What was one surprising insight you had about the science of positive emotions today?

- What was the most useful piece of information you received today?

- ▶ Who might you share this information with to create a wellbeing ripple in your life?

## Homework

In this session, we learned about how to Name, Normalize, and Navigate our emotions. We learned that all emotions – whether comfortable or uncomfortable – are positive, in that they provide valuable data about our experience and help us to show up as our most authentic, aligned selves.

For this session's homework, you will be asked to:

- 1) Create and action a daily Rooted Routine for Emotion using the Rooted Routine Template.
- 2) Log your experiences in the Rooted Routines Logbook.
- 3) Run a Rapid Reflection on your Rooted Routine for Emotion experiment.

## Your Rooted Routine for Emotion Template

Identify the emotion behavior you'd like to try this week. For example,

- ▶ Using your Wheel of Emotions to help you notice your emotional sensations,
- ▶ Journaling about emotions,
- ▶ Cultivating positive emotional experiences,
- ▶ Practicing a central nervous system-calming technique, etc.

Using the list of example Rooted Routines in session 1 as inspiration (feel free to create your own, too), complete your own Rooted Routine Template below.

Commit to this behavior for at least the next week, making sure to note down your progress each day in the **Rooted Routines Logbook**, as well as any wins, wobbles, or burning questions.

<div> <div> GROUNDING BEGINNINGS </div> </div>		
<div> <div> NURTURING ACTION </div> </div>		
<div> <div> THRIVING MOMENT </div> </div>		
<div> <div> NOURISHING REFLECTION </div> </div>		

As you playfully experiment with a Rooted Routine, remember that the key to success lies less in achieving a “perfect” result and more in our ability to reflect on and reshape our efforts by asking: *What’s working well? Where do I notice challenges or resistance? What am I learning? Based on this, what will I try next?*

## Rooted Routines Logbook

How to Use the Rooted Routines Logbook

1. **Grounded Beginnings:** Identify an existing action or routine in your day that will naturally help you start your new wellbeing habit (e.g. Brushing your teeth).
2. **Nurturing Action:** Decide on a small, manageable action you can take right now to foster your wellbeing (e.g. Take a couple of deep breaths after brushing your teeth).

3. **Thriving Moment:** Reflect on how you will celebrate or acknowledge your success, no matter how small (e.g. Smile at yourself in the mirror).
4. **Nourishing Reflection:** Think about how completing this action will make you feel and how it supports your wellbeing (e.g. Feeling calm and present as you start your day).
5. **Notes:** Add any brief notes, thoughts, or insights you have while completing your habit.
6. **Completed:** At the end of each day, mark whether you completed your Rooted Routine with a checkmark (✓) for yes or leave it unchecked for no.

You can fill in the table for the upcoming week and track your progress each day. Good luck with building your new habit!

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

## Rooted Routine for Emotion Reflection Round

When it comes to playfully experimenting with your Rooted Routine behavior this week:

- ▶ What's working well?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?

# Session 4

ENGAGEMENT



## Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- ▶ Reflect on your current knowledge, skills, and behaviors regarding strengths
- ▶ Understand what a strength is and its benefits
- ▶ Explore the concept of flow and how to achieve it
- ▶ Learn how to balance your strengths to avoid overuse and underuse
- ▶ Practice strengths spotting in yourself and others
- ▶ Create a Rooted Routine to consistently use your strengths

In the last session, we explored the role that emotions play in shaping our wellbeing, exploring how identifying and mindfully responding to our emotions, rather than reacting mindlessly, can give us more choice and control over our emotional health.

In this session, we will explore how identifying and leveraging our strengths can enhance our wellbeing, performance, and relationships. We will also look at how to find flow in our activities, balance our strengths, and apply strengths in team settings.

Let's get started.

## Reflection Round

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*"What would happen if we studied what is right with people instead of what is wrong with them?"*

*- Donald Clifton*

Once upon a time, when we shared the plains, mountains, and jungles with predators and rival tribes, it was crucial for our survival to be hypervigilant to potential threats in our environment. Our ancestors who assumed the worst when they saw a shadow in the bushes were more likely to survive because they avoided dangers. This tendency to expect the worst helped them stay alive in a world where threats were constant and immediate.

This survival mechanism, known as negativity bias, was highly adaptive in times of hunting, gathering, and tribal warfare. However, in today's world, where our daily stressors are more likely about missing a train rather than missing a meal or a limb, this predisposition towards pessimism can actually hinder our ability to thrive.

The good news is, we can rewire our brains to be more positive by shifting our focus to what is good and strong in ourselves and others. This change in perspective can significantly improve our overall wellbeing, performance, and relationships.

So, before we dive into the science, let's take a moment to reflect on your recent experiences with recognizing and using your strengths.

When it comes to knowing and using your strengths in the past (at work and beyond):

- ▶ What has gone well?

- ▶ Where have you noticed challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What have you been learning?



- ▶ What might you try next?

## What Is A Strength?

The best way to understand strengths is to reflect on when and how they show up in our everyday lives. With that in mind, take a moment to think of a recent time at work/in life when you felt energized, interested, and truly capable.

- ▶ What was happening?

- ▶ What did you do?

- ▶ What was your impact?

## Defining A Strength

At some point, each of us has experienced what it feels like to use a strength – those things you’re good at and actually enjoy doing. These are the moments that you look forward to, get completely absorbed in, and that leave you feeling more confident, energized, and satisfied.

Your strengths may include:

**Character strengths:** These are positive personality traits like gratitude, perseverance, hope, and creativity. They represent how you like to work and are things you’ll do whether anyone pays you or recognizes you for them.

**Talents:** These are natural abilities, such as musical talent, spatial reasoning, or social skills. Talents are the skills you enjoy using and would love to get paid for.

A strength is a strength because it shows how your brain is wired to perform at its best. Over time, practicing these particular thoughts, feelings, and behaviors builds up pathways in your brain, making it easy, effective, and enjoyable to use them at work.

## Benefits Of Strengths

Using our strengths has many benefits:

- ▶ Higher levels of happiness and lower levels of depression.
- ▶ Increased collaboration, innovation, goal achievement, and job satisfaction.
- ▶ Enhanced coping skills and resilience, providing better tools to manage stress and bounce back from challenges.
- ▶ A stronger sense of purpose, improved physical health, and increased flow states.

By aligning tasks with what you are naturally good at, you experience more fulfillment and effectiveness in your work.

## Strengths Assessments

Below is a table summarizing the key information about the main strengths assessments on the market. Use this as a springboard for your own research into which strengths assessment tool might be right for you.

Tool	Best Context	Key Focuses	Cost
<b>VIA Character Strengths</b>	<b>Personal development and wellbeing</b> across various life domains (workplace, home life, personal growth)	Character strengths and virtues	Free for the basic version, paid reports available
<b>CliftonStrengths</b>	Workplace performance and personal development with a strong focus on <b>professional contexts</b>	Innate talents and performance strengths	Paid assessment, with various report options
<b>Strengths Profile</b>	Personal and professional development with a <b>balanced focus on both work and home</b> life	Balanced focus on realized and unrealized strengths, learned behaviors, and weaknesses	Paid assessment with various report options

## VIA Classification Of Character Strengths

In this program, we'll use the VIA Classification of Character Strengths to discover and develop your strengths. This tool is simple to use and offers free reports.

Scientists have identified 24 character strengths, grouped into 6 broad "Virtues": Wisdom, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance, and Transcendence.

By taking the VIA Survey, you can discover your unique strengths profile. Knowing and using your top strengths is key to being your best self.

Below is a summary of the 24 character strengths and their Virtues. We encourage you to take the test and learn more by Googling VIA Character Strengths.

Strength Category	Strength	Description
Wisdom	Creativity	Thinking of new ways to do things is a crucial part of who you are.
Wisdom	Curiosity	You like exploration and discovery.
Wisdom	Judgment	You think things through and examine them from all sides.
Wisdom	Love of Learning	You have a passion for mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge.
Wisdom	Perspective	People who know you consider you wise.
Courage	Bravery	You do not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain.
Courage	Honesty	You live your life in a genuine and authentic way.
Courage	Perseverance	You work hard to finish what you start.
Courage	Zest	You approach everything you do with excitement and energy.
Humanity	Kindness	You are kind and generous to others.
Humanity	Love	You value close relationships with others.
Humanity	Social Intelligence	You know how to fit into different social situations.
Justice	Fairness	One of your abiding principles is to treat all people fairly.
Justice	Leadership	You excel at encouraging a group to get things done.
Justice	Teamwork	You excel as a member of a group.
Temperance	Forgiveness	You forgive those who have done you wrong.

Strength Category	Strength	Description
Temperance	Humility	You do not seek the spotlight and others value your modesty.
Temperance	Prudence	You are a careful person.
Temperance	Self-Regulation	You are a disciplined person.
Transcendence	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	You notice and appreciate beauty and excellence in all domains of life.
Transcendence	Gratitude	You are aware of good things that happen and don't take them for granted.
Transcendence	Hope	You expect the best in the future and you work to achieve it.
Transcendence	Humor	Bringing smiles to other people is important to you.
Transcendence	Spirituality	Your beliefs shape your actions and are a source of comfort to you.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Which of these VIA Character Strengths would someone who knows and loves you consider to be in your top five strengths?

- ▶ Why might they identify these strengths?

## Identifying Your VIA Character Strengths

Thinking back to your example of when you were energized, interested, and capable; use the VIA Character Strengths to identify three strengths that you were drawing on.

- ▶ Which VIA Character Strengths might you have been drawing on in this example:

- ▶ How did you recognize these strengths?

- ▶ How frequently in a week do you use these strengths?

- ▶ What impact might this have on your wellbeing and performance?

## Strengths & Finding Flow

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ When was the last time you were so absorbed in a task that you lost track of time? What was happening?

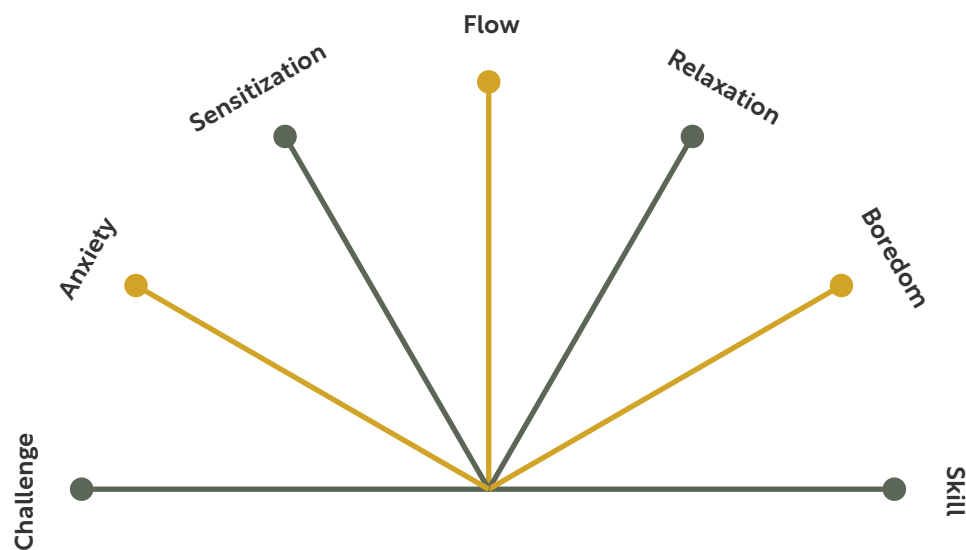
- ▶ How did you feel before, during, and after?

### Defining Flow

Flow is both a feeling and a state of being. Emotionally, flow is when you are so absorbed in an activity that you forget everything else and feel at your best, effortlessly using your strengths and skills. As a state, flow happens when what you're doing is challenging enough to match your skills perfectly, giving you a sense of control and enjoyment.

### The Flow Point

The flow point is when there's a perfect balance between how challenging an activity is and your skill level. If the challenge is too high and your skill is low, you might feel anxious. If the challenge is too low and your skill is high, you might feel bored. Flow occurs when both the challenge and your skills are high, leading to full engagement and enjoyment.



The diagram above depicts the different emotional states we may experience in response to the challenge-to-skill-level ratio. We see the flow point occur when the challenge and skill level are higher and equally matched.

## Fostering Flow

We can increase our chances of experiencing flow by optimizing four key elements: temporal, environmental, physical, and social.

### Temporal

**Definition:** When you choose to engage in tasks – time of day, week, or month.

**Examples:** Scheduling creative tasks during peak energy times; setting aside uninterrupted blocks of time.

### Rapid Reflection

- When can you fit flow into your week? What time of the day? How long for?



## Environmental

**Definition:** Your physical surroundings – sights, sounds, setup.

**Examples:** Creating a clutter-free space; using noise-canceling headphones to minimize distractions.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Where might you set yourself up for flow best? What surroundings support your focus? What sounds support your focus?

## Physical

**Definition:** How you support your body – eating, moving, sleeping, resting.

**Examples:** Eating brain-healthy snacks to get or stay energized; taking short walks to re-energize.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ How can you eat, move, sleep, and rest to support flow? How much? How often?

## Social

**Definition:** Whether you work best alone or with others.

**Examples:** Collaborating with someone who inspires you; working alone in a quiet space.

## Rapid Reflection

- Who do you go into flow with? When do you flow best solo? What sort of tasks are best done in shared flow vs. solo flow?

## Your Fostering Flow Toolkit

Here are some strategies to help cultivate flow in each of the four elements. Read through them and think about which ones you may have already used, even without realizing it, to help you focus better on tasks. Circle or put an 'X' next to the ones you might like to try.

Temporal	Environmental	Physical	Social
<b>Time Blocking</b> Schedule uninterrupted periods for focused tasks, ideally lasting 90–120 minutes.	<b>Do Not Disturb</b> Find a setting free from interruptions and noise to enhance focus.	<b>Brain Food</b> Prioritize brain-boosting foods, including complex carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats to sustain energy levels.	<b>Solo Flow Zone</b> Opt for solitude when undertaking more creative or demanding tasks to minimize distractions and achieve deeper concentration.
<b>Optimal Work Windows</b> Identify and work during your peak productivity hours, based on whether you're more of a morning lark or night owl.	<b>Minimalist Magic</b> Keep your workspace uncluttered to reduce distractions and maintain a clear mind.	<b>More Joyful Movement</b> Integrate frequent movement (e.g., standing, stretching, taking stairs, dog walks, dance breaks, etc.) into your day to boost cognitive function and reduce stress.	<b>Collaborative Flow</b> Identify the tasks that benefit most from shared creative input and energy (like strategy, solution-solving, or brainstorming) and set aside time for these flow zones.

Temporal	Environmental	Physical	Social
<b>Timer Tests</b> Try different timers/routines (e.g., Pomodoro method, 50 min. on, 10 min. off, etc.) to identify the kinds of stints that best support flow for you.	<b>Sound Support</b> Use background music, white noise, or silence based on what helps you concentrate best.	<b>Sleep Scheduling</b> Know and flow with your natural circadian rhythm to optimize brain and body functioning.	<b>Nurture Neurodiversity</b> Recognize and accommodate individual differences in sensory preferences and social needs (e.g., quiet spaces for introverts, collaborative areas for extroverts).
<b>Powerful Pauses</b> Instead of doom scrolling, recharge through gentle movement, nature, a mood-boosting video, or micro-moments of connection.	<b>Nestle Into Nature</b> Incorporate natural light and plants in your space to improve mood and focus.	<b>Body Breaks</b> Practice breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or mindfulness to calm your nervous system and enhance focus.	<b>Scheduled Social Breaks</b> Boost your social battery by either taking time to reconnect with yourself (through a walk, deep breaths, music), or to others through a quick chat or social break.

## Balancing Our Strengths

### Overplayed And Underplayed Strengths

Think about a time when you struggled with a task. Maybe no matter how hard you tried, you couldn't get the result you wanted. Perhaps you felt overwhelmed or just couldn't be your best self.

When using our strengths, it turns out that you can have too much (or too little) of a good thing. It's not just about using our strengths often; it's about using them in the right way and in the right amount.

## Overplayed Strengths

Sometimes, using a strength too much can be harmful. For example, if someone is good at leading but becomes too controlling, it can lead to problems like stress and poor relationships.

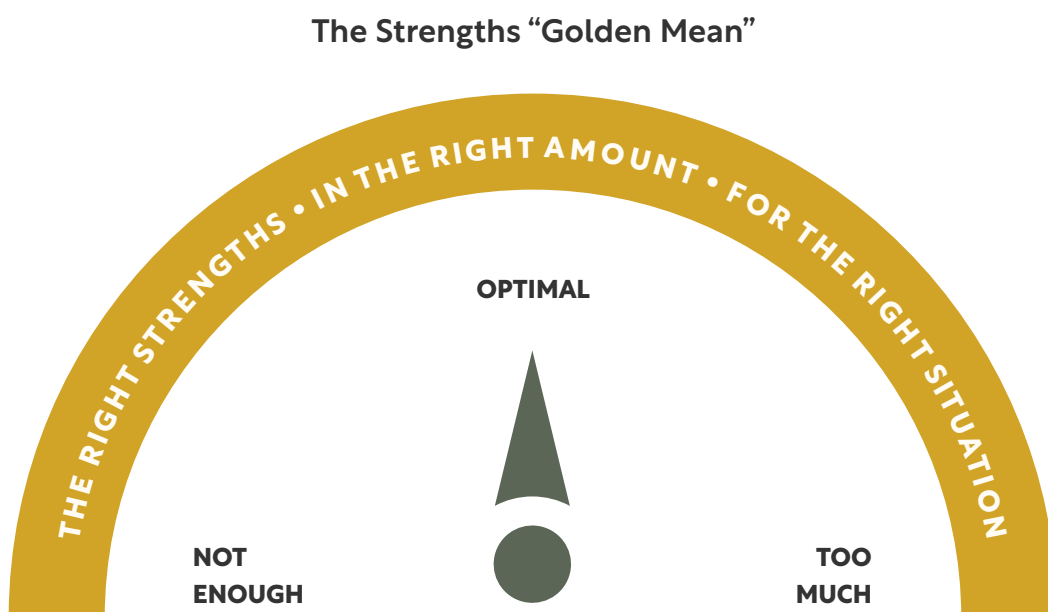
**Example:** A manager who micromanages their team might cause low morale and high turnover.

## Underplayed Strengths

Not using a strength enough can also be a problem. For example, a creative person in a routine job might feel bored and frustrated.

**Example:** An employee with great ideas might not share them if they feel discouraged, missing chances to contribute and grow.

## The Golden Mean



Much of positive psychology is rooted in Ancient Greek philosophy. Aristotle’s concept of the golden mean suggests that virtue lies in finding a balance between too much and too little of a trait. Here are some examples of how the golden mean applies to strengths:

**Bravery:** Too little bravery is cowardice; too much bravery is recklessness. The balance is having courage when needed without being foolhardy.

**Perseverance:** Too little perseverance is giving up easily; too much is stubbornness. The balance is sticking with a task but knowing when to stop.

**Zest:** Too little zest is laziness; too much is hyperactivity. The balance is having energy and enthusiasm without being overactive.

**Hope:** Too little hope is pessimism; too much is naivety. The balance is being optimistic but realistic.

**Love:** Too little love is indifference; too much is obsession. The balance is caring deeply without being overly attached.

**Social Intelligence:** Too little is insensitivity; too much is manipulation. The balance is understanding and relating to others without using them.

Finding this balance, or golden mean, helps us use our strengths effectively without letting them become weaknesses. By recognizing when we are overusing or underusing our strengths, we can adjust our behavior to be more effective and maintain better relationships.

## The Golden Mean And VIA Character Strengths

The table below applies the golden mean principle to each of the 24 VIA Character Strengths, showing how each strength can become a deficiency or an excess when not balanced properly:

Deficiency	VIA Character Strength	Excess
Cowardice	Bravery	Recklessness
Negligence	Perseverance	Obstinacy
Laziness	Zest	Hyperactivity
Pessimism	Hope	Naïveté
Indifference	Love	Obsession

Deficiency	VIA Character Strength	Excess
Insensitivity	Social Intelligence	Manipulativeness
Foolishness	Wisdom	Pedantry
Aimlessness	Perspective	Dogmatism
Cynicism	Curiosity	Nosiness
Rigidity	Creativity	Flightiness (Fantasy)
Apathy	Appreciation of Beauty	Sensationalism
Ungratefulness	Gratitude	Ingratitude
Disrespect	Humility	Self-deprecation
Injustice	Fairness	Over-tolerance
Impulsiveness	Prudence	Over-cautiousness
Unreliability	Honesty	Brutal Honesty
Cruelty	Kindness	Soft-heartedness
Rudeness	Forgiveness	Permissiveness
Discontent	Contentment	Complacency
Chaos	Self-Regulation	Rigidity
Aimlessness	Purpose	Single-mindedness
Insubordination	Leadership	Dictatorship
Disrespect	Teamwork	Conformity
Misery	Humor	Frivolity

## Balancing Strengths

- ▶ Think about an obstacle you have been struggling with recently.

- ▶ What strengths might have been overplayed or underplayed in that moment?

- ▶ What factors influenced your use of strengths?

- ▶ How could you balance these strengths better to achieve your goal?

## Teaming With Strengths

While discovering and using our own strengths can improve our engagement, performance, and enjoyment, it becomes more effective, energizing and sustainable when we're supported by the people and culture around us.

### Strengths Spotting

One simple way to start using a strengths-based approach is through strengths spotting. This means recognizing and appreciating strengths in ourselves and others.

At the team and community or organization levels, strengths spotting helps build better relationships, trust, and a culture of appreciation. It's a practical way to create a positive work environment and improve team dynamics.

Recognizing and using our strengths increases self-awareness, performance, and wellbeing. People who know and use their strengths feel more energetic, engaged, and resilient. Thinking about how our strengths affect others can also give us a greater sense of purpose and connection, making our social environment more positive.

### Individual Strengths Spotting

Use the step-by-step process below to help you spot your own strengths in your day-to-day life.

#### Select The Moment

Think of a recent task or situation where you did well. Reflect on what made this experience positive and effective.

**Example 1:** "I recently led a successful team meeting where we resolved several ongoing issues."

**Example 2:** "I organized a family gathering that went smoothly, and everyone enjoyed themselves."

#### Pick The Strength

Identify which strengths you used during this time. Refer to the VIA Character Strengths list if needed.



**Example 1:** “During the meeting, I used my strengths in leadership and communication.”

**Example 2:** “While organizing the family gathering, I used my strengths in planning and kindness.”

## Observe The Outcomes

Consider the positive results your strengths brought to this situation.

**Example 1:** “My leadership and communication skills helped the team feel heard and valued, leading to a productive and collaborative meeting.”

**Example 2:** “My planning and kindness made everyone feel welcomed and comfortable, creating a warm and enjoyable family gathering.”

## Test Your Perceptions

Ask a trusted person to check your findings. You can ask questions like, “What strengths do you see in me?” or “I’ve noted my strength of leadership in this activity. Does that ring true for you?”

**Examples:**

**Work:** “I asked my manager if they noticed my leadership and communication strengths during the meeting, and they confirmed that these were evident and impactful.”

**Personal:** “I asked my partner if they saw my planning and kindness during the family gathering, and they agreed that it made everyone feel welcomed and relaxed.”

By regularly practicing strengths spotting, you can better understand and use your strengths to improve your work and relationships.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Select a recent moment where you performed well.

- ▶ **Pick** the strengths used in that moment.

- ▶ **Observe** (note down) the positive outcomes from using these strengths.

- ▶ **Test** the reality of your responses by asking for the input from a trusted friend/family member/colleague or by referring to your VIA Character Strengths Survey. Are these a strength you know and use regularly? Or something new you're leaning into? Write any reflections below.

## Strengths Spotting In Others

Engaging in strengths spotting within your work or life involves intentional observation and thoughtful feedback. Follow these steps to effectively identify and reflect on the strengths of those around you:

## Set The Intention

Decide whether to focus on a particular person, period of time, or specific strength.

**Example 1:** “This week, I will focus on observing Jane during our project meetings to identify her strengths in leadership and collaboration.”

**Example 2:** “I’ll pay attention to how my friend handles stressful situations to recognize their strength in resilience and problem-solving.”

## Perceive The Signs

Observe how individuals show their strengths through behavior and actions.

**Example 1:** “During the meeting, I noticed Jane effectively coordinated tasks and motivated the team, showing her leadership skills. Her ability to listen and incorporate everyone’s ideas highlighted her collaboration strength.”

**Example 2:** “While spending time together, I noticed how my friend stayed calm during a stressful situation and helped everyone feel at ease. Her ability to listen and offer thoughtful advice showed her strength in empathy and problem-solving.”

## Outcome-Based Feedback

Share the observed strengths and their impact on others.

**Example 1:** “Jane, I observed your leadership and collaboration skills during our meeting yesterday. Your coordination of tasks and motivational approach boosted team morale and productivity. Everyone felt heard and valued, which led to a more effective discussion.”

**Example 2:** “I noticed how you handled that stressful situation the other day. Your calm presence and ability to listen really helped everyone feel at ease. Your thoughtful advice made a big impact, helping others feel supported and confident moving forward. It really showcased your strength in empathy and problem-solving.”

## Test Your Perceptions

Confirm with the individual if they agree with your observations.

**Example 1:** “Jane, do you feel that your leadership and collaboration were strong during the meeting? How did you perceive your role, and do these strengths resonate with you?”

**Example 2:** “Hey, do you feel that you stayed calm and helped others feel at ease during that stressful situation? How did you perceive your role in that moment, and do you think your strength in empathy and problem-solving was evident?”

**Note:** Strengths spotting is an ongoing process. To refine and enhance its impact, encourage open dialogue in group settings and individual feedback sessions. This helps people practice giving and receiving strengths-based praise.

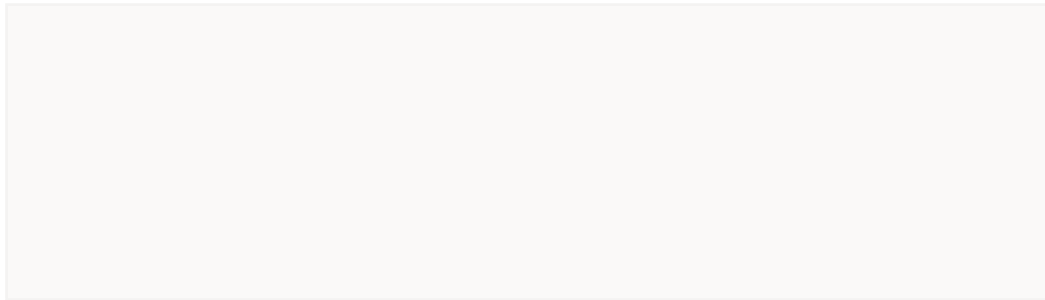
Thinking back to the exercise we did earlier, spotting the strengths of the partner, can you SPOT their strengths?

- ▶ **Set your intention** (notice the strength in their story):

- ▶ **Perceive** (and share) the signs of their strengths (their body language, voice, etc.)

- ▶ **Outcomes/impact** they created with their strengths:

- ▶ **Test your perceptions (do they agree?)**



## **Strengths Vs. Deficit-Based Feedback**

Strengths spotting is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to build a strengths-based culture. But what about those aspects of ourselves or our lives that inevitably require improvement? Feedback is essential for personal and professional growth, enhancing performance, fostering development, and boosting morale.

Effective feedback can determine whether we strive for success or feel stuck. Positive, well-delivered feedback helps individuals feel valued and part of a larger purpose by recognizing their unique skills and contributions. The way feedback is given – focusing on strengths or weaknesses – greatly affects the wellbeing and performance of individuals, teams, and organizations.

### **Strengths-Based Feedback**

Strengths-based feedback focuses on an individual's positive attributes and how to use them for future success. It involves discussing how a person's unique strengths can improve their performance and wellbeing. For example, a manager might praise someone's fairness in a meeting and suggest ways to apply that strength to prioritize self-care.

This approach boosts self-esteem and promotes a growth mindset, making individuals more open to challenges and learning opportunities. Organizations that use strengths-based feedback often see improvements in job satisfaction, retention rates, and overall performance.

### **Deficit-Based Feedback**

Deficit-based feedback focuses on weaknesses and mistakes, telling individuals what to stop or change. This method can decrease morale, increase stress, and neglect individual

strengths. For example, consistently criticizing your friend or family member for not meeting expectations without acknowledging their effort or circumstances can make them feel undervalued and demotivated (instead of exploring how they might leverage their strengths, like resilience or problem-solving, to overcome challenges and improve the situation).

## The Benefits of Strengths-Based Feedback

To illustrate the benefits of strengths-based feedback, we will draw on a workplace example. Research has shown that top-performing teams give much more positive, strengths-focused feedback to their peers compared to average teams. In contrast, low-performing teams tend to give more negative feedback. While professionalism is important, we all need to feel respected, valued, and appreciated. Cultures that focus on strengths-based feedback offer several benefits.

### Individual (Me) Level

**Increased Motivation and Engagement:** Recognizing and valuing unique contributions boosts individual motivation and engagement.

**Higher Job Satisfaction:** Employees feel more satisfied with their jobs when their strengths are acknowledged and utilized.

**Enhanced Self-Esteem And Confidence:** Positive reinforcement of strengths increases self-esteem and confidence, encouraging employees to take on new challenges.

**Encouragement Of A Growth Mindset:** Specific feedback on strengths and efforts promotes a growth mindset, making employees more open to learning and development.

### Team (We) Level

**Improved Team Dynamics:** Positive feedback fosters a supportive and collaborative team environment, enhancing team dynamics.

**Increased Positive Interactions:** High-performing teams that use strengths-based feedback tend to have more positive interactions, leading to better overall team performance.

**Enhanced Team Cohesion:** Recognizing individual strengths within a team contributes to a sense of belonging and cohesion among team members.

## Organizational (Us) Level

**Higher Retention Rates:** Organizations that focus on strengths-based feedback see higher retention rates as employees feel valued and satisfied with their work.

**Improved Organizational Culture:** Strengths-based feedback contributes to a positive organizational culture where employees feel respected and appreciated.

**Better Performance Outcomes:** Organizations that emphasize strengths see better performance outcomes, as employees are more motivated and engaged in their roles.

By focusing on strengths, we create a positive and supportive environment that helps individuals, teams, and organizations thrive.

## Flipping The Script

Below are some examples of common deficit-based feedback one might receive, and how it can be flipped to focus and build upon an individual's strengths instead:

Deficit-Based Feedback Example	Strengths-Based Feedback Example	Changes Made
"You missed the deadline again. You need to manage your time better."	"I noticed you were really focused on getting the details right for the project. How can we set smaller milestones to help manage the timeline while keeping your attention to detail?"	Emphasizes attention to detail and suggests a collaborative strategy for improvement.
"You always forget to help with the chores. You need to be more responsible."	"I noticed how focused you were on making sure everything was tidy and organized. How can we create a schedule to help share the chores more effectively while still keeping that attention to detail?"	Highlights a positive trait (focus on detail) and suggests a collaborative approach to improving task management.
"Your presentation was confusing and lacked focus."	"Your creativity in the presentation was evident. What are some ways we could structure your ideas more clearly next time to enhance your message?"	Highlights creativity and invites a collaborative discussion on improvement.

Deficit-Based Feedback Example	Strengths-Based Feedback Example	Changes Made
"You didn't meet your sales target this quarter. What's going wrong?"	"I've seen your ability to connect with clients shine through. How can we leverage that strength to meet your sales targets next quarter?"	Recognizes ability to connect with clients and seeks constructive, collaborative solutions.
"You don't help enough around the house. You need to contribute more."	"I saw how you helped with organizing the living room and setting up dinner last night. How can we make sure we're both contributing in ways that play to our strengths and help out around the house?"	Recognizes the positive contribution (helping with the living room and dinner) and frames the conversation around collaboration and strengths-based sharing of responsibilities.
"Your reports are full of errors. You need to be more careful."	"Your analytical skills are strong, and I'd love to see how you can apply that same precision to reviewing your reports for accuracy. What strategies can we implement to help with this?"	Acknowledges analytical skills and guides towards accuracy with a collaborative approach.
"You're always procrastinating and running out of time. You need to start planning better."	"I noticed how focused you were when you finally started your homework, and you managed to get through it. How can we break down your assignments into smaller parts, so it's easier to stay on track without feeling rushed?"	Recognizes the teen's ability to focus once they start and suggests a strategy to make time management easier by breaking down tasks into smaller chunks.
"You talk too much in meetings and don't let others speak."	"Your enthusiasm and ideas are valuable. How about we focus on facilitating the conversation to ensure everyone gets a chance to contribute? What do you think could help with this?"	Values enthusiasm and provides direction for inclusive participation with a collaborative tone.



## Your Turn

Consider a piece of deficit-based feedback you’ve either given or received in the past. How might you “flip the script” to transform this into strengths-based feedback?

Deficit-Based Feedback Example	Strengths-Based Feedback Example	Changes Made

## Creating A Rooted Routine for Strengths

Having explored the science of strengths, including: ways to foster flow; balancing our strengths; spotting strengths in ourselves and strengths-based feedback, it’s time to apply our learning by creating our Rooted Routine for Strengths.

### Choosing Your Habit

While you may create any Rooted Routine for Strengths you like (after all, the best habits are those we’re most eager to experiment with), if you’re unsure where to start, here are a few suggestions based on our shared learning during this session. You may wish to form a habit around:

- ▶ Identifying and using a strength each day this week at work/home.
- ▶ Selecting a small behavior to experiment with from The Fostering Flow Toolkit.
- ▶ Practice spotting strengths in yourself and/or others.
- ▶ Practice giving strengths-based feedback.
- ▶ Or any other ideas you have!

Remember, in order to overcome common behavior change derailers (“I don’t really want to,” “I’m not sure where to start,” and “I don’t think I can”), we must choose a behavior we truly want to do and shrink it until we feel at least 8/10 confident that we can do it each day for the next week.

Now, create your Rooted Routine for Strengths. For example:

<b>GROUNDING BEGINNINGS</b>	What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment “nurture” the start of your new habit?	<i>I check my calendar every morning.</i>
<b>NURTURING ACTION</b>	What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?	<i>While checking my schedule, I’ll identify one meeting or task where I can use my strength of curiosity, like asking a question to learn something new.</i>
<b>THRIVING MOMENT</b>	Once you’ve completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small? What will you do to acknowledge your growth? This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.	<i>I’ll take a moment to smile, feeling excited about exploring new ideas.</i>
<b>NOURISHING REFLECTION</b>	What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits. How might this habit help you in the future?	<i>I expect using my curiosity will help me feel more engaged and make the day more interesting.</i>

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ What was one surprising insight you had about the science of strengths today?

- ▶ What was the most useful piece of information you received today?

- ▶ Who might you share this information with to create a wellbeing ripple in your life?

## Homework

In this session we explored the science of strengths, including: ways to foster flow; balancing our strengths; spotting strengths in ourselves and strengths-based feedback.

For this session's homework, you will be asked to:

- 1) Create and action a daily Rooted Routine for Strengths using the Rooted Routine Template.
- 2) Log your experiences in the Rooted Routines Logbook.
- 3) Run a Reflection Round on your Rooted Routine for Strengths experiment.

## Your Rooted Routine for Strengths Template

Identify the behavior you'd like to try this week.

Using the list of example Rooted Routines in session 1 as inspiration (feel free to create your own, too), complete your own Rooted Routine Template below.

Commit to this behavior for at least the next week, making sure to note down your progress each day in the **Rooted Routines Logbook**, as well as any wins, wobbles, or burning questions.

GROUNDING BEGINNINGS		
NURTURING ACTION		
THRIVING MOMENT		
NOURISHING REFLECTION		

As you playfully experiment with a Rooted Routine remember that the key to success lies less in achieving a “perfect” result and more in our ability to reflect on and reshape our efforts by asking: What’s working well? Where do I notice challenges or resistance? What am I learning? Based on this, what will I try next?

## Rooted Routines Logbook

How to Use the Rooted Routines Logbook

1. **Grounded Beginnings:** Identify an existing action or routine in your day that will naturally help you start your new wellbeing habit (e.g. Brushing your teeth).
2. **Nurturing Action:** Decide on a small, manageable action you can take right now to foster your wellbeing (e.g. Take a couple of deep breaths after brushing your teeth).
3. **Thriving Moment:** Reflect on how you will celebrate or acknowledge your success, no matter how small (e.g. Smile at yourself in the mirror).
4. **Nourishing Reflection:** Think about how completing this action will make you feel and how it supports your wellbeing (e.g. Feeling calm and present as you start your day).
5. **Notes:** Add any brief notes, thoughts, or insights you have while completing your habit.
6. **Completed:** At the end of each day, mark whether you completed your Rooted Routine with a checkmark (✓) for yes or leave it unchecked for no.

You can fill in the table for the upcoming week and track your progress each day. Good luck with building your new habit!

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

## Rooted Routine for Strengths Reflection Round

When it has come to playfully experimenting with your Rooted Routine behavior this week:

- ▶ What's working well?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?

# Session 5

## RELATIONSHIPS





## Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- ▶ Reflect on the importance of relationships in your life
- ▶ Understand the benefits of positive relationships and high-quality connections
- ▶ Identify common barriers to forming strong relationships and learn how to overcome them
- ▶ Explore the concept of psychological safety in relationships
- ▶ Develop practical strategies to strengthen your relationships, both personally and professionally

In the last session (Engagement), we explored how identifying and leveraging our strengths can enhance our wellbeing, performance, and relationships. We discussed the concept of flow and how achieving a balance between challenge and skill can lead to a state of full engagement. We also looked at the importance of using our strengths wisely – avoiding the pitfalls of overplaying or underplaying them – and practiced strengths spotting in ourselves and others.

In this session, we turn our focus to the R in the PERMAH model – Relationships. We will dive into the profound impact that positive relationships have on our overall wellbeing. We'll explore the concept of high-quality connections (HQCs), learn about common barriers that hinder deep connections, and discuss the role of psychological safety in fostering trust and openness. By the end of this session, you'll have practical strategies to apply in your personal and professional relationships to build and maintain strong, supportive connections.

Let's get started.

## Reflection Round

Take a few minutes to reflect on your recent experiences with relationships:

- ▶ What has gone well in your relationships over the past few weeks?

- ▶ Where have you encountered challenges in connecting with others?

- ▶ What are you learning about yourself through these interactions?

- ▶ What changes or improvements would you like to make in your relationships?

## Why Connection Matters

### Rapid Reflection

Consider where you are in your life right now. Consider your housing, health, hobbies, education, career, personal development, and treasured memories.

- ▶ Who are the people that helped you get here?

- ▶ How would life be different without those connections?

## Wells of Wellbeing

Why do some relationships lift us up while others seem to drain our energy? Research shows that the quality of our relationships is one of the most important factors in determining our overall happiness and health. Over 75 years of studies have shown that people who have strong, supportive relationships are not only happier but also healthier and live longer lives. This shows just how powerful positive relationships can be in our lives.

In fact, the research found that close relationships – more than money or fame – are what keep people happy throughout their lives. People who stay connected to family, friends, and their community tend to be happier, healthier, and live longer than those who are more isolated. On the other hand, loneliness can be harmful – people who are isolated are more likely to experience health problems earlier, have a decline in brain function sooner, and live shorter lives. This tells us that investing time and effort into our relationships isn't just a nice thing to do; it's essential for our long-term wellbeing.

## The Benefits Of Positive Relationships

Here are 10 ways positive relationships can benefit us in different areas of our lives, whether in friendships, at work, in romantic partnerships, or with family:

1. **Enhanced Emotional Wellbeing:** Positive relationships offer emotional support, help reduce stress, and increase overall life satisfaction by making us feel like we belong and are secure.
2. **Improved Physical Health:** Being involved in positive relationships is linked to better physical health, including lower blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease, and a stronger immune system.
3. **Increased Longevity:** Strong social connections are associated with living longer. Good relationships can protect against unhealthy behaviors and encourage healthier lifestyles.
4. **Better Cognitive Functioning:** Positive relationships help keep our minds sharp, improving memory and mental clarity, especially as we age.
5. **Greater Resilience:** People with strong, positive relationships are better at handling tough times. These relationships provide support that helps us cope with and recover from stress.
6. **Higher Levels Of Happiness:** Positive relationships are one of the biggest factors in how happy and satisfied we are with life. Feeling connected and supported boosts our wellbeing.
7. **Improved Workplace Performance:** In the workplace, positive relationships lead to higher job satisfaction, better teamwork, and increased productivity. Employees are more engaged and motivated when they feel connected to their coworkers.
8. **Better Conflict Resolution:** Positive relationships help with communication and understanding, which are key to resolving conflicts effectively. People in these relationships are more likely to work through disagreements in a constructive way.

9. **Support For Personal Growth:** Positive relationships encourage us to grow by providing a safe space where we can express ourselves, try new things, and reach our potential.
10. **Stronger Family Bonds:** In families, positive relationships create a sense of belonging and support, which are important for a stable and nurturing environment. These strong bonds are crucial for the healthy development of children and the wellbeing of all family members.

## High-Quality Connections

### What Is An HQC?

We all know that our relationships can greatly impact our wellbeing and performance, both from research and our own experiences. But in today's busy world, especially with more people working remotely, how can we build these important connections? One approach suggested by researchers like Jane Dutton is to focus on creating more "high-quality connections" (HQCs).

HQCs are short, positive interactions that make us feel energized, valued, and that have a sense of mutual effort and enthusiasm. Unlike deep, long-term relationships, HQCs can happen in brief moments, like a positive chat with a colleague or a meaningful conversation with someone you just met.

### The Benefits Of HQCs

These small connections might seem minor, but they can have a big impact on our wellbeing. HQCs can help us be more emotionally resilient, lower our stress, and even improve our work performance. In our fast-paced world, where building deep connections can be challenging, focusing on HQCs is a practical way to feel more connected and boost our happiness.

HQCs are especially important because they foster a sense of community and emotional support, even in places where close relationships aren't common, like the workplace. These connections are built on trust, openness, and a willingness to engage with others in a meaningful way. They are also reciprocal, meaning that both people benefit from the interaction. This mutual benefit helps to build trust and respect, which is crucial in professional settings where teamwork and collaboration are key. By making these good connections, we can create a friendlier and more productive environment.

## What Does A High-Quality Connection Look Like?

High-quality connections are often marked by mutual trust and positive feelings, even in brief interactions. Here are some examples you might recognize:

- ▶ A colleague listens to your ideas during a meeting, giving thoughtful feedback that makes you feel heard and appreciated.
- ▶ A friend remembers something small but important about your life and checks in on you during a tough time.
- ▶ A mentor has a conversation with you that both challenges you to grow and supports your efforts.
- ▶ You share a moment of laughter with a coworker, which lightens the mood and strengthens your bond.
- ▶ A stranger gives you a smile or a compliment, creating a moment of genuine connection that leaves both of you feeling uplifted.

## Your HQC Toolkit

Now that we know the benefits of high-quality connections and how to spot them, it's time to get practical. Below is a toolkit with simple, everyday actions you can take to start cultivating HQCs, even in a busy world.

### Dare To Share

Be open and vulnerable in your interactions by sharing something personal about yourself – whether it's a recent challenge, a lesson you've learned, or a small success. When you dare to share, you invite others to connect with you on a deeper level, which can help build trust and mutual respect.

### Listen To Learn

Practice active listening in your conversations, focusing not just on the words being spoken but also on the feelings and intentions behind them. Listening deeply and empathetically shows that you value the other person's perspective, which is key to creating energizing and supportive connections. Make it a habit to listen with the goal of learning something new about the other person.

## **Ask Appreciatively**

When asking questions, frame them in a way that highlights the other person's strengths or positive experiences. For example, you could ask, "What's a recent success you're proud of?" or "What do you enjoy most about your work?" These types of questions encourage others to share their positive experiences, fostering a sense of appreciation and connection.

## **Spot Strengths**

Make it a regular practice to identify and acknowledge the strengths you see in others, whether they're colleagues, friends, or family members. For instance, you might say, "I noticed how patient you were in that meeting; it really helped keep things on track," or "Your creativity really shines in this project." Recognizing and affirming strengths in others not only boosts their confidence but also strengthens your connection with them.

## **Seek Out Strangers**

Make an effort to initiate brief, positive interactions with people you don't know well – whether it's a colleague you don't often speak to or someone you pass by regularly. Even small, positive exchanges with strangers can contribute to a sense of belonging and wellbeing. A simple "Good morning!" or a compliment can create a moment of connection that leaves both parties feeling uplifted.

## **Ask For Help**

Don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it, whether it's advice, a favor, or just someone to listen. Asking for help not only provides you with the support you need but also strengthens your relationships by giving others the opportunity to contribute and feel valued. This can deepen trust and build a sense of reciprocity in your connections.

## **Five-Minute Favors**

Offer to do small, unsolicited favors for others that take five minutes or less, such as making an introduction, sharing a helpful resource, or providing quick feedback. These small acts of kindness can significantly enhance relationships and build goodwill, contributing to a culture of mutual support and collaboration.

## Keep It Curious

Approach conversations with genuine curiosity, especially when discussing differing opinions or perspectives. Curiosity helps bridge gaps in understanding and reduces conflict. Instead of assuming you know what the other person thinks, ask open-ended questions like, “What led you to that conclusion?” or “Can you tell me more about your perspective on this?”

## Celebrate Successes

Take the time to celebrate others’ successes, whether big or small. How we respond to good news is critical for building strong relationships. When someone shares a success with you, respond enthusiastically, ask for details, and express your genuine happiness for them. This not only strengthens the connection but also reinforces a positive and supportive relationship.

## What Is An HQC Question?

One of the best and easiest ways to create high-quality connections is by asking powerful, appreciative questions. These questions look for the good, the possible, and the meaningful aspects of life. They help us see each other as real people with rich internal worlds, rather than just another name on a list. Here are some examples of HQC questions:

- ▶ What’s something you’re passionate about and why?
- ▶ What’s a simple pleasure that brings you joy?
- ▶ If you could make one small change in the world, what would it be?
- ▶ Who has been a mentor in your life and what did they teach you?
- ▶ Who or what are you most grateful for in this moment?
- ▶ What personal accomplishment are you most proud of and why?
- ▶ What’s something you’ve learned recently that excited you?
- ▶ If you could spend the day doing anything, what would it be?
- ▶ What’s the best piece of advice you’ve received?

We encourage you to try out some of these questions in your life and see how they help you connect with others more deeply.



## Common Barriers To Connection

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ On a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (ideal), how would you rate the quality of your relationships?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(Poor)					(Ideal)				

- ▶ What about at work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(Poor)					(Ideal)				

- ▶ Why do you think that is? (There are no right or wrong answers. Just be curious about the factors that may contribute to your successes and struggles when it comes to relationships at home and work.)

### The Imperfection Of Perception Bias

Why do misunderstandings often happen in our relationships? The writer Anaïs Nin once said, “We don’t see the world as it is; we see it as we are.” This means that we tend to view things through the lens of our own experiences, beliefs, and feelings. This is called perception bias. This bias can be a major barrier to connecting with others because it can cause us to misunderstand their intentions or fail to see things from their perspective.

In our daily interactions, perception bias might show up as defensiveness or miscommunication. For example, you might think a colleague's short email means they're unhappy with your work, when in reality, they were just in a hurry. We often believe we can read other people's minds, but this is rarely accurate and can lead to unnecessary conflicts and strained relationships.

To overcome perception bias, it's important to make an effort to step outside your own viewpoint and consider how others might see things differently. This can be tough, especially when emotions are high, but practicing empathy and truly listening to others can help break down these barriers and create better understanding and connection. Even small efforts to see things from another person's perspective can make a big difference in how well we connect and communicate.

## **Judgment Vs. Curiosity**

Building on the idea of perception bias, another big barrier to connection is our tendency to judge others quickly, often based on incomplete information or assumptions. Instead of jumping to conclusions, it's helpful to choose curiosity over judgment in our interactions. This means giving others the benefit of the doubt and assuming they're doing the best they can with what they have.

When you shift from judgment to curiosity, you approach situations with empathy and understanding instead of defensiveness or blame. For example, if a colleague misses a deadline, instead of thinking they're careless or irresponsible, you could ask yourself, "What challenges might they be facing that I don't know about?" This change in perspective can transform your relationships, leading to deeper connections and better collaboration.

## **Assuming The Best**

When you assume the best in others, you create more compassionate and meaningful interactions. This approach reduces the chances of conflict and fosters a sense of psychological safety, where people feel understood and valued. For example, rather than assuming someone is being difficult, you might consider what struggles they could be going through that aren't immediately obvious.

Choosing curiosity over judgment also involves believing that everyone is trying their best (even if it doesn't seem like it). We should be kind to others because we don't always know the challenges or limitations they're experiencing. Acting this way makes

it easier for people to be honest about their feelings and trust each other more. This doesn't mean we ignore problems or avoid difficult conversations. Instead, we try to understand others with an open mind rather than just criticizing them

## Shifting From Judgment To Curiosity

To help make this shift from judgment to curiosity, you can use tools and practices that encourage empathy and a more generous view of others' actions. One effective approach is to consciously replace judgmental thoughts with curious, kind ones. For example, instead of thinking "They're being difficult," try asking yourself, "I wonder what they're going through?" Or instead of reacting with "They should know better," consider, "How can I support them in this situation?"

To help you start swapping judgmental behaviors for more generous ones, we've created the Judgment Vs. Curiosity Toolkit.

## Judgment Vs. Curiosity Toolkit

To help you start swapping judgmental behaviors for more generous ones, we've created the Judgment Vs. Curiosity Toolkit. Identify the judgment behaviors you might fall into sometimes – don't worry, we all do it – and consider the curious behavior you might replace it with.

Judgment	Curiosity
<b>Pointing The Finger</b> When a family gathering doesn't go as planned, you immediately blame a family member for not helping with the preparations, thinking, "If they had pitched in, it would have gone smoothly."	<b>Pondering Our Part</b> Instead of blaming a family member, reflect on your own contributions. Ask yourself, "How did I contribute to this outcome? What could I have done differently to make things run more smoothly?"
<b>Assuming The Worst</b> You receive a brief and seemingly abrupt email from your manager and immediately think, "They must be angry with me for something I did."	<b>Actively Asking</b> Instead of jumping to conclusions, you decide to ask for clarification. You might respond with, "I noticed the email was quite brief. Was there something specific you wanted to discuss further?"

Judgment	Curiosity
<b>Sitting In Silence</b> During a meeting, you disagree with a decision being made but choose to stay silent, thinking, "It's not worth the hassle to speak up. They won't listen to me anyway."	<b>Speaking Up</b> Instead of staying silent, you choose to voice your concerns respectfully. You might say, "I have a different perspective I'd like to share. Can we explore this option further?"
<b>Over-Functioning</b> When a team member is struggling with their workload, you take on extra tasks without asking for help or setting boundaries, thinking, "If I don't do it, it won't get done right."	<b>Owning Our Needs</b> Instead of overextending yourself, recognize your own limits and communicate your needs. You might say, "I want to help, but I'm also managing a heavy workload. Can we find a way to distribute this task more evenly?"
<b>Talking About</b> After a frustrating interaction with a friend you vent to another friend, saying, "I can't believe how stubborn they are. Why don't they just listen to me?"	<b>Talking To</b> Instead of discussing the issue with someone else, you choose to address the person directly: "I felt frustrated during our conversation earlier. Can we talk about what happened?"

## Rapid Reflection

- Which of the judgment behaviors do you tend to fall into?

- ▶ What is a curious behavior you'd like to replace it with?

## Psychological Safety

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ When you're feeling creative, listened to, and able to speak freely, what's happening?

- ▶ What are you thinking and feeling?

- ▶ Who is there?

- ▶ What are they doing/not doing? How are they showing up?

## What Is Psychological Safety?

How often do you hold back from saying what you really think because you're worried about the consequences? Psychological safety, a concept extensively researched by Dr. Amy Edmondson, is about feeling confident that you can express yourself without fear of being judged, rejected, or punished. This idea is especially important in the workplace, where feeling safe to speak up leads to more innovation, better learning, and stronger teamwork.

In any relationship, psychological safety is just as crucial. Without it, people might keep their true thoughts and feelings to themselves, leading to shallow connections and unresolved issues. To create a safe environment, you need trust, openness, and a willingness to be vulnerable. When people feel safe, they are more likely to have honest and meaningful conversations, which strengthens the relationship.

The benefits of psychological safety extend beyond the individual, also positively impacting the overall health of relationships and connections. When people feel safe,

they're more likely to take risks, share ideas, and collaborate effectively. This builds a culture of trust and mutual respect, which is essential for any relationship to thrive. On the other hand, when psychological safety is lacking, it can lead to fear, anxiety, and disengagement, which can weaken even the strongest connections.

## Striving For “Safe Enough”

Is it realistic to expect complete comfort in all conversations? Dr. Vikki Reynolds argues that instead of aiming for perfect safety, it's more practical to strive for a sense of “safe enough” – a space where you feel secure enough to engage in tough discussions without expecting to be completely comfortable. This idea acknowledges that growth often comes with some discomfort, and avoiding difficult conversations can cause issues to linger and weaken the relationship over time.

Many experiences show that avoiding tough conversations often leads to unresolved problems that can fester. By striving for “safe enough,” you make room for honest dialogue, even when it's uncomfortable. This approach encourages embracing the messiness of human interaction as a necessary part of building stronger, more resilient relationships.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Reflect on a conversation you've been avoiding. What fears are holding you back?

- ▶ What is the likelihood of these fears (aka negative stories we're telling ourselves) actually happening?

- ▶ What are some more positive outcomes that could arise out of this conversation?

- ▶ How might you try to set up a “safe enough” environment (not perfectly comfortable; but honest, kind, open, etc.)?

- ▶ What might be some of the short- and long-term benefits of addressing this uncomfortable issue sooner rather than later?

## The Power Of Clear Communication

Unclear communication often causes problems between people. When we're not clear, others might guess what we mean, and they could guess wrong. This can lead to arguments. Being clear, even when it's hard, shows respect and helps build trust.

So, clear is kind, and unclear is unkind. This means it's kinder to be clear, even if the message is tough than to be vague.



People learn they can trust us when we're clear in what we say. They know we mean what we say. This makes relationships stronger and less likely to have conflicts. But when we're unclear, it can make people unsure and not trust us. This can harm even good relationships. So, being clear about how we talk to others is important for avoiding misunderstandings and maintaining good relationships.

## **The Stories We Tell Ourselves**

Clear communication is important, but it's also key to be aware of the stories we create in our minds during interactions. Brené Brown uses the phrase "The story I'm telling myself is ..." to help us recognize these narratives. Often, these stories are based on assumptions, not facts, which can cause misunderstandings.

For example, you might think a friend's silence means they're not interested when they might just be dealing with other issues. Recognizing that these stories are just that – stories – can help you approach interactions with more curiosity and less judgment, leading to more honest and effective communication.

Understanding our inner narratives can also help us identify patterns of thought that may be influencing our behavior and interactions. For example, if you consistently tell yourself that others are judging you, you may become defensive or withdrawn, which can negatively impact your relationships. By recognizing these patterns, you can challenge your assumptions and adopt a more balanced perspective, leading to more positive and constructive interactions.

## **Having Kind Conversations**

Kind conversations are a powerful way to handle tough discussions with empathy, clarity, and respect. The goal is to build understanding and connection, even during conflicts or misunderstandings. This approach encourages you to express your needs and feelings honestly while also considering the needs and feelings of others. By doing this, conflicts can become opportunities for deeper connection and mutual respect.

Most conflicts come from unmet needs and miscommunications, not bad intentions. Instead of blaming, kind conversations focus on clearly expressing what you observe, how you feel, the story you're telling yourself, what you need, and what you'd like to happen next. This helps reduce defensiveness and creates a space for finding solutions that work for everyone.

## The OFTEN Process For Kind Conversations

To help structure a kind conversation, you can use the acronym OFTEN, which stands for observations, feelings, telling the story, essential needs, and next steps. This process provides a clear framework for expressing yourself in a way that is both honest and compassionate.

### **O: Observations – “I’m noticing ...”**

Start by objectively describing the situation without judgment. This sets the stage for a conversation based on facts rather than assumptions.

**Example:** “I’m noticing that during our recent meetings, you’ve been arriving about 10 minutes late.”

### **F: Feelings – “This is making me feel ...”**

Express how the observation makes you feel. This helps the other person understand the impact of their actions on you.

**Example:** “This is making me feel a bit frustrated and concerned.”

### **T: Telling The Story – “The story I’m telling myself about this is ...”**

Share the narrative you’ve created in your mind about the situation. This invites dialogue rather than defensiveness.

**Example:** “The story I’m telling myself about this is that maybe these meetings aren’t a priority for you, or that there might be something else going on.”

### **E: Essential Needs/Values – “This is going against my need to/ value of ...”**

Clearly state how this scenario is compromising your needs/values. This explains why the situation matters to you.

**Example:** “This is preventing me from meeting my need of starting our meetings on time, which is important for staying on schedule.”

## N: Next Steps – “In the future, can you please ... And I will ...”

End by proposing a clear, actionable request for how to move forward.

**Example:** “In the future, can you please try to arrive on time for our meetings? And I will make sure to send reminders if that would help.”

## A Note On The OFTEN Process

While it’s helpful to have worked through each of the five OFTEN steps (in fact, sometimes the process alone is supportive, without always having a conversation), you may find that you don’t need to share all of your reflections. As always, being present is our best bet when it comes to having clear, kind conversations.

Indeed, simply opening up about what you’re observing and sharing about your needs may be enough to open an effective dialogue. Just make sure that each person leaves the conversation with some clear next steps (even if it’s simply to write down some thoughts and regroup).

## Kind Conversations: Tips & Tricks

- ▶ **Prepare:** Run through the OFTEN process beforehand. Consider jotting down your thoughts or even bringing your notes into the conversation, especially if kind conversations make you feel anxious.
- ▶ **Pinpoint Your Needs/Values:** We are only ever bothered by something that compromises our core needs and values. What needs/values might be in play in this scenario? Some core needs and values could include:

Value	Description
Accountability	Taking responsibility for your actions and decisions.
Collaboration	Working together effectively with others.
Integrity	Adhering to moral and ethical principles.
Support	Providing encouragement and assistance to colleagues and friends.
Transparency	Open and honest communication about decisions and processes.

Value	Description
Compassion	Showing kindness and understanding in your interactions.
Recognition	Acknowledging the achievements and contributions of others.
Trust	Building reliable and dependable relationships.
Growth	Opportunities for personal and professional development.
Work-Life Balance	Maintaining a healthy balance between work responsibilities and personal life.
Inclusivity	Ensuring everyone feels valued and included.
Loyalty	Being faithful and committed to your friends and colleagues.
Fun	Enjoying shared activities and creating joyful moments together.
Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
Generosity	Willingness to give time, support, and resources to others.

- ▶ **Pick Your Time:** Choose a moment when both of you are not busy or stressed. Ensure that you're both mentally and emotionally ready to engage in the conversation.
- ▶ **Pick Your Place:** Find a setting where both parties will feel safe and comfortable. Sometimes, stepping outside or choosing a neutral space can help facilitate a more open dialogue.
- ▶ **Pitch The Conversation:** Make sure your conversation request models the clarity and kindness you want throughout the whole process. To prevent unnecessary worry on the part of your conversation partner, state your intentions clearly. For example: "Hey [Name], when are you free to have a quick conversation around [Topic/Project, where appropriate to mention it]. It will probably take around [time] minutes. I thought we could [go for a walk/grab a coffee/meet in your office... etc.]. Does that suit you?"
- ▶ **Pace Yourself:** Take your time. Speak slowly, breathe deeply, and allow pauses to process what's being said.
- ▶ **Practice Grounding Yourself:** Stay centered during the conversation by using grounding techniques such as deep breathing or feeling your feet on the floor.

- ▶ **Pose Open-Ended Questions:** Encourage dialogue by asking open-ended questions that invite the other person to share their thoughts and feelings, like, “Can you tell me more about your perspective?”
- ▶ **Patiently, Actively Listen:** Focus on truly understanding the other person’s point of view. Avoid interrupting, and reflect back what you’ve heard to ensure clarity and show that you’re listening.
- ▶ **Plan Another Conversation:** Don’t expect to resolve everything in one go. Plan a follow-up conversation to check on progress, address any new issues, and continue the dialogue.

## Rapid Reflection

Think about a situation in your life that could be resolved with a kind conversation.

- ▶ What are your observations (the objective facts of the situation)?

- ▶ How has this been making you feel (consider referring to the emotions listed in the Wheel of Emotions)?

- ▶ What stories have you been telling yourself about this situation/the people involved?

- ▶ What essential needs/values might be in play?

- ▶ What next steps could you/others take to improve the situation?

## Creating A Rooted Routine for Relationships

Now that we've explored the importance of relationships, high-quality connections, common barriers to connection, and psychological safety, it's time to apply what you've learned by creating and practicing a Rooted Routine for Relationships.

### Choosing Your Habit

You can create any Rooted Routine for Relationships you like (after all, the best habits are those we're most eager to experiment with); if you're unsure where to start, here are a few suggestions based on our shared learning during this session. You may wish to form a habit around:

- ▶ Creating moments of high-quality connection
- ▶ Asking a daily HQC question
- ▶ Using the OFTEN process to help you clarify your thoughts and feelings around conflict – and have a conversation where necessary
- ▶ Sparking a kind conversation
- ▶ Or any other ideas you have!

Remember, in order to overcome common behavior change derailers (“I don’t really want to,” “I’m not sure where to start,” and “I don’t think I can”) we must choose a behavior we truly want to do and shrink it until we feel at least 8/10 confident that we can do it each day for the next week.

Now, create your Rooted Routine for Relationships. For example:

<b>GROUNDING BEGINNINGS</b>	<p>What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment “nurture” the start of your new habit?</p>	<p><i>I check in with my friend each morning to see how their day is shaping up.</i></p>
<b>NURTURING ACTION</b>	<p>What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?</p>	<p><i>I actively listen and ask follow-up questions to show I'm engaged.</i></p>
<b>THRIVING MOMENT</b>	<p>Once you’ve completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small? What will you do to acknowledge your growth? This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.</p>	<p><i>I pause to appreciate the connection when a conversation flows well.</i></p>
<b>NOURISHING REFLECTION</b>	<p>What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits. How might this habit help you in the future?</p>	<p><i>I expect these efforts to strengthen my relationships and deepen connections.</i></p>

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ What was one surprising insight you had about the science of relationships today?

- ▶ What was the most useful piece of information you received today?

- ▶ Who might you share this information with to create a wellbeing ripple in your life?

## Homework

In this session we explored the importance of relationships, high-quality connections, common barriers to connection, and the concept of psychological safety.

For this session's homework, you will be asked to:

- 1) Create and action a daily Rooted Routine for Relationships using the Rooted Routine Template.
- 2) Log your experiences in the Rooted Routines Logbook.
- 3) Run a Reflection Round on your Rooted Routine for Relationships experiment.



## Your Rooted Routine for Relationships Template

Identify the behavior you'd like to try this week.

Using the list of example Rooted Routines in session 1 as inspiration (feel free to create your own, too), complete your own Rooted Routine Template below.

Commit to this behavior for at least the next week, making sure to note down your progress each day in the **Rooted Routines Logbook**, as well as any wins, wobbles, or burning questions.

GROUNDING BEGINNINGS		
NURTURING ACTION		
THRIVING MOMENT		
NOURISHING REFLECTION		

As you playfully experiment with a Rooted Routine, remember that the key to success lies less in achieving a “perfect” result and more in our ability to reflect on and reshape our efforts by asking: *What’s working well? Where do I notice challenges or resistance? What am I learning? Based on this, what will I try next?*

## Rooted Routines Logbook

How to Use the Rooted Routines Logbook

1. **Grounded Beginnings:** Identify an existing action or routine in your day that will naturally help you start your new wellbeing habit (e.g. Brushing your teeth).
2. **Nurturing Action:** Decide on a small, manageable action you can take right now to foster your wellbeing (e.g. Take a couple of deep breaths after brushing your teeth).
3. **Thriving Moment:** Reflect on how you will celebrate or acknowledge your success, no matter how small (e.g. Smile at yourself in the mirror).
4. **Nourishing Reflection:** Think about how completing this action will make you feel and how it supports your wellbeing (e.g. Feeling calm and present as you start your day).
5. **Notes:** Add any brief notes, thoughts, or insights you have while completing your habit.
6. **Completed:** At the end of each day, mark whether you completed your Rooted Routine with a checkmark (✓) for yes or leave it unchecked for no.

You can fill in the table for the upcoming week and track your progress each day. Good luck with building your new habit!

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

## Rooted Routine for Relationships Reflection Round

When it has come to playfully experimenting with your Rooted Routine behavior this week:

- ▶ What's working well?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?

# Session 6

MEANING



## Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- ▶ Reflect on what gives your life meaning
- ▶ Understand the role of meaning in enhancing overall wellbeing
- ▶ Explore how balancing passions contributes to a fulfilling life
- ▶ Learn strategies to craft more meaningful work experiences
- ▶ Create a Rooted Routine to sustain a sense of meaning in everyday life

In the last session, we focused on the “R” in the PERMAH model: Relationships. We delved into the importance of building and maintaining high-quality connections, understanding common barriers to deep connections, and fostering psychological safety to enhance our relationships. The session provided practical strategies for strengthening both personal and professional relationships.

This session shifts our focus to “Meaning” in the PERMAH model. We will explore the critical role meaning plays in our overall wellbeing and how we can actively cultivate a sense of purpose and significance in our daily lives. The session will guide you through reflecting on your current sources of meaning, balancing your passions, crafting meaningful work, and creating Rooted Routines that reinforce your sense of purpose.

While this session will touch on work-life balance, it’s important to note that “work” can mean many things beyond professional employment. It could refer to the various roles we play in our personal lives – such as caregiving, volunteering, or pursuing passions and hobbies – that require effort and commitment. In exploring work-life balance, we’ll look at how these different areas of “work” impact our sense of meaning and purpose in a broader context.

## Reflection Round

What motivates us to get out of bed every day and face life's challenges? When we have a clear sense of purpose, we find it easier to tackle difficulties, whether big or small.

When it comes to meaning – perhaps more than any other area of wellbeing – reflecting on our experiences is crucial. Taking the time to pause and consider our deeper values and purpose in life is the only way we can act in more alignment with what matters most to us, and enjoy all the benefits that a sense of meaning brings to our lives.

What better way to do this than through a Reflection Round?

- ▶ When it comes to connecting to a sense of meaning in your life in the past, what has gone well?

- ▶ What challenges have you faced in connecting with a sense of meaning?

- ▶ What lessons have you learned about what is meaningful in your life?

- ▶ What would you like to try to reconnect with a sense of meaning?

## Why Meaning Matters

### The Pursuit Of Meaning

Is happiness really the ultimate goal in life, or is there something deeper we should aim for? While happiness is important, it's the pursuit of meaning that truly makes life fulfilling. Unlike happiness, which can be fleeting, meaning gives us a sense of coherence and purpose that helps us through life's challenges.

In our day-to-day lives, chasing happiness alone can often feel empty or unsatisfying. Those who focus on finding meaning tend to experience greater wellbeing and resilience. Meaning connects us to something bigger, like relationships, personal growth, or contributing to the community. It's this connection that provides a stable foundation for long-term fulfillment.

Finding meaning isn't always easy – it often requires us to think deeply about our values, purpose, and the impact of our actions. Sometimes, meaning can even come with discomfort, as it might involve sacrifices or facing difficult truths. But this complexity is what makes meaning so fulfilling. When we find meaning, we gain a sense of direction and significance that goes beyond temporary pleasures.



## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ If you had a scrapbook of photos capturing sources of meaning in your life, who/what would be in there?

- ▶ What makes these things/people/places meaningful?

## Aligning Efforts With Values

What are we really working towards? Are our efforts aligned with what truly matters to us? It's easy to get caught up in the busyness of life, but if we're busy without purpose, it can lead to burnout and dissatisfaction. Burnout happens when we're stressed for too long without finding meaning in what we do, leaving us exhausted and unfulfilled.

Many of us know what it's like to work hard without feeling fulfilled. This usually happens when our efforts don't align with our values or long-term goals. On the other hand, when our actions reflect what we truly care about, we're more likely to feel that our lives have purpose and meaning. This alignment requires self-awareness and the courage to make changes that better reflect our priorities.

## Meaning = Coherence, Purpose, And Significance

Finding meaning in life involves three key elements: coherence, purpose, and significance. Coherence is about making sense of our lives and how the different parts fit together. Purpose is having goals that give our lives direction. Significance is the belief that what we do matters and has value.

### Example

**Coherence:** Imagine someone working in environmental conservation. They experience coherence by understanding how their role contributes to the larger effort of protecting the planet. They see their daily work as part of a global movement to combat climate change, which aligns with their personal values of sustainability and respect for nature.

**Purpose:** For the same conservationist, purpose might come from a clear goal: preserving endangered species so that future generations can experience the same natural wonders we do today. This purpose provides motivation and direction, helping them stay focused even when the work is challenging or progress is slow.

**Significance:** This conservationist feels significant when they see the tangible results of their work, like an increase in the population of a once-endangered species. They also feel significant when community members express gratitude for their efforts or when they are recognized as an important part of the environmental movement. This feedback reinforces their belief that their work truly matters.

People who experience high levels of coherence, purpose, and significance tend to have greater wellbeing and resilience. These elements help us make sense of the world, stay focused on what matters, and feel that our lives are valuable.

## Making (And Remaking) Meaning

Achieving coherence, purpose, and significance isn't always easy, especially during tough times. Life events like job loss, illness, or the end of a relationship can disrupt our sense of meaning. But even in these moments, we can make small changes to infuse our daily lives with more meaning. By tweaking how we approach work, relationships, or routines, we can rebuild or discover new sources of coherence, purpose, and significance.

## Rapid Reflection

Consider the three elements of meaning in your own life as you respond to the following questions:

### Coherence – Making Sense

- ▶ How do the different parts of your life fit together to tell your story?

- ▶ When things get tough, how do you make sense of what's happening?

### Purpose – Making Progress

- ▶ What goals or dreams keep you motivated each day?

- ▶ How do your daily activities help you work toward something bigger?

## **Significance – Making An Impact**

- ▶ What makes you feel like your life really matters?

- ▶ How do your actions and relationships make you feel valuable to others?

## Balancing Our Passions

### Meaning Through Impact

How does your work impact others?

One of the strongest predictors of finding meaning is the belief that what you do has a positive impact on others. When you feel that your efforts are making a difference – whether it’s helping a colleague, contributing to a team project, or serving customers – you’re more likely to experience a deep sense of satisfaction and purpose.

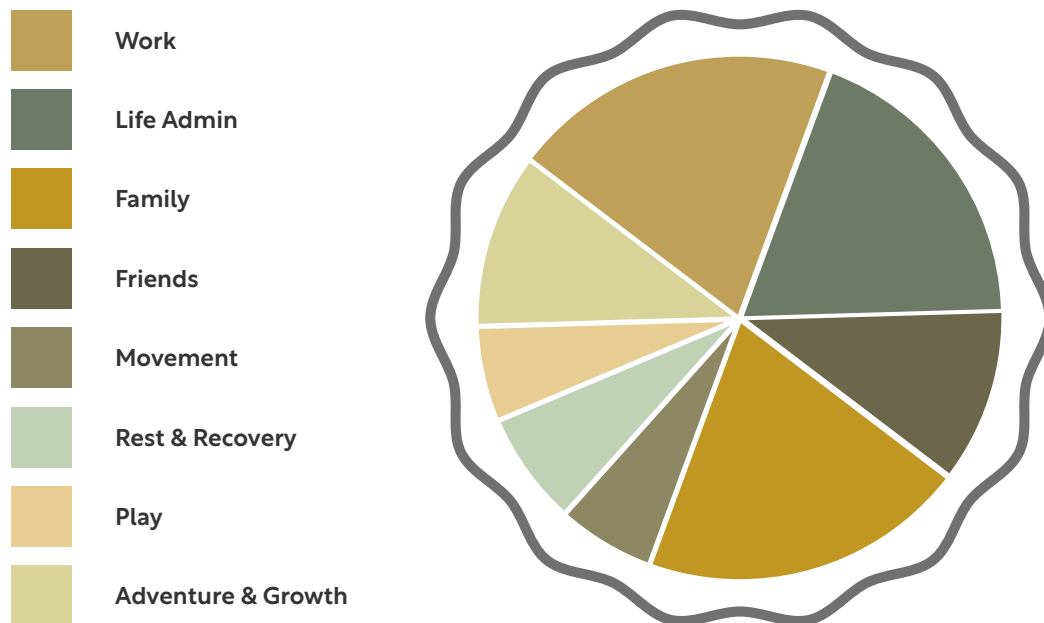
For example, those in professions like health care, education, or social work often feel a strong connection between their actions and the wellbeing of others, which can make their work particularly meaningful. But even if your role doesn’t involve direct service, you can still find meaning by seeing how your work contributes to a larger goal or helps others in some way.

### Falling Out Of Balance

Is your passion enhancing your life or taking over it? Sometimes, our drive to succeed can become overwhelming. Passion researcher, Robert Vallerand, explains that when we become obsessed with our work – feeling like we have to constantly prove ourselves or fearing failure – it can start to dominate our lives. This kind of **obsessive passion** can lead to burnout, stress, and strained relationships, as it consumes our time and energy at the expense of other important aspects of life.

On the other hand, **harmonious passion** is about finding a healthy balance. It’s when you engage in activities that you love and that are meaningful to you, without letting them overshadow other important parts of your life. When you cultivate harmonious passions, you’re able to pursue your interests while also maintaining healthy relationships, work-life balance, and self-care. This way, you find joy and fulfillment in your work without it taking over everything else.

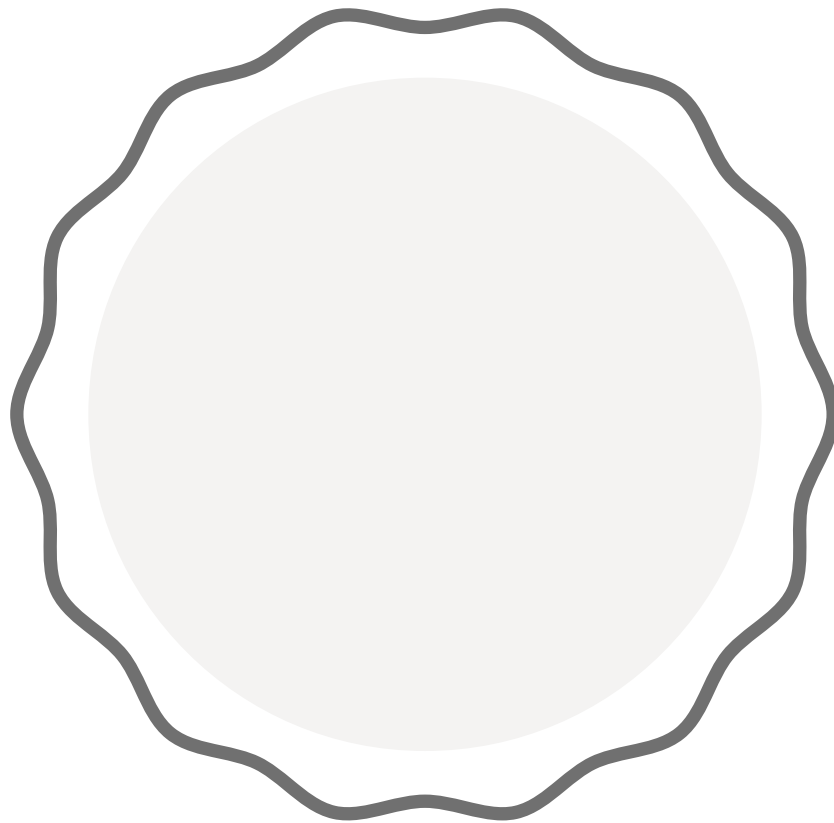
## What Is Your “Passion Pie”?



To help assess the balance in your life, imagine your life as a pie chart – your “Passion Pie.” Each slice represents a different area of your life, like work, family, friends, rest, and personal growth. By breaking down your daily activities into slices, you can better understand how much time and energy you’re dedicating to each area.

Here’s how to reflect on your Passion Pie:

- 1. Reflect On Current Allocation:** Consider (and allocate through shading a percentage of the pie) what percentage of your life is currently taken up by work.
- 2. Ask Yourself:** How much space is left for other important areas like *family, friends, movement, rest, play, and personal growth*?  
Take time to allocate and shade in these remaining areas. This can help you see where your energy is overly concentrated or perhaps lacking.
- 3. Assess The Impact:** Consider the consequences of this allocation. If work dominates your Passion Pie, you might be experiencing stress, burnout, or strained relationships. On the other hand, too little investment in work or growth areas might lead to a lack of fulfillment or purpose.



- ▶ What is the impact of this distribution on your wellbeing?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for a response to the question above.

- ▶ Where might there be too much or too little energy spent?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for a response to the question above.

This exercise helps you recognize where adjustments are needed to create a more balanced and fulfilling life.

## Harmonious Passion For Fulfillment

How can we cultivate passion that enriches our life rather than controls it? Harmonious passion is about engaging in activities because they are meaningful and enjoyable, not because we feel pressured by others or the need to prove ourselves. This type of passion leads to positive outcomes like resilience, satisfaction, and a balanced life.

In real life, people with harmonious passion can enjoy their passions without sacrificing other important areas like family, work, or health. This balance allows them to enjoy their activities without feeling overwhelmed or stressed fully. Those with harmonious passions often experience more positive emotions, ongoing motivation, and a sense of accomplishment.

However, cultivating harmonious passion takes mindfulness and self-awareness. It's important to recognize when your passion might be turning into an obsession and take steps to maintain a healthy balance. Here are some strategies that can help:

### 1. Setting Clear Boundaries:

- ▶ Establish boundaries between work and personal life. For example, avoid checking work emails after a certain time or create specific spaces for work versus leisure.
- ▶ These boundaries help maintain work-life balance and reduce work-related stress.

### 2. Prioritizing Self-Care:

- ▶ Include regular practices like physical exercise, meditation, or hobbies unrelated to work in your daily routine. These activities help recharge your energy and prevent burnout.
- ▶ Engaging in relaxation activities and detaching from work during free time can lead to better job performance over time.

### 3. Pursuing Passions With Genuine Interest:

- ▶ Regularly reflect on why you're pursuing your passions. Make sure it's out of genuine enjoyment rather than external pressure.
- ▶ For example, an accountant who loves face-to-face connection might focus more on consulting and educating clients, and use artificial intelligence to automate more administrative tasks that don't align with their personal strengths/values.



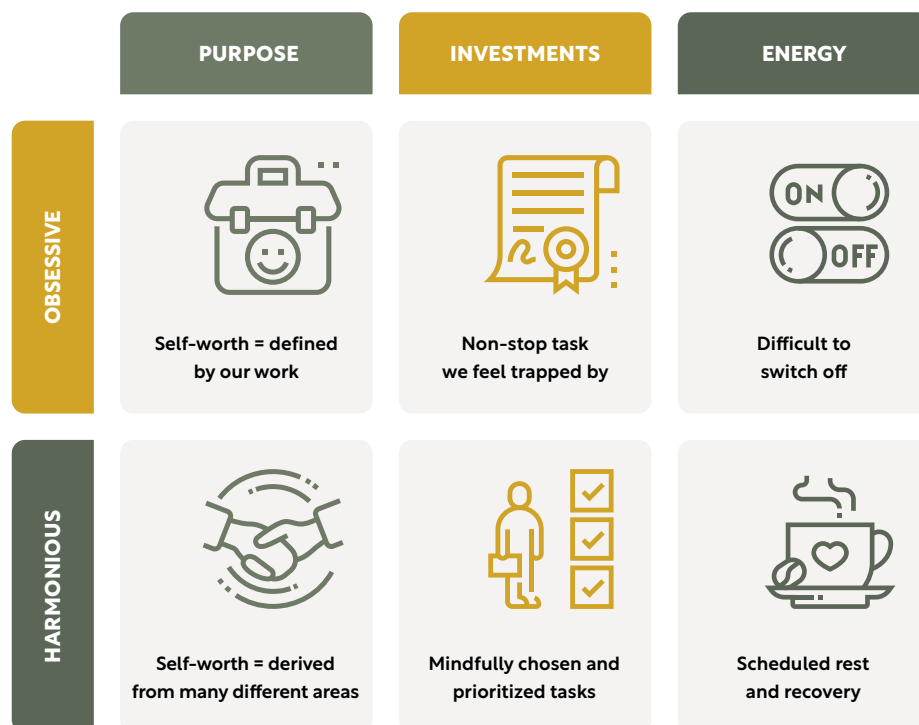
These strategies – setting boundaries, prioritizing self-care, and pursuing passions with genuine interest – help create a more balanced relationship with our passions. By following these tactics, we can sustain our enthusiasm, avoid burnout, and cultivate a harmonious passion that enriches our lives rather than consumes them.

## Rapid Reflection

- What strategies have you found helpful in your own life for maintaining balance?

## Making Our Passion Pie

If the commitments and context of our life are the ingredients of our pie, we can think of the following image as representing the factors that shape how we “bake” our Passion Pie. These three elements include:



## Purpose

Purpose is what drives us and gives our life meaning. When we clearly understand our purpose, we tend to feel more motivated and satisfied. However, if we focus too much on purpose – especially if it's tied only to work – it can lead to an unhealthy obsession. This happens when our self-worth becomes too dependent on our professional success.

## Investments

Investments are where we put our time, energy, and resources. When we carefully choose tasks that match our values, we create a healthy balance between work and life. This leads to a fulfilling life without the risk of burning out. But if we feel stuck in constant tasks driven by outside pressures, it can lead to stress and a feeling of being trapped.

## Energy Levels

How we manage our energy – through rest, recovery, and taking care of ourselves – affects how well we can keep up our efforts and enthusiasm over time. It's important to schedule time for rest and recovery to maintain our energy and avoid burnout. If we have trouble switching off or ignore self-care, it might be a sign of imbalance, leading to exhaustion.

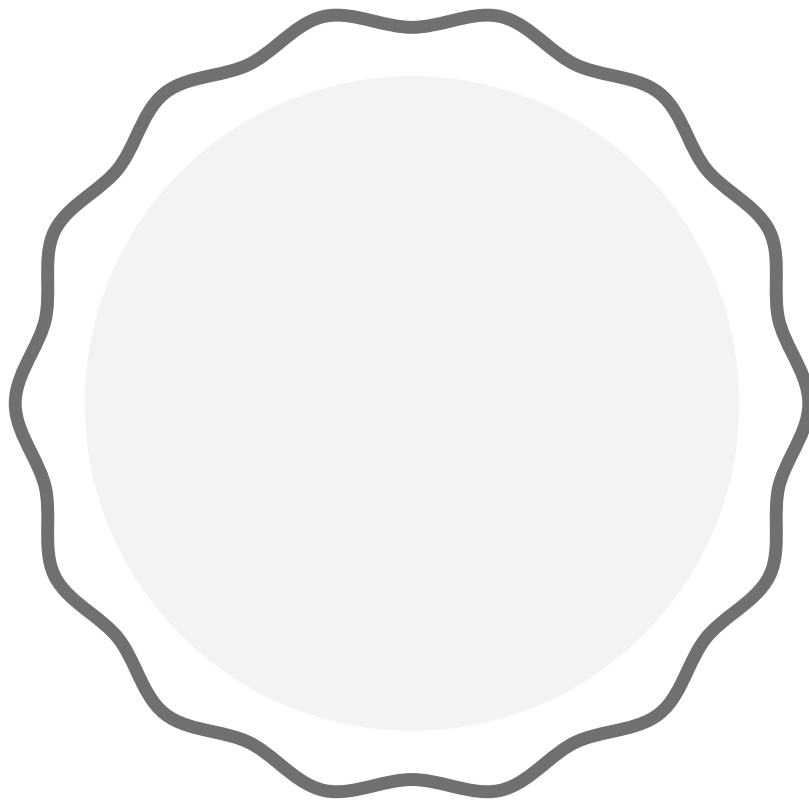
By reflecting on these three elements – purpose, investments, and energy – we can understand whether our passions are healthy and balanced or if they're becoming overwhelming. For example, do we only find self-worth in our work, leading to obsessive behavior? Or do we value different aspects of life, allowing for a more balanced and fulfilling approach?

This reflection helps us see where our Passion Pie might need adjustments so that we can enjoy greater wellbeing and fulfillment.

## Rapid Reflection

Take some time to reflect on the following and write your responses in the spaces provided.

- ▶ **Purpose:** What matters most to me right now? Based on this, divide up your ideally balanced Passion Pie.



- ▶ **Investments:** What small actions might I take to better balance my investments in a way that is sustainable and fills my “meaning bucket”?

- ▶ **Energy:** How am I resting and recovering? Am I resting enough to have the energy to live out my more balanced Passion Pie?

- ▶ **Share:** To support me with my plan to better balance my passions, is there anyone I might share Passion Pie with (e.g., colleagues, boss, partner)? How and when might I share it?

## Crafting Meaningful Work

### Rapid Reflection

Thinking about your role at work (remember, “work” can mean many things, including personal, caregiving, or volunteer roles): What are your 10 most important tasks this week?

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

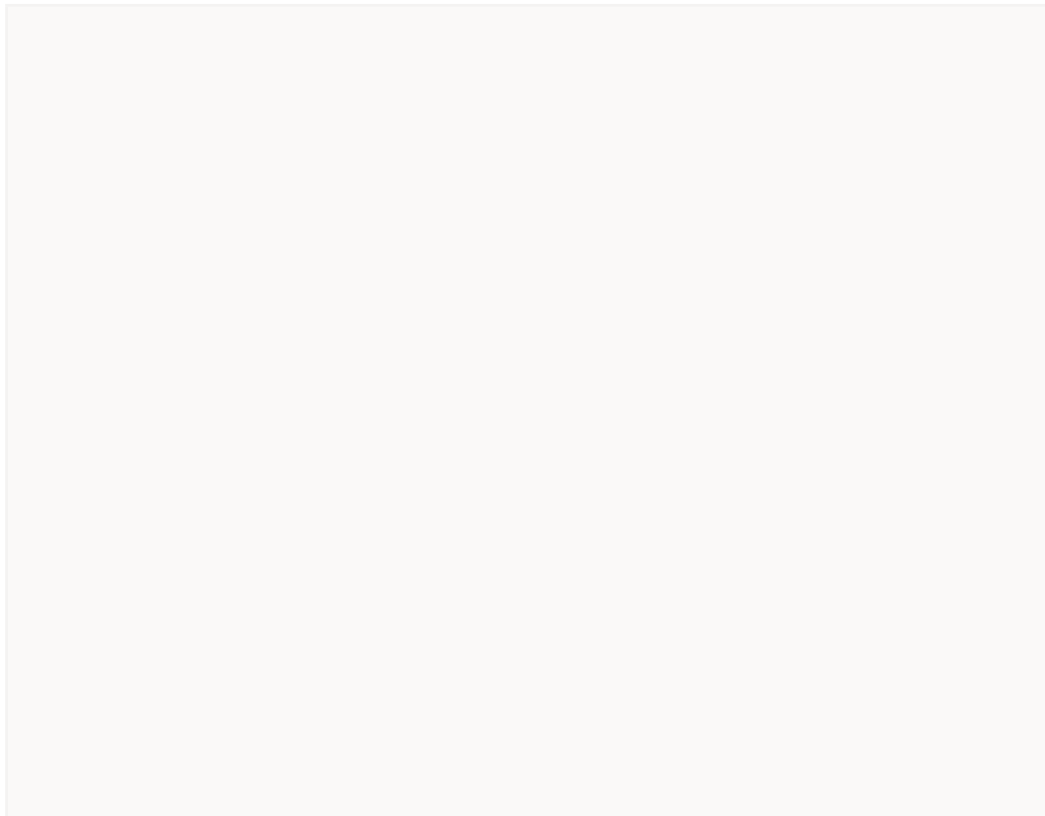
Which tasks energize you? Place an E for energize next to these.

Which tasks de-energize you? Place a D for de-energize next to these.

What are the neutral tasks? Place an N for neutral next to these.

Using the space below, write about what makes the energizing tasks so engaging. Consider the following questions as inspiration:

- ▶ Does the task call on your strengths?
- ▶ Is it interesting or meaningful to you?
- ▶ Do you enjoy collaborating with the people involved in this task?
- ▶ Does the timing, pacing, or location of the task suit you?



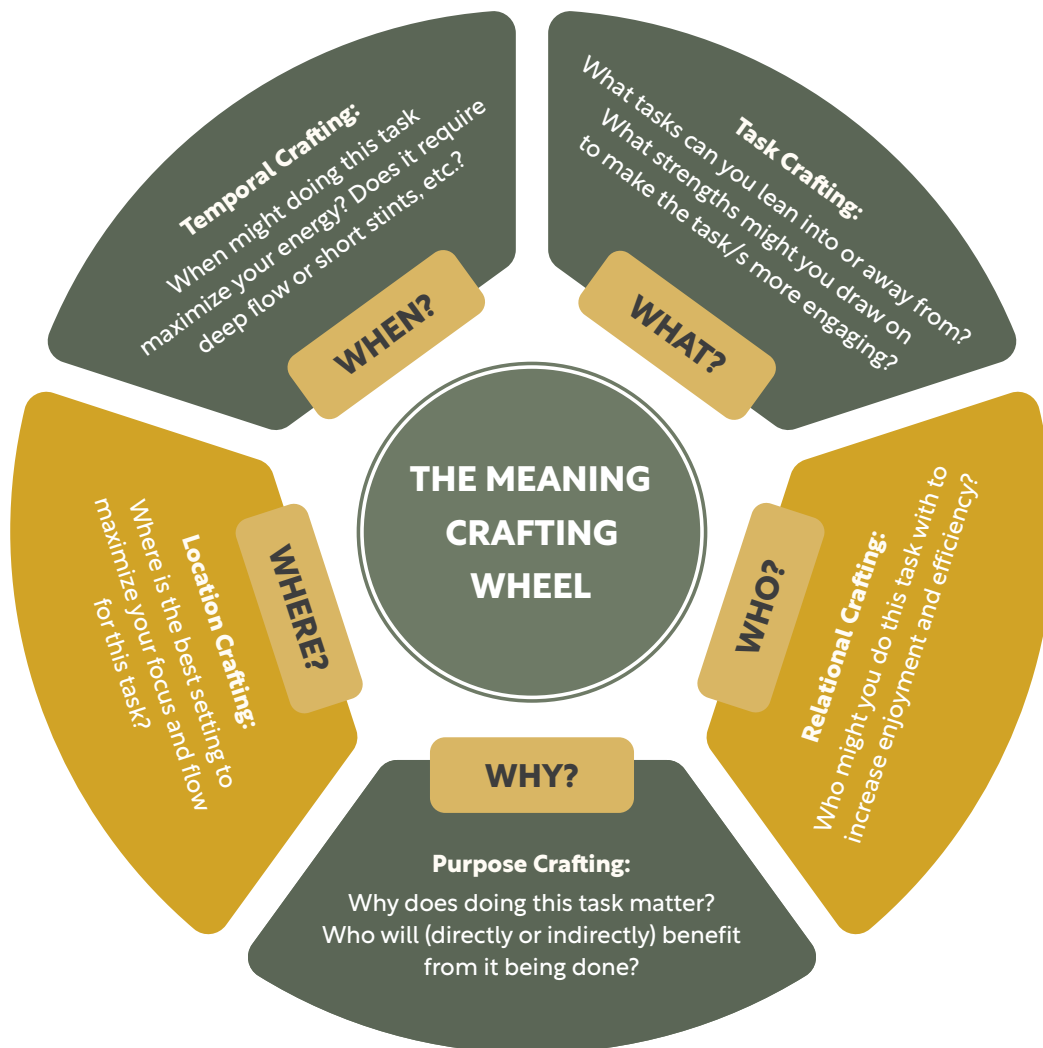
## The Importance Of Enjoying Work

Are you finding joy in your work? Leo Tolstoy once said, “If you’re not enjoying your work, you should either change your attitude or change your job.” This highlights how important it is to find satisfaction and meaning in what we do. If your current job doesn’t bring you fulfillment, it might be time to consider changing your approach or even exploring a new career path.

When we find joy and meaning in our work, it boosts our overall wellbeing. We become more engaged, productive, and satisfied with life. However, discovering this joy often requires us to take action, such as crafting our jobs to better suit our needs and values.

## Expanding Job Crafting: What, Who, Why, Where, When

How can you shape your job to make it more meaningful? Building on the idea of job crafting, Rob Baker expands the concept to include five key elements: what, who, why, where, and when. Each element offers a way to tailor your work experience to align with your values and goals.



### What (Tasks):

This involves changing the tasks you do, either by taking on new responsibilities that play to your strengths or by finding new ways to approach existing tasks. For example, you might try a different method for completing routine tasks, like using voice dictation instead of typing, to make them more engaging.

## **Who (Relationships):**

Focus on building and nurturing relationships at work. This could mean connecting with colleagues who inspire and support you or strengthening the relationships you already have. Regular, informal check-ins with coworkers can help create a sense of community and collaboration.

## **Why (Purpose):**

This is about redefining how you think about your work. By connecting your tasks to a larger purpose, you can find greater meaning even in routine activities. For example, you might start viewing mundane tasks, like managing finances, as ways of caring for your business and its stakeholders, giving those tasks a deeper sense of purpose.

## **Where (Environment):**

Change your physical or virtual work environment to better suit your needs. This might involve rearranging your workspace, choosing different locations to work from, or adjusting your work-from-home setup to enhance comfort and productivity.

## **When (Timing):**

Adjust when you perform certain tasks. This could mean restructuring your workday to match your natural energy levels or setting specific times for focused work. Finding flexible, personalized approaches to time management can help you maintain better work-life balance.

By considering each of these five elements, you can create a work experience that feels more fulfilling, balanced, and aligned with your personal goals and values.

## **Practical Applications Of Job Crafting**

How can you apply these job-crafting strategies to your work? Job crafting is not just a concept; it's a practical tool that can make your work more enjoyable and meaningful. For instance, if you find certain tasks draining, you might try grouping similar tasks together or using new tools to make the process easier. If building relationships at work is a challenge, you could set aside time for regular check-ins with colleagues or look for new connections within your organization.

It's all about experimenting with small changes that can lead to big improvements in your wellbeing and performance. That's why researchers like Rob Baker advocate for shrinking the change even more by practicing "micro-crafting."



## Your Micro-Crafting Toolkit

To help you experiment with job crafting, we've created a Micro-Crafting Toolkit filled with tiny tweaks you can use to bring more meaning into your daily work.





It's important to remember that job crafting is a process of trial and error. Not every attempt will be successful, and that's OK. What matters is having a playful and curious mindset.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Look at the tasks you currently have in your role. Choose one of your more de-energizing or neutral tasks:

- ▶ Identify the job-crafting area you'd like to leverage (what, who, why, where, when).

- ▶ Within that job-crafting area, choose a behavior (or create your own) from the Micro-Crafting Toolkit to experiment with.

 <b>WHAT (TASKS)</b>	 <b>WHO (RELATIONSHIPS)</b>	 <b>WHY (PURPOSE)</b>	 <b>WHERE (ENVIRONMENT)</b>	 <b>WHEN (TIMING)</b>
<b>But First, Fun</b> Prime your brain for success by starting with the easiest or most energizing tasks.	<b>Find A Strengths Buddy</b> Spend more time working with people whose strengths complement your own.	<b>Reframe The Mundane</b> Consider who benefits from a boring task. How might it eventually help someone else?	<b>Place–Activity Fit</b> Seek spaces compatible with your task: e.g., office for focus, lunchroom for collaboration.	<b>Schedule Set Tasks</b> Save precious decision-making resources by scheduling regular tasks.
<b>Draw Upon Strengths</b> Identify and align your strengths to your tasks to make them more engaging.	<b>Lean Into Learning</b> Seek out a mentor, colleague, or client that you believe you can learn the most from.	<b>Tweak Your Job Title</b> Dig for the deeper purpose of your role. If you could rename it, what would it be?	<b>Optimize Your “Office”</b> Wherever you work, optimize the lights/sounds/furniture for how you work best.	<b>Time–Task Fit</b> Ask yourself what time of day might suit you and the task best based on its demands.
<b>Introduce Interests</b> Shift your job towards tasks or growth areas you’re genuinely interested in.	<b>Play Your Part</b> Be conscious of the energy you bring to interactions. Set the tone you want to receive.	<b>Be Mission-Mindful</b> Reconnect to the overall vision and mission of your workplace. Why does it exist?	<b>Swap Out Scenery</b> Feeling stuck? Take your work to a new café, the balcony, backyard, library, etc.	<b>Find Your Flow</b> Set aside uninterrupted blocks of time to absorb yourself in creative, challenging tasks.

## Creating A Rooted Routine for Meaning

Having identified the advantages of having a sense of meaning in work and life, uncovered the opportunities and challenges we face when balancing our passions, and explored the potential benefits of crafting meaningful work, it's time to apply what you've learned by creating and practicing a Rooted Routine for Meaning.

### Choosing Your Habit

While you may create any Rooted Routine for Meaning you like (after all, the best habits are those we're most eager to experiment with), if you're unsure where to start, here are a few suggestions based on our shared learning during this session. You may wish to form a habit around:

- ▶ Taking a photo each day of something that fills our life with meaning.
- ▶ Choose one of the strategies to help cultivate more harmonious passion.
- ▶ Redraw your ideal Passion Pie and perform a daily Reflection Round on your efforts to better balance your commitments.
- ▶ Playfully experiment with a daily micro-crafting behavior at work.

Remember, in order to overcome common behavior change derailers ("I don't really want to," "I'm not sure where to start," and "I don't think I can"), we must choose a behavior we truly want to do and shrink it until we feel at least 8/10 confident that we can do it each day for the next week.

Now, create your Rooted Routine for Meaning. For example:

<b>GROUND ED BEGINNINGS</b>	<p>What is an existing action or routine in your day that would naturally allow you to add a new wellbeing habit? Think about behaviors you already do regularly. How can this moment "nurture" the start of your new habit?</p>	<p><i>I carry my phone with me throughout the day.</i></p>
<b>NURTURING ACTION</b>	<p>What is the small, manageable action you can take right now to help foster your wellbeing? Make sure this is an action so easy you can do it even on busy days. How will you take your first step toward growth?</p>	<p><i>I'll take a photo of something that brings me joy.</i></p>

**THRIVING  
MOMENT**

Once you've completed your action, how can you celebrate your success, no matter how small? What will you do to acknowledge your growth? This moment of recognition will help reinforce your habit.

*I'll smile, feeling grateful for that moment.*

**NOURISHING  
REFLECTION**

What do you expect to feel after completing your action? How do you anticipate this practice supporting your wellbeing? Think about any changes you hope to see in your thoughts, mood, or habits. How might this habit help you in the future?

*I expect this practice will help me notice and appreciate joyful moments more often.*

## Rapid Reflection

- What was one surprising insight you had about the science of meaning?

- What was the most useful piece of information you received today?

- Who might you share this information with to create a wellbeing ripple in your life?

## Homework

In this session we explored the sources of meaning in our lives, how we might balance our passions, and the potential we have to craft more meaningful work.

For this session's homework, you will be asked to:

- 1) Create and action a daily Rooted Routine for Meaning using the Rooted Routine Template.
- 2) Log your experiences in the Rooted Routines Logbook.
- 3) Run a Reflection Round on your Rooted Routine for Meaning experiment.

## Your Rooted Routine for Meaning Template

Identify the behavior you'd like to try this week.

Using the list of example Rooted Routines in session 1 as inspiration (feel free to create your own, too), complete your own Rooted Routine Template below.

Commit to this behavior for at least the next week, making sure to note down your progress each day in the **Rooted Routines Logbook**, as well as any wins, wobbles, or burning questions.

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NURTURING ACTION		

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NOURISHING REFLECTION		

As you playfully experiment with a Rooted Routine remember that the key to success lies less in achieving a “perfect” result and more in our ability to reflect on and reshape our efforts by asking: *What’s working well? Where do I notice challenges or resistance? What am I learning? Based on this, what will I try next?*

## Rooted Routines Logbook

How to Use the Rooted Routines Logbook

1. **Grounded Beginnings:** Identify an existing action or routine in your day that will naturally help you start your new wellbeing habit (e.g. Brushing your teeth).
2. **Nurturing Action:** Decide on a small, manageable action you can take right now to foster your wellbeing (e.g. Take a couple of deep breaths after brushing your teeth).
3. **Thriving Moment:** Reflect on how you will celebrate or acknowledge your success, no matter how small (e.g. Smile at yourself in the mirror).
4. **Nourishing Reflection:** Think about how completing this action will make you feel and how it supports your wellbeing (e.g. Feeling calm and present as you start your day).
5. **Notes:** Add any brief notes, thoughts, or insights you have while completing your habit.
6. **Completed:** At the end of each day, mark whether you completed your Rooted Routine with a checkmark (✓) for yes or leave it unchecked for no.

You can fill in the table for the upcoming week and track your progress each day. Good luck with building your new habit!

Day	Grounded Beginnings	Nurturing Action	Thriving Moment	Nourishing Reflection	Notes	✓
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

## Rooted Routine for Meaning Reflection Round

When it has come to playfully experimenting with your Rooted Routine behavior this week:

- What's working well?

- ▶ Where do you notice challenges or resistance?

- ▶ What are you learning?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?



# Session 7

ACCOMPLISHMENT



## Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- ▶ Reflect on what accomplishment means to you personally
- ▶ Understand how values drive meaningful accomplishments
- ▶ Explore strategies for setting goals that align with your core values
- ▶ Learn how to balance striving for success with savoring the journey
- ▶ Develop self-compassion to navigate challenges effectively
- ▶ Create a Wellbeing Ripple in our chosen workplace or community

In the last session, we focused on the M in the PERMAH model: Meaning. We explored how having a sense of meaning (i.e. coherence, purpose, and significance) in our lives can significantly enhance our overall wellbeing. The session encouraged you to reflect on your current sources of meaning, the role of meaning in fostering resilience and health, and the importance of balancing your passions to prevent burnout. Additionally, we discussed practical strategies to optimize how we approach tasks, where and when we work, and who we work with to craft a more meaningful work experience.

Fittingly, as our final session, we will shift our focus to the Accomplishment PERMAH pillar. We will explore the concept of achieving what actually matters to us; clarifying how to set goals that resonate with your values and contribute to your overall sense of fulfillment. The session will guide you through reflecting on your past achievements, understanding the importance of value-driven goals, and learning how to balance the drive to succeed with the need to enjoy the process. By the end of this session, you will have practical tools to enjoy effectively pursuing what matters most to you.

As we reflect on our learning journey together, you'll also be instilled with the confidence and drive to share your wellbeing knowledge and skills through creating a Wellbeing Ripple in your workplace or community.

## Reflection Round

Accomplishment is a key component of wellbeing, but it's more than just completing tasks or hitting targets. It's about striving towards goals that genuinely matter to you – goals that are closely tied to your values and provide a sense of purpose. When you achieve something meaningful, it not only boosts your confidence and self-esteem but also enhances your overall sense of wellbeing.

Reflecting on your accomplishments helps you assess whether the goals you're pursuing are truly aligned with your values and whether they contribute to your life in a meaningful way. It's an opportunity to celebrate your progress, learn from your experiences, and adjust your approach if needed. This reflection is the first step to helping you set more intentional, value-driven goals in the future.

When it comes to your accomplishments:

- ▶ What has gone well recently in your efforts to achieve your goals?

- ▶ Where have you struggled to accomplish what matters most to you and why?

- ▶ What have you learned about yourself through your recent successes and setbacks?

- ▶ What would you like to try to accomplish more of what matters most to you?

## Values In Action

### Rapid Reflection

Think about the last accomplishment that made you feel truly proud.

- ▶ What was it about this effort or outcome that you were most proud of?

- How did this accomplishment align with your values?

## Are You Accomplishing What Matters?

Have you ever reached a significant goal only to realize it didn't bring the satisfaction you were expecting? This is a common experience, and it often happens when our goals aren't aligned with our core values. Goals that resonate deeply with what truly matters to us provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment beyond just achieving the goal itself.

Steven C. Hayes, the creator of acceptance and commitment therapy, describes values as a compass that guides us in setting meaningful goals that reflect who we truly are. When our goals align with our values, we are more likely to stay motivated and committed, even when faced with challenges. This alignment helps ensure that the pursuit of our goals contributes to our overall wellbeing, rather than leaving us feeling empty or dissatisfied.





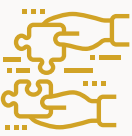

## Goals Vs. Values

There's a key difference between goals and values. While goals are specific outcomes we aim to achieve, values are the principles that guide our behavior and decisions. Think of goals as stops along a journey, while values are the direction in which you're traveling. Focusing on how you want to live your life, not just what you want to achieve, can lead to a more fulfilling journey.

Experts in motivation, like Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, suggest that goals tied to intrinsic values – such as personal growth, relationships, and health – lead to greater wellbeing and lasting motivation. These goals, which are inherently satisfying, differ from those driven by external rewards, like money or status. By aligning your goals with your values, you can ensure that your efforts contribute to a more meaningful and rewarding life.

## Remembering Our VIA Strengths

### THE VIA CLASSIFICATION OF STRENGTHS

					WISDOM	COURAGE	HUMANITY	JUSTICE	TEMPERANCE	TRANSCENDENCE
<b>PERSPECTIVE</b> People who know you consider you wise.	<b>LOVE OF LEARNING</b> You have a passion for mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge.	<b>JUDGMENT</b> You think things through and examine them from all sides.	<b>CURIOSITY</b> You like exploration and discovery.	<b>CREATIVITY</b> Thinking of new ways to do things is a crucial part of who you are.						
<b>ZEST</b> You approach everything you do with excitement and energy.	<b>PERSEVERANCE</b> You work hard to finish what you start.		<b>HONESTY</b> You live your life in a genuine and authentic way.	<b>BRAVERY</b> You do not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain.						
<b>SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE</b> You know how to fit in to different social situations.		<b>LOVE</b> You value close relationships with others.		<b>KINDNESS</b> You are kind and generous to others.						
<b>TEAMWORK</b> You excel as a member of a group.	<b>LEADERSHIP</b> You excel at encouraging a group to get things done.		<b>FAIRNESS</b> One of your abiding principles is to treat all people fairly.							
<b>SELF-REGULATION</b> You are a disciplined person.		<b>PRUDENCE</b> You are a careful person.	<b>HUMILITY</b> You do not seek the spotlight and others value your modesty.	<b>FORGIVENESS</b> You forgive those who have done you wrong.						
<b>SPIRITUALITY</b> Your beliefs shape your actions and are a source of comfort to you.	<b>HUMOR</b> Bringing smiles to other people is important to you.	<b>HOPE</b> You expect the best in the future, and you work to achieve it.	<b>GRATITUDE</b> You are aware of good things that happen and don't take them for granted.	<b>APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY + EXCELLENCE</b> You notice and appreciate beauty and excellence in all domains of life.						

A practical way to explore your values is by using the VIA Character Strengths survey, developed by positive psychology researchers Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman. As we explored in the Engagement session, the VIA framework identifies 24 character strengths that are valued across cultures, such as kindness, perseverance, and gratitude. These strengths can offer valuable insights into your core values and help you align your goals with what truly matters to you.

Beyond the VIA Character Strengths, other frameworks also provide lists of values to consider. For example, here's a table with some common values that can help you clarify what drives your behavior and decisions. Understanding these values can serve as a foundation for setting meaningful goals and guiding your daily actions.

## Example Values

Value	Description
Achievement	Pursuing excellence and striving to accomplish goals in various areas of life.
Adventure	Seeking out new and exciting experiences; embracing change and uncertainty.
Authenticity	Being true to oneself; expressing one's genuine feelings and thoughts.
Balance	Maintaining a healthy equilibrium between work, play, rest, and personal life.
Compassion	Showing empathy, kindness, and care for others, especially in times of need.
Community	Being involved in and contributing to a group, society, or community.
Courage	Facing fears, taking risks, and standing up for what is right.
Creativity	Engaging in imaginative thinking; bringing new ideas and concepts to life.
Curiosity	Having a desire to learn, explore, and understand new things.
Fairness	Treating others with justice and equality; valuing impartiality and objectivity.
Family	Prioritizing relationships and connections with family members.
Freedom	Valuing independence and autonomy; making choices that align with personal desires.
Generosity	Giving time, energy, or resources to help others without expecting anything in return.

Value	Description
Gratitude	Appreciating what you have; recognizing and acknowledging the good in life.
Growth	Continually developing and improving oneself personally and professionally.
Health	Prioritizing physical and mental wellbeing through lifestyle choices.
Honesty	Being truthful, sincere, and transparent in your actions and words.
Humility	Recognizing one's limitations and valuing the strengths and contributions of others.
Humor	Finding joy in life; using laughter and play to connect with others and cope with challenges.
Integrity	Adhering to moral and ethical principles; being consistent in values and actions.
Justice	Advocating for fairness, equality, and rights in society.
Kindness	Being friendly, generous, and considerate to others.
Knowledge	Valuing education and the pursuit of learning and understanding.
Love	Valuing deep affection and connection with others; prioritizing close relationships.
Mindfulness	Being present and fully engaged in the moment, with a non-judgmental awareness.
Patience	Tolerating delay or hardship without frustration; understanding the importance of timing.
Perseverance	Persisting in the face of challenges and difficulties; maintaining effort over time.
Respect	Valuing the dignity of others; treating people with consideration and honor.
Responsibility	Being accountable for one's actions; fulfilling obligations and duties.
Security	Valuing stability, safety, and predictability in life.
Service	Contributing to the wellbeing of others; acting in the service of others or society.
Spirituality	Seeking a connection with something greater than oneself; valuing religious or spiritual beliefs.
Trust	Valuing reliability and faith in others; fostering trust in relationships.
Wisdom	Applying knowledge, experience, and insight to make sound decisions.



## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ Which of these values immediately stand out to you as priorities in your own life?

- ▶ Are you enacting these values regularly? Why or why not?

- ▶ What might be some of the values of the people around you? How might this influence you?

## Goals That Matter

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ What is your current approach to setting goals? Reflect on whether your goals align with your values and how effective this approach has been in helping you achieve what you want.

- ▶ On a scale of 1–10, how effective has it been in helping you achieve what you want? Consider whether your goals have brought you fulfillment both during and after their completion.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
(Not effective)						(Very effective)					

- ▶ Did these goals bring you fulfillment both during and after their completion? Why or why not? Think about the role your values played in the satisfaction you felt.

## Are We Setting The Right Goals?

Have you ever set a goal based on what others expect of you or what society says you should achieve, only to find that reaching it doesn't bring the satisfaction you hoped for? This often happens when our goals aren't aligned with our core values or lack clarity and focus. It's crucial to set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

Our goals should match our deepest values. When our goals don't align with what truly matters to us, we might achieve them but still feel unfulfilled. This disconnect can lead to burnout or a sense of emptiness because the goals we're pursuing don't resonate with our true selves.

Goals should serve as milestones on a path guided by our values. This approach ensures that our goals help create a meaningful and purposeful life rather than just being tasks to check off a list.

## Job Crafting As Goal Support

Job crafting is a powerful way to align your work with your core values. It involves making intentional changes to the tasks you perform, the relationships you engage in, the purpose behind your work, the environment in which you work, and how you manage your time. By experimenting with these elements, you can create a work experience that is more fulfilling and aligned with what matters most to you.

Remember, a job can mean more than just typical work. It can include any role or responsibility that contributes to your daily life and sense of purpose.

For example, if **creativity** is one of your core values, you might consider these changes:

- ▶ **What (Tasks):** Seek out or create opportunities to work on projects that require innovative thinking or problem-solving. You might also introduce new methods or tools that allow you to express your creativity more fully.
- ▶ **Who (Relationships):** Collaborate with others who inspire creativity, or mentor others in creative processes, fostering an environment where creative ideas are encouraged and valued.
- ▶ **Why (Purpose):** Reframe your tasks by focusing on how they contribute to the larger creative goals of your organization or the impact your creativity has on others.

- ▶ **Where (Environment):** Modify your environment to include elements that stimulate creative thinking, such as art, music, or even the arrangement of your desk.
- ▶ **When (Time):** Allocate specific times of day when you feel most creative to work on tasks that require creative thinking, ensuring you're at your best during those periods.

If **service** is a core value, here's how you might adjust your approach:

- ▶ **What (Tasks):** Volunteer to take on tasks that involve helping others directly, such as assisting with community outreach, mentoring others, or providing support in areas that benefit those around you.
- ▶ **Who (Relationships):** Strengthen relationships with individuals who benefit from your support, or connect with others who share your commitment to helping and making a positive impact.
- ▶ **Why (Purpose):** Focus on the impact of your work on others, reminding yourself of the difference your service makes in their lives or in the community.
- ▶ **Where (Environment):** Adjust your environment to be more welcoming and supportive of those you serve, such as making it more accessible or comfortable for individuals you assist or work with.
- ▶ **When (Time):** Schedule your most service-oriented tasks during times when you can be most attentive and present, ensuring you're fully engaged in those moments.

As these examples show, when we align our daily actions more closely with our values, we're more likely to experience greater satisfaction and a deeper sense of accomplishment in our work.

## Creating Valuable Goals

To help us create valuable goals that we want to stick with, we've created a Valuable Goals Template for you to complete. Combining the principles of SMART goals, values-aligned goal setting, and job crafting, this template offers a comprehensive approach to reaching your goals by helping you to identify:

- ▶ **Your Objective:** Making sure that your objective is specific, actionable, and clear ensures that you know exactly what you're aiming for and how to get there.
- ▶ **The Relevant PERMAH Pillar:** Identify which aspect of your wellbeing the goal supports helps you focus, motivate, and measure your outcomes.
- ▶ **Why:** Understand why this goal is important to you and how it aligns with your values helps you stay the course.

- ▶ **What “Done” Looks Like:** Define what success looks like for this goal will give you both a clear target and a clear moment to know that you’ve achieved it.
- ▶ **Support:** You don’t have to go it alone! As we learned from our job crafting lessons, by identifying the resources, people, or tools that will help you achieve the goal, we likely improve both the final outcome and the journey getting there.
- ▶ **Celebration:** As we discovered through our Rooted Routine practice, viscerally celebrating our small wins helps keep us motivated and boosts our confidence.

## The Valuable Goals Template

What is one small, playful goal you could set using the Valuable Goals Template? Have a go now. There are no wrong answers!

<b>Objective</b> (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound)	
<b>PERMAH Pillar/s This Supports</b> Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, Health.	
<b>Why?</b> What values does this contribute to? Why does it matter?	
<b>Values</b> What personal values/strengths will help me do this?	
<b>What Does “Done” Look Like?</b> By when? Where? Who?	

<b>Supports</b> What/Why/Who/Where/When?	
<b>Celebration</b> How will I immediately embody a celebration of my success?	

## Striving & Savoring

### The Journey & The Destination

Achievement is usually viewed as the outcome of our hard work, but studies show that the process of working toward our goals is just as important as reaching them. Enjoying and fully experiencing positive moments along the way, known as savoring, helps keep us motivated and boosts our overall wellbeing as we strive toward our goals.

Savoring is about being present and mindful during the journey, allowing us to find joy and satisfaction in the process, not just the outcome. By staying connected to the positive aspects of our journey, we can make the pursuit of our goals a more fulfilling experience.

### Step-By-Step Guide: “Taking In The Good”

Rick Hanson’s “taking in the good” exercise is a simple yet powerful way to savor positive experiences and build up a sense of happiness, resilience, and wellbeing. This practice helps you focus on and absorb the good moments in your life, whether they’re big accomplishments or small, everyday joys. Here’s how you can do it:

#### Step 1: Notice The Good

Start by paying attention to positive experiences as they happen. This could be something small, like the warmth of the sun on your face, a kind word from a colleague, or the satisfaction of completing a task. It could also be a more significant moment, like achieving a goal or sharing a meaningful connection with someone. The key is to be mindful and aware of these positive moments as they occur.

## Step 2: Enrich The Experience

Once you've noticed a positive experience, take a moment to really savor it. Stay with the experience a bit longer than you normally would, and let it fill your awareness. Focus on the details. What do you see, hear, feel, or even smell? Let the experience grow in your mind, becoming richer and more vivid. Try to feel it in your body, letting it deepen and intensify.

## Step 3: Absorb The Good

Next, consciously absorb the positive experience. Imagine that the good feelings and sensations are sinking into you, like warmth soaking into your skin. Visualize the experience being stored in your mind and body, becoming a part of you. This step is about letting the positive experience really take root, helping it to stay with you longer.

## Step 4: Reflect And Repeat

Finally, reflect on the practice and how it felt. Notice any changes in your mood or mindset. The more you practice taking in the good, the more natural it will become. Over time, this exercise can help you build a reservoir of positive emotions and memories that support your resilience and overall wellbeing.

By regularly practicing taking in the good, you can train your brain to focus more on positive experiences, helping you to build lasting inner resources that enhance your life and increase your ability to handle challenges.

## Rapid Reflection

- How was that experience of taking in the good?

- ▶ What did you bring to mind?

- ▶ How did you take in the good (with your thoughts, body sensations, hearing, smell, and so on)?

## Smart Striving

While savoring is important for keeping us motivated and happy, striving – taking consistent, purposeful actions toward our goals – is equally crucial. James Clear, in his book *Atomic Habits*, talks about the power of making small, consistent improvements to achieve long-term success. By focusing on small, manageable changes, we can make significant progress over time.

BJ Fogg's research on behavior change supports this, too. His Tiny Habits method suggests that starting with simple, easy actions can build momentum and lead to bigger changes. This is especially useful if you feel overwhelmed by big goals or struggle to stay motivated.



By blending savoring with smart striving, you can create a balanced path to reaching your goals that is both sustainable and enjoyable. This way, you can appreciate the journey while steadily moving forward, finding satisfaction in both the process and the achievement.

## Daily Striving Sheet

The Daily Striving Sheet is a useful tool that combines the ideas of savoring, daily goal-setting, and small habits into one easy-to-use system. It's designed to help you set and accomplish your daily goals in a way that reflects your values, boosts your wellbeing, and allows you to enjoy the process as you work toward your goals.

The Daily Striving Sheet includes the following sections:

- ▶ **Three Main Goals:** Identify the three most important goals you want to achieve each day.
- ▶ **Values I'll Enact And How:** Specify which values you will honor in the pursuit of these goals and how you will do so.
- ▶ **Rest & Recovery:** Plan how you will rest and recover throughout the day to maintain your energy and focus.
- ▶ **Support I Might Need:** Identify any support you might need from others to achieve your goals.
- ▶ **How I'll Take In The Good:** Plan how you will savor the positive aspects of your day, both big and small.
- ▶ **How I'll Celebrate My Wins:** Identify how you will celebrate your achievements, no matter how small.

You can use this to ensure your daily efforts are aligned with your values, support your wellbeing, and allow you to savor the journey toward your goals.

## Your Turn

Take some time to complete your own Daily Striving Sheet by planning out your day tomorrow. If you don't know your full schedule, that's OK. Get playful with it and enjoy the process of planning a day you'll both be proud of and enjoy.

My 3 Main Goals	
The Values I'll Enact	
How I'll Rest & Recover	
Support I Might Need	
How I'll Take In The Good	
How I'll Celebrate My Wins	

To see the real benefits of this practice, why not try incorporating it into your morning routine for the next week? It may just set you up for the success you've been striving for.

## Rapid Reflection

- Reflect on your last accomplishment. How did you feel during and after achieving it? Think about whether you took the time to savor that moment or if you quickly moved on to the next task.

- ▶ How can you take in the good in your daily life? This might include simple actions like pausing to appreciate a beautiful sunset, enjoying a moment of quiet after a busy day, or celebrating small wins.

## Struggle & Self-Compassion

### The Backwards Alphabet

Use the space provided to write as much of the alphabet as you can in 30 seconds. The fun part? You have to write it backwards. Go!

Attempt #1	
Attempt #2	

### Rapid Reflection

- ▶ How did you feel during that exercise?

- ▶ What kind of things were you thinking to yourself as you tried to complete the task?

- ▶ What sort of things have you said to yourself in the past when you've fallen short or slipped up?

## The Misunderstood Inner Critic

Many of us are all too familiar with the inner critic – the voice inside that tells us we're not good enough, that we've failed, or that we'll never reach our goals. While this voice is often harsh, its intention isn't to harm us but to protect us from failure, rejection, or disappointment. However, excessive self-criticism can be counterproductive, leading to increased anxiety and depression and making it harder to achieve our goals.

The inner critic is often a misguided way of trying to protect us. However, instead of pushing us to get better, self-criticism usually weakens our confidence and resilience. This can lead to a negative cycle where the fear of failure holds us back, stopping us from taking the risks needed to reach our goals.

## Self-Compassion Isn't A Path To Complacency

Self-compassion isn't about being lenient or making excuses for our mistakes. It's about showing ourselves the same kindness and understanding we would give to a good friend. Research by Kristin Neff shows that self-compassion is connected to stronger emotional resilience, less anxiety and depression, and improved overall wellbeing.

Brené Brown, another researcher known for her work on vulnerability and shame, also highlights the importance of self-compassion in staying motivated and avoiding burnout. Her work suggests that people who practice self-compassion are more likely to take responsibility for their actions and engage in behaviors that support personal growth and wellbeing. This is because self-compassionate individuals are motivated by a desire to improve, rather than by a fear of failure or criticism.

## Defining Self-Compassion

Kristin Neff defines self-compassion as being made up of three main elements: mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness.

- ▶ **Mindfulness** is about being aware of our thoughts and feelings without judging them.
- ▶ **Common humanity** is the recognition that everyone experiences suffering and imperfection; it's part of being human.
- ▶ **Self-kindness** involves treating ourselves with warmth and understanding when we're going through tough times.

Research shows that self-compassion can greatly improve our mental health and wellbeing. Studies have found that self-compassion is linked to lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, along with higher life satisfaction and emotional resilience. These results suggest that self-compassion is a powerful way to boost our overall wellbeing and handle life's challenges more effectively.

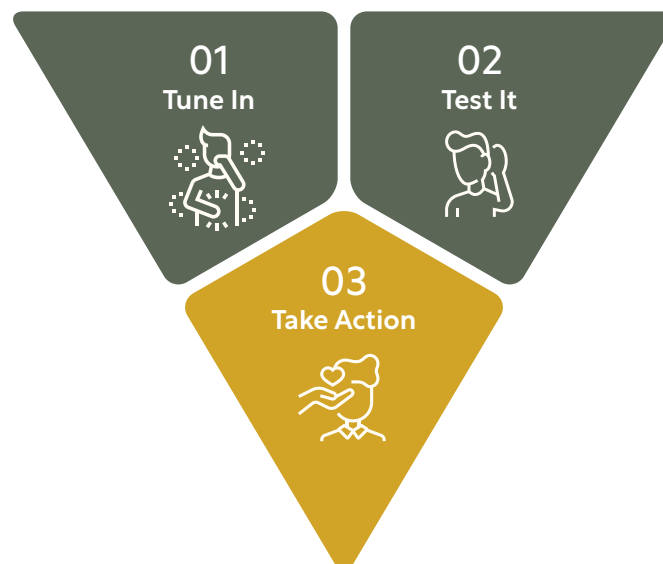
## Self-Compassion Vs. Self-Judgment

To better understand self-compassion, it's helpful to compare it with self-judgment, which is its opposite. While self-compassion involves treating ourselves with kindness and understanding, self-judgment involves harshly criticizing ourselves for our perceived failures or shortcomings. Here's how they differ:

Self-Compassion	Self-Judgment
<b>Mindfulness</b> Observing our negative thoughts and emotions with openness and clarity, allowing them to be held in mindful awareness.	<b>Over-Identification</b> Getting swept up in negative self-narratives or resisting the body's signs of struggle.
<b>Common Humanity</b> Recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy are part of the shared human experience.	<b>Isolation</b> Feeling alone and ashamed in our struggles, leading to a sense of separation from others.
<b>Self-Kindness</b> Being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate.	<b>Self-Judgment</b> Shaming or suppressing our pain, or harshly criticizing ourselves for perceived shortcomings.

By understanding these differences, we can start to cultivate greater self-compassion and reduce the impact of self-judgment on our wellbeing.

## Self-Compassion Steps



Kristin Neff emphasizes the importance of tuning in to our bodies, testing our self-talk, and taking kind action to meet our needs. Here's a practical way to apply her teachings through the self-compassion steps:

## Tune In

- ▶ Notice the signs of struggle in your mind or body. Engage all your senses to become fully aware of what you're experiencing. What signs of struggle are you noticing?

## Test

- ▶ Pay attention to how you're speaking to yourself. Would your words pass the "best friend test"? What would someone who loves and cares about you say in this situation?

## Take Kind Action

- ▶ Consider what you need in this moment. Tune into your body to determine how you can best support yourself with kindness and understanding. What action can you take right now to be kind to your body and mind?

By following these steps whenever you find yourself struggling, you can begin to cultivate greater self-compassion and reduce the impact of self-criticism on your wellbeing.

## Rapid Reflection

- ▶ In your own time, consider your own relationship with self-compassion: How do you usually respond to setbacks (beyond silly alphabet games)?

- ▶ What might change if you approached your struggles with more self-compassion?



# Creating A Wellbeing Ripple

## Where We've Been

As we reach the final session of the Wellbeing X program, let's take a moment to reflect on the journey we've shared. Each session has built on the previous one, equipping you with the knowledge, skills, and tools to enhance your wellbeing and create positive change in your life. Here's a visual recap of what we've covered (with a step-by-step detailed overview below):



## Session 1: Wellbeing 101

Humans have been trying to define wellbeing for centuries. In this session, we explored the foundational concepts of wellbeing and established a shared understanding using the PERMAH framework – Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health. We also introduced the concept of the Wellbeing Ecosystem, which includes individual, team, and community wellbeing, and discussed the importance of small habits in sustaining our overall wellbeing.

Key points included:

- ▶ Understanding what wellbeing means
- ▶ Learning the PERMAH framework
- ▶ Exploring the Wellbeing Ecosystem
- ▶ Recognizing the power of Rooted Routines

## Session 2: Health

Although Health is the sixth element in PERMAH, it forms the foundation for all other aspects of wellbeing. We discussed the small but mighty changes you can make to improve how you eat, move, sleep, and rest and recover, ensuring you have the energy and focus to pursue wellbeing in other areas of your life.

Key points included:

- ▶ Reflecting on your health habits
- ▶ Exploring how to eat well and move mindfully
- ▶ Understanding the importance of sleep
- ▶ Discovering how rest and recovery prevent burnout
- ▶ Creating a Rooted Routine for Health

## Session 3: Positive Emotions

In this session, we went beyond just focusing on “positive” emotions. We delved into the role all emotions play in shaping our wellbeing. You learned how to identify and mindfully respond to your emotions, increasing your ability to make choices that enhance your wellbeing.

Key points included:

- ▶ Reflecting on your current emotional experiences
- ▶ Understanding how both “good” and “bad” emotions contribute to a meaningful life
- ▶ Learning to use emotions as data to make value-based decisions
- ▶ Creating a Rooted Routine for Emotion

## Session 4: Engagement

This session focused on how strengths enhance wellbeing, performance, and connection. You identified your strengths and learned how to balance them to achieve a state of flow – a deep engagement and satisfaction in your activities.

Key points included:

- ▶ Reflecting on your strengths
- ▶ Understanding what strengths are and how they contribute to flow
- ▶ Learning to balance your strengths to avoid overuse or underuse
- ▶ Creating a Rooted Routine for Strengths

## Session 5: Relationships

We explored the role of relationships in building and sustaining wellbeing, performance, and a sense of belonging. You learned about the impact of high-quality connections (HQCs), identified barriers to connection, and explored the importance of psychological safety.

Key points included:

- ▶ Understanding why connection is vital for health and happiness
- ▶ Experiencing the power of HQCs in creating strong teams and supporting individual and community wellbeing
- ▶ Identifying common barriers to connection
- ▶ Learning about psychological safety as the foundation for creativity and belonging
- ▶ Creating a Rooted Routine for Relationships

## Session 6: Meaning

In this session, we explored the vital role that meaning plays in our overall wellbeing and how to actively cultivate a sense of purpose in your life. You learned how to balance your passions and craft your work to align more closely with your strengths and values.

Key points included:

- ▶ Reflecting on your experiences of meaning
- ▶ Understanding the role of meaning in health, happiness, and resilience
- ▶ Learning about the difference between harmonious and obsessive passions
- ▶ Exploring job crafting to align your work with your values and strengths
- ▶ Creating a Rooted Routine for Meaning

## Session 7: Accomplishment

In this final session, we focused on accomplishment – how to set and achieve goals that are meaningful, aligned with your values, and deeply satisfying. We also covered the importance of savoring the journey, practicing self-compassion, and creating a Wellbeing Ripple to share your newfound knowledge and skills with others.

Key points included:

- ▶ Understanding why accomplishment matters and how some accomplishments are more meaningful than others
- ▶ Learning about the role of values in goal setting
- ▶ Exploring effective goal-setting practices
- ▶ Balancing goal striving with savoring the journey
- ▶ Practicing self-compassion in the face of setbacks
- ▶ Creating a Wellbeing Ripple

## Creating A Wellbeing Ripple

You’ve been practicing Rooted Routines yourself, and now it’s time to share the wellbeing with those closest to you. You’ll create your Wellbeing Ripple in a workplace, community, or group setting of your choice. This can be as simple as asking, “What went well?” during a conversation or introducing others to the VIA Character Strengths Survey. Unsure where to start? Review this workbook or the summary for some inspiration.

To make it easy, we’ve created a step-by-step plan to help you clarify and plan your Wellbeing Ripple. Take some time to reflect on each prompt and note down your ideas. Below is your fun first draft to scribble all over and play. Feel free to re-create this and re-draft as much as you like. But remember, this is a Wellbeing Program – don’t get too serious about it. Savor the striving.

## Wellbeing Ripple: Scrappy First Draft

Who do I most want to help? Is it at the me, we, or us level?		
Which PERMAH pillar/s might they need help with (and how do I know this)?		
Based on this, what Wellbeing Action (Ripple) will I try?		
Why do I want to help these people in this way?		
How will I share my Wellbeing Ripple with them? In person? Over video conference? Via email/ newsletter? On a noticeboard?		
When will I do this? What does "done" look like?		
What strengths and values can I draw upon to accomplish this Wellbeing Ripple?		
What support might I need (resources, tools, or relationships can I draw from)?		
What are my next action steps?	Task	Due Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
How will you savor the process and the outcomes?		

## Your Wellbeing Ripple Plan

Who do I most want to help? Is it at the me, we, or us level?		
Which PERMAH pillar/s might they need help with (and how do I know this)?		
Based on this, what Wellbeing Action (Ripple) will I try?		
Why do I want to help these people in this way?		
How will I share my Wellbeing Ripple with them? In person? Over video conference? Via email/ newsletter? On a noticeboard?		
When will I do this? What does "done" look like?		
What strengths and values can I draw upon to accomplish this Wellbeing Ripple?		
What support might I need (resources, tools, or relationships can I draw from)?		
What are my next action steps?	Task	Due Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
How will you savor the process and the outcomes?		

Once you've completed your Wellbeing Ripple in your workplace or community, please run your final Reflection Round below.

## Reflection Round

When it has come to playfully experimenting with creating a Wellbeing Ripple in your chosen community:

- ▶ Who did you choose to create your Wellbeing Ripple for?

- ▶ What Wellbeing Ripple did you choose to create?

- ▶ Why did we choose this Wellbeing Ripple for this group?

- ▶ What has worked well?



- ▶ Where did you struggle?

- ▶ What are you learning about caring for wellbeing?

- ▶ Based on this, what could you try next time?

## Final Reflections

- ▶ What was the most enjoyable part of the course for you?

- What was the most meaningful part of the course?

- One thing you're most proud of?

As you conclude the Wellbeing X program, take a moment to thank yourself for your dedication to learning and sharing your wellbeing knowledge and skills with others. Remember, even the smallest ripple can create waves of positive change.