

Life Wheel Concept: Focus on What Counts Most Right Now

Each of us is a unique person with a distinct collection of values, beliefs, needs and desires that describes who we are and defines what is important to us. We are all complex individuals whose lives consist of many aspects which demand our daily focus and attention. To live productive, goal-directed lives, we need to be acutely aware of what really matters to us today and what we ardently desire for the future. This awareness forms the basis for setting short-term and long-term, tangible and intangible goals for each important area of our lives.

Setting goals, however, is only the *first step* for living a successful, rewarding life. Identifying what really matters to us today and what we ardently desire for our future is only the blueprint or prescription for achieving the outcomes we desire. Our personal growth depends greatly on our ability to examine the parts of our individual lives to see if they add up to the total person we each want to be. The next critical component is the development of an effective action plan listing the specific actions to be taken, the challenges to be overcome and the deadlines to be met. Without a detailed, written plan for goal achievement, any approach toward achieving personal success amounts to little more than a *wish list*. [more about goal-setting](http://symbiontperformance.com/id113.html) [Link to <http://symbiontperformance.com/id113.html>]

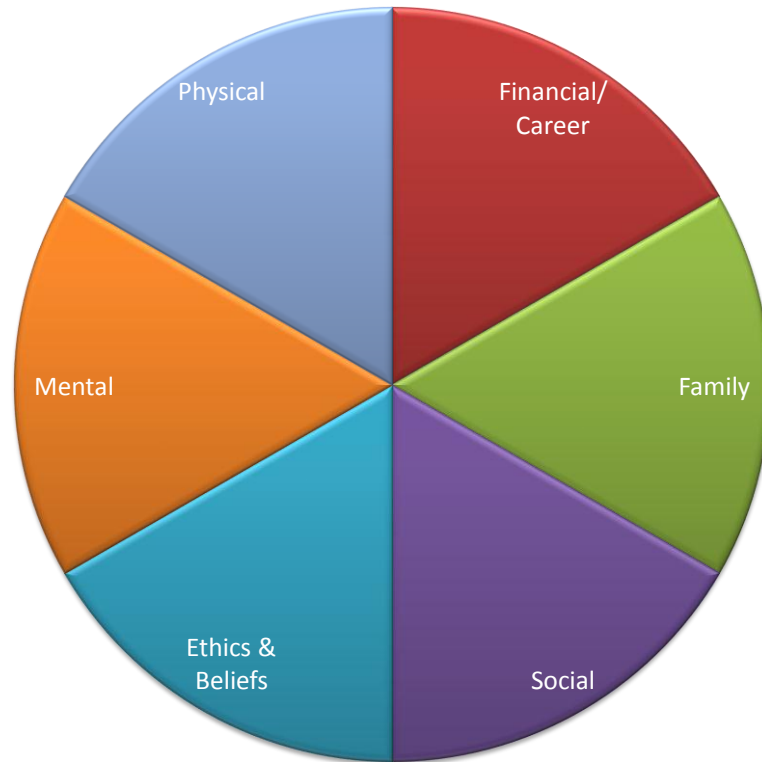
Since our time is limited, it is critically important that that we allocate our thoughts and energy in a manner that is appropriate to our immediate needs and concerns and to be confident that our daily activities are aligned with our current and long-range goals. Furthermore, we should continually assess our daily activities to ensure that we are devoting appropriate time and effort to those aspects of our lives that we hold dear and are on track to achieve our life objectives.

But how can we be sure that our daily activities are indeed on track for achieving what we want to achieve in the various areas of our lives?

While there can be any number of approaches for categorizing the key areas of life that blend together to form a total person, the “Life Wheel” model shown below can be a useful tool for identifying what is important and whether we are allocating our time and energy in an effective manner.

This “Life Wheel” depicted below is divided into six life areas: *Financial/Career, Family, Social, Ethics & Beliefs, Mental, and Physical*. It is presented here as a suggested model for organizing the major aspects of one’s life. If you don’t particularly feel that it represents an effective model for categorizing the important areas of *your* life, then revise it as you see fit. The important thing is that you come up with some form of schematic to graphically display your primary areas of focus.

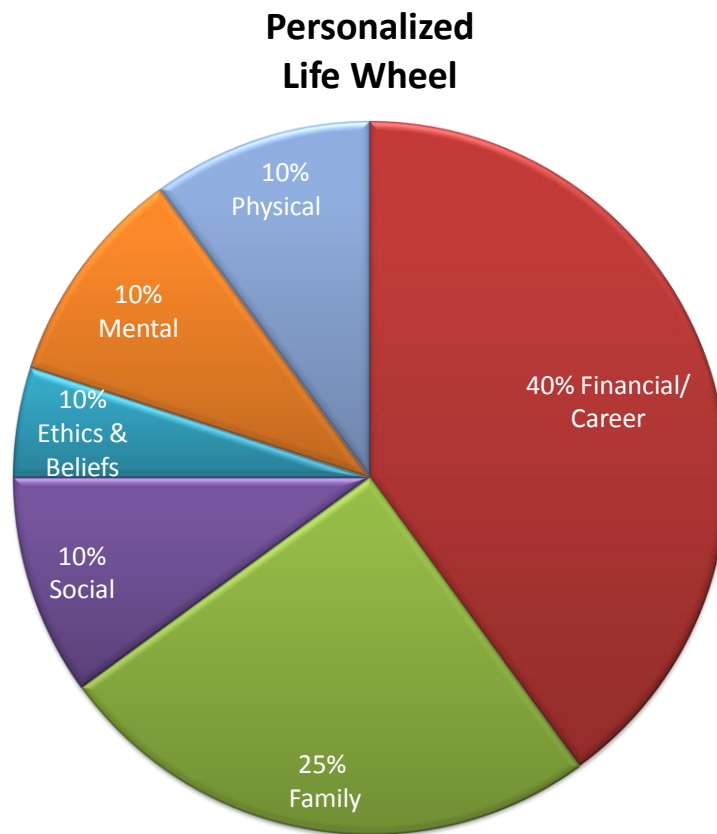
Life Wheel



This life wheel has the six areas equally divided reflecting an equal emphasis on each life area. While this allocation might be considered to be an *ideal arrangement*, it is probably not a realistic or practical representation of most people's lives and it is not intended to convey that idea. It is only presented as a starting point for discussion. Clearly, different people will place greater or lesser value and importance on different life areas. At different points in our lives, our focus will probably be more on some areas and less on others reflecting our circumstances at the time, and our long range goals will also likely reflect a life wheel that is puts a disproportionate emphasis on certain areas.

The life wheel concept is most useful if you create a series of them with one reflecting your current goals and others reflecting your focus at various future points in your life. By creating these life wheels you will have a powerful visual tool for organizing your personal success efforts that will help you crystallize your thinking and make it easier for you to visualize your desired outcomes. This visual image will also help reinforce your commitment to your goals. I find that Microsoft Excel is a relatively simple tool to use for creating these life wheels. Feel free to contact me if you would like assistance in creating a life wheel.

The following graph is an example of what a *personalized life wheel* might look like.



Time and Effort Allocation

In addition to helping you more effectively visualize the key areas of your life, a personalized life wheel provides a clear guide to your planning and organization. The time and effort you devote to a particular life area *should be directly proportional* to the importance of that area and the goals associated with it. An accurately constructed life wheel, then, answers the question posed above, namely: “How can I be sure that my daily activities are on track for achieving what I want to achieve in the various areas of my life?”

Assuming that each of us has about 110 waking hours available every week, this particular life wheel includes a 40% focus on financial/career reflecting about 8 hours a day 5 days a week at a job or profession, four hours a day (25%) devoted to family and about one and a half hours a day (10%) allocated to physical conditioning. If this were a life wheel of a college student, it might include a very large chunk of time and effort devoted to mental and little or none to family.

Take-Away

By creating a life wheel, especially for your current circumstances, you will significantly clarify your current intended areas of focus and will then be able to continually assess your daily activities to ensure that you are devoting appropriate time and effort to each of those areas of your life you hold dear and are on track to achieve your life goals.