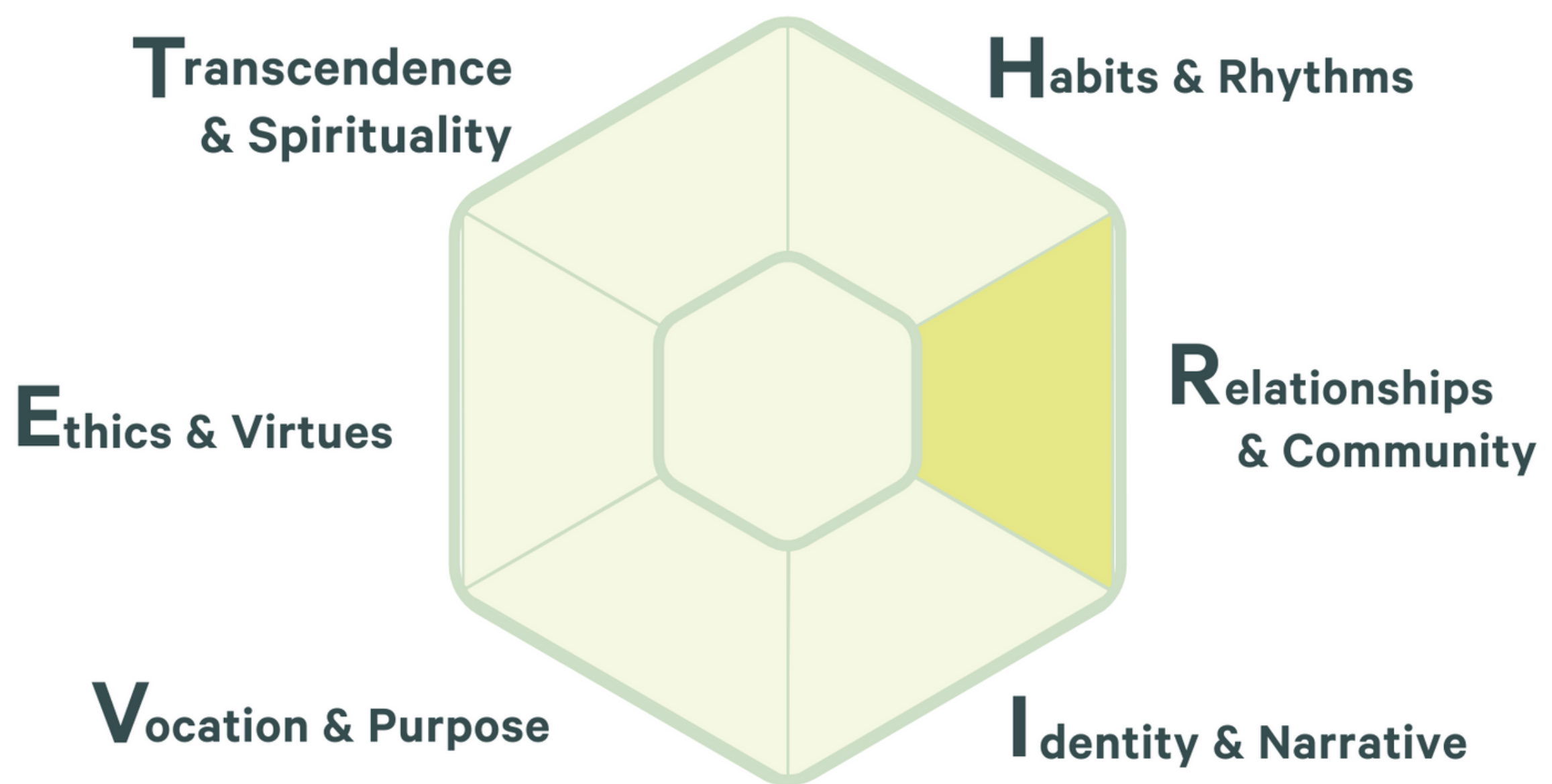


THRIVE Practices for Spiritual Health



Learn More
Explore



Table of Contents

Introduction: THRIVING Framework

Chapter 1: Transcendence & Spirituality

Chapter 2: Habits & Rhythms

Chapter 3: Relationships & Community

Chapter 4: Identity & Narrative

Chapter 5: Vocation & Purpose

Chapter 6: Ethics & Virtues

Epilogue: Closing Words



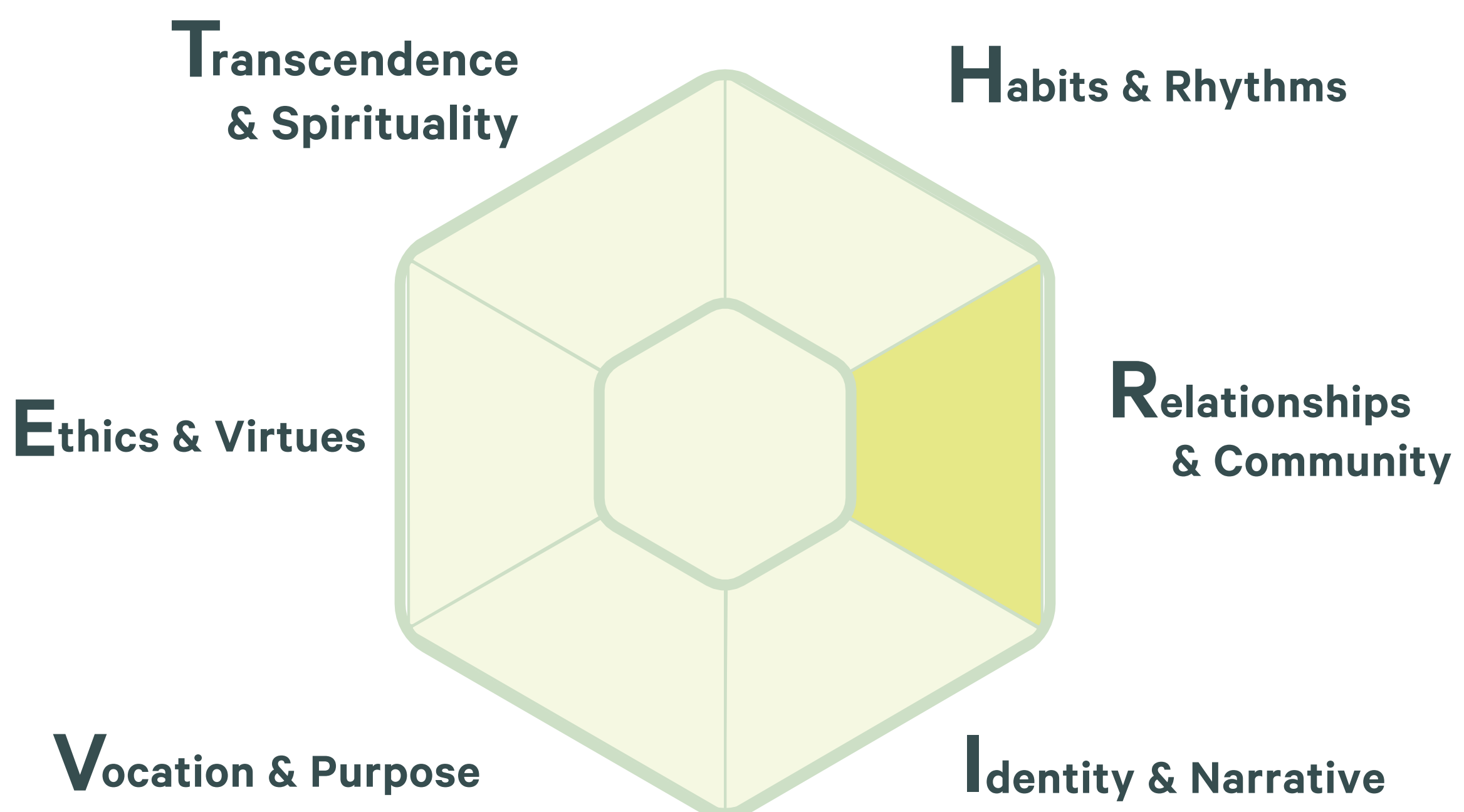
Introduction

Like maintaining our physical health, our spiritual health requires practices and exercise as we grow and change through the journey of life. We have the power to make choices about our lives and the habits we form. Healthy spirituality involves choosing practices that help us become more wholly alive and thrive. There are many different types of practices, but the practices included in this guide help ground us, connect us, and direct us toward purposeful endeavors. Grounding practices regulate our attention, emotions, thoughts, behaviors, so that we are able to set meaningful goals. We need practices that help us connect more deeply with ourselves, others, and God or the transcendent. Finally, we need practices that direct us toward our purposes and to what matters most in our lives. Good practices help us become more agile in the face of change, resilient to the inevitable suffering in life, and also grow our capacities to love. The following are examples of practices to get you started on your exploration of spiritual health.

Read More

[Staying Grounded, Connected and Directed](#)

THRIVE Spiritual Health Framework



Chapter 1

Transcendence & Spirituality

Awareness of and connection to a source of invigorating love that inspires purpose

Transcendent Experiences

Attune to Divine

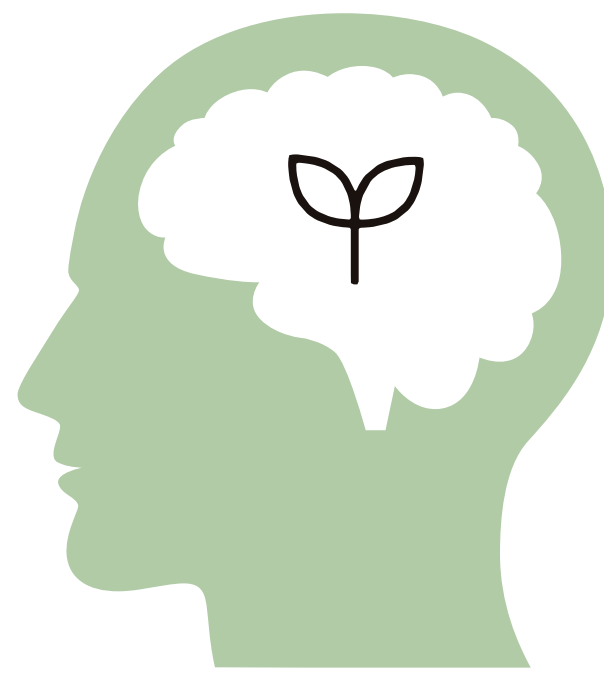
Sitting in silence, opened and attuned to the possibility of connection with the divine; prayer communal worship

Connect to Others

Connecting to others through spiritual community or fellowship through communal meals, worship, or acts of service

Attend to Beauty

Strolling along in nature, attending to art, the beauty of people, paying attention and attending to all of creation



Access Wisdom

Joining a faith or spiritual community in rituals like the sacrament of communion, reading sacred texts, lectio divina, or engage in embodied practices

Focus on Breath

Breathing and focusing on your inhale and exhale. Engage daily in a mindfulness practice, centering prayer, or other grounding practices

Learn More

Transcendence & Spirituality





A Practice: Moments of Transcendence

Explore something that is beyond-the-self (e.g., through the Divine, human connectedness, or nature) by engaging in one or all of the following:

Focus on Breath: Breathing and focusing on your inhale and exhale. Engage daily in a mindfulness practice, centering prayer, or other grounding practices.

Attune to Divine: Sitting in silence or walking in nature, opened and attuned to the possibility of connection with the Divine; prayer and communal worship.

Attend to Beauty: Observing nature, singing, dancing, attending to art, the beauty of people and all of creation.

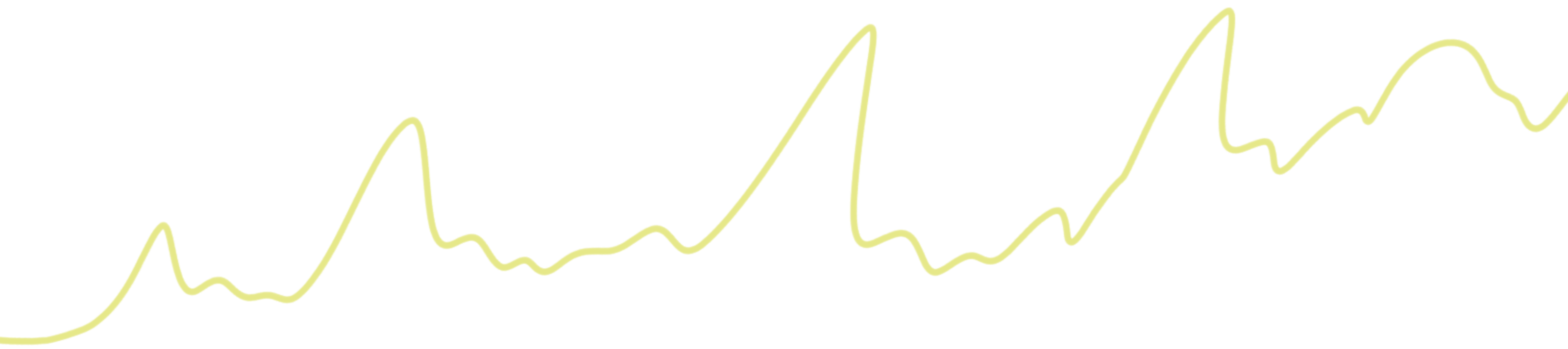
Access Wisdom: Traditions hold deep knowledge. Joining a faith or spiritual community in rituals such as the sacrament of communion, reading sacred texts, lectio divina, or engage in embodied practices.

Connect to Others: Connecting to others through fellowship, such as communal meals, worship, or acts of service.

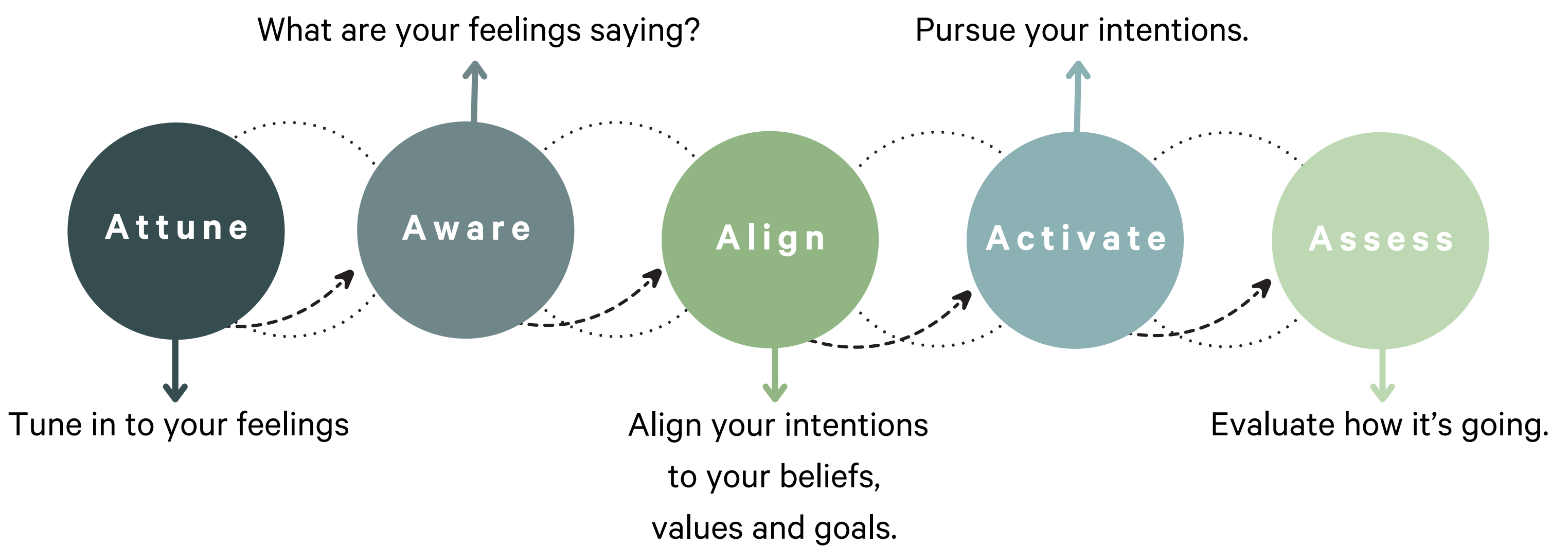
Chapter 2

Habits & Rhythms

Healthy spiritual practices and regular rhythms that allow us to slow down to gain insight, connect to love, and energize into purposeful endeavors.



Finding Agility Through the 5 A's



Learn More

Habits & Rhythm



The 5 A's of Agility

By Pamela Ebstyne King Ph.D.

1. Attune

Stop and pay attention to your body.

The body provides important clues about your emotional state. Look for tension. Do you have pain? Are you restless? Do you sense joy in your body? It's easier to notice where we feel pain or where we feel unbalanced. Try and attune to lightness, delight and joy as well as to the sources of upset. The following practices can help you attune to your emotions through your bodily sensations.

- Scan your body for places of tension.
- Take a 5-minute walk to limit distractions and tune into your emotions.
- Practice mindful breathing techniques. Take a deep inhale for five seconds, and slowly exhale for another 5 seconds. Repeat this exercise, extending your exhale for a few more seconds than your inhale.

Questions:

1) After you have quieted yourself and examined your bodily sensations, what did you notice? Examine what comes up without judgment.

2) Can you name any emotions that come up? Anger? Stress? Happiness? Joy? Try to give the feelings a name.

3) What might God, who knows you, loves you, and accepts you, notice in you?

4) Where do those feelings show up in your body (e.g., stiff neck, back pain, etc.)?



2. Aware

Reflect on what your emotions are telling you.

How do your emotions help you understand what matters most to you? Who or what brings you enduring joy or what gets in the way?

- Practice journaling daily. There's no wrong way to journal. Get started by dumping all your thoughts and feelings onto a page.
- Name and release your emotions in a safe and trusted space. When feeling overwhelmed, find a close, dependable friend, a licensed professional therapist, or a leader in your community who will support and listen to you without judgment.
- Accept your emotions without judgment. Avoid sweeping them under the rug.

Questions:

1) Approach your emotions with curiosity, compassion, and courage. What are your emotions telling you about how you are doing?

2) What are your current emotions telling you about what matters to you?

3) If you are not currently feeling joyful, take a moment to think back to a time when you did? Can you recall when and how joy showed up in your body?

4) What do your feelings tell you about what you value or think is right?

5) What gets in the way of experiencing more of what matters and brings you joy?

6) When you experience joy, what do you do? Who are you with? What are you working toward?

7) Conversely, examine the above questions when you feel grief, sorrow, upset, or outraged. Write down what you learn.



3. Align

Take active steps to align your actions and behaviors with your beliefs, values, and what matters most to you.

An important step to aligning our lives to our ideals, is not only being aware, but also creating space between our emotional response and our actions. It takes some practice. If you don't get it right, ask for guidance and forgiveness, then begin again.

- Prayer, meditation, or reading scripture can help us name our ideals and deepest beliefs.
- Practice introspection. Ask yourself on a daily basis whether your actions and decisions are aligned to your values and beliefs. Note any misalignments.

Questions:

- 1) Take a moment to name some of the values you aspire to and hope to embody. Examples of values are: kindness, loyalty, integrity, respect, among others.
- 2) Do your actions and behaviors match your values?
- 3) How do your daily experiences and emotions shed light on what you thought you knew about yourself?
- 4) Does reflecting on your emotions and bodily sensations suggest that you are in or out of alignment with your deepest values, passions, and interests?
- 5) What changes do you need to make? How might you intentionally choose to align your life a bit more closely to what God might be inviting you to?
- 6) Name 1-3 changes you might make that would allow you to be more aligned with what matters most to you.



4. Activate

Put into action the changes you identified to align your life to your values.

Take active steps to pursue change. In other words, “Just do it!” Stay connected with the people around you as you activate and explore your purpose.

- Explore your gifts, skills, and talents through meaning-making exercises, Strengths Finder, or other similar tools.
- Look to sources of joy for insight. How does joy give you insight into where you feel most purposeful?
- Find ways to contribute to your community. How can you use your gifts, skills, and talents to serve those around you?

5. Assess

Evaluate how it is going.

1) Based upon the 1-3 changes you identified in #3, identify practical things you can do to activate joy in your life and discover or pursue purpose. For example, if you noticed a passion or a strength, how might you pursue it more intentionally?

2) If you notice a relationship that deeply matters, how might you intentionally have more meaningful interaction with that person?

3) If there is a value or belief that is particularly meaningful, how can you live this out more specifically?

4) What are some ways that you can offer love to others or to God through the changes you make?



Are you able to access more joy in your life? Have you felt more of God's loving presence?

- Re-examine your goals. Where have you been? Where do you want to go?
- Be open to feedback. Ask a trusted and supportive friend for advice.
- Seek to understand yourself and avoid blame for mistakes made. Be honest with yourself.
- Where do you feel shame? Joy? Confusion?
- Write down some thoughts here. Be open to feedback.

Questions:

- 1) Who is holding you accountable? Who is on this Agility journey with you? Do they see you offering more love and experiencing more joy?
- 2) What have you learned about yourself and others? Avoid blame for mistakes made. Be honest with yourself.
- 3) Where did you feel most alive during this cycle?
- 4) How were you able to connect more deeply to the world around you?
- 5) Were you able to offer more love? What made the difference?

Chapter 3

Relationships & Community

Connections that provide a space of belonging where we can be fully known to ourselves and others and learn to give and receive love.

7 C's of Community



Coherence



Compassion



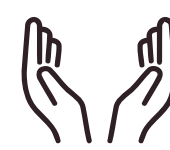
Caring



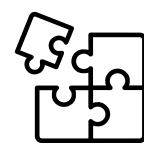
Common Values



Code



Contribution



Connecting

Learn More

Relationships & Community





36 Questions That Lead to Love and Closeness

By Susan Mangan Ph.D.

The following exercise was developed to foster a sense of closeness among peers by psychologist Arthur Aron and his colleagues. Find a family member, friend, neighbor, partner—anyone with whom you would like to become closer. Take turns answering the questions, but make sure to alternate the order. End the exercise with sustained eye contact.

Set 1

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
3. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?
4. What would constitute a “perfect” day for you?
5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
7. Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?
8. Name three things you and your partner appear to have in common.
9. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
11. Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible.
12. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?



Set 2

13. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
14. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?
15. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
16. What do you value most in a friendship?
17. What is your most treasured memory?
18. What is your most terrible memory?
19. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?
20. What does friendship mean to you?
21. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
22. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items.
23. How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most other people's?
24. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

Set 3

25. Make three true "we" statements each. For instance, "We are both in this room feeling..."
26. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share..."
27. If you were going to become a close friend with your partner, please share what would be important for them to know.
28. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.
29. Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.
30. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?
31. Tell your partner something that you like about them [already].
32. What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?
33. If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?
34. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
35. Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most disturbing? Why?
36. Share a personal problem and ask your partner's advice on how they might handle it. Also, ask your partner to reflect back to you how you seem to be feeling about the problem you have chosen.

Chapter 4

Identity & Narrative

Growing in clarity about who we are as a beloved, unique, embodied person.



Feel Emotional Storm

Pause & Breathe

Aware

Reframe

Embrace Mistakes &
Accept Imperfections

Learn more

Identity & Narrative





The Practice of Embracing Imperfections

By Kenneth Wang Ph.D.

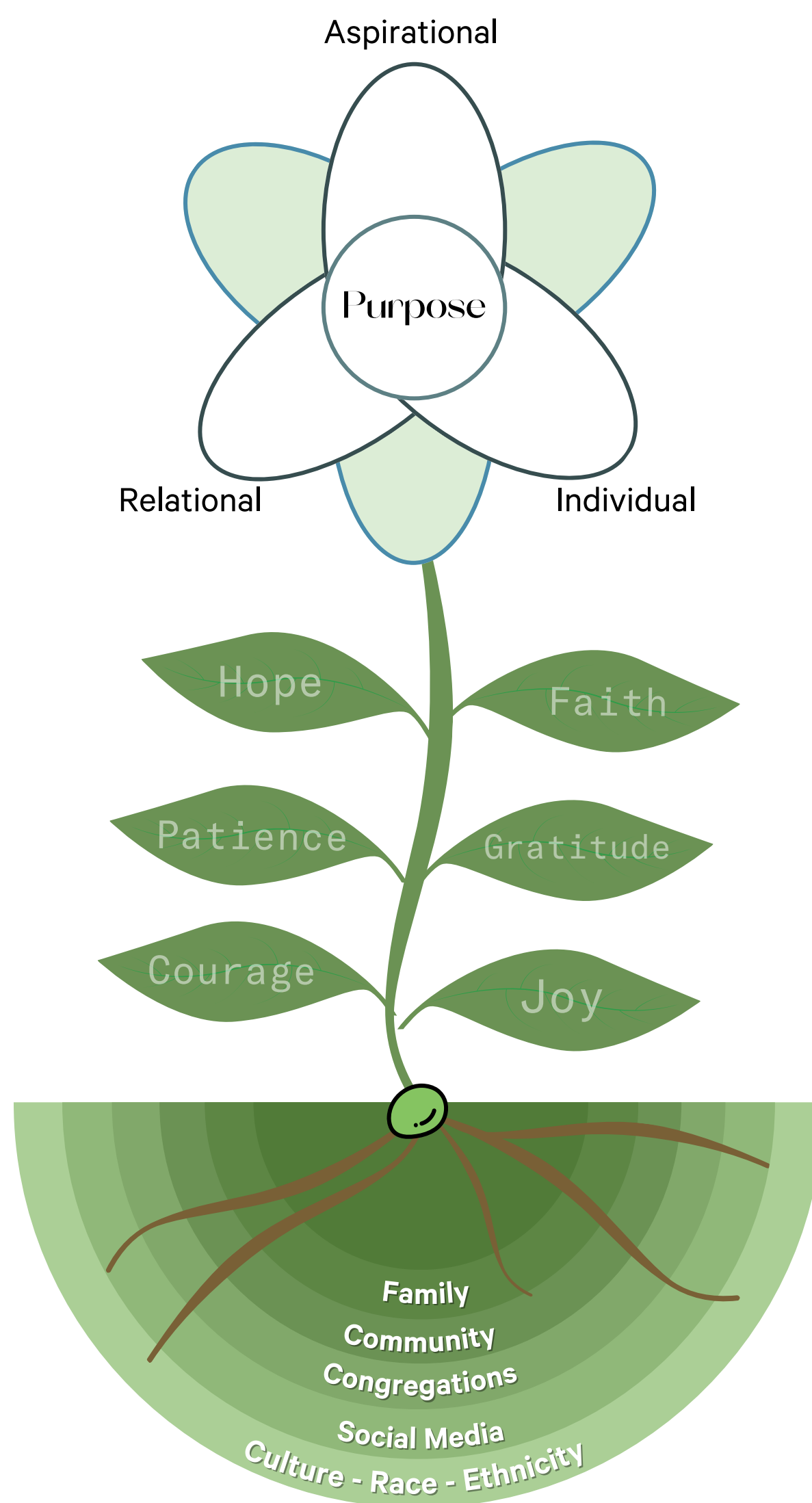
Perfectionism can be a superpower and lead to high standards and motivations. It can also be a kryptonite and paralyze us out of fear of making mistakes. When the inevitable mistakes or uncontrollable factors happen, we sometimes blame and shame ourselves, experience anxiety, ruminate, and even catastrophize. What to do?

1. **Feel the emotional storm** – it might show up in your body as a racing heart, a stomach ache, etc...
2. **Pause and Breath** – Simply focus on your breath and examine and name what you are feeling. Acknowledge what you are experiencing.
3. **Become aware** – Mindfully observe your pattern. Has it happened before? Do a self-study, and try not to judge.
4. **Reframe your mistakes as opportunities to learn** – this leads to a growth mindset. Do not shame yourself, but take this as an opportunity to claim yourself.
5. **Accept mistakes and embrace imperfections** – Give yourself grace, and recall the grace and love that God and others have for you. Celebrate the opportunity to grow. Make a practice out of forgiving yourself. Spiritual practices remind you that you are a beloved child of God..

Chapter 5

Vocation & Purpose

Contributing our strengths to the world
by living out our response to love.



Learn More

Vocation & Purpose





The Power of Purpose

By Pamela Ebstyne King, Ph.D.

We can discover purpose in many ways. One way is to reflect back on our unique experiences and capabilities through the lens of joy. Think about sources of joy in your life, and how those joys might direct your journey.

1. Sit quietly and take at least 5 deep, centering breaths. In your mind, go back to your childhood. What are some of your earliest memories of joy, delight, or just being really happy? What did you enjoy doing when you were a young person? List your top five activities.
2. Choose one of the activities - maybe the one that is most associated with positive feelings. Draw or doodle a quick sketch. Note a few specifics about this experience or activity that brought you joy?
3. Digging a little deeper—was it that you lost yourself in the flow of the activity? What were you connected to—the moment? The people? Being present and engaged with your body? Sensations? Movement? Creativity? Adventure? Be specific and write a few lines describing the source of enjoyment.



4. Imagine yourself in that moment or doing that activity—just be in that moment for a bit. What stands out for you? Thinking about the activity and the feelings of enjoyment - can you link any meaning to the activity? For example, if you loved baking with your grandmother, what was the source of joy? The connection with your grandmother? Getting lost in the precision required in the baking? Creating? The smells and tastes? If it was playing a particular sport, was it the exhilaration, comradery, or the skill?
5. What insights into yourself can you gain about what was meaningful to you as a child?
6. Now consider activities that bring joy in your life today? Make a list. Then list how these activities are *similar* and *different* to those of your childhood.
7. Based upon these reflections, can you identify anything that is missing from your life that you'd like to reconnect with? Are there things that you might want to let go of or change? Can you identify two ways you might integrate these joys into your work or relationships—as a parent, partner, sibling, or friend?
8. Consider problems in the world around you - whether in your family, in your church, or in your community. Is there a problem that needs solving where you might meaningfully contribute?
9. What task could you take on joyfully that addresses the problem?



10. Talk with a close friend or family member about what you've discovered. Ask them to give you feedback on your insights. Share how your joys provide insights into your purpose. Brainstorm with them how you might be able to pursue more joy and purpose.

11. Take an active step and contribute by using your talents and sources of enjoyment. If you liked cooking with your grandmother - maybe you volunteer to bake goods for a local food bank.

12. Evaluate. Sit in meditation or prayer and reflect thoughtfully about what you've learned. Perhaps keep a journal considering whether your activity feels meaningful, contributes beyond you, and utilizes your talents and skills - and also think about whether the activity brings you joy? Does it feel loving? If you feel resentment brewing - you might need to process with a trusted friend, rest, and re-evaluate.

Joy and purpose are found in contributing to others. If you found this helpful, share it with a friend, loved one, or colleagues who might benefit from a boost of joy.

Chapter 6

Ethics & Virtues

Our beliefs about love and how we live out love through values, views of right and wrong, and priorities.



W A I T

Why is patience important to you?

Awareness of how you are currently feeling?

Identify ways to regulate your emotions.

Transcend or connect the self to purpose.

Learn more

Ethics & Virtues





THE THRIVE CENTER

WAIT

A Training Guide to Understanding and Practicing Patience

Introduction:

In this workbook, you will learn about the power of patience: what it is, what benefits it offers, and how to cultivate it through practical exercises. Believe it or not, patience is like a muscle. With training, it can continue to grow and strengthen! This workbook will help you learn how to be patient across a variety of situations by applying our WAIT model. This four-step model was developed using research on patience conducted by former Thrive faculty Dr. Ben Houlberg and Dr. Sarah Schnitker.



Personal Assessment

Before we begin our training on patience, take a moment to reflect on the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. This exercise is a personal assessment meant to stimulate your thinking about patience. Be as specific and detailed as possible with each answer you provide.

1) How do you define patience?

2) List all the benefits you think come from practicing patience.

3) Is it difficult for you to embody patience in your daily life?

4) **Rate Yourself:** To what degree are you motivated to develop patience? (0 = *not at all*, to 10 = *more than anything*)

5) Why do you want to be more patient?



What is Patience?

Patience is an engaged practice. It is a full on reckoning with reality and facing the world as its is, not how you wish or want it to be. At best, patience is the open-hearted acceptance of delay, difficulty, and frustration. It is actively waiting in the face of adversity, within personal relationships, and when confronting daily challenges.

Patience can seem like a passive activity, sometimes being conflated with inaction or meekness. Many people identify with impatience, as it signals a busy and therefore productive life. However, by reflecting on situations where you feel impatient, you can see how impatience is a stressful response that demonstrates the difficulty of this endeavor. Passivity is, by nature, easy. Patience, on the other hand, requires careful attention and engagement. Accepting difficulty, delay, or setback with patience requires strength.

Our researchers at The Thrive Center for Human Development have spent years studying patience and its effect on emotional well-being. Just like any other endeavor that requires strength training or exercise, patience can also be trained like a muscle, reaping many benefits.

More Than a Virtue

Religious and philosophical traditions across the world emphasize the idea of patience as a virtue. Patience can act as a virtue by helping people make choices that increase their overall well-being. Research has indicated that patience is directly tied to emotional, mental, social, and physical well-being. The benefits of patience are also borne out of scientific literature.

Those who claim to have patience have rated themselves as:

- Being more mindful.
- Having more gratitude.
- Feeling a stronger sense of connection to mankind and the universe.
- Possessing an increased sense of abundance.



C E N T E R

The Benefits of Patience

Physical Health

Research has demonstrated that people who are patient have better health outcomes. They are less likely to suffer from stress-related ailments, including ulcers, headaches, acid reflux, acne flare-ups, and insomnia. Stress has a negative impact on our physical well-being and can exacerbate other health-related issues. Cultivating patience can help decrease stress and lead to better overall health, which is tied to our ability to regulate emotional responses.

Regulate Emotions

Patience gives you time to identify your true feelings and their root causes, allowing you to be more flexible in the way you respond to a situation. Researchers have found that patient people experience less depression and negative emotions. They can cope more effectively with difficult or stressful situations. In fact, people who practice patience report higher levels of optimism, gratitude, hope, and increased self-worth. In addition, they report feeling more connected with both humanity and the universe. Patience is also associated with having better relationships.

Social Skills

Patience brings self-compassion and allows you to face others with more kindness. Researchers have found that patient people are more empathetic, forgiving, and equitable to others. They are also often more agreeable, conscientious, generous, and open to new experiences, ideas, and people. Research has also demonstrated that people who practice patience are more likely to vote and increase their civic participation. Patience can influence our character by giving us awareness and understanding.

Purpose

When patience is connected to purpose, it gives us additional motivation in pursuing and achieving our goals. Patient people are more likely to persevere through challenges and become more confident with the outcomes. When we discover our purpose, the practice of patience becomes more meaningful to us. This results in higher levels of satisfaction.



Exercise the WAIT System

The goal of this workbook is to help you develop patience through WAIT. This four-step model will teach you how to think through and apply patience to difficult situations. What is WAIT?

- W** Why is patience important to you?
- A** Awareness of how you are currently feeling?
- I** Identify ways to regulate your emotions.
- T** Transcend or connect the self to purpose.

Developing patience taps into all four steps simultaneously. While these steps may seem simple, the practice is not always easy. As you work towards developing patience, be gentle with yourself and celebrate your progress. This is an ongoing process that takes time and effort, but will be worth it in the end.

To teach you how to put WAIT into practice, we will be working with one particular experience. Choose a situation where you are currently or have been struggling with being patient. This could range from a minor irritation, like being stuck in traffic, to a larger problem, such as being unemployed. You will be referring back to this situation as you work through the remaining exercises in this workbook.

Describe that specific situation. (e.g. I performed poorly in a very important business presentation.)



C E N T E R

Why is Patience Important to Me?

In order to effectively practice patience, we need to continuously remind ourselves why we want or need to be patient. Understanding the importance of patience in our lives helps us to practice patience and answer questions such as:

- Why should I be patient?
- Does patience really benefit me and those around me?
- Can patience influence my ability to respond to a difficult situation?

We do things for reasons. By using this workbook, you are already acknowledging that patience is important to you. When we take the time to reflect on why patience is important, we are able to appreciate it more and have a stronger willingness to apply it to our daily lives.

Exercises

Pause. Reflect. Understand. Then write your responses to each question below.

1. Why is patience important to me? (e.g. Is it part of my religious beliefs or moral principles?)

2. Are there moments when it's okay for me to be impatient?

3. How can my view and understanding of patience contribute to the way I respond to situations?



C E N T E R

Awareness of Feelings

Awareness is a proven strategy for increasing your ability to manage your emotions, which is essential for practicing patience. When you become aware of your feelings, you are able to understand why you're impatient with a certain situation or person. It is completely normal to have more than one feeling arise in a given situation. Many times we can't control our emotions, but we can control the way we react to our feelings. Becoming aware is the first step.

Exercises

Refer back to the situation you described on page 6. Be attentive to your feelings from this experience. Don't judge them as right or wrong. Then write your responses.

1. What feelings does that experience evoke for me? (e.g. I felt disappointed and frustrated.)

2. Are these feelings healthy for my overall well-being?

3. How have these feelings influenced my responses to that situation? (e.g. I'm too embarrassed to see my colleagues eye-to-eye after the presentation.)



Identifying Ways to Regulate Emotions

Once we are aware of our feelings, the next step is to learn how to regulate our emotions. Certain emotions are known to trigger negative reactions. That's why it is important to take a step back and identify the best ways to handle a difficult situation despite how we feel. Sometimes, it can help to view the situation more holistically (e.g. Will this experience matter in month or year?) or imagine it through a different lens (e.g. What will a trusted friend say to me about this experience?).

Exercises

As you refer back situation on page 6 and the feelings it evoked, keep an open mind as you identify the alternatives to managing your emotions and responses.

1. What are some immediate ways to help control my feelings? (e.g. I can talk to my boss about my frustration and seek advice.)

2. What is a more reasonable explanation for why this situation happened? (e.g. By checking notes beforehand, I could have presented more confidently.)

3. Had I identified these alternatives and ways to help manage my emotions at the time the situation occurred, would the outcome have been different?



Transcend the Self to Purpose

Our research at The Thrive Center shows that transcendence or going beyond the self is a fundamental component to patience. When we connect to something greater in life such as our purpose, we are able to act on patience in any situation and turn it into a habit. Being in touch with our purpose helps us elevate our emotions, see beyond any immediate challenges, and persevere. Whether through spiritual practices or an ultimate life goal, there are many ways we can achieve transcendence.

Exercises

Returning to the situation you've journaled throughout this workbook, reflect how you can sync that experience with your purpose.

1. What is my purpose in life?

2. How does connecting to this purpose now impact the way I view the situation? (e.g. I trust that God will teach me something through this experience.)

3. After applying this last step, how will it help me develop patience moving forward?

Epilogue

Closing Words



The practices we've included here are examples of the types of THRIVE practices we offer at Thrive. We hope they will motivate you to think about your daily rhythms and patterns, your relational habits, and what brings you hope, joy, and love.

Here are some questions to consider when thinking about exploring practices to ground, connect, and direct you.

- *Do you have practices that draw attention and connection to your body and emotions?*
- *What are your habits for slowing down, finding meaning, and practicing gratitude?*
- *Do you have practices that help you understand who you are and gain insight into what you believe?*
- *Do you have regular rhythms of connecting with others?*
- *Do your current habits move you toward your purpose?*
- *Do you have spiritual practices that connect you to your sources of love and transcendence?*

If the answer is no to any or all of these questions, begin exploring practices of becoming wholly alive and living into your purposes by visiting our website, www.thethrivecenter.org or listen to the *With & For* podcast with Dr. Pam King on your favorite podcast player.



Scan and Go to Home Page



COPYRIGHT © 2024 THE THRIVE CENTER FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

All rights reserved. Portions of this workbook published by The Thrive Center for Human Development. Individuals may photocopy these materials for educational uses, provided that proper attributions is given to The Thrive Center for Human Development, including its web address, <http://www.thethrivecenter.org>, as the source of content. These materials may not be reproduced for any commercial, for-profit use in any form or by any means, or republished under any circumstances, without written permission of The Thrive Center for Human Development. reproduced for any commercial, for-profit use in any form or by any means, or republished under any circumstances, without written permission of The Thrive Center for Human Development.