

Seventh Edition

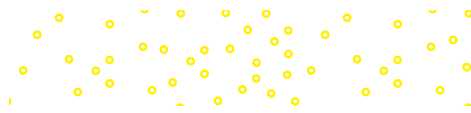
PSYCHOLOGY *of* SUCCESS

Maximizing Fulfillment in Your Career and Life



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DENIS WAITLEY

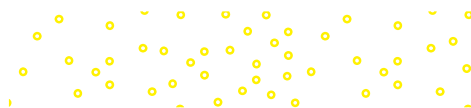


Psychology *of* Success

Maximizing Fulfillment in Your Career and Life

seventh edition

Denis Waitley, Ph.D.





PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS: MAXIMIZING FULFILLMENT IN YOUR CAREER AND LIFE, SEVENTH EDITION

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Introduction

Author's Overview

This seventh edition of *Psychology of Success: Maximizing Fulfillment in Your Career and Life* is perhaps more detailed and meaningful than previous versions in that it combines leading-edge scientific research with timeless knowledge to substantiate how important it is to understand how and why we behave the way we do in our careers and personal lives. It has been said through the ages, “It is not so much what happens to us that matters most, but how we take it and what we make of it!”

This new edition is designed to help you identify what authentic success means to you and train your brain to make success more of a habit, just like Olympians, astronauts, and gifted performers excel as a result of knowledge, skills, and practice.

During the past decade, neuroscientists have learned more about human brain function than research had provided during the previous fifty years. As neuroscience researchers work to unravel the inner workings of the brain, we know more than ever about the mysteries, of where emotions originate in the brain and the connections among instinct, intelligence, and emotion. This work is yielding fascinating insights that we can use to understand how we react to situations and people. The brain, which is a much more flexible organ than previously thought, can be consciously rewired to be more emotionally trainable, understanding, and sensitive.

Recently, the convergence of behavioral psychology and neuroscience has become highly sophisticated with major corporations hiring neural research companies to understand employee and customer behavior from a new perspective. Just as yesterday's world records are today's entry-level requirements, so too has a new tipping point been reached in understanding the secrets to motivating and communicating effectively with the emerging leaders in our professional and personal lives.

We live in a fast-forward world with more changes in one of our days than in a decade of our grandparents' lives. Every five minutes a new scientific research study is published involving some new technological or biotechnology discovery. Unfortunately, some of our most incredible technology wonders, including virtual reality, artificial intelligence, robotics, and instant networking bombard our senses 24/7. The average brain has around 50,000 thoughts per day and seventy percent of them are believed to be negative.

We learn by observation, imitation, and repetition. We seize upon role models, observe their actions, imitate, then become what we see, hear, read, feel, and touch. No single realization is as important as this in understanding and dealing with our brains and minds. “Why do we do what we do, when we know what we know? We know better than to fall into the trap of substance abuse, internalize unhealthy habits, procrastinate, alienate, prevaricate, yell and lose composure over trifles, and, on occasion, engage in road rage. So why do we do what we do, when we know what we know? Because we don't always do what we know. We do what we have learned!

Much of our learning takes place by unconscious modeling. Observation, Imitation, Repetition = Internalization. This edition of *Psychology of Success* is designed to make your definition of success easier to actualize in your own life. Our hope is that it will give you a clearer path as to:

- How to view your mind as your internal “software” program—containing attitudes, beliefs, and habits that can be overwritten to produce desired results.
- How to treat your brain and central nervous system as your physiological “mission control center” consisting of pre-programmed genetic data, as well as data based on past and present life experiences that prevent you from or propel you toward completing your aspirations.

- Provide real-life useful daily examples and action steps on how to lead yourself and others to more effective interpersonal and intrapersonal communications, increased focus on primary priorities, a healthier, more optimistic view of the future, and how to handle setbacks, challenges, and difficult situations with resiliency and emotional intelligence.

Denis Waitley

Preface

Welcome to *Psychology of Success*. Success is a lifetime of personal fulfillment that comes from creating a sense of meaning in all aspects of life. To succeed in this way, students must take an active role in discovering and pursuing their personal definition of success, and use the psychological and fundamental strategies in this course to achieve their goals. This book introduces you to the fundamental psychological principles of success—principles applicable to everyone regardless of age, background, or specialty.

Unlike many psychology books, *Psychology of Success* doesn't take a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, it asks you to take an active role in defining what is right for you as an individual. *Psychology of Success* calls on you to use self-awareness and critical thinking strategies to examine your dreams, values, interests, skills, needs, identity, self-esteem, and relationships. This will help you set and achieve goals that are in harmony with your personal vision of success.

Psychology of Success presents the principles of success in a logical order. First you will assess who you are and what special qualities you possess, which will help you develop self-awareness and clarify your goals. Next you will learn about the importance of self-esteem and positive thinking to a satisfying life. You'll also learn about self-discipline and self-motivation, which are the tools you'll need to keep yourself

on track toward your goals. Once you have mastered these psychological tools, you'll learn the fundamentals of time and money management, communication, and positive relationships.

Because each chapter refers to concepts introduced in previous chapters, you'll derive maximum benefit from working through the book chapter by chapter. If your time is limited, however, you may choose to concentrate on the topics of greatest interest to you.

Features

The features of *Psychology of Success* are designed to help you understand and remember the psychological principles introduced in each chapter. They are also intended to provoke thought and discussion and to help you make the material relevant to your life.

Real-Life Success Story Begin each chapter by reading the Real-Life Success Story, a vignette about an ordinary person struggling with the problems and challenges addressed in the chapter. Use the question following the story to put yourself in that person's shoes and take stock of what you already know about the topic of the coming chapter. At the end of the chapter, revisit the Real-Life Success Story and use the concepts you've learned to create a successful resolution to the character's situation.

Chapter Introduction and Learning Objectives In each chapter, a short introduction previews the major topics that will be covered, and a list of objectives lays out the skills and information you can expect to have mastered after reading the text and completing the activities.

Opening Quote The opening quote relates to the ideas discussed in the chapter and serves as food for thought. Take a moment to think about

what the author of the quote is trying to say. Do you agree with the author? Why or why not?

Key Terms Key terms appear in bold in the text and are defined in the margin for easy review. Key terms, along with italicized terms, are also defined in the Glossary.

Success Secret Important lessons presented in the chapter are summarized in the Success Secret feature. These notes can be used to preview and review the chapter, as well as to remind yourself to apply these important principles of success in your daily life.

Applying Psychology This feature focuses on thought-provoking issues such as culture and body image, impulse control, and the psychology of aging. It links one or more topics in the chapter to cutting-edge issues in psychology.

Professional Development The Professional Development feature makes chapter concepts relevant to the world of work, providing information on topics such as job stress, problem solving, and résumé writing.

Internet Action This technology feature discusses how to use computers, the Internet, and e-mail efficiently and effectively. It also illustrates the link between technology and psychology in areas such as artificial intelligence and online collaborative learning.

Activities Each chapter has numerous activities that form an integral part of the material. The activities allow you to apply newly learned concepts to your own life through self-assessment, real-world observation, and critical thinking.

Personal Journals Each chapter also has several Personal Journals, short notebook-style activities that let you pause to offer personal reflections on the material.

McGraw-Hill Connect® Connect offers a number of powerful tools and features to make managing assignments easier, so faculty can spend more time teaching. With Connect, students can engage with their coursework anytime and anywhere, making the learning process more accessible and efficient. From Connect, instructors can also access chapter-by-chapter notes, test bank questions, a PowerPoint presentation, and additional resources. Student features include practice quizzes, assessment activities, links to related materials for research projects and helpful online tools, job hunting resources, and much more. References to specific Web site materials are provided throughout the text.

LearnSmart Students want to make the best use of their study time. The LearnSmart adaptive self-study technology within Connect® provides students with a seamless combination of practice, assessment, and the remediation for every concept in the textbook. LearnSmart's intelligent software adapts to every student response and automatically delivers concepts that advance the student's understanding while reducing time devoted to the concepts already mastered. The result for every student is the fastest path of mastery of chapter concepts. LearnSmart:

- Adapts automatically to each student, so students spend less time on the topics they understand and practice more those they have yet to master.
- Provides continual reinforcement and remediation, but gives only as much guidance as students need.
- Integrates diagnostics as part of the learning experience.
- Enables you to assess which concepts students have efficiently learned on their own, thus freeing class time for more applications and discussions.

Getting Started

Psychology of Success is a workbook as well as a textbook. Take notes, highlight important concepts, and flag passages that you want to explore further. Take time to do each Activity and Personal Journal thoroughly before moving on to the next—they will help you understand the material on a personal level. Don't worry, however, about finding the "right" answers—the only right answers are ones that are honest, true to yourself, and supported by reflection and critical thinking. When you complete *Psychology of Success*, you will have a valuable record of your goals and where you want the future to take you.

What's New

Introduction

- NEW overview

Chapter 1

- NEW material about female role models
- NEW material on Explaining Human Behavior
- NEW material on Your Self Image

Chapter 2

- NEW material on Putting It All Together: Self-Awareness and Career
- NEW material on Work Is Unpleasant or Is It?
- Updated material on Myths About Work.

Chapter 3

- NEW material on What Are Your Goals?
- Updated material on Staying On Track

- NEW material on Resisting Change
- NEW material on Five Powers of Effective Goal Setting

Chapter 4

- Updated material on The Power of Self-Esteem
- NEW material on Controlling Your Internal Conversations

Chapter 5

- Updated material on Thinking Style and Health
- Updated material on Good Attitude, Good Health

Chapter 6

- Updated material on What Is Self-Discipline?
- NEW material on Conquering Bad Habits

Chapter 7

- NEW material on Visualization and Success
- NEW material on Steps to Visualization

Chapter 8

- NEW Professional Development Activity

Chapter 9

- NEW material on Becoming an Empowering Leader/Coach

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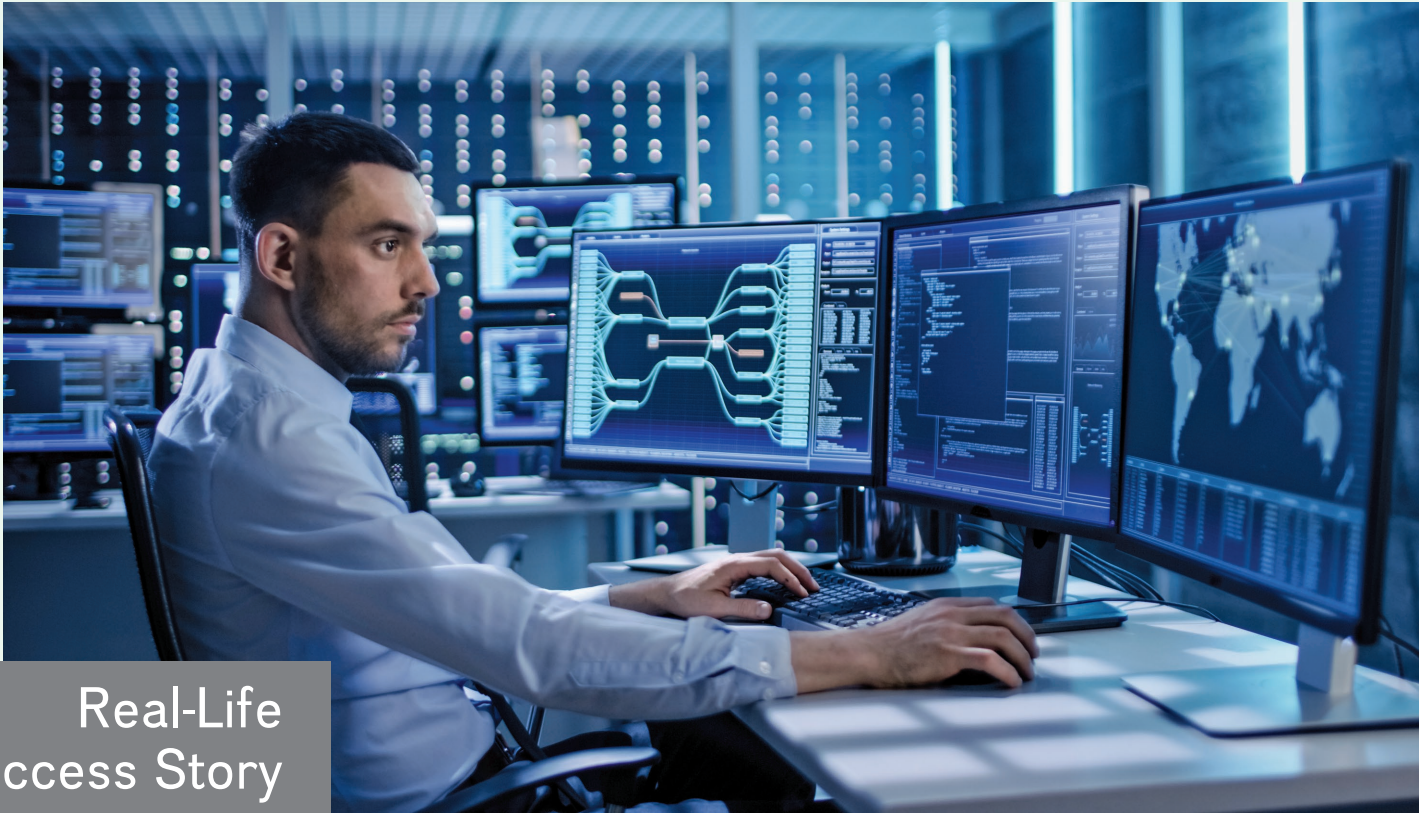
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Psychology *of* Success



Real-Life Success Story

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“Am I Doing the Right Thing?”

Looking Ahead

Bill Santos, a freelance film production assistant in Los Angeles, was offered a full-time job as an assistant producer. Everyone congratulated him on the salary raise and more impressive title. Bill, however, wasn't completely happy about the prospect of the new job. The promotion would mean longer hours and more responsibility. Plus, now that he thought of it, he didn't even like the shows he had helped make. Why was he doing this?

Looking Within

Bill's dream had been to write for a living. Being a production assistant wasn't his dream job, but he

was good at it, and there were a lot of extra benefits. Recently, Bill had started writing for a start-up magazine. Although the pay was low, it reminded him why he had wanted to be a writer in the first place. If he took the new job he wouldn't be able to spend time writing. Bill knew it would be sensible to take the job, but he couldn't get enthusiastic about it.

What Do You Think? Do you think Bill would be more successful if he took the production job or if he spent more time writing? Why?

Psychology and Success

1 Chapter

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Philosopher

introduction

The first step on the road to success is to define what success means to you. In Section 1.1 you'll clarify your vision of success and begin to think about how you can make it a reality. You'll also consider the personal qualities that will help you reach success and discover how studying psychology can help you understand yourself and your world. In Section 1.2 you'll begin thinking about your identity and self-image. You'll consider how you see yourself and what it means to be you.

learning objectives

After you complete this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define success.
- List several personal qualities that help people to be happy.
- Define psychology and cite its four major goals.
- Explain the relationship among thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Define self, self-image, and identity.
- Describe the components of identity.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Success has a personal definition for each of us. About ninety-five percent of the human beings on earth are poor; the majority of them desperately poor.

Success to any member of such a family is to have some land to till, any job that pays, and a way to earn enough to provide nourishment for the children to grow in decent health into adulthood.

Success in our culture and in many of the industrialized nations is usually associated with material wealth and fame. The images of lifestyles of the rich and famous bombard our senses and we are seduced into equating skin-deep values with authentic fulfillment. A more meaningful definition of success was penned by Earl Nightingale—a 20th-century philosopher—in his classic audio recording *The Strangest Secret*: “Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal.” It means that when we are working or moving toward something we want to accomplish, especially when that something brings us respect and dignity as members of the human race, we are succeeding. It has nothing to do with talent, IQ, age, gender, ethnicity, or birthright. It does not mean being a celebrity, icon, or tycoon.

success Lifetime fulfillment that comes from creating a sense of meaning in your work and personal life.

So what is success? In this book, **success** means a lifetime of personal fulfillment. Personal fulfillment comes from creating a sense of meaning in your work and life. This kind of success is not given by anyone else and cannot be taken away by anyone else. It requires taking risks, overcoming challenges, and using your best resource—you—to its fullest potential.

Success is a journey, not a destination. Success is a process, not a status. You don’t arrive at success. You engage in living successfully on a daily basis. It involves looking inward, considering what you value, and navigating the life path that is most meaningful for you. Begin to think about what success means to you in **Activity 1**. As you work through this text, you may wish to return to this exercise to clarify your vision of success.

Ingredients of Success

Lifelong success has several important ingredients, all of which you will learn about in this book. These ingredients, shown in Personal Journal 1.1, are positive habits of thought and action that you can integrate into your life. The first important ingredient is self-awareness. Closely tied to self-awareness are self-direction, self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-motivation, which are the tools to keep you moving in the direction of your goals and dreams. Your attitude is an important ingredient of success, too; positive thinking can help you put things in perspective and make it

success secret

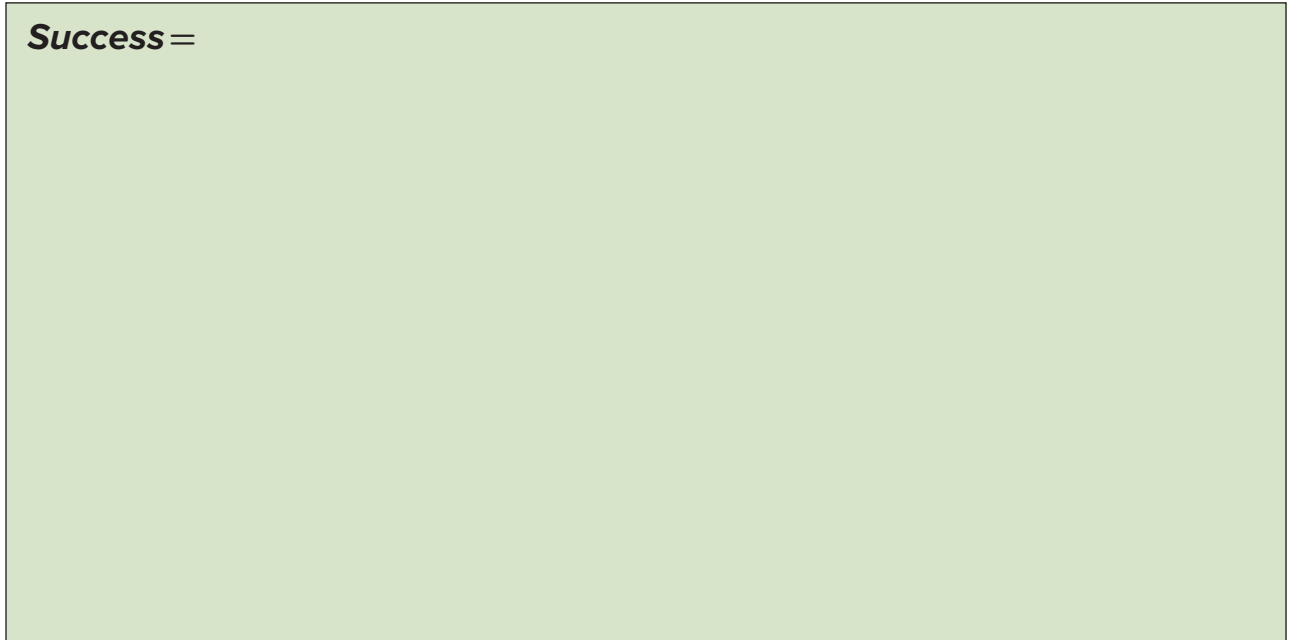
Money and fame don’t equal success.



ACTIVITY 1: What Success Means to You

- A** Take at least three or four minutes to brainstorm every word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of “success.” Write these in the box below.

Success =



- B** Look at everything you wrote. What do these words or phrases tell you about your vision of success?

- C** Now put your definition of success down in writing.

To me, success means _____

continued . . .

D Does your definition of success differ from the definition of success presented in this text? If so, how?

E Do you think you will become successful according to your own definition of success? Why or why not?

F Describe two people you know who have achieved success the way you define it.

professional development)))

Internal Career Motivation

Knowledge of your attributes, abilities, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and traits is essential to becoming proactive in career choice and career change. It is important to draw a distinction between external and internal criteria in these crucial matters. The overwhelming majority of job-hunters and career-changers react to purely external pressures and circumstances—above all, to money. Their ideas about what careers pay well are likely to be outdated because many of today's job descriptions didn't exist a decade ago; and even if you choose a career that *is* lucrative, but makes you miserable, you may well end up viewing “your work” as a necessary interruption between weekends.

Huge life decisions often turn on “starting salary and benefits” instead of on the homework to identify one's passions and talents. After money, the second external factor is ignorant advice, much of which is well-meaning but some of which is narrow-minded and prejudiced. The third external is family or social pressure: donning the old school tie to follow in Dad's or Mom's footsteps. The fourth is the perception of the job market as presented by nothing more substantial than recent advertisements or media spin. The fifth is leaving it all to luck.

Most people, locked in a strangely passive attitude, simply fall into their jobs, often with unsatisfactory results. We all must deal with external pressures and circumstances, but starting with them instead of the internal factors—our own minds and hearts—is a kind of mad reversal of priorities. Take the time to become fully engaged and honest with the exercises and assessments in this chapter. Look in the mirror before you walk through that office door seeking your first or next job opportunity.

through the tough times. Finally, no real success is possible without positive relationships with others. Let's look at each of these key ingredients of success.

Self-Awareness Self-awareness involves identifying and appreciating your individual values, personal qualities, skills, and interests. Without self-awareness, it's hard to figure out what you really want out of life. Successful people use self-awareness to build confidence in themselves and find the courage to go after their dreams. They also use self-awareness to understand their thoughts, feelings, and actions and to relate better to others.

Self-Direction Successful people set themselves apart from the rest by developing an important trait: self-direction. **Self-direction** is the ability to set a well-defined goal and work toward it. Successful people can tell you where they are going, what they plan to do along the way, and who will be sharing their adventure with them. They have a game plan for life. They set goals and get what they want. They direct themselves along the road to success.

Self-Esteem Self-esteem, a respect for oneself as a valuable, unique individual, is another foundation for success. Self-esteem helps people work toward their dreams and goals and keep going when other people criticize them or get in their way. It also helps them believe that they are worthy of success in the first place.

success secret

Success is a journey, not a destination.



self-direction The ability to set a well-defined goal and work toward it.

success secret

Use positive thinking to reach your goals.



Positive Thinking Everyone goes through good and bad experiences. Instead of dwelling on the bad ones, successful people learn to focus on future possibilities. They also use setbacks as opportunities to take stock and try again. Not every successful person is a born optimist, but successful people learn to use the power of positive thinking to propel themselves toward their goals.

Self-Discipline Success doesn't just happen—it requires effort. No matter how well you plan, you'll need self-discipline to put your plans into action. Successful people take charge of their lives. They take responsibility when things go wrong, but they also take credit when things go well. They learn how to make necessary changes and break free of bad habits. Habits are replaced, over time, by consistent training and practice, requiring focused self-discipline. They also learn to think critically, to make good decisions, and to use these skills to manage their time and money.

Self-Motivation To get and stay motivated, successful people set goals for themselves that are both challenging and inspiring. They focus on goals that have personal meaning for them, rather than goals that society or other people say they should have. They understand their needs and wants and are able to keep themselves moving forward despite their fears.

Positive Relationships Healthy and diverse relationships are essential for a successful life. Even in a society like ours that values individual achievement, no one ever succeeds without the help, ideas, and emotional support of others. The happiest and most fulfilled people are usually those who make time for other people in their lives instead of focusing all their energy on piling up accomplishments.

Which of the ingredients of success do you already possess? Which do you need to develop? Record your thoughts in **Personal Journal 1.1**.

success secret

Always make time for relationships.



Who Is a Success?

Successful people get what they want out of life. They set and achieve goals that benefit others as well as themselves. They don't have to get lucky to succeed at life, and they don't have to gain success at the expense of others. They achieve success by taking the potential they were born with and have developed and using it toward a purpose that makes them feel worthwhile according to their own standards.

In our society, it is not always obvious who the truly successful people are. The media, for example, often glamorize people who have a great deal of money, fame, or power, but these people are not always the most successful. In fact, large amounts of money, fame, or power can sometimes lead to a feeling of aimlessness.

Just as we each have our own vision of success, we each have our own idea of who is successful. Who is successful in your eyes? Powerful businesspeople? Movie stars? Nobel prize-winning scientists? Caring

Personal Journal 1.1

Ingredients of Success

On the lines in each oval, write one way you think this action or quality could help you become the person you want to be.



teachers? Dedicated craftspeople? Nurturing parents? To many of us, the most successful people are those who are special to us, such as a parent, relative, teacher, or friend. Often, we appreciate the successes of people who are close to us because they have made a difference in our lives and because we know how many obstacles they overcame to achieve their goals.

Role Models If you think back to early childhood, you may remember having a role model. A **role model** is a person who has the qualities you would like to have.

role model A person who has the qualities you would like to have.

success secret

Adults need role models, too.



Children need role models, but adults need them too. Our role models often represent what we would like to become as we get older. James, a student in information technology, takes inspiration from Michael Dell, founder and CEO of Dell Inc. When James learned that Dell had started his company at age 19 with only \$1,000 and a good idea, he decided to learn more. James read about Dell on the Internet and chose him as a role model for his ethics, technical and business skill, and positive attitude. Now James is working on starting his own computer business.

Oprah Winfrey credits Mary Tyler Moore as the role model who inspired her to pursue a media career, and Donna Karan says that working as an apprentice for Anne Klein set the stage for her own career as a fashion designer. Role models can be well-known figures from history or little-known coaches and teachers who have been a positive influence. You don't have to know someone personally for him or her to be your role model; the person may be from a different part of the world or even from a different century. Your role models may vary widely—some may have special skills or accomplishments, while others may possess personal virtues such as courage, generosity, or honor. You may have one role model or several. Use **Activity 2** to select a role model and learn more about that person.

happiness A state of well-being that comes from having a positive evaluation of your life.

Success and Happiness

An important benefit of true success is happiness. **Happiness** is a state of well-being that comes from having a positive evaluation of your life. It is an overall good feeling about who you are, what you are doing, and the relationships you have with other people. When you are interested in your daily activities, enthusiastic about the way things are going, and optimistic about your future, you are happy. How happy are you right now? Complete **Activity 3** to find out.

What Causes Happiness?

Happiness is the natural experience of winning your self-respect and the respect of others. Happiness should not be confused with indulging yourself, escaping something, or seeking pleasure. You cannot inhale, drink, or smoke happiness. You cannot buy it, wear it, drive it, swallow it, inject it, or travel to it. Happiness is not a result. It involves making the best out of whatever happens and remaining optimistic.

Did you know that outside factors, such as wealth, youth, physical health, marital status, physical attractiveness, educational level, and social status, have little effect on happiness? Corporate presidents who drive luxury cars are no happier, in general, than day laborers who take the bus. What if you woke up tomorrow looking like a movie star and with a winning lottery ticket in your pocket? You would probably be happier—but only for a while. In a year, life might not be so different for you after all. Studies show that a year or so after big changes like this, your happiness level is likely to return to

ACTIVITY 2: Your Role Model

- A** Select one person whom you admire and would like to imitate in some way. Research this person's life and fill out the profile below.

Role Model Profile

1. Name _____

2. Date and place of birth _____

3. Special accomplishments

4. Obstacle(s) he or she overcame

5. Ways he or she overcame these obstacle(s)

6. Special personal qualities

continued . . .

7. Ways he or she shows or showed these special qualities

8. Ways he or she acquired these qualities

9. Things you and your role model have in common (personal qualities, experiences, interests, challenges)

10. Areas in which you would like to become more like your role model

B Of all the people you could have chosen, why did you choose this person as your role model? What do you think your choice says about you?

C Look at your answer to item 10 in your role model profile. What are some specific actions you could take to become more like your role model in these areas?

[illegible]

ACTIVITY 3: Self-Awareness Checklist

A Happiness seems to be a way of viewing ourselves and the world around us in terms of being part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. It is being aware of the limitations we place on ourselves and opening ourselves up to the potential around us for positive change. To determine your own level of self-awareness, place a check mark in the box you think describes how often you feel this way.

	ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
I'm eager to learn.					
My work is exciting.					
I'm willing to listen with an open mind.					
I have new insights.					
I constantly network with people who have expertise in something I don't.					
I try to look at the world through the eyes of the other person.					
I focus on what I can control.					
When someone is talking to me, I really listen.					
I'm honest with myself and others.					
I've thought about my own strengths and weaknesses.					
I continually challenge my own assumptions.					
I recognize that others may think that I'm strange or odd in some ways.					
I adapt easily to the current environment and situation.					

B Hopefully, most of your check marks were in the FREQUENTLY box. It would be rare, indeed, for all check marks to land in the ALWAYS box. Each of us is unique, with different views about ourselves and the world. And no one is perfect. If some of your check marks were in the SOMETIMES box, what actions can you take to make your positive self-awareness more frequent in those areas?

C Do you feel that happiness is the result of what happens to you in life, or more how you deal with what happens to you? Why?

D What actions or events in your personal and professional do you feel have the greatest influence on your happiness?

E Two years from now, do you think you will be happier than you are today? Why?

success secret

Create your own opportunities for happiness.



where it was the previous year. In other words, most people experience a fairly stable level of happiness despite life's ups and downs.

Does this mean that you can't raise your level of happiness? No. You can always seek out opportunities to create happiness, such as:

- creating a sense of purpose in your life
- building deep connections with others
- improving skills, learning, and being productive
- playing games and enjoying yourself
- getting to know yourself better
- striving to become more like people you admire
- actively looking forward to things in the future
- enjoying the beauty in your environment
- pursuing curiosity for its own sake

Happy people don't sit back waiting for happiness to appear. Instead, they create opportunities for happiness to enter their lives.

Positive Qualities Another way to boost your happiness is to develop personal qualities that will help you enjoy life and cope with challenges. Psychologists who have researched success and happiness have found several of these qualities. Among the most important are:

- **Ability to love**—the ability to feel, express, and receive love, affection, warmth, and compassion and to act in a giving way
- **Vocation**—the ability to feel interest and excitement in something and to turn this into your life's work
- **Courage**—the ability to take risks and challenge yourself
- **Trust**—confidence in other people and their motives
- **Optimism**—hope that things will turn out for the best
- **Future-mindedness**—a focus on the possibilities of the future, rather than on the mistakes or disappointments of the past
- **Social skill**—the ability to understand others, get along with others, and build fulfilling relationships
- **Aesthetic sensibility**—the ability to appreciate and delight in the beauty of art, music, and nature
- **Work ethic**—commitment to honoring obligations, being dependable and responsible, getting things done, and being productive
- **Honesty**—thinking, speaking, and acting in a forthright way with yourself and others
- **Emotional awareness**—the ability to experience and express a wide range of emotions
- **Persistence**—the ability to persevere in the face of setbacks and adversity, to keep on track toward goals, and to handle stress
- **Forgiveness**—generosity of spirit, and the ability to avoid grudges and blame
- **Creative thinking**—the willingness to consider new beliefs and points of view and to try out new ways of thinking and doing

success secret

Try new ways of thinking and doing.



- **Spirituality**—the search for a greater good, purpose, or meaning to human existence
- **Self-esteem**—a positive feeling of your own value, which includes self-respect as well as respect for the rights, feelings, and wishes of others
- **Wisdom**—the ability to use your knowledge and experience to make sound decisions

Building these qualities will help you to be physically healthy, enjoy strong friendships and family relationships, derive satisfaction from a committed romantic relationship, be an effective and loving parent, find satisfaction in work, and feel good about yourself.

UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

To have a clear vision of what you want out of life, you need to understand yourself first. Who am I? What are my wants and needs? Why do I think, feel, and act the way I do? These questions are at the beginning of the journey to success. These questions are also some of the important ones addressed by psychology. **Psychology** is the scientific study of human behavior. The word psychology comes from two Greek words: *psyche*, meaning “mind” or “self,” and *logos*, meaning “science” or “study.”

The focus of psychology is human behavior. **Behavior** is anything we think, feel, or do, including:

- acting
- reacting
- speaking
- perceiving
- sensing
- imagining
- wanting
- remembering
- sleeping
- dreaming

Psychologists learn about people by observing their behavior. Although psychologists cannot directly measure what people think or how they feel, they can observe their actions, listen to their words, and try to understand their experiences.

Why Study Psychology?

Psychology tackles basic questions about what it means to be human. Psychologists ask questions such as:

- Why and how are people different from one another?
- What needs do all people have in common?

psychology The scientific study of human behavior.

behavior Anything that people think, feel, or do.

success secret

Psychology helps you understand yourself and others.





VIRTUAL THERAPY

More and more psychologists are taking their services online. Many now offer consultations via e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, and even two-way videoconferencing. Online therapy is not appropriate for people dealing with serious crises, such as suicidal thoughts or mental illness. However, it can reach out to people who are geographically isolated, socially anxious, or physically disabled. People can also use the Internet to find virtual support groups, information on screening and treatment, and listings of counselors and psychologists in their area. But what's the downside to online mental health services? Critics say online therapy just doesn't work. Successful therapy is based on a human connection. Can two people really create a deep human bond on a computer screen? Critics also worry that people will fall victim to bogus therapists and that personal information is unsafe online.

Think About It

What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of online therapy? Would you try it? Why or why not? Bring your ideas to class for a group discussion.

To learn more about online psychotherapy, go to a search engine or go to one of the following websites:

<http://www.psychology.info/>

A site that explores aspects of online psychology and provides a list of resources

<http://www.ismho.org>

The home page of an organization that promotes the use of technology and the Internet in mental health treatment

<http://locator.apa.org/>

A Web page set up by the American Psychological Association to help individuals find a psychologist and read articles about mental health

<http://www.metanoia.org/imhs/identity.htm>

A Web service for checking the credentials of online therapists

- Where do emotions come from? What function do they serve?
- Where do attitudes come from? How do they change?
- What is the difference between the body and the mind?

By providing insights into questions like these, psychology helps us understand ourselves and others. Learning about psychologists' discoveries and theories, therefore, can help you better understand yourself and your world.

Goals of Psychology

Psychology has four major goals: to describe, predict, explain, and (in some cases) change human behavior.

Because human behavior is so complex, many psychologists focus on just one or two of these goals. For example, some psychologists focus on observing how people think and act in very specific situations. They then use their observations to create models of human thought and behavior in these situations. For example, psychologists who study marital relationships might investigate the factors that influence people's selection of a marriage partner or the ways marriage relationships tend to change over time.

Other psychologists are interested in describing how individuals and groups think and act in order to predict how they are likely to think and act in the future. For example, psychologists who study children may try to predict which children will be at risk for problems such as depression and low self-esteem.

Many psychologists focus on the fourth goal of psychology, changing human behavior. *Clinical psychologists*, for example, help people change the undesirable behaviors associated with psychological illness. A clinical psychologist who works with people who fear social situations might help these people confront their fear and take positive steps to overcome it. Clinical psychologists have that designation because they, like physicians, can aid their patients with prescription medicine.

Explaining Human Behavior

Why do people think, feel, and act the way they do? Until only a few centuries ago, people believed that human behavior was controlled by external forces that existed outside the body. In ancient times, people believed that psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression were caused by evil spirits. Because psychology is concerned with observable behavior, today few psychologists focus on investigating the spiritual side of existence. Instead, most psychologists begin by trying to understand the biological basis of behavior.

Neuroscience: The New Frontier

Neuroscience is generally described as study that advances the understanding of human thought, emotion, and behavior. The brain is extremely complex. All human inventions, including the computer, spacecraft, smartphones, drones, self-driving vehicles, and medical devices are toys in comparison. Biologist Lyall Watson concisely summed it up: “If the brain were so simple that we could understand it, we would be so simple we couldn’t!”

We are only just beginning to discover the virtually limitless capacities of the brain, and we’ve learned more about how the brain functions during the past decade than in much of the past century. Just as our bodies react to our own memories—as well as images from the external world—they also react to our own imagined experiences or rehearsals.

American physiologist Edmund Jacobsen conducted studies showing that when a person imagines running, small but measurable amounts of contraction actually take place in the leg muscles. In the same way, when you create a vivid, frightening image in your mind, your body responds with a quickened pulse, elevated blood pressure, sweating, goosebumps, and dryness of the mouth. Conversely, when you hold a strong, positive, relaxing image in your mind, your body responds with a lowered heart rate and decreased blood pressure, and all your muscles tend to relax. These functions take place automatically, unconsciously. You’re seldom aware of their cause. You think they “just happened.”

neuroscience The science that advances the understanding of human thought, emotion, and behavior.

Until recently, we have underestimated the resilience and regenerative capacity in the human brain. People recovering from strokes and other brain injuries have demonstrated the remarkable capacity of the brain to regenerate. When parts of the brain have been destroyed or damaged, remaining parts can “come to the rescue” and learn how to take over functions that were lost. For example, when an injury occurs to the left hemisphere, which controls our language and speech, “mirror neurons” located on the right side of the brain can become involved in those functions.

Recovering patients who can’t speak, but can still hum a song, can learn to associate words and phrases with melodies, helping them with communication. Cognitive or mental rehabilitation for post-stroke patients, involving speech and physical therapy, as well as memory aids, assist the brain’s reorganization of the basic impaired functions. When a patient relearns to carry out basic tasks, neurogenesis occurs. The goal is to stimulate the brain to re-form lost pathways and circuits. While it’s true that brain cells can regenerate, they also can deteriorate if not being used. So, when it comes to using your limbs or memory, the familiar phrase applies: “Unless you use it, you’ll lose it.” For instance, if you don’t use your right arm, the corresponding part of your brain will deteriorate.¹

Mental practice is the term given to rehearsing activities and movements in the mind, and it is known to facilitate peak performance in world class athletes. Recent studies have shown it can also be used, along with other cognitive treatments, on stroke patients and others, including our returning service men and women who have been severely injured in battle, using mental imagery to visualize motor movements that stimulates neuroplasticity processes, improving motor functions, especially arm movement.

Neurofeedback has progressed well beyond the biofeedback clinics of the past twenty years, with sophisticated readouts that display how different parts of the brain are reacting to video images, sounds, colors, thoughts, and simulations. By observing PET scans of people either watching or imagining various scenes, brain researchers know that the brain doesn’t know the difference between real, watched, or imagined experiences. Neuropsychology today offers definitive proof that repeated, vivid, mental rehearsal over time can create an infrastructure in the brain that can convert virtual reality into reality. New research has proven that our brains develop neural pathways from frequently used chemical-messaging patterns and thus build synaptic connections that support habitual trains of thought. Neuroscience is at the forefront in understanding how and why we act and react to real and perceived inputs.

Neuroscience and Psychology Recently, the melding of behavioral psychology and neuroscience has become highly sophisticated with major corporations hiring neural research companies to understand employee and customer behavior from a new perspective. At whatever point you are on your career path to maximize your fulfillment in your work and life, basic knowledge of how your brain responds to the thousands

¹ Elizabeth Landau, (May 5, 2011). “The Brain’s Amazing Potential for Recovery,” CNN.com.

of messages it receives every day will help you sort out the myths from the truths, and the positive influences from the negative distractions.

Neuroscience has helped identify and measure brain activity related to consumer buying decisions and how to persuade others to buy into our concepts and ideas. It is being utilized by major industries, institutions, and organizations to help employees interact more effectively with one another and their customers.

We have learned what behavior patterns influence people to say “Yes” to what we’re trying to sell them, whether it’s a product, service, or lifestyle. For example, people want a good deal, which equates to the most value for the lowest investment. However, people think high price means more value, which, of course, isn’t necessarily true. But people pay more because they think they’re getting more. People buy into celebrity endorsements, somehow equating star status to expertise. People respond favorably to common peer group endorsements, believing that “if he or she can do it, so can I.” One of the keys to getting buy-in is to understand that most people say “yes” to others they know and like, especially if they deem those others to be trustworthy.

And, of course, there are many more obvious fixed-action behaviors: Scarcity and time deadlines drive decisions; reciprocity means that people feel obligated to repay a favor; people bargain for needs and splurge on wants, which is why reward motivation and inspiration are much more effective than fear motivation and intimidation; people don’t respond favorably, especially today, to coercion and “hard sell closing techniques.” They want to feel they are making their choices without outside pressure. With so much competition today, with so many distractions and so many options, the idea of closing a sale is obsolete, and the concept of nurturing a long-term relationship is the secret to a winning team, customer retention, and innovation. And, finally, we know that when it comes to sales, quotas, and goal setting, incremental steps work best because a minimum purchase leads to escalating commitments, just as a small success leads to increased confidence and risk taking.²

There are many false assumptions concerning how our brains and minds function. We now have a truth for nearly every myth that has been passed on to us. Here are just a few.

Myth: People make buy-in decisions in a rational, linear manner.

Truth: People’s decisions are first influenced by emotional triggers, and then by logic. Emotions dominate the decision-making process.

Myth: People can readily explain their thinking and behavior.

Truth: People have far less access to their own mental activities than perceived. About ninety-five percent of thinking is an unconscious, habitual process.

Myth: People’s memories accurately represent their experiences.

Truth: People’s memories are constantly changing without their awareness. Instead of a Facebook photo album, memory is more like a constantly edited music video, full of fragments, real and imagined.

² Robert B. Cialdini, Ph.D. (2006). “Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion,” *Harper Business*.

As you are *remembering* something, your brain is in the process of “rewiring” the connections between neurons, which is actually changing the structure of your brain. Rather than video playback, your memory is more like video editing. Every time you remember something you are changing, recreating, or re-memorizing. A memory is subject to change every time you remember it. Hence the term used by an aging athlete “The older I get, the better I was!” And the fisherman who remembers that the fish was as big as the boat!

Myth: People’s talents are received at conception as “natural gifts.”

Truth: Although talents are inherited, new talents and abilities can be learned by re-training the brain. This means that our potential for success in life is less limited by our inborn traits than previously thought.

Myth: We are born with a finite number (100 billion) of brain cells, and when one dies, a new one cannot grow. The ability to generate new neural pathways begins to decrease sharply around age twenty.

Truth: Neuroscientists are learning more about neural “plasticity,” which is the ability of the brain to generate new neural cells and reorganize to form new neural pathways, to adapt as needed. Neurogenesis, or the generation of new neurons, can continue throughout our life span, even into old age. The creation of new neural pathways does take focused effort over time; however, the ability to rewire your brain to generate success and health-related pathways is at the forefront of individual and team peak performance.

Myth: People think in words.

Truth: Two-thirds of all brain stimuli are visual. Neural activities (thoughts) precede their expression as words or language. Words and other senses can trigger thoughts, but thoughts are not “words.”

Here are the take-away concepts from the previous discussion:

We must consider the emotional triggers that motivate immediate, positive responses to communications. We must motivate without perceived coercion. Our communications and training should be interactive to personalize the relationship and lead to loyalty and retention. We should focus on desired outcomes, not penalties of failures. We have the ability to edit and reprogram our bad memories—so they don’t hold us back. We have the ability to edit, reprogram, splice-in, and spruce-up our good memories—so they propel and launch us forward.

Our brain cells are constantly “talking” to one another through chemical messaging. More than 100,000 chemical reactions take place in your brain every second. As we learn something new, our cells become more and more efficient about sending and receiving information about the task. The more we focus and practice, new neural connections are formed in the brain (synapses that don’t usually fire together, but now do), which helps us sharpen our new skill. Once this new neural pathway is firmly established and strong, we don’t need to focus our attention as much—new learning has become automatic, a part of us.

As we will discover in the pages that follow, we can engage in instant replay of positive memories, with the ability to select and magnify our positive experiences, to make us more resilient in trying times. We also can engage in instant pre-play of our goals and desires, and create new neural pathways to channel our imaginations toward successful outcomes, realizing that our brains cannot distinguish between real experience and vividly imagined, emotional passions, internalized through constant practice.

Humans are biological beings, with a complex **nervous system** that regulates thoughts, feelings, and actions. The nervous system is a vast network of *neurons* (nerve cells) that carry messages to and from the brain. Neurons communicate with one another using chemical and electrical signals. They tell our glands and muscles what to do and relay signals to the brain from our sense organs. Millions of nerve impulses move throughout our bodies all the time, even when we are resting or sleeping.

Consciousness The nervous system is responsible for more than just monitoring our bodily functions. It is also responsible for *consciousness*, our awareness of the sensations, thoughts, and feelings we are experiencing at a given moment. Consciousness can take the form of extreme alertness, such as when we are taking a test or looking for a parking space on a crowded street. It can also take the form of reduced alertness, such as when we are daydreaming or driving a familiar route without having to think about what we are doing.

Conscious activities are controlled by the **conscious mind**, the part of the brain that controls the mental processes of which we are aware. The conscious mind collects information from our environment, stores it in our memory, and helps us make logical decisions. The conscious mind is not the whole story, however. We also have a **subconscious mind**, which stores the emotions and sensations that we are not quite aware of, the feelings that are just under the surface. Our subconscious mind also helps us solve problems. Have you ever tried in vain to solve a difficult problem, only to have the solution pop into your head later when you were thinking about something else? This is the power of the subconscious mind. It came up with the solution while your conscious mind was busy with something else.

Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions

Do people act based on thoughts or on feelings? Do feelings cause thoughts, or do thoughts cause feelings? Actually, thoughts, feelings, and actions are all connected. Each influences the other in a continuous cycle.

Our thoughts about people, objects, events, and situations have a strong influence on our feelings about them. For example, if we believe that a certain event will turn out in our favor and it does not, we will probably experience a feeling of disappointment. On the other hand, if we believe that a certain event will not turn out in our favor and yet it does, we will probably experience a feeling of relief.

nervous system

A system of nerve cells that regulates behavior by transmitting messages back and forth between the brain and the other parts of the body.

conscious mind The part of the brain that controls the mental processes of which we are aware.

subconscious mind The part of the brain that controls the mental processes of which we are not actively aware.

success secret

Thoughts, feelings, and actions are all connected.

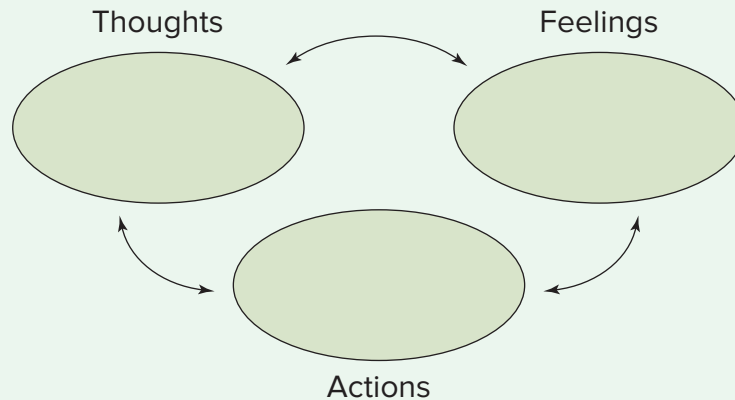


Personal Journal 1.2

Your Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions

Think of a recent situation that provoked a strong emotion. In the circles below, write down how you thought, felt, and acted in that situation.

Situation:



How did your thoughts, feelings, and actions influence one another?

By the same token, our feelings about the world have a strong influence on our beliefs and thoughts about it. If we have positive thoughts and feelings about a certain situation, we will seek out that situation again. If we have negative thoughts and feelings about a situation, we will avoid that situation in the future.

The way we act also influences our thoughts and feelings. For example, acting responsibly at work makes us feel good about ourselves, while acting irresponsibly produces the opposite result.

Use **Personal Journal 1.2** to continue thinking about how your thoughts, feelings, and actions are related.

Cognition and Emotion

What exactly are thoughts and feelings? Thought, known in psychology as **cognition**, refers to the functions of processing information. This information may be in the form of words, images, or sounds. We think every time we talk to ourselves, daydream, replay a scene from the past, hear a tune in our heads, or see a picture in our minds. Cognition includes activities such as:

- **Perceiving**—giving meaning to sensory information
- **Recognizing**—identifying whether you have, or have not, experienced a certain person, thing, idea, or situation before
- **Remembering**—storing and retrieving information
- **Reasoning**—using information to reach conclusions

cognition Mental processing of information in any form.

- **Making decisions**—evaluating and choosing among various options or courses of action
- **Solving problems**—generating and evaluating ways to overcome obstacles that stand between you and your goals
- **Forming concepts**—grouping objects, events, or people based on shared characteristics
- **Visualizing**—creating detailed mental pictures of behaviors you want to carry out

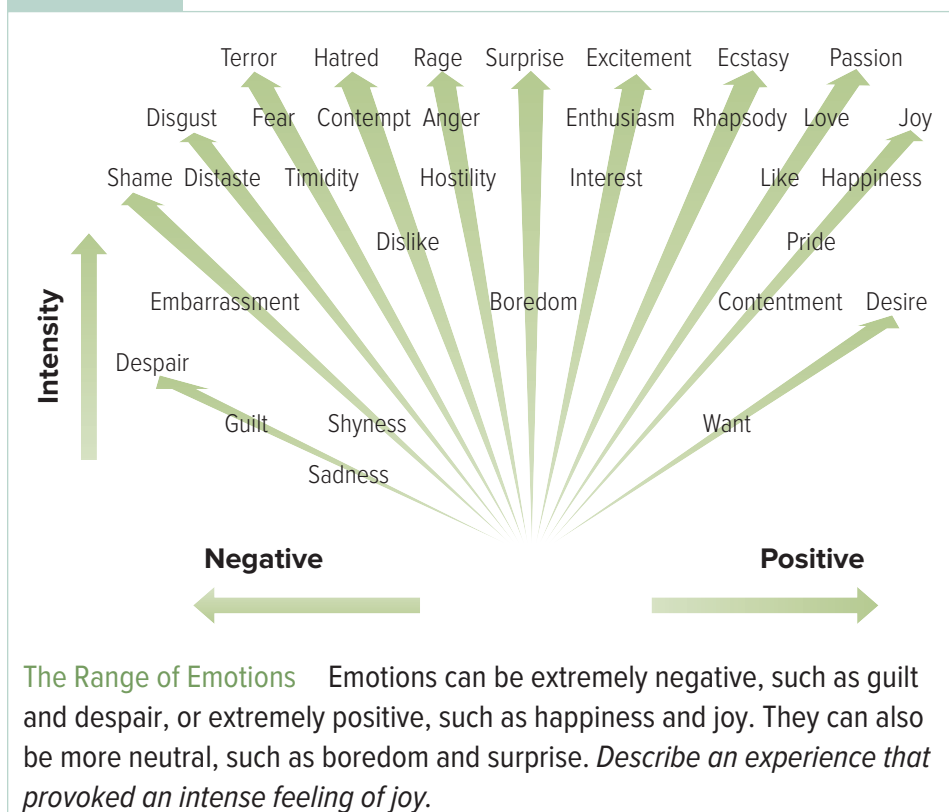
Cognition is closely tied to emotion. **Emotion** refers to subjective feelings that are accompanied by physical and behavioral changes, such as facial expressions and gestures. Although there is no such thing as a “bad” or “good” emotion, some emotions are more pleasant than others. Joy, interest, and surprise, for example, are more pleasant than fear, anger, and guilt. In addition to being positive or negative, emotions can also be more or less intense, as shown in Figure 1.1. For example, liking is a less intense emotion than love, which is less intense than passion. Emotions come from countless sources—sights, sounds, smells, memories, ideas, or interactions with others. In fact, we are always feeling something, even when we are washing the dishes or driving to work.

Positive emotions help us learn, solve problems, make decisions, relate to others, and relate to ourselves. Pleasant emotions include:

- **Joy**—a feeling of happiness following achievement of a goal
- **Love**—a feeling of affection, devotion, or attachment

emotion A subjective feeling that is accompanied by physical and behavioral changes.

FIGURE 1.1 Positive and Negative Emotions



- **Interest**—a state of curiosity, concern, or attention
- **Pride**—a positive feeling about yourself that you experience when you achieve a personal success

Unlike positive emotions, negative emotions encourage us to focus our attention on the specific thing that is troubling us. If we feel fear, for example, we will focus all our energy on getting away from the object of that fear. Because negative emotions take up so much energy, they make it hard to do productive things such as learning or working toward our goals. Negative emotions include:

- **Embarrassment**—an unpleasant feeling about yourself that you experience when you believe that others have found a flaw in you
- **Guilt**—a negative feeling about yourself that you experience when you believe that your actions have harmed someone else
- **Shame**—a negative feeling about yourself that you experience following a personal failure
- **Despair**—an unpleasant feeling of hopelessness and defeat
- **Fear**—an unpleasant feeling of anxiety and anticipation of danger
- **Anger**—a strong feeling of displeasure, resentment, or hostility
- **Disgust**—a negative feeling of aversion or repulsion
- **Sadness**—a somber emotion of sorrow over a loss

Being aware of the range of human emotions helps you understand what is happening inside you and why. Learn to occasionally stop and observe your thoughts, feelings, and actions the way a psychologist might. This will help you understand your behavior, which is the first step to making the positive changes that will lead you down the road to success.

success secret

Pay attention to what is happening inside you and why.



✓ Self Check

1. What is a role model? (p. 9)
2. What are the benefits of studying psychology? (p. 17)
3. What is the nervous system? (p. 23)

YOUR INNER SELF

We are not born with a sense of **self**. It develops—as do many of our attitudes—over time, based on repeated inputs from our environment. The sum total of our past experiences—our successes and failures, our humiliations and triumphs, and the way we have interacted with those around us and who love us—gives us a subjective sense of the sort of person we are. But there is an important catch. All of our experiences are pieces of input that are colored by our *perceptions*, and, because our perceptions are not necessarily the same as reality, our sense of who we are may miss the mark by a wide margin. Unfortunately, once an idea becomes a belief, it becomes a “truth” as far as we are concerned.

Most of our understanding of the world is filtered through our understanding of self. We decide what is right and wrong, what is appealing and unappealing, what is pleasurable and painful based on the way we see ourselves and our relationship with the outside world. Having a firm sense of self helps us make plans and predictions. It gives us an emotional investment in what we are doing. It motivates us to achieve our goals and to improve ourselves. Having a firm sense of self also helps us build and maintain relationships with others.

Your Self-Image

A picture tells a thousand words. Have you ever noticed how easily information can be conveyed in a picture or an image that would otherwise take pages of writing or minutes or hours of speaking? Your self-image is how you see yourself, which determines what you do, how you behave, how well you perform, and what kind of effort or attention you put into something. In fact, your self-image tells more than a thousand words because it sets the template or “thermostat” on your performance and what you do.

When you understand how your self-image works, you are able to address and then change it, if you want to. You can change the performance standards upon which you operate and your view of your abilities to perform at a higher level in the future. Many people are not aware of their “self-image” and how they see themselves in their own mind’s eye; therefore, they are not aware of the enormous impact a poor or limited self-image can have on who they think they are and their potential for peak performance.

Many Self-Images When we look in the internal mirror of our minds, we can see many self-images such as those that relate to ourselves as a daughter/son, a trusted friend, a business person, a mother/father, a partner, healthy, wealthy, flexible, or humorous. We can never totally erase experiences from our memories. If they were negative, our self-images may be set at

self Your sense of being a unique, conscious being.

self-image All the beliefs you have about yourself.

success secret

A sense of self helps you understand the world and make plans and decisions.



low-performance or even no-win. But we can reset our self-images. We can pre-program our future success more effectively by becoming aware, addressing and changing the self-image, or projections, of the kind of person we believe we can become.

Future Projections Define Boundaries The aspect of our self-image we want to work with is a future projection of our sense of self. It defines the boundaries or possibility of our identity and what we believe to be possible. It sets the thermostat on our range of behavior and standard of performance. If we set an image of ourselves that is higher than current performance levels, we will be motivated to gather the resources within ourselves, and from our environment, to make our new self-image a reality and not just a figment of our imagination. The creation of new self-images does take focused effort over time; however, the ability to rewire our brain activity through visualization and repetition to create new, neural pathways is at the forefront of individual and team peak performance. That is why the more vivid and specific our dreams and goals are, the more likely we are to achieve them, which we will discuss in Chapter 3.

Whatever occurs within our lives is colored by our perceptions. And because our perceptions are not necessarily the same as reality, our sense of who we are may miss the mark by a wide margin. Unfortunately, once an idea or belief becomes a perception, it becomes a truth for our self-image. Each link we add to the growing chain of self-images may either expand or limit our lives more tightly.

The Brain's Gatekeeper The more neuroscientists learn about brain function, the more we are able to influence changes in our beliefs and our behaviors that lead to maximizing our fulfillment in our careers and personal lives.

Radiating upward from your brain stem is a small network of cells, about four inches in length, called the reticular activating system. It is just about the size and shape of a quarter of an apple, and is one of the most important parts of your brain to understand and utilize to reach your goals. The reticular core of the brain dominates your behavior patterns, which include your eating habits, exercise habits, and the way you choose to live your life. It is perfectly placed to monitor all of the nerves connecting the brain and the body, and it “knows” what is going on better than any other single part of the brain. It can override activity in the spinal cord. It regulates the signals from the eyes, ears, and other sense organs and is clearly linked to the display and feeling of emotions.

The reticular activating system performs the unique function of filtering incoming stimuli, such as sight, sound, and touch, and deciding what information is going to become part of your experience. It decides what is important information and what is to be ignored. For example, if you live along a busy street, the reticular activating system quickly allows you to tune out the sound of cars rushing by so you can sleep peacefully at night.

Once you have made a decision that a certain value, thought, feeling, sound, or picture is significant to you, your reticular activating system is alerted and it immediately transmits to your consciousness any information it receives regarding that item. So when you buy a new car, for example, it is this network that suddenly causes you to notice all the cars of the same make—or even the same color—on the highway.

The beautiful feature about the reticular activating system is that you can program it to be on the alert for success-related inputs. It will wake you up in the morning without an alarm clock. If it knows you're looking forward to another eventful day, it will get you right out of bed. If it knows that you're looking for values and qualities in other individuals, it will home in on those values and qualities. If you're seeking more financial rewards, it will be extremely sensitive to any financially oriented data that could help you. The reticular activating system explains accident-prone people as it conversely explains success-prone people. It explains why some people see a problem in every solution and why others see a solution for every problem.

During every moment of our lives we program (or we allow others to program) our brains to work for us, or against us. Because the reticular activating system has no judging function, it strives to meet the attitudes and beliefs we set for it, regardless of whether they are positive or negative, true or false, right or wrong, safe or dangerous. Its only function is to follow our *previous* instructions implicitly, like a personal computer playing back what is stored—responding automatically. While the reticular activating system is a physical part of the brain, the corresponding *self-image* is an abstract part of the brain's consciousness, a function of the mind. And your self-image is the “psychological thermostat” that sets the limits and the ceiling on your performance in your world.

Limits are physical, in that genetic and other health factors, age, and skills do impose certain restrictions on performance. However, these limits—for most of us—will never be fully tested because of the limitations caused by our beliefs. Limitations are psychological. Over time we all learn to raise or lower our expectations of ourselves because of our experiences. Disappointments become solid barriers. Successes give us confidence. As we get older, we don't simply move past these limitations we have internalized. Some of them stay with us throughout our lives. Successful individuals are constantly seeking growth and high performance and, incrementally, keep raising the bar on these invisible barriers.

A former sports' psychologist tells a true story that illustrates this point, which he observed when he was working with a world-class high-jumper preparing for the Summer Games. The athlete could clear the high-jump bar in practice and in competition at 7 feet, 5 inches; but no higher, regardless of the technique or practice. When he wasn't paying close attention one day, the coach raised the bar an inch, to 7 feet, 6 inches. Thinking it was still at the lower setting, the athlete cleared it. When his coach told him what he had done, he looked at his coach in disbelief, almost agitated. “But I can't jump that high,” he exclaimed. “You just did,” the coach smiled. “You just

conquered your own four-minute mile barrier, just as Roger Bannister did so many years ago.” Once Bannister proved that it was possible to run a mile in under four minutes, on May 6th, 1954, suddenly more and more track stars were able to do it—proving an important lesson: **once you stop believing something is impossible, it becomes possible.**

Many individuals don’t understand and believe that they, to a large extent, can control their outcomes in life. They feel like thermometers, reflecting that they are who they are because of what’s happening to them in relation to the outside world. A thermometer rises or falls to meet the external environment. Most self-images are greatly influenced by what the media and our role models bombard our senses with on a daily basis. However, we do have control of our current thoughts. We can reset our self-image like an internal thermostat from average performance to peak performance, and expand our comfort zones over time.

Each of us has a number of comfort zones that we have developed throughout our lives that dictate the amount of discomfort we are willing to suffer before making adjustments. Reflect, for a moment, on just how many of your behaviors are set into motion when you move out of these comfort zones. “Too much” can motivate as strongly as “too little.” On the level of conscious thought, there are any number of examples: how much time we feel comfortable in spending with those around us; how much effort we feel comfortable in expending on our daily priorities at the office or at home; how much money we feel comfortable in spending on our lifestyles, as well as how much money we feel comfortable in earning.

The self-image can definitely be compared to a type of thermostat, keeping us in a psychological comfort zone. With a low self-image many people’s psychological thermostats are set correspondingly low. Not believing they are capable of much or worth much, the low self-image individuals are comfortable with mediocrity and being spectators. When challenged to venture out on the high side or take a chance to change the status quo, they pull back. “I’m not capable of that; that’s beyond my meager abilities. It’s not worth the effort. Why bother?” goes the negative self-talk. They have discovered that their imaginations serve as a life-governing device—that if your self-image can’t possibly see yourself doing something or achieving something, you literally cannot do it. *“It’s not what you are that holds you back, it’s what you think you are not.”*

Our “set point” for success is arrived at over time, based on belief in ourselves, our abilities, and our worth practiced on a daily basis. With a strong and healthy belief in ourselves and what we are capable of, we can go out and survive the stress of day-to-day living and reaching worthy goals. When our self-image thermostats move into the higher ranges, we believe we can handle pretty much whatever is thrown at us. We become comfortable with peak performance. And we become uncomfortable with lower performance. However, we all have good and bad days. So it becomes important for us to respond effectively to setbacks. If our efforts to win fall below our comfort zones, we feed back to our self-image some positive reinforcement and self-talk: “Next time, I’ll do better”; “I *can* do that.” “More knowledge, training, and better concentration

will win me that prize.” This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, concerning how positive self-talk impacts our self-esteem.

Creativity is seeing, in advance, an idea that can become a solution to a major problem or need. And holding on to that idea until it works or until a better idea is implemented. Creativity is holding on to your dreams even when others laugh at you. Creativity comes from having mentors and coaches who are interested in your success; coaches who’ll listen unconditionally, who praise often and criticize constructively the behavior that is undesirable, while not directly criticizing the individual. Creativity is having curious leaders who are open to new ideas and to better ways of doing things and who are not so set in their ways that they prejudge everything in advance. Unimaginative and unproductive people say, “It may be possible, but it’s too difficult.” Creative individuals say, “It may be difficult, but it’s always possible.”

When we look in a mirror, there are three reflections: the child of our past, the person we are today, and the person we will become. With the right role models and the right inputs into our brain’s software program, we can change the perceptions that have twisted and colored our image of who we really are. Understanding this secret of the power of the imagined experience is fundamental to understanding high-performance human achievement.

What is your dominant self-image? Do you see yourself as creative, friendly, funny, and intelligent, or do you have a low view of yourself? Enter your thoughts in **Personal Journal 1.3**.

Building a Healthy Self-Image

A healthy self-image is positive but realistic. People with a realistic self-image aren’t bothered by their weaknesses, however, because they know that their strengths outweigh them. Instead of worrying about the things they can’t do well, they make the very best of all the things they can do well. Sarah, for example, knows that she is a whiz at math and computers but is a pretty ordinary artist. Emmett takes pride in being a good writer and musician, but knows that he tends to stumble when making oral presentations. They both have healthy, realistic self-images.

People with unrealistic, negative self-images, by contrast, overestimate their weaknesses and suffer from low self-esteem. (You’ll learn more about the connection between self-image and self-esteem in Chapter 4.) People with unrealistic, positive self-images have high self-esteem, but they overestimate their strengths and don’t put in the effort required to succeed. They also have trouble getting along with other people because they usually seem hostile and arrogant.

Besides being realistic, a healthy self-image is also based on who you are right now. Who you are today does not limit who you will be next week, next month, or next year. Your potential, your interests, and your abilities are developing every day and will continue to develop. You are being influenced by the world around you, and you are influencing the world, too.

success secret

A healthy self-image is positive but realistic.



Personal Journal 1.3

How Do You See Yourself?

On the scales following each statement, circle one or more numbers between 1 and 10 according to how strongly you agree with it. The number 1 represents total disagreement, and the number 10 represents total agreement. You may select a single number or a range of numbers.

1. I have high intellectual ability.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

2. I am good at sports.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

3. I am creative.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

4. I have good relationships with my close friends.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

5. I have a good sense of humor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

6. I am popular with others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

7. I am competent on the job.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

8. I am competent at school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

9. I am romantically appealing to others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

10. I am physically attractive.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

11. I am a moral person.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

12. I have a good relationship with my parents.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
|-----|

Identify the three areas to which you gave the highest ratings. What are you particularly proud of in these areas? Now look at the areas to which you gave low ratings. Is it possible that you are being overly critical of yourself?

Complexity and Self-Image A healthy self-image is also complex. Having a complex self-image means having a variety of positive ways of seeing yourself. People who have a complex self-image are less likely to suffer from psychological troubles such as stress, anxiety, and depression. When they suffer a setback or difficulty in one area of their lives, they can fall back on one of the many other positive roles they play in life. Ladonna, for example, has a complex self-image: She sees herself as a business-woman, a mother, an artist, and an environmentalist. When things get tough at work, she has many other positive aspects of herself to take pride in. Jared, on the other hand, has a rather simple self-image: He sees himself mainly as an A student. When he occasionally does poorly on a test, he feels like a failure.

The key to a complex self-image is to strike a balance among the various important areas of your life, such as relationships, school, work and career, community, health, hobbies and leisure, and spirituality. When you devote time and energy to each important area of your life, you build a strong foundation for feeling good about yourself. How balanced is your life? Take a look in **Activity 4**.

YOU AND YOUR SOCIAL WORLD

If you wrote down a detailed description of your innermost self and then asked your best friend to write a description of you, how similar do you think the descriptions would be? What if you asked a sibling? A parent? What about a new acquaintance? Chances are, none of their descriptions would be very similar to yours. That's because no one sees you the way you see yourself. It's also because you probably act slightly differently with each of these people.

Have you noticed that people change their behavior depending on the social setting? Ginny, for example, is responsible and managerial at work, shy and quiet in the classroom, and sociable and outgoing with friends. Is she acting falsely in some situations? Is she unsure of who she is? Not necessarily. Ginny's behavior shows the power of social roles. A **social role** is a set of *norms* (standards of behavior) that define how we are supposed to behave in a social position or setting. Like Ginny, each of us is subject to many social roles: partner, friend, parent, citizen, son or daughter, student, employee.

We act according to social roles because we desire social acceptance. Sometimes this desire motivates us to act in ways that don't represent our true selves. Altering our behavior to make a good impression on others is known as **self-presentation**. Trina, for example, acts falsely modest after receiving a compliment because she is afraid of seeming stuck up.

All of us use self-presentation, sometimes without being aware of it. We might act friendly and upbeat at a party to make a good impression, for example, even if we're feeling tired and grouchy inside. How do you behave around different people? Do you engage in self-presentation? Write your thoughts in **Activity 5**.

success secret

It's healthy to find balance in your life.



success secret

No one sees you the way you see yourself.



social role A set of norms that define how you are supposed to behave in a given social position or setting.

self-presentation

Altering your behavior to make a good impression on others.

ACTIVITY 4: Wheel of Life

A Read each of the statements below. Decide how true each statement is for you, then write in a number between 1 (not at all true) and 10 (totally true).

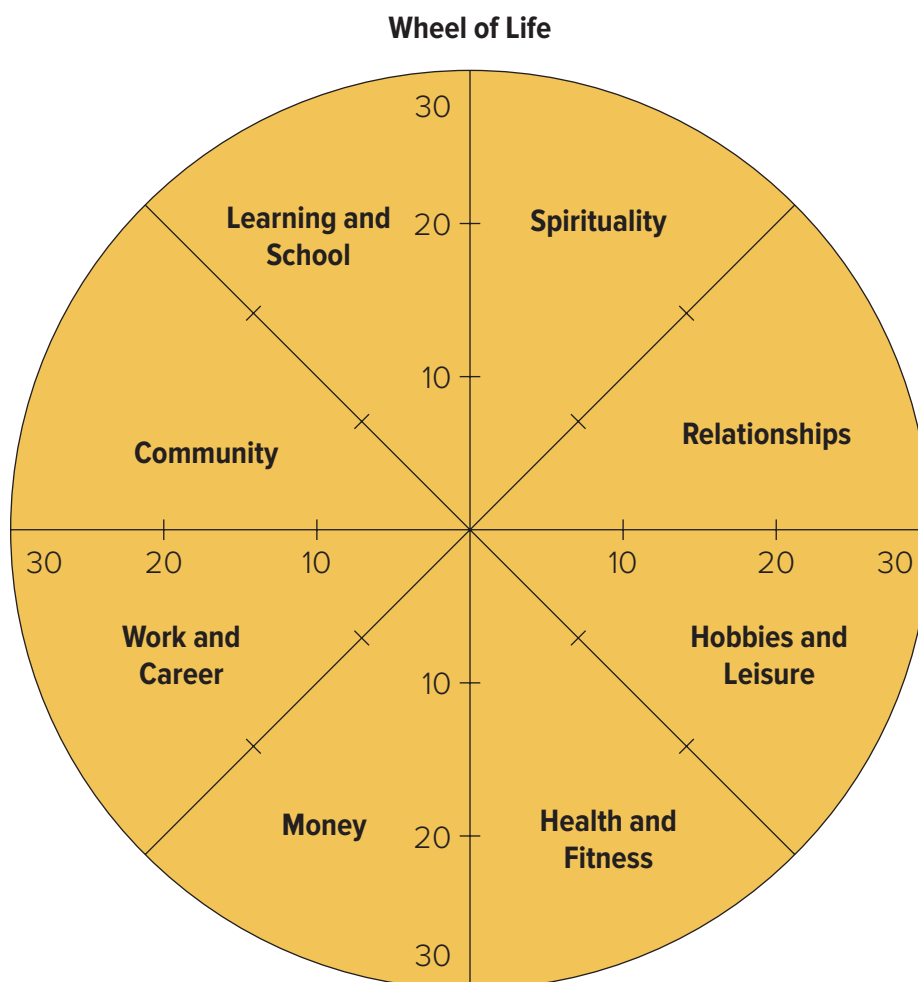
	Rating (1–10)
1. I go to movies, restaurants, and so on, with friends.	
2. I spend time thinking about the meaning of life.	
3. I exercise regularly.	
4. I enjoy time with my romantic partner.	
5. I have goals for earning and spending money.	
6. I am satisfied with my career choice and my career progress so far.	
7. I am involved in community affairs.	
8. I enjoy reading books or magazines.	
9. I belong to a club or social group.	
10. I set time aside for meditation, prayer, worship, or other spiritual practice.	
11. I eat healthful foods.	
12. I write or call friends and family members from whom I am separated.	
13. I earn the income I want.	
14. I am involved in creative work on the job, at school, or elsewhere.	
15. I belong to a community association.	
16. I attend workshops or special courses to increase my knowledge or skills.	
17. I like to meet new people and socialize.	
18. I think about how I can make my life serve a greater purpose.	
19. I try to maintain a healthy weight.	
20. I have coworkers or fellow students who are also friends.	
21. I have a plan for saving money.	
22. I have reached some, but not all, of my professional goals.	
23. I volunteer for community or charitable projects.	
24. I watch or listen to educational programs.	

B Scoring: For each of the 24 items on the list, write the rating you gave it (1–10) on the line below.

Relationships	Work and Career	Community	Learning and School
Item 4 _____	Item 6 _____	Item 7 _____	Item 8 _____
Item 12 _____	Item 14 _____	Item 15 _____	Item 16 _____
Item 20 _____	Item 22 _____	Item 23 _____	Item 24 _____
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____

Health and Fitness	Hobbies and Leisure	Spirituality	Money
Item 3 _____	Item 1 _____	Item 2 _____	Item 5 _____
Item 11 _____	Item 9 _____	Item 10 _____	Item 13 _____
Item 19 _____	Item 17 _____	Item 18 _____	Item 21 _____
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____

C Record the total for each area on the wheel below by drawing a curved line in each section of the circle.



continued . . .

D Ideally, your completed diagram should resemble a circle. However, most of us have different priorities at different stages of our lives. Were you surprised by your imbalance? Explain why or why not.

E In which area(s) of your life do you want or need to spend more time? Explain.

F Name specific things you could give up in one or two areas in order to make more time for the neglected area(s).

G Are any of the eight life areas covered in this exercise particularly important to you? Explain.
