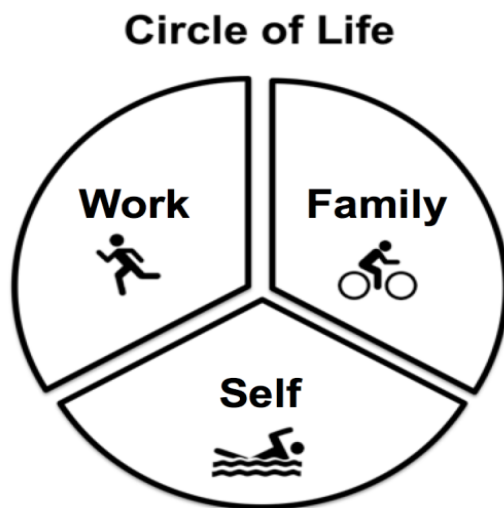


The Circle of Life Quiz

"If we don't change the direction we are going, we are likely to end up where we are headed."
Ancient Chinese Proverb

We all seem to be living an utterly overloaded life with an abundance of expectations and demands of our time. The good news is that we have so many fantastic opportunities to take part in, but the bad news is that if we do it all, we likely will suffer consequences.

The "Circle of Life Quiz" is a personal development tool designed to visually represent how balanced your life is. It breaks life into three simple pieces for evaluation (work, family, self). I liken it to training for a triathlon – to achieve the best overall performance, you must equally balance the time and energy you spend training for each event (swim, bike, run).



The tool's objective is to help you achieve improvement in your life at work, your life at home (family life), and your ability to attend to the needs of yourself between those two.

So let's get started!

Below is a quiz (8 questions per category), where you will honestly rate yourself on how you are doing in each area. After completing the quiz, you will total the number for each category (work, family, self) and plot that number onto a circle to create a visual image of how much balance or equilibrium you have among the many priorities in your life. At the end, there is a goal-setting exercise to help you make improvements in areas where you might feel you need to pay some attention.

It is pretty simple by design and intended to be completed in less than 30 minutes, including the goal-setting portion. If each question is answered honestly, it will tell you how you are doing.

1. Work:

a) **How satisfied are you with the work you do for a career?**
(NOT = 0; Kind of = 1; Satisfied = 2; Really like my job! = 3)

b) **Does your current position utilize your God-given talents where you know you excel?**
(NO = 0; Maybe some of them = 1; Mostly = 2; Definitely = 3)

c) **Do you have a “plan” for your career – where you would like to be in 5-10 years & how do you plan to get there?**
(NO = 0; working on it = 1; yes, but needs attention = 2; Yes, review it regularly = 3)

d) **Are you working on developing & improving your unique strengths in your career?**
(No = 0; I am planning to = 1; yes, but need to work on it = 2; Yes, actively working on it = 3)

e) **Are you willing to work when you are on an official vacation from the office?**
(No = 3; Only if urgent = 2; Sometimes = 1; Yes = 0)

f) **Do you take time during working hours to exercise on a regular basis?**
(No = 0; Sometimes = 1; Mostly = 2; Yes, regularly = 3)

g) **Do you have a living trust and a will set up for you and your family?**
(No = 0; working on it = 1; Have a will = 2; Have a will and family trust = 3)

h) **Do you have a financial plan with goals & priorities outlined for your family?**
(No = 0; I am planning to = 1; yes, but need to work on it = 2; DONE = 3)

“Work” TOTAL: _____

2. Family:

a) **Do you spend “quality” time with your family & children each week?**
(No = 0; sometimes = 1; Mostly = 2; Yes, regularly = 3)

b) **Do you spend a lot of time responding to personal emails and phone calls at work?**
(No = 3; Rarely = 2; Sometimes = 1; Yes = 0)

i) **On average, how many hours per week are you spending with work?**
(70+ hours = 0; 60-70 hours = 1; 50-60 hours = 2; 40-50 hours = 3)

c) **Do you make time for regular “date nights” to have quality time with your spouse/partner/children?**
(No = 0; I plan to = 1; Sometimes = 2; Yes = 3)

d) **Would your family say that you are a good listener – in tune with their needs?**
(No = 0; Sometimes = 1; Mostly = 2; Yes = 3)

e) **Do you eat dinner as a family at the dinner table 3 times a week?**
(Never = 0; Sometimes = 1; Most of the time = 2; Always = 3)

f) **Do you regularly find yourself bringing your work home?**
(No = 3; just sometimes = 2; Often = 1; Yes, frequently = 0)

g) **Is your home organized and free of distracting clutter?**
(No = 0; sometimes = 1; Mostly = 2; Yes = 3)

h) **How often do you check email after hours and on weekends without taking the corresponding time off work?**
(3+ hours/week = 0; 2-3 hours/week = 1; 1-2 hours/week = 2; less than 1 hour/week = 3)

“Family” TOTAL: _____

3. **Self:**

a) **Do you have a healthy and balanced diet each day?**
(No = 0; Sometimes = 1; Mostly = 2; Yes = 3)

b) **How many days a week do you exercise?**
(0-1/week = 0; 2/week = 1; 3/week = 2; 4+/week = 3)

c) **How much sleep do you get on average each night?**
(<5 hours = 0; 5-6 hours = 1; 6-7 hours = 2; 7+ hours = 3)

i) **Do you regularly enjoy hobbies or interests outside of work?**
(No = 0; Sometimes = 1; Most of the time = 2; Yes = 3)

d) **Are you doing anything to continue your education and personal development?**
(No = 0; I am planning to = 1; yes, but need to work on it = 2; Yes = 3)

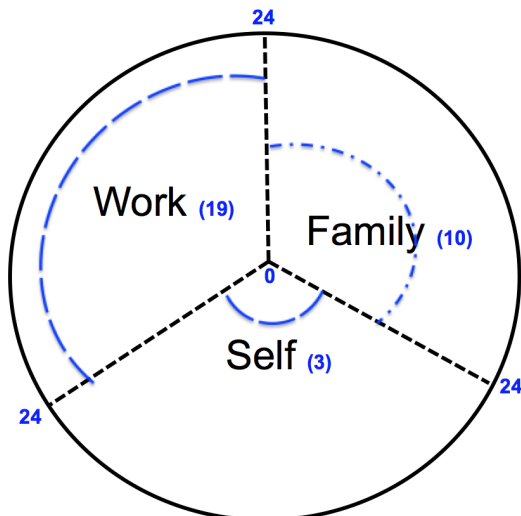
e) **Are you involved in any way to give back to the community you live in?**
(No = 0; I am planning to = 1; yes, but need to work on it = 2; Yes = 3)

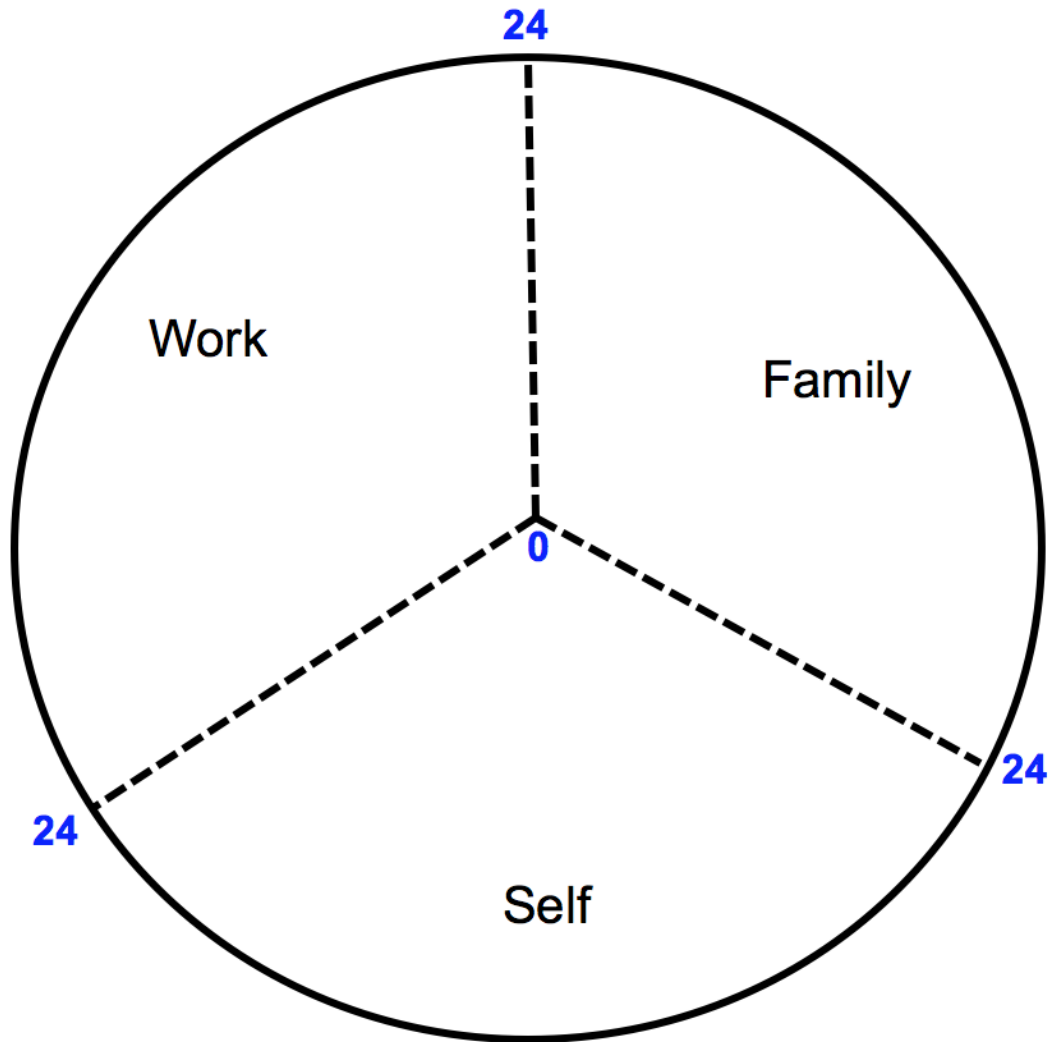
f) **Do you make it a PRIORITY to have regular quiet time to remove yourself from the busyness of life?**
(No = 0; Sometimes = 1; weekly = 2; daily = 3)

g) **Are you doing anything to increase your spiritual understanding and beliefs? ****
(No = 0; Sometimes = 1; weekly = 2; daily = 3)

“Self” TOTAL: _____

Once the quiz is completed, fill in your circle (next page) with the “total” scores above from each of the three categories -- from “0” at the center to “24” at the outside of the circle, as with the blue dotted lines below. In this example, **Work** added up to “19”, **Family** to “10”, and **Self** was “3”. Connect the lines to complete an inner circle & get an immediate visual indication of just how balanced your life is.





There are two elements in the circle to take note of as you examine it:

- 1) How round is your circle?
(Symbolic of how balanced your life is between competing priorities)
- 2) How close to “24” are you in each of the three areas?
(Indicative of how fulfilled you are in each area – but could also indicate some imbalance)

Next, examine your circle according to each area of questions. How does it look -- is it round? And if so, are you as close to a “24” in each category as you would like? Do you see some room for improvements? How would having more balance in one area impact the other areas of your life? Does this visual representation bring to mind any changes you would like to make in your life? As you see the areas out of balance, or not as far to the outer circle as you might like, go back to your questions above and review where you might be seeing some issues with how you are keeping a sense of balance between the many roles you play in your life.

Goal Setting: Developing a plan for balance in your life

"Don't give up on your dreams, or your dreams will give up on you."

John Wooden

A man without goals has been compared to a ship without a rudder. Both are subject to the winds of fate. A n e s s e n t i a l component of this exercise is to use the *Circle of Life* to set some **simple** goals for improvement in those areas where you feel out of balance. Those who are continuing to grow personally into a balanced lifestyle are likely to be the ones who are the most successful in their work, with their family, and within their inner self. That is because they have figured out how to do what they want in life!

There are just two requirements for setting these goals:

- 1) It must be written.
- 2) It must be measurable, meaning it will be clear when you achieve it.

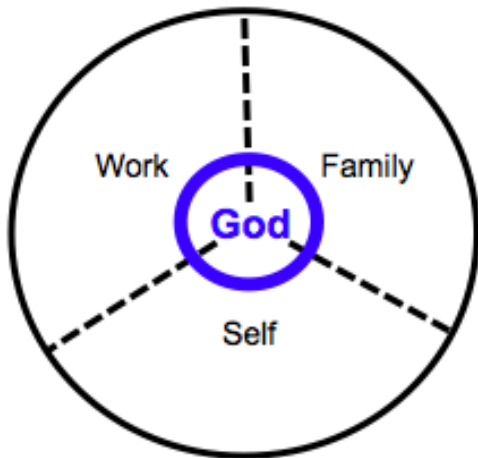
After a goal has been written, please spend some time thinking about it. Review it. Rephrase it. When you work on your goals, they tend to work on you. Reminding yourself of the results you seek will provide self-motivation to carry out your plans. But remember to keep it simple and to the point. I do not recommend any more than three goals at any given time. Otherwise, you are more likely to lose track of them and not achieve anything over time.

Goals (Work)	Date
Goals (Family)	Date
Goals (Self)	Date

Spiritual Growth Assessment

My faith as a Christian is absolutely key to my ability to meet the challenges of keeping my life in balance in this hectic and fast-paced world we live in today. I rely on God through prayer and bible study and meditation to help in all 3 areas; my work, my family & my self. Without God, I truly feel helpless in this respect.

So for those interested, below I have added a 2nd dimension to the Circle of Life, which incorporates a more complete means of evaluating yourself in your Christian walk. This of course is an optional exercise to help you dip further into your spiritual growth. One might look at the Circle of Life like this, with God at the center of all decisions we make:



As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to grow in Christlikeness. Jesus said it well in the book of Mark, 8:34:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

The focus here is on God’s work in us, and not on our work for Him. God desires heart change over religious actions. God does the revealing, the renewing, the empowering, and the recreating. Our part as His disciple is to do the yielding, the submitting, and the obeying. We strive to grow in our understanding of what it means to be a Christian, while expanding our personal knowledge of biblical truths. God expects His children to grow spiritually and the Bible encourages personal examination as an element of that growth.

Here are 5 questions to ask to get that process started. Think of it as a quick check-up on evaluating your spiritual life as a Christian:

- 1. Am I consistently praying with confidence that God can do more than I can do?**
- 2. Am I serving God with genuine passion and zeal?**
- 3. Am I reaching out with love and giving to those in need with gladness?**
- 4. Am I experiencing the power and fruit of the Holy Spirit in my life?**
- 5. Am I living a gospel-centered life, fully convinced of its truth and my salvation?**

Mike's Top 15:

While I am passionate about the need for balance in work and life, I'll be the first to admit that there is no quick fix to the many challenges we all face today in this area. There are plenty of books, articles, and videos telling us how to solve it. Here's a "top 15" list I compiled just in case it can help you with your goal setting exercise:

- 1. Set boundaries with email**
- 2. Ask for support**
- 3. Get organized**
- 4. Concentrate on one thing at a time (get present)**
- 5. Make time for loved ones**
- 6. Schedule everything**
- 7. Let go of perfectionism**
- 8. Work smarter, not longer**
- 9. Don't compromise on your sleep**
- 10. Set life goals**
- 11. Learn how to say "no"**
- 12. Make relaxation and breaks a priority**
- 13. Exercise and meditate**
- 14. My 2nd favorite is: Hire a personal coach**
- 15. And my favorite (it really works):**

→Unplug!