

Web of Life Exercise

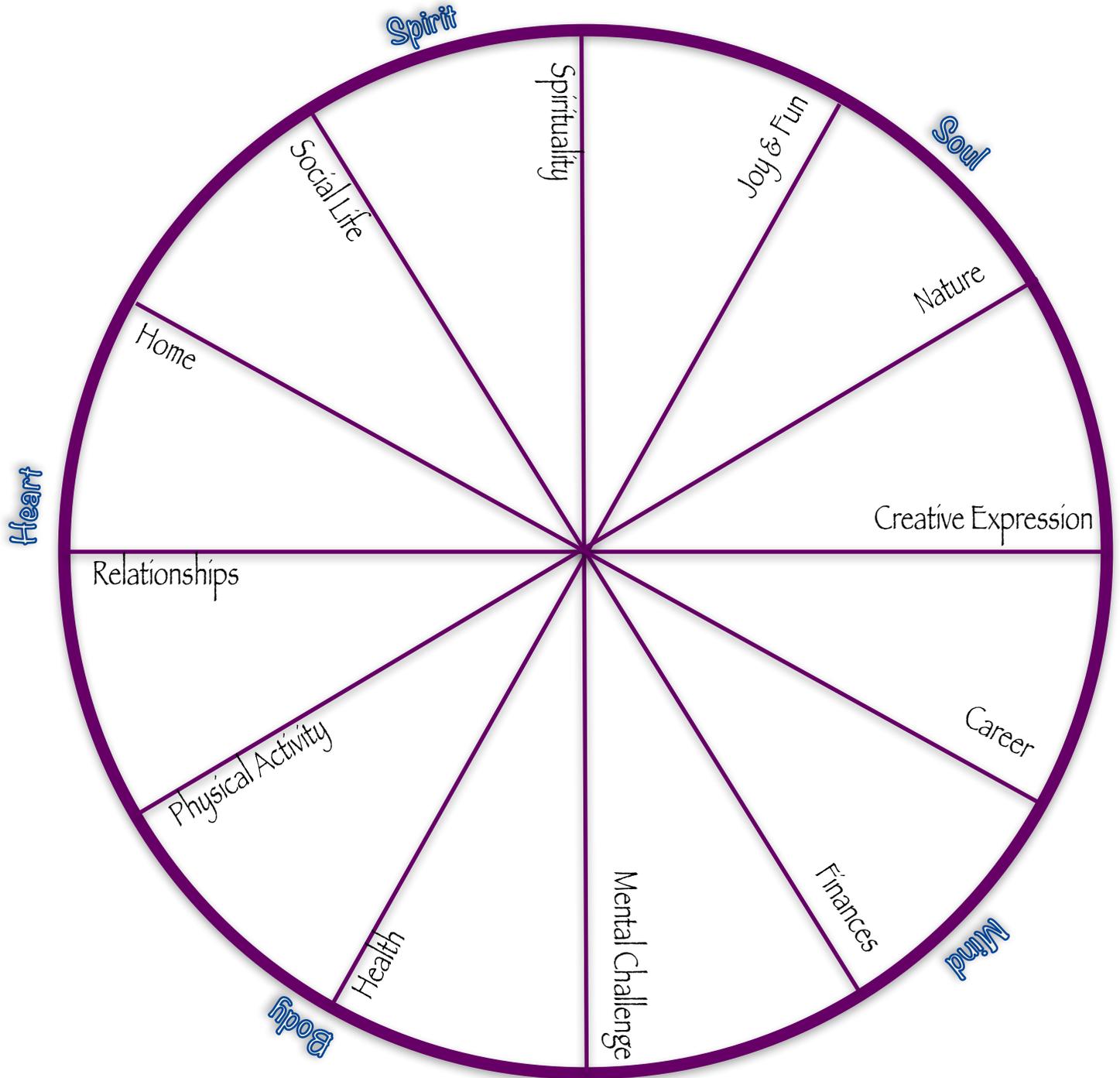
This is a visual self assessment tool, a spider diagram – representing the web that is your life! How balanced is your life? What areas need more attention? Life is a web...think of the Native American dream catcher. You want to have a balanced web that can catch the bad dreams and let the good ones through into your life!

Instructions:

1. In your favorite color, place a dot on each line representing how important that area of life is to you. Connect the dots with that color.
2. In a different color, place a dot on each line indicating how satisfied you are with each area, and connect the dots.

Close to the edge is very important/satisfied; close to the center is unimportant/dissatisfied.

Connect the dots to see how balanced your web is, and how aligned your life is with your values.



Understanding Your Web of Life

What you are looking for here is a way to understand what the gaps and alignment mean. I created the sample below as an illustration. The purple line is importance, the red is satisfaction. Let's start with the good news: those things where the two lines are close to each other (examples are Joy and fun, spirituality, health and mental challenge) – that means you're in alignment, and that's pretty awesome. There are some small gaps, but they really are pretty close. Of course, you determine the scale! Then the stuff to work on: there are two kinds of gaps. The first, and pretty obvious one, is where you aren't satisfied with something that is important to you (examples here are nature, creative expression and physical activity). In these cases, you would want to devote more time and energy in these areas, and ultimately add more things into your life that would make you more satisfied!

The other kind of gap is where the satisfaction is higher than the importance (examples are relationships, social life and career). In that case, you want to look for ways to back off in those areas, because they are stealing your time and focus from areas that are more important to you.

Now look at your own web. Look at the alignment, first. Now look at the gaps. Which ones seem like the most important ones to address? Seriously, don't say all 10. Pick your priorities. Now think about what you would like to add in to close the gap. It doesn't have to be big things. Sometimes small things – that you will actually do – can begin to fill the gap. For example, let's use physical activity. You don't have to "get in shape" or "run a marathon" or something else dramatic and daunting. You can add a yoga class, or walking at lunch, or playing catch with the dog. Even better, you can combine things...so a Saturday morning hike in the woods works for both nature and physical activity. By choosing things that are doable, your chances of actually doing them are greater, and ta-da your satisfaction will go up. And if you give up throwing so many parties (social) you might have more time for the walks! See how it works? BTW, if you have things you want to stop doing (say you had some bad habits in health, for example) the principle is the same...add in to crowd out!

This is a pretty simple exercise, but it can be pretty eye-opening, and can lead you to some relatively quick and easy improvements. What are your gaps and action ideas?

