



Whose life is it any way?

A couple of years ago I found myself on public transport shouting at a man (not something I normally do) who had just bumped into me and my partner, he hadn't meant to it was just a busy rush hour. I had been feeling pretty down for some time and not sure of what I wanted and what direction to go in and where to start. If you don't know what you want, it is easy to follow someone else's lead who will tell you what they want you to do. This how I was feeling on the day I walked in to my boss's office and unloaded all the anger that had built up in side of me. After an extended period of time off work, I had an opportunity to go on a two day coaching workshop. After the most positive and motivating two days I had experienced in a long while I spent the remainder of my time I was off work looking at my life and what I wanted from it. At the time I felt like I was walking around in the dark bumping into things and reacting, rather than being proactive and taking charge of my life.

As George Bernard Shaw once said:

"Life isn't about finding yourself.

Life is about creating yourself!"

As I sat there completing exercises that helped me look at where I was and where I wanted to be I was reminded of the dreams I once had, and the resources, skills and experience I already had within me. With this in mind and the positive feelings that came with this I started to plan changes that would make a positive difference in my life, including practicing Qigong daily and moving to an area close to a river and spending more time outside. Christmas 2010 I was flying up to Scotland and as I wandered around the shops I purchased the book called "Who Moved My Cheese by Spencer Johnson, M.D, which is a great book that looks at amazing ways to deal with change in your life. It only took about an hour to read and raises you awareness, with positive quotes and affirmations to help view change with a positive frame of mind.

As we travel through life moving from one thing to another we can find ourselves doing the same old things that have always worked and make us feel safe and yet still feeling like something is missing.

If you to feel like you're being pulled in different directions by the demands of employers, partners, family and friends? Are you feeling flat, lacking energy and generally out of sorts?

Change that feeling NOW?

It is possible to increase energy and balance in your life; I have compiled seven of the steps that I personally took to move from where I was to where I wanted to be. I am feeling more confident of my ability to handle change with a more positive view and am working towards achieving my goals. I hope you find the following information useful in living a life that is truly your own

Here are my top tips for achieving a better life balance:

1. Make time for yourself. Spending just 20 minutes a day, perhaps before going to bed, being somewhere in silence with no distractions. Just focus on your breathing going in and out or repeating a positive affirmation in your mind for example on the in breath "I am calm" and on the out breath "I am confident". If thoughts come into to your mind allow them to flow in and then flow out by concentrating on your breathing again.
2. List what's truly important to you and focus your energy there, remember it is your life so live it. Answer the following questions:
 - How do you want to feel?
 - What is important to you about your goal?
 - What are you willing to do or give up achieving your goal?
3. Focus on what is important for you including your physical, emotional and general health and well-being. A balanced diet, exercise (just going for a short walk can help) and doing something that makes you happy will all have a positive impact on your life.
4. Acknowledge your daily achievements, no matter how small they seem to you - keeping a journal, noting all the things that went well in your day and how happy this made you feel, helps immensely. Keep the focus positive and short so it's fun. Writing it just before you go to sleep will leave you feeling positive.
5. Listing your ambitions and striving to achieve them for a fulfilled life is one tip that has balance in all areas of your life –use the Wheel of Life exercise below to help you to focus on the areas that you are satisfied with and those that you want to improve your satisfaction in.

The Wheel of Life is a visual tool which represents the different areas of your life in eight core sections:

Where you live - now and in the future

Relationship – current or future life partner

Work & learning – job satisfaction or career path

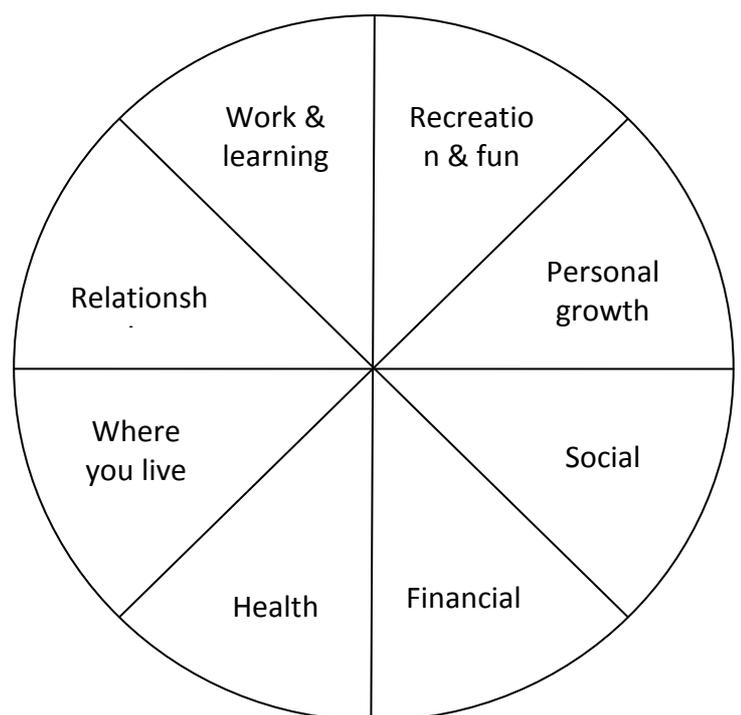
Recreation & fun – artistic and leisure activities

Financial – savings and investments

Health – exercise and diet

Personal growth – self space and spirituality

Social – family, friends and activities



Consider each section - how satisfied are you with all these areas of your life?

The centre of the wheel is 1 and means you are totally dissatisfied; the outer edge is 10 and represents full satisfaction and achievement.

Decide your degree of satisfaction from 1 to 10 and mark it on the relevant segment.

How balanced is your life?

Which areas make you happy, satisfied and fulfilled?

Which areas need improvement?

6. Try something completely new - take up something creative that you are interested in doing or learning. Having recently completed a wood sculpture course (no previous experience) I was amazed at how good I felt just doing something fun.
7. **Smile!** As you read this just smile and see how you feel. Smiling takes less facial muscles than it does to frown. Plus, smiling makes you feel happy.

"Happiness is not something readymade.

It comes from your own actions"

Dalai Lama