














*Soul Wellbeing Wheel  
&  
Self-Assessment Tool*



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# Communitas' Global Staff Care and Development's *Soul Wellbeing Wheel and Self-Assessment Tool* Along with SCD's Ethos & Mutual Expectations

Greetings Communitas Staff! We are thrilled you are viewing this resource. We pray God uses it to nourish you and help you develop a stronger care system so that you may be better "filled up" in order to better "pour out."

Before we jump into the Soul Wellbeing Wheel, we thought it best to step back and remind ourselves of the WHY this soul work is so important.

## *What is the soul?*

Communitas' Staff Care and Development (SCD) defines the soul as the "essence of who we are."<sup>1</sup>

## *What is soul wellbeing?*

A glimpse of Soul Wellbeing can be found in the Creation account of Genesis. In the beginning, God created the world; everything in it was how God intended.<sup>2</sup> Adam, Eve and the rest of creation "enjoyed the highest experience of shalom, or soul wellbeing."<sup>3</sup> They were whole, unified, well-balanced, and integrated into God's creation system.<sup>4</sup>

We recognize that this perfect wellbeing did not last for Adam, Eve and Creation. We also recognize that we serve a God who is renewing ALL THINGS! Therefore, we are eager to cooperate with God as He renews our individual souls, our relationships, our communities, our systems, and our world!

## *Why is soul wellbeing important?*

Our Soul Wellbeing is essential for living out our best lives in Christ. We minister to others out of our life in Him. As we stated above, God is in the process of making each of us whole, unified, well-balanced, and integrated into God's system. This is why we, as Staff Care and Development (SCD), are passionate about the Soul Wellbeing of our staff!

Sustaining the call God has for each of us can be challenging. SCD longs to see people thriving in their contexts. And we recognize that thriving takes grace, skill and intentionality. We also value reciprocity as it increases our personal and organizational health and leads to community and mutual support. Therefore, SCD has important **mutual expectations** in how we relate to each individual staff member.

*How does SCD support soul wellbeing?*

### **SCD's Mutual Expectations:**

1. First, each staff person takes responsibility to develop a robust and meaningful care system that is unique to them, their family, and their context. In return, SCD promises to offer resources that can assist staff in the development of their personal care system when such support is requested.
2. Second, each staff member is responsible for "raising their hand" when needs arise that warrant additional support and/or a specialist. When you raise your hand, you can expect not to be left in isolation or distress. We promise to offer you pastoral care in times of need, concern, or struggle. This includes offering professional care by referral where personal challenges exceed Communitas' ability and giftedness to adequately handle (many of our referred professionals charge for services).
3. Third, Communitas has a dedicated SCD Team who is intentionally thinking through the lifespan of a cross-cultural worker in order to provide proactive care and support along the journey. Throughout your time with C'tas, the SCD Team will invite you to participate in specific opportunities that tend to your care and development. Please respond to these invitations and participate.
4. And finally, we long to see an ethos of care within Communitas where staff are caring for staff everywhere one looks. This recognizes that we together are responsible for the health and wellbeing of each individual who makes us Communitas. Thus, whose care system could you actually become part of?

*How can I assess and tend to my own soul wellbeing?*

### **Soul Wellbeing Wheel and Self-Assessment Tool**

Communitas' SCD Team has developed a Soul Wellbeing Wheel that lays the foundation for self-assessing your Soul Wellbeing. Again, this tool is a self-assessment and not an intervention.

You are the driver. It is your choice to use it to support and encourage your soul. It may also illuminate how robust your care system is. And based on what you discover, you may choose to seek further coaching and/or resources for growth. We see the Wellbeing Tool versatile and useful in many ways and contexts. We are excited to introduce it to you.

Recently asked what it is that people need to hear right now, Spiritual Leader, Rob Bell responded by saying: "If I could, I would like to tell everyone to take a deep breath, then I would look them straight in the eye and tell them...you are enough exactly as you are. Accept that you are accepted. You have always been loved. Belonging has never been the issue."<sup>5</sup> It is this level of love and acceptance that is so central to Soul Wellbeing. How would your life and ministry change if this axiom was true for you? We as SCD dare you to believe "You are enough exactly as you are." It is out of this enoughness, acceptance, and love that you would do this Soul Wellbeing work as a response to your belonging. This is our act of worship.

SCD's Goals for the Soul Wellbeing Wheel and Self-Assessment Tool are to assist staff in:

1. recognizing the twelve aspects of life that impact Soul Wellbeing.
2. describing what health could look like within each of the twelve aspects of life.
3. identifying the aspects of life that are personally reducing one's Soul Wellbeing.
4. identifying the aspects of life that are personally nurturing one's Soul Wellbeing.
5. using the research within the tool to identify ways to tend to the aspects of life to increase Soul Wellbeing.
6. experimenting with possible ways to increase Soul Wellbeing within a chosen aspect of life.
7. measuring impact on one's Soul Wellbeing by returning to the Wheel to re-access within a set rhythm (ie. quarterly, bi-yearly, annually, etc.).
8. developing an intentional rhythm of assessing and tending to Soul Wellbeing.
9. sharing one's experience with the Wheel and Tool with others.



Here is the Soul Wellbeing Wheel:



*Description of Wellbeing Wheel:*

We have researched twelve “aspects of life” that directly impact our Soul Wellbeing. This is not exhaustive, but thoughtful to our staff’s typical lives. Here is the list including a short “sneak peak” at each aspect:



1. **Cognitive** - Discover how mental health, as well as strengthening our minds, impacts our Soul Wellbeing.
2. **Digital** - Discover how a virtual life, technology, and social media impacts our Soul Wellbeing.
3. **Emotional** - Discover how our thoughts and feelings from the past to the present impact our Soul Wellbeing.
4. **Environmental** - Inhabit - Discover how the places and people that surround us impact our Soul Wellbeing.
5. **Environmental** - Creation - Discover how Creation ministers to us as we minister to it.
6. **Financial** - Discover how our view of resources and our stewardship of them impact our Soul Wellbeing.
7. **Meaning** - Discover how cooperating with God's plan of renewal impacts our Soul Wellbeing.
8. **Physical** - Discover how the vast agency our body gives us impacts our Soul Wellbeing.
9. **Recreational** - Discover how play and Sabbath nourishes our Soul Wellbeing.
10. **Relational** - Discover how the interconnections we have with God and others impact our Soul Wellbeing.
11. **Sexual** - Discover how sexual health impacts our Soul Wellbeing.
12. **Spiritual** - Discover how choosing to grow toward maturity in Christ impacts our Soul Wellbeing.

Please keep in mind, this is a **self-assessment tool** meant for you to recognize with God's help how these aspects of life are impacting your Soul. With your discoveries, you have the choice to explore the research we have provided and experiment with our recommendations with the intent to improve your Soul Wellbeing. We do not require you to report your discoveries to us nor do we provide intervention. This Soul Wellbeing Wheel and Assessment Tool is simply a gift. And the SCD Team is here to support you as you have need or desire.

Also remember, these aspects' effects are constantly changing due to: season of life, experiences, outside influences, health issues, etc.

Therefore, we encourage staff to check-in on a few aspects of life systematically to best tend to one's soul over the long-term.

## *Soul Wellbeing Wheel Self-Assessment Tool Instructions:*

- Begin by printing out the black and white Wellbeing Wheel PDF (on the following page)
- Pray and reflect on the twelve aspects of life listed on the WB Wheel diagram.
- Ask God which aspects He may be inviting you to self-assess at this time.
- Select the three that you are drawn to (feel free to select less or more depending on what you are sensing)
- BEFORE assessing the aspects you chose, PLEASE READ each particular aspect's research to further explore the description and importance to Soul Wellbeing (this research can be found in the following pages of this document).
- Begin by thinking about what you imagine a perfect 5 looking like for the aspects of life you chose.
- Then reflect on your current life and how these chosen aspects are impacting your Soul Wellbeing. Rate on a scale of 1-5. A rating of 5 indicates an extremely positive impact; while a 1 reflects an extremely negative impact on your soul.
- Mark your printed WB Wheel with a dot that reflects your ratings. (1 is close to the center and 5 is farthest from the center)
- Draw a circular line connecting the dots to give you a visual for the balance or imbalance you may be experiencing at this time.
- As you look at the aspects you selected and the ratings you have given them, answer the following questions for each aspect:
  - Why am I rating this way?
  - What do I want to do about it?
- Write down your thoughts on the Wheel print-out or in your journal. Use your findings as a guide to discuss with God, a friend or someone from the SCD Team.
- If you feel led, commit to one or two actions steps that lead you toward tending to your Soul Wellbeing.
- Also available is follow-up coaching by the SCD Team and/or our trained coaches.
  - This coaching can support you in processing this tool to make it more effective.



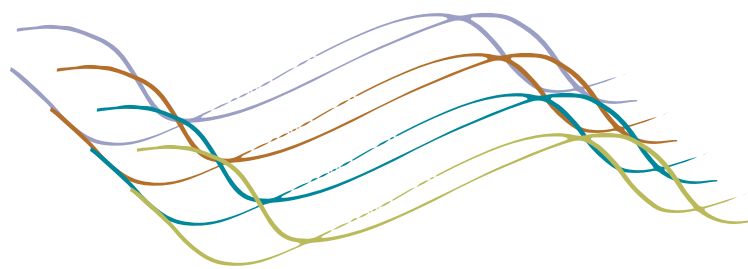
- This coaching can support you in creating a plan in tending to a particular aspect(s) of life.
- This coaching can support you in further developing your personal care system.

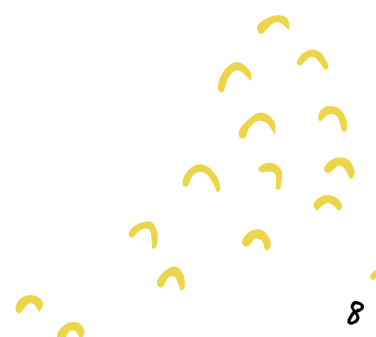
### *Aspects of Life Research*

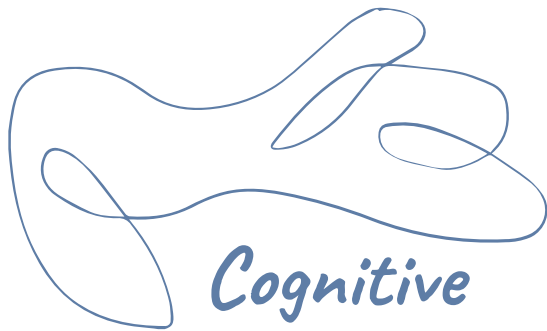
The following pages of this handbook go through each particular aspect of life within the Soul Wellbeing Wheel. As you dig deeper into these aspects, these pages will describe health within each aspect, how the aspect impacts Soul Wellbeing, descriptions of what health and dishealth look like within the aspect, and offer strategies for tending to the particular aspect (thus improving your personal care system and boosting Soul Wellbeing).

We go through the aspects in alphabetical order, so you can navigate easily through the material to find the aspects you want to learn more about.

**Let's get started!**







**“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

- Romans 12

*Description of cognitive wellness, why it’s important and how it impacts*

*Soul Wellbeing:*

Cognitive wellness is “the ability to clearly think, learn, and remember.”<sup>6</sup>It influences judgment, decision-making, planning, goal-setting, and overall mental health.

Psychologist and Professor, Christine Osgood combines both thoughts and feelings under this one aspect. She further breaks down the biology of our thoughts by explaining that sensory data is picked up by our senses while perception draws from past and present data, leading our brain to construct ways or pathways in our brains to think about an experience.<sup>7</sup>This biology of thought is part of cognition.

There’s an old saying in neuroscience: “neurons that fire together wire together.”<sup>8</sup> Osgood explains this quote saying, “habits of thinking, feeling and doing occur in us when we think one way about something. The longer we think one way, the stronger the habit to think in the same way or limitedly.” When a neuron pathway needs changing or “reforming,” we find this extremely challenging because we are actually trying to change our biology! Neuroscientists conclude that humans have “agency,” that is the ability to change their own thinking process. This truth is both encouraging and empowering. We can actually change our own biology as we change how we think!

Cognitive wellness impacts soul wellbeing by encouraging learning, mind flexibility, resiliency and curiosity.

6 <https://www.emotiv.com/glossary/cognitive-health/>

7 Osgood, Chrisitne. The Journey Inward Online Course - Cognition 2019.

8 <https://themindisthemap.com/neurons-that-fire-together-wire-together/>



Curiosity is important because it motivates us to try new things, learn, and develop a greater understanding of how we see the relationship between ourselves, others and the environment.<sup>9</sup>

Scripture alludes to this same truth in Phillipians 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think on these things.”

Cognition also includes mental health.<sup>10</sup> Genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors influence mental health.<sup>11</sup> As we all are aware, our life choices, environments, and experiences impact our mental health. It is important that we tend well to our mental health. Psychologist Dr. Erika Felix states that healthy coping skills, increased self-esteem and strong social support reduce mental health risks!<sup>12</sup>

Communitas has long been an advocate of “life-long development.” God gave us our physical brains and their incredible capacity. He gave us our mental states, our intellect, as well as our agency; therefore, healthy cognition is critical to healthy stewardship of ALL aspects of our Soul Wellbeing. What data, input, patterns and beliefs we take in and how we utilize our minds affects us both positively and negatively. Therefore, we are invited by God to be proactive and deeply responsible for the maintenance, growth and development of our cognition.

Something that can help the maintenance, growth and development of our cognition is cognitive reserve. Cognitive reserve is “the brain’s ability to improvise and find alternate ways of getting a job done.”<sup>13</sup> Cognitive reserve is an important part of keeping the brain healthy and is developed by a lifetime of education and curiosity. Studies have shown that people with greater cognitive reserve are better able to ward off symptoms of degenerative brain changes associated with disease.<sup>14</sup> A more robust cognitive reserve can also help maintain mental health if you are exposed to unexpected and unpleasant life events. For example, events such as stress, surgery, or toxins in the environment are risk factors for cognitive health.<sup>15</sup>

9 Definitions combined from both the Student Health & Counseling Services at UC Davis

<https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/wellness/intellectual> AND <https://www.americannursetoday.com/intellectual-wellbeing/>

10 <https://www.emotiv.com/glossary/cognitive-health/>

11 Ibid

12 Dr. Erika Felix. UCSB Webinar. “Coping at Home.” June 11, 2020.

13 <https://www.emotiv.com/glossary/cognitive-health/>

14 Ibid

15 Ibid

How does one create cognitive reserve? First of all, it is important to manage any health conditions you may have with a proper professional. In addition, studies have identified six cornerstones for improving cognitive health and creating cognitive reserve. These cornerstones include eating a plant-based diet, regular exercise, sufficient sleep, managing stress, nurturing social contacts, and continuing to challenge your brain.<sup>16</sup> C'tas SCD Team would add one more cornerstone to the research; and that is simply cooperation with the Holy Spirit in allowing Him to use every circumstance to grow our mental resilience. Together, these choices can result in positive changes in both your brain's structure and function thus influencing Soul Wellbeing.

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**Benediction:**

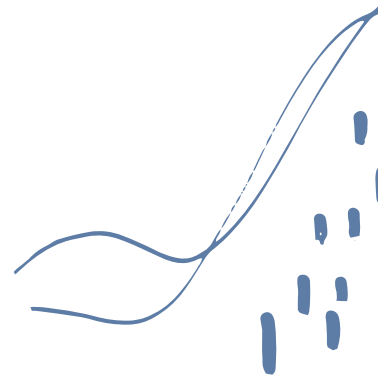
*May we, as Communitas Staff, choose a lifelong learning posture relying on the Holy Spirit to renew our minds through His powerful work of transformation.*

*Examples of a person tending well to this aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Life and ministry can be extremely challenging. Many Communitas staff have accessed quality counselors (some through Communitas and others from outside) that assisted during stifling seasons and moments. There have been numerous times where counseling has improved mental health and challenged new ways of thinking.
- Establish a commitment to lifelong learning and follow through!
- Become the grandmother who is known for intentionally pursuing new skills. She was almost always enrolled in some kind of class, from Spanish language classes to bookbinding classes to hat making classes. She constantly sought opportunities to learn and grow.

*Examples of when this aspect of life is NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Disconnect with God and others
- Skewed perceptions
- Mike Hass: "getting in trouble in your own head"
- Self-doubt and Paranoia
- Intellectual Stagnation
- Intellectual Inflexibility,
- Inability to Empathize with "Others"
- Depression
- Closed Loop Learning(Only seeking out information that confirms existingbiases.)
- Mental Illness



*Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when this aspect is positively integrated into one's care system?*

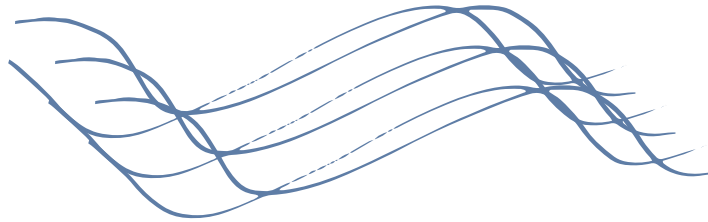
What:

- Spiritual rhythms that help connect you to God (liturgy)
- A humble mindset that is curious and willing to make mistakes
- Anything that stimulates new learning, books, magazines, classes, documentaries, hobbies etc.

- If left-brained, try something right-brained and vice versa
- Finding ways to practice AND process input, learning, counseling, etc....which promote mindfulness, meditation, health, and transformation

Who:

- Loving and trusting relationships that can handle our mis-steps
- Diverse friendships and acquaintances that challenge your thinking, preconceived notions and stretch your imagination through healthy dialogue and debate
- Counselors
- Teachers and Mentors
- Those to pass on the learning to as well





notes





**For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.**

2 Timothy 1:7

*Description of digital wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

Wow, the Digital Age is upon us. My children are called "Digital Natives" and I personally have no idea what the implications are for this reality! And now this COVID-19 season has launched many of us into greatly increased amounts of time in front of technology working, socializing and learning!

I do believe it's time to at least attempt to identify some implications both positive and negative of this age and season we find ourselves in.

I recently went to a seminar on digital wellness here in Singapore. The speaker at the seminar was Teodora Pavkovic, a Digital Wellbeing Consultant. She opened her talk by having us watch the following [YouTube video](#). I think it's worth a look.

*What is your response?*

Before we jump into the research, Communitas' Staff Care and Development (SCD) want to be clear that we are not anti-technology whatsoever! On the contrary, we acknowledge that technology assists and supports our staff and our mission tremendously! With that said, in our research, we became more and more convinced that the digital aspect of life has to be addressed as it is "infiltrating all areas of soul wellbeing."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Pavkovic, Teodora. Digital Wellbeing Consultant. Singapore.



If we wanted to start off by listing all the benefits of technology, we would be here all day. Many advances in medicine, science, communication, travel, and beyond are directly related to technology! And we thank God for these advancements. As always, there is another side of the same coin...technology also has some major downsides. In the following paragraphs, we will explore some of those.

In the book, *Digital Minimalism*, author Cal Newport shares that this book, with its Digital Minimalism Movement, would never have taken hold or found popularity two years ago. It is only very recently that people are becoming aware of their “loss of autonomy” due to their digital habits.

In both the book and the seminar, experts share the following facts: those developing smart phones, social media, and various applications are specifically and intentionally designing them to distract us, addict us, and take as much of our attention as possible! And they are successful at doing so. Each year, the amount of time an individual is recorded on their device grows and grows. The newest average for an American’s daily usage on all devices is 12 hours and specifically on one’s smartphone is over 6 hours a day! And it’s only rising.

Other realities that our digital age is revealing is isolation...the very things that are meant to “connect” people actually keep people from connecting face-to-face. Addictions to impulsively looking at one’s phone, email, social media statuses is keeping people from meaningful in-person connection. Sherry Turkle, an MIT researcher, draws a distinction between connection and conversation. In short, she calls the digital interaction connection and analog interaction conversation. She states that humans crave conversation...the “real world encounters between humans.”<sup>18</sup> She also claims that connection never adds up to conversation and even dangerously distracts us from pursuing conversation. The research supports Turkle’s claims by telling us, “teens are expressing higher rates of depression and loneliness the more time they spend on their phones – despite claims by 81% of teens that phones make them “feel” more connected.”<sup>19</sup>

18 Newport, Cal. “Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World.” Portfolio/Penguin. 2019, page 144.

19 Forbes Magazine Online. Fisher, Nicole. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolefisher/2019/01/24/how-much-time-americans-spend-in-front-of-screens-will-terrify-you/#4bc3bdec1c67>

Cal Newport does an amazing job giving research-based evidence of the acute rise of anxiety disorders amongst our youth. Evidence shows a “sudden shift in mental health that correlates ‘exactly’ to the moment when American smartphone ownership became ubiquitous.”<sup>20</sup> It is fact that in America, there is a mental health crisis where rates of anxiety disorders, depression, and suicide in teens have “skyrocketed!”

We realize much of the research we have found is looking at youth. We believe the results of this research can translate to people of all ages. Where do you land in the balance between connection and conversation?

According to Teodora Pavkovic, emotional intelligence is our weapon for digital wellness. She promotes awareness, thoughtfulness, and mindfulness around our digital use and encourages people to reclaim their attention and focus by building “fences.” A couple examples of “fences” she gives are:

- creating a solid start and finish time
- truly taking tech breaks and finding calm (as tech is super stimulating)
- knowing the reason behind using the technology (recognizing the motivation for using tech...am I bored, addicted, or truly need the tech support?)

Cal Newport offers an interesting take on the same emotional intelligence as our way to find digital wellness. Newport encourages people to take a full-blown “technology fast” for 30 days. He claims this helps people get unaddicted and reflective. He then asks people to come up with their true values (lifestyle values), and suggests using a filter (series of questions) when one re-introduces necessary devices and technology. The filter is made up of the following questions: Does this technology...

1. Serve something you deeply value?
2. Prove to be the best way to use technology to serve this value (if not, replace it with something better)?
3. Have a role in your life that can be constrained with when and how to use it (creating fences)?<sup>21</sup>

20 Newport, Cal. “Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World.” Portfolio/Penguin. 2019, page 106.

21 Newport, Cal. “Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World.” Portfolio/Penguin. 2019, page 77.

If any technology doesn't make it through this "filter," Newport suggests ridding of it. As new tech presents itself in your life, the same filter can be used.

Those who take Newport's advice often find themselves claiming back some or much of their **time**. Newport encourages his readers to "reclaim high quality leisure." If one doesn't fill up their newly freed up time with quality leisure, they are likely to get re-hooked back into digital spaces. Some tips Newport offers on discovering quality leisure are as follows:

1. Prioritize demanding activity over passive consumption
2. Use skills to produce valuable things in the physical world
3. Seek activities that require real-world, structured social interactions<sup>22</sup>
4. SCD would add...take a look at the Recreational Aspect of Life information that our team researched for more tips

To summarize, both Newport and Pavkovic are champions for choosing intentionality in our digital lives. They both speak to treating technology as a tool that serves our values. They also speak to internal and external boundaries protecting deep work, focus, attention and our relationships. Let's find ways in which one can implement these ideas towards digital health that positively impacts our Soul Wellbeing.

notes



**Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, exercise wisdom through the Spirit God has given us in our digital lives and may technology better support our values!*

22 Newport, Cal. "Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World." Portfolio/Penguin. 2019, pages 177, 182, 190.



*Examples of ways people tend well to the digital aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

1. Take a step back and honestly analyze digital's impact on you
2. Cal Newport suggests a 30-day "digital fast" you can read about it in his book or online...
3. Newport suggests evaluating one's values and then selecting the digital tools that best support that value
4. Boundaries for digital usage...not open-ended, but specific blocks of time designated for online/digital time and analog time
5. Re-discover non-digital past times
6. Embrace boredom and let it drive your creativity

*Examples of what might be happening when the digital aspect of life is **NEGATIVELY** impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

1. When babies and small children are being given devices for entertainment and learning over human interaction and 3-D toys (blocks and textured toys)
2. When schools are tech-saturated and screen time is overdone
3. When privacy and data protection is compromised by technology ("personal data has become more valuable than oil," says Pavkovic)
4. Persuasive Design...when tech is purposely designed to modify behavior
5. Generational Divides...when relationships suffer due to differing values on tech
6. When the user is seeking peace in the distraction of a tech device
7. Tech Addiction

*Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when this aspect is positively integrated into one's care system?*

1. Technology is supporting one's relationship with God and others
2. One routinely analyzes their digital needs and uses; and adjusts accordingly
3. When technology is truly supportive of life values, this is a sweet place to be!
4. Sharing your goals and limits with a trusted friend (accountability)

notes



**“Emotions are similar to ‘good friends.’ They show up to tell us when things are right as well as when things aren’t right around us or within us. Therefore, when big emotions show up, we have the opportunity to listen to what they may be saying and then decide how we want to respond.”**

- adapted from American Author Judy Brower

*Description of emotional wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

Our emotions make up our thoughts and feelings, which dramatically influence how we behave and interact in the world. God has given us emotions. They are gifts to us. They enrich our lives as we express joy, peace, delight, pain, fear and anger.

They also inform us about ourselves, revealing how our past pain is still impacting our present in hurtful ways. Ultimately, emotions enable us to experience the fullness of life in Christ and in our relationships with others.

Professor and Family Therapist, Christine Osgood, describes two myths about emotions. The first myth is that emotions and feelings are automatic and we have no influence over them.

The second myth is that our feelings are always trustworthy and true. Along with other professionals, Osgood claims that we have incredible influence over our emotions and we need to use emotional reasoning to evaluate warranted responses to our situations. In fact, she teaches that we each have agency to influence our emotions...to even construct or reconstruct our emotions!

When we learn from our emotions as well as learn how to respond appropriately to them, we are building emotional health.

Emotional health is an important part of overall health. People who are emotionally healthy are aware of and take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. They are better able to cope with life's challenges.

They can keep problems in perspective and bounce back from setbacks (resiliency). They extend grace to themselves as well as to others.

Growing in emotional health is a lifelong pursuit. It means you are:

- quicker to be aware of your feelings, both positive and negative;
- comfortable expressing them appropriately;
- take responsibility for how they impact you and others;
- and willing to seek professional help when needed.

Research shows that emotional health is a SKILL! Therefore, let's always be learning how to improve our emotional health and resiliency...thus improving Soul Wellbeing.

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**Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, continue to invite the Spirit to shine His light of truth and healing into our emotions, leading us into greater freedom to experience God's love, and in turn freely love and accept others.*



*Examples of tending well to the emotional aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- **Pastors Peter & Geri Scazzero** - Emotionally Healthy Spirituality books / courses
  - Peter says: "It's impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature."
  - They began to recognize repressed feelings. They didn't allow themselves to feel the "negative ones" like fear, anger, shame. They couldn't confess that to others, especially as leaders/ pastors. When they began to be open and honest about their feelings, learning to identify them, and take them to God in prayer, silence, and confess to others, they began to find the capacity to manage them, including identifying why those feelings were there - their origins. And emotional healing for both of them took place!
- **Missionaries Marty & Carey Uhler** - Some things they are learning and practicing.
  - In the last couple of years I (Marty) have grown in my ability to identify and articulate what I am feeling. I think this "emotional self awareness" is a foundational building block of emotional health. The practice of "checking in" on a heart level is what has made the difference for me. My wife, Carey and I do this together frequently during the week.
  - We are also learning to "quiet ourselves" when we are engaged in a charged conversation (argument or disagreement). We are seeing now how we can trigger one another when we are in reaction mode. Two questions have been very helpful for us; when asked with the intention of love and really wanting to listen. 1. What are you feeling right now? And, 2. What does this feeling remind you of? This second question can open up a pathway for the healing of past trauma. We have been learning the Immanuel Approach for emotional healing and this has been very helpful for us.

*Examples of when the emotional aspect of life is NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

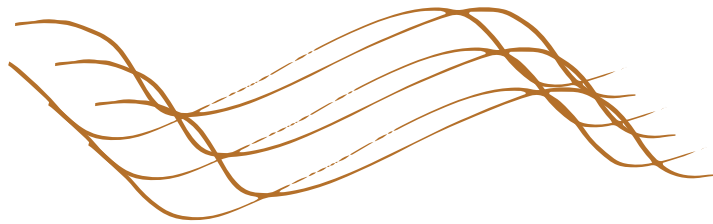
- Repeating unhealthy patterns of behavior towards ourselves and others
- Denying and/or being stuck in negative feelings of shame, guilt or fear. It becomes a vicious cycle (when we're stuck it feeds staying stuck).
- Inability to recover quickly when suffering one of the six big negative emotions. (sadness, anger, fear, shame, hopeless despair, disgust)
- When one gets triggered on an emotional level, our Relational Circuits (RC's) shut down. This will obviously have a negative impact in one's relational world. Here is how we identify when our RC's are shut down:
  - I just want to make a problem, person or feeling go away.
  - I don't want to listen to what others feel or say.
  - My mind is "locked onto" something that is upsetting.
  - I don't want to be connected to \_\_\_\_\_. (Someone I usually like)
  - I just want to get away, fight or freeze.
  - I more aggressively interrogate, judge and try to fix others.
- Giving the control of my emotional state to someone or something other than myself.
- Engaging in unhealthy or unhelpful behaviors to cope with or escape from negative emotions. This includes unhealthy mental processes e.g., repression, emotional detachment, rationalization, and minimization; dangerous and or illicit behaviours e.g., risk taking, substance abuse, inappropriate sexual conduct and lashing out physically or verbally; but also behaviours that may in other circumstances be considered positive or normal but are being misused or abused e.g., over-working, avoiding relational interactions, unbalanced or unhealthy engagement in hobbies, entertainment, and physical fitness.

*Developing a Personal Care System: WHAT or WHO is in place when this aspect is integrated well into one's care system?*



- Intentionally making space in our lives for self-awareness, to know what's going on internally. This can help us accept and process it. It could include journaling around questions such as: Denying and/or being stuck in negative feelings of shame, guilt or fear. It becomes a vicious cycle (when we're stuck it feeds staying stuck).
  - What am I feeling?
  - What does this feeling remind me of?
  - How does God see me in this?
  - What does Scripture say?
- Relationships of grace (deep and authentic). These kinds of people speak the truth with grace and love. They are willing to be part of the mess - or get into the mess with us!
- Professional counselors can help us process past experiences; family of origin issues; identity; and self-acceptance issues.
- Joining a **Journey Group**
  - The purpose of the Journey Group is to help Communitas staff members experience being more connected with themselves, with others and with God. How are we doing this? By learning practices or "Rhythms of Attention" that become "reflexive" because we have practiced them so much!
    - Four Rhythms of Attention
      - Checking in on a heart level
      - Attunement (learning to quiet myself and attune to another)
      - Listening Prayer
      - Practicing Appreciation and Gratitude
- Enabling Joy. Joy is a powerful state of being. Our right brain processing of experiences and information is fueled by either joy or fear. Fear can cause us to get stuck in lower brain function. This looks like fight, flight or freeze. We can increase our "joy strength" by practicing appreciation and gratitude daily. Another way is to be in relationships where we are receiving the message "I'm glad to be with you no matter what." This message stimulates the right prefrontal cortex which actually builds our joy strength and helps us to endure hardship well.

- Another indicator of mental/emotional health is the ability to recover quickly when suffering one of the six big negative emotions (sadness, anger, fear, shame, hopeless despair, disgust). Having the capacity to endure hardship well.
- Acceptance of our true selves and our place in God's family
- "Self-care is never a selfish act -- it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch," says American Author Parker Palmer.<sup>23</sup>







**"Open the eyes of my heart Lord, open the eyes of my heart, I want to see you"**

- Michael W. Smith

*Description of environmental wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

The environmental aspect of life has the following meanings: the first meaning represents the space one inhabits, for example, one's home, work space, neighborhood, or country. The second meaning represents the ecological system God created and the human responsibility in caring for it. Our Staff Care and Development team (SCD) has explored both meanings and has developed two separate research documents reflecting what we learned.

The following information focuses primarily on the first meaning: the space one inhabits. A person's environment is important to their quality of life. An environment includes one's housing, the climate where one

lives and works, the relationships that surround the person, one's relationship to nature and also includes one's physical possessions.<sup>24</sup>

SCD longs to see our staff create environments for themselves that help them connect with God and with others. Generally, environments need to feel safe and welcoming for connection to occur. Sometimes, creating this kind of environment requires us to be creative, partner with others and perhaps even create boundaries to protect these kinds of environments. When we do find ourselves in environments where we connect well with God and others, our Soul Wellbeing improves!

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/pbhci-learning-community/Wellness\\_Resource\\_Manual.pdf](https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/pbhci-learning-community/Wellness_Resource_Manual.pdf)

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing one's environment:

1. What kind of environment helps me connect with God?
2. What kind of environment helps me connect with others?
3. If I could change something about the environment I live in, what would it be?
4. If I changed my environment how would it make me feel? Excited, scared?
5. Is my home/ work space filled with wholesome, nutritious food?
6. What items (books, clothes, furniture, bric a brac) in your home impact my Soul Wellbeing in a negative way?
7. Who are the people in my life that enhance my environment?
8. How is noise impacting my home, neighborhood, mind?
9. Where is the nearest green space to my home that lets me be out in some form of nature? A city park, a lake, a hiking area, etc?

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All that surrounds you, the colors, sounds, people, decor and mess...each affects your environmental wellness. It can often be overlooked; many of us forget how "good" it feels to have a clean home, a good friend nearby, or a safe place to take a walk. This is important because this makes up our environment.<sup>25</sup> In addition to our homes, our work space and our neighborhoods are where we spend most of our time. Remember, while a person might not be able to make drastic changes outside their home, there may be important things that can be done to create a healthier atmosphere inside one's home or work space.

25 <https://bakerchiropractic.org/take-care-of-your-spiritual-health-and-environmental-health/>

### **Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, be creators of environments that help us commune with God and also with one another.*

*Examples of tending well to the environmental aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Over the years different teams in Communitas have found the book Sacred Pathways by Gary Thomas valuable for themselves personally and their communities. In his book Thomas describes nine different ways in which we relate to God. God has designed us to connect with Him in specific ways and in certain environments that can bring us into closer intimacy with Him. Determining what this looks like personally can help us create environments that are conducive for our faith journey, whether in nature, in a house of worship, in a home, or in a learning institute.

The links below are included in no particular order. They include summaries of the nine pathways or a study guide to the book. The links are examples to help pinpoint the environment(s) in which we might best experience God's voice and presence. They might also help one discover a "new to them" environment that leads to deeper soul wellbeing.

- [9 sacred pathways](#)
- [Spiritual Style](#)
- [Sacred Pathways](#)
- [Sacred Pathways Study Guide](#)
- Rearranging the home or work environment by getting rid of possessions long not used. To make the challenge of creating space a bit more fun...it is not unusual for friends to host clothing exchanges in their home or in a community center. The attendees are invited to bring their own items to trade and exchange. Items left over at the end of the exchange are then donated to a local charity. Time spent in community, working on a fun project results in a positive, life-giving experience.



- People who tend to thrive in the area of Soul Wellbeing follow a distinct rhythm of soul care that consists of daily, monthly, seasonal, and annual practices. This rhythm may include 1/2 day and full day retreat times as well as several days annually away with God. Plan a personal retreat in the environment in which you hear God best. Often this is not the big city where many of us live. The internet is full of ideas and reasonably priced facilities that can serve for a day retreat or a several day get away.
- Purposely create a dedicated prayer corner or sacred space in your home. For example, one woman has a beautiful wooden kneeling prayer bench in her living room. It provides her and many guests meaningful moments in prayer. Websites and Pinterest accounts offer prayer corner suggestions that aren't elaborate, but are meaningful:
  - Choose a holy image to be a focal point.
  - Pick a spot that might include a window, 1-2 chairs, small table, a lamp.
  - Add a prayer book, a journal, a Bible, change the colors during the liturgical year.
  - Accessorize with flowers, candles or other items.
  - If space is available, create a prayer closet that can be closed off from the distractions of the rest of the home. Its walls can be lined with photos and prayers and the floor can have pillows.
  - For a mobile prayer option, fill a basket with your Bible, a journal, a prayer book, and pens and carry it to the chair you will use for prayer. This basket is also perfect for taking your prayer time outdoors.

*Examples of what is happening when the environmental aspect of life is  
NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- This Forbes article, "Are Home Offices Fueling a Mental Health Crisis?" observes negative aspects that working remotely can have on one's mental health.



The article cites a 2019 report on work that refers to the downside of working from home:

- inability to unplug from work
- low motivation
- loneliness
- higher rates of worry about job performance,
  - insomnia
  - increased fatigue
  - feelings of disconnection
  - and more.....

Environmental factors that place such challenges on our mental health can obviously compromise our own soul wellbeing. These findings should be of concern to Communitas with such a large percentage of staff working in a home or remote setting, often in isolation. The article offers suggestions for adapting to the home/remote office environment, including:

- investing in a proper office
- adhering to strict work hours
- meeting virtually with co-workers
- building a support network.

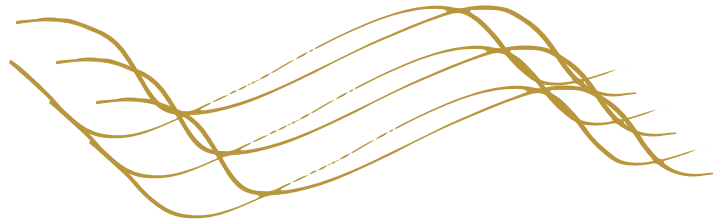
The article closes with this quote: “Whether it be friends or fencing, figure out strategies that engage your soul and stimulate your brain, then integrate them into your life so they are easily accessible in times of need.”

- The article, “The Three Killers of Remote Work” shines a light on the shadow side of working remotely while offering ideas for combatting these hidden killers in this style of work space.

Isolation, burnout, and micromanagement are listed as the top culprits that are hurdles for people who operate in a remote work situation. Of particular interest to Communitas would be the information on isolation with so many staff working in global virtual teams. Considering how to combine more real time interaction both online in real life are important ideas to take into account in each region and globally.

*Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when the space you inhabit is positively integrated into one's care system?*

- A healthy support system is available in the form of people both on the ground and far away.
- When the actual climate of the environment is not always desirable, the person has learned for example, how to navigate through the overcast, sunless days of winter.
- Regular spiritual practices impact one's day-to-day rhythm. These may include volunteering, praying, meditating, singing, reading inspirational books, taking walks, having quiet time, playing a sport, or attending religious services. (<https://familydoctor.org/spirituality-and-health/>)
- A spiritual belief or faith can improve a person's coping abilities as there is a trust that God is working things out or is part of the solution. Furthermore, social support from a religious community during times of stress or negative events provides people with a sense of belonging and support. (<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/impact-spirituality.pdf>)



notes



**"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."**

- Genesis 2:15

*Description of environmental (creation care) wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

The environmental aspect of life has the following meanings: the first meaning represents the space one inhabits, for example, one's home, work space, neighborhood, or country. The second meaning represents the ecological system God created and the human responsibility in caring for it. Our Staff Care and Development team (SCD) has explored both meanings and has developed two separate research documents reflecting what we learned.

The following information focuses primarily on the second meaning, which emphasizes the ecological system God created and the human responsibility in caring for it.

The creation narrative of Genesis provides the framework for followers of God to understand how the environment actually impacts one's soul. The story goes: in the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth, the sky, the land, the sea, every living creature, and all green things. All of it was good. Humans were created last and charged with stewarding and caring for the beautiful and good world God had created. As human beings, we were placed by God into an amazingly complex web of interconnected ecosystems that keep life going on earth. People are dependent on all other created things (be it land, animals, or oceans) for oxygen, water, food and resources. In essence: we depend on the natural world for our own physical survival. Another point to consider is how the natural world reveals more of God to us,

and how caring for the environment is part of our mission as believers to show the love of God to others. People need to experience God in the world for their own soul refreshment. There is also the creation care piece tied into this. We care for those around us directly by caring for the Earth's ecosystems and living in alignment with practices that promote its health and flourishing.

The Genesis narrative also holds powerful lessons and mandates for followers of God that shape how one interacts with the physical world. God charges Adam and Eve to rule over the garden and the living things. These directions were intended to give people the responsibility of cultivating the life and wellbeing of the plants, animals and land in the original garden. Presently, God continues to ask people to participate with Him in the ongoing re-creation of the world by tending to the environment around us with great care promoting its flourishing as well as human survival.

In return for our care and protection, the beauty of the natural world is nourishment for the soul that both revives and sustains us throughout our lives. There are innumerable ways, the natural world encourages our souls, physically heals us, reminds us of our place in the universe, and reveals to us the majesty, goodness and love of God.

Therefore, this research gives perspective to the realities of our codependency on God's creation. We need creation to minister and sustain us. And Creation needs us to minister and sustain it. Let's do this by taking care of it as God directed in Genesis 2:15.

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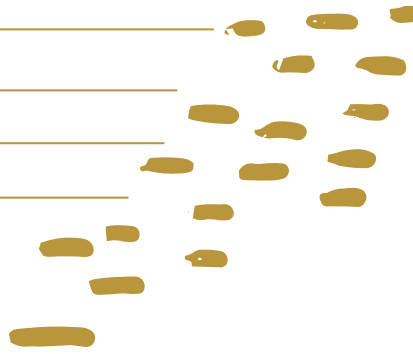
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**Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, be respectful and thoughtful caregivers of this precious planet including all that is in it!*



*Examples of tending well to the environment, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- As a young mother, I can testify to the power of the natural world to boost my soul wellbeing. When my children were infants and I was exhausted from long nights of crying and feeding, I would put them in a stroller and head to the nature reserve across the road from our condo in Singapore. I would push them on the path deep into the jungle, feeling the trees dwarf me in greenery as I walked and my soul exhaled in the calm of this environment. Away from the noise of the road and the concrete of my apartment, I could hear the birds singing, the cicadas chirping, and occasionally, the monkeys calling to each other. The vines growing up the giant trees gave me a metaphor to understand how my children needed me to grow in this season of their lives. The beauty of the sunlight through the trees took my breath away and filled me with thankfulness to my Creator. The new mercies of the day were evident to me on these morning walks. These walks in the natural world refreshed and cared for my soul better than almost any other experience of God I had during that season.
- My father tends well to the environmental aspect. Though he grew up in a metropolitan area, he came to love hiking and being outdoors. Being outside daily is a necessity for his soul wellbeing. He knew he needed access to land and space to feel at peace, so he and my mother bought 20 acres of land outside of my hometown. My father has cultivated this land carefully by planting trees, creating a pond for wildlife, and making trails for walking and snowshoeing. As a result of this careful tending to the land, he enjoys walks around his property that clear his head, provide him time to pray,



and invigorate his physical body. Watching the sunrise over the trees, observing the flowers in bloom, catching glimpses of deer and other natural wonders fill his soul with awe for God. His own participation with the Creator on this land through careful cultivation and his intentionality to spend time in it daily creates Soul Wellbeing.

- A friend goes on annual camping trips with their family. During these trips, they expose themselves to the goodness of God in the sunset, the stars, the fish, the lily pads, and the loons calling on the lakes. When they camp, they are outside from morning until nighttime, experiencing the changing elements around them. They are observing how the animals, birds, and insects interact, thus talking about the creativity of God. This cultivates in them a sense of connection to creation and developing the responsibility to care for the natural world.
- Someone works in an office building in a downtown metropolitan area. She seeks out the opportunity to have lunch outside in one of the nearby small parks whenever she can. The air is fresh, she can see the sky, she can observe a few trees and flowers in bloom. There are little birds she can watch as she eats. And so here, in the middle of the city and the concrete all around her, her soul has a chance to be renewed for the rest of her day by enjoying and appreciating the created world. The environment has been able to enhance her Soul Wellbeing because she chooses to regularly seek it out.

*Examples of what is happening when the environmental aspect is  
NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- When individuals continue to live their lives without considering the effects of their choices. Driving versus biking, trash versus recycling, meat versus plant-based, etc. are all choices we make daily. Could we become more informed decision makers?
- The rise of eco-anxiety, which is the anxiety, fear and paralysis that occur as a result of the destruction and degradation of the natural world, is becoming more recognized as a mental health struggle.  
<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2220561-stressed-about-climate-change-eight-tips-for-managing-eco-anxiety/>

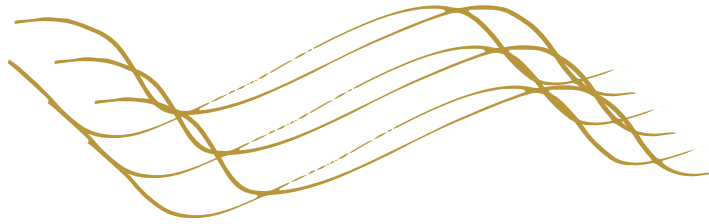


## *Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when the environmental aspect (creation care) is integrated into one's care system?*

Consider the following in your own experience:

- Listen to trusted sources regarding the health of the globe.
- Pray about a personal response to this awareness.
- Access the natural world, whether it's a park, a trail in the woods, a lake, a river, a yard or wide open spaces.
- When the natural world people are experiencing is healthy and thriving. When it is polluted or damaged, that could distress or discourage Soul Wellbeing.
- Creating intentional and regular time and space in a day to be in the natural world.
- Finding like-minded relationships that promote and support creation care ideals and actions.
- Cultivate living things in your home environment, whether it be potted plants on the windowsill or a small garden plot.
- Notice the problems in the environment around you. Is there a lot of trash in the ocean? Is there smog or other pollutants? Observe what's happening in your area.
- How could you and/or your community contribute to the solution to these observed problems? How could you make the world more beautiful for the community around you? Could you plant gardens (either vegetable or flower)? Could you organize a clean up? Could you visit decision-makers to ask for their help?
- Encourage staff to make lifestyle changes that benefit the environment:
  - Go "zero-waste" as much as possible - this will take learning what "zero-waste" includes!! (some specific alternate options include using cloth napkins rather than paper, glass storage containers instead of plastic baggies...it is also worth noting the fashion industry is also a huge environmental villain...)

- Stop or reduce eating meat
- Shop local, eat within season, use reusable grocery bags, don't purchase single-use items, bring your own jars to fill bulk items in.
- Use greener transport options
- Reduce water use
- Use reusable water and coffee containers
- Contribute financially to organizations working to solve these big environmental problems



notes



*Description of financial wellness, why it's important and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

The financial aspect is deeply connected to the emotional, meaning, relational, and spiritual aspects of life. Developing financial wellness, with all of the tasks, disciplines, and self-reflection involved, leads to clarified meaning, emotional encouragement, relational strengthening and spiritual peace. We hope that research encourages your heart!

Financial wellness can be defined as:

- 1) having clarity and awareness of the place money has as we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness;
- 2) having control over our economic life, and the associated emotions, in a way that

**Money is a terrible master but an excellent servant.**

-P.T. Barnum

**Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value.**

-Larry Burkett

**"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."**

-Philippians 4:19

leads us to empowerment, ownership, and stewardship of the money and resources God gives us to support a thriving and generous life, both now and into the future;<sup>26</sup> and  
3) the mindful transfer of ownership of ALL that we have to the Lord.

The Psalmist declares, "the earth is the Lords and all that is in it" (24:1). And Jesus said in Luke 14.33, "... those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciple." For it is only when we have given our assets over to the Lord that we will find financial peace and rest in Him.

Our relationship to money gives us insight into ourselves (worth, identity, core beliefs,) our assumptions and our values. Financial stress, which can lead to broken

communication and relational tension, is a primary cause of broken relationships and even divorce. Our relationship with money, which is often fraught with confusion, guilt and shame, requires vulnerability and courage to rightly address economic and financial issues in our lives to think differently about our stewardship.

Financial wellness is a change of thinking and lifestyle. It's a transformation. Even those who are raised in homes with economic security still must address any dysfunctional or unhelpful psychology of money inherited in their family of origin. Often financial wellness comes on the heel of discipline; discipline that identifies limited thinking and applies wisdom. If you spend all your resources, no matter how much you have, you will be poor. If instead, you employ all your resources, you will have a sense of ownership and command regardless of how much you have.

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**Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, find financial wellness that leads to true rest, the ability to live life to the fullest, as well as flood generosity more deeply into our Souls.*

### *Examples of tending well to this aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- After years of complaining that their values were not being reflected in their money matters, fellow missionaries began using YNAB, a budgeting software. They began<sup>27</sup> educating themselves on the psychology of money. They successfully increased their net worth without their income changing. Through their budget and new education on money they are now aggressively telling their money what to do. They made behavior changes before mental and emotional ones. The mental shifts came in the doing, seeing results, and feeling encouraged. Having their financial life in order has produced wellbeing in their marriage, family and has given them permission to plan for the future.
- The Best Success Stories
- Psychological benefits of budgeting

### *Examples of what can happen when this aspect of life is NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- avoidance of conversation,
- dysfunctional belief systems around finances,
- unhealthy dependency on supporters,
- unhealthy understanding of God's character,
- distrust,
- mismanagement of God's resources (money),
- isolation due to lack of resources
- not giving self permission to budget in recreation/fun

### *Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when this aspect is positively integrated into one's care system?*

What:

- A Learning Posture - Read!! Listen to Experts on Podcasts, Learn proven systems

- A Develop System - Develop Goals, Plan, Budget, Reflect
- Attitudes including - Generosity, Embracing financial story, freedom from fear, transparency, humility, Psalm 139 perspective

Who:

- Mentors - those further down the path toward financial health and freedom
- Coaches - to support you on your journey toward financial health and freedom
- Safe environment to grow - those around you are positive, learners, celebratory, generous, supportive

notes





**"It's not about you."**  
-Pastor Rick Warren

*Description of meaning, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

One's meaning is directly related to one's identity and contribution.

Meaning can sometimes be called identity, calling or purpose. It is an inner awareness that gives answer to "why do I exist?" This answer either propels one into a meaning-filled life or derails one and one's Soul Wellbeing.<sup>28</sup>

Meaning is the unique "reflection" of the image of God in a person. It is the reason you and I are here on earth, the being and living out of who God uniquely created each of us to be. One's meaning is consistent with one's personal calling, strengths, values, career, intentional decisions and also contributes positively to the welfare of others, all of which brings a sense of satisfaction, fulfillment and significance to one's life. In addition, some would even describe meaning as uniting with God in His purposes! Let's commit to discovering more of our unique and universal meaning.

**Benediction:**

*notes*

*May we, as Communitas Staff,  
each find our unique meaning  
in this incredible world in  
partnership with our exquisite  
God!*

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### *Examples of tending well to meaning, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

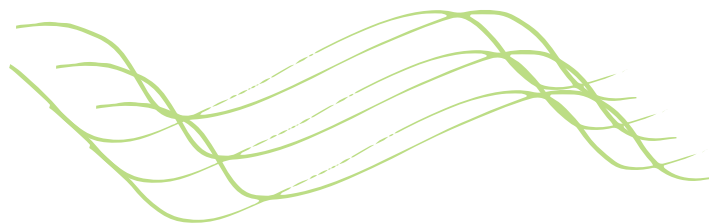
- **Mother Theresa** - she lived out her spiritual commitment and blessed thousands of people from all parts of the world and all backgrounds. Her impact was global!
- **Pete Scazero** - Founded the Emotionally Healthy Spirituality ministry. His life purpose has grown out of his own desire to be the person God created him to be while examining his own life and ministry so that he was living a more authentic Christ-focused life.
- **Henri Nouwen** - a theologian, Catholic priest, professor at Yale and Harvard Divinity Schools and Notre Dame University, who retired from a life of successful academia to care for intellectual and developmental disabilities at the L'Arche Daybreak community. He found meaning in all of these arenas.
- **Amy Carmichael** - she was a missionary in India...who was brave, bold, and courageously rescued girls out of temple prostitution.

### *Examples when Meaning NEGATIVELY impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

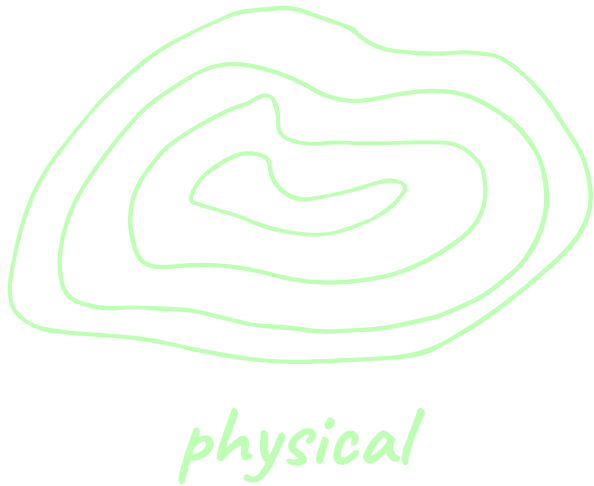
- Loss of motivation leading to depression- when one does not feel they are acting consistent with one's values and God-given talents and/or contributing positively and in significant ways, they experience discord in their soul. It may actually this discord that often alerts people to the need to make some changes!
- Loss of direction - which include feelings of confusion, lostness, or aimlessness. These feelings could manifest as low productivity and low satisfaction in vocation and life.
- Loss of energy and passion in ministry.
- An overall sense of dissatisfaction with other areas of life.
- When promises of achievement and goals prevent growth, adaptation, pivoting to maximize meaning/effectiveness.
- The negative impact on our soul's wellbeing can be quite obvious- we may feel unworthy, a loss of motivation that triggers negative consequences in relationships, work habits/productivity, physical care, etc. **There isn't an area of life that is not impacted when we lose our sense of significance.**

*Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when this aspect is positively integrated into one's care system?*

- A healthy self-awareness: what talents, interests, values, opportunities, dreams does one have? These can be confirmed by your family and colleagues.
- A clear sense that you are in sync with your talents, etc. as well as seeing the positive impact on others - "making a difference." This can be confirmed by your colleagues and supervisor.
- An environment where freedom to adapt to culture are allowed and expected, allowing for vision and mission to adjust when needed (often what we set out to do changes)
- A deep sense of fulfillment and joy. This can also include a sense of energy and motivation.
- Feeling more connected with God and His unique purpose for me and share in His joy.
- Connection with others who share similar purposes can be encouraging.
- When we have heard or understood the unique name/s that God gives each of us (see Jamie Winships Design Discovery talk on YouTube).



notes



**“What is the greatest commandment?” one disciple asked. Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.”**

- Matthew 22:36-40

*Description of physical wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

The physical aspect of life invites us to love God with our strength! Strength comes in many forms when we are dealing with the physical aspect of life.

Physical wellness is when people are tending well to the following areas consistently:

- Exercise/Movement
- Healthy Diet/Nutrition
- Limiting Alcohol Consumption
- High Quality Sleep
- Hydration
- Learning to Listen to our Body Signals
- Healthy Body Image
- Regular medical checkups and management of existing medical conditions

Most would agree that physical wellness positively impacts all other aspects of life. When we are rested, well fed, hydrated, fit, in tune with and grateful for our bodies, we are more prepared to handle the day-to-day challenges with motivation, positivity, thoughtfulness and resilience. On the other hand, when we are not physically well, we can often be overwhelmed and fatigued by the normal stresses of our day-to-day lives. Research tells us that physical wellness helps us manage stress, remain mentally sharp, equip our bodies to fight disease, increase self-esteem, control weight, directly impacts vocational success, and improves mood.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-benefits-of-exercise.htm>

Professor and Counselor, Christine Osgood, goes further and states that our bodies help our souls connect to God. Osgood believes that due to a historical view that saw our bodies as negative and separate from our souls, we need to embrace a mindset shift that includes the following ideas:

1. Our bodies are God's good design
2. We have agency (capacity to act) and can cooperate with God's good design
3. Our bodies directly help with the renewal in our souls

In order to help this mindset shift, Osgood recommends valuing the body, learning from the body, and learning about the body. If we do this, we can better cooperate with God in renewing our souls through the investment we make in our very own bodies!

"Your body is a critical part of soul care. Will you care for it?" - Osgood

## notes

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### **Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, become faithful partners with our own bodies on the journey toward renewal.*

### *Examples of tending well to the physical aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- A staff person discovered that certain foods have a negative impact on their health and general sense of energy and fitness, so they have diligently and successfully eliminated those foods from their regular diet and have noticed great benefits from this discipline.
- Some of our staff are very diligent about physical exercise when they're not traveling. Even though some of us travel frequently and struggle to exercise while traveling, some have found that their overall health remains fairly good due to their commitment to exercise whenever they are home.
- A friend loves good food, but she is exceptional at paying attention to her hunger/satisfaction level so she never overeats. She is also great at seeking ways to exercise when she notes her need for it. She pays attention to the signals her body sends her, which is an act of obedience to God who created her body to give those signals.
- Jack and Jill have developed a healthy relationship with Jack's chronic disease. They both know and respect how the disease impacts his body and energy level, and they work together to ensure that Jack does what he needs to do to care for his body, while both of them create a loving and healthy rhythm for their family.

### *Examples of when the physical aspect of life is NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Life that is sedentary without significant physical or cardiovascular activity, gives cause to weight gain, back pain, or even increased lethargy in one's work.
- If one's weight is excessively higher than standards for their age and height, they place themselves at risk for diseases which can limit their ability to maintain wellness in other areas.
- A lack of physical activity has been shown to put one at risk for high blood pressure, Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, and even mental dishealth. This impacts one's ability to serve others fully.

- Fatigue, short temper and lack of focus often follow even one night's poor sleep with increased effects after days or weeks of a lack of sleep —then one can treat others with less kindness, patience and grace.
- When one wears their fitness like a badge of honor. This is when pride takes over and can result in shaming others in this same area (especially since the physical aspect is more easily seen by others)
- When control or lack of control of food consumption gets out of balance, this leads to eating disorders and disordered eating.

*Develop a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when the physical aspect is integrated well into one's care system?*

- Daily/Weekly Rhythms that may include:
  - Exercise
  - Regular Bedtime
  - Regular Wake time (allowing for 7-9 hours of sleep)
  - Regular meal times
  - Access to drinking water
- Accountability (in the form of workout companions, a WhatsApp group where goals are shared and encouragement given, paid gym membership, helpful tracking apps, friends with similar goals)
- Meal Planning so healthy meals can be made regularly giving our body healthy food and needed nutrition
- Regularly thanking our bodies for what they do for us
- Practice: Body Scans, Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing), Contemplation, Meditation, Embodying Prayer exercises, Prayer Walking, Shinrin Yoku (Forest Bathing) - if you don't know what this is...definitely look it up!
- Regular medical examinations and checkups
- Being physically active daily is vital to physical wellness whether that is going to the gym, running, playing a sport, walking or bike riding
- Listen to your body by learning to recognize warning signs of when you're ill, stressed, tired, or have over-exerted.
- Aim for a consistent sleep schedule where you get between 7-9 hours each night.
- Actively managing health conditions



notes



**“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”**

- Colossians 3:17

*Description of recreational wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

Troy Cady, the founder of PlayFull believes, “God created us for play...for recreation. God dances; God is playful. God invites us to joy. God enjoys us and wants us to enjoy Him. Each person has a part to play in God’s big story ...and yes, we can play with God.”<sup>30</sup>Cady claims recreation can become a form of playing with and enjoying God! When this play and enjoyment occur with God, we experience Him with an added dimension. This can lead to seeing God afresh, more clearly, more deeply or even surprisingly. “We know God to be trustworthy, so let’s be free to play with Him and grow to be more like Him...to actually “imitate God in the same love of life.”<sup>31</sup>The recreational aspect of life invites us to tap into our playful and joyful nature that reflects God and His creativity and enjoyment of creation, including His enjoyment of each one of us.

Psychologists, Cushman and Laidler, define recreation as any "activity through which leisure may be experienced and enjoyed.”<sup>32</sup>They note that recreation "is tied historically to certain types of activities, especially sports, art and crafts, outdoor pursuits, hobbies, continuing education and activities with a service orientation.”<sup>33</sup>

This definition propels one to think about the vastly different kinds of recreation. Categories of recreation include but are not limited to: passive, active, indoor, outdoor, sports, adventure, artistic, entertainment, amusement, in solidarity, in groups, community clubs, service-oriented and academic.

30 Cady, Troy. <http://www.playfull.org/p/what-were-about.html>

31 Rohr, Richard. *Immortal Diamond*. Page xxv. 2013.

32 D. R. Thomas & A. Venio (Eds.) (1996). *Community Psychology and Social Change: Australian and New Zealand Perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 126-156, 508). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

33 D. R. Thomas & A. Venio (Eds.) (1996). *Community Psychology and Social Change: Australian and New Zealand Perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 126-156, 508). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

### *How does recreation connect to our Soul Wellbeing?*

When we play with the word recreation, we can see the root of this word is create. Writer, Phil Cameron writes in Bozeman Magazine the following, “the word create means to develop something new, whether an object, idea, or movement, it is something that has not been before [in your life]. Re-creation is the act of making anew. Recreation is refreshment by means of a pastime, diversion, exercise, or other resource affording relaxation and enjoyment. In other words recreation should be about refreshing the body, mind and spirit so we can regain strength and purpose and be able to be more productive when we return to our vocations and family responsibilities.”<sup>34</sup>It's interesting how this description sounds a lot like a Christian's description of Sabbath.

Troy Cady believes this outlook on play can deeply impact our recreation and our Sabbath-keeping. He encourages Christians to make Sabbath-keeping playful with the reminder to not try to get something out of it...just stop with God. Just being is good too. Let's let go of our addiction to productivity and purpose and just enjoy God and one another!

Cady encourages people to develop a “playful” ethos that can spill over into the recreational aspect of life...but also into many of the other aspects of life. Cady believes an ethos of “playfulness” is important and positively impacts Soul Wellbeing.

#### **Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, commit to re-creating with God in ways that draw out joy, gratefulness and fulfill a Sabbath rhythm.*

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34 [http://bozemanmagazine.com/articles/2014/04/30/23282\\_recreation\\_or\\_re\\_creation](http://bozemanmagazine.com/articles/2014/04/30/23282_recreation_or_re_creation)

### *Examples of tending well to the recreational aspect, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- A family with two school-aged children find the weekly routine limiting their nuclear family relationships. Their family therapist suggests incorporating “special time,” between one child and one parent each night. “Special time” is a ten-minute play session where the child leads the one-on-one play time with the parent. The focus is on their relationship and giving the child the opportunity to lead the play. The parents are noticing that during “special time,” the children open up and share their thoughts and feelings about the day or past events. This type of play is deepening their relationships with each other.
- A married couple is finding their relationship predictable and flat out boring. They decide to take up a joint hobby together. They decide to take a photography class for their I-Phone cameras. They learn tips, filter tricks, and photo composition. This leads them to explore their neighborhood together looking for the hidden gems to photograph. This re-ignites their conversations with each other, their quality time, and reaches into a rejuvenated curiosity of their context as well.
- A high-powered couple embrace the ethos of play. They take up ballroom dancing together and continue to this day dancing once a week. They also commit to traveling two weeks out of the year to truly get away together. This strengthens their marriage.
- A staff member realized in 2019 he really didn't have a hobby that he practiced consistently in his daily life. He enjoyed the occasional hike or reading, although the vast majority of his reading was work-related and not recreational reading. So, identifying this lack through the Soul Wellbeing Tool, he joined a woodworking group so that he can get into this hobby as a source of fun.

### *Examples of when the recreational aspect is NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- When recreation gets out of balance in our lives and becomes more important than other aspects of life. Cady says, “too much play is not playing.”
- Goal-driven recreation versus playfulness

- When our hobbies become addictive and we neglect our central relationships.
- When the motivations behind our recreation get “sideways”...perhaps positive attention from a non-spouse, avoidance of family obligations, escaping work deadlines, etc.
- When someone is coerced or forced to play, it backfires!
- When play becomes self-centered...play is actually meant to be loving and affirming.
- When we are not taking a healthy dose of recreation and play, we may have higher stress.
- When we neglect recreation or hobbies, we may not have a way to effectively reduce our stress.
- When we neglect play or hobbies, we risk overworking and becoming too serious in all that we do.

*Develop a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when the recreational aspect is positively integrated into one's care system? The following bullets are for you to consider as you develop your own care system:*

- Coming up with a compelling answer to “why is this recreation important to me?”
- Often a playmate or group interested in the same form of recreation (ie. Meet-up Groups)
- An established time, place and routine of positive recreation in one's schedule
- Recreation needs to be voluntary...it cannot be forced on someone effectively
- A willingness to not take oneself too seriously (a willingness to not have to be good at something to enjoy it)
- Some type of rhythm of checking in on the recreational aspect to see how it is impacting Soul Wellbeing in various seasons of our lives

notes



Jesus says in Matthew 28:20,  
**"Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**

*Description of relational wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

American author and activist, Parker Palmer warns, "the solitary traveler soon becomes weary or fearful and is likely to quit the road."

Communitas longs to see staff "continue on the road." Our Staff Care and Development Team (SCD) is passionate about staff thriving and joyfully accomplishing God's call in their lives. We discovered in a recent assessment of staff, that one of Communitas' greatest strengths is that we are an extremely relational organization. Many staff state they joined and stay with Communitas due to the relationships they have developed with their colleagues.

Relationships are key! It's the "special sauce" of Communitas and of any solid community. Therefore, we can all acknowledge the importance of exploring more deeply this aspect of life and how it impacts our soul wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of those in our midst.

The relational aspect is unique in that it is an aspect of life that reaches outside of ourselves and toward another human being. Therefore, when we choose to do the work of tending to the renewal of our souls, the relational aspect of life allows our personal renewal to overflow into communal renewal...and this is where renewal can happen in our relationships.<sup>35</sup>Christine Osgood, a professor of psychology at Bethel University, states, "as you invest in cultivating the essence of who you are, that essence will spill over into your relationships and interactions with others. What is inside you will affect how you interact. What is inside you will affect others."



Therefore, developing healthy relationship-ability is significant in not only our personal soul wellbeing, but also as it affects the influence we have on the lives of others. Below is a list of general characteristics desired to draw health out of our relationships. We have also listed the most common relationships that Communitas staff find themselves in.

### *General Characteristics that Draw Health out of All Relationships:*

- Mutually satisfying communication
- Clarified expectations
- Built and maintained trust (taking the time to understand what trust means to the other)
- Explicitly expressed appreciation (discern how to best communicate this to the other)
- Fulfilling the specific relationship (including a commitment to presence and growth)
- Grace and forgiveness
- Bearing with one another (life on life)
- Humility
- Vulnerability
- Joy exchange

These characteristics act like values. This is what we value in relationships and this is what we can do to add value to our relationships!

### *Major Relationships for Communitas Staff:*

- Family of origin (especially for singles)
- Parent-child (within nuclear family)
- Spouse
- Friends
- Supporters and Donors
- Missional contacts (ie. neighbors, clients, acquaintances, etc.)
- Colleagues (working relationship)
- Communitas community (connection to the greater community)
- Siblings (for our TCK's, MK's, PK's)



As we choose to tend to our relationships, it may be best to assess types of relationships to give better accuracy to how one's relationships are really going. I recognise that when I moved overseas two years ago, my friendship relationships were weak and undeveloped due to not actually making any friends yet; where my relationship with my spouse and colleagues were solid and strong. Thus, it was impossible to assess the relational aspect of life accurately if I didn't separate the types of relationships I was assessing.

As the research states, healthy relationships are key to increasing Soul Wellbeing.

## notes

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### **Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, seek humility, vulnerability, courage and joy within our relationships. And may the "special sauce" of Communitas continue to develop and overflow into the world!*

*Prompts for tending well to the relational aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Perhaps choose one or two of the following characteristics and try to add more of it into a specific relationship you long to see improve. Pay attention and reflect on what occurs.
  - Mutually satisfying communication
  - Clarified expectations
  - Built and maintained trust (taking the time to understand what trust means to the other)
  - Explicitly expressed appreciation (discern how to best communicate this to the other)
  - Fulfilling the specific relationship (including a commitment to presence and growth)
  - Grace and forgiveness
  - Bearing with one another (life on life)
  - Humility
  - Vulnerability
  - Joy exchange
- Counselor, Hud McWilliams introduces married couples to the idea of “weekly wrestling matches,” where time is scheduled regularly for the couple to come together to reflect on the week. This is a time to share what went well and what needs improvement in the relationship where both people are more open to hear from each other.
- Family member check-in’s around the dinner table. Simple questions may help families connect regularly. Here are some examples: “What went well today? What made your frown today? What will you do differently tomorrow?”
- Scheduling ongoing calls with close friends or family members. This keeps connection regular thus offering the potential of improving relationships.
- Who in Communitas do you want to know better? Could you initiate ongoing calls with that person to connect, share, pray, etc.? Could you become a vital part of their care system?



## *Examples of when this aspect of life is NEGATIVELY impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

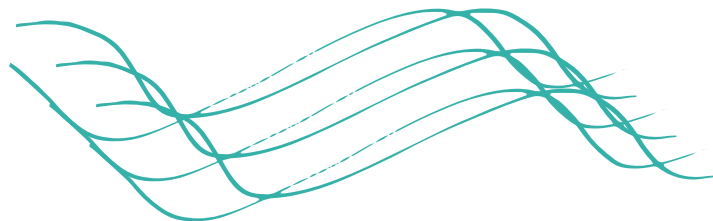
When we are not caring well for the relational aspect of life, we may experience...

- Signs of soul neglect: (according to Professor Christine Osgood)
  - inward focus, self-absorption
  - isolation, loneliness
  - increased temptation
  - feelings of desperation, panic
  - insecurity
  - callousness
  - judgmental attitude
  - cynicism
  - lack of desire for God
- Distance from Communitas community. Too much work to come to C'tas events where relational connection could be strengthened.
- Disillusionment, doubting God's call
- Allowing ministry and family demands to erode our life-giving relational needs
- Becoming toxic in our place of ministry, withdrawing from local culture or returning to country of origin

## *Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when this aspect is positively integrated into one's care system?*

- **Solid Friendships:** Research tells us that people need at least two close friendships for positive impact on wellbeing<sup>36</sup>
- **Expectations Well:** Regularly discovering and sharing expectations one has within their relationships (ie. "wrestling matches," intentional check-in's, prioritizing visits)
- **Improved Habits:** Living into what James 1:19 tells us, "let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger."
- **Humility:** Recognizing that we are all valuable and the input/viewpoint of the other person offers the chance to learn something.

- **Meaningful Connection to Communitas Organization:** Staff are encouraged to seek meaningful ways to connect with the greater Communitas global community.
- **Relational Mindset:** Work to adopt the following mindset (or one like it) adapted from American author, Judy Brower's book "Smitten by Us."<sup>37</sup> She encourages that in our everyday contact with others, we allow these assumptions to become the backdrop...
  - You are a human being, just like me: **I accept you.**
  - You are made in the image of God, full of inherent worth, just like me: **I respect you.**
  - You have a magnificent and unique design, just like me: **I admire you.**
  - You are on a journey that is all your own, just like me: **I am curious about you.**
  - We are in this together, you and me: **I need you.**
- **Renewed View of Friendship:** "Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born," written by Author, Anais Nin







"Sexuality was God's idea in the first place; he not only understands it but knows the type of power it can wield over us."

**-Debra Hirsch**

*Description of the sexual aspect of life, why it's important, and how it affects Soul Wellbeing:*

We believe that God created us as sexual beings. Our sexuality is for connection and pleasure as well as reproduction.

The "power [sexuality] wields over us" is why this is an aspect of life that impacts greatly our Soul Wellbeing. Whether single or married, we are sexual beings. How we understand this universal reality is where complication and confusion begin. Rather than ignore the impact our sexuality has on us, Staff Care and Development wants to encourage each of us to grow in a healthy, God-oriented understanding of what it means to be truly and fully human.

Scripture reserves our full expression of sexual connection for marriage while acknowledging that we are ALL sexual beings. Song of Solomon and other Scripture demonstrate God's approval of and joy in the sexual experience He designed. It is a metaphor of the one-ness that He desires to have with us.

Frankly, we as Communitas' SCD are new to exploring all the ramifications of what this means. This document is an attempt to begin - and to continue to learn. What we do affirm is:

- God created us male and female with the capacity for sexual expression intended for joy, pleasure, and reproduction in marriage.

- There are barriers to understanding our sexuality such as: lack of good information and/or messaging, and harmful past experiences ranging from

embarrassing moments to violation and lack of safe environments to talk and learn openly. These barriers may leave us experiencing low libido, sexual confusion, trouble communicating about sex, sexual shame and sexual shutdown or boredom.

This self-assessment tool is intended to help you accurately assess where you are flourishing and where can grow. Our goal is to encourage dialogue - with your spouse, if married, and with trusted others whether married or single - regarding your needs, questions, your understanding, and your hopes for your own sexuality.

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**Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, experience gratefulness and freedom within the gift of our sexuality. May we continue to foster conversations that lead us to connective and sacred sexual understanding and expression so we can more fully encounter Soul Wellbeing.*

*Examples of ways people tend well to the sexual aspect of life, thus boosting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Understanding how love and belonging inform your sexual choices.
- Taking responsibility for a healthy and godly expression of your sexuality.
- Ability to talk openly and freely to your spouse or dating partner(s) about your sexual needs and boundaries.
- Accessing high quality comprehensive sex education that includes pleasure.
- Understanding your own body and arousal systems so informed consent can be given.
- Knowing how to give and receive consent that is freely given, reversible, informed, specific and enthusiastic.

*Examples of what might be happening when the sexual aspect of life is **NEGATIVELY** impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- Sexual pain or shame with sexual behaviors or thoughts.
- Low libido or low desire for sex.
- Pain during sex.
- Inability to get or keep an erection or arousal.
- Aversion to sexual intimacy.
- Disgust with genitals.
- Difficulty expressing sexual wants and needs.
- Not experiencing orgasm if wanted.
- Unhealthy compulsive sexual behaviors that interrupt normal living.
- Use of or addiction to pornography

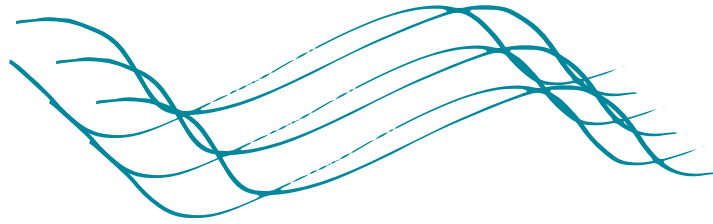
*Developing a Personal Care System: What OR Who is in place when the sexual aspect is positively integrated into one's care system?*

- Comprehensive, high quality sex education that includes pleasure.
- Trusted individuals with whom you can talk freely about your sexuality.
- Having intentional dialogue when you feel the need for it.
- An active prayer life around sexual wellness.





- A health-care provider for all health issues, including sexual health.
- When struggling with sexual wellness, finding a professional counselor or sexologist to process with and seek healing.
- Past messages of sexuality explored, deconstructed and/or reconstructed.
- Exploring sexual discernment with three categories: scripture (value system), inner knowing and science.



notes





**"...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."**

- Ephesians 4:12-13

*Description of spiritual wellness, why it's important, and how it impacts Soul Wellbeing:*

Spiritual wellness comes from maturing...from "growing up!" Paul tells us in Ephesians that maturity is attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. In other words becoming more like Christ. What we certainly know about Christ, is that He was in step with both His Father and His Spirit. In John 5:19, Jesus says he only does what he sees the Father doing. In John 8:28, Jesus says he speaks only what he hears the Father teaching him. In this speaking, teaching, listening, sending, doing exchange between Father, Son and Spirit, we come to recognize the "Divine Dance" between Them.<sup>38</sup> And the exquisite truth is that we are invited to join in this same dance! Jesus invites us in John 14 to commune with, remain with, abide with, co-create with and ultimately allow ourselves to belong to our amazing God! When we cooperate with God in this reality, we will transform more and more into Christ-likeness. We will mature more and more into humble, loving, co-creators of life!

Therefore, we can describe spiritual wellness as cooperating with the Spirit who helps us become like Jesus who accurately hears, sees, speaks, and does ALL that the Father teaches Him to do.<sup>39</sup>

### **Benediction:**

*May we, as Communitas Staff, tune our ears and hearts to better hear what our God is saying so we may grow in likeness of the Son.*

*Examples of the spiritual aspect positively impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- True humility emerges from those who are forming into the likeness of Jesus. Therefore, we ought to be becoming more and more humble as the years go on when we are maturing spiritually (Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:1-18).
- Scripture tells us the Fruit of the Spirit shows the evidence of God's Spirit in and through us! Therefore, when love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are growing up out of us, spiritual maturing is happening. When our soul is deeply rooted in God's Spirit, it produces the fruit needed to nourish our Soul Wellbeing (Galatians 5:22-25).
- Brother Lawrence teaches us to "practice the presence of God" in our day-to-day ordinary lives! Lawrence encourages us to worship God in all our activities and to draw awareness to God in all things.

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*Examples when the spiritual aspect is **NEGATIVELY** impacting Soul Wellbeing:*

- When we live a life which is focused on doing and accomplishing goals, we can easily lose touch with our true self where our deep longings, desires, and passions reside.
- When we begin to feel discouraged, frustrated or overwhelmed, it is easy to become apathetic and indifferent, passively watching life pass us by.

- When we harbor unforgiveness and bitterness in our hearts, it poisons our relationships and blocks our ability to receive love from God and others.
- When we are not nurturing the spiritual aspect of our lives, we tend to operate out of our own strength, wisdom and talents. Burnout or depression can arise when we run into our own limitations.

*Developing a Personal Care System: What or Who are in place when the spiritual aspect is integrated well into one's care system?*

The Who?

- Connection to a healthy faith community (whether local or digital)
- A spiritual friend who listens and can walk along-side you
- Communitas' Staff Care and Development Team, which offers opportunities for staff to grow spiritually (ie. Soul Care Retreats, Prayer Calls, Spiritual Direction, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Learning Cohorts, Adsideo Prayer)

The What?

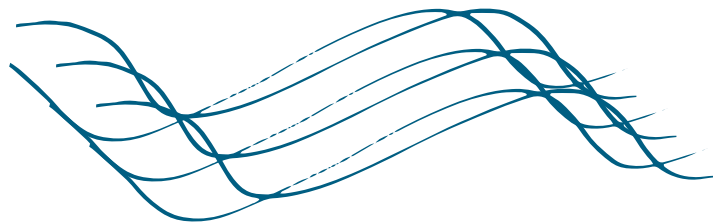
- Regular and Intentional "self-checks" asking yourself, "how is my relationship with God?" "What do I want to explore with God at this time?"
- An intentional and consistent engagement with the right mix of spiritual practices that are life-giving and appropriate for that season of a person's life. Another way to say this is establishing a "rule of life" (i.e. an intentional approach) which cultivates rhythms for spiritual transformation day in and day out. A rule of life seeks to respond to the question: How do I want to live so I can be who I want to be?
- Other important aspects which positively impact the spiritual aspect of soul wellbeing include:
  - having both a theology of healing and a theology of suffering
  - developing a biblical image of God at a heart level
  - having a grace, rather than performance, orientation
  - a growing ability to embrace mystery
  - a good understanding of transition – both in regards to life stages and to the different stages in the spiritual journey

- cultivating a grateful attitude which sees all of life as a gift
- and having a good understanding of the rhythms of life which help facilitate spiritual transformation (i.e. life- death- resurrection)

**Reality Check!** Please DO NOT try to do too much at one time. We understand many people often start off very enthusiastically about implementing a set of spiritual disciplines into their lives (especially after an inspiring presentation, retreat or course)...but more often than not they soon become discouraged and give up after being unable to consistently practice them.

Instead, try to:

- begin with realistic, bite-sized goals which are not time-consuming
- provide opportunities to practice spiritual disciplines in a group or retreat setting
- agree to be accountable to a small group, mentor, friend, or spiritual director
- begin each new year or ministry season by asking God which spiritual practice(s) to adopt in the coming season (provides greater motivation when we have a sense that we have heard from God)
- remember the importance of being patient and giving grace to yourself by remembering that each time we return to God is an act of worship



notes

## *Additional Resources (Organized by Aspect of Life):*

For your continued exploration and joy!

### *Cognitive:*

### *Digital:*

Articles:

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolefisher/2019/01/24/how-much-time-americans-spend-in-front-of-screens-will-terrify-you/#4bc3bdec1c67>
- <https://www.nirandfar.com/distractions/>

Websites:

- Common Sense Media <https://www.common sense media.org>
- Digital Wellness Collective <https://digitalwellnesscollective.com>
- Raising Digital Natives <https://www.raisingdigitalnatives.com>

Books:

- Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World. Newport, Cal.
- Indistractable: How to control your attention and choose your life. Eyal, Nir.
- Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now. Lanier, Jaron.

Film:

- "The Social Dilemma." Netflix Documentary.

Sermon Series:

- Woodland Hills Church. [www.whchurch.org](http://www.whchurch.org) Sermon Series called "Interface." Listen to sermons from September 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6 and 13, 2019.

### *Emotional:*

Books:

- Healing Developmental Trauma by L. Heller
- Developmental Trauma - 0-6yrs old - how our trauma impacts us;
- Anatomy of the Soul & Soul of Shame by Curt Thompson
- Growing Yourself Up - Jenny Brown
- Putting Away Childish Things by Larry Crabb book on Father issues; and also
- Growing Yourself Up: How to bring your best to all of life's relationships ~Jenny Brown
- Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You - Jim Wilder, et al. Incorporating the best of science and medicine, this book introduces us to The Life Model. This model is not based on western education, but rather on a biblical worldview that is thousands of years old and well tested for the transformation of identity, character and culture.



- RARE Leadership - Jim Wilder, et.al.
- Let Your Life Speak, by Parker Palmer p.30-31: "Self-care is never a selfish act -- it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch."
- Ordering Your Private World by Gordon MacDonald
- Soul Keeping by John Ortberg
- I Quit by Geri Scazzero
- Discipline of Disturbance by Hud McWilliams

#### Training:

- Thrive - Joy-based relational skill training for thriving relationships!
  - THRIVE Training equips you with relational skills that even the best families may miss or overlook. Careful study of Scripture and of how the brain is configured led us to identify 19 brain-based relational skills that provide the full range of life functions for our minds and relationships. When we lack these skills, pain, addictions, conflicts and other problems prevail.
- Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter & Geri Scazzero
  - A group of us are beta testing this course right now and are having a really good experience with it.

#### Videos:

- Jamie Winship: Talking about FEAR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOwlv06-tgM&t=35s>
- Genogram - talks by Pete Scazzero, New Life Fellowship:
  - Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50JGwGam3u8>
  - Part 2 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sg7\\_9k9pmtw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sg7_9k9pmtw)
- Shalom for my Body (techniques to calm my nervous system when upset)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X87kwXYiMY0&t=239s>

## *Environmental (Space we Inhabit):*

## *Environmental (Creation Care):*

## *Financial:*

#### Financial Assessment Tools:

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/financial-well-being/>

<https://www.smartaboutmoney.org/Courses/My-Financial-Well-Being-Plan>

<https://www.daveramsey.com/get-started?snid=footer.getstarted.thebasics#assessment>

Educational Resources:

<http://baritessler.com/>

<https://www.iwillteachyoutoberich.com/>

<https://www.daveramsey.com/> Financial Peace University ONLINE course

NOVO Stewardship Discernment Guide:

[https://media.novo.org/pdf/general/19-stewardship-guide.pdf?](https://media.novo.org/pdf/general/19-stewardship-guide.pdf?utm_source=Novo+2019&utm_campaign=2b38613a4a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_14_05_43&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fae812c676-2b38613a4a-49550717)

[utm\\_source=Novo+2019&utm\\_campaign=2b38613a4a-](https://media.novo.org/pdf/general/19-stewardship-guide.pdf?utm_source=Novo+2019&utm_campaign=2b38613a4a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_14_05_43&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fae812c676-2b38613a4a-49550717)

[EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_11\\_14\\_05\\_43&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_fae812c676-2b38613a4a-49550717](https://media.novo.org/pdf/general/19-stewardship-guide.pdf?utm_source=Novo+2019&utm_campaign=2b38613a4a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_14_05_43&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fae812c676-2b38613a4a-49550717)

Books:

- Rich Dad Poor Dad by Robert Kiyosaki
- Set for Life by Scott Trench
- Happy Money: The Japanese Art of Making Peace with Your Money by Ken Honda

## *Meaning:*

Podcasts:

- The School of Greatness. "1018 The Spiritual Guide to Inner Peace, Mastering Grief & Understanding God w/Rob Bell."  
<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9yc3MuYXJ0MTkuY29tL3RoZS1zY2hvY2wtb2YtZ3JlYXRuZXNz/episode/Z2lkOi8vYXJ0MTktZXBpc29kZS1sb2NhdG9yL1YwL3pXMIppdGhLWVV5RFRMyVjhyYXBPMzIxV0NOZkZVODAzS1NxdXdObEtSRk0?hl=en-SG&ved=2ahUKEwjPw4m3ucLsAhWF6XMBHd7CAkEQjrkEegQICRAF&ep=6>

## *Physical:*

- Every Body Matters by Gary Thomas
- Food Freedom Forever by Melissa Hartwig

## *Recreational:*

- The God Who Plays by Brian Edgar;
- The Gift of Wonder by Aroney-Sine

## *Sexual:*

**Important Disclaimer** - We have received many of these resources and websites from a christian sexologist. We are not able to vet them ourselves, therefore, they may or may not reflect the complete view of our organization.

### Websites:

- Sexologist Dr. Celeste Holbrook <https://www.drcelesteholbrook.com/all-products>  
Holbrook offers counseling and online courses to support sexual wellbeing
- "The Purpose of the Twelve Step Program"  
<https://www.addictioncenter.com/treatment/12-step-programs/>
- Gina Odgen's 4-D Wheel of Sexual Wellness <https://4-dnetwork.com>
- Gina Odgen's website <https://ginaodgen.com>
- Sex Positive Families <https://sexpositivefamilies.com/about/>
- Tina Shermer-Sellers <https://www.tinaschermersellers.com/>
- Northwest Institute on Intimacy <https://www.nwioi.com/>
- National Coalition for Sexual Health  
<https://nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org/tools/for-healthcare-providers/compendium-of-sexual-reproductive-health-resources-for-healthcare-providers>

### Relationship Counselors:

- To find sexual health providers (therapists, counselors and educators), go to [AASECT.org](http://AASECT.org) and do a search for your area
- Les and Leslie Parrott (Pacific Northwest)
- Communitas professional counselors could be available

### Books:

- Dawn, Marva J. Sexual Character.
- Judith K. Balswick and Jack O. Balswick. Authentic Human Sexuality: Integrated Christian Approach.
- Hirsch, Debra, Redeeming Sex. InterVarsity Press, 2015.
- McBride, Hillary L. Mothers, Daughters & Body Image: Learning to Love Ourselves as We Are.
- Sellers, Tina Schermer. Sex, God, and the Conservative Church: Erasing Shame from Sexual Intimacy. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.
- Nagoski, Emily. Come as You Are: the Surprising New Science That Will Transform Your Sex Life. London: Scribe, 2015.
- Morin, Jack. The Erotic Mind: Unlocking the Inner Sources of Sexual Passion and Fulfillment. New York: Harper Perennial, 1996.
- Klein, Marty. Sexual Intelligence: What We Really Want from Sex--and How to Get It. New York: Harper One, 2013.

- Gunter, Jen M.D. *The Vagina Bible: The Vulva and the Vagina--Separating the Myth from the Medicine*. Kensington Pub Corp, 2019.
- Dale, Beverly Keller Rachel. *Advancing Sexual Health for the Christian Client: Date and Dogma*. Place of publication to identified: CRC Press, 2019
- Bessey, Sarah. *Jesus Feminist: an Invitation to Revisit the Bibles View of Women: Exploring the Radical Notion That Women Are People, Too*. Nashville, TN: Howard Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2013.
- Bell, Rob. *Sex God: Exploring the Endless Connections between Sexuality and Spirituality*. New York: HarperOne, 2012.

## *Spirituality:*

- One model which pastoral caregivers have successfully used is the book by Janet Hagberg and Robert Guelich called "The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith." These 6 stages in a life of faith are not prescriptive or limiting. They simply give vocabulary to our common developmental journey. It helps create understanding and perspective to see where one is in their journey. It can help one feel validated and understood. It can also help one to see where others are in their journey and gives you eyes to see how to encourage them in their process. The ministry Unhurried Living <https://www.unhurriedliving.com/blog/podcast14> has a podcast about "The Critical Journey" and Peter Scazzerro also has adapted their model into his teachings. Similarly, Richard Rohr's *Falling Upwards* is a good introduction to the first and second half of life concept that is integral to spiritual growth and human development.
- Another great podcast which many Member Care teams for missions organizations are using is by Ruth Haley Barton: <https://www.ruthhaleybarton.com/podcast> *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*. She has 4 seasons of podcasts about soul care which include:
  - Sacred Rhythms in the Life of a Leader;
  - Life Together in Christ: Cultivating Communities for Spiritual Transformation;
  - From Decision Making to Discernment in Community;
  - Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry
- Ruth Haley Barton's book "Sacred Rhythms: Arranging our Lives for Spiritual Transformation" is also an excellent introduction to a contemplative lifestyle in which our souls are nurtured and cared for. A 6-part DVD series and study guide is also available for small group study, discussion and practice.
- Books which help to develop a sound theology of suffering: "A Grief Sanctified: Through Sorrow to Eternal Hope" by J.I. Packer; "A Grief Observed" and "The Problem of Pain" by C.S. Lewis; "C.S.Lewis and Human Suffering: Light Among the Shadows" by Marie A. Conn; "Walking with God through Pain and Suffering" by Tim Keller; and "Making Sense Out of Suffering" by Peter Kreeft.

- The importance of learning to embrace mystery: "The Mystery of God: Theology for Knowing the Unknowable" by Steven Boyer and Christopher Hall
- Schools of Spiritual Direction run by Elizabeth de Smaele of Sustainable Faith based in Amsterdam. (<https://sustainablefaith.com>)
- Deepen (relational spiritual formation) is a spiritual formation/spiritual direction training sponsored by Sent Well (<https://sentwell.org/deepen/>) geared towards missionaries and cross-cultural workers. It's an online training with some on-site training weekends in Malaga, Spain.
- Encourage the use of apps which help to facilitate spiritual formation such as "pray as you go" or "Reimagining the Examen."
- Relevant Spiritual formation blogs: "Beautiful Upheaval: Practical Wisdom for Life's Transitions"
- Metamorpha website <http://www.metamorpha.com/>. This website has an abundance of information about prayer practices, spiritual disciplines, retreats, spiritual direction and much more. They have written material but also video and audio from authors like Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, Jan Johnson and others.
- Henry Nouwen's article called "Moving from Solitude to Community to Ministry" <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cDr6n1z4962XjHDZikzbATu9OshaXMr8oLhETSDzvs8/edit?ts=5f3e88d8>