

LIVING COMPASS

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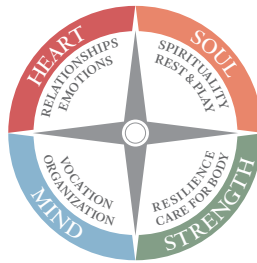
Adult Faith & Wellness Circle Program Workbook



An invitation to love God and to
be well with all your heart, soul,
strength, and mind.

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your strength,
and with all your mind.*

—Luke 10:27, Deuteronomy 6:5



The Living Compass Spirituality & Wellness Initiative was
created with a generous gift from Ab and Nancy Nicholas.

While Ab passed away in 2016, their generous support
continues to inspire us and makes this resource possible.

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Place Your Life Before God

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

—Romans 12:1-2

The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language

An Invitation to the Journey

Meaningful conversations about the integration of faith and wellness have the power to change lives. Living Compass Wellness Circles provide the opportunity to experience these kinds of life-changing conversations.

For more than thirty-five years, I have had the honor of walking with people on their journeys toward wellness and wholeness. I have walked with people in my professional life as an Episcopal priest, marriage and family therapist, retreat leader, and wellness coach, and in my personal life as a husband, father, and fellow traveler on this lifelong journey.

The invitation to this journey of wellness and wholeness is continuously being offered by the One who created us. Just as a navigational compass is acted upon by a force outside of itself, the inner compasses of our lives are also acted upon by God, who calls us to greater wholeness, gently reminding us with a whisper when our course in life needs adjusting. Your Living Compass Wellness Circle will help you to be still, to listen to God's whispers, and to say "yes" to God's invitation.

The Living Compass Wellness Circle process has grown out of the tens of thousands of hours of sacred conversations I have had the privilege of hosting in my counseling office, on retreats, and in the congregations I have served. Wellness Circles are now being offered in faith communities, schools, community-based nonprofits, retirement communities, hospitals, YMCAs, and one another's homes. Please know that we have secular versions of our adult, parent, and teen resources. You can learn more at WellnessCompass.org.

What makes a Living Compass Wellness Circle stand out from other wellness programs is that it is based on integrating Christian faith and wellness. There are many compasses that are competing to guide our lives. In fact, we all have a compass—or several compasses—that guide our lives, often outside of our awareness. Living Compass helps us make our faith the compass that guides the decisions in all areas of our lives—heart, soul, strength, and mind. When we use faith as our compass, we are better able to experience wellness and wholeness.

You might ask, "How is the Spirit calling you to greater wellness and wholeness right now?" You will discover the answer to this question, and others, in the company of your Wellness Circle over the next six weeks.

It is an honor for Living Compass to walk with you and support you on your journey toward whole-person wellness.



The Rev. Dr. D. Scott Stoner, Founder of Living Compass

Living Compass Spirituality & Wellness Initiative: A Brief Overview

The Living Compass Spirituality & Wellness Initiative creates programs that offer opportunities for us to pause and check our bearings. First, we will check the direction in which we are heading in different aspects of our lives. Then we will ask ourselves, “Am I heading in the direction that I desire for myself?” We will also ask, “Am I heading in the direction that God desires for me?” A Living Compass Wellness Circle will offer support as we explore these questions and as we make any needed adjustments.

The Wellness Compass Model for Well-being offers guidance in four dimensions of our being: heart, soul, strength, and mind. Each of the four compass points focuses on two areas of wellness, and each of the eight areas helps to guide and equip us as we commit to being more intentional about the way we live our lives. The purpose of this Compass is to provide a dynamic resource that will assist us in our search for balance and wellness. Our call is to live an undivided life, where heart, soul, strength, and mind are integrated into both our *being* and our *doing*.

Areas of Wellness

Heart

- **Relationships.** The ability to create and maintain vibrant, life-giving connections with others.
- **Emotions.** The ability to process, express, and receive emotions in a healthy way.

Soul

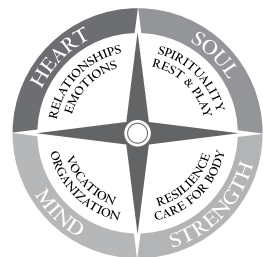
- **Spirituality.** The ability to connect with a higher purpose in life and to have a clear set of beliefs, morals, and values that guides our actions.
- **Rest and Play.** The ability to balance work and play and to renew oneself.

Strength

- **Resilience.** The ability to deal positively with the adversities of life.
- **Care for the Body.** The ability to build life-enhancing habits and practices regarding our physical well-being.

Mind

- **Organization.** The ability to keep track of and make good use of possessions, money, and time.
- **Vocation.** The ability to align our life’s purpose with the gifts and talents we’ve been given. This includes work, volunteer service, and any educational/enrichment activities.



A Living Compass Wellness Circle ...

- focuses on possibilities, not problems.
- will help you to “be still” and hear God’s call to you.
- will never require you to share if you are not comfortable.
- welcomes you wherever you are on your spiritual journey.
- will help you take concrete steps toward reaching your goals.
- is helpful when you are going through a transition in your life.
- will help you achieve greater balance.
- will help you reduce and better manage stress.
- is not a substitute for professional help; it is not group therapy or a 12-step group.

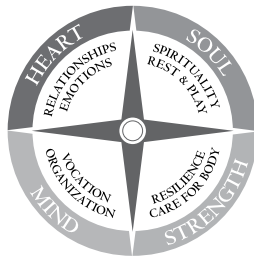
Expectations for Participants in a Wellness Circle

- Arrive 5–10 minutes early so that the group can start and end on time.
- Make a sincere effort to attend all six meetings. Four is the minimum commitment.
- Honor confidentiality of all that is shared in the group.
- Avoid giving advice to others. Instead, focus on listening deeply to them.
- “Resource” the group any time you want feedback or ideas from others.
- Do not monopolize “air time” in the group. Everyone needs equal time to speak.
- Establish clear goals and FAITH Steps for yourself and commit to working on them between group meetings.



An Overview of a Six-Week Adult Wellness Circle

1. Choose one of the eight areas of wellness on which to focus based on your results from the **Faith & Wellness Compass Self-Assessment**.
2. Describe where you are, and where you want to be, in this area of your life. This is the “You are Here” and “Wish You Were Here” part of the **Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change**.
3. Select an inspiring quote to guide and inspire you.
4. Choose a centering/mindfulness practice that you will commit to doing regularly during this program.
5. Invite others to support you on your journey.
6. Harness hope from previous positive experiences of growth as you consider any challenges you anticipate on this journey.
7. Set a specific goal for the change and growth you seek.
8. Determine a **FAITH Step** you will take each week toward your goal.
9. Continue to draw support and accountability from your **Wellness Circle** as you make progress with your goal and FAITH Steps.



LIVING COMPASS

HEART • SOUL • STRENGTH • MIND

Listening to the Whispers. Before or during the first session, each participant will reflect on their current whole-person wellness by taking the Living Compass Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment. We encourage everyone to listen to the whispers—from God, a friend or family member, or from the depths of their being—that are letting them know what area of their lives is ready for a change.

SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything is Connected. In this session participants reflect on the results of their Wellness Self-Assessment. We review the overview of the six-week Wellness Circle (p. 6), and go over expectations for participants (p. 5). They are then invited to map a journey of growth and change by choosing one area on which to focus for the next six weeks, and also consider what spiritual practice or wisdom quote would best support them on their Journey of Growth and Change.

SESSION 2: Stages of Change. Understanding change as a process that follows predictable stages helps participants maximize their chances for success in making the changes they desire. Participants receive continued support from the group.

SESSION 3: Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional. Learn how to turn change into growth. In this session participants reflect and report on how their journey is going, and continue to receive support from the facilitators and the group.

SESSION 4: Trust the Wisdom of the “J” Curve. Learn how to overcome the most common reason people are not successful in their attempts to grow and change. Participants receive continued support from the group.

SESSION 5: Systemic Dynamics and Change. Learn how individual growth impacts the lives of everyone in the system, and how systems can either promote or impede growth. Participants receive continued support from the group.

SESSION 6: All Shall Be Well. Participants celebrate their progress and share prayers and plans for continued growth.

Listening to the Whispers

Welcome to your Living Compass Wellness Circle! We are glad you are here. The fact that you are in this program says that you are committed to having a greater sense of balance and wholeness in your life, and that you are also committed to discovering a deeper connection between your faith and your sense of well-being. This program will help you get started on this journey and, along the way, help you to better know the fellow travelers from your group who are walking this journey with you. There are very few places left in our culture where people gather to have authentic conversations about life, wholeness, God, and faith. Faith communities are an ideal place to host these conversations. This Living Compass Wellness Circle is not group therapy, but a place where you can have authentic conversations about your true self as you seek to deepen your connections with God, your neighbor, and yourself.

The first step in the process is to look closely at your life as it is right now by using a tool we've created for you, the Living Compass Wellness Self-Assessment. This assessment—like a mirror—will reflect back to you your current state of balance and wholeness. The results are a present-moment snapshot of how you are experiencing your life. The first sign that something needs to change in our lives often appears as a “whisper.” The source of the whisper could be God, a friend or family member, and/or ourselves—our hearts, souls, minds, or bodies. The whisper is a sign, a call to us that we may need to do something different.

If these whispers aren't listened to, they have a way of getting louder, as do we. We may find that we are impatient and argumentative, quick to judge and to distance ourselves from those we care about. We want to honor and respond to the whispers because it is easier to address and resolve a problem or issue while it is still just a whisper than when it becomes a fracture that is more difficult to heal.

The Wellness Self-Assessment is designed to help you listen to the whispers in your life right now. Our lives are always speaking to us; the question is are we listening? As writer Paula D'Arcy says, “God comes to us disguised as our lives.” As you complete the self-assessment, do so prayerfully, listening closely to the whispers you get from God and from yourself. Be still, and know that the Spirit is always whispering, always calling us to grow in heart, soul, strength, and mind.

In the first session, using the *Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change* process, you will be invited to listen, to yourself and to God, to discern both the changes you desire and the changes you are being invited by God to make. Finally, with the support of your group, you will proceed with specific actions—FAITH Steps—that will bring a greater sense of well-being and wholeness to your life.

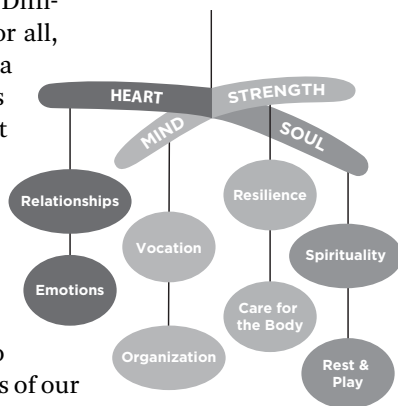
SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything is Connected

*Love the Lord your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**, with all your **strength**, and with all your **mind**.*

—Luke 10:27, Deuteronomy 6:5

The word *wholeness* comes from the same root as *holy* and *holiness*. As Christians, whole-person wellness means that we are called to seek wholeness in all aspects of our lives. We do this by allowing God and our faith to be our compass in all dimensions of our being, and by seeking wholeness in heart, soul, body, and mind.

The greatest wisdom we have learned from the field of whole-person wellness is that everything is connected. Just like a mobile or kinesthetic art, when you move any part of a mobile, it affects all the other parts (positively or negatively). We are not compartmentalized people. Difficulty sleeping may be connected to any, or all, of the following: stress at work, stress in a relationship, a sense that life has lost its meaning, a change in diet, or the recent loss of a loved one. Disruption in one area will likely disturb other areas. It is also true that if the entire mobile is moving and you calm down just one section, that calmness will radiate out to all the other sections. The whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts, and we are wise to integrate and support all of the dimensions of our being as we seek to be well and whole.



As you begin your Wellness Circle, you will be completing a Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment, which will help you see how the various aspects of wellness in your life are interconnected. As you complete the self-assessment, do so prayerfully, listening closely to the whispers you are hearing from God and from yourself. Be still and know that the Spirit is always whispering, always calling us to grow in heart, soul, strength, and mind.

After you have completed the self-assessment, using the *Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change* process, you will be invited to listen, to yourself and to God, to discern both the changes you desire and the changes you are being invited by God to make. Finally, with the help of your group, you will proceed with specific actions—FAITH Steps—that will bring a greater sense of well-being and wholeness to your life.

Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

To be completed between Sessions 1 and 2

List 2-3 areas of high satisfaction from your Living Compass Wellness Self-Assessment.

List 2-3 areas of low satisfaction from your Living Compass Wellness Self-Assessment.

Give some intentional thought to the following questions and then pick the dimension of whole-person wellness that you would like to address in this program.

- If you think of your shaded Compass as a garden, what area do you think is in need of some additional watering right now?
- What area do you feel most motivated to work on?
- What dimension do you feel a strong sense of urgency about?
- What area do you feel you are being “invited” to work on?

Area of whole-person wellness you wish to address in this program.

“You Are Here” | Describe where you are right now in your life in this area of wellness.

“Wish You Were Here!” | Describe what it will be like when you are where you and God want you to be in this area of wellness.

The Faith Connection | It is important to connect the growth and change we are seeking with our faith. Many people have found it helpful to choose a Bible verse, inspiring quote, and/or a spiritual practice to strengthen and inspire them on their journey of growth and change. To spark your thinking, we have included Bible verses at the beginning of the introduction to each area of wellness (starting on page 40), as well as several suggested spiritual practices on page 56. And, feel free to come up with your own! In the space that follows, write down a Bible verse and/or a spiritual practice that you believe will help you make a connection between your faith and the changes you want to make.

Support from Others | Are there others outside your Living Compass Wellness Circle whose support you will want or need? List them here.

Challenges | What resistance within yourself or others might arise on your Journey of Growth and Change?

FAITH Steps | List one or two FAITH Steps you feel ready to make this week. Remember that FAITH Steps are: Focused, Action-Oriented, Inspired, Time-Specific, and Heartfelt and Honest. (See below for a detailed description of FAITH Steps). Also remember that a FAITH Step can be a thought, word, or deed, or any combination of these three.

FAITH Steps

F	FOCUSED. The step will be narrowly focused. “I will walk for 30 minutes three days this week” vs. “I need to start getting some exercise.”
A	ACTION-ORIENTED. I will do something that is observable and measurable. I will not just think about doing something.
I	INSPIRED. I feel that God wants me to take this step, and I feel inspired by God to do it.
T	TIME-SPECIFIC. I will do it at this time, or within this time frame.
H	HEARTFELT AND HONEST. I will only commit to a FAITH Step that I know in my heart I honestly am ready to take, as opposed to something I think I “should” do, or I think others want me to do.

FAITH Steps are:

- specific thoughts, words, and/or deeds intended to connect your faith with your everyday life.
- based on the principles that “we have to do different in order to get different,” and “we become what we practice.”
- what turn your goals into reality.
- things you feel God is calling you to do AND are things you want to do.
- things YOU feel confident you will be able to achieve.
- action-specific. For example, “I will spend 10 minutes a day in quiet meditation,” as opposed to “I will be more relaxed this week.”

And, remember, FAITH Steps need to be shared out loud with others in order to maximize your success in doing them.

What We Pay Attention to in Our Lives is What Will Grow

By being a part of a Living Compass Wellness Circle, you are making a proactive decision to pay attention to all aspects of your health and wellness. As you choose to work on a particular dimension of wellness, it is essential that you pay attention to the wellness you already have in that area, and how you would like to make it grow. It will not be helpful to focus on your “problems” or “what is wrong.” Self-talk is very powerful. Talk to yourself like you would talk to someone you really care about. To that person you would say, “That’s great that you have started working on your weight/marriage/education/work/spiritual life, etc.” You wouldn’t say, “I can’t believe you waited this long to work on that. I doubt you’ll make much progress at this point in your life.”

Pay attention to how often you focus on the negative in yourself and/or others. Gradually shift your attention to the positive and the possibility in yourself and/or others, and that is what will grow.

FAITH Step Worksheet *SAMPLE*



Area of Wellness:

Rest & Play

Date: 11/26

Overarching Goal: To experience more peace and joy in my life.

Focused: I realize that I am emotionally and spiritually exhausted. I want and need to focus on working less and devoting more time to the people and activities that bring me a greater sense of peace and joy.

Action-Oriented: I will spend less time working in the evenings and weekends, and more of that time nourishing my spirit by connecting with friends and family and spending time in nature.

Inspired: Too often I define myself by what I accomplish, and often I live like a "human doing," not a "human being." I know God values me for who I am and not what I accomplish. That God celebrates any decision and commitment I make to live a more joyful and peaceful life.

Time Specific: Starting two days from today, I will get outside and take a short walk right after dinner without my phone at least four evenings a week. I will spend time either Saturday or Sunday, when I have more time, taking a longer walk or hike in nature, either alone or with friends and/or family.

Heartfelt and Honest: Making time regularly to do the things that bring me peace and joy are so important, and so hard to do. I know this is going to be challenging at first, and so I will be gentle with myself when I slip up. I will remember that this commitment is an investment that will help me restore my emotional and spiritual strength.

Obstacles: Old habits and self-talk that demand, "do more!" Or, "You have to finish all your work before you can relax and play." The temptation to check my work texts and emails just one more time.

Solutions: I will find an inspirational quote or scripture to remind me that I am loved for who I am and not for what I do. I will post it where I can see it every day. I will only check my work email once after dinner during

FAITH Step: Beginning two days from today, I will get outside and take a short walk right after dinner without my phone at least four evenings a week. I will spend time either Saturday or Sunday, when I have more time, taking a longer walk or hike in nature, either alone or with friends and/or family. I will read my inspirational quote or scripture out loud at least once a day.

FAITH Step Worksheet



Area of Wellness: _____

Date: _____

Overarching Goal:	
Focused:	
Action-Oriented:	
Inspired:	
Time-Specific:	
Heartfelt and Honest:	
Obstacles:	Solutions:
FAITH Step:	

SESSION 2: Stages of Change: Understanding the Process of Change

As you create FAITH Steps, it is helpful to understand that change is a process that moves through typical stages. One helpful understanding of the change process is the Stages of Change model developed by James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente. Their work outlines five stages that occur whenever a person, group, or organization seeks to create change. Identifying which stage we are in is helpful in supporting ourselves and others where we are, remembering that this is a process and a journey.



—graphic adapted from *The Transtheoretical Model*, Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992

Precontemplation. This is the entry point of the change and growth process. At this stage we may have not yet considered the prospect of change and are unlikely to perceive a need for change. Here we are not likely to respond positively to suggestions to change.

Contemplation. At this stage we have some awareness or desire for a need to change/grow. Often a state of ambivalence where we both consider change and reject it simultaneously. The Self-Assessment we completed likely moved us into this stage in regard to some area of wellness.

Preparation. Here the focus begins to shift from the need or problem to possible solutions, from the past toward the future. Talking with others to gain information and support, along with making a plan, are part of this stage, as is the map of our journey of growth and change that we created in Session 1.

Action. Here we are ready to change/grow and have begun concrete steps toward making the change a reality. This is where FAITH Steps come in. The actions taken are focused and achievable. The motto for this stage is, “you have to do different to get different.”

Maintenance. Having maintaining the desired change and growth for an extended period of time (three to six months), there is good evidence that the change will become a new habit, something that doesn’t require a great deal of conscious thought and energy to maintain.

Because change is uncomfortable, this process is rarely linear; more often, it is “two steps forward, one step back.” Imagine a teeter-totter between these stages to better understand the idea that ambivalence is expected as we first shift toward the next stage, and then sometimes shift back. This is why the support of others is crucial to help us keep moving forward.

Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

To be completed between Sessions 2 and 3, or at the end of Session 2 if time permits.

Area of whole-person wellness you wish to focus on:

“You Are Here” | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different than Session 1.

“Wish You Were Here!” | Restate or refine where you and God want you to be.

The Faith Connection | Have you chosen a Scripture verse, inspiring quote, and/or spiritual practice to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your wellness circle? Do you want to choose a new one for this week? Make note of any other thoughts you have about the connection between your faith and being well.

Support from Others | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to?

FAITH Steps | Focused, Action-oriented, Inspired, Time-specific, Heartfelt and Honest.

List at least one FAITH Step for the upcoming week.

FAITH Step Worksheet



Area of Wellness: _____

Date: _____

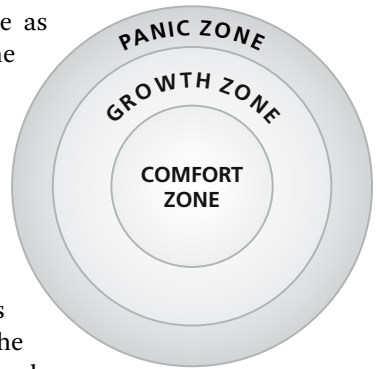
Overarching Goal:	
Focused:	
Action-Oriented:	
Inspired:	
Time-Specific:	
Heartfelt and Honest:	
Obstacles:	Solutions:
FAITH Step:	

SESSION 3: Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional.

—John C. Maxwell

Every individual, relationship, family, and organization/congregation functions within a set of patterns and habits. Over time, these patterns and routines, which are necessary for our day-to-day functioning, become familiar, and very comfortable. This **Comfort Zone** works like a set of unwritten rules about how things should be. For example, most people are “conflict averse” and so many families (and organizations) have an unwritten rule that conflict will not be talked about openly or directly.

In the graphic below, we can see that in order to grow, we need to risk moving out of our Comfort Zone. And we can move out of the Comfort Zone in one of two ways: We either move there proactively and intentionally, or we are forced to move there because of life circumstances. Either way, it is important to note that all growth is initially uncomfortable because it requires us to move out of our Comfort Zone. A person who has never been assertive is going to be very uncomfortable as they begin to practice assertiveness. The same is true for a person who has never tried doing a daily spiritual practice.



The **Panic Zone** is what we approach if we try to grow or change too much, too fast. We are also more likely to feel panic if we are forced out of our Comfort Zone against our will. For example, a person who has refused to update their job skills (choosing the Comfort Zone over the Growth Zone) is let go by their employer, which throws them into the Panic Zone.

The lesson from this is that if we rigidly defend our Comfort Zones, refusing to be proactive about growth, we will usually end up finding ourselves thrown from the Comfort Zone into the Panic Zone sooner or later.

When individuals, families, and organizations intentionally and regularly stretch themselves into the **Growth Zone**, they not only minimize their chances of getting thrown into the Panic Zone, but they also continuously expand their Comfort Zones, giving them greater flexibility and wellness. As we spend more time in the Growth Zone, over time, it becomes our new Comfort Zone. Your FAITH Step is an intentional step into the Growth Zone.

Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

To be completed between Sessions 3 and 4, or at the end of Session 3 if time permits.

Area of whole-person wellness you wish to focus on:

“You Are Here” | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different than Session 2.

“Wish You Were Here!” | Restate or refine where you and God want you to be.

The Faith Connection | Have you chosen a Scripture verse, inspiring quote, and/or spiritual practice to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your wellness circle? Do you want to choose a new one for this week? Make note of any other thoughts you have about the connection between your faith and being well.

Support from Others | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to?

FAITH Steps | Focused, Action-oriented, Inspired, Time-specific, Heartfelt and Honest.

List at least one FAITH Step for the upcoming week.

FAITH Step Worksheet



Area of Wellness: _____

Date: _____

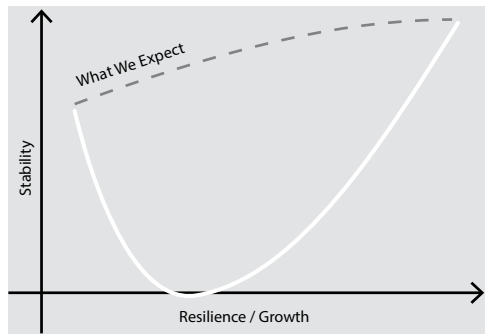
Overarching Goal:	
Focused:	
Action-Oriented:	
Inspired:	
Time-Specific:	
Heartfelt and Honest:	
Obstacles:	Solutions:
FAITH Step:	

SESSION 4: Trust the Wisdom of the “J” Curve

Change tends to come in one of two ways: planned or unplanned. It is a given that unplanned changes will be stressful. A job loss, an unexpected health diagnosis, an accident, the sudden death of a friend or loved one, or the sudden end to a relationship are some of the most stressful events any of us will encounter. No one ever plans or chooses such events, which only adds to the stress they create.

What is perhaps not as well understood is that even changes that are both desired and planned, including FAITH Steps, can also be very stressful. Beginning a new romantic relationship, starting a new job, moving to a new community, adding a baby to the family, retiring, changing staff in an organization, and making changes to “business as usual” are all changes that, while planned and chosen, still create stress.

The J Curve is the single most helpful concept in explaining why and how all change creates stress. Note that the J Curve has a vertical axis showing “Stability,” and a horizontal axis showing “Resilience/Growth.” The dotted line shows the trajectory we would like to see when positive change is planned and freely chosen. While we may expect positive, planned change to follow this path, the reality is that all change initially creates a period of instability. The J Curve illustrates this well by showing that the initial movement toward resilience and growth is accompanied by an initial decrease in stability and increase in discomfort. Think Moses and his followers in the wilderness. As their stability decreases, they become anxious and want to go back to the familiar bondage in Egypt.



As Christians, we know the J Curve to be the Jesus Curve because it reminds us how often there must be death before there can be resurrection. We must let go of what is and what has been in order to be open to what will be. We need the support of our community when we are negotiating a J Curve, and we need to remember that God is with us every step of the journey. To paraphrase Psalm 23: “Though I walk through the valley of a ‘J’ Curve, I will not fear, for God is with me.”

Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

To be completed between Sessions 4 and 5, or at the end of Session 4 if time permits.

Area of whole-person wellness you wish to focus on:

“You Are Here” | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different than Session 3.

“Wish You Were Here!” | Restate or refine where you and God want you to be.

The Faith Connection | Have you chosen a Scripture verse, inspiring quote, and/or spiritual practice to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your wellness circle? Do you want to choose a new one for this week? Make note of any other thoughts you have about the connection between your faith and being well.

Support from Others | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to?

FAITH Steps | Focused, Action-oriented, Inspired, Time-specific, Heartfelt and Honest.

List at least one FAITH Step for the upcoming week.

FAITH Step Worksheet



Area of Wellness: _____

Date: _____

Overarching Goal:	
Focused:	
Action-Oriented:	
Inspired:	
Time-Specific:	
Heartfelt and Honest:	
Obstacles:	Solutions:
FAITH Step:	

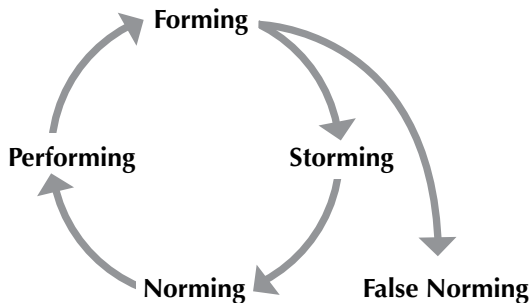
SESSION 5: Systemic Dynamics and Change

Any group of people who interact regularly constitutes a system. These include families, friendships, couples, work teams, and organizations. Systems by definition prefer homeostasis; that is, they like to find a balance point and maintain it. When one person in a system changes, it can create a “storm” in the system, and it now needs to rebalance itself. This “storming” phase, if it is worked through well, will lead to a new “norm” that allows the system to once again “perform” well. This pattern is illustrated in the graphic below. It is worth noting that Jesus often created “storms” by challenging the “norms” of the political and religious systems of his day.

Natural life transitions are one kind of change that can create a storm in a system. For example, let’s say the first child in a family leaves home. The family will now experience a big change in their former norm of what it means to be a family. There may be a period of storming before a new norm is achieved.

Another possible response is called “false norming.” This happens when a system denies that an upset has occurred and tries to pretend everything is still the same. In my work as an organizational coach, I have often seen this phenomenon occur when an organization initiates a significant change. The initial excitement over the change soon gives way to complaints like, “it just doesn’t feel the same around here anymore.” The old norm is gone, and there will be some necessary storming until a new norm and a new way to perform are achieved. Because organizations are sometimes conflict averse, they are especially susceptible for settling for a “false norm,” which will buy peace in the short run, but lead to a much greater experience of storming in the long run.

One thing to keep in mind is that sometimes people in the systems in which we live and work might resist our attempts to grow and change. If they do, it is often not even conscious to them. Why would they do this? Because when one person in a system grows and changes, the old “normal” of the system may be threatened, and others in the system may have to change, as well.



—Adapted from “Tuckman’s Theories,” by Bruce Tuckman, 1965

Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

To be completed between Sessions 5 and 6, or at the end of Session 5 if time permits.

Area of whole-person wellness you wish to focus on:

“You Are Here” | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different than Session 4.

“Wish You Were Here!” | Restate or refine where you and God want you to be.

The Faith Connection | Have you chosen a Scripture verse, inspiring quote, and/ or spiritual practice to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your wellness circle? Do you want to choose a new one for this week? Make note of any other thoughts you have about the connection between your faith and being well.

Support from Others | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to?

FAITH Steps | Focused, Action-oriented, Inspired, Time-specific, Heartfelt and Honest.

List at least one FAITH Step for this week.

FAITH Step Worksheet



Area of Wellness: _____

Date: _____

Overarching Goal:	
Focused:	
Action-Oriented:	
Inspired:	
Time-Specific:	
Heartfelt and Honest:	
Obstacles:	Solutions:
FAITH Step:	

SESSION 6: All Shall Be Well

And all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

—Julian of Norwich, 14th Century

As your six-week Wellness Circle comes to a close, it is our hope that you now know just how much God desires for you to be well, desires for you to live more fully into the wholeness that God has already given to you. You also now know that being well is a choice that you need to make every day. Being well is a process and a journey, not a destination. God will always whisper to us, continuing to invite us into greater wholeness and wellness. And as we enjoy a greater sense of well-being, God will call us to share this gift by loving and serving our neighbor.

As you gather for your last session, it is important to affirm and celebrate the choices you have each made to be well during this program. Begin by doing a final check-in with each other about how your FAITH Step went this past week.

As you close this Living Compass Wellness Circle, please take time now as a group to honor and mark what you have experienced together. Please take ten minutes or so and write some thoughtful responses to the questions on the following page.

Please remember to pay attention to your life, a precious gift from God. This is one of the most important things we hope you take from this program. Pay attention to the people you care for and to those who care for you. Pay attention to any signs that you are not heading where you want to be heading, or that your life is out of balance, and commit to continuing to create FAITH Steps that move you in the direction God is inviting you to go. Pay attention to what God is calling you to be and do with your life. Pay attention to the blessings in your life, and remember to be grateful.

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

—III John 2

Closing Reflection and Celebration

To be completed and shared during Session 6.

Celebrate! | Write down one or two things you want to celebrate that happened for you in this six-week Wellness Circle.

The area of wellness to which you will continue to pay attention:

The Faith Connection | A Scripture verse or inspiring quote, and/or a spiritual practice you wish to take with you:

One thing you are grateful for as you conclude this Wellness Circle:

Something you now know and something you can affirm now about

Yourself: _____

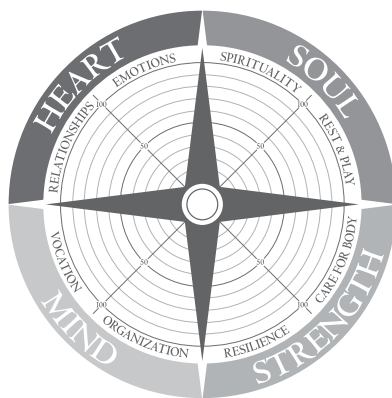
Others: _____

God/Faith: _____

Notes & Reflections

Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment

To be completed either before or during Session 1, beginning on page 40.



As you reflect on the different dimensions of your whole-person wellness, it may be helpful to read more about the eight areas of wellness, beginning on page 40. Each is followed by a Wellness Self-Assessment (pages 40–54) that contains ten statements related to that particular area of wellness.

It is helpful to remember that your Wellness Self-Assessment is simply a “snapshot” of your life at this very moment. After you’ve rated each statement, add them together to arrive at your final number, and then shade in that area of wellness on page 39 (a total of “0” is at the center, “50” halfway out, and a total number of “100” means you shade in the whole “wedge”). See pages 36–37 for an example. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

Once your Compass is shaded in, it might be helpful to think of it as a garden. Your results show areas of the garden you have been watering, and which areas may be in need of some additional watering.

Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment

Sample Scores

Care for the Body Wellness Self-Assessment

Our culture puts a great deal of emphasis on physical wellness and body image. The two extremes of either obsessing about our bodies or neglecting them are clearly something we want to avoid. It can be challenging yet essential for our long-term health to find a balanced approach as we care for and nurture our bodies.

Never	Sometimes	Half of the Time	Most of the Time	Always						
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I get an amount of regular physical activity that is healthy for me. 7

I am satisfied with my views toward my physical body. 6

The quality of my sexual life is good for me, both physically and emotionally. 6

I am satisfied with the choices I make regarding what I eat and drink. 7

I go to the doctor for regular checkups, and seek help when needed. 4

I am satisfied with my relationship with food. 5

I am satisfied about the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs for me. 6

I am satisfied with my current weight. 6

My doctor tells me about how I should look in the future, and I decide for myself what is healthy. 6

I wake up and feel rested when I awake. 7

TOTAL 60

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Relationships Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

Sample Score: 60 / 69

Relationships Wellness Self-Assessment

Relationships don't just "happen"; you co-create them with others. Remember, everyone can learn skills that will improve the quality of their relationships. The grass is always greener where you water it, and so it is good to reflect on whether there are any relationships in your life that need "watering."

Never	Sometimes	Half of the Time	Most of the Time	Always						
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I am satisfied with the quality of the relationships I have with my spouse, partner, children, extended family, and/or close friends. 5

The teachings of my spirituality are a conscious influence and guide for how I relate to others in my life. 4

I am satisfied with the honest conversations I am able to have with those who are important to me. 6

My friends and family can count on me when they need to reach out for help. 4

I am able to forgive family and friends for past or present hurts. 4

In my close relationships, I am very satisfied that there is a good balance between give and take. 3

I am able to resolve conflict in a healthy way with family and friends as we are able to talk through problems so that they do not fester. 4

I feel good about the amount of trust, respect, and honesty that exists in the relationships in my life. 6

I feel good about the impact my use of or non-use of alcohol and other drugs has on my relationships with family, friends, and/or colleagues. 5

I am satisfied with the amount of time I spend being in touch with the important people in my life. 4

TOTAL 45

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Relationships "wedge" of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment 41

Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment

Sample Results Based on Total Scores



Once you have arrived at your total score from each area of wellness in the Wellness Self-Assessment, shade in that section of the compass (0 is at the center, 50 is halfway out, and 100 is at the outer edge). Your scores are not “good” or “bad,” nor are they “strong” or “weak.” This assessment is simply a “snapshot” of your life at this very moment. It might be helpful to think of it as a garden. Your results show areas of the garden you have been watering, and which areas may be in need of some additional watering. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment: Your Results



Once you have arrived at your total score from each area of wellness in the Faith & Wellness Self-Assessment, shade in that section of the compass (0 is at the center, 50 is halfway out, and 100 is at the outer edge). Your scores are not “good” or “bad,” nor are they “strong” or “weak.” This inventory is simply a “snapshot” of your life at this very moment. It might be helpful to think of it as a garden. Your results show areas of the garden you have been watering, and which areas may be in need of some additional watering.

HEART RELATIONSHIPS

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. —1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Compassion is the keen awareness of the interdependence of all things.
—Thomas Merton

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

—Colossians 3:12-14

The people with whom we relate most closely know us best. Think of the wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*. Our family and friends see the “person behind the curtain,” even though we may be able to hide behind a public persona with the rest of the world. A wise preacher once said, “Don’t ask me if I am a good Christian. Ask my family, friends, and colleagues because my relationships with them are the best measure of how fully I am living my Christian faith.”

As you think about your relationships with your spouse, significant other, children, parents, extended family, colleagues, and close friends, think about the following questions.

- How transparent and authentic are you in your relationships?
- Are you comfortable being vulnerable with those to whom you are closest?
- Do you turn to others for help and support when you need it, or are you more of a “lone ranger”?
- Is there at least one person in your life with whom you can be fully yourself?
- Do you have any old, unresolved wounds from your family of origin that affect the quality of your relationships today?

Please complete the Relationships Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

▶ Relationships Self-Assessment

Relationships don't just "happen"; you co-create them with others. Remember, everyone can learn skills that will improve the quality of their relationships. The grass is always greener where you water it, and so it is good to reflect on whether there are any relationships in your life that need "watering."

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I am satisfied with the quality of the relationships I have with my spouse, partner, children, extended family, and/or close friends. _____

The teachings of my spirituality are a conscious influence and guide for how I relate to others in my life. _____

I am satisfied with the honest conversations I am able to have with those who are important to me. _____

My friends and family can count on me when they need to reach out for help. _____

I am able to forgive family and friends for past or present hurts. _____

In my close relationships, I am very satisfied that there is a good balance between give and take. _____

I am able to resolve conflict in a healthy way with family and friends as we are able to talk through problems so that they do not fester. _____

I feel good about the amount of trust, respect, and honesty that exists in the relationships in my life. _____

I feel good about the impact my use/or non-use of alcohol and other drugs has on my relationships with family, friends, and/or colleagues. _____

I am satisfied with the amount of time I spend being in touch with the important people in my life. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Relationships "wedge" of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

HEART EMOTIONS

Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another. —Ephesians 4:26, 31

The walls we build around ourselves to keep sadness out, also keep out the joy. —Jim Rohn

Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path. —Brené Brown

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel. —Bonnie Jean Wasmund

Much has been written in recent years about emotional intelligence. It is now clear that the higher our emotional intelligence, or “E.Q.,” the greater satisfaction we will experience in all aspects of our lives. A high degree of emotional intelligence is characterized by the ability to stay calm and centered even in the midst of a strong emotional force field around us. Such a person can choose their responses rather than be overtaken by a “knee-jerk” reaction. The good news is that one’s emotional intelligence can *always* be raised.

As you assess your satisfaction with this dimension of your life, the following questions might be helpful as you think about your emotional wellness.

- Are you comfortable feeling and expressing the full range of emotions: sadness, fear, anger, joy, etc.?
- Do your emotions “get the best of you,” causing you to say or do things you later regret?
- Are you ever concerned that you might be suffering from depression or anxiety? Would you be comfortable seeking help if you were troubled by emotions?
- Are you comfortable listening and being present to someone who is hurting, upset, or very emotional?
- In the words of the Serenity Prayer, how well are you able to “accept the things you cannot change, have the courage to change the things you can, and the wisdom to know the difference”?

Please complete the Emotions Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

Emotions Self-Assessment

We have a choice when it comes to responding to statements, questions, circumstances, and events. When we grow to become more centered and have greater control over our actions, we don't have to react mindlessly; instead we can proactively choose an appropriate emotional response.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

People who know me would say that I handle my emotions in a healthy way. _____

I avoid using alcohol, other drugs, and other possibly addictive behaviors to deal with my emotions. _____

I can feel and express the full range of emotions (sadness, fear, joy, laughter, etc.) with people I trust. _____

When someone I care about is upset I am comfortable listening, rather than telling them what to do or detaching from them. _____

When I am emotionally upset, I often turn to my spirituality, prayer, or other spiritual practice to help re-center myself. _____

I feel good about the way I handle my emotions and how they affect my relationships. _____

I do not feel responsible for other people's emotions. _____

I am able to communicate my emotions in a positive way without being irritable, critical, or angry. _____

I know the early warning signs of depression and anxiety, and would seek help if I recognize these signs in myself. _____

When I am feeling emotionally overwhelmed, I turn to others for support and help. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Emotions "wedge" of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

SOUL

SPIRITUALITY

Be still and know that I am God.—Psalm 46:10

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 4:6-7

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but spiritual beings having a human experience.—Teilhard de Chardin

The two best prayers I know are, “Help me, help me, help me” and, “Thank you, thank you, thank you.”—Anne Lamott

There is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we are brave enough to be it.—Amanda Gorman

As you assess your satisfaction with this dimension of your life, think about the following components of a spiritual life.

- 1. Regular Spiritual Practices.** These could include daily prayer, devotions, meditation, journaling, walking in nature, Bible study, reading, etc. How often do you do these things?
- 2. Participation in a Faith Community.** Are you active in a faith community? Do you attend regularly? Do you seek opportunities to enrich your spiritual life? Are you a “consumer” in your faith community, or do you regularly give back and help serve others?
- 3. The Practice of Forgiveness.** Do you need to forgive or seek forgiveness from any of the following people: someone from your family of origin, a current family member (spouse, partner, child), a friend, or a colleague? Do you struggle with forgiving yourself in any way? Can you fully receive the forgiveness that God has offered and continues to offer you?
- 4. Life Purpose.** Do you feel that your life has a purpose? To what degree do you live in alignment with that purpose?

Please complete the Spirituality Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

Spirituality Self-Assessment

The word *spirituality* comes from the same root as the word *breath*. This is seen in the word *respiration*, another word for breath. Spirituality is that which gives breath, that which animates a person’s life. For Christians, spirituality refers to the way in which our faith animates our lives.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I have a strong sense of God (Higher Power/Source, however I define that) in my life. _____

I have centering/spiritual/prayer practices that are a regular part of my life. _____

I am pleased with what I give back to the world. _____

I seek forgiveness from family and friends when I have hurt them, and offer forgiveness to others. _____

I read the Bible or other spiritual texts to enrich my spiritual life. _____

I have a deep sense of gratitude for the blessings in my life. _____

I feel well connected to a spiritual community and feel supported by that community. _____

The way I live my life is consistent with my spirituality, core values, and beliefs. _____

I am comfortable talking about my faith/spirituality with others. _____

I feel that I am a compassionate person. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Spirituality “wedge” of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

SOUL

REST & PLAY

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of Conversation. —Plato

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work. —Exodus 20:8

And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry. —Luke 12:19

A cheerful heart is a good medicine. —Proverbs 17:22

People who cannot find time for recreation are obliged sooner or later to find time for illness. —John Wanamaker

The time to relax is when you don't have time for it. —Sydney J. Harris

*Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.
—Ancient Proverb*

The scarcest resource in many of our lives is time. And at the same time, telling people how busy we are has become a badge of honor in our culture. We are moving so fast at times that we can forget how important rest and play are to our well-being.

Here are some questions to help you assess your satisfaction with this dimension of your life.

- How often do you play?
- What were the attitudes about play in your family of origin?
- How do you play?
- Do you use part of your resting time to connect with God?
- Do you take time to recreate every week or weekend?
- Do you take all of your allotted vacation time?
- Do you have hobbies that you enjoy?
- Do you get enough sleep on a regular basis?

Please complete the Rest & Play Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a "10."

Rest & Play Self-Assessment

People often feel guilty when they take time to have fun, goof off, take a nap, or just play, but both our bodies and our souls need to be recharged, just like our cell phones. Healthy sleep, fun time with family and friends, and unscheduled and “unplugged” time all help us lower the stress hormone cortisol. They also help us feel refreshed and ready to go.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I use some of my rest time as sabbath time to intentionally renew and nurture my spirituality. _____

I am satisfied with the amount of time that I set aside for healthy fun. _____

I have at least one hobby or interest that renews me, and I take intentional time for it on a regular basis. _____

I actively take advantage of opportunities to try new healthy ways to have fun. _____

I regularly take time to laugh and enjoy life. _____

I am able to take my mind off work/school/other commitments while I am away from them. _____

I take time to recreate and renew myself regularly. _____

I am confident that the amount of time I spend on email, online, watching TV, on my computer, on my phone, and other technology, is good for my overall well-being. _____

I have recreational activities that I regularly enjoy with others. _____

I frequently have fun where alcohol and/or other drugs are not involved. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Rest & Play “wedge” of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

STRENGTH

CARE FOR THE BODY

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body. —1 Corinthians 6:19-20

We do not stop exercising because we grow old—we grow old because we stop exercising. —Kenneth Cooper, M.D.

Don't dig your grave with your knife and fork. —English proverb

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. —Parker Palmer

Being our best through generous self-care is the finest way to be of service to others. —Margaret Stortz

Our culture puts a great deal of emphasis—quite often too much emphasis—on body image as a measure of physical wellness. Yet as Christians, we are clearly called to care for our bodies as “temples of the Holy Spirit,” not obsessing over our appearance, but caring for the gift that our bodies are—a gift from God. As you think about caring for your body, you might reflect on the following questions.

- Are you mindful about your nutrition and eating patterns?
- Are you concerned that you too often eat for emotional reasons as a way to comfort yourself?
- What role does alcohol, or other drugs, play in your life? Are you content with that role?
- Are you consistent about going to the doctor and dentist for regular checkups and care when needed?
- Are you comfortable with your sexuality and your sexual needs?

Please complete the Care for the Body Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

► Care for the Body Self-Assessment

Our culture puts a great deal of emphasis on physical wellness and body image. The two extremes of either obsessing about our bodies or neglecting them are clearly something we want to avoid. It can be challenging yet essential for our long-term health to find a balanced approach as we care for and nurture our bodies.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I get an amount of regular physical activity that is healthy for me. _____

My spirituality is a positive guide for my views toward my physical well-being and how I care for my body. _____

I am comfortable with my sexuality, knowing that my sexual decisions are healthy and safe for me, both physically and emotionally. _____

Most of the daily decisions that I make regarding what I eat and drink are healthy. _____

I go to the doctor and dentist for regular checkups, and seek help when a health problem arises. _____

I feel comfortable about my relationship with food. _____

I know that the decisions I make about the use of tobacco, alcohol, and/or other drugs are healthy for me. _____

I feel comfortable with my current weight. _____

Instead of letting the culture tell me about how I should look in terms of weight or appearance, I decide for myself what is healthy and best for me. _____

I get an adequate amount of sleep and feel rested when I awake. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Care for the Body “wedge” of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

STRENGTH RESILIENCE

Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

—Matthew 11:28

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* —Psalm 23:4

Is everything as urgent as your stress would imply? —Carrie Latet, poet

*Happiness is not a matter of intensity, but of balance, order, rhythm, and
harmony.* —Thomas Merton

When it rains, I let it. —A 113-year-old man when asked about his secret to
growing old.

Stress resilience has to do with how well we deal with two separate aspects of our lives: how we emotionally and spiritually negotiate significant changes and transitions—planned and unplanned, and how well we manage stress in general. Being highly resilient, which means “to bounce back, or spring back to shape or form,” implies that we have taken the time and allowed ourselves to do the hard work of fully working through the stages of grief when we have experienced a significant change or loss in our lives. Too often we try to avoid these feelings, which seems like a good idea in the short term, but will always limit our emotional and spiritual wellness in the long run.

As you assess your satisfaction with this dimension of your life, reflect on whether you have been through any of the changes listed below. How fully have you addressed any transitions? How much do unresolved or frozen grief feelings (sadness, loss, anger, fear) affect you today?

- Divorce or break-up
- New relationship
- Birth of a child
- New job or change of job
- Financial stress
- Major health issue in yourself or a loved one
- Death of a loved one
- Child leaving home
- Move to a new location
- Recent accident or injury
- Work stress—impossible boss
- Unemployment

You also will want to stop and reflect on whether you are a stress “junkie”—a person who thrives on having high levels of stress in their life. While it is possible to thrive in this way for a short time, the presence of chronic stress chemicals in your body will eventually cause a decrease or breakdown in functioning across all dimensions of your life.

Please complete the Stress Resilience Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

Resilience Self-Assessment

The word *resilience* means *to bounce back*. Our modern lives are filled with frustrations and pressures—we just call it stress. Stress is a normal part of life, but if our stress levels are constantly elevated, we will be more vulnerable to health problems. The good news is that we can develop skills to become more resilient, to help us bounce back from the inevitable stress that life brings us.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I usually respond to changes in my life with a positive attitude. _____

I am dealing effectively with changes, planned or unplanned, that have occurred in my life. _____

When I am stressed, or in the midst of transition, I turn to God (Higher Power/Source) and my spiritual life to give me strength and resilience. _____

I recognize the signs of stress: headaches, trouble sleeping, feelings of depression, or outbursts of anger, and try to make healthy adjustments accordingly. _____

When I encounter challenges, I am able to keep them in perspective. _____

In times of stress or transition, I seek support rather than taking my stress out on others, or isolating myself. _____

I anticipate and plan for changes and transitions that I know are coming, rather than simply reacting to them as they happen. _____

I refrain from using alcohol, drugs, or food to numb or self-medicate when I am stressed. _____

In the midst of stress, I am generally able to remain flexible and adaptable. _____

I refrain from overcommitting creating expectations of myself, that self-inflict high levels of intensity and stress in my life. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Stress Resilience “wedge” of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

MIND

ORGANIZATION

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty. —Proverbs 21:5

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.” —Luke 14: 28-30

Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life. —Immanuel Kant

Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you. —Carl Sandburg

A place for everything, and everything in its place. —Isabella Mary Beeton

Being disorganized can be both a symptom and a cause of stress in our lives, whether it be disorganization of time, environment, finances, or planning. Everything becomes harder and requires more time when we are not organized. A vicious cycle is easily established when we become more stressed if we are not organized, which in turn causes us to be even less organized and more stressed.

So much for the “bad news.” The good news is that anyone can make immediate progress in becoming better organized once they set their intentions to do so, and once they ask for the support and coaching of others. Whatever patterns we have around organizing our time, money, “stuff,” etc., are simply learned habits and—like all habits—they can be changed.

In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey writes about what he calls the “tyranny of the urgent.” One of the symptoms of getting caught up in the “tyranny of the urgent” is feeling like we are wasting time if we take time out to plan and prioritize. In the end, planning and prioritizing will save us time and make our lives much calmer, but it is so hard to realize this when we are caught up in constant busyness.

Take an honest look at your life and assess how well you organize all the important things in your life: time, calendar, finances, closets, drawers, meals, grocery shopping, work, errands, important papers and documents such as wills, titles, and birth certificates.

Please complete the Organization Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a “10.”

Organization Self-Assessment

Whether your organizational challenges deal with time, money, your environment, or planning, you are not alone. Many people find that disorganization tends to look like a cycle: we're not organized, which causes stress; the stress causes us to pay attention to other things so we don't get organized; and this causes more stress. By choosing what you would like to pay more attention to, you can begin to break the cycle.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

My spirituality strongly guides my relationship with money and material possessions. _____

Others whose lives are impacted by mine would describe me as well-organized. _____

I am happy with the way I organize my priorities, ensuring that I have enough time to dedicate to the important aspects of my life. _____

I am on time for appointments, meetings, and social events. _____

At the end of each day I usually feel like I have completed most everything I had planned to get done. _____

I have a way of keeping track of my calendar, and keeping my commitments organized that works well for me. _____

I regularly take time to plan ahead for things so that I don't have to rush around at the last minute to get ready. _____

I am satisfied with how I organize my finances, which could include the following: maintain a budget, keep track of expenditures, save money, pay bills on time, organize tax information and file tax returns on time. _____

I regularly take time to clean and organize my personal spaces, such as my home, car, office, desk, closets, etc. _____

I regularly go through closets, drawers, files and other storage spaces and get rid of things I know longer need. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Organization "wedge" of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

MIND VOCATION

Be transformed by the renewing of your minds. —Romans 12:2

People for the sake of getting a living, forget to live. —Margaret Fuller

Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess.

—Parker Palmer

All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. —Galatians 6:4

Nothing will work unless you do. —Maya Angelou

Vocation has to do with knowing both our gifts and our purpose in life. When we are expressing our unique gifts through meaningful work or volunteer service, or in our work or personal role (spouse, partner, parent, friend, sibling, etc.), we will experience a high degree of vocational wellness. Many people spend much of their waking hours at work, on education, or volunteering. How we experience our work/education/service lives can have a major impact on our wellness and wholeness. The questions below will help you reflect on your satisfaction with this aspect of your life.

- Is the work/education/service you do congruent with your values and beliefs?
- Do you have a sense of purpose in your work/education/service?
- Do you see how your work/education/service fits into the bigger purpose of your life?
- How do you relate to those with whom you work or serve?
- Are you comfortable expressing your needs and wants where you work or serve?
- Are you growing in your work/service/education?
- Do you intentionally seek opportunities for growth and learning?
- Do you see a connection between your faith and your work/education/service?

Please complete the Vocation Wellness Self-Assessment on the following page. NOTE: If a statement does not apply to you at this time in your life, simply rate that with a "10."

Vocation Self-Assessment

Our vocation is related to our sense of life purpose and our core values and it can be expressed in our career, education, and/or volunteer work. If the hours we spend at work, on education, or volunteering are aligned with our vocation/purpose/values, then we will experience wellness in what we do. If not, we have an opportunity to reconsider other ways we can express our vocation that may better provide wellness and wholeness in our lives.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I have a clear sense of the gifts and talents that I have been given. _____

I am satisfied with how my work/education/service life is balanced with my personal life. _____

I have others in my life who enjoy the same kind of work/education/service that I do. _____

I welcome opportunities to learn new things that will enhance my work/education/service. _____

My work/education/service is congruent with my spirituality, beliefs and core values. _____

I would feel confident making a change in my work/education/service if I needed to. _____

I am satisfied with the pay and/or recognition I receive for my work/education/service. _____

I enjoy my current work/education/service _____

I make good use of my gifts and talents in the work/education/service I do. _____

I have a clear sense of purpose and direction in my work/education/service. _____

TOTAL _____

When you are finished, total your score and then take that number and shade in the Vocation "wedge" of your Wellness Self-Assessment results on p. 39.

The Faith Connection

Choosing a Spiritual Practice

An important step in mapping your Journey of Growth and Change is to seek strength and inspiration from your faith. One specific way to do this is to take on a spiritual practice for the duration of the time that your wellness circle is meeting. A spiritual practice is simply a commitment to do something on a regular basis that connects you to God and refreshes and energizes your soul. By definition, our souls are all different, and so what connects us with God will be unique to each of us. While we are each unique, we share the universal need to water and nurture our souls every day.

To help you get started, here is a list of spiritual practices other people have chosen while participating in their Faith & Wellness Circle. You decide how often and how long you wish to commit to doing a practice. You can stay with one practice for all six weeks, or choose a different one each week.

- Say the Prayer of St. Francis, or the Serenity Prayer, every day until you have it memorized.
- Say the Lord's Prayer every time you walk up or down a flight of stairs.
- Create a prayer space in your home.
- Start a conversation journal with God.
- Say a prayer every time you are standing in line or waiting at a traffic light.
- Keep a gratitude journal and write what you are thankful for every day.
- Play a musical instrument, sing, or dance, alone or with others.
- Sit quietly in silence or while listening to your favorite music.
- Meditate on a Scripture verse by repeating it slowly in time with your breath.
- Spend time in nature by taking a "Wonder Walk." This contemplative practice can help connect us with God and with ourselves. Try walking slowly, noticing the wonder of God's creation. You might pause from time to time to pay attention to things you might not notice if you were walking at your normal pace. NOTE: If this appeals to you, visit our website at: LivingCompass.org to learn more about *Retreat on 2 Feet*, a contemplative walking offering from Living Compass.
- Read the Bible or another book that inspires your soul.
- Practice yoga, tai chi, stretch and pray, move or walk and pray.
- Try using one of the many apps and online offerings for meditation, centering prayer, daily Scripture reading, etc.

About the Author

The Rev. Dr. Scott Stoner—founder of the Living Compass Spirituality & Wellness Initiative—has served his community for more than 40 years as an Episcopal priest, marriage and family therapist, retreat leader, wellness coach, and author. In addition to his coaching and psychotherapy work, he leads wellness retreats for organizations and leadership teams. He is host of the Living Compass podcast, recording short episodes every week during the program year. He is also the author of *Your Living Compass: Living Well in Thought, Word, and Deed* (2014), a book that provides a fuller exploration of the themes presented in this workbook.



Scott has been married to Holly Hughes Stoner for 45 years. Holly is also a marriage and family therapist and together they are cohosts of the Wellness Compass podcast, as well as the co-creators of *The Teen Compass* and the *Parent Wellness Compass*. In his free time, Scott loves playing guitar, cycling, running, soccer, and spending time with family.

Additional Resources

To learn more about the variety of resources that Living Compass has to offer, visit LivingCompass.org. To learn more about our community resources for adults, teens, and parents that are being used in school districts, hospitals, universities, prisons, wellness centers, and various non-profits, visit WellnessCompass.org.



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The Living Compass Spirituality & Wellness Initiative focuses on the integration of spirituality and well-being. We offer resources and trainings for individuals, families, organizations, and congregations as they seek to live an undivided life, where heart, soul, strength, and mind are integrated into both our *being* and our *doing*.

This workbook—for use in a **Living Compass Wellness Circle**—has been carefully designed to help you discern the Spirit’s call in your life and then to support you on your ongoing journey toward wholeness and wellness.

