

Rolf Eisenhauer

# Life-Improver

Handbook for the Life-Improver App

The Life-Improver App can be downloaded for free from the App Store of Apple for iPhone, iPad und Mac with Apple M-Chip.

Link to App Store: [Link](#)

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## Contributors / Credits

Hermann Graßl: was involved in the content creation of the app, proofreader, creative source of ideas, well-founded test user of the various development versions.

We would like to thank all reviewers of the pre-release version for their criticisms and suggestions for improvement.

This work was carefully prepared. However, the author assumes no liability for the accuracy of information, notes and advice or any printing errors.

All explanations on psychological and health topics serve exclusively to provide personal support to the reader. The explanations are not intended to treat illnesses or health problems. They cannot and do not want to replace psychological/medical care or treatment.

For reasons of better readability, male and female language forms are not used at the same time. All personal names apply to both genders.

## Table of content

Introduction .....	3
Money .....	8
Finance, Assets .....	8
Profession .....	11
Job, Career .....	11
Time .....	15
Time management.....	15
Home.....	20
Living Situation, Home (emotional).....	20
Body .....	23
Fitness, Health.....	23
Love .....	26
Partnership, Sex.....	26
Relationship .....	30
Family, Friends .....	30
Helpfulness .....	34
Altruism, Selflessness .....	34
Mission .....	37
Vison, Life-motto.....	37
Worldview.....	40
Values, Beliefs.....	40
Spirituality.....	45
Questions of Meaning, Faith.....	45
Self-image .....	49
External-image .....	49
Self-confidence .....	52
Self-consciousness.....	52
Emotions .....	55
Feelings, Moods .....	55

## Introduction

The Life-Improver App is a self-coaching app based on the Wheel of Life concept.

The app guides you through the essential areas of life/personality and gives suggestions for self-analysis and change. You define resolutions and tasks in order to further develop yourself personally. The app records your analyzes and resolutions and reminds you to implement your desired resolutions.

### Why should I use the app?

The Live-Improver app is your guide to a happier and more satisfying life. The app:

- Helps you get a holistic understanding of who you are, what your life goals and real needs are, and how you can grow personally.
- Helps you to implement your changes at the action level through planning, reminders and various tools.
- Helps you develop new perspectives on the world and those around you.

The app builds on the Wheel of Life concept, expands it and guides you through important areas of life/personality. The app offers general tips and hints for analysis and change. For more in-depth study, literature references to guidebooks and various methods are cited.

After using the app for the first time, you should call up the app again and again at regular intervals to check your life orientation and possibly readjust it - this is especially true in the event of critical life events such as serious illness, job loss or a change of stage of life such as graduation, marriage, birth of a child, career change, retirement.

However, the app is not a substitute for professional treatment by psychologists or psychotherapists in the case of mental disorders or illnesses.

### What does self-coaching mean?

Self-coaching helps to develop personal and professional skills and to better master challenges in everyday life. It is a form of self-help that helps to increase one's well-being and satisfaction in life.

Self-coaching involves observing and analyzing your own thoughts and feelings in order to improve your behavior and lifestyle. In doing so, you will set goals for yourself and develop strategies to achieve them. The Live-Improver app offers the methods, tools and hints to carry out self-coaching on your own.

In order to work successfully with the app, you should be prepared to want to change something in your life. Self-coaching requires a lot of discipline in order to implement your plans. It can initially take a lot of effort to give up your ingrained habits and thought patterns and to overcome your inner weaker self. Not everyone can do this with a digital app alone; they need a personal coach too.

### What is the Wheel of Life?

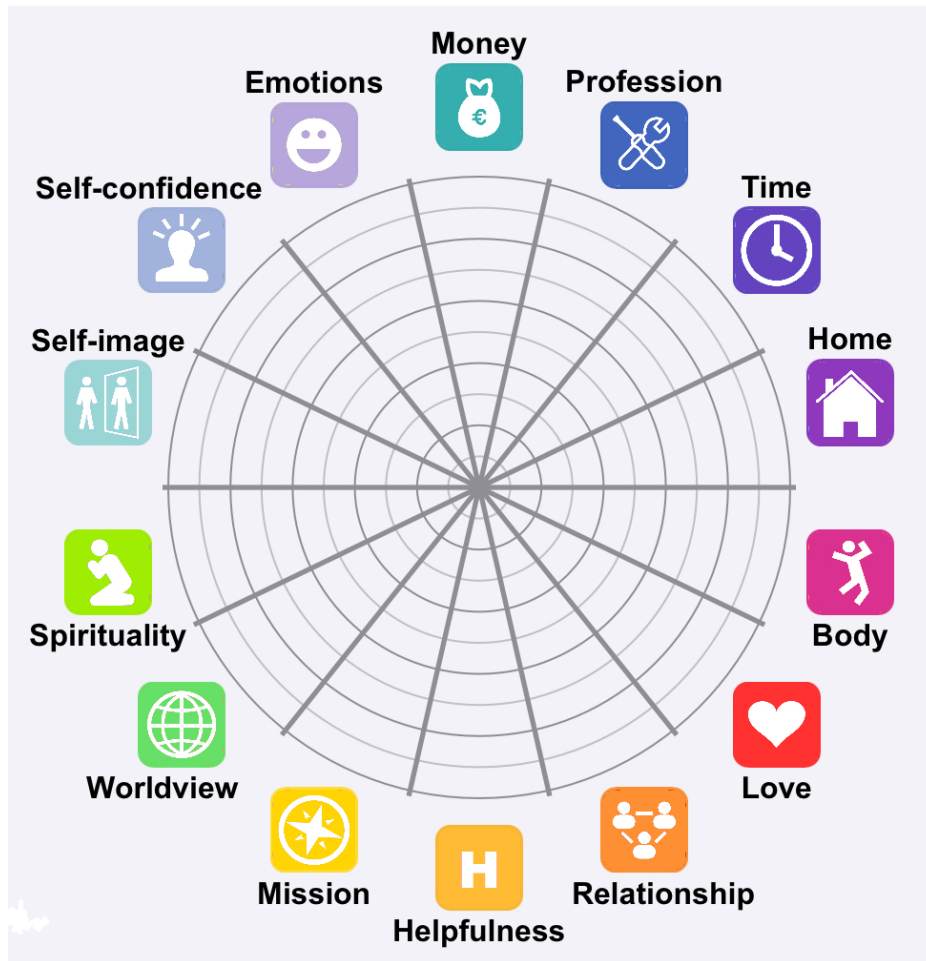
One of the essential tools of the app is the Wheel of Life. It has been one of the best-known tools in coaching, consulting and personal development for decades.

The Wheel of Life divides life into different areas, such as: money, job, time, body, relationships, and personal development. The idea is that all these areas are interconnected and influence each other. When working with the Wheel of Life, areas of life with potential for improvement are revealed and it becomes visible where life has become out of balance.

The Wheel of Life is therefore used as a tool for self-reflection and personal development and helps to set goals and priorities for change and to concentrate on what is really important in life.

## The 14 Life/Personality Areas of the Wheel of Life

The app uses a Wheel of Life with 14 themes from the most important areas of life/personality, see picture below.



When using the app for the first time, you should evaluate all 14 topics in a quick run-through to find out which topics you see a greater or lesser need for improvement. Later, you will analyze and work on the areas with high or urgent need for improvement in detail.

If the variety of topics is too large for you, you can also limit yourself to a few topics that are important to you and carry out the analysis for them. Later, you can extend the analysis to the other topics.

## How does the Wheel of Life work?

With the help of the Wheel of Life, you can clarify the initial situation in which you currently find yourself. To do this, rate the life/personality areas of the Wheel of Life that are important to you on a scale of 1 to 10. The 1 stands for "extremely dissatisfied" and the 10 for "totally satisfied".

For each individual area, think about how much time and energy of your life it takes up and how much fulfillment and satisfaction it gives you. For this analysis, the app offers the "self-assessment" tool with corresponding questions. Alternatively, you can print out the Wheel of Life and work on it with paper and pencil.

Valuations:

- 1 to 4: You are deeply dissatisfied in these areas and there is a strong need for optimization.
- 5 to 7: Everything is relatively "ok" in this area. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement here.

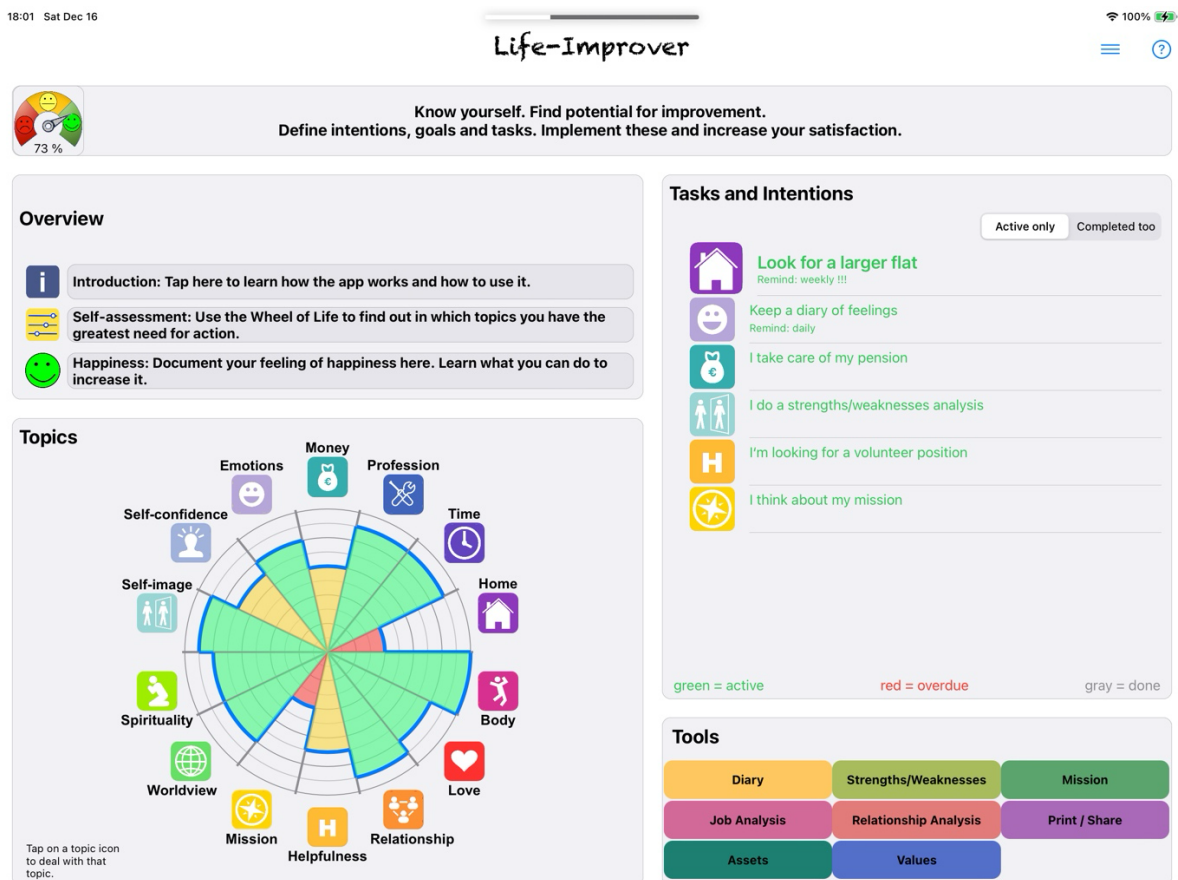
- 8 to 10: Things are going quite well in this area. This is about small improvements or measures that maintain the good condition.

After the analysis, it should be clearer to you which areas of your life should be adjusted in order to be happier, more satisfied and more successful. To this end, the app offers further methods, tools and hints.

## How to use the app

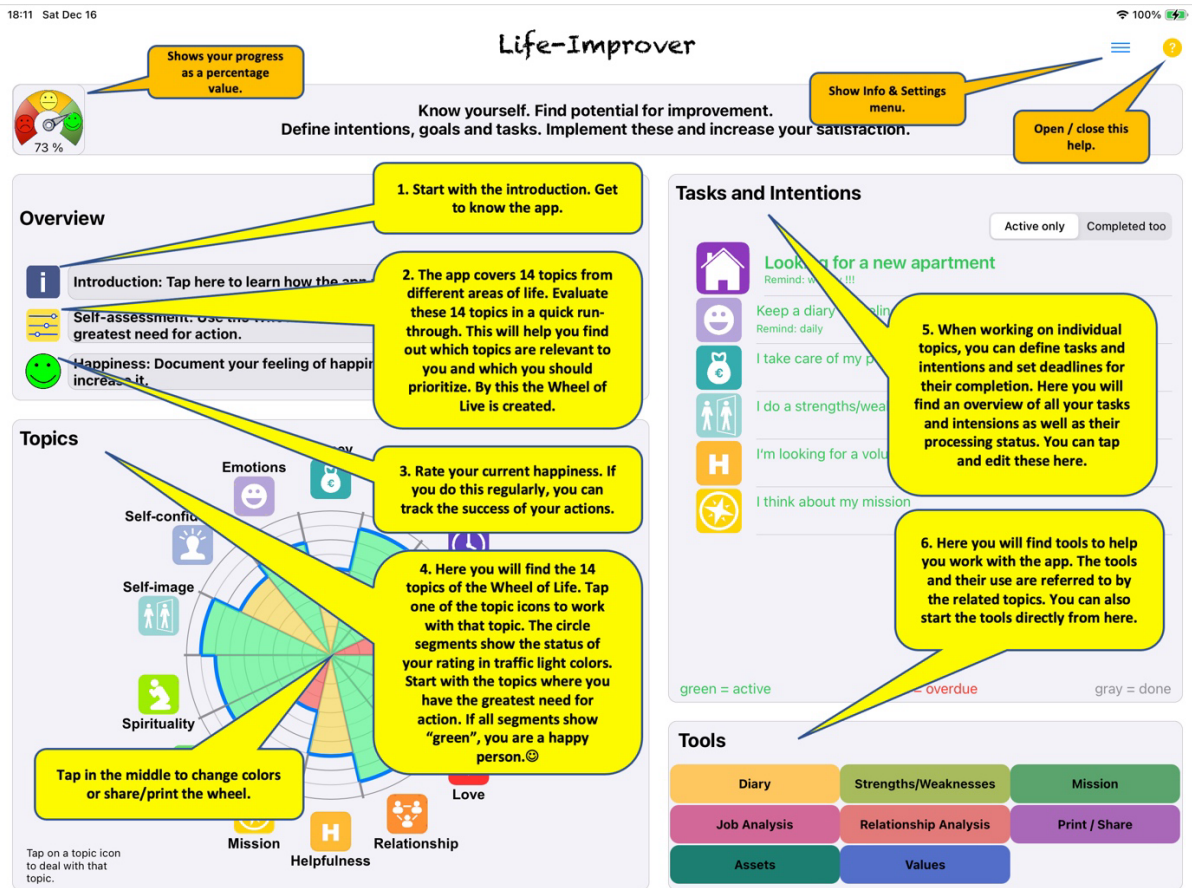
The app presents itself differently on the iPad and iPhone.

On the iPad, the home page is a kind of “cockpit”. Similar to a cockpit in an airplane, you will find the most important buttons on the home page and see everything important at a glance, such as the rating of the topics, the defined tasks and their processing status.

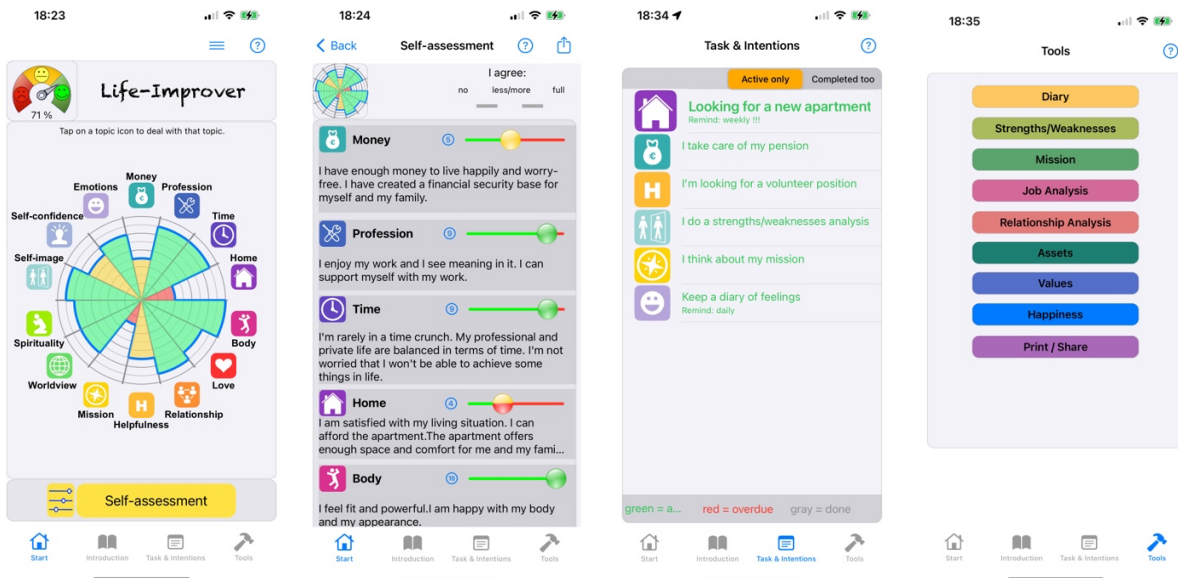


On most pages there is the (?) icon at the top right. This will provide you with help on operation or content editing. The following picture shows an example of the start page with the help texts displayed.

# Life-Improver



The iPhone app offers the same functionality as the iPad app. On the iPhone, however, the iPad's home page is divided into 4 individual pages. The lower navigation bar can be used to switch back and forth between the four individual pages.



## Getting Started

Work with the app only when you have time and are in a balanced inner state. Take time to think.

### Procedure:

1. When you access the app for the first time, you should go through the questions about all areas of life/personality under the item "Self-assessment". In doing so, you roughly

assess for each of the areas of life/personality whether you see a greater or lesser need for improvement in yourself.

2. Later, you can analyze and work on the areas with high or urgent need for improvement in detail.

### Work on a topic with a high need for improvement

Choose an area of life/personality that is of particular importance to you at the moment. Read through the guidance and questions there. These are directed at your intuition and inner voice, which ultimately leads you to your personal solution.

Listen to yourself and feel whether topics touch on sore points. Consider:

- What's going well / not so well right now?
- What have I learned recently?
- How can I make things more successful?

For more information, read the websites or the literature pointed to.

Decide what short-term or long-term change you want to make. Document your findings in the corresponding text windows of the app.

### Define intentions, tasks and goals

Self-improvement only works if you really want the desired changes yourself and are willing to change your lifestyle sustainably.

1. Think about what improvements you want to make. Answer the following questions:

- What do I want to change, achieve or be able to do?
- What specific behavior, what feeling, what attitude, what event would indicate to me that I have achieved my improvements?
- By when do I want to have achieved my improvements?

2. To do this, define resolutions, goals and tasks.

In order to realize your resolutions in the long term, set concrete, measurable goals and define tasks for implementation. A goal should include the following characteristics:

- timed,
- realistic and achievable,
- action-oriented (not based on hopes),
- objectively verifiable whether it has been achieved.

Example: If your resolution is to work less and spend more time with your family in the future, then you should define the goal of organizing your work in such a way that you can leave the office at a certain time every day.

It makes sense to break down a "bigger" resolution into small milestones. If you remain too vague in your goals, you run the risk of them coming to nothing. With the right resolutions and goals, it is quite possible to permanently change entrenched patterns of behavior.

Document your intentions, tasks and goals in the corresponding windows of the apps. Set times by which you want to have achieved the tasks. The app will then remind you. Documentation is very important - you don't forget anything and your project becomes more binding.

But make sure you don't take on too much at once. Starting with too high expectations and demands runs the risk of not making it. It's better to start with small intentions and goals and let them grow bigger later.

# Money

## Finance, Assets

*Money cannot buy happiness. But neither can poverty.*

Money brings wealth, power, and status. Money is important so that you can live without worries. With enough money, you can eat healthily. You can create an environment in which you can live comfortably alone or with your family. You can pursue your hobbies and do good.

### Money cannot buy happiness

Our capitalist system is based on consumption and constant growth. It is suggested that you can practically buy happiness. The motto in life is "Work a lot, earn a lot, buy a lot". But the more materialistic a person is, the greater the risk of becoming more dissatisfied:

- You quickly get used to what you have. When we treat ourselves to something nice, we often only experience short-term happiness until we get used to it again.
- Our demands are constantly growing as we compare ourselves with other people who have more money or material goods than us - and there are always such people.
- We spend a lot of our precious time buying luxury goods that we then hardly use.
- The fear of losing our wealth, e.g., through theft or a financial crisis, becomes a source of worry. This fear can often be even greater than the previously experienced feeling of happiness when gaining. One becomes a slave to one's possessions.
- Many people get into excessive debt and, for example, buy a house that is too expensive on credit. In doing so, they chain themselves to their property and make themselves dependent on the banks. As a result, they lose a lot of freedom, e.g., for a change of location or a career change. In the event of unemployment, there is a risk of private insolvency.

### Too little money makes you unhappy

Lack of money is a cause for concern and fear. If you have to chase after money, you have neither time nor energy for many beautiful activities. If there is not enough money, people often save on a healthy diet. Money worries are also a health risk and promote mental/psychosomatic illnesses.

### Money can also make you happy

Money can definitely make you happy if you don't allow yourself to be enslaved by money. If you have enough money, it can give you security, freedom and time that are necessary for happiness. So, money makes you happy when you spend it and share it with others.

**Summary:** *It is important to find out how much money and assets you want to strive for with how much effort, lack of freedom and fears in order to lead a worry-free life as well as have the freedom and time for a fulfilling life.*

### Self-assessment

Assess your financial situation. Identify your need for change.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- I have enough money to cover my living expenses.



- I have an overview of my current monthly income and expenses.
- I don't suffer from excessive debt.
- I manage to save something even for bad times.
- I manage to save something for retirement.
- I have invested my assets well and through a crisis-proof manner.

How do you summarize your situation:

- I have enough money to live happily and worry-free.
- I have created a financial security base for myself and my family.

### What can I do?

It's not easy to find the right balance for yourself. At every age and in every situation in life, you always have to make a new decision whether you want to spend money in the short term or build wealth in the long term. What's the use of being the richest person in the cemetery?

You should take care of your finances at regular intervals and plan, monitor and possibly optimize them. It will probably make you sleep more peacefully if you invest your money sustainably and sensibly. Handling money carefully requires a certain amount of effort and discipline. Here are a few simple tools:

#### **Assets check**

Many people have only a vague feeling about their assets. Cash flow is the basis of all solid financial planning. Get an overview of your inputs/expenses, such as salary, rent, heating, electricity, car, petrol, telephone, insurance, food, clothing, culture, television, water, hobbies, clubs. Get an overview of your assets, such as accounts, savings, deposits, residential property, precious metals.

There are various apps/forms for assets check on the Internet (see links).

The app offers the "Assets" tool. As a first step, it can help you to get a rough overview of your assets. The button to the "Asset" tool can be found under "Tools".

Sometimes, however, it is enough to analyze the bank statements of the last few months. You will usually find that even a large number of small amounts can put a significant strain on the expenditure side. This is where you can start with targeted cost-cutting measures. For example, are there unnecessary or overpriced insurance policies, unnecessary subscriptions or old and overpriced telephone contracts?

If you are dissatisfied with your income, you may be able to negotiate a salary increase with your boss (see topic: Profession) or you can reinvest your assets to archive higher returns.

#### **Keeping a budget book**

If you want to keep an up-to-date and detailed overview of your financial situation, you should keep a budget book. By documenting the flow of money, you can see exactly what you spend month after month on housing, clothing, food, telephone and how your income is composed.

Various budget book programs are available as apps or programs for download, some of them free of charge (see links).

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? Do you want to make a difference?

Examples of intensions and tasks:

- I check my assets and get transparency about my financial situation.
- I'm going to keep a budget book for a couple of months.

- I take care of my retirement provision.

### Literature and Links

- Personal Balance Sheet Templates: [Link](#)
- List of Credit Counseling Agencies: [Link](#)
- Money Manager Expense & Budget: [Link](#)

## Profession

### Job, Career

*Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life (Confucius).*

We spend a large part of our lives working. That's how we earn our living. Work can be very fulfilling if you view your profession as a vocation.

You have found the **right job** if:

- Your interests, competencies and inclinations (see the topic "Self-image") match the requirements of your job,
- your job is in line with your values and your vision (see the topic "Vision"),
- your life and career plans align with those of your partner and family.

You've found the **right workplace** if you:

- enjoy your work,
- have a pleasant working environment with pleasant colleagues,
- receive respect and recognition for your work,
- have a reasonable salary that both recognizes your performance and provides you with material security,
- are able to develop further and maintain your own "market value",
- are able to reconcile family, leisure time and job (work-life balance).

In our complex, flexible and globalized world, you can no longer assume that you will hold "the job" that can be considered a vocation throughout your professional life. With today's rapid change, lifelong learning, flexibility and reskilling are necessary to survive in professional life.

The job shapes our own identity and assigns us our social position. There are also people who see their job as their main purpose in life, who dedicate their lives entirely to their career and who no longer take time for their partner, family and friends. This can then lead to a pathological "workaholic".

Nowadays, anyone can be affected by unemployment. Unemployment and inability to work are two of the biggest risk factors for depression.

Over the years, the needs and demands on work change. Then it's time to check whether your job can be adapted or whether you need a change. Staying in the same job for too long or constant stress at work can lead to dissatisfaction, resignation, working by the book, burnout and illness.

**Summary:** *In our complex, flexible and globalized world, it is important to find the right job that gives us energy, strength, success and fulfillment, that allows us to do something meaningful and at the same time provides us with material security.*

### Self-assessment

Evaluate your professional situation. Identify your need for change.

- I have found my vocation that gives meaning to my life.

- I am happy in my job.
- I'm constantly learning new things at work.
- I enjoy going to work.
- I feel comfortable amongst my colleagues.
- My work is recognized.
- I earn enough to live well.
- My job offers me good career opportunities.
- The company or organization I work for has good perspective.
- I mainly do my job to earn money.
- I'd much rather do something completely different.
- Things are going downhill with the company I work for.
- I'm afraid of unemployment.
- I would like to become self-employed.

How would you summarize your professional situation?

- I enjoy my work and I see meaning in it.
- I can support myself with my work.

### What can I do?

Career advisors, employment agencies and adult education centers help with advice on professional matters. There are also lots of guides on the internet and in books. Simple tools for self-help are presented below.

### Job Analysis

If you are dissatisfied with your job, you should analyze the current situation and write down what positive and negative aspects come to your mind. To do this, the app offers you the "Job Analysis" tool. The button to the tool can be found under "Tools".

Bob analysis criteria:

- Job content and responsibilities
- Professional position
- Earnings/Income
- Working conditions
- Career opportunities
- Further education and training opportunities
- Job security
- Qualification
- Environment with resources and work equipment
- Opportunity to contribute your own ideas
- Working atmosphere
- Space for private life
- Family-friendliness, i.e. work life balance

Then ask yourself what needs to be improved so that you feel comfortable in your job again. Check whether minor problems can be solved quickly, for example in a conversation with your manager or among colleagues.

If your job dissatisfaction cannot be reduced or you find yourself in a crisis situation in which you question your job at all, then you should take the opportunity and reorient yourself. Almost every job change offers the opportunity for positive change.

### Strengths/weaknesses analysis

To get to know yourself better, you should check your self-image. The topic "Self-image" serves this purpose. The strengths/weakness analysis tool with the subcategory "Professional" can also be found there.

### Plan a job change

You don't just change your job on a whim. Too much depends on it, such as the regular family income, the place of residence, the retirement provision. But if the job makes you sick or no longer matches your future goals, then you should seriously consider a change.

A job change must be thoroughly prepared.

- The first thing you should do is think about what is important to you in life and where you want to go (see the topic "Vision"). To do this, rethink your talents, skills and interests (see the topic "self-image"). Document your most important competencies.
- Build an attractive vision of your dream job. Sketch a detailed, pictorial vision of your professional future, e.g.:
  - What kind of work do I really enjoy?
  - What is meaningful work for me? What is the minimum amount I want/need to earn?
  - How many hours per week do I want to work?
  - Where do I want to work (including abroad), how much do I want to travel?
  - Do I want to take on employee responsibility?
  - Do I want to take on business risk?
  - What would be a suitable company for me?
  - Do I want to become self-employed?
- Involve your partner, family and best friends in your imagination.
- Make a decision list. What are the pros and cons of changing job? Is the change realistic?
- Decide whether or not to change the job. Take your time and weigh it up carefully. Perhaps it has now become clearer to you what you need to change in your current job in order to possibly continue to be happier there.

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights did you gain? Do you want to make a difference?

Examples of intensions and tasks:

- I want to change my job
  - Creating a career change strategy
  - Retraining, financing, impact on family
  - Seek advice from a career counselling center
- I want to work less and spend more time with my family, so I'm going to finish work every day at 5:00 p.m. sharp.
- I want to change my job / employer

- Creating a job search strategy
- Create application documents
- Study job advertisements
- Send applications
- Post my profile on a job board
- I want to earn more money in my job
  - Prepare for the next appraisal interview. Collect arguments for an increase in earnings.
  - Check if other employers pay more
  - Possibly change employer (see above).

### Literature and Links

- Scott Anthony Barlow: Happen to Your Career - An Unconventional Approach to Career Change and Meaningful Work. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- David J. McNeff: The Work-Life Balance Myth - Rethinking Your Optimal Balance for Success. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- American Job Center: [Link](#)

# Time

## Time management

*Today starts the first day of the rest of your life.*

Time determines our lives. It gives structure to our day. It determines our actions and our rhythm of life.

When we are able to manage our time well and use it for meaningful activities, it gives us a sense of satisfaction. Without stress and time pressure, you get into a state of serenity and can really enjoy the time. The highest feelings of happiness can be experienced when you are completely absorbed in an activity. In this so-called flow state, a complete oblivion of oneself and time arises.

### Lack of time

In our meritocracy, many people complain that they don't have enough time. They are constantly rushed, are under stress and eventually suffer from burnout. But there is actually enough time. It's more about how we use that time.

Typical reasons for a chronic lack of time are:

- Not being able to say no - because you are afraid of denial and rejection. The reason is usually a weak self-confidence (see topic: Self-confidence).
- Overestimating your performance - because you want to do too much at the same time, or you want to do everything 100 percent perfect, or because you haven't drawn the right conclusions from your previous lack of time experiences.
- Wanting to do everything by yourself - because you can't or don't want to delegate, for example because you don't trust your fellow human beings or are afraid of dependencies.
- No prioritization - because you don't have a compass for your life goals (see topic: Mission) or don't distinguish between importance and urgency in your daily tasks (see below: Eisenhower Principle).
- No scheduling - because you haven't learned self-organization or are too lazy to use it.
- Spending time on unimportant things - because you prefer to waste your time due to lack of self-discipline - e.g. watching television, playing computer - or don't want to tackle the important things and put them off: this is called procrastination
- Intentional shortage of time as a status symbol - because you want to appear important and be appreciated accordingly, you put in all the work.

### Time is money

If you are an employee, you sell your time for money. Our economic system, which is designed for growth, requires us to give up much of our time for money so that we can buy and consume more and more goods. This leads to a constant acceleration of society and the feeling that individuals are constantly under time pressure. In the meantime, however, more and more people are refusing to accept this meritocracy. For them, money and career are no longer the primary goal of their professional lives (see the topics: Money, Profession).

If you want to have more time available, you have to give up some of the money and consumption. For example, you can reduce your weekly working hours or take an unpaid sabbatical or retire earlier with financial losses.

If you can afford it, you can also buy time by hiring domestic staff, for example.

### Leisure time

Even in our free time, we suffer from stress. We schedule evenings, weekends and vacations to experience as much as possible. In addition to professional burnout, there is also leisure burnout.

If you are a candidate for leisure burnout, then you should greatly reduce the number of your leisure activities. Leisure time should be fun, but also offer relaxation. To reduce stress, you should incorporate activities such as hiking, yoga, saunas or meditation.

### Lifetime

Our lifetime is finite and precious, because lost lifetime is lost forever.

The older we get the faster time seems to pass. With events such as birthdays, illnesses or deaths, we are increasingly confronted with the finiteness of life. We get under time pressure because we realize that the time of life is getting less, but we have the impression that we still want to do or experience a lot.

Almost everyone experiences a midlife crisis at some point. You realize that you have achieved your professional, family and financial goals and that things are going downhill from now on.

How strongly you feel the crisis depends on your self-esteem (see the topic: Self-confidence) and on your personal assessment of what you have missed or not achieved so far. During a crisis, quite a few people mindlessly make radical changes that harm them or cause them regret afterwards, e.g. separating from their partner.

In every crisis there is also an opportunity to realign your life again. You should rethink your life goals (see the topic: Mission) and set new priorities. This is how you can emerge from this crisis even stronger, more mature and happier.

**Summary:** *If you don't have enough time, you're doing too much or you're doing the wrong or unimportant things. If you have too much time, you should try to give your life meaning!*

### Self-assessment

How well do you have time under control? Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- I rarely feel a lack of time.
- My time is almost always enough for what I want to do.
- I'm almost always on time.
- I never feel rushed.
- I have sufficient time for my family and friends.
- In the evening I feel drained or depressed.
- I regularly take time to review my long-term goals.
- I carry out my tasks according to their importance.
- I don't put off unpleasant work.
- I spend too much time in front of the TV or with my gaming console.
- I allow myself enough free time and breaks.
- I am also keenly aware of the quality of time, not just the quantity.
- I can enjoy my free time.
- I am afraid of dying before I have experienced everything I want.



How would you sum up your approach to time?

- I'm rarely in a time crunch.
- My professional and private life are balanced in terms of time.
- I'm not worried that I won't be able to achieve some things in life.

### What can I do?

Many people are looking for solutions that will take them out of their time stress. That's why the market of time management guides with tips and tricks of all kinds is flourishing. Some simple tools are shown below.

#### Time management

Time management is self-management, which is about using the available time as efficiently as possible. This means that you manage what you are doing during this time, i.e. goals and tasks, rather than the time itself.

The aim is to balance the available time on the four areas of life: work, relationships (partnership, family, friends), body (relaxation, health) and meaning (spirituality, art, culture) in such a way that one can lead a happy, fulfilled life.

Based on your own personal professional and private life goals, you define activities that will lead to daily, weekly and monthly plans which are prioritized accordingly.

Many people resist time management - sometimes unconsciously - because you have to learn it first, which costs time at first. You have to learn to set the right goals and define related tasks. You have to estimate how much time it takes to complete the tasks. All of this requires a high level of planning, discipline, and attention.

The **time management classics** are: Stephen R. Covey - The Way to the Essentials and Lothar J. Seiwert - The New 1×1 of Time Management. Many community colleges or professional coaches offer time management courses.

Understanding a little bit of time management is useful for everyone and can be easily implemented in everyday life. You can start with simple prioritized activity lists and end with detailed work plans. It is important to maintain a sense of proportion so that time management does not become an obsession or even a time waster.

#### Eisenhower Principle

The Eisenhower Principle (named after the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower) is the art of distinguishing the essential from the non-essential. It is in the nature of most people to like to deal with unimportant things and to postpone the important things. The unimportant things are often more fun or bring short-term success or are simply less strenuous.

According to the Eisenhower Principle, the tasks at hand are divided into the four quadrants Q1 to Q4:

	Urgent	Non-Urgent
Important	Q1	Q2
Not-Important	Q3	Q4

- Q1 - important and urgent: These tasks should be completed immediately. Q1 tasks usually have a fixed date and can usually be completed quickly, such as solving a problem, making a phone call, or going to the authorities. If these tasks are not carried out in a timely manner, a crisis can quickly develop.
- Q2 - important but not urgent: We should mainly concern ourselves with these tasks. Q2 tasks are mostly preparatory or conceptual tasks. The more time we spend on these tasks, the more prepared we are and the fewer Q1 tasks there will be. Q2 tasks include, for example, preparing a presentation, drafting an application, studying for an exam. But it also includes recreation and relaxation activities, such as going to a theatre, reading a good book or going swimming.
- Q3 - not important, but urgent: We should delegate these tasks as much as possible. There are managers who occupy themselves and their people a lot with Q3 tasks in order to make themselves important, e.g. query reports and statistics, which are then never read and evaluated.
- Q4 - not important and not urgent: We should avoid these tasks as much as possible and only start them when all other tasks have been completed. Q4 tasks include many time thieves, such as hanging out in front of the TV, untargeted web browsing, etc.

The Eisenhower Principle can also be used for work planning in a team or family. You write down each task on a sticky note. Then each task is discussed and the corresponding sticky note is stuck on a board in one of the 4 quadrants. This creates a common view of the tasks and their priority.

### The ALPEN Method

With the ALPEN method (by Lothar Seiwert, one of the leading German time management experts), you take 5-20 minutes every day to think about your tasks and appointments. Then create a written daily plan.

The procedure consists of 5 steps:

**A** (Aufgaben) = Write down tasks - Write down tasks, activities and appointments in a daily plan.

**L** (Länge) = Estimate length. Estimate the expected time required.

**P** (Pufferzeit) = Buffer time - Plan a maximum of 60% of your free time; keep the rest as a buffer for unforeseen events.

**E** (Entscheiden) = Decisions - Prioritize, delegate, and trim/delete to limit the overall scope.

**N** (Nachkontrolle) = Follow-up check - At the end of the day, check the completed and unfinished tasks. Transfer the unfinished tasks to the next day.

### The Pareto Principle

The Pareto principle (named after Vilfredo Pareto) is often called the 80:20 rule. It says that it only takes 20 percent of the time to do 80 percent of the work. The remaining 20 percent is just for perfecting.

It often makes more sense to complete all tasks up to 80 percent instead of doing one task up to 100 percent and not tackle the other tasks at all due to lack of time.

The Pareto principle can help you focus. Which work is particularly important or urgent? What can I do to achieve the greatest effect first? However, the Pareto principle should not be used as an excuse for poor quality work.

Find out where the Pareto principle applies to your tasks and focus on the effective 80% that you can be achieve in 20% of the time.

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? Do you want to make a difference?

Examples of tasks and intensions:

- Move closer to the workplace. Save travel time.
- Drastically reduce the amount of time spent in front of the TV.
- Read a time management book.
- Every day (e.g. in the evening) do a short reflection on the day.
- Take a sabbatical and make the long-dreamed trip around the world.

### Literature and Links

- Stephen R. Covey - First Things First. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Lothar J. Seiwert - Slow Down to Speed Up. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi - Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)

### Time Management in the Internet:

- 9 Proven Time Management Techniques and Tools | USAHS: [Link](#)

# Home

## Living Situation, Home (emotional)

*Do you still reside or do you already live? (IKEA).*

Housing is a basic existential need. People need a protected space to feel safe, comfortable and happy.

### Types of living

Our society is changing. Families with children make up only a quarter of households. Housing projects sometimes take over functions that used to be organized in the family. A variety of different forms of housing have emerged such as shared flats, intergenerational living, partner households, single apartments, assisted living. Everyone must be clear about which form of housing is the right one for him/her.

### Personality types of living

Depending on their personality type, people have different requirements for their living environment. There are:

- the city person who loves the life, the hustle and bustle and the great offer of a city,
- the country person who loves the vastness, nature and peace of country life,
- the nomad who loves to move around and change homes frequently,
- the emeritus who prefers to live quietly and in peace and seclusion.

### Housing needs change over the course of life

In the course of life, we have to ask ourselves again and again what our housing needs are, where we want to live, who we want to live with and what accommodation we can afford. The place of residence is often determined by the place of education, place of study or place of work.

For many young people, owning their own home is the first step towards independence and disconnection from their parents.

Later, a family is founded. It is then important that there is sufficient living space available in a family-friendly living environment and that the financial burden is kept within reasonable limits. Cramped living conditions can have a negative impact on the family climate and limit children's opportunities for movement and development.

If the children are out of the house, the apartment / house is often too big and maintenance happens to be too expensive. Then it's time to move or sublet.

Most people want to live in their own homes for as long and as independently as possible. Decreasing mobility, the need for help or illness often leads to the fact that in old age the last home becomes a retirement or nursing home.

### Home (emotional)

Herbert Grönemeyer sings: "*Home is not a place, home is a feeling!*"

Many people have a feeling of home. At home, you feel a sense of belonging and security. Home can provide orientation and be a secure anchor in the fast-paced world.

Home can be associated with a place, a region, a cultural expression, a social bond. Some people associate the term home with their place of birth. Others feel at home in the place where their friends and family live. The feeling of home can be very strong and lead to painful homesickness when abroad.

If you haven't found a home yet as you get older, sometimes you want nothing more than familiar surroundings. If you can say, "*Home is where I am*", then you have found the right place to live.

### Rent or Buy

Almost everyone is faced with the decision at some point: rent or buy? This decision is both a lifestyle choice and an investment decision.

When making lifestyle decisions, there are questions such as:

- What is it worth to me that I could live in my own property that I designed myself?
- Do I want to have my own house with a garden for my families? What does having a good time in my own home mean to me?
- Will I be able to use the property myself in the long term or does my job require flexibility having thus rental apartments at several locations?
- Do I want to have more time for myself, my family, my job, my hobbies and friends by renting and not worry about the care and maintenance of the property? How much freedom and independence do I give up for the property?

The investment decision is about finding out whether it is cheaper to rent or buy a property. The answer to this question is not easy . It depends heavily on the situation on the real estate and interest rate market. In addition, the following questions arise :

- Do I have enough equity to buy a property? Can I service the loan interest and repayments?
- Should the property be used for my retirement provision? Do I see the "concrete gold" in the property that protects me from inflation and crashes?

**Summary:** *It is important to find an apartment / property in a living environment that is tailored to the size of the family and can be used flexibly. That satisfies the housing needs of parents and growing children while not overstressing the budget.*

### Self-assessment

Assess your living situation and identify potential adjustment factors.

Be inspired by the following statements:

What kind of **living type** am I?

- Do I tend to be more a city person, a country person, a nomad or even an emeritus?

Which types of housing are suitable for me?

- Do I prefer a single apartment or do I prefer a family home?
- Do I want to live in a shared apartment?
- Is a multi-generational house appealing to me?
- Is the cooperative concept an option for me?
- How important is the neighborhood and the community to me?
- Can I afford to build a second home or holiday home?
- Will I still be a professional nomad in the future or will I remain settled?

How to live in old age?

- What does the successive departure of the children from the house mean?
- Is it time to downsize to a shared apartment for senior citizens?
- Do I have to think about the retirement home?
- What about so called 'tiny houses'?

Cost?

- Can I afford the financial burden of housing costs, such as rent, utilities, heating costs, electricity, television, internet, insurance?

Infrastructure in the residential environment?

- Are there good neighborly relations?
- Is there a family-friendly infrastructure, such as crèches, kindergartens, schools, play and exercise facilities for children and young people, neighborhood networks?
- Are shops for daily needs within walking distance?
- Is my environment affected by environmental influences and crime?
- Does the church community play a role for me?

How would you sum up your living situation?

- I am satisfied with my living situation.
- I can afford the apartment.
- The apartment offers enough space and comfort for me and my family.

### What can I do?

Be clear about your living situation. Do you want to make a difference? Do you want to buy a property? Banks and investment advisors can help with advice on real estate matters. In addition, there are plenty of guides on the Internet and in book form. See below: Literature and Links.

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? Do you want to make a difference?

Example of resolutions and tasks:

- I think about the meaning of "home" for me.
- I seek advice on buying a property.
- I inform myself about alternative forms of housing.
- I get involved in neighborhood help.
- I deepen the cultivation of neighborly relations.

### Literature and Links

- Eric Tyson: Home Buying Kit For Dummies. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Ilyce R. Glink: 100 Questions Every First-Time Home Buyer Should Ask, Fourth Edition - With Answers from Top Brokers from Around the Country. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Independent Living for Seniors: [Link](#)
- Herbert Grönemeyer singt: „Heimat ist kein Ort, Heimat ist ein Gefühl!“. Link to YouTube: [Link](#)

## Body

### Fitness, Health

*A strong and healthy body is the best prerequisite for a happy life.*

Your body needs to be intact so that you are free for other things. You shouldn't have to worry about the health of your body.

Five simple and effective rules for health and joy of life are as follows:

- Do some sports every day (jogging, walking, gymnastics, yoga)
- Eat healthy (lots of fruit and vegetables, little meat, few calories)
- Avoid harmful substances (alcohol, smoking, drugs)
- Think positive
- Relax enough (much sleep, power naps, breaks, rest, meditation)

If it is so easy to live a healthy life, why do so many people not act on it, but are stressed, overweight, unathletic and smoke on top of that? Our inner “bastard” is to blame for this, which gives us comfort or enjoyment in the short term but harms us in the long run. To fight our weaker self, we need to listen more to our inner voice that says what's right for us. We should think about the future and our goals and less about the mere moment.

The less time and attention you invest in your body, the more time and money you will most likely have to spend on doctor visits, hospital stays and rehabilitation measures as you get older. Many people don't change anything until they get a warning on time, such as a heart attack. Only then the body will be noticed and attention as well as priority for health measures will increase.

It is important to recognize warning signals of the body at an early stage, to reduce stress and to prevent burnout. In addition to health-conscious behavior, a regular check-up is also important so that possible diseases can be treated in time and early enough .

**Summary:** *Living a healthy life is actually quite simple and works with a certain basic knowledge about health, nutrition and fitness, paired with a lot of discipline and overcoming your weaker self.*

### Self-assessment

How happy are you with your body? Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following aspects:

- I consider my body important.
- I keep fit by exercising regularly.
- I eat consciously and healthily.
- I feel tired or sick. I often lack energy.
- I'm happy with the way I look.
- I respect the limits of my body.
- I provide enough sleep.
- I take preventively care on a regular basis

- I relax regularly (autogenic training, meditation).
- I'm happy with my weight.

In summary, how do you assess the situation in relation to your body:

- I feel fit and powerful.
- I am happy with my body and my appearance.

### What can I do?

An entire industry has emerged around the topic of body and health with guides, courses, coaches, nutritional supplements, medication, etc.

Here are a few simple tips to keep your body fit:

#### Sport & exercise

You should get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week, at least ten minutes at a time. This helps to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease. However, if you want to get fitter or lose weight, you need additional muscle or endurance training.

Tips:

- Schedule your fitness exercises in your weekly schedule (see the topic "Time") and then carry them out, even in terms of other important time constraints and against your weaker self.
- Join in a gym. The cost of an annual subscription will motivate you to visit the studio regularly as well.
- Look for comrades-in-arms. Peer pressure makes you more likely to stick to your guns and sports together are more fun.
- Keep a training diary. This will make it obvious whether you are sticking to your plan. Analyze what is good for you and what is not. Write down positive experiences.

#### Nutrition

Rethink your eating habits. Let yourself be guided by unconscious beliefs (see the topic "Worldview") that may no longer make sense today, such as "We eat what is on the table" or "The plate is always eaten empty". Maybe you also compensate for some feelings of frustration by eating. It is important to throw old habits overboard and feel natural satiety again through a more conscious eating behavior.

Tips:

- Eat a wholesome diet of vegetables, fruits and fish. There should be little meat, sweets and nibbles on the menu.
- Eat regularly and calmly. Enjoy the food - but in moderation and with discipline. Stop eating when you feel full, no matter how good it tastes.
- Calculate your body mass index (BMI). Aim for normal weight to slightly overweight.
- Calculate your approximate daily calorie requirement - a rule of thumb is: weight in kilograms x 30. If you eat more calories on a regular basis, you will gain weight. If you want to lose weight, you should try to save about 500 calories a day. Most diets are usually ineffective because of their yo-yo effect. By exercising, you also increase your calorie consumption and thus your basal metabolic rate.

#### Drugs

Everyone knows that smoking is unhealthy. Alcohol in moderation is OK for healthy people, e.g. a glass of wine or a beer a day. However, if you have already become addicted, you can



hardly get rid of drugs without professional help. If you already have an addiction, you should seek professional help.

### Stress & Relaxation

Observe yourself. Do you put yourself under unnecessary pressure, e.g. when driving a car, waiting in line? Avoid stress by organizing your work but also your relaxation well through time management (see the topic "Time"). Relaxation techniques such as autogenic training, Jacobsen's progressive muscle relaxation or yoga help to regain balance and serenity.

### Tasks and Intensions

Define resolutions and visualize what will change in the future. For example, how slim and how much healthier you will be once you have lost 10 kg.

- I want to lose 5 kg
- I want to quit smoking
- I want to increase my fitness and that's why I run 4 km every day.

### Literature and Links

- MedlinePlus: [Link](#)
- Habits to Form Now for a Longer Life: [Link](#)

## Love Partnership, Sex

*Love can't be planned, it just happens!*

Infatuation, love, sexuality and partnership form a complex weave about the causes and effects of which we still know very little.

### Infatuation

Infatuation creates an intense feeling of happiness and affection for another person. It puts us in a frenzy of sensuality, changes our thinking, partially overrides the mind and makes our lives appear in rosy colors. When we fall in love, our self-image and our worldview change, sometimes dramatically (see topics: Self-image, Worldview).

Biologically speaking, the goal of falling in love is to keep reproduction going. Infatuation produces a cocktail of hormones that makes us euphoric, increases the need for bonding and promotes sexual desire.

As a rule, the infatuation cools down after a few months and the mind kicks in again. Many then realize that in their imagination they have passionately fallen in love with someone who is in fact a completely different person than could be seen through rose-colored glasses.

Falling in love does not mean that you have found love. The infatuation can turn into love or fade away again. It can be one-sided if the feelings are not reciprocated.

### Love

Love is a very strong affection for another person that can make you very happy. Love includes:

- Passion - with strong positive feelings, romantic and sexual attraction.
- Intimacy - feeling of togetherness, familiarity, a high level of openness and vulnerability, appreciation of the partner.
- Commitment - long-term partnership, caring, loyalty.

Our ideas about love vary greatly from person to person. They are determined by our cultural environment and by our personal experiences.

The psychologist Lee (1980) found six different "styles of love" through analysis:

- Romantic love - is the subject of many films and novels. Their characteristics are passion and sexual affection.
- Friendly love - the partners share common interests and habits. There are a lot of matches and a good basis for communication. The intensity of the passion is not particularly high.
- Altruistic love - one partner constantly puts one's own desires and goals aside in favor of the other. It is characterized by self-sacrifice and selflessness.
- Possessive love - the partner becomes the absolute center of life. The loved one appears perfect and you can't imagine living without them. The partners take turns going through ups and downs. Jealousy plays a big role. The relationship is unstable and characterized by mistrust, clinging and control.
- Playful love - is characterized by living out sexual freedom. Partners are looking for affairs and not really a long-term commitment. Often you have several relationships at the same time.

- Pragmatic love - the partnership is based on a pragmatic decision and is seen as meaningful and expedient. Passion doesn't matter.

Many people have a glorified and romantic idea of love. They want a happy love with the prince or princess that lasts, if possible, forever. In fact, in today's society, "eternal love" lasts more like three to ten years.

If the partner no longer fulfills the desires, such as for recognition, sex, tenderness, understanding, attention, etc., love can turn into disappointment, indifference or even hatred.

### Sexuality

Sexual attraction is a force that drives us throughout our lives. Depending on their personality and experience, some people think that sex is not possible without love. Others, on the other hand, can clearly separate sex and love.

Depending on how consciously and skillfully we can deal with sexuality, it either gives a relationship stimulus and energy or constantly drives a wedge between the partners. The more satisfied a couple is with their sexuality, the higher the happiness they experience in their relationship.

In committed relationships, sexual tension often decreases due to a habituation effect. Sexual disinterest, apathy and/or impotence or frigidity set in. The sexual stimulus then often lies in infidelity.

### Partnership

Most people want an exclusive partner with whom they are connected through lasting love. For a stable partnership, however, it is by no means enough to rely only on love. You should know if you are a good match. These include:

- Common ideas about life and life planning - both have similar expectations of the relationship, e.g. both want children, division of work, who will have a career, who will raise the children.
- Common interests - common hobbies and interests strengthen bonding.
- Religion and values - shared beliefs and values form a stable foundation for the partnership.
- Personality traits - in the case of divergent personality traits, quarrels are inevitable, for example, in the attitude towards fidelity or the love of order.
- Sexual attraction – both match in terms of their sexual needs and preferences.

In a partnership, consideration for both oneself and the other is important. It is important to find the balance between tolerance, acceptance and forgiveness on the one hand and self-assertion and a healthy egoism on the other.

Relationship crises and phases of dissatisfaction are quite normal phenomena in a partnership. Each individual partner must be able to personally develop further. External circumstances, such as the loss of a job or the children moving out, lead to the fact that the partnership has to be adapted to the new life situations.

A long-lasting relationship is hard work and requires a high level of competence in the areas of communication and conflict resolution on the part of both partners.

Many couples get together and live next to each other more badly than right. This often happens with the feeling of having missed out on true life, true love and true happiness.

A separation or divorce is usually better for the personal happiness of both than maintaining an unhappy partnership over the long term.

**Summary:** *Love drives us and determines our actions. It is our source of energy. But it can also turn into jealousy and hatred, driving us into self-destruction.*

### Self-assessment

How happy are you with your love life? Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- We have many common interests.
- Our plans for the future fit together.
- I am convinced that my partner and I can cope with crises.
- I trust my partner.
- We have a lot of fun together.
- We spend a lot of time together.
- We give the other person space for their own interests.
- We agree on money matters.
- I can no longer imagine living with my partner in the long run.
- Our sex life is unsatisfying.
- I'm cheating and fancy an affair

How would you sum up your situation regarding love/partnership?

- I love my partner.
- I have a vibrant, dynamic relationship.
- I'm happy with my sex life.

### What can I do?

There are thousands of relationship-guides and expert tips on the subject of love and partnership. But there is no formula for success for a lasting love relationship.

#### Communication

Many partnerships fail because the partners communicate too little or past each other and are unable to communicate their wishes and thoughts to their partner.

According to John Gottman, the "Horsemen of the Apocalypse" stand for communication sins that can ruin a partnership and lead to separation:

- Criticism: Blame and accusations, general condemnation of the partner
- Defense / Justification: Defense devalues criticism. Countering with accusations.
- Contempt and disparagement: through cynicism and ridicule. Intentional injury.
- Withdrawal: Demonstration of indifference
- Demonstration of power: Enforcing one's own will. No willingness to compromise.

Many partnership guides give tips on how to improve communication. See literature / links.

#### Couples Therapy

In the case of severe relationship problems, couples therapy can help.

The couples' therapist helps to talk about disappointments, expectations and fears in a neutral setting. The therapist tries to work out the problem areas with the couple and formulate common therapy goals. Sometimes it is also a therapy goal to find out whether you want to stay together or break up.

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? Define resolutions and tasks, e.g.:

- Regularly take time for a partnership conversation.
- Going to couples counseling with my partner.

### Literature / Links

- John Gottman: The Love Prescription - Seven Days to More Intimacy, Connection, and Joy (The Seven Days Series). Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- John Gottman: The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work - A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Love is respect: [Link](#)
- Couples Therapy – 2019 TV series. Link to Wikipedia: [Link](#)

# Relationship

## Family, Friends

*Family and a network of friends are the sources of personal happiness.*

We humans are "pack animals" and have lived in relationships since time immemorial. We are usually raised in family relationships, we learn and work in relationships, we spend our free time in relationships.

Interpersonal relationships:

- are among the basic needs of daily life,
- determine our thoughts, feelings and actions,
- need to be constantly maintained,
- can be beautiful but also very exhausting and stressful,
- often fail due to a lack of trust or communication problems.

The most important interpersonal relationships are those between family members and among friends:

### Family

For most people, family comes first and is their highest source of happiness. The family stands for:

- Safety and security,
- Having and raising children,
- shared experiences, rituals and celebrations,
- mutual support, e.g. in the event of illness or the need for care.

Each family has its own character with its own specific relationships, rules and rituals. The relationships with the extended family circle with grandparents, relatives and friends also shape the family relationships, as does the environment with the community, schools, workplaces, etc.

Even though many people still adhere to the traditional image of the family, the traditional family bond is increasingly weakening in Western cultures. "Patchwork families" are on the rise, as are non-marital cohabitations. This makes family relationships more fragile and complex.

Family relationships are generally considered to be most reliable, but they are also most conflict-prone. The family can also be a place of unspeakable unhappiness for a person. Intrigue, physical and/or psychological violence, abuse and dependencies within the family can lead to years of torturous experiences and psychological disorders.

### Friends

Unlike the family we are born into, we can choose our friends. In our society, people have an average of 1 to 2 best friends, 5 close friends, and 15 general friends.

A friend:

- is a helper,
- gives advice and support,
- behaves loyally,

- accepts privacy.

Friendships are often of a very intense bond and often outlast marriages and family ties. Friends are always there for each other. Especially in crisis situations, we always fall back on our friends. They help, give advice and open our eyes with constructive criticism.

A good friendship involves a healthy give and take. Friendships work well when there is emotional support involved. However, things become more difficult when time and manpower are in demand. Friendships often fall apart when money is involved.

Friendships have taken on a whole new meaning in recent years due to the ever-growing group of singles. In the social networks on the Internet, it is now possible to stay in regular contact with one's acquaintances and friends and to find new friendships or to rediscover old friends.

Making new friends is not easy for many people. But it's a skill that can be learned and practiced. This includes being attentive, approaching others in an open and humorous way, having a little courage and allowing new contacts.

**Summary:** *Good relationships make you happy, bad relationships cause grief and worry. It is important to maintain and nurture the network of family members and friends. Discrepancies should be resolved as soon as possible. Relationships that drain energy should be examined and resolved if possible.*

### Self-assessment

How happy are you in your network of relationships? Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- My family life is peaceful and harmonious.
- I feel free and I am not restricted in the family.
- I enjoy fulfilling my role (e.g. father, mother) in the family.
- I've fallen out with family members and I'm suffering from it.
- I have some really good friends.
- I can rely on my friends.
- I keep in regular contact with my family members and friends.
- It is easy for me to make new acquaintances and, if desired, develop them into a new friendship.
- I feel lonely. I lack acquaintances and friends.

How would you summarize your relationships:

- I live happily and in peace with the members of my family.
- I have some really good friends that I can count on and keep in touch with on a regular basis.

### What can I do?

Many people suffer from unresolved conflicts, which can be traced back to relationships, among other things. This can lead to mental disorders of all kinds. In severe cases, it may be necessary to seek appropriate psychotherapy. The following techniques are suitable for helping yourself:

### Relationship analysis

Take a critical look at your network of relationships. Create a list of the people you are related to, family members, friends, colleagues, etc. To do this, the app offers you the "Relationship Analysis" tool. The button to the tool can be found under "Tools".

Name	Ratio	Importance	Assessment	Measures
Max	friend	Very much	optimally	none
Hans, Inge	parents	medium	drains energy	improve / reduce dependencies

Think about which of these people have a positive or negative influence on you. For example:

- Does the relationship give you energy or does it drain energy?
- Does the person exert authority or control over you?
- Is the relationship one-sided or mutually balanced?
- Are there situations in which you feel uncomfortable in the presence of the person?
- Are there any unresolved conflicts with the person?

Example:

Think about what actions you want to derive from the analysis, such as scheduling more time for a relationship or reconnecting with an old friend or ending a relationship?

### Communication tips

Interpersonal communication is a very complex topic. We communicate both verbally and non-verbally (gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, etc.). Our communication is primarily about the matter. Behind the scenes, however, both expectations and our inner attitude towards our counterpart resonate.

Again and again, interpersonal communication leads to misunderstandings. You think the other person should know exactly what you mean. However, if our counterpart has a different view of the world (see topic: Worldview) or a completely different mental context, we often talk past each other without realizing it.

You can see some communication rules here.

- Listening – Be a patient listener. Let the person, you are talking to, finish. Don't interrupt. Try to understand his position. Try to understand his/her opinion, needs, and feelings. Take your conversation partner seriously and show respect and appreciation.
- Clear statements - Express yourself clearly, simply, and understandably. Describe your own feelings honestly without making any accusations.
- No destructive criticism - Avoid insults, name-calling and insinuations at all costs. Avoid equally destructive criticism and contemptuous remarks. If you are attacked, do not fight back, otherwise after the conversation everything will be even worse than before.
- Both win – Don't try to walk away from the conversation as a winner. Instead, try to find a "win-win" solution that both you and your partner can be happy with.

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights did you gain? Do you want to make a difference?

Examples of intensions and tasks:



- Contact good friends regularly.
- Reconnect with lost friends.
- Search social networks (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Stayfriends, Xing, Tinder) for old and possible new friends.
- Trying to reconcile with a quarreling family member.

### Literature / Links

- Harriet Braiker: Who's Pulling Your Strings? - How to Break the Cycle of Manipulation and Regain Control of Your Life. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)

# Helpfulness

## Altruism, Selflessness

*Helping others brings joy and makes us happier and more satisfied.*

Egoism aims to increase one's own well-being, which is usually not successful. The opposite of egoism is called altruism. Altruism is the special kind of selfless, altruistic helping.

Altruism is deeply rooted in the human psyche. Those who selflessly help others are rewarded with feelings of happiness and satisfaction.

However, very few people help completely selflessly and without self-interest. Often, we only help to calm our guilty conscience, to appear as a do-gooder or to go to heaven at the end of life. The degree to which we are willing to help is determined by our social, religious and community environment and its beliefs.

### People help:

- out of moral obligation, compassion or charity,
- to give meaning to their own lives,
- because their religion demands it,
- because they expect that they will also be helped if they themselves need help in the future,
- to strengthen their self-esteem,
- because they are looking for community or sociability.

Without the permanent helpfulness of many people, many more people would be in distress and many important and meaningful tasks in our society would not take place like they do now.

There are many ways to become active by investing work, time and energy or to provide financial help, such as:

- in the aftermath of environmental disasters,
- in the neighborhood help,
- by helping people in their personal environment,
- in the protection of animals, the environment and nature conservation,
- by volunteering in sports, in geriatric care, in youth care, in refugee care.

### Helper syndrome

However, it is important to find the right amount of helpfulness for yourself without developing a helper syndrome. A helper syndrome occurs when you completely subordinate your mental and physical needs to help, ignore the interests of the person in need of help and essentially force your help on them. People with helper syndrome often have a weak self-confidence (see topic: Self-Confidence) and are stuck in their role as helpers; there is a danger that helping will become an addiction.

**Summary:** *We should strive for what makes us most happy: a balanced level of selfless, active help regardless of the hope of praise or help in return.*

### Self-assessment

Evaluate your willingness to help. Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- Am I really a helpful person?
- When was the last time I helped someone without expecting anything in return?
- When was the last time I cared about whether someone was feeling bad?
- When was the last time I volunteered?
- Do I donate part of my income and is this part appropriate?

Helper syndrome:

- Do I get my self-worth from helping others?
- Am I forcing my help on others?
- Am I neglecting my own needs and desires by helping?
- Do I expect gratitude and recognition for my help?

How would you sum up your willingness to help?

- I am a helpful person.
- I provide some time and money available to other people unselfishly.

### What can I do?

The possibilities for helping are almost unlimited and sometimes confusing, e.g. at charities, cultural sites, social institutions, schools, kindergartens, churches, environmental protection organizations, etc.

If you want to become a volunteer or take on a volunteer position, then consider:

- what interests do I want to contribute?
- what kind of people do I like to be with? Would I like to work with children, young people, elderly, disabled, homeless people or in a hospice?
- how much time can I invest?

Most municipalities and charitable institutions offer advice and placement of suitable positions. Alternatively, you can browse the Internet.

If you want to donate money, think about which topic you want to support and look for a reputable aid organization.

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? Do you want to make a difference?

Examples of intensions and tasks:

- Ask in my circle of acquaintances or in the neighborhood if anyone needs help.
- Visit an elderly person in the neighborhood regularly.
- Provide tutoring to children with learning difficulties.
- Sponsor a child in a developing country.
- Donate a certain portion of my salary to charitable organizations.
- Take on a volunteer position in a non-profit organization.

### Literature / Links

- Sunny Fader: 365 Ideas for Recruiting, Retaining, Motivating and Rewarding Your Volunteers A Complete Guide for Non-Profit Organizations. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)

- Robert J. Rosenthal (Editor): Volunteer Engagement 2.0: Ideas and Insights Changing the World. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- VolunteerMatch.org: [Link](#)

## Mission

### Vision, Life-motto

*Your Mission is the compass for your life.*

Successful people have a mission - a visual, emotional representation of their future - in mind. This mission (also called vision or life motto) states what is important to them and what they want to achieve in their lives. It describes hopes and dreams and gives an outlook on how these can be realized and fulfilled. It provides answers to the following questions, among others:

- What is most important to me?
- What gives meaning to my life?
- What do I want to be, do and experience in my life?
- What would I be willing to sacrifice everything for?

Instead of taking their lives into their own hands, many people simply live through the day. They allow themselves to be driven by their surroundings and give little thought to how they can fill their lives with meaning, what they want to do and what they still want to achieve in their lives. Some people have something like a mission in their head - but usually only as a vague idea, nebulous and emotive.

People who proactively shape their lives develop a mission, a vivid picture of their future. The mission should be documented in writing. It should:

- be long-term,
- describe a higher-level perspective,
- have a fundamental validity,
- include material and immaterial aspects,
- serve as an orientation (= compass) for life, so that dreams and wishes come true.

The mission is only valuable if you remember it regularly and take it seriously. Accordingly, the current goals must be in line with the mission. Goals that are not anchored in one's own mission are thrown overboard as soon as the first resistances appear.

It may take a while before you are happy with your mission. You should review them every six months or so and revise them if necessary. It should be short and concise – about 10 to 15 sentences.

**Summary:** *Create an attractive mission statement. The mission is not quantifiable and is open in time. This means you can live your mission straight away. This allows you to live in here and now and enjoy life the way you want it.*

### Self-assessment

Think about your mission.

Do you have answers to the following questions?

- What is my lifelong dream?
- What is the meaning of my life for me?

- What do I want to be?
- How and where do I find strength, love, security?
- What inner attitude do I want to develop (e.g. be more self-confident, optimistic, relaxed, etc.)?
- How can I use my personal talents for this?
- What is my role in society?
- What roles do I want to fulfill well (e.g. be a good father)?
- What would I like to do (job, travel, start a family or business, etc.)? What are my goals and plans?
- What do I want to own (property, finances, family, company, etc.)?
- What do I want to get involved in and make my contribution?
- What do I want to have achieved in 10 years?

How do you summarize your situation with regard to your mission/life motto:

- I have a vivid idea of what I want my life to look like in the future and I have put this idea down in writing or pictures.

### What can I do?

It takes a lot of time and peace to create a personal mission. If you get involved in it, it can be a very exciting process in your personal development. This can result in fundamental insights and behavioral changes for you. It is therefore essential that you put your mission in writing. To do this, the app offers you the "Mission" tool. There you can write down your mission and revise it from time to time. The button to the tool can be found under "Tools".

Typical phrases of a mission are:

- I want to live freely and self-determined.
- I always want to be a good father/mother.
- I want to have and raise children that I can be proud of.
- I want to make my dreams come true.
- I want to be financially independent.
- I take care of my education so that I have a secure job and can support my family emotionally and financially.

There are several techniques to find your personal mission.

One technique is to imagine your 80th birthday, when all your loved ones, friends, and acquaintances from your life come together to honor you. What would you like these people to say about you? Which of your character traits should they remember? Which of your achievements and contributions should be praised? What important influences should these people report that you have exerted on them?

Another, somewhat macabre technique is to imagine and visualize one's own funeral. What would you like to hear about yourself in the speeches there?

### Resolutions and tasks

What insights have you gained? Do you want to create, document or update your mission? Define resolutions and tasks, e.g.:

- I take a day off to think about my mission and its realization.

- I make it clear to myself which steps I have already achieved towards the mission.

### Literature / Links

- Stephen R. Covey - First Things First (see Chapter: Mission Statement Workshop). Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Stephen R. Covey: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- 5 Steps to Write Your Personal Mission Statement: [Link](#)
- Steve Pavlina - How to Discover Your Life Purpose in About 20 Minutes: [Link](#)
- Use A Personal Vision Statement To Guide Your Life: [Link](#)

# Worldview

## Values, Beliefs

*Every person creates his/her own view of the world.*

Your worldview (Weltanschauung in German) reflects your beliefs about yourself, about other people and about the world. It shapes your personality in the form of your attitudes, values, core beliefs, behaviors and convictions.

Your worldview defines,

- what you consider to be true and right,
- what you are convinced of
- and what you believe in.

Your worldview has been built from childhood through all your knowledge, experiences, insights and beliefs. It is shaped by the views of:

- Science, Philosophy, Economy, Ecology, Culture.
- Religions (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism).
- Political systems, parties and ideologies (e.g. socialism, capitalism, humanism, pacifism, nationalism).

Your worldview is particularly important in interpersonal communication. If the other person has a similar worldview, people understand each other blindly and claims are believed uncritically. If the worldviews differ, it can easily lead to misunderstandings, discussions, incomprehension and even rejection.

Usually, we feel connected to people who have a similar worldview and therefore similar values and political beliefs as we do.

Depending on the basic beliefs, we may feel that we belong to a collective worldview, e.g. a humanistic worldview, philosophical worldview, scientific worldview, religious worldview, esoteric, mystical worldview, economic capitalist worldview, neo-liberal worldview, conservative traditionalist worldview (see below: Literature / Links).

A worldview with strong convictions gives us orientation and a sense of security and helps us to know our place in the world and not get lost in details. This enables us to concentrate on the things that are really important at the moment and not get bogged down.

However, an overly rigid worldview can be disadvantageous. Persistence in a strong conviction can lead to failure to recognize or even miss opportunities.

People with a rigid worldview of deeply internalized personal, political and religious beliefs run the risk of developing fundamental hatred and thus becoming the reason and trigger for violent conflicts.

With an open worldview, you remain more flexible, stronger and more capable of acting. The worldview develops constantly and can be severely shaken over the course of life by personal or collective events, e.g. profound experiences or political upheavals. A fundamental realignment may then become necessary.

Two essential building blocks of a personal worldview are values and core beliefs.

### Values

The values of our worldview are moral laws and principles that we base our lives on and which guide our actions. They are deeply rooted assumptions about what is right, wrong, desirable,



etc. and are shaped over the course of life through upbringing, experience and education. Values are, for example, honesty, love of truth, friendship, trust.

Everyone has a personal value system, even if you are not even aware of it. The value system has already been consolidated in adolescence. If you want to change your value system in the course of your life, you have to "re-educate" yourself. This process of change can be very hard work.

A clear hierarchy of values is the prerequisite for the ability to quickly make the right decisions from a personal point of view. When we live in accordance with our values, it contributes to our satisfaction and happiness.

### Core Beliefs

The core beliefs of our worldview determine what a person believes to be true or false. Core beliefs partly go back to early childhood, but are also anchored in the unconscious through later experiences and adventures.

Core beliefs can be positive and supportive as well as negative and limiting. Adopting negative core beliefs without reflection over years can become a real obstacle and constrict a person emotionally.

Examples of negative core beliefs are:

- Just don't show weakness.
- I always do everything wrong.
- I am mostly negative about new things and changes. I stick to what I know and don't take any risks.

Core beliefs can be conscious or unconscious. The unconscious core beliefs are the ones that can constrict a person the most, because you don't notice them and therefore don't even think of questioning them.

It's hard to change core beliefs. Core beliefs act as perception filters. As a result, we constantly feel confirmed by events that correspond to our core beliefs, so that our core beliefs become more and more solidified because other perspectives do not even come through the perception filter.

**Summary:** *Worldview is a very personal topic. Every person has their own set of values and beliefs, which can certainly change over the course of a lifetime. Your own set of values is influenced by numerous factors in everyday life.*

### Self-assessment

Evaluate your worldview. Identify your need for change.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- Where does my worldview actually come from? Can I sketch it?
- Where does my worldview guide me, how do I orient myself and what goal do I pursue with it?
- Would I stand up for my own worldview or am I prevented or constrained?
- Do I know my values?
- Am I aware of my core beliefs?
- Do I have the feeling that my core beliefs are restricting me?
- Is it possible that core beliefs are causing events in my life to repeat themselves over and over again without me knowing why?

How would you sum up your worldview?

- I can outline my personal worldview.
- I live in accordance with my values.
- I don't allow myself to be restricted by core beliefs.

### What can I do?

One should regularly question one's worldview. If you learn something new about the world, your view of the world can sometimes even change dramatically.

#### Outline your personal worldview

Think about your current worldview. What are your basic beliefs about the meaning of life, the existence of a higher being, morality, life after death, as well as the origin of the universe and life? Outline your views on society and politics, art, science, philosophy, religions and spirituality, economics, ecology, nature, etc.

#### Review your personal value system.

Although the personal value system is usually quite stable, it should not be a rigid system. Especially in times of private or professional crisis or before major changes, you should review and reaffirm your value system or adapt it to changed beliefs. This opens up new perspectives and creative freedom for you.

#### The app offers the "Values" tool.

This allows you to select and rank your most important values from a pool of values. The button to the tool can be found under "Tools".

Use the "Values" tool to find out your 8 to 10 most important values that guide you the most in your private and professional life. Evaluate how important these values are to you and put them in order of importance.

#### Examples of values:

honesty, love of truth, friendship, trust, fidelity, loyalty, care, helpfulness, compassion, mercy, kindness, courtesy, respect, courage, civil courage, punctuality, keeping promises, individuality, independence, freedom, innovation, openness, personal responsibility, flexibility, simplicity, justice, security, order, tradition, clarity, integrity, discipline, wealth of material, striving for power, determination, self-realization, achievement, education, success, responsibility, modesty, stability, spontaneity, tolerance, affection, harmony, consensus, empathy, sustainability, pleasure.

For each value, consider:

- Is the value based on your own conviction or have you inherited it from your parents or other role models? Do the values go back to school or refer to religious influences?
- Does the value conflict with other values in the value hierarchy?
- Does the value conflict with your personal or professional life? Does it contribute more to your successes or your failures?
- What price do you pay for holding on to the value?

Write a short comment on each selected value. For example, in which areas of life you realize the value, what benefits the value has for you and what price you pay for it.

Change the order in your value system. Remove values that don't help you or downgrade them.

### Check your core beliefs

There are a number of techniques and courses available to detect unconscious core beliefs and replace negative core beliefs with positive ones.

With a simple technique, you can check your core beliefs and possibly change them.

1. Consider what are incontrovertible truths for you and document the associated core beliefs. Try to figure out your unconscious core beliefs. By writing them down, the unconscious core beliefs turn into conscious core beliefs and you can question them:

- What are my conscious core beliefs?
- Do I have the feeling that a (possibly still unconscious) core belief is constricting me?
- On the basis of my core beliefs, do I always strive to always be right about certain things?
- Could it be that events in my life are constantly repeating themselves through unconscious core beliefs without me knowing why?
- In which situations do I have unpleasant feelings, what core beliefs could be behind them?

Examples of limiting core beliefs:

- If I say no, I make myself unpopular.
- Only attractive people are successful.
- Everyone is closest to him-/herself.
- If you don't push and control people, they're lazy.
- One cannot find true happiness in this world.

2. Dissolve limiting core beliefs

You can dissolve limiting core beliefs by refuting them with counterexamples and replacing them with new, positive core beliefs.

Formulate the new core belief in a positive way. Not this way: "I'm no longer afraid of people", but rather: "I approach people openly and confidently".

3. Anchor the new core beliefs that you are embracing. Ask yourself:

- What benefits does this core belief offer me?
- Does it really fit with what's important to me?
- Is it in line with my values?
- What impact does it have on my actions and life?

Imagine your future with the new core beliefs. What will change in your life if you live with these new core beliefs for 1, 3, 5, 10 and 20 years? How is your life changing?

### Examples of resolutions / tasks

What insights have you gained? Do you want to correct your worldview? Define resolutions and tasks, e.g.:

- I take half a day off to question my values and core beliefs.

### Literature / Links

- Worldview at Wikipedia: [Link](#)
- How To Change Beliefs. YouTube: [Link](#)
- How to Change Beliefs. 4-Step Neuro-Semantic NLP technique. YouTube: [Link](#)

- How to Spot and Challenge Your Negative Core Beliefs, according to a Therapist: [Link](#)
- Conspiracy Theories and How to Help Family and Friends Who Believe Them: [Link](#)
- Noah Harari: Sapiens - A Brief History of Humankind. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)

**Examples of Worldviews:**

- Naturalistic Worldview: [The Brights](#)
- Humanist Worldview: [Giordano Bruno Stiftung](#)
- Esoteric Worldview: [Wikipedia](#)
- Christian Worldview: [Wikipedia](#)
- Buddhism Worldview: [Wikipedia](#)
- Islam Worldview: [Wikipedia](#)

# Spirituality

## Questions of Meaning, Faith

*Spirituality can help increase your vitality and life satisfaction.*

Spiritual search, questions of meaning, religious faith play an essential role in most people's lives. Studies show that, on average, spiritual people are happier and healthier:

- Spirituality provides inner peace and comfort and helps to cope with fears, especially when facing death.
- In a community of like-believers we feel comfortable and secure.
- Praying or meditation reduces tension and stress hormones, with positive effects on the immune system and health.
- For many, believing in an afterlife is a way to combat the fear of death. It mystifies death and takes away its horror.

On the other hand, intensive engagement with spirituality, religion, faith communities or esotericism can overwhelm the individual and plunge them into a personal crisis.

### Questions of meaning

We humans are living beings who can reflect on ourselves and are aware of their finiteness. That's why we ask ourselves questions of meaning:

- What is the meaning of life?
- Where do I come from, where am I going?
- Is there life after death?
- Is there a higher power?
- How did the universe come into being?

Neither science nor philosophy can provide definitive answers to these important questions.

Most people are looking for meaning in what they do. Without meaning, they lack strength and drive; life becomes dull and empty. Anyone who no longer sees meaning in life can fall into a deep depression.

Examples: Some people believe that the meaning of life is based upon solely in reproduction. Other people believe that it lies in living the happiest and most fulfilling life possible. And still others believe that it is about being the best possible person on earth in order to then go to heaven after death or to be reborn as a better being.

### Religiousness

People put forward hypotheses for everything that could not be explained, from which more than 3000 religions developed, most of which disappeared again. The most widely used religions today are: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism.

Religions provide ready-made answers to the questions of meaning. They are based on very specific teachings and texts that are binding for all believers, e.g. the Bible in Christianity and the Koran in Islam. Religious affiliation is therefore the commitment to a system of thought, belief and action.

Most people are born into a religious tradition and a community of faith. In childhood, one is conditioned by participation in church services, teachings and rituals (e.g. baptism, communion, confession) within the respective religion.

Some people have drastic experiences, such as visions, appearances of God (e.g. near-death experiences, epileptic seizures or under drugs) or experience miracles (such as spontaneous healings) that strengthen their faith.

Religiosity can help individuals with self-doubt, but on another level, it can enslave them even more:

- Demonic images of God, denied sexuality, feelings of guilt or the fear of God's punishment can have a disastrous effect on a person's life.
- Religious people are usually convinced that their religion is the only true and valid one. Religious thinking then carries with it the danger of narrow-mindedness and fundamentalism.

In Western cultures today religion is usually no longer experienced as a traditional, social constraint, as it was for centuries. In the course of their lives, many people realize that their religion no longer fits into today's world, that beliefs regulate the personal sphere, or that the representatives of the religions themselves do not follow the rules (e.g. sex scandals by church representatives). As a result, more and more people are calling themselves spiritual rather than religious and turn away from the churches.

### Spirituality

In contrast to the social and public role of religion in our culture, spirituality means something private. Spirituality stands for the idea of a spiritual connection to the transcendent, the beyond, or infinity.

Spiritual currents often go back to Far Eastern teachings and practices and are often shaped by individual charismatic persons, who are often named after them, such as: [Osho / Bhagwan](#).

Spiritual people are said to have a more positive attitude towards the body, are more emotionally stable and resilient and are more balanced in both positive and negative situations.

Spirituality can also lead to misfortune:

- The search for spiritual experiences can become a drug. It leads to an escape from the reality of everyday life. No more responsibility is taken for one's own life.
- There may be a dependence on a cult, a guru or a charlatan.
- There are people who try to justify all events in their lives with irrational, mystical explanations. They perceive many things as predetermined and many things can be explained on the basis of esoteric ways of thinking (stars, reincarnation or similar). These people are at risk of marginalizing themselves and losing their grip on the ground.

In the meantime, a veritable esoteric industry has emerged, which markets the search for spirituality and in which many charlatans cavort. The source is the offer of Western and Eastern religions, parapsychology, anthroposophy, the New Age with topics such as Reincarnation, Rebirthing, Astronomy, Zen, Tantra, Flying Yogis, Flying Spaghetti Monsters, Angels, Soul, God, Nirvana, Tao, Qi Gong, Enlightenment, Subtle World, Transcendence, Lightworker.

### Atheism

Quite a number of people reject religiosity and spirituality altogether and call themselves atheists or agnostics.

- Atheists are convinced that there is no God and no other supernatural being.
- Agnostics consider the question of whether God exists to be unanswerable and leave it open.

Atheism is seen as a secular alternative to religion. Atheists usually derive their knowledge of the world and man from the natural sciences and their ethical norms mostly from the philosophy of humanism.

Here, too, exaggerated belief in science and experts can lead to the elimination of one's own thinking and the denial of one's own responsibility.

**Summary:** *Everyone has to decide for themselves whether they want to answer the important questions of life for themselves or whether they join a religion or spiritual movement and follow their beliefs.*

### Self-assessment

Evaluate your spirituality/religiosity. What did/does religiosity mean to you? What is it like today? How has your attitude changed over the course of your life?

Be inspired by the following statements:

- I want to get closer to my own "Higher Self".
- I have a crisis of meaning or a crisis of faith because an event has shaken my faith and meaning in life.
- I consider dealing with topics such as karma, reincarnation, afterlife, angels, higher self, meditation to be important for my life.
- I feel that I am in good hands in my faith community / church. My faith community gives me sense of safety and security.
- I have had a spiritual/religious vision. My life has changed because of it.
- Believing and praying helps me in difficult situations.
- I can no longer tolerate my life being dictated by religious rules and dogmas.
- I feel guilty when I violate church teachings and regulations.
- I'm still a church member because I don't want to miss out on the rituals (baptism, wedding, etc.).
- I'm still a church member because it's a tradition for my family. But I don't really have any connection to it anymore.
- I consider religious belief to be an outdated relic from the past.
- I can be religious without a church.
- I don't need religion in my life and I have no relation to faith
- I am a believer/spiritual person and strong in my faith. – or – I am an atheist/agnostic – religious and spiritual experience do not play a major role in my life.

How would you sum up your faith?

- I have found my attitude towards spirituality and faith.
- I have clarified the "questions of meaning" for myself.

### What can I do?

The seeker is offered a wide spectrum from philosophy to the most diverse religions. It is not possible to give general advice.

Some people go on pilgrimage to have spiritual experiences. Others take a break in a monastery. Others, on the other hand, travel to Tibet or India to deal with Eastern religions.

Meditation is consistently considered in many cultures to be a fundamental and a central mind-expanding exercise. It is recommended as a lifelong exercise.

## Meditation

Meditation wants to let people come to rest. You should let go, find a new approach to yourself and possibly open yourself to the transcendent.

## Resolutions and tasks

What insights have you gained? Do you want to make a difference?

### Examples of resolutions and tasks

- Learn to meditate
- Explore my inner self. Go on a retreat in Buddhist or Christian monasteries for a few days or weeks.
- Take a pilgrimage, e.g. on the Camino de Santiago.
- Join a religious community
- Quit the Church.

## Literature / Links:

- Stephan Bodian: Meditation For Dummies. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Pilgrimage Destinations: [Link](#)
- Religion in the United States. Link to Wikipedia: [Link](#)
- Noah Harari: Sapiens - A Brief History of Humankind. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Richard Dawkins: The God Delusion. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Parascience: [Link](#)



## Self-image

### External-image

*Man is the most mysterious thing in nature... (Pascal: Thoughts)*

Everyone has an image of him-/herself. Your self-image encompasses the characteristics of your personality, character, and essence. Your self-image controls how you think, feel, and behave.

If you have a realistic self-image, you know the answers to the following questions:

- What are my main character traits?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- What is really important to me?
- How do I come across to other people?

Having a realistic self-image and knowing your strengths and weaknesses is particularly important when choosing education, studying and careers, when applying for jobs, when looking for a partner and also being in a partnership.

The foundations for your self-image were laid early in childhood. Your current self-image has developed from your upbringing, your relationships with other people and the sum of your previous life experiences.

However, our self-image often does not correspond to reality. Many people underestimate themselves; others overestimate themselves. A negative self-image creates feelings of inferiority and leads to a lack of self-worth (see the topic: Self-confidence).

Our self-image is based on our self-perception and stands in contrast to the image of others, so how third parties perceive us. Self-image and public-images are rarely congruent. Their discrepancy often leads to misunderstandings or conflicts.

In addition to the real self-image, most people also have an ideal self-image, thus an idea of how they would like to be.

For many people, their self-image offers protection, while others project their desires and hopes into their self-image. And still others have not yet registered their own developments and changes, remain in a static self-image and are thus unable to exploit their potential.

Work on your self-image. Through self-reflection and feedback from friends and family, you should regularly review your self-image and adjust it to your respective findings.

**Summary:** *If you change your self-image positively, you and your life will change positively.*

### Self-assessment

Do you have a realistic, positive self-image? Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- I am aware of my self-image.
- I have a positive/negative self-image of myself.
- I know how I come across to other people.
- I know how other people see me.

- I know my strengths and weaknesses.
- I know my successes and I am proud of my achievements.
- I know my energies and how to harness them.
- I accept what I can't change, e.g. my age, my past.
- I live in peace with myself.
- I'm afraid of real self-knowledge.

How do you sum up your self-image?

- I know my personality and my character.
- I know my strengths and weaknesses.
- I know how to address other people.

### What can I do?

Explore your self-image. For self-help, simple tools are presented below. They serve to get to know yourself better.

Characterize yourself. What are your particular personality traits?

- Are you more introverted or more extroverted?
- Are you more practical or theoretical?
- Are you more intellectually or more emotionally oriented?
- Are you more spontaneous or do you take a more planned approach?

There are a number of tried-and-tested personality tests that will help you answer these questions (see below: Literature / Links).

Which rather **positive** personality traits are particularly pronounced in you?

- Examples of more positive personality traits: active, adaptable, persistent, enthusiastic, resilient, popular, robust, assertive, ambitious, honest, empathetic, determined, success-conscious, hardworking, flexible, progressive, friendly, educated, patient, calm, fair, appreciated, skillful, health-conscious, generous, thorough, helpful, polite, humorous, impulsive, communicative, conservative, sociable, creative, performance-oriented, capable of learning, courageous, thoughtful, orderly, open, risk-taking, calm, self-confident, self-critical, sensitive, careful, spontaneous, sporty, striving, sympathetic, loyal, tolerant, uncomplicated, reasonable, understanding, trusting, versatile, careful, daring, cosmopolitan, strong-willed, determined, reliable.

Which rather **negative** personality traits are particularly pronounced in you?

- Examples of rather negative personality traits: stubborn, obstinate, arrogant, haughty, aggressive, moody, depressed, demanding, selfish, opinionated, conceited, cowardly, lazy, bitchy, aloof, silly, fearful, authoritarian, possessive, deceitful, vain, inhibited, stingy, greedy, irascible, greedy, , gullible, resentful, messy, unworldly.

### Conduct a personal strengths/weaknesses analysis.

The app offers the "Strengths / Weaknesses Analysis" tool. The button to the tool can be found under "Tools".

### Sketch your self-image.

Answer the following questions:

- What are my skills, strengths, talents and desires?
- What am I particularly good at?

- What do I particularly enjoy?
- What topics do I have special knowledge about?
- What success stories have I had in my life? What skills helped me with this?
- What do I get praised for every now and then?
- What do I want to spend my time on?
- What kind of work have I particularly liked so far?
- What have I learned from past failures and defeats?
- What can I do better than others?
- What are my salient qualities?
- What aspects of my personality are particularly endearing?
- What are the weak points and deficits I often have been made aware of?

### External-image

In order to achieve a realistic self-image, ask people close to you to characterize you. Sketch your external-image from this feedback. The clearer the self-image is, and the better it corresponds to the external images, the clearer the difference to the desired image can be seen. Focus on the essentials. From this, you can then derive personal development steps.

Try to find out what you might be overestimating or underestimating yourself in. Ask the questions to people close to you. Compare your self-image with how others perceive you.

### Summarize your findings

- What qualities and skills do you think you have?
- What special qualities and skills make you stand out?
- How do your family, friends, acquaintances and colleagues rate you? What qualities and skills are attributed to you?
- What weaknesses or deficits do you see in yourself? How can you turn them off?

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? What impact does your new self-image have on your life?

### Example of resolutions and tasks, e.g.:

- For my new self-image, I write down memorable affirmations, sentences, convictions for every area of life.
- I ask my friends to create an external image of me.
- In the future, I will give more importance to my strengths and talents in my areas of life.

### Literature / Links

- Carol Dweck: Mindset - Changing The Way You think To Fulfil Your Potential. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Self-image - Link to Wikipedia: [Link](#)

### Personality tests

- Open-Source Psychometrics Project – Recommended Tests: [Link](#)
- Discover your personality type: [Link](#)
- Personal SWOT Analysis - MindTools: [Link](#)

## Self-confidence

### Self-consciousness

*With healthy self-confidence you will have an easier time in many situations in life and will be more successful.*

A self-confident person is aware of his/her self-worth and has so much self-assurance and self-confidence that he/she approach their future relatively optimistically, fearlessly, carelessly and carefree.

A healthy self-confidence is therefore one of the most important prerequisites for a happy and successful life. Your self-confidence determines

- your attitude towards life,
- your behavior,
- your body language,
- your effect on other people.

Good self-confidence helps in many life situations, such as job applications, salary negotiations, professional careers, and finding a partner.

However, self-confidence is not innate, but is shaped in childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. It is shaped by past and educational experiences, fears and beliefs (see topic: "Worldview") that are stored in the unconscious.

Overcritical parenting and frustrations on the path of life can lead to an underdevelopment of self-confidence. Parents can block the development of healthy self-confidence if they criticize their children a lot, don't trust them or overprotect them. Teasing, humiliation, and bullying in adolescence can greatly contribute to low self-respect and self-esteem. The resulting fears, feelings of inferiority and guilt thus prevent a healthy development of self-confidence.

Many people would like to have more self-confidence. They admire other people for their brash and open demeanor, but are themselves inhibited or insecure. People with low self-confidence often have doubts about themselves and suffer from great shyness. They have a tendency to always take themselves back and put their own wants and needs aside.

But an exaggerated self-confidence can also be problematic. People with excessive self-confidence often overestimate their abilities and performances and are hardly able to assess themselves realistically. They are often perceived by those around them as arrogant and snotty.

**Summary:** *Self-confidence is determined by your inner self and can only be changed through intensive work on yourself.*

### Self-assessment

Evaluate your self-confidence. Identify your need for action.

Be inspired by the following statements:

- I approach other people with fear.
- I'm having trouble approaching people.
- I am insecure and afraid of my own courage.
- I get stage fright easily.

- My self-confidence depends on the judgment of those around me.
- I'm afraid that others will see negative qualities in me.
- I'm afraid of authorities.
- I like to surround myself with insecure people.
- I don't have much confidence in myself and get nervous quickly.
- I have many inhibitions (inhibitions of possession, power, sex, recognition).
- I can't really enforce my demands.

How do you sum up your self-confidence?

- I have a healthy self-confidence.
- I have a positive attitude towards myself.

### What can I do?

Since many people suffer from a lack of self-confidence, there are a huge number of guides and courses on this topic, e.g. at the adult education centers (VHS). The courses usually take place in the form of behavioral training to overcome inner inhibitions. Tricky social situations are trained in role-play and then tested in real life situations. In the case of more severe disorders, psychotherapeutic counselling should be considered.

### Self-help:

You can also train and build self-confidence yourself:

First of all, you should get to know yourself well and be aware of your characteristics, strengths and weaknesses (see topic: Self-image). You should become aware of your own personal history and learn to accept yourself as you are. Then you can practice self-assurance in small steps and build your self-confidence by challenging yourself to leave usual patterns and ways of thinking, to express your own opinion, to take your life into your own hands - towards a self-determined, self-confident life.

A simple technique to boost self-confidence is to keep a problem/success diary. Over a period of a few weeks, you will document situations in which you have shown low self-confidence and also situations in which you have consciously improved your self-confidence in the problem/success diary.

Example: On Monday I did / didn't get my salary expectations in the personnel interview with my boss. I have / have not been able to present my commitment and my successes well enough.

By keeping the diary, you deal with your problems much more consciously and you get to know yourself much better and thus promote your self-confidence. Take a look at your diary from time to time and celebrate your personal successes.

The app offers the "Diary" tool for this purpose. The button to the tool can be found under "Tools".

### Tasks and Intensions

What insights have you gained? Do you want to develop further? Define resolutions and tasks, e.g.:

- I want to strengthen my self-confidence and keep a problem/success diary for four weeks
- I will read a self-confidence guide and do the exercises.
- I will book and attend a self-confidence education course

### Literature / Links

- Self-confidence. Link to Wikipedia: [Link](#)
- Susan Jeffers: Feel the Fear... and Do It Anyway: Dynamic Techniques for Turning Fear, Indecision, and Anger into Power, Action, and Love. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Strengthen self-confidence: the most effective tips and exercises: [Link](#)

# Emotions

## Feelings, Moods

*You are solely responsible for your emotions, feelings and moods.*

Emotions are subjective feelings at the moment. The main emotions include: joy, anger, disgust, sadness, fear, hate, surprise. Furthermore, there are a number of sensations that we call feelings, such as feelings of happiness, feelings of love, feelings of pleasure, feelings of guilt, feelings of inferiority, feelings of envy.

Many emotions go back to our evolutionary history. They are innate and serve as a protective and survival mechanism. For example, the fear of spiders and snakes was a survival advantage for our ancestors. Other emotions are based on our stored experiences of positive or negative experiences. The memories of these experiences are usually very vague. However, they are enough to trigger an emotional reaction at lightning speed, more or less unconsciously and uncontrollably.

What we are and what we determine to a large extent our emotions. Emotions:

- express themselves through certain physical sensations such as warmth, blushing, heartbeat or breathing,
- influence our decisions and actions. Our decisions are only partly rational, but to a greater extent they are influenced by our emotional evaluation system,
- show up in our body language, e.g. through tension or a face distorted by fear,
- convey important information about our emotional status and are essential for our interpersonal interactions and actions,
- can be appropriate and helpful, but can also be inappropriate, destructive, and neurotic.

Sometimes we are misled by our feelings. For example, in a certain situation, we are overcome by unfounded fear that controls our thoughts and actions. Our perception is reduced to what our feeling dictates.

Some people are overwhelmed by their emotions or feel at the mercy of their feelings. If too many emotions are pent up, an emotional outburst occurs. A person in such a highly emotional situation appears uncontrolled and sometimes even threatening.

Emotionally sensitive people are particularly sensitive. They can be more vulnerable than others, get stressed more quickly, and face self-doubt more often.

Incorrect handling of emotions can make sick:

- The suppression of emotions can lead to tension, imbalance and stress and ultimately to chronic, psychosomatic illnesses.
- People who feel at the mercy of their emotions suffer from anxiety disorders or become addicted (food addiction, drug addiction) or behave aggressively.

Negative emotions such as fear or anger are not inherently bad, because through them people ultimately learn to survive, recognize dangers and avoid them. Stress also fulfills a useful function, because an active life requires a certain level of positive stress.

Unfortunately, we associate many valuable things in life with negative feelings. You can make positive changes in your life when you realize that you are responsible for your good and bad feelings:

- Don't let your emotions dominate you and don't suppress your feelings. If you accept negative emotions and are willing to feel them, they will gradually disappear on their own.

- Be aware that you are not at the mercy of your feelings, but that you can do something about them yourself. For example, if you get angry, it's up to you whether you freak out or remain respectful.
- You can certainly practice using reason to regulate your feelings and thus get unwanted or excessive emotions under control.

Your emotions are always dependent on the thoughts with which you evaluate a triggering event. Thus, a single thought can turn a negative feeling into a positive one. Example: A negative feeling towards your partner turns into a positive one when you realize that your partner is currently having a problem himself/herself.

**Summary:** *The more pleasant than unpleasant emotions, feelings, and moods you allow, the more comfortable you will feel, and the happier you will be.*

### Self-assessment

Explore the intensity of your feelings towards different things and people. Identify your need for change.

Be inspired by the following statements/questions:

- What emotions am I feeling right now (anger, hate, love, aggression, sadness, anger, depression)?
- How well do I know my own emotions?
- How well can I perceive the feelings of others?
- Are my emotional reactions proportionate to the stimulus?
- Am I allowing my feelings too much control over my person?
- Am I capable of self-control?
- Am I perhaps not capable of any emotions?
- Do I suffer from sleep disorders, pain that cannot be detailed, an inexplicable pressure on the chest or panic-like feelings of anxiety?

How do you sum up your emotional state:

- I am balanced and emotionally stable
- I am neither anxious nor insecure and I am not easily thrown off balance.

### What can I do?

Severe emotional disorders require therapeutic treatment. However, there are some simple techniques that can help you manage your emotions better on a daily basis.

#### **The ABC Method by Dr. Albert Ellis**

According to the ABC method, our feelings and behavior are largely controlled by how we mentally evaluate a situation. Our evaluations often result from our conscious and unconscious beliefs. These can often be irrational in the sense of inappropriate, unrealistic, not expedient.

When using the ABC technique, you can consciously restructure your own thought patterns and thus change your own feelings and ultimately your actions.

An example of how to use the method can be found here:

In the event of a negative emotional event, e.g. "my partner criticizes me", proceed in 3 steps:



**A** (activating event): The current situation.

- Analyze your current situation as objectively as possible.

**B** (belief system): Your evaluative thoughts about the situation.

- Determine how you feel, e.g. angry, anxious, jealous.
- Now ask yourself, how do you want to feel?
- What conclusions do you want to draw from this?

**C** (consequences): Your feelings and actions.

- Determine how you want to react to your evaluation and how you will react in response.

Even if you cannot significantly change the situations and events that cause your negative emotions, you can still use this method to change your perception and evaluation of them and, for example, react with less fear, anger or panic.

### **Diary of Feelings**

The "Diary of Feelings" is a technique that helps you improve your self-awareness and self-acceptance.

Take time each day to reflect on your feelings and write down your insights. Through self-awareness, many things become clearer and the confusion of thoughts becomes organized.

Journaling helps you reflect on your feelings and thus get a better handle on them and process fears and confusion better.

The app offers the "Diary" tool for this purpose. The button to the tool can be found in the app under "Tools".

### **Stopping Technique**

Don't continue to pursue your feelings, but instead try to say "stop" to yourself internally and then look at the situation from a new perspective.

Regardless of whether our thoughts correspond to facts or not, our feelings arise automatically as a result of the thoughts. Positive thoughts lead to positive feelings, negative thoughts lead to negative feelings.

### **Relaxation Techniques**

Relaxation techniques such as autogenic training and meditation help to perceive feelings better and to simply observe feelings without intention without being driven by them.

## **Tasks and Intensions**

What insights have you gained? Define resolutions and tasks, e.g.:

- Keep a diary of feelings
- Learn the ABC method at an adult education center

## **Literature / Links**

- Albert Ellis: Overcoming Destructive Beliefs, Feelings, and Behaviors. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- David D. Burns: Feeling Good - The New Mood Therapy. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)
- Hale Dwoskin: The Sedona Method: Your Key to Lasting Happiness, Success, Peace and Emotional Well-Being. Link to Amazon: [Link](#)