

# GAINING CLARITY

## OPENING TO THE NEXT CHAPTER

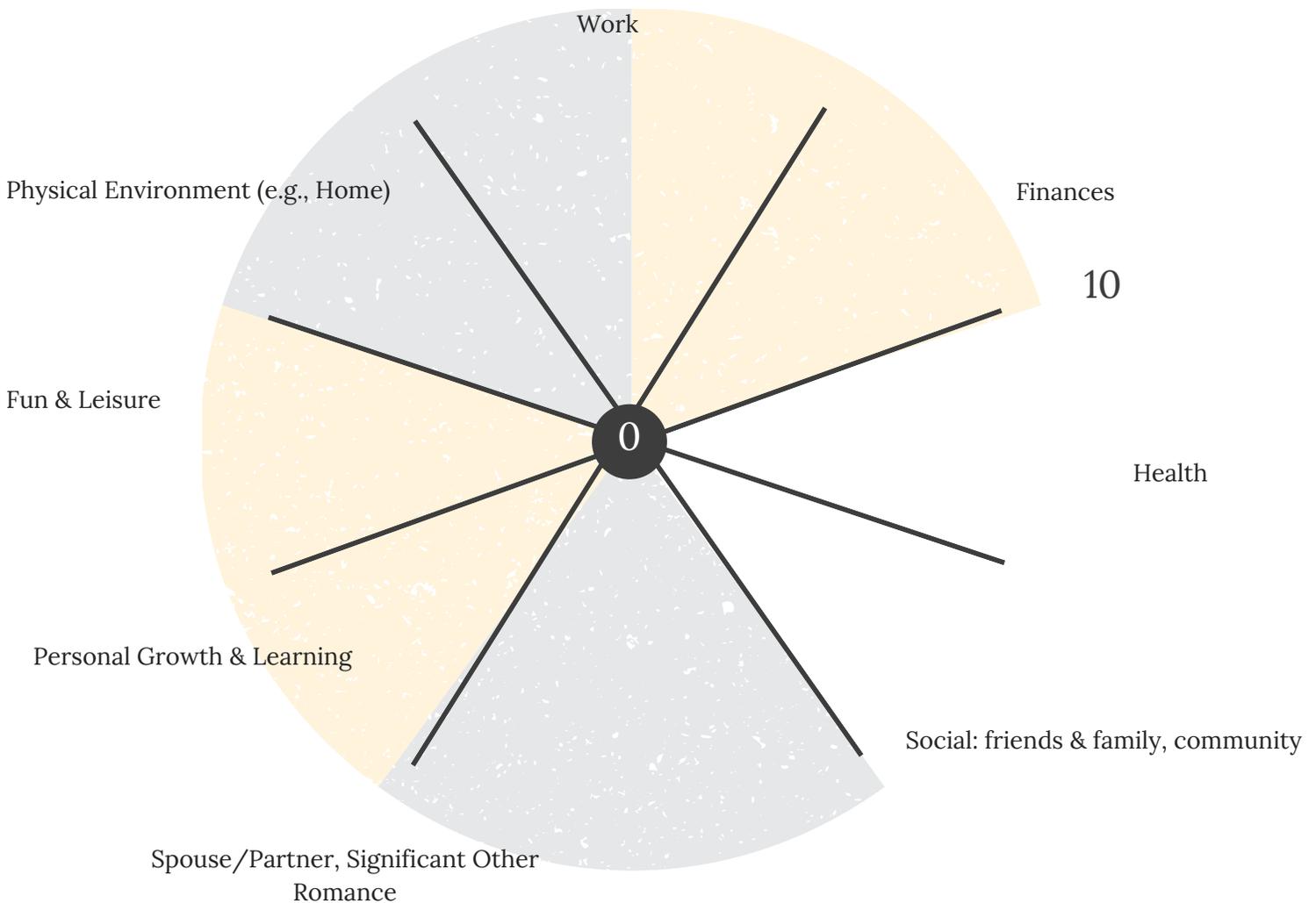
Life doesn't require that we have all the answers. It does help when we allow ourselves the time to ask the questions and give ourselves room to hear the answers. The practice of mindfulness gives us the mechanism to focus on the present moment without judgement. By letting go of the past and any expectation of the future, it frees us to open to possibility. We can then create from the potential before us.

These exercises are intended as creative thought starters to foster contemplation as you navigate to the next chapter of life mindfully and intentionally.

### I. WHERE ARE YOU NOW IN LIFE?

...and how will retirement impact it?

It can be tempting to think of retirement as a vacation where the challenges of life are suddenly erased with the change in daily routine but that isn't reality. If areas of your life are out of balance before retirement, alignment isn't guaranteed once you leave your job.



# Wheel of Life Instructions

The 8 sections in the Wheel represent aspects of Life.

- Change, split, or rename any category so that it's meaningful and represents the vision of life you want.

"Health" includes emotional and physical well-being, as well as overall fitness and nutrition and emotional balance.

Where does spiritual well-being or faith fit on your Wheel?

Do you have an area or a need for security, service, leadership, or integrity? To some individuals, these are more than values. They are categories of life management. Create your Wheel depending on how you organize your daily life.

- Use the center of the wheel as 0 and the outer edge as 10. Rank your **level of satisfaction** with each area -- 0 to 10 -- by drawing a straight or curved line to create a new outer edge.
- The new perimeter of the circle represents the state of your existing "Wheel of Life". Are you balanced for a smooth ride?

## Reflections

As you look at the Wheel consider the following:

1. Any surprises?
2. How do you feel about your opportunities in life now as you look at your Wheel?
3. Would you like to change anything?
4. How would you like to spend time in these areas?
5. If there are changes you'd like, can you make them on your own? What is needed?



# Integrating the External & Internal

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## IIa. EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE NEW CHAPTER

### **External Details | Practical Facts**

Practical facts still allow us to utilize mindfulness. It is only possible to exist in the present moment. It is precisely staying in the present that releases the anxiety that often accompanies this stage of retirement planning. There is no judgement, only assessment, and an allowance for what exists in the present moment. It becomes a creative exercise as well as practical planning.

From there, future planning is undertaken as a creative endeavor and a following of curiosity.

#### BEGIN:

Spell out the current state and projected post-retirement circumstance before leaving your work:

##### Finances:

current state and projected post-retirement circumstance

##### Medical coverage:

anticipated post-retirement coverage and needs

##### Housing:

will you stay in your current home?

if you move, will you relocate to another area?

if you stay in your current home, does it need repair or maintenance?

##### Daily routines:

what will end?

how will you organize your time?

who will you impact with your schedule?

##### Support systems:

who do you have in your life?

family

friends

social network

# Integrating the External & Internal, cont'd.

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## **IIb. INTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE NEW CHAPTER** **Internal Sustenance | Feeding Your Inner Light**

HOW WILL YOU FEED YOUR INNER LIGHT?

Consider what your passions are and how you can encourage them

How do you envision yourself growing personally as you age?  
Do you have ideas of how to make that happen?

In what ways will you sustain your intellectual skills?

How can you be connected to your loved ones?

In what way would you like to share your gifts with others?

What will you do for fun?

# Finding Answers

- III. What do you want the next chapter to look like? Mindfulness, meditation, and Daily Practices that incorporate them can help you find answers.
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## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why am I leaving my job?
2. How do I see myself physically when I am older?
3. What will I do with my time?
4. How will my life change?
5. How will I feel differently?
6. What do I want to accomplish before I leave my employment?
7. What can I do before I leave my work to make the biggest difference after?

# My Life List

IV. If you've never made a wish list of places you want to go, books you want to read, movies you want to see, this is your chance! Write it down and dream big!

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PLACES TO SEE  
WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?

**This isn't a practical budgeting exercise, just dream!**

BOOKS TO READ

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THINGS TO DO

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MORE TO LEARN

# Explore Your Passion

New life chapters present fresh slates to explore passions as well as rekindle old interests. It isn't unusual to forget some of what we once held dearest to us, or what lit up our very hearts with joy. This exercise isn't about digging into the why we forget... it's about inviting the potential and the curiosity to develop your next chapter. This exercise is about gathering clues.

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*Invite curiosity and follow it*

**What are your favorite books? Authors whose books you pre-order or read more than once?**

**Quick: list your most-watched movies or shows**

**Where do you like to go most of all? Do you have a "happy place" -- real or imagined?**

**First-choice songs -- old and new! Any lyrics you particularly adore? Capture the words here**

Now look at your responses for all of the above. Do you see a common theme that connects them? For example, is there a common element of water -- perhaps your favorite books are set by a lake or ocean and your songs refer to boating, with your happy place a cabin at the shore? Connect your dots.

# Explore Your Passion, cont'd.

*Invite curiosity and follow it!*

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WRITE ANY COMMON THREADS OF CONTENT HERE:

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Do you have any thoughts (i.e., dreams) of activities that you just *might* want to do if you had the *time, money* or *x*? Write them down. (you know what's coming... that "if" will be abolished!)

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What did you love to do when you were younger?

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What topics do you talk about -- a lot -- to *everyone*?

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What do you *look forward* to doing?

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If you died tomorrow, what would you regret not doing?

# Explore Your Passion, cont'd

*Invite curiosity and follow it!*

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Do you take pride in being able to do something? What is it?

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What are you good at? It might seem obvious and effortless to you so don't think too hard about this. Answer quickly:

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What scares you but in a secretly exciting way? For example, are you terrified of heights but can't resist looking at tall bridges or watching cliff divers?

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*Enough thinking. Time to play! Here's a creative exploration.*

Make a vision board. Use Pinterest or get your hands busy and cut up pictures from catalogs and magazines. Put them on paper or a large art board. What are you looking for?... anything that catches your interest in a vivid way and hooks into your heart and soul. The objective is to see what pattern emerges when you're done. Repetitive images will alert you to where your subconscious is leading.

Now, put everything aside. Take time and allow your thoughts room. Let them grow in your subconscious. Take days, weeks, months. Take all the time you need. Allow your subconscious to beckon you and signal you, showing you what makes your heart sing. Your challenge? Follow that passion! Take action on it!