

# Contemplation of a Mandarin



MINDFULNESS



EXERCISE



5 MIN



INDIVIDUAL WORK

Many people who tried this seemingly simple exercise of contemplating the fruit for the first time said it was one of the most difficult they had to do. They found it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time and to stay really in touch with themselves, which is a fundamental condition for being present. Contemplating the fruit is a training that develops the ability to practice presence.

## Goal

The contemplation of a mandarin is to show you what the state of mindfulness is. Mindfulness - conscious attention, mindfulness practiced regularly lowers stress levels, allows you to cope better with challenges, and improves health and mental resilience. When you advance in practice, train your attention by doing everyday activities - when brushing your teeth, washing the dishes or cleaning, focus on the activity and the "here and now". It is great for sharpening the senses and allows us to experience signals from the body and the outside.

Conscious presence is an element of charisma and an instrument that influences the stability of well-being.

## A word of advice

When we want to practice presence in our interactions with others, but the attention goes away from time to time and the mind starts to sink back into thoughts, a helpful technique for immediately returning to presence (recommended in the book *The Myth of Charisma*) is to focus attention on...the toes for a moment.

## Author/ Inspiration

Author: Monika Górska | COEDRO Coaching Education Development

## Instructions

*Place a mandarin in front of you.*

*Choose a quiet, comfortable place, sit down, take a few calm breaths, feel the air enter through your nostrils, notice the movement of your chest and abdomen. Check that you are sitting comfortably, still breathing slowly. Relax your whole body, directing your attention to the relaxation from the toes to the top of your head, successively paying attention to the sensations from there.*

*Look at the mandarin lying in front of you. What does it look like? Where does the light fall on it? Take the fruit in your hand and look at it closely, as if you were seeing it for the first time. Focus only on it. Don't pay attention to your surroundings at first. Look at the skin of the mandarin, any hollows or bumps. Turn it in your hand; try to feel its density, texture, and temperature to the touch. Smell, lick, and press the peel. Notice everything - the size, the colours, the smell, the softness, and the sounds it makes when touched, the essential oils released under pressure.*

*Begin to peel the mandarin slowly and ponderously, viewing the peel from the outside and inside. Separate then, particle, focusing on each part - how it separates from its neighbour, what fibres are seen in the process. Take a bite of one of the particles, focusing on the taste sensation - the amount of juice, its flavour; feel the taste with every taste bud. Swallow, feel the bite make its way from your mouth to your stomach. Note in your mind what you feel - in your hands, in your whole body, all your senses, etc.*

*Then put down the mandarin and pay attention to what sounds start to come to you. What colours, what scents? Try to combine all these impressions without leaving out any of them. Not even the ones of the bitten fruit.*

*After the exercise, describe all your impressions and reflections.*

# The Wheel of Well-Being



WELL-BEING



EXERCISE



25-30 MIN



INDIVIDUAL WORK

Your current well-being is a product of the balance between the challenges that life brings and the resources required to deal with them. With well-being it is like with health and harmony. It cannot be achieved to stop there, because we are always being influenced by opportunities and challenges. A good life is something to strive for and this requires being proactive and reflecting on whether we are usually doing what gives joy, fulfilment and satisfaction.

## Goal

The exercise is designed to make you aware of the status quo. It helps you answer the question which of the foundations of well-being satisfy you and what you need to take care of in order to maintain balance and enjoy health, well-being and feel satisfaction in social relationships.

## A word of advice

Although achieving well-being requires a proactive approach, over-monitoring the state of happiness makes it difficult to feel it. Do the Wheel of Well-Being exercise to gain awareness of what influences and enhances your sense of well-being. However, do not use it to put any pressure on yourself.

## Author

Monika Górska | COEDRO

## Instructions

Using the wheel technique you can look at the different foundations of well-being. The balance of the individual elements influences its stability. So check what your current state is by rating your level of satisfaction with the stability and power of a particular pillar on a scale from 1 (imbalance, no satisfaction) to 10 (full satisfaction).

- Pillar P - Positive emotions.

How often do you feel joy, inspiration, emotional freedom and security at the same time? Do you feel optimism and hope towards the future, satisfaction and pride relating to your past?

- Pillar E - Engagement.

How much flow experience do you have? How often do you find yourself involved in your work with a sense of empowerment, energy and even getting wings to fly?

- Pillar R - Relationships.

Which feelings accompany you more often - feelings of loneliness or fear or satisfaction with your contacts, relations with family, friends, neighbours?

- Pillar M - Sense of Meaning.

Do you know what makes sense to you? Do you know what you derive a sense of purpose and meaning from in your life? How would you rate the level of satisfaction of following your own path that gives meaning to your life and your choices?

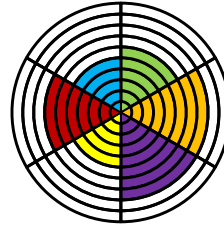
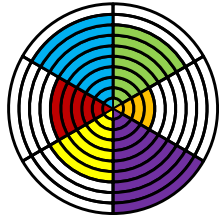
- Pillar A - Accomplishments/Achievements.

Are you satisfied with your achievements? Do you have a sense of autonomy, a belief in yourself to take on challenges?

- Pillar V - Vitality.

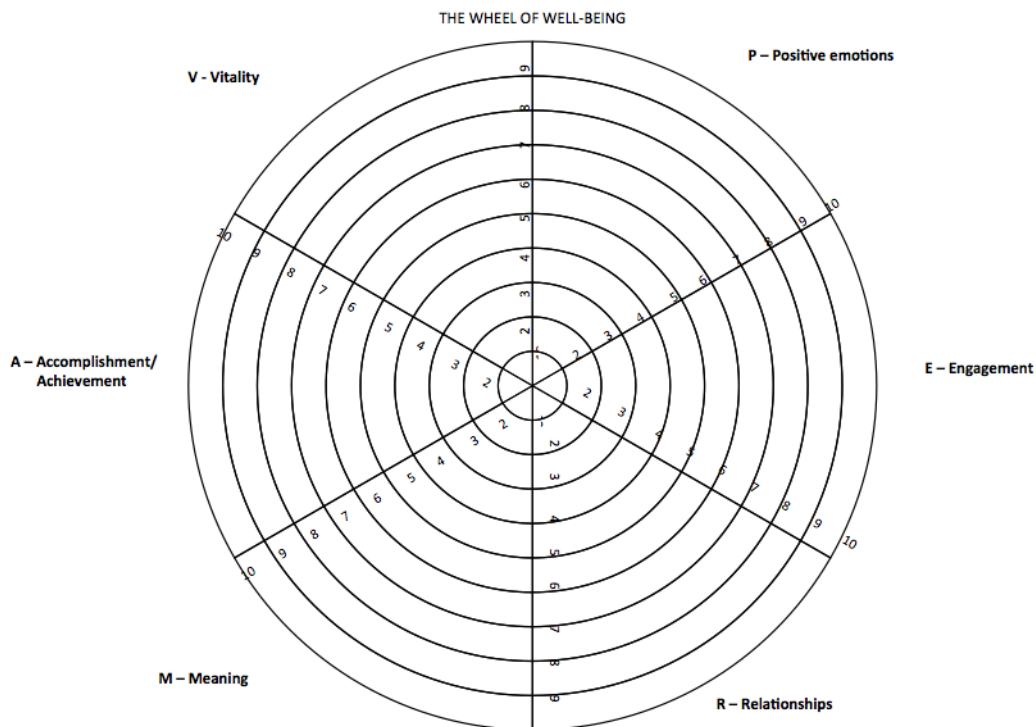
How do you feel? What is your energy level? How do you assess your lifestyle - balance between work and leisure, healthy eating, sleep, movement?

Mark your answers in the appropriate part of the circle by colouring the appropriate level. Your wheel of well-being may look like the examples below (in both examples the pillars are not balanced).



Once you have completed your circle (below) take a look at it. In what areas do you lack balance?

Analyse each area.



Answer the questions:

1. What are your thoughts? What did you discover?
2. What do you see as the most important thing to increase your well-being?
3. What seems most urgent to you to increase your well-being?
4. Strengthening which pillar can make the others more stable? (e.g. improving vitality can have a good effect on increasing engagement, positive emotions on improving relationships, etc.)
5. How do you think your current level of well-being affects your pupils?
6. Consider how you can help your pupils understand what well-being is and how they can influence it?

# Effective Self-Help

The following advice from the Headington Institute website (<https://www.headington-institute.org>) can provide a handy guide to self-help and developing resilience. Look into it regularly.

You will never reach the level of taking care of yourself to lead a stress-free life. However, there is much you can do to mitigate stress reactions.

No single technique will relieve you of all your stress, but paying attention to the following three areas of taking care of yourself will increase your resilience, understood as your ability to cope less uncomfortably with greater stress, and your flexibility as your ability to 'bounce back' especially after a stressful or traumatic event.

Areas of self-help:

## **Physical**

- Regular exercise
- Sleep
- Healthy eating
- Drinking enough water
- Humour and laughter
- Limitation of alcohol consumption
- Pilates, yoga, Thai chi, etc.
- Relaxation techniques (muscle relaxation, diaphragmatic breathing, visualisation)
- Massages, Jacuzzi, sauna, etc.
- Repetitive activities (such as cross-stitching, walking, drawing and cooking)

## **Emotional and relationship**

- Nurturing relationships
- Regular contact with family/friends
- Conversations
- Humour
- Constant support group
- Reflection: keeping a diary, writing, poetry
- Creative activities such as drawing, sculpting, cooking, painting and photography
- Movies, books, music
- Having balanced priorities
- Understanding traumatic stress and realistic expectations
- Taking advice (e.g. from a mentor)

## **Spiritual**

- Knowing your values: Where do you find meaning and purpose in life?
- Participation in a community with meaning and purpose
- Regular: prayers, reading, meditation
- Spiritually meaningful conversations
- Singing or listening to inspiring music
- Contact with religious leaders or inspirational persons
- Time spent with art, nature or music
- Loneliness

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