
Jessica Holmes

Mental Health: The Good, The Bad, and The Funny

Hi again folks! Here are some takeaways from our talk:

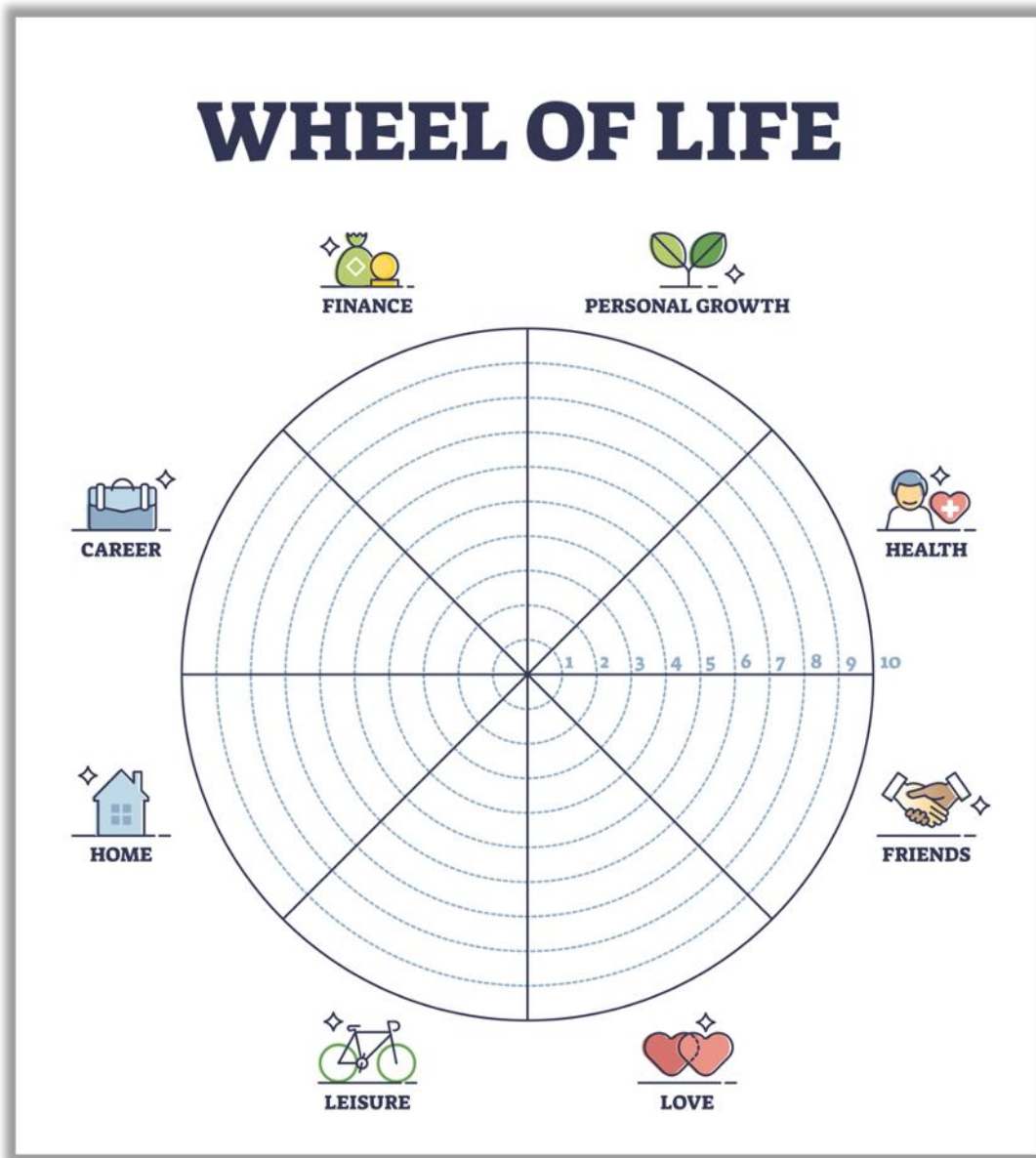
1. Small, sustainable changes are the ones you're most likely to stick with. Tortoises for the win!
2. "Languishing" refers to that fuzzy sense of overwhelm or burnout that's so common these days. Exerting brief, intense physical or mental energy with Tabata or sudoku can reengage you.
3. Create your own mental health oasis with meditation. Try an app like *Insight Timer* or *Calm* to start.
4. Prioritize books/shows/ideas that make you laugh. Humor builds resilience and there's comfort in learning to laugh it off. Sometimes we're just "paying for the story".
5. When stress strikes, take four deep breaths (in for 4 seconds, hold for 7, out slowly for 8) to reset your body and mind. Then list a person, place, and memory you're grateful for.
6. Set a daily intention for the qualities you want to put into the world (for me it's fun & kindness). Living in line with your values deepens your sense of fulfillment & purpose.
7. Present evidence once to avoid ruminating.
8. Set the timer function on your social media apps. Doom scrolling may seem like a benign pastime, but it's been shown to contribute to anxiety and depression, especially among youth.
9. Get an "emotional divorce" from situations & relationships that drain you. You can still be courteous while protecting your boundaries. We are not everyone's cup of tea and that's ok.
10. Your wellbeing matters. If you are going through a hard time, reach out to someone who cares or call a crisis line. I have. They work! Find one here: <https://yourlifecounts.org/find-help/>

Burnout and languishing are temporary reactions to stressful situations. They can ease up when the situation is resolved. Depression is a mood disorder that has a more complicated healing process. The Mayo Clinic defines depression as having at least five of the following symptoms most of the day, every day, for at least two weeks:

- Feelings of sadness
- No pleasure in normal activities
- Lack of energy
- Slowed thinking
- Anxiety
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Angry outbursts
- Trouble sleeping
- Changes in appetite
- Trouble making decisions
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Unexplained physical problems

Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about your mental health. It's hard to take that first step, but worth it! And if you know someone who is struggling, resist the urge to offer advice. Instead, listen, validate what they've shared and, if you're so inclined, ask: "*How can I help?*" Being a good listener goes a long way.

This Wheel of Life is a simple way to check in with yourself. Measure your fulfillment in each area on a scale of 1 to 10. Are there areas you're excited to spend more energy on? Areas you find draining where you'd like to step back or try a new approach? Sections you'd like to omit altogether or add? Go for it. This is your life and you're the boss of it.



To learn more about wellbeing in an uplifting way, check out my funny mental health memoir *Depression The Comedy*. Thanks so much for joining me for our talk. I wish you wellness & laughter till we meet again.

