

flourish

PERSONAL GROWTH

WORKBOOK

Flourish Life Assessment



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INTRODUCTION

This workbook will help you figure out what it means to flourish in your life - to build a vision of how you'd like to travel it.

There are many moments in life when this can be useful. Here are a few examples:

- ✎ **You've "done well" in life so far but are not feeling deeply happy or fulfilled.** You may have achieved 'success' in various ways - you might have the home, job, car, spouse, family, travel, lifestyle - that you aimed for, and these things might bring some joy in life. **But you have a nagging sense that there has to be more; that this can't be all there is to life.** There's enjoyment maybe, entertainment and pleasure, but not fulfilment.
- ✎ **You're not unhappy with the choices or direction of your life so far, but in some ways, when you look back, it seems like you weren't fully there for it.** You don't remember much about the experiences. You didn't really absorb them. **It's like you were there but you weren't.** They kind of passed you by. You don't want the rest of your time to be like that. You want to show up for your life and live it fully!
- ✎ **The meaning and purpose of your life seems unclear and you're having trouble striding energetically into your future.** There may be many things you could choose to do, and many paths you could take, but you're hesitating to walk down any of them because you just don't have a sense of which one leads to a life you'll love.
- ✎ **You have a sense that you're off track somehow.** In quiet moments you sense a creeping doubt arising - a quiet voice that's asking whether the choices you've made are right. **Occasionally you feel a sense that it's not the life you deeply want.** You get a sense that your heart's not really in it, but you're not exactly sure what's wrong.

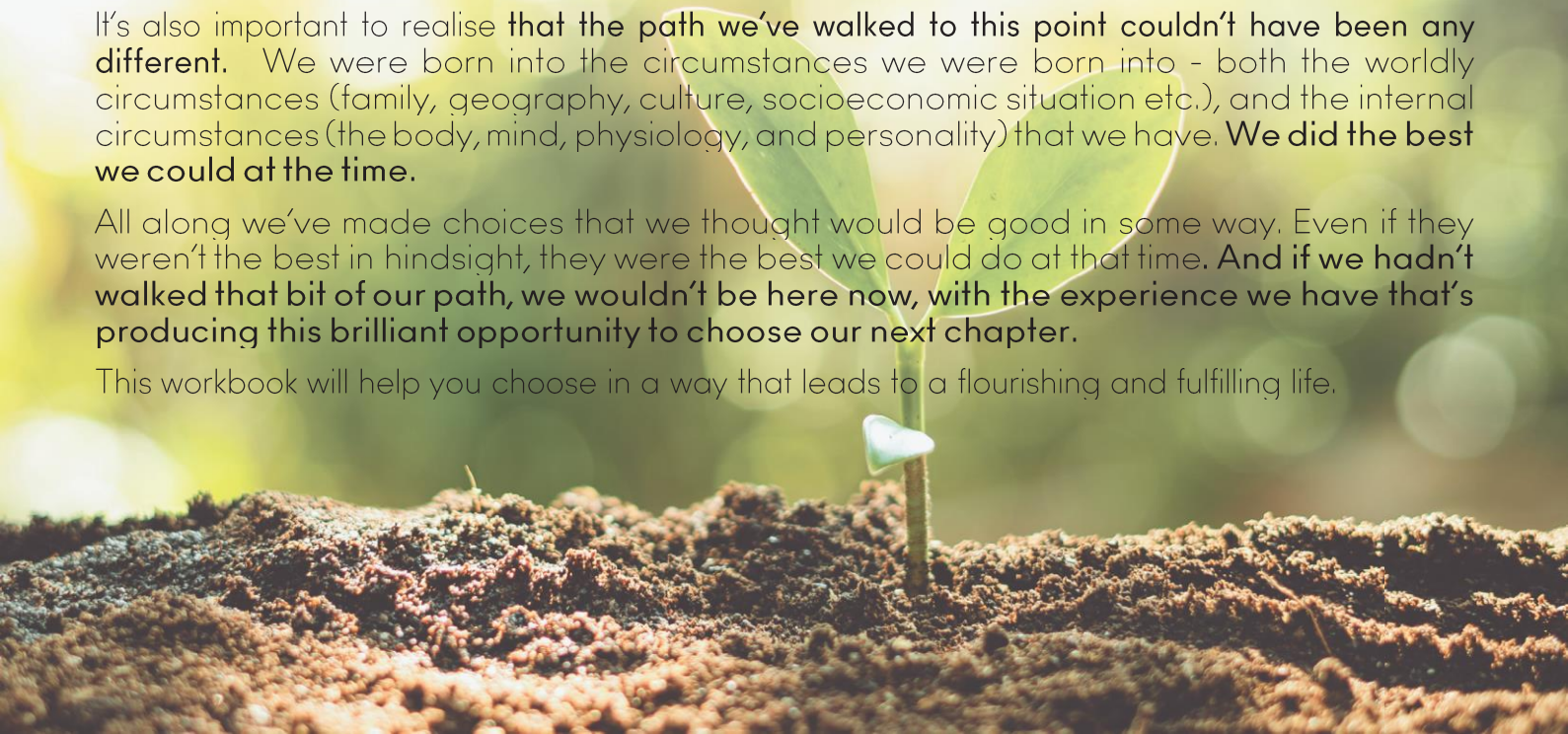
These moments, and others like them, are extremely important. They're precious! They have the power to enrich your life greatly if you embrace them. Finding yourself in this kind of place is actually very exciting because it means you have the chance to adjust before more of your life flies by. **It's an opportunity to choose again** - to engage fully with your life, maybe with more wisdom than before.

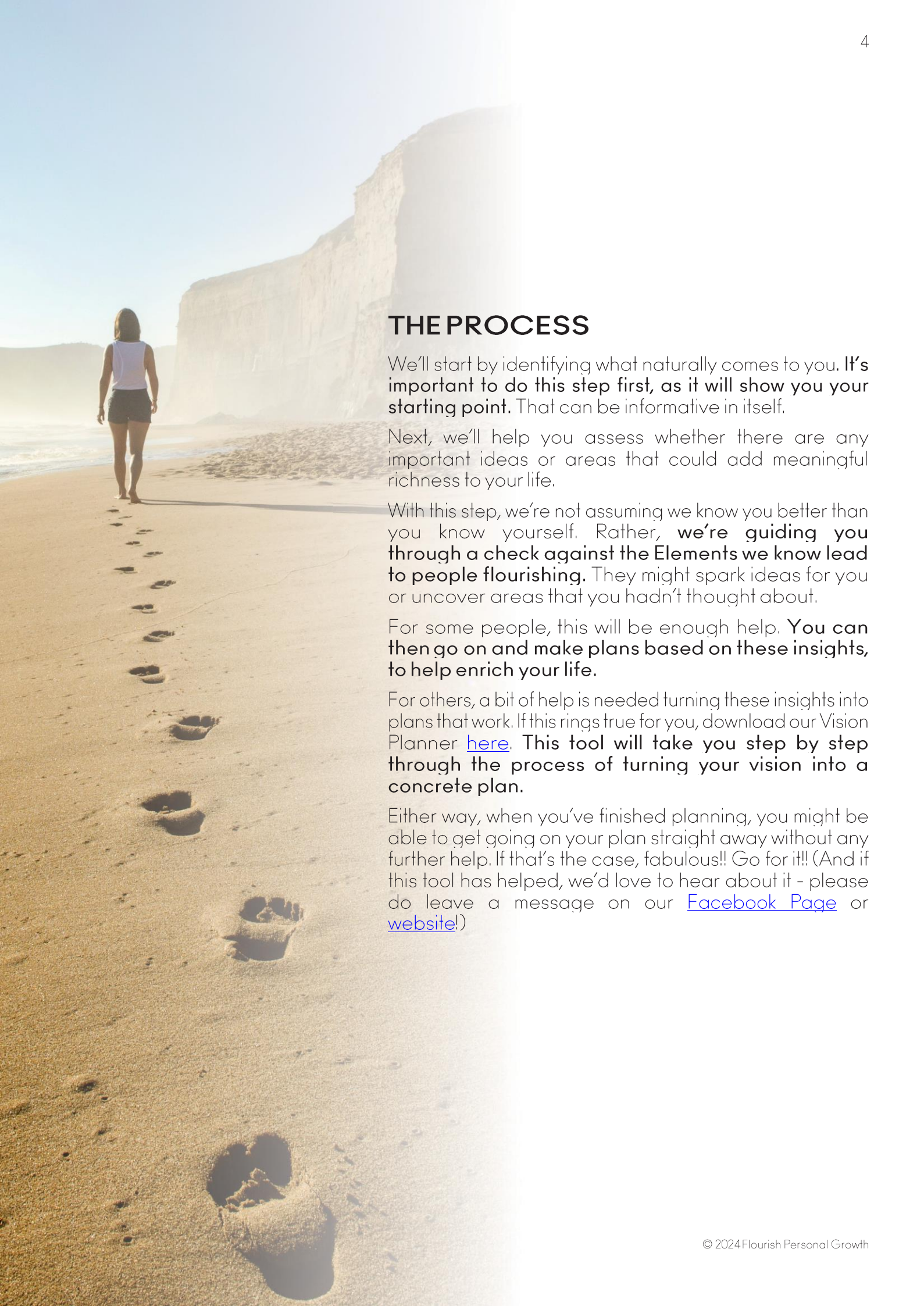
Sometimes sadness comes up when we realise we've spent a big chunk of our lifetime walking in a direction that now feels wrong, or walking it in a way that feels like we weren't really there for it. **If there's sadness that's ok. Let it be there. Let yourself feel it.**

It's also important to realise **that the path we've walked to this point couldn't have been any different.** We were born into the circumstances we were born into - both the worldly circumstances (family, geography, culture, socioeconomic situation etc.), and the internal circumstances (the body, mind, physiology, and personality) that we have. **We did the best we could at the time.**

All along we've made choices that we thought would be good in some way. Even if they weren't the best in hindsight, they were the best we could do at that time. **And if we hadn't walked that bit of our path, we wouldn't be here now, with the experience we have that's producing this brilliant opportunity to choose our next chapter.**

This workbook will help you choose in a way that leads to a flourishing and fulfilling life.





THE PROCESS

We'll start by identifying what naturally comes to you. **It's important to do this step first, as it will show you your starting point.** That can be informative in itself.

Next, we'll help you assess whether there are any important ideas or areas that could add meaningful richness to your life.

With this step, we're not assuming we know you better than you know yourself. Rather, **we're guiding you through a check against the Elements we know lead to people flourishing.** They might spark ideas for you or uncover areas that you hadn't thought about.

For some people, this will be enough help. **You can then go on and make plans based on these insights, to help enrich your life.**

For others, a bit of help is needed turning these insights into plans that work. If this rings true for you, download our Vision Planner [here](#). **This tool will take you step by step through the process of turning your vision into a concrete plan.**

Either way, when you've finished planning, you might be able to get going on your plan straight away without any further help. If that's the case, fabulous!! Go for it!! (And if this tool has helped, we'd love to hear about it - please do leave a message on our [Facebook Page](#) or [website](#)!)

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

In many cases there are reasons why we haven't already progressed far down this path. **Maybe we're not sure how to achieve the vision we've identified for ourselves and we need help generating ideas.**

Or maybe we know what we need to do but there are things holding us back.

Maybe we're a bit stuck in patterns of relating to others that seem to create distance and conflict rather than connection and belonging. **Maybe we've tried to achieve these things before, but it just doesn't ever seem to get us there.** Or we've been discouraged by obstacles or setbacks along the way and given up. **Maybe we just need some encouragement!**

If any of this sounds familiar, then once you've completed your Flourish Life Assessment, you might want to check out the range of [tools](#), and [programs](#) available on our website.

Each person's path is different. **You will be starting in a unique place.** You'll have certain character assets you can draw on with this work, and certain areas where **you might need some support.** That's why Flourish offers lots of different options from 100% self-serve programs and tools, to webinars and Q&A sessions, right up to live coaching calls and retreats.

If you'd like some help finding the right set of supports for you, at this point in your life, check out the [Where Do I Start?](#) Page on our website.

But for now, let's get going with assessing where you're at now!



YOUR VISION

Imagine you are 99 years old. You are sitting outside listening to the birds and the sounds of life going on around you. You know your life is almost over. **You have very little opportunity to do any more than you have already done.** Your choices are limited by your ageing body.

You are reflecting on your life; on what you've done with the time you've had. **You are feeling warm and happy.** You feel glad that through all the demands you faced, the opportunities that came your way, and the decisions you made, you managed to stay true to the things that really matter.

Your life had its challenges and setbacks, its sadness, hurt and disappointment. But despite this, **as you think about your life, you feel happy. You feel you lived it fully. You didn't waste this precious opportunity to be alive. When it comes to the important things, you feel that yours was a life well lived.**

Take a moment to imagine yourself in this scenario. Really put yourself there with the sights, sounds, smells, and your body feeling old. **Imagine feeling this way about your life.**



STEP 1: A LIFE WELL LIVED

What are the things you think about when you think of a life well lived? List them down as they come to you. After each item, think about the scenario above again and ask yourself 'is there anything else?'. Repeat this, giving yourself time to answer (don't rush it), until you feel that you've listed all the important Elements of 'a life well lived' for you. At this stage, we only want a single short sentence for each Elements (There's an example at the end of this document if it helps but no need to use it if the answers are flowing for you.)

Your vision of a life well lived:

Once you've done this, move on to the next section. We'll come back to this later in the exercise.



STEP 2: FLOURISHING – SELF-ASSESSMENT

We'll come back to the vision, but first let's take a look at what we know about flourishing as a human being. What are the key Elements? **What can we learn from people who've spent their careers and lives experimenting with this?**

Below is a summary of the key Elements we need to attend to.

The Elements of flourishing fall into two categories:

1. **Safety sources** - addressing these Elements will remove stress from life. In some cases, this can create enjoyment but that's usually only if they've been deprived up until now and we are able to begin enjoying the change to these Elements being nourished in our life. After a while we adapt to having these Elements met, and we tend to stop appreciating them.

We really only need to ensure we are 'good enough' on these items so that we don't feel 'at risk'.

2. **Fulfilment sources** - addressing these Elements takes us from the feeling of safety and comfort, to a rich and fulfilling life. That is, we're not just 'out of danger', or safe, we're now living life well, making the most of it, living fully, richly, and to life's full potential.

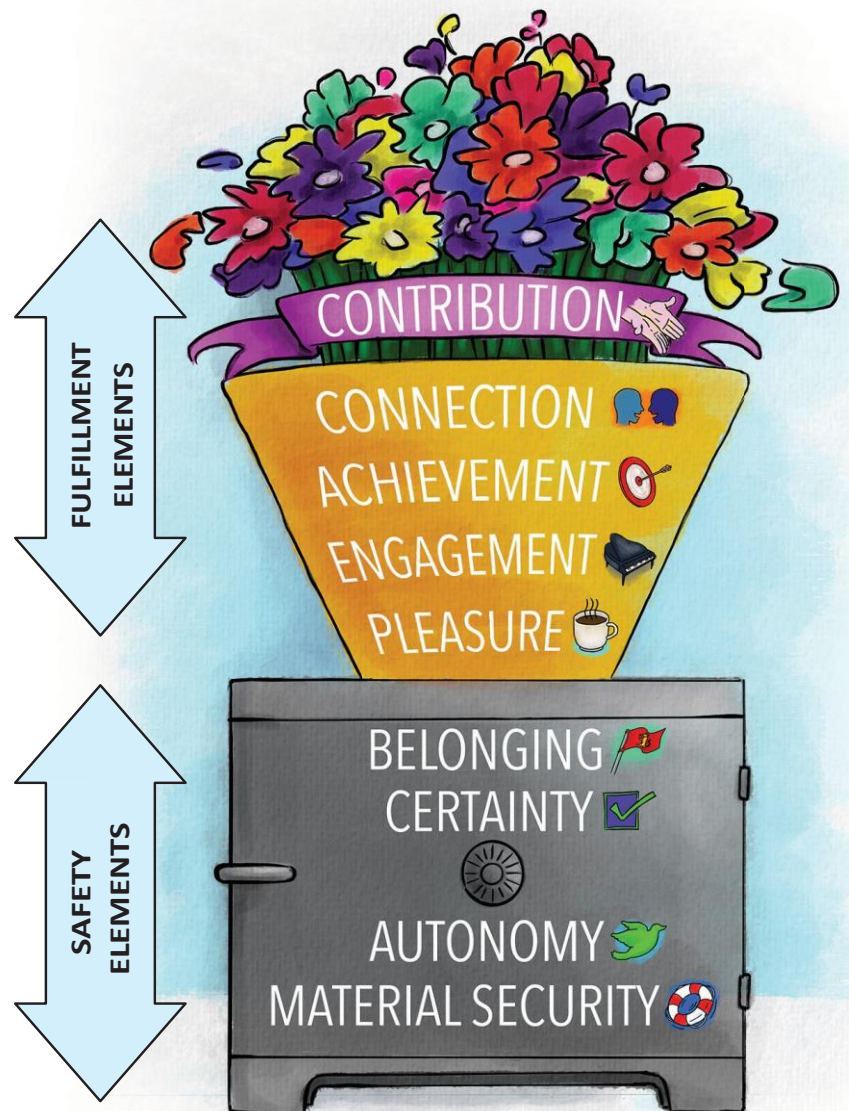
In addition to the two types of Elements we'll also look at your Growth Superpowers. That is, the attitudes needed to grow your character. This growth enables you to make changes to your life on the Nine Elements.

THE NINE ELEMENTS

Often in our modern societies, people are drawn to this kind of work because they are stuck in the doldrums between these two types of Elements. That is, objectively life is pretty good. We've got enough *stuff*, we might even enjoy our jobs and like our families and friends. But we have this sense that we should be happier.

Compared to most people in human history we're doing fabulously! And yet we're not feeling deeply happy. **What's wrong with us?! We can feel guilty or ashamed and judge ourselves as ungrateful.** We can feel reluctant to talk to anyone about it because on the surface of it we don't really have anything to complain about. That can leave us in a very isolated place.

A flourishing life is where we have both sets of Elementss being met. We're feeling safe, and not *at risk* which means our underlying stress levels are not acutely high. And we're also making the most of what is on offer in this human life. **We're living rich, rewarding, fulfilling lives.**



So, let's get going and take a good look at each one of these Elements and assess how well they are currently met in your life.



This includes physical safety, having enough food to eat, having clothing, electricity, somewhere safe to live, access to health care; being able to cope financially, and having the essentials that you need to get by.

This Elements isn't about being rich or having everything you want. It's about not needing to worry about being physically okay.

badly malnourished well nourished

←————→

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score _____



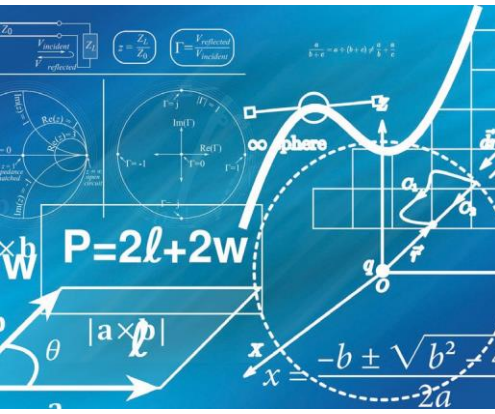
This is the extent to which you have control over your life choices. It's not about unlimited choice or about control over other people. It's your ability to make your own decisions about things that affect you, and follow them through without coercion or imposition from others.

This is not about complete freedom. Living in a safe and fair society means we accept some basic rules about living – laws that protect people and property. But within that context you're free to choose.

When it comes to choices you make that help other people, this is about making those choices because you want to make them, not because there are punishments or negative consequences if you don't.

[illegible]

Score _____



3. Certainty

This Element would more accurately be called 'certainty I can cope with uncertainty'. It doesn't mean you never feel uncertain about life situations. It's the extent to which you are at peace with the uncertainty that's a part of life. You've got enough of a grip on how things and people operate in the world to not be stressed by the uncertainty that's inherent in reality.

This one can be a little tricky because if this Element is not well nourished, we can adopt rigid views in order to try and eradicate the uncertainty in life. On the surface, these can give us the illusion

of certainty and we might be tempted to rate this Element highly. A tell-tale sign of this is if we get into arguments (or worse) when our views are questioned or challenged. When we do this, we're actually being driven by an unwillingness to accept uncertainty rather than a confidence we can cope with it. If this sounds like you at the moment, you'd rate this item on the lower side.

If the Element of certainty is well-nourished for you, you know that life is complex and not always predictable, and you're ok with that. You're not overwhelmed by it. As such, you don't reach for black and white ways to simplify the world. You're comfortable questioning things, including your own views. You don't often lock horns with others' opinions and you're wary of using stereotypes as you realise these are over-simplifications that don't often help, and do often harm.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Certainty (that you're ok with the reality of uncertainty)?



avidly seeking certainty at ease with uncertainty

←-----→

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score _____



4. Belonging

This is the extent to which you feel a part of a group. We can belong to a political party or a religious group, a sports club, an interest group, a neighbourhood, a biker gang, an employer, a professional group or a family, for example.

The group can be formed around anything, but scoring highly means you feel that you belong. People in the group know you, they expect you to participate, and they notice it if you're absent. There's a seat at the table for you.

Our sense of belonging doesn't necessarily mean we connect deeply with people in our 'in-group'. It simply means that we identify with them, we see them in some way as similar to us, as 'my people' or 'my tribe'. We've incorporated membership of that group into our identity and we see ourselves as different to people who are not in that group.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Belonging?



badly malnourished well nourished

←-----→

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score _____



5. Pleasure

The extent to which you experience pleasure in your life. This includes all of the pleasures of the senses we know and love - food and drink, pleasant smells (e.g. fresh air, freshly ground coffee) pleasant sounds (e.g. nature, music), visual beauty (e.g. nature, art, a visually pleasing home or work space) and body sensations (massage, sex, a warm breeze on your skin).

This also includes mind-pleasures such as entertainment, ideas, new experiences, learning and fun.... pleasant mental stimulation.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Pleasure?



Score



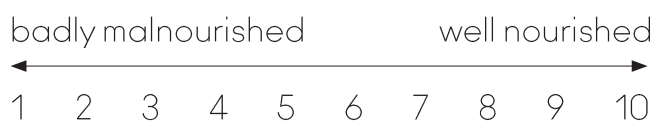
6. Engagement

This is where we are absorbed in a task that requires our skill and effort. We are so *into it* that we lose awareness of ourselves, and of time - our entire attentional bandwidth is taken up with the task at hand. Time often flies by when we're fully engaged.

When we're in this state of flow, we're not really aware that we're enjoying ourselves at the time. It's not until afterwards when we come out of it that we realise how much we enjoyed doing what we were doing.

For you it might be playing an instrument or making things in your workshop, or writing, painting, singing, problem solving, coding, doing some sport or physical activity, gardening, cooking.... any activity that totally absorbs you.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Engagement?



Score

A man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a bright red t-shirt, is shown from the chest up. He has his arms raised high in the air, fists clenched in a gesture of triumph or celebration. His head is tilted back, and he has a joyful expression. He is wearing a black wristband on his left wrist. The background is a soft, warm sunset or sunrise over a field, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a golden glow. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. The overall mood is one of achievement and happiness.

Whatever the goal is, it's a specific outcome you've consciously set your sights on achieving. Just working on something doesn't make it a goal (e.g. gardening, raising kids, doing your work). Achievement is about a specific goal that you've articulated and that you often think about and refer back to, even if it's just in your mind (e.g. be able to hold a conversation in Spanish, solve a particular problem at work, run a marathon; plant a garden). Because it's specific, it's easy to tell whether you've achieved it or not.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Achievement?

A photograph showing three people in a warm, indoor setting. On the left, a Black man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a green shirt, is smiling. In the center, an older white man with a full white beard and glasses, wearing a grey jacket over a blue shirt, is laughing heartily. On the right, a woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a blue top, is also smiling and looking towards the other two. They appear to be engaged in a joyful conversation. The background is softly blurred, showing wooden beams and a warm, ambient light.

This is the extent to which you feel connected with other people. It's about feeling embedded in social connections, both small friendly connections and larger deeper ones – the 3-7 people we feel really know us and care about us. If you needed help, you know there'd be at least one person, if not more, who'd happily go out of their way to help you. If you were struggling to cope, you have people you could turn to who would care. You have people you can share your true experience with.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Connection?





9. Contribution

This is about contributing time, resources, care and energy to something or someone outside of yourself. It's about giving to and helping others. It might be caring for others through your work, helping neighbours or friends, coaching people in sport, looking after children or people who are sick or elderly.

It might be running a local meditation group or volunteering your time to a charity, environmental group or on a committee. It might be taking time to listen to someone who's feeling down, neglected or who just needs company. It might be sharing in the joy and helping celebrate something with a friend.

Whatever the contribution is, it's centred on the happiness and wellbeing of others, rather than our own benefit. That doesn't mean we don't benefit from it - kindness has its own rewards. But the motivation for your contributions is an outwardly directed desire to help.

Thinking about your life at the moment, how well-nourished is the Element of Contribution?



none a significant amount

←————→

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score_____

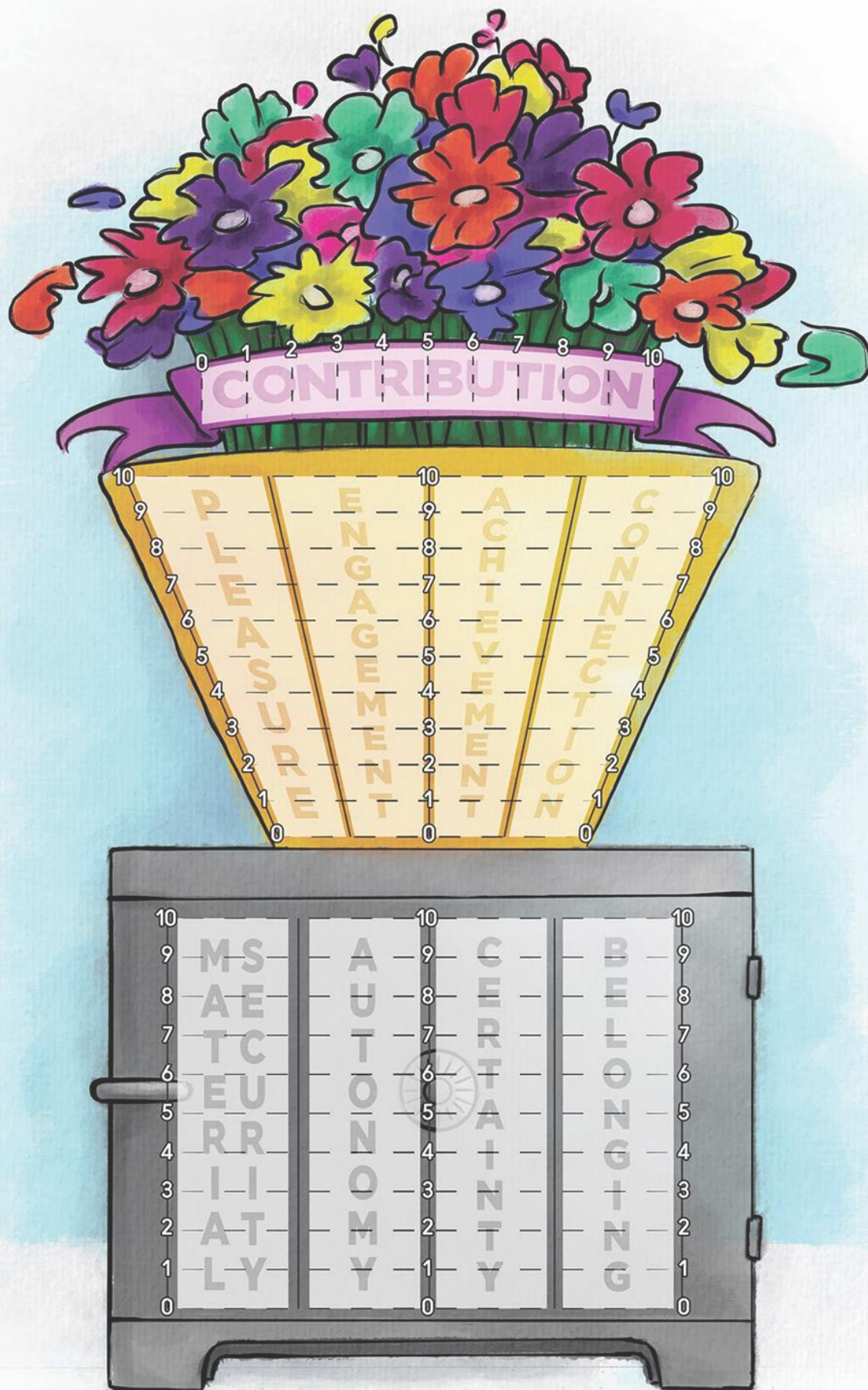
Add up all of your scores for the Nine Elements and write the total below, then continue to the next page.

Nine Elements score

/ 90



On the next page, colour in or shade each Element like this, according to your score for each one (coloured highlighters are good for this bit).



Date.....

STEP 3: GROWTH SUPERPOWERS

To flourish fully as humans we need to nourish the Nine Elements. There might be some ways you can adjust your circumstances 'out there' to help with this, but often we need to do some work 'in here' - we need to grow.

There are some key attitudes that help us do this - that turbo-charge our growth. You might have some of them in spades, and there might be others that need a little or a lot of practice.

What we're going to do now is assess your starting point - how well developed these attitudes are now. As with the Nine Elements, it's good to come back and re-assess yourself on these once a year, to see how well these Superpowers are developing.

THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

Here are some examples of situations that might lead to low scores on the Nine Elements, and that may require some personal growth to address them.



Material Security: while many of us in developed societies have these needs well met (and take them for granted!), not everyone can tick this box. Such challenges might include: managing money better when it might mean going without some things we like or changing our living arrangements somehow. Other examples: finding a way to earn 'enough'; extracting yourself from a violent home; influencing your partner to stop wasting money so that you have 'enough'.



Autonomy: being more assertive about your own needs. Maybe you find this uncomfortable because you're used to going along with what others want and are worried how they'll react if you don't. Other examples: changing to a career you enjoy when those around you want you to continue in your current job; negotiating less micro-management from your manager; having your preferences considered in joint decision making; ceasing to 'go through the motions' with family or community obligations when your heart isn't in it.



Certainty: letting go of rigid or dogmatic views that isolate you from others. Maybe these views give you comfort and help you know right from wrong or good from bad, and you're afraid of what might happen if you loosen your grip on them. Other examples: finding ways to relate to people that don't involve instructing, telling, or being the expert; opening to exploring other views or ways of understanding the world without feeling you have to defend your own.



Belonging: finding a group to belong to if you haven't had good experiences in groups before. Maybe you're expecting you won't fit in easily and worry that it could end in rejection and disappointment. Other examples: accepting people in your group whom you find difficult without creating conflict; accepting that 'the group' doesn't always make the decisions you think it should and still participating enthusiastically.



Pleasure: devoting time, energy and money to your own enjoyment, pleasure or fun. Maybe you've grown up with expectations that you focus on everyone else, and your own enjoyment doesn't get a look-in. You might find it challenging to speak up for what you want. Other examples: enjoying pleasures without feeling guilty; fully experiencing and savouring pleasures rather than having them pass you by, or the mind moving on to the next thing before it's even over.



Engagement: making time for the activities that put you in flow. Maybe taking time for this activity means other people need to 'give you' that time and you struggle to ask for it. Or maybe you haven't found your 'thing' or 'things' that really engage you. You might need to try some new activities.



Achievement: getting past self-doubt in order to set a challenging goal. Maybe the fear of failure prevents you from getting to the start line. Other examples: being in a job where the opportunity for achievement isn't obvious; having the wind taken out of your sails by previous failure; exercising the discipline needed to persevere; letting lack of confidence prevent you from trying.



Connection: needing to make some more good friends. That might feel confronting. Maybe you struggle to put yourself out there or ask for company. Maybe the familiarity of loneliness feels safer than the fear of rejection. Other examples: you feel uncomfortable sharing your 'real self' so stick to surface conversation; you don't believe you're truly like-able, interesting enough, or worthy of love, so you expect any efforts you make to fail and end in rejection.



Contribution: feeling that your own needs haven't been met yet, so not putting any effort into this (not realising how much happiness it brings). Other examples: having a scarcity mindset that sees good things as being in limited supply – to give kindness to others would mean having less good stuff for yourself; being unfamiliar with kindness as you haven't received much of it yourself.

Do you get the picture?

These are examples of the kind of challenges we can face when we decide to pursue a more fulfilling life. To face them we need to grow. But change and growth can be uncomfortable. So we need to know what assets will help us through these challenges.

This is the 'how' of flourishing – the five attitudes that will speed up and turbo-charge our growth so that we can nourish the Nine Elements. We need to cultivate these Superpowers and bring them to our daily challenges.

Let's look at them now. You can remember them as the Five Cs.



THE FIVE Cs



1. Courage

Courage is not something you have, it's something you do. It's a practice. It's **our willingness to respond purposefully in fear.**

The kind of courage needed for personal growth is not the kind that we make movies about - the Braveheart, Diehard, Indiana Jones type of courage. It's the courage of the spiritual warrior. **It's not the courage to overpower or destroy threats so that you feel safe, but the courage to voluntarily go to places where you feel vulnerable.**

Spiritual-warrior courage is **about putting down the shield, taking off the armour, and turning to face the very things that scare us.** Rather than stash these things away in the dark where we don't have to face

them, we bring them into the bright light where we can see them well. Like the man in this picture, we choose to take our 'baggage' into the light where we can see it.

Those of us who've practised a lot of the Braveheart courage can sometimes find ourselves deeply challenged by spiritual-warrior courage.

Braveheart courage is about being strong and decisive and acting vigorously out there in the world to keep danger away or achieve amazing feats.

Spiritual warrior courage is about being brave enough to get to know your very real vulnerabilities. This means we need to experience them! **This can be terrifying for those of us who are used to blocking them, avoiding them, or pretending they're not there.**

Indeed one of the activities in the Flourish program is called "Inviting our Demons in for a Tea Party". This helps you move through an issue where you're struggling or feeling stuck by intimately exploring what's going on. (More on that [here](#).) This "demon" might be a **fear of loneliness, a fear of rejection, a desperate need to have something, or achieve something, to have control, or be seen a certain way.** There are all sorts of demons.

The essence of the courage required is simply that **we need to be willing to look at and be with our experience honestly and clearly.**

We need this courage when we're scared, but **we also need it when the thing we're looking at is something we love or desire or treasure.** Sometimes these more positive feelings can also send us into reactivity - the 'stuff' of heartache - and we need the courage to look honestly at those feelings too, rather than treat them as sacred cows or 'must-haves'.

Courage is also needed to try different ways of being in the world. Most people who come to this work have already been around for a while and already have habits and patterns and ways of dealing with things. As we begin to see that some of those are not serving us or others, **we'll need to have the courage to try something new** - something we're not comfortable with, or not expert at.

We need the courage to put our "L plates" back on in life. If we're attached to always being right or the best or the expert, or being in control, or successful, or admired by others, it can take courage to move out of those zones and put the "L plates" back on.

We need this courage to **stop our habitual reactions in their tracks, to make space for a different way of responding based on values** rather than the strong urge to discharge some unpleasant feelings in a moment at the expense of important things like relationships and our own long term stress levels and wellbeing.



2. Curiosity

Speaking of “L plates”, the next essential quality for personal growth is curiosity - **a desire to really understand your experience.**

Buddhists sometimes call this ‘beginner’s mind’ and it refers to **the act of bringing curiosity to things, bringing a fresh eye even to things that seem familiar**, or that we think we already know about. It’s the ability to engage ‘don’t-know-mind’ so that we might see things more accurately, rather than through our pre-existing lenses.... to genuinely ask the question **‘what is this?’** as we explore our experience, or ‘what’s going on here?’

Of course, we can’t get away from having a lens on the world, but it’s the attitude of genuinely wanting to see clearly that’s important. That can mean pressing the pause button on our habitual ways of seeing things, interpreting things, or explaining things, and considering other perspectives or evidence.

There’s nothing more familiar to us than our own experience. So in some ways it’s the hardest thing to bring curiosity to, because we can feel like we already know it.

But that’s exactly what we need to do. Because what we actually know is what it’s like being swept up in our experience. And **what we need to do is to start paying attention to how that works.** This requires us to devote some of our headspace to observing our experience, even while we’re having it (and definitely after we’ve had it).

One of the most important things to bring curiosity to, is our reactivity. By reactivity I mean those **reactions that are fast, automatic, and emotional. It’s like they touched on a nerve and the reaction happened before the mind had any say in the matter.**

Curiosity about these moments often requires our first attitude - courage - as well, because reactivity often feels like we’re behaving badly. So **rather than cover that up, or make excuses for it, we need to sit with it (courage) and try to see what went on (curiosity).**

When we’re talking about curiosity, we’re not talking about just the easy, intellectually interesting kind. **We’re talking about bringing to our lived experience a desire to really understand its mechanics - how it works - what leads to what, so that we can see it clearly.**

And we need to bring this to both our pleasant experiences and our unpleasant ones. Everything in life is grist to the mill on this path!



3. Compassion

Compassion is the combination of empathy, good will and helpfulness. It’s ‘feeling with’ someone, as well as wanting to alleviate their pain and doing what you can to help with that. That ‘someone’ includes, importantly, ourselves.

The opposite end of the spectrum is judgment. This is where we cut off from feeling another’s pain, on the basis that they somehow deserve it, often because of their flaws, mistakes, or unskillful choices. Of course, we often aim this attitude at ourselves too!

In our modern societies, the idea of individual responsibility is central. This is a good thing. We are responsible for our words and actions and there’s really no other way to run a society but to assume this.

However when it comes to character failures - and we all have them - we assume too much on this front. **By 'character failures' I mean any time we act in a way that's not good for the wellbeing of ourselves or other beings.** For example when we're cruel, cowardly, dishonest, selfish, unfriendly, controlling, inconsiderate, avoidant, manipulative, playing the victim, aggressive, imposing, blaming.....you get the picture.

You see, we're not always 100% in control in these moments, especially if we lack self-insight, or have done no personal work ourselves so don't know how else to deal with things. **Compassion helps us see the fear - the struggle that leads to these unhelpful behaviours in ourselves AND in others.**

Compassion doesn't mean we excuse harmful behaviour. Where necessary, we would act to stop harm and ensure it doesn't reoccur. What it means is that we do this **AND we also feel for the person who's 'creating the problem'.** We see the struggle or the pain behind unpleasant behaviour.

Where this goes in the end, is that we find ourselves committed to non-harm. At the more developed end, this attitude is kindness - while still maintaining the ability to be 'tough' when necessary.



4. Clarity

This quality is often one that needs to be developed along the way.

By clarity I mean **seeing as clearly as possible, the different elements of your experience, noticing when they arise, and how they interact.** What we need to do is to develop mindfulness, or awareness, of the mechanics of our experience - what leads to what leads to what?

To achieve clarity, we need to slow down!

Let me say that again: **to achieve clarity, we need to slow down!**

Speed and mindfulness don't go together. **If you are someone who's addicted to packing your life so full that there are no spaces in between things, or addicted to constantly stimulating and entertaining your mind with external mind-food, it's time to make some changes.** You're going to have to make some contemplative space in your diary and in your mind - even if it's just a little at first.

One thing you can do straight away is to join PAR. PAR stands for People Against Rushing, and is an intentional community within Flourish. You can read more about it [here](#), but in essence, it's about developing **an intention to slow down and take notice of your life.**



There are three core intentions you need to commit to in order to join PAR:

1. **20% time buffer** - schedule into your day, 20% more arrival time than you “need” - this helps you slow down and reduces stress
2. **blank spaces in your diary** - this includes small spaces every day (maybe as little as 5 or 10 minutes) and larger ones each week (at least one un-interrupted hour)
3. **be where you are** - bring your attention back as often as you can, to where you are and what you’re doing, thinking and feeling right now.

A big part of the Flourish program is helping you achieve clarity about your experience of life. **This clarity is essential for building your wisdom. At its heart, wisdom is pattern recognition.**

If you don’t have clarity about what’s going on in your experience of the world, you will never see the patterns in that experience. **And worse, your mind will make stuff up to explain things - stuff that is often not helpful and sends you off in the wrong direction.**

The practice of mindfulness is very important to the Superpower of Clarity. Sitting meditation is an increasingly common mindfulness practice, but that’s not the whole of it. **You can actually substitute the word ‘awareness’ for meditation or mindfulness.** So, any time you are deliberately practicing awareness of what’s going on - both inside yourself and in the outer world, with an attitude of curiosity and compassion, you are meditating. This can be doing the dishes, working, commuting, playing sport, socialising.....any and all of your experiences in life.

Sitting, lying or walking meditation does have an important place in building clarity too. Because it’s a practice that reduces external stimulation for a period, it allows the body-mind to calm down (a lot or sometimes even just a little) and this helps us see things more clearly and receive them less reactively. It’s an essential practice and it’s part of the Flourish programs.

The attitude of friendliness is also very important here. **If we want to see clearly what’s going on, we need to bring kindness and non-judgment to our observations** (there’s that compassion again). Otherwise what’s happening will be warped through the lens of our “shoulds” and we won’t be willing to ‘lean in’ and look closely at the reality of our experiences.



4. *Commitment to Growth*

This is the amount of energy and commitment you have for learning and growing. **How dedicated are you to learning from your experience?**

Personal growth is the project of becoming an artisan of our own character. All artisans were apprentices at some point - usually for a long time. To what extent have you genuinely taken on this project?

To what extent do you measure your progress in terms of learning and growing, versus perfection? To what extent do you see yourself as a WIP (work in progress) versus a fixed entity who can't change? When you muck up, do you get back on the path of learning again, once you've dusted yourself off? When you encounter difficulties, setbacks, and challenges, including failure, to what extent do you judge yourself versus look for learning?

This is just as important in work settings as it is outside of work. Indeed *learning agility* is one of the two strongest predictors of performance, promotion and potential as a leader. That is, the *willingness and ability to learn on the fly*. **Learning is change, and change in the direction of wisdom is growth.**

If you've just read that paragraph and realised you don't do much of these things, but you're energised to change that, this is also a sign of an emerging commitment to growth.

Adopting a growth mindset sets up a virtuous cycle. When we taste the freedom that comes with learning our way out of difficulties, we become more committed to learning as our response. So we get better at it, which means we taste that freedom (and often success) more often. That reinforces the learning mindset... and on it goes.



SELF ASSESSMENT

So, let's have a look at where you currently sit with the Five Growth Superpowers. There's a short summary of each Superpower in the following chart, but feel free to go back and read the longer descriptions above before giving yourself a score of 0, 1 or 2 for each item.

A little note to the over-achievers out there.....this self-rating is about self-insight, not achievement.

A 'good score' is an accurate score, regardless of whether it's high or low. If you're low on any of these items, you need to know about it! **That way you can prepare yourself for the journey** by deliberately building your Growth Superpowers. Otherwise you'll bail out when it gets hard because this path will challenge you in ways you're not used to.

So think about your behaviour over the last year or so and answer as accurately as you can. If this is a test in any way, it's a test of **your courage to be honest, your curiosity to understand yourself and the clarity you have about your own behaviour.**

Taking into account the whole of each attitude's description, give yourself a score of 0, 1, or 2 for the following items.

0 = not at all like me

1 = somewhat like me

2 = very much like me

Growth Superpowers	Score
Courage: I'm willing to think about, feel and talk about emotionally difficult things. I'm willing to look at and explore my discomfort. I can admit my flaws and mistakes. I behave purposefully even when I'm feeling fear. I can change my mind in light of new evidence. I'm also willing to look closely at the things I'm attached to and why – even those things feel a bit like sacred cows.	
Curiosity: I'm interested in understanding how people tick, and how my own experience works. I test out ideas and wrestle with them. I ask a lot of questions when I'm learning – of myself or of others including teachers and people with different points of view. I often wonder about what motivates people to do things and how people work. I'm always refining my own understanding of it. I'm always actively learning about myself and others.	
Compassion: I feel empathy and good will towards others easily. When people have character failures I immediately look for what difficulty they were having that caused it. I often try to help others out of their difficulty and when I can't I wish I could. I forgive quickly because I know how hard it can be.	
Clarity: I'm attentive to the detail of my experience. I notice my own patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour. I meditate. I try not to pack too much into a day so that I can be present to what's going on. I often notice things that others don't. I make sure I've got some down-time in most weeks. I tend to remember quite a bit about things because I pay attention well.	
Drive: My motivation to grow as a person is strong. I'm enthusiastic about putting time and energy into it and persevering even if it's difficult. This is more to me than just an interesting thing to ponder, it's something I'm committed to doing. I want to experience life in a more fulfilling way and I'm going to do what it takes, even if that's sometimes unpleasant or difficult. I'm willing to fall off the wagon as often as I need to and get back on again because growth is so important to me.	
Total Growth Attitudes score	

Choose one or two Superpowers with a lower score relative to the others, and set yourself a goal for it. Here are some examples of the kinds of goals that might help:

Courage

🔗 behaviours to do less of

neglecting your own needs to please people out of a fear of upsetting or disappointing them; pretending you agree with people when you don't; reacting instantly when you're upset; insisting on having things your way all the time; avoiding conflict; reacting defensively

🔗 behaviours to do more of

speaking up for what you want when decisions are being made; raising for discussion issues that are important to you – addressing them so they don't snowball; trying something new; being willing to work through conflicts in relationships; engaging curiosity if you're criticised; questioning your own views

Curiosity

🔗 behaviours to do less of

always sounding certain as if your opinion is fact; adopting and articulating black and white views; arguing defensively or aggressively over opinions (versus exploring ideas); talking over the top of others; speaking on auto-pilot; assuming you know what's going on for others

🔗 behaviours to do more of

asking questions; genuinely actively listening; prefacing opinions to encourage exploration (e.g. *my current thinking is....; my working theory at the moment is....; I could be wrong about this but....; I haven't spent much time thinking about this but off the top of my head....*); using journaling to try and replay a difficult situation in slow motion, identifying as many of the factors at play as you can in answering the question: what's going on here?

Compassion

🔗 behaviours to do less of (towards others AND ourselves)

expressing judgments, even if they arise in your mind (including judging people for judging people); using stereotypes to describe people; assuming people have the skills and insight to do any better in the moment; criticising

🔗 behaviours to do more of

noticing when *judging mind* is present and pressing pause on it; using journaling to do some *perspective taking* – writing in detail how a difficult situation might look and feel from the other person's viewpoint; seeing the struggle – asking yourself *what might be going on for them?*; bringing to mind what it's like to struggle ourselves and what responses helped or hindered from other people; bringing to mind that struggling is part of being human, it's not a flaw, and we're not taught how to do it well; asking ourselves what *judging mind* is trying to protect us from.

Clarity

🔗 behaviours to do less of

speaking of busy-ness as a good thing; agreeing to things that will put you under time-pressure; constantly feeding your mind stimulation (even in the small moments between things); hurrying; clouding the mind with drugs or alcohol; multi-tasking (which, unless a task is automatic, is actually context-switching and is highly inefficient); allowing frequent interruptions to your attention (e.g. constantly monitoring messages)

🔗 behaviours to do more of

joining PAR and printing out a PAR card; starting to meditate; scheduling some blank spaces in your diary; starting journaling; activities that don't involve your mind processing external input; turning off non-urgent phone and computer notifications

Commitment

🚫 behaviours to do less of

moving on from difficult experiences without reflecting on them; filling your life so full that you don't have time for learning and growth; devoting no time to growth; responding to feedback defensively; adopting cynical or critical views about the world or others to explain difficulties rather than looking for learning; judging yourself or others harshly for failure

🚫 behaviours to do more of

using journaling to get curious about difficult situations; debriefing with a friend, what you can learn from situations; comparing your progress and success to a 'learning yardstick' rather than a 'perfection yardstick'; orienting your consumption of books and media towards learning and personal growth (here's [one idea](#)); setting yourself some growth goals; doing one of the Flourish Personal Growth [programs](#); getting some coaching; joining a regular meditation group.

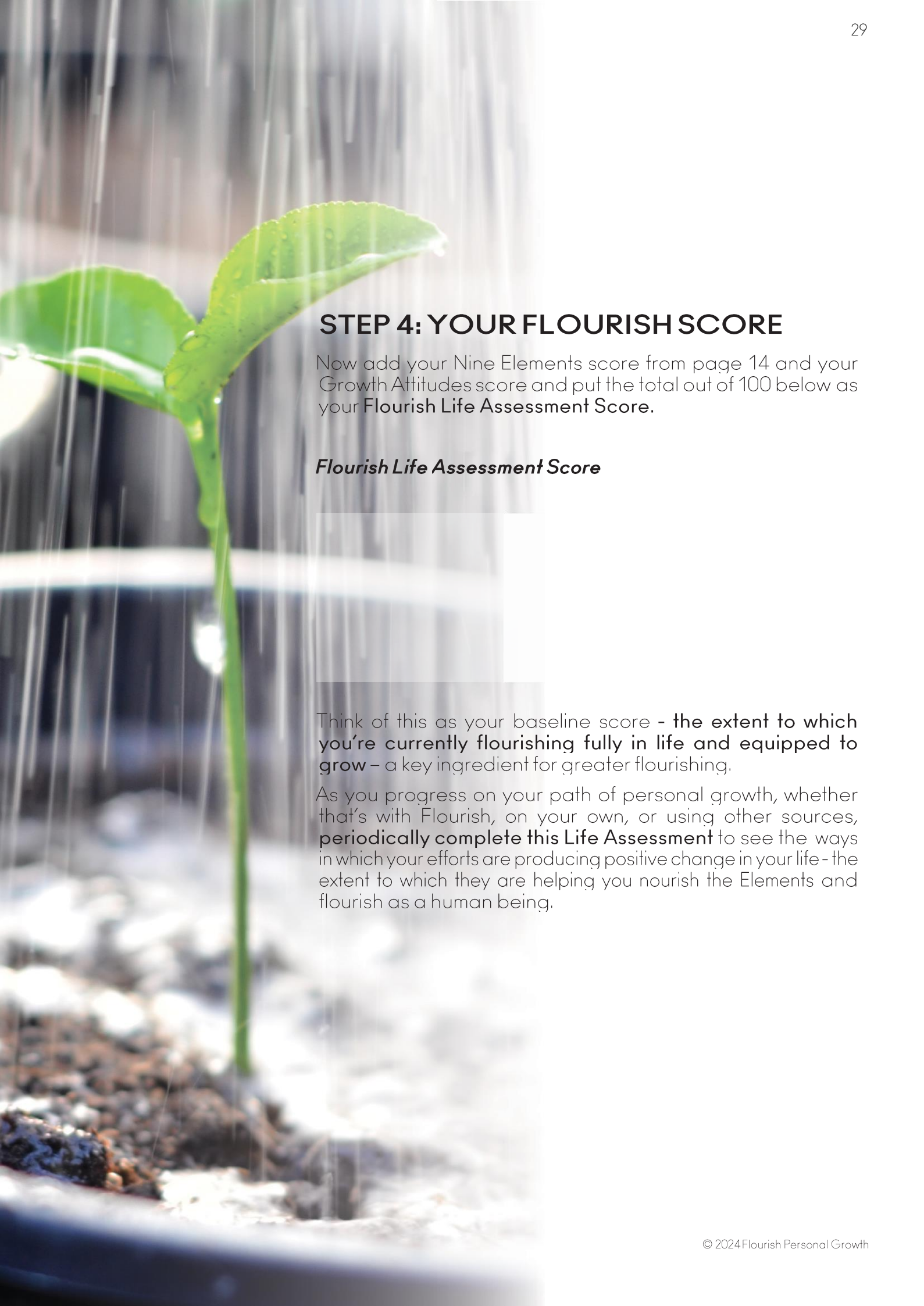
Identify for yourself, one or two goals to boost your Growth Superpowers. Record them here, and make sure they're SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based) There are some examples of SMART goals at the end of this workbook if it helps.

WHAT IT MEANS

Your Growth Superpowers score is not an assessment of whether or not you can grow. You absolutely can, regardless of what this score is. **It's simply a description of where you're at now. Knowing this helps you direct your efforts.**

All of these factors help move people along a growth path, so any scores of 0 or 1 are areas you can focus on to turbo boost your development. **They can form part of your growth path.**





STEP 4: YOUR FLOURISH SCORE

Now add your Nine Elements score from page 14 and your Growth Attitudes score and put the total out of 100 below as your **Flourish Life Assessment Score**.

Flourish Life Assessment Score

Think of this as your baseline score - **the extent to which you're currently flourishing fully in life and equipped to grow** – a key ingredient for greater flourishing.

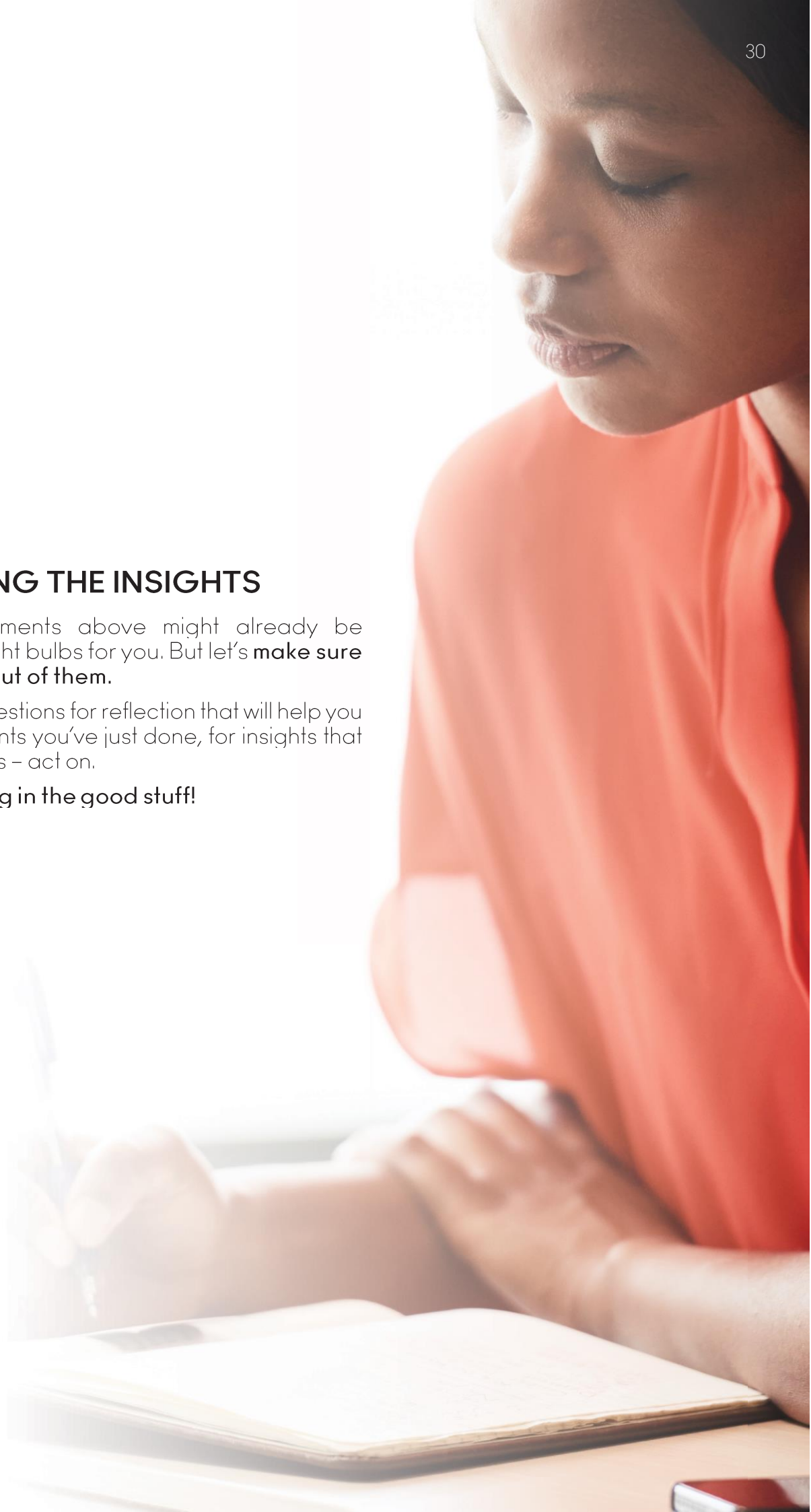
As you progress on your path of personal growth, whether that's with Flourish, on your own, or using other sources, **periodically complete this Life Assessment** to see the ways in which your efforts are producing positive change in your life - the extent to which they are helping you nourish the Elements and flourish as a human being.

STEP 5: MINING THE INSIGHTS

Your two assessments above might already be turning on some light bulbs for you. But let's **make sure you get the most out of them.**

Below are some questions for reflection that will help you mine the assessments you've just done, for insights that you can use – that is – act on.

Let's start by taking in the good stuff!



WELL NOURISHED ELEMENTS

QUESTION 1

What are the Elements that are well nourished in your life at the moment? (Scores of 8-10.) Write these in the left column. Then on the right, write a few sentences describing why you gave such a good score.

Next, below each Element, write how it feels to be in such a good place with it. If you have trouble identifying feelings, download the Flourish Help Sheet [What Am I Feeling?](#) for some ideas, and if you need more room, just write on a separate piece of paper.

Element: Feelings:	Description:
Element: Feelings:	Description:
Element: Feelings:	Description:
Element: Feelings:	Description:

THE WATCH LIST

QUESTION 2

What are the Elements that you rated a 6 or 7?

These are Elements that are reasonably well met but could do with a nudge in the positive direction. List these in the left column below.

Again, write a few sentences about why you gave these scores and then describe how you feel about them.

THE PRIORITY LIST

QUESTION 3

What are the Elements that you rated a 5 or less?

List these in order from the lowest score as this is your top priority. These are Elementss that offer the biggest opportunity for greater flourishing.

Again, summarise why you gave these scores and then describe in the left column how you feel about them

Element: Feelings:	Description:
Element: Feelings:	Description:
Element: Feelings:	Description:
Element: Feelings:	Description:

Pick one of each of the following Elements and plan some action to address it.

For at least one of them, **it's a good idea to pick something that's 'low hanging fruit', that is, something that's not too hard to achieve.** This will help you get some positive momentum.

Make sure you phrase your goals in a SMART way (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time based). There are some examples at the end of this workbook if it helps.

Priority Element
Action:

Watch-list Element
Action:

QUESTION 4

Overall, how well-nourished is your life at the moment? Put the name of each of the Nine Elements in the relevant box of the matrix below to see them at a glance.

	SAFETY ELEMENTS	FULFILLMENT ELEMENTS
PRIORITY ELEMENTS		
WATCH-LIST ELEMENTS		
WELL NOURISHED ELEMENTS		

Write a sentence or two to summarise where you're currently at, based on what you've written in the matrix above.

QUESTION 5

Think about the Safety Elements that are well nourished in your life at the moment. How does that feel in the body? Focus your mind on this for a few minutes. See if you can describe the physical feelings. Where are they? Does they have a temperature? Are they moving or still? Pleasant or unpleasant? Describe them as clearly as you can. Then do the same for any under-nourished Safety Elements.

Well-nourished safety Elements - body sensations:

Under-nourished safety Elements - body sensations:

QUESTION 6

When you think about the well-nourished and under-nourished Fulfillment Elements in your life at the moment, how does that feel in the body? See if you can describe it as you did for Safety Elements.

Well-nourished Fulfillment Elements - body sensations:

Under-nourished Fulfillment Elements - body sensations:

QUESTION 7

Is there any difference between how it feels in your body when you think about the Safety Elements and the Fulfillment Elements? If so, describe the difference as clearly as you can, grouping them according to level of nourishment as follows.

Difference in feelings in the body between Safety and Fulfillment Elements that are well-nourished:

Difference in feelings in the body between Safety and Fulfillment Elements that are under-nourished:

QUESTION 8

Identify some practical tactics you'd be willing to implement that would cause you to experience more fully the pleasant feelings associated with your well-nourished Elements. Anything that focuses your attention on them in detail helps here, like sharing them with others, contrasting them with their opposite etc.

QUESTION 9

Knowing what you do now about what it takes to flourish, how well aligned was your original vision of flourishing on Page 7, with the Nine Elements and the Five Growth Superpowers?

Looking at the items you listed in Step 1 (page 7), map them onto the Nine Elements and the Growth Superpowers below. That is, identify for each item in your original vision, which of the Elements or Superpowers, if any, it relates to most strongly.

Flourishing Factors	Items from your original vision that relate to this.
SAFETY ELEMENTS	
Material Security	
Autonomy	
Certainty (that you can deal with the reality of uncertainty)	
Belonging	
FULFILLMENT ELEMENTS	
Pleasure	
Engagement	
Achievement	
Connection	
Contribution	
GROWTH SUPERPOWERS Courage, Curiosity, Compassion, Clarity, Commitment to Growth	

QUESTION 10

What does this 'mapping' tell you about the Elements of human flourishing that you may have been under-emphasising when you initially thought about living well? In what way, if any, has this exercise changed your view of what it means to flourish?

QUESTION 11

Has anything surprised you from this exercise? If yes, what?

QUESTION 12

What thoughts are arising in response to this entire exercise?

QUESTION 13

What feelings are present as you reflect on your Flourish Score and the answers to these questions?

QUESTION 14

What other thoughts or reflections do you have on the work you've done here?

QUESTION 15

Summarise here, what specifically you plan to do, to start moving your dial of human flourishing in a more positive direction. Try to make your goals SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based – see some examples on the last page). Include your answers from Question 8.

WRAPPING UP

🔗 Lots of high scores?

If this exercise has revealed high scores on all of the Flourishing Elements, and yet you still feel like your life isn't as fulfilling as it could be, then your task is to more mindfully absorb the wonderful features of your life.

In his book *Taking in the Good*, Rick Hanson discusses the human negativity bias. That is, our human minds are Teflon for the good and Velcro for the bad. We're naturally wired to adapt to pleasant things and pay more attention to unpleasant things.

This can lead us to a never-ending chasing of pleasure because the *hit* we get from it doesn't last. Psychologists call it the *hedonic treadmill*.

The antidote to this is to turn positive facts (such as an enjoyable lunch with a close friend on the Connection Element) into positive experiences. This involves mindfully relishing the experiences, focusing on the physical sensations that arise with them, amping them up, sharing your appreciation of them and giving them a much more prominent place in your attentional sphere.

If this sounds like you, we'd recommend Rick Hanson's books. We also cover this in a practical way in the [Flourishing Life Blueprint](#) program.

It may also be that you're simply wanting a catalyst for personal growth – greater self-knowledge and character development. If this is the case, the Flourish [programs](#) would be really valuable for you.

🔗 Lots of low scores?

If you've got lots of low scores in your Flourish Life Assessment, you're probably pretty stressed, unhappy, empty, or a combination of these. If you're able to, some personal counselling is possibly the most helpful approach for you because it can be really difficult to address numerous big issues all at once. This is especially true if your scores on the Growth Superpowers are low to start with.

There are also possibly some underlying challenges that have contributed to you being in your current situation – challenges like lack of self-belief, some faulty negative beliefs about the world or yourself, or unfamiliarity with setting and achieving goals.

These challenges might also include emotional patterns that make it hard to get along with or be close with other people, or to do that while also looking after your own flourishing. Sometimes these things need to be addressed to be able to make the changes required to nourish the Nine Elements. Often we need some help and support in making such changes because they can be difficult.

It's important in this situation to realise that to a large extent it's not your fault that you are in this place. These patterns usually develop when we're young and we didn't receive the nurturing and care that we needed. We didn't know any better way to deal with things and we just did whatever we could to get by. Those coping patterns have stuck.

But now you can see that, and so you have an opportunity to carve a different path. You can definitely change things and getting some good support is the most kind thing you can do for yourself.

🔗 A mix of scores?

If you have some high scores and some low scores, and especially if you have at least medium scores (5 or above) on the Growth Superpowers, the Flourish programs are likely to be in the sweet spot for you. Read on....

STEP 6: WHAT NEXT?

For some people, simply identifying and thinking through your scores on the Elements and Growth Superpowers and focusing on priorities as we've done, might be enough to set you off in the right direction to make positive change. If that's you, then simply using this tool to check in with yourself periodically might be all you need from us.

If you'd like some help though, that's what **Flourish Personal Growth** is here for. Here are some possibilities:

- 🔗 Head over to our [Where Do I Start?](#) page to find the best starting point for our programs.
- 🔗 Complete our [Flourishing Life Blueprint](#) online program. This includes all of the tools from our menu and walks you through a self-paced development program of videos and practical activities all from the comfort and privacy of your own home.
- 🔗 Join our [Flourish Community](#) which includes the online program plus webinars and participation in our community chat where we share experiences, ideas, tips and resources.
- 🔗 If you're committed to personal growth and ready to move, join our [Fellow Travelers' Circle](#) which includes everything listed above plus one-on-one sessions with your personal Flourish Guide, membership of a small dedicated Fellow Travelers chat group, and invitations to retreats.

We hope this tool has been helpful and that you'll keep using it to stay on track. Whatever you choose to do next, we hope you keep growing.

We'd love to see you on the path.
Warmly

The Flourish Personal Growth team



EXAMPLE ITEMS: Step 1 – a life well lived

- Love and friendship – warm, honest, real.
- I've been present to my life – I was really there for it, warts and all – minimal self-deception, maximum understanding and clear seeing.
- I've harnessed my abilities to achieve positive things for myself and others.
- I made the most of my talents.
- I've contributed kindness to the world – all beings including myself.
- Money has served me, and lack of it has not hindered me.
- My default setting is gratitude and enjoyment of life.
- I've left behind a small environmental footprint.
- I've fully experienced a lot of joy.

EXAMPLES: Question 15 - SMART v non-SMART goals

- ✓ Organise a regular catch-up (at least once a month) with one good friend by the end of July. (Relevant to the Connection Element.)
- ✗ Get more friendship in my life.
- ✓ Publish my e-book and print the book on Amazon by the end of February. (Relevant to the Achievement and Contribution Elements.)
- ✗ Finish my book project.
- ✓ Gain agreement from my manager to meet once a week (rather than every day) to discuss my progress on my work tasks - by end of this week. (Relevant to the Autonomy Element.)
- ✗ Stop my manager micro-managing me.
- ✓ Agree with Harry to stop talking about politics together – on Sunday when I see him. (Relevant to the Element of Connection.)
- ✗ Stop having so much conflict with Harry.
- ✓ Join and regularly attend a gardening group that meets weekly - by the end of the month. (Relevant to the Elements of Belonging and maybe also Engagement)
- ✗ Join an interest group

