



THE GUIDE TO REMARKABLE RELATIONSHIPS

5 STEPS TO MAKE YOU A HEALTHIER,
HAPPIER, & MORE PRESENT PARTNER

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5 Steps to make you a healthier, happier and more present partner

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CHAPTER 1

REMARKABLE RELATIONSHIPS

Isn't this what we all want? Like this dad, we want to be remarkable parents. We desire remarkable marriages, friendships, and other social relationships, including our careers. Nothing is more fulfilling than to be in happy, healthy relationships. This guide will help you achieve this goal by beginning with the most important person--you.



The path toward remarkable relationships begins with you. This guide will help you be a healthier, happier, and more present partner.

REMARKABLE RELATIONSHIPS BEGIN WITH YOU

Can you recall seeing something remarkable? Or, maybe you've had a remarkable experience. In the 90s, I remember being close up watching Michael Jordan dominate a basketball game. That was a remarkable sight! Several years ago, I stood before a student body of undergrad and graduate students to represent my peers as the graduate commencement speaker.

Witnessing or experiencing something remarkable is often a momentary event captured in time. Every time you think about it or replay the video, the remarkable moment is relived.

Let's talk about remarkable relationships. Are we expected to believe they are short-lived events that end as quickly as they start? Or, can *remarkable* relationships also be *lasting* relationships?

As I think about my relationships, I've had mixed results. Some started out remarkable but didn't end that way. Others have remained truly remarkable and enduring.

Over the years, I have learned several things about what makes remarkable relationships. I have found that the most important place to begin on this journey is with you. Before you can find a remarkable partner, you must work on becoming a remarkable person.

So why begin with me?

That's a great question! Remarkable relationships require individuals with a healthy core. I'm not speaking about your physical core per se, but about your inner core. This is you operating from your center.

Your inner core is an emergent self that seeks expression. It includes your thoughts, feelings, interests, beliefs and values. This is what makes up the real you. A "self" needs expression--a voice--action--experience. Focusing on your physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs strengthens your inner core.

Before you can expect remarkable relationships begin working on becoming a remarkable person.

Another reason why is important to begin with yourself is because you live in a social world and interact with others on a daily basis. Think about the people in your life: spouse/partner, children, family members, friends, or co-workers. The challenges of these relationships is easier when you know who you are and feel good about yourself. You bring that remarkable self into your social world.

Finally, it is important to begin with you for your sake. You matter! For no other reason, you are a unique individual, living on this earth for a purpose. A remarkable you deserves personal attention.



WHAT MAKES A REMARKABLE YOU

So, what constitutes a “self”? You look in the mirror and see your body. Does that describe you in totality? Of course not! We are multi-dimensional: physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual.

Nor are we designed to live in isolation. As social beings, we have a basic need for belongingness. Being in relationship with others allows the opportunity for self-expression. Here, you can express your inner core, the remarkable, emergent self.

So, in answer to the question, “what makes a remarkable you?”, I focus on five areas of the inner and outer core of self.

- 🍁 Physical - taking care of your body
- 🍁 Intellectual - feeding your mind
- 🍁 Emotional - expressing and managing your emotions
- 🍁 Social - finding healthy and fun connections with others
- 🍁 Spiritual - seeking connection in a divine realm

In each of the following chapters I will cover one of these areas of personal fitness. Here's what you can expect:

- 🍁 Why this area is important to your remarkable self
- 🍁 What you can do to address this area
- 🍁 How this will benefit your personal life and relationships
- 🍁 A call to action - something you can begin doing right away
- 🍁 Support and follow-up to questions you have in your journey

The goal in remarkable relationships is not about changing others, it is about working on yourself to be healthy and happy first.



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS GUIDE

In my coaching and counseling work, one of the toughest challenges facing adults is finding time for themselves. This is especially true for those who juggle the responsibilities of marriage, parenting, career, and social expectations. Many people I talk to begin the morning with little energy (replenished from sleep) and end the day totally exhausted. Is that you too?

You may be thinking, *“When am I going to find the time to do all this?”* I get it. It can feel overwhelming just thinking about it. I feel that way sometimes too. But here’s what I learned. It works for me--and I have found it works for others too.

First, I find something to motivate me to action. I begin with the end in mind. The late Steven Covey lists this as the first habit of highly effective people. I want to be a remarkable person enjoying remarkable relationships. For me, that serves as a motivation to do something.

Second, I think small and achievable. No way I’m going to eat a burrito in one bite! So, when I think about doing something in one of the five areas, I start small with a goal that’s achievable. I call this “getting traction”. You’ll hear more about this and see several examples throughout the workbook.

Once I have traction, which means I am doing something once or more times a week, I think about developing rhythm. I want to develop a habit out of this activity. When something is a rhythm in my life, whether it’s working out or a date night with my wife, it shows up as a repeating event in my calendar.

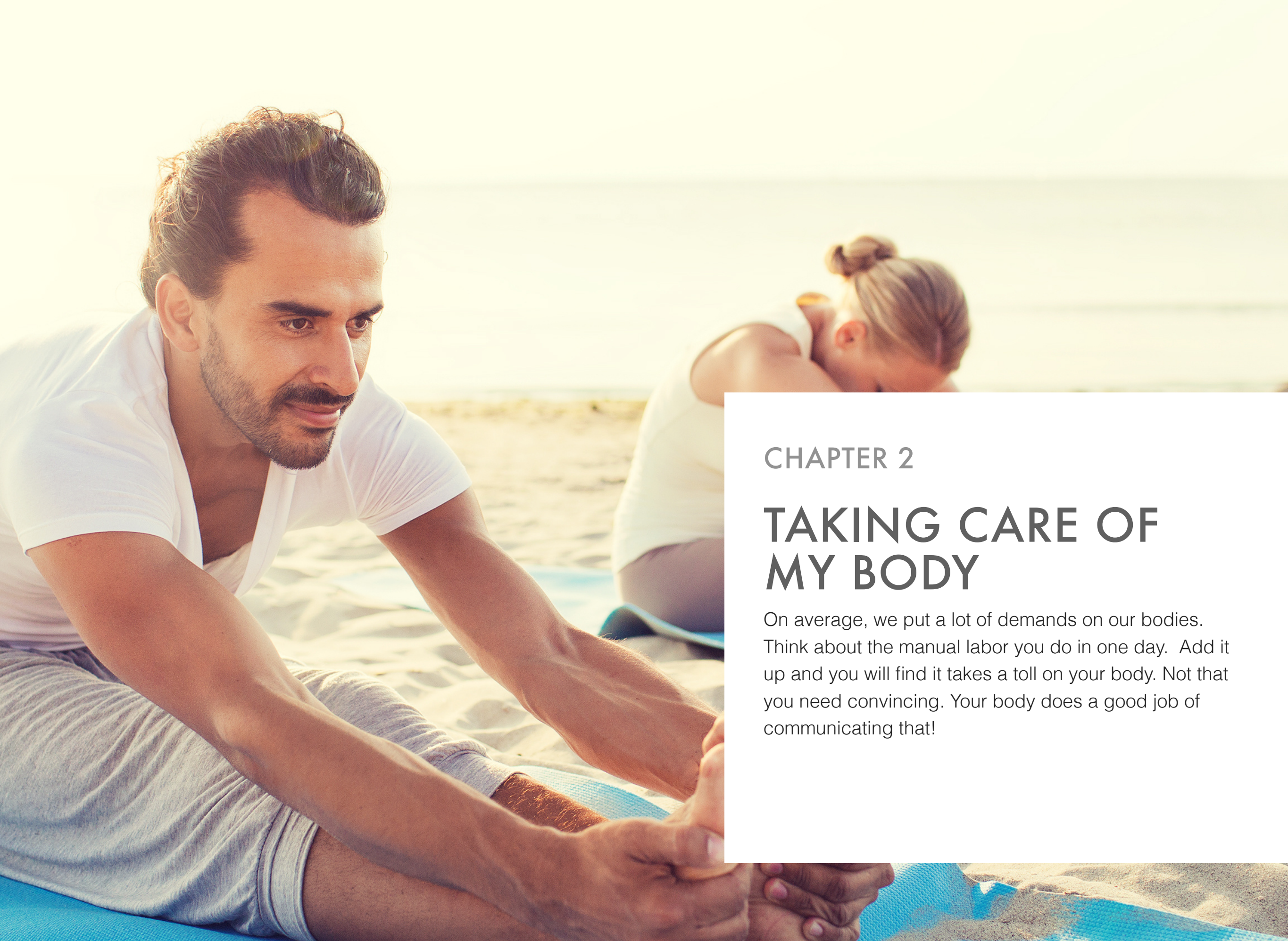
Finally, I factor in imperfection. All self-proclaimed and in denial perfectionists please listen to me. You need to do this. If not, you may give up before trying. My success in these five areas is due in part to my level of comfort with missing the mark sometimes. I don’t fall apart, get angry, beat myself up, or throw in the towel. Instead, I simply get back at my plan and work it. When it is at a rhythm it’s not hard to do.

So, let’s summarize how you will get the most out of this guide:

- 👉 For motivation, begin with the end in mind
- 👉 Find traction by starting with something small and achievable
- 👉 Develop your rhythm by establishing routine in your calendar
- 👉 Factor imperfection so you won’t quit when you fall short

For some, you may find you are already ahead because you have established some routines in your life, say in the physical area. Great! Now you can give attention to other areas of development. For those who are starting at square one, congratulations! You are doing something positive in your life that will help you achieve your goal in developing remarkable relationships. Remember, it begins with you.

As you begin using this guide, it might be good to designate a day and time that best suits you. Make sure it is time you are less likely to be interrupted. Are you ready to begin this journey together? Okay, let’s begin with the first area of self-care, taking care of our bodies--physical fitness.



CHAPTER 2

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

On average, we put a lot of demands on our bodies. Think about the manual labor you do in one day. Add it up and you will find it takes a toll on your body. Not that you need convincing. Your body does a good job of communicating that!



Taking care of your body should include a combination of healthy eating and some form of physical exercise.

A HEALTHY BODY YIELDS REMARKABLE RESULTS

In addition to physical labor, emotional and mental stress also wear on our bodies. Stress alerts the physiological system causing the body to react in adverse ways. Catabolic hormones such as cortisone are released in the body to combat stress. When stress becomes chronic, the catabolic forces begin to breakdown the system resulting in various forms of illness: physical and mental.

Stress needs an outlet or else it resides in the body. As you can see, this is not good for overall health. Taking care of your body should include a combination of healthy eating and some form of exercise that releases stress and builds energy.

Let's shift our focus from the deficits of not taking care of our bodies to the benefits we can expect if we do. The results are remarkable!

- Decrease in stress and an increase in stamina
- More energy to handle daily tasks and activities
- Increased mental alertness and clarity
- Improved emotional control
- Healthier and attractive appearance
- Increase in self-esteem
- Higher self-confidence
- Positive social impact

PERSONAL INVENTORY & PLAN

Now is a good time to take a personal inventory of what you currently do to take care of your body. First, let's establish a baseline. In the section below, jot your list. It can include things like: taking vitamins, regular doctor visits, going for walks, healthy diet plans, exercise, yoga, or other physical health regiments.

My personal inventory of what I do to take care of my body.

So, what were your reactions to your personal inventory? Pleasantly surprised? Relatively pleased? Or, somewhat shocked?

Now that you have a baseline, let's look at where you can begin to add one or two things to take care of your body. I want you to pick one thing to add from the nutritional side of health and another from the exercise side. In the next section you can begin this process.



When I began the process of taking care of my body I looked at nutrition and exercise. In the area of nutrition, I modified my food intake to cut calories, lower cholesterol, and increase nutrition. Now, I eat smaller portions, more vegetables, and replaced junk food with healthy, tasty alternatives.

What can you add in terms of nutrition to take care of your body? It can be as simple as avoiding fast-food restaurants, skipping dessert, or eating less red meat. As you reflect on your diet, what if anything do you need to change or modify? Write your comments here.

How I plan to add nutrition to my health plan.

Taking care of your body can begin simply by modifying your diet to include more fruits and vegetables.



In my younger years, physical activity comprised long walks and playing basketball with my sons and their friends in our driveway. It was a start but I knew I needed more. In my forties, I started working out regularly at the health club. Within a year I added full-court basketball twice a week to my regiment. Now, in my fifties I continue doing this and have started jogging.

Where do you want to start? Maybe it's walking with a fit-bit to log your steps. Or like the couple below you want to start bicycling. In the next section begin writing your plan for physical fitness.

How I plan to add exercise to my health plan.

You are never too old to take care of your body. In fact, as you age it becomes even more important. Before you attempt physical exercise contact your doctor and have a physical examination.



HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

You've heard the adage, *"Rome wasn't built in a day!"*. Neither will your remarkable life! We are going to start small to gain traction and build from here.

Traction begins with a single effort. It moves with a second, third, and so forth. Let's get some traction.

Now that you decided what you want to do in the areas of nutrition and physical activity the next step is to do it. The sooner the better. Here's a checklist of some next step suggestions:

- ☐ Open your calendar and schedule it
- ☐ Set a frequency that is reasonable and achievable
- ☐ Download a fitness and/or nutrition app on your device
- ☐ Solicit support from your spouse/partner or family
- ☐ Pair the activity with something you enjoy like listening to music or your favorite podcast.
- ☐ Reward yourself for accomplishing your goal that week

Taking action steps is key to traction. After you do this for a few weeks you will develop rhythm. You can add other nutrition and exercise activities as you see fit. But for now, focus on traction.

To ensure success inform your spouse/partner and other members of your family your plan. The change in your schedule may require some effort on their part to pitch in to help.

Remember to factor in imperfection. You may forget or miss a day. The key is not to give up. The more quickly you get back at it, the more traction and eventually rhythm you will establish.





CHAPTER 3

FEEDING MY MIND

A remarkable person not only takes care of the body but also feeds the mind. Studies show that exercising your brain correlates with mental health. For example, learning how to play piano gives you an added benefit of playing music that livens a mood and soothes the soul.



"Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." — Albert Einstein

Studies indicate that exercising the brain has multiple benefits and lowers risk for disorders including dementia.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE CONTINUALLY FEED THEIR MIND

My wife Marian is an interesting person. She is a forager for information. As I write, I notice her latest book: "Kings & Pharaohs" is sitting on the counter. She is studying ancient civilizations. Not for a class. Simply her latest fascination. By the way, the picture above is not her bookshelf. Okay, let's move on before I give her ideas!

One of the things that makes our relationship remarkable is a mutual interest in learning. We can talk for hours about things we are reading, documentaries or movies we watch, or anything in life that peaks our curiosity. In fact, her recent fascination in ancient history came after we visited the Oriental Museum on the campus of the University of Chicago, where it just so happens I am taking a year-long

program in advanced psychodynamic theory. Are we nerds? No one who knows us would say so. Actually, we have many dissimilar interests, but we enjoy sharing them with each other. It is one of many things that keeps our relationship interesting.

Did I mention you can multi-task fitness? To illustrate, we just finished a walk around the neighborhood. We talked about abuse of power in civilizations, while she got in ten thousands steps on her fit-bit! We got a two-for-one on that walk!

What do you do to feed your mind? Perhaps you enjoy reading or watching nature programs. Imagine what you would like to learn.

Let's begin with what you do to feed your mind now. In the section below, jot down things you currently enjoy doing. For example, a cooking class, golf lessons, or watching the History Channel.

Things I currently do to feed my mind

What did you learn from this exercise? Sometimes we are surprised by how much or in some cases how little we do to feed our minds.

So, now you have established a baseline for intellectual fitness. What might you want to add? Use your imagination but don't get too crazy like I did earlier this year. I decided to take two online courses at the same time. One was on basic photography and the other was a Rosetta Stone course on learning Spanish. I did fine for about 3 weeks and then crashed and burned! I decided to finish the photography course first and pick up Spanish later.

When you think about feeding your mind with something new to learn, start small and build from there. Don't make the mistake I did by taking on two things at the same time!





Next exercise begins with a question, *“What am I interested in learning?”* A new language? A hobby? An academic goal?

The Information Age has put learning at our fingertips. Literally! You are one click of the button away from anything you want to learn. There is so much available it can be a bit overwhelming. It’s like a smorgasbord!

Below write some ideas that might interest you. Let your heart be your guide. Intellectual growth, hobbies, pastimes, even articles you’ve read make great conversation possible with friends or your spouse.

What am I interested in learning?



BENEFITS YOU CAN EXPECT

Now that you completed the two exercises you have an idea of where you are and what you can do next to feed your mind. I am excited as I think about how this will impact your personal and social life!

Before I get to the benefits, let's review the process of getting started.

- 👉 It begins with a decision - choose one area of learning to start
- 👉 Start with something simple and achievable (unless you have more time on your hands)
- 👉 Set a reasonable goal of how often you want to do this activity
- 👉 Decide on the logistics - resource, time, location, etc...
- 👉 Enter "feeding my mind" time in your calendar
- 👉 Inform others in your household for support and adjustment
- 👉 Factor imperfection and stick with the plan--adjust if necessary

Remember how I "bit off more than I could chew" by attempting two courses at the same time? My plan derailed. So, I factored my imperfection, put the Spanish course on hold and focused on the on-line photography course. I didn't give up. I adjusted my plan.

I will let you in on a secret. Some of these areas of self-care overlap. For example, if you decided to add more nutrition to take care of your body, you can feed your mind by reading books on nutrition.

Intellectual fitness benefits your relationship on a number of levels:

- 👉 Learning always gives you something new to talk about
- 👉 Learning cures the boredom factor
- 👉 Learning gives you power which translates into opportunity
- 👉 Learning enables you to be a positive influence in relationships
- 👉 Establishing respect for each other's interests: Your hobbies and interests may be different but they also can form great connections as you learn from each other what interests you.

Okay, let's review. First, you decided on something you can do to feed your mind. Second, you set a reasonable goal, something achievable. Third, you also figured out the logistics. Lastly, you asked your support system for some backup. You are ready to launch!

Here's a few reminders:

- 👉 First, find some traction
- 👉 Second, after traction, try to establish a rhythm
- 👉 Third, reward yourself for the little successes along the way

You are now good to go. See you in the next chapter on emotional fitness!



CHAPTER 4

MANAGING MY EMOTIONS

Sometimes a walk is all it takes to cool down, relieve stress, or simply to relax and reflect on life. Emotions have a powerful effect on us. Certain activities are especially effective in managing emotions. Do you know what works for you?



A 20 minute soak in the tub allows your mind to rest and emotions to settle after a stressful day.

MANAGING EMOTIONS BENEFITS YOU AND OTHERS

Emotions play a major role in how we live in the world and interact with others.

Early on we learn how important emotional expression is in communicating to get needs met. Unfortunately, many people have learned ways of coping by suppressing emotion. And, so often as children, we are told things like, *"You shouldn't feel that way."*

Over time, some of us, as kids, stop trusting our feelings and choose to bottle them up. This pattern may continue throughout adolescence and into adulthood. This is why some of us have a difficult time identifying our feelings and communicating them.

On the other hand, some of us are overly attuned to our emotions. Others might say, *"You wear your emotions on your sleeve."* People with high sensitivity to emotion can overwhelm others with their intensity. If this is the case, we need to learn ways to regulate our emotions better.

Emotional fitness strikes a balance between *emotional suppression* and *over-expression*. Individuals with a tendency to suppress emotion, will benefit from exercises to help them increase awareness of feelings. For people who have a hard time controlling emotions, an emotional fitness plan may include exercises that help them manage emotional intensity.

The key is to be able to tune into your emotions and allow them free expression.

Here are few ways to do that. You may find these are things you are doing already. Next time you do them, think about them as a form of emotional expression:

- 👉 Listening to music
- 👉 Watching a movie
- 👉 Playing or participating in sports
- 👉 Dancing to music

Music can have a powerful effect on emotion. Creating playlists for various moods is a great way to stimulate emotions or change a mood.

- 👉 Laughing at a comedy
- 👉 Crying at a movie
- 👉 Looking at old photo album or yearbook.
- 👉 Cheering your team

Let me raise a caution flag. When it comes to competitive outlets, such as sports, be careful not to allow your emotions to get the best of you. Some people become overly emotionally invested in their sports team. Frustration can boil into anger and rage if you are not careful. Remember, emotional fitness is about healthy expression.





Here are some of the benefits of exercising emotions

- 🌟 Your emotions have an outlet for expression
- 🌟 You avoid suppression emotions, a major cause of health problems
- 🌟 Unpleasant emotions are processed out
- 🌟 Pleasant emotions are processed in
- 🌟 Increased self-awareness
- 🌟 Improved ability to tune into the emotional state of others
- 🌟 Increased capacity for empathy
- 🌟 Less stress
- 🌟 More peace

Managing your emotions benefits others too! You are less likely to over-react to your kids or spouse when you have other outlets for emotional release.

People who exercise good emotional control are less reactive and more responsive. The difference is in pace of response and attitude toward the other person.

Finally, when you do a good job of managing your emotions you can be more steady and supportive to others. Your ability to empathize, understand, and emotionally support others improves.

If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.

– Daniel Goleman

MY PLAN FOR EMOTIONAL FITNESS

By now you may notice that you already do some things to promote emotional health. In fact, some physical and/or sport activities are a great outlet for emotional release. I like the overlapping effect this has on providing both physical and emotional fitness.

In addition to the list on page 19, here is a checklist of ideas to stimulate your thinking as you begin your plan for emotional fitness. Feel free to check one or more of the ideas that interest you, or add your own.

- ☐ Yoga
- ☐ Journal writing
- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Caring for pets
- ☐ Talking with a professional counselor
- ☐ Taking an acting class
- ☐ Getting a massage
- ☐ Doing volunteer work
- ☐ Playing board games
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Okay, now that you have identified one or more emotional fitness outlets, which one do you plan to start doing?

If you're just beginning, start with something simple. A walk in nature or a massage is a good start. If you have more time, choose something more involved. The key as always is to start somewhere and get some traction.

If you have trouble expressing emotions you are not alone. Guys in particular may find it difficult to identify, let alone share their feelings. Why? Historically, boys are raised by their fathers to avoid what are considered weaker emotions (fear, sadness, worry, loneliness). Instead, they were encouraged to express anger for this was acceptable in their role as protector and provider for their families.

Unfortunately, this plan does not bode well for interpersonal relationships with females. Boys grow up to be men and have a hard time relating and responding to women.

Some women have difficulty managing emotions. Combine a man with emotional suppression and a woman with emotional intensity and you have relationship problems.

Both men and women can benefit from talking with a professional counselor or coach on how to properly express and manage emotions. If this describes you, I encourage you to get the right tools from professionals who can help.



CHAPTER 5

MAKING TIME FOR MY SOCIAL LIFE

On the course everything moves a little slower. You don't mind though. The lush fairway, ponds, trees, all invite you to relax and enjoy yourself. You can get away and have some "me time" with a few good friends enjoying the game you love.



Good friends are hard to find, harder to leave, and impossible to forget.

REMARKABLE RELATIONSHIPS HAPPEN WHEN WE INVEST IN THEM

We are designed to connect with other people. Studies confirm humans, by nature, are social. It is linked to human survival. While we strive for independence we also need interdependence--finding a way to do life together.

Family is the primary social unit. Okay, we get that. Friendships and other social relationships are important too!

A social life is easy when you have few responsibilities. However, when you start a career, get married, buy a home, and start having kids the social pie is reduced to a sliver.

If you knew that a healthy social life will improve your family relationships would you increase this slice of your pie? I hope you said “yes” because the truth is it does!

If you want to have remarkable relationships you have to invest in them. If you spread yourself out too thin and don’t make time for a social life you will miss out on the opportunity to develop close friendships.

Several years ago I joined a group of fellow business owners to build my practice. I wanted more leadership development. What I got was that and much more. We developed a bond of friendships

so strong that we know we can count on each other to be there when life deals a heavy blow. We do life together, whether it's on a boat or a boardroom, a restaurant or retreat setting. I consider these remarkable friendships.

Do you book "me time" in your calendar? Do you invest time in building quality relationships with peers?

Social media has been a blessing and a curse when it comes to connecting with others. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest provide a powerful social platform to connect with people all over the

world. Many people have become reacquainted and developed new friendships using social media portals.

Unfortunately, social forums that connect people can become a substitute for direct human interaction. Texting, tweeting, and other quick and easy forms of communication are convenient, yet they lack the power of face-to-face interactions.

As you think about social fitness, how do you stack up? Are you content with your social life? Or, is something missing? If you could add one thing to your social life right now, what would it be?

What is "me time"? Simply put, it is time for you. It occupies a slot in your calendar. When "me time" happens the role hats go on the rack so you can wear the play hat.



THE BENEFITS OF AN ACTIVE SOCIAL LIFE

If you knew that a healthy social life will improve your family relationships would you increase this slice of your pie? I hope you said “yes” because the truth is it does!

Investing in a social life has these benefits on your family relationships


- 👤 Gives you something to look forward to during the week
- 👤 Improves your mood and attitude at home
- 👤 Provides an outlet for fun and self-expression
- 👤 Demonstrates to family the importance of living a balanced life
- 👤 For couples, it gives you a night out away from the kids

Developing a healthy social life is important in your growth as an individual. In order for it to happen it has to be a priority in your life. It has to show up on your calendar. You have to be intentional to make it happen.

Okay, it's time for an exercise. Let's revisit the questions on the previous page.

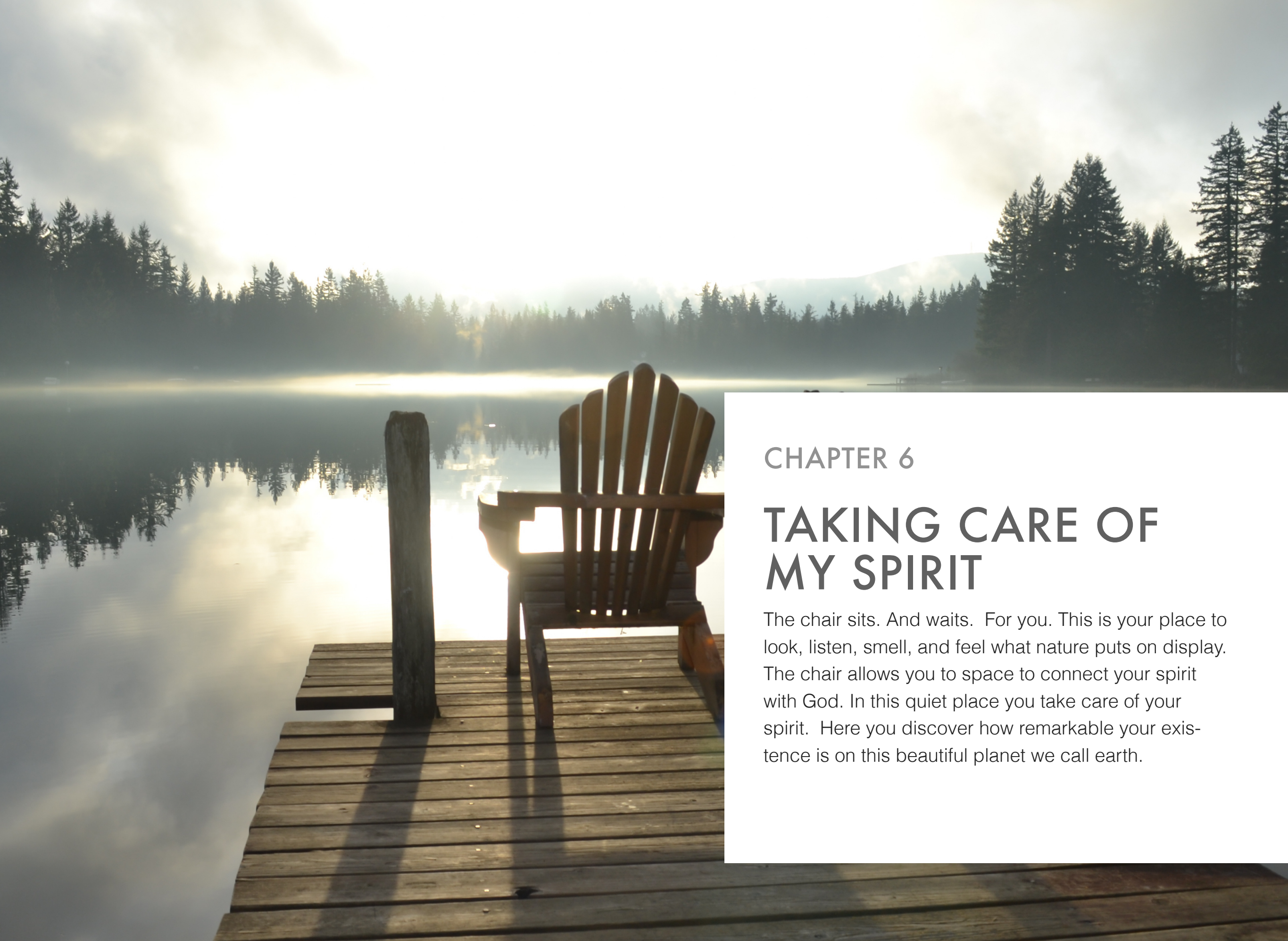
- ✳️ As you think about social fitness, how do you stack up?
- ✳️ Are you content with your social life? Or, is something missing?
- ✳️ If you could add one thing to your social life right now, what would it be?

In this section, answer the questions above. The goal is to get a sense of where you are now and what you would like to add or change to your current plan.



Now that you completed this exercise the next step is to put it into action. When I talk to people about taking time for themselves some struggle actually doing it. A common objection is *“It feels selfish to do things for me.”* I tweak it. *“It is self-care to do things for me.”* I encourage you to take the next step and do the self-care act.

We are now on the home stretch. The final area of fitness I want to introduce you to focuses on spirituality. You might say I saved the best for last. Exploring your spirituality has many numerous benefits, including establishing remarkable relationships.



CHAPTER 6

TAKING CARE OF MY SPIRIT

The chair sits. And waits. For you. This is your place to look, listen, smell, and feel what nature puts on display. The chair allows you to space to connect your spirit with God. In this quiet place you take care of your spirit. Here you discover how remarkable your existence is on this beautiful planet we call earth.



What other people say about you is not a reflection of you but a reflection of them.
God is the ultimate judge and he knows your heart.

WHAT'S SO REMARKABLE ABOUT SPIRITUALTY

Spirituality is a deeply personal matter. This is not a place to discuss religion. Each person follows their own spiritual path. The point is to find a means to express your spirituality on a regular basis.

Some individuals enjoy the rituals of religious observances while others focus on a personal relationship. Whatever approach, attention to your spiritual life is likely to give you the greatest results.

When you nurture your spirituality, you care for your soul. A nourished soul is the source of motivation, confidence, passion, and perseverance. These virtues are necessary to achieve holistic fitness.

Spirituality goes deeper than the mental tricks some of us rely on to help ourselves feel better. You have a deeper connection with your true self when it flows from your spiritual values. Feeling better about yourself spiritually, positively impacts your relationships too! You are more likely to be tuned into the needs of others and express empathy, support, and unconditional love. Others may look to you for support, encouragement, and prayer because they see you as a person of faith.

What's so remarkable about spirituality? Having a connection with God for starters. Now let's examine more remarkable benefits.

BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Divine connection is far superior to human connection. This relationship goes far deeper than anything you can imagine on a human level. Here are just a few benefits you can expect as you develop your spiritual life:

- 🌟 Connects you with your Maker
- 🌟 Enhances self-identity
- 🌟 Heals emotional wounds
- 🌟 Clarifies values, personal and social
- 🌟 Crystallizes a sense of purpose and passion
- 🌟 Instills competence and confidence
- 🌟 Increases desire and motivation
- 🌟 Influences will to act



SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT

This spiritual assessment is designed to give you an opportunity to describe your views based on your history and current experience. It will give you a profile of your current level of spiritual fitness.

Regarding spirituality, I identify myself as (check what applies):

- ☐ Agnostic - uncertain God exists
- ☐ Atheist - do not believe God exists
- ☐ Pantheistic - universal view that God exists in all things seen and unseen
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Other

Write a brief narrative of your spiritual history from childhood to current.

Has your spiritual views and/or practices changed over time? How?

Currently, to what extent if any does your spirituality play a role in your life?

What if any would like to change about how you practice your spirituality?

I hope the assessment brought you some perspective regarding your spiritual journey. For some people, their faith has remained strong and steady throughout the course of life. While others experience a spiritual drift for one reason or another.

The key here is to take another look at your spiritual with fresh eyes and see what you want it to become. When you nurture your soul vitality will reemerge and you will live with deeper sense of meaning and purpose. Others will notice a difference in you too!

Picture yourself on the chair at the end of the dock on a peaceful summer morning. No distractions. It's just you, nature, and God.

Becoming attuned to how spirituality has framed who you are now and what you want in the future can set you up for remarkable relationships. Your spirituality may or may not be something you share with a partner, but it is the very foundation of who you are as an individual, which makes it essential and relevant to any relationship you are in.

Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death.





YOUR NEXT STEP

It's not as hard as you imagine. Some people get stuck because they look too far ahead and talk themselves out of the journey. I follow a Chinese proverb, *"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."*

Your next step is about you. It's about taking responsibility for yourself. Your well being. This is the essence of self-care. Addressing your inner core activates the emergence of your remarkable self.

As you work your inner core, notice the difference in the way you feel about yourself. Your inner dialog will likely be more kind and confident. You will feel good in your own skin!

It begins with one step. You can stay where you are or move in the direction of where you want to go. If you want remarkable relationships, then take the first step by working on becoming a remarkable you.

Be prepared when others notice a difference in you too. You will have more to say from the things you are learning about and experiencing. They will notice how you exhibit such confidence and friendliness. Others will relax around you because you are comfortable in your own skin.

As you take your next step, remember the goal is to get some traction. Be patient with yourself! Traction will come and rhythm will follow.

This is not a program to endure, but a lifestyle to embrace. Keep it simple and steady. Remarkable things will follow!



7

TRACKING MY PROGRESS

I have taken some steps. How many footprints can I count? Am I getting traction? Establishing a rhythm? The journey to become a remarkable you begins with the first step. In this chapter, you will evaluate your progress in each of the five areas.



Transformation doesn't happen overnight. It takes effort over time. Before a remarkable butterfly flutters and flies it started inching along slowly as a tiny caterpillar.

TRANSFORMATION IS A PROCESS

For something to become remarkable it takes time and dedication. It took Michelangelo two years to sculpt the fourteen foot statue of David and four years to paint the Sistine Chapel. He faced many obstacles along the way but remained dedicated to see these projects to completion.

You are a remarkable person in the making. The essence of your remarkable self is within. It is up to you to bring this essence out. Taking time to invest in your personal wellness is of utmost importance. Do yourself a favor. Make investing in you a priority.

In this guide, we have covered 5 areas of personal fitness. By now you have taken inventory on what you currently do and identified some things you want to start in each of these areas. In this final chapter you will measure your progress, identify and address barriers, and find ways to turn traction into rhythm.

The purpose here is to highlight what is working, problem-solve what is not, and learn how to establish some rhythm. Finally, we want to see how you are transforming. Let's look at how your investment in self is taking shape in how you see, feel, and act toward yourself.



Family yoga is a fun way to introduce the importance of physical and emotional fitness to your kids.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

In the space below, evaluate your progress in establishing traction in nutrition and exercise.

What I have done so far to gain traction in this area.

Have you encountered barriers in your plan? Below is a list of possible barriers. Check all that apply. Add your own barriers not listed.

- ☐ Set my goal too high
- ☐ Didn't schedule it in my calendar
- ☐ Gave up too quickly
- ☐ Did not have support of my family
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY HAS THESE BENEFITS SO FAR

In the space below, describe how you taking care of your body has made a difference in your life so far. Also, add what you might want to add to your personal fitness routine.

How taking care of my body has made a difference in my life.





Learning exercises the brain and expands the mind's capacity to think on new levels.

FEEDING MY MIND

In the space below, evaluate your progress in establishing traction in exercising your mind.

What I have done so far to gain traction in this area.

Have you encountered barriers in your plan? Below is a list of possible barriers. Check all that apply. Add your own barriers not listed.

- ☐ Set my goal too high
- ☐ Didn't schedule it in my calendar
- ☐ Gave up too quickly
- ☐ Did not have support of my family
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

WAYS I HAVE GROWN BY FEEDING MY MIND

Take some time to reflect on the things you are doing to feed your mind. It might be something small like watching a documentary or reading a biography. Or maybe you sat on the piano bench and began working on scales you learned as a child. What has your experience been like so far? How have you grown by feeding your mind? What do you plan to learn about next?

Ways I have grown by feeding my mind.





One of the simplest ways to manage your emotions is to take a break and gaze out the window.

MANAGING MY EMOTIONS

In the space below, evaluate your progress in establishing traction in managing your emotions.

What I have done so far to gain traction in this area.

Have you encountered barriers in your plan? Below is a list of possible barriers. Check all that apply. Add your own barriers not listed.

- ☐ Set my goal too high
- ☐ Didn't schedule it in my calendar
- ☐ Gave up too quickly
- ☐ Did not have support of my family
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

MANAGING MY EMOTIONS IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ME

Are you taking time to do things that help you relax and nurture your inner self? Emotions flow easily when we find ways to exercise them properly. In the space below reflect on how you feel you are changing as a result of addressing your emotional needs.

I notice these changes in my life since I began addressing my emotions.





You can combine physical, emotional, and social fitness on a bike trail with some friends.

MAKING TIME FOR MY SOCIAL LIFE

In the space below, evaluate your progress in establishing traction by making time for your social life.

What I have done so far to gain traction in this area.

Have you encountered barriers in your plan? Below is a list of possible barriers. Check all that apply. Add your own barriers not listed.

- ☐ Set my goal too high
- ☐ Didn't schedule it in my calendar
- ☐ Gave up too quickly
- ☐ Did not have support of my family
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

TRACKING MY SOCIAL LIFE

Are you pleased with the progress you are making in this area? Have you reconnected with friends you haven't seen in awhile? Maybe you were able to meet new people through the social outlets you found. Journal your reflections on the benefits you have found so far in making time for your social life.

The benefits I have found since I invested more in my social life.





Shared spiritual values contribute to both personal and interpersonal health.

TAKING CARE OF MY SPIRIT

In the space below, evaluate your progress in taking care of your spirit.

What I have done so far to gain traction in this area.

Have you encountered barriers in your plan? Below is a list of possible barriers. Check all that apply. Add your own barriers not listed.

- ☐ Set my goal too high
- ☐ Didn't schedule it in my calendar
- ☐ Gave up too quickly
- ☐ Did not have support of my family
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

HOW TAKING CARE OF MY SPIRIT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE

Addressing your spiritual needs is the most meaningful way to develop a remarkable self. This is the pathway to the deepest part of your inner core. It is a sacred place that requires special attention. As you reflect on this fifth and final area of personal fitness, journal your thoughts about your spiritual life. Relate spiritual breakthroughs and/or challenges you have encountered in your journey thus far. Add your thoughts and wishes for the future as you contemplate your spiritual path.

My reflections about my spiritual journey so far.

BODY

MIND

SOUL

SPIRIT



We live in a diverse world with some remarkable people who are eager to meet other remarkable people!

YOU ARE NOW ON YOUR JOURNEY TO REMARKABLE RELATIONSHIPS

You have done the initial work. By now you have established a plan that covers five areas to develop the inner self. Now you are on your way to become a remarkable you!

As you go forward in developing remarkable relationships, keep these things you are doing in practice. Move from getting traction to establishing rhythm. Fight to protect your schedule so you can allow time for you. Trust me, others will learn to adjust, and will appreciate the difference it is making in your life.

My hope for you is to have a life enriched with quality relationships: marriage, children, sibling, friendship, and coworker. It begins with you. You have one life to live. Give it your best by being your best.

I know from personal experience the difference in my life and relationships since I decided to work on becoming a remarkable person. As a result, I am happy and blessed to have some really remarkable people in my circle of relationships. I am so excited as I think about what's in store for you! So I leave you with this charge. Carpe diem! (Seize the day!)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Olund is a licensed, professional marriage and family counselor, board-certified executive coach, and the owner of LifeWork Counseling in Hinsdale, Illinois.

As a relational-communication specialist, he helps couples and families build respectful and caring relationships by transforming negative patterns into positive connections.

Don recently published a book, “[Bringing Respect Back: Communicating Without the Conflict](#)”. He is also a contributing author in professional literature in counseling.

Don is a frequent guest lecturer and former faculty member in the graduate school of counseling at Governors State University.

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