

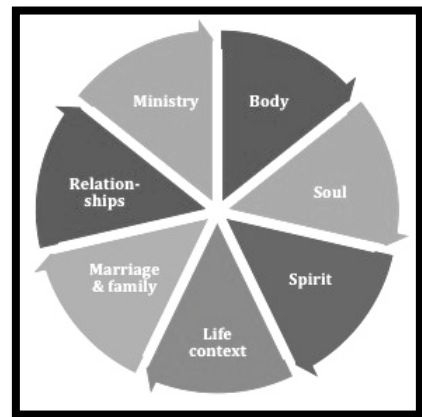


Leadership Letter

Is your life in balance?

I received an email from an old friend the other day. He opened with, 'How are you, haven't seen you in ages?' How do you answer a question like that? I often go straight into a ministry response – "The retreat centre is going well – just had a wonderful retreat with leaders from all over the world! Blah blah blah!" But, what about my relationships, my pace of life, my finances, my health and fitness, my spiritual and emotional life – the real me? To identify the diversity of our lives, I have made a wheel of 7 areas of life to consider. See the diagram.

At any one time we will have some areas where we are doing well and other areas that are challenging. Often there are particular areas of our life that tend to be a little more chaotic. One of the frustrations for me is in the area of relationships. With the rhythm of the retreat centre, it's become difficult to maintain relationships locally as we can't commit to a regular meeting on a certain day of the week. While a retreat is on, we are fully engaged and this makes it hard to have a life beyond the centre. I am sure you have your areas too that are more of a challenge like this.



Let's take a quick look at our lives:

Body – establishing a routine for health.

Fitness: What kind of fitness programme do you have right now? Check out 23½ hours on You Tube. It's a very cleverly put together presentation that talks about what just 30 minutes of walking per day can do for you. If we are going to be good stewards of our bodies, we need to keep fit. Perhaps you prefer sports, running, swimming or a specific exercise programme. Whatever you can do is worth it. Remember, a fit body influences our spiritual life.

Healthy eating: I wrote a leadership letter previously about this topic but would encourage you again to watch the DVD "Hungry for change". It's a very powerfully put together documentary and worth the hour watch. Some simple adjustments can make a huge difference. In this season where obesity is such an epidemic, eat on a smaller plate so you eat less, don't have second helpings, cut down on sugar and drink lots of water. Just making these 4 things a habit will bring about change.

Sleep & Rest: Again I have written previously about Sabbath and hope that you are consistently taking time out. We can't last for the long haul if we stay in the fast lane. If you are not sleeping well ask the Lord for understanding. There can

be all sorts of reasons but a major one is 'carrying too much emotionally and not debriefing or taking time to work it through and process.'

Soul – being at peace

Emotional health: What level of stress are you working under? We need some stress to get things done but too much and it has a negative effect. When was the last time you had a debrief? Our aim must be to live in peace – Jesus said, 'My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. Don't let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

During the LDC we minister to people using the freedom cycle (an adapted kind of theophostic ministry). Issues from the past are highlighted as we find our soul 'out of peace', or we find ourselves over-reacting to people or things. We use the analogy of smelling smoke in our lives that comes from a fire from the past. Whenever we react, get angry, are agitated, feel frustrated, or say things we didn't mean... it often relates to smoke rising and some unresolved issues from the past. Let's continue to see these areas healed up and keep that learner plate on.

Mental health: How stimulated are you in your thinking and processing? God gave us a mind to learn and understand and the whole of our lives we have the opportunity of using those little grey cells to the maximum. How many books do you read? What kind of things do you study? What is your passion right now and what are planning in order to develop personally?

Social health: How is your circle of friendships? How is your social calendar and level of hospitality? We are made for relationships and so meaningful conversation and fun together is foundational to our well being. We have been fortunate to have our youngest son and his wife living with us since they were married last August and they are serving as chefs for the retreat centre. We have a rhythm of playing card and board games with them in the evenings. It's been great fun and we are becoming masters in Cribbage, Settlers, Golf and other games that help us relax after busy days. They have taught us the importance of chilling!

Character health: There are so many passages on growth in the New Testament and we are encouraged to put on certain positive qualities and take off negative ones. We are challenged to become more like Jesus and follow in his footsteps. So what character quality are you focusing on? If there was a theme over this year for me, it must be *having a servant heart*. As people come through our centre, the constant encouragement from the Lord is to treat each one as if they were Jesus, to go the extra mile and give all we have. Many times we don't feel like it but it's not about feelings is it!

Spiritual life – creating an environment for God's presence.

In any relationship we have regular patterns of relating day in and day out. We have our regular rhythm and then we experience those special precious moments together that make memories. In our relationship with God it is similar. We create an environment with our spiritual disciplines and devotional life that

is regular and consistent. Then there are moments when heaven breaks into our lives and we see dynamic things happening. Hopefully we will see this more and more! (I am just reading 'when heaven invades earth' by Bill Johnson.) So how is your spiritual health?

Inward spiritual health - meditation in scripture, your prayer life, study, fasting...
Outward spiritual health - simplicity, solitude, submission, service...
Corporate spiritual health - confession, worship, guidance, celebration...

I am always amazed when I look at my inner life and realise how naturally rather than supernaturally, I think, feel and pray. The challenge of course is to 'do what I see the Father doing'. That requires being in that place where I discern between what God is saying, what the enemy is saying and what my own soul is saying.

The spiritual health in our leadership is seen as we ministry in a priestly way to our staff, peers and those leading us. How often are we hearing the word of the Lord, touching the lives of those around us in deep ways and bringing the fragrance of Christ into every meeting we attend?

Life context – living with kingdom values

Pace of life: How's your pace of life – too busy, too slow, just right? It tends to go in seasons doesn't it? It's important to watch, that one busy season doesn't continue to follow another one. Some of us have a difficulty of saying 'No' and it gets us into all kinds of problems.

Cultural adaptation: How's your cultural adaptation? We have lived in Spain for 7 years now and still have not fully adapted to life here. We communicate a lot when we use the phrase TIS. (This is Spain.) Things happen differently than they do in our home cultures and we have to get used to that. We have to learn to be content where God has called us and appreciate the culture he places us in.

Financial health: Scripture encourages us to be faithful in the little and we will be given much. How are we living in integrity with our finances? How generous are we? Remember, our prosperity is measured by how much we give away. Living by faith always has its challenges but we have the privilege of seeing so many miracles and learning so much about God and his divine resources in the process.

Marriage and family – laying our lives down for others

Relational & communication life: I always find it fascinating watching couples out in restaurants. The other day I watched a couple and for the longest time, the only words spoken were, 'pass the salt'. There is so much to talk about. There is so much to learn from one another. There is so much wisdom to be gained by getting someone else's perspective on issues. If in doubt, communicate! We have got into the habit of writing words of affirmation on little notes and placing them on the mirror in our bathroom. Every effort at communication is worth it. Keep up that communication as a family – over meals, with texts, emails, kik, voxer or with whatever app or method you can use.

Spiritual life: I remember some years ago being challenged when I heard Lynn Green talk about how he and Marti prayed together every morning. Soon after hearing that Rite and I followed suit and it has become such a value for us since. I think we had an advantage having had a special relationship in YWAM as we were courting. We were encouraged to have no physical contact and so our relationship developed more on a spiritual foundation. We disciple one another spiritually as we talk, pray and discuss things - I can really recommend it.

Recreational life: Do you have things in common that you like doing together? It's vital to find hobbies and activities that you can enjoy together. When my kids were young, I used to give specific attention to each one with their own unique activity. Then we would have family outings on a regular basis to keep the fun-ometer high. Rite & I still enjoy exploring new towns, having walks together, meals out and the opportunity to read books together.

Love life: Intimacy has an infinite capacity to grow in our relationship together and it is the culmination of sharing our lives together in every way including the physical bond that makes this relationship unique from all others. Romance is something to be nurtured continually every week with affirming words, quality time, gifts and dates and whatever it takes to communicate to your partner that they are the most important person in the world.

Relationships – seeking to love and develop others

Wider family: Families vary in their closeness but the question is, 'What is the Lord saying in terms of involvement with your wider family' – uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, in-laws, out-laws – the list can become quite large! I have just been invited to officiate the wedding of my daughter-in-law's sister and her fiancé. The circle gets wider.

Work colleagues: In YWAM we are good at relationships generally. Our teams are relational and we get to share our lives and pray for one another in our deepest areas of need and yet often don't know one another's surname or how many siblings they have or where they were born! Sometimes you think you are friends with your team but when you leave the role, you leave the 'friends' behind too – you find that they were work colleagues after all.

Friends: We need friends. Jesus called his disciples friends having had them as disciples or interns for a season. They formed a close bond and they were ready to do anything for one another. Peter said, 'We've left everything to follow you.' Jesus would often slip away to his home from home in Bethany. We too need those get aways.

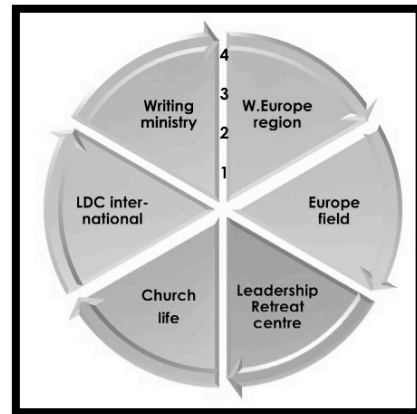
Mentorees & mentors: I think we are all too aware that the guru model of mentoring is unrealistic. The fact is, there will be many people who invest in our lives in specific areas and we will, in turn, invest in others. This is an area where we need *intentionality*. It doesn't just happen. I need to seek mentors out and be willing to respond to those who seek me out. It needs boundaries – often they are not life long commitments but a season here and a season there. Spiritual fathers and mothers tend to be more longer term but coaches come and go. During my years as national leader in Scotland, I coached many leaders in

base/team leadership from 6 months to several years. I still do, but now on an occasional basis. What are your contribution areas and who are you investing in? What areas do you need mentoring yourself – seek people out.

Ministry – living out our calling

Passion and calling: Do you find fulfilment from your work and ministry? When you are younger there is a need of exploring and checking things out to know what you are good at and what you are really called to, but as you get older you need to find your niche, where your gifts and calling match. God wants you to enjoy serving him!

Responsibilities you hold: You may be involved in a number of teams, run a number of training programmes, be a generalist and have a broad vision or be focused in one particular area. You may want to form another wheel with just your ministry roles. See my roles in the diagram.



Danger - It's easy to allow our focus to be solely ministry. Often it is here that we receive our strokes and encouragement. Because of this, we find ourselves putting our main energy into ministry and leaving only the dregs for the other aspects of our life. How many ministry hats do you wear? If you have a finger in lots of pies, make sure you aren't being spread too thin!

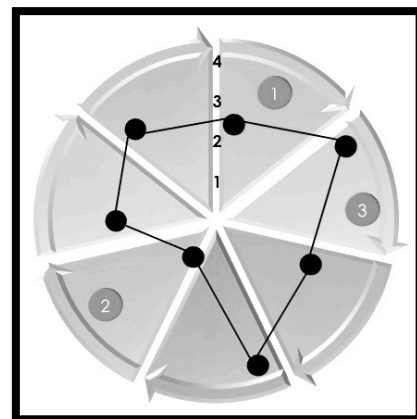
7 aspects of life/ministry hats:

So it's time to pray and make application. Assess your life in the 7 areas above and ask yourself these 3 questions:

1. On a scale of 1-4, with 1 low and 4 high, **how well am I doing** in each of the 7 areas? Place a circle or dot to identify your score.

2. Again on a scale of 1-4 **how much time is allocated** to each of the 7 areas? It may be you scored yourself low on an area but are spending lots of time on it.

3. Now choose your top 3 **priorities** for this next 3 months or season. Again a priority may be an area you are doing poorly in, or it may be an area that is your strength that you want to get stronger in or have greater fulfilment in. Write in 1, 2 and 3 in the quadrants. Then get to work and make some smart goals in these areas to see changes take place.



Happy assessing,

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