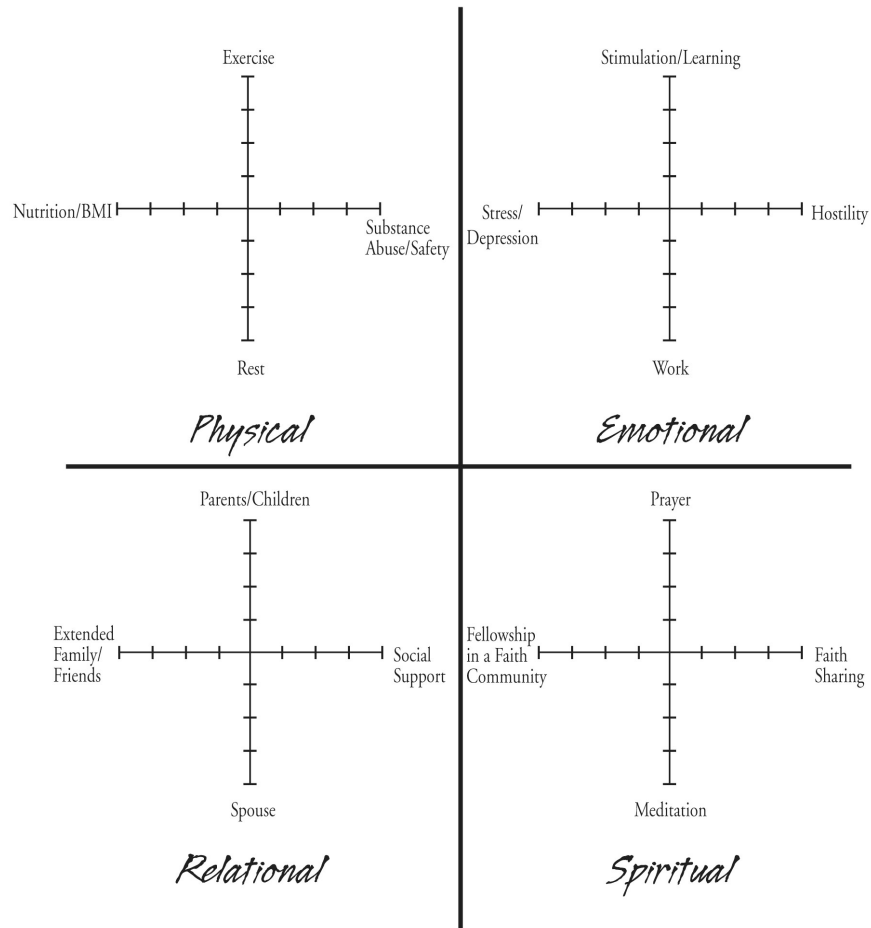


Assessing Your Health – Adults

Walt Larimore, MD

Here’s an easy way for you to assess the four major aspects of your health—physical, emotional, relational and spiritual. This simple tool will give you a helpful snapshot of your total health— or lack of it. If you are under age 25, you may want to use the “Assessing Your Health – Young Adult” tool found at www.DrWalt.com.



There is a blank graph, like the one above, on page 20 of this packet (or you can download a complimentary copies at www.highlyhealthy.net). Use one graph to record your scores to each set of questions. If you’re married, have your spouse fill out a different graph about *your* health and then compare.

Notice that as you measure each of the four aspects of your health, it will form a wheel. Each wheel has a hub and four spokes. The spokes represent the measure of health you possess in each area. The longer the spoke, the better. What you’ll be doing is assessing the length of each spoke of each wheel. Then, I’ll have you draw the wheels—which will show you how smooth or rough a “health ride” you are presently experience or will experience in the future.

Please note that this exercise is *not* meant to show you where you come up short. Rather, this tool is designed to show where *you* might think about improving in your quest to improve *your* health. The more accurately you assess yourself, the more helpful this tool will be. As you read each description below, mark the appropriate spoke to represent your evaluation of your health. The hub is the zero point. A full spoke is four points.

1 PHYSICAL WHEEL

Hub = understanding one's physical body

Vertical Spokes = exercise and rest

Horizontal Spokes = diet/nutrition/BMI and substance abuse/safety

First, let's focus on the two *vertical spokes*.

▲ Exercise

The *up spoke* measures your average *physical activity* over the last two or three months?

SCORING THE "UP" SPOKE:

4: I exercise (run, walk, work out, or participate in sports activities) at least thirty minutes six or seven days a week.

3: I exercise at least thirty minutes per day, four or five days a week.

2: I exercise at least thirty minutes per day, three days a week.

1: I exercise at least thirty minutes one or two days a week.

0: I am a couch potato and don't usually exercise very much.

▼ Rest

On average, over the last two or three months, how would you assess your *sleep and rest habits*?

Consider these factors for the *bottom spoke*. Check each that apply to you:

I go to bed at a reasonable hour.

I get a restful night of sleep most nights of the week.

I usually wake up refreshed.

I have one or two days per week for a hobby, rest, and recreation.

I enjoy one or more adequate, restful vacations each year.

SCORING THE "DOWN" SPOKE:

4: I achieve all five of the above.

3: I achieve four of the above.

2: I achieve three of the above.

1: I achieve two of the above.

0: I achieve zero or one of the above.

Now let's focus our attention from the *vertical spokes* of the physical health wheel to its *horizontal spokes*.

◀ Diet/Nutrition/BMI

Use the *left-hand spoke* to evaluate your *diet and nutrition habits*. *Three-quarters* of this spoke is for your *nutrition*, and *one quarter* is for your *BMI* (body mass index). First, evaluate your diet and nutrition habits. Consider these factors and put a check by each one that applies to you:

I drink plenty of water daily.

I eat at least two to four servings of fruits and three to five servings of vegetables daily.

I eat at least two nutritious meals per day.

I have minimal intake of caffeine and soft drinks.

I have minimal intake of saturated fats and highly processed foods.

I have fewer than two or three fast-food meals a month.

SCORING THE “LEFT SIDE” SPOKE:

- 3: I do all six of the above.
- 2: I do four or five of the above.
- 1: I do two or three of above.
- 0: I do zero or one of the above.

MORE SCORING ON THE “LEFT SIDE” SPOKE:

By using the BMI chart on page 19, look up your BMI.

- 1: My BMI is normal (20 to 24.9).
- 0: My BMI is overweight (25 to 26.9) or extremely overweight (27 to 29.9) or underweight (18.5 to 19.9).
- 1: Subtract 1 point if your BMI indicates obesity (30 or above) or extreme underweight (less than 18.5).

► Substance Abuse/Safety

SCORING THE “RIGHT SIDE” SPOKE:

Consider these factors for up to *half* of this spoke:

- 2: I am rarely exposed to secondhand smoke. I don't use tobacco products or illicit drugs. I don't drink or rarely drink alcohol (and never in excess) and I don't misuse prescription drugs.
- 1: I am often exposed to secondhand smoke or occasionally use tobacco products or illicit drugs. I drink moderate amounts of alcohol (but never in excess) and I don't misuse prescription drugs.
- 0: I use tobacco products daily or I use illicit drugs. I often drink alcohol excessively and/or misuse prescription drugs.

MORE SCORING ON THE “RIGHT-SIDE” SPOKE. Check each that applies to you:

- I almost always drive at or under the speed limit.
- I always buckle up when I drive.
- I have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in my home.
- I see a primary care doctor for regular checkups.
- I see a dentist for regular yearly checkups.

- 2: Four or five of the above are true of me.
- 1: Two or three of the above are true for me.
- 0: Zero or one of the above are true for me.

NOTE: If you or your family is wrestling with a weight problem, or your family has a history of obesity, or if you want a more detailed evaluation of your nutrition and activity, you can do a more detailed evaluation with a new tool Dr. Walt has developed for families. You can find it at <http://supersizedkids.com/resources/quiz/index.asp>.

Now, to help you evaluate your *emotional and relational wheels*, you will need to fill out a 114 question survey. Don't worry if any given statement is *completely* true or false. Just answer true (T) or false (F) based upon the one that is the closest to the truth or the more accurate of the two.



THE EMOTIONAL AND RELATIONAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

To evaluate your *emotional and relational wheels*, you'll need to completely fill out this questionnaire:

1. When a teenager drives by my yard with the car stereo blaring rap, or hip hop or rock and roll music, I can feel my blood pressure starting to rise. T F
2. There are several people whom I trust to help solve my problems. T F
3. During the past week, I was bothered on three or more days by things that usually don't bother me. T F
4. If my hair stylist were to trim off more hair than I wanted, I'd let him or her know in no uncertain terms. T F
5. If I needed help fixing an appliance or repairing my car, there is someone who could help me. T F
6. When I'm in the express "twelve items only" line at the supermarket, I almost always glance ahead to see if anyone has more than twelve items. T F
7. Most of my friends are more interesting than I am. T F
8. During the past week, on three or more days I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor. T F
9. At work the pace is usually very hectic. T F
10. Most homeless people in large cities are down-and-out because they lack ambition or self-discipline. T F
11. There is someone who takes pride in my accomplishments. T F
12. At times in the past when I was very angry with someone, I have on occasion hit or shoved that person. T F
13. When I feel lonely, there are several people I can talk to. T F
14. During the past week, there were three or more days when I felt that I could not shake off the blues, even with help from my family or friends. T F
15. When I read in the news about drug-related crime, I wish the government had better educational and drug detoxification programs, even for pushers. T F
16. There is no one I feel comfortable talking to about intimate personal problems. T F
17. The AIDS epidemic is largely the result of irresponsible behavior on the part of a small proportion of the population. T F
18. During the past week I felt that I was just as good as other people more than half the time. T F

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 19. Apart from work, the pace of my life is very hectic. | T | F |
| 20. When arguing with a friend or relative, I find profanity an effective tool. | T | F |
| 21. I often meet or talk with family or friends. | T | F |
| 22. When stuck in a traffic jam, I quickly become irritated and annoyed. | T | F |
| 23. Most people I know think highly of me. | T | F |
| 24. When a really important job needs to be done, I prefer to do it myself. | T | F |
| 25. If I needed a ride to the airport very early in the morning, I would have a hard time finding someone to take me. | T | F |
| 26. During the past week, there were three or more days when I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing. | T | F |
| 27. My work is very demanding. | T | F |
| 28. I usually prefer to keep my angry feelings to myself. | T | F |
| 29. I feel as though my circle of friends doesn't always include me. | T | F |
| 30. If another driver cuts in ahead of me in traffic, I'll drop back to avoid them. | T | F |
| 31. There really is no one who can give me an objective view of how I'm handling my problems. | T | F |
| 32. I felt depressed on three or more days during the past week. | T | F |
| 33. If someone treats me unfairly, I'm apt to keep thinking about it for hours. | T | F |
| 34. There are several different people I enjoy spending time with. | T | F |
| 35. When the cars ahead of me on an unfamiliar road start to slow down and stop as they approach a curve, usually I assume someone up ahead has had a fender bender or worse. | T | F |
| 36. I think that my friends feel I'm not very good at helping them solve their problems. | T | F |
| 37. During the past week, there were three or more days when I felt that everything I did was an effort. | T | F |
| 38. I'll usually try to correct another person who expresses an ignorant belief. | T | F |
| 39. I experience being at home or engaging in leisure activities as very demanding. | T | F |
| 40. It doesn't bother me to be in slow-moving bank or supermarket lines. | T | F |
| 41. If I was sick and needed a friend, family member, or acquaintance to take me to the doctor, I would have trouble finding someone. | T | F |

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 42. When someone is being rude or annoying, I can get rough with him or her. | T | F |
| 43. If I wanted to go on a day trip (for example, to the mountains or beach), I would have a hard time finding someone to go with me. | T | F |
| 44. During the past week, I felt hopeful about the future more than half the time. | T | F |
| 45. Every time an election year rolls around, I learn anew that politicians cannot be trusted. | T | F |
| 46. If I needed a place to stay for a week because of an emergency (i.e., the electricity was out in my apartment or house), I could easily find someone to stay with. | T | F |
| 47. Whenever an elevator stops too long on a floor above where I am waiting, I soon start to feel irritated. | T | F |
| 48. I have no one with whom I can share my most private worries and fears. | T | F |
| 49. When I'm around someone I don't like, I find it hard not to be rude to them. | T | F |
| 50. During the past week, there were three or more days when I felt that my life's been a failure. | T | F |
| 51. When I see a very overweight person walking down the street, I wonder why such people are so lacking in self-control. | T | F |
| 52. If I was sick, there would be almost no one to help me with daily chores. | T | F |
| 53. When riding as a passenger in the front seat of a car, I try to be alert for obstacles ahead. | T | F |
| 54. There is someone I can turn to for advice about handling problems with my family. | T | F |
| 55. During the past week, I felt fearful more than half the time. | T | F |
| 56. When someone criticizes something I have done, it makes me feel annoyed. | T | F |
| 57. I am as good at doing things as most other people are. | T | F |
| 58. When involved in an argument, I can feel my heart pounding and I breathe harder. | T | F |
| 59. If I decided several hours in advance to go to a movie, I could easily find someone to go with. | T | F |
| 60. There were three or more nights during the past week when my sleep was restless. | T | F |
| 61. I have a lot of privacy at work. | T | F |
| 62. When a friend or coworker disagrees with me, I am apt to get into an argument with them. | T | F |
| 63. When I need suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem, I know someone I can turn to. | T | F |

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 64. When someone else is speaking very slowly during a conversation, I am apt to finish his or her sentences. | T | F |
| 65. If I needed an emergency loan of one hundred dollars, there is someone (friend, relative, co-worker, or acquaintance) I could get it from. | T | F |
| 66. It's fear of being caught that keeps most people from sneaking into a movie theater without paying. | T | F |
| 67. During the past week I was happy more than half the time. | T | F |
| 68. Hearing news of another terrorist attack makes me feel like lashing out. | T | F |
| 69. In general, people do not have much confidence in me. | T | F |
| 70. When talking with my significant other, I often find my thoughts racing ahead to what I plan to say next. | T | F |
| 71. Most people I know do not enjoy the same things I do. | T | F |
| 72. At times in the past year, when I was really angry, I threw things or slammed a door. | T | F |
| 73. There is someone I could turn to for advice about making career plans or changing my job. | T | F |
| 74. During the past week, there were three or more days when I talked less than usual. | T | F |
| 75. At home or during leisure activities off the job, I have a lot of privacy. | T | F |
| 76. The little annoyances of everyday life often seem to get under my skin. | T | F |
| 77. I don't often get invited to do things with others. | T | F |
| 78. When I disapprove of a friend's behavior, I usually let him or her know about it. | T | F |
| 79. Most of my friends are more successful at making changes in their lives than I am. | T | F |
| 80. During the past week, I felt lonely more than half the time. | T | F |
| 81. I have very little control over how I spend my time at work. | T | F |
| 82. When checking in at an airline ticket counter, I generally leave the seat assignment to the agent. | T | F |
| 83. If I had to go out of town for a few weeks, it would be difficult to find someone who would look after my house or apartment (the plants, pets, garden, etc.). | T | F |
| 84. I feel grouchy some of the time during nearly every day of the week. | T | F |
| 85. There is really no one I can trust to give me good financial advice. | T | F |

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 86. During the past week, there were three or more days when people were unfriendly. | T | F |
| 87. If someone bumps into me in a store, I am apt to feel irritated at the person's clumsiness. | T | F |
| 88. If I wanted to have lunch with someone, I could easily find a person to join me. | T | F |
| 89. When my significant other is preparing a meal, I keep an eye on things to make sure nothing burns or cooks too long. | T | F |
| 90. I am more satisfied with my life than most people are with theirs. | T | F |
| 91. I enjoyed life more than half the time during the past week. | T | F |
| 92. At home and during leisure activities, I don't have much control over how I spend my time. | T | F |
| 93. If a friend calls at the last minute, pleading that he or she is "too tired to go out tonight," and I'm stuck with a pair of twenty-dollar tickets, I will tell my friend how inconsiderate he or she is. | T | F |
| 94. If I were stranded ten miles from home, there is someone I could call who would come to get me. | T | F |
| 95. When I recall something that angered me in the past, I feel angry all over again. | T | F |
| 96. No one I know would throw a birthday party for me. | T | F |
| 97. Many of the people I see walking around shopping malls are just wasting time. | T | F |
| 98. It would be difficult to find someone who would lend me his or her car for a few hours. | T | F |
| 99. During the past week, I had crying spells during three or more days. | T | F |
| 100. When someone is hogging the conversation at a party, I make it a point to put him or her down. | T | F |
| 101. If a family crisis arose, it would be difficult to find someone who could give me good advice about how to handle it. | T | F |
| 102. When I have to work with incompetent people, it ticks me off to have to put up with them. | T | F |
| 103. I am closer to my friends than most other people are to theirs. | T | F |
| 104. During the past week, I felt sad more than half the time. | T | F |
| 105. I have very little latitude in making decisions at work. | T | F |
| 106. When my spouse (or significant other) is going to get me a birthday present, I usually prefer to pick it out myself. | T | F |
| 107. There is at least one person I know whose advice I really trust. | T | F |

108. When I hold a poor opinion of someone, I will probably let him or her know about it. T F
109. If I needed some help in moving to a new house or apartment, I would have a hard time finding someone to help me. T F
110. During the past week, there were three or more days when I felt that people disliked me. T F
111. In most arguments, I am the angrier one. T F
112. I have had a hard time keeping pace with my friends. T F
113. During the past week, I could not “get going” on three or more days. T F
114. At home or in my leisure activities, I have very little latitude in making decisions. T F

Use the answers to the above questions to determine you scores in the following areas:

DEPRESSION

To score your level of *depression*, give yourself ONE point for each of these answers:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 3-T | 18-F | 37-T | 55-T | 74-T | 91-F | 110-T |
| 8-T | 26-T | 44-F | 60-T | 80-T | 99-T | 113-T |
| 14-T | 32-T | 50-T | 67-F | 86-T | 104-T | |

A score of five or more needs the immediate attention of a counselor or mental health professional.

STRESS

Give yourself ONE point for each of these answers:

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 19-T | 39-T | 75-F | 92-T | 114-T |
|------|------|------|------|-------|

HOSTILITY

The questionnaire can help you screen for hostility based upon measures of cynicism, anger, and aggression.

To tabulate your level of *cynicism*, give yourself ONE point for each of these answers:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 6-T | 17-T | 35-T | 51-T | 66-T | 82-F | 97-T |
| 10-T | 24-T | 45-T | 53-T | 70-T | 89-T | 106-T |

To record your level of *anger*, give yourself ONE point for each of these answers:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1-T | 33-T | 47-T | 58-T | 76-T | 87-T | 102-T |
| 15-F | 40-F | 56-T | 68-T | 84-T | 95-T | 111-T |
| 22-T | | | | | | |

To total your level of *aggression*, give yourself ONE point for each of these answers:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 4-T | 28-F | 38-T | 49-T | 64-T | 78-T | 100-T |
| 12-T | 30-F | 42-T | 62-T | 72-T | 93-T | 108-T |
| 20-T | | | | | | |

Add up your total hostility score:

Cynicism _____
Anger _____
Aggression _____
Total Hostility _____

If your total hostility score is above SIXTEEN, then your level of hostility warrants the attention of a counselor or mental health professional.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

The most direct indicator of the *quality* and *quantity* of your *relationships* is your score on the forty social support questions. Your total social support score is made up of *four* distinct kinds of support:

- *emotional support*: the degree to which you have someone who can help you deal with emotional problems,
- *belonging support*: the degree to which you have a network of family and friends to do things with,
- *tangible support*: the degree to which you have someone who can help you meet material needs (for example, a ride to the airport), and
- *self-esteem*: the degree to which your relationships boost self-worth.

To evaluate *emotional support*, give ONE point for each of these answers:

2-T 31-F 54-T 73-T 101-F
16-F 48-F 63-T 85-F 107-F

To measure *belonging support* from networks of family and friends, give ONE point for each of these answers:

13-T 29-F 43-F 71-F 88-T
21-T 34-T 59-T 77-F 96-F

To score *tangible support*, give ONE point for each of these answers:

5-T 41-F 52-F 83-F 98-F
25-F 46-T 65-T 94-T 109-F

To tally *self-esteem*, give ONE point for each of these answers:

7-F 23-T 57-T 79-F 103-T
11-T 36-F 69-F 90-T 112-F

Add up the components for your relationship scores:

Emotional Support _____
Belonging Support _____
Tangible Support _____
Self-Esteem _____
Total Social Support _____

If any component of TOTAL social support is SEVEN OR LESS, that particular component needs the most immediate attention of a counselor, pastoral professional or mental health professional.

2 EMOTIONAL WHEEL

Hub = understanding one's mind and emotions

Vertical Spokes = media/learning and work

Horizontal Spokes = stress/depression and hostility

▲ Media/Learning

Research shows that exposure to too much media or to the wrong type of media results in lower levels of health. Media can assault your senses, negatively affect your emotions and be detrimental to your physical health. Rate your exposure to media as follows:

SCORING THE "UP" SPOKE:

2: My home is TV free or I watch TV one hour or less a day, and I use the Internet less than one hour a day at home for non-work activity. Also, I never watch in pornographic or extremely violent media.

1: I routinely watch or participate in one to four hours a day of media (television, videos, video games, and Internet/computer non-work activity at home). Or I sometimes watch or am involved in pornography or extremely violent media.

0: I routinely watch or participate in four or more hours a day of media (television, videos, video games, and Internet/computer non-work activity at home). Or I often watch or am involved in pornography or extremely violent media.

-1: Subtract up to one point if you have a TV in your bedroom or often eat in front of the TV.

The *second half* of the spoke is your *enjoyment of learning* and *mental activity*. As physical exercise helps your body stay healthy, your brain benefits from mental activity. Continuing to educate yourself and staying mentally active are ways to protect yourself from dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Mental activity through regular times of reading, doing crossword puzzles, playing board or card games, participating in ongoing education (attending an adult education class at church, auditing a community college course, for example) and having a challenging job are linked with a sharper mind later in life. Researchers have shown that the brain, like a muscle, must be exercised to remain highly healthy. Those who take the time to teach others what they know not only seem to have better health—especially emotional and mental health—but also, they're more likely to keep learning new things themselves. So how much enjoyment do you receive from mental activities?

MORE SCORING ON THE "UP" SPOKE:

2: I have a moderate to high level of enjoyment for mental activities and learning.

1: I receive little or occasional enjoyment from mental activities and learning.

0: I receive no enjoyment from mental activities and learning.

+1: If your score for this entire spoke is three or below, then add one point if you teach or coach others.

▼ Work

The *bottom spoke* allows you to measure both the *satisfaction you get from work and the proper amount of work*. However, if you spend too much time at work—even when it’s work you love—it can result in reduced physical and mental health. Check all of the items that apply to you below. What if you’re retired? Measure your spoke by the meaningful volunteer work you do or the social, religious, hobby, or sport activities you participate in. If you’re a full-time homemaker, just consider the first three factors below and take full credit for (put a check by) factor four!

- ___ My job is a good match and allows me to use my gifts, talents, and passions.
- ___ My work brings me a great deal of satisfaction.
- ___ I have good relationships with those with whom I work.
- ___ I routinely work less than fifty hours a week.

SCORING THE “DOWN” SPOKE:

- 4: I achieve all four of the above.
- 3: I achieve three of the above.
- 2: I achieve two of the above.
- 1: I achieve one of the above.
- 0: I achieve none of the above.

◀ Stress/Depression

We’ll use your *stress and depression* scores from the Relationship Questionnaire *above* to mark the *left-hand spoke*. While stress, anxiety, and depression are often unrecognized by those who suffer from them, the good news is that they can be treated. The loss of motivation and energy caused by depression can diminish, damage, or destroy relationships—and can reduce one’s health. Too much work or leisure stress can impair your emotions and relationships. You cannot be highly healthy and be stressed or depressed; *they cannot coexist*.

SCORING THE “LEFT-SIDE” SPOKE:

- 4: My depression score is 0 or 1 and my stress score is 0.
- 3: My depression score is 2 or less or my stress score is 1.
- 2: My depression score is 3 or less my stress score is 2.
- 1: My depression score is 4 or less or my stress score is 3.
- 0: My depression score is 5 or higher.

▶ Hostility

For the *right-hand spoke* you’ll need to use your *hostility scores* from The Relationship Questionnaire *above*—which is a combination of the measures of *anger, aggression, and cynicism*. Each of these characteristics can lead you to mistrust—or be mistrusted by—others, thus damaging your relationships and your health. A high *hostility score* will result in impaired relationships and harmed emotions. Worse yet, hostility can kill. It’s a highly unhealthy characteristic that is detrimental to your physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual health. Yet, like stress, anxiety, and depression, it can be treated.

SCORING THE “RIGHT-SIDE” SPOKE:

- 4: My hostility score is between 0 and 2.
- 3: My hostility score is between 3 and 6.
- 2: My hostility score is between 7 and 11.
- 1: My hostility score is between 12 and 16.
- 0: My hostility score is greater than 16.

3 RELATIONAL WHEEL

Hub = understanding people and relationships

Vertical Spokes = parents/children and spouse

Horizontal Spokes = extended family/friends and social support

▲ Parents/Children

The *relationship* you have (or had) with your *parents* (no matter how old you are) plays a critical role in who you are and in determining your emotional health and your ability to have good relationships. Apply the factors below to foster parents, adoptive parents, or grandparents if they raised you. Children bring lots of work, worry, sacrifice, and stress, but also one gains a healthy sense of purpose, significance, and connectedness—all of which can have a profound impact on your health. If you’ve never had children, your relationship with the children who *are* in your life can help you become a highly healthy person. These “surrogate children” may be on a sports team you coach, part of a church youth group you lead; the scouts you lead, or the children you care about or mentor.

Consider these factors in marking the **top spoke**. Check those that apply to you:

- My parent(s) balanced love with discipline.
- My parent(s) balanced freedom with limits.
- My parent(s) balanced nurture with training.
- My relationship with my parent(s) when I became an adult was healthy, enjoyable, and affectionate.
- I have children (or work with or care for children), and my relationship with them is meaningful and satisfying.

SCORING ON THE “UP” SPOKE:

- 4: All five of these are true in my life.
- 3: Four of these are true in my life.
- 2: Three of these are true in my life.
- 1: Two of these are true in my life.
- 0: Zero or one of these is true in my life.

▼ Spouse

If you are *married*, ask your *spouse*, “On a scale of 1 to 4 [4 = outstanding], where would you rate our marriage right now?” Surprised? Or do you agree? A healthy marriage is a surprisingly strong predictor of high degrees of health. If you are unmarried, it takes more work to become highly healthy. However, there are a couple of exceptions to this rule: (1) those who believe they are called by God to the single life and (2) those who are single but have very satisfying non-sexual friendships with at least two friends or family members with whom they interact just about every day.

SCORING THE “DOWN” SPOKE:

- 4: I am married (and my spouse and I believe our marriage rates a 4), or I feel called to the single life or I have a deeply meaningful, non-sexually relationship with at least two others.
- 3: I am married (and my spouse and I believe our marriage rates a 3), or I feel I’m called to the single life or have a deeply meaningful, non-sexual relationship with one person, or I’m widowed, separated, or divorced and have a deeply meaningful, non-sexual relationship with at least two others.

- 2: I am married (and my spouse and I believe our marriage rates a 2), or I feel I'm called to the single life and I have no deeply meaningful relationships, or I'm widowed, separated, or divorced and have a deeply meaningful, non-sexual relationship with one person.
- 1: I am married (and my spouse and I believe our marriage rates a 1), or I'm widowed, separated, or divorced and I have no deeply meaningful relationships.
- 0: I am married (and my spouse and I believe our marriage rates a 0).
- 1: Subtract up to 1 point if you live with (cohabit) with someone.
- 2: Subtract up to 2 points if you are or have been sexually active with someone other than your spouse.

◀ Extended family/friends

Our *relatives*—sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins—can have a decidedly positive or negative impact on our mental, physical, and spiritual health. Similarly, healthy *friendships* (people who love and care for us and who assure us of unconditional support) seem to be associated with improved health.

SCORING ON THE “LEFT-SIDED” SPOKE:

- 1: My present relationships with my siblings or other extended family members are good to excellent.
- 0: My present relationships with my siblings or other extended family are nonexistent to poor.

MORE SCORING ON THE “LEFT-SIDED” SPOKE:

- 3: I have two or more dear friends with whom I interact frequently and who provide me great support and friendship.
- 2: I have one dear friend with whom I interact frequently and who provides me great support and friendship, or I have two or more friends with whom I interact occasionally to frequently but who don't always provide me the support I need.
- 1: I have no close or dear friends. My relationships seem to be superficial, or I have a relationship that is violent or hostile.
- 0: I'm a loner with little support or intimacy in my relationships, or I have two or more relationships that are violent or hostile.

▶ Social Support

Apart from our genetic makeup, one of the most powerful across-the-board factors in predicting premature death and disease is *lack of healthy social support*. Those who believe no one really cares for them, who don't feel close to anyone, or who feel they have no one in whom to confide or to help them out of a bind are three to five times as likely to suffer premature disease or death.

For this **right-hand spoke**, use the *social support score* from The Relationship Questionnaire above. It is a measure of your emotional support, belonging support, tangible support, and self-esteem (the degree to which your relationships boost self-worth). The higher your social support score, the better your relationships:

SCORING THE “RIGHT SIDE” SPOKE:

- 4: My social support score is between 37 and 40.
- 3: My social support score is between 34 and 36.
- 2: My social support score is between 31 and 33.
- 1: My social support score is between 28 and 30.
- 0: My social support score is less than 28.

4 SPIRITUAL WHEEL

Hub = knowing God

Vertical Spokes = prayer and meditation

Horizontal Spokes = fellowship in a faith community and faith sharing

▲ Prayer

Prayer is, in its simplest form, conversation with God. It can occur anywhere and at any time. It doesn't require a particular position. It's just an intimate discussion with someone who loves you more than you could ever imagine. Consider your experience with *prayer* in rating the **top spoke**:

SCORING THE "UP" SPOKE:

4: I pray once or more per day.

3: I pray a few days a week.

2: I pray a few times a month.

1: I pray infrequently (a few times a year).

0: I'm not a praying person or I would pray only in a crisis.

▼ Meditation

Meditation is all about listening to God. I've come to combine prayer and Bible reading with meditation. I see Bible reading and study as my listening to God speak. As I read and then "hear" God's whisper in my spirit, I talk back to him in prayer. At times, he and I are quiet—I simply meditate on what he's said. Other times I'll record our give-and-take conversation through journaling.

Consider these factors in rating **the bottom spoke**. Check all of those that apply:

I meditate or read the Bible on a daily basis.

I routinely have a quiet time of reflection.

I keep a journal to record my thoughts and meditations.

I consistently memorize portions of the Bible.

I study the Bible quite frequently or participate in a Bible study once or twice a year.

SCORING THE "DOWN" SPOKE:

4: I achieve all five of the above.

3: I achieve four of the above.

2: I achieve three of the above.

1: I achieve one or two of the above.

0: I achieve zero or one of the above.

◀ Fellowship in a Faith Community

The counsel of those who know you can be valuable. Having a spiritual accountability partner and being part of a small group of supporters who share your faith perspective and who unconditionally love you are critical aspects of keeping your spiritual wheel balanced. God has created us to operate best in community with others. When we love, encourage, teach, guide, correct, and admonish each other, we become more quickly the people God created us to become.

In rating this spoke, consider the following factors:

- I consider my spiritual community to be loving and supportive.
- I am an active member of a church or organized faith community.
- I am involved with a small group of fellow believers who hold me accountable and give me positive, meaningful feedback, teaching, and fellowship.
- I receive personal direction from at least one spiritual mentor.

SCORING THE “LEFT” SPOKE:

- 4: All four of the above are true.
- 3: Three of the above are true.
- 2: Two of the above are true.
- 1: One of the above is true.
- 0: None of the above are true.

► Faith Sharing

For people of faith, a critical factor in balancing their spiritual wheel is to form and build relationships outside of their faith community. It allows them to share their faith. In marking this spoke, consider the following factors and check all that apply to you:

- I am actively involved with people outside my faith community.
- I am generous in volunteering my time, treasure, and talent in the community in which I live and work.
- My faith overflows through my competence at my work. I always try to do excellent work that glorifies God.
- My faith overflows through my character and compassion. My life usually manifests love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.
- My faith overflows through my communication with others, and I am comfortable sharing the principles of my faith with those who ask for or may need my help.
- I am comfortable sharing the basic doctrines of my faith with those who ask or want to know about them.

SCORING ON THE “RIGHT” SPOKE:

- 4: All six of the above are true.
- 3: Five of the above are true.
- 2: Four of the above are true.
- 1: Two or three of the above are true.
- 0: Zero or one of the above are true.

1 2 3 4 THE WHOLE PICTURE

Now that you've estimated the length of each spoke on each of the four wheels, go ahead and draw your wheels. Connect the end of each spoke with the one before and after it. How do the four wheels look? Are they round, or do they have flat sections? Are all four the same size or is one much smaller? Are they all fairly round and about the same size but with short spokes? If so, they'll turn far faster than they should, and you'll be at much greater risk to burn out.

More likely, one or more (perhaps all) of your wheels are different sizes—and not at all round. Can you imagine how a vehicle would run if it had four wheels like this? Probably not very well—and certainly not nearly as long as it should. And it would be pretty bumpy.

This exercise is designed to give a *visual* representation of **overall** health, so that you can begin the process of lengthening the various spokes and improving your well-being. You may not encounter big surprises; rather, you may simply recognize and label much of what you suspected was true about yourself. Or you may be confronted with some surprises—and even a shock or two.

The illustration on the next page shows the assessment of a friend who was surprised at the condition of his wheels. “Walt,” he said, “I’d say, ‘Let’s roll,’ but I won’t. So let’s go to work!”

Whatever the case, it’s time for you to begin lengthening the short spokes of your wheels. It’s fine at this point to identify the flattest wheel or the most broken spokes.

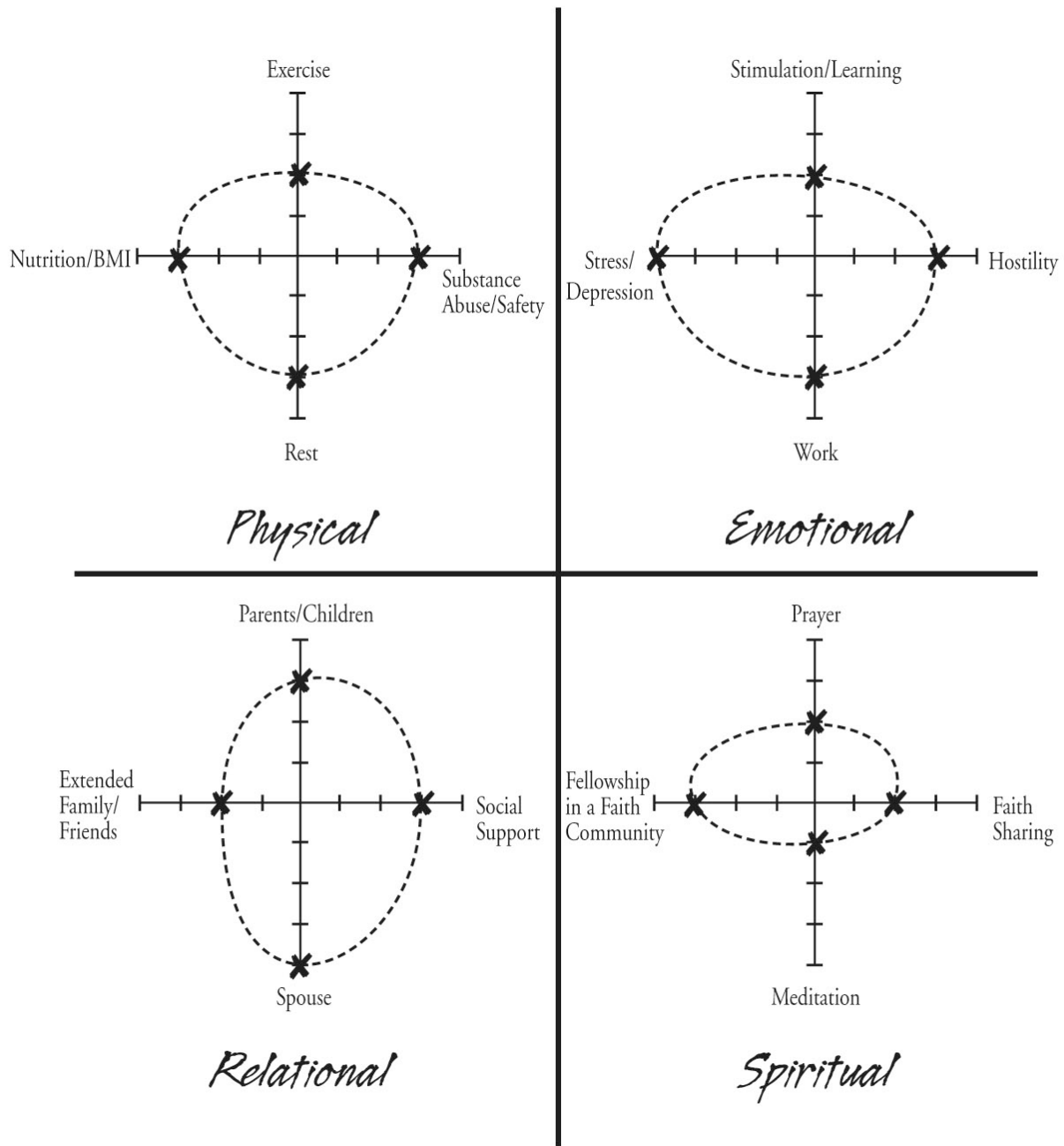
To find the flattest wheel, assign a point count to each spoke of each wheel. A full spoke gets 4 points, a 3/4 spoke gets 3 points, and half spoke gets 2 points, a 1/4 spoke gets 1 point, and no spoke gets 0 points.

A perfectly round, fully inflated wheel will have 16 points (4 points for each spoke). In the illustration below, the physical wheel has 11 points, the emotional wheel has 12 points, the relational wheel has 12 points, and the spiritual wheel has 8 points. My friend’s *spiritual wheel* is the least healthy, and it should probably be the first one he would address.

Another option is to deal with the shortest spoke(s). In this illustration, the bottom spoke on the spiritual wheel is the shortest. If you have more than one equally short spoke, choose the one that’s easiest to address and read the section in the book that deals with that wheel of health.

It’s time to go to work on your health.

You’ll find many tips on inflating a flat wheel or lengthening a broken spoke in my book *God’s Design for the Highly Healthy Person*. You can order a discounted copy at www.DrWalt.com/books or an autographed, personalized copy at order@DrWalt.com.



This Health Assessment was adapted, with permission, from the book *God's Design for the Highly Healthy Person* by Walt Larimore, MD. ©2005. The book contains many strategies on how to improve problems that are discovered using this tool. You can find additional information at www.DrWalt.com and www.HighlyHealthy.net. The graphics for this tool were designed by Peter Sultana, MD, a family physician.

Body Mass Index Table

	Normal					Overweight					Obese					Extreme Obesity																				
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																																			
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

Source: Adapted from Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report.

