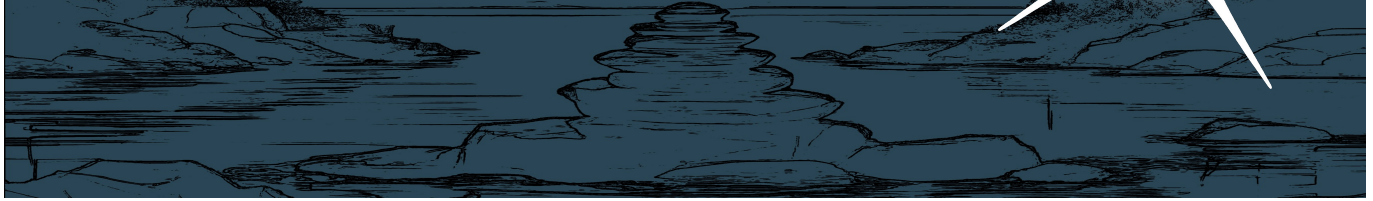


BRIGHTER TOGETHER

Your health & wellness matters!

Q4-2025



LIVING IN ALIGNMENT: *A Framework to Personal Balance*

Every day we make choices that shape our health, our finances, and our relationships. Some of those choices support us and strengthen what matters most, while others drain us and leave us feeling off balance. The difference often comes down to how our time and money are being directed as a result.

Our values act as the compass. They define what truly matters and guide how we want to live. But it isn't enough to know our values in theory - what matters is whether our daily actions line up with them. This is where time and money come in. These two resources are limited, and every decision about how we use them either supports our values or pulls us away from them.

When our time and money are directed toward protecting our values, the result is energy. We feel stronger, more resilient, and better able to handle both our needs and our wants. This is why reviewing and rebalancing is so important. Without pausing to reflect, it's easy to drift into patterns where wants overshadow needs, or where values take a back seat to convenience. By taking time to review, we bring clarity back to our choices. The steps that follow provide a simple framework to guide this review.



Identify Your Values

Defining our values across 3 key areas makes it easier to separate needs from wants and to see where your energy is truly coming from. Write down 3-5 values in each category and rank them by priority.

- **Health:** Prioritizing rest, eating healthy, staying active, learning & development, or preventative care.
- **Financial:** Security, stability, independence, flexibility, or generosity.
- **Relationships:** Family, friends, community, work, trust, empathy, or open communication.



Identifying Your Time & Money

After defining your values, make a separate list showing where your time and money go each month. Capture everything that takes up space in your schedule and budget - sleep, work hours, commuting, meals, bills, errands, childcare, social events, subscriptions, even downtime. Then, look at each item and ask: Does this protect one of my values? If yes, it's a need. If not, it's a want.



Balance With Intention

Once you see where your time and money are going, and how these align with your values, you can prioritize each list and begin balancing.

- **Time:** There are about 720 hours in a month (30 days). Are you spending them in line with your values?
- **Money:** Compare your spending to your income. Are you under budget or over budget?

Remember: Life happens. Reviewing this balance often is part of the process. When you feel overwhelmed or out of sync, revisit your values and use this framework to realign and pivot.



THE POWER OF PAUSING

Why Resting Helps You Reset

As the year winds down, it's natural to feel pulled in every direction - wrapping up projects, preparing for holidays, or trying to "finish strong." But true strength often comes from slowing down. Rest isn't doing nothing; it's giving your body and mind time to recharge so you can do everything better.

Try these small ways to build rest into your day:

- **Pause for 60 seconds.** Between meetings or tasks, take one minute to breathe deeply and reset.
- **Take lunch without screens.** Eat away from your work area or phone to help your mind fully switch gears.
- **Create a wind-down cue.** Dim lights, stretch, or read before bed to signal your body that it's time to rest.
- **Protect one quiet moment.** Whether it's your morning coffee or an evening walk, treat it as non-negotiable recovery time.

Rest isn't something to earn - it's something to maintain. Making space for stillness helps you stay focused, calm, and ready for what's next.

RECONNECTING WITH ROUTINE

Finding Energy in What Grounds You

Once you've slowed down enough to pause, find your rhythm again - not by diving back into the noise, but by intentionally rebuilding the structure that helps you feel steady and focused.

Think of your daily routine as a form of self-leadership. It's the quiet discipline of showing up for yourself in small ways, even when life feels busy. Instead of trying to control every hour, choose two or three daily anchors that help you stay grounded.

Try rebuilding your rhythm with these intentional habits:

- **Start with a grounding morning.** Before checking your phone, do something that connects you to the present - stretching, journaling, or enjoying your first sip of coffee in silence.
- **Protect your energy blocks.** Schedule your most focused work early in the day when your energy is strongest. Treat those blocks as commitments, not suggestions.
- **Eat and move with rhythm.** Regular mealtimes and light movement between long periods of sitting can stabilize mood and energy more effectively than caffeine.

Reconnecting with routine isn't about returning to hustle - it's about finding the rhythm that lets you move through life with purpose and calm. Energy follows rhythm, and rhythm begins when you lead with intention.

Mushroom Soup



Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 280 mL (1 ½ cups) white mushrooms
- 280 mL (1 ½ cups) cremini mushrooms
- 60 mL (¼ cup) vegetable oil
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) onion, diced
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) garlic, peeled and chopped
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) whole wheat flour
- 250 mL (1 cup) 2% milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based beverage
- 250mL (1 cup) vegetable broth
- 5 mL (1 tsp) fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 60 mL (¼ cup) fresh chives, finely chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. Clean and chop mushrooms about 1 cm in size.
2. In a pan, heat oil on medium heat. Add onion, garlic and sauté for about 3 minutes, or until soft and translucent.
3. Add the mushrooms and cook for 15 minutes, until they become ⅓ of their original size.
4. Mix in the flour, milk, and broth. Bring to a simmer while stirring every 5 minutes for 20 minutes.
5. Once thickened, add the thyme and simmer for an additional 5 minutes.
6. Garnish the soup with chives and serve with a slice of whole grain bread.

“When your actions align with your values, even the smallest step becomes momentum.”