

The Quadrants of Focus: The creative person's guide to living a balanced life

By Greg Provance, Co-Founder, Change Starts Today™

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Introduction

Whether you are in a creative profession, like Arts & Entertainment, or just enjoy your own creative expression, the principles laid out in this book can be applied to you. I believe everyone is creative in their own way, even if they have not yet discovered consciously what their creative talents might be.

As a life and success coach, an actor, a writer, a father, a husband, a surfer and, well you get the picture...the more I work with others to help them to express their creativity, or to build their businesses, or to improve their health, relationships and spiritual connection, the more it becomes apparent that what most people want (and need) is balance. Most of my clients begin the process thinking that they want more of something...more money, more free time, more fame, more out of their relationship, more, more, more. After a few weeks, or even a few hours, in some cases, it becomes apparent that the problem is often less about what is lacking in peoples' lives, but what is out of balance, or in conflict.

Most financial advisors or financially free individuals will agree with the fact that to become wealthy, to become financially free and STAY that way, it matters not how much money you have, but what you do with what you've got. In other words, how you MANAGE it. And since money is energy, like anything else in this world, balance is the key to a healthy financial condition. I will not argue that sometimes more money must be made to achieve this goal, but it's not about amassing huge amounts of money and stockpiling it for eternity, but rather creating a balance of flow, a management system that keeps our financial condition healthy and strong.

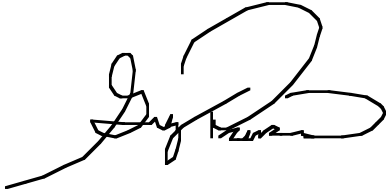
The same can be said for our physical health. A balance of diet and exercise is often prescribed as the best way to maintain optimum health and longevity, and becomes increasingly important as we get older. Our bodies react instinctively to imbalance by fighting disease, dehydration, atrophy of muscle fiber, etc.

Just as each of these examples illustrates the importance of balance within their own realm, there must also be balance as each interacts with one another. Thus, I have created the Quadrants of Focus to provide a guide by

which to maintain balance in your own life. By using this simple model, I will show you how you can easily create and maintain a balanced, fulfilling life...a life designed around your deepest desires and guided by your highest vision for yourself. Will this provide happiness and joy? I hope that it will contribute. But at least it will provide a point from which ideas and actions can grow and develop in a healthy way.

I must confess that the entire concept of the Quadrants comes from my wife, who I often refer to as my best coach. We were discussing the idea of balance, when she presented to me these Quadrants of Focus. We still use them as actively today as when they were first displayed on our home computer. I hope that you will find them as useful, and perhaps as fascinating as we do.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Provance". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the top and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Greg Provance, Co-Founder, Change Starts Today™

For more information on how to apply these concepts and to join the evolution of the Change Starts Today community, visit www.changestartstoday.com.

The Purpose of this guide

This book is designed as a general insight into how you can create balance in your life in a very simple, easy to understand sort of way. It is not meant to be the end-all answer to your problems in life. This is simply a small piece of the bigger picture, and can be a useful tool in helping you to keep your focus on the important commitments in your life. There are many different ways to look at this process, and I invite you to tap your inner creativity to find which system works best for you, and come up with ways to add to or improve the system as you see fit. Most of all, remember to have fun! Life is hardly worth doing if it is not enjoyable, so by all means, have a blast!

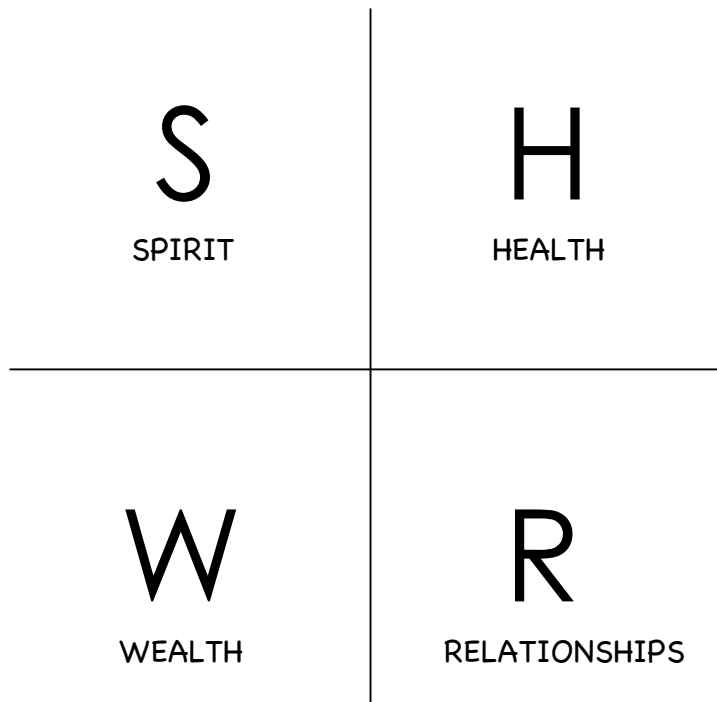
The Four Quadrants of Focus: An overview

The Four Quadrants of Focus came to be as a result of the work my wife and I happened to be doing during a time where we were trying to put back the pieces of our life. We had recently declared bankruptcy, which relieved us of over \$60,000 of debt, yet almost \$30,000 in personal debt remained, and we were beginning the path to rebuilding our lives. I had recently become a sober member of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and was dealing with much upheaval as a result of the removal of my "safety net". We had been turned inside out, and we were picking up the pieces, doing everything we could to salvage our pride, our emotions and our bank account. Nonetheless, we had hope; a glimpse of it, anyhow, and we were determined to climb out of this massive hole we had dug, fill it in, and never return again.

After several months of building a plan of action for reducing debt, and making discoveries surrounding our spiritual condition, things began to seem as if we were actually going to be OK. The tide was turning and we were responsible for it, just as we had been responsible for the wreckage of the past; but over time, I began to feel as if something was missing. Something just did not seem to fit. We had both recently hired a coach to help us with a business we were starting, and through this work, we began to identify what the problem was. As we gained more and more awareness, it became abundantly clear that the biggest issue we needed to tackle was balance. I found that I was putting an overwhelmingly disproportionate amount of energy in the area of work and almost none into relationships. I needed major improvement here, but did not know how to make it happen effectively. It was then that my wife suggested a way for me to create harmony by becoming aware of what was present in every area of my life and adjust the

amounts of energy I gave each of them at any given moment, thereby creating balance. She presented to me the following model:

The Four Quadrants Model



How it works

Each quadrant equals a different facet of your life. The idea is that when all four quadrants are healthy, in other words, filled with daily actions dedicated to the improvement of each, our life is healthy, and we are moving the ball forward toward becoming balanced and prosperous. When, however, one or more of the quadrants is lacking focus, or is not healthy, it will continue to drain energy from the other quadrants, ultimately resulting in imbalance and disease (dis-ease).

For example, let's say your physical health is failing. You can see where it may affect your financial quadrant. Or perhaps your relationships are going south. This could have a profound effect on all other quadrants, bleeding them dry of crucial energy. Get the point?

Now you may be one of the lucky among us who is thinking, "I'm in perfect balance! It's all working!" To you, then, I issue a challenge to see where it can become even better, for a true master is one who knows he will always be a student!

The Quadrants Defined

The First Quadrant: Spirit

The first quadrant represents what we believe to be perhaps the most critical sector in the bunch. This is where we connect to Spirit; ask for what we want, visualize our desires and allow ourselves to receive the abundance of the Universe. No matter what your beliefs surrounding faith, religion, Universal Truth, Energetic Field, God, or Higher Power, and no matter what your personal practices are that express this belief, I have found that it is as critical to the balance in our lives as breathing.

How do we create a healthy spiritual practice in our life? The key word here is *practice*. You will probably notice as this book unfolds that habits and practice are the focus of my recommendations for using these Quadrants. It has been said, by many, many successful people that we are our habits. Our habitual patterns define who we are. Think about it. If you are in the habit of spending money as you receive it, you are probably struggling financially. If, on the other hand, you save at least ten percent of what you earn and invest it wisely, you are probably on a path to wealth. This concept can be applied to anything in our life, and is the key to living the life we desire.

The Second Quadrant: Health

This quadrant contains anything pertaining to our physical wellbeing. Having a regular exercise program in place is crucial to living a balanced life, not only for the obvious physical attributes it provides, like strength, endurance, muscle tone and mental clarity, but it is quite possibly the cleanest energy source going, next to a healthy diet and regular sleep. This is incredibly

important to those seeking abundance in life, for it provides the fuel that we need to navigate our day effectively.

The Third Quadrant: Relationships

This quadrant is especially important, because it affects all aspects of life. Everything, in fact, can be seen as a relationship. How we relate to others, our family, society, ourselves, our businesses, the world, speaks volumes of who we really are. In business, our relationships dictate how the business runs, what it looks like and if it will survive. How we relate to our environment can mean the difference between a stress-free or strenuous life. So many facets of our lives are dependent on the health of our relationships, that if our energy is not focused in this area, it can undermine our very existence.

In fact, there are well-documented studies on a condition known as the failure to thrive syndrome. If a newborn baby were left alone without human contact, she would die, not from lack of food or water, but simply from lack of human contact!

How we connect and interact with others is paramount to our very survival, so it stands to reason, that our relationships need not be overlooked or trivialized if we are to be in balance.

The Fourth Quadrant: Wealth

The wealth quadrant deals with money, business, career, finance and anything monetary in our lives, and is probably the biggest reason people come to me for coaching. Making more money is something that most people want, but don't necessarily know how to do. And even more importantly, even those who do often have a difficult time managing their money. After all, it is not how much you have; it is how well you MANAGE what you have. Let's face it, anyone can see that if this quadrant is not healthy, many things can and will be affected. Still, it is strange that this seems to be one area in which people place the most importance on, but often have the most difficulty. It is here where more opinions are formed and more values are tested than anywhere else, and where relationships are everything. In fact, our relationship to money, and how we think about money will decide if we are rich or poor. Much energy is often focused on this quadrant, but most often in a way that is not creating wealth, but draining us of energy...and money! It is important that we see it with a healthy view so that it creates balance, rather than disease.

Setting the stage: Falling still

Before we can hope to make any changes in our lives, careers or businesses, we must lay a foundation of awareness. Both church and science agree that there is a Universal force that is unseen, often unexplained and intelligent that guides and permeates everything. It is this very energy that we are made up of and thus affected by on every level. Our thoughts, in fact are also made up of this energy and, much like an electric current flows through a wire or socket, our thoughts are conducted as well. It is not only believed, but also proven through the study of quantum physics and neural feedback that our thoughts are even more potent than that of an electric current that flows through a socket. Our thoughts are much more powerful than we ever give them credit for, yet, for most of us, they are the very source of our failures.

Our minds are much like computers in that each day, we build up a residual trail of thought, and rarely do we reset, or wipe the slate clean, allowing room for anything but clutter. By falling still, or meditating, we allow ourselves to slow down and reset, creating a fertile ground for planting the seeds of our desires with intention and focus, rather than falling victim to our mind's chatter.

Take a moment each day to practice falling still, whether it is a formal meditation or chant or simply several minutes as a "time out". Do this daily, and you will be putting yourself in a position to receive the gifts the Universe has to offer. Do this with intention and you will begin to see these gifts show up on your life. Do this with focus and you will live the life of your dreams.

Remember this: We can live our lives either by design or by default. If we do not decide our fate, life will decide for us!

Creating the vision: Your life purpose

This first step to using the quadrants is to create a vision of what you want your life to look like in each of these areas. As a coach, my clients & I sometimes spend weeks alone honing their personal vision, life purpose and getting very clear on what they want. This step, though overlooked by many, is perhaps the most important one anyone can take, for it serves as a template from which commitments are made and action plans are formed.

The first part of this process involves finding your life purpose, or vision for your life. Although this usually takes time to develop, there are some simple formulas for creating a personal vision out there. Just pick up any book on success or finding purpose and you will likely find a host of ideas. For now, here is one that I love, derived from a book entitled "The Success Principles: How to get from where you are to where you want to be", by Jack Canfield.

- 1) List 2 of your unique qualities, such as "enthusiasm" and "creativity".
 - 2) List one or two ways you enjoy expressing those qualities while interacting with others, like "to support" or "to inspire"
 - 3) What does the world look like, assuming it is perfect right now?
What does it feel like?
Answer this in the present tense, describing the perfect world as you see it.
- Example: "Everyone is freely expressing their own unique talents. Everyone is working in harmony. Everyone is expressing love."
- 4) Combine the 3 previous lines into a single statement.

Example: "My vision is to use my creativity and enthusiasm to support and inspire others to freely express their talents in a harmonious and loving way."

Some other visions include:

"To inspire and empower people to achieve their destiny." - Robert Allen

"To educate and inspire people to live their highest self based in courage, purpose and joy, versus fear, need and obligation." - T. Harv Eker

"To use my creative talents to serve and empower others through peace & integrity." - Greg Provanca

Give this exercise some time to sink in. Once you have found that sentence that inspires and moves you, write it down in colorful letters, or print it out and frame it in your office or home. Make a wallet-sized version of it and laminate it, so you can carry it with you. Recite it daily. This will begin to change your thinking from negative or unsupportive thoughts, which tend to plague the psyche to positive thoughts with purpose and intention. It serves

as a call to arms for your mission, reinforced daily, propelling you into action and keeping you out of the busy trappings of the mind. It is said that one can act their way into right thinking, but cannot think their way into right action. If you feel that this process is a bit hokey, or corny, ask yourself what you have been doing until now and how successful you are as a result. If those things are working for you, keep doing them! If not, try this on for size...you have nothing to lose! And remember...all of the positive mental attitude in the world will not help you if you are not acting in accordance with your values and core beliefs. These are crucial to check in with first and be very clear on, and then the PMA can help to support it.

Know exactly what you want

The key to getting what you want is knowing exactly what you want. I often ask my clients at the beginning of our relationship this simple question: "What do you want?" or "What does success look like to you?" A typical response is, "more money" or "more free time", or even "I don't know." These answers, while completely valid, are simply not specific enough. Which of the following statements sounds more attractive to you?

- a) I would like more money
- b) I would like a lot of money
- c) I easily make \$10,000 per month passive income and will increase my net worth by \$50,000 by April 1, 2008.

Hint: If you answered anything but c), you may want to consider my services!

Remember this: If you do not know what you want, in vivid detail, you are unlikely to ever get it!

To see how this can work for you, complete the following exercise:

Brainstorm everything you want in life, in detail, complete with by-when dates, descriptions, amounts, feelings and emotions. Do this for each quadrant, and be as thorough as you possibly can! Your list should include both tangible and intangible things, anything from your dream home to travel to your perfect relationship. Even peace and harmony, specific money, career and physical fitness goals should be considered. The key is to be as thorough

and specific as possible. And remember...go BIG! If you are willing to limit your dreams, you will certainly limit your results.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

Now that you know what you want, it is time to go and get it. Sounds simple, right? Well, it is, and it is not. Here is where many people fall into the mire of distraction, procrastination, "running out of time", and a host of other excuses for not living the life they desire. It is especially difficult, I have found, for those "creative" types, like myself, to warm up to the idea of structure, and most of us spend a good portion of our lives running away from anything that resembles it. I am here to tell you that the structure that you build is the very thing that brings freedom to your life. This peculiar paradox is an essential element in hitting your personal and professional goals with confidence and accuracy. Without it, you will likely find yourself drifting around aimlessly, hoping that one day the dream will find you. Even if you do have a clear image of the goal, by the time you get to it, it has moved somewhere else! And so the constant chase becomes the reality, always coming up short, never quite able to catch up. Sound familiar? A solid action plan will serve as the guide to keep you focused squarely on the next step required, even if the road is unclear. It is each one of these steps that become our path. As Dr. Martin Luther King said, "You do not have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."

Before you create an effective action plan, however, you must first ask yourself this question: "Am I willing to commit to do whatever it takes to achieve my goal?" I suggest that you spend some time on this one. Really dig deep and make sure that what it is you are about to step into is directly in line with your vision. If it is not, then you will surely experience much pain along the way, because your values and your actions will not be congruent. This is the quickest way to fail, miserably. Not only will you not hit your mark, but it will feel terrible the entire way.

Once you decide you are ready to move forward, and you are confident that your desires are in line with your vision, then you are ready to make commitments to each goal. I suggest writing each commitment down on paper, and declaring it out loud to someone you know, perhaps a family member, colleague or friend, but most ideally someone who is in a position to hold you accountable for following through on your plan, like a coach. You may want to choose no more than 10-12 commitments at any given time, but

certainly no less than 4 (at least one from each quadrant) so that you will be creating optimum balance in your life.

Here's an example using the quadrants:

I, _____, hereby commit to

Meditation, 20 minutes daily (S)

Learning to play guitar (S)

Drinking 15 glasses of water per day (P)

Creating my perfect body (P)

Creating strong, healthy relationships with friends & family (R)

Becoming financially free (W)

Taking one vacation per quarter (S,R)

Remember, once you make these commitments, you must follow through with them! There is nothing worse than making a deal with yourself (or your accountability partner) and then breaking it. Each time you avoid taking action toward your goal, that becomes your pattern, your habit. It also becomes a way for you to beat up on yourself for not having followed through. This type of integrity is paramount to creating healthy, successful habits that will help you to manifest anything you want in your life effortlessly, but when not used in this way, can easily become the very thing that keeps you stuck forever. And don't forget to fall still...

Into action: Creating life-changing habits

If you truly want to create balance, and be successful in business, career and life, you must create and implement an action plan. This plan should be designed to create consistent actions over time, thus creating patterns, or habits, that are directly in line with your vision for your life. If your plan is out of line with your vision and values, you will be creating more than imbalance. You will be creating chaos. Here is a suggestion on how to get started:

1. Write down (or type) your vision at the top of a page. Make it colorful & compelling.
2. List your commitments in order of priority.
3. Break each commitment down into action items. Be VERY specific. For example, if you are committing to creating your perfect body or

reaching a target weight (P), list all of the actions that will get you there, like

- a. Wake up at 7 am
- b. Stretch for 10 minutes
- c. Exercise on treadmill for 20 minutes daily
- d. 1 hour at gym, Mon, Wed, Fri 8-9am
- e. Drink 15 glasses water daily
- f. Design menu for week

And so on...

Once you have the list, you **MUST** act on it, consistently, **NO MATTER WHAT**. This may sound like a no-brainer, but it is where most of us fail. This may also sound scary, but it will ultimately mean the difference between greatness and mediocrity.

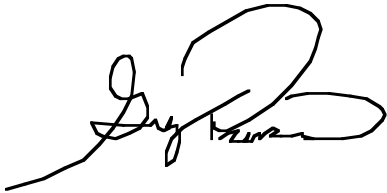
Remember this: How you do ANYTHING is how you do EVERYTHING!

This is where it is particularly helpful to have some sort of support system in place. An accountability partner is ideal...someone who will hold you to your commitments and make you accountable to do the things you say you want to do. Sure you can try this on your own, but the chances are, you will fall back into your old patterns very quickly. Humans are wired to follow patterns, and our brain is wired to keep us safe. The battle that ensues in our mind is most often too powerful for us to overcome without some sort of outside support to help guide us, and keep us on track. This is why the best teams, organizations and individuals have mentors, advisors, and coaches. The simple fact is this: you are either a professional or an amateur. Professionals surround themselves with a winning team, and amateurs do not. There is nothing wrong with being an amateur. It is a natural progression and stepping stone to the pros. But when you are ready to go pro, consider hiring a professional coach, finding a mentor and surrounding yourself with those who are successful at what you are doing. Your results, your business, your career and the shape of your life all depend on it.

In Conclusion

I hope that this brief guide has given you some insight on how to get started with living a life by design vs. by default, and provided a useful tool to do it in a balanced way. I suggest keeping the quadrants, your vision and your commitments visible for daily support. I also invite you to contact me when you are ready to use these concepts and many, many others to their fullest potential by visiting www.changestartstoday.com.

To your continued success,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Provance". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

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