



What Would You Do If You Knew You Couldn't Fail?

Introducing The Military Spouse Coach.

Krista Wells, Ph.D., The Military Spouse Coach, is *Military Spouse* magazine's professional career and life coach. She isn't just a coach; she has walked a mile in your shoes and understands the all-important role of supporting those who serve, yet empathizes when spouses share ambitions of their own. She encourages spouses to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, find balance and take action.

Recently, I went home to visit my parents and was struck by a little wooden sign that my mother had hanging on the wall. "What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?" was painted in white on the little green sign. Now, I have walked by this sign a million times before, but this time, I really stopped to think about it. I pushed aside that all-too-familiar negative self-talk and really allowed myself to brainstorm all the things I would attempt—both professionally and personally—if failure were no longer an option.

My mind was racing with ideas. I would finish my book and plan retreats with other military spouses (at luxurious spas, of course). And why not add "a perfect marriage" to my list of fulfilled wishes? But as quickly as the sign sparked my motivation, real life kicked in, and I quickly lost steam. I realized that what I needed to turn these ideas into action was a steaming-hot cup of tea, my journal and a plan.

I grabbed a pen and started sketching this simple coaching exercise that my coach did with me years ago. This exercise, called the Wheel of Life, provides an instant visual of what part of your life

needs the most tweaking.

Life as a military spouse inevitably involves change. But despite all the changes happening around us, we find progress in the process of making the daily choices that keep us focused on what is truly important in our lives. Looking at my completed wheel immediately allowed me to set new priorities and to feel less weighed down.

When I shared the wheel exercise with one of my clients, she said, "I don't even know what to put for Career, because I am home with my kids until my husband retires in 5 years." I stopped her and reminded her that that being a mom is a job—and a wonderfully important one, to say the least. As we continued to chat, she shared her desire to go back to work in about 7 years, when her kids are older and her husband transitions out of the military.

While she gave herself a 2 for Career, she had a perfect 10 for Health and realized that she was passionate about her own nutrition. After a few more coaching sessions, she decided that a potential career may lie in the field of nutrition. With this new clarity, she refocused some of

her energy and took some action steps forward. Within 2 months, she started attending meetings of dieticians, subscribed to nutrition journals, started volunteering at a hospital and even signed up for an introductory course at a university. She felt greater calmness about her decision to stay home and take care of her family yet more jazzed about her future.

She approached taking these actions as though she really couldn't fail. She set deadlines, made phone calls and—most important—took action. She later told me that her success in her Career area overlapped into other areas and that her new positive attitude helped her marriage.

I decided to experiment with this myself. I went out and bought one of those adorable braided "money trees" with a Chinese proverb attached, assuring me that this plant would bring prosperity, and plopped it right on my desk at work. I am not sure whether this falls in the category of Physical Environment or Money, but looking at my little green friend makes me smile more often throughout my day, and that counts for a lot! **MSM**

The Wheel of Life

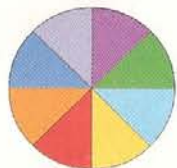


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First, draw a circle with a dot in the center. Next, divide it into eight equal pie pieces, labeling the sections Career, Money, Health, Friends and Family, Romance, Personal Growth, Fun and Recreation, and Physical Environment. Then rate each section or life category from 0 to 10. Your goal is not to have a perfect 10 in everything but to see where you are more balanced and where you may need to make progress.

The Military Spouse Coach Shows You How to Keep up the Momentum

How balanced is your Wheel of Life? In a circle with eight equal sections, rate the following categories: Career, Money, Health, Friends and Family, Romance, Personal Growth, Fun and Recreation, and Physical Environment from 0 to 10.



What area of your life needs immediate focus? Can you tame something or someone that is taxing you and taking energy away from making progress in the area that needs your immediate focus?

What would a perfect score look like to you? Think about how you would describe a higher score on your wheel. Can you begin to imagine what it would feel like if you really had that higher score?

What have you been putting off? What four action steps can you take over the next 2 months? These action steps will lead toward fulfilling your vision. After each action, state how you will accomplish the task and by when.