

Pursuing Excellence in Research

David Meya, PhD

Associate Professor of Medicine,
College of Health Sciences, Makerere University

Forming & growing research partnerships

- **Forming**
 - May result from similar research interests, mutually known colleagues, direction may be unclear at this point, no formalities
- **Storming**
 - Clarity of roles & expectations emerges, getting to know collaborators, developing working relationships, conflict may arise, more experienced mentor involvement
- **Norming**
 - Better understanding of strengths and weaknesses, team dynamics streamlined, constructive criticism, less mentor oversight
- **Performing**
 - Better understanding of the working relationships, individuals involved in collaboration, goals increasingly achieved, minimal senior mentor involvement

Identifying priority and pertinent research gaps

- Prior research areas
 - Pursuit depends on interest, room for growth, funding
- Your area of research
 - Mentors & their role
 - Manuscript reviewer
 - Email Alerts
 - Reading papers in your area
 - Funding calls
- Research fora
 - Ideas for next research question

Influencing Policy through research

- Gaps especially in clinical care
 - COAT trial; HARVEST trial
 - Translational research/basic science
- Understanding of research to policy pathway
 - Policy briefs
 - Knowing who is influential - WHO, MoH
 - Attending training workshops
 - Cost effectiveness/benefit
 - Relevant panels/subcommittees
- Publishing in high impact journals

The beginning

- Research experience
 - Medical school experience
 - Needs improvement & formality
 - Specialty Training Research Project (choose carefully)
 - The future
- Collaborations
 - Established vs New
 - Your role
 - Can you deliver?

The beginning

- Developing Skill sets
 - Putting in the hard work & time
 - Learning about grants & funding
 - Participating in research at different levels
 - Specific aims page
 - Grant applications- Multiple parts
- Research ideas
 - Group ideas vs individual ideas
 - Who funds research?
 - What type of research do you want to do?
 - How to impact outcomes, changing policy?

The Middle

- Who are you?
 - Publishing & Writing culture
 - Abstracts and meetings
 - Collaborating
 - Another email?
- On your own
 - Independent path within a group
 - What skill sets do you bring to the Table?
 - Your own funding
 - The younger generation

Thriving Collaboration

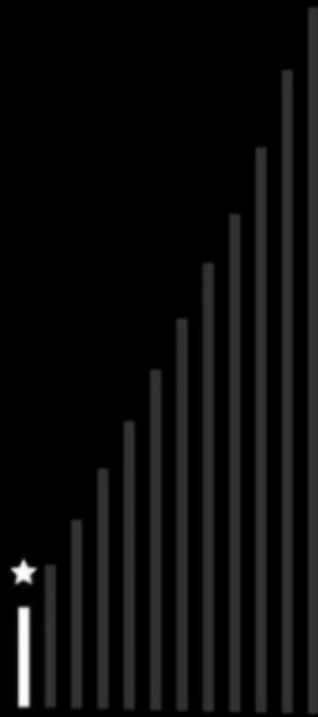
- Growth
 - Position in the Academia
 - Your influence on Science and policy
 - Parenting
 - Retirement

Did you achieve Excellence?

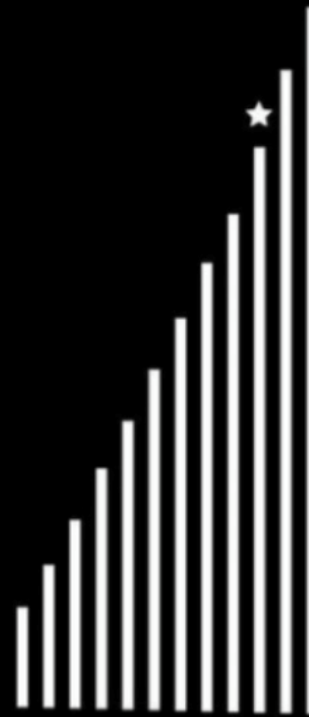
Mentorship and Coaching



Motivation & Habits



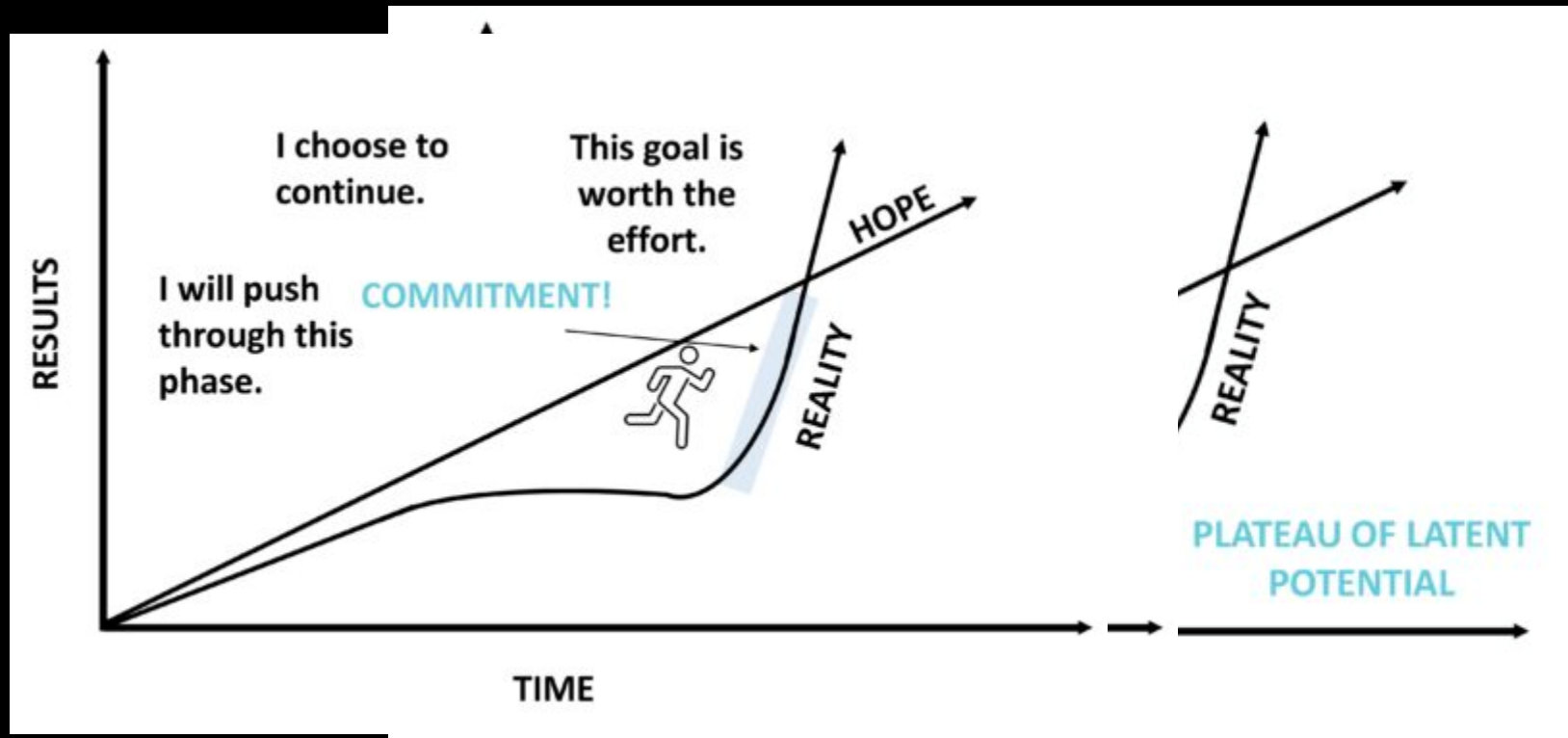
Motivation is what gets you started.



Habit is what keeps you going.

Habits & the Plateau of Latent Potential- James Clear

Lag time between doing what we need to do and seeing the results we want to see



- Breakthrough moments result from many previous actions, which build up the potential required to effect major changes
- Earthquakes, Ice cubes, Bamboo

Goals

- Really successful people feel the same boredom and the same lack of motivation that everyone else feels
- Difference - people who stick with their goals don't let their emotions determine their actions
- Top performers still find a way to show up, work through the boredom, and embrace the daily practice that is required to achieve their goals
- Commit to the process not just the goal

Self Leadership

- **Leadership** is the ability to influence people in order to get things done
- **Self-leadership** - the ability to consciously influence your own thoughts and behavior in order to achieve your personal goals
- **Self-leadership** is having a developed sense of who you are, what you can do, where you are going coupled with the ability to influence your communication, emotions and behaviors on the way to getting there

What is consuming your time?

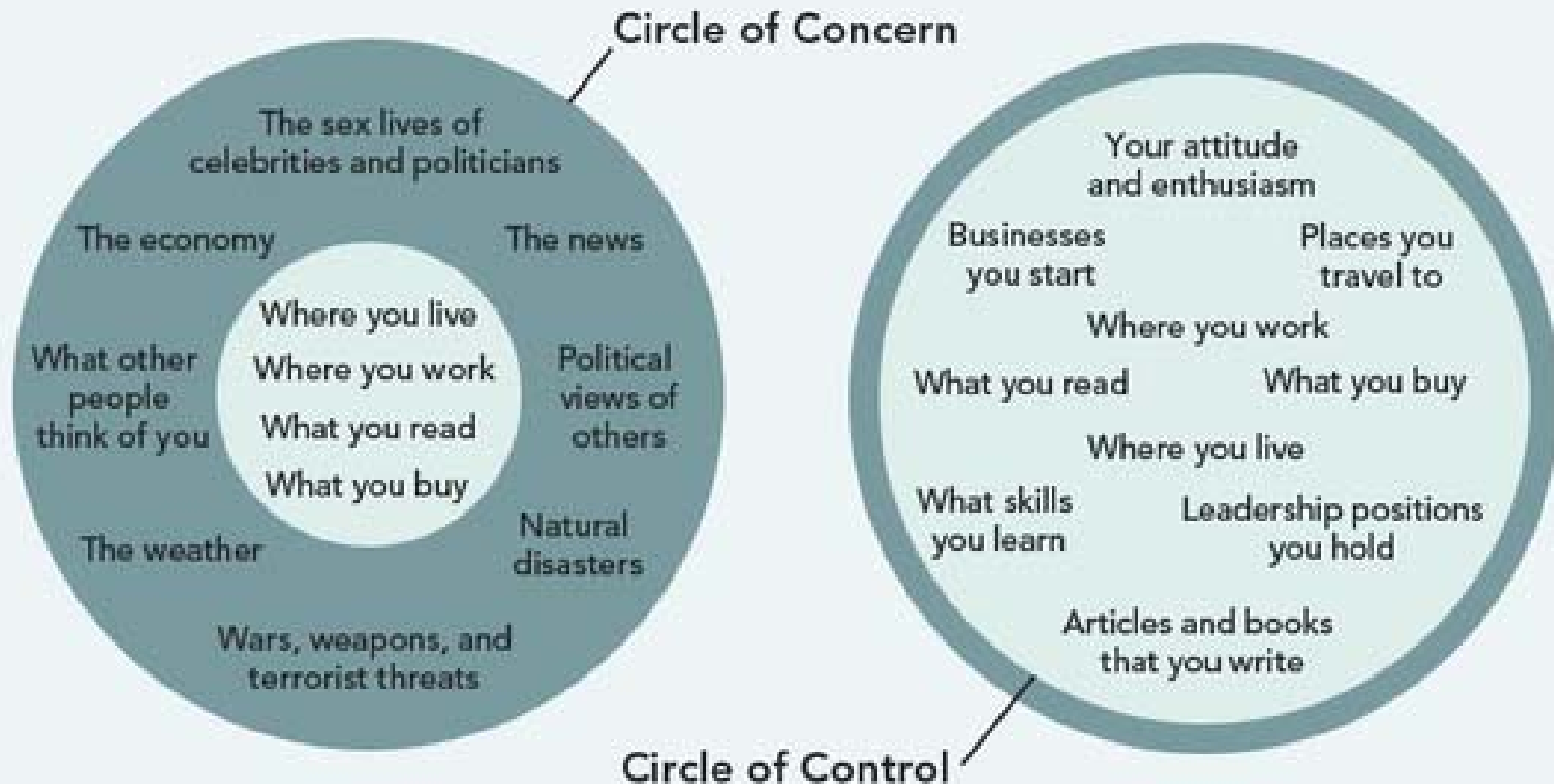
Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Control

How Reactive People Act

Large Circle of Concern and a small Circle of Control. A lot of time and energy is wasted reacting to issues that they can't control.

How Proactive People Act

Small Circle of Concern and a large Circle of Control. A lot of time and energy is focused on issues that are within their control.



Time Matrix



Emotional Intelligence

- Ability to make your way in a complex world by successfully dealing with people and your environment is the most important element of intelligence.

Emotional self-awareness
Accurate self-assessment
Self-confidence

Emotional self-control
Initiative
Achievement
Adaptability



Empathy
Organizational Awareness
Service Orientation

Inspirational Leadership
Influence
Teamwork & collaboration
Conflict management

Grit

- **Grit** is passion and sustained persistence applied toward long-term achievement, with no particular concern for rewards or recognition along the way
- An individual's **grit** is a better predictor of long-term **success**, more than talent or IQ
- Passion is a little bit of discovery, a lot of development, a lifetime of deepening
- Pursue your interests. Find something that fascinates you
- Driven by love, Inspired by vision & purpose. Fueled by optimism & belief. Powered by faith & hope. Revived by resilience. Kept alive by stubbornness. If you are honest includes some fear of failure and a desire to prove oneself –
Jon Gordon

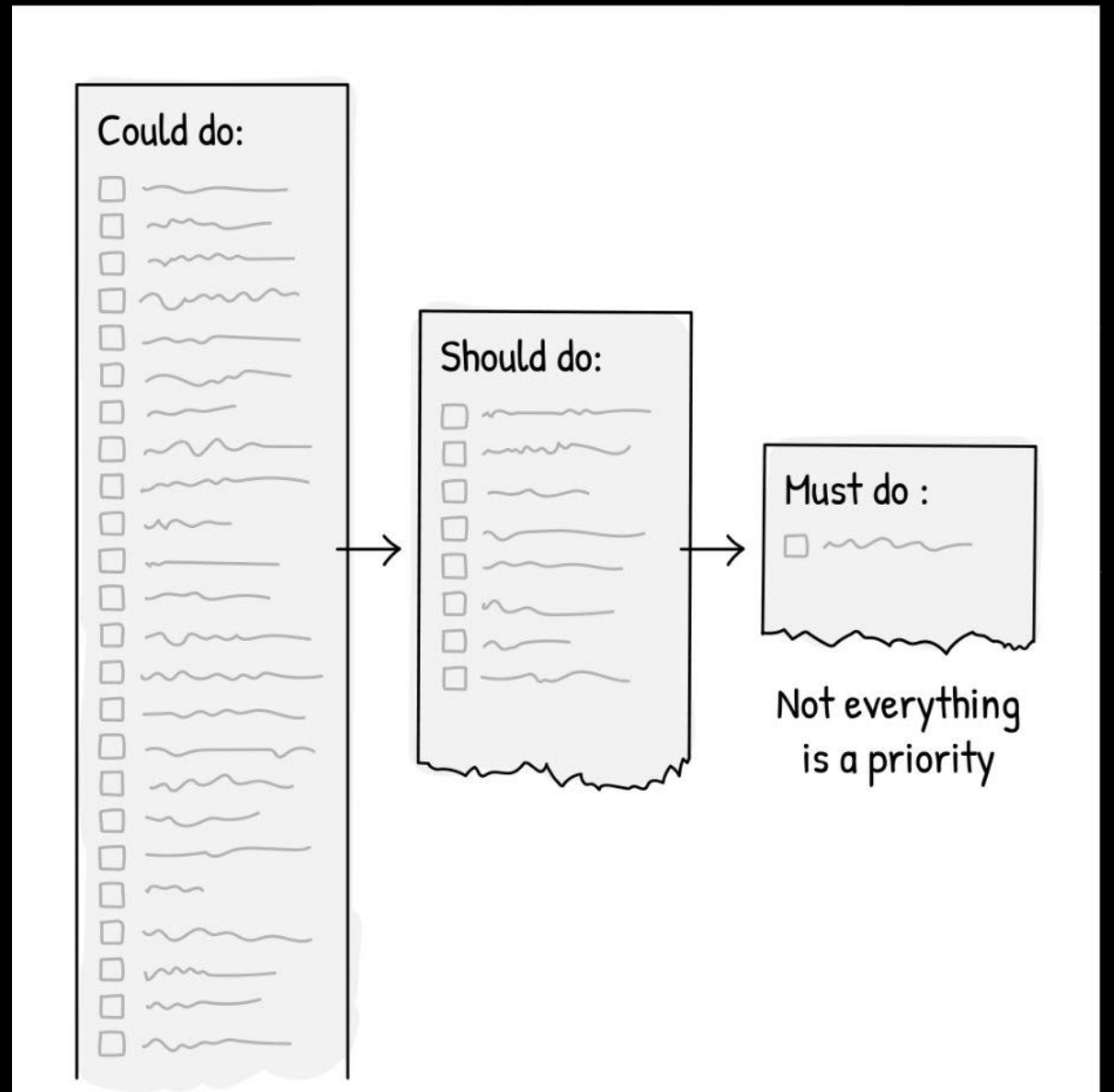
Grit

- Practice, practice, practice. **Get** a little bit better every day
- Connect to a higher purpose
- Cultivate hope
- Surround yourself with gritty people
- Angela Duckworth – the Grit score: <https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>

Grit

- Consistency of Interest; Perseverance of Effort
- Choose a job you don't want to leave (Don't think of your last day on the first day)
- **Playing the long game**
 - Tempting to jump ship for even a small raise
 - Job-hopping is a great way to increase your salary quickly
 - But learning growth & relationships compound more over time - Ben Grant

Prioritizing



Procrastination – Let's look at thislater

- Being in the now
 - Demands that you 'Do it now'
- Don't fool yourself
 - Accomplish this small thing first
- Put yourself on record
 - State when you will have something completed for someone....and respect the commitment
- Create action muscles
 - Commit to seeing lots of small things through to completion will eventually become seeing lots of big things to completion

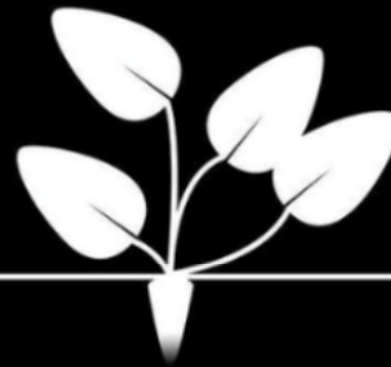
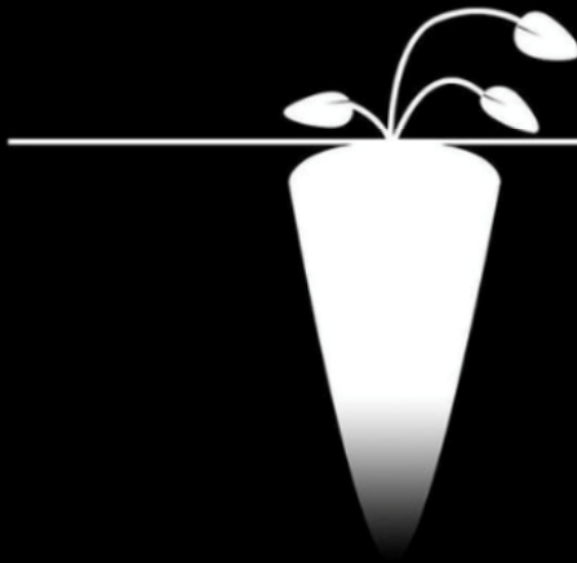
Money

- **Costs of research**

- Understanding budgets- personnel, actual costs of research, equipment and related grant policies, allowable expenses, Institutional survival, balance sheets, direct & indirect costs
- Spending within your means
- **Personal** and **Research financial literacy** is important
- Maximising your research outputs to create benefit for your funder-
 - Innovations, Publications, Public engagement, Acknowledgement, Research to Policy pathway
- Practice makes perfect

What grounds you?

Having skills

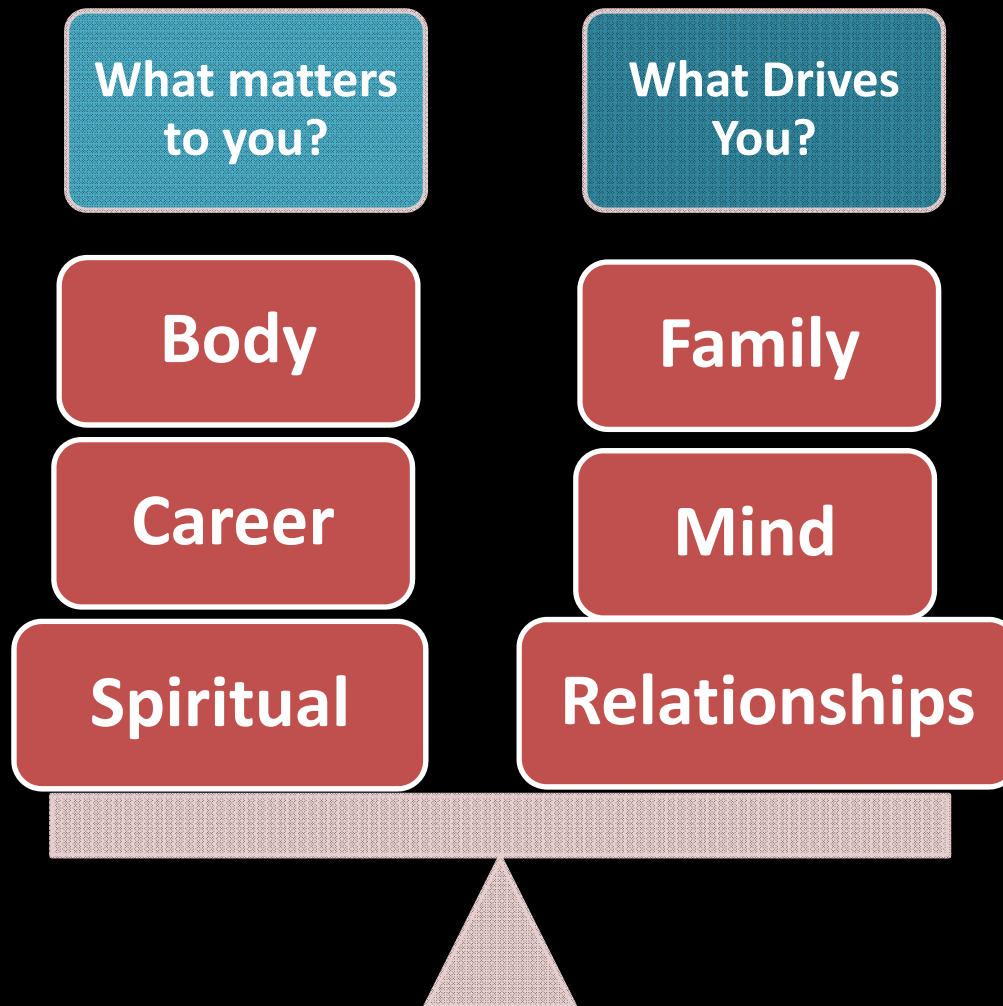


Having a degree

When you interview -

- Work Ethic
- Intelligence
- Team player
- Critical Thinking
- Continuous learning

Balance of Life



Conversation?