

Balancing Achievement and Pleasure

Some activities give us a high sense of achievement; others give us predominantly pleasure, whilst others provide us with a mix of both qualities. For example, watching my favourite TV programme, or eating ice-cream, give me a high sense of pleasure but little if any achievement; writing provides me with both achievement *and* pleasure, whilst spring-cleaning would score low on pleasure, but high on sense of achievement. The key is to find balance, as both achievement and pleasure are important for a good quality of life.

We cannot all pick and choose our work activities, although there are a lucky few who both enjoy what they do, whilst also feeling they are achieving something useful. But we do have more control over the leisure activities we choose, and this is where the following exercise comes in.

It may be helpful to list your typical daily activities, and rate each one on a scale between 0 – 10 on both the pleasure and the achievement aspects, each as a separate column, where 10 is high and 0 is low. It can be very beneficial to wellbeing to do things purely for pleasure, such as flying a kite in the park. We can also feel good about ourselves for carrying out tasks high in achievement, even if they give little pleasure at the time, such as re-organising our filing system.

What *is* important is your *overall* score that you total up at the end of each day. A big disparity between the achievement and pleasure scores may suggest that you need to adjust your activities to get a better balance. For example, if your overall achievement score is low, it might be an idea to set yourself some new projects or goals. If your pleasure score is low, then perhaps now is the time to introduce some frivolous activities that bring fun and playfulness into your life. Achievement is to be commended, but it should not be at the cost of enjoying yourself from time to time. Best of all, of course, is to find activities that provide equal measures of pleasure *and* achievement!

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