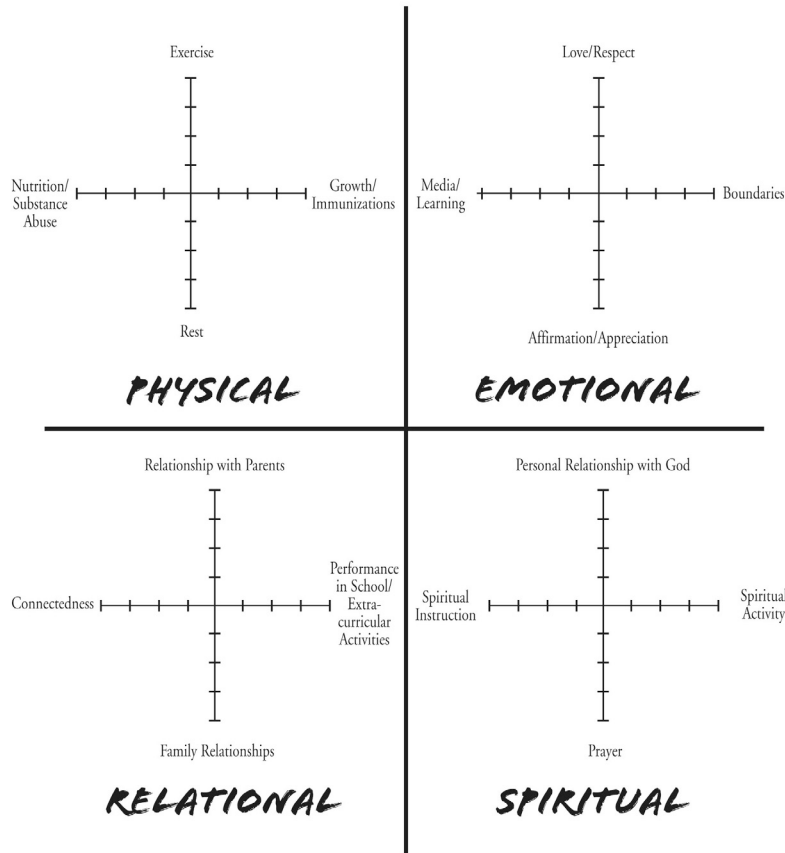


# Assessing Your Health - Teens

Walt Larimore, MD

If you're a pre-teen or teen (age 12-18) living at home, here's an easy way for you to assess *your* four "wheels" of health—physical, emotional, relational and spiritual. This tool will give you a snapshot of your total health balance. If you are aged 16 or older, you may want to use the "Assessing Your Health – Young Adult" tool found at [www.DrWalt.com](http://www.DrWalt.com).



There is a blank graph on page 18, at the end of this packet, for you to use in recording your scores. Notice that as you measure each of the four aspects of your health, it will form a wheel. Each wheel has a hub and four spokes. The spokes represent the measure of health you possess in each area. The longer the spoke, the better... The final wheels will show you how smooth or rough a "health ride" you are presently experiencing or will experience in the future.

This tool is designed to show *you* where *you* might think about improving your quest to nurture *your* health. The more accurately you assess yourself, the more helpful this tool will be. As you read each description below, mark the appropriate spoke to represent your evaluation of your health. The hub is the zero point. A full spoke is four points.

If you have a cool relationship with one or both of your parents, then feel free to ask them to fill out different graphs and then compare your observations with theirs. Be prepared for the fact that your and their observations may be different. Whether similar or different, I hope you'll have some great discussions, as a family, about improving *your* health.

Assessing Your Health – Teens – 2006 Update

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[www.DrWalt.com](http://www.DrWalt.com) or [www.HighlyHealthy.org](http://www.HighlyHealthy.org)

# 1 PHYSICAL WHEEL

- Hub = trust that your body will develop properly if nurtured  
Vertical Spokes = exercise and rest  
Horizontal Spokes = nutrition/substance abuse and growth/immunizations

## ▲ Exercise

This spoke represents my *average physical activity* over the last two or three months.

SCORING THE “UP” SPOKE:

- 4: I exercise (run, walk, work out, or participate in sports or physical education) at least thirty minutes six or seven days a week.  
3: I exercise at least thirty minutes per day, four or five days a week.  
2: I exercise at least thirty minutes per day, three days a week.  
1: I exercise only two days a week.  
0: I am a couch potato. I participate in no physical education at school and no sports activities.

## ▼ Rest

On average, over the last two to three months, how would you assess your *sleep and rest habits*?

Consider these factors for the **bottom spoke**. Put a check by each that applies to you:

- I go to bed at a reasonable hour.  
 I get eight or more hours of restful sleep most nights of the week.  
 I usually wake up refreshed.  
 I have one or two days per week for play, rest, and recreation.  
 Our family enjoys one or more adequate, restful family vacations each year.

SCORING THE “DOWN” SPOKE:

- 4: I achieve all five of the above.  
3: I achieve four of the above.  
2: I achieve three of the above.  
1: I achieve two of the above.  
0: I achieve zero or one of the above.

## ◀ Nutrition/Substance Abuse

Use the **left-hand spoke** to evaluate your *diet and nutrition habits*. Consider these factors:

- I drink plenty of water daily (five or more glasses a day).  
 I eat at least two to four servings of fruits and three to five servings of vegetables daily.  
 I eat at least two nutritious meals per day.  
 I have minimal intake of caffeine and soft drinks.  
 I have minimal intake of saturated fats and highly processed foods.  
 I have fewer than two or three fast-food meals a month.

SCORING “LEFT SIDE” SPOKE:

- 4: I do all six of the factors above.  
3: I do five of the factors above.  
2: I do four of the factors above.  
1: I do two or three of the factors above.  
0: I do zero or one of the factors above.

Also,

- A. I am frequently exposed to secondhand smoke.
- B. I occasionally use tobacco products weekly to monthly (smoke, chew or dip).
- C. I use tobacco products daily to weekly (smoke, chew or dip).
- D. I use (even from time to time) illegal drug(s) or use other people's prescription drugs.

MORE SCORING ON THE "LEFT SIDE" SPOKE:

- Subtract up to 1 point if A is true.
- Subtract up to 2 points if B is true.
- Subtract up to 3 points if C is true.
- Subtract a full 4 points if D is true.

## ► Growth/Immunizations

Now let's consider your **growth and immunizations**. *Three-quarters* of this spoke is for your *growth* (weight and height), and *one quarter* of the spoke is for your *immunizations*.

Regarding growth, I believe the easiest-to-use indicator is your Body Mass Index (BMI). You can determine your BMI by using the BMI chart at the back of this packet and then mark this spoke:

SCORING "RIGHT SIDE" SPOKE:

- 3: My BMI is normal (20 to 24.9).
- 2: My BMI is overweight (25 to 26.9).
- 1: My BMI is extremely overweight (27 to 29.9) or underweight (18.5 to 19.9).
- 0: My BMI indicates obesity (30 or above) or extreme underweight (less than 18.5).

You may be surprised I've dedicated part of a spoke to *immunizations*, but of all the preventive measures for affecting your health, this one ranks right up there. To measure this part of the spoke, determine how many recommended immunizations you have received. You may have to call your doctor's office and talk to the nurse. According to the CDC, every teen should be up to date with at least these vaccines: Td (tetanus-diphtheria, if not given in the previous 5-10 years),

- Varicella (if you haven't had chicken pox or received the vaccine as a child),
- Hepatitis B series (if not given as a child),
- MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella booster, if not completed as a child) and
- Meningitis (meningococcal) immunization.
- In addition, having a yearly influenza injection or nasal spray immunization may be wise (but does not have to be counted for this exercise)
- Also, the pertussis (whooping cough) booster will likely be recommended for teens in the future.

EXTRA POINT FOR THE "RIGHT SIDE" SPOKE:

- 1: I have received all recommended vaccines.
- 0: I am missing one or more immunizations.

**NOTE: If you or your family is wrestling with a weight problem, or your family has a history of obesity, you can more fully evaluate this risk with a new tool Dr. Walt has developed. You can find it at <http://supersizedkids.com/resources/quiz/index.asp>.**

## 2 EMOTIONAL WHEEL

- Hub = trust that your emotions will develop properly if nurtured  
Vertical Spokes = love/respect and affirmation/appreciation  
Horizontal Spokes = media/learning and boundaries

Let me point out that the measures I use here assume you are not wrestling with any emotional disorders such as abnormal stress, depression, anxiety or other mental health disorders. If they are, the measures below are critical for you, but incomplete. I'd urge you in these instances to seek professional help for such disorders.

You will note that the vertical spokes examine parental love or warmth, while the horizontal spokes examine parental limits or demandingness. To put it another way, the vertical looks at relationships, and the horizontal looks at rules. Your parents must balance these two for you to be highly healthy emotionally.

### ▲ Love/Respect (Parental Warmth)

Consider these factors for the **top spoke** of this wheel. Check those that apply. My parent(s):

- frequently tell me they love me. They communicate to me that I am a blessing.
- enjoy talking things over with me and talk to me in a warm and friendly voice.
- try to show interest and enthusiasm when I am speaking. They pay attention when I talk to them—even if it means stopping what they are doing.
- feel emotionally warm and affectionate toward me and hug me frequently.
- seem to understand my problems, worries, needs and wants.
- respect my decisions and support them (as long as they're not illegal, immoral, or something that will cause harm).
- look for opportunities to ask me for my opinion.
- consciously look for things to admire, respect, and appreciate about me.

#### SCORING THE "UP" SPOKE:

- 4: I believe all eight of the factors above are true.
- 3: I believe six or seven of the factors above are true.
- 2: I believe four or five of the factors above are true.
- 1: I believe two or three of the factors above are true.
- 0: I believe zero or one of the factors above apply to my parents and me.

#### FOR EXTRA CREDIT:

- A. I feel my parent's love for me is most frequently **unconditional**—that their love is not withheld based on my behavior, performance, or looks. I know my parents love me, regardless of how or what I do. My parents do not tie their love for me to my success or failure in accomplishing a task; to my abilities, assets, looks, or personality traits; to who I may remind them of; or to whatever my behavior happens to be—no matter how I act. (Of course, this doesn't mean they always like the behavior. Not at all! But it does mean they usually love me "in spite of . . ." even when they dislike my behavior.)
- B. I feel my parent's love for me is most frequently **conditional**—that their love of me is predicated on how I behave, perform, act or look (love "if . . ." or "because of . . .").

#### EXTRA POINT FOR THE "UP" SPOKE:

- Add 1 point if A is true.
- Subtract 2 points if B is true.
- However, the maximum is a full 4-point spoke.

Why do I give so much credence to the type of love your parents choose to give you? It's simple! If they love you only when you please them (conditional love) and convey love to you only during those times, you will not feel genuinely loved—and are at risk for an unhealthy emotional life. This, in turn, can make you feel insecure, damage your self-esteem, and actually prevent you from moving on to better self-control and more mature behavior.

If your parents love you only when you meet their requirements or expectations, you are at risk to feel incompetent and incomplete. You may believe it's fruitless to do your best because it will never be good enough. Insecurity and anxiety could plague you and prevent you from becoming highly healthy emotionally, relationally, and even spiritually.

A key foundation for a highly healthy teen is unconditional love, which can help you reduce your risk for immature anger, resentment, guilt, depression, anxiety, insecurity, and a whole slew of other highly unhealthy factors. Unconditional love balances love with limits, freedom with boundaries, and nurture with training. Such a relationship with you will be healthy, enjoyable, and affectionate for both you and your parents—which leads us to the other vertical spoke.

### ▼ Affirmation/Appreciation (Parental Receptiveness)

Consider the following factors. Check those that apply:

- My parents are my best cheerleaders. They frequently praise me and tell me they appreciate what I have done. They let me know they believe in me, they trust me, and they know what I'm capable of.
- My parents hug me teen frequently and often tell me teen how much they appreciate me.
- My parents thank me for doing things without their asking, and they demonstrate their gratitude for the little things I do (even if it's my job or responsibility).
- My parents desire to spend time with me and enjoy being with me.
- I'm comfortable going to my parents when I experience joy, satisfaction, guilt, shame, sadness, or a host of other emotions.
- I frequently talk with my parents and enjoy being with them. My parents usually listen to me without preaching, judging, or criticizing. My parents listen to me with the intent to just listen. Even when they don't understand, relate to, or like what I'm saying, they listen.
- My parents understand my temperament, talents, and love language. My parents let me know about the unique qualities, gifts, and talents that I have that they admire.
- My parents know what I'm capable of achieving, and my parents help me teen set goals based on what is appropriate for me as a unique individual.

#### SCORING THE "DOWN" SPOKE:

- 4: I believe seven or eight of the factors are true.
- 3: I believe five or six of the factors are true.
- 2: I believe three or four of the factors are true.
- 1: I believe one or two of the factors are true.
- 0: None of the factors apply to me and my teen.

Researchers call these *two* vertical spokes the "**parental warmth**" or "**parental receptiveness**" spokes. They deal with *your* parents' expression of verbal and physical affection toward *you*, as well as their praise and acceptance of you. *Low parental warmth* (criticism, disapproval, and rejection of you) has been associated with a number of negative health factors and behaviors in teens. In contrast, *high parental warmth* has been linked to highly healthy teens.

## ◀ Media/Learning (Parental Limits)

To come up with the measurement for this **left-hand spoke**, add the following two factors together:

### MEDIA

The first is my exposure to media. One could make the argument that today's teens are over-stimulated, and I wouldn't issue a peep of protest. More often than not, too much media in your life—video games, computer games, music DVDs, and way too much television—assaults your senses, negatively affects your thinking, and is detrimental to your emotions and body. Many media providers are trying to influence you in ways that many consider highly unhealthy. Highly healthy parents and teens know how to set limits when it comes to media. Where does you line up?

### SCORING THE “LEFT-SIDE” SPOKE:

- 2: Our home is TV free or I watch one hour or less a day, and the computer/Internet is only used in a public area of our home and for educational purposes. If I watch TV, my parents routinely monitor what I watch. My parents monitor what I do on the Internet. My parents put restrictions on the type of music CDs or video games I buy or use.
- 1: I am routinely exposed to two hours or less a day of media (television, videos, video games, and computer activities). Also, my parents sometimes monitor what I watch on TV and do on the Internet, and they sometimes put restrictions on the music CDs or video games I buy or use.
- 0: I am routinely exposed to two to four or more hours a day of media, or my parents never monitor what I watch on TV and do on the Internet, and my parents never put restrictions on the music CDs or video games I buy or use.
- 1: Subtract up to 1 point if you have a TV in your bedroom or unfettered Internet access in your bedroom.

### LEARNING

The second half of this spoke is your enjoyment of learning and mental activity. Research shows that the brain, like a muscle, must be exercised in order to remain highly healthy. Just as physical activity helps your physiological structure stay healthy, your brain benefits from stimulating mental activity—from continuous, active learning.

In addition, activities such as reading, doing crossword puzzles, and even playing board games with family members have been linked with sharper minds throughout life. So how much do you like to learn?

### MORE SCORING ON THE “LEFT-SIDE” SPOKE:

- 2: I have a moderate to high level of enjoyment for mental activities such as reading, ongoing education and learning, challenging mental tasks, good conversation, or board games with the family.
- 1: I have little enjoyment for mental activities and learning.
- 0: I have almost no enjoyment for mental activities and learning.

## ► Boundaries (Parental Demandingness)

Learning to reduce the amount of media to which you are exposed and having parents set *appropriate expectations* and *limits* compose what researchers call “**parental demandingness**.” When your parents balance parental warmth (the love spokes) and boundaries, you are more likely to be highly healthy. Too much of one or too little of the other leads to reduced levels of health.

“**Parental demandingness**” (discipline, expectations, boundaries, teaching and coaching) is the extent to which your parents expect responsible behavior from you and maintain what the researchers call a “hands-on attitude” with you. This includes consistently setting and enforcing rules or limits on you. Rules for teens must be clear, reasonable, appropriate, fair and just, mutually agreed upon, and flexible—emphasizing what to do rather than just what not to do.

Measure this spoke based on how many of the following boundaries your parents consistently impose:

- My parents routinely know where I am after school and on weekends.
- My parents expect to be and are told the truth by me about where I am really going.
- My parents are aware of my academic performance and visit with my teachers from time to time.
- My parents impose and enforce a curfew.
- My parents make it crystal clear that they would be extremely upset if I smoked tobacco or marijuana or used any illicit or illegal drugs.
- My parents make it crystal clear that they expect intimate sexual activity to be reserved for marriage.
- My parents eat dinner with me at least five times a week.
- My parents assign me regular chores.
- My parents turn off the TV during dinner and as a family we rarely eat in front of the TV.
- There is an adult present whenever I am home from school.

### SCORING ON “RIGHT-SIDE” SPOKE:

- 4: Nine or ten of these factors are true for our family.
- 3: Seven or eight of these factors are true for our family.
- 2: Five or six of these factors are true for our family.
- 1: Three or four of these factors are true for our family.
- 0: Zero, one, or two of these factors are true for our family.



## DETERMINE YOUR PARENT'S PARENTING STYLE

Add the points from *both* Vertical Spokes = Parental Warmth Score \_\_\_\_\_  
 Add the points from *both* Horizontal Spokes = Parental Demandingness Score \_\_\_\_\_

A parent's ability to balance what the researchers call '*warmth*' and '*demandingness*' will be directly associated with *your* overall health. To assess your parent's parenting style (which may be different from one parent to the other), use the table below. Check the box(es) in the **warmth** column that apply to your parent. Then check the box(es) in the **demandingness** column that apply to your parent(s). You may want to assess each parent separately.

Now find the row where you have a box checked in each column. That row will indicate your parent's likely parenting style.

Warmth		Demandingness	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7-8 points	and	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-8 points	<b>Strong Eagle Parents</b> High warmth and demandingness are balanced
<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6 points	and	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6 points	<b>Average Eagle Parents</b> Moderate warmth and demandingness are balanced
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 points	and	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 points	<b>Weak Eagle Parents</b> Low levels of warmth and demandingness are balanced
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-6 points	and	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-8 (and at least 2 points higher than warmth)	<b>Grizzly bear Parents</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-8 (and at least 2 points higher than demandingness)	and	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-6 points	<b>Labrador retriever Parents</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 points	and	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 points	<b>Sloth Parents</b> Low warmth and demandingness

If your parents are not "Strong Eagle Parents," then it's likely that their improving their parenting skills will result in a far more highly healthy you! I like to think the balance between these two skill sets—warmth *and* demandingness—represents a balance of love *and* limits—relationship *and* rules—caring *and* constraints—prizing *and* protecting.

When the teens nurtured in these parenting styles are evaluated, what do we see? As you might expect, Eagle parents come out on top. Their teens show the highest academic achievement, the highest social skills, and the fewest behavioral and psychosocial problems.

You can learn more about these parenting styles and the impact each has on you in Chapter 8 (The ABCs—and Ds—of Nurturing Your Teen) in my book *God's Design for the Highly Healthy Teen*.



# 3 RELATIONAL WHEEL

- Hub = trust in and nurturing healthy relationships with others and self  
Vertical Spokes = relationship with parents and family relationships  
Horizontal Spokes = connectedness and performance in school/extracurricular activities

## ▲ Relationship with Parents

Of all the characteristics of a highly healthy parent, other than loving you unconditionally, the most important is the quantity of time they sacrificially give to you. Quality time with you will only occur *only* when they spend **quantity time** with *you*.

Your parents' relationship with you is critical to your self-concept and ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Therefore, a critical measure of your health is the amount of time your parents spend with you.

Use these factors to mark the **top spoke** of this wheel:

SCORING THE "UP-SPOKE":

- 4: Both of my parents spend more than thirty minutes each day with me and my sibling(s).
- 3: One of my parents spend more than thirty minutes each day with me and my sibling(s); while the other spends between two and three hours each week with me.
- 2: Both of my parents spend between two and three hours each week with me and my sibling(s).
- 1: Both my parents spend some time, but less than two hours weekly with me and my sibling(s).
- 0: Neither of my parents spend any significant time with me and my sibling(s).

## ▼ Family Relationships

The **relationship between your parents** is a critical factor in you becoming highly healthy. What is the quality of family relationships around you? Use these factors to mark this spoke:

SCORING THE "DOWN" SPOKE:

*For married, biological parents who live together* – My parents have a:

- 4: great marriage.
- 3: moderately good marriage.
- 2: marriage fair in quality.
- 1: marriage of poor quality.

*For married parents of adopted children who live together* – My parents have a:

- 3: great marriage.
- 2: moderately good marriage.
- 1: marriage fair in quality.
- 0: marriage of poor quality.

*For a single parent* – My parent spends:

- 4: more than thirty minutes each day with me and my sibling(s). My parent also involves positive, significant role models of the opposite gender (of the single parent) in my life three hours or more each week.

- 3: more than thirty minutes each day with me and my sibling(s). my parent also involves positive, significant role models of the opposite gender (of the single parent) in my life at least one hour each week.
- 2: at least thirty minutes each day with me and my sibling(s). But, my parent has not yet provided positive, significant role models of the opposite gender (of the single parent) for me.
- 1: less than thirty minutes each day with me and my sibling(s). My parent has not yet provided positive, significant role models of the opposite gender (of the single parent) for me.
- 0: less than two hours each week with me and my sibling(s). My parent has not yet provided positive, significant role models of the opposite gender (of the single parent) for me.

*For teens in blended families (with step parents)*

- 4: My relationship with my parent, step parent and siblings is great.
- 2: My relationship with my parent, step parent and siblings is only moderately good.
- 1: My relationship with my parent, step parent and siblings is fair to poor.
- 0: My parents and I are in a blended family, but my parents are not married.

## ◀ Connectedness

Your **connectedness** to your parents and friends is foundational to your relational as well as emotional health (since relational and emotional health are intricately interwoven). Connectedness in the parent-teen relationship begins with your parents giving you affirmation, blameless (unconditional) love, and boundaries, which we’ve already measured as part of the emotional wheel. Teens with healthy levels of connectedness not only have strong relationships with good friends; they make wise decisions about sex.

Add the following two factors to come up with the measurement of **the left-hand spoke**:

*My attitudes.* I have:

- \_\_\_ a can-do attitude.
- \_\_\_ a willingness to tackle new adventures.
- \_\_\_ a sense of optimism.
- \_\_\_ an ability to make friends comfortably.

### SCORING THE “LEFT-SIDED” SPOKE:

*The connectedness I have with my friends.*

- 2: I have terrific relationships with great friends, and have four of the attitudes above.
- 1: I have fair to moderately good relationships with my friends, or have two or three of the attitudes above.
- 0: I either have poor, negative relationships with my friends, or have no friends, or run with a crowd that’s not good for me or have friends who are not highly healthy; or have zero or one of the attitudes above.

### MORE SCORING ON THE “LEFT-SIDED” SPOKE: I...

- 2: I have committed to remain sexually abstinent and have committed to avoid sexual activity until marriage.
- 1: I have had or am having sexual activity with one person with whom I am committed to remaining faithful until marriage.
- 0: I am sexually active or have been sexually active with more than one person.

## ► Performance in School/Extracurricular Activities

Rate this spoke by how you are doing in school. Given your individual talent, how much are you achieving? How are you doing in extracurricular activities? Have you found at least one healthy activity—an after-school job, a club activity or a sport, a church activity—that gives you satisfaction? For this spoke I want you to add the “*Performance in School*” and “*Extracurricular Activities*” scores together.

### SCORING THE “RIGHT-SIDED” SPOKE:

#### *Performance in school*

Given my gifts, temperament, and talents:

2: I am performing as competently as I can.

1: I am performing with some competence but not as competently as I could.

0: I am not performing nearly as competently as I could.

#### *Extracurricular activities*

2: I have found two or three healthy activities—an after-school job, a club activity or a sport, or a church activity—that give me satisfaction.

1: I have found a single healthy activity—an after-school job, a club activity or a sport, or a church activity—that gives me satisfaction.

0: I am involved either in unhealthy extracurricular activities—or no extracurricular activities.

## 4 SPIRITUAL WHEEL

- Hub = trust in and nurturing a healthy relationship with God  
Vertical Spokes = personal relationship with God and prayer  
Horizontal Spokes = spiritual instruction and spiritual activity

### ▲ Personal Relationship with God

I define true, positive spirituality in terms of a *personal relationship with your Creator* that results in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Further, the greater the depth of your spiritual health, the more likely you are to be *physically, emotionally, and relationally* healthy. Use these factors to mark the **top spoke** of this wheel:

SCORING THE “UP” SPOKE:

- 4: I believe in God and experience a great deal of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.  
3: I believe in God and experience a reasonably high level of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.  
2: I believe in God and experience a moderate level of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.  
1: I believe in God but have very little love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.  
0: I do not believe in God.

### ▼ Prayer

In its simplest form, *prayer* is an intimate conversation between you and your Creator. Prayer can occur anywhere and anytime. Prayer doesn't require a particular place or position. It can be as simple as thanking God for the good things that happen each day or as complex as a long weekend at a prayer conference. So how often do you pray? Use these factors to mark the **bottom spoke**:

SCORING THE “DOWN” SPOKE:

- 4: I pray every day.  
3: I pray a few days each week.  
2: I pray only a few times each month.  
1: I pray only on special holidays or before family meals.  
0: I rarely or never pray.

### ◀ Spiritual Instruction

Family scripture reading times, spiritual classes, religion classes, faith-community youth group meetings, faith-community camp activities, and the like all play a role in spiritual health. Be sure to add the “daily or weekly” and the “annual” scores together before recording your total “*Spiritual Instruction*” results on the **left-hand spoke**:

SCORING THE “LEFT” SPOKE:

*Daily or Weekly: Do you regularly receive adequate religious instruction?*

- 2: I participate in two or more activities each week, such as attending a faith community; joining in our family's scripture reading; or attending spiritual classes, religion classes or faith-community youth group meetings.

1: I participate in one activity each week, such as attending a faith community; joining in our family's scripture reading; or attending spiritual classes, religion classes or faith-community youth group meetings.

0: I participate in few or no spiritual or religious instruction opportunities.

*Annual: Do you receive adequate annual opportunities for religious instruction?*

2: I participate in two of the following (or similar) activities each year: faith community camps, religious vacation or holiday training, spiritual retreats, mission trips, or faith community dramas, etc.

1: I participate in one of the following (or similar) activities each year: faith community camps, religious vacation or holiday training, spiritual retreats, mission trips, or faith community dramas, etc.

0: I participate in no annual spiritual or religious instruction opportunities.

## ► Spiritual Activity

For up to half of this spoke, evaluate your *involvement in a faith community*, the other half focuses on *giving to the community* in general. Add the "Involvement" and the "Giving" scores together before recording your total "Spiritual Activity" results on the **right-hand spoke**:

SCORING THE "RIGHT" SPOKE:

*Involvement: Are you actively involved in a faith community in which you find meaningful companionship and camaraderie?*

2: I am involved at least weekly in a healthy, positive religious or spiritual community in which I receive supportive guidance.

1: I am involved less than weekly but at least monthly in a healthy, positive religious or spiritual community in which I receive supportive guidance.

0: I am not involved in a religious or spiritual community at all, or our spiritual community is unhealthy.

*Giving: Do you give of your own resources to others in your neighborhood or community?*

2: I give away time, treasure (money), or talent at least monthly by participating in at least one of the following (or similar) activities: volunteering at a soup kitchen, helping a neighbor, cleaning up along a roadside, or giving money to a church or charity.

1: I give away time, treasure, or talent once each year by participating in at least one of the following (or similar) activities: volunteering at a soup kitchen, helping a neighbor, cleaning up along a roadside, or giving money to a church or charity.

0: I rarely, if ever, give away time, treasure, or talent in service to others.

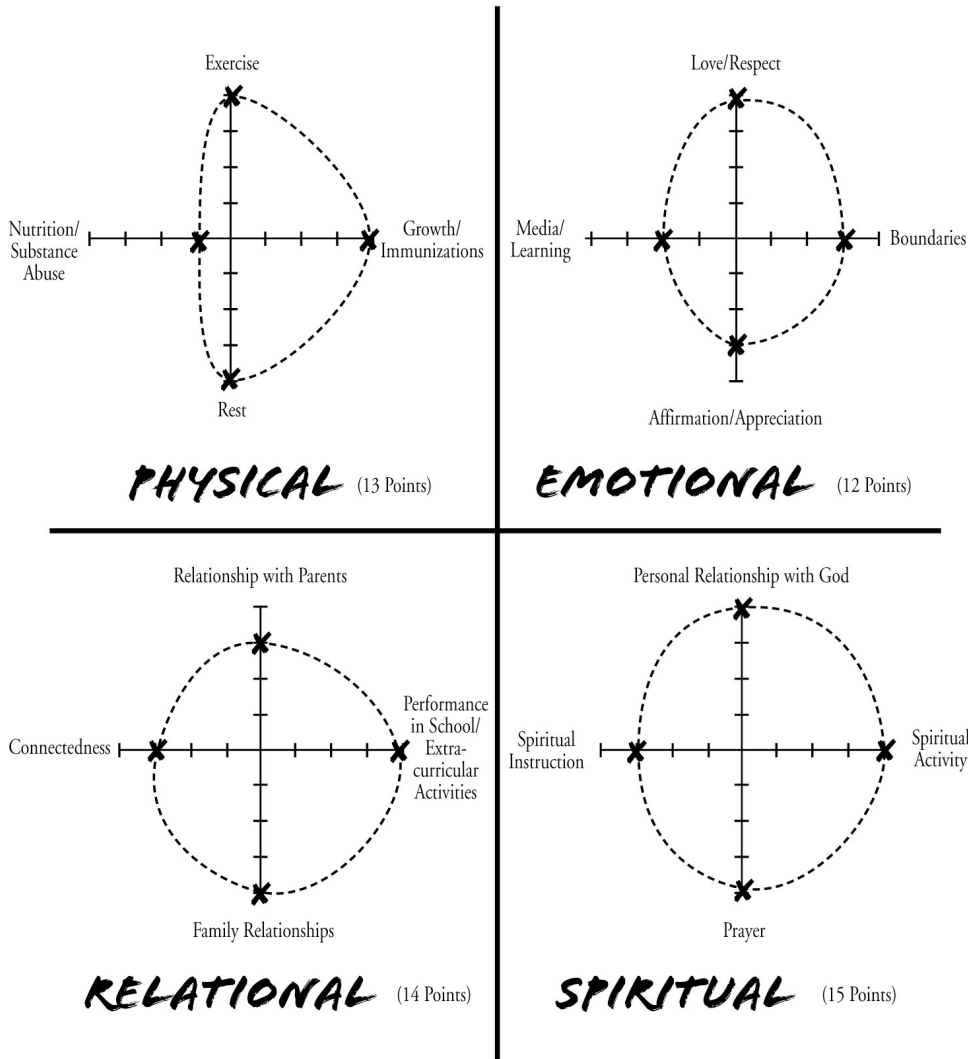
# 1 2 3 4 THE WHOLE PICTURE

Now that you've marked the estimated length of the spokes on your four wheels of health, complete the picture by drawing a wheel from the end of each spoke. Take a look. Are your wheels round, or are they flat in spots? Are they approximately the same diameter, or is one much smaller than the others? If you have any severely wobbly wheels, then you are less than highly healthy. Could you make it out of the driveway on a set of wheels like you see in the chart below?

Now is the time to begin lengthening the short spokes of your wheels of health. It's fine at this juncture to identify the flattest wheel or the most broken spokes. To find the flattest wheel, assign a point count to each spoke of each wheel. Grade each spoke this way:

## SCORING:

- Full spoke = 4 points
- 3/4 spoke = 3 points
- 1/2 spoke = 2 points
- 1/4 spoke = 1 point
- No spoke = 0 points



A perfectly round and fully inflated wheel will have 16 points (4 points for each spoke). In the illustration above, the physical wheel has 13 points, the emotional wheel has 12 points, the relational wheel has 14 points, and the spiritual wheel has 15 points. This teen's spiritual wheel is the healthiest, and his emotional wheel is the least healthy. Since there are three shortened spokes on his emotional wheel, this might be the first one he would want to address. If there were equally weakened wheels, I'd recommend that he choose the wheel he thinks would be the easiest to fix

Another option would be to deal with the most broken or shortest spokes. Look again at the illustration above, and you'll see that the left hand spoke on the physical wheel is the shortest of all of this teen's spokes. Another option would be for him to choose the wheel with the shortest spoke(s). In this case he could choose to begin with the physical wheel. If you have more than one spoke that is equally short, choose the one you consider the easiest to address. If several are equally short, choose the one you consider the most broken.

By the way, the illustration above represents my and Barb's evaluation of our son, Scott, when he was fifteen years old. Scott asked his mom, Barb, to work with him (and the rest of our family) on the left-hand spoke of the physical wheel, while he asked me to volunteer to work with him on the horizontal and bottom spokes of his emotional wheel.

Working on these two wheels required much studying and learning on all of our parts. You may have to ask for advice from a coach or trusted health care professional. Are you willing to take the necessary actions to become highly healthy?

It's hard work to become a highly healthy teen. You may be tempted to stop halfway down the road and let it go at that. Learning to care for your health will not be simple, just as it's not simple to keep a complex automobile running smoothly. Teens, like cars, require care and upkeep; and you'll need occasional checkups and preventive maintenance to avert problems. The truth is this, the human body and mind are hundreds of times more complex than any automobile and thus require even more care and special treatment.

Getting your hands greasy will be worth it. The sacrifice of time and effort will never be wasted. Your effort can and will affect the rest of your life. Nonetheless, I'd be remiss if I didn't remind you that *not* taking action could cause you great sorrow at some time later in your life.

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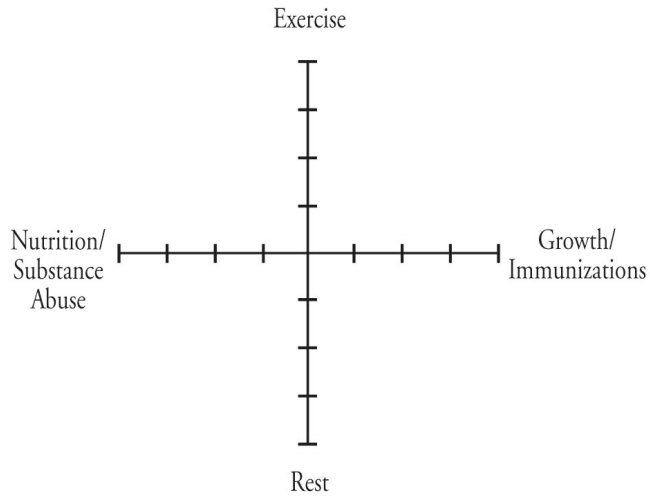
This Assessment of Teen Health was adapted, with permission, from the book *God's Design for the Highly Healthy Teen* by Walt Larimore, MD. 2005. The adaptation provided by Peter Sultana, MD, a family physician. These concepts were presented at the 2005 Annual Scientific Assembly of the American Academy of Family Physicians, held in San Francisco, California. The book contains many strategies on how to improve problems that are discovered using this tool. You can find additional information at [www.DrWalt.com](http://www.DrWalt.com) and [www.HighlyHealthy.net](http://www.HighlyHealthy.net).

### Body Mass Index Table

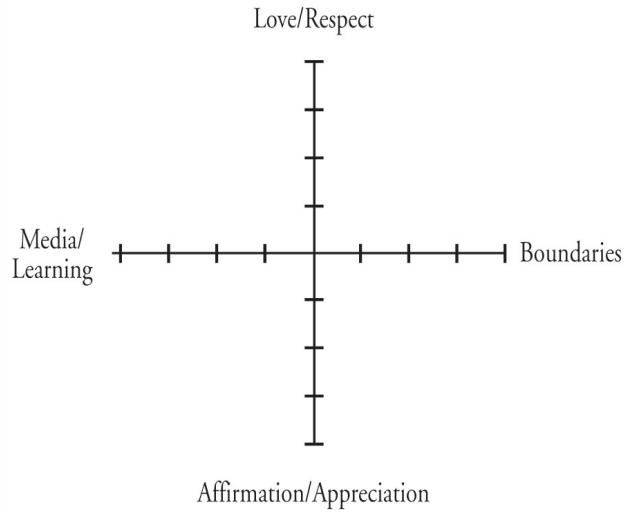
	Normal					Overweight					Obese					Extreme Obesity																				
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																																			
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

Source: Adapted from Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report.

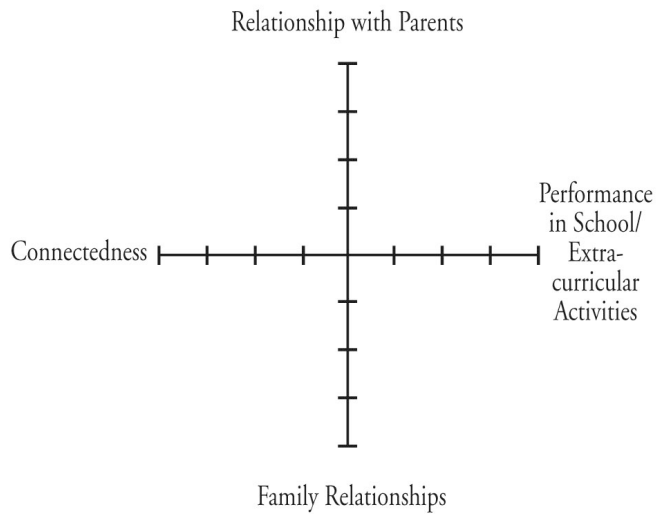




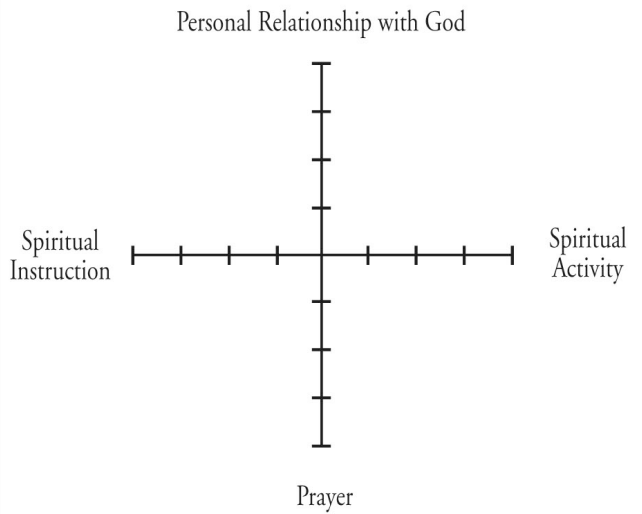
**PHYSICAL**



**EMOTIONAL**



**RELATIONAL**



**SPIRITUAL**