What do you find comforting, reassuring, beautiful, or rewarding – in a word, pleasurable? Are you open to experiencing pleasure and its benefits – or are there any blocks? Do you routinely take time for pleasure, and let it sink into you?

You can explore this by reflecting on and answering the questions below.

For each question, try to find a response in one of these five categories:

1 - strongly disagree | 2 - disagree | 3 - neither agree nor disagree | 4 - agree | 5 - strongly agree

A person’s responses to questions like these are often more complex and nuanced than a single number can indicate. But for scoring purposes, for each question please choose the number above that is most accurate (or least inaccurate!).

QUESTIONS

____ I believe that pleasure is good for me, not just enjoyable.

____ Honestly, I do have a wise relationship to pleasure: open to wholesome enjoyments but not driven or “craving” about them.

____ I routinely experience pleasure through each one of my senses.

____ I routinely take pleasure in new information or ideas.

____ I routinely take pleasure in my relationships.

____ I regularly feel a sense of pleasure in meditation, prayer, or other contemplative activities.

____ Sharing pleasures with others is an important part of my life.

____ I am aware of possible blocks to pleasure – such as busyness or feeling I don’t deserve to enjoy myself – and I am skillful at working through these blocks.

____ When I feel pleasure, I generally stay with it, opening to it, and taking it in.

____ Even when my days are hard, I look for chances to feel pleasure – and do!

SCORING

Your responses to particular questions can be taken at face value, in their own right, as opportunities for seeing useful things about yourself, for investigating further – perhaps talking about them with others – and for identifying inner resources that would be good to develop further in yourself.

Additionally, it can be helpful to get an overall sense of where you stand. Add up your responses to each question to get your total score. See where your score fits in just below; please hold these descriptions lightly, but in a general sense it could well be true that:

40 - 50 Even if your life is hard, you still experience a good deal of pleasure – and its benefits, such as reducing stress and increasing resilience. You know the difference between healthy and unhealthy pleasures, and you’re able to find pleasure in a wide range of moments and activities. You don’t let the common blocks to experiencing pleasure stop you, and you are skillful at opening to pleasure in your body so it really sinks into you. Because of all this, you are probably also real good at bringing pleasure to others.

21 - 39 You do receive significant enjoyment from life, but it seems like there are opportunities for even more wholesome pleasures. See if there are any blocks inside you or outside you to taking pleasure, even in a busy, difficult life, and use the suggestions in the presentation about taking pleasure to take care of such blocks. Also see if there are opportunities for pleasure in a sense that you could be overlooking (hearing? smelling?), or in physical activities (walking? snuggling into your pillow?). And be mindful of “taking in” your experiences of pleasure so they really become a part of you.

10 - 20 You do not seem to be experiencing much pleasure. If this is because you are seriously depressed, please be sure to speak with a professional about this. Assuming that you do have the capacity to experience pleasure, without putting any pressure on yourself, how about looking for authentic, everyday opportunities for more pleasure, such as the glitter of sunlight on the sidewalk, the smile of a friend, or the feeling of vitality in your body as you move it. Check that you are not being blocked in your experience of pleasure by forces outside you (e.g., distractions) or inside you (e.g., feeling you don’t deserve it), and use the suggestions in the presentation to deal with these as best you can. Know that wholesome pleasure is good for you, and as you look for it and open to it, this will help build up resources inside you.

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