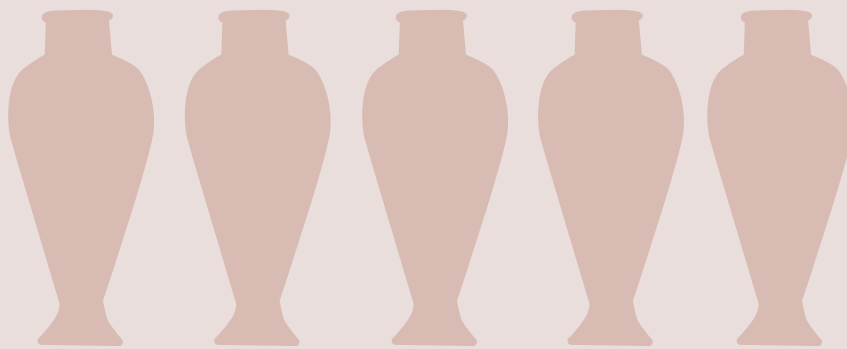




THE GAME OF REAL LIFE



skills for a life worth living



AGES
14+ 3-6
PLAYERS

THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

www.kickstarter.com/projects/thegameofreallife/the-game-of-real-life

Dear Friends

Hi Friends, We made this card game in recognition of the stress and pain that are inevitable parts of life. In light of COVID-19, the therapeutic skills taught in the Game are that much more critical.

In addition to physical copies that can be purchased as a Kickstarter reward, we're offering a free downloadable version. We realize that finances for many of us are tight right now, and we want to make sure everyone has access to these skills.

If you're able to purchase the download, please do. If you are not, please enjoy the Game anyway and share our Kickstarter with members of your community.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/thegameofreallife/the-game-of-real-life>

Enjoy the game!

-Jesse, Meredith, and the team at DBT-RU

THE GAME

Life is hard. Conflict with loved ones, managing money, existential angst, climate change - we all have plenty of reasons to feel stressed out. Luckily, there are skills available that can help us stay present and manage these problems effectively.

The Game of Real Life is a fun way to cultivate these life living skills. The game is based on the principles of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). The goal of DBT is to help us live in the moment, cope healthily with stress, regulate our emotions, and improve our relationships.

In playing the game, we hope that these DBT skills will help you find wise and healthy ways to navigate life, through the good and the bad.

THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

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HOW TO PLAY

3 to 6 players, Ages 14 and up

There are 3 types of cards:

Life Goal

LIFE GOAL

Stay at home parent to your litter of 8 pugs and 2 children.

12

Self

6

Career

14

Family

8

World

Conflict

CONFLICT

You just won the lottery for \$500,000! Congratulations! Now you can pay of your student loans. But then your friends and family start calling, asking for cash. And then you remember that your parakeet needs a hip replacement.

More money, more problems.

3

Self

3

Career

3

Family


1

World

Skill

WISE MIND

Mindfulness



Wise Mind is where emotion mind and reasonable mind overlap. In Wise Mind we integrate opposites and open to reality in all of its complexity. Breath in and silently ask Wise Mind a question. Breath out and listen for the answer. Don't tell yourself the answer, listen for it.

Each Life Goal and Conflict card has 4 categories of points:

Self

Career

Family

World

There are 3 ways to play and win the Game:

- ① win enough points to reach your Life Goal
- ② come closest to meeting Life Goal points
- ③ forget Life Goals, and just win Conflicts

THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

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To Start: Whoever went to therapy most recently is the first **Wise Mind**. Each player takes turns being the Wise Mind. The Wise Mind does not play for the Conflict card.

At the beginning of the game, the first Wise Mind separates the Life Goal cards, Conflict cards, and Skill cards into 3 piles. The Wise Mind shuffles each pile separately and deals each player 1 Life Goal card and 6 Skill cards.



The Wise Mind takes a Conflict card from the top of the deck and reads the Conflict out loud. The Wise Mind then places the Conflict card in front of all the players to read. The game starts clockwise from the first Wise Mind.



Each player picks one Skill card from their hand and has 30 seconds to persuade the Wise Mind why their Skill card is most suitable to resolve or alleviate the Conflict. The Wise Mind has 30 seconds to pick the winning Skill card.

The winner takes the Conflict card and gains points towards their Life Goal.

Each player takes turns being the Wise Mind, starting counterclockwise from the first Wise Mind.

There is no RIGHT or WRONG Skill for a Conflict. Your job is to convince the **Wise Mind** why your Skill is best.

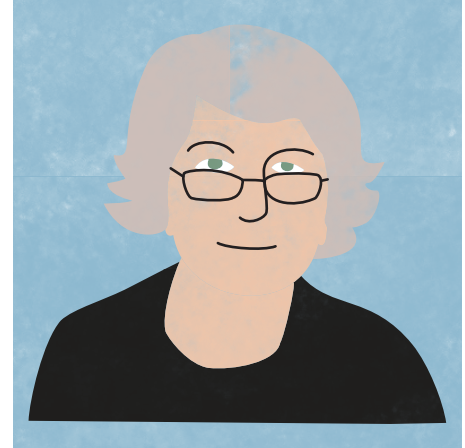
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ABOUT

About DBT DBT is an evidence-based treatment for borderline personality disorder (BPD). Dr. Marsha Linehan developed DBT in the 1980s, and the therapy has since been evaluated in numerous research trials and disseminated around the world.

For more information on DBT visit
<https://linehaninstitute.org>



Jesse Finkelstein Jesse created and illustrated the game. Jesse is a doctoral student of psychology at the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology. He is currently working at DBT-RU as a training clinician and researcher.

Follow Jesse on insta @talkisgood and visit www.talkgood.org

Meredith.Noelle Meredith is a researcher, teacher, and programmer focusing on conscious computation the use of computation tools to aid and extend human perception and awareness.

Follow Meredith on insta at [meredith.noelled](https://www.instagram.com/meredith.noelled) and visit systempoetics.com

DBT-RU This game was developed in collaboration with the Dialectical Behavior Therapy Clinic at Rutgers University (DBT-RU) directed by Dr. Shireen Rizvi. DBT-RU is a research and training clinic that provides comprehensive DBT services, for adults and adolescents.

For more information visit dbt.rutgers.edu

THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

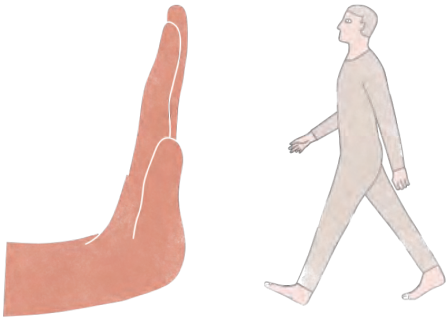
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SKILLS

PAGE 5

ASSERT

Interpersonal Effectiveness



Assert by asking for what you need or by saying no firmly (depending on the situation). Speak simply and clearly. For example, "I need your help with this project, can you give me a hand?" Not: "Why are you so useless?"

(BE) FAIR

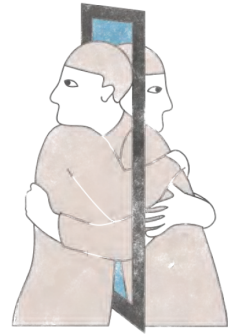
Interpersonal Effectiveness



Be fair to yourself and others. When you're fair, you're not using dramatic or judgemental statements. Instead, you're finding the truth in your own feelings and wishes **AS WELL AS** the other person's.

(BE) GENTLE

Interpersonal Effectiveness



People respond better when they feel loved instead of attacked. Express anger only with words. No threats and/or "manipulative" statements. Tolerate a "no" and stay in the discussion even if/when it's painful.

(BE) TRUTHFUL

Interpersonal Effectiveness



We often lie when we want to avoid an awkward conversation, conflict, or feelings of guilt or shame. Be honest with yourself and others. Try not to exaggerate or minimize the situation. Consider if your words feel true to yourself and the situation.

DESCRIBE THE SITUATION

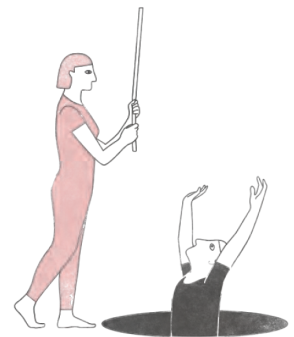
Interpersonal Effectiveness



Just state the facts. At this point, you're not expressing feelings or asking for anything. For example: "I've already said no, but you keep asking me again and again." Not: "If you actually cared about me, you would've listened to me the first time I said no."

ENDING RELATIONSHIPS

Interpersonal Effectiveness



To protect yourself physically and emotionally you may need to end a relationship. Consult Wise Mind, "Is it time to end things?" If yes, plan ahead for how you'll end the relationship. Before leaving a highly abusive relationship, contact a local or national domestic hotline (1-800-799-7233).

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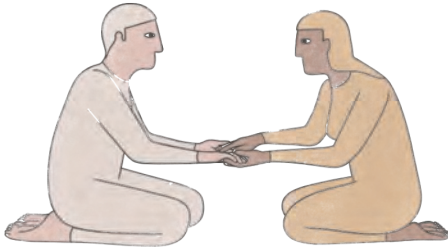
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SKILLS

PAGE 6

EXPRESS

Interpersonal Effectiveness



Express how you feel using "I" statements. An "I" statement means you're taking responsibility and prevents the other person from going on the defensive. For example, "I feel uncomfortable with this conversation." Not: "Please shut the f*ck up."

NEGOTIATE

Interpersonal Effectiveness



You aren't demanding anything, you're ASKING. If the person isn't on board, remember that you have to "give to get." Maybe modify your request to make it more appealing. Try solving the problem together and asking for their thoughts.

(NO) APOLOGIES

Interpersonal Effectiveness



Don't apologize when you haven't done anything wrong. Apologizing can be very powerful in healing conflict. But you don't need to apologize for having an opinion or for disagreeing. Don't invalidate the valid!

REINFORCE

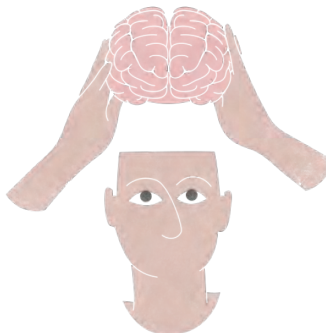
Interpersonal Effectiveness



Make sure the other person knows what they gain by granting your request. For example, "Let's figure out a way that will make you more willing to do what I ask." Not: "If you don't do what I want, I'll never talk to you again. Ever."

(STAY) MINDFUL

Interpersonal Effectiveness



Stay mindful and focused on the conversation. If the person starts acting defensive, keep the conversation on task. Be a broken record: keep asking, saying no, or expressing your opinion over and over and over again.

STICK TO VALUES

Interpersonal Effectiveness



Stand up for what you believe in. If you're not sure, take some time to determine what you value. You may want to make a list of your current values, and future goals. And once you've decided, stick to them.

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SKILLS

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(USE AN) EASY MANNER

Interpersonal Effectiveness



A smile and a little humor can go a long way to reduce tense situations. Try softening your approach instead of using a "hard sell." Don't make demands, harass, or nag. Try saying something nice or compliment them.

VALIDATE

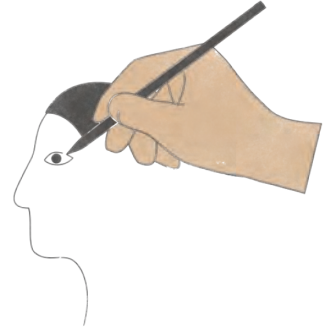
Interpersonal Effectiveness



Show that you understand the other person's perspective. Let them know that you hear what they're saying. Imagine the world from their point of view. Say things like: "I can see that this is difficult for you," or "I understand why this topic is so important to you."

DESCRIBING

Mindfulness



Notice what you're feeling, thinking, and experiencing, e.g. my hands are sweating, I feel sadness, I can't do this. Avoid interpreting these thoughts: just stick with the facts. Describe the "who, what, when, and where" - that's all.

EFFECTIVENESS

Mindfulness



Acting effectively means doing what works. Know your goals, and what's necessary to achieve them. Focus on what works, rather than "fair" vs. "unfair." This is the situation you're in, not the one you "wish" you were in.

LOVING-KINDNESS

Mindfulness



Repeat the phrase: "May you be happy," "May you be at peace," "May you be healthy," "May you be safe." Think of a loved one, then a friend, then an enemy, and then the entire world. Lastly, direct this loving-kindness towards yourself.

NONJUDGEMENT

Mindfulness



Nonjudgement means being open to all possibilities. Focus on the "what," not the "good" or the "bad." Accept each moment as the ground accepts both the rain and the sun. You're simply taking in data and making sense of the world.

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SKILLS

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OBSERVING

Mindfulness



Quiet the mind by observing things as they are, without labels or judgement. Notice your environment, notice your feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations without judging them. Don't try to change or push any feelings away. Just observe.

ONE-MINDFULLY

Mindfulness



One-mindfully is being fully present to the moment, not lost in the past or thinking about the future. Do one thing at a time. Notice the desire to be somewhere else, and then come back to the one thing that's your focus. One thing at a time.

PARTICIPATE

Mindfulness



Participate completely in the present moment. Throw yourself into whatever you're doing at the moment. Avoid judgments like questioning how well you're participating in the task. Become one with the activity, completely letting yourself go.

WISE MIND

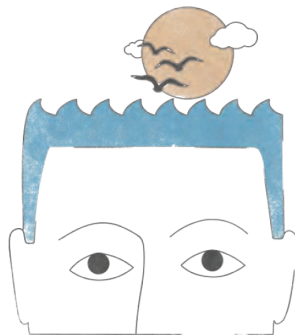
Mindfulness



Wise Mind is where emotion mind and reasonable mind overlap. In Wise Mind we integrate opposites and open to reality in all of its complexity. Breathe in and silently ask Wise Mind a question. Breathe out and listen for the answer. Don't tell yourself the answer, listen for it.

I.M.P.R.O.V.E.

Distress Tolerance



(I)magine relaxing scenes. Find (m)eaning in pain. (P)ray to a supreme being or your own Wise Mind. (R)elax with a hot bath. Focus attention on (o)ne thing. Go on a brief (v)acation. With self-(e)ncouragement rethink the situation.

INTENSE EXERCISE

Distress Tolerance



When emotions are running high, exercise to release that energy. Run, walk fast, jump, play basketball, lift weights, dance for 20 minutes. Exercise releases endorphins which help combat negative emotions like anxiety and sadness.

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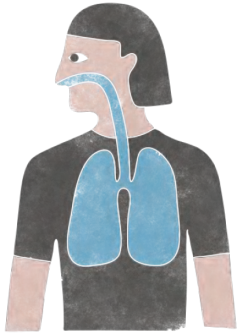
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SKILLS

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PACED BREATHING

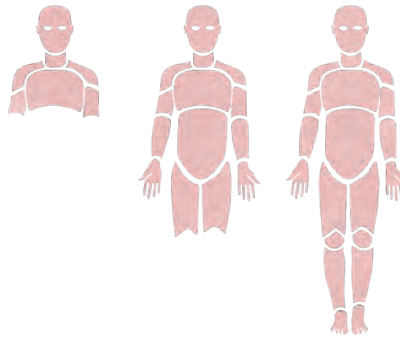
Distress Tolerance



Breathe deeply into your belly. Slow the pace of your inhale and exhale (on average, five to six breaths per minute). Breathe out more slowly than you breathe in (for example, 5 seconds in and 7 seconds out.)

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION

Distress Tolerance



Breathe deeply into your belly and tense your muscles (not so much that you get a cramp). While breathing out, say the word "Relax" in your mind. Let go of the tension. Start with your feet and move up your body.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

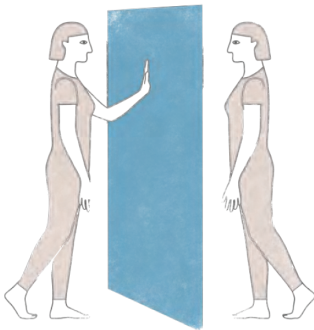
Distress Tolerance



Observe that you're fighting reality. Practice accepting the situation with mind, body, and spirit. Contact the resistance in your body. Allow yourself to feel the sadness and grief. Acknowledge that life is worth living even when there's pain.

S.T.O.P.

Distress Tolerance



When emotions are hot try S.T.O.P. (S)top! Your emotions may cause you to act without thinking. (T)ake a step back from the situation. (O)bserve what's going on in your body. (P)roceed mindfully. Consider your thoughts and feelings, and those of others.

TEMPERATURE

Distress Tolerance



Relax fast by exercising your diver's reflex. Hold your breath and dunk your face in a bowl of cold water; OR hold a cold pack on your eyes and cheeks. Hold for at least 30 seconds. Make sure to keep the water above 50°F.

ACCUMULATE THE POSITIVES

Emotion Regulation



The more positive experiences you have the better shape you'll be when sh*t hits the fan. In the short-term do one thing that brings you joy each day. In the long-term, identify values and goals that make your life worth living.

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SKILLS

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BUILD MASTERY

Emotion Regulation



Do one thing each day that gives you a sense of accomplishment. It can be a hobby or job. Make sure it's hard enough that you feel an actual sense of accomplishment. Gradually increase the difficulty over time.

CHECK THE FACTS

Emotion Regulation



Slow things down. Check if your emotions fit the facts of the situation. Ask yourself: "What's the emotion I want to change?" "What's causing me to feel this way?" "How am I interpreting this cause?" "Am I assuming the worst?"

COPE AHEAD

Emotion Regulation



Prepare for things that you know are going to be difficult. Describe the difficult situation. Decide the skill that you want to use. Imagine the situation in your mind. Imagine coping effectively. Imagine the worst outcome! Practice some relaxation after all that imagining.

OPPOSITE ACTION

Emotion Regulation



When emotions don't fit the facts act the opposite. Ask yourself: "What's the emotion I want to change?" Do the facts fit the emotion? What are the opposite actions to this response? Act opposite all the way. Repeat acting opposite until you feel differently.

P.L.E.A.S.E.

Emotion Regulation



It's hard to feel good emotionally when we feel bad physically. See a doctor when necessary and take prescribed meds. Balanced eating. Stay off the DRUGS. Try to get 7-9 hours of sleep a night. Do some form of exercise every day, ideally 20 minutes.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Emotion Regulation



When an emotion fits the facts, problem solving is the first step in changing difficult situations. 1) Describe the facts. 2) Check the facts. 3) Identify your goals. 4) Brainstorm lots of solutions. 5) Pick a solution that fits the Goal and may work. 6) Put solution into action. 7) Evaluate the results.

THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

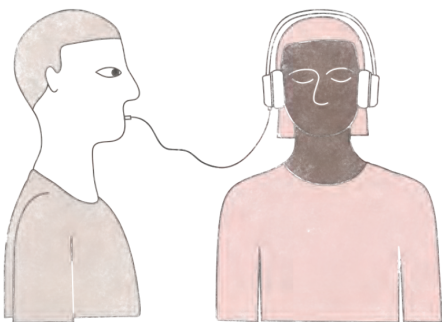
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SKILLS/CONFLICTS

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(ACT) INTERESTED

Emotion Regulation



Act interested by listening to the other person and not interrupting.

Convey this interest with words and body language: face them, maintain eye contact, and lean towards them rather than away. Don't interrupt. Ask questions, use simple phrases like "oh really?" or "uh-huh" to validate their experience.

APPEAR CONFIDENT

Emotion Regulation



Regardless of how you feel inside, appear confident. Keep your head up, stand or sit up straight, make direct eye contact, and speak loudly and clearly. No stammering, whispering or staring at the floor.

CONFLICT

You're presenting a project to everyone in your office (including that cutie you've had your eye on).

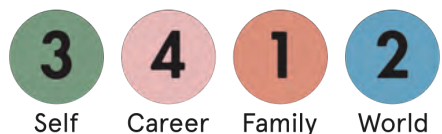
Suddenly, last night's margaritas decide to make a reappearance. You vomit all over your boss.



CONFLICT

After five years of devoted and tireless work, your boss announces that you're being replaced by a robot.

And not just any robot, the one from accounting who is dating your office crush.



CONFLICT

You're taking the bus across town to visit your best friend in the hospital.

Halfway through the ride, the bus driver announces that if the bus drops below 50 miles per hour it will explode.



CONFLICT

You're meeting your in-laws for the first time, at their house. Your stomach feels a little funny. You rush to the bathroom. The relief is instantaneous.

You flush the toilet. Nothing goes down. You make the rookie mistake of flushing again. Now all hell breaks loose.



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CONFLICTS

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CONFLICT

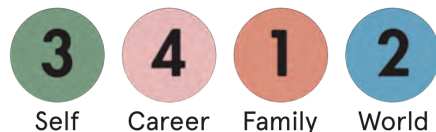
You wake Monday morning after a restless night of crazy dreams. You walk to the bathroom and as you pass in front of the mirror you notice something very odd: you're pregnant.



CONFLICT

Congratulations! You got that job promotion you've been working towards. But now the doubt starts creeping in: "Do you deserve this?" "Are you actually able to do this job?" "They're going to find out you're an imposter."

"Maybe you should quit."



CONFLICT

It's been 10 years on this stinking ship. You're short on food, it rains all the time, and your crew is getting restless.

You now realize that you're never going to catch that stupid whale.



CONFLICT

You're chilling on your couch. As your cat walks past you it glitches and resets itself.

You think you're hallucinating. But then you receive a call from a man with a deep baritone, who explains that you've been living in an elaborate computer simulation



CONFLICT

The judge just granted your ex custody over your three kids. You plan to disguise yourself as a loving but strict English nanny, and interview with your ex to babysit your kids.

It's a great idea. What could go wrong?!



CONFLICT

You're driving down a picturesque road. Not a care in the world. When, some jerk starts honking behind you. You slow down to let them pass. As they drive by, they almost run you off the road.

Oh no they didn't.



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CONFLICTS

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CONFLICT

Climate change is real, the globe is warming, and life as we know it will never be the same.



CONFLICT

That Slovakian Prince was so charming on Instagram. He just needed your banking info to wire out 15 million dollars.

Now, there's no money left in your checking account.



CONFLICT

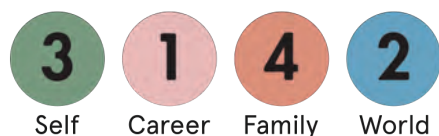
After all the tears and grieving, you discover that your asshole partner faked their death so that they could marry your identical twin sibling.



CONFLICT

You finally asked out your crush, and they agreed! Your date is scheduled for tomorrow and you're so nervous that you can't stop shaking.

Like, literally, you can't stop shaking.



CONFLICT

Your boss comes over to discuss a recent project. She points out some errors in your work. You feel criticized and humiliated. You have the urge to flip your desk, tell her to "f*ck off," lock yourself in the bathroom, and quit.



CONFLICT

You've been sober for three months when it's that time of the year - family reunion.

On your way to the party you pass by your dealer's house. You have a sudden and intense urge to use.



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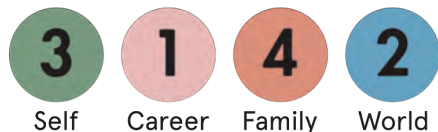
CONFLICTS

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CONFLICT

It's your wedding day. You just finished putting on your dress. Your soon-to-be mother-in-law stops by to wish you luck. Her dress looks familiar.

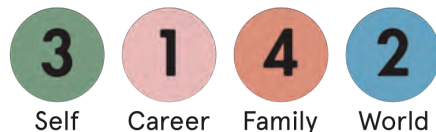
Wait! She's wearing the same white dress you are!



CONFLICT

Your BFF's boyfriend is an asshole. Six months ago they broke up and you two celebrated.

But not so fast. Your BFF just texted that they've patched things up and are now engaged.



CONFLICT

During Thanksgiving dinner, your drunk uncle keeps on making vaguely offensive comments about your date, suggesting that you shouldn't be with "that kind of person."

Despite everyone's best efforts, your uncle won't shut up.



CONFLICT

After a long, hard day of work, you sit down to meditate.

Is that construction outside? Why are your neighbors screaming? Did you leave the oven on? Will you be alone forever? What's the meaning of life?



CONFLICT

You want to borrow your parents' car to go to a friend's party. It's going to be the best party of all time. You know this for a fact. They say "no" since you've broken curfew twice and got in three car accidents.

But they just stepped outside and the keys are on the table. What to do?



CONFLICT

You've practiced every day since you were three for hours on end. Now the moment you've been waiting for has arrived - the roster for the Varsity dodgeball team.

SH*T! How many times will you have to repeat senior year to make this damn team?



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CONFLICTS

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CONFLICT

You're taking a nice train ride into the city. You enjoy the scenery as the train hums along. The man seated in front of you starts yelling into his cell phone. "This won't last forever," you think.

Then he starts screaming racial and homophobic slurs.



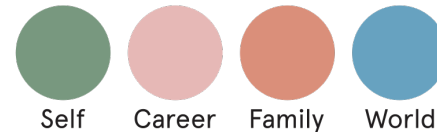
CONFLICT

You just won the lottery for \$500,000! Congratulations! Now you can pay off your student loans. But then your friends and family start calling, asking for cash. And then you remember that your parakeet needs a hip replacement.

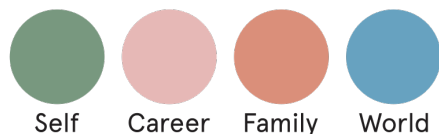
More money, more problems.



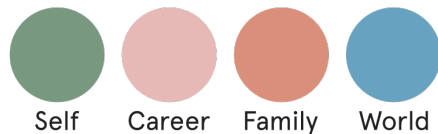
CONFLICT



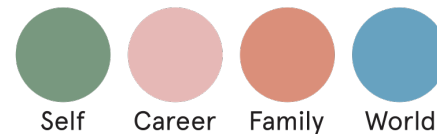
CONFLICT



CONFLICT



CONFLICT



THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

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LIFE GOALS

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LIFE GOAL

Live with 12 cats in Nova Scotia, while running your Etsy empire of knitted cat hats.



LIFE GOAL

Reality TV superstar with a line of perfumes, cosmetics, jewelry, and non-dairy creamers.



LIFE GOAL

Married with 2.5 kids, a house in the suburbs, and a thriving business selling illicit magic mushrooms.



LIFE GOAL

Clinical psychologist who illustrates card games at night to satisfy failed artistic ambitions.



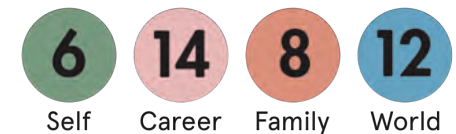
LIFE GOAL

Lifestyle guru with 200k Instagram followers, one of whom is Gwyneth.



LIFE GOAL

The richest person in the world!
Who then gives away all their money to charity.



THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

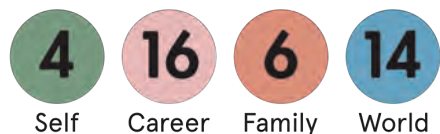
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LIFE GOALS

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LIFE GOAL

Um. You invented Post-Its.



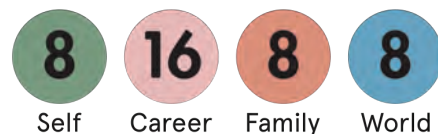
LIFE GOAL

Head mage to team Lothlórien, the one-true Elvish kingdom in your LARPing community.



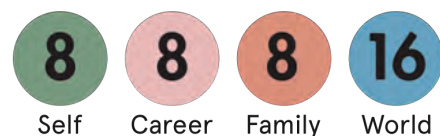
LIFE GOAL

Barista to the stars, with two french bull-dogs named Mocha and Latte.



LIFE GOAL

America's next drag superhero, saving the world from the ignorant and the tacky.



LIFE GOAL

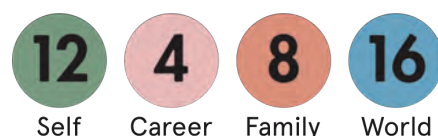
Stay at home parent to your litter of 8 pugs and 2 children.



LIFE GOAL

Live off the grid, in a geodesic dome with seeds and embryos of all the earth's plant and animal species.

After the apocalypse, you'll be ready to repopulate the world.



THE GAME OF REAL LIFE

www.kickstarter.com/projects/thegameofreallife/the-game-of-real-life

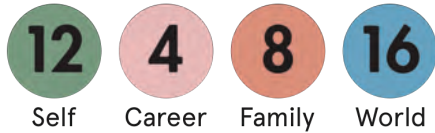
LIFE GOALS

PAGE 18

LIFE GOAL

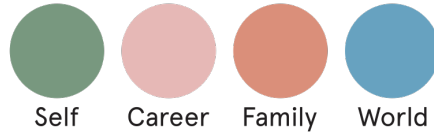
Live off the grid with seeds and embryos of all the earth's plant and animal species.

After the apocalypse, you'll be ready to repopulate the world.



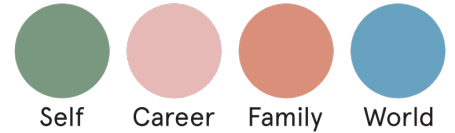
LIFE GOAL

(Make your own)



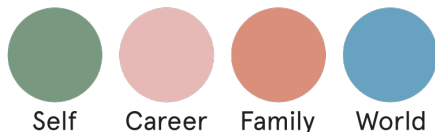
LIFE GOAL

(Make your own)



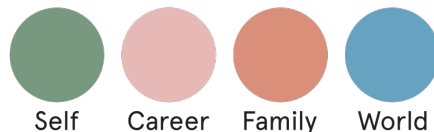
LIFE GOAL

(Make your own)



LIFE GOAL

(Make your own)



LIFE GOAL

(Make your own)

