สรุปสาระสำคัญบทที่ 3

Summary of Key Ideas from Chapter 3

Self-Awareness and Caring for Balanced Well-Being

The translation below preserves the meaning and structure of the Thai summary while using clear, grammatically correct English appropriate for first-year university students. The term “สมดุลสุข” is translated consistently as “balanced well-being.”

Chapter 3 brings the knowledge of balanced well-being from the first two chapters into everyday practice. It aims to help first-year students understand that university life requires more than determination or academic ability. Students also need the ability to understand themselves, care for themselves, recognize their emotions, make decisions, adapt to change, and live appropriately with uncertainty.

The first year of university is a period in which students must take responsibility for many areas of life at the same time, including studying, time management, health, relationships, expenses, and future planning. Students who experience stress, confusion, or mistakes should not immediately conclude that they are incapable. Their difficulties may not result from a lack of effort. Instead, they may not yet have developed the skills needed to understand themselves, care for themselves, and manage several changes occurring at the same time.

1. Self-Awareness Is the Starting Point of Balanced Well-Being

Self-awareness means more than knowing what a person likes or dislikes. It involves understanding oneself honestly and comprehensively, including one’s thoughts, emotions, needs, strengths, limitations, values, goals, ways of coping with problems, and patterns of interacting with others.

For example, some students may discover that they learn effectively when they plan in advance. Others may work well in groups but find it difficult to communicate their needs. Some may realize that frequently comparing their lives with those of friends on social media has reduced their self-confidence.

These discoveries are not intended to encourage self-criticism. Their purpose is to help students recognize which areas of their lives require greater care or further development.

Self-awareness also requires continuous self-reflection. Students may begin by asking themselves:

How do I feel today?

Which event affected me emotionally?

How did I respond to that event?

How would I like to care for myself differently if a similar event occurs again?

Reflective writing is one useful method for helping students recognize patterns in their thoughts, emotions, and behaviour more clearly.

2. Healthy Self-Love

Self-love does not mean believing that one is always right or perfect. It does not mean considering oneself superior to others or choosing only activities that feel comfortable.

Healthy self-love means realistically accepting one's value as a human being while recognizing one's strengths, limitations, mistakes, and areas that require development.

Healthy self-love involves deep self-awareness, acceptance of imperfection, goodwill toward oneself, appropriate self-care, and continued responsibility toward one's life and other people.

A person who loves themselves can still admit mistakes, apologize, make corrections, and improve their behaviour. However, they do not use a single mistake as evidence that they have no value.

For example, when a student receives a low examination score, self-love does not mean simply saying, "It does not matter," and making no effort to improve. It means acknowledging the disappointment, examining whether the problem resulted from preparation, study methods, or time management, and then making a new plan, seeking advice, and caring for oneself without using harsh language that destroys motivation.

Self-love is therefore clearly different from self-indulgence. Resting when tired may be an act of self-love. However, avoiding work every time it causes discomfort may be an avoidance of responsibility.

Balanced self-love must include both compassion and responsibility.

3. Self-Esteem and Self-Compassion

Self-esteem refers to the awareness that one is a valuable person, has abilities in certain areas, deserves respect, and has the potential to develop.

Self-compassion refers to the way a person treats themselves when they experience failure, suffering, or personal limitations.

People may find it easier to maintain self-esteem when they are successful. However, self-compassion becomes especially important when life does not meet their expectations because it prevents them from attacking themselves until they lose the motivation to continue.

Self-compassion consists of three important elements:

1. Mindfully recognizing one's experiences without exaggerating or avoiding them

2. Treating oneself with kindness

3. Understanding that mistakes, imperfections, and suffering are shared human experiences and do not happen only to oneself

A student can therefore acknowledge:

"I did not manage my time well this time, and I need to take responsibility."

The student does not need to conclude:

"I am a failure and have no value."

The first statement creates an opportunity for learning. The second may reduce motivation and encourage avoidance of the problem.

4. Developing Self-Awareness and Self-Love

Self-love is a skill that can be practised. It is not a quality that a person must naturally possess from birth.

Students may begin by regularly observing their bodies, emotions, thoughts, and needs. This helps them recognize early signs of imbalance, such as repeatedly getting insufficient sleep, becoming easily irritated, avoiding other people, or beginning to avoid academic responsibilities.

Students should also practise identifying and naming their emotions clearly. The general statement "I am stressed" may actually include different emotions, such as fear, disappointment, hurt feelings, anger, or anxiety.

Recognizing the specific emotion being experienced helps a person choose a more appropriate way to manage it.

Compassionate and responsible self-talk is also important. Instead of saying:

"I cannot do anything properly."

A student might say:

"I did not manage my time appropriately this time, but I can still revise my plan."

The second statement does not avoid responsibility. It allows the student to maintain enough emotional energy to correct the problem.

Students should also reduce unfair comparisons with others, particularly comparisons with carefully selected images of people's lives presented on social media.

They should learn to establish healthy boundaries in relationships, care appropriately for their health and studies, and ask for help when a problem becomes too difficult to manage alone.

Asking for help does not reduce a person's value. It shows that the person considers their life important enough not to allow problems to continue accumulating.

5. Holistic Self-Care

Self-care is not a special activity performed only during free time. It is also not a reward that must wait until every task has been completed.

Self-care refers to intentional actions taken to maintain, promote, and restore well-being while carrying out daily responsibilities.

This chapter divides self-care for students into five interconnected dimensions.

1. Physical Dimension

Physical self-care includes:

Getting sufficient sleep

Eating appropriately

Drinking enough water

Moving the body regularly

Resting the eyes

Reducing screen time

Recognizing signs of physical exhaustion

Caring for the body provides a foundation for concentration, emotional stability, and readiness to learn.

2. Mental and Emotional Dimension

Mental and emotional self-care includes awareness of emotions, thoughts, stress, and internal self-talk.

Caring for the mind does not mean trying to remain happy all the time. It means recognizing emotions and selecting ways to regain stability without harming oneself.

3. Social Dimension

Social self-care includes having safe relationships, communicating one’s needs, asking for help, and establishing appropriate boundaries.

Students do not need to have a large number of friends. However, they should have people with whom they can communicate honestly and whom they can trust.

4. Academic and Responsibility Dimension

This dimension includes time management, planning study periods, managing group assignments, participating in activities, managing expenses, and taking responsibility for everyday tasks.

Planning helps prevent tasks and stress from accumulating.

5. Wisdom and Meaning Dimension

This dimension includes reflecting on personal values, meaning, goals, and the direction of one's life.

Students should ask themselves:

Why am I studying?

What makes my studies meaningful?

Which activities exhaust me without helping me grow?

The five dimensions are not separate. Insufficient sleep may cause emotional instability, affect relationships, create difficulties in group work, and reduce the ability to make careful decisions.

Self-care must therefore consider the whole system of a person's life rather than focusing only on the area that is easiest to manage.

6. Emotional Awareness

Emotions provide information that helps people understand what is happening within themselves.

Fear may indicate that a person feels unsafe.

Anger may be connected with feeling violated or treated unfairly.

Loneliness may indicate a need for meaningful relationships.

Disappointment may show that something is personally important.

Emotional awareness does not mean rejecting emotions or preventing oneself from feeling them. It means recognizing an emotion, naming it, understanding its possible cause, observing how it affects the body and thoughts, and selecting an appropriate response.

For example, a student may feel angry because a friend has not responded to a message. Emotional awareness helps the student understand that:

"I am feeling upset."

This feeling is not the same as the conclusion:

"My friend does not value me."

Creating space between a feeling and an action helps prevent responses that may harm oneself or others.

Problems do not arise simply because people experience negative emotions. Problems may occur when people do not understand their emotions, suppress them until they accumulate, or allow them to determine all of their behaviour.

Using reason without listening to emotions is also not a balanced way of managing emotions. Emotions and reason should work together.

7. Emotional Healing and Recovery

Self-healing refers to providing basic care and emotional recovery when experiencing stress, disappointment, conflict, loneliness, or emotions that are difficult to manage.

It does not mean treating a psychiatric disorder. It also does not mean that students must solve every problem by themselves.

A basic approach may begin by temporarily stepping away from a situation, especially when emotions are too intense for appropriate communication or decision-making.

Students may then:

Breathe mindfully

Recognize their emotions

Write about their experiences

Speak to themselves compassionately

Adjust their environment

Care for their sleep and nutrition

Speak with someone they trust

Self-healing is not an escape from a problem. It helps the mind regain stability so that the person can return to the situation and manage it more appropriately.

However, students should seek help when their distress is severe, continues for a long period, or affects their sleep, eating, studies, relationships, daily functioning, or safety.

Support may be obtained from family members, friends, lecturers, university services, or relevant professionals.

Seeking help in these circumstances is an act of responsible self-care, not a sign of weakness.

8. Mindful and Balanced Decision-Making

Student life involves many decisions, including decisions about time, activities, group work, money, relationships, and future directions.

Good decision-making does not mean making the correct choice every time. It means making choices carefully and learning from the results.

This chapter presents a six-step decision-making process.

Step 1 Understand the Situation Clearly

Identify what is actually happening. Avoid making immediate judgments based on incomplete information.

Step 2 Separate Facts from Emotions

Acknowledge emotions, but do not allow them to become the entire conclusion.

Step 3 Consider More Than One Option

Avoid limiting oneself to only two extreme alternatives.

Step 4 Consider the Possible Consequences

Consider the effects on oneself and others, including physical health, studies, relationships, and responsibilities.

Step 5 Choose an Option Consistent with Personal Values

Select an option that is consistent with one's values, responsibilities, and well-being.

Step 6 Review the Results

Consider what worked, what should be improved, and how the experience can guide future decisions.

This process cannot guarantee that every decision will produce the best result. However, it helps students avoid making decisions based only on temporary emotions or pressure from other people.

9. Adapting to Change

Adaptation is the ability to adjust one's thoughts, actions, and ways of living within a new environment while maintaining personal values and a sense of identity.

Adaptation does not mean accepting every situation or changing oneself simply to gain the approval of others.

First-year students must adapt to new teaching and learning methods, friends, lecturers, group work, travel, dormitory life, and increased responsibility for daily living.

Adaptation may require time, experimentation, and several revisions to one's plans.

Students who adapt slowly have not necessarily failed. They may need to examine which part of the situation is difficult and what kind of support they require.

Students can strengthen their ability to adapt by accepting that unfamiliar feelings are normal, learning the rules and culture of a new environment, experimenting with different approaches, maintaining relationships with supportive people, and avoiding harsh self-criticism during periods of transition.

10. Managing Uncertainty in Life

Uncertainty is part of student life. It may involve academic results, the chosen field of study, friendships, relationships, finances, employment, and life after graduation.

Students do not need to have complete answers to every question before they begin living, learning, or developing themselves.

The ability to manage uncertainty consists of three important areas.

1. Thinking under Uncertainty

This means thinking rationally even when information is incomplete.

Students should avoid immediately assuming the worst. At the same time, they should not deceive themselves by pretending that no problem exists.

They should accept the situation and seek additional information.

2. Flexible Adaptation

This means revising plans when circumstances change or new information becomes available.

A plan that can be adjusted is not necessarily a failed plan. It may be a plan that responds appropriately to reality.

3. Emotional Management

Uncertainty may create fear, anxiety, or a feeling of losing control.

Emotional awareness helps a person continue thinking and making decisions even when they do not yet feel completely comfortable.

Students should gather information from real experiences, make decisions based on the information currently available, consult appropriate people, revise their plans when new information appears, and care for their emotions while outcomes remain unclear.

Some answers in life require time. They cannot be forced to appear immediately.

Key Understanding

Balanced well-being does not mean living without problems, stress, disappointment, or uncertainty. It means being able to live among these experiences with awareness, compassion, and responsibility.

Students with balanced well-being do not need to control everything. However, they can return to understanding themselves, caring for themselves, recognizing their emotions, and selecting appropriate responses.

Self-awareness and self-love form the foundation of caring for one’s life.

Self-care must appear in actual behaviour across the physical, mental and emotional, social, academic and responsibility, and wisdom dimensions.

Emotions should be treated as information rather than enemies.

Emotional healing helps the mind regain stability, while students must also recognize when they need help from others.

Decision-making, adaptation, and the management of uncertainty are areas in which all of these skills are applied in real life.

Students do not need to change everything at once. They may begin by observing themselves, making small behavioural changes, seeking help when necessary, and regularly reflecting on their lives.

Balanced well-being is a skill that must be learned, practised, and continually adjusted throughout life.