สรุปสาระสำคัญบทที่ 6

Summary of Key Ideas from Chapter 6

Designing Your Own Life for Balanced Well-Being

The translation below preserves the structure and meaning 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 6 connects the concepts from the previous chapters with practical action in real life. It aims to help first-year students understand that designing a life of balanced well-being does not mean creating a perfect life or controlling everything according to a fixed plan. Instead, it is a process of understanding oneself, examining one’s life honestly, identifying what needs care, making plans, experimenting with actions, monitoring the results, and making adjustments according to changing circumstances.

The process begins with an assessment of well-being in four dimensions: physical, mental and emotional, social, and wisdom. Students then analyse their strengths, areas for development, and relevant environmental factors. They use this information to set goals and create plans for seven days, thirty days, and one semester.

When students begin putting their plans into practice, they need to develop routines and manage their time, money, digital media use, relationships, and environment. They must also learn how to regain stability when life does not follow the plan.

Finally, a learning portfolio and continuous self-reflection help students recognize the development that results from applying what they have learned to their real lives.

1. Designing a Life of Balanced Well-Being Begins with Real Life

Life design does not begin with the question:

“What should a perfect life look like?”

It begins with the question:

“What is my life like at this moment?”

Some students may feel exhausted, stressed, unhappy, or unable to manage their studies. However, these feelings provide only general information.

Students need to examine whether their exhaustion is related to insufficient sleep, their class schedule, travelling, part-time work, financial difficulties, relationships,

group assignments, or family expectations. Without this deeper examination, the plan they create may not address the real problem.

For example, a student who feels unable to study may decide to spend more time reading every night. However, the actual cause of the difficulty may be staying awake late to use digital media and respond to group-work messages. Reading for even longer may therefore increase the student's exhaustion.

Assessing one's life before making a plan helps students address the correct issue without creating an additional burden.

Designing a life of balanced well-being therefore means planning from facts rather than from pressure, comparison with others, or an idealized image of life.

2. Assessing Well-Being Is Not Judging One's Personal Value

Personal well-being assessment means examining one's life systematically. It involves looking at the condition of the body and mind, relationships, studies, use of time and money, responsibilities, and the meaning a person gives to what they are doing.

The assessment helps students answer several important questions:

Which areas of my life are currently supporting me?

Which areas are becoming strained or vulnerable?

Which issue should receive attention first?

Which factors have contributed to my present situation?

Assessment scores should not be used to compare students, rank who is happier, or conclude that a person with a low score cannot manage their life.

A score represents only a picture of life during a particular period. It may change according to circumstances such as examinations, group-work problems, financial pressure, or uncertainty about one's field of study.

Appropriate self-assessment therefore requires both honesty and self-compassion. Honesty helps students see their lives as they actually are, while self-compassion prevents them from using the information to criticize or harm themselves.

3. The Four-Dimensional Balanced Well-Being Assessment

This chapter presents a twenty-item balanced well-being assessment for first-year students. It contains five items for each dimension and asks students to consider their lives during the previous two weeks.

The assessment covers four important dimensions.

Physical Dimension

The physical dimension includes:

Sleep

Nutrition
Physical movement
Taking breaks from studying or using screens
Recognizing signs of physical exhaustion

Mental and Emotional Dimension

The mental and emotional dimension includes:
Recognizing one's emotions
Having appropriate ways to rest emotionally
Encouraging oneself
Identifying possible ways of managing problems
Asking for help when a situation becomes too difficult to manage alone

Social Dimension

The social dimension includes:
Having someone to talk to
Communicating effectively in group work
Maintaining relationships with family members
Establishing personal boundaries
Knowing the sources of support available within the university

Wisdom Dimension

The wisdom dimension includes:
Recognizing the meaning of one's studies
Setting appropriate goals
Changing methods when a plan does not work
Connecting knowledge with real life
Reflecting on the values that guide personal decisions

Each dimension has a maximum score of twenty-five points.

The results should be interpreted separately for each dimension rather than through a single total score. The purpose is to understand each area of life clearly.

The interpretation identifies four possible levels:

1. A strength that should be maintained
2. An area with a reasonable foundation that can still be developed
3. An area that requires serious attention
4. A vulnerable area that should receive immediate care

A low score does not reduce a person's value. Similarly, a high score does not guarantee that the area will remain strong forever.

4. Analysing Strengths, Areas for Development, and Life Context

After completing the assessment, students should not focus only on areas with low scores. They should examine both their strengths and the areas that need further development.

Strengths

Strengths are behaviours, relationships, beliefs, skills, or resources that currently help a person continue with life.

Examples include:

Having one trusted friend

Receiving support from family

Being willing to ask for advice

Managing money responsibly

Continuing to attend classes despite feeling tired

Strengths do not need to be exceptional abilities. Even a small source of support can become an important foundation for a life plan.

Areas for Development

Areas for development are behaviours or dimensions of life that require additional care because they are beginning to affect health, studies, relationships, or one's feelings about life.

Examples include:

Regularly staying awake late

Using digital media excessively

Being unable to refuse unreasonable work

Spending money according to temporary emotions

Being afraid to ask for help

Students should not attempt to change everything at the same time. They should select one or two important issues that influence several areas of life.

For example, improving sleep may support physical health, emotional stability, concentration, and relationships at the same time.

Students must also analyse the factors connected with their difficulties. Problems do not result only from personal habits. They may also be related to travelling time, dormitory conditions, part-time work, expenses, family responsibilities, class schedules, group work, or the surrounding environment.

A student who works part-time and receives insufficient rest should not automatically be judged as someone who cannot manage time. The student needs support in designing study and rest arrangements that are realistic within their actual limitations.

5. Purposeful Life Planning

Life planning means using information from self-assessment to establish a direction and identify behaviours that can be put into practice.

It involves more than writing general wishes such as:

“I want to be happy.”

“I want to study better.”

“I want my life to be more balanced.”

A good balanced well-being goal should answer at least four questions:

1. Why is this goal important to my life?

2. Which assessment dimension is connected with this goal?

3. Is the goal appropriate for the time, energy, and resources I have?

4. What small and realistic behaviour can I begin with?

For example, the goal “I will sleep better” is not sufficiently clear.

It could be revised as follows:

“I will turn off phone notifications at 10:30 p.m. and go to bed before midnight on at least four nights each week.”

This goal identifies a behaviour, a specific time, and a frequency that can be monitored.

Life planning does not mean determining one’s future permanently. First-year students do not need to know the final answers concerning their careers or life directions.

They need plans that allow them to experiment, learn, and adapt mindfully.

6. The 5M Framework for Considering a Life Plan

This chapter presents the 5M Framework as a tool for thinking about one’s life and personal plans.

Meaning

Meaning involves asking:

What meaning does this goal or activity have in my life?

For example, improving sleep may mean more than going to bed earlier. It may support learning, emotional regulation, and the ability to participate fully in class.

Manage

Manage involves considering how to organize:

Time

Energy

Money

Relationships

The surrounding environment

A student who wants to review lessons regularly needs to identify a suitable time and place and decide how to reduce distractions.

Matter

Matter involves deciding what is most important.

Students do not need to improve every area at the same time. They should identify what requires attention first and what can wait.

Manuscript

Manuscript refers to the story a person tells about their life.

This story can be rewritten and adjusted. For example:

“I am a person who cannot manage time.”

may be revised as:

“My previous plan was not appropriate for my actual schedule.”

The revised story creates more opportunity for learning and change.

Mindful

Mindful means pausing to observe emotions, thoughts, and pressure before making a decision.

For example, before buying something online, a student may ask whether the purchase is truly necessary or whether it is an emotional response to stress from an assignment.

The 5M Framework makes life planning more than a list of tasks. It connects action with values, meaning, context, and self-awareness.

7. Seven-Day, Thirty-Day, and One-Semester Plans

This chapter presents three levels of planning to match different goals and periods of time.

Seven-Day Plan

A seven-day plan is used to experiment with a small behaviour.

Examples include:

Reducing phone use before bedtime

Walking during study breaks

Beginning to record daily expenses

Starting a conversation with a classmate

The main purpose is to discover whether the plan is appropriate for real life.

Thirty-Day Plan

A thirty-day plan is used to create continuity and identify obstacles that arise during actual practice.

Examples include:

Adjusting sleeping patterns

Reviewing lessons regularly

Reducing unnecessary spending

Practising personal boundaries in group work

Students should review their progress each week rather than waiting until the end of the month before making changes.

One-Semester Plan

A one-semester plan is used to monitor one or two longer-term goals.

Students may examine changes at several points:

At the beginning of the semester

Before and after the midterm period

Before final examinations

At the end of the semester

Possible goals include maintaining appropriate sleep, managing money, reviewing lessons, building relationships, or developing a support system within the university.

The three levels are connected. A seven-day plan begins the experiment, a thirty-day plan develops continuity, and a one-semester plan allows students to recognize long-term development.

8. Creating a Daily Lifestyle of Balanced Well-Being

A plan becomes meaningful only when it is applied in real life.

A lifestyle of balanced well-being develops through small routines that can be repeated. It does not result from one major attempt to change every part of life.

Students may begin by:

Setting sleeping and waking times that match their class schedules

Dividing large assignments into smaller tasks

Scheduling breaks from screens

Preparing a weekly budget

Organizing a study desk to reduce distractions

Setting specific times for group communication and work

Creating regular opportunities to contact family members

Finding places on campus where they can rest and regain stability

The environment plays an important role.

Determination alone may not be enough when a phone is constantly within reach, a dormitory is noisy, a desk is disorganized, or friends regularly continue conversations late at night.

Students should therefore design their environments so that desired behaviours become easier and behaviours that disturb their lives become more difficult.

Relationships are also part of a balanced lifestyle. Students need to practise communicating their responsibilities, asking for help, refusing requests politely, and setting boundaries when their workload becomes excessive.

Self-care does not mean separating oneself from other people. It means developing relationships that respect both oneself and those around them.

9. Regaining Balance When Life Does Not Follow the Plan

Real life cannot follow a plan perfectly every day.

Students may stay awake late, spend more than their budget, submit work late, use digital media excessively, or experience conflict with friends.

These events should not be treated as proof of personal failure. They should be understood as information showing that a plan or its conditions need adjustment.

Regaining balance begins by:

1. Pausing and observing what happened
2. Accepting the reality without attacking oneself
3. Analysing the cause
4. Choosing the most important issue to address first
5. Making the plan smaller and more appropriate
6. Trying again

For example, a student who cannot avoid using a phone for thirty minutes before bedtime may reduce the goal to ten minutes.

A student who cannot study effectively in the dormitory may move to the library.

A student who cannot exercise regularly alone may arrange to walk with a friend after class.

Regaining balance does not mean rigidly returning to the original plan. It means using information from mistakes to design a plan that is more consistent with real life.

When a problem is severe or persistent and affects sleep, eating, studying, relationships, daily functioning, or personal safety, students should seek support from trusted people, academic advisers, university services, or relevant professionals.

10. Mindful Emotional Healing

In this chapter, emotional healing means allowing the mind to rest, recover, and become ready to manage life again.

It does not mean creating temporary positive feelings while allowing problems to continue accumulating.

Listening to music, watching a series, reading, writing a journal, speaking with friends, or going for a walk may support emotional healing when these activities reduce tension, help students understand their emotions, and prepare them to return to their responsibilities.

However, the same activities may become forms of avoidance when they cause students to postpone work, stay awake late, overspend, avoid communication, or refuse to face problems that require attention.

After an emotional healing activity, students should ask themselves:

How did I feel before beginning this activity?

Did I choose it to rest, recover, or avoid a problem?

After the activity, am I more ready to care for my life?

Has any problem continued to accumulate?

Next time, should I use the same method, adjust it, or ask someone for help?

Appropriate emotional healing connects rest with returning to life. It should not lead a person to withdraw continuously from real responsibilities.

11. The Learning Portfolio and Self-Reflection

A learning portfolio is not simply a place to collect worksheets for submission at the end of the semester.

It provides evidence of a student's learning journey and personal development, beginning with life assessment, goal setting, behavioural experiments, and encounters with obstacles, and continuing through plan revision and the summary of learning.

The portfolio may include:

The four-dimensional balanced well-being assessment

An analysis of strengths and areas for development

A seven-day or thirty-day balanced well-being plan

A one-semester plan

Evidence of efforts to adjust one's life

Records of obstacles and plan revisions

Self-reflection records

An end-of-semester learning summary

Evidence does not always need to include personal photographs. It may consist of a monitoring table, calendar marks, sleep records, spending records, or short reflective notes.

The evidence should relate directly to the goal and should not violate the privacy of the student or other people.

Self-reflection helps students move beyond simply answering:

“Did I succeed or fail?”

Instead, they learn to explain:

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What was the result?

What should I change next?

The portfolio therefore emphasizes development and learning rather than judging students by one final result.

Key Understanding

Designing a life of balanced well-being does not mean creating a perfect daily schedule or producing equally high scores in every dimension.

It is a process of examining one’s life honestly and using that information to make thoughtful decisions.

Assessment helps students recognize strengths, areas for development, and relevant factors.

Goal setting transforms intentions into behaviours that can be practised.

Seven-day, thirty-day, and one-semester plans allow change to occur gradually.

Routines, environments, and relationships help the plan continue in real life.

Moving away from a plan is not failure. It provides information for revising the plan.

Emotional healing is valuable when it helps a person return to caring for life rather than allowing problems to accumulate.

Seeking help when a problem exceeds one’s ability to manage it is part of responsible self-care.

A learning portfolio helps students understand that balanced well-being does not develop only through reading or understanding ideas. It develops through a continuous cycle of:

assessment ⟶ planning ⟶ action ⟶ observation ⟶ reflection ⟶ adjustment

A life of balanced well-being is therefore not a life that never contains mistakes or periods of imbalance.

It is a life in which individuals can return to understanding themselves, care for what matters, use their available resources, ask for help when necessary, and design the next step in a way that is appropriate for their own circumstances.