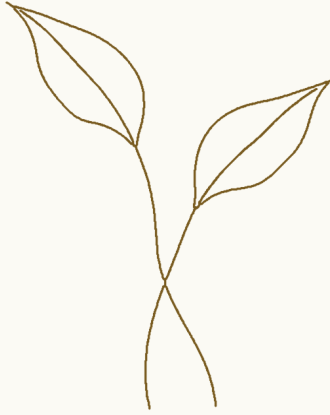




Beyond the Summit

*For the leader who has achieved so much,
yet still asks: "Is this it?"*



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The quiet question

You have done what you set out to do. Built a business. Earned the position. Provided for people you love. Become the person others turn to when the stakes are high.

From a distance, your life looks enviable. Up close, another truth may be emerging. You wake at four in the morning with your mind already at work. A milestone arrives, and the pleasure fades sooner than expected. You are present at the meeting, yet strangely absent at dinner. Somewhere beneath the success is a question you rarely voice: Is this it?



*Perhaps you have climbed the
wrong mountain brilliantly.*

That question deserves attention. It may be the beginning of a different kind of achievement: a life in which vitality, judgement, relationships and meaning grow alongside influence.

Incrocio is an Italian word for crossroads. Consider these pages a reserved conversation at yours. You can read them in your study, between meetings, while travelling, or wherever you find a little space to think. The invitation is to look honestly at what your success is costing, and what your next season could become.



*What would success
be worth if you were
fully present to enjoy it?*

1



When success stops feeling like arrival

The quiet cost of always being the dependable one

Picture a leader at the end of another productive day. Difficult decisions have been made. A problem has been solved. People are reassured. The diary for tomorrow is already full.

Now picture the less visible part of that same life: the exhausted mind at bedtime, the short temper with someone beloved, the restless search for the next deal or challenge. Even an evening off has become an opportunity to catch up.

For many executives, this is the success paradox. The discipline, ambition and stamina that made their achievements possible have also trained them to override the early signs of depletion. They know how to keep going. They have had less practice noticing when the price has become too high.

I recognise this pattern through years of psychiatric practice. It appears in founders, clinicians, senior professionals and leaders of every gender. The details differ, but the private question is often remarkably similar: “I have everything I thought I wanted. Why do I feel so far from myself?”

Achievement remains valuable. Influence can be a form of service, and wealth can create opportunity for generations. Yet even the finest walled garden can look impressive while its soil grows tired. More harvesting will never repair depleted roots.



The next achievement may be learning to tend the life you have built.



A question to carry forward: Which part of your life appears successful to everyone else, yet feels neglected to you?

2



The cost your body
is already counting

The warning signs often arrive quietly

Imagine a week of decisions that never quite ends: the board pack, a difficult conversation at home, a regulatory deadline, a flight delay, one more urgent message. Each event may be manageable. Together, without enough recovery, they create a steady state of alertness.

Our stress response can rise rapidly when needed. Trouble begins when it has too few opportunities to settle. Researchers call the cumulative wear of repeated adaptation “allostatic load”. In ordinary language, it is the cost of asking your system to remain ready for the next demand, day after day.¹

You may notice the signs before you know what to call them: lighter sleep, fatigue, headaches, unsettled digestion, poorer concentration or a shorter fuse. Prolonged stress can also contribute to cardiovascular and metabolic risk, although symptoms have many possible causes and deserve proper clinical evaluation.^{1,2}

One of the hardest admissions for a competent leader is that the body has limits. Professional success can sometimes conceal those limits, right up until an illness or a personal crisis brings them into view.



*When the leaves yellow, tend
the roots before the next season.*



Observe your own pattern this week. When do you feel energised? When do you reach for caffeine, alcohol or distraction to keep moving? What happens to your sleep after a day that demands everything? These are useful clues, rather than verdicts about your character.



Four gardens, one life

A practical way to see the whole picture

At Incrocio, we look at four connected aspects of a flourishing life. Think of them as parts of the same garden: the ground that supports you, the attention that directs you, the deeper purpose that gives growth meaning, and the relationships that receive its fruit.

Body

The soil

Restorative sleep,
nourishing food,
movement, breathing and
physical health.



Mind

The gardener's attention

Clear thinking, steadier
emotions, perspective and
deliberate decisions.



Inner life

The roots of purpose

Meaning, conscience, faith
or personal convictions,
values and stewardship.



Relationships

The fruit

Presence, friendship, family,
trust and the capacity
to repair.



These areas speak to one another. Poor sleep can make a kind conversation difficult. Unresolved conflict can disturb sleep. A loss of meaning can sap the energy needed to care for the body. The pattern is rarely solved by improving only one corner.

This is why Incrocio begins with understanding before prescribing a routine. Two leaders with similar fatigue may have very different stories. One needs clinical investigation; another needs to protect recovery time; a third may need to confront a life organised entirely around other people's expectations.



*A flourishing garden begins
with honest attention to what is
growing, and what is struggling.*

4



Body: create the conditions for vitality

Treat physical care as a foundation of leadership

The body carries you through every decision and every encounter. Caring for it gives the rest of life a firmer foundation.

Begin with sleep. Protect a consistent bedtime and a quieter final hour. Repeatedly sleeping too little can impair attention and judgement even when people feel they have adapted.³ If you snore heavily, wake unrefreshed despite enough time in bed, or have witnessed pauses in breathing, discuss possible sleep apnoea with your GP.

Eat in a way that sustains you. Regular, balanced meals, vegetables, fibre, whole foods and adequate protein are sensible starting points. Move in ways you genuinely enjoy: walking, swimming, cycling, tennis, resistance training. Consistency often matters more than intensity.

Give your nervous system moments to settle. A few minutes of slow, comfortable breathing can reduce the immediate sense of arousal for some people. Research on structured breathing practices, including cyclic sighing, suggests possible benefits for mood and respiratory rate.⁴

Alcohol may appear to switch off a racing mind, while quietly disrupting sleep and recovery. If drinking, stimulants or other substances have become your main means of coping, seek appropriate professional advice.



*Ask less of your reserves for a moment.
Ask what would replenish them.*



One commitment: choose a small, protected act of physical care that your diary has repeatedly displaced, and put it back into the coming week.

5



Mind: reclaim
your attention

A fast mind is not always a free mind

Your mind has probably been one of your greatest professional assets. It spots risk, anticipates difficulty and responds quickly. But when that same vigilance follows you into your evenings, holidays and sleep, it can begin to feel as though you are always on call to your own thoughts.

The aim is to recover the freedom to choose where your attention goes. Start with a quiet ten minutes each day. Notice the movement of thought; return gently to the present. Give one important conversation or task your full attention. Before responding under pressure, allow yourself a brief pause.

These practices can sound modest. Their value lies in repetition. Mindfulness-based approaches have shown benefits for symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression in clinical research, although outcomes differ between individuals.⁵

In my work as a psychiatrist, I have learned that many people who are exceptionally skilled at solving external problems find it difficult to sit with an unresolved feeling. Often the first useful change is simply to notice the feeling before trying to overpower it.



*Clarity begins when your attention
returns to your own hands.*



**This week, choose one conversation in which you
will listen without rehearsing your reply. Notice
what changes when the other person receives
your full presence.**

6



Inner life: what is it all for?

The question behind the 4 a.m. question

Perhaps the most important question arrives only after the obvious ones have been answered. You know how to earn, lead, build and provide. But who are you becoming through the way you live?

Inner life means the place where meaning, conscience, values, faith or personal conviction meet the choices of an ordinary day. You need no particular spiritual language to begin. You need the willingness to ask what matters when nobody is watching.

Success often starts with an understandable desire to establish oneself. Later, a more spacious question can emerge: What has been entrusted to me, and how well am I caring for it? My health, my influence, my money, my time and the people who depend on me all ask something of me.

The shift is from entitlement towards entrustment; from being the person in charge to becoming a thoughtful steward. It makes ambition more purposeful. The leader can still build great things, while becoming less possessed by the need to prove something.



*“I have been entrusted with much.
My task is to leave people and places
better for having been in my care.”*



Take five minutes to answer this privately: If your title disappeared tomorrow, which parts of you would remain? Which values do your nearest relationships experience, rather than simply hear you describe?

A meaningful life is expressed through repeated choices. The next chapter begins with one such choice.

7



Relationships: who
receives the best of you?

Success becomes richer when it can be shared

Leadership can be lonely. You may spend your day surrounded by people who want answers, approvals or reassurance. At home, those who love you may want something simpler: the experience of being with you, without competition from the next obligation.

The difficult truth is that affection and presence are different things. You can love your family deeply and still give them very little of your undivided attention. You can be widely admired and privately unknown.

Relational restoration usually begins in ordinary moments. A sincere apology without a defence. An evening protected from work. A conversation with your child in which the phone stays elsewhere. The courage to tell a close friend what has actually been going on.

Research has associated stronger social relationships with better long-term health outcomes, although the evidence does not make every individual relationship a treatment.⁶ The human point is simpler: a life becomes more liveable when we can be known as well as admired.

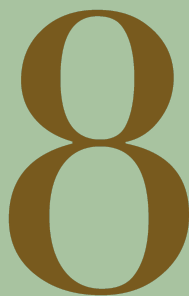
You will remember the deals and milestones. Those closest to you may remember whether you listened, whether you kept your word and whether your presence made them feel safe.



*What grows in the lives of
others because you were there?*



One invitation: reach out to someone important
this week. Offer attention rather than a solution.



The Sanctuary Spiral

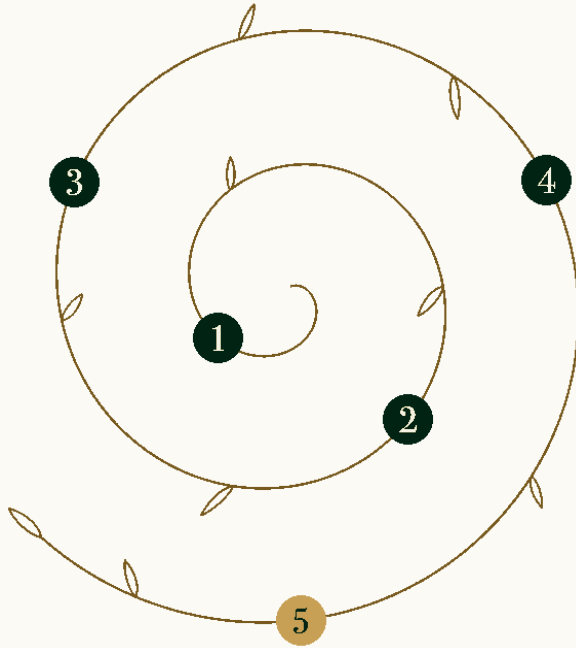
A clear sequence for a life that keeps growing

Growth rarely happens in a straight line. Each new season brings fresh pressures, priorities and questions. The Sanctuary Spiral offers a memorable sequence for meeting them with greater intention.

An Incrocio appraisal uses this sequence as a thoughtful starting point. Through a private, clinically informed conversation, we examine the pressures you carry, understand which concerns may call for medical attention, and identify priorities that fit your life rather than a generic ideal.



*Understanding first. Wise choices next.
A different way of living over time.*



Revisit, learn, grow

-
- 1 **Awakening.** Awakening is the moment you admit that something needs attention.
 - 2 **Awareness.** Awareness means examining the real condition of your body, mind, inner life and relationships.
 - 3 **Choices.** Choices turn insight into action.
 - 4 **Reality.** Reality asks what has actually changed.
 - 5 **Stewardship.** Stewardship is the posture you bring to the next season, knowing that growth requires continued care.
-



Your next chapter can begin here

A personal invitation from Dr William Egbuna



Perhaps you have seen yourself in these pages. In the early waking. The constant responsibility. The success that should feel richer than it does. The conversations deferred, the body pushed aside, the quiet sense that something important needs tending.

You have spent years making careful decisions for organisations, clients, colleagues and family. It is reasonable to bring that same care to your own life. You deserve a place where you can speak candidly, be taken seriously and explore what restoration would mean for you.

That is the purpose of the Incrocio appraisal. It begins with a discreet, in-depth assessment of your current circumstances across physical health, psychological wellbeing, inner life and relationships. Together, we identify the issues most worthy of attention, distinguish possible clinical needs from wider life choices, and develop a personal direction for the next season. The appraisal is a beginning, with any further recommendations discussed transparently.



*You have built a remarkable
life. Now give yourself
permission to live it more fully.*

If these pages have given words to a concern you have carried quietly, I invite you to enquire about a private Incrocio appraisal. A confidential conversation may be the first worthwhile decision you make entirely for yourself.



Explore Incrocio

incrociowellbeing.com

incrociosanctuary.com



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Selected sources

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2. Kivimäki et al. (2012), The Lancet.
3. Van Dongen et al. (2003), Sleep.
4. Balban et al. (2023), Cell Reports Medicine.
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6. Holt-Lunstad et al. (2010), PLOS Medicine.



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