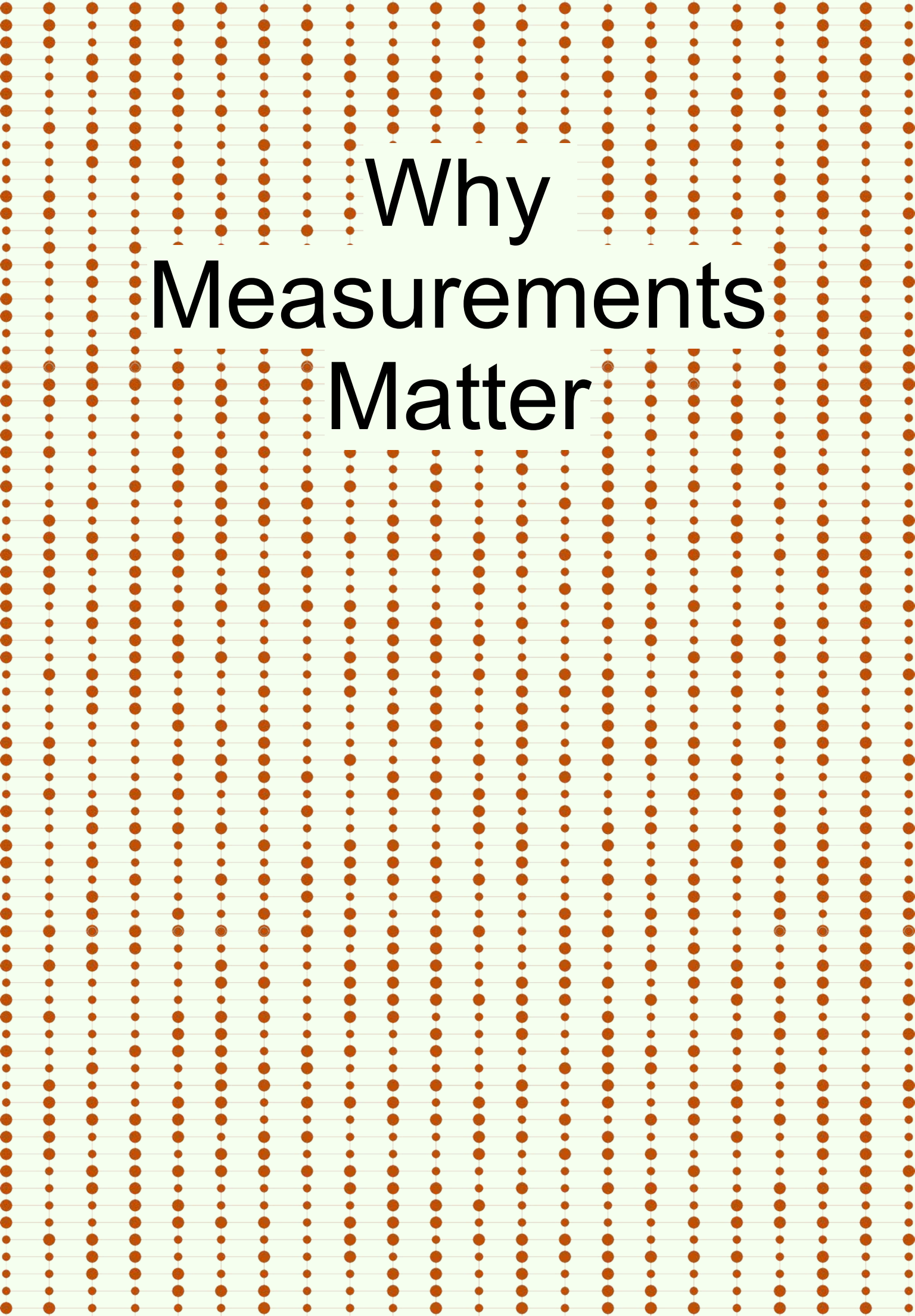




Happiness
Alliance



Why Measurements Matter

Do Measurements Matter?

How do you know if you had a good day or a bad day?

How do you know if you are healthy or unhealthy?

How do you decide if you are successful?

How does a nation decide if it is successful?



The Role of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the sum of all goods and services produced in a year (or other time period) measured in your currency.

GDP is used by almost every nation as a way to understand success. A healthy economy is supposed to mean a happy population and a prosperous country.

Up to a certain point, more money does make people happier.

Money cannot buy endless happiness. Other things bring happiness.



GDP Exercise Part One

Each person take turns reading a sentence of Bobby Kennedy's speech given in 1968 (slightly adapted for today). If it is just you, read each sentence aloud to yourself!

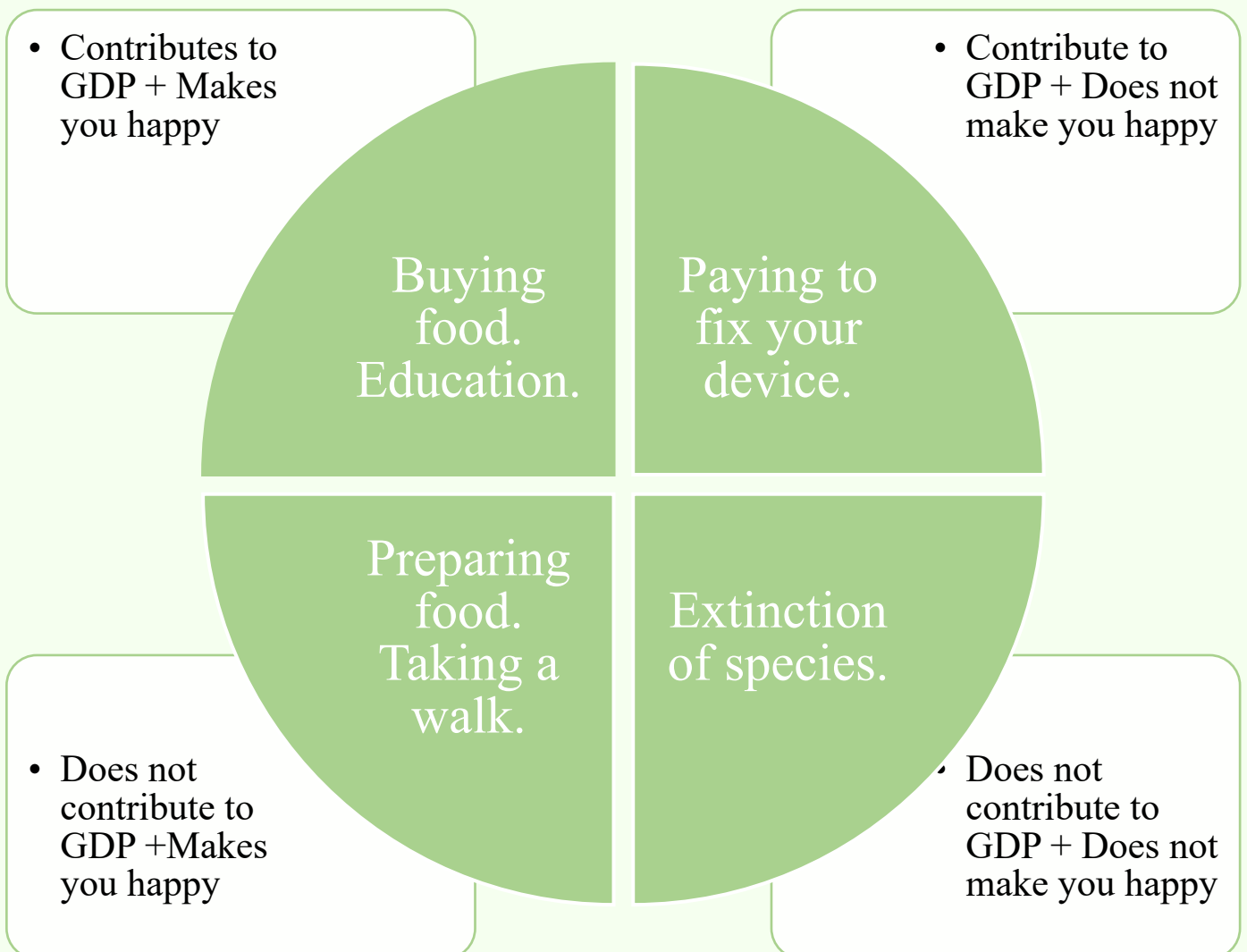
- Too much and for too long, we seemed to have surrendered personal excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things.
- Our Gross Domestic Product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage.
- It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them.
- It counts the destruction of the trees and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl.
- It counts chemical weapons and counts nuclear warheads and armored cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities.
- It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.
- Yet the gross domestic product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play.
- It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials.
- It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.
- And it can tell us everything about our country except why we are proud of our country.
- If this is true here at home, so it is true elsewhere in world.



GDP Exercise Part Two

Fold a sheet of paper into four sections. Label each with the questions below. Fill in each section with at least three items.

- What in your life contributes to GDP and makes you happy?
- What in your life contributes to GDP and does not make you happy?
- What in your life does not contribute to GDP and makes you happy?
- What in your life does not contribute to GDP and does not make you unhappy?



Do Measurements Matter?

Intuitively or Logically, we use measurements.

Measurements guide decisions.

Measurements help us determine if we are meeting our goals.



How Measurements Matter

Measurements and values operate in a feedback loop.

You measure what you value.

You value what you measure.

At a societal level, the dominant measurements of a system impact the values of the people in the system.

At any level, how success is measured impacts decisions people make and how people behave.



How Measurements Matter

Governments use GDP to measure their success in meeting their goals

- Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
- Liberty, equality, fraternity
- Security, justice, equality

The use of the measurement of GDP guides the government towards the goals of economic output and growth, which causes a shift in values among people towards financial wealth, prestige and physical appearance.

The use of happiness and wellbeing measurements shifts the goals of government to providing social safety nets which causes a shift in values among people towards caring about other people and the environment and prioritizing self-actualization over looks.



Measurement Discussion Questions Part One

What one or two things are most important to you in your life? In other words, what makes your life worth living?

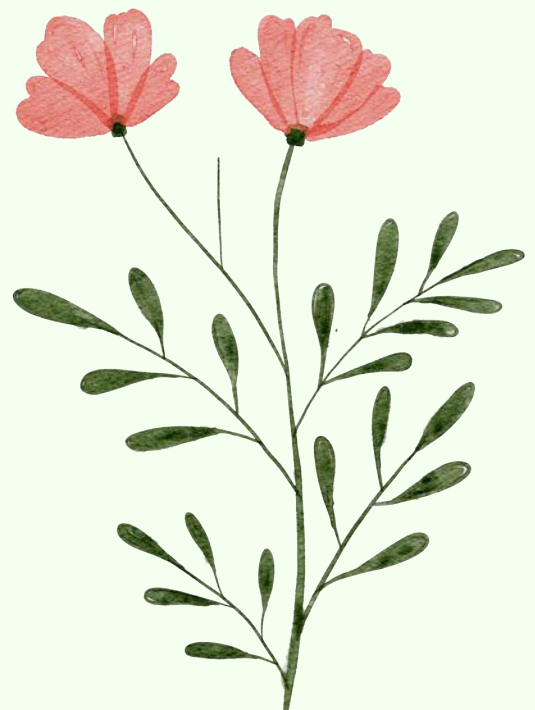
Why are these things important? Answer this question three times, going as deep as you can and getting to the essential truth of you.

How does what makes your life worth living reflect your values?

What are your values?

What are some ways you measure whether you are achieving your goals and living according to your values?

If you are not in a classroom, you can use these questions for reflection and writing prompts.



Measurement Discussion Questions Part Two

Now imagine that you are the mayor of your city or president of your country as you discuss the following questions.

What are your top three priorities for your city or country?

Name at least one goal that will help in meeting those priorities.

How will achieving the goal(s) impact your people? What will their lives be like?

What are some ways you measure whether you met your goal(s)?

What values are reflected by your priorities and goal(s) ?

If you are not in a classroom, you can use these questions for reflection and writing prompts.

