



self-care™

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## The Mirror

A simple look in the mirror with intention to really see will reveal to you how you view yourself, if you pay attention. This view may make you feel good, great, terrible, or unimpressed. Only you will know for sure what you think, but how you feel affects others. Both thinking and feeling are connected in this way. This is not a new idea, but I offer more.

I grew up learning that it was not ok to be proud of myself, that I was my heritage, my father, a product of certain circumstances and when treated well, deserving. When not, then also not. My psychology was no different to that of others, and sometimes I didn't like what I saw in the mirror and felt trapped. Through trial and error, and experience I changed.

How we feel about ourselves when we look in the mirror is a form of feedback. If we don't like the feedback, we can change the way we choose to look at ourselves and re-program. But if this conditioning is based on delusion, we will certainly become delusional through practice. It may be a harder path to follow but making real changes to support and genuinely love this person is possible with effort through intimate knowledge and effort led support.

Being positive was something I thought of along the lines of "fake it till you make it." I don't really like anything fake, so I let go of the delusion of positivity a long time ago. However, in 2005 I discovered a school of positive Aikido that taught positive to mean something different. Positive meant to move forward upon first indication of a threat and face things confidently with skills gained from practice. We had to practice hard and if the technique didn't work, repeat the training until it worked reliably. Here, positivity was acquired through repetitive practice. Over time, the level of threat and opponents increased, but the approach was the same. I suggest that you look at SELF-CARE this way.

Also, in Aikido, the idea of mirroring is used to influence the reaction of an opponent. By reading and interpreting the energy of a potential adversary, we can influence the way a situation will progress by taking responsibility for our posture, breathing and other signals of intentions. Self-control and mirroring energy toward others are subtle but powerful. Body language, tone of voice, eye contact, method of dress etc. are also ways we mirror our internal experience outward which has a corresponding effect. Feedback follows our ways.

The mirror provides feedback, but so does life in general. The way we approach work, relationships, health and the use of our resources is reflected back to us and only we know if this feedback agrees with our expectations. Life certainly is not fair, but can we say with absolute honesty that our actions do not influence what life is reflecting back at us? Reflect.

SELF-CARE is about using the feedback of life without judgment, opinion, ego or false identity. In using the tools that are outlined in these pages, your intuition will tell you that these are genuine methods that work. Discipline and consistency will reveal the extent to which you will benefit. This is all original content and has been proven to work effectively.

## Renewal Journal

During a typical day, an average person generates 70,000 thoughts. By any estimation, the required volume of practical, useful, relevant and constructive thoughts is actually a small fraction of this volume. Contrast this by examining the behavior of successful leaders that demonstrate an action orientation instead, with no time for wasteful overthinking. Why?

By reducing the actual volume of thoughts and raising the quality of thinking, a person releases mental energy and stress, and by taking control of thinking in general, an overall sense of control. Coupled with a deliberate use of time and effectively managing relationships, an individual find significance, meaning, originality and better quality of life.

Success or happiness it is said to be getting what we want and wanting what we get. The likelihood of achieving fulfillment as defined in this way is a function of managing the most important asset we possess, the ability to use our mental energy and apply effort in favor of our ideas. Taking ownership of the moment, day and overall quality of this life is up to us.

Managing life is first a matter of mental self-control, a skill that results from conditioning. This byproduct of effort yields more than success per se. In mastering ones thinking, habits and behaviors, one frees the mind to recognize the unique, interesting and new ideas in the moment. This orientation makes life interesting by renewing relationships and leveling up.

Conscious beings realize authenticity in themselves and create the new real as a habitual practice. In raising this personal standard, we similarly exercise discretion toward who we allow into our lives in terms of relationship. This is how to stay positive, feel enthusiastic, find originality and realize potential. Living in delusion and a false sense of identity is bad. Being fake is wrong. Allowing personal authenticity and a higher quality of relationships enables us to upgrade ourselves and with it, the quality of our lives. Reality is the qualifier.

Self-control requires following yourself initially. With this newfound awareness and peak state of mind, a person is transformed to a new level of maturity and strength, and as such, can also serve as a Leader, worthy of being followed. A higher degree of self-awareness leads to refreshing ones' self and being capable of greater responsibility. Presence of mind is key.

As unique individuals, we naturally possess a unique perspective. To recognize a point of view that is uniquely different and to share this with others is to recognize new possibilities from a shared vision of the future. This is how we create value and renew the world at large. The challenge is to address our deep insecurities. A mental trap based on delusion and fear.

Facing reality and recognizing the value from what is possible now, given circumstance and resources, requires presence of mind. Working with the energy surrounding us and adapting our capabilities to the needs of the moment require getting out of our heads and doing. When the correct orientation of mind and action align toward reality, we can renew.

We do this primarily by concentrating our thoughts using hand, eye and mind coordination. In other words, journaling. Presence of mind paired with coordination of action needs reflection and capturing what are essential ideas. Constructing an intelligent narrative then requires that we tie observations into some format for guiding action. This is planning.

Conditioning on a daily basis with journaling is only a 10-minute process. Over time, this practice raises your personal awareness on what is essential to you and areas worthy of action and improvement. It also enables you to capture the essential experiences that allow you to see how you have changed over time and recognize important experiences involved.

The steps involved in journaling are fairly simple and straightforward. As a discipline, it requires focus and a consistent practice daily. There is always something unique and different about every day we live. These are unusual events as they relate to our habits, interactions with others or events that happen unexpectedly. Capture these new insights.

Reflecting purely from a functional standpoint, was the day productive? If not, why not? As a matter of cause and effect, there are bound to be reasons. Again, reflect on both the extremes of what went well and what did not in terms of significance on the day as a whole. The objective is to identify the new knowledge and awareness of your reality. Be mindful.

In addition to the skills of observation, also experiment to validate the effects of deliberate changes applied to the day. Waking early for instance, installing a new routine with new practices are certain to have corresponding effects. The journal provides a way to record the experiences and differences that then occur in terms of efficiency, emotional feedback etc.

Interactions with others and the resulting effects of our actions, attitudes and beliefs are also certain to yield insights and new understandings. The journal acts as a private oasis of reality as it occurs within your field of thinking and awareness. Over time, and as you reflect further, the depth of your understanding your reality and vividness of details will increase.

Formal education provides a foundation of language and manipulation of information, but it does not teach people how to gain meaning and significance from experiences. This is because most people are not willing to make the effort. The small percentage of people that do, rule the world. The training to do this is usually self-taught, but some gain it from mentors. In my particular case, I had to learn this as a matter of keeping my job and health.

Following are detailed instructions on how you can do this without buying a prefabricated planner. Practicing how to journal with a blank notebook will require more initiative and more discipline and so this should be the starting point. Over time your needs will customize a format this is personalized to your lifestyle and so it's best to do this freehand.

On a new page, mark the date above and start by running through a recap of the day prior starting from the morning. For parts of the day that are structured, such as morning routines and workouts, identify how you performed and any reason for differences. As the day progresses in your recall, identify those things that created or released tension of mind.

Much of what is reflected back to us by the world is redundant. What is often cited as news in the mainstream media for instance, is actually not new. In the same way, taking a monotonous view of our life will reveal a monotonous life. Instead, seek to identify what is real and thus worthy of reflecting and new, essentially, worthy of effort towards progress.

Recognizing the role that tension plays in our lives is critical toward understanding our emotions, problems, and growth opportunities. Once a certain day's recall is complete and a full inventory of events have been captured for reference, any new insights and ideas should be captured. The habit of doing this allows for pattern recognition and personal development. It is also important to adopt daily habits that moderate tension like exercise.

Following are the practical steps to follow in your daily practice of journaling. While the actual journaling process is only 10 minutes, use 30 minutes to allocate time later for other practices such as SELF-CARE problem solving as a way to enhance the overall journaling practice. Leaders are readers AND writers because they dictate their life as an active process.

1. Dedicate at least 30 minutes every morning for personal time to recall and reflect
2. Grab a bound notebook that you can write into and save as an archive for posterity
3. Dedicate a new page to each day and note the date for later retrieval and reference
4. Think back to the day prior, identify unusual things worthy of reflection and write
5. Identify decisions, assumptions, beliefs or ideas as unusual and noteworthy to you
6. Write simple statements on the consequences or experiences related to the unusual
7. Then write any new insights, lessons, understandings or awareness from the event
8. Next, write out what you are grateful for in your life to reinforce the positive aspects
9. Make a list of actions or practices to improve your ways of handling life going forward
10. Create an index at the front of the journal with a headline to associate with each day

In following these steps, the practice of daily journaling conditions the practitioner to pay attention to what is essential, not redundant. In recognizing what is new and being present in the moment you will limit negative or unproductive thoughts. Looking for the interesting and insightful experiences, you will change your outlook to a productive viewpoint that leads to effort. Changing attitudes occur with this shift in psychological orientation. These daily practices also contribute to improving confidence and optimism.

Finally, in knowing one's self as revealed from universal feedback highlighted from unusual events, we can learn something from every day and recall events. We also gain an understanding and identify the significance of our efforts. The habit of journaling will sharpen our awareness in the same way that the practice of photography sharpens viewing.

Consider excessive or redundant thinking as a form of distraction. By hosting a high volume of distraction, we waste time, energy, relationships and opportunities. The antidote is to shift the focus toward personal priorities and work on the life we live in this moment to focus toward our situation and then avoid the distractions as wasteful ways of non-living.

Recording daily experience on cave walls was an important part of the development for our species. Throughout time, great thinkers and social engineers used writing to reflect the new ideas that lead to our evolution. The practice of journaling is an essential part of capturing the memorable times of our lives that deserve attention. It is also our true legacy.

As a personal anecdote, I have been using a journal for 17 years. More recently, I needed to take stock of my personal growth and development based on a repeating pattern from 10 years ago. In going back to review, I saw aspects of my thinking that had changed, and some that had not. The journals I kept on hand brought me to understanding self-limiting beliefs.

Holding onto negative ideas, fixating stubbornly on outdated, poorly concluded ideas keeps us from being more self-aware. Improving and becoming better requires self-renewal. It starts with reserving 30 minutes every day to practice SELF-CARE and journal your efforts.

## Time Management

Renewal Journaling is the habit of reflecting on new insights, experiences and perhaps ideas. To stay focused throughout the day and use time wisely, there is an additional discipline required. You may consider this to be unnecessary, or even undesirable as more work. However, without this practice you will likely be losing 20 – 33% of prime time daily.

Instead, putting a structure in place to follow daily will ensure 100% of your obligations are kept and as a result, others will both trust and respect you. This is how relationships are maintained. Furthermore, it will free up at least 1 hour per day for you. In this additional hour, you can acquire new skills or learn something new to increase personal market value. The other advantage to using this approach is dedicating the time for building relationships.

The additional time required to practice the following is negligible, meaning you do this in small increments of a few minutes throughout the day. By keeping this journal handy and stored away, it becomes an important asset to you in staying on top of your commitments.

Practice staying focused throughout the day by following the guidelines during prime time:

At the start of the day:

1. Use a Heading to mark the workday including a time for the start of the day
2. create a summary table and list all your activities that carry over from the day before
3. Under each activity, list all of the work steps required to check off effort completion
4. Prioritize each work step according to a time urgency, meaning sequence A, B, C etc.

Throughout record actionable details from interactions with others that require follow up:

5. Once you start your day with calls, meetings, emails etc., timestamp and record all of these events and note decisions, follow up activity and open questions to close

6. Mark any follow up activity with a symbol in the margin so that you can finish them
7. Check off all of the activities you complete throughout the day and keep moving
8. Identify with a heading when you are working on solving problems that require calculations etc. This is important reference for later review to re-check the work

At the end of the day:

9. At the end of the workday, identify any insights or ideas that make the day special
10. Make a note at the front of the journal with some unique identifier for the day/date

On the next working day, repeat the same steps above, but now add the new items from step #6 that surfaced from interactions during the day that need to be added to the summary table. When the next days' work is planned, re-prioritize and pick up from before.

It is important to have all of the work laid out in front of you and clear from a priority standpoint. As people lean on you to do more work, having a clear sense of what your current workload allows, and priorities enable you to set expectations. If a re-order of work or effort is required, or if work needs to be delegated, you can still keep track of what is due.

Credibility and reputation are determined by several things. Your capacity as a person, as well as your ability to manage expectations. By staying on top of the work that is assigned and accepted, trust is established. Respect is given for being able to deliver consistently on promises given. By being clear on priorities and changes to workload, Leadership is assured.

## Priorities: Applying the Theory of Constraints

In my last professional role as a Director of Operational Excellence for the world's leading software company, I was assigned a responsibility for delivering to what was considered the market-leading customer experience feedback scores as equivalent to "excellent service." This was measured in terms of effective resolution of customer inquiries and their ratings.

There are a number of existing frameworks to guide and manage quality in terms of tolerance and stability using statistical calculations for process improvement. However, the problem I had to solve for was measuring performance initially where there was no process per se, only a result of customer scores. So, in essence, I had to invent and measure.

As a starting point, I took a different approach to what ordinarily professionals in quality control would use. Instead of taking a bottom up approach of time and motion studies to analyze a process for inefficiencies, failure possibilities and precision, I asked the question, why weren't all customer inquiries 100% perfect in the first place? Then worked backwards.

The theory of constraints was something I read years prior in a book called "The Goal" by Eliyahu Goldratt. It was an interesting perspective on using priorities to solve for problems. In a similar way, I looked at all of the reasons for why we could not address customer



requests in a timely manner which were within our control. If we could address competency, staffing, a sense of urgency and coordination, performance would be excellent. Of course, this required a routine method of feedback and guidance for the team.

The client recognized the fact that we had limitations on what we could or couldn't do by way of their policies and authorizations. So, the first step was to separate the measurement according to what we could control. What we could not control were permissions for system access and business policies in place with the customer. Interactions were up to us.

Now that we had a clear sense of responsibility, it was a question of what process we could put in place that was repeatable to ensure we consistently performed according to the expectations of the customers. In order to do this, we insisted that the sample size to calculate the scores had to be large enough so that every customer could provide feedback.

Analyzing the reasons for why we could not perform perfectly every time using the data behind the previous months of interactions revealed certain types of interactions that were more problematic than others. By addressing the root cause of these problem areas from most challenging down to the least, we could prioritize efforts of management accordingly.

In a similar way, recognizing why our lives aren't excellent in terms of physical health, mental state, relationships, financial well-being and any other measurable result is amenable to analysis. If we address the ideas of competency, urgency, available time and coordination, we could also solve for root cause issues. Working according to priority is key.

## Values

One of the most underrated ideas as it relates to relationships, personal development and success in general is the role of personal values. Behind all of our decisions, indecisions, emotional states and motivations are in fact values, yet most seldom give these a second thought. From a SELF-CARE standpoint, values are the underlying influence behind effort.

For the sake of argument, if one does not make an effort, it is likely because the object of that effort is not valued. This can be true for personal growth, a relationship or an object of reward. Leaving aside belief as the other possible reason for lack of action, values govern a choice of effort or non-effort. Given a belief that effort could yield results, effort is valued.

The challengers to conscious effort then, are both belief and values. Of the two, values are primary, and beliefs are secondary. This is because without value, belief is irrelevant. To say that you believe in something but do not value it, means you are not likely to make effort. Values develop as a result of experience. Values, then, are a form of personal programming.

As a form of programming, if one chooses to accomplish a task but finds their programming insufficient to address the effort required, their personal values need to be examined.

Procrastination as the typical reason for inaction is largely due to a lack of urgency or fear of consequences. If distractions and an inability to focus are at fault, values need to change.

The best place to start is to take an inventory of existing values. The way to go about this is to look at daily practices in terms of where time is voluntarily spent. Values are not what we want them to be, but what they actually are. Waking up early, putting forth the effort to train hard and increase skill demonstrates the values of discipline for self-improvement.

From a SELF-CARE standpoint, listing personal values opens the way to evaluating how these values are expressed implicitly towards the self, and outwardly towards the relationships and the world outside the individual. This distinction identifies where there are imbalances in how values are practiced internally vs. externally. These are imbalances.

To practice this evaluation, make a list of your values by looking at the last productive day where you believe you were at your best. From the start of the day, identify those qualities of your personality that contributed to the success of that day. Try the following example:

SELF-Score	Value	CARE-Score
	Punctuality	
	Fitness	
	Organizational Skills	
	Persuasion	
	Communication	
	Commitment	
	Follow Through	
	Trust/Respect	
	Integrity	

It is recommended that scoring on a scale of 1 – 10 be applied for each of the values. This review is not a daily practice unless that is your process for uncovering personal values over time. To be aware of where personal values have been compromised is a meaningful starting point. It is also suggested to return to this list to see what has changed, added etc.

Once there is a serious gap uncovered between what is practiced towards the self vs. what is expressed outwardly, an individual can choose to rectify this gap or be guilty of being hypocritical, depending on the value. Honesty, or compassion for example are often cited as qualities that distinguish strong leaders. Symmetry is both an internal and external state.

Belief as mentioned is only significant in terms of value and once these are established, it is meaningful to explore the role beliefs have in effecting action. To value change for instance, belief then comes into play from the standpoint of which course to pursue to make change a reality. As an example, when politicians run for office, the platform is belief.

Belief in one's self as a person starts with interpretation of experience. Self-esteem is a summary of personal value of the self. The lifelong experiences of an individual reinforce values through attitudes and beliefs which are the response to life feedback. As a person observes their real life, beliefs and attitudes will change for the new interpretation reality.

On the last point, when an individual decides to change the course of their life by adopting new habits, responsibilities or commitments, the ability to fulfill these obligations will depend on the strength of their belief in the ways that are adopted to actualize the desired result. Intense effort can be applied and sustained with feedback loops reflecting progress.

Journals facilitate this feedback on progress towards and self-esteem through an honest appraisal of the day and the efforts applied. A forecast is usually accurate only for the day ahead. The further out one looks, the more likely the forecast will vary from the actual results. Adopting the renewal journal and the time management system builds self-esteem.

In summary, we are not who we think we are. If we actually invest time by using the tools described, we will discover and define who we really are through practice and this reveals our nature. The values we carry with us are subject to change depending on what our experience reveals. Change the values, change habits and the lifestyle, and life will change.

### In Praise of Stoicism

In studying stoic philosophers, we find a great solace because the wisdom they gained reminds us that whether one is born exceptional or not, adversity and trials fall on everyone. Life is unfair in different ways, and challenges come to all Leaders. We need to reflect on our own experience, and this requires an understanding of how we went wrong.

The single cause behind all disasters is an unassailing trust of those that don't deserve to be trusted. This is deeply cynical, and thus the beginning of all wisdom. In honesty, a person must question themselves also as to whether they should be guided by their own opinions.

There is a degree of reflection and honesty that comes from contemplating the results of losses in life including betrayals and personal failures. How one chose to use their time, the nature of relationships, accepting cause and effect reality and intention toward right effort.

It's hard to argue against the stoics because their work comes from personal experience and while they may not have been scientists, the wisdom of their knowledge endures through time because of universal truths. Technology and the arts may evolve, but stoicism endures.

Stoicism in particular is important to SELF-CARE because of its central difference to typical self-help ideology. The importance is in omission. The “-“symbol links both the SELF and the CARE, but also means to omit three things in life as part of the personal development process. The deliberate elimination of ignorance, arrogance and wishful thinking is crucial.

Ignorance enables poor decision making because it does not factor consequence into the choice. Arrogance is the acceptance of personal opinion as fact, including judgement without knowledge. Wishful thinking combines ignorance and arrogance but also wastes time for the person that indulges this habit. Wishful thinking also enables unworthy trust.

As we observe our daily lives, we need to be aware of where ignorance played its part in our daily struggles and acquire knowledge. Where we have been arrogant or guilty of treating our personal opinions and prejudices as superior to reality, we need to acquire humility and knowledge. Where wishful thinking caused us disappointment and loss, we must wake up.

## Renewal Mindset

Renewal journaling is a means by which thinking can be evaluated and refined on a daily basis. Building a life can be haphazard, unoriginal, inconsistent, cliché or an imitation based design, or it can be a reflection of your character, personality, personal desire and imagination. Since you have learned of the possibility of a structured life, there is a choice.

To develop your blueprint, it is important to first accept the mindset that you will build something that actually serves the life you choose to live and that you are willing to put forth the necessary effort. Learning from your experience is key. Otherwise, it is not your life. Most people lead false lives because they do not examine their ways. This is Regretful.

In adopting the habit of daily reflection as described in the section above as renewal journaling, a person is confronted with the realization that the life they lead it is either consistent or inconsistent with the person they realize themselves to be. The relationship developed with the self and the experiences from conscious decisions guide your lifestyle.

The blueprint is a vision of how you choose to organize your daily effort and what this effort is geared toward in terms of an outcome. Making a directional choice (vision) will enable you to examine your values and make choices in terms of relationships, priorities and personal development. Faith and pattern recognition will aid in breakthroughs to success.

## Vision

Often people speak of vision in terms of using imagination towards potential future state for a specific person, situation, place or thing. In keeping with the idea of avoiding wishful thinking as a combination of ignorance (avoiding realities of actual potential) and arrogance (delusions of grandeur steeped in ego and pride), instead we need practical vision.

Given actual experience, a practical vision is an objective view of reality in terms possibility from the standpoint of what is probable, possible, likely, unlikely or miraculous. A choice is involved. Whatever terms are used, there are only 5 possible outcomes to be explored towards organizing effort. Choosing from these possibilities is vision toward self-guidance.

For the sake of argument, consider the vision for someone who has been released from prison, from their point of view. Depending on the character of the person and their emotional state, there are only a handful of actual possibilities to guide towards the future:

1. **Give up** - Live on the charity of society at large without giving back
2. **Be the Same** - Return to prison for yet another offense at some point
3. **Concede** - Join the working world in whatever capacity is available
4. **Double down** - Become a more sophisticated criminal and hope no re-capture
5. **Aim higher** - Re-invent ones-self into an entrepreneur or success story

Are there other possibilities besides these? Vision in this example would enable our recently released citizen to contemplate their actions. Vision is not necessarily positive. Without making a decision, by default there are only a handful of outcomes from a practical or cause and effect point of view. In terms of effort, vision is a guideline. Vision is proactive.

Once a person has decided on the various possibilities and decided on their vision, effort needs to be planned and applied to make that vision reality. Leaders do this mental exercise before making important decisions and have peace of mind because they act on the best knowledge they have available. Communicating a vision as described can also be effective at consensus building. By discussing various scenarios and possibilities, a leader makes the decision-making process objective and clears the way for teamwork at the outset of work.

### Dealing with Setbacks

Despite all of the effort to plan and to live well, the fact remains that we cannot control what happens to us all of the time. There are setbacks and experiences everyone deals with that could be characterized as tragic and unfortunate and most likely, unexpected. Untimely death of loved ones, personal illness, financial setbacks, divorce or market losses.

Consider the general class of the structure to be built using this blueprint to be a reflection of your self-esteem. High self-esteem individuals with high standards will not leave their quality of life to chance. It is impossible to build a desirable and stable life spontaneously. Class A or Class 5 structures are both desirable and endure because they are designed to be.

You have no doubt heard that it's not what happens to us, but rather how we deal with what happens that define or reveal who we really are. There is a truth to this statement, with the caveat that you are not under the influence of some additional stress to your mental state beyond the unexpected situation at hand. What are these additional stresses? Obligations.

### Practical Design Considerations

As a priority, before we design a blueprint and start building, we need to take stock of our resources and obligations or financial resources such as debt, cashflow and lifestyle

expenditure. These inflows and outflows are tied to the people that voluntarily select a certain lifestyle. If there were an unforeseen disaster, how long could you sustain *that* life?

When we take on the obligation with others in the form of spousal/family support, debt or cash flow commitments, we are in fact betting that we can fulfill the expectations toward these commitments regardless of circumstances. With this in mind, we need to anticipate the minimal reserves required to sustain our commitments if the unforeseen were to occur.

Being prepared for the unexpected releases anxiety and fear of the unknown. A good rule is to save enough to continue living the same way with a 12-month financial reserve to ensure quality of life. Knowing monthly expenditure and the terms of agreements are required. This includes an understanding of the cost of capital, meaning the interest rates that apply.

With conscious planning and effort, you can save 12 months of financial reserve as the floor of the blueprint to be used towards recovery. To ensure that this happens as fast as possible, you need to reduce the discretionary spending through budgeting and planning expenditure. This also means participation on the part of the people for whom you provide.

## Relationships

Quality of relationships is based on a combination of both trust and respect. Both of these attributes are symbiotic and can only be proved when relationships are tested by unexpected situations. The number 1 reason for the disintegration of marriages is financial hardship. The fallout of these situations can be devastating so it is crucial to anticipate risk.

The depth and strength of a foundation determines how tall or large a structure can be built above. As a starting point, it is essential to determine the load bearing capability from your self-esteem and preparation to endure the weight of dependence on you as an in a worst-case scenario. Your relationships are sustained by effective planning and organizing ahead.

Your personal way of expressing Leadership is based on your personality and is the style by which you are recognized, remembered and appreciated. Nevertheless, it is still essential to be realistic and organized for the unexpected. Planning and organizing while managing your commitments is necessary. Leaders are more than readers; they are the writers of fate.

Self-Esteem, or your relationship to self, is also based upon respect and trust. By following your own daily habits and staying true to your vision ensures stability and in doing so, earns you at least 1 follower; the most important one in fact: yourself. This is the basis of all of your relationships because you cannot offer trust and respect to others, lacking it yourself.

In summary, the blueprint you develop is an expression of the vision for the life that you intend to live, supported by your Leadership, quality of relationships and personal development. Your resulting lifestyle is only as stable as the ability to withstand the unexpected life events that occur, including the relationships that you build along the way.

## The Blueprint

Traditional methods of self-help are based upon motivation, goal setting and social skills. I personally started my journey along these lines at the age of 16 with a reading of “Think and Grow Rich.” Still a valid and excellent read, however this content pre-supposes a person is already authentic and self-aware. The challenge today is that distractions have misguided us away from being authentic in the first place. Without this grounding we can be deluded.

I can honestly say that I had met all of the career goals that were set in motion in 1997 before I graduated school. For the first half of my life, I wanted to acquire the skills and experiences of the top leaders I personally looked up to in terms of salesmanship, problem solving and vision achievement. Yet, achieving goals did not make me a successful person.

I consistently met sales targets in one of the most challenging fields of professional sales. Completed all of the projects I managed on time. Mastered solution architecture and management consulting. Took the world’s leader in software to new heights in operational performance and delivered their highest goals in customer experience. But yet I still failed.

In order to achieve the goals, I sacrificed relationships, personal fulfillment, health and peace of mind. As a result, I became defensive and closed off any reflection on my thinking. I evaluated everything except myself. My track record and achievements were impressive but empty of meaning. As a result, I took on risks and learned the hard way about attitude.

The renewal journal was the innovation that I needed to think every day about the nature of gratitude for what I *did* have in my life when everything came crashing down. Family, Faith and Friends provided the support I needed, while the power of the renewal came from within. I had to recover first the real identity behind all of the deluded, distracted false me.

Falseness of being and the errors of our way are evident in the application of force. Manipulation is also a subtle use of force to direct attention, priorities and free will towards wish fulfillment. I used manipulation and force upon myself to achieve goals and in the process, controlled others towards the same realization. For my efforts, I lost the real point.

The real point is to live as if every day as welcome and appreciated. The significance of genuine connection with others brings quality to our lives unattainable by ourselves alone. The importance of time is to recognize that without taking action and adding meaning to our waking lives, we will regret later the missed opportunities. Timing can’t be controlled.

Living intently every day and identifying the ignorance, limiting the arrogance and being present of mind so that wishful thinking is replaced by time management and focus, enable us to eliminate or at least reduce the use of distractions caused by entertainment and mind control marketing. independence in thinking ultimately liberate us to live the life we want.

First, we must determine our purpose. This is the single function we can best perform without having to force ourselves to be motivated or to concentrate. This way is not work. Work requires force, effort is expending energy towards an outcome. Ultimately, we don't control anything except ourselves and so effort is the natural limit of our abilities. When we expend effort with the right intention and position this effort effectively, the result is natural and does not force us to be someone we are not, nor push others against their will.

To organize and follow the blueprint, it is important to adopt the mindset as outlined above. Next, having the discipline to see every day to its fullest conclusion is an essential. Discipline on a daily basis fulfills the blueprint in terms of achieving the purpose that one decides. For instance, I decide that SELF-CARE is THE leading personal development platform. My purpose is to realize its existence online as a successful technology solution. My blueprint will be to develop the platform, promote it and ensure its effective use by you.

In order to achieve this vision, I must have a detailed idea of what is to be created, put forth the effort effectively, adjust as necessary and do all of this efficiently and effectively. Needless to say, I need to manage relationships with all concerned in the achievement of the vision and acquire the necessary skills, experience or expertise to deliver the intended.

In a similar way, you the reader have a purpose that if adopted will align your enthusiasm, focus and effort towards an outcome that continues to carry you forward. The effort that you will expend happens daily and you must be the Leader to manage your efforts and also be the follower that fulfills without force, the activities and steps required to completion.

SELF-CARE is the framework that organizes your objectives into daily practices and if followed ensures that discipline and alignment of efforts are effectively followed. Using this framework daily for 16 years, I was able to achieve the goals that I had set for myself. You can adopt SELF-CARE and achieve your purpose and goals efficiently without anxiety.

The three components of the blueprint for SELF-CARE practice are: 1) Time Management, 2) Relationship Management and 3) Personal Development. The daily practice of journaling and using the SELF-CARE framework for evaluating relationships enable the personal development from the ground up. Goal setting and realization is a product of this.

The structure to the blueprint is carried out daily in 3 stages: 1) Collection, 2) Synthesis and 3) Reflection. In observing daily renewal journal practice, we start with reflection from the day prior. Throughout the day, we collect information and follow up actions as part of the time management system and then synthesize ideas and effort to maintain relationships.

Within the 3 structure of the blueprint, the task of the practitioner is to observe the three stages of motivation: 1) Ethos: The facts, 2) Pathos: The decision based on vision in light of the facts and 3) Logos: The justification for the path decided upon. Altogether, the blueprint for the SELF-CARE is a 9-layer model for daily living, a conscious practice for life.



This may sound like a lot of work, but the fact of the matter is that we cannot live a life worth living without exercising conscious effort and according to a framework that we have consciously chosen to follow. In doing so, we gain wisdom through truths revealed in our mistakes, limiting beliefs, relationship failures and other falsehoods that steal our life.

The method of instructions provided in the examples to follow observe all of the layers of the blueprint, so there is no need to re-invent the framework, only to follow with discipline on a daily basis all of the instructions provided. Once the habits are developed, the practice can be modified to the preference of the individual with innovations specific to their needs.

By adopting the time management system as the foundation of the SELF-CARE system, one is empowered to live according to their own priorities. In using the SELF-CARE framework to evaluate relationships, one gains perspective over the nature of their relationships and thus managing the quality of life. In reflecting, the practitioner will grow.

The alternative to what is being proposed here is to live according to conventional wisdom instead, with the hope perhaps of finding fulfillment, realization of personal potential or self-actualization and with it, the self-expression to have lived a life to its fullest without regret. Ask yourself, do you know any such person? Most people live with wishful thinking.

Leaders may master conventional skills, roles and functions, but their thinking goes beyond. By pushing personal boundaries, assuming greater risks and facing the consequences, they do what conventional wisdom teaches against, taking chances and doing things differently. SELF-CARE is a system to replicate this without unnecessary loss.

More importantly than avoiding loss or playing not to lose, the advantage from applying SELF-CARE framework is the confidence gained from within. We are often pointed in the direction of “within” as if it were some mysterious force. The reality is that there is the real person whom we would be if all pretense, fear, affectation and falseness of being were gone.

Imagine the power of living according to the real aspirations, motivations, personality and ideals of the person whom we are within, the identity that we assume to adapt into the world. Over time, the real person is lost, and a false personality begins to operate as if it were us. When we compromise to the point of marginalizing this person, we sold our soul.

In the early stages of development, there is a period of learning and conditioning to learn the rules and conventions of society. Education, manners, skills, knowledge and maturity don't automatically descend upon us. The issue instead is the inner game, or the lack of the teaching about the ways to go beyond the formal training. The inner game is about the self.

Often times, Leadership will rise to an occasion where there is great uncertainty and a need for guidance. This can be practically anyone, but what differentiates this person from others is the degree of strength this person has in the face of fear, loss and painful consequence. Courage is the quality that enables this person to do what others cannot do.

## Faith

The concept of Faith and as Belief are synonymous when it comes to how people ordinarily use the terms. Where Faith is different from belief is in the effort applied towards something uncertain, especially outcome. Usually, Faith is spoken of in the context of religious practice. Faith has also been cited to empower class struggle e.g. “Keep the Faith.”

The distinction between Belief and Faith come down to the origin of the effort behind the practice. Where no risk is involved and an action makes sense, the effort is applied as part of belief. But when risk is involved and the effort is not certain to yield an outcome, and the person makes an effort anyway, this is Faith. Belief is from mind. Faith is beyond the mind.

Imagine the possibility of people everywhere only making an effort when personal gain is involved. Where no gain on a personal level is expected, the only reason for making an effort would be to reassure ones’ self of superiority at the expense of a situation or person. In the former case, we have opportunistic people. In the latter scenario, egotistical people.

It is in fact courageous to be more than what society, cause and effect and logic would reason for us to be. Faith seeks a greater good beyond the selfish motives of the mind alone. Without the motivation to seek beyond the self, our species would not evolve beyond the realm of sophisticated animals motivated by pleasure, territorial stakes and breeding rights.

Faith in a higher power, a higher good, greater purpose, a noble mission, a higher calling and the virtues that uplift a human being also raise the emotional satisfaction of achieving more than what selfish motives can ever allow. This is also cynical, in that emotional fulfillment is still at the heart of effort. What then is the highest good? Truth and certainty.

To achieve certainty and with it, emotional peace and lasting fulfillment, we need to arrive at truth. Much in the same way that respect and trust are inextricably tied together to ensure a relationship can be genuine and beneficial, truth and certainty are also linked together in a way that without one the other does not exist. Truth without certainty is void.

We must apply effort until we recognize the truth about ourselves and achieve certainty as to who we really are, as revealed outside of limited mind. Otherwise, we are operating on opinion, and not fact. Through the feedback and experiences of the universe in response to our actions, we achieve certainty and with it, an acceptance of ourselves. Results are truth.

Faith is what enables us to pursue the highest good we can imagine. Our mind alone cannot bring about the highest good. We can reason and apply logic, but to do so in the confines of our mind cannot reveal truth and provide certainty. Faith is the irrational pursuit of virtue. We must at some point exercise faith when the opportunity to rise above our limits is offered to us and we need to do something we have never done before. SELF-CARE provides the means to handle the tension and fear that accompany the courageous adoption of Faith. Using the system of these questions, we decide on efforts that pull us through uncertainty.

## Boundaries

Empathy without boundaries it is said, is self-destructive. To pursue the higher good or doing the right thing without a thought as to the limits of ones' capacity or handling conflicting priorities in a responsible way paves the way to undue stress and suffering. While we may be guided by a higher aim, others may not be, or worse, can be opportunistic.

As outlined in the section on Vision, there are at any given point in time, a handful of possibilities from the point of view of the actor (the one that makes the effort). Before venturing onto the path of opportunity purely on the basis of what is desired as an outcome or for how we view ourselves in terms of our self-worth. Boundaries are self-imposed limits.

Nevertheless, we cannot make decisions on the basis of convenience. To do so is to become complacent. Instead, it is better to think in terms of how we can do our absolute best at what we have committed to on tasks and upon given commitments. To pile on additional work and jeopardize the quality of our output and degrade relationships is poor Leadership.

Time management is an essential skill to master towards establishing boundaries. By setting priorities and working according to a structure where expectations are managed, and productivity is handled consciously means that the standards set for commitments is high. Boundaries for making additional commitments then preserve your respect and trust.

By raising personal standards through the habitual practice of SELF-CARE, which entails time management, relationship management and personal development, boundaries are a way of maintaining self-esteem. Living with high standards and quality relationships is a matter of discretion. We should not allow any destructive attitudes or behavior towards us.

Feedback can be negative and should be when we fail to live up to the expectations we set. In these situations, criticism is valid and should be factored into personal development as valuable lessons. To see beyond the attitude from an angry customer or relationship is a test of emotional strength and those with high self-esteem are capable of accepting these faults.

Similarly, we need to respect and trust our own boundaries for high standards when we are wronged by others. There is no need to create any additional destructive impact. It is wiser to limit losses and to move on under the best terms possible, even if this means cutting ties completely. Setting boundaries and living according to these limits is a Leadership quality.

On the last point, it is important to recognize the values and vision others have for themselves and consider the nature of our relationships in terms of compatibility. When there are significant differences, we need to establish boundaries to preserve a healthy outlook or suffer unnecessary rancor in trying to reconcile opposing opinions to no real end.

## Personal Development Led by Purpose

There are no criminal laws against being idle and ignoring our abilities. However, on a personal level there is undeniable tension from disappointment and frustration when there is a lack of expression. In addition to opportunity loss, the world of Leadership bemoans the fact that citizens, communities, employees, students and other capable people fail to give.

What is then the answer? Personal Development, whether it is self-motivated or guided by an experienced and trustworthy teacher, needs to be personalized to the individual and converted into effort. To ignore this reality is to then simply hope that inspirational personalities will motivate people to discover and contribute their talents for greater good.

Hope is meaningful, but it isn't a strategy. We can rest on hope only after we have done our absolute best given the vision we have chosen and upon exercising faith. Sometimes we may also have to compromise boundaries when it comes to dealing with cultural resistance from people that do not support our ideas and react negatively. Faith is greater than hope.

Personal development is carried out this way. Initially, a person recognizes their talents and seeks to create or apply these towards an opportunity. There are personal limitations and internal struggles to overcome. First, there is the consideration for vision and possibilities. Then there is consistent practice that require discipline and effort to develop with training.

Faith enables one to apply efforts when logic and emotions work against the motivation to continue by placing emphasis on artificial boundaries. Our values and personal commitments then pull us through to overcome what in reality is fear that holds us back. The common purpose is ultimate emotional fulfillment that only comes from life purpose.

The mindset is by far the most difficult challenge to overcome. Often individuals refuse to change their ways and pursue a different course until they hit rock bottom and are then forced to let go of control. A wakeup call to prompt such a change is usually not a welcome one. It is better to practice SELF-CARE daily to review and improve yourself with an effort.

In daily practice of time management, self-care assessments on relationships and personal development that attend to known limits in our productivity and conflicts, personal development then becomes a personalized path to self-improvement. Patterns reveal this.

## Pattern Recognition

Realizing patterns gives us the power to break cycles or repeat them. Patterns occur because as creatures of habit, we subconsciously repeat behaviors. To break free, we need to think and behave in a different manner. To attract and repeat a cycle, we need to consciously examine how a situation was setup and then repeat the same behaviors and effort to approximate the desired results. Life is not a game with referees and judges. So, to do this correctly, it is up to us to use tools to both observe and record details of daily events.

Studying how we have handled past situations that repeat can also indicate how much we have changed from the last time. When patterns present themselves, look inward to ask what attitude or behavior brought a repeat of the situation, or how did attitude attract this situation back again. This question is not metaphysical. People are predictable when viewed from the practical standpoint of marketing, scientific research and intelligence circles. To recognize the pattern of our own thinking and own our effort consciously make it possible to rise above the level of the existence that we currently occupy. Think from a detached point of view to see the situation from a purely cause and effect standpoint to rise above it.

Patterns reveal that we are not as random as perhaps we think. This can be reassuring or troubling. In the first case, positive or desirable patterns indicate skills, talents and the ability to attract circumstances subconsciously. Developing this capacity will bring us more. In the latter case, the same applies. To break this pattern, we need to find the tension.

Moving anything, including ourselves involves tension. While this term usually implies a negative meaning associated with mental stress, tension is neither positive nor negative. We cannot for instance, stand up without tensing the muscles of our core and legs to pull us up from a seated position. Tension is also used to motivate personal effort and cooperation from others. Without tension, the world does not respond to our expectations.

The challenge is that time does not allow us the freedom to repeat patterns forever. At some point, time runs out and if we do not learn from these patterns, we are forced to live with the results of situations outside of our control. It is best to see the nature of the pattern and to constantly grow. Personal development based on pattern recognition is working through this tension to our personal advantage. Without tension, self-help is wasteful. We need a personal reason to justify effort and meaning from the results we seek.

The conclusion from this argument is that tension can be useful. Pattern recognition is the proof that the world, and we, are not random. There is a real set of rules and laws in effect whether or not we choose to accept it. Since time is valuable and opportunities with people to address negative situations are up to us to handle in a responsible way, we must then use tension to our advantage. The best way to do this is to act as a detached third person would.

Being stuck in a vicious cycle of negative experience with another person or people is wasteful. There is also damage that happens to us physiologically and psychologically. None of this is necessary. When it gets really bad, an authority figure is usually called in to change the dynamic. In order to function, this person cannot be emotionally consumed by the people affected or the circumstances of the last event. Instead, this person, must observe, identify patterns and responsibilities as well commitments that are enforceable under law.

When a confrontation is handled in a constructive way, the results can be uplifting. There will be at least be peace or potentially better outcomes in favor of all. It makes sense to establish a vision for the desired results and then to act in accordance with the agreed vision. Whether a person accepts this more mature outlook, Leadership is the requirement.

## SELF-CARE

The first time I heard the term SELF-CARE was in 2006 when I developed the framework for a practical problem-solving approach. Now I hear the term daily from various sources. There's even a song about it from the late Mac Miller. The meaning as it used can mean to personally administer therapy such as a day spa visit, psychological/spiritual healing, or to approach the self with kindness. The closest explanation to our usage is in a [Forbes article](#).

When I invented my version of SELF-CARE, it was a framework inspired to help me change the course of a relationship with another business executive. I noticed a pattern in how things repeated in my life when I let anger and resentment get the better of me. That is the likely outcome that would have occurred with this person, who had better political cover.

Instead of butting heads and losing out, I reasoned to myself that there had to be a structured way to handle the way forward with this person. It was my first executive role and I expected more from myself than the past patterns of behavior allowed. I came up with a structure that started with focus and concluded with efforts I could follow. It had to work.

Success with this approach expanded my use to evaluating myself in terms of a relationship. I wasn't enlightened before to realize that managing myself required self-parenting. At some point, we need to get over what we did not receive and take responsibility for setting boundaries and ensuring discipline to take personal care. With this approach, I was able to specify personal growth, raise self-worth and handle health, career, family stress and travel.

Beginning with the detached point of view that life is providing us as feedback, and ask yourself the following questions with presence of mind (without distraction or prejudice):

### INTERNAL EXPERIENCE (SELF)

1. **Sense:** What is the most important or persistent subject on my mind?
2. **Experience:** What is my emotional experience in words when I sense this topic?
3. **Life-Force:** Does my energy, vitality, enthusiasm rise or fall with this thinking?
4. **Faith:** What is my vision for this situation? What is my decision on those paths?

### EXTERNAL EXPRESSION (CARE)

5. **Courage:** What fear do I need to overcome and what are the risks I have to face?
6. **Appreciation:** How can I create value for myself and others from this situation?
7. **Respect:** What are the rules to follow so I am not ignorant, arrogant or wishful?
8. **Effort:** What are then the actions I need to take and the order to fulfill a vision?

Using this guideline, you can evaluate each of the priorities that occupy your mind and take action. The SELF-CARE outline with the renewal journal, and the time management system cohesively support your highest aspirations, if used faithfully. The power of this methodology is in the cohesive way it works. Your power is also apparent in cohesive effort.

## Reflection

To reflect outward what is inwardly desired as confidence, strength, integrity and Leadership takes continual effort. It first requires making the desired attributes true so that belief can then be firmly established in us, so we are then capable of Faith and Courageous effort. Consider the journal, the time management system and the SELF-CARE framework as a three-way mirror, where each reflect a different aspect of you back to yourself in truth.

I disagree with the famous quote that the only thing to fear is fear itself. As a First-hand witness and according to knowledgeable people, regret in life is a very real experience. If we are fortunate enough to live a long life, the final stages allow us to reflect upon how we lived. If life is lost abruptly or unexpectedly, the significance of our life depends on how our life was reflected in other people. Inevitably, those people that matter to you are the ones that cared. In either case, it's the real people, the courageous and loving people that matter.

When we reflect our own brand of Courage, Appreciation, Respect and make effort, this is our legacy. We need to wake up to the realization that life is not something to passively view as it passes by. We are a product of the efforts of the old world before us so to contribute the talents, energy and the resources provided to us is an unstated expectation.

I discovered my purpose relatively early in life. As a preschooler, I still remember delivering a graduation opening address at the [Hull House](#) in Chicago. This was a place where children of immigrants were given creative and pre-kindergarten teachings to support early growth and development while their parents struggled with assimilation and a livelihood. How fortunate I was to discover my talent, be nurtured and encouraged in this way. I am grateful.

Becoming a public speaker, an inspirational guide or any other form of Leader, in my mind, requires a credible body of experience and knowledge. Otherwise, I would merely entertain. In my first professional role, an experienced colleague told me to throw myself at every challenging project that came my way and to learn how not to do things. Another mentor told me to take chances and discover what I was made of. I followed this faithfully.

As I reflect on the 20 years that followed these advice, the third guideline that shaped my life was quoted by the late [Jim Rohn](#), who in turn quoted [Earl Shoaff](#) in saying that one had to work harder on themselves than they do on their job. My ability to work hard on myself and succeed at making a living for the decades that followed was in using this SELF-CARE.

We live in a time where technological innovation is approaching its next phase of evolution where AI and Augmented Reality will challenge perceptions of reality and value of creative intelligence. My purpose in sharing this content with you is to reflect authentic teachings as used in an analog mode, and to position the platform of SELF-CARE to its equivalent in a Digital format. In doing so, the experience, talents and knowledge given to me will see its fullest potential. My aim is that future Leaders are influenced by this information. Thank you for investing the time in reading this eBook. Please visit [SELF-CARE.com](#) for more info.