



Change Without Pain, Life Without Struggle™

The Life Owners' Guide to Living Your Dreams!

Dear Fellow Life Owner,

I just got off the phone with one of our Circle members who had set up an *Ambition Ignition*™ coaching session with me.

This young man had been working on his Six Master Keys, but was having a problem choosing a definite primary purpose. He had many things that he “sort of” wanted, but not anything really specific. He also said he tended to get interested in things, and then lose interest in them after a while.

Well, as it happens, this month's theme for “Life Without Struggle” is...

Living On Purpose!

But it's kind of hard to live your life on purpose, if you don't *have* a purpose to begin with.

And if you don't have one, you're *definitely* not alone. Most people don't have any idea what their purpose is.

So this month, we're going to look at all the ways people manage **not** to find their purpose, and look at what you can do to choose and create (not find!) yours.

Last, but not least, I'll share some tips with you about actually *living* your purpose. (As it turns out, this is the easy part!)

Life On A Roller Coaster

So I asked the young man I was working with what sorts of things he thought he wanted, and why he lost interest in them.



*If you don't know where
you're going, it doesn't
matter which way you go!*

And as it turns out, he started losing interest right around the time he found out how much work was involved in making them happen.

And I know exactly how he felt, because I used to have this problem myself. The worst part is, a person who's having this problem will usually criticize themselves for being “lazy” and feel bad about it!

And yet, a person in this situation will actually work very hard, as long as it is to...

Avoid something worse!

They will work very hard to get things done on time... as long as somebody else will be unhappy with them.

They will study very hard to pass the class... as long as they are being graded.

They will, in general, do almost anything to avoid a preventable disaster... as long as it's right on their doorstep.

They will even attempt an exercise program or engage in other attempts to change... until the change actually starts working!

Does this sound like you?

This problem may seem very complex and difficult to fix, and I myself struggled with it for many, many years... even though I knew exactly what the problem was!

In his books, Robert Fritz describes this mode of living as the “Reactive-Responsive Orientation”, which is a fancy way of saying that people in this mind-set react to their circumstances rather than **choosing how they want things to be**.

As a result, they will only work to change things, so long as there is still a *reason* to change. And those reasons go away, as soon as the person makes any progress. So then they stop trying, and the reasons eventually come back!

Fritz describes this process as one of remaining “within the area of tolerable conflict”. In other words, when circumstances become intolerable, we start trying to change them, and when they become tolerable again, we stop.

Unfortunately, Fritz also noted that it isn't possible for a person who's in this mode to get out of it by treating it as a problem to be solved! If you're in this “orientation” towards life, and you decide it's intolerable, you'll only work on changing your attitude until circumstances become tolerable again.

And for quite a few years of my life...

That's Exactly What Happened!

What Fritz *didn't* write about is how people get into this way of thinking to begin with. If he had, he might have discovered a better way to get people **out** of it!

But what I have personally found, is that people don't start out this way. Children don't ordinarily start out by avoiding conflict and discomfort.

Instead, they go after anything and everything they want... with a passion!

And even when they suffer setbacks, they usually don't stay upset for very long. They get up, brush themselves off, and go after something new... or even the **same** thing.

But some people, after too many failures and not enough success... after being told one too many times that they'll never amount to anything... after trying hard and being disappointed one time too many...

They Just Give Up

Some kids get hurt and decide it's just not worth it any more. They decide not to risk telling anybody what they want and getting teased or put down. They decide not to bother trying to compete, because they "always lose". They decide that they will never be the favorite, so they might as well not try.

And from then on, they will be reactive-responsive. Or in plain English... **losers**.

Now, I don't use that word to be judgmental in the least. Chances are, if you have this problem, you *already* call yourself that — or maybe something worse! — in your darkest moments. My intention isn't to pick on you, but instead to show you I truly understand the problem, and to prove to you I've not only *been* where you are, I also know how to get **out** of that place!



Once you decide you can't win, you stop trying... unless, that is, you get rid of the feeling of losing, and of being a "loser".

Finding The Way Out

While you're in the reactive-responsive orientation, it is *impossible* for you to have a *true* purpose in life, because your **actual** purpose in life is to avoid conflict! Since you believe you can never actually win, there is no point in trying. What you do *instead*, is try to avoid **loss**.

You lay low. You conserve your resources. You don't do something unless you *have* to. And you sure as heck won't do anything that resembles work, just to get something you **want**.

You already tried that, and it **hurt**!

And in the process of making this decision as a child, you split off a part of yourself — the part that actually *wants* things. This part became isolated and abandoned, as the “rest of you” grew up. So the things you might still want deep down, may seem trivial and childish even to you.

Besides, thinking about those things just makes you uncomfortable. Those are just dreams, right? You're an adult now — you “know better”, don't you?

The Way Out Is The Way Through

It might sound like I'm going to say that you should face what you want, and go where you're uncomfortable. Fight through the things that are stopping you, blah blah blah.

But that wouldn't work, because that's precisely your problem in the first place: not wanting to go where things are uncomfortable!

To the extent that I could make you temporarily **more** uncomfortable staying where you currently are, I could certainly get you to move in the right direction, for a while. But that only goes so far, and at some point your abstract discomfort with the ups and downs of your life will be replaced by the very real discomforts involved in moving towards your dreams.

So, scaring you into changing is right out.

No, the thing that you need to learn, if you want to get out of the constant see-sawing of your emotions, the pain of goals set (but not met!) and the gnawing empty sense that you really *were* meant to **do something** with your life, is...

How To Love Your Life — And Yourself!

The opposite of moving away from discomfort, is moving towards things that you love. You can't get out of a negative

mindset by *disliking* it - you can only **move to a positive mindset by liking it.**

When you try this, however, you'll discover that the first thing that happens is that you feel bad about what you want!

The Problem-Oriented Mind-Set

In his book, *The Path of Least Resistance* (available at <http://dirtsimple.org/books/>), Robert Fritz writes:

“A person in the reactive-responsive orientation is in a kind of maze. The circumstances are the walls. The person’s life consists of negotiating through the maze. Some people have found safety in traveling the same route, and some are consistently surprised when confronted with a new dead end, but either way, there is always a limitation of choice, often between the lesser of two evils.”

To get out of this maze, we have to be able to see our lives from a new point of view: not in terms of what is holding us back, but in terms of what we actually want, regardless of whether it seems like it’s really possible.

Fritz also quotes Carl Jung:

“All the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble.... They can never be solved, but only out-grown.... Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient’s horizon, and through this broadening of his or her outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge.”

In my own work helping people, I’ve seen this phenomenon repeatedly. A woman who had not cleaned her house in years, struggled endlessly with trying to get the problem resolved, until she chose to envision her ideal day (see page 15). A few days later, she moved into an apartment and started living again. The “problem” of the uncleared house no longer mattered! (Today, she’s selling the old house, and buying a new one.)

Another man struggled with on-the-job procrastination and tried to figure out how to overcome it... until he thought about what he really wanted in life, and moved to a new city and a job he loves. The “problem” of procrastination no longer had any hold on him.

So don’t fight your problems. It is your very **focus** on them that makes them problems in the first place! Instead, **imagine a better world**. In other words, one where the problem *no longer exists*. Then work to bring that vision into reality.

When you start to think about what you **really** want, underneath all the things you've been telling yourself you **should** want, it may cause some pain at first.

It's sort of like when your arm or leg “falls asleep” due to having its blood circulation cut off. You don't notice the pain when the circulation goes — only when the blood starts flowing again.

But just like with your restored circulation, the pain of being reunited with your **true** desires is really a sign of...

Healing and Recovery

At first you'll think that you can't have what you **really** want. Sort of like a child mourning a lost pet, when his or her parents suggest getting a *new* dog or cat or goldfish to replace old Fluffy!

In your heart, you will say that what you *really* want is gone for good, and there is no way you can ever have it again. The past is gone forever, and whatever opportunity or passion you once had has gone with it.

But the truth is, the part of you that loved someone or some thing is not dead, and no part of us is ever truly made for only one thing or person in this lifetime. You *will* love again, but only if you can re-join your separated self.

And when I worked with that young man today, I asked him to think about the last goal he lost interest in, after at first being very enthusiastic about the idea. And I asked him to tell me at precisely what point he had lost interest in it.

And he told me that it he had found out how much work and time it was really going to take to achieve. So I told him to think right now about how much work and time it would take, and to really contemplate actually doing it. And I asked him,

“How Do You Feel?”

And as he began to focus on the feelings in his body, I began to take him through the steps of reconnecting with the part of him that didn't want to spend all that time and effort on his goal.

I asked him to ask his feelings, what it was that they wanted for him.

(You see, even the parts of us that are sad or mad or afraid, have positive desires we can move towards. It may not seem like it, but they do!)

And he told me that this feeling wanted him to have free time, so he could do other things like enjoy himself and socialize.

So I told him to ask the feeling what having free time would do for him... what would he **feel**, if he had as much free time as he wanted?

“Alive”, he replied.

And what would you feel if you were able to be as alive as you wanted?

“I would be free!”

I'm not going to go into all the details here of the rest of the process that I went through with this young man, as they are something I taught during the “Time For What Matters” workshop on March 24th. (The recording will be available for download by Full and Associate members soon.)

In that workshop, I explained how parts of ourselves become deceived — learning to place barriers between ourselves and what we want. As we grow up, we begin to believe we have to **earn** pleasant states like being happy, or alive, or free.

But this isn't really the case. These states are *already* a part of us, and we can only *really* know our purpose, as seen **through the light of such states!**

After all, if you aren't “free”, how can you **freely choose**? If you aren't feeling “alive”, how can you experience really living?

You Can't!

So what I showed this young man how to do, was to experience the feelings of being “free” and “alive” without having to **do** anything.

And then, how to reunite this divided part of himself, that wanted to avoid any work or discomfort, with the whole of himself.

So that it — and he — could be truly free.

Finally, I asked him to think about the goal he abandoned, and asked him how he felt about the time and work now.



When you're living in a problem-solving mindset, life is a constant series of ups and downs, as you respond to the “problems” that keep coming back as soon as you lose your motivation to “solve” them.

“I feel now like I actually **could** do it, but I'm not interested in the goal any more.”

And the rest of his goals?

He scanned the list he had prepared before his session. But it took him only a moment to see that only two of these were still of interest to him.

From his new perspective, it was instantly clear that the rest of his goals had in fact been “should's” and fears, disguising themselves as things he really wanted.

But the two he still wanted, he **really** wanted. And he now felt entirely ready to tackle them...

Hard Work and All!

So here are the important lessons you should take from all of this so far:

- If your outlook on life is fundamentally about avoiding (or even “solving”) problems, your life will tend to oscillate between long slides into chaos and brief periods of ascent toward something better.
- If you're in this problem-oriented mindset, you can't get out of it by treating it as a problem to be solved — you must **love** your way out of it, by seeking what it is you **truly** desire.
- In the problem-oriented mindset, your own goals are *always* suspect! What you think is a goal may really be an attempt to solve a problem. For example, do you want to lose weight because you like the way you'll look, or because you **don't** like the way you look now? If it's the latter, **you will never succeed**, because as soon as you start to look better, you'll lose your motivation to change!
- The feelings you think are stopping you from accomplishing something, are actually the gateway to your healing. Even the parts of you that are **avoiding** pain and problems, also have something they **seek and love**. You must get past the thing that's being avoided, to reach the feeling of what you love.

So, that pretty much sums up the most common way that people manage not to have any purpose in life. A purpose is something you **move towards**, not something you run away from.

But most of us spend most of our lives running away from problems, and not *towards* a dream.

So How Do You Build A Dream?

First off, just forget the idea that you have to “find” or “discover”, or “figure out” your purpose in life.

Because the first rule of things that matter in our lives is this: nothing **has to** matter.

What matters to you may be completely trivial to someone else, and vice versa.

So watch out when you find yourself thinking that something “should” matter to you, or when you think that something you

“Wide” Thinking vs. “Deep” Thinking

There are two ways you can think about being “purposeful”.

The first, and more common interpretation of living and working “on purpose”, is that you are actively — perhaps passionately — engaged in the present moment with the aim of achieving something **now**.

This kind of engagement is what I like to call being “deep”. One is deeply involved in **this** moment, and **only** this moment.

But there is a second way to look at being “purposeful”, and that is what I refer to as being “wide”.

When you are engaged in “wide” thinking, you take a step back from your immediate circumstances to look at the big picture. Instead of passionate devotion to a single point of focus, you spread your attention out in time, space, and balance.

Instead of just looking at whether you’re accomplishing the goal, for example, you look at whether your actions are leading to fulfillment and renewal. Are you taking care of yourself, and those who matter to you?

This is one reason that books about time management often talk about the importance of daily and weekly “review” or “planning” sessions. While most of our lives can and should be filled with passionate devotion to specific goals, we need to stay aware of our overall purpose, to ensure that we don’t get distracted by what we’re currently involved in.

For more on this topic, you can review the “Balance” workshop of *Seven Days to Live Your Dreams*, as well as the next two workshops of *It’s About Time*, coming April 21st and May 26th for Associate and Full members.

want “doesn't really matter”. These are both signs of the problem-oriented mindset.

Instead...

Look To What You Love!

Seth Roberts (a psychologist, author, and blogger) has a fascinating hypothesis about the economic evolution of humanity. In simple terms, he believes that we specifically evolved to **have hobbies**, as a form of evolutionary R&D.

That is, he believes that we as individuals are designed to develop uniquely personal interests, so that we'll develop unique skills, so we'll have things to **trade with other humans**.

In other words, by finding things that we and we alone are “best” at, we not only become more valuable to the community, but we also improve the “state of the art” — passing on our knowledge to our descendants.

Thus, he theorizes, we really are evolved to have unique personal talents. Or more precisely, we're evolved to be able to latch onto interests that are uniquely **ours**, and thereby develop skills that are also unique.

It's a fascinating idea, because it lends some credence to the idea that we all really **are** special, and really do have unique talents! However, the unfortunate flip side of this is that...

The Money Doesn't Always Follow!

It's really a myth that you can “do what you love, and the money will follow.” If this were actually true, I could read books and play video games all day, for example.

Remember, according to Roberts, we evolved this tendency to develop unique skills, so we could **trade with other humans**. Thus, if you want to make money, you have to actually do something that other people are willing to pay you for.



*You can't spend your whole life at the beach, but you **can** bring this kind of joy to every moment, no matter what you are doing!*

Unfortunately, it's precisely *because* of your unique personal skills, that you are the absolute **worst** person to judge what is valuable to other people! Your interests make you sensitive to elements of quality that are invisible to everyone else — while you completely take for granted whatever it is that **other** people see in what you do! (Because it's so *ordinary* to you.)

For example, as a writer, I want this newsletter to be compelling and filled with all sorts of interesting themes and to give you very profound insights into life...

Especially yours!

But, because I've *already* had so many insights that I've written about or talked about in my workshops, I tend to devalue the things I've already said before — even if it was just once, a long time ago, in a blog article that maybe half of my readers never saw, and the other half might've already forgotten about!

So it takes some discipline to keep writing with clarity and enthusiasm about things I may feel I've already said, many times over. But **you**, dear reader, do not care about what I said before, only what I'm saying **now**. If I did not successfully make my point before, then what I'm saying is still **new to you**.

On the other hand, if I did successfully make the point before, then you will feel uplifted by the fact that you are among the special few who know exactly what I'm talking about!

So, what is important to **me** about expressing **my** talent, has almost *nothing* to do with what **you** want, as a consumer of it!

Getting Out Of The “Quality” Ego-Trip

So, as a person with great potential, you are going to have to realize a couple of things about what you love:

First, that you can indeed make money in some way **related** to what you love, provided that you realize that there will always be some friction between what you would **prefer** to do, and what your customers (or employers) will actually want you to do.

But this friction shouldn't be viewed as a problem. Rather, this friction is the very **source** of the energy that produces money for you. And if you can learn to *love* or at least appreciate that friction, you will have the very best of all worlds. (I, myself, am still learning, but I'm definitely getting there!)

Second, you must realize that what **you** think of as quality, is not necessarily the same as what your *customers* think quality is. Remember, the very nature of love is that we...

Perceive Things Others Do Not!

When you love someone, you notice small things about them that nobody else does — maybe their five smiles, or their one freckle. In the same way, when we love our **purpose**, we become aware of things that others do not.

I have difficulty, sometimes, listening to recordings of my workshops, because I hate listening to all my “ums” and occasionally awkward turns of phrase. I hate it when you can hear my chair squeaking in the background, or a bit of static on the line, or the hissing sound my nose sometimes makes when I breathe.

But I grit my teeth and send out the recordings anyway. Because I know that **nobody cares but me**.

When you or anybody else listens, you're not paying attention to these little blows to my ego, you're trying to *learn* something. You're interested in **you**, not me, and that's exactly how it should be.

And so it should also be, when you go out to sell **your** talents to the world as an employee or entrepreneur. Your customers or employers are interested in **themselves**, not you, and they will judge your work by *their* criteria, not yours.

You may want your work to be perfect, because you *identify* with it. But this is infatuation, not love. As they say...

If You Love Your Work, Set It Free!

Set it free from your unrealistic expectations of quality. Don't wait for the story or painting or software to be “perfect”.

Love, you see, cannot be **earned**. We don't love people because they're perfect, and you can **never** be perfect enough to *deserve* anyone's love or money.

Other people will always have their **own** reasons for loving you or your work, and you will only hurt and stress yourself by insisting that their reasons should match yours. Be glad that they value what you have to offer, without worrying about *why*!

Of course, you can always try to educate people about why the qualities you value are important to them, too. But you need to do this in a way that respects what they *actually* value, not just what **you** think they should value.

And all this relates back to an important point about...

Defining Your Purpose

If you define your purpose in contrast or opposition to reality, you'll create stress. One way of doing that (as we just talked about) is to ignore what **other** people value about you or your work. This cuts you off from the support (both emotional and financial) that you would otherwise receive

Rule 3: You Get What You Think You Deserve

“Animals establish a pecking order to determine who gets “what's coming to them”. But I am a human being, and I don't need to “keep my place” in the pecking order to avoid getting injured or killed!

I will not treat myself as “unworthy”, but will instead ask for what I want, and trade generously to get it. I will not cheat others, but neither will I withhold enjoyment or fulfillment or compassion from myself, just because I don't think I “deserve” them yet.

Deserving is for animals.”

From “The Code of Owners”, at
<http://theownerscircle.com/>

But an equally important way in which people tend to cut off important sources of support, is to define their purpose too narrowly, so that they are ignoring what they need and want in their **own** lives.

See, a lot of times, people come to me with a long list of things they want to improve in their lives: their health, their relationships, their personal organization, their career, and so on. But they worry because the *Six Master Keys* stress the importance of picking just **one** primary purpose.

But then I explain it to them like this: no matter what your purpose is, you'll need good health to fulfill it, won't you? Of course, they say.

And you'll need your relationships to be in a good place, so that you have the support you need and aren't being distracted by problems, right? Yes, they say.

So this is what you need to understand. Once you *choose* a purpose...

Everything in your life becomes a part of it!

You will go to bed, so you can rest up for your purpose. You will get up in the morning, so you can experience your purpose. You will be kind and loving to others, so you can fulfill your purpose. You will take care of your health, so you have energy for your purpose!

Think about a time when you were really in love with someone... and every moment of your day had **meaning**. Either because it was a moment *with* them, or else because it was one moment *closer* to being with them!

And when you have a purpose that you love, this is how your life can be.



*Have you looked at the **whole** of your life lately? Remember that the reason you're here is not only so others can benefit from your unique talents and outlook, but also so **you** can enjoy and be fulfilled by expressing your gifts.*

Your purpose becomes your **dominant thought**. That is, the *thought that you return to* in between other things. It is the thing that fills your day with love and anticipation.

And you might be wondering, how do you choose something that important? How will you know what it is you love that much?

And the answer is actually fairly simple. To find your purpose...

Envision Your Ideal Day

I first came across this idea in the book *Wishcraft: How to Get What You Really Want*, by Barbara Sher. In it, Sher advises us to:

“With pen in hand and as much paper as you need (or a tape recorder if you prefer to dream out loud), take a leisurely walk through a day that would be perfect if it represented **your usual days** — not a vacation day, not a compromise day, but the very substance of your life as you'd love it to be. Live through that day in the present tense and in detail, from getting up in the morning to going to sleep at night.” (emphasis added)

One of the most important reasons for doing this, is that it helps us learn to visualize our goals in terms of our ongoing life. Without this grounding, we may tend more towards idle fantasy, and not realize how achieving our goals (or the process of **getting** them!) will affect our day-to-day living.

For example, you may dream of winning the lottery, but have no idea what you'd do all day if you didn't have to work! Or, you may dream of being a best-selling author, without thinking about the part where you have to actually spend your days alternating between writing in solitude and traveling to talk shows or book signings!

The book (which I highly recommend you **get**, by the way — pick up a copy at <http://dirtsimple.org/books/> - it's the first one on the page) goes on to explain what **specific details** of your ideal day you should pay special attention to, and how to use the information you discover to help narrow down your purpose. There are also many other excellent exercises, such as the “Five Lives” exercise, that will help you get greater clarity about what you want and, more importantly...

What Will Really Fulfill You!

I first read *Wishcraft* maybe twenty years ago, but it's taken me almost until now to really be on the same mental wavelength that the book aspires to teach. If you are coming from a mindset where enjoyment is scarce, if you don't believe you're special, if you feel you have to work hard for anything you want, and you

don't think you *deserve* anything good, then the book probably has little to teach you.

Because, like I did for so many years, you'll probably find ways to miss the point entirely, and turn its contents into rules to prove how bad/lazy/stupid/whatever you are, because you're not following them!

I urge you not to do that, though. Use the techniques from last month's *Life-Changing Secrets* CD to purge the emotional blocks standing between you and realizing that yes, you really **can** have a purpose you love, to fulfill and to be fulfilled by.

Better yet, you can also use the newer technique I'm teaching now, that allows you to transform the parts of you that produce guilt and misery and fear, into parts that produce feelings of peace, joy, safety, and freedom!

Because, when you have these kinds of feelings as your normal way of being, living a life of love and purpose is just what comes naturally.

Yours in the Circle,



Phillip J. Eby, Founder
The Owners' Circle



*Being the owner of your
life is not always easy,
but it is always rewarding
in the end!*

Don't Forget!

There's a lot more to your Circle membership than this newsletter; be sure to use your other resources, including:

- This month's *Life-Changing Secrets* CD: "The Secrets of Creating A "Super-You""
- *The Pathfinders' Forum* online messaging service (Associate/Full members only) at:
<http://dirtsimple.org/pathfinders/>
- The April 7th *Pesonal Impact Coaching* teleconference (Full members only)
- Part 2 of "It's About Time" (April 21st, Full and Associate members only)

and of course, my emails, blog articles, and the Six Master Keys!

—PJE