

Be the Designer of Your Life



*When we have a bigger idea for life,
Life begins to show up for us.*

Kevin Lockwood
Intentional Journey Coach
& Motivational Speaker
www.EnvoyPeace.com

About the Author

Kevin Lockwood is the founder of *EnvoyPeace Coaching & Consulting* and creator of *Intentional Journey Coaching*. He is also the Executive Director of *Journey Outreach* and former Co-Director and Executive Manager of *Children's Global Peace Project*; two non-profits dedicated to the growth of personal awareness, social-emotional intelligence, and human connection. He carries with him thirty years of experience creating transformation from the inside out for individuals, Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and non-profit organizations in over fifty countries.

His work with the United Nations, African Management Services Company, Inter-American Development Bank, and other progressive, social-change organizations has shifted the conversation on challenges facing our modern society. Through a revealing of the innate genius we all have, he has helped create social and economic transformation in schools, prisons, housing, employment, and water resources.

Kevin is a Certified Visionary Leadership & Conscious Coach, and Licensed Spiritual Practitioner. He loves coaching and consulting because the best and most empowering solutions not only involve those facing the challenges, but indeed come from within them. He dreams of a world where every person uncovers for themselves an energy of joy and excitement in expressing themselves and their passions to create connected and compassionate community.



EnvoyPeace Coaching & Consulting

1521 S Pearl St, Denver, CO 80210

Kevin@EnvoyPeace.com

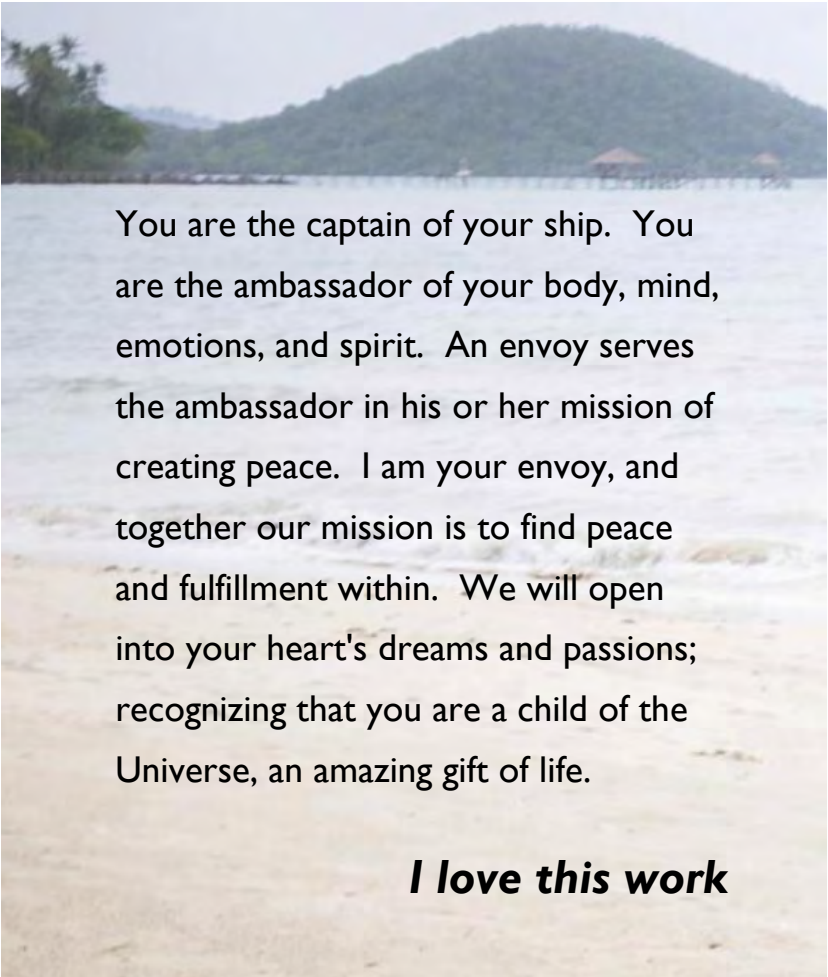
www.EnvoyPeace.com

Phone: 720-255-5470

Skype: EnvoyPeace

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You are the captain of your ship. You are the ambassador of your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. An envoy serves the ambassador in his or her mission of creating peace. I am your envoy, and together our mission is to find peace and fulfillment within. We will open into your heart's dreams and passions; recognizing that you are a child of the Universe, an amazing gift of life.

I love this work

Introduction

This is a practical guide for integrating and balancing your heart, mind, spirit, body and field of support to design a fulfilling life. Although it is a relatively short read, it is not a quick one. Most people find it is helpful to read it slowly and thoughtfully, working through each Practice with patience and persistence.

The pain of not diving into what is on offer here can mean a lifetime of what you and others think you 'should' be. It can mean unfulfilling, mediocre days filled with feelings of frustration, sadness, or lifelessness. It can mean never uncovering your greatest gifts and talents to share with the world. The strength and commitment to look within, face your limiting fears, and find your full potential is led by an inner desire. When you truly want things in your life to change, you will find the desire and determination to change things in your life.

You may be thinking that being the designer of your life sounds strange or unrealistic. You may be thinking that you are following your desires already and you still feel uninspired, burnt out, and non-impactful. These are normal thoughts and feelings to have, and perfect questions to probe into. You are in the right place. You have the right materials in your hand to begin to shift your life in powerful ways that serve your own being.

If your experience of life has been practical, you likely have developed your talents to suit society's needs. You might be thinking that living your heart's desires is only possible for the artists of life that are not attached to security. On the other hand, you may feel you are a free-flowing artist of life. You might feel that you are having some challenges in integrating into society in ways that feel stable and supportive.

Most of us fall somewhere in between these two ways of living. No matter where we fall on the spectrum, we can have the best of both worlds. Our hearts' innate desire to thrive can be integrated with our minds' innate need to survive. We are at our best when we live in balance. We can develop new ways of living that are healthy, whole, live-giving, and supportive. While this can be difficult to do on our own, the good news is that it is much less difficult when you have a process to follow. The path of improving our lives flows more easily when we use proven, supportive methods, and have a guide to assist us.

This guide provides Five Key Practices for being the designer of your life. What awaits is a rediscovery of who you truly are and what you have really come to experience in this lifetime. We will dive into new ways to express yourself that are fulfilling and reflect your deepest desires. Within each Practice, you will find steps and exercises to support you along the way in creating your own path of fulfillment.

Fulfillment describes our relationship with our inner being. It is personal, individual, and meaningful in the realm of our Life Force. Most of us have been geared to measure life by our accomplishments. Accomplishments are about destinations, they are temporary. Fulfillment is about the journey, it is ongoing. It may include accomplishments, but it is not attached to them. Fulfillment is recognizing that striving for any goal or accomplishment is about the emotional aspect we believe we will achieve. It is an awareness of creating a daily life that meets our emotional desires.

Before you begin it may be helpful to have a journal ready so you can write down any important ideas, thoughts, or feelings. People have been successful starting at any point of the Key Practices. The importance of the whole Practice is to consider all aspects of intentional change and emotional development. It is helpful to keep them in balance, and reflect on how each works best for you in fulfilling your unique path.

If you have read this far, you are likely part of a large percentage the population that desires to create a more fulfilling, joyful and powerful life. You realize that with a little help you can make it happen. If you would like to teach your heart and mind to work together, and experience a life that is about the journey and not the destination, then read on.

***This is your life; no one else's.
The Universe itself is desiring to express
your deepest desires through you.***

Kevin Lockwood
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Five Key Practices for Designing Your Life



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Key Practice #1

Open to your Life Purpose and your desire to thrive;
revealing the amazing person you were born to experience.



HEART

***The antidote to exhaustion is not necessarily rest.
The antidote to exhaustion is wholeheartedness.
~ David Whyte***

Even if we have done some deep soul searching, who we think we are and what we think we desire are highly influenced by what we have learned. We learn about life from our family, our educational system, our social groups, and our society. For most of us, we have some level of awareness of our hearts' desires. Yet this awareness is constantly challenged by the cycle of everyday life. Within our learning and experience of life is often developed a 'should' self; who and what we think we 'should' be. This is often a nice picture of good and virtuous things, and some of it may resonate with our true desires for life. However, it is often self-judging and does not align with our deepest desires for self-expression.

How can we uncover and begin to follow our hearts' desires

to thrive in ways that are sustainable and support our minds' needs to survive? That is a big, multi-part question, and we'll go through each part as we move through the Five Key Practices. Let's dive into the first part of the question.

Uncovering Our Hearts' Desires

One effective way to begin communicating and listening to our hearts is by quieting our minds and bodies. Then we can allow any protective armor or false masks to fall away. From the time we were children our minds and bodies have recorded and stored all of our lessons and tips for survival. This includes putting on daily armor or masks so we might feel safer and more acceptable to ourselves and others. Unfortunately, this hides our full authenticity from ourselves and others. It is part of our 'should' self. As much inner work as we may have completed, letting go of this survival mechanism can be a daily battle; or a daily practice depending on our perspective.

It may ease our conscious minds to recognize that, until we learn to walk on water and pass through walls, some of the survival tools we have learned are helpful to us. They have gotten us to where we are in life. Still, many of our survival tools fall into the category of limiting and no-longer-useful. Having a regular meditation or guided imagery practice is very helpful for opening our hearts.¹ Following is an exercise to support you. By journaling with it regularly, you can create and maintain an open line of communication with your heart.

Tell Me My Heart's Desires

- *Find a quiet space where you can sit and relax, and light a candle for yourself.*
- *As you focus on the flame, begin to notice your breathing. Gently allow it to become slower and deeper. Imagine it flowing in and out your heart.*
- *Bring to your mind a curiosity for your heart's desires. Allow your eyes to close and inquire:*
- *"Tell me my heart's desires?"*
- *When you feel a response of any type acknowledge it with a "Thank You". Then ask the question over and over until you feel complete. Welcome all thoughts, even silly little ones. Allow a free flow of expression.*

An exercise like this, that opens to your heart, may cause your mind to retreat to fight-or-flight mode.ⁱⁱ Your mind might label this exercise, and others to follow, as silly or worthless. In this way it is protecting itself by staying in a space of what it knows. If you feel resistance, ask yourself what is wrong with being silly and playing along. Let your mind know that you are safe, and it doesn't need to protect you right now. If you are thinking you have completed an exercise like this a dozen times already, ask yourself if you're the same person you were the last time you checked in with your heart.

Breaking through the survival mechanisms of the subconscious mind can be a challenge for anyone. Working with an experienced mentor or Intentional Journey Coach in a safe atmosphere can help. Lifting the veil of inauthenticity, and revealing and accepting all of ourselves, is the way to uncovering what rests deep within our hearts. In this way we can journey through our emotional shelters and learned behaviors and unveil all of ourselves, to ourselves, at the core.

Visioning a Life We Love

With a playful and curious mind we can begin to explore and document a vision that makes our hearts beat and our eyes shine. What opens us to playfulness, fun, hope, and compassion? Following are some of the questions that can be helpful to work with, meditate on, and journal about.

If I Could Do Anything

- *If I won \$50M, how would my work or life change?*
- *What would I love to achieve/experience before I die?*
- *If my life was perfect and my dreams came true, what would it look like in 10-15 years?*
- *What kind of person would I love to be? What are the values or virtues that are most important to me?*
- *Who helped me most in becoming who I am? How did I feel around them? What qualities helped me?*
- *What is important for my health, spirituality, mental improvement, relationships, recreation, career, finances, or self-worth?*

Exploring Our Value and Values

We can be blind to our own greatness. Often the things that come the most easy and natural to us, and what others most value in us, go unrecognized and underutilized. The next exercise is to connect with at least five people we trust for their wise insights and their ability to truly see us. They can be family, friends, clients, or colleagues, or a mentor or coach. Connect in whatever way you feel most comfortable: email, phone, in person, social media, or even an old fashioned letter. Ask them these questions:

My Value and Values

- *What do you believe are my truly unique talents and gifts?*
- *What do you believe I can do better than practically everyone?*
- *Is there an area of my life or talents you feel I could grow into?*

Please be sure to thank and honor people for their time, caring and authenticity. Then share what you value about them. Ensure you keep a record in your journal of your conversations. Then take time to sit quietly or meditate with your notes and explore them more. What others see in us is a glimpse into our value, and what we see in them is a glimpse into our values. Write down other things you value or admire about others or yourself in terms of career, relating, spirituality, or other aspects of life that are important to you.

The consequence of not working through this Practice and those that follow can mean a continued experience of life as who we think we 'should' be. It can mean routine, unfulfilling days filled with pervading feelings of dullness, frustration, sadness, or loneliness. It can mean not uncovering our greatest gifts and talents we have come to express and share in this lifetime.

When I was a young adult my mother told me that I loved books as a child. I had no recollection of that. As an elementary, high-school and college student I can recall reading as little as possible, and I never read anything for pleasure or to learn about something new I was passionate about.

One day I uncovered a memory, a deep 'learning' from one of my caregivers when I was a child. I had asked my sister, older by 3½ years, if she would read me a book. She said no, because my books were stupid. She meant no harmful intention. It was really how she felt about it. However, at that moment I took on a subconscious belief, from someone whom I saw as an authority of life, that all my books were stupid.

It was not until I was in my mid-twenties that I rediscovered my innate adoration of books. Now I love books, I love to read, and I love to learn new things. My awareness from all of this is that it can be valuable to introspectively relook at parts of life I have turned away from or discarded. There may be some gems in there that I'm missing out on for myself.

Key Practice #2

Acknowledge your Learned Skills and your need to survive; utilizing your abilities and creating new ones.



MIND

*If you think you can, you're right.
If you think you can't, you're right.
~ Henry Ford*

It bears repeating that, until we learn to walk on water and pass through walls, some of the survival tools we have learned through life are helpful, and still many fall into the category of limiting and no-longer-useful. The mind is a wonderfully powerful thing. It has up to 80,000 thoughts per day, and all of these thoughts are creative. Unfortunately, 90 percent or more are repetitive and 60 to 80 percent are negative.ⁱⁱⁱ Our goal is to turn the mind into a fully utilized asset that is creating a life for us in a direction we want to go. Because we are creative beings, our attention is our treasure. Wherever we put our attention will grow. So, let us begin focusing on what we desire.

Recognize What's Working

Neuroscience research shows that, if we begin our self-work by trying to fix ourselves, our minds will retreat to survival mode. This engages the amygdala of the brain and sympathetic nervous system, often called our fight-or-flight mode. This part of us only knows old ways of reacting and being that are based on what we have experienced. It is not creative, and will win any battle over new ways of thinking.^{iv}

Therefore, our first exercise is to recognize all the incredible things our minds are doing well. There are most likely parts of our life where our experienced self and learned skills are aligned with our hearts' desire to thrive. When we begin here we engage the prefrontal cortex of the brain and parasympathetic nervous system. This is the part of us that is most creative. It can support us most effectively in honoring our hearts' desires and in uncovering ingenious and inspired ways of looking at challenges and trying new things.^v

So, do not hesitate or delay in writing your successes in your journal. Give yourself a pat on the head.

What I Love About Life

- *What are those little things I love about life that my day would be incomplete without?*
- *What are the things I love about my current life or things in the past?*
- *When in life did I feel most creative?*
- *What gives me energy?*
- *When did I feel at my best; most successful, proud, joyful, connected, loved, or accepted?*

Acknowledge What's Wanting to Change

Our challenges, or weaknesses, are places where our lives are not aligned with who we desire to be and what is meaningful for us. It is important to acknowledge these. They represent the reality of how we see and feel about our current life. They bring our attention to what might not be working well. These items

give us motivation to make change. Here are the questions to answer in your journal.

What I'd Like to Change About Life

- *What are the things I don't like, or even hate, about my life and I want to change?*
- *What are the things I don't like about life in general, or the world, and I want to change?*

The previous two exercises, about what is and is not working in life, may be easy for some minds to work with. However, some of us may have been conditioned to not praise ourselves. Others may have been conditioned to not change the way things are. In either case, when the mind does not feel emotionally safe it retreats to survival mode.

Working with an experienced mentor or Intentional Journey Coach can be an effective practice for opening up the mind to recognizing what is working well and acknowledging what is ready to change. In this way we can have help in creating a safe and fully accepting environment to explore in.

Scoring Our Overall Visioning List

Now that you have four journal entries from the exercises in Key Practice #1 and #2, work with these to create an overall Visioning List. After you complete this, we will look at what is most important and possible to achieve. This is a two-step scoring process involving desires and beliefs. The reason we are doing this is to bring to the forefront what is most meaningful for us that our minds feel is safe and achievable.

Step one is to score all the items on your Visioning List on a scale from 1 to 10 in terms of how much you desire or value them. Step two is to score all the items on your Visioning List on a scale from 1 to 10 in terms of how much you believe you can have them.

As we begin this new journey in our life, we want to work on items that create new neuropathways of success. Then we can begin to teach our minds that we can be successful and it is safe to follow our hearts' desires. Our minds can witness and support the joy of positive outcomes. As the mind learns to trust the

heart, more items will rise in believability.

When we commit to trying something new we are enlisting the mind as a valuable asset. It will figure out how to get it done. This will be difficult to do unless we really want something and believe we can have it. Scoring an 8 or higher means we are willing to give something up in order to achieve it. If we are not willing to give anything up, our desire is not very high; certainly not an 8 or higher on a scale from 1 to 10. It may seem at this point that we are focusing on destinations instead of the journey. Know that these are just the first steps of our practice. We will begin exploring the emotional qualities of our journey in the Practices that follow.

Example: My Scored Visioning List

<u>Item</u>	<u>Desire</u>	<u>Belief</u>
Learn to Play Guitar	8	8
Work With Aging Adults	6	9
More Family Time	9	9
Etc. . . .		

When I was a baby my mother often felt she had to hide me. There had been a miscarriage in the neighborhood and my presence often caused painful memories. That experience and its learnings repeated in many ways during my childhood.

As I grew older my subconscious would sabotage events that might cause me to be seen. I can recall having odd feelings of relief when I injured myself in sports practice, which prevented me from being a starter on the team. I also managed to work my way down the academic ladder so I didn't graduate at the top in my class. As a corporate trainer I loved teaching, but it made me a nervous wreck to be seen.

When I finally unwound the subconscious belief that my presence caused pain and I should hide myself, speaking to crowds of people became fun and success became something I can enjoy.

Key Practice #3

Journey within through an Integrative Discovery process;
awakening natural potential and releasing old patterns.



***Within our most challenging moments
lie the roots that hold us back
and the soil to plant something new.***

Spirit as it is used here can go by many names: Prana, Chi, Life Force, Higher Self, Internal Wisdom, etc. If we could only use one of the Five Key Practices to being the designer of our lives, I would choose this one because it helps access and integrate the innate wisdom we each have within. This Practice can support every part of that initial question: How can we uncover and begin to follow our hearts' desires to thrive in ways that are sustainable and support our minds' needs to survive?

The struggles and challenges we have in life are pointers to mental and emotional blocks and limiting beliefs that hold us back. When we unwind the core of who, what, when, where, why and how we established our tools for survival, we can find a new freedom of choice. We can act freshly in situations that show up

in our lives. We can break free from old triggers. A trigger is a repeating pattern of reaction developed as a tool to work through a challenging situation. As you will learn, this is what the introspective process of journey work is all about!

Within each of us is the innate wisdom to work through our problems and challenges. We are the captains of our ships. We are the ambassadors of our bodies, minds, emotions, and spirits. We only need to hold a speck of possibility and openness that it is true. For every step we take towards opening to our greatness, the Universe responds by taking a giant leap towards us.

Origins of Mental and Emotional Blocks and Limiting Beliefs

Our minds do not see beliefs as beliefs, they see beliefs as facts of life and survival. Choosing beliefs freely is not something our rational minds do. To begin to open our awareness to this, it is helpful to first look at how our strategies for life evolved. Up to the age of eight our minds are like sponges, learning how to survive in these experiential vehicles we call our bodies. Our minds figure this out through the experiences we have as children. This includes our family or caregivers, our educational system, our social groups, and our society. Our subconscious mind runs our biology, behaviors, patterns and responses over 90 percent of the time based on what it has recorded about life.

In 50 years nearly 75,000 medical studies have been published in the area of emotional and social-emotional intelligence.^{vi} This area of research has been well documented; yet effective ways to shift and grow our social-emotional tools for life are not well known. As adults, our go to strategies for physical, emotional, mental and social survival are most often those we learned as children.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente provides an excellent comprehension of how our strategies for life evolve. The ACE Study is focused on 10 simple questions about abuse, neglect, and other traumatic experiences we had as children. As the number of yes answers increase, so do the risks of having social- emotional and cognitive difficulties, health-risks, disease, and early death. This study shows how impactful our childhood environment can be in having fulfilling lives as adults.^{vii}

Over one-third of our society has had at least one adverse childhood experience. And, the reality is, we have all experienced some level of trauma as we have developed our tools for life. Growing up is challenging for everyone. Something as simple as coming home from kindergarten and not finding your mom there because she was visiting a neighbor can be traumatic. It can ingrain feelings and beliefs about life that we are alone and people we care about are not available for us.

These childhood traumas are stored in our minds and bodies. They are held in place with the emotion we experienced at the time. The more intense and frequent the emotional experience, the more we are locked into the old neuropathways that are our methods of response. This is how we learn to survive. Unfortunately, if we do not unwind the negative and limiting patterns learned as children, it can be very difficult to evolve our abilities and strategies as adults.^{viii}

Identifying and Working With Challenging Emotions

Using introspective journey work, we can begin to explore our emotions. The first step is to learn how to feel again, and allow emotions to flow naturally. Emotions are not something that get in the way of living life. They are a gift of experiencing life. They are central to everything we do and every decision we make. As children we may have been taught to talk and think in a way that established a belief that we are our emotions. We may have said, “I am happy” or “I am sad”. Then we learned to judge the emotions we did not like, and became unwilling or fearful of feeling them. We may have even begun to think that if we felt too much of an emotion we could get stuck in it, indefinitely.

Emotions are energy sensations meant to flow through our bodies. Sometimes “I feel happy” and sometimes “I feel sad”. These ups and downs of feeling emotional energy are a natural human experience. As humans, this energy was meant to come and go so that we can experience life wholly. We really cannot fully know the experience of joy without a balancing experience of sadness. As a simple example: when we are sick and stuck in bed, we forget how great it feels to be healthy. When we regain our health, we have a renewed experience of how great food tastes, how beautiful the sky is, and how much we love spending time with friends.

Our society is well trained in avoiding emotion. We have all types of coping mechanisms to not feel what we do not want to: television, alcohol, sex, drugs, food, video games, social media, etc. Partly why movies and television are so popular is we get to feel the emotions of some imaginary experience rather than our own. Even what are viewed as healthy habits, like exercise and meditation, can become crutches for avoiding our personally challenging emotions.

The first part of the experience of journey work begins with a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere where all emotions are welcome. When we are authentic and non-judgmental, we can allow emotions to flow and work with them more openly and easily. As we give a voice to our unexpressed emotions, we begin to fall into a natural state of relaxation. The veils of inauthenticity melt away. We can let go of trying to control or judge anything, and in this state our innate wisdom can speak, and be heard. We are re-teaching ourselves how to naturally and healthily feel emotions; to let them come and go.

This journal exercise can help us to uncover emotions we are trying to avoid, and allow them to come and go.

Journey Work: Identifying Challenging Emotions

- *Close your eyes and imagine getting ready to turn on the television, or go to the kitchen for food, or light a cigarette, or some other habit you want to change.*
- *What is the feeling you are having just before you engage the habit? Not the feeling of release because you are about to engage the habit, what is the challenging feeling before that?*
- *Scan your body for where this emotional energy is being felt and identify the core emotion; like anger, fear, sadness, loss, hurt, guilt, or numbness.*
- *Breathe. Allow, accept, and appreciate the sensation. Let it come, and let it go. Breathe.*

Non-Personal Awareness (NPA) and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) are other practices that can help in re-learning to allow emotions to flow.^{ix}

Replacing Limiting Beliefs

If we do not unwind our limiting beliefs and clear our triggers, they will keep attracting that treasure of our attention. They will influence our creative thoughts and experiences; reinforcing more limiting beliefs.

Let us explore an example of a crystalizing moment where triggers and beliefs are set. Say when you were a child, one of your parents or caregivers often came home drunk and was abusive to you or others in your family. By the age of eight you likely decided that you never wanted to act like that. You probably made a vow to yourself to never be like that person. All the qualities of that person often get wrapped up in that vow. That can include good qualities too, like being a great networker and very successful at business.

Now let's say you are in your 30s or 40s and still living out that vow subconsciously, while consciously and diligently you are trying to figure out why you have never been successful at business. That vow is how you have been protecting yourself from being like that dangerous caregiver your whole life, but it is also impacting you in other ways. It is holding you back from being successful.

To your subconscious mind being a successful business person also means to be an abusive alcoholic. So you will find subconscious ways to sabotage your success, and you will eventually create another belief, that you are not successful. As a child your life felt threatened by the caregiver you made a vow about, and your mind took on the job to keep you safe from the behaviors that person exhibited, even the good ones.

The next part of journey work is to dive into the crystalizing moments we had as children. Again, this is most effective while in a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere. We need to be in an open and free-feeling state. From this space we can begin to see and feel through our experiences as children more clearly. We can begin to unwind what happened by allowing our younger selves to speak freely from the pain of our experiences. We can even allow for a full conversation between our younger self and the person we had challenges with. Anything and everything that needed to be said then can be said now. In this way we are emptying out our trapped emotions and developing social-emotional intelligence skills. We are re-teaching our minds how

to authentically feel and communicate.

This may stir up a lot of emotion, or it may not. Either way, we can know that the process is working perfectly. We can let emotions come and go freely until we are feeling emptied out and authentic. Now, in this place of calm and internal connection, our own wisdom will guide us. It will help us identify the beliefs about ourselves and life that we developed during challenging and traumatic experiences. It will also help us clear out those beliefs that are no longer serving, and replace them with more healthy awarenesses about who we truly are and of what we are truly capable.

This journal exercise can help us unwind childhood events, trapped emotions, and subconscious defenses that we built to avoid having an experience again. It can be difficult to revisit this on our own, and we may find it most effective to have the help of an experienced mentor or Intentional Journey Coach.

Journey Work: Replacing Limiting Beliefs

- *Close your eyes and breathe; allow and appreciate the emotional sensation you identified in your body during the previous exercise; breathe.*
- *Then ask yourself, “When have I felt like this before?”, and allow your mind to drift back to a time in your life when you felt that way.*
- *Allow the images and story of the experience to unfold, and allow your inner-child to speak freely and completely empty out about that experience. Express fully your thoughts, feelings, and needs.*
- *Then ask yourself, “What beliefs or vows did I take on to prevent this type of experience from happening again?”, and allow your inner wisdom to speak.*
- *Ask your inner wisdom: “What is the truth about me now? What are healthy beliefs I can work with?”*

Sustaining Healthy Beliefs

The final part of our journey work is to reinforce and grow the new neuropathways we have just formed. Multiple studies have shown that just visualizing an exercise can be nearly as effective as the physical practice. The same is true for developing

new patterns of thought.^x An experienced mentor or Intentional Journey Coach can support us in mentally and emotionally walking through this exercise, in identifying and releasing any remaining stuck points, and in moving forward in our lives.

In your mind you can imagine stepping forward into the future. As you take each step you can invite in the feelings of what it is like living and experiencing your life from a place with new awarenesses. You can let go of triggers that were formed from limiting beliefs or vows. In your mind's eye you can experience the images of new ways of being, and feel into new ways of doing life that are healthy and sustainable. You can envision your heart's desires for full expression and a fulfilling life. Here is the journal exercise.

Journey Work: Sustaining Healthy Beliefs

- *Close your eyes and feel again the freedom and strength of the new healthy truths and beliefs you identified in the previous exercise.*
- *Breathe into your life a day from now, imagine how that feels and what it looks like.*
- *Then ask yourself, "How is life showing up more easily and freely in this new way of being?", and "How is this impacting the lives of those around me?"*
- *Keep stepping into the future a week, a month, six months, and a year from now; feeling and breathing into this new way of being, and allowing the images and emotions of the new story of your life to unfold.*
- *Ask your inner wisdom, "In what supportive and sustaining ways can I live in this awareness?"*

All parts of journey work are highly supportive of our goal to become the designers of our lives. When we are listening to our own internal wisdom we can hear our hearts' desires. We can learn to follow our hearts in ways that feel safe and possible to our minds. We can reinforce new, sustainable ways of being. In this way, we are turning the mind into a fully utilized asset that trusts our heart and creates a life we love.

I am not wanting my stories to sound like continually picking on my big sister. However, at 3½ years older, it is helpful to simply recognize that she was influential when I was a small child. She loves and cares for me dearly now, but that was not so much so when we were younger. I was an unexpected child and displaced her as the youngest in the family. Honestly, as a child, she felt things would have been much better without me. We laugh about it now, but not back then. When we played together, if we did, it was by her choice and by her rules.

How did this show up later in my life when relating with women? Well, one of the tools of the subconscious mind is to attract and replay painful relationships from our childhood so it can try to turn them around for the better. These memories with my sister, as well as those previously shared, worked together to create a strong dynamic. I was mostly attracted to women that were not available to spend much time together and/or generally did not really see me. These were the types of relationships with the biggest sparks and fireworks for me, and also with the most challenging triggers and emotional pain.

Fortunately, in the midst of one of those painful moments, a friend asked me why I was in a relationship like that. I began to describe all the wonderful things about my partner. My friend stopped me, and asked the question again. I paused, and realized that she was asking a deeper, more personal question. The image that came was that of a four-year-old me with my nose pressed up against my sister's bedroom door wanting to be let inside to play. I found a crystalizing moment.

An awareness of our habits and triggers can become an opportunity to work with limiting vows and beliefs. And, intellectually knowing where these came from is usually not enough to be free from them. A month later I sat down with another friend to do journey work. He supported me in unraveling the whole emotional story. My relationship with my sister is closer now, and my intimate relationships are better. I am still working through challenges, but they are different ones now. Life really is about the journey, and I am grateful that it keeps unfolding in more empowering and joyful ways.

Key Practice #4

Explore Experiential Behaviors and new ways of being and doing; discovering more about what you love about life.



***Curiosity is the movement of the Universe
itself, through you, to experience life.***

Continuing from the previous exercise, we can further reinforce the development and practicing of healthy and sustainable beliefs and ways of living through new experiential behaviors. There are many planning and learning styles we can explore to help us get started. In trying new things it is not definitively necessary to uproot our lives and head down a new path. Gentle new choices can create a world of new possibilities. Again, the idea here is to create a trusting relationship between our minds and our hearts. Before we get moving, however, it is important to revisit our compass settings to ensure we are traveling in the direction we truly wish.

Emotional Qualities of Our Visioning List

Looking back at your scored Visioning List from Key Practice #2, the next step is to rank order your visions that scored 8 or in each category of desire and belief. This is also a good time to modify and rescore the list if necessary, recognizing your value and values. Then you can begin to explore the top 10 items from a perspective of your own emotional intelligence. In this journal exercise, as you review each item, it is essential to relax the mind and body and allow tension, control and judgement to fall away. Focus on ease, flow and authenticity. Welcome in any and all expansive and contractive emotions about each item.

Emotional Awareness of My Visioning

- *Close your eyes and breathe into a centered and grounded place; allow yourself to be at ease.*
- *Open your eyes to read just one of your top-10 visioning items.*
- *With your eyes closed again, allow any and all emotions about this vision to freely flow.*
- *When you feel complete, open your eyes and note your expansive and contractive emotions, and then start over with your next visioning item.*

Example: My Ranked Visions & Emotions

<u>Item</u>	<u>Emotional Qualities</u>
1. More Family Time	Joy, Connected / Sadness
2. Learn to Play Guitar	Freedom, Relaxed / Stuck
3. Etc. . . .	

Life Really Is About the Journey

Contractive emotions about a vision are entry points for introspective journey work. In this way we can uncover and open into any mental-emotional blocks or limiting beliefs that may hold back our success. With these feelings we can revisit the two

exercises in the previous Key Practice: “Replacing Limiting Beliefs” and “Sustaining Healthy Beliefs”. Our Practices for becoming the designers of our lives are just a small part of our whole-life potential and possibilities. When we hone in on blocks or limitations associated with our desires, and unravel them at their core, we open the doors for entirely new possibilities in all areas of our lives.

The expansive emotions associated with a vision have an entirely different use in Intentional Journey Coaching. The reality of our visions is that our desires do not rest in some end goal or thing. What we really desire is the emotional qualities we believe that thing will bring into our lives. It is not the new car or job or relationship we desire. What we are seeking is the feeling we believe we will have once we have those things in our lives. From this awareness we can begin to realize that life, and our joyful experience of it, really is not about the destination. Life really is about the experience of the emotional journey along the way.

Having this appreciation for the underbelly of what drives us in life is vital element in planning and practicing new experiential behaviors. We can begin to appreciate what being non-attached to our Goals feels like. The next step is to hone in our compass setting by crafting personal Vision and Mission Statements.

Crafting Our Vision & Mission Statements

The number one main ingredient in crafting personal Vision and Mission Statements for your journal is that they evoke powerful, drawing emotion. We want to deeply feel into our vision and mission so our lives become a living expression of our desires. These statements will cause us to bounce out of bed in the morning to greet the day with energy and excitement, and bring us to a restful sleep at night.

A Vision Statement is a simple, succinct and powerful sentence. We might consider it our personal mantra. It is a phrase that will guide our inner compass and focus the light of our inner being. It is something that does not change often. It gives us clear direction for years or decades. Recall the “Tell Me My Heart’s Desire” exercise earlier from Key Practice #1. This type of meditation or introspective journey work is very helpful for accessing within us the simplicity and powerfulness of a guiding message for ourselves. We can also use our journaled Value and Values notes to help us here.

A Mission Statement is longer but still concise, about a paragraph. It gives details about the Vision we want for our life and our future. It is something that will provide us direction for months or years. Our Top-10 Visioning List, and the expansive emotions we feel about them, are good reference points. We can consider our Mission Statement an elevator speech or personal marketing pitch. It is what we will use in Key Practice #5 to enroll trusting relationships that support our Vision and new ways of being. A Mission Statement is clear and concise enough to keep the attention of others focused and energized.

In summary, a Vision is who we desire to be and a Mission is what we desire to do within that beingness. My Vision Statement might be to be a great world leader, and part of my Mission Statement might be to conquer all with love.

Experiential Learning Plan

Experiential learning is a way to begin exploring our hearts' desires and new ways of being. It takes us out into the world and begins to shift our everyday life. For each Goal we can look toward our Mission Statement to create Subgoals and Actions that allow us to test out and feel into new experiential behaviors. Looking back at our Top-10 Visioning List, the next step is to pick one to three Goals that we feel have the biggest emotional bang

Example: My Learning Plan

My Vision: *Be a Great World Leader*

- **Goal 1:** Conquer All With Love
 - **Subgoal 1:** Love Myself
 - **Action 1:** Establish a morning meditation practice (Feeling connected, energized, clear, secure, focused)
 - **Action 2:** Establish an evening gratitude practice (Feeling complete, joyful, relaxed, grateful, happy)
 - **Action 3:** Learn to play guitar (Feeling flowing, connected, alive, joyful)
 - **Subgoal 2:** Love My Family
 - **Actions (Emotional Qualities)**

for us, and we believe we can accomplish. Completing this journal exercise for one goal might look like the example provided below.

As we do this, it is important to pay close attention to the emotional qualities we are desiring to achieve with our Subgoals and Actions. If we set up experiential learning steps that evoke the expansive emotions of our Visioning List, we will begin to train and reinforce in our brains that it really is about the journey and not the destination. An experienced mentor or Intentional Journey Coach can help us to find the passion in our Actions in ways that remain non-attached to our Goals. Then we can fully enjoy our experiential learning steps and vibrate in new ways of being that will attract our Goals or something even better.

Planning & Learning Styles

As we begin to make plans and take action it is helpful to be aware of different planning styles. We can talk with a mentor or coach about our favorite planning styles and how those can be leveraged. We can also consider other planning styles that might be helpful for structuring a path towards our goals.

Planning Styles

- **Goal Orientated:** *specific goals, check lists, and accomplishing steps*
- **Direction Orientated:** *general plan and direction without any specifics*
- **Action Orientated:** *short term plan, no long-term considerations, base the next step on the previous*

As we engage in learning new things it is helpful to also be aware of different learning styles. Again, we can talk with a mentor or coach about what is most comfortable, and what has been our most enjoyable ways of learning. We can also consider other ways of learning that might work well. Be most aware of how you feel about your plans. Expansive emotions mean you are on track. Contractive emotions can mean something to avoid. Contractive emotions can also be something useful to explore

with introspective journey work, to get to the core of any limiting beliefs or mental blocks you may have.

Learning Styles

- **Conceptual:** *Thinking/Auditory,
Learn by reading about riding a bike and talking with expert bike riders*
- **Observation:** *Watching/Visual,
Learn by watching others ride a bike*
- **Experiential:** *Kinesthetic/Doing,
Learn by riding a bike*

Celebrate Failures

There are no wrong paths when we go on an adventure. That is why we call it an adventure. Consider life as a laboratory and our bodies as experiential vehicles. We want to take successful steps in the direction of our hearts' desires to bring joy into our lives, and to begin to teach our minds to trust our hearts. When we commit to try something new, this is enlisting the mind as a valuable asset. Since the mind wants to keep us safe from feelings of failure or embarrassment, it will figure out how to do it.

But what happens if we feel we have failed because we do not accomplish something we set out to do? Often we have been taught and coached to battle through failures. Still, sometimes we just can't find the resolve and constitution to do it, or we find ourselves back in old patterns of behavior. Then what do we do?

There is a better way than battling ourselves. When running into difficulty, stop and open to it. In becoming the designers of our lives we celebrate failures, because in the process of stretching into new ways of being we have just uncovered a mental or emotional block. As we discussed earlier, coaching goals are just a small part of our lives. That block is a doorway into the limiting beliefs and patterns we have about ourselves or life. Through introspective journey work we can get to the core of the block, uproot it, and plant new healthy awarenesses about ourselves and life. This, will in turn, open doors for new possibilities in all areas of life.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes. It really is about your journey and not your destination. Experiential learning is a continuous process, growing your experience and awareness. It is naturally full of tension and opposing modes of adaptation. Experiential learning involves interactions between you, the learner, and your environment. It is a holistic process of adaptation to the world you live in. It involves exchanges between the social knowledge you encounter and your personal knowledge. Most of all, enjoy the process of learning. Trust that you cannot do it wrong and that everything you need to know is already within you.

After moving to Colorado in 2000 I had a relationship with someone who has children. When that relationship ended I was devastated. I missed her, and I missed the kids. A friend suggested that I volunteer to work with children since I seemed to like being around them so much. So I did, I tried something entirely new for me. It didn't require a huge change to my life, but it did require a serious commitment of a few hours every week.

This later led me to begin learning about social-emotional intelligence and cultural diversity. This led to me working globally with children and organizations. This led me to help form and run *Children's Global Peace Project*. This led me to a body of work called *The Journey* and becoming the Executive Director of *Journey Outreach*. This led me to create *Intentional Journey Coaching*.

I love this Practice because it combines the best I have to offer from many parts of my life. It involves my skills as a corporate instructor, change manager and coach; my abilities with *The Journey* and as a Spiritual Practitioner; and my awareness and passion of social-emotional intelligence.

Key Practice #5

Cultivate a Supportive Environment that feeds your desires and visions; creating a sustainable container for your life.



The field is the sole governing agency of the particle.
~ Albert Einstein

Like Spirit, The Field can also go by many names: Oneness, Universe, All That Is, Source, Energy, etc. Our environment, 'the field' in which we live, is a powerfully influencing agent in our lives. This includes the relationships we cultivate with others as well as our world. The 'I–Me–My' of the personal growth movement gets a lot of attention. Yes, I am a powerful, creative being. Yes, everywhere I go there I am. Yes, within me are the solutions to releasing triggers and developing healthy awarenesses of myself and life. Yet there is still no 'I' in 'Team'. As we can see from The ACE Study, we are highly influenced by our environment and the people around us.

Our relationships provide much of the imprint for how we interpret and experience life. Again, this is reflective of our family, our educational system, our social groups, and our

society. Most of us will not thrive in a box by ourselves. A well balanced and experienced life does not exist in solitude. Thoreau went to the woods because he wished to live deliberately; so he would not, when he came to die, discover that he had not lived. Then he came back and shared what he had learned. We grow in life and in knowing ourselves through relationship. We shine our best when someone is watching, even more so when someone we care about is watching.

Are you curious about what your life might look like a year or two from now in terms of income, employment, relationships, spirituality, or otherwise? Looking at the lives of our five closest friends can provide some clues. We tend to become products of the company we keep. Two of the three learning styles offered for Experiential Learning involve other people; talking with and observing them. Numerous studies in psychology and neuroscience demonstrate that having good social relationships is one of the strongest predictors of fulfillment and success. The University of Chicago's Research Center found that people with five or more close friends are 50 percent more likely to describe themselves as very happy.^{xi}

Who & What Will Support Us

The first journal exercise is to assess our whole environment on how supportive it is of a specific Goal. It is separated into four parts to assess what we see as our internal strengths and weaknesses, and our external opportunities and threats. Take some time to list the people, things, and characteristics that fall into each category. An experienced mentor or Intentional Journey Coach can help us plan ways to best utilize the helpful aspects and mitigate harmful ones.

Internal & External Support Assessment

- **Strengths:** *Helpful Internal/Self Characteristics*
- **Weaknesses:** *Harmful Internal/Self Characteristics*
- **Opportunities:** *Helpful External/Environmental Things and People*
- **Threats:** *Harmful External/Environmental Things and People*

The next journal exercise is to build a personal board of directors. It can include people we know or would like to know. They might be famous people or not. This is a group of people that can support us showing up in the world in a way that is congruent with our Vision, Mission and Goals. Some might support us with their personal time. Others might support us through their writings or talks, or just by just being an example. Looking back through our journal at the “My Value and Values” exercise from page 8, we may find some people that would fit well on our personal board of directors.

If none of the people you know can support you on your journey of designing your life, then you will want to reach out and find different people. As was mentioned in Key Practice #4, our Mission Statement is what we will use to enroll others that believe in our Vision and new ways of being. It is not intended to convince someone who would otherwise not believe in what we are trying to accomplish. We can let those relationships rest in what they are, or allow them to fall away.

One of the most effective ways to meet and engage with new supportive people is to find social groups that share our desired interests and passions. Within those social groups we can open up to developing new friendships and resonant relationships. Like the word sounds, resonant relationships are ones that are in balance and in tune. They are relationships that share a connecting emotional bond around a common Vision, Mission, or Goal.

Another effective way to find support is to share our passions with people we meet, and to ask them about their passions. This is another place where our Mission Statement comes in handy. It is okay if some people we meet do not resonate with our plan, or us with theirs. Neither of us have much skin in the game; we just met. They may however know someone who does fit well with our new path in life.

Comparing Life to a Winning Change Management Program

We can use a modern business example to illustrate the importance of resonant relationships. Research shows that more than two-thirds of information technology projects are over time, over budget and/or incomplete, and nearly one-third of these projects are cancelled or never used. That may sound like a

reflection of how our lives have been in the past. How can we turn this around?

What is the common element that creates successful business projects? It is a resonant leadership environment where there is a shared vision and people feel connected to their job purpose, customers, co-workers, and organization. Considering our lives and what we desire, we want to create for ourselves an environment that looks like that.^{xii}

Cognitive intelligence – knowledge, systems thinking, problem solving – comprises only one-third of the skills needed for success. The majority of the skills required, two-thirds of them, are social-emotional intelligence skills. We might recall an old saying that success comes from one-third of what you know, one-third of who you know, and one-third luck. It was called luck back then because the underlying components seemed like magic, there was no concept yet of social-emotional intelligence.

The opportunity here is to change the field of our relationships. Take a moment to reflect on who brought the best out in you in the past, or who brings the best out of you now. Know that more relationships and experiences like that are waiting to form. It is time to capture a fulfilling life for ourselves. Most of all, enjoy the journey. The Universe is always conspiring in your favor.

I have witnessed people design new lives without moving, getting a new job, or letting go of relationships. I have also seen the opposite; big life changes leading to entirely new paths and new ways of living.

Sometimes life changes are easy, and sometimes they are difficult. They might be big or small. They might come slowly or quickly. In all cases I have witnessed, they have included a willingness to try something new and the support of trusted people. These are also the elements that have held me up and kept me going through changes in my life.

It is different for everyone. I cannot tell you what it will look like for you, other than it will be different than it has been for me or anyone else. One thing I can say for sure is that you will not know unless you give it a try. Everyone's path of change is different and is eventually made evident for themselves by walking it.

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