

Takis Athanassiou | Leadership  
Initiative

# Develop Your Path

Strategies and tactics to help you  
design a meaningful life and  
business for you and the others!

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# How to Define Your Purpose

***"How to define your purpose?"*** It is one of the questions I often asked in my consulting sessions by many people and entrepreneurs. It is odd to listen something like that by people counting many years of work in a specific field, but, it seems, that there is a general problem because many people have caught in the trap of "**making ends meet**" and have lost their life purpose! This is a bad feeling both from a personal as from a professional view point! And it needs to be addressed immediately in a way that would re-established the person's life balance!

## What Is The Problem

You are not just a person who works, has a career and you need, at the end of the day, to get the money for paying your bills! And certainly you are not just a person who lives alone, without a family, friends, relationships, and other people! You are both and, most of the times, concurrently!

You live, work, dream, do, have, be, want, love, share, communicate, lead, follow, grow, teach, learn, support, help, believe, like, dislike, etc. aiming at living the fullest version of your dreams and life!

At the same time, you do business, or enterprises, you schedule your personal and professional future, analyze, design, organize, code, develop, sketch, paint, make music, dance, etc. in order to grow your potential and enhance your capabilities.

You are a multilevel entity encompasses many varieties of dreams, visions, ideas, approaches, habits, mindsets, beliefs, learning modes, styles, etc. into a unified and consisted action system aiming to serve your personal (*and business*) goals and objectives!

The problem is that you have never designed your life for something like that! You never intentionally, and unequivocally have sat down with yourself to think about that and design the life you want to live!

This particular problem is especially acute when you reach a certain age and looking back, you find out that your life path is not the one you have wanted to live!

## A Life Without Purpose

The problem of living without a guide is widespread among leadership circles and it is pinpointed by many authors. It is presented, very eloquently, by Michael Hyatt in his *Life Plan: Designing The Life You've Always Wanted*, at one of his podcasts with the same subject and it will be re-emerged again at his next book *Living Forward*!

Michael states that:

*"When it comes to life, most people are spectators. They watch events unfold a day at a time. They may plan their careers, the building of a new home, or even a vacation, but it never occurs to them to plan their life. As a result, they drift along, often to destinations they would have never consciously chosen: failing health, a broken marriage, or a stalled career." (Michael Hyatt: LIVING FORWARD)*

And he has right! Most of the people have never got into the trouble of defining their real purpose in life. Instead, they keep on complaining about the obstacles and hardships they have encountered into their life. And they, have right, as well. Because as Lewis Carroll have described *"if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there"* (Brainyquote)

And that is exactly where starting the job of a consultant, aiming at helping someone to discover his/her life purpose!

## A Simple Recipe for Defining Your Purpose

In my business, I need various recipes to help me understand what are the requirements of the person I talk with. This is especially more difficult when I associate or work with someone virtually or from a distance! In such situations I use a mixture of frameworks and techniques

to help me identify the "pain" of the person I talk with in order to serve him/her better!

The first and foremost tool in my toolbox is "**listening**" carefully and actively on what the other person saying. Sometimes the real intentions of a person are not laying on what he/she says but on how he/she says something or, even, at his/hers pause.

A second framework I often use is a set of carefully structured questions which would provide in a short time the required clarity to our discussion. These questions, if used properly, can establish a common "**communication**" between the two parties and focus the discussion on what worth to be covered!

The method I used is derived by the work of **Ryan Allis** as presented in his wonderful presentation **Lessons From My 20s** (*a must read for every entrepreneur, I believe*).

His solution for developing a business that it is aligned to your purposes is simply the intersection of four (4) critical areas:

1. What are you good at?
2. What do you love doing?
3. What have the Market Needs?
4. What can you be paid for?

The intentional and clear answer to these question can provide more information about what your purposes in life are and how these can be aligned with your vision, your life, and your business.

Of course, to define your life's purpose is a lifelong venture! But this simple recipe can orient you to the core areas of your life, define your true priorities and help you to do the business (*and the life*) you really want!

# What is your Scope in Life

One question I often hear is the "***How to get more money?***". It is natural! In the middle of today's prolong financial crisis, everyone wants to make a second income, or some more money, with an ease! But the scope is wrong! So is the question! You see, the problem today is not only the money! It is, usually the lack of scope and meaning in our life, lead us to the wrong question!

## Toward Your Life Scope

If your only concern in life is the "***how to get money***" challenge, your scope is limited. You might need to reconsider your scope, in something much larger, as "***How to get more resources to achieve my goals?***" or "***How to serve other people and build meaningful connections and interactions with them***". Or the even better "***Can I be someone who serve the people he/she interact with, and at the same time builds a sustainable lifestyle of meaning?***". This last question set a much larger scope and, perhaps, develops to you, a much greater momentum and incentive for achieving it!

The latter question is a small (*raw if like it*) personal mission statement which can set in proportion to your life and make you find all the necessary resources for gain that objective.

## What Your Mission Statement Says

If you decompose, this mission statement, you would find:

1. A **Vision** (*I want to serve the people and make a living out of this*)
2. Some **Outputs** (\*At personal level I'll be more balanced and calm; I will devote more quality time to my family; at business level, I would pay more attention to my employs and I'll try to develop more their skills and knowledge; at financial level I have reached a level of financial security able to permit me the design of a more balanced

lifestyle; etc. \*)

3. A **Strategy** (*According my vision, my system beliefs and my values, I would do all I can achieve win-win situations in all circumstances I'm involved in and to provide continuing value to other people with my actions, skills and knowledge*).
4. Some **Overall Tactics** (*I will do that without offending anyone, maintaining a coherent and cool posture in life and in business; I will provide for my family and spend all the available time they need me present for the individual and collective growth of each one of each of its members; By my activities I will seek to gain trust and to prove proof of knowledge via argumentation and good rationality, listening the other people, influencing them to develop themselves and their abilities and trying to keep my health, fitness, mental, emotional psychological and spiritual state at top performance, etc.*)
5. Some **Daily/Monthly/Year Tasks & Activities** (*whatever you have to do that would promote your main, overall, tactics according to your master strategy and bring you a step closer to the achievement of your desired outputs and towards the implementation of your vision*)

## What is your Scope in Life

As you can see, the way we express out life's scope directly influencing and our why's and how's. And, as a result, provide us the necessary momentum to achieve what we want in our personal and business life!

So, what is your scope in life?

# Start With What You Have

Most people expect something to happen, in order to do something else. They strongly believe that in order for them to do something, something else should be preceded! And they postpone activities and things to be done in the name of lacking the necessary resources.

Have you heard the "I do not have, <experience, luck, money, ...>, to do it!" I bet you have. So am I. And it is wrong. Very wrong, indeed!

You do not need anything to start something you like. Not even permission. you need a decision, and along the way you will find or you will develop the resources you need in order to achieve your objectives.

You should start with what you have at the moment and use them creatively. For instance, you do need an expensive video camera in order to do a professional video recording. You can do it with the camera of your phone (*even if you are not a professional actor*), even if it does not provide the quality you think you require. You just need to start and press the record button, tell what you want, and publish it in order everybody see it!

I strongly believe, that the abundance of "things", can create a big disorder and indecision while a small, well selected and creatively used, set of required tools and devices, can maximize the effect of your message! And your overall impact!



# What Makes You Special?

I was thinking this question when I was aiming at meeting an old friend! Not that my friend has nothing to do with the content of the question. Not at all. He was a very special and gifted person, lovable to all and with a lot of distinctions in his professional field!

He had also managed over the years to stay very close to his family, friends and associates while building a thriving and ever growing small business with limited investments and without an obsessed focus on what's next!

He had managed to surface over many crises with more experiences than scars and kept a balance across all his endeavors! But this is not a post for my successful friend! My friend was just the trigger for me to think about what makes him so special. And what you can do to be special as well!

You see the point is for you to be special and how can I help you achieve that! Deep down, I believe that everyone is special, in his/her own special and unique way! The trick is how you can convince him/her to act as such.

Action is the key, because only by doing you can:

- reflect your inner strengths and weaknesses,
- establish triggers that prompt you do something to bring you closer to your goals,
- develop
  - habits,
  - assets,
  - beliefs
  - mindset
  - knowledge
  - skills and
  - behaviors to make you what you want, and grow to the right

direction!

Doing and thinking can be bonded in action, and when this is done, it is magic!

No! Rather is a form of art!

You become special by keeping your word and your commitments; by being responsible and **accountable**; by dreaming and sharing your dreams with other people; by helping friends, laughing more and complaining less; by finding solutions rather than creating problems; by being authentic rather someone like "**one of the guys**"; by deciding using your own abilities rather following others' opinion; by listening before you speak, attending before intervene, cultivate before destroy; by developing **leaders** rather than followers; by leaving behind you something of value for the other people to have, rather for just your family; by doing, thinking and sharing!

What makes you **SPECIAL** is the way you handle things. As **Aldous Huxley** pointed out:

*Experience is not what happens to you; it's what you do with what happens to you. (BrainyQuote)*

And it is a daily process.

# The Huge Impact of Everyday Rituals

Every day I get up from my bed, say a hello to my family, I hit the shower and take care my personal hygiene, eat a light breakfast, and try to start my daily routine for the day to come!

The family greeting and acknowledgment, the shower and the personal hygiene and the breakfast, are all the initial triggers “*conditioning*” me to unfold my everyday rituals and get the things needs to be done ..., done!

**Rituals** are things you repeatedly do because either have a certain reflection on you or provide certain results for you and your life!

## Attitudes and Mindsets

Everything start from you and you should be (*or make an intentional and honest effort to be*) the raw model of yourself.

As in leadership, personal growth depends heavily on who you are, what you are prepared to do, what are your goals and vision, and what you can bring in the table!

You cannot expect the world to be changed or give you permission to start doing what you have to do!

There are attitudes and mindsets that should change at a personal level for you to be able to utter a comprehensible demand on yourself!

To that end (*if you should choose to accept the mission of course*) you should start working on yourself and on yourself investing in new ideas, behaviors, belief, skills and knowledge, changing in the process what's is not longer works.

This is a process of changing “identity”, old beliefs and behaviors

*(exactly as the high-end education and the good training should do)* towards too many small and large things and situations, in order to gradually become the person who is capable of make the difference in his/her life and in his/her world!

There are many beliefs, postures, practices and attitudes you should choose from and adopt them!

Among them the most effective ones for the agents and operators in life and business fields of our today digital and interconnected world, are the:

- **Life planning.** Life planning is a procedure can provide you insights, scope and intention to your personal and business life. For more information you should consider read the writings of **Michael Hyatt** on **Life Plan**, while Michael recently have prepared with **Daniel Harkavy** a new **book** on the subject. Michael approach is based on a positive attitude to life and the combination and management of key life components as priorities, outcomes and action plans
- **Healthy daily routines and habits.** There are many good habits you can adopt in you life as everyday rituals and promote your personal or/and business goals in a success trajectory! Such habits/rituals may be the daily writing of a certain amount of words, the drink a lot of water, the frequent exercise, the healthy eating, etc.
- **Living intentionally.** Most people take the life for granted, but the things are not always so! Life is far from a simple uncoordinated reaction to everything happens to you! Life is a gift, relates to your goals and mission and should be a fully conscious, proactive and intentional activity, aiming at making you and your world better. As A. Huxley had remarkably pointed out: *“Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him”*
- **Meditation.** There are many schools and **practices** for **meditation**! You should practice and choose which one is best for you and adopt the best practices help you relax and sooth your thoughts!
- **Pause or quiet time during your day.** To find a quiet place and stay in peace for a small amount of time is one of the best practices I know to ease up your trouble thoughts and put the things in perspective. Typically a practice as that is a form of meditation, but you can do anywhere without too many formal restrictions as far as the posture or breathing concerns!

- **Martial Arts.** **Martial arts**, when is done right, can also be, a wonderful way of preparing you to deal with various situations in life and business. Even though martial arts frequently have correlated to self-defense purposes, provide a holistic body-mind-spirit framework which can help you promote further your objectives!
- **Praying.** **Praying** is one of the most rewarding religious practices capable of focusing your mind and provide you insight, quality, purpose, direction and scope in your life.
- **Visualization.** **Creative visualization** is another cognitive practice, can help you to “straight out” many things of everyday life while provides you focus, purpose and tools for developing the momentum you want, providing the results you have planned to bring!
- **Wabi Sabi.** **Wabi-sabi** is a Japanese attitude in life demanding to find the beauty in the imperfection. As a mental state, can help you accept the odd things in life, embrace the different, abandon the perfectionist filter in what you see and do and keep up with the things in life does not fit or does not agree with your mental ecosystem!
- **Gratitude.** **Gratitude** is a powerful approach to life, helping you to realize the many gifts you may have, appreciated your life and leave behind the things have caused you problems in the past. As a formal practice is very useful in providing you a base for the development of a more self-conscious resilient and self-confident life!
- **Journaling.** **Recording** your daily thoughts, ideas, wants, to-dos, etc. is a very old practice! **Keeping a journal** or a **diary** and updating frequently though is a different kind of “notes-taking”! Journaling it related to your personal deeper thoughts and feeling towards various things in life and provide you consistency and focus as far as your wants, to-dos, and life plans are! Other than that, **writing**, in general, can provide multiple results to someone and might help him/her to clarify a lot of things about his/her emotions!
- **Reading.** Reading is the oldest form of creative past time for the people and a unique way of keeping up with the changes in your world. The selection of appropriate and suitable for your life and business books is capable of helping you transform your life, find out new approaches and ideas and educate further yourself towards the direction you have selected. I am an ardent reader of many books (*both in physical or electronic form*) in various disciplines and I can affirm without a doubt that a good book can change your life. Just try

it!

- **Listening to something of value.** Same as reading but modern technology and the plethora of the many audio books, the variety of the existing podcasts and the quality of many radio shows can guarantee you that you would never be without a suitable for your objectives audio broadcast! The availability of such audio resources along to usability and accessibility provided by the modern technology (*via smartphones, tablets, car consoles, PCs, etc.*) provide a cheap way for keeping you always inform and up to date!
- **Physical exercise.** There are many benefits of the physical exercise, especially today, which you spent the most of your time in a sitting position. **Physical exercise** when combined with healthy eating, good sleep and proper hydration can provide miraculous results in life and business (*as many **researches** have shown*)!
- **Goal Setting.** Goal setting as a daily ritual is a form of promoting your life goals throughout the day. There is a commitment when you re-affirm your goals on a daily basis (*or periodically*) something that can help you to move after your objectives with more determination! The goals you set should be **SMART** (*in order to be feasible and achievable*) and should depend on your values, your life goals and strategies, and your strengths and weaknesses. Part of the goals setting procedure is the accompanying ritual of prioritization, triage, and selection of your 3 daily **MIT**'s for implementation.
- **Organization.** Organization, even in a light form, is a way for you of doing what matter most for your life and not crushed by the constant information overload, the clutter, and the **uncontrollable demands** of the other people. There are many **methodologies**, you can consider before you select the most suitable for you! But considering what there is not an endless process. In modern times life and business, it is essential the adoption of a proven life **organization** practice!

among other things!

## Beliefs and Everyday Routines

There is a **direct link**, among your beliefs, your attitudes and your current mindset with your everyday rituals and your goals!

The status and the intention of your inner status (*your life goals, your values, your aspirations, your limitations, your beliefs, etc.*) impacts and reflected your daily activities.

*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. (Aristotle)*

If you haven't selected clearly what you want to do, if your choices are poor, the result in your life and business is also a poor one

To adopt a certain number of specified actions and incorporated them into your everyday life is a matter of long, and painful, many times, process.

Everyday rituals, though are habits you freely adopt for certain reasons and you practicing them periodically (*usually on a daily basis*) and intentionally because they **bring** significant results!

## **My Everyday Rituals**

My daily routine (*as the **corresponding** ones of many other people*) is the distillation of many trial-and-errors things I have to do in the past and either work or not! In any case, what I have learned point me toward the direction of keeping the most "successful" ones (*i.e. for me at least*) and practice them up to the point of perfection!

The thing with **high achievers** (*like a wannabe high achiever as myself*) is that never anything is, quite, enough!

There are always something new, a hack or a tweak you have to check on or incorporated into your life, a new approach to doing something, a new methodology to implement in your **workflow**!

But before you start to be an artist in the living an effective life, as in the piano practice (*in piano before you become a virtuoso you need to master the basic keys and moves*), you need first to select and stabilize some of your habits and adopt what's working best for you!

This is, usually, means a time of contemplation, personal reflection and filtering of the values, beliefs, habits, etc. that are appropriate for you and serve you best and a consequence, based on this process, employment of the ones are the most effective for you!

This process should be couple with a long term life planning in which

every habit, action, etc. you adopt and employ it in your life should (*and must*) defined by and depends on a cluster of previously done and design activities as is the definition of your values, you free adapted and intended life choices and strategies, you general (*and specific*) goals, etc.

Before you select and define these procedures (*the definition of the big stones of your life as Covey put it*) it is impossible to employ successful rituals in your life that would promote you in the required direction!

I have done this exercise, long time ago, and found out a set of ritual I practicing for quite long now and “bootstrapping” me in a fresh and re-invigorating way to handle the daily personal and business tasks!

Of course, I do a lot of **variations** (*psychology says that the automatic repetition of the same activities, may create fatigue and repulse to its execution voiding the results you want to bring by their practice*) of the same rituals, but all these are small variations in a core ritual system (*as more time for exercise, goals settings, etc.*).

The whole set it amounts for a total of **45 minutes**!

1. **Visualization / Meditation (10 minutes)**. In this section belongs any practice can help you reboot your mind and focus on the important things you have to do in the day (in relation to your life and business goals)! Such practices might be the visualization, the quiet time (*a time of inner examination for instance*), praying, meditation, zazen, reading, **bio-feedback** activities, **NLP** centric exercises (*as the reflection on the **Sandwich feedback model**, the practice on **various NLP Techniques**, or the focus on **basic NLP exercises** is*), etc.
2. **Daily Planning and setting my MIT's (5 minutes)**. Every day, after the visualization phase who have prepared my mind for the day, continues with an old ritual of defining the day's' activities and setting the MIT to be completed. This phase actually is a continuation of my previous day and depends heavily on the things I have not accomplished the previous day. This is a mission-critical activity for me because all my activities do not depend entirely on my discretion. Many daily activities involved appointments with clients, events to be attended, deadlines, papers, and budgets should be delivered, the communication with prospects, etc. So in this 5 minutes, I should balance all these in a coherent timetable and set my MITs in order! I



usually doing my activities in a batch and try to reserve only 1-2 days solely for out of office activities!

3. **Journaling (10 minutes)**. It is possible my oldest practice along to physical exercises and my most profitable one. Typically speaking, writing and reading for me are of high importance! Especially journaling is an activity that makes me clear out my life goals, understand better myself and why I do what I do in such a way, as well to plan what I want to do for the future! Journaling along with mind-mapping permits me to disentangle many difficult subjects and handle the every day “complexity” with a relative ease!
4. **Physical exercise | fitness (20 minutes)**. There is no mystery in this! Exercise (*along to a good night sleep and plenty of water*) is one the most important keys to developing a good, quality and healthy life! I had a long-standing relationship with various forms of exercising but today I try to do it in a shorter but with higher more intense manner, aiming at keeping a good and lean body along to an excellent physical condition. I try to do at least 5 days x 20 min daily exercises while on times I implement more rigorous sets of specific and specialized for different body parts exercises! I use various devices and app to keep up with my diet and my fitness while at times I readjust the metrics to achieve different results. To keep up with my physical requirements (*some of these come from my more rigorous training days in the army and in martial arts, but this is a different discussion. For a more rigorous training you can consult the wonderful book **8 Weeks to SEALFIT: A Navy SEAL's Guide to Unconventional Training for Physical and Mental Toughness**, by Mark Divine or you can check the corresponding training program*). I use many metrics to help you keep up with my objectives and maintain my “good” health habits! Some of these read as stretching and local walking at least once every 2 hours, light launch, plenty of water, minerals and vitamins intake, everyday walking of at least 5 km, a 1000 words a day writing principle, everyday reading note taking and documenting many internal and external processes, etc.

# Your Next Move

I was on the road, again, in a small cafe, reading my notes for my next meeting. In an odd moment, my eyes gaze to the surrounding trying to catch a moment of relax. Unconsciously I start **observing** the people around me, trying to focus at what I had to do next.

I started to think: what are people doing here? I mean, I was in a small cafe, a place people try to relax, associate with other people, feel new emotions and interact with new people. They have participated in ordinary activities and they were calm & relaxed! The "**no participation**", simple is not a choice.

People, usually are drawn on activities provide them with more incentives and stimuli from those they are prepared to handle! And most of them are **unconscious** without a prior "logic" **decision**. People follow a lot of things and trends without too much thought at first and if you present them a best alternative for their time and effort, usually, they try to rationalize their **choices**.

All we do the same thing, at least, for the things we are interested in or want in our life! People interact with people who make them feel better than what they actually feel, most of the time without good, apparent, reason. At the same time, people buy items, products and services that give them the incentives to think better of themselves, to make them dream bigger dreams.

That's why your next move is not always **"logical"**. But it is always justifiable. You **"select"**, unconsciously the most of the times people, relationships, associates, products, items, etc. that make you believe that you can make a difference, to **leverage your assets**, to live better the story of your life, to develop yourself, to associate better and more fully with the people around you, to make you a better person, to make you feel... that **YOU** can.

These "selections" provide you the notion that you can develop and grow toward the direction and the goals you want to achieve! To render you a **strong** person and the person you want to be in your life! These selections build your character and make you overcome many obstacles in your personal and professional life!

You want to change, to be the one who can make these choices, but this does not come without cost. It needs **work**. Personal work, with yourself.

Your next move is to be the person who he/she can do the things you want to do in life. And that does not depend on something outside of **yourself**.

It needs a change in your identity! It needs you to change a lot of things, you previously consider as given and standard. You need to remove the autonomous systems you have established in your life, via of years of practicing unconsciously habits and **beliefs** that drove you outside your real path!

The path is your course towards achieving your goals and it depends on you!

# How to Better Leverage Your Assets

It is a difficult period to live in, and it becomes even more demanding, by day! You need time, energy, knowledge, skills and every possible asset you might own, just to cope effectively with everyday problems, either at a personal or at a professional level. And sometimes, all these assets, does not seem enough! You need to better leverage your assets in an optimal way and even better, to build, access or use some more assets!

## What Do You Have?

The things you truly have, as I wrote in my recent newsletter, are a personality, a character, a culture, a family, your memories and experiences, your health and physical condition, your expertise, your knowledge and skills, your talents, a network of close and loyal friends, and the motivation for making your life better! These are the important staff!

You may also have some items, resources and some more tangible or intangible assets (*as money, academic studies, a work portfolio, books, a large circle of influence, etc*) that can assist you to achieve your goals. But everything is useless if you do not know how and when to use it and if it is not aligned to your true goals via the mission you choose to accomplish in your life!

You are responsible for your life path and that means you are, also, responsible for your actions. The basic responsibility of you is to develop more options in any given situation (*for yourself and the others*) and develop or access more assets you need to accomplish your goals!

## How to Evaluate Your Assets?

Do you know the jigsaw puzzles? Bits and pieces at irregular shapes of

paper to provide only a few leads as where they would be placed on their final position. But, if you find their place, you will end up having one beautiful picture, hide behind the random order of the pieces.

What you have, and what you own, are elements of a same puzzle, aims to give you a complete picture only when you know where you are going! Only when you have goals and objectives and a life path, the how, the where and the why of the usage of your assets have gained meaning! Only then, you can better leverage your assets according to the situations you have to face!

## How to Better Leverage Your Assets

1. Take an inventory of your assets. Think and record your major assets (*tangible and intangibles*) and write the best appropriate situation you can use them in order to provide you the most profitable results for you and your objectives. Take a step further. Use a spreadsheet and catalog your major resources and assets, writing beside them where and how you can use them best!
2. Use the best assets you have or can access to gain a better leverage and achieve maximum results. Find how you can grow your capacity to use them more productively and apply them at where would provide you the most gains!
3. Hack yourself! Try to generate solutions and options for every situation. Leave your assets behind and choose to follow a line of thought that would generate you more options and solutions for any given situation. Exercise your capability to not use your resources and assets but your mental and physical traits in a more effective way. If you cannot produce any solution, you can always use any of your assets to find a way through!
4. Train yourself to living a more frugally and a simpler life that would serve you to many situations.
5. Learn how to reserve your energy, endurance, mental and physical strength, fitness, health and time in order to use them when you needed them more. Follow a line of frugality, since this mode of operation, may help you to produce much more options to serve your true purposes!
6. Assess and chase the true priorities of your life, leaving behind the random ventures and routes does not serve anymore your purposes and does not make you a better person!

7. Evaluate your way of living, your goals and align the methods you use for achieving your goals. Make the necessary amendments if you think it necessary, in order your life to reflects your personality, values and character!
8. Change your mindset to support the achievement of your goals and objectives and review your path, under the view of making your actions and your life more effective towards your purposes
9. Change your habits, if not corresponding to your goals, and assume new habits that would serve you better.
10. Think, and find ways to multiply your vital assets, and provide more value to yourself, the people around you and your society!

# How to Provide Value

Value is not an easy concept to grasp at first! It needs a lot of experience to understand it and even more experience to be able to provide value to the people you associate with. The problem with value is that it means something different for each one of us. And it does not relate always to money!

For me, for instance, extra value in a project is to provide more tools and ways to continue the stakeholders to pursuing their objectives. On a personal level, providing value means to make people doing more of what they want, to look better and to feel better without doing it too obviously! For someone else might be to free them time to do more important things they want to do. But, in essence, everybody agrees, that value has to do with something that someone when receive it, transforms his/her life for the better!

The value does not necessarily relates to money or financial assets. You do not need a fortune to provide to someone, you associate with, a little bit more of what his or she expecting from you! Either personally or professionally. In business, the things are more structured and the value, usually, is measured with quantified terms (*products, outputs, etc.*)

But many times, to provide value or do more for someone is very simple and does not cost you a dime! You can provide to someone intangible things and still to worth a lot for his/her. Things like some of your time, an acknowledgement, a laugh or a smile, a sign that you are paying attention, a gesture, etc.

In practice, there are many ways you can use to provide value to someone or to a situation. Here are some you might want to use on your everyday life:

- Pay attention to objections, questions, worries, anxieties, fears, etc. of people, for these are the indicators of the areas they might need

assistance

- Listen carefully what they have to say to understand what makes them troubled
- Stand on their shoes. Think about the problems they have to solve and the situations they have to deal with and find out what you would have done in their position. Use that knowledge to help them more effectively
- Treat your significant other, your family and your close friends in a more professional manner. Do not take anything for granted. You should always be able to surprise them and provide them things that are important to them in a manner that shows respect, caring and deliberation.
- Do more than what they expect from you, to do
- Do a work on his/her behalf
- Elaborate something or research something of importance and provide it to the one you think he/she can benefit the most by its usage
- Introduce to someone a new concept, an idea, an approach, a new tool he/she could use to achieve more in his/her life
- Do not create them overload or put them to do extra work. Instead do that work and provide the output to the ones they can use it
- Think about something someone would need and provide it to him/her, without a cost
- Provide **SMART** and viable solutions to be quickly and promptly employed by them

The whole point of providing value is to help them in the way they want to be helped and not on how you are thinking that they should be assisted. Try to treat, with the same mindset, all the people you associate with, either in your personal or/and in professional life. Because the value provision should be a mindset cultivated by you to employ it in every situation!

When you want to provide value, you should always try not to provide the fish itself but rather to train the people you are interested in, on how to fish! Training and inspiration should always work in tandem!



# The Other Side of the Fence

What do you think about fences! This is something I was thinking walking down the street and looking the fence around a deserted factory! It was a brilliant factory unit when it started to operate, but now it was abandoned. The technology and the economy have conspired to render it obsolete! But something has maintained its operation and signified a "**do not trespass**" warning. Its fence. And that remind me about the barriers and fences in your life. Either the existing ones or the ones existing only in your mind!

A fence can make you think twice! Fences, blocking your way, stop you, detour you, or separate you from something, perhaps you want (*or imagine that you want*).

Fences always considered as barriers. But can be many things. For instance, can be challenges. And good ones!

As a boy, I have heard a story about someone wanted to cross over a fence but he didn't dare to do it! After many drawbacks and thinking, one day he decided to toss his hat over that particular fence! It was impossible for him to go home without his hat (*he will be grounded for a long time*)! So he set his heart and his mind and jump over the fence to retrieve his hat! And he does so, and the story said that he retrieved his precious hat!

He made a challenge to himself and delivered an excellent result. And at the same time, he saw what's was on the other side of that particular fence he was desired so much to see.

The fence is not a barrier if you don't choose to see it as such. The hero of this story saw the fence as a challenge. Someone else can see a permanent or temporary blockage as something else!

Considering this concept in a different mode, you can see that a fence can be many things. A fence, for instance, can be:

- a challenge you have to make
- an obstacle you have to cross-over
- the unknown you have to face or handle
- the different you need to collaborate with
- the odd you must learn to accept and incorporate to your actions
- the peculiar you need to respect or/and accept in your life
- the strange fellow you have to join in for some venture
- the end of your expectation about a situation and the start of a different more rewarding situation
- the launch platform for something new you want to start  
and many, many more things

A fence is anything you want it to be. But it is something you have to face with. You have to find the way to handle it and to use it for your benefit and the benefit of the other involved parties.

It is not something you can stare at it all day, expecting to move itself outside of your road. It will not! It is not, either, something you can talk it out of your path. It will not work! It is you the one you have to do something!

Generally, it is something you have to learn how to handle it! It might be a learning experience, but, moreover, it can be proved a better path for knowing yourself.

# Work To Be

The work is not what used to be! The working conditions in 21st century have changed a lot under the pressure of many factors as is the arrival of digital economy, the deregulation, the globalization, the downsizing of many former, might, companies, the huge demand for new skills and services, the slow adaptation of the working force to new condition, etc., to mention only a few!

This truism does not make justice to the full propositions of the problem.

Work should be one of the fundamental rights of our post-modern societies, but it is not. Not anymore, at least! And now we are responsible to re-define it and find our place in the new "**working**" market.

## The Definition Of Work

How do you would define work? Actually, I do not know any valid definition, can provide the "**true colors**" and the meanings of the working experience in a clear and unique statement! Work have many, and, sometimes, different meanings, to different people (*according to their beliefs, their working position, their dreams and their financial status*).

Generally speaking, work (*in a project management lingo*) means:

*the amount of effort applied to produce a deliverable or to accomplish a task (a terminal element) or a group of related tasks (Wikipedia: Work (project management))*

but that does not say anything!

At least, no to the people who are not project managers and need just

to make some money in order to cover their pressing needs. If you want to **make a difference**, you need some more things!

And no, work is not about money. It is about many more things like the:

- autonomy
- integrity
- self-dependency
- resiliency
- survival
- creativity
- associations
- networking
- providing the necessary means for your family
- providing value (*where there were none*)
- provide quality services (*to a market no one care about it*)
- give birth to something new
- develop something it is needed
- act as you would be a role model for other people
- educate and teach the things you know well and may be of value for other people
- develop a new lifestyle, attitude, etc.
- grow yourself via your service to other people
- lead more efficient your life and the people depend on you
- impact and influence much more people by what you are doing
- coach and foster the ideas of other people may have
- invest at the dreams and ideas of other people
- trust a company, an association, a person
- develop a business and a life, to mention only a few

Yes, work can be many things. Typically speaking, in an exchanging goods society, you exchange time, energy and creativity for a specific, pre-agreed amount of money.

But this is work or a pleasure? It is important to be paid for something you would do anyway, or not? It is ethical to be paid for something having so much fun, or your lifestyle is that of the ones working at a corporation?

Sometimes it seems very difficult to answer to any of these questions. But the questions, still keep on being made!

Is been asked if: "**Is it possible for a normal person to escape the rat race?**". The question comes with 6 answers, with various connotations.

From affirmations to the promotion of, several, ways to acquire new skills.

And there are many more answers if you search around in various **blends** and **flavors**.

The escaping the rat race thing is not about changing your life, adopting a nomad lifestyle or working on your own terms. It has many more **variations**, **choices**, cities, **ways** can help you to decide from.

But this is enough?

## Characteristics Of The New Working "Ethics"

A new working culture seems to spread out in the world. A culture and a lifestyle away from normal working hours, typical tasks and roles, things you should observe, monitor, evaluate, etc.

Little things as:

1. **The negation of "one-salary" myth.** Most of the time, as a worker in a new scheme you have tasks rather than a permanent job. You paid for the results and not for the effort, or the time you invest for the completion of an activity. Usually, you do many parallel tasks (*and sometimes for different "employers"*) *to gain the same (or bigger)* amount of money you would have gained in a "normal" work!
2. **The nomad work.** Now it is easier than ever to work from your house, many miles or continent apart for your "working" location and still be as same (*or even more*) productive as you used to be
3. **You are not bound to time, location, or proximity to your work** in order to "arrange" your life. You can adjust your work, around your daily living schedule, and if you are good at what you are doing, there would be no difference at all.
4. **You own your energy, your time and the results** of your work and you are the sole responsible for the results you are deliver
5. **You do not have one employer.** You rather have different associates, you provide value to, according to your skills and competencies

These are, of course, just the tip of the iceberg. And as it is widely

known, what you see of an iceberg is just the 1/8th of the things **lay below** the surface.

As it is at the new working schemes (*globally speaking, of course*)!

## Work To Be

One successful urge (*and strategy*) for personal and business development in the new business ecosystem is the very well known urge: "**Think globally, act locally**".

It is, of course, a winning strategy, promoting a global, bird-eye like view of your action and sponsoring the **accountability** you have (*or should have*).

**Strategy**, though, is not everything, but it is a good start. **The strategy** provides a framework for thought and actions can direct your time, energy and creativity to achieve the things, really you need to accomplish.

If you need to adjust, to operate and to succeed in the new living and business environment you need to re-engineer yourself. Not to be someone else, of course!

The demand of this new digital era, we are all living in, is to be yourself and more of all to be authentic.

But what is the **YOU** thing in relation to a work, when you are a student, an unemployed, without a work prospect, below ordinary living standard, etc.

Intentionally I become provocative, but in the new economy, many people have faced the negation of the everyday self-evidenced "**facts of life**". And that was a very crude thing for many of people have not the talent, skills or competencies to "adjust" to the new conditions. Or were slower to adjust to the environment they have summoned to serve.

## Re-Engineering Yourself

Our culture is a peculiar thing and our limits (*or strengths*) are negotiated every day by the attention we give to the people cannot cope easily with the new conditions.

If we fail to pay attention, many people might leave behind under the engine of our "constant progress".

Warriors say that "**they don't leave any one behind**" while the common wisdom dictates that "**the devil lays in the details**".

Both quotes, emphasize just one thing: you have not the right to be who you were!

You need to change from the person you were to the person that going to help those people to cope, effectively, to whatever lays ahead of them.

And, at the end of the day, of course, you need a way to "**make ends meet**". For you, and your family.

How would you do that? First, you need to change identity. Why? Because your old self, is not as suited to the new economy standards as you originally believed.

If you were you would have so many problems to cope with all these new facts, let alone to help other people to be successful in the new environment.

This is the reason, you have to change and move away from your former "**comfort zone**". You need to think deep and large and came with some results that will guide you to find who you are and what you would like to do (*for the rest of your life*).

You need to check, a couple of things or, ... maybe four (*adaptation from Ryan Allis' **Lessons From My 20s on Life, Entrepreneurship, and The World***). you need to find out:

1. **What you love doing.** In order to keep on doing what you are love doing , but not per se, but as a part of a larger direction (*or mindset that would help you to develop a viable working practice that would provide much value and help many people (beyond yourself)*).
2. **What the world needs.** In order to have a clear understanding of what it is in demand and the general direction you have to follow in order to coincide to this vector (*if you want your efforts to have an impact on the "real" world*)
3. **What you can be paid for.** In order, you would know how you can

make some money by your efforts.

4. **What you are good at.** In order to know how to provide value to the people really need it (*and get paid for*)

Thinking of this line, might help you to see with **clarity** where you want to **focus** your efforts and how to develop your working position in this new world economy!

***Question: What do you say? You can leave your comments or your questions, by [clicking here](#).***



# What's your next action? Have you start planning your life and business?

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