

VISION BUILDING:

The Seven Life Structures



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One of my favorite sayings attributed to Jesus is “turn the other cheek.” Some folks interpret this to mean be a doormat and don’t stand up for yourself. If you are struck on one side of your face, turn and allow yourself to be struck on the other side. There’s a different interpretation I like better, for two reasons. First, it’s from translations of the original Aramaic language, the language Jesus actually spoke. That makes it more credible to me. Secondly, it just makes more sense when you consider it in the context of Jesus’ overall teachings. “Turn the other cheek” is an instruction to take a different point of view, to look at something a new way. When you literally turn your cheek, you must turn your head to face a different direction, and this gives you a different vantage point on your world. Personal growth is often about seeing life from a new vantage point. For me, a new vantage point is my greatest source of “aha’s.” I invite you to use this book as a way to “turn the other cheek.”

Personal growth is the process of becoming who we must become in order to have the life we desire. Often our growth is motivated by a conversation in our heads that goes something like, “I need to be more of this, or less of that, or more like so-and-so.” “I need to overcome this bad habit or develop this better one.” “I need to be nicer to my sister and eat more oat bran.” At best, this method offers mixed results and a lot of frustration. It’s based on

something being “wrong” or missing in your life. The negative stimulus-response method of inspiration is not a bad way to learn what you don’t want, but overall it doesn’t feel good. It doesn’t have the clear high-minded purity of living from vision. Living from vision means *clarifying and claiming an ideal state, consciously designing your desired future, and allowing the vision to come into form*. Living from vision feels better and works better.

When you have a vision for one area of your life it will show up in every area of your life. This is a natural process. For example, if you hold a vision of greater prosperity, you’ll find more expendable income means something to your physical well being, to your peace of mind, to your creativity, to your relationships, etc. If you hold a vision for healthier relationships, you’ll find your improved work relationships will cause you to be more creative and fulfilled in your job, and you’ll experience greater emotional peace of mind, and greater prosperity. These are more than just side effects. They are the natural result of the holistic nature of life. Your life is an integrated system—a change in one aspect affects the whole.

Conversely, if you have a blind spot in one area of life it leaves a trail in all areas. If you want to know where your blind spots are, just look at your life. Your blind spots have themes—trails that run through all your life structures. For example a blind spot having to do with supply might show up as financial lack, lack of worklife creativity, lack of fulfilling relationships, lack of emotional joy, and a lack of physically enjoyable activities. There will always be good, logical reasons and excuses for these lacks, and you may

not always be able to connect the dots and see the theme. But it's there nonetheless.

Maybe you already have a solid understanding of the power of your thoughts, the presence of God's love in your life and the metaphysics that ties it all together. Maybe you know that you are programmed to thrive, to be happy, productive and at peace. Yet perhaps your life doesn't always reflect what you know. **Visionbuilding: The Seven Structures of Life** is a tool to help you look at your life, piece by piece, so you can see the blind spots. Once seen, some will go away rather magically, others will require some strategic attention.

Use the ideas that follow to bring God-awareness to each structure. This is your primary goal. It is a simple system. The closer you are to God in your mind and heart the better life becomes. God is ready and waiting for your green light to participate. God always has a better idea. The key is surrender. Let go of your human doing, let go and let God, as the saying goes. Allow yourself to be lifted up to the God vibration in each life structure, the active presence of God. In this way, your life keeps getting better and better.

A structure is a framework that holds something together or through which something flows. The building that houses your favorite fast food joint is held together by its structure. A gasoline engine is a structure through which gasoline flows and is transformed into energy to run your old Pinto. You can see that the structure isn't the whole story of the building or the car, but it is a *vantage point* for observing the whole story. We're going to look at your life through seven structures. The point of dissecting life this way is that

sometimes looking at the whole disguises important information about its parts, and you can only learn that information by considering the parts separately. If you show up at a hospital and say, “I hurt,” they’ll need to know more in order to help you. They’ll ask you questions and take X-rays to find out *where* you hurt, why, and what it means before deciding what’s next. Our process is a way of finding out more precisely where you hurt, why, and what it means, in order for you to help yourself create the life you want.

If you don’t know it yet, please understand that your beliefs create your reality. What you believe is what you get. This is an absolute law of life. It doesn’t apply just sometimes or just to some people. Metaphysics is real, verifiable, and powerful. Your beliefs manifest precisely. The universe doesn’t read between the lines. It accepts your beliefs absolutely, literally, and turns them into your experience. What you believe manifests. There’s no going back to redefine what you really meant to believe. What you believe is what you get.

The exercises below are designed to help you change your beliefs that are creating your unacceptable experiences. Notice the word “unacceptable.” It is a strong word. You won’t be motivated to change by anything less. You must be at a point where you say, “This is no longer acceptable. I won’t accept it any longer. I can and I will change it, no matter what.” When you reach the point of saying that, you’re ready to get results.

Here are the Seven Structures of Life. After you read them you can do either the group and/or individual exercises that follow to help you build your vision throughout each life structure.

THE SEVEN LIFE STRUCTURES

NO. 1: PHYSICAL

In order to build your vision you must attend to your physical being. It does not treat you well if you ignore it. Just like all the structures of life, your physical body is a manifestation of your consciousness. It is created by the contents of your mind. Most of us don't believe this, at least in absolute terms. It is true anyway. The laws of the universe are absolute. You wouldn't argue that gravity only works sometimes, or that rainbows present their colors in red-to-violet sequence only sometimes. If stress weakens your immune system and managing your stress with your conscious mind keeps you healthier, it is conversely true that increasing your stress with your subconscious mind will get you sick. Sometimes big time, life-threatening sick. Your body offers great clues to your consciousness. In case you are one of the few people on the planet unfamiliar with Louise Hay's landmark work on the subject, see her classic "You Can Heal Your Life." It will open your eyes to the mind-body connection in ways you couldn't have imagined, and show you how you can control your health by controlling your thoughts. Change happens in biological time, so your body will "mark" the change process. You can monitor your changing

consciousness by monitoring your body. It's also worth noting that you are more than your physical body. You are not your body, you *have* a body. The you that is eternal currently inhabits that body and will, at some time, move on to a different expression. Remembering this can help you detach your ego from your physical being, and focus on what's important—the eternal you.

NO. 2: EMOTIONAL

It is useful to divide this life structure into two categories, emotions and feelings. Emotions are the ego's reactions to events that are real or imagined. They are why you still don't speak to your aunt Tilly who told you your dog was ugly when you were ten. They are also why you haven't realized your dreams. Our most powerful emotion is fear. It will run your life if you let it. It is a beast we must ignore in order to subdue. It feeds and thrives on attention.

Feelings are of a different source than the ego. They come from the highest and best that is within us, our Godself. They are always an expression of God's love. Because love always overpowers fear, feelings are more powerful than emotions. When you are moved to reconcile with Aunt Tilly and treat her kindly, feeling has moved you. Spiritual qualities like compassion, courage, openness, caring, generosity, and kindness are feelings. Life mastery happens when you are able to live from your authentic feelings, not your reactionary emotions.

NO. 3: MENTAL

This life structure has to do with the nature of your mind. Your brain is a biological information processor that your mind controls. Your mind is your consciousness, the nature of your awareness. Your mind is what you use to change your life, to overcome your lower self, your fears and your ego, and to create the best life you can. Your mind allows you to learn, to create, and to be self-correcting and self-generating. Your mind is the portal to a greater spiritual awareness that will heal and empower your life. Health in this structure means you can focus, learn, create, control your thoughts, and find peace.

NO. 4: SPIRITUAL

This structure is about your concept of a higher power, and about your relationship with that power. With our limited human minds, we cannot know God fully. We can, however, experience God fully in the mystical, intuitive sense. Most of us have not had that full experience, and most of us operate with the God concept we were taught as children, and only what we understood with a child's mind. What is your experience of the presence of a higher power in your life? What is your operating definition of God? Do you make a distinction between God and institutionalized religion? Can you imagine a closer relationship with God that transcends religion? Awareness of your unity with God or a Universal Loving Presence is the goal of the spiritual structure of life.

NO. 5: SUPPLY

The life structure of supply is about resources that sustain and expand your life. Resources include money, opportunities, experiences, and creativity. If you look at your life and notice lack or limitation, you have some work to do on the life structure of supply. There are many good reasons you may find yourself in short supply, but they are probably not what you think.

The bottom line rests with *you*—not the economy, your job, your family origins, intelligence, credentials or anything else you may tell yourself. The healing of this life experience also rests with *you*. You can reconfigure your thinking about supply and experience a completely new day. That new day may contain more cold cash than its predecessors.

When pressed, however, most of us say our relationship with money is more about peace of mind, security and confidence than about a specific number of dollars. Poverty consciousness exists in the very wealthy, and prosperity consciousness exists in the dirt poor. The other resources that add up to the structure of supply follow suit. Once you focus your energy and change your thinking money flows to you, opportunities show up, resources for all your projects are there, and life gets richer in all ways. My book “Cash and Consciousness: 21 Days to Abundance” (2002 edition, Crowheart Media) can help you get there. It’s a 21day program of changing your thoughts, words, and deeds that create the prosperous life that is your natural right.

NO. 6: RELATIONSHIPS

Your greatest opportunity for growth as a human being is in the life structure of relationships. All relationships are partnerships, each party requesting, giving or receiving universal love. Universal love is not romantic love, but God's energy on earth. Healthy partnerships mean that each party both gives and receives, each can be authentically themselves, and each experiences harmony, caring, cooperation, peace, and fulfillment. The way you experience partnerships in your life will tell you if you have a blind spot in this structure.

Do you have healthy work relationships? Do you have close friends with whom you can be authentically yourself? How do you interact with service people? Do you have an intimate partnership—a significant other or mate? What are family gatherings like for you? In my audio-seminar “Sandpaper to Silk: Perfect Partnerships All The Time,” I teach a simple system for mastering the life structure of relationships by creating them from vision. I show you how to control your mind's tendency to set up expectations for how others “should” act, then reacting (emotionally, see #2) when they don't. I show you how to create a vision statement for every significant partnership in your life, and how to make that vision a reality.

NO. 7: CREATIVITY

The life structure of creativity includes work, career, sports, hobbies, art, human interactions, and creative expression in any form. Brain scan studies have found that the brain of a twenty-five year old and a seventy-five year old are virtually identical. Aging does not cause brain function deterioration. Lack of use does.

You are programmed to be a creator, a problem-solver, an innovator, a learner, an information processor, and a thinker. The universal law of physics called entropy dictates that any system (in this case your brain) will self-destruct unless new energy is added. You add new energy by exercising creativity.

Furthermore, you and I are God's channels for its creativity. God creates through us. In "Cash and Consciousness," my book on prosperity, I say "Money follows creativity, not craving." God seeds your mind with desires and ideas, and then funds them fully with all the financial and other resources required to bring them into form. If you are not attracting the resources you want in your life, look at the life structure of creativity. You have a creative genius within you, and a world waiting for what only you, as a unique expression of Spirit, can create.

Ask yourself "In which of the seven areas of life do I most want more POWER?" Approach it from the negative if you like, "Which area of life causes me the most frustration, fear, failure?" "Where do I feel most powerless?" Turn the answer around into a statement of your ideal. What would desire most as an ideal in that

aspect of your life? Write a vision statement for your selection. A vision statement is a description of what you would like to experience if life were perfect.

PREPARATION EXERCISE

“What is my God?” meditation and writing exercise

In the seminars and groups I facilitate, we often start with this exercise. If you are going to change your relationship with your higher power, that power had better be one that you want to be more chummy with! Be prepared to re-work your concept of God, or whatever you name the universal eternal power and presence. You may be moved to discard old childhood models of God that don't feel right. They probably aren't. They must be confronted because they can keep you stuck. It is important to define for yourself an unconditionally loving, supportive higher power to which you can feel personally connected. Through that power you will heal, grow, gain skills and courage to live the life that makes your heart sing—your vision. Still your mind as best you can, breathe deeply, relax and meditate on the question, “What is my mental concept of God, and how must I change that concept in order to move forward in my life?” Take notes afterward, and work toward a written definition of the highest and most positive, powerful concept of God you can imagine. It might feel silly or even sacrilegious to have a written definition of God. Do it anyway and know that God is supporting you in the process.

LIFE STRUCTURE EXERCISE– BY YOURSELF

Step One:

Select one structure for your attention right now. There is always one that is calling to you more than the others. You will recognize it intuitively if you just get still enough long enough. You can ask yourself these questions if you like. "If my life got better just in this one of the Seven Structures of Life, would I be happier and more fulfilled in all areas?" "Does this area contain most of my challenges right now?" "Do I have a life pattern in this area that I would like to change?" "Do I feel personally empowered in this area? (The area where you feel least powerful should be the area you choose).

Step Two:

Create for yourself a description of your ideal experience for this area of your life. Use descriptions of the experience rather than conditions. For example, "In my financial life I always feel powerful, never afraid. I always have more than I need. I am a good steward of money. I am free to do whatever I choose because I always have the required resources. Money comes to me doing what I love." Or, in the area of relationships, "All my relationships are harmonious. I am able to give and receive love. I accept others as they are—without judgment. I have a perfect intimate partnership, all the friends I desire, and a good business network. I feel supported by the people in my life." You get the idea. You are creating what you want, based on the experiences you now have that you no

longer want, and based on the desires you feel in your heart. You are creating a vision to aspire to and work toward. Remember it's all inner work. It is never about changing external circumstances, and it is absolutely never about changing other people.

Step Three:

Work with your statement until you have an affirmation: *a positive statement in the present tense—one short clear sentence that you are willing to be true now.* For example, “I always experience joy at work, no matter what.” “My mate and I live in complete harmony.” “All my labors lead to greater prosperity.” Get to work with your affirmations. Write them on index cards and carry them with you, create them as banners on your computer screen or PDA. Create one affirmation each week so you’ll stay focused and not let your energy be diluted by too many at once.

I am a great believer in the power of affirmations because I have witnessed their powerful results. You have 60,000-70,000 thoughts daily. That means that your sustained attention is necessary to implant new thoughts in your subconscious mind. Anything less just isn’t going to cut it. Old beliefs will predominate until they are transformed.

Affirmations are present tense declarative statements of what you desire to be true. For example: “My mate and I experience only loving harmony.” “My employer and I support each other’s creativity.” In working with your affirmations, begin with the phrase, “I am willing to fully experience this in my life now...” or “I am ready to accept this in my life now...” If you’re not used to working with

affirmations, they can seem awkward. Don't give up. They work.

Keep your attention on your vision. Use your heart—*not* your logical mind—to fuel it with energy and bring it into form. Act on its behalf however and whenever you are inwardly guided. Trust the process. Accept the guidance, intuition, ideas and resources that issue forth from your vision. And most importantly, remember that the purpose of your vision is to bring you joy in each structure of your life. Accept the joy. You have a right to it.

Here are some affirmations I use that help shift my focus from the dramas of life to the grace of God. “I turn this structure of my life completely over to God.” “I listen to the inner voice of spiritual truth.” “I act from the strong center of spiritual truth, above my surface personality.” “God always has a better idea, and I always yield to it.”

Step Four:

Create an action plan, commit to one action for this week that supports your affirmation for the week. Keep your action commitment in front of you all week also, so you won't “forget” to do it. In our mastermind groups, you must report back next week to the group on your action commitment. The power of accountability can work for you, too. Find a supportive partner to share your weekly commitment with, and ask that he or she hold you accountable to yourself. Report in at an appointed time each week.

LIFE STRUCTURE EXERCISE– WITH YOUR MASTERMIND GROUP

Step One:

Bring your vision description to share with your mastermind partners. You might want to provide copies for everyone. Remember this is a safe, confidential group where people care about you and care for you. Share these with each other and ask for support in creating your vision. Create your affirmations and your action commitment for the week from this vision statement. In our annual day-long VisionBuilding retreat each person creates annual vision statements for each area of life and an action plan to build each vision, including thoughts, beliefs and behaviors that must change. You can do this with your group in a less formal way, or on your own and use your group for support.

Step Two:

When you arrive, do a silent meditation together for about 5 minutes. No one needs to lead this unless someone feels moved to volunteer. Someone may close the meditation with a spontaneous invocation, or say, “We recognize the presence of Spirit in this time together. We surrender our fears and judgments and outmoded habits of thought to the power of Infinite Love. We accept this moment as a time of healing, empowerment, and forward motion into our ideal lives.”

Step Three:

Go around the room, each member sharing the life structure they choose and their vision for it. Set a time limit for each person and have someone act as timekeeper. Remember not to evaluate anyone's efforts or offer ideas or interpretations unless asked. Go around the room a second time, each person reading their self-assignment, affirmations and action commitments.

Step Four:

Close with a few moments of silence, someone can speak a closing prayer, or someone can read, "We give thanks for this time together, for the power of this group, and we go forward knowing Spirit always supports us in living lives of greater joy and fulfillment."

As you progress with your vision, affirmations, and actions, notice how your work is impacting all areas of your life, and notice how the chosen focus area changes.

Build your vision, seat it firmly in your mind, fuel it with your love and energy, and soon you will be living it. It is the difference between design and default. Your old life patterns will predominate unless you replace them with a vision of a new life. Time spent describing or analyzing what's wrong does not fuel your vision—it fuels your past. Your highest vision for your life has come to you from God so turn to God to overcome the fears and ego that will appear, and keep on keeping on. Living from vision is the best life ever!

Go to www.reverendmargaret.com to subscribe to Margaret's free workweek inspiration "T.G.I.M.– Thank God It's Monday!" and the "Weekly Power Principle." While you're there, check out her other writings, audios, and seminars. You may also reach her at (800) 264-9690.



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