

Looking at Life's Rules

Exercise 8. Looking at Your Own Rules of Life.

What are your "rules of life," the rules by which life works, for you? Make a list of up to ten of your rules. They might be empowering rules or constraining rules. You might actually live by them, or you might believe them, but not live by them.

Examples from some of my clients:

"Money is the root of all evil. "

"You can get anything you want out of life, if you're willing to pay the price. "

"People should be trusted until they prove they are untrustworthy. "

"People should not be trusted until they prove they are trustworthy. "

"Chance favors those in motion. "

What are your rules?

Procedure

1. Relax. (See the exercise entitled "Creating a Container for the Work" above.)

2. Reflect. From a calm, clear, centered place, ask yourself the question "What are my life rules?" Make notes in your learning journal or elsewhere for later review or use the space below (if you have printed this out). Use as much paper or as many characters in a digital file as necessary..

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| 1) |
| 2) |
| 3) |
| 4) |
| 5) |
| 6) |
| 7) |

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8)

9)

10)

Once you've written as many rules as you can -- no more than 10 -- process them using this guideline:

A. Look at each rule, one at a time. Look carefully at the underlying meaning of the rule. The words themselves will be key here as they will contain both your conscious and unconscious meanings.

B. Identify those rules that seem to be couched in negative terms.

C. Reframe them so that you get at the same meaning in a more positive and constructive manner.

D. Make notes of your reframing ideas. It may be best to collect all your note taking in a binder or by using a hardbound journal of some sort.

For example:

Rule: Money is the root of all evil.

A quick Google check reveals that this idea originates in a quotation from *The Bible*, usually cited as "1 Timothy 6:10." Here's what it says in the King James Version, but just about any version will say something very similar:

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Ah ha! It doesn't actually say that money is evil! It says that "the love of money" is the problem.

If I'm a person who has been passively following a life rule that says "Money is the root of all evil" by behaving in a way that helps me avoid having money or focusing on money, I will probably have to change this rule so that it allows me to become more business like. After all you can't stay in business if you don't make a profit and money is the measure of that.

So, I might reframe this rule to be something like one or more of the following:

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Don't seek money just for money's sake.

Money can do a lot of good in the world.

It's not the money, it's how you spend it.

Again, I urge you to find a learning partner or group with whom to discuss exercises like this.

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