

DEFOGGING YOUR LIFE

Confucius say, “Life really simple, but we make complicated.” Nature proves him right. From acorns to oaks. From trickles to mighty rivers. From a 4-pound egg 6 inches in diameter, to a fully-grown 8-foot, 350-pound ostrich the world’s biggest bird, built to run 40 mph for up to 30 minutes at a stretch.

We’re also adept at bollixing up matters by saying, “Will you marry me?” and “Don’t worry; the kids’ll get scholarships” and “Lighten up; I only took a few limbs off your tree to improve my view.”

E.F. Schumacker says, “Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction.”

Einstein believed “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

Elbert Hubbard described that process: “The sculptor produces the beautiful statue by chipping away such parts of the marble block as are not needed - it is a process of elimination.”

DaVinci brushed it off: “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

And D.H. Mondfleur gave us this set-up for Hang Time: “Eliminate physical clutter. More importantly, eliminate spiritual clutter.”

If you’re feeling fractured and fuzzy, you’ve come to the right place because we’re going to use the clutter-buster, fogcutter, focusing tool that can, in 10 minutes, focus your entire life!

I spent last Saturday in Orlando with Bobb Biehl, one of America’s master strategic planners. He’s been working with leaders and organizations for 30 years, helping them clarify and simplify their personal lives and businesses. He taught us many tools to do that. We’ll test-drive one of his most powerful ones. It’s called

Getting Your Life Into Focus

Every leader now and then hits patches when visibility is low, or the wheels seem to be falling off. When this happens, it’s time to take the “50,000 foot view” of your life, and find your North Star because we all need to know which way is North in our lives.

Working with hundreds of leaders, Biehl predicts that many Boomers, thanks to energy and good health, will retire later than 65, an age when many feel finally prepared to really be effective! With so many years hopefully ahead, we dare not waste any of them. So, here’s how to get focus quickly for life’s home stretch by locating your personal North Star, using the 5 points of the North Star: God, Purpose, Dream, LifeWork and Legacy.

Since the broadest context in which we may place our life is between History (the past) and Eternity (the future), and since both emanate from the Creator, here's Question #1:

#1 What's the first word that comes to mind when I say "God?" And if you were to tell someone today who God is, what would you say?

Write it down, and look up, please, when you're finished.

#2 For what reason did God put you on this earth?

#3 A Dream keeps you energized all your life, fueling your spirit without needing much outside encouragement or stimulation. Define your LifeDream by answering Question #3: what difference do you hope to make for God before you die?

#4 LifeWork is the activity that's worthy of the time, energy and money you have left in life. What will be your LifeWork?

#5 Finally, your Legacy. What do you want to leave behind after your life on earth is over?

By unpacking five short questions, in only a few minutes, isn't it astounding how clear things that were so complicated can become! Biehl recommends revisiting these clutter-busters every 30 days. **Now let's hear your answers.**

Here are mine:

#1 When I heard the word "God," I thought ... "accepted." To describe Him, I might say, "God is your Creator and Redeemer. He made you, forgave you of your sins because of His Son Jesus' death for you on the cross, and He wants to be with you always."

#2 I believe God put me on earth to believe in, trust and enjoy Him one-on-one and with as many others as possible.

#3 My LifeDream? Before I die I want to have reflected God's love and acceptance to my wife Liz, to my family and to others in such a way that He'll be attractive and irresistible to them.

#4 I believe my LifeWork is to help others define their calling in life (including God's call), define their dream, and help them live it.

#5 I hope my Legacy will be that my family and others will know that nothing matters more than knowing, following and serving God.

Let's go to the Manufacturer's Handbook to see what God says about "Focusing Your Life."

James 4:13-17 James, Jesus' half-brother, writes: "And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, 'Today--at the latest, tomorrow--we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money.' You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, 'If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that.' As it is, you're full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil."

Matthew 16:24-26 Jesus said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

Luke 6:46-49 Jesus said, "You don't get wormy apples off a healthy tree, nor good apples off a diseased tree. The health of the apple tells the health of the tree. You must begin with your own life-giving lives. It's who you are, not what you say and do, that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds. Why are you so polite with me, always saying 'Yes, sir,' and 'That's right, sir,' but never doing a thing I tell you? These words I speak to you are not mere additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They're foundation words, words to build a life on. If you work the words into your life, you're like a smart carpenter who dug deep and laid the foundation of his house on bedrock. When the river burst its banks and crashed against the house, nothing could shake it; it was built to last. But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you're like a dumb carpenter who built a house but skipped the foundation. When the swollen river came crashing in, it collapsed like a house of cards. It was a total loss."

Proverbs 3:5-7 "Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to GOD! Run from evil!"

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