

April: WEEK ONE



SELF-IMPROVEMENT

THE AGENDA:

Discussion: What kind of person do I wish to be? How can I become the type of person I wish I was? What are some of my best qualities? What things about myself do I wish I could change? Which of these things am I able to change?

- ◇ 'Crafting a Personal Mission Statement'
- ◇ 'Creating the Type of Life You Want'



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- ◇ Bring a blanket and snacks and go on a picnic outside.
 - ◇ Play 'I Spy' or spot cloud shapes.
 - ◇ Construct a Bug Zoo and collect some bugs outside. Remember to set them free when you are done!

Crafting a Personal Mission Statement

A personal mission statement explains who you are and want to be, and what you stand for. You can use it to guide you when making choices and decisions, large and small, by asking yourself – ‘does it help me become who I want to be?’ A personal mission statement also helps you explain who you are to others.

A person mission statement should answer 3 questions:

(1) What is my life about – what is my life’s purpose?

(2) What do I stand for – what are my values?

(3) What accomplishments am I working toward that will help me fulfill my life’s purpose in a manner consistent with my values?

Step 1: Clarifying purpose and values.

A. Write a list of at least 20 talents you have – pretend there is a big reward for coming up with each one.

B. What excites you about your life? About the world? What angers you about your life? About the world?

C. What would a really good day be like for you? Where would you be? What would you do? Imagine anything – it doesn’t have to be true.

D. Imagine that today is your 30th birthday and a reporter is writing a story about what you have done. What would you hope your friends, the people you work with, family members would say about you to this reporter? What difference would you hope to have made in their lives? How do you want to be remembered?

E. Imagine yourself a 100 years old, surrounded by your loved ones – talking with them in a comfortable, relaxed setting. These people have gathered to learn from you and your wisdom. What would you tell them is important in life? What really matters, looking back on your life?

Step 2: Drafting a Mission Statement.

Look over what you've written during Step 1. Then look again at the 3 questions a mission statement should answer:

What is my life about – what is my life's purpose?

What do I stand for – what are my values?

What accomplishments am I working toward that will help me fulfill my life's purpose in a manner consistent with my values?

Go ahead and write a rough draft of your personal mission statement. It should be short but still tell who you are. When you read your personal mission statement, you should feel something, like 'yes, that's who I really am!'

Keep your draft personal mission statement with you and look at it several times during the day – see how it makes you feel. You may want to bring it to the next several meetings with your mentor to talk about it and see if you want to change it.

Creating the Kind of Life You Want

In order to create the kind of life you want, it helps to have a clear picture of where you're headed – your personal mission. It's equally important to make a plan on how to get there – how to make your dreams come true – one day at a time.

To help you do that it is a good idea to learn how to set goals and objectives for yourself. Your goals are the things you want to do over the next several years. Your objectives are the smaller steps you're going to take – tomorrow, next week, next month – to get there. By writing down goals and objectives for yourself you are taking a big step toward making them happen. The next step will be to actually do these things – and keep a record. This is something you and your mentor can work on together over time.

Writing Goals

Here are some of the kinds of goals a young person like you might be interested in setting.

- Art/Music/Creativity – what goals do I have for my creative side?
- Education – where do I want to be in several years in terms of my education?
- Relationships – 3 years from now, what do I want my relationships to be like? Do I want more friends? More time with family? A better relationship with my dad? To be married? To be single?
- Spiritual – what kind of spiritual growth or involvement do I see for myself over the next few years?
- Sports/Fitness/Health – if I am successful what will my health and fitness be like several years down the road?

Work – what direction do I want to go in terms of my future career?

Example:

One young person might write:

In three years from today, I will be:

In a 4-year college full-time, pursuing a nursing degree

Living on my own – not married – and not fighting with my father

Working part-time as a nurse's aide or home health aide

Taking piano lessons

Working out – more fit

Active in a church near my college – doing community service

What are your goals? Write out a goal for each area below that's important to you:

Art/Music/Creativity _____

Education _____

Relationships _____

Spiritual _____

Sports/Fitness/Health _____

Work _____

Writing Objectives

Objectives are the smaller steps you take to make progress toward your goal. To be useful, objectives need to answer the question “what will change, by how much, by when?”

Usually objectives work best when they are written for the next few months to a year. It’s hard to know what will change beyond that time frame, so its hard to set realistic objectives several years out.

Example

Let’s say you’re a sophomore in high school with the goal of obtaining a BA, some good objectives might be:

- Begin weekly study for the SAT by _____
- Talk with guidance counselor about requirements for admission and what I need to do by _____
- Improve GPA to _____ by _____

Get involved in at least _____(number) of extracurricular activities by _____(date)

Take some time to write the goals you just developed in the space below, and then write several objectives for each goal. You can do this with your mentor or on your own and then go over them together.

Here’s a tip on how to test if your objectives are solid – ask yourself, are they “SMART?” SMART stands for:

- S**pecific – do I know precisely what has to happen?
- M**easurable – how will I know if I’ve achieved this objective?
- A**ttainable – Is it realistic or do-able?
- R**esult-Oriented – will it really move me toward my goal?
- T**ime-Limited – does it have a due date?

If your goals are SMART, they’re solid – now go start doing them!
