



# Relationships *The Adlerian Team*

## Defining Purpose – Rules of Engagement

By Sue Smarkala

In a previous article on Manage Energy – Not Time, we looked at the four principles from The Power of Full Engagement, by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz. Their premise is: “Energy, not time, is our most precious resource.” This is a very important idea for parents and families. By managing our energy, which is a renewable resource, we escape the limiting paradigm of managing time, a non-renewable resource. The four sources of energy are: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical. As we shift our focus from managing time, to managing energy, we can produce major change in our lives and the lives of our families.

The first step toward a life of Full Engagement is by accessing our spiritual energy. This requires us to understand our deepest held values and the vision we have for our lives –our purpose.

### How Engaged are You?

“We become fully engaged only when we care deeply, when we feel that what we are doing really matters.” To measure the power of your purpose, choose a value between 1 and 10, to rate your answers to the following questions:

- How excited are you to get to work in the morning?
- How much do you enjoy what you do for its own sake rather than for what it gets you?
- How accountable do you hold yourself to a deeply held set of values?

If your total is above 27, you have a significant sense of purpose in what you do. If your total is below 22, you are likely going through the motions.

### The Key is Purpose

Defining your purpose is a conscious choice to live a life that is personally meaningful to you.

We all reflect occasionally on our purpose in life – professionally, personally. Writing of heroic exploits and searching for/living a life of meaning are time honoured human activities. Many box office successes focus on achieving the challenge of impossible goals – Lord of the Ring, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Finding Nemo. The story of achieving the protagonist’s intent is uplifting, exciting, energizing and so satisfying - appealing to people of all ages.

### The Elements of Purpose

Purpose becomes a powerful and enduring source of energy when you see it as a challenge you choose to achieve, rather than a threatening, onerous responsibility you must meet. Positive purpose comes from within you. It is an internal choice, not another’s choice, not a ‘should’. And finally, purpose is about you in relationship with others, not personally self-focused.

Purpose is made up of values and vision. Determining your deepest values and then articulating your expression of those values in your life, through actions, creates the vision you have for your life. A value is a roadmap for action. Your vision is the goal of those actions.

### Values

Choose your deepest values from this checklist. Add to this list if necessary.

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Authenticity       | Happiness          |
| Balance            | Harmony            |
| Commitment         | Health             |
| Compassion         | Honesty            |
| Concern for others | Humour             |
| Courage            | Integrity          |
| Creativity         | Kindness           |
| Empathy            | Knowledge          |
| Excellence         | Loyalty            |
| Fairness           | Openness           |
| Faith              | Perseverance       |
| Family             | Respect for others |
| Freedom            | Responsibility     |
| Friendship         | Security           |
| Generosity         | Serenity           |
| Genuineness        | Service to others  |

### Values hold you to a different standard for managing energy.

Being fully aware of your deepest values informs your actions. If you value **Knowledge**, you will be drawn to the seasonal college course catalogues. In living that value, you will choose a course that interests you and commit to the time necessary to achieve new learning. If **Family** is a primary value, building family connections into your day – a story before bedtime for your child is a priority. With the value of **Health**, following an exercise regime in your week provides a physical component to your life engagement.

**Vision – how you intend to invest your energy.**

You may have a professional and a personal vision statement or a single vision statement. It needs to be overarching, and challenging, a reach, so that there is always possibility in achieving it. It will embody your values; vision is a blueprint for action. It clarifies, sets the bar. Your vision statement allows you to make energy choices reflectively. ‘How can I bring this part of my vision alive?’

**An example of a Personal Vision Statement:**

Deepest Values: Family, Respect & Kindness toward others, Excellence, Integrity, Health

Personal Vision Statement: My highest priority in life is my wife and children. When we are together, I am committed to giving them all of my energy and attention. To make that possible, I must take care of myself physically.

**Full Engagement**

Knowing you are designing your actions in tune with your deepest values, creates spiritual alignment. Acting out of your values clarifies your mental processes. As you feel mentally focused, being congruent with what is most important to you, you are emotionally connected and physically energized.

Consider these questions to assist you in monitoring your engagement level:

How powerfully do you feel your purpose on a day to day basis?

What are your deepest core values?

What would others say are your values? What is your ‘walk’ telling them?

How will you build a vision from your core values?

A life of Full Engagement is a goal for many of us and wonderful modeling for our children. Learning to understand ourselves and our sources of energy is an ongoing challenge that holds much reward. It is in that self knowledge that we will find our balance and deep personal satisfaction. It allows us to be fully present in our relationships and adds much to our family life.

Reference: Jim Loehr, Tony Schwartz, *The Power of Full Engagement*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2005

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