

## 10 - CONCLUSION

“There are no secrets to success.

It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”

- Colin Powell<sup>196</sup>

Congratulations! You are now ready to achieve success in every area of your life! As we discussed in Chapter 8 (Vision), our definition of success is to make consistent progress on any worthwhile goal. Also in the Vision section, we recommended you start with small wins or put another way: pick the “low-hanging” fruit! By choosing the fruit close to the ground, it is easier to pick (you don’t need a ladder nor to climb the tree). So, starting with small goals helps you to accomplish them more easily and then build on your success (as depicted in Figure 141<sup>197</sup>). Finally, in our discussion on discipline from Chapter 3, we recommended a concrete method to achieve those wins called the “nibble approach”. Using those three techniques – the right definition of success, small wins and the nibble approach – you will begin to improve your life immediately. These techniques have been proven many times by the author’s over the course of our lives. They are not wishful thinking or merely hope – they work!

How can we be so sure? In the very first Chapter, we promised to provide a *practical* framework for success and we believe we have achieved that. Let’s think about just how practical the Philosophy of Intentional Living is ... first, we begin with the stability layers. The stability layers are areas of our lives that follow Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and play a support role to our ambition. There are 5 stability layers: spiritual, economic, health, emotional, and social. Each layer both supports the layer above it and the rest of the framework. We will re-examine some of the highlights of these



Figure 141 Success!

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<sup>196</sup> As quoted in *The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell* (2003) by Oren Harari, p.164.

<sup>197</sup> This picture is in the public domain and available at: <https://pixabay.com/en/children-win-success-video-game-593313/>

layers in the next section; for now, let's focus on their support role in the overall framework. In essence, we focus on them first because they foster the right environment and produce the right set of conditions for your visions to flourish. In other words, we don't just jump right to Vision without being prepared to do so. We know that to be successful means that you need to have prepared for the task; you need to have the right resources marshaled; you need to learn the right skills and finally, you need to have the right attitude. Preparation before you act is practical. In the economic stability section, we likened this to building a launch pad for your rocket ship. A launch pad offers a stable foundation; supply depot and support structure for the rocket ship. From that stable foundation, you are ready to launch the Rocket ship of your dreams (as depicted in Figure 142<sup>198</sup>)! 3, 2, 1 ... Lift Off!

Of course, that rocket ship is a metaphor for envisioning your future life and having the practical ability to design the life you want. Besides giving you an overall framework for success, the practicality of our approach is also demonstrated in the concrete models we provide for many vague concepts. This is a direct effect of our engineering backgrounds, because in engineering, you cannot build against vague or ambiguous concepts. So, with that desire for precision in mind, we rejected discussing topics in a vague or general manner like Love, Purpose or Bonding and instead decided to break those topic downs by using a detailed model of how they work. While models



Figure 142 Lift Off!

are only simplified approximations of how the world works, they are useful tools for understanding and providing a set of concrete steps for implementing those concepts. For example, using the model of Love allows you to answer a hard question like, "How do I know if I am in Love

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<sup>198</sup> This image is in the public domain and available at: <https://pixabay.com/en/rocket-launch-rocket-take-off-nasa-67649/>

with someone?” You can now answer, “If you have traversed the Love cycle, then you are in Love... What does that mean precisely? You connect, apply effort, and sacrifice for the other person. By doing that you experience emotions, thoughts and growth”. That answer is much better than; “you know it when you experience it.” Actually, no you don’t - because feelings, especially in relation to the romantic period of Love, are often deceiving. Many people think, “when the feelings are gone, the love is gone”; which is incorrect. Many times that is just when true love begins.

Besides models, we have presented many concrete examples, sidebars and illustrative images. This is not a dry, stuffy read of dense text; instead it is an interactive, hands-on, visually entertaining feast of ideas. Those ideas are carefully knit together into a cohesive framework. That framework guides you step-by-step upwards towards greater levels of achievement. Finally, the practicality of those techniques shines through every element of the I.L. pyramid. For example, in the balance section, the practicality is evidenced in our directly addressing both the need for rest and the difficulties of an ever-changing environment. We are neither naive nor blind to the challenges everyone faces in life. We have faced many of those challenges and carefully crafted strategies to mitigate them! Now, let’s examine how each area of the I.L. Pyramid reinforces the others areas – or simply, how everything fits together!

### **Putting it all together**

“That’s another hallmark of truth, is that it snaps things together. People write to me all the time and say it’s as if things were coming together in my mind. It’s like the Platonic idea that all learning was remembering. You have a nature, and when you feel that nature articulated, it’s like the act of snapping the puzzle pieces together.”

- Jordan Peterson<sup>199</sup>

As depicted below in Figure 143, the Intentional Living Pyramid is carefully *designed* so that the elements are related and support each other. You should traverse the pyramid from the bottom up and from left to right.

The I.L. Pyramid begins with the foundation layer (across all three axes) of spiritual stability. Integrity, Discipline and Love form the backbone of your life by giving you a strong and honorable character. From there you focus on your economic stability in order to be able to support yourself, sustain yourself and eventually thrive in the market place. Some people don’t like to think of themselves as an “economic being” but that is

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<sup>199</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/jordan\\_peterson\\_926974](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/jordan_peterson_926974)

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTENTIONAL LIVING

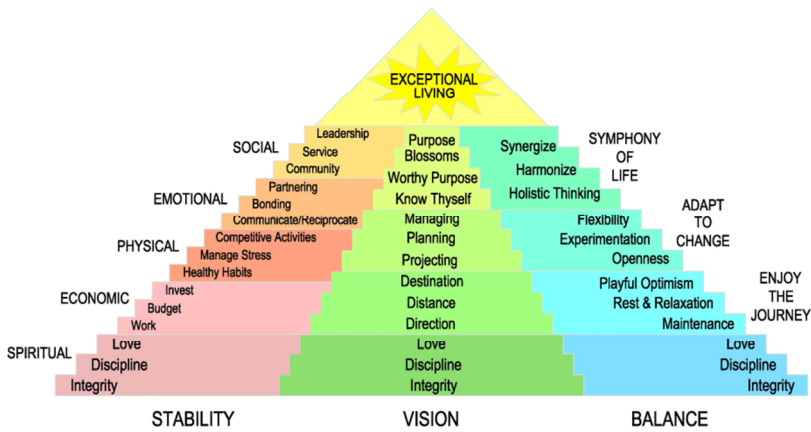


Figure 143 All Elements of the I.L. Pyramid fit Together!

ignoring reality. Intentional people never ignore reality – we accept it for what it is and adapt to it (and sometimes change it by envisioning a different future). From there we move to the right and begin to implement goal setting, which is the first part of envisioning. Of course, you begin with small goals and learn the art of hitting what you aim for (aka targeting). You learn to project an objective forward by setting a direction, distance and destination. You understand that when you are progressing towards *any* worthwhile goal – you are successful! With these three steps (spiritual foundation, economic value and goal setting), you have begun to move forward in your life. You have begun to live intentionally by setting a course for your life. This is a very powerful statement and strong beginning! At precisely that time you are ready to assess where you are by slowing down and stepping back in order to “Enjoy the Journey”. Yes, we have moved to the balance section of the pyramid and completed one revolution of the Intentional Living Cycle as depicted below in Figure 144.

Figure 144 shows the Intentional living cycle that follows the stability → vision → balance pattern. Below those categories are different components of that same pattern: prepare → act → assess and strengthen → build → enjoy are different ways to describe the same cycle. And what a cycle it is! On the surface, it seems obvious... but the truth is – most people don’t follow this cycle. They skip steps, fail to adequately prepare, don’t understand envisioning, don’t bother assessing what they did well and what they did poorly, and don’t reflect on where they have been and where they want to go. In other words, they really only *think* they already do this cycle do this cycle but they actually don’t know how to do it well. If you

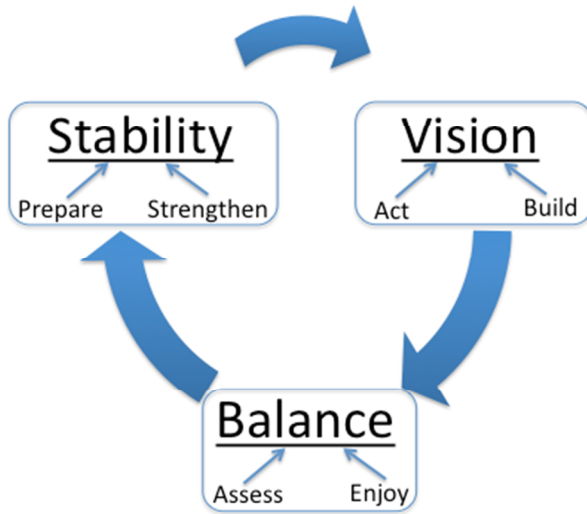


Figure 144 Intentional Living Cycle (aka Stability-Vision-Balance Cycle)

follow the “Stability-Vision-Balance” cycle, you will be successful – period. After each iteration of the cycle, you climb the pyramid and achieve greater levels of success. And remember, each element in itself has a set of stairs to achieve that element. So, *climb baby, climb!* Now, let’s refresh our memory on the key highlights and lessons learned for each element of the I.L. Pyramid!

### Highlights

“Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind  
and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality.”  
- Earl Nightingale<sup>200</sup>

Let us now look back on this exciting journey of discovery that we have come through. At the same time as we remember some key details, we will summarize and analyze the meaning of the individual elements within the context of the whole. So, let’s jump in with both feet and begin where the book began – with the question:

### Why Intentional Living?

In the very first chapter we set out to do two things: first, to explain

<sup>200</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/earl\\_nightingale\\_390812?src=t\\_repetition](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/earl_nightingale_390812?src=t_repetition)

what the philosophy of Intentional Living was and secondly, to tell you why it is different and thus, why you should be interested in it. So, to explain what Intentional Living was, we started with a personal anecdote (which illustrated it) and then a definition, which was:

**Intentional Living (IL) is a state of living  
where you have intention towards every activity in your life**

Of course, that definition relies on the definition of “intention” which we follow up with both a formal definition and a colloquial definition: “at its smallest, most atomic level, an intention is a ‘mini-goal’.” We continue defining this by detailing how you execute an intention via the Intention Cycle of Condition, Intention, Preparation, Action, New Condition, and Analysis (see Figure 1 on page 3). You should notice how this is a microcosm of the larger Stability-Vision-Balance cycle we discussed above.

A small but important part of this chapter debunks the myth of “I already do that!” There will be a huge temptation for people to think they already live intentionally because almost everyone has tried to steer their life, set a goal or state an intention at some time in their life. Some people may even state intentions quite often, but even that is not to the level we are talking about when we say, “every activity in your life.” We mean every single hour of every single day that you are directed towards your intentions in the areas of the pyramid! So, if it helps to think of this as “*extreme* intention” then that is what we mean!

We then answer, “How is IL different from other philosophies?” IL is practical, empowering and transcendent. We view the practicality of this philosophy as its most significant differentiator to most other philosophy books out there – as you know, the book is chock full of detailed diagrams, photos, quotes, concrete examples and anecdotes! All the vague concepts that other books only address at an abstract level like love, purpose, meaning, integrity and many others – we break down into detailed models and give you a clear understanding of HOW to achieve it! With these practical guidelines in hand, you are ready to “Enter the arena!” The arena of your life is a metaphor for the competitive world we all live in. But going into that fight we give you a powerful tool to take on the struggle of living: The Intentional Living Framework. The Intentional Living Framework is another way of looking at the IL Pyramid because it acts as a framework, which in turn “frames” and organizes the complexity of modern living. Having such a “frame” of reference is a very powerful tool because you can use this pattern (prepare, act, assess; or stability, vision and balance) in every endeavor you undertake no matter what career, family or service path you follow. Simply put – the authors know the pattern works

because we have used it successfully throughout our lives.

We end the chapter by answering, “How do you get started?” To answer that we examine motivation and passion and provide a detailed analogy of how you get passion in your life! Passion is what you get motivated about. Motivation is that short term push or excitement to do something. We warn you to stay away from Rain makers (toxic people that steal joy and enthusiasm) and instead surround yourself with Fire starters (energetic and ambitious people). At the end of this chapter, you should understand how intentions and intentional living can be a powerful change agent in your life!

### **Why Stability?**

This chapter refutes a pervasive myth perpetuated by Hollywood movies that the “only way to live” is to be reckless and carefree. Or even worse, that the best way to live is to live dangerously and “on the edge”. The myth is summed up in the phrase “Live Fast and Die Young”. This is the life of instant gratification, where the young and eager want the world and they want it now. Naturally, it focuses on the hedonistic side of life where pleasures are immediately satisfied. It ridicules the life of stability as the boring life of squares and nerds. Plainly stated, this myth is a lie – a fantasy perpetuated by fools. Why? Because fools forget they pay a price for that fast-living and it usually catches up to them. On the other side, the life of stability and delaying gratification serves you well by enabling you to launch your visions from a solid foundation. It affords you the opportunity to design the life of your choosing! So, from that perspective, stability is not boring at all.

**Stability is thrilling as it provides a tall,  
stable platform to see your future!**

Besides the myth of living fast, this chapter then takes on a second myth – the myth of “peak experience” by examining the successful person’s motivation matrix (see Figure 8 on page 16). Immature people run from one peak experience to the next – assuming that the quality of their life must be measured by the magnitude or the “intensity” of each experience. What they fail to understand is that there is another dimension to the mature person’s motivation matrix and that is sustainment. In other words, mature people want rewarding experiences that last. Thus, using both intensity and sustainment as the two axes that guide your motivation you see that Love and Creativity provided sustained fulfillment whereas pleasure is intense but fleeting. This is not to say mature people never seek pleasure

– they do but they just prioritize that below Love and creative endeavors (because those are the things that last).

The chapter continues by demonstrating via real life examples that the cost of hedonism and drugs are just too high a price to pay for such fleeting pleasure. The way to combat the allure of that sex and drug culture is to never forget the high price you pay for following that path. Many people have destroyed their lives by following that siren song. Don't be fooled by the peddlers or by Hollywood that it "won't happen to you." It is very unfortunate that when we are young, we feel invincible. We feel strong. That feeling of invincibility has caused many people to test that invincibility and destroy their future.

The chapter concludes by advising a "go slow" approach to your life – an approach where preparing before you launch your dreams pays off. An approach where you can build a life of quality because you are building on a strong, steady platform. You prepare, you gain experience, you build success layer by layer. That is the path of Stability and it is a very good path that is proven. That proven path works! When you understand that and can avoid the siren song of "fast living", you are ready to travel the path of stability.

## **Stability**

These chapters delve into details of 5 stability layers that make up the platform from which you launch your dreams. Those layers are Spiritual Stability, Economic Stability, Physical or Health Stability, Emotional and Relationship Stability, and finally Social Stability. They are layers of Stability precisely because they build upon each other. The importance of the order (or sequence) of layers was stressed as such:

**The *sequence* of steps matters for your Success;  
shortcuts are fantasy or luck.**

Your stability begins with spiritual stability because the quality of your character affects everything you do. As we previously said, think of the stability layers as building a platform (or a mini-house) from which to launch your visions. When building a house, the foundation begins with a set of "footings" which is concrete poured into holes from which the rest of the foundation (and structure) rests so that it does not sink into the ground. Applying that analogy to life you have to ask yourself – what anchors your life? What keeps you from being blown around in any direction by the winds of change? Or put another way:



**You intentionally anchor your life by  
confidently answering “Why am I alive?”**

That question is a question about purpose. So, we must begin there. The cornerstone of defining your purpose rests in whether the universe itself has a purpose. To that end, we begin stability with the base assertion that the universe itself has a purpose:

**Cornerstone: A Creator created the Universe with a purpose.**

Furthermore, we assert that the Universe (which follows our basic, empirical evidence of why and how we create things) was created for the purpose of “fostering, sustaining and nurturing life.” That is why the earth was created, that is why civilizations and societies are created, that is why you create a family and that is the purpose of the stability layers (to sustain and nurture your own life!). From a stability perspective, it is important to have a foundational belief (call it faith if you wish) that the universe was *not* a random occurrence. Thus, to us, the question of whether you believe in God is fruitless. It will never be empirically proven that God does or does not exist. Thus, to us, “Do you believe in God” is a much less interesting question than:

**Should you believe in God, the Creator?**

Believing the logical assertion that a God created the Universe with a purpose (just as humans do when we create a car, plane, or building) is both sound and reasonable. We assert this is a more reasonable position than its opposite. Furthermore, we strongly believe that the empirical evidence of the ramifications of that belief are overwhelmingly beneficial to our success in living an abundant life.

***Spiritual Stability***

Besides those anchor points, your spiritual stability is based on three characteristics: integrity, discipline and love. We begin by explaining integrity which has an outward expression of honesty and an internal representation of your soul. In essence, your honesty is the outward representation of the integrity (or soundness) of the spiritual purity of your soul. Thus, a strong, unwavering commitment to objective truth and honesty is the means for keeping your integrity intact. Your soul and its active element of conscience (which attempts to guide your actions towards the right path), is your individual connection to your divine nature. Our analogy for soul was the glass of the lamp, which houses this divinity (see

Figure 14 on page 31). Keep the integrity of your soul (fragile glass) free from smudges, soot and cracks. You do that by always being honest, open and transparent in your actions. This brings us to the next building block of spiritual stability, which enables you to execute intentions consistently and regularly: Specifically, to be consistent in your execution requires discipline.

**Discipline is your key ally in executing your intentions well.**

So, while an intention is casting a goal into the future, the way you get there is via discipline – spiritual discipline to insure your goal is worthy, mental discipline to plan the steps to your goal, and physical discipline to consistently and methodically carry out your plan on a day-by-day basis. While discipline is often associated with a regimen or recipe to achieve an outcome, it is the mental rigor that is the key to successful discipline. Simply put, mental toughness is the hallmark of discipline. This ability to put mind over matter will get you through when times get tough and you don't feel like striving towards your goals. That mental toughness will power the daily healthy habits you form to improve yourself. It is taking control of that extra time before and after work – your morning and evening hours – that will make all the difference in your success. Remember this:

**The things you do every day will have more of an overall impact on your success in life than almost anything else you do.**

So, while discipline gives us the means to achieve our goals, what gives us the motivation to do so: *Love*. Love of family, love for others, and love for life itself drives us. We have deep bonds with those that we love. That is the reason why we refused to settle for the vague, abstract definitions of love that are woefully inadequate to answer a basic question like, “how do I know if I truly love someone?” In fact, to answer that specific question, we created the Love cycle diagram as depicted in Figure 145 below. The diagram makes it easy to answer the question, by asking a question in return, “have you gone through one or more iterations of the love cycle, performed the actions therein and felt the effects?”

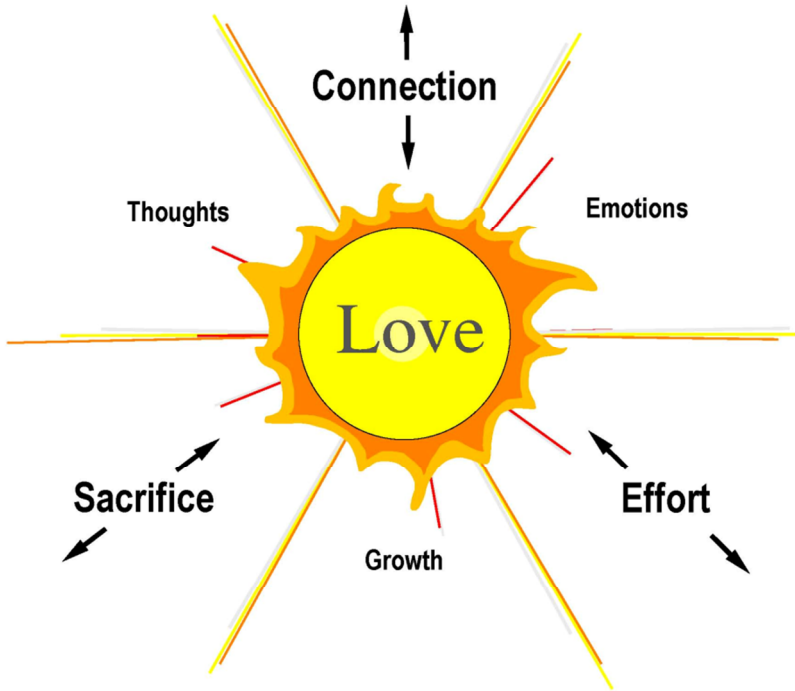


Figure 145 The Love Cycle

As you can see in the figure, the Love cycle is a set of actions that you do for Love and a set of effects experienced from those actions. First is the act of connecting with another person. You use communication to make that connection. From that connection you experience strong emotions (often very pleasant emotions). Once you have entered a relationship (via the connection) to love the other person requires reciprocal effort on the part of both parties. That requirement for effort, many times after the emotions have subsided, is what separates romantic love from true love. True love is the willingness to put effort into the relationship even when you don't "feel loving". From that effort you will experience the growth of character and growth of the bonds between you and your beloved. The final stage in the cycle is by far the most difficult, Love requires sacrifice of yourself. Simply stated, the ultimate expression of true love is the willingness to sacrifice your happiness, comfort and health for the happiness of your beloved. Without sacrifice, there is no attachment bond to the other person, and thus no love that stands the test of time (and the natural temptations and obstacles flesh is prone to). With sacrifice you experience all of the effects listed in the Love Cycle – thoughts, emotions and growth. And that causes the cycle to continue, each trip around the

cycle weaving another attachment bond to the other person – one thread at a time.

### ***Economic Stability***

We all need to drink, eat and sleep comfortably every day. Thus, our survival requires a minimal level of economic success. In other words, we must be able to provide for our basic needs. Of course, in intentional living we want to do more than survive – we want to thrive! Thus, our economic success requires us to master three building blocks: the right attitude towards work, the ability to budget our income and expenses, and finally the ability create and smartly invest surplus funds. Let's summarize each of those areas.

Your attitude towards work will affect how well you work. You must look at work with the correct perspective. Regardless of what kind of work you do, understand this:

#### **Work is always valued effort that is inherently meaningful!**

At its most basic level, work is merely an exchange of value. You are providing your effort, skill and time in exchange for an agreed upon amount of money. Working hard and being industrious is the key to moving up in your career and for being able to save for a rainy day. We illustrated this concept by analyzing Aesop's fable of the grasshopper and the ant. The grasshopper only wants to play while the sun is shining while the ants work every day to collect and store food. When winter comes the grasshopper is freezing and starving while the ants are warm and fed. The moral of the story is that work is both important and necessary. If you compare it to a healthy diet, work is analogous to the staples in your diet (fish, vegetables, meat, etc.) whereas play is akin to the sweets (cake, cookies, etc.). To have a healthy diet you eat staples regularly and sweets occasionally. Keeping that same balance in regards to work produces a healthy budget. The first rule of budgeting is:

#### **Rule #1: Your monthly inflow must be greater than your outflow.**

The rule above uses an analogy of funds to the pooling and storing of water. Savings is akin to a pool of water. Income is analogous to funds flowing into the pool (inflow). Expenses are akin to funds flowing out of the pool (outflow). Budgeting is an exercise in discipline where you track your income and expenses to insure the above rule holds. To have a

healthy budget your inflows must exceed your outflows. How do you insure that happens, you implement rule #2:

**Rule #2: Limit your spending on what you ‘need’  
not on what you ‘want’.**

You must spend money on things you need; however, in a capitalist society you are constantly bombarded with advertisements that attempt to expand your definition of need to encompass things that are just nice to have (or in actuality, “wants”). In this section of chapter 4, we examined the example of buying a luxury car versus an economical car. The purpose of mastering rules #1 and #2 is to create a surplus of funds every month that you can save. By saving (or pooling these funds to stick with our flow analogy), you will be able to handle the inevitable unexpected expenses that arise (like a car breaking down or you getting sick). This type of saving is called a “rainy day fund” which should be equivalent to about six months of your monthly salary (in case of the worst case scenario, where you had to find a new job). After you have both a surplus of funds being saved each month and a rainy day fund, you are then ready to put your surplus money to work for you by investing. Our first and most important rule of investing is:

**Since almost all investments entail a risk,  
it is important to only invest money that you can afford to lose.**

The rest of the economic stability section covers most of the various types of investments and how they compare in terms of risks versus rewards. Additionally, we cover three techniques for successful investing: become debt free and invest early, plan your retirement, and diversify your investments. Following the simple (yet effective) rules in this section, will put you on firm financial footing that can support the other stability layers (like health, relationships, etc.) and the discovery of your purpose in life (discussed in the Vision chapter)! Now let’s examine the highlights of the next stability chapter, physical or health stability!

***Physical Stability***

The objective of physical/health stability is more than just maintaining an adequate level of health – it is exuding vitality and an abundance of energy! The three building blocks to achieving this vitality are: creating healthy habits, managing your stress and engaging in competitive or challenging activities! Let’s examine the highlights of each of those building blocks.

Healthy habits are the things you do every day to improve your health! You create these habits in four key areas: sleep, hygiene, dieting and exercise. For sleep habits, you should develop a consistent sleep schedule in order to insure you get enough sleep to feel rested and ready for the day! For hygiene, you keep yourself and your living area clean and free from dirt and germs (this includes proper dental hygiene). For dieting, you discipline yourself to eat healthy food in the right portions. We do not recommend any particular diet and instead believe that “moderation in all things” is the best advice in this area. Finally, we come to what we consider the most important healthy habit for your overall success in intentional living: daily exercise! Physical exercise comes in three basic varieties: cardio training, strength training and core (aka stomach) training. All three are important to maintain health and vigor. Cardio keeps your heart and lungs healthy (some cardio, like swimming also helps build strong muscles). Strength training keeps your bones and muscles strong which helps ward off injury. Core training helps keep your stomach toned and improves back support. We feel so strongly about daily exercise that it must be stressed:

**You must exercise to have an exceptional life!**

For those who don't currently exercise, you should consider starting small. Daily walks have been proven to drastically affect your health! Exercise improves your health, increases your metabolism (which helps in maintaining a healthy weight) and floods your body with powerful, uplifting chemicals called endorphins. Getting these benefits every day is a powerful motivator to face the day with a positive attitude. Feeling strong and healthy helps you tackle the inevitable obstacles that will come your way. In short, exercise gives you an edge!

The next building block for physical stability is to use techniques to manage the stress in your life. Stress is like a silent killer that sneaks up on you. You may think you are handling all the stresses in your life but without taking active measures to manage your stress, it can be there undermining your health in the background. Stress is caused by demands and pressures put on your life by external forces that cause your body to go into “fight or flight” mode. Continual, overwhelming stress breaks the body down by causing heart issues, weight gain, hyper-tension, and many other symptoms. So, how do you manage stress? Three excellent techniques for dealing with stress are to engage in hobbies, meditate and adequate resting. Additionally, as covered before, exercise is also an excellent stress reducer.

The final building block for physical stability is engaging in competitive or challenging activities. Why challenge yourself? To avoid plateauing in

your health, it is best to continually strive for a new physical goal and competitive activities do that. For example, 5k or 10k races are an excellent way to challenge yourself by charting your time and striving to “beat your personal best”. So, while competitive activities may involve other people, you truly only need to compete with yourself. When you embrace competitive or challenging activities, it increases your drive to improve yourself. You have a direct, clear motivating factor that can lead to you developing intensity in your workouts and in your performance. Developing intensity for your physical health is a powerful counter-force to aging and a strong reason to consider adding competitive activities to your health routine. Now let’s examine the highlights of the next stability chapter, emotional or relationship stability!

### ***Emotional and Relationship Stability***

Emotional stability and relationship stability are two sides of the same coin. Emotional stability involves achieving a state of emotional control and emotional maturity that you then use to develop strong, healthy relationships. So, emotional stability refers to your internal state while relationship stability refers to the extension and external application of emotional maturity to others.

First, to understand emotional stability, you must understand emotions. As stated previously, emotions are a physical and mental state of being often accompanied by intense feelings. Examples are sadness, happiness, anger and fear. There is also a primitive “emotional response cycle” (see Figure 30 on page 81) that has the following stages: stimulus, trigger, feelings, “express or repress”, “react, transfer or attack”, “subside or retrigger”, “assess or ignore”. How you progress through this cycle of emotional response determines whether you have attained emotional stability. The building blocks of emotional stability are: emotional control, emotional responsibility and finally emotional maturity. Let’s examine the highlights of each one.

This section begins with a correlation between a toddler’s temper tantrums and those who cannot control their emotions or use emotions to manipulate people. Stated bluntly, do NOT be an emotional toddler! Emotional control is not controlling your emotions; instead, it is controlling the response to your emotions! This is a very important distinction. Are you a victim to your emotions where you are triggered so easily and reflexively respond to any stimulus? Or have you discovered the gaps of freedom you possess between stimulus and response? Specifically, there is

a gap of freedom between stimulus and experiencing the emotion or between the trigger event and what you feel about the trigger event and another gap of freedom between experiencing an emotion and responding to that emotion (see Figure 33 on page 84). You must learn how to SLOW DOWN THE WORLD and evaluate stimuli before you allow it to effect you and further evaluate your emotion before you respond. The co-authors have used a technique whereby we imagine an invisible force field that lets us slow down and examine input from the world before we allow it in! By practicing these techniques you will begin to see these precious gaps of freedom and to take control of your emotional responses! Attaining emotional control is essential to achieving successful relationships... so much so that we forcefully assert:

**While you may have relationships,  
you will not have a “real” and successful relationship  
until you attain *emotional control*.**

We do not make such pronouncements lightly. We have seen relative's stress and ruin relationships over and over again with “emotional tantrums”. Once you have attained emotional control, you can move on to the next step towards emotional stability: emotional responsibility.

Emotional responsibility is the act of being responsible for your emotional responses. To that end, we begin with a discussion of inappropriate emotions – in particular, the seven deadly sins of pride, greed, lust, gluttony, wrath, envy and sloth. These are emotions run amok and we examine the key technique of mentally framing them for what they are – spoiled, little mental toddlers demanding your attention. You should not give them credence; you do not feed them and instead you rely on your spiritual foundation of integrity, discipline and love to stay focused on important things! One way to counteract such inappropriate emotions is to feel compassion for others.

**Compassion is the key antidote to inappropriate emotions!**

Compassion and purpose are your key techniques to effectively diminish inappropriate emotions. It is not that you will not feel any inappropriate emotions – we are not robots; however, you can “shrink them in your mind” by putting them in the proper perspective. Alongside your purpose and your spiritual foundation they are very tiny things ... it can even help to picture them as little, whiny creatures begging for your attention. “Shoo along!”, you say with a smile! Unfortunately, even with these techniques, you will find yourself – at times – falling prey to inappropriate emotions. For example, anger transference is very common



where you transfer anger or stress from your work onto your home life. If you succumb to inappropriate emotions, you need to rectify them as fast as possible. Here is how to take responsibility for those actions:

**To take Responsibility: Admit it... Own it... Fix it!**

Besides taking responsibility for your inappropriate emotions, you also have the responsibility to foster positive emotions in yourself and in others! One way to think about it is this: you carry your emotions around with you like weather, you can either be positive and uplifting (like sunshine) or miserable and angry (like a rainy day).

**The greatest responsibility is the responsibility  
to be a blessing to others!**

Once you have accepted the responsibility of both constraining inappropriate emotions and expressing appropriate emotions, you are ready to move on to the final stage of emotional stability, which is emotional maturity! Maturity is a state where you have one or more undeveloped skills or traits that you “fully develop” through a maturation process to make them effective. A simple example is the maturation of an acolyte from apprentice to craftsmen through the discipline of training and practice. The maturation process has three components: experience, wisdom and balance. Emotional maturity is the maturation, or full development, of your emotional responses in service to sustaining and nurturing your relationships. You gain experience in evoking, expressing and controlling emotions by passing through the “crucible of relationships” (in other words, engaging in relationships with other people)! Wisdom is when you understand the underlying principles and know how to apply actions in the right measure in accordance with the needs of the situation. In terms of emotional maturity, acting with wisdom is knowing when and how to control your emotional responses to best foster and improve your relationships! Finally, to reach emotional maturity you must know how to balance your masculine and feminine emotions. In other words, you must know when to balance toughness with tenderness, assertiveness with receptivity and talking with listening. Become a gentle warrior, who has the ability to act aggressively but chooses to lead with tenderness! In your emotional journey towards stability, you will engage in many relationships ... it is these relationships that will test you and help you to grow. We call this, the crucible of relationships!

The crucible of relationships is where your emotional control, responsibility and maturity are tested. A crucible is a container that is used to put things under high heat in order to meld them together; thus, the

crucible of relationships is an analogy for how the relationships in your life force you to grow by putting you under pressure (in potentially uncomfortable situations). Do not fear this crucible, because we need relationships to survive and to thrive! So, let's move on and cover the highlights of relationship stability.

The building blocks of relationship stability are communication, reciprocity, bonding and partnering. Communication is the sending and receiving of messages, both verbal and non-verbal, between two or more parties. In the relationship section, we compared communication to a lubricant – the oil that lubricates every transaction within a working relationship. Additionally, we went into detail on techniques for effective communication like “Care about the receiver more than hearing yourself speak”; “Care about the message you are sending”; “Watch for non-verbal cues of listening and agreement”; “Determine if the message is reaching fertile soil”; and “Be Tactful”.

**Honest, Open, Trusted and Constant Communication  
are the keys to a healthy relationship!**

As we discussed in the integrity section, honesty is the outward expression of your integrity, the cleanliness and transparency of your soul. So, honest communication is simply telling the truth in your relationships – without varnish, without hyperbole and without omission. Honest communication is the surest sign that a relationship is moving to a deeper level. Open communication is unrestricted communication in terms of content and frequency. All subjects are on the table, you are an “open” book to the other person in the relationship. Trusted communication is communication you can rely upon because the other person is trustworthy; has your best interests in mind; and is reliable to “do what they say they are going to do.” Constant communication is continuous feedback on the status of the relationship in the same way good internet companies give constant feedback on the status of your online order. As we stated previously, communication is a lubricant for relationships – so let the communication flow!

Reciprocity is repaying a kindness done to you by always following the golden rule – “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Stephen Covey suggested we all have an “emotional bank account” where doing things for others is a deposit into their social bank account and asking things of others is a withdrawal. In the same manner, you have a social bank account and when someone deposits into your bank account, you are beholden to return the favor. A relationship is dysfunctional if one

party is always giving because their emotional bank account becomes drained and eventually they become resentful.

**Reciprocity means that both parties in a relationship put forth effort.**

Bonding is when people in a relationship share experiences that form a lasting attachment to the other person. These are not merely shared activities between people like a work holiday party or gathering at a sporting event. While there is nothing wrong with those experiences; they are not bonding experiences. To bond requires both parties to pass through three layers of the psyche in order for the experience to form an attachment bond. Those three areas of the psyche are the self-esteem layer, the real self and the soft, inner core (see Figure 50 on page 111). Furthermore, a mental barrier often protects each area. For an experience to be a true bonding experience both parties must be trusted; must have demonstrated caring for the other; and finally, sacrificed and grown together. True bonding experiences are times that you never forget.

Partnering is when you engage in a long-term commitment with someone you have bonded with. Partnering creates a small team, a single unit working towards a set of common goals. The three activities that make a partnership successful are compromise, synchronize and idolize. Compromise is when you seek a win/win solution that works for both parties. Synchronize is when partners know their roles in the relationship, play them well and get in sync to a common cadence and rhythm. Idolize is when each partner magnifies the other's strengths and downplays their weaknesses. These three activities enable your relationships to stand the test of time and remain healthy, engaging and joyful! Now, we are ready to examine the highlights of the final stability layer – social stability.

***Social Stability***

Social stability is seeking to foster and nurture communities within the larger social spheres of your life. It is an enlarging of yourself outside of your comfort zone into the social sphere. One reward for this effort is to experience a “Kumbaya moment” of deep connectedness with other people within a group as you all work towards a shared vision. This chapter explored three core requirements in building such communities: sociability, service and leadership.

Sociability is your ability and willingness to engage in social settings, activities and groups. Admittedly, for many shy or socially awkward individuals, this can be a scary proposition. That fear often begins in early

childhood - especially in school where kids can be harsh critics of each other to boost their fragile, budding egos. Despite these fears and misgivings, sociability is the only door to enter into community with others and thereby reap the feelings of connectedness, belonging and empowerment. Connectedness versus separateness is the great battle we all wage within ourselves and it is very easy to build up those walls of separateness. Let's now turn our attention to those barriers that keep us from entering the door of sociability.

Three barriers that hold us back from being sociable are introversion, fearfulness and hassle. Introversion is a personality type (or category) of those people that prefer solitude over social gatherings. As a preference, introversion is not a robotic behavior that always must occur – it is just the preferred way that this group of people recharges and relaxes. The opposite category, extraverts, feed off the crowd and gain energy from large gatherings. The second barrier that keeps us from social settings is fearfulness – being afraid of failure, embarrassment and the unknown. It is obvious that fear is a powerful motivator that often causes people to act irrationally and not in their best interest. In terms of social gatherings, fear of what the group “may think” holds many people back from participating. Finally, all group activities require a level of effort from all participants and many people are simply not willing to pay that price of admission. They see social interactions as full of hassles, problems and obstacles that they “just don't need” in their life right now. So, the barrier is erected, brick by brick until they are closed off from the world. These barriers stunt our growth and self-actualization. We then discussed techniques to tear down each of these types of walls.

In order to tear down a wall, you must understand how the wall is created and how it grows taller. Once you understand how it grows, you can see the path to tear it down and stop it from growing back in the future! The wall of introversion grows via the “slippery slope” phenomena where each decision towards introversion (and thus away from social gatherings) makes it easier to make the next decision towards introversion. Thus, the way to tear down that wall is to both refute and disregard the faulty rationalizations you invent to prop up an anti-social decision. Then, each decision towards sociability makes the next one easier and provides new proofs that those rationalizations are false. This was clearly demonstrated in Joseph's personal anecdote about him attending (or not attending) his Company's Christmas party. The wall of fearfulness usually grows by magnifying a negative past experience which increases the number of potential fear events that you must avoid. Fear of failure, fear of change and fear of the unknown are real fears but what is unrealistic is the person's

assessment of probability versus possibility. In other words, they have made a mountain out of a mole hill. In the end, overcoming fear involves courage and the realization that the benefits outweigh the risk. That same cost/benefit understanding comes into play in overcoming the final wall – the wall of hassles. Yes, social activities, groups and settings involve a level of commitment and participation. You can either view this as overly burdensome or you can view it as “the cost of doing business”. You have the ability to change how big or small you view these responsibilities – you can choose to view them as huge undertakings or as minor inconveniences. Once you learn this skill, this ability to flip the switch and alter your thinking about a topic, you will gain immense rewards in many areas of your life! Once you have overcome these barriers to sociability, you are ready to take the next step towards social stability – serving others in your community. In the final subsection of sociability, we defined community and set forth “seeking community” as an important goal for all “external” areas of our life (extended family, work, neighborhood, etc.). We specifically chose to call the section “seeking community” because community is an ideal to strive for and approach, regardless of whether you reach the state of a “full community”. The perfect community (a pure form) is when people who come together for a common purpose unite as a single cohesive unit to accomplish something greater than any individual could achieve. This body of people is in-tune with the unique aspects of each member’s individual strengths and weaknesses. They have reached a higher consciousness of self-awareness and self-optimization; where they are constantly aiding each member’s growth, training and support because they know this will strengthen their unity. Of course, as we stated, you will only approach this ideal; however, even getting close bestows many rewards for all members of the community. To play your part, you must be willing to serve others, which we discuss next.

Service is engaging our compassion to help others in need as exemplified by the parable of the “Good Samaritan”. In this section, we discuss how to successfully serve others and end with the resulting joy you experience when serving. The motivation to serve comes when you learn how to develop the “heart of a servant”. The heart of a servant denotes a person with compassion who acts with altruism and generosity towards those suffering. The basis of these traits (compassion, altruism and generosity) is humility – the understanding that all are equal in the eyes of our creator. Humbling ourselves enables us to see others in a new light, as being connected in spirit, and that allows us to lead with our heart. While the heart of a servant motivates you to serve, in order to avoid burn out, you must “serve from your overflow”. In essence, it is best to serve after you have achieved a level of stability within your own life.

**We must have a stable and balanced life before  
we can successfully help others!**

If you do not heed this advice, it is easy to see service as another burden and grow resentful. Joseph provided detailed examples of how this happened to him. Finally, one significant reward for service is the synergy of joy. Many people you serve will express joy during the event. That joy is infectious and spreads to others and to those who serve. That, in turn, creates a positive feedback loop that infects all around and fills the air with the sounds of happiness. Creating an organization and environment where these type of “Kumbaya moments” can emerge requires strong leadership.

Leadership is the ability to inspire others to work as a team and accomplish the objectives of a shared vision. It is the development of that shared vision that gives the group a direction in which to head. This can be summed up as:

**Leadership provides strategic direction.**

The way you measure leadership is to look at those you lead. Are they following you with enthusiasm and passion or just going through the motions? Inspiring those you lead to higher levels of achievement is the true mark of a good leader.

**Inspiration is the key byproduct of Successful Leadership**

A successful leader inspires those on his/her team to push themselves to go beyond their limitations. The leader wants the best for his/her team and is always looking to help them reach their potential!

**Inspiring greatness is the goal of every true leader.**

In this section, we then examined three techniques that make a leader successful: decision making, leading by example and mentoring. In order for the leader to set the strategic direction for the group, he or she must constantly make decisions in order to solve problems, arbitrate disputes and clear obstacles. The difficult part of making decisions is that the situations involved can be complex with a myriad of options, nuances and outcomes. It is easy to get scared by not knowing which path through this “maze of options” is the best one. Thus, many people avoid making decisions for exactly that reason. They see a thousand shades of grey instead of seeing things clearly in “black and white”. What Michael learned from his time as a military leader is that:

**A decision cuts reality!**

Like a sword cutting through the proverbial Gordian knot, a decision cleaves those thousand shades of grey reality into a black and white equation. In other words, a decision “cuts reality” by taking sides and as long as the leader is willing to live with the ramifications of his/her decision then it is ok. We went on in the chapter to examine three characteristics of a good decision: well-informed, sound and firm. A well-informed decision is where you have done your due diligence and analyzed the pros and cons of at least three courses of action. A sound decision is where you can justify why you chose one alternative over the others. A firm decision is one that you stand by even in the face of criticism.

A leader is watched at all times by the group - especially in times of trouble. How does the leader handle problems? How does the leader respond to pressure? Do you rise to the occasion or cower? To lead by example, a leader must be willing to take on the tough problems. A leader must be willing to step up and “face the danger” of the situation. We call this:

### **Stepping into the Breach!**

A leader is a man or woman of action. In the military, a “breach” is a break in the lines where the enemy can exploit your weakness. A leader must be aggressive and fill in the breach – a good leader must be willing to do that themselves. A good leader knows when it is time to step up – good leaders are aggressive problem solvers. The last technique we discussed is how a leader mentors their subordinates. A leader cares about the people under his/her care. A leader becomes protective of them and seeks to nurture their growth and understanding. The best leaders are those that groom their subordinates to be able to take over in their absence. Those leaders know that the mission “must go on” and it cannot crumble just because they are taken out of the picture. The group must carry on without them and accomplish the mission. This is why good leaders, from the very first day they become a leader, follow this rule:

### **Work to replace yourself!**

To recap, the three techniques of leadership we discussed were to make firm decisions, lead by example and mentor your subordinates. Of course, these are not the only leadership principles as there are many good books about leadership and many historical examples of great leaders. Those great leaders lead for a purpose: they lead to inspire a group of people to do more than they thought possible. They asked them to strive for greatness in the service of a higher cause! They used the techniques we discussed to execute on a shared vision. To do that, you must be able to create a vision

of a better future! That is what we discuss next ...

## Vision

Vision is an image of a future state that you wish to create. Envisioning is the process of creating a vision. With envisioning, you move from a current state (the “as-is”) to your future state (the “to-be”) via a detailed plan. It is through envisioning that you design aspects of your life and make them a reality – in essence, you design your future! But what sort of future should you design? The future you desire is directly related to what you see as your purpose in life. Discovering your purpose is a process that you cannot rush – so the first rule for discovering your purpose is this:

***Find the solution, don't Force the solution.***

Any problem you face, including the problem of finding your purpose, can cause mental anguish until it is solved. This leads to a tendency for many to find *any* solution instead of the best solution. In other words, you are tempted to *force* a solution instead of *finding* the correct solution. The same goes for discovering your purpose. To this end, we created the “Life Vision Cycle” (depicted in Chapter 8 as Figure 88 on page 171) which divided purpose into general-purpose and specific purpose. In other words, you can begin moving forward designing your life with a general purpose in mind and then through the goal-execution process you will begin to experience life and discover your specific purpose (we discuss how later). As a guide to your general purpose, we offered three examples of general purpose: emulation of divine purpose (love of humanity, teaching and creating things); leveraging a natural talent (i.e. playing a musical instrument); or awareness of a great need (i.e. curing a disease, helping the homeless, etc.). After choosing a general purpose, you proceed along the life vision cycle to the goal execution phase – in other words, you begin setting and executing goals for your life! We understand that this process is not easy – in fact, most people are very afraid to even think about designing their life. But mastering the skills of design (projecting, planning and execution) has the power to transform your life and the lives of others!

**This must not be understated: Great designers  
change the course of history!**

As you read, keep this in the forefront of your mind:

**You have the ability to *envision* a better future for yourself,  
others and the world; then to successfully execute that *vision*!**



The building blocks of successfully envisioning your future are goal setting, design and purpose. Let's examine the highlights of each subsection.

### ***Goal Setting***

Goals are targets for you to achieve change, and hopefully, better your life; however, many people fail to believe they can change things in a meaningful way. They fail to see the world through the eyes of a designer. They fail to look at life as an opportunity to create. To do that you must understand this:

**Your life is a *Canvas* and you are the *Artist*.**

Goal setting (or what we call "targeting") has three parts: direction, distance and destination. In goal setting, "direction" means focusing on a path in life at the exclusion of other paths; for example, in a career it would mean choosing a particular field of study. A popular myth is to "choose your direction wisely" – we disagree with this because wisdom requires experience. Instead, we recommend:

**In the beginning forget "choosing wisely";  
instead, pick *ANY* direction that offers growth!**

The authors readily admit that we have a bias towards action. "Analysis paralysis" occurs when you are trying to find the perfect path instead of being content with a good path. Remember, that "Perfect is the enemy of the Good!" Secondly, you can be very successful even if you have not found your perfect path. Our definition of success is broader than most... our definition of success is:

**Success is making consistent progress on any worthwhile goal!**

This is extremely important to understand – if you are earnestly *progressing* towards worthwhile goals – you are successful! To us, steady progress is the key indicator of success! Now let's delve into the specific highlights for goal setting. In goal setting, "distance" means understanding the scope (or size) of your goals. How big or small should you set your goals? There are four components to the size of your goals: time required, resources required, effort required and skill required. Understanding the requirements to achieve a goal will enable you to prepare to meet those requirements and thus be ready to achieve a goal. Without preparation, achieving goals is merely luck! Being intentional means you don't want to

rely on luck! Another important technique to setting the scope of your goals is to understand how important it is to learn how to set and achieve goals slowly. How do you do that? By using this rule to pick the right scope:

**Start small to achieve early wins!**

By starting small, you will achieve your early goals. This is called picking the “low-hanging fruit”. Once you achieve your small goals, you will be ready to slowly increase the scope of your goals and set bigger, more ambitious goals.

**To achieve ambitious goals, you must be willing to fail.  
Failure is fertilizer for future growth!**

Once you have begun to stretch yourself and select bigger goals, it is time to challenge yourself and really “THINK BIG!” The crux to thinking big is to stretch yourself beyond what you think is currently possible!

In goal setting, “destination” means specifying precisely what you are trying to achieve. In other words, we want to specify the “What”, “When” and “How” to achieve your goals. “What” relates to direction and “When” relates to distance, so let’s focus on the “How”. To understand how to achieve a goal, you must make your goal S.M.A.R.T. which is an acronym that stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-based and Time-Bound.

**To achieve your S.M.A.R.T. Goals you MUST write  
them down and routinely track your progress!**

Once you have selected a S.M.A.R.T. goal, you are ready to move on to the next phase of envisioning, which is how to design a plan to achieve that goal!

***Design***

Unfortunately, most people are afraid to design their life. Why are we afraid to design the life we envision for ourselves? Excuses we hear are: “Design is too hard for me”; or “Things change too much so why bother?”; or “This is just setting me up for failure.” While we understand that crafting a plan is work, to have an exceptional life you must accept the mantle of design. The three components of design are projecting, planning and managing. Let’s examine some highlights of each.

In design, projecting is the ability to imagine detailed mental images of

an idealized future state. Projecting requires three sub-activities: visualization, understanding and utilization of pure forms and elegant design. Visualization is the mental projection of detailed imaginary replicas of your objective. With visualization, you learn how to use focused imagination to take on the role of director and use the mind's eye to see your objective before it exists in reality! Pure forms are abstract idealizations of concrete entities in our physical world. In other words, when you understand pure forms you begin to be able to see the idealized representation of a thing. You begin to understand how to envision "what is best!" You become a master sculptor who can see the idealized version of beauty before he begins chiseling the marble to produce Venus de Milo. By training yourself to see the pure form of things, you will be better able to visualize and in turn, better able to design your future! Finally, as part of mastering to see the pure forms, you will learn how to focus on the most salient features of your design. This element of "paring down" a design to focus on its simplicity, directness and clarity is what produces elegance. In other words, elegance involves the "paring away" of inessentials and craft to get down to that pure form. Our sculpting analogy is again useful here where we are chipping away all the rough edges to achieve our envisioned masterpiece! Once we have successfully projected our vision, idealized its pure form and pared it down to its elegant essence, we are ready to create detailed plans for its creation!

In design, planning is the creation of a set of detailed written artifacts that communicate your vision to others. The purpose of these artifacts (similar to blueprints in architecture) is to convey the details of "what" you want to create and "how" you will achieve it. A common example would be a detailed business plan you write before you launch a new business! Without a business plan, the probability that your business will fail is very high which brings us to an important point:

**Without a plan, your visions are mere fantasy  
and will never come to fruition.**

The three components of a good plan are description, details and destiny. In planning, description is the first phase in the planning process where you write down a detailed description of the objective. That description is typically best as a set of views that fully describe all the details of the project. In the second phase of the planning process, details refer to fleshing out your objective and specifying how you will get there by answering the questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How? Finally, in our third phase of the planning process, destiny is where you include in your plan a section on how you will overcome and mitigate obstacles and risks. Once you have a written plan in hand, you are ready to

move on to the final step in designing your life – how to take action and manage the execution of your plan! Remember, you “plan the work and then work the plan!”

In design, managing is executing your plan to turn your vision into a reality! Our three-pronged approach to managing your projects is to muster your resources, monitor your progress and master the ending! In managing, “mustering your resources and resolve,” means to assemble the necessary resources and your determination to battle the obstacles you will face in executing your plan! In managing, “monitoring your progress,” means measuring the key indicators of progress for your goal. Remember that, “what is measured – improves!” Finally, in managing, “mastering the ending,” means re-visualizing the ending so it is ever-present before you and gives you the strength to finish the task! By re-visualizing your objective, you focus your energies for the final push and cross the finish line!

### ***Purpose***

A seminal question in the life of every human is “what is my purpose?” Unfortunately, this question defies a simple answer and was the subject of this important section. A purpose is the reason why you do something. There are little-P purposes every day and there is the Big-P Purpose or what is your “life-purpose”? This leads us to the first important realization on purpose:

#### **There is not just one purpose; there are many purposes.**

You have a choice among a multitude of purposes – each with a different meaning. You find your purpose by seeking a resonance between worthy meaning, your skills and desire. In other words, the “right” purpose will resonate within you and with others. We detailed three techniques to helping you find purpose: “Know Thyself”, “Worthy Purpose” and “Purpose Blossoms”. “Know Thyself” means to deeply understand who you are, how you react to the world and especially your strengths and weaknesses. You cannot determine if a worthy meaning aligns with your skill and desires if you do not know yourself well enough. “Worthy Purpose” means a purpose (or act of continual resonance) with a worthy meaning as depicted below in Figure 146. In turn, a worthy meaning is a meaning (a value judgment attached to an event or activity) that is aligned with your spiritual foundation (or fosters the universal imperative!). The authors highly recommend you take your time to study Figure 146 to understand how Fate intersects with your actions in the discovery of your purpose!

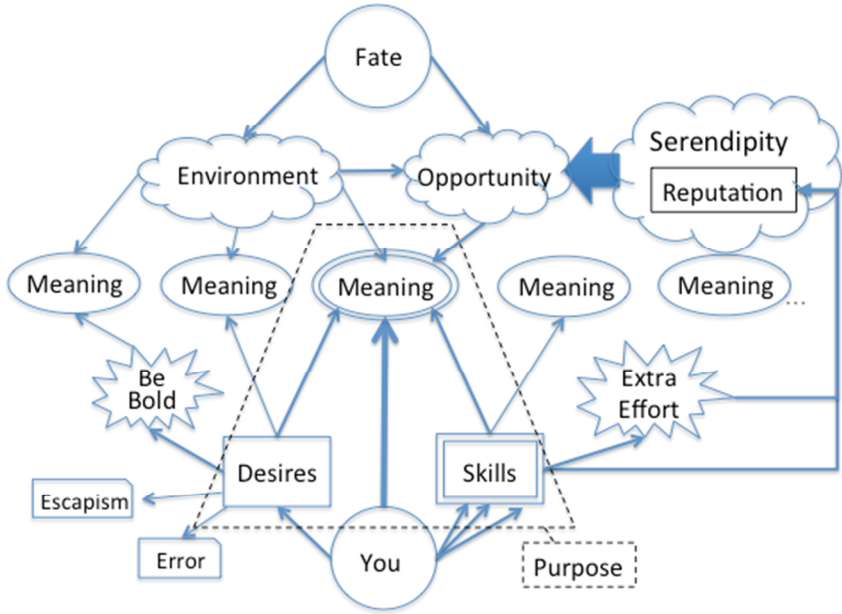


Figure 146 How Fate interacts with your Purpose

As Figure 146 shows, there are a multitude of meanings for you to choose from. The figure attempts to show how you, with your skills and desire, interact with your environment (chosen for you by where you were born and the family you were born into) in order to set the stage for the opportunities presented to you. Fortunately, you can affect even your environment to increase the number of opportunities afforded to you by hard work (“Extra Effort”) and boldness (“be bold”). In other words, the opportunities afforded to you will determine the quantity and quality of activities (and thus meanings) you can choose from to fulfill your purpose (by aligning that worthy meaning with your skills and desires). Everything you do in life becomes part of your reputation and that is a reflection of your work ethic and your integrity. Your reputation is incredibly important as highlighted in the exhortation below:

**A good Reputation mixes with Serendipity and provides you with new Opportunities!**

Finally, we leave this section by understanding what it means for a meaning to be worthy. A worthy meaning is one that does not harm anyone and, more importantly, one that nurtures growth (follows the universal imperative).

In the capstone section of this chapter, “Purpose Blossoms” means when you find a purpose that “resonates” then that purpose will grow, expand and spread to others. Purpose can expand internally (as briefly highlighted in the next two points) and externally (as highlighted in the last two points). “Purpose grows” means that a purpose that resonates, by its very nature, expands outward (increases in size and scope); and increases in its detail and definition (it is further refined). “Purpose spiders outward” means that it can splinter (or branch) into a tree of multiple related purposes. Now, let’s shift to see how purpose expands externally to others. “Purpose spreads to others” means it becomes infectious from your zeal and enthusiasm for it! Finally, “Purpose transcends” means a purpose that nurtures others can transcend yourself to become a “higher purpose”. We ended the chapter by exhorting you to accept the challenge of discovering your purpose! The final axis in the IL Pyramid is the axis of balance where we learn the art of “slowing down and stepping back” to assess where you are and where you are going! Let’s relook the highlights of that chapter!

## Balance

In this chapter we explore the techniques behind keeping things in their proper proportion to achieve both success and satisfaction along the way! We do this by balancing the Yin energy (or receptive/female energy) with the Yang energy (or active/masculine energy) as depicted in Figure 147. In other words, you emulate the cosmic balance of the universe, the ebb and flow of energy, within yourself! This aligns with emulating the universal imperative (Nurture Life!) in crafting a

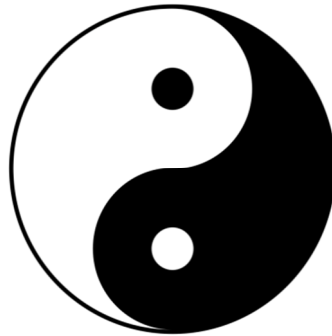


Figure 147 Cosmic Balance

Vision for your life! We believe this is what it means to follow the Way, the Tao and the Righteous Path. In terms of Stability, you alternate between “Building/Preparing” (Yang) and “Saving/Resting” (Yin). In terms of Vision, you alternate between “Plan/Design/Act” (Yang) and “Assess/Appreciate” (Yin). In the broad sense of the overall Intentional Living Pyramid, Balance is where you slow down (rest) and step back (assess)! That cannot be overstated, to achieve balance you:

### Slow Down and Step Back

The chapter covered three building blocks to achieving balance: “Enjoy

the Journey”, “Adapt to Change” and the “Symphony of Life”. Let’s now go over some highlights in each!

### ***Enjoy the Journey***

This section answered the question, “How do you enjoy life *while* you are striving for stability and leaps of Vision?” The answer involves three techniques: maintenance, rest & relaxation, and playful optimism. Maintenance involves care for the “machinery” that makes you go. In other words, if you run yourself too hard for too long, you will break down. To emphasize this we reviewed the famous Aesop fable about the farmer, due to his impatience, who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs! Yes, you are that goose! The golden eggs are the goals that you set, design and achieve! In order to keep laying golden eggs you must take care of yourself – maintain and improve your skills, maintain and improve your financial health and of course, maintain and improve your physical health. There is an old expression that alludes to this “maintaining your tools” maxim:

*“If a woodchopper was given just five minutes to chop down a tree or lose his life, he better spend the first three minutes sharpening his axe.”*

*- Anonymous*

In other words, your tools are well maintained (in this case by being “sharp”) and can perform when needed to help you “lay the golden egg”! After maintenance, the next building block is rest and relaxation. Rest and relaxation must not be seen as something you do once a year on vacation; instead, it must be integrated into your daily and weekly schedule. Resting is not running away from work; instead, think of it like this:

### **Resting improves the quality of your work, your attitude and your life.**

Resting involves two key “Yin” activities: being still and being unworried. These are receptive activities that allow you to absorb the energy of the universe. Being still involves breathing deeply and cleansing your mind and body. Being unworried means being free of time and task pressures. Remember, proper resting has a purpose:

### **Proper resting is part of work. Proper resting produces quality.**

Proper resting is in balance with your overall stability and vision and not at odds with them. The proportion of each is in balance. Think about that balance in terms of thirds of your life: one third working on Stability,

one third working on Vision and one third keeping you in Balance. There will be periods of your life when you change that equation (for example, starting out you focus more on stability) but an even split into thirds is a good rule of thumb.

The final activity to “enjoying the journey” is to adopt an attitude of “playful optimism”. These are two distinct things so let’s briefly discuss each. Optimism means seeing the glass as “half full” and looking for the positive or good in everything. The second is to not take yourself too seriously by being able to laugh at yourself and at the crazy world we live in. Smile, laugh and be friendly! Playfulness makes everyone’s day brighter and becomes infectious. So, go out and play!

### *Adapt to Change*

When things don’t go as you planned, you must be able to adapt to the current situation. Intentional people expect change and don’t fear it. In this section, we covered three techniques to help you become more adaptive: openness, experimentation and flexibility. In adapting to change, openness means you are transparent to the world and not pretending to be perfect. We discussed three ways of being open: “Being open to external change” (not all change is bad), “Being open to challenge” (do not fear correction), and “Being open to internal change” (able to change direction). An attitude of openness makes you more attuned to change and thus more ready to handle it. The next two techniques cover how to handle change better. The second technique for adapting to change is experimentation. In the context of adapting to change, experimentation means looking at the world through the eyes of a scientist. In your role as a scientist, you constantly look for ways to improve by creating experiments to try different things and observe the outcome. Life becomes an exciting set of experiments and change is just another variable in those experiments! The third and final technique for adapting to change is flexibility. In the context of adapting to change, flexibility means being mentally pliable (instead of rigid) in the face of change. Discipline requires a firm, rigid mindset; however, this Yang activity must be tempered with the Yin receptivity of flexibility. You know you have succeeded at becoming flexible when you can mentally accept change without frustration. We recommend three techniques to improve your mental flexibility: “Go with the Flow”, “Bend Don’t Break” and “Walk a Mile in their shoes”. In terms of flexibility, “Go with the Flow” means that you emulate water and can bend or work around changes that arise. In terms of flexibility, “Bend Don’t Break” means you emulate a tree in a wind storm where the branches bend to new changing



winds instead of breaking. Recall our discussion of the rigidity of discipline and the need to temper that with the flexibility to bend your rigid patterns. The best example of this is having flexibility within your schedules. The discipline of time scheduling is a very effective tool; however, it must be balanced with the ability to make the schedule flexible (add in cushion for unexpected events) and be willing to change your schedule as more important events arise. A key principle for this is that:

**People are more important than schedules.**

If you have a rigid schedule that you are following and making great progress on but suddenly you are faced with a situation where a family member needs your help – you put aside your schedule and help them. Simply put: People trump schedules. Why? Because you must look at things holistically and understand the notion that your relationships are more important than the scheduled activities you are delaying. Finally, the technique of “Walking a Mile in their Shoes” is a form of mental flexibility where you look at the world from another person’s perspective. This allows you to temper judgment with understanding. Being more mentally flexible enables you to adapt to change without derailing the achievement of your Vision. In other words, you learn how to knit together the activities of the IL Pyramid into a cohesive whole, which we call “The Symphony of Life”!

***Symphony of Life***

In this section, Life is analogous to a symphony, which you both conduct and compose! As a great conductor, you dictate which strengths, skills and habits you will bring to bear on the music. As a composer you determine which notes to play and which instrument section plays those notes. The individual notes and instruments are analogous to sections in the I.L. Pyramid as depicted in Figure 148.

How do you craft the symphony of your Life? You design when to play the notes of each instrument and you play them well! You weave throughout the pyramid to insure that the elements play off of one another and leverage the strengths of the other. You let those notes ring forth – just as you let your inner light shine forth! Specifically, this section detailed three techniques to composing your symphony: holistic thinking, harmonize and synergize. In crafting your symphony, holistic thinking means understanding how the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.



Figure 148 You Orchestrate the Elements of the I.L. Pyramid

This is what is meant by the second part of our personal mantra for this chapter:

### Slow Down and Step Back...

You “Step Back” in order to get perspective on your world ... in order to see the big picture and where you sit in relation to the totality of your life. Are you reaching your destination? Are you achieving your goals? Are you enjoying the journey? This type of holistic thinking allows you to act strategically instead of only acting tactically. You act strategically by making smart long-term decisions for your life. You do what is best in the long term though it may be difficult in the short term. In crafting your symphony the second technique is to “harmonize with the universe”. In that context, harmonize means to blend your unique skills and talents together with others to form a product that combines your unique multiple perspectives on creation. Blending with others and working together is the core of creating family and team harmony.

### Shared vision, love and respect are the hallmarks of team Harmony!

Knowing how to harmonize with other’s help you to bring harmony into your life by knowing when to focus on different areas of the IL pyramid. Specifically, you must mix in areas of the Balance axis, after working in an area on the Stability or Vision axis. By rotating across these three axes in a harmonious cycle (Stability → Vision → Balance or, in other

words, Prepare → Act → Assess), you will maintain a good balance and achieve the life you deserve! This is flowing with the universe ... why? The universe flows in a direction – always to implement the universal imperative: sustain and nurture life! Do not fight against that current as stressed in the following assertion:

**Do NOT fight against the Universe by harming yourself or others!**

When you are in alignment with the universe, with yourself, with your family, with your community ... you are in both internal and external harmony. Then you are ready for the final technique in crafting your symphony, which is to “synergize”. In that context, synergize means to create energy by combining distinct elements! You create synergy in three ways: first, within yourself; secondly, with others; and finally, with the Universe! Inner synergy is the energy you build up by staying in balance. This inner synergy gives you a reserve of energy to either overcome obstacles or expend reaching out to others. Synergy with Others occurs when you collaborate with others on a common objective! You feed off of each other’s energy and that energy is thus multiplied. Finally, you synergize with the universe by implementing the areas of the IL Pyramid so that they reinforce each other. This is done by working on the Pyramid from the bottom up and from left to right. Reinforcement is the key! For example, Discipline helps you Love more and Love motivates you to be more disciplined! Following this path, aligning yourself with the Universe, leads you to discover your purpose. In discovering your purpose you will bring forth your Magnum Opus or “Great Work!”

We have concluded the highlights review of the book! Such repetition of the content is a useful technique for improved learning and recall of the key lessons, concepts and sayings. Beyond repetition, there is another technique that is even better at learning these concepts: teaching them! We highly encourage you to take the lessons you have learned from this book and apply them in your life. Once you have concrete experience through the application of the principle, share what you have learned with family and friends! Teaching a concept is the surest way of truly learning it and more importantly, making it your own! You will find your own take on the concepts and thereby put your personal mark on them. We encourage that because what is important is the sharing of the principles, not who “first said it” – in fact, given these are universal principles – no one owns them, they belong to the universe! So, now that you have finished – where should we go from here? Do you want to continue the journey together?

## Where to go from here

“We are very near to greatness: one step and we are safe;  
can we not take the leap?”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson<sup>201</sup>

While you have reached the end of this book, your Intentional Living Journey is just beginning. Now is not the time to make this an intellectual exercise that you quietly put down and forget about. Instead, we hope this is a call to action! A call that awakens neglected or undiscovered areas of your life ... a call that harmonizes with your inner voice and urges you not to hesitate! Now is the time to reinvigorate your life with new energy and heed the *Calling!*

## Take the Leap

We understand that to change the patterns and course of your life can be scary. Changing anything will often be faced with questions and possibly even criticism. Family and friends will ask, “Why are you doing that?” They will be skeptical of being intentional as if you already do it with trite phrases like “Of course, you act with intention. Doesn’t everyone?” The answer is a simple “no”. Most people don’t act intentionally and some attempt it but do it poorly because they don’t have a framework to follow like the I.L. Pyramid. So, cast aside that criticism, muster your courage and take the leap towards a better life as depicted in Figure 149<sup>202</sup>.



Figure 149 Leap of Faith!

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<sup>201</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson (2014). “The Heart of Emerson's Journals”, p.170, Courier Corporation

So, how do take this leap of faith?

Simple, you must apply what you have learned. Follow the patterns we have laid out – slowly and methodically take an inventory of yourself. Where are you in each of the categories in the pyramid? Are you economically stable (do your inflows exceed your outflows)? If not, you need to track them and create a budget to get them in order. Are you healthy? Once you have those basic stability building blocks, you begin to explore the possibilities for a better future. In other words, what talents do you want to explore? What new things do you want to learn? What places do you want to visit? The very first quote of this book (by Theodore Roosevelt) challenges you to “get into the arena”. Do not be a spectator in life... take the leap! Do not think you are leaping blindly; you are leaping from a strong foundation, as we discuss next.

### **Building on the Foundation**

“Aspire to be like Mt. Fuji, with such a broad and solid foundation that the strongest earthquake cannot move you, and so tall that the greatest enterprises of common men seem insignificant from your lofty perspective.

With your mind as high as Mt Fuji you can see all things clearly.

And you can see all the forces that shape events;  
not just the things happening near to you.”

- Miyamoto Musashi

The I.L. Pyramid is a strong foundation for you to build upon – it is a proven framework for a successful life. Every element in the pyramid has been tried, tested and proven to work. We are not engaging in guesswork, or hope; instead, we are simply leveraging over 100 years of proven experience with empirical evidence to back it up. Figure 150<sup>203</sup> depicts the framing of a house upon a solid foundation.

The foundation of the house (cinderblocks and footers in Figure 150) is anchored into the soil and stands as a sturdy basis to build the wooden frame you see. In that same way, the I.L. Pyramid can form the foundation of your life upon which to build your Vision. Now is the time for you to project forward into the future and begin setting goals. Begin with small goals to gain some early success with the envisioning process. Reward yourself after each win and take time to enjoy your success and assess the

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<sup>202</sup> This image is in the public domain and available at:

<https://pixabay.com/en/gymnastics-tumbling-sport-girl-853695/>

<sup>203</sup> The image is in the public domain and available at:

<https://pixabay.com/en/new-home-construction-builder-2897352/>



Figure 150 Framing a House upon a Solid Foundation

results. By following this pattern – Stability → Vision → Balance – and climbing the I.L. Pyramid - you will be successful. Additionally, as you work through each area of the Pyramid, you will not be alone in your efforts. We will be there with you via our community website and via our efforts to expand and continue the I.L. Vision as depicted in Figure 151.

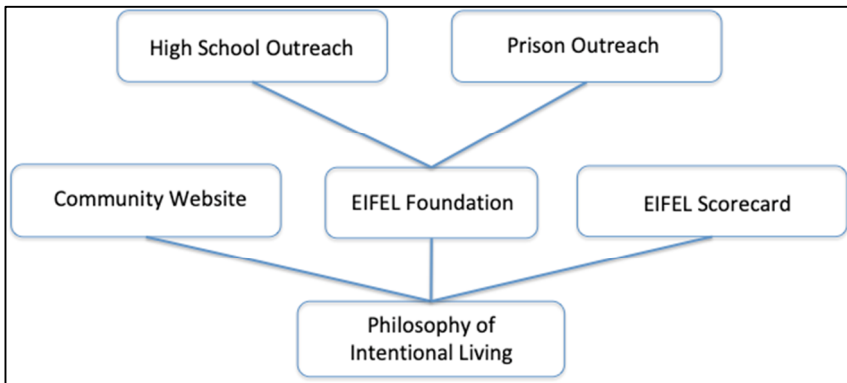


Figure 151 Expanding the I.L. Vision

As we discussed in Chapter 8 on Vision, your purpose can blossom and grow. In that manner, you can see how this book will expand and grow outward in its purpose of outreach and enrichment! This book is the cornerstone in that Vision as depicted in Figure 151. The book itself will be expounded upon with a series of workbooks and training courses. Upon that the vision spiders out to three other areas: a Community website (<http://intentionallivingcommunity.com>), the E.I.F.E.L. (Extreme Intention For Exceptional Living) Foundation, and the E.I.F.E.L.

Scorecard. The community website will have in-depth articles, discussion forums and memorabilia. The discussion forums will be filled with articles, anecdotes and examples of applying the I.L. Principles. The EIFEL foundation will be a 501c Charitable Foundation whose purpose is outreach to various communities of interest whom we believe will greatly benefit from this philosophy. Our initial targets are high school students and those incarcerated who want a chance to turn their life around! We are planning one or more kickstarter (<http://www.kickstarter.com>) campaigns to launch those initiatives. Finally, in the same manner that a credit score is used by banks and businesses to gauge your ability to repay a loan; we will create an EIFEL Score to gauge your progress in each area of the I.L. Pyramid. Furthermore, for those that achieve an EIFEL score higher than 80% in each area will earn a “Life Merit Badge” (to be designed similar to Boy Scout Merit Badges) in that area. Your scorecard, I.L. aphorisms and other content could be accessed via a mobile application to help you climb the pyramid! As should be evident, we have a lot more work to execute on this I.L. Vision!

We sincerely hope you will continue this I.L. journey with us by participating in our community website and sharing your personal experience in applying the I.L. principles! Frankly, we *need* your help to continue and expand this Vision! Will you help us? Together we can help ourselves and help others to live more intentionally to reach new levels of success! Together we can build upon this solid foundation to reach new heights! The opportunities are boundless as we explore in our final, next section.

## Expanded Universe

“A mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimension.”  
- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

You are not the same person you were when you started this book. It is said that you can never step into the same river twice. Of course, that is true because it is constantly moving and changing so each time it is a *new* river! That same expression can now be said for you – you are not the same person you were before. You have changed. You have been exposed to new ideas that have expanded your mind, expanded your outlook, and opened up new opportunities for you to explore!

Your spirit has changed – it is awake and vibrant. The flame is bright. Your body has changed. It is eager for the day and eager to be strengthened. Your mind has changed – it has learned to leap forward and

project itself far into the future. It has become a time traveler! Most importantly, *your eyes have changed*. You can see clearly. You can see things you have never seen before. You can see much further and cast your view over a vast landscape. Even more exciting than what you *can* see is to consider what you *will* see! You will SEE MORE! The aperture of your view has been expanded to take in more of this amazing universe! And the universe is magnificent and vast as depicted in Figure 152<sup>204</sup>. When you gaze up at the stars, you can imagine how we have just begun exploring the universe. The possibilities for learning and discovery are endless! The mysteries to be unfolded will revolutionize the world time and time again! Our civilization is a mere babe in the woods. Our story is just beginning ... unleash your imagination and unleash your creativity! Do not shackle your mind with worry of fame or fortune – those are byproducts of genuine accomplishment... Accomplish first, and those will follow!



Figure 152 The Universe is Magnificent and Vast

We have finally reached the end of this leg of our journey together. This book was truly a labor of love for the co-authors. We spent more than seven years working on it... We met weekly at first to write; however, for the last two years we were writing every day. We sincerely hope you found this useful. We hope you found it worthy of your time. We hope you can apply these principles and reach your goals! Thank you for reading and we wish you well on the next stage of your journey!

THE END

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<sup>204</sup> This image is in the public domain and available at:  
<https://pixabay.com/en/milky-way-galaxy-night-sky-stars-984050/>