**Life Lessons**

**THE ACTIVITY OF LIVING WITH PURPOSE:**

**HEALTHY INVESTMENTS OF TIME AND ENERGY**

Science has clearly demonstrated *entropy*, the stark reality that our world is winding down, and slowly running out of energy. The sun and the planets are cooling from their cores, and all living things are deteriorating into death. Most people also believe that like our bodies, our world is running out of time as well. The four-dimensional time-space continuum is apparently running out of gas. So if the world God created is dying, is it therefore inevitable that we are all losing our liveliness?

Most people believe there is a fifth dimension, one that has something to do with sickness and health. It can hasten death, or inspire new life. How do some people seem to get livelier as they age? What is *vitality*? Where does it come from, and can we grow our experience of it? Beyond conceiving children, can we participate in an ongoing process of creating life? Can we tap into something that lets us co-create time, and energy? As our bodies age, can the soul within be getting younger?

We have many choices regarding what to believe about vitality vs. entropy. And those beliefs and mindsets strongly influence many lifestyle choices about how we behave. These choices clearly influence how long we live, and more importantly, *how* *much we and others enjoy our lives*. The key to experiencing a fullness of time and energy is living with a *fruitful purpose.* Here are some ways you can retrain your brain to guide and motivate healthier choices.

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| ***Sickening Beliefs about Vitality*** | ***Healthy Beliefs about Vitality*** |
| If you can’t do something right, don’t bother to get started. *I can’t, so I won’t.* | Do the best you can, and leave the results to God. *We can, and we will.* |
| Why do something you don’t want to do?  Wait until you feel like it. | If it’s important enough, find time for it today, and put your heart into it. |
| When I feel threatened or insignificant, it only makes sense to hunker down and chill. | When I’m down on myself, I refocus on my purpose, and start living for it. |
| Apathy asks, *Who cares?,*  and  *What difference does it make?* | Passion flows from thinking through to find good answers to those questions. |
| Lethargy avoids and laments work, thinking it takes time and energy away from rest and play. | Enthusiasm realizes work, rest, and recreation can all empower each other. |
| Procrastination wastes time by believing we’ll always have plenty of time later on. | Opportunity says time is short, so let’s make the best of it: *carpe diem!* |
| Depression sees talent and opportunity as curses, or even temptations from a critical, punishing God. | Hope sees these as blessings, gifts from a loving, generous, helpful God. |
| Burn-out sees my work as economic necessity, an exhausting bondage to my controlling boss. | Zest sees my employment as voluntary service to my boss and those we serve. |
| Passivity believes that exercise is too painful, and might injure me. | Activity believes being sedentary is too painful, and *it* will injure me. |
| Every investment of my limited time and energy leaves me with less. | When I put first things first, I have better focus and drive for other things too. |

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| ***Sickening Habits with Vitality*** | ***Healthy Habits with Vitality*** |
| Taking pleasure in mooching off others, getting others to do things for us | Taking pride in taking good care of myself and other people |
| I love being entertained by people doing athletic, charming, dramatic, and exciting things. | I am growing my ability to do all those things in my own life. |
| enjoy relaxing, especially when I avoid unpleasant relationships and responsibilities. | I relax *as a part of enjoying* my active responsibilities and relationships. |
| I’m often tired and distracted before the day even starts. | I’m often full of energy and focus, even when I come home after a long day. |
| I’m often seeking my own happiness in selfish pleasures, right now in the short run. | I’m often trying to create the good life for myself and others, down the road. |
| My life feels like a treadmill, staying busy, multi-tasking to look like I’m getting things done. | I leave myself free time to be spontaneous and focused on one thing at a time. |
| I enjoy imagining how passive, residual income can help me retire completely from work at a young age. | The good I do for others means as much to me as money I make for my family. |
| My best friends are the ones who share my interests and passions for my leisure life. | My best friends are the ones who work hard to leave the world a better place. |
| Most of my hopes and prayers are for things to go my way, to go better for me and my loved ones. | Most of my hopes are for me to go God’s way, so God blesses me and others. |
| Other people find it sickening the way I work, rest, and play. | My habits of work, rest, and play leave behind a healthy footprint of wellbeing. |

***The key to having more time and energy is the enthusiastic pursuit of a compelling purpose, one that makes the world a better place for both others and ourselves. We all need to believe in a higher power than inspires us into a life with healthier experiences that only grow in us as we give them away. The ideal higher power for this purpose is the indwelling God of love, joy, and peace, forever providing wellsprings of enthusiasm for life, both within and around us. These are our fountains of youth.***