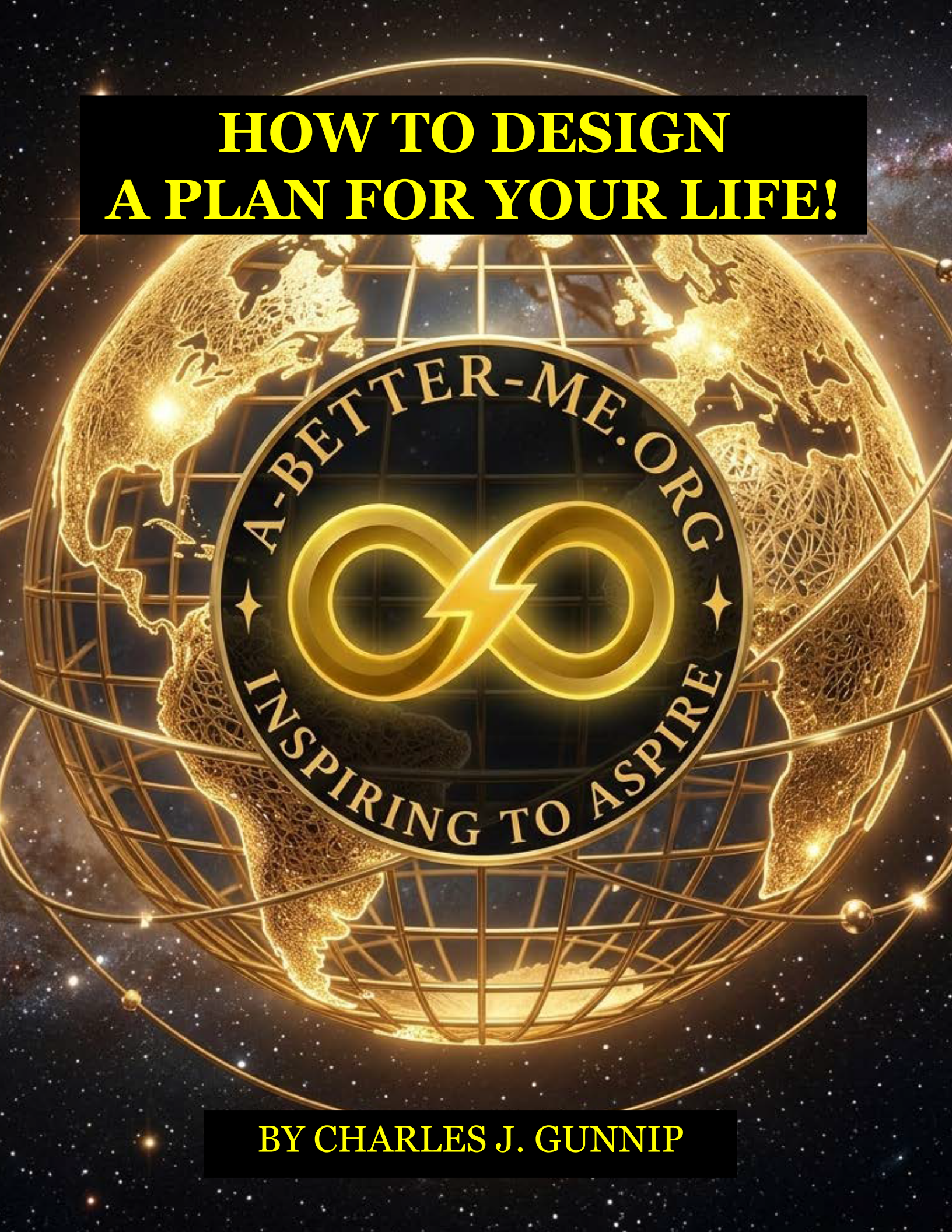
HOW TO DESIGN A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE!



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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

HOW TO DESIGN A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

From the time you were small, you've had thoughts, ideas, and dreams about what you wanted to be when you grew up. You most likely imagined the type of home you wanted to live in and where in the world you wanted to put down roots. You might have daydreamed about the career you'd have and the friends you'd hang out with.

As you matured, your innermost goals for your future morphed several times over the years.

Now, here you are, all grown up and living your life. You probably have a job and may be in a serious relationship. But at this moment, ***are you living a life that you'd choose to be living?*** Does your life fit you? Is your life going as you'd planned? Or did you even have a plan?

As you read this book, reflect on how you're living currently and ask yourself, *"Is this what I want for my life?"* As you examine your life, you'll be encouraged to thoroughly think through specific elements of your existence you might like to change.

The purpose of this book is to help you develop a life plan that will lead you to the life you desire.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MAJOR ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE?

To get started, get a notebook to record ideas and thoughts that will form a new or revised plan for your life. **Label it as your Life Plan notebook.**

Next, spend some time thinking about these aspects of your life: Home, career, love relationship, family, friends, health, character traits, hobbies, and intellectual/cultural pursuits.

What does your ideal life look like?

Although no one's life is perfect all the time, a reasonable goal is to feel satisfaction, joy, and a sense of comfort and well-being in your own life in most of the above aspects of your existence. Let's take a look at each area.

"If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone els's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much."

-Jim Rohn

YOUR HOME

One of the most important aspects of your life is your physical living environment. It includes the location where you live (city and state), the type of home in which you live, and the physical furnishings and

arrangement within your home. Where/how you live profoundly affects your everyday life.

Is everything about your home just the way you'd like it to be?

LOCATION OF YOUR HOME

Do you live in the location you would select to live in right now? If your answer is 'yes,' then you're in good shape. However, if your answer is 'no,' where would you like to live? What would it mean to move there? What is holding you back from moving to the location you desire?

Are you limited to living in a certain place because of your work? Most importantly, what steps would you need to take in order to relocate to the city/state of your choice?

At the top of a page in your Life Plan notebook, write "Desired Location." Write your target location on the left side of the page. On the right, list all the steps you need to follow to move to your target location.

Consider these sample steps for your Life Plan:

1. Brainstorm cities to live in. Narrow choices to 2 cities.
2. Research the cities on the internet. Make plans to visit the cities within the next 6 months.
3. Check into the possibility of getting a job transfer. Determine whether there's an opportunity to request a job transfer to the city of choice. Ask staff at work about this issue.

TYPE OF RESIDENCE

Do you live in an apartment and wish you lived in a house so you could have your own yard to garden and take care of? Or is it the opposite — you'd like not to be tethered to the constant work of maintaining your yard year-round.

Are you living in the type of home (apartment, house, or condo) you want to live in? Write down all your hopes and dreams about the type of home that attracts you. For example, if you now live in a house but would rather live in a condo to enjoy a more carefree lifestyle, make note of it.

Include in your Life Plan your specific goals about the type of home you prefer. Then list the steps you'll take to accomplish what you want.

Possible steps for your Life Plan:

1. Call a realtor to discuss the worth of the house. Determine if it's feasible to sell now.
2. Look for condo residences within 30 minutes' radius of work. Take a look at a few units.
3. Evaluate budget to determine whether moving at this time is workable.

FURNISHINGS AND ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

As you spend much of your life in your own home, it's important that it be comfortable and suitable for everything you want to do while you're there. If you love color, paint the rooms the shades you love. If you've got interests in great art, hang reproductions of your favorite artists' works in every room.

As you write this section of your Life Plan, think about how you can surround yourself with things you love and have furniture you like that also fits your needs.

If someone who knows you well were to tour your home, would he see the influences in it as truly representative of you? Does your home accurately reflect who you are just the way you'd like it to?

Record in your notebook what you'd like to change about the set-up of each room of wherever you live. Maybe you'd like to do away with the formal dining room and make it a game room or relaxing place to read or paint instead.

Here are some examples of steps you might write:

1. Paint living room. Buy some light taupe-colored paint.
2. Find sleeker-looking furniture for living room. Check consignment shops for a gray or black modern-looking sectional sofa and large glass coffee table to hold books and magazines.
3. Measure bookshelves in bedroom to see if they'll fit in the living room after painting.

Where you live, the type of home you live in, and the furnishings are some of the most integral aspects of your everyday life. ***To live your best life, your home ought to reflect your overall personality and make you happy.*** Does your home setting fit these requirements?

If not, write down what you desire in these areas. Be specific. Keep in mind you're in the process of designing the life you seek. ***You deserve to be happy.***

"Everything's in the mind. Tha's where it all starts. Knowing what you want is the first step towards getting it."

-Mae West

CAREER AND WORK

Since your career encompasses about a quarter of your life if you work full-time, you hopefully love what you're doing and have great passion for it. Work is your bread and butter — you support yourself and your family with the work you do. ***Your career is the very basis of your financial life and brings stability and necessary routine to your life.***

Let's ponder that very thing — your job. Is the career you're working in now the type of work you'd opt for? Do you enjoy what you do? Or can you at least say you're glad to have your job and believe it serves as a stepping stone to a grander career for you in the future? Are you where you want to be career-wise? Why or why not? What can you do to get there?

This aspect of your Life Plan might include steps that look like these:

1. Ask supervisor about pursuing more training in accounting.
2. Check local community college for a class on writing small business plans.

3. Post resume at CareerBuilder.com to begin looking for another job.

Regarding your work, what changes could you make to feel more passion and excitement about your work?

Plan a realistic course of action to follow regarding your career that will make you happier and arouse your interest and creativity. Be honest with yourself about your career as you design this segment of your Life Plan.

"A good battle plan that you act on today is better than a perfect one tomorrow."

-General George S. Patton

LOVE RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY

Partner relationships and having a family are probably at the top of your list when it comes to what you want in life. Having a deep, enduring love life can improve your health and even increase your life span.

Finding a cherished life partner and having a family are probably either on your list or else you're already blessed with the entities of love and family.

It's important to occasionally re-evaluate these life aspects in order to experience long-term the joys and fulfillment of having close, satisfying relationships.

LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

Finding and solidifying a love relationship might be one of your main goals in life. How is your love life going? Are you pleased with the partner you've selected and the way the two of you spend time together? Is there anything you want to work on to enhance your love relationship? Or do you see it as just about perfect?

Perhaps you haven't yet found that special someone. Are there choices you can make regarding how you spend your time that would make it more likely you'd encounter someone with similar interests as yours? Make a note about any plans you have for your love relationship.

Love relationships are integral parts of a fulfilling life. Ensure you ponder your love life and address it in your Life Plan.

Give your love relationship the attention it truly deserves by considering whether it truly meets your wants and needs. If there are things you want to change about your special relationship, include those goals in your Life Plan.

You might write steps such as:

1. Talk with Sue about spending more time together, like having a date every Saturday evening.
2. Discuss my concerns about John's developing pattern of coming home late for dinner. Figure out a workable solution to the issue.
3. Join the golf league at the Country Club to meet other people who also like to golf.

FAMILY

Getting married, having and raising children, and fostering enduring family ties might likely be important elements of your life. ***A family provides a supportive, loving network like no other.*** When all seems lost, turning to your family to spend special time together can lift your spirits more than anything or anyone else.

Do you want a family? Or do you already have a family and have a goal to spend more time with your loved ones? How does your family fit in to the plan you have for your life and future? Ponder these issues. If it's something you're interested in, include family in your plan.

See these possible steps for your Life Plan:

1. Agree to work only one Saturday a month to have the other Saturdays to spend with family.
2. Talk with Jane about wishes to have a baby soon.
3. Ask Cousin Jim to meet for coffee one Sunday morning a month.

Your close connections with others make up some of the most fulfilling parts of your life. Therefore, ***address your wants related to your love relationship and family in your Life Plan.*** It will help you crystallize what you're seeking from these cherished relationships.

"If you love the life you live, you will live a life of love."

-Unknown

FRIENDS

When you're designing a Life Plan, it's feasible that you'd include friendships. After all, the more supportive of a network you have the more satisfied and content with your life you'll be. ***To live your best life, you'll want to have wonderful friends.***

Engaging with friends on a regular basis enriches your life in so many ways. During time spent with friends, you engage in fascinating conversation and enjoy your favorite activities with people you care about. Do you have friends? Did you meet your friends during various situations in life, such as high school, college, work, and your neighborhood?

Do you find your friends interesting? Are they helpful when you need it? Do you return the favor occasionally? Reflect on your friends. Do you hang out with the type of friends that you want in your life? Do you have no friends at all? Maybe you believe you have no time for friends.

Your Life Plan steps regarding friends could look something like:

1. Attend the neighborhood block party in May. Try to make friends with at least 2 people living nearby.
2. Make friends with people who attend the Business Morning Club on Tuesdays. Plan to get to know better at least 3 people from the club.
3. Go out with co-workers at least 1 Friday night a month.

Write in your notebook what you want to have in the way of friends. If you want 2 or 3 more good friends, write it down. ***What is your ideal plan for friendships in your life?*** If you're completely satisfied with the array of

friends you have and the amount of time you spend with them, mention in your Life Plan that all's well related to friendships.

[redacted]

HEALTH

Your physical condition is one of the most salient aspects of a plan for a good life. Your ability to manage your feelings and keep negative emotions in check is paramount to living a peaceful and satisfied existence.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Are you in the best physical shape you can be? If so, how do you do it? It might be wise to include your blueprint for good health in your Life Plan.

If you'd like to make some changes regarding your health, what changes would you make? What can you do to improve your physical self?

Are you willing to make the physical changes you desire? Do you want to do it? Decide if there's anything you want to have in your plan related to your physical health.

If so, go into detail about what you want and will do. For example, state you want to engage in regular exercise for 30 minutes a day 5 days a week. If you want to reduce your cholesterol and blood pressure readings, include such goals with specifics in your notebook.

As mentioned in prior sections of this book, designing the health section of your Life Plan requires you to be quite specific about what it is you want and the steps required for you to accomplish your goals. ***The more specific your plan, the more likely it is you'll follow it to live the life you desire.***

Items like these could be included in the physical health portion of your Life Plan:

1. Get off blood pressure medicine. Go on the DASH Diet to lose 18 pounds. Walk 20 minutes a day 6 days a week.
2. Have a yearly medical examination every January.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Your emotional health plays a role in everything you do. How you react when there's a challenge at work or when your partner disagrees with you is a result of your emotional health. Your overall moods spring from your emotional health.

Do you feel satisfied and content most of the time? Is it customary for you to exhibit angry outbursts at others? Maybe you spend moments practically daily thinking about something upsetting that took place in your life a long time ago.

Examine your own emotional health. How are you doing? Take into account your emotional health when designing the health aspect of your Life Plan. ***Record what you want to do about any challenging feelings in your notebook.***

Steps in the emotional health section of your Life Plan could be:

1. Ask physician for referral to therapist to resolve old issues regarding father.
2. Note occurrences of angry outbursts on calendar. Find a good book on anger management to work on decreasing outbursts.

Your physical and emotional healths are two aspects of life that permeate all other areas of your existence. If you're in the best shape you can be physically and emotionally, good for you. However, if you desire to make some adjustments in these areas of your Life Plan, write down exactly what you wish to do to achieve what you desire.

"Let our advance worrying become advanced thinking and planning."

-Sir Winston Churchill

CHARACTER

Elements of your character also figure in to the big picture of your life. Perhaps you believe you already possess the character traits you deem important. However, it's worth your time to consider this very relevant area of your life.

Possessing and displaying strong character is necessary to live a life you can be proud of. Do you have the character traits you believe to be important or that you admire? Do you strive to show the patience your grandfather always

demonstrated that you so appreciated? Have you developed your mother's strong work ethic you were always so proud of?

Now is the time to inventory your own character traits. ***Maybe you've got the traits you've aspired to but have a few you'd like to alter or improve on.***

Under the "Character" heading in your notebook, write down whether to keep doing what you're doing or how you want to alter some of your personal qualities.

Be specific in your Life Plan – for example, you might write:

1. I will listen better to co-workers and make efforts to understand them better so I can be a mentor and help others.
2. Read a book about patience. A goal is to increase patience.
3. Work harder by finishing all projects I start within two weeks. Keep listing of my projects and check them off as I complete them. Seek supervisor's guidance to improve my work habits.

Having positive character strengths will lead you toward a fulfilling life. In your Life Plan, you'll want to address character traits specifically.

Consider what's important to you regarding your character and then document your goals and the steps you'll take to achieve them in your Life Plan.

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood. Making big plans, aim high in hope and work."

-Daniel Burnham

HOBBIES AND ACTIVITIES

Mental health experts have long known the incredible impact that chosen hobbies and activities have on a person's life. Do you have hobbies you adore?

Collecting baseball cards or old dishes might bring you the greatest emotional lift ever. Being involved in the local Chess Club or volunteering at the library could be the icing on your cake of life.

Take a look at these sample Life Plan steps:

1. Sign up for golf lessons next month. Learn how to play golf. Practice golf once a week in addition to lesson time.
2. Call the community theatre and inquire about try-outs for their next production.

Whatever your beloved hobbies and activities, ensure you've included them in your Life Plan. What changes would you like to make in this realm of your life? Are there hobbies you're tired of doing? Would you like to develop an interest in a new activity? Write down the activities you've always wanted to do in your spare time.

Realizing the impact of your hobbies and activities on your life is important to your levels of contentment and satisfaction. Consider hobbies and activities as important parts of your Life Plan.

"Great minds have purpose; others have wishes."

-Washington Irving

INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PURSUITS

Having intellectual and cultural pursuits in life may or may not be important to you.

If thinking great thoughts, engaging in stimulating conversation, and being in a constant state of learning are things you love to do, then it would make sense for you to include something about intellectual pursuits in your Life Plan.

Learning a second language, reading all of Shakespeare's works, or attending plays and cultural shows are relevant pastimes if you want to be involved in cultural activities. ***Consider what some of your secret passions might be.*** For example, have you always wanted to re-read some of the classics you read in high school so you can truly enjoy and understand them?

Perhaps your ethnic background and country are subjects you've always dreamed of exploring in depth. Can you imagine more fascinating pursuits than these? You deserve to take the time to engage in whatever cultural pursuits that draw your interest.

Check out these possible items in this category of your Life Plan:

1. Attend one play every 3 months. Call about special pricing at the theatre.
2. Research my cultural heritage. Join Genealogy.com to construct my family tree.
3. Check out travel DVD at public library on Spain.

Are you happy with the level of these pursuits you currently enjoy? Outline specifically how you'll pursue them in your Life Plan.

> "Planning is about bringing the future into the present so that you cando something about it now."
>
> -Alan Lakein

SUMMARY

Creating your Life Plan is a fluid process because life itself is ever-changing. Situations transform, people grow, and unexpected events occur. So re-evaluating your Life Plan from time to time is the smart thing to do.

Your Life Plan will ensure you live wherever you wish in the way you want. Your plan will provide a pathway for you to do work you're passionate about and cultivate relationships with partners, have children and family, and fraternize with friends you adore.

A plan will even help you set up your spare time so you're spending it doing hobbies and activities that bring you satisfaction, fascination, and joy.

Make your physical and emotional health a focus of your Life Plan — the healthier you are the better life you'll live. Re-visiting your Life Plan from time to time will allow you the opportunity to continue to work to strengthen your character and possess the qualities you deem important.

Finally, reviewing your Life Plan will show you whether you're pursuing activities that expand your intellect and taste for cultural events.

If you strive to truly embrace life at its fullest, make your own plan and then take every step from this day forward to make it happen! Live the life you truly want by discovering the value of having a Life Plan.

"If you want your life to be magnificent story, then begin by realizing that you are the author and every day you have the opportunity to write a new page."

-Mark Houlahan