



# WISDOM PROJECT

## *Formation of Identity*

*To the Generations that follow*

*The Deep Wisdom I learned that I wished I knew when I was young*

## Be the Champion of Your Life

### *Transform Your Destiny!*

Thoughts, Insights, and Inspirations  
to guide you through the  
traumas and transitions of life.

Contained within are wonderful tools to turn:

**Tragedy Into Triumph,  
Adversity Into Advantage,  
Fear Into Fortitude, &  
Calamity Into Courage.**

*By Robert Porter Lynch*

## Contents

Preface .....	3
Chapter FOUR: FORMATION OF CHARACTER Who am I? .....	4
Part I: Identity and Experience.....	4
Part II: Character-Based Identity .....	8

# Wisdom Project

## PREFACE

Christianity is currently on the wane according to very compelling statistics. (see: [Christianity at the Crossroads](#) )

### *Value Proposition*

Christian Leaders are overlooking a *Powerful Value Proposition* that could dramatically reverse this trend. Here's what we know: (see: [Wisdom Project](#) for more detail)

Well adjusted Christians (not necessarily devout) who have *three things in their lives* are likely to live 15% longer (approximately 7.5 years or more)<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Belief in God** (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit – don't forget the last of the Trinity which gives people a Healthy Spirit)
2. **Mission & Purpose in their Lives** – this gives meaning to what they do and something to live for (people without meaning and purpose are more likely to be depressed, eat poorly, and get sick more often)
3. **Strong, Trustworthy Relationships** – social relationships prevent the loneliness that studies have shown can reduce life expectancy by eight years.

People who have these three “Key Factors for Success” (KFS) live longer because they have something to live for, for today and for eternity. *Their minds, bodies, souls and spirits are activated fully.* They are happier and have a strong sense of well-being. They have a *healthier and happier attitude toward life itself.*

### *Character-Based Identity*

These KFSs become the foundation of a *Character-Based Identity* that should distinguish and differentiate Christians from others in a very positive and energizing manner.

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<sup>1</sup> *Changes In Lifestyle And Outlook Can Affect Longevity* by Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO, AARP Magazine, June 2018

## Chapter FOUR: FORMATION OF CHARACTER Who am I?

**H**as your character become ingrained into your identity? If not, a person becomes detached from their inner guiding forces, resulting in a tangled external façade reflects the inner turmoil that's tearing around inside.

### ***PART I: IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE***

Answering the question: “WHO AM I?” is one of the core-questions of one’s very existence because one’s identity has massive impacts on one’s fate. This question is central to the formation of one’s identity and one’s perception of self-worth in their world. (And while vital and pivotal to human existence, it is not addressed adequately by our educational system) The answers follow six typical paths based deeply on how each individual answers the question: WHO AM I?

#### 1. **MY DESTINY:**

- I aim at becoming the highest and best vision of my Soul that reflects my personal purpose, mission, and vision for creating a better world.
- My Ego supports and aligns with the guidance of the Soul.
- **I am the future vision of my highest possibility** and I am the values that support that vision.

#### 2. **MY STRUGGLE:**

- I am the inner struggle between my Soul and Ego.
- Inherent conflict between the four drives compels me to endure an inner battle, which is the source and the angst I reflect in my life.
- **I am my angst, my pain;** my inner turmoil is what matters most.

#### 3. **MY WANDERINGS:**

- I am my meaninglessness;

# Be the Champion of Your Life

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- I am pulled in many directions, confused, conflicted, unsure, often taking the safe route to reduce pain and ameliorate fear, thus I am everything and nothing;
- **I am a jumbled confusion** masked in material meanings of life.

(in other words, I really don't know who I am and really don't care or I have given up caring or caring was so painful that I just don't want to face that hurt any more.)

## 4. **MY EXPERIENCE:**

- I am what I have experienced in life – good or bad.  
Whatever has been my history is the permanent map for my future – my past gloom will be my future doom.
- Thus my past will mean I become victimized by whatever past pain, hurt, guilt, and disappointment has brought me.
- **I am a projection of my Ego's interpretation of the past;** success, failure, incompetent, powerful, etc are all the words of the Ego defining my dealing with the challenges I have faced.

## 5. **MY SEXUALITY:**

- I am defined by my sexual preference, my passions, my partners, my plumbing.
- My sexual identity will define how I think, feel, and relate to others
- My Sexuality is paramount to defining who I am
- My Sexuality is a Public Affair to be displayed Proudly
- People who are insensitive to my sexual preferences are

## 6. **MY SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:**

- My social media “friends” define who I am and what I should be to be “liked.”

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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- The people I surround myself with define and guide my thinking, my deepest beliefs, my responses to the world around me, and the things I value most.
- Without my “friends” I would be isolated and rejected.

Let’s look at the typical answers to the question WHO AM I? (try this at a social gathering and see what you get for answers) when one defines their essence from the perspective of my “Experience”:

Experience – 40 years solving computer problems....

History – come from family migrating from Poland....

Success – started 3 highly profitable businesses....

Affiliation – member of black knights gang in ....

Highlight Event – survivor of concentration camp....

Education – graduated cum laude from....

Military – served 20 years in Marine Corps....

Neighborhood, City, State – Floridian from Miami....

Profession – doctor, lawyer, hairdresser....

Survival – cancer survivor of 5 years....

Age – 72 years old and retired....

Role or Profession – mother, doctor, plumber....

Religion – Christian, Jew, Atheist

Status – homeowner with condo in....

Sex – male, female, hetero/homo....

Physical – weightlifter, sexy....

Sensitivity – tough, gentle, caring, loving ....

Interests – car collector, skier....

Marital Status – married, single, divorced....

Nationality or Ethnicity – African-American...

Employment Status – employed, between jobs...

Financial condition – rich, poor, up-and-coming....

Pride – inducted into the Hall of Fame....

Goals – to become a millionaire by the age of.....

Social Status – leader of my team, community ....

Illusion – successfully accomplished .....

Victimization – my father raped me when I was .....

Struggle – I’ve never been able to, you are privileged, etc.

# Be the Champion of Your Life

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What's notable about these common responses is they have nothing to do at all with the most important trait of personal identity – CHARACTER.

Most of these answers come from the one's *ego*, which needs to impress and protect. (BTW, I don't think the ego is bad or demonic, especially when guided by one's soul).

When Identity and Experience become intertwined, one can never separate what's happening in their daily life with who they believe they actually are. Thus, if their experience is happy or positive, it is reflected in their attitude (which is okay if everything is going well). But the consequences are severe should they experience a "bad" day, which results in a "bad" attitude, which in turn creates more bad experiences, and ultimately a depressed or morose or angry identity.

The Resilient person does not attach an adversity experience to their identity. This detachment enables them to bounce back, not weighed down by historic baggage of past experience.

The real potential is not just to bounce, but to use the adversity experience as propulsion to a higher level.

In other words, let the adversity become a transformational experience -- to be born again at a higher level.

Knowing the answer to "Who am I?" is essential if you are to trust yourself, and to be trusted by others. A strong, integrated character is more important than intelligence and smartness, for character is the foundation of wisdom and the path to the soul.

In the larger view, I really don't much care for people who are intelligent but lack character, for they can never be wise nor soulful, which means they lack a well-developed conscience, and thus cannot be in my inner circle of friends.

*"You'll never decide what you want  
until you've decided who you are."* - Noel Coward

*"As Soon As You Trust Yourself,  
You Will Know How To Live."* -- Johann Von Goethe

Trusting oneself means alignment of personal values into an integral whole – otherwise known as "integrity," with clarity of direction – otherwise known as "mission & purpose."

Think about all these answers for a moment. What are these people saying? What's their objective?

First, they are creating an image of themselves they want the outside world to associate with them.

Second, they are totally avoiding what is their inner core. What's notable about these common responses is they have nothing to do at all with the most important trait of personal identity – Your CHARACTER; Your Personal INTEGRITY; Your VISION and VALUES; or Your DESTINY.

From the superficial illusion, in not one case do we get any sense that we could trust this person, because we only know what's on the surface, which is what they wanted us to know.

Most of these superficial answers come from the one's Ego, which needs to impress and protect. Not a single answer came from the Soul. (BTW, I don't think the Ego is bad or demonic).

The biggest problem with the “outer” approach to identity is:

### *Your Experience Becomes Your Identity*

When Inner Identity becomes dependent upon Outer Experience, one can never separate what's happening in their daily life with who they believe they actually are. You become a victim or hero based on the experience of your life:

- When you have happy or positive experiences, you are happy and positive. Thus, if your experience is happy or positive, it is reflected in their attitude (which is okay if everything is going well).



## Be the Champion of Your Life

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- But the consequences are severe should you experience a "bad" day, which results in a "bad" attitude, which in turn creates more bad experiences, and ultimately a depressed or morose or angry identity. When your experiences take a turn for the worse, your identity is now about being a failure, and naturally you become depressed. (Perhaps this contributes to why twenty percent of our population in America suffers from some form of clinical depression).

### *Character-Based Identity*

A person who bases their identity on the *Inner Alignment* of their Four Drives (which starts with the alignment of the Ego to support the Soul's destiny and purpose) thus becomes far more resilient to the twists and turns of their experience/fate.

They do not attach an adverse experience to their identity. This detachment enables them to bounce back, not weighed down by historic baggage of past experience. Every day is a new day filled with possibility and interesting challenges.

Sadness, depression, and glumness are just fleeting emotions that have nothing to sustain them. This is not a knee-jerk Pollyanna style "oh everything is beautiful" approach to the world, but a deep, *inner knowing* of why and how the world works.<sup>2</sup>

The real potential here is not just to bounce, but to use the adversity experience as propulsion to a higher level. In

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<sup>2</sup> The Six Volumes of *Keys to the Kingdom* are designed to provide this deep, inner wisdom, exploring the forces and dynamics that are in constant interplay, molding the fate of the world.

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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other words, let the adversity become a transformational experience -- to be born again at a higher level.

How do people who've had this kind of transformational experience view the world?

This person of wisdom, who has "integrated" their inner dynamics – the good and the bad, the light and the dark, the strong and the weak, the enlightened and the realistic – is the one who can truly be trusted.

They answer the question, "WHO AM I?" very soulfully. They define themselves from a place in their souls where character has defined, developed, and refined their identity. Typically these people will be disarmingly humble (soulful) in answering the question with answers along these lines:

- Vision – the possibility that....
- Values – the most important values are....
- Destiny – God put me on this earth to....
- Purpose – devotion to this noble cause....
- Commitment – dedication to solving....
- Learning – from my failures I now see....
- Quest – seeking the understanding of....
- Giving – serving those who....
- Impact – making a difference....
- Integrity – dedication to walking the talk....
- Conscience – it's the right thing to....
- Relationships – aim to be the best friend....

These people's character is sourced not from their ego, but from their soul. They define success much like what the great sports coach John Wooden advocated:

*"Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming."*

It is in this shift from ego and self-interest to soul and embracing the greater good, that character is formed.

Thus the formation of character involves an “identity shift,” without which a human being is merely a pawn in the hands of a crafty leader or a potentially omnipotent culture.

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## Part II: Character-Based Identity

How do people who've had that kind of transformational experience view the world? Every once in a while you meet a totally unique person who answers the question, "WHO AM I?" very soulfully. They define themselves from a different place, from which character has defined and developed their identity. Typically these people will be disarmingly humble (soulful) in answering the question:

Vision – the possibility that....  
Values – the most important values are....  
Destiny – God put me on this earth to....  
Purpose – devotion to this noble cause....  
Commitment – dedication to solving....  
Learning – from my failures I now see....  
Quest – seeking the understanding of....  
Giving – serving those who....  
Impact – making a measurable difference by....  
Integrity – dedication to walking the talk....  
Conscience – it's just the right thing to do ....  
Relationships – aim to be the best friend anyone....

These people's character is sourced *not from their ego, but from their soul*. They define success much like what the great sports coach John Wooden advocated:

*Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.*

It is in this shift from ego and self-interest to soul and embracing the greater good, that character is formed.

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### **TRUST DEFINES YOUR IDENTITY**

*"Character becomes Destiny"*

– Heraclitus, Greek ~500BC

The ideal of character should never be diminished or dismissed.

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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It is the hallowed core of humanity, of dignity, of reason, of purpose, and of a trusted life lived to its fullest.

This is a deeply profound thought, because in one's passage through life, we are faced with thousands of decisions, large and small, which serve as cross-roads in our destiny.

Before we can trust others, we must first show we can trust ourselves. To create true synergy with others, we must design it and manifest it within our hearts, minds, and souls, and perceive it manifesting in our everyday world.

### *Trust and Ethics*

The journey into the inner dimensions of identity, while inspiring, is also challenging. One's experience and outmoded beliefs have been molded over our lifetime. We are creatures of habits, many of which are not terribly beneficial. Old thoughts and beliefs can be like junk food – momentarily satisfying, but ultimately devastating. Realigning what culture and habits have formed can be frustrating, time consuming, and even painful.

Realignment can also cause difficulties with those who are our closest friends. Defining those who can be in our inner circle by a tight, exclusive definition of the inner journey to integrity leaves us with a wrenching dilemma: “What do we do with the vast majority of people on the ‘bell curve’ between integrity and evil? Do we exclude them from our realm of relationships? Of course not.

The role of ethics is to set standards that enable the majority of people to function in an environment that balances the individual's needs with the greater good of everyone else. However, in the final analysis, ethics serves only as second-rate glue creating a standard binding together those who have not done the inner work to build

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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true integrity. If all had integrity, ethics would not be needed.

Ethical standards<sup>3</sup> are essential to the proper functioning of all societies institutions. Most people will be willingly to abide by a strong standard of ethics that bind them to behaviors that enable a reasonable level of trust. However, the untrustworthy person will always find a way around ethics, contracts, and any form of binding agreement.

The biggest problem with ethics is the misconception that good ethics will cure the problems of distrust. Ethics actually creates a dilemma for building trust.

*While the lack of ethics will definitely destroy trust, the presence of ethics may only bring trust to a neutral point.*

Good ethics implies “I won't do something wrong;” it takes the fear out of the picture. But ethics doesn't mean “I'll be effective,” nor “use sound judgment,” nor “be collaborative,” nor “compassionate,” nor “spontaneous,” nor “willing to bend as circumstances change.”

We all know ethical people who are ornery, dispassionate, inconsiderate, self-righteous, or uncooperative; thus while theoretically “trustworthy,” they are not able to generate a trusting relationship in real life. Trust embraces far more than ethics.

Real trust comes from people who are willing to be highly cooperative and compassionate as well as ethical. In addition, we trust people who also have good character,

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<sup>3</sup> It goes without saying that ethics are in an abominable state of affairs today. Trust in our core institutions is spotty. We trust our military five times more strongly than Congress. More than two thirds of our nation distrusts banks; and with good reason (as we will see in a later chapter) Business has a very erratic pattern of being trusted, highly dependent upon how ethical they are.

good competence, and good collaboration. When we see great trust, we see people who know that their self-interest must always be put into a bigger picture: what's in the mutual interest of the relationship itself.

Recently I was asked to help rebuild a relationship between two business partners where the trust had broken down. The older of the two partners said it so well:

*"For me at this stage of my life, I find it very difficult to separate friendship from business.*

*The qualities of a great friend are quite similar to those of a great partner. Frankly, I don't know where the dividing line is any more.*

*The qualities of trust, integrity, mutuality, loyalty, and commitment to a larger mission are inherent in both a friendship and business partnership.*

*As we embark on the threshold of a noble destiny together, I want these qualities to be present between us. In fact, this is more than a "want," it is an "essential ingredient."*

### ***Cross-Roads of Destiny***

Those who have poor character continually make bad choices when they reach these cross-roads. The poor choices may include a wide variety of things, starting early in life:

- who we associate with,
- how we treat others,
- where we spend our time
- what we decide to learn
- the future we seek
- the choice of friends and partners
- the commitments we make
- how we honor others

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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- the way we respond to pressure and stress
  - choices to believe in one thing or another
  - where to live
  - use of drugs or alcohol
  - what employment to seek
  - the choice to go on to college, and what college and what courses
  - should I join the military or public service
- .....the list is endless.

How we answer each of the choices in life, it might be argued, depends upon three key forces:

- 1) *who influences us,*
- 2) *our belief systems,* and
- 3) *the values we hold dear.*

That is the crux of the issue of character; for the person with character is consciously aware of these three forces and makes decisions about his or her life with the best inputs from these three forces

If you look at anyone whose life has been a failure, the decision points about their lives were multitudinous; many times they could have made critical turns that could have avoided having their pathway of life run headlong into a ditch.

*Character is the Inner Foundational Alignment  
that displays your trustworthiness to the outer world.*

It is in this way that trust is not just a quality of your life:

*“Trust becomes Identity”*

People truly know you when they can trust you. If those around you can't trust you, they don't know you well enough to put their faith, love, caring, or material assets in your trust. You are a mystery, and not a good one.



## THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And being one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for those passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

How the woods are lovely, dark, and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I --  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

-Robert Frost

To be trusted by others, you must first be able to trust yourself, which means you must know your inner soul.

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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Martin Luther King's 1963 speech is one of the most moving and energizing pieces of literature ever delivered to an audience that was hanging on his every word:

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by **the content of their character**.\*

I have a dream that ....when we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last!"

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\* I fear that this last point about *character* has been lost, and has little meaning to our society today. Of all the MLK's points, this one makes the biggest difference for future generation

# Be the Champion of Your Life

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## ***PART III – SPIRIT-BASED IDENTITY***

Spirit Based Identity focuses on the unification of Ego (the “survival instinct” with Soul (the “thrival instinct”). The Spirit calls for us to connect with others.

### ***Why do we want friendships?***

We want to connect to others – of course! But why? Do we ever ask the deeper questions?

For many we want connectivity to help express and find deeper meaning in our lives, not just to talk, but to seek a deeper sense of community – a common unity – a soulful experience, a powerful yearning within for something uplifting, energizing, calming, purposeful.

This is the Spirit within that’s calling us.

The divine inspiration desiring fulfillment to fill the vacuum of isolation, to free us from the self-imposed emptiness of solitary confinement, to soothe our aches.

Our yearning for friendship is the beginning of our search for people whose wisdom will bring us meaning, whose happiness will bring us joy, whose love and affection will touch our hearts, and whose spontaneity will enliven our creative juices. A deep friendship brings us a oneness with self, with others, and sometimes with a divine presence.

When a friend in need calls upon us, it gives us the opportunity to lift our souls to a higher sense of purpose.

*Seek and ye shall find* is an ancient spiritual principle – it’s a process that requires refinement, conscious direction, a language of learning, and a discipline of thought and action.

Spiritual Champions have powerful souls aligned with their egos – they understand the higher order – divine – energies of love, creation, joy, and wisdom, incorporating these into their thoughts and actions

### ***PART III: LOVE OF WORK, DEVOTION, & COMMITMENT***

In the building of character, one's work and one's experience can be creatively transformed into art and then magnified into action, if our hearts and minds are conduits of a much greater and mightier purpose -- if we see ourselves as benefactors of a conscience ordained by divine order; in this way we meld love into work as we express our character -- thus manifesting our identity with our destiny.

#### ***The Love and Art of Work***

Mastery of the art melding identity with work is an art that is actually not about work itself.

Work can be transformed into art, and magnified into action, if our hearts and minds are conduits of a much greater and mightier purpose -- if we see ourselves as benefactors of the flow of the two divine energies -- love and creation -- and channel these energies through us into the building of our world. Kahlil Gibran probably understood this phenomenon best as he observed in *The Prophet*:

*When you work you are a flute through  
Whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.*

*When you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream  
Assigned to you when that dream was born,  
And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving  
life. And to love life through labour is to be intimate  
With life's inner most secret.*

*All work is empty save when there is Love;*

*And when you work with love  
You bind yourself to yourself,  
And to one another, and to God.*

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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*And what is it to work with love?  
It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart;  
It is to build a house with affection;  
It is to sow seeds with tenderness  
And reap the harvest with joy;  
It is to change all things you fashion  
With a breath of your own spirit,*

*Work is love made visible.*

*And if you cannot work with love but only  
With distaste, it is better that you should leave your work  
For if you grudge the crushing of grapes,  
Your grudge distills a poison in the wine.*

*And if you sing though as Angels, and Love not the singing,  
You muffle man's ears to the  
Voices of the day and the voices of the night.*

St. Francis of Assisi explained this divine process as creative energy:

*The person who works with their hands is simply a laborer;  
the person with their hands and minds a craftsman;  
and with their hands, mind, and heart, a true artist.*

The laborer and the craftsman “work hard,” the artists “works in wonder.” Our lives and our work can be a sacred art, one for which we need to take the time and to make the effort to become masters. Aristotle commented that:

*The aim of true art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.*

In other words, life itself can be -- and the building of character is -- a sacred art.

We mold and shape and design the moments which collectively represent our day, tuning our perceptions and awareness to see and hear what others do not, then amplify and

# Be the Champion of Your Life

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configure these small signals into a larger tapestry of meaning, upon which we become empowered to create action.

We must cherish deep wisdom and pass it on to others as our gift, as an act of our love, our caring, and our commitment to our larger purpose.

However, love and creativity alone are not enough; no work of art can be created without two other key ingredients: devotion and commitment.

## *Commitment*

It's been said: commitment is what transforms a promise into reality; it is the words that speak boldly of our intentions, and the actions which speak louder than the words; it is making the time when there is none, coming through time after time after time, year after year after year.

Commitment is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism, of vision over fear. Commitment gives us the discipline to attain a mastery of our lives, of our own personal duty to build our character.

## *Devotion*

Never should devotion and commitment be confused with "working hard." Devotion is sourced from the soul; a love and dedication for something higher than ourselves, an ideal, a beauty, a goodness that transcends the mundane. St. Francis knew:

*"It is in forgetting oneself that one is found."*

The devoted person sees themselves not as the cause of anything, but as an instrument or vehicle or conduit through which some greater power can be exerted to achieve a greater purpose. Devotion gives us the zen-like presence to be "in the moment," never to be enslaved by our discipline, but to be set free by discipline.

Devotion allows the master to see past the dogma and prescriptions of the discipline, to touch the hearts and souls of

# Be the Champion of Your Life

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the group, to transcend the dictums and feel the pain, to touch the heart, to manifest the vision of those who seek guidance.

Thus the master is never above and never below, but always by one's side.

In building our personal character, we mold and shape and design the moments which collectively represent our day.

We, as humans, are endowed with a gift to tune our perceptions and awareness to see and hear what others do not, then amplify and configure these small signals into a larger tapestry of meaning, upon which we can be empowered to create daily action demonstrating our devotion, our caring, and our commitment to our larger purpose.

That is the formation of character, identity, and ultimately, destiny.

## *Reverence*

Those who show reverence for the right things – truth, divine inspiration, love of one's family, friends, and community – are spiritually centered, reluctant to pass judgement indiscriminately, willing to listen, ask probing questions that reveal inner meanings, and respect every human for their inner soul.

## *Self Confidence*

So much is made today about creating self-confidence in today's youth, who are so consumed with identity, acceptance by their peers, and pressure from social media. Much of the effort to build self-confidence is misdirected.

Let's look at the word *confidence*.<sup>4</sup> It means *trust* and *resilience*. A person who wants self confidence must trust themselves, bringing their diverse interests and desires

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<sup>4</sup> From the Latin *con* (to join, unite, bring together align) and *fidere* (faith, trust, fidelity, loyalty)

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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together, into an aligned, unified inner integrity -- into a strong set of core values.

All-too-often efforts to build self-confidence are terribly misguided. Some kids are given an exorbitant amount of praise and positive reinforcement, often to the point of delusion. Some are rewarded with trophies just for participating in something, regardless of their contribution. Others attempt to defeat self-loathing by fostering self-love, to the edge of narcissism.

Great people never want undeserved acclaim, and never think of loving themselves. Their emphasis is on *personal integrity, service to others, and what's in the interest of the greater good*. In other words, self-confidence means to *trust yourself* – your values, your intentions, your integrity to do the right thing, your own sense of purpose and mission, and your inner character to stand strong under pressure and adversity.

A better way to build confidence is to build one's own sense of trust and the discipline to be a pillar of strength. (see Rudyard Kipling's Poem "If"). Here are a few questions to ask:

How committed am I to doing the right thing, regardless of who likes me?

When I'm wrong, am I willing to apologize and take corrective action?

Do I find peace, seek harmony, and build unity in the caldron of turmoil?

How willing am I to tell the truth, even if it makes me look bad?

How disciplined am I to travel the high road?

Am I willing to inspire, enthuse, and set a positive example?

Am I a person dedicated to good deeds, not just words?

Do I have the courage to intercede when a wrong is being done?

Am I willing to temper my adept knowledge with real wisdom?

Am I committed to being true to my word?



## Be the Champion of Your Life

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Am I willing to be humble in the face of glory?  
Am I dedicated to a personal mission that builds a better world?  
Am I willing to serve my fellow man honorably?  
Is my soul and conscience my guiding spirit in my life?  
Can I do the right thing without being arrogant or self-righteous?  
Am I dedicated to bringing out the best in others?  
Can I be skeptical enough to learn, but not succumb to cynicism?  
Can I be knowledgeable without being too smart?  
Can I apply the Golden Rule to all my interactions in life?  
Do I give devotion and respect to a higher, soulful authority?

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### *Peacemaking*

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth. But also ...

Cursed are the peacemakers, for they will-likely be shot by both sides.

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### *COURAGE CREATES ABUNDANCE*

*Courage enlarges,*

*Cowardice diminishes resources.*

*In desperate straits the fears of the timid  
aggravate the dangers that imperil the brave.*

- Christian Nevell Bovee

## Be the Champion of Your Life

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*Some final thoughts to consider*

You can't just *live* your life;  
You must *lead* your life.  
Take the High Road of Destiny and  
Character;  
or be a Victim on the Low Road  
of Blame and Disdain.

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*There are only two ways to live your life.  
One is as though nothing is a miracle.  
The other is as though everything is a  
miracle.* -- Albert Einstein

*Life is either a daring adventure or nothing  
at all.* -- Helen Keller

Who said it best? Einstein or Keller? You choose!

