

SUPPLEMENT #16
LIFE EXERCISE – USE TO MAKE A DECISION SUPPLEMENT

We can feel LIFE within us:

- excitement
- joy
- energy
- creativity
- enthusiasm
- eagerness

Describe one time when you felt, or feel, very much alive:

If, instead, we feel bored, apathetic, unwilling to move, dull, or depressed, we are experiencing LIFE-LESS feelings.

Describe a time when you felt lifeless:

Which set of feelings do you experience more often?

Which set of feeling do you prefer?

Why?

BASIC IMPULSES OF LIFE

1. We all want to enjoy being who we are.

Name some things you like about yourself:

Name some things you dislike about yourself:

What connection can you find between these lists, and the times you described in the last exercise (feeling very much alive/feeling dead)?

Identify a choice or decision you are trying to make.

What feelings come up inside you as you think of doing it?

2. We all have a deep desire to grow into a fuller person.

In what ways will the choice or decision affect your growth into your fullest potential?

In what ways do you experience yourself resisting this change?

3. We all have an impulse to give, to share.

In what ways would the decision or choice lead you to be a more giving, sharing person?

Your resistance to this impulse is usually experienced as selfishness. Do you sometimes feel yourself to be selfish? How?

4. We all want to also receive, to feel others giving to us. Name what you long to receive from others:

Can you identify any ways in which the choice or decision you are considering would affect your ability to receive, or the desire of others to give to you?

Resistance to receiving is also experienced as a painful feeling of being shut off, isolated, un-cared, closed. Have you ever experienced this feeling? Under what circumstances?

Visualize yourself with open arms and open heart, receiving love and joy. How do you feel when you visualize this?

LEVELS OF LIFE

Though life is a unity, we experience it on more than one level.

1. The body.

There are many impulses which we feel on the level of the body: hunger, which is the urge or impulse to eat; sleepiness, the urge to rest and refresh one's self; the urge to laugh, to stretch, to unite with another...

Describe some tendencies on the level of the body, which you have experienced:

2. The Mind.

Please understand this term, mind, as referring to all your psychological faculties: thoughts, emotions, imagination, memory, and will.

Identify an event that was a major turning point in your life. Write down some details about that event - where it happened, what you were doing when it happened, what was said, and so on.

Write down the feelings that came with the memories:

Your mind's vivid powers are not, of course, entirely separate from the faculties of your body. Physical and mental go together and often flow into one another; you are a single person, and your life is a unity, yet the different levels do exist.

Name a time, today, when your focus was primarily on the physical level:

Name a time, today, when your focus was primarily on the mental level:

Your FOCUS is where your life energy is directed.

3. The Spirit.

Most of us are aware, sometimes in the vaguest way, that there is a core of our being which is deeper than the others. We know that there is something which will exist as long as we are alive, even if we lose all the powers of our bodies and all the faculties of our minds.

For a few minutes, sit quietly. Turn the focus of your attention away from the urges and impulses of the body - - just accept them, and leave them alone. In the same way, turn the focus away from your busy mental activity - - try to focus on the deepest, quietest part of yourself. (You won't be able to stop your thoughts, so don't even try; just don't follow them.)

What words come to your mind to describe this experience?

Life is in the spirit. Our perceptions of being alive, or of being dead and empty, are perceptions in this deepest level of self.

Think back to the choice or decision you are considering.

How will it affect you on the level of the body?

How will it affect you on the level of the mind?

How will it affect you on the level of the spirit?

THE BEST SELF

At our deepest level, the spirit, we may be able to become aware of our best selves --- ourselves unspoiled by the complications we have created with our manner of living.

Sitting quietly, shift the focus of attention away from the body and away from mind, as before. Try to spend at least ten minutes just sitting, with your focus inward. Do not try to think - - JUST BE.

Afterwards, still sitting quietly, see if you can identify some of the qualities that are your best self. Do not write down physical or mental attributes - - there are ASSETS or GIFTS. What is really good about YOU? Our true selves will always urge us towards what will bring us inner peace, or serenity. The world in which we live encourages us, however, to build and value a false self. The false self bases its self-esteem not on inner peace or serenity, but on the judgments and opinions of the world. It justifies itself by finding STATUS and POWER, acquiring POSSESSIONS, and seeking PLEASURE for its own sake. It spends its energies getting these things, and desperately tries to hang onto them. It FEARS losing them. It is JEALOUS of others who may have more.

Describe some characteristics of your own false self which have been significant in your life.

Think again of the choice or decision you are considering.

What would be its effect on your false self?

What would be its affect on your true self?

BASIC HEART WISHES

It is likely that all of us, everywhere, really want the same things.

We all want TO LOVE.

How fully is this wish satisfied in you?

We all want TO BE LOVED.

How fully is this wish satisfied in you?

We all want TO SHARE, so that our lives are in solidarity with the lives of some others.

How fully is this wish satisfied in you?

We all want TO BLOSSOM, to be what and who we were meant to be.

How fully is this wish satisfied in you?

In what ways would the decision or choice you are considering affect the satisfaction of your deepest wishes of the heart?

What decision can you reach concerning the matter in question?

List your fears about this decision.

What commitment are you willing to make? Write it here.