

Heirloom

By Joel Lind

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Introduction

This book is full of self-exploration and writing-exercises. I will prompt you to write, draw, self-reflect, and think critically--I hope that you find these writing prompts interesting, exciting, and very meaningful. I relate these writing prompts to the feeling on Christmas morning--where you open beautifully wrapped presents--you never know what golden idea is waiting to be discovered.

Pick and choose which writing prompts you want to complete. I hope you do most of them. Some of the writing prompts are very challenging--and time consuming--but very well worth the effort to gain self-knowledge. You might learn about how you can start to change your "life story" and "back-story" as you understand yourself on a deeper level. You're welcome to modify these ideas in any way to meet your specific needs. If the writing feels like "work" and isn't fun... then don't do it--because my intent is to not hand out "busy" work.

This book is full of my pondering over the past 20+ years. Most of the ideas found in this book are my own unique ideas where I've combined important lists with other lists which has sparked new ideas (more lists).

Over the years my joy for life has greatly increased, and I blame it on meaningful journaling--which has improved my social life--which has improved my overall life-satisfaction.

No academic scholar has tested my ideas--what you read is my opinion and life-experience. Some of my journal recommendations have come from other authors--I will tell you who and where I got the idea from to give context and avoid plagiarism.

A couple of ideas I recommend you draw symbols... do not get intimidated by drawing or think you're not a good artist, I believe stick figure drawings are totally acceptable--most of my drawings are simple concepts. If you can draw basic shapes like a star or a sun or a fire, then you'll be just fine. Giving an idea a symbol, or a metaphor, makes that idea even more powerful. Words are magical, but when you add artwork to them, they become *memorable*.

I personally love books that inspire me to create something, to think of something new, to explore my world--so enjoy! Please do your best to apply these writing-prompts into your own life--you're welcome to borrow ideas from me--but I would strongly recommend creating your own unique ideas--it will make your journey so much more powerful.

Heirloom

Chapter 1: Meaningful Journaling

What is an heirloom? An heirloom is something precious that you pass down to posterity. Why not give your posterity the greatest gift ever... your unique ideas and personality--which can be found in your heirloom--i.e. journal.

Journaling is my greatest passion and my greatest possession. I've read many books/articles where the author mentions a little snippet about "journaling", however, no author ever goes into detail about what their journal-writing experience is about. I wrote this book with that idea in mind... "what should I journal about that is meaningful"?

My brain prompted me many times in my adolescents to begin a journal. Finally after contemplating, at the age of 16, I began my journal on September 7th, 1999. My journaling *style* has evolved over the years. I try to only journal when I'm struggling, or I feel inspired, or receive a really good idea that I sometimes transform ideas into something I call a "values-list".

When I pass away, I believe that my legacy and identity will be found in my journal--that is why this is an heirloom. Anyone who journals,

whether new or experienced, should consider organizing your most *cherished ideas* into a separate journal. For example... I have 4 journals that are in **three-ring-binders** with *filler paper*.

1. My *first* journal (binder) is made up of 3 sections: Heirloom, Traditional Journal (diary), and Treasures.
2. My *second* journal (binder) is where I keep all my excess diary style journal entries (they start to add up after a while).
3. My *third* journal (binder) is where I put “retired” ideas... ideas that I no longer highly-cherish, but are still historically important--they show a transformation of my evolution (these start to add up too).
4. My *fourth* journal (a very small binder), I take to work or on vacation where I record ideas I find from books I’m reading, or to write a diary style recording.

Journaling is my medicine--it’s how I keep my brain organized and stable. My style of journaling is unique (I created this through years of trial and error). I believe there is an art to my madness that I hope is applicable to others.

I also have a smartphone, and I constantly record ideas in the QuickMemo pad--which I later record in my organized journal.

Chapter 2: Values-Lists

What is a values-list? First we need to define what a value is. A value is something you consider to be *extremely* important. For example... I consider myself and my family's happiness to be extremely important, my experiences, books etc. So... a "values-list" is basically *a list of ideas* of something you value. There will be many examples throughout this book of what I mean by a "values-list".

It has taken me a while to realize how inspiring values-lists are. When I create a new values-list, for me it's one of the most exciting experiences I can create. Why? Because when I create a new values-list... I usually get into a state-of-mind called "flow"--utilizing my brain to its fullest extent.. I lose track of time because of enjoying the creative process. Exercising your brain by creating self-knowledge is powerful. All of the exercises I recommend can help you become more confident, be a better communicator, a better friend, a better partner, and understand yourself on a deeper level, and be more organized.

On July 16th, 2017 was when I realized that all of my values in my journal were basically "lists". Around that time, I also discovered "journal questions". Journal questions are chunks of knowledge I like to think about

and reflect on in my diary/journal. I don't consider journal questions as "values-lists" because I don't think they're powerful enough or deep enough or interesting enough to be one.

After time, some of my values-lists get combined with other values-lists, or I retire them. When I retire an idea, I put it into a retirement binder.

One of the greatest values-lists I own is called "Values-list's Created". I basically answer these four questions every time I think of a new values-list or journal question....

- What is the values-list or journal question I created?
- Where did the idea come from? (Did it come from a book, my brain, a conversation, a blog, a website, etc.)
- Where is it located in my journal?
- The date I created it?

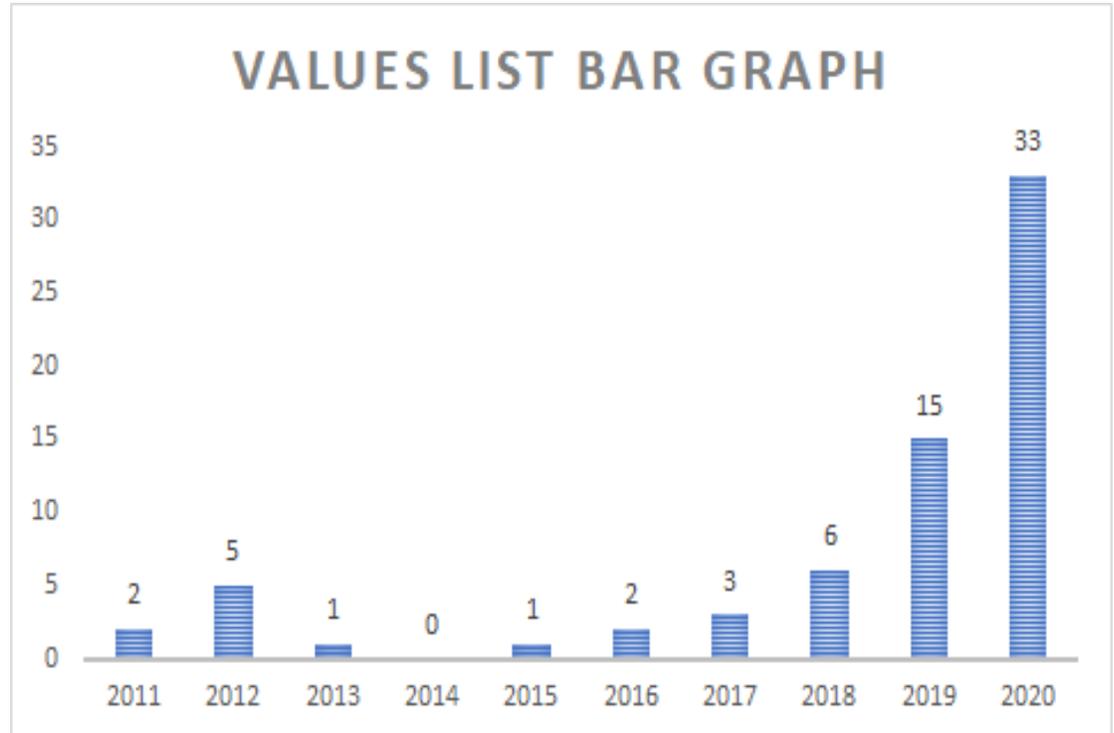
Chapter 3: Graphs

I keep graphs of progress in a couple areas of my life. Back in 2019 when I realized how significant values-lists were and I decided to create a “bar graph” that showed how many I created on a yearly/monthly basis. Values-lists are one of the most significant measurements of success and happiness in my life.

I keep my Mood Maintenance Graph located in this section too. I also have a graph that tally’s all my “Highlighted Experiences” that I keep track of on a monthly basis. A lot of tally’s in a month is a pretty good indicator that that month was really amazing. If there’s no tally for a month... I probably didn’t like that month very much.

Your activity:

- Create meaningful bar graphs or line graphs, or any other kind of graphs you can think of... of things you care about...
 - Things I care about are my journal, my mood, values-lists, dreams I’m pursuing, experiences I have, etc.
- Below is an example of a Bar Graph of my Values Lists starting in the year 2011.



Chapter 4: Goals Analyzed

I would strongly recommend analyzing all your goals. If you don't have any, or have never recorded them and have forgotten about them.. then forget this recommendation.

There's two measurements I look at when analyzing a goal. On a scale of 1 to 5 I rate how *difficult* that goal was. On a scale of 6 to 10 I analyze how *long* it took to accomplish that goal. Then I combine those two numbers on a bar graph. On the bar graph, I shade in the *difficult* part of the graph to show the distinction between how difficult the goal was and how long..

Your activity...

- If you have a record of goals you've done in the past, consider converting those goals into bar graphs. Consider rating how difficult the goal was, and how long it took. Then combine them together on a bar graph.
 - Some examples of goals that I've recorded are... earning a BS Degree in Business, reading the encyclopedia, earning a teaching certification, passing Praxis 1 and 2, creating a website, writing this book, etc.

Chapter 5: Histories

Every writing assignment I've given has been a suggestion. This next journal activity is merely a recommendation. I've received a lot of inspiration from writing out specific histories in my life. Most of the "histories" are a page long to about 5 pages. I'll share some examples..

Histories I've written out.

1. The history of my social life
2. The history of my brain
3. The history of my comedy
4. My history with Mormonism
5. My history with Christianity
6. The history of my wife Chelsea
7. The history of my South Korea experience
8. My history with 12 steps
9. My history with skateboarding
10. My history with education
11. My history with key people in my life... My ex wife,
ex-girlfriends, my brother Dave, my mom, and my friends.

Your writing activity...

- Brainstorm what your “histories” are.
 - Your histories are key people, key events, key people in your life
 - Write out those histories with a little more detail
 - My greatest history is my social life... because that is what is extremely important to me

Chapter 6: Hangout Friends

Everyone's values are going to be different than mine--and that's expected. I believe I am maturing a lot as a human being and it's taken me a long time to realize how important my hangout friends are. Without them I am left alone and not thriving. I need people in my life who I value and cherish--but more importantly... *people who I spend time with*. I love going on vacation, I love the holidays, I love the weekends spending time with family, older friends, newer friends, neighbors, etc.

Here are some of my most important lists, consider the following...

- Who are your "*hangout*" friends?
- Who are your "*potential hangout*" friends?
- Who are your "*historic hangout*" friends?

Your hangout friends are the most important people in your life. They are your spouse/partner, your closest family *that you spend time with*, your closest friends *who you hangout with*.

I am friendly towards most people. But it's not very often that an acquaintance becomes a friend, who then becomes a hangout friend. Hangout friends are special people.

My list of “*potential*” hangout friends are people I hope to one day bump up to hangout friend status. This takes work and it's a very delicate process. Friendships are very fragile in the beginning i.m.o. I've had friends on this list for years and years, and for whatever reason... they don't ever get bumped up to hangout friend status--that's okay... I still value the relationship though.

I then have “*historic*” hangout friends. These are friends that I will never let go of... but we don't hang out all the time. The friendship has a rich past, but people change, my values are different and I've changed, and the relationship just isn't thriving anymore... but I still love my historic hangout friends. I'll hold onto them forever unless there's a very serious reason as to why I should let go of the relationship.

For this activity... keep a list of...

- Who are your hangout friends?
- Who are your potential hangout friends?
- Who are your historic hangout friends?

Update this list as relationships grow and develop.

Chapter 7: Symbolic Heart

My first values-list found in my journal is called the “symbolic heart”. This value is my most important list and drawing I possess. It is also my self-affirmations--which are my greatest ideas. All the goals, and histories, and artwork, symbols, metaphors... support this drawing/list. This list I repeat in my head on a regular basis.

I originally thought of a “symbolic heart” in 2009 when I was living in South Korea teaching English. This idea was reiterated from a book called “Essential Art Therapies” by Leah Guzman, and I’ve updated and redrawn my symbolic heart to reflect my values in 2021. I’ll share some of the differences between my 2009, and 2021 drawing.

Basically, a “symbolic heart” is a drawing in the shape of a human heart on a piece of paper with your greatest values going around the perimeter, and the center of the heart is your number one greatest value.

Your “heart” is symbolic or a metaphor for your greatest desires.

In 2009, my symbolic heart had...

- Gratitude
- Faith/hope/charity
- Trust in God
- Obedience
- Friends and family
- Social skills

- Covenants
- Service
- Fun
- Gifts of God
- “Eternal Life” tree at the center of my heart
- Peace and joy
- Grace
- The Atonement

Back in 2009, each value had a very simple/literal symbol. I thought of these symbols as “seeds”--and having faith that the seeds would grow into fruitful trees. These ideas are like relics, historical evidence of where I’ve come from and what I used to highly value.

I’ve changed and grown since 2009. In 2019, I became obsessed with metaphors because of reading the book, “Awaken the Giant Within” by Tony Robbins. I decided to create a few metaphors (where it's applicable) for some of my current values. Below you’ll see a few examples of what I mean by metaphors.

My symbolic heart for 2021 is a little different: at the top of my heart I drew... (These are basically my self-affirmations which I’ll go into more detail later)...

1. I am metaphorically like the universe because I’m constantly learning and I keep my family in harmony

- My wife is metaphorically like the sun--life and energy flow from her
 - My children are metaphorically like “earths” because they revolve around the sun
2. My Social Hobbies (the symbol is two stick figure people talking to each other)
 3. Values-List (the symbol is a bar graph with a construction crane building a bar section of the graph)
 4. Star-status (a Chinese looking building with different levels with a star on top)
 5. Highlights/Core Memories (the symbol is a scene I drew that represents a vacation I took in the Bahamas)
 6. Best of the Best Timeline (a drawing of a skater doing an advanced trick on a ledge)
 7. Wikipedia Profile (a puzzle piece... symbolic of figuring out and understanding life)
 8. Self-Employed (a little stick figure expanding into a really big stick figure--symbolic of big growth)

9. Shield of strengths and Armor (a shield with symbols of strengths going around it (this will be explained in better detail later in the book))
10. Christianity Symbol (a seed planted that slowly grows into a tree that's bearing fruit)

As you can see with the comparison from my 2009 symbolic heart to my 2021 version, I obviously included my family in the mix, I put my *dreams* in it, and I believe metaphors and symbols are a powerful way to explain values.

Now it's your turn, to begin to create your own symbolic heart...

- Draw the shape of a human heart on a piece of paper
- Create your own list of values
 - What do you consider to be extremely important?
 - Also, what do you want to acquire or accomplish (dreams)?
- Transform your values into metaphors or symbols
- Go around your heart with more examples of things you value, like your family, employment, hobbies, important memories, special strengths.

- Then in the center of your heart is your most cherished and important value.
- **I recommend doing this exercise last after you read the book, you will generate more ideas from other exercises.**

Chapter 8: Mood Maintenance

Another values-list/graph that I think is useful is what I call the “Mood Maintenance Line Graph”. It’s basically a line-graph that represents your happiness/unhappiness/neutrality over your life-span, on an x-axis. On a y-axis, it is a range from +10--being your most happy, to -10--being your most unhappy. Every year represents a data point beginning at age 0 to your *current age* where you quantify how happy you are on a graph. Then you’ll connect the data-points so you see a continuous line that goes from high to low depending on how happy you were. If you look at the graph below, from age 0 to 5, I was pretty neutral, meaning I was at 0, I wasn’t really all that happy, nor was I all that sad.



The graph above I created in Excel. But my actual graph is on filler paper. From age 0 to 11, I gave one data point for each year. From age 12 to 38, I gave a data point every 6 months. My memory of events is a little foggy below age 11.

On a separate sheet of paper I have a values list that I call "Mood Maintenance Line Data Support", *where I explain each year why I gave the data point that I gave.*

For me and my personality, I do not want to experience a "10" happiness--because of personal reasons. I want to be around an "8". Depending on your life situation, you will want to decide what range of +10 to -10 numbers mean for you when you create your own mood maintenance line graph.

Another example... I rate suicidal or homicidal ideation to be a -10. I don't think you can hit rock bottom lower than wanting to end your life--or someone else's life. If you look at my graph, around age 31, I rated myself a -10. I don't want to go into too much detail, but at that age, it was the most depressing time of my life.

For me to be consistently happy in my life and to continue to get a data point or rating of an "8" happiness score--this is what I need...

1. I need to be social to friends, family, neighbors, pretty much anyone and everyone
2. I need to journal
3. I need to be involved with social media and blogging
4. I need to read interesting books
5. I need to go through my self-affirmations regularly
6. Every now and then I play board games with friends
7. I skateboard every now and then with friends

If I'm doing all these things, my happiness maintains around an "8" and I would consider myself to be the perfect amount of happiness.

I currently rate my happiness on a weekly basis whenever I want to reflect on my happiness.

I now recommend that you create your own mood maintenance line graph...

- On a sheet of paper, draw a line-graph that represents your happiness--the y-axis is a range of +10 to -10. The x-axis rate each data point for each year of your life starting from age 0 to your current age. (Look at the graph above as a reference)

- On a second sheet of paper (Mood Maintenance Data Support) explain why you gave yourself the rating you gave for each year--after age 11 rate yourself every 6 months *or as often as you'd like*. Be creative, you can modify this writing exercise in any way to meet your specific needs.

Chapter 9: Highlights

This next activity I am asking you to chunk your life experiences into 5 year increments for your entire life (this is a challenging recommendation). *What are your happiest memories and/or impactful experiences (highlights) from age 0 to your current age?* Plug those memories into 5 year increments, from 0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 14, 15 to 19, etc, up until your current age.

To put this writing assignment in context, I have a lot of experience digging into my past because of my involvement with 12 steps. In 12 steps, you're asked to do a "4th step inventory" where you analyze every experience of your entire life to try to find patterns of behavior (to help you overcome your addiction)--it's extremely insightful to do this. I took this idea and modified it by organizing my life into a chronological order by 5 year increments.

Understand that you're not going to think of everything at first, the memories will slowly flow in as time goes on, so leave space on paper for the memories to trickle in.

I would recommend brainstorming first by writing 5 year time increments with plenty of space on paper, and record every experience you

can think of with just short sentences or explanations. We're going into more detail in chapter 6 with “core memories”.

With this values-list, I continuously add *current* life-events as they happen--but I no longer chunk my life in 5 year increments... I do it on an annual basis now. I also have a modified graph that tally's how many highlights I have on a monthly basis. Already for the year of 2021, I have about 20 amazing/impactful experiences that I've recorded in this values-list. Anytime I have a really good experience hanging out with friends, or something really unique happens, I write that experience in this list. I don't go into a lot of detail... if I wanted to add a lot of detail, I would write the full story in my traditional journal.

For this activity...

- Categorize your life in 5 year increments, so from age 0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 14, 15 to 19 etc... up until your current age
- Record every **positive/impactful** experience you can think of and put it in the timeline

Chapter 10: Core Memories

These ideas are some of the most powerful journal prompts converted into values-lists i.m.o. Each idea came from a different book that I combined together to produce this values-list/drawing. I got the idea of a “core memory” from watching a Disney movie “Inside Out”. That movie is about the introspection of a young girl's brain. The movie goes deep into her personality--which is made up of her unique “core memories”. Her core memories are specific events that are *extremely* meaningful to her.

A core memory is simply a really impactful or special memory--something you cherish. I would also argue it's usually a positive memory, or at least very important.

In the previous chapter, I asked you to organize your memories in 5 year increments. This chapter, I want you to extract your core memories from that list. *Extract your best of the best core memories.* I want you to start with your absolute greatest memories to less-as-great memories.

Before you start writing down your core memories,

- I want you to consider adding *sensory detail* to those core memories. Sensory details are what did you see, hear, feel, taste or smell with that core memory?

- Next, I want you to draw a *symbol* for that core memory.
- And lastly, what *strengths* are associated with that core memory.

I'll share an example. Some of my greatest memories have to do with skateboarding. For a specific memory, I was skateboarding with friends at a middle school in Salt Lake City, UT. I was on fire that day... I pulled a 180 heel-flip to tailslide to fakie and got it on film. Later that day, I finally got to see myself skate for the first time in a really long time. The symbol I drew for that memory is a skateboarding trophy. Strengths associated with that core memory are, I have intense belief in myself. This is the greatest experience of my entire life.

Now it's your turn. What are your core memories? I have about 33 currently and I'm 38 years old. I have core memories that start when I was 11 years old, and I have experienced 1 so far in 2021.

For this activity...

- Write down each core memory--*starting with your greatest core memories...*
 - Add *sensory detail*. What did you see, hear, touch, taste, smell?

- Create a *symbol* for that core memory
- Lastly, what character *strength(s)* are associated with that core memory?

Currently, as my core memories happen, I write and draw that experience as a symbol. I find it very enjoyable to come up with new symbols and consider my strengths associated with that new core memory. It's really amazing to become self-aware when you realize you're experiencing a core memory. It makes experiences that much more special and really puts you in the moment. When I create "symbols"... sometimes I just draw the "scene". For example, I went boating at Pineview, UT, and I was having an amazing time... for my "symbol", I drew the mountain range and a boat and the lake and the sandy beach--the drawings can be simple.

Chapter 11: Shield of Strengths

The previous chapter was about core memories--it will help with this writing prompt. Look for patterns of strengths that you considered when writing your core memories.

In this writing exercise, you're going to come up with your top 5 character strengths and write them on a piece of armor--a shield, *and put your greatest strength right in the center of your shield*. For each strength, draw a symbol that represents that strength, and then come up with examples as to why that's a strength.

I'll share some examples. My 5 strengths are...

1. Confidence
2. Accomplishments
3. Imagination
4. Wit
5. Social intelligence

My *symbols* for each strength is a...

1. Superhero for *confidence*
2. A stacked building with a star at the top for *accomplishments*
3. A lego skateboarder for *imagination*
4. A drawing of my face having a light bulb moment for *wit*

5. Then its three stick figures standing on the balcony of a mansion holding their hands united in the air for *social intelligence*

I then have *examples* of why those are character strengths.

1. For *confidence*, I have my pro skater decision, employment as a teacher experiences, and confidence I experienced on my mission, etc.
2. For *achievement*, skateboarding progression, a time when I subbed at a highschool, and writing this book.
3. For *imagination*, original poetry, organized with writing, journaling insights, etc.
4. For *wit*, I was a volunteer as a tour guide at an elementary school's haunted house. I have many social experiences that would support my belief in this strength.
5. Then for *social intelligence*, I mastered concepts from a book called "Big Talk" by Joshua Eubergang. I have 12 steps experience, therapy, hobbies, thriving relationships with friends and family, and many positive experiences.

Having this shield of strengths is a constant reminder of my character strengths and the realization that I would like to always be confident, imaginative, be an achiever, be witty, and experience social intelligence. I want to increase and continue to grow with all these character strengths.

Now it's your turn. You can add as much detail as you want.

- Draw a *shield* that fits the size of a paper
- Pick your top 5 character *strengths* you discovered from the core memories exercise
- Create *symbols* for each strength
- Give *examples* of why that is a strength
- Put your number 1 best strength at the center of your shield

Chapter 12: Armor

To supplement the shield metaphor, I decided to add a symbolic sword, helmet, breastplate, and boots.

I wanted to be symbolically and metaphorically protected from the slings and arrows of life. A “sword” can be a little aggressive. However, I believe there is good in this world, I also believe there is evil. To combat that evil... we sometimes need to fight evil. That is why I believe whoever is reading this, should consider creating a symbolic sword and attach meaning to it.

Meaning that I’ve attached to this metaphor is... I have given myself the *sword of truth*. Obviously evil hates truth... so whoever I decide to argue with... I want to make sure that whatever I say to another person, that it is grounded in truth and love (not everyone I argue with is “evil”--just wanted to make that clear). I want to pick fights carefully because the truth hurts.

I have also attached to my armor, the *helmet of understanding*. I want to understand as much as I can about everything. I want to ask a lot of intelligent questions.

I have given myself the *breastplate of resilience*. I strongly believe in being resilient and not taking the slings and arrows of life too personal. Sometimes I need to use my faith in God to let things go that offend me. I may also need to journal about the conflicts I experience.

I have given myself the *boots of exercise*. I believe exercise is extremely important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Exercise keeps your blood vessels healthy so that oxygen and nutrients can gain access to all the cells of your body, especially your brain.

For this exercise... what does it mean to give yourself a...

- Sword, helmet, breastplate, and boots
- If you want more armor... create it

Chapter 13: Wikipedia Profile

I thought of this values-list in 2013. Basically, the idea is... what would you want people to read about you online if a wikipedia profile was created? The question evolved and then became... “what do you want to be remembered for when you pass away”? Below are a few examples of what I came up with...

- I want to be remembered for that I maintained love for life
- That I was fun to be around
- That I genuinely wanted to help others find happiness

I went to a conference for work in 2020, and the speaker had an extremely insightful question that I added to this values-list that takes the wikipedia profile a step further, and the question is this... “what will you have offered the world that will live on after you're gone”? And here are a couple examples of what I came up with...

- That I was a great father to my children and had a great relationship with them
- That I helped my children prosper in their life

Now it's your turn, think critically and answer the following questions and create your very own wikipedia profile...

1. What do you want to be remembered for when you pass away?
2. What will you have offered the world that will live on after you're gone?

Chapter 14: Self-employed

My dream is to one day become self-employed. I mentor close friends and family and I would someday hope to become a life-coach.

What is your employment philosophy...?

An example.. mine is... I will grow a ton and become extremely useful in other people's lives.

For your activity....

1. What is your employment philosophy?
2. What does it take to win in your job/career/self-employment?

Chapter 15: Self-Affirmations

I learned about self-affirmations from my step-dad Al Carter in 2004. Self-affirmations are basically **YOUR MOST POWERFUL IDEAS** that you repeat to yourself on a regular basis (daily/weekly/monthly) to emphasize certain qualities of greatness and excellence. All of my graphs, histories, highlights, core memories, book notes, best ideas **support** my self-affirmations.

In the seminar, Al went into depth about how intelligent our bodies are, especially our cells. Your cells listen to you when you talk to yourself. You can basically rewire your brain to believe whatever you want. My self-affirmations are...

1. Symbolic Heart
2. Social Hobbies
3. Values-lists
4. Star Status
5. Highlights and Core memories
6. Best of the Best Timeline
7. Wikipedia Profile
8. Self-employed

9. Shield of strength and armor

10. Christianity

Chapter 16: Gratitude

Being grateful is such an attractive quality to possess. I began my “gratitude journal” in 2011. As I evolve, I find that I’m grateful for different things--so I rewrite my gratitude journal.

I have organized my gratitude journal starting with my absolute greatest things I’m grateful for...

1. Friends and family
2. Experiences
3. Truth
4. Understanding
5. Money
6. Journaling
7. Good books
8. Forgiveness and mercy
9. My Career
10. Social media

Now it’s your turn... your list can be longer than mine, shorter... you decide what your gratitude journal will look like.

Chapter 17: Bucket List

The bucket list is a very simple list--it's also like a "dream board". It can be powerful and a big motivator to be successful in a career/job/self-employment. I want to have amazing experiences with my wife and children and close friends. I want to travel the world and experience different cultures. Most people know what a bucket list is. For those who don't... it's basically a list of places you want to travel to, or things you want to experience in your lifetime.

Here's a couple places I want to travel to and experience...

- New York
- Thailand
- New Orleans
- Miami
- Cancun Mexico
- Dubia
- Cruise to Alaska
- Italy
- Cruise through the

Mediterranean

Now it's your turn... where do you want to visit and travel to?

What kind of career and money do you need to make to have amazing experiences that you want to experience?

Chapter 18: Past/Future Hobbies

This is a simple values-list. What are your past hobbies? What would you like your future hobbies to be in the future?

A couple of examples of my past hobbies are

- Snowboarding
- Chess
- Guitar
- Disco Skating
- Dancing
- Poetry

A couple of examples of future hobbies I plan on doing are...

- Blogging
- Orating
- Mentoring
- Standup Comedy

For this activity...

What are your past hobbies and your future hobbies?

Chapter 19: Vacations

I personally love to go on vacation any chance I get. Last time I was on vacation, I went to St George, UT, with my family in the summer of 2020. While vacationing, I was thinking to myself... *wow, I am having a really good time*, I would rate this experience a “10” on a scale of “+10 to -10”. Not every vacation I go on is a winner. I’ve had some lousy vacations that I would rate -5. Anyways, that idea sparked this new concept of rating every vacation I’ve ever been on.

For me to rate a vacation a “10”, the vacation needs to be very enjoyable, everyone is having a good time, and it’s memorable.

The most memorable vacation I ever went on was when I went with my family on a cruise to the Bahamas. Everything about that trip was memorable. The weather was perfect, the food was delicious, the white sandy beaches were exotic, the tropical colorful fish were fascinating, playing volleyball was amazing, everyone was having a great time, etc.

For this activity...

- Start with the earliest vacations you remember as a child all the way up to your current age
- Rate every vacation you’ve ever been on on a scale of +10 to -10

- What does a perfect vacation “10” rating look like?
- From now on... make it a goal to have really positive “10” rated vacations

Chapter 20: Books

This next chapter will benefit non-fiction book lovers. A lot of my journal insights and connections have been sparked from reading non-fiction books. There's just a few lists I keep in regards to books.

I keep a list of "Books to Buy" I plan to buy in the future. Whenever someone, or an author, makes a book recommendation, I keep that list in this section.

My next list are books I've read that I've really liked. If I love the book and I get meaning out of it, then I'll write that book in this values-list. If I don't care for a book, I give it to Goodwill and forget about it. So far for 2021, I've read 5 books that I gave a 10+ rating. For me to give a book a 10+ rating, it must be very well written, complex words/ideas are used appropriately, it leads me to truth or self-exploration, or it sparks a new subject interest, or I create new values-lists, or I connect ideas in a meaningful way.

I try to write down only *exceptionally* good ideas from books. I believe less is more when it comes to recording good ideas. I have 8 sections or categories of "Good Ideas". They are... 1. Relationships, 2. Experiences, 3. Truth, 4. Comedy, 5. Career/Self-employment, 6. General

Knowledge, 7. Brain, 8. Politics. These sections are woven into my self-affirmations.

For this activity...

1. Keep a list of books you want to buy
2. Keep a list of every amazing book you've read that you give a 10+ rating
3. Keep a list of "Good Ideas"
 - a. Consider putting your good ideas into your own unique categories

Chapter 21: Intelligence Argument

I thought of this values-list in 2016. I do believe this idea is universally applicable to most people. *Create a list of every intelligent thing you've ever done*--this is an *argument* as to why you're intelligent. I made this list because I struggled with my own self-doubt and questioned my intelligence. I finally created a reference sheet or values-list and proof that I no longer needed to acknowledge anxiety or fight doubt about my intelligence. Here are some examples...

- I wrote a story in 3rd grade that was very interesting and my first indicator that I enjoyed writing and thinking
- I've written original poetry
- The day I decided to pursue pro status in skateboarding
- The day I decided to work hard and not give up on myself regardless if I were gifted or not

I have other examples, but that list gives you an idea of some things I consider intelligent and why I no longer needed to doubt my intelligence.

For your activity...

Create a list of everything you've done intelligently.

Chapter 22: Star Status

This value-list has to do with your dreams or your current employment. In everyone's path, whatever direction you decide to go in... you start out as a *beginner*, then move to *amatuer*, then turn *pro*, then if you want... you can become an *expert*, and if you're really lucky... then you enter *star status*.

Beginner... you're fresh, new, excited, interested, realizing you have a desire to pursue this certain thing/hobby/interest. You're reading books, pursuing degrees, learning everything you can about this interest. Does it make sense to continue pursuing this path?

Amatuer... this is where the trials come, the setbacks, the reasons why you should consider giving up, or consider why you must push through the hard to get better at the thing you want to master. This is not giving up on your dream--this stage is pushing through the hard. Once you get through this phase, you enter...

Pro... this is proof you got good enough to start competing or start making money at the thing you pursued--or you go viral.

Expert... this is where a person can start teaching, mentoring, sponsoring, and sharing your gifts pro bono to others.

Start Status... this is when you get good enough mastering something that you get recognition from others in that field.

For your activity...

What dream(s) are you pursuing?

- What does a beginner look like?
- What does a amatuer look like?
- What does a pro look like?
- What does an expert look like?
- What does “Star Status” look like?

Chapter 23: Finding Your Purpose

These next 4 questions are extremely helpful in identifying your purpose in life. The first question is “passion”... what do you love? The second question is “mission”... what does the world need? The third question is “profession”... what are you good at? And the last question is “vocation”... can you make money doing those things?

I truly believe these are some of the most powerful questions I’ve ever asked myself. I’ve used these questions to navigate my journey and path towards what I want to pursue in life.



Your activity... answer these questions

1. **Passion:** What do you love?
2. **Mission:** What does the world need?
3. **Profession:** What are you good at?
4. **Vocation:** How can you make money doing that thing?

Chapter 24: Hard

I believe trials play a big role in the purpose of life. Overcoming trials, learning from them, being humbled by them, etc. I have a couple of values-lists in relation to trials... they are:

- “What is the Hard You’ve Come From” (or trials you’ve experienced)
- “Where Did that Trial Come From?”
- “Specifically How Did You Overcame It”
 - Consider listing your trials from hardest to less hard.

I’ll share an example... I would say *the hardest trial I ever experienced is...* not standing up for myself.

Where did it come from? I was skateboarding with my friend at a bank in East Provo by a convenient store in the year of 1999. This crazy lunatic high school kid came rolling up with his crew in their van. He got out and started staring at me. Then he started yelling at us saying, “Hey you! What you doing in my territory!?” Then he hops a fence and rushes and attacks me. I’d never been in a real fight before so I was a little caught off guard. I’m not going to go into a lot of detail, but let's just say, I didn’t win the fight. *I was humiliated.* As the months went on, I started to hate

myself for not defending myself well enough. And I believe this is where my self-hatred started for *not standing up for myself*.

Specifically, how did I overcome this trial? Well... I made a commitment to myself that I would literally rather die defending myself than be a coward and let someone abuse me. When I learned about self-affirmations a few years later, I made the self-affirmation that "I dare to stick up for myself in any situation".

It's pretty remarkable how one experience can alter the rest of your life. Fortunately for me, I decided to turn this tragedy into a victory.

For this activity... answer these questions...

- What is the hard you've come from?
- Where did it come from?
- How did you overcome it... if it is still bothering you... what is a plan to overcome it?
 - Try to list your trials from hardest to least hard

Chapter 25: Best of the Best Timeline

For this values-list... you can start at any age. For me... my first amazing experience was when I was 11 years old. *For each year of my life*, I have contemplated what was the greatest experience, idea, compliment, journal entry, goal, vacation, class, memory, event, etc. And I put that memory in a yearly timeline. Even for those really bad years, like when I was married to my ex-wife... I was still able to remember something positive that came out of that year.

Sometimes memories can be a little blurry. Do your best. Even if you're a little off in the timeline... who cares... no one's going to know.

As the year 2021 has been strolling on... I've been contemplating what is the best thing that has happened so far. For me... getting into blogging is the best thing that has happened so far.

For your activity...

- Create a “best of the best” timeline. Start at any age.

Chapter 26: Heroe's

I never considered having a “hero” till I was 28 years old in 2011. I’ve reflected on heroe's ever since then, and I’ve gained a lot of insight into myself and what I want to become. This might sound egotistical, but I do consider myself a hero. Here’s a list of my heroe’s and I’ll explain why..

1. Michael Rutter... he was my 11th and 12th grade English teacher. He lit the wick of my curiosity to explore poetry and literature. He showed me what true passion looks like for a *school* subject.
2. William Tyndall, Andrew Jackson, Louis McFadden... What do these 3 people have in common? They were all martyred for honoring the truth.
3. 5th grade camp leader... he shared his amazing personal story as to how he became successful despite the setbacks he had to overcome.
4. Tony Robbins... he truly cares and wants to help and inspire others to fulfill their God-given talents.
5. Jason Hewlitt... he is an entertainer who follows his heart regardless of the consequences.

6. Joel Lind... because of my quest for truth and knowledge, and my desire to share how to find happiness with others.

Now it's your turn...

- Who are your heroes and why?

Chapter 27: Your Opinion about Yourself

My brain is obsessed with what I think about myself. I believe the opinion you subconsciously think about yourself is extremely important to introspect and think about. Because, what you think about yourself... there's a high chance that others think something very similar.

Here's my list about my opinion of myself...

- I'm a very likeable person...
 - I'm fun
 - I'm accepting
 - I'm interested in others stories
- I like my personality
 - I'm witty
 - I am forgiving
 - I'm a hard worker
 - I connect on a deep level
- I am capable of...
 - Writing
 - Reading
 - Sticking up for myself

- I am highly intelligent
 - I read a lot
 - I write a lot
 - I engage socially a lot

Now it's your turn...

- *What is your opinion about yourself?*
- Give examples

Chapter 28: Compliments

I love this particular values-list--anytime someone gives you a genuine compliment, you should record it. That compliment is a source of strength and can even put a smile on your face. I started this values-list in 2012. I will share a couple examples of impactful compliments that I've received.

Here is my list...

- Lavell Edwards (famous BYU football coach) in 2001 after listening to my church talk said this... "you are very sincere".
- In 2009, an Engineer at KAI (Korean Aeronautics Industries) told me... "you should be a college professor".
- In 2012... I was a tour guide for a Halloween haunted house... one of the teachers said.. "Over the course of 20 years, you were the best tour guide we've ever had".
- In 2019... a student told me that... "your everyone's favorite teacher".

Now it's your turn...

- Are there any compliments you can think of that you remember someone sharing? If not... from now on, try to record sincere compliments that people give you.

Chapter 29: Criticism

I believe criticism plays a special part in our lives. Criticism can be a hard pill to swallow sometimes. I believe everyone who is alive has received criticism at some point in their lives. The question is... did the criticism help humble you... or did it make you bitter and angry?

The worst criticism I ever received was when I was age 17 working for a company that vetted people to see if they could be approved for an extension on credit. I was talking to a guy on the phone, and I put him on hold... I made a mistake and didn't actually put him on hold so I heard his conversation he was having with a customer. I accidentally heard him say... "this is the stupidest person I've ever talked to". Me being an insecure 17 year old teenager, this was a hard pill to swallow. I was already struggling with self-doubt and stupid-ideation in my life; so to hear someone communicate something that I secretly already believed inside was ammunition for some self-hatred to resonate. Yeah I may not have been the best loan application information gatherer. I could let this criticism destroy my life or I could use it as gasoline to burn an inner fire inside me to prove this guy and everyone else who has criticized my intelligence wrong. Obviously I had a lot of growing to do and this guy unbeknownst

gave me a huge punch to my ego, but I learned and grew from that experience.

For your activity...

- What criticism have you received and what did you learn from it?
 - If you're still harboring ill feelings towards the person or the comment... what can you do to let it go and learn the lesson that you were meant to learn.

Chapter 30: Conclusion

I began my journal when I was 16 years old in the year of 1999. I kept getting this feeling and impression that I needed to start a journal. I had this burning desire to write down my thoughts. That decision was 22 years ago. I had no idea that my journaling would transform into what it has.

I talked with a close friend who said he hated journaling because all he wanted to do was write negative thoughts. I can relate, I used to only write negative stuff. The great thing about journaling is that you can easily destroy anything you don't like. I hope that from reading this book, I've given you ideas to write about that are positive and uplifting. I know I've "assigned" a lot of work, but what a treasure trove you can uncover from the writing workshops I've suggested.

Because I had destroyed so many negative journal entries back in 2007, that was a huge shift in how I journaled. I realized I had wasted hours and hours writing negative stuff, that from then on out, I only wanted to write negativity intelligently. If I was going to write something negative, I was going to include a solution so I wasn't wasting my time. I've destroyed hundreds and hundreds of journal pages--but that's okay. Because most of

my journal entries now are pretty positive. If I have something negative to write, I'd better write down the lesson I'm supposed to learn from that experience. This is a way to learn intelligently from negativity.

I thoroughly enjoyed writing and editing this book. I hope you were able to get a few new ideas and able to implement them into your life.

Journaling is so much more than just writing in a diary everyday. Diaries are sometimes boring and disorganized. I believe that diaries are an opportunity for you to dump information, so that you can discover and extract insightful ideas. Consider organizing your journal into 3 separate binders...

- The first binder is your heirloom of best ideas (*keep an organized list of all your values lists that you create*)
- The second binder is where you keep diary type journals
- And the third binder is where you retire ideas

I hope you unearthed new information about yourself and had fun creating and thinking with the prompts I suggested.

Journaling is my passion... and I believe you can now see why. I hope you can discover the power, the self-insight, and meaning from implementing the journal recommendations found in this book.

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- “Winning” by Jack Welch
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