

Westside Notes



A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step

***Escape Velocity: Adapted from my new workbook entitled
From Now On: Seven Keys to Purposeful Recovery***
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“Escape velocity” requires rocket fuel and combustion to move us away from old patterns and into a brand-new orbit. Clarifying one’s core values and discovering greater purpose are the primary ingredients toward a meaningful, effective vision in recovery.

Living life with purpose – what does this really mean? Investing yourself in a recovery process opens up a window of opportunity to ask yourself essential questions and to start to imagine what purpose will unfold for you.

Many years ago I worked with a chaplain who told me that purpose does not always reveal itself unless we ask the *right questions*-questions such as:

- What gives your life meaning today?
- What is your sense of purpose so far in your life?
- What type of legacy would you like to leave behind?

Orthodox rabbis in Jerusalem are masters of debate, confrontation, and exploring many of the tough, spiritual questions. Yet, much of the time they never actually arrive at crystal-clear answers. Is it necessary to have all of the answers in this chapter of your life? Of course not.

But the humility of not always having the exact answers coupled with the willingness to follow your unique rhythm makes room for a more purposeful path. In this excerpt adapted from my workbook, we’ll explore how to uncover your unique rhythm.

As human beings in recovery, we have the rare opportunity to utilize relationships to gather and absorb wisdom through sponsors, therapists, coaches, yoga teachers, etc. - all with valuable experience, perspective and guidance. If you believe in God or a Higher Power, tap into your spiritual practice to explore your purpose or to search for greater meaning.

Digesting and synthesizing all of this information helps you choose what fits for you and what does not. Then you can make a conscious decision to integrate purpose into your recovery allowing your authentic recovery voice to take shape. But how does this happen?

You'll begin discovering some of the answers available to you through the powerful tool of "visioning". Many of my clients through the years arrived in my office looking for the *so-called expert* with the *right* answers to make them feel better. Yet, this implies that the answers are somewhere else. The answers are inside of you, but where do you begin to find them?

Walt Disney coined the term *imagineering* to describe the process of imagining limitless possibilities. As we know, he was a visionary and a pioneer who set out to create the *Happiest Place on Earth*. By putting one foot in front of the other, he created Disneyland as well as the international phenomena called Disney.

No matter what your opinion of Walt Disney may be, we can all agree that he started with a vision and created an empire. He took a blank canvas, invited a team of imagineers (or like-minded people) and took one action after another until theme parks, full-length animated motion pictures and iconic characters were born.

A vision can be short-term or long-term--large or small. It can fit into any timeframe that feels right for you. Begin slowly and build muscle until you reach a longer-term vision. If you feel overwhelmed at any point, stop. The intention of this exercise is to allow you to create safe stretch goals and pace yourself accordingly.

Visioning (or imagineering) offers you the freedom to stretch beyond your everyday routine and comfort zone by creating a longer-term vision of what you would like to design in the coming year. Give yourself plenty of time to meditate on these ideas before writing. Feel free to take as much time as you need to explore the possibilities.

Now it's time to imagine the year ahead. By creating a trajectory toward a mindful future, you'll build more structure and momentum as part of your purposeful recovery. Please consider the following questions as you write about the possibilities for the coming year:

- Give shape and voice to the vision of your life and recovery 12 months from now. (If 12 months feels too distant to you, please shorten the length of time to suit what feels more productive to you).
- How would you describe your heart's desire?
- What do you want to invite into your life personally and professionally?

As you allow the visioning process to unfold, keep in mind that "escape velocity" is the aim. Your rocket may be ready for take-off now, or it may need some time to collect fuel and create combustion. Most of all, remember that it's not that anything has to happen, but simply what could happen that counts at this stage of the launch.