

Developing Presence – Exploring Purpose

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PRESENCE – A SYNTHESIS OF LOVE AND WILL

Two complimentary poles that come in to play when we work as guides are *Love* and *Will*. The following quotes and ideas from *Psychosynthesis Counseling in Action* by Diana Whitmore (2004) illustrate how these qualities are expressed in the counseling environment and the limitations that may result if either style is relied upon exclusively.

Psychosynthesis regards these two archetypal energies as essential elements in the therapeutic style of the counsellor, ever present in some way in the counselling arena. Any practising counsellor would be wise to understand the dynamic interplay of love and will in their counselling style. There is often a strong tendency in counsellors to attempt to create unity, to prefer being in a state of harmony with the client. This is not unnatural, as a motivating factor for many counsellors is their desire to heal, to care for others and basically to love. The counsellor may easily fall prey to creating this unity by becoming the client's missing half (in terms of love and will), thereby fostering dependency on both sides.

In the training of a psychosynthesis counsellor, the student is led to recognize her innate tendency and to develop its opposite so that both are available as therapeutic styles, according to the needs of the client at any particular moment. No one therapeutic style is appropriate for each client all the time.

What are the therapeutic styles of love and of will? The following terms provide a sense of the difference between the two, but they are neither exhaustive or absolute.

Love	Will
Universality	Individuality
Consciousness/awareness	Power, change
Feminine Principle	Masculine principle
Feelings	Mind
Heart Energy	Head energy
Receptive modality	Reflective modality
Being	Doing (becoming)
Mother therapy	Father therapy
Supportive/nourishing	[Confrontational/Provocative]
[Empathy]	[Discernment]

Love Oriented Counseling

- A focus on empathy and love on the part of the guide is especially important in the early phases of counseling. The guide aims to be receptive and open to the client and their subjective reality. This helps to create an environment in which the client feels safe enough to become open and self-disclosing.

The counselor acts as an external unifying center providing the empathic mirroring that was lacking in the client's early environment. Trust is placed in the unfolding process of the client's work on themselves, affirming that the client is OK as he or she is. This supports and orients the client towards a developing relationship with "I"/Self.

- **Limitations:** Because a “love oriented” style of counseling is expressly non-directive and non-interventionist the “work may remain too abstract with a lack of focus on implementing behavioural changes in the client's every day life.” “The counsellor tends to nourish the client but avoids confrontation. There easily can be a lack a boundaries between them and the style becomes too loose and diffused. The client may love to be loved, but will not be stretched and challenged.”

Will Oriented Counseling

- When the energy of Will is active in the therapeutic process, the emphasis is more on strengthening the client's sense of identity and inherent individuality. Through the development of an *internal unifying* center the client learns to provide for themselves what has previously been provided by the guide – they begin to develop empathy towards themselves.

A key aspect of this movement towards self-empathy is the processing of *empathic failures* between client and guide. “In this sense then, the client learns the capacity to *hold* the good and the bad, the successes and the failures in one totality of experience with an awareness that knows her identity is not dependent on either – she still remains herself throughout.”

- The guide may adopt a more mental and reflective way of interacting with the client encouraging them to develop their personal power in order to become increasingly autonomous and independent. “Change, the value of change and the importance of becoming are implicit.”

The guide “may challenge the client to look deeper, take greater risks and more positive steps forward.” “The counsellor stimulates the pursuit of goals. She opens the client's perspective, and reminds her of what she is capable of. She may include the educative function, providing maps and models relevant to the client's process. There is more use of structure and techniques designed to provoke transformation.”

- **Limitations:** If the guide is too imposing and directive, the client may come to see them as a teacher or authority figure responsible for their well-being, abdicating responsibility for their own growth as a result.

“Given the emphasis on structure, maps and models, the counsellor will be as limited as these structures. If all she has is a hammer, she will only see nails. If her tools are diverse and flexible there will be no problem, but if they are limited and sparse clients will be made to fit the tools rather than the tools serve the client.”

Synthesis

- “The synthesis of the two archetypes, love and will, in the counsellor's style is called 'presence'. Presence requires the counsellor to have both of these valuable resources available. For the counsellor to have the ability to support and nourish, and to provide direction firmly means both trusting the process and creating the process. It means the counsellor having available her mind and her feelings, her receptivity and her ability to reflect and stimulate.”

Having both Love and Will available can protect us against any tendency to polarize our therapeutic style with that of the client. For example, a counsellor might respond to an assertive client by becoming more passive and receptive, unintentionally forming a unit with the client. In this case, they are providing what is lacking for the client rather than helping them to find a more accepting

and loving way of being with themselves.

“The solution is for the counsellor more or less to match the love-will balance of the client.” “If the client is very willful and assertive, the counsellor too can take a more active and directing role. If the client is very passive and immobilized, the counsellor can take a receptive, non-directive stance.” “...this style will tend to evoke from within the client what is needed to make her whole.”

WHAT DOES PRESENCE LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

Developing a reliable therapeutic presence is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself and your clients. The benefits in this healing partnership are profound.

Developing greater therapeutic presence is also a potent antidote to burnout. As you continually learn to fill yourself with healthy resources, you avoid becoming depleted when you hold a healing space for another.

Your confidence in yourself naturally increases as you embody these skills in your practice. Therapists who apply these principles develop a deeper trust in their feelings, skills, intuition and wisdom. (Suzanne Scurlock-Durana, 2006)

In *Unfolding Self*, Molly Young Brown (2004) suggests that a “full and facilitative presence” in a therapy session includes the following components:

- **Genuineness and work on oneself** – You can't stay in a safe, defended place if you want your clients to move out of defense. Consequently, in order to be effective as guides, we need to allow our mental, emotional, intuitive, instinctive, and sensory awareness into the process in a genuine and immediate way. “Such genuineness requires dedicated self-awareness, courage, and honesty. It requires constant work on our part as guides, to further our own growth and wholeness.” “...in genuineness, the therapist is engaged with the [client] from a centered place. This entails risks – risks of being rejected, of being hurt, of being vulnerable. Being genuine means that, at times, you will be angry; at times you'll be hurt, and [at] times you'll be scared” (Hoffman, 2004).

Our ability to monitor our own process as it occurs can give us valuable information about what is happening for the client as we resonate with their unfolding experience. However, it can also warn us when our personal feelings and history are being triggered and give us the space and control to gently put them aside so that we can deal with them at another time on our own.

Our ongoing work on ourselves might include such pursuits as therapy, a spiritual practice, meditation, the arts, and continuing education. “Beyond preventing intrusions of our own unresolved conflicts into our clients' work, we embrace the challenge of constantly expanding our potential as whole, aware, growing persons and allowing this whole person to be present to our clients, friends, and family.”

[The *Self-Empathy* exercise on p. 7 can help to develop presence in relation to any personal challenges we may face in our work with clients.]

- **Bifocal vision** which perceives the client first as a Self who has a purpose and path in life with challenges and obstacles to meet in order to fulfill that purpose, and second, as a personality with a

unique blend of physical, emotional and mental characteristics – including their problems and presenting issues.

It is assumed that the real guide of a psychosynthesis interview is the client's higher Self and that Self, at any particular time, is directing the person's attention in certain directions. With this in mind, the external guide, whose role is to support the client's inner process, is attentive to what seems to "want to happen" in the session (Crampton, 1977, p. 9).

By actively trusting the client's emerging purpose, the guide validates their human integrity and perceives them as more than just a problem to be solved. Questions and approaches for facilitating this process are described below in *Exploring Purpose* (p. 9).

- **Non-attachment** – “Paradoxically, presence rests on non-attachment: letting go of preconceptions about what ought to occur, and of the desire for some kind of measurable success. The challenge is to be involved without getting entangled, to keep one's understanding and perceptions of the process broad rather than narrowed down to one small aspect or point of view. Working for a particular outcome may help structure the session, but attachment to achieving that outcome may subvert some other more appropriate process and result.”

“For this reason, it is essential for a guide to be aware of his or her own needs and biases, and disidentify from them as much as possible while working with clients.”

- **Acceptance and respect** – “Non-attachment is possible when we truly accept and respect our clients as they are, from moment to moment.” This allows us to be present as guides without holding back any part of ourselves out of distaste or judgment. “We can own and disidentify from our personal feelings and hold a larger perspective of caring.”

It is important to remember that this type of acceptance is more than merely tolerating the client and their behavior. “If someone were to say they can 'tolerate you,' you will probably be hurt by this statement. It does not feel good to be tolerated. It is not healing to be tolerated. Rather, it is healing to be fully accepted for where you are at.” (Hoffman, 2004)

- **Expansive, inclusive concepts and beliefs** – As guides we can choose to hold in mind the biggest possible picture of our clients and the meaning of their dilemmas; in doing so, we create a context for optimal growth.

It is also important to remember that any models we may use to understand and assist our clients are only tools for exploration. A model can never fully represent the full and true nature of our client as a human being. When determining which models or approaches to use, the question to keep in mind is not whether the model is “true” but whether, and to what extent, it is useful.

- **Concentration and empathy** – Effective guiding requires a conscious choice to focus on the client and set aside intrusive personal thoughts and feelings that do not concern the relationship with the client. This allows the guide to empathize with the client, accurately sensing their feelings and experiences as well as the meaning they attach to them.

As with any of these therapist qualities, it is important not to reduce empathy to a technique. “Empathy is a very challenging process.” “It requires an ability to detach from yourself to join with the other person in their experience. It is a process of de-centering. For some, this can be scary. The therapist gives up some of their control or foundation when they are truly engaging in the process of empathy.” (Hoffman, 2004)

QUALITIES OF A GOOD HELPER:

The following formulation of the qualities of a good helper compliments the psychosynthesis understanding of presence and can serve as a quick reminder before a session. It was prepared for resident hall assistants at the University of South Carolina (n.d.).

"You cannot force someone to seek help, change their habits, or adjust their attitudes. You will make important progress in honestly sharing your concerns, providing support, and knowing where to go for more information. Below, you will find a list of characteristics/skills that will help you be a good helper."

- **Empathy:** Communicating that you have listened to the other person and understand how that person feels about the problem being discussed and that you are truly attempting to understand the other person's world from his or her frame of reference, rather than your own.
- **Unconditional Positive Regard:** Communicating to the other person a deep and genuine caring message that "I do NOT judge you" and "I accept you as you are."
- **Genuineness:** Your offer to help cannot be contrived or phony. It can't be because you are the staff member and it's your job. Your communication must be congruent with your feelings about the problem.
- **Respect:** Communicating that you have faith in the other person's ability to solve the problems, and that you are there for the other person.
- **Meet the person where they are at:** You must understand that clients sometimes have struggles and that they have made choices that have caused them some problems. In order to help someone, you must meet them where they are in the struggle, and attempt to understand why they are doing what they are doing.
- **Objectivity:** Involving the use of facts without distortion by personal feelings and judgment.
- **Confidentiality:** Communicating verbally and through your actions that information shared with you will be respected and not gossiped about. You will only share information with the express written consent of the client.
- **Role Model:** Be a good role model in regards to sensible behavior and communication. Role model availability and openness.
- **Be Caring, but be firm:** Caring about a client does not mean being manipulated by them. Avoid making promises that you can't keep.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE FOUND PRESENCE?

Empathy, Equanimity, Patience, Mental Alertness, Grounded Physicality, Speaking with "true" voice, responsive to own emotions. – Presence can feel like flow, ease. It can also feel "raw."

EXERCISES FOR DEVELOPING PRESENCE:

The following exercise from *Unfolding Self* (Brown, 2004, pp. 56-7) is designed to help you experience and recognize the qualities of “presence”.

AN IDEAL GUIDE

1. Take a few minutes now to find a comfortable, alert position and to relax. Close your eyes and pay attention to your inner experience. Then open your eyes, read a sentence or two, and take it back inside for contemplation....
2. Imagine now that you are in an emotional crisis or are facing a difficult and important decision. Perhaps you can remember such a time in the recent past and can relive the experience. Be in that experience now.
3. Recall or imagine how your body feels, what kinds of postures or movements express your inner situation....What are your feelings?....What are your thoughts?....How is your mind working?....How does the world in general look to you from this perspective?....Take time to fully experience this.
4. Now imagine that you have a companion with you, someone whom you trust and feel completely comfortable with, even in this trying time. Allow a sense of this person to grow in your imagination?
5. What are the qualities of this person with whom you choose to share your turmoil and distress?....How does he or she respond to you?....What if anything is said?....What does he or she communicate without words?....
6. Allow yourself to fully experience this person's presence, making any changes in the image that you need in order to be completely safe with him or her....
7. If you are willing to take another step, imagine that you are this perfect companion, that those qualities are yours. You may look back at the person in crisis and experience what feelings and thoughts you have in relation to him or her....
8. You may want to say something to the person in crisis about how you, the companion, see him or her, or about your willingness and attitude in being there....
9. Take time to allow this experience its full impact....
10. Imagine bringing these qualities and attitudes into your relationships with others, especially those in whom you would like to facilitate growth.....
11. When you feel ready, open your eyes. You may want to take a few notes in your journal about the qualities of your perfect companion. These notes will be helpful in comparing your experience with others'.

SELF-EMPATHY

This brief exercise begins to reflect the importance of our relationship to Self as we offer empathy in psychosynthesis therapy. Empathic Self interpenetrates our repertoire of skills and interventions in clinical work, forming the foundation and context for true empathy. Self provides our deepest validating environment (Meriam, 1996, pp. 13-15).

1. Take a moment and recall a difficult experience you've had recently. This might be an event where you felt a welling up of intense feelings such as anger, disappointment, envy, shame, or fear. Try recalling the intensity of the feelings and the situation that provoked them.
2. Imagine these feelings are related to a part of you needing your attention and caring. In a manner similar to the way you would attend to a friend, a loved one, or perhaps a child in distress, try extending yourself to this part of you, embracing it, so to speak, within a spirit of empathic responsiveness and understanding. Notice the quality of your presence to and engagement with this part of you. Is your heart open? Closed? Do you resist or fear becoming too accepting? Do you find yourself getting caught up in the issues? Are your thoughts focused? Scattered?
3. Now, as you attempt to empathically engage this aspect of yourself, imagine or remind yourself that behind you, under you, or surrounding you is the energy and presence of empathic Self. Try sensing that as you remain in some degree of empathic relationship to a distressing aspect of yourself, you are in turn being empathically embraced and unconditionally valued by the larger presence of Self. Take some moments to sit with this awareness, perhaps reminding yourself that empathic Self maintains a continuous and loving relationship to you throughout all your life experiences, even as you struggle with accepting your own difficulties and the difficulties of others.

After completing this exercise, note what awareness arose as you simultaneously experienced giving and receiving empathy. Could you feel an engagement with the empathy of Self at the same time that you were attempting to come into empathic relationship with a distressing part of yourself? Was it difficult or easy to remain open to the possibility that Self could love and value you even though you may find it difficult to love and value a part of yourself? In what ways might the empathic or nonempathic stance you assume toward yourself be reflected in your acceptance or nonacceptance of others?

THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE IN ACTION

A quick review of the following table before a session can help ground you into presence. It was adapted from *Developing Your Therapeutic Presence* by Suzanne Scurlock-Durana (2006) unless otherwise noted.

Before the Session:

- Nurture the conviction that you deserve to take care of yourself.
 - Take a reading of where you are on the inside.
 - Connect to your healthy resources.
 - Set a clear intention.
 - Affirm current realities.
 - Remind yourself that you are not the only resource for your clients.
- Lila Devi (1996) suggests checking in with the following factors before a session:
- Physical comfort: Are you well rested, fed, warm enough, etc.?
 - Have you left any personal worries & concerns at the door?
 - Have you affirmed your intention to listen attentively to your clients without judgment and with no personal investment in the outcome of the session?

During the Session:

- Hold a space of compassion and acceptance for your client.
- Be a container large enough for the full range of experiences your clients bring to the session.
- Establish and maintain clear boundaries.
- Honor your client's process and pace.
- Be aware when your own emotional issues are being triggered, and know what to do about them.
- Maintain a vision of your client as whole and healthy, and free of physical and emotional pain.
- Help clients get in touch with their own capacity for self-healing.

After the Session:

- Get feedback from your client.
- Acknowledge your client's courage and commitment to heal.
- Help your clients stay aware of the bigger picture.
- Make suggestions for supplemental or follow-up work if appropriate.
- Take care of yourself.
- Close each session with an attitude of gratitude and acceptance.

EXPLORING PURPOSE

WHAT IS PURPOSE?

Assagioli (2002) described purpose as consisting of four elements:

Purpose “I find it useful to think of a purpose as something larger than a goal, for it implies a direction rather than an endpoint. Goals can be seen as way-markers or mileage signs along the path of purpose.” (Brown, 2004)

Intention indicates that one has chosen to use their resources and effort to achieve this purpose – to raise it from the level of hope or wishful thinking. Intention can be reinforced by putting our purpose in writing, saying it aloud, creating an image of it, etc.

Motivation implies the uncovering, understanding and integration of any unconscious drives or subpersonalities that underlie our chosen purpose. Uncovering motivation can strengthen intention once a choice has been made (e.g. strengthen our resolve to move toward wholeness rather than to run away from fear.)

Valuation requires that the willer determine whether the chosen purpose is meaningful within their overall philosophy or world view.

FINDING PURPOSE IN A THERAPY SESSION:

QUESTIONS FOR THE GUIDE TO CONSIDER (MAINTAINING BI-FOCAL VISION):

What's emerging? What are their goals? What is behind their blocks? What do they like? value? What patterns do you see? What are life circumstances requiring of the client?	What's missing or needs to be developed? What qualities are evidenced? (physical & facial affect, pattern of speech, etc.) What interests, excites or raises the client's energy? What has meaning to them now? historically? What is the common thread over their lifetime?
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QUESTIONS THAT EVOKE PURPOSE

- *What do you want? here? in life?* Or, Why are you here? Or, What do you see as the purpose of this session today?

Rue Hass (2006) suggests that beginning a session with questions such as these engages a different area of the brain than asking “What's wrong?” which will tend to elicit a well-practiced mental list of problems, shortcomings and failures. “What do you want?,” on the other hand, forces the client to begin to explore alternative ways of seeing and working with their problem and “... points in the direction of imagination, choice, being in charge, a sense of personal sovereignty.”

- Other questions that evoke purpose include:
 - ◇ It seems to me that you want to work on this problem in order to.....?
 - ◇ What is your next step? Or, What seems to be possible for you right now in your life? Or, What works?
 - ◇ What quality or qualities would be most beneficial to you at present (hope, patience, courage, etc.)?

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE FOUND PURPOSE?

- Once the client has begun to identify what they want, Hass suggests asking them to answer the question “*How will you know when you are getting what you want?*” In other words, “What will you be looking for and sensing that will let you know you are on the right track?”

A simple way to explore this is to ask them to observe what “yes” and “no” feel like inside. This awareness can also be facilitated by asking questions such as “What happens in your body when you *feel* [italics mine] these statements: 'The world is an unsafe and unfriendly place?' And then, 'The world is a safe and friendly place?’” Through this type of process the client learns to **ask themselves** what they want, what is right for them, and how to read their own physical, mental and emotional signals as a barometer for knowing the answer. [Note – Even if the client has difficulty feeling and understanding their internal responses to these questions, this exercise can serve as a starting point for the exploration of what is blocking them in identifying and fulfilling their purpose(s).]

Internal responses that indicate alignment with purpose can manifest in any of the psychological functions. Possible responses might include:

Sensation: Relaxation, an expansion of energy, feeling grounded, postural alignment, etc.

Emotion: Contentment, acceptance – coming to “terms” with it, excitement, joy, calm or peace, feeling like your “heart is in it,” etc.

Thinking: Mental clarity, thoughts that affirm the chosen purpose, etc.

Intuition: A sense of knowing what to do, that something “feels right.”

Imagination: Receiving an image, perhaps a dream, that clarifies purpose, inspires you toward it, or leads to an understanding of how the purpose might be fulfilled.

Impulse/Desire: An impulse to take action in regard to purpose, a sense of commitment to fulfilling the purpose.

QUESTIONS THAT EVOKE INTENTION

- What would your life be or feel like without the problem?
- What are your hopes? dreams, etc.?
- Would you like to explore this further?
- Questions that offer a choice such as: Want to try something? Are you willing to go into this more deeply? Are you willing to take another step with this?

QUESTIONS THAT EXPLORE MOTIVATION

- What stops you from getting what you want? Or, What is blocking or interfering with the fulfillment of your purpose?
It's common for people to respond to these questions with generalities such as "I always feel guilty, as though I've done something wrong." or "I'm always afraid." Asking for specific examples will help to clarify the direction of the work/session. "A particular incident carries all the triggers, the emotional responses, the beliefs, and the physiological and behavioral symptoms" (Hass, 2006).
- Is this a recurrent problem? How does it affect you? Tell me about another time when you experienced this problem.
- Why is this the best choice? What need will it fulfill? What do you expect to learn from it?
- Who is making this choice? ("I," Subpersonality or other part of you)?
- How does this choice differ from previous choices you have made around this problem or issue?

QUESTIONS THAT EXPLORE VALUATION

- How does this choice contribute to your values and overall sense of meaning?
- Who/what do you value? admire?
- What do you believe in?
- What has meaning?
- What quality do you most dislike in others?

THE P-I-P RECIPE (PURPOSE-INTENTION-PLAN):

The following map of a psychosynthesis session comes from Molly Young Brown (2004, pp. 106-111).

PURPOSE

If the purpose of the session is seen as reflecting the client's larger life purpose, this larger vision can then provide motivation for the immediate tasks of freeing up blocks, identifying and integrating subpersonalities, etc. “The guide listens through the content presented, waiting to catch the thread of purpose: to free the individual's capacity of choice, to bring more of a certain quality into the individual's life, to develop the capacity to love, to discover a vocation, to remove blocks to creativity and joy.” “Defining purpose for exploring specific problems within a session, or for using a particular method, also helps. For example, a guide can ask, 'What would be the purpose of giving voice to your anger right now?’” Even when it seems obvious, an explicit statement of purpose can prevent the client and guide from working at cross-purposes (e.g. The guide thinks the purpose of the session is to develop strategies for dealing with a difficult situation at work, while the client is trying to gather the courage to quit and find a new job.)

INTENTION

“Simply agreeing on a purpose for a session may not awaken intention. Often we must specifically evoke and strengthen it through awareness and conscious choice, bringing in both mental and emotional dimensions.” “When we evoke intention, we offer an opportunity to the individual's willing self to align with the purpose of the session, to choose to cooperate with the changes and growth emerging from the higher unconscious.” We need to address “I” in order to evoke intention and may need to do preliminary work with disidentification if there is a major limiting identification present. Offering the client choice in determining the direction of the session can help to mobilize their intention. This can also be a jumping off point for exploring motivation.

PLAN

A plan consists of the methods and strategies that will be used to fulfill purpose, both within a session and over the course of treatment. “The plan arises from past experience with the client, from intuitive hunches and rational assessments as to what would be most effective, and most importantly, from the individual's expressed preferences and choices.” The plan may be adjusted during the session so as to achieve the most beneficial result for the client. The plan can focus on any of the psychological functions using techniques such as dialog, methods for clarifying purpose and evoking intention, subpersonality work, guided or spontaneous imagery, development of the will, ideal model, assignment of homework, etc. As always, the overarching purpose is “.....to enable 'I' to awaken, to activate the will, and to open to contact with Self.”

EXERCISES FOR FINDING/DEVELOPING PURPOSE:

EXPLORING PURPOSE

1. Take a few minutes to get comfortable and relaxed. If it helps, close your eyes and allow your feelings and thoughts to become quiet and receptive.
2. When you feel ready, open your eyes and read the questions below; taking each inside for contemplation. Allow your answers to come in the form of words, imagery, or impressions. You may want to make a note of each response before going on to the next question. Now take a few moments to relax and focus....
 - What is my purpose in guiding, as a friend or as a professional? . . .
 - And what is the purpose of that? . . .
 - And what is the purpose of that? . . .
 - And what is the purpose of that? . . .
3. Continue in this manner until you find a sense of purpose that seems to have the greatest meaning and usefulness to your work . . . You may want to write a statement of that deepest purpose in your journal before returning to the text.

(This exercise can also be done with a partner who asks the question about purpose over and over again, including a paraphrase of the previous answer (“and what is the purpose of your _____?”).

(Brown, 2004, p.6)

PURPOSE

This exercise helps to align *Will* with “*I*”/*Self* by clarifying purpose and moving towards it symbolically, recognizing and moving past influences that distract us from our chosen path.

1. Take some time and think of what the *main purposes* in your life are right now. Jot down a list of all the most important purposes that come to your mind – abstract or concrete, difficult or easy, far or near.

They may range from self-realization to painting the garage, from developing a better relationship with a person to learning a new language. Anything goes, as long as (a) it is important to you and (b) it is a real purpose and not just a mere possibility, a hope, or a “should.”
2. Now choose what feels to you at this moment to be the most important purpose on your list.
3. Close your eyes and let an image spontaneously emerge that symbolizes this purpose for you. It may be the image of absolutely anything – an object of nature, an animal, a person,

etc.

4. With your eyes still closed, imagine that in front of you lies a long, straight, clear path reaching directly to the top of a hill. On top of the hill you can perceive, from afar, the image you have chosen to symbolize your purpose.
5. On both sides of the path you can see and hear and feel the presence of beings of various kinds who will try to divert you from your path and prevent you from reaching the top.

They can do absolutely anything they want except for one thing: they cannot obstruct your path, which remains straight and clear before you.

These entities represent various situations, persons, secondary aims, and inner states of your life. They have a great number of strategies to divert you – they will try to discourage you and seduce you, to frighten you and hypnotize you. They will give you logical reasons why it is not worthwhile or why it is even absurd for you to go on; they will try to intimidate you or make you feel guilty; and so on.

6. Experience yourself as clear will, and proceed on the path. Take some time to understand the strategy of each entity. Feel its pull. You can even have an imaginary dialog with the entity – but then move on, and as you do this, experience yourself *willing*.

Note – *As we all know, some of these entities can exert a very strong, and sometimes overwhelming, pull on us. While they can divert us from our path, none of them can truly block it. That is, **they can never actually enter “I”/Will space – it is we who make the choice to leave it.** In fact, our wills need strengthening precisely because this is what we have done.*

7. When you reach the top, face the image representing your purpose, stay with it for a while, and enjoy it. Realize what it means to you, what it has to communicate to you now.
8. Open your eyes and write about your purpose as well as about all the forces that tried to prevent you from going forward.
9. Repeat the exercise, on succeeding days, for your second and third most important purposes. In general, the remaining ones will tend to take care of themselves, because the habits of conscious willing you develop in applying yourself to your main purposes make you generally more effective, and also because as you accomplish your main purposes, enormous energy may be released that makes other tasks easy. Feel free, however, to repeat the exercise for as many targets as you wish, keeping in mind that it is always your main purposes, especially your first choice, to which you have decided to devote most of your attention and energy.

(Exercise devised by Dr. Massimo Rosselli. In Ferrucci, 2004, pp. 82-83)

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