

Introduction

Your Integral Life Matters: A Whole-Brain Life Management Mindset for Learning, Leading and Legacy Success in the American Tradition

A. National and International Learning and Development

For the last twenty five years national and global political and economic forces have appeared to be undercutting America's accomplishments at building a democratic consensus home and abroad on what sustainable human development requires. Individuals, organizations and communities normally amenable to incremental change are experiencing a multi-factored explosion of disruptive attitudes, and challenges to elected authority that elevate human mindlessness and social chaos to a new and threatening art form.

American leaders and citizens are enveloped in an avalanche of terror threats to our national security, an explosion of technological innovations to be accommodated, a host of socio-economic disparities that breed hostility, and prominent ecological abuse that only the powerful and wealthy among us could rationalize as being good for national and global human development.

It appears that the American government, institutional leaders and cultural elites are at an apex of dysfunction; and that their inability to learn, analyze, prioritize, synthesize and achieve social consensus is ascendant in a culture at war with itself. An undercurrent of educationally limited, ill-informed, and emotionally driven citizens and noncitizens appear to be in a tsunami of acrimonious communication with those in positions of authority and power. Concurrently, significant evidence of duplicitous governance, pervasive inequality, socio-economic insensitivity and escalating ecological damage has been convincingly demonstrated. We can clearly see our adversary. It is us! We can do better!

The American Learnership vision for the future (this Life Management Mindset Handbook) is that (1) benefits from lifelong learning, reflection and renewal; (2) support mindful rather than mindless thinking and behavior; (3) inspire people at all income levels toward self-fulfillment, high performance, the common good, and human enlightenment; and (4) when shared, this powerful philosophy, improvement architecture and practical tools can be beneficial to all societies and nations. Additionally, this Mindset Handbook recognizes and elaborates on the recent development of the integral learning and knowledge management disciplines – especially their capability to integrate knowledge, skills and abilities across multiple disciplines and fields of study. And lastly, America is the leader – and will continue to be the leader of the free world's socio-economic relations and cultural development – as well as being the primary influencer of international finance and markets.

[Author's Note: An important factor in this mindset handbook is that a "theory to practice" commitment is maintained throughout. Overarching meta-concepts are derived from consolidation of lower level practical tools and experiences into a richer tapestry of contemporary research and principles with broader influence and scope. While many thought leaders and writers stress changing one's purpose and intentions as critical for human growth and development, the content of this Mindset Handbook additionally argues for *proactive lifelong learning and professional performance branding* wherein concepts and tools are continuously improved and used to achieve practical objectives that serve individual, business and community needs within a relevant timeframe. The principle here is that aspiration (vision and motivation) requires perspiration (skills and work) for a well lived life and a balanced social system-of-systems.

Expectations at Program Completion

The intent, herein, is to illustrate the potential *lifelong learning and knowledge building* that may be achieved when empowered adults become skilled and engaged in "interdisciplinary reasoning" for "integral social development." This capability, may be contrasted with the more commonly used methods of societal deliberation and decision-making where issue analysis is riddled with personal bias, limited relevant information, and overlooked contextual factors that (unfortunately) are directly pertinent to the personal, business, community or societal situation at hand.

The thesis of this Mindset Handbook is approached with *four overriding expectations* concerning how one should investigate, organize and draw conclusions given the scope and interdisciplinary nature of human issues and topics. What boundaries must be drawn, what dependencies must be clearly explained, what sequencing between cause and effect is fundamental, and how information can be prioritized and presented for different groups with a variety of interests and needs.

1. The **first goal** or expectation is that the author has attempted to learn, improve, apply and share a snapshot of the best life management knowledge and experience he has discovered during his 45+ adult years. The content and context of this handbook and mindset is rich with authoritative source material written by others to whom recognition is given. Significant analysis, written explanation and graphical content has been added by the author to enable the subsequent establishment of an interdisciplinary and integral educational curriculum for others' edification in concepts that are intellectually, emotionally and practically useful. A *whole brain* (writing and graphical) learning methodology is utilized throughout to communicate a high degree of life management **SUBSTANCE** to be shared with others' for their own knowledge and skill development. As always, each reader reserves the right to accept, reject or modify the recommendations they themselves receive from others. Think of a buffet table with many possible choices. Some items are must haves, certain ones might be sampled, and a few will definitely not be selected. People choose to meet their own needs and interests.

2. The **second goal** to achieve is directed towards those who make the inevitable comment upon seeing the breadth and depth of the subject matter offered: "Quickly tell me what this is and why I should care." The approach used is to help others to understand and apply a systematic life management **PROCESS** (method) for managing their own growth and development – even though they may not care to learn or fully use what the author has chosen to advocate at a particular point in the manuscript. Early on, a metaphor of a *University of the Mind* is introduced in which readers and participants are requested to conceptualize their own brains as being huge databases functionally similar to the intellectual content stored and taught in university libraries. All content is useful to human experience and development, but needs to be selectively accessed and used – in an integrated and meaningful manner – only when appropriate. This approach advises that one's brain can be thought of being organized in a system-of-systems taxonomy that favors one's real life social structure and practical experience – and, that recent research indicates the human brain has distributed data holding compartments analogous to a university. Everyone in life is charged to make responsible choices in their use of data and information when in pursuit of their objectives and unique interests. The attentive reader and communicator cannot avoid learning both substance and process when enmeshed within an interdependent learning experience.

3. The **third goal** selected is to introduce and evaluate a life management **META-SYSTEM MENTAL MODEL** way of reasoning, learning and action in which the total course material of a typical university, that is, all its educational subjects and strategies, are viewed as consisting of the purposeful differentiation of knowledge and skills by selected "experts." Some educators have commented that this differentiation process reduces individuals' range of perspective and holistic reasoning capabilities. Alternatively, it may be more useful for human learning and development to reconstruct the interdisciplinary linkages among stove-piped knowledge domains – and then focus on the more comprehensive and integral mental models necessary for enhanced reasoning and decision making. Today, we live in complex and fast-paced situations and the popular concept of *mindfulness* should focus less on stress reduction through behavior modification, and more on building a mindful capacity and resilience for proactive mind management. A contemporary term for this achievement is for a person to build enhanced *complexity*

4. The **fourth goal** of this learning project is to define a life management **LEARNING AND LEGACY BRANDING METHODOLOGY** that enables our life management Handbook readers and life planning coaches to record personal stories that reflect accurately and substantively on their life/career experiences and accomplishments. This, in fact, is what this author has achieved for himself and for others' consideration as they too, reflect and grow through their life experiences. The process used in this Mindset Handbook is for the author to conduct a *blended learning and interactive mentoring initiative wherein participants are assisted in learning, preparing and publishing their own e-books as illustrated in Appendices B and C*. This practical outcome illustrates how everyone can apply the life management knowledge, skills and abilities advocated. They receive greater life/career presence and self-fulfillment, business leadership and consulting skills, and local community recognition and inclusion in their services to others. (The author will assist interested readers in publishing their personal life learning and legacy planning e-books.)

In conclusion, the methods presented and knowledge advocated in this Mindset Handbook, should be thought of as creating a "working hypothesis" for evaluation by adult learners of the (a) quality of the SUBSTANCE shared, (b) for the effectiveness of the PROCESS utilized, (c) for the comprehensiveness and maturation of the META-SYSTEM MODEL employed, and (d) for the value received by LEGACY BRANDING oneself as having demonstrated notable achievement. Together, any well-organized person will benefit from taking the time to reflect and act on the *What, Why and How* their personal and professional time on earth has been spent.

The overarching ALF social system-of-systems meta-model used in this Life Management handbook and mindset illustrate the concept that Personal system development focused on SELF FULFILLMENT, coupled with Organization system development emphasizing HIGH PERFORMANCE and Community system development concerned with the COMMON GOOD, can empower a nation's citizenry to achieve Societal HUMAN ENLIGHTENMENT and social progress. (Figure 1)



**A Mindful
"Way-of-Being"**

A Non-Profit Education,
Coaching, Consulting
and Fundraising
Community

Personal Self-Fulfillment



Organizational High Performance

The American Learnership™ Forum
"The Reinvigoration of America" -- "Head, Hands & Heart Community Support"



Community Common Good

A Business Alliance
for Citizen Development
and Enhancement of the
American Culture

Dr. Rudy Garrity
Founder/CEO
www.alforum.org



Societal Enlightenment

Figure 1

Mindset Handbook Structure and Use

This handbook and mindset are flexibly configured to support a variety of learning methodologies that educators and learning facilitators may use in assisting individuals and groups in attaining the practical knowledge, skills and abilities needed for their personal (family), organization (business) and community (societal) social lives – and, at any stage of their adult lives between ages 25 to 75. Textual descriptions and graphical depictions combine for whole-brain exercise, while differences in learning styles and personal preferences are noted and respected.

Our readers and course participants have choices on how to proceed (Reference chapters in the Table of Contents). Also, ALF will occasionally host FREE webinars to introduce this Mindset Handbook to purchasers and potential business partners. Contact Dr. Garrity www.alforum.org, for Life Management assistance.
Choices:

1. Young adults ages 25-50. Life/Career Transition and Growth
Study Appendix A; then read chapters 1-13, the Epilogue and Appendices B and C.
Options: Prepare draft of e-book: *My Integral Life, Work, Wealth, Health and Legacy Success*; or
Prepare draft of e-book: *My Authentic Personal and Professional Brand*
2. Mid-life/career adults ages 50-65. Mid-Life/Career Transition and Renewal
Study Appendix A; skip chapters 1-13, then read the Second Interlude and chapters 14-15.
Next review chapters 1-13, the Epilogue and Appendices B and C for e-book preparation.
Options: Prepare draft of e-book: *My Integral Life, Work, Wealth, Health and Legacy Success*, or
Prepare draft of e-book: *My Authentic Personal and Professional Brand*
3. Senior adults ages 65-80. Senior Rejuvenation, Authentic Living and Legacy Success
Study Appendix A; skip chapters 1-13, then read the Second Interlude and chapters 14-15.
Next read chapters 1-13, the Epilogue, and Appendix B for e-book preparation.
Options: Prepare draft of e-book: *My Integral Life, Work, Wealth, Health and Legacy Success*, or
Prepare draft of *My Senior Life Learning and Memorable Legacy (Letter)*.
4. Attend the Master Class for Your Integral Life Matters. This Mentor's Program applies the complete Life Management Mindset Handbook methodology. Participants work with Dr. Garrity on **All** the above subject matter and earn an ALF Certification. Reference: <http://www.alforum.org>

B. The American Experiment in Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

The American experiment in democratic governance deserves a mixed review in terms of its efficiency and effectiveness. A majority of Americans benefit from the security, wealth, and technological capability offered to those who through education, social connectivity, or birthright have the opportunity to participate, produce, and consume valued goods and services. However, in terms of serving the interests of *ALL Americans* more fully, the nation is failing to live up to its Constitutional guarantee of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all. There is little doubt that American society, in terms of its social and financial responsibilities, should be able to produce and distribute its bounty more equitably and in greater alignment with its founding principles. For a sizeable minority in the population these opportunities may not exist; or are missed due to their lack of preparation; or social barriers are perceived to be too difficult for them to overcome.

While the increasing pace of life, complexity of issues, and unpredictability of events threaten to consume many in whirlpools of societal turbulence, the systems that have been designed for support often fail to respond adequately. Chaos and rigidity co-exist to the detriment of social alignment and cohesion. Using the Federal government as an example, pluralistic gridlock that even James Madison might find difficult to accept has slowed policy and budget deliberations to a crawl. Americans seem to be losing their ability to recognize and act on issues of mutual concern. Unless a crisis is imminent, little action is taken, and even then that which is done may be ill-advised.

A critique of the growth and development of modern American society in terms of the core civic and ethical values envisioned in the American founding would hardly be complementary. The extent of our impressive economic and technological accomplishments coupled with seemingly intractable political, social, ecological, and international predicaments could have been difficult to anticipate and prevent, but surely we might have done much better than we have. The question of whether American society can proactively learn to manage its future for positive results, or simply act as inept caretakers of a diminishing heritage, may be worth considering. It appears that we, as citizens, are not sufficiently engaged in the most important conversations required to fully understand, expertly negotiate and firmly secure enlightened national progress here at home.

On the international scene, we may ask ourselves: "Where are the future U.S. leaders with outstanding minds and ethical personal character who can influence and establish America's national vision, mission and policies that are constitutionally authentic and internationally welcomed? Concurrently, we could ask ourselves to reflect on our seemingly self-imposed commitment to be the leader of the "free world." Are we willing to "walk our talk" by confronting the ignorant traditions, rampant greed, and inhumane behavior of billions of people distributed throughout planet earth? To what degree is human progress on an international scale the responsibility of American? Is human progress limited to only a minority our nation's and the world's people? What share of the planet's human burden falls is the responsibility of the United States? Can we even articulate these multi-dimensional questions in an informed manner?

America's Founding, Purpose and International Influence

Appendix A contains selected documents that provide a foundation for America's purpose, principles, ideals and culture. Included are the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Original Bill of Rights to our Constitution. It is important to notice that the content and citizenry preferences used throughout are guided by the societal laws, operating procedures and cultural priorities established over time – and now represent the American way of thinking and being.

[Author's Note: It is suggested that the readers allot time early in their schedule to scan these important guides and prepare to include their own knowledge and perspectives as a foundation for understanding and use of this Handbook's focus on human aspirations and objectives. The *Universal Ideals* identified in Chapter One later in the document are considered as contemporary American values and practices that contribute to both the content and context of American life. These factors established the socio-economic environment within which the research and writing of this manuscript was conducted. *Notwithstanding this approach, the vast majority of concepts and practices recommended, herein, are considered to be equally applicable to other nations and cultures.*]

A 21st Century Recap

A short sample of contemporary American societal issues and dilemmas is offered as a reminder that, notwithstanding the progress and standard of living enjoyed by many Americans, our potential is far from being achieved in a fair and equitable manner. As a nation we are hamstrung when any sizable segment of the population fails to exercise its rights and honor its responsibilities to itself and the larger community. Selected areas for immediate American concern include:

1. Addictions (lack of responsibility and self-control). The recognition of excessive drug and alcohol abuse, smoking and eating disorders, and sexual perversions and predators; At issue: Cost and effectiveness of the War on Drugs, selective medical use of marijuana, the doubling of heroin deaths in the last two years, etc.
2. Education (inadequate preparation for today's jobs). The lack of knowledge, skills, and motivation for performance in the competitive global workplace, over- and under-educated people; At issue: Educational standards and opportunity, curriculum content, knowledge of math and science, etc.
3. Social/Moral (crime, anti-social attitudes and behavior). Significant cynicism, intolerance, bias, lack of respect, self-centeredness, pastiche personalities, illegitimate births, and crimes against persons and property; At issue: abortion rights, gay rights, rights of community and obligations of citizens, etc
4. Economy (worker productivity, lack of economic opportunity, and inequitable distribution of goods and services). Welfare, poverty, and hunger; At issue: jobs, health care, global business and trade, generational under-employment, etc.
5. Politics (lack of responsible participation). Lack of respect for government and the political system, public scandals, cronyism; At issue: church/state relations, influence peddling, pluralistic gridlock, etc.
6. Ecology (overuse and destruction of environment). Overpopulation, pollution, resource depletion; At issue: destruction of rain forests, global warming, energy production etc.
7. Technology (tools and technologies). Unanticipated economic and social impacts; At issue: ethical issues of biotechnology, controls against computer pornography, cybercrime etc.
8. International (conflicts, wars, and human deprivation). Inequality of life and freedom; At issue: Middle East Wars, African genocide, starvation, and spreading of disease, etc.

Weighing heavily on the minds of those concerned with American citizen and human system development is how we approach these societal issues with respect for the freedoms we cherish, and with reinforcement of the obligations we owe each other within the complexity and diversity of our American societal experiment. Armed with a belief in the unbounded potential of American ingenuity and our extraordinary progress in science, medicine, government, and economics; we often explain to ourselves that, in time, all our nation's problems can be resolved, but we just have not achieved sufficient consensus and identified required resources.

From a broader perspective, how should we interpret America's relationship with the rest of the world? Have we yet determined just how much responsibility and interdependency we need to establish with other nations and continents? Even if we attempt to retreat economically, politically and/or militarily, will others let us do so? Must America always be the biggest humanitarian contributor and the last resort in repelling ignorant and savage behavior elsewhere? What can we reasonably do and afford? And, what should a citizen assume in terms of their personal opportunities and responsibilities?

Integral Life Management and Achievement

Our lives are experienced in a linear (horizontal) manner as we go through our individual aging processes (birth, adolescence, early adult, middle adult and senior adult). Most often we have little understanding of what we can expect at each stage, and are lucky to have others who can assist us in developing a vision for ourselves and the knowledge and skills required to succeed at every level we attain (Figure 2)

As we grow and develop our human capabilities (knowledge, emotions, physical) evolve in an interdisciplinary manner and at an uneven pace and rate of maturity within the complex environment we inhabit. The pace of development in our lives proceeds with similarly early in life, but as we acquire independence and exposure we become more responsible for our own trajectory once we enter early adulthood. As we get older we can find that we get locked into patterns of choices and behaviors that are increasingly restraining our options moving forward. For many, a crisis begins to develop wherein we become compelled to make life/career changes so that we may follow alternative paths towards newly discovered

goals and objectives. Questions such as: What is our unique meaning and more satisfying direction? What practical steps might get us there? Which life achievement curve do we prefer? This *Integral Life Matters* handbook will assist you in choosing and pursuing an optimal life management strategy and memorable legacy. Earlier and faster are essential accomplishments in this model.

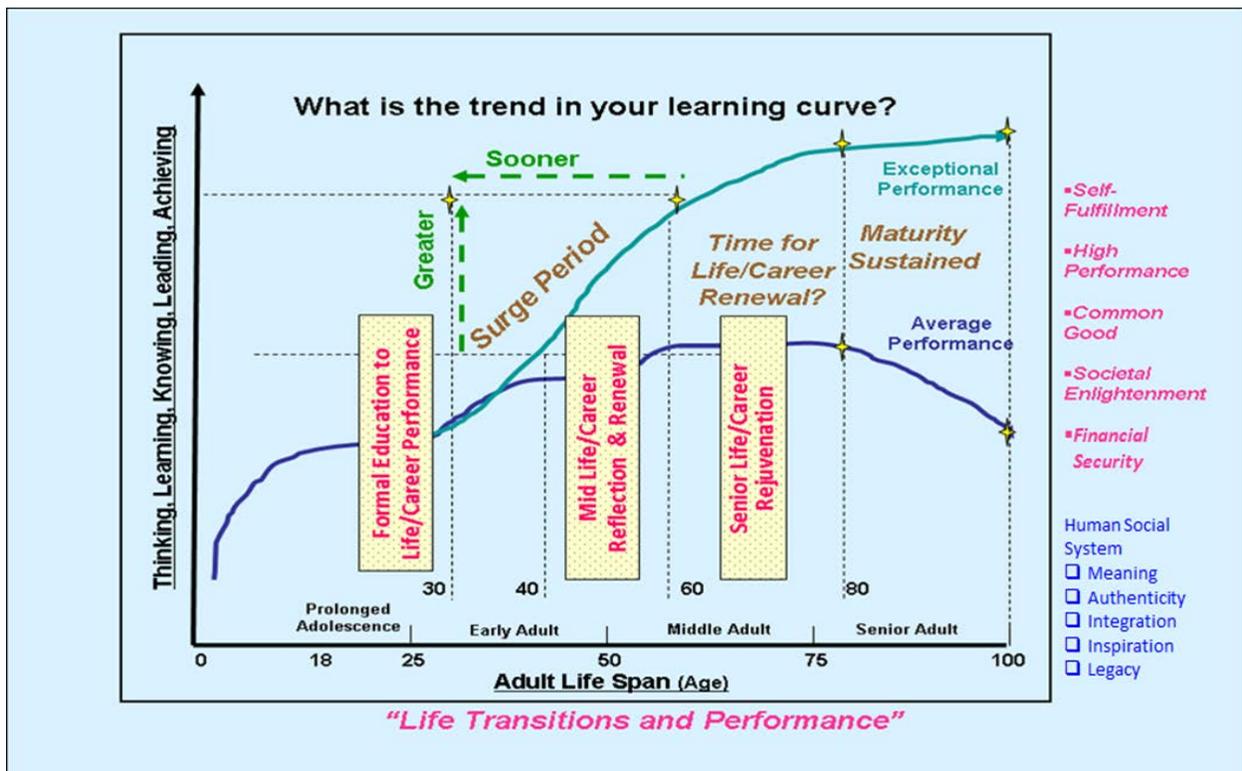


Figure 2

Summary of Contents

The comprehensive contents of this Mindset Handbook are presented for lifelong learning and conversation as:

Ambitions: This section on *Preliminary Insights and Ambitions* contains “think pieces” as a foundation for enriched consideration of the American Learnership and Integral Knowledge Management subjects that follow. These insights should enable readers and seminar participants to stretch any self-imposed boundaries on our thinking, learning and desired performance. The ability and willingness to proactively engage life management responsibilities is critical for everyone’s lifelong learning and success.

Section I: This section on *American Learnership: Life Management and Professional Branding* introduces the proprietary “American Learnership” concept as a powerful and comprehensive methodology for achieving optimum benefit from initiatives designed to improve knowledge building for social systems development. Readers are invited to reflect on the meaningful ideals and inspirational goals that motivate and assist us in understanding the benefits of *lifelong learning*, the *meaning of life*, *life project management* and *personal branding*.

Section II: This section on *American Learnership: Interdisciplinary Reasoning Competencies* describes the interrelatedness of five knowledge building skills that systematically enable meaningful thinking, learning, knowing, leading and achieving. These skills are *Systems Thinking*, *Pattern Recognition*, *Situational Learning*, *Knowledge Management*, and *Adaptive Leadership*. These competencies form an interdisciplinary and powerful methodology for driving social systems development.

Section III: This section on *American Learnership: Integral Social Systems Development* provides a comprehensive explanation of how we citizens can function within four interdependent knowledge building social system domains to become exceptionally successful. These are *Personal Systems Development*, *Organization Systems Development*,

Community Systems Development, and *Societal Systems Development*. These competencies increase the speed and quality of knowledge building.

Section IV: This section on *American Learnership Encore: Mid-Life Opportunities and Experiences* provide senior adults the opportunity to review and improve on their accumulated learning, knowledge building and life accomplishments, and to bring closure to a successful life well-lived. Commitment to a 50+ Encore Initiatives for senior life management and legacy branding allows elders to remain productive and vigorous through life's end.

Epilogue: *Summarization and Review of Selected Major Topics:* A review at this stage solidifies reader comprehension:

- A. Implications for Integral Learning and Knowledge Management
- B. American Learnership Practitioner Characteristics (25)
- C. Wealth Accumulation and Financial Security
- D. Life Transitions and Architecture for Integrated Living and Development.

Appendix: *Supporting information; Participant products and services.*

- A. American Founding Documents
- B. Personal e-Book Publishing (option): *My Integral Life, Work, Wealth, Health and Legacy Success*
- C. Personal e-Book Publishing (option): *My Authentic Personal and Professional Brand*
- D. Encore Example: The Author's Encore Journey
- E. Complete Your Unique Life Project (option): *My Senior Life Learning and Memorable Legacy (Letter)*
- F. American Learnership Organization and Author

C. Ambitions: Preliminary Insights and Aspirations

The improvement of understanding is for two ends: first our own increase of knowledge; secondly, to enable us to deliver that knowledge to others. — John Locke

Many of us go through our lives completing tasks and meeting responsibilities without thinking too much about where we are going and how we are going to get there. Only occasionally when a person or an event breaks our pattern of concentration do we take the time to reflect on what we have been doing and to determine whether it is meaningful to us, or to anyone else, that we continue along the same path. When we do find time to mull over our direction, extent of commitments, and rate of progress, the thoughts that often emerge are:

When will I discover my true calling, and begin to live a more integrated and meaningful life?

How can I become more knowledgeable and competent in a rapidly changing and stressful world?

How can I manage my way through these mid-life/career disappointments, and have a second chance to succeed?

How can I make my life a memorable event, and become an example for those who follow in the future?

These questions, and others with similar heart-felt overtones, are clues to lives that lack the cognitive and emotional development that people in advanced societies have come to expect. How can we make the appropriate personal changes? How can we even think about what has happened and what is needed to be done? These are daunting challenges. These concerns and challenges mark the cornerstone of this work.

The research for this Life Management Mindset Handbook has been an investigation into Americans' lives, careers, legacies and societal best practices; and a framework for integrating the resulting theories, perspectives, and practices so they may be understood, embraced, and applied for personal, organizational, and community improvement.

Other authors have conducted research, analyzed their findings, and presented their perspectives – and this handbook attempts to give many of them the credit they deserve within the context of its social architecture. The Handbook is a compilation of selected topics and authors whose perspectives have informed the author's own development over a lifetime of social development and career progression. A buffet table is set and we can all browse, select, and discuss that which is mentally nourishing in our own lives and careers. We can become more efficient, effective, innovative, and compassionate in managing our way through this one life we have to lead.

A few context setting factors that come to mind to begin this conversation are presented. These are meant to prod you, the reader, to reflect on your own efforts to make sense out of the sometimes incoherent patterns of human thinking and behavior we all experience – and to emerge determined to find your answers to the above questions.

1. Conscious Pursuit of Personal Development (Mindset)

Personal development may be easier to understand and support as a concept than it is to define and implement in a systematic manner. Because individuals are distinct from one another (age, gender, and education) and experience different life circumstances (ethnicity, culture, and career) we might expect that everyone is significantly unique as they make choices in pursuit of a satisfying life. And yet, philosophers, researchers, academics and social scientists have compiled considerable data and information that suggest that at a fundamental level of human reasoning and behavior we have common needs, interests and attitudes that drive our perspectives and preferences.

Researcher and author Steve Pavlina (*Personal Development for Smart People: The Conscious Pursuit of Personal Growth*, 2008) has assembled an impressive body of knowledge and insight that suggest there are certain high-level concepts leading to practical actions that every one of us should be able to learn and apply in all areas of our lives and careers. For Pavlina, "smart people" are those that have acquired a working knowledge of seven principles, with "intelligence" being the foremost and the result of the interaction among the other six:

- a. Intelligence – Human *intelligence* is derivative from the mutually reinforcing primary and secondary principles that follow. When these principles are learned and applied throughout our lives we are empowered to learn, grow, lead, achieve and contribute to human betterment.

b. Truth – The first primary principle of personal development. We primarily grow as human beings by discovering new truths about ourselves and our reality. We can accelerate our growth by consciously seeking *truth* and deliberately turning away from falsehood and denial.

c. Love – The second primary principle of personal development. *Love* is an emotion, but more than that it is the willingness to connect to another person, place or thing to create a meaningful relationship. Forming connections may be the essence of a purposeful life.

d. Power – The third primary principle of personal development. Our ability to consciously and deliberately assist and create the world around us is a function of our *power* to cultivate a life of our own choosing. We need not accept becoming a victim of our environment.

e. Oneness – The first secondary principle comes from combining *truth* and *love*. Whereas love is the ability to connect by choice, oneness recognizes the *truth* that everything is *already connected* – the natural state of being. *Oneness* creates an empathetic connection with everything else.

f. Authority – The second secondary principle is derived from *truth* and *power*. Truth without power accomplishes nothing. Power without truth generates wasted action. The principle of *authority* teaches us to blend knowledge and action to produce intelligent results. Living a self-directed life requires that others be influenced by our apparent *authority*.

g. Courage – The third secondary principle results from the combination of *love* and *power*. While it is clear that a sense of power often leads to bold action, it is equally true that when power is coupled with the love from our deepest connections we can act both bold and *courageously* in the face of risk and obstruction.

[**Author's Note:** Additional information on Steve Pavlina's perspectives and contributions are at www.StevePavlina.com]

2. Knowledge, Values, Culture and Societal Progress (Mindset)

In social, political and economic literature researchers are able to define the societal *knowledge* that promotes the emergence of strong cultures with the power to drive societal progress. The general effect is that the *values*, attitudes, beliefs, orientations and underlying assumptions prevalent among a group of people (*the culture*) can be shown to reliably influence that group's economic development, material well-being, social-economic equity, and political-competency (*societal progress*). The assumption is that the group is able to define the values, assumptions and behaviors they agree should be the standard assessment criteria and the measures of acceptable performance. It has been suggested that cultures that value self-reliance, equal rights, democracy and productive work are better positioned to empower their citizenry to make intelligent choices toward greater human enlightenment and progress.

The question that arises is "Is the culture itself judged to be worthy of the task before it?" Has the culture developed and been accepted as intellectually and behaviorally mature for the group's continued development? The two factors for basic reflection by the group's leaders are (a) has the group learned the most relevant, scientific and logically established processes, methods, facts and truths essential to their historical time and experience (e.g. their Intelligence Quotient), and (b) has the group learned and accepted the personal and societal relationship responsibilities sought by their most respected and progressive leaders (e.g. their Emotional Quotient).

The well regarded American Senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan once said: "The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, which determines the success of a society." One response might be is that politics represents the arena in which policy battles are fought by selected warriors chosen by powerful and competing constituents. And, in America the general set of rules by which these battles are fought are guided by the U.S. Founding documents of which the Constitution and its Amendments are preeminent.

3. Transitioning from a Mindless to a Mindful Way-of-Being (Mindset)

Sigmund Freud once said: "We know that the first step toward the intellectual mastery of the world in which we live is the discovery of general principles, rules and laws which bring order out of chaos. By such mental operations we simplify the world of phenomena, but we cannot avoid falsifying it in doing so, especially when we are dealing with processes of development and change." Whenever we become lazy or trapped by our simplifications and convenience-based way of thinking, we are in danger of operating on the basis of *premature cognitive commitments* in which our frames of reference and preference dominate our mental processing and exclude new, more accurate, and more useful information – and we begin to operate *mindlessly*.

Mindlessness is perpetuated by (a) unconscious, motivated-not-knowing, (b) using restrictive categories for approved knowledge, (c) a sense of limited scope or resources, (d) a refusal to consider the influence of context, (e) the influence of pre-established values and perceptions, (f) a strong preference for linear, cause and effect thinking, (g) a lack of education, emotional development, and/or experience, and (h) excessive trust in “experts” with little real basis for their views. Upon reflection, it might be that most of humankind lives within social, ethnic, religious, cultural, political, and economic circumstances that perpetuate this mindlessness. Maybe the time has come to raise the bar of our expectations, and to declare that given the hundred thousand years or so of our *homo-sapiens* ancestors roaming around the earth we should have accomplished more. Maybe we can learn to become more mindful in our reasoning and behavior as we progress into our respective futures.

According to Ellen Langer in her book *Mindfulness* (1989), mindfulness can be distinguished by three key qualities: (a) creation of new categories, (b) openness to new information, and (c) awareness of more than one perspective. The willingness and ability to create new categories occurs when people pay attention to the information coming their way in terms of the situational context involved. A state of mindfulness also allows a person and/or group to welcome new, relevant information as a source of learning and improvement; it understands that change is continuous and as complexity grows new factors and relationships warrant consideration. And lastly, being astute to others’ knowledge and experience requires that not only new information but others’ perspectives are considered when trying to understand people and situations. Mindfulness is the result of open-minded, systems thinking and human pattern recognition. On the global scale, the world can be divided between the have and have-nots, the mindful and the mindless. We have a choice.

4. Whole-Brain Training and Learning (Mindset)

Our human brain is structured with a prefrontal lobe *executive capability* to organize and to push and pull data and information to/from multifarious brain data locations. This functionality enables thinking and reasoning (sense-making) amid many influencing factors, thereby enabling human response and behavior appropriate to the situation at hand. The sum total of all the brain activity required for daily assessments, decisions, actions and reflections has proven to be extraordinary as human learning and development has progressed over millennia.

A word that uniquely captures the synthesis of these mutually supportive brain functions is *integral*. When our learning elicits integral learning, knowledge and understanding of the situations in which we find ourselves, we are empowered to reason and take action in a rapidly changing and complex world. Brain training that enhances the integral learning and knowledge building capacity of the human brain can be considered as a useful metaphor for learning and leading an efficient and effective life and career, and for constructing a holistic personal legacy that becomes meaningful for posterity.

The author and readers of this Mindset Handbook are considered to be subjects in an experiment on *integral brain learning through cognitive and emotional immersion*. We are part of an experiment in which whole-brain stimulation occurring through an immersion into a plethora of interrelated subjects and perspectives alternately frustrates, and then illuminates, our mental processing and sense of order. The approach is to provide enough new information to stimulate interest and establish a learning opportunity, but not so much to dwell on the topic at the expense of the larger, whole life integration objective. Hundreds of perspectives, models, frameworks and other “think pieces” are included to assist you the reader in making a self-assessment of what you think, feel, and plan to do to craft and fulfill your personal and professional life of objectives.

The educational objective is to create *holistic brain learning* by stimulating cognitive association and emotional sensation. Everyone desiring to stay mentally sharp and relevant throughout their lifetime can benefit from participating in reasoning and stimulating dialogue. The expectation is this mindset-building experience is a bit more interesting than doing crossword puzzles or Sudoku.

5. Integral Learning and Knowledge Management (Mindset)

The field of Knowledge Management has been articulately defined by the George Washington University educational team of Michael Stankosky and Francesco Calabrese during 2000 to 2010. While the discipline of learning was included as a major pillar and supporting factor, more research shows that comprehensive learning (context as well as content) is more critical to knowledge building and management than previously thought. In fact, it is now fair to say that knowledge creation and sharing cannot be fully effective if situational learning has not been thoroughly accomplished.

As important as knowledge management has become in understanding personal and organizational effectiveness and development, we need to appreciate that we are first and foremost awash in a sea of data, information and various personalities relating to the situations within which we learn. Some situations are routine and need little attention while at

the other end of a continuum – without the use of the right information at the right time for the right purpose by the right people – those situations might well be personally or professionally limiting.

Every situation we encounter requires a fair amount of information gathering and analysis followed by decision-making concerning (a) what to do with that knowledge and (b) if further action is appropriate. Every situation is an interdisciplinary learning opportunity and the learning we acquire contributes to our store of knowledge we deem to be trustworthy and useful. Situational learning may therefore be valued as a predicate for knowledge management – and without efficient management of both learning and knowledge; attempts to improve organizational leadership and human performance cannot be fully effective.

6. A University of the Mind (Mindset)

A major example of how life and work has been systematically divided and organized into units of knowledge and performance is illustrated in Figure 3. Shown is the approach used by a well-known university to depict the various schools, departments, and programs that have a logical connection to the University's Knowledge Management Program. The breadth of the university's educational program inspires this author to propose the concept *University of the Mind* – to be a "Mindset" that describes the "similarity between a university and the human mind" wherein their modular construct, breadth of knowledge, and responsibility to accommodate activities requiring both integration and differentiation. This perspective poses the challenge: How can we select, record, modify, apply, and share patterns of belief and information among individuals and social systems when and where they are needed?

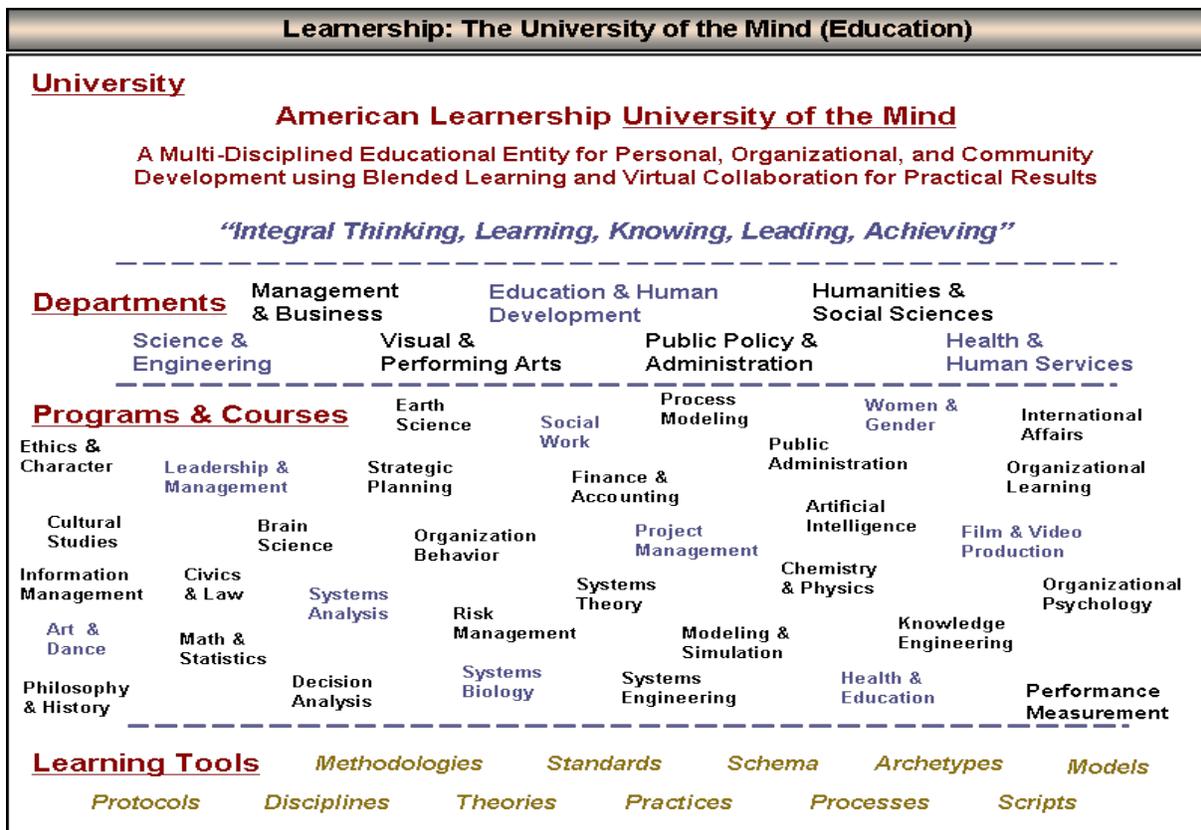


Figure 3

7. Systems Integration for a Differentiated World (Mindset)

Societal development occurs within a complex tapestry of interrelated fields of knowledge, culture, and societal structure sometimes referred to as the human social system. While our lives are lived as integrated experiences, we are formally educated to think and work within narrowly differentiated scientific and sociological disciplines. This paradox, while somewhat understandable for teaching children and less experienced people, can restrict adult minds from expanding to their full cognitive and emotional maturity.

Even as we recognize that differentiation and fragmentation may often lead to greater productivity and efficiency in our activities, we cannot afford to sacrifice the greater human potential and effectiveness that result from lifelong learning in an integral, interdisciplinary, system-of-systems context. A complex environment where important interdependencies must be accommodated while decision-making and problem solving are in full sway calls for formal education and practical training that competently addresses real life and career challenges and opportunities.

What is needed as we develop into adulthood is greater emphasis on interdisciplinary education and skill development that incorporates systems thinking, pattern recognition, situational assessment, broad-based knowledge sharing, and adaptive personal and organizational skills development. This Mindset Handbook is an example of one such learning opportunity, and many new perspectives and insights will unfold for the reader that will ultimately enhance your self-management, professional performance and continuous growth and achievement.

8. A Life Learning Educational Asset (LLEA) (Mindset)

The emphasis here on both the evolutionary content and context of interdisciplinary disciplines – across an adult lifetime of often overlapping and changing forces – requires a willingness to introduce concepts early-on that will only come to more meaningful fruition somewhat later as additional factors and actions are indicated.

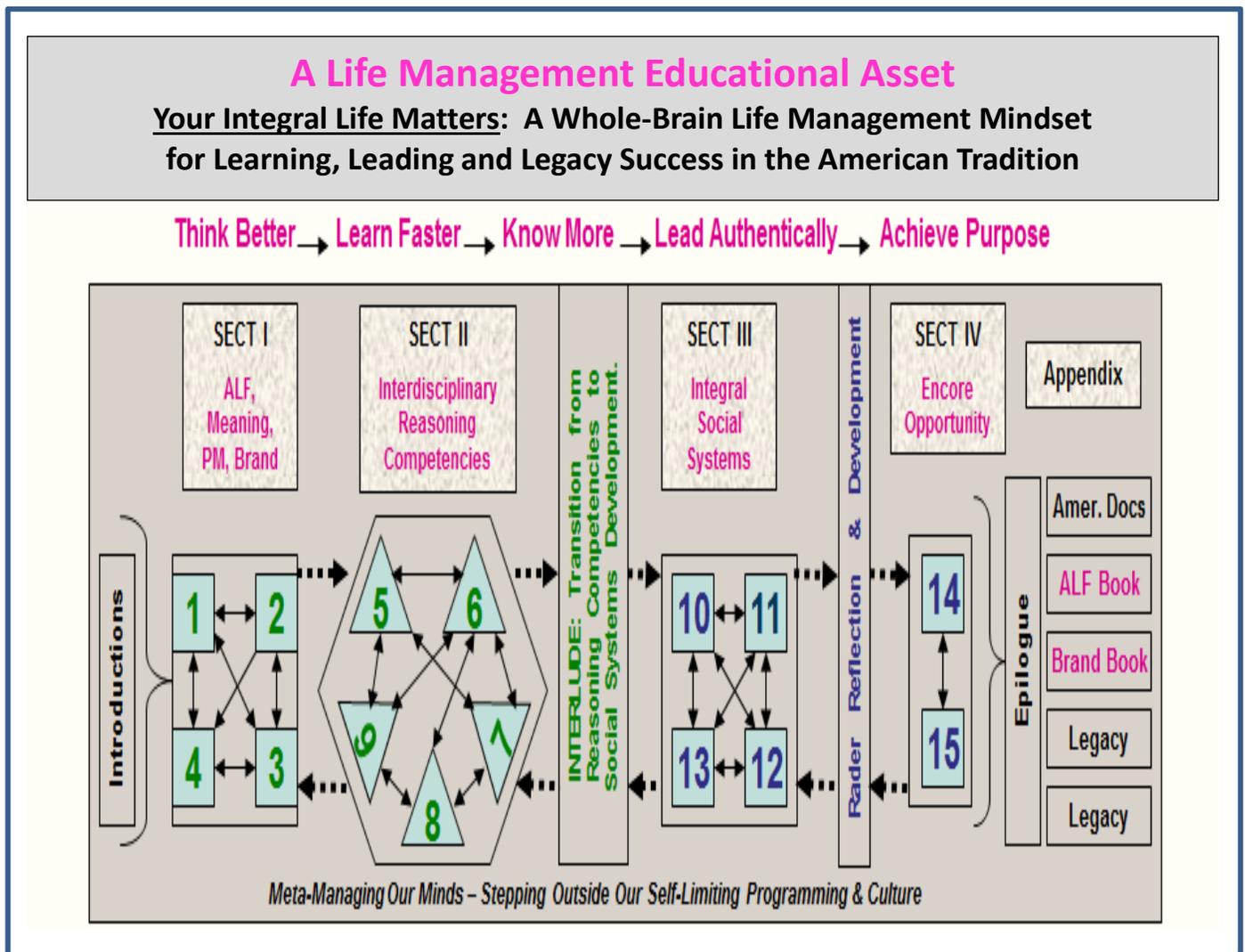


Figure 4

As an example in Figure 4 the integrated human social systems domains of personal, organizational, community and societal development (Chapters 10-12) can only be dynamically understood after foundational learning processes are introduced here in the Introduction, anchored in an architecture, purpose, process and desire for individual personhood (Chapters 1-4). When these cognitive and emotional topics are interlaced into motion – where systems thinking, pattern recognition, situational learning, knowledge management and adaptive leadership are sequentially synthesized (Chapters 5-9) – change and growth are energized in those same target social domains.

As lifelong adult learning is experienced, a person's mid-life and senior years are where a second chance at innovation and interpersonal compassion – followed by expressions of orderly self-fulfillment – are illuminated as evidence of an integral life well lived.

9. American Traditions (Mindset)

This body of research, documentation and graphics has been produced after a period of 30 years of adult experience and development, six years of doctoral study and dissertation preparation, and nine years of university teaching and business consulting. In that time your author has been an American citizen reared in the social and civic values of the growing and expanding American culture and development. Including some professional development and recreational travel outside the United States, his experience is heavily weighted on U.S. foundational documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and Amendments and the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

The knowledge and experience gleaned from life, work, debate and cultural conversation with others has enabled this author to assimilate the competence and confidence to selectively assert a best practices mindset for societal living, working, and collaboration that – while certainly not perfect in considering other relevant perspectives – can be advocated and recommend as contributing to the advancement of people in most cultures, races, religions, localities and political persuasions in this twenty-first century timeframe. This belief is supported by the accumulation of an immense number of references that suggest the breadth, depth and integration of concepts and practices worthy of emulation at appropriate opportunities. Appendix A contains selections from some of these founding documents for review and reference here and in subsequent curricula.

10. Capacity for Inquiry, Learning and Advocacy (Mindset)

The writing of this document was pursued in the spirit and understanding that all societal trends and issues are open to personal interpretation. It is recognized that events have meaning in terms of the values, attitudes, and beliefs of those who witness or participate in them; our perception is our reality. In terms of this project, a need for an awareness of differing perspectives and the resulting effects on individual and group thinking and action is appreciated. The search for core values, attitudes, and beliefs is pursued to discern those for which there is wide support and compelling evidence of usefulness as applied to societal development. As for how well American society has already progressed and the potential quality of its future, a continuum of human perspectives is recognizable:

a. The Optimist's View. Optimists, at one end of a continuum, tend to expect the best possible outcomes from current trends or situations. Optimists see the positive results of the American experience and can point to trends that portend an even better future ahead. From this perspective, America's achievements have been extraordinary and have enabled the majority of its citizens to enjoy unparalleled prosperity. Internationally, America dominated the twentieth century and is positioned for leadership in this century also. The optimists trust that the positive aspects of individual, organizational, and community life will emerge and succeed in making the future better than the past – at least for themselves and those they care about. Optimists believe that society will eventually improve education, reduce crime, defeat bias, streamline bureaucracy, overcome poverty, improve life expectancy, etc. Things will definitely get better; somehow.

b. The Pessimist's View. Pessimists, at the other end of the continuum, tend to expect the worst possible outcomes from current trends or events. Their views are the opposite from those of the optimists and they argue that evidence of their views is easy to find in everyday events. The pessimist's viewpoint has probably never been stated better than by Dorothy Sayers, a commentator on Dante (Dante's Inferno) and modern society, who stated, in part: "And since we are today fairly well convinced that society is in a bad way and not necessarily evolving in the direction of perfectibility, we find it easy enough to recognize the various stages by which the deep of corruption is reached" (Sayers, 1954). In terms of this perspective, America's problems with education, crime, poverty, disease, dishonesty, corruption, etc. will not be solved, because we lack the will, the ability, or both to take action.

c. The Hopeful Realist's View. Hopeful realists, somewhere along the continuum between the optimists and the

pessimists are inclined toward rational consideration of facts and cause-and-effect relationships, and believe that resources may be summoned by informed and willing persons to achieve desired improvement. By avoiding what may be termed the optimist's wishful thinking and the pessimist's allegiance with hopelessness, the hopeful realist engages problems and opportunities with personal determination and commitment to the future. Allen Tough in *Crucial Questions About the Future* (1991) says "...if in doubt, adopt a cautiously optimistic attitude...Face fully the deep-seated problems of the world, but also retain plenty of hope, energy, and enthusiasm." (p.43)

This Mindset Handbook has been researched and written as a hopeful realist. Almost any text with social commentary or newspaper of the day is sufficient reference to see the obvious -- America is severely troubled. If stating that the nation and society are in decline is too much for some to bear, it is certainly true that the nation's potential is not being fully realized. The challenge is to find strength in our roots, locate our common ground, learn the lessons that are being taught, strive for our higher goals, and act in the interest of ourselves and others.

Conclusion

With these perspectives in mind, we can now move forward to Section I: American Learnership: Life Management and Professional Branding.

Chapter 1, An Introduction to American Learnership -- provides an overarching summary of the foundational concepts and insights that make "Learnership" a distinctive trademark. The principles, graphics and practices advocated are meant to stretch readers' thinking and suggest new approaches for becoming successful – all within a logical social system-of-systems framework. The foundational relationship between American Learnership and Integral Knowledge Management begins in this chapter.

Chapter 2, Discovering the Meaning of Your Life, offers a comprehensive method for reflection, learning and the identification of one's own life management objectives to create a sense of purpose and motivation. The learnership social system domains and guideline objectives used to organize this task were (a) Personal self-fulfillment, (b) Organization high performance, (c) Community common good, and (d) Societal human enlightenment. When pursued in an integrated manner, the learner is assured of achieving personal development and greater life satisfaction.

Chapter 3, Being the Project Manager of Your Life, provides an introduction to a well-regarded business management skill with a description of how that tool could be used equally well in managing one's learning and life trajectory. The project management methodology adds value due to its use of process management and systems thinking techniques that require employing discrete steps in working towards a desired objective. Periodic review of project challenges and updating of necessary project changes keeps the life management initiative moving forward toward meaningful objectives at a reasoned pace.

Chapter 4, Creating Your Authentic Personal and Professional Brand, describes how the reader may responsibly learn more about themselves and then use that learning to chart a course of action that enables their purpose and capabilities to be understood and valued by others in their network and field of business.

END