

Leading From Within: Aligning Yourself for full Potential (Part 1)

By

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Most of us experience those special moments in our life where it feels like we are doing exactly the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, for the right reason. It is difficult to explain in words but it feels right inside. Deep inside we know that we are who it is that we want to be, and doing what it is that we really want to do. Imagine, how good it would feel if you were to have more and more of these “just right” moments. Imagine, if you could feel “just right” even when working really hard, making big sacrifices and perhaps even when suffering. This may sound idealistic and maybe it is, but ideals are like the stars. We never really manage to reach them but they light the way and help us to navigate our lives. A common buzz word today is “being in the zone”, which simply means that we are fully engaged in what we are doing whether that is relating to someone, working on a project, or solving a challenging problem. A key concept underlying all this is the notion of purpose and meaning. The more our way of being and behaving reflects our life purpose the better we feel. It is a feeling that is at very core of our being and has a sense of permanence rather than an emotionally driven “high”. It is also very personal and varies from one individual to another.

An effective model to use to assess personal alignment is a model we developed and called the Life Alignment Model © (LAM). The model is an adaptation and development on the Logical Levels of Change by Robert Dilts who is an authority in the field of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP).

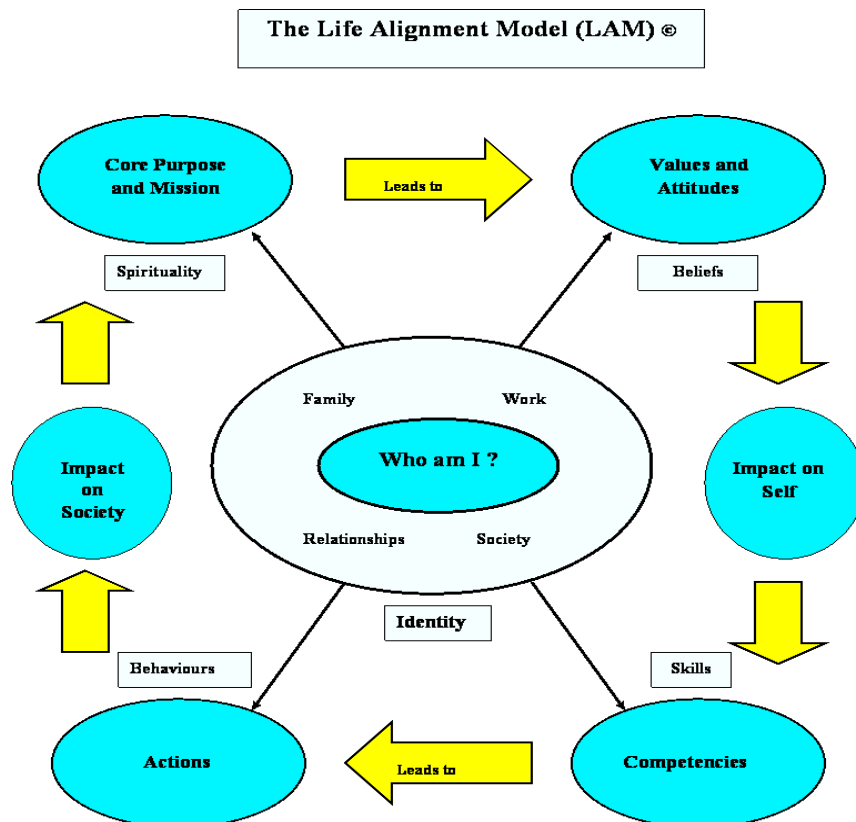
The Life Alignment Model © puts the Self at its centre with the various facets of one’s personality surrounding it in a cyclical fashion, one leading to the next. The four facets are: Core Purpose; Values; Competencies and Actions. The more aligned the facets are in your life the higher the probability that you are deeply satisfied and contented in your life and that you are really reaching for the stars.....your stars.

Consider this story to illustrate our point. George was a highly successful forty four year old area general manager of a multinational company. He was considered to be one of the best people in the company due to his experience and knowledge, his ability to think strategically, and his sensitivity to people. When George was offered the position of regional general manager he was very enthusiastic about this once in a lifetime opportunity. George decided to take some time off to reflect deeply on the decision he had to make. Over the past years since his appointment to area general manager, George had committed himself to put his family first. He felt that all the career progression in the world would be futile unless he spent quality time with his wife and two young children.

George's wife was also a successful career woman. Together, they always managed the challenge of balancing and juggling work and family demands. George knew that this position would require frequent and long periods of travel and after long deliberation decided to turn down the offer choosing to put his presence with his family before everything else. The CEO and board of directors respected George's decision and trusted his integrity and sound judgement. Consequently, they offered to redefine George's new role in such a way that reduced the amount and duration of travel by empowering area managers and capitalizing on the use of cyber technology for communication. George took the job and placed promoting work/life balance amongst his people high on his list of priorities.

George can easily be accused of unwisely putting his biggest career opportunity on the line. However if we apply the Life Alignment Model © to George's case we can understand his decision and even admire him for it. It is only because of his sound alignment of his core purpose, values, competencies, and actions that he could live peacefully with his decision. His life purpose and values impacted his competencies and actions/decisions which in turn made an impact on the organization, reflecting his own core values. This is an example of true alignment.

The figure below is a graphical representation of the Life Alignment Model © showing how one facet builds on the other starting with the facet of Core Purpose.



When we have a clear sense of purpose in life, and embrace values that truly reflect that purpose, then we are on the right road to Life Alignment. Our skills and competencies need to be a manifestation of our values, which in turn need to reflect our core mission. Likewise, our decisions, actions, and behaviours need to represent our strengths and talents. With this alignment we can have the best positive impact on our social and physical environment. We can also achieve our full potential and be who it is that we really want to be. Rob Parsons, an international author and speaker on business and family issues, encourages us not to settle for success but to strive for significance, that is, success that leaves a deep sense of fulfillment and satisfaction.

This may involve taking the suggestion of Steven Covey, to take time to create a personal mission statement and spend the rest of our lives working towards it. He also suggests that sound principles be at the heart of our mission and that all our decisions and actions are in line with it.

This set of questions will help you evaluate and reflect on the extent to which your four facets are in alignment.

1. What is my mission in life; that which gives me a deep sense of purpose and a reason to live?
2. Do I have a set of values that adequately reflect my personal life purpose?
3. What are my strengths and skills in areas such as career, relationships, family, personality, etc.?
4. Are my skills a strong reflection of my most deeply held values?
5. How do I behave every day in terms of the decisions and actions that I take in my various life roles?
6. Are my decisions and actions a manifestation of my skills and competencies? Do I do what I am best at every day?
7. What impact do I have on my social and physical environment?
8. Is this impact in line with my core purpose and mission statement?

In the second part of this article we will be discussing The Life Alignment Model from an organizational perspective and showing how both personal and organizational core mission, values, competencies and actions can be in alignment with each other.