

THRIVING BY LIVING WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU...

By Paula Holland De Long CPCC, ACC

Imagine living a life that brings you more satisfaction, purpose and joy than you have now. Truly being with the people that you love, not just sharing space with them. To feel ease and purpose as you go about the business and pleasure of your day to day life. Using and embracing all of the gifts God gives you. Knowing that you have the strength and courage to manage whatever life throws at you instead flailing helplessly in the wind. Does this sound too good to be true? It's not.

We have been taught from an early age to follow the thinking of our heads rather than our hearts' desires. We have been relentlessly trained to operate inside the box of what we know we can achieve, rather than risking the uncharted territory of what we truly want. Intuition and resonance are ignored for the sake of conforming to our society's definition of success and happiness.

Today, in our country, the stress of conforming to one size fits all "Fulfillment" has stripped many of us of our willingness to conform and replaced it with a unquenchable desire for aliveness, passion and purpose in our lives.

So how do you create a life like that. Because it doesn't just knock on your door one day and say, "I'm here! Your life will be perfect and peachy from here on out."

True fulfillment that fills up that yearning place inside us is not created by what we think we should have, or by things in themselves. It is found by looking deeply into our hearts and living in honor with the inherent truths we know about ourselves and the world.

What are some of your personal truths, the intangible concepts that are essential in your life? Accomplishment, creativity, excellence, honesty, humor, joy, peace, spirituality, tradition, and vitality are just a few examples of the things that may be one of your personal truths, or values.

VALUES ARE...

Simply said, your personal values are the key things that define what's important to you and what's not. Values are things that move you most and the major things that can push your buttons. You know them by resonance with you and the feelings of rightness in your heart, not by should's, wants or desires. They're not inherently right or wrong or good or bad. They are the things that makes you who you are.

Values are your compass, your lifeline, your guideposts for making choices and decisions. When you are living in honor with your values, there is an ease about life. When you're not, stress, anxiety and dis-ease are the result.

Does that make sense?

VALUES CONNECTION EXERCISE

I'm going to ask you a few simple questions to connect you with your values. As you read them, notice the words that pop into your mind.

- What words do people use to describe you that make you proud?
- What's important about the legacy you leave?
- What motivates you enough to take a stand in the face of opposition?
- What you know in your gut that you have to have to be happy?

How does it feel to claim these words as part of who you are? What's important to you about these words that resonate? Who will you be if you are living and honoring these values?

WHO WILL YOU BE?

Let me give you an idea. You'll be a person who trusts that you can handle what the world throws at you no matter what. You'll make decisions without second guessing them incessantly. You'll let go of the things that don't matter to you or that you really can't control. Your authentic self will come through without embarrassment or shame. You'll see mistakes as a learning opportunity, not a personal failure. You will be someone who gives your love and respect freely to the world. You'll be someone that people are drawn to, aspire to be, someone they trust for truth, honesty and integrity. And you'll feel great!

NOT EASY. NOT SELFISH. YOU BECOME SOMEONE ADMIRER AND EMULATED

I don't mean to imply that this is effortless or easy. The decision to live your life based on personal fulfillment and values is somewhat radical and definitely outside of the box. The idea can be scary and uncomfortable.

WHAT ARE YOU HOLDING BACK ON OR TOLERATING?

So I'd like to ask you to think about what you're willing to tolerate in your life and what you're not. If there are things in your life that you're tolerating, ask yourself how they honor your values? That connection can help you shift perspectives, gain more compassion, and help you let go of the things that you can't change.

As your work to bring your actions in line with your values, you'll start to notice how much more fulfilling your life becomes.

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Cancer survivor, professional life coach, author, and inspirational speaker Paula Holland De Long offers wisdom, advice, and tools that promote health and healing for cancer survivors and their loved ones. Her coaching work encourages thriving during and after cancer using complementary, holistic, and spiritual coping tools that transform fear into hope and choice. Her personal battle with cancer inspired her to found **What's Next For My Life, Inc.**, whose workshops and support products are offered at cancer treatment centers and support organizations, and via teleconference to participants around the country. Her first book, the *What's Next For My Life? Companion Journal for Cancer Patients* has just been published and her second book about creating a new life after cancer is forthcoming.

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