**The Obituary Exercise**

Imagine your time has come, sadly and you need to write your own obituary. What will it say? To help you reflect deeply on what is really important to you, pause, contemplate and answer the following questions:

* What have been your main accomplishments in life? Once you’ve listed them, examine what connects them.
* What has been your greatest achievement of all? Why did you pick this one?
* Who are you leaving behind, and who will miss you the most? What will they miss you for?
* Why have you been attracted to your career/profession?
* List the people you’ve helped in your life. How did you help them?
* What has been the main question that life has asked you? How did you respond?

In the process of answering these “deep” questions, values will surface. What should people really remember you for? That you excelled at project management, developing marketing strategies or building new customer software. Probably not, right? It is not that your day job/career is not important, but your life has more depth than that – in what way? What will your friends, associates, family, fellow-workers, etc. miss you for?

Make a list of values that emerge from this exercise. When you’re finished, check it out for authenticity. The list should not represent what you think you should say. The value needs to feel like your favorite shoes – they need to fit just perfectly. Eliminate any values that are not a good fit, although they may look wonderful on paper.

Now, take your edited list through a final reduction. Evaluate each value by asking yourself – In the one life you’ve been given on this earth, is this value important enough to be remembered for? The final list should be five core values.

**Now, take the true core values of your life and define what each one means for you – not your friends, parents, etc. What do they mean for you?**

**After defining your core values, reflect on how the values define your “voice.” In one/two paragraphs, describe your “voice.”**

**Finally, what value must you focus on to live a professional/personal life with extraordinary purpose? Why?**