

The Living Legacy

How to start making a difference in nine steps



Hello,

Many of us want to make a difference, but we're not sure where to start. If that goes for you too, then here's a way to become much clearer about what it is you'd like to change... and then to put together a plan to do it.

We call this approach 'the living legacy'. It's not a legacy in the sense a lawyer would recognise, but it's a legacy nonetheless. It's your gift to those around you.

There are nine steps. You can take them at your own pace. Each step takes you deeper and further along the route to making a difference. You can go round several times, if you need to get clearer about what impact you want to have.

This isn't a typical 'how-to' guide, and we're not going to give you the 'answers'. This unique interactive workbook gives you the chance to answer questions for yourself, and type them in, so that you can come back to it again and again, tweaking and improving your ideas each time.

Rest assured that we can't see your answers. You've downloaded a local copy, and you can edit it, and share it with friends and family, or keep it to yourself.

Good luck with it!

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howtomakeadifference.co.uk

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Getting Clear



There is a path towards making a difference. But your path may be different from anyone else's. Before we decide where that path will take you, let's understand why you're on the path in the first place. This is your stimulus to act.

And let's uncover what you bring with you on that path – what values you hold, and what skills you can offer.

These are the first steps, and they will help you to get much clearer about your path.



STEP 1 : MY VALUES

What beliefs and behaviours are important to me?

What are your values? It seems straightforward enough, but when you sit down to try and identify your values, you are really *mapping your soul*. You are listening to your deep yearnings, and defining the things that are important to you. You are addressing the mystery of who you are. And that's crucial both for your life satisfaction and for finding your purpose.

Even fifty years ago, this would have seemed like a luxury. But as developed societies get richer, we have more time to think about things other than just finding food, and clothing ourselves, and surviving from day to day. A shared moral purpose is evolving, around intensely worthwhile things like a desire for justice and fairness. Or a desire to save the planet from environmental collapse and extinction.

But with affluence and freedom comes complexity. We have too many choices. We don't know which avenue to follow, or which cause to espouse. Which is where values come in. Understanding and knowing your values is a significant first step, taking you onto the path you want to tread.

Have a look at the values list overleaf. What you are looking for are those few values which are so central to you that they will direct your life. We suggest you aim for between three and ten. When you've looked through them, we'll start.

Start by selecting the ones which play – or could play - a major part in how you live. Be honest with yourself. The question is not “does this appeal to me” or “would this make me feel good about myself” or “shouldn't I be doing something about this?” The question is: “does this matter so deeply to me that I am already living by it, or prepared to live by it?”

Don't worry about dropping ideals from your list if they're not really values. If you think that Physical Exercise is important, but you don't actually exercise or want to exercise, then that's an ideal, not a value. It shouldn't be on your list. And that's fine. There are no right or wrong values. You are prioritising what is genuinely, deep down, important to you.

This isn't an exhaustive list, so add in a value if we've missed it.

Having trouble getting down to a manageable number? If a value is important to you AND you're living that value, keep it on the list. If you're not living it, and not prepared to take immediate steps to live it, de-select it. For example, if one of your values is **honesty**, but you are keeping secrets from a loved one, or working in a dishonest industry, you should take it off your list.

When you've got down to a manageable number (ten or fewer), expand on the individual words. Write down a sentence or two about each one, to describe what it means to you. (Freedom, for example, means very different things to different people.) This will help you to build up a much clearer picture of who you are, and what you stand for.

All this may well take time. It is not a quick process to explore values that have either lain dormant or been suppressed over a period of possibly years. But it's worth doing, because your list and your words will remind you of who you are, and who you are committed to being.

THE VALUES LIST

Accountability	Fidelity	Reliability
Achievement	Financial Security	Religion
Acknowledgement	Forgiveness	Respect
Advancement	Frankness	Safety
Adventure	Freedom	Security
Affection	Friendship	Self-Control
Autonomy	Fulfilment	Self-Esteem
Balance (Home/Work)	Future Generations	Self-Expression
Balance (Physical/ Emotional/Mental/Spiritual)	Giving	Service
Being Right	Goodness	Serving The Community
Being The Best	Happiness	Simplicity
Business Building	Harmony	Social Responsibility
Caring	Health	Spirituality
Challenge	Helping Each Other	Spontaneity
Change	Helping The Environment	Status
Charity	Honesty	Strength
Competence	Humour	The Arts
Competing	Iconoclasm	The Future
Connecting With People	Inclusiveness	The Past
Conservation	Independence	The Present
Control	Integrity	Trust
Control	Intimacy	Truth
Cooperation	Justice	Vitality
Courage	Leadership	Wealth
Creativity	Learning	Winning
Culture	Love	Wisdom
Dignity	Loyalty	
Egalitarianism	Mastery	
Elegance	Meaning	
Empowerment	Mercy	
Enlightenment	Order	
Enterprise	Peace	
Enthusiasm	Perseverance	
Excellence	Personal Development	
Excitement	Physical Fitness	
Experience	Pleasure	
Experiences	Privacy	
Fame	Quality	
Family	Recognition	



STEP 2 : MY SKILLS

Which skill and talents will I use?

Your skills matter, and it matters that you use your skills. If you're a poor listener, don't become a therapist. If you're clumsy, don't become a surgeon. Your patients wouldn't thank you. If you're going to make a difference, you need to put your skills and natural aptitudes to work.

What skills and talents do you have, and which of them in demand? This is a much more open exercise than finding your values. How can we match up what the world needs with the skills you bring?

Here's an exercise to help you do just that. Compile these two lists.

Ten things I'm good at are...

Ten things I enjoy doing are...

Now find the things in common. There may be ten, there may be only a couple, but there are bound to be some. For each of them, ask yourself how other people could find them useful.

Appeared in both lists

How other people might find them useful...

The answers will tell you which skills to think about using as you pursue your goal of making a difference.



STEP 3 : DOMAIN

In which area of my life do I want to focus?

As an introduction to deciding on your purpose, it will help to decide on which area of your life is going to be the domain in which you choose to make a difference.

Domain isn't a common word in this context, so here are some examples. Make your own choice, and don't worry if it's not in this list – this is just to give you an idea of what's available.

Artistic – will it involve your life as a painter / musician / dancer / photographer / sculptor / engraver / collector / director / cook / flower arranger / designer / decorator or whatever is your chosen medium of artistic expression?

Work – will it involve your work as a director / manager / full or part time worker / leader / trade unionist / entrepreneur or whatever role you do, or wish, to fulfil at work?

Home / Family – will it involve your husband / wife / partner / child / parent / relative / step relative, or someone you care about who needs your help or guidance or support?

Spiritual – will it involve your meditation / religion / faith / personal god or whatever your higher level of being that touches your soul?

Social - will it involve your volunteering / community work / social service or whatever form of service you feel it is important to engage in?

Sport / Games – will it involve your performance, or your support for your support for your sport / game or fitness activity?

Physical Health – will you be seeking to improve / transform your health, in order to benefit yourself and your loved ones?

Mental Health – will it involve a healthier lifestyle / personal development / escape from toxic friends or associates?

There's a wide choice, and focusing will help you choose your purpose.

My domain will be...

Getting Sharp



With these first three steps behind you, you will already be clearer. Clearer about why you're on this path, clearer about what you care about, and clearer about what skills and talents you can bring. Take some time to look back at your answers. Update them if you wish.

The next three steps will help you to get sharp. You'll get clear about the domain of your life in which you want to make a difference. You'll be deciding on your purpose. And, so that you can articulate your plans to other people, we'll encourage you to find a way to turn your ideas into a concept.



STEP 4 : MY PURPOSE

What is the difference I am going to make?

This is the heart of the matter. It's time to decide on the difference you're going to make.

Here are some examples of **purpose** that may help to crystallise your thinking:

- To help others to learn
- To help others to feed themselves
- To help others to read and write
- To bring laughter into people's lives
- To take your game or sport to a new level
- To build a new business paradigm combining profit with compassion
- To save young boys and girls from sexual exploitation
- To paint pictures which move people
- To touch people's hearts through song
- To pioneer a new category of bio science
- To be a great surgeon to save and improve lives
- To nurse people with compassion and joy
- To give a dying partner the happiest and most fulfilling last months possible
- To get traffic-calming measures at a local accident black spot
- To help ex-prisoners live happy and useful lives back in society
- To give your children the best possible start

And so on.

The crucial thing is **to define a purpose that works for you.**

I am going to ...

Have a go at writing down a purpose for yourself. Live with it for a few hours, or days, and come back to it if you need to. Your first attempt to articulate your purpose is unlikely to be your last. If you're lucky, you'll have a burning clarity that dominates your thinking and feelings from early on in the process of deciding how you'll make a difference. If, like the rest of us, your purpose is slow to reveal itself, it's likely that it will develop and change over time. It doesn't have to be right first time. Write down *something*, then you can improve on it.



STEP 5 : MY CONCEPT

How can I create a vehicle to bring my ideas to life?

It's time to engage the outside world. It's all very well having the desire to make a difference, but the next challenge is to share what's in your heart and what's in your head. You need a vehicle for your ideas, and that's where having a concept comes in.

The way to start is by writing down your purpose, and then to write down your best idea for tackling the problem. **So for example:**

- My purpose is to help others who are suffering from the same disease that my sister had...
... so I will set up a charity to help them.
- My purpose is to make the company I work for more environmentally friendly...
... so I will put together a 'green committee' in my workplace.
- My purpose is to help bored local kids...
... so I will hire a musical venue and help them form bands, choirs or rap groups.

And then just turn it round:

- I'll set up a charity to help other people with such-and-such a disease.
- I'll form a 'green committee' at work to find ways of making the organisation more sustainable.
- I'll provide musical opportunities for local kids who need more creative outlets for their energies.

This can be easy, or it can be hard. Some concepts are fairly self-evident, but others demand profound reflection – coupled with some imagination – to provide a solution. You may want to look for radical, innovative concepts that will create sufficient new value to change things. Or you may decide to work with existing charities or organisations working towards the same purpose.

This is my purpose, and also my best idea for tackling the problem...

So my concept is...



STEP 6 : MY STIMULUS

What is driving me to do this?

Are you not yet clear about what sort of difference you want to make? Then let's begin by finding a seed with the potential to become something much larger. We're going to encourage you to identify your stimulus.

A stimulus is any situation or fact or anecdote which stirs you into wanting to act.

The stimulus can sometimes provide your purpose.

- Having someone close to you die can be the stimulus to raise funds to help prevent similar deaths, or to channel the compassion created by the tragedy into some new, life-enhancing project.
- Seeing pictures of a natural disaster like an earthquake or a tsunami can stir your compassion with an intensity that makes you feel that you have to do something positive as a human being to help the situation.
- Or seeing wasteful destruction of wildlife, or environments, may stir your anger, so you feel an urgent need to do something to improve the situation.

Find a situation which you feel is unresolved, and which stirs you. Maybe you're angry, or upset, or saddened. You have to find some sort of resonant compassion within yourself. If you're not stirred, look elsewhere. If you're struggling, try reading Jessica Williams' book "50 Facts that Should Change the World". Then, just have a go.

My stimulus is...

If you feel you're in the right area, but you haven't quite nailed it, try to enhance your stimulus.

Do some active research to pinpoint the exact area of the challenge you find most engaging. This is likely the area you will find most rewarding when you set about making the difference. You will therefore be more energised, and more capable of rising to the challenges which will inevitably come on the journey.

Suppose your stimulus came about when you saw a documentary about starvation. Are you up for some research? (If not, you need a different topic.) Research the subject on the Internet, see what charities are already involved in trying to help. Talk to one or two of them, and if possible, talk to people operating in the field – engaging with the problem at first hand. If you can, make a trip to the region that interests you most, and experience the situation in person. Watch fundraising events staged by some of the TV channels. Celebrities often go out to witness events at first hand, and you can see the importance of what they are doing move from their heads to their hearts. You can see they are moved by what they are seeing, and their fundraising efforts are much more powerful as a result.

Revisiting your stimulus keeps your intention to make a difference powerfully in your heart, and prevents it slipping back into your head. It keeps your courage and motivation strong, and reminds you why you are striving to create value to bring about a positive difference. And it gives you fresh energy.

Get Going



You're six steps along the path. You've sharpened your urge to make a difference into a specific purpose. And you have a concept or a vehicle, to bring it to life. Review where you've got to so far. Amend your answers, as many times as you wish, as long as you genuinely feel you're getting closer to the purpose and concept that you're going to devote yourself to.

The next three steps will take your ideas from the page to the real world. You'll be gathering help and resources, following an action plan, and making things happen.



STEP 7 : RESOURCES

What help and resources will I need?

Armed with your concept, you can ask for help. You're clear now about what you're trying to do, and why you're trying to do it. Can you do it alone? Maybe, maybe not. But your purpose is rooted in a noble cause, so why not ask for help and resources?

Help can take many forms: time, money, ideas, hard work, expertise, introductions, physical resources... and don't forget moral support. What you need, and who you can ask, is completely dependent on your concept. But it's worth writing it all down, because your plans will be heavily affected by whether or not you get those resources.

This is the help I need	And this is who I will ask



STEP 8 : MY ACTION PLAN

What will I do and when?

Plans help you to bridge the gap between your intentions and actually *doing* something. This is a serious quest that you're involved with, and it deserves proper planning. Try to capture the major steps and add dates to them. They will be milestones along the path.

Action #	What will be done?	Who'll do it?	Deadline



STEP 9 : MAKING IT HAPPEN

How can I keep going?

You now have a plan. But... any plan or intention is only as good as our ability and willingness to implement it. There's often a disconnect between what we plan and what we do. Some people run ahead and do things with very little planning. Others plan and plan but never act on their plans.

Making a difference is much harder than NOT making one! So, here are some ideas for when you feel stuck or daunted or dispirited.

If you face seemingly overwhelming challenges...

- **Start from a position of optimism.** It helps from a psychological point of view but also a practical one. You will achieve more, and people will listen to you more, if you have a can-do approach. Focusing on what we CAN do is infinitely more productive than focusing on what we can't do.
- **Find some like-minded people and organisations** who are active - or who could be active - in your area of concern. Mastermind groups can be extremely effective in developing thinking, and making things happen.

If you find yourself procrastinating...

- **Develop a mindset of “positive failure”.** Getting out of your comfort zone to do the big stuff to make a difference will inevitably bring some failures. Accept the failures as proof you are making progress. See them as a badge of courage. Keep failing positively until you start to succeed.
- **Make things smaller** - one thing a day to get you closer to your goal. Even two minutes. A coach called Cheryl Miller calls this 'microbursts' - very short bursts of energy aimed at a particular problem. Take bite sized chunks – at speed.

If you can't start until it's perfect...

- **Forget perfect.** At the heart of this, there's a worry about being criticised. The lesson here is that unless you're Mozart, there's no such thing as perfect. After you get to 98% you're going backwards. You're probably filling up your mind with irrelevant detail that has no place in the outside world. So let go a little and see what happens.
- **Value learning from mistakes.** We don't like making mistakes or being ridiculed. And that's quite understandable. But experience - including mistakes - is a great teacher. Most successful people have a string of mistakes behind them. Remember your strengths - tap into your passion - take your courage in both hands - and try.

If you're just too busy...

- **Ask yourself: is whatever I'm doing a good use of my time right now?** Having a purpose, being clear about your values - both help you to figure out what's important. But it also means dropping what's trivial.

If you're feeling stressed...

- **Be aware that going through all these exercises is a way of finding a life with much less stress.** Even if we are trying to achieve something which is very difficult. If you are aligned with your purpose and your values then you will be more energetic, more alert, more at peace with yourself. More 'in the zone' as athletes say. Positive stress gives energy. Negative stress arises because we follow paths which are at odds with our values and talents.
- **Anticipate that you will have setbacks.** Realise that it's not about you. Ultimately, all experience is useful...
- **Remember that distress is different from stress.** If you're working with seriously ill or damaged people, you may well find your work distressing. You would not be fully human if you didn't. But exhausting as it is, it will be ultimately positive. You won't be ripping yourself apart if that is what you have chosen in the light of your purpose and values.

Other ways to get things moving...

- **Involve other people.** One way of achieving results through others is learning to influence them. To do this, you must step into their shoes, to show that you understand their issues, and appeal to their values and finer feelings. Being passionate is a great persuader.
- **Learn to delegate** - if you have people to delegate to.
- **Make public commitments.** If you make a commitment in front of other people, they can act as your conscience and hold you to account.
- **If you've done all the exercises well, then you will have broken down many of the barriers to purposeful action.** The exercises are intensely personal, and when you identify things like purpose and values that are very relevant to you, they can be a huge source of inspiration and energy.
- **Refer back to your purpose and values and commitments regularly.** They may change over time, or you may redefine or refine what's important to you. But keep them alive. Post them somewhere where you can see them.

Afterword

You've begun to make a difference.

You know it's going to get tough, if it hasn't already. There may be times when you'll wish you never started. But you've acted on your stimulus. You've worked out what you want to do. You're committed. You're going to need courage.

So let's review some of the benefits of the path you're taking.

You are building your character. You're clear about your purpose and your values.

You are inspiring others. Values, confidence, enthusiasm, passion – they all enthuse other people.

You're taking responsibility. You're not passing the buck.

You're acting according to your conscience. The light by which you judge your actions burns brightly.

Your life has meaning. Your actions say more than words ever could. Even the words in this workbook!

Above all else, other people's lives are richer for your presence.



So stand tall, difference maker, and be proud of your Living Legacy.