



Safe Brave Spaces Starts Within ME

Chapter 3.1 – Knowing

Meaningful Experiences Exercise

Step 1 – What are my most meaningful experiences & gifts/abilities/skills?

This first exercise, my meaningful experience and gifts journaling, requires simply journaling over a two to three-week period around the following areas and then reviewing them to see themes/patterns. Meaningful experiences are events that reflect a very satisfying results and that brought you a sense of joy, fulfillment and a feeling that you were being at your very best. These moments may not reflect your biggest accomplishments; they may simply reflect your deepest sense of satisfaction. For folks that are spiritual they often reflect times when they are in ‘flow’ with the spirit. They may also involve challenging circumstances that upon later reflection you recognize as unique and powerful breakthroughs. By extending this exercise over a period of at least a few weeks it also frees us not to feel pressured to see and allows insights and memories to bubble up from within. As these memories arise, in a journal of our choosing (either paper or electronic), simply:

1. Capture the specific details of the moments: Where were you? What were you doing? Who was with you? How were you feeling?
2. Think about the moment and capture your insights guided by the following questions:
 - What was most meaningful for you? Why do you think that?
 - What was most meaningful for others you were with? Why do you think that?

Step 2 – Strengths and Gift Enabling the Experiences

After a few weeks of capturing these experiences, the second step is the identification of supporting gifts, abilities and skills that enable your Meaningful Experiences. I am convinced that each of us have natural gifts; things that you just see, just sense or just know, abilities that have always been a part of you. We also have learned abilities and skills that we have acquired due to our unique experiences that have occurred in our lives which support and build upon your gifts. As no individual's experience is exactly like ours, we have a unique perspective and learning path. Specific situations have offered opportunities to apply your gifts and abilities in a way that provides unique value to you, others and the communities that you have supported. These gifts and abilities, evidenced in your Meaningful Experiences, are easily identified by:

1. Reflect on each of your meaningful experience
2. Capture the gifts, strengths, learned abilities and skills that where key to your success in those experiences

What's Important to Me (my Guiding Values)

1. Complete a Values Sort

Review the below list of values select your top fifteen that are most important to you and place them in rank order as best you can. Also feel free to create a new value or combine a few into a new word that more accurately captures what is important to you.

Authenticity	Courage	Happiness	Love	Responsibility
Achievement	Creativity	Health/Fitness	Loyalty	Safety
Adventure	Curiosity	Honesty	Meaningful Work	Security
Authority	Decisiveness	Humor	Money	Self Respect
Autonomy	Determination	Independence	Openness	Service
Balance	Equality	Influence	Optimism	Spirituality
Beauty	Excellence	Inner Harmony	Peace	Stability
Boldness	Excitement	Involvement	Pleasure	Success
Compassion	Fairness	Integrity	Poise	Status
Challenge	Faith	Knowledge	Popularity	Teamwork
Citizenship	Fame	Joyfulness	Power	Trustworthiness
Community	Family	Justice	Professionalism	Truth
Competency	Friendships	Kindness	Recognition	Wealth
Competition	Fun	Knowledge	Relationships	Wisdom
Contribution	Generosity	Leadership	Reputation	Working Alone
Cooperation	Growth	Learning	Respect	Working with others

2. Narrow the Field

Review the above list of common values and select your top fifteen that are most important to you and place them in rank order as best you can. Also feel free to create a new value or combine a few into a new word that more accurately captures what is important to you.

3. Select your Top 5

Once you have identified your top 15 values most frameworks suggest that you narrow your list down to your top 5 or 10 values. I personally recommend trying to get closer to 5 as it helps you refine what is truly important to you. This is not an easy task as almost everyone that I know who has completed this work has found it difficult to narrow it down. To assist with this step, consider these 5 values as 'core values', which tend to be not optional and not negotiable. In other words, these are values that must exist in your environments and relationships

4. Define your Values

The intention of the fourth step, personal definition, is to enable you to capture and articulate what this value truly means to you and how it is expressed in your everyday life (virtue). This is a really critical step as it allows you to put words to what is truly important to you. Getting clarity around 'what is behind the word' provides tremendous clarity to help guide further choices and decisions in your personal journey towards safe brave space.

Creating a Personal Contribution Commitment (PCC) Statement

A PCC statement, thoughtfully and well crafted, is the booster fuel that releases that inner wisdom and full potential. Three quick exercises that I have found helpful and often recommend to clients to craft their PCC are (from easiest to more difficult):

1. Create your Billboard

If you could have a gigantic billboard anywhere with anything on it—metaphorically speaking, getting a message out to millions or billions—what would it say and why? It could be a few words or a paragraph.

2. Message to a New World

You are getting into a rocket ship. The rocket ship takes off. You are on your way to an undeveloped planet in the universe. It's a fine planet in every way, but it's uninhabited. You can shape this planet however you want it to be shaped. You have the power to have it be any way you want. When you land, what is it that you're going to make happen? What's the impact you want to have that will make the planet the way you want it to be? (Pause). The ship is now landing on the planet. The door opens. You touch the planet and say, "It's going to be this way." What is "this way"?

3. Questions Towards Clarity

Significant questions are often the best way to unveil what you already know to be true but can't yet see. A group called the Positive Project suggests the following exercise to help define your purpose/PCC.

- a) Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed for at least two hours and go through and answer each of the questions below.
 - When I was 8 years old, I loved...?
 - I lose track of time when I am...?
 - If I knew I couldn't fail, I would...?
 - I feel great about myself when....
 - If money was not an issue, I would love to spend my time...?
 - I'm a rock star at...?
 - Three things I love about myself are....
 - If I weren't afraid of what other people think, I would...
 - My favourite things to do in my free time are....
 - If I knew I was going to die one year from today, I would....
 - Two people who inspire me most are....
 - I would regret not doing these things in my life....
- b) Once you have answered them all, take time to go back over your answers and find any common themes.
- c) Go back and review all of your answers. Take 10 to 20 minutes and think about each of your answers in depth. Ask yourself how you feel when you read your answers. Note which ones move you and which make you feel alive.
- d) Now, write as many answers as you can to the question "My Personal Contribution Commitment statement is —?" until you feel moved, extreme joy, or are even brought to tears. Once you do this, you will know your PCC.

Biases, Blind Spots and Privilege

It is easier to understand the more overt demonstrations of biases and privilege however we are often blinded by the many things we do not see. Three helpful resources to deepen your personal awareness are:

- Unconscious bias video - (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0veDFGo666s> - short video to provide a foundational understanding of unconscious bias
- Project Implicit – Harvard University - <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/langchoice/canada.html> - a powerful free test to understand your biases
- The Advantage Checklist - a helpful process, which I now do annually, and was spurred while reading Ijeoma Oluo's book 'So You Want to Talk About Race', that has helped me see more clearly is The Advantage Checklist. It simply requires you to reflect and build a list of the area in which you have an advantage over others (i.e., for me I was born in Canada, I am a man, I am white, I was raised in a stable middle class family with two parents). Take your time, build it over a few weeks. I think you will be surprised by what you discover. The article by Peggy McIntosh in the Additional Resources is a great read to deepen awareness in this area.

Additional Resources:

- Pursuit Value System – debriefs and coaching available through Mike Farley @ www.pursuitinc.com
- The Enneagram – www.integrative9.com (assessment & debriefs through www.safebravespaces.com)
- Articles – Unpacking Privilege – Peggy McIntosh
- Books – So You Want to Talk About Race – Ijeoma Oluo
- YouTube – Uncomfortable conversations with a Black Man – Emmanuel Acho