

***The Habits* of Purpose**

Living Your HOW



The Habits of Purpose - (HOW)

We know the *story of purpose* and our *pillars of purpose* are the WHY and the WHAT of our Purpose Pyramid. The final piece of our pyramid is the *habits of purpose*. The habits of purpose are the HOW behind our WHAT and our WHY.

We know our pillars of purpose are the set of core values that guide our decision-making. They keep you focused on your meaningful vision of the future. Like a laser, they help you hone in on what's most important and the steps you need to take to lead with excellence. The habits of purpose are taken from your core values. Each of these habits match a corresponding behavior that helps you activate that value in the world. When your values remain purely theoretical they fail to make a difference in the lives of real people.

It's important to remember that a purposeful life is not a passive life. Purpose driven leaders are active in their pursuit of what is most important. They understand the importance of life's story expressed through meaningful habits.

What we say as leaders becomes insignificant without the natural transition of our beliefs into behaviors.

When you become sacrificial initiators for others, your beliefs take on flesh and activate your presence in the world. Purposeful leaders understand that no one ever followed a theory. Put another way, people don't know what you stand for until they see how it impacts how you live. Leaders who have the conviction to cultivate purposeful habits will build meaningful lives of impact.

In other words, changed lives are the result of leaders who have a bias towards *doing*, not just talking.



Excellence

To reiterate, the Habits of Purpose are the HOW flowing from your WHY and your WHAT.

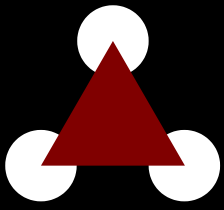
Habits are the processes that activate your system of belief for the good of others (or to the detriment of ourselves, this all depends on what choices we make!). As Aristotle said, *“we are what we repeatedly do, excellence is not an act, but a habit.”*

The path of excellence is paved with thousands of small decisions that determine who you are and who you become. Put simply, who you become is the summation of what you repeatedly do. In order to successfully pursue excellence, we need to understand what it is and what it is not.

Excellence is not a buried treasure waiting to be discovered; it is not a magic potion or secret mechanism.

Excellence is a laborious process; it is the summation of thousands of individual decisions that comprise a greater work of art.

It is a sculptor who commits himself to the process of chipping away at a piece of rock that will eventually become something magnificent. The sculptor does not expect to see the finished product after only a few swings of the chisel but understands that each cut into the rock brings him closer towards his goal. Our daily decisions are the deposits we need to build lasting pieces of art in the world.



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Habits and Identity

Living from your identity is critical to determining the habits that will define your leadership. Your future is contingent on your ability as a leader to develop consistent habits that shape you into the leader and person you want to become.

The concepts of our identity and habits closely depend on each other - they form a feedback loop that shapes our behaviors in an intentional way.

In order to gain the clarity we need moving forward, we first need to decide WHO we want to become. The crucial step here, is to understand your WHY (purpose statement) and your WHAT (core values).

Next, we need to prove our identity to ourselves every single day with our actions and decisions. Every time we make a choice that aligns with our identity we are voting for the type of person we want to become. Inversely, every time we make a decision that doesn't align with our intended identity, we are voting for the type of person we DON'T want to become.

We continuously reinforce our beliefs about who we are with actions that signal the type of person we are becoming.

This is the feedback loop: we are in a continuous process of becoming someone different than who we are right now. Our decisions drive the results and direction of this process every single day. In the process of purposeful growth, we must start with reflection and understanding, but we must finish with habits and behaviors. This constant, self-reinforcing loop of affirmation is critical to becoming a purpose driven leader. Your decisions shape who you are, and who you are shapes your decisions.

Author James Clear wrote,



Your identity emerges out of your habits. You are not born with preset beliefs. Every belief, including those about yourself, is learned and conditioned through experience. More precisely, your habits are how you embody your identity. When you make your bed each day, you embody the identity of an organized person. When you write each day, you embody the identity of a creative person. When you train each day, you embody the identity of an athletic person.

Find Key Principles

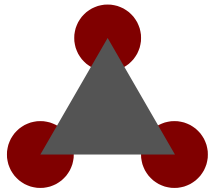
There are underlying principles of behavior to each of our core values. Once we have chosen our core values, we must do the investigative work to uncover the behaviors that activate those values in the world.

This requires us to think in a principled way. Author and investor Ray Dalio said this about principles, *“The most important thing I learned is an approach to life based on principles that helps me find out what’s true and what to do about it.”*

When we discover core principles, we discover what is true.

Our evolving understanding of what works well is encapsulated in the principles that govern our lives. When you take the time to understand timeless truths, you are able to discover simple heuristics that apply across the spectrum of your life. You start to develop simple “rules of thumb” that help you solve problems, make decisions, and live intentional lives of directed purpose.

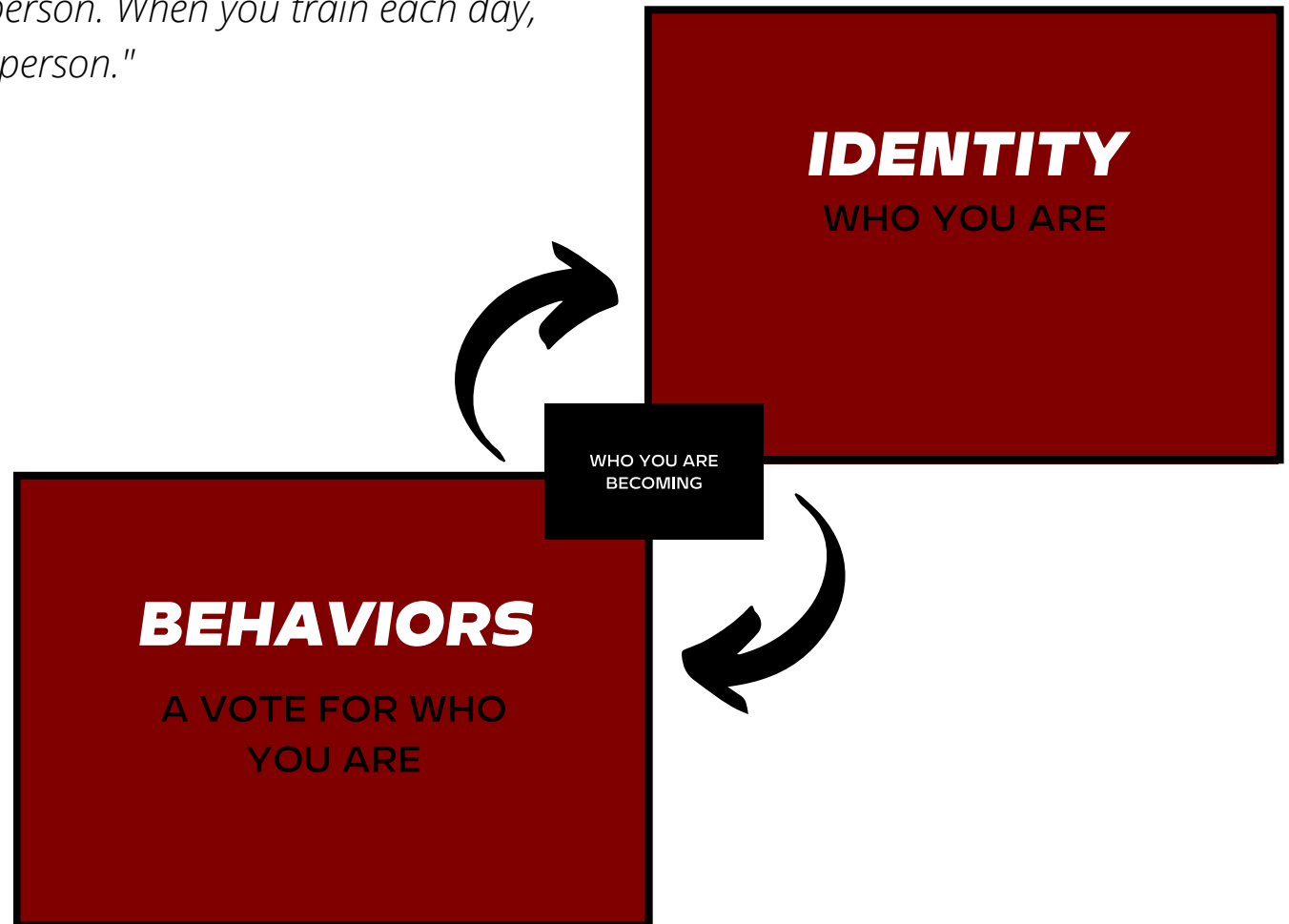
Through trial and error and reflective observation, you begin to develop a philosophy of living that seeps into every single area of life. Principles are unique because they allow for freedom of expression while providing guardrails for your behavior.



THE FEEDBACK LOOP

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- James Clear





Principled thinking is the first step to cultivating the habits of a purposeful life.

As you change over time, your collection of principles becomes a manual for how to live well. You are better equipped to make wise decisions that align with your identity and purpose. In other words, thinking principally forces you to find the rationale behind your thoughts and behaviors.

The good habits come from thinking repeatedly in a principled way, like learning to speak a language. The good thinking comes from exploring the reasoning behind the principles. Using principles is a way of both simplifying and improving your decision making. (Ray Dalio)

Core Behaviors

Your values become active in the world when you identify core behaviors that align with your core values.

For example, take the core value of toughness. Toughness can be defined a hundred different ways, and it can mean a hundred different things to a hundred different people. The important thing to discover is, what does toughness mean to you? How do you want toughness to be displayed in your life and on your team?

What is the HOW behind the core value of toughness - how does it manifest itself in your day-to-day life? What is the critical action or behavior that is true about someone who embodies toughness? What image comes to mind when you think of the word?

Your core values become “energized” when you recognize how they are displayed in your everyday life. When you simply state your values (i.e. Toughness, Commitment, Humility, Focus, etc), they can lack the necessary “energy” to come alive in your leadership.



Values are not meant to simply exist on paper or plastered on a wall, values are meant to be lived!

To change a value from its stagnant state to its active state, you need to define what it means and then associate it with a core behavior. This makes it living and active in your life.

Toughness is one of my core values. To me, toughness is about doing the right thing at the right time regardless of the circumstance. Regardless of how I feel about the situation, I want to have the toughness to execute what needs to be done in the moment. I want to work on building the emotional, physical, and psychological toughness to do what is required, when it is required. This is how I have defined toughness; this is the main idea that exists underneath the core value.

Therefore, when I think of toughness I associate it with a specific behavior: too simply, “*do hard things well*”. I know life will require me to exhibit my toughness in many different areas. When those situations arise I want to attack hard things with excellence. I don’t simply want to survive or “get through” difficult situations; I want to grow through challenging circumstances with resolve.

Use these questions to help clarify your thinking in regards to the core behaviors that will define your core values:

What problem am I trying to solve?

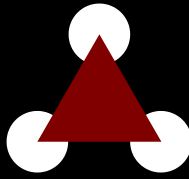
What are the behaviors that I most associate with my core values?

What are the keystone habits (the few things, if I do consistently, will make everything else better) in my life?

What are the behaviors (my HOW), if I do consistently will keep me in line with my story of purpose (my WHY) and my pillars of purpose (my WHAT)?



A Portrait of Purpose



Seneca was an ancient Stoic philosopher who thought deeply about the habits of purpose. He had this to say, "Everyone hustles his life along, and is troubled by a longing for the future and weariness of the present. But the man who ... organizes every day as though it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the next day." Seneca organized his daily habits (even though he was under constant threat of death and persecution) to reflect his deepest values. He wrote some of the most influential essays in the history of philosophy during several periods of intense personal crisis. He accomplished this by developing consistent daily habits that aligned with his purpose.



Clarify with Key Questions

When you associate a behavior with each of your core values you hold ourselves accountable to your core beliefs.

Your commitment to your identity is strongest when your WHY your WHAT and your HOW are aligned.

The integrity of your life comes from the alignment of your purpose that drives you towards meaningful action in the world. One of the best tools for accountability is to ask yourself key clarifying questions that keeps your eyes on the prize.

As a purposeful leader you should use questions to constantly reassess and clarify the direction of your leadership. These questions are determined to remain accountable to the story, pillars, and habits of your purpose. The behaviors of purpose become habits when your mind stays fixated on your identity, and the vision of who you want to become. Just as stagnant values are activated in the world by behaviors, questions serve as subtle reminders for how to remain faithful to your core values:

What problem am I trying to solve repeatedly?

What is the embodiment of the values I am trying to live?

What are the keystone habits in my life that make everything else better?

What are the behaviors that we can consistently do to keep us in line with our mission?

Let's use the previous example of toughness. A good clarifying question would be, *in what ways have I taken the easy way out when things got hard?*



Here's a quick synopsis of how this core value would be defined as part of my leadership identity:

Core Value: Toughness

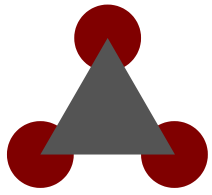
Core Behavior: Do hard things well

Clarifying Question: *In what ways have I taken the easy way out when things got hard?*

If you have solid principles that guide your day-to-day decisions, but you don't have a systematic way to apply them, they're not much use. Identifying behaviors and their clarifying questions are a system of activation and recognition to live and work as purposeful leaders.

Summary

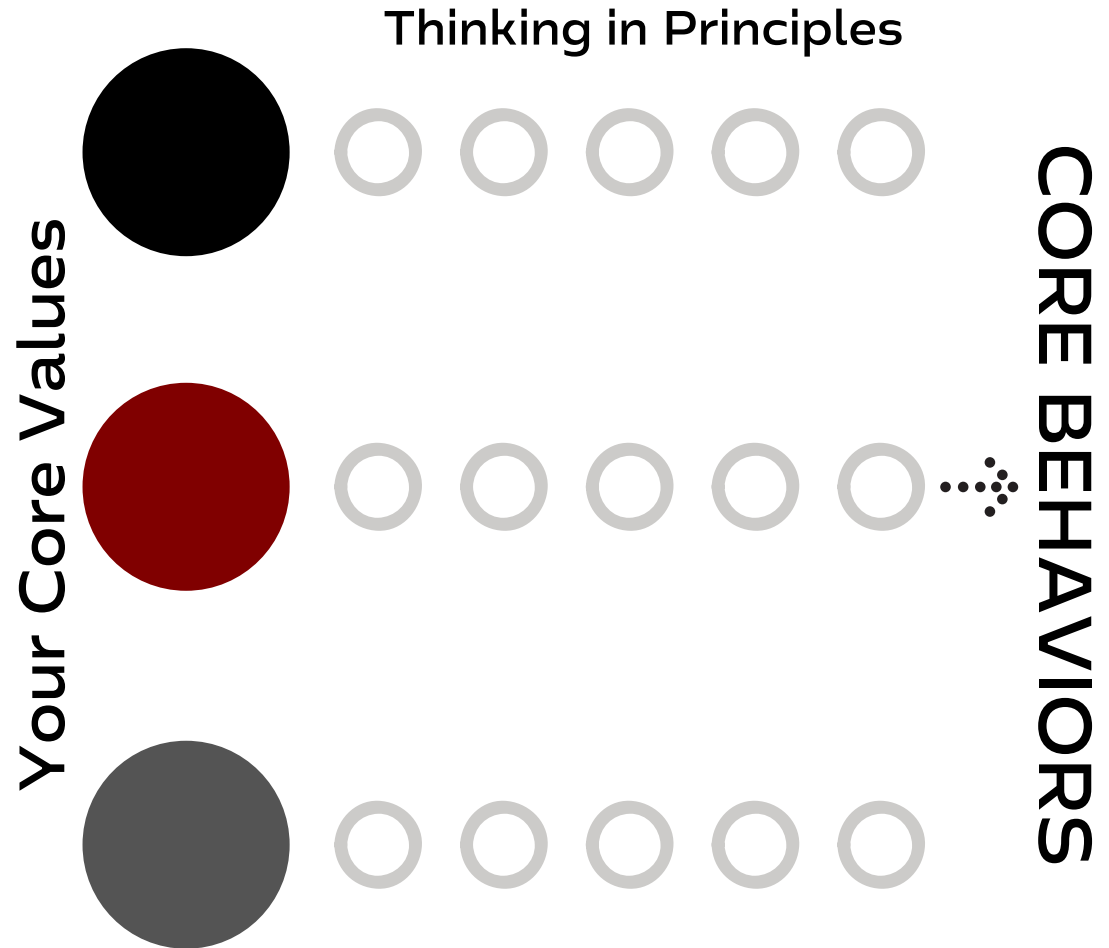
1. Intellectual commitment to purpose is useless unless it shows up in your everyday actions (you are summation of your habits)
2. Your identity is crucial to developing your habits of leadership - THE FEEDBACK LOOP
3. There is a principle (a deeper truth) buried underneath each of your values
 - Your principles determine your core behaviors
 - Your core behaviors activate your values in the world
 - Your questions clarify your behaviors

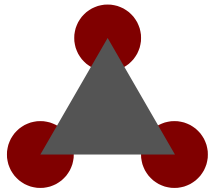


The *Habits* of Purpose

People do not decide their futures, they decide their habits and their habits decide their futures.

- F.M. Alexander





My Habits of Purpose

Living Your HOW

What are the behaviors that keep me in line with my WHY and my WHAT?

What are the few things that if I do consistently will make everything else better in my life?



Thoughts Go Here

IDENTITY
WHO YOU ARE

WHO YOU ARE BECOMING

BEHAVIORS
A VOTE FOR WHO YOU ARE

Thoughts Go Here

What are the principles that I believe in most?



My Core Behaviors

Write here