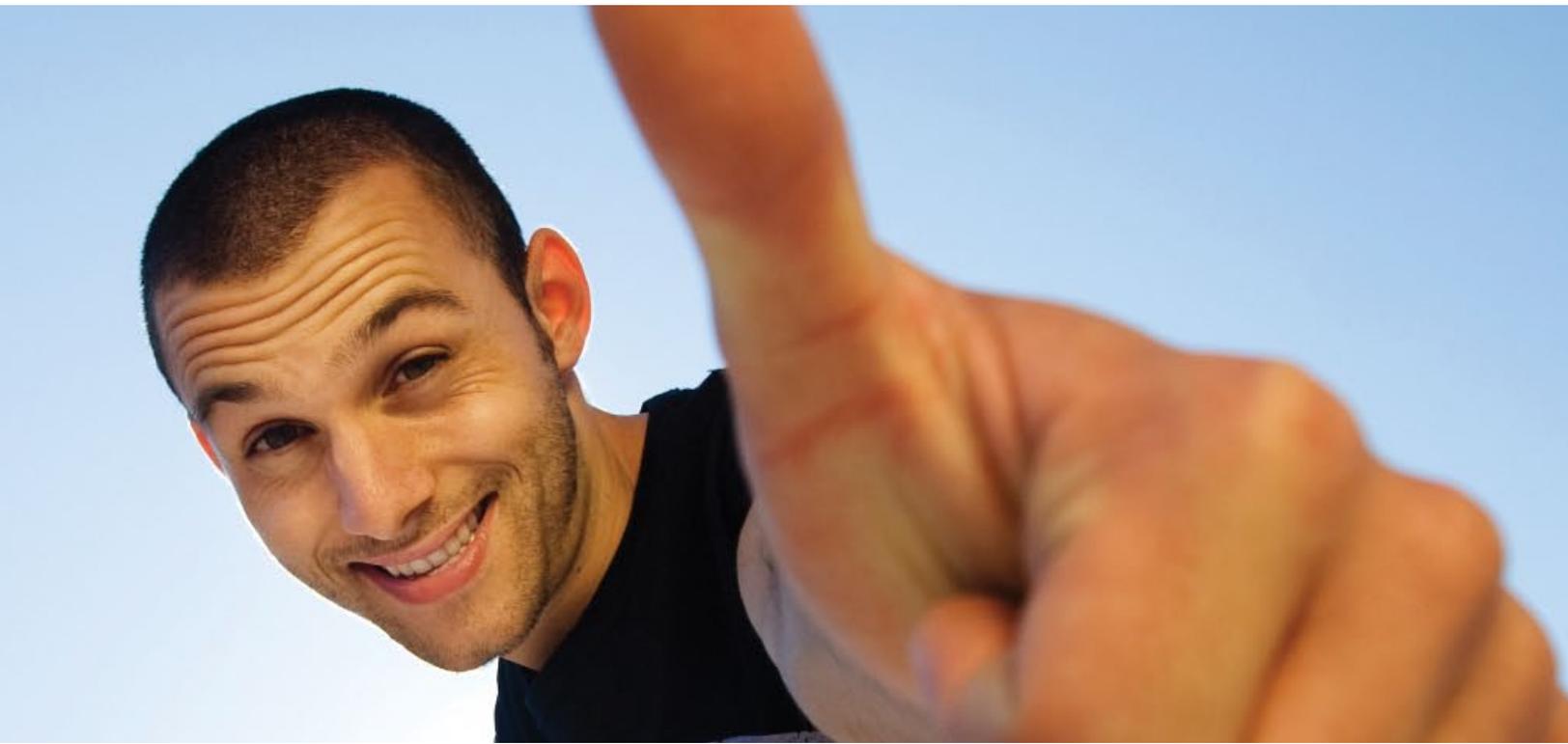


Resilience



Principle 4: Stay connected to people and passion



Homewood
Health | Santé

Inventory

Under each heading write down people, things, or activities you have had a connection to but have lost. Be as specific as possible.

Relationships (e.g., partner/spouse, children, family members, good friends, co-workers, old friends, customers)

By completing these quests you will begin to:

- *Reconnect to interests and passions*
- *Enrich your life with new involvements*
- *Gain vitality and strength*

Self-expression (e.g., hobbies and interests, painting, music, gardening, writing, building, creating, discussion groups, dressing to suit yourself)

Nature/God (e.g., the great outdoors, church, spirituality, faith group, God)

Community (e.g., doing volunteer work, participating in the community life, joining your neighbors, supporting charities)

Art/creativity (e.g., visiting art/performances, creating your own art, exploring and learning about arts, contributing to arts)

Reconnect

List the top three connections you want to re-establish (from the previous Inventory):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Make a commitment to re-establish connection to these this week through the following steps. Keep the steps realistic and achievable. Each action should bring you one step closer to being connected.

Examples:

I will reestablish my connection to my parents by:

1. Phoning them this week.
2. Write down their important anniversaries, birthdays, etc. and sending cards.
3. Send them a letter acknowledging how much they have given to me in life.

Write a letter to someone you haven't spoken to for a long time. Someone who meant something to you in your past, and who you would like to catch up with or, at minimum, express your gratitude for the influence they had upon your life.

Your letter should mention your gratitude for specific things the person has done for you. It should contain an apology for specific things you have done or failed to do in keeping the relationship close.

If you moved and regret not maintaining contact, let them know. You might write asking them the latest news, recall good times together, thank them for helping you during difficult times, etc.

What's stopping you? Your thoughts (principle 1), your fears and emotions (principle 2)?

Resilience

I will reestablish my connection to my spirituality by:

1. Reading daily from the Bible
2. Meditating daily
3. Joining a discussion group about spirituality

I will reestablish my connection to my creativity by:

1. Reading good quality writing daily
2. Taking part in the arts
3. Listening (Really listening!) to music each day

I will re-establish my connection to _____ by:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We recommend some type of weekly check-in on efforts such as this. This could be with a partner (someone who is a good friend), an on-line correspondent, mentor, or professional from whom you gain counsel.

Find a passion

Spend at least one whole day exploring your purposes and passions.

Throughout the day keep asking yourself “what is my purpose in doing this now?”

For example, “what is my purpose in taking a nap now?”, “what is my purpose in eating now?”, “what is my purpose in getting active now?”, “what is my purpose in avoiding this phone call now?”, etc.

These questions call for specific replies.

There are no wrong answers, and the answers you arrive at may be illuminating.

Discover something new

You may think you don’t have any passion. What then? Time to go on a hunt! Previously (principle 2) we talked about going outside your comfort zone and learning or trying new things. Here we go again. This week, decide to “taste” something new that you have never experienced before, such as visiting a museum or art gallery, listening to different music, participating in a discussion, meeting someone for coffee and talking about passion in life.

You may have already thought of something, but just in case, here are some steps to get you going!

Look at the inventory in Exercise 1. What seems to be missing?

1. Pick a category area, say Art/Creativity.
2. Check the daily paper or weekly guide to local events and find something under that category. Alternatively, talk to someone who knows the scene and can recommend something.
3. Pick something that strikes your fancy (or something you would never dream of attending).
4. Go do it!

Ask yourself the following:

1. What did I learn?
2. What does this experience point to or suggest about what I need so that I feel more connected to people and things in my life environment?

Note: If you feel nothing, try the exercise again. If there still seems to be nothing you are attracted to, talk it over with a professional counselor (e.g. psychologist, psychiatrist). You may have other issues to resolve first.

Lost passions

Get out the object of passion you have set aside or perhaps forgotten (Your old stamp collection, that box of photos from good times in the past, your dusty old banjo, tools you haven’t used for a long time).

- *Feel and experience what you enjoyed.*
- *What can be rekindled here?*
- *What would you like to reconnect with from these objects?*

Stop blocking

Fear and feeling defeated drive us into isolation. How well do you use support from others in your life?

List 10 people who are friends, family, or associates. Rate how much support you get from each (1= low or none, 2 = medium, 3= high support). Then look at what you are doing to block that support or to keep people at a distance. This is called blocking behavior.

Name	Rate	My Blocking Behaviour
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Here are some of the things we do to “block” our connection with others:

- *Not listen*
- *Change the subject when sensitive topics arise*
- *Use humor to avoid serious issues*
- *Focus exclusively on our own needs*
- *Treat people as if they are unimportant to us*
- *Manipulate people for our own ends*
- *Keep silent. Never tell others what we’re thinking*
- *Never make requests when we need help*
- *Be a “lone wolf”*

Make a commitment this week to not let your blocking behavior stop you from seeking support.

Plan to increase the rating for at least one person (i.e., draw more support from them). You may not succeed with everyone, but we believe you will succeed with some of the people in your life.

Passion kindles passion

Find someone who is passionate about what they are doing and listen to what they say, how they feel. Look to see if you can adopt some of their attitudes and conviction about the object of their passion.

Some people will fight for the name of Stompin' Tom Connors or Ella Fitzgerald or Maria Callas are the greatest singers ever! They know the words to every song and are full of trivia about the lives of their favorites.

Some people will get so absorbed in woodworking that they forget to eat and sleep. They pore over books and catalogues in their spare time. They can't wait to get into their workshop.

Some people are passionate about causes. They care deeply about children and are involved in charities that help disadvantaged or handicapped kids.

- How do these people talk about their passion? What kind of language do they use? Is it timid and polite or is it filled with color and life?
- What happens to these people's faces when they talk about their passion?
- What happens to you when you listen to them? Are you excited and drawn into their passion? Do you become "enrolled" in that passion, too?

Ask yourself if you are surrounding yourself with people who lack passion (we tend to adopt the style of people around us).

Take steps to change this...being with passionate and "connected" people helps us to stay connected ourselves!