

## Building Your Pillars

The journey from employee to entrepreneur can be daunting. No more paycheck, regardless of performance. No more health benefits and paid holidays. No more security. For some, these hurdles are too tough to climb, and they stick with their J.O.B.

Others are excited by the freedom to call their own shots. No more BOSS! No more making money for a faceless corporation. No more dancing to someone else's tunes.

Effective time management is essential to the success of the Small Business Entrepreneur. By definition, smaller organizations have very little margin for error, and every hour of every day for every employee is critical to the success of the organization.

Carl Sandburg said, "Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you." These words would be at home on the desk of every entrepreneur.

When you take full responsibility for your income, it is essential that you master the allocation of your most valuable resource—your time. If you don't manage your time successfully, you have no chance to succeed. Period.

In order to maximize your productivity, you must first be clear about who you are and why you are doing what you're doing. In *Start With Why*, Simon Sinek says, "WHY provides the context for everything else."



LIFENESS HARMONIZE AN  
ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE

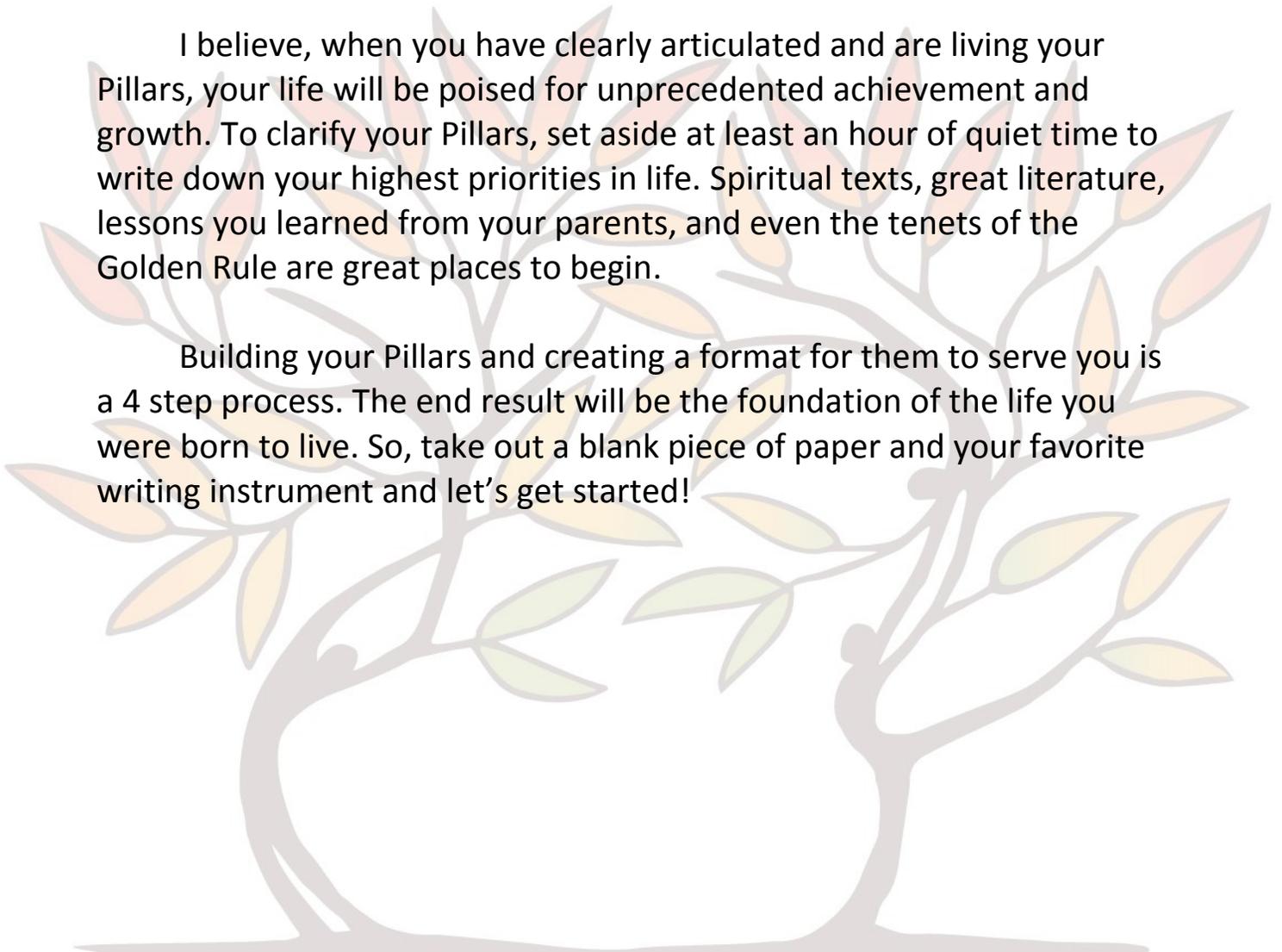
Why is what you stand for, not what you do. In terms of long term success and personal productivity, what you do is far less significant than why you do it.

In *Lifeness*, Amber Vilhauer discussed some of the rituals that are the building blocks of her productivity. Bruce D Schneider mentioned the importance of shifting your viewpoint in order to gain focus on the things that are truly important.

For me, my Pillars of Truth are the foundation of why I do what I do. They are my guide when difficult decisions need to be made. They are my motivation when I'm tempted to take the easy way, rather than the right way. To paraphrase Sinek, my Pillars provide the context for my behavior.

I believe, when you have clearly articulated and are living your Pillars, your life will be poised for unprecedented achievement and growth. To clarify your Pillars, set aside at least an hour of quiet time to write down your highest priorities in life. Spiritual texts, great literature, lessons you learned from your parents, and even the tenets of the Golden Rule are great places to begin.

Building your Pillars and creating a format for them to serve you is a 4 step process. The end result will be the foundation of the life you were born to live. So, take out a blank piece of paper and your favorite writing instrument and let's get started!



## Step 1

I've provided a list of words to get you started. If you're struggling to get traction identifying your Pillars, I hope the list will provide some inspiration. Choose the words that best describe what you value most, and who you'd like to become. You *are* your Pillars. Don't rush this process. Take your time and give it your full attention.

There is no right number, and you may decide to have two (or more) sets of Pillars. One reflecting your work/business life, and another representing your family/spiritual life. There is likely to be considerable overlap, but this may help you integrate your Pillars into all aspects of your life.

The number of Pillars you identify at this point is less significant than that the words come from your heart. I have about 20 Pillars presently, and it is a pretty fluid list. I will occasionally combine two, or refine and perhaps eliminate others, as they cease to serve me.

## Step 2

After you've picked your words, write each word in the present tense. For example, *Courage* becomes I am courageous. This simple process, repeated for every word on your list, will truly empower you. By writing those words in the present tense, you will begin to feel their power.

Next, write a few sentences to describe the state of being that reflects your present tense statement for each Pillar. For example, ***I am Courageous***. I live a courageous life, and embrace fear as my teacher and my guide. I meet and overcome all obstacles that threaten to keep

me from being the best possible version of myself. I know that by living this way, I am certain to live without regret.

Here's another example: ***I am open and honest with myself and others at all times.*** I always act and speak from the place of my highest truth. When faced with a challenge, I remember that to fail in this is to risk the foundation of everything I am and ever will be.

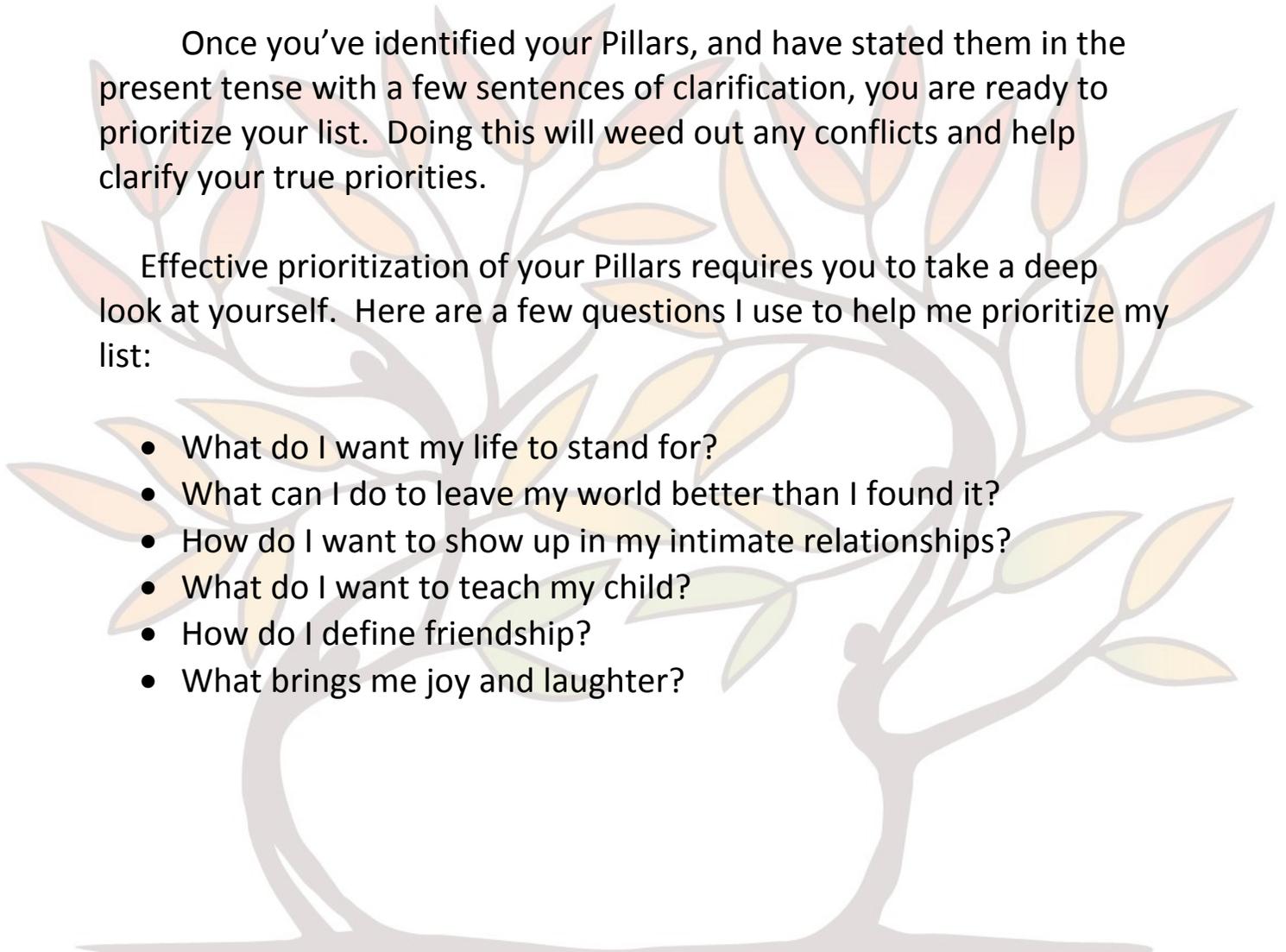
As you go through this process, make sure each statement is aligned with your personal code. Whether your spiritual guidance comes from the Bible, the Talmud, the Koran, or anywhere else--even if you are an atheist or agnostic--you have a perspective on what is right and what is wrong. Let that be your guide.

### Step 3

Once you've identified your Pillars, and have stated them in the present tense with a few sentences of clarification, you are ready to prioritize your list. Doing this will weed out any conflicts and help clarify your true priorities.

Effective prioritization of your Pillars requires you to take a deep look at yourself. Here are a few questions I use to help me prioritize my list:

- What do I want my life to stand for?
- What can I do to leave my world better than I found it?
- How do I want to show up in my intimate relationships?
- What do I want to teach my child?
- How do I define friendship?
- What brings me joy and laughter?



If you have more than seven or eight, you may find it easier to divide them into groups of four or five. Whatever works for you is perfect. This grouping process may actually lead you to dropping some Pillars from your list, or perhaps combining two or more into one. If that happens, great! You may also find that certain Pillars are more important in your personal/spiritual life than in your work life. Perhaps new areas of discovery regarding how you show up in the world will unfold.

When you have taken the time to identify and prioritize your Pillars, and once what you believe in your heart becomes interwoven with the way you live your life, you will experience productivity at the highest level. When your daily life is in harmony with your Pillars of Truth you will find yourself with much more time to accomplish the things that matter most.

To give you an idea of how it feels to live in harmony with your Pillars, pick one aspect of your life and imagine yourself living in complete harmony with your highest truth in the area you have chosen. Visualize living as the person you know you are capable of being and achieving all you've ever wanted in this area.

Take a moment to embrace the feeling of being the best possible version of you. Imagine meeting someone for the first time as you stand in this place of harmony. How do they see you? How does it feel to be seen in this way? You have the capacity to experience this feeling more often when you are living your Pillars of Truth.

Steven Covey said, "You have to decide what your highest priorities are, and have the courage to say 'no' to other things. And the way you

do that, is by having a bigger ‘yes’ inside.” Your Pillars of Truth create that *bigger yes*.

After you’ve prioritized, grade yourself on each pillar, based on your performance over the past six months or so. How have you done? See how you measure up to the standard you have set, and notice where you need to make adjustments.

#### **Step 4**

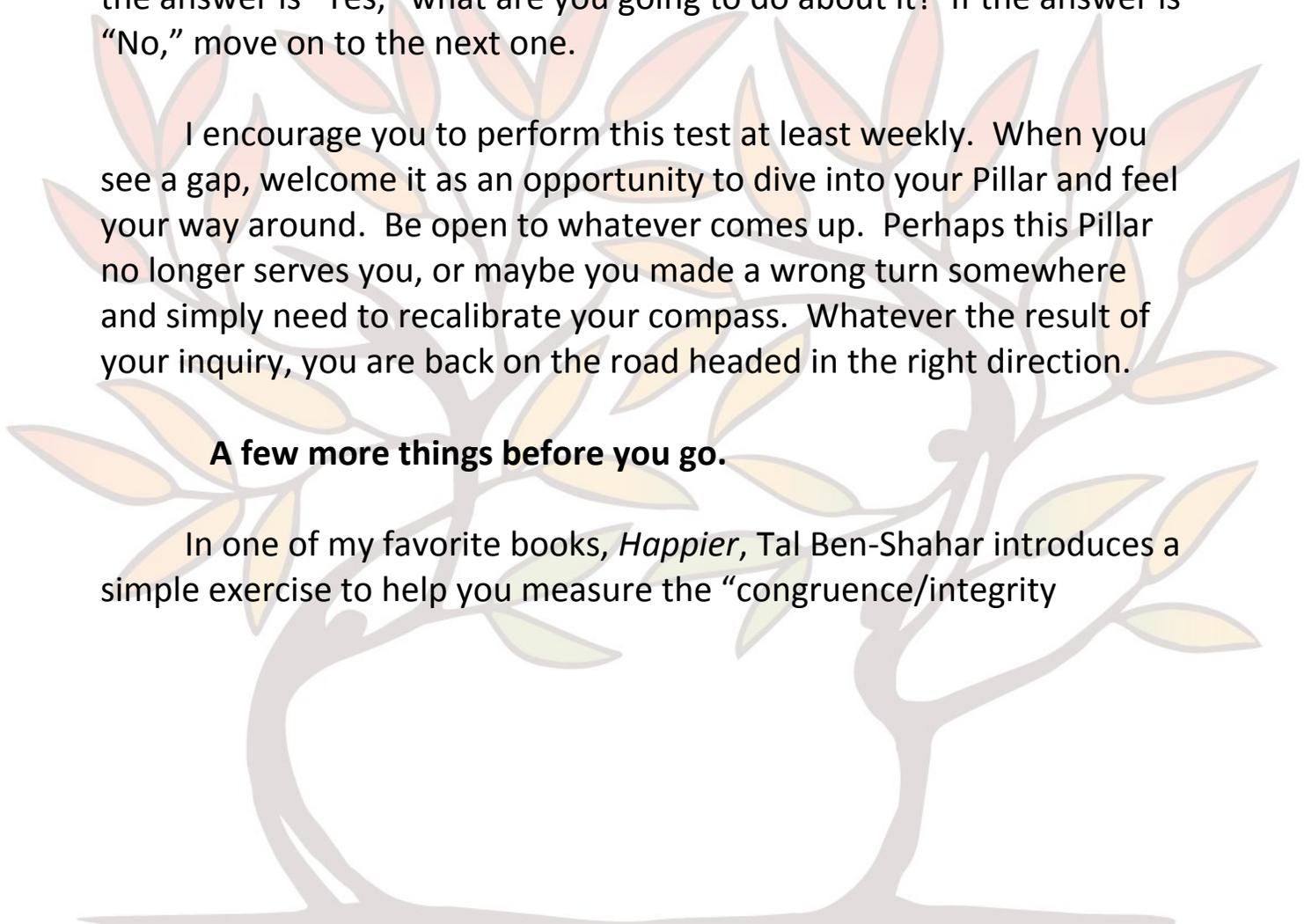
The Gap. How are you doing? Are you living your Pillars? Every Day? Probably not. We all fall short occasionally. Don’t beat yourself up, just get back on track as quickly as possible.

Look at each one of your Pillars and ask yourself: Is there a gap between my performance and my intention with regard to this Pillar? If the answer is “Yes,” what are you going to do about it? If the answer is “No,” move on to the next one.

I encourage you to perform this test at least weekly. When you see a gap, welcome it as an opportunity to dive into your Pillar and feel your way around. Be open to whatever comes up. Perhaps this Pillar no longer serves you, or maybe you made a wrong turn somewhere and simply need to recalibrate your compass. Whatever the result of your inquiry, you are back on the road headed in the right direction.

#### **A few more things before you go.**

In one of my favorite books, *Happier*, Tal Ben-Shahar introduces a simple exercise to help you measure the “congruence/integrity



between your highest values and the way you live.” He calls it your “Integrity Mirror.” Let’s try it right now.

On the page or pages where you have listed your Pillars, next to each one, list how much time per week or month, you devote to living this Pillar. How does your time distribution look? Are you walking your talk? This is another way to measure your progress.

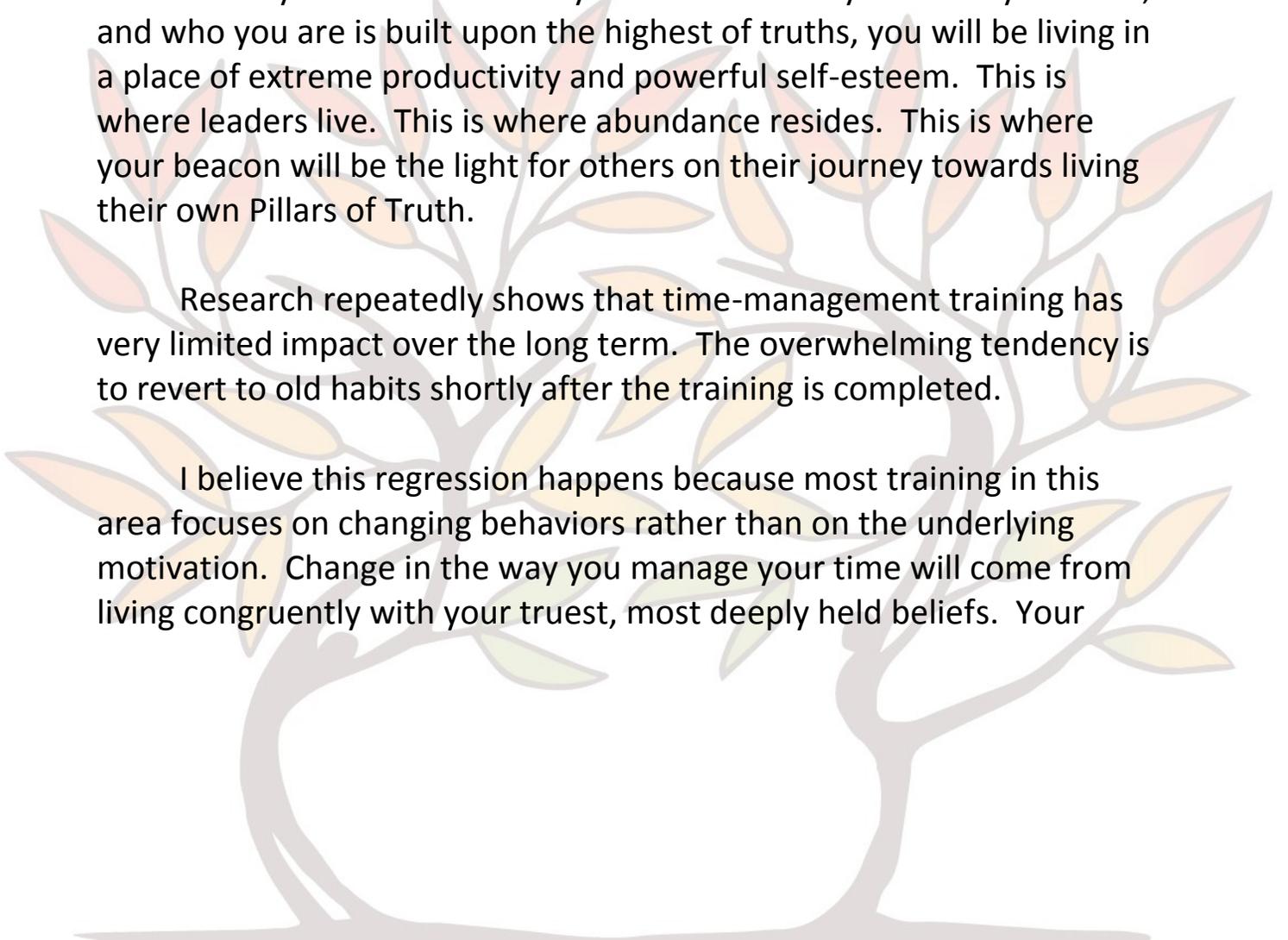
Stephen Covey said, “A life of integrity is the most fundamental source of personal worth. Peace of mind comes when your life is in harmony with true principles and values.”

The Integrity Mirror is a great periodic check-in to make sure you are living in congruence with your truths. Living a life of integrity.

When your actions are fully in line with who you are at your core, and who you are is built upon the highest of truths, you will be living in a place of extreme productivity and powerful self-esteem. This is where leaders live. This is where abundance resides. This is where your beacon will be the light for others on their journey towards living their own Pillars of Truth.

Research repeatedly shows that time-management training has very limited impact over the long term. The overwhelming tendency is to revert to old habits shortly after the training is completed.

I believe this regression happens because most training in this area focuses on changing behaviors rather than on the underlying motivation. Change in the way you manage your time will come from living congruently with your truest, most deeply held beliefs. Your

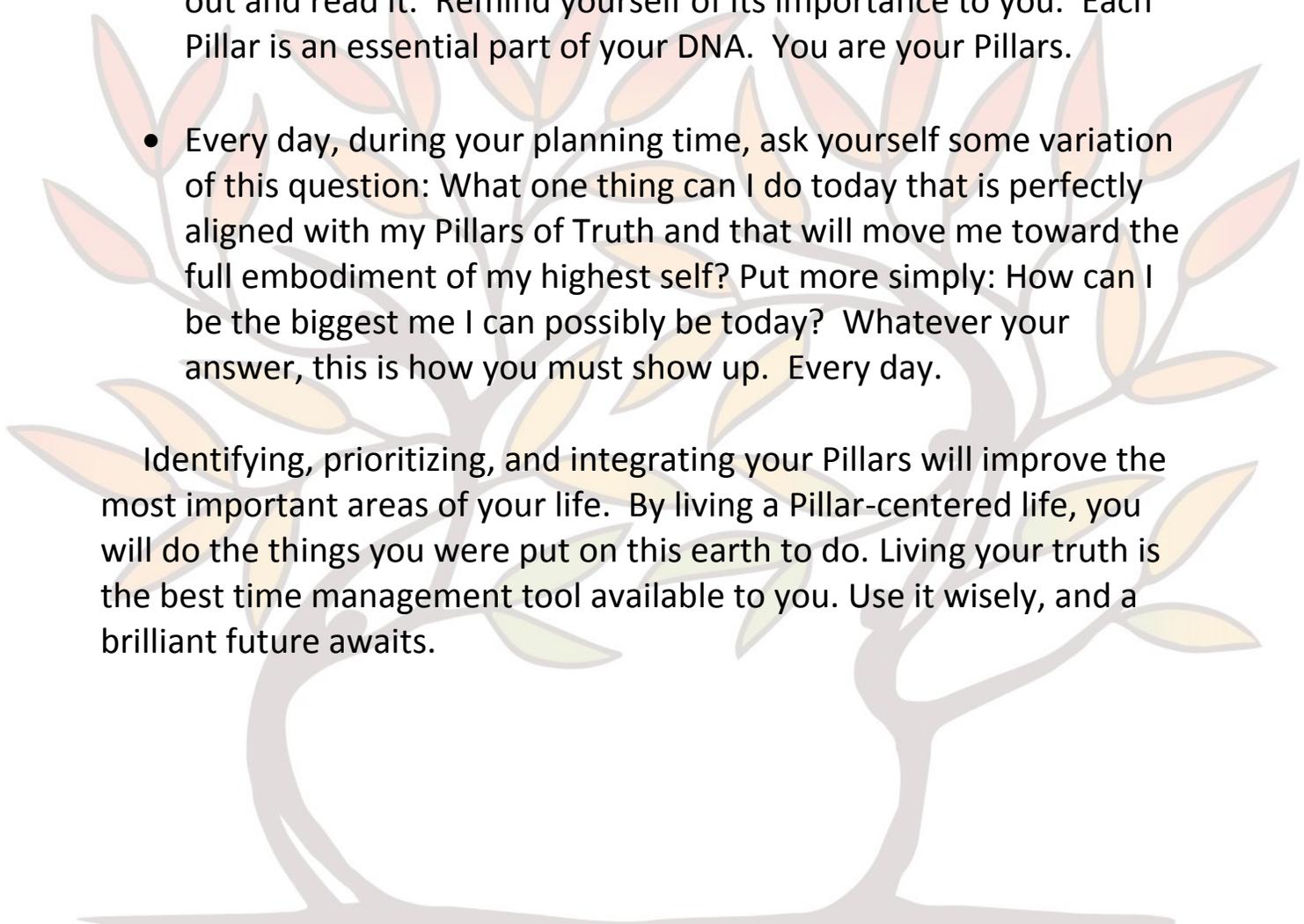


actions will reflect your goals. In that way, your Pillars will guide the way toward lastingly effective time management.

Three steps you can take that will keep your beliefs and your actions fully integrated, while empowering you to live in a place of Time Affluence, are:

- Spend at least 15 minutes every day, preferably at the same time, reading, reviewing, and reminding yourself of your Pillars. Read them to yourself. Make sure you are living them.
- Choose one Pillar upon which to focus on each day. Use that Pillar as your compass in the decisions you make throughout the day. You may want to write out your full paragraph about that Pillar and put it in your pocket, like a talisman, or good luck charm. If you find yourself with a couple minutes to spare, pull it out and read it. Remind yourself of its importance to you. Each Pillar is an essential part of your DNA. You are your Pillars.
- Every day, during your planning time, ask yourself some variation of this question: What one thing can I do today that is perfectly aligned with my Pillars of Truth and that will move me toward the full embodiment of my highest self? Put more simply: How can I be the biggest me I can possibly be today? Whatever your answer, this is how you must show up. Every day.

Identifying, prioritizing, and integrating your Pillars will improve the most important areas of your life. By living a Pillar-centered life, you will do the things you were put on this earth to do. Living your truth is the best time management tool available to you. Use it wisely, and a brilliant future awaits.



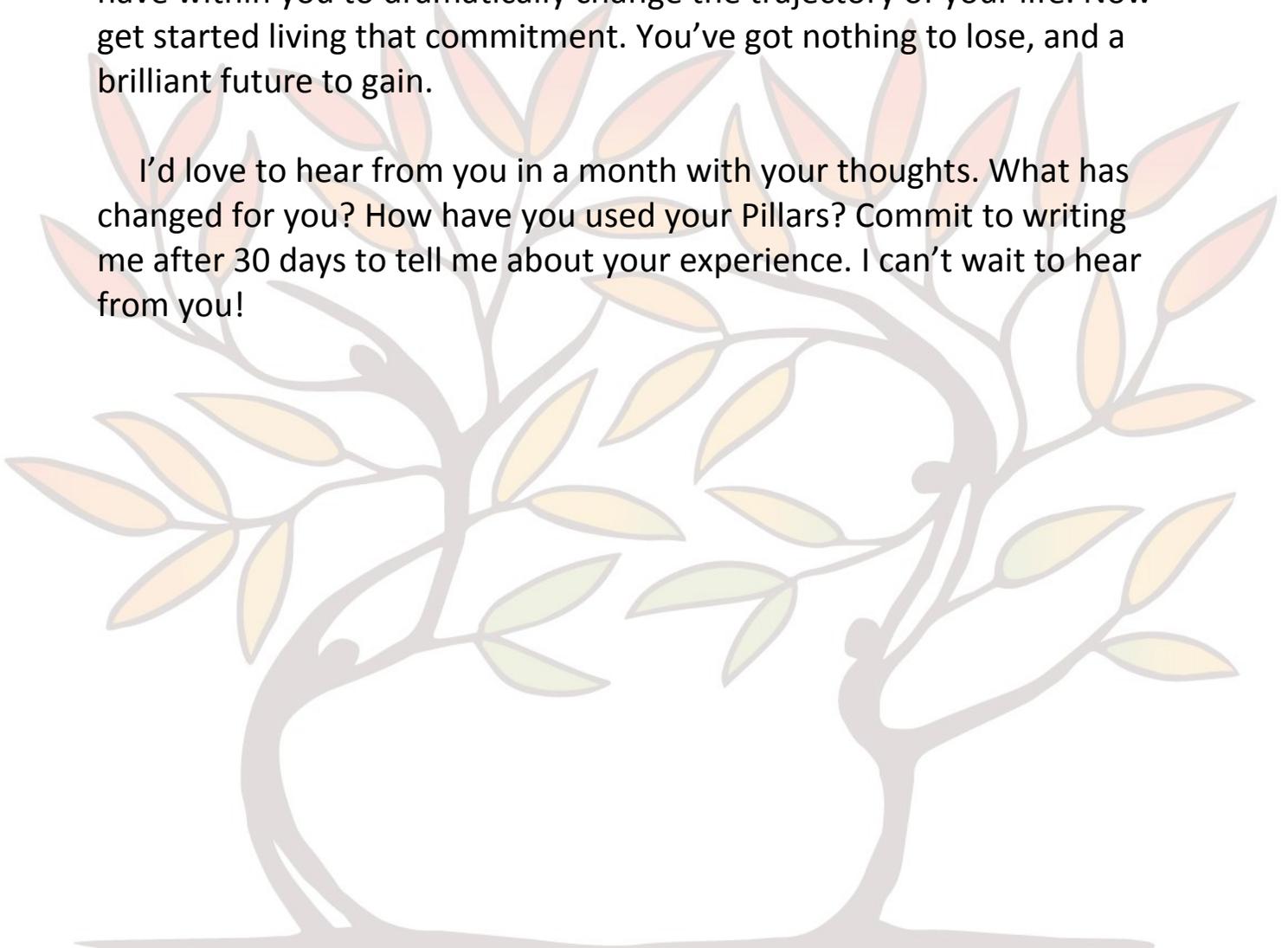
Wallace Wattles said, “The world needs more *demonstration* than it needs *teaching*.” That sentiment has evolved from Gandhi’s “Be the change you wish to see in the world,” all the way to the familiar Nike exhortation, “Just do it.”

Remember, to successfully manage the life of your business, manage the business of your life.

The best way to use your incredible new tool is to schedule quiet time alone, (15-30 minutes, minimum), at the start of every day. Review your Pillars and make sure that your plans are in alignment with your values. Focus on the Pillars that will guide you each day.

Give yourself the next 30 days to see for yourself the power you have within you to dramatically change the trajectory of your life. Now get started living that commitment. You’ve got nothing to lose, and a brilliant future to gain.

I’d love to hear from you in a month with your thoughts. What has changed for you? How have you used your Pillars? Commit to writing me after 30 days to tell me about your experience. I can’t wait to hear from you!



Abundance  
Accountability  
Adventure  
Appreciation  
Authenticity  
Balance  
Belonging  
Bliss  
Caring  
Collaboration  
Compassion  
Competition  
Connected  
Courage  
Creative  
Curious  
Decisive  
Dedicated  
Dignity  
Discipline  
Educated  
E!ective  
Empathic  
Empowered  
Enlightened  
Entrepreneur  
Ethical  
Excellent  
Expert  
Fair  
Famous  
Family

Flexible  
Focused  
Friendship  
Forgiving  
Fun  
Freedom  
God  
Grateful  
Great  
Growth  
Happy  
Healthy  
Honest  
Humble  
Independent  
Innovative  
Integrity  
Intuitive  
Joyful  
Justice  
Kind  
Knowledge  
Leader  
Learning  
Love  
Loyal  
Money  
Nature  
Nurture  
Open  
Order  
Passion

Partnership  
Peace  
Philanthropy  
Potential  
Powerful  
Productive  
Prosperity  
Recognition  
Respect  
Responsibility  
Results  
Risk  
Romance  
Safety  
Self-esteem  
Service  
Spiritual  
Status  
Strength  
Success  
Teaching  
Teamwork  
Tolerance  
Trust  
Tradition  
Travel  
Variety  
Vision  
Vulnerability  
Wealth  
Wisdom



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