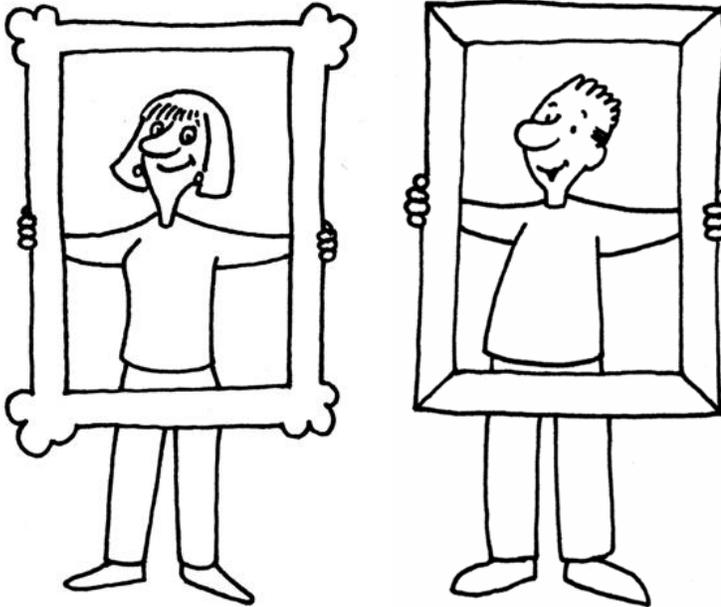


# Picture Your Life

With a Healthy Mind and Soul



This is not a “self help” book but a manual that uses scientifically proven tools in combination with Ancient Wisdom to help you create a Healthy Mind and Soul.

In the words of my clients,

“Tim’s FRAMES work planning has helped me to plan my life. I now have my own graphic design business. He also helped me connect to free community supports and my depression is much better so I can work in my own business.” Maryland Kowalski

“I have been cured of my addiction and depression. Tim is doing Gods labour and his special talent has helped me to get on with life” Peter Gavrilovic

“Tim’s FRAMES have helped us as a couple to plan where we want to be in our lives with work and as a couple. He is guiding us in how to deal with our depression with cognitive therapy and both of us are feeling better.” Alana & Shayne



Unlike the material that I present in this book, very little of the advice offered in self-help books has undergone any rigorous scientific testing.<sup>1</sup>

I have tried to create a practical manual that will enhance your life if you follow it. There are no new ideas here. Instead, I've drawn from ancient wisdom passed down through the years combined with recent work in the field of positive psychology. I've combined these ideas to create a practical approach that has helped my clients make changes to their lives.

### ***About the Author***

Meditation and contemplative prayer have been my spiritual foundation for over 35 years. My experiences as a hermit monk in northern Ontario shaped my early adult life, and later, I joined The Little Brothers of Jesus, a Catholic fraternity founded by Charles de Foucauld. After spending many years as a monk, I became a lay person and married Nancy, the love of my life.

More than 25 years ago, I led one of the first cognitive therapy groups in my community. Since that time, I have spent 20 years working with a cutting-edge program that focused on helping people with severe mental health concerns to think clearly and find their dreams. I credit the effectiveness of this approach to my discovery of the field of positive psychology<sup>2</sup>, founded by Martin Seligman. The practice of Positive Psychology offers a recipe for contentment that I teach to my clients.

But what I find really exciting is that the synergy between positive psychology and traditional approaches creates results and benefits that far exceed either of these approaches alone.

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<sup>1</sup> While there are many excellent scientific studies on how to become happier, most self-help authors are unaware of this research or choose not to discuss it. Read more at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2026001/Self-help-books-ruin-life-They-promise-sell-millions.html#ixzz33JBk87L9>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu>

I work with doctors, lawyers, factory workers, general labourers and families who are seeking to improve focus and communication skills. I also work with individuals who are experiencing more severe mental health challenges, including bi-polar disorder. The **FRAMES** tools outlined in this book draw from ancient wisdom, clear science from the field of positive psychology and proven approaches like cognitive behavioural therapy. My training and years of experience have taught me many things, but it is the mental health issues in my family that have taught me the most. When we are directly affected by the challenges relating to mental health, we learn the true meaning of support and setting limits. Some of my family has asked me not to mention them specifically in this handbook, but they do want you to know that our intimate experience with mental health issues has touched each of us deeply and the process of working through these challenges has brought us to the other side as better human beings. We know our humanity, our brokenness and our healing.

This book is meant to be inclusive of all races and religions. These are the communities that I support and that I choose to serve.

A word about the use of frames in the book: At times **FRAMES** is capitalized. This refers to the acronym standing for **F**un, **R**elationships, **A**pppearance and health, **M**ess or procrastination issues, **E**conomics and **S**unshine to yourself and others. At other times frames is not capitalized and this is referring to the 4 frames explained below.

These 4 frames transcend religion and race but they require faith - faith in ourselves and, at times, a knowledge that perhaps what is happening is beyond us. I am a Christian; however I have tried to make this manual inclusive of all faiths because we will all benefit from focusing on the frames that are outlined in this manual.

Many of the ideas presented in this handbook are not my original ideas, but have been gleaned from ancient wisdom and are supported by documented scientific research.

During my years of combined mental health work and spiritual practice, I learned that by applying the **FRAMES** tools to each of the frames described in this book people are able to get on with their lives and develop a sense of meaning that extends beyond them.

I support people throughout the English-speaking world through phone support or Skype. Visit [www.timssupport.com](http://www.timssupport.com) or email me at [tims wonderfulworld@gmail.com](mailto:tims wonderfulworld@gmail.com) if you would like to book a session.

## ***About Positive Psychology***

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field of positive psychology is founded on the belief that each of us wants to live a meaningful and fulfilling life. We want to cultivate what is best within ourselves and to enhance our experiences of work, love and play.

Positive Psychology is accepted worldwide. It has even been endorsed by President Obama. He lobbied for Positive Psychology experts to work with the United States military to address the high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide rates among army soldiers. The program, used throughout the army to promote psychological resilience, teaches 40,000 United States Army drill sergeants how to deal with the crisis of suicide that has overtaken the troops.<sup>3</sup>

There are potential applications for Positive Psychology in so many areas. For example, a recent study from the Yale University School of Nursing in New Haven, CT focused on using positive psychology interventions to improve adherence to treatment in adolescents with Type 1 diabetes. The results were promising. Both adolescents and their parents benefited from increased positive communication and became more knowledgeable about diabetes care. Adolescents living with a complex chronic illness benefit from the emphasis on positive emotions and strengths instead of problems.<sup>4</sup>

Another research group at the Seattle Pacific University in WA, investigated the use of Positive Psychology in the Corrections Program, specifically its effect on inmates re-entering into the community. This positive psychology intervention focused on teaching skills that facilitate re-entry into the community. It included weekly lectures, discussions, and homework assignments that focused on positive psychology principles. The researchers found significant differences between pre- and post-intervention scores, which supports the use of positive psychology in prison interventions.<sup>5</sup>

A third example of current work on the uses for positive psychology took place at the Graham Anderson House, Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust in Glasgow, Scotland. This research focused on brain-injured survivors that exhibited challenging behaviour. The goal of the program was to use positive psychology to improve the mood and self-

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/military/meeting.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Development of a Positive Psychology Intervention to Improve Adherence in Adolescents With Type 1 Diabetes (2014) Jaser SS, Patel N, Linsky R, Whittemore R. [J Pediatr Health Care.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Evaluation of the Positive Re-Entry in Corrections Program: A Positive Psychology Intervention With Prison Inmates (2014) [Huynh KH](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Hall B](#), [Hurst MA](#), [Bikos LH](#). [Int J Offender Ther Comp Criminol](#)

concept of survivors of traumatic brain injury. This study showed promising results for the effectiveness of Positive Psychology interventions when applied within a hospital setting.<sup>6</sup>

These are just a few examples of the ways that experts, world-wide, have demonstrated that using Positive Psychology theory is an effective mode for change. Because it is so effective, I have embraced Positive Psychology as a central part of the knowledge base of my practice and an important part of this book.

The practice of clear thinking, having purpose and meaning in our lives, and learning to focus on something beyond ourselves can help anyone. When we combine these with an acceptance of life's inescapable darkness and learning to focus on our dreams and the light in our lives, we are better able to develop a Healthy Mind and Soul.

*I'd like to share a practical example from my own practice about discovering meaning through the use of Positive Psychology. I worked with a piano teacher who hated both advertising and performing as a means to promote her business. After she completed the Signature Strengths Survey designed by positive psychology researchers, we discovered why. Her top strength was humility! She was not one for the limelight. Instead of performing alone at her end of year piano recital, she'd invite an autistic student to perform African drumming along with her. And it is precisely this thoughtfulness around the needs and desires of her students that makes her such a great teacher and a wonderful person. Before she recognized her humility as an asset, she was critical of herself because she found it difficult to promote her business through performance and advertising. But now she feels great about her strengths and abilities and her business is thriving because she has implemented other methods of advertising that do not place her front and centre.*

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<sup>6</sup> Exploring the use of positive psychology interventions in brain injury survivors with challenging behaviour (2014) [Andrewes HE](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Walker V](#), [O'Neill B](#). [Brain Inj.](#) 28:965-71.

In this handbook, I describe four areas or frames of life and **FRAMES** exercises that have been designed to help keep life focused and clear.

Here are the 4 frames:

**Frame 1**, Picturing a life with purpose and direction, focuses on life planning and goal setting.

**Frame 2**, Picturing a life with magnificent mental health helps us manage thoughts that trouble us and make us anxious, worried or depressed.

**Frame 3**, Picturing a life with loving relationships helps us deal with relationships in a loving manner, face conflicts or accept the reality of the personalities we live with.

**Frame 4**, Picturing a life of serenity helps us visualize a life filled with calm and peace, making our life as serene as it can be.

Each Frame contains practical concepts drawn from scientific and ancient wisdom literature that are supported by well-researched exercises.

### **A bit about FRAMES**

The term FRAME is used in two ways in this manual.

The first type of frame surrounds the four aspects of our lives that, if we look after them, create a beautiful, balanced life.

The second type of **FRAME** appears in the exercises at the end of the book. These exercises use the **FRAMES** tool<sup>7</sup> that is applied to each of the four frames of our life. This tool is a practical approach that helps us discover the reality within ourselves. This knowledge is the key to unlocking a life that holds a sense of peace that can be shared with others, like a beautifully composed and framed picture.

*“The strongest warrior is he who conquers himself.”  
old Aztec saying*

### **The relationship between the 4 Frames**

Each of life's frames connects with the other three. For example, an unresolved mental health issue (frame 2) will affect relationships (frame 3) and life planning (frame 1). And when we have purpose and direction in our life, our mental health improves. Sometimes we may need treatment for a mental health issue and not receiving treatment hinder life planning, sensing purpose and developing meaningful relationships. Meaningful relationships help keep our mind healthy.

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<sup>7</sup> FRAMES stands for (**F**un, **R**elationships, **A**pppearance and health, **M**ess or procrastination, **E**conomics, and **S**ervice to others)

Having people in our lives that we can count on brings peace, satisfaction, contentment and happiness. Developing a connection with something beyond ourselves is vital to creating a healthy mind and soul.

*“Spirituality is an individual practice that is connected to a sense of peace and purpose. It also relates to the process of developing beliefs around the meaning of life and connection with others.”<sup>8</sup>*

Developing a healthy mind and soul is simple if we break it down into 4 practical frames.

I have kept the handbook simple and practical to help you create as beautiful and clear a picture of your life as you possibly can. Using the **FRAMES** tool in the exercises at the end of the book helps you create a healthy mind and soul.

### **The FRAMES tool of our life**

Consider a framed photograph of our family. In it, everyone is smiling, dressed in their best clothes or experiencing a memorable moment together. But if we flip that framed picture over, the back isn't as beautiful and presentable. This is not a bad thing, it is everyone's reality. We all have two sides, one that we present to the world and one that we keep hidden. Feeling guilty about the flip side of the picture of our life is not helpful. By looking at it, and accepting it and then working on the areas that we can improve on helps us the make the picture of our life as beautiful as it can be.

If we consider the word **FRAMES** as an acronym, we'll see that our life is shaped by it.

**F** is for FUN.

**R** is for Relationships

**A** is for Appearance and Health

**M** is for messes and procrastination that need to be dealt with.

**E** is for economics

**S** is for service work or sunshine given to yourself or others

If we are having fun, if we have good people in our lives, and our health is good, if we are dealing with things we have been putting off and our \$ is in order, and we are serving others, while making sure our own needs are taken care of, the picture of our life will be magnificent!

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<sup>8</sup> <http://au.reachout.com/What-is-spirituality>

## ***How to use this little handbook***

You can read this book cover to cover or you can focus on the frame that you are drawn to, the areas in your life that need work. Some sections will guide you to the **FRAMES** exercises at the end of the book. Do the ones that you believe will be helpful as you read and reflect on the principle you are drawn to work on Frame 1: Picture your life with purpose and direction

The first frame focuses on life planning and goal setting. It helps us picture how we want our life to look. In this section, we will look at the **FRAMES** in our life that help us achieve balance, purpose, and direction. Each frame is interconnected: for example, when money is tight, it can affect your relationship with your spouse and children.

## **Circles and loops**

What goes around comes around, so the saying goes. Finding purpose and direction in life can be like following a winding path that loops back on itself – life is never linear. We need to realize that life’s patterns, both good and bad, repeat themselves. We need to see the good and work on or accept the bad. Yin and Yang<sup>9</sup> balance each other. The “light” in our lives is visible because it contrasts with the unavoidable “darkness” of life. The circles and loops are not good or bad, just something that everyone experiences. It is up to us whether we decide to accept them or to do something to change them. If we deny we need to work on the bad the chance of it looping around and occurring again are high.

*My first book was a cookbook and my goal was to sell \$100,000 worth of books. I hired a business coach and paid him \$500/half-hour. After 2 years I had still not reached my goal, however I did make well over \$100,000 in the 2008 stock market! Circles and loops happen all the time. But my business coach taught me two things: to focus my skills on supporting individuals with mental health needs and to focus and balance my own life. When I didn't reach my sales goals, I was led to write about what I know best - how to picture your life. And even though my cookbook has sold very well, it did teach me a lesson: too many things in the soup spoil the meal.*

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<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin\\_and\\_yang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang)



### **ACE thinking**

When life hands us a bad day, a terrible month or dreadful year, there is a way we can make sure we have an ACE up our sleeve.

**A** is for acceptance

**C** is for coping

**E** is for empowerment

We will grieve many losses in this game called life. If we can learn when to play that ACE, we will be able to handle that bad hand we've been dealt more easily.

### **Acceptance**

*“Acceptance looks like a passive state, but in reality it brings something entirely new into the world - a peace that leads to a new conscious awareness.” Eckhart Tolle.<sup>10</sup>*

Accepting what we have been given is the start to peace. This does not mean being a doormat. We cannot change the fact that people we love are going to get sick and die. We are all going to turn into dust after all. Expectations are what will make us miserable. This does not mean we do not plan. Hopes and dreams keep us going. Life will give us surprises and we may not get the things or relationships that we thought we should have. Brooding is not helpful. Accepting and using coping strategies will help us make things better and will empower us to help others who have suffered a similar fate.

### **Coping**

Coping is a plan of action. If we have been depressed or anxious for more than a few weeks we need to see a doctor. Finding support is critical in any venture. AA groups, prayer meetings, a good friend or family member is invaluable in helping us cope. No man is an island. We need each other. We need a community, a group that can help us

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/acceptance.html>

in a time of need. Our community helps the healing process. It helps us to come into unity together to find that source of healing.

### **Empowerment**

Research shows that giving back after we have suffered is effective in helping us heal even further. Telling a friend or a co-worker our story can build them up and us up. The ACE process does come and go. At times we still may feel very angry and in despair. It is during those times we can see the roller coaster we are on and know that it will stop and we can get off. Having a caring community empowers us to stop the ride and eases our worry and discomfort. Giving back is always helpful for others and us. What goes around comes around.

*There is a man in our hometown who lives this ACE concept to the fullest. In fact, he is the one who gave me the idea of using ACE as an acronym for recovery. He was a member of a CARE recovery group that I led for 15 years. He always arrived at our group with a backpack containing a 6" x 10" metal box. In this box he kept a variety of things he had collected at the local thrift shops.*

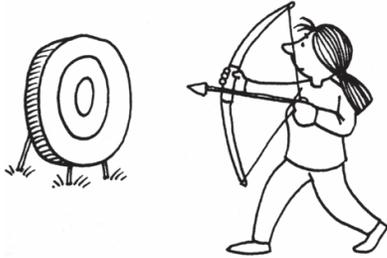
*These treasures were not for him but to be given away at an empowering moment. Once he presented me with a card that had my name on it and the inscription, "Honoured by God". The week after I taught the ACE recovery concept he gave me 3 silver letters glued together spelling ACE.*

*He repeated these acts of generosity over the years, and always just at the right time for the group members. This man had schizophrenia and occasionally was greatly tormented by it. His purpose, when he could manage it, was to raise people's emotions. He empowered each of us many times, and at other times, we cared for him.*

Life is a trip down a road with twists and turns. Sometimes the weather on the road of life is clear and hot and other times it's cold and raining. But we need to keep in mind that the road is leading somewhere, even if it feels endless sometimes.

See the **FRAMES** tool at the back of the book for an ACE exercise to help you deal with low emotions.

## Setting BOW Goals



Goals can be scary! But if we use BOW thinking, we can take aim at our goals without the fear of missing our target.

*The cloud forests of Costa Rica are filled with rainbows and a sky the color of magic. On the road to nowhere, we traveled through hell to get to heaven. Our traveling companion and good friend, Laurence, a blind massage therapist, gave us directions and encouragement while we were lost on the side of a mountain; truly a case of the blind leading the blind. We learned a lot about stress and distress on this trip and Laurence helped us put it all in perspective. "Up must be good," he kept saying as we drove up a dirt road filled with huge boulders. We eventually made it as he said we would! Our goal to make it to that cloud forest was fulfilled!*

*The reward was dinner at the Sunset Café in a cloud forest of dreams. Every night at sunset, guests and staff stop and take half an hour to pay homage to the most spectacular beauty they have ever seen, while an orchestra enhances the awe-inspiring experience by playing classical music softly in the background. On this trip we learned that at times it is necessary to go through hell in order to get to heaven; we also learned that when climbing a mountain, up is the right direction!*

When a golfer steps up to the tee, his goal is to hit the ball into the hole, to "make an ace." But with odds of roughly 40,000:1, a hole in one is one of the most difficult feats in sports. California's Norman Manley holds the world's record with 59 holes in one. Based on those odds, he will have swung the club 2,360,000 times! The only problem with setting goals is that we expect too many holes in one.

BOW thinking takes that problem away.

The B in BOW goal setting means Barely on target,  
The O means On target and  
The W is for Wow! I hit the bull's eye!

The BOW is in our hands. All we need to do is use it to hit our target – the goal we set for ourselves. Suppose your goal is to have more fun and take a trip. A **Barely on target** goal might be to plan where to go and to find out the cost. The **On target** goal might be to set up a bank account with automatic withdrawal, taking enough each pay cheque to save enough for the trip. The **Wow** will be getting on the plane at the airport.

It's important not to set our goals too low because if they aren't challenging enough, we might quit too soon. And writing our goals down is also important.<sup>11</sup>

You'll find a BOW goal-setting sheet in the **FRAMES** Tool Kit at the back of the book. Keeping our **FRAMES** work in mind when we set our goals will help us create the life we have always pictured.

### **Hitting a tree 5 times a day will make it fall**

Breaking things down to small doable tasks is a great motivator. Just doing 5 things to get started will get us in gear. If there is a tree to fell, hitting it 5 times a day will slowly fell it. If we feel a sense of emptiness, as if there is a big hole in us, we must fill that hole by taking actions that lead somewhere. Using the **FRAMES** Tool Kit provided in the back of this book is a good example of actions that produce results.

*I have found writing very motivating over the years. Yet when you think of writing a book you do not realize that after the book is done you become a book sales person! This part is not as inspiring. Breaking the task down has been helpful for me. For example, we sell books to libraries. Calling 5 a day is doable. When you look at a list of 500 to call it can be depressing. Small achievable tasks make facing a daunting task much easier.*

“Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence.” [Ovid](#). We need to persist even if it is hard.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.dominican.edu/dominicannews/study-backs-up-strategies-for-achieving-goals>

## Time is on our side (Yes it is!)



Some of you may recall a song covered by the Rolling Stones in 1964 with the lyrics, "Time is on my side, yes it is." We need to realize that even though time is considered a non-renewable resource, every day we are given 24 new hours - 1440 minutes - 86,400 seconds. Each day starts fresh. It is a time we can face the challenges ahead and see the all the beauty that surrounds us and that dwells within us. Time is a resource that we need to learn to use wisely. Although time management has been covered by many authors, the simple realization that time is a resource that constantly repeats itself is liberating. The secret is in how we structure the use of this precious resource and what our attitude is while we are using it. The peace of this realization can be profound. See the **FRAMES** Tool Kit for a "Time is on Your Side" exercise.

## **Frame 2: Picture your life with magnificent mental health**

In this frame, you'll learn how to manage troubling thoughts. You know the ones, the thoughts that make us anxious, worried or depressed. You will also learn how finding meaning in your life can help your mental health. In this frame, we will explore how to change the things we can, accept the things we cannot and the wisdom to know the difference.

### Scale of emotion

Picture the full range of emotions that you experience as a musical scale! One day, we may wake up feeling elated, but on receiving some bad news, we plunge into despair. Another way of looking at the emotions we experience is like the gas gauge on your dashboard. When life is working well, our tank is full. If it isn't, we might want to take action that will fill the tank back up.

It is inevitable that sometimes we will experience emotions on the low end of the scale. It's OK to feel down for a while or even to feel bitter and vengeful. But it's our actions when we feel those emotions that tell the tale of our future destiny.

*"Grief can be the garden of compassion. If you keep your heart open through everything, your pain can become your greatest ally in your life's search for love and wisdom." – Rumi*

Refer to the Scale of Emotions exercise at the back of the book to look at them in greater detail.

### **Clouds will come**

Just as the sun can't shine every day, we will feel down or we will feel angry. But extended darkness is a sign that treatment may be in order.

It's the actions we take when we are experiencing those emotional low points that will shape our future life. Just remember, evil is an action, not a feeling. If we are hurting others, we need to stop. Being stupid means taking foolish actions. So if we do foolish things, then we are being stupid. If we are taking evil actions we are being sinful.

But just feeling low or down, or having low self-esteem, or feeling that our life is going nowhere does not make it so. We may experience those emotions at the low end of the scale much of our lives. It is what we do with those low points that matters and maybe we need to accept the reality of what has just happened. Acceptance alone can part the clouds to show just a ray of sun.

### **We need a healthy excellence**

Perfectionism is the root of ego. In reality all we can do is our broken best. To expect to be God-like and never make a mistake is the road to depression, anxiety and fear. Knowing we are vulnerable is not bad or weak.

But we need to seek a healthy pursuit of excellence to make the picture of our life the best it can be. But this pursuit of excellence needs to be balanced and not filled with paralyzing expectations that are unhealthy and unrealistic.

### **2+2 does not = 6**

Our actions need to coincide with where we want to go.

If we want to lose weight but we don't pay attention to our diet, or avoid weighing or measuring ourselves, our actions will not result in weight loss.

2 + 2 will never = 6

What we do affects what will be and what our future becomes. Each move in a chess game affects future moves. Our focus needs to be clear. We need to know what we want in life and what our priorities are.

We need to have a healthy frame work to keep our mind well and the picture of our life clear. Then we need to focus on what will really bring us peace: the reality of our spirituality. If we focus too much on the physical reality (our body, our family, or our work), and we miss focusing on the Creator, we will be stuck in creation. Time spent in love and devotion of the Creator will always lead us in the right direction. And  $2+2$  will then = 4.

### **Frame 3. Picture your life with loving relationships**

#### **Groups and families have dynamics**

Group and family processes unfold naturally. These processes are self-regulating. Things will work out. Do not interfere. Efforts to control these processes can fail. Either way, it may block the process or make it chaotic. Learn to trust what is happening. If there is silence, let it grow. Something will emerge from the silence. Everything does not need to be fixed. Sometimes we need to accept “what is” in our relationships. If there is a storm, let it rage. It will dissolve into calm. Is the group or family disconnected? We can’t make it happy all the time. Even if we could, our efforts might well deprive the group or the family of a very creative struggle. But we do need to understand how to facilitate the group process as it unfolds. Every group and every family has a leader. A family’s or group’s process and a leader’s process unfold in the same way, according to the same principle. Facilitating what is naturally unfolding is more powerful than pushing our own agenda. A good leader understands how to have a profound influence without making things happen. Demonstrating or modeling desired behaviour is more powerful than imposing morality and an unbiased position is stronger than prejudice.

Life’s processes unfold naturally. Conflicts resolve themselves sooner or later, whether or not we know in advance how things will turn out. Knowing this can help us in our work if we are empowered leaders. It can help us lead our children as we parent them and it can help us lead ourselves to acceptance, humility and peace.

See the **FRAMES** Tool Kit for a way to communicate the beauty of relationships.

### **Families can be crazy**

*My own parenting was focused on self-esteem building. We were very careful to not raise our voice when disciplining, so as to not diminish our daughter Rachel's self-esteem. She is now 23 and has a boyfriend. The boyfriend's mother is from Portugal and at times, she raises her voice to her son. This seems so bizarre to my daughter and I think we may have overdone the self-esteem work. She cannot handle conflict as well as we hoped. And so when my clients feel guilty about raising their voice, I tell them that sometimes it may be helpful. Everyone loses it once in a while, so learning how to deal with conflict is important.*

Family therapy is one of the most effective ways to help individuals and families to heal.<sup>12</sup> Many families have characteristics that seem bizarre to some of their members. The uniqueness of each family unit can be intriguing, but sometimes it's hurtful. We must learn to accept differences, celebrate what is beautiful about one another and work on the hurt. Sometimes we must simply accept that there is too much to change in a person. Acceptance becomes love when you refuse to enable addictive or inappropriate behaviour.

As families live together, much of what they experience is negotiation. Who takes out the trash, who is in charge of the TV remote... the list goes on and on. Negotiation must be done with dignity and respect. Conflict needs to be addressed and resolved when volatile emotions are under control.

There are exercises in the **FRAMES** Tool Kit to help you develop peace in the family by learning to fight with assertiveness, dignity and grace.

### **We need community "come into unity"**

We are social creatures. We need people in our lives. But it's critical that our community supports our goal of coming into unity so we can work together. Everything else is distraction.

We need to have fun and enjoy friends, but with balance. Coming together in unity with the hopes and dreams we have together is vital to our growth as individuals, families, and society as a whole.

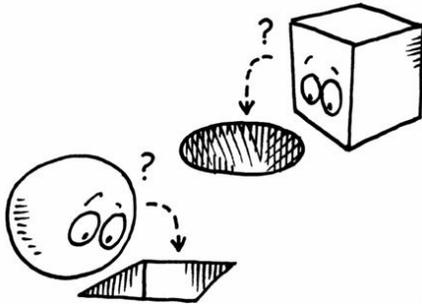
There is too much division with religion, race, and politics. Wisdom lies in coming together in unity and experiencing a true working community. To do this we must work together to deal with conflict and work together to grow to be the best we can be together.

Refer to the **FRAME** exercise section to facilitate this process.

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<sup>12</sup> Szapocznik José Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 2000, 3:117-134

## Personalities differ



*I live with an introvert and I am an extrovert. The love I have for her has caused me to grow and become slightly quieter. We have rubbed each other the wrong way, and it is not easy at times. But it is so wonderful to see her grow as well. She helped with a choir, which took a lot for her to step outside her comfort zone to do this. Now her role with the choir is finished and she feels empowered. It has been my experience with the people I support that our differences can help us grow.*

We are the artwork of the Creator, a piece of God's joy. But sometimes our differences can be hard to tolerate, and it can be hard to accept that God is responsible for the differences that result in conflict. But we grow together into the work of art God intended when we take the time to learn from our conflicting experiences.

## **Frame 4: Picture your life with serenity**

Our souls are the healthiest part of who we are. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is within us and it is our soul being that connects to the kingdom of heaven. If we are children of God there is nothing unhealthy about that.

Plato believed that a healthy and virtuous soul is one that functions harmoniously.<sup>13</sup> Aristotle thought the stable equilibrium of the soul is what we mean by having character.<sup>14</sup> We need to build character and find harmony within ourselves. This happens as we learn to control our mind and commit to living a life that is uncomplicated and focused. As we do this, our mind is freed to see our spirituality unfold within us. What we need is a healthy mind that will help us realize the potential of our soul.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.unc.edu/~plmiller/writing/Platos\\_Divided\\_Soul.pdf](http://www.unc.edu/~plmiller/writing/Platos_Divided_Soul.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.buddhanet.net/tib\\_heal.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/tib_heal.htm)

## **Be still and know**

“In the midst of chaos, keep stillness inside of you.” - Deepak Chopra<sup>16</sup>

In the psalms of the Bible it says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

It is in stillness that we will find the deepest peace. Avoidance through materialism and entertainment will not bring the peace that is beyond understanding. It is fun for a little while but it won't last and we will always need more. When we look at our reflection in a still pool, any movement on the surface of the water distorts the reflection. We need to be still and reflect on who we really are and we will see the kingdom of heaven open up within us.

## **Gratitude heals**

When we have a gratitude attitude it will bring healing. St Ignatius of Loyola said that being ungrateful is the greatest sin. Gratitude not only changes us, it changes those around us.

Robert A. Emmons did a study on practicing gratitude. He had participants do practicing gratitude exercises for 6 months and found it raised positive emotion by 40%. Grateful people have fewer medical conditions and visit their doctors less. Couples who express gratitude to each other stay connected.<sup>17</sup>

The thing we most need to be grateful for is the Creator who has placed us here in this earth school. Sometimes the lessons are hard but we will have a better life here and in the hereafter if we keep the master planner in focus with a sense of gratitude.

See the **FRAMES** tool kit and do the Wow of NOW – for an exercise in gratitude.

## **We need to be ourselves**

We need to avoid being “holier-than-thou.” This is a life path that leads nowhere. We are soul beings. One's body is the cage of the soul. The body is not who we are. It will be dust when we die. WE ARE NOT DUST. We are soul beings having a human experience. We are a part of the Creator that is longing to go back to its source. We are children of the living God. If we are children of God, are we not a part of who created us? We need to be our true selves and touch this reality in focused reflection and prayer.

See the **FRAMES** Tool Kit for ways to reflect on this reality with the meditation exercises.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/stillness.html>

<sup>17</sup> Seligman, Martin E.P. Flourish 2012

### **Give up selfishness but look after your true self**

*There is a Mother Theresa living in my home town, a nun who started a drop in centre down town for people who need support and an accepting place to go. She gets up at 5 am everyday and makes lunch with her volunteers and has been doing this for over 30 years. She is in her 80s and has a vitality that is a true witness to the selfless energy that giving can bring.*

True self-interest teaches selfishness. We need to check our egocentricity and look beyond our family, friends and work. But if we keep a loving balance, being a parent or a worker is service not selfishness. We need to love others and still take the time to love our true, self our soul being.

This love happens in focused silent spaces within us when we make time for stillness, the rest of our daily life benefits. We come to know our ego and we see how the master planner has shaped our life. We see our true self and how we are part of God and we come to understand that our body and everything else that we think we are a part of is a mistaken identity. Our true self is soul being.