**The Bedrock Goal—The Most Important Thing**

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I was honored Kristi asked me to write a series of articles to contribute to Victorious Living Magazine. I know what it's like to be incarcerated and relate to the importance of finding quality reading material that both inspires and brings us comfort. This is the second of six installments that I will be submitting. The article appearing in the July 2019 issue titled *Forgive Yourself and Move On* focused on negative Life Changing Events and the impact they have on us. It also discussed the importance of forgiving ourselves for the mistakes we’ve made, in order to get on with our lives to enjoy the many blessings that lie ahead.

Values-Aligned Goal Setting is a program created by an incarcerated individual for the benefit of other incarcerated individuals. This is not just for those in physical prison. It provides benefit to those imprisoned by substance abuse, by a toxic relationship, by the profound loss of a loved one, by a divorce and by other negative life changing events that make it difficult to get out of bed in the morning. This program has been presented to hundreds of incarcerated individuals all trapped within some form of prison.

For us to realize the blessing of an abundant life we must strive to have positivity in our daily existence. Positive relationships, positive thoughts, a positive feeling about ourselves, a positive relationship with God, and a positive view of our future. Psalm 68: 6-7 Father of the fatherless, defender of widows, God in his holy abode, God gives a home to the forsaken, who leads prisoners out to prosperity, while rebels live in the desert.

 The human condition is to seek happiness in our lives. In order to seek happiness, we need to determine what we believe will bring us happiness; this is a deeply personal thing. Prosperity does not refer to material wealth; it is finding what is at our core and living in accordance. For many it is a relationship with our higher power; my relationship with God and the trust I have in the plan for me has provided a stability in my life, through the highs and the lows. The starting point in crafting a plan toward a happy and abundant life is to determine what is known as the Bedrock Goal.

In the world of goal setting the Bedrock Goal is the most important thing in constructing a path forward in our lives. Your **Bedrock Goal** is the goal on which everything depends; it is the foundation of all your goals. This is especially true as we seek to overcome negative life changing events. Your Bedrock Goal must have the following characteristics:

1. It must provide a source of comfort during times of despair.
2. It should inspire and motivate.
3. It should contribute to having purpose and meaning in your life.

Often, we discover our Bedrock Goal as we reflect on our shortcomings and failures. We look at changes and need to make in the way we live our lives.. For an alcoholic a likely Bedrock Goal is sobriety, for a person who has turned their back on their faith their Bedrock Goal might be to stay connected in thoughts and deeds to God.

Once we determine this goal, we must take the time to determine how it fits into our lives and what Specific Activities are necessary in its pursuit. The Specific Activities you identify are generally simple to understand and execute. However, these activities require the demonstration of self-discipline in order to bring the outcome we are seeking. For example, activities related to maintaining sobriety may include attending a specific number of weekly AA meetings, finding the right sponsor, creating a substitute activity (exercise), redefining those we will associate with (other sober people), and identifying where we will socialize (gym). Focusing on the right activities makes goal pursuit more enjoyable and meaningful. Remember this is a commitment you are making to yourself.

 To find our way, we need to look deep inside ourselves, with total honesty, seeking to find our path to happiness. We need to prepare a plan that will inspire us and fill us with hope. This is a meaningful way to prepare to break the bonds of incarceration in all its forms.