

Purpose-Driven:

An Unconventional Guide for finding and following a higher calling

SMALL EXPERIMENTS EXERCISE

In this exercise we're going to give you a protocol for how to design your path of action to get you moving toward your purpose and deepening into your higher calling.

Here's what we are going to cover:

1. *The straw man*
2. *Practice starting*
3. *Running small experiments*
4. *The Exercise*



1. The Straw Man

Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail, there's only make.

– Sister Corita Kent and John Cage

A straw man is the name of an effigy sacrificed in the fires for various religious and ritualistic purposes. For you, it is meant to be a sacrifice also, because it represents a rough first draft. When you are at the very beginning of a project, or process, you need a way to take that first step. In order to take the overwhelm or pressure out of your internal system, consider putting together a very rough, bad, terrible even, first draft of your first step. Make it easy to produce, simple, and quick to put out into the world for early feedback. The essence here is that you are NOT ATTACHED to it.

It can change, be destroyed, ruthlessly pulled apart, or built upon. Its only function is that it is just a beginning.

This first step probably takes the most courage, especially when you step outside of your zone of comfort. Keep in mind that whatever you do, it doesn't have to be successful, the right thing, nor do you have to finish it. The operating principle is go where you have energy. When you lose energy for it, stop what you're doing and go where the energy is next. You don't have to know the end goal, you don't have to know what you are doing. You just have to *start moving your will*.



2. Practice Starting

Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think.

– Sister Corita Kent and John Cage

You need to practice getting started with something new, when the end result or the success of the outcomes are still unknown. Here are some real stories to illustrate:

- A poet wanted to explore performance art because he was inspired by artists such as Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramovic. He began with setting up a very simple participatory poetry writing event at an indoor shopping mall. Each person who stopped by wrote one line based on a theme about life. At the end of the day he then wrote a composite poem of all the contributed sentences which he posted online. He did this several times, adding more components and pizzazz to his set up for attention.
- A man wanted to explore how he could bring his passion for supporting men into his professional life. He wanted to give this idea a chance to blossom into something bigger. He began by running an online group every week. It wasn't particularly well attended because he didn't know much about holding space for the others, but he improved over time, and so did the attendance to his group.
- A young mother wanted to find a way to build a "red thread" of something of her own while raising small babies. Motherhood is relentlessly physical work, and she needed intellectual stimulation. She decided to explore coaching to see if that way of supporting others would light a fire in her. She didn't think coaching was "it" but thought it would lead her in the right direction. She began by coaching other parents in her toddler group, helping them via free intimate conversations rather than anything particularly formal.

3. Small Experiments

The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all of the time who eventually catch on to things.

– Sister Corita Kent and John Cage

So, this is all leading to you getting started in a way that is not intimidating or overwhelming. You can begin with a straw man, and then improve it bit by bit as you learn by doing. The main thing is: you begin. Just get something going.

The exercise below will help you get started, and help you structure your process so you can find courage and keep going, even when things are failing, not working, and you feel discouraged. Everyone goes through that, and the ones who make it through to something higher than they could have otherwise done, accomplish this because they are structured in their activities. They are organized, but also able to pivot, learn, keep getting back on the horse, and know where they are in the process and manage their expectations accordingly. We call this a well-organized expedition into the unknown.

Are you ready? Let's get started!



STEP 1.

We have nothing to fear but fear itself. Apart from pain. And maybe humiliation and obviously death. And failure. But apart from pain, and humiliation, failure and death, we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

– A. Rimmer

We're going to start with a straw man. You are going to write about what interests you. These interests are going to inform what you decide to try experimenting with.

Here are some questions to help you. Go through them and write what comes up for you. Don't edit, or think too hard. Try and write what comes up in the moment. Watch for voices of criticism or mocking that try and stop you. Your worksheet is on the next page.

Write your answers here:

What inspires you?

Name any feelings of warmth, enthusiasm, energy, or spark you notice. And around which issues/topics?



What gets to your heart/speaks to your heart?

What are you interested in, but haven't yet given yourself permission to pursue? (Can you at least give yourself permission to write it down?)

When you look back on your journey to get here (where you are now), what big lessons have you learned along the way? Try and find ones that aren't borne of bitterness or resentment in quality or tone, but are ones you find are wise, insightful, or that you feel grateful for. You earned those insights!

STEP 2:

"Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties."

— Erich Fromm

Review the answers you wrote earlier. ***Do you have any ideas starting to emerge for some small experiments?***

Write them down, even if they seem impossible or too difficult or impractical. This could be an idea for a personal project, a new approach to your current work, a new side hustle, a professional training, a new activity or even a hobby to take up.

Write them down on the next page. You have permission! You will not be required to take up each of these experiments. This is your Straw Man practice.



Write your answers here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing answers.

STEP 3.

Consider everything an experiment.
– Sister Corita Kent and John Cage

Let's look at the ideas that came up for you above and see what we can learn from them. At this stage, we look at the function of each of the ideas you outlined in the previous step. Here are some prompts to help you:

What are the functions of your ideas or desired outcomes?

- Here's an example to help you. Say one of your ideas was to grow some cutting flowers to sell at the farmer's market. The functions of that project include: spending time outdoors, working in the soil and with plant life, working independently, interacting with the public, and producing natural beauty for others.

Notice if you tended to write about FORM instead of FUNCTION.

- These are different, and for the Creativity Arc it's especially important to understand their differences. Form, for example is, "I want to build an app," or, "I want to get a job at a winery," or, "I want to run for local mayor."
- Here are some more examples of function:
 - a. I want to find a way to help people through listening and dialogue.
 - b. I am a teacher, but I want to be more in nature and out of the classroom. I don't know exactly what I could do, but it has something to do with kids and getting them (and me) into wild nature.
 - c. I want to find a way to spend more time with my passion for permaculture gardening and animals, particularly horses.
- Why is this important? Because the FORM of your project/idea comes at the end of a process, not at the beginning. If you stay with the function or value you want to create, then the creative medium of your life can teach you what the right form is going to be, and it may not be what you'd initially expect. So leave the form open.

You can write your answers on the next page.



Write your answers here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing answers.

STEP 4.

Draw the art you want to see, start the business you want to run, play the music you want to hear, write the books you want to read, build the products you want to use - do the work you want to see done.

— Austin Kleon

Next, let's look at what you might do, in a small experiment sort of way. *What do you imagine doing, at a small scale to start with?*

Not form, just the function of it. Don't edit while you write, just dump whatever comes into your head and heart. It's just ideas, no matter how far fetched or silly they might seem at first.

Don't analyze and create at the same time. Just create.

Write your answers on the next page.



Write your answers here:

A large, empty rectangular box intended for writing answers.

STEP 5.

Our job in this life is not to shape ourselves into some ideal we imagine we ought to be, but to find out who we already are and become it.

— Steven Pressfield

Now we're going to take a step back and **analyze** what came up in you. You need to get to know your tendencies when you try to create ideas.

A major pitfall we all experience when doing something new or creative is the self-talk, which is nearly always negative. This step is asking you to peer inward and take an objective look at what kind of self-talk you are engaging in, of which you might not be fully aware. It's best to know what you are telling yourself about yourself so you have a chance to nip it in the bud, or develop strategies for mitigating any negative impacts on your efforts and outcomes.

On the next page we've written some journaling questions for you to use as a template whenever you suspect negative self-talk and need some prompts to help you notice them and get you back on track.



Write your answers here:

What negative reactions or thoughts did you experience? Did any control issues, fear, doubt, or self-ridicule/mockery come up? Anything negative?

What potential do you intuit, if you let yourself? What small triumph did you feel?

What inspires you? Where does your energy go when you look at your list? What does that tell you?

What gets to your heart/speaks to your heart?

STEP 6.

What you seek is seeking you.
— Mawlana Jalal-al-Din Rumi

Now, for the final step, we want to see you getting into a kind of flow with your small experiments. This is a process of going between being directional and emergent, like a pendulum swing between the two.

Here are some journaling questions to help you reflect when it's time to reflect – not while you are creating and are in action. Remember, *don't analyze and create at the same time; they are different processes.*

When you look at your small experiments, what patterns of interest can you observe?

Where is your energy? What worked for you?

Hints of emergence often show up right under your nose. What is right in front of you that you haven't seen yet?



Write your answers here:

You may have already chosen your strategies for your small experiments. But are there other ways you could achieve a similar function, outcome, or value? List them here.

Is there anything showing up that contradicts or opposes your ideas? Some way in which the world is objecting? Are you falling out of flow, are you struggling to make something work even though you strongly believe it should? What assumptions are you possibly carrying that you need to become aware of?



Write your answers here:

Listen to your energy, and do a scan of your body. Where are you holding tension, and why? When you look at what you believe is the next step, where is your energy? Do you see any subtle drops in energy, like your heart is sinking? Do you feel tired, even exhausted?

If, instead, you imagined giving yourself permission to go where your energy is and being honest with yourself, what would you do instead, if anything? Sometimes when we lock into form too soon, we can intuit something is off, but only if we pause and listen to our energy levels. They are never wrong, we just don't always remember to pay attention.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

You've made it through!! We're proud of the work you've done in this exercise to discover something that is absolutely possible: to find your purpose and chase your dreams – all in practical and grounded ways.

This is an example of the kinds of things we do every month inside our Membership program, called the Monastery. Its a place where we gather together every month to practice and hold each other accountable. We also hold space for your growing, healing, and deepening into your true purpose and service to a world in chaos.

Will you join us? Learn more and get on our waitlist. Be the first to hear when our doors open for enrollment.

We'd love to have you!



THE MONASTERY

M E M B E R S H I P P R O G R A M

Community | Training | Purpose

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