

Engineer Your Career:

Building a Blueprint for Your Best Self

By Randy Siegel

Chapter One—Overview

A Call to Introspection

So much emphasis is placed upon execution and action in the business world today that there's little time left for introspection. Until you embrace the Delphic injunction "know thyself," chances are you'll be singing the refrain from that old Peggy Lee song, "Is that all there is?"

I am told that what makes this process totally unique—and effective—is that it calls you as a businessperson to be introspective and self-aware. It calls you to invest in your life and career by taking the time to determine what really matters to you. And while this process may bring income and prestige, more importantly it will help you become happier with your life and work, and grow into your full potential and power.

Introspection leads to insight, insight to inspiration, and inspiration into awareness. Awareness helps you make informed choices, and informed choices help bring you into alignment. When aligned, you are your most authentic, and your authenticity empowers you to reach your full potential and power. I call this state "standing in your power," and when you are in it, you become the full expression of all you are. I will elaborate.

When you take time to reflect upon your values, life, and work—whether through meditation, journaling, working with a coach or therapist, or simply talking to a friend—you begin to identify what's really important to you. You gain insight, and this insight inspires or motivates you to align your life and work with your essence, or that which brings you joy, meaning, and serenity. This insight inspires you to make informed choices that empower you to take control of your life, rather than be controlled by the invisible strings of your unconscious. With each inspired choice, you become more closely aligned with your authentic self. And when you align your interior and exterior worlds, you are your most powerful.

Author and counselor Richard Leider interviewed more than a thousand retirees who had been successful in their jobs. Most reported that if they could live their lives again, they would:

- ◆ Take time to be more reflective.
- ◆ Take more risks.
- ◆ Do what it takes to understand what gave them fulfillment.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said: “Most of us go to our graves with the music still inside of us.” Now is the time to sing your special song. This is your time to:

- ◆ Determine what’s really important to you so that your work—your whole life—can become a true reflection of all you are.
- ◆ Decide how you can package, present, and promote yourself to take your career to the next level.
- ◆ Discover how to find purpose and passion in the work you do.
- ◆ Make real change in your life.

Your Inner Work

New York Times best-selling author Marianne Williamson writes, “Ultimately, it’s only people who have done and continue to do their own inner work who can effectively lead a competent modern workplace.”

Before beginning any important task, it’s helpful to examine your intentions. The following exercise will assist you.

Exercise 1.1: Examine Your Intentions

Complete the following sentences.

My Intention for This Book

1. I bought this book because I hoped to...

2. When I reach the end of this book I want to be...

I read once that 40 percent of change comes from awareness; commitment makes up the remaining 60 percent. How committed are you to meeting the above goals?

Standing in Your Power

Whatever your career goals may be, your Best Self Blueprint can assist you by showing you how to “stand in your power.” “But what does ‘stand in your power’ really mean?” you might ask. You stand in your power, when you:

- ◆ Are true to yourself, your values, needs, and wants.
- ◆ Accept and address your limitations with compassion.
- ◆ Share your true self with others, even showing your vulnerability at times.
- ◆ Connect to your passion.
- ◆ Own your unique strengths and put these strengths to service for others.
- ◆ Put your best face forward projecting likeability, credibility, and authority.
- ◆ Become “other-focused” in all communications by expressing a genuine concern for others.

Standing in Your Power

Introspection into Insight

Insight into Inspiration

Inspiration into Awareness

Awareness into Informed Choices

Informed Choices into Alignment

Alignment into Authentic Self

Authentic Self into Standing in Your Power

When you stand in your power, you’ll also notice some physical changes, notably:

- ◆ Your posture improves; you stand or sit straighter.
- ◆ You walk a little taller and with purpose.
- ◆ You hold your head high; your chin is in better alignment with your body.
- ◆ Your shoulders are relaxed.
- ◆ Your eyes are brighter; you appear more alert and present.

- ◆ Your face is relaxed, especially your jaw.
- ◆ Your voice is strong, and your pronunciation is clear.

The next exercise will help you gauge if you are standing fully in your power. It will also help you identify those sections that you'll want to pay particular attention as you move through this material. To gauge your progress, you may want to retake this assessment several months after you have completed the workbook.

Exercise 1.2: Are You Standing in Your Power?

Read each statement; then using your best judgment circle the number that indicates how well the statement describes you. (3 = very well, 2 = somewhat, and 1 = very little). Next, total the scores you selected to describe yourself for all questions in each section. Finally, enter your totals in the space provided at the end of each section.

Personhood			
Score			Statement
1	2	3	I can admit my mistakes, even be vulnerable at times.
1	2	3	My inner critic doesn't control my life. I can forgive myself for past transgressions. I am not overly hard on myself when I make mistakes.
1	2	3	I devote significant time for self-discovery and self-awareness (activities could include therapy, personal coaching, meditation, journaling, and spending periods of time alone).
1	2	3	I speak out even when it's uncomfortable. I am able to hold my ground and not cave in to public approval.

1	2	3	I have friends I feel <i>really</i> know me and hold me accountable. (Give yourself three points if you have three or more friends, two points for one to two friends, and one point for no friends.)
			Personhood total score:
Purpose			
1	2	3	I am using my strengths in some way to help others.
1	2	3	I can clearly articulate my personal mission or philosophy in two minutes or less.
1	2	3	My friends can articulate my personal mission clearly and succinctly. (Give yourself three points if you have three or more friends who could do so, two points for one to two friends, and one point for no friends.)
1	2	3	I am in the "flow." I lose track of time for long periods of time. I am struck by the coincidences in my life. People, places, and events seem to line up magically at times. Put another way, I am living synchronistically.
1	2	3	If I died tomorrow, I would have few regrets.
			Purpose total score:
Persona			
1	2	3	I seek peer and target audience feedback about how I am perceived.
1	2	3	I can define my "dream" reputation.

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1	2	3	I can deliver a succinct description of what I do, how I do it differently, and the benefit it provides—all within ninety seconds.
1	2	3	I am sought after by others for counsel, wisdom, perspective, and creative thought in one or more areas of expertise. I have been featured in the media, published an article, or given a speech in the past six months.
1	2	3	I have an annual personal marketing plan and review it quarterly.
			Persona total score:
Presence			
1	2	3	I look people in the eyes and notice their eye color.
1	2	3	I am aware of my intentions before beginning an important task or communication.
1	2	3	I am a good listener. I listen to understand before trying to be understood. I listen for the feelings and emotions behind others' words. I am able to reserve judgment even if the ideas and opinions are different from my own.
1	2	3	I know how others would rank my likeability, credibility, and authority.
1	2	3	I am a good presenter and look for opportunities to present.
			Presence total score:

How did you do? Don't feel bad if you didn't do well. You aren't alone. Most workshop participants report disappointing scores. And I teach this stuff, and my scores aren't as high

as they could be. The bottom line is most of us aren't operating at full power in our work and lives. Your Blueprint for Your Best Self can help you, however. Here's how.

Building Your Best Self Blueprint

By completing a series of exercises, you'll complete your Best Self Blueprint, a summary designed to help you package, present, and promote yourself with authenticity, vision, conviction, competency, clarity, and caring—the hallmarks of all great communicators and leaders.

This proven, proprietary blueprint process fuses psychology, sociology, and solid business principles into a memorable four-pronged model, based on four “Ps.”: personhood, purpose, persona, and presence.

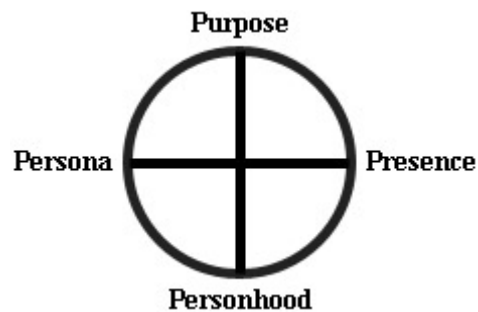
Many psychologists use the term **personhood** to describe authentic self. Grounded in self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-disclosure, personhood calls us to live lives that reflect our core values, needs, and wants. **Purpose** describes that part of us that wants to be of service to the world. It's our personal purpose or mission, and it transforms careers into callings, ignites passion, and empowers the way in which we work. **Persona** describes the public face we put on for the world. In business, persona can be broken down into three units: a unique selling proposition, personal brand, and positioning statement. Finally, **presence** is the way we carry ourselves and listen to others. This determines in large part our ability to convey likeability, credibility, and authority—three primary attributes of powerful communicators.

Most businesspeople think only persona and presence are needed to build their careers, but unless both are grounded in personhood and purpose, they miss the mark. With personhood and purpose, businesspeople become self-aware, confident, and trustworthy; without them, they lack authenticity, direction, respect, and the ability to build strong relationships.

It's common sense that having a sense of purpose, or developing a personal mission statement, connects us to our passion and gives our work a sense of meaning. By now we know that paying attention to our image, or creating our own personal brand, helps us manage the way in which others perceive us, and we have most likely observed that our ability to forge strong connections with others will help us achieve professional and social success. But we may not know that unless each of these areas is grounded in our authentic self, in the very essence of who we are, each of these three areas will not truly serve us.

Picture personhood, purpose, persona, and presence as the four points of a cross contained in a circle. Personhood is at the bottom of the cross and serves as the foundation of the model;

Purpose self is at the top, where with personhood it creates a stabilizing vertical axis. This vertical line represents work we must do internally. Looking at the horizontal axis, we find persona at the far left and presence on the far right. This line represents external work.



The Deliverables

“All this is well and good,” you might say. “But what are the deliverables?” By completing a series of exercises, you’ll complete your Best Self Blueprint, a summary designed to help you package, present, and promote yourself with authenticity, vision, conviction, competency, clarity, and caring—attributes shared by all great communicators and leaders.

Your blueprint will summarize your:

- ◆ Core Values
- ◆ Roles You Play in Your Life and Work
- ◆ Core Strengths and Examples
- ◆ Key Attributes
- ◆ Needs and Wants
- ◆ Ideal Work Environment (Motivators)
- ◆ Key Barriers to Self-Acceptance
- ◆ Personal Purpose/Mission Statement
- ◆ Unique Selling Proposition and Proofs
- ◆ Brand Summary and Promise

- ◆ Positioning Statement
- ◆ Elevator Speech
- ◆ Action Steps

The uses for your personal blueprint are too numerous to list here but include job searches, performance reviews, career and life planning, and a wonderful tool called a management manifesto that we'll review in chapter ten.

In this chapter, you got a thirty-thousand-foot view of the process we'll be using throughout the book. Now that you have the big picture, you're ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work.