

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Module 4: Consulting Our Deaths for What Gives Our Lives Meaning, Purpose, and Value



Create a genius star for your purpose and values.

Place your purpose in the center of the star. It might be the very same word as your archetypal goal in your first genius star, or you may find yourself wanting to tweak it or refine it a little. Consider any satellite values as well. Is your work in the world in alignment with your values? Does it allow you to express those values? Is there something more, or something less, you're being called to do on behalf of your values? (Note: to hone down your values to five core values, I've placed some suggested exercises in the module.)

Craft a concise but more encompassing purpose statement.

Your purpose in life might be as simple as the goal in the center of your first genius star—to love, to lead, to transform, to serve. But if you find that a single word is too limiting, play with writing a purpose statement. Try to keep this to a single sentence. You may find yourself including archetypal roles, goals, and values, but be careful not to overpack it.

Create a genius values star for each of your archetypal roles.

If you're up to the challenge, do five genius values stars for your five different roles. Look for where they overlap and where they differ. Also,

notice if your purpose changes at the center of each star, or whether it remains the same, or inflects slightly.

Consider the role of values formation in your childhood.

Look over your list of values, especially your genius values, and consider which ones may come from childhood voids—meaning they are reactions to what’s been missing, and which ones may come from childhood role models whose values you resonate with.

Explore your values in light of “the shoulds.”

Are there values which tyrannize you and make you neurotic? If so, they may be values which are not native to you, which are not part of your natural genius, which have been dictated to you as shoulds. They may be old values, and you may wish to release them and make room for the values more native to your genius.

It might help to make value genius stars for your significant family members—that may show you the values you have learned to comply with or rebel against.

If religion was important to you growing up, make a star chart for your religion, and compare it to your native values chart.

You may also want to look at how your values have changed over time. A useful assignment would be to make a values star for each decade of your life—and you might also include satellite values—to see what’s never-changing and thus part of your natural genius, and what has changed, which may indicate letting go of any shoulds and living life in more accordant with your genius values, those that are genuine to you.

Another angle to take is to do a values star for the significant others in your life. For example, if you're in a long-term relationship, do a star for your significant other and compare it to yours, looking both for places of harmony AND places where you may be shoulding on each other and contributing to each other's neurosis.

So you too may wish to examine the connections between the values of your work in the world and your genius values. What values does your job, your career, your profession, or your vocation expect you to uphold? If those values are not native to you, how have you justified them to yourself? How have they settled in your psyche? Do the values tyrannize, or make you neurotic, or psychologically queasy or uneasy? Going back to our last module, have they showed up in your body as symptom?

Create a “*memento mori*” for yourself to remind you to consult your death.

It could be a piece of art or any tangible artifact or symbol. It could be a ritual or a practice you develop (such as waking up and reciting “Today is a very good day to die). You may want to write your own eulogy.